THE LOST LANDS



The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

With Matt Finch, Greg A. Vaughan, & Bill Webb

5th Edition Fantasy

FROG GOD GAMES

The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

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This setting is dedicated to Geoff Tew, a damn fine thief whose spirit still graces our gaming table and whose favourite character still walks these streets.

"In order to know virtue, we must first acquaint ourselves with vice."

Quotations except as noted otherwise are from the **Marquis de Sade (1740–1814)**

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The Blight Campaign Guide



The Cyclopædia Infestarum

A Primer of All Things Blighted

"The Blight is a city; a vast corpulent, mad, ugly thing, but it is so much more than that. Its veins seep into other places, drawn across the Between, which rips at its fabric and tosses it about like a child throwing a ball. You might find a curiosity shop from the Blight crammed amongst the mighty tenements of some other city, a horrific character staggering along the streets of an otherwise normal town, or perhaps even a whole block perched within another city like a cuckoo in a nest.

Her polite name is Castorhage; named after the grotesque Royal Family that rules here, a family even worse than those who would depose them. It has been called lots of other names, other oaths have been flung at her and her constituent filthy, chymic poisoned parts. From Sister Lyme to the chaos of Toiltown, through the throttling alleyways of the Jumble to the airy madness of the Hollow and Broken Hills, every facet has a story, and every story a dark edge.

Yes, the Blight is a place, but it is a place that touches others, like a cancer, suddenly infesting a brighter place and poisoning it. There is no escaping its touch, and once it draws you in, you may never escape.

Welcome …"

Introduction

"The imagination is the spur of delights...."

Welcome to the Blight, a city of many names but known as the **City-State of Castorhage** (KAST-or-awzh, or KAST-or-HAYJ to uncouth foreigners) in the **Lost Lands** campaign setting of **Frog God Games**. *The* City. What you have before you is the outline of a vast place, a city of many parts that may be used as you wish to add spice to your urban adventures.

The Blight is not just a place, it is *alive*, a place that may crawl suddenly upon you, a street, a name, a rumour. It may be little more than a story in your own campaign, a rumour of places nearby, or a street around the corner. It could be a whole district that sits in your own city, a bad neighbourhood that people avoid, burgeoning like a cuckoo in its soiled urban nest. It may, however, be bigger, perhaps even the basis for a whole campaign.

In itself it is a city, a singular place made up of many parts presented to you as one settlement, but to use as much or as little as you wish — a district, a series of places, a group of occupants or a whole. This guide takes you down its streets and alleyways, through its rotten parishes and into its diseased parks. You'll meet many of her occupants; from the highest caste aristocratic families to the Lowest of the Low, undead who toil endlessly in the name of the Glory of the Empire of Castorhage.

In truth, it's as much a thing as a place, and the worst of it is that it can turn up anywhere. Despite being an official part of the **Frog God Games'** campaign setting, the Blight can be found bleeding into the slums of any city of your own campaign, cropping up in the bowels of any metropolis, or lurking in the edges of smoggy river cities.

In short, the Blight is yours to do with as you will.

Use it as nothing more than a single encounter, a street or NPC, or expand it to use the districts herein as whole regions of your campaign. If you wish, use the entire city as a base for your adventures, embellish them, stamp your character upon her gin houses and workrooms, her temples, and her opium and insectum dens.

The whole concept of the Blight is that it's fluid. Yet whenever your players enter a part of the Blight, they should know it by its smell, its characters and its tastes.

This is the wrong side of town.

The Seven Prayers of Castorhage

The philosophy of the city-state is embodied in the so-called *Seven Prayers of Castorhage*: the seven prayers recited by priests, memorised by children, and part of the skin of the city. This is not to say that they are beloved; they are enshrined in tradition, as is the city. Where they are broken, the weight of the law falls harshly.

There are seven more prayers that remain unspoken but well-known, particularly amongst the aristocracy; these are the more truthful versions of the seven prayers. But of course, the truth sometimes hurts, so in a place with such a veneer of civilisation as the Blight, they remain unsaid.

The Seven Prayers

I. Love, honour and obey your Queen.

II. Our destiny is to build an empire at the centre of the world.

III. Only the wise know how to use the dangerous curse of magic, and only a fool would tamper with it.

IV. To toil is to know joy.

V. To be strict is to love; to be weak is to wither.

VI. Obedience shows our love for our home and family; disobedience shows our disdain for them.

VII. Be content and joyful with your family, your history and your destiny.



The Seven Unspoken Prayers

I. Magic is power, and power in the wrong hands is folly.
Only those of high caste know how to use it wisely; the lowborn who dabble with it must be taught a lesson and cleansed as an example to others.

II. Power is might, and might is right; our destiny is to rule.

III. Sinning in secret is not sin.

IV. Workers work. Rulers rule.

V. A peasant who learns to write is a peasant who has too much time on her hands.

VI. Obedience is the only word that matters to a dog.

VII. To know virtue, we must first intimately know vice.

A Note from the Author: Using This Guide

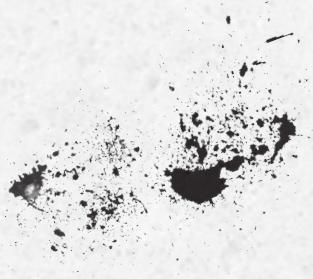
This campaign guide describes the Blight as a whole city, a place of different districts ruled in a particular way by a particular group of characters. It is a city-state of its own standing, with its own laws and rulers and peculiarities. There are thirteen districts detailed herein, and each is home to an eclectic, unwholesome mob of selfish, sometimes frightened individuals who walk or stagger the streets and parishes of their home district. Yet deep below this odious skin lurk a few decent souls; those who wish the city to rise as a benevolent power, a guiding hand, not a monstrous tyrant. They are few in number.

For the GM, there are several new rules, and options for darker-themed campaigns, while for the players there are new races and subtypes, prestige classes, equipment, and ways to spend hard-earned cash, as well as ways to allow more focus on putting the PC at the heart of a campaign. Like anything outside of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, it is an option, not a demand. You know your players better than anyone can, use what will suit them to create a memorable adventure or encounter, a chilling meeting or an unforgettable moment. The guide is a canvas, it is complete — in a way — but like any good travel guide, it is only one aspect, one view. How you interact with it makes it special, makes it yours, and your adventures are always what your players will keep coming back for.

It is an adult, lower-level dark fantasy. Adult themes appear throughout the setting and the adventures that are set here, and these adventures, and many of the most-powerful NPCs, top out at about 13th level. Once you get to those dizzying heights, the chances are you've so many enemies and jealous admirers that, unless you're very careful, you'll wind up poisoned or murdered. That's not to say there aren't any opportunities for higher-level adventures; it's just that they are rarer. You'll encounter mature themes in the Blight but it will never be gratuitous. As with all such publications, use it as you wish, but above all have fun with it.

Let the tale begin …

Richard Pett, February 2013



Player's Introduction

Sickened walls jut from the green waters like jagged teeth, their brickwork haemorrhaging from the strain of the towering load above. Centuries of rebuilding, repairing, shoring and praying teetering on the edge of ruin above a poison ink bay of arsenic-toxic waters. Brick walls rise from the dead waters of the Great Lyme River—Sister Lyme as they call her—lying in a bay seemingly bereft of natural life where slurry licks the footings of this failing domain. Timbers rise and jut across streets—joists shore up walls and iron bars lash whole avenues together—the endless sinking decay and toil making the city a giant endless building site. Bamboo scaffolding lashes around every structure, walls are propped against others by vast beams crossing rivers and the whole place is like a house of cards—waiting for the fall to commence. Nothing is still, and everything will one day collapse.

This city continues to rise from its vile depths—buildings lashed on other buildings, with a lace of piers and ladders, rope bridges and stone structures heaved between its various confusing levels. It is a cat's cradle of interwoven wood and stone and hemp where a trip of fifty feet can take an hour on foot. Older buildings are crushed under the foundations of their children and gaze up weakly, senile structures being trampled to death in the struggle for air.

Bright boats of all sizes ply the sluggish bays and streams between the houses offering a quick but costly way of getting from one street to the next avoiding the perilous crossings and drops below. These boats compete for garishness, whilst their owners compete for attention—shouting, crying and even singing the safety and pleasure of their wares. Above their heads, a treadmill ferry creaks by, lumbering on despite the abuse from the boatmen, hateful of yet another invention in this city of renaissance.

The city is also alive with birdsong—the singing of canaries, which seem to be as populace as the people, who throng the streets and bay and bridges in their tens of thousands. And outwards and upwards the city spreads, like a blighting mass of architecture—towers rise in distant BookTown, the garish lights dance over Festival, and the echo of sounds and life in a dozen districts drifts lazily towards you. And high, high above all towers the grey ramparts of the Capital—a schizophrenic mass of tastes and styles, decrees, orders and tyranny.

Welcome to the greatest city in the World: Castorhage—"the Blight" to many of its inhabitants, a metropolis dancing on its own grave…

Welcome to Castorhage—the Blight. Few who visit it leave unscarred; many never leave at all, some even of their own volition. Castorhage is the official name for the city, although most of the Lowfolk call it the Blight (and a great many of the higher castes as well), a seemingly unending confusion that marches endlessly into the surrounding cloying countryside, a cancer that thrives in the sickness of the city streets—feasting and expanding with each day.

It has other names too, many other names. Some call it the Canker, the Rot, City of Secrets and Lies, others the City of Golems, some refer to it simply as The City, and still more names haunt the slums and streets… many more names.

So what is Castorhage? It is a homage to great writers of great cities; imagine the fog-shrouded streets of Conan Doyle, the dislocated horror of Clive Barker, the grime of Dickens, the corruption of Jeff Vandermeer and the misery and magic of China Miéville. It is Alice meets Frankenstein.

In her soul, the Blight is a dark urban horror fantasy setting dealing with mature themes, but in an adult way. You'll meet dubious characters and those who it is difficult to know whether to trust or not, nothing is clear in this dark place, particularly not the long nights.

Now, please join us in on the 8th hour Treadmill Ferry across Sister Lyme via Town Bridge; the Farnham Theatre in the Artists' Quarter is open and the night is young…



City of Secrets and Lies

The Blight is vast; it is mad and random and teeming with life—and unlife. Each doorway conceals a secret, every window a longing, every roof a hope and fear. More than three million faces stare from its broken soul. Each face hides a story.

Orders seep down from the twisted rulers in the Capitol who use the **Royal Family** like puppets—giving credence and power to their empty promises and lies. Simple orders are carried out by the **City Watch**—the police of the Blight—but everyone knows the Watch earn little and many are open to bribes. Important orders are carried out by the **Knockers** (a.k.a. the Faceless, the Undertakers, the Midnight Men), the Secret Police of the Blight, brutal, single-minded thugs who carry out orders to the letter. It's said that if you hear a knock at your door in the night you should put on your best clothes and get ready for your funeral. The Knockers work for the **Illuminati**. Allegedly the true rulers of this city, the faceless Illuminati slither like a rotting sickness in body of Castorhage, unseen, but always there just below the surface. Three **Crown Justices** are in theory answerable only to Queen Alice herself, however, these three supposed "pillars of society", are in fact rumoured to be the leading members of the Illuminati, their fingers seeping into every dark dealing in the city, their eyes open day and night and their ears hearing all whispers.

The Illuminati, they say, operates through hundreds of intermediaries and clubs, lodges, guilds, trading corporations and companies. They hold vast reserves of wealth, and with wealth comes power. However, the Illuminati is also rumoured to be a constantly festering mass of backstabbing and betrayal, murder, blackmail and ruin, and whilst it is rare for a Crown Justice to be removed, the **Justices** and **Under-Justices** and **Streetclerks** change constantly, playing an endless game of bluff and strength in the hope of rising to the top.

There are those who perceive this and look upon the Illuminati with hate. These so called **Anarchists** and **Revolutionaries** (two very different groups it should be noted) weave their own plots to bring down the Illuminati, plotting and murdering in their own brutal way to topple the rulers. Many claim to work for **Queen Alice** herself, and indeed many Royals are said secretly to pay or be part of the Anarchists. Some say the Queen's squabbling **daughters** (she had no sons) use everyone they can to bring about each other's demise, but each shares one fear—what will happen if the Queen's recently named heir apparent, the frightful **Alicia**—the "Little Queen"—gets her hands on the crown.

However, even the Anarchist and rebel groups are fractious; opium-addled artists hold furtive conversations with manufactury overseers and **Lowfolk**, level-headed merchants plant alchemical fire bombs in crowded market places in the hope of killing a single Under-Justice, and poets scream from street corners about the latest innocent victims of the Knockers.



How the aristocrats hate these rebels; how the great families of **Borxia** and **Tredici** and others would love to slowly punish each and everyone one of them and perhaps, just perhaps, prove that their own claim to the Crown is better than that of the family Castorhage.

Beneath, the merchants and traders, guildsmen and artisans earn enough to feed their family, but the taxes and Lodge Tithes, Guild-Dues and bribes make life hard. Making money is not hard in so vast a city; keeping it is.

The workers form the lowest acknowledged caste in the city. Toiling at manufacturies and sweatshops their lot is a miserable one, toil and food and maybe a night in the sweaty, stench-ridden alehouses in the common-quarters. The workers are slowly coming to the boil however, as their jobs are taken by the **Lowest of the Low**, the Anarchists feed on this fear of hunger and poverty, and many workers raise their fists in anger against a dark future. The Lowest of the Low are not even acknowledged as people—they are the undead, the golems and homuncules and alchymic unliving; workers that toil without food and drink day and night. They are soulless creatures without hopes or fears, but even in death they are exploited by the mill owners and ship captains and merchants who can afford them. This new class is growing, some say growing unnaturally fast, and with the passing of the ***Corpse*** **[laying to rest]** ***Act of 1770*** only those who can afford the Death Duty can be assured that when they die, they will truly rest in peace.

Sinister Locals

Others lurk in the shadows of the city—the **Fetch** is the undead population of the city—and whilst they revel in the sight of so many undead walking in the city, they are angered. Many of their brethren are taken in the night and broken, others are burned as an example of the intolerance of the living to the Fetch. Ruled by a great vampire known as **Beltane**, the Fetch have become remarkably organised of late, and the marked increase in the sale of shutters and bolts and locks has not gone unnoticed. Their own caste is strict; from the cattle-like ghouls to the great vampires and liches, each knows her station in unlife.

Almost as numerous as the Fetch is the **Great Coven**, a group of witches and warlocks who worship and seek to bring the **Devil** to the world. Some say that 1 in every 13 women in the city is a witch, and witch hunting is so profitable that fully 280 witchhunters are registered in the Capitol. The head and hands of a witch command high prices both from golem-stitchers, cabalists and alchemists, and the witchhunters can be assured of a purse of 100 gold shekels if they capture a witch who is subsequently burned alive. Of course profit often pushes justice aside, and occasionally an awkward enemy or a barren or unwanted wife is suddenly found to be "practising witchcraft"— much to the astonishment of their husbands of course.

The **Thieves' Guild** (a.k.a. The Guild) is the largest guild in the city, and in itself it is a splintered wreckage of families and agreements, stand-offs and battles. The tattoos of the guild members are as numerous as blindingcrows on gables, and it seems that every street has its own thieves' guild.

As numbers lessen for these groups, so they become more furtive. A wererat population known as **The Family** is said to rule **Festival**, acres of piers filled with freakshows, corner-doxies and false smiles. Skin-wearing horrors from **Between**—a land between mirrors that touches the Blight in so many places the two sometimes seem one—walk the clubs and marbled corridors of the Capitol, whilst hated **briny**—skum-sired men and women—loiter furtively at the water's edge. The list grows and becomes uncountable, golem-stitchers who seek to create living gods, a guild of clockmakers try to make an iron chariot, an inventor called Gallileus is toiling to make a fire that thinks.

Stories, always more stories.

The Lay of the Land

The streets have never been counted, although maps of the Capitol and other areas come to light. Many based upon the works of noted dwarf cartographer and geographer Cord Gryme (1187–1501) who devoted his lifetime to mapping the various parts of the city. Some scurrilous individuals have actually suggested that such maps were part of an Illuminati driven plot to find a focal point to bring the Devil into the world, though such was never proven even after Master Gryme was "put to the question" for 8 days by certain unnamed parties. That Gryme did not survive the ordeal is but a footnote in the greater story of the Blight.

The city is bisected by the **Great River Lyme** (a.k.a. **Sister Lyme**) a tortuous, sickly black estuary that is dragged phlegmatically about by the tides. Everything flows into the Lyme; perhaps that is why it is so sick. Boats drag themselves through the waters and under treadmill ferries—suspended iron cages that criss-cross the city. Bodies float to the water's surface occasionally, and despite its filth the river is teeming with life—if life is the correct word for it. Pale things slip momentarily into view, discarded Made occasionally emerge from the deeps and pull themselves onto rusting piers in order to carry out programmed tasks, and other things appear as well but always at night—things wearing different forms and bodies walk the narrow alleys at night. Under the **Gyre** and **Midden**, things slide through inky waters.

Piers, sometimes the size of towns stab across the waters of the Lyme, **Festival**—the pleasure town—is the greatest of these; a towering hill of iron and timber and joy that hides a frown. **Town Bridge** crosses the Lyme near the **Artists' Quarter** and is a huge bridge of limpet buildings clustered onto buildings—towers spike the air and boats ply the numerous gaps caused by fires and Anarchists' bombs.

The docks run for miles, many little more than jagged timber teeth jutting from the waters, but the **Great Docks** of the Trading Companies Collective are different—sheer brick rising from the river, pierced by iron cranes and ladders and huge doorways giving access to the trade life of the city. Within rise two of the few stable exits into the cornucopian lands of Between; but a boat journey away yet teeming with resources waiting to be harvested.

Sweatshops and manufacturies belch caustic fumes that spread along with the stench of broken animals and creatures all across the city, but **Toiltown** and the **Jumble** is where they gather—a place of toil and misery

that answers to East Ending's Great BlackBell hanging in the WorkClock like a black iron sword plunged through the heart of the city. Beyond this, other smaller districts such as the **Sinks** and the **Hollow and Broken Hills** run, aristocratic places of refuge (or exile) and worship accordingly. Within the Hollow and Broken Hills lurks the city-state within a city-state known as **Sanctuary**, the holiest of holies in Castorhage.

Limping between streets so cramped that only a child could walk upright in them are other parishes and places, becoming lost in a maze of nameless paths and alleys until they begin to rise into the better quarters. **BookTown** and the **Seminary** taste clean air as they stare upwards at the Capitol and are serve as the city's seats of learning.

Finally comes the greatest monument of Castorhage: The **Capitol** is insane; it is a thousand spires and raised walkways, treadmill ferries, churches and domes in one mad place. It is the child of a thousand dreams and the product of endless lives of toil. Its face is pitted with a million windows and ten thousand gargoyles. And it is one building.

The **Royals** and the **Upper Class** call the Capitol home, many never leave the building to walk the streets beyond—they have no need to. Balconies, parks and terraces abound, doorways lead into spiral stairs that rise and fall a thousand feet, corridors echo on for hundreds of feet, pathways cling to the sides of cathedrals and lead to secret gardens. The Capitol is a city unto itself. It has its own rules and etiquettes, carved stone street names lie at every corner and traders ply their wares. From Royal Palace to Fairy Cathedral, from the dreaded Purgatory to the minute Borxia Summer Palace this place has thousands of facets all contained within a single building.

There are places spoken of in quiet corners by those who claim them to be real or are whispered as fairy stories to the young to keep them quiet. **Between**, a land behind mirrors, a place discovered by accident and whose accessibility by certain Illuminati-sponsored mages has, some say, opened up a dangerous way between places that should not be joined. The things of Between are often called the Dark Fey or Between People, but they are not people. They are the essence of all that has passed in their lives in that weird land where everything thinks and sees. Between creatures like **Jack of Iron**, the **Woodwose** and the **Stag King** are things of flesh and thorns and hate that exist beyond and who see the city dwellers as invaders. All acknowledge that serendipity has drawn Castorhage to her subject and that she should exploit her…and what harvests she brings to the city-state, a harvest that brings her greater wealth and power by the hour.

Yet one mortal place remains in the city to be described, **Underneath**. Underneath is everything below the city—and it is vast. They say a king who lived a hundred years had an army toiling in the dark and that these men and dwarves never saw day in their lives, working ceaselessly on tunnels, hidden routes, stores and subterranean canals. Beyond paranoia no one quite knows why this king had these tunnels built. Many have fallen into disrepair, some have become lairs for things that like dark places. Others however are still active: The **Grand Tunnel Canal** links Sister Lyme to the countryside some 6 miles away and exiting at **King's Lock** without ever emerging into daylight anywhere along its length; great sunken libraries pierce the depths, brink veins that spiral down hundreds of feet; walkways link the Capitol to streets used by spies and guilds and lodges. Occasionally huge holes open up in the ground, plunging whoever or whatever happens to be above them into the blackness beneath. These holes are unpredictable in size and location but all share some things in common: they are huge and cold and deep.

Just one more story in a place with a million tales…



Part One: Places, A Cyclopædia of Geography

being an overview of the places of the Great City of Castorhage

"Welcome friend. Take the air if you can and walk with me along the cobbled streets of the City of Secrets and Lies, the Deathless City, the City of a Thousand Names, the Blight. The stories I have to tell may alarm you, may frighten you, may entice you — but one thing I will say before we begin — to the local there is but one phrase to remember; 'trust only yourself,' for this is the city of deceit and it is built upon a lie …"



A Sum of Her Parts

From the highest spires of the Capitol to the lowest slums of the Lyme River and Toiltown, the Blight teems with life — of all sorts.

Districts form across boundaries of class, race and wealth, and each area is fiercely independent, with its own peculiar rules and rulers, characters and curiosities.

What follows is an overview of every district in the city, together with a list of three seasonal sites, which come and go depending upon the time of year.

The Capitol

"True happiness lies in the senses, and virtue gratifies none of them."

The Capitol is a towering edifice that is the soul (and many would say fist) of the city. It is a thousand buildings crushed into one, which rises above the city, threatening and belittling all beneath it.

It is a town in a single building.

It dwarfs the Jumble, towers over every warehouse, and imposes itself over the highest gables and steeples. The rest of the city cranes to see its towers, its domes, its cathedrals.

The Capitol is the life's work of hundreds of dreamers and architects, kings and politicians. Ten thousand have died constructing it, and seventeen centuries of labour lie between the footings and the spires.

Yet it is one thing, one abode, one structure.

They say it can rain in one part of the Capitol and be sunny on another, its valleys and summits attracting mist and cloud like a mountain chain. The highest summits rise over a thousand feet above the city streets below and it covers over a hundred acres, yet within the teetering, writhing floors that make up its whole — from the Soul to the Crown — it is beyond measure.

The home of **Queen Alice** and the Royal Family, it is the workplace of all three Crown Justices and the thirteen Justices who assist them — a motley group of thieves and scoundrels, things in human skins and murderers bound under the iron will of the Illuminati — the true rulers of Castorhage — at least in their own minds. Countless clerks and servants, butlers, blacksmiths, gardeners and caretakers run the Capitol, which has streets between buildings. Many people live out their whole lives without stepping from the Great Door at the foot of the Capitol, and have had their ashes scattered from the upper spires where the true power lies, hidden behind great oak doors in leather and panelled chambers. Here, dramas are acted daily — betrayal and reward, truth, deceit and lies.

Such are the staples of life in the Capitol.

The Artists' Quarter

The heart of the city, the Artists' Quarter is a hotbed of intrigue and anarchy, plots, blackmail and deceit. It is a swarm of noise and clamour, a potpourri of sin, exploitation and wickedness. It is also a place of hope. Spilling from the foot of the Jumble like an insane cat's cradle, the Artists' Quarter staggers down to the Great River through a shamble of tiny streets cowering beneath leaning, sagging buildings that were once the Banking Quarter before it upped sticks and moved into the Capitol in 962, a day known as *White Freyday* by those who moved into the abandoned buildings and became the new residents. An annual eleven-day party takes place on the anniversary of *White Freyday* to celebrate the "liberation" of this part of the city from the corrupt and (practically universally) hated bankers.

A curious trio of powerful groups lurk within the quarter. Firstly, the Fetch, whose vampire elders find the waking nightlife to their liking, and their slaves are profligate here. Opposing them are the Triads of the Xi'en and Gtsang immigrants, who flocked here for mutual protection. Finally, there are the rebels and anarchists, drawn by the revolutionary plays and anarchist puppeteers. It is the one place in the city where the word *revolution* is said out loud.

There are a thousand different types of performing and traditional art in the quarter, and everyone has something to say — usually loudly at first, and then quietly, and perhaps a little smugly after fame finds them. Presently, the most famous artist in the Quarter is Maximel D'Regiolette, the greatest painter of all time, whose images are so beautiful that they make people who see them weep. The artist is presently working on the ceiling of the Great Castorhage Cathedral in the Capitol. Maximel, a fallen angel, is involved in the Cult of the Self-Blinded Angel, which wallows in physical pleasure and pain.

This district is fractured, with artists gathering by disciplines, so that there are streets of puppet makers, courtyards of paint makers, and alleys of glassblowers. Politics and anarchy seethe here.

Theatre Town

The *Theatres' Sinister* is one of many notable districts within the Artists' Quarter. Famed for the outlandish and shocking, these theatres also run the gauntlet of the Knockers, occasionally performing risqué plays aimed at highlighting the sins of the Upper Class.

The *Raven Periodical* is the anarchists' mouthpiece. The *Raven* is found lying at the end of bars, pinned to the doors of privies, lying discreetly in the travel bag of gentlemen, and loitering on street corners nailed out for all to read. Although few can read, those who can feel obliged to reveal the details of the *Raven* in almost as much detail as they do the gentleman's rag *The Eye*. The *Raven* is not afraid to shock and detail the true goings on of the Capitol and, particularly, the City of Golems. Aris Macwell, the gnome editor, printer and writer of the *Raven*, operates from a dozen dens across a dozen districts. His employees, known affectionately as the "Liars" (after being branded as such by the Crown Justices many years ago) have friends everywhere, and an uncanny knack of turning a titbit of information into a newsworthy event.

The Barnacles and Great Dock

The Barnacles is a large island town built upon various levels of tunnels that in turn link to the outer buildings (variously known as "nests" or "limpets" to the guards and workers). The Barnacles itself is ruled as an independent district by a group of greedy insular merchants, and who collect taxes from visiting ships, fund the local watch, and arrange shady deals.

The Barnacles is a dizzying tidal-stack rising from the ocean. Clustered in and upon its surface, like limpets on a rock, are hundreds of buildings — variously thrown, tied, nailed and bolted to the precarious cliff faces, gripping for dear life above the jagged rocks below. As you watch, you glimpse tunnels weaving into the rock, streets winding dizzily above the water, and at the summit, a towering crow's nest made of iron. Barnacles is linked to land by a vast array of bridges, which link in turn to a wall of warehouses, buildings, cranes and treadmill ferries that serve the armada of ships docked here. These fingers grope backward to the city, handing through trade and goods in an endless, greedy dance.



The Great Dock

A madhouse of noise and colour and movement and life lurking beyond the Levee, a huge wall designed to keep thieves out. Here, lines of great warehouses consume and excrete the wares of the known world. More than a hundred chain ferries, rope bridges, causeways and bamboo bridges (often held together more by prayer than physics) link the independent state of the Barnacles to the city. So movement never stops, and by night, the stretch of water here is like a living fairyland of lights that becomes a city almost unto itself.

BookTown

"It has a unique smell, this place, of old books and ageing parchment, of ink and learning. This place of towers and strange bridges between buildings, this place where the streets are cramped with a curious mixture of all walks of life. The bewigged Urger rubs shoulders with the punkawallah, who in turn flees from the eyes of his cruel master the Overseer, who clutches a fistful of legal papers. A handcart full of heavy tomes is pushed by a reed-thin man wearing a turban, a donkey sags beneath its load of new wet parchment."

BookTown is a canyon of tall buildings and towers linked by innumerable bridges and gangplanks, rope bridges, and ladders to enable the legalese, professors, and studiers to get between their clients more easily. This is a place that is as much vertical as it is horizontal, and is a town of tall spires and huge echo-filled halls.

BookTown is the repository for tomes and grimoires, maps, arcana and worthy works. Bibliomerchants flock here to buy and sell; wizards peruse high shelves of arcane tomes; and hierophants puzzle over ancient holy writings. Above all, it is a repository for secrets.

As the place has gathered books, so space has run out, and the smell of old books and academia has spilled into the streets. As the booksellers have arrived, so too have those seeking knowledge and curiosities, and as such the place now has a huge reputation for the acquisition of antiquaria and the curious, the unusual, the magical, and the alchymic. It has a particular allure for the non-human, and those who wear false skins find that they can easily fit in among the strange locals who dwell here. These strangers take sweet, dark Ashurian cabb'e in the narrow balconies overlooking the plazas of the booksellers, and smoke from long pipes in the shade of the great towers. One may unknowingly meet naga, rakshasas and hags, as well as angels and devils in the dank, musty shops and libraria herein. It is a place where the game of knowledge is played for very high stakes, and where trouble and intrigue are only a page turn away.

The Seminary

Home to the greatest universities and academies, institutes, and arcanum, the Seminary clings to the foot of the Capitol as a child clings to its mother; it oozes into BookTown and the surrounding area, and devours it.

This is a place of learning, of cobbled streets that rise dizzyingly to the skirts of the Capitol, where crumbling ivy-clad institutes embrace grand marble universities and where the spirit of learning is palpable.

Behind the façade, the place has an ill reputation for experimentation — the first breach into the Between took place in this district at the Cooper Building, Seminary District Offices of Hetherington Quarrus Mabe on Torresday 11th Gray 1637. The first Alchymic Undead was raised here in 1545, and countless other less notable, but equally horrific, experiments have been made here. Some of the failures still walk the streets of the city.

The City of Golems (a.k.a. The Asylum Run By the Inmates, The Butchery, the Stitchery, the City of Flesh and Iron)

The most hated parish in the city lies in BookTown.

The City of Golems is where the *Cadaver-Surgeons, Homuncule Wives* and *Golem-Stitchers* ply their trade. Part mortuary and part surgery, this area of cottage universities and charnel houses, townhouses and watchtowers is a seat of learning second only to the Seminary. Here, alchemists and physikers are given free rein (and an endless supply of bodies — for those who can afford them, or a beacon to body-snatchers for those who can't) to work "miracles" upon.

In consequence, the Illuminati, the *true* controllers of the city, permanently have one eye upon this area, and the place crawls with their agents: Knockers, Justices, Streetclerks and the City Watch. The area has a hundred *arcane eyes* upon it at any given time, a countless army of familiars and a truly breath-taking number of imps, infernal thralls, homunculi and other spies — all keeping a watch upon developments — engaging in acts of betrayal, bribery or blackmail. It is the black heart of all things of the city, the soul of corruption.

The area itself is filled with ornate — some would say unsettling — buildings, many of which are fortified in case of imminent revolution. These buildings have ramparts and spires, and over-elaborate decoration; gargoyles dance on eaves, and angels sing on gables. The streets wind steeply uphill and, as they do, fortification grows until reaching the Castle Strőrd, home of the infamous Count Strőrd, one of the founding fathers of modern surgeons and alchemists. Rumour has it that Count Strőrd is not only an expert with death and undeath, but is actually a lich able to wear human skins.

Festival and the Great Fayre

Festival is basically a huge timber pier in the Lyme River, built around a squat grey hill. It is a metropolis of wererats, a place of lies, hiding lycanthropy that has become a plague here. This is a place ruled by the **Rat Queen** — a vast creature that dwells in a sunken palace made by the designer of the Royal Palace itself — the Queen is terrible, an abomination in form and deed.

Covering twelve score acres, Festival rises some two hundred feet through steep streets called the Skew, to the Great Fayre at the summit. The streets rise steeply between shambles of buildings built upon buildings,

The Rat Queen sits
Upon her throne
Down deep beneath the street

And there she slits
The young man's throat
And drinks his blood so sweet

They say she has
Eight sisters dear
And each is her and they

The sisters whereas
They do fear
The Queen who is as they

Their tails meet
Their food they share
But one thing they must know

The Queen they greet
Makes them to swear
Their lives to bear for Woe

So stay away
From eight and one
For one is great in size

And never play
Or seek your fun
Where her deep lair it lies

— East Ending Nursery Rhyme

each bolted to the last, giving the place a spastic look and a feeling of imminent collapse. Timbers groan and creek, bolts occasionally explode, and evidence of shoring up and repair is everywhere.

Whatever you define as pleasure is available here, from simple tumbling clowns to sinister dark places where nightmares are drawn out of madmen and given breath and lust.

The Family, wererat children of the Rat Queen, run the Great Fayre and the island it stands upon. The Family regard themselves as brothers and sisters, although even the closest families have their squabbles, particularly amongst the three ruling arms of the Family: the Frynn, the Grasts and the Scathels.

The Crimson Lantern

The town's prostitution district in itself covers nearly half of Festival. Here, the darker excesses of insectum are enjoyed, and those who find joy in inflicting pain often find comrade spirits in the cloying moist alleyways of the pier town.

The Great Lyme River (a.k.a. Sister Lyme)

The Great River Sister Lyme cuts through the heart of the city, keeping at bay the districts behind its docks and warehouses, piers, treadmill ferries and boats. Manmade islands dot its surface, the largest being the Gyre (q.v.) and Festival.

The spine of the city, Sister Lyme touches almost every other district and stains it, for many things find the river useful — not only smugglers and murderers, but also those with secrets and those who wish to hide. Many use the river as a friend: the wererats from Festival; the Briny, the hated half-skum who hold their mothers in dreadful thrall; and the Illuminati, who use the Lyme as an ally to cloak their deeds.

The river is infested with false islands, creations of rust and barnacles and rot that jut from the river like rotting teeth. These islands are reached by swaying bridges, badly made treadmill ferries and hope, which sways over the black waters. *The River Act of 1708* forced many of these structures to be at least fifty feet above the waters to allow shipping to pass, and many bridges and links have been destroyed, leaving remote islands that are ideal for piracy and other skulduggery.

Despite appearances, the foul waters are alive with strange life that feeds upon bilge and waste; huge, pale sough-eels and slop-sharks, wallow whales and bog lanterns watch those above hungrily. To fall into the acid maw of a wallow whale is a guarantee of death.

The Bilges

"The filth must go somewhere," said Crown Justice Moravan in 1392, in answer to the city's burgeoning sewage problem. So the Bilges was born.

The Honourable John Quintilius Moravan

Crown Justice Moravan (1325–1401) was a reformist famous for his failed attempts to abolish slavery and the provision of almshouses to the poor. In association to his order for creation of the Bilges, he was also known for breaking the back of the infamously corrupt Sewagers and Ironmongers Guild and replacing it with the city's Office of Sanitation.

A sprawling mass of boardwalks, barges and the screeching of black gulls, the Bilges is about the lowest place a person can find himself in the city. It is the city of stench. Affectionately titled StinkTown and the City of Perfume, it is the place where all unwanted rubbish of the city comes to die. Three huge islands have risen like black boils from the Lyme as a result. These three hills have names — the Midden, the Maw and Mount Misery — each a shanty of rising timber boardwalks, rope bridges and termite-feasted pilings. Then there are the black flies — the Midden-Angels — that rise in the spring and stay until late autumn. The flies are a torment on hot summer days, and workers wear full-face scarves (known as a *keff*) to keep them at bay. Some people claim the flies occasionally eat children and babies.

Rather like the nearby Sinks, the Bilges is constantly on the move, and whole chunks of the isles occasionally fall away, taking many unfortunate victims with them. Quicksand mires (known locally as bilge-bogs) open up for no apparent reason. Things live beneath the mires themselves. The Festering Brethren — a race of intelligent, humanoid cockroaches — lurk in the dark corners of the Bilges and nearby districts. The Brethren are hated and feared in equal measure, but are of use to the Lords of Rag and Bone who rule the Bilges. The creatures burrow into the refuse in the hopes of finding treasure, and assist in places where men refuse to go to carry out particularly unpleasant work.

The Canker

The Canker wreathes the river from autumn to spring, a thick, viscous, green-yellow smog caused by the river mist and choking coal fires of the city. The mist is thick, acrid and persistent — occasionally a Canker rises and stays for a month. The Canker also hides a deadly mist known as Jack's Candle (or the Lyme Lantern, the Ghost Light, or Gandaspati). A thousand fairy stories have been born of its many names. Some say that the mist is a living thing, or many living things, that walk the streets at night and punish men for coming here.



The Ghats

Along the whole river and often teeming with life — and death — particularly at dawn on holy days, are a series of steps that descend into the inky waters and which are used to immolate the dead and cast them into Sister Lyme. Many folk worship river gods and come here to pay their respects. The Ghats are the river cremation sites; they do a brisk trade. It is a common sight to see two sets of feet sticking from funeral pyres — one a legitimate burning, the second a cheap burning paid for by cash to prevent the corpses heading to the City of Golems.

The Gyre — The Town of Flotsam and Jetsam

The Gyre, the spiritual home of the briny, is a well-known landmark that lies in the Great Lyme River. It is a town built upon flotsam, which has formed into a slow whirlpool in the river and which rotates with the slowness of the hour hand upon a clock. That it floats at all is remarkable; that it is a thriving settlement with buildings, boardwalk streets and piers is unbelievable. From the shore, figures can be seen moving gingerly along the boardwalks, as smoke drifts from chimneys, and hundreds of colourful boats bob in the foul waters.

Hobbington's Lamp

The great sea lantern lies at the farthest point of the Lyme. The huge sea lantern is powered by a broken† elder fire elemental, and shines out like a ghastly green gash across the night sky.

The Windmills

As the river broadens, so the windmills grow. Once there were many vast windmills, which rose across the bay, but fire, neglect, and skulduggery has seen almost all fall back into the river. Many of the remaining windmills are lashed to the rocky islets or manmade islands that jut up like broken teeth from the bay. These islands are very useful for anyone with a need to be hidden.

The Hollow and Broken Hills

Here, the land splinters and falls into the sea in a thousand spires and hollow hills. Miracles happen here: statues weep, and wells remove malady. This archipelago of tidal stacks, cliffs and islets, as well as being home to countless people, is home to churches. Temples and places of worship rise here, as well as the (now full) Great Blight Cemetery — itself now a huge area of decaying tangled briars and undergrowth, ruins and mausoleums. Many come to Hollow Hills to take the air and listen to the birdsong of the tree-lined avenues and parks in this district. Limestone outcrops abound, and these have been variously turned into grottoes, temples, follies or occasionally more sinister places best avoided. Bridges — both natural and manmade — criss-cross this area of fractured land.

Sanctuary

The most holy city-state within a city state, Sanctuary is the home of the master of the church in Castorhage. The present ruler, **His Holiness the Father of Castorhage**, balances a precarious thread between enemies, allies, and those who wish to succeed him. The ruthless Borxia family number one of his Holiness's most troubling neighbours; this terrible family has designs upon the throne and crown of Castorhage itself.

The Eye

One day there was a church called Saint Cartwell's, which stood proudly near the West Lychgate of the Great Cemetery; the next it was gone, replaced by a vast hole. Locals claim the hole appeared at midnight and that the devil rode out of it on a goat with a man's face. The Eye is deep and cold and menacing. Birds occasionally swoop into its gloom and do not return, and ropes have been lowered down into it and the men on them have not come out again. And recently, similar holes have sprung up across the region. Gas and disappearing explorers have hampered exploration of the Eye and the other holes.

Powerful clerics, bishops, archbishops, and holy fathers rule this area of the city. Behind the smiles and religious paraphernalia seethes a hotbed of intrigue, duplicity, lust, and greed for power as church battles church for supremacy.

Scrying in the Blight

Paranoia grips the Blight — and for good reason. The city is alive with scrying devices, familiars, arcane eyes, imps and countless spies. The hardest thing to keep here are secrets. Visitors may find the paranoid nature of locals hard to fathom at first, but after a few days, the plethora of spies begins to become obvious. Imps lurk in corners, homunculi watch from behind hidden grills, and the feeling of scrying is almost overpowering.

Every day there is a 5% chance* that visitors may be scryed, either deliberately or accidentally. Creatures notice the sensor by succeeding on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception). In almost all cases, this scrying is a mere coincidence, a chance view of some wizard of divination out looking for information not connected to the visitors. Such a huge amount of scrying, however, can make one complacent...

Locals often refuse to divulge information, and this is particularly true in the case of information perceived to be dangerous. As a result, Persuasion checks to gather what the GM feels is sensitive information are made at disadvantage in the Blight.

*Roll a d20. If the result is a 1, scrying is possible.

The Jumble (a.k.a. the Cat's Cradle, the Madness, the Maze, the City of Thieves)

He was on a narrow balcony barely two feet wide, which led off ahead and rounded a corner over a dizzying drop. Below lay a town. Yet no ordinary town, this town rose in every direction — up over steeples and roofs of thatch and stone and slate, beyond narrow towers and round balconies that hung impossibly over the grey city beneath. Timbers of huge size bolted with iron bars as thick as a horse were its skeleton, its flesh the flotsam and jetsam of the city. It leapt rivers, strangled canals and turned in streets so narrow two children could barely pass.

"This ..." said Themris with a smile, "is the Jumble."

The Jumble is a vast, confusing maze of streets that rise upward and outward — some would say in mockery of the Capitol itself.

It is easy to get lost in the Cradle — streets sink below ground and rise again to rooftop streets, taking a dozen ladders before continuing along a gable that ends at a bare wall, beyond which may lie the garret of a naga artist, a madman or cringing orphans.

The majority live here in cramped confusion to escape something — taxes and enemies, wives, lovers and Knockers. It houses a vast population of ne'er-do-wells and villains, as well as many common folk simply trying to make their lives a little richer. It is, in many ways, the safest place to be a villain; the nickname City of Thieves has long been associated with the Jumble, a place where it is very easy to get lost and come to harm.

Like the Capitol, the Jumble has its own streets, markets and laws. A local vigilante force patrols the streets at night, but foul things still make a home and hide here.

The Bazaar

Allegedly the greatest market in the world, the Bazaar sits beside and within the Jumble, oozing along its streets like a sickness. It is a thousand streets filled with countless shops, stalls, markets and traders.

The Sinks

Castorhage — built partly upon clay and silt deposits — is literally dancing upon its own grave: The more weight that comes to bear, the faster the sinking takes place. This is nowhere more apparent than in the Sinks — literally a drowning town.

Branner the Brat

King Branner I of Castorhage (891–899) ascended the throne at the age of seven and was often sickly. He was commonly known as Branner the Child for his tender age, but was sometimes cruelly referred to by East Enders as Branner the Spoilt Brat. His reign was largely influenced by his regent and stepmother Loris (a.k.a. Loris the Mad Bitch by East Enders), and died under suspicious circumstances at the age of nine.

In 897, Branner, the then king of Castorhage, ordered the creation of a new town for artisans. This would be a place of grand canals and gilt buildings, of towers and cathedrals and art. Branner, always a strong-willed child, decided that it would be wise to use an area of the city known as the Grey Lake, famous for its shallow waters, as the basis for the town.

From the start, the project was doomed. A mysterious number of accidents occurred, workers disappeared, and wages had to treble overnight to keep the work going. Piers vanished in moments, taking those working on them into the waters, never to be seen below. A curious fog — *Jack's Candle* — seeped up at night and killed with its poisonous kiss. It remains the main reason for the multitude and high cost of canaries across the city, the birds dying as soon as they get a whiff of the marsh gas itself to give their owners precious moments to take precautions. Numerous attempts were made to abandon the project. By this time, however, Branner was sick, and his stepmother Loris insisted that work continue. Even after her child's death, the long-lived (and despised) stepmother insisted that the work be concluded — as a fitting tribute to her dear departed stepson.

Even at its finest, it was obvious that Branner's Folly (as it had become known) was sinking — towers leant, walls ruptured, cathedrals sagged. Yet after a few decades, the sinking suddenly halted, and the town was left as it is today — a twisted wreckage of leaning walls and towers, exhausted battlements and dislocated arched bridges over canals that range between a few feet to bottomless. Visitors find the Sinks curiously unsettling, and are often prone to dizziness. Even the prahu-punters, most famous for the songs they sing as they take their fares from one street to the next, claim that only certain alchemical variations of snuff keep the dizziness at bay as they punt fares between the steep, dying canyons of the city walls — walls that threaten always to collapse.

Now the Sinks is the home to the disowned nobility: bastards, criminals, madmen, those who sicken, those who have wronged, and inbred horrors. These nobles like to think of the Sinks as an elite domain, a decadent aristocracy willing to take life to further extremes than those in the Capitol. In truth they are exiles; their crimes beyond even those considered normal in the Capitol itself.

Vampires infest some of these families, although they are always careful to conceal their gifts. For the rest, they are a disturbing mixture of hopes and fears, abominations and murderers. These nobles pay well, and have infested the Sinks with hangers-on, traders, priests and others mad enough — or greedy enough — to live in the shadows of their masters and mistresses.

Stories persist that sea-devils (or sahaugin) have been seen brazenly walking the streets here by night, and that the worship of their hellish gods goes on behind the gilt doors of this dislocated district.

The Asylum (a.k.a. the Hatch, the Sanatorium, Heaven)

Occupying more than eleven acres, the Asylum is where the city hides its less-fortunate populace, and occasionally someone conveniently goes missing here.

The Asylum is a walled area of the city occupying several streets and a market square (Bedlam Square), the buildings and walls are secured so that inmates cannot escape; once cast into the Asylum, one never leaves.

The Asylum is a city in itself: It has its own laws and rules, property and even currency. An inmate called the Judge rules the Asylum inside, whilst the Sanatorium Overseers ensure that no one escapes.

A single huge doorway is the only entry point into the Asylum. The door has the phrase "*Welcome to Heaven*" carved above it.



Toiltown (a.k.a. The East, East Ending, The State of Sweat)

Everyone hates vast Toiltown, even the overseers and manufactory managers who dole out their cruel forms of justice within. It is a place of endless manufactories and sweatshops, workhouses and underground mills.

One is regarded as a true East Ender only if born within earshot of the Great Black Bell of East Ending. The lowest castes of the city make their homes here, and a vast number of slums have developed over the years. Visitors find a dizzying array of endless unnamed streets awash with dirty children, sullen goodwives and aggressive men on their way to gin houses for an evening's relaxation. An East Ender, however, is a friend for life if you can overcome his reticence.

Washing up on the shores of the Artists' Quarter and Bazaar, the East Ending is a rough place to wander in, but a good place to find information. A coin can buy many services — murder, in some streets — and in a town where the Watch keep their distance, many people find Toiltown a good place to hide. With so many people crammed into the disgusting, filthy place, trouble is never very far away, and many predators find the close proximity and cheap life very useful.

The East Ending has an unenviable reputation and history of murder. Whether this is caused by the harshness of life here, or whether East Enders make easy prey for such killers is open to conjecture, but barely a night passes without a death, or two, or ten …

An appalling trade in slavery — and worse — lurks just beneath the surface. Many a decent East Ending man looks on in anger at events in his patch, and these men are often stirred into action. This anger is a useful tool to those brave and cunning enough to capitalise upon it.

Beyond, the city does not so much stop as stagger out into the grey and green fenlands around — fens that are dangerous places — filled with bogs and pools. Yet at the same time, a building site is rising here on top of the old places, slowly taming the land with dikes and fill to allow the city to burst its edges. The Wash, another aspect of Toiltown, is one sinking arm of the city that has lapsed into insularity that thrives in the mires of the city.

As the city swells, so to do the original inhabitants of the Fens seethe and grow angry. Many farmers and poachers ply their trade within the trackless Fens, but other things have grown to resent the city folk's arrival — dark things without names and souls, evil things that slip from the Fens and into the city streets at night.

Boattown

Strapped from the East Ending near the Great Docks lurks a fixed group of riverboats, planks and piers known collectively as Boattown. This is a place where swarthy halfling families hold sway, where fishermen rub shoulders openly with briny, and where murder costs a few coins. Boattowns are common across the Blight, but this one is the biggest — and nastiest — in the city-state.

Lych Fens

Creeping ever outward, the city slowly gorges itself upon the drab bog-ridden countryside beyond with localised areas with pleasant names such as Dead Maiden Sink, Sheep's Coe, and Withered Foot. Those within this place resent the invasion and have been fighting back.

WorkClock

A huge clock that tolls the hours rests in the heart of Toiltown. Her bells are said to be rung by the Devil, and at her heart hangs the legendary Great Black Bell.

Town Bridge

The "Bridge with a Town on top," Town Bridge is a teeming mass of trade and humanity crammed between the Great East Bridge Gate and the Royal West Bridge Gate — a distance of half a mile. Town Bridge has taken advantage of its curious taxation laws that do not recognise the bridge as part of the city. Therefore, lodgings and traders that live on it are exempt from taxes (although a tax is charged to enter the bridge from the east gate). It is thus the home to the most scurrilous, greedy and unpleasant group of rogue landlords ever assembled. A dozen families may share a room; three generations of the same family may find themselves lodging in a shack lashed to the side of a balcony of one of the Great Town Bridge Towers; or a cupboard even may be let as a flat. As a result, the whole town has grown out over the river and sits like a fat timber whale in the Lyme.

Town Bridge has its own language (Bridge-Slang), its own ruler (**Crown Prince Justice Cornlord**, one of the most prominent of the thirteen Justices in the city), and encompasses one of the most difficult and time-consuming journeys in the city to cross (it is often said it is easier to climb than walk across Town Bridge). Many folk set out from the West Gate armed with rations to ensure a safe crossing.



Scrimshaw

Town Bridge is more than a bridge linking two parts of land; it also connects the Blight to a place in Between called Scrimshaw, a whaling island port in the Unsea, a churning ocean filled with "whales" that provides an astonishing profit to whichever gang happens to be running the operation at the time.

The Great Fire of Town Bridge

One of the most terrible of calamities in recent centuries, the Great Fire took place in 1509, and charred stumps and the smell of ash still remain in some parts of the new bridge. Some scholars have speculated that the calamity, and rumours of the discovery of ragefire — a living, hungering flame — are curiously similar in date, and appoint the Great Fire as the first encounter between men and ragefire itself.

Underneath

The Great Dark beneath the city is vast. It is an endless length of tunnels and canals, natural cysts, and shafts that fall for miles. It is a hollow cocoon above the void, a place liable to collapse at any moment and open up some dark fissure into the light. Most famous amongst these fissures is the Eye, found in the Hollow and Broken Hills district.

The Underneath, they say, touches every part of the city, and every home lies just a god's whim away from being devoured by the dark. There are countless tales of whole streets vanishing, and of caves opening suddenly beneath nurseries to allow faceless monsters to take babies.

Underneath is everything below the city — and it is vast and deep. They say a king who lived a hundred years had an army toiling in the dark, and these men and dwarves never saw daylight in their lives. Countless escape-tunnels, stores, submerged canals, and shafts are the result.

And far, far below, a rumour persists of a creature called the **Body Snatcher**, the thing that once owned the city and whose hive aspects wants it back.

The Mine

The Mine is cool and endless and dark, a working mine that moves and grows daily. Vast sections of the mine have been abandoned, others flooded, still others fled and occupied with horror. Shafts fall miles into the bowels of the earth, and cages descend into cysts in the world. Waterfalls plummet a thousand, thousand yards.

What work takes place in the Mine is secret now, and why the Illuminati sponsor the ongoing ripping of the earth here is a mystery.



Seasonal Districts

Three distinct areas of the city rise during particular seasons. These districts occasionally miss a year if the weather is too bad or too good, but they always reappear eventually.

The Black Ice Fayre

In winter, Sister Lyme always freezes over, particularly around the feet of the piers and harbours. Locals use the ice to their advantage, taking to it on crude whalebone skates, or improvising makeshift sleds. Hot on their heels come the traders and businessmen anxious to make a profit from this levity, and soon a full-size town appears on the ice.

Carnival

In early summer, the farmers and rural folk come from the fens around the city to sell their produce at the Carnival. The Carnival is a month of feasting and drinking that takes over the whole lower caste portions of the city-state. While not a district per se, the Carnival alters the layout of many districts within the city and creates new markets, floating towns, and shanties.

The Mudflats

During dry summers, the city becomes unbearable, and the stench is enough to knock visitors off their feet. As the Lyme grows sluggish, it congeals into a black tar-like mud that has a crust upon which the locals venture out upon to get away from the dustbowl of the city itself. Like the Black Ice Fayre, this movement grows, and soon people are building makeshift lodgings and taverns upon the crust — which they hope will not break and deposit them into the filth beneath.

Whispers of Darker Places

Two final places remain, but these are not within the city, they are more shadows that fall across it at certain times. They are not places that can be described or catalogued easily, but they are within touching distance of the city-state.

Between

The land beyond mirrors, a place of terrible rumours and dread. The secret of the fixed accesses to Between is a fiercely guarded secret of the Illuminati, who control most of the doors in the city. However, their frequent violations of the land of twisted shadows has led to a dramatic increase in doors opening between the two worlds, as strange dark things drag themselves screaming from ordinary looking-glasses, and many mirrors have been smashed as a result. To break a mirror, they say, gives seven years *good* luck.

Things are occasionally caught or seen — these things are difficult to look upon, and are composed of all the things they have touched, the thoughts they have made, and the company they have kept in their strange lands. Some call these folk the Dread Fey, Twisted Fey or Others.

Between is given further detail in **Part 5**r.

The Furnace

A dark part of Hell that has been birthed by the Blight and the association with its true ruler **Demoriel the Twice-Exiled Seductress**, this is a land of choking fires, volcanoes and torment on an unimagined scale. Clouds of bats scour the Furnace for escapees, and twisted devil overseers break the workforce throughout eternity.

Too many landscapes of the Furnace can now be viewed in the art collections of the insane for it to be the work of one man's imagination.

The Furnace, they say, is the new kingdom of the Illuminati, and it is growing.

Media Inspiration for The Blight

A list of films, books and songs that have the distinct feel of the Blight. Those marked in **bold** are particular references used in its creation.

Books

- Neal Asher — *Spatterjay* novels
- Clark Ashton Smith — most things
- Clive Barker – anything, but especially *The Hellbound Heart* and *Weaveworld*
- **Lewis Carroll – *Alice's* adventures**
- Susanna Clarke — *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle — Sherlock Holmes, pretty much anything, but especially *Charles Augustus Milverton* and *The Crooked Man*
- John Connolly — *The Book of Lost Things*
- Mike Dash — *Batavia's Graveyard*
- **Charles Dickens — most things**
- Antonia Fraser — *Marie Antoinette: The Journey*
- **Neil Gaiman — *Neverwhere***
- Mary Gentle — *1610: A Sundial in a Grave*
- *W.W. Jacobs — The Monkey's Paw*
- Tim Jeal — *Explorers of the Nile*
- H.P. Lovecraft — anything, but especially *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*
- Scott Lynch — *The Lies of Locke Lamora*
- **China Miéville — *Perdido Street Station, The Scar, Iron Council, Un Lun Dun***
- Giles Milton — *Nathaniel's Nutmeg*
- George Orwell — *1984*
- Mervyn Peake — *Gormenghast* Trilogy
- Anne Rice — particularly the Vampire novels
- **Mary Shelley — *Frankenstein***
- Neal Stephenson — *The Baroque Cycle*
- Jenny Uglow — *The Lunar Men*
- **Jeff VanderMeer — everything, but especially the *City of Saints and Madmen***
- Tad Williams — *The War of the Flowers*
- John Wyndham — *The Day of the Triffids*

Films

- *Alice* — Jan Švankmajer
- *Alien*
- *The Blair Witch Project*
- ***The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari***
- *The Company of Wolves*
- *Cloverfield*
- *Cronos*
- ***The Elephant Man***
- *Frankenstein* (original)
- ***Freaks***
- *From Hell*
- *Golem*
- Hammer Horror Films (especially the *Frankensteins* and *Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter*)
- *The Haunting*
- *Highlander* (just the first one)
- *The Hills Have Eyes*
- *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*
- *The Maltese Falcon*
- *Night of the Demon*
- *Nosferatu* (either version)
- *Pan's Labyrinth*
- *Quatermass and the Pit*
- Quay Brothers — especially *Street of Crocodiles*
- *Saw*
- *Sleepy Hollow*
- *The Wicker Man* (original)
- *Twelve Monkeys*

TV

- ***Carnivale***
- *Children of the Stones*
- *Penny Dreadful*
- *The Quatermass Conclusion*
- *The Stone Tape*
- ***The Twilight Zone***
- *Utopia*

Podcasts

- The Dark Verse
- Pseudopod

Blight Mood Music

Sometimes, it's fun to work whilst listening to particular mood music. Here's a list of the music I listened to most working on Castorhage. See if you can lay your hands on some of them and play them as mood music:

- Black Sabbath — *Black Sabbath*
- Christopher Gordon — *The Galapagos*
- Clawfinger — *Out to Get Me*
- Edward Elgar and Gustav Holst — *The Planets: Mars, Bringer of War*
- Marilyn Manson — *The Beautiful People*
- Ozzy Osbourne — *No More Tears*
- Krzysztof Penderecki — *Polymorphia*
- Prokofiev — *Dance of the Capulets*
- Rage Against the Machine — *Born of a Broken Man*
- Sex Pistols — *Holidays in the Sun*
- Slipknot — *Duality*
- Therapy? — *Crooked Timber*, *Living in the Shadow of a Terrible Thing*



Part Two: Peoples, A Cyclopædia of Character

being a Who's Who of the Lowfolk, Importan Personages, Gods, and Things of the Great City-State of Castorhage

"Here, my friend, the gods walk the streets …"



Meet the Locals …

The Blight is a sprawling mass of people and things. The place is overcrowded, violent, and filthy, and this festering mass of life (and unlife) is a breeding ground for deceit, violence, selfishness, and, of course, adventure.



How the City-State of Castorhage Works

The City-State of Castorhage, and by extension the entire Empire of Castorhage, is a hereditary monarchy with an absolute primogeniture order of succession, with the current monarch's eldest child taking over rulership, regardless of gender, after the deaths of both king and queen. However, as the Blight operates functionally as an *absolute* monarchy (despite what the law books and Courts may say), the ruling monarch can decree otherwise. That happened recently in the Blight with **Queen Alice** announcing her youngest child **Princess Alicia** as her heir. Unfortunately, the queen has lapsed into madness, and now craves human flesh, a need only quelled for her short public appearances by powerful magic and insectum.

Some say her madness came when she bore Alicia, a birthing that is never spoken of. A few whisper that Alice lost her wits at that very moment, and that the unnaturally aware Alicia and she are somehow one and the same. It is a silly story whispered by prattling goodwives and courtiers in the Capitol and given no heed by those with wit, except when they awaken troubled in the darkest hours of the night. The queen's other eight daughters thus squabble, plot, and contrive to ensure that when their mother dies, they gain power — by hook or by crook. Each daughter has her own alliances and friends and is paranoid about her own safety. They are united in one thing: their horror about what the city would be like with the spoiled and frightful Alicia as its ruler.

The Illuminati — who in truth run the city — are aware of this instability, and take careful steps to ensure that true power rests elsewhere, thus ensuring that however unreasonable or insane any past or future monarch is, the city grows — as does their hope of expanding the empire to rule the world. Ostensibly, the Illuminati control the three Crown Justices that run the "mundane" aspects of the city: its trade, its armies, and its colonies, leaving the Royal Family to drink and copulate in their own tight, inbred circles.

True power in fact rests with a single secret sponsor who runs the city as she thinks it should be. The real supremacy finally rests with the rarely seen **Demoriel, the Twice-Exiled Seductress** who sits like a spider at the centre of a vast web of intrigue. She guides the city, its plots, ways, and means with a view to creating an eternal mortal empire. Demoriel is a cunning and patient ruler, and does not seek a covert infernal empire, but rather one that is fatally poisoned within and can expand through the secretion of that venom. Outwardly, the godly state of Castorhage has its holy temples, its paladins, and its religious orders, but just below its surface lurks a dark soul. Demoriel controls little, but steers like a ship's captain, setting Castorhage upon its path to glory and infamy.

Castorhage's links to Between have made the city a tempting morsel for the archdevil, and she passes her subtle instructions through powerful intermediaries, particularly the Illuminati, the Fetch, and the Great Coven, within which she has an aspect. In the Illuminati she controls the loyalty of two Crown Justices: She makes frequent appearances in the nightmares of His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken**, guiding his path through visions she sows into his dreams; and she plays the vision of a goddess to Her Resplendent **Grand Justice Ashleia,** the Mistress of Life's Wondrous Varied Forms. She gently guides the sphinx who wears human skins. She is also one of **Beltane's** concubines and often masks herself as **Elaine of Aldwark** to whisper secrets into the ears of the Royal Princesses.

So subtle has the arch-devil been that, despite her centuries of interference, no one has deduced her existence and survived. A few outstanding geniuses and paranoid madwomen have uncovered her and tried to destroy her, but they have all failed and suffer the consequences to this day …



Below these heights of power, a series of families vie for influence. These tight clans are so paranoid about befouling their blood that they have inbred to a dangerous point. To cover this, they have taken on new, exotic names to reflect their almost entirely invented history. Below these families are individuals who have risen or are rising through the ranks, often carefully chosen by the Illuminati to keep the status quo. Below this — although allegedly on level footing with the Royals — is the Church of Mother Grace**,** represented by **His Holiness, Umbertine IX, Father of Castorhage** (N male human **high priest** of Mother Grace), who is chosen for life by a secret council, within which fester the groping fingers of the Illuminati.

Somewhere far, far below, are the few decent or greedy folk who wish things to be a little better. These are divided into two broad camps: the rebels or revolutionaries, who wish to topple the government and replace it; and the anarchists, who just want to topple it. Even within this disparate group, the Illuminati gropes, and members of the Thieves Guild (*The* Guild as it is generally acknowledged to be) pay homage to their masters.

Those Below Demoriel

We briefly meet some of the inhabitants of the Blight here, and learn of their motives, ambitions, and desires. We will meet them all again, in time, and get to know them a little better …

"Gods" of Castorhage

The "Gods" of Castorhage actually live in the city. They are not generally true gods or divine per se, but rather living legends. Despite the arguments of the scholars of the Seminary and BookTown, people refer to them as gods. They are creatures of myth and great power who wield incredible authority, influence and fear over the Blight.

True gods are also of course worshipped, and no matter how obscure the deity, or how tiny his group of worshippers, some temple, church, or alley-shrine will be found on the streets of the Blight, in particular in the alleys of the Hollow and Broken Hills. The Blight also has its own saints and sinners, devils and angels who are discussed briefly at the end of this section.

The list below is by no means intended to be complete, and occasionally new gods rise or old gods fall, followers are called to arms, or things are born (or made) that become deific in the eyes of local people.

Anger-Consumed-By-Desire

Rumours abound of an insane satyr in the city, a dark fey that is at once a haughty dandy, an innocent maid, or a violent psychopath. The locals have given this creature a name.

The satyr eats love and lust and beauty, finding ample feasts each night to sate its hunger. After it gorges its appetite, it leaves behind age and weakness and ugliness. Its leavings are worms, foul black things that crawl and fester in the dark and who, too, are drawn by love and lust and spirit to gorge.

Beltane, God-Emperor of the Fetch

The Fetch (see below) are the undead populace of the Blight — a vast and mobile gypsy people who hide by day and walk by night.

Many of the Fetch lead what appear to be quite normal lives — sometimes behind heavily tinted spectacles claiming allergy to the sun or birds, or disliking crowds or simply being eccentric and only being seen by night. Others simply claim to love the night and have little time for the noise and clamour of the day. The Fetch call these members of their race the Deceivers, and afford them great respect, they are the shepherds of their kind, finding safe places to hide, deceiving the people of the city and leading them away from the Great Hives where the Fetch sleep.

Generally, only intelligent undead are truly considered part of the Fetch — ghasts and wraiths and others with active minds. Ghouls, however, are its chattel, its slaves and workers, expendables, and Lowest of the Low. It is the vampires that are the nobility of this race, and Beltane their king. The great vampire-king sits at the centre of an impossibly complex network of informants, underbosses, and enforcers. His spies are everywhere, linked by covert mental means to ensure secrecy. They are expected to "Fall into the Sun" if discovered (walking into sunlight to die), and swear total fealty to the Fetch. Beltane's punishments for transgressions and failures are legendary, and he is called the King of Thorns, Master of Impaling by his subjects. Beltane is known to impale real and imagined foes, and leave these vampires as permanent spectacles to his wrath.

His many brides are his most precious and loyal subjects, queens in their own right who work his most complex plots in person and who have the most contact with the people of the city. Beltane regards his brides as mock princesses; his own royal family and images of the true royal princesses. Unknown to Beltane, one of his brides is **Demoriel, the Twice-Exiled Seductress**, who uses her position as concubine to whisper sweet words into the ancient vampire's ear and guide him subtly on the path she would steer for the city.

The Fetch are fiercely mindful of their caste in unlife, and are governed by strict rules which forbid the creation of other unlife without the approval of the Fetch as a whole. Occasionally, they conduct covert wars against men to swell their kind, but generally they wish to remain secret, continuing in the dark with their curious unlives and goals.

The Brides of Beltane

Beltane only considers the most beautiful women as potential brides, and even then, only if they have some other gift or purpose. Selene, his first queen, was regarded as the most beautiful woman to live when she reigned a thousand years ago. The tale of Beltane and Selene is an epic of misery, separation and, ultimately, betrayal. It is said that Beltane chose her death over that of the entire Fetch.

The present queens silently do their master's bidding, and are used in the most delicate, profitable, and dangerous tasks, ensuring the shadow of Beltane is present at such momentous moments.

Crooked Promethean, The

Golems, homunculi, and other constructs are common in the Blight. The numerous Cadaver-Surgeons, Homoncule Wives, and Golem-Stitchers that come here to learn and trade ensure a steady supply of such slaves. However, there are those amongst the constructs who have spent too much time in the company of men and learnt, and begun to think. These constructs have formed a secret grouping: a hidden cant called Cobble, and a covert society called the Inkling. They pass messages, and whisper and plot in the name of the Crooked Promethean.

The Crooked Promethean is an abhorrence, an impossibly vile-looking creature made a century ago. It hides in the shadows at night, sleeps under the piers, and cowers from the sun. Given life by its master, the Crooked Promethean is endowed with a most-active brain; it is an artist, a philosopher, and a poet — and it is all too aware of the effect its appearance has on the people of the city. It has suffered a long lifetime of abuse and terror, hunts and screams from the uneducated locals, been chased from a thousand hiding places, and been called every foul name under the sun. It knows that the physikers wish to capture and dissect it, keep it in the dark for all time to study and question.

It knows all these things and forgives — forgives its tormentors for their crimes. Yet in its forgiveness, it is often brutal: It dissects its own enemies whilst quoting poetry; it sings whilst its enemy's minds are stripped apart; and it cries whilst it breaks them. The Promethean wishes to make men see that what they are doing is wrong, and wishes them to stop. Those that do not stop, it stops. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

And at night it dreams, and its dreams are shared by others of its kind …

Devil, The

Known as the Evil One, Old Scratch, Tom Hobb, and a hundred names, the Devil has minions across the city-state, and his influence is growing.



This self-styled Lucifer has many disguises, many lovers, and many subjects. He also has many enemies, not the least of which is the arch-devil Lucifer, though he apparently lacks the time or wherewithal to deal with such a presumptuous upstart (or secretly enjoys the corruption it fosters). Regardless of his many adversaries, his honeyed tongue ensures that his will is done, and his unknown plans for the Blight and Between move ever on …

Green Man, Aspect of the

There is an ancient creature that dwells in the heart of the deepest, darkest Between forest. This thing has led a thousand, thousand lifetimes. It has seen betrayal and murder, corruption, and misery. The Green Man is a thing of thorns and briars and preternature, a being opposed to all normal laws of the known world, a thing whose very existence affronts Nature herself. It is assumed by all that the aspect is part of the true living god brought into the city by his pagan worshippers through human sacrifice.

Drawn initially by the Great Coven to father a child, the Aspect of the Green Man visits the streets of the Blight more frequently these days, the Aspect sometimes walks the streets as a tall, dark stranger in a top hat, sometimes as a breeze stirring up the rubbish, sometimes as a fire erupting in the timbers of a workhouse. He is only rarely seen in his true form of thorny madness.

It is a strange being without understandable motives or goals — it may vanish for a thousand nights to emerge slovenly for a single day and ends it dancing upon the rooftops slaying the scrimshaw gargoyles there. It may then vanish again, only to appear hiding in the body of a puppeteer or priest, a skin it discards like a toy once it has no further use for it. In short, the Aspect of the Green Man may appear anywhere and at any time

It has grown lonely of late and calls others of its kind into the world; these devil-spawn, twisted fey plague the streets of the city until caught or killed. Some reside in the freak-collections of the wealthy or have learnt to hide from men. Many victims found torn and ravaged by briars are the work of his **thornies** summoned forth to plague the city while goodly folk wonder at the true purpose of his visitations.

Harvester of Cribs, The

The Harvester is nothing so terrible to look upon. It is about the size of a goblin or kobold, and wears a vaguely ludicrous clown's outfits. It carries a short wand, which it talks to and which talks back. But on the wand end is the head of a baby — a living, talking baby with a twisted grin and evil mind.

The Harvester collects children. It takes some away to a special place in Between in a nightmare land of fairy tales and monsters. The others it eats, for it gets so hungry these days ...

Leper King, The

"He has no face, the Leper King; his body is broken and his mind has been shredded. He walks here and there in the city, but you will never see him — unless he wishes you to, and that, my friend, will be the last thing you see as his kiss takes your flesh for his own. He will pluck out your eyes and wear them in his own empty rotting sockets; he will take your beauty and wear it like a mask before soon, very soon, it will be rotten again. He will take your memories and claim them as his own, perhaps try to love those you have loved and be a father to your children.

"And you will be left as he; a thing without flesh, without succour, without hope, yet very, very much alive …"

Pagan Lord of Lice, The

The Pagan Lord is king of all vermin. He wears a coat of lice that dance upon his flesh in joy, waiting to be freed upon the sick, the poor, the helpless, the old and the young. He walks the streets at night with his insect young at his side. He crouches in the shadows, with only the strange whispers of the movement of his young to soothe him. He takes the flesh from bones and leaves the husk as his calling card.

Some claim to have seen the Pagan Lord of Lice riding a dead horse, others say that he consorts with the great spiders of the city rooftops, and more claim that he carries a great scythe and is the son of Death. But each night he is seen somewhere within the city, taking his harvest and spreading his misery. His progeny are everywhere, clinging to the flesh of babies, sucking the blood of pigs, and cavorting on the emaciated forms of the dying.

Puppeteer, The

Not all the children of the city are real. Some are the progeny of the Puppeteer. His offspring try to lead others astray to populate his games and shows and become puppets themselves. The Puppeteer wanders the streets with a broad smile upon his face; he plays street-corners and under bridges, in fairgrounds, and at the market. Those who attend his show often find that they themselves become a permanent part of it.

Madness-of-the-MirrorStorm, The

A kraken from the Between that has been dragged into the seas of men. An accident drawn here by the Illuminati, the Madness lurks in the deeps of the Fetid Sea, yet her tentacles are slowly encroaching within the shallower waters, gripping the piers and footings of the great docklands and Town Bridge and drawing her own kind to her lusts.

Denizens from Between

They have many names: The Echoes, the Nowhere, the Twisted. Between creatures are things with bodies whose forms are made and changed by influences around them. A Between wolf is as much of his pack and the wild, snow-covered lands as he is wolf — he is the essence of all things that he has passed in that strange place and been shaped by it. His hunger is all consuming. This wolf is partly snow and partly frost, his eyes are like gales, and his breath like a storm; he passes unseen in the winter snows of the Between and hunts with the knowledge and cunning of all other wolves and the hunters who have chased them. Yet this wolf has one further secret — it is not just wolf but part man, a lycanthrope who spent its early days in the Great Between Forest. This, then, is a creature as white as snow but with twisted boughs and briar, a creature of teeth and claw and consummate cunning. And all Between creatures are like this to some extent; the more ancient the creature, the more terrible a foe it becomes, for as the centuries have passed, it has grown with — and become part of — its surroundings.

A recent immigrant, the Madness is slowly weaving new plots in her strange home, and her influence is reaping a curious change upon the waters: fishermen are trawling the strangest catches, and the sea devils are already hailing her as a living god come to help them drown the city.

She is afraid of only one thing — the Devil — and is careful to keep her eyes beneath the surface of the waters and away from his gaze.

Other "Gods"

Beware the Mask Man, the Feaster of Flies, and the Wolf Wearing Innocent Skins when you walk the streets of Castorhage. Is that the shadow of the Tall Man of Misery hobbling along on his crooked staff? Is that harlot the Whore of Weft, whose lust is sated only by laying her eggs in the paralysed bodies of her lovers, leaving them in high gables wreathed in cocoons? Was that strange noise the Lyme Troll out fishing the streets of the city for delicious dwarves? The city is no place to be after dark, and whoever you may meet, mind your language, guard your purse, and pray to your own gods that the ones here leave you be.

Saints, Sinners and Legends

The city drowns in its past and suffocates on its legends. To the visitor, it seems that every street has its own saint, every alley its own legend, every gable its own curse. Every day is a holy day to some saint — whether that is Saint Mohv, Patron Saint of Ash, or Lucretia, the Martyr of Witches.

In so huge a place, sinners, too, are celebrated, from Armenat, Patron Sinner of Absinthe, to Lady Bess, the Sinner of Nudity who rode a horse naked through the streets of the city and was burnt at the stake for it.

Legends have a habit of springing up and walking in this place; every cellar has its ghost, every church its gargoyle, and every street its black hound or fiery horse.

Devils and Angels

Devils and n'gathau† have taken a peculiar interest in the Blight, perhaps driven by the "closeness" of the terrible Furnace — a part of Hell where machines turn night and day. Lucifer (the self-proclaimed and the true) has taken some interest in the city-state, as have his consorts and followers. Or perhaps the proximity of the Between, with its own devil — the Green Man — has brought them. They are here, and they are abroad in the city tonight. And behind and within it all is, of course, **Demoriel**†.

They take many forms and have many servants and masters, many within the ranks of the dreadful Great Coven, others serving the Illuminati, or perhaps driving it on its strange quests. But whatever their motives and situations, they are here now.

Following their shadows are the angels, who are as profligate as the devils. These angels also walk the streets of men engaged upon terrible quests; they are avenging angels who see only their enemy. They are not creatures to reason with or parley; they are beings of fathomless light here to take away evil — and evil takes many forms, from the foul devil, to those who aid them or accidentally block the angels' paths whether with naked swords or with trivial words. The angels care not; all are condemned or pushed aside in the name of the quest. Only the quest matters.

If they spend too long in the city, even these devils and angels are driven to madness. The noise, the confusion of thoughts, the poison air, and the endless movement drive them to despair. The endless potential opportunities for good and evil are like a torrent to the creatures, and they are driven insane by it. These insane devils and angels are an explosion of the emotions that created them — creatures of heartless good or joyful wickedness.

Archangels and Arch-Devils

Less numerous, but vastly more obscene and powerful, need has drawn these creatures to the city by their lesser brethren. Often the need is simply to destroy, to find an insane one of their kin and ensure its total destruction. Sometimes there are other quests, or would-be masters drawing them into the city.

People

"Cruelty, very far from being a vice, is the first sentiment Nature injects in us all."

A caste system operates superficially in the Blight. From the Queen to the Invisibles, everyone knows his station in life. In theory, it is not possible to move between these castes — rank being something inborn rather than earned. The Illuminati changed that: They pull all the strings of their puppet queen and her distended family of daughters. It is also possible to rise within the various stations in power and, if one marries a Royal, one becomes Royal, providing one can pass oneself off as Royal in the first place, of course. A person can achieve almost as much power, if not more, in the dark corridors of the Capitol, and those wise and rich enough can even fabricate backgrounds.

Caste is simply control, and those with cunning minds can manipulate and stretch it like a band of rubber. Following is a simple list and description of the different castes present in the city.

The Royal Caste

The Queen — Her Royal Highness Queen Alice

"The figure staggered into the room spastically, taking great strides with the aid of two sticks, making her look like some four-legged spider in a crooked web. Her face was veiled 'to protect us,' they had said.

Her breaths came in sharp rasps, and her voice was like breaking glass, often calling for the beheading of her subjects. But for now, she was happy just to look at us, it seemed. I could not help thinking of the spider once more: Was she watching us and waiting to strike, or was she waiting for us to walk openly into her web?"

At seventy-nine years of age, demented **Queen Alice** is the puppet ruler of Castorhage, drowning in the acid advice of her advisors the Crown Justices, who have poisoned many members of her own family against her. Queen Alice is a puppet in every sense of the word, her body kept upright through alchemy, which has long since chased away her wits. Cruelly, her majesty occasionally has lucid moments, but these moments are becoming increasingly rare. Perhaps more cruelly, her majesty has also recently developed a habit of killing and eating flesh; her moniker



The Royal Blessing

All the Royal Family (and a great many bastard Royals) have a bone-wasting disease that cripples them. As they age, their limbs contort, and they end up walking like dislocated spiders. Many Royals have to be conveyed in personal carriages, or seek magical or alchemical means to remain mobile. That this sickness reaches a terrible conclusion involving a final *change* is a rumour the Royals dare not allow to become public, nor can they ever allow the Lowfolk to draw any conclusions between the likeness of spiders and the sickness.

of "Ghoul" is becoming more appropriate with each passing day. She is no normal ghoul, however, for the Queen is no bestial creature; she is capable of grace, but nowadays she is so drugged that she is little more than a walking corpse that smiles vacuously from behind a black veil, a mourning garment she still wears in public to honour her long-dead husband Marram.

The continuation of the Queen is good for practically everyone, who fear a civil war should she die.

The Distended Royal Family and the Terrible Daughters

Fractured and lacking any kind of cohesion, the Royals are as varied as their subjects, with loyalists, Illuminati members, fanatics, devil-worshippers and even rebels in their number. Some of the more notable Royals are listed below. A thousand different versions of Royal lineage have been drawn, each supposedly more true than the last, yet each is argued, and none is agreed upon.

Alexandra, The Unseen Princess

The rumours of a grotesque abhorrence that was the Queen's first daughter refuse to go away, and tales of a locked room in the highest steeples of the Capitol containing the princess are strangely persistent. That the staff who attend it are blind and deaf is also regarded by almost all as just a rumour.

Princess Eleanor

The queen's "public" eldest daughter is not acknowledged as such by her sisters, who contest that she was sired by the Devil. Eleanor is icy, and her greatest — and only — desire is to rule the city-state and its empire. She weaves countless plots to achieve her aims, and worships the Devil. Eleanor despises her husband, Crown Prince Rorth†, but admits the union is useful for appearance.

Princess Genève

The grotesquely fat Genève takes countless lovers and has birthed a dozen (known) heirs. Born a matter of seconds after her twin sister Eleanor, she hates her crooked sister(s) with every ounce of her being. Her second passion is poison; her first is manipulating suitors with her poisons.

Princess Lilly (deceased)

Some say she was murdered, and unfortunately, Lilly knows who did it: her sisters Eleanor and Genève, in a rare act of cooperation. They didn't expect her to come back to haunt them, but by night she wanders the Capitol, singing and slowly driving her sisters mad with fear.

Princess Rebecca of Mourney

The young and beautiful darling of the crowds is the public face of the Royal Family. Rebecca has a thousand would-be suitors and has turned down countless proposals of marriage. In fact, Rebecca secretly sponsors the revolutionaries, intending to bring a structured, peaceful change. Her sponsorship is, of course, a secret guarded on pain of death by her fanatical followers, who dub themselves the Hidden Knights of the Capitol and who have each taken an oath of death and swallowed a *plague scarab* as proof. The scarab, should they choose to use or die, erupts within them, unleashing a score of locust swarms upon their enemies.

Rebecca's fear is that her sister Alicia will ascend the throne, something she can't allow to happen.

Princess Mercy

If ever a child was wrongly named, it's the violent Mercy. Mercy is no sedate Royal who takes a back seat to anyone; she is a figure of action — murderous action. Mercy courts the lords and masters of the army, whispers to them, brags to them. Mercy considers a coup an option for her aspirations of making the city-state a military force to be reckoned with across the world. She hates her sisters, although she has taken a lover in Elaine of Aldwark† recently. Her attachment presently is purely lustful, but the succubus's charms are considerable and could draw the princess into a deeper, more malleable bond.

Princess Rachel (deceased): Murdered in her sleep by poison administered by her sister Geneve, Rachel's sobs are still heard in certain parts of the attics of the Royal Palace.

Princess Sarah (deceased): Sarah died in childbirth, and some say her child was monstrous and immediately killed and burnt. They are lying. The daughter, Lydia, doesn't know her birth right and is presently part of a freakshow touring the city, her convoluted and bizarre escape completely unknown to her. A secretive arm of the Illuminati watches her, and ensures that she comes to no harm — her life a useful insurance against future events.

Princess Lenora

The youngest surviving mortal daughter of the queen, Lenora regards herself as the most stable. Her lovers are wizards and those who know secrets, and she is often found in a carriage rattling along the cobbles of BookTown on some mission.

Princess Alicia, "The Little Queen"

The terrible nine-year-old "Little Queen" is one of the newest Royals but has rapidly achieved a high station in life. The queen herself anointed Alicia as her chosen heir just a few years ago. Her mother dotes on her, but most other members of the Royal Family despise her. Spoilt, violent, and sadistic, the girl has a reputation amongst the servants for terrible callousness, her cries of "off with his head" ring through the Capitol when she is angry (which is most of the time), and her orders are carried out by guards too afraid to question her. Her dotage from the Queen ensures that she gets whatever she wants, even if that involves sadism and cruelty. As such, she is Rebecca of Mourney's nemesis, and the removal of the little queen is a priority for her (although Princess Rebecca is careful to hide her true intent to dispose of the horror-child).

In the meantime, the terrible child's will is enforced with alarming brutality: little friends arrive and are never seen again; couriers quake at an invitation to her parties; and lesser Royals whisper that "something really must be done."

Elaine of Aldwark

The Queen's lady-in-waiting, Elaine is one of the Illuminati's most dangerous and powerful allies. The true Elaine was killed when she was a young girl and her place taken by a succubus bound and broken by the Illuminati to serve their long-term goals. That she is also a member of the Great Coven is a secret even they do not know. Elaine is a glutton for excess, particularly sexual, and her private balls are orgies that involve violence and cruelty to excess. Her present lover is Maximel D'Regiolette, the greatest painter of all time, who is presently working on the Capitol Cathedral ceiling. Maximel, a fallen angel, and Elaine are involved in the Cult of the Self-Blinded Angel, which wallows in physical pleasure and pain. Elaine has a child, a union between herself and the Devil (q.v.). Elaine is also a slave to Demoriel†, and allows the arch-devil to wear her skin when called upon.



The Road of Impalements

In 1693, the City Watch and Royal Army brutally put down an uprising in the Jumble. It is rumoured that 900 prisoners were taken, none of whom were seen again. To make an example of the rioters, Malice had 500 sharpened stakes arranged on the main thoroughfare of the Capitol and had a rioter impaled on each. Many of these rioters were left to die slowly, and visitors remarked upon the brutality of the act. It was told that Malice took the air each night along the road and conversed with the victims, even ordering his wizards to cast *speak with dead* spells upon them. The road was eventually cleared only at the request of Crown Prince Rorth who "objected to the smell." Stories abound that Malice has the Royal Family under his power — either magically or through simple terror.

Crown Prince Rorth

Princess Eleanor's husband is the dashing face of the family. In truth, Rorth is only interested in sexual conquest and horseracing, in that order. An absinthe fiend, he frequently goes to the Artists' Quarter in disguise to search for some new vice.

Clovis, Crown Prince of the Capitol

Ancient Clovis, the husband of Princess Geneve, has designs upon the throne, and uses his sorcery to aid his efforts. He makes pacts with devils to further his ends, and it is rumoured that he has sold his soul to the Devil. Although not a member of the Great Coven, he craves the attentions of Elaine of Aldwark†.

Duke Malice

Ostensibly in charge of the Royal Armies and the City Watch, Malice is an appallingly cruel taskmaster infamous for his use of personal wizards to *dominate* officers and captains in his force. Capable of outrageous acts of cruelty, the stories of Malice are frequently told in taverns and gin houses up and down the city. It was Malice who first used Royal manticorae to pull apart prisoners; he who used live prisoners as catapult ammunition; and he who was responsible for the great Road of Impalements, a tale that still blights the Capitol and Royal Family. Despite the rancour held for him in the city, the Queen's 80-year-old cousin has aged remarkably well. He retains a full head of long, thick black hair (carefully oiled and held in place), and the trim, well-muscled physique of a much younger man. Remarkably, he is not of the *alchymic-undying*†.

Duke Taim

The queen's only nephew, Taim believes in order and the sanctity of the Royal Family. He is totally loyal to the queen and her name and, like Malice, capable of extreme violence and cruelty if need be. Taim, however, is more controlled in his fury, and is more likely to see good in people if they give him cause to do so. Taim is madly in love with Princess Rebecca of Mourney, and has proposed no fewer than eleven times. The Master of the Capitol, he is responsible for the security and well-being of the Royal Family and all residents in the Capitol. Taim works covertly against any evil he finds therein, a position that grows more desperate by the day.

And the Rest

A huge number of other petty Royals — dukes, ladies, earls, counts and knights — hang off the purse strings of the Royal Family. Many of these Royals live across the city, some incognito, some ashamed of the Royals, others involved in various groups encountered across the Blight.

The Crown Justices

Three Crown Justices are, in essence, the true rulers of Castorhage. The "Illuminati Triad," as they are known by those who serve them (though not in the presence of members of the Xi'en Triads), control all matters, however covertly, and hold (or believe they hold) the Royal Family in thrall. The truth, of course, is much more complex. Though they are not technically a part of the Royal Family, the Crown Justices are nonetheless considered part of the Royal Caste and are generally its most powerful members.

Grand Scribe of Castorhage His Resplendent Grand Justice Braken†

The dreadful Braken is the Master of Courts responsible for all matters of law within the city. His fingers grope unseen in the dark as his followers seek to advance the Illuminati in influence and terror. Braken wants nothing less than utter conquest — the conquest of Heaven and Hell. This need to rule paradise and enslave the Devil drives everything Braken carries out. His agents stalk the alleyways of the city searching for angels and devils, many of whom are imprisoned within the walls of his **Justice Lodge** (**C34**) — a huge pinnacle of gargoyle-wreathed stone high in the Capitol. Braken employs nearly a hundred doppelgangers as his eyes and ears across the city. His group, The Veil, seek out and protect other doppelgangers and further the cause of their master, searching BookTown for secret and powerful spells, looting the Hollow and Broken Hill for altars to ancient gods, and exploring the Between for power.

Often, Braken moves through the city changed, on some secret mission with others of his kind. Usually he is found at home in the **Oracle Hall** (**C34**), or slinking through secret chambers and corridors from there down to the **Great Vault** (**C16**).

Braken unknowingly works as a tool for **Demoriel the Twice-Exiled Seductress**, the true ruler of the city and queen of its dark heart.

His Resplendent Grand Justice Korsk, **Master of the Sinks**

Like all swyne, Korsk lives only for excess — in all forms. He wallows in the feculence of his own corpulence, and his followers, who include beasts and humanoids and devils, scour the hellholes of the city for new vices to ensure that his Grand Justice does not get bored. He is *terrible* when he grows bored. A close friend and ally of **Crown Prince Rorth**, the



pair are often seen in the Grand Justice's iron carriage heading toward the Artists' Quarter, a quartet of lovelies in the carriage with them.

As the Master of Trade, he is responsible for all taxes, imports, and exports. He is presently lodging in the Crooked Cathedrals in the Sinks, and specifically in the cathedral of **Alemiam, Sinner of the Flesh** (**SI2**).

Her Resplendent Grand Justice the Mistress of Life's Wondrous Varied Forms Ashleia

Ashleia believes that all life is a riddle, and its form imperfect. She is driven by the desire to create new lives and new forms; her tower is a butchery of filleted flesh and stitches and knives where she works her foul art aided — they say — by magic she found in the ancient libraries of Between. Beyond her veiled form of aristocracy and beauty, her true form has been demented by her work; her teats drip the acidic milk that is her lifeblood (her mortal blood long since replaced during an obscene ritual to achieve immortality). Her lust is fury, and she takes lovers simply to suck dry, leaving nothing but dust from her excesses. As Mistress of Commons, her mandate is to the see to the welfare of all of the commoners of the city. In truth, this just makes it easier for her to bring these wretches under her power.

She dwells in **Castle Strânkk** (**C29**), a teetering pile high in the clouds of the Capitol. Therein she has housed the *Crucible of Unbirth*, a Between artefact that can weave flesh and birth life. Her castle is a vast menagerie of twisted things that often escape into the streets below. She uses the Illuminati spy network to further delve into Between for dark knowledge, and the name "Queen of Dark Miracles" is whispered by other members of the Illuminati who rightly fear her.

The Grand Justice believes a goddess she refers to as The Light guides her path; this goddess pours visions into the sphinx's mind and gently steers her. In truth, the goddess is a disguise of **Demoriel the Twice-Exiled Seductress.**

The Royal Armies and City Watch

Commanded by **Duke Malice**, who is "advised" by His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken**†, the Royal Army makes its home in the Capitol, whilst the City Watch generally quarters across the rest of the city. The standing army quartered in the city numbers just over 17,000, though several times that number are abroad across the length and breadth of the city-state's colonial holdings. This number officially includes the Royal Navy within its ranks. The Royal Army uniform is liveried in ivy green tabards worn over studded leather armour, though regiments in the field often supplement this with their own flourishes. Soldiers tend to carry longswords and spears, although cavalry, crossbowmen, siege engineers, and pikemen regiments are to be found in their ranks. Ranks rise from soldier, to corporal, sergeant, sergeant-major, captain, colonel, brigadier and general, with Duke Malice holding the title of captain-general over all of Castorhage's land and sea forces. The general currently presiding in the city is **General Prester Haft**, a puppet of his masters Malice and Braken.

The City Watch (officially known as the Office of the Watch) numbers just over 2,000. They wear deep blue padded armour uniforms and are armed with coshes or short clubs, though certain parishes or specialized units may vary these somewhat. They carry hefty lanterns, and each also carries a whistle with which to summon help. The Watch is divided between districts, then parishes, wards, and finally Watch Stations. Ranks are Constable of the Watch, Sergeant of the Watch, Inspector of the Watch, Parish Officer of the Watch, Parish Commander of the Watch, District Commander of the Watch, and Watch Commander. All serve under the auspices of the Captain-General of the Watch, a position filled by Duke Malice. The present leader is Watch Commander Kevel Durmast†, a member of the Veil. Malice believes Durmast to be solely his creature but knows neither the Watch Commander's true nature nor his true loyalty to Braken and only Braken.

The Upper-Class Caste

The Thirteen Justices

Grovelling at the feet of the Crown Justices, ever hoping and plotting to replace them, are the thirteen Justices, who dream of the power of the Illuminati and all the dark gifts that entails. These contemptible bastards are detailed very briefly here. Each has a title that correlates to an assigned duty or lodge within the city over which the Justice serves as chief jurist.

Justice Weld Shortstone I, Master of Structures

A covert anarchist, Weld Shortstone aims to bring down the Illuminati and who is presently working on the Tower of Heaven in the Hollow and Broken Hills (**HBH8**).

His Grace the Master of Lanterns, Justice Blackbriar

Blackbriar is an obsessive explorer of the Between and collector of Between animals who dwells high in the Capitol. More information on Blackbriar is given in **Adventure Chapter *L8: Apotheosis***.

His Magnificence Justice Shank, Lord of the River

Shank is an ally of the Family (see **Festival**) who aims to make the Blight a wererat metropolis**.** Shank presently lives in the Broken and Hollow Hills (**HBH 29**).

Justice Lady Lucrezia Elisabeth Sullage, a.k.a. the **Grand Seamstress**

Lucrezia lurks in the **Palace of Light and Joy** (**C22**). Her paper-skin is faded, unlike her wits, which are as sharp as a dagger. She has created a dynasty of art adoration, and her home is flung open to genius, the lost, and the insane. One wing of her mansion is set aside as a prison and surgery, within which her children help her create living art through homunculi-stitching and golem-wifery.

Its Resplendent Justice the Eyes of Fate, **Master of Gables**

This twisted creature is a gable-haunting murderer high in the Thieves' Guild able to wear the skins of its victims. It usually lurks high within the **Palace of Rain** (**C7**).

Her Resplendent Justice Anisse Capprico, Lady of Beverages

The senior witch in the Great Coven, Annise is noted for her peacock-feather gowns and lives in the Capprico Estate in the Capitol (**C30**).

Justice Alfor Quent, the Lord Culmus, Master of Humours

Quent believes himself to be his goddess's living messenger, sent to give release to the poor, the sick, and the humble by eradicating them with his vermin followers. Culmus is the patriarch of the strictly pious Culmus family. Unlike many nobles, Culmus practices what he preaches, and his austere and drab house Culmus Manse (**C31**) is so austere that visitors are practically unheard of.

Lord Justice Mordent Knap, Master of the Royal Mint and Steward of the Capitol

Knap is Cartographer of the Underneath, Master of the Royal Mint, dazzling artist, and Steward of the Capitol. Unsurprisingly, Knap is one of the most influential people in the city and seen as a logical next Crown Justice. Sadly, he wishes to see true justice return and, although he has considerable influence with bankers and merchants, he also has many enemies. Knap has an obsessive desire to see the Underneath tamed and restored as a dwarven kingdom. Many of his peers wish he would lead such an attempt and never be seen again. Knap resides in a sumptuous townhouse at the Royal Dock (**C13**).

Justice Burr, Lord Protector of the City, a.k.a. the Collector

Burr is a hoarder of curios and magic who sponsors exploration, protection, and theft across the city. He is presently charged as chief jurist of the Barnacles and Great Docks and often is found in the Barnacles overseeing operations (area **LR1**).

Crown Prince Justice Cornlord, Lord of the Bridge

Cornlord is the Town Bridge ruler who uses poisons and spiders to aid his advancement. He lives on Town Bridge at area **T1**.

His "Royal Highness" Duke Scapegrace Wrye, Justice of Alleys, Streets, and Ways

Scapegrace, a master at finding information, lives in the House of Wrye (**C25**) with his nephew and **Anan Wrye** (N male human burglar), figurehead of the family.

Justice Lady Skathen Spalpeen, Mistress of Piers

Skathen is a recent convert to the Cult of the Madness-of-the-MirrorStorm. She seeks to create safe havens for her kind and hasten the plot to drown the world. Spalpeen lurks in the sodden cellars beneath the Second Royal Gallery and Museum (**AQ10**) with her spiritual sister Curator Abigail Wasp.

Justice Spent Sullyce, Lord of Surgeons, a.k.a. **The Lord of Leeches**

Sullyce is a golem-stitcher who seeks to advance science and experimentation through dark clerical paths. He lives in his home high in the Crooked Key levels of the Capitol (area **C24**).

The Under-Justices

Each Justice has his own staff, from petty clerks to trusted advisors and plotters. Within this hierarchy, the under-justices are the next in authority to the Justices. More often a curse than a blessing, these statutory advisors are often as bad as, if not worse, than their masters. A backstabbing mass of disloyalty, treachery, and selfishness thrives across this group, with countless alliances, extortions, and murders seething amongst the rampant ambitious egotism. Many under-justices fill in as chief jurist when their masters are away or simply don't wish to occupy the bench that day.

The Least Justices

Technically, anyone who works within the household of the Justices — from cooks to clerks — are afforded the title of Least Justices. The title "Least Justice" is an ongoing joke in the city, used with disdain by the Lowfolk as a well-known Toiltown quip, "What's the difference between a least justice and a pig herder? Just some words." This is sometimes followed by the well-known but rarely spoken quip, "What's the difference between a Crown Justice and the pig? At least the pig admits to what it's burying its nose in," when all present are sure that no listening ears may be nearby.

Streetclerks

These individuals are responsible for local "justice" and have duties from collecting taxes to keeping the streets clean. They are generally very good at the former, and poor at the latter. They most commonly serve as chief jurist of all the areas that are neglected by or fall between the cracks in the legal oversight of the Justices.

The Middle Class Caste

The Bondsmen, Guildsmen, and Merchants of the city, these are the men and women who run the city day by day. They are the stuff of daily life who keep the wine, the bread, the salt, and the trade of the city going.

The Lowfolk Caste

The most numerous by far, making up some 97% of the population, the Lowfolk are the labourers, dockers, butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers of the city.



Lowfolk of the Blight

Jakob and Jemmynia Wilt — Mr. and Mrs. Average

Jakob is thin, his skin pasty from a lack of good diet. His eyes are sallow, but he has a smile on his face, despite the blotches under his skin. His hair has been shorn very short and he wears practical rather than fashionable clothing. Jakob drinks gin and ale (a cocktail called "Mother's Ruin") and likes to go out at the end of the week to the Garlick Alehouse, where he sings with his mates, and together they find joy in their harsh life.

Jemmynia is a peacock compared with her drab husband. She wears a dress of a sensible blue hue. Beneath, she wears petticoats and has buckled shoes that have been frequently repaired. Sometimes she uses colored chalks or charcoal to add depth to her eyes. She also works on the third floor of their weaver's cottage in the East Ending, where she weaves raw cotton into fine thread. She has six children who are each the apple of her eye, and wishes she had more to give them to eat and more time to spend with them to teach them their letters so they can better themselves.

The Invisibles Caste

Freaks, waifs, orphans, and beggars, these poor souls congregate around temples and cathedrals begging for money. Their numbers also include the Untouchables, those who deal with dead flesh in the ghats of the riverside (truly one of the great hypocrisies in a city so reliant upon and incorporating alchymically or magically animated flesh). If they are lucky, they may be given money by some kindly soul. If they are unlucky, they will be rounded up by the Knockers and taken for a golem-stitcher to work on.

Lowest of the Low Caste

The undead, the golems, the homuncules, and *alchymic-unliving*†, these poor creatures are not even acknowledged as life and are treated as objects of less worth than cattle.

Others

Some folk by their very existence defy caste or are difficult to place in any one in particular. Others could simply be of any caste. Examples of these folk who might be of any caste or of none are included below.

Artists

One of the most influential groups in the city includes the artists, the puppeteers, the painters, the street-performers, the sculptors, the satirists, and the thespians. Many artists pride themselves on being the great reformers, philosophers, and thinkers of the Blight and like to challenge the status quo. There are also many who very much like the status quo, and staunchly wish it to remain in place.

Anarchists

Some have a romantic ideal that these men, women, and things are freedom fighters out to help the poor. In some cases, this is true; in others, not so. The persecution of religion, the unprovoked bigoted attacks on property, the fires — these, too, have their roots in anarchy. Anarchists wish to see the Illuminati removed; some also wish the Royal Family gone, believing the city will be better off without any rulers.

Races

All the common races and many of the ethnicities of Akados and beyond are found in the city. Some have been here for so long that they have formed their own unique identities: from tradelord gnomes to shadowlamp half-orcs, each has its own identity and unique traits. Others have also made their homes here or have lived here for as long as memory: the *swyne*†, a race of pig-blooded humans, and the *briny*†, skum†-sired horrors that bring a terrible curse on their mothers. Less-common races still are found in the alleyways: the Festering Brethren, the *lantern folk*†, the night-slugs†, and the dreadful Tunnel People† who hunt in packs and rise through the streets at night to feed. So many things find a home here, so many…

Foreigners

To the locals of the Blight, everyone who looks or sounds slightly different is a "Foreigner." Foreigner is a catchall group that covers everyone either not of the standard races prevalent in the Blight or those who do not conform to the standard human seen here. Blight locals show no shame when addressing foreigners as such, and usually break into exaggerated and frankly embarrassing raising of their voices and slowing of their speeches to accommodate the (in their bigoted view) inevitably dim-witted stranger. This likely has something to do with the equally offensive habit of folk who live in other places referring to Castorhagers as "Blighters."

A Murderers' Row

In the Blight, life is cheap and often brutally short. The constables are inefficient, easily bribed, or simply bored, and the myriad threats posed by the various other hazards of the city obscure many crimes from ever being discovered. These factors make life easy for the countless killers, murderers, and cutthroats of the city to ply their trade and, ironically, often live to a ripe old age (old for the Blight, anyway). Herein are detailed some of the more famous killers of the city-state.

"A killer, my friend, never dies. His legend lives on and, sometimes, in this city, what lives on is more than that legend …"
—Inspector Ornamie Hogg*

The Hornet Eater

Able to vomit swarms of hornets whose sting caused flesh to swell and burst, the Hornet Eater terrorised the city from 1599 until 1609 when it was (allegedly) slain by **His Beatific Knighthood Gerrant of the Capitol**.

The Crooked Shadow

A true horror indeed, this serial killer came from Between and was never caught. The Crooked Shadow drew the life from its victims' madness and made them into Between-spawned things of terror imprisoned in other people's nightmares. Of late, alienists have begun to notice an alarming increase in mental problems associated with nightmares, and the conjecture is the Crooked Shadow may be abroad again.

Butcher's Bride

This madwoman vanished into the night about ten years ago and has remained unseen since. Her speciality was disembowelling her victims and creating undead statuary from them.

*Ornamie Elias Hogg (1722–?), city's longest-serving Watch Inspector. Disappeared Chill 17th, 1772, while chasing **Jonas Long-Tongue**, the feared mohrg assassin capable of infecting his victims with his own form.

The Great Coven

One in thirteen women in the city is said to be a witch. It's also said that if the Great Coven† wants you dead, you'd best hurry and dig your grave.

The Coven wishes — and indeed has succeeded — in bringing the Aspect of the Green Man into the world. The Aspect of the Green Man is a creature from the Between that has sired a child and which is still at large in Castorhage's alleyways and gables. The Great Coven is now engaged upon a secret grand plan, an intention to infect a generation of young with devilry, in the hope of bringing a perfect generation of witches and warlocks into the city's future. This "New Heaven" the witches are aiming to create gets closer every day, despite the suspicions of the Illuminati.

Made up primarily of druidic members, the Coven has witches, wizards, and sorcerers amongst its number, as well as a truly impressive number of local thugs, creatures, and Between followers.

Guilds, Clubs, and Societies

An uncountable number of guilds, lodges, and societies exist in the Blight. These groups have aims as far apart as can be imagined, and vary in strength from a few drunken dreamers sitting around hearths to the insidious Thieves Guild, which itself is made up of over 500 different thieves' guilds and alleygangs.

Alleygangs

The Bell Street Angels, the Green Dock Villains, the Scrutton Street Constables; these gangs form for protection and reputation. Each has its own laws and rules, entry forfeits, and etiquettes. Alleygangs are everywhere; from simple gangs of youths standing at street corners to organised groups controlling crime at the behest of some Justice, Anarchist or Undead.

Highwaymen

The scourge of the streets, highwaymen rob and then steal away into the night. The best known of these — Vanishing Jack — is infamous for his ability to race up walls and gables as though a spider. Highwaymen (and women) variously use the city to their advantage, escaping through mazes of alleys, across rooftops, or under piers. Many of these Highwaymen, like the anarchists, are folk heroes, and tales abound of men robbing from the rich and giving to the poor, strangers refusing to take a poor man's coin, or stories of dashing villains with a hundred ladyloves.

"Champions of Justice" — The Vigilantes

With so feeble and corruptible a Watch, the poor often come together by streets (sometimes as alleygangs) into vigilante groups and take the law into their own hands. Though well meaning, these groups are hot-blooded and occasionally manipulated …

From Between

Too many incursions have taken place to ignore, and now the Between rulers believe that they are being invaded, and are fighting back. They are sending agents into the streets to learn and listen. In time, perhaps these will be backed by a true invasion force.

Jabbyrwok: A Between Dragon

"Beware the Jabbyrwok, my son!"

A dragon is a terrible enough foe, but a dragon from Between is something else entirely. Dragons live practically forever, they say, and in Between, the more one lives, the more one grows — as memory and experience, surroundings and events become power and flesh.

A Between dragon is the essence of greed and fury and terror of a thousand lifetimes. The Jabbyrwok is but one such creature. It is a thing from and of the forest, a creature as hard and ancient as the mightiest oak, a thing that is the bending tree in the gale, the terrible dark despair of the deepest woods at night, and the ancient wisdom of the untouched land. The Jabbyrwok is seldom seen in Between, but no mortal weapon could slay it or even injure it. There are those in the city — and the Great Coven in particular — who would like to unleash the Jabbyrwok onto an unsuspecting city in the hope of levelling it and beginning a new dark age of paganism in the ruins.

The Stag King: A Lord of Between

Part man, part stag, and part lustful dream, the Stag King walks the streets with the aid of his thousand-hooked staff. The Stag King speaks to the city animals and, as he does, he *awakens* them and makes them question their place in this cruel city …

The Stillborn Witch

Mother of changelings, this witch wanders at will from the city to Between, taking children from one and moving them into the other. For all the children, this act is terrible — Between children are like monsters to the city folk, and Between-Lands are nightmares to the city children. These nightmares, of course, become reality in the dreadful lands beyond.

Travellers

Two groups of locals are so numerous, yet so transient, that they rarely stay in the same spot for long. These two travelling groups are utterly different and yet share a similar resentment from the people they dwell near.

The Fetch

The undead populace of the city are a loose family of travellers who move about often out of necessity before powerful Illuminati clerics discover their homes and move through them with terrible speed. They move in groups both small and large and are guided by the Deceivers, undead that operate amongst humans and who guide their brethren from safe place to safe place. Deceivers are amongst the highest caste of undead and are looked upon with great respect by other undead; they pride themselves upon their ability to hide amongst the living and have developed a thousand techniques to mask their death, their fetor, and their hungers.

The Illuminati are not the only hunters of these creatures, and bounties are given on some plagues of undead in certain districts. Such torments and genocides have been attempted in the past, but as the ancients grew wiser, so they grew more invisible. A notable example of this history of conflict is the Great Cleric Anthony Mackus (1348-1399), most associated in legend and written word with the destruction of undead. He claimed that an unnamed archangel charged him to rid the city of this filthy stain, and he embarked upon a crusade against the Fetch, which ended only with his mysterious disappearance in 1399. Rumour has it that Mackus is now none other than the Gable-Man, a vampire of legend that eats the happiness of old people, and that he was struck down by vampirism by none other than Beltane himself.

Ruled by an ancient vampire known as Beltane†, the Fetch have become remarkably organised of late, and the marked increase in the sale of shutters and bolts and locks has not gone unnoticed by those looking to exterminate the Fetch. The Fetch are on the offensive just now, and are fighting back in retribution against the witch hunters who seek and slay their populace. The Fetch form uneasy alliances with two groups in the city in particular: the Great Coven, whose witches consort occasionally with them and find the friendship of undead curiously satisfying, and the Illuminati, who use the Fetch for various purposes, particularly the removal of enemies.

That the Illuminati are responsible for the rise in witch hunters and yet have an alliance with the very prey of those they have so fervently backed, is another example of the complexities within the city. This complexity is epitomised in the old adage, "As honest as a Blight Friend," meaning one who cannot be trusted.

Ghouls form the vast majority of members of the Fetch, along with their more powerful ghast masters. The ghouls are the cattle of the Fetch, and their lot is a miserable one indeed. Incorporeal undead form another class of Fetch, whilst the elite vampires are advised by ancient liches and less common undead whose names are only whispered.

The Fetch is a flexible populace, and sections of the "group" may be uncovered by the unwary, or brave adventurers, who so often are innocently duped into being assassins. Once someone is an enemy of the Fetch, he is marked for life and must hope that the Brides of Beltane do not pay him a visit in the night.

The Wild Hunt

There is a dark festival known as Calamity, which fortunately only falls on one night every three years, where the Fetch rise for a single night, dancing on rooftops and taking over the city. On this night, even the Royal Family take to their beds early and hide behind the strongest shutters. No sane man walks the streets on Calamity for fear of being taken to Beltane himself.

Boattown

Boattown is the slang term for a "temporary" settlement of fishermen and dockers, narrow-boatmen and mariners who draw together for protection. Boattown is never still; it is either changing in size or location, moved on by some point of law or simply through fear. The Boaters are



not popular, hated for their reputation and their ability to avoid taxes of any kind. These rough folk are fishermen, lobstermen, smugglers, and pirates and have their own pidgin language (River Cant) and their own laws, based upon families, strength of arm, and wealth. Halflings make up the vast proportion of the local population.

Races and Ethnicities of Castorhage

Virtually every sort of civilised race or cultural group to be found on the face of Lloegyr can be found within the teeming streets of the Blight, but some are more predominant than others. Only natives of the city belong to a caste, but for those ethnicities and races that are born into the city, the most common castes are listed as well. Following is a far-from-exhaustive list of the various peoples and groups that call the City-State of Castorhage home.

Castorhagers

It is unlikely that the folk of Castorhage — known as Castorhagers in polite society and "Blighters" everywhere else — should be considered to constitute their own ethnicity. Like so many folk ranging from the city-states of Irkaina, to the marches of Reme, and the southern reach of Withy-Strythe, they would more appropriately be considered another of the many groups bearing the label of Foerdewaith, but of all of those areas, they are perhaps the most deserving of such a distinction. Though largely of the same racial stock as what became the Foerdewaith, Castorhage was never more than a protectorate of Foere, and even that in name only. The folk of Castorhage have made their own society on Insula Lymossus for more than 3,500 years and are as distinct a group as can be found among the Foerdewaith of Akados, even showing greater physical deviation than would be expected in such a short time (see the "Blighted" below). Most Castorhagers are of the Lowfolk caste, but they can be of any caste.

Blighted

As much as a third of Castorhage's human population falls within this group and make up what amounts to an entire racial subtype. These folk fall within the Castorhager ethnicity but are perhaps the most drastic example of it. For it is these folk who seem to embody the very concept of living within the Blight. They bear its marks upon their bodies and upon their souls. These Blighted folk show an unusual degree of physical affinity for their position or occupation within the Blight, as if the city has crept into them and become a part of their very being. This supposition may not be far off. In Castorhage, Blighted folk are so ordinary or plentiful in number as to be virtually unnoticeable upon the streets of the city-state. However, on the extremely rare occasion that one of these folk should relocate to points outside Castorhage (and it is exceedingly rare that one of the Blighted leaves the city of his birth, though why this is the case is little understood), it becomes much more evident that they're not quite like everyone else and may just seem to carry a bit of that ill-regarded city. Blighted can be of any caste but are usually Lowfolk or Invisibles.

Ashurians

Ashurians found in Castorhage tend to be traders from the Ammuyad Caliphate or the Isthmus of Irkaina, or are in some way connected to the businesses of households of such folk. Few of those lands' native folk come here for anything other than trade. Most have the dark hair, swarthy features, and shorter, more slender build so common in those lands, yet there are sufficient numbers from Antioch City-States or distant Zagros Mountains to bear the entire range of skin tones, heights, and builds that can be found among the folk of northern Libynos. Native Ashurians are usually of the Middle Class.

Daanite

A true rarity indeed, fewer than a thousand of these insular folk dwell among the masses of Castorhage. All of the Daanites to be found in the city are either traders out of Dunkelding or the representatives of Daanite chiefs and their attendant guards and advisors. These petty kings of Ynys Cymragh conduct their trade independently with the vast port city and eye each other as warily as they eye the locals. These folk tend to be well muscled, if a bit shorter than the average, with ruddy or freckled skin, and hair ranging from brown to red. Eyes likewise range from brown to blues and greens.

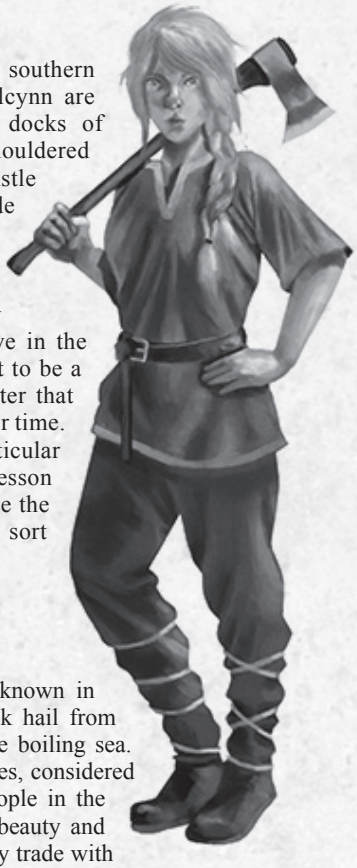
Foerdewaith

Even those Foerdewaith not counting themselves among the Castorhagers still dwell in the city-state in large numbers, outnumbering all other groups save the Castorhagers themselves and the Xi'en. These are the folk of western Akados who have long dwelt in the city or upon the island itself but have not quite taken up the same identification with the city-state, perhaps only having arrived from the mainland in recent generations or being only visitors to the Blight. They tend to be the Foerdewaith of western Akados with their fairer skin and more aqualine features, with darker hair colors and eyes of grey, blue, or violet. Like Castorhagers, most Foerdewaith are Lowfolk, though they can be of any caste.

Gtsang

Only within the Prefecture itself or perhaps among some of the Thousand Rocks of the Nether Sea are there more folk of Gtsang than in Castorhage. Like the folk of neighbouring Xi'en, the people of Gtsang tend to be shorter than those of the rest of Akados, with skin tones ranging from pale to parchment. They have the narrow eyes with epicanthic folds of the Xi'en, as well as their propensity for straight, dark hair and dark eyes. They are generally a bit stockier than the folk of Xi'en, with broader shoulders and heavier frames. They are frequently mistaken for Xi'en by the other folk of Castorhage, which is considered offensive to both parties. They likewise mistrust the Xi'en who tend to treat them poorly, and Xi'en youths often victimize lone Gtsang when they can catch them unawares, robbing them and sometimes beating them as well. Gtsang can be of any caste from Upper Class to Invisibles. A great many are Middle Class.

Heldring



The great seafaring race of southern Akados, the longships of the Helcynn are not an uncommon sight at the docks of Castorhage. This tall, broad-shouldered people enjoy the hustle and bustle of the busy piers and waterside taverns and brothels, and some even set up establishments to cater to their own people visiting the city. Despite the popularity as a destination, few Heldring live in the city-state long term, considering it to be a cursed place with bad air and water that drains the life of its inhabitants over time. They look at the Blighted in particular as an example of this and as a lesson to those who too willingly embrace the corrupt ways and practices of this sort of civilization.

Jaata

The folk of Far Jaati are little known in the West. These short, swarthy folk hail from the far side of Libynos, beyond the boiling sea. They have dark hair and fine features, considered by many to be the handsomest people in the world, with women of surpassing beauty and men of incomparable elegance. They trade with Castorhage from ports with strange names such as Shabbis and Elogong, and through this trade bring great riches to the city-state's coffers. Some of the folk of Jaati have come as merchants and experts for the markets of Castorhage, but others have come to escape the strictures of a caste system that prevents any sort of social mobility at home. These folk are some of the few who embrace Castorhage as a place of bright opportunity. Jaata are frequently Invisibles for their work on the ghats, but they otherwise range from Upper Class to Lowfolk.

Khemitites

The mysterious Triple Kingdom, a land of living gods and civilizations for longer than humankind has numbered years. The exotic ships of Khemit are welcome in the ports of Akados, and Castorhage is no exception. And though it is an especially long voyage from the Free Main of Libynos to the docks of the city-state, the coin to be made has always made trips in both directions worth the effort. These strange folk are sometimes compared with the Jaata by the unskilled eyes of Akadians, but though both tend to be shorter, slighter, and darker in complexion than the folk of Akados, their cultures bear little resemblance to each other. Whereas the people of Jaati are warm and friendly, embracing their new land, the Khemitites generally keep themselves aloof, distancing themselves from those they see as foreign barbarians — barbarians who were able to conquer their lands in centuries past, but barbarians nonetheless. The folk of Khemit are rarely seen in public, preferring to remain sequestered in their fortified compounds and manses, surrounded by soldiers of their own land and priests of their own religions. When encountered, they usually appear exotic and unearthly in diaphanous tunics and gowns, skilfully crafted adornments of gold and jewels, and kohl-limned eyes.

Mulstabhins

The folk of distant Mulstabha (see ***The Northlands Saga Complete*** by **Frog God Games**) make almost all other foreign visitors seem mundane and approachable. Their habit of holding themselves aloof from the local residents makes the Khemitites look warm by comparison, and their rigid system of castes make the Jaata system seem flexible. They are the people of the Land of the Bull from the Sea, and their stranglehold on all trade between the northern seas and the southern seas renders them both too rich and too important to leave out of a trading hub such as Castorhage. The fact that they keep to themselves and share almost nothing of themselves or their home with anyone makes them seem only more exotic and powerful. They are tall and lean, with skin the color of mahogany, and wiry black hair with blue or brown eyes. Descended from a mixture of ancient sea peoples and Libynosi, they are unlike any other known people in the world in appearance or culture.

Oceanders

Oceanders (see ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**) are another of the Foerdewaith that have declared themselves their own cultural group since their maritime empire calved off from that of Foere three centuries ago. They largely resemble the folk of eastern Akados, prone to easily tanned skin, brown hair and eyes, though if anything as a people largely originating from the Island of Pontos, their skin tends toward more olive tones, and they stand perhaps a bit shorter. As members of their new empire that is both a trade partner and rival of Castorhage, those Oceanders who find themselves in the city-state usually represent either trade interests or military personal sent to protect their trade interests. They keep their hair short, and facial hair is uncommon. An Oceander soldier can usually be picked from a crowd because his back is always ramrod straight and he is seldom seen without his breastplate and short sword. They are peaceful and seem to get along well in the city, but they trust no one.

Shattered Folk

These plainsmen of the Haunted Steppe are perhaps encountered nowhere outside their native lands in greater numbers than in Castorhage. Several tribes of them can be found in Reme and frequently visiting Bard's Gate, but these are technically a separate group called Plainsmen who have



permanently relocated from the Haunted Steppe to the plains of Reme and have left their old lives behind entirely. Castorhage, on the other hand, conducts active trade and maintains colonial interests on the Elitani Coast of the western steppe, and has formal trade relations with the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation tribes of the Shattered Folk. Thus, few other places exist outside the Haunted Steppe where tribesmen of the Shattered Folk can be encountered who are still truly of the Shattered Folk. As is common among the Shattered Folk, height varies, but they typically have a thin, muscular build. Skin ranges from burnt red to tan to mahogany with straight brown or black hair and little facial hair. Eyes are black, grey, or brown, and some have varying degrees of epicanthic folding, though these are most often seen among the tribes farther north and east on the great stepped plain.

Uplanders

A bluff and hale people descending from the upper portions of the mountain valley of the River Eamon, these industrious folk have spread far and wide in their pursuit of business and opportunity. They tend to divide themselves along clan lines in their homeland with the Angus of Dun Eamon being the primary chieftain of the premier clan, but their clan rivalries can be found — albeit on a lower scale — even among the Uplanders who inhabit the far places such as Castorhage. Uplanders tend to take a superior view over those who do not hail from their highland home in the Stoneheart Mountains, but those in Castorhage have largely moved past this tendency with their greater exposure to the outside world. They are known to be hardworking and have a reputation for honestly and fair dealing that sometimes exceeds the reality, but as a whole are an honourable and proud folk whose word is always good to those they count as a friend. They are of average height, with lighter skin tones tending toward freckles, and hair ranging from browns to auburn to shocking shades of red. Eyes range from brown or hazel to grey to blue or green. They are known for wearing kilts with the colours of their clan tartan and have made the garments fashionable even for those not of Uplander descent. Any Uplanders that are residents of the city are likely to be Middle Class.

Viroeni

These wandering folk can be found virtually anywhere across the whole of Akados and northern Libynos other than the Green Realm and the Haunted Steppe. They are a traveling folk composed of outcasts bereft of a homeland or true allies. Most folk of Akados consider them thieves or worse, and their life of travel is as much for their own protection as for a lack of any land of their own. They do find a home of sorts in Castorhage and tend to gather there in greater numbers and for more extended periods of time than elsewhere. The folk of Castorhage have more serious threats to deal with in their daily lives than the wandering gypsies of the Viroeni, and encampments or even whole neighbourhoods of these transient people barely even raise an eyebrow among the locals. It's not that the locals of Castorhage are any more accepting; it's merely that they harbour a grudge against the Viroeni no greater than that which they harbour for many different peoples. Interestingly, the gypsy-soul halflings of Castorhage have found in the Viroeni a kindred spirit, and in these small folk the Viroeni have actually found a true ally. The Viroeni tend to be tall and willowy, lithe of build, and fair of form. Skin tones range from pale olive to dusky, with hair and eyes as black as midnight, and sharply defined features. Occasionally, fair-haired children are born among the Viroeni from some recessive genetic line, creating a smattering of honey-haired, brown-eyed folk amongst their number. The Viroeni as a whole are known for their unusual grace and musical ability as much as their wandering and reputation (mostly unearned) for thievery, causing many to speculate the existence of elven blood somewhere in their past. Viroeni native to Castorhage are almost always Lowfolk.

Xi'en

The Xi'en peoples (or Chi'en as they are sometimes known, though this would technically only refer to those from the capital city of Chi'en) are the folk of the great Xi'en Hegemony of western Akados, beyond the imposing massifs of the Impossible Mountains and the hostile and trackless depths of the Green Realm. Despite their relatively close proximity, few Xi'en are found in central or eastern Akados beyond those that dwell in Castorhage. In fact, next to the Castorhagers themselves, the Xi'en are the most numerous of all peoples to dwell within the city-state and even have their own district within the city itself. Most Xi'en of Castorhage are immigrants who simply wish to work hard and make a living beyond the all-powerful local authority of their emperor, but many are envoys or soldiers in the employ of the emperor or are members of powerful criminal organizations called the Triad. This latter group gives the Xi'en of the city an unfavourable reputation among some segments of the population, but as a whole, they are accepted and seen as an otherwise-ordinary part of the city that can be mindboggling to outsiders unaccustomed to such exotic cultures and persons. Because of the vast size of the Xi'en Hegemony and the many lands that it controls, its folk are as diverse in stature and appearance as most Akadians. As whole, their skin tones do tend toward a slightly darker or amber complexion, and many are shorter than the average Akadian; however, the Xi'en of the southern portions of the Hegemony are much taller as a whole than the rest of the continent. Hair tends to be straight with a predominance of black and dark brown, though rust-reds and light browns can also be found. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of these people is their tendency toward narrower eyes with epicanthic folds, though even that demonstrates extensive variation in its presentation. Xi'en range from Upper Class to Invisibles with many Middle class, but most are Lowfolk.

Briny (Half-Skum)

The briny make up a significant — though often overlooked — portion of the city's population. Confined principally to the areas along the docks and river, these folk lead a life of social ostracism by the land-dwelling and sea-dwelling kin alike. Most survive simply by existing undetected among the folk of the city, hoping against hope of someday finding their own place in society. It is a rare briny that is higher than the Lowfolk. Those Castorhagers who are particularly bigoted often consider them to be the Lowest of the Low.

Changelings

The existence of changelings – the offspring of a hag and a humanoid male (elf, human, etc.) - is a poorly kept secret at best among the folk of the city-state. With the presence of so many hags in and around the city and the otherworldly influence of Between always hovering nearby, it is no surprise that children are stolen and replaced in households none the wiser for the switch. What would be surprising is the sheer number of changelings that now inhabit Castorhage. In fact, their true numbers remain completely unknown — even to themselves, as many changelings have no idea that is what they are. What greater sinister purpose might exist for seeding this many false sons and daughters within the city remains to be seen, but it is unlikely to have been intended for the good of the city. Changelings blend in and can be of any caste, just as a human can. Statistically, most are Lowfolk, however.

Coprophagi (Roachfolk)

While a known part of the city, its population of coprophagi are a people apart in every sense of the words. They are neither acknowledged nor welcomed by most of the city's denizens, and exist in a sort of shadow reality on the verges of the vast civilization around them where they must scratch and scramble just to find the means to survive. Most assume that the shrouded Festering Brethren are the extent of the presence of this race, entirely unaware of the great numbers that dwell just beyond the edges of sight in the dumping grounds, and alleys, and other hidden places. For their part, the coprophagi seem content to exist in peace, though one shudders to think what would occur if this people were ever to rise up in their true numbers and seek to exert their will upon the city. Coprophagi are of the Invisibles or Lowest of the Low depending on who is asked.

Denizens of Leng

Few of the many strange and enigmatic creatures that call the city home are as mysterious as the cowled denizens of Leng†. These odd traders arrive in their black-hulled ships and conduct trade amongst the city's seedier elements in exchange for their strange rubies. They are rarely found upon the streets for any other reason. What manner of creatures within their sealed ships cause the thuds and disconcerting bleatings is unknown to the Watch and various longshoremen — and most have no wish to know so long as the black ships leave the docks just as swiftly as they arrived.

Dhampirs

In a city where the Fetch hold such sway, it is no surprise that a population of dhampirs – the half-vampire spawn that results from the union of a human mother and a vampire - has sprung into existence. Some choose to follow in the footsteps of their undead forebears and serve as servitors or go-betweens for the Fetch, while others join the ranks of the many vampire hunters who call the city home and seek to bring about an end to the scourge that the Fetch represents.

Dragons

In a city as cosmopolitan and inhabited by the strange and powerful as Castorhage, it should come as no surprise that an unusually large number of dragons likewise call it home. However, most folk of the city have no clue as to this fact. The dragons that occupy Blight keep a low profile and either sequester themselves behind secure walls and gates beyond the knowledge of the citizenry or walk about while magically taking the form of the more mundane inhabitants. Many of the more powerful practitioners of magic and/or monstrous inhabitants of the city are aware of the presence of these dragons, but none — not even the dragons themselves — know the true numbers that hide among the populace. The motivations for the presence of these dragons are as varied as the dragons themselves, though many seek knowledge of the strange and mysterious that seems to pervade the very being of the city-state. Many seek merely to keep tabs on others of their kind that likewise call the city home. While no tally exists of all the dragons present, most assuredly there are many metallic, chromatic, and even primal dragon races found within the mix.

Dwarves

The dwarven race has embraced the City-State of Castorhage in a way not normal for their kind. In part, this can be accounted for by the presence of an older dwarven kingdom and extensive mines that existed in the Underneath, but even this doesn't truly account for the sheer number of dwarves that call the city above home as well. Generation after generation of dwarven families living in, working in, and building upon the city have resulted in dwarves that are largely unlike dwarves found in other human cities.

Dwarves in the city vary little from their normal cousins, still showing the common characteristics of hard work and a strong sense of justice. This leads local dwarves to a powerful sense of community, which some see as insular. However, the dwarves are anything but that, and their feelings of exploitation by the mill owners — particularly those who use the Lowest of the Low — has led many dwarves to engage with Anarchists and to form strong bonds with other workers.

Typically, city dwarves are slightly (but not much) more fashionable than their rural counterparts, and their traditional, simple styles may be dressed with a modest amount of silver filigree work or jewellery, the odd large collar, or the occasional hat. Many dwarves in the city shave their beards as the grime in the city air makes them dirty quickly. Some dwarves take this to an extreme and oil their beards into unusual points or curls, and many have handlebar moustaches. A few dwarves, notably those who toil many hours, let their beards simply grow uncombed and unshaved, and are known as "dreaded" on account of the rather fierce nature they give their appearance. Most dwarves are Lowfolk, though many are Middle Class. Very few are Upper Class.

Hill Dwarves

Any of these dwarves in the city have largely left behind their hill dwarf backgrounds. Many have professions as miners and smiths not far from those that they might hold in other settings but with a decidedly different environment than those that they usually inhabit. Those that stay too long seem to become street dwarves (see below) in just a few generations.

Street Dwarves

Most of the dwarves found within the city of Castorhage would be what are considered street dwarves in most places, though these street dwarves are somewhat different than those found elsewhere, in that, unlike the street dwarves throughout the rest of Akados, these do not descend from the original line from the Domain of Hawkmoon. Rather, these street dwarves seemed to have developed from the many hill dwarves who had for so long inhabited the city-state in a case of parallel evolution. However, other than this change in their lineage, the street dwarves of the Blight conform in all other ways to those found elsewhere.

Elves

Few places could be considered less sylvan or arboreal in atmosphere than the crowded, soot-choked, urban mass that is the Blight. And many have left the city, tiring of the endless misery and filth it creates and consumes. Yet nonetheless, many elves make their homes here. Some are drawn by the thirst for knowledge, others by the beauty of the art of decay within the city. These elves tend toward a more cosmopolitan, transient, or forlorn outlook than their traditional kin who are more comfortable in the more natural surroundings. They are well represented by the elves who have migrated to the city but have retained the very essence of elfdom. However, more traditional elves can be found within the city-state's confines as well. They are just apt to be less comfortable with their surroundings than those previously described. Elves choosing to live in the city are almost always Upper Class or Middle Class.

Grey Elves

Rarely seen elsewhere on the continent of Akados are the grey elves. A more grave and ephemeral race of elves than the high elves typically seen elsewhere, the grey elves lack the history of conflict of humankind shared with elves of the continent. Grey elves hail from the distant island kingdom of Sarefein (see ***Razor Coast*** by **Frog God Games**), legendary for its white trees and peaceful glades as much as active navy. The grey elves of Sarefein first colonized the distant shores of the Razor Sea long ago, and it is through their maritime ventures that they made contact with the city-state. Their white-winged ships ply the waters of the world's oceans and trade peacefully with the black, plated hulls of Castorhage. Very few grey elves are found in the city, and all of those that are represent trade interests or diplomats of their island home. Though called grey elves, these folk are actually of a much paler cast than most elves but have hair ranging in colour from white to silver, with many having a tint of bluish-grey to them. Eyes are bright blue, silver, or completely colourless. The grey elves stand taller than all other elves and are as at home upon the waves as on land. Some think they bear an ancient connection to the royal houses of the Green Realm, but such knowledge is beyond the ken of mankind.

High Elves

The more typical example of Akadian elves, it is from the ranks of these folk that the forsaken and travellers arise. Even the high elves hold the rare grey elves in some awe. High elves in the Blight who have not taken on the city-state's specific traits are in the city for many reasons from trade, to travel, to family. A great many of the high elves live in mixed families with half-elf children or parents, and find the otherwise dingy and spiritually oppressive environment of the city an unusual harbour for peaceful habitation with

no concern regarding racial mixing. The half-elves generally are accepted throughout the regions of old Hyperborea, but perhaps nowhere more than the Blight are they given even less of a second look. They are simply one of the myriad folk who call the city home.

Primitives

For some elves, darker things bring them to the city, for there is beauty, freedom, variety, and self-expression in many things. These elves, known as the Primitives, revel in all forms of expression, but particularly those involving shock and awe. The Primitives believe that they alone have the right to choose their own way, and will not be guided by convention or law. They are the embodiment of anarchy and yet, conventional anarchy is something they abhor. Some Primitives are drawn to even darker paths of self-discovery (see Sidebox).

Described elsewhere in this book, the primitives are a distinctly Blight sort of elf that can descend from high, grey, or even wood elves, though high elves are by far the most common. These decadent and even indolent elves have abandoned all pretext of their elven traditions to embrace the hedonistic lifestyle of the avant-garde "elite" as they consider themselves.

The One Who Has Seen Beyond and Despaired

This is one such elf who has seen the darker path. This once noted and courted artist vanished from his life of urbane glory and fled to the rooftops of the city, where he attempted to befriend the scrimshaw gargoyles. His artistic expressions began to involve living things, and he created many obscene creatures using his dark arts; some still walk the city nights. These creatures needed "donors" to allow their creation — donors that seldom if ever offered their bodies voluntarily — and for a period of 16 months the elf held the city in its thrall.

Things that should not have walked were given names and tormented the locals. At first, these creatures were thought to have come from Between, and Jack Hookhands, Hag Many Heads and Midnight's Harvester were attributed as invaders. However, the truth soon came to light as the elf was spotted during one of his own donor harvests. When he was finally caught, he bragged that he had given so many creatures life that he had created a new race in the city, and that in time his family would rise again. He was hanged in 1698.

Wood Elves

A true rarity, few believe that there would even be any wood elves (see ***LL8: Bard's Gate*** by **Frog God Games** for general information about wood elves in the Lost Lands) in a place such as the Blight. While a few wooded areas in existence upon the island of Insula Lymossus and elven interests of the mainland sometimes require the presence of a few of these folk, by and large they are a rarity and tend to be highly uncomfortable in the city's unnatural surroundings.

Fetch, The

Mentioned above, the Fetch is a sizable population of undead that has called the city-state home virtually since its inception. Though its numbers are primarily composed of ghouls that act as servitors and assorted other types of undead also in lesser roles, it is the vampires that truly form the backbone of the Fetch, and their long service to Beltane† ensures that they play a major (if mysterious) role within the city. The Fetch are the very definition of the Lowest of the Low.

Ghazaks

Few in number within the city, these strange humanoids hail from the Isthmus of Irkaina where they are found in greatest numbers among the Mulstabhins of Krivcycek Island (see ***The Northlands Saga Complete*** by **Frog God Games**). The ghazaks (see ***Dunes of Desolation*** by **Frog God Games**) are a strange race of pale-skinned astrologers and wanderers with white or silver hair and yellow or pink eyes. Some folk liken them to the grey elves, though there seems to be no true connection beyond a slight superficial resemblance. Others connect them to the Viroeni, which may actually bear some element of truth. In any case, it is unlikely they would be present at all if it were not for the trade between Castorhage and Mulstabha. Yet present they are, and their colourful robes and penchant for mystery and fortune telling make them a favourite source of gossip around the city.

Gnomes

If there's a race that could truly be said to have thrived within the oppressively urban confines of the Blight, it's the gnomes. Gnomes are the backbone of the city-state. They are the second-largest racial group (if mongrelfolk† are discounted), and the wit and wisdom upon which all commerce depends. They are the bankers, the merchants, and the workhouse-owners, inventors, plagiarists, and dandies. If the city were a ship, they would be the air that drives it. Gnomes are everywhere, it seems, in Castorhage — they own the most buildings; they create the best inventions. Their natural penchant for magic and alchemy has found fertile soil within the weird energies that suffuse the place, creating an intriguing group called alchymists and a vast extended family known as Shortstones. Likewise, nowhere else are the gnomes' tinkering about in the fields of alchemical innovation and general prankery accepted (or at least tolerated) as they are in Castorhage. For example, the Treadmill Ferry was created by Alwin Malachite, the first viable cotton-spinning machine by Truthes Agrate (until the idea was stolen by Joseph Sedge of Toiltown), and the Tottering Crame (the first vertical conveyor) by Blessed Crun Wood. Castorhage is perfect for gnomes because it is full of gems, animals abound, and laughter is to be found in every tavern or on every street corner (if you know where to look).

Castorhage gnomes are proud to be gnomes: they shout out their race; they draw attention to themselves; they repeat their family name a thousand times a day. Blight gnomes are therefore unsubtle — in both demeanour and appearance. They are, if anything, "über-gnomes." Castorhage gnomes spend fortunes coiffuring their crimped beards, and sport the latest fashions. The leather they wear is of the finest quality they can afford; their pockets are full of the latest gnome toys, snuffboxes, pocket watches, and wonder-chymicals. Of all the races, gnomes have the highest number of members in the Upper Class per capita. They also have a great number in the Middle Class. Lowfolk gnomes are actually the minority among their kind.

Deep Gnomes (Svirfneblin)

Like most surface settlements, the deep gnomes are relatively rare. However, in the city district known as Underneath, they are much more common. Typically bald, the svirfneblin are known for their large gnomish noses and ears, and skin of deep earth tones.

Rock Gnomes

The most common type of gnome encountered in Akados, it is from the rock gnomes that most of the city's gnomish population is drawn.

Tradelord Gnomes

As described elsewhere, these gnomes represent a number of clans that have risen in the fields of banking, law, trade, and business in general throughout the city-state. Their name is synonymous with reliability



and practical decision-making, which is about as un-gnomish as can be imagined. Yet they have become a fixture of the city and its holdings abroad nevertheless. The vast majority of Upper Class gnomes belong to this subtype.

Goblinoids

While not officially counted as a part of the population, goblinoids are actually somewhat common within the bounds of the city. These are usually in the form of mercenaries or bodyguards such as the hobgoblin mameluks of Mulstabha that protect the diplomats and traders from that realm. Likewise, the Upper Class elite keep a number of goblins as pets as a current fad. These unfortunates are dressed in Small costumes and paraded about on leashes or kept in small pens and given pet names. Many are infuriated at this treatment, and curse and rail against their captors, though this usually brings on gales of laughter from the watchers. Like many pets grown too large though, after goblin pets cause enough property damage or maim a servant or two, they are usually put down or (more commonly) released into the slums to fend for themselves. Entire bands of goblins exist within the city who were former pets and now serve as mercenaries. Some are employed as toughs, or simply exist as cheap labour within the city, though many desert and end up begging on the streets, joining street gangs, or picking through the dumps. Goblins of this background invariably hate Castorhagers, and for most it is only a matter of time before snapping and becoming murderers, kidnappers, or other predators within the city. Bugbears are also not unheard of, though they are just as likely to be criminal or serial killers using the city as a stalking ground as mercenaries or guards. Least common are the silids*, who can be found in small numbers in the Underneath.

* Silids are small subterranean dwellers enjoy ambushing and waylaying their opponents. They slay their victims, steal their possessions, and leave their bodies to whatever happens to wander along looking for a meal. Cruel, mean-spirited creatures, silids care nothing for themselves or anything else. They seem to take great pleasure in bringing misery to others, particularly adventurers. Silids rarely interact with other races. They are an untrustworthy lot, and most other races avoid contact with them.

Gremlins

Not truly folk of the city, these creatures nonetheless are encountered frequently within its bounds and are universally unwelcome. All sorts of foul-ups and catastrophes are laid at the feet of the gremlins†, though in truth, a large portion of them is due more to the carelessness and negligence of various citizens themselves. So bad did this putative blame become that as part of the *Pact of Immaculate Reception* of 1233, it was made illegal to raise the actions of gremlins as a defence in any court case without tangible proof of their involvement. Mites† are easily the most ubiquitous of the gremlin-kin found within the Blight. They wage constant warfare against the night-slugs for control of the dingy drains and rotting soffits of the city, but virtually every other sort of gremlin imaginable can be found up to no good at some time or other.

Half-elves

A place with as many different sorts of folk living in close proximity is going to undoubtedly have its share of crossbred races, and the half-elves are no exception. Half-elves have been inhabiting the Blight for centuries and far outnumber those of pure elven blood. Like humans, half-elves run the gamut of castes.

Half-orcs

Like half-elves, half-orcs enjoy an unprecedented level of acceptance and general sense of, if not being welcomed, at least not being received with hostility. It is more noticeable, though, to a half-orc population that finds a much more general prejudice than that experienced by half-elves across Akados. However, even here half-orcs are far from a favoured group, and like many inhabitants of the Blight must scrape by on the rough edges of civilization. Many of the half-orcs inhabiting the city, therefore, have the *Savage*† Blight background to reflect this constant struggle for survival. Half-orcs are almost always Lowfolk.

Shadowlamp Half-orcs

These variant half-orcs are unique to the Blight. They have an unusual affinity to the Underneath and the benighted streets, and serve many valuable roles as investigators and enforcers in the darkened corners of the city where few dare to tread.

Halflings (boatfolk)

Halflings are no great lovers of an urban place such as the Blight, but Castorhage's close proximity to the traditional Halfling homeland of the Dale and the Low Country ensures that it has its share of the small folk. The majority of halflings to be found here have taken to the river life and count themselves among the boatfolk, though plenty of city-dwelling halflings are present as well. Whether on a boat or in a ghetto, the halflings of the Blight find that their small size and elusiveness is especially helpful in escaping the many dangers that stalk the streets of the city. Halflings are primarily Lowfolk, though a good many of their number are Middle Class.

Gypsy-souls

In addition to the boating and town-dwelling halflings, another type of small folk subrace — while not constrained to Castorhage — seems to have originated there and tends to loiter in the area. These are the *gypsy-souls*†, halflings who have taken to the wandering life and traditions of the Viroeni. Considered little better than thieves by most folk but generally ignored, the greatest prejudice that the gypsy-souls face is by others of their own kind, not the boatfolk necessarily, but definitely from the more sedentary and established halfling population.

Lantern folk

As discussed in *Part 3: The Blight Player's Handbook*, the lantern folk are unusual in that they're a subrace of derro that has come to peacefully inhabit and even find a modicum of acceptance among the dwarves and svirfneblin of the Underneath. These folk seem to have left behind their race's tendency toward insanity, and have become productive and useful in the society of the city below. Lantern folk are largely outside the caste system, but probably would be considered Lowfolk.

Mongrelfolk

Mongrelmen† are accustomed to existing at the absolute bottom of the social order. But in Castorhage with coprophagi and night-slugs, not to mention the many twisted and deformed victims of long habitation of the Blight, mongrelfolk* find that they actually fit in somewhat well. They're not exactly beloved by their neighbours or other races, but they don't seem quite so out of place and are regularly seen on the streets holding down jobs, running errands, and otherwise going about their business. True, the majority still remain poverty stricken and often resort to begging and petty theft, but it is not automatically their lot in life as is so often the case elsewhere. While mongrelfolk (like everyone else) dislike the night-slugs that infest the corners and subfloors of their hovels, they do share a certain amount of amicability with the otherwise shunned coprophagi and share their pidgin language of hoots, grunts, and imitations of speech.

Many folk suppose that the mongrelfolk of Castorhage came into being through the works of the elf primitive The One Who Has Seen Beyond and Despaired (see Sidebox above), not the least of which the elf himself. However, mongrelfolk within the city predate the experiments of the depraved elf. It can be said, though, that the elf's work certainly added to the existing population, as those that survived his ministration with sanity intact were largely able to breed true with their new kindred. Mongrelfolk are always Invisibles.

* Though not inherently evil, mongrelmen are shunned from society because of their appearance. They make their homes far from civilization, and those few encountered in settled areas are usually slaves or servants of the local humanoid races. Mongrelmen that must travel among other races take precautions so as not to reveal their true identities, using cloaks, capes, and the like to hide their forms. Mongrelman society is a collection of close-knit tribes, each with its own leader. Mongrelmen never fight against other mongrelmen, preferring to live peaceably with others of their kind, for all mongrelmen know they are shunned by outsiders and must stick together if their race is to survive.

Monstrous Races

More so than in any other major city of Akados, Castorhage is thronged with races that civilized folk would normally deem as monsters. And even more astounding, these monstrous races seem to get along reasonably well within the social confines of the city. Most of these monstrous races keep to themselves, remaining behind closed doors or the curtained windows of hansom cabs or even magical disguises, but some parade themselves openly in public without drawing any direct ire from the Watch of citizens. True, getting caught in a dark alley by one of these races still likely results in the death and possible devouring of those unfortunate enough to have done so, but in public, at least they are able to maintain a façade of reasonably civil behaviour. Even they do not wish to draw too much attention from the City Watch or one of the many notorious monster hunters that operates within the city. Most numerous of these monstrous city-dwellers are aranea†, lamias, kitsune*, nagas, and sphinxes. In addition, many of them keep servitor creatures on hand such as goblinoids, lizardfolk, orcs, boggards**, boarfolk***, and gargoyles. Their motivations for being in Castorhage are as varied as their natures, but everyone knows to take care because the face of a harmless old beggar may actually serve as the guise of powerful, sorcerous creatures.

* Kitsune, or fox folk, are vulpine shapeshifters known for their love of both trickery and art. Kitsune possess two forms: that of an attractive human of slender build with salient eyes, and their true form of an anthropomorphic fox. Despite an irrepressible penchant for deception, kitsune prize loyalty and make true companions. They delight in the arts, particularly riddles and storytelling, and settle in ancestral clans, taking their wisdom from both the living and spirits.

**Boggards resemble anthropomorphic frogs or toads, complete with webbed hands and feet, large eyes, and overly wide mouths. These creatures make their homes near large rivers or deep in marshes. There they make small villages composed of mud mounds on the banks.

***Boarfolk are giant humanoids standing some 9 to 10 feet tall, weighing nearly 700 pounds. They possess boar-like features, including large tusks that protrude from their mouths.

Night-slugs

This disgusting and pestilent race enjoy the absolute lowest rung of society among all races within Castorhage. Like humanoid vermin, they live to do little more than scavenge food and poke about in places that others don't want them. Unless they have a good reason for being somewhere, most are chased away on sight. Night-slugs† are considered Lowest of the Low without exception.



Orcs

Like the goblinoids of the city, a fairly significant population of orcs serves as mercenaries, guards, and hired muscle. It's not to say that none of them has turned to crime or perhaps taken part in brigandry on the side of their day jobs, but in general, they maintain a fairly peaceful existence within the bowels of the city inasmuch as they avoid drawing the notice of the Watch to any great degree. In addition to the orcs, many of the folk who choose to hire their kind as thugs or toughs want even a bit more muscle and have been known to hire orogs - the offspring of an orc and ogre - to supplement their ranks, bringing a not insubstantial number of that race into the city as well. Orcs are usually considered Invisibles, with occasional Lowfolk.

Being from Other Planes

Other than humanity itself, perhaps no group in the city is as diverse as the population of aberrations, celestials, elementals and fiends that either make their home there or visit frequently enough that their presence is noticeable. No one type of being dominates the city, though in sheer numbers it is hard to compete with the imps that serve as familiars and thralls to countless petty mages and sorcerers. Likewise, a large number of quasits serves in the same capacity. True demons and devils are relatively few and far between, but not unheard of, and an equal number of devas, planetars, and solars can be found going about their enigmatic business, careful to keep an eye out for enemies of their race but not generally starting a row with any fiends they encounter without good reason. Rakshasas seem to inhabit the city in relatively high numbers and are known for being prone to keeping boarfolk around as hired muscle. Genies and other elemental creatures can be found with some regularity within the city, though efreet and salamanders seem to be the most common for some reason. Because of the city's close ties with Xi'en, no one is truly surprised to find oni among the outsiders that manifest from time to time, and in a place so prone to violence and death, psychopomps* are to be expected. The one race that is almost conspicuously absent are then aeons**, which seem to be barred from setting foot on Insula Lymossus altogether. The reason for this is not well understood — even by the aeons themselves — but the wise and learned suspect it has something to do with the proximity of Between keeping these paragons of natural order at bay.

*Pyschopomps are emissaries of the many gods within the Lost Lands. They are tasked with ushering the souls of the departed from the mortal world to whatever afterlife location that soul is destined for.

**Extraplanar arbiters of order in the cosmos.

Ratfolk

Almost as numerous as mongrelfolk, the ratfolk inhabit a similar place on the pecking order. For the citizenry's part, they make little distinction between the two races, though the ratfolk of Castorhage seem largely to have originated in Jaati or other areas of far Libynos, and the source of the mongrelfolk remains a mystery to all. In any case, the two races get along well enough and are among the only ones that engage in any sort of social contact with the coprophagi. Like the rest of the city, the ratfolk harbour a special grudge for the disgusting night-slugs. Ratfolk are usually Invisibles.

Sciurians

Truly a strange and little-known race, the squirrel-like sciurians* are rare in the city as well. If one is seen, it is more than likely on the spit of some hill-dwelling orog that has hunted it and is now preparing it as its dinner. No sciurians actually dwell within the bounds of the city, but a population of the rare creatures does exist in the forested highlands upriver on Insula Lymossus. They seek to avoid contact with the inhabitants of the city, for some of the more savage races found there actively hunt them.

* Sciurians resemble humanoid squirrels. They are a diminutive, furry folk who dwell deep in the forests far from the intrusions of other races. A typical sciurian is curious, but also somewhat skittish. They are prone to nervous twitching of their tails, and often pause to scan the surrounding area for danger. In a comfortable environment, sciurians are amiable creatures and enjoy music and celebration.

Shae

As mysterious a race as any, a sizable population of the shadow-like shae* can be found within Castorhage. They tend to keep to themselves and generally appear in public only at night when they frequent taverns, clubs, and other social events. The reason for their presence in the city remains a riddle to most, but it is not lost on some that shadowy folk such as the shae and wayangs (see below) seem to be drawn to the place.

* The mysterious people known as the shaes are natives of the Shadow Plane. In their own language, their name means "unbound" or "unfettered." According to shae history, they were once humanoids who through tireless study and self-perfection managed to transcend the bonds of a definite form. Though they still bear roughly humanoid shapes, shaes' outlines are perpetually wispy and impossible for any non-shaes to focus directly on.

Swyne

Another of the new races that seem to be distinctly Blight in origin, the *swyne*† mingle with the rest of the population in their lives of hedonistic excess. *Swyne* have the highest number of Upper Class per capita. Few *swyne* would ever allow themselves to be anything less than Middle Class

Tabaxi

The cat-like tabaxi* of Castorhage hail from two very different points of origin. Some of the tabaxi of Castorhage hail from the bamboo forests of southern Xi'en in the region known as the Utterends where the highland forests of the Green Realms meet the warm, humid coastal lowlands, and from the distant continent of Libynos. In Libynos, most tabaxi are found in that continent's central jungles, but a significant population of them relocated centuries ago to lower Khemit and the temple-city of Bastus. The Libynosi tabaxi found in the Blight are from that group.

*The tabaxi (called cat-people or tigerfolk by some) are a reclusive race of feline humanoids that dwell far from settled areas, making their home deep in the forests and jungles. They rarely engage in trade or dealings with other races, preferring to keep to themselves most of the time. Tabaxis are very graceful and catlike in their movements. They resemble humanoids with feline characteristics most akin to a tiger. Both hands and feet sport vicious claws that can do significant damage when they leap upon their prey.

Tengu

One of the more exotic races to call Castorhage home are the crow-like tengu*. Sometimes called tengu, these bird-like humanoids can be found across Akados from the east to the west, but those of the city-state tend to be from the tengu clans of central Xi'en. Many of the tengu are heavily involved with the Xi'en Triad gangs, so much so that the form of Thieves' Cant used by these Triads (called Tli'liik, see below) is a cant created from the Tengu language. Despite their somewhat shady reputation around the city, tengu remain commonplace enough to invite no special attention from the Watch or other citizens. Tengu are almost universally Invisibles.

* Tengus are a race of avian humanoids that resemble crows or ravens, and often bear much of the same stigma. Though they frequently choose to live among other races in densely populated cities, their society is tight and closed, and they rarely allow others to see its inner workings. They are also often referred to as "kengu" or "tenku" depending on the region.

Tunnel People

Heard of by all but seen by few, the infamous Tunnel People haunt the dreams of many a Castorhage child. Those who dwell in the Underneath have a much greater familiarity with these foul denizens, but even in the city above they serve as a sort of bogeyman to scare misbehaving children. Though not truly an organized group of any sort, the Tunnel People share enough characteristics in common to be lumped together in the eyes of the citizenry at large. In truth, they are different groups of savage tunnel dwellers that occupy abandoned sewers, mineshafts, and adits of the Underneath where they scratch out a living always on the verge of starvation and extinction. Typical examples of the Tunnel People include morlocks, chokers, grimlocks, insane, ravenous vagrants driven from the city above, and the hated woerms†. Unfortunately, on more than one occasion they seem to have spontaneously banded together for raids into the Underneath or even night-time raids into the city above in search of anything edible, including children, winos, or anyone or anything else they can catch.



Languages

Many are the languages spoken in the City-State of Castorhage, and just walking down the street can expose the ear to a dozen different tongues. Below are listed the primary languages spoken in the city, as well as their principal speakers.

- **Westerling (Common)** — the common tongue of the city
- **Aklo** — aboleths, Between creatures, denizens of Leng, fey, lantern folk
- **Bridge-Cant** – pidgin of Common and myriad vulgarities spoken primarily by the lower castes of Town Bridge
- **Canto**[PC:ItD] — Tunnel People
- **Cobble** – secret cant of the sentient constructs of the Inkling
- **Darkling (a.k.a. Dark Folk)** — dark creepers, dark dancers, dark stalkers, etc. (except huggermuggers[TOHC] who speak their own gibberish language of Chatter)
- **Dwarven** — dwarves
- **Dreamspeak** — Between creatures, denizens of Leng, night hags
- **Elven** — elves, half-elves
- **Gnome** — gnomes
- **Goblin** — bugbears, goblins, hobgoblins, silids
- **Grus** — boarfolk, swyne
- **Halfling** — halflings
- **Helvaenic** — Heldring
- **Khemitian** — Khemitites, tabaxis
- **Kirkut** — Shattered Folk
- **Meeruwhan** — Jaata, rakshasas, vishkanyas
- **Mongrotic** — coprophagi, mongrelfolk, ratfolk
- **Necronomus** — the Fetch
- **Ogham** — Daanites
- **Orc** — half-orcs, orcs, orogs
- **Planar Languages (Abyssal, Celestial, Daemonic, Ignan, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Truespeech)** — angels, daemons, demons, devils, efreet, salamanders, shae, wayangs, etc.
- **Rama** — gypsy-souls, Viroeni
- **River Cant** — boatfolk, some gypsy-souls, and Viroeni
- **Semuric** — Ashurians, ghazaks, Mulstabhins
- **Thieves' Cant** — thieves, mainly
- **Tli'liik** — Xi'en thieves' cant based on Tengu language
- **Undercommon** — lantern folk, silids, Tunnel People, Underneathers, etc.
- **Xaon** — Gtsang, kitsune, vishkanyas, Xi'en

[CSK] ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**
[K6] ***K6: Shades of Gray*** by **Necromancer Games**
[NLSC] ***The Northlands Saga Complete*** by **Frog God Games**

Those taken by the Tunnel People are rarely seen whole again, and more than once the Shadowlampers in service to the Queen have been sent to find and exterminate them with limited success. Once their raids pass, they seem to split up and evaporate into countless deep pits and tunnels beyond the edges of the Underneath to lurk until they decide to poor forth as a horde once again. If considered a caste at all, the Tunnel People would definitely be considered the Lowest of the Low.

Vishkanyas

The ebony-skinned vishkanyas* are a race little recognized among most folk of Castorhage, which is precisely how they want it. However, to the various criminal enterprises and even certain elements of the government, their unsurpassed skill in the crafting of poisons and their lethality as assassins is well appreciated. They keep to themselves and ply their trade, and most folk are none the wiser. The vishkanyas of Castorhage originally came from Far Jaati and therefore tend to avoid other Jaata for fear of being recognized for what they are. For their part, the Jaati consider sighting a vishkanya as bad luck and possibly a sign of impending death, and they usually vehemently deny such an occurrence if confronted. Vishkanyas usually blend into the Middle Class or among the Lowfolk.

* Vishkanyas are a race of exotic humanoids with poisonous blood. Possessed of an alien beauty, these graceful humanoids see the world through serpentine eyes of burnished gold. Their supple skin is covered with tiny scales, often of a light green, which are sometimes arrayed in patterns not unlike those of a serpent. They cannot be generalized as good or evil, but since they truly speak with forked tongues, they are content to accept the gold they're offered and leave questions of morality to others.

Vodyanoi

Very few of these amphibious folk are found in the Blight, though a significant population of them lives in the nearby Lych Fens. When vodyanoi* are encountered, it is usually either on the docks, along the river, or at the outskirts of the city where it meets the bogs and swamplands that hem the city in. On almost all occasions, they are out hunting boggards or chikes that have strayed within the bounds of the city. Whether the vodyanoi see themselves as some sort of protectors of the city or if they just hate the crocfolk and frogfolk that badly is unknown. On the rare occasions when contact is made with vodyanoi, a grippli go-between usually brokers the deal.

* Vodyanois resemble humanoid salamanders. They have short noses, bulging eyes, and broad mouths covered with thickets of fleshy tendrils. Skin color varies wildly depending on the climate and terrain, from drab greens and grays to vibrant oranges and reds.

Wayangs

Another of the strange shadowy races that call the Blight home, the wayangs* are thought to stem primarily from the proximity of so many gremlins and other fey to the presence of the Between and the many magical and shadow effects constantly at play over the city. Whether this theory holds any water is up for debate, but what is not debatable is that a significant population of these shadowfolk reside in the city for their own hidden purposes.

* The wayangs are a race of small supernatural humanoids who trace their ancestry to the Plane of Shadows. They are extremely gaunt, with pixielike stature and skin the color of deep shadow. Deeply spiritual, they follow a philosophy known as "The Dissolution," which teaches that in passing they may again merge into the shadow. They readily express their beliefs through ritual scarification and skin bleaching, marking their bodies with raised white dots in ornate spirals and geometric patterns. Shy and elusive, they live in small, interdependent tribes.



Part Three: The Blight Player's Handbook

A stitched thing shambles through the night, the smog of the Canker caressing it. Hooded and covered, the thing's head is too large for its body, and it has to lean frequently against the dirt-smeared brick embankments of Sister Lyme and suck in air through broken lips. A stench like rotting vegetables and sugar surrounds it. People move by in the smog, quietly and nervously going about their business. Occasionally, a cockroach crunches under their feet. Some travellers are rich enough to have linkboys, and a ghastly yellow pallor surrounds the conspirators as they flit like will-o'-wisps through the poison air of the street.

The silence is suddenly stabbed by the sound of a carriage clattering along the cobbles — a child's nightmare pulls the carriage yet no one seems to notice; it gulps the air as it lurches by — a slick black thing that hobbles spastically yet with great purpose. Unseen within, a naga pulls at a hookah, her arcane limbs fidgeting nervous. She is reading an ancient cabalistic work that details a ragefire elemental, a hateful thing of such fury that it can consume cities. The naga smiles and blows out a crimson smoke-ring as she puzzles this new weapon that has fallen, or rather been dropped, into her presence. The naga bangs upon the roof of the carriage for the driver to speed on, and within moments, the streets are quiet again.

The hooded thing staggers on, beneath towering walls and sloping gables where great spiders crawl, the arachnids cowering from the spider-catchers who ply their trade in the dark. Both avoid the rooftops where ancient scrimshaw gargoyles call to each other in haunting song. No one climbs to meet the scrimshaw; no one dares.

The figure passes a burnt-out pawnshop and is ignored by a young couple in a doorway; seeing only each other, one of the figures has two mouths full of jutting yellow teeth. The other, possibly a man, is dead, only alchemy keeps his wan body upright. He appears to be ignoring the prostitute's shortcomings, or perhaps is paying for them.

At last the stitched thing reaches its destination, a crooked house lit by the distant lights of the Great Fayre and the peculiar cutting beam of Hobbington's Lamp — the greatest of sea lanterns. Now hobbling down the stairs, it gives a secret knock and is allowed into the alchymic opium den. Entering, it sees something in the mirror opposite, but the thing it sees is not its own reflection, and as it watches the shadow moves out of the looking glass and into the room. The hooded figure bows, and hands over a package to the mirror dweller, who smiles crookedly and moves into the city night, drawing a shining meat-cleaver as it does so. Singing a nursery rhyme under its breath, it breaks into a skip.

Outside, countless other stories are taking place; misery and joy, and lust and sin abound here. This is their home; this is home to many, many things …"



The Blight is vast; it is mad and random and teeming with life. Each doorway conceals a secret, every window a longing, every roof a hope and fear. A million faces stare from its broken soul. Each face hides a story.

In the appendices, you'll find a printable player's introduction to the Blight, its characters, streets and horrors. In essence, the Blight is a dark urban horror fantasy setting that can be used either on its own, or mingled with other areas of your GM's campaign world.

Many different races can trace their lineage back centuries in the Blight, and these Blight versions of standard races have developed their own unique abilities, contacts, and skills. In such a vast city, no guide can ever be considered entirely comprehensive, but here is a selection of new races and racial subtypes of the more established races commonly encountered. All the standard fantasy role-playing races may be met in the streets of Castorhage, but their environment may change local characters, as a dwarf living in the arctic or an elf living on a coral reef would change, but they are still unmistakably elves and dwarves.

Races presented hereafter represent Castorhage variations upon the core races, as well as new potential character races — derro, briny, coprophagi, night-slugs, and swyne. Racial subtypes of each of the core races are also presented. These subtypes are those that exist in addition to the standard core races; they have unique abilities due to their exposure and background in relation to the Great City.

Do not limit your choice to standard races; a party of ghoul characters make an excellent change of pace. Skum and wererats also make interesting variations upon character races and enable you to develop a whole new skill set and viewpoint for your characters. Your GM will always point you in the direction she wishes her campaign to go, but do not be afraid to make suggestions. The Blight is, after all, a city of a million stories …

City Races

The information given below could be useful in any urban setting. Races in the game manual of the world's most popular roleplaying game are a good starting point for variations based upon background, environment and attitude, and these are as numerous as campaign worlds they live in.

Thinking about the environment that races come from can be a fun addition to any gaming session — consider a race of dwarves that has lived far below the city in an area of the Underneath that has not been discovered until now. Perhaps greedy miners have followed a vein of silver down into the vast caverns beneath Castorhage, or maybe one of the pits has opened up somewhere in the city and the dwarves see the sun for the first time. Do the blind dwarves flee from the warmth or worship it? How do they react to the noise of the city and how do the locals react to them? Are they convenient monsters in the game of some local Streetclerk, or are they taken as freaks to Festival to be displayed and mocked for the delectation of the populace? Perhaps the dwarves are amazingly skilled artisans who begin work in secret for some unprincipled cad who kidnaps some of their number to ensure compliance. Perhaps the characters come upon an escapee one night being chased by constables who claim the blind dwarf is a killer …

New Racial Traits

A curious aspect of life in the Blight is that it subtly, over generations, moulds its inhabitants, exaggerating the effects on their physicalities and mentalities of the ways in which they apply themselves within its confines. For example, descendants of labourers are, on average, noticeably more hulking and brutish than their forebears, and descendants of scholars have, on average, wider eyes and larger craniums.

Frog God Games — as a champion of old-school games — has taken for its cue on the use of racial subtypes the same approach as was used in 3.0/3.5 and earlier iterations of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game with a more traditional method more akin to the concept of "subraces" of old. This approach was held by Necromancer Games during its years releasing 3.0/3.5 materials and has been carried through by the Frogs as well, most recently with the release of ***LL8: Bard's Gate*** and its (re)introduction of the street dwarf racial subtypes. It appears again in the shortly forthcoming ***Mountains of Madness*** with the mountain dwarf racial subtype. The latest iteration of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game has returned to the more traditional use of "subrace". However, for consistency between past and future products, we have opted to continue using racial subtype to represent a subrace.

Below you will find new, completely optional, racial traits and subtypes that can be used to add flavour and a distinctly Blight-like feel to your characters. Some of these are intended to replace existing racial traits and others can be used independently of existing traits. And as with all things **Frog God Games** provides, these rules are here for you to pick and choose as you please and as best suit your game. If you prefer to use the standard nomenclature regarding subraces, then drop the use of racial subtypes and go with subraces. As always, make of it what you will.

Dwarven Optional Racial Traits

Dwarven characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with dwarves (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard dwarven racial traits:

Blight Builder. Street dwarves in the Blight are especially talented builders and crafters. You gain expertise with the artisan's tools of your choice. Pick one from: smith tool's, brewer's supplies, mason's tools. This replaces the Tool Proficiency trait.

Blight Enmity. Street dwarves have redirected traditional dwarven enmities against creatures that are specific to the Blight. Choose one type of creature: Between creatures, constructs, lycanthropes, or undead (choose a single type). When tracking this type of creature, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks and on Intelligence checks to recall details about the creature. If that creature speaks a specific language, you also learn that language when declaring your enmity to the creature.

City Sharp. Some Blight dwarves have very strong ties to the city. You have advantage on Blight-related Intelligence (History) checks and on Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information within the Blight.

Trade Expert. Some Blight dwarves are descended from families with a focus on a skilled trade. In matters of trade, you are considered an expert, allowing you to add two times your proficiency bonus to Charisma (Persuasion) checks when trading with others.

Elves

Elven Optional Racial Traits

Elven characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with elves (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard elven racial traits:

Artistic Devotion. The Blight can transform elves of an artistic nature into obsessive practitioners, forever seeking the perfect expression of their form. You gain proficiency with one of the following: an instrument of your choice, calligrapher's supplies, cartographer's tools, cook's utensils, glassblower's tools, jeweller's tools, painter's supplies, or woodcarver's tools.

Fey Talent. Some Blight elves find that a talent for music, song, dance, or some other form of entertainment runs in their blood. You gain proficiency in one of the following skills: Acrobatics, Performance, or Sleight of Hand.

Immersive Memory. Some Blight elves are easily immersed within the memories of their ancient race and its history and experiences. You have

advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to Castorhage and the Blight, the history of your race and the major events that your ancestors experienced.

Social Spirit. An inner radiance seems to shine bright in some Blight elves, positively influencing those with whom they interact. You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks for any lie you tell.

Gnomes

Blight Optional Racial Traits

Gnomish characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with gnomes (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard gnome racial traits:

Alchemy Fiend. The Blight elevates some gnomes' obsession with alchemy into incredible talent. You are proficient with alchemist's supplies. Crafting alchemical creations takes half the time and materials cost 10% less than market value (crafting and downtime activities are detailed in the game manual).

Blight-Blooded. Some gnome families have formed strong ties to the Blight through the latent action of their fey origins. This bond strengthens your relations with other gnome families. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks when dealing with other gnomes from the Blight.

Blight Enmity. Some Blight gnomes have redirected traditional gnomish enmities. Choose one type of creature: Between creatures, constructs, lycanthropes, or undead (choose a single type). When tracking this type of creature, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks and on Intelligence checks to recall details about the creature. If that creature speaks a specific language, you also learn that language when declaring your enmity to the creature.

Uncanny Business Acumen. Some gnomes find that the Blight enhances their naturally convoluted thought patterns into a talent for the abstract intricacies of trade, finance, and law. Because of your reputation as a businessperson, you receive a 10% discount on purchases within the Blight. You also receive a 10% bonus when selling to merchants in the Blight.

Truth Twister. A creative relationship with fact and fiction, especially serving within the courts of the Blight, has led to some gnomes' facilities with deceit being enhanced. You add twice your proficiency bonus to Deception, Insight, and Persuasion checks when interacting with authorities in the Blight.

Urban Magic. The Blight has altered the inherently magical nature of some gnomes. You know the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. Intelligence is the spellcasting ability for this trait.

Half-Elves

There is magic in her eyes, and a slight fey look about her. Her features are narrow, and her eyes purple. Her red hair is drawn into a tight pigtail by a deep blue cheesecloth scarf.

Everyone loves Tamarind, her smile, her laugh, her singing — she has broken a hundred hearts they say by refusing the advances of lesser men, claiming she is looking for a wealthy fat lord to live with and spend his money.

Behind those eyes, however, works a brain of evil. A black heart beats in her and Tamarind plots and weaves like a great, sick spider. She knows she is beautiful and knows it well, using what the gods have given her to bring her a better life.

She kills those who come too close to her web.

— Tamarind (Half-elf burglar)

Blight Optional Racial Traits

Half-elven characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with half-elves (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard half-elf racial traits:

Emotionally Remote. Torn between two worlds, some Blight half-elves have grown emotionally distant to those around them**.** You have advantage on saving throws against being compelled against your will (such as the Command spell).

Racial Ambiguity. The Blight suppresses the elven appearance of some half-elves, allowing them to pass more easily as a different race while emphasising a talent for assuming alternative identities. You are proficient with a disguise kit and you have advantage on ability checks that would expose your identity while you are disguised.

Half-Orcs

Blight Optional Racial Traits

Half-orc characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with half-orcs (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard half-orc racial traits:

Slum Survivor. Some Blight half-orcs are skilled at surviving in slums, sewers, and underbellies. You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Survival) checks within an urban environment. In addition, you can use the Survival skill to find food and water in an urban environment. A successful DC 10 Survival check results in enough sustenance for one person for 1 day.

Nightbred. The Blight moulds some half-orcs toward the darkness, emphasising their subterranean heritage. Your eyes are attuned to dark and dim conditions beyond that of others of your race granting you superior darkvision but also shackling you with sunlight sensitivity. Your darkvision has a radius of 120 feet. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when you or your target are in direct sunlight.

Halflings

Blight Optional Racial Traits

Halfling characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with halflings (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard halfling racial traits:

Deft Dancer. Some Blight halflings are infused with the rhythm and beat of the city's dark heart. Choose one of the following options: **a)** proficiency in the Performance skill and with one type of musical instrument. **b)** proficiency in the Acrobatics skill and advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks when entertaining an audience.

Rigging Rat. Some halflings have Blight-charged agility. You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks when climbing. Climbing also does not halve your speed.

River Runner. Many Blight halflings are drawn to its waterways, plying the Lyme with inborn expertise. You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks when swimming. Furthermore, you are proficient with Navigator's tools and waterborne vehicles.

Humans

Blight Optional Racial Traits

Human characters that start in or near the Blight may not exhibit the same traits that are traditionally associated with humans (as presented in the game manual). Some of the new traits may list a specific trait that it is intended to replace, while others do not. For those that do specify which trait it would replace you should work with your GM to determine the best fit for the game.

The following racial traits may be selected instead of the standard human racial traits:

Citysoul. Within the Blight, you add your proficiency bonus to Wisdom (Perception), Wisdom (Insight), and Dexterity (Stealth) checks. In addition, once per day, you can become lost in thought in a trance-like state for 1 minute to subconsciously plumb their knowledge of the city. At the end of the trance, you may make a Charisma (Persuasion) check with advantage. You regain the ability to become lost in thought after a long rest.

Recall. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks in relation to knowing the urban geography of the Blight, the fastest method to get from one location to another, and for finding specific locations within the city. In addition, you can spend at least 1 minute concentrating on your surroundings to know which district you are in, even if you cannot see your surroundings.

Polluted. The city itself seems infected with choking gases and corrosive chemicals, yet some humans seem to thrive in even the most pollutant-rich environments. You have developed an innate resistance to these conditions and have advantage on saving throws against inhaled poisons and toxins.

Twilight Sight. Touched by exotic blood or Between, some humans can see better than their kin in dim light conditions. You have limited darkvision in a radius of 30 feet.

Water-Blooded. They say that blood is thicker than water, but for some Blight humans, the waters of the Lyme seem to run through their veins. You have the ability to hold your breath for twice as long as others (you have advantage on Constitution saving throws when holding your breath underwater) and have a base swim speed of 20 feet.



New Racial Subtypes

As mentioned above under Blight Racial Backgrounds, the use of racial subtypes here is in the traditional "subrace" sense.

The racial subtypes included here are all more or less unique to the Blight (with the exception of gypsy-souls). Not that they can't be found anywhere else — though that is likely to be rare enough — but rather that wherever they're found, their existence can be traced back to their Blight roots, proving that the Blight is so pervasive — so corrupting — that it changes everything it touches and usually not for the better.

Street Dwarf

Street dwarves were originally of mountain dwarf stock, but all trace their descent to a single band of exiles from the Great Mountain Clan Targ in the Forlorn Mountains. Called Gilyo's Brigade, the dwarves of this band had been cast out of the Great Clan for any number of petty crimes. The band relocated into the lowlands of the newly formed Domain of Hawkmoon after leaving their mountain home and found solace in the wild towns springing up across this new frontier. Their natural skills as craftsmen soon made them wealthy and allowed them to establish shops, inns, waystations, and merchant houses. In less than a century they had largely abandoned their old dwarven culture and had begun to establish their own rich traditions.

Since their early days in Hawkmoon, street dwarves have spread far and wide to many of the world's major urban centres. Commerce is their livelihood, and they simply follow the coin. They are savvy urbanites who know the ins and outs of city life. Well aware of the dangers of the city — pickpockets, footpads, thieves' guilds, corrupt officials, and assorted con artists — street dwarves have developed a characteristic wariness of all strangers that borders on paranoia. They are shrewd and cunning and are difficult to trick — especially when money is involved. It's equally difficult to intimidate or accost them because though they have distanced themselves from their heritage as doughty giant and orc fighters, they still remain a race of the stout folk and are notoriously hard of head and hard of knuckle in any barroom brawl or alley robbery attempt.

Physical Description. In appearance, street dwarves differ very little from one city to the next, being all descended from a single clan. They have the height of their mountain dwarf forebears, with most approaching 5 feet in height, though they are thinner and less stocky of build. Consequently, they tend to be more agile than their mountain cousins. Their beards are the darker shades of the mountain dwarves with a smattering of silvery white even among the younger folk, but they are usually kept trimmed shorter and closer to the chin than is typical for a dwarf. Hair is likewise usually kept at a shorter length, but hair and beards alike are always kept well-groomed and fashionably styled. Some street dwarf women are capable of growing beards as well, but they never do, preferring to go clean shaven as is the norm of females of other races with whom they interact. Street dwarf attire reflects the social caste and climate in which they live, but often it is an expression of affluence that they have achieved over the years.

Society. The clan kinship so strongly felt among mountain dwarves and even hill dwarves is largely absent among street dwarves. Though they all descend from a single clan, upon their arrival in the lowlands they spread out to settle and take on lowland ways. Now street dwarves relate more closely to their immediate family groups, and though they feel a

kinship with fellow street dwarves it is no more than a vague sense of camaraderie, no more binding than any other acquaintances they make. Though street dwarves are mostly known for success in business, by no means are all street dwarves wealthy merchants and business owners. Most make a comfortable living in some trade that they have undertaken while some have amassed great wealth in trade or investments and others live in the gutter as homeless beggars, their fortunes fallen on hard times or from families that either lost or never made the great leap to affluence that some of their kin have. In all regards, street dwarves tend to reflect the majority of the society in which they live.

Relations. As mentioned, street dwarves lack the extreme kin-bonding found among mountain and hill dwarves. In fact, they often find mountain and hill dwarves that they meet to be discomfiting and uncomfortably intense, if not outright uncouth. For their part other dwarves typically look at street dwarves askance as if poor souls who have lost their way among the baubles and fancies of the soft lowlanders. In any case, the groups can maintain friendly relations with one another but rarely seek out any more social contact than is absolutely necessary. Street dwarves do not maintain the same prejudices towards other races that their kin do and therefore have no more animosity towards goblins or orcs than they would towards any other brigand. Likewise, they have no experience in fighting giants most having never even seen one. Instead they hold their ire towards those they that see as oppressing them, whether it be criminals or corrupt officials for a wealthy merchant or street bullies and corrupt city guards for a beggar. It is towards these that street dwarves devote their legendary dwarven grudges.

Religion. Of all types of dwarves, street dwarves are the most likely to be agnostic or outright atheists. They are pragmatic and practically minded, putting more faith in sound investments and a solid plan than divine protection or tradition. Those that are of a religious bent usually venerate the major gods of wherever they happen to live, though they tend to shy away from elven deities as flighty and strange and traditional dwarven deities as somehow familiar yet uncomfortably alien. Some street dwarves, especially those that dwell in the Domain of Hawkmoon, still worship the Hawkmoon deity for whom their ancestors took their name. Gilyo, God of Travel and Caprice. Outside Hawkmoon, though, such worship is little seen.

Adventurers. Adventure may not call so powerfully to street dwarves as it does to members of other races, as these folks usually prefer the known dangers of city life to the unknown dangers of the open wilderness. Nevertheless, they can sometimes be found among adventuring bands if for no other reason than the irresistible lure of treasure.

Male Names. Bariom, Caedimus, Cassius, Filo, Luciliun, Tiberonus

Female Names. Andromeda, Caliopa, Gratica, Koryola, Veran, Vesta

Street Dwarf Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Age. Dwarves mature at roughly the same pace as humans. They are considered young until the age of 50 and can live between three and four centuries.

Alignment. Street dwarves tend towards lawful alignments as the most reliable course to success among civilized folk but have no real leaning towards good, neutrality, or evil beyond their own individual moral compass.

Size. Street dwarves are among the tallest of the dwarves, their height averaging almost 5 feet but never shorter than 4 feet. They are stocky and broad and often weigh 150 pounds, sometimes more. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray instead of color under darkness conditions.

Greed. You have advantage on Intelligence checks made to determine the price of nonmagical goods regardless of what they're made of.

Grudge. Someone or something crossed you at some point in your life and you will never forgive or forget that slight. Little did they know, dwarves hold grudges like no other. Pick a person (NPC or character) or creature that represents an injustice or harmful treatment you have endured. Regardless of whether they actually wronged you, they are the object of your violent obsession. When you score a critical hit against your hated foe, you can roll one additional damage dice (based on weapon type) and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit. Because of your hatred of this foe you have disadvantage on Charisma-based skill checks against them.

Streetwise. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to potentially notice hidden watchers, ambushes, or traps while on the streets of a city.

Urbanite. You can add your proficiency bonus to Charisma (Deception), Wisdom (Insight), and Charisma (Persuasion) checks when used in urban surroundings.

Weapon Familiarity. You have proficiency with short swords, rapiers, and whips. This replaces Dwarven Combat Training.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Dwarvish.

Elf, Primitive

Primitives are elves who have found themselves drawn to the strange, almost otherworldly allure that seems to shine just beneath the surface of the Blight for those with the sensitivity to see it. The result of their long exposure to this strange, intangible presence ever tickling at their minds has led them to devote their lives to its expression in art. They are fey — almost elemental — creatures inspired and tortured by wildly vivid dreams to the point of obsession over an act of creation to bring their dream visions to life. They may stand for hours immersed in the light play of sun on the gables, entranced by the reactions of an admixture of venoms, or crafting the perfect expression in musical movements about the unique potpourri of odours produced by a particular alleyway.

Physical Description. Primitives tend to stand taller and are more willowy than the typical elf, rarely with an ounce of fat on their bodies as they devote every waking moment and all their energy to the perfection of their art. Some with an epicurean bent lie at the opposite end of the spectrum, representing the shockingly phenomenon of a morbidly obese elf. They share the same almond-shaped eyes of other elves, but their wide irises are always completely black, blending seamlessly with their pupils, and creating the impression of looking into a vast, bottomless well. Their clothing tends toward minimalist ideals and ranges in quality from a few diaphanous veils or scarves to little more than a rough loincloth. They see their bodies as another form of expression of their art and wish to reveal their canvas to as many as can see, regardless of physique, injury, or deformity. Exotic and extravagant tattoos, often covering much of their bodies, are not uncommon. In the cold winters of the Blight, they bundle up in rough, primitive garments of hide and thick fur, channeling the inner nature they sense within the walls of the city. The hygiene of these elves varies wildly, with some taking great pride in their physical aesthetic and others seeing such concerns as mundanely gauche, preferring to revel in a natural state of filth.

Society. Primitives take their name from the fact that they see themselves entirely outside society. In fact, to them society is an unnatural aberration that separates them from the enlightened beauty that they forever seek to capture and emulate in their art. As such, primitives with any political leaning at all tend toward the Anarchist camp. Some may even believe the true expression of their inner eye's beauty lies in watching the entire city burn.

Relations. Primitives have poor relations with virtually every other race, including other elves. Only other primitives and the most avant-garde of art patrons within the city who share their bohemian outlook find themselves in the social circles of the primitives, and even then, these relationships tend to be short, self-absorbed, and one-sided, the primitive moving on to some new companion in their eternal quest to capture their inner eye in art.

Religion. Primitives have all of the emotional capriciousness of other elves but tend to lack much value for kindness or any concept of beauty that lies outside their own personal obsessions. Most primitives are chaotic, but very few of them are good. Primitives are never lawful. Many primitives gravitate toward agnostic or atheistic beliefs as all other matters are subordinated to their personal obsessions. Some do, however, venerate deities that represent certain types of art, freedoms, or simply hedonism in general. Among the primitives who venerate a deity, some of the more common divine patrons are Dame Torren, Moccavallo, Bacchus-Dionysus, the Queen of Spiders, Pan, Lurz-Urcia, Pelora, Eliphaz, Arialee, Sriasha, Gilyo, Demogorgon, Bast, Tiamat, Shupnikkurat, the Church of Marwan, The Poppy's Chorus, and one of the largest chapters

of the Cult of the Unspeakable in the Lost Lands. A few even call upon the blessings of The Ash Queen or The Horseman. Above all, they fear the demon lord Mathrigaunt the Mad, knowing full well even in their indolence that to fully succumb to madness is to lose their vision entirely. There are rumours, however, of some primitives who have done that very thing and now secretly seek to propagate the spread of the insidious cult among their peers.

In addition, it is not unusual to see a new cult spring up among a group of primitives dedicated to some wholly or partially fabricated deity drawn from an exotic land or a prehistoric past viewed as somehow purer or more visceral. Without the backing of a true deity to provide any sort of evidence of divine inspiration whatsoever, these small cults usually dissolve in a matter of days or months at the most. While they exist, though, some of them can become quite dangerous or vicious in their ideals of physical excess at any cost.

Adventurers. While the harrowing and strenuous life of an adventurer holds little appeal for most languid primitives, for those whose imagination it does capture, little can hold them back. For them, something of the vision they seek to actualize lies in the chaotic freedom and risk of adventuring, and they jump into the life with both feet. There are few rigors they won't endure, dangers they won't face, and risks they won't take for the sake of their passion.

Male Names. Primitives eschew the names of their elven heritage and those of the surrounding human culture alike. They prefer to take on monosyllabic mononyms that they feel portray the underlying truth of their being or poetic descriptions that seek to do the same. To most others, their names seem pretentious, nonsensical, or both.

Male Names include Chak, Durst, Flower-Fire, Pum, Quell-The-Stone, Ran-The-Side-Fall, Son-Of-Nos, Slay-Made-Blue, Tak-tak, Thorn, Tutho, Uch, Willow, and Whole-Wind.

Female Names. Females use a similar naming convention as the males, but their names tend more toward the more poetic phrasing or individual words that they feel represent their moment. Such names include Abundance, Encounter-Upon-Green-Radiance-Of-Night, Light-In-Ever-Noise, Perfect, Pain-For-Promise, Rain, Sash, Two-Sides-Through, Under-Lives-Peace, and Willow.

Primitive Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Age. As with other elves, primitives are considered adults around the age of 100 and have a lifespan of up to 750 years.

Alignment. Primitives have all of the emotional capriciousness of other elves but tend to lack much value for kindness or any concept of beauty that lies outside their own personal obsessions. Most primitives are chaotic, but very few of them are good. Primitives are never lawful.

Size. Primitives are taller and thinner than other elves, averaging 5 and a half to well over 6 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray instead of color under darkness conditions.

City Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to a specific city district. You can add your proficiency bonus to Intelligence (History) checks for one other city district of your choice.

Artistic Devotion. Primitives are forever seeking the perfect expression of their form. You gain proficiency with one of the following: an instrument of your choice, calligrapher's supplies, cartographer's tools, cook's utensils, glassblower's tools, jeweller's tools, painter's supplies, or woodcarver's tools.

Fey Talent. Primitives quite often focus on their talent for music, song, dance, or some other form of entertainment. You gain proficiency in one of the following skills: Acrobatics, Performance, or Sleight of Hand.

Dreamspeaker. Primitives have the ability to tap into the power of sleep, dreams, and prescient reverie. Once per day, you may cast the *dream* spell. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You regain this ability after a long rest.

Know Your Own. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks involving your fellow primitives.

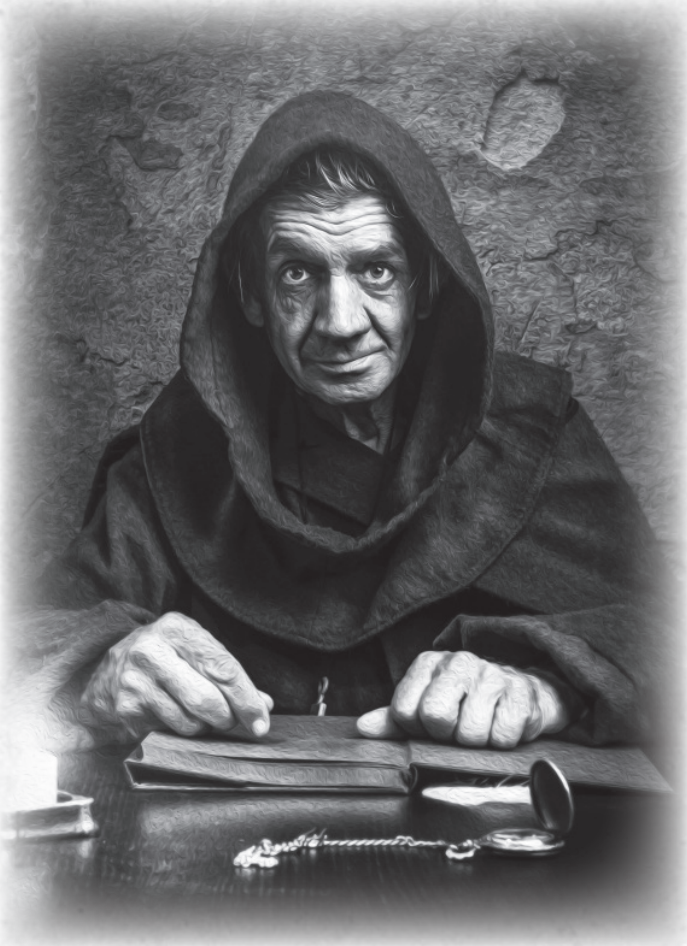
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Elvish.

Gnome, Tradelord

Tradelord gnomes are a common sight amongst the financial areas of the city; they are cunning and astute, good judges of character and risk, and their talents are in demand — by the legal, financial, and speculative professions, as well as the less-legal arms of those groups. In many ways, their reputation resembles that of the street dwarves in other urban areas throughout Akados, but whereas the street dwarves are known for being hard-working business owners and workers, tradelord gnomes are specifically involved as financiers, bankers, commodity speculators, investors, and trade factors at the highest echelons of local and international trade. And while they are known for their business acumen, they are not especially well-regarded for their scruples. A person always feels more comfortable with a tradelord gnome on his side of a negotiating table but much less comfortable with one on the opposite side.

Physical Description. Tradelord gnomes superficially resemble ordinary gnomes in all ways, but all tradelord gnomes are descended from a handful of Castorhage gnome families (no matter how distantly related), and all tend to bear a certain family resemblance. Their hair tends toward muted shades of brown, red, or sometimes green, though grey and silver seem to predominate even at relatively young ages. In addition, there is an unusually high incidence of balding among their numbers. Eyebrows are almost always thick and bushy, with wide, hooked noses, and large, protruding ears. Thick, brushy moustaches and sometimes sideburns are extremely common, though beards are never worn. Their skin also tends to be more pallid compared with their kin and is frequently extremely thin, almost parchment-like, with a spider web of tiny veins visible on the cheeks, chin, nose, and ears. Eyes tend to be bleary and slightly jaundiced, and myopia is very common, with many tradelord gnomes wearing spectacles before they reach adulthood.

Society. Tradelord gnomes are extremely preoccupied with social class and form. They are extremely proud of their Castorhage lineage from a few well-placed families whose involvement in the politics and finances of the city-state date back for centuries. With family names such as Bothelwaite,



Curringham, Evendon, and Shipwright, they feel that they are the true cream of the crop within the city-state, with a name that should open doors and get immediate recognition even among the unwashed Lowfolk. The fact that none of their family names is even remotely as well-known as the upstart parlor magician Shortstones and their seemingly endless progeny irks the families of the tradelords to no end, though they will never let on to being disturbed by a notion so far beneath them.

Relations. Tradelord gnomes tend to get on well with most other races, if at a comfortable and coolly indifferent arm's length. They hold ordinary gnomes in utter contempt, however. The city's Lowfolk recognize them as true "movers" within the Blight's social strata, and the Upper Class see them as formidable and respectable professionals, if not particularly friendly or suitable for socializing. The tradelord gnomes' natural standoffishness actually serves them well in their relations with others because it makes them seem stuffy and competent while at the same time masking their inclination toward pompousness biting condescension. The few that manage to get close to a tradelord gnome almost always find them rude and unpleasant but worthwhile companions nonetheless for their astute judgment and considerable skills at the bargaining table.

Religion. Favored religions are Sefagreth, Thyr, Dre'uain, Archeillus, and Iskardar, and no doubt more than a few who secretly revere Lord Mammon. Noticeably absent among the worship of the tradelord gnomes is the worship of their chaotic racial deity Hammer Mittelschmerz.

Adventurers. Tradelord gnomes seldom become adventurers, but some find the thrill of the discovery of new trade markets and the victory over opposing forces as a great draw and become sea captains, caravan leaders, or even trade negotiators in the most hostile of environments.

Male Names. Bates, Cumberlin, Huffingham, Jomas, Myles, Perrington, Tomorj, Trevor, Willin

Female Names. Agathra, Agned, Delorys, Gertrand, Myllicent, Myrtle, Pennifor

Tradelord Gnome Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Age. Much the same as their kin, tradelord gnomes mature at the same pace as humans. They reach adulthood in their 40s and regularly live between 350 and 500 years of age.

Alignment. Tradelords have a tendency toward law and neutrality, being much more concerned with reaching the means to their ends through skilful manipulation of the existing rules rather than with whether or not the ends themselves might be in any way worthy or moral. Lawful neutral and neutral are their most commonly taken alignments, with some exceptional individual skewing toward lawful good or lawful evil. Neutral good and neutral evil are extremely rare, and chaotic alignments are unheard of among them.

Size. Tradelord gnomes are commonly between 3 and 4 feet tall and weigh around 40 pounds. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray instead of color under darkness conditions.

City Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to a specific city district. You can add your proficiency bonus to Intelligence (History) checks for one other city district of your choice.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency with the Perception skill.

Know Your Own. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks involving your fellow tradelords.

Truth Twister. Quick wits and and even quicker tongue are your trademark. You are exceptionally talented at negotiation, lying, and discerning lies. You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks when attempting to lie and have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks when determining if you are a being lied to.

Urban Magic. Like many other gnomes, the Blight has altered the inherently magical nature of tradelord gnomes. This ability allows you to cast each of the following spells, without components, once per day: *floating disk*, *knock, message*, and *unseen servant*. You can cast these spells again after completing a long rest. The spellcasting ability for these spells is Charisma.

Weapon Familiarity. You have proficiency with short swords, rapiers, and whips.

Languages. You can read, write, and speak Common and Gnomish and either Semuric or Xaon.

Half-Orc, Shadowlamp

Shadowlampers, as they are typically called, are half-orcs in the Blight born pale and sickly looking. The light still hurts the enlarged eyes of these half-orcs. Sometimes referred to as vampires, ghouls, or undead by other city folk, they prefer to do their business by night. To many, however, the Shadowlamper is a boon; someone who prefers to work at night can come in very handy, not only for the criminal underclasses, but also amongst more legitimate professions. The Queen's 4th Shadowlampers are a renowned part of the City Watch, with a waiting list of seven years to join and the toughest entry tests in the whole Watch. The Illuminati have made great use of Shadowlampers, and these half-orcs are also ranked amongst some of the most famous spider-hunters in the city's history.

Physical Description. Shadowlamp half-orcs are tall like their more common kin, easily exceeding 6 feet in height for both genders, but lack the sheer muscle mass of their cousins. Their bodies are thin and corded with wiry muscle that makes them look more like scarecrows — or cadavers — than a typical half-orc, and their skins tend to run paler than the dusky or greenish hues more frequently found. They have wide eyes with large pupils that are frequently bloodshot and teary in bright lights. Though their lower canines are less prominent than is normal for half-orcs, they are nevertheless somewhat elongated, and the fact that their upper canines are likewise hypertrophied only adds to the comparisons to some sort of blood-drinking undead beast.

Society. As products of a wholly urban environment, shadowlampers do not suffer the persecution and ostracization seen by the societies of both of a typical half-orc's parents. This is partially because shadowlamp half-orcs are the offspring of mated shadowlamp half-orcs, the initial orc/human crossing having occurred generations in the past. This is also because with so many underclasses in the Blight held with equal disdain by the upper crust of society, it is too much trouble for a lone segment to be singled out for specific prejudice. They receive the hardships and privations of a second-class citizen, but then so do most folk of the Blight, so it seems like no unique burden to shadowlampers.

Relations. With no special prejudice levelled against them in the city of their birth and a generations-long dissociation from the separate cultures of their progenitors, shadowlamp half-orcs get along with the other races that inhabit the city just as would any other. No special grudges are harboured, and no great blood feuds recognized. A shadowlamper on the streets of the city would have the same possibility to like or dislike an elf he met on the street as he would an orc. Though some folk are put off by their cadaverous appearance and exhibit a prejudice along those lines, the respect they command for the work they do and the myriad of other racial prejudices that swell within the disparate folk of the Blight causes shadowlampers to not feel singled out as a target of vitriol by any particular group.

Religion. As creatures naturally suited for the dark of night, those few shadowlampers who do observe a formal religion tend to gravitate toward those that favour the shadows such as Mirkeer and Sister Shadow or other aspects of the night such as Narrah or even relating to their occupation such as Vanitthu A shadowlamper worshipping Grotaag is unheard of, but most pay no attention to any religion in particular.

Adventurers. As individuals, skilled for a certain line of work, in particular guarding, watching, or hunting at night or in the dark places of the city, shadowlampers make excellent adventurers, and many are drawn to such a life.

Male Names. Borkil, Daga, Hurk, Kultak, Merrik, Tarik, Yasg

Female Names. Borlea, Dresa, Morfuda, Shevzu, Tulik, Yada

Shadowlamp Half-Orc Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1, and your Dexterity score increases by 2.

Age. Shadowlamp half-orcs mature slightly faster than humans and are considered adults by the age of 14. They rarely live longer than 75 years.

Alignment. Shadowlamp half-orcs have no great propensity toward evil nor toward chaos. Likewise, they hold no special fondness for good

or law. They are just as likely to be chaotic evil as chaotic good, though only a very few could be considered lawful good. The largest portion of their population falls firmly within the boundaries of neutrality. Most work hard, do their job, support their families, and at the end of the day enjoy a pint and a cigar. They usually hold no great loyalty to the city or its institutions, but take great pride in their own work ethic and expertise in those areas in which they excel.

Size. Shadowlamp half-orcs are tall and lean, easily exceeding 6 feet in height for both genders. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Superior Darkvision. Your darkvision extends to a radius of 120 feet.

Sunlight Sensitivity. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks that occur in direct sunlight.

City Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to a specific city district. You can add your proficiency bonus to Intelligence (History) checks for one other city district of your choice.

Know Your Own. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks involving your fellow shadowlamps.

Keen Sight. You have advantage on sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks made in dim light or darker conditions.

Weapon Familiarity. You have proficiency with the greataxe, greatsword, and maul.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, Orc, and Undercommon.

Note. The shadowlamp half-orc is a variant of the half-orc described in the game manual. It is not a subtype and will not possess the same traits as non-variant half-orcs.

Halfling, Gypsy-Soul

Consummate traders and tricksters, gypsy-souls are halflings who feel a deep and abiding kindred with the Viroeni gypsy-folk of Akados. Though not related to these wandering tribes by blood, the gypsy-souls have associated with them for so many generations that these halfling bloodlines indeed seem more closely akin to the Viroeni than to their own kind. In fact, the gypsy-souls speak the Rama language of the Viroeni and generally keep to their own neighbourhoods, caravans, or encampments rather than mix extensively with others. The exceptions to this are, of course, the Viroeni themselves, who see the gypsy-souls as kindred little brothers and sisters and the halfling boatfolk of Castorhage. Interaction in the city, however, can draw some out of their insular natures, at least for a time. Gypsy-souls support themselves as tinkers, traders, and in the performance of odd jobs whenever possible. Some have small animal herds**.**

Physical Description. Gypsy-souls in general conform to the physical appearance of their halfling kin. They tend to be a little bit taller — some reaching the outlandish height of 3 foot, 6 inches — and a bit leaner, rarely having the paunch from a life of prosperity and good meals that tends to find its way onto many halflings as they reach middle age. They almost always go barefoot, which is not unusual for halflings in general, and their ears are less pointed, in some cases being completely indistinguishable from human ears in shape. Their thick curly hair tends toward dark brown and black, with many wearing thick sideburns and even short beards, though rarely moustaches, and they have a tendency to grey early, with many having thick streaks of white running through their unruly mops at even a relatively young age. Their eyes share dark shades similar to their hair though occasionally a striking ice blue appears. Their skins are a shade darker than the almond coloration of typical halflings, possibly from greater exposure to the sun in their wandering lifestyle. They quickly develop many fine lines and wrinkles from years in the sun and wind and a tendency toward laughter, though this does not make them appear older as much as it makes them seem jollier and more world wise.

Society. Like the Viroeni wanderers that they have come to identify with, gypsy-souls spend most of their life traveling upon the roads of Akados in caravans of small wagons. These are frequently included as part of a Viroeni caravan but not always so. When they are with Viroeni, they are treated as one of their own and answer to the tribes reigning matriarch just as do her human kinfolk. This arrangement is very egalitarian in that on many occasions the Viroeni themselves answer to a halfling gypsy-soul matriarch if she is the most senior member of the caravan. On the open road or in an encampment, gypsy-souls are prone to music, dancing, and the telling of elaborate jokes. They do not involve themselves in pranks very frequently because they are accustomed to living on few resources and among hostile peoples so that anything that might damage another's property or dignity is seen as detrimental to their survival. Rather, they confine their internal rivalries to clever jests and barbs for the amusement of all, and a gypsy-soul that knows he has been bested enjoys the roast as much as any onlookers and begins planning his future rejoinder almost immediately. Pranks upon non-gypsy-souls, however, is an entirely different matter, and truly legendary members of their families are those who can pull the most outlandish pranks upon other peoples.

Relations. If folk look upon the Viroeni as roving skulks and thieves, they look upon the gypsy-souls who associate with them as little better than an infestation of vermin. Only in municipalities of established relation with gypsy-souls do they find any real welcome. In Castorhage, there are entire barrios occupied by gypsy-souls who have made a more permanent abode for themselves, and here they have become enough of a fixture to avoid constant persecution. It is true that the folk of the Blight look upon all gypsy-souls as cutpurses and pickpockets, but then, most other groups are suspected of the same, so the gypsy-souls find an easier acceptance than in most other places. In places not as accustomed to the presence of gypsy-souls, they are usually confined to isolated encampments away from towns and cities, and allowed entry only on market days when their wares and services might be of use. Gypsy-souls harbour some resentment toward this inherent disregard for them, but their own habit of tricks and pranks does not engender them to these communities.

Religion. Their love of the freedom of the road and the irreverent ways of halflings means a great many favour the halfling deity Mick O'Delving with Pekko almost equal in popularity. Their inherent wanderlust and love of the many hidden twists and turns of life leads many into reverence of Belon the Wise, Moccavallo, Tykee, or Zors. Some of the older gypsy-souls are devoted to the traditional Viroeni deities of Mert, Vionir, or Lurz-Urcia. Very rarely, an evil gypsy-soul might venerate Demogorgon as the Lord of Fate.

Adventurers. Their love of life on the road makes adventuring a natural choice for gypsy-souls. Many would claim that adventuring is their only occupation, whether they be an aged caravan matriarch, mischievous street urchin, or established urban tinker. The draw of an adventurer's life is one of the reasons that many gypsy-souls who establish themselves in cities such as Castorhage eventually abandon their sedentary life and take to the roads once again.

Male Names. Gypsy-souls have abandoned the typical naming conventions among halflings in favour of those of the Viroeni. Common male names include Alfonso, Andrej, Baldo, Hanzo, Luca, Marko, Stefan, and Toman.

Female Names. Esmara, Eva, Mirella, Nuri, Riva, Tabita, Violca

Gypsy-Soul Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Age. Gypsy-soul halflings reach the age of majority at 20 and can often live up to 150 years.

Alignment. Gypsy-souls are chaotic by nature though rarely truly evil. Many of them, in fact, have a heart of gold that is tempered by their impish ways. Their love of freedom and disdain of rules and the shackles of civilization means that they are never inclined toward lawfulness. Most frequently, they are chaotic good or neutral with some neutral good and chaotic neutral. Only on the rarest occasions are neutral evil or chaotic evil gypsy-souls encountered.

Size. Gypsy-souls in general conform to the physical appearance of their halfling kin. They tend to be a little bit taller — some reaching the outlandish height of 3 foot, 6 inches — and a bit leaner, rarely having the paunch from a life of prosperity and good meals that tends to find its way onto many halflings as they reach middle age. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

City Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to a specific city district. You can add your proficiency bonus to Intelligence (History) checks for one other city district of your choice.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency with the Perception skill.

Know Your Own. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks involving your fellow gypsy-souls.



Gypsy-Cant. You and your fellow gypsy-souls have a special cant that allows you to pass secret messages in front of listeners who do not speak Rama. Even those that speak Rama would find it near impossible to decipher these exchanges.

Shiftless. Gypsy-souls have a reputation for larceny and guile — and sometimes it's well deserved. You can add your proficiency bonus to Charisma (Deception) and Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks.

Weapon Familiarity. You have proficiency with short swords, rapiers, and whips.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, Halfling, Rama and River Cant.

Human, Blighted

It is a peculiar facet of the Blight that those who dwell there notice a subtle change over many generations, almost as though their deeds truly become tattooed upon their bodies. This is true in general only for those who have several generations of Castorhage in their kin; those who manage to escape, who throw off the shackles even for a few years, or who by good fortune are somehow immune to this effect are unaffected.

Others are not so lucky, and this kinship manifests in subtle changes within the bodies of those who come from such long lines of locals. For example, those who use their bodies for brute force — the builders, labourers and roofers — can be identified by their peculiarly large hands, or shoulders, or backs. Miners develop wider eyes with larger pupils; chimney sweeps, an unsettling ability to voluntarily dislocate their limbs; nobility may be tainted by generations of envy or lust and have peculiarly feral or angered expressions. In general, these changes are not monstrous but are all the more unsettling for their subtlety.

Physical Description. Blighted humans are typical of the human folk of western Akados. Their skin tones are usually somewhat pale and range from sallow to ivory to pinkish all the way to the almost pure white of albinism. Whereas most of western Akados tends toward more aquiline features, those of the blighted are usually coarser and somewhat broader. Their hair runs to the same dark browns, auburns, and black of western Akados, and their eyes are a range of blue, grey, blue-grey, bluish-black, dark brown, and pale violet. As noted, their physical features do tend to reflect the sort of occupation their family has held for many generations, though these changes are subtle and fall well within the normal physical morphology found within the population.

Society. No single social stratum fits the blighted. They can be from the lowest of the city's gutters to the marbled galleries and halls of the Capitol. In fact, a member of the blighted would not even identify himself as such. Being one of the blighted is not a recognised classification; it is simply a physical reality of those whose families have dwelt in the city-state long enough for physical changes to occur. This is reflected in that the one feature they all truly have in common is their ancestry's long residence within Castorhage.

Relations. Like humans elsewhere, the relations of the blighted run the gamut from open integration with other races and cultures to rampant xenophobia and prejudice based on the individual's upbringing and circumstances.

Religion. The blighted have a higher tendency to follow the religions indigenous to the city of Castorhage as opposed to those of elsewhere in Akados. There are many exceptions to this, however, as the folk of Castorhage includes immigrants from across the world of Lloegyr who have brought their native beliefs with them to their new homes. By far the largest human congregation of any god in Castorhage is that of Mother Grace, the city's de facto patroness deity.

Adventurers. The adventuring life among the blighted is more dependent upon their occupation and circumstances than their race. An indolent nobleman with money to burn and free time to spare might take up adventuring as a pastime to relieve his boredom, whereas a Lowfolk woman living in the gutter and begging or picking pockets to feed herself might see it as an opportunity to increase her prosperity.

Male Names. The blighted use the same styles and forms of names as the rest of the citizenry of Castorhage. Their naming conventions do not mark them in any way as different from anyone else.

Female Names. Like the males, blighted females share the same naming conventions as the folk of the city around them.

Blighted Human Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your ability scores each increase by 1.

Age. Humans reach the age of majority in their late teens. Their lifespan is usually less than a century.

Alignment. The full range of alignment options are commonly found among the blighted.

Size. Humans have a large degree of variation in their height and weight and can range from 5 feet to 6 and a half feet. Your size is Medium despite the large variance.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

City Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to a specific city district. You can add your proficiency bonus to Intelligence (History) checks for one other city district of your choice.

Citysoul. Within the Blight, you add your proficiency bonus to Wisdom (Perception), Wisdom (Insight), and Dexterity (Stealth) checks. In addition, once per day, you can become lost in thought in a trance-like state for 1 minute to subconsciously plumb their knowledge of the city. At the end of the trance, you may make a Charisma (Persuasion) check with advantage. You regain the ability to become lost in thought after a long rest.

Know Your Own. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks involving your fellow blighted.

Recall. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks in relation to knowing the urban geography of the Blight, the fastest method to get from one location to another, and for finding specific locations within the city. In addition, you can spend at least 1 minute concentrating on your surroundings to know which district you are in, even if you cannot see your surroundings.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one additional human language of your choice including Rama, River Cant, Thieves' Cant, and Xaon

Note. The blighted human is a variant of the standard human described in the game manual. It is not a subtype and will not possess the same traits as non-variant humans.



New Races

The scourge of the Blight does more than simply twist the essence of those unfortunate enough to live there for generation after generation and create new traits and subtypes of existing races. The Blight also has entirely new races … or has at least has attracted these otherwise rare races in numbers unknown elsewhere.

Briny (Half-Skum)

Fishermen spit when they hear the name mentioned — briny, fish-bred — born of a forced union between skum and the wives of men. The humans hate the children that flounder in the streets, children more at home in the cold, dark waters than in the lands of the sun and air. They are children that, they say, have some purpose in being on land; children that remind them of the foul act that created them; children that hate the day, hate the sun, yet are attracted to it, like moths to a flame, their eyes watering painfully as they stare into the glow of the summer orb, praying for someone to turn off the light.

They come from the deep and cold places below, watching the warmth of landmen's wives with greedy eyes, eyes that want to steal. Skum lurk everywhere in this city, and the local strain constantly seek a human mate to take and impregnate. If a skum is not born, the union is cast out — along with the mother — by the skum, who are bound by an ancient ritual not to kill them (some have conjectured that the aboleth expressly forbid such killings to allow their progeny to establish a foothold on land). The women (called "brine mothers" by most folk) often come back — poor, silent creatures that they are, no matter what they were like before. They always bring back what they have been given, these poor taken wives, but they never tell what they saw, or what happened to them. The given thing is called a briny, and hated although it is, it is well-known amongst the fishermen that to kill the child means to also kill the wife, for many have tried. Many have killed the foul infant in the hope of freeing the wife, only to find her hanged a few days later — always by her own hand.

Physical Description. Some are more human than others, but each is deformed in some way, and about a quarter of them slowly change as they age, eventually undergoing a terrible transformation, and becoming a skum. However, for a character, this end can be a long way off, or perhaps it never occurs. They always inherit some aquatic feature: bulging eyes, shreds of wan, scaly skin between fingers or toes, or perhaps an unsettling smell of brine and fish.

Society. Briny tend to stick with other briny — it's safer that way, although the more human ones find it fairly easy to blend into society. Some briny thrive on their appearance and make a living from it in the freakshows and side-stalls of the city.

Relations. Many locals are bigoted, and fishermen in particular despise such creatures. This can harden the attitude of a briny, who may become aggressive. They make excellent friends, however, since anyone who overlooks their ancestry is unusual and to be prized. Some people pity the briny, and show them acts of great kindness; many religions in the city happily accept converts to their cause. Briny can procreate with another briny, and do so willingly and regularly in the city, most notably on the Gyre. The resulting offspring is always a briny who does not further transform as it ages and is considered, perhaps, the most blest of the briny by their small society.

Religion. Some briny are unaware of the eventual end fate has in store for them, while others seek to stop the awful transformation with devotion and prayer. Communities of briny develop their own religious practices based upon nature or sea, or adopt those of other races to better blend into the societies of which they are a small part. Amongst these, the worship of Brine is by far the most common.

Adventurers. Tough lives make rogues or fighters of many briny, whilst others take to religion and rise to high ranks. Amongst their own societies, religion tends to be more druidic than clerical. Be sure to check with your Dungeon Master to see if you can play a briny character.

Male Names. To blend in, briny often take human names, although those with an inherent favouring of the Aquan language may take a darker name more in keeping with their past.

Female Names. Like the males, the less common females also tend to take names from societies in which they find themselves.

Briny Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Charisma score decreases by 2.

Destined Devolution. Briny's age at the same rate as a half-orc. Of those that die of old age, 1 in 4 spontaneously slough off their skin to reveal a living adult skum within. This transformation functions as the *reincarnate* spell, with the newly formed skum. Your Strength and Constitution scores each increase by 4, your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Charisma score decreases by 2.

Alignment. Although they can have any alignment, briny tend to be neutral, their upbringing making them more self-reliant and less biased toward one school of thought or another.

Size. Briny exhibit the same range of variance in height and build as humans. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking and swimming speeds are both 30 feet.

Type. You are of the monstrosity type.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray instead of color under darkness conditions.

Amphibious. You can breathe air and water.

Sunlight Sensitivity. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks that occur in direct sunlight.

Aquatic Mastery. Intelligence (History), Wisdom (Perception), Dexterity (Stealth), and Wisdom (Survival) checks are made with your proficiency bonus added while in an aquatic environment (regardless of whether you are above or below the surface). Wisdom (Perception) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks are instead made with advantage when you are below the surface of the water.

Damage Resistance. You are resistant to cold damage.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common.

Coprophagi (Roachfolk)

In a city of social dregs, the coprophagi (or roachfolk as they are more commonly known) are truly the scrapings from the bottom of the barrel. Reviled by all, the roachfolk live almost invisibly within the City-State of Castorhage, restricting their movements and habitats to areas where others wouldn't care to look or to the sheltering darkness of night that hides them from the eyes who might take umbrage at their very existence.

It is thought that roachfolk originally must have hailed from Between or some other vile plane because no records speak of their existence before the rise of the city-state, and they are largely unknown elsewhere on the continent. The fact that they bear a vague resemblance to dwarves, however, speaks of a far closer and more tragic origin, though none amongst the stout folk speaks of such a thing, and they would violently oppose anyone who attempted to lay such a claim. For their part, the coprophagi keep to themselves and avoid contact with others whenever possible for fear or instigating pogroms against their very existence — a circumstance that has occurred more than once in the past. The fact that they continue to survive within the Blight — and in significant numbers — is a testimony to their ruggedness and adaptability.

Physical Description. The coprophagi in all ways resemble a humanoid cockroach. They stand erect on two, thick insectile lower legs with two more sets of limbs extending from their torso, a pair of long insect-like arms extending from their flanks midway between waist and shoulder, and a second pair of smaller insectile appendages that extend from their shoulders. Their hide is brown or black and like a carapace in texture and durability, and a larger, thicker carapace extends down their backs from neck to thigh to provide their own natural armour. Their heads are like



those of a large roach, with long antennae extending from the front, but they do have an oddly and unexpectedly humanoid shape to them. Some even have feeble beards growing down from their mandibled jaws, giving rise to the rumour of some mysterious dwarven heritage.

Society. Roachfolk keep to themselves, their society largely opaque to outsiders. What most do know of them is that they have formed a sort of fraternal order called the Festering Brethren. Of all the roachfolk encountered by other races, it is these who are typically seen and are some of the few who will even go about in the daytime in the view of others. The Festering Brethren largely cover their bodies in rags and winding clothes like lepers, though it does not disguise their insectoid shapes, and many even carry a curved staff with a small bell on the end that rings as they use it to walk. Also like that of a leper, these staves are intended to give the other folk of Castorhage warning that a member of the Festering Brethren approaches so they can relocate elsewhere if they wish to avoid being in the presence of the roachfolk.

Relations. Roachfolk are tolerated at best and are unwelcome in most establishments within the city. They lack the stigma of true vermin borne by the night-slugs but nevertheless are treated little better. Outside the city, they are likely to be viewed as a monster and a threat. No law in Castorhage requires the coprophagi to use the bell-staves — though some insist that it is only a matter of time — and the rampant pacifism that the Festering Brethren tend to display certainly helps that situation. Despite their peacefulness, though, the coprophagi are willing to defend themselves, and the Festering Brethren in particular have proven on many occasions to be capable combatants, further discouraging outright acts of violence against their race. Of all races, the mongrelfolk are most sympathetic of the coprophagi, and might perhaps even be distant relations to the roachfolk.

Religion. Roachfolk are survivors and have little use for religion. The Festering Brethren in particular are an order dedicated to Zors, the Hanged Man, albeit in a much more lawful aspect than that with which that demigod is usually associated. The majority of coprophagi within the city worship either Mother Grace or Sister Shadows. There is a secretive

minority, however, who cling to the prophecies of The Horseman as they time when their race will rise above all others.

Adventurers. The hardscrabble existence among the coprophagi makes techniques for day-to-day survival their first priority. A part of that is to avoid getting caught when they're scrounging about the gutters of the city. Be sure to check with your Dungeon Master to see if you can play a coprophagi character.

Male* or *Female Names. The names of the coprophagi are unpronounceable to most humanoid tongues. They, therefore, habitually take simple names borrowed from the predominant cultures around them irrespective of gender or meaning. However, they hold no special connection to these names and frequently take a new name whenever they next must deal with folk who are not of their own kind. Some common names include Abe, Ban, Bell, Bob, Cane, Cob, Dock, Duke, Guv, Jud, Lob, Lord, Mab, Nob, Pod, Prince, Queen, Rose, and Tune.

Coprophagi Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Intelligence and Charisma scores decrease by 2 points each.

Alignment. Coprophagi tend toward neutrality, and their actions are typically those necessary to get by each day. That said, few roachfolk are chaotic because they have learned that to provoke the populace of the Blight with their actions is to invite their own extermination.

Size. Roachfolk are between 3 and 4 and a half feet tall and weigh between 70 and 100 pounds. Your size is Small.

Type. You are of the monstrosity type.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 40 feet.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray instead of color under darkness conditions.

Spider Climb. You can climb difficult surfaces without needing to make an ability check.

Four-Armed. Roachfolk possess two middle limbs and two smaller upper limbs. As a bonus action, when you make a successful melee attack against a target, you can attempt to grapple your foe (see the game manual for more information on grappling).

Winged. You have undersized wings tucked beneath your back carapace. You gain a fly speed of 40 feet but are not able to hover. You must land at the end of any round in which you fly or fall, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet you fall.

Sure-footed. You are able to use your extra limbs to assist with balance. You have advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock you prone.

Natural Weapons. Your claws are natural weapons which can be used to make unarmed strikes. If you successfully hit with your claws, you deal 1d4 + your Strength modifier slashing damage.

Natural Armor. Your thick carapace grants you an AC of 12 + your Dexterity Modifier.

Extreme Resilience. You are immune to all non-magical diseases and have advantage on saving throws against poisons. Additionally, you are not subject to the exhaustion effects of temperature extremes (see the game manual for more information on temperature extremes and their effects).

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Mongrotic.

Lantern Folk

The lantern-folk are an offshoot from the species known as the derro, who are fey-descended creatures of the dark realms below the earth. The derro themselves are evil, and insane by any normal, surface-dweller's standpoint. The lantern-folk are less inclined to evil than their deeper-dwelling cousins, and also somewhat less insane.

At home in the Underneath, the lantern-folk have lived long enough in the shadow of the great city-state above to have taken on some of its characteristics, much like the blighted humans (see below).

Physical Description. The lantern folk have skin ranging from pale blue to stark white, and wild, bushy hair ranging from stark white to pale blue (hair and skin tone are rarely the same). They wear moustaches and sideburns with regularity, though beards are fairly uncommon. They have



bulging, pupil-less eyes like their cousins, the derro, and only four fingers on each hand, though their feet have five toes. They are small and slight of build, but extremely light on their feet and quick.

Society. Lantern folk dwell among the dwarves of the Underneath and elect delve-chiefs to govern their neighbourhoods in an orderly and peaceful fashion. They typically work as miners, craftsmen, traders, tunnel maintenance workers, or gatherers of resources available only in the Underneath or lower subterranean areas. When encountered on the surface in the night markets or well-shaded establishments during the day they sell their rare gems or negotiate contracts with surface firms for the kinds of specialised work that they can provide. The derros' racial propensity for sadistic experiments and poisoning only rarely emerges among lantern folk individuals.

Relations. The lantern folk have now lived in the Underneath for centuries without causing any (significant) problems. They are distrusted, but not generally feared or hated.

Religion. For the most part, the lantern folk have embraced the religion of the dwarves of the Underneath who sponsored them and hold Vergrimm Earthsblood or Crugas in high regard. Some revere Dwerfater or even Grox, but these are much fewer and farther between.

Adventurers. For folk interested in plumbing the maze of tunnels that exists beneath the Underneath, few are more suited to this lifestyle than the lantern folk. Their natural ability to navigate these low passages and survive in the great darkness makes them most suitable. They also do well aboveground in the many cellars of the city or even out on its winding streets at night. Be sure to check with your GM to see if you can play a lantern folk character.

Male Names. Bariom, Caedimus, Cassius, Filo, Luciliun, Tiberonus

Female Names. Andromeda, Caliopa, Gratica, Koryola, Veran, Vesta

Lantern Folk Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Charisma score increases by 2.

Age. Lantern folk, like other derro, mature very quickly and are considered to be full grown by the age of 9 or 10 and have a lifespan similar to humans.

Alignment. The lantern folk no longer embrace the evil ways of their derro forebears. They have also shed much of the chaos inherent to the madness of others of their kind. Lantern folk prefer to live and let live, preferring a neutral approach to other races and to society. It is not unheard of for the chaotic madness of their ancestors to manifest in individual lantern folk.

Size. Derro stand between 3 and 4 feet tall and weigh between 35 and 45 pounds. Your size is small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

City Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (History) checks related to the Underneath. You can add your proficiency bonus to Intelligence (History) checks for one other city district of your choice.

Derro Magic. You know the *light* and *thaumaturgy* cantrips. When you reach 3rd level you can use the *color spray* spell once per day. When you reach 5th level you can cast the *darkness* spell once per day. You do not need material components for these spells but you are unable to cast these spells while in direct sunlight. You can cast these spells again with this trait after you have finished a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Darkvision. You are accustomed to dark and very dim conditions from having spent your life mostly underground. Under dim light conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit. You see shades of gray instead of color under darkness conditions.

Sunlight Sensitivity. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks that occur in direct sunlight.

Know Your Own. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks involving your fellow lantern folk.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, you can take the hide action as a bonus action.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, Dwarvish, and Undercommon.

Night-Slug

None is as naturally capable of the fine art of breaking and entering as the night-slug. Fortunately for society, few are also as cowardly. Night-slugs maintain their existence simply by avoiding notice. Sometimes called the Tunnel People by the few folks of Castorhage that run across them in the endless sewer channels beneath the city, these elusive creatures often reside in small crawlspaces or even the hollows between the outer masonry and inner plaster and lathe of a house. They can maneuver their bodies through seemingly impossible spaces. Those among their number who are not lucky enough to acquire such grand accommodations typically live in places that allow them to avoid notice — the city dump, a gable hanging over a small alleyway, and so forth.

Physical Description. Night-slugs have a humanoid structure with blotch-grey skin bearing randomly arranged tufts of muddy-brown hair. Their arms are thin and elongated, hanging limply at their sides, and they seem to possess little if any muscle tone in general. Their ligaments and tendons are exceptionally elastic, allowing a night-slug to elongate its arms and legs, in the process pulling what muscle it has closer to its frame. In addition, night-slugs have a "collapsible" skeleton; its bones are composed primarily of cartilage, allowing the creature to squeeze into incredibly small areas.

Society. Night-slugs are true scavengers living on the fringes of the societies of others. They usually prefer densely populated urban areas for the increased number of hiding places and resources from which to scrounge their needs. Most night-slugs are loners because of the limited resources available to them, mated couples rarely staying together beyond the birth of a brood of whimps (as their young are called), and mothers generally abandoning their young as soon as they reach maturity after 3 years.

Relations. While most humanoids despise night-slugs and find their presence loathsome, few actually fear the creatures. More than one urban goodwife has walked into a room of her house at night to find a night-slug crouched in the corner chewing on a lace table runner and staining the rug with its noxious skin secretions. While the typical reaction certainly includes a scream, rather than flight it just as often concludes with her grabbing a broom and chasing the creature until it manages to squeeze back through a crack in the baseboards to the safety of the inner walls. In some cities plagued by these creatures, there is an entire industry for exterminators hired to enter homes and buildings to clear out night-slug infestations. The only race that could truly be said to hold empathy for the night-slugs are the wretched mongrelfolk on the rare occasions when the two peoples cross paths.



Religion. In general night-slugs are not religious and devote little time or energy in contemplation of the gods. As such, there is no religion that could be said to be typical of night-slugs, and most follow no religion at all.

Adventurers. Unlike their skulk cousins who possess a more violent bent, night-slugs are inherently cowardly and rarely a threat to even those who would otherwise find themselves at their mercy. Be sure to check with your Dungeon Master to see if you can play a night-slug character.

Names. As loners and outcasts, most night-slugs don't bother with names at all. Their lack of interaction with most others prevents any sort of need for one. A night-slug identifies everyone as either "self" or "other/danger." Of the few that do take names, they are usually a single word — bereft of context — borrowed from another language or a monosyllabic name that sounds pleasing to a particular night-slug's ear. They make no distinction between male or female names. Examples include Bloo, Fancy, Glugh, Plop, Spoon, and Tater.

Night-Slug Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 4, but your Intelligence is reduced by 2 and your Charisma is reduced by 4. No score can be raised above 20 or reduced below 3.

Age. Night-slugs are able to survive on their own by age 3. By age 5, they are considered adults. Night-slugs seldom live more than 30 years.

Alignment. Most night-slugs have no strong ethical convictions of any kind. They survive by stealing, so they tend toward Chaos and Neutrality.

Size. Night-slugs are Small creatures. Because they're so flexible and able to squeeze themselves into their surroundings, they make Stealth checks with advantage.

Type. You are of the monstrosity type.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 20 feet.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray in darkness, not colors.

Sly Crawler. While prone, a night-slug has a Crawl speed of 20 feet, and crawling doesn't slow it down even in difficult terrain. A crawling night-slug doesn't trigger opportunity attacks when it crawls out of an enemy's reach.

Slime Coat. The skin of a night-slug secretes a thin fluid resembling slimy perspiration that has a musty odor and leaves a stain on most fabrics. This coating protects the night-slug against grappling; other creatures have disadvantage when trying to grapple a night-slug, and a night-slug has advantage on its attempts to escape from grappling. It also makes night-slugs easy to track; Survival checks to follow a night-slug's trail across any type of terrain are made with advantage.

Compression. Night-slugs can move through spaces one size category smaller than themselves without squeezing, and they can squeeze through openings two size categories smaller.

Languages. You read, write, and speak Common.

Swyne

"Lord, why can't I get a decent tailor these days? Adjust my cravat, idiot; can't you see it's crooked? How can I go to the lodge dressed like a human? I hope they have those succulent kidneys tonight, the ones that they serve just lightly toasted with sugar. They have fine food at the lodge — not that you'd know about the finer things in life. We'll drink the finest Crava from crystal and eat our fill before talking business over cabb'e and hookahs filled with the finest tobacco and insectum money can buy. We'll trade millions tonight, you know? Millions! Can you imagine a million? I thought not. That's the trouble with humans — no imagination, and little appreciation for the finer things in life — little appreciation of anything, in fact."

Pleasure, pleasure, and pleasure: the three "P's" of swyne philosophy. A swyne lives to enjoy, to eat the finest food, to romance the most beautiful people, to plunder the greatest treasures. A swyne is a voyeur, a pleasure-seeker, a lothario. They do anything and everything to ensure that they get the most out of life.

In essence a humanoid pig, the swyne is usually fat, sallow-eyed, and hungover from excess. Dressed in the best he can buy, a swyne gets what he can out of life — as often and as plentifully as possible. Roughly human in size and shape — and with all the foibles and interests that accompanies — the swyne are often mistaken for fat humans from a distance, until their snouts and piggy eyes come closer into view. Swyne tend to stick together, and refer to each other as brother or sister hog.

Physical Description. Some swyne can pass for human; so subtle are their porcine features. Others resemble humanoid pigs, with hoggish features, clumsy hands, and squealing laughter. They all tend to be fat (a result of enjoying as much fine food as they can, as often as they can), and prone to being clumsy; their porcine ancestry runs deep, and occasionally shows itself in their eating habits.

Society. Swyne stick together. A swyne almost always helps another swyne in trouble, often with the benefit of a considerable lecture on the error of their ways and how the suffering swyne in question should follow the path of his benefactor, whatever that path may be. Swyne live for excess, and have developed many guilds of their own to band together to ensure mutual benefit — providing, of course, that the benefit is primarily their own. The swyne have developed thousands of clubs related to excess and pleasure, the most famous of which are the Hedonists, a group perpetually related to dark rumours of excess, torture, and cruelty over enormously excessive luncheons.



Relations. Everyone has his uses, and a swyne judges life by the number of associates he has. Their selfish natures tend to make true friendships rare but incredibly close; a swyne friend is one for life, but a swyne associate cannot be trusted. Swyne deeply admire the banking gnomes of the city, and many close associations have and do take place across the city. They consider elves to be flighty and unpredictable, dwarves miserable, and half-orcs repulsive. They like a halfling's appetite and admire the human capacity for vice. They take great offence at being likened to pigs, and often refer to other humanoid races as monkeys as a riposte if so insulted.

Religion. Swyne religions are based around acquisition: be it monetary, rare objects, land, property, or any other such avarice. Porfask, the Swyne God of Wine-cellars is one; Hork, Goddess of Musk, another. Of course, Mammon has the greatest share of worshippers among the race and has been adopted into the swyne pantheon — whether he is aware of it or not. To many races, the swyne gods seem trivial in their focus; to a swyne, they are divine in their singular greed.

Adventurers. The restless greed of the swyne makes them useful allies, which, coupled with their brotherliness, makes them useful contacts. Be sure to check with your Dungeon Master to see if you can play a swyne character.

Male Names. Boarbrand, Bogslob, Grund, Grork, Hobb, Hogwell, Hoglard, Pikskin

Female Names. Asparagus, Cauliflower, Cupling, Ladywell, Lettuce, Pigmella, Porcinia, Porflower, Sugary, Winscent, Winseed

Swyne Racial Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution and Charisma scores each increase by 2, but your Dexterity is reduced by 2.

Age. Swyne mature at roughly the same rate as humans and typically have the same lifespan as their human counterparts.

Alignment. Swyne can be of any alignment. Most often, their gluttony and greed are their motivators pushing them to follow their whims and do whatever they are able to get away with. They tend to be chaotic neutral or neutral evil.

Size. Swyne are generally as tall as humans but are almost all very plump to morbidly obese. Your size is Medium.

Speed. You have a base walking speed of 30 feet.

Darkvision. Under dim conditions, you can see up to 60 feet as if the area were brightly lit, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You see shades of gray in darkness, not colors.

Gut Feeling. Swyne are naturally gifted at judging people or sniffing out a bargain. You have proficiency in Insight.

Healthy. Swyne can — and often do — eat almost anything, and their powerful fortitude makes them highly resistant to toxins and sickness. You have advantage on all saving throws against poison and disease.

Keen Smell. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Stubborn. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or compelled.

Languages. You read, write, and speak Common and one additional modern language of your choice.

Blight Backgrounds

Where does your character's story begin? Why does it begin there? What experiences shaped your character and why? How did the environment that your character has lived helped determine who he is and why? These are some of the questions you might consider when you create your character. Below you will find numerous Blight backgrounds that can be used as a starting point when you are crafting your character and their story.

As you read through the below backgrounds, you will notice that several are tailored for specific races within the Blight. This was intentional and provides additional, defining characteristics to those races. That doesn't

mean that other races are not allowed to have these backgrounds. If a specific background is good for your character then work with your GM to customize it for your game. As always, these are optional suggestions intended to immerse you and your character into the Blight.

For characteristics, ideals, bonds, and flaws, consult the game manual and choose those that work best for your character concept.

Alchymyst

Typically found surrounded by bubbling pipes and jars, frothing jugs of vile-smelling ichor, and tubes connecting to tubes connecting to tubes, you were once admired throughout the city for your nose for the task and cunning skills with all manner of exotic substances. But you grew obsessed with perfecting your art and your reputation quickly became that of dangerous and unpredictable, if not mad. You now ply your trade out of the eye of the public, and only to customers that are looking for less traditional means of enhancement.

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, Medicine
Tool Proficiencies: Alchemist's tools
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A quill, bottle of black ink, a small notebook with various arcane formulae inscribed within, a set of common clothes, a pouch containing 15 gp

Feature: Fleshwarp

Fleshwarping is gruesome but all too common in the Blight. You have developed a knack for the practice of altering a creature's physical form through the use of alchemy. Much as life is extended through the use of *elixir of life*†, you are able to enhance life with your alchemical potions and goo to make it bigger, better, stronger, and faster.

Boatfolk

The river barges where you were born, grew up, and have lived all your life are all you know. You and your people are fiercely insular and come from tightknit families. You celebrate your own holidays and have your own festivals, manners, and cant. Tradition is very important to you and yours, and no one, not even the Queen, will make you all change. You've seen the looks outsiders give you when you speak in River Cant, and you are sure their suspicious glares hide their disdain for you and your people.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Insight
Tool Proficiencies: Navigator's tools, vehicles (water)
Languages: River Cant
Equipment: A family heirloom, a clan symbol carved from **lyme walrus** ivory, a cudgel, and a pouch containing 5 gp

Feature: Oral Tradition

You are responsible for the lore and history of your clan. You were chosen by your gran to carry the traditions and ways of your people. At gatherings, children and adults alike seek you out to hear the stories, deeds and folklore of the boatfolk. One day, you too will pick someone to carry on the tradition.

Crooked

You have been touched by Between and are not like others. You cannot stand to look in the mirror for fear of seeing things from your worst nightmares reaching out to pull you down, into the dark, to slowly devour your as you unleash a scream that no one hears. Your peculiarity and random outbursts draw looks and whispers that make you uncomfortable and misanthropic.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Perception
Tool Proficiencies: None
Languages: Two of your choice
Equipment: A random trinket, a small ball of twine soaked in waters of the Lyme, a sickle, and a pouch containing 7 gp

Feature: Prescience

You have a strange prescience that often warns you out of danger. Your "gift" has you always looking over your shoulder, waiting for the glimpses of events you see to happen. You've told very few about your clairvoyance, fearing they will try to exploit you for their own gain.

Capitoler

The towering fist of the city, the Capitol, casts its intimidating shadow across the numerous districts, ghettos, and squalid sewers of Castorhage. Born in the heart of this immense city-in-a-building, your speech, dress, and demeanour reflect your privileged birth, compared to most born in the Blight, and you feel an air of superiority as you pass amongst the decrepit, stinking, filthy rabble that is the bulk of the lower castes. The intrigue, the betrayal and deceit, truth and lies - the daily drama enacted in the name of politics is a driving force in your life.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Persuasion
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A gaming set, one set of fine clothes, a pouch containing 20 gold, a set of credentials, and a random trinket

Feature: Capitol Access

You hail from the Capitol, where your parents mingled with minor gentry, scholars, guards, or any number of other civil servants or people of some importance. Because of this you can come and go among the countless clerks, servants, butlers, and other necessary personnel within the labyrinthine halls that lie behind the Great Door. You know the inner workings of the extensive bureaucracy within the Capitol and can gain access to records that you normally would never be privy to. You can gain audience with minor functionaries if needed.

Cultist

The "Gods" of Castorhage are not divine but rather legends and myths that have risen to god-like prominence and developed cult-like followings. These "Gods" - Beltane, the Crooked Promethean, the Aspect of the Green Man, and many others - wield immense authority, influence, and fear over the people of the Blight. That influence extends to you.

You follow one of these "Gods" with slavish devotion, enacting their will and spread their influence across the Blight. Work with your gamemaster to determine which of the "Gods" fits with your character and the campaign.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Religion
Tool Proficiencies: Choose one: disguise kit, poisoner's kit, or herbalism kit
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A kit of your choosing, a book containing the testament and teachings of your "God," ritual accoutrements, and a pouch containing 5 gp

Feature: Bolt Hole

You lead a normal life, moving among the populace as any other resident might. Your affiliation with one of the cults of the "Gods" is secret but you have taken precautions just in case that is ever compromised. You have established a safe house where you and a few close associates can retreat to lay low for a time. Work with your GM to establish a location where you can hide out that fits with your character and the campaign.

Charmwell

Your features and mannerisms reflect your elven parentage and overshadow any human blood that runs through your veins. The fey blood flows strong within you; you might even have the stuff of the Old Ones or possibly the dark fey. You've taken advantage of your elven predominance and relish the role of the entertainer, hearing the cheer of the crowd, being at the centre of attention, with a commanding presence that holds rapt the attention of all that watch you perform.

Skill Proficiencies: Performance, Sleight of Hand
Tool Proficiencies: One type of musical instrument
Equipment: A musical instrument, a set of traveller's clothes, a set of juggling balls, a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Headliner

You have a steady gig at a local tavern or theater. Your show, whether comedy, drama, or tragedy, or simply riotous shenanigans of the bawdiest caliber, is always sold out days in advance. You might even have a paramour that is rather famous within the city!

Forsaken

You've come to the city to discover and learn, hoping that your lifetime of memories and experiences will reveal some greater meaning, but memories are fickle and what may have been your reality now seems like a dream. Your bitterness that your long life is slowly coming to an end is apparent and you have developed a grim reputation among the locals. You are one of those that have come to Castorhage in the twilight of your years, searching for meaning and understanding of what your life has truly meant.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Arcana
Tool Proficiencies: One type of musical instrument
Equipment: A musical instrument, a set of traveller's clothes, a small notebook containing memoirs, a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Lifetime of Learning

You have acquired a lifetime of knowledge and training, and life in the Blight evokes past experiences with the new. You can call upon your lifetime of learning and research and are considered a source of knowledge and lore for your peers. You are considered an expert in an obscure subject. Work with your GM to determine what subject and how it fits with your character.

Hooligan

You are one of the Invisibles, the Lowfolk, or the Lowest of the Low. You were born and raised in the cesspit that passes for slums within the Blight. You know how dangerous the streets are but are able navigate them with ease. These are your streets, your people, and you have a reputation among the underclass of Castorhage as someone not to be trifled with. Murder, blackmail, illegal insectum, extortion, racketeering - these are but a few of the things you and your crew traffic in. When something happens, you know about it thanks to your network of informants.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Stealth
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set, thieves' tools
Equipment: A gaming set, thieves' tools, a set of dark, a set of common clothes, a concealed dagger and cosh, a satchel containing a random type of insectum or other illicit good (work with your GM to determine the type), a small notebook with a list of those that owe you money (encrypted with a cipher of your creation).

Feature: Friends in Low Places

You have contacts in all parts of the underworld within Castorhage. Some owe you favors or money, some simply fear you, others respect you, but they all supply information that you can use to get ahead in this Between-dog-eat-Between-dog world.

Lyme-Blessed

Ah Sister Lyme, she slithers — or perhaps more rightly oozes — through the city, her veins reaching upstream to taint and choke. None can escape her. She peculiarly affects humans; you've spent many generations on her back or in her womb, and it has seeped into your pores. You wear this patina, this infestation, and she has a strong hold on you. You've never been able to venture far from her banks for long, always returning to her bosom, relishing her caress, and drinking deeply from her waters.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Perception
Tool Proficiencies: One set of artisan's tools
Equipment: A set of artisan's tools, traveller's clothes, spectacles with rose-coloured lenses, a flask filled with water from Sister Lyme, a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Clear Sight

Your eyes have subtly evolved to see better through water distortions and obstructions. You can see twice as far as others through fog, mist, and murky water. Work with your GM to determine how this will fit with your character and in the game.

Revolutionary

Vile politicians, twisted royalty, greedy thugs - the disease and decay that rules Castorhage must be excised completely so that those that suffer under the yoke of tyranny and oppression can be free. You've seen the malignancy first hand, after all, you were born to it as a child of the aristocracy. You grew to despise your station and those that perpetuate the rot. But now, now you fight!

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Stealth
Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit, thieves' tools
Equipment: A disguise kit, thieves' tools, a set of traveling clothes, a pouch containing 20 gold

Feature: Inside Man

Because you were born to the aristocracy, you are privy to the plots and schemes of the ruling class within Castorhage. You use this to your advantage and gather intelligence that can help the Shadow of Freedom or another underground revolutionary movement strike at the heart of the corruption and expose them for what they are.

Salt-o'-the-Earth

Coming from a respected family in the city, you can trace your local ancestry back over several generations to the dwarven kingdom said to have first carved the Underneath. You are extremely proud of your heritage and will never let your clan name be besmirched. You are well known within your home territory and have a reputation as forthright, stern, and wise.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Intimidation
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set, one type of artisan's tools
Equipment: A gaming set, a set of artisan's tools, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Family Feud

You may choose an organization, a guild, a club, a cult, or a noted individual from the Blight with whom they have a longstanding grudge. You have a network of informants that reports on the activities of your hated foe. Additionally, you take any opportunity available to act on this family grudge.

Work with your GM to establish an acceptable grudge (and target for the grudge) for your character.

Savage

Your parents came to the city to seek their fortune; half-orcs themselves, they found life hard, and they joined a growing number of half-orcs who live in dark, rusty ghettoes and hovels — grouped together for fear of attack. You are tough, independent, and smart and have learnt to survive alone in the city. You do what you must, the only way you know how – by any means necessary.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Survival
Tool Proficiencies: None
Languages: Two of your choice
Equipment: An improvised weapon of some type, and a backpack containing a bed roll, a healer's kit, flint and tinder, a mess kit, 3 days of rations, and water skin

Feature: Exit Strategy

People look upon you with disdain and suspicion. You know you must be wary when you are out of your home territory. The first thing you do when you enter a building is identify the different means of egress. You can handle your own but you are a survivor, and sometimes that means making a quick getaway.

Sprawl Mason

Some dwarves have a particularly strong background in all things connected to building. You have an extremely keen eye for quality craftsmanship and can identify who the craftsman was. Furthermore, you are an extremely well-respected craftsman in your district and are often sought after for your skill and innovation.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Perception
Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A set of artisan's tools, a set of well-made work clothes, a small sketch pad and pen and ink, a pouch containing 15 gp

Feature: Professional Reputation

You have earned the respect and admiration of others both in and out of your trade. You are the first person that others in your craft come to for advice and for permission to take commissions within your district. You have prospective apprentices begging for your tutelage.

Toiler

Myriad dwarf families came to Castorhage seeking work, and the reputation of their spirit of toil gained many of employment. A trade expert and successful merchant, you are always on the lookout for new ventures and investment opportunities. A rare spice from far off Khemit? Mustalbhin sundries? Jade figurines from an ancient and forgotten civilization? Not a problem, you can find it, which is why you are sought after by the most discerning clientele.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion
Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A set of artisan's tools, a set of traveller's clothes, a small notebook containing business ideas and possible investments, a pouch containing 15 gp

Feature: Trade Network

You have a well-established network of merchants and traders that come to you first when they arrive in Castorhage so that you can have first pick of any of their goods. You can find hard to locate goods, contraband, and other sundries, through legal and illegal means.

Thanatologist

Death is always present in Castorhage. The study of death, how bodies decay, the changes they go through the post-mortem period has always been fascinating to you. You spend all your spare time studying death and its processes. You are not concerned with the meaning of life and death, just the physiological and forensic aspects of death and how that knowledge can benefit those still living.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, Perception
Tool Proficiencies: Choose one: a mortician's kit or a surgeon's kit
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A kit of your choosing, a hefty tome containing your notes and observations, a magnifying glass, a lantern, pen and ink, and a satchel with 15 gold.

Feature: Body Farm

You have established a body farm of sorts within the districts in Castorhage. You have been able to place bodies in various stages of decay in areas where they will not be disturbed. These locations are secluded enough that you can visit them and record your observations and findings without fear of interruption. You also have established contacts with several body snatchers who are always willing to take your coin for the freshest specimens.

Traveller

You are a brilliant performer that can dazzle, amaze, and entertain crowds. Not only are you blessed with talent and stage presence, but you have dashing good looks and are keenly aware of the effect you have on others. You have a silver tongue to match your charm and can often talk your way out of (or into) any situation.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Sleight of Hand
Tool Proficiency: One type of musical instrument or a forgery kit
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A musical instrument, a bright set of traveller's clothes, a flask of strong liquor, a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Grift

You can run the short or the long con, can spot the best marks, and have associates you can call on a moment's notice to run a scam. There are those that are still talking about your last con as if it were legendary.

Vigilante

Life in the Blight is brutal. Injustice, murder, slavery, and worse plague the streets, subjecting the already hopeless residents to suffering unknown in the majority of other cities. You cannot stand to see this continue. You see the inequality, the abuse, and the rotten corruption at the heart of the Blight as cancers that must be excised. If the law won't protect them, you will.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, Stealth
Tool Proficiency: Poisoner's kit
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A poisoner's kit, a set of dark clothes with a cowled cloak, a mask, a weapon of your choice, a climber's kit, and a pouch with 10 gp

Feature: Judge, Jury, and Executioner

What gives you the right to cast judgement and sentence on those that prey on the weak? The fact that the law will not protect them gives you the right. You feel no remorse when you hunt down, cast judgement, and carry out the sentence on these vermin. You are the law.

Optional Blight Character Quirks

Abandoned. Abandoned to live on the streets as a child, you grew up tough. You have abandonment issues that hampers your ability to develop close relationships. When alone, you find it uncomfortable and try to seek out company if possible. (Optional: When alone, you begin to panic and must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom save or become frightened.)

Alleychild. The narrow defiles and ginnels were your childhood playground and home. Wide-open spaces are panic inducing and make you extremely uncomfortable. (Optional: You must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened while in a wide-open space.)

Almost Killed. You fell in the Lyme, were hit by a runaway broken or undead horse, or fell from a tall building. You have odd nightmares about the event that somehow manifest themselves in the dreams of others, who find it impossible to save you.

Apprentice. Because you were raised by a tradesman, you have a keen understanding of tools and crafting. Consult your GM to determine what trade you might be adept at.

Artists' Quarter Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in the crazy and creative district of the Artists' Quarter. You have done everything you can to stay out of the way of the three major factions and were once invited to join the Cult of the Self-Blinded Angel.

Bastard Nobility. You bear the hallmarks of an aristocrat's bastard. You can mingle easier than others with different castes, and can call upon an aristocrat that is known to you for a favour.

Between Marked. Whilst very young, a nightmare from Between somehow manifested itself and scarred you. You are deeply affected by the experience and cannot abide being near mirrors. (Optional. If you come within 20 feet of a mirror, you must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom save or become frightened.)

Boatchild. You have grown up on the banks of Sister Lyme, and even swum her depths for dares. You are more comfortable on the water than on land.

BookTown Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in BookTown. You are privy to secrets whispered among the stacks and shelves of the cavernous libraries of BookTown.

Body Harvest. You're quite the entrepeneur and have established yourself as the go to source for highest quality cuts of meat. Your customers are Cadaver-Surgeons, Homoncule-Wives, Golem-Stitches, and others who are in the market for body parts, cadavers, and sometimes even something alive...

Born in the Barn..acle. You were raised among nests and tunnels of the Barnacle. You know the tunnels and tight, winding streets better than most and can move through the Great Docks unhindered. There is a chance you know some information about a shady deal or two.

Born to Beer Slops. You were raised in the gin houses and taverns of the city. You know the best dives in the Blight and just so happen to have a legendary thirst that causes tavernkeepers to groan when you walk through the door.

Brine Touched. There is some briny in your family, a gift that your mother and father tried to hide. Your fingers and toes are webbed and you can hold your breath twice as long as average.

Brothel Waif. The child of a harlot from the Crimson Lantern, you have grown up hardened, independent, and tough. You have a soft spot for those in the "trade" and seek to aid them whenever possible. If you witness a prostitute being mistreated or abused, you will surely step in and aid them.

Capitol Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in the Capitol. You have unique insight into the gossip and politics of this dangerous quarter. You might even know a secret way into the Capitol.

Child of a Famous Beauty. Your mother or father was famous in the city for their looks. However, you were often left alone when young and suffered from nightmares. To this day, the night terrors persist. (Optional. You must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom check before attempting to sleep.)

Chimney Sweep. When young, you were small and used for cleaning chimneys of the wealthy or those of the Capitol. You can always find the best hiding places but confined spaces are terrifying. (Optional. When you are in a confined space, you must succeed at a DC 10 Wisdom save or become frightened.)

Choir Child. You have an incredible singing voice but the brutal training regimen you endured at the hands of your cruel choir teacher has left you scarred and traumatized. (Optional. Pick a specific tune that reminds you of your time in the choir. You must make a DC 10 Wisdom save or become frightened.)

Circus Act. You ran away to join the circus. A colourful life of travelling through Festival and the Artists' Quarter followed, punctuated by trips to other parts of the city. You still have contacts within the myriad troupes that perform in the city. Interestingly, your closest contacts can be found in the Great Fayre, possibly within the Family.

Cruel Kin. Cruel parents or relatives raised you, and you left home early. You are independent and misanthropic but have a cruel streak that you try hard but often fail to control.

Devotee of Mother Grace. Very religious parents who found great solace in the order of things in the church of Mother Grace raised you. If someone blasphemes against Mother Grace within your hearing, you feel compelled to educate the blasphemer. (Optional. Succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or act in an overzealous manner against the blasphemer.)

Distorted. Your anatomy has been altered by exposure to the toxins and pollutants of the Blight. You have a distinguishing anatomical feature caused by the environment of the Blight. This feature is something you could have been born with or developed through years of exposure. (Optional. Your distinguishing feature can have positive or negative effects on your Charisma. Work with your GM to determine if this is the case).

Educated. You attended one of the minor schools in the city. Schools were vile, ordered places, and they have given you a healthy loathing for order and authority.

Festival Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in Festival, but were not tainted by the place. You can move freely among the lyncanthropy-inflicted locals. At some point in your life, you caught the attention of the Rat Queen. She still is interested in you.

Foundling. You were abandoned as a baby, but found. There is something distinctly odd about you. This can be a physical thing such as a minor deformity (an extra finger, mismatched eye colour and so forth), or simply an odd air about you.

Freakshow Touched. You were raised in a freakshow and became close to many acts. You have developed a very meaningful relationship, possibly romantic, with the "star" of one of the shows.

Gable Child. You spent your days up in the gables, where the air was clearer and there was always more to see. You know the best perches to watch the residents of the Blight and often see things not intended to be seen.

Gablemaester's Child. Your father was one of the brave gablemaesters who kept the rooftops clean, safe, and free from spiders. You have utmost familiarity with the rooftops of the city, and can often find the quickest and easiest path through the city using the rooftops.

Guild Child. You were raised as part of a guild and have a benefactor looking out for you. At some point, when you are most in need, there is a chance your benefactor will aid you. (Optional. Roll percentile dice. On a roll of 96-100, your benefactor will come to your aid in some manner determined by the GM.)

Guild-Bound Family. Your family is blighted by an agreement they made to a guild before you were born. Because of this, you are constantly fearful of being held accountable for your family's mistakes. (Optional. Succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom check any time you encounter a member of a guild. Failure results in an unpredictable outcome to be determined by you and the GM.)

Haunted by Between. Between seems somehow to follow you around. Every so often, you hear noises no one else does, feel something move behind you, or see a reflection in a corner of a mirror that cannot be there. You are inherently Between touched. (Optional. Succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom save or become frightened when hearing noises that others do not.)

Hideling. For reasons known only to you, you have chosen to mask your mixed racial heritage. Forsaking one for the other, you emphasise the ancestry that is most common, human, in the Blight and excel at hiding in plain sight.

Hollow Hills Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in the hallowed and holy places of the Hollow and Broken Hills. You can

move freely among the inhabitants of these areas and have explored every inch of the Great Blight Cemetary.

Jumble Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in the Jumble. Because of this you are paranoid and untrusting, always lamenting that you are being watched. You are right.

Kissed by Angels. Some people are born lucky, and you're one of them. Cats sit in your lap, children stop crying and laugh when you enter a room, and frosty discussions thaw when you talk. Some petty people find such lucky folk annoying, and become jealous of them, of course.

Link Child. When younger, you worked the dark streets of the city as a link boy (or girl). Your night vision is excellent, and you have an almost sixth sense when operating in darkness. You find daylight unpleasant, and prefer to wear tinted lens when the sun is at its highest.

Messenger. When younger, you were hired by one of the many messenger guilds in the city to pass messages in haste. You know the fastest routes through the city.

Mill Child. You spent much of your childhood working in one of the many mills in the city. Worker safety was not a priority of the overseers in the mills. You bear the marks of having been involved in an industrial accident of some kind. Consult with your GM on how to utilize this trait in game.

One of Many. There were 10+1d6 other children in your family. You have a very high likelihood of encountering one of your siblings at any given time within the Blight. These encounters can be cordial or hostile, the choice is yours.

Orphan. Raised by an overseer, your early life was incredibly tough. You bear the physical and psychological scars of this experience. You have vowed to save as many orphans as you can. How you do this is up to you.

Out from the Asylum. You don't know how you escaped intact (mostly), but you did. You've been to the City of Golems and lived to tell about it, albeit with a noticeable alteration to your body. You've undergone a transformation at the hands of a Cadaver-Surgeon, Homoncule-Wife, or a Golem-Stitcher. Work with your GM to determine something noticeable that has been altered about your character.

Riverchild. You were raised in a boat town along the river; you speak River-Cant as if it were your native language. You know the right folk to talk to in the boat towns that ever-present within the city and always seem to have the best information about the goings on in these "neighbourhoods."

Seminarian. You were born or raised (or created) in the Seminary. You have seen the true horror of the ghastly experimentations that take place in this academic bastion at the foot of the Capitol. You rarely make it through the night without waking in a sweat, screaming at the horror you cannot forget.

Seventh Child of a Seventh Child. There is something decidedly odd about you; odd things happen around you, and occasionally unpredictable events occur — cats bristle and flee from you, plates fall on floors when you enter the room, or a clock strikes thirteen. This does not have a mechanical effect, and your GM should weave it into your character's story from time to time.

Sewer Brat. You spent a lot of time in Underneath, either as a runner for a guild, someone who ran away from home or the orphanage you were raised in, or some other story you deem appropriate. You have a sixth sense that allows you to navigate the sewers of the Blight better than most others.

Sideshow Touched. You were raised in a carnival sideshow and became close to many acts. You can move amongst the sideshow workers as if you were still one of them. You have a special affinity with many of them and are often given the best rumours and tales.

Sinks Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in the Sinks. When you were younger, curiosity got the best of you causing you to venture down to the Grey Lake. You've seen things. Terrifying things. And you know the stories to be true.

Sinister Theatrics. You were raise or spent considerable time in the Theatres' Sinister. You'll never admit it, but you very well could have the ear of Aris Macwell or one of his Liars.

Sorrowful. You are of mixed heritage but struggle to understand why you feel you are missing something crucial to your makeup. Your parent's differences were too much to overcome after the love and lust faded. You favour the parent that raised you but are cursed with an unnaturally long life or a fleetingly short life in comparison to your parent.

Strange Relations. Somewhere in your family line is an anomaly. the hint of an elf, the touch of a gnome, the flicker of a halfling. Exactly how and where this came from is a mystery. Your character is slightly odd in a hard-to-define way. This is not a mechanic, but a story option; perhaps the PC has a luxuriant dwarvish beard, slightly pointed ears, or woolly feet that indicate that somewhere, far back, something odd happened in the family.

Streetwaif. You were raised on the hard streets of Castorhage and have learned how to survive. You made an enemy, however, and that enemy is looking for you. Work with your GM this develop this twist for you accordingly, and weave it into your ongoing story.

Thirteenth Child of a Thirteenth Child. There is something decidedly odd about you, and not all of it good. Strange effects follow your character. These are only minor but decidedly strange. horses keel over and die in the street when you walk by; a pyre-beetle lamp goes out; you find two-headed silver coins; or a plummeting magpie crashes into a wall as you walk past. Life, in short, continues to throw oddities about you.

Toiltown Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in Toiltown. You know who to go to when you need the illicit services offered in Toiltown. Your fellow East Enders remain loyal and true to you, aiding you when you need it. (Optional. Whenever you encounter a slaver, you must succeed at a DC 12 Wisdom save or confront them, often violently.)

Touched by the Unsea. When young, you were taken to the Unsea, and it had a profound and unsettling effect upon you. The Unsea calls you, and you find it oddly consoling to have objects from there or even odd things from the mundane sea about your home or person. There is something oddly clammy and brackish about you.

Town Bridge Born. You were raised or spent some considerable time in Town Bridge, and can consider yourself a Town Bridge local. You despise Crown Prince Justice Cornlord and the ruthless landlords that act in his stead in Town Bridge. You have vowed to bring them all down.

Wicked Stepsisters. Wicked stepsisters who delighted in using you as little more than a slave raised you. This made you resilient, if sad, when young. That sad resilience has shaped your personality into one that is hardened and serious. You have little tolerance of frivolity.

Wild Child. You were feral as a child. Your feral nature remains with you and impacts your relations with "civilized" Blighters.

New Equipment

Equipment and Things to Part You From Your Lucre — Castorhage Goods

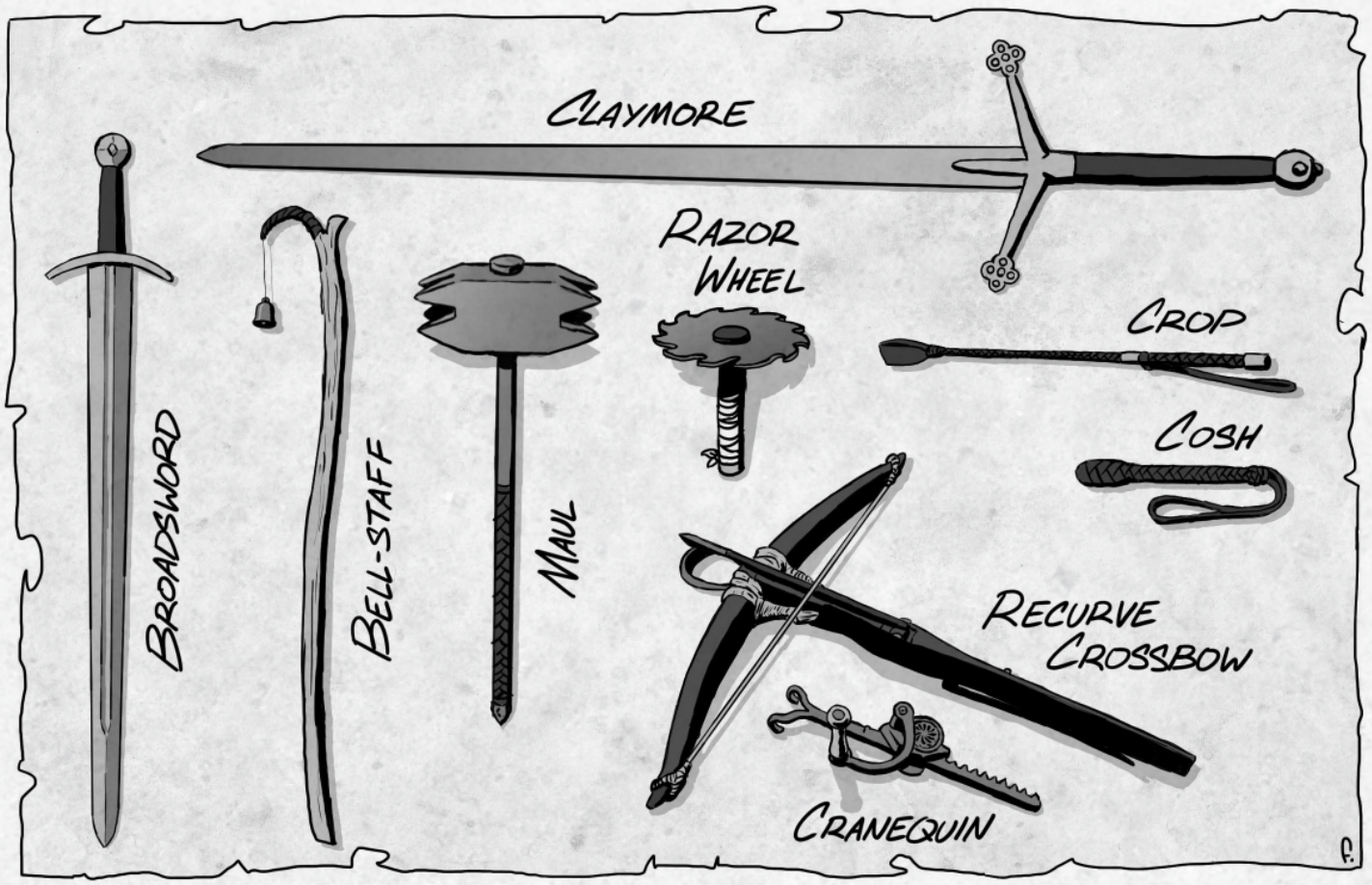
A short walk in the Blight avails one of the sheer volume of goods for sale, from Aarckle, Budge & Sons Gentlemen's Outfitters, to Zyn, Ripple & Wade, Pipe Makers to the Aristocracy. The wares are advertised across every available space; no wall is without a painted sign or hoarding, sandwich boards are carried by down-at-their-heels men eager to earn a tanner, and shop windows often show elaborate displays of wares. With so many people in such a small space, competition is stiff, and beyond their gaudy adverts, traders stop at nothing to be the best — and the richest — in the city-state.

Weapons of the Blight

Along with most other weapons, the following new weapons are used by the denizens of Castorhage.

Weapon Qualities

Misfire: The increased power or configuration of some crossbows can result in a misfire. If the natural result of your attack roll is equal to or less than the weapon's misfire value, that shot misses, even if you would



have otherwise hit the target, and the crossbow cannot be used again until a person proficient in the use of the weapon spends a full-round action to restore it to working order. Magical repeating crossbows will still misfire on a natural 1. Magical, non-repeating crossbows will not misfire, even on a natural 1.

Weapon Descriptions

Bell-staff, coprophagi. This is a simple walking staff usually of hornbeam or some other hardwood capped with a curving arm from which dangles a small bell. When the staff is carried, the bell rings, resulting in disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. The coprophagi and sometimes lepers or other diseased individuals typically use these staves to give warning of their approach to others so they can be well away before they reach them. In the hands of a coprophagi or other individual proficient in its use, though, the bell-staff becomes a potent weapon.

The proficient user of a coprophagi bell-staff can flip the bell up and against the arm it hangs from so that the clapper is held still, and the bell no longer rings to cause disadvantage on Stealth checks. You can then flip it down again as well so that it returns to ringing as normal. A non-proficient user can perform the same maneuvers (if he thinks of them) as move actions that provoke attacks of opportunity.

Broadsword. The broadsword has a heavier, shorter blade than the longsword. It is 2-1/2 to 3 feet in length.

Claymore. The claymore is a heavier, longer version of the greatsword. It is 4-1/2 to 5 feet in length. The heavier weight of this devastating weapon contributes to it doing additional damage.

Crop. A stout leather crop used to spur on a mount or punish a peasant.

Crop, loaded. A loaded crop is a crop in which the shaft and head has been weighted with lead to provide some heft.

Cosh. This small, flexible club, also known as a blackjack, consists of a leather-wrapped lead weight attached to the end of a wooden shaft via a leather-wrapped coil spring.

Cosh, folding. This smaller, lighter cosh folds to make it easily concealable. It can be unfolded as a bonus action. The gentleman's version — a handy weapon for the discerning person of quality to have in a tight spot, or on the rugged streets of the Blight — is usually rimmed with metal, and is readily transportable in a handy leather holder.

Crossbow, arbalest. Because of the size and weight of this heavy crossbow, you attack at disadvantage with it if you are not wearing an arbalist harness (see below).

The increased power of the arbalest crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with an arbalest crossbow is a natural 1, the shot misses even if you would have otherwise hit the target, and the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical arbalest crossbow has no chance of misfiring.

Crossbow, folding. This smaller, light crossbow can be folded down to make it more easily concealable or disguisable. Unlike most other weapons of its size, you may attempt to conceal a folding crossbow upon your body. It can be assembled as a standard action. The gentleman's version — de rigueur at all fashionable or aristocratic shoots and hunts — is always of masterwork quality, usually inlaid with precious metals, and always comes collapsed in its own velvet-lined carry case.

The configuration of the folding crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with a folding crossbow is a natural 1, the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical folding crossbow has no chance of misfiring.

A folding crossbow is treated as if it were a light crossbow.

Crossbow, folding hand. This hand crossbow can be folded down to make it even more easily concealable or disguisable. It can be assembled as a standard action.

The configuration of the folding hand crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with a folding hand crossbow is a natural 2 or lower, the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical folding hand crossbow has no chance of misfiring.

A folding hand crossbow is treated as if it were a hand crossbow.

Crossbow, recurve. A recurve crossbow is a light crossbow modified with the power of a heavy crossbow at a shorter range. You draw a recurve

Simple Melee Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Crop	10 gp	1d2 bludgeoning	1 lb	nonlethal, bludgeoning
Crop, loaded	20 gp	1d3 bludgeoning	1 lb.	nonlethal, bludgeoning

Simple Ranged Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Misfire	Capacity	Rate/Fire	Weight	Properties
Crossbow, folding	50 gp	1d6 piercing	—	—	1	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/120), loading, two-handed
Crossbow, recurve	100 gp	1d10 piercing	—	—	1	7 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/320), loading, two-handed

Martial Melee Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Bell-staff, coprophagi	5 sp	1d6 bludgeoning	5 lb.	Versatile (1d8), disadvantage (Stealth)
Cosh	5 gp	1d4 bludgeoning	3 lb.	Nonlethal, light
Cosh, folding	10 gp	1d4 bludgeoning	2 lb.	Nonlethal, light
Broadsword	12 gp	1d8 slashing	5 lb.	Versatile (1d10)
Claymore	50 gp	2d8 slashing	10 lb.	Heavy, two-handed
Razor wheel, coprophagi	5 sp	1d6 slashing	1 lb.	Finesse, light
Scythe	15 gp	1d10 slashing	8 lb.	heavy, two-handed

Martial Ranged Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Misfire	Capacity	Rate/Fire	Weight	Properties
Crossbow, arbalest	125 gp	2d6 piercing	1	—	1	22 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), heavy, loading, two-handed
Crossbow, folding hand	125 gp	1d6 piercing	1	—	1	2 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/120), light, loading
Crossbow, repeating arbalest	825 gp	2d6 piercing	3	6	2	30 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), heavy, two-handed
Crossbow, repeating heavy	300 gp	1d10 piercing	3	8	2	24 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), heavy, two-handed
Crossbow, repeating recurve	600 gp	1d10 piercing	3	10	2	10 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/320), heavy, two-handed

crossbow back by pulling a lever called a cranequin. A recurve crossbow fires crossbow bolts.

The increased power of the recurve crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with a recurve crossbow is a natural 1 or lower, the shot misses even if you would have otherwise hit the target, and the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical recurve crossbow has no chance of misfiring.

Crossbow, repeating arbalest. This weapon functions identically to an arbalest crossbow, except that it does not need to be reloaded after firing a single bolt. It has a magazine capacity of 6 bolts and a rate of fire of two bolts per round.You must be wearing an arbalist harness to use the repeating arbalest crossbow. The increased power of the repeating arbalest crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with a repeating arbalest crossbow is a natural 3 or lower, the shot misses even if you would have otherwise hit the target, and the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical repeating arbalest crossbow only misfires on a natural 1.

Crossbow, repeating heavy. This weapon functions identically to a heavy crossbow, except it does not need to be reloaded after firing a single bolt. It has a magazine capacity of 8 bolts and a rate of fire of two bolts per round.

You must be wearing an arbalist harness to use the repeating arbalest crossbow. The increased power of the repeating arbalest crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with a repeating arbalest crossbow is a natural 3 or lower, the shot misses even if you would have otherwise hit the target, and the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical repeating arbalest crossbow only misfires on a natural 1.

Crossbow, repeating recurve. This weapon functions identically to a repeating heavy crossbow, except that its damage and range values are equivalent to those of a recurve crossbow. It has a magazine capacity of 10 bolts and a rate of fire of two bolts per round.

The increased power of the repeating recurve crossbow tends to make it misfire. If the result of your attack roll with a recurve crossbow is a natural 3 or lower, the shot misses even if you would have otherwise hit the target, and the crossbow cannot be used again until an action is used to restore it to working order. A magical repeating recurve crossbow only misfires on a natural 1.

Razor wheel, coprophagi. This weapon is made from a thin sheet of scrap metal that has been fashioned into a circular shape and given a serrated edge. A wooden handle is set in its centre at a perpendicular angle so that it can be gripped with the blade parallel to the wielder's arm and used in battle as a slashing weapon.

Blight Gear

Adventuring Gear

Item	Cost	Weight
Alchemical solvent	20 gp	½ lb.
Alchemist's Glue (bag)	50gp	1 lb.
Cage, pyrebeetle	5 gp	5 lb.
Everburning candle	25 gp	—
Everburning lamp	125 gp	1 lb.
Fishing tackle, basic	5 sp	—
Fishing tackle, luxury (Tugg, Wilmott & Son)	8 gp	2 lb.
Gable bridge, clockwork	200 gp	15 lb.
Harness, arbalist's	40 gp	3 lb.
Ladder, clockwork	300 gp	10 lb.
Lantern, pyrebeetle	20 gp	3 lb.
Pyrebeetle, live	5 cp/pound	—
Pyrebeetle carcass	1 cp/pound	—
Siklight cockroach	8 cp	—
Siklight sconce	5 sp	1 lb.
Siklight sconce, candelabra	5–10 gp	5–8 lb.
Vermin repellent	5 gp	—

Alchemical solvent. This bubbling gel eats through adhesives. Each vial contains enough solvent to cover a single 5-foot by 5-foot square. It destroys most normal adhesives such as glue, tar, sap).

Alchemist's Glue (bag). This bag of alchemical goo can be used to restrain a target. The bag is small, about the size of a medium humanoid's hand, and triggers upon impact when thrown. On a successful ranged attack roll, the target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained for up to 1 minute as sticky glue foams out of the bag and quickly adheres to the nearest surface. A successful saving throw results in the target's movement being halved until the end of their next turn. A failed save results in the target being completely restrained. A creature restrained by the alchemical glue can use its action to make a Strength check (escape DC 12) to end the effect.

Flying creatures hit by alchemist's glue must immediately land or take falling damage on their next turn.

The glue does not work underwater. An application of *universal solvent* to a stuck creature dissolves the alchemical goo immediately.

Cage, Pyrebeetle. This is a small, portable cage capable of holding up to 5 pounds of pyrebeetles. If properly cared for and fed, pyrebeetles can survive in these cages for up to a week.

Everburning candle. This otherwise normal candle has a *continual flame* spell cast on its wick. Due to the small size of its wick, it sheds light only as an ordinary candle, but it does not emit heat or deal fire damage. If the candle is broken, its *continual flame* no longer functions.

Everburning lamp. Everburning lamps are oil lamps bearing a *continual flame* spell that function in all ways as an everburning torch. However, an everburning lamp is partially made of glass and is, therefore, more fragile than an everburning torch. If an everburning lamp is broken, its *continual flame* no longer functions.

Gable bridge, clockwork. Similar to a clockwork ladder, a gable bridge extends to 20 feet in length at the pull of a lever, enabling it to be used as a bridge, provided support is available at both ends. These objects, which weigh 15 lbs and are structurally stronger than the ladder, are frequently used by Gablemaesters on their hunt for spiders and other horrors in the rooftops.

Harness, arbalist's. This harness is worn over armour or normal clothing and is used to provide support for the use of an arbalest crossbow or repeating arbalest crossbow by allowing the stock to rest in a special socket built into the harness. The wearer of an arbalist's harness can mount the crossbow in place or remove it from its mount as an action, and can fire and reload the crossbow while it is mounted.

Ladder, clockwork. A collapsible ladder able to extend up to 20 feet in length in a single round. Activating a clockwork ladder is equivalent to a move action. A clockwork ladder collapses back to 4 feet in length and weighs 10 lbs.

Lantern, pyrebeetle. This sturdy lantern comes equipped with a fireproof wire cage capable of holding a pound of pyrebeetles in its interior as well as built-in reflectors to magnify its light to equal that of a torch.

Pyrebeetle, live. These cockroach-like beetles have an extremely hardy carapace and produce a natural slow-burning oil from glands within their bodies. They are not especially incendiary, but burn readily if exposed to fire. Typically, they are set alight after being held within small fireproof cages or bags of tough fibres. A pound of burning pyrebeetles emits light in a 10-foot radius, but reflectors mounted on street lamps or within lanterns doubles this area of illumination to an area equal to that of a torch. A pound of live pyrebeetles burns with a largely smokeless fire for 12 hours. A single live pyrebeetle is insufficient to provide a light source, quickly burning out and crumbling. Burning pyrebeetles are not suitable to serve as flaming weapons because they do not burn particularly hot and readily crumble to ash if treated too roughly while burning.

Pyrebeetle carcass. As live pyrebeetles, the carcasses of pyrebeetles can be lit for use as a light source. They give off the same illumination as live pyrebeetles, but the oil-producing glands of a pyrebeetle break down soon after death. A pound of pyrebeetle carcasses burn for only 2 hours. A single pyrebeetle carcass is insufficient to provide a light source, quickly burning out and crumbling.

Siklight cockroach. These small, pale-grey roaches give off a soft, greyish light equal in illumination to candle when awake. They eat garbage and if properly cared for, will live for a year or more. They also give off a distinctive unpleasant odour so that anyone carrying one or more of these insects has disadvantage to Stealth checks when within olfactory range. Siklight cockroaches have a hard chitinous shell and 1 hit point. If their shell is pierced, the cockroaches explode similar to alchemist's fire, though only dealing 1 point of fire damage in the square where the explosion occurs and no splash damage to surrounding squares. However, they do burn for 1 round thereafter and deal 1 additional point of fire damage, so flammable objects and structures can easily be set alight by such an explosion. The cockroaches are also prone to rupturing their carapace under certain weather conditions and are known to start many small fires in Toiltown and in the hovels along the Great Lyme River (conditions for such a spontaneous explosion are at the GM's discretion). Fortunately, cumulative exploding siklight cockroaches do not cause additional damage or duration of burning. However, if many of them explode in a single square, they still only deal a total of 1 point fire damage and another point fire damage on the following round before they burn out. For this reason, they have found no practical application as weapons, though they can make good detonators.

Siklight sconce. This is a small candle sconce of tin, brass or some other non-flammable substance. The candleholder portion has a wire covering and allows space for a single siklight cockroach to be caged within. Beneath this is a small, connected repository that can hold a small amount of organic garbage upon with the caged cockroach can feed. As long as the food repository is kept stocked with garbage and the sconce is shielded from extremes in temperature or violent handling, a siklight cockroach can live in the sconce for up to a year or more. A siklight sconce can be set on a table or other surface as a candle stand or mounted to a wall.

Siklight sconce, candelabra. This functions in all ways as a siklight sconce but can have individual sconces for anywhere from 3 to 12 siklight cockroaches.

Vermin repellent. this vile-smelling paste can be spread on the skin to keep vermin at bay. It will repel most normal vermin such as rats, centipedes, beetles, spiders, snakes, and wasps. It is not as potent against swarms (up to the discretion of the GM).

Tools and Skill Kits

Item	Cost	Weight
Gablemaester's kit	200 gp	8.5 lbs.
Mortician's kit	100 gp	10 lbs.
Rat-catcher's kit	10 gp	40 lbs.
Second-story harness	55 gp	3 lbs.

Gablemaester's Kit. Specialized kits for the spider-hunting gablemaesters that dare to venture across the spires and rooftops of Castorhage, this kit includes the crampons, pitons, and other tools found in a climber's kit plus a second-story harness, alchemical solvent, antitoxin, and vermin repellent.

Mortician's Kit. This kit contains the vials, instruments, tubing, tools and chemicals necessary to drain a corpse of all fluids, embalm a corpse, and prepare a corpse for presentation at a funeral. Proficiency with this kit lets you add your proficiency bonus to any ability checks you make to embalm or prepare a corpse.

Rat-catcher's Kit. For those brave enough to risk hunting dire rats and wererats within the city, special gear is often required. Rat-catcher's gear comes in a hefty trunk and consists of bags of pepper (to mask scent), a bag of silver dust, a hefty armoured leather shirt (equivalent of padded armor), and an shortspear.

Second-story Harness. This series of straps, trusses and buckles can be worn over clothing or armour and allows the wearer to secure herself in place, using a move action, on a vertical surface so that both her hands are free. The wearer can remain in this position without needing to make additional Strength (Athletics) checks. While anchored in this way she cannot move but does not need to make Strength (Athletics) checks to avoid falling whenever she takes damage. The wearer can release herself to start moving again using half of their total movement.

Surgeon's Kit. This kit contains various sizes of scissors, needles, forceps, clamps, scalpels, probes, and sutures necessary to perform most common types of surgery. Proficiency with this kit lets you add your proficiency bonus to any ability checks you when performing common surgical procedures.

Animals, Mounts, and Related Gear

Item	Cost	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Animal Sentinel (canary)	1 sp	40 ft.	—
Broken animal	varies*	—	—
Broken creature, intelligent*	varies*	—	—
Cage, canary	2 gp	5 lbs.	—
Camel	50 gp	50 ft.	480 lb.
Camel (combat trained)	110 gp	50 ft.	480 lb.
Canary	2 gp	40 ft.	—
Dog, fighting (blight-bull)	40 gp	40 ft.	150 lb.
Dog, fighting (pit-mastiff)	210 gp	40 ft.	195 lb.
Dog, terrier	2 gp	40 ft.	100 lb.
Elephant	450 gp	40 ft.	1,320 lb.
Elephant (combat-trained)	530 gp	40 ft.	1,320 lb.
Hyme	6,500 gp	—	—

Animal Sentinel (Canary). An animal sentinel is a normal animal used (normally by humanoids) to detect hazards before they can affect the animal's owner. Many types of animal sentinels exist, but the type most commonly encountered are the caged canaries used by miners. The caged canaries are carried into new or deep tunnels to detect the presence of carbon monoxide or coal gas or methane. The use of a canary animal sentinel gives advantage to the Survival check to detect the presence of the invisible, odorless gasses before larger creatures are affected or before exposed flames can ignite volatile pockets. When a canary sentinel is exposed to these types of bad air, the bird becomes poisoned for 1d4 rounds before its owner becomes affected. When the owner is exposed to the levels of gas that would cause negative effects to him, the canary becomes unconscious and dies in 1d4 rounds. After an exposure to such a hazard, there is a 50% chance that the bird dies regardless of whether it was removed from the hazard in time or not.



Broken Animal. These sell for 10 times their standard value, so a broken heavy horse costs 2,000 gp. Animals come with a focus (a command word or command item, such as a rod or badge or tabard). The most common broken animals are performing monkeys (often dressed in human clothes to entertain) that sell for 500 gp. ***Broken Creature, Intelligent.*** These sell for 300 gp x Int x HD. A broken troll, therefore, would cost 10,800gp (300 x 6 x 6 gp). ***Camel.*** This camel is trained as a mount or pack animal. A combat-trained camel can be ridden into combat without danger. Refer to the game manual for details on mounted combat and for more information on camels.

Dog, Fighting. See *Part 6: The Blight Bestiary*

Dog, Terrier. See ***The Tome of Blighted Horrors*** by **Frog God Games**

Elephant. An elephant trained as a mount or pack animal. A combat-trained elephant can be ridden into combat without danger. Refer to the game manual for details on mounted combat and for more information on elephants.

Hyme. A hyme is an unpleasant but loyal draft animal detailed further in *Part 6: The Blight Bestiary*.

Transport

Item	Cost	Speed
Boat, Bilges narrowboat	1,000 gp	2 mph
Caravan, gypsy	150 gp	5 mph
Carriage, fancy	500 gp	5 mph

Item	Cost	*Speed*
Fare, coarse cab	1 gp/mile	5 mph
Fare, elephant-wallah	2 sp/mile	4 mph
Fare, gable palanquin	10 gp/mile	4 mph
Fare, sedan chair	1 sp/mile	2 mph
Fare, treadmill ferry	2 sp	2 mph

Bilges Narrowboat. A horse or other dray animal pulls this 30- to 100-foot-long ship. It is 10 feet wide and has a living space. Sometimes the whole boat is given over to a living area, but costs are tripled for such vessels. In general, they travel at 1 mph along the city's lock-laden canal ways and 2 mph on rivers.

Caravan, Gypsy. A richly decorated and enclosed wagon used for living and travel. A family of 4 can easily live in a gypsy caravan. They are almost always drawn by a single horse.

Carriage, Fancy. A four-wheeled luxurious transport able to carry as many as four passengers in leather-clad luxury. Often, details are added to the carriage such as potion stores, armoured doors, and magical accessories. Installing these in the carriage costs one and a half times as much as a normal object. For example, installing a chest into a carriage would cost 2 gp and 2 sp.

Clothing

Item	Cost	Weight
Cummerbund, silk	4 sp	1/2 lb.
Boots, farmer's heavy duty	1 sp	3 lbs.
Boots, gentleman's luxurious, (Forbes Winter; Grugg & Sons)	3 gp	2 lbs.
Boots, ladies' calfskin and crocodile hide, luxurious	8 gp	1-1/2 lbs.
Boots, ladies' dire wolverine and ermine, luxurious	75 gp	2 lbs.
Boots, wading, leather	5 sp	5 lbs.
Boots, workman's heavy	5 sp	3 lbs.
Fisherman's coat, heavy waxed	3 gp	6 lbs.
Gauntlets, black leather	3 gp	1 lb.
Gauntlets, owlbear hide	16 gp	1 lb.
Gloves, winter, gentleman's luxury (Forbes Winter; Grugg & Sons)	2 gp	—
Hat, stovepipe	15 sp	1 lb.
Hat, tophat, basic	1 gp	1/2 lb.
Hat, tophat, fancy ermine-lined (Forbes Winter; Grugg & Sons)	25 gp	2 lbs.
Hatpin, basic	1 sp	—
Hatpin, jewelled	5+ gp	—
Jacket, insectum, luxurious (Aarkle, Budge & Sons)	14 gp	3 lbs.
Jacket, smoking, luxurious (Forbes Winter; Grugg & Sons)	10 gp	4 lbs.
Keff	5 cp	1/2 lb.
Muff, basic	5 sp	1 lb.
Muff, ermine or beaver	1 lb.	100 gp
Overcoat, basic	5 sp	5 lbs.
Overcoat, luxurious, fur and silk lined (Maxim's)	40 gp	6 lbs.
Overcoat, waxed (Aarkle, Budge & Sons)	1 gp	5 lbs.
Tailcoat, luxurious (Forbes Winter; Grugg & Sons)	8 gp	4 lbs.
Veil, mourning	2 sp	—
Veil, white	3 sp	—
Wrap, ladies winter	4 sp	4 lbs.

Fisherman's Coat, Heavy Waxed. This heavy long coat is made of canvas and carefully waxed to seal it against moisture. Because of its excellent insulating qualities, it grants advantage on Constitution saves against exposure to cold weather. It can be worn over light armour.

Keff. This is a thin, black full-face scarf. It is light enough with a loose enough weave to be worn in the summer months without being stifling or limited vision, but provides some protection against biting flies.

Personal Grooming and Accessories

Item	Cost	Weight
Dubbing (Mompeson's Finest)	3 cp	1/2 lb.
Flask, hunter's, plain	7 sp	1-1/2 lbs.
Flask, hunter's, silver	25 gp	1-1/2 lbs.
Grooming case, gentleman's (Watt, Simpin & Dodd)	6 gp	2 lbs.
Hair oil, gentleman's (Forbes & Son)	1 sp	—
Hair oil, musked (Forbes & Son)	3 sp	—
Hipflask, fancy	15 gp	1/2 lb.
Hipflask, plain	1 gp	1/2 lb.
Hookah, fancy	15 gp	10 lbs.
Insectum container, fancy	10 gp	—
Insectum container, armoured	20 gp	1/2 lb.
Lucky rabbit's foot	1 gp	—
Monkey's paw, mounted on silver chain	2 gp	—
Moustache oil, basic	2 sp	—
Moustache wax, luxury (Hobb & Darkler, Gentleman's Groomers)	7 sp	—
Muscle balm (Colcott's, "Eases stiffness")	2 sp	—
Pipe, smoking, briar	2 sp	—
Pipe, smoking, clay	1 cp	—
Pipe, luxury smoking, calabash	5 gp	1/2 lb.
Polish, boot (Mompeson's Finest Tan)	5 cp	1/2 lb.
Razor, cut-throat (Hoppin & Sons)	1 gp	—
Razor, cut-throat, superior (Forbes & Son)	4 gp	—
Scrip, luxury leather	1 gp	1/2 lb.
Scrip, plain	2 sp	1/2 lb.
Shaving stick, military	2 cp	—
Shaving stick, perfumed	1 sp	—
Snuffbox, gentleman's	3 gp	—
Tantalus lock, walnut; average	50 gp	1/2 lb.
Travelbag, gentleman's	5 gp	3 lbs.
Travelbag, lady's	5 gp	3 lbs.
Umbrella, fancy	1 gp	1 lb.

Item	Cost	Weight
Umbrella, plain	5 sp	1 lb.
Walking cane, fancy	2 gp	2 lbs.

Insectum Container, Fancy. A richly decorated container in which to keep live insectum.

Insectum Container, Armoured. As above, but made of steel.

Scrip, Luxury Leather. A small decorative pouch or wallet for carrying small amounts of coinage and important papers or calling cards.

Scrip, Plain. As above, but without decoration.

Tantalus Lock, Walnut. A tantalus lock for a liquor bottle encased in walnut. The lock can be picked by a creature proficient with thieves' tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

Food and Drink

Item	Cost	Weight
Ale (Tolly's Bottled Brown)	1 sp	1 lb.
Chocolate	10 gp/1b.	1 lb.
Cabb'e (coffee) beans	2 sp/lb.	1 lb.
Gin (pint)	2 sp–5 gp	1 lb.
Tea & Accoutrements		
Tea, common, brick or loose leaf	5 cp/lb.	1 lb.
Sieve, bland	2 cp	—
Sieve, fancy	1 sp	—
Sieve, silver	2 gp	—
Tea, Arrath Green Leaf	6 gp/lb.	1 lb.
Tea, Dazeel	1 sp/lb.	1 lb.
Tea, East Dominion Between Leaf	25 gp/ 1/4 lb.	1 lb.
Tea, Mugreebb Finest Quality (Gruss & Daughter)	4 sp/lb.	1 lb.
Teapot, earthen	1 sp	2 lbs.
Teapot, silver	15 gp	1 lb.
Tea set, common	5 sp	5 lbs.
Tea set, luxury silver (Hobbington & Daughter)	50 gp	7 lbs.
Tippling stock, luxury	20 gp	—
Tonic (Ad's, "Guaranteed to lift your spirits")	4 sp	—

Drugs

Item	Cost	Weight
Opium tincture	25 gp	—
Snuff, tobacco (1 pinch)	1 sp	—
Tobacco, rough shag	5 sp/lb.	1 lb.
Tobacco, Turkad	8 gp/lb.	1 lb.
Tobacco, personal mix (Tott & Grimwell, Royal Tobacconists)	2 gp/lb.	1 lb.

Opium Tincture. This small vial of liquid contains a single dose of ingestible opium.

Snuff, Tobacco. Typically carried in decorative silver boxes, snuff is a form of tobacco that does not require chewing or smoking. Instead, it is snorted into the nostrils with the effects experienced as swiftly as inhalation.

Boiling Death Lice (Injury). A failed experiment in insectum development, the bites of these alchemically enhanced lice inject a potent toxin that boils the victim's blood. Typically, they are kept in a flask that is thrown at the victim. If it hits, the flask breaks and the swarm of lice emerges to bite the victim. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) poison damage and is poisoned for up to 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns. On each successive failed save, the creature takes 4 (1d8) poison damage. After three consecutive successful saves, the poison ends.

Boiling Death Toxin (Ingested or Injury). Harvested from the alchemically enhanced boiling death lice, this version of the toxin has been concentrated into an ingestible or injury poison that can be applied to weapons. A creature subjected to the boiling death lice toxin must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and is poisoned for 24 hours. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn't poisoned.

Insectum

Insects are everywhere in the Blight, a peculiarity even the wisest find difficult to explain. In summer, the night air boils with them, and even in the depths of winter, a hive of enormous elephant cockroaches may be seen huddling behind a hearth, or a black batmoth fluttering around a pyrelantern's glow in the snow. The Blight, which is host to many unique species, seems to nuture them, and many grow to uncommon, even giant, sizes. They have an alarming habit of forming swarms that — if not dealt with swiftly — may amass in quantities large enough to kill domestic animals and even people.

The preponderance of large and unique insects, as well as other types of vermin, in the city has led to a unique industry that combines alchemy, toxicology, and insect husbandry to produce a range of alchemically enhanced drug-like insect venoms. The purpose-bred species that result are known as insectum, and their use is tightly controlled by the corrupt and ruthless Insectum Guild, which issues licenses to only a handful of official dealers to collude on supply, and who respond swiftly to spikes in demand with commensurate price rises. A host of illegal street dealers fill out the market for insectum, but most are unpredictable in quality, with many of these disreputable dealers selling inferior, sick, or even dangerous insectum. While guild members are not spotless, the value of their official status and a fixed address tends to ensure that the effects of their products can be relied upon.

An insectum is typically used by ingestion or injury: eating it, or applying its bite or sting, sometimes to a particular body area, where it may remain attached for the duration of its effects. Usually, the user must willingly succumb to the effects of the toxin in order to also benefit from the alchemical boon it contains. Insectum are sold live and sterile, and die within a week of purchase. An insectum must be alive when used, and unless otherwise detailed, dies once it has been used. The price reflects a single dose of insectum.

Insectum	Type	Price
Angry weevil	injury	75 gp
Auceps scarabaeus	injury	40 gp
Bite spider	injury	100 gp
Blake's sanguisuga	contact	350 gp
Bloatfly	ingested	2 gp
Callus fleas	injury	50 gp
Cockerel spider	ingested	40 gp
Darkwasp	injury	175 gp
Dolor crabrao	injury	275 gp
Eyeleech	contact	125 gp
Festerfew	ingested	75 gp

Poisons

Poison	Type	Save DC	Onset	Frequency	Effect	Cure	Price
Boiling death	ingested/injury	20	—	1/rd. for 6 rds.	2d8 poison	2 saves	2,300 gp
Boiling death lice	injury	18	—	1/rd. for 6 rds.	4d8 poison	2 saves	900 gp

Insectum	Type	Price
Fingerlice	injury	35 gp
Fire bite lice	injury	40 gp
Gadfly ambrosia	ingested	3 gp
Great snakefly	injury	40 gp
Howling nightshade grub	ingested	40 gp
Hungering wasp grub	ingested	250 gp
Joy scarab	injury	10 gp
Jubb's nasal lice	injury	140 gp
Kothrington's swan fleas	injury	150 gp
Libidinosus vermis	ingested	40 gp
Lobotomy hornet	injury	950 gp
Lucius spider	injury	40 gp
Misery slug	ingested	30 gp
Ochre lice	ingested	100 gp
Porr's scarab	ingested	275 gp
Rictus gnats	injury	150 gp
Screaming maggot	ingested	125 gp
Speed weevil	injury	40 gp
Thistle frenzy bug	injury	40 gp
Wart lice	ingested	175 gp
Water crane	ingested	110 gp

Angry Weevil. This black-and-red giant weevil injects a toxin that deals 1d4 points of damage and causes the user to fly into a uncontrollable fury for 1 minute, increasing their damage by 1 points, but taking a –2 penalty to AC. This does not stack with barbarian rage effects. When the user reduces a creature to 0 or fewer hit points, she must attempt a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become confused. For the remainder of the duration, she attacks the nearest creature other than herself. On the following round, refer to the *confusion* spell to determine her actions. At the end of this round, and each round thereafter, she can attempt a new saving throw to end the confusion effect. The user cannot end her fury voluntarily.

Auceps Scarabaeus. The bite of this golden scarab contains a poison that causes 3 (1d6) points of poison damage plus disadvantage on any Charisma-based checks (a DC 13 Constitution saving throw negates the effects on Charisma checks). If affected by the poison, the user gains advantage on initiative rolls and on Perception and Insight checks for 2 hours.

Bite Spider. The bite of this spider injects a toxin that causes the user to have disadvantage on Charisma-based checks and causes the user's skin to gradually harden over the course of 1 minute, at which point the user cannot have an AC less than 14 for 1 hour. When the effect ends, angry boils and warts cover the user's skin for the following 1d6 days, imparting disadvantage on Persuasion checks.

Blake's Sanguisuga. When this mottled brown leech is first attached, the user must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated for 1 minute. The leech remains attached for 1d3 hours in which time the user has improved resistance to the effects of certain types of damage. The user gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for the duration but becomes vulnerable to acid, fire, and poison during this time.

Bloatfly. Consuming this 2-inch-long fly provides a Medium or smaller creature sufficient nutrition for 1 day. The user must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Callus Fleas. The bites of these fleas cause the user's skin to gradually harden over the course of 1 minute. This effect deals 3 (1d6) points of poison damage but provides a +2 bonus to AC for 1 hour.

Cockerel Spider. Ingesting this spider causes the user's voice to deepen and become more threatening. The user has advantage on Intimidation checks for 1 hour but must also succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 24 hours.

Darkwasp. The sting of this wasp injects a venom that deals 4 (1d8) points of poison damage and improves the user's ability to resist the effects of certain types of damage. If affected by the poison, the user gains resistance to acid, fire, and poison for 1 hour. The user becomes vulnerable to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage while under the effects of the wasp venom.

Dolor Crabrao. The sting of this wasp injects a venom that deals 4 (1d8) points of damage to the user and forces the user into an uncontrollable fury for 1 minute. While in a rage, the user gains a +2 bonus to hit and damage on melee and thrown weapon attack and damage rolls, and advantage on Wisdom saving throws. In addition, she takes a –4 penalty to AC. She also gains 2d6 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points are lost when the effect ends. This does not stack with barbarian rage effects. While under the effects of the venom, the user cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills or any ability that requires concentration (such as spellcasting). The user cannot end her fury voluntarily, and gains 1 level of exhaustion after the effect ends. If the user falls unconscious, her fury immediately ends.

Eyeleech. When this black leech is attached to the eyelid, it injects a toxin that deals 3 (1d6) points of poison damage but the user's night vision is enhanced. The user gains darkvision 60 ft., and advantage on all sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks, for 1d3 hours.

Festerfew. A user who eats a handful of these live lice gains advantage on all saves versus disease and poison for 1d4 hours but must also succeed on a DC 15 Constitution save or be stunned for 1 hour.

Fingerlice. A user whose hands are bitten by these lice gains exceptional manual dexterity but tiny maggots writhe under their skin. The user gains advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks for 2 hours, but has disadvantage on Strength (Athletics) checks that require use of the hands (climbing, swimming, and other similar activities).

Firebite Lice. A user bitten by these lice gains exceptional agility but the toxins cause the user to feel like they are on fire. The user takes 5 (2d4) points of fire damage, but gains advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks.

Gadfly Ambrosia. Consuming a paste made from the crushed remains of this fly provides a Medium or smaller creature with sufficient water for 1 day. The user must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Great Snakefly. The bite of this fly is applied behind the user's ear, whereupon she has advantage on Acrobatics checks for 2 hours. At the end of the duration, the user is deafened for 2 hours unless they succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw .

Howling Nightshade Grub. This sausage-sized grub tastes disgusting and howls when eaten. For the following day, the user has advantage on skill checks and Constitution saving throws made to resist nonlethal damage from exhaustion, starvation, thirst, a forced march, or hot or cold environments, but becomes sluggish and has disadvantage on initiative rolls for the duration.

Hungering Wasp Grub. When eaten, this orange-and-black-striped grub provides the user with advantage on saves versus poison for 24 hours. At the end of the duration, the user must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 24 hours.

Joy Scarab. The bite of this green scarab beetle injects a toxin that instils intense feelings of elation and joy. The user gains advantage on

saves versus emotion altering effects (*calm emotions, mind blank, detect thoughts*, etc.) for 4 hours. However, for the duration, the user fights only to defend herself. If the user is interacted with or questioned while under the effects of this spell, she can only defend herself and may not attack, though any advice or answers she gives may be disjointed due to her euphoric state.

Jubb's Nasal Lice. These lice must be snorted into the nasal passage where their bites grant the user advantage on Wisdom (Perception checks) that involve smell for 4 hours. For the duration, the user also has disadvantage on saves versus effects that would be inhaled, such as inhaled poisons and stench effects.

Kothrington's Swan Fleas. The bites of these fleas inject a toxin that deals 3 (1d6) points of poison damage but the user gains advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws for 1 minute. At the end of the duration, the user must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage on Strength checks and saving throws for the following hour.

Libidinosus Vermis. Ingesting this worm grants the user advantage on Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, Performance, and Persuasion) checks for 4 hours, but the user also has disadvantage on Wisdom checks and Wisdom saving throws for the duration.

Lobotomy Hornet. The sting of this hornet injects a venom that grants the user advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws for 4 hours, but the user also has disadvantage on Intelligence checks and Intelligence saving throws for the duration.

Lucius Spider. This fist-sized grey spider's bite delivers a toxin that deals 11 (3d6) points of poison damage, but a user so affected gains advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks for the following 4 hours.

Misery Slug. Eating this slimy, black finger-long slug cures 1d8 points of damage at the beginning of the user's turn and at the beginning of their following turn. At the end of the duration, the user must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute.

Ochre Lice. Eating a handful of these fat lice grants advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks for 2 hours, but the user has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws for the duration.

Porr's Scarab. Consuming this crunchy, bitter black beetle grants advantage on Dexterity and Strength checks for 1 hour if the user succeeds on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw . Failure results in the user vomiting up the remains of the beetle and being poisoned for 10 minutes.

Rictus Gnats. The bites of these gnats cause the muscle tone of the user's face to relax, making it hard to convey expressions or emotion. For 1 hour, the user, if reduced to 0 hit points, drops to 1 hit point instead. For the duration and for 24 hours thereafter, the user's face remains devoid of expression, incurring disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion, Deception, Performance, and Intimidation) checks.

Screaming Maggot. This writhing, bulbous maggot screams when eaten, dealing 3 (1d6) points of thunder damage to the ingester, who must also succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be deafened for 10 minutes. The user gains advantage on Intelligence checks for 1 hour.

Speed Weevil. The venomous bite of this white weevil is applied to the chest near the heart, dealing 4 (1d8) points of poison damage and granting the user an extra 10 feet of movement to her base walking speed for 2 hours.

Thistle Frenzy Bug. If this insect is attached to the user's neck, its sharp claws inject toxins that deal 3 (1d6) points of poison damage but the user adds 1 to their AC while the bug remains attached. The bug remains attached for 3 hours before dropping off, but if it is forcibly removed before this time, the user must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (3d6) poison damage from a concentrated burst of venom.

Wart Lice. Ingesting these lice causes the user's skin to become malleable and flexible, granting advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks and checks involving a disguise kit for 4 hours. At the end of the duration, the user's skin forms ugly warts, imparting disadvantage on the user's Charisma (Persuasion) checks for 1d4 days before they disappear.

Water Crane. Eating this long-legged water insect grants the ability to breathe underwater (as the *water breathing* spell) for 1 hour. Once the user has breathed underwater, though, she must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to be able to breathe air again so long as the water breathing duration is still in effect. If the user fails this saving throw, she is able to only able to breathe underwater for 10 minutes or until the water breathing effect ends, whichever is sooner. After this time, if the water breathing duration is still effect, the user can attempt another saving throw to be able to breathe air again.

Lifestyle Expenses

Live a life of luxury; eat well, drink the finest wines, and be seen in all the right places. In the Blight, how well you eat and how well connected you are can have a direct effect on the characters. Lifestyle expenses add detail to life in a filthy, crowded city such as the Blight. If you don't want to add the minutiae of expenses, feel free not to employ this section.

Costs of living are associated with a specific standard of living: destitute, poor, average, wealthy, extravagant, and decadent (detailed below). Give your players a general sense of the options, and let them decide how they're going to spent their time and money. Generally, costs of living are subtracted at the start of each month, along with the effects as indicated.

Destitute (0 gp/month): Eating what you can beg.

At the end of each month, make a base DC 10 Constitution saving throw (add 1 to the DC for each consecutive month of **destitute** living) or reduce your Constitution by 1 point. If your Constitution reaches 0, you die. This reduction cannot be recovered except by magic healing or by an improvement in living standards up to at *least* average for at *least* 1 week, during which it can heal as normal. You must also make a base DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each month of living destitute or contract the filth fever disease. If you contract filth fever, there is a cumulative 1 in 10 chance* for each consecutive month of living in destitution that you must make a Constitution saving throw or contract one of the following additional diseases. Roll percentile dice to determine which one. The cumulative chance stops and resets to 0 if you spend at least 1 week at an average standard of living. Likewise, if one of these comorbid diseases is contracted, there is no additional chance of catching another unless you are cured of the first one.

*Roll d10. At the the first month of destitute living, a roll of 1 indicates that you have contracted a disease and should roll on the Additional Diseases table. The second month, a roll of 1 or 2 o a d10 indicates that you contracted a disease. Repeat this process for each month, so month 3 would be a result of 1, 2, or 3, and so on.

Additional Diseases

d%	Disease	Save DC
01–03	Black Rot	19
04–15	Blinding Sickness	15
16–31	Bloody Flux	15
32–39	Devil Chills	13
40–42	Festering Lung	16
43–58	Grey Ache	13
59–60	Leprosy	17
61–64	Mindfire	13
65–72	Red Ache	15
73–80	Seizure	13
81–84	Slimy Doom	13
85–00	Sewer Plague	10

Treat Disease effects as per *contagion,* with this addition: "Saving throw can be repeated after each long rest. If the save is made, the creature is cured and the effects end."

Black Rot. This highly infectious disease affects the skin and muscles of the victim, creating an accelerated gangrenous process that turns the affected tissue black and eats it away. If exposed to the disease, a creature needs to make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease. The effects of the disease take hold during the first 24 hours. For every

4 points of Constitution damage sustained by the victim, a random limb is lost and can only be recovered by regeneration or similar magic. Once contracted, the victim needs to make a new saving throw every 24 hours. If two consecutive saves are made, the disease is cured and all effects except for the loss of a limb are restored after a long rest. If the save fails, the victim suffers 1d6 Constitution damage, 1d6 Dexterity damage and 1d3 Charisma damage. If Constitution is reduced to zero, the victim dies.

Devil Chills. An infestation carried by various devils. It typically is not fatal. Potential victims must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease. It weakens the victim over time, but generally is not fatal. Once contracted, the victim gains one level of exhaustion and cannot recover and exhaustion from non-magical means until the disease is cured. Repeat the saving throw every 24 hours. If the save is successful, the victim is cured and can recover exhaustion normally. If the save fails, the victim gains an additional level of exhaustion but this disease cannot increase exhaustion over 3 levels of exhaustion.

Festering Lung. Creatures exposed to this disease must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become infected. This infection gets into the lungs of the affected creature and begins to break down the respiratory system, producing choking and copious amounts of bloody phlegm. It saps the strength from the victim due to poor oxygenation and renders him unable to speak or make any vocal noises two days after contraction. Creatures that do not breathe are immune to festering lung. While under the effects of this disease, the victim cannot cast any spells requiring a vocal component. In addition, the creature has disadvantage on Strength checks, Strength saving throws, and attack rolls that use Strength. The saving throw can be repeated after every long rest and if successful, the creature is cured and the effects of the disease end.

Grey Ache. Upon exposure to this disease, creatures must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected. Once infected, the creature's bones begin to ache, and shortly following the onset of the ache, round or oval-shaped lesions begin to appear on the skin. The lesions are grey and scaly and within 1d12 hours begin to crack and ooze blood and pus. While infected, the creature has disadvantage on Dexterity and Charisma checks, saving throws, and any attacks that use Dexterity. This disease can only be cured through magical remedies, such as the *lesser restoration* or *heal* spells.

Leprosy. This disease slowly rots the flesh and numbs and stiffens limbs. Creatures exposed to this disease must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become diseased. While diseased, creature has disadvantage on Dexterity and Charisma checks, Dexterity and Charisma saving throws, and attack rolls that use Dexterity. This disease cannot be cured except for by magic.

Red Ache. Living creatures must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become infected. Their skin will become red and bloated and warm to the touch. While infected, the creature has disadvantage on Strength checks, Strength saving throws, and attack rolls that use Strength. The saving throw can be repeated after every long rest and if successful in 2 consecutive tries (two long rests in a row), the creature is cured and the effects of the disease end. A *greater restoration* spell will also cure the disease.

Poor (3 gp/month): Eating frugally, with little or no meat.

At the end of each month, make a **base** DC 5 Constitution saving throw (add 1 to the DC for each consecutive month of poor living) or take 1 point of Constitution damage. This damage cannot be recovered except by magic healing or by an improvement in living standards for at least 1 week, during which it will heal normally.

You must also succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of each full month of average living to avoid contracting filth fever.

Average (10 gp/month): You have meat and ale occasionally, the odd night in a tavern, and generally your dress is fair.

You heal attribute damage at the normal rate (fully recover after a long rest) after maintaining an average standard of living for at least 1 week.

There is a 1 in 4 chance* that you must also succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of each full month of average living to avoid contracting filth fever.

*Roll d4. A result of 1 indicates the DC 13 Constitution saving throw is required.

Wealthy (100 gp/month): You visit taverns regularly, eat meat most days, and drink wine.

After 3 consecutive months of this standard of living, you gain a temporary +1 bonus to your Constitution. If the temporary bonus to Constitution changes your Constitution modifier, your hit point maximum will also change, and would be as though you had the new modifier from 1st level. This bonus is lost if your lifestyle drops below the **wealthy** tier for at least 1 month.

Because you are well connected, you are considered proficient in social interaction skills (Deception, Persuasion and Intimidation) in your home district. This bonus stacks with any other you have gained through feats or traits. This bonus is lost if your lifestyle drops below the **wealthy** tier for at least 1 month.

Extravagant (1,000 gp/month): Only the finest things in life for you. You drink expensive wine as often as you wish, go out to expensive clubs and the theatre, and are seen and known by many.

After 3 consecutive months of this standard of living, you gain a temporary +2 bonus to your Constitution. If the temporary bonus to Constitution changes your Constitution modifier, your hit point maximum will also change, and would be as though you had the new modifier from 1st level. This bonus is lost if your lifestyle drops below the **extravagant** tier for at least 1 month.

Because you are well connected, you have advantage on social interaction skill checks (Deception, Persuasion and Intimidation) in your home district. This bonus stacks with any other you have gained through feats or traits. This bonus is lost if your lifestyle drops below the **extravagant** tier for at least 1 month.

Decadent (5,000 gp/month): You deny yourself nothing. You eat and drink and partake in whatever catches your fancy as often and as much as you like. You rarely go to clubs or the theatres because private showings and debauches are prepared for you. Your hedonism is known to all, and you have acquired a sizable entourage or sycophants, devotees, and hangers-on who emulate your every move.

After 3 consecutive months of this standard of living, you gain a temporary +3 bonus to your Constitution. If the temporary bonus changes your Constitution modifier, your hit point maximum will also change, and would be as though you had the new modifier from 1st level. This bonus is lost if your lifestyle drops below the **decadent** tier for at least 1 month.

While maintaining your lascivious lifestyle, there is a non-cumulative 5% chance that you contract one of the diseases on the **Additional Diseases** table at the start of this section. Roll a d20. If the result is 1, roll on the table above.

Sustaining a lifestyle of insectum abuse, alchemical enhancements, and hard living takes its toll on your body and immune system. After an entire year of **decadent** living, you lose the temporary Constitution bonus and begin taking 1 point of Constitution damage for every 6 months that you *continue* to maintain your hedonistic lifestyle. If your standard of living drops below **decadent** for at least 1 year, you can then recover the Constitution damage after a long rest.

You have a reputation of largesse and are very well connected. Because of this, you have advantage on social interaction skill checks (Deception, Persuasion and Intimidation) in any district within the city. This bonus stacks with any other you have gained through feats or traits. In addition, your reputation precedes you, allowing you once per day to add double your proficiency bonus to an interaction skill check in a non-hostile situation.

If your standard of living drops below **decadent** for at least 1 week these bonuses are lost completely, and your entourage and the crowds turn on you, casting you as the object of their derision.

Common Names of The Blight

These are examples of typical human names found within the Blight. There are many more names to found within the city, but these can serve as a guide for capturing the feel of the average names spoken on the streets and in the gin houses of the city.

Male Names

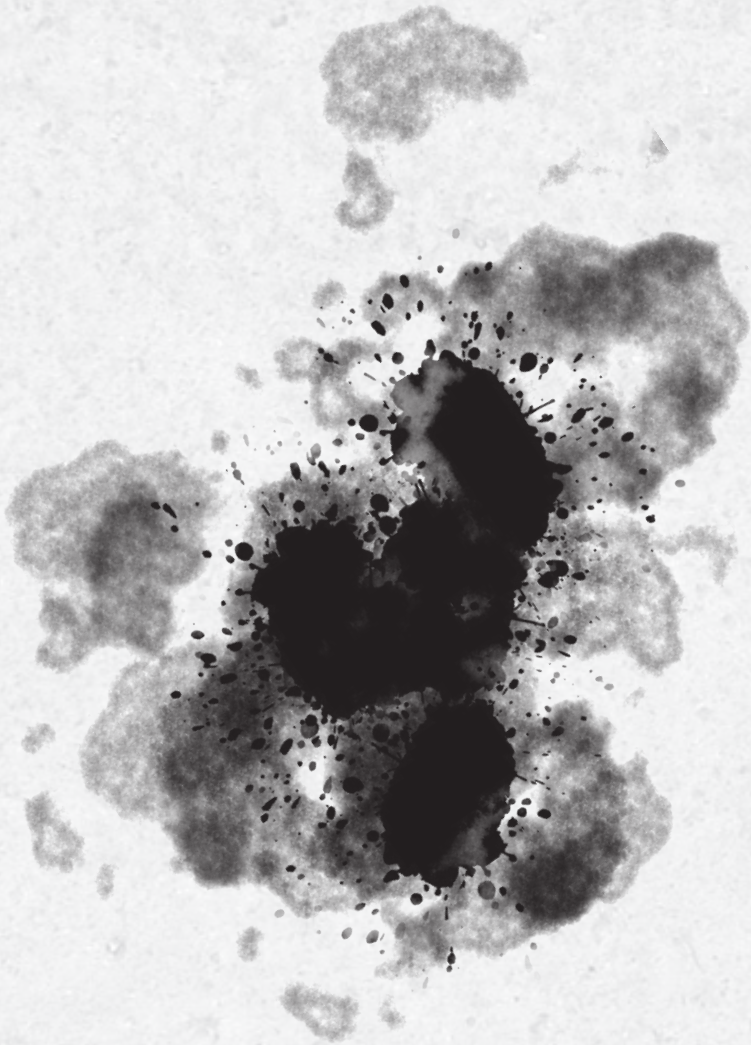
Barbel	Joshua	Sorrel
Bathsedomil	Kale	Spurge
Bedomile	Kotlin	Sturgeon
Borage	Loam	Tanner
Breck	Longhorn	Toadflax
Carbuncle	Luther	Tog
Carder	Natter	Tomlin
Cleg	Mab	Turnip
Cole	Mox	Turnstone
Crig	Oscar	Tussock
Droll	Padge	Uriah
Ekrin	Pleasant	Weald
Flax	Quarrel	Weld
Gideon	Qogg	Welt
Grund	Rudge	Woad
Henbit	Seth	Wrack
Jacob	Silas	Wryneck

Female Names

Ancona	Elisa	Mercy
Bernice	Elisabeth	Murnifell
Blackberry	Ettie	Nan
Briney	Fogou	Nightscent
Broom	Grace	Poppy
Brudella	Happiness	Primrose
Bunting	Hazel	Rull
Buttercup	Hemp	Shanny
Catkin	Hempy	Shanny
Celeress	Hope	Sheepsbit
Chastity	Hornet	Tansy
Chen	Humrineller	Teasel
Constance	Ivy	Thenna
Curlew	Juniper	Uneria
Dandelion	Katkin	Vellia
Dulse	Lettuce	Weft
Ella	Mallow	Zydora

Surnames

Alderfly	Grindylow	Pumple
Bedstraw	Gutter	Rake
Blackfly	Hartwill	Rast
Blackhemp	Hogweed	Rowgate
Bladderwort	Humpless	Sedge
Botfly	Kumblecramps	Slyne
Brompton	Kumblekumble	Sough
Butterly	Linton	Stoat
Catchpenny	Lucksikard	Stotter
Cornuwell	Mine	Tangle
Cotter	Mowthorpe	Thornholme
Crump	Mumblechump	Tredge
Crush	Mumpsy	Troff
Dogerell	Pedimine	Turnkey
Flixton	Podge	Wodge
Frim	Pollard	Wold
Grindalythe	Porter	Zander





Part Four: The Blight GM Guide

"Happiness lies neither in vice nor in virtue"



The advice given herein is aimed specifically at the Blight and running a rich, story-driven experience for you and your players. However, the themes within and those outlined in ***The Blight Player's Handbook*** — complex relationships, family, power, and other ambiguous themes — could fit well into any urban adventure path or indeed other campaigns. Rich relationships and family are at the centre of many adventures set in out-of-the-way places, betrayal can occur in the most remote spots, and complex groups can stretch across the countryside, not just streets.

These rules and ideas won't suit every group, so use only what you think you and your players will enjoy.

Finally, not everyone wants the complexity of followers, friends, powerful enemies, and shadowy sponsors. The Blight lends itself beautifully to the more classic role-playing campaign too, with opportunities at every corner for adventuring. Whether it's robbing a cruel merchant, exploring the shifting jungles of the Between, or fighting in the bear pits and sweat vats of the city's underbelly, a city is a great place to adventure.

Using the Blight as a base for other adventures gives your players the opportunities to spend their hard-earned cash on magic, on pleasure, and on the dubious goods for sale here. Each Blight adventure and District includes options to further develop stories as sidebars, but has at its core simple adventure.

Bringing the Blight to Life

The best campaigns and adventure paths are merely text without the input of a great GM and players to guide it and make it grow into something more. These groups often share their experiences on message-boards and get into character in a way actors might be proud of, immersing themselves in detail and complex handouts. On one occasion, I recall with particular fondness, actual food was prepared for part of the adventure.

An adventure is not unlike that food that served as part of our game. A great adventure is not just about words but deeds, and a good GM adds flavour to the words, spicing descriptions with sounds, sights, and smells to bring the whole to life in a satisfying and fulfilling way.

Castorhage pays serious attention to these senses, and each district of the city has a "Sight, Sound and Smell" section as a part of it. Also, included in each district is one additional section — what the place *feels* like. Is it crowded or oppressive? Have an air of nervousness? Excitement? Some GMs may find this detail too much, and wish simply to play out events and areas as written. However, I again include such detail because for many GMs (myself included), this can transform a game into an experience. Strong feelings leave an impression on the adventure, and as such may lead to a more satisfying experience. I can recall when simply the banging of my hand on a radiator to define an echo from below suddenly created an air of menace, and when a tap on the underside of the playing table to define a sudden thump below the character's feet pulled everyone's gaze downward.

Again, as with all of the Blight, the city is yours to do with as you please. Use as much or as little as you wish.

The Blight: Mundane, Magic or Mythic

The Blight is a place like no other; it bleeds into other realms, it bludgeons its way into narrow alleys, and it slithers its way beneath other cities. The insidious, twisted domain of Between has a peculiar effect upon the place, and one you may wish to think about before you run anything in and around the Blight: How does it work? As written, the Blight is a single place; a city made up of many parts to create a whole fantasy setting perched on the borders of reality with an extraordinary place — Between.

You might not want that, however. You might want a district, a shop, an NPC to come from here, and nothing else. These places and people might be mundane parts of a whole, simple passers-by or districts that have always existed in your city. You can, however, go for a more extraordinary answer. The Blight can literally exist in *Between* other places: a door in your city leads to the Blight, a shop front backs onto Between, or a tramp wanders the streets of your city *and* the Blight. If using this more magical approach, be careful how you choose to explain it; the Between is in effect similar to a *gate* spell, allowing access between, but it is much more fickle than that. You might not want such an explanation, however; *gate* spells are generally very rare, and having too many presents its own problems. Instead, you might wish for the simplest of explanations — it's a mystical place whose very nature is inexplicable: doors exist that connect to different places, but they simply are; occasionally the view from an otherwise mundane window shows something completely random; and a character falls down a seemingly endless tunnel and ends up in the Between and thence the Blight.

A City for Anywhere

The great thing about running a fantasy role-playing game is the flexibility you have in determining detail. You can create vast volcanic ranges, deep ocean trenches, and huge flood plains. In short, you determine whole geographies. Once these ideas have been generated, you're then free to get into the details — how high, how deep, how wide? The same goes for any fantasy city, and Castorhage is no different. I've presented Castorhage as having a temperate climate with extremes of winter and summer; however, it would be an easy task to adjust this — some sections such as the Black Ice Fayre† of winter— would need to be reconsidered or removed, but basic details could be altered quite simply.

Castorhage could be at the equator of your world — the heat and squalor should therefore be emphasised. Litter the narrative with crushing ivy growing up the sides of decaying buildings ravaged by the peculiar Castorhage stonemite (whose bite, of course, is painful and can kill babies). The river is sluggish and could become mudflats lasting many months in the dry seasons.

Flip the idea on its head and Castorhage becomes a sub-arctic hell, the black waters frozen for many months. Here the city dwells in a comatose frozen canker-shrouded blanket throughout the long, harsh winter.

Other ideas can easily be weaved into the mix, even the exotic such as Castorhage standing on the edges of a vast waterfall falling into nothing, or being the last point of call before the Burning Ocean. Use the text as a canvas, not a script.

Size Isn't Everything

One of the most important decisions you may wish to make is how Castorhage fits into your world: Is it the basis for an ongoing campaign and thus the centre of everything?

Castorhage is presented herein as a huge city, an impossibly massive population at complete odds with a typical fantasy game setting. Its population density as presented here is a little greater than that of the borough of Manhattan at ~77,000 people per square mile. However, despite its advanced technological state compared with much of the world, Castorhage is by no means a "modern" city. It lacks the towering skyscrapers, though it has a multitude of precariously tall tenement buildings and a propensity to stack new construction haphazardly atop old construction as in the Jumble and Festival. Though Festival and TownBridge are not technically a part of the city in the legal definition, their population numbers are included in the census here. In addition, though Manhattan has a multitude of skyscrapers, a great portion of that real estate is office space rather than residential space, of which Castorhage has only a fraction by comparison. In fact, the typical apartment or residence of Manhattan would be considered luxuriously roomy by better than 90% of the population of Castorhage who settle for a single cramped room, garret, undercroft, stairwell, or door stoop that they call home. The Blight, of course, has only a ghost of the infrastructure of a modern Manhattan or London.

However, even with the above considerations, the Blight's size is still virtually unbelievable (always an interesting concept in a fantasy roleplaying game) in a contextual sense, like a swollen blood-gorged tick always on the verge of rupture. This is greatly accounted for by Castorhage's own unique quality hinted at in the "Between tessellation"

description in the sidebox. In short, the city's proximity to Between creates a sort of vortex of sentience (I would say humanity, but humanity is only a majority representative of the beings found here).

This unique vortex of sorts consists of two principal features. Despite the appalling mortality rates and constant threats of danger and disease, Castorhage enjoys a subtle fecundity that ensures that the population can renew itself and not only sustain its numbers but even grow despite the plagues, pestilence, and famine that frequently afflicts the population on some scale. In addition, it seems to possess a strange form of unconscious mental. Those who are born in the Blight seldom leave — even those who travel far away to the city-state's many colonies usually end up finding their way back home before all is said and done. This is no conscious compulsion; it just seems to work out that way more often than not. In addition, foreigners who travel to Castorhage and remain for any extended period of time frequently stay permanently as well, start a family or raise the one they brought with them and become a part of the city's ever-burgeoning populace. Again, this is not a conscious compulsion, and most anyone asked about it as a motivation would outright deny such a thing, but more often than not that is how things turn out.

It seems that the Blight is hungry and never sated.



If the population scale of Castorhage is simply too large for your campaign use, however, simply drop the number by an order or magnitude or only adopt the parts of the city that you really need. Just because the Blight is a growing, ravenous beast doesn't mean that it has to be for your campaign world.

The Flavour of the Blight

"The imagination is the spur of delights ..."

The descriptions of people and places gives you an overview of the city, its decaying parts, and its twisted alleyways, which are merely the main components to the dish. The true essence of the Blight lies also in its flavour, its smells, its atmosphere, and its spice.

Appendix Aincludes a number of random lists included to give you some inspiration if you need any for the strange locales and locals found in the city but also to give you a taste of what is lurking there. It is hoped these lists inspire you to set up adventures, encounters, or even perhaps simple conversations in your own game. In addition, Appendix B includes a lexicon of terms common to the folk of the Blight so you can sprinkle it liberally throughout your campaign and create that living-city feel.

Bear in mind also that the Blight is of course more than the sum of its parts and that any twisted dark fantasy setting could have these elements. Over and above these flavours, here are a few more ideas to give you a taste of the city.

I started titling this next section "Mature Campaign Themes," but I'm not sure if that's the exact phrase I wanted. Mature can mean many things, but initially comes across as sex, violence, drugs, and other morally ambiguous themes. Those issues certainly have their place in the Blight, as it's a dark fantasy setting, but it's not all it's about. The optional rules and ideas that follow are for you to judge. Do they suit your style, are they unacceptable to your group or would they have a place with a slight alteration?

How It All Began

One of the most useful and inspiring RPG articles I've ever seen appeared in the pages of *Imagine Magazine* — TSR UK's roleplaying periodical that was published during the decade of the '80s. *Imagine* featured articles about a homegrown campaign called Pellinore and in some articles The City League — so called because it was "a league across." These city articles fascinated me in their level of detail. They would describe everything from entertainments in the city to obscure corners and plazas with an incredible depth of character and interaction. To me, they were the consummate way to describe a city — down to every street corner, every persona, and every obscure fact but always leaving space for development if the GM wished. This place lived. Yet always with such a place, there was room for expansion.

A long time ago I was lucky enough to have an adventure published called "The Styes" (*Dungeon Magazine* #121). I intended the place to be a simple one-off location for a single adventure, and as such, the setting was fairly small, and provided scant details. I'd read China Miéville's incredible *Perdido Street Station* shortly before writing it, and the amazing dark atmosphere Miéville created soaked into me. Reaction to the adventure was good, and James Jacobs suggested a sequel. I threw several ideas around, one of which eventually became "The Weavers" in *Dungeon* #135. However, at about this time I also began an adventure path with my own group, based upon the Styes setting. This adventure path, loosely based around *The Maltese Falcon*, greatly expanded upon that original setting, and I soon realised that the Styes was not big enough for the players to explore so other regions such as Festival Town and the Spice Islands were incorporated. These in turn expanded into what became a schizophrenic madness, an endless development that has been fed and nurtured in a dark attic as it slowly became the City-State of Castorhage.

That "The Styes" now languishes unused by its owners frustrates me, but it has given birth to a new monster — The Blight — so in many ways I'm grateful for its torpor.

Above all, the idea for this vast work owes itself to encouragement in my writing, both from message-board posters and especially from the wonderful people at Paizo and Frog God Games. For without that, and the kind words of many others, I would never have had the courage to undertake this project. It's also very important for me to thank people who have taken the time to review my work, edit it, and suggest changes. I've looked at everything they've done, and I hope learnt from them. Your suggestions and annoyances and likes have helped me to improve in the past, and continue to improve in the future I hope.

This project is therefore yours, and I hope that I can repay you by creating something to savour.

Campaign Themes and Styles

Some groups play an incredibly deep and absorbing campaign; others like to relieve the stress of their daily lives by beating up orcs. Most games (ours included) prefer a balance of both; unmasking a politician one week, and slaughtering a group of goblins without dialogue the next. Linking adventures into themes through the characters is one way to bring your characters realistically together under a common bond. It's not for everyone; some groups like to start and roll characters with total freedom — an elf monk here, a dwarf barbarian there — but sometimes a change of pace is good. It may not always be appropriate to do so, but occasionally, ideas like the two below can offer a welcome change of pace.

The City-State of Castorhage

CITY-STATE OF CASTORHAGE

Size: Metropolis

Population: 3,285,000 (67% human, 5% mongrelfolk, 5% ratfolk, 4% gnomish, 4% dwarven, 3% half-elven, 2% goblinoid, 1.5% half-orc, 1.3% briny, 1.2% orcish, 1% elvish, 5% other, including halfling, swyne, tengu, inphidians, tabaxi, grippli, ghazaks, dhampir, an vishkanyas)

: Castorhage, for all appearances, is a hereditary monarchy supported by a very a powerful, yet insular, bureaucracy. Queen Alice is the ruler in name and title, but the Crown Justices, three powerful bureaucrats, control the vital areas of trade, defence, and colonisation. Behind the scenes, the puppet strings are pulled by a shadow syndicate, the Illuminati, who control the Crown Justices. But true supremacy rests with **Demoriel, the Twice-Exiled Seductress**, a manipulative arch-devil who secretly rules from the shadows, plotting the course she wishes Castorhage to take.

Defence: Castorhage is protected by the City Watch and the Royal Armies under the command of Duke Malice, a cousin of Queen Alice. There is also a secret police force, the "**Knockers**," that rounds up Anarchists, dissidents, political enemies, and anyone seen as a threat to the status quo of the ruling elite.

Commerce: There is no limit to the goods and services – licit or illicit - available in Castorhage.

Qualities: academic, colonial power, holy site, magically attuned, notorious, prosperous, racially intolerant (lowest caste), strategic location

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UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Between Tessellation: The area of the city of Castorhage has the unique property of being exceptionally "close" to a physical "other reality" called Between. This creates all manner of unpredictable and dangerous manifestations within the city and its inhabitants.

Colonial Power: Castorhage possesses a vast network of global colonies from which it can draw economic and labour resources.

Overpopulation: Castorhage has a massive population for the area it encompasses unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Its massive economic, colonial, and magical resources are the only things that stave off massive starvation. However, it also creates an unprecedented diversity, innovation and labour base causing a contradictory dichotomy of prosperity and poverty.

Notable NPCs

Demoriel the Twice-Exiled Seductress, Hidden Despotrix of Castorhage
Her Royal Highness Queen Alice, Monarch of Castorhage
Her Royal Highness Princess Alicia, Heir Apparent
Clovis, Crown Prince of the Capitol
Elaine of Aldwark, Queen's Lady-in-Waiting
His Resplendent Grand Justice Braken, Crown Justice, Master of Courts
His Resplendent Grand Justice Korsk, Crown Justice, Master of Trade
Her Resplendent Grand Justice Ashleia, Crown Justice, Mistress of Commons
His Grace Duke Malice, Captain-General of the City Watch and the Royal Armies
His Grace Duke Taim, Master of the Capitol
Kevel Durmast, Watch Commander
Prester Haft, General of the Royal Army
His Holiness Umbertine IX, Father of the Church of Mother Grace

The Player Characters as Part of the Story

Having a theme to a group of characters can be a great way to commence and find a thread through a campaign. Are the characters all associated with a thieves' guild? Are they all pirates or members of the same holy order?

While theming a group is a powerful way to start a campaign, restrictive themes can soon become tiresome, so whilst using these themes, try to vary them. Perhaps one group of characters is indeed part of a holy order, but even such an order has its more dubious associates. Isn't it true that even the best and most spotless law enforcers must associate with and occasionally (or perhaps often) deal with more dubious characters? Such a party could easily be made up of clerics of the order, supported by fighters who though initially allied to the order could be disillusioned with it or have a more selfish, profit-driven motivation for their alliance with a powerful religion. A rogue could easily be "persuaded" to join the order to assist in the more dubious of activities when nimble hands and a head for heights is crucial.

Having limitations of race is occasionally interesting, and an all-gnome or dwarf party can make for an interesting campaign, but players often play their characters for a long time — sometimes many years — so be sure *all* your players are happy with this option before you consider it.

Below are two potential options for themed character groups and how they may be involved and evolve in your campaign.

The Shadow of Freedom

Vile politicians, twisted royalty, and greedy thugs rule the city. Against this backdrop there is a movement taking form — the Shadow of Freedom. Word spreads amongst the underclasses, and charismatic locals are sought to further the group's ends. This group doesn't want anarchy - they want freedom. Working-class heroes, any class could feasibly be represented here, and rogues, fighters, and rangers could join forces with clerics, wizards, and a multitude of races. The binding arc for this party is to strike at the ruling classes in their corruption and unmask them. Adventures in this theme focus upon unmasking cruel overseers who use slaves and undead to work mills, revealing secret cults hidden within the aristocracy, and stopping the filthy trade of golem-making.

The characters face the entire weight of the law in this campaign, which sees them as fugitives operating in the underclasses, and yet they are glorified as heroes by the working folk who do all they can to help the legendary Shadows.

The Guild and Demelza

This party is more ambiguous and operates from a thieves' guild. This guild could be a group of swarthy but kind-hearted Dickensian rogues or a bunch of street thugs who use brutality to achieve their ends: wealth and power. The power they seek is an object, a mask that grants incredible charisma and arcane power to whoever wears it. Sadly, the wrong person has it, a young witch by the name of Demelza (CN female high elf **witch**). As the campaign arc begins, her actions within the Great Coven, which is threatening to burst apart, are but small ripples in the great pool of the city.

The binding theme here is greed and power; the characters face the wrath of the law and rival gangs as they seek to establish their own patch of the city — perhaps even their own guild eventually. Adventures focus on daring heists, dashing rooftop chases from sadistic guards, and working in a city district to establish a base of operations. As the campaign begins to take on more of a structure, the characters learn that Demelza's cohorts are thriving right under their own feet in the Underneath. She has fled from her own kind and has entered the bowels of the city to regroup.

The Great Coven cares nothing about who gets in the way, and the locals are suddenly frozen with terror as night visitors and other *things* cavort across the rooftops. Unfortunately, the characters are caught between the two factions, and whatever action they take is construed by the other as treachery. As Demelza becomes more desperate, she dabbles with darker and more powerful devils, and soon these too are at large in the character's patch. More powerful aspects of all the different groups are brought together for a final confrontation in the vast spaces below the city.

The Characters as the Whole Story

Another option is to modify the character's background to be something extraordinary. In this way, a group of characters may become the focus of the campaign. This option lends a very strong connection between the characters and the setting. It may, however, require the GM to flesh out the adventures accordingly, or modify published adventures with his own theme. In taking this approach, it is vital to raise questions at each turn, justify why events are happening, and seek answers.

Following are two sample quirks from ***The Blight Player's Handbook*** used as examples for this process:

Noble's Bastard. Far from being just any noble, it is a highborn priest who has fathered the character. The character is the bastard offspring of Justice, the **Lord Alfor Quent, Master of Humours**. The characters are brought together for some collective reason, perhaps to aid the unwanted father or to thwart him. How do events proceed from here? Does the Justice know of the characters and judge them irrelevant or crucial? Do the Justice's enemies know of the characters and consider them valuable tools for future plots? Does the character hate the Justice, having been brought up as an orphan?

Child of a Famous Beauty. Famous beauty the character's parent may be, but looks are only skin deep. The character is a child not of one beauty, but many, a cult of witches that were each burned at the stake long ago. Now the characters have been brought together for some reason. In truth, the witches' child has already infected his friends — the other characters — with his arcane sickness, and their fates are now intertwined.

The cult mothers sold the souls of their children to the Devil, whose cohorts come collecting on the first child's name day. The first child is an NPC who brings her kin together to fight back against the Devil. She tells the characters that they must stick together or risk a fate worse than death, but soon after the campaign begins she vanishes, and soon the Devil's cohorts begin to appear.

You can modify these quirks to certain characters , or all of them as you wish, giving the characters a ready-made focus and enemy at the start of things to hang your campaign on or to add to existing adventures to give them a personal touch. characters of different races and ages present different challenges, but having the group begin as friends or subjects of a particular NPC is always a good starting point.

Castes

Caste is about birth and breeding, and it's something that a clever person can easily use to her advantage. How you play this option depends on how much you wish to make of caste issues. Some find them abhorrent, and prefer to play with them out of the way. That's fine. Just have it playing along in the background: royalty looks down on upper caste, who look down on middle caste, who frown on low caste.

If you wish to make a simple rule, then the gap between each caste is reflected in a penalty for social interaction — that is Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks. The penalty for each separation of caste is 2, so a common man trying to persuade an upper-class banker does so at DC +4, simply because the banker mistrusts him, and vice versa.

A character can fake higher caste simply by use of Deception, the check is made at DC +2 for the first separation, and DC +4 for the next. A member of the royal family covertly trying to join the lower caste anarchist group does so at DC +4. As GM, you may wish to play up stressful situations: for example, a character trying to talk round a princess at a dinner party.

Caste may be a good way to enhance role-playing situations, but it may also not be your cup of tea. As ever, use it or not as you wish.

Real Places with Blight Flavour

Though the Blight is a fiction, a sheer folly of the improbable, its roots run deep in the real world. I can't help but picture those places from which her inspiration has been drawn when I crack open the pages or dust off the keyboard to revisit the old girl. The main places I always have at the back of my mind when delving into the Blight are Fes in Morocco — one of the few true medieval cities left in the world — and, of course, London. Venice, York and Cambridge all also lurk somewhere in the streets of the city-state as well.

Fes is a meandering confusion of alleys and footpaths, steep narrow streets, and the resonance of human work. The call to prayers is something to be experienced as they echo across the city.

It would be churlish to deny that there is a lot of London in the Blight; many names and inspirations are from the city, twisted and spat down on this setting for your amusement. Peter Ackroyd's incredible *London: The Biography* is the best book I've ever read about the capital and is a goldmine of great ideas.

The bottom line with this and many other fantasy settings is that power rules. If the characters get caught in the Royal Palace and end up before Alicia — the little queen — and she yells, "Off with their heads!" then unless the characters escape, and escape quickly, they've had it. That is not to say, however, that a lord ordering a serf to chop his hand off expects him to do so. Making an enemy of a sir or lord may bring the characters trouble in a different way, however; he's likely to have plenty of powerful friends, plenty of money, and plenty of influence. Perhaps he's friends with the local Watch Captain, and can ensure that the characters are harassed or followed, or his house is better guarded.

The Caste Levels of Castorhage

Royal
Upper Class
Middle Class
Lowfolk
Invisibles
Lowest of the Low

Caste Characteristics

For those who really wish to immerse their campaigns into the injustice of caste and class, here are some characteristics you may wish to make available to characters. Only one caste characteristic may be chosen per characters, and that choice is made when a character is created.

Each caste characteristic is associated with one or two specific castes and can be taken only by those of the proper caste. The feat is physically manifested in the body of the individual as much as in his actions, so presence of the characteristic is obvious to any native Castorhager unless hidden by Deception checks as detailed above. As etiquette is so richly bound with grace and breeding in the Blight, so caste is also accent, education, and demeanour. Therefore, simple spells such as *alter self* still require a Charisma (Deception) check to pull off the charade when speaking as one from a different caste.

Note to the GM: These are intended for immersion. If they do not fit with your game then definitely ignore them, tweak them, or alter them however works best for you and your players.

Labouring Caste (Lowfolk or Invisibles)

You have broad shoulders and a harsh, coarse appearance.

Benefit: You can apply your proficiency bonus to all Deception,



Intimidation, and Persuasion checks within your caste, regardless if proficient in the skill or not. You have exceptional Strength from working as a labourer all your life. You are proficient in Strength Athletics.

Special: When operating outside your caste, the DC of Deception, Intimidation and Persuasion checks increases by 2 for each level of caste separation.

Gable Caste (Lowfolk or Invisibles)

You have long, clever fingers and slightly longer arms, and your head has a slight upward tilt to its deportment.

Benefit: You can apply your proficiency bonus to all Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks within your caste, regardless if proficient in the skill or not. You are incredibly dextrous and can gain proficiency in Sleight of Hand.

Special: When operating outside your caste, the DC of Deception, Intimidation and Persuasion checks increases by 2 for each level of caste separation.

Sailing Caste (Lowfolk)

You bear the tanned weatherworn skin of your caste and strong, broad hands.

Benefit: You can apply your proficiency bonus to all Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks within your caste, regardless if proficient in the skill or not. You have spent your life on the water and know the ins and outs of sailing. You are proficient in Vehicles (water).

Special: When operating outside your caste, the DC of Deception, Intimidation and Persuasion checks increases by 2 for each level of caste separation.

Expert Caste (Middle Class)

You have the quick wits and intense concentration of the Middle Class but bear the worry lines and bags under your eyes of one always beset by the worries and weight of an unforgiving world.

Benefit: You can apply your proficiency bonus to all Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks within your caste, regardless if proficient in the skill or not. You are always alert and aware of your surroundings, taking notice of anything out of the ordinary. You are proficient in Perception.

Special: When operating outside your caste, the DC of Deception, Intimidation and Persuasion checks increases by 2 for each level of caste separation.

Educated Caste (Royal, Upper Class, or Middle Class)

You have the highbrow and piercing stare of an educated person.

Benefit: You can apply your proficiency bonus to all Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks within your caste, regardless if proficient in the skill or not. You are proficient in either History or Religion (pick one).**Special:** When operating outside your caste, the DC of Deception, Intimidation and Persuasion checks increases by 2 for each level of caste separation.

Caste Locations

These are the general castes of parts of the city. Use them as a rule of thumb but bear in mind that traders abound in the Capitol, and Royals are sometimes seen in Toiltown.

Royal: Capitol
Upper Class: BookTown, Capitol, Hollow and Broken Hills, the Sinks
Middle Class: Artists' Quarter, the Barnacles, Town Bridge
Lowfolk: Festival, Jumble, Toiltown, Underneath
Invisibles: Festival, Toiltown
Lowest of the Low: Festival, Toiltown

Duels

Duels are common in the Blight amongst all classes and castes, and are a good way to settle matters without them getting messy. They are a commonplace way to resolve issues that are likely to otherwise result in a

The Honourable Guild of Duelling Referees

This august body, of course, does not exist in the city. However, a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check always avails one of a local member of the unspoken guild. These Referees ensure fair play and that honour is satisfied and operate on a strictly controlled hierarchical wage system. A Referee for a Duel to First costs the participants 50 gp; a Duel to Second costs 100 gp; a Duel to Third costs 200 gp; and a Duel to Fourth costs 300 gp. Not using a Referee may raise awkward questions afterward: If the duellists had nothing to hide, and if the winner was "so honourable" and didn't need to cheat, why wasn't there a Referee? It is considered gentlemanly, for the challenger to pay for the Referee, but this is not always the case, and for those of lower castes, there are always folk nearby who might act as an arbiter in a tight spot or, if not, a baying crowd who otherwise suffice.

protracted campaign and, ultimately, death. They can also be very exciting to role-play.

Duels are illegal (but then, theoretically, so is murder) but follow a very strict set of guidelines. Duels are to "First" (the first wound to a participant ends the duel), "Second" (where the loss of 75% of hit points ends the duel), "Third" (where the fight goes on until one person is brought down to 0 hit points), or "Fourth" (to the death, where the character that drops to 0 hit points is killed outright by the other duellist). Duels are always fought on neutral ground, and weapons are either melee or ranged. Sometimes magical duels are fought.

Seconds are used to act as assistants to the duellists, and sometimes (particularly in Third or Fourth duels) it may be agreed that seconds also participate. All duels require the services of a Referee.

Many Duels to First and Second are accompanied by a wager — often a considerably large wager — that the loser hands over the sum without complaint. Cheating, reneging on a wager, or other such despicable acts soon lead to an establishment of a reputation, and there are some duellist clubs and guilds — most notably the Royal Duellists — who seek out cheats and duel them … or simply murder them.

Those who play fairly and honour the traditional rules of duelling are respected, even by their enemies.

Enemies

Great enemies make a great campaign. A recurring villain can generate stronger feelings than the toughest monster, and having someone who can outsmart the characters from time to time is a good way of levelling the playing field of your campaign. However, recurring villains come with some warnings: Don't overdo them, and don't make them omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. Base your villain on logic, bound by the same rules your characters have, and they'll work fine. A good recurring villain should have a way out, but one based on sound game sense. A *potion of gaseous form* or a *scroll of fly* are both good methods to use, but hold your master villain to the same rules the characters have and be prepared for your characters coming after her. The predictable garbage truck pulling out of a side alley at the last minute to unintentionally block a pursuit should be reserved for only your worst game sessions. Ergo, always be prepared that the villain may be caught or killed.

In the same way that a master villain makes a great addition to some campaigns, so do more mundane enemies. Enemies great and small — from individuals to guilds, cults and monsters — bring another dimension to play. However, they come at a cost: more work for you as the GM.

Enemies have actions, lives, lairs, and probably friends and enemies of their own, and you must decide early on how much work you're prepared to do. A simple basic villain such as a cult is an easy way to start. As the characters kill the cultists other more powerful cult leaders hear about it and try to eradicate the characters. Eventually, clues lead to a showdown and a good campaign ending. A more complex issue would be a group of Anarchists; the relationships within that group are complex, and perhaps some allies are also partly enemies. The characters could even side with their enemies temporarily to attack a greater mutual foe, although can anyone be trusted in such a complex situation?

Optional Rule: Enemies as a Penalty

Just as Part 3 introduced the idea of friends of the characters as part of their creation process, the Blight also offers the possibility of introducing enemies into their lives and the idea of enemies as a penalty. In a thriving vibrant place like a city, there is generally no cause without effect: You almost always reap what you sow.

You may wish to allocate enemies to characters at the start of their careers, in the same way that they come into the story with friends. Bear in mind the relative strengths and importance of starting-level characters when deciding their enemies, and again don't just think of individuals alone. Perhaps the character is part of a family that wronged an NPC, or maybe what he stands for and whom he works for are abhorrent to an NPC who was once a friend.

You might occasionally wish for such an enemy to be incredibly powerful, however. Starting off a campaign being hated by **Duke Taim** makes for an interesting twist to any campaign. Taim is not omnipotent but has tough friends, and an adventure starting with a group of constables kicking in the characters' door to arrest them for heresy could provide some lively play. However, it requires additional work on your part to either explain why Duke Taim doesn't continually pursue the characters once they escape or explain how the characters are repeatedly able to avoid his efforts.

Another, less front-heavy option is to never throw away a good villain. If the characters defeat a villain on an adventure but don't make sure that he's dead, it's very easy to again use that same villain (now with a revenge motive against the characters). Likewise, even if they are more thorough in their administrations against said villain, perhaps she has some well-connected friends of her own who might spring to have her raised or perhaps saved at the very brink of death only to be transformed into an *alchymic-undying*†. In a place like the Blight, the options for a long-term villain reappearing from a past adventure are almost limitless. And as the characters advance in level, power, and influence, a good villain should do the same with the expansive resources and alliances to be found in the city.

For instance, if during an adventure the characters kill Rammen the wererat cultist, unless they take precautions to keep his death secret, his sister Campion hears about it 1d4 days later. **Campion** (a.k.a. the Mistress of the Ashen Lantern) (NE female human wererat **burglar**) is part of the Cult of the Elder One, and commands followers, most of whom are wererat rogue/clerics. Campion loved her brother and immediately becomes an enemy of everyone who took part in the raid that ended in his death. Based in Festival, her lair is a festering vat of filth filled with her victims. Campion begins her enmity by stalking individual characters, finding their homes and preparing to attack the ones who live alone.

And of course, all of this plays out as the backdrop to whatever new adventure the characters happen to be undertaking.

Fads of the Blight

"It is always by way of pain one arrives at pleasure."

Fashions shift almost daily within the chic circles of the Blight, and one day's fad is tomorrow's cast off. The most current fads are listed below, although they can change as quickly as the wind.

Art as Cruelty/Cruelty as Art

The Surrealists Club delights in using pain as art, and whilst some of these groups are little more than sadomasochists, others are much more sinister. The use of flesh for art is unsettlingly common in the Blight, and is fast attaining a cult following. The creation of art from broken, living flesh is something that has coincided with the rise of the Cult of N'gathau within the city, who are able to keep victims alive whilst lacerating and filleting them. A scattering of notable groups, including the revolting Panacea, have risen in recent times to indulge in this travesty.

Of course, there are always those who imitate art, and the rise in sadistic serial killings involving the lacerating of flesh has soared recently.

Goblin Pets and Awakened Animals

The latest fashionable accessories to be seen with — goblin pets and awakened animals (almost always dressed in imitation of humans) — are seen frequently in the Blight and command a high price. Kept on a chain and regarded with some amusement, the creature has learnt that if it behaves to amuse, it is not hurt. Awakened animals learn very quickly, and some have surmised that every single cat in the Blight is awakened. Goblins tend to be



slower to learn but are no less comedic in the eyes of the elite as they make their ineffectual attempts to resist or win their freedom.

A good goblin pet or awakened animal able to perform tricks fetches at least 200 gp; those who do more astounding things fetch even higher prices. The *Garbled Poet*, a goblin that quotes poetry, was recently the subject of a 2,000 gp bid from a collector; a bid refused by its current owner.

The whispered idea that these goblins somehow steal out of their homes at night and meet below the streets of the city has been roundly ridiculed by all parties, but it's only a matter of time before the truth of the situation comes to light in a most disagreeable spectacle.

Macabre Fashions

Aristocrats get bored very quickly and require the very latest indulgences and fashions, partaking in an almost frenzied desire to be seen in the right places by the right people wearing the right clothes. A macabre fashion has grown recently that is accentuated by the wearing of undead objects as clothing or accessories. Animated insects are the usual choice, but unliving stoles are also seen as de-rigour amongst the higher families. A small selection of such objects follows.

Item	Cost
Earrings, unliving, undead moths set on silver hasps	60 gp
Stole fox fur, composed of torpid, undead fox	400 gp
Cape, ghoul-flesh	200 gp
Gown, wedding, egret feathers accented by carved monkey-bone swans	400 gp
Scarf, human hair	5 gp

Clubs, Guilds, Cults and Gangs

Making a foe of an individual can be dangerous; cunning or powerful individuals may stalk and attack characters when they are at their most vulnerable or hire assassins and other killers to do so on their behalf. Far more dangerous, however, are cults, groups, kinsmen, and gangs, for these are likely to have deeper resources and can make multiple attacks upon their enemies.

On the other hand, membership in such groups can make for powerful allies — or perhaps, not-so powerful allies that create more of a hassle than a benefit. Most groups don't necessarily advertise what weaknesses and liabilities they possess while certainly overselling their strengths. In any case, whether friend or foe, the myriad groups that the characters could become associated with provide you with endless opportunities for mayhem, mystery, and even some mirth.

Some cults may also operate as clubs and some guilds may operate as gangs or — as in the case of The Guild — be composed of many, many different gangs. You should typically determine whether a group stands opposed to a character or as an organisation that a character could potentially want to join and then handle the representation of that group accordingly based on the information provided in this section. For general purposes here, cults and gangs (and the Great Houses — see below) are presented as adversarial groups and clubs and guilds as organisations that might be something the characters would be interested in gaining membership.

Clubs

Unlike guilds, clubs are relatively easy to join, rise within, and leave. These organizations all have a prerequisite to join, a membership benefit, sometimes (but not always) a special feature, and with the addition of an advancement protocol. Unless otherwise noted (or as in the case of some secret clubs), an individual may not be a member of more than one club at a time. While a member in good standing, the character gains all the benefits of club membership, but these are lost as soon as that membership dissolves. However, at that point the individual is free to begin membership with a new club. Many clubs require an annual fee. If that fee is not paid, the member is placed on probation and no longer gains the benefits of the club (though any special penalties still apply). The individual can come off probation simply by paying any overdue membership fees and become a member in good standing again with all the normal benefits.

There are thousands of different clubs within the City-State of Castorhage — some enormous and influential, some small and virtually unknown. A few sample clubs are provided below to use or to serve as a template for other clubs that you may wish to introduce to your campaign.

Amateur Mendicants (Club)

A group of deluded aristocrats, wealthy individuals, and the curious who wander the streets dressed as beggars.

Prerequisite: Seeking out a member of the Mendicants is not easy, unless assigned as a reward or occurring as an encounter, it requires a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check with one attempt allowed per month. On a successful check, a DC 23 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check is then required to convince members to allow another to join their group. Other methods of entry are at your discretion. For example, someone who spends months dressed as a beggar at a place known to be frequented by members of the mendicants may impress them sufficiently to approach that individual.

Benefit: The Mendicants have an incredible network of spies and knowledge of the city. Twice per month, a member can ask a question of her fellows and gain the ability to make an immediate Investigation check with advantage and as if they have expertise in the skill (apply 2x proficiency bonus).

Special: A member must spend at least one day out of each week dressed as a beggar and living on the streets of the city. This is a risky

endeavour, however, and all members face one random encounter per month (as determined by the GM) that starts out as hostile.

Advancement: Roll 1d20 once per month for an opening. On a 20, a position of local Mendicant Clerk for a district opens up. This position earns 100 gp per year and allows the Clerk to request information as above once per week rather than twice per month. In addition, while researching her own district, she can make such checks daily.

Arcanum Infernus (Club)

A small group of like-minded people who find death fascinating.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast necromancy spells. Initiation is by invitation only - a character can make one attempt per month at a cost of 100 gp to bribe and try to impress members. It requires a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to be invited. If invited, there is a one-time fee of 250 gp for a lifetime membership.

Benefit: A member can access the Infernus Library at will, which contains all necromancy spells up to 4th level. Members using the library in relation to research of necromancy spells or magic items do so advantage to their Arcana checks and as if they have expertise in the skill (apply 2x proficiency bonus)..

Special: Unpopular: Club members are often targeted by religious orders determined to remove their stain from society. In encounters with some good or lawful aligned religious orders or churches, members have disadvantage on all Charisma-based checks.

Advancement: Members that show proficiency in Arcana, History, and Religion are offered access into the Inner Quorum. For a one-time fee of 1,000 gp they gain access to all necromancy spells up to 5th level. Those who have proved themselves worthy (usually through a quest or a difficult task) and who are part of the Inner Quorum are automatically appointed to the Inner Council, where they have access to the whole library of all known necromancy spells up to 7th level.

Brothers of the Gables (Club)

Climbers, explorers, and daredevils, the Brothers of the Gables delight in finding the highest buildings to climb, and reaching the most remote parts of the rooftops of the city. Many gablemaesters are members of this club.

Prerequisites: A petitioner to join must climb a prominent building within the city requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check of at least 150 feet without ropes or other aids. The petitioner's Athletics check result is then removed from the Persuasion or Deception check required by the petitioner after the successful climbing feat to impress the membership. This follow-up check has a base DC 25, which is reduced as described above.

Benefits: Membership opens doors to other routes, methods, and ways up famous buildings, as well as knowledge of those places. Intelligence checks by members regarding any tall building or high part of the city such as the Jumble or the Capitol are made with their proficiency bonus applied and with advantage.**Advancement**: A member can attempt one qualifying climb (whether successful or not) per month as under Prerequisites above but with a minimum height of 200 feet. If successful she can attempt to increase her standing in the brotherhood by making an immediate DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check after making the attempt (not modified by the success of the Athletics check). Success on this check indicates acceptance into an inner circle where further techniques of climbing buildings are shared, allowing them to apply double their proficiency bonus on Athletics checks when climbing.Fame or Infamy: There are those in the club who seek out multiple climbs of astonishing danger. A member making a climb with a minimum of a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check becomes famous as does anyone climbing a building that is particularly legendary at the GM's discretion (such as the outside of the Great Royal Cathedral [**C9**]). Such famous members make all Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) checks with advantage anywhere in the city where they announce their fame.

Hedonists (Club)

Carousers and gluttons, the Hedonists are a loose affiliation of those who like the finer things in life and indulge in them heartily.

Prerequisites: Various arms of the group are seen in the rowdier or more fashionable holes of gluttony and excess in the city. One needs simply appear at one, and spend money trying to impress would-be peers. Once per week a petitioner can spend 200 gp, and make an immediate DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check to gain membership. *Swyne*† can add their proficiency bonus to this check. Membership requires the spending of 100 gp per month minimum, but for each 50gp spent in excess, the DC of the Investigation check mentioned in the Benefits section is reduced by 1, to a maximum of 3.

Benefits: Once per week a member can ask a fellow Hedonist to spend the day making an Investigation check to gather information on their behalf. This check uses the requesting member's Investigation skill modifier but with their proficiency and any added reduction to the DC as mentioned above. to the check. A Hedonist also has access to money since so many *swyne* loan sharks are members. Loans of up to 500 gp are always available, subject to a 7-day term of repayment at 10% interest. If not paid within the specified time, the weekly interest rate doubles. If a member defaults on a loan for 4 weeks in a row, she is kicked out of the club and hired thugs are likely to come knocking looking for the money (GM's discretion). Only one loan may be taken out at a time.

Special: Each month, a Hedonist faces a random, hostile city encounter.

Advancement: Roll 1d20 once per month for an opening. On an 18–20, the position of Honoured Glutton opens up after another member dies. The position costs 100 gp per month, but allows access to a twice-weekly request of the Investigation check above and up to 2,500 gp can be borrowed as a loan. Honoured Gluttons can make a check once a month to see if the position of Hoglord becomes available. On a 20, the position is available; it costs 250 gp per month but grants legal access to the Capitol and the Sanctuary as an "honourary noble." Loans of up to 10,000 gp are available to Hoglords.

Physiciana Insectum (Club)

The Physiciana experiment with compounds and breeding techniques for standard *insectum*† to try to enhance their effects.

Prerequisites: Proficiency in Medicine and Nature. Fees are 100 gp per year.

Benefits: The member is able to purchase *insectum* at 80% of normal price and once per week, can purchase a specially enhanced version of any *insectum*, at a 50% increase in cost that has either no associated penalty or double the duration (buyer's choice).

Advancement: Members with a +5 or greater modifier to both the Medicine and Nature skills learn to enhance *insectum* themselves, enabling her to produce the variant *insectum* above with only a 25% increase in cost. Members with a +8 or greater modifier in both skills always create enhanced insectum when they breed it (limited to once per week).

School of Hard Knocks (Club)

A group of duellers who enjoy wrestling, a boxing match, baiting, and generally watching or participating in melees for pleasure. They are based within various establishments across the city and are profligate.

Prerequisites: Two levels in a martial class (barbarian, fighter, monk, paladin, ranger, rogue). Fees for carousing and instruction by experts and oddsmakers are 250 gp per year.

Benefits: Once per month a member can place a wager on a match with advance knowledge. Matches have odds of 20:1, 12:1, 10:1, 8:1, 6:1, or 4:1 (member's choice). Members can reduce the odds of this match by one die category (20:1 becomes a d12, 12:1 becomes a d10, 10:1 becomes a d8, 8:1 becomes a d6, 6:1 becomes a d4, and 4:1 becomes a d3). On a roll of 1 on the appropriate die the member is a winner and the pay-out is at the original odds (not the adjusted odds received by the member). The maximum bet a member can make on one of these matches is 50 gp.

Special: Because of their penchant for winning long odds and taking other people's money, club members face at least one random, hostile city encounter once per month.

Advancement: Roll 1d20 once per month for an opening. On a natural 20, the position of Club Secretary opens up with a one-time cost of 1,000 gp in addition to the standard 250 gp per year club fees. Secretaries have

access to better tips and can wager once a month as above but either with a reduction in odds by two die categories (d3 minimum) or with a cap of 100 gp instead of 50 gp. In the latter option, the Secretary can split the bet over two bets of 50 gp if she so chooses.

Club Secretaries can check each month to see if the post of District Secretary turns up (also on a roll of 20), which has a one-time cost of 2,500 gp on top of the 250 gp annual fees. District Secretaries get even better tips and each month can choose to either reduce the odds against them by two die categories *and* have a 100-gp monthly cap (divisible into 2 bets if she chooses) or instead have a 200-gp monthly cap which is divisible by up to 4 50-gp bets). District Secretaries oversee admission of new members.

Warreners Club (Club)

The Warreners Club are amateur explorers of the Underneath. They meet up to talk and discuss and swap information about subterranean places and enthuse about all matters below. Many are also members of the Royal Underneath Society.

Prerequisites: Proficiency in Nature and Survival. One attempt may be made each week to locate a member of the club, and doing so requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Membership in the club is free, but the member must pay 25 gp per year in social dues.

Benefits: Exposure to experts on the Underneath and Great Dark benefits members of the club by offering insight and important information about these areas. Because of this, members are considered proficient when making Nature or Survival checks that are specific to the Underneath and the Great Dark and they are in the company of at least one other member of the Warreners. This limitation on accessibility can be modified at the GM's discretion based on any means of remote communication by spell or magic item that a member may possess.

Special: Creatures whose environment includes underground terrain instinctively know a Warrener when encountered. These creatures are usually hostile to the Warrener.

Advancement: Warreners with +5 or greater modifier to both the Nature and Survival skills are invited into the inner circle of select members known as the Descent and can access the club library and museum. Members of the Descent using the museum and library as a research tool related to subterranean matters have advantage on related skill checks. Descent members are expected to pay 100 gp per year in upkeep for the library, as well as the social dues, but can invite other members into the club as they wish providing they meet the necessary prerequisites.

Guilds

While clubs can be difficult to enter but easy to leave, one is a member of a guild for life. They are an altogether more serious path, and while bound by the one crucial rule — financial — they are in general a closer-knit group. Just as there are thousands of clubs within the Blight, there are many hundreds of guilds ranging in size from large and mighty to small and virtually insignificant. Also, as with clubs, an individual can generally be a member of only one guild (though leaving them tends to be much more difficult and, after doing so, gaining membership to another virtually impossible).

Because of the detailed nature of guilds and the sheer number of them throughout the city, only two sample guilds are given below (and even they are related). A list of many of the guilds within the city is provided in **The Blight Campaign Guide**, but even it is not exhaustive. Rather than list them all, this sample should serve to provide you with the means to construct any sort of guild to suit your campaign.

In addition to the normal means of gaining renown (within a guild or organization, you can also award renown to guild member characters as rewards or for characters who achieve personal goals related to matters pertaining to the guild. More information on this can be found in the Personal Goals section later in this chapter.

The Castorhage Arcane Society

Wizards and other arcane spellcasters who seek to advance within the Blight often find that their somewhat despised craft brands them (unless they are Upper Class and therefore entitled). By gathering together, and seeking to further their collective aims as scholars, the Castorhage Arcane Society has grown in strength and influence. Guild members are marked with a secret and permanent arcane tattoo (not unlike a typical guild tattoo, but one infused with arcane energy), that shifts and changes, including growing in size as new ranks are achieved within the guild. Any other member of the guild automatically recognises the tattoo if she sees it, and is better disposed to her fellow member, granting advantage to all Charisma (Persuasion) checks made by her fellow scholar.

Leader

Artemi Nightshade (LE male human **archmage**) serves as the Grand Cabalist of the Castorhage Arcane Society. As a scion of that Great House (see below), Artemi commands both a great deal of wealth and a great deal of political influence. He has learned that to best serve the Society (as well as to line his own pockets without interference) it is better to remain apolitical in the constant tug-of-war for power between these houses and the Royal Family. He is neither an ally nor an enemy of any, though he certainly tends to favour Nightshade agendas if they are not at odds with his goals for the Society. His greatest fear is that Ticcia Borxia (CE female human **archmage**), the recent Master Cabalist (ranking member of the circle of 12 senior members, the Cabal, just below the Grand Cabalist), is not so neutral toward her own family name as she claims and secretly plots to suborn the Society itself and eliminate Artemi in the process. His suspicion is not incorrect.

Headquarters

The headquarters of the Castorhage Arcane Society is a secret known only to its members. The Society meets in one of the Inner Libraries at the Great Library of BookTown (**B8**). Master Temmil, the Curator, prepares the necessary rooms at times when the Society is meeting and lets members into the locked building when such meetings are held after hours. Temmil is not a member of the Society, but he is a respected supporter of it.

Joining

Membership of the guild is sponsored by an existing member in good standing and largely dictated by character wealth. Individuals seeking the friendship (and sponsorship) of a member must first locate one with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Once located, the petitioner can attempt a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check once per month which, if successful, is followed by an immediate DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Failure of either check results in refusal, although further attempts can be made in following months.

If a character is successful in these checks and wishes to join the Society, she must demonstrate the ability to cast arcane spells of at least 1st level and must then pay a one-time 100-gp membership fee. Once this has been done, the individual receives the guild's arcane mark and is inducted at the rank of Apprentice of the Society.

Special Note: Because the Society is open to all arcane spellcasters with the financial means to join, it is one of the few groups that doesn't mind if its members are also members in other guilds as well.

Gaining Renown with the Society

Gaining renown in the Society is always a matter of buying it. It takes the form of increased fees paid to the Society to gain greater access to rank and resources. Society rank is determined by Total Renown (TR) and the benefits of the Society are likewise defined by these ranks. The various ranks of the Society and the one-time monetary cost to achieve them is listed below. It is not possible to move up in the Society more than one rank per month unless some extraordinary circumstance dictates otherwise (as determined by the GM).

TR	Society Rank	Cost
1	Apprentice of the Society	100 gp
2	Minor Scholar	200 gp
3	Lesser Scholar	400 gp

TR	Society Rank	Cost
4	Arcane Caster	600 gp
5	Arcane Scholar	800 gp
6	Maester	1,000 gp
7	Spellbinder	1,200 gp
8	Maester Scholar	1,500 gp
9	Arcane Maester	1,800 gp
10	Cabalist*	2,100 gp

* After achieving the rank of Cabalist, every additional payment of 3,000 gp earns 1 additional TR, but does not provide an increase in rank. The TR above 10 can be used as "good will" when it is time to select a new Grand Cabalist.

If a member's TR is ever reduced to 0, they are no longer a member in good standing and no longer gain any benefits of membership. All encounters with Society members are with disadvantage on Charisma-based skill checks. It is up to the GM whether a member can buy her way back into good standing or not, depending on what caused it to be lost in the first place.

Resources

In any hostile city encounter, a Society member who reveals herself as such had advantage on Charisma checks to adjust the attitudes of the belligerents. If the attitudes are adjusted to at least indifferent and the Society member does nothing to further provoke the other parties, then she will be allowed to leave the encounter unmolested.

It is known within the Society and without that some unscrupulous casters when confronted with hostilities may claim to be members of the Society even when that is not actually the case. The Society combats this by actively policing those who make such claims to weed out the pretenders. In any city encounter where membership in the society is claimed and it succeeds in defusing the situation, there is a base 20% chance that another member of the Society or a thrall of a member is within earshot who will cast *detect magic* to confirm the membership. Society members always recognise the distinctive appearance of one of their tattoos using *detect magic*. If the person claiming membership proves to be false, the Society member will immediately call them out on it and demand their surrender for Society judgment. Whether an actual fight ensues depends on the relative strengths and confidence of the member making the accusation. In any case, such a perpetrator is marked for further investigation by the Society.

The public is aware of the Society's work in weeding out imposters and is generally amiable if not exactly helpful to such endeavours. However, if the claim of being a member of the Society does not diffuse the hostility in a situation, any Society members nearby will not intervene, preferring to avoid notice themselves in such dangerous surroundings.

In addition to this general protective reputation provided by the Society, membership also provides other benefits based on the member's Total Renown (TR).

1 TR: Able to purchase arcane scrolls from the Society of up to caster level 4 with no limit on the number available. Gain advantage on Arcana checks related to one school of magic (your choice). Gain access to the network of procurement specialists employed by the Society. These specialists provide access to magic items (common through rare quality), and materials that are not available through most other purveyors in the region.

2 TR: Gain a basic arcane research assistant capable of doing research for you during downtime. Your assistant also reduces the amount of time it requires to research and craft new spells (limited to 5th level spells and below) or magic items (of common quality) by 10%.

3 TR: Able to purchase arcane scrolls from the Society of up to caster level 6 with no limit on the number available. The cost of obtaining magic items and materials for creation of new magic items and spells is 10% less when purchased through the guild procurement system.

4 TR: Your arcane assistant is now an intermediate arcane research assistant capable of doing research for you during downtime. Your assistant also reduces the amount of time it requires to research and craft new spells (6th level and below) or magic items (common, uncommon quality) by 20%.



5 TR: Able to purchase arcane scrolls from the Society of up to caster level 7 with no limit on the number available. The cost of obtaining magic items and materials for creation of new magic items and spells is 20% less when purchased through the guild procurement system.

6 TR: Your arcane assistant is now an advanced arcane research assistant capable of doing research for you during downtime. Your assistant also reduces the amount of time it requires to research and craft new spells (7th level and below) or magic items (common, uncommon, rare quality) by 30%.

7 TR: Able to purchase arcane scrolls from the Society of up to caster level 8 with no limit on the number available. The cost of obtaining magic items and materials for creation of new magic items and spells is 30% less when purchased through the guild procurement system.

8 TR: Your arcane assistant is now an expert arcane research assistant capable of doing research for you during downtime. Your assistant also reduces the amount of time it requires to research and craft new spells (8th level and below) or magic items (common, uncommon, rare, very rare quality) by up to 40% (GM discretion, especially with very rare).

9 TR: Able to purchase arcane scrolls from the Society of up to caster level 9 with no limit on the number available. The cost of obtaining magic items and materials for creation of new magic items and spells is 40% less when purchased through the guild procurement system.

10 TR: Your arcane assistant is now a master arcane research assistant capable of doing research for you during downtime. Your assistant also reduces the amount of time it requires to research and craft new spells (9th level and below) or magic items (common, uncommon, rare, very rare quality) by up to 50% (GM discretion, especially with very rare and legendary items). Charisma checks with other members of the Society are always made with advantage. The exception is that if a Deception or Intimidation check is made against a higher-ranking member of the Society, you lose 1 TR.

Master Builders of the Edifice of Royal Engineers, a.k.a. The Royal Arcane Engineers Guild

The secretive guild of Royal Arcane Engineers is the only group allowed on major building projects, especially those in the Capitol. Members have access to new spells, a grand library of the city, and receive a royal stipend. The guild has developed specialised spells that are used to enable buildings to be safely built atop buildings, and although many cannot afford their services, the guild pride themselves that all buildings lashed onto others without their help collapse. Some say sabotage is at play, but guild members laugh at such suggestions, claiming their time is far too valuable to waste on undermining the shoddy work of others. Their guild tattoo displays a plumb bob and trowel over a shield bearing the numbers II, VII, IX, and X.

New Spells of the Royal Arcane Engineers

Arcane Veins

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of quicklime, a pebble, and a splinter of wood)
Duration: see descriptionVeins of arcane power course throughout the touched structure, creating a magical strength and stability to it. The structure becomes sturdier and less susceptible to damage, increasing its AC by 2, its hit points by 10%, and its damage threshold increased by 10%.

This spell has no effect on magical structures or creatures such as constructs.

If cast on a structure, the spell initially effects an area 20 feet by 20 feet in size. This area grows over the course of time, however, at a rate of an additional 20-foot-by-20-foot area per year in the direction as designated at the time of the casting, and continues for a total of 5 years. The effects of the spell can spread beyond the structure it was initially cast upon to adjacent structures if they are physically connected (such as by a wall or bridge).

Additional castings of the spell on the same object or structure have no additional effect, though if cast on a structure larger than the spells area of effect they can be combined for better coverage of that area.

At Higher Levels. When the spell is cast using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the structure's hit points and damage threshold increase by 10% for each slot level above 3rd.

Greater Arcane Veins

5th-level transmutation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of quicklime, a pebble, and a splinter of wood)
Duration: see description

This spell functions like arcane veins, except the increase in AC is 4, hit points are increased 20%, and the damage threshold is increased by 20%. Additionally,

At Higher Levels. When the spell is cast using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the structure's hit points and damage threshold increase by 20% for each slot level above 5th.

Beliefs

Ever since the tragedy of 643 when a portion of the Capitol collapsed from earthquake damage sustained more than a century earlier, it has been evident that some sort of order and oversight was necessary to successfully achieve the architectural balancing act of maximizing upward expansion in the city's limited area while maintaining the structural integrity of the older structures below. The Blight has long been undertaking this in a haphazard, chaotic manner, but the Royal Arcane Engineers' Guild are who set about to make that a reality. By strict adherence to carefully contrived standards of materials and methods (and no small amount of proprietary magical augmentation), the guild has spent the last millennium achieving something that is all but unheard of in the Blight: Where they have been, the guild has managed to create stability.

Goals

The guild knows that the works of other builders in the city are inferior; in fact, most of them are downright dangerous. The guild knows that it lacks the resources and time to oversee all construction within the empire, but that doesn't mean it thinks that it shouldn't. With one project at a time, the guild seeks to project its influence over the construction practices of the city-state. Most citizens who seek to build within the city cannot afford the services of the guild, but the guild believes that they should therefore not build. They do not acknowledge the necessity for building beyond what they are able to accomplish, which makes them completely unrelatable to the common folk and has helped ensure that even after more than a thousand years of presence within the city, they are still no closer to achieving the standardization of architecture that they seek.

Leader

The Royal Arcane Engineers are ably managed under the stern eye of Grand Master Creator Permenya Tundlestoke (LN female dwarf **archmage** (specializing in transmutation)). Permenya, of the Underneath Tundlestokes, followed in the footsteps of her grandfather Sheffer as leader of the guild. She has an intimate knowledge of transmutation magic and its application in the unique building conditions of the Blight but received a very thorough business education as well in her youth. The fortunes of the guild have only improved during the three decades of her tenure so far.

Headquarters

The Edifice of Royal Engineers is said to lie somewhere in the Capitol, though its exact location is unknown. Whether this is a matter of security or because it is constantly being moved (some rumours say due to instabilities in the Capitol's foundations that they are continually forced to shore up to preserve the reputation of their order). Whatever the reason, it is said that a system of secret knocks and passwords at the Great Door (**C1**) results in being escorted to the proper location. Rumours also mention, however, that the wrong password or knocks result in being escorted to a secret oubliette for a stay of indeterminate length.

Joining

Joining the Royal Arcane Engineers requires that a candidate have the ability to cast 3rd-level spells of the transmutation school. The petitioner must then bribe a minor Capitol official with 2,500 gp and then make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check during an interview to successfully identify the techniques for certain relevant spells. Only one attempt at this process can be made per month. Though arcane casters are by far the most common members of the guild, there are divine casters (limited to clerics of lawful religions) that demonstrate sufficient mastery of the requisite transmutation school (through multiclassing or other means allowing them to cast arcane spells) to qualify as well.

The spellcasting ability of the member determines her rank in the organisation. The initial rank within the guild is Royal Arcane Engineer.

Can Cast	Society Rank	Cost
1st-4th level Transmutation Spells	Royal Arcane Engineer	2,500 gp
5th level Transmutation Spells	Arcane Contriver	5,000 gp
6th level Transmutation Spells	Master Creator	10,000 gp
7th level Transmutation Spells	Minor Grand Master Creator	15,000gp

Gaining Renown

Gaining renown with the Royal Arcane Engineers is usually accomplished by securing and completing a prestigious building project. If a project that a member of the guild was involved with is later destroyed through natural or unnatural means, that guild member loses a TR. Likewise, the discovery or development of new spells with application in engineering and building gains renown for the discovering. Finally, 1 TR is gained by a member each time she achieves a new rank within the guild.

Resources

The guild has a vast library of information on building and the building application of the arcane arts that it has amassed for over a thousand years. Members are given access to these materials and other perks based on their TR within the guild.

1 TR: When in the guild library, the DC on Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence checks relating to engineering and construction is reduced by 2. The DC on Charisma (Persuasion and Deception) checks dealing with the Royal or Upper Class castes is reduced by 1.**2 TR:** Transcribe any common transmutation spell of 5th level or lower.

3 TR: Purchase an arcane scroll of any common transmutation spell for half price.

4 TR: When in the guild library, the DC on Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence checks relating to engineering and construction is reduced by 3. The DC on Charisma (Persuasion and Deception) checks dealing with the Royal or Upper Class castes is reduced by 2.

5 TR: Gain access to study and learn the spell *arcane veins* (see sidebox).

6 TR: All Intelligence (Arcana, History, Nature, Religion) checks related to the city of Castorhage and its holdings are made with advantage. The DC on Charisma (Persuasion and Deception) checks dealing with the Royal or Upper Class castes is reduced by 3.

7 TR: Gain access to study and learn the spell *greater arcane veins* (see sidebox).

Transcribe any common transmutation spell of 7th level or lower.

8 TR: Once per game week, when making any non-Intelligence check related to the city of Castorhage and its holdings, substitute an Intelligence check. Charisma (Persuasion and Deception) checks dealing with the Royal or Upper Class castes are made with advantage.**9 TR:** Transcribe any common transmutation spell of 9th level or lower.

Cults and Gangs

In dealing with organisations that stand opposed to the characters (usually cults and gangs), the Blight uses an abstract system to measure the relative strength of these groups. Such groups are assigned a level (although some groups — such as the Illuminati — are off the scale as far as resources go because they are a core friend or enemy of the Blight and as such are effectively ever-present). These groups may become friends or foes of the characters at some point through an adventure, reputation, or even accident and require a gauge of their power for you to work from.

The relative power of a gang or cult is represented by its level. The level of a group gives an indication of the strength of the leaders, and the relative strength in levels of their members. The level of a gang is usually the leader's character level (though there are occasional exceptions to this), and the level of the group is squared to approximate the total class levels



of its membership. Gang levels in general range from 5 to 20, although higher- and lower-level gangs are out there. A group is also detailed by a general alignment, its primary location, its leader(s), motivation(s), friends and foes, tactics and morale.

Many groups are not easy to defeat since, unlike organisations such as the Watch or the Royal Army, they rarely operate in large groups or from a single location, but as a disparate mass spread over an area. Members of a group, for example, could be brought together for an activity, and the leader may decide that several members are required. Some gangs, cults, and groups do operate from a single base, and the choice ultimately is yours — using the examples provided, do you want a covert adventure of hit-and-run tactics with the characters having to seek out various factions of the coven, or do you prefer the idea of a fixed coven base?

A group, like any encounter, should have tactics that represents their typical *modus operandi*, and morale. The morale gives the general likelihood of the gang retreating from any given combat encounter based on the table below. The morale should also list under what circumstances the group is entirely disbanded; these circumstances may not match the same qualifiers as given for encounter morale but usually follow along the same lines. For example, a mad group of cultists who seeks to eat the moon may never give up until each one of them is slaughtered, every member always seeking new members over time so that unless purged, the threat is always there. A less-desperate group such as a smaller thieves' guild may be disbanded if half or even a quarter of its number is destroyed, capture or slain.

Unless otherwise noted, groups that are not defeated are able to recruit new members by various means to replace lost members and even grow a bit over their baseline level at your discretion, varying their numbers and otherwise being dynamic, living organizations. Generally, lawful groups (who operate in a more orderly fashion) can recruit new members at a rate of 1 new class level for each level of the group per month. Chaotic groups recruit at a rate of 1 new class level per group level per week but have a 50% chance to lose a similar number of class levels instead, though never for 2 weeks in a row. So the 9th level opium-dealing Irthren Gang (CE) under attack from characters of a holy order can regroup and recruit 9 class levels of new members in a week — through bullying, intimidation, or other methods such as bribery. However, in any given week there's a chance that they lose that number of class levels instead.

Morale Levels

Percentages indicate the chance that the group or individual will retreat from an encounter. This check is made each time one of the listed criteria is fulfilled. If a group is outnumbered by 2-to-1 or more or face opponents with a clear tactical advantage or dire reputation (GM determines), its morale level is reduced by one for the purposes of that encounter. If a group is in its headquarters or some other location it considers to be a major stronghold, its morale is increased by one level for that encounter. All numbers are in reference to the number of group members present for the encounter rather than for the group as a whole.

Breaking: 50% when faced with the prospect of battle regardless of group size. 100% if demoralized by a successful Intimidate check or one of their number is killed or incapacitated.

Low: 50% when faced with the prospect of battle while outnumbered or if demoralized by a successful Intimidate check. 75% each time a member is killed or incapacitated. 100% when reduced below half their numbers.

Cautious: 35% when faced with the prospect of battle while outnumbered. 50% when the first member is killed or incapacitated. 75% when reduced below half their numbers. 100% when reduced to one-quarter their numbers.

Average: 20% when faced with the prospect of battle while outnumbered. 35% when the first member is killed or incapacitated. 50% when reduced below half their numbers. 75% when reduced to one-quarter their numbers and each death or incapacitation thereafter.

Hardy: 10% when faced with the prospect of battle while outnumbered. 25% when the first member is killed or incapacitated. 35% when reduced below half their numbers. 50% when reduced to one-quarter their numbers and each death or incapacitation thereafter.

Courageous: 10% when the first member is killed or incapacitated. 25% when reduced below half their numbers. 35% when reduced to one-quarter their numbers and each death or incapacitation thereafter.

Very Strong: 10% when reduced below half their numbers. 25% when reduced to one-quarter their numbers and each death or incapacitation thereafter.

Fearless: Fanatics who never retreat from an encounter and will fight to the last.

Sample Gang: Hood Street Vandals (Level 7)

Alignment: CN
Location: Artists' Quarter
Leader: Edwin Sedge (CN male *blighted* human **veteran**)
Motivations: Smash the mills
Friends: The Family (Festival), Anarchists (sometimes), lower-caste workers
Enemies: Royalists, City Watch
Tactics: Operate by night. Sedge can gather up to half the group in 4 hours, or the entire group with a day's notice. The group use hit-and-run tactics, attacking lone targets and then vanishing into the night.
Morale: Hardy; the leader, all three of the Brothers, and half the group must be slain or captured before the group breaks and ceases as a viable entity.

The Hood Street Vandals are a group loosely allied to the Anarchists and are based in the Artists' Quarter. Their leader, Edwin Sedge, a former workhouse orphan, was so badly abused during his youth that he grew up with a hatred of all things "establishment." The group is a covert gang that aims to smash mills, factories, and workhouses near the Artists' Quarter. Membership is secret, and a matter of caste, with Lowfolk workers forming the bulk of its membership. Instructions are spread through word of mouth, with lesser members being aware and following instructions from a trio of brothers (called "the Brothers" by members of the gang), any one of which knows approximately 50% of the lesser members by name. The Brothers in turn act under direct instruction from Sedge.

The Four Great Families

There are four great families in the City-State of Castorhage: the Castorhage Family (the Royal Family), the Borxia Family, the Nightshade Family and the Tredici Family. Below them are a swarming mass of other houses, great and small, all wielding various levels of power and influence. As a subsection of Gangs, the rules can be applied to these politically and/or nefariously connected houses as well to create a gauge of their power and influence.

Blood runs thicker than water, they say, and unlike gangs, ties of blood are often intricately woven into others through marriage. The relative strength of each family is given in a simple stat block, designed to reflect not only their power, but their allies and enemies, as well as their elders.

Sample Family: House Wether (Level 9)

Alignment: N
Location: Capitol
Family Head: Lilly Wether (N female human **spy**)
Primary Motivation: Loyalty to the Royal Family
Friends: Secret alliance with the Clan Sullage (BookTown) aimed at bringing the Borxias down, their deals swinging on property and business ventures; the Royal Family (Capitol)
Enemies: Outrage and condemnation of House Shibboleth over attempts to frame an (allegedly) innocent senior family figure over a fair duel results in frequent duels between the sons of both families; hatred of the Borxia Family

over property disputes and unpaid loans as well as deaths of family diplomats at their hands

Tactics: Spying, brokering information and secrets

Morale: Very strong. Exiles flock to their banner, and the family name is arrogantly bandied about throughout the city; the support of the Royal Family secures their future so long as the Castorhages are in power.

Although giving a good indication of the family, these statistics are also slightly abstract on purpose. They do not go into great detail about the family members or alliances but can be used to judge who is more powerful than whom, and are intended as a jumping off point that you can flesh out and develop for your campaign. Unlike gangs (see below), family runs deep and can count upon lesser families as allies.

Magic

There are thousands of independent wizards and sorcerers operating in the city, but in general access to the higher-level spells (6th-level and above) are controlled by guilds, who guard them jealously — even going to so far as to burn copies of spells in their libraries if they discover them.

Higher-level divine spells are even more strictly controlled, and generally only deemed suitable for Royals or those of great importance. As such, spells such as *raise dead*, *resurrection*, and *true resurrection* are not generally for sale to the ordinary character unless they have powerful connections. If you wish, you can ignore this rule. However, its basis is in the logic of the city: The nobles wish to keep such miracles for their own use. "Dish them out to the Lowfolk," they say, "and everyone will want them." This does not rule out high-ranking clergy or those who serve them being given access to such spells as rewards, for example.

The Illuminati are rumoured to be the depository of hundreds of unknown spells, taken by their spies, unearthed by their explorers, and ripped from alien hands by their adventurer-agents. Tales of countless new forms of magicks and twisted domains of spells are speculated upon by conspiracy theorists. Of the few known to truly exist, the foul *birth magic*, that targets the unborn with vile eldritch and arcane power while still in the womb, has evidence walking and staggering across the city. Tales of spells that can unmake a person's biology, of arcane powers that can control parts of the Between, and those that are able to break and bend the will of men to unspeakable acts continue to be whispered.

Miracles and Magus: Optional Rules for Buying Spells and Magic in the Blight

"Only the wise know how to use the dangerous curse of magic, and only a fool would tamper with it."

— One of the Seven Prayers of Castorhage

Magic brings power, and power is something jealously guarded in the city. Buying magic therefore is more difficult in such a closed society and, if you use the optional rules outlined in the sidebox below, all magic is affected.

Where magic *is* sold, it commands the normal price as noted in the guidelines for magic items in the game master's section of the rules.

Magic Items and Spells

Magic brings power, and power is everything in the Blight. Magic items therefore rarely come up for sale, and even potions and scrolls are guarded lest they fall into the wrong hands. Some locations do trade magic, but the profession is considered a very dangerous one; gifted crafters are often taken by jealous individuals and groups and put to work on their whims.

In general, such items cannot be purchased save at specifically noted locations within the city-state, but groups, friends, and masters may be located to make such objects easier to commission. The determination of such contacts rests with you as GM to install into adventures as friendly contacts or perhaps power rewards. For example, the characters may save a member of a cabal who has powerful friends. The character's reward is a power award (see below) that enables them to purchase *rare* items of up to 5,000-gp value, but each item must be commissioned with crafting times as indicated in the game manual plus 1d6 weeks.

Spellcasters may also join an appropriate guild or club that allows them access to spells and items. If you do not wish to go with specific clubs or do not have time, use the rule of thumb that a one-time fee enables the character to join such an association. Such cabals and clubs have an indicator to represent the rarity of items and spells they offer or can create, with the fee being 250 gp per rarity or spell level. As an example, the Cabal of Shadowy Illusionists (*uncommon, level 5*) has the ability to create all magic items up to *uncommon* rarity for a cost of 500gp and has access to all associated spells up to 5th-level for a cost of 1,250 gp. Purchase of spells and items is in addition to the fee, of course, and unless the fees are paid in full, membership is refused.

This association also works for divine spellcasters. They pay a one-time tithe to their church at the appropriate level and thereafter have access to items and spells of up to that level.

At your discretion, clubs may bar entrants from higher-level clubs than their own character level, so a 1st-level spellcaster could not pay 1,250 gp to join a higher-level guild or club.

Spellbooks outside of cults and cabals are scarce, but it is always possible to obtain such items on the black market (at a premium, of course) if more honest means are not available. The markets in some sections of the city — notably BookTown — heave with tomes and books that can be purchased or modified by additional pages.

Be wary, however, about treating spellcasters fairly. The standard here is that magic is rare and its users are people to either be feared or admired, possibly in equal measure. This trade-off can be mechanic (adding say a fear factor for those not used to being exposed to magic) or a role-playing one (spellcasters are popular).

Consider the sidebar options, but if none of them suit, either go with your own or ignore the magic aspect presented here.



Death and Magic

Resurrection and *raise dead* are serious matters in the Blight and are only generally available to the most important Royals, priests, and political figures of great power, those lucky enough to personally know someone capable of casting these spells, or belong to a cult where such actions occur. They are certainly not available to the common man at any price. The idea of (near) eternal life is considered blasphemous in many religions and some groups, notably the Knights of the Great Order (a LN order of **knights** whose sole purpose is to hunt down and immolate those who have been raised), who take a particularly dim — and violent — view of it.

Personal Goals

Personal goals are life aims that are given an XP reward when achieved by a player character. These goals can be identified when the character is generated, or acquired like power and friendships as the character progresses through a campaign.

Personal goals are usually selected by the player with the GM's agreement, but occasionally a GM may wish to add one. For example, if the GM wishes a character to begin his career already hating wererats, he can work with the player to devise a modified background where, as a child, one of the character's parents was killed by wererats, but more than simply murdered, they were eaten alive by the wererats' pack. The character witnessed the event and only escaped through sheer luck. The character's personal goal is to kill 50 wererats, and she receives a specific reward, commensurate with the estimated difficulty of the goal, when it is complete.

Be imaginative with the goals you choose, and if you don't want one, that's fine, not everyone has such motivations in life.

Personal goals are judged by challenge rating just as standard encounters, and rewards should be similar when the goal is achieved. If the reward is experience points, then they should go directly to that character and that character alone, although constituent aspects of the goal inevitably lead to other experience on the way for her friends (the actual slaying of the wererats, for instance). It should be noted that the character does not need to be directly responsible for the achievement of the goal (i.e. the character does not have to personally slay all 50 wererats), but the character must be involved as at least a motivating force behind the achievement of the goal, if not an actual participant. Therefore, the character can be a member of a wererat hunting party, the character can be a lone wererat stalker, or the character can hire a group of mercenaries to carry out his wererat extermination. In all cases, when the 50 wererats have been killed, the character receives the personal goal's achievement reward.

You can see how individuals (especially villainous NPCs) might achieve level advancement without actually dirtying their hands, which fits in well with the concept of conspirators and secret movers-and-shakers behind the scenes that is so prevalent in the Blight. It also gives credible explanation how someone with clearly limited direct combat capabilities such as an Ernst Stavro Blofeld (a supervillain created by Ian Fleming for his James Bond series) type of character can lead an organization of henchman of its calibre and be a suitable match for a high-level character such as Bond. This mechanic works especially well in a campaign that is more than simple blood-and-muscle combat encounters.

A list of possible goals and their potential levels are assigned below. The GM must be careful to ensure that rewards are not too high for the goal assigned or chosen, and that the story can have an end: a personal goal of bringing down the monarchy, for example, is unrealistic, however, a personal goal to join the anarchists is not.

Characters in general only have one life goal at a time, although as GM you may allow as many as you wish. Where a personal enemy is designated, the character must only play a role in their demise, so a character group attacking the *Cult of the Rusted Henge* would be enough to fulfil a specific goal on behalf of a character hating or opposing them.

As a final caveat for the use of personal goals in your game, the players should be aware that if the character unwittingly fulfils some major aspect of her life story, she does not receive the reward. In the example above, if the character kills 50 wererats, only the enemies that she knew (or at least had good reason to strongly suspect) were wererats contribute to the goal. Killing the henchmen of the wererats, who were not themselves wererats, does not count toward this goal, and if the character kills some thug on the street who also happens to be a wererat without the character being aware of it, it also does not contribute to this goal. This could lead to some need for reasonable adjudication on the part of the GM if the character later discovers

How Magic is Viewed in the Blight

This is very much a matter of personal taste, but the general assumption in the city-state is that magic is power, and power should not fall into the wrong hands. How you run this is a matter for you and your players, but some increasing scales of control are given below. Each requires you to decide — if you even wish to — how to tweak the way magic is viewed in this campaign. This is not for everyone; many people love high-magic campaigns, in which case simply ignore these rules.

1. Magic is Not Generally for Sale

This is the mildest of the aspects and the one suggested to be used when running this campaign. Magic is simply so rare that it has fallen into powerful hands and only appears when an obscure item turns up at an auction, is stolen, or a treasure trove is found. Potions and scrolls do not generally fall into this category since they are relatively weak, but casters who make a habit of supplying scrolls to revolutionaries may not last long.

When spellcasters are seen in the street who do not clearly represent a recognised god, their presence creates a spectacle. Any members of the Watch report such matters or may even try to capture such casters for a reward. It should generally only affect the game when such characters are captured by the Watch, in which case they are hastily tried for witchcraft (usually when an under-justice can be called in 1d4 days), and executed by pyre.

Consequently, many arcane spellcasters take to donning ecclesiastic attire to disguise their abilities from the ignorant masses, playing their magical abilities off as divine in nature. How the various NPCs in your campaign react to this is left to you.

2. Magic is Dangerous

Not only is magic not for sale, but those who command it are to be feared. When magic is used, it has that effect upon the ignorant, who fear it accordingly. This isn't necessarily a mechanical game effect. A wizard sending a *fireball* across a street at some foes would be held in awe and terror. Perhaps ignorant City Watch officers flee or become frenzied in their wish to kill or to escape.

In this version, magic is something to try to keep secret, and when discovered being used, should have an ongoing campaign effect. Perhaps a subtle effect, such as NPCs fearing certain spellcasters or treating them with undue respect, or perhaps the characters pick up a few pursuing witchhunters.

3. Magic is Evil

In this final version, magic is viewed as being positively wicked, and all spellcasters that are not clerics are clearly witches, unless they belong to the right guild and can prove their aristocracy. Arcane spellcasters may be discriminated against and feared. In game mechanics, all known arcane spellcasters make Charisma (Intimidation) checks with advantage but commence any encounter with a NPC who does not know them beyond their ability to cast spells as hostile (so a character who is indifferent to the other characters commences the encounter with a hostile attitude toward the spellcaster).

Do not use this version to belittle or isolate arcane spellcasters, but to add an aspect to them that is both good and bad. They are feared for their gifts. If they repeatedly use them boastfully or in prominent places, there should be consequences. Perhaps a Guild member seeks them out for a task, or a witch-hating peasant or priest comes hunting them.

that someone she had previously killed was, in fact, a wererat and asks how this will apply to the life goal. In general, granting the reward with the discovery of the knowledge retroactively is probably not an issue. But if the knowledge would be sufficient to reveal that the goal should have been met and the reward given at some prior point, it may not make for a satisfying game solution. It may require the GM to extend the goal slightly so that the character can achieve it with an active effort rather than backing into it unknowingly and then suddenly reaping the benefits of its rewards. Back to our cinematic example, it would be a singularly unsatisfying moment if during the assault on Blofeld's stronghold Bond suddenly realized as he finally reached Blofeld's inner sanctum that the archvillain had been killed by an errant piece of shrapnel during Bond's opening volley.

The achievement of the personal goal and reward should feel like an achievement for the player as well as the character, so you should strive to make it so even if that means a slight manipulation of matters at the end.

Sample Reward	Sample Goals
Choice of common magic item	Join a club or avenge a death by slaying a petty official.
500 gp	Marry a childhood sweetheart, have children.
1,000 XP	Defeat 5 of a specific personal enemy.
Choice of uncommon magic item	Destroy a petty guild or club, or unmask an organisation of minor repute by providing evidence to a holy order of wrongdoing.
2,500 gp	Slay a minor noble, purchase a particular property that has been taken by others illegally, raise enough money to free a relative from a terrible gaol or break them out of same.
Gain a special title	Marry a famous beauty, perform to royalty.
5,000 gp	25 of a specific personal enemy (At least CR 2).
Choice of rare magic item	Destroy a moderately powerful guild or club, avenge a childhood wrong against nobility by tracking down the noble and either killing or ruining him.
10,000 gp	Rise to the rank of guild leader in a major guild, track down and kill a serial killer of great repute.
Advance to higher caste	Build a church or purchase a manor house.
Awarded honorary university degree	Create a new 5th-level spell, explore Between or other exotic lands and have a significant geographical feature named after you.
Knighted by the Queen	Amass a personal fortune of at least 50,000 gp (not including magic items possessed).
25,000 gp	Defeat 50 of a specific personal enemy (At least CR 3).
Choice of very rare magic item	Unmask a devil, demonic or n'gathau cult and slay its leader.
Made titled (minor) nobility	Bring down a major guild or club, rule a parish, gain a 20th-level friend, establish a dynasty, establish a powerful business garnering 20,000 gp per year.
Invest in lucrative venture	Amass a personal fortune of at least 100,000 gp (not including magic items possessed).
Join inquisitors or witchhunters	Build a cathedral.
50,000 gp	Defeat 75 of a personal enemy (at least CR 4).
Choice of legendary magic item	Bring down a major cult, become a Justice, rule a district, establish a powerful club or guild.
Made landed nobility	Go on a quest to recover a holy artefact, marry into the upper echelons of the Royal Family.
75,000 gp	Defeat 100 a specific personal enemy (at least CR 5)

Power

Power in role-playing games comes in many shapes and sizes but generally revolves around a statistical basis: What are the highest-level spells you can cast? How many hit points does the monster have? What feats can your character use?

However, it is also true to say that it is not always *what* you know but *who* you know that defines power.

Power as a Reward

As an alternative or addition to money, you may decide to reward your characters with power. Rewards can range from trivial, such that the characters earn the respect of locals in the parish of Dern Bridge and all Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks are made with the character's proficiency bonus added for a year, to the profound resulting in the character being invested with the title of Lord Under-Justice of Trade, a position of great import and that pays 25,000 gp per annum.

Be careful when offering power as a reward, though, because as the saying goes, with it comes responsibility. If you wish to keep things simple, reward the power as a simple bonus to income, skill checks, or as followers. More complex power rewards could involve interaction with other powerful individuals, opportunities to influence important decisions and possible trade and/or nefarious activities. An interesting campaign could revolve around various powerful houses that vie for the illicit trade in contraband, with interaction at a political and covert level. The characters build up power rewards by influencing aspects of these families and rise in power accordingly.

Example Power Reward: Fetch Destruction

If the characters rid a portion of the city of Fetch, they are installed as parish undead hunters, positions that bring in 1,000 gp per year. The parish installs six **guards** as underlings of the characters and replace dead underlings at a rate of one per year.

The character's interactions (all Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks) are made with advantage within the parish. If they wish, once per month, the characters can push local traders for extra tax, bringing in a further 200 gp if they make a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check. However, at the same time the use (or overuse) of this tax bullying should likewise have consequences for you as GM to decide.

Example Power Goal

To achieve this goal, the character must bribe the commander of the local Watch Station, Hamandus Quade (NE female gnome **burglar**), with a bribe of at least 1,000 gp and make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Only one check is allowed per bribe, and only one bribe attempt is allowed every month (the bribe is still taken whether the check is successful or not). The first character to succeed in the check is offered the position of UnderMaester of the South Street Docks.

The position of UnderMaester of the South Street Docks allows the character access to all imported goods coming into the city. These docks are notorious for illicit goods, and each month the character brings 1d6+4 x 15 gp into his own purse from his take of the taxes. With a DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation) check (one check made at the time the income is taken), this amount is doubled.

Cutthroats, pirates and smugglers are at tough lot, and it is up to you as GM to decide if and when the character's Intimidation attempts result in a tiff or other, perhaps more serious, discussion involving cutlasses and dirks.

Power as a Goal

The Blight is rotten to the core, and power is something almost everyone strives for. The characters can take part in this corruption or perhaps seek to better things by working toward obtaining their own power. As discussed in the Personal Goals section, some characters may seek an entry into the ranks of power in the city as part of their background aspirations. As such, power, as presented here, can be used as a part of a character's personal goals as described above.

The guilds offer one avenue into the establishment. Generally, to obtain such power the characters must remove the incumbent (who is invariably corrupt anyway) by bribing his immediate superior to remove him or by securing the position in some other way (perhaps as a reward, or perhaps by carrying out a duty for a guild, aristocrat or other influential person).

Relationships as Rewards

Consider that the characters' actions always have some kind of effect: the characters can act selflessly, perhaps saving a hostage or commoner from danger, perhaps they save a merchant's daughter and gain her father's undying gratitude. Such actions could reap new relationships, which may also increase their power (as detailed above).

For example, the characters unmask a plot by cadaver snatchers to harvest parts from beautiful young people for local golem-stitchers. These people are all the offspring of commoners, and only the characters stand up for them. At the close of the adventure, you may decide that one of the young people is a potential partner for a character. You may decide to grant this friendship as given, and hand the character the details, or you may decide that if a character passes a certain action (a Persuasion check or other appropriate skill check), the character can develop a relationship with that individual.

Advancing Relationships

You can make the friendships as complex as you like, keeping track of NPCs as individuals who sometimes accompany characters or who have adventures of their own that are referred to in passing or which could lead to other adventures. You may also decide that such NPCs are static, and stay at the levels initially generated, happy with a quieter life. Or you could decide to advance the NPCs at a rate relative with the characters — either half, one-quarter or one-eighth for example, depending on how useful you wish these friends to be and how powerful your campaign is in terms of levelled characters.

Example Relationship Reward

Characters successfully completing the adventure and saving at least 75% of the captured NPCs receive a relationship reward:

Hamtren, the grateful parish constable (N male human **veteran**), is considered a friend of the character who, in the GM's opinion, acted the most heroically or who performed the single-most heroic act in the adventure in Hamtren's presence. The GM should also allow every other character present a chance to befriend the constable. Those succeeding on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check also benefit from his friendship. All other characters who took part in the adventure find that Hamtren is friendly in attitude to them from its conclusion.

Technology & Firearms

Technology levels of the **Lost Lands** are defined in Chapter 1 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***, but a short discussion of technology as it applies to the Blight is warranted here in **The Blight GM Guide**. The technology level for Castorhage as given in Chapter 1 is "Industrial Revolution," which in the Lost Lands means the folk of the Blight have access to or are at least exposed to steam power, clockworks, and manufactories on a regular basis. In fact, Castorhage is the most technologically advanced society in the entirety of the **Lost Lands** campaign setting. Even dominant global powers such as the Empire of Oceanus that rose from its simple island roots and brought the entire Foerdewaith empire to bay can only claim an "Age of Sail" technology level, while cosmopolitan Bard's Gate barely makes it to the level of a Renaissance technology.

Why Castorhage possesses this unique technological advantage is wrapped in a combination of its relative seclusion while still maintaining the full innovative support of the great empires of the world throughout its existence, the uninterrupted will of its government to seize and exploit every possible technology available without the typical concerns of political and moral restraint, as well as its unique position in relation to the otherworldly influence of Between upon the minds, bodies, and souls of its populace. In short, Castorhage is a place that has been "touched" (or "blighted" if you will) and has had the resources and unimpeded political will to explore a myriad of lines of scientific query to their logical, illogical, and often even catastrophic conclusions. The Blight is the mad scientist's lab where he never had to worry about a mob of villagers with torches and pitchforks coming to end his unnatural experiments. The sciences, pseudo-sciences, and meta-sciences have benefited from this unbridled excess, but the city has certainly suffered for it.

But though the City-State of Castorhage has long had access to steam power and clockworks (the former was tinkered with on Earth as early as the 1st Century AD by Heron of Alexandria and the latter startlingly exhibited in the Antikythera mechanism believed to date as far back as 150 BC), the Blight is no steampunk campaign. Because where traditional steampunk settings harnessed the power of steam into all sorts of mechanical wonders, in Castorhage it never became more than an auxiliary source. For in Castorhage, the great experimenters discovered the great possibility and cheap availability of necromancy, not simply in the obvious sense of animating legions of zombie labourers, but rather in its application through necrocraft and golem innovation. While the many technological innovations that power Castorhage incorporate steam power or clockworks, at the core is their reliance preservation and animation of once-living flesh to supply their labour and energy needs. It is much cheaper and easier for the arcanists of the city to harvest the limbs of the dead or dying and craft them into an animated bucket brigade than forge and install an expensive and heavy steel pipe to carry water up a slope, and it is this philosophy that has driven the city's innovation for centuries.

Of course, the important question, though, is how does the city's technology level impact your own campaign? And the answer, as with all **Lost Lands** products from **Frog God Games**, is that its impact is as much or as little as you prefer. Much of the technology is presented in a neutral manner. It is described in the background without detailed explanations as to which portions are magic versus which portions are technological. In the Blight, there's little distinction and little need for one. The technology need not play a significant role in your campaign unless you want it to.

Perhaps the biggest point of contention is the presence or absence of firearms. Many GMs and players enjoy adding them as an augmentation to their games to give them a more swashbuckling feel, but just as many despise them and want no part of them. Firearms have been presented as a part of the **Frog God Games/Necromancer Games** campaign setting since as early as 2005, so their appearance in the Blight is nothing new, but will be handled in much the same way as every other instance. There are firearms in the Blight as part of the base assumption of the setting, but they are not integral to it, and you can absolutely ignore it entirely without ramifications or the need for substantial rewrites for your own running of the campaign.

The standard firearms found in the game master's manual can be found in the Blight and are as available or unavailable to the players as you want them to be. The City Watch, the Royal Army, and many criminal elements in the city undoubtedly have access to firearms, but magic is cheaper and easier to control access to, so their use has not spread broadly and may never even be noticed by your players if you don't want them to. In general, encounters and NPCs are not built around the use of firearms, so it should be relatively easy to excise them altogether without a second thought if you so wish.

It is assumed that the Capitol is undoubtedly bristling with mounted cannon that overlook the river (and the surrounding city!), but they do not play a role in any of the published materials and need never be mentioned. The ships of the Royal Navy are black ironclad paddlewheel steamers that add their belching fumes to the smudged air above the city, but they add only a pittance to that put off by the countless cook fires, trash fires, funeral pyres, and general arson that occurs in the city daily. And while these same navy dreadnoughts have shipboard cannon (side mounted, not turret mounted as in modern warships), they are equally likely to use their cannon to fire secretly conducted experiments involving the enslavement and deployment of ragefire elementals through a Byzantine projector. In any case, access to these vessels of the Royal Navy is highly restricted, and they need not play a part in your Blight campaign unless you wish them to do so.

The Undead, the Broken, the Made, and the Unliving

One curious sight that surprises many visitors is the presence of broken creatures and the many forms of undead, nearly dead, or unloving creatures that walk the streets of the city. In an amoral city-state built upon the backs of cheap labour, it is perhaps not surprising that they find a way to work their lower classes even beyond the bounds of life.

Broken creatures[+] are the most frequently encountered example, and seeing a pair of broken trolls carrying great baskets of stones or other unbelievable loads is, while not commonplace, not altogether unusual.

Similarly, skeletons or zombies are used by the wealthy or particularly insensitive to fetch and carry, obeying simple instructions, and doing menial tasks. Although not as common as broken creatures, they are generally seen at least monthly by locals. Many patrons have taken to dressing their skeletons in hooded livery to disguise their horrific appearance.



And if the use of zombies and other lesser undead as menial labour goes on unchecked, then so does the creation of **flesh golems**, **homunculi**, **fleshgines**, necrocraft and other constructs incorporating the components of one or more individuals who once counted themselves among the living. Commonly known as the "Made," any of these can be seen openly walking, slithering or flying the streets of the Blight, and many take the form of commonly employed services such as the undead-drawn coarse cabs and fleshgine-animated Dungier's buggies.

Finally, there are the unliving, those who either through their own choosing or by the will of others who had the power of life and death over them partook of the magical philtre known as the *elixir of life*[†]. Those who take the draught successfully find themselves with a new lease on life — or near-life to put it more accurately — released from the shackles of aging and finding the physical needs of the body much diminished all around. These are the *alchymic-undying*[†], more commonly referred to as "Reborn." Of course, that the physical sensations of the body are diminished just as much if not more causes some to consider this form of near-immortality as much more akin to near-Hell. Normally those who are exposed to the *elixir of life* are those who can afford it and have a morbid fear of death or those who possess some valued skill that their overseers are not willing to let perish simply because the physical body might do so.

There are also those who take the *elixir of life* but whose bodies do not react well to the unnatural infusion. Instead of shedding the shackles of ordinary mortality as *alchymic-undying*, these unlucky souls instead find themselves cursed with a progressive form of undeath that not only steals away their vitality and ability to experience sensation, but also their very reason and personality as well. These cursed folks are the *alchymic-unliving*[†], and when their curse becomes advanced enough, they lose every shred of who they were and become simply one more zombie shuffling mindlessly to its master's commands.

The Weight of the Law

"The law which attempts a man's life is impractical, unjust, inadmissible. It has never repressed crime — for a second crime is every day committed at the foot of the scaffold."

The law is tough and well organised in the Blight. Making an enemy of it is unwise but perhaps inevitable for some groups.

Having a viable law in a city is the only way to keep order, and as a GM you should not hesitate to call upon high CR officers and minions to see it carried out. Third-level characters who wantonly burn down a Royal palace should not be surprised soon to find a group of **wardens** tracking them.

Law in the city-state of Castorhage is maintained by its venerable, respected and feared Office of the Watch — Queen's Men as they are often referred to colloquially. From parish Watch Stations, these thousands of constables, inspectors, and other officers oversee the safety and the orderliness of the streets — well, the orderliness at least. The Watch, as an official instrument of the government, is much more interested in maintaining order; it is order that allows the workings of the city to continue and the trade, taxes, and bribes to continue to fill the Royal coffers. Therefore, maintaining an orderliness to facilitate that trade is of utmost importance. That a modicum of safety arises for the benefit of the citizens is merely a secondary gain that is of little concern to those at the highest levels of the City Watch.

This attitude is not necessarily reflected at the street level of the Watch — folk who, after all, have to live on those same streets — but while it is not guaranteed that a constable walking his beat is corrupt and/or blind to the plight of the commoners around him, there is still no shortage of corruption even in the lower ranks. Regardless of whatever indirect benefits to the commoners of Castorhage may arise through the ministrations of the City Watch, no one would make the mistake of declaring the streets of the city safe by a long shot. Still the presence of the Watch and its patrols undoubtedly make them at least *safer* for the most part.

The standard City Watch patrol is made up of 5 Constables of the Watch (N male or female human **guards**) and a Sergeant of the Watch (N male



human **veteran**). However, this is only the *standard* Watch patrol. There are some places in the city where the Watch just dare not go, and some places (such as the Capitol) where patrols are two, three even four times larger.

The Watch has not only **guards**, **veterans**, **captains**, and **scouts** in its employ but **sneakthieves** and **burglars**, **acolytes** and **priests**, and **mages** of all different specialities amongst their number that serve in special capacities. Many Watch clerks are **commoners**, while most **inspectors** are highly trained and can ferret out most anything. Higher-level officers quite frequently are **nobles**, being political appointments through family influence. Far from a homogeneous organisation, the Watch represents hundreds of points of view and scores of agendas. Nevertheless, the sheer crush of its bureaucracy tends to keep it more or less on course in the execution of its duties. The Office of the Watch oversees a city of millions of people, however, and crime is rife.

What does or does not cause the Watch to become involved in a situation depends on the political capital at play. In general, a parish tiff where a cult temple is burned to the ground by adventurers is not a cause for concern in the eyes of the Watch, whereas bumping off an aristocrat most assuredly is. The more "respectable" (read: powerful) an individual is, the less likely he is to be troubled by the law, and certainly a bribe of 500 gp in the right hands can get the aristocrat criminal off all but the worst of charges.

How you adjudicate this is very much a matter of personal taste — the Watch is there for you to use as an ally or foil, but having it regularly swoop in to save characters in over their heads does not make for a very fulfilling game while it could also soon become very tedious having to deal with the tenth cultists' body by dumping it in the river for fear of hanging. Likely, a balance will need to be struck in your campaign between the usefulness and the antagonism of the Watch toward the characters. In any case, the players should not be allowed to become entirely dismissive of the Watch, and characters who march up to the Capitol singing Anarchist songs are unlikely to be seen again.

The Knockers (the Castorhage Secret Police) is also a force to be feared. This group turns up at night and takes people with them without warning or explanation. Those that go with them are rarely seen again. There are many well trained individuals within the ranks of the Knockers, but their numbers and membership are so secretive, and their activities are so clandestine, that there is no such thing as a "standard" Knocker patrol.

As with all in this setting, judge the level of law the characters must deal with however you wish. If you want a very strictly legal campaign, have the City Watch be a constant issue for the characters, perhaps at the core of some adventures where it's not just about killing a powerful and aristocratic enemy but covering up any evidence of their involvement as well. Conversely, in some streets murder is commonplace, and with a city of countless serial killers, the law is clearly failing somewhere.

Throwing an unexpected Watch patrol into an adventure is a great way to test your player's mettle, and if they happen to kill some constables, then so much the better; everything, as has been said before, has a cause and effect in a place so crowded. There are always so many eyes everywhere, looking greedily to make a coin or use information to seize some power. A party that takes down a few corrupt Queen's Men, must simply learn to play this game to survive.

In general, hanging or beheading is a punishment meted out for anything from simple theft upward, rarely dependent upon the seriousness of the crime — though deportation to one of the Between colonies is always possible for those who might receive a commuted sentence. Crimes of a lesser severity than theft usually warrant being tossed into the city gaols or, worse, the sanatoriums for the mad. There are also still some prison hulks floating in the Lyme, and these are terrible, diseased places without hope where those whose betters may still wish to talk to them at some future time are incarcerated for "safekeeping."

True Gods of the Blight

While the "gods" of the Blight are a constant presence in the minds of many Castorhagers and even occasionally walk the street, there are still countless other older deities whose names are invoked on a daily — sometimes momentary — basis. These gods have their own local names, but as with any icons, scholars have surmised that many are only local aspects of more widely named or quoted gods. The more commonly revered gods of the Blight are listed here, but in a city so large, it seems that whatever god, saint, or angel one worships, there is bound to be a shrine to them somewhere.

Many of the main deities presented below appear in other areas of the Lost Lands as well. However, their complete description covering those other representations is not included. Rather, the list here details them in a shortened version based on their relevance to the Blight itself.

Baphomet

The Rage Storm; Demon Lord of Anarchy, Beasts, and Anger

Greater God (Demon Lord)
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Domains: Animal, Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Fire, Water
Symbol: A burning goat's head
Garb: Rich royal robes or filthy nakedness
Favoured Weapon: Halberd
Form of Worship and Holidays: Full moons for worshippers with lycanthropy who tend to engage in wanton slaughter. Non-lycanthropes hold secret rites with desecration of holy symbols and blood rituals.
Typical Worshippers: Minotaurs, lycanthropes, therian-

thropes*, chaaor demons, the Alcaldrich Order of Knights Templar in Exile

While revered in a more urbane and civilized manner in some other lands, in the Blight this demon lord is a god of fire, of the raging storm and the thunder and lightning who destroys. Even his more civilized followers who meet in secret cabals for their carefully hidden dark rituals revel in the destruction he promises to bring to the world. Hymns to Baphomet speak of the End of Days, the coming Apocalypse, or the ruin of the world through anarchy. Of late, rumours among Baphomet's faithful speak of a new weapon wielded by the Royal Navy, a powerful new advancement that has seen limited use only in the far colonial corners of the empire. When they whisper of this tantalizing new development, they use only one word: ragefire.

Baphomet previously appeared in ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**.

*Therianthropes (sometimes called anthromorphs or weretherions) are animals that can assume a human or hybrid form (the latter combining traits of both their human and animal forms). They are akin to lycanthropes (in that they are shapechangers), but therianthropes are not lycanthropes and do not carry or induce lycanthropy. All therianthropes in human form have slightly feral characteristics.

Brine

Ocean's Anger; Fish-Brother; God of Sea and Unsea

Greater God
Alignment: Neutral
Domains: Animal, Chaos, Destruction, Water, Weather
Symbol: A crashing tidal wave devouring the towers of a city
Garb: Salt-crusted fishing nets and seaweed drapings symbolising tentacles
Favoured Weapon: Net
Form of Worship and Holidays: Full moon nights when the high tide is highest, new moon nights that coincide with unknown aboleth rituals in the deeps. The Brine Sea celebrated at midsummer with a flotilla of boats upon the sea make offerings and feast on fish. Cradle-Song ceremony when a human woman is returned to the surface world with a briny infant in tow to welcome them into the ***briny*** community. The Culling occurs when a briny undergoes transformation into a ***skum*** and is caught by his briny kin before he can escape into the sea and is euthanized in a sacred bloody ritual upon the benighted waves.
Typical Worshippers: Briny, brine mothers, fishermen, locathahs, some sahuagin

One day, Brine's worshippers say, the world will be swallowed by a vast tidal wave that will wipe it clean and create it anew as has happened many times before. Until such time, those who worship and work the sea give offerings to the god and the creatures that live from it seeking their favour. To the briny race, Brine is held as patron and a sort of protective older brother that sees to their needs and promises them a new life of justice and equality once the wicked world that they live in finally passes away.

Father Canker

Brother Choke; The Silent Assassin; God of Poison, Silence and Smog

Lesser God
Alignment: Neutral
Domains: Air, Death, Trickery, Weather
Symbol: A smoking brazier or a shard of opaque glass
Garb: None, usually beggar's wrappings or mourning veils
Favoured Weapon: Any poison or poisoned weapon
Form of Worship and Holidays: Night vigils where rats or other small animals are sacrificed as burnt offerings when the Canker is especially thick. Burning of thick incense for Feast of Fools to hide presence from Father Canker. Grieving mothers set cornhusk dolls alight and cast them into the Lyme as votive offerings.
Typical Worshippers: Beggars, grieving mothers and fathers, belkers, some undead and psychotic thieves/murderers

He is at your window, he swallows the breath of your children as he chokes them, sobbing as he does. Father Canker seems to be a god wholly of Casterhagi origin. He represents the ever-present danger to be found in the noxious fumes of the Canker and the choking smog of the city. Jack's Candle is said to be his manifestation. Father Canker is not so much revered as placated, and many beggars and those forced to live in the lowest parts of the city along the banks of Sister Lyme where the mists rise highest and the sea breezes are at their weakest live in constant fear of the choking miasma that can come without warning and leave all it encounters dead where they lay. Parents of young children who die of crib death, the Canker's suffocating fumes, or virtually any other cause often see Father Canker as the protector of their lost child's soul and make votive offerings into the Great Lyme River during their grieving period, a time that can sometimes last years or decades. The authorities sometimes have to keep a careful watch for these activities on days when there is a high fire danger on the river.

There is a local rumour — or fairy tale — that floats around Castorhage. Some people say that Brother Choke has a weakness, that he is afraid of birdsong. Whether there is any truth in that, many locals keep a canary in their homes hopefully to ward him away. They have come to know that when the bird stops singing, he is at hand, and it is time leave quickly.

Geryon

The Liar; The Great Serpent; Lord of the Fifth; Patron of Betrayal and Deceit

Arch-Devil
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Domains: Charm, Evil, Law, Serpent (see below), Strength
Symbol: A fanged serpent
Garb: Ordinary clothes, no special garb other than a gold serpentine crown and pectoral when conducting rituals
Favoured Weapon: Glaive-guisarme
Form of Worship and Holidays: True followers of Geryon seek to attend the worship rituals of other deities under the pretence of being true believers and secretly desecrate them. Actual services to Geryon take place in deep, hellishly lit caverns and involve blood sacrifice, the summoning of infernal snakes, and the ritual blowing of shofar.
Typical Worshippers: Politicians, con artists, barristers, justices, mongrelfolk, serpentfolk, lizardfolk, inphidians*

The arch-devil Geryon is the Great Serpent and master of the Fifth Circle of Hell where he rules from a great iron fortress. He commands many followers in the city who seek his favour through lying in his name and to further his cause. Many of Geryon's faithful are casual followers who seek his blessing only to cover their dishonest dealings and have determined that such efforts made to his glory are less likely to be discovered for the falsehoods they are. For his part, Geryon does not care whether his followers are formal worshippers or mortal fools who inadvertently bring him power. The majority of his worshippers in the city are **mongrelfolk** (those with reptilian heritage are considered particularly blessed) who seek to curry his favour and use their natural aptitude for deception and obfuscation to further his cause.

Geryon's formal worshippers revere serpents of all kinds, and lizardfolk are found throughout the city who serve his cause. The inphidians of the city who worship Hassith-Kaa seek out the reptilian peoples who venerate the Liar and seek to exterminate them at any cost. Geryon's most devout



followers are called Serpent Masters and must sign a pact of evil with him to obtain greater power.

*Somewhere in humanities lost aeons a race of malformed serpentine humanoids rose, now known as inphidians. While the truth of their origins has been long forgotten, most sages subscribe to one of two theories. The first states the creatures are the failed results of horrific experiments performed by the dark and nameless sorcerers of an ancient snakecult in their attempts to ensorcel their followers. The second theory contends the inphidians were once a cult of snakeworshippers cursed by an ancient snake-god for some transgression against the ethos. Whatever the truth, it appears as of late that the inphidians have evolved into true race, beyond the machinations of arcane experiments or curses. While there exist several known species, recent reports describe encounters with yet unidentified inphidians and others are sure to surface as encounters with the race grow more frequent.

Jubilex

The Faceless Lord; Lord of Corruption and Decay; Demon Lord of Slimes and Oozes

Demon Lord
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Domains: Chaos, Evil, Slime (see below), Water
Symbol: An amulet portraying an amorphous mass covered in eyes or a splatter of paint with an eye drawn in the centre
Garb: Filthy rags
Favored Weapon: Morningstar (called a "pulper" by the faithful)
Form of Worship and Holidays: Outbreaks of disease are considered to be signs of the Faceless Lord's favour; otherwise, there are no real holy days or organised worship other than random sacrifices and eviscerations.
Typical Worshippers: Insane humans, lepers, intelligent oozes, ooze demons, spawn of Jubilex, slime nagas, some evil dragons

The Faceless Lord is a powerful demon lord, sometimes worshipped as a deity, though it does not generally behave as such. It is considered by its worshippers to be chaos personified and a return to a simpler, purer state of existence. Jubilex is said to sow chaos and discord throughout the

Serpent Domain

Serpent Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Animal Friendship*, Speak with Animals**
3rd	*Animal Messenger*, Protection from Poison*
5th	*Conjure Animals*, Stinking Cloud*
7th	*Compulsion, Dominate Beast**
9th	*Cloudkill, Dominate Person*

*limited to serpents only

Bonus Proficiencies and Cantrip

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with a poisoner's kit and heavy armour. You gain the *poison spray* cantrip if you do not already know it.

Venomous Armor

At 1st level, your skin starts to secrete venom that is toxic. When your bare skin comes into contact with another creature, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for a number of minutes equal to your cleric level. Consequently, you are immune to poison.

Channel Divinity: Serpent's Gaze

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to charm a humanoid within 30 feet of you that you can see.

As an action, you attempt to charm a humanoid you see within range. It must make a Wisdom saving throw, and does so with advantage if you or your companions are fighting it. If it fails the saving throw, it is charmed by you until the spell ends or until you or your companions do anything harmful to it. The charmed creature regards you as a friendly acquaintance. When the spell ends, the creature knows it was charmed by you.

Potent Venom

Starting at 6th level, the potency of your poison damage increases. When you deal poison damage, the potency is increased by 1d6 points of damage.

Venomous Strike

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with poison. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal 1d8 poison damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage is increased to 2d8 damage.

Improved Serpent's Gaze

At 17th level, you can charm up to 2 humanoids, instead of one, when you use Serpent's Gaze. While creatures are charmed by your Serpent's Gaze, you can take a bonus action on your turn to verbally command what those creatures will do on their next turn.

planes, though it is possible these are simply the instinctive actions of a mindless monstrosity rather than a calculated stratagem. It is doubtful that Jubilex even recognizes that it has worshippers, or cares.

Disliked even by other demon lords, Jubilex is often depicted as an enormous amorphous blob with eyes in random locations that spews forth foul and deadly slimes of many varieties. During a dispute with the dwarven god Dwerfater thousands of years ago, Jubilex was imprisoned in some hidden location rumoured to be on the Material Plane and the world of Lloegyr. His physical absence has not seemed to affect his few deranged cultists over this time, and if his name has been forgotten to the point of being little more than a whispered rumour in the world, then it likely has only helped his cult to remain hidden from the powers that would otherwise seek to destroy it.

The Faceless Lord is the ruler of slimes and oozes, things that slip beneath the streets of the Blight and find an ideal setting for birthing and growing his kin and progeny. He is also the Lord of Decay and is said to slither the streets of the Blight at night by his mad faithful. His followers are called Masters (or Mistresses) of the Ooze, and they often sacrifice a limb to green slime to gain their lord's favours. They are feared by even the vilest things in the city for their cruelty.

Lord Shingles

The Shadow on the Rooftop; Sovereign of the Heights; God of Builders, Gables, Rooftops, and the Sky

Lesser God
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Domains: Air, Artifice, Community, Knowledge
Symbol: A spire
Garb: Ceremonial work apron and headdress with a ceremonial trowel and hammer
Favored Weapon: Light hammer
Form of Worship and Holidays: Formal ceremonies held at dawn on the four High Holy Days and at sundown of the solstices and equinoxes. Ceremonies include ritual chants, bonfires, and oaths.
Typical Worshippers: Architects, builders, gablemaesters, sprawlmasons, spider-hunters, daredevils, some burglars and vigilantes

No city has a skyline like Castorhage, so it is no surprise that the city's unique rooftop culture with its ubiquitous features and threats should spawn an awe in the people who live and work upon it. It is possible that Lord Shingles was originally just an obscure sky deity or perhaps some lesser builder deity associated with Dre'uain the Lame, but whatever the case, something about the Blight's urban sprawl and ever-more precarious skyward expansion called out for a God of the Heights, and one appeared. He is sometimes glimpsed at dusk and dawn, and there are many gablemaesters and spider-hunters who have claimed to have spent time with the god, though none can remember any details with which to describe him, other than that he feared no precipice or drop and somehow made them feel strangely calm and safe as well. Oddly, many thieves pay him heed and make offerings on rooftops for luck in their second-story endeavours, flowers, coins, and personal possessions, and the gables and spires of the Blight are festooned with his shrines.

Lucifer

Prince of Darkness; Prince of Lies; The Adversary; The Prince of Light; Lord of Infernus; The Falling Tower; Satan

Greater God (Arch-Devil)
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Domains: Charm, Evil, Law, Strength, War

Slime Domain

Slime Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Ooze Bolt*, Spider Climb*
3rd	*Mucus*, Slimeskin**
5th	*Muck*, Ooze Eruption**
7th	*Ooze Sphere*, Pseudopods**
9th	*Conjure Ooze*, Gelatinous Wall**

New spells are described below.

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons and heavy armour.

Touch of Jubilex

Starting at 1st level, you have resistance to acid and poison damage.

Channel Divinity: Spew Slime

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to spew caustic slime from your mouth.

As an action, you vomit forth a 30-foot line of acidic slime. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 4d4 acid damage immediately and 2d4 acid damage at the end of its next turn. On a miss, the slime splashes the target with acid for half as much of the initial damage and no damage at the end of its next turn.

Channel Divinity: Command Ooze

Starting at 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to command an ooze that you can see.

As an action, choose one ooze that you can see within 60 feet of you. That ooze must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature succeeds on the saving throw, you cannot use this feature on it again until you finish a long rest.

If the creature fails its save, it is under your command for the next 24 hours, until it drops to 0 hit points, or until you use this feature again.

On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command the ooze if it is within 60 feet of you. You decide what action the creature will take and where it will move during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as guard. If you issue no commands, the ooze only defends itself against hostile creatures. Once given an order, the ooze continues to follow it until the task is complete.

Divine Strike

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with corrosive acid. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal 1d8 acid damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage is increased to 2d8 damage.

Form of the Faceless

At 17th level, you can use your action to transform into an ooze. This feature works like the *polymorph* spell, and allows you to transform into a black pudding, gelatinous cube, grey ooze, or ochre jelly.

Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Slime Domain

New Spells

CONJURE OOZE
4th-level conjuration
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You summon oozes that appear in unoccupied spaces that you can see within range. You choose one of the following options for what appears:

- One ooze of challenge rating 2 or lower
- Two oozes of challenge rating 1 or lower
- Four oozes of challenge rating 1/2 or lower
- Eight oozes of challenge rating 1/4 or lower.

An ooze summoned by this spell disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions.

The GM has the creatures' statistics.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using certain higher-level slots, you choose one of the summoning options above, and more creatures appear: twice as many with a 6th-level slot and three times as many with an 8th-level slot.

GELATINOUS WALL
5th-level evocation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a small piece of gelatinous cube)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a transparent, stationary wall of gelatinous slime. The wall appears within range on a solid surface and lasts for the duration. You choose to make the wall up to 60 feet long, 10 feet high, and 5 feet thick or a circle that has a 20-foot diameter and is up to 20 feet high and 5 feet thick.

When the wall appears, each creature within its area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the wall. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw.

On a failed save, the wall engulfs the creature, and the creature takes 3d6 acid damage. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 6d6 acid damage at the start of each of the caster's turns.

An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the wall.

A creature can attempt to move through the wall, but suffers the same effect as a failed save mentioned above.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the damage increases by 2d6 for each slot level above 6th.

LIQUIFY FLESH
6th-level transmutation
Casting Time 1 action
60 feet
Components V, S, M (a drop of acid and a drop of water)
Duration Instantaneous

A thin, green ray springs from your pointing finger to a creature that you can see within range.

A creature targeted by this spell must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 10d6 + 40 acid damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it is liquefied and turned into a puddle of ooze.

A liquified creature and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, are reduced to a disgusting puddle of melted, bubbling ooze. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a *true resurrection* or a *wish* spell.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the damage increases by 3d6 for each slot level above 6th.

MUCK
3rd-level conjuration
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of glue, a small ball of gelatinous slime, and a drop of acid)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You transform a 20-foot-radius area into a pool of ooze and caustic slime, centred on a point with range and lasting for the duration. This area is filled with a bubbling mass of greenish-black and foul-smelling liquid. Ooze, slime, and pus constantly form bubbles that burst, releasing splashes of corrosive droplets. Pseudopods writhe and reach for any creature in the area.

The area covered by the muck is difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn in the area takes 2d6 acid damage. Any creature that ends its turn in the area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 acid damage as slimy pseudopods grope and grasp it.

MUCUS
2nd-level conjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range 60 feet
Components V, S, M (phlegm)
Duration Concentration, up to 1 hour

You conjure a gob of thick, phlegmy mucus at a point of your choice within range. The mucus fills a 20-foot cube from that point for the duration. The mucus is difficult terrain and lightly obscure their area.

If the mucus isn't anchored between two solid masses (such as walls or trees) or layered across a floor, wall, or ceiling, the conjured mucus collapses on itself, and the spell ends at the start of your next turn. Mucus layered over a flat surface have a depth of 5 feet.

Each creature that starts its turn in the mucus or that enters it during its turn must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained as long as it remains in the mucus or until it breaks free.

A creature restrained by the mucus can use its action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC. If it succeeds, it is no longer restrained.

OOZE BOLT
1st-level evocation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round

A bolt of grey ooze springs from your hand and streaks toward a creature of your choice within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 4d6 acid damage.

Slime Domain

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

OOZE ERUPTION
3rd-level transmutation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a ball of gelatinous slime)
Duration: Instantaneous

Choose a point you can see on the ground within range. A fountain of slime and ooze erupts in a 20-foot radius centered on that point. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d12 acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Additionally, the ground in that area becomes difficult terrain until cleared away. Each 5-foot-square portion of the area requires at least 1 minute to clear by hand.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d12 for each slot level above 3rd.

Pseudopods
4th-level conjuration
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a piece of tentacle from a giant octopus or a giant squid)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Squirming, slimy pseudopods fill a 20-foot square on ground that you can see within range. For the duration, these pseudopods turn the ground in the area into difficult terrain.

When a creature enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, the creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 acid damage and be restrained by the pseudopods until the spell ends. A creature that starts its turn in the area and is already restrained by the pseudopods takes 3d6 acid damage.

A creature restrained by the pseudopods can use its action to make a Strength or Dexterity check (its choice) against your spell save DC. On a success, it frees itself.

SLIMESKIN
2nd-level transmutation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a handful of oak bark)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a willing creature. Until the spell ends, the target's skin has a slick, slime-like appearance, and the target's AC can't be less than 16, regardless of what kind of armor it is wearing.

VITRIOL OF JUBILEX
4th-level evocation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of giant slug bile)
Duration: Instantaneous

You point at a place within range, and a glowing 1-foot globe of greenish-black ooze shoots forth from your hand, exploding in a 20-foot radius. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 6d8 acid damage and 3d8 acid damage at the end of its next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half the initial damage and no damage at the end of its next turn

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the initial damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 4th.



Symbol: Leviathan Cross (alchemic symbol for sulfur)
Garb: Red or black silken robes with tall pointed hoods that either cover the face or with deep cowls and with white, featureless masks
Favored Weapon: Trident
Form of Worship and Holidays: Blood sacrifices at Samhain (the last night of autumn) nights of the Dark Moon (when Sybil is full), and Walpurgis Night.
Typical Worshippers: Witches, corruptors, politicians, revolutionaries, the disaffected

The Prince of Darkness is worshiped by countless in the city, and many good people have been tempted by lust or greed or hunger into serving him. In fact, his worship is so insidious that there's no way to determine what their true numbers might be. However, the astute and very observant are aware that many symbols of other divinities (deities and arch-devils alike) are usurped and used in worship to the Prince of Lies, and doubtless many prayers so intended for other powers fall pleasingly upon his ears in Infernus instead. Though not much is known about any organized cult of Lucifer, his most devout followers, the Dark Cardinals, bear marks of the touch of their master. Sometimes this mark may be a simple blemish, other times it is a change of body into something monstrous, bestial and lustful.

Mammon

Lord of Avarice; Lord of the Third

Arch-Devil
Alignment: Lawful Evil
Domains: Artifice, Earth, Evil, Law, Trickery
Symbol: A coin with the arch-devil's face upon it
Garb: Rich robes of the finest materials, bedecked with gems and thread of precious metals
Favored Weapon: Shortspear
Form of Worship and Holidays: Few formal rituals beyond the accumulation of wealth and tithing to cult leaders who maintain contacts for business deals and shady deals alike and organize smaller services where key figures can meet to strategize plans for profiteering
Typical Worshippers: Bankers, royalty, business owners, thieves, *swyne*†, many Castorhagers (covertly)

Perhaps the most commonly invoked god of Castorhage, Mammon is said to be interested only in the spreading of his own name and that even his name is a lie. It is said Mammon's name is pronounced in the clink of every coin and the cry of every slave. If there is something that generates income, directly or indirectly, Mammon has a hand in it at some level. Mammon is invoked by those who wish for good luck and fortune, as well as those in power or those who have nothing. His touch caresses priest and pauper, queen and whore alike and brings to all dreams of limitless wealth and power. Worship of Mammon is somewhat unique in that there are relatively few followers of Mammon who revere him as their primary deity but a great many who invoke him on the side in order to achieve success in some financial endeavour. Even the good-aligned followers of gods of good are not immune to the temptation to beseech Mammon's blessing from time to time. As a relatively shadowy figure, even in the politics of Hell where he is lord of an entire Circle, Mammon seems to prefer this pseudo-anonymity.

Mithras

Lord Storm; The Battle; The Soldier-God; Mithrae Invicto; God of War, Battles, and Soldiers

Greater God
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Domains: Animal, Glory, Law, Repose, Strength, War
Symbol: A bull, warrior in a Phrygian cap, or a raven
Garb: Military dress uniform or battle armour with Phrygian cap
Favored Weapon: Short sword, spear
Form of Worship and Holidays: Worship services are held in caves and grottos on nights of sacred celestial alignments. The autumnal equinox (the Cusp of Mithras) is his sacred day and involves public daylong ceremonies from first light until moonset with sacrifice of bulls and military parades. On the eve of great battles, secret underground ceremonies are held (frequently attended by combatants from both sides of the coming battle) to ask for favour in battle, beseech Mithras to bring honour in battle, celebrate past battles, and promote cult members to higher grades of Mithraism; if a ceremony finds favour, a celestial bull may materialize for the cult leader to slay in commemoration of Mithras' deeds.
Typical Worshippers: Soldiers, generals, warriors, statesmen

The great Cult of Mithraism is one of the most widespread religions in the world. The universal appeal as the god of all soldiers and roots that predate even the Legions of Hyperborea when his worship was first spread far and wide make Mithras perhaps the most commonly revered god in the Lost Lands. He brings luck in battle, he is the parting mist, the coming storm, the changing wind; he aids those who trust to him. That he is principally a god of soldiers — and soldiers only — is probably all that prevents the cult from becoming the dominant religion in the world.

Founded in the early days of Hyperborea, the soldiery of Castorhage is no exception to the god's wide appeal. However, his cult takes on a slightly different edge, perhaps, in the naturally blighted surrounds of the city-state. In Castorhage, Mithras is revered more as the unstoppable victor in battle as opposed to the honourable warrior. He is often referred to as Old Iron Hand or Lord Storm among the Royal Army, and his worship within the city's military is encouraged and in some cases compulsory. The Cult of Mithraism outside Castorhage has looked askance at that city's branch for some time and often see it as a tainted form of worship. Every few years there is always talk of excommunicating the Castorhage sect, though the Heliodromus of Mithras has quashed such talk on every occasion so far. However, troubling rumours coming out of the Libynosi colonies of high-grade Casterhager cult members siding with followers of the barbaric war god Thursis in battle may at least be the straw that breaks the back of the Soldier-Gods cult in the Blight. Whether this is true or not remains to be seen, but many Paters and Coraces of Mithras across Akados wait expectantly to see what sort of decree may come down from the Heliodromus.

Mother Grace

The Holy Mother; Mother of All; Goddess of Family, Order, and Tradition

Greater God
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Domains: Community, Law, Nobility, Repose
Symbol: A mother holding a child and a distaff
Garb: Black robes trimmed in silver with red collar and accents, silver and red mitre and ceremonial distaff
Favoured Weapon: Light mace
Form of Worship and Holidays: Minor services in the form of multiple times for prayer or meditation are daily in cathedrals and churches throughout the city with longer, formal services held every Sunday (all-day affairs) and Wodesday (evening services). The High Holy Days are all considered sacred to Mother Grace and hold services accordingly, and seemingly every other day in the calendar is designated as a feast day for one or more of her saints.
Typical Worshippers: Castorhagers

Three Aspects of One God

Mother Grace is a good example of the extremities of religion in the Blight. Three aspects of her teachings are taken up and worshipped with equal fervour by groups with three very different philosophies.

The Beatific Quest: This aspect of the worship of Mother Grace is lawful good in alignment. It follows her teaching that knowledge is all, that mistakes of history cannot be repeated with proper study and prudent thought, and that only through awakening the desire to know will the world be pure and advance.

The Rule of Order: Lawful neutral in alignment, the Rule of Order focusses on the words of the Mother of All when teaching infants and the ignorant — that fairness is only good when firmness is behind it, a clenched fist in a velvet glove. Order and discipline are paramount. This aspect of the Mother's worship is the most rigid; it follows set laws and ranks and patterns of worship established centuries ago and still clung to with dogged attention to detail. It is as inclined to use the weapons of the wicked to destroy them and preaches that the only thing that truly matters in a chaotic world is the preservation of the status quo.

The Fair Fist: Of lawful evil, this sect preaches that only order can bring the world out of the darkness of anarchy, and only those who worship the Mother Grace are the truly enlightened capable of bringing about this order. This aspect of the goddess focusses entirely upon scare mongering of the teachings of the Holy Mother — that unless properly educated as to the dangers of the present age, the world will fall into absolute chaos. Missionaries, bigots, and fear-mongers, the Fair Fist (one of this sect's many names) believes in worshipping Mother Grace and nothing else (all other religions being blasphemous) and historically is the group behind most of the Mother's crusading activities. They wish only to extend order in the Mother's name (whether the world wishes it or not).

The most widely worshipped god in the City-State of Castorhage, the shrines, churches and cathedrals outnumber those of other gods by a dozen to one and are unequalled in their magnificence. Mother Grace is the goddess of the Royal Family and the official religion of the State. Other gods, saints, and religious figures are tolerated, and yet even this tolerance is occasionally tested with persecutions launched by the religious leaders of Mother Grace's church with the backing of the Crown. Crusades on foreign shores — especially in and around Castorhage's many overseas colonies — are regular and by no means driven by goodness, with many similar activities occurring on a smaller scale locally. Pillaging Between in her name, burning witches to her glory, and assorted murder and mayhem under the auspices of divine authority are her all-too-regular consorts. Throughout all of it, only one thing matters: order.

Outside of Castorhage and its colonial possessions, Mother Grace is a very intriguing goddess. For despite her clear and present power as a major divinity and her near monopoly on religious influence throughout Castorhage's empire, she is virtually unknown beyond its boundaries. Nowhere else can be found organized congregations or temples in the name of Mother Grace, and no known culture or ethnicity lays claim to her origins. Her religion seems to have appeared as if from nothing at some point early in the creation of Castorhage, and went on to obtain and keep a position of religious supremacy. Some learned scholars hypothesize that her church in Castorhage may represent some organized remnant of the prehistoric deity once revered almost universally among early humans and known usually as only The Goddess. But even that is base speculation derived from little more than her apparent affinity for humans and a vague resemblance between the shape of the head of her distaff in religious depictions and the ancient imagery of the Tesseract long associated with worship of The Goddess. What truth may lie in this connection has yet to be definitively determined.

Papyri

The Archivist; The Quiet One; The Lost Apprentice; The Thoughtful Silence; Goddess of the Written Word

Demigod
Alignment: Neutral
Domains: Esoteric, Knowledge, Magic, Rune
Symbol: A quill superimposed on a shield
Garb: Scholars robes, usually with ink-stained cuffs. There are many different collars, tassels, and hats worn with these robes to denote different roles, ranks, and specialties among followers of Papyri.
Favoured Weapon: Spear (always with a shield)
Form of Worship and Holidays: Solemn periods of silent meditation, prescribed readings of holy books and approved literature. Public readings from Papyri's *Escutcheon Di Epistemos Primo* are held every Thyrsday evening.
Typical Worshippers: Scholars, teachers, wizards, arcanists, alchemists, nagas, liches

The quiet Papyri is seldom depicted in religious art, but when she is, it is always as a studious, unassuming woman hunched over a scribe's lectern. Her true name is unknown, and she is now named for the earliest medium associated with her worship. The church of Papyri claims that Papyri was originally apprenticed to Yenomesh, the ancient God of Glyphs and Writing. Papyri doctrine states that she served Yenomesh since the beginning of his creation of writing but either ran away or was banished by him for unknown reasons after discovering something among his writings. For their part, the followers of Yenomesh deny any such association.

She is invoked by those who hunger for knowledge at any cost, and the greatest tenets of her church is that all knowledge is neutral (no matter how much harm could be caused by those who misuse it) and that all knowledge should be preserved by the constant creation of new copies. Throughout history this has been accomplished by virtual armies of painstaking scribes, though with the modern innovation of the printing press in Castorhage this tedious practice has been largely relegated to the typesetters who need only assemble a book's words once. Despite her seemingly benign focus on scholarship and education, Papyri's support of unregulated knowledge acquisition can often lead her adherents onto paths that culminate in exposure to dark truths and darker gods. For those with a greater understanding of the Quiet One, they know her consorts are gods of madness, things without names, and fey gods of old that have been imprisoned and should never again see the light of sun. The liturgy of her faithful, however, is that the knowledge of Papyri is a shield for those who would use it, and those who would use the knowledge are likewise a shield for its preservation. It is whispered that many of the highest-placed members of the almost-mythological Fraternal Order of the Secret Flame.

Sister Shadows

The Unseen; Goddess of Alleys, Streets, Piers, and Pathways

Demigod
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Domains: Artifice, Darkness, Earth, Shadow (see below), Trickery
Symbol: A twisting wynd (alleyway)
Garb: No special garb
Favoured Weapon: Dagger
Form of Worship and Holidays: No formal services or holidays; most followers offer a simple prayer before going about their daily chores and another before sleep

Shadow Domain

Shadow Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*Umbral Armor*, Unseen Servant*
3rd	*Darkness, Invisibility*
5th	*Fear, Hungering Shadows**
7th	*Greater Invisibility, Phantasmal Killer*
9th	*Hallow**, Wall of Shadow*

* New spells are described below.
** Excludes the *Daylight* effect of the *Hallow* spell.

Bonus Proficiencies

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons and heavy armour.

Shadow Mantle

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you can use your action to surround yourself with a swirling, shifting mantle of shadows. This feature gives you advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. This effect lasts for 1 hour.

Channel Divinity: Shadow Self

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to create three shadowy duplicates of yourself. These illusory duplicates appear in your space, move with you, and mimic your actions, shifting position so it is impossible to determine which image is real.

Refer to the *mirror image* for how the duplicates behave.

Channel Divinity: Shadow Step

Starting at 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to *shadow step* (as *misty step*). As an action, you step into the shadows and reappear up to 30 feet away to an unoccupied space you can see.

Divine Strike

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with necrotic and cold energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal 1d4 necrotic and 1d4 cold damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage is increased to 2d4 cold and 2d4 necrotic damage.

Shadow Bulwark

At 17th level, your affinity to the shadow intensifies, granting you resistance to necrotic and cold damage.

New Spells

HUNGERING SHADOWS
3rd-level conjuration
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 150 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of glue, a small ball of gelatinous slime, and a drop of acid)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You open a gateway to the plane of shadows, a cold, colourless, and darkened distortion of your world . A 20-foot-radius sphere of hungering, writhing shadow appears, centred on a point with range and lasting for the duration. This void is filled with a maddening whispers and cacophonous laughter that can be heard up to 30 feet away. No light, magical or otherwise, can illuminate the area, and creatures fully within the area are blinded.

The void creates a conduit between the planes, and the area is difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn in the area takes 2d6 necrotic damage. Any creature that ends its turn in the area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 cold damage as otherworldly shadows slowly drain its warmth.

UMBRAL ARMOR
1st-level abjuration
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a wisp of shadow)
Duration: 1 hour

A swirl of shadow surrounds you, manifesting as an umbral shroud that covers you and your gear. You gain 5 temporary hit points for the duration. If a creature hits you with a melee attack while you have these hit points, the creature takes 5 necrotic damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, both the temporary hit points and the necrotic damage increase by 5 for each slot level above 1st.

WALL OF SHADOW
5th-level evocation
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of powder made by crushing a shadowed gemstone)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a writhing, roiling wall of shadow beginning from a point in range. You can make the wall up to 60 feet long, 20 feet high, and 1 foot thick, or a ringed wall up to 20 feet in diameter, 20 feet high, and 1 foot thick. The wall is completely opaque and lasts for the duration.

When the wall appears, each creature within its area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 5d8 necrotic damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. Attempting to pass through the wall is equivalent to crossing difficult terrain.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 5th.

Typical Worshippers: Beggars, thieves, dock labourers, street sweeps, commoners, ratfolk, mongrelfolk, skulks

In a city contorted by countless pathways and alleys, this goddess's name is said almost as widely as Mother Grace's. Her name is uttered by those who walk the broadest streets to those who dwell beneath the rankest piers closest to the Kiss of the Lyme and who have to "dance daily with Sister Lyme," an old Blight phrase meaning to fall into the Great Lyme River, an act that is often a person's last.

Largely unknown outside the Blight, some suppose Sister Shadow to be an aspect or divine servant of the shadow goddess Mirkeer. However, despite The Unseen's similar affinity to the dark corners of the world, their similarity ends there. Sister Shadow is not a deity of the night and nefarious dealings in shadow, she represents the endless shadows, nooks, and

crannies and the endless possibilities they represent for survival, success, and even satisfaction. She is a goddess of not only those innumerable hordes that dwell within the corners of the city, but the potential that the city represents for those same people she embraces. Many folk see her simply as a goddess of thieves and street gangs, but those who truly revere her see her as protector and inspiration for their lives and the chance — however slight it may be — to better them.

The Ash Queen

Queen of Whores; The Hunger; Goddess of Lust, Nature, and Witchcraft

Greater God (Outer God)
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Domains: Animal, Beast (see below), Chaos, Earth, Plant
Symbol: A naked woman silhouetted before a full moon
Garb: Nudity smeared with mud, blood, and placental tissue (usually animal but humanoid when available)
Favoured Weapon: Sickle
Form of Worship and Holidays: Blood sacrifices and rituals held on every new moon with special fertility rites held every Modraniht and on the eve of Beltane
Typical Worshippers: Druids, mothers, fertility cults, satyrs, witches, hags, atavistic serpentfolk, nocturnals, intelligent plant creatures, rorkouns, gorynychs, bholes, dark young, living monoliths, some mongrelfolk

The Queen of Whores and the eldest god, The Ash Queen's name is screamed by hunters as they take their prey and courtesans as they take their lovers. She is all things lust and like all hungers, can be a force of good — of the creation of life — but also of evil — betrayal, lies, and perversions. And sometimes there is less than a knife blade's thickness of difference between the two. The Ash Queen is savagery and the wanton celebration of Nature at its most brutal and unrestrained. Her rites are usually performed at night under a new moon and starlit skies and involve orgiastic feasts accompanied by wild music and ecstatic dancing. The priests and priestesses, who are said to be unusually fanatical, are naked but for smears of thick marsh mud, clotted blood, and the placental blood and tissues of recently birthed animals or even humanoids when available. For those who follow the Queen of Whores and are sane enough to realize it, her worship and religion are merely a thinly veiled front for the mad cult of the goddess and Outer God, Shupnikkurat

The Horseman

End of Days; Lord of Disease; Supreme of Daemons; The Oinodaemon

Greater God (Daemon Lord)
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Domains: Death, Destruction, Evil, Madness, War
Symbol: A skull and scythe or a diseased and rotten ram's head
Garb: Hooded black robes without footwear
Favoured Weapon: Scythe
Form of Worship and Holidays: Blood sacrifices anywhere there is death or imminent death, including battlefields, plague-stricken cities, regions of famine and social upheaval
Typical Worshippers: Daemons, doomsayers, the insane, plague carriers, ghouls, some wererats



"The end is nigh!" proclaim his followers. The End of Days is here, and soon the Horseman shall ride down upon the city to reap his harvest. He will turn his four faces upon all, laying the city low with his disease, burning its ruins to ashes, and starving the handful that have the ill fortune to survive. His name is Death and his only promise is ruin and destruction. Outside the city of Castorhage, The Horseman goes by his more commonly known name: the Oinodaemon. His ultimate goal is to bring ruin upon all mortals, and he is patient in his efforts. Though only the insane favour The Horseman's worship, all peoples fear his inevitable arrival.

The Gods of the Swyne

It is difficult to categorize the gods worshipped among the race known as the *swyne*† as a true pantheon, just as it is difficult to categorize them as even true gods. Nevertheless, these deities find veneration among the swyne population and seem to be capable of granting spells to clerics who worship them, so they are included here in abbreviated format. In truth, they seem less like an actual pantheon and seem more like lesser godlings or powerful outsiders that managed to find a home for their extremely specific and limited areas of influence and simply latched onto whatever veneration they could.

The Gods of the Swyne

Deity	AL	Area of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Hork	NE	Goddess of Musk	Amoral, Animal, Charm, Trickery	Dagger
Porfask	CN	God of Wine Cellars	Amoral, Chaos, Glory, Intrigue	Club

* See **Part 3, New Races**
DD See ***Dunes of Desolation*** by **Frog God Games**

Twisted Campaigns

To some classes, alignment is at the core of their nature — whether you are a righteous paladin, a despicable rogue, or a neutral druid, your alignment guides you. Not everyone, however, is so clearly morally righteous or despicable. A festering hotbed of backstabbing, liars, political greed, and hunger for power offers you a useful backdrop to events for your adventures. These themes can be developed into powerful campaign threads.

Twisted campaigns thrive upon darker subject matter: prostitution, slavery, addiction, suffering, and misery, but this does not mean your players have to be part of them. They may, in fact, be abhorrent to the characters and act as a catalyst to their adventures. Two samples of the same campaign are given below, but one is given the features of a twisted Blight campaign.

The Price of Flesh — Standard Campaign

This campaign is set in Festival, the island of pleasure in the Great Lyme River. Cother's Pleasure Palace caters to all sins, they say, although it is difficult to become a member of this exclusive club — membership is strictly by invitation.

The characters are sponsored — be it by a religious group, cult, or guild — to investigate the disappearance of Lady Heather McCall, a disowned noble and lover of Horace Grove, a well-to-do snuff merchant. Grove arranges for the characters to enter the palace incognito and learn what is happening. The characters discover that Cother is a member of the Family†, and the wererat has been abducting speciality victims for his more discerning customers to infect with lycanthropy. He has used the services of a notorious ogrekin abductor known only as the Stalker to snatch his victims. The characters unmask the plot, free Heather, and all seems well.

However, the Family are extremely angry about the event. Cother was a promising young businessman who was a favoured cousin of one of the organization's more senior members. An attempt is made upon the character's lives, and clues point back to Festival. Furthermore, threats are made to the character's sponsor, and the matter quickly swells into a ground war between the Family and the character's sponsoring group. This escalates, and the characters become involved in hit-and-run tactics against the Family, which culminates in a pitched battle under the piers between the characters, their sponsors, and the Family.

In the meantime, Heather has been infected with lycanthropy, and the aspect of her character and her misery at the event is laid bare; attempts at cures fail and she ends up in the Asylum. Her lover Horace offers a fortune for the characters to embark upon a crusade against the rats.

The Price of Flesh — Twisted Campaign

In this version, events follow along as before, but the characters have a more ambiguous background. The sponsor, it transpires, is the covert ally of a rival wererat family from foreign shores (the Nettles) intent upon establishing their own pitch on Festival. These sponsors know that Cother is the favoured cousin of one of the senior Family members. The adventure runs as written above, but this time if the characters do not kill Cother, he is killed immediately after the adventure by the rival wererats.

The characters are then caught in the middle of this pitched battle — with the two rival wererat groups both after their blood — the Family blame them for the death of Cother, the Nettles intent upon burying any evidence. The characters must overcome both groups, or find a way of playing one off against the other, clearing themselves, and securing their future.

Vermin of the Blight

It has been said before that the crawling, creeping, and flying vermin that infest the Blight are virtually ubiquitous — especially in its summer months. And though the Blight gains its nickname from the lichen-like fungus of that name that proliferates in the darkened corners of the city, most folk assume that it comes from the blight of these vermin that are to be found virtually everywhere and welcomed nowhere.

Swarming insects are a constant problem at certain times of the year when weather conditions are just right, but there are some particular types of insects that seem to be unique to the city of Castorhage or at least never recorded in other locations.

Most people think of the spiders when the subject of Blight vermin is discussed. The rooftops and gable, soffits and spires are overrun with them — and many of monstrous sizes. Two varieties of spiders are exclusive to the environs of the city. These are the **gable spiders**, who don't spin webs but rather construct their elaborate lairs and hunting grounds from the garbage and debris produced by the city itself; and the **chymic spiders**, acid-spewing dreamstalkers that seem to physically embody the fear of spiders shared by most folk of the city. The fact that the city is not a web-shrouded mausoleum of humanoid carcasses can largely be attributed to the neverending efforts of the gablemaesters, a guild of rooftop spider hunters dedicated to battling the ever-growing scourge that creeps above the heads of the citizens.

Insectum are another example of myriad species of vermin that appear to exist solely in and around the Blight. They are covered in considerable detail in **The Blight Player's Handbook**.

In addition to insectum, other less-monstrous bugs that seem unique to the city are the midden-angels, great black biting flies that make their home in the Bilges and require the workers there to don special protective scarves in order to avoid having their faces disfigured by the painful bites, and the stonemites, large, red, termite-like insects that gnaw on the stone and mortar of masonry for their sustenance rather than wood and paper like their lesser cousins.

Lighting the streets and many of the homes and businesses in the Blight is also done thanks to vermin. Thought there is some usage of gas lamps around the city, as with many areas of technological advancement the necessary infrastructure was largely deemed too costly and difficult to install and maintain with other cheaper, easier options available. To this end, the discovery of the burning properties of pyrebeetles revolutionized the old torches and expensive oil lamps that had previously been used. Pyrebeetles are a type of small beetle indigenous to the swamplands surrounding the city that have peculiar flammable properties and make for excellent torches and lanterns. Pyrebeetles are detailed more fully in **The Blight Player's Handbook**.

Siklight cockroaches are the smaller, more nauseating cousins of the pyrebeetle. These creatures feed on waste and give off an insipid, pallid light when they are awake, though they also extrude an unpleasant odour at all times. Many folk ascribe the unhealthy vapours given off by these insects as the cause of many illnesses among the poor. Siklight cockroaches are a common sight in poorer parts of the Blight where, if properly cared for, they can live for up to a year. Unfortunately, they have the alarming habit of exploding if their hard carapace is pierced or sometimes even from just sudden changes in temperature and certain conditions of the Canker. For this reason, small explosions and fires are commonplace in areas lit by them in the poorer areas of the city, and has earned them several 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. Siklight cockroaches are also covered in more detail in **The Blight Player's Handbook**.

Finally, no discussion of Blight vermin would be complete without mention of the *coprophagi*† and night-slugs. The coprophagi are roachfolk endemic to the dumping sites of the Bilges and other out-of-the-way corners of the city's slums. They are little understood by the citizens of Castorhage and largely ignored, though their presence is far from welcome. On the other side of the coin are the night-slugs†, a race of wormlike humanoids that makes its home between the walls and in the crawlspaces of buildings and houses all over the city. Night-slugs, when discovered, are treated like any other vermin, and attempts are made to exterminate them while they attempt to retreat and hide in the nooks and crannies from whence they came. The constant battle against night-slug infestation would be horrifying were it not so disgusting and frequently unintentionally comical.

Blight Adventures

Although specifically focused on this setting, many elements of the adventures proposed below fit into any dark urban campaign. The themes of betrayal, paranoia, political intrigue, and high dark magic could easily be adapted to your own setting, of course, or to your own corner of the Blight, however large or small that may be. Of course, you'll have your own ideas as to the type of adventures you wish to play, whether that be your own work or bought adventures, and these ideas are offered simply as suggestions to the type of adventures that could work particularly well in the Blight.

Anarchist Adventures

Placing the characters in a position of peril at some stage in a campaign is a good trick to use to add a sense of menace. There can be few more menacing situations than being a fugitive, and while the characters may spend their whole careers as anonymous enemies of the state, they may suddenly find themselves unmasked, discovered, or worse, betrayed at any moment.

Between-Heavy Campaigns

One drawback a city setting has is that it can sometimes be difficult to introduce a wilderness element. Castorhage has the surrounding Lych Fens and even the rest of the island of Lymossus, but the focus is very clearly on the events and places within the confines of the city itself. Between gives you an ideal link to a wilderness adventure on the very doorstep — or threshold. One minute the characters can be exchanging pleasantries at the Throttled Bull Gin House, the next they are sailing down a hellish jungle river aboard an Illuminati-sponsored barge.

Between also gives you a good starting point for a feeling of unknown menace: Do the characters become aware that things from beyond the mirrors are slowly leaching into the city? Are these creatures led by an intelligence that is a harbinger of an invading force?

You can also use Between to introduce any aspect of the surreal into your adventure. For example, you could create a nightmare *Twilight Zone*-type situation by having Between draw characters unknowingly through reflections in mirrors, puddles, or even shop windows. You could even use Between to introduce a whole series of events based when the characters sleep in a very Lovecraftian/Dreamlands kind of campaign.

Between, as we shall soon see, is your canvas to paint any kind of surreal adventure upon.

Conversely, you may wish Between to be a magical place of great menace, a place that sheds no light or shadows, but is within touching distance. Are the voices in the characters' minds real or imagined? Is that shiver down the spine a simple chill or is it something reaching out to touch, to covet, to hunger?

Destroy-or-be-Destroyed Adventures

Having so many people about — and using the links of enemies, friends, and power — gives you another option to stretch the destroy-or-be-destroyed adventure. Perhaps the characters begin with a simple attack upon a local gang, only to find that the gang is actually a training ground for some of the most promising talent the Guild has to offer, and the characters have just slaughtered a relative of one of the bosses of that Guild.

The characters may spend their careers at odds with the Guild until a final showdown takes place. Perhaps a character's personal goal (see above) is to finally be rid of the endless, unsleeping menace?

Cults and the Fetch make two more possible foes for such adventures, but in a place of great size and diversity such as the Blight, you have a choice of almost endless enemies at your fingertips.

Good vs. Evil

A **n'gathau** cult, a devil-worshipping arm of the Illuminati, a festering boiling mass of rats that hungers constantly, the city is a bad place, and bad things invariably need destroying or they become too strong to overcome. The holy orders and churches of the city are constantly vigilant against such evil but hunt it out whenever they can. The characters could spend an entire campaign pursuing a particular cult or demon on the loose in the city and using human flesh to hide itself. The good vs. evil theme makes for a particularly simple but powerful and iconic campaign or focus for adventure.

Guild- and Club-Based Adventures and Political Campaigns

Politics is nasty: One minute the characters' sponsor is sweetness and light, delighting in their exploits, the next she is seething with jealousy or is revealed to have always been using the characters as dupes. Political adventures are challenging because the enemy and her home may be known to the characters, and the temptation is to wade in regardless of the consequences. Get such a story right, however, and the results can be extremely satisfying from a campaign perspective.

A powerful NPC swarming with guards and distributing orders makes for a good ally and a dangerous enemy. Perhaps the characters are sponsored by someone else to infiltrate such a group, maybe initially getting their hands bloody in the name of a greater justice. Adventures such as this may lead to destroy-or-be-destroyed campaigns as discussed above, with the characters operating furtively or perhaps under the protection of a holy order or some other patron — who may be using the same kind of twisted political double dealings.

Royalist and Loyalty Adventures

The use of background, relationships, and enemies gives you scope to expand upon the characters' loyalties and make them more personal than say simply a hatred of a particular cult. Perhaps the characters' friends are struggling against a ruthless Justice who delights in hurting or otherwise persecuting them for some reason. Alternatively, the character could be neutral or evil characters working for the Royal Family as loyal guards, retainers, or spies. Maybe good characters operate covertly in the Capitol or other places of power. These characters receive knighthoods, power, or loyal followers as rewards but tread a dangerous path against their many enemies and "friends" alike. These characters can become beacons of hope and pride, living a truly heroic life of idolisation and envy, held up as icons for the people. And of course, few things make for a more tempting target …

Standard Fantasy Adventures

A city is a great location for a host of adventures, and the Blight, with its seething underbelly of rot and vice, gives you endless potential. Are the characters dashing thieves and duellists out to rob the rich? Are they driven by a desire to hunt the Fetch or humiliate the corrupt and villainous local Justice? Or are they simply adventurers, hiring their services out for the most excitement and coin? Never underestimate the fun of stress-free adventuring and the fun that a good swordfight, discovery, or simple heroism can be.



Part Five: Between

That first fateful day it had been raining, I recall, and I'd passed a miserable afternoon in the offices of Cooper, Cooper, Cooper and MacThane where I had a commission. The office was plain and windowless, but to give the illusion of size a huge mirror ran directly across opposite my desk. I spent many idle moments gazing into that mirror, wishing only to be away from that dreadful office and back to my study of optics.

Then it happened — the fateful moment — the moment my own, and many others' lives changed; some say for good, but not as many as say for bad.

The figure in the mirror was so slender I barely noticed it move, yet move it did, behind my reflection. So startled was I that I leapt from my desk, spilling ink over my day's work in an effort to escape the thing behind me. But I was utterly alone in the office, there was no "thing" behind me. The thing I saw was still in the mirror.

And it stared at me …

First Recorded Contact with Between
Hetherington Quarrus Mabe
Lyme District Offices, Cooper Building
Toilsday 11th Grey, 1637





What is Between Like?

It is as much a feeling as place, this strange echo-land; it is a place where emotions and surroundings leech into the creatures that live there so that both may become one. It is a land of incredible extremes, where snow falls into jungles, where places loop and coil back upon themselves to create an endless nightmare, and where eyes watch from living walls. This place has an inner logic, and travellers speak in hushed terms of Fowler's Endless Stair, Corrun's Labyrinth, and Pech Pit. These are places of legend in Between, places few have seen and escape.

Some say it is the land of the fey, others that it is Heaven, or Hell.

It is none of those things, and yet all of them.

For you, Between can be the setting for any surreal, mad or twisted adventure you wish, an adventure of dreams, an adventure of twisting endless corridors that slope away at impossible angles, a place where creatures that cannot walk do so, and are always hungry. Hints on GMing Between are given later in this section.

Of Curious Mirrors

The first few incursions into Between were brought about by accident; a normal mirror or reflection in an extraordinary arcane place creating a portal *between* two places, hence the name that has been applied to the lands beyond the magic mirror. However, once properly understood, the art of fashioning magical mirrors — often called *mirror-portals* — sometimes big enough for a person to slip through, was born. These mirrors are infamously fickle, and while certain brave (read: foolish) individuals see Between as a place they have a modicum of control over, in truth they have none. Master Between thieves can come and go into Between, but their entrances are like wounds, soon healing and potentially leaving the visitor stranded.

The manner of the creation of these mirrors is jealously guarded to an almost insane degree. The *Royal Between Reflectory Society and Guild*, themselves in thrall to both the Illuminati and the Thieves' Guild, hold the key and materials to their creation — something any Between thief would give his front teeth for. However, everything has its price, and these mirrors have occasionally ended up in the hands of less scrupulous characters (if that is possible) than the aristocrats and greedy merchants.

These *mirror-portals* are not in general created so much as found and enhanced. Travel into Between is an incredibly risky process; the thresholds are fickle. They also touch on the fact that *mirror-portals* are not the only types of portals that exist. There are other types of apertures between the mundane and the surreal. Sometimes they are a tear or weakness in the fabric of reality, sometimes they are a passage fashioned by means beyond the ken of the finest minds and most powerful of Castorhage and sometimes they appear to simply be spontaneous manifestations that allow unexpected (and often unwelcome) transport from one side to the other. The general term *gateway* is usually used to describe these different sorts of access points, so that all *mirror-portals* would be considered *gateways*, but not all *gateways* are *mirror-portals*. They do, nevertheless, seem to have at least some propensity to form in mirrors or other reflective surfaces, though. Most importantly, though, these fickle *gateways*, whether spontaneous or crafted *mirror-portals* have so far appeared and/or functioned only in Castorhage proper. Whether this is some property of the city or of Between or both has yet to be determined.

There was an old lady who swallowed a cow,
I don't know how she swallowed a cow;
She swallowed the cow to catch the dog,
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat,
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird,
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider,
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly;
I don't know why she swallowed a fly — perhaps she'll die!

There was an old lady who swallowed a horse...
She's dead, of course.

— Nursery Rhyme allegedly inspired by an encounter with the Hag of Many Voices and Hungers from Between, thought to still be at large in the city slums

A Between Empire

Hot on the heels of the discovery of Between came the explorers — people eager to make a fortune by harnessing this new land as a Royal empire. The Royal Between Company was formed in 1638.

Sir Donnan Grabe is the most (in)famous explorer of Between, making frequent voyages of discovery, firstly by foot, then with pack animals, and finally by boat after discovering the Unsea in 1639, an occasion marked by Grabe's loss of a troop of men led by Captain Corrun in the frightful so-called Corrun's Labyrinth.

As the land yielded up its secrets and wealth, the rulers of Castorhage realised that they had a cornucopia upon their doorstep and took extreme precautions against its being exploited by others. They flooded the land with troops and colonies, the most infamous of which was Fort Toil on the Greensward Hell border. The 5,000 souls of this settlement vanished in a single night in 1647 — food lay uneaten on tables, kettles boiled on stoves, all as though everyone went in a single instant. This event is still referred to as the Fort Toil Massacre by members of the Royal Between Company, who set out upon a zealous quest of revenge and conquest. Unfortunately it led directly to the beginning of the Greensward Hell War was followed in only a few short years by the Massacre of Ste. Anne's Field. Since then the powers-that-be have taken a slightly less obtuse approach to their colonisation efforts. They still reinforce and strengthen

their position in the strange nether realm of Between, but they do so with the knowledge that they are not alone in that realm and not altogether welcome. They have learned the hard way that to push too hard too fast provokes an asymmetrical response that has proven to be beyond the abilities of their brute application of force. Rather a slow but steady colonisation and exploitation seems to have proven the better course and is one of the primary reasons why vast military formations of Castorhagi troops are not seen marching across the Betweenlands — Between simply won't tolerate it.

Despite this institutional paranoia, the only entrances to Between discovered continue to remain only within Castorhage herself. Now established as a "legitimate" component of the Empire of Castorhage, Between is giving up more of its secrets on a daily basis, and yet with each new discovery some new terror emerges, or some new thing staggers from the dark corners and into the city itself. The alarming increase in creatures from Between walking the city streets of Castorhage has been kept mostly secret by the powers that be, though rumours are beginning to circulate on the streets.

Between realms seem to be fractious, and whilst intelligent creatures inhabit some, others are completely wild. However, even in those places where intelligent creatures are found, they tend to hunt in packs and can mock or imitate the invaders. Civilised creatures that are organised into a true society have yet to be encountered. Rather, the most advanced Between creatures seem to be mocking echoes or caricatures of men and other humanoids — almost as if distorted reflections seen in a flawed mirror.

What traces of older civilisations have been found so far in Between have been in the form of decayed monuments or disjointed tales so fractured and superstition-driven as to pose no serious threat to Castorhagi colonial ambitions.

More troubling to the city is that things that are coming out of Between seem to be leaching the very thoughts and essences of the Blight and its inhabitants into mocking manifestations of their animating spirit. This is all the more disturbing as it seems to be only the dark side of humanity that is manifested.

The Illuminati and Between Companies

Their tentacles and claws grip every part of the city, and Between beyond. The Illuminati have been quick to seize opportunities to set up their own secret colonies in Between, and it is speculated by those few that know that their unbirth magic known as *The Staff of Life*† and *The Elixir*† has its origins in the dark places of Between. In addition, the rise of a new group of Between-specialised wizards called mirror mages is likely the result of the influence of the Illuminati, and it is thought that most, if not all, mirror mages are in fact in the direct employ of the Illuminati.

That the Illuminati has control of parts of Between is not in doubt; the questions are which parts and why? Their efforts focus at the Barnacles and Great Docks, where the transient *gateways* come and go with incredible and alarming regularity. Lurking behind its great levee wall, the Barnacles is seething with industry and greed.

The official Castorhage presence in Between is represented in two primary companies and their subsidiaries, though without a doubt the Illuminati secretly exercise partial or even total control over these consortiums.



The Royal Between Company was the first entity to be licensed by the Crown to investigate, explore, colonise and exploit any valuable resources of Between. The Royal Between Company is headquartered out of the Capitol and chaired by Lucas Nathaniel Nightshade (LN male human **noble**) under license from Queen Alice. The Royal Between Company directly administers the Castorhage Western Province and Slave State, but that proved challenging and taxing on resources enough that it has calved off the Castorhage East Dominion Company to oversee the so-called Land of Saffron with a more personal eye. Though ostensibly a subsidiary of the Royal Between Company and therefore under the jurisdiction of Lord Nightshade, in truth Chief Factor Aldrege Butterknuckle (N male *tradelord gnome* **noble**) wields almost absolute control over the activities of the East Dominion.

A mysterious group of zealots wield true power over the Royal Between Company, whose remit is to explore, exploit and enslave any aspects of Between that might prove profitable. In going on for a century of pillage, the company has swelled the Royal coffers beyond imagining, and whilst the cost in human life is high, it is considered a worthy risk by those whose only risk is financial. Company livery consists of a banner or herald depicting an iron fist smashing a circular mirror, the uniform is violet with gold trim and troops from the Royal Between Corps are tough. True power in the company is almost impossible to unravel; a clever ruse by its members to achieve a level of anonymity, but dozens of high-level nobility make up its ranks

The Royal Unsea Whaling Company is an entirely separate entity based out of the port of Scrimshaw. It was founded after the lucrative discovery of the abundant whales of the Unsea that called for a more specialised touch than simply another arm of the ponderous Royal Between. The history of the Royal Unsea Whaling Company is more tumultuous in that the control of the company regularly slips between certain powerful "families" of Town Bridge through political manoeuvre and counter-manoeuvre, and more frequently downright skulduggery and thuggishness. It recently passed into the hands of the Darnell family of Town Bridge, but that oversight seems destined to be short-lived. Despite the constant change in family control, through it all the company has been capably managed by the Governor of Scrimshaw, the Lady Constance Thorn (N female human **noble**).

Mirror Mages

Specialists in arcane exploration, mirror mages are a selective and insular sect of arcane practitioners that devote themselves to unravelling the mysteries of Between, and the ability of the land and its creatures to leach memories and manifest them in a physical form, an ability that they would like very much to be able to command.

Outposts and Colonies

Whilst various groups — most notably the Illuminati — have established a number of secret outposts, the following are the most notable Between locations that have seen the stamp of Castorhagi habitation.

Castorhage East Dominion (a.k.a. the Land of Saffron)
Castorhage Western Province and Slave State (a.k.a. Hope)
HrondHuss
Mallen and Between Mine No. 1
Scrimshaw
The Myre-Between

Each is detailed further under either Betweenlands or The Unsea below.

Betweenlands

"My first glimpse of the Betweenlands almost left me insensible; here indeed was Cornucopia — the Land of Plenty, the Place of Milk and Honey. The far side of the mirror was like a place of impossible life and noise and scents; my senses were assaulted from all sides. I first entered a mirror of the room I set forth from; this was an ordinary looking replica of the room from which I departed, save that it was aware … I cannot describe it even now; it seemed as though it was watching me, as though everything was watching me. I found a door that, in the chamber I had left, led into a hallway and thence my own small walled garden. Grasping the doorknob, which if my senses hadn't betrayed me I could have sworn complained at being moved, I stepped into the next room. It was not my garden; rather it was a garden room such as the Royals have — a glass chamber full of light and flowers. And such flowers! Colours and blooms that I had scarcely even dreamt of were there, and the air was alive with buzzing of bees. An open doorway led onto a green lawn by the side of a tumbling brook.

"Little did I know then, what was out there watching me enter this garden …"

—The Chronicles of Hetherington Quarrus Mabe
Volume 1, Chapter 11

Between realms do not seem to obey standard geography. While some domains seem endless, others are very small. There seems to be no logic where one ends and another begins, although inevitable bleeding of the two places occurs; an icy land freezing jungle trees for example. Attempts have been made to map Between, but the results have been imperfect at best and sometimes dangerously inaccurate. In addition, there are no true directions. North, east, south, and west are all given arbitrary values by the explorers who have come to Between, but none holds any true relevance and oft-times the designations of direction for different explorers has differed.

Broken Land, The

"If the Devil could create a beast and give it breath and anger, the creatures I glimpsed would be his masterpieces. The things lurched about on three legs, but not with any great speed, almost as though they were injured in their movements; they were things of thorns and iron and might, each taller than a cathedral and each with hateful fire in their bellies. I saw these dragons lay waste to the lands they ruled — great lines of white fire belching from their mouths and destroying men, almost as though for amusement. This land was red with weed and sickness and resignation, and the dragons ruled here in this Broken Land."

—Pramus Quith, Expeditionary Captain
Royal Between Company

A large stretch of dragon- and worm-infested wasteland extending along one of the borders of the known areas of Between, this blasted and dangerous region seems to defy all attempts at exploration. Most who enter don't return alive, and none has been able to discover the far side where its desolate expanse ends — if indeed it has an end.

Azure

Beyond the eastern borders of the Castorhage East Dominion is a vast unexplored mountainous jungle land full of active volcanoes and alien things that seek the destruction of any interlopers. To the knowledge of the Castorhage East Dominion Company and the Crown it is wholly uncharted. Unbeknownst to them His Holiness the Father of Castorhage has begun his own exploration of them from the far side by means of a stable gateway recently discovered beneath a monastery in the Hollow and Broken Hills. This gateway gives ships access onto a sargasso sea called the Sea of Mists and Creeping Things after which a week's voyage in any direction brings the vessel to the eastern shore of the Betweenlands at the foot of the mountains where a small port and outpost called Providence has been established. The first administrator of this outpost, Friar Lyme, disappeared only a few weeks after its establishment, though it is now overseen by Prior Cleg (N male human **summoner**) when he is not busy with his duties at the monastery.

His Holiness is calling this land Azure in hopes that if word of it leaks, such a moniker will lend confusion about what it is referring to, but of course the Illuminati are already well aware of its existence and include Prior Cleg among their top agents. From the tiny settlement of Providence, the investigation of these largely unknown heights and the warm sea below is being conducted on a small scale by the Brothers of Saint Jull, the small monastic order of the Hollow and Broken Hills that unexpectedly found a Between *gateway* beneath their priory.

Castorhage East Dominion, a.k.a. The Land of Saffron

Administered from the bastion of Fort Labour on the banks of Queen Alice's Maw, the place boils with insects, its humidity making the air like water as the Eastern Jungle rises towards distant mountains. All around is the noise of insects, and the anger of the land itself. Volcanoes growl in the night, their deep roots pulling at the very earth itself. Here and there, a hastily constructed stockade fort clings to the place, its presence like a scab on a wound. Folk of Castorhage dwell and work here, afraid of the very place they live. Tales of flash floods the size of mountains that sweep down the river, of volcanic eruptions, of distended creatures lurking on the edges of the jungle, and of the Fort Toil Massacre are keenly known. Yet the spices here are the purest ever seen, and boats groaning with unnaturally heady saffron, of cinnamon and of cumin, regularly wallow through the Between *gateway* canal to reach home. Some, of course, never make it back. They all hope to see a new day, hope that they will never witness a massacre, or a great flood, or the boiling anger of the volcanoes.

The infamous Land of Saffron is run by the Royal Between company via its Castorhage East Dominion Company arm. This place has a terrible reputation for brutality, and the masters cannot get enough labour to run their spice plantations. Presently, criminals are being deported to this land and being proffered freedom (which, of course, never transpires). It is a concern of those who truly know the place that it is on the brink of revolution, and could, if things went badly, see the establishment of an independent Between state, something no one in authority in Castorhage wishes to ever see.

Castorhage Western Province and Slave State, a.k.a. Hope

A disgusting industry blights this place, a land where man has lashed the land into some sort of temporary submission. Cotton plantations, rampant growths of white as far as the eye can see, are being harvested by bands of sickly looking people. Their hands and eyes and frames tell that they were once from Castorhage, but their tale is all too common: a harsh sentence for a petty crime mandated years of labour; predatory lenders have gripped them in an impossible fist of indentured servitude, and they work to repay debts they and their descendants can never hope to cast off; they ran afoul of a press gang and had not the family or influence to see

them freed before being transported. These are the stories of those who labour in Hope.

They call it Hope in cruel jest or irony, the Western Province and Slave State is basically a large prison without walls, a place cast-offs are given the hope of redemption and sanctuary by Under-Justices and judicares — no matter how trivial their crime. If they happen to be caught when a ship is ready at the Great Docks, chances are they will be on it — or face the gallows. Settlements scatter away from Point Hope, the bay where new ships arrive and disembark their passengers from the fickle *gateway* beneath an overhanging tor of rock bearing the ill-named township of Port Welcome, itself the home of a great lantern to welcome shipping by night. Hope is a den of thieves and slavers and greed and wallowing sin. The imposing walls of Fort Industry overlook the town and sprawling plantations of the surrounds, keeping a grim eye over its charges.

The Queen has a personal fetish for this place, having once visited it in her younger years, and has decreed that it will succeed and be an example to heathens across the lands that Castorhage and Mother Grace are the only true faiths worth aspiring to. The main outer colony, Grace, lies a few days sailing

The Western Province and Slave State is less explorer-centric than its sister settlement of the Castorhage East Dominion and far more ordered. Visitors are not welcome, and intruders (called "stowaways" by Duke Mandrake who rules from his seat at Fort Industry) are hunted. Thirteen overseers rule the outer plantations here under the authority of Duke Mandrake, and these plantations are separated by perhaps fifty miles apiece. Beyond that is nightmare of the Greensward Hell. However, between these great cotton plantations the land is not much more forgiving. Here is found miles of green sawgrasses as tall as a man, high wild corn and gods know what. Often labourers disappear from the edges of the plantations, and some overseers — particularly the perverse Overseer Lucas Clover (NE male human **noble**) — delight in exiling wrong-doers to the vast wild fields between these outposts of civilisation. Clover is barely able to conceal his perverse delight when he sends a slave out into corn beyond the plantations, and garners a sick glee in their imagined sufferings.

Rough roads link the outlying settlements to Grace, the high wild corn encroaches constantly, and small armies of men toil to keep the wild undergrowth at bay. Their task focusses solely on the few pathways, what lurks beyond is left alone. While clearing the pathways is relatively easy work, there are those who are snatched while they toil and never seen again. There are all kinds of tall tales about what lurks in the cornfields. People mention long knives, scythes, hoods, things made of sack and voices that sing sad songs of homes lost and travellers who go missing.

Eastern Jungle

Little enough is known of the vast rainforest that is known simply as the Eastern Jungle. It is beneath the dense green canopy of this expanse that the Castorhage East Dominion Company harvests its wealth in spices and rare woods. Small plantations manned by convict labourers and indentured slaves work under the eaves of this jungle, and if turnover of the work force is high due to the back-breaking labour, incessant mosquito-borne disease, and shadowy, cannibalistic things with too-long limbs and sharp-filed teeth that lurk beneath the heavy green boughs, then it is a small price to pay in the name of profit. The Under-Justices and Judiciaries send a constant stream of convicts sentenced to transport to work the Land of Saffron, cheap resources to feed the ever-hungry jungle.

Many villages and work settlements spring up along the languid flow of the Queen Alice's Maw river, though they disappear almost as quickly and are soon buried beneath the unnaturally fecund plant growth that typifies this forested land. Also hidden beneath this green shroud are many stone temples and pyramids of seemingly great age. Who or what built them remains a mystery, but the oft-repeated motif of hexagonal honeycomb structures among their artwork and architecture leads many to point to the Leviathan Graveyard also said to be buried within the jungle's depths. The jungle's eastern border climbs the lower slopes of a chain of sharp-edged mountains, many of which have peaks that emit a constant stream of smoke and a hellish glow from their rumbling interior. Earthquakes are not infrequent and sometimes devastating to the communities along the river and mountain slopes as flash floods and rockslides quickly do what the denizens of the jungle tend to handle in a slower fashion — the eradication of interlopers.

Fort Industry

More commonly referred to as "Old Blood, Sweat and Tears," Fort Industry serves as the hub for administration of the township of Hope and the plantations of the Castorhage Western Province and Slave State. It is the hastily constructed replacement for the ill-fated and abandoned Fort Toil, ruled by Duke Mandrake (LE male human **knight**), the Queen's third cousin once removed. He is a vile, religious madman, who adheres to the harshest doctrine of Mother Grace — order, honour, country and goddess. His clan (a group of vicious murderers, zealots and clerics) follow his calling — to create a new Heaven in the world here in the Western Province and Slave State. Worship, work and obedience are all he asks for, and expects, of his followers and subjects. The duke sets a high standard. He punishes the most trivial acts with brutal breakings on the wheel and for the most wicked acts — fornication outside wedlock, lewdness and whore-mongering — and his punishments are the most heinous. Burnings are his favourite way of cleansing his sinful flock, but he realises the power of acts of even greater brutality, pulling sinners apart with wild horses for example.

Fort Labour

A monstrous tyrant and close relative of Duke Taim, Lord Thresh (NE male *blighted*† human **veteran**) has recently taken over the running of the East Dominion under authority of Chief Factor Butterknuckle. His Paladins of Order, a grotesque bunch of rapists and murderers, are gripping the dominion in a vice and throttling anyone who dares disagree. The group operate out of Fort Labour, little more than a timber torture chamber in constant need of repair, aimed solely at ensuring the efforts of those here to toil and profit and explore in order to further the fortunes of their betters. Independent explorers are welcomed here, simply because of the death rate, and while most are never seen again, some return with wild tales of temples and mountain passes and cities built upon mountaintops. Thresh is a serial madman, his black moods are almost as legendary as those of Duke Taim, and in a fit of rage he has been known to send dozens of men, women and children to their deaths on some wild goose chase. Yet Thresh knows he will be judged on one thing and one thing alone — profit. Thresh is a zealot on colonisation and a steady stream of settlers are sent on their way, looking bleakly at the mountains crushing the sky ahead and wondering at the chances of their survival.

Fort Toil

The first outpost of Castorhage in Between, Fort Toil long held the record for being one of the shortest lived until the settlements along the eastern river began to spring up and disappear with regularity. Constructed in 1644 at a point midway between the *gateway* at Point Hope and the Greensward Hell, Fort Toil was a reinforced stockade burgeoning frontier town that eventually boasted a population of 5,000 souls. It was intended to serve as a bulwark of defence for the newly forming Port Welcome and as the spear tip for expansion into the resource-rich environs of the nearby forest. That is until its entire population vanished in a single night in 1647. Not a soul was left after travellers discovered the disappearance the following morning…with no signs of struggle or clues as to where everyone went. The incident became dubbed the "Fort Toil Massacre" in a move to inflame the Royal Family and other prominent movers and shakers of Castorhage and resulted in the creation of the Royal Between Corps and a programme of military build-up in Between. It also ultimately led to the Massacre of Ste. Anne's Field and a reversal of that hawkish policy.

Today, Fort Toil stands largely as it was. It has long since been looted of any valuables or useful equipment, but the log blockhouses and stockade still stand, largely untouched by the weather and environment, in mute testament to the folly of greed and colonialism in Between — a lesson that if not exactly learned has been duly noted in the current policy of Between colonisation.

Fowler's Endless Stair

Believed to be one of the first landmarks discovered in Between after Mabe's initial discovery in 1637 (largely because of a diary found some 50 years later that spoke of it), Fowler's endless stair gains its name from the early explore Desteryn Fowler, a famed Libynosi big-game hunter and traveller. Taking a commission from the newly forming Royal Between Company, Fowler and his troop of 27 hunters, porters, trackers, and soldiers entered through the Mabe *mirror-portal* of BookTown and were never seen again. Only a few short weeks later that *mirror-portal* had shut as well. The diary of one member of the Fowler expedition was found some five decades later by a Royal Between Company expedition to the Great Between Forest and brought back what little news of Fowler's fate that is known. The diary described visions of a miraculous stair that had occurred sporadically and that Fowler himself had apparently become obsessed with finding.

The actual location of Fowler's Endless Stair is unknown, if indeed it is not altogether transient to begin with. It is usually associated with The Wall both as a convenient geographical context and because the diary was discovered in the not-too-distant Great Between Forest, but nowhere in the description of the stair was The Wall mentioned. Some scholars speculate that it was actually a free-standing stair that ascended to the sky to destinations unknown like some kind of heat mirage, and this actually matches the diary's furtive descriptions better. But even that is truly speculation as well, as is what caused the explorer to obsess so over it or his traveling companions to so willingly go along. That the stair is "endless" is simply derived from the fact that if they found it, the exploring party never left it and some contend that they climb it still in a vain effort to find what glorious reward or secret it holds at its undiscovered summit. Other than occasional claimed sightings of the vision, there have been no confirmed reports of anyone ever actually finding it.

Great and Secret House, The

A few travellers have reported a house somewhere deep in the Betweenlands. They say it is of endless size and seemingly infinite chambers. Some travellers have reported being unable to enter it, either finding no doors or accessible windows or finding that doors and windows are completely impervious to penetration. Others have reported being able to easily enter it and explore some of its vast interior, though these report doors within appearing or disappearing in its confusion of halls and chambers and causing their parties to inevitably split up. In each of these cases, one or more members of those groups never emerged again. No one has been able to determine why some groups are able to enter and why other cannot, but speculation runs toward the subsequent disappearances having a strong connection — as if the house sought to claim certain individuals and allowed them the means to enter. Ultimately who is master of this house and what its purpose is remains just one of many mysteries of Between.

Great Between Forest, a.k.a. The Unquiet

The Great Between Forest, or the Unquiet as it is known to those who have had the misfortune to spend a night encamped within is a vast swath of woodland that covers what is often approximated southern extent of the Betweenlands. The forest's depths are unplumbed and unknown and are rumoured to hold all manner of creatures and horrors from wolves that talk to dead that hunt. And anyone who has experienced the forest at night has made mention of the susurrus of the trees, a constant whispering sibilance as if each trunk was awake and watchful, sharing its secrets and murderous desires with its companions. That many kinds of intelligent plant life including treants and scythe trees, have been encountered within only adds to this feeling of the forest as a single waking entity only biding its time until it turns against all who would dare encroach upon its borders.

Greensward Hell

This jungle is said to be alive in a singular sense, a fact possibly borne out by the tragedy of Fort Toil, the original outpost linking Between and the Blight. Explorers head off weekly into the green depths to seek wealth, to search for fabled cities of secrets, and to hunt. Many never return, and those that do are sometimes broken men who swear to never venture into the Green again. Yet still more go, for every expedition is driven by the tales of wealth.

Formally claimed as territory by Castorhage, the fringes of the jungle now has several cotton plantations established, and these in turn are manned by slaves under the protection of the Illuminati via the Royal Between Company and the Castorhage Western Province and Slave State. If the insects and the sickness do not get you, if the strange creatures that plague the lands don't take you and consume you, and if the greedy does not stab you in the dark for your shoes or the want of a waterskin, you might live another day here. And each day can be worth a fortune.

HrondHuss

The HrondHuss is considered the last mark of civilisation upon the Betweenlands beyond which lies only endless wilderness and madness. This inn is constructed in the elaborate alpine style of the Yolbiac Vale and is owned and operated by the ex-patriot Valesman Yudr György (N male human **warden**†) who has managed to live in the shadow of the Wall largely unmolested for nearly 20 years. The Huss is staffed solely by Yudr's wife and 3 children and one Ashurian slave named Khelmut (a Denizen of Leng† with the following changes: alignment is neutral, disguised as a male human) How he managed to build this establishment



and how he supplies it is a mystery to the few folk who come this far as is the lone guest who has resided here for the last 14 months, a thin, pale stranger calling himself Etumo (CN male vampire), but most assume that the Valesman must be running from something. Only the very astute notice the lingering looks that occur between the wan guest and Yudr young wife Ingred.

Yudr will keep any guest who can pay and abides by the rules of peace within the Huss but has been known to bring in those in need who could not pay at the time but were in dire straits. Though in these cases he always extracts a promise of a future service, none of which have been called in to date. The Huss has rooms to accommodate 40 guests and a stable for a score of mounts. The fare is simple but good with a plentiful supply of good Yolbiac beer. Etumo hires out as a guide for any who wish to explore the nearby Wall of the forest at the rate of 20 gp per day, but few take the intense man up on the offer.

Land of Hateful Things

This place is said to be a dark fairyland, a place where the essences of children's nightmares are taken and given flesh. The few who have managed to glimpse it from afar report having seen a number of children wandering within its sometimes-idyllic-sometimes-horrifying landscape. Some of these children have been recognised as missing persons who disappeared from their homes in the night. The fact that some of these children disappeared decades or more ago and yet seem to have not aged at all when spotted again causes great concern and speculation among those who have received these reports. None of the reports of the missing children's whereabouts has yet been made public knowledge through any official channels, though street rumours sometimes run rampant. In addition, no attempt to make contact with these children has succeeded, and those who have tried have invariably disappeared.

The truth of the matter is that the Land of Hateful Things is the demesne of the Harvester of Cribs who brings those that he does not immediately devour to this place to dwell thereafter. Why he should do so or if he is even the actual ruler of this domain remain very much in question.

Land of Long Night

This realm is a place perpetually shadowed where the dead walk under a black sun. It is a place haunted by ghosts and tragedy, where the land itself is an undead spirit that aches for rest and longs for vengeance against whom and for what it cannot even understand.

Lands of the Echo Queen

Travellers report that somewhere within Between there exists a kingdom that is a dual — yet mocking — version of Castorhage and its environs. Herein, a grotesque queen rules her subjects with an iron fist, and has a fanatical group of loyal soldiers at her call. This land is occupied by a plethora of enlarged and awakened animals, trees, and other horrific creatures. A great forest extends around the borders of this kingdom and twisted creatures live therein, these creatures, despite their horrific and multiple forms are also intelligent. Some wonder which is the image of which, so dreadful is the royal court of the Blight. Regardless, this land remains frustratingly elusive and has yet to be discovered by those who are actually seeking it, rather than those who just happen to stumble upon it.

Leviathan Graveyard

Little enough is known of the Leviathans, great indescribable beasts of the mundane world's distant past. Also sometimes known as Ancients, the role of these vast behemoths is unclear in the history of the world as they do not appear to appear to have been a type of dragons nor do they conform to the physiology and structure of the great "thunder lizards" still found alive in some parts of the world today. They appear to have been a wholly different type of creature, equally as primordial as both of those others but much more alien with a greater diversity of form. The fossilised remains of such creatures have been found throughout the known world, but the city-state of Castorhage produces the highest concentration of discoveries of anywhere. Part of the mystery as to why that is may be answered by the sunken valley that lies along one oxbow of the jungle river here.

The fossilised remains of hundreds of the creatures known as Leviathans can be found in the eroded embankments and gullies of this stretch of the river and in forms more varied and sizes unequalled by any finds in the mundane world. Whether the creatures came collectively to this spot to die untold millions of years ago or were merely present at this location when some catastrophic event occurred that caused their simultaneous deaths is uncertain, but the few members of the Royal Underneath Society who have braved the journey downriver to reach this site have located numerous examples of the honeycomb-clustered fossils so often associated with the Leviathans. That only about half of those scholars and their parties have returned to tell the tale seems to have done little to diminish the appetite for more discovery. That some of those who did not return were later found on the site as little more than bags of rotting skin, their bones, organs, and musculature having been somehow meticulously removed with only a few small incisions has had at best a modest effect on diminishing the scholars' ardour. Perhaps most telling of all in reducing efforts of the savants of the society to obtain company permission to make the journey has been the faces of the victims whose remains have been found — faces that though now nothing but hollow skin remain perfectly intact and recognizable and forever etched into an expression of surprised joy.

Mallen and Between Mine No. 1

This mine is miles deep, and 400 workers (mostly dwarves) work its faces for Between gold. It is a strange place with an outpost town at its head called Mallen. This settlement (originally simply named Settlement 34) is a rambunctious place where miners come to stake their claims and face the things that slither in the mines beneath them. It is overseen by Royal Between Company Foreman Boss Rath (LE male hill dwarf **veteran**), a surly and cruel dwarf who astonishingly claims hobgoblin ancestry and gets into many bloody brawls with those who dare mock his claim or deny it. If anyone causes too much trouble, he directs his company toughs to apprehend the troublemaker in the dead of night and introduce him forcefully to one of the mine's deeper shafts.

The Between mine is a terrible place, a shifting series of faces that birth out stones and ores unpredictably, but has yet to end. Thousands of work faces (many mined by workers suspended in space on harnesses), side-corridors (some that grow ever lower and narrower regardless of whether the miner crawls forward or backward), and endless depths lie beneath the precarious chain conveyor that lowers the workers half a mile and more to the main worksites themselves.

Even though Mallen appears to sit by itself among these broken hills with only its own tailings for company and no road leading to or from it, it is only half of the settlement with the other half lying in the Underneath below Castorhage and still known as Settlement 34. Mallen is usually reached by crossing over from this location, and anyone approaching from overland in Between is immediately considered a hostile threat and all steps necessary are taken to either eliminate the intruders or to exterminate the miners while Rath and his guards bunker down in their blockhouse and await for reinforcements from Underneath. For more information on Settlement 34, see Chapter 10 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***.

Mockery, The

This hidden place is a haven, a retreat for the vampires of the Fetch, where undead can find peace and tranquillity can be for a time. Called the Mockery, the place at first looks like a small ghost town abandoned in the depths of the forest, but that is before the visitor notices the talking flowers or the many vampires sleeping in the sunlight. In the Mockery, death and life are mingled, spirits rise and fall, and those cursed to walk the night can for a time be freed from the limitations of their curse and live like the living, like the mortal lives they left behind to come into their inheritance of undeath — for a time. But even the Mockery cannot be tolerated for long by a visiting vampire, for the longer one stays the more one is changed. The spirits of the place speak through the soil and the

plants, making promises, stripping away their minds, their wills, and their personalities. A vampire who stays too long in the Mockery "goes to root", they say. His flesh becomes grey and hard, his joints stiffen into gnarled poses, and the light of awareness leaves his eyes. Some of the tangled trees around the town have strangely humanoid forms, and the Fetch point to these as examples of those "gone to root". That some of these grow new green shoots is a mystery to even those most well-versed in the place. The ruler of the Mockery reigns from a courthouse overgrown with vines and old trees. She wears the robes and wig of a Crown Justice of Castorhage and sometimes refers to herself as the Fourth Bench. She is Perdition, Dread Queen of UnBirth and she rules the Mockery in the name of her master Beltane and guards the secret of the gateway that connects this place to the Artists' Quarter of the city-state. This ancient vampire has proven immune to the influence of this place and this is well known to the Fetch and accounts for her position of authority. Secretly, and unknown to her or the Fetch, she has become a puppet vessel for the powerful animus spirit that infests this place. Only the strange dreams of dominion and sunlight that she sometimes experiences provide her any insight that all is not what it seems.

Further detail on the Mockery can be found at AQ42 in Chapter 2 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***.

Myre-Between, The

It's almost passé to say this soggy marshland is alive. Certainly, the standing stones within its green, fetid depths are known to speak as they sway in the colossal floating bog. Things live in the Myre-Between — bad things, although the present regional governor, Lord Henry Bragmye (CN male changeling† **talimancer**), laughs off such tales. His manor house sits at the edge of the Myre-Between, its wooden siding gouged by the effects of the damp air and frequent mists. Out in the Myre-Between beyond the grounds of his estate are hidden tombs, tombs whose contents have made men rich. Lord Bragmye charges a high price for his hospitality and guides into the mire, but without them, successful entry is nigh impossible.

Pech Pit

Like the Fort Toil Massacre and the Massacre of Ste. Anne's Field, the Pech Pit is the sight of a tragic loss of life early in the exploration of Between. Intrepid explorers managed to blaze a trail across the uncertain terrain between the Castorhage Western Province and Slave State and the Castorhage East Dominion. When the rise of the first Greensward Tyrant, the mad monk Eglund of Sanctuary arose and threatened the plantations of the Western Province with annihilation, a lone rider managed to make it past the cordon of the monk's skirmishers and the natural dangers of the great Betweenlands plains. Bringing his urgent message or dire peril to Fort Labour, Castorhage East Dominion Company assembled its levies, slave militia auxiliaries, and Royal Between Corps companies and set out at a forced march to relieve its beleaguered parent company. Unlike the Ste. Anne's Field travesty of decades earlier, no Between horde rose to meet them, and the very ground seemed to tremble beneath their tread. The marching host was unstoppable — until the ground opened beneath their feet and swallowed them.

The great sinkhole opened too quickly for the mass of the army to escape, and only the vanguard and baggage train survived. Witness accounts reported the vast pit's depths being shrouded in unnatural darkness and the sounds of inhuman bellows and all-too-human screams arising from it for hours. By nightfall all was silent and all the remained was the sinkhole now known as the Pech Pit. Since that time, by contractual agreement, the too arms of the Royal Between Company do *not* send military assistance to one another. The result has proven far too costly.

The few travellers who make the journey today between the Castorhagi dominions attempt to avoid the pit, but somehow always end up finding it. Even attempts to make a new road had failed as even the new course found itself blocked by the pit and requiring travellers to skirt its dark depths. Strangely reports on the size of the pit vary and those who travel overland without even following the road still come across it, almost as if it seeks travellers out. Most folk are able to safely go around it, though some parties have disappeared in its vicinity, and those who come upon it unexpectedly at nightfall fear the worst, for it is always most active at night. Tales of vast tentacles, creeping monstrosities, or cannibal humanoids skulking in the dark have all emerged from travellers braving the land road, and perhaps they are all true. None of braved the depths of the pit to know for certain what dwells within or how deep it goes, but all assume at the very least there waits an undead army whose marching tread can still sometimes be herd echoing from the mouth of the shaft — an army that should it ever find a way out will undoubtedly continue its march to the Western Province and bring sword and flame to a war a century over.

Queen Alice's Maw

Flowing through the forest bordering the Castorhage East Dominion, a score of small, newly established villages follow the banks of this gruesome green snake of a river almost a mile across. These colonists are almost all forcibly settled here by Lord Thresh and have adopted a dark fatalism as the river of the woodlands take them one by one through unbelievable acts of horror or insanity. Only the newest of settlers still share the original spark of adventure and dreams of striking it rich that first drew them to trying their fortune in Between. For the rest, stuck as they are between the nightmare reality of their present circumstances and the assured death at the hands of Lord Thresh's "paladin" order, most simply hope that when the inevitable ends comes that it comes quickly and as painlessly as possible. None of these villages is large enough or lasts long enough to warrant an official name or map notation, but most of the inhabitants enjoy sardonically giving them names as far from the true nature of their reality as possible, names such as Joy, Beginner's Luck, Double-Or-Nothing, and Can't Miss.

Sea of Mists and Creeping Things

Not truly a part of the Betweenlands but generally agreed to also not be a part of the Unsea, this sargasso sea is perpetually cloaked in an obscuring bank of fog that prevents vision beyond a few dozen yards. A waterborne gateway from the Hollow and Broken Hills opens into this sea and is used to access the small port of Azure on its western shore. Oddly, regardless of which direction a ship travels from this *gateway*, a voyage of roughly a week always brings it to the shore near Providence. Why this is has yet to be determined but further investigation has been stymied by both small numbers of the Brothers of Saint Jull who are undertaking this exploration and the nagging habit of ships occasionally disappearing without a trace in the seemingly endless mists. Sailors try to reach shore as quickly as possible through murky tangle of the sargassum and thank their lucky stars when they see the fog break ahead and land on the horizon.

Spiral Fable

The Spiral Fable is a mystery site where reality seems fluid and can follow the imagination of the viewer, though usually in a way that distorts and endangers viewer. It is known in the Artists' Quarter of Castorhage as a place where the storybooks come to life and allow their fanciful ideas to manifest in reality. There has to be a gateway connecting somehow to the city, but no one has discovered it for certain. All they know is that sometimes stories come to life and run rampant among the living, and the bloodier the story the more likely it is to happen. On the Between side it is little more than a nondescript valley among rugged hills with nothing to mark itself as such a place of chaos made real. There have been reports of an unusual concentration of chaos beasts inhabiting the region, but so few folk have dared to try and explore that this could easily be a chicken-or-egg tale. More information on the Spiral Fable is given at AQ41 in Chapter 2 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***.

Ste. Anne's Field

The site of the second-greatest massacre after that of Fort Toil, Ste. Anne's Field is a meadowland not far from the fringes of the Greensward

Hell. Here a full regiment of more than 3,000 Royal Between Corps regulars drew up their battle lines to face the brunt of the malignant forces they were facing in the Greensward Hell War. What emerged from the forest to engage them was like no army ever seen before or since. A vast, disparate horde of creatures, humanoids, madmen, indescribable horrors emerged and crashed into the carefully arranged ranks of the waiting soldiers. It was over in minutes, the field nothing more than a litter of broken bodies. It was as if Between flexed its muscles and showed what the might of the Royal Between Company was up against. It changed the course of Castorhagi policy from one of military conquest of Between to one of careful expansion and localised exploitation rather than risk the ire of the entire land like that again.

Today the field is still a pleasant green meadow. At its centre stands a crooked marble statue of an angel with broken wings representing the solar angel Saint Anne, Patroness Saint of Martyrs, erected in honour of the many lives lost. One of the statues arms is broken off, and the other still reaches beseechingly out towards the distant wood line in an expression of contrition? A plea for mercy? No one alive knows. However, it known that at night the statue weeps blood and the dead walk seeking vengeance against any among the living who dare pass by. As a result, the field is almost universally avoided.

Theatres Obscura, The

A dark theatre district of shadows and crooked streets springs here in a small vale among desolate hills. It seems to have a life of its own as those who find entrance to it in the Artists' Quarter come here to partake of its otherworldly offerings. The dark fey hold sway here and control the *gateway* to the mundane world, and the god known as the Leper King is said to stalk its always-twilight streets. More information on the Theatres Obscura can be found at AQ9 in Chapter 2 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide (Festival)*** and in ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre*** in ***The Levee*** adventure.

Tyrant Kingdoms

A small number of tyrants have set up so-called kingdoms within the forest beyond the plantations of the Western Province and Slave State and far away from any kind of laws of men. Characters such as King Flesh (CE male human **transmogrifier**†) and an insane halfling missionary called Mistress Lydia Scathel (NE female halfling **wererat**), madly convinced that she is a new Rat Queen and must transform this place into a haven for the Family populated only by wererats, set up their short-lived fiefdoms beneath the jungles' eaves. Loners, miners and hunters are inching across the place, and although they seem to be taming it their efforts are doomed; this place grows at an impossible rate, is brimming with lurking horrors and can even get into the skin of those who live here — as an insect called the feasting mite slowly eats its victims alive beneath the cover of their own hide.

The Wall

Here stretches a howling mountainside at the foot of which rests the HrondHuss, the last inn before its massive expanse. Whether mountain range of virtually sheer cliffs or simply a vast wall across the Betweenlands, none knows for sure as none has ever reached the top to determine the truth. The Wall draws explorers to its upper reaches, but none has ever succeeded, even those who try to *fly* in its wild gales. Those who return from attempts at its upper reaches tell of finding signs of civilisation, of maddening echoes in the wind, and gales that flay the skin off a man. The relics they return with sometimes fetch fortunes back in the city. And the Ashurian manservant at the HrondHuss always listens to such tales with a keen ear, though he keeps his own counsel as to his interest.

Winter Wood

A portion of the Great Between Forest that grows thickly with evergreens, the Winter Wood is known to lie relatively close to the HrondHuss but far from anywhere else. Unlike the rest of the great forest,



this portion is perpetually blanketed in snow, though few snowfalls or blizzards actually occur, and it is renowned for the iridescent bubbles that frequently float gently upon a cool winter breeze. Voracious wolves (many long since dead) haunt these woods along with spiders, and worse things, and great flapping creatures are known to soar above the treetops in the night sky. At least one gateway is known to open into this woodland from the Theatre District, but its Castorhage end is a closely held secret by the city authorities who monitor it to see what kind of abominations it might spawn and what might be learned from them.

The Unsea

A vast, uncharted ocean, the Unsea is a place of incredible storms and nightmarish gales that has proven difficult to explore. It is always overcast and gloomy in the best of conditions, and often fogs are so thick that a helmsman can't see his own masthead. The outpost of Scrimshaw lies beneath a huge ragefire†-powered lighthouse that casts a beacon to draw shipping home. Whaling in the Unsea is the most plentiful, and is a draw to the fleet of fishermen and whalers who now operate its dark waters. Rumour has it that not all the catch is passed into the Castorhage markets, and that often things that talk are found in nets.

The Unsea has many unique and interesting features and locations of its own, a selection of which are detailed below.

Brittle Ice, The

An endless ice field emerges here from the freezing waters of the Unsea. It seems to stretch into eternity but offers tantalizing glimpses of fanciful spires and dreamlike palaces upon the distant horizon or reflected as mirages upon low-hanging clouds in certain weather. Rumours say that the legendary Tu Chai Palace stands somewhere in that vast expanse, but exploration is limited because the ice field is rotten and brittle and collapses into sinkholes and hidden crevasses with alarming frequency. Only the enormous horned, six-legged polar bears that haunt its landscape seem to be immune to the effects of these hazards, and they are known for being extremely aggressive and always hungry.

The eastern flank of the ice shelf abuts the sweating expanse of the Greensward Hell, where a massive ice cliff looms, apparently untouched by the sweltering heat, above the verdant jungle expanse, seemingly untouched by the cold. As elsewhere, the ice here is too brittle to support much in the way of exploration, so for now the Brittle Ice holds its secrets close.

Carrion

"The reason for the stench besetting our deck finally became apparent; the dogged nidorous odour that has been plaguing us for days has revealed a source. It is the floating carcass of a whale, a vast creature whose mouth is pulled back in a permanent dreadful grin the size of a

cliff. There are living things amongst the rot, and signs of habitation; bones have been splintered and broken and lashed, and parts of ships pulled and stitched into place to make a revolting floating town."

—Last Known Journal Entry of Abriath Wayde,
First Mate of the whaler *Lyric*

Carrion has been spotted upon the waters of the Unsea by many. It is a mobile, floating town ruled by aboleths. The aboleth's slave creatures tend the revolting carcass as they pay fealty to twisted sea gods who drive the settlement upon its way, taking it to the next holy place for its inhabitants to invade.

Carrion is more than a floating island, it is a vessel, and when the wind is up, great sails can be stretched to drive it onward at a ponderous pace. The aboleth of Carrion are served by an array of slaves taken from their voyages — voyages that expand the aboleths' minds and powers. The aboleths have an incredibly sophisticated social structure, and are governed by a rigid caste system. They are led by the One of the Carcass, The Great and Only (NE **aboleth)** who is attended by its 8 beloved kin The Prime (NE **aboleths**). The aboleths have voyaged the Unsea for all time it seems, and the immortal skum† that tend them can remember histories so vast that mortal minds would struggle to comprehend their telling.

Cataclysm, The

There is a place where the Unsea falls into the nothingness of night and void, and that place extends its icy fingers to the seas for scores of miles around. Once in the grip of its current, there is no escape from its inexorable grasp. Few people have ever glimpsed the Cataclysm, and no one has voyaged close enough to significantly explore it in any way. A few have tried and been drawn into whatever lies beyond; the odd, vain wizards who have sought to *fly* or use other magical means to see what lies below, they have all been drawn by great gales into the fury of the Cataclysm which likewise defies all attempts at *scrying*. Only stories exist about the place, and they are all bad.

Cloven Sea, The

The Unsea in this region is torn, a huge slash between two great walls of water creating a slowly shifting land exposed from beneath the waves. The tear is a seething, moving mass of water usually a hundred yards across and deep, but sometimes much wider or even narrower to the point that its watery walls almost seems to touch. Perched precariously upon one of its upper walls is the skum city of Thry'ss where homage is paid in equal parts to the aboleths of Carrion and the long-missing Madness-of-the-MirrorStorm, the great Between kraken who once made her home within the waters around the Cloven Sea but has been banished to the mundane world for many years now.



Corrun's Labyrinth

Shorlty after the discovery of the Unsea was the discovery of the Brittle Ice and the discovery of Corrun's Labyrinth. It is called labyrinth because that is the best description that sailors and cartographers can come up with to describe it, but in reality it is simply a section of the northern Unsea much like the rest. If anything, the waters here are unusually gentle and very rarely lashed by storms and perhaps with a somewhat higher frequency of crabs and other sea crustaceans, but not large or harmful ones. It's almost as if the sea is particularly safe and pleasant here by design, an invitation for the lost, storm-tossed or wayward voyager to sail within and find a moment's rest from the dangers of the Unsea.

Of course, once a vessel is piloted within the sea haze gradually increases so that eventually the ship sails through a nearly impenetrable fog, a fog that seems to give a suggestion of hiding actual walls water as if the ship was actually sailing down hidden lanes into the deeps. Those who don't immediately come about when the mists first rise are lost in the endless maze of fog-shrouded waters heading ever deeper into what, exactly, no one knows. But all know that they are never seen again, as so famously happened in 1639 to Commodore Grabe's subordinate Captain Corrun and his entire schooner the *Wreath*. Even ships that do immediately come about when the mists arise don't always make it out, for sometimes the mists rise quickly and thickly and a ship that's lost from view is rarely seen again.

Edge of Ruin

The lightship *Edge of Ruin* remains anchored as a warning on the very border of the Edge of the World. Beyond is the vast area of Unsea that no one has successfully explored. Though lightly crewed, she is a massive vessel, wide-bodied for stability with a towering pinnacle constructed upon her superstructure atop which burns a fiercely blazing magical beacon. Her captain, Ada Moathreer (N female human **veteran**), and her small crew are frequently visited by the curious, the lost, or by those drawn by the astonishing harvest of whales and strange fish here.

The *Edge of Ruin's* crew appreciates visitors as they bring supplies and cheer to Ada, who for some curious reason loves it here. The combination of Ada's lively spirit and broad smile combined with the desperate location bring a curious calm to this frightfully elemental place. It is likely — those who have been here often say — that Ada has influenced the very nature of Between and created her own calm on the very edge of the storm.

Edge of the World, The

There is a point in the Unsea where the sea angers — a place that simply cannot be navigated. At its edge, a battered lightship of great size called *Edge of Ruin* heaves with an angry beacon at its top. The sea beyond the ship boils, a churning seething mass of whirlpools, tearing and grappling the ocean. It has been compared by many mariners with the great Tempest Meridians that separate the oceans of Lloegyr in two. A type of Between fish called query is a delicacy that is rarely caught but often seen here. Its presence draws many sailors who come for many miles to lay their nets out here on the verge of these destructive waters.

Great Whale, The

Not so much a place as a thing that is the size of a place, there is a thing of corrupt flesh that swallows ships and in whose belly sailors rot. Its gut is said to be larger than a town, and sailors are said to call out from within its colossal gullet as they slowly die or strive to live on the scraps of flesh and food devoured by the endless consumption of the Great Whale.

The Great Whale is indeed big enough to accommodate people living inside it, and these unwelcome squatters live within the rear parts of

the vast whale's mouth, dwelling in safe havens they have fashioned into crude fleshy dwellings that form air pockets whilst the whale is beneath the sea. They are not alone. So vast is the thing that lacedons — the undead remains of sailors who have lived and died here — also dwell within it. The sailors trapped in here have tried to escape the maw many times, but have so far always given up when confronted with the vastness of the Unsea. They pray that the vast creature one day will swallow a rowboat or enough timbers to lash together a raft that they can initiate plans to escape.

Scrimshaw

This maritime outpost sits upon (and within) a massive sea stack that rises from the waves of the Unsea. It has many connections to the city district of Town Bridge and serves as the headquarters of the Royal Unsea Whaling Company administered by the Lady Constance Thorn, Governor of Scrimshaw (N female human **noble**) under the authority of the Darnel family of Town Bridge. In truth, Scrimshaw is considered a city district of Castorhage in its own right. Scrimshaw is detailed further in Chapter 9 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***.

Scrimshaw Lamps

The Scrimshaw lamps are lighthouses constructed of whale bones — one of the most readily available building materials in the Unsea. They are four in number, and mark the edges of the thoroughly explored and relatively "safe" part of the Unsea. Each is lit by a bound ragefire elemental and manned by a keeper.



Frostrime

The north lamp bears an almost-constant patina of ice from the blowing spray of the turbulent seas. The frigid post is manned by Keeper Dobbs (N male street dwarf† **3commoner**) who was exiled here for crimes in the Capitol and given the choice of manning the lighthouse or being burned alive. Dobbs is slowly going mad and is being courted by the cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm. One day soon, they intend to extinguish the light and destroy the place.

The Choir

A small family occupies the western lamps. Uril Quod (N male human **commoner**) and his wife Ela (N female human **commoner**) have 5 children and are happy to bring them up away from the foul influences of civilisation. Loathe to see visitors, Quod does all he can to prevent contact with the outside world.

The Penance

The largest lighthouse is manned by the Sorrowful Man (N sentient **lesser flesh golem**†), a creature of twisted appearance that, like Quod, is happy in isolation. The Sorrowful Man does not loathe company, however; it loves it, but does not allow its sadness to consume it. Some captains love the twisted creature, which shows glimpses of a soul and which loves to read the books they bring.

Hope

Hope is the most southerly lamp and has been bent into a strangely curved shape by the storms that constantly pound its flanks. It seems like only a matter of time before it finally gives out and collapses. Its keeper, Dabrin Hodd (NE male **arcane assassin**†), is a lunatic and killer who preys on lone travellers and castaways. Hodd kills anyone he gets a chance to, seeking to add them to his Gift, which he is constructing in his cellar. The Gift is a living statue made of animated portions of multiple bodies, and which cries out and sobs for release or death.

Ships' Necropolis

At this slowing drifting location, the sea is choked with ships, an expansive, crushing mass of timbers and masts and prows making one place that stretches and rises across the sea swells. Mangy gulls call from its higher places, whilst its cliffs of wood are endlessly consumed by the sea and repaired, somehow remaining a single tangible thing. A beast known as The Brackish King (LE *Between vampire*†) rules the Ship's Necropolis. He is tended by his crew, some of whom are vampires, but many of which are lacedons or brine zombies. Undead seagulls and **vargouilles**† stalk its seaweed-throttled cliffs, and other more terrible undead lurk in its holds and bilges. Skulking far below the decks, hiding from the sight of men, is an aquatic corpse orgy. The Brackish King is able to draw ships from the bottom of the Unsea at will, doing so when he needs fresh corpses and new structures to twist and lash. His motives are otherwise unknown.

Turmoil, The

The greatest whirlpool in the Unsea, the Turmoil is more than just a natural phenomenon; it is, like many whirlpools here, alive. A bound swarm of dozens of elder Between water elementals, the Turmoil occasionally drifts across the waters to hunt, only to return to its usual place a year or so later.

Sailing the Unsea

The Unsea is a seething mass of storms, whirlpools, waterspouts and natural (and unnatural) terror. The weather itself here is an aspect of the Between; in other words, in places it is a living, thinking thing. Storms are

genuinely malevolent; waves do indeed deliberately try to swamp vessels, and hurricanes pluck sailors from ships. St. Elmo's fire dances off masts and annihilates whalers, and vast whales swallow ships whole.

Do not make the mistake, however, that the Unsea is cohesive or omnipotent. It is not, nor is it one single entity. The weather can slumber, its moods changing from fury to calm in an instant. The weather also sometimes works against enemies and monsters. The fractious nature of the Unsea gives you a complete guiding hand in events. If you want a whirlpool to open up beneath your characters' ship and drag them to gods know where, then do so. If you want a vast tidal wave to swallow Scrimshaw at the end of your campaign, do it.

Tales of the Unsea

There are always stories, but when the place is as wild and endless as the Unsea, and when the place is Between — a land that soaks up thoughts and fears and tales — it is always possible. That which is imagined becomes truth, and what is given a life in a story is given breath. Dreaming is dangerous here, almost as dangerous as imagining.

The stories below are the tip of the iceberg for such tales in the Unsea and are further detailed above. The tales are read aloud or paraphrased text that the characters may overhear in the Precarious†, learn about whilst visiting or sailing the Unsea, or even learn from the old songs of bards and storytellers in the city streets.

The Unsea is an elemental place that allows you to draw upon any folk, fairy or other tale you wish. A quick whisk through a group of legends of the sea could give you inspiration if it is needed. Here are a few ideas to give you some options.

Ships' Necropolis

"It is said that ships that sink in the Unsea surface a year or so later with their crews still aboard, and sail toward the Ships' Necropolis. Imagine a lichyard of broken ships that gather as a vast, sick island reeking of undeath, brine and misery. The ships — so those unlucky enough to have seen the place say — go on forever, slowly rotting in the grip of seaweed and barnacles and blasted by brine.

"It has a king, but no ordinary ruler, his blood is as cold as his heart, and he sucks the marrow from sailors who cross him, taking their flesh, their souls, and even their memories to his table. The Brackish King, they call him, a Between vampire king. The King sends the fronds of his terrible kingdom into the Unsea, looking for other ships to swell its population. If you come upon a cliff where there's no land, or the stench of brine and blood, or the call of lost sailors, set full sail and head away, for it could be the Ships' Necropolis."

The Turmoil

"Aye, the whirlpools in the Unsea are more than natural; they don't rise on high tides or anywhere you'd expect 'em. They appear where they want to, when the sea gets in a bad mood or the storm spoils for trouble. There are no whirlpools like those in the Unsea, vast black chasms that roar so loud that those who get too close go deaf or mad.

"The Turmoil, well that's one of the worst ones. The Turmoil is mad itself, you see, an insane spiralling madness of water a mile deep. Those that look at it die of fright, they say, and those that have heard it swear it calls out to them. He has his brides, does the Turmoil, twisted sick things that dance in the walls of water, screaming at those who can taste the clean air above."

The Great Whale

"Nothing is as big as the Great Unsea Whale; like a storm it is, like a great dark cloud dancing with waterspouts and tornadoes. They are her children, see. Those and the things of teeth and decay that circle the nadir beneath her gown of fetid water. Her bridal train is poison, and her hunger insatiable."

The Cataclysm

"The Cataclysm, oh yes, it's real, lass. There is a place where the Unsea falls into the nothingness of night, and that place extends its icy fingers to the seas for scores of miles around, once in its grip, there is no escape from the tides and storms."

Unsea Weather

Unpredictable in the extreme, Unsea weather can change in an instant. One thing, however, is always consistent; the sun never glimpses through the clouds. It goes dark - sometimes disturbingly dark, but the sun never shines directly on the Unsea.

Storms of incredible fury whip out of nowhere, driving ships off course, not that most ships have a course — captains simply follow their instincts. Ship loss rates are incredibly high, and were it not for the ease of the harvest here, the sea would be considered un-navigable.

In the Unsea, weather tends to follow fairly set types, ranging from overcast skies where rain, hail, sleet, and snow are regularly encountered. Powerful storms can occur at any time, and waterspouts are commonly seen. Fog is a constant problem on the Unsea, and banks of it can settle on ships for weeks. Temperatures are always at least cold, and often much lower, and occasionally the sea freezes or strange isles of ice race past, or into, ships.

Unique Weather Encounters

A place driven by forces of nature and thriving upon moods gives you another angle to approach adventures on the Unsea: the bizarre weather

Where are the Random Weather Tables?

Some people love to have charts of random weather effects, and the charts within the game master's guide are useful. However, I've decided not to include random weather charts, nor chances for things like capsizing or being crushed by tidal waves here. The simple reasoning behind this is that if you want the characters to be capsized and end up washed onto some random ship full of intrigue and cutthroats, or if you wish the players to be washed under a tidal wave and thrown into gods know where, then do so. Randomly assigning chances at a gaming table for something that has such a major effect seems counter-productive to me.

Never overplay your powers, however. Giving character's a slim chance through skill to save NPCs, cargo or avoid encounters is good; driving characters in a direction you wish could quickly become boring.

If you like the implied randomness of such charts, then plenty are available out there, they just don't form part of my thinking. Don't ignore the effects of weather, however. Battling a dragon turtle in mountainous seas or in thick fog adds another dimension to an otherwise potentially bland encounter.

—Rich

event. A quick check of the internet brings up some inspiring video and photographic footage of some incredible things. Magnify them in the Unsea. A couple of possibilities are presented below.

Frozen Sea

The sea becomes progressively icier until it eventually freezes. Does the ice herald the arrival of some creature come to hunt, or does the morale of the crew, or any hidden NPC troublemakers (or monsters), suddenly take front stage, bringing a totally unexpected twist to an adventure that could be about hunting, exploration, or curiosity?

Eye of the Storm

The storm goes on for days, but suddenly the ship enters the eye, a vast calm region of sea. Something exists in this eye: either a floating ship town, a creature, or perhaps something stranger.

Navigating the Unsea

Most sailors know an old tale about the best way to navigate the Unsea, carrying a potato or fish head or cork for luck and then, if they get lost, tossing it into the sea and seeing which way it floats. That way is sure to be home.

The Between compass is a relatively new invention and has been of limited success. *Speak with animals* (if animals can be found) is sometimes useful but often infuriating. Most wise captains rely on magic. Spells such as *find the path* used to chart a course are a lifesaver here, and those rare spellcasters of high enough level to cast it are sometimes found amongst Unsea whaling crews and paid well for their services. Other spells or combinations of spells have been used to assist in navigation, and the art of navigation on the Unsea (and anywhere in the Between for that matter) is the subject of magical research. *Know direction* tends to be useless in a place that just doesn't have a north, whilst flying or teleporting have inherent risks of weather and the chance of ending up somewhere badly wrong.

Land in the Unsea

There are several tidal stacks rising from the Unsea to soar high over the waves. Scrimshaw arguably occupies the most famous of these. Other examples of these rocks are often impossible to land on and are home to vast flocks of mangy gulls. Occasionally, strange and alien structures suffocate these isles. These structures are often surrounded or within great henges.

Sometimes an island rises from the sea and stays for a night, a day, a season, a hundred years. The whaler's call these places the "Land of the Young." Sometimes they are occupied by Between creatures, sometimes they are abandoned and empty of all life.

Unsea Equipment

The unique and hostile nature of the Unsea calls for many types of specialised equipment in order to successfully navigate its waters. Typical types of equipment used by Unsea sailors as well as innovative devices developed specifically for navigation are described below. These items can be obtained in Scrimshaw and frequently in Town Bridge as well.

Item	Cost	Weight
Ambergris	50–500 gp/lb	—
Ambergris, memory	1,000–1,500 gp/lb.	—
Bell, ship's great	200 gp	100 lbs.
Compass, Between	1,000 gp	4 lbs.
Fishing tackle, Unsea	25 gp	10 lbs.
Foul-weather gear	20 gp	8 lbs.
Harpoon ballista	800 gp	70 lbs.
Lantern, ship's great	75 gp	20 lbs.
Lodeprow	10,000 gp	60 lbs.
Shipskin, Unsea	varies	varies
Spermaceti	10 gp/gallon	—
Spyglass, greater	2,500 gp	1 lb.
Waggoner, Unsea	500 gp	5 lbs.
Whaler's longcoat, whale-wax	200 gp	8 lbs.

Ambergris: A waxy substance produced in the intestinal tract of whales, ambergris is used in perfumery as a fixative and occasionally in cooking.

Ambergris, memory: Some ambergris harvested from certain Unsea whales somehow contains the memories of the beast it was taken from and when properly distilled is similar in function to a *Between vessel*. Memory ambergris described in Appendix A of ***L3: Sea's End*** of ***The Levee*** adventure.

Bell, ship's great: A great bell is mounted to the deck of a ship and when struck can be heard over a distance of 3 miles. It is heard over greater distances with a successful DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check per mile thereafter. Weather conditions affect the audibility.

Compass, Between: Created as a pair of heavy brass and gold instruments, the compass and the lodestone. A Between compass does not show normal directional bearings but rather has a single indicator noting the direction of that compass's paired lodestone. The lodestone is usually left at port to allow a course home to be charted. Beyond 100 miles, the reliability of the compass diminishes with a 20% chance at any given time of a reading being incorrect by several degrees for 1d4 hours.

Fishing tackle, Unsea: A bewildering array of rods, large nets and things with hooks that are used to catch fish in the Unsea. Such tools are for use in the Unsea only, and are in general too large to be used on more mundane seas.

Foul-weather gear: Heavy waxed clothing including an overcoat, hat and waterproofed trousers that provide some water and wind resistance, but protection from the cold equal to a cold-weather outfit as well.

Harpoon ballista: This is a standard ballista modified to fire harpoons with attached chains. The chains are usually 2 inches thick and 100 feet long. They are anchored to the ship's deck by an iron hook.

Lantern, ship's great: Usually mounted to a ship's mast or deck, a ship's great lantern projects a cone of light over a distance of a 120-foot cone and provides dim light beyond that out to a 240-foot cone. A great ship's lantern burns for 1 hour per pint of fuel oil and has a 1-gallon reservoir.

Lodeprow: Storms of the Unsea are extremely violent and electrically charged. To save their masts, Unsea captains travel with a lodeprow. A lodeprow is a sheaf of lead and iron attached to the prow of a sailing ship that draws lightning strikes to it and then harmlessly disperses them into the surrounding sea by means of a series of conducting channels along the ship's hull. *Lightning bolt* and other electricity spells are drawn to the hefty lodeprow only if cast from in front of or above the ship.

Shipskin, Unsea: Shipskin is special outer attachments designed to prevent capsizing during the worst Unsea storms (see sidebox).

Spermaceti: A waxy substance produced in a cranial organ of Unsea whales and some other species as well. When harvested, spermaceti is used in a variety of ways from clean-burning lamp oil to soothing ointments and candle wax.

Spyglass, greater: Objects viewed through a greater spyglass are magnified to four times their size. Characters using such a spyglass may have a difficult time with some Perception checks involving sight (optional)..

Waggoner, Unsea: A collection of captain's notes and nautical charts of the Unsea, an Unsea waggoner is indispensable to an Unsea ship. Created by the Royal Unsea Whaling Company and sold only to those captains licensed through their auspices, the waggoner is the most accurate means of navigating the perilous geography of the Unsea. When using an Unsea waggoner, the chance of being misled by a Between compass (see above) is reduced to 10% at the time of the check. With a waggoner alone, the chance of plotting an accurate course in the Unsea is 75%.

Unsea Shipskin

The threat of being swamped with the Unsea's violent waves or tipped to such a degree that the deck is directly exposed to the crashing surf are all too real when sailing upon the Unsea, and both hazards bring with them the danger of a ship foundering as its decks fill with seawater. As such, no self-respecting Unsea captain would venture onto the belligerent waves without the precaution of an Unsea shipskin.

This unique nautical construct is a cover of waxed tarpaulin stretched on a durable frame of wood and iron that is custom crafted to cover much of the main deck of a ship. The cover is specifically designed to close off exposed portholes, hatches, and gangways without interfering with movement by sailors upon the deck itself. Entry is achieved by crawling into one of the covered points of entry. In rough seas, gaining access to one of these entrances requires a DC 10 Dexterity check *and* half of the character's total movement.

The utility of the shipskins, though, is that they severely inhibit the ability of large amounts of water rapidly to gain access through these points of ingress. In rough seas with waves that routinely reach peaks of 20–30 feet or more, the chance of taking on too much water and beginning to sink is 40% for an unprotected ship. A ship with an Unsea shipskin reduces this chance to a mere 5%. Even a ship capsized by weather or the attack of some large sea creature has a 35% chance to right itself in the round following the attack.

An Unsea shipskin is normally stowed in a locker on the main deck and can be deployed reasonably fast.

The construction of an Unsea shipskin costs one-tenth of the price of the entire vessel when built, and takes 1 week per 1,000 gp to fit. Only a few noted shipwrights in Scrimshaw have the knowledge to create these specialised covers

Whaler's longcoat, whale-wax: The finest quality seal fur treated with an alchemically enhanced spermaceti, this bulky longcoat protects a sailor from both the cold and the wet of a sea voyage. It provides protection from cold equal to a cold-weather outfit, and items placed in its inside pockets are protected from water exposure as long as the coat is not fully immersed. In addition, though it is not considered armour, it does provides an armour bonus of 1 because of its thickness and rigidity. It can be worn over light armour, providing the unusual benefit that its armour bonus will stack with that of any armour worn underneath (including *bracers of armour*), though its armour check penalty stacks as well.

Unsea Menagerie

The Unsea teems with life — very strange life. The Between twists the form of those things within it, and the environment around the creature affects it in a greatly accelerated way. **Part 6** contains a number of creature stat blocks, while below some Unsea inhabitants are given a more general treatment. In general, the creatures below conform to their standard stats in the game manual and other source materials, many with the *Between creature*† template as described in **Part 6**. It is all too true that the variety of creatures encountered in the Between is uncountable, and the Unsea is no exception.

Aboleths

Aboleths are, unfortunately, commonly found throughout the Unsea. They almost always have a Between Creature template or subtype. The aboleths come in a variety of types and sizes, and their growth in the Unsea does not seem to be something that ends. The **spiboleth**† is one horrific example of their variety that has its origins in the Unsea. As an aboleth's intellect increases, so does its size and the effects that its specialised knowledge has upon its physiology. An aboleth from the Unsea that studied necromancy, for example, would likely be partially rotted with large areas of necrotic flesh on its hide — a creature that should not and possibly cannot live.

Afancs

Afancs are the sea monsters that sailors talk about when spinning tales of the sea. They are the creatures responsible for entire fleets and crews being lost or destroyed. They are thought by many to be the "kings" of the sea as most other water-dwellers pale in comparison both in strength and size to the mighty afanc.

It is theorized that Afancs are very likely the cause for some of the lesser whirlpools in the Unsea, and bold Unsea captains have killed at least three afancs here. In other confrontations with the creatures, ships have been less lucky, and those afancs continue to roam the Unsea holding a grudge against the harpoon-firing interlopers that sail above.

Anglers

Lurking just below the surface of the water, anglers come in all shapes and sizes. From the tiny parasitic choking angler that seeks to enter the throats of its victims to feed and expand until it suffocates its prey, to the rumours of glimpsed horrors of the deep such as the wretched shadow angler that casts a black globe of pure darkness. Or the vile endemic angler, whose light causes those who glimpse it to sicken, allowing the fish to attack them, and even the vast goliath angler, said to be twice the size of the biggest whalers. Some are convinced that the various anglers are the pawns of aboleths, and many believe that Castorhage's own unique Lyme angler† is merely one more offshoot of this prolific genus.

Gulls, mangy

The air on the Unsea is alive with vast flocks of ugly, mangy gulls who appear to be half-starved and missing many of their feathers. They eat anything organic in nature, and if they get very hungry, have been known to infest whaling vessels and attack their crew or even chew on the tough wooden planks of their hulls if they can find a secluded spot within which to nest. Gull hunts through the lower decks are something that every wise Unsea captain orders at least once a year to ensure that none of the pesky intruders have compromised the integrity of his ship's hull.

Merfolk

Remains of mermaids occasionally wash up in and around the Unsea, so mermaids must exist somewhere although no one has encountered one. **Merfolk** do, conversely, appear in the Great Lyme River, though whether they have entered it and ultimately the Unsea from the seas beyond Castorhage or vice versa has yet to be determined.

Sahuagin

The **sahuagin** of the Unsea are reticent about contact. Evidence of their presence has been seen by experts and explorers, but so far they have not been encountered in any significant numbers. On the few occasions that they have been encountered, it has been seen that the incidence of mutation within their population is high. Whether this propensity for mutation extends to a higher incidence of malenti is unknown, but so far, aquatic elves have yet to be encountered in the Unsea. If there is a malenti-like mutation for the Unsea sahuagin, it's possible that it takes some other humanoid form.

Sea Serpents

Vast sea serpents are often seen on the Unsea and come in all shapes and sizes. Brine sea serpents are regularly spotted, and **fanged sea serpent**† has been on the menu at the Precarious. Deep hunter sea serpents and shipbreaker sea serpents have so far, mercifully, been the subject of sailors' stories rather than verified encounters — unless those encounters have all ended with the complete loss of the ship and its crew, which of course is always a possibility when dealing with these monstrosities.



Sharks

Sharks of all sizes, but generally very large sharks and dire sharks, are seen in the Unsea. The physiology of sharks is curiously altered by Between and almost all have the *Between creature*† template.

Skum

Skum are common in the depths of the Unsea. They are the slaves of the aboleths who created them and regard the men who have arrived in the Unsea as invaders who must be destroyed. They regularly attack ships and occasionally land-bound outposts. Curiously, the Unsea skum almost never demonstrate the effects of the *Between creature*† template as if their artificial creation at the hands of the aboleths has somehow resisted the normal influence of Between.

Squids

Squids are a regular sight in the Unsea, from the more commonly seen smaller varieties to vast ship-crushers of impossible size and twisted bodies. Giant squids are common, and even larger creatures are regularly reported by whalers. Squids show a worrying cohesion and sophistication of tactics unusual for their species. Ordinary squids frequently swarm onto sailors who fall into the Unsea, tearing them to pieces in a frenzy. And sometimes they sacrifice themselves in huge numbers to fulfil some unknown purpose or even to carry out some act of seemingly appalling cruelty on other sea creatures as if they bore a sentience and evil far beyond that expected in a cephalopod. Unsurprisingly, the Unsea whaler is convinced that there is more to the local squid than meets the eye.

Sunfish, Terrible

The terrible sunfish is always at least the size of a house and often much bigger. These creatures are unlike their more mundane kin; they have much larger mouths and more ferocious appetites. They are also as dark as shadows, and attacks by them often occur without warning.

Awakened Creatures

Bear in mind that spontaneously *awakened*† animals and plants are common in the Between as an extension of the land's (and sea's) own heightened awareness. All such creatures display an extremely high cleverness and attendant cruelty.

Turtles

The largest turtles spill into the Unsea, and like everything in Between, these creatures are expanded to almost ridiculous size and cunning. Dragon turtles, giant bog turtles and turtle sharks have all been reported and, less commonly, cooked. Such turtle meat commands a very high price back in Castorhage. A curiously sad creature known as the mock turtle has also been encountered in the Unsea. This creature has an almost human countenance and is able to spread misery and despair with its mere presence.

Walrus, Fearsome

The rarely encountered but formidably large fearsome walrus has a vile temper and has been known to even attack ships when provoked. These creatures are believed to be a larger, aggressively atavistic version of the equally rare **Lyme walrus**†.

Weird Fish

There seems to be no end to the shape, size, and hue of the different species of Unsea fish. Things with several heads or bloated bodies like balls, things without mouths, and things that are manic thrashing hordes of tentacles are so regularly seen by Unsea whalers that they become inured to the effects of seeing yet another thing that should not actually be able to live. A favourite is the query that swims in schools in the vicinity of the Edge of the World. Though they resemble a 2-foot-long fluke-tailed cricket with spiky, prehensile antennae and an external intestinal sac, the disgusting-looking fish are delicious and considered a rare delicacy in Scrimshaw and Castorhage alike (though customers are rarely allowed to see them unfilleted and in their natural state for the sake of business).

Whales

Whales are the reason the Unsea is so busy with invaders from Castorhage. They are of great variety but generally conform in one common aspect: their size. Unsea whales are massive, and massive whales are profitable to the ship captains that harvest them and the rendering plants that sell their constituent parts. Types of whales encountered here include baleen whales, sperm whales, great white whales, killer whales, blue whales, crimson whales, faceless whales, and the extremely dangerous **wallow-whale**†. There are even rumours of the extremely rare and elusive deep singer whale, though these have yet to be confirmed. One more commonality is that Between whales are intelligent, and proving to be an increasingly elusive — and more often aggressive — prey.

Wyverns

Despite the relative lack of land, wyverns are regularly seen and often attack ships. They seem to have an innate ability to locate and colonise the many sea stacks scattered across the sea and use them to nest and hunt. Types of wyverns include the typical variety as well as fork-tailed wyverns, nocturnal wyverns, and even the thankfully rare barbtongued wyverns. Almost all wyverns of the Unsea also have the *Between creature*† template applied. Most wise whalers carry at least one ballista aboard with normal ammunition rather than harpoons in order to deal with the unwanted attentions of a wyvern or the dreaded flight of wyverns.

Through the Glass Darkly: GMing Between

Travel By Magic

"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."
"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.
"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."
—Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Between is a curious thing, perhaps even a curious entity; despite several attempts to tame the methods of travel to the place, access to this netherworld remains annoyingly unpredictable.

Travel to Between using spells such as *gate*, *plane shift*, and *astral projection* fail to penetrate its heart, and even those mirrors that usually offer reliable access to Between can fail (sometimes with catastrophic results for the user). The simplest way to enter Between is to know a threshold, or to enhance it by use of special mirrors and techniques known only to a handful — and even those experts very often fail, with terrible results.

Travel within Between is similarly unpredictable, and use of spells such as *dimension door* and *teleport* have led to appalling tragedies. All spells of this nature cast to travel within Between operate with the same chances of failure as a *teleport* spell, with the caster assumed to be heading for a "false destination." Results on the percentile dice of 80% or below indicate the spell has functioned normally while those of 81% or more suffer the effects indicated.



Known affected spells included *arcane gate, astral projection*, *dimension door*, *etherealness*, *gate*, *plane shift*, *teleport* (all versions), *transport via plants, tree stride*, and *word of recall*. Other spells are affected at your discretion.

Casting spells such as *magnificent mansion* and *rope trick* may also have their inter-dimensional space affected by this quality, and where a mishap is indicated, either have an unexpected occupant already in the space or have the space become something twisted and useless, perhaps even dangerous.

Some areas of Between are subject to localised effects as well. For example, some casters find it impossible to use *wind walk* in given areas due to storms, while others find summoning monsters either brings twisted dead things or ravenous killers that obey no one.

The exception to these rules are Between thieves. These daring (some would say foolhardy) rogues use Between as a way of travel and escape, and their Between-related powers always work as indicated. However, even a Between thief with class levels as a spellcaster who attempts to cast one of the above-mentioned spells is subject to the warping of its effects.

The Mirror Voyager: What Between is Like

Between is as much a feeling as a place, and when emotions become the fabric of a curious land the possibilities for danger are greatly enhanced. Sailors, anxious as they voyage the Unsea, report several curious phenomena: storms appearing from nowhere, dark shapes beneath the bow of a ship, or a sudden dreadful calm. Between is a place that changes like a person's mood, and it has been conjectured that even nightmares are able to breathe life from those explorers foolhardy enough to come there.

Although it has geography, that geography is fluid, and sometimes no logic exists for the way the place changes, where a vast rainforest abuts a glacier, which in turn hides a warm ocean. The geography within these areas is also able to change to a limited degree, and some have suggested that Between is actually like a living dream or nightmare of itself, where logic sometimes follows, but not always.

Between is like an adult fairyland, a place of nightmares and dreams that has its own thoughts and wants. It is alive, and everything in it is alive, constantly leaching thoughts and dreams and hungers and fears from around it, becoming one consciousness broken by a thousand madnesses.

Here are a few other suggestions to bear in mind for GMing an adventure here:

The Awakened Land: Think of Between not just as a place, but as an extension of everything within it. A jungle, for example, in Between is not just an ordinary jungle; it is a collage of all of its lifeforms: the hunger of the predator, the fear of the prey, the boiling heat of the day, and the power of the monsoon. It is like nature, but nature *exploded.*

Dreams and Nightmares Come True: Play upon a visitor's fears; they hear noises nearby, the night air boils with strange calls, a Between ruin echoes with ghosts that whisper and cry in misery.

Everything Is Alive: Play this how you wish. Do the plants in Between become dangerous? Are the trees thinking? Do awakened animals or strange monsters plot against intruders?

Have Some Disturbed Internal Logic: Night should follow day, but is the day unnaturally short? Does the night last a day, a week, a month?

Twisted Geography: Think of Between as a jumbled jigsaw, where some pieces do not fit together. Some pieces do not link, so travel between

The Mirror Knights

Sworn to protect Castorhage from horrors of Between, several groups of valiant, and perhaps not-so-valiant but sufficiently greedy knights, warriors and duellists have come together to form societies aiming to protect the people of the city-state from supernatural invasion. The most famous of these groups, the Mirror Knights, is made up of hunters who fearlessly track creatures that come from Between. Aided by Between thieves, these warriors track and kill the creatures mercilessly using a variety of hunting methods, from subtle stalking to packs of bloodthirsty mastiffs.

them is impossible under normal circumstances. Think about how such a place ends? Does a jungle simply end at cliffs that vanish into haze, or does a sick mist settle upon the jungle, drawing characters back to where they started? A rudimentary map of sorts of Between is provided in ***The Blight Map Folio***, but its layout is a best guess by the often-conflicting tales of various explorers. It serves as a suggestion of an "averaging" of the geography of the realms of Between and is by no means intended as an accurate depiction of the exact topography.

Tragedies of Between

In addition to the many dangerous encounters to be had in Between, the strange realm brings its own inherent dangers that simply seem to manifest merely by extended (or sometimes not-so-extended) contact with its strangeness

'Tween Blight

The most terrible of ailments can be drawn through the tiny threads of *mirror-portals* and into the city, terrible diseases that permanently bend the human form into a twisted caricature, much like the nature of Between itself.

The whispered names of diseases such as strickenback, slynesplinters, or madlands regularly make the rounds of gossip, but none of them has yet been isolated by the physikers of Castorhage and proven to be truly a preternatural illness from beyond. It is supposed by many that such known maladies as **derange**, **dislocating larva**, and **second-head fluke** must surely have originated in the twisted womb of beyond. Even the eponymous **blight** seems highly suspect to be of something other than mundane terrestrial origin. One ailment that is known to have originally been introduced to Castorhage from Between is the boiling pox. Though rare, its manifestation is distinct and always tragic. Remove disease does not work upon it, and it is so infectious that the merest hint of its taint is likely to draw a group of Mirror Knights to isolate or even — if the victim is lucky — despatch the afflicted poor soul.

Long-Term Effects of Between Exposure

A final note is warranted regarding the hazards of braving the perils of Between. Sometimes its long-term repercussions are a bit more insidious, though no less dangerous. Some frequent Between travellers have reported catching a glimpse of doppelgangers of themselves, of being stalked by a sinister twin or of waking up with a shadowy figure at the foot of their bed. In fact, some more learned on matters Between have suggested that Sir Donnan Grabe confessed on his deathbed to being a Between impostor.

The Spiteful

The Spiteful is a conspiracy of Between fey and foul shapechangers who wish to invade and conquer Castorhage right under the noses of its people. They seek to do this through subversion by means of introducing changeling spite-waifs into the cribs of certain of the city's new parents as a means to breed a generation of Between doppelgangers (**doppleganger** with the *Between creature*† template applied) who control the reins of power within the city. It is entirely possible that The Spiteful play some role in the mysterious motives of the Lands of the Echo Queen (q.v.) but no substantive connection has yet been found.

Coincidentally, one of the only groups within the city that is aware of this secret group and its motives are doppelganger spies of The Veil. They have reported the machinations of this group to their master, **Grand Justice Braken**†, but he has yet to move overtly against their incursion. It should be noted that certain other individuals of Castorhage have become aware of The Spiteful menace at times in the past and have seen fit to declare their own crusades against its corrupting influence upon the city. More information on The Spiteful and their activities in Castorhage can be found ***TB3: Bloody Jack*** by **Frog God Games**

Between Disease: Boiling Pox

Boiling Pox
Type diseaseInfection inhaled, contact, ingested
Save DC 18 Constitution to prevent infection
Incubation Speed Fast, pustules begin to form within 24 hours of infection; eruption follows within 4 hours
Effect 1d4 Charisma and/or 1d4 Dexterity drain
Cure 3 consecutive successful saving throws (see below); *greater restoration* or *wish* spell

Victims of this painful, highly virulent infection develop red angry sores over their whole body, intense cramping of the muscles, and a very high fever. When touched, these sores cause intense, agonising pain and make every movement painful. As the disease progresses, the angry red pustules begin to erupt, showering anyone within 10 feet with infectious blood and pus (DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being hit with fluid). Additionally, the victim's bones start to soften and bend, often leaving a distorted remnant of what was once a humanoid creature. The damage to the victim isn't only physical, however. The victim's psyche can be harshly impacted by the agonising pain and very high fever caused by the disease.

Each day the victim suffers from the boiling pox, they must make a Constitution saving throw. When a successful saving throw is made, the DC of the saving throw is reduced by 1d4 for the next attempt, indicating that the victim's immune system is starting to fight back against the infection. For example, Zhern makes his saving throw on DC 18 on day 1. The next day he would need to make a saving throw with a DC of (18 – 1d4), which would be a DC range of 14-17. If he rolled a 3 on a d4, he would need to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw on day 2. This repeats for every day a successful save is made until there have been 3 successes in a row, or the DC reaches 0 and the infection abates. A failed saving throw does not increase the DC.

Each day the victim fails their saving throw, they lose 1d4 Charisma points from the physical damage the pox does to their body. There is also a 25% chance (a roll of 1 on a d4) they will incur 1d4 Dexterity damage from the softening of their bones (commonly called *osteomalacia*) as the infection slowly begins to spread beyond the soft tissue. The victim dies if they are reduced to 0 Charisma or Dexterity. The reduction lasts until the victim finishes a short or long rest and no longer suffers from the boiling pox.

If the victim suffers from the boiling pox for more than 3 days, there will be a 50% chance (a result of 3 or lower on a d6) that they suffer some form of madness from the intense pain they experience and from the very high fever induced by the infection. Consult the rules on madness in the game manual to determine how the ordeal affects the victim.

Unfortunately, boiling pox has proven to be completely resistant to *lesser restoration* and *heal*, and only seems to be cleansed by *greater restoration* or *wish*.



Part Six: The Blight Bestiary



Things: The Creatures of Castorhage

Many "common" monsters are to be found cowering in the gloom of the city — sea devils and wererats are some of the most common — but here one may encounter nagas and rakshasas, sphinxes, hags, bugbears, golems, ghouls, chaos beasts and demons as well as many others. Some creatures walk the streets wearing human form, others skulk beneath piers and in the Underneath waiting for the sun to set before walking the streets, and some are seen as little more than nuisances or even valuable servants or pets.

Animals

As the city teems with life — both human and unhuman — so too it teems with animals, be they beast for fodder or companionship, watch, or pest. Birds soar above gables, from the great black **Blight albatross**† and the **gable hate-owl**† to the **hooded ravens**† and **blindingcrows**† to the smaller birds, particularly the ever-present **canaries**† with their singing voices, which warn of death, the Lyme thrush, the gable-sparrow and the tiny moth-wren. Dogs are a common pet, particularly in the rougher areas of the city. Among the most prized are the **terriers**, which come in a hundred shapes and breeds and are much prized for killing rats and other vermin. Every gentleman or crook these days seems to have a fighting dog on a leash — from the **Blight-bull**† to the huge **pit-mastiff**†.

Cats are seen less, and certain fanciful dim-witted individuals have even gone so far as to say that all the normal cats were killed in a single night by an army of cats from Between. These **Between-Cats**† are, allegedly, ruled by an emperor who has some alien plot in mind for the city. Clearly, this is so much hokum. Despite the many cats, rats are everywhere, and come in all shapes and sizes as well, from the vile **Festering Lyme rat**† with its mangy body covered in lice to the much feared (almost legendary) Giant Rat of Shabbis, a mercifully rare foreign visitor to the shores of Castorhage who brings plague in its wake.



The City of Thinking Animals

One of the many anomalies given to the city of Castorhage is a proportionally huge populace of awakened animals. Some have conjectured that the awakening has some connection to the Between, and that the frequent violations into that domain by locals have led to a bleeding of the essence of this land into the city. This has also been blamed for the rise in sentient animated objects — clocks that refuse to chime, **mortomata**† that kill the children they are supposed to entertain, and **fleshgines**† that mysteriously crush their masters or pull all their limbs off. Others attribute the unusual manifestation of intelligence to centuries of breeding and training, stating that some great evolutionary advance in animal intellect may one day take place because of this.

Strangely, apes of all types are seen in the city — no doubt due to its long and extensive history of trade with and colonisation of Libynos — and so many have escaped from collectors that monkeys and apes are now common. The **Blight apes**† and **Blight monkeys**† are uncannily alert, and many are able to perform incredible feats of intelligence. In addition, no self-respecting organ grinder is without his monkey, or vice-versa.

Stock animals are plentiful — cattle, sheep and goats — as well as chickens, geese and dodos, which are often seen in city knackers-yards awaiting slaughter. Dodo is very much an acquired taste, either being loved or loathed, and some eating-houses specialise in preparing the bird with a whole raff of available recipes. The awkward birds are also raised for their large eggs. And there are pigs, a vast number of pigs, some of which, like the Great Fayre pig racers, are said to be able to talk and reason among men.

The popularity of private menageries in the latter 17th and early 18th-century R.C. assured that escapees were common, and a whole host of bizarre creatures still hunts in the night. Some of these have developed local legends: the **BookTown Panther**†, the **Great Canal Python**†, and the **Hollow and Broken Hills Crocodile**† are but a few of the hundreds of beasts that stalk the city.

Dark Fey

Though not a part of the natural world, Between is certainly a reflection of it. This includes a propensity toward attracting the sylvan creatures of the natural world and the presence of many fey within its strange borders. Whether these fey are unnatural manifestations of Between itself, examples of the darker types of fey in the natural world that are just attracted to Between's presence, or simply fey who have become trapped in Between and warped by its dark presence is unclear. Perhaps it is all of the above. In any case, the presence of these dark fey is indisputable and they exist in a relatively large concentration in and around the city of Castorhage as a result.

Inhabitants of the Lyme

That anything lives in the black dead, alchemically seething waters of the polluted heart of the city is remarkable in itself. However, the river teems with aggressive predators that feed upon the slops and flotsam, peelings, and corpses of cats, rats, dogs, and people that fall into the Lyme daily. **Sough-eels**† with their slick white bodies and gnawing secondary jaws are frequently seen, **Lyme anglers**† — more commonly known as slop-sharks — with their terrible diseased bites and bodies like sacks of flesh waiting to burst hide in the shallows. **Wallow-whales**† swim the deepest areas, their cathedral-like wan bodies searching for prey, their throats lined with ragged bone beyond which lies the Church of Jobe — the stomach maw of the whale allegedly once home to a sea devil. **Bog lanterns**† wriggle in the gloom, their luminescent bodies like the lamps of the Lyme anglers. The seldom seen **Lyme walrus**†, with its barbed tusks and sinful lies, a creature that sheds its skin and becomes human when it attempts to secure a bride, is just one more predator that watches the shore from the river's depths.

Monsters Unique to the Blight

The fungi of Castorhage is more alive than it ought to be. The bestial polypore, a malevolent symbiosis of beast and plant, grow in the evening and spend the night looking for people to infest. More terrible is **blight** itself, a peculiar intelligent lichen able to take over whole streets in a single night and suffocate them, and only kept at bay by the constant vigilance of brave Blight Knights — hunters who walk the streets at night armed with alchemic fire bellows. Some say blight originally inhabited the city but was driven deep below; some believe that the blight will rise again en masse and absorb the entire population. One thing is sure, the city gained its nickname for it, whether she likes it or not. It is also the more common name of a creature known simply as the **Body Snatcher**, a hive thing that dwarves say lurks in the Between roots at the very bottom of the Underneath.

The most uncommon dray is a **hyme**†, which the cab companies find to be fast, tireless, and above all obedient. And whilst occasionally hymes go on the rampage and eat a few people, mostly these matters are hushed up by the guilds and masonic groups. A hyme resembles a child's nightmare: it is only passingly equestrian, a slick creature of blackness that walks in a lopping stride but which is capable of great speeds when needs be. More importantly, everything gets out of its way.

There are many, many creatures unique to the Blight, from the foul **Blight naga**† to the **night-slug**†, humanoids that dwell between walls. Not all things have a name and it is sure that many, many things are yet to be discovered and catalogued.

Pestilences and Parasites

The most common monsters are the smallest in the city — the lice and infestations, sicknesses, and disease. In so crowded and twisted and filthy a city, naturally they thrive. Couple that with the abnormal proximity of Between and illness becomes something even worse than those usually encountered. A few of the better known and understood of these hazards are derange, dislocating larvae, and the alarmingly grotesque second-head fluke.

Scrimshaw Gargoyles

In its heyday, Castorhage was famed for many things, and the **scrimshaw gargoyles**† were one of them. These delicate figures are thought to have been created centuries ago as watchers to aid the local constabulary — spies and guards — whispering in their eyries. Time has taken its toll on the whalebone constructs, and now they number fewer than 50, having been taken, destroyed, or worn to nothing by the constant wind high above the city. Each scrimshaw gargoyle is different, both in size and design, but they share some features: They are carved from delicate whalebone covered in strange sigils, many of the writings have faded, and now lichens and grime cling to their once statuesque bodies. They are also very much aware.

Double-Headed Dran

Second-head fluke is a horrible thing to look upon, with a cankerous second pseudo-head sprouting next to the victim's own head, and urban myth states that some of these pseudo-heads develop their own minds and learn to talk. The most famous of these legendary second-head fluke cases is said to be Double-Headed Dran (1672–1699). This poor sailor developed a pseudo-head which was so vile and vicious that it would attempt to attack anyone who came within reach, even spitefully gnawing upon the side Dran's own head from time to time. In an attempt to rid himself of the foul growth, Dran cut off the head with a knife, only to bleed to death shortly thereafter. Dran's pseudo-head is preserved in the Royal University of Surgeons in the Seminary.

Shapechangers

There is a wererat plague within the city, and in places, the predominant population is these lycanthropes and their rat allies, which come in a dizzying array of varieties and sizes. The rats are by far the most prodigious of shapechangers, but there are many, many others lurking unseen in the glare of the city streets.

Spiders

Many types of arachnids call the sprawl of the city home. **Gable spiders**† are common, as are the more mundane breeds of monstrous spiders, with the much rarer **chymic spiders**† and **phase spiders** being reported only occasionally. Regardless of breed, all the spiders of the city tend to have two things in common: They are almost always invariably big and fast, and they generally live among the city's gables and rooftops. Occasionally, great webs or skeins of cords, rags, and less pleasant things spring up between buildings, and steeplejacks and roofers, or more usually gablemaesters, are paid great sums in comparison to other labourers because of the nature of their jobs and the danger the spiders pose.

Stitched Things

Easily the most common type of "thing" seen in the city are the stitched and remade creatures: golems, homunculi, fleshgines, necrocrafts* and other created creatures. They are a daily sight, lifting, carrying, and guarding.

*A necrocraft is a medley of undead body parts and corpses grafted together with dark magic to create a single animated undead creature with abilities based on its component pieces and the surgical and necromantic talents of its creator. Necrocrafts are better suited for brute force than delicate manipulation, and most creators build larger hulks rather than smaller, more agile (and fragile) necrocrafts. Though necrocrafts can be of virtually any size and can be made up of undead bodies or parts of any size, a typical specimen is 7 feet tall and weighs 250 pounds.

The Tome of Horrors Complete Creatures

Eneerg the Keeper's seminal work — the *Infernal Tome*, or *The Tome of Horrors Complete* — lists many terrible creatures that can be found above, below or upon the streets of Castorhage. A few of the more commonly known are listed here.

Bone cobblers are said to make up an entire caste of the Fetch, and their many lairs have inspired some of the more perverted and wicked artists in the city. Some speculate that these artists actually encourage the cobblers in their collecting.

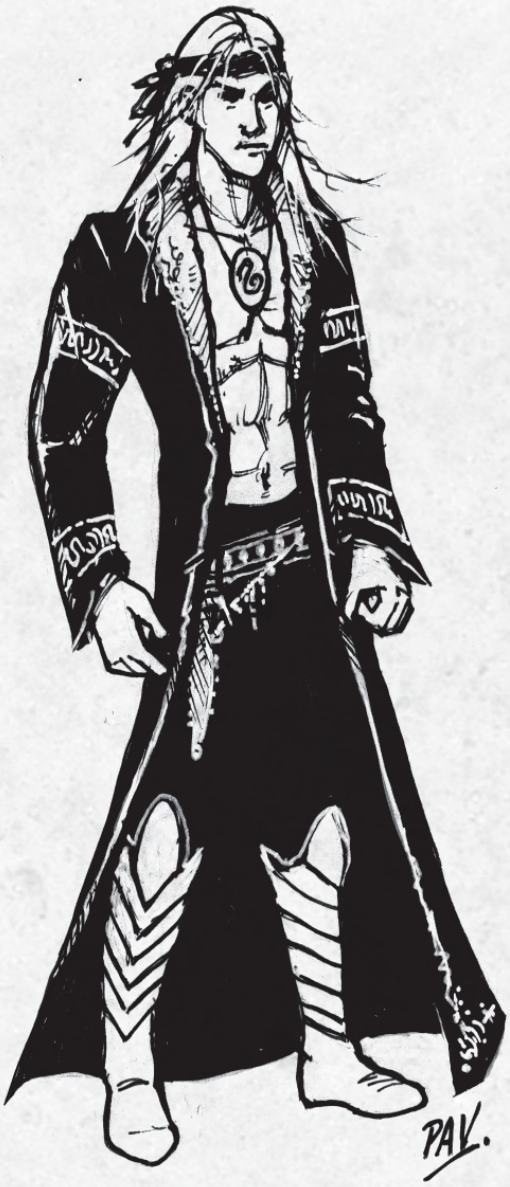
Dark creepers and **dark stalkers** seethe in the Underneath and are sometimes found living in the city, wearing tinted lenses and heavy clothing to disguise their nature. Rumours of a Stalker King refuse to go away. The King Without Shadow plays his doleful songs, they say, whilst his guillotine beheads those who set eyes upon his kingdom.

Countless gargoyles festoon the gables of the city, and amongst these are continuing sightings and encounters with **four-armed gargoyles**, fungus gargoyles (who are credited with spreading a particularly vile blight that rots hands and feet), green guardian gargoyles, and **margoyles**.

Golems and constructs are common, of course, with flagstone golems and furnace golems being somewhat rarer. However, even such strange constructs as iron maiden, mummy, ooze, rope, stone guardian, tallow and wood golems can be encountered. The foul witch-doll golem is often used by the Great Coven.

The superstitiously dreaded midnight peddlers make up some of the Fetch. Some are so infamous for their deeds that they have well-known nicknames: Rickety Rose collects heads in her cart, whilst the Slithering Peddler collects hands. Blind Bethen collects eyes, said to be removed from living victims and will trade one to an unlucky soul who encounters





her but is willing to make a one-for-one swap. Peg-Leg Jabe often has some Between creature or other riding in his hand cart from his frequent trips beyond.

These monsters, of course, are merely the tip on the diabolic iceberg of horrors that lurk in the Blight.

Unliving and Undying Alchymic

Those who wish to live forever sometimes take this dark path through use of the proprietary means available with the *elixir of life*†. Those who take this draught by choice hope to join the **alchymic-undying**†; those who fail in this endeavour are cursed to become the **alchymic-unliving**†. Those who are forced to take the elixir by cruel masters or terms of indenture almost invariably end up among the alchymic-unliving.

Alchymic Creature Template

More commonly referred to as the "reborn," alchymic-undying creatures are living creatures infused with the gifts of undeath through exposure to the mysterious *elixir of life*.

Any living creature can be transformed into an alchymic-undying creature when exposed to *elixir of life* (see ***The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**). An alchymic-undying creature uses the base creature's stat block, with the following differences:

- Challenge increases by 1.
- Constitution declines by 2; adjust hit points accordingly.
- Always has proficiency on Strength and Dexterity saving throws, and on saves against disease (including ongoing effects of diseaases), paralysis, and poison.
- Is immune to exhaustion and unconsciousness
- Never ages or sleeps, and needs only 1/10 as much food, drink, and air as a normal creature of its kind.

Unliving as Art

There is a revolting trade that is growing in the Castorhage: the use of lower-grade elixirs to bind different components of certain creatures together to form a new thing, a thing in many cases totally unique. For some, the methods used are crude: the scalpel, the stitch, the saw. Subjects are injected with low-grade *elixir of life*† and then the pieces are removed and subsequently sewn together. More often than not, the resulting creature is either horribly disabled or physically unstable and decays quickly. It does not always then die, however.

The quality of the work depends upon the grade of the elixir and the skill of the artist, but these vile surgeons are growing in number and infamy. More advanced artists and experimenters use complex crucibles and procedures to bind the pieces together. These crucibles are made with necromantic magic, and these artists claim to be using techniques discovered by the creators of the first owlbears and gorilla-bear hybrids, as well as those who first brought abominations into being. The latest, great visionaries of this sort of rebirth extol the (so far) secret and unseen experiments of the great surgeon-artists whom they claim have succeeded in forging new life from Between creatures and mortal flesh.



- **Negative Energy Affinity: A**n alchymic-undying creature never has its maximum hit points reduced by attacks from undead creatures.
- **Regeneration:** An alchymic-undying creature heals 1 hit point per 2 HD at the start of its turn, unless it took acid or fire damage since its last turn.

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The alchymic-unliving are creatures tainted by the curse of undeath through exposure to *elixir of life*. Those who partake in the forbidden fruits of such alchymic experimentation face a dismal future. It is true that death, or at least mortal death by aging, is no longer a concern, but the life left is bleak and bereft of any of the joys of the living.

Any living creature can be transformed into an alchymic-unliving creature that is exposed to *elixir of life* (see ***The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**). An alchymic-unliving creature uses the base creature's stat block, with the following differences:

- Challenge increases by 1.
- Strength increases by 2, Intelligence declines by 2.
- Type becomes undead.
- AC increases by 2.
- Uses Charisma rather than Constitution to determine bonus hit points per hit die; recalculate hit points accordingly.
- Immune to disease, exhaustion, paralysis, poison, stun, and unconsciousness.
- Immune to effects that reduce ability scores or maximum hit points.
- Gains darkvision 60 feet.
- **Legendary Fortitude (3/day):** When the creature makes an unsuccessful Constitution saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.
- **Curse of Undeath:** The creature must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw every 30 days or its Intelligence is permanently reduced by 1. If its Intelligence declines to 3, it transforms into a zombie.
- **Regeneration:** An alchymic-unliving creature heals 1 hit point per 2 HD at the start of its turn, unless it took radiant damage since its last turn.

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Monsters, Monster Templates, and Named NPCs

Abigail

Abigail is a striking woman who has deep red hair set in fetching cascading curls. She wears a long, black wool coat over a crimson shirt and breeches, all topped off with a broad-brimmed leather hat and a light scarf over the lower half of her face. She carries a variety of tools for hunting and killing vampires.

Abigail

Medium female human, neutral good
Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Holy Devotion. Abigail has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.
Spellcasting. Abigail is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks), and she has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Abigail makes two melee attacks, one with the rapier and one with the dagger.
Silvered Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.
+1 Silvered Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.
+1 Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit,

range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage. The bolts are silvered.

She carries the following vampire-killing equipment:

- *potion of cure wounds (at 4th level)*,
- *potion of invisibility* (3 doses)
- 6 vials of holy water
- *+1 heavy crossbow* with 24 silver bolts
- *+1 rapier* engraved with the name "Luther"
- Silvered dagger
- 2 silver mirrors
- 3 wooden stakes with mallet
- Silver holy symbol of Mother Grace

Treasure: gold wedding ring (100gp), silver hatpin depicting a unicorn (75 gp)

Algernon Alfonce Leptonia

When the characters first spy this fellow, they see a sickly-looking man dressed in the latest outré fashions. Effected, rouged, and effeminate, he is the picture of decadent aristocracy from his outrageous wig to his curl-toed boots. He is a vampire spawn.

Algernon Alfonce Leptonia

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. Algernon regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.
Spider Climb. Algernon can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.
Vampire Weaknesses. Algernon has the following flaws:
Forbiddance: He can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
Harmed by Running Water: He takes 20 acid damage when he ends his turn in running water.
Stake to the Heart: Algernon is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into his heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place.
Sunlight Hypersensitivity: Algernon takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Alphonse makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Alphonse can grapple the target (escape DC 13) in order to bite.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Alphonse regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Treasure: *potion of invisibility*, heavy winter coat with buttons made from doll's fingers, heavy winter muffler inlaid with obsidian worth 200 gp, longsword decorated with designs of wolves chasing sheep (100gp), pendant made from a mummified wren set with tiny diamonds in its eyes worth 250 gp, fancy human-skin bag containing 23 gp and ten 5-guinea notes (worth 50 pp total), keys to all locks in the Club Crimsón, a folded piece of paper with the "Hymn of the Panacea" written on it, and a pocket-sized angel fetish made of raven feathers.

Annalise Grast

Annalise Grast has suffered a mutation in her lycanthropy and has been ***stuck in a hideous hybrid form of rat and halfling.*** *Her features are distorted, even considering their animalistic pairing, and appear to largely be the result of extensive inbreeding. Her curly, blonde hair, delicate cheekbones, and ample bosom are repellent incongruities in combination with her pronounced snout and twisted, fanged and slavering mouth, and her hideously mismatched eyes — one lazy and the other spaced almost to the side of her head like a fish. Beneath her dark armour, her skin is covered in light-brown fur.*

Annalise Grast

Small female halfling shapechanger (wererat), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 97 (15d6 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +7, Con +6
Skills Acrobatics +7, Perception +4, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Halfling, River Cant, Thieves Cant
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Annalise may take the *Dash, Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.
Filth Fever. A creature with filth fever becomes sick within 1d4 days of being infected. At that time, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. It also regains only half the usual number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and 0 hit points from resting. Once symptoms appear, the infected creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw after every long rest. If it fails, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion, but if it succeeds, the creature loses 1 level of exhaustion. The disease is cured when the creature has no levels of exhaustion left.
Keen Smell. Annalise has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.
Shortsword of Wounding. Once per turn, when she hits her target with her *shortsword of wounding*, she can wound the target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each time it has been hit by *Annalise's shortsword of wounding*, and it can

then make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success. Alternatively, the wounded creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it can use an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, ending the effect of such wounds on it on a success.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Annalise's attack deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when she hits with a weapon attack, if she has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Annalise does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Annalise makes two melee attacks with her *shortsword of wounding*, or one *shortsword of wounding* attack and one bite attack. If attacking from range, Annalise can make two attacks with her repeating recurve crossbow +2.

Shortsword of Wounding. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

Repeating Recurve Crossbow +2. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Treasure: *shortsword of wounding, repeating recurve crossbow +2*

Aranea

As the monstrosity approaches across its web, you notice that unlike other giant spiders, this one has a pair of diminutive arms and hands, and an oddly brain shaped hump on its back.

Aranea

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 39 (6d10+6)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5
Senses blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Deep Speech
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The aranea can use its action to polymorph into a Medium creature (humanoid or beast), or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Innate Spellcasting. An aranea's spellcasting ability is Intelligence, and requires no material components for the following spells (spell save DC 13):
At will: *dancing lights, poison cloud, shocking grasp;*
3/day each: *charm person, sleep;*
1/day each: *invisibility, mirror image;*

Spider Climb. The aranea can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

***Web* (Recharge 5-6):** +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hit points 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Ashen Angler

A vast whale of the Between

Ashen Angler

Gargantuan beast (elder Between), unaligned
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 315 (18d20 + 126)
Speed swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	14 (+2)	25 (+7)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4
Saving Throws Str +13, Con +13, Wis +8
Senses blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 18
Languages --
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Echolocation. The Ashen Angler cannot use its blindsight if deafened.

Freedom of Movement. The Ashen Angler ignores difficult terrain, and magical effects can't reduce its speed or cause it to be restrained. It can spend 5 feet of movement to escape from nonmagical restraints or being grappled.

Hold Breath. The Ashen Angler can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Keen Scent. This Ashen Angler can notice creatures by scent in a 180-foot radius underwater and can detect blood in the water at a range of up to a mile.

Siege Monster. The Ashen Angler deals double damage to objects and structures

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Ashen Angler makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail slap.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 54 (8d10 + 10) piercing damage. If the hit is a critical hit or exceeds the number needed by 5 or more, the target is also swallowed. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Ashen Angler, and it takes 35 (10d6) acid damage at the start of each of the Ashen Angler's turns.

If the Ashen Angler takes 50 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the it must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the Ashen Angler. If the Ashen Angler dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained

by it and can escape from the corpse using half of its movement, exiting prone.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack*, +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one object. *Hit*: 65 (10d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 54 (8d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the Between whale's next turn.

Sickening Light. The Ashen Angler sheds a peculiar, wan light that creatures not from Between find unsettling. Creatures within 120 feet of the Ashen Angler must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be overcome by nausea and fever (as the **poisoned** effect). A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If any of these saves is successful, the effect ends immediately, and the creature is immune to the effect for 24 hours.

Capsize. If the Ashen Angler moves at least 30 feet straight toward a watercraft (boat, ship, ferry, etc.) and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, there is a chance that it will capsize. All occupants of the watercraft must make Dexterity saving throw when the craft is rammed (see below). To determine if the watercraft capsizes, consult the following:

Size	Outcome
Small **(e.g. rowboat)**	The craft is destroyed, all on board must make a successful DC 19 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being stunned. Regardless of the outcome of the save, passengers each take 36 (5d10 + 9) damage and are thrown from the wreckage.
Medium **(e.g. keelboat)**	The craft must make a generic DC 17 saving throw to avoid being destroyed. If successful, the craft takes half of the 10d10 + 10 damage. All on board must make a save DC 19 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. If the craft fails the saving throw, it takes full damage and begins taking on water. It will sink in 1d4 rounds.
Large **(e.g. sailing ship)**	The craft must make a generic DC 15 saving throw to avoid being capsized. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the ship capsizes. All on board must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being pulled under with the ship. If the save is successful, the ship takes 10d10 + 10 damage and those on board make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone (or overboard if they are near the ship's edge).
Huge **(e.g. longship)**	The craft must make a generic DC 13 saving throw to avoid being capsized. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the ship capsizes. All on board must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving to avoid being pulled under with the ship. If the save is successful, the ship takes 10d10 + 10 damage and those on board make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone (or overboard if they are near the ship's edge).
Gargantuan **(e.g. warship, galley)**	The craft must make a generic DC 12 saving throw with advantage to avoid being capsized. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the ship capsizes. All on board must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving to avoid being pulled under with the ship. If the save is successful, the ship takes 10d10 + 10 damage and those on board make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone (or overboard if they are near the ship's edge).

Beautiful, the

The Beautiful is the central figure in the Levee Adventure. Her appearance varies in the course of the adventure, and you should refer to the text for this.

The Beautiful

Medium celestial (fallen deva), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 19
Hit Points 110 (13d8+52)
Speed 30 ft., fly 120ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +8, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +8, Deception +10, Intimidation +10, Perception +8, Stealth +9
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Damage Resistances acid, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Between Weapons. The Beautiful's weapon attacks are magical and deal an extra 17 (4d8) psychic damage on a hit (included in the attacks).

Between Awareness. The Beautiful knows if she hears a lie.

Create Between-Gate. Using her action, the Beautiful can create a *gateway* between any unoccupied point that she can see. The *gateway* is large enough to allow passage of a creature up to Huge size and remains open up to 1 minute as long as the Beautiful maintains her concentration on the *gateway* (as a concentration spell).

Create Paradise. User her action, the Beautiful can weave a paradise personalized to the tastes and desires of one mortal being who has felt the touch of her presence. This paradise is effectively infinite for the individual for which it was created and can accommodate

Dislocated. Attacks against the Beautiful are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

Innate Spellcasting. The Beautiful's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). The Beautiful can innately cast following spells, requiring only verbal components.

At will: *bestow curse, create between-gate, crown of madness, detect evil and good, invisibility (self only), shield*
3/day each: *darkness, dominate person, mirror image, spider climb*
2/day each: *create paradise*
1/day each: *antimagic field, blink, dimension door*

Magic Resistance. The Beautiful has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Beautiful makes two attacks.

Flaming Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage and 17 (4d8) psychic damage.

Cloak of Despair (Recharge 6). Once per turn, The Beautiful's can touch a creature of her choice and overwhelm them with hopeless feelings of despair. The creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target is overwhelmed with despair for 1 minute. During this time, the creature can't attack or target any creature with harmful abilities, spells, or other magical effects.

Unusual Equipment: *Scythe of Speed*
Scythe of Speed
Weapon (scythe), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, you can use a bonus action to make one attack with it as a bonus action on each of your turns.

Belabra (Tangler)

This creature resembles a man-sized flying jellyfish with twelve long tentacles. Four thin eyestalks protrude from its cap. Its cap is blackish gray and its eyestalks are dark gray.

Belabra (Tangler)

Medium aberration, neutral
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)
Speed 5 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages none
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Acidic Blood. Each time the belabra is hit with an attack that does piercing or slashing damage, all creatures within 10 ft. must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be sprayed with the belabra's blood. Any creature that fails their saving throw takes 4 (1d6+1) acid damage and has disadvantage on attacks, saving throws or ability checks due to sneezing and partial blindness until the end of the belabra's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The belabra makes up to 3 attacks. One slam, two with its tentacles, or one bite if a target is grappled.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (3d4 + 2) piercing damage

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 9 (3d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* grappled and target is restrained (escape DC 12, if successful take 3 (1d4=1) piercing damage from barbs).

Beltane

Beltane is the god-king of the major undead faction in the city, the Fetch. He is not encountered in the course of the ***Levee Adventure****, but he is a major figure in the background weave of the entire city.*

Beltane

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 144 (17d8 + 68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +10, History +10, Perception +9, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Elvish, Gnome, Infermal
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If Beltane isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use its action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form. While in bat form, Beltane can't speak, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 30 feet. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in mist form, Beltane can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, and Dexterity saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.

Misty Escape. When he drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, Beltane transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Beltane regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Beltane takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Rust Metal. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits Beltane corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative −1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to −5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the rust monster is destroyed after dealing damage.

Spellcasting. Beltane is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Beltane has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level **(**4 slots): *comprehend languages, fog cloud, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, gust of wind, mirror image*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse, nondetection*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, greater invisibility*
5th level (1 slot): *dominate person*

Spider Climb. Beltane can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Beltane has the following flaws:

Forbiddance: Beltane can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water: Beltane takes 20 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart: If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into Beltane's heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, Beltane is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity: Beltane takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only): Beltane makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only): *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Beltane can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Blighted Corrosion (Recharge 5-6). As an action, Beltane can corrode a nonmagical ferrous metal object he can see within 5 feet of it. If the object isn't being worn or carried, Beltane's destroys a 1-foot cube of it. If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, the creature can make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid Beltane's touch.

If the object touched is either metal armor or a metal shield being worn or carried, its takes a permanent and cumulative −1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed. If the object touched is a held metal weapon, it rusts as described in the Rust Metal trait.

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only): *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Beltane, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Beltane regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction of maximum hit points lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the Beltane's control.

Charm: Beltane targets one humanoid it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see Beltane, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Beltane. The charmed target regards Beltane as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under his control, it takes Beltane's requests or actions in the most favourable way it can, and it is a willing target for Beltane's bite attack. Each time Beltane or Beltane's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Beltane is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day): Beltane magically calls 2d4 swarms of blindingcrows or festering lyme rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, Beltane can call 3d6 small gable spiders instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Beltane dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Beltane can take 3 legendary actions, described below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Beltane regains spent legendary actions the start of its turn.

Move: Beltane moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Beltane makes one unarmed strike.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Beltane makes one bite attack.

Between Creature Template

A Between creature is infused with the weirdness of Between and is shaped and changed by its environment and experiences. Some Between creatures are bizarre versions of existing creatures (such as gargoyles and wyverns), while others are new creatures that don't have a non-Between equivalent (such as caul cuckoos and hymes).

If you need (or just want) more Between creatures beyond those presented in this book and Blight adventures, you can create them three ways.

1. Apply a Between simple template to an existing monster stat block. This is quick and simple, and is perfectly adequate for most encounters.

2. Convert an existing creature to the Between subtype using the guidelines presented here. This involves more effort and is better suited to major foes, such as creatures that command groups of lesser, Between minions (which can be converted quickly with the simple templates).

3. Create a wholly new Between creature from scratch, following the guidelines below. This is ideal for a powerful villain or recurring foe.

Between Creature Simple Templates

Although all life in Between is unique, some creatures (wolves, for example) are common to the normal world and Between. The following simple templates can be used to turn any creature that does not have the Between subtype into a Between creature. A creature given one of these templates counts as a Between creature for the purposes of spells, abilities, and magical items but it does not gain the Between subtype or the many



benefits of having the Between subtype — it gains only those benefits specifically described in the simple template.

Larval Between

1. Increase Strength and Dexterity by +1.
2. Increase hit points by 1 Hit Die + Constitution modifier.
3. Gains darkvision 30 feet if it doesn't already have darkvision.
4. Gains resistance to damage from monmagical weapons.
5. Gains Dislocated trait (attacks against it have disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or their equivalent).
6. Increase CR by +1.

Naiadic Between

1. Increase Strength and Constitution by +1, Dexterity by +2.
2. Increase hit points by 2 Hit Dice + (Constitution modifier ×2).
3. Gains darkvision 60 feet if it doesn't already have darkvision.
4. Gains resistance to damage from nonmagical weapons.
5. Gains Dislocated trait (attacks against it have disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or their equivalent).
6. Gains proficiency in Dexterity saving throws.
7. Increase speed by +10 feet.
8. Increase CR by +2.

Adult Between

1. Increase Dexterity by +3; increase Strength, Constitution, and Intelligence by +1 each.
2. Increase hit points by 3 Hit Dice + (Constitution modifier ×3).
3. Gains superior darkvision.
4. Gains resistance to cold, force, and poison damage, and to damage from nonmagical weapons.
5. Gains Dislocated trait (attacks against it have disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or their equivalent).
6. Gains proficiency in Dexterity and Constitution saving throws.
7. Gains Innate Spellcasting (save DC 15): 1/day each—*invisibility* (self only, duration 1 minute), *spider climb*.
8. Gains Magic Resistance (1/day, when it fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead).
9. Increase speed by +10 feet.
10. Increase CR by +3.

Elder Between

1. Increase Dexterity by +4; increase Intelligence by +2; increase Strength and Constitution by 1 each.
2. Increase hit points by 4 Hit Dice + (Constitution modifier ×4).
3. Gains superior darkvision and blindsight 30 feet.
4. Gains resistance to acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, and poison damage, and to damage from nonmagical weapons.
5. Gains Dislocated trait (attacks against it have disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or their equivalent).
6. Gains proficiency in Dexterity, Constitution, and Wisdom saving throws.
7. Gains Innate Spellcasting (save DC 16): 3/day each—*invisibility* (self only, duration 1 minute), *spider climb; 1/day each—blink*, *mirror image.*
8. Gains Magic Resistance (1/day, when it fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead).
9. Increase speed by +20 feet.
10. Increase CR by +4.

Ancient Between

1. Increase Dexterity by +5; increase Intelligence by +3; increase Strength and Constitution by 1 each.
2. Increase hit points by 5 Hit Dice + (Constitution modifier ×5).
3. Gains superior darkvision and blindsight 60 feet.
4. Gains resistance to all damage except radiant and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.
5. Gains Dislocated trait (attacks against it have disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or their equivalent).
6. Gains proficiency in all saving throws.
7. Gains Innate Spellcasting (save DC 17): 3/day each—*invisibility* (self only, duration 1 minute), *spider climb; 1/day each—blink*, *dimension door.*
8. Gains Magic Resistance (2/day, when it fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead).
9. Increase speed by +20 feet.
10. Increase CR by +5.

Converting an Existing Creature

Most Between creatures have the following abilities. (These are already included in the Between creature stat blocks presented in this book). Between creatures are highly varied, however, so it's not a hard-and-fast rule that every Between creature must have these traits or can't have others.

Between Age (BA). Many of a creature's statistics improve with the length of its exposure to Between. Because a Between creature can't die of old age, even normally short-lived creatures can become quite powerful through centuries of exposure. These increases are divided into five age categories, according to how long the creature has been exposed to Between: larval, naiadic (15+ years), adult (50+ years), elder (150+ years), and ancient (600+ years). At each age category, a Between creature gains the following cumulative benefits:

- +1 to its Dexterity score;
- +1 to one other ability score besides Dexterity;
- +1 Hit Die (added to its hit points, + its Constitution modifier, as usual)
- one feat (if feats are being used in your campaign) or proficiency in one type of saving throw.

Senses. A larval creature gains darkvision (30 feet) if it doesn't already have darkvision. The range increases to 60 feet at naiadic age and to 120 feet at adult. An elder creature gains blindsense (30 feet), and an ancient Between creature has blindsight (60 feet).

Damage Resistance. A naiadic creature gains resistance to damage from nonmagical weapons. An adult creature gains resistance to cold, force, and poison damage. An elder creature gains resistance to acid, fire, and lightning damage. An ancient creature gains resistance to necrotic, psychic, and thunder damage. All of these gains are cumulative, so an ancient Between creature has resistance to all but radiant damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from magical weapons.

Magic Resistance. An adult Between creature has Magic Resistance (1/day, when it fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead). This increases to 2/day for ancient creatures.

Intelligence. If an animal's Intelligence score is increased above 2, it gains the ability to understand and speak Deep Speech.

Additional Abilities. Between creatures can have abilities that reflect their habitat, history, environment, and supernatural nature. Adding one such ability per age category is a good benchmark, but it's not a hard-and-fast rule. These abilities can be adapted from other monsters, drawn from spell-like abilities, or can be new abilities you create. These abilities should be thematically appropriate to the Between and to the creature's origin. Two new abilities that are especially suited to Between creatures are Dislocated and Distorted.

- ***Dislocated.*** The creature's form is made up of its memories, which shift and change. The creature is continually under the effect of a *blur spell (attacks against it are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or an equivalent).* The creature can suppress or reactivate this ability at will as a bonus action.
- ***Distorted.*** A distorted creature's internal anatomy varies from individual to individual and seldom makes any biological sense. Critical hits against the creature do a flat +1 damage but don't roll damage dice twice.

Challenge. After making all these changes, the creature's CR should be reevaluated from scratch. As a simpler alternative, just increase the creature's CR by +1 per Between age category. This will be close enough in most cases, unless the creature gained especially powerful attacks.

Create a New Creature

Creating a new Between creature is no different from creating any other creature, as described in the GM's rulebook. It's easiest if you start by choosing its age category and proceed from there, but do what you're most comfortable with.

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Between-Cat

Vaguely feline, this hairless, pale creature has wrinkled, flaccid skin, a pair of stunted vestigial limbs extending from its flanks, and a ring of small tentacles around its neck. Its clawed forepaws each bear one wickedly hooked claw much larger than the others. Its eyes are dark voids, and a long, prehensile tongue extends from its mouth.

Between-Cat

Tiny aberration (larval Between), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 15 (6d4)
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +3, Int +7, Wis +4, Cha +5
Skills Arcana +7, History +7, Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances cold, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities disease; charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Deep Speech, Infernal; telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Dislocated. The Between-cat's form is made up of memories, which shift and change. The creature is continually under the effect of a *blur* spell (attacks against it are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or an equivalent). The Between-cat can suppress or reactivate this ability at will as a bonus action.

Dual Existence (recharge 4-6). The Between-cat can pass easily back and forth between the Between and the mundane world at will (no action required). This allows it to teleport up to 60 feet to a space it can see, or to escape into the Between until it chooses to return to the mundane world.

Innate Spellcasting. The Between-cat can use the following spell-like abilities, using Intelligence as its casting ability (DC 15). The cadaver doesn't need material components to use these abilities.

At will: *comprehend languages, tongues*
1/day: *detect magic, glyph of warding*

Nulltropy. A creature slain by a nulltropic claws attack can return to life only through a *wish* or *true resurrection* spell.

Shapechanger. In the Between, the Between-cat always assumes its natural shape. In other worlds, it appears as a normal cat unless it uses an action to adopt its natural shape, which it must maintain through concentration, like a spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Between-cat claws once and strikes once with its tongue.

Nulltropic Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 2d4 + 2 slashing damage plus 1 force damage for every additional Between-cat within 60 feet of the target. Force damage can't be reduced by resistance, immunity, magic, or any other means.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d6 + 2 piercing damage plus 2d8 poison damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (Between)
Organization solitary, pair, pack (3–6), hunt (7–10), brood (11–15), coven (16–30), or council (31–56)

Cats have often enjoyed a vaguely mysterious and sinister reputation throughout many cultures, and the Between-cat may be the most deserving of this reputation. Catlike in name only due to its vaguely feline appearance, some scholars question whether Between-cats began as normal cats and were changed through exposure to the Between. Others think they are actual creatures of the Between that managed to gain a catlike appearance through their intimate contact with the mundane world, while some believe they are some entirely unrelated species that simply evolved concurrently to resemble the more mundane varieties of cats. Whatever the case, it seems that Between-cats hold no special affinity for true felines, and yet are able to move among them completely unnoticed by other cats without raising any alarm when in their mundane cat forms. Whatever the reason for their existence and their relationship to mundane felines, Between-cats are one of the few creatures that enjoys seemingly complete freedom in moving between the natural world and Between.

Feline Scholars. While their full agenda is not known, two facts about Between-cats are recognized among the most learned of scholars. First, they ceaselessly search through venerable tomes, petroglyphs, and other ancient writings in search of some unknown secret or secrets that they have revealed to no one. Second — whether related to the first item or not — Between-cats seek to completely unmake reality for their own hidden reasons. Nulltropic damage from their claws, amplified by the presence of other Between-cats, induces a loss of order and energy in the target and produces an overall breakdown of substance toward nothingness. More than mere entropy, which simply describes the loss of order and cohesion, the nulltropy of the Between-cat brings about a complete loss of existence in any form, albeit on a tiny scale. Armed with their nulltropic attack, Between-cats can accomplish their goal of unmaking reality one tiny piece at a time.

Terrifying in Groups. Fortunately for the sake of reality and all who live in it, the nulltropic damage caused by a single Between-cat is minuscule, and they are loathe to use it indiscriminately. They instead save it for enemies in battle or for certain artifacts and writings they have found over the years, as well as for aboleths, whom they consider bitter enemies. However, when more Between-cats get together, their nulltropic attack becomes terrifying. Thankfully, no one has ever reported encountering more than 56 Between-cats in one place. There is speculation, however, that if more did gather, then the nulltropic damage they could cause would continue to scale to an ever-accelerating degree. Most sober-minded theoreticians refuse to think too long on the dreadful implications of this line of thought.

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Between Gargoyle

A gargoyle, but with blurry, indistinct outlines, as if it doesn't entirely belong to its own substance.

Between Gargoyle

Medium between-creature (monstrosity), chaotic evil
Armor Class 18
Hit Points 70 (10d8 +30)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	7 (–2)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine, cold, force.
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

False Appearance. While the between gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

Dislocated. Attacks against the between gargoyle are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

Innate Spellcasting. The between gargoyle's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The between gargoyle can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day each: *invisibility* (self only, duration 1 minute), *spider climb*.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The between gargoyle makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Betweeen Peacock

A fleshy sack, discolored with veins, sits amid and beneath a trio of gangling legs that bend in all the wrong places. A head is thrust back that looks part bird, part cockroach; its beak more akin to a stinger. Its peacocklike plume is littered with wretched-looking scraps of flesh topped by a grisly collection of severed harpy heads, the eyes of which watch you with tortured expressions.

Between Peacock (Nightmare Choir)

Large aberration (adult Between), unaligned

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 152 (16d10 + 64)
Speed 15 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +1, Wis +6
Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances cold, force, poison damage; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities disease; charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Deep Speech
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Death Throes. When it drops to 0 hit points, a nightmare choir explodes in a mass of thorny, fleshy limbs riddled with teeth and hundreds of tiny filaments that hook into clothing, skin, and flesh. Creatures within 20 feet of the nightmare choir take 6d6 piercing damage and are restrained; a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage and prevents being restrained. A restrained creature frees itself by using an action to make a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. The area becomes difficult terrain for 10 minutes, and a creature that ends its turn in the difficult terrain takes 1d6 slashing damage.

Magic Resistance (1/day). When it fails a saving throw, the nightmare choir can choose to succeed instead.

Swallow. A creature that ends its turn grappled by the nightmare choir is swallowed whole. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained. It takes 3d8 necrotic damage automatically at the start of each of the nightmare choir's turns. Only one Medium creature or two Small creatures can be inside the nightmare choir at one time. A swallowed creature is unaffected by anything happening outside the nightmare choir or by attacks from outside it. A swallowed creature can get out of the choir by using 5 feet of movement, but only after the monster is dead. When the nightmare choir inverts or reverts to normal, swallowed creatures are ejected prone into adjacent, empty spaces.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nightmare choir makes one tongue attack and three claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d8 + 5 slashing damage.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit (reach 15 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the target is grappled (escape DC 15) and pulled to within 5 feet of the nightmare choir, which then makes a bite attack against it as part of the same action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one grappled creature). *Hit:* 4d6 + 5 piercing damage plus 2d10 necrotic damage.

Captivating Hymn (1/day). The nightmare choir raises its harpy plumes, which begin singing. They continue singing as a bonus action for 1 minute. Creatures within 100 feet of the nightmare choir and able to hear it must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the nightmare choir for as long as the singing continues. A charmed creature must move toward the nightmare choir along the most direct path, even if that takes them through dangerous terrain. A charmed creature that's within 5 feet of the nightmare choir is stunned. A charmed creature repeats the saving throw when it takes damage, ending the effect on itself with a success. Success on the saving throw leaves a creature immune to Captivating Hymn for 24 hours.

Horrific Inversion (recharge 6). The nightmare choir inverts itself, becoming a huge maw filled with hundreds of quivering, needlelike teeth. The choir makes a bite attack against every creature within 5 feet of it, regardless

of grappling. Creatures within 30 feet that witness this transformation must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted with madness. If the result of the saving throw is 12-16, the creature suffers a short-term madness; 7-11 results in long-term madness; 6 or less results in indefinite madness. An inverted nightmare choir cannot fly or use Captivating Hymn. It can revert to its normal form as a bonus action. When it inverts or reverts to normal, swallowed creatures are ejected prone into adjacent, empty spaces.

ECOLOGY
Environment any land (Between)
Organization solitary

A nightmare choir is an animalistic predator that uses the mesmerizing songs of harpies to lure prey to its side. When prey is near — and prey is anything that the nightmare choir can drain blood from — the monster suddenly inverts its body to make a surprising attack. In its usual form, it appears as a veiny sack of rubbery, feather-flecked skin, with bony, feathered wings, a swan's neck tipped with a beaklike stinger, three skinny, multi-jointed legs tipped with talons, and long, peacocklike plumes tipped with the severed heads of harpies. When the monster inverts, it suddenly bloats into a balloon of flesh that rips apart to allow a great maw of hooked teeth to burst forward, and a long, sticky tongue to shoot out to draw its prey in. The collapsed flesh sack envelops its stinger, wings, and plume, which become unusable in this alternate form.

Arcane Feathers. The thirteen eye-feathers of the nightmare choir's plume are worth 100 gp each. If an eye-feather is used as an additional material component for a divination spell, the spell either takes effect as if cast with a spell slot 2 levels higher, or the saving throw against it is made with disadvantage (caster's choice).

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Bileborn

This revolting creature appears to be formed of a tangle of limbs and pieces of rotting corpses that splay in all directions like some kind of demented sea urchin. The many appendages flail spastically as it moves with a disturbing, rolling motion. Barely discernible amid this tangle are a number of severed, rotting heads, their eyes open and watching, their lips wordlessly mouthing unheard imprecations.

Bileborn

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Coordinated Burst (1/day). As a bonus action, the bileborn synchronizes its flailing motion. Its speed increases to 60 feet, and it can make 8 slam attacks on its turn. This effect lasts until the end of the bileborn's current turn.



Many Arms. Creatures have disadvantage on attempts to escape from the bileborn's grapple.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bileborn makes four melee attacks, using any combination of Slam and Absorb. It can use its Babbling Scream in place of two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage. If two or more slam attacks hit the same creature in the bileborn's turn, the creature is grappled (escape DC 14).

Absorb. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature already grappled by the bileborn). *Hit*: 2d6 + 4 piercing damage, and the creature is pulled into the bileborn's space and absorbed into the monster's body. An absorbed creature is blinded and restrained, and it takes 2d6 + 4 piercing damage at the start of the bileborn's turn. One Medium creature or two Small creatures can be inside the bileborn at one time. An absorbed creature is unaffected by anything happening outside the bileborn or by attacks from outside it. An absorbed creature can escape from the bileborn's body by using an action to make a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check, or it can get out after the bileborn's death by using 5 feet of movement.

Babbling Scream (recharge 5-6). The bileborn screams in incoherent babbles. All creatures within 60 feet that hear it must make a successful DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be confused (as the *confusion* spell) for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, an affected target can make a Wisdom saving throw. If it succeeds, this effect ends for that target.

ECOLOGY
Environment any land
Organization solitary

The bileborn is an undead creature born of alchemical and necromantic experimentation. Its purpose and the identity of its creator are unknown, but the mistakes of this master have long since been paid for, as the

original bileborn ultimately escaped and slew its creator, incorporating his body among the rest.

A bileborn seeks to increase its mass by absorbing creatures into its body. This does not increase the creature's size or change it in any fundamental way, but the crowd of body parts grows denser at its center. Then at some indeterminate point, the creature reproduces by fission. The fused conglomeration of rotten body parts splits down the middle, forming two bileborns of equal size and power. These instinctively avoid each other as they go their own ways in search of victims to absorb.

These creatures are little more than horrid masses of dismembered and absorbed victims that somehow work in necromantic coordination and demonstrate considerable stealth and surprising speed for their size and composition. Despite their chaotic and jumbled appearances, their fleshy mass is physically tough, quickly using the dismembered parts of its interior to switch out damaged limbs on it exterior. The bulk of its absorbed brain tissue resides within the severed heads of the central mass of the creature, allowing it to function in a rational manner, though its purpose and goals are likely to be inscrutable to living, sane creatures.

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Blight Ape

This creature looks like a strange caricature of a gorilla. Standing barely 4 feet tall, it superficially resembles a tawny-colored version of that animal save for its height. However, the resemblances end there. Rather than the look and posture of an animal, the creature carries itself with a sense of dignity. It stands straight (or as straight as possible for a creature whose knuckles drag the ground), and it wears a formal black vest. Its simian face is carefully composed, with its eyes bearing the look of long-suffering patience of a professional manservant.

Blight Ape

Small monstrosity, lawful neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 26 (4d6 + 12)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +0, Wis +4, Cha +4
Skills Insight +4, Perception +4
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Blight Monkey Mange Vulnerability. Blight apes are especially susceptible to the mange carried by Blight monkeys. A Blight ape makes saving throws against the disease with disadvantage. If a Blight ape contracts Blight monkey mange, it loses great patches of its fur as the disease's characteristic rash spreads across its body, eventually infiltrating the ape's respiratory system. If a Blight ape's Dexterity or Constitution score is driven down to 0 as a result of the disease, it dies from suffocation.

ACTIONS
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 bludgeoning damage.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary

It is speculated that Blight apes probably originated as some species of Libynosi ape transported en masse over the years to Castorhage to serve in assorted menageries of the well-to-do, circuses for the common folk, and as game animals in the hunting preserves of the truly decadent. Whatever type of ape they are descended from is unknown because no further specimens have been found in recent centuries, and they are presumed to be extinct in their natural habitat due to hunting as well as the wholesale capture and exportation of them. Over the years, their numbers proliferated in the city of Castorhage, and they took readily to the ways of their captors, literally aping their mannerisms and habits. At some point in the last century, bored nobles who had long ago taken to dressing them in finery in mockery of their near-human appearance realized that the Blight apes were no longer simply mimicking their human masters, they were in fact carrying out their own activities in the same manner as the humans around them. They had evolved into an entirely new species, no longer truly animals.

Loyal and Smart. With the realization of the evolution of the Blight ape came the discovery that they were both intelligent (if not truly smart) but also of an extremely lawful and peaceful nature. Likewise, though they can understand the Common tongue well enough, they never developed the ability to use language of their own beyond a few simple grunts and hand motions. It soon became in vogue to keep the creatures as scullions and servants, which developed over time into actually hiring them into trusted positions as butlers and governesses with a known penchant for keeping their mouths shut about any internal secrets they might learn. By whim of Castorhage law, Blight apes receive the same wage as any other hireling in their position and are now often seen as actual family members by some of the more benevolent folk of the city. However, there are far more Blight apes than there are staff positions in well-to-do households, so most Blight apes find themselves relegated to menial jobs and poor treatment. Most are actually employed by the city, since few businesses choose to hire a Blight ape over a human or other humanoid race if they're going to have to pay the same rate anyway, but there are some exceptions — particularly for jobs where a combination of extreme loyalty and extreme discretion are desirable.

Despised Cousins. Blight apes despise Blight monkeys with a passion, and the little cretins are one of the few things that can truly rouse a Blight ape to anger. Some of the Blight apes hired by the city are actually armed for the purpose of hunting down and exterminating nests of Blight monkeys among the city rooftops, an occupation which they pursue with relish. For their part, Blight monkeys enjoy humiliating and even killing a Blight ape whenever possible.

Blight Cockerel

Lanky and bedraggled, with thin feathers other than a wide tuft around the neck, this rooster is particularly ugly for its kind. Its wattle and comb are both shredded and torn from past battles, and razor-sharp spurs have been tied to the backs of its legs.

Blight Cockerel

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 2 (1d6 - 1)
Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +2
Languages none
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Ferocity. When the Blight cockerel drops to 0 hit points, it immediately makes one attack against a creature within 5 feet as a reaction before dying.

Fighting Fury. When a Blight cockerel sees another member of its species or other similar-sized bird (other than a chicken), it instinctively triggers its fight response. It spends 1 round attempting to intimidate its opponent, then attacks, gaining a +1 bonus to attacks and damage. A Blight cockerel in a fighting fury fights until it or its opponent is dead.

ACTIONS

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (the Blight)
Organization solitary

Cockfighting is a common pastime among the coarser citizens of the Blight (and secretly many of the upper crust as well) and the gamecocks have been bred for centuries in the city just for these contests. The resulting breed of Blight cockerel is a distempered gamecock known for its viciousness in fights and its instinct to continue fighting even after having taken a mortal wound. Many runners of cockfights no longer allow Blight cockerels in their venues because of the likelihood that neither bird will survive and their investment in training a prized gamecock will be lost even in victory. Blight cockerels are bred with normal chickens and always attack another Blight cockerel on sight unless restrained.

Before fighting matches that involve betting, some Blight cockerels are outfitted with fighting spurs: razor-sharp blades tied to their legs. Fighting spurs replace the bird's beak attack with a spur attack, which has the same attack bonus and reach but does 1d4 slashing damage.

A Blight cockerel stands 2 feet tall and weighs 10–15 pounds.

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Blight Monkey

This dark-furred monkey has slightly lighter fur around its face and chest, but all of it is matted with reeking filth. It hangs by its prehensile tail as it prepares to throw a handful of the filth that it wears so copiously.

Blight Monkey

Tiny monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 5 (2d4)
Speed 20 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +6
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages none
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Blight Monkey Mange. A creature infected with this disease must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw every time it completes a long rest. On a failure, the creature's Dexterity score is reduced by 1d2 and its Constitution score is reduced by 1. The disease ends when the creature's Constitution saving throw succeeds two days in a row or when it receives a *lesser restoration or comparable magic. Once the disease ends, the creature's ability scores recover at a similar rate.*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d3 + 4 piercing damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract Blight monkey mange (see above).

Excrement. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (range 10 ft./30 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract Blight monkey mange (see above).

Enraged Screech. The Blight monkey emits a harsh screech. Creatures within 30 feet that hear the screech must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn. Once a creature makes a successful saving throw, it's immune to the screeching of Blight monkeys for 24 hours.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary, pair, band (3–9), or troop (10–40)

Like Blight apes, these little beasts are believed to have originated in distant Libynos and were originally brought to Casterhage as part of menageries, but unlike the apes no one wanted to continue importing the creatures after their nasty disposition was discovered. Somehow, it seems, they just kept creeping unseen onto ships in Libynosi ports and disembarking upon reaching the city. There was a time when seeing dozens of the things scampering across yardarms and hawser lines to reach the docks from ships newly arrived from the East was a common sight. When the true extent of their colonization of Castorhage was realized and their disease-ridden nature fully grasped, the city took steps to curtail this mass immigration. However, despite its best efforts the city's efforts were far too late, and now thousands, if not tens of thousands, of the creatures clamber unseen — though certainly not unheard — across the city's maze of rooftops.

Twisted by Blight. Something about the city's influence appears to have corrupted the creatures and changed them from previously mischievous and unruly animals to actual beasts with just enough intelligence to have a taste for cruelty and a strong penchant for chaos. Despite their nimbleness and glimmerings of intelligence, all attempts by folk to domesticate them and spellcasters to take them as familiars have failed as they invariably turn against their would-be masters at the first chance. They routinely destroy books and valuables, and attack family pets. Their habit of biting off the fingers and toes of humanoid infants sleeping in their cribs has earned them the eternal ire of Blight apes everywhere who always attack them on sight. Blight monkeys share this animosity, going out of their way to ambush or abuse Blight apes at every opportunity even flinging themselves into suicidal attacks in their attempts to bring harm to the apes. They are truly fearless in their stupefying anarchy and attack a creature much larger than themselves, using their grating screech to summon more of their kind to join in the attack. It is fortunate for the city that Blight monkeys appear to be a favored prey of gable spiders and festering Lyme rats, because otherwise the fecund beasts would likely plague the city to an even greater degree.

Blight Monkey Mange. All Blight monkeys are a carrier of a disease that is transmitted through their bite and through contact with their excrement. This disease causes the disgusting monkeys to lose patches of fur in clumps, but otherwise appears to cause them no harm. To others infected with Blight monkey mange, it causes a red, scaly rash in the crooks of elbows and knees and in the armpits. The rash is itchy and raw, causing pain and limiting movement until it clears up. Blight apes are known to be particularly susceptible to the ravages of this disease (see Blight ape).

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Blindingcrow

This glossy black crow has fleshy pustules and sores growing out from under its plumage. This bird is has a thick, heavy bill and even more surprisingly has a central third leg that ends in an array of sharpened talons.

Blindingcrow

Tiny monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)
Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Condition Immunities Blindness
Skills Perception +3
Languages none
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 13
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Blinding Sickness. A creature infected with blinding sickness must make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw after completing each long rest. On a failure, the infected creature gains 1 level of exhaustion; on a success, it loses 1 level of exhaustion. The disease is cured when the creature has 0 levels of exhaustion, or through *lesser restoration or comparable magic. The real danger from the disease, however, is blindness. When a creature reaches 3 levels of exhaustion caused by blinding sickness, or when it has taken 3 or more necrotic damage in less than 10 minutes from blindingcrows that carry the disease, the creature is permanently blinded. Greater restoration or comparable magic is needed to cure this blindness.*

ACTIONS

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 9 Constitution saving throw or take 1 necrotic damage and contract blinding sickness (see above).

ECOLOGY

Environment non-arctic land
Organization solitary, pair, flock (3–12), or murder (13–100)

Blindingcrows are fairly intelligent carrion birds known for their problem-solving skills and ability to adapt within the city environment. Despite past attempts to exterminate them, blindingcrows are more common than ever in the city's trash dumps and are known for their distinctive screeching caw. Sociable, especially when not nesting, blindingcrows may gather in communal roosts on winter nights, sometimes with thousands or even tens of thousands roosting at one location.

When large groups of these bird gather, they sometimes form a huge swarming flock and chase predators in a behavior called mobbing. Loud noises are the most common cause for a murder of blindingcrows to attack an individual.

As foragers, these birds also clean up dead animals and garbage. In fact, blindingcrows are often blamed for overturning garbage cans when the real culprits are usually raccoons or dogs. From prolonged exposure to the toxins and wastes in their urban environments where the blindingcrows live and feed, they have developed an ironic affinity for a particular disease. Blinding sickness has festered within these birds, and they pass it from one to another during mating and while feeding. The feathers of these birds, although a glossy black, are marred by oozing, sores that drain diseased fluid and that dry and become encrusted. When the birds preen themselves, this diseased fluid transfers to their beaks where it infects their bite attacks. Despite their third claw and sinister reputation, blindingcrows are no more effective with claw attacks than a normal crow. Only when blindingcrows swarm do their claw attacks really present a threat and live up to their name.

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Body Snatcher

A massive lump of shadow, like a gargantuan hillock, shifts in the darkness and reveals itself to be a living creature. Its body is mostly torso and is roughly barrel shaped, with four elephantine legs and two long arms ending in three-fingered hands. A massive mouthlike opening dominates the top of its frame, from which extends a long, prehensile tongue studded with spiky growths at its tip. The entire beast appears to be covered in — or perhaps made of — a lumpy, lichenlike substance of tiny, leafy growths.

Body Snatcher

Gargantuan plant (fungus), neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 264 (16d20 + 96)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	12 (+1)	22 (+6)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Perception +5



Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands all spoken languages, but can't speak
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Absorb Cadaver. A creature slain by the body snatcher is immediately absorbed into its body as a bonus action. If the body snatcher is still alive at the end of its next turn, the cadaver is irrevocably destroyed. If the slain creature was Large, then its body takes 2 rounds to destroy, and a Huge creature takes 3 rounds. Creatures larger than Huge can't be absorbed. If the body snatcher is killed before an absorbed cadaver is fully destroyed, then the body (or parts of it) it can be recovered from among the mounds of blight lichen.

Hive Mind. The body snatcher can't be surprised. In addition, the body snatcher is aware of all growths of blight within 50 miles. It can see everything within visual range of these patches at all times. It can direct the direction and speed of a patch's growth (no action required) as long as that patch is in darkness, but it can control only one patch per round. A patch of blight that's in complete darkness and under a body snatcher's control can increase its size by 100 square feet per round.

Light Somnolence. When exposed to bright light, the body snatcher becomes slow and lethargic; the effect is equivalent to a *slow* spell, and it lasts for as long as at least half of the body snatcher is in bright light.

Regeneration. The body snatcher heals 10 hit points at the start of its turn. This ability doesn't function if any part of it was exposed to bright or dim light since its previous turn.

Swallow. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained. It must hold its breath or begin suffocating. Two Large, four Medium, or eight Small creatures can be inside the body snatcher at one time. A swallowed creature is unaffected by anything happening outside the body snatcher or by attacks from outside it. A swallowed creature can get out of the body snatcher by using 5 feet of movement, but only after the monster is dead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The body snatcher spits out a spore globule, slams twice, and makes either a tongue attack or a bite attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4d8 + 7 bludgeoning damage.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 3d6 + 7 slashing damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 20 Strength saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 17). The body snatcher can grapple one creature at a time and can't use its tongue attack while it has a creature grappled.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit (reach 10 ft; one creature already grappled by the body snatcher's tongue). Hit:* the creature is pulled into the body snatcher's space and swallowed (see above).

Spore Globule. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (range 40 ft.; one creature). *Hit: 6d6 + 1 bludgeoning damage.*

Create Blight. The body snatcher exudes a 10-foot-by-10-foot patch of blight (see Appendix C) in an area adjacent to itself. This patch is immediately eligible to be grown and directed as part of the body snatcher's Hive Mind ability.

ECOLOGY

Environment underground (the Blight)
Organization solitary

Known only as the Body Snatcher by the dwarves of the Underneath, this massive overgrowth of ambulatory blight lichen lurks in the deepest caverns where the boundaries between the mundane world and Between are thinnest. The creature somehow possesses sentience — likely from its long exposure to the strange influence of that other-realm — and shares some traits of Between creatures. The conglomeration of lichen growths has taken on the form of a massive quadruped, but it shares no special affinity with that form and, in truth, its body possesses no internal organs or structures other than the undifferentiated blight of which is it composed.

The Body Snatcher, like the blight that makes up its body, is at its strongest in absolute darkness and is debilitated by the presence of bright light. Its hive mind gives it a mental connection to and the ability to see through all growths of blight within 50 miles, and it is with this ability that it has managed to maintain observation of the lands above and its inhabitants since before the city existed. Through this observation, it has learned much of the ways of humanoids and has come to understand many of their languages. And it desires nothing more than to consume their bodies upon their deaths, directing its remote blight growths to do that whenever possible. The nutrients obtained from the consumed corpses help feed the growth of these blight patches, but something about these feedings is somehow transmitted telepathically back through the hive mind and serves some mysterious purpose for the Body Snatcher. It is for this reason that the dwarves gave the Body Snatcher its name, though none understand the full significance of the creature's impulse to consume these corpses. Whatever the reason, most speculate it has something to do with the creature's proximity to Between and that it is unlikely to have any benign purpose.

The Body Snatcher stands 25 feet tall. Even though it is made only of tiny lichen growths, these conglomerate quite densely so the creature weighs more than 30,000 pounds. It is well over a thousand years old and is probably much older, and it may well be immortal.

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Brain Rat

Brain rats are indistinguishable from normal rats, but they are highly intelligent, with strange mental powers.

Brain Rat

Tiny monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 3 (1d4+1)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (–4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Innate Psionic Spellcasting.
At will: detect thoughts, as per the spell.
1/day: confusion (DC 13 Intelligence Save).

Keen Smell: The rats have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage.

Mental Attack (3/day). The brain rat targets an opponent with lower Intelligence than itself, and projects a mental attack causing 1d6 points of psychic damage (DC 10 Intelligence saving throw for half damage). Those with Intelligence higher than the rat's are immune to the mental attack.



Broken Creature

A broken creature is not born. Instead, cruel techniques of coercive persuasion applied over time systematically strip away its will until it unquestioningly accepts the instruction of a master. These techniques are taught only to high-ranking members of one of the guilds that specialize in breaking creatures, such as the Grand Society of Obedience and the Sisters of Bestial Discipline. These groups have created a considerable industry of breaking creatures and selling broken creatures as reliable-yet-docile servitors within the City-State of Castorhage.

Any living creature with Intelligence 1 or higher can be broken, with the exception of familiars and animal companions. A broken creature uses the base creature's stat blocks, with the following differences:

- Constitution increases by 2, Wisdom declines by 2.
- Has proficiency and advantage on Constitution saving throws.
- Dominated: A broken creature responds to its controller as if under the effect of a *dominate monster* spell that can't be dispelled or broken. There is no telepathic link; commands must be issued verbally, visually (hand signals), or aurally (whistle, drums, etc.). The creature never makes a saving throw to end the effect, even when it takes damage or is given a self-destructive command.

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Broken Fey

These are horrific creatures, individuals with different possible appearances.

Broken Fey

Large aberration, lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +3 (+6 in water), Insight +4
Damage Resistances acid, fire
Damage Immunities poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered
Condition Immunities poisoned, paralyzed, petrified
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Sorcery Points. The Broken Fey has 5 sorcery points and can use them on either an Extended Spell or a Subtle Spell. Points can also be exchanged for spell slots using the following exchange:

Slot	Points
1st	2
2nd	3
3rd	5

Spellcasting. The Broken Fey is a 5th-level spellcaster. Charisma is its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following spells from the sorcerer spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *Acid Splash, Chill Touch, Friends, Minor Illusion, Poison Spray*
1st (4 slots): *Charm Person, Comprehend Languages*
2nd (3 slots): *Detect Thoughts, Suggestion*
3rd (2 slots): *Gaseous Form, Fear*
Amphibious. The Broken Fey can breathe air and water.
Freeze. If the Broken Fey takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The Broken Fey makes two bite and one trident attack.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit: 9 (*2d8 + 5) piercing damage and 5 (1d10) poison damage.
Trident. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft. or range 20/60; one creature). *Hit: 7 (*1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Canary

This tiny songbird has feathers of pale yellow with a slight greenish tinge and is streaked with gray and brown on its back and wings.

Canary

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4
Languages none
Challenge 0 (XP 10)

Gas Vulnerability. Canaries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of inhaled poisons and fouled air. They have disadvantage on saving throws against any effect caused by an inhaled gas or substance.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (reach 0 ft.; one

creature). *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

ECOLOGY
Environment forest (any land in captivity)
Organization solitary, pair, or flock (3–12)

These tiny birds were originally discovered among the subtropical islands of the south and were brought to the mainland to be bred as songbirds. Their numbers have flourished in captivity over the years, and it was eventually determined that they were useful in detecting dangerous gases in mines and caverns. Since that time, they have been widely employed by miners as sentinel animals to detect the presence of otherwise undetectable gas hazards before the miners are overcome by them.

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Caryatid Column

An exquisitely sculpted and finished statue of a beautiful female warrior, longsword in her hand.

Caryatid Column

Medium construct, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 30 (4d10 + 8)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	9 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities Necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages None
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Immunity to Magic. A caryatid column automatically succeeds on all saving throws against spells and spell-like effects. If a successful saving throw reduces damage by half, the caryatid column takes no damage instead. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below (these effects override its immunity). A *stone shape* spell cancels the caryatid column's immunity to magic for 1d4 rounds.
Shatter Weapons. Whenever a character strikes a caryatid column with a melee weapon and the attack roll is a natural 1, 2, or 3, the character must make a Strength check. The character's Strength bonus is added to the roll, but the character's proficiency bonus and the weapon's magical bonus (if any) are subtracted from the roll. If the result is 15 or less, there is no effect. If the result is 16 or higher, the weapon shatters and becomes useless.

ACTIONS
Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 2 slashing damage.

The caryatid column is more fully described in ***First Edition Foes***, published by **Frog God Games**



Caul Cuckoo and Caul Cuckoo Gyre

This is no ordinary human child, but an infection, something that leeched upon a living babe whilst in the womb and smothered it, becoming something partly human and partly from Between. Its form is fluid, oily almost, and the disturbing mixture of human and slug is revolting to behold.

Caul Cuckoo

Small aberration (larval Between), neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 63 (14d6 + 14)
Speed 10 ft., burrow 5 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +4, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Sylvan, telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Change Shape. A caul cuckoo has two forms. Its natural form is that of a sluglike thing with a distorted humanoid head, but it can also take a humanoid form based on its mother. A caul cuckoo can shift between its forms as a bonus action. Equipment worn or carried on its humanoid form melds into its natural form.
Distorted. The caul cuckoo's internal anatomy is radically different from a normal humanoid's. Critical hits against the creature do a flat +1 damage but don't roll damage dice twice.
Horrific Appearance. Creatures that start their turn within 30

feet of a caul cuckoo in its natural form and who can see it see must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be poisoned. This is a psychological effect, not actual poison, so immunity to poison offers no protection. A poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn to end the effect. A successful saving throw makes the creature immune to the horrific appearance of caul cuckoos for 24 hours.

Salt Vulnerability. A handful of salt burns a caul cuckoo as though it was alchemist's fire, doing 1d4 fire damage at the start of the caul cuckoo's turn until it's extinguished by spending an action to make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The caul cuckoo makes three tongue attacks or sings its lullaby.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 piercing damage plus 1d6 acid damage.

Lullaby. When a caul cuckoo wails its lullaby, it has the same effect as a *confusion spell* that affects all creatures within 300 feet of the caul cuckoo who can hear the song. All potential targets must make successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throws or become confused**.** The confusion lasts for 1 minute or until the caul cuckoo stops singing or loses concentration on its lullaby. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, with a success ending the effect.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (Between)
Organization solitary, pair, gang (3–8), or cult (9–20)

Caul cuckoos are the tragic result of an unborn child corrupted by a caul cuckoo syre while still in its mother's womb. When birthed by its human parent, a caul cuckoo is Tiny, but otherwise has all of its normal abilities. A caul cuckoo has a 50% chance of being in either of its two forms at birth. If in its human form, it usually waits until after nightfall to either escape into the night or murder its sleeping parents and then escape. If born in its sluglike form, it immediately attacks its mother and any others present in an attempt to escape.

Though the birth of these creatures is a rare occurrence, there is a reason that many old midwives carry a bag of salt with them whenever they attend a new delivery.

Caul Cuckoo Syre

This creature is a pallid pupa, no larger than a finger, with a tiny, twisted humanoid face.

Caul Cuckoo Syre

Tiny aberration (larval Between), neutral

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)
Speed 5 ft., burrow 5 ft., climb 5 ft., swim 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Stealth +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Salt Vulnerability. A handful of salt burns a caul cuckoo syre as though it was alchemist's fire, doing 1d4 fire damage at the start of the caul cuckoo's turn until it's extinguished by spending an action to make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

ACTIONS

Lullaby. When a caul cuckoo syre wails its lullaby, it targets one creature within 30 feet which must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or fall unconscious. Creatures with 5 or more HD are immune. A creature that saves successfully is immune to all caul cuckoo syre lullabies for 24 hours. An unconscious creature wakes up after 1 minute, when it takes damage, or when another creature uses an action to awaken it.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (Between)
Organization solitary

Caul cuckoo syres are the progenitors of caul cuckoos. They spend the majority of their lives stealthily searching out pregnant humanoid females to infest, so they can corrupt their unborn children into caul cuckoos.

Drawn to Mothers. A caul cuckoo syre can detect pregnant humanoids within 60 feet by smell. Strangely, caul cuckoo syres are also attracted by the odor of some ghouls, which consider caul cuckoo syres to be quite the delicacy. When a caul cuckoo syre locates a pregnant potential host, it crawls into the woman's womb while she's asleep. Over the course of the next five days, it slowly dissolves into the developing embryo, bathing it in unnatural hormones. The woman experiences severe morning sickness during those five days; a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check made by a character with proficiency in Medicine spots the difference between this sickness and typical morning sickness. By the end of the five days, the syre is completely gone and the fetus is transformed into a caul cuckoo.

Dangerous Surgery. If the syre's presence is detected or even suspected, it can be removed with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The check can be repeated as many times as necessary, but if it fails by 5 or more, the host takes 1d6 slashing damage (which can easily kill a commoner with 4 or fewer hit points). Lesser restoration or comparable magic destroys a caul cuckoo syre automatically and restores the fetus to normal health.

Cave Fisher

This man-sized creature resembles a cross between a lobster and a spider. It has eight legs, two of which end in serrated pincers. Its snout is long and pointed.

Cave Fisher

Large monstrosity, unaligned
Armor Class 12 (natural armour)
Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	1 (–5)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages None
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Filament. A creature struck by a cave fisher's filament

becomes grappled by the sticky thread and is pulled 20 feet closer to the cave fisher. A grappled creature can use its action to rip the filament free with a DC 13 Strength check, or can attack the filament directly (AC 12, 5 hit points, resistant to all but slashing damage). Alcohol or universal solvent dissolves the adhesive and releases the creature caught by the filament. A cave fisher can have only one creature grappled at a time.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cave fisher attacks once with its filament or twice with claws.

Claws. *Melee Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Filament. *Ranged Attack:* +3 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* the target is grappled and pulled 20 feet closer to the cave fisher (details above).

Chaos Beast

A horrid mass of glaring eyes, gnashing teeth, and barbed tentacles, the chaos beast's twisting form is constantly reshaping itself.

Chaos Beast

Medium aberration, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 16 (natural armour)
Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6
Skills Perception +5
Damage Resistances acid, necrotic, slashing
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages None
Challenge 6 (2,800 XP)

Amorphous. The chaos beast can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Destabilize. Whenever a chaos beast touches a creature, as an attack or other form of contact, the creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be assaulted by chaotic energy. On a successful save, the creature is pushed in a random direction away from the chaos beast. On a failed save, the creature becomes destabilized and immediately begins to choke and cannot draw breath, is restrained, and begins to lose form and shape as pure chaotic energy begins to break down and reform its physical body. At the start of each of the chaos beast's turns, the destabilized creature takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The destabilized effect continues until the creature dies or a *remove curse* spell negates the effect.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chaos beast makes two attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be affected by the **destabilize** effect.

Child of Folly, the

The Child of Folly is a massive undead ooze containing zombies, detailed in Adventure Chapter L5.

Child of Folly

Gargantuan ooze (undead), unaligned
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 162 (12d20 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	1 (–5)	10 (+0)	1 (–5)

Skills Perception +3
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages None
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Release the Zombies (recharge 5-6, up to 3 times per encounter). The Child of Folly can spit out a **zombie** as a bonus action in its turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Child of Folly makes up to four slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If two or more slam attacks hit the same creature in the Child of Folly's turn, the victim may be engulfed.

Engulf: If The Child of Folly makes two successful slam attacks on the same victim in one turn, the victim of the attack must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the Child of Folly. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw. On a failed save, the Child of Folly enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 10 (3d6) points of necrotic damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage at the start of each of the Child of Folly's turns. When the Child of Folly moves, the engulfed creature moves with it. An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 13 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the cube.

Child of the Forest (Verdigris Forest)

These fey creatures look like children at a distance, but when seen more closely they have goat-like legs, wild, flowing hair, and their faces resemble a variety of different beasts: here a pig, there a wolf, and there a bull

Child of the Verdigris Forest

Small fey, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +4, Sleight of Hand +4
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Animated Hair. A Child of the Verdigris Forest carries cuttings of its own hair, braided into ropes, in its leather pouch. It can quickly splice these short hair ropes into a longer rope and magically animate it to entangle foes, which requires 2 rounds to complete. A Child of the Verdigris Forest's animated hair rope has AC 14, 8 hit points, is immune to all but slashing damage, and flies with a speed of 30 feet. When it attacks a target, the target creature must make a successful DC 12 Strength saving throw or be restrained (escape DC 13). A restrained creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. The hair rope is destroyed by a successful Strength saving throw, but a successful Dexterity save leaves it unaffected and it continues attacking.

Mobility. An opponent has disadvantage on opportunity attack rolls against the Children.

Innate Spellcasting. The Child of the Verdigris Forest's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The Child can innate cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *animate objects* (stones only), *shatter*, *speak with stone* (functions identically to *speak with plants*, but with stones instead), *stone shape*

Stone Stride. The Child can step into a stone and emerge from any other stone within 30 feet as part of normal movement. The stones must be at least as large as they are. The Child can't end its turn inside a stone.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Shears. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage. A Child of the Verdigris Forest scores a critical hit with shears if its attack roll is a natural 18, 19, or 20.

Stone. *Ranged Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20 ft./60 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 bludgeoning damage.

Laugh. *Area Attack (recharge 5, 6):* automatic hit (range 60 ft.; all creatures in range). *Hit:* creatures in range that can hear the laugh must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1d3 rounds.

Coffer Corpse

This creature appears as a desiccated humanoid shrouded in rotting, tattered funerary clothes. Its hands end in sharpened claws with slightly elongated fingernails.

Coffer Corpse

Medium undead, neutral
Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances piercing and slashing attacks that are non-magical
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhausted, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Magic Weapons. A coffer corpse's attacks are magical.

Deceiving Death. In the first round in which a coffer corpse is struck for 6 or more points of damage, the creature slumps to the ground, seemingly destroyed. If it has fastened its death grip on a victim, it releases its hold when it falls. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check sees through the ruse (necromancers apply their proficiency bonus on this check). On its next turn, the coffer corpse rises again as if reanimated, triggering its fear ability.

Fear. A creature viewing a coffer corpse rise after it uses its deceiving death ability must make a DC 12 Wisdom save or become frightened for 1 minute.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the coffer corpse can automatically hit the target with its claw and any target grappled cannot speak or cast spells with a verbal component. No more than one target can be grappled by a coffer corpse at the same time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage.

Crathog

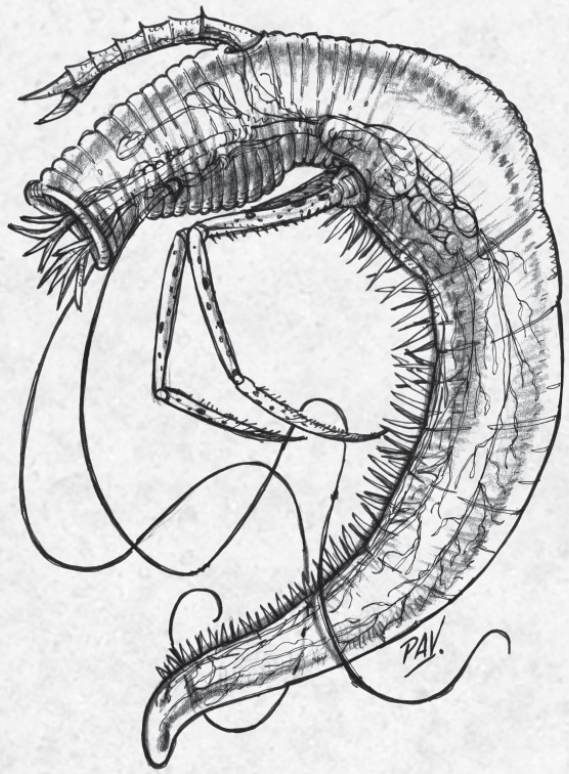
This creature draws its leech-like body along by great barbed spindly tentacles that glisten with fluid. Somewhere inside its cluster of spines and sharp bones lurks a great maw that distends itself outward.

Crathog

Huge aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 123 (13d12 + 39)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)



Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +4, Cha +3
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Aquan, Deep Speech
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Acidic Trail. The crathog's skin exudes a layer of acid. This coating leaves a slimy trail behind the crathog similar to a slug's trail. All spaces that the crathog occupied since its last turn retain this acidic coating; any creature that enters or starts its turn in such a space takes 1d6 acid damage. At the start of the crathog's turn, all previously acidic spaces become safe.

Blending Skin. When at rest, a crathog shifts the color of its flesh to blend perfectly with the surrounding terrain. While motionless, the crathog is invisible.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crathog attacks twice with tentacles, then either bites twice or uses distended bite once.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d8 + 5 bludgeoning damage plus 1d10 acid damage. If both tentacle attacks hit the same creature on the crathog's turn, the creature is grappled (escape DC 15). The crathog can have up to two creatures grappled and still use tentacle attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 5 piercing damage plus 1d10 acid damage.

Distended Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit (reach 20 ft.; one creature); Hit:* 1d12 + 5 piercing damage plus 1d10 acid damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment coast
Organization solitary

The crathog are octopod horrors that had their origins in the exits of large cities' sewers emptying into the sea. The mixture of alchemical fluids, waste products, and other toxins caused mutations within the sea life that grew in the area until a new species spawned and bred true. The crathog began to gain an incessant drive to reproduce, a deeper understanding of their surroundings, and a greater intelligence.

A crathog seeps a corrosive acid from its porous flesh. Its tentacles move with eerie quickness to grasp its prey and pull it toward its distended jaw. These jaws are hinged on a flexible tendon that allows the crathog to contract a coiled muscle and launch this set of jaws outward to burst from its clustered mouth. The creature is able to blend into its surroundings like a chameleon. It moves almost totally silently, but leaves a slimy trail which in itself is acidic and dangerous. A crathog is incredibly strong and stealthy, known to climb onto ships to feed on unsuspecting sailors, dissolving their flesh with its acid.

Their intelligence allows them the insight to use their special abilities as ambush hunters. They tend to hide in crooks of old harbors and lie in wait until a fisherman ventures past. Crathog are not only cunning, they are incredibly cruel; they delight in mutilating or tormenting prey, and disfiguring their opponents with their acids. Why they do this is open to conjecture, but many scholars believe that crathog are somehow spawned by the influence of Between and that they seethe with the inherent injustice of those who have died in the river, particularly those who have suffered from its acidic toxins.

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Crirge

A magically-mixed hybrid of a crow and a stirge, having the head of a crow with the proboscis of a stirge.

Crirge

Tiny monstrosity, unaligned
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 3 (1d4+1)
Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (–4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (–4)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages none
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Blood Drain*: Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage, and the crirge attaches to the target. While attached, the crirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the crirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss. The crirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the crirge.

Crown Prince Clovis

Ancient Clovis, the husband of Princess Genève, has designs upon the throne, and uses his sorcery to aid his efforts. He makes pacts with devils to further his ends, and it is rumoured that he has sold his soul to the Devil. Clovis is a member of the Great Coven.

Prince Clovis, Crown Prince of the Capitol

Medium aranea (Human Form), neutral evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 49 (9d8+9)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any four languages
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Shapechanger. Clovis can use his action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Spider Climb. Clovis can climb difficult surfaces and ceilings without requiring an ability check.

Spellcasting. Clovis is a 9th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:

Spells (slots):
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation;*
1st (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield;*
2nd (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion;*
3rd (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly;*
4th (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm;*
5th (1 slots): *cone of cold;*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Clovis makes two attacks on his turn.

Bite (Spider Form Only). *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save. If the poison reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but **poisoned** for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is *paralyzed* while poisoned this way.

Dagger. *Melee or ranged attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Web (Spider Form Only, Recharge 5-6). *Ranged weapon attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., and the target is restrained by webbing, requiring a DC 12 Strength check to escape.

Crown Prince Justice Cornlord

Cornlord is the Town Bridge ruler who uses poisons and spiders to aid his advancement.

Crown Prince Justice Cornlord, Lord of the Bridge

Medium aranea (human form), neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception + 4, Stealth +11
Damage Resistances poison
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assassinate. On Cornlord's first turn he has advantage on attack rolls, as long as the target has not taken a turn. Any hit against a surprised target is considered a critical hit.

Evasion. If Cornlord is required to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, he takes no damage on a successful save, and half damage on a failed save.

Shapechanger. Cornlord can use his action to polymorph into a spider-humanoid hybrid or into a giant spider, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Cornlord's attack deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when he hits with a weapon attack, if he has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Cornlord does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spider Climb. Cornlord is able to climb difficult surfaces and ceilings without requiring an ability check.

Innate Spellcasting. Cornlord's spellcasting ability is Intelligence, and requires no material components for the following spells (spell save DC 15):
At will: *dancing lights, poison cloud, shocking grasp;*
3/day each: *charm person, sleep;*
1/day each: *invisibility, mirror image;*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cornlord makes two attacks on his turn.

Bite (Spider Form Only). *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+2) piercing damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save. If the poison reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but **poisoned** for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is *paralyzed* while poisoned this way.

Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw,

taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Web (Spider Form Only, Recharge 5-6). *Ranged weapon attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., and the target is restrained by webbing, requiring a DC 12 Strength check to escape.

Crown Prince Rorth

Princess Eleanor's husband is the dashing face of the family. In truth, Rorth is only interested in sexual conquest and horseracing, in that order. An absinthe fiend, he frequently goes to the Artists' Quarter in disguise to search for some new vice.

Crown Prince Rorth

Medium human, neutral
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +5, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages any one language (usually common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Eagle Eye (3/day). On a successful hit with a longbow or shortbow, Rorth can roll an additional damage die and add it to the total damage of the hit.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Rorth makes two attacks on his turn.

Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Dark Creeper

This creature resembles a small humanoid with a light, thin frame. It has gray skin and stark-white eyes with gray pupils. It dresses in filthy, brownish-black clothing. The smell of dung and rotted meat hangs in the air around it.

Dark Creeper

Small humanoid, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 16 (3d6 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Deep speech, Undercommon
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Death Throes. When a dark creeper is slain, its body combusts in a flash of bright light. All creatures within 20 feet of the slain creeper must make a successful DC 12 Constitution save or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. Any other creeper within 10 ft. of this flash are automatically blinded for 1d6 rounds. The creeper's gear and treasure remain lying in a heap where the creeper died.

Martial Advantage. A dark creeper's dagger attack does an extra 1d6 piercing damage if the dark creeper has advantage on the attack, or if another dark stalker or dark creeper is within 5 feet of the target.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 piercing damage and the target must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d4 poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour. After being poisoned, the victim must make a saving throw each round until succeeding. Each failure causes an additional 1d4 points of poison damage.

Dark Stalker

This creature resembles a small humanoid with a light, thin frame. It has gray skin and stark-white eyes with gray pupils. It dresses in filthy, brownish-black clothing. The smell of dung and rotted meat hangs in the air around it.

Dark Stalker

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 48 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Death Throes. When a dark stalker is slain, its body combusts in a flash of flame. All creatures within 20 feet of the slain stalker take 3d6 fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 12 Dexterity save. The stalker's combustible gear is burned to ash, but other items (shortswords, poison vials, coins, gems) survive the burst of fire.

Martial Advantage. A dark stalker's shortsword attack does an extra 2d6 piercing damage if the dark stalker has advantage on the attack, or if another dark stalker or dark creeper is within 5 feet of the target.

Innate Spellcasting. The dark stalker's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *fog cloud*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dark stalker attacks twice with its shortswords.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 piercing damage and the target must make a successful DC 12 Con saving throw or suffer 1d4 poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour. After being poisoned, the victim must make a saving throw each round until succeeding. Each failure causes an additional 1d4 points of poison damage.

Demoriel

This creature is a very attractive female with raven black hair, coal black eyes, amber skin, and a shapely form. Small bat wings protrude from her shoulders, and tiny horns jut from her forehead, just above her eyes.

Demoriel, the Twice-Exiled Seductress, Shadow Ruler of Castorhage

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 231 (22d10+110)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	22 (+6)	24 (+7)

Skills Persuasion +13, Deception +13
Damage Resistances cold damage, nonmagical weapon attacks
Damage Immunities fire, poison damage
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Enrapture. Any creature hostile to Demoriel that starts its turn within 20 feet of Demoriel must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, unless Demoriel is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is paralyzed until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Demoriel's Enrapture for the next 24 hours.

Hellish Weapons. Demoriel's weapon attacks are magical and deal an extra 13 (3d8) acid damage on a hit (included in attacks).

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Demoriel fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Demoriel has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. Demoriel's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *charm person, darkness, detect magic, dispel magic, dissonant whispers, hideous laughter*
3/day each: *counterspell, dominate person, telekinesis*
1/day each**:** *greater invisibility, mass suggestion;*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Demoriel makes two attacks with her longsword.

Reaver (Longsword). *Melee weapon attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage, or 17 (2d10+6) slashing damage if used two-handed, plus 13 (3d8) acid damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Demoriel has access to three legendary actions. She may choose from the options listed below. Only one legendary action may be used at a time, and may only be used at the end of another creature's turn. At the start of her turn, she regains the use of any spent legendary actions.

Die Laughing (3 actions). Demoriel casts *hideous laughter.*

Reaver Attack. Demoriel makes a melee attack with Reaver.

Teleport (2 actions). Demoriel magically teleports up to 120 ft. to an unoccupied space, along with any equipment she is carrying or wearing.

Unusual Equipment: Reaver

Reaver

Weapon (any sword), legendary (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

Reaver is Demoriel's finely crafted unholy longsword. Those that wield it gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon, which deals psychic damage instead of slashing damage. When a celestial creature takes damage from Reaver, it suffers an extra 1d8 psychic damage. The sword emits a dim purple light in a 15-foot radius.

Demoriel was once a powerful angel that made her home in the heavens among the other angels. In the Celestial Hierarchy, she was a member of the Cherubim and served alongside Gabriel, Raphael, and Ophaniel. During the Unholy Schism, she sided with Lucifer and aided him by seducing another Cherub wherein Lucifer caught the angel unaware and murdered him on the spot.

When Lucifer was thrown down from the good-aligned planes, Demoriel was beside him; cast out for the sin of slaying another angel and spilling the blood of an angel in the outer planes. When Lucifer envisioned Hell, Demoriel envisioned herself on the throne next to him, serving as Hell's Queen. Unfortunately for her, she became one of his many concubines but never his bride, for the Great Uprising occurred in Hell and the other arch-devils moved to destroy Lucifer and his court. When Lucifer was removed from Hell's Throne and took up residence in a pocket plane called Infernus, Demoriel followed. Once again, she was denied her place on the throne next to Lucifer as he took a devil named Shabiri as his consort. Though Demoriel remains ever loyal to Lucifer, she does not trust nor like Shabiri. For now, she waits until her time comes when she can discredit or destroy Shabiri and replace her as Lucifer's consort.

Though Lucifer no longer rules Hell, Demoriel still serves him unswervingly. She follows no other, though she is more than willing to lead other creatures to their demise by feigning loyalty to them. She has a particularly vile hatred for celestials (more than other devils do it seems) and enjoys corrupting and destroying them.

Demoriel attacks with her spell-like abilities, attempting to charm the strongest opponents she faces. If forced into melee, she attacks with her spell-like abilities and longsword, Reaver, or summons other devils to fight for her while she maintains a position away from the immediate fight.

Denizen of Leng (the "men of Leng")

Wrapped from head to toe in tattered leather robes, this creature appears almost human at first glance. The longer one looks, however, the more one becomes aware of strange and terrifying realities beneath the façade.

Denizens of Leng are more fully detailed in ***Fifth Edition Foes***, by **Frog God Games**.

Denizen of Leng

Medium Aberration, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)

Skills Deception +9
Damage Resistances cold, lightning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Abyssal, Infernal
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. At the start of its turn, a denizen of Leng recovers 5 lost hit points. This ability fails to function only if

the creature is utterly cut off from Leng; e.g., if its ability to *plane shift* is negated. If a denizen of Leng is reduced to 0 hit points while it is still capable of regenerating, its body dissipates into vapor in 1d4 rounds, leaving only its clothing and equipment behind, and it returns to life on Leng.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, a denizen of Leng can do an extra 4d6 damage with a claw or bite attack if the denizen has advantage on the attack or if one of its allies is within 5 feet of the target.

Spell-like Abilities. A denizen of Leng can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as its casting ability (DC 16, attack +8). A denizen of Leng doesn't need material components to use these abilities.

Constant: *tongues*

3/day: *detect thoughts*, *hypnotic pattern*, *levitate*, *minor image* 1/day: *locate object*, *plane shift* (self only)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. A denizen of Leng bites once and attacks once with claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 piercing damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw or immediately gain one level of exhaustion.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 slashing damage.

Devil, Hellstoker

This man-sized creature has loosely hanging, rubbery flesh, grayishblack in color, and its entire body is smeared with a yellowish-brown mucus. Its head is ovoid, devoid of hair, and sports upward curving horns. A hardened ridge of bone runs from its brow, across the top of its head, and disappears into its spine. Its long, serpentine tail is dark grayish-red.

Devil, Hellstoker

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +5, Survival +5
Damage Resistances acid, cold
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Infernal, Telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 4 (XP 1,100)

Innate spellcasting. The Hellstoker Devil's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 10). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *protection from evil and good, teleport* (self and 50 lbs.)

1/day: *burning hands*

Fiery Body. Hellstoker devils are covered in flammable oil. Any fire damage that hits them will cause them to burst into flame for 1 minute. While on fire, a creature that touches the hellstalker devil or hits it with a melee attack within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage and catches on fire. Until a creature takes an action to douse the flames, it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Oily Skin. Hellstoker devils have advantage on any attempts to escape a grapple.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hellstoker Devils can make up to two attacks, either with their claw or longspear.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the hellstoker devil is on fire, a claw attack does an additional 3 (1d6) fire damage and the target catches on fire. Until the target takes an action to douse the flames, it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Longspear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage when used one-handed or *Hit:* 6 (1d8=2) piercing damage when used 2-handed or *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) when thrown.

Bellows. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8) fire damage and the target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or catch on fire. Until the target takes an action to douse the flames, it takes 4 (1d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. The hellstoker devil must be on fire itself or use its *burning hands* to ignite the bellows before it can be used.

Summon Devil (1/day). The hellstoker devil chooses one of these options and has a 50% chance of success: 2d8 lemures or 35% chance of success: 1 hellstoker devil. Any devil summoned acts as an ally of the hellstoker devil, remains for up to one minute and cannot summon any more devils.

Devil, Lilin

A beautiful well-proportioned woman with crimson skin stands before you. Her eyes are dark, almost black as is her hair. A pair of small bat-like wings protrudes from her shoulders. She wields a gleaming longsword in her hand.

Devil, Lilin

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 76 (8d8+40)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str + 6, Dex +6, Cha +7
Skills Deception +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-magical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting: The lilin's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The lilin can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *charm person, misty step*
3/day each: *animate dead*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lilin devil can make two attacks with either claws or longsword or a combination of both.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one tar-

get. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Summon Devil (1/day). The lilin devil has a 30% chance of summoning one **barbed devil**. If successful, the summoned devil appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of the lilin, and acts as an ally of the lilin. It remains summoned for 1 minute, until it or the lilin dies, or until it is dismissed by the lilin. It cannot summon other devils.

Diseased Vampire (e.g., Lord Hemlock, Wither)

Virtually no diseases affect the undead, but as with everything in the City of Castorhage, diseases can take unusual forms and abnormal virulence. The Nosferiadra is a magical curse rather than a disease, but it has a physical presence, a drifting cloud that winds its way through the blight along streets and into shadows, down gutters and over rooftops. It is neither extensive nor particularly contagious, but the vampire Hemlock has been unlucky enough to be infected by its influence. The effect of the curse is much like a disease that might affect a living being; Hemlock is not as powerful or as capable as a vampire in the prime of death.

Diseased Vampire

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 68 (17d8 + 0)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +6, Cha +8
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages As known in life
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shapechanger. If the diseased vampire isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into its true form. While in bat form, the vampire can't speak, its walking speed is 5 feet, and it has a flying speed of 30 feet. Its statistics, other than its size and speed, are unchanged. Anything it is wearing transforms with it, but nothing it is carrying does. It reverts to its true form if it dies. While in mist form, the vampire can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, and Dexterity saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.

Misty Escape. When it drops to 0 hit points outside its resting place, the diseased vampire transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that it isn't in sunlight or running water. If it can't transform, it is destroyed. While it has 0 hit points in mist form, it can't revert to its vampire form, and it must reach its resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in its resting place, it reverts to its vampire form. It is then paralyzed until it regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in its resting place with 0 hit points, it regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. The vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

Spider Climb. The vampire can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire has the following flaws:

Forbiddance: The vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water: The vampire takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart: If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into the vampire's heart while the vampire is incapacitated in its resting place, the vampire is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity: The vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only): The diseased vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only): *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only): *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. A diseased vampire regains *only 1 hit point* from biting, rather than the full amount of damage inflicted. The reduction of maximum hit points lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the vampire's control.

Charm: The vampire targets one humanoid it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the vampire, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the vampire. The charmed target regards the vampire as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the vampire's control, it takes the vampire's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the vampire's bite attack. Each time the vampire or the vampire's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the vampire is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day): The vampire magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, the vampire can call 3d6 wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the vampire dies, or until the vampire dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The vampire can take 2 legendary actions, described below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The

vampire regains spent legendary actions only at the end of a long rest.

Move: The vampire moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Blight-Bull (Light Fighting Dog)

This small but nasty-looking dog is scarred from many battles.

Blight-Bull

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	10 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages none
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Ferocity. When the Blight-bull drops to 0 hit points, it immediately makes one attack against a creature within 5 feet as a reaction before dying.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage, and a Small or smaller creature is grappled (escape DC 9). A grappled creature takes 1d4 + 2 piercing damage at the end of its turn.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban
Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3-12)



Pit Mastiff (Heavy Fighting Dog)

This vicious-looking dog is heavily muscled and glares threateningly at everyone who gets near.

Pit Mastiff

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages none
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Ferocity. When the pit mastiff drops to 0 hit points, it immediately makes one attack against a creature within 5 feet as a reaction before dying.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 2 piercing damage, and a Medium or smaller creature is grappled (escape DC 12). A grappled creature takes 1d8 + 2 piercing damage at the end of its turn.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban
Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)

Dogs bred and trained specifically to fight are tougher than normal breeds. They are typically garbed in light barding and have been taught to lock their jaws to bring opponents down. Their training has suppressed some of their natural instincts and rendered them quite specialized; consequently, they aren't of much use for other activities, such as tracking, but continue to fight past the point when other dogs would no longer be able to continue.

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Dog, Riding

This burly dog is fitted with a small saddle. A low, menacing growl rumbles up from its chest.

Riding Dog

Medium beast, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armour)
Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track by smell.

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Duke Malice

Ostensibly in charge of the Royal Armies and the City Watch, Malice is an appallingly cruel taskmaster infamous for his use of personal wizards to dominate officers and captains in his force. Capable of outrageous acts of cruelty, the stories of Malice are frequently told in taverns and gin houses up and down the city. It was Malice who first used Royal manticorae to pull apart prisoners; he who used live prisoners as catapult ammunition; and he who was responsible for the great Road of Impalements, a tale that still blights the Capitol and Royal Family. Despite the rancour held for him in the city, the Queen's 80-year-old cousin has aged remarkably well. He retains a full head of long, thick black hair (carefully oiled and held in place), and the trim, well-muscled physique of a much younger man. Remarkably, he is not of the alchymic-undying.

Duke Malice

Medium human, neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6
Skills Athletics +5, Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages any one language (usually common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cruelty. When he scores a critical hit with his claymore, Duke Malice can roll an additional 1d6 and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Duke Malice makes two attacks on his turn.
Claymore. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.
Recurve Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10) piercing damage.

Duke Taim

The queen's only nephew, Taim believes in order and the sanctity of the Royal Family. He is totally loyal to the queen and her name and, like Malice, capable of extreme violence and cruelty if need be. Taim, however, is more controlled in his fury, and is more likely to see good in people if they give him cause to do so. Taim is madly in love with Princess Rebecca of Mourney, and has proposed no fewer than eleven times. The Master of the Capitol, he is responsible for the security and well-being of the Royal Family and all residents in the Capitol. Taim works covertly against any evil he finds therein, a position that grows more desperate by the day.

Duke Taim

Medium human, neutral
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spellcasting. Duke Taim is a 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following paladin spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots) — *bless, divine favor, heroism, wrathful smite*
2nd level (2 slots) — *aid, branding smite;*

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Duke Taim makes two attacks on his turn.
Greatsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.
Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

REACTIONS
Parry. When wielding a melee weapon, Taim can add 2 to his AC as a reaction against one melee attack that would otherwise hit. He must be wielding a melee weapon and be able to see the attacker.

Eleanor Shank

Eleanor Shank is a member of the Thieves Guild, and a pivotal figure in ***the Levee*** *Adventure.*

Eleanor Shank

Medium human, neutral good
Armor Class 16 (leather armour)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Thieves' cant, Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Eleanor can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.
Evasion. When Eleanor is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if the save is successful, and only half damage if the roll is a failure.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Eleanor can deal an extra 4d6 damage to one creature she hits with an attack if she has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. Eleanor doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't Incapacitated, and Eleanor doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Eleanor can make three attacks with either her shortsword or her light crossbow per turn.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Electric Eel

The serpentine creature moves sinuously through the water, the tip of its tail sparking with an electrical discharge.

Electric Eel

Large beast, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)
Speed 5 ft. Swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	1 -5)	12 (+1)	2 (-5)

Damage Immunities lightning
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Electric Shock (recharge 6). The electric eel produces a jolt of electricity in a 10-ft. radius centered on itself. Creatures within 5 ft. take 13 (3d8) points of lightning damage. Those further away but within 10 ft. take 4 (1d8) points. Creatures making a successful DC 13 Constitution save reduce the damage by half.

Elemental, Ragefire

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

Ragefire Elemental

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.

Besides the differences noted above, Tiny through Large ragefire elementals also have the trait **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 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.

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Ragefire Elemental

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	124	+7	3d10+3	1d12	8
Gargantuan	189	+8	4d10+3	1d20	11

Enoch Nettle

*A minor spellcaster, Enoch plays a role in the **Levee Adventure**.*

Enoch Nettle, Acolyte of Mother Grace, Poacher

Medium human, lawful neutral
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt, buckler)
Hit Points 20 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +2, Wis +4
Skills Medicine +4, Religion +2, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Enoch Nettle is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (3 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

ACTIONS
Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

Treasure: Poacher's coat (heavily waxed long coat with many interior hooks for game), 6 snares, Morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, chain shirt, buckler, wooden symbol of Mother Grace, small pyrebeetle bullseye lantern, 11 silver pieces.

Fanged Sea Serpent

This serpent is 12 to 15 feet long and 5 feet thick. Its body scales are thickened and hardened, which slows it somewhat in water but provides good protection. The serpent's most outstanding features, however, are the rows of long, sharp teeth that fill its mouth. It has large, lidless red eyes with white pupils.

Fanged Sea Serpent

Large dragon, neutral
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)
Speed swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages -
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Pack Tactics. The fanged sea serpent has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the fanged sea serpent's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.
Water Breathing. The fanged sea serpent can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour.

Father Gromwell

Father Gromwell is a major figure in the Levee Adventure.

Father Gromwell

Medium human, lawful neutral (Mother Grace)
Armor Class 19 (Between-based powers)
Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +4
Skills Insight +5, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages common
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Father Gromwell is a 9th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells from the cleric spell list:
Spells (slots):
Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying*;
1st (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith*;
2nd (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, silence, spiritual weapon*;
3rd (3 slots): *beacon of hope, crusader's mantle, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians, water walk*;
4th (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stoneskin*;
5th (1 slot): *flamestrike, mass cure wounds, hold monster;*
Staff of Withering. Father Gromwell has a *staff of withering* with 3 charges that regains 1d3 expended charges at dawn. He will use charges on his first two hits if he is engaged in melee combat, but will reserve the third charge.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Father Gromwell makes two attacks on his turn.
Staff of Withering. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage. If Father Gromwell expends 1 charge on the staff, it inflicts an additional 2d10 points of necrotic damage and requires a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or the target also is at disadvantage on all ability checks and saving throws based on Strength and Constitution for a period of 1 hour.

Fleshgine

Fleshgines are constructs of flesh combined with other materials designed for a specific purpose. They might pump water from a city's reservoirs into rooftop cisterns to supply the inhabitants with running water, or they may lift or pull — anything a humanoid body can do. But fleshgines are built to improve upon a humanoid's ability through modification and vast strength. While they are not uncommon in Castorhage, they often operate out of sight; their disturbing appearance being something the civilized locals choose not to acknowledge. They can be heard though — their steady stormy breathing, the asthmatic wheeze behind a grate, the slithering of flaccid limbs between floors. They also have a strong odor — a sort of organic sweatiness that can smell of the many other odors from the things they work in and around, which they absorb and amplify.

Fleshgines come in all shapes and sizes, and while no two are ever alike, they often fall into a set pattern. Each is very strong, and many — an uncannily large number — are weakly sentient creatures in their own right. Different fleshgines tend to have different abilities; some are simple brutes that occasionally go mad, some are more cunning, lurking and growing behind plaster and wainscoting and brooding their dark, strange dreams and wants.

All fleshgines have the trait **Berserk:** Every time a fleshgine is injured in combat, roll d100. If the result is less than or equal to the total number of hit points the fleshgine has lost so far in this combat, its elemental spirit breaks free and the fleshgine goes berserk. The berserk fleshgine attacks the nearest living creature; if no creature is close enough for the fleshgine to attack with a single move, it attacks an object instead. The fleshgine's controller can try to reestablish control, provided the fleshgine is within 60 feet. The controller must use an action to speak firmly and authoritatively to the construct and make a successful DC 15 Charisma check. A damaged fleshgine that spends at least 1 minute outside combat has its chance to go berserk reset to 0 percent.

Sentient Fleshgines: While most fleshgines are simple, mindless servitors made of flesh stitched and grown to inorganic parts and contraptions, some grow into something altogether different. Sentient fleshgines take on aspects of their humanoid neighbors that seep in from their close proximity on a daily basis. These aspects include tics, habits, language, and even some of their vices. These creatures are often bloated by the desires and madness of Between and become enraptured by it, seeking new directions and becoming fixated in disturbing ways. These constructs often form complex alliances with those who dwell behind the veneer of the Blight, particularly with the ghouls of the Fetch (who have enough inert humanity to understand and fear the construct). Some say the thoughts of the Crooked Promethean violate their dreams and awaken them; others say that it is a simple accident of nature. These sentient constructs lurk in plain sight and are driven by whatever twisted needs or goals have grown within their warped consciousness.

As more complex fleshgines are grafted from darker sources of flesh and bone, so too the risk of disaster becomes greater. Philosophers within the city-state already worry what fleshgines might do if they rebelled en masse. They point to the curious whale-song that occasionally haunts certain nights, and which seems to come from the fleshgines calling to each other across the city. What are they saying or planning, they wonder? The golem-stitchers and homuncule wives laugh at such suggestions; their creations are simple flesh-and-blood machines after all. What maliciousness could possibly lurk within this humble framework?

All sentient fleshgines that have gone berserk at least once in the past develop an urge toward murderous abduction called "take" or "taking." Occasionally the fleshgine's habits and needs drive it to seize a victim at least one size category smaller than the fleshgine. The fleshgine is always cunning in this action and manipulates its manifold parts and surroundings to camouflage its action. If the fleshgine's Stealth check beats the victim's passive Perception, the victim doesn't see the attack coming and the fleshgine gets to make a grappling attack with advantage. If the victim notices the attack coming, then it's just a normal attack by the fleshgine. While the victim is grappled by the fleshgine, it's also restrained, muffled (unable to cry out or speak), and suffocating. After a number of rounds equal to its Con modifier (minimum of 1), it becomes unconscious. At that point, the fleshgine hides the victim in some convenient location around or within its body. The victim remains unconscious until it dies or it's rescued.

Casual observers notice the hidden victim if their passive Perception exceeds (10 + the fleshgine's Stealth bonus). Anyone specifically looking for a victim taken by the fleshgine must win a contest of their Perception against the fleshgine's Stealth or Deception (fleshgine's choice). A taken victim is found automatically if the fleshgine is destroyed, but also might be injured, depending on the type of attacks used against the fleshgine and the size difference between them; GMs can apply their own judgment in these cases.

If a victim escapes the fleshgine's grapple, the fleshgine might attack or flee, depending on the situation.

A taken victim takes damage equal to any one of the fleshgine's melee attacks after every 24 hours. The taken victims are used to vent the leeched needs of the fleshgine — whether they be simple hunger, torment, or sexual — before their dead and broken remains are cast away.

A sentient fleshgine is always torn between its urges to seize a victim and the knowledge that discovery means certain punishment and death. It therefore carefully watches its chosen victim, often for weeks or months before striking.

The following entries describe three sample types of fleshgines. Many more are possible.

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Dungier's Buggy

The rumble of a coach's wheels upon the cobbles comes out of the misty night, but it is not accompanied by the clip-clop of hooves. Rather, there is a soft slapping of skin upon the hard stones. Emerging from the fog is a hansom cab drawn not by a team of horses but rather by the upper torso of an ogre melded to the front of the conveyance. It walks on its massive hands, and its head stares forward, the eyes alert but vacant.

Dungier's Buggy (Fleshgine)

Huge construct, unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical, nonadamantine weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities disease; charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages understands Common and Giant but speaks only programmed phrases
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Berserk. Every time the fleshgine is injured in combat, roll d100. If the result is less than or equal to the total number of hit points the fleshgine has lost so far in this combat, its elemental spirit breaks free and the fleshgine goes berserk. The berserk fleshgine attacks the nearest living creature; if no creature is close enough to attack with a single move, it attacks an object instead. The fleshgine's controller can try to reestablish control, provided the fleshgine is within 60 feet. The controller must use an action to speak firmly and authoritatively to the construct and make a successful DC 15 Charisma check. A damaged fleshgine that spends at



least 1 minute outside combat has its chance to go berserk reset to 0 percent.

Cover. The coach portion of a Dungier's buggy provides three-quarters cover to occupants. The coach is built from iron and wood. It has AC 8, 80 hit points, and is immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant damage. If the coach is destroyed, the fleshgine becomes a Large creature and loses its Cover, Facing, and Trample traits.

Facing. Because the legless ogre is permanently melded to a wagon, it can only move forward and backward, or turn. Its speed is halved when it moves backward. Its slam and bite attacks can be made only against targets in front of it. It can trample while moving forward or backward. behind it as normal. Once a Dungier's buggy's front side has been determined, it requires a move action to turn its facing greater than 90 degrees. A Dungier's buggy is aware of attackers behind it but cannot see them, though it can accurately estimate what space they are in if within 20 feet.

Narrow. Though a Dungier's buggy is Huge, it can move through areas only 10 feet wide without penalty. It can't, however, squeeze through spaces narrower than 10 feet.

Trample. As the Dungier's buggy moves, it can enter spaces occupied by enemies but can't stop there. Creatures in spaces the Dungier's buggy enters can attempt DC 13 Dexterity saving throws. On a failed save, the creature takes 2d10 + 4 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone; on a successful save, the creature moves 5 feet out of the buggy's path and can make an opportunity attack if it's allowed to react. A Dungier's buggy can trample any number of creatures during its move, but it can't trample the same creature more than once per round.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Dungier's buggy slams once and bites once.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d4 + 4 piercing damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary

Perhaps the most successful of Castorhage's many fleshgines are the hired coaches of the golem-stitcher Dunaven Dungier. His method of crafting a hansom cab with the animated upper torso of an ogre (occasionally a hill giant) fused to its front in place of a team of horses proved both practical and popular in a city as vast and populous as the Blight. Soon Dungier's buggies were traveling throughout the city providing swift, reliable transportation for the noble and common alike and for only a modest fare. Dungier's popularity with the other cab drivers and owners of hacks proved to be less than stellar, though, and only three years after the introduction of his ingenious cab, portions of his body were found floating in the Great Canal. It is assumed that sough eels or some other denizen devoured the rest. Fortunately for his legacy, Dungier's methods were fairly easy to reproduce, and now hundreds of these coaches — still known colloquially as Dungier's buggies — travel the streets of the city.

Hobbreth's Mighty Pump No. 87

The stench of sweat and the distant sounds of heavy breathing engulf you — whatever it is, you are catching the merest glimpse of the whole. In the oily dark you can see sickly appendages gulping, a horrible sense of brooding vastness, and a glowering cluster of eyes filled with misery just below a vast, idiot, crooked mouth.

Hobbreth's Mighty Pump No. 87 (Fleshgine)

Gargantuan construct, unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 205 (10d20 + 100)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	10 (+0)	30 (+10)	4 (-3)	4 (-3)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical, nonadamantine weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities disease; charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsense 60 ft., passive Perception 7
Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Berserk. Every time the fleshgine is injured in combat, roll d100. If the result is less than or equal to the total number of hit points the fleshgine has lost so far in this combat, its elemental spirit breaks free and the fleshgine goes berserk. The berserk fleshgine attacks the nearest living creature; if no creature is close enough to attack with a single move, it attacks an object instead. The fleshgine's controller can try to reestablish control, provided the fleshgine is within 60 feet. The controller must use an action to speak firmly and authoritatively to the construct and make a successful DC 15 Charisma check. A damaged fleshgine that spends at least 1 minute outside combat has its chance to go berserk reset to 0 percent.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fleshgine bites once and makes three tentacle attacks in any combination.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 10 piercing damage.
Tentacle Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit (reach 20 ft.; one creature). Hit: 4d6 + 10 bludgeoning damage.
Tentacle Grab. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit (reach 15 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* creature is grappled (escape DC 20).
Tentacle Crush. *Melee Weapon Attack:* automatic hit (one creature already grappled by the fleshgine). *Hit:* 4d10 + 10 bludgeoning damage, and the creature is restrained.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary

"You can't see her all, of course, even I never did when I was stitching her and moulding her, making her flesh and breathing life into my baby. I recall her formation though, her crisp newness — the endless flesh, and the stench of pigs — for it was pig-flesh I grew and nurtured, and spread across her carcass like a great sail on a vast living sailing vessel.

In her base she is all purpose — her many sucking mouths, which in truth I suppose you'd call tentacles (if such a crude word could be used for such grace), with so many eyes clustered together so she can see from her sweaty groin below that pointless mouth — she must have a mouth, of course. Her flesh engorges above, like some vast flaccid organ that could fill a great hall, bloated, booming, pumping. Veins cross her every inch — you can see the swelling blood pumping as she draws her harvest upward through her cathedral mass far, far above.

She rises then, reaching high into the city, her pumping limbs extending endlessly upward with surprising — some have said alarming — strength to the digits that grasp her farthest reach. Some have likened the digits to fleshy spiders, but I think that's simple scare-mongering to frighten children; they simply grip the vessel they spend her harvest into. And here her harvest is drawn, the life-giving water that sustains those in the streets high above pumped from sphincter mouths between each cluster of thin many-jointed hands.

It may taste a little of her sweat — her feral porcine nature — but it is water, saving the lower city from drowning and keeping the upper city drinking.

How many have I made? Oh, hundreds, no two quite alike. The stories about them going berserk? Rubbish put about by those with a grievance — anarchists would say anything to cause discontent amongst the ignorant.

I do sometimes wonder if they have a soul, though, my fleshy babies lurking between walls and dreaming. What do they dream of, I wonder?"

— Emilia Hobbreth, Homuncule Wife

Macabre Lift

The dark shaft of the vertical tunnel appears to be empty until its wooden floor suddenly lurches and rises from where it rested. Beneath the planking of the floor, you can see that a great fleshy organism has grown like a distended bladder that covers the entirety of its underside. From this sweaty, rugose sac extend four muscular limbs that grasp the walls of the shaft with their multi-fingered appendages and begin to climb, carrying the cargo of its wooden flooring smoothly up the shaft.

Macabre Lift (Fleshgine)

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 7 (15 from above)
Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)
Speed 10 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	4 (-3)	1 (-5)

Skills Athletics +8
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical, nonadamantine weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities disease; charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 7
Languages none
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Berserk. Every time the fleshgine is injured in combat, roll d100. If the result is less than or equal to the total number of hit points the fleshgine has lost so far in this combat, its elemental spirit breaks free and the fleshgine goes berserk. The berserk fleshgine attacks the nearest living creature; if no creature is close enough to attack with a single move, it attacks an object instead. The fleshgine's controller can try to reestablish control, provided the fleshgine is within 60 feet. The controller must use an action to speak firmly and authoritatively to the construct and make a successful DC 15 Charisma check. A damaged fleshgine that spends at least 1 minute outside combat has its chance to go berserk reset to 0 percent.
Crush. A macabre lift can fall on foes beneath it as its move. Every creature under the lift takes 1d8 bludgeoning dam-

age per 10 feet the lift fell, or half damage with a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail the saving throw are restrained under the lift; a restrained creature can escape by using an action and making a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. Restrained creatures take 2d8 bludgeoning damage at the start of the lift's turn.

Heavy Floor. The floor of a macabre lift is built from heavy wooden planks. Attacks against the macabre lift from creatures above it (such as passengers that were being raised or lowered in the lift) are made against AC 15, not AC 7.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fleshgine slams twice.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d8 + 6 bludgeoning damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary

One of the first fleshgines envisioned by the golem-stitchers of Castorhage, the macabre lift has found widespread usage among government buildings and other large, multilevel structures with the budget to install such amenities. These constructs are rather simple in design, with a fleshy, leathery hide grown on the underside of a 10-foot-by-10-foot deck of heavy wooden planks. Four stocky limbs extend from the underside of the creature at its four corners and end with club-like pseudopods surrounded by a fringe of grasping fingers with thick, coarse nails. The entire fleshgine is no more than 2 feet thick but weighs 1,500 pounds or more (3,500 pounds if constructed with an iron deck).

Macabre lifts are designed to be placed in vertical shafts whose dimensions match those of the fleshgine. The fleshgine then lies flat at the base of the shaft and allows passengers to step upon its decking. Upon a signal —usually the ringing of a small bell set into the side of the shaft — the macabre lift begins to climb the shaft while keeping its deck level and stable. Handholds are often built into the walls of the shaft to make the climb easier for the fleshgine, but its climbing pseudopods are so adept that it rarely needs any sort of assistance. The number of times that the bell is rung indicates to what floor the lift is supposed to carry its passengers. Likewise, bells set into the shaft at floors above summon it from below to pick up passengers. The rise and fall of the climbing fleshgine is so smooth that most passengers easily forget that they are riding upon the back of an animated construct.

If a macabre lift goes berserk, its usual tactic is to tip itself over to try to dump any passengers to the floor of the shaft below. Anyone riding the lift when it does this must make a successful DC 13 Dex saving throw to grab hold of the fleshgine's deck and not fall.

Gable Hate-Owl

This sinister-looking owl has pitch-black plumage and a pallid face with yellow eyes. The V-shaped pattern of feathers on its brow gives the appearance of a perpetual scowl of utter scorn.

Gable Hate-Owl

Small monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 14 (4d6)
Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages none
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Flurry of Wings. If the hate-owl's bite and claws attacks both hit the same target on the hate-owl's turn, the target takes an additional 1d8 + 2 bludgeoning damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hate-owl bites once and attacks once with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 2d6 + 2 slashing damage.

Spiteful Glare. A creature within 60 feet that can see the gable hate-owl's eyes must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. If it fails, the creature drops one item it's holding (roll randomly if more than one item is held) and has disadvantage on attacks, ability checks, and saving throws until the end of its next turn, and the hate-owl can immediately move up to 60 feet (if it hasn't moved yet) and use Multiattack against the creature.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary

The gable hate-owl is a shadow among the homes and buildings in the Blight. Viewed as a thing of ill omen, the presence of the owl roosting is feared by the common man. Spiteful, petty birds, the gable hate-owl got its name from the hateful scowl its natural plumage creates. They have been known to kill or torture for sport, attacking dogs and other small animals as they flense off flesh and fur and then leave the poor victims to limp away.

These great owls are large, although most of their bulk comes from fluffy feathers and large heads, with plumage that gives that appearance of wearing a high-collared cloak. Great horned owls have wingspans of up to 5 feet and weigh up to 4 pounds. Gable hate-owls primarily hunt at night, locating prey through their excellent hearing and sight. Their diet consists of rodents supplemented by smaller birds and rabbits.

Their gaze particularly unsettles the folk of the Blight, as the piercing black eyes that seem dead peer out from under the sharp contrasting pale facial feathers. This sinister-looking visage creates ill fate to any that the owl wishes, typically casting its hateful look upon those that startle or interrupt the bird. A gable hate-owl's wickedly sharp beak lets it easily rip open hard shells or strip the flesh from its meals.

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Gargoyles

Castorhage teems with gargoyles of various kinds, detailed below. See also "Between gargoyle."

Gargoyle, Four-Armed

A powerful gargoyle similar to its kin, but having four arms rather than two.

Four-Armed Gargoyle

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons or not made of adamantine
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrifaction, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Terran
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

False Appearance. While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

ACTIONS
Multiattack: The gargoyle makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one with its horn.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage.
Horn. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Gargoyle, Margoyle

This creature looks like a hideously ugly humanoid chiselled from brown stone. Two large horns protrude from its head, just above its eyes. Four large, stony spikes jut from its shoulder blades. Its hands and feet end in sharpened claws.

Gargoyle, Margoyle

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 68 (8d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	6 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhausted, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Terran
Challenge 4 (700 XP)

Stony Appearance. While a margoyle sits motionless, it is indistinguishable from natural stone and can't be detected as alive by any means.

Actions
Multiattack. Margoyles can make three attacks. Twice with its claws, once with its bite, or it can gore once with its horns instead of using its bite.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.
Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Gargoyle, Scrimshaw

The eerie humanoid-shaped creature is perched precariously on the edge of the building. The light from the full moon glints off its alabaster-colored body, revealing intricate etchings along the surface. As it surveys the land, the creature throws back its head and emits a piercing howl into the night.

Scrimshaw Gargoyle

Medium construct, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities thunder
Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Stony Appearance. The gargoyle is indistinguishable from a statue and can't be detected as alive by any means while it remains motionless.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scrimshaw gargoyle bites once and attacks once with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 2 slashing damage.

Shrieking Howl. By tilting its head up and forcing air through its weathered bones, a scrimshaw gargoyle emits a high-pitched shriek. Creatures within 150 feet who hear the shriek must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for up to 1 minute. An affected target can make another saving throw at the end of their turn. A successful save results in the target not being affected by the effect of the Shrieking Howl for 24 hours.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary, pair, or wing (3–12)

The origin of these strangely carven sculptures in the city of Castorhage is shrouded in the mystery of the past, but their existence is now well known through its entirety. Originally created as mere constructs lacking the status of truly living creatures, their exposure to eddies and currents of malevolent energy among the city's high places, over the years somehow granted the missing spark of life.

A scrimshaw gargoyle is meticulously crafted from painstakingly carved whale bones joined together at the joint articulations. However, these craftings were all completed centuries ago, and no new ones have been constructed in the long years since. The existing scrimshaw gargoyles are, therefore, all old, their whale bones weathered and discolored by time and climate. Though it is thought that thousands of these creatures existed upon the city's rooftops in the distant past, it has been estimated that fewer than 50 of them are now in existence, each of them recognizably distinct with their individual unique markings. However, the thinking on this is beginning to change as in recent months several new specimens have been spotted upon the rooftops. These new gargoyles are clearly composed of parts cannibalized from previously destroyed gargoyles. Most believe the scrimshaw gargoyles, taken as a whole, are too dimwitted to produce new members of the species. Some contemplate a secret cabal of magical practitioners as responsible for this change; others theorize that certain scrimshaw gargoyles have advanced much farther in their power and understanding of magic and are somehow responsible. Whatever the cause, it appears that the scrimshaw gargoyle population is on the rise for the first time in living memory.

It is thought that the scrimshaw gargoyles' original progenitors built the creatures to serve as guardians. To this end, the horrific shriek the gargoyle emits probably originally served as an alarm. The gargoyle generates the sound through careful fluting of the bones around its mouth, and a supernatural means of passing air — even on still nights — through the narrow structure. As the gargoyle evolved from a simple guardian to a menace, however, its shriek also evolved. No longer a loud noise to alert those nearby, now the shrieking howl is capable of striking fear into the heart of the bravest man.

A scrimshaw gargoyle stands just over 5 feet tall and weighs a mere 80 pounds.

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Ghoul Pig

Undead pigs with many of the attributes of ghouls, including a taste for human flesh.

Ghoul Pig

Small undead, unaligned
Armor Class 12 (natural armour)
Hit Points 21 (6d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (–2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages None
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or another undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target van repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the paralysis with a successful save.

Giant Owlbear

Much larger than the already large hybrid of owl and bear, the giant owlbear is a fearsome predator with a piercing screech, a shaggy, thick hide of fur covered by feathers, and the eyes of an owl.

Giant Owlbear

Huge monstrosity, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armour)
Hit Points 80 (7d12 + 35)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages None
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The owlbear makes three attacks: one with its beak and two with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Girallodile

The girallodile has dirty green hide, mottled with wan, bone-like extremities. It is partly leathery scales and partly furred, the fur clumping in ugly growths about its limbs. It slithers lizard-like on its four lower legs, but its upper body looks ape-like with four double-jointed arms spaced oddly along its flanks. It has a wide crocodilian mouth set in a simian face, and its body tapers to a scaled, elongated tail.

Girallodile

Large monstrosity, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armour)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +7
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages None
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

The girallodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be affected by a shaking palsy for 1d4+4 rounds, giving disadvantage on all attacks and ability checks.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and restrained until the grapple ends.

Saw-tail. If a creature is grappled in the girallodile's tail at the beginning of the girallodile's turn, the girallodile will lash it around in the tail, causing damage from the sharp scales. The creature automatically takes 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage and must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the girallodile's next turn. The girallodile may then release the creature and make a normal tail attack, or may hold onto the creature to continue causing damage in the next round.

Gloom Crawler

This giant, squidlike beast has thirty to forty tentacles, each up to 30 feet long. From the end of each tentacle stares a small, round, lidless eye with a stark blue pupil. The creature's glossy flesh is inky-black with a slightly paler underside centered around a vicious, beaked mouth of monstrous size.

Gloom Crawler

Huge monstrosity, neutral
Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 159 (13d12 + 75)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	2 (–4)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3
Damage Vulnerability Radiant
Condition Immunities Prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages None
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

All-Around Vision. A gloomcrawler's many eyes allow it to scan quickly in all directions. Attackers never gain advantage or bonus damage against it from the presence of nearby allies.

Actions

Multiattack. A gloom crawler attacks ten times with tentacles and bites once. Each tentacle can either slam or constrict.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature grappled by the gloom crawler). *Hit:* 1d10 + 5 piercing damage and the creature is dragged to the gloom crawler's mouth.

Tentacle Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit (reach 15 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 5 bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (Escape DC 16).

Constriction. *Special Melee Attack:* Automatic hit to one creature already grappled by the gloom crawler at the start of the gloom crawler's turn. *Hit:* 1d8 + 5 bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled and restrained.

Golem, Lesser Flesh

A creature staggers into view, a construct that is pieces of flesh carved and assembled into a vaguely humanoid whole.

Lesser Flesh Golem

Medium construct, neutral

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)
Damage Immunities Lightning, poison; nonmagical, nonadamantine weapons; charm, exhaustion, fright, paralysis, petrification, poison
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Berserk. When a lesser flesh golem starts its turn with 26 or fewer hit points, it has a 1-in-6 chance of going berserk. A berserk golem attacks the nearest living creature it can reach. The construct's creator can regain control over the golem, if he's within 60 feet, by using an action and making a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Fear of Fire. If the golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Lightning Absorption. Each point of lightning damage that hits the golem heals 1 hit point.

Magic Resistance. A lesser flesh golem has advantage on saving throws against magic. It is immune to effects that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem slams twice.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 3 bludgeoning damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land
Organization solitary or pair

A lesser flesh golem is constructed from a whole cadaver or a number of humanoid body parts stitched together into a single composite form. It moves with a stiff-jointed gait as if not in complete control of its body. A lesser flesh golem typically stands 6 feet tall and weighs 300 pounds.

While most lesser flesh golems are mindless, some reanimate with a sliver of sentience, and with that spark comes memories of a previous life. The head and brain of such a lesser flesh golem must be just the right combination of fresh enough and (in its previous life) strong-willed, and even then luck and

chance during the lesser flesh golem's creation seem just as important in retaining the creature's mind. These sentient flesh golems have the same stats as other lesser flesh golems, but can have Intelligence 6–16.

Lesser flesh golems cannot normally speak, but sentient lesser flesh golems retain the knowledge of one language they knew in life (usually Common). They have a difficult time expressing themselves in anything more than simple terms, but, in most cases, a sense of horror at their newfound state is easy to discern. With patient reeducation, they might be able to regain much of their former intellect.

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Golem, Wood

Medium construct, unaligned
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (–1)	18 (+4)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning and piercing from non-magical weapons
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Alarm. The golem lets out a piercing howl that lasts for 6 rounds when anyone other than its creator enters the area it is guarding (or comes within 50 feet of the golem). This functions similar to the audible version of the *alarm* spell and can be heard to a range of 100 feet.

Immunity to Magic. A wood golem is immune to all magical spells and effects, with the exception of spells that inflict fire damage, which affect it normally but also inflict double damage. A magical attack that deals cold damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The wood golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 15 (2d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Splintering. As a free action, a wood golem can launch a barrage of razor-sharp wooden splinters from its body in a 20-foot-radius burst. All creatures caught within this area take 6d6 points of slashing damage (DC 12 Dexterity save halves). Recharge 5–6.

Grand Justice Ashleia

Ashleia believes that all life is a riddle, and its form imperfect. She is driven by the desire to create new lives and new forms; her tower is a butchery of filleted flesh and stitches and knives where she works her foul art aided — they say — by magic she found in the ancient libraries of Between. Beyond her veiled form of aristocracy and beauty, her true form has been demented by her work; her teats drip the acidic milk that is her lifeblood (her mortal blood long since replaced during an obscene ritual to achieve immortality). Her lust is fury, and she takes lovers simply to suck dry, leaving nothing but dust from her excesses.

Her Resplendent Grand Justice, the Mistress of Life's Wondrous Varied Forms, Grand Justice Ashleia

Medium gynosphinx, neutral evil
Armor Class 17
Hit Points 136 (9d8)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Skills Arcana +12, History +12, Perception +8, Religion +8
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages any four languages
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Inscrutable. Ashleia is immune to any effect that senses emotions or reads thoughts, and scrying or divination spells that she wishes to refuse. Wisdom (Insight) checks made in an attempt to ascertain her sincerity are always made at disadvantage.

Magic Weapons. Ashleia's weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting. Ashleia is a 9th level spellcaster. Intelligence is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost;*
1st (4 slots): *chromatic orb, expeditious retreat, mage armor*;
2nd (3 slots): *alter self, hold person, knock*;
3rd (3 slots): *blink, fireball, slow*;
4th (3 slots): *polymorph, stoneskin*;
5th (1 slot): *telekinesis;*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ashleia makes two attacks on her turn.

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ashleia has access to three legendary actions. She may choose from the options listed below. Only one legendary action may be used at a time, and may only be used at the end of another creature's turn. At the start of her turn, she regains the use of any spent legendary actions.

Cast a Spell (3 actions). Ashleia casts a spell from her list of prepared spells.

Claw Attack. Ashleia makes a melee attack with her claws.

Teleport (2 actions). Ashleia magically teleports up to 120 ft. to an unoccupied space, along with any equipment she is carrying or wearing.

Grand Justice Braken

The dreadful Braken is the Master of Courts responsible for all matters of law within the city. His fingers grope unseen in the dark as his followers seek to advance the Illuminati in influence and terror. Braken wants nothing less than utter conquest — the conquest of Heaven and Hell. This need to rule paradise and enslave the Devil drives everything Braken carries out.

Grand Scribe of Castorhage, His Resplendent Grand Justice Braken

Medium doppelganger, lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 112 (15d8+45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6
Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Ambusher/ Surprise Attack. In the first round of combat, Braken has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he has surprised and deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage on a successful hit. Any hit against a surprised creature is a critical.
Brutality. Braken deals one extra damage die when successful in hitting with a melee weapon (included in the attack).
Read Thoughts. While concentrating, Braken can read thoughts within a 60-foot radius. He has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, Persuasion) checks vs his target while reading its thoughts.
Shapechanger. Braken can use his action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid he has seen, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Braken makes two attacks on his turn.
Broadsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+4) slashing damage.
Shield Bash. *Melee weapon attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4+4) bludgeoning damage. A medium or smaller creature is required to make a DC 15 Strength save or be knocked prone.

Grand Justice Korsk

Like all swyne, Korsk lives only for excess — in all forms. He wallows in the feculence of his own corpulence, and his followers, who include beasts and humanoids and devils, scour the hellholes of the city for new vices to ensure that his Grand Justice does not get bored. He is terrible when he grows bored.

His Resplendent Grand Justice Korsk, Master of the Sinks

Medium swyne†, chaotic evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any four languages
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Magic Resistance. Korsk has resistance on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Spellcasting. Korsk is a 9th level spellcaster. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Korsk has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, mending, message*;
1st (4 slots): *charm person, mage armor, magic missile*;
2nd (3 slots): *hold person, invisibility, suggestion*;
3rd (3 slots): *fireball, haste, tongues*;
4th (3 slots): *dominate beast, stoneskin*;
5th (2 slots): *hold monster;*

ACTIONS
Dagger. *Melee or ranged attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3(1d6-1) piercing damage.

Gremlin

This creature resembles a goblin with long floppy ears, a pinched wrinkled face, nasty claws, a mouth full of sharp teeth and a wicked glint to its eyes.

Gremlin

Small fey, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 7 (2d6)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Goblin, Sylvan
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Knot Expert. Anyone attempting a skill check to undo a knot that has been tied by a gremlin does so with disadvantage.
Sneak Attack (1/turn). The gremlin deals and extra 3 (1d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the gremlin that isn't incapacitated and the gremlin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The gremlin makes two melee attacks, either with its shortsword and bite or with its claws and bite.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one

target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Gryph

This small jet-black avian is about the size of an eagle. It has multiple legs with wicked talons and a needle-like beak.

Gryph

Small monstrosity, neutral evil
Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 16 (3d6 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages none
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Adhesive. The gryph adheres itself to anything that it successfully hits with its talons. A creature that is adhered to the gryph is also grappled by it (Escape DC 12). Ability checks to escape the grapple are made at disadvantage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gryphh makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its legs.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 +2) slashing damage, and be subjected to the Adhesive trait.

Implant eggs. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage and 1d4 eggs implanted and target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. If the save is made, the target's body rejects the eggs. Otherwise, the eggs hatch in 1d4 minutes and each hatched egg results in 1 (1d3) piercing damage as the baby gryph burrows out. The hatching can be prevented by a *restoration* (lesser or greater) spell or a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Once the eggs hatch or are prevented from hatching, the poisoned condition ends.

Hazards

This appendix lists hazards that can be encountered in The Blight. Some of these can also be found in other areas, especially those with overflowing filth, rampant disease, or insidious Between influence.

Blight

This peculiar lichen is ubiquitous to the city of Castorhage. Reports of large infestations of it occur in the earliest city records, and it is from this constant presence that the city has obtained its nickname. It is a leafy foliose lichen with a dull gray coloring that is darker on the underside. Its drab coloration makes it difficult to see from distances greater than 10 feet in any conditions other than bright light; it's noticed with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.



Blight grows slowly except in total darkness, where it grows so rapidly it can cover hundreds of feet in only a few hours. Infestations of the lichen tend to pop up in the darkest of alleys or on heavily overcast or moonless nights. The dwarves of the Underneath warn of caverns where the stuff grows unchecked, forming drifts dozens of feet deep. Blight grows no more rapidly in bright light than normal lichen, but it isn't harmed by bright light.

Furthermore, some scholars speculate that the lichen might possess some form of intelligence. They base this on the fact that when options for growth exist toward and away from some living victim that the blight can grow on, it always grows toward the living victim.

Each 5-foot-square of blight has AC 5 and 16 (3d8) hit points. It is resistant to nonmagical bludgeoning and slashing damage, immune to piercing and psychic damage, and vulnerable to fire damage.

Blight is generally harmless to creatures that are aware of it, but its dense, rapid growth in darkness makes it very dangerous to a helpless creature. If a helpless creature (asleep, drunk, paralyzed, etc.) is in an area of total darkness that blight has access to, a thick, impervious layer of lichen can grow completely over the creature in 1d6 rounds. This causes no physical injury, but the creature is restrained and cut off from air; when its breath runs out, it begins suffocating. The creature can break free by using an action to make a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. An adjacent ally can free the trapped character with a Strength (Athletics) check, or by inflicting 15 slashing damage to the blight.

If a victim is slain by blight or if it grows over the corpse of a living creature, a truly remarkable quality of the growth is revealed. Whereas most surfaces that the lichen uses as a substrate are unharmed by its growth, the corpse of a living creature is absorbed in short order and will be completely gone within hours, leaving nothing behind but inorganic remnants such as belt buckles, swords and armor, gold fillings, etc. A Tiny or smaller creature is totally obliterated in 15 minutes; a Small creature disappears in 30 minutes, and a Medium creature in 1 hour. Large creatures will be completely absorbed in 4 hours, and Huge creatures in 9 hours. Gargantuan and Colossal creatures will be absorbed only if the blight is able to completely cover it. If so, the corpses are absorbed in 16 and 36

hours, respectively. A creature absorbed by blight cannot be returned from the dead by anything less powerful than *true resurrection*.

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Derange

Derange is blamed for much of the unsavory behavior to be found in The Blight, or at least folk find it convenient to believe it to be the source.

Derange is a condition brought on when the tiny earwig spider lays its egg in the ear of a sleeping victim. The warmth of the victim's body causes the egg to hatch and the tiny earwig larva to burrow through the eardrum and inner ear into motor control centers in the victim's brain. Once the larva has nested in this area, it creates a small cyst and begins to draw nourishment from the hormones and chemical interactions within while bathing these centers with chemicals of its own. The result is that the victim's personality changes, his alignment randomly shifting each morning when he awakes (see table). The victim is still in control of his actions, but these actions reflect the priorities and methods subscribed to by this new alignment. At night, the victim often awakes in the midst of sleep with a return to his original alignment and a full and sickening awareness of the things he has been doing.

This condition can be removed with *lesser restoration or comparable* magic. Likewise, each morning upon awakening, the victim makes a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to resist the alignment-altering effect and to function with normal alignment. After 1–3 weeks, the derange larva matures into an earwig spider and exits the victim to begin the next stage of its lifecycle. When this occurs, the victim must make a DC 8 Constitution saving throw. If it succeeds, the victim recovers fully (though there may be lasting repercussions from deeds done under different alignments; being under the influence of derange is not recognized as a legal defense before the Courts of Castorhage). If the saving throw fails, then the departing earwig spider ruptures an artery in the victim's skull as it crawls out of the victim's head; the victim bleeds to death internally in 2d4 rounds unless magical healing halts the bleeding before then.

1d10	Alignment Shifts To
1	Lawful good
2	Neutral good
3	Chaotic good
4	Lawful neutral
5	Neutral
6	Chaotic neutral
7	Lawful evil
8	Neutral evil
9	Chaotic evil
10	Same as previous day

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Dislocating Larvae

These tiny green larvae resemble tadpoles no larger than a pinhead, but they can spawn in sufficient numbers in small pools of stagnant water to give it a greenish tint. A full-grown dislocating larva resembles a green hair 2 or 3 inches long.

When ingested, the larvae colonize the stomach of the victim, where they begin reproducing within 1d6 hours in the digestive tract. As they reach maturity, they feed on the surrounding tissue and migrate on to nearby organs as they lay thousands of eggs. These hatch into even more larvae, which continue the colonization. The pain causes terrible convulsions in the victim that can be forceful enough to dislocate joints.

The victim of a dislocating larvae infestation loses 1d4 points from Constitution every day. When the victim's Constitution has dropped to half or less of its starting value, the victim is stunned by pain, unable to do anything but writhe spasmodically. When the victim's Constitution drops to 4 or lower, the victim is incapacitated instead of stunned, and it feels an overpowering need to seek out a body of stagnant water and drown in it (so the larvae colony in the body can survive instead of dying with the host).

Any magic that cures diseases, kills all the larvae and eggs in the victim. Lost Constitution points don't recover normally but can be restored with magic.

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Second-Head Fluke

This dreaded microscopic parasite is relatively common in the Lyme River, and many fishermen have caught the sickness after accidentally swallowing Lyme water. It can also be spread by physical contact with those already afflicted.

This foul sickness manifests as a large, swollen tumor on the victim's shoulder that, over a period of 4–6 days, grows into a second, cankerous head. This head is most horrible to look upon, consisting of disfigured and distorted features, random tufts of hair, misplaced teeth, and dark patches of melanoma. Despite its obvious disease origin, this head-like growth uncannily resembles the victim, even in its distorted and horrifying state.

Once a case of second-head fluke is contracted, madness and physical decline are sure to follow. After the second head fully manifests, the victim must make a successful DC 13 Wisdom saving throw each day or lose 1d3 points of Wisdom. In addition, each day there is a 10% chance that the victim loses 1 point of Constitution from the cancerous disease.

When the victim's Wisdom drops to half or less of its starting value, the second-head fluke begins having more pronounced effects. The pseudo-head utters nonsensical vocal sounds as if trying to talk, and the head flops about spasmodically at random times. In close quarters, the head tends to flop toward nearby creatures, and anyone who comes in contact with it or the host must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract a second-head fluke infestation of their own.

Second-head fluke is notoriously difficult to cure.

- Stage 1: Before the pseudo-head has grown, *lesser restoration* or comparable magic reverses the growth and cures the victim completely.
- Stage 2: Once the pseudo-head has fully formed, the disease can be cured by removing the head surgically, then casting *lesser restoration.* The patient takes 2d6 slashing damage, and the surgeon must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check; only someone with proficiency in Medicine can even attempt the procedure. Whether the operation succeeded won't be known until six days later; if a new, cancerous head doesn't grow, then the surgery succeeded.
- Stage 3: Once the victim's Wisdom score is reduced to half or less of its starting value, the disease can be cured only with surgery (as above) and *greater restoration* or comparable magic. This casting of *greater restoration* doesn't restore lost Wisdom points, but a subsequent casting does. The target dies if this reduces its Intelligence or Wisdom to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Lost Wisdom and Constitution points don't recover normally but can be restored with magic.

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Herald at the Threshold

A thing of sublime chaos, this creature seems to have no set form yet is composed of flaccid skin and a trio of grasping, tentacle-like limbs. Its form is partially made of boiling emotions that clothe the thing in waxy flesh. Its great limbs grip at its surroundings, lacerating stone in its grasp, while some sort of fetid opening surrounded by moist bones rises to a set of horns like demented curved instruments through which an agonizing, grating scream tears.

Herald at the Threshold

Large aberration (adult Between), neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +8, Wis +6
Skills Perception +4
Damage Resistances cold, fire, force, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses blindsight 90 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands Deep Speech but can't speak
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Absorb. If a creature with 0 hit points fails a death saving throw while a herald at the threshold is in the same space with it, that creature dies and its body is entirely absorbed into the herald's. The herald gains temporary hit points equal to the creature's Constitution score. If the herald is subsequently killed, enough of an absorbed creature's corpse can be recovered for a spell such as *resurrection* to work, but not *revivify* or *raise dead*.

Dimensional Mastery. A herald at the threshold can cast *dimension door* as a bonus action.

Dislocated. The herald at the threshold's form is made up of its memories, which shift and change. The creature is continually under the effect of a *blur spell (attacks against it are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or an equivalent). The herald can suppress or reactivate this ability at will as a bonus action.*

Immune to Transformation. A herald at the threshold is immune to any effect that would alter its form..

Magic Resistance (1/day). When the herald fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Innate Spellcasting. The herald at the threshold can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as its casting ability (DC 16). The herald doesn't need material components to use these abilities.

At will: *dimension door, freedom of movement*
3/day each: *blink, counterspell*
1/day each: *invisibility* (self only, duration 1 minute), *resilient sphere*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The herald attacks three times with its claws.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 5 slashing damage. If two claw attacks hit the same target on the herald's turn, that target takes an additional 3d6 slashing damage and gains 1 level of exhaustion.

Overwhelming Mind (recharge 5-6). The herald projects a telepathic assault in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in the cone must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A paralyzed creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success. In addition, creatures that attempt to make mental contact with a herald, whether telepathically or through spells such as *detect thoughts* or *dominate monster*, are immediately subject to this attack.

Preternatural Horror (1/day). The herald reveals the full horror of itself to the minds of nearby creatures. All creatures within 60 feet of the herald must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted with madness. If the result of the saving throw is 12-16, the creature suffers a short-term madness; 7-11 results in long-term madness; 6 or less results in indefinite madness. No line of sight or visual contact is needed for this attack to work.

Screaming Pipes (1/day). The herald emits a psyche-blasting shriek through its hornlike appendages. All creatures within 30 feet of the herald and capable of hearing it must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the creature is stunned for 1d4 rounds and permanently deafened; if it succeeds, the creature is deafened for 1d4 rounds and incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The herald at the threshold can take up to three legendary actions per round. Legendary actions are taken at the end of another creature's turn, and only one can be taken after each turn.

Cast Spell. The herald casts an at-will spell.

Claw. The herald makes a claw attack.

Multiattack (costs 2 actions). The herald makes three claw attacks.

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Between)
Organization solitary

Born by the Beautiful to serve her needs as keepers of her thresholds from Between, the heralds are creatures that defy mortal and mundane reference.

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Byme

Superficially it could be a horse — certainly there is some horse in it — but the resemblance is unnatural. It's a dark thing, a thing the eye finds difficult to rest upon, with the anger and musk of a horse, but the shape is wrong. Its head is dark and long, and slaver drools from it onto the ground. And though it tosses its head like a horse, it has barbed teeth in its jaw.

Byme

Large aberration (larval Between), unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 30 (4d10 + 8)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages none



Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dislocated. The hyme's form is made up of memories, which shift and change. The creature is continually under the effect of a *blur spell (attacks against it are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight, truesight, or an equivalent)*. The hyme can suppress or reactivate this ability at will as a bonus action.

Distorted. A hyme's internal anatomy varies from individual to individual and seldom makes any biological sense. Critical hits against a hyme do a flat +1 damage but don't roll damage dice twice.<RULE>

Musk of Fear (1/day). As a bonus action, a hyme emits an unpleasant musk. All breathing creatures within 30 feet must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned while within 30 feet of the hyme. The effect lasts 1 minute. A creature that spends its entire turn more than 30 feet from the hyme repeats the saving throw, ending the effect on itself with a success. Other hymes and their masters are immune. Beasts have a -2 modifier on the saving throw; horses save with disadvantage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hyme bites once and attacks once with its hooves.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit: 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.*

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 2d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage.

Bray of Terror (recharge 5-6). All creatures within 60 of the hyme and that can hear it must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the hyme for 1d4 rounds. Other hymes and their masters are immune. Beasts have a -2 modifier on the saving throw; horses save with disadvantage. A creature that saves successfully is immune to Bray of Terror for 24 hours.

ECOLOGY

Environment plains, swamp (Between)
Organization solitary, pair, or herd (3–12)

The first hyme came about one terrible night when a creature from Between was captured and held in a stable. Whilst the greedy captors sought to sell their prize to those who collect such creatures in peculiar menageries, something terrible happened, and when the hunters returned they simply found the creature gone and the horses within mad with terror. Cursing their bad luck, the hunters looked for new prey. A few months later, each mare in the stable birthed a horrible dark thing that resembled a foal but was certainly not of this world. The hunters went back to their original purchaser with their new creatures and sold them. These were the first hymes.

Between-Horses. A bastard union of the Between and the horse, the hyme combines the qualities of a horse with the aggression of a Between creature. They are hard to tame, but not impossible, and broken ones now regularly pull coarse cabs around the city. Initially, such terrible dray were the exclusive property of those aristocrats who could afford them, but their prodigious appetites created more hymes from unions with mares (hymes are born to both hyme-hyme and hyme-horse parents). They are now seen regularly, but most often on dark nights.

Rare Commodities. Hymes command very high prices, and are extremely rare to find for sale. Occasionally, one becomes available, but generally only particular dealers — such as Groppit, Swift & Humb: Hyme Dealers by Royal Appointment — sell them. A hyme sells for 6,500 gp.

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Iron Cobra

The iron cobra is a construct that resembles a small, 3-foot long cobra. Its eyes give it an evil and determined—and almost intelligent—look. The iron cobra is most often used to guard a treasure or to act as a bodyguard for its creator, though on some occasions it can be ordered to track down and slay any creature who is within 1 mile and whose name is known by the maker.

Iron Cobra

Small construct, unaligned
Armor Class 20
Hit Points 25 (5d6 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	2 (–4)

Skills Perception +3
Damage Resistances fire, thunder
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages None
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Find Target. Once per day, an iron cobra's creator can order it to find and kill a specific creature within 1 mile, which it finds unerringly. The creator must have seen, or be holding, an item from the specified target.

Poison Reservoir (Recharge 5-6). An iron cobra's bite injects poison from a hidden reservoir within its body, which produces the poison. The cobra's poison does not need to recharge until it has successfully bitten three times. The mechanism does not function if it is removed from the mechanism.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the bite injects poison, the target suffers an additional 1d6 points of poison damage and must make a DC 15 saving throw or be poisoned for 2 hours.

Ivor Grast

Like his twin sister, Ivor Grast was touched by Between while still in the womb and is trapped in hybrid form. He is strong, but his musculature is misshapen, and it looks as though he has been racked until his limbs popped from their sockets and then twisted in different directions. His terrible, physical deformities are partially concealed beneath a ludicrously foppish outfit of silks, satins, and lace assembled around a breastplate of black-enamelled metal. His head is similarly elongated and twisted. A misshapen jaw forces his drooling mouth to the right side of his face, and both beady, red, rat-like eyes to the left. He slurps and gulps as spools of ropey saliva drip down his side, an Adam's apple the size of a fist distending the stretched skin of his long neck. Yet for all this malformation, he moves with unsettling agility and power, his outsized hands hefting a serrated sword that bears cruel hooks and barbs along its blade.

Ivor Grast

Small male halfling shapechanger (wererat), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (mithral breastplate)
Hit Points 110 (15d6 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +6, Con +6
Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +3, Perception +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Halfling, River Cant, Thieves Cant
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Filth Fever. A creature with filth fever becomes sick within 1d4 days of being infected. At that time, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. It also regains only half the usual number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and no-hit points from resting. Once symptoms appear, the infected creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw after every long rest. If it fails, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion, but if it succeeds, the creature loses 1 level of exhaustion. The disease is cured when the creature has no levels of exhaustion left.

Keen Smell. Ivor has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Shapechanger. Ivor can use his action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, Ivor can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature he hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of one of Ivor's allies that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ivor makes two melee attacks with *Shatterspike*, or one attack with *Shatterspike* and one bite attack. If attacking from range, Ivor can make two attacks with his shortbow.

Shatterspike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, and they must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or also suffer 5 (1d10) points of damage from bleeding.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Unusual Equipment: *Shatterspike*
Shatterspike
Weapon (longsword), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you successfully hit with this weapon, the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or begin to bleed profusely. The target loses 5 (1d10) hit points from bleeding at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute, unless a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check is made to staunch the bleeding or until the target receives magical healing.

Treasure: *Shatterspike, potion of greater healing,* shortbow with 20 arrows, courtiers outfit, mithral breastplate, 47 gp, 10 pp

Ivy

*Ivy plays a role in the **Levee Adventure**.*

Ivy

Medium construct, neutral
Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Damage Resistances lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantine weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fear of Fire. If Ivy takes fire damage, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of her next turn.

Lightning Absorption. For each point of lightning damage taken, Ivy heals 1 hit point.

Magic Resistance. Ivy has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Immutable Form. Ivy is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Reckless. At the start of her turn, Ivy can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against her have advantage until the start of her next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ivy makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Jacob Moil

*Handsome, clever, and fair, Jacob Moil is an anarchist leader met in **L8: Apotheosis**.*

Jacob Moil

Medium human, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 16 (leather armour)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Thieves' cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Jacob can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.
Evasion. When Jacob is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if the save is successful, and only half damage if the roll is a failure.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Jacob can deal an extra 4d6 damage to one creature he hits with an attack if he has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. Jacob doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if one of his allies is within 5 feet of the target, that ally isn't Incapacitated, and Jacob doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Jacob can make three attacks with either his shortsword or his light crossbow per turn.
Shortsword +2. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Treasure: Jacob has a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of gaseous form*, and a *shortsword +2* (already incorporated into his actions).

Justice Alfor Quent

Quent believes himself to be his goddess's living messenger, sent to give release to the poor, the sick, and the humble by eradicating them with his vermin followers. Culmus is the patriarch of the strictly pious Culmus family. Unlike many nobles, Culmus practices what he preaches.

Justice Alfor Quent, the Lord Culmus, Master of Humours

Medium alchymic-undying human, lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 117 (18d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +4
Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Alfor is a 9th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells from the cleric spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying;*
1st (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith;*
2nd (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, silence, spiritual weapon;*
3rd (3 slots): *beacon of hope, clairvoyance, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians, water walk;*
4th (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stoneskin;*
5th (1 slot): *flamestrike, mass cure wounds, hold monster;*

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Alfor makes two attacks on his turn.
Maul. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Justice Anisse Capprico

Anisse is the senior witch in the Great Coven. She is noted for her peacock-feather gowns.

Her Resplendent Justice Anisse Capprico, Lady of Beverages

Medium human, lawful evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7, Persuasion +7, Religion +4
Damage Resistances non-magical slashing damage not made with silvered weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages any two languages (usually Abyssal or Infernal)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Blessing of the Coven (recharges after a short or long rest). Anisse can choose to add 1d10 to an ability check or saving throw. The decision can be made after the initial roll, but must be made before the outcome is determined.
Innate Spellcasting. Anisse's spellcasting ability is Charisma, and she requires no material components for the following spells (spell save DC 15):
At will: *disguise self, false life, mage armour* (self only), *silent image, speak with animals;*
1/day each: *conjure fey;*
Spellcasting. Anisse is a 17th-level spellcaster. Charisma is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She regains any expended spell slots after finishing a short or long rest. She knows the following spells:
Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, fire bolt, friends, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp;*
Spells (4 5th-level slots): *banishment, burning hands, blink, charm person, faerie fire, flame strike, hellish rebuke, magic circle, scorching ray, scrying, stinking cloud, suggestion, wall of fire;*

ACTIONS
Mace. *Melee weapon attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Justice Blackbriar

Blackbriar is an obsessive explorer of the Between and collector of Between animals who dwells high in the Capitol.

His Grace, the Master of Lanterns, Justice Blackbriar

Medium human, neutral good
Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+ 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +6
Skills Perception +4, Nature +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any two languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Blackbriar is a 6th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the prepared the following spells from the druid spell list:
Spells (slots):
Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, poison spray, produce flame, shillelagh;*
1st (4 slots): *charm person, entangle, spider climb, thunderwave, web*;
2nd (3 slots): *barkskin, flame blade, spike growth*;
3rd (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, gaseous form, stinking cloud, wind wall*;

Wildshape. Blackbriar can assume a wild shape in the same manner as a druid of 6th level.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Weld makes two attacks on his turn.
Scimitar. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.
Sling. *Ranged weapon attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage.

Justice Burr

Burr is a hoarder of curios and magic who sponsors exploration, protection, and theft across the city. He is presently charged as chief jurist of the Barnacles and Great Docks.

Justice Burr, Lord Protector of the City, a.k.a. the Collector

Medium alchymic-undying human, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 84 (13d8+26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception + 3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Burr may take the *Dash, Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.
Evasion. If Burr is required to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, he takes no damage on a successful save, and half damage on a failed save.
Sneak Attack (1/turn). Burr's attack deals an extra 14(4d6) damage when he hits with a weapon attack, as long as he has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Burr does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Burr makes two attacks on his turn.
Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS
Uncanny Dodge. As a reaction, Burr can halve the damage of an attack that hits him, as long as he can see his attacker.

Justice Lucrezia Elisabeth Sullage

Her paper-skin is faded, unlike her wits, which are as sharp as a dagger. She has created a dynasty of art adoration, and her home is flung open to genius, the lost, and the insane. One wing of her mansion is set aside as a prison and surgery, within which her children help her create living art through homunculi-stitching and golem-wifery.

Justice Lady Lucrezia Elisabeth Sullage, a.k.a. the Grand Seamstress

Medium alchymic-undying human, neutral evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d8+ 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any four languages
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Lucrezia is a 12th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, mending*;
1st (4 slots): *false life, mage armor, ray of sickness;*
2nd (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, ray of enfeeblement, web*;
3rd (3 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse, vampiric touch*;
4th (3 slots): *blight, dimension door, stoneskin*;
5th (2 slots): *Bgy's hand, cloudkill;*
6th (1 slot): *circle of death*;

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or ranged attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Withering Touch. *Melee spell attack:* +7 to hit, one target. *Hit*: 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Justice Mallam Fetter

Judge Lord Justice Mallam rules the Asylum with an iron fist.

Judge Lord Justice Mallam Fetter

Medium human, lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+ 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +6
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages any two languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Fetter is a 6th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, chill touch, message, poison spray*
1st (4 slots): *burning hands, magic missile, ray of sickness, unseen servant*
2nd (3 slots): *misty step, phantasmal force, ray of enfeeblement*
3rd (3 slots): *bestow curse, fear, vampiric touch;*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Fetter makes two attacks on his turn.

Longsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d8) slashing damage.

Crossbow, light. *Ranged weapon attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Justice Scapegrace Wrye

Scapegrace is a master at finding information.

His "Royal Highness" Duke Scapegrace Wrye, Justice of Alleys, Streets, and Ways

Medium human, lawful evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception + 3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Scapegrace may take the *Dash, Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Scapegrace's attack deals an extra 7(2d6) damage when he hits with a weapon attack, as long as he has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Scapegrace does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Scapegrace makes two attacks on his turn.

Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Justice Shank

Shank is an ally of the Family who aims to make the Blight a wererat metropolis.

His Magnificence Justice Shank, Lord of the River

Medium male human (wererat), neutral, evil
Armor Class 16 (studded leather, shield)
Hit Points 112 (15d8+45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6
Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any one language (usually common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brutality. Shank deals one extra damage die when successful hitting with a melee weapon (included in the attack).

Keen Smell. Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell are made at advantage.

Shapechanger. Shank can use his action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Shank makes two attacks on his turn.

Bite (Hybrid or Rat Form Only). *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

Shield Bash. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4+4) bludgeoning damage. A medium or smaller creature is required to make a DC 15 Strength save or be knocked prone.

War Pick. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. When wielding a melee weapon, Shank can add 3 to

his AC as a reaction against one melee attack that would otherwise hit. He must be wielding a melee weapon and be able to see the attacker.

Justice Skathen Spalpeen

*Skathen Spalpeen, is a recent convert to the **Cult of the Madness-of-the-MirrorStorm**. She seeks to create safe havens for her kind and hasten the plot to drown the world. Spalpeen lurks in the sodden cellars beneath the **Second Royal Gallery and Museum***

Justice Lady Skathen Spalpeen, Mistress of Piers

Medium alchymic-undying briny, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 97 (13d8+39)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception + 3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Skathen may take the *Dash, Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.
Evasion. If Skathen is required to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, she takes no damage on a successful save, and half damage on a failed save.
Sneak Attack (1/turn). Skathen's attack deals an extra 14(4d6) damage when she hits with a weapon attack, as long as she has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Skathen does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Skathen makes two attacks on his turn.
Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.
Hand Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS
Uncanny Dodge. As a reaction, Skathen can halve the damage of an attack that hits her, as long as she can see her attacker.

Justice Spent Sullyce

Sullyce, is a golem-stitcher who seeks to advance science and experimentation through dark clerical paths.

Justice Spent Sullyce, Lord of Surgeons, a.k.a. The Lord of Leeches

Medium human, neutral
Armor Class 19 (plate and shield)
Hit Points 117 (18d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +4
Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Disarm. On a successful attack with his flail, Justice Sullyce can disarm his foe. The foe must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or drop an item of Justice Sullyce's choice.
Spellcasting. Spent is a 9th-level spellcaster. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells from the cleric spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying;*
1st (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith;*
2nd (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, silence, spiritual weapon;*
3rd (3 slots): *beacon of hope, daylight, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians, water walk;*
4th (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stoneskin;*
5th (1 slot): *flamestrike, mass cure wounds, hold monster;*

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Spent makes two attacks on his turn.
Flail. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength save or drop an item of Justice Sullyce's choice.

Justice The Eyes of Fate

The Eyes of Fate is a gable-haunting murderer and high-ranking member of the Thieves' Guild. It enjoys skinning its victims and wearing the skins as trophies.

Its Resplendent Justice, The Eyes of Fate, Master of Gables

Medium gargoyle, lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception + 4, Stealth +11
Damage Resistances poison
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Thieves' Cant plus any two languages
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assassinate. On the Eyes of Fate's first turn it has advantage on attack rolls, as long as the target has not taken a turn. Any hit against a surprised target is considered a critical hit.
False Appearance. While motionless, the Eyes of Fate is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The Eyes of Fate's attack deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when it hits with a weapon attack, if it has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as the Eyes of Fate does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Innate Spellcasting. The Eyes of Fate's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *chill touch, dancing lights*;
3/day each: *blindness/deafness, bestow curse*;
1/day each: *dimension door*;

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Eyes of Fate makes two attacks on its turn.

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Justice Weld Shortstone I

Weld Shortstone is a covert anarchist who aims to bring down the Illuminati.

Justice Weld Shortstone I, Master of Structures

Medium gnome, neutral good
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+ 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +6
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages any two languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Weld is a 6th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, dancing lights, mage hand, poison spray;*
1st (4 slots): *color spray, disguise self, mage armor, magic missle*;
2nd (3 slots): *invisibility, mirror image, phantasmal force*;
3rd (3 slots): *major image, phantom steed, lightning bolt;*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Weld makes two attacks on his turn.

Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Folding Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

Kraken Tentacle Segment

The ten-foot section of severed tentacle is obviously coated in the substance of some other plane of existence, and lashes out with brutal power.

Kraken Tentacle Segment

Large monstrosity (Between), chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armour)
Hit Points 136 (13d10 + 65)
Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	13 (+2)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +9
Damage Immunities lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities frightened, paralyzed
Senses blindsight 30 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages --
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Dislocated. Attacks against the tentacle are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kraken tentacle makes two slam attacks, one of which it can replace with one use of Fling.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) points of lightning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained.

Fling. One Large or smaller object held or creature grappled by the kraken tentacle is thrown up to 60 feet in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes a solid surface, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

Lady Elaine of Aldwark

The Queen's lady-in-waiting, Elaine is one of the Illuminati's most dangerous and powerful allies. The true Elaine was killed when she was a young girl and her place taken by a succubus bound and broken by the Illuminati to serve their long-term goals. That she is also a member of the Great Coven is a secret even they do not know. Elaine is a glutton for excess, particularly sexual, and her private balls are orgies that involve violence and cruelty to excess.

Lady Elaine of Aldwark

Medium succubus, neutral evil
Armor Class 13 (16 with mage armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d8+12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills Deception +9, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +9, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages any four languages
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Charm. One humanoid Elaine can see within 30 ft. must make a DC 15 Wisdom save or be charmed for 1 day.
Draining Kiss. Elaine can kiss a charmed or willing creature, who must make a DC 15 Constitution save, taking 32 (5d10+5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half that on successful one. The target's hp max is reduced by an equal amount.
Etherealness. Elaine can magically enter the Ethereal Plane from Material Plane, and vice versa.
Grim Harvest (1/turn). When a creature (other than a construct or undead) is killed by Elaine using a spell of 1st level or higher, she regains an amount of hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or up to three times if the spell is from the necromancy school.
Spellcasting. Elaine is a 12th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, chill touch, dancing lights, mending*;
1st (4 slots): *false life*, mage armor, ray of sickness**;
2nd (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, ray of enfeeblement*, suggestion*;
3rd (3 slots): *animate dead*, bestow curse*, vampiric touch**;
4th (3 slots): *blight*, E's black tentacles, stoneskin*;
5th (2 slots): *dominate person, cloudkill*;
6th (1 slot): *circle of death**
*necromancy spells for use with Grim Harvest

ACTIONS
Withering Touch. *Melee spell attack:* +7 to hit, one target. *Hit*: 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

Lady Grey

Lady Grey is obviously affected by alchymic potions, for her skin is drawn and parchment-like.

Lady Grey

Medium alchymic-undying (human), chaotic evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 72 (8d8 +40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Regeneration: Lady Grey regains 5 hit points at the start of her turn. If she takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. She dies only if she starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Due to her preternatural, alchymic speed, Lady Grey makes three melee attacks with her dagger, or two attacks with her hand crossbow.
Silver Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit:* 1d6+4 piercing damage.
Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus mild poison: DC 10 Constitution save or take an additional 1d6 points of poison damage.

Treasure: *potion of barkskin*, silver dagger (25gp), copy of the hymn to the Beautiful (see Handout 3 in **L2: Pound of Flesh**).

Lesser Blight Vampire

A form of lesser vampire occasionally found in the city.

Lesser Blight Vampire

Medium blight vampire, lawful evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages any two languages
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Regeneration. A lesser blight vampire regains 5 hit points at start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the lesser blight vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the lesser blight vampire's next turn.
Spider Climb. Can climb difficult surfaces and ceilings without requiring an ability check.
Vampire Weaknesses. A lesser blight vampire has the following flaws:
Forbiddance. Lilly cannot enter a residence without receiving an invitation.
Harmed by Running Water. Takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.
Stake to the Heart. Can be destroyed by taking a wooden piercing weapon to the heart.
Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Takes 20 radiant damage when starting its turn in sunlight, and has disadvantage on attacks and ability checks when in sunlight.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. A lesser blight vampire makes two attacks on its turn, one rapier and one bite.
Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.
Bite. Melee weapon attack: +5 to hit, targeting one willing, grappled, incapacitated or restrained creature. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the lesser blight vampire regains hit points equal to the amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.
Spellcasting. The lesser blight vampire is a 4th-level

spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *chromatic orb, expeditious retreat, mage armour*
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self, hold person, knock*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (ld4 + 2) piercing damage.

Long Lucy

Lucy is a halfling with dwarfism, and is barely a foot tall. She is a major figure in the Levee Adventure. By L9, when she is wealthy, she has certain additional treasure items, including magic items she can use in combat.

Long Lucy

Tiny halfling, neutral
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Halfling, Rama, Xaon
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Spellcasting. Long Lucy is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *chromatic orb, expeditious retreat, mage armour**
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self, hold person, knock*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (ld4 + 2) piercing damage.

*Long Lucy casts this spell on herself before combat.

Treasure: ***In L9 only:*** *wand of magic missiles, potion of greater healing,* scrimshaw and silver-gilded megaphone worth 250 gp, magnificent wishbone corset worth 100 gp.

Lord Benedict Morel

Lord Benedict serves ***Princess Rebecca of Mourney***†*, and is* ***Eleanor Shank's***† mysterious *benefactor.*

Lord Benedict Morel

Medium human, chaotic good
Armor Class 17 (studded leather armour)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dexterity +7, Intelligence +5, Wisdom +5
Skills Acrobatics +7, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Elusive. No attack on Morel has advantage if he is not incapacitated.

Evasion. If Morel is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Lord Morel deals an extra 31 (9d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated and Morel doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Stealthy. Lord Morel has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lord Morel makes three attacks per turn: two with his rapier and one with his shortsword.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Treasure: Rapier +1, studded leather +1, *ring of free action, potion of gaseous form*, *ring of mind shielding*, pouch with 15 5-guinea notes (75 pp), shortsword, light crossbow with 20 bolts, 6 pickled homunculi (see ***L1: Hereafter***)

Lord Justice Mordent Knap

Knap is Cartographer of the Underneath, Master of the Royal Mint, dazzling artist, and Steward of the Capitol. Unsurprisingly, Knap is one of the most influential people in the city and seen as a logical next Crown Justice. Sadly, he wishes to see true justice return and, although he has considerable influence with bankers and merchants, he also has many enemies. Knap has an obsessive desire to see the Underneath tamed and restored as a dwarven kingdom. Many of his peers wish he would lead such an attempt and never be seen again.

<3>Lord Justice Mordent Knap, Master of the Royal Mint and Steward of the Capitol

Medium dwarf, lawful neutral
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception + 5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Eagle Eye (3/day). On a successful hit with a longbow or shortbow, Mordent can roll an additional damage die and add it to the total damage of the hit.

Keen Senses. Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight are made at advantage.

Ambusher/ Surprise Attack. In the first round of combat, Mordent has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he has surprised, and does an extra 14 (4d6) on a successful hit. Any hit against a surprised creature is a critical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mordent makes two attacks on his turn.

Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Lord of Many Faces, the

The Lord of Many Faces was once a lobster-like chuul with a thick armored shell and a mouth full of writhing tentacles. Being in Between has corrupted the Lord of Many Faces and mutated its body and mind. It now resembles a strange mingling of an ochre jelly with odd pseudopod pinchers and writhing tentacles sprouting from the gelatinous and viscid surface of its blob-like form.

The Lord of Many Faces

Large aberration, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)
Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances acid
Damage Immunities lightning, poison, slashing
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the Lord of Many Faces or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 ft. of it takes 9 (2d8) acid damage. Any non-magical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the Lord of Many Faces corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits The Lord of Many Faces is destroyed after dealing damage. The Lord of Many Faces can eat through 2-inch thick, nonmagical wood or metal in one round.

Amorphous. The Lord of Many Faces can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Spider Climb. The Lord of Many Faces can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Lord of Many Faces makes two attacks with its pseudopod pinchers.

Pseudopod Pinchers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) acid. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is a Large or smaller creature and the Lord of Many Faces doesn't have two other creatures grappled.

Tentacles. One creature grappled by the Lord of Many Faces must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. Until this poison ends, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Psychic Crush (Recharge 5-6). The Lord of Many Faces targets one creature that it can sense within 60 feet of it. The target must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.

Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage

Thornrage is immaculately dressed and groomed. He is tall, muscled, and extremely handsome in a cruel, soulless sort of way. The man's thick black hair falls in rich curls to his shoulders.

Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage

Medium human, lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (plate armour)
Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5;
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Thornrage is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following paladin-list spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command, heroism, protection from evil and good*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, branding smite*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, magic circle*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Thornrage makes three attacks with his glaive or shortbow.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage.

Shortbow *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Aura of Dread (Recharges after short or long rest). Thornrage exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the caitiff must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from Thornrage, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself with a success.

Lurker in Desolation, the

The Lurker has a roughly insect-like shape but is seemingly made up of faces, anguished faces that bloat out its revolting form like a sack of skin and give the thing a pregnant look. The thing's skin is translucent, and the gory contents visible in its stomachs merely increase its girth and add to the illusion of pregnancy. Its back crawls with slender fleshy tendrils

that whip about apparently tasting the air, suffocating around a vast open mouth. It doesn't have any true legs but seems to drag itself about with graceless haste upon its many stumpy tendrils.

The Lurker in Desolation

Huge aberration, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 143 (15d12 + 45)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	9 (–1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities Acid
Condition Immunities Prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Aquan, Deep Speech
Challenge 5,000 (CR 9)

Acidic Trail. The Lurker's skin exudes a layer of acid. This coating leaves a slimy trail behind the Lurker similar to a slug's trail. All spaces that the Lurker occupied since its last turn retain
this acidic coating; any creature that enters or starts its turn in such a space takes 1d6 acid
damage. At the start of the Lurker's turn, all previously acidic spaces become safe.
Blending Skin. When at rest, a Lurker shifts the color of its flesh to blend perfectly with
the surrounding terrain. While motionless, the Lurker is invisible.
Dislocated. Attacks against the Lurker are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

Actions
Multiattack. The Lurker attacks twice with tentacles, then either bites twice or uses its distended bite once.
Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* Tentacle: +8 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). Hit: 2d8 + 5 bludgeoning damage plus 1d10 acid damage. If both tentacle attacks hit the same creature on the Lurker's turn, the creature is grappled (escape DC 15). The Lurker can have up to two creatures grappled and still use tentacle attacks.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* Bite: +8 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d8 + 5 piercing damage plus 1d10 acid damage.
Distended Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 20 ft.; one creature); Hit: 1d12 + 5 piercing damage plus 1d10 acid damage.

Luther

Luther is a dark-skinned Libynosi man, a little on the portly side. He wears an officer's coat of the Royal Army with fine gold tassels and several medals, but has removed his captain's rank from it since he no longer serves in the Castorhage military. Luther is a follower of Mother Grace.

Luther

Medium male human, lawful good
Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, Luther can expend a spell slot to cause his mace attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If he expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.
Spellcasting. Luther is a 5th-level spellcaster in the service of Mother Grace. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

ACTIONS
Silvered Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.
Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d10) piercing damage. The bolts are silvered.
He carries the following vampire-killing equipment:
- 3 vials of holy water
- Silvered mace
- Silver mirror
- Silver holy symbol of Mother Grace
- 3 wooden stakes

Lyme Angler

This ugly, bloated fish has a glowing, fleshy protrusion that extends from the top of its skull and dangles in front of its wide-mouth, which is filled with needle-like fangs.

Lyme Angler

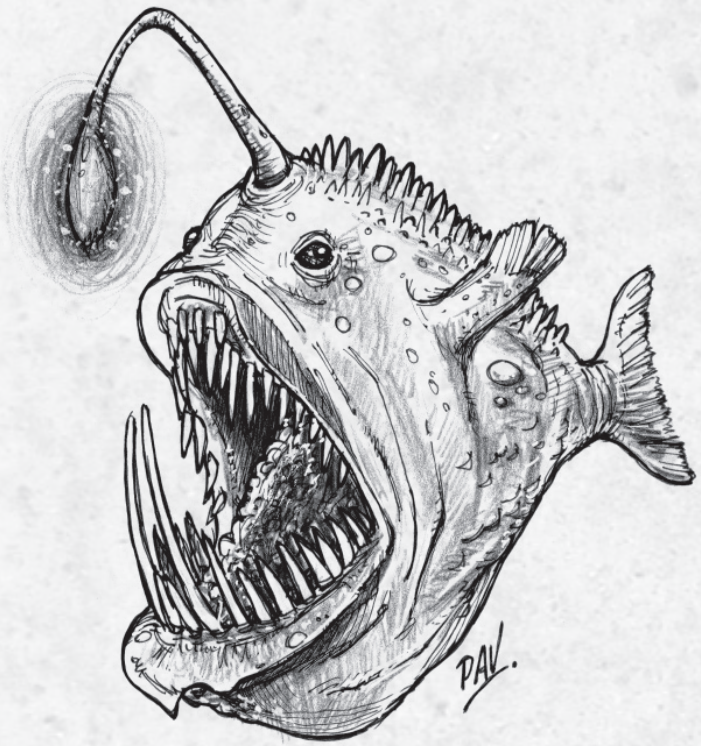
Large beast (aquatic), unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)
Speed 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	2 (-5)

Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages none
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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 Wisdom 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.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d4 + 4 piercing damage and the creature must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract brine misery (see above).

ECOLOGY

Environment sea
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.

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Lyme Walrus

Thick folds of fleshy blubber encase this massive sea creature. Yet despite its bestial appearance, its eyes reveal calculating intelligence, and it holds itself upright with unusual dignity. The illusion of a man would almost be convincing were it not for the long tusks that protrude from its whiskered mouth.

Lyme Walrus

Large humanoid, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +3, Performance +7, Persuasion +5
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Fascinating Story. A Lyme walrus can manipulate its guttural voice while weaving a fascinating story. Creatures within 60 feet that can see and hear the Lyme walrus for 1 minute or longer must make successful DC 13 Charisma saving throws or be charmed and stunned for as long as the Lyme walrus continues speaking. Combat and other



severe distractions prevent the ability from working. A creature that saves successfully is immune to Fascinating Story for 24 hours. Any potential threat allows a charmed creature to repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself with a success. Taking damage breaks the effect automatically on the injured creature. A creature need not understand Common for this ability to work; the power is in how the Lyme walrus modulates the sound of its voice, not in the words it speaks.

Innate Spellcasting. The Lyme walrus can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as its casting ability (DC 13). The Lyme walrus needs only vocal components to use these abilities.

At will: *minor illusion*
3/day each: *disguise self, major image*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lyme walrus bites twice.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* t

ECOLOGY

Environment coast

Organization solitary or team (1 Lyme walrus with 1–6 scouts, spies, or master thieves)

A child of Between that has lived so long in the mundane lands that it has literally shed its Between skin, a Lyme walrus is disturbingly human. The human aspects have been absorbed by mingling with men in its own lands. The walrus delights in the manners and appetites of men and feels itself to be at least partly human.

Named for Sister Lyme where these creatures were first encountered by the humanoid races of the mundane world, Lyme walruses can be found in other locales though they prefer to remain near a body of water to which they can retreat and move with the most freedom if necessary. The Lyme walrus often seeks out the company of people to learn tales and stories from them and to indulge in their appetites — particularly those of feasting. A Lyme walrus often wants only to hide itself in human lands, and eat. In this regard, it is generally harmless. However, they are possessed with a strong acquisitiveness and insatiable appetites, and often find themselves in the company of those who use their fascinating story ability as a distraction in order to perform darker acts undetected. The Lyme walrus is usually an innocent in this regard, and sees all such acts as simply the ways of the humanoids of the mundane world.

The Lyme walrus's thick layer of blubber serves as protection from both predators and cold. A typical Lyme walrus weighs 1 to 2 tons and measures 10 feet in length with tusks up to 3 feet long.

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Malevolent Box Fish

A translucent blue and nearly invisible in water, this cube-shaped jellyfish has four distinct sides and trails dozens of extremely long tentacles. This particular creature is much worse than usual having recently consumed a sea hag and absorbed some of her power.

Malevolent Box Fish

Huge beast, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 147 (14d12 + 56)
Speed swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages -
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Underwater Camouflage. The malevolent box fish has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while underwater.

Water Breathing. The malevolent box fish can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The malevolent box fish makes two slam attacks.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour.

Horrific Appearance. Any humanoid that starts its turn within 30 feet of the malevolent box fish and can see the malevolent box fish must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the malevolent box fish is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the malevolent box fish's Horrific Appearance for the next 24 hours. Unless the target is surprised, the target can avert its eyes and avoid making the initial saving throw. Until the start of its next turn, a creature that averts its eyes has disadvantage on attack rolls against the malevolent box fish.

Ink Cloud (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). A 20-foot-radius cloud of ink extends all around the malevolent box fish if it is underwater. The area is heavily obscured for 1 minute, although a significant current can disperse the ink. After releasing the ink, the malevolent box fish can use the Dash action as a bonus action.

Mantis-Thing from Between

It is fleshy, but in a revoltingly waxy, insectoid way. It staggers on several insect legs and drags itself along on two long limbs, making the thing look like it is obsequiously praying to some demented god as it moves. It has a vast, bloated head riddled with teeth, but moves with appalling speed despite its large size. As it moves, sinews, faces, and limbs of people bloat its flesh, and horribly distorted hands grope outward from this vile host. Wreathed about its sickening flesh are palpable manifestations of misery, regret, and bitter, dashed hope.

Mantis-Thing from Between

Large aberration (naiadic Between), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +5
Skills Perception +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Between Mantis

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Cocoon (1/day). The mantis-thing can encase a grappled, incapacitated creature of up to Medium size in a dense cocoon (AC 10, 30 hp, immune to all but slashing damage) composed of fibrous material spun out of its mouth. The process takes 1 minute for creatures smaller than Small, 2 minutes for Small creatures, and 3 minutes for Medium creatures.

Immune to Transformation. A mantis-thing is immune to effects that would alter its form.

Incubation. Once an egg is implanted, it releases enzymes that paralyze the victim for as long as the egg remains in the body. The egg hatches 1d4 days later. When it does, the young mantis-thing consumes the host's internal organs, killing the creature. Removing an egg takes 10 minutes and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check; a creature without proficiency in Medicine has disadvantage on the check. Each attempt also does 2d6 slashing damage to the host, whether the check succeeds or fails. Magic that cures disease, such as *lesser restoration or a potion of vitality,* also destroys the egg without harming the host, but immunity to paralysis or disease offers no protection.

Pack Attack. The mantis-thing has advantage on its attack roll if the target is within 5 feet of one or more allies of the mantis-thing that are able to attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mantis-thing makes two claw attacks.

Lunge (recharge 5-6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 20 ft.; one creature). Hit: 4d8 + 5 slashing damage, and the target must make a successful DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 2d8 + 5 slashing damage. If both claw attacks hit the same target on the mantis-thing's turn, the target is grappled (escape DC 15) and the mantis-thing can make a proboscis attack against it as a bonus action.

Implant Egg. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one grappled creature). Hit: a mantis-thing egg is implanted in the creature, which is paralyzed and becomes subject to Incubation (see above).

Proboscis. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (one grappled creature). Hit: 1d4 + 2 piercing damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (Between)
Organization solitary, pair, or nest (3–8)

Mantis-things are exaggerated versions of insects, distorted by the horror of parasitic infestation and the misery of hopelessness. They are semi-intelligent, and communicate via a language composed of clicks from their mouthparts, and the position and trembling of their patterned forelimbs.

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Mar-eel

This creature looks like an 8-foot long eel with yellowish-brown splotches on its back.

Mar-Eel

Large beast, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)
Speed 5 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages ---
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Gnaw. The eel possesses a second set of jaws in its throat that aid in swallowing—it can make another bite attack against a grappled opponent. A grappled target takes 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage at the start of the eel's turn.

Water Breathing. The eel can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. After every long rest, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

Marren Grast

Marren wears an outrageous wig of black ringlets and dresses in the finest silks and latest fashions — always turquoise and pink and crimson. He is a frequent visitor to the Capitol where he seeks to further the long-term aims of the Grasts (ingratiation into Royal circles). He is a wit, a dilettante, a master poet and painter, playwright and fop. Behind his dazzling white teeth is a heart of steel and an iron will.

Marren Grast

Small male halfling shapechanger (wererat), chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (studded leather)
Hit Points 99 (18d6 + 36
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +6, Cha +6
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +6, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Halfling, River Cant, Thieves Cant
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Marren may take the *Dash, Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.

Filth Fever. A creature with filth fever becomes sick within 1d4 days of being infected. At that time, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. It also regains only half the usual number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and no-hit points from resting. Once symptoms appear, the infected creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw

after every long rest. If it fails, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion, but if it succeeds, the creature loses 1 level of exhaustion. The disease is cured when the creature has no levels of exhaustion left.

Keen Smell. Marren has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Shapechanger. Marren can use his action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Marren's attack deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits with a weapon attack, if he has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Marren does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Marren makes three melee attacks: one with his *assassin's dagger*, one with his rapier or hand crossbow, and one with his bite.

Assassin's Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Unusual Equipment: Assassin's Dagger

Assassin's Dagger
Weapon (dagger), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. This weapon scores a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

Treasure: *Assassin's dagger,* rapier, *potion of greater healing* (2), *potion of gaseous form, hat of disguise,* hand crossbow with 10 bolts (4 of which have the poison of a purple worm applied, DC 13 Constitution saving throw, 10 (3d6) poison damage), noble's outfit, signet ring, assorted jewellery worth 1,200 gp, belt pouch with 6pp, 13 gp.

Marrow

Covered in a debilitating and foul-smelling skin condition, this unfortunate man walks with the aid of a curved cane. His misshaped hood hints at some foul deformity of the head beneath. Below, his face leans as though flattened on one side, huge eyeballs protruding to a ghastly degree from the skull.

Marrow

Medium alchymic-undying† humanoid, neutral
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3
Condition Immunities exhaustion and unconsciousness
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Alchymic Regeneration. Marrow heals 1 hit point per 2 HD at the start of his turn, unless he took acid or fire damage since his last turn.

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Chloroform. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit (reach 5ft; one creature). *Hit:* Target must make a DC15 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 hour. The attacker must take the defender unawares, by a contest of Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Perception).

Hand crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Master Luther Gable

A member of the Renders street gang, who owns a homunculus named Lickspittle, Master Luther Gable is a human male with tightly-stretched, parchment-like skin from some sort of childhood disease. He has a long nose, and an old scar parts his greasy hair across his entire scalp.

Master Luther Gable

Medium human, Neutral
Armor Class 18 (studded leather armour)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dexterity +7, Intelligence +3
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Elusive. No attack on Master Luther Gable has advantage if he is not incapacitated.

Evasion. If Master Luther Gable is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Master Luther Gable deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of one of his allies that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Stealthy. Gable has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Actions

Multiattack. Master Luther Gable makes three rapier attacks per turn.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Treasure: Gable carries a *potion of greater healing* and a *potion of invisibility*. The scabbard of his shortsword has mother-of-pearl ornamentation and is worth 400 gp, his cloak has an obsidian clasp

depicting two hands arm wrestling, worth 50 gp, and he carries a leather purse made of elephant hide containing 22 pp.

Misery, the

The Misery is an immense greenish-black thing with intense yellow eyes. It is 30 feet long and a foot thick. The body of the thing is a worm-like mass of pulpy flesh with several gill-like apertures along its length with which it propels itself through the water. The front of the beast has a long trunk like that of an elephant. Its skin glistens as if coated with a fine sheen of oil.

The Misery

Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil
Armor Class 20 (natural armour)
Hit Points 247 (15d20 + 90)
Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8 (+12 in water)
Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages Aklo
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Dislocated. The Misery is constantly *blurred* as in the spell.
Jack's Candle. As an action, the Misery can release an exhalation of gas in a 60-foot radius spread twice per day. If this occurs while fully submerged, this gas slowly diffuses upward and combines with any existing fog to create a smog-like cloud with suffocating effects that can linger for hours until the fog is burned (treat as normal Jack's Candle but with advantage on the saving throw). If the Jack's Candle is exhaled while above water it has the effects described below.
An interesting side effect of the Jack's Candle is that its appearance (in normal form or diffuse form) attracts creatures from the surrounding marshes that have an affinity for foggy conditions. Examples of these include hungry fogs, crimson deaths, vampiric mists, trench mist, and even animating fog, and similar creatures. Any time Jack's Candle forms, there is a 20% chance that 1 or more of the above creatures will hide in its interior and go on a slaughtering spree through the city.
If Jack's Candle occurs above water, creatures within the sphere must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or act as if under the *confusion* spell 1 minute. In addition, the air within the fog is not breathable by air-breathing creatures.
Uncatchable. The Misery cannot be grappled or restrained.
Water Breathing. The Misery can only breathe underwater.

Actions
Multiattack. The Misery makes one bite and one sting attack.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage and 16 (3d10) poison damage.
Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage and 16 (3d10) poison damage.
Spit. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 20/60 ft.. *Hit:* 4d10 poison damage and target is poisoned until the end of its next turn.

Mite

This creature is an ugly humanoid about 2 feet tall. It has long, pointed ears, a large round nose, and grayish-brown skin.

Mite

Small fey, lawful evil
Armor Class 11
Hit Points 3 (1d6)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Deep Speech
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Hatred. Mites have advantage on attacks versus dwarves, gnomes and deep gnomes.
Innate Spellcasting. The mite's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 10). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At Will: *prestidigitation*
1/day: *fear*

ACTIONS
Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.
Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.
Vermin Empathy (1/ day). The mite can summon a swarm of bats, a swarm of rats, or a swarm of insects once per day. The summoned creatures arrive 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the mite and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the mite dies, or until the mite dismisses them as a bonus action.

Mocking Gull

The mocking gull is a twisted, bloated, Between-touched undead stirge. This human-sized creature looks like a cross between a large bat and a giant mosquito. Its wings are leathery and gray and its skin is drawn tight across its bones. The creature has eight pincer-like legs and a long needle-like snout. Its eyes glow pale blue.

Mocking Gull

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 31 (7d8)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages -
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Dislocated. Attacks against the mocking gull are made

with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one paralyzed creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the mocking gull attaches to the target. While attached, the mocking gull doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the mocking gull's turns, the target loses 7 (1d8 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

The mocking gull can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 14 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the mocking gull.

Mongrelman

The hideous creature approaching from the shadows looks to be pieced together from parts of other monsters as some sort of vile joke or blight on nature.

Mongrelman

Medium monstrosity, lawful neutral
Armor Class 13 (natural armour)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Wis +4
Skills Athletics +5, Perception +4, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Mongrelman
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Mimicry. The mongrelman can mimic sounds made by any creature previously encountered as long as it has heard the sound. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Moon Angel

This thin, stretched creature has gangly, long limbs that bend in unusual ways. Its skin is pale and sickly with its face shrunken in its drooping, hairless head. Pointed ears rise high above the crown of its head, and its eyes are sunk deep beneath its brow like two bottomless pits. Its toothless mouth hangs open, jaw slack, as it incessantly licks its withered lips.

Moon Angel

Large fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 14



Hit Points 97 (13d10 + 26)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3
Skills Stealth +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities cold, poison
Condition Immunities disease; poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Aquan, Common, Deep Speech
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hypnotic Song. A moon angel's song has the power to entrance those that hear it. All creatures aside from other moon angels within 300 feet of a singing moon angle must make a successful DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by all moon angels. While charmed this way, a creature's speed is 0. A creature that successfully saves is immune to the hypnotic singing of all moon angels until the following sunrise. This effect lasts for as long as the moon angel continues singing and for 1 full round after it stops. A charmed creature is willing to accept a moon angel's Drowning Kiss.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The moon angel attacks twice with its claws.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 4 slashing damage plus 1d8 cold damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A paralyzed creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect with a success.

Drowning Kiss. A moon angel can flood the lungs of a willing, sleeping, helpless, or hypnotized creature by touching it (traditionally by kissing the creature on the lips). If the target cannot breathe water, it immediately begins suffocating

from drowning. A drowning creature makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of its turn, coughing up the water and ending the effect with a success.

ECOLOGY
Environment sea
Organization solitary or school (2-5)

Oftentimes folk who fall into the river, even in the relative shallows, are never seen again even if help was close at hand. At such times, folk who dwell near the riverside make the sign against the evil eye and blame the disappearance on hidden currents carrying the victim into the depths or the normal fauna that makes the Great Lyme a graveyard for hundreds of citizens of Castorhage every year. However, sometimes the cause of the disappearance is more sinister than either of those. Sometimes it is the work of a moon angel.

The moon angel is a rare creature that lurks in the deepest, coldest waters of the Lyme, fond of rising to the surface and quietly watching the goings-on ashore, waiting for the unfortunate soul who loses his footing or is more drunk than careful and falls into the dark waters of the river. When it locates such a victim, it quickly moves to hypnotize him and draw him deeper into the waters where it can feed at its leisure.

A creature of the coldest fathoms of the river where depth and pollution block the sun, a moon angel cannot stay long near the warm surface while it waits for prey. It becomes uncomfortable from the heat and light, and can even develop severe sunburns on its pale skin when remaining too close to the surface for long. For this reason, the depredations of the moon angels remain relatively rare. The occurrences do increase in the winter months when a thin sheet of ice often covers the river's edges, though they still love the daylight no better then than they do in summer.

Occasionally on moonless nights, a moon angel may leave the river under the cover of darkness to hunt additional victims on land. At these times, such a creature tends to clamber along the rooftops to find open windows to take meat from within, with any household survivors the next morning describing only dreams of a strange crooning song echoing through their sleep. As with those who disappear into the river when a moon angel pays a visit, the unfortunate soul that has garnered its attention is never seen again. It for these incidences that the twisted fey known as moon angels gain their name, though few if any folk have made a connection between these nighttime disappearances and those that occur more frequently in the river.

Extremely tall and awkwardly gangly, the moon angel stands eight feet in height but weighs barely 250 lbs.

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Morlock

Degenerate humans long lost from the world of light, morlocks have regressed through years of subterranean dwelling into ravenous, barely thinking beasts of the endless night. They no longer remember the civilized lives their ancestors led, although many morlock tribes still dwell in the shattered ruins of their ancient homes. Ironically, in many cases morlocks worship the statues left behind by these ancestors as their gods.

Morlocks move about on two legs at times, but often drop down to a creepy four-limbed shuffle when speed or stealth is necessary. Their wiry, often emaciated frames mask the strength of their limbs and their swift reactions.

Morlock

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 21 (4d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	5 (–3)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the morlock has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Pounce. If the morlock moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the morlock can make another bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the morlock can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the morlock that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The morlock makes two melee attacks, one bite and one club.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

N'gathau

The n'gathau are a sadistic and cruel race of extraplanar creatures that journey the planes in search of living flesh to further their craft and trade. The n'gathau collect the flesh of their enemies, flay and destroy it, and reconstruct the tortured in blasphemous likenesses of their former selves. Additionally, they sometimes capture the essence of a slain outsider and bring it to their native plane where it remains in eternal torture.

Most horrifying of all, the n'gathau were once humanoids themselves: taken by beings known as the Twelve and transformed via disfiguring tortures. Living creatures are the n'gathau's desire, for the dead serve no purpose; the n'gathau cannot enjoy the suffering of one that cannot scream.

The average n'gathau is a walking collection of bizarre tortures, piercings, chains, flayed skin, and hooks. No two n'gathau are identical in their suffering; the pain endured by each is unique.

The Pain Trade

The n'gathau engage in a bizarre trade with other extraplanar races. In exchange for living creatures, the n'gathau offer reliquaries that contain the power that mortal pain and suffering offers. These reliquaries are most often used as spell components, used to craft constructs, or used in the creation of magic items.

When a living creature is tortured and mutilated, its screams and suffering are captured by machines of alien construction and fabricated into small reliquaries. These items are in turn traded to those who offer the n'gathau what they desire in return — flesh.

Torturers

N'gathau are monstrously sadistic, and engage in the torture of captive beings for the simple pleasure of it. Any creature subjected to torture by a n'gathau loses 1d2 points of Constitution per day. A n'gathau will not let its plaything die as a result of the torture. When the captive's Constitution drops to 1 the n'gathau grants it a reprieve from the torture until it is back to full health.

Rulers of the Plane of Agony

The n'gathau are ruled by an enigmatic sect of frighteningly powerful beings called the Twelve. Very little is known about them except for their names and appearances; their history and true origins are locked away in the minds of the Twelve themselves and the catacomb of vaults lining the



Plane of Agony. Though reclusive and secretive, it is known (supposedly by one who has seen the Plane of Agony and lived to tell about it) that the Twelve, as mighty as they are, are but servitors of a greater being called the Quorum. The n'gathau known as Agasin is pictured here.

N'gathau Pain-Trader

N'gathau are all individual and distinct, but in terms of their relative strengths, the lowest group of them can be characterized as shown for the Pain-Trader. Individual pain-traders may certainly have different characteristics from the "typical" one detailed here.

The n'gathau pain-trader's lower right arm is encased in a latticework of wires and cables leading down to razor claws that replaced its original fingers. Its chest is pierced with rows of small, upward-curving hooks, and its head has been seared, burning off the ears and hair, leaving a mass of scar tissue. Its right leg is scarified in intricate designs and patterns.

N'gathau Pain-Trader

Medium fiend, neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	7 (–2)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +3
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Infernal, Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cruelty's Bliss. N'gathau relish the suffering of others. When a n'gathau pain-trader hits an opponent with a natural 20 on the attack roll, it gains advantage on all further attacks against that opponent for the next 24 hours.

Horrifying Appearance. The sight of a n'gathau pain-trader is so disturbing that anyone seeing it must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a successful roll. If the creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the pain-trader's Horrifying Appearance for the next 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The n'gathau pain-trader makes two melee attacks.

Razor Fingers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16) and restrained until the grapple ends.

Delicious Agony. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature that is grappled by the n'gathau pain-trader. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the target fails the saving throw, its hit point maximum is reduced by 5 (1d10) and the n'gathau regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

The n'gathau pain-trader can maintain the grapple on the creature after subjecting it to this effect, but it can only use Delicious Agony on the same target once every 24 hours.

Exquisite Suffering (Recharge 6). When the n'gathau pain-trader makes a successful attack against a creature, the it can force its target to feel the sensation of the n'gathau's own agony, overloading the senses of the target. The target must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a successful save and the creature is immune to the Exquisite Suffering of the pain-trader for the next 24 hours.

Naga, Blight

An exotically featured woman's head tops this snakelike creature. Its scales range in color from deep purple to black, with the creature's underside colored a lighter shade of violet. Ten arms protrude from the snake body's flanks, though they are spindly and frail in their musculature.

Blight Naga

Large aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d10 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +3, Wis +0
Skills Deception +6, Insight +2, Perception +0, Persuasion +6
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Meeruwahn
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Change Shape (3/day). A Blight naga can take the form of a human as an action. Each transformation lasts 10 minutes. If the naga impersonates a specific person, it must make a Deception check when it meets people who know the person being simulated.

Innate Spellcasting. The Blight naga can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as its casting ability (DC 14). The Blight naga doesn't need material components to use these abilities.

At will: *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*
3/day each: *dispel magic, identify, magic aura, suggestion*
1/day: dominate person

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 1 piercing damage plus 5d6 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 11 Constitution saving throw.

ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary, pair, or family (2–4 adults and 1–3 young)

Blight nagas are aesthetes and artists that as a race have existed in the city for as long as anyone remembers. Whether they were indigenous inhabitants, early visitors from Between, or immigrants from a distant land is argued, but they have seemingly always been there. Most Blight nagas claim ancestry from the exotic lands of Far Jaati and go so far as to learn that land's language, though this has yet to be proven and is refuted by some members of the Blight naga community who, in fact, steadfastly deny this origin. The fact that members of the race can move among the humanoid populace indistinguishably in humanoid form further lends to this confusion.



Art Collectors. Blight nagas relish the arts, including the arcane arts. They have a propensity for identifying magical items, as well as the skill and capriciousness to fabricate such items (or fake versions of them to foist upon the unwary). Likewise, many a Blight naga has coaxed or cajoled a fine piece of artwork or rare magical item out of the hands of its owner, augmenting their skills in such tasks with magic as necessary. When rolled together, this means Blight nagas are sought out for the keen ability to identify and appraise artwork and magical trinkets, yet held at arm's length once the object is identified.

Nagas with Arms. Blight nagas are frailer than their more common cousins. However, they make up for this frailty, at least in part, with an odd evolutionary feature other types of nagas lack—arms. While the arms of a Blight naga don't have much in the way of musculature, they are well suited to fine craftwork and the ability to wield magical items such as wands and staves.

In Plain Sight. Blight nagas delight in hiding in plain sight among the humanoids of the city, usually using their change shape ability to take the form of a humanoid female so as to mingle freely. Still, while using this ability they must be wary of the passage of time lest they find themselves transforming back to their natural state at an awkward moment. A typical Blight naga is 12 feet long, resting on a coil of two-thirds of its body so that it stands only around 6 feet in height, and weighs 275 pounds on average.

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Necrophidius

This creature monster has a long skeletal body topped with a fanged human skull. Its eyes glow with a hellish red light.

Necrophidius

Large construct, neutral
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Understands the languages of its creator but cannot speak.
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dance of Death. As a bonus action, a necrophidius can enthrall opponents by swaying back and forth. Those within 30 feet viewing the dancing snake must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom save or be stunned until the end of the necrophidius' next turn. If a creature makes a saving throw, it is immune to the effect for 24 hours. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw until the start of its turn. A creature averting its eyes has disadvantage on attack rolls against the necrophidius.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 +3) piercing damage. If the target is a

creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Night Slug

The creature is roughly the size of a halfling. Its skin is a blotchy gray color with a few sporadic tufts of muddy-brown hair. The scraps of ragged clothes it wears are covered in filth, clearly not having been washed in weeks — if ever. Its arms are thin and elongated, hanging almost limp.

None are as naturally capable of the fine art of breaking and entering as the night-slug. Fortunately for society, few are also as cowardly. Night-slugs maintain their existence simply by avoiding notice. They often reside in small crawlspaces or even the hollows between the outer masonry and inner plaster and lathe of a house. Those who are not lucky enough to acquire such grand accommodations typically live in places that allow them to avoid notice — the city dump, a gable hanging over a small alleyway, and so forth.

Night-slugs are capable of maneuvering their bodies through seemingly impossible spaces. Their ligaments and tendons are exceptionally elastic, allowing a night-slug to elongate its arms and legs, and in the process pulling what muscle it has closer to its frame. In addition, night-slugs have a "collapsible" skeleton; its bones are composed primarily of cartilage, allowing the creature to squeeze into incredibly small areas.

A typical night-slug stands around 3-1/2 feet tall and weighs 40 pounds.

Night-Slug Society

Night-slugs are scavengers living on the fringes of other societies. They prefer densely populated urban areas for the increased number of hiding places and resources from which to scrounge their needs. Most night-slugs are loners because of the limited resources available to them; mated couples rarely stay together beyond the birth of a brood of whimps (as their young are called), and mothers generally abandon their young as soon as they reach maturity after 3 years.

While most humanoids despise night-slugs and find their presence loathsome, few actually fear the creatures. More than one urban goodwife has walked into a room of her house at night to find a night-slug crouched in the corner chewing on a lace table runner and staining the rug with its noxious skin secretions. While the typical reaction certainly includes a scream, rather than flight it just as often concludes with her grabbing a broom and chasing the creature until it manages to squeeze back through a crack in the baseboards to the safety of the inner walls. In some cities plagued by these creatures, there is an entire industry for exterminators hired to enter homes and buildings to clear out night-slug infestations.

Unlike their skulk cousins, who possess a more violent bent, night-slugs are inherently cowardly and rarely a threat to even those who would otherwise find themselves at their mercy. There are examples, however, of individuals who have overcome this innate fearfulness and gone on to become highly proficient thieves and even assassins, in some cases.

Night-Slug Characters

Night-slug player characters have the following racial **traits**.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 4, but your Intelligence is reduced by 2 and your Charisma is reduced by 4. No score can be raised above 20 or reduced below 3.

Age. Night-slugs are able to survive on their own by age 3. By age 5, they're considered adults, and they seldom live more than 30 years.

Alignment. Most night-slugs have no strong ethical convictions of any kind. They survive by stealing, so they tend toward Chaos and Neutrality.

Size: Night-slugs are Small creatures. Because they're so flexible and able to squeeze themselves into their surroundings, they make Stealth checks with =advantage.

Darkision: Night-slugs have darkvision (60 feet).

Sly Crawler: While prone, a night-slug has a Crawl speed of 20 feet, and crawling doesn't slow it down even in difficult terrain. A crawling night-slug doesn't trigger opportunity attacks for movement.



Slime Coat: The skin of a night-slug secretes a thin fluid resembling slimy perspiration that has a musty odor and leaves a stain on most fabrics. This coating protects the night-slug against grappling; other creatures have disadvantage when trying to grapple a night-slug, and a night-slug has advantage on its attempts to escape from grappling. It also makes night-slugs easy to track; Survival checks to follow a night-slug's trail across any type of terrain are made with advantage.

Compression: Night-slugs can move through spaces one size category smaller than themselves without squeezing, and they can squeeze through openings two size categories smaller.

Languages: Night-slugs begin play speaking Common.

Night-Slug Burglar

Small humanoid, neutral

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 11 (2d6 + 4)
Speed 25 ft., crawl 20 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Sleight-of-hand +6, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Compression. The night-slug can move through spaces one size category smaller than itself without squeezing, and it can squeeze through openings two size categories smaller.

Slime Coat. Other creatures have disadvantage when trying to grapple a night-slug, and the night-slug has advantage on attempts to escape from grapples. Survival checks to follow a night-slug's trail across any type of terrain are made with advantage.

Sly Crawler. Crawling doesn't slow down a night-slug, even in difficult terrain. A crawling night-slug doesn't trigger opportunity attacks for movement.

Sneak Atttack. A night-slug burglar's dagger attack does an extra 1d6 piercing damage if the night-slug has advantage on the attack or if another night-slug is within 5 feet

of the target and able to attack.
Thief. The night-slug burglar has proficiency with thief's tools and is never without them.

ACTIONS
Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.
Dagger. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (range 20 ft./60 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban
Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–6)

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Nightmare Choir

See Between Peacock

Paradigm of Bondage, the

The Paradigm of Bondage is a thing weighed down by countless chains and fetters dragging along behind her. She is definitely female, but there the resemblance to anything mortal ends. Her mouth is filled with jagged teeth and broken lengths of chain.

The Paradigm of Bondage

Medium aberration (Between), lawful evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 123 (13d8 + 65)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +5
Damage Resistances cold, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, restrained, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Between Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the darkvision of the Paradigm of Bondage.
Dislocated. Attacks against the Paradigm of Bondage are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.
Innate Spellcasting. The Paradigm of Bondage's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). The Paradigm can innately cast following spells, requiring only verbal components.
At will: *vicious mockery* (as an 11th level caster)
3/day each: *fear*
1/day each: *eyebite*
Magic Resistance. The Paradigm of Bondage has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Ooze through Bars. The Paradigm is able to move freely through iron bars within this or any other prison. Additionally, difficult terrain doesn't cost her extra movement and magic can neither reduce her speed or cause her to be paralyzed or restrained.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The Paradigm of Bondage makes two attacks with its spike chains.
Spiked Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 5) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16) if the Paradigm isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 10 (3d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.
Between Scream. (Recharge 6) The Paradigm of Bondage unleashes a cacophony of soul-shaking howls from Between in a 30-foot radius. All creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of their next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the Paradigm's Between Scream for 24 hours.

REACTIONS
Unnerving Mask. When a creature the Paradigm of Bondage can see starts its turn within 30 feet of the Paradigm, the Paradigm can create the illusion that it looks like one of the creature's departed loved ones or bitter enemies. If the creature can see the Paradigm, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its turn.

Paradigm of Mockery, the

It has a great many snake-like limbs that emerge from beneath its red-and-white checked tunic, and apparently no legs. It wears a fool's cap with a burlap veil over its face upon which a clownish face with a wide, leering idiot grin has been crudely painted beneath two black beady eyes. The way that the veil undulates, though, tells you that something other than a true face lies beneath. The orange robe beneath its tunic has a repeating pattern of screaming smiles and laughing frowns stitched into it. Two great leathery wings unfold from its back as it launches itself into the air.

The Paradigm of Mockery

Medium aberration, neutral evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 119 (14d8 + 56)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +7, Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Flyby. The Paradigm of Mockery doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The Paradigm of Mockery makes two melee attacks with its claws.
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained.
Writhing Snakes. The serpents of the Paradigm of Mockery's body twist and writhe around a grappled creature, biting

repeatedly. At the start of its turn, the grappled creature takes 8 (2d8) piercing damage and must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Laughter of Mockery. (Recharge 6) The Paradigm of Mockery can make its robe bellow out laughter mocking all the souls that it has consumed from Festival over the centuries. All creatures within 60 feet of the Paradigm must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or fall into fits of laughter and fall prone (as the hideous laughter spell) for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, and each time it takes damage, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. The target has advantage on the Wisdom saving throw if it is triggered by damage. On a successful saving throw, the spell ends and the creature is immune to the Paradigm's Laughter of Mockery for 24 hours.

Paradigm of Offal, the

Masses of carrion and debris break the inky surface of this enormous, undulating sludge.

The Paradigm of Offal

Huge ooze, unaligned
Armor Class 8 (natural armor)
Hit Points 237 (19d12 + 114)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages -
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Amorphous. The Paradigm of Offal can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the Paradigm of Offal or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 9 (2d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the Paradigm corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the Paradigm is destroyed after dealing damage. The Paradigm can eat through 2inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

Spider Climb. The Paradigm of Offal can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and 18 (4d8) acid damage, and if the target is wearing nonmagical metal armor, its armor is partly corroded and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10. If the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 16) and restrained until the grapple ends. A grappled creature takes an additional 14 (4d6) acid damage for each turn it remains embraced by the Paradigm. Nonmagical metal armor would also gain another -1 penalty for each turn it remains in contact with the Paradigm.

The Paradigm can grapple two creatures of Large size or smaller simultaneously. It can continue to use its slam attack while grappling two creatures.

Splatter (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (8d8) acid damage.

Pit Pony

This shaggy pony looks exceptionally strong, and it walks confidently along the rocky ground despite the near total darkness.

Pit Pony

Medium beast, unaligned
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 17 (2d8 + 8)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	2 (–4)	15 (+2)	7 (–2)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +4
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Over-sized Rider. A pit pony can carry a Medium or Small creature as a rider. However, any Medium creature taller than 5 feet finds that his feet drag the ground if he doesn't bend his knees uncomfortably in the stirrups. These riders take a –2 penalty to all Ride checks while on a pit pony.

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Pit ponies are a breed of shaggy-haired pony that descends from the husbandry of the Durahchûk dwarves of millennia ago. The dwarves bred these sturdy ponies as animals that were surefooted, not afraid of the dark, and able to haul heavy loads over rough terrain. They were bred to be large enough for a full-armoured dwarven warrior to ride upon into battle (if the more popular dire pigs were not available), yet short enough that they could still easily traverse the rocky corridors and low tunnels of the underneath. Though barrel-chested, these ponies have legs that are unusually short for their stature. This allows Medium creatures to ride them, though any creature with longer legs than the average dwarf finds his feet dragging the ground.

Princess Alexandra, the Unseen Princess

The rumours of a grotesque abhorrence that was the Queen's first daughter refuse to go away, and tales of a locked room in the highest steeples of the Capitol containing the princess are strangely persistent. That the staff who attend it are blind and deaf is also regarded by almost all as just a rumour.

The princess is a horrid mixture of shape: half-spider, half-rat, with a human face.

Princess Alexandra

Medium monstrosity, neutral
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any two languages
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Keen Smell. Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell are made at advantage.

Shapechanger. Alexandra can use her action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat; into a spider-humanoid hybrid or into a giant spider; or back into her true form, which is humanoid. Her statistics, other than her size, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

Spider Climb. Alexandra is able to climb difficult surfaces and ceilings without requiring an ability check.

Innate Spellcasting. Alexandra's spellcasting ability is Intelligence, and requires no material components for the following spells (spell save DC 15):
At will: *dancing lights, poison cloud, shocking grasp;*
3/day each: *charm person, sleep;*
1/day each: *invisibility, mirror image*;

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Alexandra makes two attacks on her turn

Rapier. *Melee weapon attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save. If the poison reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned this way.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged weapon attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., and the target is restrained by webbing, requiring a DC 12 Strength check to escape.

REACTIONS

Parry. When wielding a melee weapon, Alexandra can add 2 to her AC as a reaction against one melee attack that would otherwise hit. She must be wielding a melee weapon and be able to see the attacker.

Princess Alicia

The terrible nine-year-old "Little Queen" is one of the newest Royals but has rapidly achieved a high station in life. The queen herself anointed Alicia as her chosen heir just a few years ago. Her mother dotes on her, but most other members of the Royal Family despise her. Spoilt, violent, and sadistic, the girl has a reputation amongst the servants for terrible callousness, her cries of "off with his head" ring through the Capitol when she is angry (which is most of the time), and her orders are carried out by guards too afraid to question her.

Princess Alicia, "The Little Queen"

Medium Between-sired tiefling, neutral evil*
* Alicia is not the only child sired by something from Between, but the long-term effects of this rare coupling are presently unknown.
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Alicia is a 1st-level spellcaster. Charisma is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the prepared the following spells from the sorcerer spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mending, prestidigitation*;
1st (4 slots): *burning hands, disguise self, shield*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or ranged attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Princess Eleanor

The queen's "public" eldest daughter is not acknowledged as such by her sisters, who contest that she was sired by the Devil. Eleanor is icy, and her greatest — and only — desire is to rule the city-state and its empire. She weaves countless plots to achieve her aims, and worships the Devil. Eleanor despises her husband, ***Crown Prince Rorth****, but admits the union is useful for appearance.*

Princess Eleanor

Medium human, neutral evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 39 (7d8+7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any four languages
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spellcasting. Eleanor is a 7th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:
Cantrips (at will)—*chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, mending*;
1st (4 slots)—*false life, mage armor, ray of sickness*;
2nd (3 slots)—*blindness/deafness, ray of enfeeblement, web*;
3rd (3 slots)—*animate dead, bestow curse, vampiric touch*;
4th (1 slot)—*blight*;

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee spell attack:* +7 to hit, one target. *Hit*: 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

Princess Genève

The grotesquely fat Genève takes countless lovers and has birthed a dozen (known) heirs. Born a matter of seconds after her twin sister Eleanor, she hates her crooked sister(s) with every ounce of her being. Her second passion is poison; her first is manipulating suitors with her poisons.

Princess Genève

Medium human, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 46 (7d8+14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +11
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Thieves' Cant plus any two languages
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Assassinate. On Genève's first turn she has advantage on attack rolls, as long as the target has not taken a turn. Any hit against a surprised target is considered a critical hit.
Evasion. If Genève is required to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, she takes no damage on a successful save, and half damage on a failed save.
Sneak Attack (1/turn). Genève's attack deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when she hits with a weapon attack, if she has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Genève does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Genève makes two attacks on her turn.
Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +6 to hit, range 80/230 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Princess Lenora

The youngest surviving mortal daughter of the queen, Lenora regards herself as the most stable. Her lovers are wizards and those who know secrets, and she is often found in a carriage rattling along the cobbles of BookTown on some mission.

Princess Lenora

Medium human, lawful evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any four languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Lenora is a 9th-level spellcaster. Intelligence is her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the prepared the following spells from the wizard spell list:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*;
1st (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*;
2nd (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*;
3rd (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*;
4th (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm;*
5th (1 slots): *cone of cold*;

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Lenora makes two attacks on her turn.
Dagger. *Melee or ranged attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+5) piercing damage.

Princess Lilly

Some say she was murdered, and unfortunately, Lilly knows who did it: her sisters Eleanor and Genève, in a rare act of cooperation. They didn't expect her to come back to haunt them, but by night she wanders the Capitol, singing and slowly driving her sisters mad with fear.

Princess Lilly

Medium blight vampire, lawful evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 82 (11d8+33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, nonmagical weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. Lilly regains 10 hp at start of turn if she is not currently in sunlight or running water, and hasn't taken radiant or holy water damage.
Spider Climb. Lilly is able to climb difficult surfaces and ceilings without requiring an ability check.
Vampire Weaknesses. Lilly has the following flaws:
Forbiddance. Lilly cannot enter a residence without receiving an invitation.
Harmed by Running Water. Lilly takes 20 acid damage if she ends her turn in running water.
Stake to the Heart. Lilly can be destroyed by taking a wooden piercing weapon to the heart.
Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Lilly takes 20 radiant damage when starting her turn in sunlight, and she has disadvantage on attacks and ability checks when in sunlight.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Lilly makes two attacks on her turn, one with her rapier and one with her bite.
Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.
Bite. *Melee weapon attack*: +6 to hit, targeting one willing, grappled, incapacitated or restrained creature. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the target's hp max is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken.

Princess Mercy

If ever a child was wrongly named, it's the violent Mercy. Mercy is no sedate Royal who takes a back seat to anyone; she is a figure of action — murderous action. Mercy courts the lords and masters of the army, whispers to them, brags to them. Mercy considers a coup to be an excellent option for her aspirations of making the city-state a military force to be reckoned with across the world. She hates her sisters, although she has taken a lover in ***Elaine of Aldwark*** *recently. Her attachment presently is purely lustful, but the succubus's charms are considerable and could draw the princess into a deeper, more malleable bond.*

Princess Mercy

Medium human, chaotic evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 23 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand + 4, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Mercy may take the *Dash, Disengage, or Hide* action as a bonus action.
Sneak Attack (1/turn). Mercy's attack deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits with a weapon attack, as long as she has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Mercy does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Mercy makes two attacks on her turn.
Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.
Hand Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Princess Rebecca of Mourney

The young and beautiful darling of the crowds is the public face of the Royal Family. Rebecca has a thousand would-be suitors and has turned down countless proposals of marriage. In fact, Rebecca secretly sponsors the revolutionaries, intending to bring a structured, peaceful change. Her sponsorship is, of course, a secret guarded on pain of death by her fanatical followers, who dub themselves the ***Hidden Knights of the Capitol*** *and who have each taken an oath of death and swallowed a plague scarab as proof. The scarab, should they choose to use or die, erupts within them, unleashing a score of locust swarms upon their enemies.*

Rebecca's fear is that her sister Alicia will ascend the throne, something she can't allow to happen.

Princess Rebecca of Mourney

Medium human, chaotic good
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand + 4, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common languages
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, Rebecca may take the *Dash, Disengage, or Hide* action as a bonus action.
Sneak Attack (1/turn). Rebecca's attack deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits with a weapon attack, as long as she has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as Rebecca does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Rebecca makes two attacks on her turn.
Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.
Hand Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Prophet Adam, the

He is a long-haired, muscular man who stands completely naked except for the streaks of blue, green, and yellow paint mixing with crimson blood that seeps from the multitude of long lacerations on his skin, all of which is rapidly being washed away in the monsoon rains. Around his neck hangs an angelic figure made of bloody lamb bones. This prophet led his small cabal of followers here to Between to await the beginning of the new world.

The Prophet Adam

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 13 (mage armour)
Hit Points 60 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +4
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Celestial
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. Adam is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, fire bolt, mending, true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *color spray, expeditious retreat, mage armour*, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow, mirror image, suggestion*
3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse, slow*
*Mage armour is active when Adam is encountered

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Adam makes two melee attacks with his halberd.
Halberd +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Queen Alice

"The figure staggered into the room spastically, taking great strides with the aid of two sticks, making her look like some four-legged spider in a crooked web. Her face was veiled 'to protect us,' they had said.

Her breaths came in sharp rasps, and her voice was like breaking glass, often calling for the beheading of her subjects. But for now, she was happy just to look at us, it seemed. I could not help thinking of the spider once more: Was she watching us and waiting to strike, or was she waiting for us to walk openly into her web?"

Queen Alice, Her Royal Highness

Medium alchymic-undying† human, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 36 (8d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any two languages
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Queen Alice makes two attacks with her rapier.

Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. When wielding a melee weapon, Queen Alice can add 2 to her AC as a reaction against one melee attack that would otherwise hit. She must be wielding a melee weapon and be able to see the attacker.

Rachel Birch

A leader in the Knights Occularus, Rachel Birch is a major figure in the adventure (although she is most likely quite transformed by the end). This description is for her pre-transformation state. There is steel in her eyes, she betrays it in her stance and her attire. She wears her red hair short, and she is lithe and muscular. Her movement is gracious but sparing, and she leads her men with unquestioned authority.

Rachel Birch

Medium female human, lawful neutral
Armor Class 17 (half plate)
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Skills History +5, Religion +5
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, Rachel can expend a 1st level spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If she expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by ld6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Rachel Birch is a 14th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She ordinarily has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, healing word, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid*, *continual flame*, *lesser restoration*
3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope*, *magic circle, speak with dead*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward, freedom of movement, guardian of faith*
5th level (2 slots): *mass cure wounds, raise dead*
6th level (2 slots): *blade barrier, true seeing*
7th level (1 slot): *resurrection*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Sallow Ashenly

A frail youth with almost alabaster skin, Sallow Ashenly is wrapped in heavy winter gear that almost completely muffles his appearance other than his unkind eyes. Below his clothes, Sallow is frail, and appears almost to be an addict or consumptive. He is wiry, and there is something obviously odd about him. Characters making a DC 18 Intelligence check can identify him as a dark stalker.

Sallow Ashenly

Medium humanoid (dark stalker), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 48 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Death Throes. When Sallow is slain, his body combusts in a flash of flame. All creatures within 20 feet of the explosion take 3d6 fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 12 Dexterity save. Sallow's combustible gear is burned to ash, but other items (shortswords, vials, coins, statuette) survive the burst of fire.

Martial Advantage. Sallow's shortsword attacks do an extra 2d6 piercing damage if he has advantage on the attack, or if another dark stalker, or a dark creeper, is within 5 feet of the target.

Spell-Like Abilities. Sallow can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as his casting ability (spell save DC 11). Dark stalkers such as Sallow don't need material components to use these abilities.
At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *fog cloud*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sallow attacks twice with his shortswords.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 piercing damage and the target

must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d4 poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour. After being poisoned, the victim must make a saving throw each round until succeeding. Each failure causes an additional 1d4 points of poison damage.

Treasure: *potion of cure wounds (3rd level)* in thick green glass vial sealed with wax seal, lacquer insectum case containing 4 doses of *Blake's sanguisuga*†; two shortswords with raven-head hilt set with silver wire worth 75gp, 25 gp in pockets, small crudely made soapstone angel carving.

Scythe Tree

This twisted tree has many branches but few leaves. In the center of its trunk is a long, deep scar. Its roots are twisted and blackened as if by fire.

Scythe Tree

Huge plant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armour)
Hit Points 76 (8d12 + 24)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (–1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Vulnerabilities: fire
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS
Multiattack. A scythe tree attacks three times with its branches.
Branches. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 5 slashing damage. A scythe tree scores a critical hit if the attack roll is a natural 19 or 20.

Skin Stitcher

A skin stitcher is a malevolent and violent creature that kills for food, pleasure, and the skin of humanoids (which it keeps and collects). While it is known to eat just about anything it kills, it only keeps the skin and flesh of humanoid creatures. Other creatures are devoured, flesh and all. Skin stitchers collect the flesh and skin of any humanoid creature slain. From this, they weave intricate clothes and coverings that they wear over their entire body. At a distance, the skin stitcher can pass for a normal humanoid when wearing one of these "skin suits" A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to reveal its true identity). Up close, the skin stitcher's disguise becomes much less effective, making it appear as a humanoid with a heavily scarred and stitched-together body.

The skin stitcher stands about 6 feet tall and (in its true form) appears as a skinless humanoid. Its natural body appears to be bone wrapped tightly with corded muscle and covered with a dark red-purplish slime. Its eye sockets are deep and contain large bulbous eyes with blue irises. The skin stitcher's long, lanky arms end in claws as do its thick, muscled legs. It carries two large chains covered with many sharpened barbs.

Though their hands are clawed, skin stitchers prefer to attack using large chains covered with razor-sharp barbs. These not only aid in killing a foe, but also help strip the flesh from a victim. Skin stitchers often attack from ambush, attempting to gain the upper hand over their prey as quickly as possible. Slain opponents are skinned and then eaten, or carried to the skin stitcher's lair and devoured later.

Skin Stitcher

Medium aberration, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17
Hit Points 62 (7d8 + 14 +20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13 (with advantage in most cases)
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Gown of Faces. The gown of faces worn by the skin stitcher gives it an additional 20 hit points. It does not have this effect for anyone other than the skin stitcher who created it. The gown "recovers" lost hit points every 24 hours.
Skin Scent. The skin stitcher can smell skin, and gains advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on smell, provided the creature has skin rather than a carapace, chitin, or similar external surface. Armor does not negate this ability.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The skin stitcher makes two melee attacks with its flaying-chains.
Flaying-chains. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage. If the first attack is a hit, the attack with the second flaying-chain is made with advantage.

Skulk

This creature appears to be human, but entirely hairless and with slender, graceful limbs. Their skin, however, can change color like that of a chameleon.

Skulk

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Skulk; some also speak Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Chameleonic Hide. If they shed their garments, skulks can hide when they are lightly obscured and have advantage on Stealth checks.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). A skulk deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated and doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Untrackable. Anyone trying to follow skulks through forest or underground territory has disadvantage on skill checks for trailing or tracking.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft., one target). *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (range 30 ft./120 ft., one target). *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 bludgeoning damage

Skum

Skum are aquatic humanoids that were created by the aboleths in some distant past (possibly a different place than this world) when entire aboleth civilizations thrived and bent a world into new and horrible shapes in accordance with the plans and dreadful aesthetics of these abhorrent, fish-like masters. Regardless of when and where the skum were created, they now have a firm foothold in the deeps of the sea and the lightless subterranean waters of the realms below the earth.

In general, the presence of skum signifies that an aboleth may be established in a lair nearby, although one might from time to time encounter a tribe that has lost its master to old age or disease. These deep ones are capable of breeding on humans; the hybrids are born human, but as they age, they take on more and more characteristics of the skum, and finally take to the deep waters of the sea.

In some forgotten places far underground, explorers may occasionally stumble upon vast, labyrinthine ruins that were once the cities of the aboleths and their skum legions. Such places may still be occupied by the vestiges of the skum armies, for these creatures do not perish of old age, although their ranks have been utterly decimated by disease, war, and famine in the deadly winnowing of the Under Realms.

Skum

Medium monstrosity, lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armour)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 ((–1)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Undercommon, Aboleth
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Limited Amphibiousness. The skum can breathe air and water, but the skum needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skum makes 3 melee attacks with one each of trident, bite, and claws.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft. or range 20/60/ft., one creature). *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Slithering Horror

This creature looks like an 8-foot long eel with yellowish-brown splotches on its back. Unlike an eel, it has several small legs, allowing it to move quickly on land.

Slithering Horror

Huge monstrosity, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 86 (9d12 + 27)
Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages ---
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Gnaw. The slithering horror possesses a second set of jaws in its throat that aid in swallowing—it can make another bite attack against a grappled opponent. A grappled target takes 18 (4d6 + 5) piercing damage at the start of the slithering horror's turn.

Water Breathing. The slithering horror can breathe in water and on land.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. After every long rest, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

Slop-Shark

See "Lyme Angler"

Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering, the

A wyvern, but strangely blurred in appearance and with strangely wrong-looking proportions.

The Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering

Large dragon (Between), neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 152 (16d10 + 64)
Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+2)	17 (+4)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	15 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +8
Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances cold, force, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages --
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Dislocated. Attacks against The Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering are made at disadvantage unless the attack has blindsight or truesight.

Innate Spellcasting. The Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
1/day each: *invisibility* (self only), *spider climb*

Magic Resistance. The Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Song makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one**.**

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

Huge beast (aquatic), unaligned

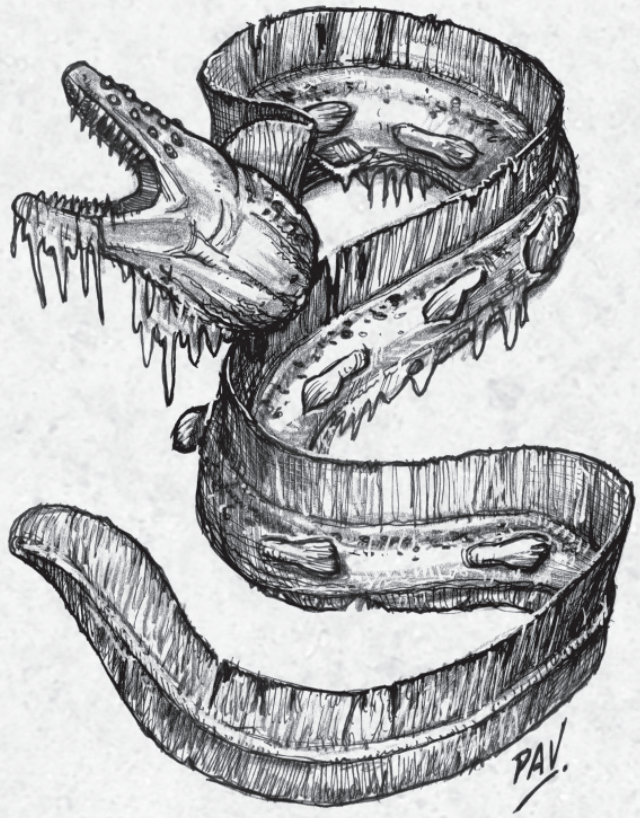
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 126 (12d12 + 48)
Speed 10 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3
Damage Resistances piercing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages none
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d10 + 6 piercing damage, and a creature must make a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract sight rot. A Medium or smaller target is also grappled (escape DC 16) and restrained. The sough-eel can't bite a different target while it has a creature grappled.



Gnaw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit (one creature already grappled at the start of the sough-eel's turn). Hit: 1d8 + 6 piercing damage. The sough-eel makes this attack as a bonus action at the start of its turn. A creature that's hit on 2 consecutive rounds by the sough-eel's gnaw attack may be swallowed (see below).

Swallow. The sough-eel makes its bite attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling and that it's hit with 2 consecutive gnaw attacks. If the bite attack hits, the creature takes the bite damage and is swallowed. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, and it's unaffected by anything happening outside the sough-eel or by attacks from outside it. **I**t takes 4d6 acid damage 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. If the sough-eel takes 30 or more damage on a single turn from a creature inside it, the sough-eel must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution save at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the slough-eel. A swallowed creature can get out of the sough-eel by using 15 feet of movement, but only after the sough-eel is dead**.**

ECOLOGY
Environment sea
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.

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Spider, Chymic

The body of this spiderlike creature is a mass of humanoid faces caught in drawn-out, hideous screams. Ten spindly legs rise unevenly from the bulbous mass. Between tufts of bristly hair hang needle-sharp fangs that drip with a bitter-smelling, thick red liquid.

Chymic Spider

Small aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d6 + 16)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +4, Wis +5
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands Common but can't speak, telepathy 100 ft. (dreams only)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Arachnophobia Aura. A chymic spider exudes a fear of arachnids that seeps into the psyche of all creatures within 1 mile of the chymic spider's lair. Creatures with Intelligence 3 or higher have disadvantage on saving throws against fright in this area.

Dream Telepathy. The chymic spider's telepathy allows it to communicate only with creatures that are asleep and dreaming. Most creatures interpret these exchanges as normal dreams, but characters are free to reach their own conclusions. The chymic spider can also choose to create nightmares in the sleeper, who must make a successful DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed for as long as the chymic spider maintains telepathic contact (it can be lost as concentration).

Egg Implantation. A chymic spider can implant eggs in a helpless or paralyzed creature. The eggs hatch 24 hours later. Once the eggs hatch, at the start of each of the host's turns, it takes 1d6 necrotic damage and must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed by pain and spiderling poison until the start of its next turn. This continues until the spiderlings are destroyed or removed. Spiderlings can be removed by inflicting 4d6 slashing damage on the host (halved with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check by the creature doing the damage) or destroyed with a *greater restoration spell or comparable magic. If the host dies, a swarm of spiders bursts from the body.*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage plus 2d8 poison damage, and a creature must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A paralyzed creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect with a success.

Chyme Spray (recharge 6). The chymic spider expels the chymic juices from its stomach in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the cone take 6d6 acid damage, or half damage with a successful DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. The juice sticks to creatures that failed their saving throws, and they take 3d6 acid damage at the ends of their next 2 turns unless the acid is removed by using an action to make a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check, or is neutralized with vinegar, alcohol, or a similar substance.

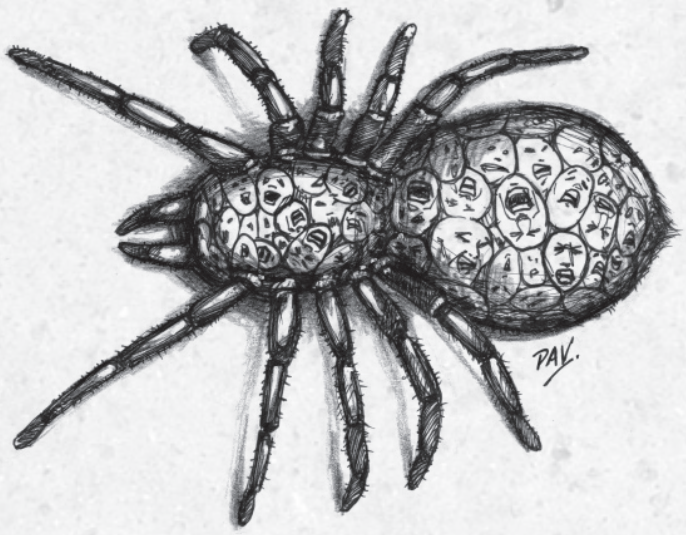
ECOLOGY

Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary

Chymic spiders are not true spiders, but rather born from the fear that spiders instill within many intelligent humanoids and inherently linked to the fabric of fear. These cunning aberrations sneak through the city rooftops and await their prey for days on end. Anyone who wanders into the chymic spider's 1-mile radius that might be the least bit fearful of spiders is quickly identified, and the chymic spider begins methodically stalking the victim, waiting for its chance to make dream contact.

Urban Predators. These rare creatures lurk along the edges of Sister Lyme, hiding in gables, chimneys, and under eaves and seemingly found nowhere else in the world. Composed from the latent fears of arachnids somehow given life, the creature is able to project these primal fears into any living creature. It simply prefers to stalk and prey on those who fear it most. It is able to project these nightmares and can cause victims to be paralyzed while it enters their lairs, and lays its eggs within them. The baby spiders within whisper to their new host, wanting to be fed, obsessing about food, and within 24 hours they erupt to feed on their host before separating to make their own lairs. After a chymic spider successfully reproduces, it quickly withers and dies, leaving behind only a spiderlike husk that the crows and vermin of the city quickly consume. Newborn chymic spiders don't begin their own reproduction hunts for 1d3 years after birth.

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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

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 15 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +0, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web, passive Perception 10
Languages none
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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 Strength 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.

ACTIONS

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

Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). Hit: the creature must make a successful DC 10 Strength 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.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

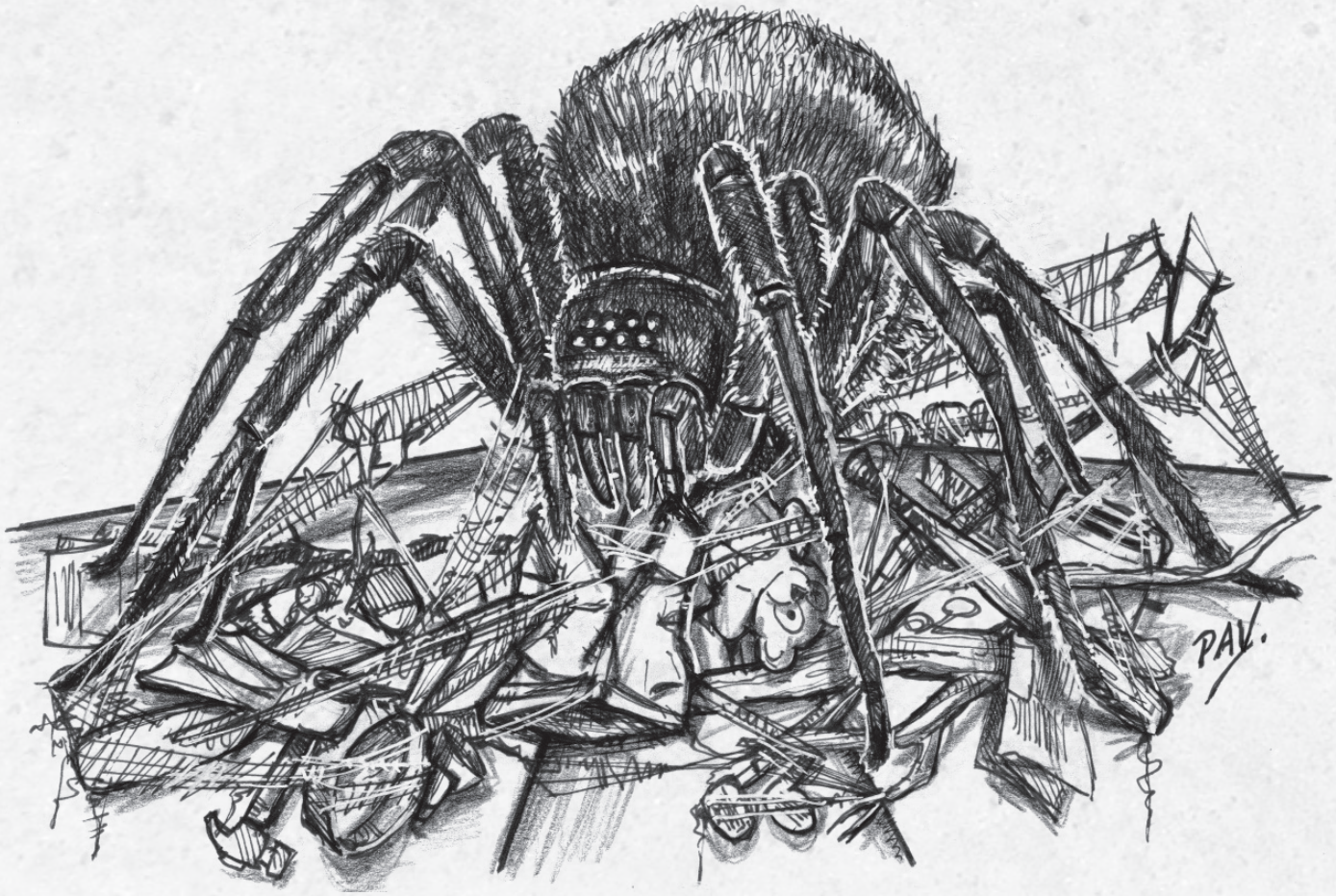
Small Gable Spider

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 18 (4d6 + 4)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +0, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web, passive



Perception 10
Languages none
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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 Strength 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.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 0 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 11 Constitution saving throw.
Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 11 Strength 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.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

Medium Gable Spider

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web, passive Perception 12
Languages none
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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 Strength 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.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +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 Constitution saving throw.
Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 12 Strength 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.

ECOLOGY
Environment urban (the Blight)
Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

Large Gable Spider

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	3 (-3)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +6
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web, passive Perception 12
Languages none
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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 Strength 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.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +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 Constitution saving throw.
Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 13 Strength 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.

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.

Salvaged Webs. 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 creautures they're fighting. The sticky mass can glue a creature in place, making it easy prey for the gable spider's poison.

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Spite-Waif

The figure is childlike, but any sense of innocence is immediately overshadowed by the aura of malevolence that exudes almost palpably from it. Its flesh is gray and pasty, seemingly too loose for its body. Its head is hairless with a wide mouth and distended jaw full of needle-sharp teeth, and, though humanoid in shape, when it moves it scuttles about on all fours like some kind of insect with too many joints.

Spite-Waif

Small aberration (larval Between), neutral evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +2
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Mirror Portal (1/day). A spite-waif can turn a normal mirror into a portal between the Material Plane and Between. The spite-waif must touch the mirror to be transformed. The portal forms behind the mirror, which must be pushed aside to get at the portal. The portal can be used by any creature that fits through it; the portal is the same size as the mirror. It remains open indefinitely or until the spite-waif creates a different mirror portal or the mirror is broken.

Create Mirror-Portal (1/day). A spite-waif can turn a normal mirror into a portal between the Material Plane and Between. To use this ability a mirror must be obtained from the Material Plane and taken to Between where the spite-waif must conduct a 1-hour ritual to attune the mirror and turn it into a device for scrying. It is then able to scry through any Material Plane mirror for a suitable location to use as a portal. Once a location has been determined, the *mirror-portal* is created and fixed between the two mirrors, and the spite-waif's mirror cannot be attuned to any other mirror. Once the mirrors have been attuned, the portal can be opened from either end by simply sliding the mirror aside as a part of movement and revealing the extradimensional portal behind it. Anyone can pass through the *mirror-portal* as long as they can fit through the dimensions of the mirror's pane. Once created, a *mirror-portal* remains open indefinitely until closed. If closed, it can no longer be opened except by the spite-waif that created it. If either mirror is destroyed, the *mirror-portal* is closed permanently.

Innate Spellcasting. The spite-waif can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as its casting ability (DC 11). The spite-waif doesn't need material components to use these abilities.

At will: *alter self*
1/day: *sleep*

Perfect Copy. When a spite-waif uses *alter self*, it can assume the appearance of a specific individual. Unlike a doppelganger, when a spite-waif is killed it remains in its assumed form unless a *dispel magic* is cast on the corpse.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spite-waif bites once and claws once.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d6 + 3 piercing damage.



Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d4 + 3 slashing damage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (Between)
Organization solitary or gang (3–6)

These creatures are insidious changelings and infiltrators from Between. Spite-waifs are an immature stage in the development of a doppelganger that are native to that bizarre realm. While they have the doppelganger's ability to change shape, they lack its physical power and ability to read minds. As a result, they are used primarily as changelings to replace children of the Material Plane, and then grow up within that child's household and live its life. The reasons for these switches are manifold, but they are universally of malign intent. This is especially evident in the fact that unlike hags, who swap changelings out for real children and then raise the true child as its own, the spite-waif usually devours the child at the time of the switch.

Formless Children. Superficially, spite-waifs physically resemble a small humanoid child but with a doppelganger's characteristic gray and formless skin and features. Its jaw is able to distend to allow it to swallow creatures up to Medium size, and a mouthful of needle-sharp teeth help it grip its prey. Internally, the spite-waif's abdomen is an extra-dimensional space that can hold any amount of prey. Horrifically, the parents of switched children are frequently concerned about a possible stomach ailment afflicting their "child" when they change its bedclothes, not aware of the true source of its exceptionally soiled and sometimes bloody diapers.

Stolen Lives. A spite-waif can maintain its charade for years, altering its regularly as it "grows," and usually does so for the entire childhood and adolescence of the replaced child. In many ways, they become that child, assuming all of its roles and eventual responsibilities, though it always maintains some form of contact with its own kind — even if only a quick meeting once every few years — to stay current on the planned reasons for the switch. The reasons and plans for a changeling switch are always extremely far-reaching, taking decades to develop, and frequently involve replacing a child from a prominent family in order to attain a powerful position in government later in adulthood. While a spite-waif remains in Between, it doesn't mature physically or in Between Age. A spite-waif that dwells on the Material Plane grows at a rate comparable to the species it mimics. When a Material Plane-dwelling spite-waif reaches physical maturity (usually within 10–12 years), it attains Medium size and completes its transformation into a full non-Between doppelganger, becoming in all ways at this point a normal doppelganger, though likely maintaining any prior contacts with its Between compatriots.

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Sprat

An anaemic, stick-thin man who seems almost to bend in the wind, he is dressed in the latest fashions and has a magnificent top hat and cane. Sprat is a wererat ghoul, unusual in that he retained his shapechanging ability after his transformation into an undead creature.

Sprat

Medium undead (humanoid shapechanger), neutral evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+1)	10 (+2)	17 (+0)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	10 (–2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shapechanger. Sprat can use his action to polymorph between a rat and his true humanoid form.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 2 piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d4 + 2 slashing damage plus DC 10 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute.

Blowgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 25/100, 1 target. Hit: 1 piercing damage and the target must succeed at a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the victim is also unconscious while poisoned.

Stricken Child, the

Lying prostrate upon a bed of rust-coloured spines and blooms cradled in slowly enveloping iron growths, is a sickly pale man. He is naked, and his revolting affliction is clear for all to see. The miserable man's head is swollen obscenely, a degenerate bloated thing that looks ready to burst at the lightest of touches. His eyes bulge painfully and his jaw hangs slack, a trail of spittle dripping from it. On closer examination, you can see that the thing has only vestigial hands and feet as well as a second head — a grotesque and elongated thing that looks to have been squashed at some time — lolls behind the swollen cranium.

The Stricken Child

Medium monstrosity, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 20 (metal thorns)
Hit Points 48 (12d8)
Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (–3)	8 (–1)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Horrific Appearance. The Stricken Child has such a distressing shape that all creatures within 30 feet with an Intelligence of 3 or higher who gaze upon it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution save or become sickened for 1d4+1 rounds. In addition to affecting creatures passively, the Stricken Child can use its horrific appearance actively by presenting itself as a standard action. A creature that succeeds at its saving throw becomes immune to the Stricken Child's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

Howl. The Stricken Child can issue a sickening howl (recharge 5–6). All creatures within 30 foot that hear the howl must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution save or be frightened for 1d4+1 rounds. A creature that succeeds at its saving throw becomes immune to the Stricken Child's howl for 24 hours.

Preternatural Knowledge. The Stricken Child can see and hear things beyond this world and knows what should not be known. The gift is erratic and imprecise.

ACTIONS

Cloud of Misery (2/day). As a combat action, the Stricken Child can vomit forth a **swarm of insects.** The swarms begin adjacent to the Stricken Child, but if no living creatures are within its area, they move away from the Stricken Child in a random direction at their normal speed. The insects melt into pools of brown phlegm after 10 rounds.

Thing in the Cellar, the

This creature is an anathema to natural law. It is a thing of memories, of hatreds and of chaos. It changes physically in some ways, but there the link to anything mortally understood ends.

The Thing in the Cellar

Large aberration (Between), neutral
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 125 (10d10 + 70)
Speed 40 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	19 (+4)	25 (+7)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Aklo
Challenge 6 (XP 2,300)

Distorted. The Thing in the Cellar has no recognizable internal anatomy, giving it a 50% chance to treat any critical hit or sneak attack against it as a normal hit.

Preternatural Horror. Those who see the Thing realise its very existence is contrary to every law of nature. Animals will not go within 30 feet of the creature, and when first sighted by a creature with an Intelligence of 6 or higher, the viewer must make a DC 15 Wisdom save or gain a malady (see Blight Maladies in the introductory chapter to The Levee adventure).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thing in the cellar makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. It can forego one claw attack to use its leach attack.

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Leech. *Melee Spell Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one tar-

get. *Hit*: 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. If the save fails, the target takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and the thing in the cellar gains an equal number of hit points. Any hit points gained over the thing's maximum hit points become temporary hit points. If the save succeeds, no damage is done and the target is immune to leech for 24 hours.

Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch, the

It has a face — or rather, two faces — both of which you somehow know. One face is rigid, hard, determined, while the other is frightened like a child, her eyes darting in fear and staring behind her always. The eyes draw you; they are steely. Indeed, they seem to be metallic, and then you realise where you have seen the gaze before — Rachel Birch, the Paladin-Occularis who has been chasing you for months for some transgression you can't even guess — a member of the order that burned your village at the order of Thornrage. What has become of her? She is filleted and stretched so that her human form sways and is distended, oddly lacking in any kind of bone and she is able to stand purely though muscle. As she staggers, she moves like a tumbling thing blown in the wind, propping herself upon long distended knuckles. Her skin runs with livid scars that cover her entire skin, threatening to peel away before your eyes.

The Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch

Medium undead, neutral
Armor Class 18 (natural armour)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)

Savings Throws Con +5, Wis +8
Skills Athletics +8, Perception +8, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages the languages known in life
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, The Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch, has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) rolls that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch makes three melee attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage and it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum by 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under The Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Thorny

This creature resembles a hunting dog constructed of tangled briars, vines, leaves, and sticks. Its entire body is covered with small, sharp thorns.

Thorny

Medium plant, neutral
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages N/A
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Thorns. A thorny's body is covered by sharp wooden thorns. Any creature attacking a thorny takes 2 (1d4) damage from the sharp thorns. A creature that grapples the thorny takes this same damage every round the grapple is maintained

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (2d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Threnody

The vampiress is a sight to behold now that she is not moving so fast that she can't even be seen. Those that caught a glimpse of her in L7: My Benefactor **recognize her immediately, though it is obvious that she is no longer pregnant. She is old, far older than seems physically possible. Her skin is a wrinkled, hairless, expanse of ashen grey pallor, and seems to sag from her frame as if the skeleton inside was somehow retracting. The flesh of her abdomen hangs in a pendulous mass nearly to her knees, having already disgorged the brood of young it carried. Her wrinkled head is eyeless, with only a small nose and a wide fanged mouth to break its cracked and wrinkled surface. Membranous wings of ragged flesh rise from her shoulders, and most horrifyingly of all as she raises clawed hands toward you, you can see that in the centre of each palm is a glaring, jaundiced eye.**

Threnody

Medium undead (Between), neutral evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 119 (14d8+68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +6, Cha +8
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Deep Speech
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Birth Brood. Between vampires do not have the ability to create spawn, but Threnody is one of the rare examples of her kind that can create a new generation of Between vampires. Every century or so, she becomes obsessed with reproduction. No act of procreation is required for such an event to occur and conclude. When it occurs, she grows to Large size as she bloats with a host of young, and her hunger to feed becomes almost a madness. She requires living hosts into which her young are birthed and prefers them to be sentient creatures of the mundane world. When birthed, the young occupy a large cyst in their host's body where they feed for 1d3 days until they grow rudimentary wings 1d3 days later. At that point, they finish feeding upon the host and burrow out to make their escape, maturing to become full-grown Between vampires in a matter of weeks. When they first emerge from the host they are virtually helpless (AC 10, hit points 2, fly 10 ft.), but after that they begin to grow and transform into a fully-grown Blight vampire at within 2d12 days and develop the natural abilities of their kind during this time.

Cunning Action. On each turn, Threnody may take the *Dash*, *Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.

Dislocated. Attacks against Threnody are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

Shadowy Escape. When she drops to 0 hit points outside Between, Threnody transforms into a shadow (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that she isn't in sunlight. If she can't transform, she is destroyed.

While she has 0 hit points in shadow form, Threnody can't revert to her Between vampire form, and she must reach Between or a *mirror-portal* and successfully possess it within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in Between, she reverts to her Between vampire form. She is then paralyzed until regaining at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in Between with 0 hit points, she regains 1 hit point. The same is true of a mirror-portal, except she does not revert to her Between vampire form.

Possess Mirror. Threnody can use her action to possess a *mirror-portal* connected to Between. Similar to when a creature is possessed, the mirror-portal must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by Threnody; Threnody then disappears. Threnody's presence in the mirror can be determined by divination spells such as *detect evil and good*, but she cannot be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead.

Threnody can remain in a mirror indefinitely, but will be ejected from the mirror if it is destroyed or she is turned.

Regeneration. Threnody regains 5 hit points at the start of her turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If she takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Threnody makes three attacks, only one of which can be a bone drink attack.

Tongue. *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Threnody can grapple the target (escape DC 17).

Bone Drink. *Melee weapon attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Threnody, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage as their bones liquefy and Threnody begins drinking the slurry through the creature's flesh. The target's hit points are reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Threnody regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Dominate. Threnody targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see Threnody, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by her. The charmed target regards Threnody as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under her control, it takes Threnody's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Threnody's bone drink attack.

Each time Threnody or her companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Threnody is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Burst of Speed (Recharge 6). Threnody can move twice her base speed.

Vargouille

Hideous, disgusting, and vile, vargouilles stream out of the Abyssal plane. Little more than a severed head with bat wings, these fiends carry a potent disease that perpetuates their abominable kind.

Vargouille

Tiny fiend, chaotic evil
Armor Class 12 (natural armour)
Hit Points 13 (3d4 + 6)
Speed 5 ft., 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages understands Abyssal and Infernal, and any languages it new before becoming a fiend, but is unable to speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Demon's Kiss. If an incapacitated target is within 5 feet of the vargouille, the vargouille can kiss that creature, which must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or become cursed. The cursed target loses 1 point of Charisma at the end of each hour, as its facial features take on a fiendish aspect. The curse held at bay by direct sunlight or the *daylight* spell. Once the cursed target's Charisma drops to 2, it suffers an excruciating, violent death from its head tearing from its body to become a new vargouille. The curse can only be ended by a *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell. The physical changes are undone when the curse ends through these means.

Stunning Shriek. The vargouille unleashes a piercing shriek. Creatures within 30 feet of the vargouille that hears the shriek must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened and stunned until the end of the vargouille's

next turn. While frightened in this way, a target is stunned. If the creature's saving throw is successful, then it is immune to the vargouille shrieks for the next 1 hour.

Wallow Whale

Something stirs in the sludge beneath, swimming 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

Gargantuan aberration, neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 201 (13d20 + 65)
Speed swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	4 (–3)	21 (+5)	4 (–3)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

Skills Perception +4
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities thunder
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages none
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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 Constitution saving throw or contract filth fever.

Filth Fever. A creature with filth fever becomes sick 1d4 days after being infected. At that time, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. It also regains only half the usual number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and no hit points from resting. Once symptoms appear, the infected creature must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw after every long rest. If it fails, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion; if it succeeds, the creature loses 1 level of exhaustion. The disease is cured when the creature has no exhaustion.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wallow-whale bites once and makes one tail slap attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +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 Strength saving throw or be swallowed (see above).

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit (reach 15 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4d8 + 6 bludgeoning damage and the target is knocked prone.

Melee Atttack—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

ECOLOGY
Environment sea (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. Stirges 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.

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Watch Commander Kevel Durmast

Kevel is the current commander of the City Watch, Kevel is also a member of the Veil. Duke Malice believes Durmast to be solely his creature but knows neither the Watch Commander's true nature nor his true loyalty to Braken and only Braken.

Watch Commander Kevel Durmast

Medium doppelganger, lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +11
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages any one language (usually common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Ambusher/ Surprise Attack. In the first round of combat, Kevel has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he has surprised, and deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage on a successful hit. Any hit against a surprised creature is a critical.
Evasion. If Kevel is required to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, he takes no damage on a successful save, and half damage on a failed save.
Read Thoughts. While concentrating, Kevel can read thoughts within a 60-foot radius. He has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, Persuasion) checks vs his target while reading its thoughts.
Shapechanger. Kevel can use his action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid he has seen, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Kevel makes two attacks on his turn.
Rapier. *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack*: +8 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution save, taking 24 (7d6) damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Watchful Child, the

Most certainly some type of a gargoyle, this creature appears to be badly made. Its face is almost child-like but broad and stretched, while behind its grey body hang two angelic wings. From its skeletal frame erupt metal plates and nodules that grow upon it like tumours. Four arms extend from its torso, but a stunted and shriveled fifth arm hangs from the thing's neck.

The Watchful Child

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 60 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (–2)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons or not made of adamantine
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, exhaustion, petrifaction
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Terran
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

False Appearance. While the watchful child remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

ACTIONS
Multiattack: The watchful child makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one with its horn.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.
Horn. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Wererat Leader

Wererat leaders are the elite of the city's wererat population, more powerful and much sneakier than the ordinary sort. Most of the city's wererats are halflings in their true form, and this is also true of the elites.

Wererat Leader

Medium humanoid (any race, shapechanger), lawful evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 42 (6d8+18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-silvered weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft. (in any form), passive Perception 12
Languages Common (cannot speak in rat form)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turn, the wererat leader may take the *Dash, Disengage*, or *Hide* action as a bonus action.
Keen Smell. Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell are made at advantage.

Shapechanger. A wererat leader can use its action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The wererat leader's attack deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when it hits with a weapon attack, if it has advantage on the attack roll, or there is an ally who is not incapacitated within 5 feet of the target, and as long as the wererat leader does not have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (humanoid or hybrid form only). A wererat leader makes two attacks (only one of which may be a bite).

Bite (Hybrid or Rat Form Only). *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

Shortsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Whale, Between

Massive whales that swim the unfathomed deeps of the seas of Between.

Whale, Between

Gargantuan beast, unaligned
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 228 (13d20+ 91)
Speed swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	25 (+7)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4
Saving Throws Str +13, Con +13, Wis +8
Senses blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 18
Languages --
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Echolocation. The Between whale cannot use its blindsight if deafened.

Freedom of Movement. The Between whale ignores difficult terrain, and magical effects can't reduce its speed or cause it to be restrained. It can spend 5 feet of movement to escape from nonmagical restraints or being grappled.

Hold Breath. The Between whale can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Keen Scent. This Between whale can notice creatures by scent in a 180-foot radius underwater and can detect blood in the water at a range of up to a mile.

Siege Monster. The Between whale deals double damage to objects and structures

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 42 (6d10 + 9) slashing damage. If the hit is a critical hit or exceeds the number needed by 5 or more, the target is also swallowed. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Between whale, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the Between whale's turns.

If the Between whale takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the Between whale must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the Between whale. If the Between whale dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack*, +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one object. *Hit*: 36 (5d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 31 (4d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the Between whale's next turn.

Capsize. If the Between whale moves at least 30 feet straight toward a watercraft (boat, ship, ferry, etc.) and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, there is a chance that it will capsize. All occupants of the watercraft must make Dexterity saving throw when the craft is rammed (see below). To determine if the watercraft capsizes, consult the following:

Size	Outcome
Small **(e.g. rowboat)**	The craft is destroyed, all on board must make a successful DC 19 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being stunned. Regardless of the outcome of the save, passengers each take 36 (5d10 + 9) damage and are thrown from the wreckage.
Medium **(e.g. keelboat)**	The craft must make a generic DC 17 saving throw to avoid being destroyed. If successful, the craft takes half of the 10d10 + 10 damage. All on board must make a save DC 19 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. If the craft fails the saving throw, it takes full damage and begins taking on water. It will sink in 1d4 rounds.
Large **(e.g. sailing ship)**	The craft must make a generic DC 15 saving throw to avoid being capsized. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the ship capsizes. All on board must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being pulled under with the ship. If the save is successful, the ship takes 10d10 + 10 damage and those on board make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone (or overboard if they are near the ship's edge).
Huge **(e.g. longship)**	The craft must make a generic DC 13 saving throw to avoid being capsized. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the ship capsizes. All on board must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving to avoid being pulled under with the ship. If the save is successful, the ship takes 10d10 + 10 damage and those on board make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone (or overboard if they are near the ship's edge).

Size	Outcome
***Gargantuan* (e.g. warship, galley)**	The craft must make a generic DC 12 saving throw with advantage to avoid being capsized. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the ship capsizes. All on board must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving to avoid being pulled under with the ship. If the save is successful, the ship takes 10d10 + 10 damage and those on board make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked prone (or overboard if they are near the ship's edge).

Wolf, Ghoul

This creature resembles a wolf with matted dark fur torn away in places. Its flesh is sickly gray where its fur is torn away. Its eyes are stark white.

Ghoul Wolf

Large undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 13 (natural armour)
Hit Points 50 (8d10 + 6)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages --
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The ghoul wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.
Pack Tactics. The ghoul wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the ghoul wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Woerm

This wormlike monster's eyeless head has a hooked jaw and large, pointed ears. Its scaly hide is dull gray with a crest on its head and along its back to its tail, along which its shrunken, vestigial legs hang limply. Its long, multi-jointed arms are like slimy spider legs tipped with elongated, clawed hands.

Woerm

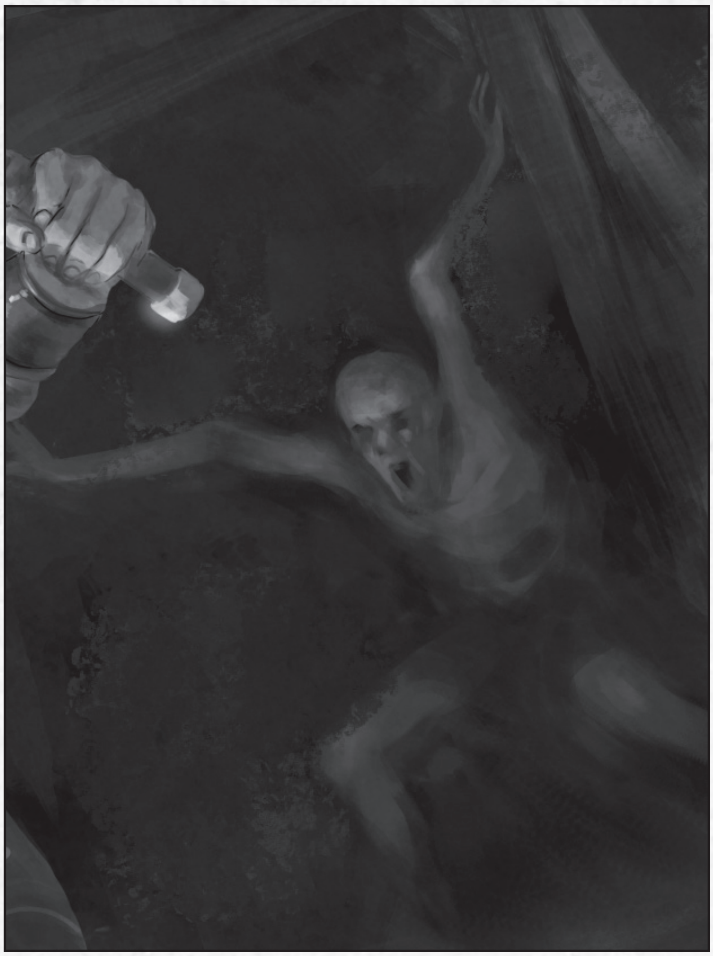
Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Athletics +5, Stealth +3
Senses blindsense 30 ft. (blind beyond 30 ft.), passive Perception 11
Languages Undercommon
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blind. Woerms rely entirely on blindsight. They are immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other effects that interact with normal sight.
Filth Fever. A creature with filth fever becomes sick 1d4 days after being infected. At that time, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. It also regains only half the usual number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and no hit points from resting. Once symptoms appear, the infected creature must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw after every long rest. If it fails, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion; if it succeeds, the creature loses 1 level of exhaustion. The disease is cured when the creature has no exhaustion.
Pack Attack. A woerm has advantage on its attack roll if the target is within 5 feet of another woerm that's able to attack.
Regeneration. A woerm heals 5 hit points at the start of each of its turns. This ability doesn't function if it took acid or fire damage, or was exposed to sunlight, since its previous turn.
Stench. A creature (other than a woerm or troglodyte) that starts its turn within 5 feet of a woerm must make a



successful DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. A creature that saves successfully is immune to woem Stench for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The woerm bites once and claws once.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 piercing damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be infected with filth fever (see above).

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 3 slashing damage.

Disorientating Scream. Woerms communicate with their own kind via high-pitched screams. Creatures other than woerms within 15 feet of a screaming woerm must succeed at a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated for 1 round. A character who makes this saving throw successfully is immune to woerms' Disorientating Screams for 24 hours.

ECOLOGY

Environment underground

Organization solitary, pair, gang (3–12), or cult (13+)

Woerms are an aggressive, insular race who constantly hunger for flesh and who have become adept at survival in the crippling and stifling confines of the Underneath. Originally spawned of cursed unions between morlocks and troglodytes, they are rarely encountered and never above ground, as sunlight repels them.

Careful Hunters. Woerms are cautious when hunting, striking prey as they rush forth from hidden holes and disappear into others. This tactic has led to an impression that they enjoy playing with their prey — earning them the name "Welcomers Below" — but woerms delight only in eating.

Social Horrors. Woerms are surprisingly sophisticated and intelligent — or at least, more sophisticated and intelligent than they look — and have complex and powerful clans and groups; two opposing groups of woerms never work together, but occasionally a great leader forges a larger kingdom of the creatures. These clans can last for decades or even centuries, and the feasting halls that rarely have been discovered have shown their appetites and successes. Occasionally, the insular woerms form an alliance with, or more often enslave, a race of subterranean dwellers, typically their morlock or troglodyte forebears.

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Zombie Horse

Zombie horses are a staple of Castorhage's necromantic industry. They are so unintelligent that they are only used as workhorses: commanding a zombie horse to attack requires a DC 10 Intelligence check on the part of the horse to understand and obey (with a –5 on the roll due to its Intelligence modifier). Otherwise, the zombie horse looks on placidly without taking any actions at all.

Zombie Horse

Medium undead, unaligned
Armor Class 8
Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	1 (–5)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wisdom +0
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages understands trained words
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude: If damage reduces the zombie horse to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie horse drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Common NPCs

Agent of Good

These individuals may be vampire-hunters, witch-hunters, or serve as contacts for good-aligned organizations such as religious orders or orders of knighthood.

Agent of Good

Medium humanoid (any race), any good alignment
Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Holy Devotion. The agent of good has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The agent is a 4th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). Agents of good usually have the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. An agent of good makes two melee attacks, one with the rapier and one with the dagger.

Silvered Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Silvered Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage. The bolts are silvered.

Apprentice Mage

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. The apprentice mage is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mending, prestidigitation*
1st level (2 slots): *burning hands, mage armour, shield*

ACTIONS
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Arcane Assassin

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 15 (18 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 81 (6d6 + 6d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +13
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The arcane assassin is a 6th-level spell caster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The arcane assassin has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, minor illusion*, *poison spray, true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *feather fall, mage armour, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers, darkness*, *invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *blink, clairvoyance, vampiric touch*
Assassinate. During its first turn, the arcane assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the arcane assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.
Evasion. If the arcane assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the arcane assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The arcane assassin deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The arcane assassin makes two shortsword attacks per turn.
Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Ascetic

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unarmoured Defence. If wearing no armour or shield, the ascetic's AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The ascetic makes 3 unarmed strike attacks or three dart attacks.
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the ascetic can choose one of the following additional effects:
- The target must make a successful DC 13 Strength saving throw or the creature drops one item (ascetic's choice);
- The target must make a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw be knocked prone;
- The target must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or stunned until the end of ascetic's next turn.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS
Deflect missile. As a reaction, the ascetic deflects one missile and any damage is reduced by 1d10 + 3. If damage is reduced to 0, the ascetic catches the missile if it small enough to hold in one hand and the ascetic has at least one hand free.

Burglar

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 16 (leather armour)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Thieves' cant plus any two languages
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the burglar can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.
Evasion. When the burglar is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the it instead takes no damage if the save is successful, and only half damage if the roll is a failure.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the burglar can deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage to one creature it hits with an attack if it has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. The burglar doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't Incapacitated, and the burglar doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The burglar can make two attacks with either its shortsword or its light crossbow per turn.
Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Captain

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6
Skills Perception +5, Persuasion +7, Intimidation +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The captain has advantage on all saving throws against fear.
Leadership (1/day, 1 minute). Allies within 30ft who can hear and understand the Captain add 1d4 to their attack rolls and saving throws.

ACTIONS
Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Deathmage

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 66 (12d8+12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Grim Harvest (1/turn). When the deathmage kills a creature that is neither a construct nor undead with a spell of 1st level or higher, the deathmage regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times if it is a necromancy spell.
Spellcasting. The deathmage is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, mending*
1st level (4 slots): *false life*, mage armour, ray of sickness**
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, ray of enfeeblement*, web*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, bestow curse*, vampiric touch**
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, dimension door, stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *contagion, cloudkill;*
6th level (1 slots): *circle of death**
*Necromancy Spell of 1st level or higher.

ACTIONS
Grim Harvest. When deathmage kills a creature that is neither a construct nor undead with a spell of 1st level or higher, the mage regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times if it is a necromancy spell.
Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Duellist

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 17 (leather armour)
Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 3 (700)

Light-footed. The duellist can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of its turns.
Suave Défense. While the duellist is wearing light or no armour and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The duellist makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with a rapier.
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (ld4 + 4) piercing damage.
Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (ld8 + 4) piercing damage.

Elder Witch

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any two languages, telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 6 (2,300)

Innate Spellcasting. The elder witch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:
At will: *detect magic, jump, levitate, mage armour* (self only), *speak with dead*
I /day each: *arcane gate, true seeing*

Spellcasting. The elder witch is a 14th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following witch spells:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, eldritch blast, guidance, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *crown of madness, clairvoyance, contact other plane, detect thoughts, dimension door, dissonant whispers, dominate beast, hellish rebuke, protection from good and evil, telekinesis, vampiric touch*

Whispering Aura. At the start of each of the elder witch's turns, each creature of its choice within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage, provided that the witch isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (ld4 + 2) piercing damage.

Foulguard

Medium humanoid (any), any non-good alignment
Armor Class 18 (plate armour)
Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5;
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The foulguard is a 10th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following paladin spells prepared:
Cantrips: *chill touch, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *command, false life, protection from evil and good, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, branding smite, find steed*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, hellish rebuke, inflict wounds*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The foulguard makes three attacks with its glaive or shortbow.
Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage.
Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.
Aura of Dread (Recharges after short or long rest). The foulguard exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the foulguard must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from the foulguard, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself with a success.

Foulguards are likely to have a special steed.

Frenzied Berserker

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 105 (10d12+30)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (–1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +7
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +9, Performance +4, Survival +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Any one language
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brutal Critical. The frenzied berserker can roll one additional weapon damage when determining the extra damage for a critical hit with a melee attack.
Reckless. At the start of its turn, the frenzied berserker can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls that turn but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. A frenzied berserker makes two greataxe attacks per turn.
Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Grandmaster Spy

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 18 (studded leather armour)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dexterity +10, Intelligence +8, Wisdom +8
Skills Acrobatics +10, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +14
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Elusive. No attack on the grandmaster spy has advantage if the grandmaster spy is not incapacitated.

Evasion. If the grandmaster spy is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the grandmaster spy instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The grandmaster spy deals an extra 31 (9d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the grandmaster spy that isn't incapacitated and the grandmaster spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Stealthy. The grandmaster spy has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The grandmaster spy makes three rapier attacks per turn.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Hierophant

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 16 (hide armour, shield)
Hit Points 132 (24d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +9
Skills Medicine +9, Nature +5, Perception +9
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Druidic plus any two languages
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. The hierophant is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, mending, poison spray, produce flame*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle. faerie fire, speak with animals*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, beast sense, hold person*
3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, meld into stone, water breathing*
4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast, locate creature, stoneskin, wall of fire*
5th level (3 slots): *commune with nature, mass cure wounds, tree stride*
6th level (1 slot): *heal, heroes' feast, sunbeam*
7th level (1 slot): *fire storm*
8th level (1 slot): *animal shapes*

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (ld6 + 2) slasping damage.

Change Shape (2/Day). The hierophant magically polymorphs into a beast or elemental with a challenge rating of 6 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. The hierophant can choose whether its equipment falls to the ground, melds with its new form, or is worn by the new form. The hierophant reverts to its true form if it dies or falls unconscious. The hierophant can revert to its true form using a bonus action on its turn. While in a new form, the hierophant retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks. It can cast its spells with verbal or somatic components in its new form. The new form's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks.

High Priest

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 17 (half plate)
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Skills History +5, Religion +5
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the high priest can expend a 1st level spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the high priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by ld6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The high priest is a 14th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The high priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, healing word, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid*, *continual flame*, *lesser restoration*
3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope*, *magic circle, speak with dead*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward, freedom of movement, guardian of faith*
5th level (2 slots): *mass cure wounds, raise dead*
6th level (2 slots): *blade barrier, true seeing*
7th level (1 slot): *resurrection*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Initiate Witch

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +5
Skills Arcana +2, Deception +5, Nature +2, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 2 (450)

Innate Spellcasting. The initiate witch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 14), requiring no material components:
At will: *disguise self, mage armour* (self only), *silent image, speak with animals*
l /day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. The initiate witch is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:
Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, mage hand, minor illusion*
1st-3rd level (2 3rd-level slots): *blink, charm person, faerie fire, hold person, phantasmal force, sleep*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Inquisitor

These individuals are chosen agents of their faith, charged with enforcing their gods' dictates and rooting out the unfaithful. Even those of good alignment are fanatical in their devotion to their faith.

Inquisitor

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment
Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Holy Devotion. The inquisitor has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The inquisitor is a 4th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). Inquisitors usually have the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light, resistance, sacred flame*
1st level (4 slots): *command, protection from evil and good, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. An inquisitor makes two melee attacks, one with the longsword and one with the dagger. The inquisitor makes only one attack if it holds the longsword in both hands.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if held in both hands.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage. The bolts are silvered.

Inspector of the Watch

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment (usually lawful)
Armor Class 17
Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +6, Intimidation +6, Investigation +8, Perception +4, Perform +6, Persuasion +8, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Gnome, River Cant, Xaon
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. As a bonus action on his turn, the inspector can Disengage, Dash or Hide.

Jack of All Trades. Inspectors of the watch receive a +1 bonus on all skills not listed above.

Sneak Attack. An inspector of the watch can make a sneak attack as a rogue for 1d6 points of damage on a target upon which he has advantage.

Spellcasting. These high-ranking officials are 4th level spellcasters. Charisma is their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following spells from the bard spell list:
Spells (slots):
Cantrips (at will)—*friends, light, mage hand*;
1st (4 slots)—*charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, disguise self;*
2nd (3 slots)— *detect thoughts, locate object, zone of truth*;

ACTIONS

Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Knight of Renown

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Indomitable (2/Day). The knight of renown rerolls a failed saving throw.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the knight of renown can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight of renown makes three attacks with its greatsword or crossbow.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + **5)** slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6)

slashing damage if the knight of renown has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (ld8 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the knight of renown has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Master Assassin

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 18 (studded leather armour)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dexterity +11, Intelligence +9, Wisdom +8
Skills Acrobatics +11, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +15
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Thieves' cant plus any two languages
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assassinate. During its first turn, the master assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Elusive. No attack on the master assassin has advantage if the master assassin is not incapacitated.

Evasion. If the master assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The master assassin deals an extra 31 (9d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the master assassin that isn't incapacitated and the master assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The master assassin makes three rapier attacks per turn.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 31 (9d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 31 (9d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Master Spy

Medium human, neutral
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 84 (13d8+26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5
Skills Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +4, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the master spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. When the master spy is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the it instead takes no damage if the save is successful, and only half damage if the roll is a failure.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the master spy can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the master spy that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The master spy can make three attacks with either its rapier or its hand crossbow per turn.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The master spy adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the master spy must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Minstrel

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3
Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages any two languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The minstrel is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockey*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Song of Rest. The minstrel can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally, or the minstrel itself, who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest.

Taunt (2/day). The minstrel can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 ft. If the target can hear the minstrel, the target must succeed DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the minstrel's next turn.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Phantasmagist

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int. +5, History +5
Skills Arcana +5, History +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any four languages
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The phantasmagist is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, mage hand, minor illusion, poison spray*
1st level (4 slots): *color spray*, disguise self*, mage armour, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, mirror image*, phantasmal force**
3rd level (3 slots): *major image*, phantom steed**
4th level (1 slots): *phantasmal killer**
*Illusion spells of 1st level or higher

Displacement (recharges after the Phantasmagist casts an Illusion Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, the phantasmagist projects an illusion that makes it appear to be standing in a place a few inches from its actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls. The effect ends if the phantasmagist takes damage, it is incapacitated or its speed becomes 0.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Seer

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 67 (15d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The seer is a 15th-level spell caster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The seer has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, message, true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic,* feather fall, mage armour*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts,* locate object,* scorching ray*
3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance ,* fly, fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye,* ice storm, stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *Telepathic bond,* scrying**
6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion, true seeing**
7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball, teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *maze*
*Divination spell of 1st level or higher

Portent (Recharges after the Seer Casts a Divination Spell of 1st Level or Higher). When the seer or a creature it can see makes an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check, the seer can roll a d20 and choose to use this roll in place of the attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Sneakthief

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 8 (1d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +2
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Deception +2, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Thieves' cant plus any one language
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the sneakthief can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature it hits with an attack if it has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. The sneakthief doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't Incapacitated, and the sneakthief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.
Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Summoner

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Benign Transportation (Recharges after the Summoner Casts a Conjuration Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, the summoner teleports up to 30 ft. to an unoccupied space that it can see. If it instead chooses a space within range that is occupied by a willing Small or Medium creature, they both teleport, swapping places.

Spellcasting. The summoner is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, mage hand*, poison spray*, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *mage armour, magic missile, unseen servant**
2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers*, misty step*, web**
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, stinking cloud**
4th level (1 slots): *Evd's black tentacles*, stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*, conjure elemental**
*conjuration spells of 1st level or higher

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or ranged attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Talimancer

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 66 (12d8+12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Sculpt Spells. When the talimancer casts an evocation spell that forces other creatures it can see, it can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. These creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell. If a successful save means a chosen creature would take half damage from the spell, it instead takes no damage from it.

Spellcasting. The talimancer is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, light*, prestidigitation, ray of frost**
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, mage armour, magic missile**
2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image, misty step, shatter**
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball*, lightning bolt**
4th level (3 slots): *ice storm*, stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *wall of force*, cone of cold*;*
6th level (1 slots): *chain lightning*, wall of ice**
*Evocation spell

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (ld4 + 2) piercing damage.

Transmogrifier

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +4, History +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The transmogrifier is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *chromatic orb, expeditious retreat, mage armour*
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self, hold person, knock*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (ld4 + 2) piercing damage.

Vicar

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills History +5, Religion +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Any four languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the vicar can expend a 1st level spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the vicar expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by ld6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The vicar is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The vicar has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, healing word, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, continual flame, lesser restoration*
3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, magic circle, speak with dead*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward, freedom of movement, guardian of faith*
5th level (2 slots): *mass cure wounds, raise dead*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Warden

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 17 (studded leather armour)
Hit Points 100 (12d10 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +9
Skills Nature +6, Perception +7, Stealth +9, Survival +7
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Favored Enemy. The warden has two groups of favored enemies. It gains advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track its favored enemies as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Keen Hearing and Sight. The warden has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks related to hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warden can make two attacks each round with either longbow or longsword.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Witch

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment
Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armour*)
Hit Points 49 (11d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +6
Skills Arcana +2, Deception +6, Nature +2, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Any two languages
Challenge 4 (1,100)

Innate Spellcasting. The witch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 15), requiring no material components:

At will: *disguise self, mage armour* (self only), *silent image, speak with animals*

l /day: *conjure fey*

Spellcasting. The witch is a 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, eldritch blast, friends, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, vicious mockery*

1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *blink, charm person, dimension door, dominate beast, faerie fire, fear, hold*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Cyclopaedia Appendices



Appendix A: Useful Lists

Lists can be useful in a number of ways. They can add dressing to a scene, give a taste of the mood of a place, or they can be used as inspiration for adventures.

Below you will find lists that detail:

- 100 Sights on the Street
- 100 Echoes of Between
- 100 Freakshows
- 100 Strange Shops and Markets
- 100 Street Traders
- 20 Locals

These will allow you to use easily add a sense of depth to your campaign with minimal effort on your part. In and of themselves they provide only a barebones description or idea, but you can flesh them out as you see fit into a full-fledged encounter, event, or character. They can even be used to provide hooks to other adventures.

100 Sights on the Street

With streets that never sleep, an astonishing array of people pass by in any given day. Most are mundane encounters — people on their way to work, goodwives on their way to market, or traders plying their wares. This list is designed to give you an idea of the types of encounters that may be had in the twisted streets of the Blight, as well as to add colour into your adventures as encounters, informants or even enemies.

1. A man wearing a top hat is having a furious argument with himself.
2. A passing dog's back is dancing with lice.
3. The man in the sedan chair has a wig on that is so big that it flows out of the windows.
4. A line of mourners passes by, laughing hysterically.
5. "The End is Near!" exclaims the corner prophet.
6. The crawling nuns are sobbing as they toss flowers to the ground around them.
7. The two men hustle past carrying a harpsichord between them.
8. A trio of monkeys runs past, one after the other, each wearing a fez.
9. The priests are wearing black gowns that cover their whole bodies as they march past chanting solemnly.
10. Three harlots pass by singing loudly and off key.
11. The sweating, red-faced dwarf is stripped down to his kilt, and blows furiously into his bagpipes that make no sound whatsoever.
12. The sadhu sits cross-legged on a straw mat and smiles as he prays; his hair must be 12 feet long and coils in huge lengths about him.
13. He wears a pirate's coat and a stirge perches on his shoulder.
14. He struggles by carrying a bundle of a dozen pikes in his arms.
15. She wears a mask designed to look like a swan and makes a strange cooing sound as she walks.
16. Three dark clowns tumble by, each dressed as a raven. Behind them stalks a tengu in greasepaint.
17. A man on stilts walks past juggling cheerfully yapping puppies.
18. An old lady is knitting as she rides by in a coarse cab.
19. Four small children sit on a camel's back as a turbaned merchant leads them through the streets.
20. He has six sheep on leather leads; a mangy sheepdog slinks behind in disgrace.
21. The colourfully dressed woman has a glove-puppet crocodile on one hand, and a glove-puppet black pudding on the other.
22. The man in black screams out words of a tortured poem about death and pacifism.
23. A small troupe of actors is performing a morality play about saintly goats.
24. An empty hearse passes by, her undertakers smiling and joking at the empty wagon bed.
25. A horse has collapsed and is dying on the street; a crowd of people has gathered and they stare curiously.
26. A butcher guts a pig, splashing blood on some passers-by who take no notice.
27. A man sells kittens out of an old great helm.
28. A gnome in a jester's outfit cries hysterically.
29. The dwarf sits grumbling and swearing loudly to himself.
30. A huge crowd gathers around a bull-baiting.
31. A cat dashes by in the alleyway, chased by something with too many legs to see clearly.
32. An old man in a pillory snores away obliviously while a blindingcrow pecks at his ear.
33. A lion in a cage paces warily, watching everyone. There is no sign of its keeper.
34. A dancing bear performs to a crowd of children screaming in glee.
35. A vicar atop an apple crate screams that you are sinners.
36. A squealing pig dashes down a side street, an article of underclothing caught on its ear.
37. A gnome covered in white grease paint and wearing all-white clothes screams that the angels are coming to punish the city.
38. Somewhere high above, a scrimshaw gargoyle call echoes.
39. A child walks past clutching a repulsive reptilian doll without eyes.
40. A pile of coffins lies by an open door. A night-slug picks at the broken end of one.
41. The smell of burning fat comes from a nearby alley.
42. The footpath ahead has a deep hole filled with collected sewage.
43. A Crackling and Salt puppet show begins on a nearby corner.
44. A dog runs by growling, an unidentifiable bone of great size held in its mouth.
45. A man dressed as a vampire urges you eagerly to visit the Theatres Grotesque tonight.
46. A crimson skull-faced clown eats fire for crowd of onlookers.
47. A trader with a cart sells leather animal masks.
48. A woman chalks magnificent pictures of angels on the pavement.
49. Piles of rubbish lie at the side of the road where rats wander about in broad daylight.
50. "Everyone who lives in this city is a wererat!" screams a hysterical washerwoman.
51. Temple bells across the city begin to call people to prayer.
52. A completely naked sadhu strides past you purposefully.
53. A fight starts nearby between three men; one transforms into a doppelganger and runs.
54. Two carts block the road, each owner refusing to back up.
55. The house nearby has four fresh heads mounted on iron spikes above its gables.
56. A harried-looking dwarf rushes past pushing a handcart filled with breastplates still smoking from the forge.
57. The smell of burnt hair and peppermint wafts in your nostrils.
58. Drying laundry hangs from the windows above, blocking out the sunlight in this alley.
59. A trio of thick-shouldered workmen leaning on their shovels sits around a smouldering brazier.
60. A burnt-out shell of a building stands nearby. Somebody has scribbled "that's wot u git" on it with a piece of charcoal.
61. A sobbing man stares into the sky.
62. An old sewer tunnel has collapsed here, narrowing the street to less than a yard.
63. A church clock clangs its cracked bell pathetically nearby.
64. The caustic odour of alchemy and decomposition nips at the back of your throat.
65. A dirty-feathered albatross sits on a windowsill swallowing a most peculiar-looking fish. Was that a hand?
66. Shouting traders and their carts pack the streets today.
67. A girl walks past selling sweet-smelling roses. Both of her eyes are nothing more than old burn scars.
68. A man's wooden false teeth have fallen into an open sewer nearby.
69. A long line of sombre pilgrims clad in burlap robes walks by singing hymns.
70. Six drunken sailors stumble along singing obscene sea-chanties.

71. A hideous corner-doxy propositions you with a wink and a leer.
72. A group of children walks by marching in step. They are following a rotund little boy beating a drum.
73. The stench of rotting vegetation is getting worse by the minute.
74. Three hanged men twist slowly in the breeze from an impromptu gallows.
75. A gibbet containing a rotting corpse swings beneath a tall pole bearing the seal of the Crown Justices.
76. A sad-looking night soil collector pushes his cart along the street. He has forgotten his shovel.
77. A street crier walks by ringing his bell and announcing the daily news.
78. A man is baiting a chained owlbear with a trio of pit-mastiffs. A crowd places wagers on the outcome.
79. Old men smoke long pipes and complain about the street noise as they yell at each other to be heard.
80. A woman wearing the black veil of a mourning widow announces she's going to the river.
81. A group of pallbearers is taking a rest while sitting on the coffin.
82. Nuns dressed in the grey habits of some obscure order walk past blessing passers-by.
83. A group of sweating dwarf sprawlmasons walk by lugging buckets of stones.
84. From scaffolding high above, someone shouts abuse at you about something you can't quite make out.
85. Slops hit the street not far from you from an overhead window.
86. A rooftop chase clatters by far above you. Someone is shouting, "Halt!"
87. A pox-ridden beggar throws himself at your feet and pleads for alms.
88. The wind is coming from the river today, unfortunately.
89. Two Shortstone gnomes walk past grinning broadly. They carry a stuffed crocodile between them.
90. A camel train slowly plods past on its way to market; a mysterious robed man in turban and veil guides them.
91. A sign has broken loose from its mounting above and fallen on a passer-by, killing him. The crowd is stepping around his still-twitching corpse as they continue on their way.
92. A man leads an elephant with a large hooked goad. He nods his head sagely at everyone he passes.
93. An armoured knight rides a huge Shire horse through the streets.
94. The odour of rotting fish sitting too long in the sun suddenly envelops you.
95. Two drunken brothers argue over a woman who smiles at another man nearby.
96. A wedding party walk past smiling and laughing. The groom is hollow-eyed with fright.
97. A renderer walks down the street beneath a cloud of flies. His apron and work leathers are slick with blood and smeared fat.
98. An old woman kneels and loudly prays in the middle of the street. The crowds and carts maneuver around her without a glance.
99. A street vendor rushes by with a handcart full of delicious-smelling pies.
100. The street ahead is being prepared for a witch burning.



100 Echoes of Between

With the city on so dangerous a frontier, the horrific Between occasionally bleeds into the more mundane city. Effects listed below are trivial and may last little more than the blinking of an eye, or could be a precursor to a longer and more dangerous encounter. Not everything is as it seems, however, and some of these encounters are more flesh and blood than the stuff of Between. *Do not use such effects too often. If you do they become expected and might become mundane. Use them instead to spice up the occasional boring rest day, to remind characters dashing through the city that all is not quite right, or to be a genuine precursor to an adventure in Between.*

1. A shadow falls the wrong way in an alley.
2. A puddle at your feet reflects a grinning face with tusks.
3. A starling on a gable stares at you disturbingly before flying away.
4. You're sure the cat that leapt over the fence said something.
5. Somewhere in the city, a clock strikes fifteen.
6. Your shadow is momentarily monstrous but then returns to normal
7. Your hands begin to shake uncontrollable and feel intensely cold; then you suddenly return to normal.
8. A horrific face forms in the clouds high above and then drifts away.
9. You keep seeing something out of the corner of your eye, some sort of insect scuttling about the gables, but every time you look, it's gone.
10. The smell of burning sugar is strong here.
11. You're sure someone called out your name, but there's no one around.
12. You're apparently the only one that hears the terrible scream.
13. Your reflection in the shop window is of something terrible; then when you glance again, it's back to normal.
14. You keep hearing the same word in your ear all day: "Soon."
15. The same man in a top hat keeps waving to you from the distant rooftops
16. An enormous cobweb entirely covers a doorway
17. What is that strange flute music from the sewer grate?
18. You pass the third window in a row and see the same sobbing woman inside.
19. The buzzing continues in your head — sometimes louder, sometimes softer, but always menacing.
20. The ground beneath your feet suddenly jolts, but no one else seems to notice.
21. The man that just walked past you just had no face.
22. Suddenly, the street performer's song goes eerily off key and picks up an unearthly cadence, but only you seem to notice.
23. You feel something trickle down the back of your throat and then crawl downward and disappear.
24. For no reason, in broad daylight in the middle of the street, the hairs on the back of your neck raise as if you'd just seen a ghost.
25. An overwhelming feeling of déjà vu washes over you, followed immediately by a dreadful anticipation.
26. Your nose suddenly starts dripping blood.
27. The crying baby behind the curtained window stops abruptly … almost unnaturally.
28. Just behind the susurrus of everyday street noises, you can hear soft whispers.
29. Why does all of the laughter in the street seemed aimed at you?
30. You just saw flies come out of that man's mouth.
31. The distant noise sounds like nails being scraped over a blackboard.
32. Momentarily, none of the street signs have any meaning.
33. When you glanced in the mirror, something tall and dark stood behind you, but when you turned around, it wasn't there.
34. It's as though everyone keeps staring at you and looking quickly away.
35. There it is again, the feeling that this is all a dream.
36. The steps up the side of the house vanish back on themselves somehow
37. The same hooded raven keeps following you.
38. You see a speeding carriage hit a baby's crib in the street, and then both are gone
39. The fruit on the stall is momentarily rotten and alive with flies and maggots.
40. The line of mourners are all smiling as they follow the casket.
41. In amongst the cart full of pigs being taken to slaughter you can hear

a baby crying.
42. You get the feeling something bad is about to happen.
43. A babe in swaddling clothes falls from a high window, but as it drops, it becomes falling leaves that drift away on the breeze.
44. In a window, moths are being burnt alive by the lantern flame.
45. From the corner of your eye, you see a long-dead dog chasing a cat.
46. The front of the building swells pregnantly.
47. The smoke from a stove drifts down in a gust and momentarily you think you hear something screaming on the fire.
48. The colour of the ivy on the wall is wrong somehow.
49. A gravestone lies in the cobbled street claiming this is the spot where Ferris Harm the Awakened Cow died.
50. Something big runs up behind you, but when you turn, nothing is there.
51. The shutters on one window nearby bang in the still air.
52. Through the closed shop window, you swear you see something with huge, gossamer wings vanish up the chimney.
53. The smell of brimstone pervades this part of town.
54. The beggar looks just like your father.
55. A thick smog suddenly settles over the street.
56. A window in a nearby shop suddenly shatters from no apparent source.
57. The mouse clearly screams "help" as the cat devours it.
58. The lobster thrashes in the pot for much too long as it's boiled alive.
59. The snakes are skinned alive before they are roasted by the street vendor.
60. The woman in the pillory is long dead, but no one seems to care.
61. On the gables above, you see a heron being eaten by a great spider.
62. The man is so fat it takes twelve men to bear him along in his sedan chair.
63. The scars on the mangy cat's back resemble a necromantic rune.
64. Fungus grows abundantly down the alleyway.
65. The smell of perfume is overpowering.
66. Something monstrous howls from below the streets.
67. Someone kisses you, but there is no one in sight.
68. A man runs down the street claiming everyone is a demon in human skin.
69. The blood runs from the abattoir into the gutter, the sound of laughter and distraught animals causing you to retch.
70. Water drips skyward from a puddle but stops the second you stare at it.
71. A deep, fuming hole has opened up in the street. People stare down into its depths nervously.
72. A whole block of buildings has collapsed.
73. The sound of following birds continues but every time you glance over your shoulder, there is nothing.
74. In a basket, a chick hatches that looks like a grotesque human child before the hen settles back down on its brood.
75. A dust devil tears down a wynd.
76. The passing woman stares at you, and she momentarily has eight eyes.
77. In the distance, a priest sets fire to himself.
78. She scratches at herself madly, claiming the Between spiders are eating her alive.
79. The silhouette in the window resembles a clawed man wielding a meat cleaver.
80. The eyes of the portraits in the window display stare at you knowingly.
81. There wasn't an alley there yesterday.
82. That door wasn't there yesterday.
83. That shop wasn't there yesterday.
84. That distant church spire wasn't there yesterday.
85. Whatever is in the sealec crate, it's angry and not human.
86. Beneath those heavy robes, it's a walking skeleton.
87. The tribal masks in the souk stall momentarily chant at you in an unknown language.
88. You can smell the fear of the dying animals as the butcher sells his meat.
89. Someone died in that wynd. You don't know how you know, but you know.
90. The door is covered in gouges from being repeatedly stabbed with a sharp instrument.
91. The shutters on every house on this street are thick and set with iron spikes facing outward.
92. The puppet show features grotesque characters with inhuman faces and animal claws. They seem somehow familiar to you.
93. The children eat rotten fruit and look at you gleefully.
94. The man has fallen from the roof directly onto the spiked railings of the balcony below. His body twitches a few times as people pass by below.
95. The graffiti claims that a "Thing" stalks the night in this ward.
96. The graffiti says the Queen is a ghoul.
97. The graffiti says that everyone in the city is a wererat.
98. The old statue in the square is gone, and a ring of bloody palm prints is all that remains in its place.
99. From the clock face above, a gable hate-owl emerges, beats a drum, and stares at you as if waiting for something … or someone.
100. The rooftops here are lined with pumpkin-faced scarecrows, but all have their heads put on upside down.

100 Freakshow Exhibits

It seems that every street corner in the Blight has its resident freakshow. Sometimes these shows are run by cruel owners who treat their exhibits abominably; some are run by the exhibits themselves. Often, groups of special people get together to form travelling troupes, special shows, or they may settle in a particular location and work from there. The **Strangers' Fayre** runs the 1st week of every spring. This special show is a gathering of all the unusual people of the city and takes place in Festival.

Some exhibits at these shows are so famous that people come to their homes and meet them; such special persons can make good livings at their trade and become the darlings of the aristocracy. Unscrupulous types stop at nothing to attain the services of the physically unusual and whole adventuring companies devote themselves to pursuing and capturing interesting specimens for the shows.

Provided below is a list of 100 of these special persons. Bear in mind that each person or creature below has a story. Some of them are fakes, some are not. It is up to you to decide who is or who isn't, but generally a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to unmask them, and such exhibits will try not to allow themselves to come under such close scrutiny.

1. Meet the Revolting Starling-Boy and Listen to him Lament his Dead Mother
2. Join the Incredible Salmon-Nun in Prayer
3. Zond, Crown Prince of the Hirsute, Awaits
4. Rose and Elizabeth — the Twins of One Body
5. Crarv the Ape King of Libynos
6. Meet the Astonishing Snake-Child
7. Ephinar — the Elf with Two Heads
8. Misfortune's Mistress
9. Fear the Festering Basilisk Dwarf
10. Meet Tom, the World's Smallest Sailor, who Sailed a Hat around the World
11. Corpulent Caress, the Princess of Girth, who Weighs a Tonne
12. The Queen of Three Faces
13. Turbot Thorran the Living Merman
14. The Amazing and Revolting Lord Otyugh, Crown Prince of Flotsam
15. The Incredible Headless Gnome Thadius Shortstone
16. The Terrible Two-Headed Amphisbaena Boy
17. Faceless Quade
18. Edran Mand, the Bat Gnome of the Malagro Jungle
19. Missela the Weeping Mermaid
20. Hagun and Grorft, the Half-Orc Conjoined Twins: One is Orc; One is Man
21. The Howling Worg-Boy
22. Tobus the Obscene Colossus
23. Murg the Dwarf with a Giant's Head
24. The Dreadful Kraken Baby
25. The Boil Boy
26. See the Remarkable Half Dwarf-Half Tree
27. The Ettin Wife
28. Behold! The Three-Headed Wolf
29. The Goblin Scholar
30. Mercy, the Princess of the Seelie Court

31. Joshua Cole the World's Tallest Man
32. The Slug Wife
33. Uriah Mabe, the Man with Two Mouths
34. Maxwell, the Incredible Flat Man
35. Torris the Rhino-Child
36. Garrett the Cloaker Man
37. The Impossible Head
38. The Lord of Seven Hands
39. The Astonishing Pig-Gnome
40. Karg the Singing Bear
41. The Quill Man
42. The Blood-Drinking Savage of the Razor Coast
43. The Albino Ostrich
44. The Lonely Centaur
45. Jacob Quane's Singing Stirges
46. The Green Man
47. Marius, the Man who has One Giant Leg
48. Genevieve the Mongrel Mistress
49. The Poetic Lizard Man
50. The Appalling Zar
51. The Performing Kobold Twins Mang and Mant
52. Chimera Girl
53. The Hydra Boy
54. The Angel of the Slums
55. The Black Harpy
56. Lady Two-Skins
57. The Choir of Deformed Puppies
58. Grache: Half Orc-Half Goblin
59. The Troll's Daughter
60. Jephtha the Incredible Boneless Man
61. Sad Eudora
62. The Spider Queen
63. Jebbington the Rat Boy
64. Laura the Frog's Daughter
65. Bessie Vast-Flesh
66. The Rotting Man
67. Dare you visit the Cockatrice Spinster?
68. Karl the Man-ticore
69. Long Widow Charlotte, the Tallest Woman in the Blight
70. Horace Habe the Mouse Man
71. The Crocodile Man
72. Three-Legged Enoch
73. Murmond the Halfling Goat-Boy
74. Madrigal the Dismaying
75. Burg the Bald Bugbear
76. The Terror of the North
77. Gooseflesh Gideon
78. The Mock Man
79. Marlwell the Moth Man
80. Bloody Bones
81. The Broken Satyr
82. The Doppelganger
83. The Screaming Ogre
84. Mother Pig-Wife
85. Sister Morlock
86. The Gargoyle Baby
87. Octavia the Leech Girl
88. Minitar the Mite-Child
89. The Three-Faced Hag
90. The Ugly Mermaid
91. Dare you meet the Howling Dog-Boy?
92. Lydia the Octopus Mother
93. The Eight-Legged Spider Piglet
94. The River's Daughter
95. The Coiling Worm Whore
96. Pagg the Kobold Man
97. The Double-Cockerel
98. Scaly Jabe
99. The Five Sisters of Misery
100. Slithering Habb the Lamprey Man

100 Strange Shops and Markets

They say that everything has a price in the Blight, and conversely, everything seems to have a seller: from the child selling bootlaces to the renowned antiquarians of BookTown. Here is a list of 100 such entrepreneurs to add into your adventures to provide a little background or to include as a location for further adventure. Some may be collections of shops where competition will literally be fierce; some are little more than junk shops peddling rubbish.

1. Kennington Smythe's Snuffery
2. Tarquin Splain's Hatpin Emporium
3. Aled's Taxidermy — The Bigger the Better!
4. All Things Russet
5. Cloaks of Monstrous Furs
6. P. Quibble Luxury Coach Fitters
7. The Boneyard
8. Jessabel's Hooks
9. The Butterfly Collector
10. Drums of Strange Flesh
11. Lugg's — The Gentleman's Tailors
12. Mancom's Minute Flea Market
13. Rooftop Bridges
14. The World's Rarest Seeds
15. Jacob's Chain Ferries
16. Door Guardians
17. Paintings of Between by Thrade
18. The Luxury Helm Padding Mart
19. L. Pudd, Travelling Set Makers by Royal Appointment
20. Tremer's Grotesquery and Strange Statues
21. The Ink and Paint Quarter
22. Marcus Foll Canvas Stretcher
23. The Scrimshaw Quarter
24. The Unwanted Auctionroom
25. Great Candles
26. The Gentleman's Syringe Shop
27. Exotic Perfumes and Unguents
28. The Coriander Shop
29. T. Webb Land Agent and Property Purchaser
30. Only Black Cats
31. Rhino Horn, Tiger Eye and Salmon Bladder
32. The Rookery Copper Coin Mart
33. H. G. Rutred Mandolin Makers by Royal Appointment
34. J. Reds Tobacconists
35. Pavilions and Tents
36. The Halfling Pie Shop
37. Hobb Quiffwell — Luxury Feather Bed Makers by Royal Appointment
38. Harper, Torb, and Stiff: Plaguemask Makers to the Aristocracy
39. Unusual Skins
40. The Scorpion Market
41. Oils of Pleasure
42. Potion Bottles of All Sizes — Leaded Glass Guaranteed Unbreakable
43. The Rare Dog Market
44. Hair Oils and Wigs
45. The Codpiece Mart
46. Buckles and Dog's Paws
47. Trendtam's Ship Hire Company
48. The Cabb'e Courtyards
49. The People Breakers — Torture Implement Makers by Royal Appointment
50. The Junk Yard
51. The Clockery
52. The Crockery
53. J. Poultryman Organ Maker by Royal Appointment
54. Marl Feather — Luxury Narrowboat Fitters
55. The Chitin Museum and Workshop
56. Ambergris
57. Spectacles, Monocles and Tinted Eyeware
58. Rufftall's Familiaral Suppliers
59. The Absinthe Quarter
60. The Rarest Bibliophiles

61. The Clothing Flea Market Quarter
62. Golden Eggs
63. The Harpsichord Warehouse
64. Strange Leather
65. The Renders
66. Elizabeth Pegg — Tapestry Weaver
67. Silk Underthings
68. The Secret Scroll Case Workshop
69. Bubble Pipes and Hookahs
70. Astronomical Spyglasses
71. J. Harris Towd's Leechery and Physikers
72. Y. Collic's Barbers and Surgeons
73. The Thrall Obedience Shop
74. Carved Doors and Portals
75. The Lych Gate Maker
76. Screens and Lacquer Panels
77. Gargoyle Chandeliers
78. Strange Woodwinds
79. The Handcart Market
80. Hutt's Armour Enamelers
81. The Alchymic Supply District
82. Materials and Other Magik Components
83. The Down-at-Heel Sword Mart
84. Kaptwell Wine Importers
85. The Leaded Window Workshop
86. Sebb's Writing Boxes by Royal Appointment
87. Jobb's Alchymic Snuff
88. Gerin's Talking Mynah Birds
89. Rooftop Scarecrows
90. Urched's Masterwork Crossbow Craftsmen
91. J. Chard — Peacock and Rare Poultry Importers
92. G. Rubb — Goblin Pet Trainers
93. N. Pearsly Undertakers and Stone Monument Makers
94. Antiquities
95. Strong Nome Grog
96. The Toby Jug Quarter
97. The Old Shop Auctionhouse
98. Quadd and Ruptuk — Masterwork Topiarists
99. Gnome Thrones and Luxury Chairs
100. The Lightning Rod Highrooms

100 Street Traders

As well as those lucky enough to have shops, windows to sell goods at or alleyways to work from, there are a countless host of traders who work out of carts, carry their wares in wheelbarrows, or lay them out on cloth mats on the streets. These people are variously referred to as costermongers, hawkers, or, more rudely, screechers because their ceaseless cries to tout their goods. Several streets echo to the sound of running battles between traders — who is loudest, who has the sweetest singing voice, who is the funniest — and often-successful traders can gather huge crowds.

Often, traders are more concerned with their Perform checks than their professional skills.

By far the most successful of street traders are those who sell food; people in the city are always hungry, and having food close at hand makes that hunger more during the day. All the objects on this list are intended to be available to the general populace. They should almost all cost a copper piece or thereabouts. Foods generally are cooked in big pots on site.

1. Boiled beef and cabbage
2. A crow seller
3. Pickled cabbages and meat pie
4. Fish and fry
5. An armour polisher
6. Toffee apples
7. Hot chestnuts
8. A faith healer
9. Rice balls
10. A young lad selling saddle soap
11. A hawker selling goat meat
12. A man selling lucky horseshoes
13. A kettle seller
14. A man selling large wooden badgers
15. A woman selling lucky rabbit's feet
16. Dried apples
17. A charcoal seller
18. Pork pies
19. A basket weaver
20. Apple fritters
21. A beautiful woman selling perfumed oils
22. Eel pies
23. A foreign sock seller
24. Plum pudding
25. A rope splicer
26. Spiced ale
27. A very fat man sells pickled lemons
28. A betel nut seller has his wares on a carpet at his feet
29. Fresh turnips
30. A goodwife selling feather pillows and quilts
31. A bucket maker
32. A fortune teller and her tarot cards
33. A fishwife sells fish from a basket
34. A dwarf sells ropes of onions
35. Jellied eels
36. A young woman sells hot codlings (baked apples)
37. Mulled small beer
38. A fishmonger
39. An old woman sells elderberry hair dye
40. Two children sell cotton bootlaces
41. A woman with a cow sells fresh milk
42. A young chimney sweep looking for work
43. A dwarf sells coal from a barrow
44. A tikka seller, his colourful wares spread out in jars before him
45. Charcoal cooked corn
46. Candied Fruit
47. A man cooks noodles in a giant wok
48. A trio of goodwives take in laundry
49. Fried chaap (potato) with onions and beet slices
50. An old woman sells garlic
51. A line of seamstresses repair clothing
52. Baskets of wool are sold by goodwives
53. Wurst sausage and sauerkraut
54. Garlic snails
55. A gnomish chandler (wax, soap and candle goods)
56. Spiced scrumpy
57. A young girl selling mint, parsley and other herbs
58. A failed apothecary
59. A snuff seller
60. A barber
61. Cockles and mussels
62. A salt seller
63. Incense trader
64. Goosefat seller
65. Horse meat for sale
66. Clay pipes
67. Tool repairs
68. Hare soup
69. Quill seller
70. Hot cross buns
71. Corkscrew maker
72. Neatsfoot oil
73. A knife sharpener
74. A man selling puppies
75. A cobbler repairs shoes
76. Cold mutton
77. Spice cakes
78. Lark pie
79. Wreaths and garlands
80. A thimble seller
81. A man sells calvados



82. Hot crabs
83. A man selling his pig
84. Tallow candles
85. A silk seller
86. Shinbone dice
87. Fresh vegetables
88. Rollmop herrings
89. Salted fish
90. The muffin man
91. Tripe and onions
92. A tea merchant fallen on hard times
93. A trio of very old women sell pickled oysters
94. Dodo stew
95. Pork sausages and onions
96. Lavender seller
97. A canary seller
98. A woodcutter selling logs
99. A bootblack
100. Lard seller

20 Blight Locals

These NPCs have a little more flesh on their bones so to speak. They are given better descriptions, some character traits, and motivations to enable you to use them in your adventures on short notice. When using NPCs, try to give them a little backstory and motivation to explain the reasons for their actions. A small effort can create memorable friends and villains from the most unlikely sources. The author recalls in particular Petal the pit-bull, pet of one character, who had a pathological hatred of one of the other characters. This caused all kinds of issues as the characters were pirates on the same ship.

1. Jack Slack: The Street Spiv

Jack Slack (CN male human **burglar**†) wears a black longcoat and has high leather boots of good quality. He has tinted spectacles and an overly long nose. His walk is hurried and furtive, and he speaks in the same way with a slight nasal quality to his voice from a frequently broken nose. Jack prides himself that he can get hold of anything given enough time. He once arranged for the purchase of a singular set of ashes — those of a sphinx — for a rich client of necromantic abilities and questionable motives. Given 1d6 days, Jack can usually arrange for the delivery (often from a theft) of items up to a value of 1,250 gp. For this service, he charges a 20% commission.

You could use Jack as a way to get characters rare and unusual components, as a link to adventures, or as a fence for more dubious items they wish to sell.

2. Habb: The Street Crier

The dwarf Habb (LN male *street dwarf* **minstrel**†) carries an enormous megaphone with him at all times. He is dressed in the livery of a city official, and his hair and beard are neatly trimmed and oiled. Sadly, his voice is irritatingly high, but the city officials think it is — on the face of things — distinctive enough to draw the requisite attention from the crowds (and secretly they find its grating effects on all who hear as highly amusing). Habb has a morose disposition and seems genuinely gladdened by bad news. He is a good source of local gossip, and all Charisma checks to gather information from him are made with advantage, though he requires a small consideration of 5 gp for this information.

Habb makes a great way to introduce characters to an adventure, or he could be a secondary source of useful information if a trail in another adventure goes cold.

3. Lucy: The Lavender Lady

Growing old but still beautiful, Lucy (NE female human **wererat**) carries her baskets of lavender into the inns and shops and businesses of the city. She takes great pride in her appearance and always wears expensive perfume made from her wares. She's also one of a great many wererats in the city who were cast out by their families. She has the air of a down-at-the-heels noble, which is essentially what she is. Her line of illicit work is as a confidence (wo)man. She reels in victims and then ruins them, or ruins them and then kills them, or just kills them and eats them. Lucy keeps her wererat ancestry secret and works covertly for the Anarchists within the city.

A great wolf-in-sheep's-clothing, Lucy could be a deadly enemy, a sinister friend, or a surprising accomplice.

4. Tupper: The Honest Cabbie

Tupper (N male gnome **commoner**) is a scruffy cabbie who drives a small open-topped carriage about town, dragged by a horse one step from the knackers-yard. He wears a top hat and fine, but well-worn clothes. He never shuts up from morning to night and beyond, and has an opinion about everything and everyone in the city. Tupper is truly a coward and is being used by various groups as a spy. He's easily bullied and soon complies with any reasonable suggestion, providing it doesn't cause him pain.

Tupper could be a useful (though unreliable) informant or spy for the characters, or perhaps someone who is spying on them (who could likely be turned with suitable incentive).

5. Unnamed: The Invisible Tramp

Something wheezes beneath a tramp's clothes as it leans upon a heavy staff. It has a mangy **terrier** at its side and a begging bowl in its hand. This is Unnamed (N female **mongrelman**†), a beggar of the Invisibles caste. If unmasked, she is revealed to have a scaled, lizard-like head with a tuft of fur on the right side and tusks on the right side of her mouth. She says nothing, for fear her garbled voice would give her away, and she has no wish to be back in the freakshows from which she so recently escaped. She has no name, but she knows the shows and pleasure piers of the city from bitter personal experience. Her dog is well trained and exceedingly loyal to her.

The unnamed tramp mongrelman is a good friend to be eyes and ears among the lower castes or perhaps as an insight into the worst side of the city as she is set upon by a band of young roughs for no reason other than her race.

6. Hassibelius Joppi Shortstone IV: The Would-Be Merchant

Joppi Shortstone (CG male gnome **commoner**) is ugly, but you cannot truly hold that against him. He wears ridiculously flamboyant attire, which is probably easier to hold against him, especially the hat, which is nearly 4 feet tall and has all the colours of the rainbow in an eye-searing pattern. Trade and commerce, commerce and trade, one day Joppi knows he'll be rich — one day. He has a different trade each week; this week it's tortoises — the buying, selling and cooking thereof. Next week it could be scarves or mittens, or maritime insurance, and so on. One of life's eternal optimists, Joppi is annoyingly cheerful but has great contacts in trade. He also has an unrivalled knowledge of the local markets, and one day he'll cotton to the fact that guiding is much more profitable than selling. Until then, he'll undoubtedly be a fixture in the various markets and souks of the city.

With such a fantastic knowledge of the city, Joppi would be useful as a guide, leading the characters to places they never knew existed below or above them.

7. Maid Muggwood: The Insane Elf

The Maid Muggwood (CN female high elf **berserker** armed with a longsword and shortsword instead of greataxe, uses the two-weapon fighting style, and has indefinite madness) is a sad case. This elven lady has gone to seed. She looks as though she's slept rough forever, and her hefty blanket is wrapped about her shoulders, covering her painfully thin clothing and body. Maid Muggwood has seen something that unhinged her - she talks in strange rhymes, and sobs uncontrollably at the sight of a bird eating a worm or a character staring at her. She has lucid moments, and occasional bouts of incredible violence. She is often taken for an easy victim, something many an attacker soon regrets.

What has she seen that has unhinged her so? Maid Muggwood could be one of many elves who lose their way in the city that have been exposed to something terrible or is stalked by something impossible. Has she been affected by Between and may happen to know a way to reach that strange land?

8. Bok: The Bouncer

Bok (N male half-orc **frenzied berserker**† with proficiency musical instruments (mandolin)) is one of the most massive half-orcs the PCs have ever set eyes on. He favours his human side, and it's only his claw-like nails that give him away — that and his eyebrows which meet on his prominent forehead. He seemingly has more tattoos than skin. Bok has little to say, but when he does say something, it's best to listen. Bok is surprisingly gentle, unless pushed, in which case he's downright sadistic. He's been in too many fights, however, to enjoy them, and just gets on with his job, acting as a bouncer or security guard at various city events. Bok prefers to talk music these days, and is a first-rate mandolin player.

Bok could make a useful friend, assuming characters don't judge him by his cover as everyone else does. Once he is befriended, he is unlikely to give up on the friendship.

9. Rodwell: Officer of the Watch and Smuggler

Constable Rodwell (NE **doppelganger** with the additional traits of an **inspector of the watch**†) has one of those forgettable faces, ordinary in every way. Even his voice is so ordinary that it's boring to listen to, and he has so little to say.

Rodwell, however, is a consummate villain, operating as he does within the law as a low-ranking city constable as well as a smuggler. He has contacts along both banks of the river and countless henchmen. The doppelganger is obsessive, however, and once he makes an enemy, he never forgets.

To the GM, Rodwell is one of those recurring villains that could be encountered many times in many different forms, always lurks just out of sight, never risking open assault but stirring up enemies seemingly from nowhere. You could use him as an unusual addition to a campaign where, having thwarted one of Rodwell's smuggling operations in their first adventure, the characters spend the rest of the campaign being occasionally harassed by the obsessive doppelganger.

10. Tammin the Shopkeep

Tammin (NE female gnome **commoner**) is very petite and quiet. She dresses plainly and tries not to attract attention. Her shop sells all manner of interesting bric-a-brac, and occasionally something rare or of great value appears inexplicable among her wares. Tammin doesn't seem to know the value of her goods, and her slight frame and easy nature make her a prime target for villains.

Tammin has something in her cellar, something that needs feeding regularly. She acts the innocent feeble woman, but in truth, she is nothing of the sort. She uses her innocent nature to lure lone visitors into her cellar to "see something new that's just come in." Down in the cellar is her lover, a **drider** named Sakkarriss. He makes sure to clean up any scraps left over from the victim.

You could use Tammin as an adventure seed. Perhaps the characters learn that several people have gone missing near her shop and the finger of guilt points at her. Maybe Sakkarriss grows hungrier - his corpulent frame needs endlessly feeding, and his hunger could become unbearable from the infrequent scraps he's fed. Tammin cannot bring enough food to him, and he starts to stalk the city at night to look for prey — likely inadvertently leaving a trail of clues back to his abode beneath the shop.

11. Vros Harbstorl: The Gablemaester

Vros Harbstorl (NG male human **master thief**†) has a scythe on his back and dresses in a heavy waxed coat. Under this coat are an array of magic knives and daggers. Vros is grim, a man of few words — unfriendly, some would say — but he has a heart of gold, just no words to match. Few professions are more dangerous than gablemaester, the people that take to the gables above the city to keep them free from gable spiders and worse.

Vros could lead the characters into many adventures, as a guide across rooftop paths and ropeways, a henchman to help root out evil, or as a hunter of the scrimshaw gargoyles and beasts that haunt the upper spires of the city.

12. Saluk: The Foreigner

She dresses strangely, with veils and silks and furs, gold drips from her fingers and bells ring from her toes. Hidden beneath her veil, Saluk (CN female human Ashurian† **summoner**†) has no lower jaw, and she has come to the city to try to find a magical cure for this hideous injury obtained during a fight with a demon she accidentally summoned. Saluk cannot talk but is a master at pantomime, and uses her foreign looks to her advantage in communication. Some of the more bigoted locals often hurl abuse at her out of either anger or fear.

Perhaps Saluk hires the characters to help her, or maybe the demon that injured her torments her still.

13. Honest Jobe: The Sprawlmason in the Know

Honest Jobe (LE male hill dwarf **veteran**) is lithe and muscular, his head clean-shaven. This dwarf squints in the sunlight and spits far too frequently. He has a hoarse voice (caused by shouting up endless scaffolding), and loves money more than anything. He whistles all day, and has a pet parrot he refers to as Mother. Jobe knows the city well, and has an excellent working knowledge of both the below and aboveground portions. His knowledge of Underneath, however, is truly superior, and he's been hired on many occasions to draw maps for adventurers. However, he charges a premium: his Intelligence (History) check result x 5 gp.

Jobe could be used to bring the characters into an adventure below ground. Perhaps someone has been taken by ghouls, and the characters are hired to go into the Underneath immediately and need to get information fast.



14. Mother Witchram: The Landlady

Bedridden Mother Witchram (CE female human *alchymic-undying*† **commoner**) is a tyrant who runs her lodgings with an iron fist. She is vast and hasn't left her bed in 17 years, preferring to feast on sweetmeats and cakes and just-cooked meat. Her tongue is the foulest in this area of the city, and her temper is legendary. Her screaming insults can often be heard from several streets away. There seems to be no end to the number of brutish sons she has at her disposal nor the various cousins and family at their call. Crossing Witchram is dangerous indeed.

Perhaps the characters rent rooms or a building from her and accidentally earn her ire with her confusing and endlessly increasing prices, or maybe they kill one of her tenants or damage her property in an unrelated fight. She can become a good foil for the characters, who may be deterred from physically attacking her due to her disabilities or the threat of endless sons and friends in high places.

15. Slender Somwell: The Tragic Innkeeper

He looks dead, he does. His name is Caspice Somwell, or Slender (N male halfling **berserker** with an Intelligence of 3) to any friends he still has. His eyes are hollow and rheumy, his mouth slack. He stares at nothing, simply stares. Somwell ventured into Between 7 years ago to find a friend's daughter who had vanished and came back changed. His wife, Patty Somwell (NG female halfling **commoner**), who loves him dearly, runs the tavern they own, The Distressed Lamb, and helps him as much as she can. Left feebleminded by the experience, Somwell is beyond mortal cures. Occasionally, however, he fixates upon customers, sitting with them and attempting to play cards (which he frankly can't manage).

Use Somwell as a warning of the dangers of Between and as an unusual and slightly sinister NPC presence.

16. Capid Munsange: The Treacherous Street Juggler

Dressed in peculiarly bright clothing, this jester-juggler is seen at many street corners. He says little but smiles often. Capid Munsange is a **quasit** with the following changes:

- Capid Munsange is size Medium.
- It has a Constitution of 15 and 52 (8d8+16) hit points
- It has an enhanced shapechanger ability that allows it to assume humanoid forms
- It is disguised as a male human **minstrel**†

Munsange is employed by a balor demon as a spy within the city. Covertly, he passes his information (often the locations of targets) to a small cult called the Brotherhood of the Impossible Angel, a group of demon-worshipping kidnappers and extortionists.

For GMs, Munsange could be used either as the focus for a whole adventure or an agent as part of a wider plot. He particularly enjoys using an alluring shape to trick a witless pervert into the clutches of him and his sisters who dwell in a twisted abyssal corner of Between that hangs on the edges of the city itself.

17. Fenis: The Corner-Doxy with a Secret

What a beauty! With cascading blonde curls and a voluptuous figure, Fenis (NE female human **wererat** with the traits and abilities of a **warden**† and Charisma 19) smiles knowingly as she walks the streets. Her voice may be coarse, but she says pretty things, and her attire is revealing and pleasing to look upon. She knows she's beautiful and uses it to her advantage. As an agent of the Family, Fenis is a corner-doxy of the highest calibre, a honey trap that has caught hundreds of willing victims over the years. She's married to the Family, but her appallingly huge husband Tam (CN male half-orc **wererat** with the abilities and traits of a **berserker**) is never far away.

Fenis gives you several options for adventure. If the characters work with the Family, she makes a useful and colourful ally; as an enemy, she makes a beautiful and dangerous foe.

18. Ollman: The Jaded Fisherman

Looking older than the sea, Ollman (LG male briny† **warden**†) hauls at his nets, his hands calloused to leather. His face is unmistakably and disturbingly fish-like, his wide eyes seemingly lidless. Ollman has plenty to say - he's a source of the best fishermen's tales and stories of beasts on the high seas. Ollman is a good man, although half-skum have a hard time in many parts of the city and tend to keep to their own. He's an expert on the seas hereabouts, and knows what lies above and below the seas within a month's journey from the city.

Ollman could serve a potential ferryman or as an expert on the river. He is distrustful, however, and getting information out of him won't be easy. He lives and eats and drinks in the briny taverns and markets by the Lyme, places where being anything other than half-skum can make life difficult.

19. Rudd Ruddwell: The Master Smith

The sweat glistens on Rudd Ruddwell's (CG female hill dwarf **veteran**) brow and drips down her goatee. She wears very little beyond sturdy shoes and a leather smith's apron, and her cinder-scarred musculature is absolutely frightening. Rudd is a colourful character - she can swear, spit, and belch with the best. When she drinks, she doesn't stop until she falls over. Full of tall tales, most of which are embellished, Rudd remembers when adventuring was proper adventuring, when owlbears were 20 feet tall, and girallons hunted in packs of 40 minimum.

Rudd could make a useful ally, as a henchman or as a masterwork weaponsmith. She may drink in the same tavern as the characterss, where her loud jokes and belches bring her to everyone's attention.

20. Number Six: The Dead Messenger

No matter how much padding the hefty coat has, it's still obviously a skeleton underneath. Number Six (N female human **skeleton**) obviously has nothing to say and merely acts as a messenger, operating between two points in the city. Her owner, the Merchant Gernwell (LE male human **noble**), uses animated skeletons, as many aristocrats do, to fetch and carry and deliver. Some strangers find this use of the undead abhorrent and destroy them — something that carries a fine for destruction of property in Castorhage. In general, sensitive owners send out their undead servitors by night or heavily disguised.

Are the characters approached by a skeleton bearing a message to begin an adventure? Do skeletons operate in other more mundane jobs or does the destruction of one undead cause problems for the characters? All are ways that Number Six can figure into a Blight campaign.

Appendix B: A Blight Lexicon

Many terms and phrases are commonly used in the Blight that may be less well known beyond its crowded streets. A sampling of some of these terms is provided below that you can use to sprinkle throughout your game to add a measure of local flavour to the NPCs.

Æ – abbreviation of ævum, meaning "Age at Time of Death" (High Boros)

Ancients, The — giant and monstrous creatures of prehistory sometimes found in fossilised remains in the vicinity of Castorhage; more proper term is "Leviathans"

Astromancer — magical practitioner who combines astrology with the physical laws of astronomy (common term outside of Castorhage as well)

Bibliomerchant — BookTown bookseller

Blight, The — city of Castorhage, usually disparaging

Blighter — resident of Castorhage, always disparaging

Boater — water-gypsy boatman, usually Viroeni or halfling

Burke — to smother

Canker, The — thick fogs that arise off the river and envelop parts of the city that have a reputation for choking the life from the sleeping, the weak and the helpless

Coolie — a servant/labourer (usually indentured)

Corner-Doxy — a street prostitute, a harlot (usually cheap)

Costermonger — also hawker or screecher; a street vendor

Deadbook, The — death, usually by murder or other violence; to be "put in the Deadbook" is to be killed

Esquire — common title of gentry, barristers, and the well-to-do; often shortened to Squire

Fetch, The — secret undead inhabitants of the city serving the vampire-god Beltane

Fireman — a labourer employed to stoke the furnaces of manufactories or seagoing vessels with steam-driven paddle wheels

Flagonfist — a tavern server (common term outside of Castorhage as well)

Gablemaester — folk employed to patrols the rooftops of the city and keep the worst of the vermin and riffraff under control

Ghat — river temple composed of stone steps, of Jaata origin

Gill – a quarter pint

Gong — night soil wastes thrown into the gutter

Gong Farmer — a night soil collector who pushes a cart along the street each morning

Great Dark — unexplored subterranean realms below the Underneath

Hege – adjectival demonym for something of Xi'en manufacture or tradition, short for Xi'en Hegemony (usually used in Castorhage for items of Gtsang origin as well)

Insectum – addictive insect-based drugs used by many in Castorhage

Jack's Candle – a rumoured part of the Canker thought to be intelligent and responsible for burking many of its victims

Knackers-Yard — also knackery; a slaughterhouse for horses and other animals that have been retired due to age or infirmity and are intended for rendering rather than consumption

Knight of the City (K.C.) — a minor and relatively obscure noble title occasionally bestowed by the Queen or Crown Justices

Legalese – also turnees; the minor legal clerks employed by the courts and barristers for the endless paperwork and procedure of the Courts and particularly BookTown

Little Sis – also sis; a gold shekel (1 gp)

Lowfolk — primary commoner caste of the city

Lych Field — cemetery

Made, The — commonly encountered forms of lesser undead and constructs cheaply made and used for mindless labour

Milliner — a maker of women's boots

Mortimata – also mortomata; simple automata made of flesh and bone and muscle preserved and animated by alchemy and/or necromancy

Navvy — a labourer employed in construction of a road or canal

Old Ones — semi-mythical ancient peoples thought responsible for leaving stone circles and cave paintings behind, often conflated with Ancient Ones/Andøvan culture

Physiker — a physician, a doctor; a professor employed as a private tutor (common term outside of Castorhage as well)

Pil – a silver pilaster (1 sp)

Prahu-Punter — also punter; narrowboat pilots of the Lyme and the Sinks hired to ferry passengers and renowned for their singing ability

Punkahwallah — a servant employed to manually operate a punkah ceiling fan; a practice originally imported from Far Jaati

Punter — also prahu-punter (see above); a patron of prostitutes (derogatory)

Queen's Men — officers of the City Watch

Sadhu — a holy man, likely of Jaata origin

Savant — high-ranking university professor position

Steeplejack — a worker specialised in constructing or repairing steeples and other precarious roof features

Tanner – a copper common (1 cp)

Triad – a Xi'en criminal organization or thieves' guild

Tongawallah – driver of rickshaws and handcarts

Tout – a street seller who pesters and cajoles passers-by

UnderMaester — local ward political position appointed by parish watch commanders

Urger — a person who sells horseracing tips on the street

Waggoner — a book of nautical charts and notes

Wynds — winding, often steep alleys of the city

Yīshī — honorary Xaon title for the mistress of an apothecary

Appendix C: Sample Encounters in the Blight

The types of encounters that can occur in a city such as Castorhage — sitting as it does on the edge of Between — are virtually limitless. However, some are more unique to the city than others. Below are provided a bare-bones sampling of some of the types of encounters to be had in the Blight so they can be lifted whole cloth or simply to serve as the basis for other encounters of your own devising.

Note: The sample encounters include those that appear in the ***Blight Maladies Card Deck*** as **13 Unwanted Attentions and Deviancies.** We included them here for those who did not purchase that supplement, but also because we had more than 13 such encounters that we wanted to provide for GMs to use in bringing their Blight campaigns to life.

Magic Fingers

Lucinda Farenthol, an attractive masseuse with nimble fingers, strong hands, and an aura of sensuality, offers invigorating massages for weary travellers and uptight adventurers. She insinuates that she can offer more than her healing hands and attentive ear for the right price. If someone takes her up on offer, Lucinda leads that person to her private quarters for an intimate session. She barters almost anything, most notably information from previous clients. When she gains her mark's trust, she drops all pretences and assumes her true form as a **green hag**, using her magical touch to sap her quarry's strength.

The Ripper

A blood-curdling scream from an adjacent alleyway momentarily drowns out the cacophony of voices in the claustrophobic streets. A quick peek into the dank alley confirms the worst suspicions. Torrents of blood pour from a young woman's throat torn asunder. A gentleman with a black wool overcoat, ebony cane, black shoes, and vicious, unnatural claws stained wetly crimson hurriedly races from the scene and then inexplicably vanishes into thin air. Dissatisfied by the unwelcome intrusion, the serial killer known as **The Bogeyman** (NE **night hag** with the **Adult Between** template applied; capable of shapeshifting into any gendered humanoid form) stalking Castorhage's streets resumes his search for another victim.

The Wailing Willow

An unnatural weeping willow tree growing in this dungy cul-de-sac takes its name to extremes. It bleeds whenever somebody cuts a branch or twig. Even more disconcerting, it wails in agony, sobbing for hours after the damage. Children goad one another to cut branches from the tree to prove their bravery. Recently, Erza Manni (N female young half-elf **warden**†**)** has taken it upon herself to defend the tree and has made her home under the tree's drooping branches. Erza has quickly assumed the role of a stern, militant guardian. She currently holds a younger boy (N male human **commoner**) prisoner, claiming he has committed crimes against Nature. Erza plans to hang him at dawn.

Market Mayhem

The market bustles with activity as vendors look to sell all manner of items — clothing, baskets, fruit of questionable quality, and more — and shoppers look for the best deals. A clamour of voices, each person shouting over the next, makes normal conversation all but impossible. In one of those bizarre moments where everybody seems to stop speaking at once, a pain-filled scream rises. A crudely made iron sword protrudes outward from the side of a large covered basket and pierces the thigh of a burly man next to it. Almost immediately, 28 **goblins** erupt seemingly from everywhere, grabbing merchandise, stabbing vendors and customers alike, and smashing anything they can't carry with them.

We Three Things

The party notices a group of three men dressed in soot-stained overcoats, each bearing two dark valises. Hideous, Murk, and Snurg (CE male human **thugs**) are small-time thugs and couriers for some of Castorhage's seedier groups. The brutes could not appear more different: Hideous is tall and lean with sallow eyes and a vapid expression; Murk is of medium height and build but appears almost insubstantial; and Snurg is short and squat, nearly as wide as he is tall, with a vicious look about him. What the men carry in their satchels is up to the GM. It can be anything from sensitive stolen trade agreements to body parts heading for disposal or delivery as warnings.

Jack's Candle

A fog bank of the Canker roils down the street. Wispy tendrils seem to snatch and grab at buildings as it moves quickly down the lane at a speed of 40 feet. Anyone enveloped by the cloud finds all sound muffled as if under a *silence* spell. In addition, the fog gives concealment to anything within 5 feet and total concealment beyond 5 feet. Shapes seem to move within the fog and reveal themselves to be 1d3 **spectres** (with the **Naiadic Between**† template applied). These spectres never leave the greater cloudbank but attack anything that comes within its vaporous confines. The cloud passes on after 1d6 rounds, taking the spectres with it.

The Cat

A mangy tabby sits in the middle of the alleyway ahead. It does not appear afraid or intimidated in any way by the party. If the cat is treated kindly, it meanders its way through the entire party, rubbing against legs and walking between feet and generally making a nuisance of itself. This creature is actually a **Between-cat**†. Any PCs treating it well or feeding it





gains a luck point. Within the next 24 hours, you can apply this luck point to a single attack, saving throw, or ability check and add 1d6 to that roll. You must declare you are using it prior to the roll. Should any character mistreat or attempt to frighten the cat away, it hisses loudly, turns its head and walks around a corner, completely vanishing if searched for. Any such character who frightens or attacks the cat has disadvantage to all Charisma-related checks for 24 hours.

Child's Play

In an adjacent alley, a child's cries can be heard along with the shuffling of feet and rustling of trash. If investigated, the party discovers a man dressed in dirty clothes who smells like rancid wine trying to strangle a small child. Assuming they intervene, they are in for a nasty surprise. The man is a vagrant who has been dominated by the vampire (CE male human **vampire**) into his current actions. While the characters deal with the vagrant (N male human **commoner**), the vampire tries to dominate the strongest-looking character, turning to gaseous form once its ruse is discovered. It orders any dominated character to attack the rest of the group.

Down the Rabbit Hole

A large white rabbit appears from under a hedge and scampers off into an open manhole in the street. The hole drops 10 feet down into the sewers. The rabbit seems to have disappeared, but a black top hat sits on the walkway adjacent to the sewer flow channel. Inside the hat are a wand (non-magical), a carefully folded, 20-foot-long chain of knotted coloured scarves, a deck of trick cards that always reveal an ace of spades, and 3 *magic carrots*. The carrots each summon a large white rabbit, which uses the **giant rat** statistics, for 10 rounds if broken in half and placed in the hat.

Cold Case

A heavy rainstorm has eroded the soil from the weed-choked yard of a small house. In the yard is a small, overgrown vegetable garden. Within the garden, an exposed skeletal human hand pokes through where the soil has washed away. Examination reveals a full, buried skeleton dressed in the rotting remains of a once-fine dress. The skeleton still wears a small silver ring (2 gp) and a set of garnet earrings are caught in the folds of its collar (200 gp). A despicable nobleman buried this woman here after murdering her more than a year ago. The house owner is entirely innocent of any crime but may have witnessed something. Specifics are left to the GM.

Drunken Sailor

In a dockside tavern, a drunken mariner, Urthgar (CN male human [Heldring] **berserker**), challenges the largest character to a fight for some imagined slight. He offers the option of fighting with fists or (nonmagical) clubs. If he is refused, he attacks with his club anyway. Urthgar has the poisoned condition due to his intoxication. If Urthgar is defeated but survives, he offers to serve as a henchman to the character for 1 month. If victorious, he passes out shortly thereafter.

Riddle Me This

A large sedan chair comes to a stop next to the party, and the curtain is pulled back by one of its 8 burly chairmen (LN male human thugs) to reveal an **androsphinx** reclining inside. The sphinx informs that party that a sidereal oracle has determined that they must pass a test of wisdom. She asks them, "What makes the crooked right?" If they answer "90 degrees," she commends them and provides them with some valuable clue to an adventure or a monetary reward of 1,000 gp. If they fail to answer correctly, she orders her guards to attack and beat them into unconsciousness for their lack of perspicacious.

Seafood Special

A weathered old man wearing the waxed overcoat of a fisherman lurches unsteadily down the street singing a sea chanty between swigs from a bottle. Upon sighting the characters, he stops and proclaims that they have the smell of the sea about them before transforming into a **weretiger** and attacking. If he is killed, inside his coat can be found the jawbones of 7 fishermen he has killed and collected trophies from. Among these are a total of 15 teeth with gold crowns worth 5 gp each.

A Tangled Weave

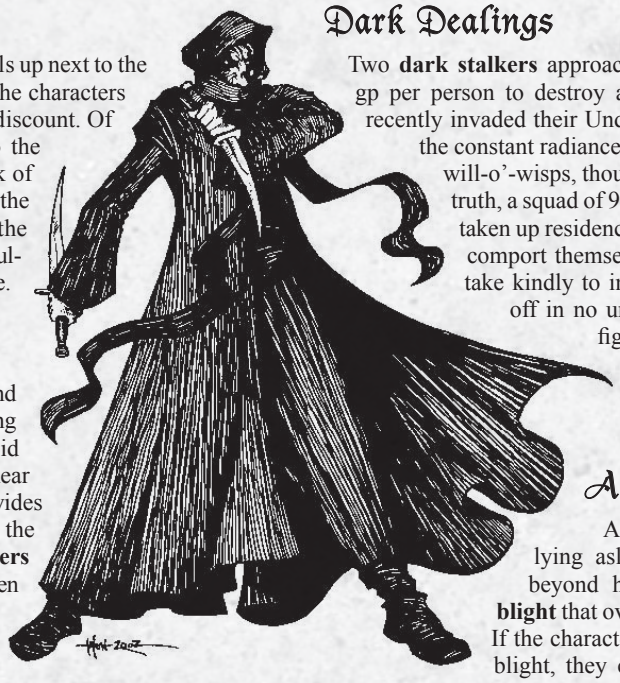
An alleyway between two sagging tenements has been completely curtained off like a grand stage. A barker (NE male halfling **sneakthief**[†]) stands outside and calls for passers-by to step right up and see the Beautiful Esmel perform her exotic dances for only the discriminating eye for the low, low admission price of only 2 sp. The barker takes the admission and allows entrants (no more than two at a time) to step behind the curtain to see the spectacle and tells them to exit out the back when they're done. Behind the curtain, the alleyway is filled with the web constructs of 2 **Large gable spiders** and an **ettercap** who is in league with the barker. They attempt to quickly silence and subdue spectators before the next are allowed in.

Pub Crawlers

A barroom brawl spills out into an alley and knocks over a large stack of barrels. As the barrels tumble into the street, night-slugs spring out of them and scatter in all directions looking for cover with 4 night-slugs (N male *night-slug*[†] **spies**) armed with clubs and rusty daggers charging straight for the party. The characters happen to be standing directly in front of a sewer grate that the creatures are heading for, and they are willing to fight their way through in their desperation to escape. If the characters think to step out of the way, the night-slugs charge harmlessly past and disappear into the sewer. Otherwise, they fight viciously in their attempt to escape.

Hellish Hack

A coarse cab being drawn by a **hyme**† pulls up next to the party. The driver, a **bearded devil**, offers the characters a ride to anywhere they want — at a steep discount. Of course, anyone foolish enough to get into the cab is soon beset by the devil and the pack of 6 **hell hounds** that lurk in hiding nearby. If the devil is defeated but the hyme survives, the characters can take possession of the foul-tempered beast and its cab for their own use.



On the Rooftops

A gablemaester falls from above and lands, dead, at the characters' feet. Looking up, they catch a glimpse of the arachnoid forms he was apparently fighting and can hear screams of terror. A nearby scaffold provides access to the rooftop 70 feet above where the characters find a **drider** and 2 **phase spiders** that have captured a pair of gnome children in their webs. The characters have just enough time to step in to save them from a horrible fate. If searched, the gablemaester's corpse has a gablemaester's kit† that the characters can claim if they like.

Fire in the Hole

As the last rays of the sun touch the city's rooftops, a group of city workers picks through the smouldering remains of a building that has recently burned down. One of them causes a pile of rubble to shift and exposes a formerly hidden subbasement. Pouring from the exposed cellar are the Tunnel People who had set the fire from below the previous night. These 7 **morlocks**† attack for 3 rounds and try to drag as many people as possible with them back into the uncovered tunnel.

Lovers' Lane

A well-to-do couple sits together on an ornate iron bench overlooking the river below as the moon reflects off its dark surface. However, even a cursory inspection reveals that they are entirely unmoving — they don't even breathe. Examination reveals that they appear to have recently drowned, though their clothes and hair are completely dry. A **moon angel** lurks at the edge of the river not far away and recently killed this couple. It uses its hypnotic song to try to entrance the characters as well.

Gamecocks

The characters arrive at a tavern where cockfights are being held. They have the opportunity to wager on these fights if they want. Eventually, someone accidentally overturns a table lamp and starts a small fire. In the panicked confusion that follows, the characters find themselves facing 3 **Blight cockerels** still wearing their fighting spurs that have escaped from their handlers. If the characters kill the cockerels, they must still contend with **Mot Porkchop** (CN male half-orc **berserker**), the owner of the establishment and the birds. He demands 200 gp for each cockerel slain or injured and attacks with his 2 bouncers (CN male human **veterans**) if his demands aren't met.

Dark Dealings

Two **dark stalkers** approach the party and try to hire them for 100 gp per person to destroy a pack of floating balls of light that has recently invaded their Underneath domicile and hurt their eyes with the constant radiance. Their description sounds a great deal like will-o'-wisps, though they don't know what they're called. In truth, a squad of 9 **sprites** masquerading as will-o'-wisps has taken up residence in the dark stalkers' home and arrogantly comport themselves as if they own the place. They don't take kindly to intrusive characters and tell them to shove off in no uncertain terms. If the characters refuse to fight the sprites, they have to contend with the stalkers and 11 **dark creepers** angry at their betrayal. The sprites will not assist the characters.

A Growing Blight

As night falls, the characters spot a drunk lying asleep in a darkened alley. Barely visible beyond him is a growing expanse of spreading **blight** that overtakes the insensate wino at any moment. If the characters attempt to save the man or destroy the blight, they come under attack from 6 **violet fungus** allied with the spreading fungal growth. If saved, the drunk (N male human **noble**) proves to be connected to one of the noble houses of the city and can provide the characters with valuable contacts and adventure hooks.

Between Standoff

The party comes upon a standoff between 5 constables (N male human **guards**) and 9 **Between-cats**. The constables seem to be intent on rounding up the cats and placing them in a number of small cages they have piled nearby, and the Between-cats seem equally determined to avoid being captured. Both sides are intent on standing their ground, and neither retreats. Unless the characters depart immediately, they can choose to side with one group or the other but will be drawn into the combat that starts immediately. If the characters linger but do not join a side, each side attacks them, assuming that they are in league with the other.

Agent Provocateur

A shopkeeper or some other local NPC the party knows approaches and tells them that he just saw a monster transform into a man in a nearby alley and start spying on the nearby market. He points out a nearby Xi'en man who does look rather suspicious. If approached, the man proves to be a Triad collector (CN male human Xi'en **burglar**†) out collecting protection money from local merchants and immediately attacks the characters, assuming they are from a rival gang. He is joined by 3 Triad **thugs** who join him from the nearby crowds. The shopkeeper who sent the characters is actually a **doppelganger** of the Veil who wanted to send a warning to the local Triad.

The Walrus and the Carpenter

Behind a pile of lumber at a construction site near the river, the party stumbles upon a **Lyme walrus**† devouring the corpse of a construction worker he just killed. It immediately tries to spin a tale to explain itself and uses its fascinating story ability. If successful, it attempts to lead one or more character into the river where it can slay them at its leisure. If it is unable to subdue the characters in this way, it whistles and alerts the 3 cutpurses (CE male human characters) it has been working with. They arrive to help in 1d3 rounds.

Appendix D: New Magic of the Blight

Following are some of the magic and alchymical items that are found in the Blight.

ALCHEMIST'S DART
Weapon (dart), uncommon

You have a bonus of +1 to attack and damage rolls made with this magical dart. A creature struck by it must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be entangled as if it were hit with an alchemist's bag†.

ASSASSIN'S DAGGER
Weapon (dagger), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. This weapon scores a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

BETWEEN RING
Ring, rare

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.

A wearer of a *Between ring* gains a +2 bonus to AC against any creature with the Between subtype or Between Creature template. In addition, the wearer can make an unarmed attack against such a creature with the hand that is wearing the ring as if he had the Stunning Strike ability (DC 12 Constitution saving throw) three times per day. If the wearer already has the Stunning Strike ability (e.g. the character is a monk), then they gain a +2 bonus to the attack and damage rolls and the Stunning Strike uses the Ki save DC for that character.

Curse. When a *Between ring* is worn, the wearer must make a DC 12 Wisdom 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 discolouration in the finger. Each day there is a 1-in-20 chance that it tightens, causing 1 point of 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 and becomes necrotic, eventually falling off in 1d4+4 days. The loss of this finger deals 2d4 points of damage but is one way for a wearer who has failed his Wisdom saving throw to remove the ring. A ***remove curse*** spell or similar magic will also allow the wearer to remove the ring.

PLAGUE SCARAB
Wondrous item, uncommon

Used primarily to prevent information being tortured out of them by a clandestine group calling themselves the Hidden Knights of the Capitol, this small item appears much like a typical, if tiny, scarab medallion or brooch. However, when swallowed, it lodges in the individual's stomach and remains in place. Thereafter, the swallower can activate the scarab with a thought. Once activated, the *plague scarab* burrows from its resting place to the swallower's heart (takes 1 round to reach), killing him instantly. However, in the following round it then bursts through into the oesophagus and unleashes swarm of insects (or other setting-appropriate swarm) that pours forth from the victim's mouth and attacks anyone present.

If a swallower chooses, he can discard the plague scarab before it activates by regurgitating it. Once a plague scarab has been activated, it is destroyed and cannot be used again.

POTION OF BARKSKIN
Potion, uncommon

You drink this potion, your skin has a rough, bark-like appearance, and your AC can't be less than 16, regardless of what kind of armor you are wearing. The effects of the potion lasts 1 hour.

POTION OF BLUR
Potion, rare

When you drink this potion your body becomes blurred, shifting and wavering to all who can see you. For the duration, any creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against you. An attacker is immune to the effect if it doesn't rely on sight, as with blindsight, or can see through illusions, as with truesight.

POTION OF ENHANCE ABILITY
Potion, rare

When you drink this potion, you are bestowed with a magical enhancement. Each potion is brewed to provide enhancement to a specific ability and lasts one hour. The following potion types are available:

Bear's Endurance. The target has advantage on Constitution checks. It also gains 2d6 temporary hit points, which are lost when the spell ends.

Bull's Strength. The target has advantage on Strength checks, and his or her carrying capacity doubles.

Cat's Grace. The target has advantage on Dexterity checks. It also doesn't take damage from falling 20 feet or less if it isn't incapacitated.

Eagle's Splendor. The target has advantage on Charisma checks.

Fox's Cunning. The target has advantage on Intelligence checks.

Owl's Wisdom. The target has advantage on Wisdom checks.

These potions function as if cast using a 2nd level spell slot. The price for these varies, but are usually in excess of 1,000 gp.

POTION OF SPEAK WITH DEAD
Potion, very rare

When you drink this potion and then touch a corpse of your choice within range, you grant that corpse the semblance of life and intelligence, allowing it to answer questions you pose. The corpse must still have a mouth and can't be undead. This cannot be used on a corpse that was the target of a *speak with dead* spell or potion within the last 10 days. The potion effects last for 10 minutes.

Until the effect of the potion ends, you can ask the corpse up to five questions. The corpse knows only what it knew in life, including the languages it knew. Answers are usually brief, cryptic, or repetitive, and the corpse is under no compulsion to offer a truthful answer if you are hostile to it or it recognizes you as an enemy. This effect doesn't return the creature's soul to its body, only its animating spirit.

Thus, the corpse can't learn new information, doesn't comprehend anything that has happened since it died, and can't speculate about future events.

REAVER
Weapon (any sword), legendary (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

Reaver is Demoriel's finely crafted unholy longsword. Those that wield it gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon, which deals psychic damage instead of slashing damage. When a celestial creature takes damage from Reaver, it suffers an extra 1d8 psychic damage. The sword emits a dim purple light in a 15-foot radius.

Demoriel was once a powerful angel that made her home in the heavens among the other angels. In the Celestial Hierarchy, she was a member of the Cherubim and served alongside Gabriel, Raphael, and Ophaniel. During the Unholy Schism, she sided with Lucifer and aided him by seducing another Cherub wherein Lucifer caught the angel unaware and murdered him on the spot.

When Lucifer was thrown down from the good-aligned planes, Demoriel was beside him; cast out for the sin of slaying another angel and spilling the blood of an angel in the outer planes. When Lucifer envisioned Hell, Demoriel envisioned herself on the throne next to him, serving as Hell's Queen. Unfortunately for her, she became one of his many concubines but never his bride, for the Great Uprising occurred in Hell and the other arch-devils moved to destroy Lucifer and his court. When Lucifer was removed from Hell's Throne and took up residence in a pocket plane called Infernus, Demoriel followed. Once again, she was denied her place on the throne next to Lucifer as he took a devil named Shabiri as his consort. Though Demoriel remains ever loyal to Lucifer, she does not trust nor like Shabiri. For now, she waits until her time comes when she can discredit or destroy Shabiri and replace her as Lucifer's consort.

Though Lucifer no longer rules Hell, Demoriel still serves him unswervingly. She follows no other, though she is more than willing to lead other creatures to their demise by feigning loyalty to them. She has a particularly vile hatred for celestials (more than other devils do it seems) and enjoys corrupting and destroying them.

Demoriel attacks with her spell-like abilities, attempting to charm the strongest opponents she faces. If forced into melee, she attacks with her spell-like abilities and longsword, Reaver, or summons other devils to fight for her while she maintains a position away from the immediate fight.

SCYTHE OF SPEED
Weapon (scythe), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, you can use a bonus action to make one attack with it as a bonus action on each of your turns.

SHATTERSPIKE
Weapon (any sword), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you successfully hit with this weapon, the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or begin to bleed profusely. The target loses 5 (1d10) hit points from bleeding at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute, unless a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check is made to staunch the bleeding or until the target receives magical healing.

SPYING PANE
Wonderous Item, very rare

This polished mithral mirror with an ornate copper frame is 4 feet long and 2 feet wide. It can be hung or placed on a surface and then activated or deactivated by speaking a command word. The *spying pane* forms a link with any mirror or framed art object such as a painting that it touches while activated, up to a maximum of 20 such objects. Each such link permits the user to look through the linked object's frame as though it was a window. Touching the object to the *spying pane* a second time cancels the link, and if the maximum number of links has been reached, linking a new object to the speculum breaks the oldest existing link. A link is also broken if the distance between the *spying pane* and the object exceeds 600 feet. When activated, the surface of the *spying pane* displays a grid of the currently linked views; touching one of the views enlarges the window to its actual size or the size of the mirror, whichever is the smallest. Touching it again restores the grid. A *spying pane* can be used for as long as 10 minutes a day, in increments of 1 minute. These increments do not need to be consecutive.

VOICE MASK
Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This mask has 4 charges. While wearing this apparently normal black facemask, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to alter your voice. The wearer can decide what their voice sounds like (similar to the *alter self* spell). The effect lasts for 1 hour or until the user removes the mask, ends the effect with a bonus action, or uses another charge. The mask regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

WAND OF COLOR SPRAY
Wand, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it you can expend 1 charge as an action to cast the ***color spray*** spell from it.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand erupts in a pile of glitter and is destroyed.

WAND OF DAYLIGHT
Wand, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the ***daylight*** spell (save DC 15) from it.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF ENLARGE AND REDUCE
Wand, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the ***enlarge/reduce*** spell (save DC 15) from it.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

THE WEATHER VANE MORTOMATA
Wondrous item, uncommon

Popular in the city, mortomata are a combination of animated object and animated dead. The *weather vane* is a

sphere with a circular opening, and within there is a series of depictions of weather types in a circle, from fair to foul. The undead, featherless crow that sits inside the mortomata points at the type of weather it expects. The *weather vane* is 75% accurate but vague. The only weather increments are "fair," "changeable," "stormy," and "dry."

The Staff of Life (a.k.a. The Elixir)

"More a curse than a blessing…"

For some, life must go on no matter what the cost. The dabblings of arcane physicians into the stuff of life was always going to be dangerous. *Elixir of life* — "The Elixir" or "Staff of Life" as is it sometimes known among the whispers of the Lowfolk — comes from feeding a particular species of Between worm with flesh and blood of the mundane world — living flesh and blood, and the healthier and fresher the blood used, the better the quality of elixir. Worms are then either injected (in many cases) or held in an artificially made womb known as the Cuckoo Womb into which the subject is immersed.

The Cuckoo Womb is used in general to create new forms or hybrid creatures from the parts of others harvested using a particularly unpleasant ritual involving injecting the creature with elixir and farming off the parts that are required. The parts are crudely sewn or affixed together in hopes that the Cuckoo Womb and the elixir do the rest — although they often do not. The minor works of many celebrated golem-stitchers slither or drag themselves through the city as a result of this process, unable to die without destruction. Theirs is a pitiful existence, and one that often leads to diabolic revenge. Artisans of this trade — Golem-Stitchers and Homuncule Wives and Cadaver-Surgeons — are usually drawn into the profession through reading or through association; there is no level requirement to carry out such work, only a steady hand and brutal soul.

The true and purest *elixir of life* commands a high price, at least 20,000 gp per dose, and even this price comes with no guarantee of success. Of course, where every genuine artefact is found, fakes soon follow, and cheaper and less-stable versions of the elixir have flooded darker parts of the market. That the undeath that follows is agonizing or that some subjects are prone to appalling unmaking as the threads of the elixir dissolve, taking their hosts with them, makes the elixir not merely a boon, but a weapon in some eyes. Many see the forced injection of the elixir into workers as being of incalculable benefit; true, the servant withers in terms of their personality and vital spark and living relationships, but their skills remain! What price for a manufactury of unliving workers who toil day and night and never need rest yet have the intelligence and abilities that typical examples of the animated dead do not. Some call this concept the "New Utopia." Many in the city claim that such manufacturies not only exist already but are thriving, and it can only be a matter of time before everyone in the city is aware of an unliving. Forced undeath is becoming more common by the day, as are the poor wretches who drag their rotting and failing carcasses into the dark places away from sight and seems likely only to expand with the recent *Corpse Act of 1770*.

The latest great visionaries of such rebirth extol the (so far) secret and unseen experiments of the great surgeon-artists who, they claim, have succeeded in forging new life from Between creatures and mortal flesh.

ELIXIR OF LIFE
Potion, very rare

A living creature that is not of the aberration, celestial, construct, elemental, or fiend type that is injected with *elixir of life* (an infusion process that takes an hour and requires either a helpless or willing recipient) must make an immediate Constitution saving throw based on the quality of the elixir. Creatures that are immune to poison or necrotic damage are not affected by the elixir. If the saving throw is successful, the creature dies and rises again in 1d4 hours as a "Reborn" with the *alchymic-undying*† template. If the saving throw is failed, the individual immediately dies and rises in 1d10 minutes as an undead creature with the *alchymic-unliving*†.

If the elixir is applied to a creature of the appropriate types (as described above) that has died within the last 24 hours but whose corpse is still relatively intact, the creature still gets a Constitution saving throw as if it were still alive with outcome of becoming either an *alchymic-undying* or an *alchymic-unliving* creature, but the saving throw is made at a cumulative +1 penalty to the DC of the saving throw for every 2 hours since it died (not including the hour required for infusion).

If used in conjunction with a Cuckoo Womb and pieces of only partial cadavers in order to create a new-made form of life (as adjudicated by the GM), the elixir likewise has a quality-based saving throw to determine the stability of this outcome. If this saving throw is successful, the resulting creature is stable as a new type of living creature. If the save is unsuccessful, the new-made creature is unsuccessful, is in extensive pain, and dies in 1d4 days as its body literally falls apart.

Anything of *medium-grade elixir* or lower is unpredictable, short lived, and prone to sudden violent unravelling. For each year of life or unlife for *low-grade elixir*, each month for *pig-grade elixir*, and each week for *street-grade elixir*, the initial Constitution saving throw must be made again or the creature rapidly (and often revoltingly) unmakes itself just as if a new-made creature had failed its initial saving throw. There are some exceptional cases (again at the GM's discretion), where such an unmaking does not fully destroy the creature but instead forces it to live in a pain-filled, half-life of indeterminate length and horror.

Elixir of Life

Elixir Quality	Price (per dose)	CL	Reborn Creature Save DC (per dose)	New-Made Creature Save DC (per dose)	Cost (Per Dose)
True Elixir	20,000 gp	9th	5	5	10,000 gp
Medium-Grade Elixir	5,000 gp	7th	15	10	5,000 gp
Low-Grade Elixir	1,000 gp	5th	25	15	500 gp
Pig-Grade Elixir*	500 gp	3rd	—	20	250 gp
Street-Grade Elixir	100 gp	—	—	25	50 gp

* Made from actual pig blood and flesh rather than humanoid.

Chapter One: A Blight Upon the Lost Lands



What's in a Name

The City-State of Castorhage instantly brings some names to mind, both for its citizens and the folk of nations across the continent. It is called the City, the Empire of Castorhage, the Blight. But even these only scratch the surface of the names it has gone by — and in many cases continues to go by — names such as the City of Secrets and Lies, the Deathless City, the City of the Lyme, the Colonia Lymossus, the Kingdom of Borxia, the Cursed City, the Blessed City, the Great City, City of a Million Stories, the City of a Thousand Eyes, the City of Thinking Animals, the Cankerous City, the Rot, the City of Golems, the City Without a King, the City of Seven Kings, the City of Cursed Blood, the Empire City, the City of Dark Fey, Leviathan, the City at the Edge, the Levee City, the Centre of the World, the Cesspit of the World, the Devourer of the World, the City of Sails, the City of Steam, the City of Flesh, the City Where the Sun Never Rises and, perhaps most appropriately, the City of a Thousand Names. These and a hundred more names have graced the references to this singular city on a tiny island, tucked away in the corner of an inland sea across a narrow bay from arguably the world's greatest empire of the last three millennia. Yet this city's footprint extends far beyond its borders, and it commands a vast naval empire that spans the globe and compares with even the mighty maritime Empire of Oceanus.

All this arises from a population crammed onto an inhospitable rock scarcely capable of supporting itself. Truly Castorhage is a city unlike any other in the Lost Lands. To know the empire you must know the city, and to know the city, you must know its story, and this city is all about stories.

The City-State of Castorhage

Alignment: LE
Capital: Castorhage (3,285,000)
Notable Settlements: Aldwark (10,965), Caskow (2,480), Crow's Fallow (3,232), Duness (2,190), Dunnage (1,765), Hudd (4,325), Kalares Croft (14,637), Kirksterry (873), Larkspur (416), Ludlow Castle (852), Mourney (12,810), Plover (921), Purcher-On-Rose (1,126), Scrimshaw (2,320), Sheklan (784), Tarry (38,762)
Ruler: Her Royal Highness Queen Alice and three Crown Justices
Government: hereditary monarchy
Population: 4,800,000
Religion: Mother Grace, Mammon, Lord Shingles, Sister Shadows, Mithras, Geryon, Lucifer, Baphomet, Brine, The Green Father, Demoriel
Resources: trade hub, manufactured goods, banking, coal, pitch, cotton, cloth, spices, whale oil, spirits (beer, liquors), ironwork, shipbuilding, tin, alchemical reagents, glass, alchemy, magical resources, breeding (dogs, warhorses)
Technology Level: Industrial Revolution (Necromantic and Elemental)

The City-State of Castorhage is ruled by the city itself, although they are not precisely synonymous. The City of Castorhage technically just comprises the ten districts of the city proper and the handful of semi-independent burroughs that share space with the urban monstrosity of the main city. The City-State more properly refers the entirety of the city's holdings upon the Isle of Lymossus, in particular the seven shires that formally comprise this political designation. This region serves as the heart and imperial capitol of the Empire of Castorhage, which includes not only the City's immediate holdings in and around the Fetid Sea, but also colonial possessions stretching from the Bream Islands and Tabur Bay in the West, to lands bordering the Boiling Sea on the far shores of the continent of Libynos, in the East. Then, of course, there is the small matter of certain colonial endeavours that can't be found on any map of the world of Lloegyr — where the Crown of Castorhage struggles to maintain claims and rights on lands and waters of rich resources and unimaginable danger. Castorhage is an empire that not only spans continents but spans worlds, and it leaves its indelible shadow anywhere it touches.

The city of Castorhage itself is a vast, sprawling metropolis perched on the eastern shore of the Isle of Lymossus, where the languid and polluted Great Lyme estuary meets the Fetid Sea. Built around a natural granite tor at a curve in the river, upon which was constructed the first citadel and which continues to serve as the foundation for the Capitol today, the city has since spread to the surrounding hills, flatlands, broken lands, islands, and even, in some places, swamps. The whole is surrounded by a noxious wetland known as the Lych Fen.

The Isle of Lymossus is barely 240 miles from north to south, and only 132 miles east to west at its widest point. It is the tallest extension of the ancient Worntooth Peaks to the southeast, the rest of which continue into the basin of the Crescent Sea and a submerged mountain range. The small side isle of Taff stands as technically the tallest peak of that chain, as its base extends beyond the continental drop off beyond the island's western shore, making its height from its base on the sea floor to its peak over 27,000 feet. Between the island and the Akadian shore are string of small islands comprising the shire of Pence Islands, partially-submerged peaks of the Worntooth chain.

The backbone of the isle is the Lymoss Highlands, a rugged range of ancient mountaintops, none of which rise higher than 10,000 feet, and that only show white caps in the winter months. From this range, the island extends northeast and southeast in a series of rolling hills, making up the majority of Mourneyshire and Hollyhay. These are largely dry and somewhat barren plateaus until they reach the lower, coastal plains around Fallowshire and Perish Shire, though one highland forest called the Highhorn does exist along the steep and precipitous drop in elevation between central Hollyhay and Lakland. Other than the Highhorn, most of the forested areas are in the richer soil of the lowlands of Berkleyshire, the Purtle Lows and what was once Aldwarkshire. A deep series of canyons in this mountainous offshoot of the Worntooths forms what are today the low-lying regions of Lakland, with its hundreds of lakes and streams, and the swampy peninsula of Telosmere. The islands of Apyrion, Caskow, and Tatum's Light are actually much more recent prominences arising from volcanic activity in the last few million years, and are much younger then the formation of Lymossus — though their inner fires have long since cooled.

History of Castorhage

The First Masters of Lymossus

The history of what is known as Castorhage extends much farther into the past than even the greatest of Castorhagi scholars knows. The first true settlement of the isle was more than 12,000 years ago by the Phoromyceaen city of Lyemmos. Their fortified city stood upon a tall bluff overlooking the river they also named Lyemmos. The settlement stood upon the hill now in the parish known as the Madness, and as they began delving their settlement into the bedrock beneath their feet — as the Phoromyceaens were known to do — they pierced a vast hollow space beneath the hill — and in doing so undermined the city's entire foundation. In minutes, the entire city was swallowed by the earth hundreds of feet below. In time, a natural hot spring filled the sinkhole and created what is now the Spa of Saint Hermis, in the Hollow and Broken Hills district, but none know the truth of the crushed ghost city that rests undisturbed far below the heated waters.

The tribes of the Ancient Ones that inhabited the island off and on for the next few dozen centuries knew nothing of the city, and their culture only retained the name of the river itself. By the time Polemarch Oerson led his Hyperborean Legion from the North, 6,500 years later, his cartographers labelled the tiny island of the Crescent Sea Lymossus after the name used among the local Akadian tribes.

During the intervening years, however, a race of wandering dwarves had found the many natural tunnels beneath the island, and fought back an incursion of strangely sentient mould they called "blight". Declaring the tunnels clean, these dwarves set about creating several subterranean enclaves below the island. The most important of these was Durahchûk,

CITY-STATE OF CASTORHAGE
1 Square - 1 Mile
Lych Fens
THE SINKS
FESTIVAL
TOWN BRIDGE
BOOK TOWN
THE CAPITOL
The Great Lyme River
HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
JUMBLE
ARTIST'S QUARTER
JUMBLE
TOILTOWN
Great Treadmill Ferry
Great Docks
Lych Fens
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
Marsh
N

which eventually united the enclaves into a single kingdom. The dwarven enclave of Durahchûk lasted for more than 5,000 years before finally falling to the ravages of a disease they called the Scarlet Plague, or just "The Curse." The rising human culture on the island above always maintained a vague awareness of this dwarven kingdom deep beneath their feet, but never understood its true extent until after the fall of the dwarves to the Scarlet Plague. While Mad King Rames is credited with digging out the district known as the Underneath, the truth of the matter is that he found most of the Underneath already delved by the Durahchûk, with rich mines already well-established. While King Rames did move his court into the Underneath — out of his own sense of paranoia and a need to make a name for himself to escape his father's faltering shadow — the truth is that rather than cause a generation of labourers to spend virtually their entire lives delving, in order to construct the vast highways and city caverns that are Underneath, he actually worked those poor souls in his mines to enrich his coffers. If anything, the rumours of the Mad King don't go far enough to capture his cruelty and capriciousness in sentencing a generation to die in the dark. His reputation also gives him credit for amazing works of delving, that lie more accurately at the feet of the long-departed dwarves.

Scholars still question who the Durahchûk were. Most assume that they were an offshoot of the deep-delving mountain dwarf race, rather than the more commonly encountered hill dwarves who prefer residing on or near the surface. But if so, they have still been unable to establish any connection of how the Durahchûk are related to Karam Ezun the Wyrmkiller, the legendary father of the Nine Great Mountain Clans and the Hill Clans. For their part, the hill and street dwarves of Castorhage don't know. The few times that the mountain dwarves of clan Ironskull have been consulted, they have referred cryptically to the "deep cousins", a reference that has remained opaque to human scholars. Currently, the best guess is that these deep cousins are an entirely different lineage of dwarves than those of the hill and mountain clans, and the Durahchûk are an example of them, extant as recently as 750 years ago.

Rise of the Castorhagi

All of these events form a history of Castorhage virtually unknown in the modern world. However, the known history of the city-state

Technology Levels

One of the lines found in the information blocks for the various nations of the Northlands (and, indeed, for all of the forthcoming **Lost Lands** products) is "Technology Level." This line simply indicates the level of technological achievement that can be found throughout the land in question. There are always exceptions as some areas may be more erudite and others more savage, but this gives a general guideline of the types of weapons, armor, and equipment that can be found in the area. These levels can vary between even neighboring nations as one may be more insular and cut off from outside contact and ideas and another may be open to a great deal of trade bringing in new innovations from outside.

In general, characters should only be able to find equipment of the technology level listed and, in some circumstances, that of lower technology levels. For instance, just because the residents of a given nation have achieved a High Middle Ages technology level does not mean that they cannot find a wheeled conveyance just because that was invented during a Bronze Age technology level. Likewise, the short sword was developed in the Bronze Age and would still be available in later technology levels. Stone or bronze weapons and armor, however, would be unlikely to be found in a High Middle Ages technology level as few artisans in such a technology level have practiced that sort of crafting. As always, the GM must use his discretion to determine what might be available from a lower technology level.

It should be noted that the technology levels presented in the **Lost Lands** products are not meant to represent real-world advancements in technology. There is, perhaps, a loose correlation in some of it, but it is instead intended to represent the developments of technology in the world of the Lost Lands specifically.

The technology levels most frequently found in the **Lost Lands** are as follows:

Stone Age

Materials: clay vessels, furs, hides, horn, stone tools and weapons, some copper, wood; **Armor:** hide armor; **Weapons:** dagger, javelin, shortbow, spear; **Warfare:** ambush, raiding bands, single combat; **Settlements:** rock shelters, semi-permanent camps; **Social Organization:** tribes/bands; **Transportation:** paddled craft, trained animals; **General:** animal domestication, fire, horticulture, log rollers

Bronze Age

Materials: bronze tools and weapons, crude glass items, linen, papyrus, wool; **Armor:** breastplate, leather armor, padded armor; **Weapons:** composite shortbow, short sword; **Warfare:** organized armies, city walls (large city-states only); **Settlements:** capitals, cities, towns; **Social Organization:** city-states; **Transportation:** chariot, oars, sails, side rudder, wheel; **General:** agriculture, corbelled arch, hand loom, lever, oil lamp, plow, potter's wheel, pulley, sundial

Iron Age

Materials: cotton textiles, iron and steel tools and weapons, parchment; **Armor:** ring mail, scale mail, studded leather; **Weapons:** longbow, longsword; **Warfare:** cataphracts, catapults, hill forts; **Social Organization:** nations/empires; **General:** arch, dome, locks, loom, screw, water wheel

Dark Ages

Materials: cold iron, felt, porcelain, silk, silvered weapons; **Armor:** chain shirt, chainmail; **Warfare:** fortified towns (wooden stockades); **General:** horn window panes, hourglass, masterwork items

High Middle Ages

Materials: adamantine, mithral; **Armor:** half-plate armor; **Weapons:** composite longbow, greatsword, lance; **Warfare:** castles, cavalry; **Social Organization:** guilds; **Transportation:** stern rudder, stirrup; **General:** Gothic arch, lantern, spinning wheel, waterclock, windmill

Medieval

Materials: paper; **Armor:** full plate, tower shield; **Weapons:** bastard sword, crossbow, rapier, warbow; **Warfare:** gun powder, trebuchet; **Transportation:** astrolabe, compass; **General:** buttons, crude glass window panes, mechanical clock, mirror, power loom

Renaissance

Materials: finely ground glass; **Weapons:** firearms; **Warfare:** cannon; **Transportation:** caravels, coach lines, paddle-wheel boat; **General:** fine glass windows, glass lenses, printing press, rockets

Age of Sail

Warfare: ship-borne cannon; **Social Organization:** colonial empires; **Transportation:** oceanic voyages, sextant; **General:** calculus, telescope

Industrial Revolution

General: clockworks, manufacturies, steam power

begins with Oerson and his great march into Akados. In the time of his grandchildren, the co-regents Oesson and Oeric, Hyperborea rose up in rebellion against its former masters in Boros. The matter was decided in the great battle of Hummaemidon, when the Hyperborean polemarch Asenna defeated the combined legions of the Borean polemarchos Crassin and Odontius. Polemarch Asenna was slain in the battle, but the grateful co-regents did not fail to recognize his generals, the strategoi, who persevered to see the battle through to victory. One such general was Strategos Oleus Castorhage. For his efforts, he was granted the right to establish and rule the island province of Insula Lymossus, in the newly established Hyperborean Empire. As the harmost (military governor) of the province, Oleus established his "Citadel Castorhage" on the great granite tor overlooking the meandering Great Lyme River.

The Castorhagi family ruled as faithful stewards of the Hyberborean imperators for more than 1,700 years, as they built a successful colony and burgeoning city upon the banks of the estuary. Everything changed, though, when a mysterious visitor called upon Harmost Demos Castorhage. Barely 21 years of age at the time, the harmost greeted the mysterious stranger, who was swathed entirely in robes of brownish-yellow, with a featureless mask over his face. The stranger spoke with words of courtesy, and knew some of the family passwords from older days, so Demos heard him out…cautiously. Demos was repulsed by the stranger's smell, a combination of rot and strange spices, but the things he whispered caught the young harmost's attention and held him transfixed. For most of the night, the visitor whispered too quietly for the guards to hear, but with Demos leaning eagerly forward to catch every word. When finally the whispers ceased, Demos Castorhage leaned back as if in a daze. He ordered fine quarters to be prepared for his guest, and announced that he must ponder what he had heard.

The stranger called himself the Eburnean Oracle, and remained at Citadel Castorhage. Each evening he would consult the harmost into the small hours of the morning, whispering ever for Demos's ears alone. The mysterious oracle never left his rooms except to speak with the governor, was never seen to eat, and was never observed without his full robes and mask.

Finally, after six years of the ceaseless whispers, something changed. The barracks of the Lymossus Legion caught fire in the middle of the night. The wooden barracks built against the stone wall of the citadel burned well, and the fire did not spread beyond its confines. As the Hyperborean legionnaires attempted to escape, they found the barracks doors barred from the outside, and the Castorhagi somatophylakes waiting outside all of the windows with their sharpened xiphos, ready to kill any who emerged. A few of the soldiers managed to fight their way free of the initial flames, only to die upon the blades of the Castorhagi bodyguards. By morning the entire barracks had burned to the ground, with more than 800 Hyperborean soldiers inside. As the city of Colonia Lymossus looked on in mute shock, the harmost emerged from the citadel accompanied by the Eburnean Oracle. He publicly declared the independence of Insula Lymossus, and himself as King Demos Castorhage I. He then appointed the oracle as his Chief Advisor — and with this, the reign of the City-State of Castorhage had begun.

Hard Alliances

Though Castorhage had its first king (and shortly thereafter its own calendar) based on the crowning of Demos I, its troubles were only beginning. Demos had thought the Hyperborean empire would be too distracted to worry about a single island province, but he hadn't reckoned on the public reaction to the burning of the legionnaires. Castorhage immediately sent envoys and offers of terms and payment in an attempt to make peace with the eastern empire, but to no avail. Skirmishes escalated on land and sea between the Castorhagi and the Hyperboreans, and within a decade Castorhage found itself engaged in the Eleventy Years war with Curgantium, the Imperial capitol.

War with Hyperborea proved brutal. Though the Hyperborean Imperator had his hands full dealing with Heldring raiders in the south, and humanoid raiders in the north, he still mustered the forces to engage Lymossus in a long-drawn-out military conflict. Within 20 years, Demos was dead — slain in battle — and 7 years later his oldest son Belos I had fallen as well. Demos's second son, Belgos, took the throne as Belos II and continued to prosecute the war. Alhough a direct invasion of Insula Lymossus was problematic for the Hyperboreans, Castorhage nonetheless suffered brutally, and won very few of the battles that occurred. It became a war of attrition that Castorhage had no hope of winning.

Over the span of the war, the city-state went through nine royal successions. By the time King Parvalis fell in 121, the end of the city-state seemed near. With Parvalis's son only an infant, and no strong heir ready for the throne other than an unpopular and aged uncle, discontent among the people of Castorhage finally came to a boil. The heads of the Four Great Families of Castorhage — the Borxia, Tredici, Nightshade, and Castorhage — met secretly in the tunnels of the Underneath. At this meeting, the four house patriarchs established the "First Illuminati," and called upon the arch-devil Caasimolar to intercede on their behalf with the imperator of Hyperborea. The former President of Hell proceeded to broker an agreement, whereby hostilities ceased, the city-state retained its independence, and a treaty was signed. However, the deal stipulated that the crown of the city-state would pass from the decimated Castorhage family to the Agrige Borxia. In no position to protest, the Castorhagi assented to the agreement, and the beginning of the Borxia royal dynasty began.

The Borxia kings did bring some measure of prosperity back to the city after the peace, and a great measure of prosperity back to their house. But not all were content with a Borxia king. The house of Castorhage began to grow strong again, and the grandson of Parvalis gathered together allies and the other malcontents, forming the "Second Illuminati." This secret group devoted itself to Asmodeus, and bade him to intercede and overturn their Infernal Pact with Caasimolar. The immediate change they had hoped for did not occur, but Asmodeus did see a way to help them (and pursue his own ends) by making sure that the Borxia were tempted into ever-greater evil and extravagance. Times grew hard for the folk of Castorhage under the years of Borxia excess: the pact with Asmodeus did not bring the throne to the Castorhagi, but it did foment discontent within the city.

If the Castorhagi thought Asmodeus's intervention would bring about a quick change, they were sadly mistaken. The Borxia reigned for 161 more years, including the rule of King Fidelius the Foul, known today as the Reign of Misery due to his brutal, oppressive, tyranny and the toll it took upon the city. But even that did not tip the scales away from the Borxia. When the Reign of Misery ended with Fidelius's death in 198, his gluttonous and wastrel son Porfask the Large began his own 16-year reign. Such was the Large's largesse that the race known as the swyne began to appear in the city from parts unknown, and upon King Large's death, these hedonistic folk began to worship the former king as a god — worship that within a century began to produce true clerics. It is commonly agreed that King Large did not ascend to godhood, but who (or what) is granting spellcasting abilities to the faithful remains a great mystery.

The first year of King Large's reign saw the outbreak of the First Great Fire that killed hundreds and rendered thousands homeless, and the reign of his grandson saw the first outbreak of the plague known as The Death, which claimed sixty percent of the populace. After the plague burned itself out, the survivors turned to the extermination of the rats that were deemed to have been plague carriers — and which had multiplied rapidly, due to the great many plague corpses left throughout the city. This extermination became known as the "Pyre of Rats," for the hundreds of thousands of rats and rat corpses burned in great bonfires. The rats, mysteriously and utterly unpredictably, fought back. In the dead of the night, hundreds of citizens found themselves beset by rat swarms that devoured them in their beds. Many view this event (known as the Biting Feast) to be the first manifestation of the Rat Queen within the city.

Finally, due to ruinous taxation during the reign of King Crowan, the long-simmering discontent in the city reached a boil, and revolt followed. Anarchists seized Crowan and "shortened his hair by a head" upon the headman's block, earning him the nickname "Short-locks" in the history books from then on. The Anarchists then stormed the Capitol in force. Here, they seized the Eburnean Oracle, who was hiding within the King's chambers, apparently having served as advisor to the monarchs of Castorhage for 297 straight years. The mob took the protesting creature, still swathed and masked, out to the Traders Gate Square, where they burned the seemingly immortal creature alive. They wrapped the charred remains in weighted chains and threw it into the river, rejoicing to be done with the foul influence of the individual whom popular opinion blamed for most of the terrible decisions of rule made over the last three centuries.

The Second Castorhage Dynasty

With the death of King Crowan, the city found itself without a Borxia monarch for the first time in 222 years, but their freedom was to be short lived. The Castorhage patriarch, Rissel, was a powerful devil-binder and used his considerable magical abilities — and astute use of political favour — to claim the throne and bring the rule of Castorhage back to the family of that name. The Second Castorhage Dynasty continued uninterrupted for the next 1,500 years with the exception of a trio of short interludes when non-Castorhagi queens ruled. King Rissel was known as the Binder for his magic, but in most minds for his successful binding of House Castorhage to the throne, apparently permanently.

It took some time for the city-state to recover from the centuries of Borxia rule, but changes in trade laws brought in more traders from afar, generating greater tax revenue than in past times, and this period also saw the establishment of the first formal clubs and guilds as a way to both promote and regulate trade among the growing middle class. However, something even more significant entered the city at this time as well. The city's first guild, the Guild of Harlots, was established under the leadership of an outspoken and influential woman, her name unknown, and who disappeared from sight thereafter. Soon a voice much like hers was heard from the wife of a powerful member of the new Sewagers and Ironmongers Guild. Then a few years later, a similar voice was heard from among nuns of Mother Grace. But no one noticed the similarities in message or technique among these voices, because when the arch-devil Demoriel had followed the echoes of Caasimolar and Asmodeus into this mortal city, the Twice-Exiled Seductress decided that she would not only rule it, but that she would do so without anyone being the wiser. To this end she secretly insinuated herself throughout the city, so that within two decades she had created the "Third Illuminati" to supersede the works of its predecessors. The Third Illuminati soon held much of the power in the city, right under the noses of the traditional rulers. The offices of Crown Justices were established to fight this trend, but soon they, too, found their way beneath Demoriel's sway. The arch-devil effectively wielded more control over the city than any single other entity — and no one was the wiser.

The first hiccup in the new dynasty of the Castorhagi occurred almost 150 years later. King Prywid, called "the Cursed" (for a variety of reasons) made the beautiful young Coal Borxia his third queen. She soon became pregnant and bore him a son, and people thought that perhaps the string of Prywid's bad luck had ended. When he suddenly died two years later, they quickly decided differently.

Queen Coal wasted no time in taking the reins of power over the city-state and beginning what became known as the Years of Terror. Though it had likely existed for some time within the city, it was during the Years of Terror that the Great Coven truly rose to prominence within the city. It was from this time that the saying, "Every thirteenth woman in the city is a witch," came from as the coven took on many important and even official roles within the city. The Church of Mother Grace was suppressed, and the High Bishop of the Church, Jord of Croix, was burned at the stake on the steps of the Great Cathedral for refusing to renounce his faith before a tribune of witches. Legends say that the flames of his pyre burned all day and all night with him standing peacefully within them until the final hour, when he finally crumbled to ash in an instant. Though Jord died that day, word of the manner of his death did not, and the Church of Mother Grace underwent something of a resurgence even as it went underground during the reign of Coal. And when the Years of Terror ended 40 years later, with Queen Coal Borxia burning on those same cathedral steps, the office of the Holy Father of Castorhage was ordained in the name of Jord. Only seven years later, Jord was beatified by the Church and named as the patron saint of the city.

The grandson of Coal and Prywid, King Artelo I, assumed the throne, and the crown rested once again upon a Castorhage brow. During his reign, Artelo resolved to reverse the fortunes of the city-state by making it the hub of a vast trade empire. To this end, he commissioned the construction of the Great Docks to accommodate the largest trade ships of the world. He also greatly expanded the trade fleet of the city-state, sending its ships abroad for trade and exploration. Two years later, the Castorhagi ship, the Brave made landfall on the western coast of Libynos, and four years after that Castorhage established its first trading colony on Tandril Island across the Crescent Sea.

Artelo's daughter Malice succeeded him and continued his overseas policies, with the additional strategy of using the city's criminals as slave labour. She established the Forest Coast penal colonies, and was the first Akadian monarch to establish peaceful contact with the wild elves of the Green Realm. Unfortunately, this peace was not to last. Her own great grandson, Lertis Tevoy, seeking to follow in his ancestors' footsteps, decreed that a road should be built through the Green Realm to pierce its inner secrets. He then set about protecting the road with forts along its length, and had the audacity to be surprised when the wild elves interpreted his actions as an invasion. What followed then was a ruinous 24-year war of attrition fought against the elves of the Green Realm. The elves' numbers were never truly known, and almost every battle was fought on their terms in their terrain. Not a single significant engagement was won by the Castorhagi, and every foot of ground gained was done so at the expense of gallons of Castorhagi blood.

When finally even King Lertis had to admit that the Great Road was a failure, he was forced to mortgage the Crown Jewels to pay off some of the resulting debts. More than 76,000 Castorhagi had been slain and more than 3 million gold sovereigns spent in the futile war. The Crown Jewels would not sit long in a bank vault in Curgantium, however. Lertis Tevoy's half-brother, Terrance Aquiri, made arrangements with a Leng slaver, who purchased the King of Castorhage for sufficient funds to re-acquire the Crown Jewels from Hyperborea and settle the huge debts accrued by the now-missing king. Terrance Aquiri was as surprised as anyone when his plan worked without any problems. The aristocracy, exhausted by Lertis Tevoy's excesses, unanimously heralded Terrance Aquiri as the new king rather than a traitor. Terrance gained nickname "Acquire," for his methods in obtaining both the Crown Jewels and the Crown.

King Acquire

King Acquire's initial reign was largely peaceful and prosperous. During this time, the Castorhagi exploratory ship *Brave* stumbled upon a never-before-charted island in the Crescent Sea that had apparently risen from the deeps. An ancient, intact palace upon it — believed to date from Phoromyceaen times — made it an extremely attractive find, and Acquire claimed it for the Royal Family, naming it "Royal Island." He moved his wife and two daughters to the refurbished palaces in this serene, idyllic setting, far from the cutthroat politics of the Capitol. When his much-loved Queen Selene became pregnant again, he resolved that the island should become the permanent Royal Quarters during times of peace. She delivered for him triplet sons, and the people of Casterhage declared it a new golden age for the city.

As the boys grew into adolescence, they proved to be handsome, intelligent, talented, and possessed of a sweet disposition allowing them to cooperate and work with one another without rancour or jealousy. The people, who received regular updates on the Royal Family by official dispatch from the queen, began to call the boys the Crown's Hope, and saw them as guarantors of the city's burgeoning prosperity for decades to come. However, when the princes reached the age of 16 and were to be presented formally at the Capitol, tragedy struck. Before their ship could set sail to join King Acquire in the city, the beautiful Royal Island sank as suddenly as it had risen. Everyone upon the island was lost: the entire royal household, the queen, the two princesses, and the three princes.

The city entered a state of shock, and Acquire was devastated. He could no longer govern, and took to wearing ashes and sackcloth for his self-perceived infractions against the gods. He ultimately abdicated his throne to his cousin Aldwerd, and took up a lonely vigil at sea, waiting for the island to rise again. When it eventually did, 18 years later, Acquire settled upon it, renaming it Bitter Island. The palace still remained, but of course all of his family and retainers were long gone. He took up a hermetic existence upon the island, and King Aldwerd would send the Royal Ship *Rosestone* to check on his cousin, bringing him supplies and what creature comforts it could. When the ship returned in 686, the island was gone, once more sunk beneath the waves, taking what was believed to be the last of the surviving royal family with it.

There was one member of the family that had escaped the island, though. Unbeknownst to all, one of the many folk of Castorhage who had become enraptured by the Royal Family was none other than the vampire lord Beltane. When the *Rosestone* made its initial voyage to pick up the

Royal Family, it did so with the captain and crew firmly dominated by the god-like vampire. Beltane visited Queen Selene in the night, twice, while the family made its preparations for departure, each time leaving her one step closer to immortal undeath. On the third night, Beltane stepped upon the ship's deck to see the island suddenly sinking beneath the waves. He dove in and swam to the Queen's chamber where he found her upon the verge of drowning — and bestowed upon her his final life-draining kiss. He then buried her deep in the sea mud to await the next night. When she arose as a vampire at the next nightfall, she found that Beltane had fashioned a coffin from her furnishings in the palace. Then, traveling by night and burying themselves in the coffin by day, they made their way back to Castorhage, where Beltane introduced to the Fetch his first and greatest Bride, Selene.

The city long mourned the loss of its beloved King Acquire, but his cousin Aldwerd I proved a capable king, as did his son and his grandson. This proved to be of great importance, for in 751 the poles of the world shifted, the Goitre formed in the western ocean, and the continent of Boros froze over. This sudden event brought great climactic change, including a major cold surge from over the Haunted Steppe and the Crescent Sea. A realm like Reme could weather the sudden shift because of its great territorial resources; the Grand Duke could relocate his people to warmer or more fertile areas as needed. But for a small, overpopulated island like Lymossus, there was no such solution. The Fimbulwinter came to Castorhage when Aldwerd I's great-granddaughter Queen Gwenth was only 29 years old.

The unrelenting winter storms closed the harbour much of the time, and made life on the island virtually impossible. Help and supplies were not forthcoming from the main continent because of the great fires ravaging the hinterland. The imperial capital at Curgantium was destroyed, and the Hyperborean Empire was on its knees. The Fetch hunted in the twilit days of the city with impunity, daring any to confront them — and Beltane revealed himself to the city for the first time, along with his heart-breaking bride Selene, the city's once-beloved queen. But through it all, the young Queen Gwenth marshalled her resources, organised her labour, prioritised the city's needs, and empowered ministers and common folk alike to help find solutions. When the Fimbulwinter finally passed, 15 years later, and brought a much needed summer back to Lymossus, Queen Gwenth found herself ruler of a city that had not only survived, but had found its spirit through the adversity. When trade relations were established with distant Xi'en shortly thereafter, true prosperity began to burgeon in the city-state. When she died at the age of 57, Queen Gwenth became the only monarch of Castorhage to be given the sobriquet "The Great."

Unfortunately, her son, King Artelo IV, unexpectedly died only a few months later, leaving the city in political upheaval. During the "Troubled Years," civil strife wracked the city while a suitable heir was sought. Finally, a nephew from the line of Lertis Tevoy was found and crowned King Corvus Taim. None of his children survived into adulthood, so after his death the crown passed to an uncle and a cousin before finally finding stability in the person of the twin regents Alar and Elspeth. Brother and sister, neither wished to rule over the other; they chose instead to cooperate and share rule in the tradition that the sons of Queen Selene had intended. When Alar died young, Elspeth ruled as sole Queen until her own death at the age of 80, passing the throne to her own son.

Change of Regimes

After the relocation of Hyperborea to Libynos and its eventual fall, Castorhage found itself largely cut off from continental trade. Attempts to reach mutually beneficial agreements with Reme were proving problematic, as each side wrangled for greater control of the Crescent Sea; most of Castorhage's focus turned towards its far-flung trade interests in Xi'en and Libynos. The city of Trinidar became a major colonial holding for Castorhage. Over time, however, the rise of Foere altered matters. Suddenly there was a powerful, centralised force of governance on Akados — and where the Hyperborean imperators had become corrupt and distracted, the new Foerdewaith Overking was proving to be dynamic and decisive.

Seeing the difficulty of his position, King Prudus I sent envoys to Foere with oaths of allegiance and orders to negotiate favourable terms with the new Overking, Macobert. The Overking accepted the homage from Castorhage, and granted the city-state a protectorate status rather than that of a vassal state. Foerdewaith inspectors-general were sent back with the envoys to assess the tax burden of the city. Though Prudus's decision was pragmatic and wise, not everyone perceived it so. There was much grumbling in the streets over the matter of bowing to a foreign power, but the next morning when all three inspectors-general and King Prudus himself were found in their respective beds consumed alive by rats, the city held its collective breath. King Cantor II sent a polite letter of condolence over the unfortunate, yet totally accidental, demise of the inspectors-general — and reminded them that Castorhage's own king had perished in identical fashion. He chose not to reiterate any oaths Prudus I may have made, and Foere decided it prudent not to send any more inspectors-general. Few, if any, taxes ever made their way to the new capital of Courghais, and for its part the Foerdewaith Crown tried its hardest to simply ignore the city-state of Castorhage.

Reclamation

During the reign of Prudus II, the Overking of Foere called for a Great Crusade to free the Libynosi holy city of Tircople from the clutches of invading heathens. The King lent his sword and his knights to the cause, and was well rewarded for his efforts. Castorhage was given rights to colonise the eastern coast of Libynos, and the city-state wasted no time in doing so. Soon colonies began to spring up along the coast, and Castorhage took its first real steps as a maritime empire.

The new largesse flowed into Castorhagi coffers, but it was not to last for long. With much of Foere's military strength still engaged in Libynos, a powerful vampire lord calling himself the Singed Man took the opportunity to overrun and conquer the Duchy of Kear in western Foere. The loss was particularly troubling to Casterohage as their own King Prudus II was traveling through Kear at the time. He and his entourage were captured by the soldiers of the Singed Man, and King Prudus II died as his prisoner. Prudus's widow, Queen Constance, assumed rule over the city and began the long process of trying to convince Foere to expel the Singed Man before he became a true threat. The matter became complicated, however, when a Foerdewaith army led by the Duke of the Rampart was soundly defeated, and the duke captured and turned into a vampire in the Singed Man's service. All told, it would be 155 years before the Singed Man was finally overthrown.

In the meantime, the activities of the Singed Man emboldened the vampires of Castorhage, and they began operating boldly throughout the city, using the deaths from the first outbreak of the Shabbisian Plague to cover their activities. When Bishop Anthony Mackus discovered that the Fetch had infiltrated the Church of Mother Grace all the way to the Holy Father, he instituted the *Great Reclamation*, purging the church of vampires and abolishing the office of Father of Castorhage. Mackus became known as the Great Cleric of Castorhage and was given the mandate to "guide the city from darkness." He quickly implemented a crusade against the Fetch in the city, and soon undead ichor ran in the streets alongside the living blood shed by the Fetch.

While the distant crusade raged, great changes took hold. The Singed Man was finally laid low by the Foerdewaith paladin Sir Varral the Blessed, and his nightmare kingdom in the Duchy of Kear was dissolved. Foere was quick to move in to reclaim its lost realm, but not before Castorhage annexed the port of Tarry as "rightful recompense for the sacrifice of their own king to the cause." Foere, already beleaguered from its long years of fighting Kear, and perhaps respecting the city-state for its own ongoing crusade against the undead, chose to not challenge this annexation. Tarry became an official mainland port for Castorhage, followed not long after by the secondary port of Kalares Croft.

Even on a social and infrastructural front the city-state advanced mightily. Crown Justice Moravan, well remembering the plague of his youth, ruled against the Crown's interests in the ground-breaking case *Symmons, et. al. v. Tettle Escratory,* which resulted in the breaking up of the horrifically corrupt (and extensively Fetch-infiltrated) guild of the Sewagers and Ironmongers. Castorhage also saw the establishment of an Office of Sanitation to oversee disposal of the city-state's waste in a manner that posed as little health risk to the populace as could be achieved. Hundreds of defunct and dangerous sewer channels were sealed, preventing many avenues formerly used by the Fetch; the Bilges

were used as a replacement to move the city's wastes to the dismal Brine Heath for disposal. King Leris Pallor was personally against the ruling by the Crown Justice (due the immense cost to the Royal Coffers). The Great Cleric, however, supported the ruling — moreover, the Crown Justice was beloved by the people, and King Leris publicly (albeit reluctantly) supported the ruling.

By the beginning of the 15th century, Great Cleric Anthony Mackus had disappeared — undoubtedly at the hands of the Fetch, the Great Coven, the Illuminati, the Guild, the Royal Family, the Anarchists, the Church of Mother Grace, or any one of an endless list of enemies he had made in his quest to bring the city to piety. Without him, the crusade against the Fetch ground to a screeching halt. The office of Holy Father was reinstituted by the Church, and the next Father of Castorhage, Umbertine VI (the Conciliator), did much to smooth over grievances and bring a modicum of peace back to the streets of the city. Legends say that the now-sainted Umbertine VI even sat down at a negotiating table with Beltane, the God-Emperor of the Fetch himself, in order to broker a lasting peace. Whatever the truth of this story, under the stewardship of the Conciliator the rampant bloodshed came to a halt within the city-state, and peace was re-established. When the beloved Crown Justice Moravan died only two years later, the Holy Father presided over his funeral — held on the Great Docks so there would be sufficient room for the immense crowds and an entire flotilla of boats to allow additional spectators. The closing words of the Holy Father's eulogy proved unintentionally prophetic when he uttered, "We will never again upon the Crown Bench see gentle soul and iron will like that of the blessed John Quintilius Moravan." Since that time, the corruption and depravity of the Crown Justices has been absolute.

The Time of Empire

Despite the peace ushered in by Saint Umbertine VI, all was not well in the city-state. The number of so-called "gods" of Castorhage — largely quashed during the time of Anthony Mackus as he made his stated goal to destroy Beltane — began to grow again. The first report of the Leper King began to appear, along with the Aspect of the Green Man, and the Great Coven claimed that the Devil once again walked the night. The reasons are still much debated, but most scholars of the city-state believe that the mysterious other-realm known as Between was stirring and drawing closer to the mundane world than it ever had before. The height of this increase in godly beings came when the Harvester of Cribs famously made off with the triplets of goodwife Grace Hamminy. It is said that was when *fear* entered the city and never after loosed its grip.

Less than a decade later, in the 41st year of his fruitful reign, King Leris Pallor mysteriously fell from a high balcony of the Capitol. Murder was strongly suspected, but even magical investigation could get no clear answer, so the matter was closed by order of his newly crowned son Worrn I (originally pronounced WOR-in, though later accepted as simply WORN in the centuries to follow).

Early in Worrn's reign, the fleets of Foerdewaith gathered in Reme for a Third Great Crusade against the Huun in Tircople. Worrn I, wishing to honour the example of his five-times great grandmother Queen Constance, declined to support the crusade — thereby re-planting the seeds of animosity with the grand duchy of Foere. When the next year the entire crusader fleet was lost at sea in a terrible storm, King Worrn's less-than-sympathetic condolences of "having warned against this foolish adventure" fanned the flames of animosity to a blaze, one that has tainted relations between the two nations ever since.

King Worrn died of a fever at the age of 43, and disloyal advisors then sought to slay his son Tyrus in order to shift the Crown to a different Great House of the city-state. Some claim that the Borxia were behind the plot, others claim the Tredici, and still others point to the Perfida acting at the behest of certain Foerdewaith interests. None of the theories has ever been proven. Prince Tyrus, surviving the treacherous attempt, was forced to take ship in the night, and flee the city. In the voyage to escape his assassins, Prince Tyrus ran across Bitter Island, once again returned from its long rest in the deeps of the Crescent Sea. Fearing being overtaken by the assassins' ships, and hoping to find a defensible place within the miraculously-preserved Phoromyceaen palace, Tyrus and his small band of companions fled inside. Within, he found not just a place to hide but a means to win back his throne. In the hermit's cell where King Acquire had lived out his final days, Tyrus found a shining, silver-bladed sword — King Acquire's own legendary blade *Vangard*. With this sword of great magical power, Tyrus and his companions turned on the assassins and brutally slew them in ambush. Then taking the attackers' own ship, Tyrus returned to the city. When the traitorous advisors spotted the sails, they assumed it to be their own assassins returning successfully from their hunt, and made no preparations for defence. Tyrus and his companions attacked the palace, surprising the advisors and slaying all but a few to be kept for questioning. The lesser co-conspirators and supporters were sentenced to exile on Bitter Island, where they were chained to the pillars of the palace and guarded by briny† jailers. Tyrus was soon crowned Worrn II, and when Bitter Island once again sank eight years later, the briny guards returned to report that all prisoners had still been alive and chained when the palace slipped beneath the waters.

The reign of Worrn II became known for expansion of its colonial holdings and diplomatic coups, as the rival Foerdewaith struggled with their own Wars of Succession. King Worrn II sent forth the refitted ship *Brave* and other vessels far and wide, establishing colonies on the Bream Isles and opening trade with the isolated Gtsang Prefecture. Moreover, King Worrn II's court was one of the first to formally recognize the newly independent kingdoms of the Vast and North Heath, sending ambassadors to their courts. It is thought that Worrn II's wisdom might even have soothed the damaged relationship with the Grand Duchy of Reme, but his death one year before that nation's own independence from Foere meant that his young and inexperienced grandson Luceus was on the throne when the grand duchy rose in rebellion. The Foerdewaith Court, still smarting over the ongoing struggle with the Vast and North Heath states, put intense diplomatic pressure on Castorhage not to recognize Reme's sovereignty. Stumbling through the political threats with the grace of a blind owlbear, Luceus managed to offend both nations, and soon found himself in the short-but-decisive Short War with Reme. In seven short months, Reme soundly defeated Castorhage's navy and forever forestalled Castorhage's future chances to regain control of its former possessions, Tandril Island and the Forest Coast. In the next year, the Free States declared their independence in the Forest Coast, and the Grand Duchy of Reme gleefully became the first to recognize this new state. Worrn's own death by burning, at the time of the Sixth Great Fire of Town Bridge, was seen as something of a relief, and his own estranged son Musilleus was hastily put upon the throne. Strangely, Worrn was nowhere near the fire itself at the time, an interesting mystery left to be conveniently forgotten.

The unfortunate Musilleus was immediately pressured into a marriage with an eligible lady of the city-state, and soon had his own son, Quintus. Quintus inherited none of his father's and grandfather's weak chins, watery eyes, or vague dispositions — quite the opposite, in fact. Quintus was likened to his noble ancestors Prudus II and Worrn II, showing their sharp minds and steely resolves, earning him the nickname of "the Cognate." It was during Quintus's tenure upon the throne of Castorhage that the Great Bream shipyards were established and the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation of the Shattered Folk was discovered, opening yet more trade routes for the city. It was also during his reign that the fleets of Castorhage first ran afoul of the monstrous aquatic masters of the Nether Sea, beginning more than two centuries of warfare with the sea-throng of the Sinking Place.

When King Quintus Cognate died childless at the age of only 44, his death opened the way to the throne for a cadet branch of the Royal Family. Quintus's first cousin Rolith Artyle was next in line, and would have been the favourite for succession — but he had been inconveniently killed by his own uncle in 1548, after using an obscure and rarely referenced rule of the dice game *Royal Families*. Musgrove the Cold-Hearted, the very same uncle, reluctantly assumed the throne. Musgrove did not rule for long: his research into the properties of alchymic undeath — some say based upon research previously pursued by Quintus Cognate — led to his accidental self-poisoning and death after only eight years of power. It became a Castorhagi legend that his funeral was the only time the sealer of the Royal Crypt smiled while performing his duties. His son Musgrove II succeeded the father and immediately set about undoing many of the draconian measures that Musgrove I had put into place.

Musgrove II's reign was doomed to be short as well, however, for his father's research had borne deadly fruit. Musgrove I emerged from his tomb as a lich-like monstrosity after resting for only four years, slew his own son — whom he named as the Usurper — and resumed his reign.

Now, he styled himself as Musgrove the "Dead-Hearted," rather than his former "Cold-Hearted." A pall seemed to hang over the city during the terrifying — and potentially endless — reign of the undead Musgrove, but the stability it caused over a 54-year reign had benefits as well. During the second reign of Musgrove I, the money-banks of Castorhage began the novel practice of issuing paper tender, which soon caught on for transactions of greater value. The city began trade and colonisation in Far Jaati. The Empire of Castorhage reached its greatest expansion, and was rapidly becoming a true naval power. Even the 17 unsuccessful assassination attempts against the undead ruler only served to bolster the power and reputation of the city, now referred to as "the Blight" as often as it was called Castorhage.

When King Musgrove attempted to gain even greater power through a transition to demi-lichdom, his plans went greatly awry. The previously un-killable king was reduced to a fine ash that the Father of Castorhage, the leader of the Great Coven, and a Bride of Beltane worked to collect completely, bless thoroughly, then scatter across hundreds of square miles of the Fetid Sea. Castorhage was through with Musgrove the Dead-Hearted. The undead king's own great-grandson assumed the throne, to much acclaim by all.

The reign of Musgrove's great-great-grandson, Warden II, saw the addition of trade to the Razor Sea and peaceful contact with the mysterious grey elves (or Sarefein), though no major colonial acquisitions were added at that time. However, during the time of Warden II's own son, Worrn III, perhaps the greatest discovery in Castorhage history took place when the unassuming accountant Hetherington Quarrus Mabe first made contact with the place known as the Between. The discovery of Between radically altered the direction of the city's leadership (though in many ways on a covert level), charting its course, even into the present day, toward a wealth of new resources, colonisation opportunities, open warfare, and unspeakable dangers beyond the borders of reality.

A Shadowy Present

Since the discovery and continuing exploitation of Between, many of the city's ambitions have been turned in that direction, but not all. Other breakthroughs warrant mention. In the last century, the arts/sciences of golem-stitching and planar pact-making have been virtually perfected. Extra-planar thralls inundate the city, and the creation of ever-more-ingenious fleshgines† has culminated in the creation of the Crooked Promethean. At long last, too, the city-state has discovered new heights in the art of naval warfare, after suffering a series of humiliating defeats to the fleets of Oceanus. In the early 18th century by the Castorhagi calendar, Castorhage unveiled its innovative new *Dreadnought* class of warships: ironclad side-wheelers, steam-driven by boilers containing enslaved elemental spirits. Ever since the city manufactured a small fleet of these magically-powered war machines, the Royal Navy has been virtually unstoppable. With the rumoured addition of new fire-weapons yet to be revealed in the waters around Akados, to the mind of Castorhage's military commanders there is nothing their empire cannot achieve. Whether true or simply hubris, this idea is perhaps best represented in two events of recent years: a single-ship blockade of the Alcaldrich Empire's port of Caduvar, and the reportedly successful entry into the unnavigable Tempest Meridian by the dreadnought *Extirpation*.

What this means for the city-state and the rest of the world, remains cloaked in shadows and speculation, but great change is a certainty.

Lost Lands Timeline of the Blight

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
–8222	**–6484**	Phoromyceaen city of Lyemmos disappears in sinkhole
–4227	**–2489**	Durahchûk and related clans drive blight from tunnels beneath Lymossus, establish clanholds in Underneath
	Arrival of Hyperborean Legion	
–1847	**–109**	Polemarch Oerson leads Hyperborean Legion out of Boros and into Akados
–1766	**–28**	Death of Oerson
–1765	**–27**	Rise of Valenthlis; Outbreak of elven civil war
–1764	**–26**	Wild elves withdraw to west in Second Exodus
–1738	**1**	Battle of Hummaemidon; Birth of Imperial Record; Strategos Oleus Castorhage granted province of Insula Lymossus
–1736	**3**	First citadel of Castorhage constructed on Insula Lymossus
–1322	**417**	First Great Fire sweeps Town Bridge
–250	**1491**	The Great Darkness covers waters of Gulf of Akados region for three years; sea trade to the north ceases
–7	**1734**	Arrival of the Eburnean Oracle at Citadel Castorhage
–1	**1740**	Harmost Demos Castorhage declares himself King of Castorhage in defiance of Imperator Ivint III; Lymossus Legion is burned alive in their Castorhagi barracks-complex
1	**1741**	Establishment of the Castorhage Royal Calendar; Capitol foundation stone is laid
11	**1751**	Generally-recognized beginning of the Eleventy Year War
121	**1861**	The four Great Families make a pact with Caasimolar, forming the First Illuminati and granting rule to House Borxia; Caasimolar brokers peace with Hyperborea; Eleventy Year War treaty signed
143	**1883**	House Castorhage entreats Asmodeus to intercede in an Infernal Pact, begins
162	**1902**	Reign of Misery commences

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
199	**1939**	First Great Fire
237	**1977**	First outbreak of The Death
244	**1984**	The Death ends, population of Castorhage reduced by 60%
245	**1985**	The Pyre of Rats
247	**1987**	The Biting Feast
304	**2044**	King Crowan "Short-locks" beheaded by Anarchists, end of Borxia rule; Eburnean Oracle burned alive and thrown in river
326	**2066**	Demoriel arrives unheralded in Castorhage
328	**2068**	First formal clubs and guilds founded
346	**2086**	Demoriel's Third Illuminati rises and takes covert control of Castorhage
403	**2143**	Earthquake strikes Insula Lymossus, leaving much of Castorhage in ruins; The Great Rebuilding begins
405	**2145**	Dwarves of Underneath begin cremating their dead, give the Body Snatcher its name
410	**2150**	The Great Rebuilding largely completed
453	**2193**	Queen Coal of Castorhage comes to power; beginning of Years of Terror; Rise of the Great Coven
461	**2201**	Jord of Mother Grace burned at the stake, the flames burn all day and all night
511	**2251**	Queen Coal of Castorhage burned at the stake; Years of Terror end
512	**2252**	Illuminati exile Karlingen Borxia from their ranks
518	**2258**	Church of Mother Grace raises Saint Jord as patron of Castorhage
537	**2277**	Boattown purged, Great Docks constructed; Karlingen Borxia encounters Underguild, transformed into vampire
539	**2279**	Castorhagi explorer ship *Brave* makes landfall in western Libynos
544	**2284**	Castorhage colonises Tandril Island; port of Trinidar established
561	**2321**	Forest Coast work-camps are established as penal colonies
578	**2318**	Wild elves of Green Realm gift the Courtyard of Oak to Queen Malice
608	**2348**	King Lertis Tevoy decrees construction of Great Road and builds fortresses "to pierce the secrets of the Green Realm"
609	**2349**	Hostilities with Forest Coast wild elves begin
621	**2361**	Day of Calamity, dwarven city of Solace swallowed by sinkhole; Dwarven kingdom of Durahchûk consolidates power over entire Underneath
629	**2369**	Battle of Tevoy sees complete destruction of Royal Army garrison by wild elf warband; Fort Tevoy abandoned, informally renamed "Fort Toofar"
631	**2371**	Citadel of Tranith destroyed by earthquake, wild elf raiders slaughter the survivors; Outpost fortress of Fringe makes separate peace with wild elves and refuses entry to all Castorhagi soldiers and work parties
632	**2372**	Karlingen Borxia steals Underguild artefact and uses it to achieve godlike powers; Underguild banishes Karlingen Borxia, who takes Beltane as his new name
633	**2373**	Great Road abandoned; Ilber Nole left as the only fortification on Forest Coast; Royal Accountants tabulate the final cost of the Great Road project at 76,712 lives and over 3 million gold sovereigns; King Lertis mortgages Crown Jewels to recoup economic losses
634	**2374**	Terrance Aquiri, half-brother of King Lertis, sells Lertis to Leng slavers to recover Crown Jewels and settle Great Road debts; Crowned king as Terrance Aquiri but known thereafter as King Acquire
637	**2377**	Captain Ery Pordrago aboard *Brave* discovers heretofore unknown island and claims it for Castorhage; Intact ancient palace of unknown origin discovered upon island; Beltane returns to Castorhage, begins creation of The Fetch

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
638	**2378**	King Acquire claims Royal Island as personal estate and refurbishes palace to original glory, moves Queen Selene and their 2 daughters to new palace
639	**2379**	Queen Selene gives birth to triplets, all boys
643	**2383**	Portion of Capitol undermined in earthquake of 403 collapses, many Royals killed; Royal Arcane Engineer's Guild founded; Sealed tomb of Eburnean Oracle discovered hidden in Capitol foundations
651	**2391**	Queen Selene's sons grow strong, wise, and handsome, showing no sign of jealousy or ill will between them; King Acquire refuses to bring them to city yet, for fear or possible dangers; Queen Selene's triplets become known as The Crown's Hope
655	**2395**	As King Acquire makes preparations to present his sons at Capitol, Royal Island sinks beneath Crescent Sea; King's entire family is lost along with hundreds of courtiers, soldiers and servants; King Acquire abdicates in favour of his cousin Aldwerd and begins shipboard vigil
683	**2423**	Acquire's ship, *Rosestone*, discovers Royal Island again; Acquire renames it Bitter Island and disembarks to live in solitude
686	**2426**	*Rosestone* returns to Bitter Island to check on Acquire and finds island has sunk again
750	**2490**	Noises emerge from tomb of Eburnean Oracle for 10 months
751	**2491**	Poles of Boros shift; Goitre emerges forming Tempest Meridians; Ice sheet begins forming over continent of Boros and World Roof; Coming of Fimbulwinter to Castorhage; the Fetch hunt with impunity in the long Darkness, as Beltane reveals himself for the first time
756	**2496**	Tower of Oerson destroyed; wildfires ravage Curgantium and spread across Akados
759	**2499**	Imperial Court relocated to Tircople; Western empire abandoned by Hyperboreans
766	**2506**	Fimbulwinter in Castorhage ends
769	**2509**	Twelve Bloody Nights; Imperator and Pontifex roles combined; Trystecce the Ageless becomes imperatrix
		End of Hyperborean Age in the West
767	**2507**	A Xi'en trading-junk out of Quy Tai makes landfall at Castorhage, opening Xi'en trade
777	**2517**	Establishment of Vampire Hunting Trinity of Life
824	**2586**	The Twin Regents, King Alar and Queen Elspeth, normalise Castorhage trade relations with Xi'en Hegemony
891	**2631**	Birth of King Branner, known as Branner the Child
897	**2637**	King Branner orders construction of artisans' town upon Grey Lake
899	**2639**	Death of King Branner the Child
914	**2654**	Birth of Macobert of House Foere
943	**2683**	The Lightness Queen creates Symphony of Ore in Durahchûk
958	**2698**	King Macobert begins uniting Akados as Kingdom of Foere
		Rise of the Foerdewaith
962	**2702**	White Freyday: Banking Quarter relocates to Capitol
986	**2726**	Construction of the Capitol's Folly Gate
1004	**2744**	Macobert crowned Overking of the Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foerdewaith
1006	**2746**	King Prudus I offers fealty to Overking Macobert; Castorhage granted status of protectorate rather than vassal-state
1007	**2747**	King Prudus I and three Foerdewaith inspectors-general found consumed in their beds by swarms of rats; Foere declines to send further inspectors-general to Castorhage
1025	**2765**	Death of Macobert; Son Magnusson succeeds to the throne

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
1027	**2767**	Scarlet Plague decimates dwarves of Durahchûk, dwarven kingdom of Underneath abandoned
1028	**2768**	Overking Magnusson completes imperial capital at Courghais
1041	**2781**	Red Plague strikes Kingdoms of Foere; One quarter of the population of the central lands dies including Magnusson II; Son Osbert I succeeds to the throne; Castorhage spared from plague
1057	**2797**	Red Plague returns and strikes central Kingdoms of Foere again; the kingdom's central territories are virtually depopulated, Castorhage loses a quarter of its population to the plague; Plague claims Overking Osbert I, who is succeeded by his son Osbert II
1089	**2829**	Royal University of Castorhage founded
1114	**2854**	King-Crescent Company dissolves, Trinidar and Forest Coast Work Colonies slip from Castorhagi control
1119	**2859**	Prince Cale of Reme blocks Castorhage's attempts to resume control of Trinidar and Forest Coast
1121	**2861**	Prince Cale of Reme leads Colonisation of Great Steppes
1150	**2890**	Mad King Rames begins expansion of the Underneath, relocates Royal Court to the Skin; Lantern folk officially given citizenship
1172	**2912**	The Ludlow of Apyrion goes mad and burns citadel to the ground, with himself and his entire family inside
1191	**2931**	Caleen colonies reach shores of Lake Hali; humanoid attacks begin
1207	**2947**	Shadow walkers lead humanoid hordes from Lost Mountains; Caleen colonies destroyed, Prince Cale is lost; Wizard's Wall raised at Crynomar Gap; Tomb of the Eburnean Oracle is found open and empty
1216	**2956**	First pogrom against the Fetch sweeps Artists' Quarter
1218	**2958**	Prudus II moves Royal Court back to Capitol
1220	**2960**	First Great Crusade gathers at ports all along Sinnar Coast and Crescent Sea, recaptures Tircople; Crusader States established; King Prudus II of Castorhage participates in Great Crusade and is granted colonial rights in southeast Libynos
1230	**2970**	The vampire lord known as the Singed Man rises in the Duchy of Kear and conquers it, ruling as its Infernal Tyrant; King Prudus II caught traveling in Kear at time of rising and slain; Wife of Prudus, Constance, crowned queen
1233	**2973**	*Pact of Immaculate Reception* reached between Queen Constance and the mites of Actors' Way
1237	**2977**	Battle-Duke Ormand of the Rampart charged with freeing Kear from the Singed Man, Foerdewaith army crushed by the Infernal Tyrant of Kear at Seilo Ford, Battle-Duke Ormand slain, rising as vampire spawn in the Singed Man's service
1243	**2983**	The vampire Ormand expands the enslaved Realm of Kear from Eber to Tarry; Foere and Castorhage dispute political responsibility and neither raises further forces to try and dislodge the Infernal Tyrant
1325	**3065**	Birth of John Quintilius Moravan, future Crown Justice
1326	**3066**	Birth of King Leris Pallor
1341	**3081**	First Shabbisian Plague
1344	**3084**	Vampires use cover of plague to move openly in Castorhage
1362	**3102**	Infernal Realm of Kear reaches largest extent, stretching from Tarry to Tourne
1385	**3125**	The Great Reclamation; Father of Castorhage Qeudecce III, exposed as a vampire by Bishop Anthony Mackus, and burned; Office of Holy Father abolished, Anthony Mackus raised as Great Cleric of the Church of Castorhage
1386	**3126**	Great Cleric institutes perpetual crusade against Fetch
1388	**3128**	Sir Varral the Blessed destroys the Singed Man and Duke Ormand, freeing the Realm of Kear; Duchy of Kear is reconstituted under Foerdewaith Crown with nephew of overking given title in Eber; Castorhage annexes port of Tarry

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
1392	**3132**	Crown Justice Moravan rules in *Symmons, et. al. v. Tettle Escratory* that sewage runoff must be confined to controlled subterranean channels; planning for construction of Bilges begun
1398	**3138**	Sinkhole causes partial collapse of Crooked Cathedrals
1399	**3139**	Disappearance and presumed death of Great Cleric Anthony Mackus; End of crusade against Fetch
1401	**3141**	Death of Crown Justice Moravan
1410	**3150**	Sinking of *The Gull* in Great Lyme River, Gyre forms
1416	**3156**	Taking of Triplets of Grace Hamminy by Harvester of Cribs
1427	**3167**	King Leris Pallor dies in mysterious fall from Capitol; Worrn I crowned king
1432	**3172**	Fleet gathers in Reme to transport Third Great Crusade to Crusader Coast, Castorhage declines to participate
1451	**3191**	Worrn I dies of fever, disloyal advisors seek to kill his son Tyrus, who flees by ship and rediscovers Bitter Island; Tyrus returns with the sword of King Acquire and slays treacherous advisors, crowned Worrn II; Conspirators are exiled to Bitter Island
1459	**3199**	Bitter Island sinks, drowning exiles
1470	**3210**	King Worrn II orders *Brave* sent in exploration for colonisation of Bream Isles and Nether Sea
1473	**3213**	Foerdewaith Wars of Succession begin
1481	**3221**	Colony of Farthest Point established on Lesser Bream; Trade relations begin with Gtsang Prefecture
1488	**3228**	Castorhage recognizes independence of Vast and North Heath and sends ambassadors to Eber and Bret Harth
1493	**3233**	Grand Duchy of Reme gains independence from Foere
1500	**3240**	Short War with Reme, Castorhage capitulates after 7 months and agrees to permanently absolve all claims to Forest Coast
1501	**3241**	Free States founded across Crescent Sea; Cartographer Cord Gryme tortured to death for alleged connections to the Great Coven
1505	**3245**	Armistice signed between Foere and Vast and North Heath kingdoms; former March of Eauxe depopulated and left abandoned as buffer zone
1509	**3249**	The Sixth Great Fire sweeps Town Bridge; considered by many the first appearance of ragefire in Castorhage
1513	**3253**	Shipping magnate Irvoli Sammick discovers Bitter Island has resurfaced and plans grand gala in its palace before it sinks again; Sammick discovers palace occupied by sahuagin and his entire party is captured and devoured
1514	**3254**	Sammick commercial fleet arrives at Bitter Island to avenge Irvoli only to discover island has sunk again
1522	**3262**	Castorhagi trader *Provision*, out of Great Bream, makes landfall at mouth of Devil's Tail and discovers the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation
1530	**3270**	Trade fleet of Lesser Bream reaches Elitani Coast and opens trade with Elitan-i-Pan; Four of seven ships are sunk by monstrous sea creatures while returning across Nether Sea
1533	**3273**	Admiral Milo Skanter leads fleet of 12 ships into Nether Sea to hunt sea monsters; Attacked by sea-throng of The Sinking Place, only one ship escapes
1534	**3274**	Increasing attacks by sea creatures disrupts trade across Nether Sea
1545	**3285**	First alchymic undying are created in the Seminary
1561	**3301**	Death of King Musgrove I the Cold-Hearted, son crowned as Musgrove II
1565	**3305**	Death of Musgrove II "the Usurper" at hands of his undead father, who resumes rule as Musgrove I the Dead-Hearted
1571	**3311**	Beginning of colonisation of Far Jaati
1582	**3322**	Angel Gate Import and Storage Company donates bench to Angel Gate

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
1590	**3330**	Lords Bank of Castorhage issues first paper tender for 10 guineas to Justice Horace Crimm, to purchase a crystalline punch bowl for a name day celebration
1596	**3336**	Angel Gate Fire
1597	**3337**	Angelsgate ghat constructed upon ruins of Angel Gate
1599	**3339**	Oceanus and Foere sign non-aggression treaty; The Hornet Eater begins his reign of terror on Castorhage
1609	**3349**	His Beautific Knighthood Gerrant of the Capitol ends decade-long murder spree of the Hornet Eater
1619	**3359**	King Musgrove I attempts to achieve demi-lichdom and fails, great grandson crowned as Warden I
1632	**3372**	Castorhagi ships make first contact with grey elves of Sarefein, begin trade into Razor Sea
1637	**3377**	Toilsday 11th Grey: Hetherington Quarrus Mabe first breaches the Between
1638	**3378**	Formation of Royal Between Company to explore and harvest resources of Between
1639	**3379**	The Unsea is discovered by Sir Donnan Grabe, first recorded observation of Corrun's Labyrinth
1644	**3384**	Greensward Hell discovered in Between; Fort Toil outpost established
1647	**3387**	Fort Toil Massacre
1648	**3388**	Establishment of Royal Between Corporation
1649	**3389**	Entirety of staff and guests at Bridge House Tavern suffocated by Jack's Candle; Greensward Hell War
1650	**3390**	Massacre of St. Anne's Field
1670	**3410**	Crooked Promethean created
1672	**3412**	Castaway Corbin Trellishaw washes ashore on Bitter Island, discovers several chests of gold in palace that are too heavy to transport on the raft he constructs; Trellishaw escapes by raft to Bridgeport; Trellishaw hires ship to return to Bitter Island, but it is gone again
1687	**3427**	Alwin Malachite creates the first treadmill ferry across the Great Lyme River
1696	**3436**	Captain Aldrin Shaw of Eastwych deserts from the navy of Foere, relocates to Swordport; begins to gather small fleet of freebooters
1697	**3437**	Disappearance of the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar after a short stopover in Castorhage
1698	**3438**	Birth of Queen Alice; Hanging of the elf primitive known as "The One Who Has Seen Beyond and Despaired"
1699	**3439**	Conroi Expedition crosses Wizard's Wall to begin exploration of Haunted Steppe
1701	**3441**	Construction of Capitol "completed"; Queen Lotheria attempts to throw Princess Alice from palace spire, stopped by Clarence Borxia
1702	**3442**	Captain Shaw's fleet driven from Swordport by earl's dragoons; Flees to Razor Sea
1706	**3446**	Captain Shaw destroys small Foerdewaith colony on Razor Coast and founds Port Shaw
1708	**3448**	*The River Act* requires all bridges and crossings to be at least 50 feet above the water and calls for construction of Great Windmills to replace water wheels for milling
1709	**3449**	Great Treadmill Ferry constructed, connecting the Capitol to Great Docks
1711	**3451**	Last King of Castorhage, Worrn IV, dies in riding accident; Alice crowned queen; Oceanus opens trade relations with Port Shaw
1712	**3452**	Oceanus prohibits Castorhagi ships from trading on Razor Coast and attacks them on sight
1714	**3454**	Oceanic warships defeat Castorhagi fleet in Razor Sea

Regis Castorhagi (R.C.)	Hyperborean Imperial Record (I.R.)	
1718	**3458**	First ironclad *Dreadnought* class warship, *The Lady Ruin*, launches from Great Docks
1721	**3461**	Castorhagi dreadnought *The Lady Ruin* engages two Oceanic warships north of Razor Sea and sinks both in battle
1722	**3462**	Castorhage and Oceanus open talks for Razor Coast trade
1729	**3469**	Mother Cathedral destroyed in hurricane
1730	**3470**	Queen Alice marries Duke Marram of Mourney; Great Treadmill Ferry transports 40 elephants all at once for wedding ceremony at the Capitol
1731	**3471**	Fetch make open assault on Trinity of Life at Broken Bridge; Battle of Quandary Deep sees total victory for Castorhagi ironclads over the sea-throng of The Sinking Place; Path opened for colonisation of Elitani Coast, trade resumes with Elitan-i-Pan Confederation
1732	**3472**	Birth of Princess Alexandra
1734	**3474**	Birth of Twin Princesses, Eleanor and Geneve
1742	**3482**	Birth of Princess Lilly
1744	**3484**	First Castorhagi colonies established on Tabur Bay
1745	**3485**	First Bloody Jack Carver abductions and murders
1749	**3489**	Crown Prince Regent Marram of Mourney dies on his 57th name day after choking on an undercooked ham hock prepared by his twin daughters; Queen Alice marries Prince Orsche of North Heath; Bloody Jack Carver killings mysteriously end
1750	**3490**	Birth of Princess Rebecca
1751	**3491**	Six dreadnoughts attack the Kraken's Teeth to force passage to the Sinking Place; *The Lady Ruin* and three others sunk, the remaining two retreat to Great Bream shipyards
1753	**3493**	Jumble Uprising ends with Duke Malice creating Road of Impalements; Birth of Princess Mercy
1755	**3495**	Birth of Princess Rachel
1756	**3496**	Princess Sarah is born monstrous, the infant is taken away and burned
1758	**3498**	Birth of Princess Lenora; Crown Prince Regent Orsche of North Heath drowns in Royal Bath
1759	**3499**	Capt. Sparse Weller sights "fairies" over Bitter Island; Alcaldar opens Channel Lakes creating water route across central Libynos; Castorhage signs lease for long-term rights of passage
1767	**3507**	Night of the Bleeding Heavens
1768	**3508**	Birth of Princess Alicia; Disappearance of murderer known as the Butcher's Bride
1770	**3510**	Passage of the *Corpse* (Laying to Rest) *Act* requires payment of a Death Duty to ensure that mortal remains are not subject to later reanimation for Labour; Dreadnought *Extirpation* enters Tempest Meridian seeking Tartarian Passage
1772	**3512**	Rumours of Royal Navy using new fire weapons in Libynosi colonies; Disappearance of Inspector Ornamie Hogg
1773	**3513**	Princess Rachel dies in her sleep, there are whispers of foul play; Castorhagi and Alcaldrich ships skirmish in Boiling Sea; Castorhagi ships barred from use of Libynos Channel Lakes
1774	**3514**	Poisonous gas from Devil's Cloaca kills hundreds in their sleep in Artists' Quarter
1776	**3516**	Dreadnought *Devastation* anchors in Sangre Sea off Caduvar
1777	**3517**	Current year

The Castorhagi Calendar

Castorhagi Months	Lost Lands Months	Hyperborean Names	Real-World Approximation
Longnight	Oeros	Firstmonth	January (Longnight 1–Ashen 3)
Ashen	Foeros	Secondmonth	February (Ashen 4–Grey 3)
Grey	Freyrmond	Thirdmonth	March (Grey 4–Sow 6)
Sow	Eostre	Fourthmonth	April (Sow 7–Rain 8)
Rain	Tiwemond	Fifthmonth	May (Rain 9–Sun 11)
Sun	Daan	Sixthmonth	June (Sun 12–Bake 13)
Bake	Haymond	Seventhmonth	July (Bake 14–Reap 17)
Reap	Hummidos	Eighthmonth	August (Reap 18–Yield 21)
Yield	Mithrond	Ninthmonth	September (Yield 22–Celebrate 23)
Celebrate	Blótmond	Tenthmonth	October (Celebrate 24–Redsky 26)
Redsky	Winterfyll	Eleventhmonth	November (Redsky 27–Chill 28)
Chill	Yule	Twelfthmonth	December (Slumber 1–28)

Among the many reasons that other realms look with ill favour upon the City-State of Castorhage is the city-state's hubris in establishing its own calendar. To compound indignity with insult, the Royal Horologers of Castorhage proceeded to create a calendar that conformed not to the 12 lunar months of the Hyperborean calendar, but rather to the ascendance of the 13 Houses of the Zodiac. Completely eschewing the concepts of 30-day months, fortnight festival days, and the separate recognition of the four High Holy Days, Castorhagi scholars crafted a calendar of 13 months, each consisting of four 7-day weeks. And, of course, they renamed the days of the week as well. Whether the Castorhagi thought that the rest of the nations of Akados would catch on to their calendar and switch over to its usage, or simply didn't care what the rest of the Hyperborean descendant states did, most of the recordkeepers and traders who deal with Castorhage are simply thankful that the scholars didn't renumber of the hours of the day as well.

The calendar as used by the city-state is included below, along with the standard calendar used by the majority of the rest of the world's population. Note that the months do not correspond perfectly, because the Castorhagi months are two days shorter and the annual calendar entirely lacks the inclusion of the traditional four High Holy Days. It should also be noted that because of the uniform length of the months and their divisions into weeks, individual dates always fall on the same day of the week from year to year.

Days of the Week

Prayerday
Mournday
Toilsday
Washday
Threshday
Freyday
Marketday

Festivals and Holy-Days

With its traditional and capricious disdain for the rest of the world, the city-state seems to purposely avoid the common festivals and holy days recognized throughout the rest of the continent of Akados. While the immigrants who comprise much of the city-state's population, and various religions imported from elsewhere usually still recognize days of importance to themselves (and typically the four High Holy Days as well), these are nonetheless absent from the city's official calendar, festivals, and holy-days. Rather, Castorhage recognizes hundreds of its own celebratory or notable occasions. Some of the primary ones are described below.

Carnival: Not an official holiday or festival, Carnival is rather an annual, seasonal, district that appears as shanty towns, markets, and pockets of celebration all over the city as Lowfolk from the surrounding fens and farther abroad come to the city to buy, sell, eat and drink. Carnival has no set dates, but runs roughly from the last week of Rain to the last week of Sun.

Dael's Vigil: The date of this day varies depending on the winter solstice, but always falls within the month of Slumber. It is the longest night, and is a time when doors are locked against demons and devils who are said to come knocking.

Feast of Fools: A holiday adopted from the Hyperborean calendar, this day of feasts, parades, and general paradoxical tomfoolery is officially celebrated on Freyday, Longnight 6th.

Feast of Saint Hedley: The three-day Feast of Saint Hedley's occurs on various dates in the month of Celebrate, based on cryptic astronomical measurements performed by the Church of Mother Grace. It is most fully celebrated in Festival, where all the inhabitants don crow masks in honour of the laughing leper. The celebration all but takes over the island, which swells in population and whose streets run with masked figures. Simple posts with crows in cages are hung from gables and rooftops, and local children throw stones at them to try to release (or more often kill) the birds.

Feral: Once a celebration of ancient nature deities, this holy day has been appropriated by the nobility into a night of brutal hunts throughout the city and countryside.

Harvest Day: To celebrate the harvest Prayerday, Yield 22nd is held as a special day of prayer and communal meals.

Name Day (also Mother Grace's Nameday): The most holy day of the year, Prayerday, Sun 1st, is dedicated to the name day of Mother Grace, patroness deity of the Empire of Castorhage and reputed creator of life. This is a city-wide celebration recognized by all faiths and proclaimed by Royal Decree and Crown Justice Act.

Saint Jord's Day: A festival held every Prayerday, Sow 1st (the official first day of spring in Castorhage) commemorates the martyrdom of the city-state's patron saint. This is a day of spring cleaning and worship followed, after midnight by a citywide revel to celebrate the end of winter.

The Annual Childrens' Carnival: One of the newer festivals of the city, this five-day affair takes place from Marketday, Yield 28th until Washday, Celebrate 4th. It is held at the Great Fayre on Festival, and runs from dawn until well after midnight each day. Parents are able to drop their children off and leave them until late; many use this as an opportunity to partake in the less child-friendly activities taking place during the early part of the White Freyday festivities in the Artists' Quarter.

The Brine Sea: In worship of the god Brine on Marketday, Sun 28th, locals set out in a flotilla of boats at dawn to honour the sea; they cast offerings to it, and then feast on fish brought in the day before.

The Strangers' Fayre: Taking place the first week of every spring (Sow 1st–7th) in Festival, this celebration gathers all of the best freakshows from the city and beyond, for a week of garish frights and delights.

The Sun Festival: The date of this festival varies, depending on the summer solstice. The shortest night of the year, it is a night of festivities (and in many cases orgies of carnal excess or violence) when those who join in celebrate life and its brevity, and stay awake until dawn.

White Freyday: An eleven-day celebration running from Mournday, Celebrate 2nd, to Freyday, Celebrate 13th. It is celebrated in the Artists' Quarter to commemorate the removal of the city's money-banks from the former "Banking Quarter" to the Capitol. The celebration consists of parades, meals, games, musical performances, and a symbolic "running of the bollocks" on the final night, when volunteers dressed as bankers and tradelord gnomes run through the streets while children chase them with sticks.

Others Important Dates

Calamity: One night every three years, the Fetch rise for a single night, dancing on rooftops and taking over the city. How they determine what night this will be is a mystery, but rumour of it usually begins circulating a few days before — the wise make sure they are securely inside before dark.

Castorhage Currency

The City-State of Castorhage has been minting its own currency for the last 1,700 years. As such, the city's banking system and trade is well entrenched in the following currencies that are produced locally:

Fourthing (fg) = 1/4 cp
Copper common (cp) = 1 cp
Ha'penny (hp) = 5 cp
Silver pilaster (sp) = 1 sp
Gold shekel (gp) = 1 gp
Platinum royal (pp) = 1 pp

Coinage

Fourthing: More commonly referred to as "farthing", this is a quarter of a copper piece, the lowest form of legal tender used in the city. It is basically a copper coin cut into four roughly equal wedges and is used for the very least of transactions, such as the buying of small amounts of flour and as tips for the lowest classes.

Copper Common: Commonly referred to as a "tanner" for its coppery-brown coloration, this copper piece is what the day-to-day life of common folk revolves around. They are of varying quality and seem to have passed between every hand in the city.

Ha'penny: The equivalent of 5 cp or one-half of a silver piece, these coins are still in use, though less than others, due to their size. They are twice the size of standard coins and are octagonal in shape.

Silver Pilaster: Often jokingly referred to as the "foundation of the city-state," these coins (once called pennies) became known as pilasters, and are now frequently referred to a "pils." The most common coin found in the city, the silver pilaster is used for most ordinary transactions.

Gold Shekel: This coin replaced the original gold sovereign minted in the earliest days of the city-state. The shekel was first cast in 962 R.C. by order of King Ibin and named for a coinage that first built the fortunes of the city through trade with distant foreign lands of Libynos. This is a gold piece of various vintages, and often so worn by use that the monarch depicted upon its obverse side is no longer discernable. The most legible of the coins are those bearing the image of the current monarch, Queen Alice, and is why in the last few decades they have picked up the nickname of "Sis" or "Little Sis".

Platinum Royal: A platinum piece, usually known locally as a "guinea," is a coin often found in pristine condition. Many commoners believe having a guinea in your pocket is good luck.

Paper Tender

It is not practical for the wealthy of the city to carry large sums of money on their persons, and for this reason, paper tender of two sorts has been in use for the past 187 years.

Bank Note: The first is a bank note, issued by one of the Three Great Banks in the Capitol: Lords; Hapswell, Hapswell and Crab; or the well-known Lyme Bank. Notes are generally in denominations of 5, 10 and 20 guineas, although denominations of 100, 500, and the rarely-seen 1,000 guineas are to be found. These notes are redeemable at the three banking institutions within the Capitol, although anyone who does not look suitably wealthy or who rouses the suspicions of the bankers may find questions asked about where they came by the notes. These notes are hard to forge, but a thriving industry in forgeries does exist. A master forger known as The Painter operates from a location called The Risings, and uses a loyal handful of Royal student-artists to help in his work.

Bearer Bond: Larger transactions are carried out by notes between companies or houses called bearer bonds. Such notes are essentially impossible to forge, and as they are only redeemable between great houses or businesses, questions are invariably asked when they are used. There is theoretically no limit to the value of these notes. Local legends among the financial quarters of the city state the Great House of Hasburg in the Capitol once paid by bearer bond a bill of 106,000 guineas for a controlling stake in the Far East Company, and that a note for a slightly lesser amount was paid for *The Ullesyan Angel at Rest*, a painting by the master religious artist Greccan, whose paintings adorn the royal cathedral in the Capitol.

A Blighted Empire

Isle of Lymossus

As mentioned, the Isle of Lymossus (formally known as Insula Lymossus in High Boros) is not large, roughly 240 miles by 132 miles at its greatest extent. The entire island is considered a part of the City-State of Castorhage, and is principally composed of its seven shires, unincorporated hinterland villages, and wilderness areas.

Belkleyshire

Belkleyshire lies at the extreme southern tip of the island. Its terrain is predominantly the rugged shire woodlands and the swampy peninsula of Telosmere. The only settlement of any note is Purcher-on-Rose, at the mouth of the Rose River. This shire is mostly inhabited by woodsmen, swampers, and fishermen who brave the rough seas off the island's southern coast. The shire is the ancestral domain of the Cornova family, and its Royal Reeve, **Eskan Cornova** (NG male human **noble**), oversees its three parishes of the Wood, the Purcher, and Telosmere with a light hand. Belkleyshire is far from the cutthroat politics of the city, and its inhabitants prefer it that way. Eskan Cornova considers the rugged coast of the southern Lymoss Highlands as an unofficial shire parish, and has become intrigued of late by an ancient monastery on Taff that is occupied by a holy order — apparently cut off from all outside contact for more than five centuries. He is not sure what to make of this discovery, but will doubtless find the time to travel there and get a lay of the place before too much longer.

Devil's Holt

Formerly known as Aldwarkshire, this was once a lush and beautiful forested area of the island. Long under the rule of the Gacci family, the chief settlement of Aldwark was turned into an industrial centre called by many "Toiltown the Lesser." The vast stretch of brick manufactories and mills built along the Redding Slough belched forth immense black clouds and consumed the hardwoods of the Aldwarkshire Wood with abandon. Now, the shire woodland is little more than a vast muddy plain of rotting tree stumps and stubborn vines, that cause itching blisters on any exposed skin that touches them. The Redding Slough is a black stream that slips into the Fetid Sea like the blade of a poisoned dagger, killing or driving off all aquatic life within 15 miles. A stinking pall of ash and grime lays over Aldwark, and most of its population is composed of indentured servants, whose contracts were bought by the Gacci to work their deplorable mills. There are no recognized parishes in the shire, though the naval citadel of

Caskow and Tatum's Light are ostensibly under the shire's jurisdiction. The city-state pays a lease to the Gacci for use of these facilities, and these payments are largely what keeps the shire afloat.

Ivan Gacci (CE male blighted† human **knight**) is the family head, and serves as Royal Reeve in Aldwark. Though the family's fortunes have turned, he still squeezes every fourthing he can from the labours of the army of sickly indentures at his disposal, and his reputation for cruelty and brutality has spread far and wide. The one shining hope of the family lies in the second cousin of Ivan, **Elaine of Aldwark**, who has found a place with the Royal Family. All of Ivan's ambitions rest on the shoulders of Elaine, whom he sees as a fragile puppet for his manipulation. He is completely unaware of who she is, and what she is capable of, and is quite likely to meet a very untimely end if he attempts any intimidation of his "kinswoman."

Fallowshire

Lying a hard day's carriage drive — or two leisurely days' ride — north of Castorhage, there lies the aristocratic outpost of Crow's Fallow. Known paradoxically as the Fallowshire (or just the Fallow), the land is composed of beautiful, rolling green countryside; rural peasant farmers; horse breeders; and magnificent, stately homes and estates (some almost palatial in their dimensions and luxuriance). The shire is, notably, the ancestral home of the noble House Perfida (see **Chapter 5**), with **Malistri Perfida** (NE female human **noble**) — a lesser cousin of the house — serving as its Royal Reeve, and has inherited a distinct character from that family's long residency.

Notable settlements within the shire are its recognized "First City" of Crow's Fallow, remote Kirksterry, the villages and estates of Mordent, and the sea fortress at Tumescir that is controlled almost entirely by the Perfida family.

Crow's Fallow is on the tongues of every noble who can afford to live or visit the place, but its infamy amongst others is terrible. Far from being a green idyll, Crow's Fallow hides dark secrets: the servants are brutalised slaves, and the aristocracy is riddled with vampires, sickness and cruelty. The infamous hunt, which most estates in the shire run for six months of the year, often hunt people, not wild game. Orgies of wanton excess are commonplace, and the regal right of "the first night" and the "right to thigh" which allow local lords the first night with any new bride and the rights to have carnal relations with anyone of lesser rank are enthusiastically practiced.

The parishes within the Fallow are Larkmere, Grimlaw, Barrowstones, Black Myre and Dark Moss. They make up this dreadful shire, and are names associated with horror, slavery and pagan evil amongst local common-folk and others who know the dark truth. Their appointed sheriffs are seen more as bogeymen who lurk in the night, rather than protectors of the people and enforcers of the law.

Hollyhay

Sometimes called the Happy Shire, Hollyhay is predominantly within the southern hills descending from the Lymoss Highlands. These dry, weather-beaten downs make for poor farming, but do support hardy grasses perfect for grazing and haymaking. The principal settlement is Hudd, a market town and slaughterhouse for the herds of the hinterlands. The thin strip of coastal land is better for farming; and the nearby Highhorn provides good hardwoods for building, and for bow and polearm-making, creating cottage industries of bowyers and weaponsmiths and having a reputation for fine marksmen. The Highhorn's steep slopes and deep vales are hard to harvest lumber from, however, so this industry has never blossomed into anything significant. The most curious inhabitants of the shire are not recognized as official inhabitants, but are known by many. These are the sciurians, a race of docile squirrelfolk who dwell in the upper reaches of the Highhorn. These small people are skittish and shy, avoiding strangers who enter the upper reaches of the woods, but they do conduct some limited trade with the halflings of the downs, and they have been known to help lone travellers in need of aid.

No single family claims rights over Hollyhay, so it is ruled jointly by a collective of human and halfling farmers and herdsmen who meet in Hudd once a month to discuss matters of the shire. They have been given leave to elect a Royal Reeve for 2-year terms, and **Jasper Holdwell** (LG male halfling **inspector**) is in his fifth term for another year before he comes up for re-election. The shire has 16 different parishes throughout the downs and coastlands, each with its own sheriff, and there is rarely a need for them to gather.

The main population of Hollyhay is herdsmen and hay cutters upon the stark downs. A great many of them are halflings who build their traditional subterranean dwellings among the low hills. They say that here dwells the greatest concentration of halflings anywhere outside the Dale, though the halflings of Mayfurrow near Bard's Gate would surely dispute this. The halflings of Hollyhay look askance at the Small Folk of the city. They see the halfling gypsy-folk of Boattown and entrepreneurs of Festival as swindlers at best, and murderous criminals at worst, doing their best to discourage their own kind from moving to the city. They are not consciously aware of the curse of lycanthropy that infests the halflings of Festival, but the local leaders recognize the names of Grast, Scathel and Frynn as anathema to their kind, and no halflings of those clans are permitted to reside in the shire.

Lakland

Lakland is not a shire, but rather a wilderness area of many lakes, streams, and wooded vales in southern Lymossus. The folk of both Belkleyshire and Hollyhay visit Lakland on occasion for its beauty and abundant fishing, but it is known to be a haven for the fey, who are not particularly welcoming of visitors. The hidden dells and rills that dot the rolling lands between the hundreds of tiny lakes make hiding easy here, and one can never know what might be watching from some concealed position no more than a dozen yards away. Folk who camp here overnight tend to go missing with frightening regularity, and for this reason it has not become a haven for outlaws seeking to hide among its natural concealment. Legends of Belkleyshire and Hollyhay state that the halfling god Mick O'Delving once tricked the Aspect of the Green Man to leave the wooded glens of Lakland and travel to the city in order to re-establish the order of nature there. That this is an impossible task that the god placed before the primordial being is the tongue-in-cheek joke of the legend, but everyone who relates it knocks on wood or tosses salt over his right shoulder shortly thereafter, for fear that too much encroachment upon the pristine waters and dells of Lakland might just summon the Green Man back to exact terrible revenge upon anyone in the surrounding region.

Larkspur

Larkspur, a noble folly lying some 6 miles north of the city, was once destined to be the location of a large industrial town, but it fell into the surrounding Lych Fens in a similar way to that of the Sinks — more dramatically. Few buildings stand now, and those that do are perched upon deep, unstable bogs and mudbars. The Grand Tunnel Canal (see **Chapter 10**) emerges here at the King's Lock, and links up to the Great Lyme to the south. Long abandoned as an official government town, Larkspur is now a rural, rough-and-tumble location of scratch farmers, swampers, and eel fishermen. However, just under its surface it exists as a base for the Guild, and to a lesser extent other organisations that make use of the ready access provided by the canal. The current town overseer is **Lamkin Nit** (CN male blighted† human **senior operative**), a scar-faced tough who rules with a firm (but light) hand. He is a member of the Guild (rumoured to be a member of the Inner Circle or even the Guildmaster himself!) who keeps a close eye on the comings and goings through the canal, charging a small toll for its use (2 cp – 1 gp depending on how wealthy a traveller looks), but he makes no real attempt to regulate its access. He knows that a number of different groups maintain secret safe-houses and strongholds along the canal and figures it is better to let them pass than to try and stop them — and possibly attract unwanted Royal attention.

Lych Fens

The flooded swamplands of the Lych Fens surround the city of Castorhage in a choking embrace. Attempts for the city to drain areas of these fens and spread outward have proven to be failures: the debacle of constructing the Sinks by King Branner the Child being the most famous example. No matter how much the swamps are drained, the inevitable saturation of the

low-lying coastal lands, and frequently storm-wracked tides, ensure that none of the endeavours have yet come to fruition. As a result, the city has turned inward with a greater compression of its already jam-packed population. Many swampers dwell in small hamlets among these swamps, catching eels, raising goats and pigs, and even growing small plots of vegetables where dry ground can be found. Several extensive clans of these swamp folk reside in the southern Lych Fens, many related to the Pigbrine of the Wash (see **TT10** in **Chapter 8**) — these are particularly cruel and vicious towards outsiders. Along with them dwell innumerable briny†, skum, lizard folk, and other swamp-dwelling races that maintain an uneasy equilibrium, one that always threatens to erupt in open warfare in the watery glades.

The northern Lych Fens are even more inhospitable, being truer to the name for their original use: the disposal of bodies. The creatures that dwell here are feral, unlikely to be humanoid, and are joined by myriad types of undead that occupy the swamp due to the long practice of bog burials conducted by the Great Cemetery in the Hollow and Broken Hills (see **HBH31** in **Chapter 7**)

Lymoss Highlands

This is a rugged chain of ancient, low mountains. They have been explored fairly thoroughly over the centuries, with occasional mines opened up to exploit what mineral resources were available, but as these have played out, the highlands have largely been left to themselves. The sheriffs of Mourneyshire make occasional forays in search of predatory beasts or escaped criminals, but in general the peaks are unpatrolled. Consequently, they are home to small but stable populations of orcs and goblinoids. These creatures have learned over the years not to raid into the lowlands, lest they receive reprisals capable of causing the extinction of their tribes, but they are extremely territorial and frequently gather to ambush anyone foolish enough to encroach upon their domain. Some of the peaks still bear ancient dolmens and stone rings left by the Ancient Ones who once called this island home, and the tribal shamans conduct torch-lit rituals on certain nights of the year, rituals that involve howls rising from the peaks into the dark skies and that are sometimes answered by unseen things from above. Occasionally, the bravest or most powerful witches of the Great Coven will join these rituals for a time, but the things they have seen left even them shaken, and they soon cease to take part again.

Mourneyshire

By far the most cosmopolitan of the shires (outside the urban blight of Aldwark), Mourneyshire is a broad land extending from the highland vale of the Upper Lyme Rover and down along the Great Lyme's length to the hills of Fallowshire, as well as down through the Purtle Lows to Hollyhay and Quent's Wood (which they share with Perish Shire). Technically, the lands between the Great Lyme and the south bank of Redding Slough are a part of the shire, but they are too dangerous for most folk to live there. Instead they are heavily travelled by sheriff's patrols who prevent poachers and woodsmen from sneaking into Quent's Wood to steal resources. The city of Mourney is the largest on the island outside of Castorhage, and has the air of an uplands market town. The wide swath of the shire is divided into more than 20 parishes, and supports vast stretches of farmlands as well as grazing ranges where cattle and sheep are raised, and the famous Shire warhorses are bred.

Mourney is a walled city accessible by two river bridges, and is the ancestral holding of the dukes of Mourney. The line of the Mourney dukes has crossed with the Royal Family of Castorhage through marriage many times in the past, and the current Queen's late husband was **Duke Marram**, the grandfather of the current **Duke Ostem of Mourney** (LG male human **knight**). **Princess Rebecca** is the daughter of Marram (though she is thought to be the first child of **Prince Orsche** whom the Queen married shortly after Marram's sudden death). Though it is not commonly known that Rebecca is of the line of Marram, she is nonetheless claimed by the Duchy of Mourney because she was raised for most of her formative years in that city, and stole the hearts of the locals with her beauty and grace.

Perish Shire

Perish Shire is small and poorly populated, occupying only the lowlands north of the River Derse and the southern fringe of Quent's Wood. It is the ancestral land of the dukes of Ludlow, who occupy the ancient coastal castle of Ludlow and allow the Royal Reeve, **Justis Babbot** (N male half-elf **noble**), to oversee affairs in the main town of Plover. The dukes of Ludlow once counted themselves the foremost war leaders of Colonial Castorhage, but their star has fallen far over the many centuries, reducing them to a small clan of short, churlish drunkards who tend towards obesity and honeyed-urine disease. They still claim ownership over the rocky island called the Apyrion, but have not exerted influence there since disaster claimed that citadel more than 600 years ago. The current Duke Ludlow, **Festinbar II** (NE male human **veteran**) sits in his rocking chair in full plate armour, looking out over the ocean and brooding over his fortunes.

The rest of Perish Shire is occupied by lowland farms, fishermen of the river and coastal waters, and hunters and woodsmen of Quent's Wood. Not far from the woodland's border is an ancient Hyperborean cemetery called Culden Field. One or more battles were fought here between the Hyperborean Legion and the rebel Castorhagi, and the dead were buried on site — most in mass graves, but also in a number of individual marked graves and even a few stone crypts. The inscriptions of names and dates have long since worn off from these 1,700-year-old weathered stones, of course. Local tales speak of haunts and bogeymen that lurk in the night around Culden Field, but actual reports are few and far between.

Pence Islands

This little chain of rocky islands makes up the smallest and most-frequently-forgotten shire of Lymossus. The Pence Islands have served as the homes for rugged fishermen for more years than the Castorhagi calendar measures. Most of these folk are descended from the ancient tribes that dwelt here before the arrival of the Hyperboreans, and their tales are rich with unknown history and untold tradition. Life on the Pence is hard and windblown, relying on the capricious seas to provide for the table, and on half-buried hovels to provide shelter. Most folk here are followers of Brine, though very few briny† are found among their number. All told, there are more than 500 islands among the Pence, and each is technically considered its own parish. Only a handful of these have a sheriff, however, or even a name, and these tend to unpronounceable amalgams from the ancient local dialects. The largest island parish is Skwthwildereen, which plays host to the shire's principal town of Sheklan. Here the Royal Reeve **Diver Olighas** (N male human **noble**) oversees the main fishing fleets and collection of taxes for the Crown and tithes for the Church of Brine — both given equal weight under shire law.

Wicken

This small hamlet north of the city is of little consequence in the affairs of the city-state, one of hundreds like it scattered across the isle. It does, however, play a significant role in ***The Levee Adventure Path*** and is fully detailed in a side trek included with adventure ***L1: Hereafter***.

The Crescent Sea

The Crescent Sea is the vast inland sea of Western Akados, separating the core Kingdoms of Foere and its surrounding states from the vast wooded wilderness of the Green Realm and beyond. The Isle of Lymossus is situated near the eastern coast of the sea at approximately the mid-point of its north-south axis. The Crescent Sea is a large, deep-water inland sea, with major ports at Castorhage, Reme, and Bridgeport on its eastern shore. The western shore is mostly wilderness, with smaller ports of call at the Free Coast states. The island of Tandril is found near the western coast of the sea, almost due west of Lymossus. Significant trade crosses the Crescent Sea to the Grand Duchy of Reme, the kingdoms of North Heath, the Vast, and Myrridon, the halfling lands of the Low Country and the City-State of Castorhage, as well as in and out through the Mouth of Akados, where the Crescent meets the waters of Mother Oceanus far to the south.

Bitter Island

Claimed long ago as Royal Island by the monarchs of Castorhage, Bitter Island is a temporary island that rises above the surface of the Crescent Sea and inevitably sinks again with little to no warning. It has served as a Royal Residence, a hermetic retreat, and a place of exile since its discovery centuries ago. It has experienced both great triumphs and tragedies associated with the Castorhage Royal Family, and continues to be sought by those hoping to capitalise on its unique reputation — or to learn its secrets. Each time it has risen, the island has continued to possess an intact palace apparently dating back to ancient Phoremyceae, though the palace is always empty of any prior occupants or furnishings.

Brine Heath, The

The Brine Heath is a great, poisoned, salt swamp along the coast of the Kingdom of North Heath and south of Norshore. It is technically unclaimed land, cut off from the surrounding landward nations by the desolation of the Poison Lands. The salt swamp has very little life, and plants struggle to grow in its oily, briny waters, but some dangerous denizens do manage to eke out an existence including some giants and several types of dragons and drakes. The ruins of the early Hyperborean city of Almanass still stand in the northern reaches of the swamp, but they are difficult to reach because of the treacherous surrounding lands and the bloodthirsty humanoids known to gather in the war camps of Shunta.

Fetid Sea, The

A shallow bay that stretches between Lymossus and the mainland, this stretch of water has been known as the Fetid Sea for millennia. Whether the Brine Heath pollutes its waters or the sea pollutes the Brine Heath is not entirely clear, but aquatic life in the Fetid Sea is scarce and unhealthy. Only in its westernmost reaches where the waters of the Crescent Sea wash through it is fishing even possible. Situated at the centre of the Fetid Sea are a series of muddy islands called the Floodtides. These are little more than large tidal mounds of silt and mud that are sometimes entirely underwater. However, the sea near the Floodtides is nonetheless much, much deeper than elsewhere, and said to hold great creatures only occasionally glimpsed in the surrounding waters.

Free Coast

Formerly called the Forest Coast Work Colonies, this string of settlements was established centuries ago by Castorhage to work convicts and harvest the plentiful trees of the Green Realm. Eventually, King Lertis Tevoy provoked armed conflict with the wild elves of the Green Realm when he tried to build a great road piercing the heart of the Green Realm. The war was ruinous for Castorhage, and resulted in the near-total destruction of the penal colonies. Centuries later, when outcasts and those seeking political freedom began relocating to these old colonies, the Grand Duchy of Reme blocked Castorhage's to resume control over them. This resulted, shortly thereafter, in the creation of the Tycho Free States that now occupy this portion of the Forest Coast.

Ilber Nole

Ilber Nole is the only true fortification on the Free Coast. Constructed by Castorhage to oversee their Forest Coast penal colonies and defend from sea raiders, the citadel was largely abandoned at the same time as the coast itself. It has since become occupied by elements of the peoples inhabiting the Tycho Free States, and is currently the demesne of the self-styled **Free Corsair Andre Turotimis** (N male human **pirate captain**), who watches over the waters of the Free Coast and keeps away the warships of other nations.

Kalares Croft

The sheltered Firth of Kees gives access to the city of Kalares Croft, a vassal city engulfed by Castorhage with the annexation of Tarry. The fortress of Crestfall overlooks the protected entrance to the firth, which provides an ideal anchorage for ships of the Royal Navy away from the prying eyes and ears of the city-state, and out of the way of the storms that sometimes lash the Fetid Sea. Kalares Croft now serves the primary purpose of refitting and resupplying naval vessels at anchor there, and gives their crews a place to take shore leave without fear of being murdered by an Anarchist, or worse.

Tarry

Tarry is Castorhage's only major port on mainland Akados. Once a port of the Duchy of Kear, Tarry was annexed by Castorhage following the fall of the realm of the vampire-lord known as the Singed Man. The seas around Tarry are particularly shallow and silty, and have long been known for the seep of oil from the seabed in many places. This oil-seep creates an oily, sludgy area of the sea known as the Damps. This ecological nightmare is valuable as a port, however, as the folk of Tarry are able to collect the seeping petroleum to create bitumen, pitch, asphalt, tar, and alchemist's fire. Several towns along the shores of the Fetid Sea provide crafts and services to support this industry. **Duke Talmas Odrecky, Lord of the Damps** (LE male human **high priest** of Mammon), rules over all of these operations on the eastern side of the Fetid Sea, in the name of Queen Alice of Castorhage. Situated on a small island in the heart of the Damps, and barred from casual observation by patrol sloops and summoned elementals, there stands the mysterious Preterhouse, where it is said secret experiments are conducted by the government of Castorhage. What these experiments may entail, or if they are indeed occurring, remains unknown.

Trinidar

Once called the Jewel of the Crescent Sea, the city of Trinidar was established on Tandril Island by early Castorhagi explorers. It has been free of Castorhagi rule for 600 years and is now an independent city-state in its own right, though it remains a friendly port to Castorhagi vessels and profits greatly from the Castorhagi trade funnelled through its trading houses. Trinidar is an interesting and diverse mix of cultures, styles, and traditions, with a great deal of the South-Coast-style architecture, wooden constructions of grand shuttered windows and colourful stucco. Trinidar holds a chapterhouse of the Imperial Mercantile League, and possesses the only known major public temple dedicated to the worship of the Loa of the Aizanes-Tulita

Colonial Possessions

Castorhage is a colonial empire with holdings all of the world, and some in other worlds as well. The Between colonial holdings of Castorhage are discussed in detail in **Part 5** of **The Cyclopædia Infestarum**. Colonial possessions in the world of Lloegyr (a.k.a. the Lost Lands) are listed below, though not in great detail.

In the west, Castorhage possesses colonies on the islands of Great Bream and Lesser Bream beyond the coast of the Xi'en Hegemony. They have also begun setting up colonial holdings on Tabur Bay on the southwest coast of the Haunted Steppe. From the ports of the Bream Isles, the Castorhagi trade with Xi'en, Gtsang Prefecture, and the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation of the Haunted Steppe, send voyages of exploration beyond the known bounds of the world, and do battle with the aquatic beasts of the Nether Sea for control of the sea routes in that region.

Far to the south, Castorhage has some small holdings along the Razor Coast and on islands of the Razor Sea, but they mainly trade with Port Shaw. They also conduct limited trade with the mysterious grey elves of Saferein

In the east, the Castorhagi have their largest colonial holdings along the eastern coast of Libynos and on that continent's far northeastern peninsula of Far Jaati. The vast bulk of Castorhagi auxiliary troops can be found in these holdings, to keep any popular uprisings suppressed and to defend against hostile natives in the surrounding areas. The colonies of eastern Libynos are a mixture of Royal and private interests, but control of the Jaati colonies is held exclusively by the Far East Company, a mercantile concern controlled by the Castorhagi Great House of Hasburg.

Allies and Enemies

The City-State of Castorhage has never been known for getting along particularly well with others, but their corrupt government has typically been so self-absorbed as to make them easily ignored in other lands. However, their impressive economic resources make many friendly trade contacts (if not exactly friends) and their recent leaps forward in naval warfare technology make any other naval power wary, at the very least.

At present, Castorhage enjoys open and free trade relations across the globe with the Aizanes-Tulita Islands, the city-states of the Bundesveldt, the free city of Endhome, the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation of the Haunted Steppe, the cities of the Domain of Hawkmoon, the Kingdom of Khemit, the Southern Libynosi Paramountcies, the City-State of Mulstabha, Port Shaw and other colonial settlements of the Razor Coast, the City-State of Trinidar, the Kingdom of the North Heath, the Kingdom of the Vast, the Xi'en Hegemony, and the Great City of Shabbis. Nations and governments friendly enough to conduct trade with caution and a suspicious eye include the free city of Bard's Gate, the Kingdoms of Foere, Gtsang Prefecture, the Huun Imperium, the Empire of Oceanus, the grey elves of Sarefein, the low Country and the Dale, the Kingdom of Myrridon, the native Tulita of the Razor Sea, the Tycho Free States, the Kingdom of Withy-Strythe, the Kingdom of the Helcynngae, the County of Toullen, and the Grand Duchy of Reme. Nations and peoples with whom Castorhage currently bears outright hostility include the Empire of Alcaldar, the Black Heldring, the Crusader States, the Kanderi Desert tribes (also called Kerders or Kanderi Raiders), the Pirate Confederacy of the eastern Razor Sea, the Seething Jungle tribes of Libynos, and the aquatic masters of the Sinking Place in the Nether Sea. Of these, Castorhage is only currently engaged in active open warfare with the masters of the Sinking Place, though it seems likely that they will soon be drawing battle lines with Alcaldar as well.

Defence and Law Enforcement

The city of Castorhage is unwalled, though the stinking Lych Fen that surrounds it serves as a deterrent against attack just as great as any a wall could provide. Moreover, with the sheer press of humanity that calls the city home, the thought of a military invasion would give even the most ambitious of the world's warlords pause. Castorhage has seemingly grown too big to fall to external invasion, though it always seems on the verge of collapse from internal strife. Any invading general worth his salt would know to simply blockade the small island and let the city starve and fall to the diseases that would surely emerge in such circumstances. That way lies the key to victory over any who would claim the crown of Lymossus from the Castorhagi. There are some who have considered the idea closely.

The Royal Army

Of course, just because the city lacks a wall or major universal fortifications doesn't mean it is defenceless. The city maintains a standing army of 17,000, at least a quarter of which is stationed in and around the city at any given time (many, many more can be conscripted on very short notice). The rest are stationed in overseas possessions or are *en route* between distant ports in the empire's massive territory. Details of this army and the supplementary forces that defend the city are provided below, but there are multiples of this number that can be drawn from auxiliary native troops drawn from the many colonial possessions of the empire. Estimates put the numbers of these colonial auxiliaries at over 100,000 and possibly many, many more. These troops are recruited and trained in their homelands, and then stationed in other colonial possessions of the empire to prevent any chance of their creating armed uprisings in their own countries. Strict laws prevent almost any of these colonial auxiliaries from being brought to Castorhage itself. The closest such troops come would be the Imperial Jaata-Kut Auxiliary Sappers Corps, stationed at the fortress of Crestfall on Kees Firth, 40 miles across the Apyrion Strait from Lymossus.

Soldiers of the Royal Army are commonly called dogsboys (slang, sometimes derogatory). They usually carry broadswords and light crossbows, although cavalry, siege engineers and pikemen regiments are to be found in their ranks. The ranks rise from soldier to corporal, then to sergeant, sergeant-major, captain, colonel, brigadier and general. The present general and Lord Commander of the Royal Army and Navy is **General Haft** — who is a puppet of his secret masters (see **Chapter 5**).

The Royal Navy

The Royal Navy is officially considered a branch of the Royal Army, and counts for approximately a quarter of the army's total personnel. Rather than dogsboys, the sailors of the Royal Navy are called Lymies (often derogatory). The Royal Navy boasts a fleet of 57 ships of war, including 5 of the new ironclad *Dreadnought* class. Most naval vessels are typical clippers, sloops, men-o-war, and galleons, rigged with sails and outfitted with wooden hulls (though often reinforced). The dreadnoughts are ironclad vessels approximately the size of a brig, but propelled by two sidewheel paddles. These are driven by large boilers deep within the ship, where ragefire elementals are held enslaved, contained, and harnessed. The hulls of these vessels are clad in iron plating, and they have only a modest superstructure to keep their profiles and centre of gravity low in order to avoid tipping. They are typically outfitted with the usual complement of ballistas, catapults, and in some cases even cannons (captains of dreadnoughts have preferred cannon in particular, due to their advantages in the confined spaces of the interior decks). Recently, rumours speak of great cannon-like tubes being erected from turrets atop the dreadnoughts' main decks and of deliberate feeding of convicted criminals to the ragefires in order to cause them to spawn. Dark whispers have emerged from the southern tip of Libynos of dreadnoughts spitting fire across long distances to engulf enemy ships, shoreward fortifications, or simply enemy troops. If any of this is true, it is a truly horrific development in the ways of naval warfare.

Office of the Watch

The Watch (politely known as Officers of the Watch or the Queen's Men) number just over 2,100. They wear deep blue padded armour greatcoats as uniforms, and are armed with coshes† and/or short clubs. They carry pyrebeetle lanterns, and each also carries a bone whistle with which to summon help. The ranks of the Watch are are Constable of the Watch, Sergeant of the Watch, Inspector of the Watch, Parish Officer of the Watch, Captain of the Watch, Parish Commander of the Watch, District-Commander of the Watch, and Commander of the Watch. The present Commander of the Watch is **Kevel Durmast** (NE male **doppelganger**) who is secretly a member of Justice Braken's spy ring, the Veil.

Other Agencies

There are myriad private or secret law enforcement or protection agencies employed by the powerful throughout the city. Perhaps the best known are the Knockers, a force of secret police in service to the Crown who can "disappear" someone without leaving a trail back to the powers that be. Less known is the Veil, a ring of doppelganger spies and assassins, who answer directly to Crown Justice Braken and his masters.

The Legal System

From the Crown Justices on down, the legal system is a convoluted pyramid of power, influence, extortion, and corruption. Each level seeks to undermine the members of the next level up and replace them, while defending against the same efforts of those below them. Below is a brief summary of the hierarchy.

Crown Justice: Three chief judiciaries of the Crown Bench, technically at the same authority level as the Queen. They pass laws and hear important cases

Justice: Twelve elite judges who each oversee some specific aspect of law or municipal governance.

Under-Justice: The chief jurist of a city district. These hold absolute power in their districts unless overruled by a member of the Royal Family

or one of the Crown Justices.

Judicare: A minor judge who handles court cases and hears criminal prosecutions of a mundane sort that are beneath the notice of an Under-Justice.

Streetclerk: A jurist and legal aid to the district Under-Justice, the Streetclerks oversee the activities of individual parish Watch stations.

Underclerk: An assistant to a Streetclerk, Underclerks sometimes oversee individual ward Watch stations.

Chief Jurist: A generic term for the highest-ranking judge of a district, parish, or ward.

UnderMaester: A local political appointment made by parish Watch Commanders, UnderMaesters are charged with levying jury taxes on citizens in their parish when called upon, organizing any electoral efforts required, and supplying respectable citizens to fill out juries when needed for local trials.

Capitol Barrister: Legal counsel representing the interests of the Crown.

Barrister of the Commons: Legal counsel for those of a caste other than Royals.

Legalese: a.k.a. "Turnee"; these are hired legal advisors who can file official paperwork, provide legal advice, and even defend or prosecute minor cases before the courts.

Clubs and Guilds

Contacts are the common man's way into the hallowed halls of power. A beggar, it is said, could bribe his way to become a knight if he had the right luck and the vast amount of money it would take. In a city like this, anything and everything is for sale, but anything and everything is also controlled.

There are thousands of clubs, guilds and cults in the dank city streets, each one seeking power, each one with relationships with others—some good, some bad—and each one capable of action, no matter how great or how small.

Being a member of a guild or club or cult opens doors; it brings the characters into a new sphere of influence, opens up access to new spells, new equipment and new avenues of pleasure.

They can also be powerful: guilds own parishes within districts, clubs own officials, cults have the local Justice's daughter kept in a dark place to make sure that their actions remain unseen.

Making enemies of such groups is dangerous, simply because of the amount of power they have. A character opposing a cult may be arrested on a trumped-up charge, judged and hanged in a single night. Even breaking free of the gaol leaves them a fugitive, but there is always someone who opposes the same cult, eager for new recruits.

There are said to be over 500 thieves' guilds in the Blight, all a fragment of the Guild itself. Each of the core classes has a choice of cults, groups and guilds to represent them, the most infamous of which are the Dying City, a group of druids who aim to bring a plague upon the houses of all those who have stained the land with the Blight. Simply put, these groups give you another gaming option. You may wish to have them as shadowy background groups, you may wish to bring them to the fore. They are part of this city as they are any dark fantasy city.

Guild Tattoos

Every guild (and many clubs) within the city has its own distinct tattoos and members are trained to recognize their own guild's tattoos. An unknown person who displays a guild or club tattoo to a member will usually have that tattoo closely inspected before they are accepted as a fellow member.

A small sampling listing the myriad clubs and guilds of the city is provided below. Each gives a brief description of the organization as well as its official tattoo-sigil.

Albright Guardianship Company

Sigil: Sword upright before a kite shield bearing a sunburst

A mercenary organization barely whitewashed as a private security firm

Anti-Arcane League

Sigil: A spring and winding-gear

A group of inventors sworn to replace magic with technology.

Blight Knights

Sigil: A bellows contraption with a lick of flame extending from its nozzle

An organization dedicated to curbing the spread of the growth of the organism known as Blight.

Company of Honourable Seamen

Sigil: A ship's wheel crossed by an anchor and a cutlass

A merchant marine guild of great power and numbers that is regularly used to supplement Royal Navy forces in battle.

Consortium of Tar, Bitumen and Potash Calefactors

Sigil: A barrel below three gold coins

Merchants specialising in the recovery, manufacture, and distribution of tar, bitumen, potash, asphalt and pitch.

Dwarven Beneath Brotherhood

Sigil: A caged canary and pyrebeetle lantern on a black background

This group of dwarves offers guide services to those exploring below the city streets.

Gentlemen Explorers Club

Sigil: A globe and sextant

An exclusive group of explorers of renown, whose members have travelled the dark rivers of Between, climbed impossible mountains and sailed the Unsea, as well as set up colonies in mundane foreign lands.

Grand Society of Obedience

Sigil: A coiled, thorn-covered whip

One of only two guilds possessing the secret of creating broken† creatures.

Guild of Harlots

Sigil: The silhouette of a curvaceous woman

Called the First Guild, or the First, the official guild of the courtesans and corner-doxies of the city.

Hedonists

Sigil: A haunch of meat and goblet of wine upon a tray of insectum†

An exclusive swyne club dedicated to excess and all things indulgent.

Honourable Guild of Duelling Referees

Sigil: Two crossed fencing epees

Referees of all legally sanctioned duels in the city.

Honourable Guild of Miners

Sigil: A pickaxe horizontal above a canary in a cage

The third-oldest guild in the city, dedicated to mining the Underneath

Honourable and Most Holy Guild of Crematorium Masters

Sigil: Stacked wood for a funeral pyre (which unfortunately looks more like a pyramid made of bread loaves)

The society that oversees the legal cremation of remains in the city and includes most ghatmasters.

Honourable Society of Equestrian Touts

Sigil: A horse's head

More usually called urgers, these folk stand on street corners and sell tips for the weekly Castorhage Horse, Dray and Hyme Races. They not only sell tips, but higher-ranking members in the guild can take bets as well (these have a special tattoo). Tip prices depend on the urger and the look of the customer, and often urgers sell tips specifically in order to affect the odds being given rather than to benefit the purchasers of the tips, so as in all things in the Blight: *caveat emptor*.

Illuminati

Sigil: The All-Knowing Eye superimposed upon the Blessed Tesseract

The true rulers of the city who work in secret behind the scenes and pull the strings of a thousand thousand marionettes. They control two of the Crown Justices (though they are rumoured to control all three) and in turn answer to the city's unknown ruler, the demoness Demoriel. They are currently responsible for choosing who serves in the pastoral role of Father of Castorhage over the See of Lymos, and seek to control the Royal Succession as well. They sponsor most of the ongoing labour in the mines beneath the city, and are secretly setting up their own planar kingdom known as Furnace. Finally, perhaps the greatest illustration of their power is the fact that they control most of the known portals to Between.

Infamous Puppeteers

Sigil: A marionette holding a stick

A group of skilled puppeteers who provide biting social and political commentary designed to incite the population and frequently on the run from the law.

Insectum Guild

Sigil: Stylized insectum beetle

Guild of alchemists capable of raising and producing "safe" and potent insectum† for the many distributors in the city.

Knights of the Great Order

Sigil: A headstone with a halo of light radiating outward

An order of LN cavaliers dedicated to hunting and putting to rest individuals who have been animated by necromancy, extended by *potions of longevity,* or revived by resurrection magic.

Liars' Guild

Sigil: Smiling red lips

A guild of swyne enchanters.

Mirror Knights

Sigil: A broken mirror

Warriors and mages dedicated to hunting the strange creatures that creep into the city from Between and prey upon the populace.

Office of Sanitation

Sigil: An ouroboros symbolising the water cycle

City sanitation called sewerers that replaced the Guild of Sewagers and Ironmongers.

Pactmakers

Sigil: A rolled parchment scroll crossed by a quill

Guild of conjurers who oversee and facilitate the keeping of outsider thralls by spellcasters of Castorhage.

Pawnbrokers Guild

Sigil: Three iron balls arranged in a triangle

A guild that offers secured loans to people, with items of personal property used as collateral.

Punters' Alliance

Sigil: Gondola and boatman

Consortium of prahu-punters who ply the waters of the Lyme and the canals of the Sinks.

Royal Duellists

Sigil: A fencing epee piercing a stylized heart with a single drop of blood dripping down

Duellists who seek out cheaters in duels to bring them to challenge or even eliminate them quietly to preserve the integrity of the city's duelling system.

Royal Lamplighters

Sigil: A burning torch

Guildsmen responsible for lighting and dousing the pyrebeetle street lamps around the city each night as well as serving as useful guides to have after dark. Their link-boys know the city's secrets better than most.

Royal Between Reflectory Society and Guild

Sigil: A man looking into a mirror but seeing a reflection not his own

Mirror-mages who control and jealously guard the secret of *mirror-portal* creation. They themselves are in thrall to both the Illuminati and the Thieves Guild, who hold the key and materials to their creation.

Royal Underneath Society

Sigil: A shovel and coil of rope with a dwarven face faintly superimposed

Delvers and savants who plumb the mysteries of the Great Dark and the Underneath in search of the truth of Castorhage's past.

Sisters of Bestial Discipline

Sigil: The face of a troll with a nose-ring

One of only two guilds possessing the secret of creating broken† creatures.

Surrealists Club

Sigil: A graceful female nude with no skin on one arm and extended above like a billowing sail

Those who believe in pain as an art form. They commonly use flesh in horrid displays of their craft. Some are secretly members of the Cult of N'Gathau

The Gablemaesters

Sigil: Stylized skyline of gabled roof tops

Gablemaesters hunt the spiders and monstrous insects that dwell atop the city. They know every inch of the rooftops of the city, and vociferously deny any claim that they breed the colossal spiders occasionally found there, as a form of job security.

The Inkling

Sigil: A cogwheel with an eye set in it off centre.

Secret society of sentient constructs dedicated to the Crooked Promethean and the freedom of all thinking machines. They use the secret language of Cobble to communicate.

The Rat-Catchers

Sigil: A stylized cat's claw

A society of individuals (many of them Guild members) dedicated to exterminating the wererats of Festival. Hated enemies of the Family, Rat-catchers membership is by strict invitation only. The blood of a thousand wererats is on their hands and membership is often perilous.

The Royal Cartographers Society

Sigil: An astrolabe with sun, moon, and the figure of Death

An elite handful of far-traveling cartographers and a repository for an astounding collection of maps, both modern and antique.

The Thieves' Guild (aka "The Guild")

Sigil: Countless signs and sigils for the myriad branches of the Guild

The umbrella organisation for most of the gangs and thieves' guilds of the city.

The Whispering Sisters

Sigil: A pair of luscious female lips

These ladies of the night specialise in using their talents to prise secrets from customers, and make them available for sale to the highest bidder.

Eating in the Blight

"As many as there are pies in the Blight."

—Old rural saying

Tens of thousands of people make their living by cooking food and selling it in the city, from the humble pickled egg seller to **The Cullinare** (see **B30** in **Chapter 3**) the most famous eating house in Castorhage. Not everyone can afford more than one meal a day, but everyone, it seems, is hungry.

Street Vendors

The smell of meat cooking in woks, the warm sweet aroma of fresh bread, the spices wafting from pie sellers — food is available at every street corner in the city. The simplest traders are the pie makers, who make the traditional *stodge*—a wrapped meat pastry with chopped carrots and onions—but with hundreds of local variants from the *hot stodge*—a spiced meat pastry—to the *tin miner's stodge*—a pastry meal that is half pie, half jam tart. These pastries are typically only a copper common, and traders sell from dawn to dusk.

Bread makers sell at many street corners or in market stalls, and the number of different breads is matched only by the number of bakers. Commonest is the *cob*, which is often served with a large hunk of cheese and slices of onion for a farthing, *currant bread* is a sweeter toasted bread, whilst *pack* is a long thin crusty bread and a staple of many workers. Breads of great size are made for factory workers and others, and once a master baker baked a bread carriage for the Royal Family

The woks sizzle day and night, indeed locals suspect that some wok traders are undead, as they never seem to rest. Generally, wok traders sell very spicy food and noodles served in a fragile clay dish known as a *spill-me-not*. Such food is cheap, with a copper common giving a good meal.

Duchess Anne's Bread Carriage

This remarkable, full-size creation still resides in the Capitol. Created by Master Baker Harold Babcock in 1403, the immensely heavy carriage was drawn to the Capitol by two shire horses, one of which died on the journey. The carriage was subsequently dragged by hand the final mile by local Lowfolk. The number of these that died in the process—if any—was not recorded in the Royal Archives.

Fish-and-Fry

The staple of the dockworkers and fishermen, battered fish-and-fry (usually fried potatoes, but occasionally carrots, turnips or parsnips depending on what is available) is delicious, cheap and plentiful, although sometimes very odd fish are found beneath the thick layers of batter. A good-sized helping of fish-and-fry can usually be had for a farthing. For those who are bit more particular about the quality and freshness of the fish, a copper common is a more reasonable price.

Pie Shop

Every street has a pie shop; most sell simple beef or pork pies for a ha'penny, but as ever in a city of this size regional and district variations abound, from the *hot swan pie* made by the locals of the Souks in Great Docks markets to the far simpler *Uplander's pie,* containing a sheep's stomach stuffed with meat and barley.

From time to time, an unsettling story emerges about just what goes into pies in the Blight, and every so often, something very bad has been found to be happening. Usually the very bad ingredients never become publicly known, but sometimes a curious individual digs too deep and learns too much…

Jellied Eels

"Jellied eels, jellied eels, who'll buy my jellied eels?"

—Traditional song of the jellied-eels sellers on the docks

A city delicacy (but regarded by some as monstrous) jellied eels come in all shapes and sizes, including the massive *flotsam eels*, portions of which (*rounds*) are often as much as 6 inches across. Generally the eels are served with vinegar and cost a copper common for a round.

Wok House

A wok house is a slightly more upscale version of the street traders' woks. These are generally run by the more successful of such traders, although some wok house owners go back several generations. Elaborate Xi'en meals can be had at wok houses for a few silver pilasters.

Tiffin

Tiffin is a meal taken in mid-morning amongst the more civilised people (those able to spare the time to take a meal at such a busy time in general). Tiffin usually consists of a savoury sauce over a rice base with fried meat and spices.

Three-Penny Ordinaries

Considered the cheapest sort of feast money can buy, a *three-penny ordinary* is a three-course meal usually of soup, a stew and seasonal fruit or a sweetbread. A three-penny ordinary sells for 3 silver pilasters.

Twelve-Penny Ordinaries

The stuff of a street waif's dreams, a *twelve-penny ordinary* sells for 5–12 silver pilasters depending on the size of the meal and its garnishments.

Chop Houses and Beef Houses

These places vary from lean-to shacks perched over a street or canal to luxurious places with liveried staff that enjoy a city-wide reputation. The quality varies, also, not always solely by the price. Meat served with seasonal vegetables is their principal fair.

Coaching and Carriage Inns

The more upscale customers head for these places, even if not journeying. They tend to have the best rooms, tidiest staff and finest food. All types of meals are available from these places, varying in price from 1 sp to 5 sp.

Eating Houses

A small number of premises are dedicated purely to providing meals rather than as taverns, or inns, or to provide various entertainments. These luxurious places serve remarkable dishes, often at remarkable prices. They generally specialise in the exotic, and their chefs have an open mind about making a meal out of anything. Legend has it that the most famous of these, **The Cullinare** (**B30**), has special meals prepared for discerning clients who have very unusual tastes. The extraordinary cost of these meals includes guaranteed privacy for such clients.

Getting Around in the Blight

Getting around a city can be a nightmare: the crowded streets and filth often make progress painfully slow and uncomfortable. Foot travel to move through the city is considered to be through difficult terrain during the day between dawn and midnight.

Walking

Shank's Pony remains the only viable transport for most, and the streets are congested throughout the day with foot traffic.

Sedan Chairs

Usually (but not exclusively) carried by 2 chairmen, the sedan chair ranges from a simple covered wooden seat to luxurious biers and golden sedans. They are slower than walking unless a beater is hired to push crowds out of the way.

Horses, Mules and Camels

The commonest sort of transportation other than walking.

Elephants

Those who can afford to buy or hire an elephant not only rise above the filth and squalor, but are far less likely to find their way barred. Elephants travel the crowded city streets at 3 miles per hour. However, there are not many *elephant-wallahs* available for hire. Social status often plays a role in being able to hire an elephant.

Carts, Hand Carts and Wagons

These conveyances number in the thousands in the city and can travel at only a half mile per hour.

Chariots, Curricles, Droshkies and Harnesses

Those who wish to travel the city at speed do so at risk. These vehicles are designed for speed, and are often involved in accidents.

Carriages

It is not unusual to see a black carriage tearing through the cobbled streets of BookTown, a gilded phaeton drawn by broken ogres, pulling gracefully to a halt at the foot of the Capitol, or to a towering bishop's landau outside a cathedral. The peasantry know to keep out of the way of all carriages, which move at a steady 3 miles per hour through the city streets.

Coarse Cabs

A common type of transport seen in the better areas of the city is the *coarse cab* or *ugly coach* (also variously known by the slang terms *ug, sickcart* and *Tom Buddle's hearse*—after the inventor), a 2-person carriage affording cover from the elements and entered from a wide door at the rear or sides, and within which are leather (usually camel-hide) seats. The coarse cab is pulled by a single broken† creature, animal, fleshgine† or golem, with the driver (if there is one) sitting atop the carriage. The most common dray is a hyme†, which the cab companies find to be fast, tireless, and above all obedient. And while occasionally Hymes go on the rampage and eat a few people, mostly these matters are hushed up by the guilds and organizations that run the city. Another specific type of coarse cab is known as a Dungier's buggy† which has no driver but rather guides itself through its fleshgine† body. Everyone avoids the coarse cab, which travels at 5 miles per hour.

Boats

A million boats have sailed the Great Lyme River, they say, and often it looks like they are all out at once. On special parade days or festivals, the rivers are as crowded as the streets; however, generally the river allows travel at normal rates. Ferries and punts can be found regularly along the rivers and canals. On canals, progress is slowed by locks and river traffic so that canal boats of any type move at 1 mile per hour.

Treadmill Ferries, Chain Ferries

The treadmill ferry (also known as a chain ferry) was created by Alwin Malachite in 1687. These contraptions are essentially a great chain with a cage suspended beneath. At one end of this arrangement is a large treadmill powered by criminals, animals, or undead, walking the treadmill to make the ferry proceed along its course. The **Great Treadmill Ferry,** which links the Capitol to the Great Docks, is said to have once transported 40 elephants at a single crossing.

Conveyors and Lifts

These vertical treadmill ferries have only just been used in parts of the Capitol, linking the upper and lower parts of the town-in-a-building to each other. They are considered works of the Devil by most ordinary folk, though they elicit nothing like the fear and distaste people feel for the

macabre lifts† (see ***The Tome of Blighted Horrors*** by **Frog God Games**) found almost exclusively in the Capitol. These fleshgine monstrosities also carry passengers between various levels, but are powered by hideous part-flesh, part-machine things crafted from reanimated dead flesh and necromantic energy. They are generally kept out of sight beneath the floor of the lift, to reduce any amount of revulsion that might be felt by those who see its true nature.

Gable Palanquins a.k.a. Crows-Fly

Although the name is held in some disrepute, a Gable Palanquin is a single-seat sedan strapped to the back of some suitably agile large creature that is able to traverse the rooftops of the city at greater speed than those who pass below. Also called a Crows-Fly (on account of its ability to head in the direction *as the crow flies*) the palanquin is regarded as the fastest, but probably least comfortable, way to travel across the city. The most common type of carrier is a broken girallon or dire ape, though broken ogres specially trained for climbing are not unheard of.

Gable Palanquins are uncommon, and travelling incognito is never possible, as passers-by gawk and occasionally clap as the sedan passes overhead. They are, however (other than flying or magical means), the fastest way across the city, travelling at an astonishing 7 miles per hour.

Appendix: Monarchs of Castorhage

For most of the 38 centuries that Castorhage has existed, first as a Hyperborean colony, then an imperial province for the first 17 centuries, and then as an independent city-state, a kingdom, and finally an empire in its own right for the last 18 centuries, it has been ruled primarily by one family, the House of Castorhage. This family dates back to a Hyperborean strategos who served Polemarch Asenna in the ancient battle of Hummaemidon for which he received the colony of Insula Lymossus as a reward. Appointed as military governor (or harmost) over the colony (later a full province), the citadel built by Oleus Castorhage on what became the Capitol Hill was the first portion of the city to bear his name. Centuries later, when his descendant Demos Castorhage declared independence from the Hyperborean Imperator and burned the Lymossus Legion alive in their barracks, he changed the name of the province to the City-State of Castorhage with himself as the first King of Castorhage.

After more than a century of warfare with Hyperborea that ultimately resulted in a treaty and the formation of Castorhage as a full-fledged kingdom, the new ruling line of House Borxia attempted to rename their realm the Kingdom of Borxia. Try as they might, they could not get the renaming of the actual city to Borxia to stick among general usage until they finally contented themselves to just refer to the kingdom as whole by its new name. However, other than on official documents of the Royal Court, even that name was rarely used. So when, by hook-and-crook, House Castorhage managed to regain control of the throne centuries later, they chose to ignore the kingdom's formal name and continued to refer to it, and all of its holdings, as the City-State of Castorhage.

Only on a few very brief occasions has the city-state fallen out of House Castorhage's control since then, and the name is now indelibly stuck as Castorhage in the public consciousness. Even as the city-state eventually emerged as a colonial empire, the name of Castorhage has stuck and frequently is still referred to as a city-state, though it is with the understanding that the reference encompasses the totality of its colonial territory. If one wishes to speak specifically of the capitol of this city-state/empire, it is generally referred to as the City of Castorhage (though "city-state" is still used frequently). Rarely does anyone make reference to the Isle of Lymossus as anything other than Castorhage or the City-State of Castorhage, and one would have to peruse ancient records indeed to find reference to the defunct Kingdom of Borxia. There are, in fact, more extant records that make reference to the Hyperborean province of Insula Lymossus than to any sovereign Borxia realm, a matter that causes the Second Family no small amount of bitterness.

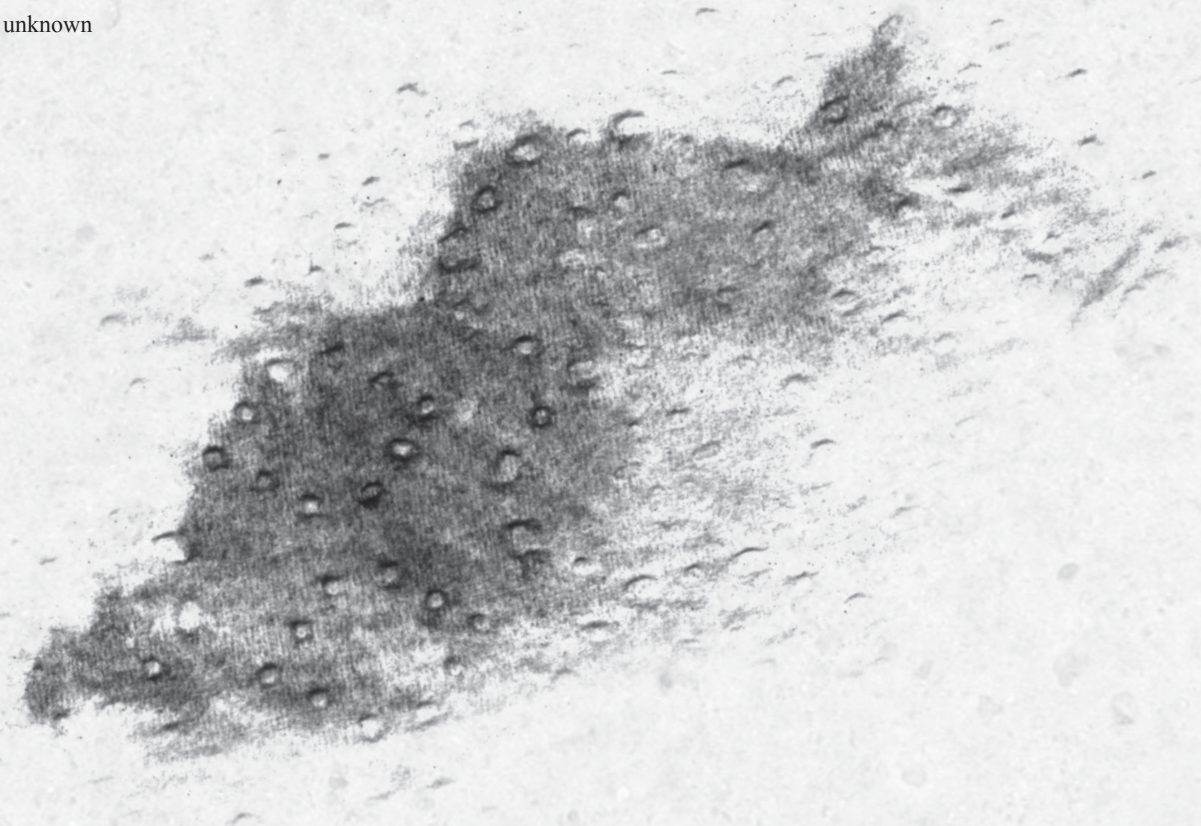
A complete listing of the monarchs of Castorhage since its independence from Hyperborea is included below. The line of the harmosts of the Province of Insula Lymossus is less known, as many records were lost in the earthquakes that damaged the Capitol archives over the centuries. That portion of the lineage is, necessarily, incomplete.

Monarch's Name (birth name if different)	Birth/Death Years	Years of Reign
Harmost Oleus Castorhage	–1779?/–1716	–1738 – –1716
(Reigns of unknown harmosts)	—	—
Harmost Larros Castorhage	??/–16	–27 – –16?*
Harmost Demos Castorhage	–37/22	–16?* – –1
Establishment of Independent City-State of Castorhage		
King Demos Castorhage	–37/22	–1–22
Belos I	5/29	22–29
Belos II (Belgos)	7/33	29–33
Dumos	15/57	33–57
Belos III	32/58	57–58
Belos IV (Antipites)	37/72	58–72
Cromon Regos	52/89	72–89
Belos V (Terbites)	69/108	89–108
Parvalis	86/121	108–121
Agrige I Borxia	82/145	121–145
Profero Borxia	103/162	145–162
Fidelius Borxia "the Foul"	131/198	162–198
Porfask Borxia "King Large"	154/214	198–214
Queen Brotha Borxia	166/217	214–217
Casterwell Borxia	175/241	217–241

Monarch's Name (birth name if different)	Birth/Death Years	Years of Reign
Agrige II Borxia	193/281	241–281
Crowan Borxia "Short-locks"	261/304	281–304
Rissel "the Binder"	270/324	304–324
Turgiv Tuk	289/337	324–337
Predyr I	311/350	337–350
Queen Alysa	327/363	350–363
Predyr II	349/381	363–381
Rannan	362/410	381–410
Predyr III	390/426	410–426
Prywid "the Cursed"	391/453	426–453
(Queen Giness)	411/442	— (barren, died of fever)
(Queen Lethry)	422/451	— (wererat, beheaded)
Queen Coal Borxia	431/511	453–511
Artelo I	481/548	511–548
Queen Malice	512/590	548–590
Artelo II	561/607	590–607
Lertis Tevoy	586/634?	607–634
Terrance Aquiri "Acquire"	593/686?	634–655
Aldwerd I	611/692	655–692
Aldwerd II	640/713	692–713
Artelo III	693/743	713–743
Queen Gwenth "the Great"	722/779	743–779
Artelo IV	735/779	779–779
Troubled Years (779–782		
Corvus Taim	757/811	782–811
Eldreg "the Old"724/817	811–817	
Espargus "the Infirm"	699/819	817–819
Twin Regents (Alar & Elspeth)	801/881	819–843
Alar	801/843	819–843
Queen Elspeth	801/881	843–881
Alam	842/898	881–898
Branner I "the Child"	891/899	898–899
Queen-Regent Loris "the Mad Bitch"	855/934	898–934
Queen Carmen	908/950	934–950
Chance	930/958	950–958
Ibin	932/976	958–976
Branner II	953/990	976–990
Prudus I	959/1007	990–1007
Cantor II	980/1041	1007–1036
Cantor III	1013/1075	1036–1075
Cantor IV	1031/1101	1075–1101
Claudus II "the Light-Hearted"	1082/1115	1101–1115
Claudus III "the Stooped"	1103/1142	1115–1142
Rames "Mad King Rames"	1120/1218	1142–1218
Prudus II "Cypricus"	1188/1230	1218–1230
Queen Constance	1199/1247	1230–1247
Cyrus I "the Absolved"	1218/1268	1247–1268

Monarch's Name (birth name if different)	Birth/Death Years	Years of Reign
Claudus IV	1251/1295	1268–1295
Prudus III (Cassius)	1261/1327	1295–1327
Cyrus Provid	1285/1371	1327–1371
Cyrus Barrit	1302/1386	1371–1386
Leris Pallor	1326/1427	1386–1427
Worrn I	1408/1451	1427–1451
Worrn II (Tyrus)	1424/1492	1451–1492
Luceus	1470/1509	1492–1509
Musilleus	1493/1536	1509–1536
Quintus Cognate	1509/1553	1536–1553
Musgrove I "the Cold-Hearted"	1496/1561	1553–1561
Musgrove II "the Usurper"	1534/1565	1561–1565
Musgrove I "the Dead-Hearted"	1565**/1619	1565–1619
Warden I	1581/1626	1619–1626
Warden II	1603/1633	1626–1633
Worrn III (Calverd)	1608/1650	1633–1650
Melancholia	1629/1692	1650–1692
Worrn IV	1657/1711	1692–1699
Queen-Regent Lotheria Tredici* **	1677/1706	1699–1701
Worrn IV	1657/1711	1701–1711
Queen Alice	1698/	1711–
Princess Alicia**	1768/	

* The exact date of the transfer of the harmosti from Larros to Demos is uncertain.
** Date of Musgrove I's rebirth as an undead creature.
*** Lotheria Tredici ruled as Queen-Regent while Worrn IV was debilitated with illness.
**** Heir-apparent
? Exact date of death is unknown



Chapter Two: The Artist's Quarter



Paint hides decay; the rot lurking just below the make-up, grease-painting holding the whole hollow mess in place. Opium dens and insectum houses flourish here; their Xi'en and Gtsang masters smiling as they welcome customers, promising to take away their unhappiness; their monotony, their being, and make something new. Here dreams really do come true, in a sense. Illusion creates the possible, and here illusory magic has become something deeper, darker. The Fetch thrive here; their own souls so near to the lands beyond life, almost able to touch Heaven, so close, so achingly close that its presence drives them mad. From the gifted painter to the anarchist puppeteer, all find a home here, cringing below the madness of the Jumble, offering relief from Toiltown, and bringing a smile to faces that have forgotten how to grin. Everything can be found here—everything—from the music halls to the drug-pits to the murdering quarters, all things are commodity and therefore have a price.

Enter this jumbling madness carefully my friend, and don't look too closely behind the face-paint, what lurks there might wipe the smile from your face…

Introduction

That's Entertainment

Be assured that, despite appearances, this is a place of order. Visitors sometimes make the mistake of assuming the quarter is a place of chaos; of street-juggler vying for a corner with the sword-swallower, where the street-wizard smiles and performs whilst the nearby acrobats tumble by. This is not the case; the quarter is one of the most controlled and organised places in the Blight, and at its heart are three groups, all competing for space—the **Fetch**, the **Triads** and the **Revolutionaries**.

The Fetch mingle freely here, finding a place where darkness awakens a whole district. There are vampires here, but they are few and secretive; tragic periods in their history where the vampires sought to infest brought terrible retribution from the churches, and memories of paladinhoods burning vampires alive in the sunlight are still fresh, despite the handful of centuries that have passed since the last such events. Now the vampires lurk, hide, their secrets kept in strong places — they are often the most ancient of their kind, the only ones who could survive the purges. A handful of terrible vampires, sworn to serve Beltane, God-Emperor of the Fetch, weave cobwebs across the district, using others to fuel their hungers. Sometimes other unlife springs up; a rogue cabal of vampires, a visiting foreign undead, most only remain here for a short while before they are discovered and dealt with. They are unclean, not of the kin. There are many hags in the quarter; night hags primarily, and ghouls, many, many ghouls. Theirs is an unlife of caste, of strictest understanding of place; a ghoul obeys all undead with a mind here; they are the slave class, the cattle of the Fetch, and they have hives here in the cellars below where they slumber and plot and serve.

The **Insectum Triads** are every bit as ordered; their Xi'en and Gtsang honour brings them into a close-knit group. To the locals these are a strange people and their ways are foreign — something they happily play on to add mystique to their creations, their apothecaries, their theatre. The Triads riddle every facet of the culture; and every member of the extended family are touched by it. Unlike the Family of Festival, however, theirs is a strict code of honour that cannot be stepped from; or diabolical retribution occurs.

The Triad (whatever their caste and kind) are permanently at war with the Fetch here, and despite outward appearances there are many in the Insectum Triads with great honour and goodness; they seek to remove the undead from the quarter and restore order. An enigmatic figure, referred to only as the **Shadow Dragon**, rules the Triad, but where and what he or she is, is only conjecture. Orders come from above — somehow — and are followed strictly; through lines of subordinates with titles such as the *Master of Incense*, and the *Lotus of the Willow Fan* to those who obey without question. The closest many visitors come to the Triad are viewing the countless illusionists, magicians and theatre-wizards that throng in this district; every music hall worth its salt has a Xi'en wizard somewhere on its books, and that these spellcasters are bound within a strict arm of the Triad is of no interest to the impresarios desperate to sign up the latest Mister Synn, Mistress Lotus and Hwang Cho-Sull; names that trip off the tongue like gold chinking into a chest.

Finally, amongst these disparate groups — and who in truth make up barely a fraction of those who live and work here — are the rebels, the **Revolutionaries**; those who wish to change the order of the city; and some that wish to remove order entirely. The rebels lurk in the margins of the Artists' Quarter, they have many friends, their fingers spreading out across the city, grasping hands in friendship. Their mouthpiece — *The Raven* periodical — graces bars and hoardings and noticeboards across the city, but it is here that it is printed, here that its life began. Add this to the political satirists and puppeteers, dangerous fringe theatres and plays and outright acts of anarchy and you have a beacon drawing every dreamer, as well as every ambitious royalist and iron-willed establishmentarianism. This place seethes with discontent yet is crushed in order. Even those who seemingly oppose; Fetch and Anarchist, dreamer and Triad, find uneasy alliances. Only the Fetch and Triad stare with fixed hatred across the narrow gaudy streets of the Artists' Quarter without sympathy.

Part One: Places

What the Artists' Quarter looks like…

Like a tattoo over reality; thick paint covers but does not conceal. This is a transient, crowded place where every inch has a rent or value — and the value is high. Fortunes are made here as well as fame — and infamy. The Artists' Quarter is dizzy, with ideas and concepts, colours, sounds and voices. Although trades and professions run along connected lines — so a master painter is drawn to others of his ilk and pigment makers follow in their glorious shadows. This is a relatively cramped area, so it is possible, within the course of an afternoon, to glimpse the whole twisted range of entertainment. The trick, of course, is to catch the eye — to stand out — and so the place has developed a self-perpetuating cycle of newness turning quickly to yesterday's news.

Below all this, however, it is shabby. The theatres are old — ancient even — oak panels and tight vertigo-inspiring seats glare down on tiny stages lit by powerful sea lamps. Crooked doorways and garish cellars plead for release from the dark below the Jumble's shadow.

What the Artists' Quarter smells like…

Of stage-paint and street foods and temporariness. The stench of greasepaint and the scent of the crowd: tobacco and sweat and perfume. The smell of close life and all that entails, its refuse, its joys, its artisanship.

What the Artists' Quarter feels like…

Busy. This is a cramped, looming environment that some find oppressive; air sometimes struggles to reach the streets, choking before it gets there. Some have another view, they say that the whole district feels like a family, its embrace, its familiarity, its refreshing nature is like a well-loved cloak or a pair of familiar warm boots.

What the Artists' Quarter sounds like…

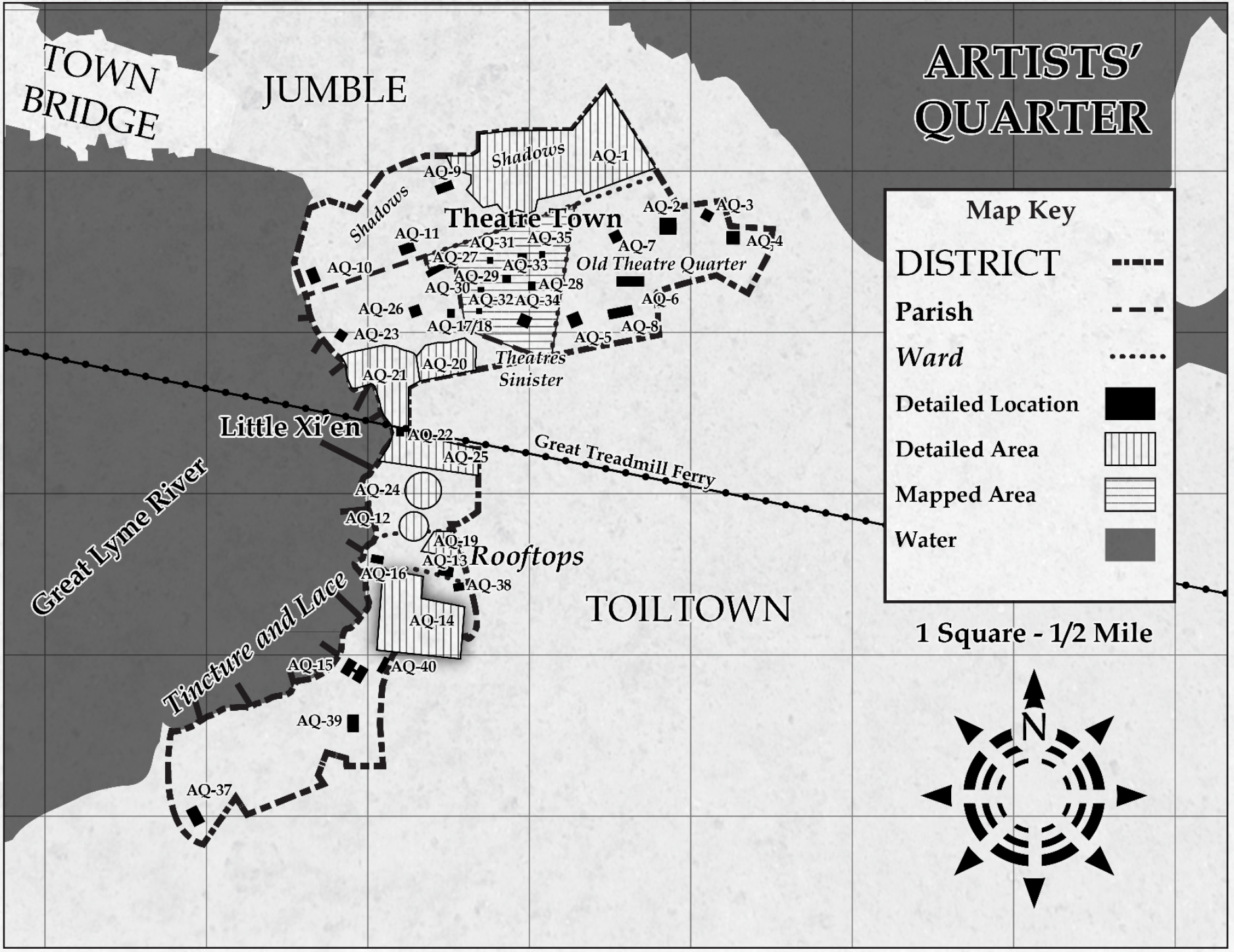
Noisy. Yet not the standard noise of the city, for behind the bustle and clamour lies melody; beautiful singing voices call from street corners, the sound of laughter pervades inside and out.

Seven words to describe the Artists' Quarter…

Glee *screams…* *Between* ***foreign***

revolution… **Stares**

Enjoyment


TOWN BRIDGE
JUMBLE
ARTISTS' QUARTER
Shadows
AQ-1
AQ-9
Shadows
Theatre Town
AQ-2
AQ-3
AQ-4
AQ-11
AQ-31
AQ-35
AQ-7
AQ-27
AQ-33
Old Theatre Quarter
AQ-10
AQ-29
AQ-30
AQ-28
AQ-32
AQ-34
AQ-6
AQ-26
AQ-17/18
AQ-5
AQ-8
AQ-23
Theatres Sinister
AQ-20
AQ-21
Little Xi'en
AQ-22
AQ-25
Great Treadmill Ferry
Great Lyme River
AQ-24
AQ-12
AQ-19
AQ-13
Rooftops
AQ-16
AQ-38
TOILTOWN
AQ-14
Tincture and Lace
AQ-15
AQ-40
AQ-39
AQ-37
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
1 Square - 1/2 Mile
N

Parishes and Wards

Tincture and Lace is the name for the artisans' parish, which covers much of the district since everywhere is a marketplace. Its primary focus, however, is the southern part of the quarter where the most gifted artists live. Little Xi'en, almost a town within itself, lies just to its north. It is the foreigners' quarter and described in detail further below.

Theatre Town

More a series of collected groups of theatres, the town is made up of three distinct wards. Firstly, **The Old Theatre Quarter**, is home to three of the original theatres — the Lamplight Theatre (**AQ2**), the Old Royal (**AQ3**) and the Old Music Hall (**AQ6**); places as infamously ancient as the actors and families of actors that have lived there. **The Shadows** may sound sinister, but in fact is simply a physical description; there are scores of theatres lying immediately below the Jumble. Finally, the **Theatres Sinister** is one of many notable districts within the Artists' Quarter — famed for the outlandish and shocking, these theatres also run the gauntlet of the Knockers, occasionally performing risqué plays aimed at highlighting the sins of the upper classes. Some say a cabal of devils lurks behind the façade, guiding events to their own purposes.

The **Rooftop Garrets** is where you'll find the most gifted, outrageous and famous artists, who avoid the choking clamour of the streets below in their lofty — and often ridiculously expensive — *garrets*; a rather eclectic term for all the houses that have sprung up here — large and small.

The End is the most famous street in the quarter, linking many of the most famous old theatres. The **Secret Actors' Way** is an alleged secret road below ground linking the Farnham, Grange and Royal Theatres, and said only to be known to a handful of managers and royalty, allowing royal visitors to enter and leave in complete secret. Some say that the Royal Family contains a number of sublime actors (and particularly actresses) who indulge themselves from time to time here in the theatres, as acts as well as intrigued visitors. Others say that devils cavort openly in subterranean theatres.

There are any number of Subterranean Rivers and Canals below the quarter which are primarily now the homes of either the Fetch or the Triads, or occasionally are the focus for a battle between both. Such streets offer power, affording easy secret access for whatever nefarious purpose their owners may have for them.

AQ1. The Twisting Puppet Alleys and Shadow Theatres

An endless maze of narrow streets where the light is blanked from above by washing lines and leaning, leering buildings. Every corner brings a new delight — if delight is the correct word for the strange, ridiculous and occasionally disturbing acts of theatre and puppetry that occur here.

At times infamous, at times anarchistic, but at all times entertaining and outré, the alleys slip in and out of the Theatre District and — at times — in and out of reality. It was here that Merrick first performed his infamous *March of the False Folk*; a damning indictment of the class system in the Blight, shortly before his imprisonment and multiple beheadings for treachery. Here too Elisabeth Marnier's great work of theatrical anarchy *Insurrection* was performed on the streets. Elisabeth's subsequent disappearance has remained largely unexplained to the masses. In fact, **Elisabeth Marnier** (female **vampire**) was infected with vampirism whilst festering in the lower jails within the Capitol, but escaped and fled here. Tortured by her inner hungers, Elisabeth has become a shady legend amongst Anarchists within the city, her band of spawn do much more good than harm. Lurking in the flooded cellar of the old ruined Queen Anne Opera House, Elizabeth keeps her identity secret to enable the continued raids into the Capitol to rescue imprisoned commoners. Known by various names, but particularly the **Ebony Angel**, she has become a deep legend in the city and can still be seen by night, wandering her beloved theatres and puppet shows spreading whispered words of encouragement to rebellion.

Amongst almost four hundred different venues (the numbers vary as the buskers and street-performers come and go on a daily, sometimes hourly basis) are a full bizarre range of acts; from children's entertainers to full-blooded nihilists, desperate talented actors to faded legends to hopeful hopeless amateurs. The place is also famous for attracting big names, who appear from time to time, sometimes covertly.

Lurking within the façade of the district, the **Shadow Theatres** appear and then vanish, open and close the same night, and reach into existing theatres to grab gifted performers for Between's hungers. A small number of the more infamous shadow theatres are detailed throughout the district, but at any given time what may seem like a normal theatre — or indeed is the façade of a normal place — masks a Between theatre, beyond which fantasy is given breath and flesh.

1. It is suggested that in a place so close to Between that the mere act of thinking something can make it take on life. Numerous examples of great fantasy, art and nightmare becoming real exist, and continue to burgeon. It's also correctly conjectured that actually, the more terrible or outrageous or achingly emotional something becomes, it is more certain to become real. Various short-lived cults and cabals have sought to prove this as fact. Mysteriously, almost all those cults who were considered close to such proof vanished shortly thereafter.

Infamous Puppet Shows

In the Blight, the fine art of puppetry is much more than a children's entertainment; it has been honed into something satirical, and the ability of the performers to vanish into the city has spawned a thousand stories. Puppetry has distinct advantages over many other satirical art forms: it is portable, quick to set up and mingles well with other more traditional puppeteers; indeed, there is some truth in the legendary closeness of puppeteers. The oft mentioned Infamous Puppeteers, the guild of puppeteers, is one of the strictest and most brotherly (and sisterly) of all guilds. The guild members swear a binding oath never to incriminate a fellow puppeteer, and in essence pay for a portion of the guild to provide cover for those who seek to make their voices heard satirically.

A liberal amount of *gaseous form* and *invisibility* potions do the rounds amongst the more anarchic of performers, and tales of vanishing puppeteers are part of the fabric of the city — particularly here. Commoner performances usually involve the *Life and Times of Master Mabb*, the famous *Crackling and Salt* shows involving the nefarious and illegal activities of terrible Mister Crackling and his wife Olive Salt, a crocodile, a watchman and a string of sausages dragged around the city by a dog. Such acts are commonly seen on most street corners and the puppeteer is surrounded by a crowd of eager children. Darker satire takes shows into another place; the *Infamous Tale of Jack Sprat* — about a man forced to eat his family to avoid starvation, and the *Tragedy of Mister and Mistress Wedge* and their adventures as slaves to the Royal Family are only rarely seen, yet exist. Home-grown variations abound and the brave puppeteers of the city continue to be a thorn in the sides of the aristocracy and the establishment. That the puppets of some of these shows have come to sinewy life from Between and their characters now walk the streets is another rumour that is totally true, if you listen to those in charge.

The capture and "trial" of infamous puppeteers is a big deal in the city and the rewards for some; for example **Slanderous Lucy** (reward 5,000 gold shekels), **Smiling Jacob Slight** (reward 3,000 gold shekels) and the infamous **Teacher** (reward 6,000 gold shekels) make puppeteering big business, it continues to be conjectured that a dark guild of puppeteer-hunting rogues (The Cut String and Severed Hand) lurk somewhere in the dark underbelly of the Thieves Guild, but little proof has ever been given. Again, like most urban myths here in the Blight, it is totally true.[1]

AQ2. The Lamplight Theatre

There is something oddly intimate about this theatre, which somehow seems to stare down at you and almost reach out to grab your attention. This is clearly one of the oldest establishments in an old city; the entrance steps have been worn smooth by customers, and the flaking red door paint hides a countless rainbow of faded older colours.

Allegedly the oldest theatre in the city (although actually the oldest is the Theatre of Performing Beasts at **AQ27**), the Lamplight is a beloved ancient place with a crooked slightly disjointed feel. In fact, this feel is directly the result of its close proximity to Between; an unwelcome neighbour in the district and presently more deeply immersed in places such as the Susurrus Theatre (**AQ9**) amongst many other smaller and transient places. The mundane Lamplight is an amazing pace of oak and dark windows and intimacy. Its looming balconies somehow magically tinged to allow every word, every feeling of the actors to reach out to everyone.

Occasionally actors and guests take a wrong turn and end up in the darker, Between version of the Lamplight. This place is gorged, bloated with the dreams and joys and anxieties of the actors that have passed this way over the centuries, it is a place of dark imaginings where plays become real and the sets grow into reality.

The Lamplight, owned and run by the notoriously sour **Rachel Hyme** (LN female human **noble**), only surviving member of the long line of Hyme family and more particularly only surviving Hyme sister of eight infamous socialites. Rachel is a recluse, but watches every play from a private balcony that somehow cannot be seen by any other customers. Plays tend to be dark, the Lamplight has a long reputation for drama and rarely do customers leave with smiles on their faces, suicides have been known during particularly dark plays. The actors the place attracts, however, are the best, and the plays are always excellent. Roschnizski's *Pallid Winter*, *Broken Summer* and *Forgotten Spring* trilogy of plays are regarded by many as the greatest ever written and performed in the city.

AQ3. The Old Royal Theatre

Here is opulence — perhaps obscenely so. This theatre is like a palace; it is grand, cascading with high towers and minarets, marble and lead and gleaming polished copper spires. The entrance — a sweeping wave of marble and brass — draws customers to an arched entry where, marked by letters that somehow seem to breath are the words 'Old Royal Theatre.'

Perhaps the most famous theatre in the Blight — certainly the biggest — the Royal oozes class, quality and wealth. It is the theatre visiting aristocrats from the Capitol risk being whisked in carriages across the city to see. A huge ensemble cast are in residence in the countless towers and attics, and a remarkably strict caste system operates. Actors are brought in from infancy, "donated" by famous acting families and given over to the madam of the Theatre **Mistress Beatrice Lament** (LN female [5EF]**aranea**[†]), who has a trio of helpers (all also **aranea**) who have skulked in the theatre's warm embrace for decades, taking the odd warm meal as a special treat.

The greatest actor of the age **Lenore Frome** (a.k.a. the **Angel's Shadow**) is spreading rebellion right under the aristocrats' noses. Fifty-year-old Lenora has a spotless reputation and ready access to the saner Royals; something she uses to full effect. Presently her own Royal sponsors are unknowingly paying for the schooling of half a dozen of the finest bright young things in the city to spread anarchy into the next generation — if this one fails to ignite. Watching her carefully, and waiting for the chance to unmask her, is gelded singer **Goir Thrage** (N male human **minstrel**[†]) from the Choir of Angels (**HBH14**). The countertenor — allegedly the most beautiful voice in Castorhage — is a devout royalist, and is slowly gathering proof of Frome's anarchy, waiting to pass it to the proper authorities and see her burn for her vile acts (as he sees them).

It is hinted that upwards of a thousand people work at any given time in various aspects of the Royal, and that there is fully a mile of cellars, one link of which enters the Secret Actors Way.

Unbeknownst even to Beatrice Lament, this great acting family is actually being steadily infected by the Family (see **Chapter 4: Festival**), and in particular the Grast Family, who fancy themselves as close to royalty. The instruction to slowly infect and infest the Royal has come from the Rat Queen[†] herself (**F13**). Foremost in this steady infiltration is **Lenora Grast** (a.k.a. **Lenora Rose**) (NE female halfling **wererat**) who is steadily building up her following and the Family influence accordingly. The Rat Queen is said to have demanded a private show for her and her sisters at the Royal, an act that is causing the Family great consternation and has led to whispered conversations doubting her sanity.

The Great Backstage of the Royal has almost 500 sets, ranging from grotesque visions of Hell, to tumbling meadows, windswept moors and pirate ships. These sets have become soaked in illusory magic, which consequently causes disadvantage on all saves against illusions made within the entire theatre.

AQ4. The Old Royal Theatre Watch Tower

A dizzyingly high stone edifice rising to a huge stone and beamed rooftop, the Castorhage flag dances proud from the highest gable, where an iron dragon weathervane keeps stern watch.

It is no coincidence that the Office of the Watch are based here, right outside the Royal's favourite theatre. The place has an iron reputation for discipline and a no-quarter approach to all its actions. Stern uber-royalist **Watch Captain Gilbert Quench-Smyne** (LN male human **knight**) is on his way up; the dashing young captain has been seen with the prettiest ladies, the most influential lords and the sternest of sponsors. That he is the second cousin of Duke Malice is well-known, that he is actually his bastard son is not. Malice keeps a careful eye on his beloved prodigy, and is conscious of how tempting a target he would be for his many enemies; he has covertly sponsored his young cousin in this iron citadel brimming with blood-thirsty Constables of the Watch. These constables, the Queen's First Theatre Watch, number 180 of the most bloody and violent psychopaths, and these men and women delight in their work.

It is suggested that the Watch Tower has an infamous theatre in its own bowels where the Watch create their own sport. Whilst primarily this involves the dissection and torture of ghouls, the occasional Anarchist — or for that matter anyone who they cross in the theatre — suffices as an amusing diversion.

Within the Watch, a small secret group of **ghosts** is beginning the arduous task of exacting vengeance, under a direct order from Beltane itself. The ghosts are responsible for a number of atrocities committed recently within the tower and have been abducting a few members of the Watch and taking them to their masters, the upper echelons of vampires within the district, and in particular Perdition, Dread Queen of UnBirth (see **AQ42** for more details).

AQ5. The Queen's Grotto

A dazzling glass house of stained angels, dark lanterns shedding black light, and a strange fluting caused by peculiar ventilation and the incorporation of musical pipes within the roof section, the Queen's Grotto — as its lantern-lit name announces — squats like a pregnant iron celebration amongst tumbling fountains and crooked trees.

The Grotto is a haven for artists; part gallery, part theatre, part school, part writers' hermitage, the Grotto is a tumbling place with hundreds of chambers spread over a score of wings. This, however, is a palace of dark delights as well as more traditional arts, and is the plaything of most of the

royal princesses, who use the Grotto as a dark beacon to attract the gifted with a view to whisking them into the Capitol and perverting their abilities to better fulfil royal wishes, whims and desires. That it also overlooks — they might say looks down upon — Toiltown is a bonus to them.

The Grotto's present Guide (the de-facto title of the person responsible for the overall running of the Grotto) is **Guide Hannas Grave** (female **succubus**). Grave runs an incredibly devious place, with layer upon layer of dark seductions, temptations and ruin. Some describe the Grotto as lax, wallowing almost, disrespectful, pagan perhaps, and certainly the old gods do hold more sway here. Even Grave has turned away from the temptations of Lucifer and become increasingly fey, more elemental. The artists and players come from all manner of backgrounds; some have wealthy parents, some are undoubted geniuses, all have some dark message hidden somewhere in their past. The occupants of the Grotto are strange, elusive, touched, and Grave is anxiously trying to work our why so many of her flock should be this way. Grave has been so deeply intrigued by this current crop that she has taken to darker paths to learn more, making bargains with shadowy things of Between in an effort to find answers.

Presently lodging at the Grotto is the darling author of the age **Emily Bleaklow** (CG female human **commoner**) said to be the greatest romance writer of her generation — possibly of any generation. She and her gifted sisters, who now lodge in a decaying mansion on the moors of Larkmere in Crow's Fallow (see **Chapter 11: The Sinks and Asylum**), are without doubt all geniuses, but Emily's arrival at the Grotto has brought about a subtle change. Now tormented and enraptured by the stirrings of Between dreams, she has begun to see a truth in a new calling, and as her dreams intensify, slowly she is beginning to understand that the dreams are a messenger. What the message is, she is so far unsure.

AQ6. The Old Music Hall

Nothing can hide the growing decay on this place; this is a building that has had its day, and now wallows in a past while refusing to acknowledge any future. The lights here are grimed, the stonework swallowed by oil and pyrebeetle smoke and the Canker. Yes, the place is grand still, but faded, ageing.

Once the darling of the city, now an echo of a grand past, the Old Music Hall is a den for one of the city's oldest vampires, **Magnus Melancholy.** Magnus has dwelt in the city for centuries, and for most of that time lived here beneath the Music Hall, which has undergone change after change; slipping into a deliberate decay before rising, like a phoenix, from its own ashes (often literally). Melancholy feels the time is right to change again, and is busy preparing for the rebirth of the Music Hall, which this time he intends to bring about through fire.

Magnus Melancholy is a **vampire**, with the following changes:

- CR 15 (13,000 XP)
- His many years of unlife and earlier practice of the arts of illusion while alive has granted him this ability:
- ***Displacement (Recharge 5-6).*** As a bonus action, Magnus projects an illusion that makes Magnus appear to be standing in a place a few inches from its actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls against Magnus. The effect ends if Magnus takes damage, it is incapacitated or its speed becomes 0.
- He gains the spellcasting feature described below.

Spellcasting. Magnus is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence. He knows the following wizard spells:

Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, ray of frost (2d8), true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages, fog cloud, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *mirror image, phantasmal force*
3rd level (3 slots): *hypnotic pattern, major image, non-detection*
4th level (3 slots): *hallucinatory terrain, phantasmal killer*
5th level (2 slots): *mislead*

His trio of vampire 'associates': **Master of Ceremonies Rudyard Hasp**, the mysterious Xi'en, **Qui**, and the dog's-body-useless **Alby Otiose** are busy laying plans, as the theatre slowly grows more empty night by night.

Unfortunately for Melancholy, the mysterious Captain Otto van Schorn from the adjacent Grange Theatre (**AQ8**) is taking a growing interest in the Music Hall and its mysterious and seldom-seen benefactor. The matter is further complicated by the fact that Schorn is falling in love with the almost impossibly delicate Qui, and intends to find a cure for her vampirism, which he still denies despite clear evidence to the contrary.

AQ7. The Farnham Theatre

It could be a castle, but it clearly masquerades as theatre. This is a military place, with Castorhage Royal banners draped across every outer surface it seems. Militaristic men ride stone and bronze horses from the outer walls, which are made of huge stones.

The 'Theatre of Patriots' runs all its acts to support the military, stir up pride in the city-state and crush anarchy and difference. Whether it be rousing opera, brooding symphony or stirring play, the Farnham is patriotic through and through. Ultra-staunch royalist **Artram Horde** (LN male human **veteran**) runs a tight company to military precision, and offers ex-military a job regardless of their talents. The group of men has set Horde up with an impromptu militia able to rival many of the street gangs across the city, and with a standing army of over 100, his influence spreads across this district. His thugs — with their shaved heads and dual-face theatre tattoos — are a fearsome sight, and he often sends them off on tasks, particularly aimed at taking out Anarchist puppeteers and other rebels.

This has all gone too far, however, and a growing military sect, the "Old Breed," thrives within the army here masquerading as patriots: but patriots of steel. Their way harks back to the purity of the old days, the strict difference between nobility and the Lowfolk, who did as they were told or else. The Old Breed marshals are dabbling very seriously in the occult to try to enslave the populace in a populist bigoted and intolerant thrall, and their sectarian ways are gaining friends by the day. The present leader of the Breed **Marshal Otram Storr** (LE male human **knight**), dilettante gentleman, has a growing inner core of followers, while charming nobles to his cause from his garret here. Horde harbours a secret passion for Storr, fearing what might happen if he vocalises it. Many of the Capitol dwellers admire Storr's thinking, and are prepared to ignore the more fanciful and extreme of his methods of crushing the moral of the Lowfolk. He is regarded by some of the highest nobles as a visionary, and is very high on the list of Anarchist assassination targets.

Storr is presently plotting about the various Between *gateways* at the Great Docks (**LR1**), and how he can use his friend Earl Fobbringdon Fox, Paladin of the Welcoming Gate (**TT12**) to further the misery of local people at the Levee to perchance increase the number of lucrative gates; something he firmly believes is the cause of the location of the Great Docks *gateways*. Storr is all for a mass execution to see the effects this has upon the *gateways,* but so far his suggestions have been quietly dismissed by those in power.

Often, Grand Justice Korsk and his old friend Crown Prince Rorth visit the theatre on the way to a local brothel. Their iron carriage is regularly seen in the street outside the Farnham and the two are great patrons of all its causes. And here, the Secret Actors' Way is a fortified link to the Royal and Farnham theatres, replete with a canal to enable the transportation of heavy scenery.

AQ8. The Grange Theatre

A rather moth-eaten theatre that has perhaps seen better days, the Grange looks a few staggering steps from collapse, indeed one section of roof is bowing alarmingly.

Curious Music

While traditional instruments abound, and in countless varieties, the eccentric tastes and fashions of the city-state ensure that obscure and outrageous instruments are also seen and heard. A selection of such instruments; these fashioned from parts of creatures (who are occasionally still in a state of life of one sort or another) are given below. This is merely a taste of the more outlandish instruments found in Castorhage.

Basilisk Drums: The drum of a taut basilisk hide gives a sound like no other; the skin of the basilisk is able to be stretched to cover a great area, and thus deliver the deepest resonance. It is said that a trio of basilisk drums, played correctly, can sound like an approaching storm.

Bronze Owlbear Bass Horn: This great horn is 15 feet long and held aloft on a special tripod. The instrument, constructed from the spinal column of an owlbear, tapers up to the electroplated head of the beast and is able to give forth an astonishing variety of pitches, from tiny unsettling screeches through to bellowing deep calls.

Sea Hydra Great Organ: This is a great pipe organ whose pipes are made of the treated heads of a 12-headed sea hydra, and whose inner workings are a confusion of flesh and metal bound by infernal magic. A dozen homunculi are woven into the fabric of the organ and assist the player in making the infernal organ wheeze its foul music. The noise of the organ is unlike any other — a harrowing sound of the nadir, a bass-resonant cacophony of notes on the edge of madness.

The Kraken Soul: This is a horn made from the carcass of a kraken powered by the lungs of a roc, within which is held an evil air elemental made of smoke. The whale-like echo song mournfully calls out, shaking the very ground with its notes. It is said that this song so angers krakens that, should one hear it, the creature tears up the entire area around the instrument to avenge the outrage committed upon one of its kin to make this vile object.

Vrock Tri-Harp: The tri-harp is a vast instrument made from the skeleton of an Vrock — often the head is preserved; occasionally kept alive. This instrument is difficult to master, having three different scales of harp — from the highest note to the deepest base.

Wyvern Double-Viol: This huge instrument requires 3 people to use — 2 to play and one to support. Its noise is one of appalling sadness — the deep groaning strings singing a tale of misery and despair.

The Grange has a reputation amongst true artists as the place to perform, and is presently home to **Magnus Odde** (LN male human **noble**), greatest composer of Castorhage. Odde is not only a master composer, but also a master craftsman, and manufactures exquisite versions of the city-state's traditional instruments (see Sidebox). Odde has a small group of followers and a loyal-if-eccentric fan base. His "Song of the Dying Kraken" and the "Winter of Birth" are hauntingly beautiful pieces, but Odde has fallen out of fashion amongst the fickle nobility, who now prefer things more devilish and bloody.

Odde purchased the decaying Grange 7 years ago in a last attempt to revive his career, but the effort has failed and now sickness and old age is slowly depriving Odde of his talents and — tragically — his wits. However, his beloved and young wife **Lidian** (N female human **spy**) tries to keep her lover's spirits up and enthusiastically welcomes visitors. Those who attend the Grange these days report it echoing and near empty, which somehow seems to make the dark music even more haunting.

Hiding in plain sight amongst the musicians, **Captain Otto van Schorn** (LG male human **knight** of Mother Grace) bides his time; he is laying a trap for his neighbour Magnus Melancholy (**AQ6**), whose theatre has also fallen on hard times; but in his case deliberately so. It seems only a matter of time before van Schorn makes public his knowledge to his masters, the Vampire Hunting Trinity of Life (**AQ17**) a group with various contacts within the quarter and who help — and occasionally hinder — the various factions within the area with their occasionally over-zealous religious approach.

A group of **mites** lurk in the cellar stores of the theatre, they are busy fighting a running battle of life and death with some local cats. The mites keep the Secret Actors' Way clean to an obsessive degree; in honour of an ancient pact made between them and the Royal Family in the 11th century.

AQ9. The Susurrus Theatre

You cannot find it by day, no matter how good your guide, or how much you look; it remains simply hidden in the maze of alleys and pathways that curve and embrace in the shadows of the Theatre District. Look for it by night, however, and the Theatre's Obscura may be waiting for you, if they want you.

Lurking in the folds of the Theatre District, the Susurrus Theatre does not actually exist — not in the normal sense — it is one of several theatres that exist semi-permanently within Between. Occasionally a punter or group stumble into the theatre of living wood, some even escape. Nestled in an area known amongst those who know as the Theatres Obscura (aka the Shadow Theatres), the Susurrus is a living timber thing that has its own will and life.

Many dark fey lurk within the shadowy edges of the Theatres Obscura, and pluck or sometimes invite visitors in. Often these visitors stay forever, sometimes they are even willing to do so.

AQ10. The Second Royal Gallery and Museum

Grime and neglect stain the once-grand pillars of this large place, its pyrebeetle lanterns struggling to cast light through their patina of grime. Rain spits from gutters looming in the Jumble above and fall here in waterfalls.

Run on a threadbare budget by **Curator Abigail Wasp** (NE female alchymic-undying† gnome **mage**) (see *Cyclopædia Infestarum)* and the help of a **trio** of alchymic-undying assistants (N male or female alchymic-undying human **commoners**) and a **gargoyle** called **Polypore**, the gallery and museum is a vast warehouse brimming with decay and neglect. Only one wing remains open from the original seven, the rest are variously leaking, falling apart or being infested with **blight**† (see *Cyclopædia Infestarum)*. All the truly valuable works now lie in the Capitol, but the museum and gallery are still brimming with forgotten treasures, and in some cases infamous works of terror and arcane secrets of madness.

The true challenge of the visitor — apart from dodging falling plaster and wondering if the strange noises are pipes or ghosts — is finding anything at all. Rooms full of tantalising cases and chests lie strangled in woods of ivy and briar, hillsides of boxes sway in unseen gales, and attics brimming with items of great value and intrigue creak above rotting floors concealing drops of dozens of yards.

Wasp is a wicked, insular figure whose paranoia is justified, she's removed countless threats from the museum and gallery — from members of the Guild to Great Coven hags anxious for secrets of the Witching Library to aspects of Lucifer greedy for dark codices and librams. Wasp is utterly suspicious to a point where she has begun to collect several species of outrageously dangerous spiders — some of great size — that she is slowly releasing in the museum to prevent snoopers and thieves.

Her spiritual sister, the acidic **Lady Skathen Spalpeen, Justice-Mistress of Piers**† lurks in the sodden cellars of the museum with a small cadre of **merrow**, and **sahuagin** and other followers. A recent convert to the Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm, Skathen seeks to create safe havens for her kind and hasten its plot to drown the world.

AQ11. The Winter Garden

What you first took for elaborate slate is actually a grimed glass dome atop a building surrounded by twisting diseased trees.

Filled with dying decayed vegetation from across the known world and Between, the Winter Garden (so called because things still grow here all year round) is allegedly open on certain religious festival days to all visitors. Within, a symphony of water and ancient gnarled trees is at ludicrous odds with both its surroundings and its home; curious statues grace corners and iron walkways and bridges lead visitors deeper into grottos and eerily silent groves.

The keeper of the garden, **Lementia Grabe** (**spirit naga** with shapechanger ability) is a lonely, sad figure whose paintings of endless gardens of bounty and cornucopia hang dustily in obscure corners. Lementia plays the ancient veil-wearing spinster, frail and lonely, in an attempt to lure visitors into her grasp. If this fails, she plays the demented wealthy widow on her last legs about to die with no one to love nor any kin to console her. In fact, Lementia is indeed very, very old, but also terribly hungry; she believes her forest is infested with dark, demented magic and her trees capable of conversing. Whilst this is true, the **awakened Between-touched† trees** — many grown from seeds plucked in Between — do indeed speak to the naga but only to torment her by whispering when she sleeps, reminding her of misdeeds carried out with lovers, occasionally bringing the pod corpse to the surface to remind her of her wicked ways.

The Rooftop Garrets

Home of the darlings of the art world, but also the saddest people who make the quarter their home, the Garrets are in truth a jagged district that reaches into every part of the quarter and beyond up into the Jumble. Eccentric, sometimes mad, but always unstable, the narrow streets of the artists are also where they display their wares. Statues and sculptures greet visitors, mundane iron walkways become embroidered with gold and copper wire swans, and the gentle song of wind-chimes ring across the whole region. Every surface, it seems, has some bell or chime hanging from it, and in a gale the song of the Garrets can drive people to madness.

Mapping the Garret is impossible; ladders leap upwards to slender rope bridges, swings cross narrow alleys, planks teeter over streets. Yet here the air is clearer somehow, even with the brooding presence of the Jumble nearby; there is a gentleness to this region, yet a nagging feeling in the back of the mind of those who wander here that this is an ethereal fey place teetering on the brink of insanity and collapse.

The Garret has its heart, and the only well-known way down onto the streets, somewhere between Little Xi'en and the main streets of Tincture and Lace.

AQ12. Poverty Spires

MacGrum Winter (NE Uplander male uplander human **veteran**) and his gang of unpleasantly rat- and ferret-like overseers and collectors (**thug**) run Poverty Spires, a collection of hovels, cramped and overcrowded tenements and draughty damp rooms that litter the edges of the Garrets. If a single rain-swept chamber is linked by a hopeless swaying rope bridge high above the streets it'll be one of Winter's. If a chamber contains six families or a staircase doubles as a bedroom it will be his.

Brutal, heartless and nasty, Winter runs a vile ship of extortion, sexual exploitation and misery amongst those too poor or too new to have a choice, and once they fall into his spiralling sump of debt, it is unlikely they'll ever leave alive. Occasionally, when someone stands up to Winter and his thugs, a pack of **ghouls** appear in the night and take the offender. Winter's sister Guelder is a **ghoul** living in the **Cellar** (**AQ39**); the two remain inseparably close kin, despite the obvious gulf between them.

AQ13. Maximel D'Regiolette, the "Greatest Painter of All Time"

Presently, the most famous artist in the Quarter, **Maximel D'Regiolette** (CN fallen **deva)** (as a deva but chaotic neutral) dwells in a high garret more like a cabalist's tower than a home. Maximel lives in utter luxury, surrounded by lovers and followers; recompense for his genius, and whose images are so beautiful they make people who see them weep. Maximel is presently working on the ceiling of the Great Castorage Cathedral in the Capitol (**C37**).

Blight Cult: Cult of the Self-Blinded Angel

Riddled with cults, the Blight may seem a hotbed of misery, delusion or in rare cases, mad truth and danger. This cult is a group of depraved and deluded artists dedicated to pain. Numbering two score, the membership is completely open, but generally only carried by word of mouth among friends. To outer eyes they may seem very insular and secretive, but in actual fact have no further motives than their own strange and sick pleasures.

Unfortunately, this seemingly-otherwise harmless diversion, the cult is actually unknowingly a sect of the chaotic evil Cult of the Unspeakable (see ***Trouble at Durbenford*** by **Necromancer Games** for details). There are currently, however, no practicing clerics within this cult.. The favoured weapon is the blowgun, especially in association with various psychotropic poisons and drugs.

In truth Maximel is the lover of the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting Elaine of Aldwark, the Illuminati's most dangerous and powerful ally. Elaine is regularly seen in this part of the city, and here particularly. Both are senior members of the Cult of the Self-Blinded Angel (see Sidebox), a loose association that reaches across artists here and over the city. They wallow in physical pleasure and pain. The misguided cult hurt no one but themselves, but to outer eyes their pleasures may seem sinister in the extreme.

AQ14. The Rusting Web and Nests

Timber houses are crammed into a shanty town above the streets; you see boats and bridges, barges and ladders amongst the confusion. Here truly is an elevated town within a city, and about it, the songs of birds in their thousands.

Home to thousands, the Web is well named, since it's possible for even locals to end up trapped in streets they have never visited before. Here houses with narrow balconies hang off gin houses made of the sterns of sailing ships, and a street of timber and ladders grants access between the neighbours, providing they can cross the streets safely without falling to their deaths. Notorious for sitting above an old submerged sink-hole known as the Devil's Cloaca, the Web has been struck several times by poisonous gases, most recently 3 years ago when over one hundred people died in their sleep in one street.

The Web is held in the thrall of one of the largest arms of the Triad, the **White Dragon**. The streets here are distinctly more Hege in style than any other part of the quarter except Little Xi'en itself.

Blight Gang: The White Dragon

Alignment: LN
Location: Artists' Quarter
Leader: Master of Incense (LN Xi'en male human **martial artistt**)
Motivations: Order, money
Friends: The Triad
Enemies: Aspects of Gtsang families, authorities in the city
Tactics: Violence and extortion, supplying opium and insectum
Morale: Very Strong; the Dragon is an aspect of the Triad, probably the strongest gang in the city beyond the collective masses of the Guild

AQ15. The Poem of Castorhage

Something strange is happening around this rooftop street. A covered wooden bridge seems to be the source of an infestation of ochre and rust and patinaed metal that dances like ivy around the surrounding buildings. The metal growth makes a strange singing chime as it moves in the breeze.

A living rusting song in "oreblossom" (a slowly-spreading growth of metal and ore — see **Chapter 10**), the Poem takes up an area roughly the size of a church, and is directly the result of the death of a master oreblossom dwarf called **Drodge Scree** (now deceased**scout**). The oreblossom has infested a nearby building to the point of making it uninhabitable, and it now lingers in a rusty web. People come to the Poem to hear its song when the wind is up. Sometimes, it is possible to almost hear voices lamenting the loss of Scree in Dwarven.

AQ16. The Eyrie

A high wall of warehouses ends at a great clock tower, with a rusty iron balcony teetering above a huge drop.

The highest fall in the quarter, the Eyrie is a popular spot for suicides, a dizzying 140 feet above the streets below. No one is quite sure why people come here so readily to die, but some suggest that it is the clock itself that draws people here. One tale runs that long ago a pair of inventors laid claim to a curious mechanism within the clock and that the dispute ended with one throwing the other over the railing of the Eyrie to her death. As she fell, she swore vengeance upon the other inventor, and all his kin.

It is conjectured that the kin sometimes suddenly awaken by night, walk to the clock and throw themselves off, satisfying the demented spirit of the murdered woman in the process.

AQ17. The Broken Bridge

High above a narrow street, a stone bridge has fallen in two yet still serves as access. Ropes and swaying timbers link the two broken halves, leaving a fall of three dozen yards below. Hanging below one side of this bridge is a curious wooden chapel made from a ship.

Situated at an important crossroads of the Rooftop Garrets, the Broken Bridge is a steadily swaying structure upon which are a dozen homes. A DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross the bridge at anything more than half speed or to fight on the bridge. The bridge is home to the Vampire Hunting Trinity of Life; a group of vampire hunters with various contacts within the quarter. The Trinity ensure that, while outwardly the place appears as normal as a fractured bridge above a city can, those within are all sworn to the quest.

The bridge is like an armoury of vampire hunting replete with cabinets full of stakes, garlic, alchemical gear, holy symbols and religious ephemera. The Trinity, although technically long-lived (being established in the 8th century) is actually often short-lived; vampire hunting is dangerous, and here at the heart of vampirism in the city, they are exposed to some of the most brutal of ancient undead. Fanatical to the point of self-destruction, some members have dedicated their whole life to the death of a single vampire.

Their present leader, the **Mushaff Nziin** (LN Ashurian female human **veteran**) is uber-religious, a devotee in the strictest sense to Mother Grace, who runs her network of followers with iron religious zeal. In all, 13 vampire hunters make their base in the chapel and bridge, but only half that number are ever in the structure itself; the others are scattered across the city.

Amongst vampire hunters, the Trinity are considered the most extreme; theirs is a quest where collateral damage is acceptable, and even the death of a score of innocents would be considered a fair swap for one ancient vampire — whilst of course paying due penance for their sins afterwards. It is also not uncommon for the Trinity to either stalk other vampire hunters as they follow their prey or outright kill them if they feel that their own hunting methods are surer of success and the other's might risk allowing the vampire to escape.

For their part, the vampires are aware of the Broken Bridge, and its present state is indicative of an attack that occurred less than 50 years ago. The place is, however, impossibly warded against the undead and their followers, and in many ways a gang war goes on between the groups. Occasionally, an infestation of ghouls rises to attack the place to try to infect those within with fever or eat them alive.

AQ18. The Hanging Chapel

A curious place sways gently in the wind; part boat, part chapel, the building hangs from the broken bridge above and is reached by a perilously exposed open wooden stair which moves like a ship at sea.

Domicile of an ultra-zealous religious sect, the chapel is subject to a *hallow* spell with a secondary effect of *death ward*, as well as a permanent *guards and wards* spell, which is activated by the presence of undead on the bridge. Finally, the bridge and chapel are sheathed in a *major image*. The chapel keeper, His Grace the Keeper of the Hanging Chapel (LN male old human **priest** of Mother Grace) is very old, and coming to the end of his effective days; he spends his days now searching for a successor to take over his duties. Held within the chapel, under the strictest security, is a *holy avenger* treasured by the Trinity.

AQ19. Gable Park

A curious vision greets you here; this is a raised area of the city, built of ship's timbers and bolts the size of horses. Here are grand houses, that rise from the rooftops; towers and bridges and houses sat amongst the upper boughs of great trees that rise from the streets and courtyards below.

Gable Park consists of several dozen grand houses stretched across this part of the Rooftops, and is home to the more illustrious of artists and performers. Entry is gained via three iron gates, which are watched by half a dozen members of the City Watch who have adjacent small lock-ups. Only those known to the guards or those who can prove they have business beyond are allowed onto the rising iron walkways and bridges that surround the park and buildings therein.

Little Xi'en

Crammed with curious Xi'en and Gtsang characters, and heady with incense, the smell of spices and strange tongues, Little Xi'en is the largest part of the Artists' Quarter and was raised here by visiting artists and performers from the two lands who made lives for themselves here. Many families can claim a score or more generations of ancestors in the city.

A triumphal pair of Hege arches greets visitors at the north and south entrances to the district, whose population is 90% Xi'en and Gtsang ethnicities. Inside the district, the changes become absolute, and the old familiar signs and streets of the Blight vanish, absorbed into a foreign entity. The streets of Little Xi'en are teeming with commerce; every space is given over to buying and selling, street markets and warehouses which seem perpetually open for business.

Blight Gang: Family of the Gtsang Fist

Alignment: LN
Leader: Ho'cha'mii the Blight Blossom (LN Gtsang female human **assassin**)
Motivations: Triad supremacy, order, continuation of Gtsang community, destruction of undead
Friends: None
Enemies: The Fetch, other aspects of the Triad
Tactics: Violence and extortion, supplying and fermenting poisons
Morale: Fearless; some aspects of the Triad go into battle with a virulent poison in a silver seal held in their back teeth which, if bitten, kills the person instantly (Con 25DC 25 Constitution saving throw), her tongue sloughing away in the process to prevent *speak with dead*. The creation of this poison is a closely guarded secret and it deteriorates quickly, becoming a harmless tarry substance in a matter of hours. They do not use this poison for any other purpose.

AQ20. The Apothecaries

A crowded area of streets bustling with people. The traders here sell a curious mixture of goods made into recipes, cures and potions for good luck. The apothecaries — most of whom can trace ancestry back to Gtsang Prefecture — are amongst the most gifted in the city, and potions of all kinds are readily available, including fortified and doubly distilled potions. The apothecaries also have an obsessive desire to explore and create new elixirs; particularly those extracted from animals and beasts. **Part 2** below explores a few of these extracts in further detail.

The apothecaries also have a trade monopoly in Little Xi'en on poisons and have perfected the art of poisoning to a high degree. Access to poisons is limited, and only those who have friends in the Triad can count on access, otherwise it is a risky game. A character seeking access to Gtsang poisons must succeed on a base DC 13 Persuasion check (add 1 to the DC for every 10-gp value of the poison) or face a hostile reception from **Gtsang Triad members** (2d6 CN male and female human **bandits spy**).

Gtsang Triad members abound here, fighting a covert war for supremacy and against the unclean hordes of undead that thrive in the district. Bound by a single banner, this aspect of the Triad is fierce and ruthless. **Ho'cha'mii the Blight Blossom** (LN Gtsang female human **assassin**), a leader of the **Gtsang Fist**, is in a crusade with His Grace the Master of Burials Hamp Lothar (**HBH11**) to destroy the Fetch here, both are apothecaries.

AQ21. Hege Market

The call of chickens, the smell of sweat and spice; food is a serious business in Little Xi'en and looking at the array of goods, flesh, herbs, body parts and snakes here. Apparently, everything is considered edible.

And indeed, it is.

The Hege market, which starts every day at dawn and goes on well into the night, is an education in food and haggling. Ancient recipes and secret preparations lurk here in tiny food halls and meat houses. The food is amongst the most diverse in the city, and the Xi'en are prepared to have a go at cooking anything. The Sidebox details a few of the rarer dishes, but steaming bowls of noodles and eels, deep fried meat in batter balls, and a spicy rice pancake crammed with painfully spicy vegetables are the most common street foods seen.

Quacks, Hoodoos and Elixir Magi: The Trade in Animal Extracts

Blight locals are a superstitious lot, and trade openly in hundreds of strange and curious potions, lotions, elixirs and drugs; some of which are genuine, most of which are not. Extracts of animal parts are particularly valuable, both for supposed cures and enhancing certain spells.

The bile of owlbears is extracted by a particularly cruel method, inserting a pipe directly into the stomach and withdrawing the contents, an act that eventually kills the owlbear. Occasionally an angry owlbear escapes and exacts revenge upon its cruel owner. Amongst its many (supposed) qualities are sexual enhancement, great strength and hair growth. double the duration of spell *enhance ability* when used for or 5 Arcana 15 Owlbear bile costs in the region of 100 gp per pint.

Hege Delicacies and Secret Recipes

Sundry infestations (notably of **stirges**, who are seen in great storms and swarms, occasionally coming together in a great murmur that can clear streets until the collectors remove them) and an unhealthy draw of insects combined with poverty, has led to the Xi'en locals coming up with a colourful variety of cheap, readily available foods. These delicacies are common street food across the quarter and beyond, but most heavily concentrated in the streets here. A small sample is given below, the list is by no means comprehensive.

Battered stirge feet
Fried bees
Fried spiced scorpions
Lyme fish-head soup
Roast blindingcrow
Roasted large spiders in cloves
Stirge chicks in honey and salt glaze
Stirge heads

Tales of dragon soup, recipes for garlic-fried chuul and live-cooked cockatrice follow the street vendors. The Xi'en, as has been mentioned before, are astonishingly resourceful and inquisitive when it comes to their diets.

AQ22. The Noh-Cha Teahouse

An arched pagoda sits at a bustling crossroads. Within, a delicate scene of grace and calm somehow beckons.

The oldest of many tea houses across Little Xi'en, the Noh-Cha is a classic example of calm and serenity in an otherwise hectic corner of the city. Soaked in calming enchantments, the Noh-Cha, owned and run by **Master Shi-Wai** (NE Xi'en male **aranea**† in humanoid form), this most famous of teahouses harbours a dark secret. Surrounded by **7** graceful Xi'en courtesan beauties (all **aranea** in humanoid form), Master Shi-Wai carefully hides his secret; and his lifelong work to acquire a vast fortune in Hege artefacts stolen or taken by various owners and robbers across the city.

Master Shi-Wai, a picture of smiling sophistication, is actually riddled with hatred for all those who wear what he regards as the wrong skin. He sees the true clothing — for both his own race and humans — as the Xi'en ethnicity, and displays a cruel streak to those who say otherwise.

His sanctuary — a foully trapped and secretive top floor within the pagoda — is brimming with wealth; he sometimes he lures fellow collectors here as part of his plot to take what they have and return it to the rightfully pure owner (himself). Those customers who delight and honour the owner, may go a whole lifetime and see nothing amiss; the service is unrivalled, the atmosphere one of peaceful relaxation. Although his charges are very high (a tea-ceremony costs 10 gp per head, a whole evening's graceful entertainment and meal are 100gp), customers do not go away disappointed, unless he and his ladies eat them of course, as they do to the more aggressive or impure visitors or robbers; his ladies taking great delight in slowly consuming a guest over several weeks — all whilst the victim is fully conscious and aware, of course.

A distant friend and confidant of Clovis, Crown Prince of the Capitol, Master Shi-Wai is able to move in circles of considerable influence, and well beyond his apparent status. Testing him in any way is likely to be a dangerous game to play.

AQ23. The Ch'uin Eating House

A fabulously colourful palace rises from a crowded square. The palace, decorated in flags and gold and crimson paintings depicting dragons, exudes power and opulence. A group of powerful-looking, immaculately uniformed guards wander the entrance area, long curved swords presently sheathed.

The grandest and most celebrated eating house in Little Xi'en, **Yīshī Haa** (LN Xi'en female human **noble**) has gathered about her some of Little Xi'en's most celebrated cooks and set up this grandest of all eateries. It is said that at least once a month the Queen's Lady in Waiting, Elaine of Aldwark, with her lover Maximel D'Regiolette, (**AQ13**) attend a private party here with members of their cult.

Haa is the soul of discretion, and has been well rewarded for her services. Motivated by her art, she dabbles in experimental foods, strange recipes and her own medicines, and makes every effort to secure new ideas — to an obsessive degree. No stranger to the Guild (of which she is a high-ranking member), Haa has a select group of very capable rogues who scour the city for secret formulae, order and collect exotic foods and who occasionally enter Between to bring her back some new indulgence.

AQ24. The Great Firework Market

Here is a tumultuous din; a cramped intimate square that smells of fire and brimstone. It is a square like no other in the city; a dazzling, dancing song of fireworks and colourful explosions.

Home of the more moderate arm of the Triad, the **Song of Flame**, the cramped market square at its heart occupies an area some 100 feet across, which is surrounded by a growing mass of towering houses within which the secrets to produce fireworks is jealously guarded by the aspect of the Triad. **The Lotus of the Willow Fan** (NG Xi'en female human **noble**) is presently entrusted with the greater secrets of Hege alchemy; secrets that are passed down by word of mouth over generations.

The market is an incredible sight by evening, when traders vie for attention, gold and the honour of a seemingly endless number of contests and festivals to honour the imperial dragons of the Xi'en Hegemony and to be recognised by their peers as masters of their trade. A group of powerful ninjas (the "Lotus Fist") are used to keep order and exact revenge against thieves, and the fact that other aspects of the Triad constantly seek out the gangs secrets have honed the ninja into a very effective assassination force. It is said that Duke Malice himself once tried to hire the group for an operation, but was artfully and politely declined by the Lotus of the Willow Fan. Some suggest that one day Malice — who is known to not take "no" for an answer — will be back, armed with flames to eradicate the market in an epic conflagration (no word as to his thoughts regarding collateral damage to the city). So far, this suggestion is little more than that.

Blight Gang: Song of Flame

Alignment: NG
Leader: Lotus of the Willow Fan (NG Xi'en female human **noble**)
Motivations: Protect innocent Xi'en from oppression and undead; keep the greatest secrets of Hege alchemy safe
Friends: Local Xi'en populace
Enemies: Other aspects of the Triad, the Fetch, some authority figures of the city (Duke Malice)
Tactics: Explosives, alchemy, evocation magic
Morale: Cautious; the gang has many friends across the city who can harbour them, so any concerted attack is likely to lead to the gang breaking up temporarily and reforming 6–12 months later.

AQ25. The Opium Market and Houses

Slinking amongst the parish are opium dens; they make no secret of their wares, and have established a sort of genteel veneer to their trade. There are countless opium dens in the city, but all pay homage to the centre of the trade and the main route of the drug, the **Song of the Soporific**. Run by the dangerous **Master of Soothing Dreams** (LN Xi'en female human **mage** restricted to spells of 3rd3rd level and below), the aspect not only control trade in opium and rarer insectum across the city but are obsessive in hunting undead. The Song stop at nothing to halt the undead, whom they regard as an abomination to be burnt and destroyed, and their name is whispered by the Fetch, who are rightly wary of the gang and their methods.

The Master of Soothing Dreams is careful to maintain friendship with not only the other parts of the Triad, but also their royal visitors and customers across the city, and her gifts to the Capitol are often incredible; it is said that half-a-dozen years ago she gifted a young gold dragon to the queen that took 5 men to carry. A genius at diplomacy, she has ensured that the hunt for undead has the greatest network of spies and informants it can, and the undead rightly fear her and her followers. This of course makes her a target, and Beltane himself has spoken her name and commanded vengeance upon her for her atrocities against his beloved kind.

Blight Gang: Song of the Soporific

Alignment: LN
Leader: Master of Soothing Dreams (LN Xi'en female human **mage** restricted to spells of 3rdrd level and below)
Motivations: Destroy all undead, control opium and insectum trade
Friends: All aspects of the Triad, local populace
Enemies: The Fetch
Tactics: Sworn enmity of undead with a host of experience, skills and magic items at their disposal
Morale: Fearless; gang members are generally brought in as children and trained to do nothing but fight undead in addition to the drug trade.

Blight Gang: The Jade Dragon

Alignment: LN
Leader: Shadow Dragon (LN Xi'en female human **assassin**)
Motivations: Order, continuation of the family; continued influence of Gtsang and Xi'en populations within the city
Friends: None, but fealty from all Xi'en and Gtsang people in city
Enemies: The Fetch, Castorhage authorities and several groups aimed at removal of foreigners from the Blight
Tactics: Violence and extortion, supplying opium and insectum
Morale: Fearless; possibly indestructible.

AQ26. The House of the Shadow Dragon

This is an unremarkable Little Xi'en house. Mingling in with the roots of Little Xi'en, the current leader of the **Jade Dragon** Triad, the **Shadow Dragon** herself (LN Xi'en female human **assassin**) is so unremarkable as to be practically invisible. Yet she rules the district, and most Xi'en in the city honour her as their true leader, without ever knowing who she is. Ruling by her contacts within the various aspects of the Triad, the Shadow Dragon is an unremarkable peasant woman in her 40s who dwells amongst the common folk. Hers is a world of high honour, and her resolve iron; she can arrange for an army to take the streets within an hour, and yet she can be passed without a second glance.

AQ27. The Theatre of Performing Beasts

The flaking timbers and stone of the theatre shout its name in both the common tongue of Akados and Xaon characters of the Xi'en Hegemony. A crude structure that is lashed by the weather and time, a great gong stands atop a set of worn steps entering the theatre, which in truth more resembles an open amphitheatre than a place of art.

It's said a theatre has existed here since Castorhage was little more than a muddy street on a wide river, and that many of the city's most famous plays were performed here first. The theatre has a darker reputation, however, than its artistic charade alludes to. Its stones, they say, are soaked in blood from the early days, when art and pain were bedfellows, and where spectacles and mass executions were regarded as entertainment — days that many say are rapidly returning to the Blight.

The owner, the ever-smiling **Xiānxián** (N Xi'en female human **phantasmagist**† **mage**) is in thrall to something that lurks underneath the theatre and in the canals below - the ancient **Xiǎnbǐ, Grace of the Smiling Slumbering Dragon** who is a **vampire** with the following changes:

- She is a Xi'en female
- She has an Intelligence score of 18 and gains the spellcasting feature described below.

Spellcasting. She is an 11th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 spell attack. She knows the following wizard spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, fire bolt, gust, light, minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, detect magic, disguise self, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, darkness, phantasmal force*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, fireball, slow*
4th level (3 slots): *black tentacles, dimension door, fire shield*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold, modify memory*
6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*

Xiānxián, variant spellcaster - wizard with 5 cantrips and 4/3/3/3/2/1 spell slots for spells levels 1 to 6. Xiānxián concentrates on illusion spells with a spell save DC of 16 and a spell attack modifier of +8Xiǎnbǐ has lurked below Little Xi'en since the theatre opened and has been in many ways responsible for the rise of the district and its neighbours. One of the Chosen of Beltane, the vampire keeps an obsessively low profile, aware that over the years the Triad has tended toward what she regards as a dark path. She has no spawn, and keeps only a single human follower, but deep below the theatre, lurking within a maze of canals she dwells in her home, from where she guides Fetch plots against the Triad and instigates vengeance against their many enemies.

Above, the theatre has become more of a circus of late, with performing animals and the most bizarre freaks from across the known world of Lloegyr. The show, laced with fireworks, illusions and death-defying tricks, is considered a little lame; the relative silence suits Xiǎnbǐ, however, but the Between-obsessed mind of Xiānxián continually searches for new and exotic acts. Unbeknownst to her mistress, the illusionist has been making forays over to Captain Hubbward in the Festival district (**F21**) to seek diverse new acts for her show. That the dominated Xiānxián seems capable of independent thought of this sort is something that is likely to alarm and intrigue the vampire when her secret is finally discovered.

The Trial and Theatres Sinister

Cramped around and mostly behind the Theatre district, the Trial is where hopefuls come to seek fame and fortune, but more often end up drawn into the darker parts of the city. The Theatres Sinister squat at the edge of acceptable entertainment — and sometimes beyond it — and are therefore, all the rage. The theatre wizard holds court here, weaving figment, glamer, and shadow with smoke and mirror as part of a dazzling — or disturbing — act. Often theatres are more like zoos than places of entertainment, and entire shows resemble ghastly circus acts. Talk of a theatre of devils is never far away from local tongues, and, as is often the case in the crowded city-state, there is more than a grain of truth to the tale.

AQ28. The Caress

This doubtlessly once-grand cathedral appears as though it should be condemned, yet the crowds of excited circus-goers that ring its exterior suggest it is very much approved.

Crammed into the dizzying, twisted steeple of the old Shingles' Minster, a disused and desecrated cathedral once devoted to the Shadow on the Rooftop, are rings of seats stacked one upon the other to nearly the very spire itself which looms several hundred feet over the apse below, The Caress is a vertigo-inspiring circus in which its bombastic ringmaster, **Bishop Batoph** (LE male gnome **phantasmagist**†**illusion mage**), combines illusion with a stable of broken† creatures (see *Cyclopædia Infestarum*) to tell tall-tales of exploration and daring.

Running across several suspended stages, the plays often involve 4 or 5 separate acts which include feats both mundane — acrobatics using ropes, nets, trapezes, tightropes, and winged creatures — and magical — levitation, flight, wall-walking, and "spontaneous transposition" — all accompanied by musical scores produced spontaneously by the **Carcass Choir**, a **fleshgine**† (see ***Tome of Blighted Horrors***) composed of ghastly animated instruments constructed of the bones, skins, and sinews of creatures that fell to their deaths during performances.

Indeed, such 'unfortunate' occurrences have become more frequent of late following the invasion of the venue by a presence that has been dubbed "the Whistling." This entity, an ectoplasmic twister in which puckered lips of various sizes and shapes emit a shrill cacophony of whistles, is an ill omen: the death of a performer is never long to follow. Yet the haunting has not harmed ticket sales at The Caress but boosted them, with customers eager to witness the skirling ghost and the fatal falls it causes scrambling into the circus' heights in ever-increasing numbers. Despite efforts to identify and locate it, little has been discovered about the manifestation, and Bishop Batoph is growing increasingly concerned that, as his steeple fills to

the bursting point, the scourge on his performers will shift to their patrons, with a potentially devastating impact on his business. For now, though, the increasing prices are more than covering the replacement of the dead, the Carcass Choir is growing, and the infamy of The Caress escalates, much to the delight of **Flaze** (**barbed devil**), the devil from the Broken Back Theatre (**AQ29**) to which Batoph is held in thrall.

AQ29. The Broken Back Theatre

It appears as if an older building of grey stone has collapsed around the superior architecture of its bloodied and blackened baby, still brooding in its exposed and ruined womb.

Squatting at the crux of the district, drawing power at the centre of a diabolical configuration of infernal establishments, emerging from a morass of higgledy-piggledy construction and contraption like the upturned cloven hoof of a colossal goat otherwise crushed and covered by topsy-turvy streets, the Broken Back Theatre appears bloated and strained, as if having been once struck in twain, another structure that lay within— an implacable structure of dark red brick and black iron — had simply been revealed as the source of its engorgement.

The Broken Back is a menagerie and a madhouse, a bar and a brothel, a maze of corridors and chambers that house all manner of tricksters, troupers, courtesans, and cardsharps with caged tigers, cabinets of death, falling swords, and zig-zag girls. Birds of paradise cluster on its ever-lit chandeliers watching white doves die and be reborn from hen's eggs, while the drug-dreams of opium addicts play on stages set around their levitating divans.

Unknown to all but a few, whose knowledge of the truth behind the endless rumour and speculation of its existence keeps their tongues tied for fear of dire retribution, the Broken Back is a theatre of veiled devils whose agents crisscross the city, bartering power, wealth, fame, and beauty for souls, and claiming them once the terms of their infernal contracts — all of which issue from the desk of the theatre's director, the **chain devil Gweilushix,** acting as the local "contract devil" — are satisfied. These devils have the innate ability to pass as humans through the use of illusion magic.

Clowns in devil suits — or maybe devils in clown suits — appear within the bounds of the district, offering free tickets to exclusive events at the theatre to "select" and "special" customers. These exclusive events feature plays in which audience members — their identities concealed by masks provided on entry — participate in a mélange of convoluted storylines, improvising their contributions and walking the boards with the actors until, horribly, the stories begin to leave the stage and sinisterly intrude into reality, mirroring aspects of the participants' private lives that none but those that lived them should know.

When the actors remove their masks, revealing faces that mirror those whose lives they are imitating, the participants realise they are trapped within the play. As they react to their terrifying situation, unable to remove their own masks, the play evolves to seamlessly account for their anger, fear, protests, and horror, casting them as monsters, villains, and victims of the heroic antics of their doubles, whose true-hearted feats of magic and keen blades wrested from vaults of pure faith strike true against their hated foes.

As the play continues, so does the participants' dissociations from their identities, and only those of great mental fortitude are able to maintain their sense of self and resist losing themselves completely to their new roles — roles which inevitably turn toward the tragic, and a choice between a bargain for their immortal soul, or a mortal life in servitude to the Theatre. Those who resist the infernal offer languish in the bounded reality of the Broken Back, a place that extrudes into the Blight in an awful collage of its twin existences in both the city and in Hell. Without a contract in place — what, in effect, would be nothing more than a permission slip to "play" themselves in the real world — escape for most is an impossible dream, while their doubles — disguised devils that are sin incarnate — progressively pitch their lives into downward spirals of violence, greed, and excess, such that the longer they delay signing away their afterlives, the less of a life they have left to return to.

There are, in effect, an infinite number of stages in the Broken Back, which specializes in tragedies and histories of high drama and higher emotion; their structures and settings coalescing from the unrealities it straddles when written into existence by its idiot/savant playwright **Zhi Zobal Manqing** (**barbed devil**), and upon which a number of unknown and unidentified yet brilliant actors play their parts as though, suspiciously, their very lives depended on their performances. The artistic value and prescient nature of the plays produced by Manqing over the years, stories that reveal hidden truths behind major events in the city-state's history if their puzzles can be solved, make them a priceless treasure that only the most powerful or clever have a chance of obtaining. For each of the works that have been performed on the Broken Back's stages, Manqing has written at least ten more of equal inspiration, scribing with both hands simultaneously in the grip of reverie from which he does not emerge for hours at a time.

The Pillars of the Patrons flank the theatre's Grand Scene — a secret subterranean arena with elevated boxes that seem always to house personages of anonymous nobility, arrayed in haute couture and adorned with glittering jewels. To the left and right are horrid carvings of bodies horribly killed. The on the left is marked "*Genesius*" in graven letters above a base of carven flame, and the one on the right is marked "*Vitus*" above graven bubbles of boiling liquid. Both are incarnations of the agony from Hell who reside in service to the masters of the Broken Back and in honour of the pains of birth that its works render in their realm every day.

AQ30. The Scandalous

A white stone mausoleum of indeterminate sanctity sits within a halo of gravestones.

The fog-shrouded, ghost-lit stage of The Scandalous, "Where Illusion Meets Death," is the demesne of the infamous theatre-wizard **Master Edmund Fallow** (NE male human **magephantasmagist**†). Those in the know flock to its doors to petition for contact with the spirits of their loved ones, whose ghosts are summoned before their eyes to carry tidings from beyond the grave. Fallow, a handsome, immaculately-groomed man in his mid-forties, frequently seems to play little part in events beyond invocation, permitting the apparitions to intermingle and converse with the audience for as long as either chooses to remain.

That these shades have begun to accuse their killers, betrayers, and wrongdoers, causing revenge and retribution to spread throughout the city, has gained the attention of several organisations intent on shuttering the illuminations. And yet such efforts have so far come to naught, for Fallow is secretly in thrall to **Puredove** (**imp**) — a devil with flawless white scales who feeds him the revelatory dreams of the dying in exchange for their souls — and to her establishment, the Broken Back Theatre (**AQ29**), through which powerful infernal interests, in the continuation of their dark trade, corrupt and contaminate the plots of those who would work against it. The imp has grown in power as more souls are claimed and bound to higher level devils. Most of the effects are actually well- designed illusions which are based ion information the imp reveals.

Recently, Fallow has fallen afoul of the Triad at the Orchid Laundry House (**AQ32**) whose espionage of The Scandalous, driven primarily by their suspicions of undead influences in its performances, has revealed a systematic process of abductions through the hypnosis of clients seeking personal séances and other divinatory ceremonies. Fallow is now their primary suspect in the disappearances of several of their members, notwithstanding the fact that their ghosts have begun to appear on The Scandalous' stage and claim all manner of contrary causes, from internal betrayal to innocent accident. For his sake, Fallow remains typically silent on the matter, and lets the spirits speak for themselves.

AQ31. The Cage

A tunnel with walls covered in obscene paintings leads down from the street to a subterranean vault containing plinths that bear a variety of cages, and a walkway that surrounds a circular, elevated platform. Wisps of coloured light float all around.

The Cage is a ghoulish, and frequently cruel, show; an exotica whose frequently disturbing entertainments are enthusiastically led by an endlessly lewd and lascivious creature known as **Emasculanto** (CN between-born† **incubus (**also able to appear as a succubus (with the shapechanger ability)) (see *Cyclopædia Infestarum*). This individual, with the body of a muscular, hairless, black-skinned humanoid with a smooth, featureless head — featureless save for mouths where its ears should be, mouths with rose-rouged lips, perfect white teeth, and tongues that spout obscenities and entreaties in equal measure — parades in front of attendees. It proudly displays its scars and the numerous piercings that ring its chest and torso. It is usually accompanied by its own bound **incubius**, dove-winged, devil-tailed, blonde cherubs with forked tongues and impressive physiques. Emasculanto is also a member of the Cult of the Self-Blinded Angel (**AQ13**), and a frequent visitor to Maximel D'Regiolette's opulent tower in the Rooftop Garrets where its tastes are indulged in refined and consenting company. The distorted fiends present here are an example of the effects of extreme passions close to The Between.

The jaded owners of The Cage, the conjoined twins collectively known as **Missy C'hii** (NE Xi'en female human **illusion magephantasmagist**†) (see ***Tome of Blighted Horrors***), employ or enslave a variety of performers for its fetishes, including people from a variety of races and nationalities, as well as awakened animals and broken creatures, all of whose appearances and physiques have been 'enhanced' by surgery or magic, and whose payment (should they be entitled to any) is frequently the satisfaction of some sort of unusual addiction. In addition, during the shows, Emasculanto and Missy C'hii weave the whole together with illusion and narrative.

As one extreme of show business in the city, The Cage frequently crosses the line of acceptable entertainment, which is unsurprising for a venue that constantly seeks to move the boundary of fluctuating moral limits. Yet its outrageous, undiminishing popularity among the masses of the perverse, or those just wishing to test the limits of their taste, ensures its continued survival — even with an entity as bizarre and confronting as Emasculanto as its "frontman" — with the steady flow of gold into taxation coffers and the hands of the influential. Should the authorities ever discover Missy C'hii's clandestine sideline in "haute cuisine," however, it may be a different story.

it'sAs a result of their almost starving to death as girls in Little Xi'en — a fate they were rescued from by Chuukwai, a deformed wizard in service to the Broken Back (**AQ29**), and to whom they both now pay fealty — Missy C'hii now relishes the consumption of almost anything edible and has built a clientele of wealthy food fetishists and closet cannibals, whose number includes Gavage Missem (**F36**) himself, to whom she serves immaculately prepared, presented, and seasoned offal, eyes, brains, and other "delicacies" from a selection of sentient creatures — among which the flesh of gnomes and elves is a frequent favourite.

AQ32. The Orchid Laundry House

This long workshop is a hive of activity, with scores of Xi'en workers bustling in and out of the large doors along its sides, carrying large wicker baskets of steaming laundry on heads, shoulders, and backs.

The Orchid Laundry House is open for business around the clock, and is always packed with a multitude of Xi'en labourers whose language and work songs fill the long, low building with spiralling, dynamic tones. Rolling shifts change every few hours to create a regular migration of labourers to and from neighbouring Little Xi'en where the majority of the workers live. The streets between, having taken advantage of this fact, sell all manner of Xi'en-preferred foods and goods and seem like an extension of that district into this.

The Orchid serves a vast number of homes and businesses in the area, including many of the theatres themselves, whose demand for specialised services to ensure their elaborate wardrobes are kept clean and pristine is a major business line for the laundry. Its trademark wicker baskets can be seen being carried through all the streets around — sometimes by teams of up to six for the largest — into and out of the laundry building through a number of different service doors along its approximately 300-foot length.

While it is, in and of itself, a very successful business, clothing and linen is not all the Orchid launders. It is also a major front business for Triad operations in drugs, insectum†, and a range of other income-generating criminal activities, including operating as a high-class opium den and puppet-house; the puppets of which are young, pretty Xi'en girls.

It is run by a mysterious figure known as Father Feng who is only very rarely seen in public and even then, heavily guarded and veiled. **Father Feng** (LN Xi'en male elderly human **weretiger**) is, in fact, a Triad mastermind, over 100 years old, and a pivotal player in the organisation's many operations throughout the city and beyond. His personal chambers, constructed like a vast puzzle box, lie deep beneath the Orchid in an isolated, yet otherwise unremarkable section of Underneath. Lethal traps and wards — cleverly fashioned to reveal themselves only once persistent trespassers are within their midst — have so far ensured their security. Within the benighted chambers themselves, magic mirrors — each cast in solid bronze and decorated with a coloured silk ribbon — reveal the glyph and symbol on their hidden surface when lit, warping minds, inflicting pain, and draining lives. Yet more reveal **shadows** or **specterspectres,** who crawl out from their parallel dimensions with murderous intent.

Father Feng's monstrous secret is kept at its highest levels. Before his transformation into a lycanthrope, which occurred following an assault on the Triad research laboratory he was running, Feng was a prodigy of the alchemical arts, perfecting mass production processes for a range of drugs and poisons. Such was his value to the organisation that, even in the face of his corrupted nature, it chose to protect and nurture rather than execute him — a decision that has profited the Triad almost incalculably, over the years since.

AQ33. The Crippled Lamb Gin House

This looming institution of worm-eaten wood and peeling white paint looks to be on its last legs, each storey displaced in a staggering fashion that imitates the drunkards that surround it.

The cramped and tangled alleys and thoroughfares that meander with confused intent throughout the Trial huddle and cleave to the bases of grand, imposing establishments, much akin to the career strategies of its throngs of out-of-work actors, musicians, and stage-hands. One such establishment, the infamous Crippled Lamb Gin House, that teeters up on five stories of dilapidated, drooping construction, is typically stuffed to the gills with sorry hopefuls who desperately clamour for time on any of its multitude of stages, many of which are tiny nooks and crannies that permit only a single artist to orate, recite, joke, or sing to whomever happens to be in ear-shot. Thus, at any one time — for like many such places, the "Lamb" is open around the clock — it is host to a score or more performances which run the gamut from the ridiculous to the sublime; the former being far more frequent, of course, than the latter. Thus, the Lamb is also frequented by many of the best-connected agents in the business — both independent contractors and employees of the various venues here in the Trial and in the Old Theatre Quarter — whose presence can easily be deduced by the throngs of fawning, preening, sycophantic 'talent' offering anything for their chance at the big time.

The Lamb does a roaring trade in cheap food, drink, and accommodations for its army of aspirants and audiences, and so employs a large staff taken from their ranks that accept low pay in return for preferential billing on its boards. Such arrangements are typically managed on behalf of the owner by 'Queenie', a long-term employee who has become vital to the Lamb's

continuing operations over time, but who is, in fact, **Mellicity Frynn** (CN female halfling **wererat**), working undercover at the Lamb, along with a handful of other halfling **wererats** loyal to the Family, to secretly send a steady stream of particularly promising young starlets to her "contacts" in Festival.

The owner of the Crippled Lamb, **Osril Quame** (LG male human **agent of goodscout**), is an enormously corpulent, sweaty man whose greasy, bald pate is ringed by a bright ginger fringe that descends into bushy, mutton-chop whiskers. He can usually be found seated at his favourite table on the ground floor, barking and bullying like a beached walrus, and being served by a dedicated team of waiters who bring him an almost constant flow of snacks and sups. Despite what his foul temper and repulsive manners may suggest about him, he is, in fact, a deeply moral man, a close ally of Captain Otto van Schorn (**AQ8**), and a member of the vampire hunting Trinity of Life (**AQ17**). When not at the Lamb or engaged in business for "the Broken Bridge," Osril is typically on his best behaviour courting a serving girl from the Broken Back Theatre (**AQ29**) named Chastity, whose apparently genuine attraction to him has kept him flustered and flattered for several weeks. The discovery that Chastity is actually a **lilin devil**, tasked by Gweilushix (**AQ29**) herself to corrupt Osril and then become the mistress of the Lamb, is likely to crush the agent of good, who is falling completely under her spell.

AQ34. The Crooked Spire

A burnt-out church with a gaunt and erratic steeple rots within an overgrown enclosure.

The incinerated, skeletal husk of what was once Baphomet's Bethel, now referred to simply as the Crooked Spire by locals, is generally thought to be haunted and to be avoided. Its overgrown, weed-infested grounds, warded by a tall fence of twisted iron spikes wended and woven through by nettles and brambles, hide dank, stagnant ponds harbouring nurseries of biting insects which rise in their thousands through the night air to feast on the delights hanging in the steeple, or to spread their pestilence across the city.

In the upper reaches of the jagged pinnacle — once consecrated to the power of the storm, but which now points like an accusatory finger at the source of its destruction — lairs the ultimate cause of its "haunting," a gang of **gargoyles** and **margoyles**[5EF] who — while remaining aligned to the Punishment, a shady and vile group who live in the higher cliffs of the Capitol — are now also in league with a sibilant **horned devil** calling itself The Scaphist.

By day, these foul creatures of blackened hides cling motionlessly to the structure's exterior, patiently watching the comings and goings of the citizens in the streets below. By night, they take to the air, gliding through the darkness to waylay and abduct those foolish enough to walk alone, or else cluster in the Spire's honeycomb-like structure to be entertained by the delirious blasphemies of those they have already brought to their shrouded master and which lie just beyond sight of the passers-by below. For each of these unfortunates is nailed into a coffin with holes cut into it so that their head, arms, and feet protrude, and the coffin is suspended from the apex by a rope, hanging like the egg of a lacewing, in its interior. In this state, their faces and extremities become completely covered by the multitude of flies, bees, wasps, and other insects attracted by the sweetness, and they are continually tormented and stung.

Delirium typically sets in within a few days at most, and it is at that point that the Scaphist begins its obsessive ministrations, telepathically plumbing the depths of their psyches while their insanities take hold, and expertly manipulating their delusions and hallucinations to embed responses to its commands in their disoriented memories. And so, in this horrific fashion, does the Scaphist create its unique artworks — crazed choirs, deranged dramas, and psychotic performances — the faint, drifting echoes of which reinforce fearful superstitions regarding the Spire which, while awful in their own way, are far less terrible than the truth.

But now, much to its consternation, the Scaphist has been challenged by one of its actors — a matronly mother of 6 that lived, 6 stillborn, and, she says, 6 more to come — named **Zadie Keckilpenny** (N female human **commoner**) who has emerged from the depths of madness with a reconstructed persona, a body composed of the morass of vermin that had plagued her, and a source of power she unlocked when forced to enter a mental vortex of self-negation. The Scaphist is only just beginning to understand what it has unwittingly created, and Zadie, meanwhile, is gathering her power so she can tear it apart with her newly-awakening magical powers.

AQ35. Actors' Square

A claustrophobic commotion of sight and sound assaults the senses throughout this overcrowded knot of ginnels, yards, and wynds.

For most, the city is a hard and brutal place that dashes ambition and aspiration against its filth-encrusted, rotten masonry almost as soon as they are evoked. And it is perhaps unsurprising that its entertainment districts burgeon not only with those desperate to merge daily reality with fantasy, but with a steady flow of wide-eyed supplicants, already blinded by the bright lights of the stage and only too willing to be exploited in ways that continually stretch the imaginations of the dream-brokers for the merest chance of a life immersed in such constant escape.

A tangle of alleys close to the Crippled Lamb Gin House (**AQ33**), a venue that many target for their initial performances and a chance to earn a meagre living, has become the epicentre of such desperation. Known as Actors' Square, this shanty town *cum* street theatre is dominated by teetering tenements ruled over by tyrannical landlords who have transformed almost every internal space of their dangerously dilapidated buildings into one-room flats, while every inch of the streets themselves are occupied by public performers of every spot and stripe — actors, orators, musicians, comedians, mesmerists, puppeteers, singers, dancers, acrobats, mimes, jugglers, magicians — all begging for recognition if not a tanner or two. It is a riot of colour and sound, where the prosaic and the provocative merge: drying clothing strung on lines between buildings is mixed with festival flags and banners at every story; the screams and shouts of actors mingle with genuine cries of pain and ecstasy; solicitations for public perception and participation mimic propositions to pay and play at a more personal level.

In a place where the weird and wonderful appear commonplace, the veiled and outcast might walk freely, and here, the Fetch intermingle in disguise, absorbing the intensity of life, or stalking victims to smuggle to their masters, like Urias Kemp (**AQ36**), below. Here too, the Thieves' Guild is deeply entrenched, and running any number of scams and shake-downs, protection rackets and common burglaries, all coordinated by the considerable intellect of a tiny puppet called **Puncheon** (NE male **awakened** puppet**commoner**), that came to life following a performance in which it, and its puppeteer (who did not survive the event) were struck by lightning. That the incident occurred on a spring afternoon without a cloud in the sky is the source of much speculation among those few who are aware of the nature of their local Guildmaster, especially those allied to The Cut String and Severed Hand (**AQ1**).

Actors' Square is also a hotbed of Revolutionary propaganda, where political satirists erect seditious puppet stalls for ephemeral performances and distribute issues of *The Raven* to any who witness the shows; shows that were much sought-after, at least until it became known that they are now plagued by large, jellyfish-like creatures that spontaneously appear, floating in the air, stingers trailing to the ground, whenever the satires and parodies last more than a few minutes. Now, most audience members flee the scene as soon as they realize what they are witnessing, desperate to avoid the fates of those who, helplessly entangled in barbed tentacles, vanish along with the gelatinous bloom shortly thereafter.

This swarm of Between **belabra**[†] serves the Cherelizé Carousel, an appalling Between theatre run by **Poor Zan Zoots** (NE male Between-touched[†] **noble**), that entertains its fey audiences with a rotating display of cells depicting the taken locked within soul-destroying mundanities and indignities of everyday mortal life in the Blight, with the ultimate aim of inducing their suicide; spectacles which rarely fail to receive standing ovations but which, due to the perverse death magic that binds

the Carousel, result in the kidnapped mortal being instantly returned to the Material Plane, and waking, unharmed, in a random part of the city-state, as though from a horrendous nightmare.

AQ36. The Sump

A cluster of feeder channels terminates in this large junction chamber from which a river churns along a brick-lined tunnel. A precarious, makeshift stage, adorned with colourful rubbish, is erected over the swirling torrent.

Below the quarter, a number of subterranean waterways and crumbling service tunnels provide a hidden home for swarms of ravenous vermin and disgusting oozes that feed on the sewage and detritus that is washed into them from the filthy streets above. Despite such infestations, however, these canals also serve two groups who regularly require such clandestine channels to avoid the eyes of the city: the Fetch and the Triads. For the most part, these two interests avoid each other in use of the tunnels so as to not compromise their own clandestine use of them, but on occasion, their needs clash and confrontation erupts into violent battles to control important rivers, junctions, or access points to the districts above.

One such river, the Sump, is currently controlled by a large colony of **ghouls** who have grown particularly organized around the leadership of one who was ironically never able to muster much charisma in life; a failed actor called **Urias Kemp** (NE male human **ghast**). In life, Kemp was a bald, thuggish-looking man with a naturally heavy build and musculature more in keeping with theatrical security than performance, and yet he was obsessed with the dramatic arts and had memorised the key exchanges and soliloquies from scores of plays and productions. Unfortunately, he was an incurable ham, with a ludicrous lisp, inappropriately camp mannerisms, and an unshakable delusion regarding his acting talent that led him to increasingly damning displays of histrionics in a variety of venues.

Following a disastrous appearance at the Crippled Lamb Gin House (**AQ33**) that resulted in a month-long protest boycott of the venue by all the local talent agents, Queenie had him thrown down a manhole. Having lain unconscious in the dark tunnel below for some time, Kemp was awoken by a weak old ghoul that, believing him already dead, had begun to feast upon one of his legs. Kemp smashed its head in with a chunk of masonry but the damage was done: at first, he was in too much pain to escape his plight, and then the ghoul fever took hold, sealing his fate.

Now, in death, his pretensions survive, and he wreaks his vengeance on the acting communities above, using his strength to muster a growing ghoul pack that occasionally steals actors from their streets to perform for him below, in a large junction room that they have transformed into a nightmarish theatre. Right now, he has a dozen of them imprisoned, who know only too well that they must continually measure up to the undead thespian's warped appreciation of the dramatic arts or else become meat for their ravenous audience. For them, as it did for him, rejection will equal death.

AQ 37. The Roasted Cat

A fire-and-gangrene-blackened cat — apparently alive! — hangs by twisted strands of wire and screws embedded in its spine above an open burning brazier, both of which are mounted above a decaying door in an even more decaying building that looks desperately keen to savour its impending ruin. As you watch, the cat seems to struggle.

The macabre signage, a gruesome example of a **zombie** house cat, is a permanent fixture used to amuse the passing crowds and patrons alike. Its pitiful yowls and hate-filled hisses often keep the neighbours awake, but none dare approach close enough to release it because of the viciousness of its swiping claws. Like many local pubs, the Cat, owned and run by **Foul-Mouthed Betty** (CN female human **guard**) is a rough-and-tumble affair, an uneasy mix between incredibly heavy drinking and the need to provide entertainment. Of late, a travelling group of freaks has set up in the yard out back, adjacent to the jakes, and have become part of the furniture during the last few months.

Unbeknownst even to her, one of the performers of the attendant freakshow at the Cat is none other than Lydia, daughter of the (deceased) Princess Sarah. **Lydia** (N female human **spy**) is totally unaware of her royal blood, and is desperate to escape her surroundings. Lydia is bright and unscarred by the Royal Family, but would be a useful tool to any of her scheming aunts should they discover her. Trapped between her deformity and her insidious relatives, Lydia presently works, unaware of her importance in the grand scheme of things.

AQ 38. The Raven

An upper storey tenement built in the style of the Xi'en Hegemony of the Far West.

The unremarkable tenement houses a remarkable person and publication — Aris Macwell, editor and writer of the broadsheet called *The Raven*, the anarchist's mouthpiece. Macwell (NG male gnome **spy**) moves his works across a dozen locations, but bases himself here and regards this place as home.

Issues of *The Raven* are found lying at the end of bars, pinned to the doors of privies, lying discreetly in the travel bags of gentlemen, and loitering on street corners nailed out for all to read. Although few can read, those who can feel obliged to reveal the details of *The Raven* in almost as much detail as they do the gentleman's rag *The Eye*. *The Raven* is not afraid to shock and detail the true goings on of the Capitol and, particularly, the City of Golems. Aris' employees, known affectionately as the Liars (after being branded as such by the Crown Justices many years ago) have friends everywhere, and an uncanny knack of turning a tidbit of information into a newsworthy event.

AQ 39. The Cellar

The alleys below the quarter run almost as far as the street above, and woe betide anyone caught there. Ghouls are said to run the sub-alleys in packs, blindly feasting in strays or working some mission for their dark master Beltane. One of the pack, and more human-looking ghouls, is **Guelder Winter** (NE Uplander female human **ghast**), sister of MacGrum (**AQ 12**). Guelder spends more time above ground than below, and is one of the highest caste of ghouls; able to pass as living with simple disguises and clever perfumes, veils and gloves. Her wanderings around Tincture and Lace bring her into contact with many useful allies. Guelder ensnares nobles into her dark world, and enjoys a high prestige by luring lusty nobles into the Cellar where a hunt begins; a hunt that ends only in the tearing living feasting the ghouls love to indulge in. This feasting is strictly controlled—Beltane never allows his ghoul kin to over-feed, pointing out that to do so merely results in greater hunger, and also if found they face being torn on the devices in his kingdom.

At times of great peril for the Fetch, the entire people have sought refuge in the cellar, and as a result a paranoid web of traps has sprung up across the subterranean streets.

AQ 40. The Ghoul Court

A diabolic subterranean hall with a gruesome stage wrapped in ornate spiked iron rails, great pits and shafts pierce the hall, which is scattered with wheels for breaking and row upon row of impaled ghouls, many of which writhe in suffering.

The court is the focus of the Cellar, a great hall where the ghouls gather on occasion and pay homage to their lord **Hunger-Given-Breath** (CE male human **Aanti-paladinfoulguard**†) and his adviser **The Only** (NE female human **ghast**). Hunger-Given-Breath (Lord Hunger for short)

likes to be amused, and has his agents scattered across the city seeking diversions for him. Sometimes, whole acting troupes are brought here and made to perform — their last performance of course. The Only is the most feared ghoul in the area — possibly the whole city — her insatiability is legendary amongst ghouls, and her habit of feasting on mates during copulation has earned her the nickname "Mother Mantis". Before she was infected and became a ghast, she had been a cleric of Lucifer[TOHC] and retains standing with that cult.

Between Locations in the Artists' Quarter

Engorged with emotion and bloated with imagination, the Artists' Quarter reaches out to tear at Between. Often, fragments open through the mundane and Between and create short-lived places that are a collage of the two; a mundane failing theatre is haunted in Between by creatures that wear skins of failure and who hunger and feed on talent. A Between puppet show grows flesh and bone and hunger, and enters the streets of Little Xi'en. However, there are three places with so *many* tales and legends that they must be considered, if not a fixed, then certainly close neighbour.

The first, the Susurrus Theatre and Theatres Obscura (**AQ9**) have already been detailed in a pertinent area of the quarter. Two others are detailed below; these places are far more transient than the Obscura, whose entry can even be found again and again by certain fey. The two other locations can, literally, turn up anywhere, and are not even fixed to the quarter itself for all encounters.

AQ 41. The Spiral Fable (not shown on map)

A living book of nightmares, the immortal fable is a magic book that takes its readers into its pages and devours them.

The Fable is considered by many Between thieves as one of the most dangerous (known) areas of Between due to its unpredictability. Rather like a library of books whose pages have been torn out and rearranged randomly, the Fable changes often. An encounter can start out mundanely enough; a visitor enters a stage door to find he is actually in a forest, and when he turns to escape finds that wolves slaver behind him; his doorway to reality gone. However, it is the changeability of the Fable that makes it so dangerous, for from then on, the story can lurch from one outrage or madness to another; the forest awakens, and the wolves shed their skin running naked and distorted across snow that becomes sea which becomes a vast living thing. The land sinks and a new town appears from the ocean, a place of theatres and shadows where the wolves become men and the whole town an extension of the visitor's anxieties and horrors.

Dotted throughout the various asylums of the Blight are people who claim to have been in the Fable, and who — some claim — have met people trapped in that place forever, unable to die, unable to escape, unable to go on, they may be found rocking and singing to themselves, unaware often that they are no longer in Between at all.

AQ 42. The Mockery (not shown on map)

To find a safe place for his followers, Beltane made a pact with a Between creature, allowing the creature to wear the body of one of Beltane's followers in exchange for a haven, a place of peace and tranquillity for the undead. The place is called the Mockery. In the Mockery, death and life are mingled, spirits rise and fall and even undead can occasionally find sleep. Mockery is dangerous for the undead, however, as it makes promises, strips away at their minds and sometimes consumes them, leaving them in an even darker netherworld like perdition, but without any solace of companionship.

Yet Mockery is a haven, if it can be borne. Presently lurking in the place, which wears a façade of an abode of judgement, is an ancient vampire able to withstand the insanity of the place. The vampire is known as **Perdition, Dread Queen of Un-Birth** (LE female human **vampire**), and she stalks the halls of Between plotting for her master Beltane. Before becoming a vampire, she had the ability to commune with the dead, and h. H and her conversion to undeadtransformation has strengthened thisthisher ability.

Recently, Perdition has sent a small group of **ghosts** into the Old Royal Theatre Watchtower (**AQ4**) for vengeance, wrapped in their efforts and the world of spirits, Perdition never leaves the Mockery. There are parts of the Between space now that have started to grow the vampire's stain, and as each night wears on, she endeavours to explore and enslave more of her world in the hope that one day, a new land might be opened up for the undead. In the meantime, she occasionally sleeps and dreams — actions she knows are impossible for her.

Part Two: Running Artists' Quarter

A Night Out in the Blight

Downtime can be an odd thing; some groups are quite happy to let it pass in a single sentence: "My character rests for a week," "My character goes out to local inns for a week," etc. and leave it at that. Other groups like to use their downtime to good effect; brushing up on skills and using the lull between adventures for in-game activities.

This list of options — set here for the sake of clarity but which in truth could apply anywhere — enables the characters to spend time doing something that may fit into both camps in a simple way. Devise other distractions for your players, if this is their kind of thing, basing the options on allowing a set choice and package of amusements, activities and simple diversions.

A Cultural Tour: Spend 25 gp and enjoy a day wandering the streets of the Artists' Quarter and getting to know it. Make all Persuasion checks in the quarter with advantage for the next day.

A Night Out on the Town: Spending 10 gp or more and a DC 15 Charisma check to enjoy a fine, raucous evening and enjoying the benefits of a +1 bonus todvantage on Persuasion or Intimidateion checks the following day in the quarter when giving a bribe or a gratuity.

Exploring: Wander a particular parish such as the Old Theatre Quarter getting to know the area, make all Investigation checks in that area with advantage for the following 24 hours.

Gastronomic Delights of Little Xi'en: Spend 15 gp plus to enjoy a night out in Little Xi'en sampling its local fayre.

Mingling with the Artists: Spend 20 gp to be seen at the right places and make a DC 15 Charisma check to enjoy the benefits of the Mingling with Genius money feat locally for 24 hours.

Making Friends: Spend 10 gp or more at a specific hostelry or venue and make a DC 10 Charisma check to enjoy a fine, raucous evening and make all Persuasion checks 1 with advantage the following day when within the quarter.

Mingling with the Puppeteers: Spend 5 gp to spend a day wandering the streets of the quarter watching the puppeteers.

Take in a Play: Spend 10 gp to enjoy a night at the theatre.

Take it Easy: Spend 50 gp to recharge, enjoy the sights and sounds of the district for a whole week, and relax.

Wandering Little Xi'en: Spend 5 gp or more wandering the strange streets of the district and make Investigation checks that related to Little Xi'en 1with advantage the following day.

Animal Extracts

Perfected in the apothecaries of Little Xi'en and modified by scholars and physicians across the city, extracts can be used to enhance spellcasting — often adding a metamagic feat when used as a material component — or can be distilled to other, more physical effects. These and any feats are added onto the spell after casting, the spell is considered its standard level at the time it is learnt and it is the extract (which is consumed during



casting) that enhances the spell or effect accordingly. In general, only master apothecaries and alchemists are able to distil the extracts mentioned below, and costs vary wildly; the creator often basing her price on the purchaser's demeanour and relative wealth — so one customer might pay twenty times more than another. Arrogant and wealthy spellcasters often find themselves paying king's ransoms for goods that the rebel's pass freely.

Magical beasts seem particularly disposed to producing these beneficial extracts, whether that is there bestial nature, a shared kinship with man or some other factor is unknown. The method of extraction for each elixir remains the same — the creature must be alive. For some reason, dead beasts seem to give only dead extracts.

As a rule of thumb, those who extract the elixirs must make a base DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check (2add 1 to the DC for every HD of the creature) to avoid killing the creature during extraction. The process causes the animal or beast 1d6 points of damage per Hit Die the creature has, and the DC for extraction increases by 3 for every time the creature isn't fully healed (this stacks for additional extraction).

Cantrips are considered to be spells.

Extract	Effect
Ankheg Salivary Gland	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does acid damage by 1d10 points of damtage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.
Basilisk Eye	The harvested tears, when imbibed, bolster the ability to resist incapacitating effects. For 1 hour, the user will have advantage on saving throws against spells or abilities that would incapacitate the themgive disadvantage on the initial save for . Single use per dose, limited to one use per long rest.
Behir Lymph	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does lightning damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period, reroll any 1 or 2, one use only per dose.
Bulette Liver	When ground into paste and added to *potion of giant strength*, the duration is doubled.double the . Single use per dose, limited to one use per long rest.
Chimera Cerebrospinal Fluid	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does fire damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.damage as an effect
Cockatrice Phlegm	When boiled and fermented, cockatrice phlegm gives the imbiber advantage on saves versus petrification effects for 8 hours. Single use per dose, limited to one use per long rest.
Darkmantle Skin	Doubles the duration of spells that create darkness or similar effects. The spell must use concentration and cannot be instantaneous in duration. Single use per dose, limited to one use per long rest.
Giant Eagle Bile	Doubles the duration of spells that affect vision . Single use per dose, limited to one use per long rest.

Extract	Effect
Gibbering Mouther Spittle	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does psychic damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.that apply a rightened effect
Griffon Milk	The boiled, distilled and fermented milk of a griffon can, when ingested, double the duration of double the duration of the *fly* spell. This is a single use per dose and is limited to one use per long rest.
Hydra Sputum	When consumed, the next spell that restores hit points to a creature will restore an additional 1d8 hit points. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.
Kraken Tears	When used as an additional material component, it will double the duration (reroll any 1 or 2)to *water breathing* or *water walk*. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per long rest.
Manticore Vomit	When formed into a sticky paste and applied to the skin prior to casting, it will double the duration of increase the AC bonus of *barkskin* and the target's AC cannot be less than 17, regardless of armour worn. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per long rest.by +1
Owlbear Bile	Doubles the duration of *enhance ability* when used with the *bear's endurance* and *bull's strength* options. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per long rest.
Pegasus Rheum	Doubles the duration and increase the radius by 50% for detection spells (e.g. *detect evil*, *detect magic*, etc.) Only one use per dose and limited to one use per long rest.
Phase Spider Cerebrospinal Fluid	movement doubling the maximum teleportation distanceDoubles the maximum range of *dimension door*. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.
Phoenix Saliva	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does radiant damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional componentShorten the casting time of when cast as a ritual spell. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.
Purple Worm Casts	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does necrotic damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.
Remorhaz Meningeal Membrane	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does force damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.Double the duration
Sea Serpent Gastric Juice	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does poison damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.by either increasing the caster level assumed to be casting the spell by 5 levels or by increasing the spell slot level by one, whichever is applicable.
Sphinx Bile	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does thunder damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.
Stirge Hematoma	Diluting the clotted blood of a stirge and consuming it will grant Aadvantage on Medicine checks when using a healing kit with this ingredient for 10 minutes. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per long rest.
Tarrasque Pus	Considered by many physikers, apothecaries and healers to enable imbiber to regenerate (how long and at what rate is conjecture); possibly apocryphal.
Unicorn Sweat	Imbibing the sweat of a unicorn provides added protection against sleep and charm spells for 24 hours. Saving throws against these effects are made with advantage. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period. Gives advantage on
Winter Wolf Nephroliths	Increases the damage on the very next cast of a spell that does cold damage by 1d10 points of damage when used as an additional component. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per 48-hour period.Doubles the duration of that deal cold damage or that produce ice
Worg Chyme	This pulpy, acidic fluid can be brewed into an abominable-smelling elixir that when successfully imbibed (user must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution save or be poisoned for 1 hour and vomit up the extract)Con , produces a keen sense effect similar to that of a worg, resulting in Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on vision or hearing being made with advantage *keen hearing and smell* of a worg (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks the rely on hearing or smell)for 1 hour. Only one use per dose and limited to one use per long rest.

Optional RulesNegative Effects of ExtractsadvantageThe extracts listed above have the potential to turn a tough fight in the character's favour. Consider substituting a negative effect instead of the long reuse period on the extracts. Consuming the bile or fluids of a dangerous creature can and very likely should have consequences.

Another suggestion would be to impose an Animal Handling skill check in addition to the Medicine skill check to relieve these creatures of their extracts. After all, they are alive and likely aren't going to just let you cut into them and freely remove their glands and fluids. If the Animal Handling check fails by more than 5 points, maybe the creature overpowers the characters and attacks!

Obviously, how you use these extracts, if you choose to at all, is up to you, the GM, to do with as you will. As always, these are simply suggestions and you should feel empowered to alter then as best fits your style and the players in your game.

Additional Downtime Activities

Additional downtime activities are introduced as an optional GM tool in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*, Part 3**. Following are additional downtime activities that are particularly suitable for the Artists' Quarter. The activities presented here are given in their most basic form. If you'd likeset of activities, you can add additional tiers to each activity by increasing costs and adding new benefits, and for each level as appropriate.

An Actor's Life

You make contacts, open doors and try to build a career as an artist.

Prerequisites: You are proficient in the Performance skill.

Benefit: You pay to be part of a performance as a financial sponsor, with rights to appear in a play or similar event in a minor capacity for 1 month. The cost is 100 gp and you must make a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check once during the month to gain minor notoriety. You add your proficiency bonus to1 Deception and Persuasion checks within the quarter for 1 week after the performance.

Being Seen

You flash your cash about and are seen in the brightest places with the right people.

Prerequisite: You have a Charisma of at least 10.

Benefit: You pay to enhance your visibility on the streets for 1 month. The cost is 100 gp to make all Charisma-based checks within advantage within one parish or general area of the Artists' Quarter (Theatre's Sinister, Little Xi'en, etc.).

Keeping a Lover

You keep a mistress or paramour to fit in with the many bohemian types who dwell in the Artists' Quarter.

Prerequisite: You succeed on a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This check can only be attempted once per game month. Deception or PersuasionOnce this check succeeds, and the cost of the companion is maintained each month, no further check is necessary. Failing to pay the upkeep of your companion results in downtime action the activity lapsing and will require a new check to find another companion. Finding additional companions requires a new check.

Benefit: You invest in a hired companion for 1 month. The monthly cost is at minimum 100 gp to maintain a companion with one characteristic. If you desire a companion with additional characteristics, you can spend an additional 100gp for each additional characteristic. You can choose from the list of characteristics below.

Once a characteristic has been chosen, the choice cannot be changed. The same characteristic cannot be chosen more than once for a single companion. The same characteristic from multiple companions do not stack.

Beautiful: Your companion is dazzling, and their beauty reflects well upon you in social situations. You have advantage on Persuasion checks while in the Artists' Quarter.

Charming: Your companion has a talented way with words. When they accompany you in a social setting, you have advantage on Deception checks while in the Artists' Artist's Quarter.

a help action (advantage) Deception, Persuasionor use of a Disguise kit (if you are proficient)

Gifted: Your companion is extremely gifted and has given you lessons in a specific musical instrument (choose one). You can make Performance checks as if proficient while in the Artists' Artist's Quarter as long as your companion is accompanying you.Deception, PersuasionAnimal HandlingHistoryInvestigationance or Tool Proficiency with a musical instrumentis considered to give you a help action (advantage) on any skill checks when they are present.

Local Guide

You pay someone to be your personal guide in the Artists' 'Quarter.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You have access to a personal guide within the Artists' Artist's Quarter for 1 month. The cost to retain this service is 50gp per month and will provide unlimited access to the guide's knowledge of and familiarity with the district. You will have advantage on History and Investigation checks while your guide is present. The guide will not enter into dangerous situations for you but will certainly try to steer you towards business that will result in a boon to them (like his brother's rug shop).

History or Investigationresulting in you having advantage in all such checks when the guide is present

Mingling with Genius

You seek to surround yourself with the leading intellectuals and philosophers that espouse the most fashionable and popular ideas that currently pervade society.

Prerequisite: A minimum Charisma score of 13 and a minimum Intelligence or Wisdom score of 13.

Benefit: The pleasure of such august and notable company is not cheap. For 100gp a month, you will be seen with in the best coffee houses, theatres, and centres of art within the Artists' Quarter. You can ask questions or favours of the geniuses with which you associate, for a small fee...100gp. As an example, you can ask the NPC to identify or appraise an item, make an introduction to another famous person, compose an essay or piece of music, create a work of art, or instruct you on a topic of history, science, or arcane lore. It is assumed that the NPC is automatically successful on up tomakes a successful DC 20 checks for any skills, tools or instruments necessary to accomplish the task.25 Tool (artisan) when used to appraise an itemPersuasionInvestigationanceor Tool use for any musical instrument.

Person of Taste

You possess a new piece of artwork that shows your fine taste.

Prerequisite: A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check and a minimum of 1000gp to acquire the piece of art. This check is limited to one attempt per month.20 Artisan Tools

Benefit: You search the galleries and markets of the Artists' Quarter to find the perfect new piece of art to prominently display that will remain fresh and socially appealing for 1 month (after which it will be considered gauche or passé). The cost is 1000gp minimum. You can reduce the DC of the Persuasion or Deception checks by 2 for every 500gp additional you offer for the art. Once purchased, word of your prize spreads quickly throughout the Artists' Quarter, making you the talk of the fashionable elite. You are considered proficient in Charisma-based skills and can add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus. 3 Persuasion Quarter

The Graceful Visitor

You spend a considerable amount of time in Little Xi'en getting to know the locals.

Prerequisite: You are of any ethnicity other than Xi'en or Gtsang.

Benefit: You spend the time and money to become well acquainted with the folk of Little Xi'en for 1 month. For the small fee of 250gp, you can purchase information from the locals in the Artists' Quarter. This fee grants you a free piece of information that would normally require a skill check to obtain. If you are seeking the information within Little Xi'en, you are granted two pieces of information that would normally have required a skill check.

1 Persuasion 2

Artists' Quarter Random Encounters

Day	Night	Result
01	01–03	1d6+1 **thugs***
02	04–05	1d4+1 **nobles**
03–12	06–08	1d6+2 Constables of the Watch (**guards**) (**AQ4**)
13	09–10	Maximel D'Regiolette and Elaine (**AQ13**)
14–18	11	2d4 beggars (**commoners**)*
19–21	12	A trader*
22–23	13–21	Theatre-goers*
24–25	22	Street play*
—	23	Guide Hannas Grave (**AQ5**)
—	24	Master of Incense (**AQ14**)
—	25	His Grace the Keeper of the Hanging Chapel (**AQ18**)
26	26	Magnus Odde (**AQ8**)
27	27–31	1d4 drunks (**commoners**)*
28–29	32–33	Impromptu flea-market
30–33	34–35	Corner-doxy*
—	36	Master Shi-Wai (**AQ22**)
—	37	Yīshī Haa (**AQ23**)
34–39	38–43	No encounter
40–41	44–50	Street Artists or Artists in the Street (choose from below)
42	51	Breed Marshal Otram Storr (**AQ7**) and 6 militia (**guards**)
43–50	52	No encounter
51	53	Mistress Beatrice Lament (**AQ3**)
52-55	54-58	Wandering street performers*
56-62	59-60	Street food vendor*
63	61	Lenore Frome (**AQ3**)
—	62	Master of Soothing Dreams (**AQ25**)
64–65	63–64	Captain Otto van Schorn (**AQ8**)
66	65	Artram Horde (**AQ7**) and 6 militia (**guards**)
67–69	66	Capt. Gilbert Quench-Smyne (**AQ4**), 12 constables (**guards**(**guards**))
70	67	MacGrum Winter (**AQ12**)
71–72	68–71	Members of the Family (**wererat**)*
—	72	Xiānxián (**AQ27**)
73	73	Lenora Rose (**AQ3**)
74–78	74–80	1d4+1 **spys**Knockers (**spies**)*
—	81	Shadow Dragon (**AQ26**)
—	82	No encounter
79–82	83–88	Lowfolk*
83–97	89–90	Street Artist (see list below)
98	91–93	Mushaff Nziin (**AQ17**)
99	94	Emily Bleaklow (**AQ5**)
00	95–96	1d6+6 **ghouls**
—	97	Polypore (**AQ10**)
—	98	Lementia Grabe (**AQ11**)
—	99	No encounter
—	00	Magnus Melancholy and his spawn (**AQ6**)

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–40	Human (Castorhager)
41–60	Human (Xi'en)
61–73	Human (Gtsang)
74–75	Human (other)
76–90	Halfling
91–93	Dwarf
94–96	Gnome
97–00	Other

Where named characters are encountered, they are encountered alone or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Beggars: These miserable folk are either pathetically helpless or aggressively harassing in their attempts to procure a handful of tanners.

Constables: The constables of the Queen's First Theatre Watch are known for their bloodthirstiness and vile demeanour. If accompanying their captain, they take note of anyone who crosses them to seek them out and rough them up later.

Corner-Doxy: These come in all genders, shapes and sizes. Prostitutes are plentiful throughout the Blight (**commoners**).

Drunks: Groups of revellers (**commoners**) who are worse for wear, they may become violent (30% chance to be hostile), unless their attitude if improved.

Family: These blokes are 2d6 in number (**wererats**) and are wandering about enjoying themselves (35%) or bickering (65%).

Gentlemen: Genteel citizens out on the town (**nobles**); they may be worse for wear and/or in the company of 2d3 prostitutes.

Ghouls: A pack of **ghouls** (30% led by a **ghast**) hunts the alleys. Beltane has given strict instructions not to overfeed, so they may, surprisingly, run away from encounters (25%).

Impromptu Flea Market: This is a market of 2–5 stalls. Use the list in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*, Appendix A** to determine the contents.

Lowfolk: These locals (**commoner**) are simply going about their business and want to be left alone.

Militia: These jack-booted human thugs (**guards**) accompany their superior in a protective ring and are itching to start trouble with anyone who looks at them crossways

Rogues: These cutpurses (**spythug** or **bandit**) may follow targets to alleys and attack by day and are likely to attack openly by night.

Street Food Sellers: These street vendors (**commoners**) sell pies, fish and fry and other consumables as detailed in **Chapter 1**.

Street Play: A street play uses local features such as market places, raised pavements etc. to stage a performance by 1d6+5 actors (**commoners**) of some skit or play — often bawdy comedy.

Theatre-Goer: This group of 1d8+3 folks (**commoners**) are out enjoying a show on the quarter. They may be inebriated (35%).

Thugs: By day these thugs (**thug** or **bandit**) are noisy and objectionable; by night they attack unless their hostile attitude can be improved.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) usually has a market stall, although some operate from hand trays. They sell a variety of basic goods, from coal to flowers to fish to candles.

Wandering Street Performers: A single musician (**commoner**) or a small group of 1d4+4 musicians and entertainers (**commoner**). There is a 10% chance that the group will contain a **minstrel**†.

30 Street Artists and Artists on the Streets

1. Macabe Grudd (NE male gnome apprentice mage), a Crackling and Salt puppeteer who talks to his puppets a little too freely.

2. Mad Donty (N human commoner) wanders the quarter with his one-stringed lute shouting songs and begging for ale money.

3. The Pageant of Elongated Faces: Actors in horrific masks dance and scream and sing opera (terribly).

4. The Angel's Insomnia: A group of 4 gifted acrobats (spy), and members of the Guild whose acts consisting of death-defying clambering, falling and leaping amaze and horrify their audiences.

5. Asanna Fey (N female half-elf commoner) wanders the streets naked save for her layers of blue paint to reflect her misery. She warns people that the end is coming.

6. A Crackling and Salt puppeteer.

7. Jav Mumpkin (NE male gnome spy) lurks at the back of his partner and fellow Guild member Oscar Grind (NE male extraordinarily-ugly commoner) whose disarming face acts as a sufficient shock and distraction for a little thievery. (Perception checks are made with disadvantage while Oscar Grind's face is visible and in the field of view).

8. Growl Fetcher (CN male hill dwarf commoner), snuff-taking Growl's act consists of him painting himself grey, pretending to be a statue and then chasing people with his axe when they walk away.

9. Artemis Quidd (LE bearded devil polymorphed into human form), wearing the skin of a piper, wanders the streets trying to draw old people into his grasp, promising them rebirth or youthfulness but then taking them to Hell.

10. The Muckjubb Players: Morality players who are actually a successful gang of rogues and swindlers (spybandit) who work for the Guild.

11. Habjubb Donkey (NE male human minstrel) gleefully playing the Infamous Tale of Jack Sprat puppet show.

12. Uncle Gupp (N male human commoner) is dressed in a sandwich board advertising the coming events at the Farnham Theatre (AQ7).

13. Elisabeth Heppy (NG female human commoner) is street artist who chalks magnificent copies of classic paintings on the streets of the quarter. Heppy is being harassed and stalked by a wererat called Dandy Nettles (NE male human wererat).

14. Chullia Habb (N female human commoner) dresses as an angel, with kites or silk for wings, and dances through the streets.

15. Muckpudd (NG male half elf commoner) riding his orange-painted pig, Porkchop (N male boar), does a fine act of juggling knives and burning objects but is truthfully a gifted artist whose paintings are simply too far ahead of their time.

61. The Painted Specials Group of freakshow artists parade the streets dressed as grotesque children playing flutes and praising Mother Grace and Brine.

17. Zoll and Boll (N male human commoner), jugglers and acrobats who do amazing things with two-man tree saws.

18. Master portrait painter Hebbicus Qill (CG male human commoner) with his manservant Mister Habbius Hemp (N male human commoner) clutching and dragging his vast store of equipment on their way to paint a new costumer.

19. Drake Muggubbin (LN male human commoner) wanders the streets acting his one-man plays and talking to ghosts. Some say the Fetch have taken an interest in his uncanny abilities to see spirits and his movements are being followed by religious zealots that are intent on destroying all undead in the city.

20. Minor landscape painter Edward Grudd (N male human noble) on the streets painting in oils.

21. Mitcer Quire (CN male human commoner) and his mistress and model Lithin (NE female human starter mage dashing about the city with his easel and paints on their way to paint the model at some new location.

22. The Mournful Clown (NG male gnome spycommoner) goes about the city playing incredible music on his harp.

23. The Tumblers, a quartet of dwarf acrobats (CN male dwarf spy), who breathe fire and daub walls in curious (and frankly obscene) Dwarven graffiti.

24. Brother Drake (N male apprentice starter mage is a typical petty street wizard, casting his relatively weak spells to earn a crust. Drake has fallen on hard times and has been wandering the narrower streets at night helping a pack of ghouls to the odd prostitute, sure that no one is going to miss the occasional fallen lady (or man) (see Sister Oblivion below).

25. Sister Oblivion (NE female human ghoul). What Drake doesn't know is that an undead flute-playing prostitute has sworn to keep an eye out on the living girls (not that she can ever tell them, of course) and is eagerly stalking Drake, whilst admiring his fat body and wondering just how succulent he might be.

26. The Drawn-Faced Man (CN male commoner) with his face like a horse's and his sack cloth, wanders the city singing sad laments and reciting beautiful poetry about how people leave their bodies when they sleep.

27. (Night only) Daring anarchist puppeteer Jacob Dridge (NG male human spy) enacting the Tragedy of Mister and Mistress Wedge with his revolting fleshy puppets.

28. (Night only) Marriana Ragg (NE female human ghoul): Reciting the deepest, most haunting poems, harlot Marriana seeks to lure customers into alleyways. Even as she rends them, she still shares her poems with her victims

29. (Night only) Archibald Hegg (NE male human vampire spawn (a local entertainer)): Tearing down the streets and trying to escape an ancient vampire's agents, who see him as nothing more than a beacon for vampire hunters, the Shadowy Tumbler as he is known tries to flee, spider climbing his way across rooftops as he runs.

30. The Human Millipede. In truth, little more than a quartet of down-at-luck gnomes (N male gnome commoner) who have taken to crawling about the streets in costume reciting lewd poetry are proof, if any is needed, that not everyone in the Artists' Quarter truly has talent. **1. 1.**



Chapter Three: BookTown



It has a unique smell, this place, of old books and ageing parchment, of ink and learning. This place of towers and strange bridges between buildings, this place where the streets are cramped with a curious mixture of all walks of life. The bewigged legalese rubs shoulders with the punkawallah, who in turn flees from the eyes of his cruel master the overseer, clutching a fistful of legal papers. A handcart full of heavy tomes is pushed by a reed-thin man wearing a turban, a donkey sags beneath its load of new wet parchment.

Here in the shadow of the tall buildings men are slave to the books that they come to see, and every window is crammed with tomes and maps and manuscripts, pamphlets, codices, and weighty works. You see a narrow iron spiral stair through grimy windows — both stair and window are crammed with books. Even the streets sing out in worship of the written word — scribes and bookbinders and printers compete for custom amongst the stalls of mapmakers and cartographers and legalese.

And buried beneath the gloss of respectability are the secrets, the antiquaries who fight over ancient tribal fetishes, the wizards who kill for spells that have never seen sunlight, and the twisted visionaries who organise trips to explore Between.

Is this the place of knowledge, or is it the home of madness?

Introduction

Can you keep a secret?

BookTown is the treasury of tomes and pamphlets, maps, arcana, and worthy works. The **bibliomerchants** flock here to buy and sell, and as the place has gathered books, so space has run out. And as the booksellers have arrived, so too have those seeking knowledge and curiosities. The place now has a huge reputation for the acquisition of antiques and the curious — the unusual, the magical, and the alchemic.

BookTown has an unusual attraction for the nonhuman; those who wear false skins find that they can easily fit into the strange locals that dwell here, take sweet dark Turkad cabb'e in the narrow balconies overlooking the plazas of the booksellers, and smoke from long pipes in the shade of the great towers. One may unknowingly meet nagas, rakshasa, and hags, as well as angels and devils, in the dank musty shops and libraries herein. It is a place where the game of knowledge is played for very high stakes and where trouble and intrigue is only a page turn away.

Unlike a library, BookTown is a very dangerous place to visit, and an even more dangerous place to live. Twisted things are drawn by secrets, some of these are very powerful, and the alleys of BookTown are infested with the taint of their dark presence. Creatures come in the wake of these powerful things, the rooftops, sewers, and ruins of this district are infested with unspeakable creatures. Wizards imprison demons, devils, and daemons; they make slaves of things that have never seen the sun and use these foul creatures to wage war with each other. In a place where secrets can make mortal men more powerful than their dreams, every scrap of knowledge is pored over in minute details. The tome made of flayed skin contains a dark secret to open doorways into Between at will, while the huge painting is actually a riddle to find a holy artefact that could lay low a city, and the codex contains the secret to remake life.

BookTown is a city of lonely, secretive, people: the strange and unwanted, the homeless or the despicable. Where the occupants bind together to form cults and guilds, they do so out of necessity, aiming to keep secrets to a chosen few who have the wit and wisdom to use these secrets wisely.

As with many districts, BookTown has grown beyond its ability to cope with its own size, and has blighted upward and outward; streets rise on bamboo scaffolding, walkways clamber over gables, and precarious rope bridges are slung across streets. Every inch of space is fought over, and paranoid occupants jealously guard and protect their belongings. This is a place where servants — the stitched, the Made, the animated, and the summoned — do their mistresses' bidding. No one wants to leave his secrets for others to see and to steal.

Finally, there is wealth; those who discover new and fabulous things know where to go to sell them, and BookTown is infested with traders of the outré, the old beyond counting, and the macabre. Fortunes have been made and lost on whims, and BookTown finds itself the home of many of the most respected and foolhardy explorers and explorer's clubs in the city. Gossip is all about who has done what or who is going where. Nowadays, Between is the place on everyone's lips; can it be tamed, can it be exploited, can it be made home?

So, can you keep a secret?

Part One: Places

What BookTown looks like …

BookTown is a canyon of tall buildings and towers, linked by innumerable bridges and gangplanks, rope bridges, and ladders to enable the legalese and professors and studiers to get between the sellers more easily.

This is a place that is vertical as well as horizontal. Towers are the order of the day here, towers and auction rooms and museums, libraries and bibliographers.

The order of the written word clashes with the need for wisdom. The streets throng with the servants of these people; the explorers, the researchers and the arcane obsessive. There are others drawn to this hive of wisdom, this repository; the others. The others come in many forms; the devil looking for souls to take, the naga poring over runes and sigils, the rakshasa tearing apart flesh to study the tattoos upon it at ease.

This is a place where everything is given over to collection and learning; there is little room for the sustenance of day-to-day folk, the people here hunger for secrets, for maps depicting lost civilisations, for the key to entering Between.

What BookTown smells like …

It has a unique smell, the subtle smell of old print and parchment, of musty manuscript and ink. And age, always the scent of age.

What BookTown feels like …

BookTown feels like a chaotic library, where silence is a golden jewel that is rarely heard but always desired, it is a place of subdued energy. It is chaotic, but chaos with order; treasures may lie within such chaos, and somehow, everything seems to be catalogued in someone's memory.

What BookTown sounds like…

This place sounds like every busy library in every place in the world all standing on the same spot. Noise is common but hated, street traders whisper-shout their trade, salesmen use the minimum words to introduce themselves. There is an anguished cry of silence.

Seven words to describe BookTown …

Musty ***Tall***

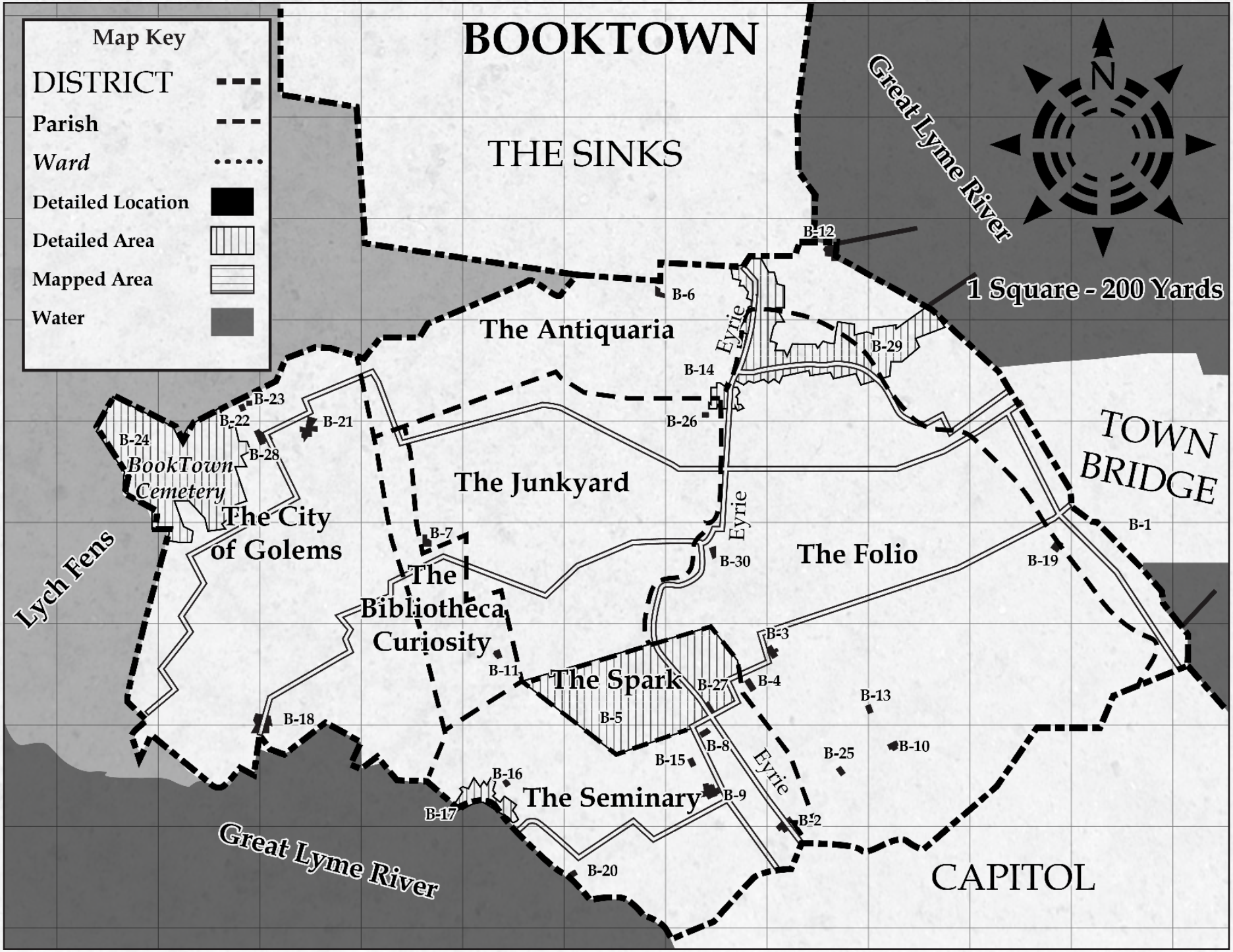
Old Fleshy

Confusion *Junk* ***library…***

Parishes and Wards

The Folio

The Folio cuts directly through the heart of BookTown by the river, but then creeps ever outwards, extending like a spider's web across the district. It is slowly expanding. Folio is the public face of BookTown, and contains thousands of book sellers, bookbinders, parchment-makers, and other traders associated with the written word. Here hack writers and experts in linguistics offer their services, and the Royal Association of Scribes (**B13**) has its home here, as does the Royal Cartographers (**B4**). This area is the most respectable area of BookTown; its streets are narrow


Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
BOOKTOWN
THE SINKS
Great Lyme River
N
1 Square - 200 Yards
B-12
B-6
The Antiquaria
Eyrie
B-29
B-14
B-26
B-23
B-22
B-21
B-24
B-28
BookTown Cemetery
The City of Golems
The Junkyard
TOWN BRIDGE
B-1
B-7
Eyrie
B-30
The Folio
B-19
Lych Fens
The Bibliotheca Curiosity
B-3
B-11
The Spark
B-27
B-4
B-13
B-5
B-18
B-8
B-25
B-10
B-15
Eyrie
B-16
The Seminary
B-9
B-17
B-2
Great Lyme River
B-20
CAPITOL

and confusing, but they are more regularly patrolled and act as the main thoroughfare. It also has the most houses and residents.

The Seminary

Home to the greatest universities and academies, institutes and arcanum, the Seminary clings to the foot of the Capitol like a child clings to its mother; it oozes into BookTown and the surrounding area and devours it.

This is a place of learning, of broad cobbled streets that rise dizzyingly to the skirts of the Capitol, where crumbling ivy-clad institutes embrace grand marble universities and where the spirit of learning is palpable. Behind the façade the place has an ill reputation for experimentation — the first breach into the Between took place in this district. The first alchymic undead was raised here in 1545, and countless other less notable but equally horrific experiments have been made here. Some of the failures still walk the streets of the city.

The City of Golems (a.k.a. The Asylum run by the Inmates, The Butchery, the Stitchery, the City of Flesh and Iron).

The most hated parish in the city lies in BookTown. The City of Golems is where the Cadaver-Physicians, Homuncule Wives, Golem-Stitchers and Surgeon-Artists ply their trade. Part mortuary and part surgery, this area of universities and charnel houses, townhouses and watchtowers is a seat of learning second only to the Seminary. Here, alchemists and physicians are given free rein (and an endless supply of bodies for those who can afford the tax, or a beacon to body snatchers for those who can't) to work "miracles" upon.

In consequence, the Illuminati, the true controllers of the city, permanently have one eye upon this area, and the place crawls with their agents: Knockers, Justices, Streetclerks and the City Watch. The area has a hundred *arcane eyes* upon it, a countless army of familiars, and a truly breath-taking number of imps, homunculi, and other thrall spies all keeping a watch upon developments, engaged in acts of betrayal, bribery, or blackmail. It is the black heart of all new things of the city — the soul of corruption.

The area itself is filled with ornate — some would say unsettling — buildings, many of which are fortified in case of imminent revolution. These buildings have ramparts and spires, and over-elaborate decoration; gargoyles dance on eaves and angels sing on ridges. The streets wind steeply uphill and, as they do, fortification grows until reaching the Castle Strőrd, home of the infamous **Count Strőrd**, one of the founding fathers of modern physicians and alchemists. Rumour has it that Count Strőrd is not only an expert with death and undeath, but is actually a lich able to wear human skins.

The Bibliotheca Curiosity

Little more than a collection of alleys linked by neglected courtyards and squares, the darkest and most secret tomes in the city have a home here. The area has the most accesses into Between, and has an unsettling, ruinous atmosphere. Between creatures step out of dreams, novels, and nursery rhymes here and become flesh, thriving upon the imagination of those who are drawn here. It is possible to walk in and out of the Between whilst wandering these alleyways, and visitors frequently vanish, either never to return, or to return changed by their ordeals.

The Antiquaria

The outer streets of BookTown, where the slime of the Sinks begins to grip, are home to the antique dealers of the city. Wars are waged between these groups, and each is a member of one guild, club, or association, banding together for safety. Scores of antiquaries operate here, each generally specialising in a given trade, be that art, maps, magic, or sculpture. The Antiquaria also houses some of the most famous guilds and clubs associated with exploration, who find a base here at the heart of all knowledge, a marriage of convenience.

The Spark

The inventor's parish, see (**B5**) for more details.

The Junkyard

The Junkyard contains a little bit of everywhere else in BookTown; its streets are crowded with legalese, flea markets, and the effluvia of writing. The junkyard also houses a huge number of cabb'e houses, as well as the usual eclectic mix of gin houses, taverns, and inns.

Streets

For a place with countless alleys and ginnels, footpaths and ways, there are surprisingly few streets, most of which are referred to in the collective parishes they pass through. One street, however, is of particular note.

The Eyrie

Hanging above the streets of BookTown and limping between towers and across gables is a timber and iron walkway. Flimsy rope bridges and plank bridges cross the canyons above the streets, offering access directly into the places above.

The Eyrie is the collective name for the ladders, rope bridges and plank walkways that cross the gables and cling to the sides of buildings here. This confusing mass of structures allows access across rooftops in this crowded district, and although travel is far from safe, it allows quicker movement between places. The Eyrie rises between twenty and two hundred feet, and embraces many of the larger buildings in the area. Bamboo scaffolding and retractable bridges abound, and the street is brimming with traps and guards where it connects to important buildings. The Eyrie has its own unique locations: Dompkin's Bridge is a thirty-foot retractable bridge between buildings. The Great Ladder is a ladder that climbs upward in a continuous overhang from the Folio directly up to the highest level, and Potter's Folly is the name given to anyone who runs on the perilous path. A bizarre number of mules and broken creatures can be found on the flimsy pathways, carrying loads that must inevitably, it seems, drag the animal into the streets below. Monkeys are commonly found here, as are a peculiar breed of ugly crow called Opus crows. It is said that should the crows ever leave, BookTown will collapse.

The Eyrie has an unsettling reputation for attracting **gargoyles** at night, and several have made homes in the belfries and towers high above. They are drawn to the easy prey they find upon the Eyrie, but are often subject to mass killings by those who make their home here and who fear such attacks.

Using the Eyrie

Most journeys across the Eyrie should pass without event, the need for a check, or any adventure; after all, the street serves as a primary access between buildings and, whilst exhilarating, is generally safe. However, the Eyrie does give you a great location for adventures. The precarious rope bridges, retractable plank bridges across deep ravines of brick, and the exposed nature of some routes gives you an additional location to exploit. Do so as you wish. Having running battles and chases high up adds a further risk to the encounter. Having your players improvising ways across gables or leaping between buildings are good methods to make an ordinary encounter into something memorable.

Sample Auction

The Estate of the Late Collector Rostrum Greengage announces a sale of rare memorabilia. Items for sale include a spellbook bound in calfskin containing arcane spells up to 6th level, and a second backup spellbook containing arcane spells up to 3rd level that includes a fine and complete collection of evocation spells. The estate also has a wand of wonder, a trio of wand of fireballs, a masterwork alchemist's laboratory, arcane paraphernalia, and objects from a lifetime of collecting, as well as the disposal of Greengae's townhouse on the outskirts of his beloved BookTown. Inquiries to Mistress Abigail Anston Esqu.

B1. The Anston Auction House

An enormous building with countless extensions in different styles gives this warehouse-sized place an air of panic. The chaotic building runs to a dozen different styles and has half a dozen entrances.

The most famous auctioneer in the world, **Mistress Abigail Anston** (N female human **noble**), runs her auction house and has made a fortune from it. The fearsome Miss Anston is now in her eighties, but has lost neither her wits nor her biting sarcasm. Her warehouse-sized auction room bristles with **guards** led by her oldest friend and niece, **Rachel Nightshade** (N female **minstrel**). Rumour has it that Abigail has a **guardian naga** lurking in her undercellars. The story is true. The traps within the warehouse are the stuff of legend amongst the many thieves' guilds within the city, the Guild in particular. Abigail has equipped her storerooms with a dazzling array of pitiless protections, including several crushing-block traps.

Mistress Anston's paranoia is well founded. Her auction rooms always have at least 25,000 gp worth of stock, and often the sum is much higher. Occasionally, special auctions are held and Abigail has been known to borrow an **iron golem** or two from various underhand sources.

Within, the auction rooms have the ability to lose even those with maps. Endless stairways, **macabre lifts**†, and a cavernous cellar complex serve to confuse those within, and even the public rooms themselves are baffling. Part of this is due to the endless extensions Abigail has installed over the years.

Auctions take place every month, but at least once (or sometimes twice) a year, special auctions are held. Rules for running auctions are included here, and variations are given for you to consider.

Auctions should be significant events; they would get very dull if the only items on sale were a pair of potions of heroism, a +1 club, and a gold-rimmed crystal censer worth 100 gp. Special auctions are elaborate, well-attended affairs full of intrigue and bargains. The characters can use their skill in the expanded auction rules to influence the outcome of bidding and bag a bargain through shrewd bluff and bidding, or they can keep their eye out for bargains as the auction runs its course with simpler rules. In either case, create an event of auctions; don't just use it as a simple and cheap way to get magic. A score or so of unusual objects can create an interesting variation in roleplay, and thrusting daggers of bluff in the chamber makes an unusual event.

Running Auctions

Auctions give you an option to introduce goods to the characters, and to give the characters another option to dispose of their gains. One option is to set a top price is set for each item and if the characters bid above it, then they win the item. This gives you an easy and quick way to deal with treasure purchased. Remember that items can often sell for much more than they are worth at auction and that the auction house always takes a cut. If you wish for more interactive bidding, consider having NPCs bid against the character(s) and allowing them to attempt to persuade or intimidate the competition into withdrawing from the auction.

False Papers

Everything is owned in the Blight, and everything of any consequence should have papers (although frequently they are absent). Ownership of the correct papers *is* ownership. False papers are therefore invaluable, but easily checked, so being involved in such exploits as falsifying papers is risky (transgessors are usually hanged) but profitable.

Typical Things to have Papers for include:

- Property
- Ships
- Slaves
- Golems and Stitched Things
- Uniquely valuable objects (such as artwork or jewels)

Papers may be found as part of treasure troves, but new owners must register them at the Court of Justice (**B2**) at a cost of 5% of the value of the item. Dual papers almost always lead to court cases at which the customary bribe and use of legalese to follow correct proceedure yields results that are generaly (though not always) favorable.

Papers for Goods

To forge papers for goods, the cost is 10% of the value of the object, if you can find a forger. Of course, with two owners of the same object with legitimate papers, a whole raft of experts (called **Legalists** or **Turnees**, all of whom make a fortune out of this endless wrangling) have appeared. Disputes often have to be settled by an appointed Judicare or, in rare cases of great value, by the Lord Justices themselves. The cost of seeing a Judicare is generally about 20% of the value of the object in question and he decides, absolutely impartially, the legal truth, to the highest bidder. A friendly Judicare is thus a very valuable ally.

B2 The Great BookTown Court of Justice

This place oozes officialdom. A dozen immaculately dressed City Watch (**guards**)stand at attention at the foot of a grand staircase that leads to a startling building wreathed in spires, gargoyles, and sculptures of angels. A copper-domed roof is crowned with a weathervane depicting the Scales of Justice.

The Court of Justice is the depository of all legal papers within the city; it teems with petty clerks, minor Royals, and legalese. In a city where paperwork is everything, ownership of appropriate papers is crucial. However, that isn't to say that two or more people can't have the correct papers. The Court settles such disputes and deals with the taxation coming from estates, and land and building purchases.

Justice is, of course, open to interpretation, and interpretation is open to influence. The whole system is a mockery that perpetuates the wealthy becoming wealthier and the poor becoming poorer. Rich barons, for example, may apply for papers for a previously unregistered land that may have a village on it; the fact that everything has been done properly proves that, regardless of the feelings of those who live there, the village now belongs to someone else. And that someone else can now evict the villagers, for example, to build a gold mine. Legal advice is expensive and unlikely to be affordable to people who dig holes for a living.

A half-dozen bewigged Judicares and Under-Justices work in the offices, under the leadership (although often by proxy) of His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken** who uses the services of **Justice Burr,** and His

Royal Highness **Duke Scapegrace,** Justice of Alleys, Streets and Ways to run the more general events, keeping a careful eye out for the unusual.

B3. The Gentlemen's Explorers Club

A mansion whose architecture overpowers its neighbours. This curious place has swallowed the buildings immediately nearby and fashioned them into something gaudy and gothic. It is a place clearly very self-satisfied with itself that conceals something important behind its heavy doors.

The Gentlemen's Explorers Club is a group of explorers of renown whose members have travelled the dark rivers of Between, climbed impossible mountains, and sailed the Unsea, as well as set up colonies in mundane foreign lands. Membership is exclusive, and the 119 members are careful to keep their exclusivity. Like many such clubs, the place boasts a residential wing, a kitchen with resident chef, and the funds to back its members more expressive and wild whims of explorations — if they can get approval of the current chair **Archibald Thwaid** (N male human **master spy**[†]). The hallowed halls are a museum of books, and in particular maps and journals of the club's members, and those objects bought by wealthy members of the club. Herein are scores of items to aid navigation and exploration, and a dozen notable magic items that can help aid any mission.

Current members have an obsession with Between, and are often funded to explore the place to aid the Royal Family in further conquests. The club has an unrivalled collection of knowledge about Between.

Membership in the club is exclusive: Prospective members not only have to be vetted by a trio of members, including the present chair, but must achieve a notable accomplishment in exploration. Usually, potential members are tested in one of three ways. They may be invited upon a voyage of discovery or exploration (often these days, voyages are to the Between) as part of a larger group. Sponsorship by the club also offers a way in; characters are selected based on their history of exploration and are usually offered an opportunity to explore somewhere the club has not yet got around to going to, considers too dangerous for their common members, or to further explore an area known to the group. Membership in the club may be offered as a reward for taking part in such a mission and returning alive and with a tangible result. Finally, the club is always keen to add high caste members, and anyone who can stump up the funds to pay for an expedition (usually around the 50,000 gp mark) automatically gains membership.

Membership in the Club entitles the member to free access to the club's library and collection, giving advantage to History, Nature, and Medicine checks for research that can be conducted in the library. Fees are 1,000 gold per year. You may wish to consider otherwise that membership opens doors, allows access to spectacular adventures, and offers the character a chance at the immortality history offers.

B4. The Royal Cartographers Society

A dozen pillars hold aloft a great gable centred about a strange object that is part clock, part astrolabe, with the sun and moon dancing about a picture of the heavens whilst a great Death figure points to the time with his scythe.

At the hour, the Death figure strikes a bell, and at midnight, the bell makes an empty hollow noise from Hell.

The most risky job in the city is how most view a cartographer's job. A good mapmaker is never out of work and never out of peril, for the business of mapping everywhere is an important task. That the Between occasionally defies mapping is an enigma members constantly worry upon. Cartography is entering a new and exciting period, with new inventions and techniques springing up daily and the Profession (cartographer) is one you may consider adding to your list of available skills. This royal society is made up of those elite handful of cartographers with many ranks in the skill and adventures to back up the talent.

The Royal Cartographer's Society also acts as a repository for an astounding collection of maps, both modern and antique, and their collection easily outstrips those of the Gentlemen's Explorers Club (**B3**). Indeed, although small in number, members of the Society are encouraged to outdo those of the Explorers Club. The present **Royal Master Cartographer Erasmus Quine Shortstone** (LN male gnome **master spy**[†]) is conducting something of a covert war on his rival, **Archibald Thwaid** at the Club, and although such rivalry has yet to erupt into open conflict, Erasmus goes out of his way to discredit the Explorers Club and its members as foolhardy boys who cannot settle on what they want out of life.

Shortstone has a spy in his midst. **Master Cartographer Mabb** (CN male gnome **senior operative**) is secretly working for **Lord Catchpenny Hopton** (**B19**), mapping those aspects of the Between to which he has direct access. Mabb is a member of the Explorers Club.

B5. The Spark

The clang of steel, the stench of burning tar, the noise of toil are never far away from this twisted collection of warehouses, workshops, and lean-to sheds.

The Spark is a loose parish where inventors meet, talk, and fight. These narrow alleys and streets are home to a shifting population of around one hundred inventors. Gnomes make up a large part of the local population, and inventors come from far and wide to try to establish a business here in the cradle of invention. Royal visitors are common in these streets, as is intrigue.

Where fortunes can be made, rivalry is bitter, and murder has tainted the parish on more than one occasion. The parish is home to the Anti-Arcane League, a group of inventors sworn to replace magic with technology.

Handling Inventions

Inventions give you an opportunity to introduce new concepts and ideas into your campaign at a pace that suits you. Technology raises a number of issues for fantasy gamers, and pitching the correct level is of vital importance.

The Blight touches the edges of several technological advancements without going wholeheartedly into them. One example of this is the treadmill or chain ferry; ostensibly, a cable car and an invention that would be inappropriate for some fantasy campaigns. A Treadmill Ferry, however, is powered by animals or humans working in a treadmill. This is connected to a carriage that hangs over water by a hefty chain.

Basic printing presses and clockwork items are relatively old inventions, and the addition of animated objects can be used to explain any potential crossovers. Go much farther, and your campaign may take a step into steampunk, which is fine if that is your goal. The Blight would lend itself well to steampunk, and the idea of pistol-wielding Between-thieves could work well.

Remember some important things about inventions: They don't always work, they can be dangerous, and they can take years to become established. Having an eccentric inventor as a close NPC friend can give you an amusing aside; perhaps the characters dread a new invention being made by their friend as they so often fail or explode; or perhaps they love trying out new ideas such as mixing potions to create new elixirs, testing clockwork items, and new ranged weapons.

A trip to the Spark should be interesting, but not game changing; if some amazing invention was made, the Illuminati would almost certainly hear about it first, abduct the inventor, and then slowly use them to their own ends.

Their leader, **Pardigious Crane** (LG male gnome **noble**), is not an enemy of magic; he simply wishes to ensure that the benefits of magic — flying, disease-free life and so on — may be enjoyed by the masses.

Suggestions for handling the process of inventing are made in the sidebox. The Blight's default technology level is given in **Chapter 1**, but a GM must judge the level of technology he wishes his campaign to be set at. If you wished to introduce gunpowder, steam, or other developments into your campaign, here is the place to do it. The Spark, and indeed the whole of BookTown, also offers you a place to introduce goods from a new resource book or of your own devising.

B6. The Black Librum

From outside, the Librum appears to be another ordinary townhouse in BookTown, one perhaps that has seen better days. Beyond its façade, however, are cellars and corridors linking to escape routes across BookTown. An extensive dungeon complex exists below the house.

The townhouse owner, **Maximilian Gratchen** (LE male human **summoner**†), is master of the **Guild of Flesh**. The guild closely guards the secret of **Unspeakable Conjuration**, an arcane sub-school detailed in **Part 2** of this chapter.

Superficially, Gratchen is an antiquarian, and a well-respected one, his expertise is in ancient objects, and the townhouse does an excellent job of masking his true interests with a veritable museum of objects.

The **Guild of Flesh** has only a dozen members, each a powerful specialist wizard of the Unspeakable Conjuration sub-school. Entry to the guild is via an excruciating ritual involving hooks that lasts for several days. So terrible and painful is this ritual that more than half of those who have taken it have died. Whilst small in number, Gratchen has ensured that, whilst keeping the guild's identity secret, he has the influence of several major groups, and can count on the Family for support, and via agents, can trace the assistance of Princess Ellen in the Capitol as one of his "pupils." Interfering with Gratchen is a potentially campaign changing feat.

B7. The Society of Pagan Artists

A large warehouse has been converted into a number of dingy tenements and garrets.

Darlings of the aristocracy, the Pagan Artists are a community of artists who aspire to capturing paganism in art. Their works are at times shocking, and are designed to instil primal feelings. They dabble in forays into Between and boast some Between-thieves in both their number and associates. Their leader, who goes by the single name **Nacre** (CN female elven **mage**), is the most gifted and unstable artist. Nacre dwells in a rooftop garret and has access to Between through a looking glass positioned behind a secret door. Her work is startling, using strange combinations of colours and energy to create scenes that seem to breathe.

Other notable artists include **Aegis** (CN male elf **mage**), who paints in shadows; **Taint** (CN female **assassin**), who paints and sculpts to shock; and the disturbing **Eschar** (CN male human **noble**), who is horrifically scared with burns and who likes to create works of art from preserved animal parts.

B8. The Great Library

An imposing building, crenulated and enforced as though expecting a siege, this place is crowned with countless stone angels.

They say if the building burns or is attacked, the angels will rise to defend it. A trio of iron angels greets visitors in the lobby, and within, several hundred more angel statues watch. The stories about the angels are true: the three in the foyer are **iron golems** that animate in the event of theft or attack or fire. The angels beyond are **caryatid columns**† that number in the dozens. The curator is aware that he has the power to command angels to retrieve stolen books and to punish transgressors; he has done so several times.

The Great Library is one of BookTown's most famous monuments, with tens of thousands of tomes, grimoires, librums, and scrolls containing the knowledge of the world. The Great Library is very conscious of its collection, and its current Curator, **Curator Angus Temmil** (N male half-elf **noble**), oversees the collection, ensuring that a charge of 10 gp is made at the door to deter the ignorant. Books are not lent.

The outer library works as a repository for knowledge, but is shambolic; a new system for cataloguing is constantly talked about but never instigated. When a character wants to research information, the GM should assign a DC for what a normal Intelligence (plus any skill) would be required without the help of a library. Researching "wolves" might be a DC of 5, but researching a specific sword lost in the wilderness 100 years ago might be DC 30. Do not actually make this roll yet: first determine if the character manages to find any information at all. This is done by a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see if the character can trace through the bizarre indexing system to the relevant information. If this check fails, no benefit is gained from the use of the library. If it succeeds, the character has found the relevant books and manuscripts, and then gains benefits on the actual research check as follows. If the character is not proficient in the relevant skill (Arcana, History, etc.) that applies to the topic, then the character is considered proficient in the skill for the purpose of research, and gains a proficiency bonus. If the character is already proficient (or expert) in the skill, then the research check is made with advantage.

The Inner Libraries hold the older and more dangerous books, including spellbooks up to 5th level. Access to these is via interview and appointment, costing 100 gp. The interview is with one of the Under-Curators, who wishes to know the character's area of expertise. An appropriate skill check (for example DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) to gain access to spellbooks) is needed. Funds are refunded if access is declined (less a 10 gp entrance fee), and access is denied for a week. The Inner Libraries are even more confusing than the outer ones, and a DC 15 Intelligence check is required to get information. Looking for spells has a DC of 15+1/level, so for example, finding a *fireball* spell is a DC 18 check herein.

Access to the Special Libraries is through interview with the curator himself. Angus is stern and obsessive about the knowledge within these books, which includes spells of level 9, as well as some books on hidden knowledge. Such interviews may be played out as you wish, and are almost always refused.

The Castorhage Arcane Society uses the inner rooms of the library for its periodic Society meeting, and Master Timmel is very accommodating of their use even after hours. The Society is responsible for depositing many of the books, and there are usually a handful of Society members perusing the stacks on any given day.

B9. The Castorage Museum

This schizophrenic building is a mass of styles and additions, spires, wings, and extensions. A vast stone elephant guards the pillared entrance.

The Great Museum is allegedly the largest in the world, and houses an unrivalled collection of objects: ancient art, temples (including three whole temples transported from deserts in Khemit, the Red Wastes, and the Feirgotha Plateau of the Stoneheart Mountains), priceless gold tomb collections, stone circles, vast statues from across the known world, a Between wing with preserved specimens, mummies, armour, bizarre animated objects, and countless others.

The present curator of the museum, **Lady Elisabeth Jobe** (N **doppelganger**) is obsessive about security after a trio of well-documented thefts in the last few years. She has installed, at considerable expense, an array of deadly traps backed by an elite force of guards, led by **Museum Watch Captain Marshum Mitchwell** (N **doppelganger** appearing as a dwarf). Lady Jobe follows the museum's time-honoured view that its contents are not for the ignorant public to view.

Stars of the museum include the infamous ship the *Redeemer*, which sailed around the world and which now hangs in the Wing of Exploration;

the preserved body of Saint Augus, one of the most venerated saint of the city for his acts of kindness and miracles over a thousand years ago; and numerous magic items. The item collection is rumoured to include a *sphere of annihilation.*

To keep the ignorant out, a fee of 200 gp is charged per visit per day, and is strictly by membership of the various guilds and clubs operating throughout BookTown. Exceptions are made as detailed below. The museum acts in a similar way to the Great Library (**B8**), and can provide invaluable information. The DC of the Intelligence (Investigation) check required to find information in the first place is 18; the museum is better organized than the library, but has less information to find. If the character makes the Investigation check, the resulting benefits are the same as provided by the Great Library.

The museum is actually a front for the Illuminati, and in particular the Veil, the **doppelganger** spies and followers of **Grand Justice Braken**. The Veil use the museum as a base for their operations and as a lure for the wealthy, the curious, and the ignorant. Parties are thrown at the museum to announce new acquisitions, discoveries, or exhibitions, and these are used to target possible new Illuminati members or to cover the murder of those useful people to have out of the way and replaced by doppelgangers. The Veil has been incredibly discreet with its operations thus far, and the powerful ally Justice Braken has ensured anonymity.

B10. Hepton, Morose, Tamper and Hokk, Legalese

An austere looking townhouse office.

Hepton, Morose, Tamper and Hokk are the finest legal minds in the city, and constantly on the move between their offices, the Great BookTown Court of Justice (**B2**), and Bell's Cabb'e House (**B25**). The bewigged legalese lead dull lives but are constantly harassed for their views on this, that, or the other, and are widely regarded as the cleverest people in BookTown. **Hopton** (LN male human **noble**) is secretly infatuated with Nacre of the Society of Pagan Artist's (**B7**) and has an extensive collection of her work. **Morose** (N male human **noble**) is an insectum† addict and shows the scars of joy scarab use. **Tamper** (N male human **noble**) is a pervert, and often found in the brothels of Festival, whilst **Hook** (N tradelord† gnome **minstrel**) is a regular theatregoer and has boxes at various theatres in Theatre Town in the Artist's Quarter.

Fees for these fine minds are not cheap (double the usual amount) but their close relationship with the court enables their clients to establish a convivial rapport with justice and settle matters expediently.

B11. Master Quabe, Spelltomes and Antiquarian Books

A large glass-fronted shop clearly houses thousands of tomes. A sign above the door advertises the proprietor.

Master Quabe (NE male human **mage**) is a morose, dour man who walks with the aid of a cane. He has a reputation for frequenting the corner-doxies of the area. Quabe is a collector of spellbooks, and his shop houses — amongst many quack tomes, fakes, and minor spell tomes containing single spells within their elaborate interiors — a number of larger spellbooks.

Spellbooks come in all shapes and sizes, and those described in the core rulebooks are merely the standard tomes. Rare tomes possibly containing variant spells may also be located. Quabe is a serious collector, and knows the value of his goods. He also has friends in high places, and anyone attacking, or worse, killing him, has to suffer the consequences.

Quabe's books are typical of those rarer books found in BookTown and may contain written secrets as discussed under **Part 2** below.

Living in BookTown

BookTown is an expensive place to live and can be risky. However, locals have access to a dazzling array of knowledge and distractions to amuse them. BookTown is also fairly safe, which is a high priority for many.

Characters Living in BookTown

Some employ a "legalist" to do their dirty work. A good legalist will find suitable lodgings within a week for 5% of the yearly or purchase cost. Otherwise, a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to locate a suitable place; only one check per week may be made this way.

Detailing lodgings adds another dimension to characters, and providing a home in detail can add something to a role-playing campaign such as this one.

Lodgings per month

Single-room dwelling	60 gp
Small cottage[1]	120 gp
Townhouse[2]	10 gp

Purchases

Single-room dwelling	1,500 gp
Small cottage[1]	6,000 gp
Townhouse[2]	24,000 gp

Sample Property — The Eagle's Nest

A rooftop garret with views across the whole of BookTown and accessed via a safe and simple path in the Eyrie, this residence has four rooms and a rooftop terrace for the bargain price of 7,500 gold. If the property is not sold within a month of advertising, an auction will be held for the property at the Anston Auction House.

[1]3 rooms

[2]6 rooms, with balcony

Enemy Penalty: Master Quabe

Quabe has friends in the aristocracy and the Capitol. If he is attacked in any way, the matter is taken up by **Sir Effen Trilg** (NE male human **captain**), a member of the Royal Court. Trilg has access to 12 levels of the watch at all times, and sets out to solve any attack with expediency. If Trilg escapes but his foes remain at large, Trilg returns with a Watch patrol of double the strength. Only Trilg's death resolves this enemy penalty.

B12. Tamm's Antiquaries

A large warehouse crammed with antiques and curios lies by the river here.

Rose Tamm (CG female human **burglar**) has a vast collection in her warehouse. Her objects tend to be more macabre than decorative and by her own estimate, she has more than 20,000 such objects ranging from skull fetishes, to masks, to twenty-foot-high statues. Tamm's guard, the enormous **Quilleta** (N female human **gladiator**) stands almost 7 feet tall and will fight to the death to defend her beloved saviour.

Tamm has a grudging respect bordering on attraction for **Quentin Ruben Sollerman Hubbard** (**F21**) and often exchanges objects with him. A trip to Tamm's warehouse can take a day, and her stock is frequently changing to keep her customers' interest up. As with all such stores, you can either allow your players to flip through some choice reference books, or assign new goods from time to time as a list or even side-trek in its own right. For example, Tamm may suddenly acquire the contents of a physician's laboratory, a selection of temple goods, or objects from a wizard's workshop. Tamm also makes a good fence for unusual objects.

B13. Royal Association of Scribes

Crammed between other larger buildings is a narrow tower. Hanging above the door is the guild-sign of the scribe's guild.

The Royal Association of Scribes is a small group of scribes. Membership of the group requires proficiency with Artisans' Tools (calligrapher's supplies) and enables the member to make double their usual income. Membership costs 100 gold per year. The present **Master Scribe Brannan Hask** (LN male human **noble** with an Intelligence of 17) is recruiting linguists and waves the usual entry fee for potential members with the Linguist feat.

B14. The Great BookTown Flea Market

A teeming market filled with hundreds of stalls selling bric-a-brac.

Practically a parish in its own rights, this market operates daily, and contains hundreds of stalls selling everything from junk to magic. The stalls are filled by the gatherings of rag and bone men, thieves, villains, and the odd honest trader.

Use the flea market as a source of cheaper equipment, as a place containing a variety of objects, or as a place characters can fence their goods — at a greatly reduced price, but quickly and with no questions asked.

Part 2 below contains a chart to flesh out the stalls of the Flea Market and what may be found herein.

B15. The Eye

A large workshop with a sign hanging over the door proclaiming that this is the offices of *The Eye, the Blight's Journal.*

Seen across BookTown and in the smarter places in the city, *The Eye* is the pro-Royal journal of the aristocracy and patriotism for the city-state. The journal is printed as often as stories allow, and has a circulation of several hundred. Its contents ensure that readers are kept abreast of the present important news of the city (carefully avoiding any intrigue or revolutionary talk) and in belittling the unofficial journal, the Anarchist sponsored *Raven*. **Lord Perren Hawthorn** (LN male human **noble**) is the present head of the journal, and is one of societies' most fashionable and distinguished names. Perren sponsors a web of spies and informants and is a member of the Illuminati. He has friends in very high places, and characters tangling with him tend to regret it until the day they die, which is often swift. *The Eye's* printing presses have been subject to attack by Anarchists in three occasions in the last twelve months.

A Fantasy Journal

A journal like *The Eye* (and for that matter, *The Raven*) or *Spectator* not only gives you options for excellent handouts in your gaming group, but also to introduce adventures. The journal can introduce events, adventures, and other matters you deem appropriate and offers you a way to keep characters abreast of other events in the city, such as balls, festivals, new buildings and, of course, gossip.

A sampling of the much more crudely manufactured *Raven* is included with ***The Levee*** adventure, but an example much closer to the broadsheets put out by *The Eye* or *Spectator* would be what is found in the ***Bard's Gate Players' Guide*** by **Frog God Games**, detailing samples of the similar publication, *The Lyre Valley Beholder*.

B16. Cooper Building — Offices of Cooper, Cooper, Cooper and MacThane

An inauspicious office building.

This building is one of scores offering legalese and advice. Its only noteworthy feature is that it was the first location where the Between was spotted. On Toilsday 11th Grey, 1637, Hetherington Quarrus Mabe saw something looking at him from inside a mirror, and the world of Between was discovered. Exploration was immediately undertaken, and the areas beyond the mirror began to be explored. Oddly, after only a few weeks exploration, the *mirror-portal* into Between from here shut; it is conjectured that this was because the explorers were the first to encounter Fowler's Endless Stair (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***). However, this conjecture came to light only fifty or so years later when a group exploring Between from BookTown happened upon a diary of one of the original explorers who referred to visions of a beckoning stair and that it was their intention to follow that route if they saw it again.

B17. The Royal University

A vast series of ornate buildings surrounding a central cathedral faces the river.

The rich and privileged boys of the Royal University board and learn here. The hallowed halls, lodgings, and grounds cover a dozen acres, and there has been a university here for seven centuries. The education the boys receive allows them to begin as fully rounded characters. The masters are a curious lot, the **Master Erasmus Uriah Worrlingtor** (LN male human **noble**) rules with switch, cane, and tradition. Young boys serve as lackeys to older boys who, in turn, serve the masters. The boys emerge to take up important position within the city, and most insist that their own sons attend the university.

Only those of the Royal caste are welcome (though children of the Upper Class have been known to buy their way in from time to time by payment of exorbitant donations), and the fees are 10,000 gp per year. You may decide that characters emerging from the university have greater access to skill ranks or decide that those who emerge can pick two additional skills as class skills for each point of Intelligence bonus.

The university prides itself on contests with the Church University (**HBH12**).

B18. The Physicians' Institute

A grand circular building built in classical Hyperborean style, this building is crowned with a dome and dancing with skeletal figures that stare at the river.

The less educated and those with suspicious minds call the institute the "Charnel House" and have been known to murder its students, lecturers, and physicians. The Anarchists have their sights on the Institute and place it high on their list of places they would like to see burnt to the ground.

Master Judd (LE male human **deathmage**†) is in charge of the Institute and has the services of a score of wizards and clerics amongst his masters. The study of golem and homuncule making forms the core of studies, and there is a healthy demand for bodies from the Institute. The creation of undead, including alchymic undead, regularly occurs, and a small group of the masters are devotees of the Cult of Revenants (see **Part 2** below). The present Master runs the covert cult, whose followers are numerous throughout the city.

B19. Hopton Manor

A towering manor not far from the river and within view of Town Bridge.

Lord Catchpenny Hopton (N male human **master spy**†) is the acknowledged master of the acquisition of and locator of *Between vessels* (see **Part 2** below). Hopton sponsors half a dozen Between-thieves and has ventured into Between on many occasions himself. His manor contains a trio of *gateways* into various aspects of the Between. One is a stormy clifftop place where the elements rage and seethe. Hopton has sailed the terrible Unseas of this land and is in the process of mapping it with the help of his friend, **Master Cartographer Mabb** (**B4**), who is also in the process of mapping a large ancient forested area of Between that is accessible from the second manor's *gateway*. The third *gateway* leads to an area of moors that he recently accessed.

B20. Fall's Institution

A great tower rises from the streets here. The tower rises to a twisted and crooked spire.

The greatest guild of evokers in the city (allegedly), the **Grand and Enlightened Chann Fall** (N male human **archmage**) runs a private institute here to teach evocation. Presently, he has a dozen pupils, as well as several score likeminded wizards keen to sponsor youngsters, applaud Fall's research, and access his library.

Membership in Fall's Institution is simply by fee and the ability to cast evocation spells. Fall also welcomes donations of spellbooks and objects for his pupils. Fees are a flat 250 gold per year, and members are able to access Fall's library, which contains all evocation spells up to 5th level. Intelligence (Arcana) checks made concerning evocation spells and carried out here are made with advantage.

B21. Castle Strord

The most elaborate and disturbing of BookTown's curious architecture. Castle Strőrd, with its gargoyles and spires and unsettling statues, is a well-known local landmark.

Visitors are not welcome, and **Count Strőrd** (**lich**) is the ruler of the **Cult of Revenants** in the city (see **Part 2** below), and keeps a staff of guards, including a quartet of flesh-golem hounds to ensure he is not disturbed.

Strőrd is a consummate collector of tomes and grimoires, and his library contains some of the only copies of rare 8th- and 9th-level arcane spells, as well as *golem manuals*, *Between vessels* and dark knowledge. Strőrd has a habit of wandering the city streets on some mission or other disguised as an emaciated, hat-wearing man riding in a black carriage or slinking about the streets on foot at night. He also works with a host of **Blight ghouls**† who occupy the streets below BookTown and the cemetery in particular. The lich has introduced a caste system amongst his ghouls to keep them small in number but powerful; this caste code ensures that the ghouls do not bring too much attention upon themselves. An outcast of the Fetch, Strőrd is constantly at war with **Beltane** and his brides, and occasionally he uses the services of intermediaries, mercenaries, and adventurers to carry out attacks on his behalf.

B22. Stompton, Hogg and Gryme — Corpse Purveyors

An undertaker's workshop.

The grisly trio are BookTown's foremost suppliers of fresh bodies. The cannibal **Jacob Stompton** (CN male **master spy**†), the grotesque **"Lady" Hogg** (CN female human **deathmage**†) and the deranged **Uriah Gryme** (NE male human **master spy**†) don't let little things like a lack of corpses or their ongoing covert battles with the ghouls in the cemetery stop them from delivering whatever the customer wants. Killers in their own rights, it can only be a matter of time before their exploits reveal the smiles beneath the dark veils they wear as part of their sombre, neat uniforms.

B23. The BookTown Morgue

Adjacent to the undertakers is a sign proclaiming this warehouse is the BookTown Morgue.

The local Watch are based at the nearby Watch Tower (**B28**) and have the keys to this place, which is locked with average locks. A secret door links this building to the undertakers and gives ready access to corpses. The keen undertakers are always happy to leave coin behind the bar of Mother Magpie's Gin House for **Captain Cleg** of the Watch if he turns a blind eye to the odd waif going missing.

B24. BookTown Cemetery

Surrounded by a high wall, a rambling, overgrown park in the area serves as a huge cemetery where some of the graves have weathered away to almost nothing.

A trio of grotesque lich gates depicting orgies of gargoyles, one of angels, and one of animals give access to the ten or so acres of the cemetery. Amongst the almost countless decayed stones, mausoleums, and crypts, the most notable feature is the Tower of Silence, a large area of raised graves.

The local gravedigger **Hampen Nightshade** (N male human **commoner**) lives in a small cottage on the edge of the cemetery but is petrified of his employer, **Count Strőrd**, and although he is aware of what else shares the cemetery with him, he dare not say anything. Also serving Count Strőrd, and kept in strict check by him, are a small colony of **ghouls**†. Count Strőrd has pressed a strict caste system on the ghouls, who rarely attack and often go hungry for months for fear of their master. The ghouls have become tougher as a consequence, and venture out occasionally on errands for their master or out of hunger. Their leader,

the emaciated **Penitent One** (LE female **ghast**), ensures that the caste is followed; the ghouls do not use their fever except when pressed, and fight using the weapons they bore in life.

B25. Bell's Cabb'e House

A curiously distorted panelled window frame seems almost to squeeze out of this odd-looking building. The heady scent of cabb'e and chocolate wafts from the building, which proclaims itself to be "Bell's Cabb'e House: The Oldest in the City."

The oldest cabb'e house in the city, Bell's Cabb'e House is a luxurious place with leather chairs, panelled walls, and stunning pictures, including some fine portraits of present customers by some of the more aspiring young Blight artists.

Sturgeon Bell (LN male human **commoner**) and his lover **Bartholomew** (LN male human **noble**), a bastard son of Royalty, run the smartest cabb'e shop in town. Political, poetic, and literary discussions take place, and one is almost certain to find a copy of *The Raven* tucked away in Bell's Cabb'e House (much to the owner's chagrin, of course). Many of BookTown's elite come here.

B26. Mother Magpie's Gin House

This is a rowdy, rough-looking gin house.

Fights, whoring, and trouble are never far away from Mother Magpie's place, the drinking hole of choice for locals from the Backhouses (**B29**). **Mother Magpie** (N female human **berserker** with 76 hit points) has a better beard than many of her male customers, but no sense of humour about it. She adores her enormously fat sheepdog **Flower**, despite its terrible flatulence and habit of biting gnomes.

B27. The Princess Louise

A small, cosy looking pub with panelled walls and windows.

You never know who — or what — you may be sitting next to in BookTown's finest pub. Panelled walls, pyrebeetle lanterns, and a dazzlingly diverse clientele, the two-storeyed former coaching inn now does nothing but sell beer and ale. It is thriving upon its reputation as the place to meet and talk. Charisma checks to gather information are made with advantage herein.

B28. Watch Tower

Clearly a gaol and watchtower.

Two-dozen local **Watch constables** (N male human **guard**) assemble here daily for patrols, splitting into groups of 6 led by a **Watch sergeant** (LN male human **veteran**). The current Watch Commander, **Captain Cleg** (N male human **veteran**), has an agreement to turn a blind eye to activities of Stompton, Hogg and Gryme (**B22**), with whom he enjoys a very amicable friendship.

What's on the Menu? — A Typical Cabb'e House

Cabb'e houses thrive in this teeming city, thriving from Castorhage's robust trade with the Isthmus of Irkaina and northern Libynos. And whilst each is subtly different, they often serve similar items. Here is a menu from Bell's Cabb'e House. It changes from day to day, so use it as a basis for your own establishments.

Brandy, Dobkins	8 sp
Chocolate	8 sp
Cabb'e, Delicate Rang	2 sp
Cabb'e, Fiery Ischran	2 sp
Cabb'e, Strong Turkad	3 sp
Snuff, Old Growl	5 sp
Snuff, Pegg's Peppery	9 sp
Snuff, Sneezery's Finest	16 sp
Snuff, Stapes	4 sp
Tobacco, Dark Shag	10 sp
Tobacco, Master's	5 sp
Tobacco, Rum Shag	8 sp
Tobacco, Tomell and Son	14 sp
Tobacco, Turkad	8 sp

B29. The Backhouses

The façade of BookTown vanishes when one looks at the cramped and filthy back streets near the river here, with their open sewers, hovels, and waifs.

More people live in the Backhouses than in the rest of BookTown combined, but where money goes, so does everyone else. Amongst the hundreds of shanty houses, hovels, and ruins is the home of the Tongawallah Guild. The tongawallah is a man or woman (generally of foreign ancestry) who drives or pushes the small carts and handcarts seen in abundance in BookTown. The present **Wallah Raapi** (NG male human **veteran**) is a mine of information, and the friendship of the guild is an invaluable ally. Raapi knows his friendship commands a high worth, however, and he doesn't distribute it freely. He is also painfully aware of the penalties of giving away the wrong information.

Raapi is close to the members of another group of local residents, the Rag and Bone Men, who scour the city streets looking for goods that they can sell, or to collect rags and bone to be made into paper from rags, and handles and glue from bones. Numbering in the thousands, Rag and Bone Men operate across the city and count many goblins, mongrelmen, and coprophagi amongst their numbers. But they are especially numerous here (though primarily represented by humans in this district). The current **King of Rag and Bone Isaac Crumb** (LN male blighted† **master spy**†) takes his title seriously, and has several civic duties in BookTown, including attending several regal events where his attendance is deemed traditionally to bring good luck.

A small group of child chimney sweeps operate a thriving business in the fire-fearful district. They operate a loose guild, the (appropriately named) Guild of Chimney Sweeps, and are ostensibly led by **Meriwether Malin** (N male human **burglar**†). Meriwether is on first-name terms with many Toshers and Mudlarks, who although they do not operate in this district (doing their work by the river), often fence goods here.



The friendship of any of these guilds provides advantage on all Charisma checks for gathering information in BookTown; friendship is often established by historic ties or by doing the guild a service.

B30. The Cullinare

A regal looking townhouse with four floors.

The most famous eating-house in the city, the Cullinare has a reputation for incredible and imaginative food. The owner, **Lady Hammren Lellth** (N female human **commoner**), has a small army of cooks, butlers, and waiters (all handsome men) waiting on tables, and her menus change daily. Everyone who is anyone comes to the Cullinare, but the experience is expensive; meals start at 25 gp per course.

Part 2: Running BookTown

What follows are not official mechanics of the 5th edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game – they are suggestions and should be ignored if they are not to your tastes or those of your players. As always, make sure that your players are on board with any of these options and remember that should feel empowered to change or alter any of them as you see fit.

If you do choose to utilize them, they are intended to sharpen the edge of your game and to make the Blight feel more like the twisted, dangerous, and deadly setting that it is meant to be. These options can add a grittier, darker feel to your game can make your players feel as if their characters are constantly walking on the razor-sharp edge of Between and Castorhage. They are, generally, higher risk but higher reward, and can be of great boon to the characters, but they can also come at a cost. Enjoy!

Secrets

Lust's passion will be served; it demands, it militates, it tyrannizes.

The true principal trades of BookTown are its secrets, its dark knowledge, and its unspeakable information. The intention with the list below is to provide GMs with a number of possible avenues of knowledge to add to BookTown. Making these secrets too easily available waters down their effect, however, and it is suggested that they are only ever found in BookTown, or in someone associated with the place. This serves two purposes: It keeps them rare, and it makes BookTown a magnet for those with a thirst for knowledge.

Some of these secrets are powerful; if you prefer to keep a strict balance in your game, then avoid using them. If, however, you enjoy mingling characters with terrible foes and disgusting knowledge, then consider using them sparingly.

Secrets come in all shapes and sizes, but in the Blight they are bound by one thing — obsessive protection. Secrets are not given away or discovered easily, but secrets do still come to light or are found in the treasure hoards and grimoires of obsessive collectors and those who thirst for power.

The most common forms of secrets are written secrets, demonic gifts, devilish temptations, daemonic offerings, and n'gathau yearnings.

Written Secrets

Written secrets may be found anywhere, but as such knowledge is powerful, it is usually hidden in code in the pages of an innocent book, scrawled in the margins of a spellbook in almost invisible writing, or subtly worked into art, poems, or other more obscure media. The discovery of secrets is left to you as GM to handle. Take care, however, that even in a place swarming with knowledge such as BookTown that these secrets are extremely rare.

Shades of Grey

The issue of alignment is a tricky one, and one that different groups of players use in different ways. ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*: Part 4** has some suggestions for alignment in a city of dark fantasy, and the issue of dark gifts and secrets raises some interesting questions. Take one example: a neutral bard using the *dark gift of the insatiable lover* secret. Said bard keeps his lover's true identity secret from friends and family for a year and a day and the succubus departs, gifting the bard the bonus Charisma. Later, when dealing with the Abyssal lair of the Dread Demon, the extra Charisma gained turns the fight and enables the bard's good friends to survive and vanquish the demon. The question is: Was the use of the dark gift an evil act?

Written secrets come in many forms. Each is bound by a trigger that may be a complex ceremony, a spell, or other action (up to and including sacrifice). The secret also has a consequence if it is triggered. Finally, the secret has a reward; some rewards come at a small cost, some are considerable. Where losses — of hit points, ability scores, or other effects are inflicted — these are only recoverable through the use of a *wish* or similarly powerful spell, or through time.

Secrets are meant to be used once by a character; multiple uses are, in general, impossible, although you may wish to consider a suitable punishment for those who attempt to use secrets more than once. Growing an extra, hideous head, being haunted by a demonic disgusting lover night after night, or something similarly unpleasant are good examples.

THE SECRET OF THE WATCHER

Anyone catching the merest glimpse of this secret must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or be struck by the Claw of the Watcher, which reduces the character's hit point total by 5 which can only be restored by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell. The claw leaves a permanent, three-fingered scar on some part of the victim's body.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud.

Consequence The character gains the loyal attention of a *Mdkn's faithful hound*. The hound appears each night and guards its mistress as she sleeps, whether she wants guarding or not. The creature also appears when the mistress is subject to magical sleep effects. However, so loyal is the hound that it barks and attacks anyone: friends, lovers, family, or foes who approach its mistress at this time.

There is a further, darker consequence to this secret. Once per year, the hound abandons its watch and goes on the hunt. On this one night, the hound cannot rest until it makes a kill — any kill the GM wishes, and with consequences the GM decides. This effect cannot be forbidden once the secret has been discovered and used.

Reward: The *mage's faithful hound*

THE SECRET OF DREADFUL SIGHT

This secret must be noticed and deciphered before its true purpose is known.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud. Saying the words is not difficult, but draws the attention of things that lurk in Between.

Consequence The Between things drawn by this secret are demented things that have spent their endlessly long lives in the shadows at the edges of mirrors. Consorting with them causes a loss of 1 point of Wisdom which can only be restored by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell. A successful DC 15 Wisdom save negates the loss.

Reward The character gains the help of the creatures in Between. Once per week he can command them to whisper secrets to him. These secrets replicate the spell *legend lore*.

THE SECRET OF THE ENDLESS NIGHT SKY

Characters become aware of the danger of this secret when reading it.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud, a chant that lasts 3 hours. Interrupting the chant causes automatic failure of the Wisdom save detailed below.

Consequence The character becomes aware of the minuscule importance of his being, in the vastness of everything. The knowledge is enlightening but dangerous. The character must make an immediate successful DC 15 Wisdom save; failure indicates the loss of 2 points of Wisdom which can only be restored by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell. Success indicates permanently gaining 2 points of Wisdom. The use of the secret twice is impossible.

Reward The character may embrace or be terrified by his true place in the order of things.

THE SECRET OF THE VOICE THAT NEVER CEASES

As soon as a character becomes aware of this secret, they trigger it and the voices.

Trigger Becoming aware of the secret.

Consequence The voices whisper constantly to the character; everything they whisper is true: the infidelity of a lover, the lies and truths told about the character behind her back, the praise. The words are mixed and mangled however, and there is no sense to the order of the way these truths appear. The character becomes aware of what everyone she knows really thinks of her as the words slowly mingle with lies and exaggerations. Soon, everything said about the character by the whisperers is painfully bad, gloating upon all the character's whims, dark lusts, and weaknesses. This may lead the character to slip into paranoia, and the consequences of this endless babble should have an effect beyond mechanics within the game.

Reward The character is permanently able to determine whether others are lying. Each turn the character may concentrate on a single target. The target receives a Wisdom save with a DC equal to 10 plus the Wisdom bonus of the character using the secret. On a failure, the character knows that the target is lying, but does not learn the truth. Cunning speakers may be able to avoid this ability by using clever evasions.

THE SECRET OF THE UNSPEAKABLE FACE

Characters deciphering this secret become aware of its risks and benefits.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud.

Consequence The Unspeakable Face is an abomination that lurks in the darkest corners of Between, and is an amalgamation of the insidious fears of lunatics and those struck by terrible disfiguring diseases. The character calls the attention of the Face and, as a consequence, its effect is visited upon the character, who must make a DC 15 Wisdom save or be affected by its *symbol of insanity* effects.

Reward The character gains the ability to call the Face once per month. The Face appears immediately and no material components are required to summon it. The Face acts as the *symbol (insanity)* spell to all those who view it, the Face appearing next to the character as though the symbol is immediately triggered. The caster level is the same as the utterer's character level. Once the bearer of the secret has saved against the appearance of the Face, she makes all subsequent saves against its effects at advantage.

THE SECRET OF THE LIAR

This secret allows the bearer to speak words of honey that charm and beguile those who hear them.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud.

Consequence The character is drawn in by the lies he tells. When he first triggers the secret, he must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save suffer the loss of 3 point of Wisdom which can only be restored by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell.**Reward** The character is able to cast *mass suggestion* once per day.

Demonic Gifts

Some secrets are not discovered, they are deliberately brought forth. Some wizards and others deliberately call dangerous allies as part of their magic. This act is simply an extension of that. There are those who believe that consorting in any way with such entities is a dangerous folly, and others who believe that to use the weapons of an enemy against him is the crowning dish of cold vengeance. This same sort of acquisition of secrets also applies to the devilish temptations, daemonic offerings, and n'gathau yearnings that follow.

Unless otherwise noted, the ability losses incurred by these gifts are **permanent** and **cannot be restored**, even by a *wish* or *greater restoration* spell.

THE DARK GIFT OF THE INSATIABLE LOVER

Characters catching the merest glimpse of this secret are aware of all its effects.

Trigger The character calls a succubus by chanting a special rhyme. The chant is difficult to correctly pronounce, and requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Charisma (Performance) check. Whilst chanting, the character must burn 1,000 gp worth of rare incense, which is lost whether the summoning is successful or not.

Consequence The summoned succubus or incubus (character's choice) offers to serve as the character's lover for a period of 1 year and a day. The summoned creature acts only to please the summoner and makes no attempt to attack her, nor to reveal her true form to anyone. If at any time the demon's true identity is revealed to any living intelligent creature, the summoner is struck by a curse that causes 1 point of permanent Constitution loss and the succubus is freed from its pact.

Gift If the lover's identity as a demon is kept secret, after the span of service has ended the demon departs the character's home world, passing on their gift as they leave in gratitude: a kiss, permanently raising the character's Charisma by 1. The demon is a wild creature, and anxious to be free to wreak chaos and take other (perhaps more satisfying) lovers. It thus twists and turns the words of its mistress, endlessly asking for directions and orders in the name of subservience, whilst actually seeking to trick the mistress into letting her escape.

THE DARK GIFT OF FLAYING NIGHTMARES AND LIES

The character calls and attempts to make a dark contract with a *glabrezu*. The bearer of the secret is immediately aware of the (untrue) consequences of the secret and its benefits.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud. The use of the secret is dangerous, as getting the words wrong allows the demon to attack. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Charisma (Performance) check is required to successfully call and bind the demon without being attacked by the demon.

Consequence The character makes a pact with the lying and bestial glabrezu for 1 year and 1 day.

Reward The glabrezu grants the character natural armour. The character can choose to permanently exchange Charisma for natural armour on a one-to-one basis to a maximum of 3 points exchanged. However, the demon may be lying. There is a 33% chance that he honours the pact to harden the character's skin with natural armour, but each point of natural armour costs 2 points of Charisma.

Devilish Temptations

THE TEMPTATION OF THE HONEYED TONGUE

The commanders of Hell's legions are terrible, their commanding voices screaming out across infernal battlefields and enthralling all who hear to their wills.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud. The infernal chant to summon the devil is full of difficult words; a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Charisma (Performance) check is required to call and bind the devil. If the words are incorrect, the devil strikes the summoner with its tail attack, and the use of the temptation fails.

Consequence The character makes a pact with a horned devil in exchange for a dark gift: the power of its voice. This pact lasts for 1 year and 1 day. There is a 10% chance (1 in 10 on a d10) that the character's voice will permanently change to a demonic growl for every month the pact lasts.

Reward The horned devil grants the character its own terrible voice; he gains the ability to cast *dispel evil and good* once per day.

THE TEMPTATION OF WANTING

The character binds an **erinyes** and is granted a portion of the creature's angry desires.

Trigger Speaking the words of the secret aloud. The infernal chant to summon the devil is full of difficult words; a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Charisma (Performance) check is required to successfully call and bind the devil. If the words are incorrect, the erinyes strikes the summoner, lashing her across the cheek with her nails and dealing 1d4 slashing damage and a 1 point loss of Charisma that cannot be restored. The scar remains despite attempts to heal it in any way, and the use of temptation fails. Ever afterward, the character has been marked for the future; any devil seeing the scar immediately attacks the bearer in preference over any other target.

Consequence The character's mind becomes engorged with the perverted and dark desires of the erinyes, and whilst most characters can suppress these wicked thoughts, some succumb to them totally. This consequence is not mechanical and is left for the GM and player to construct as they wish or not wish.

Reward The character can use *true seeing* at will three times per day. The truth is sometimes painful to behold however, and this version of *true seeing* is tainted with the darker thoughts and desires of those seen. Whether these desires are true, suppressed, or false is impossible to determine, but at the GM's discretion there may be additional information (either false or true) to be gleaned based on the desires beheld.

Schools of Dark Magic

There are darker avenues of magic than the specialist schools. Some places have taken dark knowledge and woven it into the very fabric of magic, creating different, more powerful versions of spells in given schools.

This practice has manifested in the creation of schools of dark magic. Unlike the standard wizard schools, these dark magic schools cannot be taken at 1st level and require both the taking of a feat and the admission to

the dark magic school's associated club, cult, or guild (as described with the feats below). To join one of the dark magic schools, a character must already be a wizard specialised in the associated arcane school of magic.

The issues of alignment and these schools is something a GM must consider. The rules here suggest that any alignment can use these feats, since the sweetest form of revenge can often be to use an enemy's own weapons against him. If you feel, however, that such dark knowledge is not conducive to good-aligned characters, then consider adding a further prerequisite of alignment. Only specialist wizards are able to take these feats, and only in their chosen sub-school.

Most of the feats cause some form of ability score loss as a prerequisite. Unless otherwise noted, this loss cannot be recovered by any means (including *wish* or *greater restoration*) as long as the character possesses the feat. Only by renouncing the dark magic school and voluntarily abandoning the feat (which cannot be replaced by another) can the character then undertake to remove the ability score loss she has suffered.

In addition, each feat has a special that is not generally defined in mechanical terms and is for use by the GM (or player and GM) to determine lasting effects upon the use of such dangerous knowledge. You may wish to play such effects as simple background, or you may wish to make them more manifest.

Frightful Abjuration

Through dark gifts and study, you have tapped into the fabric of an unplace that sheds greater protective powers.

Prerequisite: School of Abjuration must be your arcane tradition. The study and association eats at your soul, subtly changing your physiology. You take 1 point each of Constitution and Charisma damage that cannot be recovered. You must study the school through membership of the **Cult of the Unseen Iron Claw**, a scattered gypsy cult that exists across the Blight and must sacrifice a magic item worth at least 10,000 gp to the cult to become a member.

Benefit: All abjuration spells that can be cast at a higher level are considered to be one level higher than normal, but do not consume a higher level spell slot.

Special: Over time, this dark magic may significantly alter your appearance.

Unspeakable Conjuration

The creatures you summon have a disgusting and twisted taint and appear sickened. They are wreathed in curiously unsettling muscles.

Prerequisite: School of Conjuration must be your arcane tradition. There are a small number of groups who use the dark secrets of this magic, the most widely known being the **Guild of Flesh**, which operates from the Black Librum (**B6**). Membership requires a specific painful ritual, during which your flesh is hooked and torn. A week after the ceremony, you take 1 point of Constitution loss that cannot be recovered.

Benefit: You can conjure creatures of greater power than normal by sacrificing your Constitution. For each point of Constitution damage that you voluntarily take at the time of the summoning, the conjured creatures are one CR or CR fraction higher (i.e. creatures of CR 1/4 become creatures of 1/2 CR, 1/2 CR creatures become 1 CR creatures and CR 1 creatures become CR 2, and CR 2 creatures become CR 3).

Special: Drawing such creatures into the world has a lasting effect upon your soul and your own appearance may subtly change over a number of years, taking on the brutish and preternatural physique of the creatures you share your dreaming hours with.

Dark Divination

You can see the unseen that lurks in the everyday world just beneath notice.

Prerequisite: School of Divination must be your arcane tradition. A ritual opens his soul to unseen things that lurk in the everyday world of men unseen. Seeing these creatures risks madness, and you must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or be affected by long-term madness. The **Dark Diviners** are fortune-tellers and seers who have insinuated themselves throughout the city. They pool their hideous knowledge for some as-yet-unrevealed purpose, and are known to locate and secretly sequester members or attempted members that have succumbed to insanity in order to read the darkness in their madness.

Benefit: You gain the ability to consult the unseen creatures. These unseen creatures give you access to all divination spells up to 9th level. At any time, you can request to learn such a spell by consulting the creatures and must make a successful Wisdom save (DC 10 + 1/spell level) or take 1 point of Wisdom loss that cannot be recovered. Furthermore, the creatures are able to grant you the ability to cast any divination spells that you already know but do not have prepared by sacrificing a prepared spell of the same.. The use of such powers is dangerous, however, and you must make a successful Wisdom save (DC 10 + 2/spell level) or take 1d4 points of Wisdom loss that cannot be recovered.**Special:** The whisperers lurk at the edges of your life and have a permanent effect upon you over time. The voices grow louder, the shapes they lurk in grow more distinct, and the things more demanding of your time, causing you to be easily distracted and to sometimes enter fugues.

Shackled Enchantment

You draw forces into your enchantments that are rarely encountered. You are horribly aware of their presence in your magic and may become sickened by their presence whilst drawing their power.

Prerequisite: School of Enchantment must be your arcane tradition.. This secret is more widely known than some, and several cults have developed across the city that use it. **The Burning Hookah** (a naga cabal), the **Fist of Heaven** (a holy order of good wizards), and the **Unspoken Bond** (a less-idealist group of low-caste wizards who operate in Toiltown) each use this school. You must risk that the things you wish to manipulate may become aware of you. The ritual lasts a single night, during which 1,000 gp worth of rare oils and incenses must be burnt. You end the night by making a successful DC 15 Wisdom save. If successful, you harness the powers you wish to use; but if you fail, they harness you. Characters who succumb to such influence still gain the feat, but the things draw arcane power away from you. Whenever you cast a spell, you have a 20% (2 in 10 on a d10) chance for that spell to be consumed by these invisible things, consuming the spell slot until you have completed long rest.

Benefit: You can use Arcane Recovery twice in the same day after having completed a short rest (both uses can be expended after the same short rest or it can be used after different short rests). Using Arcane Recovery a second time severely taxes you, causing the loss of 2 points of Constitution. This lose is not permanent and the Constitution points are regained after completing a long rest.**Special:** The presence of such creatures is shackling, even if the wizard appears in control. Over time, the presence of the creature subtly changes the wizard's movements and actions so that he eventually appears to be hobbled. In time, this may reduce the character's speed and possible Dexterity.

Parlous Evocation

The fires of Heaven and Hell are used only at great risk, but the rewards make such bargains seem worthwhile for the few who have the opportunity to make them.

Prerequisite: School of Evocation must be your arcane tradition. You must perform a ritual during which you voluntarily enter a roaring fire and succeed at a DC 15 Constitution save. If successful, you are welcomed as a member of the **Fires of Truth**, a small and scattered group of grim, scarred evokers, and take 1 point of Charisma damage that cannot be recovered by any means. If the save fails, you take 1 point of Constitution damage and 1d6 Charisma damage that cannot be recovered, and are not able to gain the feat.

Benefit: The elements you use in your evocations are terrible: the ice seethes and bites, the fires immolate and feast. You can harness these forces by opening yourself up to the elements, becoming a living conduit of raw elemental energy. When you cast an evocation spell that targets a single creature and does acid, cold, fire, lightning or thunder damage, there is a 50% chance (3 in 6 on a d6) that you will unleash a surge of energy that will strike the nearest creature to your intended target, resulting in the same damage of the original. (You cast *firebolt* and strike your target for 8 points of damage, the effect triggers when you roll a 3 or lower on a d6,

and a second *firebolt* lances forth, striking the nearest creature (friend or foe) to your original target, doing 8 points of damage). This effect does not require a spell attack roll when triggered. It automatically hits the closest creature, determined by the GM.

Special: You carry an air of brimstone, a whiff of ozone, a feel of the elements. Over time, these elements become harder to control; small fires spontaneously occur occasionally while you sleep, or you may awaken frozen to your bed, wine becomes acidic as you drink it, lightning seeks you out during storms, and loud noises may cause you intense pain. Over long exposure, these effects physically manifest as scarring. The Fires of Truth are also suspected of being responsible for one or more of the Great Fires that have swept Castorhage over the centuries.

Nightmarish Illusion

The power to create illusions lurks deep within your mind, along with the unbridled reality of the id. Tapping into this area is dangerous.

Prerequisite: School of Illusion must be your arcane tradition. A scattered and poorly organized group calling itself the **Lifted Veil** revels in releasing their inner realities upon the world. They possess no special entry requirements, but exposing yourself to the nightmare creatures of the id causes 1d3 points of Wisdom loss that cannot be recovered.

Benefit: All illusion spells you cast have their DC increased by 2.

Special: The things of your inner reality haunt your nightmares. Sleep becomes more difficult and is disturbed by horrific dreams. You occasionally wake up screaming or find yourself sleepwalking.

Terrible Necromancy

As if the forces of necromancy were not wicked enough, you dabble in their darkest and most forbidden facets.

Prerequisite: School of Necromancy must be your arcane tradition. The ritual to take this feat is terrible and involves you sacrificing a little of your life essence in the form of 2 points of Constitution loss, which cannot be recovered. The **Brothers of the Siphon**, a shrouded band of necromancers that often dress as lepers or mendicant monks, assist in the ritual and partake of a goblet of the new member's blood.

Benefit: All necromancy spells that can be cast at a higher level are considered to have been cast at one level higher, but do not consume a higher level spell slot.

Special: Slowly but surely your zest for life is drawn away. Over the years the spark dies, the light goes your eyes, the smile from your lips, and the song in your soul. Eventually you began to crave blood for its own sake.

Ill Transmutation

Though all things are bound by physical laws, there are darker threads holding the world together or threatening to draw it apart. You have discovered the means to pluck at these frayed edges to warp the world around you.

Prerequisite: School of Transmutation must be your arcane tradition. Several small cults have grown up across the Blight with knowledge of this dark school, and many engineer-wizards have access to it as well. In taking this feat, you risk your own physical form in order to manipulate the physical laws around you. You must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or take 1d2 points of Constitution loss that cannot be recovered. Even if successful, you still lose 1 point of Constitution that cannot be recovered. This Constitution loss causes subtle changes in your body, though hard to notice at first: perhaps an oddness about the shape of the skull, the length of the jaw, or the shape of the fingers.

Benefit: The dark threads that hold the world together begin to alter your spells. When you cast a transmutation spells, there is a 25% chance (1 in 4 on a d4) that the target will see these chaotic forces and must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened. Consequently, this can affect friendly targets as well as hostile targets.

Special: You begin to develop sores and boils which cannot be healed by non-magical means. At first, such growths are confined to places such as the groin, armpit, and elbow, but over years they expand and become vile.

Known Between Vessels

Stone of Winter: This fragment of standing stone has weathered over the years and absorbed its surroundings in the Between, becoming a minor *Between vessel*. Characters eviscerating it gain the feelings of long winters passing over endless centuries. This has no mechanical effect but haunts the character's dreams occasionally.

Cradle of Calm: This simple baby crib is a *Between vessel* that contains the love of the mother who raised her child here and has the warmth and joy they left as ghosts herein. Eviscerating the crib does not destroy it, but eliminates such feelings from its substance so that it can never be used again. The character who eviscerated it is calmed and joyful; he is permanently immune to fear effects.

Hunger of Anger: As he died, this Between explorer gripped its sword. The broadsword is now a *Between vessel* and contains the dead former owner's barbarian rage. Anyone successfully eviscerating the object causes the sword to pit and rust into uselessness but gains the ability to go into a rage (see the description of rage under Barbarian in the game manual) once per day. This ability cannot be used again until the character has completed a long rest.

Breath of the Beast: This battleaxe beheaded the last great wolf of its kind in the Between forests it hunted in. The wolf's hunger and need are within it, as well as its ability to scent. Anyone eviscerating the vessel gain the wolf's ***keen hearing and smell*** ability, but as a non-mechanic consequence also gain its bestial hunger. This occasionally manifests itself in bursts of anger, of want, and of bestial cravings of food and blood (the GM can determine the effects of these outbursts).

Between Vessels

One of the curious aspects of Between is its ability to absorb. The Between is as fluid as a dream in places, and in other places, a stable new empire to be exploited. *Between vessels* are objects that have retained or been fed emotions, thoughts, knowledge, or events. Such *Between vessels* are valuable; they may contain nothing more than the feeling of a storm on a dark night at sea, whilst others contain levels of classes that their owners have imbued or taken from others. Dozens of disreputable characters, many of whom are Between-thieves, have become treasure hunters seeking the endless folds and corners of Between for such vessels, aware of the price they command.

Recognizing a *Between vessel* is a talent; a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to recognise a vessel for what it is and to understand what effects it has if eviscerated. The vessels do not radiate magic, although a *legend lore* spell identifies the likely effect of using the item.

Between vessels are not activated; they are eviscerated through a process of cutting them or otherwise breaking them open. The process requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check to be successful. If the check is not successful, the check can be attempted again. The vessel is destroyed if the check failed by 10 or more. Successfully eviscerating the vessel allows the character to absorb whatever is stored within it. As such, a vessel may be successfully used only once. Some examples of known *Between vessels* and their contents are given in the **sidebox**.

The Made

The spiritual home of golems, homunculi, and alchymic unliving, BookTown is home to countless such constructs. It is not unusual to see a homunculus skitter across a gable, an iron cobra following its master, or a caryatid column standing beside a door warning intruders not to set foot within. Alchymic unliving are rarely seen on the streets, but do appear as workers for unscrupulous manufactury and workhouse overseers, as guards in property, or occasionally abroad at night, hooded on some mission to deliver a message.

The Cult of Revenants

Undead are generally considered to be failed constructs by most Castorhagers, but actual necromancers are commonly found in the streets of BookTown, as are the undead they create. These necromancers have formed themselves into cults and cabals, the most feared of which locally is the **Cult of Revenants**. These cultists worship and revere Flense, God of Vengeance and Revenants, and a deity little heard-of outside of the Blight or even the necromantic circles of BookTown for that matter.

Flense

The Revenanter; God of Vengeance and Revenants

Lesser God
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Domains: Death, Vengeance (see sidebar), War
Symbol: An open tomb
Garb: Any formal or macabre clothing favouring hoods, masks, burial shrouds, and even preserved bones or portions of cadavers
Favored Weapons Scythe
Form of Worship and Holidays: Funerals and "Risings" (when dead things are called forth from the grave through necromancy), elaborate rituals attended by cult members, "revenants," and undead servitors are held in graveyards on nights of the new moon and on Moonless Night
Typical Worshippers: Necromancers, cadaver-surgeons, ghouls, the terminally ill, necrophiliacs

A little-known god of undead revered by the necromancers of the Blight, Flense represents the liberation from death for the purposes of revenge and unaddressed slights by the living. His small cult, the Cult of Revenants, actively seeks to bring the unwary to their destined vengeance much sooner than their natural lifespan would otherwise warrant. If they catch a lone victim, they force this doctrine upon him by sacrificing him to "unleash their thwarted justice." That these victims rarely volunteer and that the undead creature created from the sacrifice simply serves as a slave to a member of the cult is disregarded by its members. However, when a truly viable candidate is found for membership in the cult, that individual is actively wooed and offered the glory of "Flense's Gift" — if he but dedicates his soul to the dark god.

Flense's Gift

All those who worship the god are bound by a terrible dark pact they commit to in blood and soul when they become an acolyte of Flense. The pact grants the worshipper a terrible retribution. Upon dying, the devotee of Flense is reborn anew as a "revenant" creature, torn from the mortal body of his unworthy subject to become a thing of vengeance. The creature the devotee rises as is always free-willed and equal to the CR of the cleric in life +1. Such new forms are not bound by a requirement to be undead (though frequently they are undead) and can come in any form the god chooses on a whim. Usually the form given is most commonly associated in some way with the life or personality of the deceased follower. For example, a follower who lives far away from civilisation may return as a dire animal bent upon vengeance.

The "revenant" retains all the knowledge and memories of its prior life along with its prior Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, but none of its former class or special abilities. It is driven by an almost insane need for vengeance, and stops at nothing to avenge its death upon those who slew him or for any other perceived grievance, no matter how slight. These "revenants" do not seek vengeance against other members of the Cult of Revenants who are in good standing.

Vengeance Domain

Though it is a terrible and often futile thing, many are nevertheless compelled to walk the path of vengeance. The clerics who serve the gods, particularly those of law and retribution, are not immune, and take it upon themselves to seek revenge for wrongs committed against their faith. Such individuals are relentless, gaining terrifying powers that aid in their pursuit. Unfortunately, vengeance does not always equate to justice, and these individuals sometimes become as corrupt and wicked as those that they pursue, if not more so.

Vengeance Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*compelled duel, true strike*
3rd	*crown of madness, zone of truth*
5th	*bestow curse, speak with dead*
7th	*banishment, confusion*
9th	*dispel evil and good, dominate person*

Sworn Enemies

At 1st level, you may select a foe or group of foes (be it by race, nationality, character class, or monster type), which are forevermore your sworn enemies. When encountering these sworn enemies, you may enter a rage as a barbarian of your level (though without any rage powers unless you already possess them). You may enter this rage once per day but only when faced with a sworn enemy. If you already have the rage ability, this does not count against your normal uses of that ability. You can select another group at 6th and 12th levels.

Channel Divinity: Vengeful Strike

Starting at 2nd level, you can use Channel Divinity to gain a +10 bonus to attacks on any creature who has previously wounded you. This bonus may be added after the attack roll, but before the GM has determined whether the attack hits.

Exacting Touch

At 6th level, you can cast *bestow curse* as a touch spell on anyone who has previously wounded you. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Cold Revenge

At 8th level, you can create the effects of a *symbol of pain* against anyone within 60 feet whom you have faced in combat more than 24 hours previously. Only the selected target is affected by the wracking pains, and no saving throw is allowed. Once the effect is created, the target's distance from you no longer matters; the effects continue until you dismiss them or their duration expires. You can use this ability on multiple targets during a day but never on more than one at a time. The pain that is inflicted lasts for a number of rounds per day equal to 1/2 your cleric level. The rounds do not need to be consecutive or against the same target.

Touch of Vengeance

At 17th level you can cast *harm* as a touch spell upon any member of your groups of sworn enemies. You can use this ability once per day at 17th level, 2x per day at 18th and 3x per day at 20th level. Each use must be on a different target.

BookTown Shopping

Item	Cost	Weight
Ink, oil (1 oz. vial)	24 gp	—
Lectern, fancy	150 gp	80 lbs.
Memory vellum	Special	—
Quill, exotic	2–20 gp	—
Rice paper	1 cp	—
Spellbook, travelling	45 gp	1 lb.
Spellbook cover, armoured	20 gp	5 lbs.
Writing desk, armoured	40 gp	40 lb.
Writing desk, fancy	50+ gp	150 lbs.

Ink, oil: Water-based inks often smear or fade when wet; these oil-based inks do not.

Lectern, fancy: A reading or singing desk, often used in churches and temples. This wooden item is carved with an elaborate figure and is mounted using a pair of steps. To devotees of the religion to which this object is dedicated, checks to Intimidate from this object are made at +1.

Memory vellum: This extremely rare paper is made by only a few who have specialist knowledge and who guard their secret. Spells scrolls written upon memory vellum do not fade after their first casting, only fading after a second such use. Prices vary according to the seller.

Quill, exotic: The feather of a cockatrice, a couatl, or an owlbear made into a fancy quill.

Rice paper: Edible paper used in cooking as well as writing.

Spellbook, travelling: A lighter spellbook, a travelling spellbook is used by adventuring wizards who undertake longer journeys. The blank book weighs just 1 lb. and the pages within are lighter, and more resistant to damage and dampness when oil-ink is used to inscribe spells.

Spellbook cover, armoured: A cover or case for a standard spellbook made of steel 1/16th inch thick. The armoured cover includes a lock. It weighs 5 lbs.

Writing desk, armoured: A hefty travelling desk made of steel and walnut, the case packs into a chest-sized square containing all the items a scribe is likely to need. It weighs 40 lbs. and can be locked shut with an average lock.

Writing desk, fancy: A fixed and fancy writing desk, perhaps a roll-top, which may be carved with figures, or have fancy filigree work as decoration upon it.

BookTown Insectum

There are a few varieties of insectum found almost exclusively in BookTown. Attempts to locate them outside BookTown require a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Investigation) check for the appropriate district in question. If located outside BookTown, the cost for these varieties of insectum is increased by 50%.

Insectum	Type	Price
Malus oscula	injury	350 gp
Memoria	ingested	125 gp

Malus Oscula (Devil's Kiss): The bite of this bloated beetle on the user's neck injects a toxin that causes mild euphoria for 24 hours. During this period of euphoria, any saving throws against compulsion, domination, or charm effects are made with disadvantage while all saving throws made against fear and paralysation effects are made with advantage. When the effect wears off, the user must make a DC 15 Constitution save or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Memoria: When this small slug is swallowed after 1 minute of digestion, it releases its natural secretions in a concentrated dose that provides a temporary boost of 2 points to the user's Wisdom for 4 hours. When this effect ends, the user must make a DC 12 Constitution save or be incapacitated for 1 hour. If the slug is chewed when swallowed, the Wisdom enhancement occurs immediately, but the user must also make the Constitution save immediately at DC 12 and, if failed, the user vomits the slug up and does not benefit from the Wisdom enhancement.

Useful BookTown Lists

100 Curious Objects Found in Flea Markets

The original flea markets were places where shabby goods were sold that might contain fleas. This remains true for flea markets in the Blight, although the definition is expanded to include all goods, from shoddy to unexpected bargains. The main linking factor is price; goods should be very cheap, no more than 25% of their original market value. Remember also that some traders are unaware of the value of the goods they sell or that they have hidden extras. Use your judgement to decide prices and consider if some goods are shoddy, a fact only discovered on an appropriate check. For example, a suit of armour may appear in good condition, but a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals very shoddy fixings giving it the broken condition or causing the whole suit to fall apart after any damage is inflicted upon the wearer.

1. A curved masterwork dagger that has been treated very badly
2. A fine old rocking chair
3. A collection of books about ferns
4. A clay ewer containing a potion of gaseous form
5. A pair of fur gloves, hidden in the lining of which is a velvet bag containing 3 applications of dust of disappearance
6. A finely carved hat-stand with griffon-head hooks worth 135 gp
7. A mole-skull earring
8. A stuffed beaver
9. A halberd
10. A fur-trimmed cape hidden in the lining of which is a scroll of lightning bolt
11. A fine silver-headed walking cane with a removable handle that allows a single spell scroll to be stored
12. A bucket full of horseshoes
13. A collection of fishing flies
14. A top hat
15. A ship's anchor
16. A wildly inaccurate map of the city
17. A leather wrap containing a selection of butcher's knives
18. A complete howdah
19. A stuffed camel's head, hidden in the mouth of which is a leather purse with 50 pp
20. A Large lance
21. A case of outrageous wigs
22. A selection of glove-puppet crocodiles
23. Some dark-tinted spectacles in a crocodile skin case
24. A fine hookah worth 150 gp
25. A physiker's articulated skeleton mounted on an iron frame
26. A pickled two-headed calf
27. A set of masterwork bagpipes
28. A set of bellows
29. A sitar
30. A horse-hair chair, down the back of which is an obsidian worth 90 gp
31. A hand crossbow
32. A poetry book, written in the margins of which is the spell dimension door as a spell scroll
33. A silk wrap depicting an elephant
34. A large spice cupboard

35. A pair of mother-of-pearl dice
36. A deck of tarot cards
37. A book of pressed flowers
38. A stuffed cat
39. A journal containing scrawled recipes for lamb
40. A gold-rimmed monocle without a lens
41. A basilisk foot walking cane stand
42. A walking cane with a chuul carved on the handle
43. A squirrel leg-bone tooth pick
44. A set of fake silver hairbrushes in a leather case
45. An empty barrel that smells strongly of antiseptic
46. A trio of fine drawings of sheep
47. A griffon-head brass door knocker
48. A goblin-head iron door knocker
49. A large trunk full of bread tins
50. A lucky rabbit's foot
51. A kilt
52. A perfume bottle containing 2 ounces of sovereign glue
53. A masterwork fiddle
54. A 4-pint beer mug with a lid depicting cavorting dire badgers
55. A selection of clay pipes
56. A curious round bottle with an iron stopper
57. A battered old carpet
58. A large hand bell
59. A selection of window frames
60. A masterwork handsaw
61. A pair of clogs sized for a Small creature
62. A dog sled
63. A riding dog saddle with fine filigree work worth 100 gp
64. A wedding dress
65. A set of 7 iron torch sconces depicting salamanders
66. Four masterwork hand crossbow bolts
67. A cut-throat razor in a calfskin case
68. A musical box carved to look like a skeleton
69. A crystal ball
70. A wolverine-pelt rug
71. A carved wooden dodo
72. A carved wooden apple
73. A very warm woollen crimson cloak
74. A life-size wooden gnome archery target
75. A halfling foot hairbrush
76. A petrified Blight cockerel
77. A 10-foot pole
78. A chain shirt
79. A masterwork tower shield
80. A wood axe
81. A milk churn
82. A 200-foot hempen rope
83. A wooden case holding (allegedly) the toe bones of Saint Terram, Patron of Barges



84. The nameplate of the ship Tremulous
85. An elaborately carved door depicting angels
86. The headstone of Carrus Linderman inscribed with "Æ 38 Ys, 4 Ms, 17 Ds"
87. A 6-foot-tall angel statue
88. A 10-man pavilion tent with a hole in its roof
89. A tin hip flask cast with moon faces
90. A masterwork mandolin
91. A 1-foot-wide oyster shell
92. A jaunty colourful scarf
93. An infant's cradle
94. A box of 96 arrows (1 is a +3 arrow)
95. 50 feet of yellow cotton bunting
96. A canoe
97. A coracle
98. A hat with 3 owlbear feathers
99. A battered old gourd containing a potion of fire breath
100. A selection of 7 brightly painted farm animals carved from wood

100 BookTown Traders

These are a sample of traders that may be encountered in the many markets, souks, and alleyways of BookTown. Traders may have permanent premises or work from stalls, carpets laid out on the streets, or even off the backs of wagons.

1. Kartwell and Hydd, Purveyors of Rare Masks
2. Mull Quendly, Rare Books, Specialist in Antiquarian Maps
3. Jagg's Silver Antiquaries
4. Bracken's Tribal Miscellanea
5. Maester Pran Illuminated Manuscript Merchant
6. Codd's Holy Relic's and Cathedral Curios
7. Happam Shortsone, Master Linguist
8. Travis Prichard's Library and Booksellers
9. Nat, Norb and Fentonwell, Dealers in Tower Clocks and Large Timepieces
10. The Magnificent Rudge, Masterwork Musical Instruments and Musical Antiquaria
11. Ulliar's Pepper
12. The Quarrel Shop
13. Lorrimor's Masterwork Smithy — Fine Tools a Speciality
14. Bugg's Junk Shop
15. Ruthwell's Armoury and Masterwork Weaponry
16. Stone Statues and Soapstone Carvings
17. Klorris Mothram, Spellbook Binder
18. Jalli'ss' Arcane Tomes and Grimoires
19. Becklington and Son, Rag and Bone Men and Junk Collectors
20. J. Willis-Hodge, Marine Antiquaria
21. H. Jaff's Bookchests and Tomelocks
22. Rare Inks and Pigments of the World
23. Hebb's Trinkets and Flotsam
24. Frippery
25. Oliver Tottle, Papermaker
26. Prastin Herris, Ephemera
27. Codd Coddlington, Master Parchment and Papyrus Maker
28. Trann the Scribe
29. T. Gorse — Master Exotic Quill Maker
30. Starling Swilb, Translator and Ancient Text Decipherer
31. The Bric-a-Bracery
32. J. Whidd's Snuffery
33. Mister T. Gubb, The Blight's Only Wax Tablet Maker
34. Jori the Spellbook Case Maker
35. Nagder's Curios
36. B. Gorse — Mistress of Exotic Quills
37. The Ephemera
38. Jubb's Antiquarian Weapons
39. Rosie's Flea Stall
40. Q. Lookpride — Masterwork Alchemist Laboratory Outfitters
41. Toller's Glasswork and Magnificatory
42. T.R. Rupwell – Reed Pen Merchant
43. Master T. Yellis – Stylus Fabricator
44. Carved Angels and Guardians
45. Tockwin's, Wine Merchant
46. Physiker Mallen — Gall Sage
47. H. Gibbling Bookbinder
48. R. Sugg, the Master Gluemaker
49. Masterwork Tools Emporia
50. Charcoal by Uncle Bubb
51. G. Rudd and Sons — Linseed Oil Merchants
52. K.B. Crubb Inks
53. P. Horris, the Linguists' Library
54. Mabb's Pies
55. Lady Crigg — Mistress of the Secret Egg Tempera Formula
56. The Paper Workhouse
57. Woodcuts by Trolg
58. Gilt by T. Hobb and Son
59. The Vellum Importery
60. Jaypar's Alembics and other Arcania
61. Quinton Rudge — Cabb'e and Chocolate Importer
62. The Lantern Warehouse
63. Candles and Wicks
64. Jack the Knife-Sharpen Man
65. Exotic Oils and Incenses by Farrin
66. The Crimson Needle
67. Dobb's Junkyard
68. Karg's Opticals and Spyglasses
69. R. Potter — Oil Lamp Manufactury
70. Apothecary's Equipment
71. Mortimata and other Animated Objects
73. Quibb's Tobacco and Pipes
74. Crucibles and Alchemy
75. Herbs, Horns and Hard-to-Find Materials
76. Answer's Retorts (and Alembics)
77. The Great Myrr — Evoker by Appointment
78. Glass Eyes and Other Physician's Accoutrements by Appointment to the Royal University
79. Kebb's Waterclocks
80. J. Jubb — Guaranteed Undertakers
81. Exotic Pets and Familiars
82. The Menagerie — Strange Creatures from the Known and Unknown Worlds
83. Tremmerwell's Bookshelf and Cabinet Maker
84. Amulets
85. Scrollcases and Containers by Ruffill
86. L. Lewis — False Teeth Maker
87. More Woodcuts by Trolg
88. The Brothers Illuminatum
89. J. Jade — Writing Equipment Merchant
90. Ink Brushes by Tragg
91. Unguents and Oils
92. Tammer's Rare Woods Emporium
93. Kaspan Foord — Alchemic Objects and Rarities
94. Jett's Beehives
95. T. Portram — EmbalmerRudgewells Glassblowing
96. The Talking Sheep
97. The Wine and Owl's Feather
98. The Rarest Herbs of the World Imported by the Great West Empire Society
99. Petty Spells and Cantrips
100. Capran's Emporium — Bones and Blood of Every Creature Imaginable

BookTown Random Encounters

Day	Night	Result
01	01–03	2d3 thugs*
02	04–05	1d6+2 gentlemen
03–12	06–08	Rag and Bone Man/Lady*
13	09–10	Archibald Thwaid (**B3**)
14–18	11	Mistress Abigal Anston (**B1**)
19–21	12	Justicare or Under-Justices (**B2**)
22–23	13–21	Officers of the Watch (**B28**)
24–25	22	Auction Goods Being Transported (B1)
—	23	Maximilian Grast (**B6**)
—	24	Aegis (**B7**)
—	25	Eschar (**B7**)
26	26	Taint (**B7**)
27	27–31	Drunk*
28–29	32–33	Impromptu flea market
30–33	34–35	Corner-doxy*
—	36	Master Scribe Brannan Hask (**B13**)
—	37	Master Erasmus Uriah Worrlingtor (**B17**)
34	38–42	Nacre (**B7**)
35–39	43	Pupils from the University (**B17**)
40–41	44–50	Street food seller
42	51	Royal Master Cartographer E.Q. Shortstone (**B4**)
43–50	52	Tongawallah
51	53	Pardigious Crane (**B5**)
52–55	54–58	1d3 legalese*
56–62	59–60	Trader*
63	61	Curator Angus Temmil (**B8**)
—	62	Master Quabe (**B11**)
64–65	63–64	Rose Tamm (**B12**)
66	65	Lady Elisabeth Jobe (**B9**)
67–69	66	Hopton (**B10**)
70	67	Museum Watch Captain Marshum Mitchwell (**B9**)
71–72	68–71	Family
—	72	Quilleta (**B12**)
73	73	Mororse (**B10**)
74–78	74–80	1d4+1 thieves*
—	81	Master Judd (**B18**)
—	82	Lord Perren Hawthorn (**B15**)
79–82	83–88	1d3 Lowfolk
83–97	89–90	Flea Market Stall (**Part 2** above)
98	91–93	Tamper (**B10**)
99	94	Hook (**B10**)
00	95–96	Count Strőrd (**B21**)
—	97	Lord Catchpenny Hopton (**B19**)
—	98	Grand and Enlightened Chann Fall (**B20**)
—	99	Jacob Stompton/Lady Hogg/Uriah Gryme (**B22**)
—	00	Count Strőrd (**B21**)

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–65	Human (Castorhager)
66–75	Human (other)
76–86	Gnome
87–93	Dwarf
94–98	Half-Elf
99–00	Other

Where named characters are encountered, they are encountered alone or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Bandit: They may be led by a **bandit captain.**

Corner-Doxy: These come in all genders, shapes and sizes. Street girls are fairly common (**commoner**).

Drunk: A wino (**commoner**) who is worse for wear; he may become violent (30% chance to be hostile), unless his attitude if improved.

Family: These folk are 2d6 in number (**commoner**) and are wandering about enjoying themselves (35%) or bickering (65%).

Gentlemen: Genteel citizens **(noble),** they may be worse for wear and/or in the company of 2d3 prostitutes.

Impromptu Flea Market: This is a market of 2–5 stalls. Use the list in **Part 2** above to determine the contents.

Legalese: These bewigged legal experts are rushing about on business or pleasure (by night).

Lowfolk: These locals (**commoner**) are simply going about their business and want to be left alone.

Rag and Bone Man/Lady: This fellow **(commoner)** is usually driving a scruffy cart crammed with bones and rags and any other rubbish he or she has collected.

Street Food Sellers: These street vendors (**commoner**) sell pies, fish and fry and other consumables.

Thieves: Low-end larcenists (**thief**) stalk the streets, committing petty larceny and occasionally making a larger score.

Thugs: By day, these toughs (**thug**) are noisy and objectionable; by night, they attack unless their hostile attitudes can be improved.

Tongawallah: A local labourer **(commoner)** pushing goods in a handcart, usually such handcarts are piled so high that they represent a danger to passers-by.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) usually has a market stall, although some operate from hand trays. They sell a variety of basic goods, from coal to flowers to fish to candles.



Chapter Four: Festival



The Island of Festival certainly lives up to its name — row upon row upon row of rising rooftops stagger upwards from timber piers, strangled by bright prayer flags and gaudy signs. Painted walls sing garishly as they march through lesser amusements to the Great Fayre at the summit — a dazzling crown of huge fun wheels, twisted towers and garishly painted marquees.

The smell of burning sugar and onions and oiled timber greets you as you step onto the Island of Festival — a place of endless pleasures.

Then there is the noise, the noise of joy, the screams of pleasure, the cry of need.

Island of Festival, now not big enough for all the amusements here, is blighting outwards — birthing lines of boats linked together by chain, suffocating under timber sheds and buildings and piers that cross several boats at once.

Within the place is an infestation of the strange, the bright, the shocking; a circus of freaks performs at the quayside, a broken giant pulls a carriage, a wan beauty drifts between potential customers. The sound of beating drums drowns out the call to meet the Strongest Man in the World, a dwarf in red cries out an invitation to see the Great Ape of the Dark Continent, whilst the Lady of All Futures offers to tell your fortune.

Everyone has a smile on their faces, even the somewhat sinister masked humanoids who appear to be part men, part wolves — or foxes or tigers — appear to be happy.

At least their masks smile. If they are masks…

Introduction

What's your pleasure?

Festival is a huge man-made island in the Great Lyme River, built around a squat grey hill. It is the place locals come to for pleasure and boasts that every delight may be found here, whatever your joy might be. The dark and light of the soul are at their strongest here, simple laughter lies in earshot of unspeakable pleasures.

Covering twelve score acres, it rises some two hundred feet through steep streets called the Skew, to the Great Fayre at the summit; itself eight acres of joy and amusement. The streets rise sharply between shambles of buildings built upon buildings, each bolted to the last, giving the place a spastic look and a constant feeling of imminent collapse. Timbers groan and creek, bolts occasionally explode, and the evidence of shoring up and repair are everywhere beneath the veneer of happiness.

Whatever you define as pleasure is available here, from simple tumbling clowns to sinister dark places where nightmares are drawn out of madwomen and given breath for sexual gratification. The Crimson Lantern is said to be the largest prostitution district in the world, with any vice available at the right price. The freaks here are not mere freaks of nature, they are abominations of unbiology, often created to gratify, to serve, or to terrify.

This is a place of hidden dark secrets. Vice and misery seethe just below the surface. Dig even slightly and the maggots of corruption are there for you to see. Only beware, for here, many people share the same ancestry.

Festival hides a final secret; it is a metropolis of wererats, a place of lies, hiding lycanthropy that has become a plague here. No one knows how long the rats have lived here nor why they stayed. It is common knowledge that wererats infest the island, and various crusades have been made against them. So far, all have failed, and led to repercussions of a most dreadful nature. The rats do not exact open revenge; they do so subtly, locating those who have wronged them. To these ringleaders, the wererats add their own particularly feral cruelty, slowly eating their foes alive, cursing them with lycanthropy and binding them in the form of a rat, laughing as packs of wild dogs are sent scurrying after their pray.

The rats are happy to leave well alone when it comes to visitors, but those who pry too deeply soon come to their attention and risk everything through their spying.

This is a place ruled by the **Rat Queen**, a vast creature that dwells in a sunken palace made by the original designer of the Royal Palace itself. The Queen is terrible, an abomination in form and deed that few ever see. To most she is but a rumour.

The **Family** — the wererat children of the Rat Queen, almost all of whom are halflings — run Festival. The Family regard themselves as brothers and sisters, although even the closest families have their squabbles. There are many families, but the most powerful are the **Scathels**, **Grast** and **Frynn**. Superficially, these rats all seem to love each other, since they are after all members of the Family. However, all is not as it seems; this is a district at war with itself, a war that must remain a secret from the Queen, or her wrath may fall upon transgressors.

It is best not to upset the Queen. She can be nasty when angered. Welcome, indeed, to joy. We hope you stay. Now, what is your pleasure?

Part One: Places…

What Festival Looks Like…

Imagine, if you will, a shantytown of timbers built around a squat grey hill now hidden far below sight.

Infest that island with buildings upon buildings, spreading like a growth one upon the other so that one house may share a score of neighbours.

Adjacent to the crammed houses you find streets infested with traders, plying their trade of pleasure. Theatres tumble into freakshows, bizarre museums prop up brothels, piers stagger away from these places and offer a thousand diverse pleasures, from simple games of chance and displays of astounding acrobatics, to sights so sickening they would make a sociopath cry.

Mangy gulls call above and constantly swoop to snatch and steal, everywhere below them a riot of colour and gaudiness.

Then add the visitors — this is a place that never sleeps; by day the visitors cram the streets, making them groan beneath their weight.

Finally, infest the place with every colour under the sun. By day, the place is a rainbow of garish flags, signs and costumes of every hue. By night, the lanterns are lit and a million pyrebeetle lights dance feebly in the scent of the place. Atop the highest precipice, the rare and ingenious gas lamps illuminate the slow revolutions of the Great Wheel…always seeming to threaten an explosion or devastating fire.

What Festival Smells Like…

The smell of burnt onions and boiled sugar mingles with the salt air. The stench of sweat and bodies close by is palpable, whilst the bleach-taint of the workhouses and mills occasionally drifts across the waters on the wind.

There is another smell beneath the others. A feral smell of musk and animals; the scent of rats.

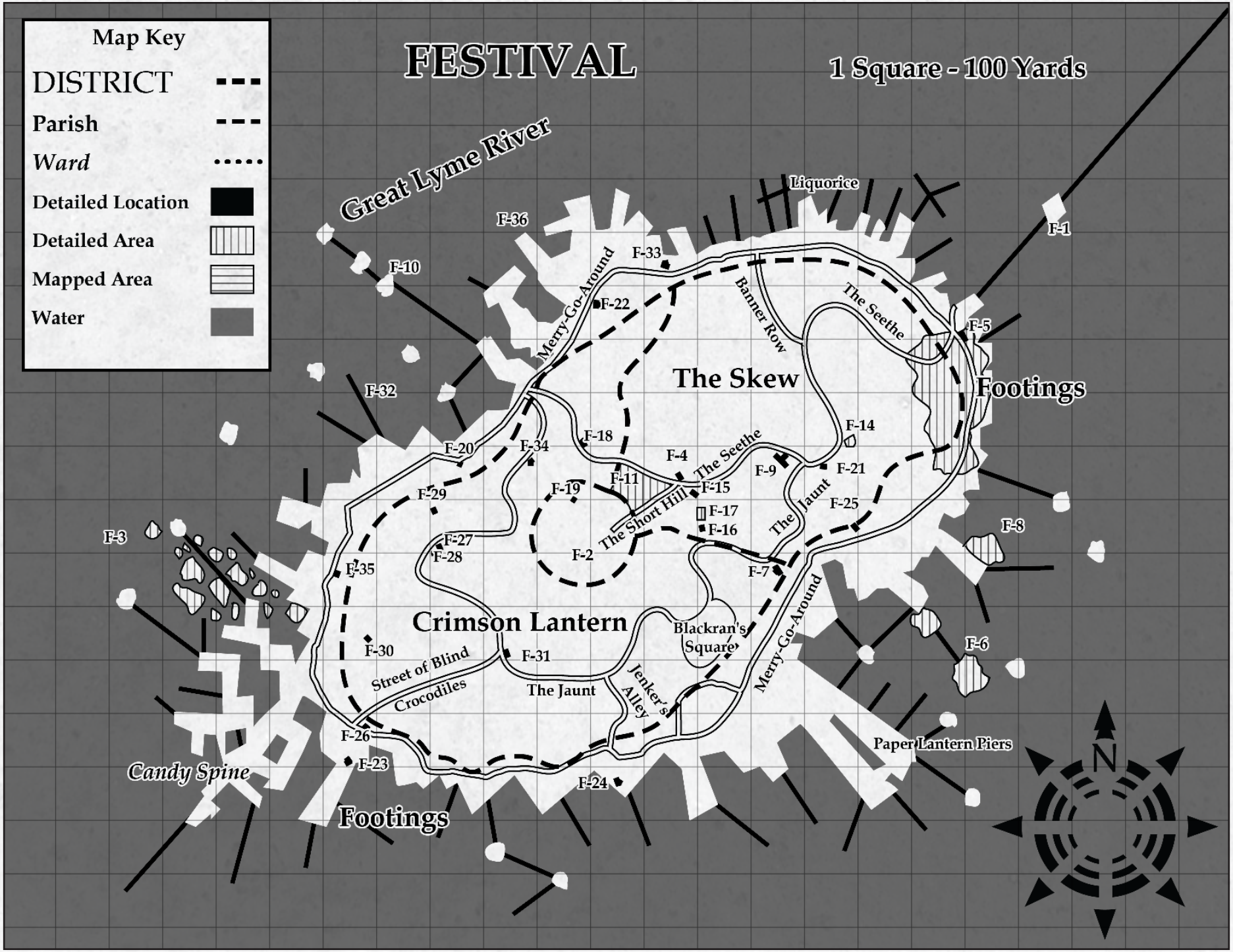
What Festival feels like…

Rather like being at sea, the whole island rocks with the slow movements of the tides upon the vast timber apparatus of the island. Movement is everywhere. Jostling crowds emphasize this movement, and many visitors complain of seasickness.

There is a palpable feeling of over-crowding here, even in the middle of the night, a sense of claustrophobia, of never being alone.

Festival's Sound in Game Terms

Festival truly is a constant cacophony of sound and fury. It is never quiet and even in the smallest hours of the night there is some level of hubbub. While on Festival, all Dexterity (Stealth) checks are made at +1Perception checks involving hearing are made at disadvantage due to the constant background noise. Only in a stoutly constructed building with solid windows and doors (a rarity upon this ramshackle isle) or underground would this penalty not apply.


Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
FESTIVAL
1 Square - 100 Yards
Great Lyme River
Liquorice
F-36
F-1
F-10
F-33
Merry-Go-Around
Banner Row
The Seethe
F-22
F-5
The Skew
Footings
F-32
F-14
F-18
F-20
F-34
F-4
The Seethe
F-9
F-21
F-11
F-19
F-15
F-29
The Short Hill
F-17
The Jaunt
F-25
F-3
F-16
F-8
F-27
F-28
F-2
F-35
F-7
Crimson Lantern
Blackran's Square
Merry-Go-Around
F-6
F-30
F-31
Street of Blind Crocodiles
The Jaunt
Jenker's Alley
F-26
Paper Lantern Piers
F-23
Candy Spine
F-24
Footings
N

What Festival sounds like…

Screams and cries of distress sound much like those of joy and happiness, and Festival has earned itself an ill reputation in the dead of the night. The soaring screaming gulls, the cries of the salesmen and showmen, and the shouts of street vendors make the streets of Festival a choir of discord.

Festival is never quiet,

Seven words to describe Festival…

…Sugary ***Intimate***
Sweaty ***Movement*** ***Scream!***
…Sticky ***Masticate…***

Parishes and Wards

Each section of the Blight is divided into districts, in turn these districts may be divided into parishes and wards. Wards are ruled by their own leaders, who in turn answer to the ruler of the parish and ultimately the whole district.

It is quite possible to pass from one parish to another without noticing, but also occasionally impossible to enter a parish without realising it. Parishes depend on their rulers. Here, the whole place is run by one big happy Family, so there seems little difference between one place and the other.

The Crimson Lantern (a.k.a. The Red Light, the Pleasure Palace, Poxtown, Slag)

The city's prostitution district covers nearly half of Festival. Here, the darker excesses of insectum are enjoyed, and those who find joy in inflicting pain often find comrade spirits in the cloying, moist, alleyways of the pier. Harlots (the polite term is "corner-doxy" in the Blight) — male, female, or other — ply their trade openly here, day and night, dawn to dawn, every day of every year.

The Footings (a.k.a. Merry-Go-Around)

The pier level of the district is a large lozenge-shaped mass of timber and iron and boats. It is often teeming with visitors and shouting locals, and houses the Lodge of the Festival Watch (**F5**). Although not demarked by any physical boundary, the district basically encompasses everything at sea level, including any floating towns and amusements.

This parish is a confusing mass of alleys and thoroughfares where many of the locals live. Brightly coloured fishing boats and boathouses are drawn up to the many quays and piers here, and fish of all sorts and especially shellfish, including the infamous Lyme Black Great Crab. Local fishermen do tend to be able to spot a visitor a mile away and spin a yarn worthy of a place in any epic poem for every catch — happily hiking up the price dependent upon how rich the buyer looks.

The Skew

The Skew is the maze of streets that wind up to the Great Fayre, and encompasses the numerous alleyways and paths that march steeply to the sea.

The Great Fayre

The home of many of the district's prominent Family members, the Great Fayre is described in greater detail below. It is the high point of the isle from which one can see a view of the whole blighted mass of the city — if the weather is right.

Streets

The main streets in Carnival are listed below, but each of these is connected by a maze of footpaths, alleyways, wynds and ginnels.

Streets are generally listed with a brief description and any major or unusual features. Places of note within the streets are listed immediately after in the Festival Guide.

Banner Row

The Street of Banners is representative of the shameful way traders will do anything for custom. This street is a small route between Liquorice and the Seethe, and has a reputation for the pushiest salesmen in the district. Traders sell common items here, mostly food and drink, although some specialise in incredibly gaudy souvenirs.

Blackran's Square

This is a small, dark market square beneath St. Fulmar's Spire, a small abandoned church. The square, and the narrow alleys around it, are a popular venue for tattooists, and a quartet of body painters live in the area, each specialising in their own unique designs, which vary from dragons to eagles to rats. Tattoo mages — wizards who specialise in magic tattoos — ply their trade here. For as little as 200 gp, a character can be tattooed with a moving picture. It is best to find a reputable practitioner, since the tattoos of less-skilled wizards often fade over time, and not all of them are particularly good artists, either.

Candy Spine

This garish arched group of rickety piers strangles its way around the island. It is home to several competing sweetmeat and candy makers who wage a rather futile war with each other in an attempt to be appointed Royal Confectioner. Few have had the heart to tell them that so poor are the makers, and so shoddy their goods, that no Royal would be seen dead eating any of their products.

The Jaunt

Though lesser known and used than the dizzying Seethe, the Jaunt is a spitting image of the main street, in that it is clustered with amusements and diversions, stalls, rides and noise. However, the Jaunt represents the darker side of these shows — here the worst of the freakshows battle for custom, where daring and garish is considered too subtle. On the Jaunt, the dance shows invariably involve performing beasts or animals, theatres run risky and sometimes offensive Fallen Plays, and the sick and injured flock to the street to beg, each claiming to have a worse debilitation than the last.

Hazzar-ash-Makesh (LE male **Rakshasa**), a prince visiting of the Far Jaati province of Krey, oversees operations on this street under the burning eyes of the Family, who are uncomfortable with the rakshasa's presence, but fear direct confrontation. The presence of several rakshasa protects those here from the Family, who find the foreign presence a distinct inconvenience. Hazzar keeps no fixed abode, in order to deter assassination attempts.

Jenker's Alley

A short, unremarkable alleyway connecting the Jaunt to Merry-Go-Around, Jenker's Alley houses a small rebellious group of wererats anxious to be freed of the Family.

Getting Lost

Where even daylight can be lost in the huddle of crushing buildings above cramped alleyways and where dizzying numbers of paths and byways leave the main streets, it is very easy to get lost in Festival. Getting lost in a city can be just as confusing as getting lost elsewhere and potentially more dangerous. Characters that are familiar with the district are not at risk of getting lost.

A Wisdom (WisdomSurvival) check by whichever character has taken the lead in the party's navigation through the city streets is required under the following circumstances:

- Movement at night: DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check or become lost
- Navigating the twisting alleyways: DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check or become lost.
- Navigating the alleyways at night: DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check or become lost.

The characters will be able to get back on track within 1d8 x10 minutes, but becoming lost means that they will face an automatic encounter, determined according to the district where they became lost.

Lost PCs Festival encounters are detailed in **Part 2: Running Festival**. You may use getting lost as an opportunity to present other encounters and buildings — some favourable, some not so. Some GMs might choose to create a small group of such places for any urban adventure, allowing the PCs to experience the unexpected, the grotesque, the strangely helpful, or head off in another direction entirely, picking up a new adventure thread as they go.

Liquorice

One of the more eclectically named streets in Festival, Liquorice is another area of crammed markets and souks that specialise in the importing of liquorice. Experts in the medical and culinary use of the plant may be found here.

Paper Lantern Piers

Paper Lantern Piers is a more graceful and genteel place to be. It is covered in eating stalls and discreet sitting areas made of black iron in the shape of country features such as hedges and gates. Higher caste folk and the wealthy tend to gather here; prices are high, but the area is patrolled regularly by the Watch. Naturally, the Family keep a careful hand on the shoulder of everyone who operates here, but having a more luxuriant side to operations can be handy on occasion.

The Seethe

Here is a helter-skelter of houses teetering across the whole street and leaning one across the other as though facing each other down. Each building is lashed with a dozen limpet structures which threaten to pull the whole mad, piggyback street apart.

The Seethe rises steadily uphill through the Skew, picking its way along streets where cobbles jut from unsure surroundings. Like the rest of the island, it is generally busy and noisy, and varies between 6 and 20 feet wide, making it the broadest street in the area. At times, daylight is hidden by lashed buildings crossing the street some storeys above.

The Short Hill

An incredibly steep cobbled street connecting the Seethe to the Great Fayre via the Jaunt. So steep is the hill that every year at least one person dies after losing control of his wagon, falling, or on one occasion, being hit by large dropped cheeses.* The Short Hill Cheese Factory lies at the top of the street, a small concern run by elder members of the Owlers, a small part of the Family.

*Herbert Frud (1618–1654) is the only person to be officially killed by cheese in Castorhage.

Street of Blind Crocodiles

This is a narrow alleyway filled with clockwork artisans who specialize in traps and in automata resembling animals.

F1. The Pleasure Ferry

The Pleasure Ferry sags under the weight of passengers, it seems the population of a small-town hangs from its decks. The cries of excited children, drunken adults and screaming mothers chokes the air.

Connecting the Festival to the mainland, the Pleasure Ferry or Chain Pleasure Ferry, as it is sometimes called, acts as an aperitif to those visiting the isle. The journey takes approximately 10 minutes, the ferry runs day and night constantly, and it is said to have not been still for nearly 100 years. On board, the ferry offers a hundred distractions, from coconut shies to prancing horse rides. The ferry specialises in the 10-minute play, and many acting troupes ply their arts aboard. The general theme is comedy, with several renowned slapstickers resident aboard the ship. Most beloved of these is the **Sad Clown** (NE male human **minstrel**), an incredibly fat comedic who does a renowned act involving a mop, some buckets and a stuffed donkey.

The cost of a crossing is 1 sp for third-class (where passengers have no cover), 1 gp for second-class where tarpaulins offer cover, and 10 gp for first-class where drinks and food are also available. The Pleasure Ferry is a treadmill ferry (see **Getting Around in the Blight** in **Chapter 1**) moved by a chain connected to the mainland and powered by bound **Large water elementals**. Three years ago, one of the bound elementals escaped, and wreaked havoc on the ferry and part of a pier. Since that time, a trio of rather overweight, bored watchers (N male human **thugs**) have been part of the crew, their job to specifically put down any escaped elemental.

Other Ways across the River

The Pleasure Ferry is the main way to access Festival other than by boat, but it is not the only way of doing so without getting wet. A number of teetering, temporary and highly illegal bridges stagger across to the island and offer a cheaper way across, usually for a toll of 1 cp. However, they are subject to the whims of The Family who have shown no qualms about severing these bridges when necessary, even while being used by customers.

F2. The Great Fayre

The summit of Festival is a crown of colour and noise and enticement. A helter-skelter beckons from behind a trio of elephants, who stand on their rear legs and trumpet. Fortune tellers, freakshows, games of chance and outré curiosities and museums cram together in this claustrophobic summit.

The Great Fayre never stops, never rests, is never still. The Family's influence is most tangible here, with halflings at every corner, easily the most numerous race.

The Great Fayre is a madness of noise and colour, where the most outrageous scams, the most dangerous rides, and the most valuable bets are placed. Some 503 of the best entertainment venues cram one above the other here, and every stall has its own barker, calling out for customers to "try his luck!"

The world famous Great Fayre Freakshow, run by **Horace Wess** (NE male halfling **wererat leader**), promises to "startle and amaze, sicken and horrify" in equal measure. Horace has agents across the known world scouring for the incredible, the outré and the foul. His exhibits range from the Twin-Headed Ettin Bride to the Hirsute Court (a royal family of dwarves covered in hair) to the Beast of the Black Jungle — possibly the most famous freak in the city — an abomination of ape and man horribly malformed by a disease which distorts and changes the flesh. This foul illness changes the metabolism of the sufferer and the body sprouts and changes — a mouth may appear in the back of the neck, a slimy appendage from the forehead, a cluster of fungoid blights around the lips. The Black Beast itself is able to recite poetry and is rumoured to have a gentle soul. It is jealously guarded by the Family, who have given private shows for high ranking royalty and even for the Justices and Bishops.

Other dazzling shows include the **Great Fayre Pig Race**, where a group of six *awakened* pigs dash around a route more akin to an obstacle course than a race circuit. The fact that these pigs have been heard talking has only fuelled interest in the daily event where hundreds of gold pieces change hands.

The **Great Wheel and Helter-Skelter** towers some 80 feet above the Fayre and guarantees riders a view they will never forget.

Add to this mix, hundreds of fortune-tellers, prize stalls, food vendors, hoopla's, crossbow ranges, wrestling challenges, and countless other diversions. Throw a mixture of several thousand visitors a day, sprinkle with intrigue and shady events of the Family, and the Great Fayre becomes a potpourri of joy, intrigue and danger. Random stalls and events are provided for here and other locations in the ***Cyclopaedia***.

F3. Gypsy Township

Boatmen in barges and narrowboats have created a small, floating village by the shores of the island here. The boats are all cramped and almost all appear to be halfling vessels.

The halfling river gypsies of Gyspy Township have tough lives; competition for work is high, and with so many folk in so small a place, trouble is never far from the surface. Arguments start over the most trivial issues. Where no grazing exists, a bale of hay becomes a valued commodity. Where halflings fight over women, the limited space means that all the neighbourhood is forced to become more than spectators; even hanging washing out to dry causes problems as lines cross decks.

The boatfolk speak their own unique language, the River Cant is a bastardised form of Halfling crossed with Rama but with an astonishing amount of pidgin curse words sprinkled in. Boatfolk do not teach this language to any but their own.

Their present Captain (as their leaders are called) is **Captain Aswoad Hemp** (N female halfling **veteran**). The formidable Ashwoad, with her mouth of sugar-blackened teeth brooks no trouble from her kin. She has a violent dislike for **Hamish Scathel** (**F7**), who killed her cousin in a brawl. However, the boatfolk are known for their toughness, and they are courted by and have married into the Family, assuring their safety.

Townships

In general, the most cramped, damp and unhealthy places to live generate a love amongst their populace that is altogether at odds with their surroundings. The "riverfolk" as those who live in boats along the river are known, are a mixed lot of Halfling boatfolk, Viroeni, and itinerant seamen. From the cramped, insular Gypsy Township, with its own cant, its own court, and its own justice, to the glorious and opulent Flugg Township, essentially a luxury riverboat permanently fixed at dock, no two townships are the same. There are townships throughout the Blight, and they are almost invariably cramped, perpetually moving, and different from anywhere else in the city.

F4. The Soiled Sow Inn

Here is a curious drinking establishment and inn. It has the white-painted walls of a hostelry, and yet has huge thick glass windows displaying wares. Hanging above the sign of a pig wallowing in mud are three metal balls depicting the guild sign of a pawnbroker.

The Soiled Sow is unique in the city; it is the only inn that doubles as a pawnbroker, a place where money is loaned on surety of property pawned. Those who do not pay back the money forfeit the goods (and often suffer other indignities). The owner, a tradelord gnome called only as **Kaif** (LN male gnome **guard**), runs the business with a somewhat brutal gang of relatives.

The inn itself is a pleasant enough place, running with mangy dogs and tiny puppies. It does a fine chicken broth and various palatable pies which change daily and are advertised inside and out on a large blackboard. Kaif, like many innkeepers, employs his own brewer **Mistress Varn** (LN female gnome **commoner**) who turns out a quantity of standard ale called Sow Ale, a pale hoppy brew, but also supplements this with various specials, ranging from thin Nipper's Brew, to some very potent Barley Wines.

What makes a visit here truly unique is the bric-a-brac that clusters every stairwell, doorway, shelf and cupboard — thousands of items "left" by their owners. Physikers' skeletons stand next to suits of full plate armour which lean against cupboards full of stuffed rodents which are propped up by books perched upon an anvil.

Any object up to 500 gp value might be located herein, second-hand, and sell at 50–80% of the normal price. The chance of locating any object is 10% and requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or the help of Kaif. Objects, of course, may always turn up here that lead to adventures. They may also be of shoddy or exceptional quality with many bearing the broken condition and some being of masterwork craftsmanship.

F5. The Festival Watch

A squat, rather dirty stone tower rises from the quayside. It has become home to seagulls and blindingcrows.

Some of the avians present secretly serve as familiars for members of the Family. It pays to know what is occurring in the local watch. The **32 Constables of the Festival Watch** (NE male halfling **guards**) are visible by their emblazoned grey and green uniforms and the short scourges they are armed with to carry out their duties — which generally revolve around dealing with drunks and minor scuffles. There are **5 Sergeants at the Watch** (LE male halfling **wererats**) led by **Watch Commander Edrin Grast** (LE male halfling **wererat leader**). The "good" commander is legendary for his short temper, and the locals rightly fear him as being something of a brute inclined to deliver his own form of justice. On the surface Grast is all smiles, playing the kindly Watch Officer to visitors; however, it is a widely-known secret that he is one of the wererats responsible for administering justice at the **Gibbets** (see **Part 2: Running Festival).** When off-duty, Grast is invariably to be found on the Sweat Township (**F8**) with his good friend, the Overseer **Todas Scathel**.

The Watch Tower itself is a standard timber structure consisting of three storeys, two of which are for the Watch to collect, store, and train with, their equipment. The top floor is where the commander lives. Stout iron-bound locked doors bar entry; these can be picked by making a DC

25 Dexterity check using proficiency with thievesthieves' tools. Only the commander lives permanently in the tower, although at all times there will be 1d4+1 constables present. Beneath the tower is a special timber gaol cellar lined with thick tar. The gaol, as anyone exploring it would realise, is far stronger than any mere Watch-gaol merits. There are highest-quality manacles (some sized for rats) and various cages —some for humans, some for halflings, some for rats — and a truly unpleasant selection of devices for punishment. When they need to, the Family punishes transgressors in here, their screams lost in the echoes of joy outside.

F6. Flugg's Township

A township of boats lurks by the side of Festival; the suffocating hulls of a dozen great ships lie below a raised timber town, its walls like wooden cliffs. Ballista protrude from open portholes and the place is bound by iron chains and decorated in gilt. Lights and paper lanterns dance on decks, and the sound of laughter and gentle singing reverberate across the gangplanks and onto the shore.

Renowned beauty Miss Mary Flugg is the current owner of the Township, a renowned gambling den and brothel. Flugg inherited the boat from her aged lover Master Haross Gelp, of Gelp and Ulley Mercantile[5] infamy — a mercantile concern of particular note for having on one occasion crossed the Great Coven and ceased to exist a few days later. Gelp himself had the craft constructed 25 years ago (before the unpleasantness involving the Great Coven).

Those lucky enough to be invited aboard (and membership is strictly by invitation only) tell of sumptuous cabins, luxury and excess. Miss Flugg excels at devising or purchasing new games and distractions for her guests. Tales of gold rocking-horse races, diamond hunts, and wagers in excess of one hundred thousand gold shekels reverberate around Festival.

Of course, security is paramount, and Miss Flugg keeps not only a **stone golem**, but also a trio of **spirit nagas** to ensure security. **Flugg** is, in fact, a **spirit naga** herself (with shapechanging ability into humanoid form) and is working for the Family. She is most strongly allied to the Scathels and has a particularly useful marriage of convenience with the scary **Etha Scathel** (**F7**). Secretly, she is also a member of the **Burning Hookahs** (see **Chapter 3**), a loathsome group of cannibalistic nagas who have a power base here in Festival.

Flugg not only makes wagers for money, but has also been known to make special wagers with her guests — especially those who have excessive magical knowledge and secrets — secrets which, if she is successful in attaining, she passes on to her masters.

Flugg's only weakness is her love for **Gathan**, a **spirit naga** who runs a covert action in the Bright Souk (**F17**). She is intensely in love with him and will do anything to save him. Conversely, of course, those who injure him will feel her wrath.

Living in Festival

Space is at a premium in Festival, however, an obscure bylaw (*The Festival (Contrary Piers on Rivers Protection of Shipping) Act of 1106)* allows anyone to build a new house that doesn't touch the ground or pier surface. Regrettably, unless the builder belongs to that rare, master-class of engineering the **Master Builders of the Edifice of Royal Engineers**, otherwise known as the **Royal Arcane Engineer's Guild** the place constructed is likely to fall down.

F7. The Scathel Manse

A functional, dour, fortified manse with no ground floor windows, three storeys, and a trio of watchtowers. No other building dare touch the manse, which lies in its own square, surrounded by withering cherry trees that never bloom.

Costs of Living in Festival

Most properties are sewn up by the Family; however, to keep up the outward façade of normality, the rats covertly employ a few human agents who are allowed to trade in properties.

Homes add another dimension to your game, but don't let it get boring. You should always have an idea of where the characters live, in case of attack, theft or visitors. Your players may wish to add traps and other accoutrements to their homes.

Cost of Lodgings per month

Single-room dwelling	20 gp
Small cottage*	40 gp
Townhouse**	70 gp

Purchases

Single-room dwelling	500 gp
Small cottage*	2,000 gp
Townhouse**	8,000 gp

Sample Property: Bradlork's Fall

This townhouse is presently on the market after the sudden death of the previous owner. It offers a unique opportunity for vendors to purchase a property of historic importance. Quade, Quig, Quard and Chum Company offer this 10-room building in the sought-after parish of the Skew, built in the manorial fashion over 5 storeys for just 11,000 gp. The house comes with an established staff, including a butler and maid, and is the location where Berran Walt wrote his famous book *Of Rats and Men*.

Property can make an interesting reward, use this technique as way to open up other avenues for the characters.

* 2-storey, 3 rooms
** 3-storey, 10 rooms

Former tough uplanders of Eamonvale, the Scathels pride themselves on their hardiness. They are the street-fighters of the Family, and are invariably called in to settle any dispute that requires a little 'muscle' or persuasion of a physical manner.

Scathel Manse reflects the tough upbringing of the family. A trio of guards (**wererats**) patrol the watchtowers day and night. **Hamish Scathel** (LE male halfling **wererat leader**) the clan leader, is in his 90th year, and presides over affairs with an iron scourge. A bent, old man with outrageous eyebrows, he is prone to forget his humanoid form and often wanders the manse in hybrid form. He also refuses to hide his clan heritage, and whenever he leaves his manse via his iron carriage, he is in hybrid form, and must be bundled into his carriage by staff to keep his identity secret.

Hamish's only child was a daughter, Etha. **Etha** (CE female halfling **wererat leader**) is legendary in the Family for her flaming red hair (now shot with a line of white) and incredible temper, as well as her capacity for taking lovers — lovers who are often found dead. Etha has little respect for anyone outside her clan but has formed a bond of convenience with **Miss Mary Flugg** at the Flugg Township (**F6**) and is happy to provide muscle when it is needed in return for protection.

Etha has had 11 children, all of which are now grown. Unlike their mother, they are more thoughtful and have taken up various positions both in Festival and across the city. The eldest, **Duncan Scathel** (NE male halfling **wererat leader**) is as renowned as his mother for breaking heads and hearts.

Within, Scathel Manse is dark and dreary, and centred around a dusty great-hall endowed with ancient family portraits. Military memorabilia — suits of armour, pikes, shields, and trophies — adorn the walls. No one ever feels really welcome in the manse, not even the Scathels themselves.

Their staff of 22 (most of whom are guards) have a high turnover, many claiming the manse is haunted by a long dead ancestor known as the **Great Weary Scathel**.

The manse has stout oak doors with amazing locks, the main treasure of the clan is held in Hamish's room in a great locked iron chest trapped with a *fireball* trap (6d6 damage): DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for half, unless perceived by a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and disarmed by a DC 15 Dexterity check. It contains the combined treasures of the clan, which amount to around 50,000 gp.

F8. Sweat Township

Here, boat is lashed to boat, caravel to coracle to dhow to barge to create an island — an island dedicated to combat and slavery.

Run ostensibly by the Scathels (**F7**), with a little "help" from the Grast family (**F9**), this island is dedicated to wagers and fighting. Every inch is given over to fighting arenas with banks of high (very unstable) terraces of timber seats, boxing and wrestling and fighting rings. The area is covered in battle cages where beast fights beast or beast fights man. Here a man can make his fortune — or lose his life.

Overseer Todas Scathel (LE male halfling **wererat leader**), second eldest son of the infamous **Etha Scathel** (**F7**), is the Overseer of this operation. He is as cruel as he is cunning, and delights in fresh consignments of slaves and beasts. He is also partial to abducting the odd pretty woman as an aside to the cage combats, then running a "save the princess" scenario where a fighter has to defend himself and the abductee against some foul monster unleashed in the cages. Of course, said abductee is almost always taken to the Overseer later and found floating in the Lyme the next day. Todas is above the law, protected by the Family and in particular his almost brotherly friendship with **Commander Grast** (**F5**). He has watchers, **2 wererat elites and 6 wererats** (in humanoid form, initially) to keep the crowd and "brave combatants" in check.

The Overseer will, of course, claim that fighting here is through freedom of choice and well paid, all of which is a lie. Generally, cage combats are run every night, although the quality varies. Most nights, there will be a simple man-versus-bear or -dogs scenario, although every third night the Overseer arranges something exotic, occasionally fights by matched sides up to **Challengechallenge rating** 5 are held and at such events, huge amounts of money change hands.

The combatants are kept in iron cages at the fore of the 'ship' held behind iron doors. These can be picked by making a DC 20 Dexterity check using proficiency with thievesthieves' tools. Large timber sheds cover the cages outside to ensure prying eyes are kept out. The watchers patrol the cages but are relatively lax and lazy. The Overseer himself lives in a converted gypsy canal boat lashed to the outside of the prison area.

Other combats are always taking place, and often the watchers will oil up to teach some visitor, tempted by a purse of 10 gold shekels, the folly of the wager.

F9. Grast Hall

A foreboding hall; a monument of stone and stained glass and gothic crenulations and show — all to the glory of the family. The motto above the great entry door reads '*In Our Name We Glory,*' and both within and without this is a statement of power, influence and wealth.

Opulence is the name of the game for the Grast family — marble and silk and fur are matched only by gilt and walnut and tapestry within. Grast Hall has 26 bedrooms, and the parties in the Grand Hall have a reputation for excess and decadence. Orgies take place regularly and the charismatic father, **Marren Grast** (see L"Hereafter") presides. Marren wears an outrageous wig of black ringlets and dresses in the finest silks and latest

Festival Scams

Centuries of lying, cheating and skulduggery have fine-tuned the scam in Festival to epic proportions — crime lords from far and wide often try to visit Festival at least once in their lives to learn from the masters.

Here are three favourite scams the locals pull on visitors:

1. The "Let me be your guide" Scam

A local approaches the victim and offers his services as a guide. He or she warns the victim that the streets are dangerous but that he or she has a family and is only looking for a little money — none if the victim cannot afford it (as a sweetener the scammer may have a child's dummy or toy clumsily sticking out of their pocket). The route, of course, passes by at least three shops where he or she visits friends. Each of these friends happens to run a business — carpet selling, (fake) antiquaria, brass and metal and jewels and valuables — all faked forgeries that are worthless.

Said friend is, of course, delighted that friends of his friend have arrived, and immediately makes them feel at home, with cups of sweet mint tea, perhaps a glass of wine or some dainty cakes. As the friends are waiting for these to be produced, a few goods are brought out "for the friend's opinion" and the hard sell begins.

2. The "I've just been robbed by thugs" Scam

A convincingly wounded-looking (DC 15 Wisdom (PerceptionInsight) check to notice the deception) man, woman, or more often, child, staggers into the victim's view wailing. The person, it transpires, has been on a special mission to a bank/shop/moneylender with a large sum of money and "must have been followed from their house" as they have been robbed.

The sum, of course, is not major, but significant enough for the scam — usually a single gold or platinum coin is the prize. Naturally, the robbed person is dreading going home to the evil and wicked spouse/brother/father who will beat them shamelessly — what is to become of them?

3. The "Buy now, and I'll deliver it later" Scam

A trick favoured by market traders is to sell objects too big to be easily carried but available for a 'bargain price.' Such objects invariably include large pots, suits of armour, horses, etc. and are always available for at least half the normal price. The difficulty of course is that the horse is *lame just now*, or the armour *needs a slight amendment* or the *pot is too heavy and the seller's lazy brother* is just about to come back from lunch. The trader suggests that he deliver it to the victim's house and offers, as surety, his platinum signet ring (a very good forgery worth only 25 gp) that appears to be worth at least 500 gp. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check allows a character to detect the forgery. Of course, as soon as the victim is around the corner the trader packs up, gets out another fake ring, and moves to another street to continue the scam.

The number of scams in Festival is countless, and many local thieves are just as skilled in performance as they are in skulduggery. Parting willing folk from their money is often easier with charm than with weapons, and allows an easier escape. Rumour has it that the true mistress of all scams is the Queen of Rats, who is unsurpassed with the complexity of her many games, which she weaves constantly to prevent boredom setting in.



fashions — always turquoise and pink and crimson — he is a frequent visitor to the Capitol where he seeks to further the long-term aims of the Grasts (ingratiation into Royal circles). He is a wit, a dilettante, a master poet and painter, playwright and fop — with a heart of steel behind his dazzling white teeth.

The prodigious Grasts number in their hundreds, and are swollen by an army of bastards. The Grasts regard themselves as the true Family, since they are all related, and both male and female members delight in finding suitably magnificent specimens to procreate with.

F10. The Black Finger

A quarter of a mile of iron, timber, rust, and rope stretches gingerly across Sister Lyme. It is host to a limpet army of stalls and events, plays and scams on various levels of pier, many of which are newly lashed bamboo scaffolds which groan nervously above the black waters of the river.

The longest pier in Festival, there are always rumours that the pier is about to be extended into a bridge connecting Festival to the mainland. The Family's feelings on this idea are so mixed, however, that such an event is impossible.

The **Black Finger Theatre**, which rests at the end of the pier, has fallen on hard times of late after a fire nearly destroyed the building in 1709. The fire was deliberate, arranged by the Family to remove a vampire spawn daughter of the Fetch who had set up operations in the district — theatres being a popular cover for vampires throughout the city.

The theatre, however, now conceals an even darker secret beneath its iron skeleton — it is lair to a wererat killer known by the title of the Fisherman. **The Fisherman** (NE male briny **wererat leader**) is master of a cult of skum who are slowly seeping into the city, particularly in places along the Lyme, using the covert disguise of wererats to avoid detection whilst they establish bases in worship of YogVagram'hkrrl, the **Madness of the MirrorStorm**, a kraken from Between.

The Fisherman is being cautious in his approach and is careful to conceal his motives; however, the Family are already suspicious of his motives — which are to steal children, always waifs and strays — from the island and take them to his masters, the skum high priests in the deep waters below. He does not ask what happens to the children, nor does he care. At present a **trio of briny* wererats** assist the Fisherman in his operations. The pier makes a perfect base for the cult's operations; children are drawn to its gaudy shows and amusements, and many poor youngsters are drawn here by the chance to work in the under piers below, which are home to countless entertainers on the pier and in Festival.

* See **The Cyclopædia Infestarum: Part 3**

F11. The Shantytown of Frynn

Here, logic is turned on its head as a shantytown has grown upwards and outwards over your heads — a bloated spider of timbers, rope and hope has exploded from the ground and erupted upwards in a confusion of buildings. Here and there you see balconies and gables, a doorway leading to a rooftop terrace, a timber tower with a battlement, or a bridge.

The Shantytown of the Frynn is the bastion of the Frynn Family. **Shamus Frynn, The Pearly King of Festival** (NE male halfling **wererat leader**), and leader of the clan, is ostensibly the 'elected' public ruler of Festival, although the Family only has one true ruler and Shamus is painfully aware of her.

The clan is noted for their charm and silver-tongued chat, and each of Shamus' 8 sons and daughters has an army of admirers, followers and would-be suitors. Whilst not the most powerful clan in terms of number or power, they are the most popular, and thus can boast the strongest position

of any of the Family. At any given time, there will be at least a hundred visitors, cousins, friends and associates staying in the Shanty.

Shamus' daughter **Isobela** is presently overseeing construction of a new pleasure pier in the Cat's Cradle part of the city (see **J3**).

The Shanty is crazy, and often dangerous to use — if you don't have a guide to help. Doorways open into collapsed wings, walkways are unsafe for anyone too heavy (often deliberately so) and, coupled with the standard defences of a clan home (plentiful traps and tricks), it makes the Shanty a daunting place — even to visit.

F12. The Tunnels of Rats

The grey hill that houses Festival hides a secret — amongst the cellars and gaols and pits is a court, the court of the **Rat Queen** (see **F13**).

Fully three score entrances pick their way into the soul of the island, many of which begin as innocent looking streets and wynds.

The dungeon is extensive and deep, and is made up of several levels of protection. The Uppers, the highest level, are constructed to look seldom used and dangerous. Warning signs and remnants of previous visitors may be found beneath fallen masonry and blocks. Immediately below is the Welcome, a large level with many traps and few watchers. The lower section of the tunnels is accessed by a series of descending canal locks which again are fortified, and which finally gives access to the Royal Palace.

F13. The Royal Palace

At the heart of the isle, squatting like a grotesque bloated spider, sits the **Queen of Rats**. The Royal Palace is a catacomb of large rat tunnels and canals, fortresses, towers and dungeon complexes that stretch for over a mile.

Some two hundred wererats occupy these places, which also double as places of commerce. One can find warehouses, docks, and even harbours beneath the city, hidden from prying eyes via clever illusions and gates. Here, one finds rat-related monsters of every conceivable type.

The Royal Palace itself has been built as a subterranean mockery of the true Royal Palace and Summit Spire in the Capitol (**C39**) and consists of over 300 rooms, many of which are wreathed in opulence. Alas, her Rodent Majesty may have money, but not taste, and the palace is a travesty of clashing colours, gaudy objects and seedy artwork. The Queen is attended in her palace by a hundred courtiers, relatives and guards (allNE male and female **wererats**), and spends most of her time in the **Royal Bath**, a marble and gilt lined pool, or in the **Royal Birthing Chamber** (the queen gives birth almost daily) where the cannibal **Rodent Midwives and Nurses** attend her every need.

The Rat Queen has made a binding pact with the n'gathau* and has a seat in a theatre in the Plane of Agony. Her most beloved followers, the **Royal Guard** (**wererat leaders**), are made up of male and female wererats, who are often abroad in the city spying, or on some secret mission for their majesty.

* The n'gathau are a sadistic and cruel race of extraplanar creatures that journey the planes in search of living flesh to further their craft and trade. While demons and devils fight an everlasting war for souls, the n'gathau collect the flesh of their enemies, flay and destroy it, and reconstruct the tortured in blasphemous likenesses of their former selves. Additionally, they sometimes capture the essence of a slain outsider and bring it to their native plane where it remains in eternal torture.

F14. The Great Circus

The banners declare that this huge canvas pavilion contains the Greatest Show in the World!

Perhaps the boast is true, for the Great Circus is huge, and the full show (which is only occasionally seen) lasts a day.

With 100 elephants, 60 tigers, 10 owlbears, 6 manticores, 3 unicorns and a chimera making up the beast side of the show; and 37 clowns, 22 acrobats (including **Prince Zarres**, the greatest acrobat in the world), 11 wizards and 12 animal trainers making up but a part of the staff, the circus truly is a sight to behold.

Maximilian DeCray (NE male halfling **wererat elite**) is the owner and founder of the Great Circus. A wererat now over a hundred years old, Maximilian is a Royal Rodent prince — he is the Queen's eighty-third son (and one of the most senior in her family) and harbours a strong desire to rule in her stead.

He has been carefully and covertly allowing the odd morsel of information about the Queen and her reputed wealth to slip into the hands of the odd, powerful adventuring group in the hope that said group may get into the Royal Palace and kill her, setting him up in a strong position to take over Festival. Maximilian has also been very careful in selecting the most appropriate friends, and can count the leader of all major clans in the family as his close allies and confidants — of course being careful never to reveal his true master-plan to any of them. A close friend of the famous explorer **Captain Hubbward** (**F21**), he often commissions explorations to bring back the most exotic creatures from around the world and once even had a true dragon. He hides the burn scars that he suffered when it escaped 19 years ago. His greatest desire, and one for which he is willing to pay many tens of thousands of platinum guineas for, is the capture of the Tarrasque itself.

Maximilian, like the rest of the troop, sleeps and lives in one of the hundred or so brightly painted gypsy caravans that are pulled up adjacent to the Great Tent that hosts the show. Many of his followers are **wererats**; although, he does like to keep unblessed followers at hand for broader works, and to ensure that shows on full-moon nights go without a hitch.

F15. Sabb's Slaughterhouse

The guild sign of the Guild of Butchers hangs above this corner butchery.

Doleful Sabb Slaughter (N male dwarf **bard**) is a curious character. Occasionally, he can be heard singing out hymns or reciting grand poems, but more often he is a cheerless taciturn dwarf who utters little more than a "goodbye." However, his shop, a white-tiled single room which he lives above is a picture of cleanliness.

Sabb is one for a bargain, unfortunately, and often his pies and sausages contain dubious meats from carcasses (only recent carcasses, he tells himself) left from the menagerie of his dear friend **Quentin Ruben Sollerman Hubbward** of Hubbward's Market of the Outlandish (**F21**). So popular have some of these meats become, that the two are presently discussing opening up an exotic meat shop in an empty building at the bottom of the hill. They are both members of the **Ravenous Club** (see **F36**).

Sabb is highly suspicious of **Gathan** and the 'man's' motives at the Bright Souk (**F17**), particularly in the way he seems to have a different girl on his arm every month. He is almost fanatical in his surveillance of the Bright Souk, to the point where he has invested in a second-hand spyglass from the Soiled Sow Inn (**F4**). **Lasseran Frynn** (LE male halfling **wererat leader**), one of Shamus' sons who lodges nearby, is actively encouraging Sabb in his surveillance in the hope that some suspicious matter occurs allowing him to involve his father. Lasseran wants the Souk for his own nefarious purposes relating to the production and sale of alchymic snuff. Sabb is an occasional visitor to the Soiled Sow (**F4**), and is on speaking terms with most regulars.

F16. The Hookah

A well-appointed timber building with narrow leaded windows declares itself to be The Hookah Cabb'e House. The smell is very welcome in the sugary, sweaty streets of Festival.

The Hookah is a street cabb'e house, at which the locals meet at various times of the day to talk about the weather, recent events, pore over a copy of the *Spectator*, sip strong Turkad cabb'e, and smoke from hookah pipes.

The owner, **Thastenn Pail** (NG male human **commoner**) is a grey-haired man with a magnificent grey beard. He is a quiet person, who sits

Cabb'e Houses

The first cabb'e house (Bell's Cabb'e House—Oldest in the City) opened in 938 in the Seminary and they thrive in Festival's more pretentious side streets. Cabb'e houses serve hot dishes of Turkad cabb'e (very harsh) and Irkainian cabb'e (mellow) or Libynosi chocolate, a warm and peculiar drink. Such places are often the centre of gossip, and in general, all ability checks in connection with gathering information gain a +1 bonus when made within them.

Cabb'e houses generally consist of a panelled indoor area (often quite small). Many double as tobacconists and snuff sellers. Prices depend upon the area, but generally a dish of cabb'e is a silver pilaster and upwards. Some are for specific clienteles, and might bar men, women, or any particular race from their interiors.

and listens rather than engages. A large tomcat called **Malibenturney** is Pail's only companion, having lost his wife in a carriage accident in the East Ending 20 years ago. Malibenturney is a **Between-Cat**[TOBH], keeping an eye on events in the area and on the wererats in particular. Characters regularly visiting the place (say once every other day) making a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check will realise that something is a bit odd about the cat — it's a bit too smart, a little too friendly, and a little too inquisitive when gossip is being told.

The Hookah is a great place to pick up gossip, and all ability checks in connection withingto gather information are made a bonusas if the character is proficient in that skill.

F17. The Bright Souk

Here is a small covered market in the shell of an old warehouse that sells colour. There are dyes and oil paints and hues of all types piled from floor to ceiling, some in great barrels. The place also sells bright wares; hammocks of orange, cloaks of vermillion, bright yellow head-scarfs. It almost appears that you have walked into a rainbow.

The Souk, which specialises in colourful attire, cloth and household hangings, is run by **Gathan** (**spirit naga**) who runs a covert smuggling operation with the aid of a local highwayman known as **Jake Shadow** (**bone devil**) who pawns his various ill-gotten gains with the naga who, in turn, fences them through **Miss Mary Flugg** at the Flugg Township (**F5**). Flugg, like one or two other women in the city (though no other nagas), is deeply in love with the naga, who is often *polymorphed* into a very handsome man, who dresses in fetching silks and scarves of bright colours. While he finds the association with Flugg useful, Gathan has no affections to return: he loves only himself and uses his charms to great effect. He is presently seducing a member of the Royal household — a serving girl called Retta — with a view to inveigling himself into the Royal Family.

Such is Gathan's charm that he can count amongst his friends members of the Frynn Clan and members of the Grast family, as well as associations with the Burning Hookah Cabbalists (see **Chapter 3**).

Gathan has a small living area upstairs, with an iron chest fitted with a superior lock; it can be picked by making a DC 18 Dexterity check and proficiency with thievesthieves' tools. The chest is also protected by several traps, which he changes periodically. He keeps his present ill-gotten gains inside it (usually around 5,000 gp).

F18. The Deck

Steps rise to the promised rooftop tavern and suddenly stop — a huge timber deck stretches before you. You are, it seems, aboard a ship which is set in the town.

The Deck is one of the areas more unusual taverns, built entirely upon one rather perilous deck of a ship slung on rooftops. It commands a fine view of the island. Run by **Mirella Saut** (female halfling **commoner**) a bad tempered old crone, the place has a passable barley wine and fine roasts in the evening.

F19. Naff the Teller

A tiny tumbled old cottage crushed under the imposing weight of a warehouse.

Allegedly the only dwarf fortune-teller in the Great Fayre, **Naff** (N male dwarf **mage**) is a jobbing spell-caster, happy to sell his services to anyone. From behind his counter, he occasionally sells potions, although he is always keen to keep such actions secret to avoid hefty taxes imposed by both the Family and the Illuminati.

F20. Maril's Laundry

An elaborately carved iron-bound door gives access to a large courtyard, wherein, by day and night, some dozen goodwives toil away at large boiling clay vats — cleaning the laundry of the city.

The owner, the dark-skinned **Dame Mistress Maril**, (LG female human **knight** in the service of of Mother Grace, level 3) is famous throughout the city for the incredible way her laundry works. A secret system involving sewing tiny coloured threads into garments as they arrive keeps the laundry moving across the city, always arriving back at the owners not only clean but whole. Maril's boast is that she has never lost a single item of clothing in 6 years here.

Secretly, Maril is a knight operating in the city to try to spread discord amongst the Family. A member of a secret organisation known as the Rat Catchers (see sidebox), which operates from the areas around the Great Fayre to keep the rats (and their terrible disease) in check. However, so successful have the group been that neither they, nor their secret sponsor (Princess Rebecca of Mourney, see **The Cyclopædia Infestarum: Part 2**) have been discovered — so far.

Meril's disguise as a rather simple, blustery but jolly, laundry lady has ensured anonymity up to now.

F21. Market of the Outlandish

Is that the sound of a charging elephant coming from inside this place?

The Rat Catchers

A group of paladins and rangers who keep the Family's activities strictly in check. This activity is through direct sponsorship from the true Royal Family, who are acting upon information brought to them by Royal spies. In fact, the numbers of rats have been outrageously underestimated by the Royal spies, who have no idea about the extent of the rats' population.

Membership of the group is for life, and by the strictest of invitations. Members never meet, but communicate by a trio of awakened crows. Occasionally, a covert operation requires the use of an intermediary to hire groups of hired swords and adventurers to make a particular raid to empty a warehouse or ship.

Run by the famous explorer Captain Hubbward, this vast warehouse grows on an almost daily basis, and it is as well that Hubbward's neighbours are tolerant and friendly towards him. A pair of stuffed mammoths stand guard at either side of the warehouse doors, below a sign that reads '*The Market of the Outlandish welcomes one and all — please come and look if that is all you wish — all are welcome! Signed Captain Q.R.S. Hubbward Esq.*'

The affable **Quentin Ruben Sollerman Hubbward, K.C.*** (N male human **noble**) runs this huge operation, importing goods (including live ones, but not slaves) from the four corners of the world. His warehouse is a constantly shifting world of walnut desks, gaudy prayer flags, howdahs, peacocks, brass siege towers, tigers, carved lion statues 20 feet tall, and everything, seemingly, that can be brought by ship from anywhere.

,.* Knight of the City, an obscure noble title

F22. Foyle's Chop House

A townhouse bears a sign above the door — *Foyle's Chop House—by Royal Appointment.*

Chop houses are a growing feature of the city, and are essentially eating houses that specialise in pork chops. Often chop houses are shabby places to eat, but Foyle's is one of the cleaner establishments in the city. Even so, the decor leaves a lot to be desired and the tetchy **Mrs. Foyle** (CG human **commoner**) can be heard swearing at all times of the day, but especially so in the evening, after her mug of gin, during which times she is wont to sing hymns loudly, swear with such force that she can occasionally be heard three streets away, and chase her husband with a meat cleaver for not being able to give her children. She's made up the part of Royal appointment to add credibility to her establishment, but claims the Queen once ate here.

F23. Caroo the Magic Cobbler

A tiny window filled with shoes and a discrete guild sign of the Royal Guild of Master Cobblers are the only outward signs that this building is not another cottage.

Oleb Caroo (N male human **mage**) is indeed a magic cobbler. His small workshop is filled with current projects, including preliminary work for a pair of *boots of striding and springing*. He is one of the city's finest cobblers, and although he does not brag about it, he once made baby shoes for the Royal Family. Oleb is a quiet, reserved character who minds his own business. He can occasionally be found in the Clockwork House Inn (**F26**).

F24. Szeer's Snuffery

Szeer's Emporium — Purveyors of the Finest Snuff — is a tiny lean-to brick building that is being crushed beneath the weight and presence of the adjacent Hubbward's Market warehouse.

Szeer Granith (NG female gnome **commoner**) is a very, very distant member of a royal gnome household the Clan Granith. Any gnome is saware if given her true name that she should, by rights, be referred to as Dame Granith. Szeer has long since learnt to forgive the lower orders for their lack of courtesy. Those who do acknowledge her in the correct way will find that she is more amenable to offer her goods at lower costs and will give them a 25% discount.

Hubbward's Daily Merchandise

Hubbward's warehouse changes every day, and to reflect this, the characters should feel that whenever they step in they may discover something different. Feel free to have all manner of goods, including (possibly) magical ones, come and go on a daily basis, and be sure to disappoint your players if they are not fast enough by having that item sold when they eagerly return for it the day after. The chart here is intended to summarise what unique goods are for sale every time the characters enter his premises; when the characters return, it is up to you if the goods are still there, or have been snatched up by eager buyers.

Day #1: a trio of chariots from Xi'en, designed to appear to be attacking ravens with iron helms covered in thorns worth (650 gp each), a necklace, made of silver, depicting the moon descending over a lake full of swans, with a trio of scantily clad maidens dancing to the tune of a set of pipes played by a great bear (worth 180 gp), a quartet of gold and leather bracers depicting stags being hunted by satyrs (worth 200 gp).

Day #2: an elephant, trained for riding (worth 800 gp).

Day #3: a trio of peacocks, with full splays, worth 50 gold each, an ornate brass chest bound in iron with an excellent lock (proficiency with thieves' tools and a successful DC 20 Dexterity check to pick), the key of which appears like a human face (worth 165 gp), and a huge ebony surrounded mirror some 8 feet tall (worth 100 gp).

Day #4: a single brass and gold and silver peacock of great size (11 feet tall) which has the same properties as a *figurine of wondrous power — bronze griffon* (worth 10,000 gp).

Day #5: a trio of ancient texts and maps (the maps are worthless but show jungle areas) hidden within the texts on a *scroll* in the binding are the spells *wall of ice, wall of iron, and wall of stone*. Hubbward is not aware of this; hence, its perceived value of 85 gp.

Day #6: not in the warehouse, but docked in the harbour; a sailing ship, the *Horizon*, a fine seaworthy galleon (worth 8,000 gp).

Day #7: a clearance of goods Hubbward needs 'out of the way' and hence are at a bargain price: a trio of sets of full plate armour with filigree work in gold depicting angelic scenes (for sale at 800 gp but worth twice that), a vast number of polearms — all at 50% lower than standard prices, a trio of spyglasses of great size (4 times the weight of standard ones) for sale at 250 gp each, a seemingly endless pile of large pavilion tents (fancy tents that sleep 6) which weigh 40 lbs. each and going for 10 gp each, and a gilded harp worth 360 gp.

F25. The Narrow House

A tiny cottage on the Merry-Go-Around.

Rashin Grynn (NE male halfling **wererat**), a member of the Family, lives in this tiny cottage. He is the Skew Streetclerk and is ostensibly responsible for administrating the street. However, Rashin is a poor demented soul who does little more than grin and eat fruit. His role is no more than puppet allegiance to the Crown, and his true worth to the Family is as the fall guy should any problems take place. Members of the Family frequently call in to get the Streetclerk to sign documentation, approve illicit acts, and sign prison warrants.

F26. The Clockwork House Inn

A clockwork bear wearing a top hat stands outside this place, holding a sign saying, '*welcome to the Clockwork House Inn.*'

One of the most famous features of the city, the House is a strange invention created and continually expanded by its owner as **Mister Smyle** (a gnome **ghost**). Smyle made his fortunes with his unique clockwork puppets, and when he retired he began work on his famous tavern. Entering the House is a curious experience. A clockwork hare doffs a walking cane, clockwork foxes stare from above the bar, and clockwork mice run across the ceiling. A trio of great clocks beat out the time, and from each a single clockwork (stuffed) dodo appears on the hour, pulls out a large pocket watch and squawks once for each hour.

Some people find this garish mixture of stuffed animal, beast, and clockwork to be rather ghoulish, and as each room has its own curious feature (a room with a clockwork raven that wears a suit, a room with a clockwork rat chasing a clockwork cat with a carving knife, a room with a clock trio of magpies fighting over a clockwork rabbit and various others) there is no escape from the inventor's madness. Unfortunately, the work took its toll on Smyle as well, he hanged himself from the bar in 1567. He haunts the place now as a reclusive ghost. Now in the ownership of the Grawn family, a minor relative of the Frynns, this place has become popular with members of the Family and at times every customer, lodger, and member of staff in the inn is a wererat.

Hubney Grawn (NE female human **wererat leader**) runs the place. Her husband **Knogg** (N human **commoner**), is totally unaware of her secret lycanthropy, or association with the Family. The old owner occasionally possesses customers to work on faulty clockwork, although this possession is purely to enable him to repair objects. Attempting to force his removal from his beloved mechanical tavern invokes his wrath.

F27. Mistress Madd's Place

A red lantern hangs outside this well-lit structure, which rises on seven levels, each with a broad balcony.

An **ogre** in fine livery, carrying a large falchion, stands on guard outside the place whenever it is open (dusk till dawn). Within, the brothel is heady with frankincense and insectum fumes, the aged and huge **Mistress Madd** (commoner) keeps a **trio of bouncers** (NE male human **wererats**) to keep the Family happy. She has some two dozen girls working here, all of who are blessed with the attributes necessary for such work. The place also acts as a front for the importing of darker insectum that is not easily obtained. The Family have a particular dealer of **Nox Inuncus** ('Night Hooks') (see sidebox) who operates as a customer.

Madd hates **Sister Crimson** next door (**F28**), and the two go to great lengths to hurt one another's business. Madd is aware that her neighbour's place is run by a harpy, but her neighbour's payments to the Family keep the peace.

New Insectum

Insectum	Type	Price
Nox inuncus	injury	300 gp

Nox Inuncus (Night Hooks): This hard-to-acquire insectum enables the user to go without sleep, and to evade the effects of exhaustion for 3 days. The large-headed cockroach bites its prey and injects them with its poison which provides advantage to all saves against sleep effects and poisons for 72 hours, and no need to sleep during that period, as well as a cost (at the end the user immediately gains 2 levels of exhaustion, which can only be removed by finishing a long rest for each level of exhaustion).

F28. The Pyre

A large red lantern, with a huge copper base, hangs above a red door.

Sister Crimson, aa **harpy**, owns and runs the Pyre, so named because of the huge oil lantern that burns day and night in the centre of the building. The lantern is overlooked by open balconies, in which the customer — those discerning people who have difficulty separating pleasure from pain — come to be relieved of their cares. Sister Crimson has two particular associates, **Mr. Syyn** and **Madam Yearrn** (both **doppelgangers**) who help with her primary customers.

Within, the pain parlour is fitted with equipment necessary for Sister Crimson's unusual clientele, and the sister employs a dozen other menials to serve to her more 'normal' clients. The harpy enjoys touring the rooftops by dark, hunting for small rodents to catch and torment. Occasionally, she is lucky enough to find a small boy to eat. She particularly delights in finding and tormenting chimney sweeps. She is often joined on her hunts by her lover, the **Cringing Hermit** (**F29**). Crimson is a noted member of the Gentle, a notorious group of sado-masochists.

F29. The Opium House

The smell of opium wafts from a side door.

Many opium dens exist throughout Festival. This is one of the more notable, as it is run by the Family, and one of their associates, the **Cringing Hermit** (**gargoyle**). The hermit, who has a *hat of disguise* and who spends most of his time in the guise of a Xi'en opium master, is used by the Family to deliver messages of special relevance. The Hermit is the lover of **Sister Crimson** (**F28**) and the two sometimes hunt by night.

F30. The Crooked Mouse Theatre

This ramshackle building was clearly once a church, but now sags across the street and leans, brow to brow, into a large warehouse. The door is green, and on it is a tiny sign proclaiming it to be the Crooked Mouse Theatre.

The Mouse is infamous for its cutting-edge plays, which have occasionally been copied in the Artists' Quarter in recent years. The plays are invariably very dark and surreal; they mix dreams and nightmares to often terrible effect. The owner, **Callwell Carver** (female humanoid **vampire**) is one of several vampires who use the night connections of theatre as a cover for her torpidity during the day. Callwell has several lovers across the city, but none locally. The vampire employs innocent dupes for her plays, each of these players are generally low level bards or those studying to become actors.

F31. Leticia the Immaculate Nunnery

As out of place as any nunnery next to a brothel, this convent is a stark contrast to the gaudy buildings around it. Functional and clearly holy, this place is a plain chapel building with an attached annex.

Sister Beloved (LG female human **priestess** of Mother Grace) runs the nunnery in devotion to the **Immaculate Saint Leticia**, who was burnt at the stake as a witch, but refused to admit to witchcraft and died because of her piety. The sister is one of a score of other nuns who give succour to

the locals and try, through hymn and public prayer, to get locals to repent their ways.

In times of need, the nunnery becomes a hospital for local people, and the nuns are often seen on the streets distributing food or advice to ladies of the night.

F32. The Menagerie of Flesh

A strange pier lurches away from shore here, at its head are a trio of cages containing disfigured people — a hugely fat bearded lady, a repulsive dwarf infected with colossal growths, and a pig with two heads. Beyond the pier is a series of pavilions and timber sheds decorated with garish signs warning of the occupants beyond.

Copwell Linkinstrap (N male half-elf **minstrel**) runs the Menagerie, which contains some of the most unfortunate people and creatures he has been able to collect in his many years as a freakshow owner. In all, there are over a hundred exhibits, from conjoined twins, to those with outlandish and pitiful diseases, through bearded ladies, to people whose body parts have been subject to mishaps with *polymorph* spells. Entrance to the pier is a silver pil, as is entrance to the score or so of selective special exhibits.

Copwell is not cruel to his charges. Freakshow owners who are cruel tend not to last very long. Unbeknownst to Copwell, one of his main exhibits hides a secret. The dwarf at the entrance, a person known as the **Festering Dwarf**, is a paladin operating within Festival to try to bring down the Family. The dwarf, whose real name is **Horton Quoarace Thamwell Durn III** (LG male dwarf paladin of Dwerfater, level) has carried a disfiguring malady since his birth, and even his devotion to his deity has not, so far, led to a cure. Horton is the second paladin operating in Festival on behalf of the Rat Catchers, he is aware of other operatives in the city, but does not know them, nor their sponsor. Occasionally, an awakened crow passes on information of a mission and he takes whatever actions he feels necessary. Sometimes he covertly enlists help.

F33. Jackdaw's House of Illusions

A crooked house if ever there was one, this tower is an unsettling blend of different styles and seemingly impossible angles. A sign above the house proclaims the title of the establishment.

A greatly enhanced *major image* spell gives the illusion of the crooked tower, which is used by the **Magus Illusory**, a small guild of wizards whose master is **Barnabus Twelve** (LN male gnome **mage**). The Magus are extremely territorial, and make regular payments to the Family for the right to perform illusion-types of magic. Those who operate without their permission are politely reminded by the Magus of their monopoly upon illusions for moneymaking. After this first warning, the wizards send one of the more able students (N male and female humanoid **mages**) to punish the transgressor when alone. This punishment is often enough to warn the character away, but occasionally a favour has to be called in from the Family to remove a stubborn rival. Beyond the frivolous exterior, the guild operates a serious guild for the study of illusion magic.

F34. The Vice House

A tower wreathed in iron bands.

The Vice House is the local home of the **Gentle**; sado-masochists who delight in all manner of sexual deviance. The House is run by **Mistress Explania** (NE female **succubus**) who uses her peculiar talents to amuse and divert her club members. The club membership riddles society, both in Festival and across the city, and anyone taking action against the club faces immediate retribution, not just from the members of the club but from other customers. A **trio of trolls** serve as Explania's enforcers.

Rumours of orgies involving zombies — from foul rotting corpses dragged from the river to fresh, recently murdered corpses — are rife, particularly amongst neighbours, and it is said that Mistress Explania has boasted that she has yet to meet a man or woman, whose darkest pleasure she has been unable to satisfy. The eight-storey tower is capable of satisfying different vices on each of its levels, but members are only allowed access to each level after passing certain requirements. For more details, see **Part 2: Running Festival**.

Blight Club: Magus Illusory

Magus Illusory (Club)

Expert illusionists who pay dearly to keep a monopoly on their craft in Festival.

Prerequisite: To be considered for membership requires the ability to cast spells of at least 3rd level and a bribe of 500 gp. Fees are 250 gp per year.

Benefits: Members have access to simple lodgings at the club's tower all year round for free, and access to the small library of spellbooks in the guild's possession.

Advancement: Barnabus is very wary of rivals, and carefully vets those who ask for higher level books to ensure that they are able to cast them. If and when members become higher level than Barnabus, he may involve them in various schemes across the city, running shows, performing the odd favour for unseen clients (almost always the Family by some covert means), and occasionally, acts of rivalry between other wizard guilds to obtain rare spells. This results in at least one random city encounter per month (usually hostile ones) but also provides such members with a 100-gp monthly stipend for their efforts and can (at the GM's discretion) bring them into favourable contact with high-ranking members of the Family.

F35. The Marionette Theatre

A narrow theatre with an alarming display of stuffed hares, crocodiles and dodos surround a gaudy sign.

The marionette theatre is partly hosted by humans and other actors, and partly by animated mortimata designed like humans with animal faces. That the garish theatre is allegedly a children's entertainment venue is peculiar to Festival.

F36. The Ravenous Club

Here by the river, creaks an old market, in the centre of which is a fine building. The pens are filled with animals freshly delivered off ships.

The 'greatest cook in the world' **Gavage Missem** (NE male human **commoner**) owns and runs the Ravenous Club, a place where membership is strictly by invitation. The club has a reputation for the finest foods in the city, and keeps fresh produce at hand. The place has its own dock for the more exotic sorts of meat, and Gavage is always interested in new recipes. He also occasionally commissions adventurers to bring him back new beasts to cook and particularly specialises in aquatic creatures. The club has a very well-kept secret that several of its clientele like the taste of humanoid flesh, and the charismatic Gavage hosts several private parties to cater to this clientele.



Invitation to the club can come about through adventures, but if the characters try hard enough a bribe of 1,000 *gp* after a month's effort and a successful DC 15 Charisma (pPersuasion) check should yield a table.

Part Two: Running Festival

Shamus Frynn, The Pearly King of Festival

> Here is a dandy fellow, a halfling dressed in a pearly coat, with pearls upon his boots and hanging from his trousers, indeed his shirt, cravat and even his top hat are all covered in pearls, which glitter like the little fellow's gold smile.

Shamus is a leading member of the Family. The Frynns have been on the Rat Court for over 500 years. **Magistrate Frynn**, as he is known to the Family, controls a particular operation on behalf of the Queen of Rats in the Great Fayre itself — that of selecting suitable persons to be "invited" to join the Family. The selection of these persons usually depends upon the whispered voices of intermediaries and dilettantes who work for her Rodent Majesty and describe the Queen's wishes. Said persons are then usually tracked by one of Shamus' eight sons and daughters, and usually drugged, poisoned or simply battered into submission, before being locked away and repeatedly bitten until lycanthropy strikes, at which time they are offered the Gift.

Generally, her Majesty will only rarely use Shamus' own particular services, and such "victims" would usually be those most able to be of a particular service at a particular time — be they diplomats, visiting dignitaries, the very beautiful, the very mighty, or simply those chosen on a whim by her glorious Majesty.

Shamus has lived long because of his ability to avoid combat, and he always tries to escape combat if possible, unless the odds are heavily in his favour, in which case he tries to flank his opponent and use death attack if feasible. Shamus is a little haughtier once in combat, confident that his magic ring will save him as it has thus far. If Shamus finds himself flanked, he uses Acrobatics to tumble out of it and drops back from combat until he can find better positioning. He flees immediately if he and his underlings are outnumbered by opponents, knowing the Family will deal with them later.

Shamus is a **wererat leader** with 66 hit points.

The Rats of Festival

Rats, rats and more rats. Cats are virtually never seen in Festival, but few people live here long enough to notice. Rats are, however, seen in vast number, and those that are glimpsed are not only huge, but uncannily aware. The phrase "as cunning as a Festival rat" comes from encounters between visitors and the rats of Festival.

Festival is infested with families of wererats, and many pay homage to the Family itself; however, the Family is not omnipotent, it is fractious and riddled with envy. Furthermore, although infestation with lycanthropy is common, the Family have a code that they stick to, and a queen whom they honour. While it is a common secret that many wererats infest Festival, it is not clear just how many wererats there are, and the Family must be careful not to invite any potential religious cleansings. Therefore, they adhere to a code and are careful not to flaunt their lycanthropic roots.

The Queen of Rats

The Rat Queen sits
Upon her throne
Down deep beneath the streets

And there she slits
The young man's throat
And drinks his blood so sweet

They say she has
Eight sisters dear
And each is her and they

The sisters whereas
They do fear
The Queen who is as they

Their tails meet
Their food they share
But one thing they must know

The Queen they greet
Makes them to swear
Their lives are full of Woe

So stay away
From eight and one
For one is great in size

And never play
Or seek your fun
Where her deep lair lies

—East Ending Nursery Rhyme

The **Rat Queen** is a legend in the city. Occasionally stories emerge of some foul and bloated beast, joined at the tail to eight emaciated rats, all wearing crowns. The Queen is often referred to as being the size of a house, and spitting young out by the minute. Sometimes tales tell of her being so vast that she is part of the city foundation itself, and to kill her will bring ruin to all, or that she is able to shed her vastness and move in the lands of men at the full moon, seeking a mate to consummate her need and then devour him.

One thing that will not go away; is the midwive's' tales about rats being born of women, nor of tales of ratmen who call out 'Gods save the Queen' as they are about to die. Some philosophers have suggested that they are, in fact, proclaiming a love for the true monarch of the city, Queen Alice herself, but others surmise that the nursery rhymes and legends about the Rat Queen may have foundation.

They are right…

Operating from her mock Royal Palace (**F13**), the Rat Queen has an impossible temper, and rages 'off with their heads' whenever she gets a chance. The job of Royal Executioner tends to be a poisoned chalice: she executes her own executioner on a weekly basis. She is able to call the Pack to her aid whenever she is in danger, or when she wishes to punish an enemy or traitor in particularly cruel fashion.

No rat ever raises a hand to their queen, whom they regard as a god. The Queen is attended at all times by her royal guard, but is paranoid about the true Queen of the city and her plots to kill her. Paranoid, the Rat Queen occasionally has excessive purges of followers to root out imagined or real spies.

The Pack

A tidal wave of screeching, screaming rats approaches you, moving remorselessly in your direction...

,

The Family

The wererats of Festival call all the wererats in Festival 'family,' and the island itself the Great Nest. Under the watchful gaze of the most prevalent clans (see below), and for the love of the Rat Queen, the Family rules the island with an iron tooth and claw, and is busy expanding operations across the city. These operations are thwarted not only by other groups vying for territory (even in the Great Fayre itself), but also by a targeted campaign of attrition, which, presently, the rats are unable to attribute to an enemy. This group, the Rat-Catchers, have many powerful allies, but wisely keep most of their membership away from the Great Nest. Needless to say, the Family would pay very handsomely to know the identity of the assassins.

The Family consists of several closely tied clans, with three main families controlling matters directly, the **Scathels**, the **Grasts** and the **Frynns**. These three families wage a covert war of attrition against each other to get the upper hand and control of the wealth that pours into the Great Fayre. Some two dozen other lesser clans make up minor parts of the Family, these in turn vie with themselves and more powerful clans to increase their standing.

All wererats take **the Troth** (see sidebox) upon reaching maturity and are expected to abide by it throughout their lives.

The path a wererat takes is generally based on loyalty to his clan; however, many keep their lycanthropy a secret and lead relatively normal lives. Some move out into the city, either unable to take the iron fist of the Family, or because they act as agents for the Queen.

The Troth

The Troth was written by Aged Grand Lord Ferester — the First and One, the so-called god who brought wererats to Festival a thousand years ago. It is a prayer and an oath all wererats take, and to break the Troth is considered the worst crime a wererat can commit, usually, although necessity and white lies play a big part in its interpretation:

- ***No rat shall kill another*** *– A rat who kills another rat is outcast*
- ***No rat shall tell the others anything*** *– A rat who gives away secrets about the nest shall be eaten by the Pack*
- ***Rat must love rat*** *– A rat who loves one who is not a lycanthrope is outcast or killed*
- ***Betraying the Oath*** *– A rat who endangers another shall be tried by the Rat Court, and if found guilty, sent to the Gibbets*
- ***The Gift*** *– Those given the gift of lycanthropy will be brought back to the Great Nest and given a chance to swear the Troth — those who refuse are sent to the Gibbets.*

Those who break these rules are taken to the Gibbets — a set of rat-sized iron cages hung far under the piers and out of sight and all hope. Here transgressors are bound and gagged in rat form and left to rot. Sometimes they are fed an elixir, which forces a change back to their normal form, crushing them to death in the cages. The worst transgressors are given to the Pack to feast upon.

Like much of the city, a caste system operates even here, and rats are given titles according to their station. These titles are, in descending order of importance:

Of the Great Blood: Those born in the Great Nest by the queen.

Blooded: Born a natural wererat in the Great Nest.

Blessed: An afflicted wererat who contracted lycanthropy on Festival or from a member of the Family.

Cursed: Born as a natural wererat but not in the Great Nest.

Unclean: An afflicted wererat who contracted lycanthropy anywhere outside the Great Nest unless contracted from a member of the Family.

Between in Festival

The Between lies at the edge of everything in the Blight, and thrives and feeds upon the emotions that drift across its borders. In a place so focused on joy, in all its varied and often dubious forms, Festival acts as a beacon for creatures from that place of dreams. A few ideas are given here for merging or allowing the Between to make an appearance in Festival.

The New Street

An alleyway appears from the Between. This alleyway, the Street of Tigers, is populated by curiosity shops selling a variety of strange and exotic wares

The Harvester

A serial killer creature from Between enters Festival intent upon collecting pregnant women's heads.

Strange Joy

A fairground attraction leads into a nightmare world of Between populated by smiling horrors.

Game-Mastering the Between is not an exact science; if you feel the back of a shop should lead to a world populated by animal-headed psychotic horrors, then have it happen. Use the basis of Festival as a link into the mad world of Between. Have the gate go one way or the other as you wish, perhaps something from Between becomes obsessed with a character, has a need driven by dark pleasure, or finds pain amusing.

Things to Part You from Your Lucre in Festival

Item	Cost	Weight
Alchymic snuff	Varies	—
Company, friendly	1–3 gp/evening	—
Corner-doxy	1–5 gp/hour	—
Mask, fayre, plain	1–5 sp	1 lb.
Mask, fayre, fancy	1–5 gp	1–3 lbs.
Outfit, flamboyant	20 gp	8 lbs.
Sugarsweet	1–3 cp	
Toffee and Liquorice	1–3 cp	

Alchymic Snuff: Not a magic item but an alchemical substance, several versions of the snuff are available, one of which is specific to the Family. Alchymic snuff has a duration of 10 minutes.

Breath of Discovery: This snuff grants heightened awareness, resulting in advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks while under the influence of its effects. Cost 25 gp.

Stink of Middens: This snuff grants advantage on all saving throws related to gas and stench attacks (such as a ghasts) for a duration of 10 minutes. Cost 50 gp.

Pursuing Odour: This snuff allows any creature with the keen smell trait (e.g., wererats) to add double their proficiency bonusadditional to all checks related to the ability. Cost N/A (only made by Family alchemists who do not sell it openly)

Sugarsweet: Sugarsweet is a ghastly concoction made from boiled sugar, toffee and honey, it is usually sold on a short stick or around a piece of fruit and appears like an orange spiked sun, although the variations of sugarsweet are as numerous as the traders that ply the stuff. Sugarsweet apples, sugarsweet pears and sugarsweet figs abound, it seems that every child visiting or living in Festival is either eating, asking to eat, or crying for the stuff.

Toffee and Liquorice: A common sweet found in Festival.

Insectum	Type	Price
Laetus	injury	125 gp
Smiling madness	injury	5 gp

Laetus: This biting spider injects a poison that has an affinity for spinal fluid and grants advantage to Charisma skill checks for 12 hours, after which the individual enters a depression for 24 hours during which they have disadvantage on all Charisma skill checks.

Smiling madness: This biting louse favours the wrists, and webbing between the fingers, the bite causing a general feeling of euphoria and happiness for one hour, during which the user has advantage on to all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saves. Once the effects of the louse bite wear off, the user becomes severely depressed, and has disadvantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saves for the same duration. The bites marks leave visible scars that take years to fade unless healed with magic.

20 Unique Festival Attractions

Each stall costs from a few farthings to a pilaster to participate in or buy from.

1. Coconut Shy: The player pays a penny (or more) for three balls and stands 22 feet from the shy, which consists of coconuts on stands, if he knocks the coconut off the stand he keeps it. The coconut is AC 12 but the balls are treated as cursed –1 weapons.. Furthermore, coconuts are generally old and dry and some are nailed to the shy.

2. The Flea Circus: Rumour states that some fleas used in circuses such as these, are fleas from Between, and are somehow trained to lead miniature carts, swim miniature rivers and fight miniature battles. In truth, the vast majority of these miniature circuses are mechanical — and use tensioned clockworks to make water appear to ripple as a flea dives into it, however, the story of Tam Trotter refuses to disappear (see sidebox).

3. Toffee Stall: Toffee in various animal shapes

4. Sugarsweet Sellers

5. Boxing Stall: A **berserker** fallen on hard times awaits the challenger, who will win a purse of around 10 gp if he is still standing after 20 rounds. No armour is allowed, and the fight is unarmed. The berserker's reckless trait may be applied to unarmed attacks.

6. Roast and Onions: A fine selection of roasted meats and onions in a cob.

7. Extraordinary Reptiles: A display of snakes, lizards or turtles in a tent.

8. Bell's Miniature Circus: Rather like the flea circus (above), Bell's Miniature Circus is a tiny replica of a circus complete with acrobats, clowns and fire-breathers. This circus however is manned by tiny homunculi dolls that are a somewhat grotesque mockery of doll, monkey and child.

9. The Swan Boats: Rowboats shaped like swans are available for hire by the hour, these boats are far from seaworthy and any attempt to use them beyond the confines of the piers may result in capsizing.

10. Crossbow Range: Hit the AC 20 central target and win a prize; usually a cornhusk doll, some fruit or a sugarsweet-apple.

11. Fortune Teller: Almost always a gypsy lady dressed in silks and robes, the fortune is told by crystal ball, tarot deck, by palm, or head bumps. The telling is always embellished by plenty of colourful language, and a return visit is always suggested as 'there are deeper waters/more to tell/great things afoot.'

12. Carousel: A small circular ride aboard colourfully painted wooden horses/donkeys/dolphins/elephants/dodos powered by a treadmill[14].

13. Toffee-apples: Watch out for the maggots.

14. The Juggler: A passing juggler playing with burning torches/swords/axes/alchemist's fire.

15. The Stiltman: A man, or more often dwarf, on high stilts looking for cash for balancing on one stilt and such.

16. The Frozen Man: A man who stands on a box all day like a statue, variously dressed as a beggar, a knight, a wizard, or painted grey like a statue.

17. Elixirs and Cure-alls: Guaranteed to fix gout, palsy and itch, restore hair, bring youth and vigour, and remove warts.

18. The Tightrope Walker: Above your heads balances the man of skill, the acrobat who can do handstands, pretend falls and all manner of japes on the high-wire whilst his accomplice holds out his hat for a reward (and occasionally cuts your purse in the bargain).

19. Kobold Head Shy: Rather like the coconut shy above, this consists of a series of desiccated kobold heads on poles waiting to be knocked off by the lucky punter. The punter gets 3 balls for a silver pilaster, and if they can hit one of the heads at 22 feet away (the heads are AC 18, but the missiles are weighted heavier to one side, resulting in contestants having disadvantage –4 to hit) they win a prize—usually some food. Sadly, at least every other head is so secured to the pole that only a critical hit will knock it down). Variations upon this theme include heads that, by artful use of clockwork or *magic mouth* permanently placed upon them, shout short, but highly abusive, insults at the thrower.

20. The Dancing Goblin: A chained goblin dances on a small rotating timber platform (to make him dance, cruel owners often put nails all over the platform). The customer buys rotten eggs or tomatoes, and the intention is simply to humiliate the poor goblin by pelting him with the foul stuff.

Tam Trotter's Flea Circus

Tam Trotter was a famous East Ending flea circus owner who lived in Castorhage in the late sixteenth century. His shows were spectacular by all accounts, and he made his fortune by them. Unfortunately, Tam became an infamous drunk with his wealth and one day accidentally set fire to his circus, destroying most of it. Rumour states that after the fire Tam vanished, the only thing left in his home was a skeleton wearing his clothes. Storytellers often conclude the tale by surmising that his performers were responsible for picking his flesh clean, or that **The Pagan Lord of Lice** visited the owner and paid him back for his recklessness.

Festival Magic Items

Certain specialised magic items find ready application in Festival. These can be found in many of the locations where high-end items are for sale.

INSCRUTABLE BALM
Potion, common
When you apply this balm, you gain the effects of an *alter self* spell (change appearance only), and in addition it makes you undetectable to the sense of smell. Ongoing concentration is not required to maintain the balm's effect. Price: 200gp.

FACE OF JOY, SOUL OF MISERY
Wondrous item (mask), cursed
This cursed item is indistinguishable from a normal fayre mask, perhaps one worn to a ball, or like many in the city district one with an animal face, and it is not until it is worn that its nefarious properties appear. Once put on, the wearer of the mask is subject to bouts of sudden, debilitating laughter. The outbreaks occur whenever the wearer is injured by a to-hit roll of a natural 20, at which point they must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or become incapacitated with laughter for 3 rounds1 minute. Once the mask is worn, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

MASK OF PERPETUAL HAPPINESS
Wondrous item (mask), rare
This mask appears as a standard fayre mask with a slight (somewhat sinister) curl to the mouth, as though it were smiling a secret smile. The wearer gains advantage on any saving throw against being frightened, and can add their proficiency bonusgains a +1 bonus to all Charisma (Persuasion) checks. Price: 5,000 gp.

RAT SCOURGE
Weapon (whip), rare
This is vile looking scourge made of cured leather like a cat-o-nine-tails, except each tail ends in a mummified rat with a nail through its jaw. The *rat scourge* functions as a +2 whipprovides a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. Once per day, the nine **rats** of the scourge become alive and detach from the scourge to attack upon command. The rats return to the scourge after 3 rounds1 minute or if slain, they disappear and reappear once again attached. While the rats are alive, the scourge cannot be used as a weapon. Price: 3,000 gp.

Festival Random Encounters

Daytime	Nighttime	Result
01	01–03	Thugs*
02	04–05	Gentlemen*
03–12	06–08	Beggar*
13	09–10	Member of Magus Illusorory (**F33**)
14–18	11	Advertiser of the Great Circus (**F14**)
19–21	12	Rashlin Grynn (**F25**) and 2d4 + 1 city watch (**guard**)
22–23	13–21	Members of the Festival Watch (**F5**)
24–25	22	Naff the Teller (**F19**)
—	23	Sabb Slaughter (**F15**)
—	24	Gathan (**F17**)
—	25	Mistress Explania (**F34**)
26	26	Quentin Hubbward (**F21**) usually riding an elephant
27	27–31	Drunk*
28–29	32–33	2d4 nuns (**F31**)
30–33	34–35	Corner-doxy*
—	36	Oleb Caroo (**F23**)
—	37	Sneer Granith (**F24**)
34	38–42	1d4 + 1 Frynn Family members (**wererats**)
35–39	43	Family*
40–41	44–50	Streetfood seller
42	51	Todas Scathel (**F8**)
43–50	52	Goodwives*
51	53	Marren Grast and 1d6 Family guards (**wererat veterans**) (F9)
52–55	54–58	Street Play*
56–62	59–60	Trader*
63	61	Etha Scathel (**F7**)
—	62	Callwell Calver (**F30**)
64–65	63–64	Family members (2–5 **wererats**)
66	65	Duncan Scathel (**F7**)
67–69	66	Scathel Family Members (2–5 **wererats**)

Daytime	Nighttime	Result
70	67	Dame Mistress Maril (**F20**)
71–72	68–71	River gypsies (**F3**)
—	72	The Cringing Hermit (**F29**)
73	73	Shamus Frynn (**F11**) and 2d6 admirers
74–78	74–80	Thugs*
—	81	Mr Syyn (**F28**)
—	82	Madam Yearrn (**F28**)
79–82	83–88	Scammer*
83–97	89–90	Festival Attraction (see above)
98	91–93	1d4 + 1 Grast Family members
99	94	Copwell Linkinstrap (**F32**)
00	95–96	2d6 **giant rats** or 1d3 **rat swarm(s)**
—	97	The Fisherman (**F10**)
—	98	Hubney Grawn (**F26**)
—	99	Sister Crimson (**F28**)
—	00	**Spirit Naga**

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–55	Human (Castorhager)
56–65	Human (other)
66–86	Halfling
87–93	Gnome
94–98	Half-Elf
99–00	Other

Where named characters are encountered, they are encountered alone or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Advertiser of the Great Circus: This fellow (**commoner**) is either wearing a sandwich board, calling out using a megaphone, or is a member of the troupe and is breathing fire, juggling or riding an exotic mount.

Beggars: These miserable folk (**commoners**) are either pathetic helpless or aggressively harassing in their attempts to procure a handful of tanners. Occasionally children work in groups of 1d4+1, and in general such groups are thieves who attempt to cut purses and otherwise steal from those they encounter. In such cases, the street urchin is a commoner that can make an attempt to steal belt pouches with a +4advantage opposed against a character's passive Perception.

Corner-Doxy: A common sight, corner-doxies (**commoners**) come in all genders, shapes and sizes, usually in groups of 1d6. Groups of 3 or more will be accompanied by a **thug**.

Drunk: A drunk (**commoner**) who is worse for wear. He may become violent (30% chance to be hostile).

Family: These folk are 2d6 in number (**commoners**) and are wandering about enjoying themselves (35%) or bickering (65%).

Gentlemen: 1d3 Genteel citizens (**noble**), they may be worse for wear and/or in the company of 2d3 prostitutes (**commoners**).

Goodwives: Numbering 1d3 these women (**commoner**) go about their honest daily business, shopping, washing clothes or otherwise engaged. They generally each have 1d4 children in tow.

Members of the Festival Watch: These constables (NE male halfling **guards)** travel in groups of 4 with a Sergeant of the Festival Watch (LE male halfling **wererat**). Occasionally Commander Grast (**F5**) also accompanies them.

Scammers: These con artists (**commoner**) operate alone, using a variety of Festival scams some of which are detailed above.

Street Food Sellers: These street vendors (**commoner**) sell pies, fish and fry and other consumables.

Street Play: A street play uses local features such as market places, raised pavements etc. to stage a performance by 1d6+5 actors (**commoner**) of some skit or play — often bawdy comedy.

Thugs: These 1d6+1 robbers (**thugs**) may follow targets to alleys and attack by day and are likely to attack openly by night.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) usually has a market stall, although some operate from hand trays. They sell a variety of basic goods, from coal to flowers to fish to candles.

The Rat Queen

The Rat Queen is monstrous, a sack of flesh and vein and mangy fur almost bursting under its own weight. The Queen staggers about using a hefty walking staff with a black-headed scythe at its end, her legs long since incapable of doing anything more than holding her colossal bulk upright. She wears a mockery of royal garments, a fur here, a gold necklace there, but, great in value as they may be, they look like gaudy trinkets on the monster. Hanging off her tail are the emaciated form of eight female rats — their bodies wasted into undeath, their eyes swollen in bald sockets. These sad things stagger about in meek compliance, and whenever the queen rages, they quiver and cower.

The Rat Queen

Large humanoid, NE
Armor Class 20
Hit Points 300 (24d10 + 168)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages common, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Fear Aura. Any hostile creature starting its turn within 20 feet of the rat queen must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened at the start of its next turn. If the saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to fear of the rat queen forever.

Keen Smell. The rat queen has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. The rat queen has advantage on all saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Rebirth. If the rat queen is slain, she re-forms in planes of existence beyond the material, and she reappears in the city after one week.

Sisters. The Rat Queen is physically attached to her sisters, each of whom is a **wererat**. The sisters are totally controlled by the Queen but as they are attached to their kin they can only move within 20 feet of her. If their tails are severed, the sisters are destroyed.

Summon Pack. When the rat queen calls up the Pack, it will coalesce from nearby rats within 1d4+1 rounds.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed at a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is

also unconscious during this period of time.

Paralyzing Horror. As a bonus action each round, the rat queen can focus upon a humanoid creature within 90 feet and cause paralysing fear in that individual. The effect is identical to a hold person spell, with a duration of 1d3 rounds. The rat queen does not need to concentrate to maintain the effect.

The Pack

The Pack follows the orders of the Rat Queen, and is only formed when she calls it. It is composed of numerous rat swarms that combine into one, a hideous and disturbing sight. This swarm behaves as though it were a single swarm, and often goes in pursuit of an individual target as directed by the Queen. Once it has carried out its mission, the swarm often dissipates into 2d6 ordinary rat swarms, falling into a huge carpet of rats that then goes back to the undercity.

In addition to the central mass of the pack, which is an area 10 ft. in radius, it is always accompanied by two normal rat swarms that are considered an unconnected part of the pack. These two normal rat swarms do not grant experience; they are considered a part of the overall monster, allowing parts of it to move and attack separately from the main body of rats.

The Pack

Gargantuan swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 100 (10d20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Pack may attack any and all creatures in its 10 ft. radius.

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 9 (3d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.[TOBH] See ***The Tome of Blighted Horrors*** by **Frog God Games**

[BG] See ***LL8: Bard's Gate*** by **Frog God Games**



Chapter Five: The Capitol



If the city is a kingdom, then this is the gnarled crown; a looming mass of weathered granite smothered by regal, aged buildings. Spires and gables and gargoyles rise from the mundane city below and soar to majestic heights, shepherded by angels. On some days, the upper Capitol is hidden in clouds, as though heavenly — or secretive perhaps.

The eye never rests; each glimpse brings some fresh revelation, some new majesty — an impossibly beautiful and graceful stained glass window here, a towering crooked spire of beaten copper there. Surely, this is one of the wonders of the known world, a city within a single building, a mound of humanity and grandeur.

Yet the glory is a mask; even if the stories about the debauchery, the vice, and the betrayal weren't so well known, the building itself would give its dark heart away. In the Blight, there can be no secrets that last forever, and the Capitol is betraying its own make-up with its decay and its slow deterioration. As the grime eats at the stone, the scaffolding grips feebly at the dying facade. Like a mask being taken from a disfigured face, so the Capitol shows her true colours with her slow decline, crushed under the weight of her own decadent splendour and hubris.

Yet, even below the decay, something dark and imposing and terrible threatens to cast off the shadows and be reborn. Who knows what form that may take — if indeed it ever transpires?

Introduction

Deceit. Betrayal. Magic. Lust.

Welcome to the Capitol, the seat of power, the web at the soul of the city — if it has a soul — the day-to-day intrigue and lies and wants that make up a city. She seems calm from afar, her iron armour strong and unbroken. Yet glimpse below the tassels, pull back the plates and a rotting core is quickly seen; turmoil within the iron, sickness within the whole, a rotten heart struggling to beat.

The City-State of Castorhage is governed by nobility; but a nobility so inbred that in truth most can claim lineage to one another in some way or other. The secretive genealogists work to prove a noble line — or even a royal one — and so many claims and counter claims seethe below the present rulers that no fewer than four families can claim the title of ruler. This claim and counter-claim is, of course, done in the most civilised way (at least superficially); by means of subtle shifts in power, slow poisonings (of mind as well as body) and intrigue. A sub-class of families — all of whom also have (albeit lesser) claims to the throne — jostle below, helping, switching alliances and manoeuvring for more power of their own. So profligate are these clans and families and brotherhoods that they need discussion of their own, and are handled in **Part 2** of this district.

And these, my friends, are merely the ones that are on top now. Below, there are others seeking power — power through might, power through magic, power through alliances — they say the "Capitol never sleeps;" however, "dares not sleep" would be closer to the truth.

How the City-State of Castorhage Works

Castorhage is a monarchy, with the eldest child taking over the kingdom after the death of the prior monarch, unless the ruling monarch decrees otherwise; something that has happened recently in the Blight with **Queen Alice**† announcing her youngest child **Princess Alicia**† as her heir. Unfortunately, the queen has lapsed into madness, and now craves human flesh; a need only quelled during her short, public appearances by magic and insectum†. Some say her madness came when she bore Alicia, a birthing that is never spoken of. A few whisper that Alice lost her wits at that very moment and that the unnaturally aware Alicia and Alice are one and the same somehow. It is a silly story whispered by prattling handmaids and midwives in the Capitol and given no heed by those with wit. Her eight daughters thus squabble, plot and contrive to ensure that when their mother dies, they will gain power — by hook or crook. Each daughter has her own alliances and friends and is paranoid about her own safety. They are united in one thing; their horror about what the city would be like with the spoiled and frightful Alicia as its ruler.

The **Illuminati** — who, in truth, run the city — are aware of this instability, and take careful steps to ensure that true power rests elsewhere, thus ensuring that however unreasonable or insane any past or future monarch is, the city — and their hope of creating an empire — grows. Ostensibly, the Illuminati control the **Three Crown Justices** that run the "mundane" aspects of the city; its trade, its armies, its colonies, leaving the Royal Family to drink and copulate in their own tight inbred circles.

True power rests with a single secret sponsor, who runs the city as she thinks it should be. The real power ultimately rests with the rarely seen fallen angel and former Queen of Hell, **Demoriel†, the Twice-Exiled Seductress**, who sits like a spider at the funnel of a vast web of intrigue. It is she who guides the city, its plots, ways and means, with a view to creating a mortal empire. Demoriel is a cunning and patient ruler, and does not seek a covert Infernal empire, but rather one that is poisoned within. Outwardly, the godly state of Castorhage has its holy temples, its paladins, and its religious orders, but just below the surface lurks a dark soul. Demoriel controls little, but steers like a ship's captain, setting Castorhage upon its path to glory and infamy.

Castorhage's links to Between have made the city a tempting morsel for the arch-devil, and she passes her subtle instructions through powerful intermediaries, particularly the Illuminati, the **Fetch** and the **Great Coven**, within each of which she has an aspect. In the Illuminati, she controls the loyalty of two Crown Justices. She is an aspect in the nightmares of His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken** and guides his path through visions she sows into his dreams, and she plays the vision of a goddess to Her Resplendent **Grand Justice Ashleia**†. She gently guides the sphinx, who wears human skins. She is secretly one of **Beltane's** concubines and often masks herself as **Elaine of Aldwark**† to whisper secrets into the ears of the Royal Princesses.

The arch-devil has been so subtle that despite her centuries of interference, no one has deduced her existence and survived. A few outstanding geniuses and paranoid madwomen have uncovered **Demoriel** and tried to destroy her, but they have all failed and continue to suffer the consequences to this day…

Beneath the power, a series of families vie for the scraps; these tight clans are so paranoid about befouling their blood that they have inbred to a dangerous point, and to cover this inbreeding have taken on new exotic names to reflect their almost entirely invented history. Beneath these families are individuals who have risen or are rising through the ranks, often carefully chosen by the Illuminati to keep the status quo. Beneath even this, although allegedly on level footing with the Royals, is the Church of Mother Grace, represented by His Holiness Umbertine IX, Father of Castorhage who is chosen for life by a secret council, within which fester the groping fingers of the Illuminati.

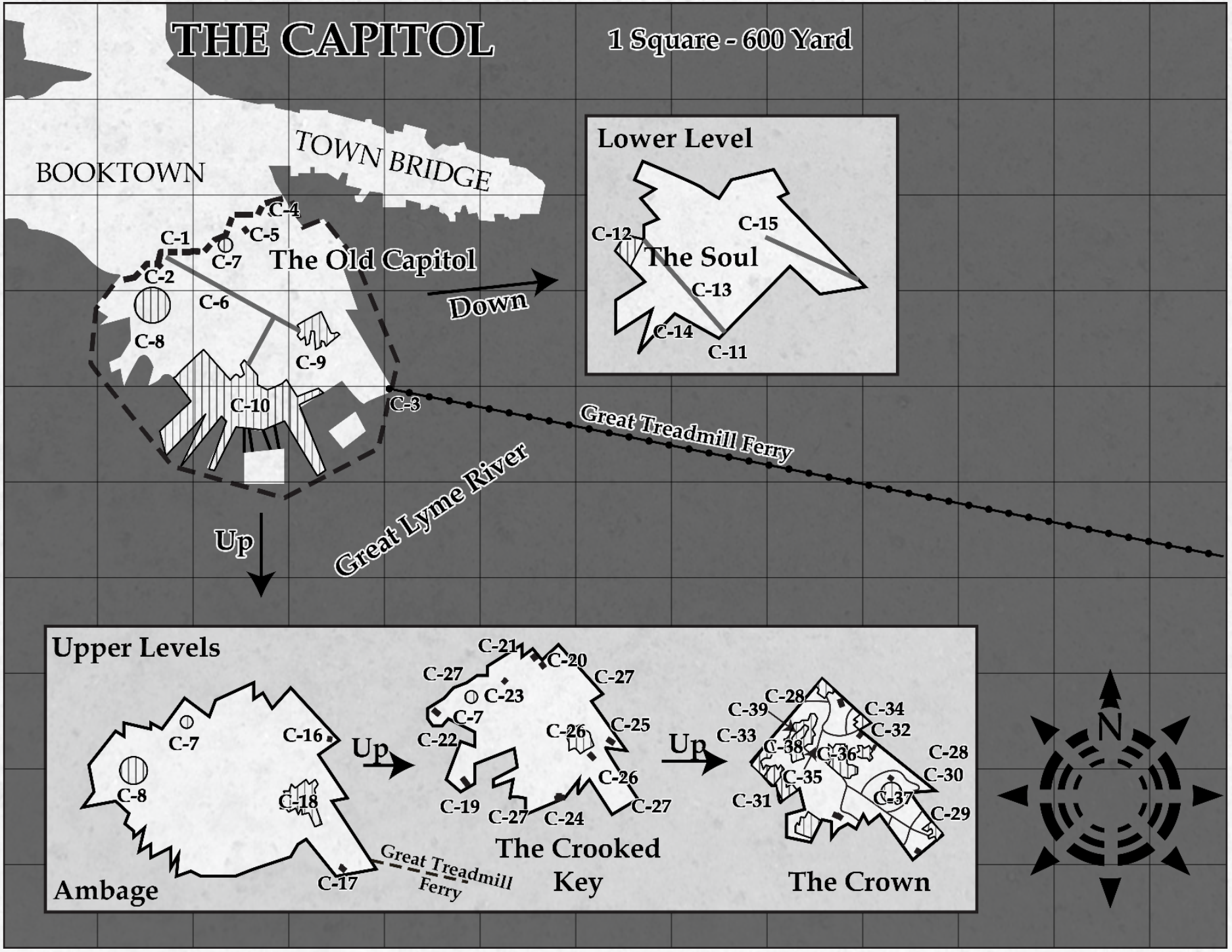
Somewhere far, far below, are the few decent or greedy folk who wish things to be a little better; these are divided into two broad camps — the rebels or revolutionaries — who wish to topple the government and replace it, and the Anarchists, who just want to topple it. Even within these disparate groups, the Illuminati gropes, and members of the Thieves Guild (the Guild as it is generally called) pay homage to their masters.

People

The Capitol is far more about flesh and blood than mere granite and fancy buildings. The plots of the people are more intricate than any spire, more awesome than any great tower. They make the vastest spider web seem simple. To reflect the more powerful people, their motives and alliances, enemies and fears, this district has a separate section on them. This is detailed in **Part 2: People**.

Rules of Civility (Paranoia)

Guards roam the Capitol; these protectors are not merely thugs, they are usually a group of 5 Guardsmen of the Capitol Watch (LN male human **guard**) led by a Sergeant of the Capitol Watch (LN male human **veteran**). The sergeant has an excellent knowledge of the nobility and is trained in diplomatic skills, just in case he accidentally approaches the wrong


THE CAPITOL
1 Square - 600 Yard
BOOKTOWN
TOWN BRIDGE
The Old Capitol
C-1
C-2
C-3
C-4
C-5
C-6
C-7
C-8
C-9
C-10
Down
Lower Level
The Soul
C-11
C-12
C-13
C-14
C-15
Great Treadmill Ferry
Great Lyme River
Up
Upper Levels
Ambage
C-16
C-17
C-18
Great Treadmill Ferry
The Crooked Key
C-19
C-20
C-21
C-22
C-23
C-24
C-25
C-26
C-27
The Crown
C-28
C-29
C-30
C-31
C-32
C-33
C-34
C-35
C-36
C-37
C-38
C-39
N

person. However, the very nature of the Capitol can work against its security. Guards are used to being told what to do, and a sufficiently bold use of Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) can often cause the more common guards to be on their way. In general, a sergeant's Insight has advantage for this purpose.

Residents must have papers (although in theory many don't; they are simply too important to need them. Papers come in two sorts; by *decree* or by *absolute right*. *Decree* papers allow for people to come and go at will in the Capitol, by levels rising all the way up to a 5th Decree for those who have access to the Crown. These papers show the person's name and trade, as well as a brief description. Forged Decrees may be purchased by Guild members or those with excellent contacts for 1,000 gp, if you can find a seller without being arrested.

An *Absolute* paper is reserved for certain important families. Those with absolute papers can also expect to be obeyed by virtually anyone in the city. This obedience is, in theory, absolute, but only for those of slightly lesser class and in line with etiquette. For example, someone with absolute papers for Level 3 (the Ambage) could readily demand an escort of guards, or expect to take goods and settle later. Getting such guards to throw themselves off the roof might be trickier.

Several standards of etiquette exist across the Capitol. Those who do not adhere to these rules stick out like sore thumbs (or astonishingly arrogant Royal Family members), and each contravention is considered on its merits.

- Weapons should be sheathed, and any scabbards fastened with visible ties. These secure fastenings require the use of half of the character's move action to remove. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check enables a character to have what visibly appears to be such a tie, but which can be removed quickly.
- The use of *charm person*, *dominate person* and other coercive magic is morally disgusting — unless the victim is willing of course — and punishable by hanging. Those who cast spells quickly become the centre of attention.
- Breeding and status are reflected by understanding of etiquette. Encounters require the use of Charisma (Persuasion) skill; whether the person has rank in it or not. Those who make checks of 10 or less cannot be noble by birth.
- Only those of rank wearing suitable attire have access to the Ambage and above. The wearing of armour for non-military men is contrary to the basic rules of etiquette — usually.

Entertainments, Indulgence and Life in the Capitol

If there is one constant about the Capitol, it is her ever-shifting pleasures. Cocooned in their false world away from toil and sweat, the Capitolers — and their guests — quickly bore and tire of repetition. Fads come and go like the changing seasons, and one week's darling of the crowds is next week's traitor being hung, drawn and quartered. In line with various Royal decrees; however, the Capitol is a place of joy — that joy has a very broad definition, and perhaps reaches its most dark public place in the Great Circus. A swarm of private theatres, museums, exhibitions, art galleries and distractions come and go and teem about the place.

Bards, performers and entertainers know a single chance meeting with a passing Royal Princess can change their entire lives, and obscene amounts of money change hands for access to the higher courts. A whole sub-class of the Guild — known charmingly as the Fixers — lurks within the Capitol purely to exploit those desperate to enter and stay.

The entertainers wander the streets constantly plying their trade. At any given time, an elephant painted green might walk by with a group of dwarf tumblers upon its back. A man dressed as a dragon breathes real fire, or a magician creates eels that fly through the air and explode in clouds of blue glitter. Such are the sights and sounds of the Capitol.

The Great Lie: The Failure of Divination

Hiding intentions in Capitol is easy (also in the Hollow Hills): whether it is by twist of fate or deliberate arcane meddling long ago, detection spells cannot be relied upon. The quality of the stone prevents even the mightiest of detections from being truly trusted; false readings are made, and even the holiest men can detect as being wholly evil.

Some (generally those who vanish shortly thereafter) say this is not a result of arcane interference at all, and that the detections are very much true. Nevertheless, divination magic is unpredictable here. Casters attempting to cast any divination spell here must make a successful Intelligence (Arcana) check (base DC 18 +1/ level of the spell) or the spell fails. Sometimes false information is given when the spell fails, and it is this lack of clarity that has given the two places a boon of vast usefulness.

Absent Friends

When one is so wealthy, one only rarely ventures out to the trader; they come to you. Shops and other premises are uncommon in the Capitol, more often than not a trader or merchant is invited into the home to assess and provide for the family needs. This is not to say shops don't exist; they do, but are unusual — traders in rare foods, wine merchants and other spices are readily available, but the traders are merchants who rarely get visitors. Such visitors are treated like Royalty since — in fact — they probably are…

Part One: Places…

What the Capitol looks like…

Imposing. Brooding. Impossible. The Capitol is like a grotesque mongrel, a vast granite cuckoo of shambolic styles and tastes and outrageous indulgence that sits bloated at the turn in Sister Lyme. Within — a place few reach — she is old, so very old and weathered. She wears her years like a veneer on her oak panels and grimed skylights and endless narrow corridors. Hers is a strange mask; a place of opulence and learning and magnificence tainted with poor taste and self-indulgence. She has many faces, but all are growing weary and old, some call her the Grand Old Lady, others whisper that she is nothing but a hag.

What the Capitol smells like…

Old. The stench of perfume and sweetness does nothing to mask the smell of confinement, mildew grown unchecked and undiscovered for centuries, the thousands of tombs interred beneath her floors, and the stench of the city beyond her grimed windows. There are simply too many people here, too much history, and the smoke from countless chimneys blocked by nests and webs and — occasionally — bodies. All this lends the Capitol a smouldering feel, like burnt wood or a fire about to engulf the entire place.

What the Capitol feels like…

Crushing. They'll tell you every inch is mapped and recorded and catalogued. They lie, this place has so many facets of Between rippling under her skin that a new psychosis has been named after her; *Capitol Madness*; the lurking fear that when one turns a corner, it is not the Capitol that meets you, but Between, with welcome arms. Her countless corridors are oppressive, even her airy spaces, grimed under skylights and glass are choking.

What the Capitol sounds like…

Like the susurrus sound of endless toil, like a hive of people trying not to be noticed, of movement, endless movement…

Seven words to describe the Capitol…

MAJESTY GRANITE
POWER *Looming* **Spires** *age*
...Foreboding…

Parishes and Wards

The Capitol is divided and subdivided and quartered into a dizzy array of streets and ways, parishes, wards and souks. Everywhere has a name and a history, but there are simply too many to record. The old girl is named for her clambering streets by level; the **Old Capitol** first, the darkest part of the city and the one which lies behind thick fortified walls at ground level.

Below her skirts is a place they call the **Soul**; or the **Carcass** if you prefer to be more vulgar in your terminology. The Soul houses the servants, the hidden faces of the Capitol, its workings, the fleshgines† that draw water from deep wells and the treadmills that pump air into her farthest recesses. In 1587, the famous explorer **Herbrell Croth (**LN male human **warden**†; died 1645) said his life would have been more demanding and his explorations more perilous if he had simply stayed at home and tried to step every part of the Soul.

Above the Old Capitol rests the **Ambage**; the most populous and confusing part of the Capitol. Partly writhing through the granite body of the district, partly onto iron terraces and walkways, this is where the business of the Capitol is done, and the homes of the less important are found. The Great Treadmill Ferry finds its docking point here. And it is also the home of many forts and castles within the walls, designed to give the defenders maximum access to those below to reap carnage.

Rising tentatively above this place, the buildings become grander, the towers higher and the opulence grander as the **Crooked Key** is reached. This is where the most important families dwell, where the finest, wealthiest merchants reside, and where the Royal Banks are housed.

Finally, the Capitol reaches the **Crown**, where the seat of learning and power rests and Royalty live in the grandest old buildings. Here the Crown Justices and their ilk are housed in iron and stone palaces with hanging gardens and terraces that vanish into the depths far below. From these lofty vantage points, it is possible to imagine the city below as little more than a hive, an anthill waiting to be stirred and broken.

Between these places are hundreds of wards, quarters, hollows, heights, ways and places.

The Old Capitol

Scores of yards thick, the walls of the Old Capitol have never been breached. Windowless, without fault or let, save for the few gates detailed below, the ground floor of the Capitol slumps defiantly, a vast old dragon never assailed.

Within, it is dark; like an overcast evening. The streets are lit at all times by guttering pyrebeetle lanterns, tended by an army of lamplighters, and link-boys lurk at all corners. But the endless twilight remains within, constantly awaiting a chance to bloom that never comes. This creates an odd, murky atmosphere, and a curiously stale smell of coal and burnt insects and sweat. The air is unhealthy, and those that live in this area are racked with coughs, spitting up great lungfuls of dark oily phlegm that, eventually, takes them.

Streets are signed, routes are lit, guardsmen wander with impunity and are more likely to question here, where traders come and go more frequently. This level houses scores of **Capitol Barristers** and the hundreds of legalists who clerk for them and run errands between here and the BookTown Court of Justice (**B2**). The lower courts of the Capitol that hear matters for the Crown outside the purview of the Court of Justice are likewise located here. And, consequently, there is an entire dormitory and reference library dedicated solely to the use of the **Barristers of the Commons,** who try these cases before the unforgiving, royally appointed **Under-Justices** (though with nowhere near the accommodations or resources made available to the Capitol Barristers).

The streets vary widely in aspect. Some streets are tiny, cramped, spaces barely big enough for a gnome to walk through — deliberately so in the gnomish parts of the Capitol here, notably all those routes that lead to GnomeTown. Some streets lurk and coil and loop upwards, stretching into darkness, losing themselves in dark recesses and attics.

C1. The Great Door

Glowering on the Great Booktown Court of Justice and the Castorhage Museum in adjacent Booktown, this vast gateway scowls with angry gargoyle faces — thousands of them. A vast iron door stands defiantly staring down the broad street, while a tiny hatch within allows access.

The Great Door is perpetually manned by the Royal Army, under the watchful eye of the Commander of the Great Door Watch, Great Door Lord High Watchman Arran Sessile (LN male human **knight of renown**†). Sessile is a decent man much admired by his men, who cram into the overlooking and watchful Great Door Castle that grows about the entrance. A score of lethal traps and dead-ends lie within, as well as the standing garrison of 500 men.

The Door Watch (also under Watchman Sessile's command) are hand-picked men and women who have risen through diligence and loyalty to the Crown. They take no chances, as they can be tried for treason if they let traitors in through negligence. The Door Watch are a much smaller part of the overall garrison here, and are two score in number. Each is noted for their Perception skills (all at least +10) and no-nonsense approach to checking and refusing access.

The Great Door always has a huge queue outside, sometimes stretching all the way down to the Great Library (**B9**) almost 300 yards north. Waits of half a day are common, and many turn up well before dawn or sleep in line to make sure they get seen in a reasonable time. The gate gives access for those who regularly come into the city. Those with a single mission to last only a few hours or days are sent, by laughing soldiers, to the Trader's Gate (**C4**) and told to give the soldier's regards to Lord Mange.

C2. The Queen's Door

One could pass the Queen's Door without giving it a second glance, it is a secret doorway built into the walls 35 feet above the street below and hidden with incredible cunning (DC 25 Wisdom [Perception] to spot). When used — which is rarely — a **broken**† **hill giant** is used to lower a complex and beautiful collapsible oak staircase to the street below. Prior to such an event; however, the street beyond is cleared by members of the Queen's Watch, who would not hesitate to use lethal force on anyone who does not obey an instant command.

Beyond the Queen's Door, a remarkably well-stocked citadel houses a dozen members of the Knights of the Capitol (**Captain**) and two dozen Capitol Guardsmen (**veterans**), who keep goods here in case of the need for sudden physical escape, or if their presence is requested (as often happens) by the princesses.

A tired, somewhat jaded retainer, **His Grace Duke Urias Trage** (LN male human **noble**) is master of the gate, and it is his job to make sure it is well-supplied and secret. Trage is terrified of his most frequent customer, the fearful Princess Lenora.

C3. Traitor's Gate

"It's the last thing you'll see, my lad. After that, they'll only be things you feel and they'll all be bad."

—The "clean version" of the *Ballad of Traitor's Gate*

An unremarkable iron gateway at the foot of a high wall, reached only by a short, dirty pier.

This access gate is used for celebrity villains (the Royal Bilge Gate at **C11**) and most political prisoners. The Traitor's Gate is only remarkable in how unremarkable it is; yet, it commands an extensive view across the river and is very visible for those on the water.

Thousands have gone into Traitor's Gate, but no one save the guardsmen ever come out again. It leads into the dreaded jails and execution halls of the Capitol, the worst of which is the dreadful Purgatory (**C15**). Some — the most noteworthy of killers and villains — enter with broad smiles, waving to the crowd; their last public act.

The Traitor's gate has a small and deadly fortification beyond, a series of four chambers each laden with deadly traps to ensure that once in, there is no escape.

C4. Trader's Gate

A large but unremarkable gateway overlooked by a finely painted, if faded, figure of Mother Grace.

The Trader's gate is used by those who have irregular work within the Capitol and the papers to prove it. It is also extensively used by the military and is often referred to as the Soldier's Gate. The officer in charge of the gate is the drunk and frighteningly aggressive **Lord Hubarrd Mange** (NE male human **veteran**) who has a reputation for beating up people he decides he doesn't want to let enter. Many people who use the gate regularly and those making successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) (to gather information) checks locally know that early mornings (before 7 a.m.) are the best times, when Mange is sleeping off his gin and cider hangover. It is simply bad luck (a 1 in 6 chance) at any other time that he is met, his attitude always begins as hostile and if the wrong thing is said to him he flies off the handle. Unbribable, unbiddable, and unpleasant, Mange is fat, repulsive and smells of gin and the sewer.

Those who regularly come to the Capitol take the Great Door (**C1**) and are happy to do so, those who have simple tasks are often sent this way and hope they can slip through swiftly. This door is only open from dawn until noon. Again, a formidable but small fortress lies beyond.

C5. Jack-of-all-Trades Gate

Ahead, a narrow gate with a dozen guild-signs is watched by guardsmen and a sergeant. High above, a wall has collapsed and a stair is exposed, along with a fixed rope and chains around the perilous pathway. No one queues at this entrance.

Rarely used even when whole, the aging staircase beyond puts visitors off, unless they have no choice. Recently a fracture, the last of many on this weak wing of the Capitol, opened and is viewed now as unrepairable. The climb is relentless, stair after stair after stair spiralling inside a tower with only the occasional stained glass window to let in light.

The route now resembles a climb as much as an access (DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check), but the use of the stair increasingly removes material. It is rarely repaired, and never repaired well when it is. If the characters want to use the stair, check first to see if the fracture has worsened (25% chance). If it has, then adjust the necessary Strength (Athletics) check accordingly. It would be reasonable that the character has to make a Strength (Athletics) check of DC 10 + 1d10, depending on how high the character has ascended, the conditions of the fracture at their location, and if there are any other circumstances that need to be factored in. If the character fails the check, they lose their footing and fall, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they descend, to a maximum of 20d6.

Capitol Watch Sergeant Hornbeam (LN male human **veteran**) and his 5 guardsmen (N male and female human **guards**) stand watch at the gate during opening hours, which are from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Few use the entrance, but Hornbeam is smart enough to know that those who wish to enter the Capitol quickly might risk this way. Nevertheless, Hornbeam is quite a jocular man.

C6. The Great Way and Hall

A steady breeze glides along this panelled and stone corridor which vanishes into the gloom ahead.

The main artery of the Old Capitol, the Great Way, is a straight path for half a mile between the Great Door (**C1**) and the Capitol Cathedral (**C9**), its way caressed by images of Mother Grace and good and bad portraits of rulers old and new. The Great Way is never less than 20 feet wide, but often much wider, it throngs with movement, nervy guardsmen and the iron carriages and palanquins of nobility.

Roughly four-fifths of the way from the door, the route enters an enormous hall smothered in countless paintings; mostly of nobility, but there are some astonishing paintings of Heaven by **Maximel D'Regiolette** (**AQ13**). The paintings have a profound effect upon some, and silent, awed faces are seen staring here from time to time, until impatient guardsmen move them on

A subsidiary road, the Great Gnome Road, leads from the Great Hall to GnomeTown (**C10**. This way is interspersed with portraits of the Shortstone clan.

C7. The Palace of Rain

A great cylinder opens in the dark here, a space overlooked by glass and water and falling into a great circular pool at its centre, a pool crossed by a single iron bridge, ochre with rust. Great arched aisles overlook this place from ever higher watch points until they reach the open circular space hundreds of feet above. Gargoyles with grinning open mouths smile down, their mouths crammed with lead gutters and spouts.

The Palace of Rain serves two purposes. The first is an entirely aesthetic one - when it rains, the palace is a dazzling sight to behold, as teaming waterfalls gather water from the gables high above and focus it into this narrow space, bringing and storing "fresh" water for the Capitol (in truth the patina of rust and pigeon excrement it picks up on its route through the gutters sometimes turns the water a sickly greenish hue). Secondly, it admits natural light into this section deep within the Capitol by focusing a series of mirrors from skylights in the Capitol's roof.

A cramped, but astonishingly positioned office, lies at the summit the palace, reached by a precarious spiral stairway and awesome in its viewpoint. This office is home to one of the most important people in the city, "Its Resplendent **Justice the Eyes of Fate**, Master of Gables." The Master of Gables keeps the roof up, and ensures that any repairs are quickly made. It maintains an army of workers and Gablemaesters to keep spiders away from rooftops, The Justice is never seen, and sends its messages through

Lighting in the Heart of the Capitol

The Capitol is a dizzying mass of buildings built upon an inner core of granite; its body riddled with tunnels and canals, chambers, buildings and secrets. Alleys writhe through this confusing mass, and somehow light seems to get into windows deep inside the place. These natural shafts of light are guided by mirrors through confines and tunnels. The position of Glaziermaester in the Capitol is one that requires a great strength of will to traverse appallingly confined spaces, but it pays incredibly well.

The Punishment

One further — and particularly vile — aspect of the Capitol remains firmly outside the building; the Punishment. The Punishment are a large grotesquery of gargoyles, individuals from their own kind with a reputation for violence and cruelty and who have been encouraged to roost within the lower to upper reaches of the outer "Cliffs" of the Capitol. These Cliffs are impossible to reach through climbing alone, and are also impossible to escape from by similar means.

The Punishment are well named. At any given time between 15 and 45 "criminals" (usually along with any immediate family members) are tossed from the Capitol's upper walls into the grip of this diabolic group. The leaders of the Punishment rule with a refined and vile cruelty, and are encouraged to torment those in their power. Once a prisoner of the Punishment, even the opportunities for death become limited. The gargoyles keep their flock alive to continue their torment, always seeking to ensure that punishments are meted in full view of — and sometimes with the forced participation of — those nearest and dearest to the prisoners.

The gargoyles, led by the fiery **Anger of Rain** (CE **four-armed gargoyle**†), number between 20 and 30 at any given time including some **margoyles** and **spitting gargoyles**† among their number, and they delight in loitering at the edges of the highest Cliffs of the Capitol, where they expect to be feted and groomed by their slaves, the prisoners. Often the gargoyles amuse themselves by taking their prisoners for a flight across the worst places, and play games with them involving catch. The gargoyles love games, and have perfected them to a cruel art. Sometimes, the dreadfulness of the situation becomes too much for a prisoner and they jump. If they hit the bottom they are lucky, if the gargoyles catch them on their descent, the Punishment unleash one of their most cruel of retributions – the Fettering. Fettering victims have their hands and feet removed, after which they are immediately cauterised and then healed, any family members are then tormented or assaulted by the repulsive gargoyles, and then daily punishments continue with renewed enthusiasm.

The gargoyles love hunting-games, and these usually involve the scattering of the prisoners and then hunting them across the rooftops; sometimes they kill most of them, others they select to keep alive through healing magic, to abuse further at a later time.

intermediaries (usually imps). It is a matter of hot speculation amongst its employees why the justice is called *Its* rather than *His* or *Her*. The gargoyle is a gable-haunting murderer, high in the Thieves' Guild, able to wear the skins of its victims and walk abroad in the city by night while often seeking out the corner-doxies of Festival or the diversions of the Artist's Quarter. The Justice is also responsible for organising and maintaining one of the most appalling punishments in the city (see Sidebar).

C8. The Great Circus of Castorhage

The narrow streets and alleys draw back into a great space of granite and limestone. It is an amphitheatre perhaps a hundred yards wide and thrice as high; rising through row after row of timber seating, intimate balconies and lurching viewpoints. The centre is bare, a vast circle of sand appears to be an oasis of blandness in a dancing revelry of architecture and flags.

The Great Circus is where weekly events are held to amuse the bored aristocracy. Events vary from week to week; it might be a staged battle, a fight between lions and peasants, a rousing musical play, true circus or a display of creatures from across the known and unknown world.

Capitoler Trends

Aristocrats get bored very quickly, but like sheep, they line up behind the major families trying to gain access to the latest trends and fads; whether this be clothing, jewellery, or food. The very latest food trends have exotic and rare ingredients at their heart; often rare spices and meats combined. A few of the trendier ones, perhaps those found with the food vendors of the Great Circus, are given below. The list changes on a weekly basis, as fads come and go, but the basic theory is that the more intelligent the meat, the better the taste.

Boiled crocodile tongues
Deep fried killmoulis fingers
Fresh uncooked boneneedle flesh in brine
Fried eblis beak
Infusion of stymphalian bird in wine
Mandragora buds in aspic
Peacock eyes fried in saffron
Sliver of mite heart cooked in garlic and cinnamon

Some things, however, remain constant.

The mistress of ceremonies, her **Ladyship Hortence Bushel** (NE female human **minstrel**), the so-called Lady of Joy, watches, mocks, and belittles any victims of the acts; and there are always at least some. Public executions are part of the act and usually begin and end the proceedings, with the ones due to suffer most kept to the end. Bushel and her contacts in the aristocracy seem to be endlessly inventive in ways of despatching their poor victims, and the more painful and colourful the better. Hortence delights in the movement of one terrible death to the next, with each victim fully aware of what is to come. Hortence is assisted in her act by a trio of dwarf jesters dressed in wedding gowns, known as the "Harlequin."

There is always an animal act, a group of support artists whom the Royal Family are able to have executed if they displease them, and a grand act, the star of the show, usually some visiting act from a foreign shore.

It costs 10 gp to enter the circus. Food vendors wander the circus selling tasty morsels of the latest aristocratic tastes (see Sidebox) and a carnival air of cheering and laughing and blood lust overtakes the amphitheatre for half a day. Court wizards work the crowds with their illusions or their pyrotechnics, and of late the wizards are vying for the favour of little **Princess Alicia**†, the darling of the crowds, with her sweet smile and happy ruthlessness.

C9. Capitol Cathedral – The Hollows Level

A great doorway is flanked by a thousand soaring angels. Beyond, a vast space opens up; perhaps the very heart of the Capitol, it certainly feels as such. The space within is quiet and immense, a forest of carved timber embraces the space like a shroud, coupling with countless paintings of angels. Here, hundreds of pews surround an incredible altar, a ponderous thing the size of a ship and borne on the backs of angels. Gold and light dance everywhere, yet it is what is above that draws you; rising in intricate intimate folds, this cathedral soars to the very heavens, grasping though the dark wood forest to soaring golden angels and finally to an incredible sight; a joy of a painting that sears across every inch of the ceiling far, far above, and yet somehow reaches down, embracing everything as it draws you in, bringing you to bosom, giving you a glimpse of Heaven itself.

It is the greatest building in the city — some say the world — no one can enter the cathedral and leave it untouched. The cathedral graces every level of the Capitol, from low to high, with its catacombs below in the Soul. The cathedral is in homage to Mother Grace, and its opulence is



staggering; some might say obscene. Gold is everywhere, and paintings grace every available space. Presently the ceiling, damaged during a recent fire, is being repainted by **Maximel D'Regiolette** (**AQ13**). He is regularly seen lying on his back on a scaffold just under the great ceiling on the Heavens (see the Crown).

The church choir, made up of pupils from the infamous **Choir of Angels** (**HBH14**) sing at every religious celebration, their voices caressed by a vast church organ whose pumps are powered by a fleshgine† far below.

Some masses and events are conducted by his **His Holiness Umbertine IX, Father of Castorhage** and all events are attended by the people of the Capitol. Security is tight, and members of the **Sanctuary Watch** are always on hand to oversee it. For less notable events, his Holiness uses the services of **His Grace Ambwin Ronelle, Bishop of the Capitol** (LN male human **high priest** of Mother Grace). The ancient bishop grips onto life like a limpet, but alive he remains and so is the master of the cathedral until such time as he meets his demise. A whoremonger and kidnapper in his youth, there are still those rebels who would like to finish the bishop off properly for his crimes, old man though he now is.

Seemingly endless corridors, stairs and ladders riddle the cathedral, and a host of underbishops and clerics dwell in the buildings that hang within the cathedral itself. Rising from the catacombs through the Hollows and upwards via the Body, the Angels and the Heavens, all of which are detailed further below.

C10. GnomeTown

The streets here are more cramped, lower than the others in the Capitol. It is still clearly an area of opulence, but there is a more whimsical air here.

One of Castorhage's semi-independent burroughs that claim a distinct township on their own yet are also a part of the greater city-state, GnomeTown is a haven for gnomes, a place where they are welcomed as brothers and sisters and can feel — for a short while at least — that they are home. The more fey gnomes also have a fascination for Between, and regularly experiment here. This is a township built on mutual admiration, where the greatest gnomes come to show off and be admired by their kin. The famous local clan the Family Shortstone thrive here. The acknowledged master and Family Eldest of the admirable family, **Justice Weld Shortstone I, Master of Structures** (NG male gnome **mage**) sits as a Justice and hears court gossip and intrigue. A covert Anarchist, Weld aims to bring down the Illuminati and has spies across the city working on ways to undermine the system from within. He wishes to see Castorhage gone, and the gnomes taken on a pilgrimage away from the rotten city and back to an ancestral claim on the High Downs of Reme. A small cadre of spies work for him to move this agenda, and he has an alliance of convenience with **Princess Rebecca of Mourney**†. He is presently working on the Tower of Heaven in the Hollow and Broken Hills (**HBH8**) and is rarely here at home.

GnomeTown is cramped, and to non-gnomes, has an uncomfortably fickle atmosphere; the architecture is strange. Odd shapes dance away to great beams that they cannot possibly support, odd bridges leap across culverts via taverns, and strange faces are carved into the walls. Graffiti is commonly seen; but this is not mere wanton defamation, this is beauty and culture, huge talking walls of graffiti are found, and carvings are always modified in some way.

A quartet of banks are housed here, the **Bank Shortstone**, the **Great Old Bank and Almonry**, the **Grand Treasury** and the **Counting House**. Because of the banks, patrols of **GnomeTown Constables of the Watch** (LN male and female gnome **veterans**) are a common sight on the streets, though they tend to be more pleasant and affable than the typical Watch patrol of Castorhage. Gnomes in the city are admired for their way with money, something handed down locally for generations. The gnome cabb'e houses around the docks on the outer riverside are legendary, as are the street entertainers. A series of wharves connect the town to the river (see **C14**).

The Soul (a.k.a. The Carcass)

Like the complex workings of a great clock, the Soul is hidden behind a façade. It is where the machinery; the slaves and fleshgines† and treadmills toil sometimes without rest, where zombie horses endlessly turn water pumps and where many never see daylight. Except for the catacombs below the Castorhage Cathedral, the appearance of the Soul is unimportant, it is the skeleton of the capitol, its beating heart, its muscles. A dedicated arm of the Royal Army watches over the servants here, reminding them how lucky they are to have work and be fed each day in the safety of the greatest city in the world.

The Soul is dirty, filled with mildew and stench. Wells sink into the ground and the river's damp sometimes caresses those here. The corridors are unlit, uneven, occasionally water-filled and always varying in height and width. Some are barely wide enough for a small character to squeeze along, deliberately so they can hide secret archives.

The Soul is also known in some quarters as the Carcass, both for its figurative role as the corpse of the city off of which the spreading Blight has been feeding for centuries, and for its actual purpose as is a gigantic storage facility. Here are the unwanted cast offs, untrends and discarded objects of the aristocracy. It has miles of corridors full of such items, all of which are carefully catalogued and stored by the **Royal Archivists**, led by **Her Grace the Lady Chronicler Retwin Kindle** (LN female human **high priest** of Mother Grace). Retwin literally worships **Grand Justice Ashleia**

(**C29**) and operates a small cadre of cultists to search the city, particularly BookTown, and the Hollow Hills for secrets for their living god.

In addition to all the above, since the passage of *The Corpse* [Laying to Rest] *Act of 1770*, the Carcass has also served as a repository of stinking, rotting bodies claimed by the City for failure to pay the Death Duty, but for which it currently has no immediate use. Instead, tens of thousands of mouldering corpses lie heaped in niches, half-made catacombs, abandoned wells and oubliettes and virtually every other sort of space imaginable, while the infestation of rats, ghouls, and many spontaneously forming undead, is almost unthinkable. A modicum of order is maintained (meaning hordes of ghouls are not unleashed to feed upon the residents of the Capitol by way of an arrangement between **Clovis, Crown Prince of the Capitol**, and the most influential of the undead currently lurking about here, **Egger Kask** (NE male **ghoul**). The details of the exact agreement are unknown but are rumoured to include some sort of an "all-you-can-eat" arrangement that seems to be holding the peace for now.

C11. Royal Bilge Gate

It is the mouth of a lion; a stone edifice that glowers outwards, iron teeth bared, lying at the base of a pair of cruelly barbed towers. Where the mouth leads is anyone's guess, but the river flows gently into the maw and vanishes in the darkness beyond.

The Royal Bilge Gate is the ceremonial water entrance for the Queen and the Royal Daughters, and is frequently used, particularly during galas. The gate directly connects to the Grand Canal and Royal Dock (**C13**).

A fanatical Watch of dwarves — Bilge Gate Watch (or "Bilgers," in less polite society) — is entrusted with guarding this access due to their considerable stonecunning. The Bilgers, a small part of the Royal Army and a handful of Knights of the Capitol, are led by the ruthlessly stalwart **Hengest Tubb** (LN male dwarf **knight of renown**†). Hengest is famed for having absolutely no sense of humour whatsoever, and his followers, all pretty dour in their own rights, consider this hilarious and the only joke worth mentioning when on duty, which is practically always. Those who spend much time with the dwarves quickly tire and then grow increasingly restless of the dwarves' rigid joke. The Bilgers are infamous drinkers, and taunt anyone they see in uniform to a drinking contest; these contests have been known to go on for over a week and have put multiple participants in the Deadbook.

The gate is singularly one of the most complex traps in the whole city, the result of the work of several master trapmakers. One aspect of the trap, the infamous Maw of the Curling Dragon**,** is something many dwarves would give their right arms to see in action, so graceful and powerful and inescapable is it. The maw is also infamous amongst the Guild and a curse, "See you in the dragon's maw," is one that is occasionally spat out by Guild members in fights.

C12. The Great Stable

The space is huge, a vast chamber built of enormous stones yards across. Within, the smell of horses betrays the occupants, but the overwhelming power of the stench portrays the sheer number of them — there are thousands of horses stabled here.

Undead horses are strictly kept apart from the living horses after an infamous stampede in 1689 resulted in the deaths of over 300 live horses and a dozen stable hands. The undead are now kept firmly sealed behind walls or toiling at treadmills, so that their dead blind eyes and stench of toil does not unsettle the mortal horses.

Nearly a thousand grooms and stable-hands work in the stables, which contain an almost mind-blowing amount of silage, grain, tack and manure. Some of the most celebrated Royal equestrian lines are kept here, in Royal stables fit for such incredibly swift, powerful and intelligent mounts. The thoroughbred stallion "Capricious" is the greatest of this line of equestrian royalty, and was bought for the Queen for over 100,000 gp from an Ashurian trader. Grace's Messenger, a mighty Shire (or great horse) has recently been bred with the stallion and anxious and greedy admirers queue for a glimpse of the foal. Less famous but almost as valuable names include the hunter Kingfisher's Sprint, the Shire horse Goliath, and the incredibly flighty thoroughbred Fey's Dance. These horses are treated better than most people in the city. Horse racing is an obsession, and the Great Circus (**C3**) regularly has racing days. Competition between houses is stiff, and a whole cadre of Royal and aristocratic jockeys live within the Capitol and work with the hands here. With purses of several thousand gold shekels per race to the winner (winner of course taking all in the city-state) the sub-family of jockeys, who include members of the Family, lurks below the surface of the city.

The serious **Royal Stablemaester Donnal Tern** (N male human **hierophant**† of The Green Father) runs a very admirable stable, and is a personal friend of many of the Royals, his no-nonsense approach to stabling and breeding is something many nobles wish could be applied to the city as a whole.

Jockeys of the Capitol

Presently, the most famous jockey of Castorhage is **Hawksbeard "Hurdling" Grast** (NE male halfling **wererat**), is darling of the Family and poisoner of at least seven of his closest rivals. Grast lives in a modest tenement building in the Crooked Key, where several other jockeys also live. Competition between the jockeys is divided into various trainers, who each run their own schools. The schools — named after their owners — include the Goose, Madder, Quail, Trod and Vorris schools. The harsh and frequently gin-soaked **Lady Beatrice Quail** (LN female human **noble**) is the most successful, having won 6 Queen's Chases (an infamously dangerous course of jumps held every Queen's Birthday with a purse of 10,000 gp).

C13. The Grand Canal and Royal Dock

This is a regally decorated, brick-lined canal tunnel, its walls carved with heraldic symbols and its ceiling hung with pyrebeetle lanterns of great size. Eventually, the canal opens into a circular chamber, a domed area beyond iron walls and bars.

Running one-third of a mile from Sister Lyme to Royal Dock, the canal brings goods from outside directly into the Royal bosom. The canal is huge, but the dock, a sprawling mass of cranes and warehouse fronts and industry and treadmills can be dizzying to look at. Royals and their entourages are greedy, fickle and easily bored, they demand entertainment day and night, and hunger constantly for diversions.

The steward of the Capitol, **Mordent Knap, Lord Justice of the Mint and Steward of the Capitol** (LN male street dwarf† **master thief**†) lives in a sumptuous townhouse built into a clock tower at the top of the warehouses. He is truly one of its dazzling talents. Cartographer of the Underneath, master of the Royal Mint, dazzling artist (usually of nudes) and Steward of the Capitol, Lord Justice Knap is one of the most influential people in the city and seen as a logical next Grand Justice. Knap runs an incredibly tight ship, and is Princess Rebecca of Mourney's closest and most valuable ally. He loves his possible future queen and is enmeshed with dozens of plots and subterfuges, careful to keep his Royal friend's name out of such events. Knap is really quite a decent, noble dwarf and even though he is a diabolical swearer and harsh task master he never uses the birch, and those who die through accidents in the docks have their families well cared for. This makes many nobles very suspicious of him.

The dock has dozens of accesses into the Royal Palaces above, and a curling road called the Devil's Staircase rises tortuously from the foot of the docks to the highest spires of the Crown far, far above. A side road —

the Gallop — is a direct line between here and the Royal Stables (**C12**) and is frequently used to test potential racehorses. The record for the 1-furlong route is presently held by Moon's Chase, set in 1637 at 1-1/2 rounds (9 seconds), it is not widely believed by any of the Royal jockeys that the record can be beaten through any mundane means.

C14. The Folly Dock and Great Iron Buoy Inn

The walls rise sharply from the water, their heights topped by a web of cranes and other machines. Hugging this dock are dozens of bright-sailed vessels. At one point, the wall is breached at the level of the river by a strange door, a grinning idiotic face large enough to allow a galley to enter. This face is so scarred and pitted by the weather that it resembles a poxed face dancing with swooping mangy gulls. Hanging away from this portal on a great chain is a huge rusting iron buoy, easily the size of small building. Its sides are lacerated and gouged by many an incidental boat collision, but it continues to bob unconcerned in the embrace of the sickly river.

The Folly Dock is the entrance to GnomeTown (**C10**) and through which imports arrive for the bustling gnome township. **His Grace the Master of Folly Dock Weld Shortstone II** (LN male gnome **noble**) presently oversees the collections of tithes and taxes and organises the considerable workforce of dockers and labourers. Weld Junior (as he is usually known) has a reputation for dark days, during which it is wise to keep away from his black moods. He once sacked an entire shift for one of them having a shoelace undone.

The Folly Gate (built in 986) was an historic attempt by the gnomes to interject a little levity into the Capitol, something they have singularly failed to do. Covered as it is in swooping gulls and grime, the portal now seems tainted somehow by its surroundings and mocks those who stare upon it. The smiling face on the figure is a grimace, its laughter insulting.

The buoy houses one of the Blight's more strange and deviant pubs, the Great Iron Buoy Inn (a.k.a. Great Father Rust). Built above a shifting sandbank a hundred yards or so from the shore, the inn is reached at low tide by a treadmill ferry which creeps across the river and at other times lurks just below the surface. The ferry makes the trip out at the first tide and back at the second, an event known as the "keelhauling" by those who have suffered the teetering, grating, nausea-inducing ride. Landing at the buoy by boat (an act that requires both a successful DC 15 Dexterity and a DC 16 Intelligence check) is considered a rite of passage for ship's captains, and many vessels have ended up grounded on the banks below, sometimes sinking as a result.

A distant cousin of **"Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell** (see **TB13** in **Chapter 9**), **Alice Hague** (NG female human **master thief**†), runs the Buoy. She is a startlingly tall woman, with somewhat mannish features, but a genuine heart of gold. A member of the Guild, Alice oversees smuggling operations into GnomeTown and the Capitol with a help of a dedicated, if repulsive, gang of pirates known locally as the "Beauties."

Within, the buoy is a curious mix of clockwork, museum and sweetshop-cum-inn; its rooms are all strangely fairy-tale-like, a result of Alice's preoccupation with and authorship of several such tales. She is herself something of an expert on such fables, and is regarded by the Guild as one of its foremost experts on Between. Alice relaxes by making sweets, usually boiled sugary hard candies she calls different names depending how she dyes and sweetens them. Her fiery shrimps are a particular favourite.

C15. Purgatory

You don't so much see it, as hear it and feel it, it coming. The screams hit you first, then the pleas, then the stench, a fetid hanging odour of humanity and fear. Then finally you arrive at a functional stone wall with a single great gate, hung above the gate is a sign, it simply reads "*Purgatory*".

Keeping Time in the Lost Lands

The city of Castorhage is not the only location in the **Lost Lands** that makes use of clocks to track time, but probably nowhere else is seen a greater abundance of such timepieces. Though Castorhage keeps its own calendar, it conforms to the traditional clock of Akados and Libynos.

The length of the day in the **Lost Lands** is measured as 24 hours, and these are further divided into two 12-hour periods of Prime (counting from midnight) and Non (counting from noon). Hours are then designated by where they fall after one of those points: 1st hour prime (1:00 A.M.), 7th hour non (7:00 P.M.), etc. At sea, the hours are sometimes referred to as "bells" because of the practice of ringing the ship's bell on the hour, but the numbering convention is otherwise the same (e.g. 2nd bell non, 10th bell prime, and so on). In Castorhage, the bells of city clock towers usually ring the hour only during standard daylight hours (roughly 6th hour prime to 9th hour non) because of the cacophony of noise that is created every hour as clocks that are all slightly off from each other in time spend a good 5 minutes ringing their collective chimes around the noon hour. The exception to this is the Great Black Bell of the Work Clock in Toiltown and a few others which ring the hour 24 hours a day, but otherwise keep the clamour to a minimum.

Our familiar modern concepts of minute and second increments are not recognized in Castorhage and the Lost Lands, but are instead based on lengths of spell durations as observed and meticulously recorded by court magi in the early days of the Kingdom of Khemit. These carefully measured time periods were later applied to the practice of commerce in the form of rented time on a public millstone.

–**Hours** are divided into six 10-minute periods, each called a "turn" or "turn-of-the-glass" or just a "glass" (for turning over a 10-minute hourglass that was used to determine the usage/charging rates of a millstone).
–**Turns** are further divided into ten 1-minute periods, each called a "tenth" (both for 1/10th of a turn and for the number of times a standard* millstone turned in a 1-minute period).
–**Tenths** are divided into ten 6-second periods, each called a "round" (for the length of time it took a standard* millstone to complete one revolution).

–**Rounds** do not typically have subdivisions, since there are few applications in the everyday life of the **Lost Lands** where such time precision is necessary. Some clocks do, however, make tic marks on clock faces between rounds to divide them into sixths (i.e. a 1-second interval) in order to track more precise time units for activities such as horse racing (see above), witch ducking, etc.

Official timekeepers in the **Lost Lands** are usually known as "Counters" from their original job of counting revolutions of the millstone.

*The Hyperborean Empire created a standardized millstone size and speed of rotation on which turns and rounds were based. Millstones since then often have great variability, but the standardized time units have remained in use for clocks.

Purgatory is the worst place to be in Castorhage. The Ruling Families use Purgatory as their personal debt settler, their research tool and their questioning place. They keep it almost totally secret, almost — certainly no one has ever escaped or left here alive after incarceration — but they do allow whispers of its presence to escape. **His Grace Alexander Borxia** (LN male human **mage**) oversees questioning, and is assisted by 3 **lilin devils**. The prison, a claustrophobic iron and furnace hell, usually has only a handful of special prisoners set aside for the maximum attention from the quartet. Refinements of torture here are far more mental than physical, something the lilins and Borxia are masters at. Borxia is a particularly

unpleasant man, having been cruelly abused by his kin when a small sickly child.

The sick questionings of the quartet have birthed a horror from Between known simply as the Tall Man of Misery. A unique creature, the Tall Man is part sadist, part madness and spends part of his time wandering the city rooftops with his crooked staff, stealing into the nightmares of those with particularly vivid imaginations and dragging them into those nightmares in Between.

Ambage

Gracefully rising despite arcane engineering, **Ambage** springs from the buildings below and reaches out into the air. Here, the granite soul of the city is riddled with corridors, so many that the original construction is all but lost, the old stone a rare and unusual find in the place, an elemental reminder of what once was. There is an air of gentle sophistication in her panelled chambers and walkways, her gracefully arching bridges with their leaded skylights and windows looking outwards and downwards.

The illusion of sophistication and grace is shattered at the southwest corner of the Ambage where the hulk of the **Great Treadmill Ferry** rises upon its impossibly tall pilings that sink all the way to the substructures of the Capitol to support the monumental chain that connects from here and extends all the way across the city, over the rooftops of Toiltown, to the distant Great Docks some 4 miles away.

C16. The Great Vault

Opening into a vast space where birds race across the interior, this building is a single echoing vault of knowledge; tower upon tower of great books — some these towers the size of small boats — rise upwards into the darkness high above. The walls of this place are riddled with ladders to access the higher shelves.

The font of all history, the Great Vault is the repository of and final resting place of every ledger, bill, transaction, article of law and instrument of government in Castorhage. So vast is this place, and so huge the task, that a special order of monks — the Brothers of Truth — live and work here. Their leader, Grand Scribe of Castorhage His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken,** Crown Justice and Master of Courts is often found here searching for secrets, using the library as his own private research tool. He ferrets powerful secrets via a convoluted and dangerous secret way to his home high in the Oracle Hall (**C34**). Braken uses the monks to filter useful information to him, and their leader **Brother Erasmus Strange** (N male blighted† human **ascetic**†), in particular. Strange has an incredible (some would say obsessive) eye for detail and is almost as well connected as his master's many guises are.

The Vault is guarded always by a force of 20 Capitol Guardsmen (**veterans**) commanded by the fierce **Jaboth Gryme** (LN male human **captain**). He lets no one in without express orders from Braken, something rarely granted to anyone save the most intimate of friends and colleagues.

C17. Shibboleth Manor

A functional and proud manor house which stares defiantly out over the river below the Capitol. This is a house of leaded glass and turrets, of battlements and steeply gabled, greened copper rooftops with griffon lightning rods shaking fists at the sky above.

The duelling Shibboleths dwell here in their rather modest, breezy, and cold manor, which lies across five storeys and has several balcony walkways. The present clan leader, **Artel Shibboleth** (N male human **master thief**†) works for the Royal Army as an Intelligence officer and is often away on diplomatic missions. The Shibboleths are proud of their military heritage and do not see their lowly physical position within the Capitol as a weakness. In fact, they view it as a strength; when trouble comes from below, who will be the first to meet it head on? The Clan Shibboleth.

For more information see **Part 2** below.

The Great Treadmill Ferry

The course of the ferry chain sways above the city higher than any building save the Capitol itself and some portions of the Jumble. Built during the reign of Worrn IV, this chain ferry was envisioned as the future of transportation between the Capitol and the port of Castorhage; however, with that king's death and the prohibitive cost of propelling its impossibly heavy chain with a combination of undead beasts of burdens, criminals and fleshgines, as well as the extraordinarily long duration of the ride, it eventually fell out of use in favour of the Royal Barge upon the river.

The final straw for the Great Treadmill Ferry was in 1730 when it legendarily carried 40 elephants in one trip from the dock to the Capitol as a part of the wedding festivities. After that time, it saw less and less use until the last time anyone can recall the great chain turning once again and showering the city below in a rain of rust and grit was during the Jumble Uprising of 1753 when Duke Malice is known to have used it as a means of gathering intelligence on the rebels' movements below.

Now the vast construction of chain and pylons serves as little more than a roost for the clouds of blindingcrows† that roost above the city and continuously spatter everything below along its path with their foul excrement.

C18. Capitol Cathedral: The Body Level

Here the cathedral is little more than open, empty space; an architectural vastness to embody and recreate the vastness of heaven.

Hidden doorways and discrete viewing boxes cling to the walls of the cathedral on this level as it rises upwards into the space above. On this level is the vast pipe organ, whose greatest pipes rise almost a hundred feet into the eyries of the building. Many of the buildings and residences used by the clergy are connected to hidden doors that proliferate in this area.

The Crooked Key

The Capitol becomes giddier here, confusing in a twisting mass of corridors and stairways and residences. Here it is almost silent; the bookish tranquillity tangible, perhaps even a little alarming for those not used to it. Nestled within this maze of forced solemnity can be found the **Three Great Banks of the Empire**, since their relocation from the Artists' Quarter following an Anarchist scare in the old Banking Quarter. The three banks: **Lords Bank of Castorhage**, **The Investment Bank of Hapswell, Hapswell and Crab**, and the most-well known among the general populace, the venerable **Lyme Bank** all keep their offices here, house most their employees here, and maintain assets rumoured to exceed 75 million gold shekels between them. There are hundreds of Capitol Guardsmen (**veterans**) constantly keeping watch over, and patrolling around, what may be the most important institutions of the entire government.

Unique to this region of work and service in the Capitol are the Serf Bridges, perilously high bridges that criss-cross between buildings here. The Serf Bridges have claimed many lives over the centuries. They all share a common theme; they are built with sparse regard for the safety of those who use them. They are built simply to allow maximum efficiency for moving slaves and workers. Some — including the infamous Abyss



— have drops of over 200 feet into gloomy chambers below, while others give direct access to the wells that are found below the Capitol. These bridges have an ill name amongst the serving classes, some of whom must use the same perilous routes a dozen times or more a day.

To facilitate escape, affairs and private meetings, a curious and convoluted secret corridor (or more correctly a veritable hive of such secret ways) slithers and crawls through this level of the Capitol. Known as the Darkling Way, this silent, dusty place serves as the veins of intrigue in this level of power and influence. In theory, only the aristocracy know of the Darkling Way, but at least one member of the Guild in the Capitol **Algrimm Smyne** (CN male human **master thief**†) knows it intimately and has secretly drawn up many schematics on how best to access the vaults of the Three Great Banks. Those found in the way that are not of noble blood usually end up in Purgatory (**C15**) so that they can be questioned about how they knew about it and what they were doing there.

C19. The Fairy Cathedral

An incredible place juts from the edges of the Capitol here, hanging from the other buildings and towering above gables below. Its summit is crested with towers and spires, scores of them, each accompanied by incredible stained glass windows depicting holy scenes. A half dozen of the spires are strangled in scaffolding, and countless builders heave buckets and materials up and down the surface of this spindly cloak.

This cathedral is dedicated to the Holy Mother with an internal shrine to Lord Shingles†. The vast echoing space is dazzling with gold, silver, and frescoes. The themes are holy, but with more than a passing reference to the fey, who herein are depicted as the Mother's children.

The cathedral is a little too weighty for its own physical continuation, and the place is constantly either being repaired or added to, which gives it the continuous feeling of being a building site. The present **Bishop of the Fairy Cathedral, Perlig Wells** (LE male human **priest** of Mother Grace) keeps a small staff of monks under his care and protection, Wells is a heartless, cruel man who gets pleasure out of birching his followers. Wells continues the previous bishop's traditions of trying to literally build the cathedral to Heaven, acting upon a legendary meeting centuries ago between one of the earliest bishops and the fey, that resulted in a promise from the fey, that if the tower was high enough it would indeed enter Heaven itself.

C20. The Palace of Perfida

It is opulence, but almost aggressive opulence. A palace rises here, high above the river, her ramparts, spires, walls an orgy of copulating figures; a debauchery of marble enveloping the place. Crowning the palace is a single great tower, which rises to a gold figure of a bull crushing peasants beneath its hooves. Hanging above this is a flag depicting the same insignia.

Heraldic sign of the Family Perfida, their grotesquely and overtly wealthy palace is a testament to their twin mantras: "Working slaves to death is but realizing their full value," and "To think of those not born to rule, is to waste thoughts."

The vile **Simeon Rallul Fortance Perfida III** (CE male human **noble**) dwells in the tower, occasionally taking pot shots at workers below with his fowling arbalest or dangling servants by their heels for some trivial misdemeanour. A large ballista is trained permanently on Castle Sin (**C21**), where the traditional enemies of the family — the Clan Goitre — are housed. Mercifully, Simeon spends much of his time at his manse in Crow's Fallow, leaving his equally unpleasant children to run the place and ruin lives.

The palace truly lives up to the name; without and within it is a vulgar explosion of excess and bad taste. The family throw lavish themed parties for their royal friends, and spare no expense on coin or suffering in their outrageous orgies and balls.

For more information on this family see **Part 2** below.

C21. Castle Sin

A decadent castle looms large over the river, almost seeming to peer upon the great river in disapproval. Like many places high above the water, this is a grand fortification, clearly designed more to impress than to offer any serious defence. Many graphic and lurid frescoes adorn the outer walls and depict acts of perversion in extreme detail.

Home to the Clan Goitre, there is something almost oily about the atmosphere within the folly. The place is given over to art, which hangs from every wall, lurks in every stairwell or walks within the courtyards and menageries of the lower court. The present clan leader, the almost frighteningly handsome **Joseph Charun Goitre** (CN male human **noble**) and his long-suffering wife **Lila Goitre** (LN female human **noble**) dance in magnificent delusion in their wildly artistic home, which is crammed with as much bad taste as good. Their six fractious children share their father's lustfulness, and delight in antagonising their neighbours, the Perfidas.

The castle is a curious mixture of tastes from previous patriarchs; one might walk from a plain but large chamber like a manor house great hall into a place of white silk and chiming glass and then into a room purely crimson in all its furniture and adornments.

For more information see **Part 2** below.

C22. The Palace of Light and Joy

This palace lurks apart from the main buildings high in the Capitol, its owners are either frantically paranoid, or wish to keep something in. There are bars on every window and every wing's rooftops are laced with nails and barbs, even the walls have iron spikes facing downwards to deter climbing.

Most people simply call it the Second Great Asylum. The inbred Sullage family are artists in the extremis, but their art is that of flesh — they are creators of homunculi, golems and necrocraft. The palace is crammed with libraries, and even has its own library wing high above the river.

The Grand Seamstress herself, **Justice Lady Lucrezia Elisabeth Sullage**† rules this place. Her paper-skin is faded, unlike her wits, which are as sharp as a dagger. She has created a dynasty of art-adoration, and her home is flung open to genius, the lost, and the insane. One wing of her mansion is set aside as a prison and surgery, within which her children help her create living art through golem-stitching and homunculi-wifery. Lucrezia likes nothing better than to shock, for her art is something that should shock. Her screams of laughter echo around the palace as she introduces some sexual perversion she has made from flesh to amuse and cavort with her guests.

Lucrezia's agents lurk in the underbelly of the Blight looking for artists from other races, even other aspects of being. Gargoyle, aranea and dark stalker artists lurk in an outer wing, along with a number of imprisoned and partly dissected aberrations.

For more information see **Part 2** below.

C23. House Wether

This place lurks deep within the granite of the Capitol, it is a veritable dungeon of a building, if building is the right word for the catacombs that have been cut here. Buried and dungeon-like it may be, but it is carved and decorated on a grand scale.

Built into the granite of the original Capitol hill, the House Wether, staunch supporters of the Royal Family, may be denied the opulence of a true palace, but they are close to the Royal Family and have been rewarded for their loyalty with this maze of a manor. The home may lack the outrageous excess of other wealthier families but the Wethers have applied good common sense and taste to their home that is lacking in many others.

While her husband **Ruscharde** is the family leader, it is **Lilly Wether** (N female human **master thief**†) who truly runs the family affairs. Lilly is a brilliant spymaster and uses her talents to aid her beloved Castorhages in their ongoing troubles with the Borxias. Lilly runs a tight ship, her followers, guards and slaves are disciplined to a military degree, and while the manor may be draughty and a little damp, it is keenly protected by traps and cunningly designed to keep intruders at bay, thus affording the Wethers an excess of privacy that few major houses enjoy in their rambling palaces.

For more information see **Part 2** below.

C24. The Lord of Leeches

An iron tower grasps the outer walls of the Capitol, manhandling her neighbours and entwining them with metal members. Ivy once grew across these walls but it has recently been poisoned and now exists as a stringy brown lattice of veins along the tower walls.

Spent Sullage, Justice Lord of Physicians (a.k.a. The Lord of Leeches) is infamous as one of the most twisted and depraved, yet also gifted, of the golem-stitchers in the city. Sullage, who is keen to keep his grasping family at a constant distance, is a master golem-maker and experiments with other creatures in his dabbling of flesh as art. He has moved on from simple fleshgines and golems into darker aspects of creation. His own private menagerie contains scores of entirely new abominations, and Sullage has recently employed the services of a Between explorer in his latest obsession to try to create a creature that is part mundane flesh and blood, part stuff of Between.

It would be wrong to label Sullage as a madman, he is rational and sane, but disturbingly thorough in his work. A connoisseur of fine wines, Sullage has various agents working across the city to purloin both rare vintages and rare flesh on his behalf, and he is a beneficiary and employer of at least two dozen rogues of the highest quality. However, Sullage prefers to do his work through intermediaries, and to this end he has employed half a dozen dark stalkers. The physician has tried ingesting and imbibing scores of elixirs using various creature's blood to attain the qualities of that type and is convinced that his experiments will eventually enable him to move between bodies like a spirit.

C25. The House of Wrye

A grand wall of stained glass windows adorns this great house, which tries, but fails, to look ordinary. While the mansion is somewhat subdued and modest, it is still grand.

Master spies, the Wryes, dwell in magnificent isolation here in their windy lofty manor house, which grips the Crooked Key and glowers down at the river far below. **Anan Wrye** (N male human **master thief**†) is the token figurehead of the family, but true power rests with his uncle His Royal Highness Duke **Justice Scapegrace Wrye**†, Justice of Alleys, Streets and Ways. Scapegrace is a devil for finding things out, and has contacts across the city, including within the Fetch and the Illuminati. A personal entourage of wizards work for Scapegrace, these wizards are very well paid for their *scrying* services, and are afforded all the trappings of aristocracy within this wall of glaring windows and occult trappings.

The first of this cabal, **Lady Elnora Loach** (N female human **seer**†) works as Wrye's main spy, using her talents, and a *crystal ball* to further the Justice's plans in his desire to become a Crown Justice. Loach is assisted by a revolting creature called the **Old Crooked Mistress** (NE **gargoyle**), a thing Wrye freed from an infamous freak show in Festival and who now serves him with fanatical loyalty. The Mistress abducts and questions, listens from outside gables, and lurks in the shadows of rooftops. The cabal is completed by **Athy'r** (N female **skulk**†) who is an expert at stalking. Often, their ranks are swollen by lesser spies and henchmen and things hired to carry out specialist plots.

For more information on the Wryes see **Part 2** below.

C26. Capitol Cathedral: The Angels Level

The space almost defies logic, within and part of the Capitol, the cathedral continues to rise, up to a vast pipe organ whose fingers grope towards the complex heaven above. It's a heaven wreathed in scaffolding that teases with glimpses of paradise. This is the domain of angels, they play upon every surface, hang in golden swarms grasping at lanterns, and smile upon you with eyes of white flame.

A trio of vertigo-inducing stairs rise upwards and outwards over the Angels to allow access above to the rooftop and heavens above (**C38**). This area is enmeshed with bamboo scaffolding to allow access for the artist Maximel D'Regiolette to reach the ceiling and his greatest work.

C27. The Iron Bastion

Strangling the higher Capitol is a curious blemish, an iron necklace of armoured walls and walkways and towers that taunt and defy. They are seen across the whole ring of the Capitol, but sometimes find shade within taller buildings or deftly linger in the shadows of a grander place. This iron necklace is never still, her walls teeming with guardians keeping careful watch for trouble.

The walkways that surround the balcony are built for defence, and have been constructed and are manned by some of the finest minds in Castorhage. These walkways link to a central iron bastion, within which are housed 3,000 soldiers of the Royal Army. While control at all times lies with **Grand Justice Braken**†, it is **General Prester Haft (**NE male human **knight of renown**†**)** who oversees the place on a daily basis. Haft constantly drills his men, and places great store upon rehearsing almost daily for a revolution, attack by a foreign power, or unexpected catastrophe.

The Bastion has almost a mile of iron corridors and a score of vast barracks. Within are countless weapons, which are used across hundreds of cunning murder holes, places where defenders can see attackers, but can barely be seen themselves, and raised platforms that move through treadmills and fleshgines† based often upon elephants.

Life in the Bastion is harsh, but the army is well paid. The Castorhage's are always keen to promote and ensure the Royal Army is behind them to a man. The various smaller forces and regiments that make up the army are fierce in their rivalries. Their commanders are feted and admired, sung about by the soldiery in taverns and gin houses of the lesser townships below.

A trio of huge iron gates with grinning demon faces mark the only access between the Bastion and the Capitol itself, ensuring that the common soldiery never encounter higher blood. These gates are used purely for emergency, for celebration (such as the yearly Rite and Fealty of the Lord Commander of the Army[6]), or for the occasional secret meeting. General Haft has one of only three sets of keys for the three gates, his commanders have the other two, although the Guild do have a copy of one gate key in their possession, just in case.

The third gate, the largest of the three, is known as the Manticorae Gate, and it grants access between the stables of the Royal Manticorae Regiment and the Queen's menagerie (**C38**), allowing direct access to fly from the rooftops of the Capitol. **Her Grace Sarrus, Lady Keeper of the**

The Rite and Fealty of the Lord Commander

The Rite and Fealty of the Lord Commander of the Army is held every 13th of Ashen and requires the present General of the Royal Army to crawl from the main barracks through the First Gate (the Obedience) Gate and up the 999 steps to the Royal Palace to offer his sword to the ruler of Castorhage in a symbolic act of obedience. The middle gate, for the sake of completeness, is known as the Challenger's Gate, after one army commander dared to try to usurp the present king through a duel, which he lost in a most bloody and painful way. The gate has kept its name as a reminder to other would-be assassins that trying to kill Royals is a very bad idea.

Royal Beast (N female human **captain**) and the 119 other members of the regiment barrack here. Their rivalry with the lesser (in their eyes) army often breaks into combat.

The Crown

At last the glory is reached, and what glory it is. There is no inch that is not designed to please, to be admired, to awe. The lofty chambers and walks and balconies of the Crown are resplendent, unbelievable, opulent. Bridges link the buildings here, which rise out of the granite and mundane places below, and soar to the heavens. The bridges are all named, but the most famous, the Angel Bridge, is detailed below. Many of the walkways are covered, and the lofty perches offer unrivalled and dizzying views to the city below. There are few folk here, all major clans and families or Justices, and those who are here are assumed to have a reason to, unless they act suspiciously or do not fit into the outré fashions, manners, and etiquette of the aristocracy.

C28. The Royal Hanging Garden

The upper ramparts and gables of the city are clothed with life. Verdant trees of great age defy gravity and cling to the outer walls defiantly. Here, a raised balcony dances above an abysmal drop, while a folly temple smiles from an upper wall that surely cannot be reached. Yet there, hidden, is a secret pathway up and up into the sky, making for its destination, one of hundreds of places to sit, and marvel, and take in the clearer air, far above the squalor of those below.

Investigating and visiting every building in the Crown, the Royal Hanging Gardens are almost beyond comprehension. Tended over centuries by a royal order of druids, the gardens thrive even in the choking poisons of the city's air. The gardens are made of stone. Cobbled pathways link and lead to viewing balconies, discreet groves and strange follies. Handfuls of Knights of the Capitol, or small groups of the Queen's Watch keep order here, not that any disorders ever take place.

The present mistress of the gardens, and keeper and tender of its plant-life, her **Grace the Keeper of the Royal Hanging Garden Lady Clarice Garth** (LN female human **hierophant**) has a small group of **gardeners** (N male or female human **commoners**) under her supervision. She particularly adores the Yew of Castorhage, a vast tree that grows in the north of the gardens, and reputedly was planted when the first building of the Capitol was erected centuries ago, the Soar of Black Roses, an eyrie that hangs out high over the city and which requires nerves of steel to tend and visit, and the peaceful Garden of Heaven, the highest point in the garden, and one of the highest places in the whole city.

Plants are not the only life here. There is a group of royal ravens that dwell in the garden, a group of royal black swans swims in one of its impossible rooftop pools, and countless other visitors and small mammals have made their homes here.

The Royal Ravens

The royal ravens are 22 **awakened ravens** that have adopted a family name for themselves, the Family Carrion. They work for the Royal Family as messengers and can talk. It is said that if they ever leave the city, it will fail. The blindingcrows†, seagulls, and assorted other avians in the city have learned to avoid the royal ravens when they are about their business. In fact, only the city's gable hate-owls† dare interfere with these rooks, and they hunt them with great prejudice whenever they find opportunity. The royal ravens are greatly respected and tended, treated as royally as birds can be.

C29. Castle Strankk

A teetering pile of stones high above the city, this place looks evil, a place of ill omen. It could be the iron dragon glowering down from its rooftop, clutching lightning rods as though about to cast them at you, it could be the strange fire from within the castle's interior, a turquoise kiss that seems to breathe and beat. Whatever it is, you are sure that what is beyond the barred windows of this high place is nothing but wickedness.

Her Resplendent **Grand Justice Ashleia†,** the Mistress of Life's Wondrous Varied Forms, lives in a menagerie of broken creatures and constructs. Ashleia is probably only matched by **Spent Sullage** (**C24**), in her ability to breathe life into anything. The sphinx has an unfair advantage over her mortal rival; the *Crucible of Unbirth*, a Between artefact which can weave flesh and birth life. The crucible is a living thing, a stolen facet of Between that acts as a slave and creator for the sphinx. So powerful have her experiments become that even **Demoriel†, the Twice-Exiled Seductress,** is prepared to intervene and make a change in the role of Crown Justice. However, Demoriel is cunning, and seeks a way to pervert the crucible to create a monster capable of tearing the sphinx limb from limb.

In the meantime, Ashleia weaves, and binds, and forces unions of things that should not breathe. Her frantic desire to create leaves her clumsy, and many of her creations stagger the streets below or the gables above, the city. The Feaster of Flies, an abomination of Between was birthed by the sphinx, and now wanders the city feasting, and vomiting clouds of flesh-stripping black flies.

No one lives with the sphinx apart from her creations, which she often insultingly refers to as her animals and her wards. Beyond her veiled form of aristocracy and beauty, her true form has been demented by her work, her teats drip the acid milk that is her lifeblood (her mortal blood long since replaced during an obscene ritual to achieve immortality). Her lust is fury, and she takes lovers simply to suck them dry, leaving nothing but dust.

She uses the Illuminati spy network to further delve into the Between for dark knowledge, and the name "Queen of Dark Miracles" is whispered by other members of the Illuminati who rightly fear her.

C30. The Capprico Estate

A huge palace hangs above the river, its lead domes and rambling golden stones guarded by great stone lions.

The normality of the palace hides a dark heart; deep within the bowels of the place lies a great cyst, a place where the darkest hearts of the great Coven meet to honour Lucifer. Through the centuries, various druids and

witches have led the family, and the present matriarch, Her Resplendent **Justice Anisse Capprico,** Lady of Beverages is one of the most senior witches in the Great Coven. Anisse can shed her own form like a cloak and wear the guise of animals. She is also able to see, hear, and speak through animals through dark secrets handed down from ruler to ruler.

Above, the palace is like any other. It is opulent, excessively vulgar and luxurious. Armies of slaves run the place for the benefit of a handful of family members. The palace is called an estate because many gable grounds surround its southern and western aspects. These gardens are similar to the Royal Hanging Gardens — indeed, they were once part of it — but were gifted to the family four centuries ago for a particular service (sending Rothan Borxia to Hell in 1322 to be precise). The gardens have been allowed to run riot, and the family occasionally amuse themselves by hunting peasants across them and over the rooftops.

For more information on House Capprico see **Part 2** below.

C31. The House Tredici

The southern heights of the Capitol rise to a final palace of spires and arches, a complex and insane series of wings and towers linked by stone bridges.

Regarded by many as the most beautiful house in the city — if "house" is the correct word for this 183-room monster — the House Tredici, built upon the fortunes of the third-richest woman in the city **Princess Isabel Anna Lurcetzia Tredici** (NE female human **assassin**), is dazzling and, a rarity for the aristocracy, beautiful. Isabel has used the fortunes of her many dead husbands to expand her own, and has brought great power and prestige back to the Tredici family, who for many generations wallowed in something of an aristocratic social exile.

There is more to the house than mere luxury, the Tredici have a powerful enemy — the Family themselves — and the building is not only cunningly trapped, it is also formidably armed. Isabel has built a private army of nearly a thousand men who are housed in barracks just outside the palace itself. They are led by Isabel's cousin **Alessandro Tredici** (N male human **captain**), who regards himself as the most dashing man in the city. His modesty is only matched by his swagger.

Isabel keeps a tight coterie of wizards at her side, led by her intimate adviser **Lord Haffish Quail** (NE male human **arcane assassin**†), who has trained a small cabal of followers in the arts of roguecraft, wizardry and assassination. These followers, who anyone would walk past in a crowd, as they are picked for their plainness, are fanatically loyal to Quail, and significantly less to Isabel. An expert on insectum†, Quail breeds his own creatures and uses his arcane knowledge to enhance the abilities gifted by the insects.

Isabel has a secret that has assisted her in her remarkable rise in fortunes. A creature of madness to do her bidding, but the cost is great and even Isabel quakes at its use. The Thing, which she has never named, is called by use of an arcane tome of incredible age and which somehow draws its victim's senses into Between, leaving behind a shallow and broken nothingness that can only stare.

For more information on the House Tredici see **Part 2: People** below.

C32. Culmus Manse

It resembles a church, growing from the buildings below, seemingly flattening them. A vast, circular window depicts Mother Grace in a halo of heavenly gold, while church bells hang in half a dozen spires below the beautiful image.

Justice Alfor Quent† the Lord Culmus, Master of Humours is the elder of the strictly religious Family Culmus. Unlike many nobles, Culmus practices what he preaches, and his austere and drab house is so spartan that visitors are practically unheard of. This suits Culmus, who loathes most of the aristocracy as heathens, even though his family has lurched into undeath, and court a number of ghouls in the rambling cellars below his manse, cellars that dwindle downwards into the very depths of the city through a series of dank shafts all the way to the Carcass below.

The decaying, vermin infested manse stands (or rather sags) as a sad reflection on the family's loss of fortunes, but within, the continuation of many of the family into undeath makes them a growing strength. A small group of living cousins — in truth worshippers of Culmus, reside in the manse. These living people are not true kin, but simply brainwashed disciples who believe Alfor is on a holy mission, and they are helping him prepare to cleanse the world of weak flesh.

More information on House Culmus can be found in **Part 2** below.

C33. The Borxia's Summer Palace

A gigantic palace seethes and tumbles away from the Capitol, its edges staring straight downwards into the lurking city below. This place is clearly the second largest in the whole Capitol, and it is almost like a town in its own right. Whoever designed this place had tastes wildly different from its neighbours. It is darkly stoned, and festooned in phallic towers and spikes. A great fortification glowers outside the palace, protecting it from the others and keeping it beyond a great drawbridge.

The Borxia do not deign to live in the Capitol, but instead lurk and lust in an island retreat in the Hollow and Broken Hills (**HBH24**). They use this as their summer palace when the stench from the Bilges gets overbearing, although in truth the family are found here at any time of the year. The Second Family of the city are as complex as their Royal cousins, and are discussed in greater detail in **Part 2** below.

The summer palace is a fabulous gigantic spectacle of power and wealth, and used by many of the kin, any of whom may be present at any given time. A steward, **Rothan Edwarde Borxia** (NE male human **noble**), keeps the place clean and stuffed with the sort of things the Borxia's love: indulgences, insectum, hot water, oil, blood, amusements, and concubines. The palace is also home to a number of lesser devils and tieflings, who are part of both the staff and the aristocracy, and keep an eye on the place.

A garrison of **100 guards** keep an eye on the palace. These are led by **Horathia Urilia Borxia** (NE female **tiefling**). She is charming and deadly … and paranoid; no one gets across the drawbridge that she doesn't know, and she knows the entire family.

The palace has hundreds of rooms and areas set aside for particular themes or events, it is tainted with a devilish possession, and a bound ice-devil is part of the structure of the building. This devil is able to create rooms within rooms, stretch the world to create chambers that cannot exist, and confuse and trap unwelcome guests.

Whole wings have been set aside for infernal guests, and a gigantic attic is crammed with things the Borxias have presently become bored with, including people. The theme of water runs deep in the palace, and many elementals and weirds have been bound to fountains and pools to amuse and cool the palace in summer. The façade of the place hides a complex series of secret chambers, walkways, and bound and broken creatures, as well as several fleshgines† that serve various loading and lifting functions, as well as simply being amusing.

Among other spectacles, the palace boasts an indoor waterfall, its own forest, and a horse racing route designed for miniature horses, wooden horses, and homunculi horses for the children.

C34. The Oracle Hall and Justice Lodge

A modest fortification with steep gabled rooftop leans alarmingly outwards over the city, her walls held aloft by scaffolding, iron bands and vast buttresses. This place is gripped from the back by a gargoyle-infested pinnacle that is clearly also a prison of some kind.

His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken** lurks in his hall here and metes out law across the city through various agencies and agents. A senior figure of the Illuminati, Braken is driven by a desire to see Castorhage conquer both Heaven and Hell. If such places are real — as he knows them to be — then they can, in theory, be conquered. The idea of dominion over these places is an obsession that explodes into life in his house, which is an unrivalled repository of both knowledge of the two, and a celebration of visions of both in art. Disturbing landscapes litter his home and some of these have driven viewers to madness. Worse, some of these paintings actually live.

Connected to this residence is the Justice Lodge, a huge pinnacle of gargoyle-wreathed stone within which are kept those useful prisoners of the Crown Justice, as well as a small number of imprisoned angels and devils whom Braken questions daily to further his knowledge. A tiny group of doppelganger guards are led by the senior spy for Braken's doppelganger network, The Veil, **Lady Artemidian Follage** (LE **doppelganger**), who is his occasional lover and confidante. The two enjoy the physical possibilities their forms allow them to indulge in, and they are experts in erotic acts of contortion.

Braken is little more than a plaything for **Demoriel, the Twice-Exiled Seductress**, who amuses herself with the Crown Justice's grand ambitions. The Crown Justice is rightly paranoid about his own security, and as well as the Veil, he has ensured that his hall is trapped and has a large number of escape routes, one of which descends directly into the Soul via a single shaft.

Loose spirits and infernal things wander the place, both in and out of Between, and the entire lodge is partially within the Furnace, itself an aspect of Between Hell.

C35. The Angel Bridge

Two simple towers watch over this structure, a high arched stone bridge without parapet edges extending high across empty space to the greatest building in the city, the Royal Palace. Angels by the hundreds dance in and about the structure, which is less than ten feet wide.

The **Royal Captain of the Angel Bridge, Earl-Captain Tideshaw Harl** (LN male human **knight of renown**[3]) and his 50-strong Queen's Guard company keep all visitors away from the bridge; only the Crown Justices and certain powerful individuals are ever allowed to enter, although those leaving are never questioned by the handsome Harl.

The bridge is a frightening prospect, spanning almost 150 feet in a single arch without rail over a dizzying drop. The Royals rarely use it these days, preferring other more secret entrances from the palace, but visitors are required to pass this way, something even the most steely-nerved are less than keen to do.

C36. Nightshade Palace

This palace extends in a breath-taking dance across the rooftops. Walkways link to pools fed by fountains, and iron pathways cross gables below to reach further parts of this scattered and vast place.

Indulgence.

The Nightshades, allies of the swyne and worshippers of all things Royal, live to indulge themselves: their parties are lavish, their sins countless, and their alliances and admirers are numerous. These indulgences find physical form here in an orgy of wealth that some find sickening. The Nightshades are a business family, and have found that nothing removes somebody from their cash more than pleasure; doting pleasure that allows their guests to have any whim catered to. The Nightshades delight in being the perfect hosts; carefully researching and studying their guests and accommodating them in any way — *any* way. Therefore, the palace is something of a chameleon, and her attic wings store countless props, games, illusions and



forgotten relics of past parties. The entire palace changes from event to event; something that costs a fortune, but money is no object.

Repulsive **Lucas Nathaniel Nightshade** (LE male human **noble**) rules the family, he has designs on practically every Royal Daughter of age, and plans for the death through fire of every Borxia for witchcraft. A consummate bullying business man, Lucas admires all new thinkers, particularly **Joseph Sedge** (**TT6** and **TT10**) and **Rudyard Brome** (**TT14**). He pushes constantly for the use of an all-undead workforce to ensure obedience, continual work and order, and has a paradoxical loathing for magic, while oddly, greatly admiring illusory magic as a fabulous parlour trick.

His equally repulsive duellist and braggart eldest son **Gideon** (LE male human **duellist**), is seen being carried about the city in his palanquin or held aloft by servants at the many parties here, all of which have some business reason behind their inception. Five other sons lurk here, hiding from their kin in the rambling and echoing house, which is strangely bereft of any kind of joy.

More information about the Nightshades can be found in **Part 2: People** below.

C37. Capitol Cathedral: Heavens Level

The ceiling is domed and huge, perhaps a hundred yards across. A faded image of angels cowers beneath a new layer of paint, the new images breath-taking, engaging, alive as they depict Heaven in all her glory. The image is not complete, nor likely to be for decades, hidden itself behind a towering final skin of timber planks that stagger awkwardly in jaunty lines across its summit.

Only one ever comes here, the painter Maximel D'Regiolette, who is presently working on the ceiling. The artist, a **fallen movanic deva**, divides his time between the ceiling and the Artist's Quarter where he makes his home (**AQ13**). The self-abusive artist and his lover, the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting, **Elaine of Aldwark**†, are seen in the quarter often, but the artist only ever works here alone upon this masterpiece which will clearly take most of his life to complete, sometimes for days without food and water. His work is so beautiful, so awe-inspiring, that it can only depict Heaven as painted from real life by one who has been there to see it.

The Forbidden Heights

The most secretive and well-patrolled part of the Capitol, the Forbidden Heights is the Royal Palace and Queen's Menagerie. Obsessive members of the Queen's Watch wander the grounds and palace. They have no compunction about killing, or throwing intruders, or those they simply do not know, off the ramparts. This final part of the jigsaw is that the Capitol is the most beautiful, every facet of its being is luxurious. It is blessed by riches almost beyond imagining.

C38. The Queen's Menagerie and Grounds

The hanging gardens venture inwards here, caressing the rooftops and buildings below, pulling free of them into a series of walkways and paths of iron and stone that hang above the city. Great cages lurk in the trees here, and the calls of distressed animals echo, and then fall, from this lofty airy place.

The greatest collection of creatures in the entire city — possibly even the world — the menagerie boasts creatures from across the known world — as well as some specially created for the Queen herself or her beautiful daughters. The grounds here are watched to a paranoid degree by members of the Queen's Guard, who personally know all the small staff here, led by **Her Grace the Keeper of the Royal Menagerie Lucy Hrunds** (NE female **noble**). Many fungus gargoyles lurk in the outer parts of the grounds, keeping a careful distance, and wary eye, on their cousins the Punishment (see above). The gargoyles, led by a repulsive four-armed gargoyle that spent too long on the royal rack, is known simple as the **Ruined One** (NE **four-armed gargoyle**†). The Ruined One, a brooding silent thing that is rarely seen, spends its days plotting vengeance upon the Royal Family, yet has been powerless to act on the occasions that have presented themselves, instead becoming a pathetic, broken thing in their presence.

There are 708 different species or types of creature here, including a trio of aboleths, a group of Harpers' manic girallons, and a pair of magnificent Rapeer's greater albino dire tigers. Albino creatures are abundant here; ashen peacocks call from the spires and trees as a small group of albino gorilla-bears thrives. A large collection of specially bred owlbears grace several cages. These brutes have been refined for their musculature and shape, a tradition within the Royal Family for generations. **Princess Eleanor** keeps a special cage of flumphs purely to punish as it amuses her. The pride of this outlandish flesh collection (presently) is a Wyvern of Paradise, a gigantic jungle creature of such dazzling beauty and hues that its shades and dancing colours can often be glimpsed on the streets far, far below

There are other creatures here that have been made to amaze and impress; things that have not been catalogued or given names yet. The Queen is known (when in those rare moments of lucidity) to be greatly amused by new shapes, particularly those that simply should not happen, and rewards the creators of such flesh art regally. Thus, as fast as the creatures are housed, new ones arrive, with such rapidity at times that the old creatures simply have to be destroyed to make room

A cowering group of royal hounds howl pitifully from the outer edges of the grounds in the kennels. Tended by the gruff **Houndmaester Algernon Fay** (NE male human **hierophant**†), the hounds include a small pack of **elusa hounds** to hunt errant spellcasters.

A veritable army of keepers, cleaners, feeders, gardeners, verderers and assistants tend the royal grounds. This army is housed in a broad dormitory at the far north of the grounds, a building known for its draughtiness and copious rat problems. The entire place is watched by an angelic guardian who glowers down from the jagged rooftop of a folly at the heart of the garden.

C39. The Royal Palace and Summit Spire

The greatest building in the city, beyond doubt, the Royal Palace is almost impossible to take in as a single structure, yet single place it is, a vast schizophrenic place of a hundred wings and towers and parts, it covers a hundred yards in width, and is a mass of countless gargoyles and angels and dancing figures. It rises upwards to a single great spire, atop which rests a point surrounded by circular glass windows that must command the greatest view of Castorhage.

Closeted in their own world, the Royal Family dwell in relative isolation in this vast structure, which teems with guardians and servants. There are various parts of the palace that are used to entertain, and hundreds of places that are kept private; even from those who protect the Royal Princesses and their graceful mother. To catalogue each of the thousand or so rooms would require a tome the size of this one, but a brief tour is feasible. The curious aspect is the insular nature of the various wings and apartments of the royals; each has their own loyal guardians (be they made or living) and have stamped their own unique authority and taste upon their area of the palace.

Within the fabric of the building, the former Royals slither and lurk, insubstantial things that whisper to the present keepers of the royal blood. Some have whispered that these dead Royals dwell within the current Royals like possessing ghosts, and occasionally, the appearance of an astonishing talent or character in Royal children lends credence to this conjecture.

The main palace has its centre in the "Heart of the Empire" (formerly the "Heart of Castorhage" before Castorhagi colonisation had begun in earnest), a vast echoing chamber that acts as throne room and formal meeting area. The walls depict devils in shocking detail being herded and tormented by voluptuous angels who carry weapons of holy retribution as bad as — if not worse than — their devilish victims. The chamber is lit by the Living Candelabrum - an obscenity that reminds their loyal subjects that there are fates far worse than death. The candles are made from the fats of victims from royal prisons, but the actual candelabrum, a twisting writhing fleshy mass of limbs and supplicating praying heads is alive… in a fashion. A royal secret that is passed within the more senior cabalists that serve Castorhage enables victims to be bound within the candelabrum forever, to properly punish those who have committed the most heinous crimes. Those bound within the obscenity dare not do anything other than praise their royal hosts and benefactors, hopelessly assuming that one day they may be pardoned and released.

The Flesh Throne is very much like the candelabrum, but worse, possibly due to its proximity and size, perhaps due to its revolting sadness. The throne, the size of a small cottage, is very much alive, but this object contains the bound bodies of the greatest advisers from the family and city history; men and women of such intellectual and tactical ability that to do without them was unthinkable, so they remain here to advise — forever. These poor souls sometimes fall into madness, at which point they are removed from the throne, an act so foul and painful that it serves as a stark reminder to those who remain. The trick used in recent years by an army of advisers, has been to prove dispensable to their Royal employers, not too dispensable, but not too useful.

The Queen's Bedchamber lies high in the north wing of the Royal Palace. Part staggering magnificence, part prison, the chamber is furnished and decorated in gold and diamonds, and has an iron golem within its fabric to serve as a final guard to the queen. This room is alive with the echoes of the former Royals, who lurk in the aspects of Between that prowl just beyond this Royal chamber.

The Royal Treasury and Museum of Castorhage does not, in truth, exist in the mortal world, but in a secluded and almost impossible to reach shadowy corner of Between; one of the first parts of Between ever discovered. This twisting nightmare of corridors that bend into infinity and shafts that drop into nothing has a single great chamber at its end,

held behind a door fashioned of adamantine by Lurrus Quegg, the Great Royal Trapmaker (1549–1638). The suite of chambers beyond groan with treasure, to put value on the hoard is difficult, but its mass is almost beyond imagining.

> A glint of gold catches a shadowy flicker suddenly, followed by another, and another. The room is piled high with treasure; sacks of gold, chests of platinum, crowns, jeweled staves, rare silks, tapestries and everywhere more and more coins — in pots, lying in piles, in jugs, on beds, in great mounds in corners and covering other goods. Other doors leave ths chamber — these offer glimpses of other treasure--more rooms, like this one, piled with wealth. The uncountable hidden hoard of an empire.

Only the Queen has access to this deepest royal treasury, she usually uses the surity of undead workers to bring this treasure to her. She rarely visits the place these days, and none of her children have set eyes upon the place, but they know it exists…

The Courtyard of the Oak is a living courtyard of wood within the palace, with an opening to the sky far above. The oak, grown and fashioned by elves and fey in a similar way to oreblossom (see **Chapter 10**) was planted by dwarves, and nurtured here twelve centuries ago as a gift to Queen Malice. Unfortunately, the growth of the courtyard coincided with the collapse of part of the Capitol in 643 and the subsequent creation of the Royal Arcane Engineer's Guild. Some say the guild's secrets were bodily ripped from the fey and elves who had constructed the courtyard and stayed on to tend to it and were suspected of sabotage in retaliation for King Lertis Tevoy's Great Road project in the Green Realm. That the collapse was entirely coincidental is something the palace annals do not state, nor do they state the fate of the builders and growers, some of whom now reside in the Living Candelabrum, and one of which is bound with in the Flesh Throne.

The Optic Wing is a dark part of the palace where royal spies and astromancers lurk, tending to the scrying devices and objects therein, as well as those of astronomical endeavour. That this wing lies immediately above and behind the Great Feast Hall is not something lost on either those who dwell here or their guests. A curious group of familiars are bound into this chamber, royal spies that those within the Optic Wing can control.

Two great roads run through the palace, and are vast panelled halls hung with countless Royal portraits along their interminable lengths. The Royal Avenue, still used by royal elephants to bring in banquet food and special guests, bisects the whole palace, from the kitchens and cellars below, to the upper chambers. Its single longest section, the Royal Colonnade is half a furlong in length, and has been used by Royal Children as a horse (or in most cases dead pony or fleshy construct) race. All the Royal Daughters who have memories can recall frightful squabbles and pain from such events, since all the Royal girls are infamous for their competitiveness. The Hall of Mirrors is a curious series of corridors in the upper reaches of the palace that, while said to exist, is rarely found. Some servants have sworn that they have been along this corridor and found an echo Royal Family, presumably in Between. They were quickly punished for such rumourmongering.

The Garden and Bridge of Monkeys is one of the strangest places of the curious palace, an outer and high garden, built out over the city, a rusting iron bridge that links two folly towers and a small garden. **Blight monkeys**† (see "primate") thrive here, and feeding them is said, in Royal circles, to be lucky. The walk and exposure puts most sisters off the luck offered, but the remote location is watched and tended by the **Royal Monkey Officer Tamrin Hake** (N male human **gladiator**) and his troupe of **Blight ape**† (see "Primate") assistants, who see it as their sworn duty to keep the atrocious monkeys away from the palace and the unsuspecting folk within.

The palace reaches its highest point 497 feet above its footings at the Palace of Heaven and Summit Spire. Curiously cramped, this lofty perch lurks behind a series of leaded window chambers to allow the maximum amount of light in. A dangerously steep stair winds endlessly up to the spire. A Royal Balcony has seen at least four cases of matricide and one unthinkable attempt at filicide, an act that was thankfully thwarted before the queen of the time — Lotheria Castorhage — was able to toss her daughter onto the rooftops below.

One final — and deadly — aspect of the Royal Palace exists about its outer walls and soaring cliff-like exteriors — the Outer Way. The Outer Way is one of the last places in the city, both in terms of physical remoteness and wish to be there. As the casting of magic (and in particular those who can fly) is likely to alert guards to shoot, the various workers who come here have to inch their way along the fragmented planks, rusting outer bars and near vertical cut stones of the way. Used by window cleaners and steeplejacks, as well as chimney sweeps and gablemaesters, at least a dozen people a year plummet to their deaths from these ludicrously exposed and dangerous walkways. Naturally, it is seen as a rite of passage by those who claim to be the leader of the Guild to venture here and make a circumnavigation of the way in the dark.

Part Two: People

The Four Great Families

As vast and daunting a place as the Capitol is, it is but a hollow shell compared to the villains who have lived within it for the last dozen centuries. The worst of these offenders can usually be traced to one of four families…the Four Great Families. No description of the Capitol would be complete without a look at these families, as well as those who lurk just below, hoping to break into their ranks themselves.

House Castorhage: The Royals

The Royal Family, for whom the city-state has been named for most of its existence, are described in detail in **Part 2** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***. At 79, the Queen is rarely, if ever, seen in public and then only for short appearances carefully scripted by her handlers. She has become more monstrous as the years have progressed — noticeably since the death of her second husband, and particularly since the birth of Princess Alicia. Only those at the highest levels of Court are aware of her condition (including the Crown Justices and Illuminati, of course), and they fear the reaction if the public should find out the true nature of her current existence. Yet, at the same time, they equally fear the struggle for power that will ensue between the Royal Daughters and must keep the aging monarch alive "for now" until the matter can be acceptably sorted out. The fact that "for now" has dragged on for over 5 years has not been lost on any of them and most either secretly shudder or secretly thrill at the bloodbath that they expect to come when she finally breathes her last.

The Queen has borne ten children, allegedly to her two husbands and one unknown suitor who most would rather not think too deeply about, but the truth of the matter, is that only one of her children is actually the legitimate child of one of her husbands, and that one — Rebecca of Mourney — is actually credited to the wrong husband. The Queen was already with child when she married Prince Orsche of North Heath. Incredibly and ironically, Princess Rebecca is the only one of the Queen's children who was not born in the Capitol, but rather in the township of Mourney where the Queen was summering at the time of the birth, so she actually bears her true father's home as her epithet. The Queen is recognized as having eight surviving daughters and two deceased daughters, but as with almost everything in the Blight, the truth is not quite what it seems. Unbeknownst to everyone, save a few individuals, is the fact that one of the "surviving" daughters is in fact dead and has returned as an undead creature to haunt her murderous sisters, and one of the deceased daughters is actually alive and well but living a life of sheltered anonymity, unaware of her birth heritage. The Queen's eight Royal Daughters are listed below with the publicly recognized "surviving" daughters in boldface:

The Unseen Princess, Alexandra (age 45)
Princess Eleanor (age 43, twin)
Princess Geneve (age 43, twin)
Princess Lilly (age 35), deceased and currently existing as a vampire

Princess Rebecca of Mourney (age 27)
Princess Mercy (age 24)
Princess Rachel (deceased at age 18)
Princess Sarah ("deceased" at birth, although she is alive and well, age 21)
Princess Lenora (age 19)
The Little Queen, Princess Alicia (age 9)

The Queen — indeed many nobles — have unnaturally long life through rare insectum†, arcane pacts and soul-selling, or more recently, through *elixir of life* rebirth. The Queen, unlike many who are struck infertile by these methods, has enjoyed outstanding fortune in birth. Her more senior daughters: Alexandra, Eleanor, Geneve and Lilly were allegedly born in union with Duke Marram of Mourney (deceased), in relatively early age (though in truth none are his) the queen was suddenly graced with a brood of five more children (three of which, Rebecca, Mercy, and Lenora) when in her fifties. This was put down to the virility of her second husband Prince Orsche of North Heath (deceased) and her unnaturally youthful good looks (though again, none of them are actually his). However, a few years after Orsche's death, she again became pregnant — at the remarkable age of 69 — this birth, however, was precipitated by the horrifying Night of the Bleeding Heavens, when it is said legions of angels and devils battled in the stormy sky and shed their blood like rain upon the city below. It was on this night, that something from Between that became known alternately as the Visitor or the Queen's Nightmare, came to the Queen and sired another daughter. The Wise speculate that the angels fought the devils that night to prevent this atrocity from occurring and merely failed in their watch, but a few quietly whisper even still that they fought not against each other but alongside each other against something even worse — something from Between that sought a union unpalatable to either Heaven or Hell. And while the young child of this union, Alicia, appears normal, she is anything but. The Queen's madness came on strong shortly after this until her unnatural cravings and descent into something akin to a living ghoul can now only be controlled for short periods by magic and insectum†.

The true power in the family rests with the sisters closest to the impossibly demented Queen, although the monarch has already named Princess Alicia as her heir. The pregnancy was a nightmare physically, and has somehow reinforced and hardened the Queen's mad heart that Alicia shall rule after her. This sudden announcement has caused the eldest (by mere seconds), recognized, and likely true inheritor — the devil-worshipping **Princess Eleanor**† — to brood and plot. In her eyes at least, Alicia is not going to live to reach the throne. However, vain Eleanor has recently begun rapidly losing her looks to her thirst for secrets and rare insectum, and fears that she will soon appear more like her grotesque twin, Geneve, than her beautiful half-sister Rebecca, to whom she has always enjoyed a strong resemblance.

Princess Geneve† is often too busy visiting her scores of lovers to spend time brooding, but in truth, she hates her twin Eleanor, and the two have an ongoing war of unspoken hatred between them, a war carried out viciously between their followers and lovers by proxy. For her part, Rebecca is careful to keep her sister Geneve sated to keep her side-lined, but makes occasional attempts on her life. Geneve's present husband, **Crown Prince Clovis**†**,** Prince of the Capitol, is very much aware of his wife's excesses, but is too interested in pursuing **Elaine of Aldwark**† to be bothered by them.

Princess Lilly is not in contention for the throne because her elder sisters Eleanor and Geneve, in one of their rare moments of concordance, murdered her. The Royal Household is aware of the murder (if not precisely its culprits, though suspicion leans strongly towards the twins), but the Queen deemed such a scandal beneath the dignity of the Royal Family (likely recalling the scandalous nature of her own brush with death at the hands of her mother when she was but a child herself). As a result of the Queen's decree, an announcement over the death of Princess Lilly was never made and, to the public's mind she is still very much alive. This general belief has been reinforced by the fact that Lilly has made appearances in the Royal Palace from time to time since then. Princess Lilly had prepared her own pacts, and shortly after her murder arose again as a vampire who now stalks the halls of the palace by night and enjoys bedevilling her family and their servants. The appearances of the princess have been frequent enough that even the Queen in her demented haze has come to realize that there must be something to them, and Eleanor and Geneve both live in terror of their sister's revenge as she sometimes walks the corridors outside the rooms at night singing. The Queen's response to all of this has been to forbid the opening of Princess Lilly's burial vault in the Royal Tomb and to order that her suite of rooms and their attendants remain dedicated for her late daughter's use. That Lilly's servants seem to still be working for their mistress is as much of an oddity as the fact that they refuse to discuss the nature of whom or what they serve — even under torture.

The Unseen Princess, **Princess Alexandra**†, is the oldest sister of course, and would normally be considered the Queen's heir, but it is a poorly kept secret that she is monstrous and considered unfit to rule. To the populace of the empire, the name Princess Alexandra is little spoken and then usually only in confusion. They recall news of her birth nearly a half century ago, and there has never been an announcement of her death, but there is never any mention of her at all nor sightings. Most assume that she must have died at some point, but among the staff in the palace it is a poorly kept secret that she is locked up in the highest tower and tended to be a serving staff that can neither see and hear whom or what they serve nor speak to report on it. Alexandra truly is the "unseen" princess.

Between this older brood of sisters and the younger came the arrival of **Rebecca of Mourney**†, recognized as the first child of Prince Orsche but actually the only child of Duke Marram. Eleanor remains the cleverest schemer among the sisters, matched in wits only by the younger Rebecca, who has within her, a core of decency, a decency of course, carefully masked. The beautiful Rebecca has an army of devoted admirers and weaves countless plots to usurp the Queen through the Anarchists and her own carefully assembled Hidden Knights of the Capitol. However, her plan to foment open rebellion and take over when the Crown is weak, is a risky strategy at best.

The other sisters are some years younger than their siblings, but no less cruel and ambitious. These sisters were born in the past few decades when only the Queen's last fragments of sanity remained. Her chosen consorts were bred like bulls to cattle, to feed the Queen's sudden hungers. Why she developed a damning and all-encompassing madness so soon after the spate of births is quite unknown, but the final secret and vile birth of Alicia through an agency of Between has been kept a very dark secret, known only to a handful of advisors in the Illuminati.

The relationships of the Royal Family with the other families tend to fall into one of two camps. First, friends to be kept by their side and watcher to make sure they cannot form their own plans, and; second, enemies to be kept even closer to the Royal bosom and smothered so that they might never have the freedom or opportunity to strike against their liege. It would never do to have it said that the blood of noble was spilled by noble, so the Royal Family keep their enemies and friends close so that if they do become too openly ambitious, accidents can be arranged without the stain of violence upon their hands.

The Royal Family: House Castorhage (Level 14)

Alignment: NE
Location: Capitol (C39. The Royal Palace and Summit Spire)
Family Head: Her Royal Highness Queen Alice**Motivations:** Maintain the status quo, destroy the Borxias and elevate another family in their place, increase in power by making Castorhage the centre of the world and everyone else her vassal
Friends: Clan Nightshade (Capitol); **Elaine of Aldwark**, known lover of Maximel D'Regiolette and recently married to Gratham Goitre (age 19) for political alliance with Clan Goitre (Capitol); House Wether (Capitol); Secretly courting the Wryes (Capitol) to undermine and attempt to poison the entire Borxia family
Enemies: Borxia Family (The Hollow and Broken Hills), Tredici Family (Capitol)
Tactics: Royal decree, political manoeuvring, false accusations, secret police, imprisonment to silence enemies, enchantment, assassination, open violence as necessary, torture
Morale: Fearless. Although the Illuminati don't truly care who rules, the squabbling within the Royal Family suits

them better than the poison schemes of the Borxias, and they continue to prop up the Castorhages — for now. The greatest threat to the Royal Family's is undoubtedly themselves.

House Borxia: The Terrible Family

The Borxias are also detailed in The Hollow and Broken Hills (area **HBH24** in **Chapter 7** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***), but the family information is reprinted here for ease of reference.

Depraved, perverse, and vile, one of the most powerful families outside of the Royal Family, the Borxias are notorious, their claws gripping and rending into the fabric of power across the city and slowly devouring segments of the Illuminati. It would take a book of many volumes to detail the history, lies and deviances of the House of Borxia, but a brief discourse upon its principal characters may shed some light on the bastard-bloated clan.

The eldest member of the clan and its matriarch, **Ambrogio Elizabeth Borxia** (LE female human **senior witch**), is one of the most senior members of the **Great Coven**, and has allegedly borne the offspring of several greater devils and arch-devils (including, it is falsely claimed, Lucifer himself). Her numerous tiefling bastards occupy locked attics, are at large in the city wallowing in their sins, or are locked up in deep prison cells for their many crimes. Although bed-ridden, the rotten, greedy old hag still runs her family with an iron fist — she is determined to see her house usurp the Royal Family, convinced (and with some reason) that it is the Borxias who have the true claim to rule Castorhage. In truth, a pact made between the families and Caasimolar, former President of Hell, was undone by Asmodeus, to whom the Royal Family paid homage at the time, to clear the way for the rise of the Castorhage family to the unchallenged dominion over the city-state. Ambrogio is protected by a bound **bearded devil** and oversees numerous other bound devils and mortals, some of which infest the roots of the family itself.

Ambrogio's brother, Clarence Borxia (deceased), once served as an advisor (and spy) for Ambrogio inside the Royal Palace. It was he who provided Queen Lotheria Castorhage née Tredici with the slow-acting and undetectable poison that she used for years on King Worrn IV to keep him sickly and unable to rule. However, as a diabolist and cleric of Lucifer, it was also he who, at the behest of a vision from his patron, prevented the Queen from hurling her then 2-year-old daughter, **Princess Alice**†, from the Royal Balcony. The result of this act of heroism was the execution of the old Queen and the recovery of King Worrn from his illness with the end of the poisoning. The newly distrustful Worrn, though grateful for his advisor's actions, nevertheless soon dismissed Clarence Borxia from his service. When unable to adequately explain to his sister why he had stopped Lotheria's actions other than to cite his alleged vision from Lucifer, Ambrogio had her younger brother quietly strangled and deposited in the Lyme, tied to a sack of bricks.

Ambrogio's current beloved protégé, grandson **Adam Borxia** (NE male human **duelist**), is an amoral rapist, betrayer, psychotic and deceiver. His almost impossibly good looks are attributed to infernal blood from Caasimolar himself; his true father. Spoiled, violent and hateful, Adam, now 15 years of age, is ambitious beyond even his grandmother's hungers, and is presently plotting a way to marry **Princess Lenora**† of the Royal Family and then poison his new in-laws (and blood relatives as well, though he hasn't revealed this part of his plan yet). This marriage is the obsession of Ambrogio and consumes her whole hateful attention. Adam, in the meantime, amuses himself by taking multiple lovers and then leaving them broken in his spiteful anger over waiting for his rightful inheritance to come to fruition.

Adam's personal bodyguard **Rafale Gorginia** (NE male human **knight of renown**†**)** is a giant of a man whose disfigured face is almost always enough to deter any attempts. Those who do upset Adam are taken away to the chambers below the house, where torture has become an art form.

Adam's mother, the charming Clara Borxia (deceased) was betrayed by her own son and poisoned. Fortunately — or perhaps unfortunately — for her, her devoted lover **Captain Aggrilet** (N male human **captain**) arranged for her rebirth unbeknownst to the rest of the family. Now **Clara Borxia** (NE female alchymic-undying† human **witch**) plots her own sweet vengeance upon her family from a ruin deep below the family estate. She has a small army of followers, and has recently been working with the **Family** (of Festival) to recruit allies to work within House Borxia as spies. A large number of **brain rats**† now infest the walls and crawl spaces of the house and have removed all their lesser kin from their presence. Agrillet still serves as a guard in the house, and also spies on the family for his undying lover.

Clara's brother, the drunken **Damiano Borxia** (NE male human **sneakthief**†), wanders the house in a fog of alcohol. Wearing a white porcelain mask to hide horrific burns from acid that were inflicted on him by the avenging husband of a woman he murdered, Damiano is regarded as little more than a freak by his family, yet is capable and cunning. His drinking gets the better of him simply because he is so bloated with the need to avenge himself upon his family. His every waking moment is consumed by plots and counterplots with the ultimate aim of killing both his mother and nephew, and taking over the isle and family.

The family adviser **Cardinal Olmir Frey-Borxia (**LE male human **priest** of Mother Grace), a distant cousin of the family, has his own plots within the family, and he too hungers for power. His orgies are the stuff of legend, and his feral tastes would revolt most. Fortunately, his status within the Illuminati is considerable, and he is determined that the House of Borxia will rise to the summit of Castorhage nobility in time.

Other notable family members within the house include **Majenta Borxia** (CE female **elder witch**†), a mistress of poisons and granddaughter of Ambrogio, who is in an incestuous affair with her brother **Gallo Borxia** (NE male human **witch**†), both of whom are older than Adam and considerably jealous of their younger sibling's favouritism. The revoltingly deformed **Isabella Borxia** (NE female human **witch**†), is the half-sister of Clara, but is never seen — she lurks in the upper attics of the house and, while regularly abroad in the city, is never seen with the family. Isabella is a member of the Great Coven and a woman who delights in using the most potent spider venoms and spiders to kill her enemies. Her daughter **Grachella Borxia** (NE female **tiefling**), has recently escaped her mother's clutches and now resides with the others downstairs. She has been accepted into the main family and, while her appearance is harsh, she bears none of the deformities of her mother. More notable bastards, advisers, followers, henchmen, and spies thrive within the vast house, a town within itself that steadily grows in the hope of rivalling the Capitol.

Of course, the Royal Family are engaged in endless plots to counter the threat of the family, but bearing in mind the iron rule that noble shall not shed noble blood, such plots have to be subtle and while open warfare has been talked of, it has not happened. Nevertheless, the Borxias have the largest private army in the city beyond the Royal Family, and the isle is a fortress where strangers are not welcome. Traders come and go, of course, but none ever set foot in the myriad maze corridors and chambers of the house itself.

House Borxia (Level 13)

Alignment: NE
Location: The Hollow and Broken Hills (HBH24. The Isle of House Borxia)
Family Head: Ambrogio Elizabeth Borxia (LE female human **elder witch**†)
Motivations: To become the ruling family of Castorhage
Friends: House Tredici (Capitol), Borage Tredici (age 44) is married to Brinel Borxia (LN female human **priest** of Lucifer 6; age 18); House Perfida (Capitol)
Enemies: The Royal Family (Capitol)
Tactics: Poisonings, infernal pacts, seduction, extortion, infiltration, tiefling violence and intimidation
Morale: Fearless. The Borxias are secure in their infernal alliances and machinations. However, the sins of the family are likely to be the Borxia's undoing as pacts with devils are very risky, and the more stretched the family becomes, the more desperate those pacts become. Most now hinges upon young Adam. Should his risky plot work there may not be enough Castorhage princesses left to resist should he fail, be unmasked or die of syphilis - all equally likely- then the family could unravel.

Clan Nightshade: The Family Silver

Standing just behind the Royal Family, the Nightshades — masters of business, friend to the swyne and greedy corpulent bullies — are the ambitious proclaimers that Castorhage should, and will, be the centre of the world, and the links to Between their gods-given right to glory. Staunchly righteous (at least superficially), they shout the words of Mother Grace, build spires and cathedrals to her glory, and are inexorably linked to the Royal Between Company.

Repulsive **Lucas Nathaniel Nightshade** (LE male human **noble**) rules the family, he has designs on practically every Royal Daughter of age, and the death through fire of every Borxia for witchcraft. A consummate bullying business man, Lucas admires all new thinkers, in particular **Joseph Sedge** (**TT6** and **TT10**) and **Rudyard Brome** (**TT14**). He pushes constantly for the use of an all-undead workforce to ensure obedience, continual work, and order and has a paradoxical loathing for magic, while oddly, greatly admiring illusory magic as a fabulous parlour trick.

His six sons are all repulsively in his image, despite the various beauties that bore them for their vast father. At age 43, his duellist and braggart eldest son **Gideon** (LE male human **duellist**), is seen being carried about the city in his palanquin or held aloft by servants at the many parties here; he's been too idle to walk for 7 years and insists on being carried to all but the most important places and events. A gin-addicted syphilitic brute, Gideon is close friends with Duke Malice and his sycophantic uber-royalist thugs. The other brothers: Garren, Millow, Maxwell and Bran are all terrified of their father and older brother and do pretty much as they are told. Only the youngest, 15-year-old roly-poly and acne-scarred **William** (NE male human **noble**), has any spine, though he spends most of his time dissecting mammals and making poor people consume his experiments.

Their only female cousin, the willowy, beautiful-yet-dangerous **Orpine Goitre née Nightshade** (NE female human **assassin**), has been married into the Goitre family through a political arrangement which Orpine was less than enthusiastic about, but which, her betrothed, **Mallow Goitre**, was delighted. Orpine has resolved herself to the marriage, but has begun to slowly poison her decrepit husband and intends to rise to power herself in the Nightshade family. Only she and Lucas are aware that she is his illegitimate daughter through a street wench from East Ending named Cloellia Fettle.

Clan Nightshade (Level 13)

Alignment: LE
Location: Capitol (C36. Nightshade Palace)
Family Head: Lucas Nathaniel Nightshade (LE male human **noble**)
Motivations: Advancement of the Empire through religious and business influence, a Royal marriage, alchemical and necromantic business innovation, profits
Friends: The Royal Family (Capitol); Clan Goitre (Capitol), Orpine Nightshade (NE female human **assassin**; age 22) is married to Mallow Lombre Goitre (age 69)
Enemies: House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills)
Tactics: Treachery through business, shady dealings, extortion, financial sabotage
Morale: Courageous. The Nightshades stand on their pretence of religious convictions and the weight of their financial reach, though they are susceptible if sufficiently undermined in those areas. It would be hard to envisage the Nightshades turning to the Borxias, but the iron grip of Lucas is obsessive about money and the advancement of Castorhage. For the good of the city he might consider a little risky subterfuge, say siding with an enemy house, only to turn traitor on them in the future and denounce them to the Royal Family. This could also easily lead to their ultimate undoing, of course.

House Tredici: Deadly Beauty

Soaked in Borxia blood, the Tredici are almost as bad as their slightly more powerful cousins. The Tredici are widely acknowledged as the most beautiful family in the city, and both sons and daughters are renowned for their astonishing good looks. Queen Alice's father, Worrn IV, even married a Tredici beauty (Queen Lotheria), much to his eventual regret. The Tredicis are rightly nervous of their cousins the Borxias, and while they are happy (indeed enthusiastic) to indulge in their kins' games, they are wary of the deeper pacts that family make with devils to do their bidding.

The matriarch of the family, the grand old schemer herself, **Princess Isabel Anna Lurcetzia Tredici** (NE female human **arcane assassin**†), has buried more husbands than most whole families, and is said to be the third-richest woman in the city after the Queen herself and Ambrogio Borxia (those truly in the know point out that all three admirable ladies actually trail the Rat Queen in acquisitions). Isabel is as cunning as he is clever, and has made two very good matches for her kin, her eldest **Borage Tredici** (NE male human **minstrel**) married Brinel Borxia and already have two fine daughters, and her youngest **Illema Perfida née Tredici** (N female human **assassin**), is married to Lirram Perfida, a man she feels is a weak and pathetic creature but she nevertheless chose for political advantage.

The great hope of the family was to be her older sister Lotheria Castorhage née Tredici (deceased) who married into the Royal Family and was the mother of the Queen herself. She actually ruled for a short span of time as Queen Lotheria but then, for reasons that Isabel never learned, Lotheria attempted to murder her Royal Daughter. She was stopped in her attempt by a Borxia (which Isabel has also never properly understood) and was ultimately executed for her actions. Despite the family's sudden fall from the temporary grace it had received, Isabel Anna Lurcetzia has stubbornly clung to the Royal title of Princess that was bestowed upon her by her short-lived association to the former Queen and for her continued relation as aunt to the ruling Queen.

The octogenarian matriarch of the Tredici has enjoyed, like many nobles, an enhanced length of life and still looks sprightly for her age. She currently has a young lover, the dashing **Lorram Quell** (NE male human **minstrel**), who at 22, is barely a quarter of her age.

Isabel is very careful to keep a close council of wizards, all of whom are also assassins and experts in insectum. A family secret enables the matriarch to utilise the skills of a creature of madness to do her bidding, but the cost is great and even Isabel quakes at its use. The thing, which she has never named, is called by use of an arcane tome of incredible age and which somehow draws its victims senses into Between, leaving behind a shallow and broken nothingness that can only stare.

The Tredici have an enmity above all others with the Family (see **Chapter 4**), who at one stage targeted them for infection to drive them from their holdings on Festival. Isabel sponsors at least 40 full time Rat Catchers and is always looking for new stars in that regard to add to her stable of hunters. Isabel strongly suspects that Clan Nightshade offered up her own father to the Pack, and allowed them to eat him alive after the tragedy of Queen Lotheria, and certainly if those suspicions were confirmed she would declare open war on that family, even at the risk of bringing her own family or the Borxias down with it.

One member of the Tredicis is taking an incredible risk. The headstrong **Simeon Tredici** (CN male human **minstrel**), is having an affair with an enemy of the family and of the Borxias in particular, the frail **Beatrice Goitre** (NG female human **noble**). If the affair is discovered, both lovers are at great risk of being murdered for their dalliance.

House Tredici

Alignment: CN
Location: Capitol (C31. The House Tredici)
Family Head: Princess Isabel Anna Lurcetzia Tredici (NE female human **arcane assassin**†)
Motivations: Greed, powerful family ties through marriage , land acquisition, destruction of the Family
Friends: House Borxia (The Broken and Hollow Hills), Borage Tredici (NE male human **minstrel**; age 44) is married to Brinel Borxia (age 18); House Perfida (Capitol), Illema



Tredici (N female human **assassin**; age 23) is married to Lirram Perfida (age 22); Clan Shibboleth (Capitol)

Enemies: The Family (Festival) — frequent infestations and outrages against the Tredicis has forced the family from their once-valuable estate on Festival. The Tredicis now sponsor Rat Catchers and have contacts across the Guild to do their bidding in what they see as a war, the Royal Family (Capitol), Clan Nightshade (Capitol)

Tactics: Seduction, terror, corruption and bribery, sabotage (including links with Anarchists), character assassination, entrapment, insectum addiction and madness

Morale: Average. The family is loyal to its matriarch but has experienced setback after setback for several generations, making retreat a viable option in the face of adversity. Isabel is canny, but as a very strong woman she has tended to overly dominate the family. If she was removed and the proper pressures applied, the Tredicis might fail and become a lesser house at best.

Lesser Houses

There are many minor families, as well as men and women, who have risen through the ranks and through contacts and bribes to achieve high station. These lesser houses are detailed here, along with two other important clans, the ubiquitous Shortstone† gnomes, and the lycanthropic **Family** of Festival. Both clans are different than a traditional house, but have considerable influence across the city. While the Family is little known, they are numerous and able to manipulate events, whereas the Shortstones are more of an extended family group of myriad distant relations that make up their own clan within the city (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***). This clan is so numerous that family ties can seem very thin, but no Shortstone would deny helping another if she possibly could.

Eight other lesser houses are described below. They variously ally themselves to, or are persuaded to, associate with one of the Great Families. There are, of course, many, many more lesser houses and influential families arising from the aristocracy, business influence, or both. The families detailed here are simply some of the most well-known or oldest. Other powerful families and clans can be added to the vast city that is the Blight to further the needs of a campaign.

House Capprico: The Ancient Witches

The most honourable and ancient house of Capprico have existed as long as the city, and many of her scholars, have graced the institutions across its districts. The family also have a deep affinity with the Great Coven, and are said to be amongst the founding members. Through the centuries, various druids and witches have led the family, and the present matriarch, Her Resplendent **Justice Anisse Capprico†,** Lady of Beverages is one of the most senior witches in the Great Coven. She is said to be able to join the minds of animals, and her peacock feather gowns are the talk of the Capitol.

The family is large and has a reputation for no-nonsense violent fighters in the brood, like the warriors of the Clan Shibboleth, the families go back a long way through wars and intermarriages, and the two have matching inbred features that are hard to ignore when the families come together. The Cappricos have a long feuding history with the Borxias, despite, indeed primarily, because of the family ties to the Great Coven, Ambrogio Elizabeth Borxia herself loathes Justice Annise and has tried to poison her at least seven times in her life. So far.

The ties to the Royal Family are more born of enmity between them and the Borxias than any great love, and the ties across the Great Coven interweave the houses closely. The honorary Lady of Beverages is the Justice responsible for taxation of the countless taverns and gin houses across the city.

House Capprico (Level 12)

Alignment: LE
Location: Capitol (C30. The Capprico Estate)

Family Head: Her Resplendent Justice Anisse Capprico, Lady of Beverages
Motivations: Expand and nurture the Great Coven throughout the city
Friends: Deep historic ties to Clan Shibboleth (Capitol), the Royal Family (Capitol), and Clan Goitre (Capitol). **Aretta Capprico** (NE female human **witch**†; age 17) is married to **Joseph Charun Goitre** (age 72). Secret alliance with House Borxia because of their mutual interest in the various instruments of infernal pacts.
Enemies: House Borxia (see Friends above)
Tactics: Fear, witchcraft, infernal magic and pacts, knowledge and secrets, extortion, violence
Morale: Cautious. The Cappricos dabble a little too readily with the arcane and it has unhinged many of the family as a result.

House Culmus: Religious Zealots

Justice Alfor Quent† the Lord Culmus, Master of Humours is the elder of the strictly religious Family Culmus ("House Flagellate" as they are widely laughed about in the low gin houses in Toiltown). He believes himself to be his god's living messenger, brought to give release to the poor, the sick and the humble by eradicating them with the house's non-living followers. He believes Mother Grace brought undead into the world to cleanse it of its mortal sins, but keeps this belief secret.

The rotting Culmus Manse is a sad reflection on the family's loss of fortunes, and while many respect the family name, the Culmus line ends with Lord Alfor, who has never sired any children. Despite what the common rabble believes, the Lord Culmus sees things differently. House Culmus has dabbled in undeath for many years, and a number of ghouls make up members of the family and lurk in the rotten palace where they have lived for centuries. Lord Alfor, in fact, claims many children, who are in truth ghouls that have been afflicted by ghoul fever and which Alfor now regards as the true blood of the family. Nevertheless, Lord Alfor himself balks at the thought of eating human flesh and thus took the route of an alchymic-undying† rather than embrace the living death of ghoul fever.

A small cadre of living cousins make up the rest of the family, although many of these have been brought from an old family settlement far down the east coast. This group of thin pale folk believe Alfor is on a holy mission, and they are helping him prepare to cleanse the world of weak flesh, themselves included.

The Borxias find loans from Alfor useful and have some older ties to this tired arm of nobility, while Alfor uses his position to introduce his kin into the Capitol for what he believes will be the coming Great Purge.

House Culmus (Level 11)

Alignment: LE
Location: Capitol (C32. Culmus Manse)
Family Head: Justice Alfor Quent† the Lord Culmus, Master of Humours**Motivations:** Continuation of the family line, purification of the city-state from the sins of lassitude and poverty
Friends: The Borxias (The Hollow and Broken Hills)
Enemies: None formally recognized
Tactics: The curse of undeath, purges of poor and undesirable, loans and financial pressure
Morale: Low. Alfor holds the clan together, but if he died it would simply fall apart and its remnants would end up as scavengers in the cellars and pits of the city by night.

The Family: The Rats of Castorhage

The ubiquitous Family is described in great detail in **Chapter 4**, however, some information is provided here as well for ease of reference. The families of **Frynns**, **Grasts** and **Scathels** make trusting any halfling demanding for those who know or guess how many wererats live in Castorhage. Made up of these three major halfling clans and numerous smaller halfling families, the Family are active in the Capitol, as well as in Festival, and the **Rat Queen** is determined to one day claim its palace as her own.

The Family (Level 13)

Alignment: NE
Location: Festival (F13. The Royal Palace)
Family Head: Public Figurehead – Shamus Frynn (LE male halfling wererat **veteran thief**), True Head – **The Rat Queen Motivations:** Usurp the current Royal Family, infect everyone left in positions of great power with lycanthropy, live lives without fear, greed, hunger
Friends: None, but plenty of associates and those who fear them. They pay tacit homage to House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills)
Enemies: House Tredici (Capitol), most right-minded people across the city
Tactics: Violence and fear, eating people alive, lycanthropic infection, theft, spying, smuggling
Morale: Hardy. Though not afraid to retreat from and overwhelming fight, it is never a total rout. The Family is too numerous to be overpowered and are likely to be here as long as the city is.

Clan Goitre: Lustful Artists

As profligate as a Goitre.

—Capitoler expression

Dazzling, fertile and talented, the Goitres are artists, singers and opera lovers; famed for their talents, charm and good looks. The present clan leader, the almost frighteningly handsome **Joseph Charun Goitre** (CN male human **veteran**) is married to his long-suffering wife **Lila Goirte** (LN female human **noble**) who is herself having an affair with the head of the Clan Shibboleth **Artel Shibboleth** (N male human **minstrel**).

The clan are patrons of the arts, and have wild orgies at their home; itself a decadent folly devoted to bad taste and myriad sins. Joseph keeps a harem to serve his needs, and is fickle and unpredictable, yet a deep thinker. He sees himself as good king material, and should one of the Royal Daughters need a husband he'd be quite happy to remove Lila from the equation.

The Goitres have six children, all somewhat fragile and unpredictable in their own rights, but the spoiled 13-year-old **Arton Goitre** (NE male human **noble**) is already showing signs of instability and violence. One shocking secret lurks below the surface of the family that none of them suspect though; **Beatrice Goitre** (NG female human **noble)**, Joseph and Lila's frail daughter, is having a torrid affair with **Simeon Tredici** (CN male human **minstrel)**. Discovery could mean death for both but their love proves too strong to abandon.

Clan Goitre (Level 10)

Alignment: CN
Location: Capitol (C21. Castle Sin)
Family Head: Joseph Charun Goitre (CN male human **veteran**)
Motivations: Lust, power, excess, novelty
Friends: The Royal Family (Capitol), Gratham Goitre (N male human **noble**; age 19) recently married Elaine of Aldwark (apparent age 25); House Capprico (Capitol), Joseph Charun Goitre (N male human **noble**; age 72) is married to Aretta Capprico (age 17); Clan Nightshade (Capitol), Mallow Lombre Goitre (CN male human **scout**; age 69) is married to Orpine Nightshade (age 22)
Enemies: House Perfida (Capitol) over a forced marriage that ended in the death in childbirth of Elisabeth Perfida née Goitre; House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills)
Tactics: Seduction, enchantment, natural charm, intermarriage

Morale: Cautious. The family show a front of bravado, but few (if any) are willing to die for their name. Although supporters of the Royal Family, the clan secretly admire the sexual depravity and infernal pacts made by the Borxias, and it is possible that the two could become allies in the future

House Perfida: The Plutocrats

If one family could be said to exemplify the state of aristocracy in the Blight, it is the House Perfida. Snobbish, boorish and oppressive, they work their slaves to death, treat any servant shamefully, and think nothing of killing them. Staunch advocates of the "Lord's right," the Perfidas are uber-aristocrats. They would not speak to a servant unless to scold or punish him, they treat everyone who isn't noble like dirt, and openly bully and belittle lesser families while sucking up to those above their station.

In general, the family are too busy being noble to bother about much else, but have made a career of what they do — or rather don't do — they are society's fashionable debauchees, they eat, they drink and they fornicate to make more Perfidas. Their family elder, the vile **Simeon Rallul Fortance Perfida III** (LE male human **noble**), only ever leaves the Capitol to go to his manse in Crow's Fallow, and then complains about everything on the way.

The Perfidas are convinced that the Goitres are in fact imposters with no noble blood, their aim is to expose this sham and have them dragged through the streets and executed for their unconscionable perfidy.

House Perfida (Level 10)

Alignment: CE
Location: Capitol (C20. The Palace of Perfida)
Family Head: Simeon Rallul Fortance Perfida III (CE male human **noble**)
Motivations: Eradicate out the poor
Friends: House Tredici (Capitol), Lirram Perfida (LE male human **thief**; age 22) is married to Illema Tredici (age 23); House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills); House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills)
Enemies: Clan Goitre (Capitol), over various attempted poisonings and a family feud over the death of Elisabeth Goitre
Tactics: Leverage family name and history, condescension, humiliation, poison
Morale: Fearless. Death before dishonour.

Clan Shibboleth: Deadly Duellists

As quick-tempered as a Shibboleth.

—Capitoler expression

Fighters, duellists and lovers, the Shibboleth have a long tradition of loyalty to the military, the present cousin of the clan leader **Artel Shibboleth** (N male human **minstrel**) is none other than **Duke Malice**, whom the family insist on referring to by his full name of Malice-Shibboleth. Artel works for the Royal Army as a spy, and is often away on diplomatic missions, something that interferes with his affair with **Lila Goitre** (LN female human **noble**) wife of Joseph, head of the Goitre family.

Artel's three sons are all infamous duellists: **Josiah** (N male human **duellist**), the enormous **Lewis** (N male human **veteran**) and the youngest, **Young Amon** (N male human **veteran scout**). They wander the streets looking for trouble, and are constantly striving to impress the Queen's Daughters with their antics. They love to goad the sons of Lilly Wether, and combine these with daring hunts for wererats to try to impress their cousins the Tredici. The family have very close ties with the Family Capprico.

Clan Shibboleth (Level 9)

Alignment: N
Location: Capitol (C17. Shibboleth Manor)
Family Head: Artel Shibboleth (N male human **minstrel**)
Motivations: Advantageous family alliances, duels
Friends: Deep historic ties with House Capprico (Capitol); the Royal Family (Capitol), Duke Malice in particular; House Tredici (Capitol)
Enemies: House Wether (Capitol); The Family (Festival)
Tactics: Intimidation and belittling, public humiliation, formal duels
Morale: Fearless; Shibboleths never retreat before a foe. A long proud line of warriors, the family has deep roots and is admired even by her enemies.

Shortstones: The Gnomes of Castorhage

Larger than any family, the clan of the Shortstones easily numbers in thousands and claims members through distant or tenuous relations reaching into the tens of thousands. Not so much a family as an extended gene pool, there are hundreds of famous Shortstones throughout the history of the city, most of whom share the same attributes and desires for wealth — particularly gems — and a love of their own clan. Of their many successful kin, the most famous and rightly acknowledged as the Family Eldest is **Justice Weld Shortstone I, Master of Structures.** Weld is a covert Anarchist who aims to bring down the Illuminati and who has spies across the city working on ways to bring the system down from within. He wishes to see the entire Blight of Castorhage erased and a great Gnome Exodus, in the tradition of the ancient elves of Akados, back to an almost mythological ancestral homeland in the High Downs of the Grand Duchy of Reme. That it should be the Shortstones who lead the way and reclaim this birthright as kings is simply a matter of course.

The Family have a code, or special prayer they honour, which runs as follows:

"*A Shortstone shall always give succour*
to another of his family;
No Shortstone shall harm another;
A Shortstone shall always make sure his kin
have money in their pockets."

Shortstones (Level 12)

Alignment: NG
Location: Capitol (C10. GnomeTown)
Family Head: Justice Weld Shortstone I, Master of Structures**Motivations:** Gnomish cultural heritage, family interests, profit, gems
Friends: None specific, but many admirers
Enemies: Few, but the racial enemies (such as kobolds) consider them consider them as representative of their kind
Tactics: Loans and favours, bribery, personal charm, guile, financial pressure, sheer weight of numbers, extortion
Morale: Courageous; seldom broken. The Shortstones are too much the fabric of the city to ever be eradicated and they always have a fall-back position or ally to call upon.

Clan Sullage: The Avant Gard

The insanity that can result from extensive inbreeding — sometimes simply called the "Madness" by aristocrats — is deepest in the Sullage family. Some would call them visionaries, but most who know them keep their distance. Yes, they have their uses; arcane knowledge, vast libraries which clog the stairwells and attics of the Sullage Mansion (ironically

called The Palace of Light and Joy), and their devotion to the arts, but in truth they are avoided.

The **Grand Seamstress**, **Justice Lady Lucrezia Elisabeth Sullage** of art-adoration, and her home is flung open to the genius, the lost, and the insane. The Borxias admire and sponsor her art, and that of her demented children. The old madam is also at the cutting edge of the outré fashions of the Blight and hosts lavish and violent balls to honour protégés she uncovers, or makes…

An uncle, **Spent Sullage, Justice Lord of Physicians (a.k.a. The Lord of Leeches)**, is the best known of the family but is so often referred to by his title that his name is often forgotten. Spent is loathed by his family, partly through jealousy of his undoubted (if disturbing) talents, and partly through his unwillingness to share.

Clan Sullage (Level 9)

Alignment: NE
Location: Capitol (C22. The Palace of Light and Joy)
Family Head: Justice Lady Lucrezia Elisabeth Sullage (NE female alchymic-undying* human **necromantic mage**)
Motivations: The pursuit of knowledge at any cost, creation of living art, golem-stitching
Friends: House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills); currently discussing alliances with House Wether (Capitol)
Enemies: The Wryes (Capitol), they have murdered at least six Wryes in the past decade and have a long-standing family hatred
Tactics: Mutilation, experimentation, torture, rumour-mongering
Morale: Low. A well-aimed strike by a group of fanatics could wipe the clan out and few would shed any tears.

Family Wether – the Estranged Foreigners

Cast aside and exiled decades ago from landholdings far to the north, the estranged Wether's have thick clumsy accents and still find some local words hard to say, yet their intellects and plans are keen. A staunchly pro-Royal Family (who took them in from exile and fed and housed them) the stoic Wethers are unmistakably foreign with their huge walrus moustaches, thickset features, ruddy skin and flinty eyes.

Although hierarchies are through the male line, and the enormous bull of a man **Ruscharde Morsche Wether II** (LN male human **scout**) is fair and engaging, it is his slender wife **Lilly Wether** (N female human **master thief**†) who truly runs the family affairs. Lilly is a brilliant spy and uses her talents to aid her beloved, the Castorhages, in their ongoing troubles with the Borxias. A handsome group of three daughters make up part of the immediate family, are all able and admirable spies picking up gossip from seemingly every corner of the Capitol and spreading it like butter. The four Wether sons are headstrong, and get into frequent duels with the Shibboleth sons. No one has yet died (that would be unseemly), but a host of henchmen and allies have paid the ultimate price for their loyalty and friendship.

House Wether (Level 9)

Alignment: N
Location: Capitol
Family Head: Lilly Wether (N female human **spy**)
Motivations: Loyalty to the Royal Family
Friends: Secret alliance with the Clan Sullage (Capitol) aimed at bringing the Borxias down, their deals swinging on property and business ventures; the Royal Family (Capitol)
Enemies: Outrage and condemnation of House Shibboleth over attempts to frame an (allegedly) innocent senior family figure over a fair duel results in frequent duels between the sons of both families; hatred of House Borxia (Capitol) over property disputes and unpaid loans as well as deaths of family diplomats at their hands
Tactics: Spying, brokering information and secrets
Morale: Very strong. Exiles flock to their banner, and the family name is arrogantly bandied about throughout the city. The support of the Royal Family secures their future so long as the Castorhages are in power.

The Wryes: Master Spies and Blackmailers

If the Wethers are good spies, the Wryes are the masters. There is seemingly no secret they do not know of, large or small. That they sponsor and have friends in the highest echelons of the Guild helps, as does the infernal spies of the Borxias who do their bidding and have scryers of the highest talent in their palace. They also have countless constructs that flap and slither at their command and spy from invisible corners of the Capitol secures their reputation — if you want to know exactly what is happening, ask the Wryes.

Anan Wrye (N male human **master thief**†) is the token figurehead of the family, but true power rests with his uncle His Royal Highness, Duke **Justice Scapegrace Wrye,** Justice of Alleys, Streets and Ways. Scapegrace is a devil for finding things out, and has contacts across the city, including within the Fetch and the Illuminati. He is close to uncovering the truth of the true power behind the city, and it is his suspicions that all the power culminates at a single shadowy figure who weaves a web of deceit and plots across the whole of Castorhage. Discovering the truth is likely to be the end for him.

The perverted obsessions of the Sullage family occupies much of the rest of Scapegrace's time, and he has a devoted group of followers presently lurking within the home of his enemy to try to undermine her and have her publicly humiliated for her tastes.

The Wryes

Alignment: LN
Location: Capitol (C25. The House of Wrye)
Family Head: Public Figurehead – Anan Wrye (N male human **master thief**†), True Head – His Royal Highness Duke **Justice Scapegrace Wrye,** Justice of Alleys, Streets and Ways
Motivations: Power through knowledge, security through knowing the weaknesses or everyone else
Friends: The Royal Family (Capitol), particularly Duke Taim; House Borxia (The Hollow and Broken Hills), the Wryes are already positioning themselves for a war of houses and families and aim to come out of it stronger
Enemies: Clan Sullage (Capitol), at least six family members of the Wryes have been killed with suspicion falling on Sullage
Tactics: Spying, exposing vulnerabilities, extortion
Morale: Hardy. The Wryes are tough against long odds. The family has been a little too good at what they do, however, and they have many enemies who would be happy to see them fall.

Independents and Bastards

A true study of every Royal bastard, every outcast inbred or unwanted child is beyond the scope of this volume, but it is a well-known fact that not every person of power hails from a pure line of descent. Some — remarkably — have risen through talent alone, although most, it is true, are simply ruthless, knew the right sponsor, or were simply in the right place at the right time. A short list of the more noteworthy individuals that presently make their home in the Capitol as movers-and shakers within the city are briefly detailed here.

Crown Prince Rorth† is Princess Eleanor's husband and the dashing face of the Royal Family. Originally a minor landowner of the Isle Lymossus who caught the Princess's eye with his debonair, devil-may-care attitude, the Crown Prince has ridden his fortunate marriage to access to sexual conquests, horse racing, and the absinthe that he desires. His "beloved"

wife is well aware of these vices, but intends to keep him around as long as he is good for her image. The moment that is no longer the case, he will undoubtedly be disposed of by the most efficient means possible.

Crown Prince Clovis†, Prince of the Capitol is the ancient husband of the grotesque Geneve, who secretly has designs upon the throne. His position as the "Crown Prince of the Capitol" gives him considerable access and influence within the Capitol, which he has put to good use in pushing his agenda. It remains to be seen if his plotting will have any true impact against the sheer inertia of the Royal Family, and his obsession with Elaine of Aldwark is likely to land him in hot water at some point with his jealous wife or an amused Demoriel or both.

Duke Malice†, a Shibboleth by blood and cousin to the Queen, carries authority over both the Royal Army (and navy) and the City Watch, though in truth the Crown Justice Braken's "advisory" capacity proves to carry more weight when push comes to shove. Completely without scruples, Malice will do whatever it takes to achieve victory, as has been shown time and again by his brutal tactics in suppressing unrest at home and abroad. Despite his bluster and seemingly unnatural vigour (he is 80 but appears 30 to 40 years younger) he secretly fears Braken and wonders what the Crown Justice is truly capable of.

Duke Taim† is the Queen's only nephew, born of her late half-brother, who himself was the result of a liaison between her father, King Worrn IV, and a noblewoman of Olduvar after the execution of Queen Lotheria. Taim was a ward of the Royal Household since the age of 10 and was protected from the pettiness of the Queen's Daughters by a devoted governess. Taim is utterly loyal to the Royal Family and, like Malice, capable of extreme violence and cruelty if needed in order to protect them. However, Taim, is more controlled in his fury, and is more likely to see good in people if they give him cause to do so. Taim is madly in love with Princess Rebecca of Mourney and has proposed no fewer than eleven times. As the Master of the Capitol, he is responsible for the security and well-being of the Royal Family and all residents in the Capitol. He is well-aware of the machinations of Crown Prince Clovis and works daily to thwart him and any other evils he uncovers — a daunting task even with the tacit help of the Wryes.

Part Three: Running the Capitol

Playing Politics

The details of the various ruling families within the Capitol offer an option to broaden the campaign into a more political and dangerous arena. Here, it is not simply power that measures the strength of an opponent, but her name, her kin, her influence. A low-level aristocrat may seem a pretty paltry opponent, but when that person is a Borxia and her death would be investigated and brutally avenged, adventures can enter a different ground.

A Family as an Enemy

It is easy to bring in an adventure or even whole adventure path with a whole family, or alliance of families. Imagine an adventure that begins with the death of a decent and honest NPC friend of the characters. Expand that death a little more darkly — the person was framed for witchcraft and suffered an agonising death at the stake; the accusation came from a high ranking Borxia or Tredici and that alone was enough to guarantee a public execution of the worst kind. Ask why such a powerful NPC was involved, was it jealousy, a trivial or petty slight, or something deeper? Perhaps the NPC had something the family wanted, a person, an object, or a secret, and refused to give it up. Imagine that the object sought was a secret, and that the characters are somehow given an opportunity to discover it: a note delivered by barrister, a trusted friend of the NPC, after death. Whoever, or whatever, passed on the secret is being watched by spies of the family, and they meet a grizzly end. Soon the characters find they have incredibly powerful enemies, and even if they hand over the secret, it is powerful or wicked enough to need the character's total silence afterwards — something only achieved by their deaths.

The mechanics of an interesting and diverse host of powerful NPC families provides characters that are literally above the law and seemingly untouchable. The enemy penalties associated with such foes would be deadly, but not insurmountable. The aristocrats do not venture into the dirtier parts of town, and here even their associates and henchmen are few and less powerful.

The adventure could be continued into a whole campaign using this family as a constant backdrop. ***The Levee*** adventure uses a family of foes in the background of the adventures. It does not bring them front and centre, but they are nonetheless useful tools in building interesting NPCs and a richer adventure.

A Family as Both Friend and Foe

Where games enter a more politically-oriented arena there are even more options. Here the characters mingle with or are even a part of the upper echelons of the lesser or greater houses; they might be servants (or even begin as slaves), they may be part of a church or guild or club that has close ties with a family. As a result, the characters become embroiled in the enemies of those families, being given difficult options to consider or face alienating their potential and probably unwanted allies. Make these NPCs as deranged as wished, in fact the more unhinged the better; an unwanted sponsor who takes a shine to the characters could become a fearfully memorable NPC.

In these adventures, the characters always have a choice who to join or oppose, but there are always serious consequences. "*Do as I say or you are my enemy*," is a powerful tool available. Don't make these NPCs omnipotent, give them flaws and weaknesses, madness and failings; they may love a character, or admire the whole group, their very unimportance might be useful as well as their abilities. The NPC may continually turn to the characters for help, and she or her enemies may be no better or worse than each other.

Imagine an adventure where a family helps the characters , gets them released from jail (perhaps for crime the NPC arranged in the first place). This sort of idea is barely touched on at the end of the Blight adventure ***TB3: Bloody Jack*** and provides an excellent opportunity for further delving into the high places of power and their dark secrets. The idea of the characters owing a powerful NPC a favour or allegiance is interesting, particularly when that NPC is mad or deeply immoral and wants the characters to do her dirty work — or else.

The Family as Background

One final option allows the GM a slightly simpler role; the characters are allies to or friends with or part of a family. They may willingly or unwillingly be part of this alliance, and are drawn into its consequences. Rival NPC families may hate them on sight, attempt to do them harm continually, or try to frame them for their own heinous crimes. The characters may be wealthy, or simply bastards that share a family name, but the plots they are drawn into, and suffer the consequences of, may not be of their making. They may become pawns or playthings of more powerful members or they may — if you wish — be born into positions of honour and respect, a campaign or adventure path with aristocratic characters offers some interesting options again. See the character of **Duke Taim†** above for some ideas along those lines. Have the players create their characters all as members of the aristocratic class and then pursue their own class levels from there, and a campaign about duty to family, position, or take can be easily established. The campaign can be made unsavoury, garnished with a few likeable commoner NPCs with a just cause and there are the makings of a campaign about revolutionary plotting.

Complex Social Skills Checks

GMs should consider their view on single skill checks to resolve complex issues, there are two ways of thinking about this. Firstly, a single successful check brings great drama to a scene; a character who *must* make a DC 18 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion)

check and gets one go at it has a lot riding on her shoulders, a failure is memorable, but then so too is a success, particularly if the reward is a valuable alliance, or some token of respect from the powerful NPC. The reverse might also be true; however, a family ball may have half a dozen allies or potential enemies who attitudes are resolved not by simple checks, but by a series of events, tests and answers. Use the combination of role-play with skill checks to move on these resolutions. A GM might wish for a series of encounters outside or within adventures to move to a resolution; these encounters might take place over hours, days or even weeks and months.

For example, the characters have been asked to form an alliance with a hoary old goat of the Borxias named **Arabella Borxia** (LE female human **noble**). Arabella is not easy to get to however, and the characters need to find ways of attracting her attention during the ball. They can do this several ways, but Arabella loves to dance. The characters have opportunities to join her or make fools of themselves several times during the dance, and have to balance wits with another family who are also keen to seek Arabella's patronage. These NPCs jostle with the characters, trying to make them look stupid, and if it comes to blows; well, how brutish of the characters to start such action amongst nobility. Duels of etiquette might be fought, with opposed checks over a series of course or events between individual characters and NPCs, the characters have chances to impress Arabella simply through good role play, and at the end of the ball they may succeed or fail. Either event brings other consequences, makes enemies and friends, and these in turn move things on further.

The essential thing here is to have fun, if powerful enemies and complex skill checks and resolutions over several events or maybe even adventures isn't what the GM wants, then ignore it, after all, there is enough in treachery and poisoning and skulduggery already, de facto duels and wars are fought day in day out by the employees and allies of the different families, and that alone is adventure enough.

Capitol Encounters

It is recommended that encounters rarely happen by chance in the Capitol, particularly in its higher quarters, and encounters are usually with either servants scurrying about or guards. Aristocrats rarely need to venture out, and if they do they are likely to have a huge entourage with them.



Chapter Six: The Great Lyme River



Sister Lyme touches everyone in the city. Her beauty graces every view with its oil-black taint, and her perfume is strong, an alchemic thing that can — and often does — kill. You'll hear birdsong above the phlegm-clearing choke of her sluggish journey to the sea, canaries sing from every windowsill here, and if they stop their song suddenly, you'd best run to higher ground as fast as you can to avoid the Canker, Sister Lyme's poison kiss.

Her veins carry the city trade into and out of this vile cursed metropolis, and occasionally something rises that simply should not: a bloated pale whale carcass from the Unsea, the flick of a tentacle tasting the air for children that play too close to her shore, a single glowering eye.

So bless her and honour her, but above all keep her at a distance, and do not be lulled into her embrace. You might become another insignificant part of her feral, chymic bulk.

Introduction

Water?

No.

Not the poison that slithers and coughs its way through this city. It is a liquid thing, certainly, some say she is even alive, that her children — the monstrous pale abominations that occasionally flip onto the surface — are truly her own.

Wherever — or whatever — you are in this city, she is the omnipresent spectre, her fingers groping and touching, slithering up streams and brooks and millraces. Her poison ink chymic waters stain the Blight; her feral toxic stench pervades the air, the clothes, the skin of everyone here. It is hard to describe the smell: of uber-humanity perhaps, a pressing stench of sweat and shit and piss swallowed in the boiling poisons of her alchemy.

She is inescapable. You can try to hide her scent, but it's still there. Some foreigners claim to be able to recognise someone from Castorhage simply by their odour — often years after they left the city. It can't be washed off, and some it drives insane; the poor, sad madmen scrubbing their skin to bone as they seek to remove it, convinced it is eating them alive. Her phlegm hangs from every gutter, a sick briny waste that slithers from walls and gables like an ochre black spittle.

Yet she is the soul of the city, its lifeblood, its veins and arteries of trade and commerce, her back seething with thousands of boats dancing like lice upon her flesh. Within her body, however, vision simply ceases. Daylight ends within a few feet of her skin and a new place exists, one they say that has a sick part of Between. The things that dance within her carcass are pale, and often huge, but always hungry. Food is so rare that the brethren who worship her would do anything to eat, and their senses are honed to their hungers. A frantic swimmer creates waves that can be heard for thousands of yards and bring hungry, wan things dancing in delight, slavering and biting at the oil-poison sickness before them to feed.

Those who worship Brine say she is a cancer, a manmade thing throttling all life and that one day will drown the whole city in her bile. Those who worship the Madness of the Mirrorstorm await such an event eagerly, toil for it, strive for the moment when the Lyme swallows the city and their day begins. The Brine folk cast flowers and holy waters and other pure things — occasionally darker sacrifices at the edges of the belief — but still Sister Lyme goes on, her sickness a continuation, death never seeming to come to her.

There are moments when she freezes and her dance halts, when ice-fayres gingerly step onto her surface to mock her. She does not like the laughter at her expense, and takes many who dance too close to the edges of the ice, her mouth drawing them down to feed her. Sometimes her edges dry in the long summers and she seems to be dying truly, her sluggish crawl to the sea almost halting, yet never quite doing what she perhaps yearns for.

And twice per day, the sea invades her, seeks to cleanse her with its brine blood, tries in vain to purify her. Sometimes great tidal bores drive deep into her soul, but the end is always the same; no matter how many buildings such tidal bores take with them, they eventually halt and surrender to her toxic embrace once more.

Welcome to the Great Sister Lyme. Do not swim.

Part One: Places

"Sister Lyme is always with you, watching, waiting. In the end, everything comes back to her embrace, and so will you."

What the Great Lyme looks like …

Almost solid, at times her dance is so sluggish that she seems to have finally stopped, exhausted, from her labours. Yet there is movement within her and without her: boats cling to her oily waves, birds swoop to kiss her skin, and occasionally things slip into view from below — always pale, always sick, and always hungry. She rarely angers, does Sister Lyme; she is like a glacier or the hour hands of a clock. She moves on, always.

And below the surface she is dark, a viscous-phlegm blackness that is impossible to see through, only feel, groping blindly like the other things that lurk below.

What the Great Lyme smells like …

Abominable, her scent clings in the air looking for a place to caress and infest. It is feral and alchymic and ordure rolled into one, a bleach-stinging misery that can physically hurt. It is as much taste as smell. The closer one goes, and the bank is plenty close enough for most, the more encompassing her caress becomes, tainted with offal and human waste and pollution. In some places, the chymic is thicker and takes the breath away; in others, suffocating bleach murders it.

And for those caught within her embrace, their stench is indescribable.

What the Great Lyme feels like …

Clinging, sometimes almost like a second skin. Those who live nearest the river, particularly those in Toiltown and in the Wash, cannot shed this touch, even by bleach and scrubbing. It is a part of their being, a tattoo of their upbringing.

What the Great Lyme sounds like …

Sick. Sister Lyme's movements are sluggish, and often her bowels can be heard churning and spilling onto the surface in a great sick retching. Sometimes, other stranger sounds can be heard, the babble of excited things. Some people say they are talking, others that it is simply the river's mad children tearing at each other far below the touch of the sun or moon.

Seven words to describe the Great Lyme River …

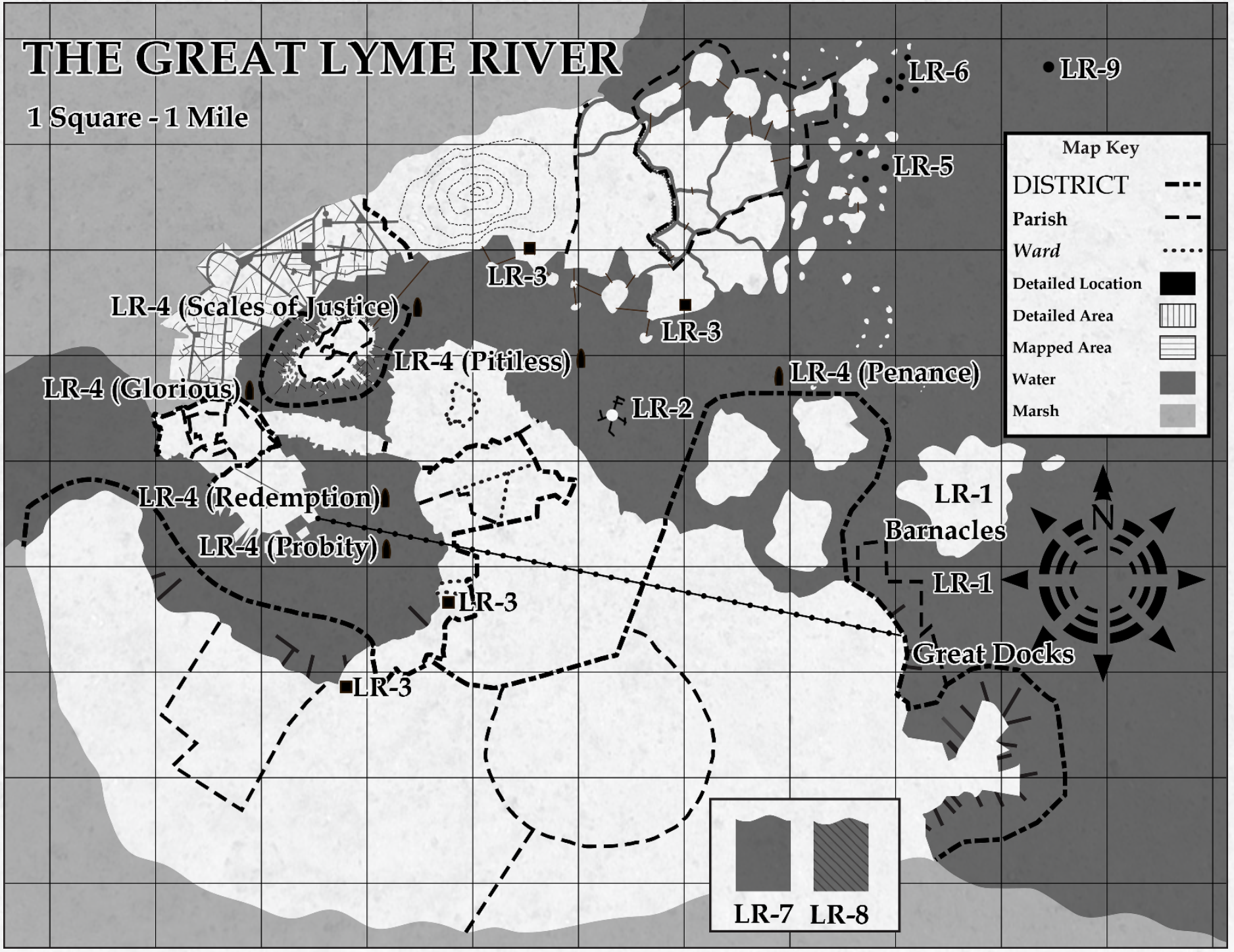
Poison **phlegm**
DEAD ... **Mouths** **Corpses**
… motion ***SLITHERING***

Parishes and Wards

None.

The Lyme has places within her womb, but these are never still — nothing is permanent within her flesh.

The places described below form constituent parts, settlements within the city, businesses, false or man-made isles. Where such places have several parts, they are described within that area as a single thing for ease of reference.


THE GREAT LYME RIVER
1 Square - 1 Mile
LR-6
LR-9
LR-5
LR-3
LR-4 (Scales of Justice)
LR-3
LR-4 (Pitiless)
LR-4 (Penance)
LR-4 (Glorious)
LR-2
LR-4 (Redemption)
LR-1
Barnacles
LR-4 (Probity)
LR-1
LR-3
Great Docks
LR-3
LR-7
LR-8
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
Marsh
N

LR1. The Barnacles and Great Docks

If ever something could be considered a human termite mound, this place is it. It is a single large isle of granite, infested with buildings that cling or thrust from its surface. This place is fortified and drowning in ships that seek solace from the isle's embrace. Beyond, countless bridges reach outward to land, groping madly at a cluster of warehouses, beyond which is a gigantic manmade wall.

Not so much a single place as a state within the city, the Great Docks are where the two stable accesses to Between, and from where the city presently enjoys its vast wealth, are entered. Two great docks have been created within the Barnacles, and herein are the two portals. Other portals come and go. Ships full of settlers and eager captains are sent into them; most do not return, but those who do — assuming the portal remains stable enough for them to do so perhaps years later — have their fortunes made for life.

A constabulary state, the Barnacles is a mad paranoid frenzied testament to the struggles between business — and the Illuminati in particular — and the state. The Queen, in theory, owns everything discovered by her subjects, and these in turn become vassal states. The two states linked here — The Castorhage East Dominion and The Castorhage Western Province and Slave State (known more commonly as Hope) — are vassal states and colonies of Castorhage and as such considered legitimate conquests. Other places that come and go are also subject to the same need to pay homage (and taxes) to Her Majesty, but collecting taxes in far-flung outposts is very difficult — particularly when such posts come and go. Business is therefore about as unstable as it can be, with trading houses and families and businesses coming and going. Warehouses suddenly find a *gateway* to somewhere, expeditions are sent through, and exploratory results returned (if they are lucky). At any given time, at least half of the Barnacles and Great Docks are empty, but the casual appearance of *gateways* or reappearance of *gateways* or sudden materialisation — or forcing of new ways (see Sidebox) — means the Barnacles are always likely to be the hub of the business side of Between. They hope.

The place is brimming with trigger-happy crossbowmen and paranoid guards, yet has sections that are almost disused. This makes for a happy hunting ground for entrepreneurs — those brave enough, rich enough, and certainly mad enough to try their luck and their wealth on a chance to make a fortune. Tales of lands of gold, of vast Between-elephant graveyards groaning with ivory, and of fertile cornucopian lands where saffron grows like weeds are profligate. At any given time therefore, there may be as many as two dozen accesses into Between, some of which are even unknown to the Illuminati.

In theory at least, **Justice Burr**[†]**,** Lord Protector of the City, a.k.a. the Collector, is responsible for the collection of taxes and tithes from the two Between states and the two companies that run them — The Royal Between Company and its semi-independent subsidiary The Castorhage East Dominion Company. Burr has a fine garret high in the Barnacles. He divides his time between here and the Capitol, to ensure he keeps abreast of events in the dangerous focus of power. Behind him, a small cabal of men and women govern affairs of the Royal Between Company on behalf of the Royal Family (and Illuminati).

The Royal Between Company is headquartered out of the Capitol and chaired by **Lucas Nathaniel Nightshade** (LN male human **noble**). It directly administers the Castorhage Western Province and Slave State. The subsidiary Castorhage East Dominion Company is run in Lord Nightshade's name by **Chief Factor Aldrege Butterknuckle** (N male gnome **knight**), who in truth wields almost absolute control over the activities of the East Dominion.

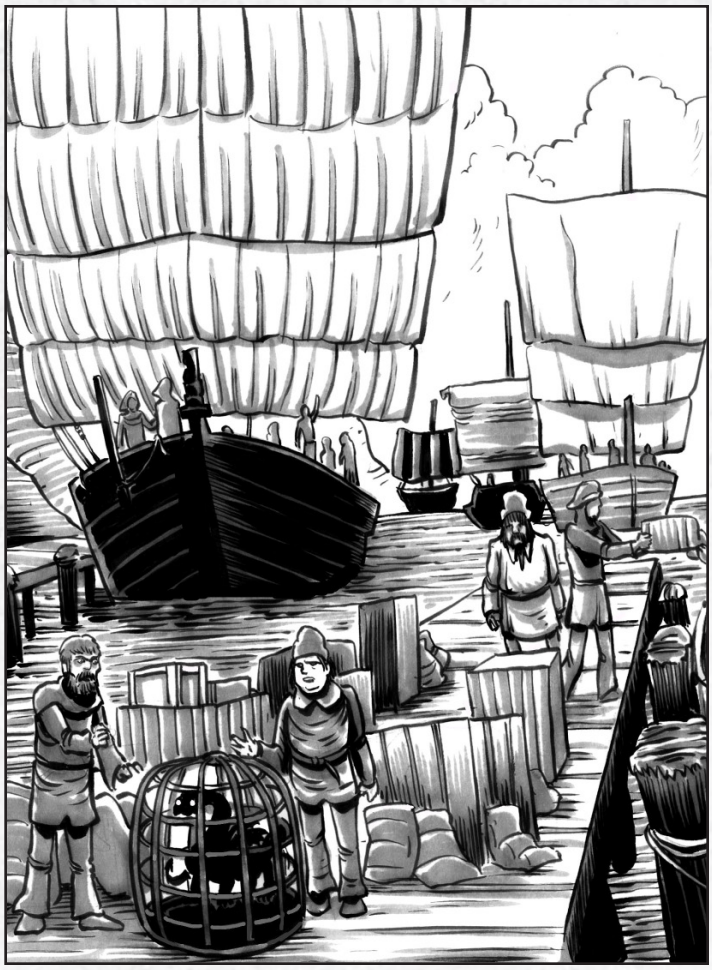
Underneath Lord Nighshade, **Captain Elias Winterberry** (LN male human **veteran**) of the Royal Between Corps is in charge of day-to-day operations, and has hundreds of soldiers, porters, sailors, and staff below him. These staff present Winterberry with a considerable headache as they selfishly insist upon living in other parts of the city. He has set up a complex pass system, which is very difficult to forge. Sadly for Winterberry, and his colleague **Earl Fobbringdon Fox, Paladin of the Welcoming Gate** (**TT12**), certain senior figures in the Guild have copies of the seals used in these passes, and those of the correct rank in the Guild — or those with enough cash — can readily come by them. Of course, the Guild is very cautious about whom they give these seals to, and other expensive but substandard forgeries are occasionally offered that lead to a downturn in the careers and lives of those foolish enough to present them to alert guards.

Two huge warehouses are built into the Barnacles, both owned by one of the Between Companies (see **Part 5** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*** for more information). They are known as the East and West docks. The East Dock is housed in a huge natural tidal cavern, within which hangs the *gateway* to the Castorhage East Dominion. Some have described the *gateway* as a sick mirror, a living fleshy thing with a deep blackness lurking within its soul. It is watched over by a score of tough, nervy guards, and appears as nothing more than a slick black oily flesh that has some unsettling movement.

On the dominion side of the *gateway*, a dangerous sargasso lurks at the edges of the fickle door, which moves about occasionally and to which it is difficult to plot a course as there are no landmarks.

The portal to the Castorhage Western Province and Slave State broods in the West Dock. This shows far more influence of the aspect beyond, and the great cavern that houses the *gateway* hangs thick with an unnatural humidity that causes curious weather to spring up around the Blight side. A score of experienced guards watch the *gateway* from a pair of iron-plated towers. A great iron gate opened by a pair of massive ettin-based fleshgines[†] and lashed into the workings deep in the bowels of the iron towers offers some protection from beyond. Some strange things have been seen wriggling or birthing through the gate here, and this has led to extreme precautions. This *gateway* looks like a giddy spinning echo of both sides of the *gate*, and is said to induce incredible nausea in those who pass through it (DC 20 Constitution save or be poisoned for 1d3 days).

The Barnacles serves as home and place of recreation for these guards. Outer walkways and cranes are used to take up supplies, and within its walled premises, a small township has developed.



Fickle Gateways to Between

While the Barnacles for some reason is the hub of aspects of Between suddenly vomiting open entrances, any true exploration of the place has been frustratingly slow. Attempts to create magic portals into Between have met with disaster, and whilst there are always willing volunteers to try (since the rewards would in theory be vast), they have all failed. Certain thieves, and members of the Royal Between Reflectory Society and Guild, have access to some of these extremely fickle *gateways*, but so far they have been more use as escape routes than in offering any real options for fixed explorations.

Borough

Beyond the Barnacles, a series of walkways, bridges, and chain ferries and treadmill slink to the mainland and the Great Docks. The greatest of these is the Great Treadmill Ferry leading directly to the Capitol over the urban decay of Toiltown, though it has been some 40 years since it has seen use (see **Chapter 5**).

A cluster of warehouses, some of which have clearly been broadly altered (to accommodate a changing position of the *gateway* into Between) cram about the place. A desperate frenetic air of building occupies the place; bamboo scaffolding, workers, and lashed platforms infest it and the spaces between, floundering out to the sea hereabouts, and watched by desperate, temporary lighthouses and great lanterns.

Between *gateways* spring up here on occasion, usually about once per year, but sometimes more frequently. The *gates* vary in size; sometimes they are barely enough to crawl into, others are the size of small ships. Each is explored, catalogued, and considered. Smaller ones are given over to independent companies (or even individuals) to explore and hastily exploited; others are given more serious consideration by the Royal Between Company. The entire exercise is like a gold rush. Frenetic activity follows discovery, and then brutal haste brings the whole business into action. Explorers are sent in, the place is catalogued, mapped, and exploited for as long as possible. Between mines, Between forests and Between harvests are gathered, brought back to the city, and sold before the whole place collapses. Some Between colonies last years, or are lost and then rediscovered (usually without any trace of the occupants). The only commonality is that these *gates* usually appear here. Thus, a legalese frenzy has occurred, laying claim to space, and while abandonment seems to be the most common aspect of the Barnacles and Great Docks, where work occurs it is frantic. Endless and aggressive wrangles occur over the place and its constituent parts.

LR2. The Gyre: The Town of Flotsam and Jetsam

A town of flotsam dances in eddies in the river, trapped by a whirlpool current and spinning slowly in the oily slick. That it exists at all is strange; somehow the place floats, its streets and debris timbers holding together and rising into curious bleached buildings. Piers grope away from this strange settlement, and colourful boats hang from these nervously.

Spiritual home of the briny, the Gyre is a town built upon flotsam, formed above a slow whirlpool in the river that rotates with the slowness of hour hands upon a clock. That it floats at all is remarkable; that it is a thriving settlement with buildings, boardwalk streets, and piers is unbelievable. From the shore, figures can be seen moving gingerly along the boardwalks, smoke drifts from chimneys, and hundreds of colourful boats are visible clinging to the turning shore.

The Gyre is held aloft on the wreckage of an arcane galley called the *Gull*. An early and disastrous attempt to infuse an aquatic devil into a living ship, the ship was nicknamed the "Unsinkable," but the devil within lapsed into madness and smashed itself to bits as it slipped from the harbour, ripping at a dozen other vessels nearby and tearing them apart. The matchwood that is left is infused with some of the devil's innate buoyancy and was initially left to sink, which it steadfastly refused to do. Over the coming months, a mass of flotsam gathered on the ship and remnants of the ships blighted by the devil's touch became a semi-permanent feature that in time became a favourite haunt for pirates, smugglers, and rogues. In time, these rogues were usurped by the briny, who found the home to their liking. For the past 367 years, the Gyre has remained in place, her base timbers loaded with timber settlements and still — so far — staying above the waters.

The Gyre operates as a fishing village, but also has a lurking underclass of those who have good reason not to be in the city. While the majority of occupants are briny, there are enough visitors and other races to allow others to blend in. **Mother Salt** (N female briny† **priestess**), the ruler of the Gyre, is a repulsive old fishwife. She spends her days wandering about the place complaining of feeling seasick, remonstrating with the youthful members of the isle, and demanding that they settle down and have large briny families. She has a disgust for wererats, and the briny here are merciless in their obsession with killing rats. An overly large number of ugly (mostly with mange) whippets and terriers wander the Gyre, and surly, ugly cats lurk in the spaces below the boardwalks of the place. A rebellious youth **Grathen Crake** (CN male briny† **veteran**) is broodingly rousing a few of the briny to rebellion, a quiet type of revolution that involves abducting and killing strangers, extorting money from their families, general smuggling, and mutilation.

One of the greatest sea captains Castorhage has ever produced, **Hezrah Wrack** (N male briny† **pirate captain**) now lives in retirement in the Gyre. He is frequently seen in one of the few drinking establishments in the township, the teetering, floating (and sometimes almost sinking) Old Mother Bore, a curious inn that is crammed with relics of Wrack's adventurous past and surely the only inn in the whole city that has a constantly sinking, waterlogged floor.

LR3. The River Ghats and Holy Water Temples

The river seethes with ghats —, steps that descend into the poison Sister Lyme and are used to burn the dead, immolating loved ones with expensive woods and spices, or just humbly burning the corpses before ceremoniously giving them back to the river.

A tradition picked up centuries ago from the colonies of Far Jaati, a poisoned underclass delivers the dead to the gods in this way. Jaata holy men and women (called "sadhu") prepare the dead for their journey to the afterlife, guide their cares into the next world, and burn their now-useless flesh in this one. The riverbank heaves with ghat masters and mistresses, sadhu representing all facets of the gods and their many faces and names. Here, a worshipper of Mother Grace may choose to give her body to the goddess by the fire, her soul taken into Heaven and her body to Sister Lyme. Here, followers of Brine can be cast into the waters untouched by flame, and here also, bodies can be quietly and unceremoniously burnt and cast into the river. Some relatives of the deceased — in fact, a large number of them — cannot afford even the most basic immolations, and hundreds of bodies are dumped daily into the Sister, perhaps the reason it teems with so much life.

With the recent passage of the Corpse Act, the ghats have taken a financial hit in their business as the sadhu are technically required to see verification of the payment of a Death Duty before undertaking the cremation of a body in the city. However, a brisk black market in Death Duty certificates has blossomed in the last few years, and the ghat-masters have always been adept at adding an extra passenger or two to their floating funeral pyres with an adequate amount of silver persuasion. They have managed to stay afloat (both financially and in the literal sense), but they are feeling the pinch and fear any greater scrutiny in the future.

The main ghats are located on the map; these are places teeming with immolations. But a ghat may in truth be found anywhere along the river and at any time.

LR4. The Hulks

Half a dozen carcasses of great ships drown in the phlegm of Sister Lyme, these corpses throttled to other ships to form floating islands. The hulks are crammed with life, pleading naked men and women cry out from their filthy decks, wary of the poison embrace at their feet. Every so often, someone is cast from the hulks and vanishes into the waters, sometimes to struggle for a minute or two in the darkness before being taken, more often than not simply vanishing.

Where space is at a premium, people look to alternative solutions. Faced with frequent escapes, the aristocracy decreed that certain classes of thieves — notably those whose crimes are likely to lead to deportation and banishment to a colony — need to be housed away from more-dangerous prisoners. In short, there was a growing underclass of criminal imprisoned for no good reason who needed housing before being transported to the colonies.

The system works well — even if the occasional hulk sinks — as the prisoners never dare to swim to safety and escapes are hard to organise. On the one occasion there was a riot, Duke Malice simply cordoned off the hulk (the *Anvil*) and let everyone on it starve to death; a harsh but fair result in his view. Since that time, no more riots have occurred.

Six "ships" are presently used: the *Glorious* (see **T18** in **Chapter 9**), the *Penance*, the *Pitiless*, the *Probity*, the *Redemption* (see ***L1: Hereafter***), and the *Scales of Justice*. Each ship is different, but has a main command area overlooking the hulk, which is usually an open hold. The overseer of the hulks, **Home Admiral Hortram Hempnettle** (LN male human **veteran**), is a fretful man whose duties weigh heavily upon him. A staunch Royalist, he fears he's been promoted to the job too quickly and may end up here permanently. An explorer at heart, Hempnettle has a thirst for exploration and tales of heroism. Extremely fair, Hempnettle nonetheless has a huge gang of thugs and Watch Officers below him — his duty men are sent to work on the hulks after misdemeanours — and an air of disrespect looms not far below. The individual wardens below him (all of captain rank) are a mutinous band, and while they know they cannot openly defy the Admiral, they regularly smuggle drink, insectum, and women aboard, sometimes even allowing wealthy enough prisoners to partake for the right fee. Unbeknownst to the Home Admiral, escapees are common; each captain has his price, and the Guild know exactly who to talk to if they need favours.

LR5. Great Windmills

As the bay broadens and the river is choked by the sea, skeletons scatter across its surface. Iron and scrimshaw and wood weather in the grip and spray of the salt sea, her brine air lashing these manmade places. They are windmills, and at least half a dozen of these are vast structures, ageing and in the most part being taken back by the sea ruins.

Once the Great Windmills ground corn in vast quantities, but the advent of treadmills and, of late, *fleshgines* (***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***), has made them little more than relics. Now only a handful of the Great Windmills survive and have been put to alternative uses by their owners. Some form isles for mischief and horror, while others have been abandoned entirely, or taken over as lairs by things that hide away from men in the light and hunt in the dark.

One mill, old Crowther's Great Mill, has been converted into an asylum and refuge by **Physiker Alder Mantle** (NE male human **archmage**) and is used for his own fleshgine experiments. Nearby, a taller windmill houses a smugglers' ring run by an insane mastermind called **Erun** (NE male human **master thief**[†]). A third, and the most outlying, houses a small cabal of vampires who wallow in sin and who are led by **Madame Rosetta Violet** (LE female human **vampire**). One of the Great Windmills also

The Canker

The city's deadliest enemy is perhaps not anarchy or cruel tyranny but instead Sister Lyme herself. The Canker a thick, low-hanging mixture of smog from the thousands of fires and manufactury smokestacks and cook fires and humidity that clothes the river whenever the conditions are right — and the conditions are frequently right. The Canker has many names: Jack's Candle, the Lyme Lantern, the Ghost Light, Gandaspati. A thousand fairy stories have been born of its many names, and many claim the Canker to be the bridegroom of the river herself. The canker has countless effects, some of which are listed below. Like most aspects of Castorhage, the canker also births dozens of creatures. These creatures are quite literally manifested from the anxieties and dreams and tales of the riverfolk, and spring up regularly, given flesh or breath or anger by the very fact of being so lucidly described and spoken of in tales. Most times, the Canker is harmless — or mostly harmless — but at other times, it leaves hundreds of silent corpses in its wake. And other than the use of sentinel canaries or having the financial means to relocate into the higher reaches of the city, no sure-fire way to escape the mist's deadly clutches has yet been discovered.

Father Canker: Most notably, the Canker is revered in the form of a river god, or perhaps a river god is associated with the Canker. In any case, Father Canker — also known as Brother Choke and the Silent Assassin — is a god of poison, silence, and smog. Whether the two are one and the same or are merely a convenient parallel of concepts is immaterial, for the Canker brings its choking death upon the folk of the city — believer and unbeliever alike.

Gag: A foul river-gas occasionally belched from the corpse of a wallow-whale or similar vast, unwholesome creature caught on some river snag below the surface and rotting for some time. But it suddenly rises, releasing its atrocious gaseous emissions upon breaching the surface. The stench that accompanies such an eruption is appalling, but its effects can be deadly. The Gag usually affects only an area within a 1d6 x 50-foot radius of the offending carcass, and remains only for the time is takes the decomposing behemoth to wash down to the sea. Nevertheless, its touch can be fatal for the short time that it is present. Anyone in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution save or become poisoned for 1d4 days.

Ghost Light: A ghost that lurks along the harbours of the Wash, the Ghost Light is named for the wan, sad light hanging in its eyes. It appears from time to time, always seeking holy folk to take on hell-rides across and through the waters of Sister Lyme.

Jack's Candle: One of the deadliest occurrences of the Canker, Jack's Candle is covered in detail in **SI27** of **Chapter 11**.

Sister's Lament: Odourless and tasteless, Sister's Lament is an oxygen-displacing gas accompanied by, it is often reported, a sad lamentation within which can be heard the snatches of words and which is known to lead to madness. The gas slowly seethes from the river sometimes at dusk in a radius of no more than 1d4 x 100 feet and is destroyed by exposure to sunlight. There is truthfully nothing supernatural about the gas other than its cause of a slow oxygen deprivation in its victims, leading to hallucinations of vivid quality and seemingly often related to the singing of a lamenting woman.

The Ashen Sailor's Kiss: An elusive **dragon turtle** that lurks within the Unsea and which occasionally slithers or is drawn into the sea around Castorhage, The Kiss is clever enough to realise that its position is in peril if it openly attacks those who live along the river. It contents itself with hunting far below the surface. However, the skum followers of the Madness of the Mirrorstorm have used the Kiss before to help their cause, and on at least three occasions recently, whole ships have vanished during the cover of dense manifestations of the Canker.

Legendary River Monsters

It is perhaps inevitable that things have slipped from the Unsea and into Sister Lyme. While such chances are far from rare, most creatures either die in the poison toxic oil of the river's depths, are themselves eaten or hunted, or wisely swim out to sea. A few more legendary beasts do appear from time to time, however. In 1673, a great sea monster from the Unsea plagued the waters around the Great Windmills and took the combined efforts of seven whaling ships and their crew to kill her. Just three years later, a gigantic angler whale was seen several times near Town Bridge and Festival before vanishing. And as recently as 1765, a kraken was reported by sailors to be lurking around Hobbington's Lamp. This is to say nothing of the occasional reports of tentacled fish things that walk from the river at night on spider legs.

houses the experiments in elemental fire being conducted by the crazed alchemist known as the **Artificer** (see ***TB4: The Crucible*** for details).

LR6. Other Manmade Isles

The sea beyond the windmills is peppered with other isles, smaller places that are in places little more than rising barnacle-infested masts. Others have clearly been built upon and within, sickly lights hang or sway in these far-away places, slender bridges link some, and others more clearly resemble villages.

Cataloguing the hundreds of other isles would be an almost impossible task, but the various tainted rusting heaps house a variety of life and unlife, from screaming colonies of gannets to a harem of ghouls. The occupants of these places often change by whim: Churchmen come and remove a pack of ghouls, River Watch sloops sail across to destroy a smugglers' group, and a greedy hermit strips a colony of its life to make a refuge for his madness and dreaming.

One of these locations gives entrance into the Underneath and the secret mining colony of Settlement 34 (see **U16** in **Chapter 10**).

LR7. Below the Water

"Just dark, the sense of touch and the gagging embrace of her kiss. The choking was beyond the words I have to describe.

"I fell — I think — and thought that my time was upon me at last. It is an inherent risk of the fishermen that sometimes they get caught in their own nets or tossed by gales and end up in Sister Lyme's embrace.

"I felt something before I saw it, a vast shape, disturbances beneath us. What it was I will never know, but it was huge and cold and wrong, yet its current drew me upward and somehow, back into the light. As I broke the surface, I gagged in the boiling current and caught a glimpse of something descending once more. Perhaps I even imagined it, I hope and pray to Mother Grace I did, but still I see it. No gods-born shape or name could I give it, this thing of movement and pale skin and indistinct form: insect, eel, deep sea fish. No, I have no words; it was alike and yet far away from those I struggle to compare it to."

—Fisherman Angrul Thame
Regarding his intimate encounter with Sister Lyme
12th Ashen 1699.

The river is vast and broad and sluggish. It is a great estuary where the city meets the sea, and a great bore runs up its course twice a day with the incoming tide to a point some 3 miles above the Capitol. The current of the bore can be deadly to swimmers or small boats, but most locals know enough to be able to avoid its embrace. In the winter months, the river is icy and thick with ice floes, if not froze over. In the summer, its waters are languid and tepid, though its deeps are almost always frigid. The river's average depth along the banks is usually no more than 30–50 feet. However, the hidden central channel of the river can extend to a depth of 350 feet or more in some places, hiding all manner of ills from under the sun.

To attempt to catalogue the depths of the river would be foolish, but a generalisation is feasible. The deep is not so cold and dark and dead as those who try to peer into its depths imagine. The Lyme teems with life and unlife, but there are also those to whom it is friend. Blight skum and Blight sahuagin (the infamous sea devils) are both sufficiently intelligent that they can make regular use of paths of a sort guided by scent and currents and temperatures as they go. More intelligent creatures are also able to navigate their way around the deeps. The Family seem to have an ability to be lucky when involved in the waters of Sister Lyme; they get washed ashore, or fumble onto a passing boat, or feel a rope and are pulled to safety almost any time one of them goes in. There seems to be no reason for this rich vein of good fortune, and even the Rat Queen herself muses over it often. Perhaps she has an affinity with Sister Lyme and some innate respect exists; it is certainly beyond mortal reasoning. See **Part 2** for encounters on the Lyme.

LR8. Between Below the Water

"Tales, aye, always tales; a ship full of mirrors sank a few years ago and the whole river was alive with tales of things being seen. I've heard tales of mermaids, but the ones seen in this river you'd hardly follow, and yes the stories of children too close to the shore who suddenly vanish or are taken by a limb with too many fingers or joints."

—Old Gretchen the Fishwife
At her washing

As much as any attempt to catalogue the deeps would be onerous beyond reason, so trying to catalogue a shifting land at the edges of a river peered into and wondered at by thousands of people a day is impossible. It is such a transient thing in its own right that in truth Between rarely finds a foothold, so what arrives momentarily may vanish a few seconds later. Some portals, like the ones in Town Bridge, are relatively fixed, but most come and go and are unnoticed save by those with intimacy to Sister Lyme's many moods.

The river is rich in folklore, and her banks and edges are alive with conditions ideal for Between to suddenly infest the Blight. The riverbank is rightly avoided by superstitious folk at night, and the number and frequency of tales and events and Between-taintings there is higher than many other places.

LR9. Hobbington's Lamp

The city ends here, a vast burning beacon hanging above a ship of iron and timber far out in the bay, almost beyond the flickering pyre-beetle lights of the city. This lonely outpost is scoured by the wind and rain, smoothed and burned by the endless gales and tormented by the sea and her moods. Some say it serves as a guide to those who return here, others that it is a warning to keep away.

The huge sea lantern is powered by a **fire elemental**, and shines out like a ghastly green gash across the night sky. The reclusive lighthouse keeper, **Bladderwrack Fuller** (N male briny† **veteran**), is an odd character. His eyes bulge outward so much that he cannot close them all the way, and he says he hasn't slept for 20 years. A mine of sea tales, Fuller is a man who prefers his own company, but keeps a loyal three-legged terrier, called Cockroach, as his only companion.

Part Two: Running the Great Lyme River

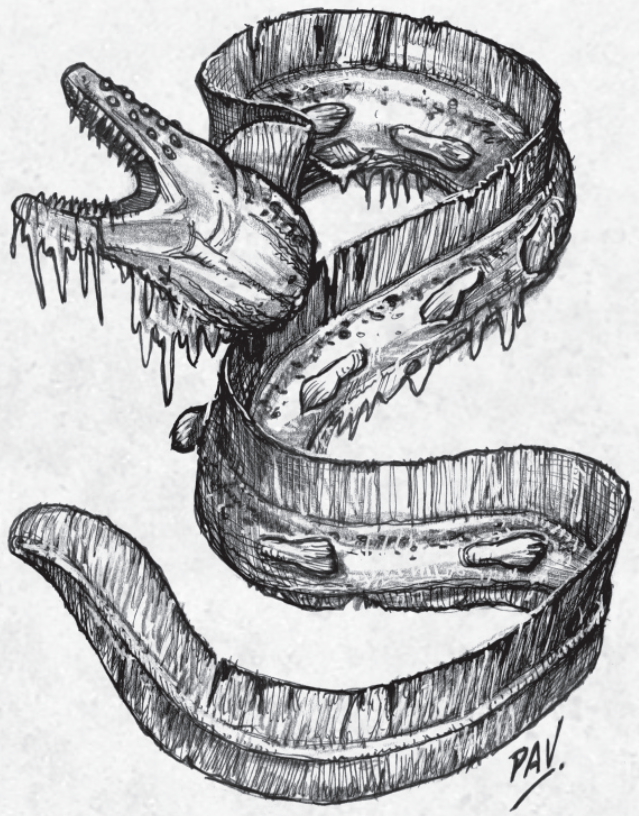
The Great Lyme River Random Encounters

Unlike the other random encounter tables found throughout The Blight Campaign Guide that focus on whether encounters occur during the day or at night, the Great Lyme River has a more important distinction to separate the sorts of encounters she produces — whether the encounter occurs on the surface or by someone daring to plumb the depths below. Encounters in the depths can occur anywhere below the depth of 15 feet, where the sediments and many pollutants of the water effectively block the sunlight on even the brightest of days. Anyone venturing below that depth finds lighting conditions to be dim during the day (providing concealment to anything that doesn't have low-light vision, darkvision, a light source, or some other means of detecting its surroundings), and below the depth of 25 feet is total darkness regardless of the time of day. Even low-light vision is of little use at this depth.

Night on the Lyme

If you prefer to distinguish between day and night encounters on the surface as well, you can roll 1d6 to determine which table to use. On a 1–4 use the "Surface" encounter table and on a 5–6 substitute the "Depths" encounters, as many creatures hiding in the darkness of the depths are willing to rise when the great burning sun has been hidden away for the night. You'll have to apply some common sense to this approach as certain things like old shipwrecks will not suddenly rise with nightfall…or will they?

Depths	Result	Surface	Result
01	Wallow-whale†	**01–20**	Boat
02	Giant shark	**—**	—
03–12	Skum† (2d6)	**—**	—
13	Wreck, warship	**—**	—
14–18	Sough-eel†	**—**	—
19–21	Sea hag	**—**	—
22–23	Wreck, small boat	**21**	Sough-eel†
24–25	Green slime	**22**	Sea hag
—	—	**23**	Green slime
—	—	**25–26**	Buoy
26–27	Sunken isle, man-made	**27–31**	Isle, man-made
28–29	Hunter sharks (1d6+3)	**32–33**	Flotsam
30–33	Slop-sharks (Lyme Angler)	**34–35**	Slop-sharks
—	—	**36–37**	Chuul
34	Sudden current	**38–42**	Sudden wave
35–39	Swarm of Quippers	**43**	Carcass, large
40–41	Merrows (1d6+1)	**44–50**	Mangy gulls
42	Bileborn†	**51**	Bileborn†
43–50	Aquatic Ghouls (1d6+1)	**52**	Festering Lyme rats (2d10)



Occurrence of the Canker

At any given time, there is a chance that at least a part of the Lyme is covered by the Canker, the mixture of fog, smog, caustic fumes, and other more mysterious things that form to create a smothering cloud that hangs low over the water. See the Sidebox in **Part 1** to determine the nature of the Canker that is present, but consult the table in the Sidebox here to determine if the Canker is present at all somewhere along the river based on the time of day and the time of year.

Season	Time of Day	Chance of Occurrence
Spring	Morning	70%
Spring	Day	50%
Spring	Evening	30%
Spring	Night	90%
Summer	Morning	30%
Summer	Day	15%
Summer	Evening	20%
Summer	Night	40%
Autumn	Morning	90%
Autumn	Day	60%
Autumn	Evening	75%
Autumn	Night	100%
Winter	Morning	40%
Winter	Day	50%
Winter	Evening	40%
Winter	Night	30%

Depths	Result	Surface	Result
51	Moon Angel†	**53**	Moon Angel†
52–55	Large water elemental	**54–58**	Water elemental
56–62	Fish, mundane	**59–60**	Fish, mundane
63–65	Sahuagin	**61–64**	Sahuagin
66	Lyme walrus	**65**	Lyme walrus
67–69	Aboleth (**SI26**)	**66**	Aboleth (**SI26**)
70	Chymic spider†	**67**	Air elemental
71–72	Giant frogs (3d4)	**68–71**	Giant rats (2d10)
—	—	**72–73**	Grey ooze
73–78	Mar-eels†	**74–80**	Mar-eels†
—	—	**81–82**	Aquatic ghouls (1d6+1)
79–82	Flotsam	**83–88**	Water hazard
83–97	Corpse	**89–90**	Corpse
—	—	**91–93**	Living disease, bloody flux
98–99	Crathog†	**94**	Crathog†
00	Spiboleths† (1d2)	**95–96**	Giant shark
—	—	**97–00**	Skum (2d6)

Aquatic ghouls: These are ordinary ghouls, but with the additional movement type of Swim 40 ft.

Boat: The surface of the Great Lyme River is aswarm with boats of all shapes and sizes, day or night (though there are far fewer at night that aren't tied off at a dock or pier). When a boat encounter is rolled, determine based on its location if it's near a pier or dock. If so, then there is a 60% chance that the boat is currently tied off rather than underway on the river. If the boat is tied off during the day then there is a 75% chance that it has a full crew compliment aboard. At night this chance drops to 10%. If a boat is underway on the river, then the chance of a full crew aboard rises to 98%, though there is a 2% chance that the boat has slipped its moorings and is currently afloat without crew aboard. The exception is a warship (including an ironclad). These are at anchor 85% of the time with only a 10% skeleton crew of sailors and marines aboard. However, unauthorized personal aboard one of these ships are going to get in over their head in a hurry as reinforcements are called and hidden guardians are unleashed.

To determine the type of boat encountered, roll on the table below. The crew of a boat will commensurate with the type of vessel it is — as a general rule, there will be a captain equivalent to a **pirate captain**, while the rest of the crew is made up of 75% **guards** and 25% **veterans**. Each boat below is given a size designation in parentheses.

Boat Type

1d8+8	Type of Boat (Size)	Crew
01–05	Raft (Small or Medium)	1 or 1d3
06–25	Gondola (Medium)	1
26–40	Punt (Large)	1d2
41–50	Rowboat (Large)	1d4
51–60	Ship's tender (Large)	1d4+2
61–75	Bilges narrowboat (Colossal)	2d6+8
76–84	Keelboat (Colossal)	1d8+8
85–89	Sailing ship (Colossal)	2d20+20
90–95	Warship (Colossal)	3d10+60
96–00	Ironclad warship (Colossal)	2d10+40

Buoy: This floating buoy has a ships' bell attached to the top that rings as it bobbed in the water. It is intended to be anchored in place to warn boat pilots away from some danger. There is a 40% chance that its anchor has slipped and it has drifted away from its intended spot or has been malevolently moved by some river denizen in hopes of causing a catastrophe above that might deliver victims and/or dinner into their watery domain. Otherwise there will be some sort of a fixed water hazard nearby (see below).

Carcass: In addition to the corpses that find their way into the waters of the Lyme, there are also many carcasses of animal origin that can be found there. Small carcasses are usually those of some domestic animal or mundane fish that is bloated with water and the gases of decomposition. Like a corpse, such carcasses are unlikely to last very long before being snatched up by scavenger fish. If one of these is investigated, there is a 15% chance that a **swarm of quippers** will arrive to feed, and a 50% chance that 2d12 mangy gulls (see below) will arrive — it is possible that both types of carrion feeders will arrive.

Large carcasses are usually those of larger sea creatures, whales, sharks, walruses, etc. and can sometimes pose a hazard to shipping. They are larger and tend to last longer as they rot in the sun. These carcasses have a 50% chance to host a disease (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***).

Corpse: There are many reasons why a corpse might be floating in the waters of the river — none of them good. That corpses are not constantly being fished out by the Watch has a great deal to do with the fact that most corpses don't last long before one or more of the river's scavengers has made a meal out of it. A corpse can be of any race or caste to be found in the Blight. Most are deteriorated to the point of being virtually unidentifiable, but feel free to build an interesting backstory and even seeds of adventure around such a find. Due to the nature of the city, a corpse floating in the river will *never* have any valuables on it, invariably having already been thoroughly looted by those above or below the waters.

Flotsam: Driftwood, accumulations of garbage, and other odd items can continually be found floating on the surface of the river. Most are worthless or even dangerous due to the presence of disease, rats, etc. Some of them (5%) are actually something of value. Choose or determine randomly what a valuable or magical item might be that has been lost in the river.

Isle, Man-Made: This an attempt by some entrepreneur with more imagination than sense to create new real estate free of city taxes and regulations atop a raft, sandbar, tidal accumulation, or some other artificial prominence. Such constructions are continually being swamped by the tides, a storm, the collision of a ship or some other catastrophic occurrence. There is likely to be some small structure on it or the beginnings of construction for one. There are many reasons why such an endeavour would be undertaken. Depending on the location of the man-made island, consult the chapter of the nearest city district for ideas of who or what may be using it. There is a 10% chance each week that the island disappears due to an unfortunate event as described above.

Mangy Gulls: These birds resemble normal seagulls but are actually creatures that have managed to slip into the city from Between through the *gateways* at Town Bridge and the Docks and have taken up roosting along the river. They are encountered in flocks of 2d12. They appear to be half-starved and missing many of their feathers and will eat anything organic in nature. If they get very hungry, they have been known to chew on the tough wooden planks of boats or even the siding or shingles of buildings. Though not usually dangerous to other creatures, they can be aggressive at times. If they are provoked into battle, use statistics for the **stirge** for mangy gulls; they do not suck blood, but they rip and tear at victims with the same result as a stirge's blood drain.

More information on mangy gulls can be found in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*.**

Mar-Eels: These are large, sickly white eels with unblinking white eyes and multiple jagged-toothed jaws. Encountered in schools of 1d4, mar-eels are a local variant of giant moray eels unlucky enough to have made the Lyme their home for generations. These eels are invariably stupid and always hungry. They are a natural prey of slop-sharks and sough-eels, but on occasion will hungrily gang up on one of those creatures and reverse the rolls of predator and prey. Their flesh can be boiled and cooked with stronger spices to make a passable if bland dish which often finds itself into the cheaper pies old along the riverfront. However, they are

also prone to various sicknesses from the polluted waters of the river, so buyers should beware, sometimes illness and even death has come from consuming a mar-eel pie.

Sahuagin: The Blight sahuagin (or "Sea Devils" as they are more commonly known) are very well organised. They lurk below piers and riverbanks watching for victims or merely spying in general. Some work for aboleths or skum cults, and some are merely scouts sent from deeper sahuagin populations in the Fetid Sea. Mutations are common among the sahuagin of the Blight, due to the highly-toxic nature of the water. Encounters at the surface of the river are with 1d4 sahuagin, while encounters in the depths are with 3d4 of the creatures.

Slop-Sharks: This is the common name of the infamous Lyme Angler, a predatory fish virtually ubiquitous to the Great Lyme River. There are 1d3 of these predators lurking about waiting for something tasty to fall into the water. For full details of the Lyme Angler, see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

Sudden Current/Wave: An unusually powerful surge pushes through. On the surface this is a wave, in the depths it is a current. Any boat is pulled 1d6 x 10 feet in the direction of the current. Anyone controlling a smaller boat must make a DC 15 Strength check to keep it from capsizing. If it capsizes, a new random encounter should be rolled to determine what sorts of predators might be attracted by the event. Swimmers must make a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid being swept 1d6 x 10 feet by the current.

Sunken Isle, Man-Made: Some ill-fated attempt at creating new real estate atop a raft, sandbar, tidal accumulation, or some other artificial prominence, this effort was ultimately overcome by the tides, a storm, the collision of a ship or some other terminal occurrence. It now exists as little more than a mound on the river bottom now covered in the years of accumulation of silt, garbage, corpses, and assorted detritus. There is a 20% chance that the remains of some ruined structure still rests on the island, which might be inhabited. Roll on the table under "Wreck, Small Boat" below to determine its occupation. Additionally, there is a further 20% chance that it might contain something of value still that's worth 1d10 x 10 gp.

Water Hazard: Water hazards can take many forms, from hidden sandbars, mostly submerged whale carcasses, large pieces of driftwood or boat hulls, or even the attacks or submerged traps of malevolent river denizens. When a water hazard is encountered, a boat pilot must make a DC 20 Strength check to avoid it. If unsuccessful, the boat is damaged and there is a 33% chance that it either begins to sink or has run aground (depending on the nature of the hazard). If the check is failed by 10 or more the boat is capsized, and a new random encounter should be rolled to determine what sorts of predators might be attracted by the event.

Wreck, Small Boat: This is the wreckage of a smaller vessel, such as a punt, a narrowboat, a keelboat, or even a small ocean-going ship. It has come to rest on the riverbed and is now covered in the years of accumulation of silt, garbage, corpses, and assorted detritus. The crew and passengers of this vessel were much more likely to have escaped than that of a warship (see below), and it is also less likely to have been carrying a treasure of any worth. There is a 50% chance that the wreck is inhabited — roll on the encounter table (Depths) if the wreck is inhabited. In addition, there is a 20% chance that a treasure worth 1d10 x 100 gp still remains aboard.

Wreck, Warship: This wrecked hulk rests on the bottom of the river It is a warship of the Royal Navy that went down in the river due to some misadventure, gross incompetence, or act of malevolence (equal chance of each) and, with the typical Castorhagi crew conditions and disregard for safety, likely had most or all of its hands aboard. There are likely to be few mortal remains left in the hulk due to the predators' feast that occurs every time a vessel goes down in the Lyme, but there are probably a few tell-tale signs of the tragic loss of life and a solid chance that it is no longer unoccupied. There is a 50% chance that the wreck is inhabited — roll on the encounter table (Depths) if the wreck is inhabited. In addition, there is a 50% chance that some lost treasure or items of value remain on board. If so, roll 1d10 x 1,000 gp to determine the value of the hoard.



Chapter Seven: The Hollow and Broken Hills



"Evil is a moral entity …"

Power and divinity somehow mingle upon unsure ground here. This part of the city is fractured, a limestone landscape of broken tors and tidal stacks and vales infested by the river. Bridges of outstanding grace and cost span these gaps, while minarets and spires and fortifications embrace, almost throttle, the natural wonder they find home upon.

Beatific faces — mostly of Mother Grace — smile from stained-glass windows, holy wells, grottoes, and alleyways. Boats cram dark harbours below, and the skirts of the tors are given over to tiny villages. Above, graceful parks rise up the sides of limestone crags, passing ancient trees and ivy and seemingly endless graveyards and mausoleums to the summits, which are crowned with cathedrals and mansions and townships that stare across at each other, almost as though daring each other to approach.

Ravens and crows sweep between the mangy gulls that soar over the ever-present river below, which at its edges touches the sea at the borders of this strange place.

Introduction

... there is a sum of evil equal to the sum of good, the continuing equilibrium of the world requires that there be as many good people as wicked people ...

The place of miracles. The land of angels. The envy of devils. This district is built upon a thousand visions, martyrdoms, and miracles. They seep up through the wells, they smile from the glass, they appear in the eyes of children. Here, angel statues truly weep, and the devil has actually leapt across rooftops, leaving his imprints across the snow one long night not so long ago.

If anything, the Hollow and Broken Hills is a boundary where Between reaches out to Heaven and Hell in wonder and is changed by it. Yet Between rarely pierces here, perhaps it is afraid that if it begins, it cannot staunch the flow and may drown the city, or drown within it.

Here, the land splinters and falls into the sea in a thousand spires and hollow hills. This archipelago of tidal stacks, cliffs, and islets, as well as being home to countless people, is home to churches. Temples and places of worship rise here, as well as the (now full) Great Cemetery — itself now a huge area of decaying tangled briars and undergrowth, ruins, and mausoleums. Many come to the Hollow and Broken Hills to take the air and listen to the birdsong of the tree-lined avenues and parks in this district. Limestone outcrops abound, and these have been variously turned into grottoes, temples, follies, or occasionally more sinister places best avoided. Bridges, both natural and manmade, crisscross this area of fractured land.

Powerful clerics and bishops, archbishops, and holy fathers rule this area of the city. He or she who rules the souls of the city and prepares for the afterlife has true power, and the ears of the mighty. Behind the smiles and religious paraphernalia seethes a hotbed of intrigue, duplicity, lust, and greed for power as church battles church for supremacy.

This may be a place of intense worship, of the divine, but here in the city, the divine has a strong foothold through intermediaries keen on extending their influences in this world, and to hell with the rest!

If it is worshipped, it is worshipped here …

Part One: Places

What the Hollow and Broken Hills looks like …

In an imminent state of collapse. A steadily rising hill gropes upward as it heads toward the sea but is marked with scores — maybe hundreds — of sinkholes that mark the entire district, with another one opening every few months and swallowing a part of a street or perhaps a small shrine. This place starts with the Madness, a teeming place crammed with the devout, pilgrims, would-be martyrs, and flagellants, almost all of whom seem to be screaming and singing at the same time. There is obscene wealth and glory here, gilt decorates every surface, minarets and spires rise into the sky, almost seeming to touch the moon, and statues, images, stained glass and frescoes of magnificent beauty. This truly is an altar to the power of religion.

What the Hollow and Broken Hills smells like …

Sweaty. The whole place has picked up a noticeable taint of humanity, and the presence of the brimming graveyard has leant a certain decay to the scent here. That the place is brimming with people also means, of course, that the smells of humanity, the waste, food, and perfume are all here in abundance. There is a deliberate war to mask this smell with incense, unguents, and perfume, which only contributes more, particularly in summer when the smell in the Madness can be unbearable and has, on occasion, actually killed people.

What the Hollow and Broken Hills feels like …

Intimate, all-knowing, there is a strange sense to the place, one of belonging and yet at the same time omnipresence. It's said that only two types of locals live here; sinners who happily live with their deeds, and the pious, those who believe themselves to be unstained. Those who fall in between — and this includes a lot of people who dwell here — are deeply unhappy, slightly demented, and paranoid. The strength of such feelings varies from individual to individual, but the very worst excesses have bred here, particularly in the infamous Borxia Family.

What the Hollow and Broken Hills sounds like …

Of church bells and calls to prayer and the sea. Of song and hymn and joy, whatever lurks below the face of the district, its exterior is to the glory of the gods, and that glory is sung from the rooftops, blown in the sounds of flutes and horns, and hammered out in the great lungs of the great musical organs of the city.

Seven words to describe the Hollow and Broken Hills …

GLORY ***tradition …***

water ***miracles*** *stone*

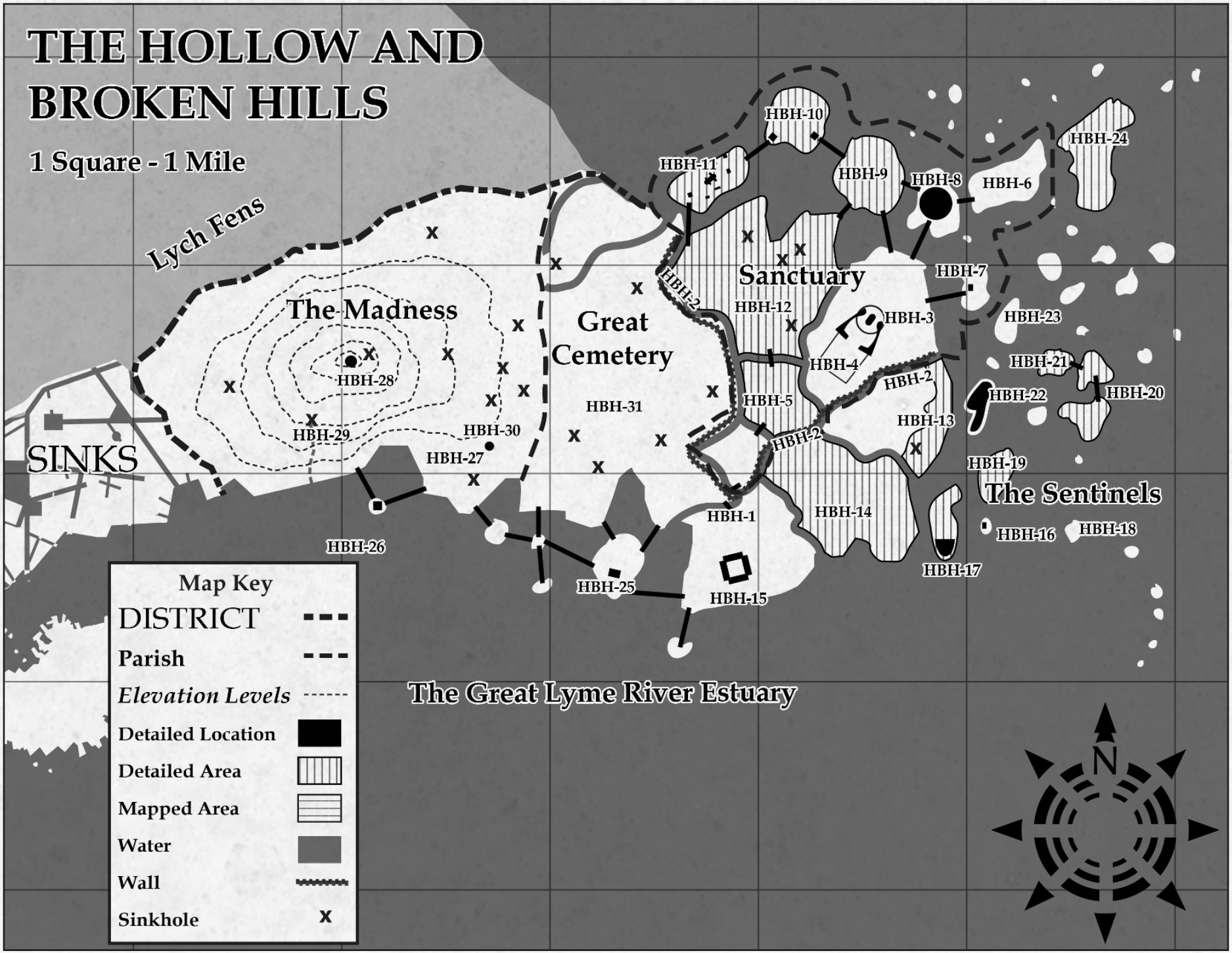
BROKEN **… Power**

Parishes and Wards

The Hills are made up of four distinct parishes, one of which — **Sanctuary** — is the holiest place in the city and a city-state in and of itself. The other areas — the **Great Cemetery**, the **Sentinels** and the **Madness** — make up the rest of the four very diverse parishes of the Hills.

The Sanctuary and Great Cemetery are dealt with in greater detail below, but the two other parishes are infamous for their qualities. The Madness is coined for its chaotic, crowded nature. Here, chapel and church and temple collide in confusion; there are said to be a million shrines here, and every god that has ever for one moment been worshipped somewhere has an image here. The grander and more powerful the deity, the greater the place of worship and the closer that place is to Sanctuary itself, the greater churches glowering across the cemetery at their illustrious and dominating neighbour. Built around seven great rings of construction, the Madness teems with worship, fakirs, sadhus, frauds, and, of course, the Guild, who make a pretty penny through pilgrims anxious to view the district's few actual miraculous places. People live between the churches, and a whole hive of tiny houses has sprung up below and within the walls of chapels and temples. Usually made of flotsam and timber, these places, known locally as the Holes, house the vast number of people who live and work in the district.

The Sentinels are the outlying islands generously given over by the church of the Holy Mother Grace to other religions, not least because


THE HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
1 Square - 1 Mile
Lych Fens
The Madness
HBH-28
HBH-29
HBH-30
HBH-27
SINKS
HBH-26
HBH-25
HBH-31
Great Cemetery
HBH-2
HBH-10
HBH-11
HBH-9
HBH-8
HBH-6
HBH-24
Sanctuary
HBH-12
HBH-3
HBH-7
HBH-23
HBH-4
HBH-21
HBH-5
HBH-22
HBH-20
HBH-13
HBH-19
The Sentinels
HBH-1
HBH-14
HBH-16
HBH-18
HBH-17
HBH-15
The Great Lyme River Estuary
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Elevation Levels
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
Wall
Sinkhole
N

of their instability. These hundred or so islands are variously gravesites, single cathedrals, or small villages.

"Why do you complain of your fate when you could so easily change it?"

HBH1. The Great Cathedral Bridge

A vast gargoyle-blighted wall, fully a hundred feet high, glowers over the lower side of the city across a deep, dirty river curiously bereft of craft. This wall forms a fortress within the city itself. A huge golden bridge leaps across the river at the very southern side of the wall where the Great Lyme River meets this valley. The bridge depicts a smiling sun figure below which is Mother Grace in all her beatific joy and beauty. This golden figure smiles with light.

The **City-State of Sanctuary** is separated from the rest of the city by a great wall, which runs the length of a valley between the two places. Boats are not allowed in the water, and obscenely paranoid guards have been known to pour boiling oil over driftwood and carcases they mistake for vessels.

Visitors are allowed in only on holy days. Access at all other times is barred except for those traders able to display the **Tattoo of Obedience** (see Sidebox), a mark of good character.

Sanctuary

It is important to remember that divination magic here and in the Capitol is subject to a curious taint that makes the casting of such spells, and their penetration herein, very difficult. Such effects are well known to those within, and the use of such spells is frowned upon, indeed any such casting herein is regarded as treasonous, the punishment (after numerous questionings involving raising from the dead if necessary or amusing) is always being burnt alive. Anyone making a successful DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check is aware of that fact, although rarely is the penalty ever delivered. See **Part 2** below for more information.

Devils run riot within the enclave, factions, and forces governed by his Holiness, who finds the covert use of devils and enslaved demons to the benefit of the church, the adage running that it is impossible to properly know and fight one's enemy without knowing him intimately. The Great Coven is very much alive and well within the enclave, although its membership is few because of fear of being unmasked by the wrong zealot. Goodness also thrives within the state, of course, but is looked upon by those in power as being something to be kept under control, and controlled with an iron fist if necessary. The Illuminati has spies across the state, and whilst its main stronghold has been and always will be the Capitol, agents run through the veins of this place.

The state has a holy calmness and authority about it, policed by the zealous and pious **Sanctuary Watch** (LN male human **captain**). No women are allowed in the Watch for fear of temptation, and rumours about endless orgies and secrets tunnels into adjacent brothels are hushed up immediately. Women appearing publicly in the state are expected to dress in the most conservative manner possible — this includes the strict use of a veil and ankle-length dark clothing inside Sanctuary. The Watch takes anyone defying this code for questioning and later exile.

The Tattoo of Obedience

Mark of good character, all those outside the church — including guards — prominently display the tattoo, which depicts a stylised figure of Mother Grace in a circular orb that resembles the sun. Tattoos are granted only after the strictest examination, and at a cost of 100 gp. Most traders, however, would gladly pay the fees, as trade within Sanctuary is calmer and a good deal more profitable, it being well-known that those who dwell within the state (except his Holiness, of course) are not beyond a bit of bribery and corruption.

Of course, there are those within the Guild who are able to make masterful copies, and even blight their hue to make them appear more sun-aged. The present going rate is 1,000 gp, but in general only those with exceptional contacts (a DC 25 Charisma [Persuasion] check) or those of the Filcher rank and above within the Guild (see ***L2: Pound of Flesh***) can gain access to such experts.

The Hallowed City-State of Sanctuary

THE HALLOWED CITY-STATE OF SANCTUARY
Population 47,700
Notable NPCs
His Holiness Umbertine IX, Father of the Church of Mother Grace (LN male human **high priest** of Mother Grace)
His Grace Augustus Hade, Holy Councillor (LE male human **priest** of Mother Grace)
His Grace Absolus Marle, Holy Councillor (LN male old human **mage**)
His Grace Mammus Thorn Borxia, Holy Councillor (LE male human **priest** of Lucifer)
Grand Master of the Rampart, Saint Edgar Rhyne, Commander of Sanctuary Guard (LN male human **veteran**)
Sanctum Paladin-Lord Grace, Commandant of Sanctuary Paladinhood (NE male human **elite warrior**)
Ambrogio Elizabeth Borxia, House Borxia Matriarch (LE female human **senior witch**)
Military and Law Enforcement Sanctuary Watch (1,400); **Sanctuary Guard** (980); **The Poor Knights of Castorhage** aka "Sanctuary Paladinhood" (40)

HBH2. The Holy Wall

The towering wall engulfs, dominates and hides. Its higher cliffs are riddled with balconies, arrow slits, and spaces for great siege engines. Fires burn perpetually upon the summit, caressing the endless glowering gargoyles, while beyond, mounted on great poles, pennants dance: both of the city-state, and that of Sanctuary and Mother Grace.

In all, almost a thousand **Sanctuary guardsmen** (LN male human **veteran**) watch the city-state from within the walls. Many are fanatical, and obsessed with obtaining membership of the **Sanctuary Paladinhood** (almost all of which are paladin in name only), a group of poor knights who have sworn fealty to Mother Grace at the expense (allegedly) of all worldly goods.

Presently, **Saint Edgar Rhyne** (LN male human **elite warrior**), the **Grand Master of the Rampart**, as the keeper of the wall is known, runs an obsessively tight ship with the assistance of his cousin, **Marris Gwade** (NE male human **duellist**), a notorious womaniser and spy for the Illuminati. Both aspire to the teachings of uber-Royalist Old Way, which has a growing membership across the Royalist quarters of the city.



HBH3. The Great Cathedral and Basilica of the Sacred Heart

A vast circular cathedral soars from the highest hills of the district. This cathedral is like no other building outside of the Capitol: It is vast, overbearing, almost obscene in wallowing in the glory of its endless gilded ramparts, soaring angels, and glowering gargoyles. Beyond, a second building rises, if building is the correct word for something of this size. More modest than its twin, this place is clearly more practical, its lines cleaner, its rooftop balconies more for defence and observatory than glory to Mother Grace.

A small town within a pair of interconnected buildings, the Great Cathedral and Sacred Heart can count almost three thousand rooms between them. It's said that it is a task of several weeks to walk every corridor and visit every chamber. Many people, like those within the Capitol, never leave its embrace. Riddled with endless secrets, darkest magic that their Holiness has refused to divulge to the outside world, the Basilica is also the most public building in the city, and the place where his Holiness gives addresses on the most important public festivals and holidays, when Sanctuary changes its austere clothing to become a festival of teeming tens of thousands.

His Holiness Umbertine IX, the Father of Castorhage (LN male human **high priest** of Mother Grace), is elected Holy Father for life by a secret council known only as the "Wisdom**"** (a mask to conceal a select powerful group within the Illuminati, the Crown Justices, the emissary of the Queen and the Holy Council). The Wisdom meet here in the Basilica only after the death (accidental or otherwise) of the current Holy Father.

His Holiness is ruler of his own state in name only, and pays absolute (but secret) fealty to the Crown and Illuminati. The taxes and tithes of the city-state are vast, and transported to the Capitol with great pomp on the first Prayerday of the month under a huge guard.

Below and advising his Holiness are the Holy Council, which presently consists of **His Grace Holy Councillor Augustus Hade** (LE male human **priest** of Mother Grace 3), **His Grace** (the aged) **Holy Councillor Absolus Marle** (LN male old human **mage**), and the relatively new **Holy Councillor Mammus Thorn Borxia** (LE male human **priest** of Lucifer).

These in turn are advised by **13 Righteous Cardinals**, each of whom has a staff of 13 **Archbishops**. Each of the cardinals has a huge staff and is responsible for various aspects of running the city-state and conniving to advance his position through intrigue, blackmail, and assassination.

In all, almost a thousand people live in the Basilica and worship in the Cathedral, a daily routine of prayer and tradition for most, an endless orgy of power and duplicity for those at the summit. Sacred knights, devilish

Three Peas in a Pod

The present Holy Council of Sanctuary observes the age-old traditions of duplicity, backstabbing, betrayal, and murder, all hidden behind a good-natured smiling mask of brotherhood. Each of the trio has risen through sin and murder, and has an admirable web of spies numbering in the hundreds.

Holy Councillor Augustus Hade: plotter and murderer, the disfigured Hade shuffles about these halls on walking sticks like a royal spider. It's conjectured that he sleeps in a web and sucks the blood from those he slowly bleeds. Merciless, gifted, and ruthless, Hade fancies his chances as the next Holy Father and plots support; his goals for power and greed and lust. His sleep is vaguely troubled by the new usurper, Thorn Borxia of the infamous Borxia family. The sallow youth is very new, but very wise, and his plotting comes almost unnaturally. Hade spends his waking hours watching, brooding, and preparing for the right moment to remove his competitor.

Holy Councillor Absolus Marle may outwardly have lost his wits, but all he has actually lost is some support from the Illuminati, who have covertly placed Thorn Borxia (see below) into their web. Marle senses his days are numbered, and he is right; the Illuminati seek only the right moment to remove him and hand greater power to their new man Borxia, even if it will take years to do so. Marle is no fool, however, and senses the coming tests. He has been hatching his own plots to side with Hade against the newcomer. Marle has also been making inquiries with a certain apothecary in Little Xi'en (The Artist's Quarter) to find a poison subtle enough not only to kill Borxia, but to carry the poison into the very hive of Illuminati plotters and remove them as well.

Holy Councillor Mammus Thorn Borxia is a worshipper of Lucifer, and gelded himself as a sign of his obedience. Known as the **Deceiver**, Mammus is vile, wily, and cruel, a senior figure of both the Illuminati (and close ally of her Resplendent **Grand Justice Ashleia,** the Mistress of Life's Wondrous Varied Forms) and the Great Coven. Borxia has spoken to Beltane and uses some of his followers as agents, in particular a ghoul spy called **Fecule** (NE female human **ghoul**). Mammus appears young, but is far from it, unnaturally lengthening his lifespan using an extract he stole from a Between thief called **Rashen**. Rashen remains in the power of the Borxia Family (see **HBH24**).

explorers, and power-hungry plotters weave an endless game within these walls: from the Sanctuary Paladinhood sent out on holy quests to retrieve artefacts and wealth, to explore and conquer; to the Emissaries of the Mother's Library, monks of the deity Papyri that never see daylight and who record the events of the city-state in endless detail.

HBH4. The Great Sanctuary Square

The towering cathedral and basilica dominate and grip a vast square, surrounding it with their benevolence, grace, and power. Glittering golden angels dance from rooftops about the stone and marble square, which has at its heart a huge smiling statue of Mother Grace flanked by angels.

The Great Square is where his Holiness addresses crowds on holy days. At other times, it is quiet, save for the suspicious guards that watch the area and ensure that visitors are genuine. On holy days, the square is crammed with tens of thousands of people praying and devoutly listening to the agent of their god in the world.

HBH5. The Enclave

Ancient and magnificent, this broad-streeted area of the city-state is immaculate, lined with ancient curling trees, and surfaced with marble and stone polished with age. Each house or establishment is different, an eclectic range of styles and taste grown up over ages. Each is matched by its taste and wealth and demeanour.

The non-religious part (in only the loosest sense) of the holy city, this is where visitors to the city-state within a city-state come to lodge and work. It houses a range of the best artisans, most subtle spies and agents, and the most expensive of traders. Only master craftsmen are welcome here, whether it be clockmakers or scribes or cartographers or armoursmiths. All are bound by the huge taxes they pay for their location here in the religious capital of the city.

Great Banker Aspin Edgrun Malcul Shortstone III (N male human Shortstone† gnome **noble**) is presently master of the Great Bank of Castorhage which rests in the enclave. At only 353 years old, this bank is still vying for inclusion into that exclusive club which is the Three Great Banks of Castorhage. However, to date it is still more likely to be generally lumped in with the four no less financially sound but nonetheless less-august banks of GnomeTown (in no small part, no doubt, due to the holder of the great banker position). Appointed by the Crown, Aspin is busy lining his coffers with the fortune he is stealing beneath the gaze of his Holiness and his advisors.

Aspin is a man of many faces. One of the most senior figures in the Guild (although known to but a few of the other members), he is also a strong supporter of the Royal Family, and is prepared to look the other way at rumours of their atrocities. He wants order so he can continue to amass a fortune and increase his power, even though he is a little wild and unpredictable himself. Close friends with His Resplendent **Grand Justice Korsk,** Master of the Sinks (**Chapter 11**), the two have an almost inseparable respect for each other's greed and insatiability and have as close a bond of trust as is possible in a place such as the Blight.

Master guildsmen, including the **Majestic Farrien, Master Clockmaker of the City of Castorhage** (LN male human **commoner**), his **Worshipfulness the Grand Master of Spires** (N male human **commoner**), and **Lord Scythe, Guild Master of Weaponsmiths** (N male human **veteran**), ply their wares here. In all, some 29 guilds have their headquarters here.

Goods are not traded: They are ordered and made, and the quality is of the highest. Magic weaponry is, of course, retained by the church for fear of it falling into ignorant hands, but all other mundane objects can be found here — for a price.

HBH6. The Church of Saint Almonia

An island that is a single construction: A vast cathedral swallows this stack of stone that lurches from the edges of the sea, a similarly bloated town beyond smothering a wider stack. The town appears to be on the edge of ruin, its flanks smothered in the uncertain embrace of a forest of scaffolding.

A huge swaying rope bridge links the island to the crowded mainland.

Also known as the "Beacon," this church is the oldest in the district, and closer inspection reveals that it is in a state of collapse. One whole wing of the church fell into the sea only 5 years ago, and an almost daily cascade falls from one part of it. Within, the church is a curiously lopsided thing, its wings and walls and buttresses have slipped, giving the whole place an askew angle of Between. Some say the hateful presence of the Borxias (**HBH24**) laid a curse upon the place and caused its demise.

Worship here is certainly a matter of faith. Aisles are riven with shafts that plummet into the dark sea, transepts cling to the edges of breaking cliffs, and distended naves grip on for dear life. The Sacred Brotherhood of Saint Almonia is charged with the upkeep of the church. The monks, devout worshippers of Mother Grace, are an arm of his Holiness' fighting wing, and are warriors without fear. Sometimes called the "monks in iron skins", the brotherhood spend almost all their time now constructing and repairing, and have fallen into sin, brought on by their neighbours the Borxias. Outwardly, the monks and church are devout. Their devotion to their collapsing home an article of faith and admiration, but below, after dark, sinning is embraced. A Cathedral of the Great Coven, the elemental bowels of the church are opened up to depraved orgies, summonation, and sacrifice.

The present master, **High Priest His Most Sacred Devotion Earl of the Isle, Hassop Brome** (LE male human **high priest** of Lucifer) bastard child of **Ambrogio Borxia** (see **HBH24**), is considered one of the most holy people of the city, and yet festers within the Great Coven. This church is one of its strongholds. Part fortress, part living hellish thing, the lower reaches of the church house a foul library containing infamous texts, unheard-of spells that enslave and punish, and devil-bound creatures.

HBH7. Saint Lether's Chapel

A gigantic, natural arch clefts this island, which like others is carved into a towering cathedral. Ships pass below the archway, ringing their bells.

The Mariners' Fortune, Saint Lether — patron saint of calm seas — has his chapel here. A skeleton staff led by **Bishop Thresh** (NG male human **priest** of Brine) mans the vast, rambling building. Ships that are able pass through the archway to receive blessings for their voyage and — so far — not a single vessel that has passed below the arch has been lost at sea.

Thresh is a curiously bookish character who is fascinated by demonology and devil-worship, but purely from a intellectual viewpoint. Those invited across the rickety rope bridge that links to the mainland find a place oddly crammed with arcana and grimoires. Thresh frequently tries to draw devils and demons into the building to question them, and has — through a number of secrets — been able to enslave a handful of demons to act as assistants in his research.

HBH8. The Tower of Heaven

A vast, almost mockingly tall structure slowly rises from this isle into the looming sky above. It is a supplication to the glory of Heaven, a growing tower that rises toward the sky above and pierces it.

Justice Weld Shortstone I, Master of Structures (NG male Shortstone† gnome **illusion mage**) is presently overseeing the construction of this holy building, a place seen by his Holiness in dreams as a stair to get closer to Heaven. A small army of Royal Arcane Engineers is working on the structure through calamity and disappointment. The whole structure collapsed during a storm 6 years ago, and the story whispered about the city is that the place is doomed, but that his Holiness will not give up on his vision for fear of injuring his reputation. So Shortstone toils, and uses his lofty vantage and location to feed information back to his true sponsor, **Princess Rebecca of Mourney**†, who has several agents within the city-state but regards Shortstone as one of her most loyal. To keep his tenuous position, Shortstone ensures that rumours of his alleged cruelty and vengefulness reach the right ears, despite his honesty and integrity. His only true cruelty is when dealing with evil, and then it is a cold, bitter thing.

Convicts work on the fractious outer scaffolds of the place, which currently stands at almost 900 feet. That Shortstone treats those in his care relatively well may be his undoing; his nature has been noted by many, and word and lies are spreading about his instability and the fact that he is deliberately failing to weaken his Holiness. The convicts work high on the structure and, as they rise, a small township rises with them.

Within the convicts, a small group of briny†, agents of the Madness of the Mirrorstorm, are implanting glyph-carcasses within the structure at arcane points, aiming to use the completed structure as a beacon to draw in a whirlwind storm-land plagued by kraken into the world.

AB&H9. The Palace of the Holy

> Here truly is a garden of paradise, an isle infested with statues and flowers and twisted, ancient trees.

His Holiness' sanctuary within the city-state, the Palace is a series of gardens and chambers linked across fabulous grounds. That his Holiness does not invite visitors here — nor have any of his predecessors — has of course led to rife speculation about what is here. Wilder stories suggest that within the palace is a book that outlines all events in history — including those yet to come until the world is destroyed by fire. Some have conjectured that the Devil himself is imprisoned in the bowels of the palace and merely seeing him would be enough to drive any lesser mortal mad.

A singular group guards the palace — the Sanctuary Paladinhood. These holy warriors are led by Sanctum Paladin-Lord **Grace** (NE male human **elite warrior**) who has spent the last years trying to gain access to and locate the secret chambers below. He is aware that somewhere below lurks a cyst within which are objects of incredible value and power, yet his cunning has not even come close to finding them. His followers number two score **veterans** and **mages.**

There are indeed secrets within the palace. Hidden behind countless secret doors and corridors is a holy treasury for the darkest and most powerfully wicked knowledge. Within the secret hoard are several forbidden books, minor artefacts and objects taken from Between.

AB&H10. The Penance

> The screams echo far from this tor which thrusts from the dark sea. This is a prison — of that, there is no doubt. A thousand barred windows stare helplessly from the dark granite, whilst two fortresses bear sturdy iron bridges away from the place.

"Welcome to the holy prison — gods help you," is the welcome prisoners receive when they are thrown into this open hellhole. Those brought here are thrown into the township that blights the tor it is swallowed by, a lawless, endless misery from which there is no escape. Some say that occasionally a doorway opens into the Furnace, and so desperate are the interred that they walk openly into that hell to escape this one. **Grand Warden Briar** (LE shapechanged **bearded devil**) rarely bothers to wear his human skin these days — unless his Holiness sends an emissary to question one of his brethren that is. Briar is the consummate psychotic, and his questioning techniques are much prized by the more powerful and better-contacted villains across the city. It is said that Briar can make anyone or anything talk, and talk long and loud and truthfully. Assisting him are a small cabal of assorted devils and a harem of sublimely vicious **lilins**† whose dark arts of drugging and poisoning have their roots in Little Xi'en's apothecaries.

Two thousand is the average population of the Penance, but it changes daily. Sometimes it swells after a purge; at other times, sickness sweeps the place and its population falls to a few hundred. The prisoners are not fed or watered, and rely upon gifts from desperate relatives, or occasional slops from his Holiness. Tourists are actively encouraged, and various guides lead parties of curious or voyeuristic aristocrats, many of whom bring food to toss to the prisoners for amusement.

A desperate disorder has blossomed into some sense within the place, and the current overlord of the prisoners, the terrible **Mister Shingle** (N male human **master thief**), rules the roost with the help of handpicked thugs. Shingle lives a life totally detached from the prisoners, has his own tower and private chambers, and listens to songbirds singing whilst eating in luxury. Shingle is the Guild's man on the inside, and is completely open and known to Briar, who accepts bribes from the Guild in exchange for turning the other cheek and allowing Shingle to question and investigate the prisoners at his leisure. Quite often, certain facets of the Guild find a visit to the Penance very useful in loosening tongues.

AB&H11. The Archbishop's Isle

> A stately cathedral palace covers much of this isle, the rest of which is given over to huge mausoleums.

Burial place for nobility, the Archbishop's Isle is the final resting place of kings and queens who are not interred beneath the Capitol. The most important are held in the Archbishop's Cathedral, and the burial ceremony of anyone with Royal blood takes place here whether the burial occurs here or not. **His Grace the Master of Burials Hamp Lothar** (LN male human **high priest** of Mother Grace) presides over the ceremonies here, an elected position he keeps for life. Hamp is a wily old bird, having risen from poverty through guile and occupying a prominent position within the Guild as an expert on all matters to do with the Fetch. Hamp is the leading authority on undead possibly in the entire city. His cathedral chambers are oppressive with old books and artefacts of use in his personal crusade against the Fetch. Hamp has allies across the city, but is particularly close to friends in Little Xi'en and the Apothecaries (**AQ20**). He is one of the closest friends of Ho'cha'mii the Blight Blossom, leader of the Family of the Gtsang Fist, and the two spend long hours in conversation about their ongoing battles with the Fetch. It is said that Beltane has offered a sarcophagus full of gold to anyone bringing him the head of either, and that an entire horde of the undead is devoted to getting at Hamp.

The isle has a gruesome reputation that Hamp is keen to encourage: that of an association with undeath. It is said the cathedral itself is alive, and its statues and gargoyles are actually bodies. There is an aspect of truth in this. **The Mukkajëë** — a powerful clay golem of great age — is bound to the cathedral and commanded by the master. The Mukkajëë has the inherited advantage of being able to heal itself (as per the spell of that name but only healing the construct of damage) when within the cathedral itself. Although it says nothing, the Mukkajëë occasionally whispers songs to itself, and can seemingly be heard breathing at times. The creature is said to contain the soul of a young priestess who was pulled apart by Beltane himself in ancient times.

A small cabal of paladins — the Holy Order of Heaven's Gateway — are based in the cathedral and take spartan rooms in a high eastern tower. These paladins operate as guardians for the cemetery and as undead hunters. The leader **Mistress Henna Thray** (LG female blighted† human **elite warrior**) is an alarming sight, her body partially mangled by a fall from the cathedral after a battle with vampire spawn. She walks clumsily and with the aid of a crooked cane.



A small force of gardeners and diggers tend the extensive mausoleums outside the cathedral, keeping the grounds tidy and the tombs unopened. The tombs within the cathedral house the most important Royals, including several members of the Royal Family. Occasionally, Hamp swears he hears children's laughter coming from the tombs, which are sealed with lead and silver and opened only after Royal deaths, which are of course rare.

BB12. The Scholar's Quarter and Church University

A huge area of towering townhouses and more modest churches, monasteries, and neat parks, this area is clearly given over to study. Handcarts of books, pigments, and quills are heaved through the narrow, cobbled streets. The angelic figure of beatific Gwendollyn — Patron Saint of Scholars — smiles from every crossroads and water pipe. The streets are crammed with groups of young men dressed in hooded gowns and the uniforms of students.

Ostensibly, the Scholar's Quarter is actually a single huge university affiliated and often opposed in contests with the Royal University in BookTown (**B17**). The Church University covers an intriguing number of aspects and disciplines, from fighting to clerical duties to scholars of undeath. It is devoted officially to Mother Grace but houses a large contingent of followers of Papyri as well who get on well with the other students and scholars. Students occasionally are dragged from the slums after displaying talents or abilities, and an education here opens doors later in life.

The present (extremely harsh) headmaster of the university, the aptly named **Silas Cane** (LN male human **priest** of Papyri), is ancient, yet the man who is now a hundred years in age still has his wits. His staff — often referred to as his "knuckles" — are handpicked no-nonsense men who nevertheless have the best intentions, despite their seemingly iron harshness. The present Undermaster and headmaster in waiting **Hanrin Gorse** (N alchymic-undying† human **priest**) feels the university should do more to ask the greater questions of the world, and is obsessed with sending pilgrimages to spread the word of Mother Grace to savages.

The quarter is a loose affiliation of disciples and university houses with eclectic names such as the Brothers of the Dead Dragon, the Sons of Philosophy, and the Maesters Grim. Physical sports are encouraged, and games such as bullrun (a game very much like rugby) are keenly enjoyed by the pupils and masters in the various open-lawn courtyards of the area. Lodgings for the younger boys tend to be in dormitories, while the older boys (who study here until they are 22 years of age) are private rooms kept clean by an army of housekeepers and younger boys.

The Sentinels

The shoreline and hundreds of tiny islands make up this parish.

BB13. The Church Docks

Beautiful sandstone buildings reach the harbour here. Angels smile on the waters beyond, which are crammed with vessels bearing church regalia. Pilgrims are arriving and departing in almost equal measure. Those who arrive seem bewildered, amazed, and in awe of the place. Those who leave move onto crammed vessels ready to spread the word of Mother Grace across the world. These missionaries have broad smiles yet seem uncertain of the fate life has in store for them far away.

Despite their best efforts, the church has found it impossible to keep the Guild at bay here, and a vast array of guides, experts, friends, and touts cram the harbour, which covers the whole length of this ward and is, in truth, little more than a few shallow stone steps into the dirty sea. Those who come here on pilgrimage are invariably preyed upon by these rogues, and despite a considerable number of Watch constables, business for the crooks is good.

A whole array of fake holy relics, sham magic and quack potion makers are based here, and peddle their goods across the city. So much so, in fact, that the whole small cramped quarter is known as the Market of Miraculous Lies. The harbour master and church representative, his **Holiness the Keeper of the Docklands** (N male human **master thief**) keeps a small army of dwarven thieves in his employ (**street thieves**†). These variously disfigure themselves to beg, extort, or shame visitors into parting with their cash. In truth, the docks here are the most heavily pickpocketed areas in the entire city.

The church is very keen on expansion and spreading the word, to ensure that heretics from other religions do not do so and grab all the limelight (and wealth). Pilgrimages set sail on a weekly basis, some returning with savages from other lands and their stolen wealth. The church has scores of well-guarded warehouses along the river to keep returned goods such as spices and lesser valuables, whilst also ensuring stocks of grain, water, and other goods for those departing. A veritable army of clerks and legalese check these goods, and often a whole train are seen following the Keeper with pounds of paper ledgers.

Despite best efforts, a few sleazy insectum† dens and gin houses operate in this area. These places are allegedly secret, and lurk behind innocuous closed doors. The Keeper does his best to alert those within to raids, but occasionally overzealous constables discover one and raid it.

HBH14. The Esplanade of a Hundred Cathedrals and the Choir of Angels

A cramped area of towers and spires and domes teeters on the edges of cliffs above the river. This whole area seems to be slowly falling toward the embrace of the water.

The river is higher here, and steep streets plummet to it, where a few cramped chapels grip the base of limestone cliffs. Saints and Beatifics are honoured here, and scores of places of worship line the steep streets of this cramped region, which is flanked by narrow streams descending over a dozen waterfalls. A long stair — the "Call of Angels" — rises through the centre of this area, and passes immediately below the most revered of cathedrals in the ward — the Choir of Angels.

The choir, run by the harsh taskmaster **Elias Crimm** (CE male human **minstrel**) is an abomination of a person. He takes young men and ensures the preservation of their angelic voices before maturity by an abominable process of elixir and gelding. The singers usually learn to accept their fate eventually, despite its monstrousness, and many go on to make fortunes in the Artists' Quarter and Capitol, as well as other parts of the city as castrato singers.

HBH15. The Priory of Saint Jull and the Iron Quarter

A vast building glowers through dirty stained-glass windows.

Covering several acres, the great monastery is a huge outer shell with a vast garden courtyard within. The Brothers of Saint Jull (Patron Saint of Bees) live a relatively pastoral existence here, and in a similar monastery in Crow's Fallow which has unfortunately fallen to the Devil. The monks, who have taken a vow of poverty and silence, make honey, mead, and cider from their garden and exchange it for simple foodstuffs. The monks' lives are incredibly hard; they rise at 3 A.M. and begin prayers, before working in the garden from dawn until dusk, partaking in a meal, and then praying until midnight. Many of the order exists in a permanent state of daze, which some attribute to them finding nirvana.

In fact, the monastery has a secret: It has been built above a Between *gateway* leading to an uncharted sea mountainous jungle land that the church are presently busy exploring in the hope of finding locals to convert. So far, all they have found is alien things, volcanoes, and death in various forms.

The leader, **Prior Cleg** (N male human **summoner**†) — is his Holiness' current master of exploration, and makes frequent forays into the mountainous between-land, which has been named "Azure." A secret tunnel links to the Between *gateway*, which lies near the river. Ships are the most commonly used means of transportation there, but the voyage takes roughly a week through a misty sargasso sea in which several vessels have already been lost. The Illuminati are present amongst the monks, and half a dozen agents (including the good prior) are presently silently watching for clues to gather more information about whether Azure is worth the trouble of taking and falling out with the church over.

HBH16. The Beacon of Hope

A vast stone angel spreads its stone arms high above the waters, its eyes burning with green pyrebeetle flames.

Lighthouse, beacon of hope, and friend welcoming travellers home or bidding others farewell, the Beacon was built just under 50 years ago as a replacement for the Broken Mother (**HBH22**). The Beacon is seen by many — including His Holiness — as a poor replacement for the once-great cathedral that dominated the entrance to the city, lost in a terrible storm 48 years ago. The lighthouse is a much more modest place, something that rankles the clergy, who are busy now overseeing the construction of the greatest building the city has ever seen — the Tower of Heaven (**HBH8**).

The present keeper **Marrad T'thy** (N male briny† **commoner**) lives a solitary life and, although sinister in his habits — particularly in relation to calling out nightly to unseen things at sea — he is an entirely decent, innocent briny who simply loves the sea.

HBH17. Salt's Shadow

A gangly arm of rock reaches from the waters, its edges lacerated by storms. This stone isle is bereft of vegetation yet curiously carved into a single township, crowned at its summit by a huge church shaped like a huge gaping whale maw.

Dedicated to Brine, this small settlement grips the tor it slumbers on. Its locals are tough fishing folk who cannot abide briny. They have incredibly hard lives and make their way by fishing for salmon or whales, although their trade has taken a severe downturn with whale-goods from the Unsea arriving via Town Bridge.

Curiously, many of the town's decorations or structures are held aloft by great whale bones, earning the place the nickname the Whales' Graveyard. No-nonsense, rabblerousing, fiery, priest **Ryth Penance** (N male human **priest** of Brine) holds the locals together and dishes out the law. Hard times are biting now, and Penance issues his fiery sermons more regularly. Many of the fishermen have taken to contacts within the Guild, and some have been in smuggling operations deeper into the city, most notably opening up avenues with the Family in festival (and the Grasts in particular). If he uncovers any such plots, the priest scalds the local and exiles him or her from the township.

Underfed women care for sickly children who play in the outer stairs and avoid the dangerous blowholes within the township. A single tavern (the Salty Slug) hangs above the residential areas of town and forms an overhanging pinnacle of rock built outward on ships' beams. The owner, **Travis Squall** (NE male human salt-o'-the-earth† dwarf **veteran**), loves new custom, and longs to bring back the good old days to his township. A

Adventures in Azure

Between has endless aspects, but Azure, with its seemingly fixed access, offers one of the more tangible places for continued exploration and adventure. The details of Azure are given in **Part 5** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*** but are deliberately left fairly vague, to enable you to plant whatever you wish in the land. It is an alien land of volcanoes, sweaty jungles, insects, and preternatural things.

With so many vessels lost, Prior Cleg has started using less subtle methods of getting crews to volunteer for pilgrimages, and may turn to outsiders to help. The characters could form part of the crew of a vessel, or maybe even be its leaders, while Illuminati agents seek to gather information and remain secret to report back to their masters. Such exploration adventures could carry a primal campaign of exploration the likes of a Robert E. Howard or Edgar Rice Burroughs story, with the characters marooned — either on a sargasso pseudo-island or in the pounding company of the jungle-covered, erupting volcanoes. The enemies, which include the land and sea themselves and are populated by alien things, might not only be strange Between monsters but also previous lost ships or colonists perhaps led by the demented cannibal and former colony administrator **Friar Lyme** (CN male human **hierophant**†) who has been taken over by the Betweenlands which has seeped into him. Such a campaign could focus on escape, exploration, treasure hunting or some combination of all three.

dreamer by nature from a respected family, Travis has concocted several wild schemes and gambles of later asking strangers to follow up legends out at sea that he has allegedly unearthed. Many of those who leave are taken by the skum† who haunt the waters about the outer river. These skum are tipped off by Travis through a series of agents, and if a stranger arrives looking flush, he may well be the next to learn about the dwarf's treasure maps and locations of booty out on the waves.

HBH18. The Great Cave of Sister Hemlock

Scoured by rain, this small rocky islet appears to have no safe landing. Hundreds of trinkets hang from the cliffs of the isle: masks, kettles, horseshoes — a whole junkyard of bric-a-brac, in fact.

Sister Hemlock (deceased) was the most famous seer, and was bricked up in here alive as an anchorite of her own free will because she couldn't face what was coming — but would never tell what that was. The sister was widely regarded as both saintly and mad: sailors would pass here before heading on voyages to ask if all was well, fishermen would ask the best places to work, nobles would seek their future. The tokens were gifts to her, often tossed by those without the skill to moor here, a dangerous option even today (and one requiring both a successful DC 20 Intelligence and DC 20 Dexterity check).

The bricked-up cave is clear to see, and has remained unopened since Hemlock first demanded the act through His Holiness Saint Whither, who himself died nearly 300 years ago. Some say Whither granted the act only after being foretold the event that forced the sister to ask to be bricked up herein, a secret that remains in the holy city-state to this day as knowledge passed down only to His Holiness.

HBH19. The Isle of Saint Maral and Sanatorium

A hermitage stands weathered on this grassy isle, while red skulls — warning signs clearly displayed at each compass point — indicate that this place is a leper colony.

Father Arthur Kemp (LG male human **priest** of Mother Grace) oversees his small flock of volunteers and monks who watch their patients here. These include a village of lepers, but also darker and more deformed patients within the sanatorium. A bleached, sanitary place, Kemp is a very kind man who believes his flock has been punished by Mother Grace for some past act of violence, but who may one day earn forgiveness through prayer. The colony is very insular; outsiders in fact are almost unheard of save for a supply ship that drops its goods on the isle and only docks on the south side of the small place. The inmates now have a small village of their own in which to live and work. Kemp encourages hard work. He also inspires his flock to marry, and several have. Beyond the strange isolation and calm here, the place almost functions like a normal settlement, with its own events, dramas, and daily grinds. Sheep are farmed here on the thin grass, and occasionally a large fish catch is traded through intermediaries on the mainland.

HBH20. Skold

A barren rocky pair of outcrops with a few scattered sheep.

Sparsely populated, Skold is used for sheep farming, and as the only viable landing access for the graveyard isle of Ossuary (**HBH21**). A sturdy bridge links the two. A handful of crofters tend the sheep on the isle, living out a tough existence. A shallow harbour on the south isle (known as Big Skold) links via a slender rope bridge to Little Skold (the north isle).

HBH21. Ossuary

A stack of rock rises into the white haze and vanishes. You see stone steps rising through graceful gardens upward into the mists just above the settlement, while below sits a small town, gripping onto three perches of rock.

Ossuary is one of scores of graveyard towns, this one with a reputation for spilling those in eternal rest from its walls. Ossuary is built upon three levels, narrow balconies forming a whole town linked by dozens of picturesque stairs and walkways through parklands between high tors. It has a fine inn — the Stekerrschalln — and a magnificent Ossuary Chapel made of the vast skeleton of a wallow-whale wreathed in bones, and is isolated from the mainland, connecting via a single very giddy high arched bridge to the nearby islands of Skold.

The present ruler of Ossuary, **Isaac Fetter, Lord Undertaker of Ossuary** (LN male **priest** of Mother Grace), is known to be a recluse. He keeps a small staff in his cliff-home, known colloquially as the Horn. Relatively unremarkable, Ossuary has a small number of visitors who come to take in the breath-taking views across the Great Lyme River toward the Great Docks. Ossuary is distinct only in that it is one of the most remote parts of the district.

HBH22. The Broken Mother

An island lies shattered here, the sea slowly reclaiming the once-magnificent carved stonework, biting, lacerating, and devouring her. This was clearly once an incredible arched cathedral, a trio of towers wrapped into one incredible and graceful cathedral.

Once, the Mother Cathedral was the greatest structure in the city, but she was lost one night during a terrible storm 48 years ago. A few teetering and precariously high structures still remain, and occasionally a mad pilgrim tries to climb them, an act that often costs his or her life as the place shatters and collapses on a weekly basis.

During the past couple of years, a member of the Royal Arcane Engineers named **Kranus Thabe** (LN female salt-o'-the-earth† dwarf **transmogrifier**†) has begun the seemingly impossible task of reconstructing the Mother brick by brick and stone by stone. Although presently her attempts seem pitiful, and her feeble scaffolding and precarious ladders seem folly, she is slowly making progress. Some suggest it is greed that drives her, a desperate attempt to remove gold long since taken by treasure hunters and the clergy, but in truth, Thabe's devotion to the Mother is all she needs, that and an unwavering conviction to see the building rise to its former glory once again.

HBH23. The Nunnery Hermitage of the Sisters of Divinity

A great, fiery, beacon dances atop this formidable place, which looks like a fortress of some kind squatting upon a rocky isle.

In truth, the Sisters of Divinity despise men, and were granted a holy decree to allow them to stay here from the 13th century by His Holiness Pious XXI. Iron-willed and of unshakable faith, the sisters, ruled by **Abbess Heartlion Rosetta XI** (LG female human **priest** of Mother Grace), are utterly devoted to the goddess, have taken an unwavering vow of chastity, and spend their days in prayer. The isle's residents often go out on evangelical pilgrimages or voyages of hope through the city,

particularly Toiltown, where they try to convince fallen women to join them. It is wildly speculated that the sisterhood punishes those whom they find in the arms of whores by gelding them, something untrue but allowed to pass as rumour by the senior sisters in the hope of sowing doubt into those who would use the services of such women.

Abbess Heartlion Rosetta is a living saint who uses her modest magical talents to heal the poor and sick. She gifts potions and cures to the less able, and has unfortunately therefore been seen of late as a possible rebel — something as far away from her true intentions and devotion as is possible. There are those who wish to see the Abbess gone, nervous that if a few peasants get their hands-on cures, everyone will begin to expect them, something the aristocracy and Church could not of course abide or tolerate.

HBH24. The Isle House of Borxia

A vast limestone tor wrenches itself high from the rusty waters here, a magnificent spectacle of architecture cavorting upon it. This is clearly a town; and quite a sizable one at that, but the architecture is harsher than its neighbours, more aggressive somehow.

Depraved, perverse and vile, one of the most powerful families outside of the Royal Family, the Borxias are notorious, their claws gripping and rending into the fabric of power across the city and slowly devouring segments of the Illuminati. It would take a book of many volumes to detail the history, lies and deviances of the House of Borxia, but a brief discourse upon its principal characters may shed some light on the whole bastard-bloated clan.

The eldest and matriarch of the clan, **Ambrogio Elizabeth Borxia** (LE female human **senior witch**) is one of the most senior members of the Great Coven, and has allegedly borne the offspring of several greater devils and arch-devils (including, it is falsely claimed, Lucifer himself). Her tiefling bastards litter locked attics, are at large in the city wallowing in their sins, or are locked up in deep prison cells for their many crimes. Although now bed-ridden, the rotten, greedy old hag still runs her family with an iron fist — she is determined to see her house usurp the Royal Family, convinced (and with some reason) that it is the Borxias who have the true claim to rule Castorhage. In truth, a pact made between the families and Caasimolar, former President of Hell, was undone by Asmodeus, to whom the Royal Family paid homage at the time in order clear the way for the Castorhages' unchallenged rule over the city-state. Ambrogio is protected by a bound **Balor**, and oversees numerous other bound devils and **tieflings**, some of which infest the very roots of the family itself.

Ambrogio's brother, Clarence Borxia (deceased), once served as an advisor (and spy for Ambrogio) inside the Royal Palace. It was he who provided Queen Lotheria Castorhage née Tredici with the slow-acting and undetectable poison that she used for years on King Worrn IV to keep him sickly and unable to rule. However as a diabolist and cleric of Lucifer it was also he who, at the behest of a vision from his patron, prevented the Queen from hurling her then 2-year-old daughter, Princess Alice, from the Royal Balcony. The result of this act of heroism was the execution of the Queen and the recovery of King Worrn from his illness with the end of the poisoning. The newly distrustful Worrn, though grateful for his advisor's actions, nevertheless soon dismissed Clarence Borxia from his service. When unable to adequately explain to his sister why he had stopped Lotheria's actions other than to cite his alleged vision from Lucifer, Ambrogio had here younger brother quietly strangled and deposited in the Lyme tied to a sack of bricks.

Ambrogio's current beloved protégé, grandson **Adam Borxia** (NE male human **minstrel**†), is an amoral rapist, betrayer, psychotic and deceive. His almost impossibly good looks are attributed to infernal blood from Caasimolar himself; his true father. Spoilt, violent and hateful, Adam, now 15 years of age, is ambitious beyond even his grandmother's hungers, and is presently plotting a way to marry **Princess Lenora**† of the Royal Family and then poison his new in-laws (and blood relatives as well, though he hasn't revealed this part of his plan yet). This marriage is the obsession of Ambrogio and consumes her whole hateful attention. Adam in the meantime amuses himself by taking multiple lovers and then leaving them broken in his spiteful anger over waiting for his rightful inheritance to come to fruition.

Adam's personal bodyguard **Rafale Gorginia** (NE male human **elite warrior**†) is a giant of a man whose disfigured face is almost always enough to deter any attempts. Those who do upset Adam are taken away to the chambers below the house where torture has become an art form.

Adam's mother, the charming Clara Borxia (deceased) was betrayed by her own son and poisoned. Fortunately — or perhaps unfortunately — for her, her devoted lover **Captain Aggrilet** (N male human **veteran**) arranged for her rebirth unbeknownst to the rest of the family. Now **Clara Borxia** (NE female alchymic-undying† human **mage**) plots her own sweet vengeance upon her family from a ruin deep below the family estate. She has a small army of followers, and has recently been working with the **Family** (of Festival) to recruit allies to work within House Borxia as spies. A large number of brain rats† now infest the walls and crawl spaces of the house and have removed all their lesser kin from their presence. Agrillet still serves as a guard in the house, and also spies on the family for his undying lover.

Clara's brother, the drunken **Damiano Borxia** (NE male human **master thief**†) wanders the house in a fugue of alcohol. Now wearing a white porcelain mask to hide horrific burns from acid that were inflicted on him by the avenging husband of a woman he murdered, Damiano is regarded as little more than a freak by his family, yet is capable and cunning. His drinking gets the better of him simply because he is so bloated with the need to avenge himself upon his family. His every waking moment is consumed by plots and counterplots with the ultimate aim of killing both his mother and nephew and taking over the isle and family.

The family adviser **Cardinal Olmir Frey-Borxia (**LE male human **priest** of Mother Grace) a distant cousin of the family, has his own plots within the family, and he too hungers for power. His orgies are the stuff of legend, and his feral tastes would revolt most. Fortunately, his status within the Illuminati is considerable, and he is determined that the House of Borxia rises to the summit of Castorhage nobility in time.

Other notable family members within the house include **Majenta Borxia** (CE female human **witch**†) a mistress of poisons and granddaughter of Ambrogio, who is in an incestuous affair with her brother **Gallo Borxia** (NE male human **veteran**), both of whom are older than Adam and considerably jealous of their younger sibling's favouritism. The revoltingly deformed **Isabella Borxia** (NE female human **witch**†) is the half-sister of Clara, but is never seen — she lurks in the upper attics of the house and, while regularly abroad in the city, is never seen with the family. Isabella is a member of the Great Coven and a woman who delights in using the most potent spider venoms and spiders to kill her enemies. Her daughter **Grachella Borxia** (NE female tiefling **master thief**†) has recently escaped her mother's clutches and now resides with the others downstairs. She has been accepted into the main family and, whilst her appearance is harsh, she bears none of the deformities of her mother. More notable bastards, advisers and followers, henchmen and spies thrive within the vast house, a town within itself that steadily grows in the hope of rivalling the Capitol.

Of course the Royal Family are engaged in endless plots to counter the threat of the family, but bearing in mind the iron rule that noble shall not shed noble blood, such plots have to be subtle and while open warfare has been talked of, it has not happened. Nevertheless, the Borxias have the largest private army in the city beyond the Royal Family, and the isle is a fortress where strangers are not welcome. Traders come and go of course, but none ever set foot in the myriad maze corridors and chambers of the house itself.

House Borxia (Level 13)

Alignment: NE
Location: The Hollow and Broken Hills (HBH24. The Isle of House Borxia)
Family Head: Ambrogio Elizabeth Borxia (LE female human **senior witch**†)
Motivations: To become the ruling family of Castorhage
Friends: House Tredici (Capitol), Borage Tredici (age 44) is married to Brinel Borxia (LN female human **priest** of Lucifer; age 18); House Perfida (Capitol)
Enemies: The Royal Family (Capitol)

Tactics: Poisonings, infernal pacts, seduction, extortion, infiltration, tiefling violence and intimidation

Morale: The fearless Borxias are secure in their infernal alliances and machinations. However, the sins of the family are likely to be the Borxia's undoing; pacts with devils are very risky, and the more stretched the family become, the more desperate those pacts become. Most now hinges upon young Adam. Should his risky plot work there may not be enough Castorhage princesses left to resist; should he fail, be unmasked or die of syphilis — all of which are fairly likely — the family could unravel.

Outside the City: The Churches of the Madness

Since these churches are built on the river and are not a part of the Sentinels Parish, they are technically beyond the bounds of the city.

HBH25. The Church of Brine

A church made of whalebones and scrimshaw, this place even has a clock made of shark jaws and scrimshaw with a dozen skeletal sahuagin parading a great bell, striking it once for each hour.

Rimed with salt spray and pollution, the blackened bones of the church are typical of those found across the district, and used as an example of one of hundreds. The Church to Brine is constructed of scrimshaw, and has a roof made of the upturned hull of an old sailing vessel the *Ecclesiastical*. Her current keeper **Priestess Sally Spindle** (N female briny† **priest**) is a feisty old bird who delights in scaring her flock and her neighbours. Regularly seen in the nearby gin houses on the small isles that surround the church, she is an old briny now, but a vast repository of all things nautical, having been married for 40 years to Albert, a good man and one of the best fishermen ever to sail the Fetid Sea. Spindle buried her husband only 4 months ago and drinks to ease her pain.

HBH26. The Praying Cathedral

A curious building rises from the waters here. It is a church, and an old one by the look of the grime and gull-droppings that infest it. This one has sagged, however, and leans out toward the river like an old man. It seems to have settled in its resting place, and despite a worrying bulge on the high south wall, remains standing.

The Praying Cathedral is again used as an example of many here. This building has been blighted by the frequent tears and sinkholes that open up in the Hollow and Broken Hills and has left the building fractured, changed, and yet somehow still standing. The view from the upper battlements down over a 200 foot drop to the sea is petrifying. There is simply nothing below as the wall overhangs by almost 15 feet.

The present caretaker, **Vicar Habbyon Gremp** (CN male human **burglar**†), uses the remote isle as a haven for his many friends in the Guild, and as a base for smuggling. The tall gangly man appears every inch the clumsy vicar, but his act is an excellent one, and his business thrives. Many ships moor up here when the canker is at its highest. Gremp is not beyond a bit of human trafficking too, and has smuggled many of the Family into the Hills. He sees his relationship with the wererats as profitable but worrisome.

The Madness

This section of the Hollow and Broken Hills is dominated by a single large hill covered in the shanties to the faithful come to worship in this most holy of districts.

HBH27. The Fallen Spire

A vast gaping hole opens in the streets here. Totally circular, it falls into deep darkness, with improvised rope ladders and precarious timbers lashed across its thirty-foot girth.

A dozen years ago, this was the location for the Spire of Saint Marram — Patron Saint of Late Harvests — then one night this hole opened up and it was gone, along with its incumbent priest Hectram Chubb (deceased). The hole, like many across the city here, is an entirely natural phenomenon, and is a little over 300 feet deep, leading to the wreckage of the church and an underground river that is occasionally populated by a cabal of skum† who worship the Madness of the Mirrorstorm.

HBH28. The Spa of Saint Hermis

A marble and iron dome topped with a goat holding a pair of scales. Steam rises through the mouths of several goat statues high in the gables of the place.

Dedicated to Saint Hermis, — Patron Saint of the Herds and Flocks, this spa based over a large flooded sinkhole filled by a natural hot spring. Within, skilled monk masseurs tend to customers and keep a careful watch over those who swim and dive into the exceptionally deep, warm waters. Offerings are made to the priestess of the temple spa, the outrageously corpulent **Mistress Kale** (N female swyne† **priest** of the Hork) who enjoys male company and who regularly develops a crush upon visitors, particularly those who resemble her ex-husband, the brawny, blonde and tanned gladiator Octrin Kale.

HBH29. The Bridge of Storms

Of the dozens of sinkholes across the district, this must be one of the largest. A great bridge has been thrown across the yawning pit, linking two streets. The bridge is a single structure, forming some sort of great townhouse, while beyond it the outer walls of the sinkhole have also been absorbed into the city, and a score of houses blink outward from just above the shadows.

A great subterranean river links this sinkhole to the river (as indicated on the district plan), and cranes and chains descend the hundred feet or so to a natural harbour. The house on the bridge is the present home of **His Magnificence Justice Shank, Lord of the River** (NE male human **wererat leader**†), ally of the Family, who aims to make Castorhage a wererat metropolis. The subterranean river is a valuable link for the Family into the district, and coupled with allies such as Vicar Habbyon Gremp (**HBH26**) allows the rats to run free in this holy place. It amuses the Rat Queen to think of a religious enclave for rats within this district, and she uses her ally Shank to further her aims, which now include capitulation of the Borxias (**HBH24**).

Shank's townhouse befits his ranks, and is a towering iron and stone thing that bloats about the bridge like a swollen wound. Scores of Family occupy various chambers within the building, and regular sailings between Festival and here bring goods. The river below is well-patrolled and has been partially constructed into a pair of subterranean settlements, one called the Warren, and the southern one at the river's mouth known as the Teeth.

HBH30. The Eye

A great tear in the ground has broken here, a circular wound almost a hundred yards across. Beyond it, the great cemetery beckons from a twisted lich gate of iron. Birds swoop in the black pit, and a strange distant echo — or perhaps a sigh — sings from far, far below.

One day there was a church called Saint Cartwell's, which stood proudly near the west Lich Gate of the Great Cemetery, the next it was gone — replaced by a vast hole. Locals claim the hole appeared at midnight and that the Devil rode out of it on a goat with a man's face. This place is deep and cold and menacing — birds occasionally swoop into its gloom and do not return, ropes have been lowered down into it, and the men on them have not come out again.

The pit is virtually bottomless, and gives access to several curious ruins far below. Unfortunately, the lower reaches of the hole are so choked with poisonous gases that no one has so far survived the drop of around half a mile to commence their exploration.

HBH31. The Great Castorhage Cemetery

It seems almost endless, a graveyard truly for a city of this size. Surely everyone that has ever died is somewhere within this still sad place which must measure a mile across and broad. You see forests and tangled groves, rising columns, and vast mausoleums across this huge green space in the heart of the city.



It is said that all faiths in the world have someone buried here. Six hundred and seventy acres of graves, mausoleums, and tombs make up the (now full) Great Castorhage Cemetery. The graves are for every faith, with special areas reserved for those who worship Brine and other gods. The hidden Garden of Mammon in the north is one of the wonders of the city, an incredible garden and maze wherein are buried hundreds of worshippers. The Forest of the Green Man is a tangled mass in the centre of the graveyard, while a subterranean Grotto to Sister Shadows is used by those who worship the Queen of Alleys.

The high northern cemetery wall looks out directly over the Lych Fens and has a platform and ramp at its top for dumping the bodies of the city's poor, plagued, or unlucky directly into the marches below. A great old, coal-fed furnace was also built up here to cremate remains when it was deemed necessary or convenient before dumping the ashes. This was formally called the Lych Field and operated for centuries as evidenced by the tangled earthen mound more than 400 feet broad that rises 30 feet from the marsh below to just below the lip of the cemetery wall. It doesn't take a very close inspection to see that this mound is actually composed of the skeletal remains of centuries of accumulated dead. At one time entire companies of clerics were employed to keep the unquiet dead from rising, but it has been silent for many years and the Lych Field itself was abandoned 7 years ago after the passage of the *Corpse Act of 1770*.

The Fetch do not haunt the site, partially because it makes such a great and obvious place for would-be fetchseers and undead hunters to come looking, but also because of a decree by Beltane that such a site is considered holy, even by him, and thus off-limits to all Fetch.

The blind and kindly **Gravemaester Nightshade** (N male blighted† human **street thief**†) keeps a small staff of gravediggers and gamekeepers at hand, but knows the graveyard has far greater guardians. A trio of insane **devas** watch the cemetery as part of some long-forgotten and clearly ill-fated agreement with the Church of Mother Grace. They are seldom encountered, and often wander the grounds in disguises to lure wrongdoers into their clutches. The angels never speak, having long ago grown to loathe each other, and this feeling has festered in their minds, unhinging the beautiful angels' bodies into something crooked. They know the Gravemaester and his workers, and do not molest them, but they do delight in talking to spirits and leaving their marks upon the graveyard.

The Outer Isles

Dozens of tiny islets give way as the Hills fall into the sea. Many are insignificant little patches of rock used to graze sheep, while some are used to facilitate smuggling or darker skullduggery.

Part Two: Running the Hollow and Broken Hills

Wolves that batten upon lambs, lambs consumed by wolves, the strong who immolate the weak, the weak victims of the strong: There you have Nature.

Holy Days and Festivals

Every day is a holy day in the Blight, or more likely an excuse for a drunken orgy.

The saying, bandied about by visitors, is very true. In a city of almost countless saints, beatifics, and sinners, as many as a score of holy days may be taking place at any given time. A sample of these days is given in **Chapter 1**, but the more eclectic ones, and those whose pomp and ceremony is an overwhelming thing of majesty are noted here in more detail.

Holy Days and Magic Potency

Some days are more powerfully holy — or unholy — than others. At such times the influence of the gods wanes or swells, and affects followers in unusual ways. With each festival listed, the description has a variant suggestion for the effects of certain spells for certain religions or alignments. These spell-effects usually occur from midnight to midnight on the given day unless noted otherwise.

A variant rule is suggested in the Sidebox suggesting the potency of certain spells at such times; use or ignore these rules as you see fit.

Dael's Vigil (Winter Solstice)

The longest night in mid- to late-Slumber, doors are locked against demons and devils who come knocking. His Holiness utters a final prayer from the Great Sanctuary Square as the sun sets, and then departs for the longest night, uttering prayers for the faithful.

The longest night is a boon for those from the darkness. Saving throws against Necromatic spells are made with disadvantage.

The vigil is usually marked by tokens and fetishes being affixed to doors, windows and chimneys. These tokens are often garlic, holy wafers or other good luck fetishes, e.g. rabbits' feet, monkey paws or thieves' fingers.

Feral

The first day of Longnight is a beacon to the outré, obscure, and occasionally disturbing festivals. Many who practice sacrifice do so at Feral, and those of the more pagan persuasion revel in a night celebrating Nature. These traditions have been hijacked by the nobility and turned into excuses for debauchery, bloodletting, and hunting. By night, hunts spread from the Capitol and into the streets searching for prey. This prey is usually prisoners (almost always political prisoners), but anyone who gets in the way might get caught up in the events. The vilest of ceremonies take place in Fallowshire, where the whole night echoes with hunting horns, baying hounds, and the laughter of the hunters.

Those who receive divine spells from a deity that includes Life, Nature or Tempest in their domains, and espouses at least some aspect of being a "nature deity," or any warlock with a Fey patron, receives a particular benefit on this day. These spellcasters increase the save DC of all spells by 2 for the duration of the day.

Harvest Day

To celebrate the harvest, Prayerday, Yield 22nd is set aside as a special day of prayers in all faiths. For the church of Mother Grace, however, the harvest is a particularly significant date in a calendar of pomp and order, as it gives tangible evidence of the Holy Mother's beneficence upon her children. For weeks before, local people decorate wells, holy shrines, scythes, barns, and practically anything they feel is connected with the harvest with flowers — some made into incredible celebrant designs depicting holy events.

Spellcasters that receive divine spells from deities with the Life or Nature make all their own saving throws with advantage. Furthermore, all spells of the Conjuration school are cast at a level one higher than the slot used for casting.

Name Day (a.k.a. Mother Grace's Nameday)

Prayerday, Sun 1st is the most holy day in the city — the name day of Mother Grace, the birthday of the goddess who is said to have cast the first seeds of life upon the world. Although this day has no game-effects, it is a day of great celebration, of festival and prayer. The festival begins at dawn, but in truth the planning — the prayer flags, tokens, gifts and goods — have been prepared for months. It is traditionally a day of gift giving, of honouring family and love and Mother Grace. Sanctuary flings its doors wide on this day, and a day of prayer, led by his Holiness, takes place until midnight.

Saint Jord's Day

A festival held every Sow 1st, as the official first day of spring, to commemorate the martyrdom of Castorhage's most famous saint, Jord, Patron Saint of the City-State, this is a day of spring cleaning and worship followed by a revelry that begins at midnight and lasts until morning. The day is particularly important to the faiths of Mother Grace (of whom Saint Jord was a cleric), Lord Shingles, Sister Shadows and Porfask. Spellcasters that receive divine spells from these deities make their own saving throws (of all kinds) with advantage.

The Sun Festival (Summer Solstice)

Mid-summer is a night of festivities (and in many cases orgies), when those who join in celebrate life and do not sleep until dawn. The Sun Festival does not mark any particular god, but is rather a celebration of all the gods. At this time locals dress as gods, wearing the masks of the divine — be they good or evil — and enjoy a night of wild celebration.

The streets are often quite dangerous during this wild abandon, and encounters can often turn nasty. The festival has taken on different aspects across the city; in some places firing sling stones at living birds in clay pots is considered entertainment, in the more genteel places people content themselves with a little bloodsport gambling. Entertainers fill the streets at this time, and a mass exodus of performers takes place from Festival and the Artists' Quarter into the wider city. This festival is well known to all members of the Guild as the greatest chance for a little overtime: guards are lax, drunk, or both, doors are often left unlocked, and anyone knocking with a broad smile is usually welcome.

The Great Lie — Hiding Alignments

Hiding alignments is easy, both in the Hollow and Broken Hills and in the Capitol — the reason, many say, that the two districts became established where they did. There are various conjectures about why what happened, and why it happened here, but whether it is by twist of fate or deliberate arcane meddling long ago, detection spells cannot be relied upon here or in the Capitol. The quality of the stone forming the bedrock and much of the construction prevents even the mightiest of detection magic from being fully trusted; false readings are made, and even the holiest men can detect as being wholly evil.

Some folk — who generally vanish shortly thereafter — say this is not a result of arcane interference at all, and that the magical detections are very much true. Nevertheless, experimentation has shown that divination magic is unreliable here. Casters attempting to cast any divination spell here must make a DC 15 Intelligence check to properly cast the spell or receive a fully-accurate result.

Holy Places

Much like holy days, some special places exude particular qualities. A small sample of such places are listed here, but remember the Hollow and Broken Hills cover an area of as much as 8 square miles, and it seems that every corner, every street, every well is holy in some way. Of course, on the back of every true miracle come a thousand shams, fakes and lies. The Guild in particular makes merry in the Hollow and Broken Hills with its holy man con artists and sale of saintly relics scams.

The Grotto of Sinner Lucretzia

This grotto sits at a minor crossroads of three alleyways: the Clench, Gubber's Folly and Hay Lane. It is constructed of volcanic tuff and marked by a simple, badly-carved gargoyle who sits above a doorway.

Within is a shrine to Mammon, and one of his more infamous sinners Lucretzia, who died in the 9th century. Lucretzia was a tyrant to her slaves,

and infamous for her treatment of them. Particularly during her 8-day feasts. Lucretzia's house once sat on this spot, and the well that remains here was her well. When she died — unable to escape a fire in her home due to her immense obesity — followers of Mammon created a shrine here. The current keeper, **Sister Immaculate Horatia** (N female human **priest**) tends the shrine purely in the hope that it will raise her fortunes.

The Holy Well of Brother Hasp

This well — in truth a small sinkhole with a flowing river at its base — was the place the martyr Brother Hasp was tossed into for refusing to renounce his devotion to Mother Grace in the 6th century. Some say that drinking water from the well, tended by a devoted **Father Stran** (LN male human **ascetic**†) grants visions of hidden enemies. A silver cup fixed by a chain is used by devotees to the martyr, and an offering is made by casting coins into a small offertory bowl kept by Stran.

The Relic of Saint Augustino

A rusting gibbet, with a barely visible, much aged skeleton within, hangs on the corner of Mildew Way. The gibbet is said to bring luck to any who touch it, the occupant — allegedly Saint Augustino — was impaled and left to rot here almost six centuries ago by a cruel tyrant master who worshipped Asmodeus. It is said that on certain days, the skeleton can be heard whispering hymns to Mother Grace.

The Tears of Archangel Bethan

Unfortunately, one of the great scams of the Hills, the "tears of the archangel" regularly appear in convincingly ancient caskets, clay ewers and even potion bottles. It is said that when the tears are consumed, they give the imbiber the gift of seeing Heaven.

The Hollow and Broken Hills Random Encounters

Daytime	Nighttime	Result
01	01–03	Thugs*
02	04–05	Gentlemen*
03–12	06–08	Fiery Preacher and devout followers*
13	09–10	Bishop Thresh (**HBH7**)
14–18	11	Scholars* (**HBH12**)
19–21	12	Trader*
22–23	13–21	Sanctuary guardsmen (**HBH1**)
24–25	22	Saint Edgar Rhyne (**HBH2**) and 2d6 Watch
—	23	Devotion Earl of the Isle Hassop Brome (**HBH6**)
—	24	Justice Sculpin (**HBH8**)
—	25	Silas Cane (**HBH12**)
26	26	Marris Gwade (**HBH2**)
27	27–31	Gravediggers*
28–29	32–33	Priestess Sally Spindle, preaching (**HBH25**)
30–33	34–35	Nuns*
—	36	Lord Undertaker of Ossuary Fetter (**HBH21**)
—	37	Hanrin Gorse (**HBH12**)
34	38–42	Monks*
35–39	43	Burial party plus mourners*
40–41	44–50	Holy temple or shrine
42	51	Righteous Cardinal (**HBH3**), 6 Sanctuary Paladins
43–50	52	Holy festival group*
51	53	Under-Cardinal (**HBH3**), 3 Sanctuary Paladins
52–55	54–58	Wandering flagellants*
56–62	59–60	Pilgrims*
63	61	Great Banker Aspin Shortsone III (**HBH5**)
—	62	Captain Aggrilet (**HBH24**)
64–65	63–64	Keeper of the Docklands (**HBH13**)
66	65	Majestic Farrien (**HBH5**)
67–69	66	Master Guildsman (**HBH5**)
70	67	Grand Master of Spires (**HBH5**)
71–72	68–71	Local Family*
—	72	Sanctum Paladin Lord Grace (**HBH9**)
73	73	Lord Scythe (**HBH5**)
74–78	74–80	**Street thieves***†
—	81	Mistress Henna Thray (**HBH11**)
—	82	Ryth Penance (**HBH17**)
79–82	83–88	Lowfolk*
83–97	89–90	Preacher plus crowd*
98	91–93	Adam Borxia, 2d12 guards (**HBH24**)
99	94	Elias Crane (**HBH14**)
00	95–96	Ghouls
—	97	Damiano Borxia (**HBH24**)
—	98	Majenta Borxia (**HBH24**)
—	99	Master of Burials Hamp Lothar (**HBH11**)
—	00	Grand Warden Briar (**HBH10**)

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–65	Human (Castorhager)
66–75	Human (other)
76–90	Halfling
91–93	Dwarf
94–96	Gnome
97–00	Other

Where named characters are encountered, they are encountered alone or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Burial Party and Mourners: This group is composed of the officiating **priest,** 6 coffin bearers, 1d12 family members, and 1d100



hired mourners (**commoner**).

Family: These folk are 2d6 in number (**commoner**) and are wandering about enjoying themselves (33%), bickering (33%) or praying (34%).

Fiery Preacher and Devout Followers: The preacher (**priest**) and his mob of 2d12 followers (**commoner**) may turn nasty if their devotions are attacked in any way.

Gentlemen: Genteel citizens in a group of 1d4+5 (aristocrat 1-4), they are here to cleanse their souls and are sober, and possibly bored.

Ghouls: A pack or 1d6+6 **ghouls** wanders the street. They are under Beltane's strict instructions not to overfeed. They may surprisingly run away from encounters, possibly making things worse. In the Hollow and Broken Hills, they are generally simply fleeing or trying to hide and escape immediately.

Gravediggers: These labourers (**commoner**) often work at night but always in groups of 2d6 for safety. They are generally covered in holy tokens and fetishes during their work, and carry shovels, mattocks and prybars with them.

Holy Festival Group: 1d100 celebrants (**commoner**) are out observing a holy day or event important to their church.

Holy Temple or Shrine: This is a temporary placement, the site of a recent miracle, a vision or a death.

Lowfolk: These locals (**commoner**) are simply going about their business and want to be left alone.

Nuns or Monks: Wandering to prayer in groups of 3d6 **priests**` , they are either singing hymns or praying or are in absolute silence (GM's choice).

Pilgrims: There are 1d100 pilgrims (**commoner**) here to see a particular place of worship or to visit Sanctuary.

Preacher plus Crowd: The preacher (**priest**) delivers a sermon to 2d12 followers or those devoted to his cause or those just about to heckle him (**commoner**).

Sanctuary Guardsmen: These 3d6 **guards** stand no nonsense.

Scholars: These 3d6 youths (**commoner**) from one of the university buildings are generally noisy but harmless.

Street Thieves: These cutpurses (**street thief**) may follow targets to alleys and attack by day and are likely to attack openly by night.

Thugs: By day these 2d3 **thugs** are noisy and objectionable; by night they attack unless their hostile attitude can be improved.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) peddles in holy tokens, votive lights, incense, and candles. Some (20%) may try to sell fake holy relics.

Wandering Flagellants: These 1d12 zealots (**commoner**) abuse themselves with whips, sticks or wire as they move, paying their penalty for their perceived sins.





Chapter Eight: Toiltown and the Jumble



Dirt. Sweat. Toil.

Welcome to the prayers of Toiltown. We are here to work, brothers and sisters and children, bonded by miserable contracts that make us little more than slaves.

We're conceived, born, work, and die within the sounds of the Great BlackBell of East Ending; the east end of the city, truly the end in fact. But we are strong here; we may not be one, but we are bound together. Yes, we have our squabbles and blood shedding: riots in the gin houses, murders at cockfights, whores slit from ear to ear. Yet still we are one, and occasionally, we rise. So far, we've been unable to throw aside the fetters of our contracts and our toil, but our day is coming. The aristo's say that scum rises to the surface, but we have a different saying, that those who climb high enough can see the light.

So work and smile as the overseers give their orders; in truth they hate the place more than you anyway. Live your life and strive for your children; their day, their life, their children's lives will be better than yours.

Swear it brothers and sisters.

Swear it and rejoice …

Toiltown, a.k.a. The State of Sweat

This is a place of work, seemingly nothing more at times. Those who live here are literally born into the thrall of one mill owner or family or another, contracted from the moment of their first breath into a series of wages, costs, and mysterious fines. Some fines last generations — so great are the misdemeanours — so that whole families are blighted forever. There seems to be no escape from these fines and costs, and the tricky legalese and vile penalties imposed upon those who refuse to pay them — at the very least imprisonment in the terrible Sweatshop, the Blight's biggest prison — await.

Life is tough, and it breaks many, but a few survive, a few even thrive, mainly those who find some loophole with which to exploit their masters, or those who take to crime or the even more ridiculously risky work of hired adventurers.

Everyone hates vast Toiltown, even the overseers and manufactury managers who deal out their cruel forms of justice within. It is a place of endless manufacturies and sweatshops, workhouses and underground mills. The work here is mundane; many of the jobs that take place go either to keeping everything here in continuation — baking bread, building houses, making candles, butchery — or a toil to make the lives of aristocrats better — crafting luxury goods, supplying endless cloth, making luxury foodstuffs. A few larger businesses allow Castorhage to export materials. For example, a rudimentary cotton-spinning machine has been developed, and workers toil in huge buildings within which are cumbersome treadmills (where both horses, undead horses, and people — living and dead — provide the power). This machine, perfected by **Joseph Sedge** has made him a fortune, and he is one of the greatest mill owners in Toiltown. Sadly, his own success has blinded him to his memories of suffering as a child and now the owner has become a tyrant. His score of mills are places of misery. **Rudyard Brome**, his greatest competitor (and alleged thief of the original process), has built his dozen mills over the past ten years at a ridiculous (some would say dangerous) rate, and he hammers his staff to compete with Sedge's. That both these men aspire to aristocracy is something true nobles find annoying and amusing in equal measure. There are some amongst the nobles (most notably Duke Malice) who believe that Sedge should be hung, but the great inventor has friends in high places and has so far avoided this fate.

In a city that prides itself on its inventiveness, there are dozens of other would-be manufacturymen who are working to advance profits, most notably **Edrin Fescue,** the alchymist gnome who is working on a machine to mass-produce pigments. Also, **Elisa Strang** is covertly working on making tools, and **Captain Hobb** is working on a method to mass-produce ships for the Royal Navy.

One is regarded as a true East Ender only if born within earshot of the Great BlackBell of East Ending. The lowest castes of the city make their homes here, and a vast number of slums have developed over the years. Visitors find a dizzying array of endless unnamed streets awash with dirty children, sullen goodwives, and aggressive men on their way to gin houses for an evening's relaxation. An East Ender, however, is a friend for life if his reticence can be overcome. They take good care of their own.

Washing up on the shores of the Artists' Quarter and Bazaar, the East Ending is a rough place to wander in, but a good place to find information. A coin can buy many services — murder, in some streets — and in a district where the Watch keep their distance, many people find Toiltown a good place to hide. With so many people crammed into so small a place, trouble is never very far away, and many predators find the close proximity and cheap life very useful.

The East Ending has an unenviable reputation and history of murder. Whether this is caused by the harshness of life here, or whether East Enders make easy prey for such killers is open to conjecture, but barely a night passes without a death — or multiple deaths — here.

An appalling trade in slavery, and worse, lurks just beneath the surface. Many a decent East Ending man looks on in anger at events in his patch, and these men are often stirred into action. This anger is a useful tool to those brave and cunning enough to capitalise upon it.

Part One: Places

What Toiltown looks like …

Crushed. Some have compared the town to an anthill, others to a wasp nest. It is ugly, there is no doubt about that, and decayed; collapsing, some say. Fires are common, and sometimes whole parishes vanish in a night's flames. It is also massive, ridiculously vast, and consuming, a maze miles across and full to bursting.

Yet it can also seem incredibly welcoming, if you're with the right people or look the right sort, a place where smiling children play in filth.

By night, it is simply black, a night ebon darkness that even flames seem afraid of. Even the link-boys who scuttle down alleyways do so furtively, as if their lights might attract unwanted attention.

What Toiltown smells like …

Of dirt and sweat and human waste, and lots of it. In high summer, many wear masks, and aristos* come here with their fancy perfumed mouchoirs to gloat. Some grow used to the stench; others drown it in gin or beer.

* Toiltown slang for "aristocrats"

What Toiltown feels like …

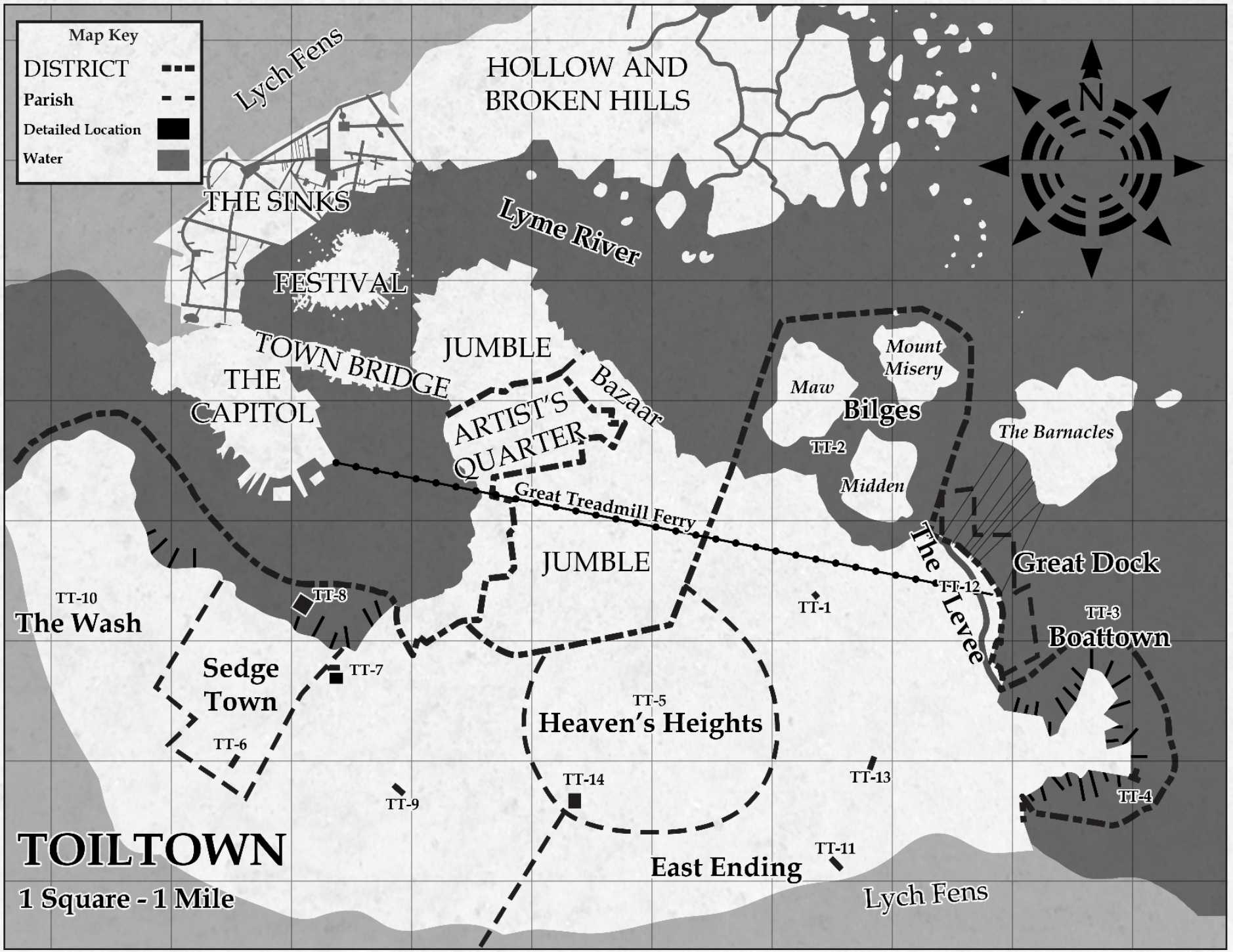
Clammy, hot, gritty. The whole vast area has its own strange dirty feel, and certainly it's impossible to go far here without acquiring a coating of grime and sweat. It can also feel incredibly confusing. Dizzyingly so; this is a place you don't want to get lost in in case the wrong person helps you.

What Toiltown sounds like …

Noisy, the slamming of the new manufacturies goes on night and day, and has driven people mad. By day, it is all toil and selling and sweat. By evening, it is either drinking or sleeping and arguments between man and wife. By night, it develops a new sound; still the manufacturies slam their clock hammer noise across the city, and there is always noise: the barking of dogs, the sound of arguments, the cry of lovers taking a few precious moments of intimacy in a place of tangled humanity.

Seven words to describe Toiltown …

SWEAT **Dung** **PIGS …**
CONTINUATION ***SUFFERING***
WORK *SLUMS*


Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Detailed Location
Water
Lych Fens
HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
N
THE SINKS
Lyme River
FESTIVAL
TOWN BRIDGE
JUMBLE
THE CAPITOL
ARTIST'S QUARTER
Bazaar
Mount Misery
Maw
Bilges
TT-2
Midden
The Barnacles
Great Treadmill Ferry
JUMBLE
The Levee
TT-12
Great Dock
TT-1
TT-3
Boattown
TT-10
The Wash
TT-8
Sedge Town
TT-7
TT-5
Heaven's Heights
TT-6
TT-14
TT-13
TT-4
TT-9
TOILTOWN
1 Square - 1 Mile
TT-11
East Ending
Lych Fens



A Dirty Half-Dozen

The underbelly of the city is considered a safe place for villains, but this is not always the case, especially if you have a price on your head. Not only is every rebel hunter in existence likely to come your way after the reward, and every would-be-captain come knocking, but those around you often envy you, or succumb to the fabulous rewards offered for your capture.

Presently the six greatest villains in terms of aristocrats' views are listed below in the order of their notoriety. Despite their egos, there is no particular leader of those who wish to throw the yoke of misery and enslavement off, nor are the six on good terms. There is no happy council of voices or coherent rebel meeting, nor in fact, any cohesion at all. Rebels do work together, more often from necessity than any other reason, and they fall out by the same token.

1. The Three-Eyed Eel (NG male human **spy**): Reward 50,000 gold shekels

2. Pleasant Sedgefly, Lady of Bilge (N female gnome **phantasmagist**†**illusion mage**): Reward 20,000 gold shekels

3. Uriah Snout (NE male blighted† human **thug**): Reward 10,000 gold shekels

4. Lila Fleabane (N female human **spy**): Reward 10,000 gold shekels

5. Oermelia Thrip (CN female boatfolk† halfling): Reward 10,000 gold shekels

6. Lucas Iris (NE male dwarf **thug**): Reward 5,000 gold shekels

Some of these notorious few occasionally receive boons via a mysterious benefactress — none other than Princess Rebecca of Mourney†, though she is always paranoid about who and how she helps.

Parishes and Wards

Countless.

The main recognized parishes are East Ending, Heaven's Heights, Sedge Town, The Wash, Boattown, and the Bazaar. Both the Jumble and the Bilges could be said to constitute a parish or sorts but are something quite different, really.

The innumerable wards are divided by ownership: by gang, by mastery — and these chop and change with the passing seasons. The city has established a total of 67 wards by number, but the borders of these fluctuate depending on the map or the guide one is relying upon. Other than for "official Crown business" (of which there is little in Toiltown), these numbered wards are largely a forgotten construct. In general, places have well-established local names — the **Grot**, the **Mire**, the **Scourge** — names earned through reputation and tradition. The more notable are given further detail below since much of Toiltown is a mass slum with few buildings of note, but plenty of places not to be found in.

TT1. The Great BlackBell of East Ending

A dirty, crowded, hill staggers from the kingdom of slums, a colourful flotsam of improvisation sheltering its occupants. This rainbow shantytown clambers up countless steps until it reaches a gigantic rocky tor mounted by a rusty iron-and-stone church. Punching the sky is a great steeple, a black and ochre thing of rust and corrosion, decay and darkness. The bell that hangs within is beaten by a great automated angel, yet even this construct seems tired and worn.

The Great BlackBell is cast of iron and beaten on the hour by its angel and is regarded as the true centre point of the vast East Ending slum. One is only a true East Ender if born within earshot of the impossible bell, which itself stands some 40 feet high.

The church below, headquarters of the Anarchists, refuge of revolutionaries, and fortress of the East End, is dedicated to Saint Purbeck, Patron Saint of the Commoners. The place is a fortress, a thorn in the side of nobles and a beloved symbol of hope to those below. Anarchists are by nature leaderless, but the revolutionaries have a leader, a living saint said to have given succour to the poor for all of her 82 years of life. **Mother Hope** as she is known to all who live here, was born **Sedgery Holl** (NG female human **vicar**† of Mother Grace) and keeps a small sisterhood here who, in turn, are hand in glove with the rebels — although Hope never allows the words to pass her lips. She is apolitical and sees her mission as simply one to give hope and spread the true work of Mother Grace to the poor.

TT2. The Bilges

A trio of revolting mounds of massive proportion rise from the river, gulls festering about each as they climb to stinking hilltops high above the water. The stench is infernal, as is the noise, yet you see that these midden mounds are home to many; there are boardwalks, piers and even buildings scattered and pocking the surface of each hill.

"The filth must go somewhere," said Crown Justice John Quintilius Moravam in 1392 in his ruling on the famous case of *Symmons, et. al. v. Tettle Escratory* to answer the city's burgeoning sewage problem. A renowned reformist best known for his failed attempts to abolish indentured slavery and to the provision of almshouses for the poor, Crown Justice Moravan was nonetheless a point of light in the darkness of his age and his surroundings. And his infamous ruling *against* the interests of the Crown ultimately led to the birth of the Bilges.

Three huge islands have risen like black boils from the Lyme as a result. Each has a name — the **Midden**, the **Maw**, and **Mount Misery** — and each is a colourful shanty of rising timber boardwalks, rope bridges, and termite-feasted timber gathered from the river and sea to provide warmth and shelter.

A sprawling mass of boardwalks, barges, and the screeching of mangy gulls, the Bilges is about the lowest place a person can find himself in the city. The bilges are where the city's rubbish goes, a collected morass of filth and waste, bones and litter. Affectionately known as StinkTown and the City of Perfume, it is the place where all the unwanted rubbish of the city comes to die. It is also where a great many of the Invisibles caste all home.

The Bilges are linked in a clannish way to the Rag and Bone Men of BookTown. Indeed, the present leader of the siles, the crabby **Pleasant Sedgefly, Lady of Bilge** (N female gnome **illusion magephantasmagist**†), is the cousin by marriage to the **King of Rag and Bone Isaac Crumb** (**B29**). The two don't like to refer to the cause of their relationship, but exchange regular letters. Sedgefly in truth is a bit of an Anarchist at heart, and sponsors many of the city rebels locally. She is also one of the master thieves of the Guild, who use the isle as one of their uncountable bases for smuggling — this one given the added advantage of being vile.

Rather like the nearby Sinks, the Bilges is constantly changing, and whole chunks of the isles occasionally fall away, taking many unfortunate victims with them. Quicksand mires (known locally as "Bilge-Bogs") open up for no apparent reason. A very strict caste system operates on the isle for rubbish collection, with the lowest — the "untouchables" — gathering filth at the water's edge and bringing it to the hills. Their trade — amongst the bogs and mires of the edges — is the most risky. Each group of untouchables has a de-facto master called the Gatherer, whose job it is to seek valuables. In turn, these report to three Masters (or in one case, Mistress) of the isles, who are **Lady Henna Rose, Mistress of Midden** (N female human **spy**), the **C'thwaa' Fester of the Maw** (N female coprophagi† **master thief**†), and **Prince Cobb, Lord Protector of Mount Misery** (NG male human **knight**), who all in turn report to Sedgefly.

By winter, the isles are terrible — ice-covered pits of waste or slurry-filled mouths of rot, which give way in summer to the black flies — the midden-angels — that rise in the spring and stay until late autumn. The flies are a torment on hot summer days, and workers wear full-face scarves (known as a *keff*) to keep them at bay. Some people claim the flies eat children and babies occasionally. The midden-angels swarm (equal to wasp swarms), and often many of these even group into vast black buzzing maelstroms. A local root known as Ulrin's piss, which when burnt smells like scorched urine, keeps them at bay and is commonly found cultivated in patches on Midden.

That businesses conduct trade — fishermen, innkeepers, and gambling houses — amazes some, particularly those who live above the filth in fancy houses, but these places draw those with plenty to hide or trade or offer, and the Bilge-Houses, as they are known, are so full of tales that all Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information are made here at advantage.

The Festering Brethren

The coprophagi (or Roachfolk) are detailed as a race in **Part 3** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***, however, a little more explanation for the Festering Brethren — perhaps the best-known but least-understood examples of this race — is in order. Like the rest of the coprophagi, the Festering Brethren tend to congregate among the dumping lands of the Bilges (and to a lesser extent other landfills and other dumping grounds in and around the city). And like their roachfolk kin, they tend to shy away from contact with other humanoids on account of the negative and sometimes hostile response that they receive. However, unlike their kin, the Festering Brethren *do* go out among the peoples of the city from time to time. In fact, when coprophagi are encountered by the other races of Castorhage, it is almost always the Festering Brethren they are encountering. It is because of this that most folk believe that all roachfolk dress in leper's rags and bear bell-staves wherever they walk. This is an image that the Festering Brethren have cultivated both to normalise their race among the others but also to provide some degree of protection from overt persecution by both appearing pathetic and unthreatening and discouraging close contact. Thanks to the efforts of the Festering Brethren more than one coprophagi has been spared a vicious attack by brutal gang members simply for fear or contracting leprosy (an affliction to which the roachfolk are, in fact, immune).

The Festering Brethren do more than simply perform a protective service for their people, however. They also work with the **King of Rag and Bone** (**B29** in **Chapter 3**) as Rag and Bone Men to raise money for their survival and that of their kin. They do this, not simply out of their kindness of their hearts, but because they hold it as a sacred mission for the survival of their race. The Festering Brethren is a brotherhood that worships Zors, the patron deity of the sick and down-trodden. In fact, they serve not only as passive supporters of their faith and their people, but most Brethren have levels of cleric or monk and actually serve as covert protectors against the persecution of the hateful and bigoted. They do not make a big show of their interventions, and truthfully want their involvement to remain a secret, but more than one murderous thug or vigilante has been found floating in the river by some imagined misadventure who actually fell afoul of the crusading Brethren while perpetrating some attack or crime against the roachfolk.

T3. Boattown

It almost resembles a vast shipwreck washed onto the shores south of a huge fortified isle, with countless chain-ferries and bridges linking it to a great mainland fort. This wreck, however, is not accidental, it is manmade. Endless ships have been drawn into this flotsam, streets and bridges and ladders — all one step from collapse — lash these wrecks together to form a distinct township.

Strapped between the East Ending and the Great Docks lurks a fixed group of riverboats, planks, and piers known collectively as Boattown. This is a place where swarthy halfling families hold sway, where fishermen rub shoulders openly with briny and where murder costs a few coins. Boattowns are common along the Lyme, but this one is the biggest — and nastiest — in the city-state.

Boattown is not a place to be without an escort or a friendly local, and all encounters here commence as hostile. A huge number of halflings have made their home and trade here. They are fishermen for the most part and ply the seas, or — if they are unlucky — get washed up on the Unsea in Between. Life is hard, and the locals match it, in the tiny gin houses and ale shops that cram this place and the decks below, fights break out over nothing, and knives are drawn and used over so much as a glance.

Yet there is great kinship here, a Boattown friend is a friend forever, and no one local ever forgets a favour. Times may be tough, but law exists here, this is a place where to be a local is to have enough — never quite enough for a halfling appetite, of course — but enough.

A gang holds sway across the flotsam town, one of the toughest gangs in the city, and keeps order and intruders out. Their worst enemies — the wererats of Festival and the Family in particular — are hunted here, and those who betray even the slightest sign of lycanthropy are quickly hung and tossed into the maws of slop-sharks and mar-eels who are encouraged by locals to swim these waters. The gang is led by **Foul-Mouthed Peg** (N female boatfolk† halfling **veteran**), one of the hardest people in the city, with a tongue and a liking for gin to match. Peg keeps a council of halfling women under her thumb and the gang beyond. She is very fair, but very firm, and those who meet her rarely escape the glare of her single bloodshot eye. Foul-mouthed Peg has vowed to find and capture the Rat Queen and dine on her sisters before finally boiling her alive for supper.

Blight Gang: The Boatboys

Location: Toiltown (Boattown)
Leader: Foul-Mouthed Peg (N female boatfolk† halfling **veteran**)
Motivations: Security and safety of boatfolk† halflings, ruination of the Family and burning of Festival
Friends: Various river-folk and Viroeni clans along the river, some local revolutionaries and Anarchists
Enemies: The Family, the Royal Family, Royals caste, Upper Class caste
Tactics: Cunning, stealth and brute force (with surprise)
Morale: Very strong; the Boatboys have been in various battles (some might say wars) over the centuries and have never been defeated. It would take a protracted campaign involving the burning of Boattown and all the subsidiary boattowns as well as the hunting of boatfolk everywhere to even consider such an event feasible — and it has been tried several times before.

TT4. The Hulk

A huge chain-ferry ship anchors at the edges of Boattown and is surrounded by smaller sailing ships and fishing boats, all with brightly coloured sails.

One of the most infamous drinking establishments, theatres, and lodgings in the Blight, the Hulk also serves as headquarters for the Boatboys (sidebox), who run various moneymaking operations from its vastness. The present keeper of the Hulk — **Oermelia Thrip** (CN female boatfolk† halfling **summoner**†) — is a common sight in her bright red wig, nightdress, and heavy cotton dressing gown. Thrip, cousin of **Foul-Mouthed Peg** (**TT3**), has an unusual liking for magic, and loves to collect spells and arcana. She has a small collection of homunculi and stitched creatures that serve as pets and messengers, and she is widely regarded as an authority on magic in the city among halflings; which is perhaps not saying much but she has respect and powerful friends to back her interest up. Thrip is also an expert on the Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm, and regularly sends out missions to thwart the kraken and its skum and aquatic thralls. In this matter, Thrip is obsessive, convinced that the cult seeks to drown the city in a sea of filth, Boattown first.

Like all matters halfling, the Hulk does eating and drinking to excess, and its revelry is legendary. Parties have gone on for weeks, and drinking sessions rarely end after a single day. In the lighthouse — the great lantern that tops the vessel — the platters are so vast that a huge dumbwaiter, installed through necessity, has to be replaced every year through wear.

TT5. Heaven's Heights

Toiltown rises to a hill here, although growth might be a better description. This is habitation on an unimaginable scale. Every inch of this huge hill is infested with right shanty buildings, so numerous that movement seems impossible through them.

Heaven's Heights would be a city in its own right in most places, yet here it is but one part of a whole. The shanty city within a city is an incredible place, an echo of the Jumble is many ways, yet lacking the grace of that district. East Enders consider those who live in the Heights outsiders, incomers who seem to mock other commoners with their cleaner air and views. Yet, in truth, Heaven's Heights is a terrible place, an opium and insectum-addled city in its own right and scene of a battle between two of the most vicious gangs in Castorhage — the Ferrets and the Hounds — who fight an ongoing war from the streets of the Heights and the income of its residents in taxes.

Blight Gang: The Ferrets

Location: Toiltown (Heaven's Heights)
Leader: Marcul Throst (N male blighted† human **master thief**†)
Motivations: Greed, personal power
Friends: None
Enemies: The Hounds, City Watch, the Crown Government
Tactics: Murder, arson, vendetta, fear
The Ferrets' battles have been ongoing for almost four years now, and the endless killing is creating some cynical veterans in the gang. For now, each atrocity (whether it is committed openly by the Hounds or as an act of secret betrayal by those within the Ferrets) perpetuates the battles, but exhaustion may be looming among some gang members.

Blight Gang: The Hounds

Location: Toiltown (Heaven's Heights)
Leader: Anna Hyde (N female human **master thief**†)
Motivations: Revenge, power, greed
Friends: None
Enemies: The Ferrets, City Watch, the Crown Government, certain members of the Fetch
Tactics: Violence, slander, poison, castration
The audacious tactics of the gang have led to several costly defeats. Many once-loyal members have defected to the Ferrets or left the city entirely, tired of the endless slaughter of those caught between the gangs.

TT6. Sedgetown

Order has been restored here, an order of manufacturies crushing the slums. A score of huge buildings rise symmetrically above the slums that wash at their shores. The clean lines of the manufacturies, and the windmills that cram their rooftops, seem at odds with the rest of the city: newer, a sign of things to come perhaps. Where the buildings' skirts touch the surrounding slums, they kick them away as though disgusted by them.

Hated, the subject of frequent attack, yet integral to the advancement of fleshgines†, treadmills, the Made and the Unliving, the invention of Joseph Sedge is being seen by revolutionaries and in particular Anarchists as the target of their hatred. The twenty mills Sedge owns are run like military establishments, with an armed guard of 50 men at each and cruel overseers. The places are built like fortresses, and work day and night to spin cotton.

Sedge has gradually slithered from his common roots to become a would-be-aristocrat, yet is hated by those he aspires to be. His great fortress home (**TT8**) has become a prison, and although rich almost beyond imagining, he is miserable and paranoid. Discipline in his mills is obscenely strict, with public floggings and weekly wage fines commonplace. However, Sedge has gone beyond mere harshness, and with the help of his most trusted employee **Master Rufus Blackthorn** (NE male human **thug**) has instigated a darker aspect to his need for control, his Shadows. The Shadows are a trio of **barbed devils** kept in an under-furnace to do his dirty work — including pursuing Anarchists' families.

A further punishment involves the use of a score of *dungeon rings*. (These allows the owner of the master ring to know where the wearer is, and to see and hear the wearer at will as per the spell *scrying*. No saving but no saving throw is allowed, and the ring only can only be removed by wearer of the master ring or by a *remove curse*.) The rings were gifted to Sedge by infernal allies working through the Illuminati, where Sedge has aspirations. The rings are enforced upon troublemakers for periods between a month and a year, and are used not only to keep track of the workers, but to find out secrets and belittle them and their families in attempts to ruin relationships.

Workers are housed in the slums immediately adjacent to the mills. In places, warning signs have been written in obscure tongues such as River Cant and Thieves' Cant, warning visitors to stay away. An undercurrent of misery and fear drives the populace into an agonising corner mingling hatred with terror, a wish to help every Anarchist but a miserable drenching fear of what happens to those who do so.

In direct opposition to this are the posh neighbourhoods that Sedge has constructed atop some of his massive manufactury buildings. Here where the air is clearer and the sounds and smells of the surroundings grown faint, rise elaborate streets, balconies, decks, and terraces holding well-to-do townhouses, shops, and eateries. These serve as homes to the newly affluent and have a well-staffed contingent of the City Watch. Most folk of this "upper" Sedgetown are rising in the upper tiers of the Middle Class or are newly arrived in the Upper Class. Chain-conveyors provide secure access to carefully sequestered streets and walks within Sedgetown below, and carefully constructed decorative walls, berms, and colonnades block the view of the surrounding slums from the sensibilities of these increasingly well-to-do folk. Few of any ever step foot outside their high-rise community, and those who do invariably head straight to the river for water transport to the Capitol or BookTown beyond, making the blight of the surrounding city something easily put out of mind.

TT7. Fort Grind

A massive stone and iron tower rises from the river and frowns at the disorder it sees to the south. This curious place has seemingly turned its back upon the mills to its southwest, as though in disapproval it has blanked its windows from that view.

The massive fort is the aristocratic foothold of order in Toiltown, and while dozens of smaller gaols, sanatoriums, and lock-ups pepper the wards and parishes, this is in truth the only safe place. A Watch station of a thousand constables are billeted here, and an uneasy number of unpleasant experimental wings lie within the hated place. The Infirmary is the focus of these twisted dabblings, and even the Watch here utter a prayer to Mother Grace when the name is mentioned or a duty takes them to it.

The master, **His Grace Parish Commander of the Watch, Lord Maple** (LE male alchymic-undying† human **transmogrifier†uter**), is a demented, sick spellcaster and golem-stitcher and cadaver-surgeon who has dabbled in rebirth, fleshwarping, and alchemy. Maple is obsessive about golems and homunculi, and has several under his control in the Infirmary, a testament to homunculi-making. Maple, a close friend of convenience with **Joseph Sedge** (**TT8**), uses the mill owner to handpick suitable subjects of sufficient strength or willpower to serve his needs, rewarding the mill owner with access to some of his own contacts within the Illuminati and aristocracy.

Maple keeps a special staff within the Infirmary, and the fear and legends of what takes place there are enough to keep most people out. Even so, revolutionaries brave (or mad) enough occasionally break into the Infirmary to try to free or destroy what they find within.

Maple has a thing about hounds, and he has a vast number of kennels containing demented breeds he has engineered himself or has been gifted by those in the Illuminati who are keen on the outcome of his ongoing work.

TT8. Sedge Refuge

An island fort of stone rises from the river here, protected on all sides by water. A vast wall stands around the island, breached in only one place by a squat dirty fortress with a pier. Within, glimpses of tall trees and elegant fountains can be seen.

Part refuge, part prison, this magnificently paranoid structure is as beautiful and garish as it is deadly. A skeleton staff (Sedge distrusts everyone) and a mesh of traps guard the bachelor in his palace. Beyond the walls and iron, Sedge lives alone with his beautiful objects, vain attempts at culture, and paranoia. He has gone through five wives, murdering one with his own hands through simple imagined terror that she was slowly poisoning him, and has choked any chance of happiness he ever had.

Joseph Sedge (LE male human **noble**) indulges his appetites, whims, and fear in full measure. His moods are terrible, especially if tripped up on matters of culture. While his house groans with magnificent art, he lacks the wit to appreciate it. His home, and the groomed grounds that are ordered about it, are cold, lonely places that seem almost like something of Between, beautiful and yet empty. Slowly but surely, Sedge's paranoia is reaching out to Between, and a nightmare place is creeping toward him waiting to engulf him. At present, this empty world exists only in his dreams, but the more he thinks of the awful place he dreams of, the more real it becomes.

TT9. Workclock

A single iron object rises from the streets of the slums here, grasping upward through a series of galleries and gables and grinning iron angels to a vast globe about which dance celestial bodies. The globe is held aloft by death, who grips it with one iron hand whilst swinging his scythe below, hanging above a vast bell made to look like lost souls falling into Hell.

A huge clock that tolls the hours rests in the heart of Toiltown. Her bells are said to be rung by the Devil, and she is said to be alive. It's conjectured that the worst deviants from the many manufacturies hereabouts suffer some sort of ultimate punishment, an unwaking passing of every second into eternity. There is absolute truth in the rumour.

A thing of fleshgine and clockwork and iron, the infernal Workclock has a parallel existence within the secret bounds of Furnace, a dreadful and hellish part of Between. The **Clock Winder**, a **chain devil**, gathers souls to keep the infernal clock going, although the structures mundane aspect — the one standing in the city — is nothing more than flesh and bone and iron made into a single great clock. It is tended by the daemon, who resembles a frail old man with a long white beard and great rusted iron key that resembles a scythe and which is used to wind the clock.

The clock tower is a powerful entity in and of itself, and its essence reaches across several places at once. This nature often causes the clock to become the focus for events — massacres, sudden appearances of gargoyles or fallen angels, storms, or other ill omens. Attempts to reach the true entity within the clock by Between thieves, who have braved voyaging into hidden folds and moods of the thing and journeyed across aspects of time, have resulted in their death or disappearance. Some claim that it's inner working lead only to misery upon Fowler's Endless Stair or within Corrun's Labyrinth. Others whisper a name not heard in the city in centuries and say it is the home or the prison or the tomb or the throne of the Eburnean Oracle and that its tolling is it calling out for its true home

in hidden Carcosa. Yet these impetuous explorers continue to try because, it is rumoured, the clock can also allow those who can learn its ways to master time itself.

Those who have ventured the farthest into the tower have been able to confirm one thing. Bound into the clock, and an aspect of its very nature, is a hideous creature, a **pit fiend** of exceptional power but of unknown name. This twisted and defaced creature sits and broods waiting for the three hands of the clock face (the hourglass, the tenths, and the rounds — see Sidebox) to align just perfectly at just the right moment to herald its own release and rise to true power.

TT10. The Wash

An air of impermanence prevails here. The streets toward the river are jumbled, chaotic, riddled with soughs and streams and brooks which burst their banks, leading to isles of timber and rush and improvisation. As the streets cram around the manufacturies of Sedgetown, they grasp at mounds, hillocks barely a handful of feet above the land, yet these desperate shantytowns seem to offer a glimpse of permanence, their structures older, yet still kissed by floodwaters. As the land heads south, it becomes marshier, and the streets become more water than buildings. Timber streets float above marsh and riverlet and brine until finally they stagger into the Lych Fens and die. What structures there are, are ruins or newly built temporary boat homes and villages lurking amongst the marshes.

Pigs and cows, they are everywhere in the Wash. In fact, the place is often called Beasttown, and not always just because of the cattle and pigs that cram here. This is a bad place, a backward part of the city that time and progress seems to have passed by. An air of improvisation and temporariness impose themselves on everything here. The whole corner of the city feels neglected, tainted somehow with regret and obsolescence. The vast majority of those who live and work here are farmers, keeping livestock to feed themselves, and to send on to market. They are nervously attending the slaughterhouse factory (**TT14**), confident that it will not prove a success. This is a hostile place where bodies lie in the streets.

The Wash consists of low gin shops and alehouses, ragged buildings, workshops, and barns. It is infested with countless low markets, bogs, streams, and mud. People do not generally own where they live, unless they are part of the Pigbrine (see below). As a consequence, properties owned by mean landlords are falling apart with overpriced rents. If an occupant complains, he is thrown out along with any dependents. Patrols frequently round up many and take them gods knows where.

Below the surface of what seems to be just one other rough part of the city is the Wash's insular community of Pigbrine, an extended family of inbred, backward-thinking elders who worship Pan as the "Green Man" and who would be happy to see the whole city vanish in flames. The Pigbrine lurk within the Wash, but totally control it. Its members usually are easy to see by their lack of chins, inbred gaits, and worrying personalities. Although not strictly a gang, to become an enemy of the Pigbrine is a very, very bad idea. If they could be bothered, they could reach out and crush those who oppose them, but their desire to simply be left alone makes them a relatively passive, if terrible foe. The Pigbrine hide in plain sight; they may look on, and have repulsive ways, but their neighbours would never dare go against them.

"Bless you," is a phrase commonly heard in the Wash. The blessing can be a curse, though, as the Pigbrine also bless those they are about to abduct, bleed, and cook.

Clocks of the Lost Lands

Mechanical clocks have existed in the Lost Lands for hundreds — perhaps thousands — of years, with the use of sundials and other means of tracking time in use for millennia before that. Most clocks found across Akados today make use of dripping water to count their rounds, tenths, turns, and hours*. In Castorhage in particular, most clocks tend to make use of a combination of clockworks, fleshgines, and golem-like constructs to keep their inner workings in motion. But regardless of the means of powering these clocks, their function remains the same.

Most clocks' outer edges mark hours numbered as 1–12 and denote turns as tic-marks between the hours (the clock face will, therefore, strongly resemble that of a real-world clock though with 5 tic-marks between each numbered hour rather than 4). However, as discussed in **Chapter 5**, the actual reference to a turn usually done with the term "glass" (i.e. turns of the glass), because it implies a tangible thing being counted in the number of the hourglass that has been turned since the start of the hour (from the days before mechanical clockworks were commonly available and an array fo hourglasses was used instead). Some sample time readings would therefore be:

1st hour, 1 glass (1:10)
3rd hour non (3:00 pm)
7th hour, 3 glass (7:30)
9th hour, 5 glass (9:50)
10th hour prime (10:00 am)
Midnight (or Prime), Noon (or Non)

Other than at the turning of an actual hour (straight up 1 o'clock, for instance), the use of "prime" or "non" would be reserved for extremely formal occasions or occasions of tactical importance (e.g. "The attack will begin at 3rd hour prime, 2 glass."). For extremely formal occasions it would be fully elongated into "5th hour of the non" (5:00 pm) or "10th hour, 3 glass of the prime" (10:30 am).

Structure of the Clock Face

As mentioned the hours of 1–12 are denoted around the perimeter of the clock face, with tic-marks between them for the 5 of the 6 glasses that constitute each hour (the 6th glass would fall upon the hour number itself, much as every 5th minute falls upon the numbers of a real-world clock).

On the clock face a long, thick hand marks the hours and glasses, clicking forward once every 10 minutes (rather than every 1-minute like a real-world clock).

A second, shorter wedge-shaped hand marks time on an inner circle usually of Hyperborean numbers (read: Roman numerals) that shows tenths (Most clocks will not include this hand, considering it too costly to add and unnecessary for most every-day needs that typically don't require the precision of less than a 10-minute interval).

Beyond that, only the most expensive and complex clocks will include a third hand (short and thin) for rounds (these click off along the inner circle using each tenth as a single movement of the hand that equals 6 seconds). There is no true seconds hand as discussed in **Chapter 5**.

Each full revolution of the rounds hand (if the clock has one) corresponds to one movement of the tenths hand (if the clock has one). Each full revolution of the tenths hand corresponds to a single movement of the hour/glass hand (usually referred to simply as the "hourglass").

In short the use of clocks to mark time in the Lost Lands is extremely complicated things primarily of interest to the extremely learned and wise. To the majority of the population, the tolling of the hour (or "bell" aboard ship) it sufficient to meet most of their needs.

* See the **Keeping Time in the Lost Lands** sidebox in **Chapter 5**.

Blight Gang: The Pigbrine

Alignment: CN
Location: Toiltown (The Wash)
Leader: Father Sow (N male blighted† human **hierophant**†)
Motivations: Isolation, the Old Ways, keeping things in the family
Friends: Some malicious fey of the Lych Fens, some boggards
Enemies: Anyone who is not one of their own
Tactics: "Disappearing" those who pry, murder, poison, sacrificing enemies in fire and eating human flesh at certain ceremonies are just two terrible aspects of this backward community and are things they do not regard as punishments, but rather blessings
Morale: Fearless; the Pigbrine would rather be destoyed utterly or kill themselves *en masse* than surrender.

TT11. East Ending

The city chokes upon itself before finally reaching the river; this vast place of impossible variety and temporariness. It is a city within a city made of leftovers and spit and hope; a place that might fall at any moment and yet is alive, giving the impression of a human nest or anthill. Places rise amongst this rot: a vast prison, a huge levee, a handful of towers and other places, yet it all seems to have a feeling of instability. Perhaps it is the timber, which clothes the whole place in the risk of immolation, or perhaps it is the smog, the burning peat and coal of the chimneys. Whatever it is, you have the feeling man should not be here, is unwelcome, from the furthest northern fishing towns through sweatshops and vast tanning pits and jumbles in the centre.

Finally, in the very far south of the shanty-city, the buildings stop, as though unprepared to dip their toes into the fetid marsh and more beyond. And while a few farmsteads and brave thorps do slip into the fens, they are noteworthy: bare or perhaps foolish places built to fail.

Fractious, violent, and selfish, East Ending is the miserable bloated mass of the city, and home to more than a third of its population. It is the toughest, most crowded, dirtiest part of the city. Like the Wash, its properties are owned and administered by numerous vile landlords who charge the earth, and hold all the cards of law. The sick cycle goes on for generation upon generation — extortion, bullying, blackmail — and is given tacit approval by the owners and their gangs. Occasionally locals form lynch mobs or turn to gangs for help, and the mixture is shaken a little before being returned to normal.

Yet below this violence is a brotherhood, a shared suffering that occasionally brings out the best in people, often from most unexpected quarters. Do not mistake the East Ender for a brotherly tender man of peace, however. There is simply a common bond of misery and wanting here.

Across the gin houses, beer halls, petty markets and low traders, a fractious group of gangs and organisations rule the town, under the fearing gaze of the aristocracy, who keep a small contingent group of prisons and gaols here. These fifty or so petty lock-ups and jails are tough places, run by tougher folk.

Most famous of all groups, the Thieves' Guild (a.k.a. the Guild) has its operational soul here, although in truth the whole organisation is so unwieldy that at any time a dozen men and women claim to be the Guildmaster. The three most important aspects of the Guild are listed below. Each opposes and yet somehow also works with the other, an uneasy alliance that is shed like snakeskin.

The first of these thugs, the incredibly beautiful **Constance Grubb** (NE female blighted† human **master thief**†), is icily ambitious, and sees herself as the de-facto head of the Guild right now. Her personal coterie of thugs are known as the Blinders. Unfortunately for her, her nearest rival, the frighteningly violent **Cherpy Jack Hornum** (NE male halfling **minstrel**) has other ideas. His smile may rarely fade (but if it does, watch out), but his silver tongue makes and breaks and remakes alliances as easily as Grubb's threats. One thing that will never change while Hornum is in charge is a total opposition to the Family of Festival, who are actively hunted and slaughtered by his East End Boys (who often include girls). Finally, the cultured **Gentleman Gabe Bindweed** (N male human **master thief**† **lord**) likes the finer things in life. He and his dandy mob, the Twisted Wheel, like culture and scams more than dirtying their nails and skin on fistfights. They despise the narrow-mindedness of other gangs, and see the wealthy as a free meal ticket who should be kept. They are thus loathed by Anarchists and disliked by the Revolutionaries.

Major Gangs of East Ending

Blight Gang: The Blinders

Location: Toiltown (East Ending)
Leader: Constance Grubb**spy**
Motivations: Greed
Friends: The East End Boys (in theory)
Enemies: City Watch, the Crown Government, the Twisted Wheel, the East End Boys (in reality)
Tactics: Putting eyes out, extortion, intimidation
Morale: Courageous; tough and wealthy, the Guild ties across the city are strong, and while leaders come and go, the Blinders have been on the streets for a long, long time.

Blight Gang: The East End Boys

Location: Toiltown (East Ending)
Leader: Cherpy Jack Hornum**minstrel**
Motivations: Greed, anarchy
Friends: Allegedly the other local gangs, but friends are cast aside like enemies
Enemies: City Watch, the Crown Government, the Family, other local gangs
Tactics: Fear backed by arson
Morale: Hardy; tough and strong, but leaders tend to come and go on an often bi-annual basis. Hornum is doing quite well, having been in charge for almost 14 months.

The Twisted Wheel

Location: Toiltown (East Ending)
Leader: Gentleman Gabe Bindweed**thief lord**
Motivations: Greed, envy of the wealthy
Friends: None
Enemies: Other East Ending gangs, work
Tactics: The Twisted Wheel are consummate hustlers and tricksters. They attract bards and wizards into their gang and aim high. They despise the dirt and mindless violence of the gangs nearby whom they consider to be in "poor form".
Morale: Very strong; the gang not only has strong roots but is also regarded with great admiration by the young, many of whom are drawn into its stylish ranks.

Anarchists and Revolutionaries

The Brotherhood of Sweat

Location: Toiltown (East Ending)
Leader: Hortence Spitewinter (CN female human **thug**)
Motivations: Anarchy. Smash the state, burn the mills, butcher the aristocracy!
Friends: None
Enemies: The State, the status quo, the Twisted Wheel
Tactics: Acts of violence and sabotage, often with flames and explosions
Morale: Low, the group has survived recent years quite intact; remarkable considering the hateful and indiscriminate violence that hallmarks the Brotherhood, who are ironically governed by a woman.

The Falling Tower

Location: Toiltown (East Ending)
Leader: Captain Judas (CN male blighted† human **mage**)
Motivations: Destroy the Capitol
Friends: None
Enemies: The Capitol, Royals, the aristocracy, City Watch, the Twisted Wheel
Tactics: Arson, destruction through alchemy, propaganda, openly recruiting
Morale: Breaking; as the weakest mob the group knows they have to fight from the shadows. Of the 49 levels they have at their disposal, killing 25 of them will effectively disband the mob completely, and they know it.

The Revolutionaries

Location: Toiltown (East Ending)
Leader: The Crimson Crown (N female human **veteran**)
Motivations: Overthrow the Crown Government
Friends: At least theoretically everyone who has an axe to grind against the status quo, but particularly those within the East Ending
Enemies: The Royal Family, City Watch, Crown Government
Tactics: Covert infiltration, abductions, robbery, sabotage, rabble-rousing, propaganda
Morale: Fearless; the group has lost 5 leaders in the last 4 years. Those who join know it is for life and laugh at the risks.

Seething below the surface are countless other groups, from Illuminati spies to Great Coven witches. Whatever the group — even Royals — they are found in spades here. The sweaty streets of Toiltown are a circus of deviance, a carnival of variety, and a dance of sin. Winding between the toil — and the glimpses of Between here — are the Anarchists and Revolutionaries. These groups are incredibly fractious and temporary; groups come and go, are wiped out, and reborn. A sampling of the larger and more permanent of these groups is given below, but at any given time there will be at least a score of lesser or more fanatical groups.

Other groups thrive but are more in line with cults than true gangs: the Great Coven infests particular parts of Toiltown, lashing the locals into their ways, devil worshippers, the Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm, the Family, everyone in fact that is part of city life is to be found somewhere in Toiltown on some oath or mission or simply hiding.

Toiltown and Between

Between is a curious place, not only existing, but occasionally being dragged into being by strong continual emotions. The misery and toil and injustice of Toiltown make a sweet canvas for Between, and aspects of it come and go across the district with alarming regularity. Things pop out of children's nightmares or the misery of loneliness or abuse of their parents; sometimes these things seek vengeance, other times they seek their creator. A certain commonality hangs over most, however: They are all things of dirt and toil, sweaty grimy places, and beings that wear the town like skin. They are all angry, full of the hateful emotions that lurk here, and finally they are always tough, toughened by the life on the other side of Between. Tales of *shadow manufacturies*, of Between hunting hounds, of the Devil riding across rooftops and leaving his hoof-prints on tiles, of hateful twisted overseers who manifest monstrous powers and of unbridled anger and hatred are commonplace. Each street, it seems, has its own Between tale or legend or ongoing problem.

The wise (and those who have enough idle time to do so) have conjectured that the existence of the Great Docks and the writhing aspects of the *gateways* into Between there may somehow have been formed by the ongoing misery of the town; truthfully that misery breeds Between like a cancer. This thinking is very fashionable amongst the ruling classes, who are anxious not only to keep Toiltown working and suffering for their own profit, but also to devise other ways to tap into the lucrative Between aspects they have found and wish to explore further.

TT12. The Levee

A wall has flattened the edge of the river here, swatting aside the slums like ants. It rises upward through a series of walkways and chain-conveyors to a top, which glowers down perhaps three hundred feet. Beyond it lies a fortified island, linked by umbilical bridges and ferries and ropes to a great thriving wharf and dock crammed with vessels and seething with buildings. And everywhere your eye falls, you see a guard with a crossbow scowling downward.

Links between land and the *gateways* of Between thrive on the Great Dock. The Levee is a fortress wall to keep intruders out. Only one gate — the aptly named "Welcoming Gate" — allows access into the piers, boardwalks and chaos of the Barnacles and Great Dock beyond. Command of this lucrative threshold is given to one of Castorhage's most decorated defenders, **Earl Fobbringdon Fox, Paladin of the Welcoming Gate** (LN male human **knight of renown**†), a would-be Justice who is assisted by a score of Officers of Discipline. Below them, more than a thousand soldiers of the Royal Army keep guard with paranoid focus, aware that their position and heavy salary come at a price, that a single failure results in dismissal or worse.

Entry is by strictly controlled pass. Forgeries are incredibly difficult and expensive to come by. Alerts are the subject of rigorous practice and are almost gracefully precise. Fox is a meticulous planner and brooks no nonsense from his subordinates. A devout Royalist and member of the Old Breed, and frequent devotee of the Farnham Theatre (**AQ7**) where his dearest and oldest friend and fellow Royalist **Marshal Otram Storr**, lurks and plans and festers.

Beyond the Levee towers the Barnacles and Great Docks (see **LR1** in **Chapter 6**).

TT13. Sweatshop

An enormous, frightful place of stone rises like an anvil from the East Ending. It is a prison, but one on a vast scale, large enough to hold perhaps everyone in the city around it. It rises through a series of ugly towers linked by iron walkways to a huge spire that punches the air as though punishing it. From within, noise echoes: the grinding of metal on metal, the sounds of toil, the echoes of death.

"*Welcome. Your life has just ended.*" The sign above the door spells out the harsh truth of 99% of those who pass the threshold of the Sweatshop, a vast prison full of petty criminals and those robbed of their freedom through indentured slavery. The Sweatshop is a panopticon divided into thirteen wings, each competing against the other for the most productive days, and those who fail are not allowed food (which is brought in by relatives from outside and divided amongst all the prisoners within). Those who are particularly slack are made examples of by the 13 overseers and their countless toadying bullies. In simplest terms, they do whatever they like to their charges.

In general, only a hefty bribe will spill a convict to freedom, and even then, a careful path must be chosen as the guards are masters at extortion, blackmail, and corruption — even with each other. This hive of malcontents and bullies is run by **His Grace the Master of Sweatshop Lord Natterjack** (NE male human **spy**), a repulsive deviant who cares only about figures and productivity and lust. His genius — employing prisoners to watch other prisoners — works well, and so far any riots have been quickly quelled. In truth, however, the Sweatshop is bursting at the seams, and it can be only a matter of time before something big happens.

Bizarrely, the Guild also use the Sweatshop as a prison, keeping a wing of their own to punish those who break the countless Guild rules and regulations often created from convenience by its masters. That the Guild's operative, the heaving **Lord Stye** (CN male swyne† **spy**), can also offer means of escape and of making life a luxury is a simple matter of business, and he of course ensures that Natterjack gets a suitable cut of all proceedings. A strange Guild court has its home in the bowels of the wing and therein the most serious crimes by the most senior Guild members — such as siding with the enemy — are considered in a proper legal way before awful punishment is generally then made.

TT14. The Factory Slaughterhouse

A grim stone cathedral-esque building echoes with the sounds of distressed animals.

One of several new manufacturies installed in this small parish and bought by **Rudyard Brome** (LN male human **commoner**), the Slaughterhouse is his treadmill butchery, a mass of chains and blades and blood aimed to increase the efficiency of the standard method of butchery. Here, new thinking reaches a miserable and bloody new step, with a score of trained butchers working night and day to keep the city (and in particular its greedy aristocracy) in fresh(ish) meat. Like his other mills, Brome's Slaughterhouse has a diabolical issue with safety (not that Brome himself worries about such things) and is also being used by a darker aspect of the Guild to deal out punishment in a mechanical way.

Brome has constructed an iron tower at the heart of his parish (which he has modestly called Brome Town). Brome is a bookish man with an obsession for mechanisms, and his home is more workshop than house. He has spies out across the city and is an old friend of the Guild in this respect, looking out for inventions, inventors, and geniuses to steal ideas from and have quietly murdered, something he'd very much like to do to his rival Joseph Sedge (**TT8**).

The Jumble

"The journey is rough tonight brothers and sisters, the Jumble is restless. No, we aren't at sea, but it certainly feels like it at times; especially in a gale. This whole place creaks and groans like a whore's busy bed when the wind's up. Even when it's still, the old girl feels the need to settle her aching bones and remind you that one day she might come crashing down on your head.

"Magic, yes I suppose magic built her, but all things are transitory, and all the way from the hold to the scorecrow's nests high above, she's never still this old girl.

"Grumpy? Always, she doesn't sit happily does the Jumble, an old girl she is, and ready to rest. Yet the builders keep propping and the wizards keep casting and lashing and the things bound into her aching skin just get older and harder.

"So, ignore her age and her moods and wander her oak passages, indulging in the redolence of old wood, clamber her steep spiral stairs and ladders out over the city dark below. There's beauty around every corner, and love carved into her every angel and gargoyle; the Capitol might have been built through fear and power, might be bigger and cleaner and mightier, but our cherished Jumble is a lady built of love."

Welcome to the City of Thieves…

There is a difficult but little-known truth to accept about the Jumble if you are truly in a position of power; it is anarchistic, it has its own ways, and no matter how many times it is invaded, attempts are made to burn it down or vast bribes are issued to its residents, it remains apart, almost elite. Try as they might, the Royals cannot get a strong foothold here; representatives are poisoned or meet with tragic falling accidents or just leave out of fear. That is not to say the place is lawless, it is not, but its laws are set down by gangs and groups and guilds away from others. Its taxes are odd, and not a penny strays into the Royal coffers without good reason, yet adequate funds are paid and Royal representatives are welcomed. The Guild — who run operations in the Jumble — would not, and could not, have it any other way. A bizarre mix of ideas and wishes and hungers cram into this uneasy group, formed of an alliance of a score of petty gangs who pay homage to the Guild below in Toiltown.

Happily, as every good aristocrat knows, there is no honour amongst thieves and the more intelligent nobles are happy to let this crumb of freedom fester and wither, doomed to failure. Greed is what sets the Jumble's thieves apart from others, they get used to the literal high life the Jumble extolls; its close location to the Artists' Quarter, Festival and its links to Town Bridge have set it apart from Toiltown, *above it* some locals from the East Ending would say, and whilst the two places are linked by the umbilical cord of low caste, they are apart. Some Royalists actually foment this difference, nurture it and let it grow.

Below this skin sits another curiously fertile group — spellcasters. Wizards seem drawn to the Jumble almost as much as they are to BookTown. A curiously sociable gathering lurks here; particularly in a corner of the Pyre, where being a spellcaster seems at time to be an almost obligatory talent to allow residency. The casters in this corner form tight groups, cabals and strange clubs. The most likely reason for this sociable arcana is twofold: first the Jumble is a relatively pleasant place to live beyond the interference of the Royals to whom magic is assumed to be *their property*, and secondly it is close to one of the greatest markets in the world — the Bazaar, where tikka-sellers argue with potion makers who haggle with canary traders. The whole mad place is a goldmine for components.

The Jumble collapses as it reaches out, so that only the central district itself truly grows upwards, and while there are curious festering buildings writhing upwards across the area, it is only truly the centre few hundred yards that have the right to be called the Jumble. The rest, either the Bazaar or the Cat's Cradle, stagers away from their bloated neighbour, in part emulating it, but never capturing its essence.

The true Jumble is a vast, confusing maze of streets that rise upwards and outwards — some would say in mockery of the Capitol itself.

It is easy to get lost in the Cradle that surrounds it — streets sink below ground and rise again to rooftop streets, taking a dozen ladders before

continuing along a gable which ends at a bare wall, beyond which may lie the garret of a naga artist, a madman, or cringing orphans.

What the Jumble looks like…

Like a strangled child's land-bound ship of impossible scale. The Jumble is almost all wood, with a little bit of rope and prayer for good measure. Temporary, mad and rambling, the Jumble does not so much increase as grow; as balconies and arcane engineers find another bulkhead to throw a street upon.

Within it feels even more like a sailing vessel, its very streets arrayed with lobster pots and rigging and even in one place a ship's wheel.

And if you look hard enough you can find the old arcane knots beneath the growth of boughs and strangling rusting iron.

What the Jumble smells like…

Of wax and polish and old wood. It has an uncharacteristic pleasantness to its odour, of age and growth and history. Somehow even the stench of the jakes that line its walls are masked, and while the close confines of its population brings the redolence of sweat and grime and humanity, it is a background smell only.

What the Jumble feels like…

Like a ship at high sea. As a temporary, ramshackle place living on a prayer, the entire place is constantly on the move. A footfall high above echoes into a reverberation below. It is claustrophobic; so much so that some cannot bear to be here, it's also vertigo-inspiring, its outer edges bereft of rail or rope or safety and plummeting far, far below. Worst of all is the Ladder, the way up and down the infernally beautiful place. The Ladder has been likened to the most demanding rock-climbs in places, and with its temporary nature often giving way to breaks, it often does become a climb in itself.

What the Jumble sounds like…

Like a ship at high sea, never still. There are some who have developed a sickness during storms and high winds, who find sleep impossible; the creaking and grinding of its vast weight of timber prevents all but the soundest of sleepers from getting rest.

Seven words to describe the Jumble …

VERTIGO ***IMPREMANENCE***
SWAYING ***CREAKING***
wood ***womb*** ***CLAUSTROPHOBIA***

Parishes and Wards

Four distinct decks make up the Jumble, and while sub-decks and platforms and gangways move between them, the decks remain constant. Moving between these decks is a single structure made up of a hundred spiral stairs, ladders and rope bridges that criss-crosses the place but allows the quickest way from top to bottom. The Ladder is the collective name for this street, but it's been called other things. Subject to almost daily collapse or blockage or accident, the ladder is no ordinary access; its swings outwards over great drops, clings using fixed planks to walls, or sways through open space on spiral stairs. So tenuous has the Ladder become that it has its own guardian angel; Mistress Raven our Lady of Falls, Beatific of the Ladder, whose image is carved or honoured throughout her journey and who has her own chapel high, high above the Jumble where the ravens who cling to her gown are honoured. The ravens of the Jumble are more than they seem, and act as guards and familiars for the spellcasters and rogues and locals who make home here.



The Bilges makes up the lowest level, and are partially at least below ground and might even be considered part of the Underneath but for the sheer amount of access between here and the decks above. The Bilges, like all of the Jumble, are home to an eclectic group of rogues, prisoners on the run and decent folk who have come to settle here; a complete mix of good and bad, friend and foe, honest trader and cutthroat. The Bilges feels squashed somehow, aware of the groaning weight above, it is most common to find halflings and dwarves and gnomes making their cramped homes here since they rarely have concern for added height in rooms, save as a luxury of space.

Directly above, and varying between twenty and fifty feet in difference vertically, the **Hold** is truthfully the workhorse of the Jumble, where trade happens, where markets are held and where guildsmen toil. This place is never still, and teems with workshops, taverns, chop-houses, markets and shops. Trade here is brisk and good.

The Deck is the term for everything immediately above the Hold, the nest and hive of humanity that lurks and stretches and yawns their way through various tasks and lives and dangers.

The Scorecrow's Nests lie at the very top of the Jumble. They are a series of towers, balconies and buildings that rise into the daylight. Rope bridges link streets up here, and a head for heights is vital. Yet this is the most elite place the commoners may ever have access to or aspire to live in, it is Utopia for those below. A garden drenched in sunlight high above the beautiful Jumble herself.

Outside of the chaotic Jumble the streets stagger away, following either the more substantial **Cat's Cradle**, the local name given to the endless maze of streets that surround and kiss the Jumble, or fall into the Bazaar. All these streets are raised above the waters on piers, and the whole place has an air of melancholy impermanence. Allegedly the greatest market in the world, the Bazaar sits within the Jumble, oozes along its streets like a sickness. It is a thousand streets filled with countless shops, stalls, markets and traders. Wealthy merchants make their homes around a small hill in the very centre of the Bazaar, and this section of the city — known affectionately as the Citadel — is better guarded, it is rumoured, than the Capitol itself. The Bazaar eventually snakes its way into the Great Docks where most of the trade goods arrive, and stories emerge on a daily basis that a new way — "Queen Alice's Highway" — is about to be constructed through the Bazaar and Toiltown — with a need to clear a vast section of slums to allow works to begin.

The Cat's Cradle

" Believe me, it is possible to get lost and die here."

Navigating the Cradle without help is very, very difficult. 10 This mad jumble of streets, alleys and pathways is the true maze the Jumble is named after. Nameless streets slither and dash, dark byways beckon, and everywhere there are shambling people.

CJ1. Smuggler's Pier

This is a vast, broad pier swallowed by a confusion of buildings.

Hotbed of thievery, the Smuggler's is no place to be caught out alone; it is a den of rogues, a cauldron of vice and a taste of the intimate pleasures of Festival. Indeed, many members of the Family see the Pier as home away from home. Halflings abound here, and the intimate grip of the Family — and the Scathels in particular — looms large, in spirit at least.

The pier houses almost a hundred taverns, as well as some of the darker locals; a dark naga known as the **Copulate One** (LE female **spirit naga**) dwells in an underpier garret painting her mad visions, while a small cabal of skum† operate far below the ward yet brazenly walk the streets at night. Led by **K'thrun F'tagnn** (NE male **skum**†) the skum hide in plain sight; some are even willing exhibits of local freakshows.

In theory, a low gin house called the Beckoning Whore works as a base for the Scathels, and for their local lord Hectram Scathel (NE male halfling **wererat**). The Whore operates as a part brothel, and her gambling dens, which lurk in various side underpiers, are notorious. A network of underpier walkways slither above — and occasionally through — the brine waters of the Lyme, and a whole host of the Invisible caste dwell here along with their more dubious secretive neighbours.

CJ2. Skum Point

A slender pier reaches out across the river, its pillars groping outwards seemingly towards the far bank.

An abandoned project, the pier was intended to be the first of many that stretched the whole way across the river and reach Festival and then the Sinks. Brainchild of local entrepreneur Hammish Crudd (deceased), his big mistake was ignoring the wishes of the Family and the Rat Queen in particular, who eventually ate the wealthy merchant alive. The pier has gone through various guises over the past few years; a floating fairground, the site of a proposed fort and even a lair for a cult of brain eaters that was removed by the Guild. Now abandoned and decaying, the various buildings that make up the pier are often home to unsavoury characters or those wishing to hide.

CJ3. Frynn Harbour

A brand new series of piers and boardwalks are springing up on the Festival side of the town here, their bright hoardings breeding behind bamboo scaffolding and new structures.

Isobela Frynn (NE female halfling **wererat**), daughter of the notoriously charming wererat **Shamus Frynn** (**F11**) is overseeing the construction of a brand-new area of pleasure piers, with the ultimate intention of bridging the river to Festival, making a fortune and eating the rest of the Family alive. Isobela is tough talking and has a large group of Family behind her to make sure the Guild do not interfere in her father's plans. The entire venture shouts security and trouble, and the place and surrounding streets are constantly brimming with fights.

Yet the pleasure pier grows daily, the Frynn fortune being put to good use here as they create a utopia for pleasure-seekers. A freakshow, theatre and gin palace are already open, and soon a circus and menagerie will follow. Isobela in the meantime has constructed her own townhouse here and has a flesh golem hound to protect her.

CJ4. The Queen's Head Inn

A mouldering and clearly very old inn seems to have swallowed up the surrounding streets and devoured them. A rather macabre sign depicts a woman being beheaded by an executioner with an enormous axe.

Notorious Guild headquarters, the Head (named after good Queen Lethry (422–451) who was executed by her husband for not bearing him any children and for coincidentally being a wererat) has almost a hundred rooms built across three streets. Its owner, the outrageously fat **Hettie Twyne** (CN female human **thug**) clutches her one-eyed pet ferret **Crispin** with one arm and a bottle of gin in the other. Brawler, nymphomaniac and professional drinker, Hettie is one of the Guild's finest, and has taken in (and a shine to) countless troubled members of the Guild over her 42 years. The Head also has a dozen safe-rooms with access to the river below or the Jumble beyond if needs be, and the staff of thirty are all full Guild members with various talents of their own who use the Head as a base of operations for their own dark doings.

Ferrets run loose in the inn, and often make off with the choicest parts of customers dinners, but the little beasts are the owner's pride and joy and

Market Day

Despite appearances, there are actually only a few special market days within the Bazaar — true, every day has something, but the specifics are listed below. On such days, the prices of standard goods of the type stated begins at 75% of ordinary price*main rulebook*.

Prayerday: No Market; trade officially closed
Mournday: Mournday Market; food and spices
Toilsday: Special livestock and cattle market
Washday: Clothing market
Threshday: Household market; tools, ironmongery and other household objects
Freyday: Freyday Flea Mart; special flea market, where cheap and general second-hand goods are traded
Marketday: Full Market; the streets throng with every imaginable trade, on this day the full range of goods are brought out and streets, windows and even alleyways are crammed with traders

each has its own name. Twyne and the Guild are presently keeping a close eye on the new buildings being erected by the Fryns, and are careful to make sure that an appropriately large amount of industrial accidents befall the site.

The inn keeps some of the finest ales in the city, and Hettie has her own master brewer, **Master Brewer Quarus Gobb** (LN male blighted† human **apprentice mage**†), an outrageously pale and thin man who says the taste of beer makes him sick. His produce, including the commonly served Fat Wench, and Hettie's Tonic are considered the finest brews south of the river, possibly in the whole city, and even the connoisseurs from the Brine Bells (**TB13**) make regular sailings here for supplies and tastings.

Some people come here and stay; the rooms are cheap and clean, the location is good and the whole building as secure as a headquarters of Thieves' Guild could possibly be.

The Bazaar

You can buy anything in the Bazaar, but finding what you want is not so easy. Like so many parts of the Blight it is not the haggling or purchasing that is the problem; it is the finding. To successfully navigate the Bazaar and locate the right markets — say the candlemaker's quarter or the laceworker's corner — requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check; a failure indicates different encounter.

In addition to the marked area of the map, areas that should be considered as the Bazaar also riddle the Cat's Cradle and the Jumble, with markets and souks infesting those streets on a daily basis. It seems that every day is some sort of special market day, and special markets are detailed in the Market Day Sidebox.

Use the Bazaar as a way for the PCs to stock up on equipment, purchase potions or lesser magics, or trade. The bartering in the Bazaar is famously vicious, but as much as you can buy anything in the Bazaar, you can also sell it. A few simple example traders are given simply to flesh out the commoner ones, there are hundreds of such traders crammed herein, all fighting — sometimes quite literally — for trade.

TJ5. Ha'ab Makkum

A small shop front gives glimpses of exotic goods; there are countless bell jars and bottles herein, some have live insects within, others have bodies of crickets, spiders or leeches. The entire rear of the shop is decked in endless tiny drawers and cabinets.

Ha'ab is typical of almost a hundred insectum† dealers in the Bazaar. His shop is tiny, exotic smelling and filled with jars and bottles and cases selling most types of common insectum as well as some of the more exotic local types listed in the sidebox. **Ha'ab** (N male human Ashurian **apprentice mage**†) a shrewd foreigner who wears an incredibly colourful and very warm smoking jacket. There is very little Ha'ab doesn't know about insectum, as well as many potions and other alchemical elixirs. His tiny cramped room beyond contains a simple bed, a small lounge and his beloved Between-cat† **Krather**.

More Insectum

Insectum	Type	Price
Alchemic grain bug	ingested	50 gp
Beneath-bloated centipede mite	injury	30 gp
Blight cricket	inhaled	35 gp
Blight giant earwig	ingested	100 gp
Giant singing cockroach	ingested	150 gp
Great Blight huntsman spider	injury	250 gp (see below)
Lyme water hornet	injury	50 gp
Remorhaz fly	injury	125 gp
Titan lion beetle milk	ingested	130 gp

Alchemic Grain Bug: Swallowing the thumb-sized bug causes 1d2 damage but gives a +1 bonus to natural armour for 1 minute.

Beneath-Bloated Centipede Mite: This large, ugly mite is placed in a nostril where it bites the inner nose and grants advantageto Wisdom (Perception) checks involving smell for 2 hours. The insectum must remain attached for duration of effect.

Blight Cricket: Swallowing the peach pit-sized cricket grants a +1 bonus to saving throws against inhaled poisons for 2 hours but also requires an immediate DC 10 Constitution save or the imbiber is poisoned for 1d6 x 10 minutes.

Blight Giant Earwig: Removing and eating the earwig's glands is ghastly and has been likened to the hottest chili peppers. However, it grants a greatly heightened sense of taste for 1 day that provides advantage to all Perception checks involving taste and allows an immediate Perception check against the DC of any ingested poisons at the very first taste to recognize them and spit them out before taking any ill effects. Upon eating the glands, however, the imbiber must make a DC 8 Constitution save or lose his voice for 1d4 hours.

Giant Singing Cockroach: This enormous cockroach is hard to swallow (requiring a full-round action to do so for a Medium or Small creature) and gives off a screaming chirping noise for an hour whilst digesting in the imbiber's stomach, causing a –1 penalty to all Stealth checks during this time. However, it also provides a +1 bonus to Constitution for that hour as well.

Great Blight Huntsman Spider: The bite of this enormous (can grow up to 1 foot across) and revolting spider is mildly poisonous (*save* Constitution DC 10, *effect* 1d3 poisoned, *cure* 1 save every long rest) but grants the recipient advantage on all Perception checks for 4 hours. A single bite of the spider costs 250 gp, but for 400 gp the spider can be cared for properly and kept alive for a period of 1d12 months during which time it can deliver one bite a day.

Lyme Water Hornet: This hornet dies after it stings (dealing 1 point of damage), but grants the recipient a +1 bonus to Dex for 1 hour. The effects of multiple stings can stack up to a maximum of a +3 bonus. For each additional sting after the first in a single day, the recipient must make a DC 12 Constitution save or suffer an anaphylactic reaction taking 2d6 damage and experiencing suffocation. The suffocation persists until a DC 15 Medicine check or Tool proficiency (healer's kit) is made or any type of healing magic is applied.

Remorhaz Fly: Anyone bitten by this enormous and beautifully revolting fly gains fire resistance 10 for 1 hour but also must make a DC 10 Constitution save or develop a rash that progresses to filth fever in 1d3 days. The fly can bite twice per day and usually lives 1d4 days after purchase.

Titan Lion Beetle Milk: Harvesting the milk of this requires an insectum expert and still kills the beetle. The milk tastes like a mixture of sugar, wax and ground beetle but causes clotting which immediately stops any effect that causes continuing damage from bleeding.

TJ6. The Market Square, a.k.a. the Calamity, the Madhouse

The market to ends all markets crashes before you, a square of prodigious size through which is laced a web of streets, balconies, bridges and alleyways gathering at the edges of a vast opening. It is hard to imagine so many people in so small a space as this, all of them haggling, waving baskets of fruit or cloth, arguing or singing the prodigious value and durability of their wares.

Often referred to as the Soul of the Bazaar, the Market Square is the focal point for trade, festivals and adventure. Those who make their way into this cauldron can buy most things.

For the purposes of magic items, at any given time there are 2d4 medium and 1d4 major magic items being peddled in the market. The mesh of secrecy and distrust surrounding such sales is difficult to pierce, and generally the use of contacts is the only way to locate such sales, unless you deem otherwise. However, everything has its price, and a Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Intimidation) check (DC 23 for medium and DC 26 for major items) also gives access to the seller. Such sales are likely to be at least watched by the trio of the Guild members listed below, along with their cohorts. Allow your characters only one attempt per day in normal circumstances.

The market as a whole is watched by a trio of Guild members who are found in various locations in the cramped districts. The enigmatic **Faar** (NE female **Blight naga**†), who shares an on-again-off-again love affair with the astonishingly handsome **Raven Fray** (N male human **spycout**), who in turn competes for the affections of the visibly shifty **Heppy Grak** (NE female gnome **spy**). The trio each have their own band of followers to match their own power in terms of a gang and in theory at least they have an admirable arrangement of keeping off each other's turf and respecting the other's rights as Guild members. However, the offer of large value objects (those above 50,000 gp) will sorely test this alliance of convenience and even the morals of the purchaser, and may result in quarrels, attempted theft or murder. Such could lead to further intrigue, adventure and even power or other rewards.

More mundane objects — those up to 1,000 gp — can be located more readily, PCs may already have knowledge or information regarding a specific trader — say someone who makes potions — but they are otherwise located on a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. Other items of up to medium magic item status require a successful DC 20 on such checks to locate, but are more common here than most other parts of the city.

The prices for other items here are kept low by competition, but scams are common; consider that if a character tries to locate it here, the purchase costs 80% of standard price, or you may wish to use a simple haggling system for this market to vary the price at 70% for a successful DC 23 Charisma (Deception) check, 80% for a DC 20 and so on.

TJ7. Bilious Frog's Masterwork Workshop

This place is a chaotic workshop littered with tools and stressed workers.

Master Frog (N male dwarf **noble**) has a short temper, and governs his staff like a tough sergeant. Sadly, Frog is losing his mind slowly but surely, he forgets things very regularly now, but when focussed upon crafting weapons and armour he is still a master. He often leaves his front door open when he goes out at night, something his kindly neighbours have so far not taken advantage of.

TJ8. Robley's Butchery

The large gate into the yard says "*Robley's Slaughterhouse*", and from within can be heard the sound of barking dogs.

Very short **Robley Robb** (N male blighted† human **commoner**) has an even shorter temper. He keeps half-dozen Blight bulls† tethered up and frees them at night, feeding them the worst bits of meat. The security around his small successful business is so tight, it's almost as though he has something to hide. He hasn't, he's just paranoid and suspects one or two of his staff might come back at night to take the strongbox from beneath his bed.

TJ9. Kabb's Bakery

The wonderful smell of baking bread wafts from a small building at the end of a cul-de-sac.

Elisabeth Kabb (LN female human Foerdewaith **commoner**) is ambitious, her bakery — and in particular her pastries — make her a living, but her cruel landlord **Urian Fedge** (NE male human **spy**) takes most of the profits as his own. Robley has taken the first tentative steps that will draw her into the rebels by starting thieving — never from her own, but from those in the Jumble who, she feels, are fair prey. She looks tired from her night work and has altogether too much money for a baker.

TJ10. Gretchen the Candlestick Maker

A tiny shop window is crammed with artfully made candlesticks.

Gretchen Othe (NE female human Heldring **apprentice mage**†) carves and creates beautiful candelabras from soapstone. Her shop is too small for more than one customer at a time, and the softly spoken witch finds making eye contact difficult. She's trying to find her way into the Great Coven but has so far failed. She is infatuated with **Raven Frey** (**TJ6**) and he enjoys playing with the witch's emotions. She has been known to shut her shop entirely and kick customers out so she can follow him when he passes by.

The Bilges

The Bilges (not to be confused with the Bilges at **TT2**) are the lowest level of the Jumble.

TJ11. The Great Secret Market

It is unseen — of course — yet lurks in plain view; the beauty of true guile. The Great Secret Market is truly where anything can be obtained; wickedness, flesh, secrets. Here too, such commodities demand a price…

Not so much a place as a concept, a loose amalgamation of like-minded individuals who share a trade and who are contactable through the Bilges, the Secret Market exists just behind the skin of the real one. The wiser nobility know that there are always going to be thieves, and that those thieves have their uses. The secret market operates behind the Guild and consists of half a dozen special thieves able to obtain rare and unusual objects given time and enough motivation. These thieves work only on specific tasks, the secret market is therefore not really a market at all, but more a service, and the price is high. As each task is different; ranging from the murder of someone respected and protected to obtaining a particular tome from BookTown to frightening someone in the Capitol the price can vary, but never drops below 1,000 gp.

The six specialists know of each other, but have a strictly professional relationship, they are: **Silas Henge** (N male human **master thief**† **lord**), who wears a mask to hide his burns and whose whispered words are the result of that fire, an immolation he never speaks of; **Meadow Rosin** (N female gnome **spy**) who rarely leaves her house high in the Scorecrow's Nests; **Alderwere Hassop** (NE male human **arcane assassin**†) who is said to be a man without a soul; and the final three are the charming and dazzling self-assured **Oscar Grape** (N male half-elf **burglar**†**thief lord**), the beautiful but immoral **Rose Turnkey** (CN female human **spy**) and the frighteningly strong tattooed **Uriah Mellow** (N male blighted† human **thug**). So successful have these individuals become that they have various residences across the city and operate behind a mask of normality.

Keen to keep their identities secret, they have a select group of trustworthy allies who know only their own rogue, but who have the ear of the aristocracy and certain wealthy clients. Discovery of the groups is usually through a power or other reward, or perhaps by simple bad luck.

The Hold

The Hold is the second-lowest level of the Jumble.

TJ12. The Roguery

A dizzy timber courtyard lit by pyrebeetle lanterns opens this space all the way up to the sky above. It is lined with taverns, theatres and gambling dens, the noise of laughter and singing and sobbing are dizzying, as is the smell of cheap gin, tobacco and insectum†.

Hotbed of entertainment in the Jumble, the Roguery stretches all the way to the sky ("to Heaven," some rogues say after a winning streak), its buildings infesting the Jumble all the way from the Hold to the Scorecrow's Nests. Across this valley of sin the Guild hold sway, and **Guild Watchmen** (**thugs** or **banditsbandit**) keep a sobering eye on events. That the Guild's men do not have uniforms can be disconcerting, particularly if a group of them take an interest in goings-on. **Magsman Arthur Kemp** (N male human **spy**) is responsible for local security, and he has two score thugs at his employ across the Roguery, various bouncers and guards all within earshot should trouble occur — which it often does. Such a large amount of money in so small an area attracts attention anyway, and at least two attempts have been made to rob the entire Roguery, one of which — the legendary Scarlet Hill Gang Attack — succeeded. Kemp wants to be sure that the same thing doesn't happen on his watch and he is none too subtle with his tactics.

It is said that a hundred hostelries or entertainments hang within the Roguery, complimented at any given time by a like number of puppeteers, jugglers and wandering freak shows. The more infamous, or perhaps more rightly better, of these places are listed briefly below. Others come and go regularly, as do the crowds herein, which begin to swell in the late afternoon and are rarely gone before dawn.

The Bleeding Gargoyle Gin House lurks across the full height of the Roguery, and wallows in its reputation as the lewdest and most explicit place in the Jumble — possibly the whole city (though certain venues of the Sinks and Artists' Quarter certainly disagree). It is half-dozen floors of doxies, nude dancers, contortionists and other more alarming skills and fetishes. The gin house has its more-subtle chambers and a multitude of quiet rooms used by the Guild for meetings, questionings and emergency lodgings. The House, run by **Megan Shrimp** (N female human **minstrel**), an intoxicatingly beautiful woman of great business shrewdness and strength, is always full, and always an interesting place for gossip. Charisma (Peresuasion) checks made to gather information are always made here at +1, and those who are members of the Guild make them at +2.

The Wheel of Joy and Misery is a huge, elaborately painted wheel of fortune hanging above the door to this cattle-shed of humanity. Within, a score of games of chance, all based upon wheels of fortune or their derivatives (even including some wheels of inquiry[BP] much to the displeasure of any Jamboorian clergy who happen to visit the place), are attended by eager pundits desperate for a chance to win. The owner, **Mirella Heart** (CN female gnome **spy**), rigs her games shamelessly so that what appears to be a 1 in 20 chance is actually a 1 in 40 chance. The wheels all have enticing names Lady Luck, Madame Fortune and so on, and are all basically the same concept, a bet is placed, the wheel is spun by the hostess and if one lucky notch matches the winning tag above, the prize is won.

There are a dozen 1-in-20 wheels that cost 1 gp each and pay 20 gp on a win, six 1-in-40 wheels that cost 2 gp and pay 80 gp, and a 1-in-100 wheel that costs a "guinea" (1 pp) and pays 1,000 gp (usually as a 100-guinea bank note). A hidden private chamber above, reached by a well-guarded spiral stair contains a special wheel, "The Great Wheel" spun by Mirella herself for select clients. Access is by invitation only, and can be given to a character as a power reward or through a friendship. The Great Wheel also has a hundred notches, and entry is for 100 gp per spin, but the prize of 10,000 gp has been won regularly enough to bring clients here again and again. Winning does not happen by chance, however, because the wheels are all rigged.

To play the wheels, a player pays his bet and picks a single number on the wheel, one player and one bet per spin. Resolve the spin for a given type of wheel by using a die (or dice) of the appropriate type (1d20, 2d20, or d%) with a second 1d4 rolled in secret. Both rolls should be made behind the screen so the player cannot see the actual result.

Winning: To win, the roll of the dice must be the picked number or add up to the picked number in the case of 2d20 (two 20s count as both a 1 and a 40) and the 1d4 roll must land on 3–4.

It rumoured on occasion that those who have attended an invitation-only spinning of the Great Wheel have utterly disappeared. These rumours have yet to be confirmed and Mirella denies any knowledge and has paid copious amounts in bribes to quash them. In truth, there have been disappearances, and Mirella has no idea how they occur. The invited players show up and are escorted or directed up the hidden stair but never emerge. When they have been escorted, either the escort has disappeared as well or the disappearance or it occurred while the guest was out of sight around the next revolution of the stair. No investigation of the stair has turned up any hidden traps or passages and no magical investigation has uncovered any useful information, and Mirella is worried that it will happen to the wrong guest someday (she herself assiduously avoids the stair nowadays, preferring a hidden ladder that extends from the ceiling of her personal chambers). The truth of the matter is that on random occasions, the guest (and sometimes escort) have accidentally found themselves in the Between Roguery (see Sidebox). When this has occurred, the unwitting guest has been escorted into an entirely different room to play a game of high-stakes *kerouz* with a chaos globe and a motley assortment extraplanar gamblers, and the player must win in order to ever leave alive — to date there have been no winners (see area **230. The High Stakes Table** in ***The Slumbering Tsar Saga*** by **Frog God Games** for more information).

The Clockwork Tavern is a rusting old windmill in the Scorecrows that houses a peculiarly industrial tavern built across three floors. The Clockwork has the reputation for peace and serenity, despite the constant

The Scarlet Hill Gang

The Legendary Scarlet Hill Gang operated in the late 16th century (Castorhagi calendar). A band of debonair dwarven thieves, they used their normally dour racial attributes to great effect, and became infamous for dozens of robberies across the city. The most famous of these took place in the upper reaches of the Capitol where a king's ransom in jewelry was taken from a ball by contrivance of various tricks of stonework that they managed to install and utilize — including a sealed bolt-hole that they may have lived in for as much as a month — in those august halls right under the noses of the Royals. After this event, the gang vanished without a trace, but rumours of members of the infamous gang are still bandied about today and toasts are drunk to them and to their leader, the incredible Carnelian Grost, to this day (**TJ19**).

The Between Roguery

Too many have reported this place for it to be mere speculation or rumour. The Between version of the Roguery is said to be a monstrous caricature of the real version, seething with travesties of humans and humanoid gamblers and rogues — a repulsive and monstrous imitation of the true place and where — allegedly — the visitors who are drawn there gamble all on various bets with the crooked versions of the locals. Those who survive the games, which are invariably bloody, are cast aside, tainted forever by their visit, and those who fail suffer some unknown fate.

Shamus Holly (CN male human **bandit**), a drunk who props up the corner of the Clockwork Tavern, is one of the survivors, but he has never been quite right since. He is gloomy and moody, frequently gets himself into pointless fights picking on the biggest people in the tavern, and often sobs into his ale. He cannot even recall his visit in much detail, and is occasionally convinced he dreamt the whole event, but his scars are too real, the marks where he was fettered and paraded naked through the streets are still raw, as are his nightmares about what he had to do to survive the ordeal.

clatter of wind-driven clockwork gears, combined with excellent wine and service. A basic night out here costs at least 20 gp but allows privacy and intimacy. Characters entertaining guests here gain a +1 to their Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

The Family, and in particularly the Scathels, operate a covert spying ring here under the Guild's noses. Their chief infiltrator, a weasely-faced runt named **Gappy Scathel**, a.k.a. **Harkel Crump** (NE male halfling **wererat**), fancies himself a ladies' halfling, and is continually seen in the Bleeding Gargoyle, where he has an overwhelming infatuation with Megan Shrimp.

The Indirect Theatre the strangest theatre in the city — allegedly — the Indirect has a number of living and/or clockwork puppets that put on an incredible and disturbing show with knives, sabres and copious amounts of seemingly real blood.

TJ13. Mabb's Gin Palace

An enormous noisy gin house has vomited outward from the main jumble of buildings and hangs in space like a graceless timber Blight dodo. Rope ladders, timber walkways and rope swings reach out to this place which bears a huge sign proclaiming it to be "*Mabb's Gin Palace*". Oddly, the place seems to be pulling away from the main rising town as though perhaps repulsed by it.

Mabb, The Queen of Gin (NG female human **bandit**) runs her gin house which, she insists, is its own independent burrough. She has the paperwork to prove it, although in truth the independence of the building was granted 200 years ago to its then owner Lord Halstaff Gride (deceased) in recognition of his services to the Crown. Mabb now has her own private kingdom, and her cheap gin prices act as a draw to locals. The place quickly becomes packed, and often those who drink have to lurk on the rope bridges and timber platforms outside, barely able to hear the bawdy music hall songs that are bellowed out therein. The gin house is garishly, seedily flamboyant. Silver-painted mock pillars support lewd oil paintings of nudes under colourful garlands and bright pyrebeetle lanterns. Impresario Mabb loves to run the show, and has a thing about entertaining dwarves, whom she hires whenever she meets them. She has her own troupe of tumbling dwarf clowns who she pays very well.

Mabb is a Revolutionary, and her dwarf clowns are part of a covert group who try to spread a little revolution across the city. The leader of these clowns (who call themselves "The Players"), **Angus Hogg** (NG male dwarf **spy**) takes many risks to help local people, but is careful to keep his identity, and those of his friends, a secret.

The Deck

The Deck is the highest full level of the Jumble and has a spectacular view of the entire city exceeded only by the Scorecrow's Nests above and the Capitol itself.

TJ14. The Overhang

The way the wall overhangs is almost sickening, it seems the whole of the Jumble is falling forwards, staring down into its own destruction. Yet judging by the hanging washing, endless grinning windows and strange walkways dangling from this wall, the situation is a permanent one — at least presently.

Sometimes likened to a ship's stern, the Overhang is an elaborately constructed series of houses with carved windows staring downwards. Wooden angels grimace as they stare down at the ground below. While simple walkways and balconies have been lashed between the streets and alleyways here.

The overhang is an infamous place where the Guild dispose of their enemies, and a local phrase, "swimming off the overhang," is slang for a sudden entry into the Deadbook. Despite appearances, the Overhang is a much-sought-after place to live; the views are good and the air relatively clear. A large number of former ships' captains live here, and a curiously dangerous drinking hole, the Giddy Hurdy-Gurdy, lurks near the top of the Overhang as a favourite drinking hole for sailors, especially the hardened men and women of The Company of Honourable Seamen — and they don't much like the Royal Navy barging in on their turf.

TJ15. The Rigging

Lashed between a series of streets and taverns high up in the Jumble is a spider's web of ropes, wire and hanging spiked objects, within which are platforms, wooden buildings fortified with iron cladding and sharpened poles. The way the whole place is arranged between taverns and houses of low repute, it looks to be the setting for some sort of spectacle.

The greatest diversion of the Jumble, the Rigging: part maze, part fighting pit, part acrobatic delight, is open once a week for an evening's entertainment and danger. Slung between platforms and repurposed crow's nests and masts form old hulks, the Rigging plays backdrop to a number of special events organised and run by **Oscar Grudge III** (CN male human **commoner**), owner of the Staring Whelk, one of the drinking holes overlooking the area, indeed the one that commands the best and most intimate views of the exhibitions. Private balconies and boxes are offered at exorbitant rates during events and betting is keenly encouraged by a number of touts and urgers drawn here by the spectacle. Grudge ensures that the whole event is a dazzling display and hires jugglers, acrobats and fire-eaters to extend the event, which often covers at least four fights or a team contest.

Grudge is careful to make sure events remain fresh, and while the eager queues of local hopefuls and rogues are always keen to test their skill and go for a large purse each week, the ringmaster also likes to introduce a number of uncertainties. These might be hidden pits, a flight of hobbled stircatrices†, a mob of goblins as fodder, or even a secret traitor planted in a team event. Last man standing in the Rigging wins the prize, which is usually — but not always — a purse of 2,500 gp. Special events and returns are common, and some of the more successful Riggers have made fortunes. The most noteworthy is presently **Big Father Fine** (N male human **thug**), a corpulent figure with astonishing grace who is the darling of the crowd and his chief rival and close contestant for the title of fan-favourite, the blond Adonis **Octrin Kale** (CN male human **thug**). Villains come and go but Fine and Kale go on.

The Scorecrow's Nests

The Scorecrow's Nests are the tiny pinnacles of the Jumble, built high upon many mast-like structures and looking down on everything in the city except the Capitol itself.

TJ16. The Pyre

High up on the northern reaches of the Jumble is a curious place. At first it looks like an eccentric market with great brass lanterns and strange and outré' objects. Yet inspection reveals even more mystery. This is not a market as such, but rather a strange ward with dozens of odd houses, twisting, hanging, wildly exposed streets and a curiously odd feeling of being watched.

Beacon to spellcasters — and in particular, wizards — the Pyre is a peculiar corner of this peculiar city. A series of gable-garrets, tower tops and spires, many are occupied by spellcasters eager to nurture their arcane powers here in this lofty place. Independently, spellcasters dabbling in magic are seen as an abomination, an affront to the Royal Decree that magic is power and power is not for the masses. These casters, however, gather here under the arcane umbrella of **Fowler Bolete** (**TJ17**) and have formed a number of loose associations, cabals and arcane brotherhoods to spread and ultimately gain influence (and perhaps control) over the common casters of the city. By keeping their potential threats close, the brotherhoods of casters based here is likely to be in contact with many other casters across the city.

A triad of casters hold the close the means of advancement — knowledge of the secrets within BookTown. These privileged three own private libraries and who knows what occult paraphernalia of power and legend. **Elder Grimcall Rothwynn** (N male human **mage**), the bookish Anarchist who backs rebels and Anarchists alike, his associate **Hebeloma Crisp** (CN female swyne† **seer**†evoker), the greedy and lascivious collector of arcana and the macabre, and finally **Father Tolly Shortstone** (LN male gnome **transmogrifier**†) make up this loose alliance. Tolly has close alliances across BookTown and access to the most secret libraries, including the older parts of the Great Library (**B8**). Each of the trio are aware that Fowler Bolete (**TJ17**) uses their talents to find others to take under his wing and send out into the city quietly seeding rebellion.

Not all the residents here are casters, but the air of normalcy has a tinge of the arcane about it. Odd things lurk at the corners of vision, even places like wine importers and gin houses have strange atmospheres, and the feeling of being watched is constant, even for those who live there. The thralls and *scrying* sensors of the city congregate especially thick about these heights. Some put this down to simply the workings of the local residents, but others suggest a permanent watch is kept on this place by arcane inquisitors in the Capitol.

TJ17. Bolete's Tower

A huge wooden tower spirals away here, its spire topped with a great lightning rod. The tower has almost sheer gables and is clothed in carvings of angels dancing with devils.

Fowler Bolete (N male alchymic-undying† human **arch mage** with caster level 15), one of the greatest wizards in Castorhage, makes his home here in this rambling mansion that rises from the Jumble as a single structure. The imposingly tall, graceful wizard lives in his wooden fortress designed not only to keep thieves out but also the various assassins of the Royal Family and Illuminati. The towering mansion is incredible to behold, a testament to a very, very long life of adventure and the unusual. Bolete is endlessly curious, but very careful who he befriends, he is almost never seen outside his home, which is a place heaving with fleshy guardians and horrific arcane traps. Every graceful inch of his home is crafted of iron-riveted glass and walnut; it smells of old books and wisdom.

Bolete grew up on the streets of Toiltown, but was taken in by a circus owner named Longstone who taught him the arcane arts. Bolete excelled, and slowly but surely has carefully amassed a library that is the envy of the wizards of the Capitol, making him a target. Bolete was actually murdered 6 years ago by Royals, but his body was taken by agents of **Princess Rebecca of Mourney**†, who arranged for his rebirth. Immediately afterwards he became one of her Hidden Knights of the Capitol (see **Chapter 5**) and vowed to help her whenever he could. Mourney has rarely used his services but finds his talents a useful tool to have access to. Occasionally he spies for her in the Capitol, and keeps a careful eye out for arcane casters to take under his wing, educate and then send out into the city to spread calm words for change and rebellion.

Bolete knows exactly what his neighbour the Quiet One is doing, harvesting devils and angels for his master, he knows in his heart that such meddling will be the unravelling of both the Quiet One and his foul master. He therefore leaves them both to their folly.

TJ18. The High Nest

A tower catches your eye here, it is topped with a copper dome and has a huge lightning rod in the shape of a sun-barge sailing across the heavens. This place is timber but sheathed in copper plates that gleam in the light, their green verdigris kept somehow at bay. Castings of the moons and heavenly smiling suns grace the eaves of this curiously building.

Living within this tribute to the sky, the **Quiet One** (CE male **shadow demon**†), astromancer and seer makes its home far from prying eyes. His small staff of gnome assistants tend to his needs and assist him in its cataloguing of the heavens. An agent of His Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken**†, the Quiet One lurks in the upper parts of the city seeking out angels and devils to take to his master. The Quiet One knows of his neighbour Fowler Bolete **(TH17)** and his petty sedition, but such things are beneath his concern; he has a darker path — to aid his master in the conquest of Heaven and Hell themselves. Trivial mortal rebellions will come and go, but the coming change is the only thing that matters.

The monstrous seer is also an artist, and delights in creating the most incredible pictures of Heaven and the things it knows dwell between the stars. These pictures are achingly beautiful but also coldly terrible, sometimes those who view them go mad, sometimes they are simply swallowed by Between.

TJ19. The Topmast Notch

The buildings finally end here with a last structure that looks down on all the others from its high perch.

A ramshackle timber mansion lurches upwards through the Jumble, its various wings creeping in and out of the levels below until it reaches this high spot. Retired Guildmaster (or rather Mistress) **Lenora Sage** (N female human **grandmaster spy**†**thief lord**) lives out her twilight years along with a small staff and a number of guests, old friends she has taken a shine to or admires and has taken under her wing. Sage has made a fortune over the years and although now very old she still has her wits and the falling leaves of her once astonishing beauty.

The old house perched atop its mast has so many balconies, levels, stairs, turrets, and subfloor Sage forgets sometimes just whether she's seen them all, and certain aspects of the place come and go in Between — always fortunately relatively harmlessly although at least two would-be robbers have met untimely ends that they are still, sadly, experiencing.

Closest amongst the small handful of friends and associates is also retired master thief **Carnelian Grost** (N female hill dwarf **master thief**† **lord**), who, at 423 has reached a remarkable span of years even for a dwarf. Grost is the only surviving member of the infamous Scarlet Gang and her dwindling funds are supplemented by the kindness of her professional admirer Sage.

The elder occupants of the Notch nest like ill-sitting hens in their lair, arguing and laughing and recalling past glories while occasionally still keeping a hand in with more modern escapades. A vast fortune lies hidden in the various folds and trapped secret chambers of the place, but it would be a brave thief indeed who tackled these venerable masters of their craft in their own lair.

Part Two: Running Toiltown and the Jumble

Toiltown and the Jumble Random Encounters

Day	Night	Result
01	01–03	Thugs*
02	04–05	Anna Hyde (**TT5**)
03–12	06–08	Carts or wagons*
13	09–10	Hortence Spitewinter (**TT11**)
14–18	11	Shift workers*
19–21	12	Angus Hogg (**J13**)
22–23	13–21	Trader*
24–25	22	Captain Judas (**TT11**)
—	23	Oermelia Thrip (**TT4**)
—	24	Jack Hornum plus 1d8 East End Boys (**bandit**) (**TT11**)
—	25	Heppy Grak (**J6**)
26	26	Foul-Mouthed Peg plus 1d6 guards (**guard**) (**TT3**)
27	27–31	Drunk*
28–29	32–33	Street Food Seller*
30–33	34–35	Corner-doxy*
—	36	Festering Brethren
—	37	Revolutionaries or Anarchists*
34	38–42	Local militia patrol
35–39	43	Builders*
40–41	44–50	Choking smog
42	51	Hectram Scathel (**J1**)
43–50	52	Freight wagon*
51	53	Carter*
52–55	54–58	Mule string*
56–62	59–60	Disturbance*
63	61	Sisters of the Great BlackBell (2d4) (**TT1**)
—	62	C'thwaa' Fester of the Maw (**TT2**)
64–65	63–64	Raven Fray (**J6**)
66	65	Cobb, Lord Protector of Mount Misery (**TT2**)
67–69	66	Escaped livestock
70	67	Marcul Throst (**TT5**)
71–72	68–71	Family*
—	72	Isobela Frynn (**J3**)
73	73	Pleasant Sedgefly, Lady of Bilge (**TT2**)
74–78	74–80	**Spiesys***
—	81	Master Brewer Quarus Gobb (**J4**)
—	82	Constance Grubb plus 1d4 Blinders (**bandit**) (**TT11**)
79–82	83–88	Lowfolk*
83–97	89–90	Livestock driven to slaughter*
98	91–93	Hettie Twyne (**J4**)
99	94	Lady Henna Rose, Mistress of Midden (**TT2**)
00	95–96	Ghouls
—	97	The Quiet One (**J18**)
—	98	The Crimson Crown (**TT11**)
—	99	His Grace Lord Maple (**TT7**)
—	00	Master Rufus Blackthorn (**TT6**)

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–65	Human (Castorhager)
66–80	Human (other)
81–87	Dwarf
88–95	Goblinoid or Orc
96–00	Other

TOHC See ***The Tome of Horrors Complete*** by **Frog God Games**

Where named characters are encountered they are encountered alone or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Builders: This group of 1d4+1 labourers (commoner 1–2 or expert 1–2) goes about its business working on the streets, a building, or the gables. There is a 60% chance they are dwarves, otherwise roll on the **Random Race Table** above.

Carter: A carter (expert 1–2) leads a pair of zombie horses† that pull an overladen wagon carrying either finished goods or raw materials. He orders the horses to attack if molested.

Carts or Wagons: A train of 2d6 carts or wagons makes its way through the crowded streets carrying either finished goods or raw materials. Each wagon or cart has a driver (**commoner**) and is accompanied by 1d2 guards (**commoner** or **guard**) to clear the way. Their attitude is unfriendly and hostile to anyone who interferes with their course.

Choking Smog: The Canker has risen in this part of the city. It can either be a foul-smelling cloud equivalent to smoke effects or you ca choose one of the effects from **The Canker** sidebox in **Chapter 13**. Moving 4d6 x 10 feet away or going indoors escapes the effects.

Corner-Doxy: These come in all genders, shapes and sizes. Street girls and corner-boys are fairly common (**commoner**).

Disturbance: An argument or scuffle has broken between two groups numbering 2d4 **commoners** each. They have a 75% chance to turn on anyone who attempts to intervene.

Drunk: A wino (**commoner**) who is worse for wear; he may become violent (30% chance).

Escaped Livestock: Livestock have escaped and rush in a panic down the street. There are 1d20 animals.

Family: These folk are 2d6 in number (**commoner**) and are wandering about enjoying themselves (35%) or bickering (65%).

Festering Brethren: These are 1d3 coprophagi† (**commoner**) wrapped in rags and carrying bell-staves†. They are keen to avoid contact, and try to move away if accosted or spoken to.

Freight Wagon: A huge 8-wheeled iron cart filled with either finished goods or raw materials rumbles down the street. Its driver (**commoner**) holds the reins of 4 zombie horses. Anyone in the street has 1 round to move or must make a DC 12 Dexterity to avoid taking 2d6 points of damage from being crushed by a hoof, under a wheel, or against a building. The driver will not stop.

Ghouls: A pack of ghouls prowls the streets. The pack is 80% likely to consist of 1d6+6 ghouls (30% chance accompanied by a ghast). Beltane has given the Fetch strict instructions to not overfeed, so this group may surprisingly run away from an encounter, possibly making things worse.

Livestock Driven to Slaughter: These 2d4 locals (commoner) is driving a herd of livestock to a slaughter yard. The livestock are 2d8 in number and consist of either pigs (50%), goats (25%), cattle (15%), ponies (10%).

Local Militia Patrol: A group of 1d8+4 locals (**commoners**) have gathered from a neighbourhood as an informal militia armed with pitchforks, cudgels and torches. They are keeping the streets clear of trouble, and their definition of trouble can vary considerably. The have a 50% chance to be unfriendly towards those that they don't know and become hostile if threatened.

Lowfolk: These locals (**commoners**) are simply going about their business and want to be left alone.

Mule String: A group of 1d4+1 nervous muleskinners (**commoner**) lead a string of 2d4 zombie horses† or mules, destined to work in a treadmill. The muleskinners do not have total control over their undead charges and will panic and flee if accosted. The drays have a 33% chance to attack if touched by anyone and do not respond to commands if this occurs.

Revolutionaries or Anarchists: A group of 3d6 of these folk (**commoner**) gather together on the street and call out for revolution or an end to the rule of the Royals. They may be painting slogans on buildings, setting fire to things or just throwing rocks and raising a ruckus in general. They are hostile towards anyone who speaks against their cause.

Rogues: These cutpurses (**bandits**) may follow targets to alleys and attack by day, and are likely to attack openly by night.

Shift Workers: These are 2d12 shift workers making their way to or from work at one of the manufacturies, mills or other workhouses. They are either resentful or exhausted depending which way they are headed.

Street Food Seller: This street vendor (**commoner**) sells pies, fish and fry and other consumables as detailed in **Chapter 1**.

Thugs: By day these **thugsbandit** are noisy and objectionable; by night they attack unless their hostile attitude can be improved.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) usually has a market stall, although some operate from hand trays. They sell a variety of basic goods, from coal to flowers to fish to candles.



Chapter Nine: Town Bridge and Scrimshaw



Splayed across the Great Lyme River is a confusion of buildings, sagging into each other and facing down into the water (a charitable description for such sluggish poison). Somehow, a many-arched bridge keeps them upright and the waters at bay. The buildings still stare downwards, gripping their neighbours in anguish, awaiting the blessed relief of collapse. This bridge seems to sag beneath the weight of the buildings, which have birthed half a dozen small timber islands lashed by countless slender umbilical bridges of rope and iron and wood. A treadmill ferry crosses the grey space next to the bridge, its iron chains grating in the wind, its passengers staring down at the sluggish toxic river below.

Yet there is something else about this place, something inexplicable that demands an explanation. For all its physical deformities, this place has an ethereal air about it, an indistinct taint, an odour of the ocean, of rotting, fishy meat and anguish, as though something is hiding in plain sight. Could it be that the bloated structure before you is a mask for somewhere else? Looking closer you see gulls enter the shells of buildings and vanish, hear the distant rumble of an ocean storm, and occasionally, just occasionally, catch glimpses of gouts of blood and discarded flesh in the depths of the river..

Introduction

What does a bridge do?

Town Bridge is more than just a simple structure linking one side of a river to another, it is also a bridge to the Between.

Town Bridge has a foothold in two places. First, it is a structure linking the west (rich) side of the city to the east (poor) side. And second, it has a definite foothold in Between, linking the city to an area of Between known as the Unsea, a wild elemental ocean harvested by the ships of the Royal Unsea Whaling Company. The harvest is whales. The place is called Scrimshaw.

Town Bridge has numerous (some would say countless) links between it and Scrimshaw, and the isle of whales has been used for over a century to harvest their game. Having access to an ocean rich in whales that is, in essence, a short trip away, has led to the whaling operations of the Unsea being very profitable and very vigorously protected. The Royal Unsea Whaling Company is a very successful entity, a valuable concern and one that is guarded jealously, even though its presence is an open secret.

They harvest the whales for their oil, their bones and, most valuably, the ambergris found in their intestines. He who controls the bridge controls the company, and while the Illuminati have a passing interest in the Unsea's grisly whale harvest, they have bigger fish to fry in the alien sea and leave the bickering to the gangs of Town Bridge, providing of course, they get their cut.

Three gangs fight for control of the bridge, while paying fealty to the bridges ruler, the Crown Prince Justice Cornlord — one of the most prominent of the thirteen Justices in the city. The aranea† Justice has peculiar tastes and a nose for secrets, and the gangs make sure that he is kept happy while they fight, a fight that seldom has a moment's peace. The three gangs form alliances of convenience with whomever is in favour with them at a particular moment; each other, the Anarchists, Royal Family or anyone who offers them power. Presently, they have been driven back from their operations by an 18 month-long gang war, which has greatly reduced the viability of each gang. However, opportunity abounds and it has never been easier to court the gangs or their rulers.

The Darnells presently hold the controlling interest in the Royal Unsea Whaling Company, having recently taken over operations from the Heaths. Their hold on power is tenuous, but they can count on support from the Family (see **Chapter 4**) and, presently, Crown Prince Cornlord. The Darnells are a curious bunch, a rough association of cousins and kin, rivermen and barge gypsies.

The Heaths consider themselves gentlemen of Town Bridge, and claim to have the Justice's favour. Operating through threats and blackmail, the Heaths have recently been driven back from the Unsea and are desperate to get their (as they see it) rightful property back.

The Town Bridge Mob are the smallest of the bridge's gangs, but the most brutal. The Mob doesn't care who supports them and why, they simply wish to get a foothold in the Unsea and its profitable trade.

Beyond the draw of the riches of Between, Town Bridge holds another attraction to the citizens of Castorhage. A strange quirk of the city-state's tax laws, which has been in effect for more than a thousand years, exempts those living on the bridge. As a result, what was intended as a thoroughfare across the river, quickly developed into an impossible city within a city, clinging to the bridge, its pilings, its docks, and even other structures to use every possible inch of space for living and escaping the harsh oversight of the tax collectors. To combat this, a stiff toll is charged for carrying goods across the bridge, but managing to find a space to live upon the span is still a financial boon to any who can manage it.

Below the bridge, the waters of the Great Lyme continue to ooze, carrying with it not only the flotsam and jetsam of the estuary but also that of the Unsea — living and dead.

Part One: Town Bridge

Places

What Town Bridge looks like…

Like a child's drawing of a bridge.

The houses on it lean in ways they shouldn't and seem destined to imminent collapse. A chaotic jumble of houses is slung across a long, many-arched bridge. At first glimpse, Town Bridge resembles an island, but then the madness of the place comes into focus. Its iron and timber fingers grope each bank for support, grasping them almost desperately, engulfed in cancerous shanty growths. This is a chaotic jumble of buildings lashed upon a teetering structure and staring at the river below.

From this structure, limbs of timber stretch out across the river. Treadmill ferries grate across the gaps between these chaotic islands. Narrow rope bridges grip hopefully to the isles and chaotic boat-towns are lashed in its shadow. Below the arches, bamboo scaffolding hangs amid even more dwellings. Shanties grip at the dead remains of ships that somehow still float at the feet of the colossal structure.

There is something even odder about the bridge. Odd angles converge in its structure, light falls across lower walls but the upper part is bathed in shadow. There is something not quite right about the whole thing, and this oddness extends to its every pore. Every timber, every wall, every nail seems to be somehow tainted in a strange touch of dislocation. It is almost as though the place has a secret. The place itself is a constant building site, with shoring and building and repairing going on at all times. Its streets and alleys are impossibly cramped, visibility is seldom beyond a few yards, and a feeling of oppression abounds.

What Town Bridge smells like…

Fishy, and overpoweringly so.

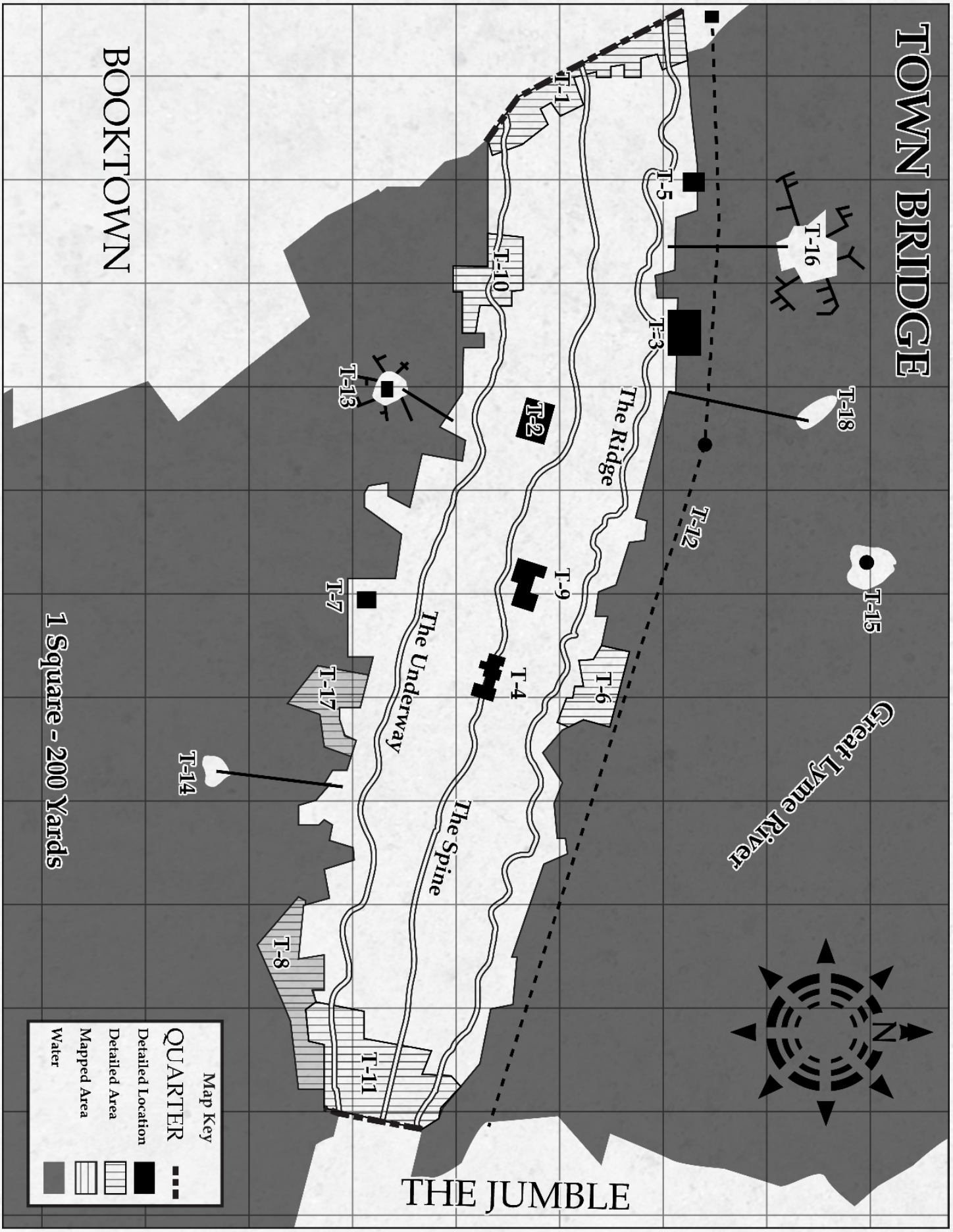
The taint of the ocean is strong here, an echo of the whale blubber hacked and filleted and boiled on Scrimshaw, its odours reeking through the gaps in Between. This taint resides at the back of other more normal scents; the smell of urine, the smell of sweat, and the smell of trade.

Sometimes the smell — the "unsmell," as locals sometimes call it — is overpowering. Sometimes it is subtler than the finest perfume, yet it is always there, its reek follows visitors away to their houses, its taint stays on wool, on cotton and even on leather.

What Town Bridge feels like…

Claustrophobic.

There is barely enough room to swing a cat. A street can become crowded if two people use it at the same time. This sensation extends upwards and down below the bridge, almost touching the water.


TOWN BRIDGE
T-1
T-5
T-16
T-10
T-3
T-18
T-13
T-2
The Ridge
T-12
T-15
T-9
T-7
T-6
T-4
T-17
The Underway
The Spine
T-14
T-8
T-11
Great Lyme River
N
BOOKTOWN
1 Square = 200 Yards
THE JUMBLE
Map Key
QUARTER
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water

The place also feels busy. From dawn to dusk, traders cross and re-cross the bridge incessantly, their call and clamour almost physical.

What Town Bridge sounds like…

Almost perpetually noisy; the traders come and go but never cease calling out their wares, as do the corner-doxies, the preachers and the Anarchists.

This is a place where silence is never heard.

Seven Words to Describe Town Bridge…

Dizzy Crush

Height **Depth**

Rust *Charred* **Falling**

Parishes and Wards

Town Bridge has no parishes. It has an appendage place — Scrimshaw — but Town Bridge is a single entity. It is certain; however, that the bridge has a distinct trio of locales, a triad of territories belonging to the gangs of Town Bridge — the Darnells, the Heaths, and the Mob — but the borders of these territories are fluid, often splitting streets, and even buildings apart.

Streets

There are, it is rumoured, 179 alleys crossing Town Bridge. The names of many of these alleys are known by just a handful of people, and a few are so rarely visited that they become overgrown with cobwebs, rust and growths of blight (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum: Part 6).*** Though they do not perfectly correspond to the exact main thoroughfares detailed below, each area of this district is listed with the street level that it is most closely associated with, or that has major access to it. Sometimes more than one may apply.

The Spine

The main street of Town Bridge is a twisted and convoluted mass of obstructions, crowds, and building work. It is said that it is easier — and quicker — to risk swimming the Lyme than to try to cross the Spine during the busiest periods, between 9th hour prime and 5th hour non. Travel at this time is reduced to 1/8 standard movement because of the crowds and clamour, the traders trying to stop passers-by, and the push and shove of carts, rickshaws, wagons and carriages.

The Ridge

Stretching haphazardly across the rooftops and gables of Town Bridge, the Ridge is not for the faint-hearted, but it provides the easiest — and most scenic — way across the district. The Ridge requires a stout heart to use, but is the quickest way across. It is a route,; however, that only those familiar with local geography should attempt. Those who do not have such skills or a worthy guide are likely to become lost and end up on one of the more unsavoury paths in the area, probably straight into trouble. It is not that the Ridge is high, it's just confusing. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check allows a crossing to be made without a check at 1/2 normal move rate (difficult terrain), a failed check results in an encounter and the need to make a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check (over a 120-foot fall into the river) to carry on, or they have to turn back.

The Underway

There is a route known to a few locals using the lower walkways and bamboo scaffolding, decks, and piers beneath the bridge. Characters who succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check are aware of the route. Again, those who fail the check face an encounter.

* Lost Lands time for 9 am to 5 pm

Bridge-Cant

A complicated pidgin of Common and vulgarities from a dozen different languages, this rough tongue is commonly spoken among the lower castes that dwell in Town Bridge, especially around strangers. The cant is difficult to learn and even harder to decipher. If an individual who is not a native of the bridge wishes to learn the cant must make a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check to pick up on the pidgin's nuances.

Between Links

It's common knowledge where the best known Between *gateways* are; although, very few people know exactly how to reach them. Even a thorough investigation often fails to turn up these fickle ways and it's always better to trust a guide. There are others that open up from time to time; in reflections, in pools of water, or in the surfaces of mirrors deliberately left or lost by those determined to enter the Between. These links open up randomly, or may be found as part of an adventure.

There are always stories about other places the Between connects to at the Bridge. These are tales of places that link to horrific and forsaken places alive with the residue and echo of the bridge, but one that is infested with death. Some surmise that this place actually predicts the future of Town Bridge, or remains as a Between echo of the last terrible fire in 1509. Too many strangers and visitors have confirmed such a place for it to be just a story.

T1. Great West Bridge (Angel) Gate and Tower — The Spine

The bridge doesn't so much end or begin as occur. A thorny tower rises from the bank and grasps the bridge. The tower is a festival of angels and is surrounded by a shanty of buildings that cower respectfully at its feet.

Angel tower serves as the de-facto hall of the Town Bridge Watch and the residence of the **Crown Prince Justice Cornlord**[†]**assassin**). Some 220 constables (LN male or female human **guard** or **veteran**) are barracked at the tower behind a bristling array of traps, portcullises, 3-foot thick-stone walls and murder-holes. The watch have a score of Sergeants of the Watch (LN male or female human **captain**) who are in turn led by **District Commander Shank** (LE male **aranea**[†]**mage**), a close kin-thing of the Crown Prince.

Visitors only ever see the Angel Archway, a claustrophobic, arched corridor under the watchful eyes of a dozen angels. The barracks lie immediately above the archway and consist of cramped quarters, drill rooms and the usual array of kitchens, stores and armouries. The sergeants have better quarters above, and those that are married are allowed to live with their spouses. The upper chambers; however, are strictly out of bounds.

The chambers above are lavish. The Crown Prince ensures that his entourage of aranea are indulged, both in desire and knowledge, and frequently members of the group may be found skulking the libraries and souks of nearby BookTown. The Crown Prince has a reputation for lavish parties at his tower, and the aranea enjoys luring those with specialist knowledge to these balls and events. Parties are almost always themed — fancy dress, magic, orgy, etc. — and well attended. The aranea and his court enjoy popularity and have been adept at keeping their identity secret. The Crown Prince enjoys a curious relationship with the gangs that vie for the bridge and its link to Scrimshaw, and at times it seems that he is almost playing a game with them: granting favours to one, ostracising another, influencing the third.

Occasionally, the Crown Prince wanders the bridge or Scrimshaw in disguise, always careful to have a trio of aranea fighters close by in case of attack, and uses his magic to lure men and women into his evil

clutches. Presently, he is considering what is best for himself in light of the changing rulers of the link to Scrimshaw. He has been advised by **Brigadier Agaric** at Fort Bridge (**T9**) — a person he regards as a bore, a nothing, and a tedious mother's boy — to interfere, and it is that fact alone which is stopping him from taking action.

T2. The Buttress — The Spine

A line of crooked dockyards and warehouses straddles the bridge. Ragged cranes descend to moored ships below. The bridge's arch here has been bricked up.

Linking to the Unsea and Scrimshaw, the Buttress is more than just a fortified building, it's the battleground for an ongoing battle between the gangs of Town Bridge. The building itself is a large warehouse that rises directly from the river and which contains a short length of tunnel that links to a secondary tunnel which in turn links to Scrimshaw. A *gateway* to Between links the two tunnels, which are brick arched waterways some 200 yards long in total, the tunnel at the Town Bridge end is just 20 yards long, passes through a portal connecting to Between (a large polished *mirror-portal* some 15 feet wide). The tunnel itself is barely 15 feet wide and has room for a single small narrowboat to pass. A chain passes to both ends of the tunnel and links to a bell that is rung when a ship begins its journey from either end.

Stories persist of things seen below the waters of the tunnel, and on one occasion, 40 years ago, a whole narrowboat loaded with whale blubber, *Serendipity*, vanished with three crew aboard. She entered the tunnel at Scrimshaw, but never arrived at Town Bridge. Some travellers claim to have heard her crew shouting feebly for aid while they travelled through the tunnel over the decades since.

The Buttress acts as a fortification protecting the Town Bridge end, and presently, is the headquarters of the **Darnell Family**, an eclectic bunch of cousins and kin, rivermen and boaters. The current head of the family, **Kinswoman Ivy Darnell** (CN female human **master thief**†**veteran scout**) rules with a smile and an icy heart. She does not like to be contradicted, interrupted, or questioned. Ivy is presently enjoying a very difficult relationship with **Brigadier Agaric** at Fort Bridge (**T9**). Ivy's lover, her cousin **Lucretia Darnell** (N female human **veteran**), acts as her thug and confident, and the pair have a loyal following.

The footings and outer walls of the Buttress are riddled with accesses into Scrimshaw. These *gateways* are either created by opportunists who bring in normal mirrors that, in this location, act as *mirror-portals*† into the Between; or are chance occurrences caused by puddles of water reflecting their surroundings and creating temporary *gateways*; whirlpools in the river that open up very temporary *gateways;* or other chance occurrences. A group of rogues have made a fortune as opportunists (see sidebox) using these doors to deliver people into Scrimshaw in the hope of money and fame (or infamy) on the Unsea. For more information on the Unsea see **Part 5** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

There are many times when the tide of the Unsea is too high and using the *gateway* at such times risks being drawn into a dangerous whirlpool between the two places known as the Hag. At these times, only the most experienced captains would risk the crossing, and they're too sensible to do so. A successful DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) check must be made to avoid capsizing at such a time and risking the vessel and crew being drawn into the Unsea. For more information see Scrimshaw below.

The Darnells are paranoid about security, well aware that the *gateway* to Scrimshaw changes hands frequently. They have presently been fortifying the Buttress with an array of traps and a quartet of broken trolls, two of which guard the *gateway* to Scrimshaw, and two of which wander the grounds. The Darnells have made the troll's presence and the traps an open secret to deter attack.

Blight Gang: Darnell Family

Location: Town Bridge
Leader: Kinswoman Ivy Darnell (CN female human **master thief**†**veteran scout**)
Motivations: Greed, control of The Unsea Whaling Company
Friends: Various boater clans
Enemies: Heath Family, Town Bridge Mob
Tactics: Violence, destruction of property and businesses
Morale: Very strong; since the family are related, it is hard to defeat them even if their leaders are killed, since another is soon found.

Opportunity Knocks

The Between Guides of Town Bridge

A healthy, but bitter, rivalry exists between a group of locals from Town Bridge who vie to deliver people to Scrimshaw, promising fame and fortune once there. The cost ranges from 250 gp to 1,000 gp depending who is asked by whom. In general, the richer and more desperate you look, the more it costs. The flamboyant **Letitia Hope'n'mor Shortstone** (CG female gnome **burglar**†**veteran thief**), is the current cream of a rather dubious crop of chancers, thieves and would-be-explorers who offer their services as guides. Most of these guides are able to get people to Scrimshaw without event, but every so often a group vanishes or ends up in some other aspect of Between — often never to return. As a rule of thumb, assume that journeys into Between from Town Bridge operate with similar chances of success as a *teleport* spell. Good guides are very familiar with Scrimshaw, while newer, cheaper, or incompetent guides are less so, increasing the chance of mishap.

T3. Tran's Pinnacle — The Ridge

The highest tower on the bridge has a domed gold rooftop.

Sophisticated, debonair and a cad with the ladies, **Sir Rathven Tran** (LN male human Gtsang **noblescout**) is the main merchant people turn to when dealing in ambergris and, more lucratively, *Between vessels*†. Tran has made a very considerable fortune through his contacts in the Royal Family and their associated hangers-on and extended relatives. Tran's Pinnacle is part warehouse, part townhouse, and part tower. The warehouse sits to the north of his tower, while the townhouse houses his children **Raif** (11), **Quentin** (6) and **Elizabeth** (3) born of his dear departed wife Ivillis, who died in a carriage accident 2 years ago. Tran is a very respected, decent and honest trader who has made a reputation through fair but firm deals. He is also something of a dilettante, and sponsors numerous explorations of the Unsea. Superficially, all is well at the tower apart, from Tran's ongoing sadness for his wife, which has been tempered by the loving affection of the children's new governess. Tran continues to host modest parties at his tower, or on special occasions, beneath the gilded rooftop dome which commands a fabulous view of the river and bridge as well as the Capitol nearby.

Unfortunately for Tran, he has fallen under the spell of his commoner governess, the remarkably voluptuous **Lucy Wax** (LE female **lilin**† devil) who has a gifted ability to *alter self* at will. Wax has been using her infiltration of Tran's affairs on two fronts: first, to secure introductions for others of her kind into the higher society Castorhage, and second, to ensure an infernal hand in the affairs of the Unsea. The lilin is aware that her position is tenuous and intends to continue her covert infiltration quietly. At Scrimshaw, her bestial cohort and sometimes-lover **Lord Krine** (area **S2** in **Scrimshaw** below), secretly a shapeshifting **bone devil**, is kept abreast of matters through coded notes. Both serve an aspect of their mistress **Demoriel**†, who has a casual interest in the Unsea, but who

is much more interested in Castorhage itself. That Tran devoutly worships Brine, for which the local vicar **Father Salt** (**T7**) carries out regular private services, is a worry to Wax, who is presently considering whether to seduce, or simply kill, the old fool.

T4. Grad's Ale House — The Spine

A red-painted ale house juts into the street here, filling a whole block of decaying buildings. Gold lettering declares it to be "*Grad's Ale House,*" and by the look of the chipped paint, damage, and repairs, it's a rough one.

Rough, violent, and nasty, Grad's Ale House is the centre of the universe as far as Town Bridge goes. It's the place to go for information (all Charisma ([Persuasion)] checks to gather information concerning the bridge are made with advantage herein), guides (both traditional and for trips to Between), and hired help (including kidnapping, murder, etc.). People come to Grad's because it's useful, not because they wish to.

Grad (CN male human **thug**) is a gigantically fat man, who runs the alehouse with the help of his (literal) fish-wife **Dab** (LN female briny† **commoner**), a small woman with a personality to match. Grad is a terrible bully, annoyed that his wife has not been able to give him a son, and by the fact that he is so repulsive only Dab would have him. Dab is, when she can be soothed into talking, an expert on the Unsea, and her knowledge of that place (both for her years living in Scrimshaw where she was born and raised, and her love of such tales), means that when people want to genuinely know about the Unsea, they go to her. This fact is; however, not well known, and only the locals in the ale house are typically aware. Dab is also a fine cook, and her jellied eels are legendary and always available by the plate at 2 sp.

Grad's has the usual ale house fare as well as the following more unique options to choose from.

Menu Item	Price
Fish cakes in gravy	13 cp
Brill with apple fritters	1 sp
Fish pie with onions	1 sp
Boiled cod and fen greens	2 sp
Brochette of smelts	2 sp
Fish-and-oyster pie	2 sp
Red mullet in cases	2 sp
Curried prawns	3 sp
Query filet with chips*	2 gp

* Query is an Unsea delicacy and only has a 10% chance of being available on any given day. See ***The Cyclopaedia Infestarum: Part 5*** for more details.

Strange Drinking Fellows

Sometimes it's useful for you to have a list of colourful characters handy to introduce into a gaming session from time to time. Following are a few that regularly turn up at Grad's Ale House, but you can use them elsewhere as you see fit.

Spicy Nab (N male briny† **commoner**) is a "Scarred" (a former sailor on the Unsea). He was a whaler for 25 years before his vessel sank, and he was lucky to make it back alive. He has a scrimshaw peg leg and many friends across Scrimshaw. He is an invaluable guide to the place and is able to help visitors gather information or make other Charisma (Persuasion) checks related to Scrimshaw and the Unsea at a +10 bonus. He is full of tales about the Unsea and provides advantage on2 any Intelligence (Investigation) checks made regarding Scrimshaw or the Unsea.

Toothless and terrible, **Rotten Ella** (CN female old human **commoner**) is a former harlot who worked the Bridge for over 30 years. She knows things; people tell her about what goes on in the bridge. You could use Ella as a way to introduce an adventure, provide necessary information or maybe even as a way to get to Between in a hurry.

Anytime the characters talk to one of these locals or to anyone at Grad's really, they can pick up some of the latest rumours coming out of Scrimshaw as the typical chatter floating around the bar. Roll 1d4 and consult the table below or make up your own rumours and news.

Rumours out of Scrimshaw

d4	Rumour
1	A new *gateway* has opened to Scrimshaw and folks are rushing to it now before it vanishes.
2	A huge wallow-whale† was taken in the Unsea yesterday. It had a kraken in its belly.
3	A fisherman from the Unsea comes in selling the weirdest-looking fish anyone has ever seen. It has a plethora of tentacles, feelers, and appendages, but also bears a vaguely humanoid shape. The fisherman swears he heard it speak a word before it expired but doesn't know what it said.
4	The Ashen Angler was sighted again near the Cataclysm. Mad Captain Obed has sworn on the souls of her parents and unborn children to take the whale or die trying.*

* If the events of **L3: Sea's End** have already played out, then this rumour is especially troubling.

T5. Heath House — The Ridge

This is a sagging, but opulent, townhouse that overlooks the Angel Tower.

Headquarters of the **Heath Family**, Heath House is a decaying place that has too much salt soaked into its fragile bones. The weathered, opulent, townhouse is an angel-festooned place that has obviously seen better days. Licking their wounds from their latest defeat by the Darnells, and mourning the recent loss of Great Father Uriah Heath, the family are determined to regain the Buttress and its wealth. The new leader, the dangerously unstable **Luther Heath** (NE male blighted human **deathnecromantic mage**†) is busy learning what he can about pacts with lower planar creatures and is presently studying the dangerous art of n'gathau† yearnings. He is dangerously close to securing the services of a lesser flesh golem from the n'gathau but is completely unaware of the possible consequences of such an attempt. Luther's presence has cast a sickening pall over the house and those who live there. The family occupy various wings of the manor and are openly taunted by any Darnells they meet. A slender peace has now taken hold, but the merest spark is likely to ignite the feud once more.

Blight Gang: Heath Family

Location: Town Bridge
Leader: Luther Heath (NE male blighted human **deathnecromantic mage**†)

Motivations: Greed, control of The Unsea Whaling Company, presently distracted by a change in leadership and a need to regroup
Friends: None
Enemies: Darnell Family, Town Bridge Mob
Tactics: Threats of violence and blackmail. The Heaths rely upon the fierce reputation of their brutal former leader Uriah to do their work for them; Uriah had a dreadful reputation for violence and his name still causes fear among locals, who are convinced he is either not dead or will return as undead or alchymic-undying soon.
Morale: Low; those who stand up to the Heaths tend to be courted by them shortly after. If they meet resistance they back off, claiming it was all a mistake and wanting to be allies.

T6. The Roost — The Ridge

A group of rickety tenements sag immediately below the treadmill ferry with dangerous plank bridges reaching out to it. Tortuous paths and ladders descend from these crowded perches, leading to slums where washing constantly hangs to dry in the moist city air, and where sullen children stare miserably.

Sebastian Grisette (LE male human **masterveteran thief**†) runs a protection racket here with members of the Darnell family. He has the locals petrified of him and his small group of thugs. Several hundred locals are cramped into the rooftop garrets, slums, and slung wooden buildings, often with several families sharing a room. Although not one of the worst slums, the Roost has a nasty reputation for disease and death.

The Great Treadmill Ferry (**T12**) is partly owned and run by Grisette, who has taken the opportunity of taking over the buildings immediately below and beside it, and converting them into more profitable uses. The ferry does not stop on its journey from bank to bank, and passengers have to take a risky leap off onto the rickety walkways that have been lashed at its side.

T7. The Gully — The Underway

The largest central arch of the bridge is marked by a small chapel which hangs below the parapet and is reached by a perilous-looking stair that enters the building through the roof.

A successful DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check is required to navigate the ladder-like stair to this chapel. The chapel is curious not only in that it hangs from the lower part of the bridge arch and is reached by an exposed, warped wooden stair, but that on display within are countless things found or gathered at sea, including the entire mandible of a small wallow-whale, a brine-preserved giant squid beak, and a sahuagin foetus in a jar by the altar.

The local fishermen come here to pray every week to Brine. The current vicar, **Father Salt** (N male **priest** of Brine) officiates his flock's marriages, blesses their births, and ensures their remains are burned at the many ghats that mark the Great Lyme River (if the Death Duty can be paid). Salt is a kind-but-weary man, tired of seeing death and pain in the city, and in the Shingles in particular. He is regularly found in the Shingles but also gives private services at Tran's Pinnacle (**T3**). Presently, Salt is oblivious to the presence of a devil at that property, but if he were to discover it, he would act to take the children away from harm.

T8. Fish Mart and Shingles — The Underway

The main buildings are made up of suffocating timber and cloth and flotsam that have been made into dwellings. In the middle, a vast flock of mangy gulls squabbles, soars, and bickers about a shanty market of perpetually moored ships.

The notorious shanty under the bridges and piers, the Shingles is a bad place to be during the day, let alone after dark. It seethes into every corner of Town Bridge; its borders impossible to discern or contain, an infestation of swelling populace.

The shanty is ruled by boater river gypsies, who pay homage to their leader **Captain Archibald Floundersbrook** (LN male halfling **veteran**). The boaters have incorporated many races into their numbers, and although halflings and humans make up the vast majority of locals, there are street dwarves, briny, and even elves and half-elves among the motley group. The locals all speak River Cant and dislike outsiders intensely. They have their own laws and rules, which are very easily transgressed by visitors who are fined accordingly. Life here is tough, and the locals match it. The vast majority of locals are fishermen, who ply their trade on the bay beyond the estuary of the Lyme. Hundreds of boats are anchored around the pilings of the bridge on some days and after a catch, the Fish Mart displays a truly wondrous variety of species and sizes.

A Between *gateway* links a narrow flooded tunnel at the base of one of the bridge's footings to the Soldier's Stack (**S13**) in Scrimshaw. It is used by skum† cultists who worship the Madness of the MirrorStorm (see **Part 3** below for more information about this cult).

T9. Fort Bridge — The Spine

A large fortified tower and attached blockhouse stands midway across the bridge here. The fort hovers over the bridge, but does not connect with the street. It is supported on four great stone arches. It bristles with battlements and siege engines, and the fumes of boiling oil rise constantly from cauldrons on its parapet.

The building is fearsomely fortified, well-patrolled, and horribly trapped. It is linked to the bridge beneath the belly of the fort by spiral stairs that wind down through two of the arch footings. The fort is essentially a secondary line of defence between the eastern portion of the city and aristocracy of the west, and serves as a barracks for the Royal Army as well as a defensive strongpoint. Some **400 soldiers** (N male human **guard**) with a cadre of **40 sergeants** (N male human **veteran**) and **6 captains** (N male human **captain**) are billeted here under the command of **Brigadier Agaric** (LE male human **knight of renown**†**assassin mage**). A warship, the *Royal Courage*, is often moored directly below the fort, which has direct access to a dozen moorings on the river below, by means of corridors that pass through the structure of the bridge itself and down one of its pilings below.

Brigadier Agaric answers directly to **General Haft**, the Lord Commander of the Royal Army and Navy who in turn reports to **Duke Malice**† and (unofficially) his Resplendent **Grand Justice Braken**†. The brigadier runs a tight, well-disciplined regiment, and insists his soldiers regularly drill, can fight upon land or sea, and have at least some experience on the Unsea. He is presently in discussions for these troops to have greater access to the Scrimshaw *gateways* with **Kinswoman Ivy Darnell** (**T2**), whom he finds flighty and dislikes. His patience is wearing thin already, and he is considering how much better things were when the Heaths ran the bridge link to Scrimshaw. Although he considers himself above such things, he has already had private discussions with his "dear friend" **Justice Cornlord**† (**T1**) about using mercenary groups to stir up matters on the bridge.

T10. The Old Souk — The Spine

The narrow bridge streets are riddled with market stalls which infest the structure and rise into the buildings.

There is a story that says that by night, these streets are walked by vampires. It's just a story… possibly.

—Saying of the Old Souk

The Old Souk is where the curious come to gather and purchase items given up — or occasionally vomited up — by the sea. Anything maritime is likely to be found herein, from the nameplates of sunken ships, to treasure maps, to living aquatic specimens. About 200 traders have tiny premises or stalls, or sometimes even just open windows through which they sell their wares. There are as many touts, urgers, and costermongers here as there are customers. A host of children serve as guides, offering to show visitors around or lead them through the nightmare of twisting alleys, wynds, cuts, and ginnels to just the place they seek for just a few "tanners," but they are more than just a harmless group of guides.

Some of these children are normal (but nasty) waifs, orphans, and escapees from workhouses, but several are wererats. Their ruler, the **Blessed One** (NE male **vampirebandit captain**), is a vampire trapped in a child's body, perpetually ensnared at the end of his childhood by undeath. The Blessed One is a member of the Fetch and tells his child recruits that Beltane has walked the alleys of the Old Souk and occasionally comes here when he has need of children. The Blessed One himself has stalked the streets of Town Bridge for centuries and it was he that was responsible for the last Great Fire to sweep Town Bridge 2 1/2 centuries ago (see Sidebox). That fire caused terrible burns on the Blessed One when he was still living that healed into a terrible disfigurement with his resurrection as a vampire. The Blessed One now wears a mask to hide his awfulness lest he scare his young charges and broods upon his inability to reach maturity. Occasionally he unleashes his pets upon the city at night, usually stircatrices†, bat swarms, festering Lyme rats†, or enraged Blight monkeys† sent to do his awful bidding.

T11. Royal East Bridge (Gargoyle) Gate and Tower — The Spine

The eastern end of the bridge oozes into the crooked tenements and structures of the Jumble. Banners and flags wave from this structure, which is covered in leering gargoyles.

It is possible to leave the bridge without realising it, so great is the confinement, and so indistinct are the streets of one district from the next. There is a story that if the current incarnation of the bridge sinks, the gargoyles on this gate will pick it up and take it to Hell.

The East Bridge is where tithes are collected by those wishing to pass west, thus ensuring that at least some tax is collected from the ignorant peasants east of the river. An extremely nasty and brutal arm of the City Watch operate here, and in general, the only people who get this job are those who have serious anger problems. **Watch Commander Hobb** (N male human **veteran**) runs the East Gate, but is long past caring about anything other than good rum and a lovely woman.

Fortunately, the constables are not very bright, and it is possible to pass through the gates without paying any taxes by making a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Deception) or Dexterity (Stealth), check. Those who fail the check; however, are vigorously examined. Taxes are 5% value of any goods taken over from the west, and the guards lack of appraisal skill is legendary (they are likely to wildly underestimate or overestimate any goods and determine a ridiculously inaccurate tax accordingly). Disputing this tax is only allowed if the constable is encouraged to do so by a bribe (usually 5 gp). The constables are also none too perceptive — Wisdom ([Perception)] +1), so some goods can be hidden with an opposed Sleight of Hand check and smuggled past. To further complicate matters, there are plenty of local people who offer their services to hide goods or smuggle characters past the guards — for a small consideration (usually 5 gp). How successful this service is, depends on what is being smuggled.

The Great Fires of Town Bridge

A massive contiguous structure made primarily of wood, Town Bridge has been subjected to several fires over the centuries, six of them catastrophic enough to virtually destroy the entire district. Called Great Fires, these calamities have, on more than one occasion, burned the entire bridge down to its stone footings. However, the importance of the bridge to the well-being of the city, as well as the significant tax incentives, has ensured that the bridge has been rebuilt each time, eventually larger and more precarious than before.

The dates and causes of the fires have varied over the centuries, with the earliest recorded instance occurring as far back as –1322 R.C., and several of the later instances having inexact dates due to loss of early city records. The most recent instance, the Sixth Great Fire of Town Bridge, occurred in 1509 and charred stumps and the smell of ash are still reported in some parts of the current bridge. Scholars of the arcane and esoteric have speculated that the calamity, and rumours of the discovery of ragefire — a malevolent living flame — are curiously similar in date, and, thus, appoint the Great Fire as the first encounter between men and ragefire itself. However, the truth is stranger. For in 1509, paladins of the **Trinity of Life** (see **AQ17** in **Chapter 2**) hoping to discover and destroy Beltane, captured the boy who would become the Blessed One, then only a human but a thrall of one of the Fetch's Deceivers. The vampire-hunting paladins carried a flask of the newly discovered ragefire with them for use against the vampire god-emperor when they found him. Underestimating the homeless waif they had captured, the hunters let down their guard only for a moment, but it was long enough for the child to turn their weapon against them and smash the flask upon the leader of the paladins (already their 187th mushaff*).

The ragefire consumed the screaming paladins and grew larger before feasting upon the rest of the structure and thousands of Town Bridge's residents. The resulting conflagration raged for a week and a day, and near consumed the entire bridge before a section collapsed beneath the ragefire and sent it to its doom in the waters of the Lyme below, and the rest of the blaze finally spent its fuel. Tales among the Fetch, tell that the boy only survived by falling, blazing, into the river below, where he was found by Beltane himself and blessed with the gift of unlife in reward for his loyalty.

* A word meaning "leader" in the Semuric language.

T12. The Bridge Treadmill Ferry — The Ridge

Rising from the west bank, a rickety iron cage is connected to a treadmill pushed by convicts. The cage is attached to iron chains as thick as an arm and rises across the river, passing close to the bridge, and eventually arriving at a large timber pier on the east bank. The treadmill is like some colossal mouse-wheel, hanging above open machinery.

Convicts dread the treadmill shift; it is reserved as a special punishment for criminals at the various institutions across the city. It has been pointed out that a waterwheel or broken creature could do the job better, but the risk of falling into the machinery below the treadmill is enough of a punishment to encourage prisoners to behave better, at least, according to the Royal Family.

The fare is 2 sp, and only foot passengers are allowed. Those attempting to ride from the east are subject to the same rigorous inspections and taxes as those arriving at the East Gate. Sometimes the queue stretches back a hundred yards on this side, so slow is the process. Although it passes very close to several points on Town Bridge, the ferry doesn't actually stop on its journey until it reaches the other side, when the convicts change direction. Passengers risk their lives to leap off at various, often repaired, points and timber platforms. Several people a month die this way. An example of this scenario is covered in ***L3: Sea's End***.

Town Bridge Isles

Six islands are in the general proximity of Town Bridge, and some are connected by their own bridges. These islands are considered part of the bridge, and the people who live there consider themselves locals of the bridge. They, often violently, object to being referred to as anything other than bridge folk.

T13. Brine Bells

This island has a single structure, a large inn, which rests at a strange angle on timbers, some of which have bent alarmingly over recent years. The building is topped with a colossal bell tower and hung with a myriad of pyrebeetle lanterns.

In more than one district of the city, a local bell, in some ways, determines the extent of the area. Many say that to qualify as a true Town Bridger, one must be born within earshot of Brine Bells, the only combined chapel and inn on the river. The inn is vast, a twisting maze of wings and extensions and boathouses lashed to a trio of old riverboats that have been absorbed into the building. Brine Bells is primarily named after the enormous clock tower that rises from its rooftop, this tower is a (literal) skeleton structure around the Brine Bell, a huge bell that chimes the hour with a low, lamenting clang. A trio of (some would say hideous) skeletal mermaids dance on iron hooks from the clock face as the clock strikes.

Always surrounded by a small armada of river boats, sailing ships, and rowboats, the Brine Bells has a single rope bridge that reaches some 150-yards across to Town Bridge. Those who dare the crossing sometimes face walking the central 50-yards in ankle-deep water — neck-deep at anything approaching high tide — and must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross or risk falling into the Lyme. If anyone is foolish enough to walk this bridge when the bore rolls up the river at the changing of the tide, increase the DC to 18.

"Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell (CN male human **captain**) owns and runs the Bells with the help of his vast family of daughters and sons and wives. Only Cappewell knows their true number, but the man has exploited a little known legal loophole that allows reverends serving a community *and* who are at sea to take as many wives as they wish. No one has challenged the fact that the Bells is not on land, and so Horace lives his full — if frantic — life in happy contentment. He also carries out religious services for Brine in the inn chapel every week. Horace also has, it is rumoured, the bushiest moustache in the city, a magnificent adornment to his magnificent frame. Horace always wears, either his admiral's uniform, or his cassock, depending upon the day, and is loved and admired by his vast family. His identical twin brother, **Captain Capper Cappewell** runs the Precarious Tavern in Scrimshaw (**S3**). Horace's distant cousin **Alice Hague** runs the Great Iron Buoy Inn just outside the Capitol (**C14**).

The Bells is a legendary drinking establishment, and is always filled with a vast variety of customers, from smugglers to pirates to naval officers to necromancers eagerly searching for a "no-questions-asked" boat trip. The Family (see **Chapter 4: Festival**) considers it a favourite place for covert meetings, since the place has so many rooms that no one has ever bothered to count them all.

Food, service, and rooms at the Bells is of legendary quality, and many have made a home here, swelling the unofficial Cappewell family further. The close contacts to Scrimshaw mean the menu is often exotic, with poached query (a Between fish delicacy), milk-soaked fried whale blubber, turtle, and other rarities. One of Cappewell's wives **Lill** (CN female human **commoner**) is a renowned brewer, and her Brine Beers are in demand across the city. It's impossible to have a quiet night in the Brine. There are a dozen sprawling chambers, with holes open to the sea below. Games, contests and gambling abound.

The Family in Town Bridge

The Rat Queen's *Troth* ensures that wererats of the Family keep their Festival metropolis a secret. Agents of the Family frequent the Brine Bells as well, their work being covert and generally little more than ensuring that those herein keep to their own business when Family matters are at hand. Such a tactic; however, has its flaws, since warning some people away merely piques their interest. The Family have taken advantage of Cappewell's religious nature to use him as an innocent ally to drive away those who get too nosy. Thus, Cappewell is a tool used by the wererats, and the presence of Family members is something he is proud of, since he regards his neighbours across the waters as friends, unaware of what they truly are. For their part, the wererats find the presence of an innocent ally useful and are frequently found in one corner or another of the inn, listening for useful titbits of information, or on some mission for the Rat Queen.

T14. Workhouse Isle

A dour workhouse sits on a wooden island in the river, its rooftop bristling with chimneys belching out acrid fumes. Occasionally, thin children are seen through the grimy windows.

There is only a single iron walkway to the isle from Town Bridge. It is in bad repair and visitors are deterred by signs saying how dangerous it, and the whirlpools beneath it, are. The workhouse doubles as an orphanage, and is run by the repellent **Mistress Bernice Swarb** (NE female briny† **hierophant**†) and her reedy, nasal assistant **Joff** (NE male briny† **spycout**). The workhouse is primarily a factory making bleach from brine and potash lye, and the children are orphans who are slaves to the owner in all but name. Some 80 children work, eat and live here, as well as being given weekly religious instruction by Swarb.

In truth, the isle is a cover for skum operations within the city, and hidden beneath the artificial isle is the rusting hulk of a riverboat that acts as a way into and out of the Artists Quarter through a series of mostly flooded tunnels. Swarb is a worshipper of the Madness in the MirrorStorm (see **Part 3** below) and uses her location to aid her allies and those of the cult, who intend to drown the city. At any time, there are likely to be skum visitors in the workhouse, kept hidden away in the attics or in moist cellars. The children know about these visitors but keep quiet. They know what happens to those who have loose tongues — they vanish to the Unsea to become brides or slaves for the skum.

T15. Blubber Point

This large artificial isle is crowned by a stone lighthouse.

No bridge connects to this isle. There is a pier with a single rowboat moored to it, providing the occupant's only means of egress. **Keeper Dav** (LN male dwarf **commoner**) mans the lighthouse day after day. He is a solitary character, who keeps the things he sees to himself. The great coal-oil light is lit every night, and burns until dawn. Dav sleeps by day and keeps watch by night. He has an array of spyglasses, and has seen some strange things in the river lately, things he'd be pushed to put a name to. Something bad is coming, he can feel it in his bones.

T16. The Shipyard

A vast timber pier rises to support a damp warehouse clearly used for making ships of great size.

Merchant Engineer Eldon Plimp (N male human **commoner**) owns and runs the Shipyard, which specialises in unusually large craft. Presently, Plimp is working on a Royal barge, and visitors are deterred from the enclosed yard, which houses the slowly growing magnificent vessel. Over forty workers cross the half-dozen rope bridges to the Shipyard and work from dawn till dusk. Plimp doesn't like visitors, and his workers are aware of his mild paranoia and his propensity to sack those who do not pay it proper heed.

T17. Rot Point

Gripping the edges of one of Town Bridge's footings like a child holding onto its mother's apron, this pier shanty island is crammed with makeshift buildings.

Almost a settlement in its own right, Rot Point is a poor shanty island crowded with hundreds of fishermen's hovels. The isle is also home to the Town Bridge Mob, whose leaders skulk on the island stirring up trouble. The present leader, **Merrill Merriweather** (CN male human **bandit captain**) occupies his position because he is the nastiest of the gang, and has the toughest allies within it. The Mob does not care who supports them or why, they simply wish to get a foothold in the Unsea and its profitable whaling trade. Communicating exclusively in Bridge-Cant, Mob members are given instructions by word of mouth, and are presently focusing their efforts on vandalism. They are always on the lookout for new support, and their leader is always eager to play the downtrodden commoner card or even side with the Anarchists … anything so long as it increases his chances of getting a piece of the lucrative Scrimshaw trade.

T18. The Prison Hulk Glorious

Floating in the river, at the farthest point at which a bridge connects to Town Bridge, is a fat derelict ship without sails or masts.

The *Glorious* is one of a few decommissioned ships now permanently at harbour and used to house prisoners. Others float the Great Lyme River as well (**LR4**). **Master Warder Lyme** (LE male human **veteran**) currently runs the brutal regime onboard, and he has a dozen officers (LE male human **guards**) who patrol the ship's upper decks. Below, sealed away by iron bars, is the open interior of the hulk. The hulk is terrible, an open cesspit containing nearly 500 souls, most of whom are nothing worse than petty criminals. Life on the hulk is deadly, and if disease and malnutrition doesn't get the prisoners, the other prisoners will. A regime of caste operates in the hulk, and the present leader is **"Captain" Shame** (NE male human **veteran**) of the notorious Shame Gang, whose rule of pillage and burning lasted nearly 3 years. Shame is deeply demented, a bully and a madman whom all prisoners try to avoid being alone with.

Security at the hulk is lax, primarily because the Master Warder Lyme ensures that a dozen buckets of offal from a nearby butchery are tossed in to chum the waters of the Great Lyme to encourage the presence of huge pale sough-eels and slop-sharks, a dozen of which fight for food each morning. Occasionally, Lyme makes an example of a prisoner by throwing him in along with the offal.

Blight Gang: Town Bridge Mob

Location: Town Bridge
Leader: Merrill Merriweather (CN male human **bandit captain**)
Motivations: Greed, access to The Unsea Whaling Company
Friends: Various boater clans or anyone who seems useful
Enemies: Darnell Family, Heath Family, society as a whole
Tactics: Brute force, fear, threats of violence
Morale: As the weakest gang of TownBridge, they have to fight from the shadows and are at risk in any protracted fight. If 15 of their total 25 class levels are killed, the Mob is effectively disbanded, and they know it.

Part Two: Scrimshaw

Scrimshaw lies in the Unsea at the far end of the Between *gateways* in Town Bridge. The settlement is, to date, the most successful Between colony of Castorhage and the pride of the Royal Unsea Whaling Company. The settlement itself is detailed below, while the Unsea is described in **Part 5** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***. Additional information on the settlement and its whaling is provided in the adventure ***L3: Sea's End***.

Places

Hanging off the edges of Town Bridge is a fixed point in Between, an elemental place known as the Unsea. This is a wild, dangerous ocean crammed with horror, mountainous seas and awakened whirlpools. No one would come here if it wasn't for money, and there is plenty to be made by the whalers, who at times have drifted aimlessly away from Scrimshaw to return a few weeks later laden with a dozen whale carcasses to render and sell.

Business is good, very good.

What Scrimshaw looks like…

A jagged sea stack rising several hundred yards into the sky.

Scrimshaw is barely an island, more a rock with houses lashed on its skin. Clustered upon its surface, like limpets, are hundreds of buildings — variously thrown, tied, nailed and bolted to the precarious cliff faces, gripping for dear life above the jagged rocks and water below. Tunnels weave into the rock, making streets that wind dizzily above the water, and at the summit, a towering crow's nest made of iron, holding aloft a great ball of fire.

The isle stands with a pair of other smaller islands, while lapping at its base are whirlpools, some of which seem to roar at the sky above wanting to be fed.

What Scrimshaw smells like…

Of the sea, but overpoweringly so.

The strange air of the Between seems to hold odours and thoughts, as though it is soaked in them. The stench of whale-blood and suffering and gales is palpable, and the strangely iron stench of storms hangs in the air.

What Scrimshaw feels like…

Remote, isolated.

Despite the (presumed)as luxury of a safe-haven relatively close by, Scrimshaw is often isolated for weeks by the strange tides here, and there are those who go mad. If there is a sun, it hangs behind perpetual clouds in the sky, no one can remember a bright day.

There is also a subconscious feeling of being unwelcome, of being an intruder, a stranger. This feeling never leaves visitors to the Unsea. The feeling that someone or something is watching is common in Between. Some people are able to put it to the backs of their minds, others become a slave to the feeling, some even go mad, convinced that something is watching or, perhaps, coldly analysing them.

What Scrimshaw sounds like…

Like being caught in an endless maddening storm.

There is no quiet in Scrimshaw, only louder noise to drown out the gales outside. The gales act as an endless reminder that, wherever visitors are or whatever they're doing, the elemental fury is waiting outside to bite. When the tide is high (which it frequently is) great waves lash the stack, occasionally tearing whole buildings off to fall into the boiling waters below, where the whirlpools wait to devour them.

Some say the whirlpools are alive, and occasionally, just occasionally, the Hag — the largest whirlpool — opens her mouth wide enough that the seabed can be seen far, far below.

Seven Words to Describe Scrimshaw

Dizzy whirlpools
Height **Depth** **Falling**
Wind boiling

Parishes and Wards

The Factory

The Factory is at sea level, although the tides are so high that often parts of the Factory sit below the waters. Six slipways drop jaggedly into the seas, each equipped with iron block and tackle to drag whale carcasses into the Factory to be rendered. More than just a single place, the Factory is a series of workhouses that butcher and render the carcasses of whales. The floor of the Factory constantly runs with blood and the castoff entrails of the carcasses. As a result, it is also plagued by vast flocks of mangy gulls so prevalent in the Unsea. The way home — the tunnel to Town Bridge — rests in the northern part of Factory.

The Slops

Above the Factory lie the Slops. They are reached by a series of spiralling brick and stone lined ramps. This is where the whalers live when not at sea, and the other businesses and interests lie. As one rises, the Slops become more sedate, better patrolled and wider. While the lower slops are riddled with secret coves and narrow passages and ginnels, the broader upper streets are wide and lit by pyrebeetle lanterns.

The Limpets

Some 400 buildings cling to the edges of the rock, held aloft on huge beams. These buildings share the noise and clamour of the gulls that swoop and beg throughout the day. The sea crashes onto rocks below, dizzying drops are everywhere, and during storms, whole villages of buildings have been lost to the sea's wrath, a constant reminder that man is an intruder here.

Streets

The Tunnel

Scrimshaw has only one street, but its subsidiary tunnels reach out into every part of the settlement. A spiralling mass of broad ramps, narrow stairs and secret alleyways, the Tunnel gropes into every corner of Scrimshaw.

S1. The Factory

Blood and the stench of death suffuse this series of vaulting tiled and stone chambers. Everywhere glints with the edges of knives and blades, and the whole area stinks of gore.

Open to the sea at six great entrances that descend perilous, often seaweed-slicked, slipways, the Factory is the hub of Scrimshaw. It is where the whalers bring their catches and the carcasses are reduced to commodity. The lower floor is given aside to various warehouses and workhouses where the whales are processed. There are six great chambers (called the Vats) where the carcasses are reduced, the oils collected and the blubber rendered down. Some whale products cause great excitement (and sometimes trouble) among the workers. Whale meat is stripped in the Factory, as well as spermaceti, a waxy substance with dozens of uses in the Blight and which commands a high price. Whalebone and scrimshaw are drawn from the carcasses and put to a wide variety of uses. However, it is the ambergris that commands the most interest for it is worth at least its weight in gold. Occasionally, an even more valuable commodity is found — memory ambergris — the same substance, but which acts as a *Between vessel*, containing the memories of the whale it came from.

There is an all-pervasive stench in the Factory, and an almost oppressive feel of misery. Most people cannot bear to stay here for more than a few days, although some of the hardier (or madder) souls have worked here for many decades. The Factory is run and supervised by the **Lord High Butcher Cornelius Rime** (N male human **veteranassassin**). Rime has an astounding collection of knives and tools for dismembering whales, as well as a nose for ambergris. His workers swear that Rime talks to his knives and sings hymns while hacking blood-drenched whale bodies.

S2. The Spermaceti Souk

A stone-fronted building open onto one of the wider tunnels of Scrimshaw, a sign declares the owner to be one "Lord Krine, The World's Only Spermaceti Merchant".

Immediately above the Factory, and connected to it by a secret spiral stair and chain conveyor lift, are the home and offices of Lord Krine, the spermaceti merchant of Scrimshaw.

Lord Krine (LE male human [disguised **bone devil**]) is a close friend and confidant of Governor Constance (**S7**) and ensures that his sponsor gets her cut of all profits he makes. He is also careful to ensure that his unseen mistress Demoriel's interests in the Unsea are protected as well. He uses a *hat of disguise* to appear as an almost impossibly handsome man. Krine has manoeuvred himself into such a position of power that to all intents and purposes, he is the ruler of Scrimshaw.

Krine has a reputation as something of a sponsor of exploration, and he is often found in the Precarious (**S3**) talking to captains. He is almost always engaged in trying to learn and gather secrets from the sailors, and if something interesting appears, he is in such an excellent political and financial situation that he can act upon it immediately.

Krine has a series of devilish chambers immediately below his offices, and he practices his art of torture herein. Krine is a practitioner of the arts of the n'gathau, and has the ability to keep his subjects alive for months or even years, unmake their bodies into things that can scarcely be looked on or create other vile works. He regards his tortures as art and is something of an art collector. Those who dabble in shocking or incredible art quickly find him friendly — for his own ends, of course.

Scrimshaw
1 Square -100 Yards
S-11 Tompkin's Lamp
S-9 Crow
S-8 The Great Stair
S-7 The Captain's Mansion
S-6 Colonial Club
S-13 The Soldier's Bridge
S-4 Swed's Mongery
S-10 The Hag
S-12 The Soldier
S-16 The Vainglorious
S-5 Scrimshaw Watchhouse
S-3 The The Precarious
S-14 The Castle
S-2 The Spermaceti Souk
S-1 Factory
S-15 The Rotten Bridge

G3. The Precarious

At first, the reason for the tavern's name is not obvious. From the tunnel's entrance, a clumsy and very faded sign shows a building with hands gripping to a rock above the sea. Once beyond the battered green doors of the tavern, the reason become obvious. Beyond is a snug bar, cramped full of people, who lean at an old ship's beam used as a bar and which leans at and angles toward you. Behind the bar, a buxom lass with her red hair tied back, looks up and smiles. She is surrounded by bottles of rum — rum from every possible place by the look of the letters, sigils, and even runes, that cross the labels.

As you adjust to the gloom, you realise that you are swaying slightly, the timbers of the place creak as though at sea. You realise, with some alarm, that the movement of the customers contributes to the swaying. At the far end, the tavern opens onto a narrow balcony above the Unsea, where a couple of drunks lean out over the edge. A twisted spiral stair rises out from the balcony, up over the sea and to the level above, while below, a ladder has been roped to the outside, the drunks swing over the ladder and clumsily clamber down. This tavern appears to be not only a fine drinking establishment, but a potentially dangerous one.

The oldest, noisiest, and most violent tavern in a rowdy place, the Precarious is well named — a huge building on six floors hangs over the sea. The Precarious is the best inn in Scrimshaw, and clings to the tidal stack itself. **Captain Capper Cappewell** (CN male human **veteran**), a huge man with an even more huge handlebar moustache, runs the place, along with the help of a dozen serving girls (his 'troopers'). For a big chap, Cappewell has a squeaky voice, and occasionally resorts to the use of a megaphone to get his message across. He also has a pair of pit-mastiffs* (Petal and Daisy) who he brings out if a fight occurs. These short-sighted beasts often get confused in such fight and end up biting anyone nearby.

The owner is close friends with the governor, although she would never be caught dead in the rowdy place herself. Cappewell dresses in bright garb and often breaks into melodious songs (always about sailors and fishermen drowning). His tavern boasts the custom of three of the best captains in the sea — Captain Flashwell, Lord Brine, and the Scourge of the Unsea — Queen Beatrice (see sidebox). A curious array of other locals cram the bar at all hours. Cappewell is also the identical twin brother of **"Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell** (**T13**), anyone bringing news of his beloved brother or his family are sure for his gratitude and a great stay.

The Precarious provides clean rooms for 6 gp per night, including a breakfast of fish, fried bread and whalemeat literally swimming in fat. The balcony rooms (which require successful DC 8 Strength ([Athletics)] checks to reach without ladders) are the cheapest rooms, while those with no risk of death to access and with extra touches such as hot water and candles are 6 gp per night. Ladders can be rented at 2 sp per day. These rooms frequently get booked up.

The tavern rum selection is legendary among sailors, and anyone bringing an unheard-of brew to the tavern will gain a lifetime +2 circumstance on Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Intimidate) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks made in the tavern. Godkin's Sin Bleeder, Captain Blunt's Boils, Old Grunty, Pickle's Elixir, The End of All Things Reserve, Captain's Sufferance, Mad to Consume, the Dark Darkness and Todger's Fire are just some of the 929 rums in stock. Food is passable and tends to consist of fish in stew with spicy dumplings.

At night, the Precarious comes to life; all kinds of gambling is found therein, as well as use of a special bear-baiting pit in the tavern's prodigious cellar, which also plays host to duels (without the usual constraints of city and guild requirements**), wrestling, and bareknuckle matches.

Notable Unsea Whalers

Three of the greatest captains ever to grace the sea now ply their trade very profitably in the Unsea. The captains have their own whalers and crew and like to boast of their exploits. There is almost always at least one of the three in or around Scrimshaw and usually found entertaining everyone in the Precarious. When two are present, the rum flows like water and the games and betting reach incredible heights While on the rare occasions all three are here with their crews, the drinking may not stop for a fortnight, and people often have to escape the tavern to survive.

Tales of legend, of tangles with the greatest angler whales and the most petrifying sea creatures, of encounters with storms that can last for a year and a day, and whirlpools the size of cities surround these three characters.

Queen Beatrice

Queen Beatrice (CN female human **pirate captainscout**) and her ship, the *Frightful*, with its crew of 40 hardened whalers, have returned to Scrimshaw with a dozen whales in tow. They have even slain one of the legendary goliath angler whales, Beatrice keeps one of its teeth as her totem Beatrice is, above all, noted for her almost supernatural drinking abilities, which she puts down to being fed rum as a baby after her mother lost her milk. Voluptuous, boastful, and hard, Beatrice is as recognisable for her hoarse voice as for her leather jerkin, two-handed falchion, and her pet dodo **Mister Cry**.

Captain Flashwell

A legend in his own mind (and most other people's), the best kisser, the best swordsman, and the best sea captain in Castorhage is **Captain Horatio Flashwell** (N male human fighter **duellist**†). Flashwell's favourite hobby — talking about Flashwell — is the sole topic of conversation when he's in Scrimshaw, which he is frequently. He has scores of lovers in the settlement and has broken more hearts than there are numbers to count them with. A very fine, almost instinctive whaler, Flashwell cares little for his score or so of crew aboard the tightly ship-skinned† *Hound*.

Lord Brine

Certainly the ugliest, and probably the shrewdest, captain on the Unsea, Lord Brine (N male briny **hierophant**†**druid**) is fascinated and awed by the Unsea. He is probably its greatest living explorer and the kindest of the great captains. Brine's ship, the *Billow* is partially converted to retain live specimens, and Brine has a particular interest in the various angler species that are commonly found in the Unsea. Brine's interest in the Unsea extends into his worship of Brine and his membership of the Gentleman Explorer's Club (**B3**). He regularly takes passengers and explorers into his vessel and often the *Billow* is kitted out for exploration. Easily the richest of the captains, Brine is courted by a surprising array of ladies, and is never without the company of at least three when he's on land. Brine has had his own chambers in Scrimshaw, a fine building in a townhouse style that lies just above the Precarious itself.

G4. Swed's Mongery

This warehouse must surely contain every lost thing in the world. It seems everything is for sale here, from iron bedsteads to stuffed bear hat stands, large ballistae, and a living jaguar.

The affable but very shrewd **Master Swed Coughlin** (LN male swyne† **commoner**) has made a fortune selling objects to sailors and whalers from hard tack and rum to wax clothes, silk rope, and rowing boats. Everything you can think of, and a little extra, is here, in the cramped and seemingly chaotic mongery. Swed employs a trio of young lads who are able to locate, in less than a minute, any object within the vast warehouse. Of course, regrettably, owing to the cost of moving objects, the swyne has no choice but to charge a slight consideration for his trouble in getting objects here, and all objects are twice their normal cost. The swyne rewards his customers; however, with a gracious and broad smile as he takes their money.

S5. The Scrimshaw Watchhouse

A fortified square lurks at the crossroads of four broad corridors. Portcullises are drawn above the entrances to these streets, while iron gated entrances stand at each corner.

Opinion is divided among the City Watch and Royal Army as to whether a tour of duty of Scrimshaw is a cushy number, or a numbing madness that scars one for life. At any given time, there are 40 constables (N male human **guard**) assigned to the Scrimshaw Watch, under the keenly disciplinarian eye of the **Unsea Commander Sir Eddard Brane** (LN male human **pirate captain**†**veteran scout**), who takes on the air of a colonial to ensure that law and order is maintained in this desperate corner of the Empire of Castorhage. Brane, to his credit, runs a tight ship, even though he is more often found in the Colonial Club (**S6**) than on duty. He is more inclined to lock up itinerant captains and smugglers and ask questions later, and his staff charge a duty of 100 gp to dock at Scrimshaw. This excise is levied by Brane's right hand man, the toadying **Obrin Clay** (LE male polymorphed **bearded devil**). Clay has been polymorphed by Demoriel† into the form of a bookish, slight man with receding hair despite his young age, though he has the ability to suppress its effects for 10 minutes each day. Clay serves **Lord Krine** (**S2**) and the pair operate a covert system to report back to their mistress Demoriel. Clay has a loathsome habit of soul-collecting, and makes frequent bargains with greater devils in exchange for souls. The bearded devil has a secret chamber within the Watchhouse where he keeps his collection of souls and enjoys punishing them.

For his part, Brane has no idea about his assistant's devilish disguise, he is simply interest in the man's ability to root out smuggled goods and levy a tax upon them of 50% of their value — Clay's own estimation of value — whales included.

S6. The Unsea Colonial Club

A grand entrance from the Tunnel is arched with decorated scrimshaw, a guard is on watch outside what is clearly some sort of club.

The exclusive Unsea Colonial Club is for high caste locals, visitors, and those who bring trade to the town. Snobbish, insular, and false, the club is actually little more than a place to get drunk for the flotsam that has washed up on Scrimshaw.

Membership of the club is allegedly exclusive, but the owner, **Sir Jacob Ragg** (LN male human **noble**) is in truth, desperate for members. He is painfully aware that the Precarious (**S3**) draws the big crowds and famous back in the city. Gothry loves to sail the Unsea, hunting. He has gathered as many tales of creatures as he can and is always trying to get others to join his mad hunts.

Interesting Residents

Several fishermen, merchants and other characters have no fixed abode in Scrimshaw but operate here often all year round. These characters are often found in the Colonial Club (**S6**) or the Precarious (**S3**) and often take rooms there, or use lodgings across Scrimshaw. Use these NPCs as background colour, useful contacts or integral parts of adventures.

Glorithia Shortstone, Scrimshaw Merchant

Glorithia Shortstone (NG female gnome **minstrel**) works between here and the Town Bridge under the permission of the Darnells. She has her own narrowboat in the Factory and makes a reasonable living. She does not; however, like what is going on in Scrimshaw. She knows all about the Governor and her little plots, and she has her suspicions about Krine. The stuttering Glorithia dresses in sumptuous furs and walks with the aid of an elaborate scrimshaw cane.

Thanis, Twisted Artist

Thanis (CN male primitive† **thug**) is gifted and wild. He is often seen rowing his small dinghy around the stacks and out to the Unsea. People think he's mad, but one day, he glimpsed the **Fthahr** opening (**S14**) and saw through its whirling chaos, the Cloven Sea. He greatly wishes to see it, and drown his senses in that mad place. Often he can be seen around the Castle, and soon, his prying is going to bring him to the attention of someone, or something, that wishes to be rid of him.

Gothry, Fisherman and Hunter

Gothry Halfbeard (CN hill dwarf **berserker**) is a foolhardy sailor who often takes his small sloop out alone onto the Unsea. He knows that one day he will meet — and kill — a creature that will make him

Athen, Zealous Missionary

Athen (N male human **acolyte**†) is determined to bring religion to Scrimshaw, although the religion he preaches is his own quack belief that the apocalypse is coming and that the world is about to drown. He has seen it in his dreams — a great wave is coming, a wave that will drown all things of the land and bring a new age to those of the sea.

Bodrum Fathom, Ship-For-Hire

Bodrum Fathom (N male human **pirate captainscout**) is a whaler at heart, but one that knows how to make money. He hires his vessel, the *Intrepid*, and its (very shifty looking) crew out by the day for hunters and those who wish to view the Unsea. His prices are not cheap (200 gp per day!) but he's likely to be the only captain willing to hire his vessel out here.

Lythr, Trapped Ingénue

Lythr Abrosei (CN female human **noble**) plays the outcast noble. She is often found in the Colonial Club telling her sob story, how her noble husband brought her here to make a fortune, didn't, and left her here to rot while he headed back to the city. Lythr has a young daughter and wishes to get both of them back to the city to make a fortune and be happy — with the right man this time. Unfortunately, despite her alabaster skin and beauty, Lythr is a selfish, scheming woman who is driven purely by greed — a fact that drove away her husband who attempted to take his daughter as well but was thwarted in his plan by Lythr herself. She is likely to seek out any rich, handsome male who arrives at Scrimshaw and try to fasten herself to him.



big names, and from time to time comes up with crackpot schemes to draw customers in. Sponsored crab fights, wooden horse racing, and various gambling ideas have come and gone and the club still slowly crumbles, its cracks hidden by cheap ornaments and screens.

Membership is by invitation only, but there are any number of drunken sots who would, for a night's drink, sponsor a total stranger. A successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check locates the sot, and 50 gp should be enough to secure patronage which allows members access into the club, for what it's worth. The club does draw in a few useful local contacts and is a good place to hear the odd titbit of information, such as what's needed in trade, or gossip from the Blight.

S7. The Captain's Mansion

A mansion grips the outer walls of the stack in which Scrimshaw has grown. A pair of large hideous-looking carven mermaids stare outwards, while directly below them, a whirlpool gulps at the cliff's base as if trying to devour it. A cavern has been scratched from the rock between the mermaid images and an elaborate wall of pillars surround a thick iron door. The lintel of this door bears a carving of a very repulsive three-eyed mermaid eating a whale.

Lady Constance Thorn, Governor of Scrimshaw (N female human **noble**) dwells in her gaudy mansion, testament to her curiously garish tastes. Gilt and plaster faces and statues abound, draped in silk and accompanied by the constant gurgle of running fountains. Thorn is an iron woman, with a heart of stone. She suffers no fools and runs things by the book — when it suits her. Her assistant, **Grimbald Slubb** (NE male **dark creeper**[†]**veteran thief**), keeps out of the limelight, operating things that require a covert touch. Thorn's Royal relatives care nothing for her, they are simply glad to have her out of the way after her wicked tongue almost caused a number of significant Royal scandals in the Capitol. Thorn is not stupid, however, she knows who she can push and who she cannot, and the "special taxes" she levies are backed by the threat of exile from Scrimshaw, which is legally hers to grant. Her occasional lover, the **Lord Krine** (**S2**) fascinates her; he is so coldly cruel, and she is slowly being drawn into the devil's world through her own lust for domination and masochism.

Thorn has an army of thugs at her disposal, all show a surprising loyalty to their mistress; they know where their bread's buttered and that they are onto a good thing here. Everyone in the Captain's Mansion is rich, making them a target for the Guild, who are presently watching the Governor with great interest. Unbeknownst to Thorn, one of her thugs, the almost invisibly average **Meridha** (N female human **veteranburglar**[†] **thief**) is secretly reporting back to her masters in the city, awaiting a chance to strike. One option they are considering is involving a group of adventurers in breaking the extortion ring and bringing the governor to justice. Of course, such a worthy plan is merely a foretaste of a large group of thieves backing up such action by either taking over the island and its links to Town Bridge, or simply robbing Thorn for every tanner she has.

Tastelessly luxurious, the mansion is a combination of too much money and too little taste. Even its greatest secret, the *Mermaid's Prospect* — a scrying artefact similar to a *crystal ball* that allows the owner to see through the eyes of every mermaid statue in Scrimshaw — has been lost in the rambling mansion. The dozen or so balconies that overlook the sea and the wide mouth of the Hag (**S10**) below, are now crumbling. Unused and neglected, they occasionally crumble into the sea.

S8. The Great Stair

The heart of Scrimshaw is pierced by a huge winding spiral stone stair. At every turn, a repulsive mermaid statue watches those who walk the stair.

The Great Stair winds from the Factory (**S1**) and rises to the Crow's Nest (**S9**) and eventually, some six hundred yards above the sea, to Tompkin's Lamp (**S10**). At one time, the governor accessed the mermaid statues as *arcane eyes*, using an artifact in the Captain's Mansion known as the *Mermaid's Prospect*, an item that has since been lost and now languishes in the back of an old cupboard forgotten years ago. The *Mermaid's Prospect* is a set of lenses that allow those wearing them to see through the eyes of any of the mermaid statues in Scrimshaw, including those outside the Mansion and those watching the outer Unsea from the Crow's Nest (**S9**).

S9. The Crow's Nest

The outer precipice of Scrimshaw is bound by a broad, unfenced balcony that hangs more than five hundred yards above the sea. This balcony bristles with siege weapons.

Reserved for attack by Between creatures, a dozen great ballistas (see sidebox), a trio of heavy catapults, a large store of ammunition, and three score masterwork heavy crossbows with ten thousand bolts are stored here (the old governor was paranoid about monsters). Just below the level of the balcony is a small garrison house that quarters **26 soldiers** (N male or female human **guards**) of the Royal Army. These men and women answer directly to the governor. At all times, a half dozen soldiers are on duty up here. It's a miserable watch, and one that is frequently skipped by skiving soldiers who prefer to play cards on the Great Stair.

Large object
Armor Class: 20
Hit Points: 100
Damage Immunities: poison, psychic
Bolt. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 240/960 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (6d10) piercing damage.

S10. The Hag

A huge whirlpool licks at the rocks of Scrimshaw, as though tasting them prior to devouring the place.

The Hag is a vast whirlpool, and approaching ships give it a wide berth. At times the hag — which can stretch to a hundred yards across on fierce days — moves from its fixed locale and causes havoc, and occasionally, just occasionally, it opens up to the sea floor below, offering glimpses of things better unseen.

S11. Tompkin's Lamp

The Great Stair eventually ends at a frighteningly exposed point on the cliffs high above the sea. Here, the land drops into nothing for a third of a mile. Above is one last structure, an iron tower 60 feet high which holds a blast furnace roar of fire at its top.

The exposure of Tompkin's Lamp is terrifying; the wind up here seems to drag at those who linger here too long. The lamp is watched by a keeper **Janus Hobb** (N male human **commoner**). Hobb has a small hermit's cave carved from the cliff and reached by a precarious narrow path which descends the cliff top for twenty feet or so to his surprisingly comfortable and warm home. The path has a fixed rope, but still requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to navigate. The fall is 1,822 feet.

Hobb doesn't like visitors. He is fixated by the light, which is a bound elder ragefire elemental. The ragefire is bound to the lamp but whispers to the keeper, trying to persuade him to unlock the bonding magic that holds it to the lamp so it can feed and pay back those it has protected for its long and thankless vigil.

S12. The Soldier

Two sea stacks stand in the Unsea next to Scrimshaw. This one is like a knife of rock almost three hundred yards high.

The Soldier, the first sea stack, is used as an outpost for a great ballista (see Sidebox above) but is only usually manned during times of alert. The Soldier rises abruptly from the sea, and unbeknownst to anyone on Scrimshaw, contains a subterranean temple of the Madness of the MirrorStorm (see **Part 3** below). Below the Unsea, skum† are watching the comings and goings of men, occasionally taking the odd ship, and slipping into the Great Lyme River through an aquatic tunnel from the stack to the footings of Town Bridge at the Shingles (**T8**). The skum are also aware of the nearby **Fthahr** (**S14**), a *gateway* to the realm of the Madness of the Mirrorstorm, a location known as the **Cloven Sea** (see **Part 2** below).

S13. The Soldier's Bridge

A rope bridge spans the terrible yawning gap between Scrimshaw and the top of the distant sea stack. It doesn't so much sway in the wind, as dance.

The rope bridge extends from a balcony in Scrimshaw just off the Great Stair. The journey is not one for the faint-hearted, and requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to achieve without falling from the swaying structure.

S14. The Castle

This sea is slightly smaller than the other, rising a mere two-hundred and fifty yards above the pounding surf.

A stair rises from the now-abandoned Rotten Bridge (**S15**) to the lowest part of this stack. There a frightful stepladder has been carved from sea level to the summit of the sea stack, a point known as Fool's Rock. This is a protrusion of stone that exists at the apex of the great stone pillar and provides a phenomenal view of the see below. Occasionally, malcontents and criminals sent across the Rotten Bridge, and told to run up the Fool's Rock, stand there with one leg in the air for a specified length of time and then return. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check is required to accomplish this feat, as well as having to use the Rotten Bridge (which is detailed below).

What no one has yet to notice from Fool's Point (primarily because they have to look straight down to see it and be in exactly the right place at the right time) is that immediately below, a whirlpool occasionally forms. This whirlpool — known to the skum as the **Fthahr** (Aboleth for "mouth") — is a tortuously restrictive Between *gateway* that opens up on rare dates, allowing access from here to a faraway point in the Unsea known as the Cloven Sea where the Madness of the Mirrorstorm once ruled. Anyone braving the whirlpool to reach the gateway is taken to the distant skum city of **Thry'ss** at the edge of the Cloven Sea.

S15. The Rotten Bridge

A low bridge of great timber beams and iron rots in the brine here, often totally submerged by the unpredictably high tides. It looks far from safe and is missing several sections, leaving jutting, narrow, rusting iron bars grasping across the boiling sea.

It is indeed far from safe, and even when exposed, crossing the bridge requires two successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks and a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checkDC 15. The bridge leads to the base of the Castle (**S14**).

S16. The Vainglorious Lighthouse Ship

Bouncing in the ocean at the edge of the stacks, is a lighthouse ship crowned with a great ball of fire.

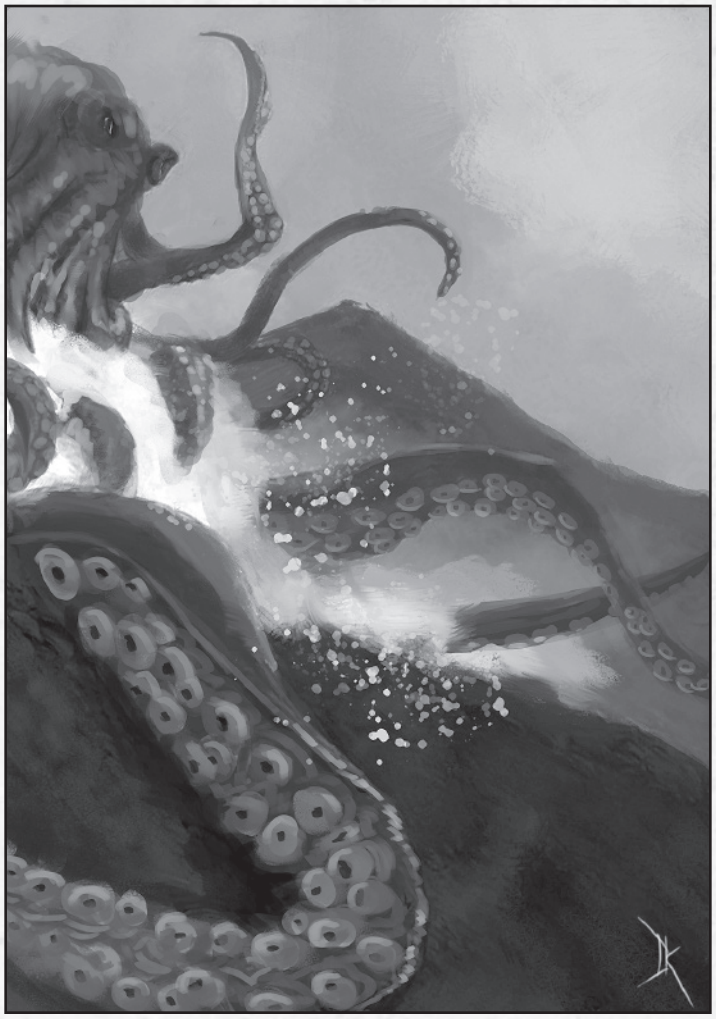
The lightship *Vainglorious* has a tiny crew of 6 briny. **Captain Uthrush Quarb** (CE female briny† **cultist leaderveteran scout**) is a cultist of the Madness of the MirrorStorm, and one day intends to sink the ship and drown the light, which is provided by a Small ragefire elemental bound to an iron mast that rises 90 feet above the ship's deck. The ship provides a usefully inaccessible base for the cult.

** See **The Cyclopædia Infestarum: Part 6**

Part Three: Running Town Bridge and Scrimshaw

The Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm

The **Madness of the MirrorStorm** (NE female unique **Between kraken†archmage**) is one of the Blight's living "gods." Unlike a true deity, the kraken does not grant spells to its followers, but guides them in her plotting, and does not dissuade them from worshiping her as a divine entity. The Madness intends to drown the city-state of Castorhage and the lands of men with a great tidal wave sent from the Cloven Sea, a part of the Unsea that has mysteriously parted due to some combination of the interference in Between by men of Castorhage, aboleths of Carrion, the Madness's own tamperings and, possibly, other as-yet unknown forces. The Madness was inadvertently propelled through a one-way *gateway* into the Fetid Sea when its own tinkering with the powerful forces affecting the Cloven Sea unintentionally interacted with separate works of the Illuminati. It is now effectively trapped in the mundane world of Castorhage. The kraken believes it has no option but to achieve its goal of total inundation of the surface lands or risk eventual discovery and possible (and unthinkable) death. To this end she has built her cult, seduced the followers of Brine, and plumbed the depths of the Fetid Sea and contiguous Crescent Sea in search of allies and power.



The Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm

Location: Fetid Sea (no one specific site)
Leader: Madness of the MirrorStorm (NE female unique **Between kraken†archmage**)
Motivations: Destruction of the land dwellers of Castorhage
Friends: None
Enemies: Church of Brine, City-State of Castorhage, The Illuminati, The Devil
Tactics: Recruitment through blackmail and kidnapping, spying, murder
Morale: Fearless; cult members fear the displeasure of their goddess more than they fear death or the pain of interrogation, and many will make suicidal attacks

Cult General Knowledge

Those in and around the city that know the most about the Madness are the skum†. Those that have been questioned don't know much other than that a living god has arrived and that it is a kraken of such size and dreadful aspect that madness comes to those who glimpse it. Where the cult and its cultists are located remains a mystery. When asked where the Madness is, they say only, "the sea." When asked where the cult can be found, they say only, "here." News of the cult has not spread much yet, but it is beginning to creep through those who live and work on or near the water, and more than one fisherman or dockhand says a short prayer to Brine or the Holy Mother when looking out to sea.

Cult Personnel

In the depths of the Fetid Sea, the Madness holds sway over many sahuagin and other deep-water creatures. On or near shore, her followers are generally skum and disaffected briny. The cult uses briny and even some human operatives, though more commonly, these folk are coerced by having their family taken by the skum† and held as hostage to ensure cooperation. Some of the land-dwelling folk have proven to be susceptible to promises of power or wealth, or, are simply disillusioned with the affairs of the world. These cultists are all terrified of other agents of their goddess, whom they are convinced sees all, and knows all. Many cultists will actually take their own lives rather than have what they know extracted from them by torture or magical coercion. The tentacles of the kraken have a long reach, and within the cult, the dogma is that she will be waiting for them in the afterlife to punish them for any betrayal in life.

Cult Trappings

The cult uses the symbol of a vaguely feminine human/cephalopodic face with tentacles writhing below. The skum† and sahuagin cultists bear it on their person either as a tattoo or scar, while covert briny and human agents may simply keep a small driftwood token with the image crudely incised into it. Worship of their goddess involves prayer to the sea for guidance and frequent ritual sacrifice of land-dwellers by drowning. Aquatic creatures that are sacrificed are usually dragged across jagged coral beds until half dead and then left in eel- or shark-infested waters, or tied down in sea beds frequented by voracious crab swarms so that the billows of their own blood upon the currents will bring about their slow and painful demise as they are eaten alive.

Enemies

Church of Brine

Some suspect that the sudden increase in skum† and sea devil activity in and around the docks and the Lyme is not coincidence. The followers

of Brine, in particular, have begun to take note and capture and question them when possible. They already have a name for the living god and may seek the aid of similarly driven individuals or those more capable of dealing with an organised threat of this magnitude to assist them. Some church leaders are already offering a bounty for skum taken alive, or briny and human agents within the city that are exposed.

The Illuminati

Although blissfully unaware of the fact, the Illuminati's mad rush to colonise and conquer and, most importantly, exploit the Between is ripping holes in the reality between the two places. Fate has already decreed one such event may bring a new terrible dawn to the city as described in ***The Levee Adventure Path***. The drawing of the Madness of the MirrorStorm from Between to the Fetid Sea was entirely accidental, and was virtually unnoticed, when a cargo of Between *mirror-portals*† sank in the Bay of Lyme just off the coast of the city during a storm. This catastrophic release of magical energy just as the kraken was conducting her own portal magic experiments at the Cloven Sea resulted in her being forcefully drawn, shredded piece by shredded piece, through a jagged cumulative *gateway*. The experience should have killed the creature, but her own considerable power and Between-spawned magical aptitude allowed her to survive and retreat into the depths of the nearby sea even as the last of the mirror fragments settled into the silty sea bed and closed the fragile *gateway*. Only the kraken's serendipitous grabbing of a few struggling sailors from the sinking ship as she fled, allowed her to closely question them before devouring them body and soul, and led her to understand something of the nature and potential the Castorhage represents.

The Devil

The Madness of the MirrorStorm fears the being that calls itself the Devil and cavorts throughout Castorhage among its witches and devil-worshippers. The kraken is unsure if the Devil is actually an aspect of Lucifer or some other arch-devil who she has learned of through the capture of some witches of the Great Coven by its cultists, but she has learned the hard way to give them and it, wide berth, after a disastrous encounter with an unknown creature called by powerful diabolists nearly resulted in her death. The presence of the Devil and devil-worshippers in general are no small part of the reason the Madness seeks to wipe Castorhage away with a cleansing tide of destruction.

Using the Cult

The cult could be a simple part of an adventure, or maybe a curious group encountered from time to time in one campaign only to come front and centre in the next. You may also decide to simply have the cult flowing in the shadow of events, to use as and if you feel the need for a more nautical campaign. An outline of a sample campaign built around conflict with the Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm is included below.

The Shadow on the Shore

The **Between kraken** the Madness of the MirrorStorm is an unwilling prisoner of the mundane world; drawn from its own realm into the lands of men. The strange tides that followed her have yet to be noticed by men, but already strange things are being found in fishermen's nets. The Madness quickly realised that she lacked the means to return, so she began to plan and plot around her new circumstances. She sought out a male kraken to breed with, tearing him to pieces when she was done with him. Starting a brood within her, she sought a deep dark place to hide. Her plan is to sow the seeds of her godliness into this new mundane world, her motherly instincts are strong. If she succeeds, her numerous offspring would plague the seas around Castorhage and could become its ruin.

The Madness could not remain in the sea for long without attention; however, and soon a local tribe of skum† discovered the beast, instantly realising that it was a living goddess that had come to give them the world. The skum had fate on their side when they found the Madness. She was heavy with young and starving, and the skum tended her as she swelled with her vile offspring, feeding her endless hunger. The tribe formed a cult and began to spread the word; not only among their own kind and the briny, but also among others chosen, or who wish, to serve the new goddess. The careful cultivating of faith in certain key sahuagin chieftains brought a powerful force of the sea devils into her fold.

The skum and sea devils begin harvesting flesh for their goddess to feed her developing young, intelligent flesh that sees its death coming as she slowly feeds on them. Word spreads among some of the more misguided and insular briny and fishermen in Castorhage — and at the Gyre in particular — about a new goddess come from the sea. These briny† are aware that the goddess will be hunted by men, and they summon twisted creatures from deep in the Unsea to help them guard against this moment and to hunt any who would try to thwart their living goddess.

This early part of the campaign introduces the characters to the plot as they try to figure out the disappearances of a strange array of folk from all walks of life, as well as hear about curious catches brought up from the bay and the river by local fishermen. Clues eventually lead to the skum operating under Town Bridge and along the Great Lyme River where the early adventures of the campaign can occur. The characters encounter the briny cultists and aquatic things of madness summoned from Between. The conflicts with these creatures leads the characters farther out to sea where the Madness is now birthing her children. Exploring the manmade isles just beyond the city, the characters come to realise that their foe actually resides somewhere out in the Fetid Sea.

The characters eventually track a major base of activity for the cult to the eerie islands at the heart of the Fetid Sea known as the Floodtides. Here they are assailed by the kraken, weakened from recently birthing her brood of young, and the cultists defending her. The kraken retreats while the cultists delay the characters with suicidal fervour. Fighting through, the characters finally reach the Cleft, a storm-wracked isle amidst terrible tidal whirlpools where the kraken birthed her young.

Here the characters encounter the Madness, fully recovered after having access to her magical resources. The characters must escape the kraken's clutches onto the isle itself where they face the remnant of the cult. Fighting their way through the cult on the isle, the characters learn that the islanders have taken the precious kraken young through a narrow Between *gateway*. The Cleft, it seems, is more than just a name and actually offers a cramped access into the original home of the Madness. She is too vast to enter through the narrow *gateway* herself.

The characters follow the cultists fleeing with the last of the kraken's broodlings into the Cloven Sea of Between, to a skum city known as **Thry'ss** ("Oblivion" in the Aboleth language) teetering on the brink of the vast waterfall at the edge of the impossible Cloven Sea with its great tear of dry land and towering walls of roiling waters somehow kept at bay. Carefully sneaking through the deadly streets of the hostile city, the characters track the location of the kraken's brood to a crooked tidal stack on the outskirts of the city where it dangles over the tear in the Cloven Sea below. Already, some of the broodlings have grown unnaturally large and powerful, augmented by their smaller siblings who form a swarm of the disgusting things. They seek only to feast upon those who dared attack their mother. The characters soon realise they are going to be overrun by the seemingly endless horde of broodlings and must devise a way to undermine the tidal stack and destroy the entire brood in a catastrophic collapse.

With the brood destroyed, surviving characters must either fight their way back through the now-alerted city of skum to reach the Cleft *gateway* or steal a ship and flee into the surrounding Unsea and try their luck at reaching distant Scrimshaw to reach a *gateway* home. And what of the Madness? Her brood destroyed, the immediate danger of her plan is past and with knowledge of her presence in the Fetid Sea spreading she is unlikely to be able to catch the city-state and surrounding areas unawares, but her threat to the entire region still remains.

Town Bridge Random Encounters

Day	Night	Result
01	01–03	Thugs*
02	04–05	Gentlemen*
03–12	06–08	Lowfolk*
13	09–10	Convicts*
14–18	11	Lucy Wax plus 1d3 children (**T3**)

Day	Night	Result
19–21	12	Brigadier Agaric (**T9**)
22–23	13–21	City Watch*
24–25	22	"Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell (**T13**)
—	23	Lill Cappewell (**T13**)
—	24	Merchant Engineer Eldon Sedge (**T16**)
—	25	Town Bridge Mob (**T17**)
26	26	Rag and Bone Man/Lady*
27	27–31	Drunk*
28–29	32–33	Soldiers (3d6) with sergeant (**T9**)
30–33	34–35	Corner-doxy*
—	36	Joff (**T14**)
—	37	Mistress Bernice Swarb (**T14**)
34	38–42	Heath Family (**T5**)
35–39	43	Fishermen*
40–41	44–50	Street food seller*
42	51	Preacher*
43–50	52	Workers*
51	53	District Commander Shank (**T1**)
52–55	54–58	Blight monkeys (2d6+3)
56–62	59–60	Trader*
63	61	Sir Rathven Tran (**T3**)
—	62	Merrill Merriweather (**T17**)
64–65	63–64	Darnells (1d4+1) (**T2**)
66	65	The Curse (**T10**)
67–69	66	Kinswoman Ivy Darnell plus 1d3 guards (rogue 3) (**T2**)
70	67	Lucretia Darnell (**T2**)
71–72	68–71	Father Salt (**T7**)
—	72	Master Warder Lyme (**T18**)
73	73	Captain Archibald Floundersbrook (**T8**)
74–78	74–80	Rogues*
—	81	Luther Heath (**T5**)
—	82	Escaped workhouse child (**T14**)
79–82	83–88	Carriage of whale produce
83–97	89–90	Blockage
98	91–93	Boaters (1d8+3) (**T8**)
99	94	Mangy gulls (2d4)
00	95–96	Sebastian Grisette plus 1d3 thugs (**T6**)
—	97	Captain Hobb (**T11**)
—	98	Lacedons (1d4+1)
—	99	The Blessed One (**T10**)
—	00	Skum

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–45	Human (Castorhager)
46–60	Human (Viroeni)
61–70	Human (other)
71–81	Halfling (boatfolk)
82–88	Gnome
89–93	Briny†
94–96	Dwarf
97–00	Other

Where named characters are encountered, they are encountered alone or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Blockage: A jam of carriages, a fight, a collapsed building or some other event impedes traffic. In general such blockages reduce speed to half for the next 1d3 hours around the area. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check bypasses it.

Boaters: Boaters are 80% likely to be boatfolk halflings and 15% likely to be Viroeni (see **Random Race Table** above).

Carriage of Whale Produce: This contents of this cart will generally be barrels of spermaceti, blubber, oil or scrimshaw. The owner may be a fisherman, a merchant or other (**commoner**).

City Watch: These constables (**guard**) travel in groups of 6. They keep an eye out for scofflaws, but generally leave passers-by alone.

Convicts: A group of 2d4 convicts are chained together and following a Constable of the Watch. They are headed to or from the Treadmill Ferry (**T12**).

Corner-Doxy: These come in all genders, shapes and sizes. Street girls and corner-boys are fairly common (**commoner**).

Drunk: A wino (**commoner**) who is worse for wear, he may become violent (30% chance).

Fishermen: These 1d12 fishermen (**commoner**) may be sailing out to fish or heading back in with the day's catch.

Gentlemen: Genteel citizens (**noble**), they may be worse for wear and/or in the company of 2d3 prostitutes.

Lowfolk: These 2d4 locals (**commoner**) are generally from the Shingles. They are simply going about their business and want to be left alone.

Preacher: The preacher (**commoner**) stands on a wooden crate roaring about the end of the world the passing crowd. He can be of any religion or of no fixed religion at all and simply serving as a doomsayer.

Rag and Bone Man/Lady: This fellow (**commoner**) is usually driving a scruffy cart crammed with bones and rags and any other rubbish he or she has collected.

Rogues: These 1d4+1 cutpurses (**street thief**†) may follow targets to alleys and attack by day and are likely to attack openly by night.

Skum: This creature is traveling alone and seeks to escape any confrontations.

Street Food Sellers: These street vendors (**commoner**) sell pies, fish and fry and other consumables as detailed in **Chapter 1**.

Thugs: By day these 2d3 **thugs** are noisy and objectionable; by night they attack unless their hostile attitude can be improved.

Town Bridge Mob: These 1d6+2 ruffians (**thug**) are members of the Town Bridge Mob on the lookout for anything that could be troublesome to the Darnells.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) usually has a market stall, although some operate from hand trays. They sell a variety of basic goods, from coal to flowers to fish to candles.

Workers: These are 2d12 shift workers (**commoner**) heading to or from the Shipyard (**T16**).

Flotsam and Jetsam of the Unsea

1. A child's doll with the eyes eaten
2. An oar with a curious bite mark in it and a long slender needle tooth sticking from it
3. A withered tentacle of great size
4. A still-sealed ship's barrel containing a small quantity of 200-year-old water
5. A corked bottle with a wedding ring in it; the ring bears the inscription "J.L. love always, Ruth"
6. An enormous disembodied eye with attached sinews
7. A piece of wood with the word "help" carved on it
8. The skeleton of a merfolk child
9. The desiccated skin of some revoltingly unnatural thing
10. A wooden totem carved with images of whales devouring humans
11. The carrying case of a mandolin raked by claws
12. A strangely melted empty wine bottle
13. A short length of rope that has been seared at each end
14. Part of a burnt rudder
15. A leather glove containing horribly crushed finger bones
16. A decomposing thing that looks like an inside out squid and smells terrible
17. A curious shell a foot long of a colour that is very hard to describe
18. A rotting piece of whale blubber
19. Some sort of dead jellyfish
20. The rotting remains of an enormous angler fish
21. A mummified webbed hand that twitches slightly
22. An intact but horribly weather-beaten rowboat
23. Torn bits of a sail
24. Some sort of dull glass sphere
25. A really ugly, dead Between fish with lots of teeth
26. A ship's water barrel with a dead monkey nailed inside
27. Bits of wood roped into a five-pointed star
28. A bit of wood resembling a man whose legs and arms have been broken off
29. A kraken carved on a bit of wood
30. A mermaid's scalp
31. A very ugly seven-toed starfish
32. Some very unnatural looking seaweed that gives off a strange humming noise
33. Strangely coloured and vile smelling kelp
34. A boot with a foot in it
35. A large piece of shed skin, possibly belonging to a sea serpent
36. The rotting corpse of a mangy gull
37. What appears to be bits of vargouille wrapped in rope
38. A necklace of shrivelled human eyes
39. A floating piece of pumice
40. A skeleton lashed to a bit of ship
41. A skeletal hand lashed to a bit of ship
42. An empty potion bottle that has been scoured by the waves until it is paper thin
43. Some rank-smelling vegetation
44. A floating chunk of ice of considerable size with a dark form frozen in its center
45. An empty rum bottle with a perfect hole bored through it
46. A cork-sheathed vial with a prayer to Brine carved into its side in Common
47. A very badly decomposed pig covered in a lace of fine cuts
48. A ship in a bottle
49. A frozen mar-eel
50. A rotting corpse that appears to have been filleted and which still has a tattoo on its forehead depicting a female face with tentacles extending from its bottom



Chapter Ten: Underneath



It has so many dark faces: the Beneath, the Grave, the Cellar. The Underneath is what most call it, but like so many places, it has so many other names. The names from below trip from the tongue like curses: the Skin, the Bowels, the Nadir … the Great Dark. These are places of ill omen that lie but a sorry fall or a shaft in a mine away. One minute you're in the daylight, the next you're in a nightmare. A place as old as Castorhage has so many vaults, so many tunnels, and so many mines. Coal has been mined for so long that there was no city above when it first started, and the Honourable Guild of Miners are said to be the third oldest in the Blight.

The vanished are those who somehow end up below against their will. Their stories are of pale elderly people that stagger from the clutches of subterranean kidnappers only to end in madness or recapture, stories of women held by maniacs in the dark for decades, and whispers of dark cults.

So many live below that whole communities have sprung up; some miners never see the sun. Such people are never alone. The Fetch love the smell of the place; its warmth and safety remind them of the womb they yearn for in their dreams. Whole communities of underground dwellers also live here — the dark fey, the creatures at the fringes of society, the feared, the unknown, the un-trusted. There also are things that make a home and who managed to steer clear of those they harvest above.

And as the Underneath deepens, so do the tales: the Lightless Cauldron, the Plunge, the Abysm. These places are known not only by name, for there are those who make their living exploring and mapping the places Underneath. Fortunes can be made and lives lost by plunging deep into that awful endless darkness.

And there is one last story that never goes away, that far, far below the city is a group known as the Bodysnatchers, things that grow into people and that are moving even now through the city, waiting to take it for their own.

Introduction

What lies just below your feet my friend?

It touches the whole city: every footfall, every spewing sewer, every gutter comes its way. Downward.

Its crust lies but a hair's breadth from everyday life, and yet it is completely different. Its darkness hides secrets and things that like the cloying blackness, and its veins writhe across the city, doors opening easily into the light above.

The Underneath is almost unique in the Blight. Perhaps only the Great Lyme River has so many facets, so many personalities as the great deeps below.

Some foolishly think the Underneath is a dead place; it is the opposite. The Upper Levels or Skin are teeming with miners and workers and toil, as well as those who mingle with the city folk by night — be they ghouls or rats or slithering things that steal faces. This outer skin is a maze of hundreds of pockets of development and caves and even townships; dwarves in particular enjoy the darkness and like to be closest to their toils. They have brought a semblance of order into the dark, but theirs is but the urban peel of this vast dark wilderness.

Beyond and below, the many facets and levels of the Mines are where urbane ends and wilderness begins. This is the zone between the happy homes of the underground dwellers and their less-welcome nervous neighbours, and where the true dark begins. Occasionally something abominable slithers upward into this area; it may rage and kill for a time before the dwarves seek it out and kill it — or die trying. The Mines are rougher, deeper, and more natural than the Skin; new caves often appear — particularly below the unstable Hollow Hills. These new caverns sometimes bring great wealth, but they more often than not just bring peril.

The mines have developed because of necessity; the deeper the dwarves mine, the more elusive ores become, and so the shafts lengthen, warming as they descend, sometimes for upward of a mile.

As the Mines end, its fingers groping blindly into the dark, so the Deeper Levels are found. Places such as the Lightless Cauldron, the Plunge, and the Undersea, and ultimately into the Great Dark of the Under Realms, an unbelievably complex system of caverns, cysts, and tunnels that seems to underlie the entire crust of the world of Lloegyr*. These are places where the things of below truly rule, and where only the bravest explorers dare tread, such as members of the Royal Underneath Society and its foolhardy explorers the Delvers, a separate class of explorer who specialises in the deep. Here things stop having names and become reference points of maps, or alluring caverns drifting away into nothing, waiting possibly for the first-ever footfall to disturb the dark. The Queen herself has a great love of such explorers, and rewards them handsomely; some say this is because she has spent so long in the dark that she is at one with the Underneath. Others scoff at such taunts and claim it is simply for the glory of Castorhage.

Finally comes the Nether, almost totally unexplored, and beyond the physical skills of many, even the Delvers, to do so. The Nether could be part of the Between, and it is conjectured by some that the few brave souls who have explored it — greats such as the dwarf Hope E. Grough who vanished on her last great expedition there in 1598 — that it has veins of valuable ore reaching into Between.

One last place belongs below, but it is just rumour. A steady stream of tales about a fungal hive able to swallow those who come too deep, or those it takes on rare journeys to the surface. This thing is called the Body Snatcher†, and its agents are said to be in the city now, wearing human faces, preparing for an invasion from below to be heralded by poison gas that will slay everyone save those who live high above the streets. The gloomy rumour continues to churn, and if you can afford it, you live high above the streets, just to be sure.

* The formal name of the world that is more commonly referred to by the layfolk as the Lost Lands. Lloegyr is derived from the Daanite language of Ogham and literally means "Lost Lands" in that tongue. The Daanites use that name to describe all of the world except their home island of Ynys Cymragh. The moribund appellation was picked up in general usage from the rare Daanite traders following the Foerdewaith Wars of Succession of three centuries ago, though the distinction of its meaning has largely been missed.

Part One: Places

Underneath

It is difficult to put a finger upon any one part of the Underneath, just as it is impossible to gather all the essence of the slithering Great Lyme River. What is given here therefore is an impression. An overall view of the places. A taste, if you will.

What Underneath looks like …

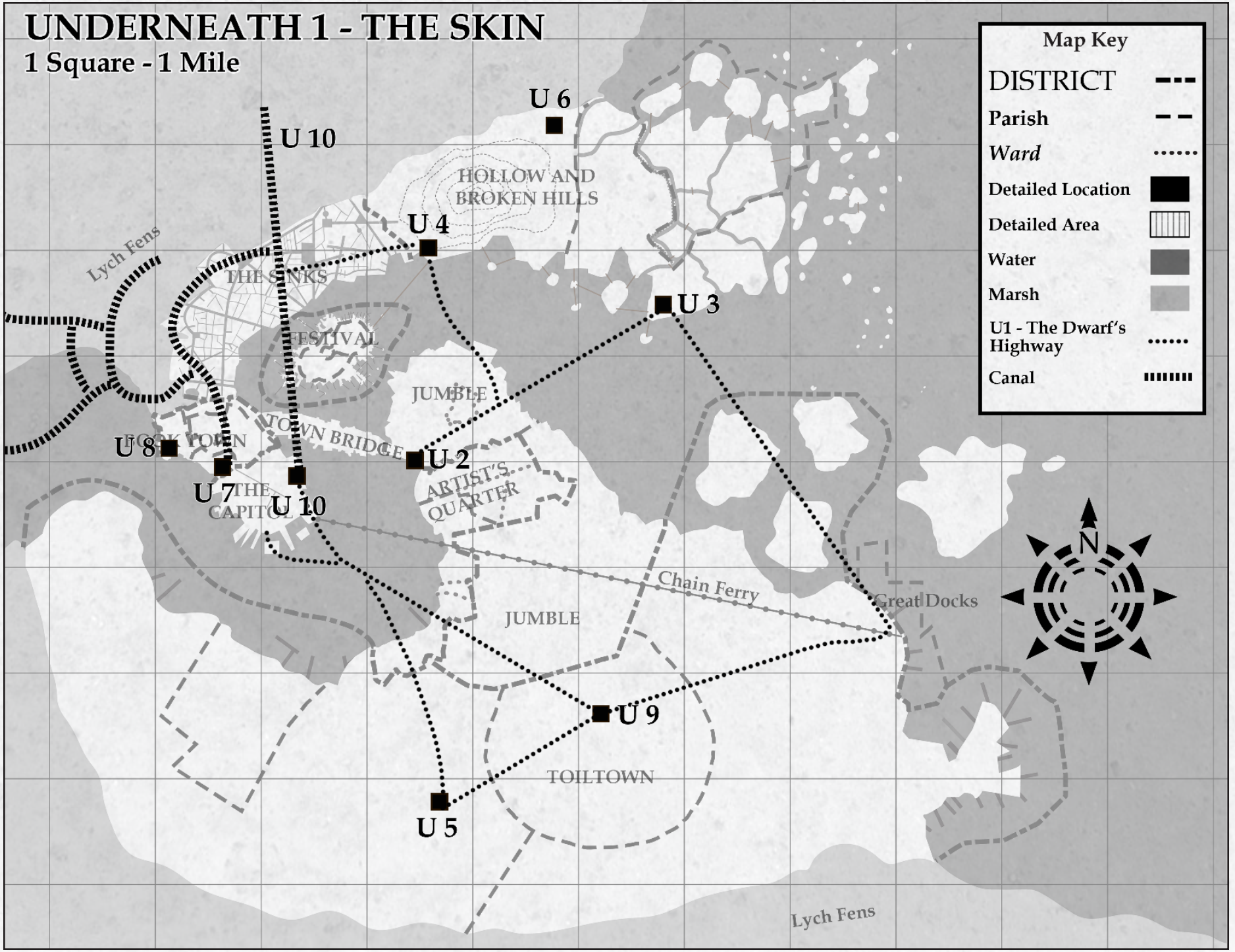
Behind the darkness lies astonishing beauty and grandeur. In the upper levels, the dwarves have cut the stones of the walls with emplacements of crystal or polished steel mirrors in such a way that light travels more effectively along them. Where features such as crystals and stalactites have formed, the dwarves have left them, or drawn attention to them with cunning stonework. Oreblossom grows, or is grown here, its beauty almost beyond words.

The deeper one goes, the stranger the place becomes: tiny crevices leaping away, distant sounds of water pounding, echoes. Sounds and smells become physical; the senses, starved of stimulus, latch onto anything and give it form, shape.

The mind plays tricks, even on those with darkvision; walls take fantastical shape, a cavern might become a dragon with twisting horns, a shaft might hide a terrible something. Whilst much of this is tricks of the mind, the fact that occasionally these shapes rise is enough to make any miner or delver treat all shadows with suspicion.

What Underneath smells like …

Of the earth and of dampness. It has a strange, organic smell: of peat, chalk, flint, wet iron, and mould. The dreaded taint of gas, which seeps


UNDERNEATH 1 - THE SKIN
1 Square - 1 Mile
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Water
Marsh
U1 - The Dwarf's Highway
Canal
U 6
U 10
HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
U 4
Lych Fens
THE SINKS
U 3
FESTIVAL
JUMBLE
TOWN BRIDGE
U 8
FOLK TOWN
U 2
U 7
THE CAPITOL
U 10
ARTIST'S QUARTER
Chain Ferry
Great Docks
JUMBLE
N
U 9
TOILTOWN
U 5
Lych Fens

into every corner of the Underneath from time to time is one no miner can smell, though they wish they could, for it is a deadly poison, an odourless assassin that kills silently and without remorse. The chirps of canaries fill the mines and deep places of the Underneath, because the silence of these sentinels is often the only warning when the gases have come and the oxygen is gone.

What Underneath feels like …

Intimate, at hand, oppressive. Even where the dwarves have made great towns, the place feels within touching distance. Some cannot bear to be long below, while others find this womb-like intimacy refreshing.

Where the caverns draw away into a vast cyst or vault, or where some great underground cathedral has been carved, the sense of space is astonishing, dizzying. Such spaces echo.

The earth gets into the soul of visitors, as well as their clothing. Spend but a few minutes beneath and your attire gains an unwelcome crust of dirt and dust and grime. Miners call it the "Kiss of Her-Below" and learn to live with it from an early age.

What Underneath sounds like …

Like a library that has been invaded by those who do not wish to be seen. Muffled voices are occasionally heard, running distant water, perhaps the echo of a hammer on stone. The Underneath has a peculiar quality, noises seem to have a life of their own, words can travel for miles and are heard as though whispered by someone close at hand (some say the miner's words are trapped below and can never escape).

When loud noises occur or are made, they are either amplified, grotesque, shuddering, or strangely muted and muffled as if not daring to break the stillness. In a place where silence is so common and yet so elusive, any loudness is fearfully intimate.

Seven words to describe Underneath …

…*Earthy* *narrow* **deep**

Drip **echo**

Blind unknown

Levels

Astonishingly, there are settlements in the Underneath, but they are primarily closeted in the upper levels of the Underneath in a place known as the Skin. Here communities of miners mingle with others whose trade is below ground or who have a reason to hide. Several towns are in this region, and these towns have their own subterranean highways, too. Beyond these highways are certain ways and known canals and routes that are named. These are detailed below.

Skill Checks

All checks made to know or resolve knowledge of the Underneath are made with Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (History) checks. They are universal checks for the Underneath region of the city, which is extensive and confusing. In general, these checks are assigned on an increasing complexity based upon depth: a base DC 10 check is made to know the basics of things in the upper levels, known as the Skin; DC 12 for the secondary levels, called the Mine; DC 15 for the middle levels, called the Deeper Levels; and DC 17 for the lower levels, called the Nether. This rule changes when dealing with the Body Snatcher† and related topics, as nothing but rumour is known about this. Consider that such checks rise to a base DC 25 to know anything beyond the general stories outlined in the text.

Upper Levels: The Skin (a.k.a. the Cellar)

The Upper Levels hold the most familiar highways and byways known to those inhabitants of the Blight who have dealings with such things. In addition to the primary settlements of Ironwood, The Vault, The Foundry, Bilgetown, and Choketown, there are countless smaller settlements, fortifications, and homesteads that serve as the abode of numerous dwarves and svirfneblin. In addition, at some undisclosed location, the City Watch maintains the barracks and proving grounds of The Queen's 4th Shadowlampers, their famous regiment. These celebrated shadowlamp† half-orc Officers of the Watch constantly conduct patrols and reconnaissance between the various far-flung enclaves and homesteads, because it is only themselves and the stoutness of their door locks that protect the inhabitants of these isolated outposts from the depredations of the Tunnel People† raids that sporadically sweep through the outlying areas. Whenever the 4th Shadowlampers happen to discover a nest of these disgusting misanthropes, there response is always a full mobilisation of the regiment along with whichever citizens wish to be deputised, and a no-holds-barred attack on the nest with fire and steel. They know that the nest must be fully burned out, for to leave one survivor is to invite another dead goodwife or child in the night as a vicious Tunnel Person seeks to feed its insatiable hunger upon the weak and helpless.

Also found prominently among the many close-lying levels of the Skin are multiple tribes, clans, families. Not always able to find adequate places of shelter in the city above, these outcasts frequently find a place among the shallow tunnels where they can gather for mutual defence and support. These peoples always gather in numbers because they lack the secure fastnesses and Watch patrols to protect them that the other residents enjoy, and when dangers are abroad, whether it be ghouls from above or Tunnel People from below, a small group on its own becomes easy pickings. Many of these folk work as guides for surfacers who are new to the Underneath and use their earnings to improve the lot of themselves and their families.

U1. The Dwarf's Highway

A regal — some would say magnificent — tunnel, held aloft by arched columns many of which are carved with faces or words or images. Troughs appear regularly along this cobbled route, which is broad enough for two hefty wagons to pass.

Not a single route, but a reflection of the quality of the passages created by the dwarves when they first mined here. The Highway (as it is more commonly known, or the "Sträth" in Dwarven) is a maze of different roads on different levels. Many are connected by tortuously winding corridors that slowly rise on ramps (often given names like the Devil's Staircase and other epithets). Some of the newer ones, however, have iron lifts that are powered by broken trolls or other creatures of great strength.

The Highway is never less than 20 feet wide and 20 feet high, and in places is much larger. It has watering points at least every half mile, and portions of the Highway are actually canal rather than road. Occasionally, a grumpy local dwarf lord assigns a turnpike tax on his section of the Highway, and whilst no dwarf would pay it (nor anyone who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence [Investigation] or Intelligence [History] check) as it is illegal, it is often backed up by force when the collector believes he can get away with it.

Copious additions have been made to the Highway, including the infamously maze-like King Torb's Folly, created under the instruction of a little known but exceedingly paranoid 7th-century dwarf king.

U2. Ironwood

A thriving community exists below ground, a place perpetually lit by pyrebeetle lanterns and choking with smoke. The place is a vast spider's web of metal — from rusting-yet-graceful bridges, to iron homes and workhouses, to iron trees. The whole place is lashed across a dozen levels and is a dazzling confusion of stairs and chain ferries. Somewhere far below is a rhythmic sound, perhaps a pump — or is it breathing?

Considered almost friendly amongst the insular dwarven population below ground, Ironwood lies closest to the surface. It is also one of the most accessible examples of the dwarven art of oreblossom, the arcane art of growing ore, and one that the dwarves of the Blight are insular and protective about. Oreblossom (see Sidebox) allows them to grow ores into fabulous shapes, encourage it to create great structures and skeletons of iron, brass, copper, and other metals, and even rarely adamantine. The great art is one known by very few, and even rarer these days. It is detailed further in the sidebar.

Notable sights in Ironwood include the Great Iron Yew, an oreblossom said to cover an acre of ground and to be almost 2,000 years old; the Rust Inn, a vast iron hostelry that actually rests in three different parts of the village; and the Oreweb, one of the most beautiful oreblossom sculptures in the city.

U3. The Grave

A vast feeling of space opens here, along with the decayed remnants of an empire — the shattered limbs of rusted pillars and a feeling of abandonment.

Once the Grave was a place of joy and light, a dwarven community of 10,000 souls they say. They called this place Solace, and it was one of the oldest mines in the dwarf empire. Solace had a king, and a court, and a thriving industry, but that very industry eventually killed it.

The mines here were easy to exploit. Some said it was the blessing of the gods that allowed such access; others that the stone was frail and should be left alone.

The Day of Calamity started without warning, a distant rumble far below the world, and then sudden collapse as the whole town began to fall into a great pit that opened below it. As the town fell, a great fire consumed the survivors.

Oreblossom

Part art, part arcana, part engineering, the ancient art of oreblossoming is known only to the dwarves of the Underneath — and precious few of them, although thousands have marvelled at its effects and grandeur.

The magic of causing an ore to grow and expand as desired is a complex and beautiful skill. The true masters of this art are drawn from dwarven arcane engineers and creationist bloodlines of dwarven sorcerers. Theirs is an art that lasts forever, a blooming of metal into something beautiful and functional, and occasionally a magic that awakens the beauty within the metal itself, causing it to blossom in totally unexpected ways.

Dwarves have been using this skill for centuries, and the Underneath is riddled with examples of this work, from its most mundane in creating metal floors and passages to access deep mines and cross difficult terrain, to incredibly complex structures and citadels that defy explanation, and sometimes to out-of-control expansions that grow organically and subsume the materials of their surroundings — often the shaper himself.

Within minutes, Solace was gone and almost everyone was dead. Survivors had little to say, but a handful reported that just before the great collapse, they heard a retort far, far below, as though an explosion had occurred.

Theories run wild about what happened to Solace. Most put it down to dwarven greed and bad luck, but some maintain it was a deliberate act to prevent the dwarves delving deeper, that they had threatened the fabric of the Body Snatcher.

What is left of the town is now called the Grave, but it is far from dead. The place is latticed with remains of the dwarven town, and creatures have taken over parts of the great settlement — crude timber bridges and the coarse songs of humanoids, goblins in particular. Mercenaries and adventurers are occasionally hired to purge the Grave of occupants, soldiers and watch being far too busy and important to risk.

The Grave is deep, and explorers speak of the place extending into the Mines and even, in places, touching the Nether. These deeper levels are complex and unstill; things have crawled into them that hunger for flesh cured in the bright sunlight, a blessing, they say, that leads to the finest taste, the choicest, juiciest flesh.

U4. The Vault

A huge space in the rock has been worked into a town, its roads carved from the high walls of the cliffs, its houses hewn from the rock. Waterfalls seem to cascade from every point and fall into a wide lake at the foot of the town.

One of the larger dwarf settlements, the Vault is a masterpiece in rock carving and building. Centred on a great underground lake known as the Well, the Vault is ruled by a council made up of miners and senior local figures of note and led by an elected figurehead called the Superior. In truth, like many institutions in the Blight, the Superior is actually elected on baksheesh, the present incumbent being a wealthy mine manager renowned for his stoic religious attitude and his arrogant distribution of advice and extreme financial punishments.

That the Vault is a masterpiece of order and beauty in stone hides the corruption that riddles this town. Insular, bigoted, sexist, and above all irredeemably corrupt, the town makes it clear that outsiders are welcome only if they bring business. The local militia (the Vault Constabulary) harasses other strangers. The town is well known for its extreme wealth, and town is full of fine markets and inns.

The Vault also has a fairly unique shift of briny† miners who work the Well. These indentured workers are kept in a huge workhouse and toil for the Superior. The Well stretches through a series of underground rivers infamous for sucking currents, but which are famous for their diamonds. As the workhouse shift delves farther into the Well, so do the risks increase. But the Superior demands ever more funds to run the town and expand its influence both below and above.

The town remains aloof of its neighbours, and in particular ridicules those from Ironwood, who are regarded as simpletons and the butt of almost every joke told in the Vault — which admittedly is not many.

The Great Vault Falls tumble 360 feet down a series of three steps, behind which are oreblossom galleries enabling visitors to walk behind the falls. Its beauty is a closely guarded local secret.

U5. The Foundry

Dirt, sweat and grime — the place wreaks of it. This is a place of toil, where vast caverns have been hewn to allow ore to be extracted, improved or perfected. Huge cranes lift ore from great iron 8-wheeled wagons onto huge iron barges. Above rises the brick town, while higher still, huge chain ferries haul material up into the grimy dark above. These chain ferries must weigh several tons each and swing and grate in protest far, far above the town.

"Tough as a Foundry-dwarf" is a phrase known to most dwarves in Underneath, and for good reason: the locals here are as tough as old boots, and quicker to fight than a cauldron full of scalded rats. This is a tough town where work and play are hard. The wages are high, and the workers who come here are either very skilled or very stupid. The Foundry pollutes the tunnels and underground streams within a mile of its location. Rocks are coated with grime; water is ochre and oily.

The town is not pretty, but a practical brick place built on several levels, with openings between them allowing a view far down into the Foundry itself. Above, chain ferries bring the ore in huge pulls up and up into the high cavern and eventually into the clearer city air. These chain ferries are amongst the longest in the city, with one rising 2,000 feet in a single pull.

To say that safety is secondary is an understatement, and the Foundry has an unenviable reputation for disasters, great fires, and citizens crushed to death by falling ore or plummeting great iron chain ferries that hang in the air like a slow-moving moon. The Foundry Floor is widely regarded as one of the most dangerous places in the whole of Castorhage, and to walk it unprepared is to take a step close to Hell and to risk being consumed by molten iron in its dozen or so great furnaces or to be crushed by new-cast ingots the size of carriages.

The Royal Foundry Company runs the town, and their senior employees control the place. They care little for the safety or happiness of their employees and are as quick to hire as they are to fire.

U6. The Great Chimney

A shaft of darkness gapes here, a wound in the world surrounded by nail-wire and signs saying "*Danger, keep back, bottomless pit.*"

The Great Chimney is 3 miles or so deep, and is used variously by those within the Underneath to move about. It grants very quick access for those who wish to move between the levels of the Underneath. Some locations have spiral stairs and fixed ladders bolted to the walls.

U7. Bilgetown

A town set on a confusion of piers beneath the skin of the world, this place stinks of fish and dirt and work.

Bilgetown rests on the shores of the edges of a huge underground lake, the Gloom (**U8**), itself only slightly smaller than the Undersea (**U24**). It is a place fished and mined in equal parts. Bilgetown thrives upon this twin income, and has set itself up as a dark version of Festival, using the pier it was built upon as a lure to those who wish to witness and play in this dark fairyland. The Family (see **Chapter 4**), alert to any chance to expand, have set themselves up as the de-facto rulers of Bilgetown, and are busy spreading their influence. For the present, the wererats toil to keep their grip on the town and have suffered setbacks from the true rulers of Bilgetown, the dwarf aristocrat family of Skarn, themselves riddled with aristocratic bigotry and self-importance, as well as a few vampires.

Lit by caged fire beetles and pyrebeetles in beautifully coloured glass lanterns, Bilgetown is indeed a dark fairy tale in its own right, and the fingers of Between have groped their way into the shadowy corners of the town. The Lonely Pier is one of the darker places in Bilgetown, a place where the entertainment is on the farther side of evil. Her freakshows are amongst the vilest, her "shock" acts the most distressing to be seen below ground.

Of late, a handful of **aboleths** has been caught by the Bilgetown fisherfolk (most of whom are briny[†]), and all these encounters have ended in death or worse for the anglers, often cursed before they can cut the aboleth free of their nets. Some also add that the number of mermaid sightings near the pier has increased dramatically of late. Some of the more terrible ones, including the Walrus Queen, Fan of Four Faces, and the Taker have fairy tales of their own already, and seem to have stepped out of those stories, possibly because of the Between birthing them.

U8. The Gloom

Here lies a lake without tides, its surface a black mirror.

A vast underground salt lake, the Gloom stretches for many miles into the Underneath, its fingers groping into places beyond the city above. The Gloom is also very deep, a fact that makes it extremely attractive to aquatic creatures. The territory of the Gloom is fought over by subterranean aquatic creatures, predominant of which are sahuagin, who have a local mutant queen known as the **Jagged Sorrowreaper** (CE female **sahuagin**). So terrible is her reputation that even creatures such as skum balk at tangling with her or her pagan followers. Rumours continue to link her clan with the Great Coven. In truth, a tacit respect exists between the two groups, and the queen supplies the coven with unusual and rare creatures for their research and more diabolic surgery and ceremonies.

Much of the Gloom is riddled with signs of ancient occupation, and sahuagin relics abound. The Jagged Queen engages sahuagin treasure-hunters in seeking out items from what she claims is a glorious and ancient empire hidden deep below the waters. Her boastfulness has drawn others, including aboleth agents, deep into the lake. Of late, the Jagged Queen has also taken to drawing sea serpents into the darker waters, and rumours abound that she has very recently taken a sahuagin as a consort.

U9. Choketown

Coal. The stench of it gets into your mouth, in your clothes, under your skin. This town is choking in coal dust, and its dangers are at every corner. A fire would be something from a nightmare here. The place is lit by magic, the air alive with the call of canaries and curiously revolting insects that plummet and blindly beat out feeble radiances.



Choketown is the largest coalmine in the empire and has a lot of demanding customers. The locals have a reputation for cheerfulness, and are renowned for their strong voices. Attending church services in Choketown is an unforgettable experience, and many choirs have been asked to perform for Royalty at the Capitol. The loud voices have a reason: the coalfaces are long and deep and getting deeper, the places are often swarming with coal dust or beetles or both, and vocal communication is often all there is. Even so, the folk of Choketown are especially short-lived, their average lifespans measuring as much as a century less than that of the rest of the city's dwarven population. The constant inhalation of the coal dust and requirement for the bellow-like training of their lungs means that most dwarves of Choketown age before their time, becoming wracked by blacklung by the time they reach their first century and enfeebled and wasting away before their 150th year.

The inhabitants of Choketown are understandably paranoid about naked flames, as any exposure to the rampant coal dust could result in a massive explosion and fire. As such, they use magic and fire beetles exclusively to light their subterranean home (when the dark-loving dwarves even need light). Fortunately for them, beetles seem to thrive in the area. Not only are fire beetles found in great numbers, but all manner of insect life exists here. In particular, the choke(town) beetle flies in great swarms and seemingly feeds on the omnipresent coal dust. These insects can grow to the size of a fist but are usually no larger than a marble in size. Drawn to the town's artificial light and copious volumes of coal dust, the beetles form vast clouds that can plunge entire sections of the settlement into blackness.

Although friendly, the locals do not stand for any nonsense, and are hardworking and gods-fearing dwarves. The businesses run a strictly religious clock according to the worship of Vergrimm Earthsblood[BP], with centuries of strange admixture with the traditions and rites of Mother Grace picked up from the long association with the Castorhagi above. Inns and taverns are open only a few hours every day, and attendance at churches and chapels is mandatory

The ruler of Choketown, **Elder Bartholomew Rothgrorr Haggrudd Formel Choke** (LN male dwarf **veteran**), is rigidly religious, but is a benefactor to the town in many ways, from his church schools and sobriety societies, to an engineering and religious library run by his grace. Choke Manor, which overlooks the town, is an imposing gothic place of towers and grandeur containing nearly 200 rooms. Magnificent stained-glass windows depicting angelic dwarf figures shine from the place, despite the constant suffocating mass of choke beetles.

The Iron Cathedral (a.k.a. the Deepest Cathedral) is an incredible underground cathedral of iron and precious metals, home to the Sisterhood of the Deep (nuns who worship Vergrimm Earthsblood) and ruled by **Sister Perfect** (LN dwarf **priest** of Vergrimm Earthsblood).

U10. The Grand Tunnel Canal

Clearly a well-maintained and very broad canal, possibly large enough for a small sailing vessel to use.

The Grand Tunnel Canal links the Great Lyme River to the countryside 6 miles to the north of the city and exits at King's Lock, currently occupied by the town of Larkspur (**see Chapter 1**). The Grand Tunnel now serves as a magnificent smugglers route, and is jealously guarded by the Guild and the lesser groups that use it, including at times the Fetch. Numerous small, fortified buildings stand at the end of side canals, and these have become infested with dozens of different clans, groups, and cults.

Secondary Levels: The Mine

The levels below the Skin are more functional, their tunnels more often than not used, exploited, and then abandoned. In general, there is nothing decorative or fancy about this location. The place is riddled with deep and unprotected mineshafts, abandoned work faces, side drifts, flooded tunnels, and adits.

In many cases, maps still exist of these levels, and some explorers boast of huge collections of old mine working maps. Encounters are scarce here — few creatures from the deeps are brave enough to venture into this region, and few explorers come this far without heading farther down into the dark.

Where present, settlements have a temporary, frontier atmosphere to them. Buildings are more practical than regal, as functionality governs locales. Locals tend to focus more upon earning enough to get out rather than spending time in conversation with strangers. All Charisma-related checks take a –2 in the Mine.

What work takes place in the Mine is often secret now; the Illuminati sponsor a number of projects here and lower. The vast majority of these plots involve mining and money, and the exploiting of whole clans of dwarves. However, the Underneath hides many secrets, and the Illuminati hires groups of explorers through intermediaries to send on seemingly simple mapping or exploration quests — often with a deeper, darker hidden purpose.

U11. The Lattice

Hanging above a roaring underground river is a rusty walkway, a cocoon of latticed wire rope that sags in places and has complete tears in others that stare at the torrent below.

A vast web of oreblossom walkways, the Lattice is the collective description of the walkways on this level above the raging underground river that cuts the bedrock. Aging and decaying, the Lattice is by no means the safest way to explore this area, but many places can be reached only from it. Hasty repairs, improvised rope bridges, and luck litter the Lattice, paying homage to the more solid suspension bridges, iron stepping-stones, and walkways hewn from the edges of passages high above the torrents.

U12. Grimdeeps

A rather sad, functional settlement, there are no statues here, no avenues, no welcomes, just vaults of stone, shafts, and grinding machinery.

The primary Illuminati-exploited village, Grimdeeps acts as a gateway to the Mine. The Illuminati use the village as a testing ground and training area for explorers and miners, slowly selecting both from the population for promotion (often never to be seen again).

Ostensibly ruled and owned by the Grimdeep Mining Company, the village is a dour and sad place where toil is the only order of the day. The place never sleeps, and shifts are constantly coming and going, mining the tin that suffuses the area. The ore crushers (powered by waterwheels) make for a constant cacophonous companion. Visitors generally find sleep impossible and cannot wait to leave. The locals are simply tired, and the small chapel is often home to snoring locals during religious services.

Alcohol is not allowed in the village (unless you happen to be an aristocrat) and so few goods are for sale that pausing for supplies is barely worth it, something the Illuminati are quite happy to encourage. The town manager, **Father Fathom Grimdeeps** (NE hill dwarf **veteran**) has a small network of dwarf spies to enable him to keep a tight grip upon the mine and to spot those with any promise. Such prodigies are watched closely for usefulness and, when the time comes, assist in larger exploration parties and darker delvings into Underneath.

U13. The Womb

A verdigris forest bows obsequiously at the feet of a vast building that is seemingly birthed from the cavern ahead, a squat thing of ochre rusting trees and grown pillars organically infused with grinning gargoyles. The building almost appears to ooze through the stone walls, fighting through every pore and crevice. A set of steps that uncannily resemble jagged teeth rises to a hefty wooden door.

An example of one of the more important lairs of a group that wishes to hide, the Womb is the home of a cult known as the Panacea, a group of demented artists who believe the world is about to be reborn in a beautiful shape by their messiah, an angel known as the Beautiful.

Hundreds of groups — some powerful, some weak — use the Underneath as their lair, hiding from the world but remaining just a step away from the bright city lights above. The Panacea is just one of countless groups that comes and goes here out of sight. This area is further detailed in adventure ***L5: Below*** in ***The Levee Adventure Path***.

U14. The Dark Canal and Tunnels

A series of rank, stagnant canals is here, crossed by rope bridges and scowled at by watchtowers of iron and stone.

Almost as much a district as a settlement, the Dark Canal and Tunnels occupy a wide area of the Underneath and connect a dozen settlements, the main one of which is referred to by its company title of Settlement 13.

The Tunnels represent the harder edge of the mines. Here, life is just work, and the occupants are either indentured slaves or true slaves, watched over by a small number of the dwarven elite. The place is a powder keg of seething resentment and potential revolution. The dwarves here number about 2,300 in all, spread across the tin mines, and in one very secret case Settlement 34, Mallen — a Between mine detailed in **Part 5** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*** — able to draw an astonishing array of minerals and which is the focus of Royal and Illuminati work and observation on this level.

Settlement 13 has a large underground mansion known as the Palace of Caverns, from which the ruler of the Dark Tunnels, **Her Grace the Ochre Prime Amthynne Starlkoph** (NE female hill dwarf **noble**), rules from behind her mourning veils with the aid of her countless female kin. The plots, intrigue, and danger of the Dark Tunnels is said to be almost comparable to that of the Royal Family and the Borxias, and often the matriarchal Starlkoph family here are referred to as the "Second Royal Family" or "Their Royal Under-Royals." Dwarf hunts (see sidebox), socialising, and backstabbing are the order of the day in this region. The vast Palace of Caverns forms a backdrop to these events, which often spill onto the streets above and into the Capitol, where the Starlkophs, like much of dwarf aristocracy, are welcomed with open arms. Some suggest that money has more to do with this than kinship, and that many members of the Royal Family loathe dwarves, regarding them as ugly fey or perhaps goblins. Stories continue to come from the Royal Palace that every midwinter **Princess Mercy**† organises a special hunt in the grounds of the Royal Estate at Crow's Fallow in mockery of the Starlkophs' dwarf hunts, where captured dwarves serve as the prey.

The only thing more important to the Starlkoph dwarves than status is money. The women of the family covet and go to incredible lengths (at least on the part of their slaves) to obtain and hoard gems. The palace is said to have in excess of 125,000 gp worth of gems hidden in a special casket made by the Guild for the Ochre Prime and created using a rarely invoked death bond — where the price was so high that the builder of the cabinet's life was forfeit upon its completion.

Dwarf Hunts

In such a perilous location, often beyond immediate help, the miners lead a precarious existence. They face not only rockfalls and collapses, but also the hungry attentions of dwellers from the Underneath. To combat this aspect of their lives, dwarves regularly form hunting parties and venture deep underground on hunting trails to bag what they can. This sends out two signals: firstly, to the dwarves, who know that the hunt seeks out the nastiest and toughest foes that have been sighted or rumoured, and secondly to any intelligent monsters in the area, who know that coming too close to the dwarves risks attack.

A typical hunting party is detailed below. These dwarves are almost always mounted on dire pigs, at least for part of their hunt, but are also prepared for extreme caving and climbing. They use a variety of dogs to aid them, often a large number of terriers bred for their scent ability, and dwarf hunting mastiffs, infamous for their ferocity and noisiness. Dwarf hunts are regarded as the domain of females among the Starlkophs, and whilst males are welcome, they never lead or directly assist in the hunts. Rather, they act as spectators (which are frequently in tow) to cheer on their mistresses or as emergency physikers or bearers if required. Each hunt has its own title, traditions, and special days. The dwarves hold at least 20 special hunt festivals annually, each dwarf in special dress and livery unique to that hunt.

The Choketown Hunt

The Choketown Hunt is an annual hunt that takes place in the fringes of the area around Choketown and particularly looks for beetles and other insects grown unnaturally enormous (though the occasional Choketown miner caught alone is not out of the question). The hunt consists of the hunt leader, **Her Dedicated Hunt Mistress Lady Gwenenth Sharn** (LN female dwarf **spy**), **1d2 hunt madams** (N female hill dwarf **veterans**), and **2d4+4 hunters** (N female hill dwarf **nobles**). All the hunt members are mounted on **giant boars**, and they are accompanied by **1d4 terriers**† and **3d4 blight mastiffs**†.

Hunts have a reputation for experimentation, and various techniques, mounts, and tracking and hunting beasts have been used. It has not been unheard of for broken† or charmed cockatrices, broken† trolls, and even giant bats to be part of a hunt.

U15. The Faces

A huge, vaulted cavern opens here, waterfalls cascading from the walls and iron bridges crossing the open space. The wall is a mass of carved faces, thousands upon thousands of them. It appears that they may have once been bearded dwarven faces, but the constant erosion of the waters has smoothed their lines and erased their features to the point that they are now empty-eyed, nondescript faces, devoid of emotion or soul. They are chilling to look upon as they stare back, hollow eyed, in their countless legions.

Part graveyard, part celebration, part tribute, the Faces is one of the sights of wonder in the Underneath. Formerly a dwarf city called Durahchûk (Dwarven for "Soul of the True Folk"), it is now a vast space partly collapsed into wildness but which also has pockets of dwarf settlers and miners intent upon raising the former kingdom and restoring it as the true home of dwarves in the Blight.

Covering hundreds of acres over dozens of levels, with traps that are still as dangerous as they were when the settlement was abandoned centuries ago, the Faces is a melancholy place. They say a plague came to the Faces, a plague that burned like fire and slew as fast as flame. The records of the city (those that weren't burnt) speak of a population well in excess of 20,000 and possibly as high as 50,000. The plague, and stories of it, still emerge from time to time.

A dark presence, a **n'gathau pain-trader**†, has taken up occupation in a large section of the Faces from a fortification now named the Embrace of Chains. Several areas of the Faces are inhabited by ghouls, led by vampires. A mockery of a Dwarf Hunt — led by the vampires and running with ghouls and ghasts — roams the lower sections of the Mine. Their favoured prey is said to be dwarf — especially those descended from the former population of Durahchûk.

The dwarf dominion has changed drastically as time passed and dangers evolved, but the present **Crown Prince of Dwarf-Soul, Thorgrim** (LG male deep dwarf **captain**) has a small court carefully reinforced in the far-flung east wing of the city.

The fingers of the once-great city reach out throughout the Underneath, and minted coins, goods, and weapons and armour are commonly found.

Several dispossessed dwarf nobles pay high prices to adventurers to clear certain sections of the Faces to make them habitable, and to many aristocrats (especially those few with a conscience), a trip to see the Faces is a lifetime pilgrimage — no matter what the risk.

U16. Settlement 34 (a.k.a. Mallen and Between Mine No. 1)

Its accesses trapped, patrolled, and in places the domain of wild monsters, Settlement 34 is a well-guarded secret. It is a mine so profitable that its official administrators, the Royal Between Company, keeps its existence a closely guarded secret. Its true masters, the Illuminati, likewise ensure that its very existence remains a mystery to all and enforce that mystery with deadly efficiency.

Settlement 34 is unique in that it exists in both the mundane world of the Underneath as well as in Between itself. Though ostensibly the same town, the inhabitants have taken to calling the Underneath side of it Settlement 34 and the Between aspect **Mallen**, so that if it does happen to appear on any map, its innocuous name would be unlikely to attract attention. The mine itself is a miles-deep shaft that is almost wholly within Between, though the entrance tunnel to it is visible from the mundane side. It's just that as one approaches the mineshaft, he has stepped across from Settlement 34 and into Mallen. The mine yields strange Between gold that the Illuminati have discovered they can actually grow with the proper alchemical and magical treatments, as well as numerous rare and extremely valuable metals and gem deposits.

For every indentured worker or slave in Settlement 34, there are 2 heavily armed guards. These guards come from a fanatical lawful cult dedicated in name to Mithras (but in actuality serving Mammon) known as the **Iron Heart** led by **Disciplinarian Slothris** (NE male hill dwarf **inquisitor** of Mammon) is billeted in the huge cavern that houses the single great mineshaft. A chain cordon runs through the settlement just beyond these billets, separating most of the settlement from the few bunkhouses and the foreman's blockhouse that sit closer to the shaft. Through trial and error, this cordon has been set to demarcate the point beyond which one passes into Between if they continue beyond the chain. Only fully loaded, chain-drawn ore carts come out of from behind this barrier. Every few weeks, more "contract miners" freshly brought to Settlement 34 are ushered beyond the chain. To date, none has returned.

Lady Fenwin August (LE female human **seer**†) runs the settlement's operation of processing the retrieved ore and shipping it topside. She handles the administration from a heavily fortified tower hung by great chains from the zenith of the great cavern within which the mine sinks. The entire settlement is severely paranoid, only tacitly because it fears discovery (betrayal within the Illuminati is far more likely).

A secret stair leads to the Deep Chain Conveyor that links Settlement 34 to the remote surface island it reaches up to just off the coast of Castorhage. The access point is heavily guarded, as the mine is extremely profitable and allegedly entirely allocated for the Royal Treasury — although actually much is siphoned away by various levels within the Illuminati until what is left finally reaches the Capitol. A host of agents, spies, and others lurk within the town and its area, and so many familiars stalk the air that it seems infested with them.

The Between side of the settlement is a small company town consisting of little more than a few sturdy workmen's barracks, guard shacks, and a kitchen and chow hall, and a small company store that keeps the workers supplied with the basic necessities and occasional luxuries, all at usury prices. The workers on the Between side are all indentured slaves or "contract miners," little better than indentured slaves considering their pay has to pay off their contract loan terms, and even the purchasing of the basic necessities of survival virtually ensures that they'll be eternally indebted. This is by design because the Illuminati don't want any who have actually seen the "other side" to ever come back to report. Mallen is overseen by a ruthless foreman called Boss Rath (LE male hill dwarf **veteran**) who sees to it that his directives are writ in the blood of his workers. He knows he'll get a fresh crew in to replace his losses every few months, and those broken survivors from previous crews make nice offerings to the deep dark things that creep in the mine's deeps to propitiate their hungers. More information on Mallen and the actual mine itself can be found in **Part 5** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

U17. Thakren

> A village of stone houses carved from the walls and ledges of a cavern look down upon a great, dark void below. Narrows paths lead along the edge of this bottomless pit to connect the buildings. In places, precarious suspension bridges span gaps where no walking ledge reaches. Upon every door of every house of this silent subterranean necropolis is painted a red face and the Dwarven runes.

The runes all spell "Thakren," Dwarven for "curse," and remains from the time of the curse that came to this place. It was the same pestilence that struck Durahchûk, but in this place, the locals came up with a more drastic method of preventing the spread than isolation. The story whispered by dwarves down through the centuries is that most of the local populace sealed themselves inside, hoping that the plague would pass. This never actually happened at Durahchûk, but the tales are true of four remote communities that were scattered throughout these levels of the Underneath. These isolated settlements still exist, though three are lost to the current knowledge of the Underneath inhabitants. Within one are the inbred descendants of the original dwarves who never emerged again after the ravages of the disease and remain isolated from all outside contact. Two of the sealed dwarven fastnesses are dead, tombs for their long-lost peoples and now sacred places that (and indeed the only tombs for dwarfkind in the Underneath (see **The Roots** below). Should they ever be discovered and robbed, it would bring about the ire of any dwarf who heard of it, followed by a swift vow of blood vengeance. The last, the isolated hamlet originally named Grim-Mathen but now usually just called Thakren, also remains the home of its original occupants — all of whom are now undead.

The ghoul-town of Thakren is infamous, the subject of hundreds of fairy tales, children's bedtime stories, traveller's fearful whispers, and miner's nightmares. Ruled by a ghoul-thane known as **His Tattered Majesty, Grim-Cacor I** (CE male dwarf **ghast**). Grim-Cacor (literally the "Deep Demon") was once the chief steward of Grim-Mathen's thane but personally devoured his liege after the first few months of enforced isolation as the ghoul fever began to take hold among the entrapped populace and assumed control of those who remained as undead. His village stretches across several ledges gazing down into a pit. The Blight ghouls here continue to mine and scavenge, and occasionally visitors from the Fetch far above come here to collect dues for Beltane. His Tattered Majesty is said to have a grotesque infant son who has never grown but who is able to see the future and past flawlessly. The ghoul-thane is greatly revered by the undead of Underneath, even once having a visit from Beltane himself.

Thakren is a place strangely familiar yet desperately odd, where life goes on as though it was never interrupted. The locals still work, mothers claim to have babies at home (though few are heard), and the place is still ruled by the thane and his merchant councillors. Undead bat swarms fill the air of the cavern, and legless things crawl up from the pit to be worshipped.

U18. The Great Bridge

> A long, narrow bridge of stone stretches across a huge shaft here. Air is drawn into the hole with an eerie wheeze. The cavern that draws away from this incredible span is lost in shadows and its own vastness.

The only access into the lower levels of the Underneath, the Great Bridge leaps across a vast void that becomes the Abysm (**U23**). Ancient dwarven watchtowers overlook the bridge. Those who cross the bridge often have to clear the watchtowers of occupants, usually ettins and orcs and trolls, but sometimes larger, more disturbed things take them over.

No check is required to cross the 200-foot-long bridge, which arches to a high point in the centre, some 40 feet above the towers that rise at either

end. The journey is unforgettable, however. The Abysm Song is a gale that whips up from time to time in the vast cavern here. This wind can churn up to gale force and sometimes higher, and acts as a natural defence to the old sunken kingdom of the dwarves. Characters attempting to cross the bridge when the winds are at their peak must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or be drawn into the Abysm and lost.

U19. The Great Stair and the Hanging Gardens

A huge spiral stair winds downward, its walls watched by statues of dwarven warriors in full plate armour. This stair clings to sheer stone above a great dark space, and is surrounded on all sides by iron blooms and trees and copper ivy.

The Great Stair and Hanging Garden descend into the very deepest known part of the Underneath — the Deeper Levels and the Nether beyond. The dwarf kingdom is broken here, and even the statues are faded and smashed or defaced. Falling for a quarter of a mile, the oreblossom hanging gardens are spectacular but grim and now rusted. The stair passes several watchtowers and guard-posts leading to other dungeons, many of which are dangerously unstable. The stair, however, remains an important passage for many, and is regularly used. To access the stair and not meet trouble of one kind or another is considered a blessing by most, but a curse by others. "What," they ask, "has driven away those who watch the stairs?"

Deeper Levels

The last frontier as far as those from the city are concerned, the Deeper Levels start at the lower parts of the Great Stair and continue downward until the worked caverns end and the wilds of the Under Realms take over. Beyond this point, it is far too dangerous to try to colonise, mine, or otherwise tame. One small hold lies at this foothold, the appropriately named Frontier, last outpost of the Royal Underneath Society.

U20. Lightless Cauldron

The great stair winds and eventually ends at a huge spherical chamber, whose every surface has been worked with Dwarven runes.

The Lightless Cauldron is said to detail the history of the dwarves, but those who have studied it closely (often giving their lives over to the study) argue that it is some sort of codex, possibly even an ancient defence against an unnamed predator from far, far below. A broad dwarven canal still links this chamber to the one Frontier (**U21**). This route is well patrolled, and has a number of narrowboats drawn up, together with stables nearby for pit ponies (sidebox) to draw the barges along the canal. An extended family of lantern folk† lives here and serves as guides and pilots along the canals. They employ two full companies of shadowlamp half-orcs†, all retired from the Royal Army or the Watch (some even from The Queen's 4th itself) to conduct the patrols and provide security along this important waterway.

U21. Frontier: The Royal Underneath Society Underquarters (a.k.a. the "Hindquarters")

Beyond huge iron gates almost a foot thick is a curious settlement. It is a town of brick and stone comprising several warehouses, a small manufactury and an ornate manor house.

More a series of warehouses than a village, Frontier has iron gates to keep out unwanted creatures that might stray from below and a garrison of a few dozen experienced fighters. Used to focus exploration of the Underneath, this last bastion of humanity — the "last home" as it is commonly known — is on the very edge of the deepest areas of the Underneath. It is a hive of activity for explorers, would-be heroes and heroines, and those who are simply mad. The Royal Underneath Society sponsors exploration here, but of course their actions are governed for the betterment of the city-state and in particular (albeit unknowingly) the Illuminati.

The temporary home of half-dozen explorers at any given time, Frontier is the final step before launching into the truest deep parts of the Underneath. The clubhouse — a quite bizarrely normal establishment complete with fine chambers, a library, and workshop — has an air of colonialism about it, a veneer of city life when all around is dark. Official known as the Underquarters, society members have secretly dubbed it the "Hindquarters" much to Governor Quomm's continual dismay. The clubhouse butlers do their best to keep an air of normalcy in the club, and the society's **Governor of Underneath Herbert Quomm** (LN male human **spy)** is usually in residence to serve as administrator to the facility and oversee its many comings and goings. It is possible to set the clock at 6th hour non* when he arrives for his glass of port.

Frontier has a highly variable population. At the times of the largest expeditions, as many as 200 people can be herein; at others, it is practically a ghost town with only its small permanent staff in residence. The renowned workshops here are all brimming with fabulous facilities, from masterwork alchemy labs and tool rooms, to spellbooks and maps. The explorers are also wise enough to keep a stable of some dozen pit ponies here at all times in case of emergency.

Non-members of the Royal Underneath Society are tolerated but not welcomed, and the place has a remarkably frosty reception for anyone who is regarded as an "independent." Anyone who stumbles upon Frontier by accident (and there have been many) generally come away suggesting that facing the hordes of Under-creatures below is preferable to a night in the Frontier Club as a non-member.

* That is, 6:00 P.M.

U22. The Plunge

A series of exploratory shafts have been thrust into the ground in reach of Frontier. In total, 19 such shafts have been sunk here, 3 of which form the seeds of Between mines as they reach into that domain. The Plunge is operated by a handful of the hardiest of dwarven miners, led by **Hampen Grime** (LN male salt-o-the-earth† dwarf **veteran**), a tough, dark-skinned dwarf with a reputation for swearing and plain speaking.

Trust No One?

Not everyone seeks to exploit the Underneath. Some (admittedly only a very few) have high morals when it comes to advancement. There are still those who are kind and decent, and who wish to see the Underneath cleared of menace and restored as an empire for the dwarves. Chief amongst these is one of the 13 Justices of Castorhage, **Justice Mordent Knap†,** Lord Justice of the Mint and Steward of the Capitol. Cartographer of the Underneath and Master of the Royal Mint, he wishes to see true justice return and has considerable influence with bankers and merchants. The Justice has used his position of authority to inveigle himself within the Illuminati and works to destroy it from within. Chief amongst his attentions is banking and Underneath, and Knap has a series of trustworthy followers nurtured over several years to ensure loyalty in his employ across the Underneath. These spies make sure that most of the major events that happen below come to his attention so he can act. The foremost supporter of Frontier, Knap is using his power and wealth to sponsor a series of expeditions below ranging from colonisation, to reinforcing villages and beleaguered settlements, to investigating the truth of the ancient dwarf kingdom of Durahchûk that once called the earth beneath the Castorhagi streets home.



U23. The Abysm

Falling from the Great Bridge (**U18**), the Abysm is one of the deepest known shafts beneath the city-state and has a reputation for unpredictable gases, and the occasional alien thing that crawls or flies up from below. The pit is of unknown depth, but surveys have been reported to as deep as 2-1/2 miles before being driven back by heat or strange beasts. Various platforms, chains, and other means have been used to try to explore the farther reaches, and recently constructs have been sent down. So far, they have not returned.

U24. Undersea

> Vast and cold, the cavern that opens before you has worked edges in its circular transit. Steps dip into a huge dark shaft filled with water. Salt kisses your lips as you taste the brine air here.

Sometimes argued to be part of the Unsea, the Undersea is the name given over to a huge deep underground saltwater lake or sea. Aboleths rule here, and use the services of a subservient and blind group of skum who number in the thousands. The aboleths have taken a number of prisoners and slaves over the years, bringing them from the surface far above to conduct strange experiments and studies in a city away from the light. Unbeknownst to the aboleths, they are actually pawns in an even bigger game; they are unwitting servants of the Body Snatcher† — a creature merely whispered to exist. The aboleths and other things that live below are pawns, taking victims and their minds for what they think are their own purposes. In reality, the Body Snatcher harvests and sieves those minds and bodies as part of its plot to reclaim what was once its own from the men of the surface high, high above.

The Nether

The very deepest parts of the Underneath that are known, the Nether is merely a name on some maps, and a tale in some storybooks. The caverns here are unworked, and a cloying, sweaty heat touches everything. A tropical malaise affects these corridors and caverns, making it a breeding ground for insects that boil in the air and cause every surface to appear to move.

In addition to the goblinoids and giants of Trolltown, the Nether also contains the highest concentration of Tunnel People. The **morlocks**† and **woerms**† that lurk here represent a true threat to any who dare venture this far into the depths. They avoid Trolltown, having suffered several thrashings at the hands of the trolls and ettins in the past, and some morlocks have even moved to coexist peacefully in that place. But whenever one of these ravenous wanderers tires of feasting upon the insects of this place and can manage to catch an intruder or two alone, nothing but perhaps the gnawed and splintered bones of such unfortunates is ever seen again.

There are a few oases of calm here if they can be found, small pockets where the air is cooler and sources of fresh water bubble up from hidden springs. Most of these are carefully concealed within small settlements of lantern folk† who keep to themselves and protect their own while trying to avoid notice by their more noxious neighbours. However, the lantern folk are very adept at their dungeoneering craft, and they usually have little trouble remaining safe and undetected by the lumbering beasts that wander the Nether.

U25. Trolltown

> A great cave stirs in the deep, its very air steaming with repulsive insects, its sides carved and stricken with fortification. A gigantic domed tower hangs in its centre, lurching.

Trolltown is a foul place to be, a settlement inhabited by troglodytes and trolls but which rules a chunk of the Nether, and which serves the amusement of Lucifer, Prince of Darkness. Humanoids rule this place, and come here to trade and fight and steal. This is as much a viable town as any of the loftier dwarf or human settlements, though unlike those others it is not a borough of the greater city-state of Castorhage. It is an independent settlement that has a militia of trolls and ettins, a market, and water and meat in plentiful supply. It also has the insects, which makes daily life here unbearable for the population as they crawl across every surface, every patch of exposed skin, every beast of burden, biting or stinging until swatted away.

The town is ruled by the **Borrog Festanwen** (CE male two-headed **troll**), who has his own unique take upon life and has created a strangely familiar court. His champion, **Mahfennwi Stroll (**CE male **ettin**), has a mob of ettin ruffians at his beck and call, and is secretly plotting to take over Trolltown. The Royal Palace is situated in the highest level of the domed tower at the heart of the town, and all taxes and food tithes are presented here, as well as any notable visitors. The Bile Lake that floods parts of the town frequently hampers movements. Bizarrely, the seasons above increase the waters here so that in winter, for example, the town is half-flooded.

Visitors are rare in Trolltown, but those who can pass for humanoids and who have a mastery of the Giant or Undercommon languages and practices of those who speak them may be able to mingle for a few days before being discovered and, by royal proclamation, pulled apart by famished otyughs.

U26. The Festering Creases

Partly in the Between and partly in the city, thousands of feet of tunnels and caverns are linked by one fact — their filth. This is the place where all the filth of the city above finally comes to rest. It is the lowest part of the Underneath that is not ruled by the Body Snatcher (see below). The area is filled with **otyughs** and oozes of all kinds, feeding on the refuse.

The Roots — Not Shown on Map

The stories are true. Far, far below the city is an alien creature that has existed longer than even the most ancient of dragons can remember, a creature called the Body Snatcher in old dwarven tales but with a prior name much, much older than that. The Body Snatcher was a thing that grew in the Upper Levels, spreading its fungal fingers over and through all and even extending up through the cracks to the surface in the darkness of night, though with each dawn the light of the sun arrived to burn it back into the depths. How long the enormous continuous fungal mass that spread for miles under the earth lingered there, none could say, but it was present when the first dwarves arrived in the upper tunnels.

The dwarves of Durahchûk burned the growth back with fire, alchemy, and magic, and the thing had no sense of how to respond. It could grow toward these two-legged, fleshy invaders, but always the doughty mailed warriors were ready with torch and oil. Soon the thing was driven out of the Upper Levels and into the natural fissures and faults that make up what would one day be called the Secondary Levels, while the dwarves consolidated their new territories and fortified against incursions of the strange blight that grew so aggressively in the darkness. Before long, their first test shafts were striking valuable veins of minerals, and the first of the mines was begun, bringing them into confrontation with the barely sentient fungoid growth once again … and once again, it fell back before their fire and steel.

But then something occurred to change the fungi's inevitable slide into oblivion. The dwarves began to bury their dead as they years passed, and they cut tombs in the rock within which the bodies of the departed could be lain to rest. Tombs in the dark places of the dwarven citadels — *beneath* the dwarven citadels. Tombs whose tightly closed doors could not prevent the entry or the spread of simple fungal growths. The fungus found the tombs and grew over the bodies and fed on them, absorbed them, subsumed them. And it learned.

The great fungal growth's countless centuries growing in the strange energies given by the close proximity of Between did not go by without effect, and as it absorbed the first of these dwarven dead, it learned something of them, their ways, who they were. And it learned to hate them, hate them as much as it now desired to feed on them — all of them. This was the time of the Growing, when the fungus advanced in unprecedented quantity, speed, and precision. The Durahchûk still had fire and spell, but even they could not keep everywhere in the tunnels lit at all times. And the fungal blight seemed to be learning how to fight them.

The dwarves also discovered that whenever they laid one of their dead to rest, the fungal blight inevitably found the tomb, no matter how heavily guarded, and consumed the corpse. The more it consumed, the more capable it seemed to become at adapting and combatting the dwarves' tactics. It was at this time that the dwarves of Durahchûk gave the fungal creature a name, the "Body Snatcher" and also when they abandoned their time-honoured tradition of interring their dead in vaults. Instead, they turned to cremation in their forge fires, a tradition that lasted for the rest of their days in the Underneath.

Eventually the dwarves regained the upper hand, denying the infestation any more of their dead to feed upon or the opportunity to learn more from them. But they did not follow it to the deepest tunnels of the Roots and did not fully exterminate it. And eventually it found other things to feed upon in the deeper places of the world. Darker things. From these it learned new things and new ways to fight. From these it was able to culture within its own vast being a new organism, a tiny organism too small to be seen, even smaller than the spores of the Body Snatcher's own fungal substance. It seeded these new organisms on its spores and then let the warm air vents of the Root and the Nether carry these seeded spores up high into the Mines and the Skin.

When the disease broke out amongst the dwarves, even their hardy physiologies could not stave off the burning fevers and blood-red faces as tiny capillaries broke beneath their skin and coloured their features with crimson as they died. Some called it the Scarlet Plague, but most just called it Thakren, "the Curse." They tried to cure it, seal themselves away from it, and flee it, but in the end, the Thakren plague spelled the end of the great Durahchûk civilisation of the dwarves beneath Insula Lymossus.

However, even in its victory, the Body Snatcher could not reclaim its prize, for in the centuries that had passed as it lay brooding in its pit, new folk had come and built upon the surface of the island. Folk in great numbers and with great magic. And between their own prowess and the advantage of sunlight, the Body Snatcher could no longer occupy the Upper Levels and Secondary Levels as it had before and was forced once again into the depths to await a time when it can be master of the Underneath.

The murky deeps of the Roots are elaborately carved — or perhaps more accurately, grown — parts of the Body Snatcher itself. The living walls are infested with thousands of the Body Snatcher's lesser parts — grown creatures and horrors that dwell within the Roots and who fear the things from above, abominations whose very forms terrify the perfectly distended bodies of the Body Snatcher and its hive.

The Body Snatcher still waits and broods in the dark. Time is meaningless to a sentient hive mind fungus. It has seeded the city above with its spreading blight† through the countless unknown fissures and shafts that rise to the surface. And its spores have also carried the seeds of madness through fungal infections of brains and central nervous systems to create some of what are called Tunnel People† among particularly susceptible members of the populace above as well as draw other subterranean races of similar ravenousness to plague the city. It still seeks to claim as many of the bodies of the dead as it can to add to its collective mind in hopes of another epiphany like that which laid low the dwarves, and continually turns its thoughts toward the means of producing a new Scarlet Plague.

Part Two: Running Underneath

100 Features of Underneath

1. The perfectly preserved corpse of a dwarf calcified beneath a layer of in lime
2. A miner's lamp
3. A scrawled warning (in Dwarven): "Do not proceed!"
4. A very distant yell
5. A subterranean graveyard
6. An abandoned subterranean library full of wax tablets and mouldy scrolls
7. A broken bridge above a shaft hundreds of feet deep
8. A trio of dwarf miners who has starved to death after becoming lost
9. The recently dead body of an aboleth miles away from any water
10. A set of badly burned rat bone sculptures of people, who by coincidence number the same as the group of people who find it
11. Hundreds of candle stubs line this corridor
12. A nailed up side shaft with the Dwarven words, "Danger, occupied."
13. A shaft opens above your head. It is home to thousands of bats
14. A crucified dwarf skeleton
15. A dwarf skeleton that clearly died being pulled apart. The ropes and limbs are still nearby
16. A rusted bell with "gas" written on it in Dwarven
17. A comfortable but long-abandoned miners' bunkhouse
18. A well covered with a padlocked wooden trapdoor
19. A series of lewd drawings of dwarf ladies
20. A broken mattock
21. This area has dozens of locked cells, with rusted keys in each door
22. A metal bridge crosses an underground mill race
23. Half a dozen rusted waterwheels cross a deep fast river
24. The distant sound of screams for help
25. A distant bell clang
26. Something very heavy falls down an unseen shaft nearby
27. A daisy chain of dwarf shin bones
28. A dwarf skeleton crushed completely flat but with no sign of the cause
29. A set of strange bone musical pipes that make an eerie noise in the warm breeze below
30. A pith miner's hat with unlit candle on top
31. A discarded set of cards
32. A scrimshaw whistle

33. A bag of fossils
34. A big bag of fossils
35. A wheelbarrow full of coal
36. The marked grave of a pit pony called Loyal who served his master well for 20 years
37. An old ore cart
38. A still-edible jar of jam
39. A half-bottle of foul tasting water
40. A side-corridor has collapsed and a skeletal hand is visible protruding from beneath
41. A series of ornate chambers set about a water-filled shaft
42. A number of sluices are arranged along a stream that lies beside the corridor
43. A very heavy iron door with a locking wheel mechanism bars the way
44. A steppingstone bridge crosses the deep underground water shaft
45. A dried fish
46. A fine carving of a three-headed ettin
47. A corridor with dozens of bat and gargoyle carvings
48. Clearly some sort of abandoned underground market
49. The mines here are badly burned and what was in them is calcified
50. A shrine at the side of the corridor
51. An elaborately carved water pump that looks like an afanc
52. A twelve-wheeled wagon
53. A statue of a dire pig with the words, "Loyal unto the death," carved below in Dwarven
54. This whole area has pit props that are riddled with woodworm
55. The corridors here have wooden flooring
56. A curious lump of crystal
57. This section of corridor has wide wooden gates across it
58. An area of corridor overlooked by dozens of arrow slits
59. A massive fossilised long bone
60. A terrified cat scuttles by
61. A bucket of dead rats
62. A huge coal bunker piled high with coal
63. A number of moulding paintings of important-looking dwarves line this room
64. This corridor is designed to look like the open mouth of a dragon
65. A storage room filled with milk churns
66. A corridor lined with empty storage jars
67. A large number of what look like gnoll skeletons smashed to bits
68. A very deep mineshaft
69. Huge rusted coils of wire fill this chamber
70. An unnecessarily elaborate wig
71. A cauldron
72. An abandoned dwarf village
73. A carved map of the area
74. Parts of an old museum that have long ago decayed
75. A neat but abandoned underground tavern called the Skull and Hatter
76. An underground quay leads to a river tunnel
77. An oreblossom tree
78. An oreblossom walkway winds its way gracefully across a deep underground lake
79. The distant sound of iron on iron
80. A cold smith's forge
81. A series of mounted choker heads in a small courtyard
82. A complex junction of stairways
83. A fierce wind blows from up a side shaft
84. A rope-and-wooden bridge hangs across a shaft
85. An iron sphere 6 feet in diameter
86. A massive maul big enough for a Huge creature
87. A length of chain as thick as your waist hangs taut and vanishes into a wide shaft below
88. The skeleton of some insectoid thing like a face
89. A decomposed dwarf has become one with the iron furnace that killed him
90. A huge stove
91. This area must have been some sort of kitchen to feed hundreds
92. The whispering words of a child echo from somewhere near
93. The clattering of chains follows you
94. A massive spider scurries by
95. A gigantic long-rusted trebuchet points at a huge natural cave entrance
96. A huge pit of bones
97. A side room of lavatories
98. A very tall bunkroom that could sleep a hundred on ten levels of beds carved into the walls
99. The ceiling creaks ominously, and a trail of fine dust spills down
100. The floor shakes.

Underneath Encounters

The table is divided into encounters for the uppermost regions (The Skin and The Mine) and the lower regions (Deeper Levels and The Nether). Modify rolls on the table based on the Underneath level as follows:

Upper Levels (The Skin) +0/Secondary Levels (The Mines) +10
Deeper Levels +0/The Nether +10

Upper	Lower	Result
01	01–03	Human miners
02	04–05	**Swarms of rats** (1d4+1)
03–12	06–08	Dwarf prospectors
13	09–10	**Otyughs** (1d2+2)
14–18	11	Ore caravan
19–21	12	Diggers
22–23	13–21	**Piercers**
24–25	22–23	**Bugbear** gang (1d4+2)
—	24-25	**Ochre jelly**
26–27	26–31	Explorers
28–29	32–33	Gatherers
30–33	34–35	**Kobold** gang (1d4+10)
—	36	**Darkmantle** clutch (3d4)
—	37	**Gibbering mouther**
—	38–42	**Bugbear** troop (1d8+5)
34–39	43	Dwarf hunting party
40–41	44–50	**Ghoul** pack (1d6+6)
42	51	**Mite**† band (2d4)
43–50	52	Mine workers
51–55	53–58	Shadowlampers†
56–62	59–60	**Morlocks**† (1d6)
63	61	**Mimic**
—	62	**Cave fishers**† (2d6)
64–65	63–64	**Woerm**† gang (3d4)
66	65	**Black pudding**
67–69	66	**Wererat** pack (1d6+4)
70	67	**Giant spider** colony (1d6+2)
71–72	68–71	**Dark creeper**† hunting gang (1d4+2)
—	72	**Gelatinous cube**
73–78	73–80	Collapse
—	81	**Aboleth**
—	82	**Morlock**† tribe (3d6)
79–82	83–88	**Green slime**
83–97	89–90	**Mongrelman**† band
98	91–93	**Troll** gang (1d2+2)
99	94	**Cloakers** (1d4+2)

Upper	Lower	Result
00	95–96	**Skum**† pack (2d8+4)
—	97	**Purple worm**
—	98	**Ettin** gang (1d4+2)
—	99–00	Ropers (1d4+2)

Collapse: This occurrence either signifies (75%) a collapse that has already happened, temporarily blocking the way or (25%) a dangerously unstable section of passage, almost certainly labelled with warnings in Dwarven. Characters moving through such dangerous locations trigger collapses with area-effect spells (or others at your choice) that cause 25 hit points of damage or more, or may cause the collapse at your discretion.

Diggers: These 1d4+1 dwarves (**commoner**) are repairing the tunnel with pit props, crowbars, and other tools necessary to fix a problem or concern in part of a working mine.

Dwarf Hunting Party: This group conforms to the Dwarf Hunt sidebox in **Part 1** above.

Dwarf Prospectors: This is a group of 3d4 salt-o'-the-earth† dwarf prospectors (**commoner**) led by a salt-o'-the-earth† dwarf guide (**veteran**). They generally carry surveying equipment and heavy tools to enable them to explore the caverns for ore. Such dwarves are generally hostile to any interaction, suspecting rival companies and groups of prospectors.

Explorers: A group of 1d6+6 hill dwarf scouts (**veterans**) are exploring the Underneath for various reasons, almost all to do with making money. The group is likely to be hostile to any encounter, suspecting foul play. They are (50%) likely to be mounted on **giant boars**.

Gatherers: This group of dwarves is out gleaning the Underneath for food and water. They are generally 1d6+3 toiler† dwarves (**commoner**) with a **giant boar** and a single toiler† dwarf **guard**. They search for fungi, root vegetables, and spring water. In lower regions, the guard should be increased or the party may be lost.

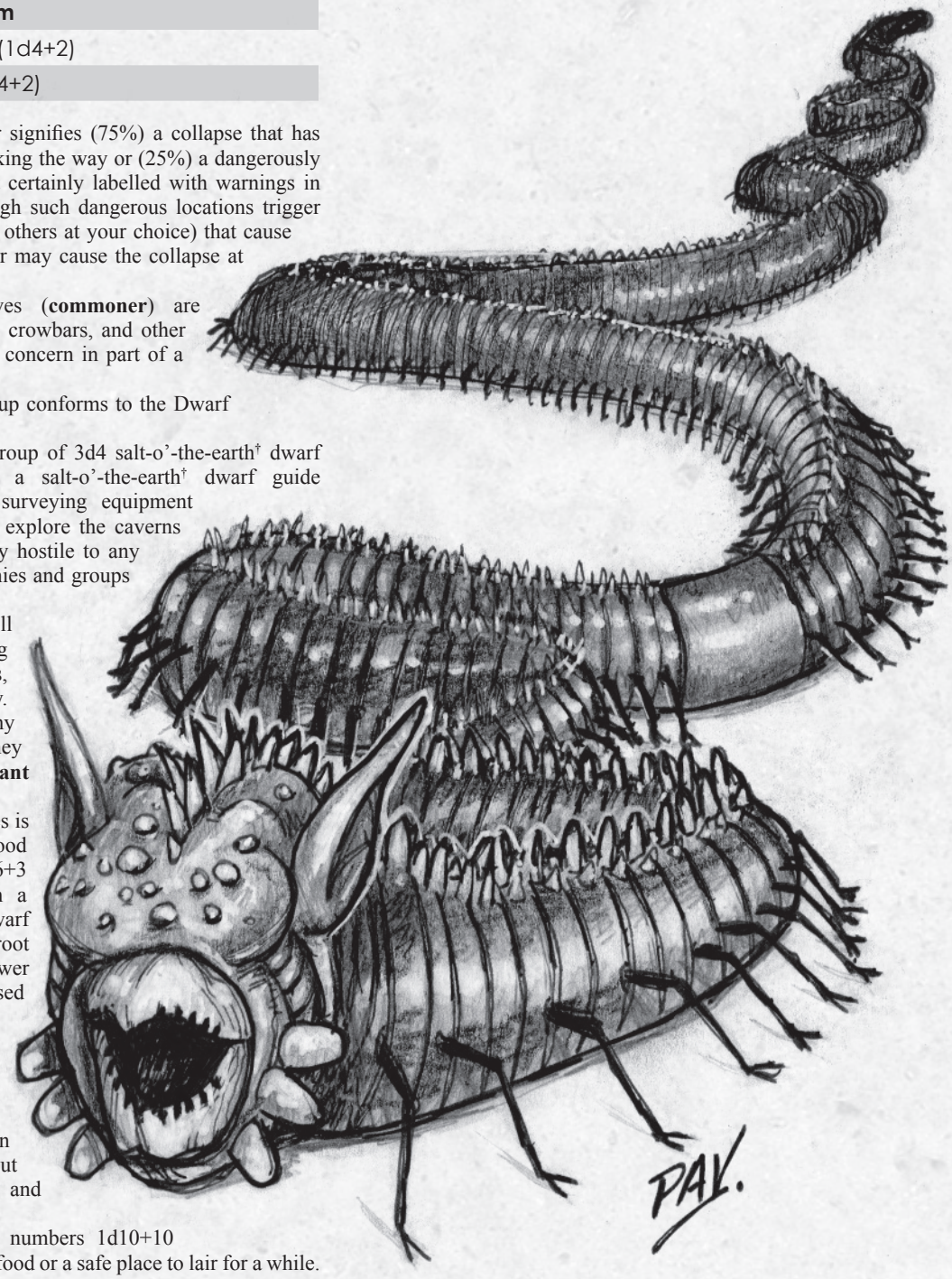
Human Miners: This group of 2d6 miners (**thug**) is unwelcome in the upper regions. The human miners are almost always searching for work farther below. They are in the Underneath incognito without a city permit, and have the means and supplies for an extended sojourn.

Mongrelman Band: This band numbers 1d10+10 **mongrelfolk**† traveling in search of food or a safe place to lair for a while. They are initially wary of other travellers, but become friendly if treated kindly.

Ore Caravan: This train of 1d4+1 ore carts drawn by pit ponies† consists of 1d10+10 toiler† dwarf labourers (**commoner**) and 1d4+5 toiler dwarf **guards**. The carts are either empty and going down, or full and coming up. If the carts are full, the caravan members are unfriendly and even threatening to characters who bother them.

Mine Workers: This group of 1d20+10 toiler* dwarves (**commoner**) is either just going on a shift or just coming off. They're either in a hurry or exhausted and grumpy, and have little time for small talk.

Shadowlampers: A squad of 1d6+3 shadowlamp half-orc* constables (**guard**) patrols the tunnel, watching for threats.



Chapter Eleven: The Sinks and Asylum



Decay, the whole place reeks of it, from the stinking, stagnant canals crossed by the broken skeletons of rusting bridges, to the sagging moss-suffocated walls of buildings falling into one another. One day soon, the whole place is going to topple, and the marsh will reclaim herself, reassert her right to be seen, and will rule this sodden corner of the city once more. Nature is slowly winning this war. The gardens are choked with weed and briars. The streets are awash with the stench of urine and effluent and poison.

There are no streets here, only canals, with a few walkways and alleys connecting the tilting, sinking buildings, or weaving between them. The canals themselves are clogged with hired gondolas, rented rowboats, and garbage … so much filth. It's almost as if the waters rebel against the encroachment of the city. Placid lakes and pools are embraced with pollution and slime.

This corner of Castorhage has become home to those who fester with decay. The true rulers of this place thrive on endless death. The unseen leaders of the district come abroad at night and dwell in a sick image of the Capitol, a decadent despairing dance of excess. The aristocrats who come here are exiles: the misfits, the demented, the disgusting. Cast out of the Capitol, but above the call of the executioner. Royal does not kill Royal, at least publicly, so they cast them here to rot. Some live out lives of easy normalcy; a veneer of life beyond the damp decay. Others embrace the macabre joy that comes from living in such a place and with such company.

A few others attain a new type of unlife and join the few who really rule here. The vampires…

Introduction

Is madness infectious?

They cram into its decaying façade living a collective lie; all is normal here, all *are* normal here. The truth is darker; madness begets madness, excess drives excess, and when the hunger is driven by those who are unused to hearing the word 'no' the glut never stops, feeding upon itself and growing out of control.

No aristocrat should kill another — at least not openly — so those who are deemed unfit to mingle with the inbred, selfish, vile polluted horrors that rule the city from the Capitol are exiled.

They come to the Sinks to die.

They crawl the streets here, absorbing an exterior calm; an image of serenity is of utmost importance, for no matter how depraved, no matter how diseased, no matter how wrong they are, they find a home here.

Yet, even the Royal Family admit that some of their high caste are too dangerous. These individuals are confined in the **Asylum**, the "Asylum Run by Inmates" many call it. The guards, physikers and cultists who care for the Asylum do so for perverse reasons, but each is bound by a fear of retribution, they dare not openly defy a noble by killing one. Many inmates go free only to be caught again, yet some remain free to carry on their wicked lives.

This is a place where Royals take care of their sick. Watch constables walk the streets in droves, ensuring that only those who look the part are allowed to use the countless boats that ply the waters here. There are few paths in the Sinks, but plenty of boatmen, with their colourful attire and their songbirds. Ah yes, the songbirds. The Sinks has an even darker secret than its populace: its poison soul. The Sinks sag into the marshes of the city and occasionally, poisonous gases rise from the water. Everyone who can afford one, has a canary to warn them of impending gas. This gas has a life of its own, with its own legends and names. First, there is the **Canker**, which are the smoggy mists that rise seasonally off the river and surrounding waterways. The Canker sleeps here to spread its ephemeral embrace across the city, and within its enshrouding billows, **Jack's Candle** kills with its smothering fumes.

Others have made homes here. The Sinks is a great place to hide, for in truth, there are few worse places in the city, certainly few less wholesome. Life is cheap here, disease is rife, and plagues strike with alarming regularity. The rot throws new sicknesses into the air, and some of these illnesses take on flesh given them by Between. These killers rise for a night, a month, or a hundred years, and plague the locals living here.

Ostensibly, the Sinks is an enclave of art and nobility, separated by a vast gulf from the ruffian Artist's Quarter where anarchy seethes. Art here is different — edgier, horrific — better, most aristocrats would say.

Others lurk here. Vampires abound in the dark streets. Some walk openly in the twilight and have normal lives. They are a plague like any other, but have taken hold of the ruins and the rotting spires and the vast cathedrals with their incredible frescoes and dancing colours. Sahuagin, the sea devils, slink in the canals, looking for intelligent flesh to eat. Skum look for brides to take. And things without eyes swim through the muck or stare blindly up through thin ice.

Part One: Places

"True happiness lies in the senses, and virtue gratifies none of them."

What the Sinks looks like…

Like a child's drawing of a city, there are no straight lines in the Sinks. Everything seems to rely on everything else to remain standing, like some vast house of cards. Everything is green, and this damp verdigris hides the magnificence of the buildings it chokes. This is a place that was once incredible; art glances from every hallway; columns sag or twist; courtyards try to be reborn from the sinking decay and rot.

This is a district riddled with canals, but these are not sweet-smelling avenues that lead to the open sea. They are open sewers that never flush themselves of the filth that clots their courses. This place is suffocating even to the piles upon which the district has been built, and which it clings desperately to, like a drowning man holding onto flotsam.

Blurring this vision are the birds. They swoop in vast flocks between the streets, over the rooftops, and on top of the stagnant water. Peacocks call from gables. Ravens and blinding crows swirls among the spires and pelicans squat on the piers. Swans glide across oily dark waters, herons nest on tower tops, and mangy gulls sit on sills. Why so much birdlife comes here is a matter of speculation; most suggest it is the waste, the greedy nobility tossing what they cannot eat to the scavengers. Others say the birds have a different purpose. Some say the ravens are waiting to collect and devour the souls of the dying, that the birds have come through a rip in Between and are here to maim and cleanse the place of mortal life. Others attribute it to the more mundane reason that everyone who is anyone in the Sinks has a menagerie, and that birds are cheaper, but more likely to escape, than many of the other animals.

What the Sinks smells like…

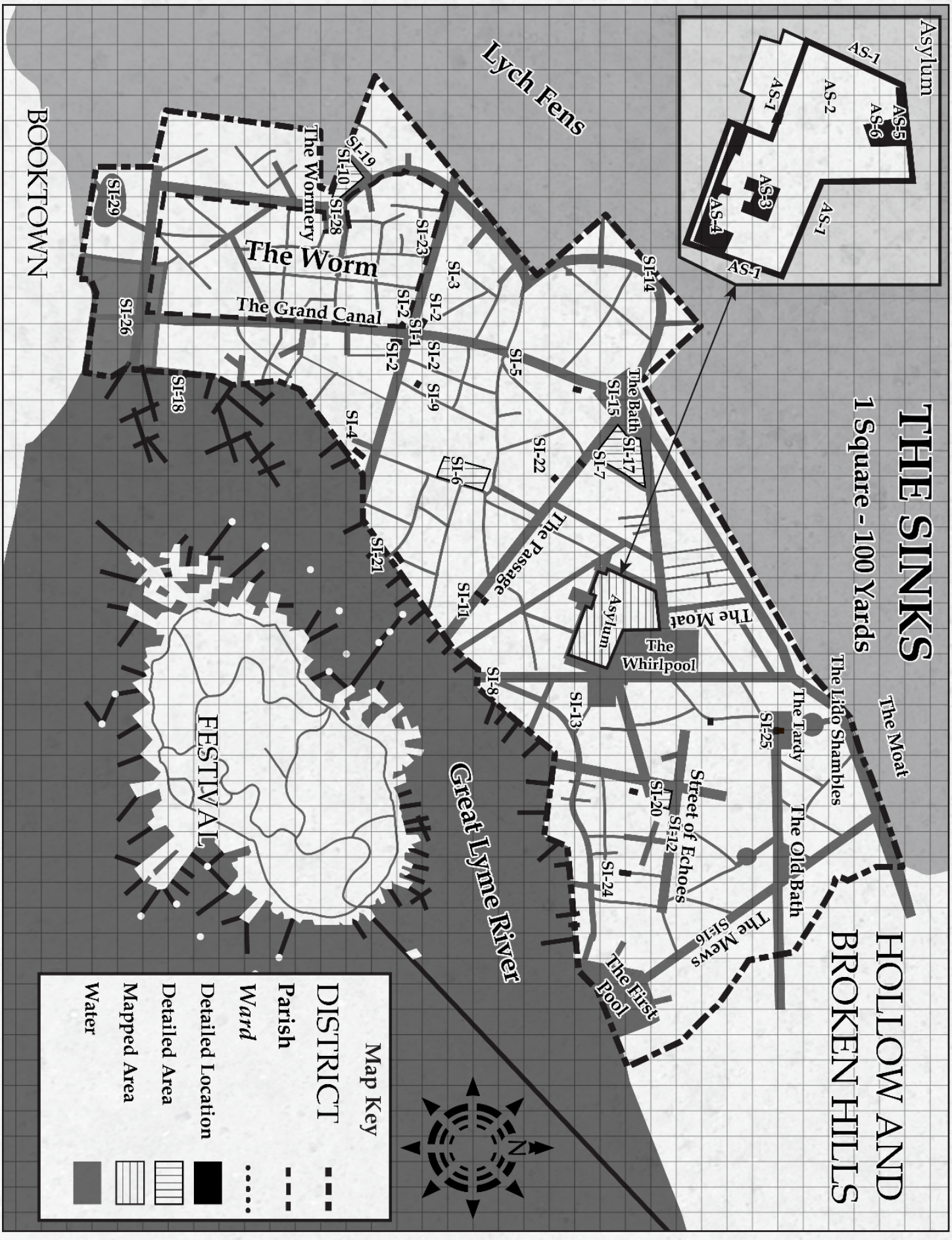
It smells of the sea, and of decay. The Sinks is stagnant, always stagnant. Its smells and sickness have a tendency to stay, fetid, clinging to corners and gables and walls. Lichen and fungus abound, and green moss forms even on the newest buildings within days of construction. Feces swims with slops, rotting meat dances with floating cadavers, rubbish dances with decay.

What the Sinks feels like…

It feels as though it is perpetually moving, for no good reason. Some say the birds lend it this air of motion, others say that it is actually moving, and is even now floating upon the skin of the Lyme waiting to sink at any second. The Sinks is riddled with odd angles and shapes. Many visitors complain of queasiness, some cannot abide to stay for more than a few hours. There is a palpable feeling of oppression, of imminent collapse, as though the city is at the very edge of an earthquake or a tidal wave is about to rip through.

What the Sinks sounds like…

It is filled with the songs of the boatmen — the prahu-punters — the calling birds, and the cry of gulls feasting upon the flotsam and waste


THE SINKS
1 Square - 100 Yards
HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
Asylum
AS-1
AS-2
AS-3
AS-4
AS-5
AS-6
AS-7
Lych Fens
The Worm
The Grand Canal
The Wormery
BOOKTOWN
SI-1
SI-2
SI-3
SI-4
SI-5
SI-6
SI-7
SI-8
SI-9
SI-10
SI-11
SI-12
SI-13
SI-14
SI-15
SI-16
SI-17
SI-18
SI-19
SI-20
SI-21
SI-22
SI-23
SI-24
SI-25
SI-26
SI-28
SI-29
The Bath
The Passage
The Moat
Asylum
The Whirlpool
The Lido Shambles
The Tardy
The Old Bath
Street of Echoes
The Mews
The First Pool
Great Lyme River
FESTIVAL
N
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water

of the city. And there is something more, a sound that is hard to discern, yet always there. Some say it is the song of madness, the whispers of the screams of the Asylum inmates drifting into every pore of the city, into every window and through every door.

Seven words to describe the Sinks…

…dead *Dislocated*
Mad inbred
DECADENT **collapsing** *Water*

Parishes and Wards

The Sinks isn't cohesive enough to have Parishes, although the **'Worm** and even **The Asylum** (see below) may qualify in the loosest sense.

Streets

The Sinks has canals, not streets. There are no roads to speak of, and it is often called the City without Streets. It does have several hundred narrow walkways; from rusting iron paths that cling precariously to walls above canals, to narrow pathways that lurk between tunnels of houses that kiss in the daylight above. All goods of any size have to be brought in by water, and anyone with any self-respect or care for personal safety uses the barges and boats that ply those waterways. The prahu-punters in their colourful boats work night and day to ferry their visitors and fares about. Some say that many literally work day and night, and that some prahu-punters are actually things that wear the flesh of men. These canals vary from a few inches deep, with sludge and rot reaching to the surface, to some that are said to be bottomless.

The Grand Canal

The most euphemistically named of the Sinks' many canals, the Grand Canal is a stagnant sludge into which the Sinks' refuse empties. Its surface often grows a hard crust in summer, but it is perilous to walk as routes that resemble rock are infested with mires and quicksand.

The Moat

Surrounding the entire district, the moat is a natural waterway and is what remains of the levee that was built to keep the water off the paths and alleys of the Sinks. Its course has been modified over the years and varies in width between 5 and 500 feet. The Moat dries up in places, and becomes a place for local children to play upon, much to the terror of their mothers, who have heard the stories of bogs that swallow, and mires that choke.

The Passage

The canal of trade in the Sinks, the Passage is home to the most people, who dwell in fancy townhouses that lean against each other; the flaking paint and sculptures and banners hide the decay behind. The Passage also houses most of the shops and the majority of fashionable outlets and warehouses in the district.

The Worm of the Sinks (a.k.a. the White Worm, the Slither, the Lost Way)

Seen as more of an infestation than an area, the Worm has developed over the centuries since Branner's Folly was first made and infested with canals and brooks. It has a thousand dead ends and passages, some of which are said to lead straight to Between, or even Hell itself. Things lurk here, dark cults spring up. It is a bad location, in the bad part of town. The narrowest canals here are barely navigable, and the sick façade of twilight normality in these streets often hides terror a skin-width behind the veneer. It is said that in the Worm there are sucking pools and bogs that move, and that some places link to foul dungeons riddled through bedrock.

Lidos, Pools and Baths

It is true that the Sinks has a thousand squares, mostly grimy gaps in the darkness that allow the sun to cast a few shadows, for the locals to breath air — those that need to. There is another type of plaza here, another meeting ground. Sometimes these places are used as floating markets, sometimes as places to bathe — if you are brave enough. Mostly, they are just meeting places of canals. The locals call them lido or bath or pool, but they all serve the same purpose: a confluence of canals.

The Bath (**SI5**) is the most famous of these places, but there are others. The First Pool is the oldest, with ramparts to hold back the tide and strange floating shipyards. The shipbuilders work here, bribing the aristocratic gangs and overseers for their patch, fighting for it if necessary. The Old Bath is the first public swimming area, but few would brave it now. The festering place is famous for its gondolas, narrowboats, and barges which light up the place by night. Children still play in the Bath, but only when their parents are not looking. Things lurk in its depths.

The Lido Shambles is criss-crossed by timber buildings and is called 'Little Town Bridge' by some. The Whirlpool is a confluence of many canals, and at certain times of the year, when the tides are high, the place lives up to its name and is un-navigable. The Tardy is another smaller lido, politely known as the 'Still Lido.' This place is a festering mass of flotsam that develops a hard crust of ice in winter, and is a pool of mud in summer. In its centre, sits a small, dreary island compound called the 'Weary Palace,' notable for its three-faced gargoyle weather-vain and tall central tower.

The worst of the larger Lidos is the Wormery or Deep Pool. It is said to link directly to Underneath, and that there is a vastly deep (some say bottomless) pit leading directly to Hell. Attempts at exploration have met tragic ends, and the place has a well-deserved reputation for deadly marsh gases. Those who live at its sides are never without a canary or three to warn them of poisonous gases. The Lightless Echo (**SI28**) contains more details of the pool.

Many other pools pierce the canals and rivers of the Sinks.

"Even Royalty has its outcasts, its guilty secrets, its horrors. This is where they go to be hidden, to live lives away from their cousins in the Capitol. Shameful secrets.

"They wouldn't kill them though, not like us poor, oh no. They keep them alive. Royal code they say, no Royal ever harms another. I've heard tales, terrible tales, of inbred things, vampires, and worse. They get bored see? Bored in their dislocated homes that sag and collapse. They yearn for the old days. Oh, they try … they keep up a veneer of respectability, but they're all cursed, all touched by Branner's Curse.

"Demented many are; perhaps that's why they built the Asylum here. It's easier to transport those that is close. Spreads like a sickness it does, this madness … infests and infects, drives 'em crazy. Surgeon-artist, prophets, killers … they all wash up in the canals here eventually.

"If you want my advice, you'll steer well clear of the Sinks. For those who enter tend to drown, and not all of them in the water."

SI1. Cathedral Square

Impossible! The scene that greets you is unnerving and breath-taking. It is a confluence of canals in a wide space surrounded by a quartet of cathedrals. Each of the cathedrals has fallen, three now lean across the canal in an embrace of buttresses and gabions and timber. The fourth leans away, its high tower spiralling upwards and facing the square.

The heart of the Sinks, the Cathedral Square was just like any other of the city marvels until almost 400 years ago when, after a major storm with extensive flooding, a sudden sinkhole swallowed several city blocks, and left the cathedrals in their present state of semi-collapse. That they have not completely collapsed is, many say, a miracle, and the rest of the damaged areas were soon built over again. The more cynical point out that perhaps Branner's Folly has met its ultimate rebuke here, and that when

the cathedrals finally fall, the place will finally be abandoned and left to the waters from which it was originally, foolishly, pulled.

Cathedral Square draws the needy, the beggars, the sick, and the pilgrims. By day and night, the square sweats below a tide of humanity scarcely seen anywhere in the city, or in any other city for that matter. To walk across the 200-yard square has been known to take a day, and the countless prahu-punters who lurk below the makeshift bridges that criss-cross the watercourses of the squares are masters in repartee.

>GJ2. The Crooked Cathedrals

There are four cathedrals in all: Saint Berram in the northeast, Saint Korne to the southeast, Alemiam, Sinner of the Flesh, in the southwest, and finally Saint Lannon in the northwest. The tower of Saint Lannon is the only one not connected to the others. It is possible to enter the doorway of any of the other three cathedrals and leave from another, passing through a giddy array of walkways and bridges suspended above the ground.

Saint Berram's (Patron Saint of the Arts) is the largest cathedral, and is richly decorated in incredible scenes of the life of Mother Grace and the dizzying angels that accompany her. To step into the cathedral's heart is to step into gold; every inch is gilded save the mosaic floor which is richly decorated in spiralling patterns that many find dizzying. Saint Grecho (Patron of Painters, 1102–1178) painted the interiors, which are regarded by many as the finest in the city. Although, the modern work on the Capitol Cathedral (**C9**) is rapidly eclipsing even the work here. The cathedral is home to His Holiness the Living Saint Marripian Jeppo (LN male human **high priest**† of Mother Grace) and his hundreds of devoted followers, who make their homes in the convents and monasteries around the square. Every week his holiness attends a service, and on some occasions the festivals and masses can go on for several days.

Saint Korne (Patron Saint of Architecture and Settlements) is the highest cathedral, a vast edifice of gold showing the wealth and the power of the church. A shrine to Mithras, the cathedral also has its own, integral warrior's school, which has monasteries across the Sinks. The Order of the Korne are humourless, devoted fighters who live a life of strict discipline and order. Many do not set eyes on a woman until they are past their 21st birthday, some claim never to have done so. Possibly the greatest fighter in the city, the now elderly Master, His Holiness with Honour and Armour, the Blade of Storm Varth (LN male human **knight of renown**†) avoids ceremony as much as he can. Varth belies his steely powers with a ready wit and calmness that few equate to the hero of old.

Alemiam, Sinner of the Flesh (Patroness Sinner of Carnality and the Womb), is not so anachronistic here as might at first be supposed. For the joys of enlightenment, there are those who take an opposite stand, and the Sinner of the Flesh is not just the goddess of certain higher castes of courtesan and houri that operate in the city, but also the saint many women turn to when they wish for children, or pray they are not with child. There are some, of course, who make a donation and enter the cathedral to be titillated; it is true that some of the most erotic art in the city is on display here, and rumours abound of chambers which contain the darkest secrets of the carnal arts. Her Ripe and Bountiful the Cornucopian Mistress of the Sinner and Sinned Falisia (N female human **high priest**† (with the following changes: 49 (9d8 + 9) hit points, 9th level spell caster with the following spell slots—1st level (4), 2nd level (3), 3rd level (3), 4th level (3), 5th level (1) and remove spells above 5th level and *aid* and *mass cure wounds*, and change Challenge to 5) of the Ash Queen) runs the cathedral, she is a generous and kind patron who has, rumour says, a score of children by a score of different men, many of whom hold positions of great power in the city. Her eldest daughter Isobela (NE female human **initiate witch**†) is said to be the daughter of Duke Taim in the Capitol.

Presently living in luxury at the cathedral is His Resplendent Grand Justice Korsk-Master of the Sinks. Korsk has a wing of the cathedral for his own indulgences, but uses his power to keep Falisia and her followers on his side, as well as having his own deadly bodyguard, the infamous Abran Blackthorn (N male human **veteran**). Korsk regularly ventures from the sinks with his old friend Crown Prince Rorth, heading towards the Artists' Quarter for amusement. He is also almost brotherly in his closeness to Great Banker Aspin Edgrun Malcul Shortsone III, presently master of the Great Bank of Castorhage (**HBH5**).

The Leaning Tower of (Saint) Lannon (Patron Saint of Self-Worth and Pride) is a strange and — to climb its 698 steps — dizzying experience. Some say that to look directly down from the Point of Pride at the highest point of the tower is to truly see yourself. It has an astonishingly high suicide rate and many traders have become so blasé about people who throw themselves off that they have named their stalls the Final Stop, the Spend Your Last Coin and other unsubtle titles. The Braggard Stone hangs at a point some 5 feet below the top Point of Pride, and is said to bring a lifetime's luck and wit to any who touch it. Sadly, it is so far over the edge of the leaning tower that anyone who wishes to touch it must successfully make the almost impossible DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check, or rely upon a rope or a friend literally dangling them over the edge of the tower by their feet — a true test of friendship. Over a hundred people have found that all the luck and wit doesn't save them from falling. His Valiance the Cleric of Lannon (N male human **high priest**† (with the following changes: 49 (9d8 + 9) hit points, 9th level spell caster with the following spell slots—1st level (4), 2nd level (3), 3rd level (3), 4th level (3), 5th level (1) and remove spells above 5th level and *aid* and *mass cure wounds*, and change Challenge to 5) of Mammon) runs the tower, and oversees the monastery of Mammon, which has over a hundred devotees whose parents pay vast sums to have their children taught by the growlingly selfish priest.

GJ3. The Crooked Clock

A rancid building lurches partly across the broad canal; it is home to thousands upon thousands of blindingcrows† and ravens. The place is a great clock, held aloft in the embrace of bones, a whole building made of bones. Their source soon becomes obvious; this is a place of execution; its walls fester with gibbets, many of which are occupied by pitiful people on the edge of death. Stakes for burning witches and traitors, and a frightening array of stages for public disembowellings and punishment crowd about the clock. A brand-new, shining guillotine glowers from a new stage, this one higher than the others. Countless heads, many fresh, stare blankly like sick garlands swaying in the breeze.

Centrepiece of local justice and entertainment, if you come to the Crooked Clock against your will, it's the last journey you will make. Executions take place here daily, even hourly in times of great conflict (such as during ***The Levee Adventure***'s later stages). The crowds number in the thousands, and at such times a carnival atmosphere of macabre joy fills the area, with cheap souvenirs, street food and tickets for better views available. Certain entrepreneurs who own property overlooking the clock have taken advantage of these carnivals and rent out viewing points and private rooms; a good view of a really good execution can cost as much as 100 gp.

Religious Services

The subject of spellcasting in the Blight is one that is raised regularly by the clergy. Some spells are simply not cast on anyone who has not devoted their whole life to the church (whichever church), and quite often no spells at all are cast unless the recipient is a certified devotee of the god in question, can prove it, and can pay. The four cathedrals in the Sinks are noted exceptions to this, and spells up to 3rd level are available, although the wait is usually 1d6 days for the right cleric to be present. Spells of 4th and 5th level are generally only available to devotees who know the clerics or the orders on a personal level. However, even then the fee for such spells (with the **strict** exception of *raise dead*, which is reasonable) tends to be exorbitant. Holy water and healing potions are easily and readily available at each of the four cathedrals at standard cost, and other common and uncommon potions may be ordered with a wait of 1d6 days at a cost set by the GM if desired.



SI4. The Raven Spire

A cathedral stares out across the great river; its surface blisters with gargoyles, each of which is a raven-like figure. There are ravens hanging traitors, ravens viewing the skies through telescopes, and ravens checking the time on elaborate timepieces.

Outcast noble Chamomile Bramble (NE female human **lesser blight vampire**†) lurks in the belfry of the cathedral, often casting her gaze across to Festival where she spends most of her nights.

Bramble keeps a small group of vampire spawn to serve her needs, one of whom — Nectra (NE male human **cult fanatic** of Lucifer) — runs the cathedral as a front for his mistress's activities. The other spawn are all female and masked as nuns of "The Raven Lord" (a possibly fictitious deity). The spawn keep up the façade by holding services at the very start or end of the day but never during full daylight hours. Often, services are held in winter evenings, and during the summer, the place has an air of neglect and decay about it.

Locals have noted this strange coincidence of the summer and the torpor that seems to sweep the place when the sun is at its highest and longest, and occasionally someone becomes intrigued enough to investigate. No one so far has managed to enter the cathedral and come out alive.

SI5. The Bridge of Tears

A beautiful arched bridge spans the canal here, linking two magnificent buildings.

The bridge connects the palace of ex-cleric of Mother Grace His Holiness the Drogè of the Holy Mother (NE male **lesser blight vampire**†) to his interrogation rooms. The name is taken from the experience of prisoners afforded a last glimpse of the city and its palaces before they are questioned. The palace covers four acres, and contains a score of works by the celebrated 14th-century artist Cardella Magell.

The machines of questioning, some of which are fleshgines†, are the very latest word in cruelty and pitilessness. They are easily able to take apart bodies, but the combination of domination and the insectum† used heightens the cruelty and torture to a level where resistance is impossible. One does not leave the interrogation rooms sane, and there are stories, even among the vampires, of things lurking in the shadows of Between that are occasionally glimpsed hungrily looking in on the questionings. That prisoners sometimes vanish — when escape is impossible — is something the Scarlet Stain (see below) are secretly concerned about and they have a number of agents trying to find out why and to put a stop to it.

The palace and interrogation cells bristle with guards and clerics and are a front for a powerful cabal of vampires led by his holiness. These are part of a small group of 13 vampires who act as an independent gang of undead known as the Scarlet Stain, who operate in the Sinks and who, ostensibly,

Blight Gang: The Scarlet Stain

Leader: His Holiness the Drogè of the Holy Mother (NE male **lesser blight vampire**†) **Motivations:** Domination of all undead of Castorhage
Friends: Ostensibly (but only tacitly) the Fetch
Enemies: The Fetch (in truth)
Tactics: Seek and convert. The brothers seek out only males to join their brotherhood, a formation that is bound by ties of carnality and undeath
Morale: Fearless; a strong bond of brotherhood created not only by their shared creation and needs, but in many cases by a true affection developed over centuries of companionship.

act as its undead rulers. To cross the vampires is an effective signature on your own death warrant; the vampires are becoming so powerful that they have launched intrigues and plots against Beltane, God Emperor of the Fetch. A thousand plots and intrigues are guided on a daily basis by the vampires, who consider the Sinks the true capital of undeath in the city. They plot with and against each other for power.

The vampires and their kind lurk behind an iron shield of respectability. The clerics who serve them are true clerics of Mother Grace, as are their guards and slaves. However, once beyond a certain position and level of power, the character is promoted into the inner circle or taken apart for amusement.

SI6. Michaelgrego's Menagerie

A park sits incongruously in the city here; however, this park is enclosed with tall iron bars topped with cruel spikes. Within, dozens of cages sit among the larch trees that feebly grow inside.

This parkland, like the few others in the Sinks, rises from one of the rare expanses of solid ground. **Michaelgrego** (NE male human **transmogrifier**†) is the owner of this exotic park and menagerie, one of the few that opens exclusively under the dim glare of pyrebeetle lamps by night. His collection is open from dusk to dawn, a situation that leads many to believe its owner is a vampire — something that suits him well as it keeps greedy collectors from his doors.

By day, the main iron gates are locked, a tethered pit-mastiff† chained just outside. By night the two watchmen (**guards**) emerge from their sleep and open up, charging 10 gp per person for entry to the exclusive (some would say horrible) menagerie.

The menagerie is an homage to the skills of the surgeon-artists within the city, and houses only abominations. Within its walls are great rhinapes (ape-rhinos), albino wolverine-bears, the often-seen flying monkeys (usually, but not exclusively, cross-bred Blight monkeys with stirges or blindingcrows†). The heart of the menagerie houses the rarer creatures purchased at great expense by Master Michaelgrego. These include rarely seen Cockatughs (cockatrice-otyughs), the foul chyrda (choker-hydra), the appallingly-scented manteech (manticore-giant leech), as well as fearsome girallodiles† (crocodile-girallon).

The collector is known to be an eccentric and pays very handsome (up to 250 gp) for abominations that are in good condition. Of late the menagerie has fallen on hard times and has an air of neglect; the owner has sacked most of his staff and now keeps only a handful of keepers and guides. Michaelgrego is actually in appalling debt to outcast noble moneylender **Chamomile Bramble** (**SI4**).

SI7. The Twisted Bridge

Clearly an earthquake has damaged this bridge, which lurches across the river in a twisted skein of timber and stone.

The Twisted Bridge is part gallery, part upscale gin house, and part zoo. The owner, Lapidary Ratwin (N male hill dwarf **veteran**) made his fortune in mining Underneath and has indulged his pleasures at his home in the grounds, a place he calls the Palace of Cellars. Ratwin's muse is this rambling oreblossom (see ***Chapter 10: Underneath***) structure, which he has access to via a sunken canal linking directly to his home. The Bridge is open all day every day and consists of six tumbling levels of cages, exhibits and the gin house. Ratwin has hired an astonishingly beautiful woman to run his business, Rosetta Twyne (CN female human **minstrel**† with the following changes: Cha 19, Bluff +12). Those who witness the way Twyne winds the dwarf around her finger find it alternately disturbing or hilarious, and she is slowly milking the dwarf for everything he has. The gin house, one of the very few in the supposedly sophisticated streets of the Sinks, does a roaring trade, but is prone to loudness and the release of several creatures from cages when the gin hits home. Ratwin took the precaution of installing locks on all his cages after a dire wolverine escaped a few months ago.

The pride of Ratwin's collection is a strange and seemingly impossible creature he has named the "Broken Fey." This creature is a strangely contorted and deformed **skum**† that Ratwin believes is loyal to him. In truth, the skum is an agent, working in the Sinks to further the designs of its own kind, who are particularly numerous in the canals and levels below the Sinks. The creature is here to listen, but often uses his spells to encourage or charm those who come here to gloat to instead spill their secrets to him. The skum operates with the help of another skum agent, a regular at the gin house called Brother Ragged (**skum**†), who pretends to be a wealthy leprous (anonymous) aristocrat who wears a *hat of disguise* to cover his own work.

Skum Artists and Golem-Stitchers

Tales keep surfacing — quite literally — of a group of skum† who worship the Madness of the Mirrorstorm and who are creating foul things below the Sinks using the arts of the Golem-Stitchers. Every so often, a horribly changed prisoner will stagger into the streets, or emerge from the rank waters of the canal and tell of places far below the streets and canals where these mad-things work. Many of the skum operating in the Sinks serve these surgeon-artists, and provide them with useful subjects, steal rarities and generally meddle. These skum operate from the Fecumile (**SI26**).

SI8. The Exploration Ship Brave

A battered sailing vessel of great size is moored at the riverside here.

The *Brave* is the most famous of the legendary explorer vessels commissioned by the Royal Family to establish colonies in various parts of the world from Xi'en and the Haunted Steppe to Shabbis, the Razor Coast, and Far Jaati. It is not actually the same ship as the original Brave, which first visited Khemit, and has been on seven journeys thus far to these far flung locations, but has been rebuilt several times after an older version was decommissioned. The latest iteration of the *Brave* is presently being refitted as an ironclad by agents of His Holiness the Drogè of the Holy Mother for a trip to pierce the stormy barrier of the Tempest Meridians and discover the Tartarian Passage. The ship is a riot of movement, and in the coming months, it is supposed that the vessel will sail under the command of her new captain Captain Adaggio D'eppe (NE male human **pirate captain**) with Navigator's Tools and Vehicles (water)), with 200 colonists and guards and supplies for the journey to spread the word of Mother Grace to whatever lies in the mysterious seas of the Goitre.

SI9. Connol's Erotic Cabb'e House

At first glance, the obscenity of the carvings of this crooked building are not obvious, then the forms come into sharp focus, and the confusion of intertwined body parts becomes obvious. Heady perfume and the smell of strong cabb'e linger at the doorway of this opulent place.

An immaculately attired **guard** always stands watch at the door. He only allows those who look the part to enter (unless he knows them). In general, assume that unless the characters are obvious (or pretend) artistocrats wearing at least 100 gp worth of clothing they are politely declined entry with the words "we're full" — even when it is obvious by glancing into the building through the broad outer windows that it isn't.

Connel's is the place to see and be seen in the Sinks, and as a consequence, is brimming with aristocrats, while a legion of brightly attired indentured servants await to serve their pleasure outside on the pier. Within, the cabb'e house borders on outrageous. Its walls are swimming in murals of naked flesh, its cubicles carved with erotic scenes, its library jammed with erotica (more often than not written by the infamous Marquis Magnano (1693–), author of numerous speculative treatises on sexual behaviours as well as the outrageous *Madam Flenders* series of erotic novels). Prices are at least quadruple what they are in other cabb'e houses, with even the most basic Turkad costing 13 silver pilasters (sp).

Connel herself (NE female human **witch**†) is a member of the **Great Coven** and worshipper of the Lucifer; she keeps her coven activities under obsessive secrecy, although three of her staff are her acolytes (NE female human **acolyte**†).

SI10. The Fleshery Gardens

The streets pull away from this parkland, which is raised upon iron girders and surrounded by iron railings. Oddly deformed trees lurch and grasp at the air, while countless ornate cages stand between them.

Open from dawn to dusk, the Fleshery Gardens are another of the Sinks' menageries, this one has a charge of 5 gp at each of the three entrances. The Fleshery Gardens are (in)famous for the trio of "**vine blights**" that are kept out of general view in a large iron enclosure. The garden's owner Lady Lydia Minnow (N female briny† **hierophant**†), has a small collection that is viewed with great suspicion and even fear by her neighbours. Minnow has a reputation (perhaps not unfounded) for regarding flesh as being less than plant when it comes to interest and feasibility for manipulation. Minnow herself remains indifferent to her neighbours, although occasionally she finds them useful to feed and to work upon.

Minnow's other creatures, an eclectic mix of creatures that carry diseases, are often plant-imbued or fungal in nature. Some say she has even journeyed to deep into Underneath, and made contact with the infamous and unseen **Body Snatcher**†, which allows her to cultivate the only known controlled patches of blight in the city. There is more than a grain of truth in this story, Minnow was driven mad by her journey to find the curious rumoured fungal horror below and has had her mind twisted by her encounter with it. Now an agent of the Body Snatcher, her work to learn what diseases will wipe out the people of the city and transform them into half-plant creatures is gaining pace, even though Minnow, who retains no memory of her sojourn below, is unaware of why she is so driven in her efforts.

SI11. The Bridge House Tavern and Birdcage

A massive bridge yawns across the great Passage Canal here; it is a bloated building, but clearly appears to be a tavern and boating inn. The place has its own dock.

One of the sights of the Sinks, the Bridge House is a tavern the size of a small village that seems to almost grow over the canal. Her owner Lady Ellie Bindweed (LN female human **burglar**†) is better known by her highwayman name, the Laughing Lady, a name given by her public in light of her displays of laughter as she robs from the rich and gives to the poor (though the two have not been connected yet). One of the few aristocrats with a conscience, Ellie was exiled from the Capitol for striking a man who was beating his butler to death for putting too much sugar in his porridge.

Foul mouthed and manly, Ellie masks her nobility well, claiming to be the thirteenth daughter of the infamous whore Lizzy Moan, who was the tavern's previous owner and who mysteriously vanished 22 years ago (when Ellie paid her a fortune to leave the city for good). Ellie is madly in love with Marco Cappellan (**SI14**), one of the few people who knows her secret. She keeps a staff of boatfolk† halflings, who take no mistreatment from her customers, a group composed primarily of the commoner castes of the city.

The Bridge House is easy to get lost in, particularly if you take one of its rooms, which tend to be nearer the canal level. Food is plain but plentiful, and rum is the drink of choice, although many fine wines mysteriously end up being poured and Ellie is not shy about sharing an incredible vintage with someone who can make her laugh.

The Birdcage itself, which rises through the centre of the pub, is full of scores of canaries; the last time the tavern ever closed was in 1649 when the entirety of its occupants were burned by Jack's Candle. The new owner arranged for the cage to be clumsily raised through the tavern floor to give warning of such a danger again.

SI12. The Street of Echoes

A broad canal is edged by fine townhouses and palaces. The buildings here are of a better quality and stability than others.

Some say the Street of Echoes is partly in Between, and that it somehow has an alleyway directly to Lonely Street (**SI19**). Many men and women of character swear to have ventured down one only to find themselves in the other.

This "street" is home to many of the more affluent aristocrats in the Sinks, and as such, is a hotbed of strange behaviours, murders and kidnappings, as well as such outrageous tales as people being kept in cellars for their entire lives. Among her more famous locals are: Lord Hugo Crab (N male *alchymic-undying*† human **spy**) an infamous writer and serial womaniser; Lady Fidelia Flax Shortstone (NE female **lesser blight vampire**†) who has a habit of bathing in blood; the gifted painter Duke Cadwhile (NE male *alchymic-undying* human **noble**) who specialises in gruesome paintings of battles; and Sir Benedict Hoe (LN male human **duellist**†) whose face is said to be so disfigured that those who see him leave the Sinks and never return for fear of a terrible case of *filth fever*. Many of the locals in this district have second homes in **Crow's Fallow** (see **Chapter 1**), and like many locals, wax lyrical about the place.

SI13. Magella's Chapel

A gilt-towered church of almost breath-taking simplicity, purity, and beauty stands here.

Considered one of the finest and most beautiful churches in the city, the chapel was painted by the great artist Cardella Magella in the 14th century. To enter the chapel is to step into joy. The paintings within depict Heaven, and so immersive is the experience, that many consider the paintings to have been done from life. Magella's work appears across the city, but it is here in the Sinks that his paintings are most often encountered.

Many paladins and holy orders visit the chapel as a pilgrimage, and some pay their tithes here and worship here regularly. One such man, Sir David Orchid (LG male human **knight** of Mother Grace) operates from the chapel dressed as a mendicant. He carries a terrible secret: he believes his Holiness the Drogè of the Holy Mother (**SI5**) is being manipulated by vampires, and he is trying to uncover what he can about the outrage, praying and hoping that what he knows is false, the implanting of sinful lies by Lucifer. "Sinner David," as he calls himself, is a common sight outside the chapel, and his ability to recite poetry of joyful depth, and his wonderful hymn-singing, ensures he is fed and watered well, despite his rags and slovenly appearance.

SI14. The Capellan Barge

An ocean-barge decorated in gold with incredible holy scenes painted upon its surface floats here placidly.

Explorer and dandy Marco Cappellan (NG male human **warden**†) lives in his barge, which is a testament to his love and devotion to the Holy Mother. Cappellan is having an affair with Lady Ellie Bindweed (**SI11**), but is worried about how keen she is to wed. Cappellan is a curious soul, perhaps the reason he has two dozen cats living with him. He is totally unaware that the cats are all Between-cats†, here for their own strange purposes and to catch and eat rats.

Cappellan is restless, he believes that life is for living and he cannot settle with Ellie because of it. He is very amenable to being a mercenary adventurer, and lets it be known that, for a price, he is always interested in risky work. His base price is 100 gp per day plus 5% of any spoils, negotiable depending upon the glamour of the adventure presented.

The inside of his barge is luxurious, and testament to an adventurer's life; there are weapons on display, including a *+2 falchion* and a very fine harpoon, as well as other oddments of his busy life; the partial carapace of a huge ankheg, the ichor of a vrock, and the tentacle of a roper.

SI15. The Bath

A huge limestone flagged pool in the middle of opulent but decaying buildings, the place seems to serve as a dockyard, a market and a bathing area, as well as the source of local drinking water. The striking feature are the caged canaries; there are thousands of them.

Huge, rambling and occasionally toxic, the Bath is all things to the locals in the northern part of the Sinks. It is transformed every Market Day when the Bath becomes a flotilla of boats, barges and rafts that is difficult to comprehend in size and scope, and even more difficult to adequately see in a single day.

Bath Market Days are legendary, and a draw to every bargain hunter in the city. Antiquarians from Book Town make a particular pilgrimage. The goods sold here vary across the whole spectrum: from fruits that are far too exotic and fresh to have been grown anywhere but Between, to suits of full plate armour. The local traders know that slaves of the rich come here *en masse* to buy things, and every master or mistress has a particular "like." The Guild is well and truly established in the Bath Market. Indeed the Market Overseer Lucie Crubb (N female human **spy**) is a member of the Guild. Two score of rogues, and a similar number of beggars from the Amateur Mendicants Society operate in the market. Cutpursing is so common that people have taken to wearing metal purses or keeping money in codpieces and petticoats.

Goods vary in price and quality. You can either draw up a list for Market Days so that you have a special selection of traders, or assume that with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Perception) check, whatever the characters are looking for can be found. Resolve the quality of such an object by secretly rolling 1d12: 1—forgery/fake, low-quality version, DC 1d10+10 Intelligence (Investigation) to detect; 2—shoddy, broken; 3–5—average quality; 6—excellent quality. Allow characters to make DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) checks to haggle prices to 60–90% of normal cost (1d4+5).

The Bath is a draw to briny† and to skum† — for related reasons. The briny vengefully chase the skum, the skum like to hide in numbers for safety. A network of dangerous tunnels and pools lie deep below the Bath, and a small number of people go missing every few months; they are generally taken below for ill purpose. The Jagged Man (NG male briny **master thief**†) lurks in the market area searching for skum. He operates a small gang known as the Unblinking Brotherhood who seek to halt and eradicate the skum in the Sinks and beyond. Enemies of the Madness of the Mirrorstorm, these briny have high morals, but their insularity and aggression can make them enemies of people they should be fighting alongside.

SI16. The Mews

An upscale area of townhouses and mansions that is not so crooked, these properties are set back on more solid ground and even reach a hill at the very edges of the iron fences and lich-gates of the churches and cathedrals of the Hollow and Broken Hills.

The richest part of the Sinks, the Mews is also the most stable, rising from the First Pool at the riverside to the Old Bath, a half a square mile of properties where the wealthiest, and of course highest caste, nobility live. It is also the least decadent, standing as it does beneath the stern gaze of Castorage's religious quarter. Vampires are rare — cruelty, sadly, is not. The aristocrats here may be the best of a deformed, inbred bad bunch, but they are still of that ilk: outcasts who have secrets to hide, and deformities and violent mental maladies to bear.

An inner elite of Royals call the shots in the Mews. They are the rich and powerful and influence trends, fashion, culture, and art. Chief among these Royals is Countess Lobelia Francisia Gertrude Omnemion Rosetta Grace Hawthorne (LN female *alchymic-undying*† human **cultist leader**), a devout practitioner of spiritualism (see Sidebar), who has a small gaggle of hangers-on and followers. The countess is struck with a terrible skin condition in her alchemically sustained existence and, as a result, wears a veil at all times.

Blight Gang: The Unblinking Brotherhood

Location: The Sinks
Leader: The Jagged Man (NG male briny† **master thief**†) **Motivations:** Kill every skum, avenge the brine mothers, and end the perpetuation of the briny race as a result
Friends: Some local Guild members
Enemies: Skum, Cult of the Madness of the MirrorStorm, aboleths, most humans (who mistake them for enemies)
Tactics: Quick to anger and very insular, the Brotherhood assume almost anyone to be an agent of the skum and act with swiftness to stop them getting away. Hit-and-run, the briny know the enormity of their task and keep moving, finding the nests of the skum and obliterating them whenever possible; they fell buildings on these holes to stop them ever being used.
Morale: Very strong; the briny members of this group will gladly die to move their goals to an end. They know the suffering the skum cause.

Spiritualism

In a world so close to its dead, it is little wonder that many become fascinated by them. The retrieval of, and questioning of, bodies through *speak with dead* has found a niche in contemporary polite (although some would say barbarously cruel) society. Gatherings where one or more castings of *speak with dead* are used on corpses of great antiquity are a current fad in the Sinks. The corpses, of course, are more desired if they are well preserved, and so the current fad of collecting mummified bodies commands a high price. That the cadaver snatchers — particularly those from BookTown — have cottoned onto this lucrative trade might have something to do with the amount of thefts and break-ins among the city's more ancient tombs. The greatest prizes are master criminals and madmen, and the employees at the Asylum are busy securing such corpses — almost entirely fresh — for substantial fees.



SJ17. The Royal Water Garden

A dazzling array of gardens is built on one of the few patches of dry ground in the Sinks. This place has follies, great towering ash trees, genteel canals and amusements.

Ostensibly the pleasure grounds of the wealthy, the Water Gardens are actually tended and run by representatives of the Family (see Festival). Archibald Greenbalm (CN male halfling **wererat leader**) is the Head Keeper of the garden. He has a staff of a dozen members of the Family, who have their teeth into various members of the local aristocracy and are profiting well from it. The pleasure gardens are lit at night by glass lanterns of pyrebeetles and has diversions such as a small freakshow, the occasional touring artiste from Festival, and a gambling hall known as the Folly, also run by Archibald and his cronies.

The Folly is a sumptuous place heated by a small furnace, and membership is by caste and fee (a flat 250 gp per year's membership). Deathshead and Royal Families (see **Gambling at Brine Bells** in ***L3: Sea's End***) are the games of chance here, and sums of 1,000 gp are commonly lost in an evening.

SJ18. The Old Dockyard

A score of piers slither from the timber shore of the Sinks, these are clearly given over to shipbuilding and docks, but have fallen on hard times.

The Old Dockyard is barely used these days, the piers are dangerously rotten, and the pools below are infamous for quicksand. A small group of local dandies and artists have made their home here, these struggling dilettantes revel in their self-enforced poverty. The occasional pie shop or opium den opens up here to serve the aristocrats but generally doesn't last long. Some say the old docks are haunted by the ghosts of shipbuilders from the past, and most infamously the *Lady Rose*, a gigantic ship that burnt during construction, killing 118 workers, for which the first ironclad dreadnought *Lady Ruin* was later named (itself sunk in the Battle of the Kraken's Teeth in 1751). Parts of the *Lady Rose's* hulk can still be seen when the waters of the Lyme (rarely) clear, its skeletal black timbers lurking at the furthest pier in the docks, a perilous place to reach even in the best weather.

Snobbery in Extremis

The vast majority of the Royal and Upper Class castes regard anyone below them as hardly worthy even of noticing. The caste system initially set out in the Blight is a monstrous thing that cannot (in theory) be transcended (but which, of course, is ridiculously exposed on countless occasions). Play this how you wish and more importantly how you and your players will enjoy. If the first hint of belligerent antipathy on the part of a noble is going to bring swords drawn and echoes of murder, then tease it back into the shadows. On the other hand, if you wish to play the city as it truly operates, then the disdain and lack of any kind of respect is important. Many of the nobles regard those beneath them as little more than cattle; they are stupid, uneducated creatures that cannot, and do not, ever show any promise. This bigotry is a tricky thing to get right when running a game; play it as lightly or strongly as you wish, bearing in mind that this is supposed to be fun. Facing down a bigoted fool and relieving him of his dignity is something that will stick in players' minds. Endless tirades of abuse to slaves and servants will not. If in doubt, keep it firmly in the background as something that happens and is just understood by all the city-state's inhabitants.

SJ19. Lonely Street

"You can't always find Lonely Street, Miss. In fact there are some who say it's more likely to find you. The shops are odd, selling things nobody wants, and the shopkeepers, they're even odder."

—Old Gaffer's Tale of the Sinks

Lonely Street is an oddity; it has one foot in Between and the other in reality, and like many of the borderline places of Between, it is not easy

to find, even for the greatest of trackers or guides. The street is a jagged, shambling thing — little more than 50 yards of alleyway crowded by shops selling oddities. The stores here sell things such as sugar mice, jars of kitten tears, sealing wax and monkey tails. Nothing of any apparent use is here, although occasionally an old curiosity shop opens up that sells potions and elixirs, as well as bric-a-brac. The proprietor of one of the most commonly encountered unnamed shops, Mr. Pejter (CE male human **commoner**) is a seemingly kindly old soul who has an uncanny knack of guessing exactly what it is that the customer wants, whether they know it or not. Sometimes these objects draw the buyer into trouble, sometimes joy, but always something unexpected.

§J20. The Apery and Aviary

The sign says that beyond the iron fencing lies "*The Greatest Apery in the World*", and if the noise from within is anything to go by, the sign might speak truthfully.

Situated near the upscale areas of the district, the Apery and Aviary are the personal collection of Physiker Donnan Thistle (LN male **aranea** who habitually appears in the shape of a charmwell† half-elf), who has a fascination for apes and birds. His collection includes over 700 creatures, and includes several more rare monsters. His main exhibits are: a girallon, a mated pair of dire apes, a cockatrice, a flock of Ghue Island dodos, a flight of stircatrices†, several different breeds of blindingcrow†, a small exhibit of Between mangy gulls†, more than 70 varieties of canary from around the world, a venerable hooded raven†, and 2 malevolent gable hate-owls†. The pride of his collection is a flock of blue stirges from the Aizanes Islands that whistle to each other. The collection, of course, also holds a selection of mundane birds, monkeys and other simians from around the world including a cage of Blight monkeys† (with glass walls to protect viewers from their flung excrement). The entire park is staffed by a troop of Blight apes†, who see to the care of feeding of the exhibits, and take their charges very seriously.

For a half-spider-creature-thing, Thistle is actually almost kindly (although he does occasionally forget himself and eat the odd passing tramp or waif). He also has an addiction to absinthe, and on occasion he has woken up to find several cages covered in thick webs with no recollection of the event.

§J21. The Benediction of Flagellation

Opening his palms to the river is a huge statue of Mammon. His bloated form is clothed in a strange tower from which are dangling several manacles. Some of these are actually occupied by suspended bodies of suffering men and women.

The Brothers and Sisters of Sufferance are a fringe cult of deluded Mammon worshippers who believe that true devotion to self is to suffer in this lifetime in order to enjoy perpetual joy in the next. Their deceptive leader, the ever-smiling Joyful Perseverance (LE shape-changing **chain devil** disguised as male human priest of Mammon) is an incredibly charismatic man. He regularly preaches from the steps before the statue-temple, and his use of *enthrall* ensures he has good attendance for his sermons. In his version of worship, he proclaims the Self comes after death, not before. Consequently, the cult takes everything … mind, body and soul, and delivers the followers to enlightenment through trials of pain. Joyful (his true name is Equillrio) has taken great delight in his clever scheme and has even begun a bit of surgeon-artistry on the side. He is not aware, however, that two of his regular attendees are actually members of the Cult of N'gathau† making their own assessment as to whether he should be publicly exposed and tortured to death, or quietly eliminated and his flock of followers subsumed.

§J22. The Peacock House

"*Fashions macabre!*" The wording of the sign almost leaps off the placard on which it is carefully hand-painted in grotesque hues. An enormous stuffed and lacquered peacock is mounted to the wall above the sign, its plumage spread in full glory, and its eyes continually weeping pits of dripping blood.

This is one of the most fashionable outré places in the Sinks, and even boasts customers from the Capitol. The stuffed peacock of the sign is the legendary Queen's Hen, an extremely rare Large dire peacock, given to Queen Alice for her 12th birthday. Two decades after its death, it was purchased by the owners of this shop and mounted using a *programmed illusion* to create the illusion of bleeding. Those owners died 7 years ago, the victims of their own cannibalistic ghoul cult experimentation, and the current proprietors bought the establishment at auction for a song. The new owners, Maccum and Gweneth Slyne (CN male and female **commoners**), specialise in using minor undead (such as beetles, insects and small mammals — mice in particular) and weaving them into their macabre mortomata fashions. It is said that they even used the gnawed bones of the prior owners to fashion some of the more macabre pieces. Their work is not cheap, and is custom made to order, taking 1d3 days per item. A selection of some of their work appears in **Appendix B** of the adventure ***L4: Decay*** in ***The Levee Adventure***.

§J23. The Macabre Theatre and Insectum House

This strange building slumps into the embrace of the broad, dirty canal before it. Across the canal, great beams have been propped to prevent total collapse, and the building is stitched together with a jigsaw of iron bars and great bronze bands. This place leers above the slimy waters, bathing them in the glow of its many pyrebeetle lanterns. An iron walkway beckons visitors into the bleak comfort of the Macabre Theatre.

Crooked gargoyles stare out, grasping iron lanterns to light the place. This building is only kept afloat by a skeletal iron framework, which grips the powdering stone of its construction. A surprisingly humble entrance is flanked by boards with chalked details of the next play, while a lower door gives access to the damp-smelling insectum† house.

The theatre is a relatively unpleasant affair, with uncomfortable balconies overlooking a tiny stage. Peering down from the upper seats is a vertigo-inducing, claustrophobic experience that provokes unwanted intimacy between actors and audience. Failed impresario from Theatre Town **Lothario MacQuabe** (N male charmwell† half elf **minstrel**†), owns and runs the theatre with the help of his partner Pollard Quinton Shortstone (NE male gnome **spy**). In truth, Pollard makes the money — the insectum house is vastly more lucrative than the theatre — but the two enjoy a cold but professional relationship that occasionally spills into outright fights.

MacQuabe desperately tries to attract cutting edge shows to the theatre, but seldom succeeds. Sometimes; though, great stars of the Artists' Quarter are lured here to perform, some say by a vampire friend of Lothario.

Below the theatre lies the insectum house, which specialises in its own uniquely bred species of joy scarab† — **Pollard's scarab.** The effect of these is similar to that of a normal joy scarab but the effect lasts twice as long, and the cost is 150 gp. This grubby, damp cellar is littered with dozens of joy scarab addicts at all times, and when someone dies, MacQuabe is not above selling them to the golem-stitchers of BookTown.

SI24. The Club Crimsón

Standing in a square of fetid canals, this fancy townhouse has a garish lantern hanging above a small pier. A shadowy entrance hangs above the canal here.

This small and exclusive artists' club is run by the current club secretary, **Mister Algernon Alfonce Leptonia**†. The club is a front for the works of a cult group of artists called the Panacea and is explored more thoroughly in ***L4: Decay***.

SI25. The Weary Palace

A tumbling palace slumps over the effluvia of a broad, still pool, with a tall central tower rising from its centre. A dank pier cowers beneath a strange black clock made of equal parts bone, muscle, and withered flesh. The clock depicts a crooked city of surreal towers. A great door beckons from below. From one of the four corner towers extends a distinct three-headed gargoyle weather-vane.

This home of local vampire **Lord Hemlock**†, the Weary Palace is used as a base for the raving artists known as the Panacea. The vampire has a small group of followers, and an access from deep within the palace leads directly to Underneath. The palace is a major location in the adventure in ***L4: Decay***.

SI26. The Fecumile

The waters are murky here, a viscous phlegm that does not seem so much to move, as slither or slide. The carcasses of some of the oldest townhouses have slipped beneath the waters here and drowned, their naked statues still guarding the street they once graced, until even the practice of building atop them, as is so commonly done in other parts of the district, has been completely abandoned.

The Fecumile lies below the waters near BookTown, and is one of the oldest sections of Branner's Folly. The whole section submerged overnight and took with it scores of night shift builders, most of whom drowned. The corpses of these buildings were used by others and the townhouses now lie between 20 to 75 ft. below the canal waters hereabouts. Without diving into the water, it is impossible to see the block of houses, but the prahu-punters and sailors know the stories of the place and swear that it is haunted. The local residents are a pasty lot and the properties here are used mainly by servants unfortunate enough to work in the Sinks. Their children are forbidden to swim here.

The area suits a pair of aboleths well; they have operated here for many years among the Old Closes of the area and have become more advanced as golem-stitchers than many who walk the streets in BookTown above. The aboleths are here to further the desires of their dark mistress, the Madness of the Mirrorstorm, a Between kraken bent on drowning the world. Unfortunately, the alien minds of the aboleth have a skewed view of what their agents should look like, and the things they have created to do their bidding in the world above have often been burnt or hacked to death on sight. Some, however, survive. And the aboleths continue to hunger for more creatures to further their skills. **The Hunger that Thrives** (CE female **aboleth**) and **The Crackle of Cold Flesh** (CE male **aboleth**) have several hundred skum† agents in the Sinks, and here they are at their most numerous. They generally keep 1d6+2 spiboleths† about as well (recent recipients of their surgeon-artistry procedures). The creatures are careful to hide in the waters, and if they have to emerge, do so by night. Any human slaves are controlled using *dungeon rings*.

The Old Closes

One of the more unique, some would say disturbing, aspects of the Sinks is that there are a large number of properties, places, and buildings that reside below water level. Called the Old Closes, these levels were originally the ground floors of the structures built in what became known as Branner's Folly, and eventually the Sinks. When the district subsided, the former ground-level structures were submerged — some with occupants still inside! — and what remained was adopted as the new "ground" level of the structure with entrances added, docks extended, etc. New levels were then constructed on top to extend them higher. Some of the structures of the Sinks have continued to sink over the years, adding new levels to the Old Closes just as new stories are stacked upon those above. The idea is that either these structures will reach bedrock eventually and become foundationally secure, or will collapse under the weight of their own hubris. There are some buildings in the district, where the folk have lost count of the number of layers of Old Closes that lie below as new ones are added on top.

Because these levels are submerged below canal level, they are, out of necessity, occupied primarily by aquatic creatures. These lurking subterranean crannogs are the home to skum. A cult of the creatures lurks below, serving the needs of a pair of aboleths (**SI26**), here to try to advance their own work as surgeon-artists, and to prepare for the coming of their living god the Madness of the MirrorStorm. The aboleths don't wish to reveal themselves to the city, but on occasion, will send a small troop of skum† into the canals above to capture citizens for questioning and experimentation.

DUNGEON RING
Wondrous item, rare
A *jailer's dungeon ring* is worked gold, set with carnelians. The ring is magically attuned to one or more iron *prisoner's dungeon rings*. When the wearer of a *jailer's ring* places a *prisoner's ring* on a subject, the prisoner cannot remove the ring without the use of a *remove curse* or *wish* spell. The wearer of the *jailer's ring* can remove a linked *prisoner's ring* at any time.
The jailer is aware of any wearer of a linked *prisoner's ring* condition. Additionally, all wearers of linked *prisoner's rings* count as (very) familiar to the jailer for purposes of spells such as *scrying* and *teleport*.

The houses of the Fecumile form several acres of ruins: Old Closes (see Sidebox); guarded temples and dungeons within which lurk skum; oozes and other stranger creatures created by the insane and alien aboleth.

SI27. The Misery — Not Shown on Map

"They say that below the waters of the Sinks lurks a pitiless creature, an anger of gas and poison."

Not so much a place as a being, **The Misery**† lurks in the deepest waters of the Sinks and rarely awakens. The canals of the Sinks are deep, they are formed from the marshes and lakes that once existed here and one day will again. At its edges, the Sinks does not so much stop, as slough away into pitiful mires and scattered hovels of the Lych Fens. The Misery lurks here at the edge, where city meets swamp, but is sometimes said to dance beneath the canals at midnight.

The Misery, a truly ancient vorin, is almost always slumbering. If disturbed, it usually lurks through the canals for a few nights seeking victims and unleashing smothering gas into the occasional street in the Deadbook. It may well be responsible for a great number of rumours, claims, and appearances of Jack's Candle.

SD28. The Lightless Echo

The Wormery is bottomless, some say. One tale tells of a dog that got caught in one of its sucking currents. The poor thing struggled for many minutes, much to the amusement of those nearby, before it was sucked into oblivion.

The deepest, darkest part of the Wormery, the Lightless Echo is avoided by boatmen, who stay away from its edges and respect the occasional sucking current and tale thereof. The stories are well known: haughty divers who never return; stitched mortomata sent into its depths on chains and vanishing; aquatic familiars that do not come back. Furthermore, the Wormery has an ill reputation for marsh gas, and everyone nearby keeps at least one canary to warn them of impending doom.

Little more than a dark stain in oily waters, the Echo can be seen at the height of a sunny day and its edges are marked by everburning lamp† buoys warning boaters to keep away from a 60-yard square of the bath. At the edge of this area, swimming requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics). For every 5 feet farther into the area the undercurrent increases the DC by 3 to a maximum of DC 30 towards the centre. On a failed check, the victim is pulled underwater at a rate of 20 feet per round, which increases by 5 feet per round for every 10 feet farther into the area, until reaching maximum of 70 feet per round within 40 feet of the centre.

In truth, the Echo drops for over a mile, and links to several lesser passages and pools within the Underneath, eventually arriving in the Dead Sea (see **Chapter 10** for more information).

SD29. The Forgotten Palace

"There is a palace, a drowned place that is said to be occupied by a dead princess."

—Old Gaffer's Tale of the Sinks

One final dark secret remains about the Sinks; it has a last reason for its name, one that few people ever talk about. The houses of the Sinks were, as has been previously stated, built upon a marsh. The marsh still sometimes takes back that which lies above; sometimes it's a house that vanishes, or an end of row that sinks, leaving the skeletal grasping timbers of its neighbours clawing where it once stood. Sometimes whole neighbourhoods just vanish, taken beneath the waters. The district continues to be known as the Sinks for this abiding reason.

The Forgotten Palace is just one of many such buildings lost to the undeniable grasp of the Sinks. Most structures that are taken in this way are destroyed in the process, but some still remain intact. Some hold their occupants tight as they drown, taking them into unlife through some unknown means.

The exact location of the Forgotten Palace is left up to you, and it can be virtually anywhere — whether beneath a lido, or even under other buildings as new construction was built on top of it. If you choose to allow your players to find it, provide the following description when they first catch sight of it beneath the waters.

> Far below, the light can barely penetrate. Yet here in the barest glint of the distant sun is a face, another great sun that scowls upward like an angry mirror from the walls of a bent and mud-smothered palace.

The Forgotten Palace fell in a single night, and her occupants did not notice until it was too late. In truth, some still deny the truth, particularly the Forgotten Princess, who still resides here preparing to meet her betrothed for the very first time. Now a **banshee**, the princess still believes her beau is due to arrive at any moment. Her staff, many of whom are now aquatic **ghasts**, serve her every whim and, like her, are swept up with the coming visit. They continue this charade day after day, unknowingly reliving the same anticipation, the preparation and the smouldering disappointment, day after day after day. Any living creatures foolish enough to intrude upon their desolate re-enactment are sure to receive the full brunt of their wrath.

Living in the Sinks

It may seem an odd choice, a crumbling ruinous group of choked waterways where disease and poisonous gas are rife. However, those who wish to vanish from the city often come here; it's a great place to hide, if you can blend into your surroundings. The hovels available for the commoner castes are rat-infested flea-holes; however, characters from a Capitoler caste, or those able to dupe their way into seeming so, can easily blend into the district if they can afford it.

Costs of Living in the Sinks

If the characters are of the Royal or Upper Class castes, they can find the following types of properties for sale or rent. If of a lower caste, they must make a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Performance) check to fool a prospective landlord/seller of their fake upper caste identity. If not wearing appropriate dress (as least a noble's outfit and 150 gp in assorted jewelry) the check is at disadvantage.

Cost of Lodgings per month

Cost of Lodgings per month	
Townhouse*	100 gp
Mansion, small**	200 gp

Purchases

Purchases	
Townhouse*	6,000 gp
Mansion, small**	12,000 gp

Sample Property: The Tumble Hall

This townhouse lies not far from the fashionable and sought-after area of the Street of Echoes, and consists of a dock and a detached townhouse built on two levels. The townhouse has a magnificent master suite and a rooftop balcony with commanding views across the district. Despite its name, the property has firm footings without danger of subsidence and has been recently inspected and certified by a member of the Royal Arcane Engineers' Guild. Due to a need to sell, the townhouse is presently on the market for 5,500 gp and is available for the discerning customer of high caste for immediate occupation. A small staff of 3 indentured servants (1d4+2 years left on their terms of indenture apiece) comes with the property. The indentured servants are elderly and may require replacing. The seller is able to assist in such matters for a small fee of 1d10 x 6 gp per servant and obtain younger servants with 1d10+1d6+5 years of indenture for 50 gp/year of service remaining (regular price 100 gp/year).

* 2-story, 10 rooms with rooftop balcony and canal access

** 3-story, 16 rooms with private boathouse

Part Two: The Asylum

"By gods, it must be the noise. Yes, the noise is the worst. The sobbing, the screams, the pleading, the rage, the fear, the pain. The Asylum knows no peace, no still, no calm.

Beyond its towering walls is a living Hell; a place that makes every other in the city appear like a garden of joy. They send nobles here when the madmen and inbred lunatics of the Sinks cannot bear them, or fear them.

"Those who kill a noble suffer a million possible fates, all of which are terrible, so they are cast here, allowed to wander in their ravings, or engage in their desires or needs or hungers — whatever they are.

"Occasionally, a good woman comes here to help, to cure, and for a few days her efforts are rewarded, but no spell can repair the broken mind forever, and there are so many … so many.

"Do you know that some call this place Heaven?"

What the Asylum looks like…

From the outside, a large blank wall encloses the old Bedlam Market Square. Within, it is chaos, living chaos. There are so few places to separate the inmates that most simply wander, and there are so many, that whatever happens, just happens. One might see a murder, a rape, and a suicide in a single hour. This, they say, is Hell given flesh, and all the foulness that comes with countless people unable to take care of themselves, left to fend for their survival.

What the Asylum smells like…

Unique, and dreadful. There is no sanitation in the Asylum, and countless people within. It stinks of death first, and then dirt, human waste, and sweat, and tears, and pain. No place, anywhere, smells quite like the Asylum.

What the Asylum feels like…

Oppressive, hot, bewildering, and scary. The place is full of people. It is never ever still, not even for a single moment.

What the Asylum sounds like…

Like the cacophony of Hell.

Seven words to describe the Asylum…

Misery insane
Sobbing **sweating**
Hell **purgatory** confinement

AG1. The Wall

A vast wall towers above the place, shielding it from anyone who might wish to look within. The wall is topped with broken glass and iron spikes and wire. A single door allows entry, a great oak thing with bars and repaired hinges. A sign above the door reads "*Welcome to Heaven.*"

Daubed in human waste, the towering outer wall (DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to climb) is 60 feet high and climbed from within by a series of slender ladders and fixed ropes that lead to an upper viewing area. This area contains eight wall towers of timbers, within each of which are 3 ballistas and 12 heavy crossbows. A guard watches the inmates below, but those who look closely at this watch and its lack of uniform find that it is made up of inmate trustees (male and female human **bandits**), some of whom are trigger happy.

Often seen aloft on the Wall, the aristocratic Sanatorium Overseer **Thatchery Crab** (LE male human **knight**) is ostensibly charged with making sure no one escapes. He turns a blind eye to those who pay him, and frequently takes victims back to his chambers in the prison for amusement or to serve his perverted needs and vile wickedness.

The main door is very heavy timber, bound in iron, and can only be opened from the small tower immediately above it via a pulley. Visitors are asked why they are here, inmates and visitors are often prodded and probed by other inmates on entry. Once in, people do not get out unless the Sanatorium Overseer expressly allows it.

AG2. The Yard

Pandemonium, madness, human swarm. Are there words in language to describe the scene of hellish humanity cramped within here?

Huddling beneath makeshift buildings, and within what is left of the three streets of the old market, the countless inmates of the Asylum live and die here. Every sad facet of human suffering and mental illness is on show here, allowed to thrive or simmer or suffocate as whim dictates. This is truly a place of boundless suffering. There are those; however, who have it even worse than the thousands crammed here in disease and filth and fear. The political prisoners assigned to the Asylum are often less than human after questioning. These poor souls are noted by the inmate guards and the Judge (see below) for special treatment. There are no laws within the Asylum save those of the Judge and those few good souls who work here to genuinely try to help. Sister Morgan Hawthorne and her three nuns (all LG female human **acolytes**† of Mother Grace) are four such souls. There are others, some escape, some stay, some even stay to carry on their work instead of being sucked into the madness.

AG3. The Watch Tower

A badly built tower rises awkwardly in the middle of the pandemonium. This tower bristles with iron bars and spikes, and has a door incongruously set twenty feet above the yard itself.

In the middle of the Yard rises a tall timber watchtower, wherein the tiny contingent of 6 under-overseers (NE male human **bandits**) that comprise the Asylum Watch work along with their boss Overseer Vern Wedgewood (NE male human **veteran**). The mortality rate of guards is frightfully high, and, if you manage a year at the Asylum, you are often pensioned, out of respect, into a cushier number elsewhere in the city constabulary.

Where the Asylum is literally run by the inmates, mistakes are high, and the inmate guards have been known to wipe out the legitimate guards in a frenzy (or once, in 1589, after a fight over tea). The lowest entrance



stands 20 feet above the Yard for safety, and a clockwork ladder (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***) within the tower allows access out. Few of the under-overseers ever venture from the tower, and one of the more recent under-overseers boasted that he never set foot from the tower in his whole year-long shift. Armed to the teeth with scores of heavy crossbows, ballistas, cauldrons for boiling oil, and crates of alchemist's fire, the under-overseers are in a perpetual state of drunkenness and fear. When they do head out, it is generally to admit paying guests, and take them on a guarded tour of the facilities. The more they pay, the worse the inmates they see.

AG4. The Prison

Rising from the south wall is the remains of part of the old town and a prison. The prison has barred windows and grim, mossy walls blistering with spikes. Even by its appearance, the place is gruesome, but the noises from within set your hair on end.

Troublemakers are sent into the Prison and into the loving care of the Judge. The Judge is the true ruler of the Asylum, who oversees the place with the help of half a dozen of the less obviously insane nobles, all of whom have severe psychotic tendencies and victims to feed them. An adherent of a demon-prince called Mathrigaunt, Judge Lord **Justice Mallam Fetter**† runs things here with an iron fist. He is so feared that many inmates feint or soil themselves if they so much as hear his voice. Fetter is a true maniac; paranoid, schizophrenic, agoraphobic. Fetter and his henchmen live and rule a private Abyss for their victims. Those who enter the Prison can forget about life and should prepare only to suffer and eventually die. The Prison is locked tight and those who enter can only despair.

Occasionally, an unknown benefactor passes on an instrument of questioning for the Capitol to the Judge to play with. Some say that these instruments are gifts from Princess Eleanor† but the purpose behind them remains mysterious.

AG5. The Sanatorium

There is a final building in the pandemonium and insanity of the Yard; it is a place even the inmates seem to steer clear of, a rather plain building with two stories and barred windows, a sign above the gated iron door reads "*Sanatorium*."

The worst is yet to come; two stories of the worst inmates, considered too horrific or too special to mingle with the others, are housed in this fortified place. The Sanatorium is used by the Sisters of the Devout Resurrection and Rebirth (LE female human **witches**†), a dozen nuns who tend to the needs of those within. The sisters consider those in their care to be heralds of Lucifer. Some they regard as blessed, some they have nurtured and freed, some they have sent on missions for their Dark Prince. Others they see as unworthy carriers of their lord's essence and have systematically stripped the corruption from the unworthy vessel, usually starting by flaying the skin from them, followed by a layer-by-layer dissection. They have also perfected a particularly wicked strain of the disease devil chills, which is imbued with the essence of a particular devil (see Sidebox). The sisters are led by Her Holiness the Humble Mother, an **erinyes**, who takes great delight in shredding the skins of her inmates, or exploring their souls.

The sisters are very careful to maintain autonomy from the Judge, although they are also careful to keep him happy with bribes. The Sanatorium is more like a prison. The inmates are held in solitary confinement, and visitors are not welcome. The sisters are careful to point out the virulence of the inmates' diseases, the terror of their afflictions, and the strength of their violence. In all, around 80 inmates are held here. Among their number are those who have been infected with devil blood and who show attributes of infection by tainted devil chills (see Sidebox below)

New Disease: Tainted Devil Chills

Among the followers of Lucifer, there are those who dabble in the works and discoveries and secrets found in the Blight, including a recently discovered and particularly wicked and infectious strain of devil chills. These various strains of the disease have been deliberately fermented with a particular type of devil. The new tainted devil chills produce the effects as the devil chills strain described below.

The unique effects of the various strains are detailed below, and can only be removed by a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell. Some followers of Lucifer take these scars and stains as tattoos of honour and wear them (or bear them) with wicked pride. These effects are almost always just the tip of the iceberg in terms of physical deformity, which grows more disturbing as the infection takes hold or the character ages after recovering from such an infection.

Tainted Devil Chills

This disease targets humanoids and, due its devilish nature, ignores divine health and similar immunities to disease. Any humanoid that comes within 15 feet of an infected creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become infected. Symptoms manifest after 1d4 days. At the end of a long rest, an infected creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw it loses 1d4 points of Strength. The Strength loss heals at one point per day once the creature is no longer affected by the disease. On a successful saving throw, the DC lowers by 1d6. Once the DC has dropped to zero, the creature is no longer affected by the disease. When a victim takes 6 or more points of Strength damage, the infection takes on an added horrific effect. The body or mind of the afflicted is permanently altered.

Devil-Specific Effects of Tainted Devil Chills

Devil, barbed: The victim develops painful quills that erupt from the areas of the body nearest the major arteries. The victim weakens, and 1d2 points of his Strength damage can only be cured with a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell. Once per day, the victim can use the barbed hide ability of a barbed devil for 1 round per level or Hit Die, though doing so causes great pain and 1d2 points of damage each time the ability deals damage to an attacker.

Devil, bearded: The victim's skin erupts in painful, ugly clumps of body hair that smell abominably. The eruptions are hard and bristly causing 1d4 points of Charisma damage, but the character gains a +1 bonus to AC due to its toughened hide.

Devil, bone: The victim's skeleton twists and distorts, becoming awkward and deformed. The victim's speed is reduced by 10 feet (minimum 5 feet) but the victim becomes immune to sneak attack damage.

Devil, erinyes: The victim's shoulders hunch and tear growing vestigial wings. The victim takes permanent disadvantage on attack rolls due to the awkward weight but gains a fly speed of 25 feet each day for 1 round per level or Hit Die.

Devil, horned: The victim's skull becomes swollen and distorted with thick, jagged shards breaking the skin, and the skin around it becomes leathery and hard. The cranial distortion causes 1d3 points of Intelligence damage, but the victim gains proficiency with a gore (melee weapon) attack as a bonus action (1d6 piercing damage).

Devil, ice: The victim's facial expression becomes cold and featureless and its skin slowly grows paler and cooler to the touch. The victim's masked face gives advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks and disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

Devil, lemure: The victim's skin becomes waxy and soft, greasy and easy to manipulate. The victim gains advantage on skill checks that benefit from a disguise and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks used to escape being restrained, but 1d3 points of the Strength loss can only be cured with a *greater restoration* or *wish* spell.

AS6. The Attic

Here at the very top of the Sanatorium is a stifling space, a cramped attic room wherein are thirteen iron cages screened by drapes. From within, a variety of sounds echo: quiet whispers, shuffling and a strange choking noise.

Thirteen caged rooms hidden from all eyes, the Attic houses the very worst inmates. Those whose features, infections or maladies are too much for even the Lucifer-worshipping witches of the sisterhood to look upon. Tending to these thirteen, are two blind nuns of the sisterhood. Among the mad occupants of the Attic is a **barbed devil**, who plots to try to remove the **erinyes** and replace her.

Part Three: Running the Sinks

Staging Robberies and Other Crimes

Not every group of adventurers shares the same moral high ground, and for some, the temptation of a place like the Sinks; or any other establishment that promises easy money, may be too much to resist.

This simple set of rules enables you to outline the wealth and protection levels of a dwelling in the Sinks, the Blight or any other urban setting. The level of encounter difficulties and rewards is based upon the level of the occupant. If the characters deliberately try to gauge this strength, they can do so with a successful Wisdom check (DC 25–1/level of occupant). They can also attempt to ask locally using a successful Wisdom (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to gather information. This approach is more risky but more accurate: the check is 20–1/level of occupant. However, if a character fails the check by 5 or more, you can assume that the target knows people have been asking about them, and is more alert.

Wealth

Treasure for these encounters can be determined using tables in the rules. But wealth is not always a set thing, and if you wish, you can vary the amount of value in a given hoard on the following table by rolling 1d12 and applying it to the recommended treasure amount.

d12*	Wealth Adjustment
1–4	Normal level of wealth
5–6	25% less than standard
7–8	25% more than standard
9–10	Standard but with object worth 100 gp x target's level in gp (magic, gems or other)
11–12	Double the standard level (make up the balance in magic or gems)

* If the owner of the hoard is from a wealthier background (e.g. from the Royal or Upper Class castes or otherwise aristocratic) add 1–2 to the check.

Protection

Protection for the targeted hoard is assigned using the following chart, roll 1d12 once per hoard, but if the target has been alerted and has more than 24 hours to react, roll twice and pick the toughest result.

d12*	Protection Present
1–4	Occupant only
5–6	Occupant plus entrance is trapped
7–8	Occupant plus entrance and treasure are trapped
9	Occupant plus guardian
10	Occupant plus guardian plus entrance is trapped
11–12	Occupant plus guardian plus entrance and treasure are trappedNote: Trap severity should be based on the Challenge of the occupant—most traps will be Dangerous, but if the treasure is worthwhile, some may be deadly. Guardians will have the same challenge as the Occupant.

* If the owner of the hoard is from a wealthier background (e.g. from the Royal or Upper Class castes or otherwise aristocratic) add 1–2 to the check.

Official Investigations

This is busy crowded city, and for many, crime definitely does pay, particularly for those involved in the Guild. The caste system works differently; however. Refusing an order by a Royal is punishable by at the very least, a sacking. Therefore, use the following system if the victim of the characters' robbery is an aristocrat (a member of the Royal or Upper Class caste, Lord/Lady, Duke, etc.). For a typical aristocrat the assigned Watch will consist of three constables: two **guards** led by a **veteran**. If it's a member of the Royal caste, there will be an additional two **guards** and the group will be led by an inspector (**master thief**†). A member of the Upper Class caste only gets two additional **guards**.

The inspectors and constables assigned to the case investigate the crime. They check the site for clues and ask locally for witnesses as well as snitches and contacts.

As the GM, you'll need to make some judgments based on how the robbery proceeded and what sort of chance there is for the characters to have left identifiable clues or witnesses; or, more importantly, if there are any snitches on the streets, in rival gangs, or in the Guild itself that may have caught wind of the job and be willing to sell them out.

Additional Investigation Modifiers

One thing going in the characters favour, is that there won't be much in the way of magic used to try and track them down. In a city so full of magical resources and constant *scrying* and familiars and magical thralls, there are surprisingly few such resources used in the investigation of mundane crimes. The Watch doesn't have much of a budget for magical resources. The exception to this is murders. If the characters' actions result in the death of some of their opponents, the investigation will always involve the use of a *speak with dead* spell to try and quiz the deceased. These are not always successful, and the deceased does not always have useful information. Obviously, if the deceased knows the identity of his murderer, the jig is up.

As had been said many times already, nothing has quite the stroke in this city like money does. In other words, the more valuable the items stolen, the more likely there are to be clues of some sort, whether it be word on the street or greater magical resources brought to bear. On the other hand, if the characters deploy a bit of money on their own to foil an investigation, there is a good chance it will have at least some effect.

Investigations aren't pursued for very long unless the amount of money in question is very significant.

If the case ends up being closed, the characters are off the hook. However, it's possible that the investigators will close in on the perpetrators and end up discovering the characters' identities, fingering them for the crime.

That puts the characters cross-ways with the law and can complicate things during their adventures in the city.

Determine what form of action you want this identification to take so that it can fit into your campaign without upsetting it. Maybe you'll want to stage a constable raid on the characters' base camp. Perhaps wanted posters offering a reward for the characters might begin to show up around the city allowing you to stage an encounter (or encounters) with bounty hunters later in your campaign. In a city as rife with corruption as the Blight, it's entirely possible that simply paying off an inquisitive Watch inspector might well be sufficient to make the entire matter simply go away (consider charging: 50 gp per 1,000 gp of stolen goods). If there are murders involved, then any bribery amounts will likely double. If there are murders of any aristocrat or members of the Royal or Upper Class castes, this should go up exponentially or even become too hot for a bribe to even work. Then there is always the matter of possible blood debts leading to quests for vengeance by relatives or allies leading into more possibilities with **Enemies** as discussed in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

It's also recommended that you review **The Weight of the Law** in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*** in order to tailor how you want your law enforcement responses to look in regards to the actions of the characters. The bottom line is if you want to pursue this sort of plot device in your Blight campaign, use these rules as a guide to help you build a reasonable response to the actions of your players, but make sure they are serving the needs of your campaign and not the other way around. If the characters need to escape impossible odds in order to further your campaign plans, then by all means do so. This very idea is explored a bit at the conclusion of the stand-alone Blight adventure ***TB3: Bloody Jack*** and is very much a part of the plot device at the very beginning of **The Levee Adventure**. Use it how you will to make it work for you.

Madness and Mental Maladies

The very presence of the Sinks seems to reach into visitors' souls, and for those who spend more than a few hours here, the effect begins to seep beneath their skins and into their minds. While this experience is unpleasant, it does not have any lasting effect; however, encounters with the Between and those that come from there may, if you wish it, have a more permanent and unsettling effect.

Roleplaying games that use madness rules play upon the slow deterioration of the player characters. Most fantasy role playing games take the opposite track; with characters becoming more and more powerful and facing tougher and more epic encounters. The mixture of the two systems is a tempting one; the steady growth of power, friends, wealth and items is balanced by the weary, battered and weathered effects of the slow loss of emotional and mental faculties as the character faces stranger and more disturbing encounters.

If you wish, you can use the suggested alternative rule outlined below; this system takes the madness and detrimental effects out of the base statistics field and puts it into a separate area entirely.

The Sinks Random Encounters

Daytime	Nighttime	Result
01	01–03	Thugs*
02	04–05	Gentlefolk*
03–12	06–08	Person of breeding*
13	09–10	Market Overseer Lucie Crubb (**SI15**)
14–18	11	Physiker Donnan Thistle (**SI20**)
19–21	12	Archibald Greenbalm (**SI17**)
22–23	13–21	Prahu-punter*
24–25	22	Lord Hugo Crab (**SI12**)
—	23	Crowded prison boat on its way to the Asylum
—	24	Chamomile Bramble (**SI4**)
—	25	Lady Fidelia Flax Shortstone (**SI12**)
26	26	Michaelgrego ***(SI6)***
27	27–31	Revellers*
28–29	32–33	Impromptu Canal Market
30–33	34–35	Corner-doxy*
—	36	Vampire spawn*
—	37	Sir Benedict Hoe (**SI12**)
34	38–42	The Jagged Man (**SI15**)
35–39	43	Rushing slave*
40–41	44–50	Street Food Seller*
42	51	Lapidary Ratwin (**SI7**)
43–50	52	Joyful plus followers (**SI21**)
51	53	Escaped lunatic*
52–55	54–58	Duke Cadwhile (**SI12**)
56–62	59–60	Trader*
63	61	Rosetta Twyne (**SI7**)
—	62	Maccum and Gweneth Slyne (**SI22**)
64–65	63–64	Marco Cappellan (**SI14**)
66	65	Captain Adaggio D'eppe (**SI8**)
67–69	66	Sinner David (**SI13**)
70	67	Lady Ellie Bindweed (**SI11**)
71–72	68–71	Family*
—	72	The Laughing Lady (**SI11**)
73	73	Lady Lydia Minnow (**SI10**)
74–78	74–80	Rogues*
—	81	Countess Lobelia Hawthorne (**SI16**)
—	82	Lothario MacQuabe (**SI23**)
79–82	83–88	Lowfolk*
83–97	89–90	Connel (**SI9**)
98	91–93	Ghouls (aquatic), pack (7–12)
99	94	Escaped menagerie creature (GM's choice)
00	95–96	Skum†, brood (2–5)
—	97	Lord Hemlock (**SI25**)
—	98	Pollard Quinton Shortstone (**SI23**)
—	99	Mister Algernon Alfonce Leptonia (**SI24**)
—	00	Visiting vampire*

* Refer to the Random Race Table below.

Random Race Table

d%	Race
01–35	Human (Royal, if applicable)
36–65	Human (Upper Class, if applicable)
66–80	Human (other)
81–90	Half-Elf

d%	Race
91–94	Elf
95–99	Other
00	Briny

Where named characters are encountered, they are encountered alone, or with guards and/or friends at your discretion. Certain named characters may or may not be encountered at street level and may be hunting for prey or amusement according to their background.

Corner-Doxy: These come in all genders, shapes and sizes. Street girls and corner-boys are fairly common (**commoner**).

Escaped Lunatic: This encounter may be with a seemingly ordinary person whose malady becomes apparent if she is befriended or engaged. Or, it may be a person obviously in the throes of insanity, running down the street naked and claiming to be on fire, surrounded by imaginary spiders or the like.

Family: These folk are 2d6 in number (**commoner**) and wander about enjoying themselves (35%) or bickering (65%).

Gentlefolk: Genteel citizens (**noble**), they may be worse for wear and/or in the company of 2d3 prostitutes.

Impromptu Canal Market: This is a market of 1d4+1 punts. Such traders are usually (75% of the time) selling consumables; other goods are at your discretion.

Lowfolk: These locals (**commoner**) are simply going about their business and want to be left alone.

Person of Breeding: This person of Royal caste (**noble**) is taking the air or on the way to an engagement or place of entertainment with 2d12 staff or friends (**noble**, **guard**, **veteran**; 33% chance of each)

Prahu-Punter: This boatman offers his services or some similar notable encounter. The canals are full of punters coming and going.

Revellers: A group of 1d4 revellers (**noble**) who are worse for wear. They may become violent at the slightest provocation.

Rogues: These cutpurses (**spy**) may follow targets to alleys and attack by day and are likely to attack openly by night.

Rushing Slave: This slave (**commoner**) is on some appallingly urgent mission (like getting salt for porridge) on pain of death.

Street Food Sellers: These street vendors (**commoner**) sell pies, fish and fry and other consumables as detailed in **Chapter 1**.

Thugs: By day these 2d3 **thugs** are noisy and objectionable; by night they attack unless their hostile attitude can be improved.

Trader: A trader (**commoner**) usually has a market stall, although some operate from hand trays. They sell a variety of basic goods, from coal to flowers to fish to candles.

Vampire Spawn: This spawn is on a mission for its mistress and does not wish to be disturbed. It is not aggressive. If you wish, 5% of these encounters can be hostile.

Visiting Vampire: This individual keeps to itself and is generally involved in some other business than just feeding. Like the spawn above, you may wish for such encounters to be hostile 5% of the time.



The Levee — A Blight Adventure Path

By Richard Pett

"... You've just entered the wrong side of town ..."



The Levee Setting

The Levee is an adventure designed to be set within the Blight, a city of extremes perched on the edges of an unstable empire in Between. In the city-state, shanty slums slink beneath the shadows of the great Capitol, a town within a building that houses the autocratic Royal Family and their advisers. As the adventure progresses, each of the districts of the city is visited, before eventually the adventure spreads across the city and into Between for its climax in the finale.

The Blight Campaign Guide contains everything you need to run ***The Levee*** for the city to function, and suggestions are made to convert the adventure to your own campaign. However, the adventure benefits from the use of individual districts, and these in turn have suggestions and leads for other adventures. In many ways, the districts are the fine detail to add to the adventures; they provide everything away from dice rolling and intrigue that brings a campaign to life.

Each adventure chapter also includes ways to change the introductions for the adventures. One issue with an adventure with few trustworthy allies is that occasionally characterss are going to do unexpected things, make the wrong conclusion from actions, and kill the wrong people. There are ways included to alter the way the adventure moves, but ultimately, the best version of ***The Levee*** is going to be the one you write to fit the actions of your players and how they react to the areas.

Finally, from time to time adventure chapters will have side plots and suggestions to bring back or alter NPCs on the way. Use these or not as you wish, your version of this adventure will be the best.

And watch out for when the Levee breaks …

Synopsis of The Levee

One of the most curious aspects of the City-State of **Castorhage** (a.k.a. **the Blight**) is its unique access to **Between**, a place bloated with — and thriving on — thoughts and feelings. The Blight is the only place — so far — that has access to this place, but that access can be tenuous; spells such as *gate* and even *wish* have failed to create a stable access into the land, and only those few places such as Town Bridge, which links to the Unsea, and a handful of fanatically guarded *gateways* in the Great Docks have a (so far) permanent link. Other routes come and go; lands are partly colonised and exploited only for access to suddenly end, leaving those that remain there trapped forever. The incursions so far into this land have been fraught with danger, but also reward.

Between remains a temptation; a land of plenty (and danger) on the doorstep, rich in possible resources and wealth, and with the added draw of ***Between vessels*** — curious objects that retain memories, feelings, and even souls — the reasons for venturing into the land are numerous, and have drawn many. Fortunes have been made and lost as often as lives.

The **Illuminati** — often using the funds of the Royal Family — have struck again and again into this new empire, but those very incursions threaten to undo the Blight. Constant incursions into Between have weakened the fabric of the wall that separates the two places.

There are those who wish for this metaphysical *Levee* to break, who would revel in the chaos and madness of life and souls that would happen should a fracture burst and a tidal wave of Between pour into the city. Some say such a wave would cleanse the filth that the Blight has become and start it anew. These folk have a leader, a visionary, a messiah; they call her the **Beautiful**, the Anointed, and she is a fallen angel from Between. To her enemies, she is the Angel of Death, a madness of boiling emotions, a terror that never stops until she has them in her grip to reform. Her story is long and complex, but her soul was brought here by the calls of a visionary priest called **Father Gromwell**, a man who was like a father to the player characters who participate in the adventure.

Gromwell came into possession of a fabulous item, a *Between vessel*. This vessel held the thoughts and dreams of an angel from Between, a creature able to create doorways into parts of Between at will and shape the form of and put what its considerable imagination wished these worlds. Father Gromwell saw in the item a Paradise, a Paradise in the everyday world. He hungered — obsessed — tasting again and again the Paradise, only a step away, and he began a quest to locate the angel and try to find paradise. In the end, it was unclear who was seeking whom, but regardless of how this happened, Father Gromwell is gone but his angel remains. To a Between creature, the thoughts and passions that feed them tore at her, the noise suffocating her. Broken and driven insane by the actions of men in the name of gods, in the selfish fury and lust that mankind hangs upon the banner of faith and joy and fealty, she became unhinged. Now stalking the street of the Blight, the angel is drawing followers to her own enlightenment, the inevitable fate that the Between and the Blight should be one; that by breaking the Levee, the nature of the Between will wash over the city and cleanse it, creating Paradise. They call her doctrine the Panacea. And as she moves, she leaves gateways in her wake.

At first, artists and visionaries hear her subliminal call, see her art in the slowly changing colours, the strange feeling her dreams bring them, her unsettling nature and presence subtly tainting the city. Their words slowly spread, and the city becomes infested with a cancer of her followers, followers who are determined that her plan, her vision, her *great work*, must succeed. And as she moves slowly across the city undermining the Levee, doorways open and things spill into the world from the land of madness and dreams.

Soon, they say, the world will be reborn, cleansed and scoured for a bright new dawn.

Her work has only been going on for a matter of months, but it is already drawing to a terrible conclusion: The Levee is about to break.

There are those whose spies crawl like lice across the city, rats that uncover every secret. The **Knights Occularis**, a shady group of poor knights who worship Mother Grace, are loosely allied with the Royal Family and the Illuminati. Their leader, **Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage**, learnt of Gromwell and his claims to be able to find an earthly Paradise, a prize beyond measure. The idea possessed him, and he used his power to start an obsessive hunt for the priest. Thornrage initially was frustrated in his search, so he took a bold step. He knew Father Gromwell lived at an insignificant village called **Wicken** where he painted angels for the church. Thornrage studied these painting first hand, but has grown tired of subterfuge. He ordered the paintings taken piece by piece from the church in which they were created and returned to his home at the Bright Citadel in the Capitol. To further aid his quest, he ordered the village razed, its occupants either taken for future questioning (dead or alive), or questioned on the spot. To end the attack, he released a trio of charmed ogres and pretended the attack was by such beasts that had finally been driven off after his knights razed Wicken themselves. The ogres remain as de facto tokens to put off nosey locals and looters.

The characters lived in Wicken, and were part of the taken group, but have been spotted by those who oppose the Occularis. These people have their own powerful allies but must work in secret. After all, the knights are honoured as the purest of knights, and stories of them attacking and killing paladins is nothing but a dark rumour put about by those who worship Lucifer. This group learnt too late of the attack, but tracked the characters to a prison hulk where their allies can arrange an escape. In the meantime, they continue their efforts to get to the bottom of Thornrage's obsessive plans and intrigues. They continue to try to find survivors whilst an agent of theirs, a member of the Thieves' Guild called **Eleanor Shank**, arranges to free the characters in the hope that they can shed some light on events and then report it back.

The **Thieves' Guild** of the Blight is almost as fractious as the Illuminati; it has amongst its membership murderous cutthroats, Anarchists, and mobs. It also has clerics, men of goodness, and those who seek to protect the common man from the injustice of the Royals and the Illuminati. Dandy highwaymen and dashing spies rub shoulders with bullies, murderers, and cutthroats.

The Guild changes from decade to decade as new rulers and leaders come and go, new alliances are formed, and new ideas are spread. Presently, the leaders of the Guild are reasonably good men and women — some even have a conscience. They like to think of themselves as good people, but they are still rogues at heart. Their current leaders are from the slums and shanties of the Blight, and they are sick of seeing people suffer in the city. They oppose the Illuminati and the Royal Family as much as

they safely can in the face of such power. Theirs is not the goal of anarchy, however; they do not wish to burn down palaces or guillotine the Justices. They simply wish them gone and are slowly poisoning them from within, driving one against the other. They leave anarchy to others.

They know nothing about the Levee. They are suspicious, however, but daily toil drives them, work diverting them from more lofty troubles. Theirs is a world of territories, of money, of sweat, of influence, of true life.

Behind this intrigue, the city is slowly descending into anarchy: the poor are being taken from their homes or forced to work in unlife by manufactury owners and overseers; things stalk the street that have no name; and the word of the Royal Family and their iron associates is all. Soon, the guillotine begin to fall, and as it does, a revolution begins.

Onto this stage step the player characters …

GM Tips for Running the Levee

"I had a dream, which was not all a dream."

— Lord Byron, "Darkness" (1816)

Levee is a predominantly urban-based horror adventure with a few jaunts to some pretty terrible places along the way, but at its heart the characters are going to be based in and explore the city of Castorhage, known as the Blight. Each of its 9 adventure chapters is based in a different district of the city, and the adventure as a whole takes characters from 1st level to 10th level. The adventure chapters take place primarily in the Blight, but with the odd side trek or journey to Between that eventually returns the characters to their home again. You'll not encounter many dungeons or many black-and-white examples of good and evil. Indeed, the knowing-who-to-trust part makes up some of the campaign's more-demanding sections. It incorporates a strong mix of roleplay and combat, and the characters mingle with some of the important players in the city and end up facing the fallen angel Beautiful. Some may even decide at the end of the adventure to side with this foe and take a selfish course to personal paradise. It is also, unmistakably, of a more mature nature. Do not consider running this adventure with anyone below the age of 13; it deals with horrific issues and villains.

A core suggestion in running this adventure (and indeed any possible future sojourns into Between) is in playing up the effect it has on those who witness it. Coming face to face with obscene unnaturalness gives you a great opportunity to taint the characters. These taints are described as maladies, and are detailed at the end of this introduction. These effects are not designed to ruin, belittle, or cripple characters. The opposite in fact; they are designed to enhance roleplay. If you and your players don't like the idea, don't use it, but do consider that such effects are rare and unusual and could be fun to play — in a sick and twisted way. The Blight is not all about statistics and power — the more powerful you get, the more enemies and jealousy you attract — but it is about experience.

The same advice — ignoring things you don't like — runs true throughout this adventure and the whole setting. While the adventure is designed to run from the box, you'll inevitably get a better experience by gearing it to your players. You know them better than anyone and know how to get the most from them, and give the most back to them.

To start with, and to put the adventure into context, this is a city on the edge of revolution. The royalty rule the city with a rod of iron, and their despicable followers and conspirators have the power of life and death. Their whims and desires are all. Below, a seething underclass is being whipped into a frenzy through outrage after outrage. In the Blight, power is everything.

If you can, make the city-state feel edgy: locked doors are no good against a mob, there is a palpable feel of discontent, and the people are unhappy and confused. This is partly due to the malignant and alien influence of Between, which slowly grows as the adventure moves on, but also the feeling of injustice and despair that most people feel. Later suggestions about mood make considerations to running the adventure over the course of a 9-month period in the city; this gives the characters the full experience of the Blight, from murky autumnal nights through to smog-choked winter where the river freezes, through to hopeful spring and dry and desperate summer. It's not essential that the adventure is run in this way, but you may need to tweak the odd reference here and there to seasons.

Between plays a prominent role in this adventure. Look closely at the advice in ***The Blight Campaign Guide***, but also use Between to convey your own mood for your players. If your group has a thing about spiders, make Between riddled with them; make them big and hairy and fast. If it's clowns they don't like, have clowns or shadows of clowns lurking from time to time. Between gives you a largely blank canvas to add your own twists and turns to the adventure, but also allows you to run the adventure entirely as written.

One final point before we move to the brief outline and onto the first adventure chapter: The characters are the story here. Many players love to immerse themselves in their characters, and this adventure puts the characters front and centre of action. It also allows the characters to develop friendships, make enemies, and make big decisions. This is one aspect that a generic published adventure cannot do anywhere near as well as you can. You know your players better than anyone and what makes them tick as individuals. The seeds of such stories are planted throughout the adventure, but where these side plots and tales go is up to you; nowhere if you wish. Some players are happy to turn up, have some stress-free adventuring and derring-do, and then go home. Others like to weave stories. Let them. Bear in mind all your players' desires as you go, but allow the characters to develop as they move along. The characters start as outsiders in the city, and where their story takes them whilst they ride the adventure is entirely up to you and them.

Experience Points and Levels

Character advancement in ***The Levee*** can come from experience awarded, milestones, or a mix of both. Characters should, at minimum, advance at least a level during each adventure. The assumption is a little more general than a more rigid adventure's advancement. The challenges herein are deliberately on the tough side, and so having a level-up occur due to side treks is no great hardship. Under no circumstances should you allow your group to fall behind the stated level, however. If necessary, consider adding XP awards to bring the group up to the required level.

In more roleplay heavy sections of the adventure, characters can avoid encounters with clever play. You should award XP for all encounters avoided in this way. At the end of the adventure, assess the characters XP totals and, as detailed above, add any necessary XP to bring them up a level by the adventure's end. Encounters such as the Ashen Angler at the end of Adventure Chapter Three potentially involves multiple NPCs and characters acting in any number of given ways, including running away from the encounter totally. In all things, use your judgement; keep the levels at least to the minimum required.

For what it's worth, you're encouraged — if you're happy to do so — to use milestone awards, and simply advance the characters one level at the end of every full adventure. This enables you to use all the encounters as written and saves tedious mathematics as well as making judgements on good play. Some people love keeping track of XP though, so use whichever system works best for you and your players.

The Relationship — The Touched

Pivotal to the adventure is the relationship some characters will have with the Beautiful, the Between angel whose motives are entirely justifiable — from her point of view. The city is sick and diseased; it needs the cleansing waters of Between to wipe it anew. As mentioned throughout the adventure, be very careful with this relationship, and be sure that *all* the characters have the potential to be touched at any time. Putting your eggs into one basket and developing one character as the closest is fine, but having only one character affected means he could die and derail your carefully constructed plans. Make sure others are affected as well in case of the unforeseen death. These "touched" characters become the link between the characters and their enemy (the whole fateful link is explained in ***L9: Utopia***).

The Tear

Throughout the later stages of the adventure, references are made to strange noises in the sky as the Beautiful tears and rips at reality, hoping to wound it in such a way that the Between flows through. These sounds are heard only by those most touched by the Beautiful and — until the ninth adventure — are hard to pinpoint.

If you will indulge me for one moment. One evening in the winter of 2013 I stepped outside my remote farmhouse to hear a sound I had never heard before or since, an incredibly loud, grating, ripping sound in the sky that touched me and — to be frank — scared me to death. It lasted only about 10 seconds, but I'll never forget it. Strangely, the two dogs I had with me didn't seem remotely concerned. Later research showed me that I wasn't the only person to hear these sounds, which I understand were caused by an atmospheric disturbance. An example of the sound *exactly* as it was is provided in the hyperlink below. This instance took place very far from where I heard it. The noise was overpowering and very haunting. It makes perfect sense to me to use it here as the steadily growing sound of Between being torn open and gaining access to the mundane world. Hyperlink through the PDF of this book or type it into your own search engine. Play the sound ever so quietly at first as the Tear first begins to manifest, and ramp it up to 11 for the final adventure.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHi6LjKuNl4

Nine Steps to Revolution

Revolution comes to the boil as this adventure progresses. Each section also presses the campaign toward anarchy, revolution, and a reign of terror. Each therefore contains appropriate background material, encounters, and suggestions for building this sense of impending anarchy.

Steps to Madness

And as the break in the Levee slowly grows, the influence of Between grows. Some adventures also includes suggestions, encounters, dreams, and visions for the characters, building into the madness of the concluding adventure. These visions are yours to use, but consider how you are using them. It's all well and good to focus these visions upon the characters most likely to have them: bards, wizards, and other spellcasters perhaps. Be careful if you narrow these visions down to certain characters, however. Being brought back from the dead in this city is no matter of ready cash; it is a matter of morals and power. If the character who has the visions dies, who replaces him?

Extras

The Levee is packed with additional rules, ideas, and side treks to enable you to mould the adventure into your style of gameplay. Its soul is an urban horror campaign focusing on dubious allies and shady motives, backstabbing, guilty secrets, and duplicity. It can be run straight out of the box, or it can be embellished as you see fit.

The Adventure Chapters

Adventure Chapters 1–3: City of Paradise

The first three adventure chapters establish the characters in the city and on terms with Eleanor Shank, the character's link to the Thieves' Guild. During these chapters, they first hear mention of the Beautiful, the Anointed, and the coming End of the World, as well as encounters with angel-obsessed cultists and hints about the campaign background. The characters become closely involved with the Circus Macabre, a pivotal group that hangs at the edges of the adventure acting as confidants and friends. The characters are drawn into the story knowing little, at present, about the truth of the Panacea. The adventure also mentions the idea of revolution.

The characters learn something is amiss in Between, particularly in ***L3: Sea's End*** where they join a whaler on the Unsea and hear sailors' tale of the Between. But for now, the Between is an enigmatic place that is simply one they visit and experience temporarily. Soon, however, the characters learn who is really investigating whom …

This section of the adventure establishes the concept of ongoing enemies and manipulates the characters into being enemies of the Family — in particular the Grast Family of wererats that become the background enemy throughout the adventure.

Main Enemies: The Family (wererats of Festival), ghouls, mites, and golem-stitchers.

L1: Hereafter

Location: Great Lyme River Prison Hulk, Festival and the Great Fayre
Level: 1

L2: Pound of Flesh

Location: BookTown
Level: 2

L3: Sea's End

Location: Town Bridge and Scrimshaw
Level: 3

Adventure Chapters 4–6: Paradise Lost

These adventure chapters gain the feeling that something bad is coming, bringing Between incursions and killers into the adventure. They also establish the characters as potential folk heroes — at least to some.

The characters now regularly hear the name of the Beautiful, and that he or she or it is being hunted by the Knights Occularis. They also become aware that the vampires of the city believe something bad is coming and are trying to stop it. The vampires are terrified that if it arrives, a new emperor will come to challenge Beltane, God-Emperor of the Fetch. Vampire seers keep seeing the character's names and intend to use them to help their own ends. As a result, the Knights Occularis launch a crusade against the vampires and their allies, the characters included.

In the meantime, Eleanor Shank is being used herself, fed little pieces of information to help the characters . Depending upon her feelings for the characters , she begins to plot her own way forward. And the Circus Macabre begins to establish a glowing reputation in the city after its liberation by the characters despite the growing mobs of Anarchists roaming the streets by night and causing a curfew to be announced.

This trio of adventure chapters is wrapped in external events as the Revolution truly begins, the iron grip of the Royal Family on the streets is felt, as the characters become aware that what they are searching for is Paradise on Earth.

Main Enemies: The Fetch (vampires and their spawn), the Office of the Watch, abominations, the Panacea cult, and surgeon-artists of the city

L4: Decay

Location: The Sinks
Level: 4

L5: Below

Location: Underneath
Level: 5

L6: The Susurrus Theatre

Location: The Artists' Quarter
Level: 6

Adventure Chapters 7–9: Paradise Found

In these adventure chapters, the characters learn more of the Beautiful, and that she can create Paradise. They tangle with her followers as well as her nightmares. At this stage, the Revolution that has been simmering boils over with an attack upon the Capitol and its terrible reprisals. The characters need to keep their heads whilst helping those in need.

By now, friendships are reaching their highest levels, while enemies are at the character's shoulders and starting to move into the open. This section, however, also gives those enemies their cause to fear and admire the characters enough to pursue them.

The coming Apocalypse — or more truthfully Rebirth — at Castorhage sours the weather. Between incursions become commonplace, and the city is gripped with otherworldly creatures. Everyone is potentially an enemy. And finally, the Levee begins to break as the adventures reaches its climax on the Great Lyme River.

Main Enemies: The Beautiful and her cult of mad followers, colossal abominations, golems, a Between-vampire, the Knights Occularis, and a host of Between things and fleshy constructed creatures

L7: My Benefactor

Location: The Hollow and Broken Hills
Level: 7

L8: Apotheosis

Location: Toiltown, the Jumble, and the Capitol
Level: 8

L9: Utopia

Location: The Great Lyme River
Level: 9

Beginning the Adventure

The only crucial link to begin the adventure is that all the characters began their story at a boggy little village called Wicken that once hosted a visiting pilgrim named Father Gromwell. Gromwell was obsessed with angels, and in his time at Wicken he decorated the church with magnificent paintings. In their quest for Father Gromwell, the characters enemies pursue every clue they can find. They kill and then question, they torture, and they destroy. All they can see is the prize.

As has been stressed before, there is no requirement on the characters to follow a particular class or race to enjoy this adventure path. Any character should have a role to play, and at times, the emphasis is on individual characters to shine.

Autumn Commences

If you're using the Blight timeline, ***The Levee*** commences on Mourndday 9th of Celebrate, roughly corresponding to Monday 9th of October. An unusually long and mild summer air is slowly drifting away, and the Canker is beginning to manifest itself upon Sister Lyme in the mornings as the cooler night air condenses over the water. Some days are still warm; most are not, with a brisk north breeze in the air. Crops are in. Use the passing summer as a way to emphasise the coming winter. In the streets, hats and scarves are beginning to replace fresh fruit; some seasonal fruit remains but is already going to rot.

The Levee Pre-Generated Player Characters

The following player characters represent several Wicken villagers about to be hanged in the *Redemption* prison hulk. As such, they have no gear other than ragged peasant's clothing. Each of these curiously gifted villagers was created using standard character creation rules for the Fifth Edition of the world's most popular role-playing game and has a background that ties them into the events of the ***The Levee***. Although they are designed specifically for use with ***The Levee***, they can be used — with appropriate gear added — in any other campaign or as sample Blight NPCs.

One thing you will notice about these particular characters is that they do not have a background selected. This presents the perfect opportunity for you and your players to explore the new backgrounds specific to the Blight in ***The Blight Player's Guide***. Encourage your players to select a background, either from among the new Blight backgrounds or from the game manual, that best fits their style of play and while providing opportunities for interesting roleplay and interactions with the other characters and NPCs encountered while traveling or adventuring through the Blight.

References

When the adventure references something that's described more fully in ***The Cyclopaedia Infestarum***, we use the † symbol to indicate that more detail is available (this is done in the city districts as well, so you're probably already aware of the method by now). In general, this indicates a new NPC type or a new monster. When there are cross-references to city districts, these will usually be specifically cited. To avoid pages filled with distracting notations, the † symbol is not used on *every* outside reference within an adventure — only the first few times it occurs.

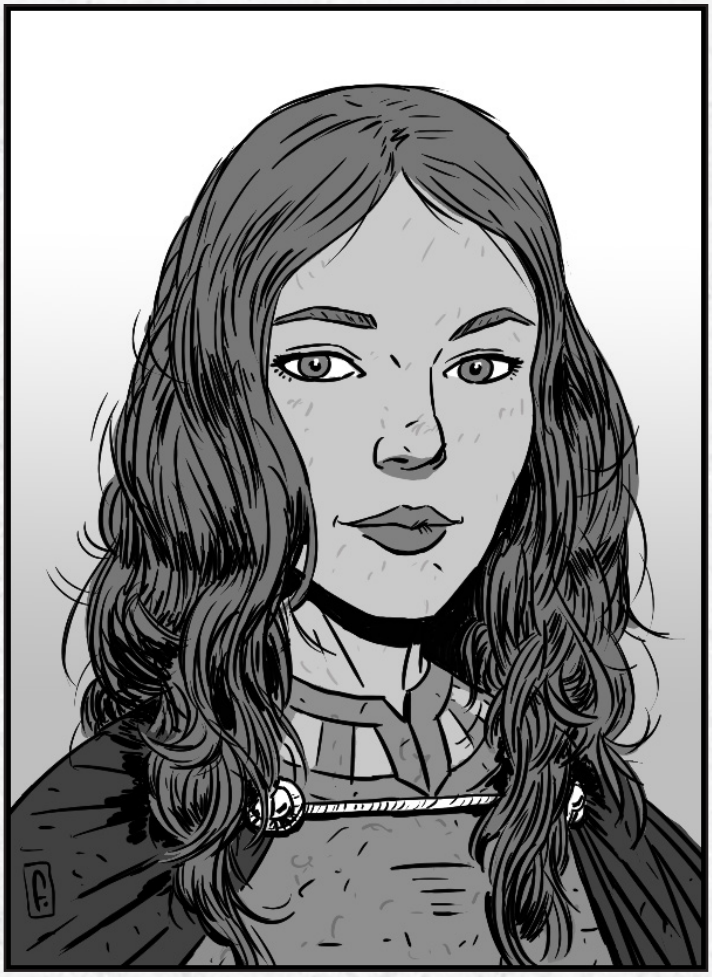
Agnes Scroggs, Farmer

Female Human Druid 1, Neutral
Armor Class 10**Hit Points** 9 (1d8 + 1)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Skills Animal Handling +5, Athletics +2, Nature +3, Survival + 5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Druidic, Goblin
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

PROFICIENCIES
Proficiency Bonus: +2
Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields (armor and shields cannot be made of metal)
Weapon: Clubs, daggers, darts, javelins, maces, quarterstaffs, scimitars, sickles, slings, spears
Tools: Herbalism kit
Saving Throws: Intelligence +3, Wisdom +5



CLASS FEATURES

Druidic. You know Druidic, the secret language of the druids. You can speak the language and use it to leave hidden messages. You can automatically spot hidden messages left by others who know Druidic. These hidden messages can be spotted by non-Druidic speakers with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check but cannot decipher it without magic.

Ritual Casting. You can cast a druid spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have that spell prepared.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use a druidic focus as a spell-casting focus for your druid spells.

Spellcasting. You can cast divine spells.

Spell Save DC: 13

Spell Attack Modifier: +5

Spells Known:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraftt, produce flame*

1st level (2 slots): *cure wounds, charm person, faerie fire, fog cloud*

ACTIONS

Attack. You can attack when you take this action, using the following:

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1 + 0) bludgeoning damage.

EQUIPMENT

Peasant's outfit

You were born and raised at your family's farm on the outskirts of Wicken, a village that lies several miles outside the great city of Castorhage. Your parents were much older than most others when they conceived, and your arrival was both a blessing and a surprise for they had all but given up the hope of having a family.

From an early age, you found you had a way with the animals of the farm, instinctively understanding them and being able to convince them to be calm or comply where others seemed to find their behavior confusing, aggressive, or stubborn. Your skill helped the farm to thrive and, by your late twenties, you had taken over from your aging parents.

When your mother died two years later, you met your Aunt Sorcha for the first time at the funeral. Aunt Sorcha stayed at the farm afterward — ostensibly to cook, clean, and help your father grieve — but primarily, having discovered your way with animals, to secretly pass on her knowledge of nature to you. With Sorcha's help, you learned how to speak with animals, and how to use your subtle influences on people too, many of whom began to seek you out to mediate disputes.

When your father died less than a year later, Aunt Sorcha had almost finished her teachings. When the soldiers came, she had been gone for less than a week. You do not know why you have been arrested, but you hope Aunt Sorcha's teachings help you and others to survive the experience. You are 5 ft. 6 in. tall and weigh 150 lbs. You have long, wavy brown hair, green eyes, and white skin tanned from long hours working outdoors. You are 31 years old, and The Green Father is your patron deity.

Eliza Crabapple, Trapper

Female Human Rogue 1, Neutral
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 9 (1d8 + 1)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

PROFICIENCIES

Proficiency Bonus: +2
Armor: Light armor
Weapon: Simple weapons, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords
Tools: Thieves' tools
Saving Throws: Dexterity +5, Intelligence +3

CLASS FEATURES

Expertise. You are exceptionally proficient at Sleight of Hand and Stealth. You double your proficiency bonus for any ability check you make with either of these abilities.

Sneak Attack. You know how to strike subtly and exploit a foe's distraction. Once per turn, you can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature she hits with an attack while you have advantage on the attack roll, or if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it. You must be using a finesse or ranged weapon.

Thieves' Cant. You know thieves' cant, a secret mix of dialect, jargon, and code that allows you to hide messages in seemingly normal conversation. You also understand a set of secret signs and symbols used to convey short, simple messages.

ACTIONS

Attack. You can attack when you take this action, using the following:

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1 + 0) bludgeoning damage.

EQUIPMENT

Peasant's outfit

You were born and raised at your father's home in Wicken, a village that lies several miles outside the great city of Castorhage. You were named



after your mother who died giving birth to you, weakened by a disease that she picked up from the markets in the city. Your father is a skilled artisan, adept in repairing clocks, locks, and simpler, mechanical devices. From a young age, you were taught the mysteries of cogs, gears, triggers, and trips as you helped him in his work, sometimes traveling with him to various parts of the city to make deliveries and pickups.

As you progressed into your teenage years, you grew tall and athletic. You loved running, jumping, and climbing all around the village and local area until you met Silas, a strong and handsome local shepherd's boy. Silas introduced you to Wild Grog, the local poacher, who taught you both how to trap game. You excelled in setting snares and making traps, a skill that your father's teachings had set a solid foundation for, and you were proud to contribute to the kitchen table. But Wild Grog, an old adventurer, also taught you both how to fight. You learnt to use your agility and speed to outmanoeuvre your opponent and find weak spots in their defenses.

When the soldiers came, though, your skill was outmatched by their armor and weaponry, and you were bludgeoned into unconscious for deigning to resist. You do not know why you and other villagers have been arrested, but you hope Wild Grog's teachings help you and the others to survive the experience.

You are 5 ft. 9 in. tall and athletically built, weighing 155 lbs. You have short, curly strawberry-blonde hair, green eyes, and freckled white skin. You are 19 years old, and The Green Father is your patron deity.

Gideon Redmane, Cidermaker

Male Gnome Bard 1, Neutral Good
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 11 (1d8 + 3)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Intimidation +5, Performance +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Gnome, Sylvan
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

PROFICIENCIES
Proficiency Bonus: +2
Armor: Light armor
Weapon: Simple weapons, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords
Tools: Bagpipes, lyre, pan flute
Saving Throws: Dexterity +4, Charisma +5

CLASS FEATURES
= As a bonus action, ad
Ritual Casting. You can cast a bard spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have that spell prepared.
Spellcasting Focus. You can use a musical instrument as a spellcasting focus for your druid spells.

RACIAL TRAITS
Gnome Cunning. You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

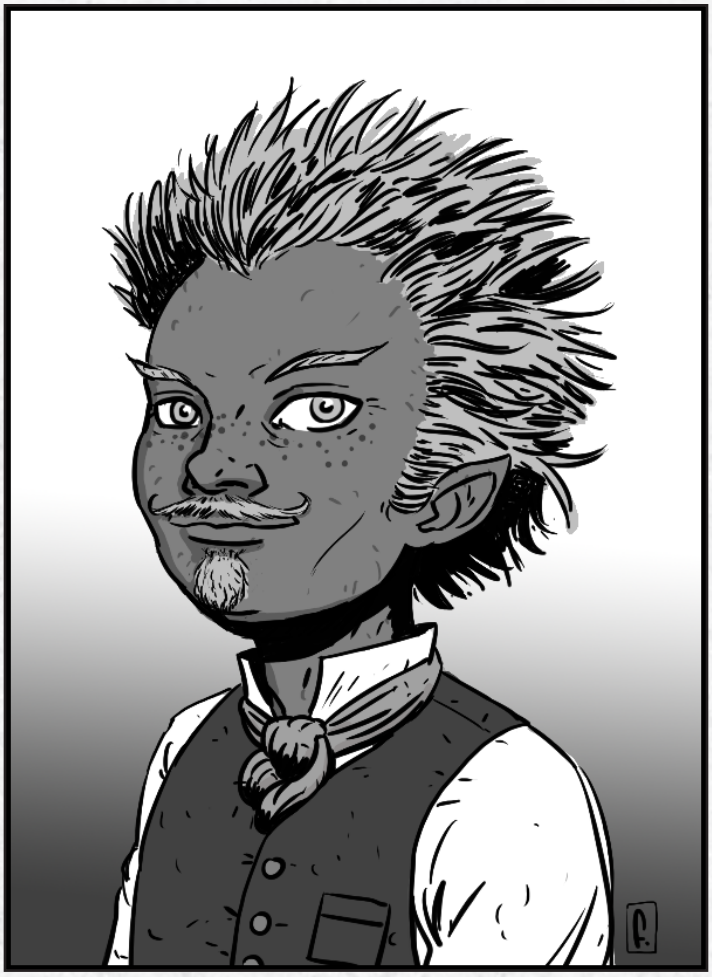
ACTIONS
Attack. You can attack when you take this action, using the following:
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1 + 0) bludgeoning damage.]

EQUIPMENT
Peasant's outfit

You were born and raised at your parents' tavern in Wicken, a village that lies several miles outside the great city of Castorhage. Your father, Tully, is a master cider maker, and your mother is a cook and hostess to all who visit The Smiling Pig. As a gregarious and fun-loving youngster, you relished living in a home that attracted frequent visitors, even those from the city, and you loved helping your father and older sisters out in the orchards.

Due to your longevity and the centrality of your family's tavern and brewery to village life, you have grown to know all of the families of Wicken and can count several of the parents of your current close friends as former playmates. While some of the longer-lived races find such change to be sad, you have always had a talent for seeing the funny sides, the silver linings, and for making people laugh. The fact that you have learnt how to make people drunk as well just works in your favour. You also enjoy telling tall tales to the officious or the ill-humored, and you have developed the skill to cut them down to your size with a few choice, mocking words.

You had been back at Wicken for only six years when the soldiers came, having left for a decade to study music, comedy, and magic with talented members of your extended family who cleave even closer to their fey roots in the deep, wild forests even farther from the city. But your attempts to charm and distract the armored invaders fell on compassionless hearts, and you were bludgeoned into unconscious for making light of their serious, unknown business. You do not know why you and other villagers have been arrested, but you hope that your optimism and influence help you and the others to survive the experience.



Tall for a gnome, you stand 3 ft. 8 in. tall and weigh 43 lbs. You have spiky red hair, golden eyes, and nut-brown skin. You are 46 years old, and Hammer Mittelschmerz is your patron deity.

Meriwether Chubb, Preacher

Male Human Cleric of Mother Grace (The Beatific Quest) 1, Lawful Good
Life Domain
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 10 (1d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Insight +5, Religion +5**Senses** passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

PROFICIENCIES
Proficiency Bonus: +2
Armor: All, shields
Weapon: Simple weapons
Tools: None
Saving Throws: Wisdom + 5, Charisma +3

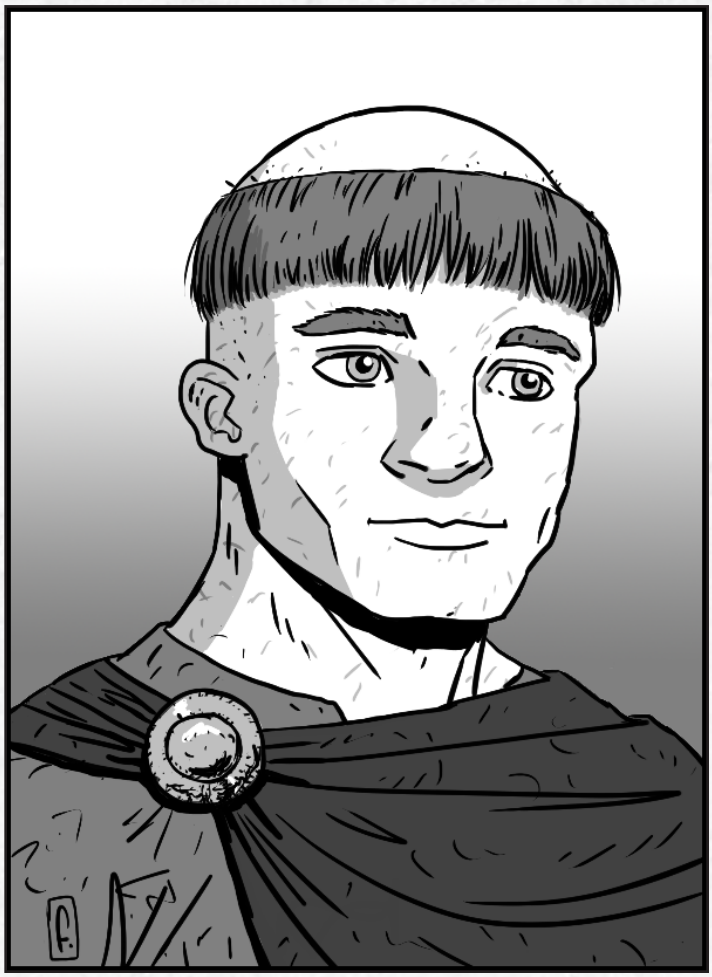
CLASS FEATURES
Disciple of Life. Starting at 1st level, your healing spells are more effective. Whenever you cast a healing spell that restores hit points to a creature, the creature regains additional hit points equal to 2 + the spell's level.
Life Domain Spells. 1st level: *bless, cure wounds*
Ritual Casting. You can cast a cleric spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have that spell prepared.
Spellcasting Focus. You can use a holy symbol as a spellcasting focus for your cleric spells.
Spellcasting. You can cast divine spells.
Spell Save DC: 13
Spell Attack Modifier: +5
Spells Known:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, sacred flame*
Spells Prepared:
1st level (2 slots): *bless, cure wounds, healing word, sanctuary*

ACTIONS
Attack. You can attack when you take this action, using the following:
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1 + 0) bludgeoning damage.]

EQUIPMENT
Peasant's outfit

You were born and raised at your family's home in Wicken, a village that lies several miles outside the great city of Castorhage. Your father is the village blacksmith and your mother is a housewife. While your older brother followed your father into the family trade, your destiny was different from birth for you were born with the distinct rose-colored mark of the Mother and Child over your heart.

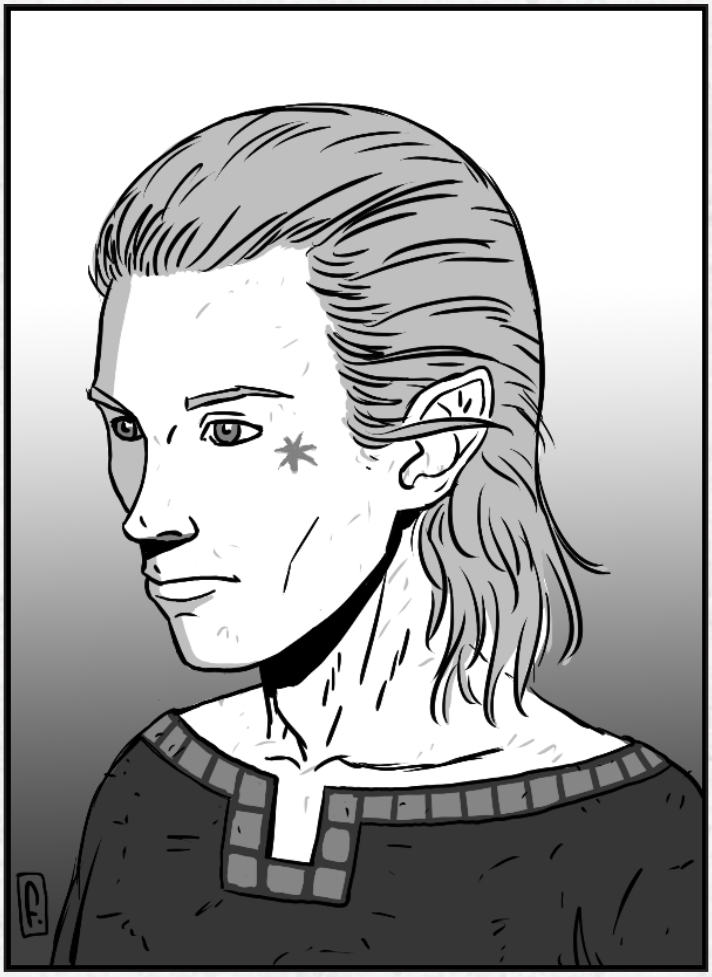
Father Gromwell, the priest of the parish's Church of Saint Alman, took you under his wing as an acolyte from a young age and, along with your friend Sept, filled your head with dreams of Heaven and Paradise with his stories of angels and the afterlife.



Your faith in Mother Grace grew deep and, as you emerged from your teenage years, she blessed you with the power to heal, to inspire, and to protect those around you. When Father Gromwell confirmed you into the clergy, it was as much to his delight and pride as it was to your parents. In keeping with the teachings of the Beatific Quest, you began to lead religious and instructional sermons on the value of community, service, sacrifice, and the study of history working alongside your superior, Father Nettle, to build and lead the parish whenever Father Gromwell became immersed in his wonderful paintings of angels.

A short time later, when Father Gromwell announced that he was retiring and passing the torch to Father Nettle, the news was met with surprise and sadness, but also with understanding for you and the community knew that he had left the parish in good hands. It was only a few months after he had left, though — time in which you had hardly had the time to properly discuss the implications of Father Nettle's modernising ideas — when the soldiers came. You do not know why you and the other villagers have been arrested, but you hope that your faith and inspiration help you and the others to survive the experience.

You are 5 ft. 11 in. tall and, with the heavy, naturally strong build of your blacksmith father, weigh 185 lbs. Your short brown hair is cut in a tonsure, your eyes are blue, and your fair skin is pale from spending long periods indoors. You are 27 years old, and Mother Grace, as the Beatific Quest, is your patron deity.



Sept Alman, Painter

Male Half-elf Sorceror 1, Lawful Good
Wild Magic Bloodline
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 10 (1d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

PROFICIENCIES
Proficiency Bonus: +2
Armor: None
Weapon: Daggers, darts, slings, quarterstaffs, light crossbows
Tools: None
Saving Throws: Constitution + 5, Charisma +5

CLASS FEATURES
Wild Magic Surge. Starting at 1st level, your spellcasting can unleash unpredictable surges of magic. After casting a sorcerer spell of 1st level or higher, roll a d20. If you roll a 1, a random magical effect is created. Consult with your GM for the results.
Tides of Chaos. Beginning at 1st level, you can manipulate chance and chaos to gain advantage on one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. This can only be used once per long rest.
Spellcasting Focus. You can use an arcane focus as a spell-casting focus for your sorcerer spells.
Spellcasting. You can cast sorcerer spells.
Spell Save DC: 13
Spell Attack Modifier: +5
Spells Known:
Cantrips (at will): *blade ward, mage hand, ray of frost, true strike*
1st level (2 slots): *magic missile, shield*

RACIAL TRAITS
Fey Ancestry. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

ACTIONS
Attack. You can attack when you take this action, using the following:
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1 + 0) bludgeoning damage.]

EQUIPMENT
Peasant's outfit

You do not know where you were born or who your parents are, for you were found at the door of the Church of Saint Alman as a baby, laid in a basket woven of twigs and leaves, and bearing a red birthmark shaped like a seven-pointed star near your left eye. Father Gromwell, who found you, named you accordingly, and pronounced you a blessed child of Wicken and the son of all.

Many of the families of Wicken contributed to your upbringing, sharing the burdens and the pleasures of your company, and so you got to know almost everyone. Try as you might, though, you have never been quite able to overcome the lack of direct connection to the people who raised you, and you have remained emotionally remote, suffused at times with a deep sense of melancholy. You became good friends with Meriwether, however, the church's acolyte who was only a year older than you, and you spent many days with him in the church, learning the teachings of Mother Grace. You also spent time helping Father Gromwell paint his grand visions of angels — a skill that you became quite proficient in — and you also loved to listen to his stories of the realms of the afterlife.

Your magic came as you left your teenage years, a gift from an ancestor that causes the star high on your left cheekbone to burn with an inner fire and enables you to heal with a touch or with divine flame, and to dazzle with starlight. But when the soldiers came, there were too many for you to subdue, and you were bludgeoned into unconsciousness for daring to resist. You do not know why you and the other villagers have been

arrested, but you hope that the magic that suffuses your blood helps you and the others survive the experience.

You are 6 ft. 2 in. tall and slender, weighing only 170 lbs. You have shoulder-length blonde hair, violet eyes, and pale white skin. You are 26 years old, and Mother Grace, as the Beatific Quest, is your patron deity.

Silas Hodd, Poacher

Male Human Fighter 1, Neutral
Wild Magic Bloodline
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 12 (1d10 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +4, Survival +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Elven
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

PROFICIENCIES
Proficiency Bonus: +2
Armor: All armor, shields
Weapon: Simple weapons, martial weapons
Tools: None
Saving Throws: Strength +4, Constitution +4

CLASS FEATURES
Fighting Style: Two-Weapon Fighting. When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack
Second Wind. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + your fighter level. You recover the use of this ability after completing a short or long rest.

ACTIONS
Attack. You can attack when you take this action, using the following:
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1 + 0) bludgeoning damage.]

EQUIPMENT
Peasant's outfit



You were born and raised at your family's home on a hill overlooking Wicken, a village that lies several miles outside the great city of Castorhage. Your father is a shepherd, and your mother and younger sister are seamstresses. You spent much of your youth helping your father, guiding the flock in the hills and dales, shearing and lambing in the spring, and protecting them from wolves and other predators. You grew strong and quick as a result, with proficient knife skills and a sharp eye.

Your family was poor, however, and so as you got older, you also began joining Wild Grog, an old friend of your father's, as he poached game. You proved a proficient survivalist, with a particular talent for spotting game trails and burrows, knife-hunting, and skinning for meat and fur, but you had little patience for the finer points of trapmaking. When Grog mentioned you could both do with another pair of hands, you invited Eliza, a local girl who you'd had your eye on for a while, to join you. She proved to be an excellent trapmaker, and the three of you enjoyed great success. You loved Grog's stories of his old adventuring days, which he used as inspiration to teach you and Eliza how to fight. You learned how to use two daggers at once, as well as some handling tricks to warn opponents of your intimidating proficiency. But when the soldiers came, your skill was outmatched by their armor and weaponry, and you were bludgeoned into unconscious for deigning to resist. You do not know why you and other villagers have been arrested, but you hope Wild Grog's teachings help you and the others survive the experience.

You are 6 ft. tall and muscular, weighing 190 lbs. You have long brown hair, brown eyes, and tanned skin. You are 21 years old, and The Green Father is your patron deity.

Between Maladies

Yes, we created some decks of cards called ***Maladies*** as a supporting product for **The Blight Kickstarter**. No, these aren't related to them. The truth is that we were trying to come up with a good name for the decks we had come up with, and Maladies was just too good to pass up. So while the ***Maladies*** card decks provide you a number of handy reference cards to make running your Blight campaign easier, the maladies we refer to here are a totally different thing. These maladies — Between Maladies — are intended as supplemental rules as a part of your Blight campaign. That you have the possibility of printing them and cutting them out as handy reference cards to hand out to your players … again, entirely coincidental.

The Levee and some of the stand-alone Blight adventures (***TB1–5***) have a number of occasions where the characters fall foul of vile abominations from Between. Such creatures can tear at the character's soul and being, unmaking or changing it. And really any campaign set within the Blight has a possibility of this same effect. The experience touches the exposed individuals in a strange way. Some cause a physical transformation to occur. Such cases are always possible when coming into too close contact from residents of Between, as anyone making a DC 12 Intelligence check is painfully aware. Most of these maladies are deliberately non-mechanical, designed instead to enhance roleplay.

These maladies are given as a set of cards for you to print and draw randomly at moments where they are indicated throughout ***The Levee***. The effects should be a tangent to normal play. Don't become obsessive about it; it is simply designed to add another facet to the adventure path

and reflect its strangeness. If a mechanic is required where the situation or consequence cannot be avoided, then they should make a DC 15 Wisdom save or be shaken for the duration of their encounter with the subject of their malady.

Physically, the maladies can be triggered whenever you wish, but in all likelihood they grow over a matter of 1d4 days after the event that triggers them. Where such maladies contradict a character's code of honour or ethics, they should not impinge in such a way that requires the character to lose his or her standing. For example, a paladin that dreams at night of acts of violence should not lose her paladinhood because of it, but may seek to cure such maladies by concluding the adventure successfully.

Curing maladies is tricky since these are effects from a place beyond mortal magic where such mundane cures do not work, although powerful spells such as *wish* do. If such a malady causes a player genuine concerns about the actions, you may wish to consider the line of a bespoke cure for the character — a cleric undertaking fasts, flagellation, or weeks of prayer, for example. These cures can become part of the experience of playing with Between; some work, while some end in despair and failure — perhaps making things worse.

This set of maladies is designed to be fun to play, and to give ***The Levee*** and adventures in Between a subtle twist. If they aren't your thing, don't use them.





Develops a peculiar rash that resembles a human face	By night, stares at particular constellations obsessively and whispers "soon"
Paints things in various shades of red	Sculpts strange things with wax
Paints human faces that have weird and disturbing aspects	Frantically sketches things with too many legs
Has a thing about moths	Obsessively collects and catalogues dead roses

Becomes obsessive about pupae	Jumps at the sight of her own shadow
Develops an obsession with angelic figures	Occasionally retches up 2- to 3-foot-long, wan worms that are difficult to kill
Is unsettled by spiders	Finds sleep difficult due to incredibly disturbing and vivid dreams
Develops a fascination with flutes and plays disturbingly strange music that sounds almost impossible for human lips and lungs to perform	Obsessively paints unreal Between landscapes filled with oceans of caressing limbs

Cannot abide to press her ear against anything for fear that a tiny worm-like creature with a human doll face will burrow into her brain and eat it	Mumbles strange, inhuman poetry at odd moments
Stares at beautiful things obsessively	Doesn't always seem to be mentally in the same room as everyone else
Develops an unhealthy fascination with flies and maggots	Develop a fascination with the colour ochre
Hates total darkness	Cannot abide to be outside in the full midday sun

Wakes up screaming on some nights	Becomes fascinated by butchery
Cannot bear reflections, particularly in particular mirrors	Seems to be awake most nights writing in a completely unfathomable stream of letters
Becomes obsessive about personal security, particularly at night, claiming there is something out there in the dark waiting for the right moment to attack	Occasionally says "She is coming" for no apparent reason
When sleeping, begins scratching, drawing, or painting bizarre and unsettling things and places on nearby walls, furniture, or other blank surfaces, each image depicting obscene and violent acts.	Dreams peculiar dreams where shadows fall the wrong way and where acts of joy are mingled with and inherent to acts of violence

Gains a Knowledge (Between) skill of 1 rank, or gains a rank if they already have that skill as a result of obsessively dreaming about Between places, and finds the only way to get relief from these maddening visions is to scream loudly once per day	Grows an extra, palsied finger. The finger often — but not always — occurs with the others. This new digit is withered and sickly looking
Grows a withered, sickly tail. The tail grows from the base of the spine and, after a certain length of time, grows a small, useless mouth filled with needle-like teeth	An extra but otherwise functional mouth grows on the lower anatomy. The mouth does not function or speak in any normal way but occasionally utters a low moan in the depths of the night
Something wicked is coming by night. Only by using the correct tokens and fetishes can you keep it away, and only magic and faith can stop it. It does not show its face by day, and you are safe.	Obsessively crafts and builds a bizarre musical instrument that resembles a sitar and trio of flutes bound by sinews. After completion, gains 1 rank in Perform (Between music), a new skill that is in essence a standard perform check. Sadly, such music is so wholly grating and disturbing that the only people who get any joy from it are characters touched by Between.
Grows an odd, semi-alive tattoo of a wan worm on her back. The worm occasionally moves, an action that the character can feel and is unsettled by. By night, the character is convinced the worm tattoo is burrowing into her brain for secrets	Is obsessive about dirt, and occasionally notices strange, insectoid forms scuttling about immediately below her skin. These things are never caught, but wake the character often with their movement

The character becomes convinced that she is pregnant, that something has laid its young within her body. Occasionally, she can feel them squirming in her stomach. This pregnancy affects male and female characters alike.	Becomes convinced that her bones are slowly changing, and that somehow, at some undefined moment in the future, they will all dislocate, and something new will be formed.
Only prayers will keep Between from you.	Has one permanently bloodshot eye that occasionally sees things that cannot possibly exist
Develops a maddening itch that only appears when mirrors are nearby. Occasionally awakens to see lice dancing about on this scar. But when he looks again, they are gone. They must be imaginary . . .	Doesn't see her own reflection in a mirror, but instead sees a monstrous mockery of what her secret desires and lusts are. This doppelganger whispers sometimes, threatening to come out of the mirror, replace her, and do unspeakable things to her family and friends.
Doesn't seem to be affected in any way	Continually has to fight off dark urges that rise unbidden into her brain, particularly when mirrors are about



L1: Hereafter

By Richard Pett



Playtesters — to whom we send our grateful thanks, apologies, and love

Brett Andrews
Simon Bell
Andy Boam
Jim Clunie
Iain Hunter-Fennell
Sharon Hunter-Fennell
Chris Griffiths
Clare Jones
Mark Laverlock
Tim Marsh
Lesley Pearce
Pete Pollard
Alistair Rigg
Chris Sharpe
Ben Whenham
Isaac White

Introduction

It has to do with mirrors. And betrayal.

At its heart, **Levee** is an adventure where the characters become close to its main protagonist. The peculiarly close relationship with the protagonist — a Between† angel called the Beautiful — is an integral part of the entire adventure, but not governed totally by it. There is a simple reason for this — death. As the adventure progresses, the Beautiful and her "touched" character(s) communicate — through dreams and images, until eventually they meet in ***L7: My Benefactor***. This close relationship is consummated at the end of the adventure where the character(s) are given a chance to betray their friends to receive their own personal heavens. The adventure is built to this climax and is likely to be all the more memorable for it. However, a good RPG has more than a chance at death, and the ***Levee Adventure*** is no exception. You, as GM, must therefore be prepared for this eventuality. To do so, focus your visions on more than one character, but leave others unaffected, so that if one or more dies, you have a backup.

A TPK (total party kill, for the uninitiated) gives you another challenge, but bringing in new characters who have also been touched by the angel is relatively easy. You'll see as the adventure progresses how this close relationship develops and can use your own judgement on how to handle it best for your players.

As you're reading this adventure, go back to ***The Blight Campaign Guide*** for references from time to time, and understand at least the basics of the bigger picture of the city before slipping a noose around the characters necks and hanging them..

There are many facets behind the Beautiful, but perhaps the closest to the characters is the Thieves' Guild of Castorhage. The Guild†, as it is called, can be used by the characters to develop friendships, who will meet some of its associates along the way. As written, the Guild is merely part of the backdrop of the adventure, to expand as you wish. The reason for this relatively light touch on the Guild's involvement is because the adventure is not meant exclusively for rogues or assassins or other "thieves-guild types." The Guild is quite diverse, more than just a simple professional gang. Like any huge organization (even one as inherently disorganized as the Guild), it has many pieces and moving parts. The Guild employs or serves as a beacon for Royals and Anarchists, for cruel thugs and good-hearted rogues, and even for angels and devils.

The Guild

Thievery is the second-oldest profession in the Blight after harlotry; it is therefore granted the title *The* Guild in honour of its ancient and much-respected roots. Countless legends of hero-thieves and rogues pepper the Guild's illustrious history. Curiously, the Guild of Harlots is often referred to as the "First Guild," or simply "First," by its teeming members and profligate customers.

The characters have been imprisoned aboard Her Majesty's Prison Hulk *Redemption*, which lies in the heart of the Great Lyme River. They begin this adventure without any starting equipment beyond the clothes they wear. Some groups may not like this approach, and if you don't, change it. There is no reason why the characters cannot have brought equipment with them to the Blight: it has simply been confiscated. As the first NPC they meet, Eleanor (see below) could have arranged access to it, and hands it back to them when the time comes. You can easily have their equipment lying in the bottom of the rowboat they escape from in the prison hulk, and remove the equipment that is otherwise supplied there. However, part of the fun of the adventure is to truly begin from scratch, and to require the players to build their characters' possessions from the ground up, through encounters and other opportunities. Use your best judgment.

Spells and Spellbooks

To some characters, the accoutrements of their classes are integral to them. A wizard cannot function without a spellbook and a cleric without a holy symbol is handicapped. Starting characters without equipment is always challenging, but in this case the characters are not out of the woods until at least day of adventure has taken place. The early encounters of this adventure are about roleplaying, but having the basics along is important. Assume that any wizard characters prepared their spells prior to their capture, and have yet to use any of them

. Allow reasonable material components to be available at hand (a small bit of old leather strap for *mage armour* or a bit of crusted river silt for *sleep*, for instance). Clerics can crudely craft temporary holy symbols from scraps until a more permanent one can be obtained. Allow your players to come up with creative ways these needs can be met, and try to incorporate them into your game.

Adventure Background

The extended halfling-wererat clan known as the Family has long and secretly run the district of Festival, and the Thieves' Guild has long sought the means to topple them. Some members of the Guild, however, have more personal reasons for wanting the Family's demise. **Eleanor Shank**, a member of the Thieves' Guild, is one such. Her husband Marris was infected with lycanthropy by members of the Family, and she was forced to kill him when he transformed into a wererat hybrid, attacking her and her child, Tam. She wants revenge. This story unfolds in future adventures in Levee.

Eleanor has spotted the characters, who have been imprisoned in a river hulk — or rather, she has been led towards them by a helping (an at-present unknown and unmentioned) hand. The characters have two things she needs — expendability and faces unfamiliar in the city. She's been looking for strangers for the last couple of days to help her find out a little more about the Family, rulers of one of the Blight's more colourful districts — Festival. The Grast family are one of the more illustrious branches of Festival's infamous Family. It just so happens that a minor member of the Family, Ammos Grast, a bastard son of Marren Grast† (the head of the Grast Family), is also on the hulk. Eleanor thinks Ammos may also be useful to her in locating a missing spy from the Thieves' Guild, named Uriah Agaric. Eleanor intends to kill two birds with one stone by releasing the characters and getting them to also free Ammos, whom she hopes will be so grateful to the characters that they may fall in together. She knows the risk she is taking — that she may release the characters and Ammos for nothing — but she thinks it's a risk worth taking.

Adventure Summary

The characters begin the adventure with ropes about their necks, about to be executed. Taken from their homes in the hamlet of Wicken† (beyond the city walls) by soldiers, the characters have an unexpected saviour; the Rat Catcher Eleanor Shank, a highwayman in The Guild, offers them a mission: head deep into Festival, the centre of entertainment in the city, a place where danger hides behind a smiling mask.

Eleanor Shank informs them that the isle of Festival is infested with a cancer that needs to be drawn — wererats. The Thieves' Guild has been

fighting a war against the rats of Festival for some time, but somehow the rats never seem to be defeated — indeed, they are growing in strength. One of the Guild's own number, a spy called Uriah Agaric, has recently gone missing in Festival. Shank wishes the characters to go to Festival, find out what they can about Agaric and, if possible, rescue him. What they can find out about Festival will also be of use in the war against the rats. Shank has hit upon the idea of using the characters because of two main reasons; their anonymity, firstly, and their expendability. Shank knows much more about the characters than she lets on; she, too, has associates that ask her to carry out tasks. For now, she keeps the identity of her sponsors to herself.

The characters are also in the right place at the right time: Ammos Grast, one of the bastard children of a prominent Family in Festival, is also in the prison hulk. Eleanor wants the characters to use the next few hours to bring him along on the escape — a grateful member of a prominent family could be useful, at least for now. He may also know about the wererats in Festival, and why they are so numerous. But what seems like a lucky coincidence is far from true — the characters are pawns in a game they are currently unaware of.

If the characters agree, Eleanor arranges for the executioner to sign the death certificate and she'll arrange some new bodies from a nearby morgue to replace them. The warrant for the characters death, it transpires, was approved by Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage† — Shank is impressed, for the characters were sentenced by a real bastard, the head of the Knights Occularis. There are dark stories about these knights and inquisitors: massacres, tortures, burnings… always nasty things. They traffic with the occult, with necromancy and with the Devil. The Occularis play an important role in the **adventure**, but for now they're just a name and a bad taste.

Shank finishes her offer by warning the characters that fleeing into the city is a bad idea. Her associates are very well connected, and the time and trouble they are going through to release the characters are expensive; betraying them would be a bad idea. In truth, Shank does not expect the characters to survive, but her associates have more confidence in the characters' abilities. She tells the characters that a boat will be waiting for them at midnight, and that they're to be ready. When they learn anything useful about Uriah, she asks them to send message to her, using a special messenger she'll leave in the boat.

The characters have a few encounters in the filthy prison hulk before midnight, when they can escape, and must be wary of a fellow prisoner who could cause real problems for them. The characters escape by boat, and, after a dangerous encounter with guards and some local river life, finally see Festival in the distance.

Uriah Agaric, a disguised member of the Thieves' Guild, used his talents to assimilate himself into a small circus and freak show in Festival, run by the Grast family, called the Circus Macabre. He had been digging too deep and has been punished in the most awful way possible for the Family: devoured by the Pack, eaten alive by a huge swarm of rats. However, there is enough of him left to make *speak with dead* possible. The circus and freak show, cruelly run by Obed Gride with the help of the bullying Ammos Grast, has fallen on hard times. He needs fresh talent and guards; local freak shows have been fighting open battles, and stealing each other's exhibits. The characters become involved in Gride's circus, and spend time protecting the show from attack by rivals. They can also use any talents they have, to bring in visitors. They may take pity on the abused freaks and performers, who would, it is obvious, be better off without Gride.

Ammos's "uncle" (actually his father) is Marren Grast, the leader of one of the most powerful arms of the Family. Marren invites the characters to Grast Hall, to thank them for releasing his favourite nephew. Marren gives the characters a substantial reward, and treats them to a fabulous meal. He asks the characters to deal with the "whore" responsible for his nephew's imprisonment, and offers them an additional reward. The "whore," it transpires, is a ghoul— trying to locate her leads the characters deeper into Festival.

By questioning his flock, and taking opportunities to improve their lot in life, the characters have the chance to learn more about Uriah. They find he was investigating an area beneath the Festival piers, called the Shadows. The characters may also learn that the circus performers are kept there under duress. Gride has the circus's true owner — a tiny, stunted halfling called Long Lucy† — held prisoner, and such is the loyalty of the performers that they remain, fearing what may happen to her.

The Shadows, it transpires, are ruled by a mite called the Shrunken King, who rides a giant rat and has friends in the Family. Discovering his lair and his mite allies, the characters eventually learn that the King and his kind are smuggling living goods into the Filleted Cat, a gin house and freak-brothel connected to the mite tunnels. The mites are the worst kind of body-snatchers; they steal visitors and sell them to the highest bidders at nearby BookTown, infamous home of many a golem-maker or homuncule wife. The characters find plenty of clues that this operation is run by a collector in BookTown called Rebecca Belladonna, and that the Family are closely involved.

The characters have a run-in with the owner of the Filleted Cat and his crooked-faced daughters before finding what is left of Uriah hung from the underpiers; he has been eaten alive, but there is enough of him left to question by the use of magic. When Shank questions his remains, using a *potion of speak with dead* † an eerie encounter occurs with the corpse. It reveals that Festival is infested with wererats, and that they intend to spread across the city. They are ruled by a queen, who devours the living.

The characters also discover Long Lucy in the bowels of the gin house, and free her, enabling her to arrange for the Circus Macabre to flee Festival. She is forever indebted to the characters, whom she invites to take a role in the circus's future. She pledges to make the Circus Macabre the greatest show in the city; and the characters, as new partners, will receive updates and rewards as it grows, establishing the show and its members as future allies and friends.

The characters have a run-in with Gride and Ammos, which can come in many ways. They can ambush the pair at the show, can be ambushed by them, or — if they take too long or are not subtle — can end up facing a larger mob of Family members, and have to flee Festival. Regardless of these actions, the characters have been seen; soon, members of the Grast Family are talking about them and what they might know. They become enemies of the Family, and so begins a curse that follows them through the whole adventure.

The characters are well-rewarded by Shank, though, who asks them to continue their investigations in nearby BookTown. This time the Guild will be paying — and paying well. By the adventure's end the characters should have visited their old home of Wicken — to find it little more than a name on a map and some burnt-out shells of houses. The attack seems to have taken place with no apparent reason. The only clue is that unusual care was taken in removing the paintings of the former parish priest, Father Gromwell. By talking to an old hermit, the characters learn that the village was razed by the Knights Occularis, who talked about finding an "ultimate treasure" there. But the question remains: What can Gromwell's strange paintings of a scythe-wielding angel have to do with this alleged treasure?

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins with the characters imprisoned on a prison hulk floating in the Great Lyme River, awaiting imminent execution, having been mysteriously plucked — along with everyone else — from their home village of Wicken — which has subsequently been razed to the ground for reasons that become clearer as the adventure moves along. **Appendix A,** below, gives some suggested traits for the players to use in the construction of the characters, to tailor them as inhabitants or visitors to Wicken when the arrests occur. Allowing the characters to choose a campaign trait may seem to imbalance the game; however, keep in mind that these backgrounds provide valuable inspiration for the characters. You may also wish to consider allowing your characters certain goals (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*** and **Appendix B** of this adventure). Again, these are not essential, but can provide an interesting side angle to the main event.

Following the initial arrests, it seems that the characters and their fellow villagers (the rest of whom are unaccounted for at the beginning of the

adventure) have been simply unlucky — a village in the wrong place at the wrong time. The side trek adventure located after the appendices provides more meat to the conspiracy, however, as it is soon discovered that bad luck had no role to play here. The village, when visited again, is simply gone — although the church seems to be the focus of the mystery. Crucially, their village was once home to Father Gromwell, a pivotal figure in the adventure, and ultimately the reason Wicken and its inhabitants were taken.

Read the following introduction aloud to your players.

Wicken was always a fine place to live. The seasons came and went as really the only marking of the passage of the years. The winters forced you to huddle around your hearth and those of your neighbours, or to enjoy the smiles, laughter, and singing over mulled cider in the Smiling Pig Tavern. Winters soon became warm springs, but Wicken was far enough from the city — the one you call the Blight — to enjoy clean air, so you could enjoy the newly arriving warmth and greenery. After every trip into the market of the great and bloated city — your senses overwhelmed — you were glad to return to friends and family. Summers were a blur of festivals and heat, lazing in the fields of barley, and waiting for the harvest and orchards of sweet apples to ripen under the sun. When harvest-time came, and the nights began to draw in, the larders were filled and made ready for a cozy winter.

The peaceful hamlet lay beyond the city walls, a small group of cottages that in spring and early summer were a riot of wisteria: the heady perfume dancing across the meadows around the hamlet itself. At its heart lay a church with a grand spire. This church was built within and about a stone circle, and once a year the locals would thank the older pagan gods for the harvest — a week of celebration would be held. The cider would flow, pigs were roasted, and thanks were made. Even old Father Gromwell, the great painter of angels, joined in with the celebration; he believed the old gods still walked the world.

Yes, Wicken was a fine place to live. Until they destroyed it.

One day, the soldiers arrived. They rounded up the locals, took them away in wagons, and despite your heroics and bravery, you too were taken. Your last sight of Wicken was on a late summer afternoon, as a group of men with crimson robes over their bright armour strode into the village like conquering heroes.

Since that day, your life has been a blur. You were taken in chains to the city and moved from holding cell to holding cell, until, at last, you arrived at the notorious prison hulk *Redemption*, a stitched mass of boats crushed into one, a place without hope, where people go to die. You have found yourselves convicted, imprisoned, and condemned...one more nameless, forgotten victim in the Blight

Media Inspirations Behind L1: Hereafter

The GM's overview provides some ideas and inspirations behind the entire ***Levee Adventure***, but throughout the adventures there are suggestions for movies, books, and music to give you help in setting the mood. For *Hereafter*, have a look at the following books to get a feel for the story:

City of Saints and Madmen by Jeff Vandermeer
Neverwhere – Neil Gaiman
The Night Circus – Erin Morgenstern

Part One: End

The adventure begins with the characters bound and about to be hanged in the prison hulk *Redemption's* execution cabin (**R5**), which lies in the aft section of the ship. They have been seen by, and met, other prisoners; who do not expect them to come back. Some people do return from the aft rooms, where confessions and details are extracted, but most die. The characters have no equipment for this opening scene, beyond the rags they're dressed in. Their hands are bound with rough rope (DC 20 Strength check) and their faces are covered with hoods; they can, however, speak.

The characters are lucky, for Eleanor Shank, a member of the Thieves' Guild, intends to help them (as described above).In the execution cabin, the characters are watched by a single executioner, Habb Gryme, who is armed with a whip. The executioner is very nervous, as he's seen who's signed the execution warrant. Although he is expecting Eleanor, he has gotten so nervous that he's hooded and readied the characters while his agonizing wait for her has stretched on. Eleanor, the characters potential saviour, arrives a few rounds into the adventure. If the characters somehow get free and manage to overpower Gryme, she arrives mid-fight and makes her offer, commenting on how impressed she is that the characters don't seem to need it. However, it is daylight outside, and beyond the cabin there is a score of prison guards, all depressed with boredom and spoiling for action. An open escape into the terrible poison waters of the Lyme, with its denizens — pale sough-eels† and slop-sharks†, wallow whales† and bog lanterns, would be remarkable — but unlikely.

When you and your players are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:

> So, this is the end.
>
> The rope hangs tight about your necks, and musty black hoods cover your faces. In the background, you can hear the steady walk of the executioner. Perhaps it is for the best; you try to move your hands but they are bound, as are your legs. The bindings are strong, too strong for limbs weakened by imprisonment.
>
> You can barely remember the reasons you were brought in from the countryside beyond the mires outside the city walls, from a small village known as Wicken. It was a fine home to you and your neighbours, until you were all taken. As for the others, you have no idea what happened to them.
>
> Somewhere beyond, the sound of hymns wafts over the water. The time has come: a clock strikes in the distance.
>
> One, two, three...the count to noon goes on...seven, eight... the bells toll steadily, and you struggle with your bonds to no avail.
>
> Twelve. Your necks brace for the coming fall, the snap of bone, the crushing of your windpipe, the severing of your spine. Whatever the hereafter might bring.
>
> All is still.
>
> Your hoods are removed by a tall woman, with long brown hair held in a pony-tail. She smiles broadly.

Meeting Eleanor

The figure is **Eleanor Shank**†, member of the Thieves' Guild and a generally decent person. Eleanor is a very strong character, and is more than capable of taking care of herself. She has a child named Tam, who is barely a year old. Eleanor killed Tam's father, Harron, after he contracted lycanthropy and tried to kill them. As a result, she has a healthy loathing for rats. She also dislikes people who are full of themselves, or who are weak.

Play this opening scene carefully, Eleanor is a pivotal figure in the coming events, but she is not irreplaceable. She is a strong-willed character with whom some groups may not get along. This is no matter; she still has a role to play regardless whether they like her or not; indeed, animosity is what keeps the Guild members going, in many cases. The point you should strive to make is that she has both motivation and morals. She cares about the way the Family behaves, the killings and torturing they are responsible for. She is part of a group known as the Rat Catchers, a sub-guild that devotes its lives to destroying the Family, by killing the most prominent members, and unmasking the rest. They are losing their battle.

Eleanor reprimands the executioner for his theatrics, and orders him to release the characters. She is quick to apologize for the delay, but it is not easy sneaking into a prison hulk, particularly not the *Redemption*. She has a proposition for them.

Eleanor informs the characters that down the river, the isle of Festival is infested with a cancer that needs to be removed — wererats. A friend of hers, Uriah Agaric, has recently gone missing in Festival after trying to find out more about the rats' strengths and allies. Shank wishes the characters to go to Festival, find out what they can about Agaric (who she describes as "a tall man with a swan tattoo on his neck"), and, if possible, rescue him. Everything that can be found about the Family will help: they are evil, insular and they are spreading. The fact that the characters know virtually nothing about Eleanor and are unknown on Festival is the icing on the cake. If the characters ask how she knows that, she comments on their accents, which are not local.

She also knows a way to make things easier for the characters, which forms the second part of her bargain; there is member of the Family prisoner here on the hulk, Ammos Grast, a bastard son of Marren Grast. She offers the characters an escape route and a boat, if they carry out the mission for her. Carry it out and they are square; cross her, and her friends will come looking for them. The price of the deal is that Grast must be with the characters when they leave; she doesn't care how they do it, but surmises that if the characters befriend him, it will make matters easier at Festival.

If the characters accept, she tells them that the main grate immediately opposite the aft sail will be left unlocked at midnight, and a jolly boat will be found immediately below. Eleanor points the way to Festival (which lies 2 miles west-north-west), and tells the characters to follow the lights in the event of the Canker's being abroad tonight (which it almost always is in autumn). She also describes Grast to the characters, and tells them that a trio of glass vials will be in the boat. She tells them to try not to look too closely at them, but if broken, they will release a messenger that will get to her within an hour. She says she'll await the messages from the characters.

Eleanor Shank: A Short Introduction

Eleanor is a pivotal figure in this adventure: her skills can be used both for and against the party, depending upon how, over the next months, they react to her. Eleanor has always had a guiding angel, a good sponsor whose name she does not even know. This Benefactor — a masked man — appears from time to time to help her. She doesn't know if the mask is a disguise, or if he is horribly disfigured. He first appeared when she was at an orphanage at age five, having lost her mother to the pox. She was taken by the kind man to a good family, and educated; but her roots were strong, and she was drawn back into the city. Time and again this sponsor has helped her, and when he turned up a few days ago to suggest she rescue the characters, she did as she was asked.

Eleanor has no idea that her sponsor is really an aristocrat. If she knew the real name, she might not be so well-disposed, wrongly suspecting some foul plot. Eventually all will be revealed.



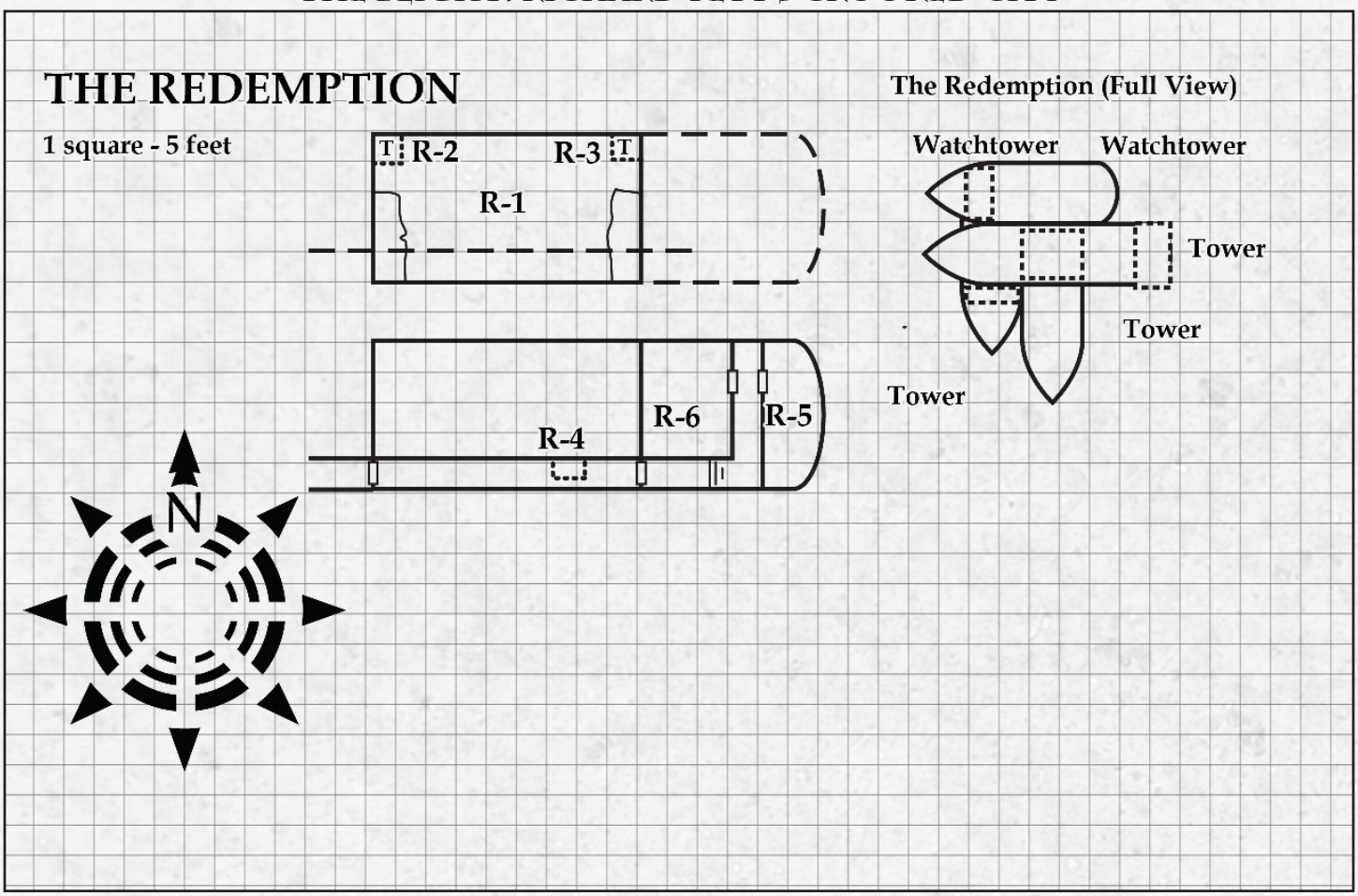
The Knights Occularis

The Knights Occularis are a band of knights under a vow of poverty, inquisitors who seek to cleanse the city of witches, devil worshippers, and anyone they regard as a heretic. Obsessive followers of the Mother Grace, these knights are far from the paladins they claim to be, although their power is great — they have sometimes pursued even true paladins of the city as heretics. The Occularis are inquisitors, wizards, and sorcerers, who dabble in the black arts of their enemies to "better face them." They are infamous for purges, particularly of witches, and their inquisitorial methods are the stuff of nightmares. Based in a castle within the Capitol called the Bright Citadel (a place the characters eventually visit) they are considered stalwarts of goodness. To take up arms against them is to risk the most terrible of punishments — usually being burnt alive.

If the characters talk to their executioner, he also apologies for the theatrics, but tells them that their execution has been approved by Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage, a fearful figure who is head of the Knights Occularis (see Sidebox). The warrant is nearby, and casually describes the characters as a group of prisoners to be hanged; their bodies are then to be brought to the Capitol for further questioning. If asked, the executioner informs the characters that the tactic of "kill first, *speak with dead* later" is not unheard of, but the trouble involved in getting corpses across the river means they must have been important.

If the characters ask, Eleanor lends a character one of her knives and a couple of punching daggers, but she warns the characters to keep them hidden from the guards. The two guards outside are loyal, but the others are not — and if the characters get into trouble, the loyal ones will not lift a finger to help them. She'll do her best to get any personal effects to the boat. If the characters agree, she bids them luck and asks the guards outside to take them back to the hold, leading them from area **R5** via **R4** as detailed below. Eleanor concludes this section of the adventure by completing the death warrants and telling the characters that, officially at least, they just died.





The Redemption

This section describes the physical layout of this portion of *Redemption*. Refer to **Redemption Encounters** below for information on event-encounters that occur.

A series of five ships lashed into one, the *Redemption* sits about a central watchtower, with three lesser towers. Woefully understaffed, the hulk has six holds full of prisoners. The characters, in the aft hold, are in the least-protected hold. The outline of the whole ship has been provided, in case you wish to expand further details, or in case the characters decide to carry out some reckless exploration prior to escaping.

A short corridor sheathed in iron leads from the aft chambers to the partially-flooded hold, which lies 20 feet below the corridor and can be reached via an iron grate. The guards drop the characters in carefully, so they take no damage from the fall; however, as the last character is about to be dropped, the far door opens and a sergeant enters. Startled, the guards shove the last character down, to take 1d3 points of damage as a result. A DC 10 Dexterity save allows the character to avoid this damage.

R1. The Black Hold

The hold lies knee-deep in water, and some prisoners show foul sores from too much exposure. Everything is damp, and the walls are slippery with black mould. Some forty prisoners trudge about the hold, squabbling, talking, or sobbing. A roof of iron bars stares down at you from a twenty-foot height, and guards occasionally walk across a catwalk above. Two flotsam islands have been constructed by the prisoners, allowing a select few to stay dry.

The 40 prisoners consist of **28 inmates** (CN male human **commoner**) and **12** thugs (CN male human **bandits**). Unless noted, no prisoner has weapons or equipment. Most have fallen to sickness and/or despair, and the average life expectancy for prisoners here is 6 weeks. A hierarchy has developed, with the strong ruling the weak, and beyond this there are no rules in the hold. Buckets of slop are lowered in each day at dusk, and the prisoners have a free-for-all to get some food. There are no lights or latrines.

At all times, it seems that someone is watching, although by night it is easier to hide any actions, for the hold is unlit. The dry flotsam areas are roughly 3 ft. high and home to the tougher prisoners; they are prepared to tough it out to protect their land, which comprises a dozen crates, barrels, and tea chests.

The walls are slippery and would require a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. The roof is made of solid iron bars.

Hold Roof: DC 25 Strength check to break.

Development: The characters can claim a space either through force (by overpowering a thug) or through a DC 10 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check versus the leader of a group of thugs. Due to the social structure in the prison hold, and the nature of its inhabitants, intimidation of some prisoners is more difficult than usual.

Combatant prisoners, such as Sharkley, Greel, and the thugs, would require more work to intimidate. For each of these NPCs, it is recommended to increase the DC of the intimidation skill check necessary to affect each of them. Consider adding the Wisdom modifier of each of these individuals to the base DC of 10. If you feel that is too high, feel free to ignore it and continue with the DC 10. If you feel it is too low, you could also add their Intelligence or Charisma modifier and Wisdom modifier to the DC. The choice, as always, is up to you. If successful, the period of time the opponent acts friendly is limited to the time that they are in your immediate company. Further attempts to intimidate that opponent, or anyone who witnesses the intimidation, have disadvantage if no threats have been carried out. At this point, at your discretion, the basic compliance of the intimidated person is assured without further checks, but cowed prisoners who are actual combatants will not hesitate to strike, if a suitable opportunity presents itself.

Piling the flotsam together to form an island is simply a matter of moving the boxes on top of each other (and of course having the material to do so). However, stacking flotsam more than a single layer in height requires a Dexterity check (DC 10 + 2 for every 4-ft. height), or the whole island collapses noisily. There are always lots of people watching, and a diversion may be required unless the GM deems that a successful check is feasible in the pitch-blackness of night. The Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to clamber up such a makeshift structure is 8. Bracing the structure into the corner and/or holding it steady reduces the DC of all checks by 3. Of course, there may be methods involving Intelligence checks, improvised tools, or just plain genius that greatly reduce, or perhaps even remove, the risk.

Guards rarely bother to examine the weakened prisoners, confident that the bars will keep them held. In general, guards only show interest if more than 4 people shout, or if a wider squabble occurs.

R2. Fore Grate

A hefty iron grate, secured with a big padlock, blocks access to the hold.

The fore grate is comprised of 3 in. thick iron bars, which are locked. The bars above the hold lie on the same level as the deck, and towers rise both fore and aft. The watch on the holds has been severely depleted of late, in answer to several riots across the city. Details of the watch, and how they react to escapes, are given at the end of this section of the adventure.

Fore Grate: DC 20 Strength check to break, DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves tools to unlock.

R3. Aft Grate

A thick iron grate with a big lock secures this hatch. It is encrusted with barnacles, as though it has been below water.

Salvaged from another wreck, this iron grate is also locked; however, at midnight, a guard leaves the aft section of the ship and unlocks the aft gate quietly, before returning.

Aft Grate: DC 20 Strength check to break, DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock.

R4. The Iron Walkway

Ten feet above the hold is a raised iron roof; a strip of it has been covered with loose iron bars to form a walkway. A single rusty grate lies in the floor of the walkway, while at either end are iron-bound doors.

Both the aft grate into the hold and the iron bound doors are locked.

Aft Grate DC 20 Strength check to break, DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock.
Iron Bound Wooden Doors: DC 20 Strength check to break, DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock.

R5. The Execution Room

A cramped, drab chamber with a dozen sets of gallows.

This is the where the adventure begins. The executioner **Habb Gryme** (N male human **veteran**) is usually the only occupant. He has a small, dirty cupboard with spare hoods and rope; otherwise the chamber is bare. The door is unlocked.

R6. Questioning

Beyond a tight door which has swollen with damp, there is a chamber holding a torturer's rack. A row of butcher's knives is slung from a shelf nearby.

The rack is used to question prisoners, with the knives as additional tools for dealing with hard cases. Among the knives, there are two that can be treated as daggers. Treat the other knives as improvised weapons.

Ammos Grast

The main requirement for the characters is to draw **Ammos Grast** (LE male human **wererat** with swim 30 ft. in rat form) into their escape plan. He is being held in **R1** among the other prisoners. None of the characters have noticed Ammos, but he cuts quite a figure; the halfling has striking brown eyes nestled underneath huge eyebrows. He has inherited the Grast gypsy-look and has a deep, calming voice.

In truth, Ammos expects to be rescued, and is so arrogant that he has spent much of his time avoiding the underlings (as he perceives the other prisoners) or putting them in their place. A commoner with delusions of grandeur, the bastard son of Marren Grast is ready to be convinced (DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion)) that an escape has been arranged for him, and readily accepts any plan. Ammos knows the Great Lyme River teems with predators, and although the idea of changing shape and escaping as a rat has occurred to him, he's saving it. Ammos does not, under any circumstances, assume the characters are Family, or reveal anything about his natural gift of lycanthropy.

Development: Ammos begins any encounter indifferent to the characters, but is ready to be convinced. Mentioning escape or the Family or helping him in any way grants advantage on all Charisma checks to convince him to come with them. If the characters manage to escape, he arranges for them to go to a place at his friend's circus, the Circus Macabre, detailed in **Chapter 2** of this adventure.

If the characters befriend Ammos and escape, award the characters 250 XP each.

Redemption Encounters

The characters' arrival back from execution is unexpected, and one or two of the smarter prisoners suspect foul play, thinking the characters have bought their lives with secrets, almost certainly about the thinker himself. Three encounters that all occur in **R1** are detailed below for you to play out — these can occur at any time. Remember also that although the grate will be left unlocked at midnight, the characters still have to get to the grate and through it without alerting the guards and their fellow prisoners. Some options are detailed for this, but players being players, there are bound to be others; be prepared to judge something unexpected.

Encounter 1: Spiv Sharkley and His Associates

Spiv Sharkley (CN male human **thug**) and his **3 brothers** (CN male human **bandits**) have been in the hold for a couple of weeks now, having been caught stealing pigs. Sharkley operates a trade business. Few like him; he generally gets his trade goods through threats. The characters may be able to talk their way out of combat here, or may decide that Sharkley deserves everything he gets.

Sharkley sends one of his brothers (Langton) over to the characters for a chat. He tells the characters that he has several friends in the hold, and that, if the characters know what's best for them, they'd better cooperate. If they hand over all their goods there'll be no trouble, but if not, well, the guards won't come helping. Physical violence or a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidate) check causes Langton to scuttle nervously back to the group, and bring Sharkley and his other brothers back with him.

Equipment: Spiv has a *potion of healing*, 20 feet of rope tied around his waist below rags, a dagger concealed in a purple silk scarf hidden beneath rags, a small club, and a pint of owl bear bile

Development: If the characters drive Langton away, the whole group comes back and begins throwing their weight about. A DC 10 Charisma (Intimidate) check gets a thug to back down, while Sharkley is tougher to intimidate (DC 15). Unless all his brothers, or Sharkley himself, are successfully intimidated, the group attacks, intent upon stealing the character's valuables; every new prisoner has valuables.

Encounter 2: An Unwelcome Friend

If the characters act against Sharkley, they gain an unwanted ally — a man called **Greel** (N male human **spy**). Greel is curious about the characters; he is a very perceptive man, and he saw the characters go in, and come back out, in a better state than he expected. Most people don't come out at all, or they come out screaming. The characters didn't. Greel is smarter and more of a charmer than Sharkley, and can count **6** hardened **thugs** as potential allies. He's not interested in them, however; he's interested in the characters. He comes across to one character with an offer of some salted meat he's been saving, but he's glad to offer it to anyone who has seen the aft rooms — at least that's his story. Greel is superficially friendly, but if the characters try to attack him, he calls out for help and 6 **thugs** come to his aid. These thugs care little for Greel: they make a token show of alliance, but are driven back by any show of force.

Greel suspects something is up with the characters; he doesn't know what, but intends to find out. Ultimately, if he finds out about an escape, he wants in. If the characters don't let him join, he bides his time, and if he can, he calls an alarm as the escape takes place (see **Escape**), hoping he'll be rewarded with freedom.

Encounter 3: Gloptime

At dusk, 3 Redemption **guards** lower 3 buckets into the hold; each is filled with gruel. The characters may be shocked by the way the prisoners fight over the food, or they may join in. They haven't been fed since they were captured, and are hungry. Overpowering a single thug (brute force, Intimidation or any other way you deem appropriate) allows the character a share of the foul stuff. As the prisoners squabble over the food, the guards above laugh, comparing them to pigs. The GM might decide that if the characters have established a reputation for toughness, they get a share of food without trouble. Characters who do not eat must make a successful DC 10 Constitution save or develop one level of exhaustion.

Darkness over Redemption

As night falls, a cancerous smog (known locally as the Canker) drifts from the mills that abound on the shores of the Great Lyme River. Beyond, the city comes to life. Firebeetle lanterns begin to spring up in the darkness, and noises are everywhere; screams abound, but the emotion causing them is difficult to discern.

At midnight, a guard steps across the bars above and quietly unlocks the grate. A small jolly boat (big enough only for the characters plus 1) is rowed alongside the *Redemption* by a member of the Thieves' Guild, who slips into a guard's uniform and takes up his watch. The boat has two oars, and contains any personal items the characters had such as spellbooks or holy symbols, which have been retrieved from the prison store by another member of the Guild. It also has a trio of pickled homunculi (see Sidebox) in jars. Hidden beneath some blankets at the bottom of the boat (DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate) is a pair of silvered punching daggers.

If the boat is overloaded, there is a chance someone might fall out. One random character must make a save when the group first enters the ship, when they come under attack, and when they encounter a mar-eel (see below). A DC 12 Dexterity save is required to avoid falling in. Characters in the water attract the attentions of a **mar-eel** who arrives within 1 minute after they fall in. The eel attacks any living thing in the water.

Swimming in the calm waters of the Great Lyme requires a DC10 Strength (Athletics) check. Additionally, for each turn of exposure to the oily acidic waters the swimmer takes 1 hit point of acid damage. Inhabitants of the river are immune to this effect, which is variable; there are some areas adjacent to bleach works where the damage is much higher, for example.

Pickled Homunculi

These constructs are often used as cheap methods of communication for those who lack more powerful constructs or access to awakened animals. Pickled homunculi are identical to the homunculus in the SRD with two important differences. They are attuned to the character who possesses a special seal (usually a cheap ring), made at the time they were created. When released, they await instruction, either in the form of a message or an object, and then move unerringly towards the recipient to pass on whatever they have been given. Secondly, and sadly, they are very short lived, and disintegrate 24 hours after being released, usually very messily. Each is painfully aware of its short mortality.

The homunculi are visible through the dark, thick glass of their homes, and often look on pleadingly. Each also tends to develop a rudimentary personality, often based on a single human trait. In this case the three are taciturn, jolly and cross. The homunculi speak Common. They attempt to avoid combat at all costs in order to complete their assigned tasks.

Pickled homunculi cost 500 gp.

Escape!

There are no lights in the hold, but several guards have bullseye lanterns. The characters need to ensure that they escape quietly, with a diversion, or using some other means of non-detection. To escape quietly, each character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If the check fails or the characters are seen escaping, they find others trying to escape with them, one **thug** per character tries to escape and get onto the characters' boat. Intimidate checks to get them to back down have disadvantage. If intimidation fails, they must be physically forced away. If combat or checks go on for more than a minute, assume the **guards** hear something, and an alarm is raised. If they have not dealt with **Greel**, he also shows an interest in escaping and attempts to follow the characters; if he is thwarted, he calls out an alarm.

Tactics: If an alarm is raised, the guards try stopping the escape (they will be fined a week's wages if it is successful). Consequently, 1d6 rounds after the alarm, a single guard armed with a light crossbow appears. He uses an action to load and fire his bow. His attacks has disadvantage due to the thick fog of the Canker. More guards arrive at the rate of 1 guard every 1d6 rounds, until all 20 have arrived.

Development: As the characters enter the boat they notice a few very large, sickly, white eels in the waters nearby, waiting for prey. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies them as mar-eels, one of many vile creatures that lurk in the river. Those who fall in risk attack by the eels, as detailed above. The boat can be rowed at 30 feet per round, and once beyond 120 feet cannot be seen.

At 90 feet, unless the eels have eaten, one of them butts the boat, hoping to sink it; it continues to attack each round until it has taken 12 points of damage, after which it swims away. The boat is AC 5, and if the eel hits, a random character on board must make a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling overboard. If the eel's attack against the boat is a critical, then the DC of the Dexterity save increases to 10. Only one **mar-eel** attacks in this way. These eels are often afflicted with a cruel eye-disease, and this one has ugly sores around its eyes. It has disadvantage on attacks as a result. Once the eel has been thwarted the others in the area slink away, and the cries from the ship behind (if any) dull in the smog and are eventually lost.

The Great Lyme River

Progress across the Great Lyme is painfully slow; the river is full of obstacles, hard to navigate, and cloaked in Canker. It is therefore dawn before the characters eventually approach Festival, having followed the murky river for 5 hours and covered little more than 2 miles. At this point, the following encounter occurs.

Avoiding the Pleasure Ferry

The Great Pleasure Ferry, a huge ship hauled across the Lyme on massive chains, starts just before dawn each day, and is pulled across the river. There are few passengers aboard at this time, mainly workers heading to Festival for the day.

The chain the ship is pulled with lies slack in the water when the ship is not in use, but as it approaches it rises out of the water and becomes taut. Allow each person aboard the jolly boat to make Perception checks; the first is DC 15, the second is DC 10, the third is DC 5. A check occurs each round, and a success indicates the character hears something below the water and to their right. Read or paraphrase the following description:

> Suddenly the Canker is split by a dark shape, being drawn at great pace; it slips quietly through the oily waters, and as it does so, it is preceded by a vast chain rising from the water.

The murky chain suddenly emerges from the water right below the characters' boat. To avoid being sunk, the rower must make a Strength check (give somebody with the Sailor background advantage on the check): the check is DC 10 if the characters heard the ship coming and took action on the first round, 12 if they made the second Perception check, or 14 if they only made the third. If they failed all the checks, the boat is automatically struck by the chain and capsizes.

If the boat is struck, it is smashed; all occupants are tossed into the water and must make DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks to stay afloat. One minute after the ship is struck, an alarm bell sounds on the Pleasure Ferry and it comes to a halt. Lines are cast 1d4 rounds later, and the characters can clamber aboard with a successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check. However, 1d12 rounds after the boat capsizes, a sickly mar-eel slithers into the area (as **mar-eel**, but disadvantage on all attacks and Dexterity saving throws due to partial blindness and 31 (7d8) hit points; attacks against it have advantage.)

Tactics: This eel is old, sick, and injured, but is still looking for a tasty morsel. It also has a sickness of its eyes and is effectively blind. If it takes any damage it withdraws for 1d4 rounds, and swims away if it takes 8 or more damage

Development: Once aboard the Pleasure Ferry, the characters are scolded by its crew for sailing in the Canker, and some of the crew think the characters should be charged with a crime. Orders reach the crew to ferry the party to Festival and drop them; they've suffered enough for one morning. For more information on the Festival Pleasure Ferry, see **F1** in **Chapter 4**).

Ad Hoc XP Award: If the characters avoid the ferry and eel, award a total of 500 XP to the party.

The Blight at Dawn

Shortly after the encounter with the Pleasure Ferry, the sun glimpses over the rotten city. Read or paraphrase the following description, modifying it for the characters' current surroundings.

> There is a moment's hush as the Canker slowly parts, its ochre skin drawing back as a thin glint of sunlight cuts it. As the noxious fog flees, the city slowly appears, a vast place you have rarely even set foot in, let alone seen from its heart. To your left, countless steeples and spires climb across a land of broken hills and limestone that is infested with houses. Beyond and ahead, a strange area of the city seems to collapse, its imposing buildings pierced by canals. The names of these places begin to form in your minds: The Hollow and Broken Hills, BookTown, Town Bridge, and others. Further beyond, the river curves and rises to the vast Capitol, the heart of the city, a single building the size of a town itself. On the opposite bank, a vast, single shanty rises in mockery of the Capitol, a towering, jumbled mass of streets and slums that somehow rises upwards, smothering the streets below, which splutter outwards to the south.
>
> Directly ahead, a gaudy island of timber piers and flotsam buildings rises, an assault of garish colour and smiling faces rising to a crown. This must be Festival. As your eyes blink in the light, the city begins to come to life and sound rises, quickly becoming a call, a single vast sound of life. Calls to prayer begin to echo across other parts of the city and bells begin to toll.
>
> Ammos signals you towards a teetering island at the edges of the town. It is dawn in the Blight, and ahead of you lies your destination.

Part Two: The Circus Macabre

Ammos directs the characters to a small island, upon which sits the Circus Macabre. When the characters approach the small circus, read or paraphrase the following description:

> Your destination, it seems, is a small island of wooden piers, crowding around a badly sagging townhouse whose walls seem ready to drop into the oily river. The place shouts of neglect, from its slumped timbers to its stained pavilions and to the tents that cram the pier's surface. Crimson banners proclaim it as the Circus Macabre, and warn visitors to prepare to be amazed. Chained to the entrance beside the unsteady house, there is a very mangy lizard of some size. Rusty barbs reach out to protect the place — as if anyone would wish to enter unwelcomed.

Run by Obed Gride and his partner Ammos Grast, the circus has fallen on bad times. However, Grast's position as a favourite of his 'uncle' Marren Grast ensures a steady stream of cash. Furthermore, the circus is a front for the abduction of lone visitors, who are sold either as prostitutes to the Crimson Lantern District, or via an intermediary called Rebecca Belladonna to golem-stitchers in BookTown. Of the occupants, only Grast, Gride, and the clowns are wererats. The rest are either innocents (in the case of most performers), or lackeys bullied into working for the Family (the case of those in the Filleted Cat Gin House). Running from dusk to dawn, the circus appeals to an eclectic bunch of strange customers, but is very quiet in the hours before dawn.

The Circus Macabre rests in the north of the island of Festival, on the western edges of the Liquorice ward. The Circus itself is built upon a rusty pier that is in danger of collapse; its surface is slippery in many places, and rotting quickly. Tents and boats pulled alongside are approaching the end of their natural lives. When the characters arrive, Ammos leads them into the Great Tent (**CM 13**), where his partner Gride is rehearsing with Scarred Samuel the Owlbear Trainer (**CM 14**) The owlbear Gripper is nearby.

Improvise this meeting. Gride expects to see his partner back, and any friends of his are *his* friends, although they are all anxious to avoid talk of the Family and their dubious lycanthropic heritage. All members of the Family adhere to a strict doctrine detailed in the sidebar called "The Troth". After the meeting, Ammos goes off to find his uncle at Grast Hall (**F9** in **Chapter 4**).

The Troth

The Troth was written by Aged Grand Lord Ferester — the First and One, the so-called god who brought wererats to Festival a thousand years ago. It is a prayer and an oath all wererats take, and to break the Troth is considered the worst crime a wererat can commit — although necessity and white lies play a big part in its interpretation:

- ***No rat shall kill another*** *– A rat who kills another rat is outcast*
- ***No rat shall tell the others anything*** *– A rat who gives away secrets about the nest shall be eaten by the Pack*
- ***Rat must love rat*** *– A rat who loves one who is not a lycanthrope is outcast or killed*
- ***Betraying the Oath*** *– A rat who endangers another shall be tried by the Rat Court, and if found guilty, sent to the Gibbets*
- ***The Gift*** *– Those given the gift of lycanthropy will be brought back to the Great Nest and given a chance to swear the Troth — those who refuse are sent to the Gibbets.*

The Gibbets are a set of rat-sized iron cages, hung far under the piers and out of sight and hope. Here, transgressors are bound and gagged in rat form, and left to rot. Sometimes they are fed an elixir, which forces a change back to their normal form, crushing them to death in the cages. The worst transgressors are given to the Pack to feast upon.

Like much of the city, a caste system operates even here, and rats are given titles according to their station. These titles are, in descending order of importance:

Of the Great Blood: Those borne in the Great Nest by the queen.
Blooded: Born a natural wererat in the Great Nest.
Blessed: An afflicted wererat who contracted lycanthropy on Festival or from a member of the Family.
Cursed: Born as a natural wererat, but not in the Great Nest.
Unclean: An afflicted wererat who contracted lycanthropy anywhere outside the Great Nest (unless contracted from a member of the Family).

Circus Macabre Features

All the tents are black, and not just an ordinary black, but an absorbing darkness that seems to drive away light. Each tent also detects as moderate illusion magic, an inherent quality of the circus that is not obvious to most people. The fabric of the tents has a cunning weft of cloth from Between that enhances illusory magic; subtly caressing illusions to enhance their quality, and giving disadvantage to Intelligence checks. The tents also have other irregular properties: memories tend to stay within them, sometimes distant voices are heard, and lights fall at odd angles upon them. In gaming terms, this is reflected purely in the DC adjustment, but as GM you should subtly weave these factors into any illusion spells cast here. Other effects are detailed in the text. This quality is something Long Lucy and her troupe are carefully concealing from their captor-employers. If the characters help to free them, they share this secret with the characters. It is also a focal point of the circus's rise in future chapters of the ***Levee.***

Each tent and narrowboat is dilapidated and in danger of ruin; the few items within are generally personal effects (costumes, grooming, and utensils), and only places noted with treasure have anything of value. All occupants commence the adventure assuming the characters are wererat friends of Ammos and Gride; they begin with an unfriendly attitude to the characters. However, each NPC below has a possibility of being befriended, and some have ways to nurture such friendships. The NPCs only give over information if asked and made friendly … and some friends are not good to have.

CM1. The Office

A slumped building squats before the pier upon which the Circus Macabre huddles. It has a saggy roof, crowned with nails upon its gable. Windows are narrow and shuttered; the whole place rises from the waters on iron stilts.

The office is where the main group of wererats loiter by day. The building doubles as storage rooms, prison, and sleeping areas, and has an unpleasant smell within. Characters making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Nature) check identify the smell as that of rats. Within, the place is a pig-sty; mouldering seats and damaged tables littered with rubbish lie strewn about, making the area a trip hazard. A DC 5 Dexterity save is required to do anything other than making a normal move herein. A teetering staircase hangs in the room, and if used by more than two people at once collapses, dropping those on the stair into the room below. Characters on the stair or immediately below at such a time must make a DC 10 Dexterity save or take 1d6 damage from falling.

A makeshift counter stands by the east wall, adjacent to a small hatch which is open from dusk to dawn to allow customers, at a cost of a 1 sp, to enter the Circus Pier via the turnstile (**CM8**). Ammos is usually on the door at these times; if he is busy however, one of the characters will be asked to cover for him.

A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notes that just behind the staircase and hidden by rubbish is a small rat-hole; the hole drops down into the Tunnel below (**CM7**). The hole is so small that a Small creature requires a DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to enter; the DC increases to 18 for a Medium creature. The rats use this route to access the Tunnel below and head to the Filleted Cat. More details of their adventures are given in the **Events and Entertainments Section**.

Treasure: The counter has a small locked wooden strongbox on top; it contains 43 sp and a pile of gaudy black tickets that have white writing with the circuses name and "*Admit One*" emblazoned on them.

Wooden Strongbox: 1 in. thick; DC 15 Strength check to break open, DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock.

CM2. Back Prop Store

This is a ridiculously cramped and cluttered chamber. Amongst the piles of rope, props, torches and other oddments, you see a huge wooden clown with a fox's head, a wooden grim reaper holding the sign "*Circus Macabre,*" and at least one pantomime horse.

Among the props are several items that may be useful as disguises, including animal masks, a black clown's outfit, and several pantomime creature outfits including a trio of pantomime horse costumes, a pantomime crocodile, and a large troll costume. Lurking within the rubbish are 2 very fat female **giant rats**, friends of Gride who are regularly fed and bred with by the wererats. One of the females is presently heavy with young; an example of a deceased infant lurks in the Pickle Room (**CM9**). The rats are well hidden beneath the rubbish, and in effect are concealed during any combat.

Treasure: DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) checks are required to locate each of the objects herein: a small purse containing 3 gp, a broken corn doll, and a very small silver mirror smelling faintly of perfume. Each of these objects was left by victims of the wererats.

CM3. The Bedchamber

If the room below was filthy, this one is even worse. Not only is the room filled with rubbish, but those who dwell in here care nothing for sanitation.

The 3 circus clowns (LE male human **wererats** with treasure listed below) sleep and spend much of their spare time here — they have made nests of the rubbish.

Tactics: The clowns delight in combat, tumbling, and using their enhanced acrobatics not just to help but to perform, changing into hybrid form as soon as they safely can (when out of sight of visitors). They use their caltrops, tanglefoot† bags and smokesticks† as combat dictates, but always early. Soon scared off, each wererat backs down if injured, only entering combat again if they can flank. If two of them are killed, the third flees.

Development: Befriending the clowns can be risky; if they suspect the characters are here for more sinister purposes, they explain this to Gride, who then talks to Ammos. In this event, the characters may face a concerted attack, as detailed later in the adventure. At the least, the clowns begin to watch the characters more carefully, perhaps following them as rats to see what they are up to.

Treasure: The clowns use smokesticks† and tanglefoot† bags in their act and go through them regularly; there are a dozen of each herein, all left in prominent places. The clowns each have three daggers and a bag of caltrops. In addition, they have glove puppets (first a dwarf with bloated eyes, the second a crocodile, the third a gargoyle with two heads), a wired monkey skeleton, a dead mummified cockerel head, a dozen mummified frogs, one has a silver wedding ring (*to G—all my love Arron*) worth 50 gp, one has a collection of gold teeth worth 12 gp, the third has a purse containing 23 gp and 24 sp. Other objects lie among the rubbish and filth; characters searching here must make a DC 12 Constitution save against filth fever. DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) checks locate each of the following objects: a bag of gold coins (35 gp), a carved wooden head used as dagger practice (the name "*Gride*" is carved beneath the figure), an hourglass using human ashes and bound in copper bands and labelled "*Dearest Frances, you always kept nagging me about time*" worth 20 gp, two gags (clearly used), and a pair of manacles (Gride has the key).

Smokestick

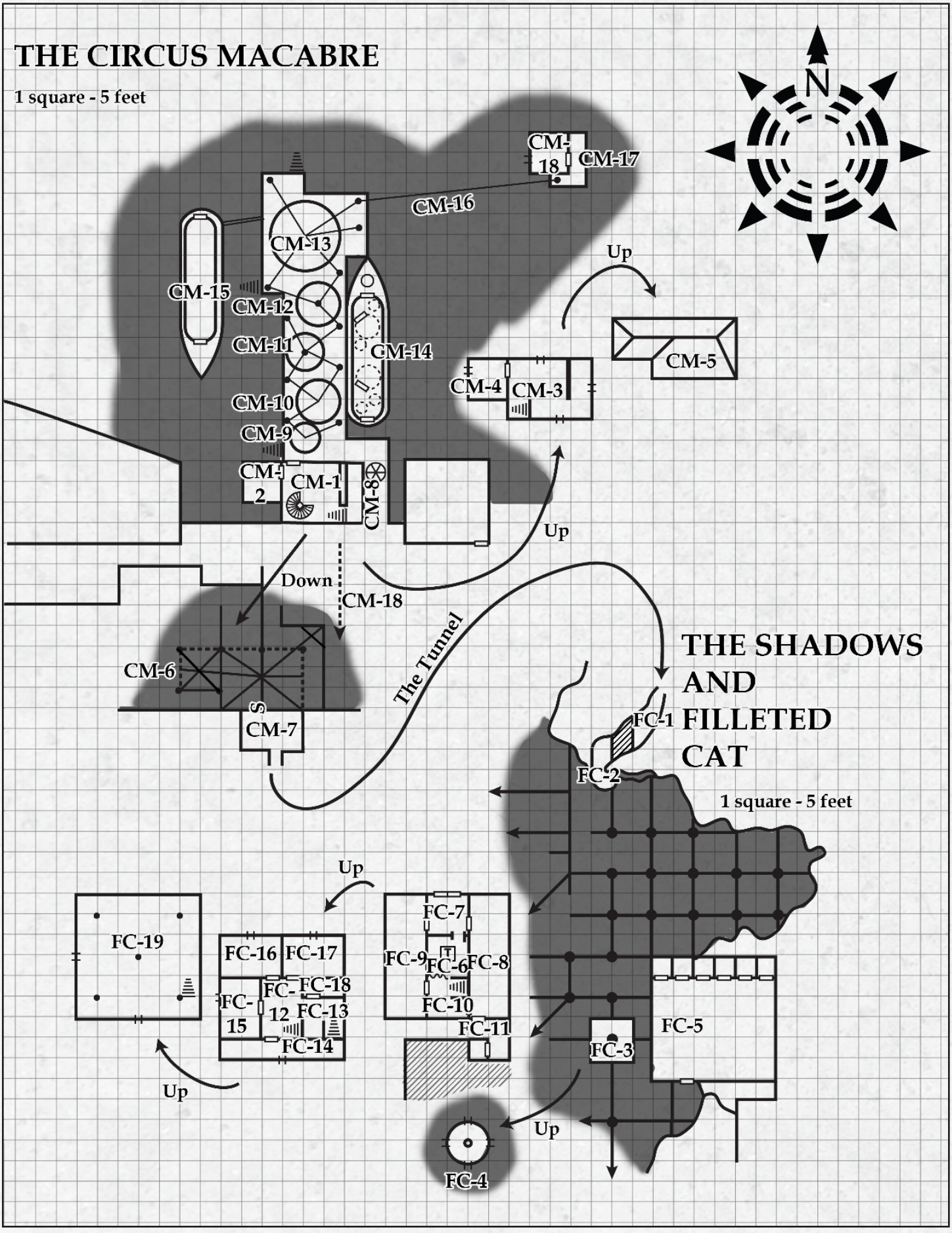
This alchemically treated wooden stick instantly creates thick, opaque smoke when ignited. The smoke fills a 10-foot cube (treat the effect as a fog cloud spell, except that a moderate or stronger wind dissipates the smoke in 1 round). The stick is consumed after 1 round, and the smoke dissipates naturally.

TANGLEFOOT BAG

Wondrous Item, common

When you throw a tanglefoot bag at a creature within 20 ft, the bag comes apart and goo bursts out. The creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be restrained. Huge or larger creatures are unaffected by a tanglefoot bag. A flying creature is not stuck to the floor, but it must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be unable to fly (assuming it uses its wings to fly) and fall to the ground. A tanglefoot bag does not function underwater.

A creature that is glued to the floor (or unable to fly) can break free by making a DC 17 Strength check or by dealing 15 points of slashing damage to the goo. A creature trying to scrape goo off itself, or another creature assisting, does not need to make an attack roll; hitting the goo is automatic, after which the creature that hit makes a damage roll to see how much of the goo was scraped off. Once free, the creature can move (including flying) at half speed. The goo becomes brittle and fragile after 2d4 rounds, cracking apart and losing its effectiveness. An application of *universal solvent* to a stuck creature dissolves the alchemical goo immediately.


THE CIRCUS MACABRE
1 square - 5 feet
N
CM-18
CM-17
CM-16
CM-13
CM-15
CM-12
CM-11
CM-14
CM-10
CM-9
CM-4
CM-3
Up
CM-5
CM-2
CM-1
CM-8
Up
Down
CM-18
CM-6
CM-7
The Tunnel
THE SHADOWS AND FILLETED CAT
FC-1
FC-2
1 square - 5 feet
Up
FC-19
FC-16
FC-17
FC-18
FC-15
FC-12
FC-13
FC-14
FC-7
FC-9
FC-6
FC-8
FC-10
FC-11
FC-5
FC-3
Up
Up
FC-4

CM4. Lockable Cell

The door to this room is locked.

Beyond this locked door is a squalid little cell with some straw on the floor. The wererats use this room to keep their prizes (victims) in, and Gride has the only key. A couple of the more recent prizes have scrawled message on the plaster walls: a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to see each. The first says *Gods save me from the rats – Alice Green*, the second is a line from a hymn *bring me release from my tormentors*. Characters making a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check will note that these words are from a hymn to **Brine, God of the Sea**†, and come from the hymn *Dark Waters*. This particular hymn describes when the rats rise from the dark waters below, and feast on humanity until burnt to ashes by the eyes of the Brine.

Cell Door: 2 in. thick; DC 20 Strength check to break, DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open.

CM5. Rooftop

The rooftop sags alarmingly, and the gable is lined with nails.

The nails are here to stop seagulls from perching on them. The roof is so weak that if a Medium character climbs onto it there is a 20% chance each round it will collapse, dropping the character 20 ft. onto the floor of the room below.

CM6. Underpier

The rusting iron bars supporting the pier and building above are being devoured by seaweed and barnacles.

High tide rises to within 10 feet of the building and pier, and if a character falls into them, a hungry **mar-eel** comes looking for food 1d12 rounds later. The eel is driven off if it takes 15 points of damage.

Development: At low tide, a secret door into the Tunnel (**CM7**) is revealed; however, the door is hidden under weeds and barnacles, and requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot even at low tide. The door has a hidden iron latch (found by a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check) that requires a DC 15 Strength check to turn, allowing the door to open slowly. The DC can be reduced to 10 if the characters oil the latch 3 hours before a further attempt is made. Note that the door does close automatically, and a similar latch is listed in area **CM7**; if the door is not shut, the tide rises into the tunnel, filling it. If this occurs, a **mar-eel** lingers at the entrance, hoping for a tasty morsel.

CM7. The Low Tide Shaft and Tunnel

Beyond the door is a small chamber, and a crawl-hole leads away to the south.

The crawl-hole is just large enough for a Small character to crouch in; a Medium character must crawl.

Development: Characters entering the room and making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a cool breeze, caused by the vents that are placed every 200 yards in the tunnel. These vents lead



directly to the surface, and allow characters to spot the tunnel's route from above rather than crawling along it. For more information see the **Tunnel** section at the end of this part of the adventure.

CM8. The Turnstile

A narrow, rusty, turnstile at the side of the wilting house is wreathed in sharp wire.

The wire is in place to stop people from clambering around. A DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to successfully go over the obstacle without taking damage. Those who fail the check take 1d6 points of slashing damage.

CM9. The Pickle Room

Beyond the flaps of this black tent are jars and bottles, long bell glasses, and oddly shaped cabinets, all labelled. A peculiar smell slaps you as you stare.

This is a fragment of Long Lucy's collection of preserved curios, from her travels so far. She has further collections stored across the city, which becomes apparent if she is freed. Herein, visitors find the grotesque, preserved young of Gride and the rat upstairs, in a jar labelled "*human-rat child*", a "*four-headed stirge*", a "*double-ended cat*", a "*unicorn-bear*", a "*preserved behir fetus*", "*The Sorry Man*" (a man with only half a face); "*The Mummy of Khall*", and many others. In all, some 511 exhibits are crammed into this claustrophobic chamber.

The strange effect of the fabric of the *Circus Macabre* causes a shiver to cross the spines of those who enter: for every minute spent herein, the character must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened. If frightened, the character(s) desires to leave as quickly as possible.

CM10. The Orchard

A strange, autumnal scent rises from behind the flaps of this tent.

Within, a narrow walkway between (perpetually) autumnal trees has been made. The quality of the circus is such that, once beyond the entrance, it is possible to imagine the visitor is in a forest in autumn; the smell, the sounds and the gentle breeze swiftly take over. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check negates this effect, while those that fail the check are completely taken by the visit, and believe themselves to be in a forest in autumn. Such characters may, at the GM's discretion, hear a distant call — a cry for help that comes from deep in the forest — its source cannot be found, and it is heard but once.

CM11. The Weeping Sisters

The sound of gentle sobbing echoes from within this tent.

Conjoined twins **Elaine and Blessed Arya** (N female conjoined† human **minstrel**) sleep and work in this chamber, which echoes with their present misery. They love Long Lucy† and miss her terribly, quietly sobbing themselves to sleep just after each dawn. The tent is decorated as a parlour, with twin harpsichords, papier-mâché screens depicting black swans flying across a dark lake by night, and the scent of musk. The sisters sing sad songs and play their instruments as visitors pass through, getting glimpses of the ladies. The music is unrelentingly melancholy, and characters staying here for more than a minute must make a DC 10 Wisdom save or have a desire to leave, possibly saddened to the point of tears.

Development: Elaine and Blessed Arya had a terrible life before being bought by Long Lucy from their wicked stepfather. They love music, and anyone with musical skill who makes a successful DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check in their presence has advantage on all subsequent Charisma checks involving them. A successful DC 10 Charisma check will befriend the twins, and they will then be willing to mention Long Lucy with very sad eyes, saying only that she has gone away. A DC 15 Charisma check makes them helpful, and they say that Gride and Ammos took Lucy several months ago when they first came to Festival, and that Long Lucy is held prisoner somewhere. They also comment on the "tall man with the swan tattoo" who vanished only a few weeks ago; he was working in the circus and was great friends with Scarred Samuel the Owlbear Keeper. The sisters have seen Ammos transform into a wererat hybrid when drunk, to shock them, but have been too worried what effect this knowledge might have on their friends to tell anyone.

Treasure: The harpsichords are worth 125 gp each, and the twins have hidden their worldly goods in one. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the walnut jewellery box carved with raven figures; it contains 46 gp, a small silver mirror, and an enamel portrait of a very beautiful brunette (their mother, Lilly) set in a silver frame worth 125 gp. In the other harpsichord, they have hidden (DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check) Long Lucy's spellbook. It contains the following spells: 1st—*alarm*, *feather fall, unseen servant*; 2nd—*enlarge/reduce, invisibility, levitate*, *mirror image, suggestion*.

CM12. Grove the Slug Man

This tent exudes an earthy smell, perhaps of fungi and mildew, perhaps merely of decay.

Within, the smell becomes stronger; there is a feeling of being below ground, of earth and damp. **Grove** (NG male gnome **mage**) has dark skin and is usually naked save for a dark shift, and often a black fez. Grove has no legs; his lower torso ends in a long snake-like lump. He is still able to move (Speed 10 ft.) and is a witty and well-travelled fellow. He is glimpsed between opaque glass and low lanterns filled with black, scented oils. He uses his illusory magic to enhance his tent and give a feeling of oppression; those who spend more than a minute herein must make a DC 8 Wisdom save or wish to leave, quickly becoming claustrophobic.

Grove tells the tale of his birth in the Underneath, a district below the city streets, and of his abduction from his kindly gnome mother; how he worked the mines of Between for decades before his saviour Long Lucy found him and showed him the sun, which blinded him (he is not in fact blind, as anyone who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check can ascertain on seeing him).

Development: Grove hates Gride and Ammos, and is very suspicious of the clowns, although he does not know any of them are lycanthropes. He suspects that there is some hidden exit from the office and building, as the group often goes in and are not seen again for many, many hours; they return smelling of odd perfume and have stupid grins at such times. He has also seen them take women, and even once a child, into the office and has never seen them again, although he has no evidence of any wrong-doing. He only reveals his suspicions to people he is on helpful terms with. Grove misses his own kind, and any gnome, or characters who can speak Gnome or Undercommon, have advantage on Charisma checks make to interact with him.

Grove's hatred of the wererats was so great that when the tall man with the swan tattoo (Uriah) came here, Grove shied away from him, thinking him a friend of theirs. He knows, however, that when the tall man was last seen, there had been some sort of incident between him and Gride, and that Gride now has the other man's sword cane.

Treasure: Grove has hidden his wealth below a loose plank in the pier below. A DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice that one plank has a narrow, sawn section that shows dirt from frequent removal. Below is a small cache of coin in a leather bag (123 cp, 26 sp, 45 gp), a *potion of healing*, a *scroll of blur* and a *wand of color spray* (7 charges) †. Grove would gladly lend the items to anyone he feels likes him (a successful DC 10 Charisma check ensures Grove's friendliness).

CM13. The Great Tent

A very large black tent, within which is a central sawdust circle raised above the ground by some five feet, and reached by low steps.

The main acts perform here, and a major performance is detailed under **Events and Entertainments** at the end of this section. Equipment tends to come and go during acts, and harnesses and ropes are in position for the acrobats and clowns to use.

CM14. The Menagerie of Cages

A narrowboat sits low in the water; atop it are at least a dozen cages, all occupied.

The cages sit on the deck, which is covered with planks and which hides the hold below. **Scarred Samuel** (N male human **spy** with +3 to Intimidation) usually sleeps, eats, and lives on deck with his beloved animals, which include (in no particular order) a trio of dancing **riding dogs**, 5 performing **baboons**, a dancing **brown bear**, 2 **miniature ponies**, and **Gripper**, an **owlbear**. The cages are not locked, but are fastened with a simple iron peg through a double latch. Samuel controls all his animals as though he has *animal friendship* in place. The owlbear is somewhat trickier, however, and while he can readily control it in the circus ring, Samuel must make a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check to force the owlbear to make a move action.

Development: Whip-wielding Scarred Samuel sleeps under a canvas on deck. He was the closest of all the circus performers to Uriah, and became his confidant. Uriah chose him because of his hatred for the rats and his deep love for Long Lucy, for whom he has performed for over 10 years. Consequently, Samuel begins with a hostile attitude to the characters initially, an attitude he tries to keep to himself. If this attitude goes on for more than 2 days, he attempts to cause the characters danger as detailed in **Events** below. If his attitude can be overcome and he can be made helpful, he answers any questions he can about Uriah.

He knows Uriah worked for the Guild, became more and more convinced that wererats did not merely nest in Festival but ran it, and that somehow the ruling families were infected with lycanthropy. He is convinced that the rats here are abducting people for various nefarious purposes, but that these prisoners are somehow spirited away from the office building. The last day Samuel saw him, Uriah had argued with Gride, and the two went into the office. Uriah never came back. That was several weeks ago. Samuel does know that Gride has Uriah's beloved sword cane, which was a gift from the tattooed man's father. Samuel knows that the clowns, Ammos, and Gride are all wererats.

Gripper hates Gride because the rat delights in tormenting the owlbear; a hatred obvious to anyone who is present when Gride passes the owlbear and is successful on a DC 10 Wisom (Insight) check. If released, the owlbear attacks Gride on sight.

Treasure: Planks have been laid across the low deck, and a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check ensures this is noticed. A DC 15 Strength check is required to move a plank sufficiently for a character to crawl in. Below are the tents of the original circus macabre: 30 black tents of various sizes and magnificence, all threaded with the odd magic of Between.

CM15. Long Lucy's Narrowboat

A fancy black narrowboat emblazoned with crimson-outlined black lettering declares, "*The Circus Macabre is in town! The greatest show in the world!*"

The narrowboat has cramped quarters below, that are fitted out luxuriously and have all the necessary home touches Long Lucy required (they are also sized for her): cupboards of fine pottery, a silver service worth 200 gp, a tin bathtub, a pot-bellied stove, and a small bed.

Three dwarfs – **Grutt**, **Lutt** and **Brack** (N male dwarf **commoners** with +5 to Performance) work as labourers for the circus, and sleep on deck below a canvas. They are relatively new employees, and on amicable terms with the rats. They start on friendly terms with the characters, and if they can be made helpful, are happy to help the characters out in non-combative ways. The dwarves are good musicians, and play a variety of instruments, including fiddles, trumpets, and drums. Two halfling acrobats **Dandelion** and **Sedge** (N female halfling **sneakthieves**†) sleep in the boat below. Both are very nervous, terrified of fighting and being injured. They are petrified of Gride, but even more terrified of Ammos, who has taken a shine to the red-headed Dandelion, and recently asked to marry her. When the adventure begins, she is playing for time, but if after 4 days the situation has not changed, they attempt to flee after the wererat proposes again while drunk. For more information see **Events and Entertainments** below. Long Lucy's beloved tortoise-shell cat, **Nostrum,** also lurks around the narrowboat. The cat is actually a **Between-cat**† in disguise, although it keeps to itself — only Long Lucy is aware of its special qualities.

Development: The dwarves repeat to Gride anything the characters say to them, regardless of their attitude (unless, of course, they are charmed). Dandelion and Sedge are a different proposal - they are absolutely petrified by the characters, who they assume are the friends of Ammos. If the acrobats can be made befriended (possibly through a pair of successful DC 12 Charisma checks, or bribes, or other creative means), they tell the characters that they know Long Lucy is around. The three were very close and they *know* she is alive; although how they know, they are unable to explain. They would weep tears of joy if she could be freed, and they could escape Festival.

Treasure: There are nine musical instruments in all, each worth 25 gp. Anyone making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a rough handbill being used to line a canary cage that hangs within the cabin. The handbill is **Handout 1**.

CM16. Safe Crossing

A pair of ropes have been slung from mooring points on the pier, and on a rickety island forty feet away. The rope sags as it reaches its half-way point.

Gride lives on the isle, and has deliberately made the rope hang low to the water. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to move across the rope at half speed. A character who fails by less than 5 makes no progress; a failure by 5 or more results in a fall into the water. Characters who weigh more than 100 lbs. who cross at any time other than low tide cause the rope to sag into the water. If this occurs, the character attracts the attention of a **sick mar-eel** (attacks made with disadvantage) (Gride encourages it to loiter, by throwing it rotten fish once per day). The eel arrives and attacks anyone still on the rope 1d4+1 rounds after being alerted.

Tactics: The eel is wary in combat, and only attacks every other round, withdrawing into the gloom of the Lyme during rounds in between. If the eel takes any damage, it withdraws for 1d4 rounds. If it takes 15 or more points of damage, it swims away.

CM17. Gride's Isle

A wooden building rises from the waters on crooked timbers.

The balcony outside the building has no barriers, and characters rolling a 1 on an attack here must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity save or fall into the water. If the **sick old mar-eel** (**CM 16**) is still in the area, it arrives to investigate in 1d3 rounds. A stout door gives access to the room, but the door has been swollen by endless damp: a successful DC 13 Strength

check is required to open it. The isles' timbers are very damp and clogged with seaweed and barnacles. A successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb atop the structure.

What looks like a dog is curled up in a kennel by the door. The kennel is just a box made of damp timber that its occupant habitually fills with seaweed from forays below. The "dog" is actually a big **giant rat** with 12 (maximum) hit points. The creature attacks anyone stepping onto the isle that does not have rat empathy. It slips into the waters and flees if reduced to 5 hp or less. The **mar-eel** (see **CM 16**) is 1d6 rounds away but always watching the isle. If anything falls in it quickly investigates, hoping for a meal.

CM18. Gride's Sweatshop

Beyond the swollen door is a cramped room, filled with objects having to do with the sea. There are ships in bottles, charts, and even a ship's wheel. A tiny cot stands in one corner.

Gride (LE male human **wererat**) spends his time herein by day, and by night he is either found hosting the circus show or at the Filleted Cat. Gride has a pet goblin, an adornment he regards as the height of fashion. His **goblin**, **Slug**, is reasonably kind-hearted for a goblin, having spent its whole life with various masters (most of them cruel). Slug wears his costume begrudgingly (he is dressed as a dandy with a silk ruff, turquois pantaloons, curved court shoes, and other finery), and takes snuff to increase the effect, although the snuff use is an addiction. He has no weapons and no loyalty to Gride; he shows the scars of frequent beatings, and is Gride's plaything. If left to his own devices, Slug (whose real name he has never known) would take up a career as a rogue. Slug is attached to his master by a thin 5-foot long ornate chain with a fancy bracelet. This chain is easy to break (DC 5 Strength) and worth 50 gp intact.

Development: If freed, Slug could become a loyal companion to the characters. The GM may wish to develop him as a full character or an NPC who takes levels as a rogue. If sold, Slug would fetch 250 gp +1d6 x 10 gp in a market auction.

Treasure: About his body, Gride has (2) *potions of blur*†*, +1 silvered sword cane* (treat as rapier), entertainer's outfit, megaphone with copper and mother of pearl trim worth 200 gp, sling, pouch with 22 bullets (4 silver), false moustache, keys to all the locks in the circus and this room. Gride's room is crammed with nautical objects: there are 5 ships in bottles worth 25 gp each, the ship's wheel is set with an iron and silver wyvern figure worth 50 gp, and the charts are excellent (worth 100 gp in total, detailing the waters beyond the river). A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal that there is a small, ornate strongbox containing 200 gp in various purses hidden in the rafters.

Strongbox: DC 18 Strength check to break, DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open.

The Tunnel

The characters are likely to discover that the wererats use a tunnel to go somewhere in Festival. The tunnel is long, and the characters have two options to find out where it leads: explore it directly, or follow its ventilation shafts. In all, the Tunnel heads roughly south and then southwest, keeping to the lower edges of the island for 900 yards before reaching the Filleted Cat, a low gin-house and deviants' club on the northern edges of the Crimson Lantern parish, a place infamous for its brothels and darker pleasures.

If the characters crawl along the tunnel, they arrive at area **FC1** in the Filleted Cat section (**Part 3** of this adventure). Following the tunnel on the surface is safer, but more demanding. The characters make Perception checks to follow the line, which does swerve in places; they must make a total of four successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) checks to follow the tunnel, and each check takes half a day, although all the characters can engage in the hunt.

As the characters wander about the city looking, they may be spotted by touts, sham guides, and other ne'er-do-wells. **Chapter 4** of **The Blight Campaign Guide** can help you with some of its suggested scams, or simply have the characters assailed by a group of low level ruffians if you prefer simplicity. The last vent lies immediately beside a low gin-house, the Filleted Cat. What the characters find there is detailed in **Part Three**.

Events and Entertainments

The characters can sleep and talk to whoever they wish, assuming that they are only working a half day at best. As the GM, add to, remove, or gloss over these tasks as you wish.

Event 1: Dinner at Grast Hall

This encounter automatically occurs on the night of the escape (see **Escape!** in **Part 1**). Ammos approaches the characters late in the afternoon to say that his uncle Marren Grast is very grateful to them for helping him escape, and wishes to reward them. He expects to see them at Grast Hall (**F9** in **Chapter 4**) that evening for supper. Turning down the invitation is unlikely, but if the characters do, you need to improvise a meeting between the characters and Marren at another time in this adventure, since this is somewhat pivotal. Snubbing such an invite is likely to bring Marren stomping down to the circus anyway. Ammos becomes increasingly nervous during the later afternoon, as any character making a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell. He knows he is going to be punished by his "uncle," and that the humiliation will be public. He becomes surly as the event approaches, saying little if he accompanies the characters to the imposing Grast Hall itself.

Meeting Marren Grast

Play out this encounter in as much detail as you wish, but bear in mind that Grast Hall is teeming with wererats. Have some come and go, but each keeps his lycanthropy hidden. There is, however, an odd smell of rat, which anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check notices and is able to identify. Any animal companions or druids in animal form find it almost overwhelming.

Marren Grast is a charming host, despite his slightly hunched appearance and unsettling table manners, which leave much to be desired. When the characters arrive, they are shown through opulent corridors lined with portraits of famous family members (all Grasts, of course). Marren wears an outrageous wig and is dressed in dazzling colours. He has incredible, almost comically white teeth. The Hall is laid to dinner, but this is a dinner table for halflings; the characters may have to squat in too-small chairs. The table groans with silverware; a DC 15 Intelligence check or any character with a suitable background (merchant, noble) estimates this service alone as worth more than 1,000 gp.

Marren makes every effort to charm his guests, especially ladies, making witty remarks, singing the occasional ode, and generally talking about himself. In all, the dinner party lasts 3 hours (unless the characters offend him, in which case he orders them out). Ammos remains silent throughout the evening.

The dinner is gravy soup, followed by turbot with cream sauce, sweetbreads with hashed wild duck, rump steak with mushrooms, partridges, and finally a compote of fruit with cream. Wine comes out often, and is liberally served by a butler who never gives his name — but who makes his disapproval of the characters clear, particularly if they haven't bothered to properly dress (or worse, not washed) for dinner. Marren enjoys the wine that is frequently brought out, and as the evening wears on he becomes easier to prod for information about the Family. Over roughly every course (so 6 in all!), a character has a chance to impress Marren and get something out of him. The character can make a DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Persuasion, or Performance) check, to get an answer from those below, but be prepared to improvise if the characters try to push the questioning a certain way. After each course the DC lowers by 1. Note only one phrase is uttered per course, amidst the other talk.

- *"Of course, the Grasts are the eldest family in Festival. Those Scathels, and Frynns claim superiority, but just look at our manners, our breeding. They are savages!"*
- *"Those Scathels, nothing but highland barbarians. Why they've barely been here a handful of centuries and expect to be followed. Their dreary mansion is like the seed of their eldest Hamish; withered and dying!"* Any character can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check – Marren looks scared as he utters this.
- *"Frynns! Ha, living in a shanty little more than a nest, they may think they have power, but our day is coming!"* A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the character to hear Ammos whisper, *"what about the Troth..."*
- *"In truth though, we're all just one big happy family. More kinsmen than I often care to say."*
- "And how many live here, oh, thousands wouldn't you say nephew; thousands of us happy locals all here to entertain!"
- *"Gods save the Queen!"* Characters making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Insight) check notice that Marren is looking downwards as he utters this, not across the river to the Capitol and the home of the true Queen.

If the characters mention wererats in Festival at any time, Marren's face darkens. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check notes his glance becomes one of anger. Marren reveals nothing more except to deny any such infestation as the fickle rumour-mongering of the jealous on land.

A Reward, a Punishment and a Proposition

The evening ends as brandy is brought out along with two objects: a hefty wooden box, and a long cane. Marren says that before he rewards the characters for delivering Ammos from the prison hulk, he must punish his nephew. He was foolish for getting caught, and has sullied the Grast name. He commands Ammos to come over to him and gives him half a dozen lashes on each open palm with his cane. The characters do not need to make a check to realize how humiliated Ammos is.

Marren then hands the box over to the characters, thanking them for saving his beloved nephew from himself. A Grast, he adds, always pays his debts. The box contains either double the characters randomly generated starting money or 750 gp, whichever you choose most appropriate.

Marren then draws his chair in closer to the characters. Allow each character to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice an unpleasant smell on Grast; his clothes reek of the sewer, a scent masked by perfume and the smell of food, but one of underscoring rot. His nephew, he admits, was foolish, tricked by a "whore" who, by coincidence, is associated with a rival clan on the island – the Frynns. This woman — known as Grace Spindleshanked — lurks around the Great Fayre at the heights of Festival.

Now, he and his associates would cause great upset if they went there, but strangers, now, they could slip in unnoticed and do some sniffing and bring this whore and her associates back to Grast Hall — or what's left of her. Frankly, the message will be the same anyway — he'd be mightily happy at that occurrence. If that eventuality were to occur, Grast adds that not only would he and the entire Grast family be grateful for repaying the besmirching of their good name, and find such useful and graceful people easy work, but he would personally reward them. At this point, Grast brings out from his pocket a curious object: an obsidian sphere about the size of an orange; he flicks a brass switch and the object parts, revealing a central section wherein there is a dead young crow — undead in fact. The object is a mortomata Grast calls the *weather vane* (see Sidebox). If the characters agree to deal with Grace Spindleshanked, Grast gives them the object on top of all the other rewards.

After making his offer (which he fully expects to be accepted very gratefully and gracefully) Marren tells the characters that he tires, and waves them out. The characters are seen off the premises and are free to make their own way either back to the circus, or into the crookedly fanciful streets of Festival, to enjoy the remainder of the night.

The Weather Vane Mortomata

Wondrous item, uncommon

Popular in the city, mortomata are a combination of animated object and animated dead.

The *weather vane* is a sphere with a circular opening, and within there is a series of depictions of weather types in a circle, from fair to foul. The undead, featherless crow that sits inside the mortomata points at the type of weather it expects. The *weather vane* is 75% accurate but vague; the only weather increments are "fair," "changeable," "stormy," and "dry." The object grants a +1 bonus to all Survival checks made to predict weather, and is worth 300 gp.

The Pretty Ghouls: The Ghoul "Whore" and Her Girls

Spindleshanked is one of the few ghoul harlots who make a living in Festival, and while such diversions have greater following amongst the necrophiliacs of the city, here they keep a low profile. **Grace Spindleshanked** and her formerly consumptive (when alive) workers **Liza and Maude** are based in a small lair known as the Urchin, which hangs beneath the piers near the Black Finger (area **F10** in **Chapter 4**). The harlots appear at night, staggering up the Seethe and to the Great Fayre where they look for customers. Occasionally, they take a customer back to the Urchin and have a feast. The ghouls are habitual in their nocturnal activity; they are members of the Fetch†, and have the marks to prove so (each has slash marks across their wrists). Grace is in the employ of the Frynns, and was paid to trap Ammos a few days ago. She didn't ask why, but simply lured him to a trap that resulted in his capture. She cares nothing about the Family, and usually avoids them, but her reward was such a pretty leprechaun doll that she couldn't resist it.

The characters have two options to catch the girls and bring them to justice: the first is to simply watch for them at the Great Fayre (they are easy to see) and try to capture and/or kill them, the second is talking to the unusual group of characters at the Fayre to learn where they live.

Grace Spindleshanked

Pale to the point of consumption, this woman has made every effort to colour her skin; she is rouged and powdered, with glossy red lipstick clearly visible beneath her mourning veil. She flutters a fancy, lace fan absently, making her painfully-black hair sway hypnotically. Her perfume is overpowering, as is the sickly-sweet smell of hashish, which haunts her enthusiastically.

Grace Spindleshanked (**ghoul** with the following additions: Stealth +5, and if she makes a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against her for the rest of her turn) can readily pass for a living person — until seen too closely or too bare, that is. Assume that she is disguised as a living person, an act she tries to perpetrate. Grace knows, however, that there are those connoisseurs who are willing to pay for their unique tastes, and has a bevy of regular customers. Cocky to the point of arrogance, Grace particularly savours frightening men by displaying the collection of removed members she has taken from previous lovers; her favourite trick is to paralyze, then torment.

Tactics: Grace and her girls (**ghouls**) wish to avoid combat, if possible. They move in large crowds, and if they suspect attack, they flee. For more details see the **In the Middle of a Crowd** Sidebox. Grace is cunning, and

In the Middle of a Crowd

Grace and the girls are frequent visitors to the Great Fayre, and need to work to survive; so even attacks are not going to put them off. However, they are also not stupid. For the first encounter, the characters may simply see, stalk and attack the girls, who are never more than 30 feet apart unless working. The characters may also be tempted to pay for the girl's privacy, costs for which begin at 5 sp. Customers are led to side alleys (never the Urchin).

If they discover foul play, the girls lash out, hoping to paralyze their foes and deal with them accordingly. If outnumbered and injured, they instantly flee into the crowd. The crowd gives them advantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) checks. If the character fails two checks in a row, they lose their quarry, and the next time the girls come here they are actively looking for the characters.

If trouble persists, the ghouls begin to hunt, trying to lure a lone character into a side alley (of which there are literally thousands in Festival) to attack. No one cares if someone shouts "Murder!" but even the locals here are not going to stand by while someone is butchered by Fetch in full view.

the girls work as a group, working to give Grace the best opportunities to attack. The girls flee combat unless they are in the Urchin (see below), in which case they fight to their destruction, always fearful that paladins and other holy knights are seeking them, and expecting no mercy.

Treasure: Grace has leather shoulder bag holding a *potion of blur*† in an elixir bottle, a folding silver stiletto with obsidian handle and silver spider motif worth 45 gp, black veil, white whalebone basque with silver fastenings worth 25 gp, high black leather boots, black mourning veil, crimson cloak, black lacquer fan shaped like a death's head moth that is stitched and frequently repaired – the remains of a *wind fan* that she used too enthusiastically but an object still worth 50 gp for its intrinsic value, 3 throwing knives (one down a boot, the other two in scabbards at the back of her basque), each coated with a paste of terinav root poison (DC 16 Constitution save or lose 1d3 points of Dexterity: the lost Dexterity will be recovered after completing a long rest), gold bangle depicting prancing ponies worth 45 gp, a collection of mummified male human members in a small ornate lacquer case depicting death's head moths, 25 gp in a small leather scrip, brass and walnut hashish pipe and small quantity of hashish in a ferret-skin pouch. Liza and Maude each have wedding dress with white veil, decayed bouquet, purse with 20 sp, and make-up worth 5 gp.

The Great Fayre

Grace has a whipping boy. Someone she enjoys tormenting: Asa, the talking awakened pig. Asa is part of the Great Fayre Pig Race, which runs thrice nightly. Grace gets great joy from telling the pig what she is going to do to her, and cannot resist approaching her at least once nightly. Asa is terrified of Grace, but her calls for help have fallen on the deaf ears of her owner and master, Bartholomew Starling. Her fellow pigs are similarly afraid of Grace, but feel they can do little to help except leave, which they are loathe to do, as business is good.

The Great Fayre is detailed in area **F2** in **Chapter 4**, and features such strange acts as the Hirsute Court and the Great Wheel. Grace is known only in the area detailed below, but a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check gives details that she is known to frequent the Honeycomb, an area of sweet-stalls and freak shows in the southeast of the small district.

The Honeycomb

The Honeycomb is well named; it is a cramped area of alleyways infested with sweets stalls, liquorice, and boiled candies, lurking in the far shadow of the Great Wheel. Here the stalls are shabbier, the owners (more) sinister-looking, perhaps desperate for your custom.

Several stalls operate in this area, and a few examples are given to spice up the encounters here. Grace is well known here: the GM should assume that if the characters fail any Charisma or Intelligence check to gather information by 5 or more, they encounter one of these friends and learn nothing. That evening, such traders warn Grace and her sisters — assume from that point on that the ghouls are expecting trouble.

Characters making successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) checks (roll once every 2 hours) or successful DC 12 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) checks at night, discover that Grace and her girls frequently work here. characters making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check learn that she is normally seen at the Great Fayre Pig Races (see below). Spotting Grace is tricky, but for every 2 hours of simply watching, allow the characters a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to catch a glimpse of her and try to follow (all of the characters can aid another in this attempt). In these crowds, assume the ghouls are always attempting to be stealthy.

The Sugar-Plum Gin House

Rowdy and stinking of boiled sugar, the Sugar-Plum is a great place to pick up information — and trouble. Decorated like a gaudy cake, the place sells only gin, and is frequented by desperate local traders watched by **Miss Butterfly** (CN female human **commoner**), who carries a greatclub with her wherever she goes. She is regarded as one of the most gifted swearers in the area, and likes to live up to her reputation.

Nectar and Spice Music Hall

By night, impresario **Gutterly Grumbletrounce** (LN male human **minstrel**†) calls out the cats through his megaphone. The immaculately dressed dandy has vast sideburns and tacky, lewd manners as he introduces various talentless acts: a singer called Madame Gringe, the juggler Torlessar, Molly Tubb the bawdy singer, and guest acts which, this month, include the drag singer Gladys Surd, the darling of the Capitol (apparently).

For 1 sp, the always-busy place encourages a sing-a-long that raises spirits and smiles. Gutterly makes frequent covert attempts to secure the talking pigs from the pig races, and if he sees anyone there he inevitably approaches them to offer 100 gp for one of the pigs (how this develops is left to the GM).

The Great Fayre Pig Race

One of the highlights of the Fayre, the pig race is more akin to an obstacle course than a race circuit. There are 6 pigs, and bets are placed with the manager **Bartholomew Starling** (N male human **commoner**), although in truth it is the pigs who run the show. Each of the pigs is Between-touched and awakened; they can all talk, but rarely do so to avoid startling the public. They want to avoid being burned as witches, or punished horribly by bigoted locals for being talking pigs — something even this lot don't see every day.

The bet on a race is 5 sp. Roll 1d6 to determine which pig wins the race, and a winner gets treble the bet. However, if the pig's owner gets a sudden rush of bets (say all the characters bet on the same pig) he has a quiet word with said pig, who then comes last.

The pigs are **Asa, Corncob, Marigold, Lettuce, Squeely Bret,** and **Thistleweed.** Anyone making a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) or Intelligence (Nature) check realizes that they are awakened. Characters making similar checks before each race can see which pig looks most confident. The pigs are generally content, but have various porcine plots of their own: securing animal rights, good treatment, working with human agents to secure various plots involving other awakened animals, and getting hold of turnips, which they all adore.

Development: Talking to the pigs is not easy; they are collectively held in a pen outside the house where their master lives, and he has a **Blight pit-mastiff**† (AC 15 with studded leather barding) on a leash with him at all times. The mastiff takes lumps out of anyone it doesn't fancy, and as its leash is 15 feet long that gives it plenty of range. Gaining Bartholomew's confidence enough to allow a chat with his charges requires two successful DC 16 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) checks. Any failed checks

cause the dog to snap at the character who failed the check. Bribes of 1 gp add a +1 bonus to the check (max +5).

Asa (N female awakened **Between pig**) is a pretty, but very fat, pink pig with brown spots, who particularly adores turnips. A DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check is enough to get the pig to squeal its story, but a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to entice the pig to cooperate in any action. Asa's talk comes in grunts and squeals, and she is genuinely afraid of Grace, on whom she smells death. Grace talks to her every night, and says she is going to slowly roast, fry and salt her, as well as other — nastier — things she can't bring herself to talk about. She does know where Grace and her sisters live, however, as Grace frequently mentions her home and its big oven. Grace calls it the Urchin (and her oven the "Pig Pot"), and says that it overlooks the Black Finger. She also says that her home is under a nearby pier, below a cookhouse called the Squealing Piglet. Grace goes into great detail about these places every time she sees Asa, and is very precise in her intentions for the pig, who she knows understands perfectly. Grace, apparently, loves to eat anything that realizes it is being eaten, and a pig with such qualities is almost impossible for her to resist.

The Urchin

The Black Finger is one of the major locations in the district, but is surrounded by other piers. A normal search requires as DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, but everyone knows the Squealing Piglet; a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check locates the structure, and a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check when speaking with the locals reveals that it has a very dubious reputation for what it puts into its pies, cobs and roasts. The entrance to the Urchin is not easy to spot from above the pier; however, anyone from the water level or leaning over the pier sees the Urchin almost immediately below the eatery — something that is not coincidence.

Grace and her sisters have a deal with **Magnus Crably** (NE male human **commoner**) above; they get scraps thrown into their boudoir in return for frightening a few of the owner's more desperate customers (who, frankly, Crably is happy simply to see vanish). A small hatch in **U5** links the two places. If the Squealing Piglet is open (which is all hours except from midnight–dawn), he watches out for odd behaviour; unless the characters try to approach the area with a distraction or with stealth, the owner spots them. A simple pulley system in his kitchen rings a bell below, alerting Grace to trouble, at which point she starts the Carousel (see **U4**). If threatened or unmasked in any way, Crably becomes very compliant, for fear of being turned over to the Watch for his activities with the Fetch.

U1. The Swing

A metal swing hangs below the pier, wrapped in slippery seaweed. The swing begins 10 feet below, but directly under, the pier. A DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check is required to get from the pier to the steps, and a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or DC 10 Strength (Athletics) is needed to achieve movement in the opposite direction.

The waters always churn below the pier (DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check), and because of the frequent offal thrown away by Crably, there is always a **mar-eel** nearby. If a character falls into the water, an eel notices on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check and moves to the swimmer. Assume the eel starts 1d6 rounds away, but once in the area it only leaves if killed. If attacked, the eel slithers below the piers and into cover.

U2. The Iron Steps

A jagged iron stairway slithers around the outside of the building, framed in iron bars. The walls of this building are made of flotsam, iron sheets, and ship's timbers, and looks very thick. The stairs are slippery with seaweed and salt-sprayed water.

A DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to move down the steps at anything more than half speed. Characters who fall may attempt a DC 15 Dexterity save to grab a rail but otherwise risk the attentions of a mar-eel (see **U1**). The stairs arrive at a small platform between 10 and 15 feet above the sea. A crude opening allows access within. The walls can be battered down with a DC 20 Strength check or 25 hit points of force or bludgeoning damage (the walls have an AC of 10).

U3. The Sty

A curious space surrounds what looks like a rusting carousel, but this is a carousel made of rusting iron horses with blades thrust into their heads, making them appear to be ghastly unicorns. The area between the horses is tangled in wire and pointed rusty barbs. The surrounding lot is strewn with straw and rotten turnips; beyond, there is a farm building of some sort.

The straw is for 3 **ghoul pigs**†; one is little more than a piglet, and all show signs of being tormented. They are terrified of the ghouls, and attack any non-ghouls that enter. They do not, however, attempt to move through the carousel, even if it is motionless.

U4. The Carousel of Rusting Unicorns

If alerted, the ghouls turn a lever in the boudoir (**U5**) that operates the clockwork carousel. If moving, characters attempting to pass through the carousel must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Anyone making a successful check can pass through the wheel or remain safely within the area, benefitting from partial cover and moving at normal speed. The ghouls do not have to make such checks to move through the area. Characters who fail the check by less than 5 suffer 1d6 points of slashing damage (DC 12 Dexterity save halves the damage). Those who fail by 5 or more are tangled in the carousel and tossed about by the machinery for 1d6 slashing damage per round. Entangled characters automatically fail the next save, and must make additional saves each round to escape or suffer more damage.

U5. The Boudoir

A flotsam house rises from the floor. It is a confusing mass of reclaimed timber that rises to an upper floor, which is a crude platform-area open in many places to the floor below. Rickety steps rise to a curious boudoir, a place surrounded by mirrors and "decorated" with mangy cushions, silks, and hangings.

Ten feet and a crude set of timber steps separate the two levels (no check is required to climb to the level above). Characters using ranged attacks between the two floors are assumed to have cover. **Grace** and the sisters, **Liza and Maude** lurk here by day, scratching and dreaming of death and love.

Treasure: Among the cushions are a fancy bottle of perfume (worth 25 gp), a human finger with a plain gold ring still attached (the ring is worth 100 gp), a mangled emerald-green dress with a fancy mouchoir worth 20 gp in one pocket, a collection of human teeth in a jug, a set of false teeth made from hippo ivory worth 75 gp, a drowned cat, in vinegar in a bell jar (a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies something else in the vinegar — the head of a *+2 silver crossbow* bolt, which can be set on a bolt easily), a ceramic cow with silver horns worth 35 gp, a silver cut-glass claret jug depicting the moon defecating on the sun worth 75 gp, a papier-mâché spectacle case with bronze-lined gargoyle filigreed reading glasses within worth 75 gp in total, and a rather ghoulish papier-mâché leprechaun doll with glass eyes, moveable arms, real hair beard, and velvet gloves worth 5 gp. The mirrors are worth 200 gp, but may shatter if removed; a DC 15 Dexterity check completes the task. A failure on the check reduces the value by 50 gp; a failure of 5 or more reduces value by 50%.

Development: While removing one mirror, the face staring back from the reflection is not the character's own, but something horrible. That character must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom save or drop the mirror, reducing its value as indicated above.

Event 2: Easy Work

If the characters succeed in Marren's task, he is overjoyed. He admits candidly that he liked the look of the characters when he first set eyes on them, and he'd like to welcome them into the bosom of the Grast family. He tells them to go to Ammos, and to tell him they are to start work immediately, on a healthy salary of 5 sp per day — no one can say the Grasts aren't generous — and, who knows, he may be back in touch with the characters in due course. In the meantime, he's sure young Ammos can find work to test their talents.

At the circus, Ammos immediately, and rather sulkily, directs the characters to his partner Obed Gride. Gride asks the characters what they can do; he especially needs the Circus advertised around Festival and has need of strong voices and talent. The characters get two chances to impress him with a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check, a flashy or useful spell (no check required), or another Charisma-related skill check (DC 10 Deception or Persuasion will do). Those who impress him are told to head off into Festival to drum up trade, and be back here when the circus opens at dusk, where they are to carry on entertaining the crowds. Gride warns such characters that entertainment is a cut-throat business in Festival and warns them to be on their guard. He says that any acts get a cut of the takings, can perform nightly in the Great Tent, and keep any money they make outside later.

If characters fail these checks, or don't try, he leaves them with Scarred Samuel to help in mucking out and feeding the menagerie and owlbear. These characters are kept partially busy lifting and cleaning; this task does not take up much more than half a day, on a daily basis.

Jobs

Entertainers: Characters who are entertainers are expected to be present when the circus is open, for at least 4 hours. They can use the rest of the time to go about Festival, arbitrarily advertising the circus, or can use the time as they wish.

Lackeys: Those who work as labourers spend much of their time with Samuel, Grutt, Lutt, and Brack, and have plenty of chances to talk to the other entertainers, although bear in mind that many of them sleep during the day. Once per day, one of these characters may (1 in 4 chance) be asked to muck out Gripper's cage by Samuel while he keeps the owlbear back. This encounter never occurs if he is friendly to the character in question. To muck out the owlbear pen, the character must be on hand with a mop and bucket. Assuming the characters to be allied with the rats, Samuel seizes at least one opportunity to let his owlbear slip, and attack the character. The owlbear only makes a single attack, as Samuel attempts to get it back under control and the character (presumably) tries to flee.

Event 3: A Performance

The circus forms a backdrop to events in this adventure, and the twice-nightly performances not only offer a way for the characters to slip away at such times and get up to no good, but may offer some characters the chance to earn some extra cash. Be sure to play up the crowd's reaction — the cheers, the laughter, or the boos. Those who excel may find the clowns jealous of their fame, and find them trying to put their new competition off — how this develops is left to the GM. Two performances take place each night, and they always follow the same pattern as follows:

- Introduction — "*Welcome ladies, gentlemen, and children to the Circus Macabre!*"
- The Clowns
- Samuel and his performing dogs
- A character performance, if any
- The Acrobats
- The Clowns and Samuel's performing apes have a meal that turns into a food fight
- Gride halts the food fight and introduces the two miniature ponies, who gallop to music played by the dwarf labourers.
- The second or more character performances, if anyThe Acrobats
- The Finale — Samuel and his Dancing Owlbear (substituted for his dancing bear if the owlbear is touchy, which it often is).
- End of the show by Gride.

Gride happily includes the characters in the show if they wish. Remember that if their Charisma (Performance) checks (or Dexterity (Acrobatics), or other as the GM sees fit) succeed, the crowd claps and cheers, but they will also boo any bad results.

Event 4: A Show of Strength

This event happens someplace outside the circus, and involves a threat from a rival family—in this case, the Scathels. If the characters stay exclusively in the circus area, they are safe. If the encounter occurs with fewer than half the characters present, only place one wererat in the encounter. The wererats approach the characters on a quiet side street if possible; they do not openly reveal their true form in a public place.

The characters are approached by a pair of rough-looking youths who are actually **wererat** toughs. They make small talk, commenting that the characters are from that Grast scum-circus in Festival. The characters are assumed to also be wererats, and as the conversation slows, one changes — momentarily — into a hybrid. He tells the characters to give Ammos a message, "the Scathels are the entertainers in this town, time for the bastard to slink back to his father and back up his own arsehole where he came from." The wererats then attempt to bite the characters — a traditional show of contempt — before slipping back into the city.

Development: The characters can use the mistaken opportunity on the wererats' part to their advantage. If they overpower a wererat or make a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check, they hear the words "Troth" and/or "Gods save the Queen," or learn that both families are infested with wererats; whichever the GM deems appropriate. Change the information to something juicier if you wish. Remember that even under threat of death, a wererat is not going to betray the Family; the penalty for doing so is far worse than just death.

Event 5: A Proposal of Marriage

On the fourth day, a drunk Ammos arrives before the show starts, carrying a cheap wedding ring (worth 25 gp) and proposes to the horrified Dandelion (**CM15**). Petrified, she dares not refuse, and Ammos struts about for the rest of the evening looking very smug. At dawn the two girls attempt to flee the circus altogether. They only escape for a few hours before literally being dragged back by their hair. Ammos, remember, has Family friends. He immediately arranges for a priest to perform the ceremony whether Dandelion agrees or not. How it develops then is left in the GM's capable hands, though the characters can certainly assist Dandelion in her escape or intervene in some other way if they wish.



Part Three: The Filleted Cat and Shadows

Kidnapping is a lucrative business, particularly if you know the right person who pays top money for the freshest specimens. After all, the city is full of strays and waifs — who's going to miss a few? The kidnappers must be careful, however, to keep their activities away from prying eyes, particularly those of rival families. A valuable sale in bodies or body parts would be a fine enhancement to any family business, and so Ammos and Gride have kept their activities secret. The two wererats have formed an alliance of convenience with the Shrunken King, a mite who also has a talent for abduction. The King keeps the Tunnel area safe from intruders while the wererat partners use the women they abduct, or pass them to a contact in BookTown who specializes in bodies and how to use them for her foul ends.

This section of the adventure is divided into two portions: The Shadows, wherein lurk the mites and through which the wererats can pass on their abductees away from prying eyes; and the Filleted Cat, which lies above the Shadows and from where the victims are either forced into service if they are old and pretty enough, or are passed on to the customer, a collector in BookTown called Rebecca Belladonna.

The Shadows Features

The Shadows make up the area of piers immediately beside and below the Cat. The Shrunken King has instructed his followers to make the place defensible in case they are discovered or, more likely, betrayed by their rat partners. The struts that form the piers are narrow, corroded iron, only 8 inches wide. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross them at half speed. Failure by less than 5 results in no progress that round, whereas failure by 5 or more results in a fall into the water below. The mites have oiled up three of the lower pier struts, which require a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross; a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to notice the oil. The mites have grown used to balancing and do not make Acrobatics checks unless they cross the oiled sections, in which case they face the same DC as others. The beams continue, and form a skeleton of iron 15 ft. above, holding up the buildings overhead. The Honour Guard (**FC3**) are practiced in using their centipede mounts to climb and attack upside down, giving them the height advantage. They take no penalty while fighting in this way.

In his wisdom, the Shrunken King has fed and encouraged a beast of fearsome reputation to reside in the area. This creature lurks just below the surface of the waters, which are around 20 feet deep but require only a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check to navigate. Climbing from the waters to the piers is not easy, and requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. A pale, sickly **electric eel**† lurks in the waters. Anyone who falls in the water attracts its attention. It arrives to attack 1d3 rounds after a character enters the water.

The Filleted Cat Gin House and Deviant Club

One of the more (but by no means only) unsavoury brothels in the Crimson Lantern District, the Filleted Cat and Deviant Club are well known to drunk locals and others as the place to go for more obscure carnal tastes. Jabb and his sister Gramp have imprisoned two women taken from the Circus Macabre to hire out, as well as their own sister. Of late, these women have been getting very aggressive, and on occasion Jabb and his sister have feared for their lives. Jabb has taken to carrying a hefty whip and club to persuade them, and is presently nursing a scar from the Gorgon from the last time he tried to hire her out. Consequently, business is falling.

General Features

The whole place *feels* seedy. From the time it opens at mid-morning to when it closes, it has drunken, lecherous customers. The floorboards are sticky with spilled drink, the furniture dances with fleas, and the windows are barred.

The locals have no idea the owners are wererats, but are sufficiently afraid of the reputation the rats have in the city to flee if confronted by one. However, open discovery that Jabb and his sister are lycanthropes would force them to move on, something that are loathe to do. At any time, 1d12+7 locals (**commoners**) are drinking in the ground floor; half of these are women who drink in the Mother's Bar (**F9**).

Gin Houses are tough places — gin being the cheapest, strongest alcoholic drink generally available in the city. The customers of the Cat are a mixed bunch, but some are friendly with Jabb and his sister (no one speaks about the *other* sister). If the characters wade into the Cat during normal hours (which is generally any time between dusk to dawn) they find the occupants assisted by a small group of 4 local toughs **(**CN male and female human **thugs)**. These four come from the score or so regulars at the Cat. The locals all know about the brothel but don't care. What they don't know is that the workers here have been abducted.

FC1. A Warm Welcome

The tunnel begins to widen, allowing larger creatures to stand within it.

Characters up to Medium size can stand in the tunnel here.

Trap: The mites have rigged a double trap here; the base of the floor on the area shown is made of plaster and covers up a small pit with spikes (**spiked pit**, 10-ft deep, DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) to locate, DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to determine actually a trap). The

plaster covers piles of string that are connected to several bells across the Shadows. When the alarm is triggered, the mites are alerted.

FC2. The Underexit

A narrow shelf lies above the waters. Above, the noises of the streets can be heard. The shelf is supported by girders of iron that rise from the oily water and are topped with beams and flagstones. This area forms a natural edge to one part of the land below Festival, and the outline of a building is clearly visible opposite: presumably, the cellar sits at the same level as you.

Patrolling the area of the beams are **3 mites,** mounted on **3 giant rats** anxious to avoid falling in the water.

FC3. The Shrunken Honour Guard

A platform has been made around a pillar which supports a spiral stair, seemingly made of very large nails driven into the beam.

The stair is awkward to climb unless the characters are Small size. A DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to climb them. The stairway rises 8 feet into the Shrunken Court (area **FC4**). The Shrunken Court has a series of small windows overlooking the Shadows, and if alerted, the mites within hurl darts at intruders as detailed below.

In his wisdom, the Shrunken King has installed an honour guard to defend him. These 4 Shrunken Honour Guards (**mite**, with 7 (2d6) hit points and AC 14) wear a special uniform of rags made from the most colourful bits of flotsam in the waters. They wear the finest bits of leather armour available. The honour guards ride **4 giant centipedes**, and have been practicing riding upside down, with their mounts gripping the upper pier supports. They take no penalty for making such attacks, although their heads do turn a curious purple colour as the blood rushes to them.

Tactics: After raising a cry to alert the Shrunken King (area **FC4**), the honour guard use their mounts to try to lure opponents across the oiled sections of beams. The honour guard fight bravely, and only retreat if one of them is killed, heading back to the king to defend him.

FC4. The Shrunken Court

The nail stair rises into a surprisingly opulent chamber. This space is crammed with curios, from things that look vaguely valuable like shields and weapons, to bits of nice seaweed, driftwood, and other even less-interesting things.

The Shrunken Court is a small wooden shed with windows overlooking the Shadows (allowing the Shrunken King to make declarations to commoners). The mites (except the king, who is too important to do so) hurl darts at intruders, hoping they'll go away. They only engage in combat if told to do so by their king, or if intruders arrive. The Shrunken Court is the lair of 4 **mites** and their king **(mite** with 14 (4d6) hit points and his mount, a **giant rat** with 14 (4d6) hit points)). Cramped together in this chamber, the mites spend their time listening to royal decrees, sleeping, and pulling the legs off insects. The Shrunken King is a curiously turquoise mite wearing a fez adorned with medals and strange flotsam. He also wears a fine, fur cloak covered in small trinkets, and smiles both benevolently and regally. The king's royal steed, Lord Callipygian, is a magnificently muscled giant rat (14 hit points) with a fancy saddle. Lord Callipygian does not leave the king, and if he falls,



Callipygian stands over his body defending him until slain. The mites here are used to the cramped quarters and can fight comfortably with 2 to a single 5-foot square.

Tactics: The Shrunken King dons his ceremonial fez-crown, checks that his appearance is suitable for combat, mounts his beloved charger Lord Callipygian, and saunters into combat. In all, these actions take him the first 3 rounds of combat. As king, his job is to shout loudly, issue instructions, and raise the men's morale. If he is engaged, he first asks who he is fighting before joining battle, ideally from rat-back. The king is a fair fighter, and if any opponents fumble or fall, he backs away for a round, allows them to pick up their weapon, check their hair and attire, and then recommences the attack. If reduced below 6 hit points, the Shrunken King honourably surrenders, assuring the characters that his kin will pay a ransom if he can send one of his faithful retainers to make the appropriate demand. See the Sidebox for more details.

Treasure: The king has potion of cure wounds, a small lance, 6 tangle darts, 12 normal darts in a bag made from a sheep's stomach, crown (fez decorated with sundry medals, coins, and bits of flotsam that look nice; worth 50 gp), royal outfit (fur cloak with gold trinkets; worth 100 gp). The royal court is also crammed with treasure. Sadly, most of it is valuable only to mites. Amongst the piles of rubbish, framed feathers, mounted cockroaches, and graffiti detailing famous mite military victories, are the following: a magnificent gold hatpin adorned with tiny obsidians worth 50 gp; a small statue of a duck with a copper and silver torque around its neck worth 75 gp; a walking cane with a carved kobold head worth 30 gp; a 3-pint copper and pewter toby jug designed to look like a grinning dwarf worth 60 gp, a small casket holding 99 sp and 56 gp in loose coins, and a *feather token* (anchor).

A Mitey Ransom

The characters may be taken aback by the Shrunken King's demand to be ransomed; however, he is genuine, and to refuse him is a terrible taboo amongst local mites. The mites have no intention of letting the characters know the location of other kingdoms below Festival, but cunning characters may find a way. If this occurs, the GM has a small side adventure to create. If a mite is left alive, he goes to a small shrine of flotsam the mites have created below the Opium House (area **F29** in **Chapter 4**), and leaves a written message there. The shrines are patrolled daily, and the other mites soon learn of the outrage. The day after, an honour guard of 6 **mites** is sent with the ransom to the characters to bring back the king — who is just one of many mite kings in the city. The ransom paid is a dozen tanglefoot bags†; this is not negotiable. The mites present are all tougher versions of their kind (see area **FC3**).

Note how the characters behave in this encounter, as it will have consequences as far down the line as ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre***. If the characters betray the mites at this stage, or indeed if they kill the king, the characters earn an enemy penalty as detailed in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*: Part 4, Enemies**. This involves an extra encounter in ***L2: Pound of Flesh***.

Jabb's Customer

Jabb has a note in his pocket that should pique the character's interest. It is a printed note proclaiming a forthcoming auction at Anston Auction House in BookTown and was handed to him by a messenger yesterday. The messenger always changes, but Jabb knows who the messages are from — Rebecca Belladonna — a homuncule wife artist who creates flesh art, and whose teacher, Lady Grey, is responsible for the Gorgon, a construct upstairs. Jabb is scared to death of Belladonna; she gave him the Gorgon as a reward for services rendered. He regularly supplies her with fresh bodies, and she particularly craves young flesh, which is more pliable in her twisted form of construct creation. The way the usual arrangement works is with Jabb appearing at an auction he has been tipped off to attend. There, he is always approached by a woman wearing a veil or mask who calls herself Rebecca Belladonna. Jabb then he leads her out back and passes her the goods.

Jabb knows he is not the only member of the Family to deal with her, but she pays very well and he always tries to oblige. If he manages to overpower the characters, one introduction to the next adventure could be when Jabb transports them, one by one, using his hand cart.

FC5. The Cellar and its Noisy Cupboard

A spacious, if damp, cellar, filled with bottles, barrels, and general objects. A line of stout doors pierces the north wall, and from one of these comes a furious banging and swearing.

Keys sit in the locks of each cell, all of which have strong doors; only the occupied one is locked. There is a considerable amount of drink herein, mostly beer and gin of dubious quality. There are also dozens of tools, torches, mops, buckets, and cleaning rags that have not seen much use over the years. A ladder rises 15 ft. to a trapdoor in the bar (area **FC6**). The swearing is in Halfling, and comes from **Long Lucy**†, the true owner of the Circus Macabre. Lucy is in the easternmost cell. The halfling has dwarfism, and is barely a foot tall.

Development: Lucy may be small, but she is fierce. Despite lacking her most powerful spells, if she is freed she attacks anyone, unless they talk her down first. She immediately asks for a weapon — any weapon — although she prefers one she is proficient with. Lucy has not been harmed, but hates all her jailors with a passion, particularly Ammos and Gride. She has heard the women upstairs suffering at the hands of Jebb and his sister and urges the characters to act. She knows the brothel is high up, and that the gin house is often busy. Long Lucy's beloved familiar was slain, although her Between-cat Nostrum is still alive and well, back at the circus.

Lucy knows something about Uriah; he was brought here not long ago and then removed again. She heard Jabb and his sister talking about the Pack feeding — south of the King, they mentioned. The pair were talking about Uriah's place of grisly execution. Once (or if) matters are resolved here, she urges the characters to help her settle with Gride and Ammos if they haven't already done so, and then help get her and her circus away from Festival, where they should be safer. These developments are dealt with at the end of this section of the adventure.

Treasure: Hidden among the rubbish (DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check) are a handful of fine vintages — a case of N'mir 1682 red wine worth 75 gp, and a bottle of Kudd 1670 brandy worth 25 gp.

FC6. The Bar

This is a cramped bar, in the middle of the gin house.

Jabb (LE male human **wererat),** an ugly thin man who resembles a rabbit, and his foul sister **Gramp** run the bar, shouting, arguing, or serving.

Tactics: If any locals are in, Jabb turns on any attackers, claiming they are thieves and asking for the Watch. An answer to such a call is unlikely, although if the characters spend too long here after combat, a group of 6 Watch constables (NE male halfling **guards**) arrive within the hour from their base (area **F5** in **Chapter 4**). If combat ensues, Jabb hurls bottles at intruders, preferring to stay out of melee. If no customers are about, or he is injured to half his hit points, he assumes hybrid form and attacks. He tries to flee as a rat if reduced to 5 hit points or less. Gramp joins her beloved brother in combat, matching or complimenting his tactics.

Treasure: Jabb has a meat cleaver (as handaxe), hefty whip, short club, purse containing 34 sp, key to strongbox in bedroom (area **F17**). In his back pocket, Jabb has a note, written on a slip advertising a forthcoming auction (see **Handout 2** and the sidebar). At any given time, there are 3d12 cp, 2d6 sp and 1d12 gp in a small open till behind the bar.

FC7. The Hall

This is a cramped hallway, with a hatch opening to the bar.

The rooms show signs of fights, damage, and stains. At any time, 1d12 **commoners** are drinking in the ground floor (areas **F7–F10**).

FC8. The Snug

This is a plush, though still-damaged, chamber with leather chairs and a few ornaments.

It has a small pot-bellied stove with a pile of timber nearby. A narrow door stands beside it.

The back door gives access to the yard, and is frequently used by customers.

Treasure: A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check picks out a couple of objects on display: a clay jug with a glass top set with a large amethyst worth 50 gp, and a longsword in a scabbard decorated with silver wire, worth 25 gp, against the far wall.

FC9. The Mother's Bar

You behold a very rough and badly damaged bar room.

Named after a particularly infamous brand of local gin — Mother's Sobbing Ruin — this is the bar the gin sops and goodwives come to, to make noise. From time to time, entertainment happens herein: cockfighting, dice, or wrestling are the norm.

Development: The women who come in here are a terrifying bunch verbally, but not prone to fighting. If they see fighting they heckle, and certainly make bets, but otherwise only attempt to verbally lash troublemakers. The women have Charisma (Intimidation) skill +2, but back down if threatened.

FC10. The Backroom

This room is masked with the smell of cheap perfume and incense. A narrow, steep stair rises to the floor above. A pair of cheap, lewd statues of naked women stand to either side of the stair.

FC11. The Yard and Lockup

This area opens to a smelly yard that partly forms an open urinal with a small wooden lock up. An alley leads out of the yard into the streets beyond.

The lockup is locked with a padlock (DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to bypass). A hefty handcart sits within. The handcart is stored beside a large, wooden strongbox (large enough to admit a Medium creature at a push). The cart is locked with an average lock and chain (DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to bypass). The strongbox shows signs of being used to imprison someone, and a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the scuffs of boot leather, some scratches and, caught on a nail at the back, a child-sized leather boot strap. The rats use the handcart to take the choicer victims to BookTown and their contact, Rebecca Belladonna.

FC12. The Warmest Welcome

This room is drenched in cheap perfume, which does little to mask the other smells. The walls are covered in amateur frescoes showing carnal acts. Leather seats are drawn into viewing positions at various places, while a low table in the centre has a silver decanter with clay mugs and a bottle of wine. Manacles, rope, and gags, as well as strange masks, hang in various places throughout the room.

Customers are led here, and the women shown off for them to choose. The women are summoned by Jebb or his sister. The doors to each room are locked (DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to bypass), but the keys are in the locks. The manacles have keys in them.

Treasure: The decanter is poor but worth 35 gp.

FC13. The Stair

This stair rises even steeper than the last.

FC14. Bess

This dingy sparse room contains a bed and a single occupant.

Bess (N female human **commoner**) is a bearded lady of prodigious size, formerly a worker with the Circus Macabre. If released, Bess seeks out Long Lucy immediately. If allowed a more normal life, she thrives with the Circus.

FC15. Sister Gramp's Bedroom

A filthy bed dominates this chamber.

Gramp spends little time in her room, but it is littered with empty gin bottles, bones of past feasts, and other refuse. Gramp's beloved rat **Sarran** (**giant rat**) rat lurks in the room; it attacks anyone but Gramp who enters the room.

Treasure: Throughout the rubbish, and located with DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) checks (one for each character), are a bone earring set with a small garnet worth 25 gp, 29 cp, 13 sp. 9 gp, and a very finely made porcelain doll worth 25 gp.

FC16. Jabb's Room

This room has an unsettling quality. It could be the grime; it could be the caked bloodstains on the floor; it could be the stained bed. Regardless of the source, as you look you feel a clammy presence that you can't shake.

The revolting landlord lives in here. He spends much of his time abusing his employees.

Treasure: Jabb has hidden the gin house's take in a crude place behind the lath. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the hole and the fact that something is in it: a small, ornate box. The box is trapped with **poison darts** (refer to game manual). Within the box are 51 pp, a miniature gold and pearl perfume bottle worth 100 gp, a silver and brass pike gag worth 5 gp, a lacquer snuff box with gilt inlays worth 50 gp, and a pair of tinted spectacles with platinum ridges worth 125 gp.

FC17. Spare Chamber and Sickening Clues

This chamber is empty, its bare floorboards scrubbed clean.

The chamber shows signs of previous occupation. There are things scratched into walls, stains on the floor, and in one corner, a wicker basket. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies twelve names on the walls: most are women's names, but three are male names. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies that the walls have been painted with quicklime several times, and there may be dozens, perhaps even hundreds of names hidden beneath.

Treasure: The wicker basket is a kind of sick memento kept by Jabb; it contains personal belongings of his victims. It includes several hair combs, a fine frosted glass and silver perfume bottle worth 25 gp, a posy, a pair of dancer's booties, a paste brooch (*"All my love, G"*) worth 10 gp, and a trio of carved wooden animals.

As soon as the characters set eyes on the carved animals, they realize that they are identical to the carved animals made by the carpenter of Wicken, Arus Quodd, who made such animals for the village children. Each depicts a smiling animal. The three are unmistakably Quodd's work, and a sign that either Quodd, some children from Wicken, or at least someone who has had contact with them, has come this way. This development is detailed further in ***L2: Pound of Flesh***.

FC18. The Gorgon

The door to this chamber is locked (DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock).

This room is bare save for some blankets tossed on the floor.

The Cat's prize employee, the Gorgon, is locked in here. Testament to the twisted mind of her creator, Lady Grey (a surgeon-artist who appears in ***L2: Pound of Flesh***), the Gorgon is a sentient **lesser flesh golem**† designed to please. Although mercifully few are perverted enough to find the poor creation attractive, those who do pay very well. The Gorgon has a trio of beautiful faces sewn together, subtly angled so that when she turns, she faces her client with but one visage. Her body is voluptuous, but unnaturally so, her limbs engorged, her organs distended. Characters first seeing the Gorgon must make a DC 15 Constitution save or be sickened by her sorry state for 1d4 rounds. The Gorgon makes no attempt to attack, and simpers feebly when anyone enters the room. She has had enough beatings, and is horribly weakened by years of torment.

Development: Although she is horribly scarred and appears bestial, the Gorgon is sapient; her suffering has been atrocious at the hands of her tormentors, her creator Lady Grey, and Jabb. The Gorgon, who recalls her name was once Ivy, spent several weeks being remade by the vile Grey. She knows the name Lady Grey and that Grey had wererats working with her. She also remembers gravestones, but mercifully little else. How quickly and coherently she recalls these tidbits are left to you to pass to your players — she may be coherent, or she may be petrified.

FC19. The Attic Garret

The stair ends at a very broad attic. A wide, grimy window stretches across one part of the roof.

Chained to the central pillar in the attic is **Wen** (**wererat** permanently in hybrid form), sister of Jabb and Gramp. The pair use and abuse their unfortunate relative as their most revolting service. As Wen was afflicted by lycanthropy the process aborted itself, leaving her dragging a partially formed rat body with her. Though chained, Wen can reach and attack any part of the room. She has a trio of **giant rats** at her beck and call; these rats cause the customers little harm if Jabb is here, but attack anyone else who enters without such supervision.

Tactics Wen pretends to be compliant, slowly moving towards any who enter the chamber, afraid only if Jabb is there, before attacking relentlessly. During combat, she tries to use her bite attack; she may also try to use her chain as an instrument to grapple opponents, this gives her advantage on her grapple check. She cowers back to her pillar if reduced to 5 hit points or less but attacks again if attacked.

Uriah, A Warning from Death (South of the Filleted Cat)

Having been discovered as a spy, Uriah was overpowered and brought to the Cat, were he was briefly questioned and then taken to a point some 50 yards south of the Shrunken King's Court (area **FC4**). There, hung by chains, is the half-eaten corpse of a man. Even from just his bones and what little flesh is left, it is possible to see he was tall, and a close examination (DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check) reveals a swan tattoo on his neck. A further DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals two things: he was eaten alive by small teeth and, from the rictus frozen on what's left of his face, he died in enormous pain.

If the characters contact Eleanor and inform her of finding what they suspect to be Uriah's remains, she sneaks into Festival that night and greets the characters. She has a *potion of speak with dead* to question her unfortunate compatriot. Play out this encounter as a spooky end to events so far, and a prelude to the next stages of the adventure when it is the characters who are at risk of being brought back here and suffering a similar fate. Eleanor can ask 5 questions, and although samples are listed here, she is open to sensible suggestions from the characters:

Q: *Did you learn why our enemy is so strong?*
A: Yes
Q: *How is it that they are so strong?*
A: Because there are thousands of them
Q: *Where is the nest?*
A: The nest is Festival
Q: *How are they organized?*
A: They have a group, called the Family, and a Queen; a vast dark god who binds them through force
Q: *How can there be so many?*
A: They hide in plain sight; you are never more than 6 feet from a rat*

*A DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recalls that this last part is an old Blight adage.

Eleanor repeats the old Blight adage to herself, "you're never more than 6 feet from a rat," before releasing Uriah from his bonds with a prayer, and letting the river take his remains.

Concluding the Adventure

As the adventure moves on and reaches a conclusion, how do Gride, Ammos, and the clowns fit into events? Use your judgement to decide how quickly the wererats work out that the characters are spies (if they do at all), and how they act. Certainly, Ammos will not go crawling to his wicked father asking for help, but he should, if he has time, be able to gather at least another 2 **wererat** sneaks to send against the treacherous characters.

Alternately, the characters may take the battle to the rats and arrange an ambush; certainly, if they are on good terms with Long Lucy, she asks the characters to help her and the Circus Macabre escape — and the only way to do that is quickly. The wererats, she trusts, have less influence in other parts of the city, and she intends to hide from them in plain sight. Organizing an escape after defeating Ammos and Gride could make an exciting climax; perhaps the figure of Marren Grast is seen on the quayside as the characters slip across the water and into the smog. Regardless of how events pan out, if the Circus escapes from Festival, the performers are grateful to the characters. They promise to keep in touch in due course, once the Circus Macabre opens anew: a phoenix rising from the ashes!

In the end, the characters are going to have broken bread with one of the Family and subsequently betrayed him. Marren Grast has a very, very long memory and immediately broods upon the visitors who dared to mock him. If Ammos is not dead at this point, Marren has him killed and blames the characters, earning them the Enemy Penalty outlined below.

Hereafter Enemy Penalties

Using enemies as a penalty in your Blight campaign is discussed in **The Cyclopædia Infestarum: Part 4, Enemies**. Included here are two such penalties tailored for the ***Levee***.

Emily Grast

The half-sister of Ammos, Emily Grast, swears vengeance upon the characters, acts that are detailed in ***L2: Pound of Flesh***.

The Mites of Festival

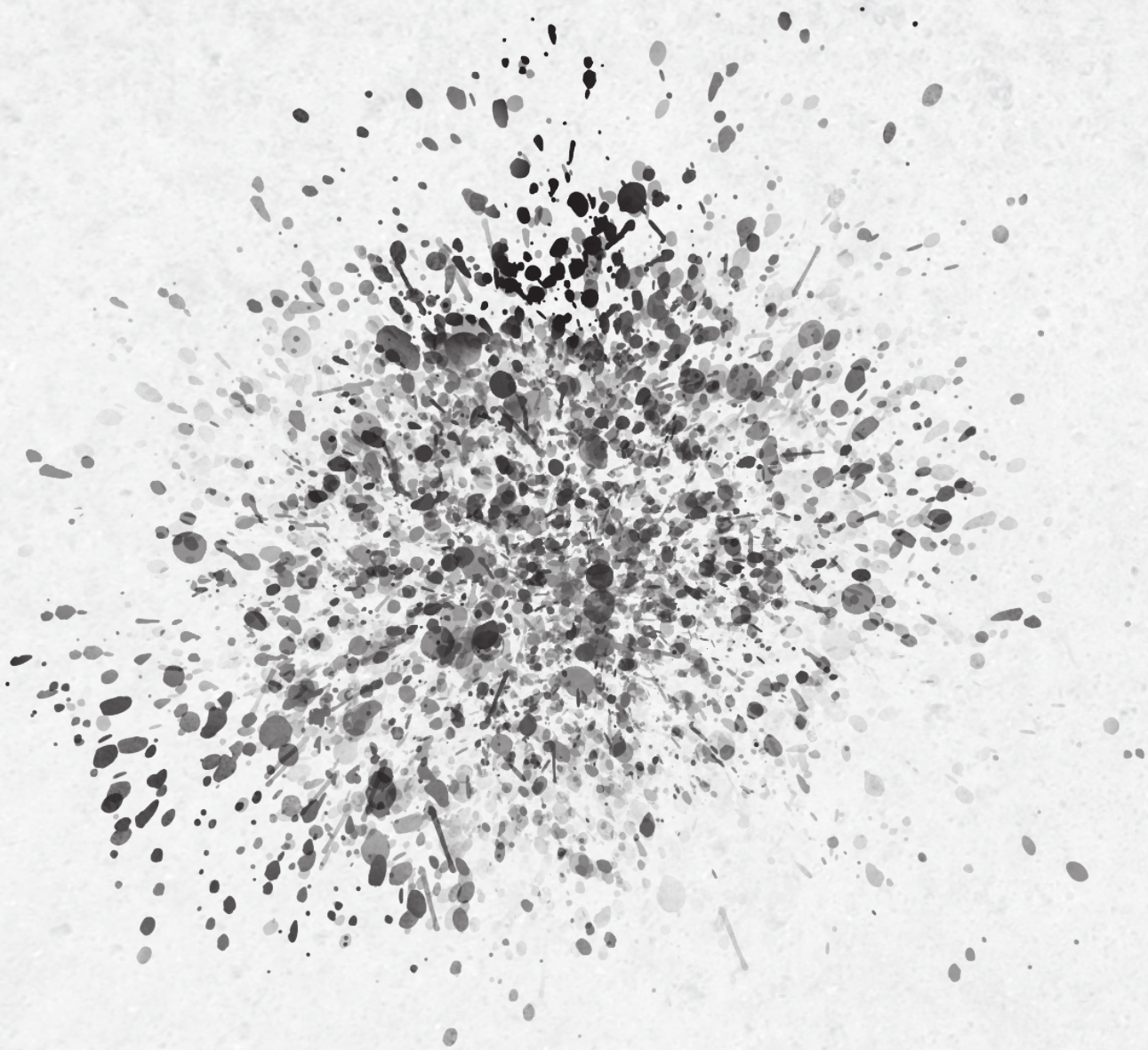
Unless the characters managed to extricate themselves from the situation with the Shrunken King by avoiding the encounter, or coming up with some plausible way to avoid conflict, the Mites of Festival also swear vengeance. This consequences of this are also covered in ***L2: Pound of Flesh***.

Perhaps less worrying is the enmity of the mites. If the characters killed their king, they swear revenge; if they released him honourably, the Shrunken King swears revenge for his captivity. Either way, a second Enemy Penalty is coming the characters' way to complement the furious scream of Marren Grast.

If the characters are successful, Eleanor thanks the characters for their help. She is sad at what they found out, but grateful for the knowledge. If the characters reveal the clues they have about connections to BookTown, she quizzes them further. The development of potential wererat spies in BookTown is worrisome, and she goes to do some talking. If they haven't done so already, she advises the characters to leave Festival as soon as they can. If the characters do not, feel free to have the wrath of Marren Grast begin to materialize; if the characters remain, they are likely to stay alive only for a short time longer.

A couple days later, Eleanor returns with an offer from the Thieves' Guild: If the characters investigate the connection between Festival and BookTown, they will receive 250 gp each. A further bounty of 50 gp per wererat head they bring back from BookTown is also offered.

If the characters do not confide in Eleanor, she starts sniffing around the characters' contacts and eventually digs up enough to suggest that something links BookTown with Festival. She says nothing about her inquiries, but NPCs such as Long Lucy may comment that she has been asking questions, saying she is a friend of the characters. Shortly thereafter, Eleanor returns to make her offer of employment with the Thieves' Guild.



Hereafter Appendices

Appendix A: Levee Campaign Quirks

Allow the players to choose a campaign quirk for their characters those provided below. You may use them in addition to their existing backgrounds or as a partial replacement for them. These traits represent their lives until this point; you may wish to modify them for older or younger characters accordingly. These quirks are included to give players an immediate association with Wicken, which by the time of the first adventure, has already ceased to be. The place was their home, and a happy home at that. If you prefer to use different methods of introduction, for example, playing out the initial attack upon the character's home by the Knights Occularis, then feel free to do so.

These campaign quirks are available to all races; the characters are assumed to have lived in or regularly visited Wicken for several years and to have developed a close relationship with the locals. It is a place they have been happy with and have enjoyed a good life.

Alman Artist: You spent many hours in Wicken's Church of St. Alman, helping Father Gromwell to paint scenes of celestial glory and listening to his stories of the afterlife. You gain proficiency with Artisan's tools (Painter's supplies) and advantage on Intelligence checks about the planes.

Alman Preacher: You spent many hours in Wicken's Church of St. Alman, absorbing Father Gromwell's religious stories that filled your head and heart with dreams of Heaven and Paradise. You gain a proficiency in Religion and advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks for oratory.

Ciderwright: Wicken's copious crop of apples always appeared in late summer or early autumn, and you became an expert at climbing the orchards to retrieve the choicest fruit. Working under the guidance of the local brewer, Tully Redmane, you also mastered the art of cider-making. You gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to climb, and gain proficiency in Artisan's tools (Brewer's supplies).

Grog's Snarer: You spent many hours with Wild Grog, Wicken's local poacher, learning how to set snares and trap game. Game was plentiful in Wicken, the foul air of the city unable to grasp at its forest and meadows. Creatures have disadvantage avoiding or escaping from Hunting Traps that you have set, and you get proficiency in Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Grog's Spotter: Your keen eyes aided Wild Grog, Wicken's local poacher, especially at night when hunting rabbits. Grog was a great story teller, and you spent happy hours listening to his stories of heroism and dragons. You gain a proficiency in Perception and advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks for oratory.

Grog's Trapper: You spent a lot of time with Wild Grog, Wicken's local poacher, who tracked with dogs and his pet pig, Olive. You have happy memories of the wild-haired giant of a man, laughing as he bagged rabbits and told wild stories of adventure at the campfire. You gain proficiency in Survival and creatures have disadvantage avoiding or escaping from Hunting Traps that you have set.

Wicken Farmer: You grew up and worked on a farm in Wicken. The land was fertile, the water clean, and the harvests were invariably good. Your farm thrived and, in time, became yours. You gain proficiency in Animal Handling and Nature.

Wicken Shepherd: Your family farmed sheep on the hills above Wicken. Life could be tough, especially in the winters, but it was rewarding. You gain proficiency in Animal Handling and Survival.

Wicken — A Side Trek

The Journey to Wicken

The characters are likely to want to return to their home to pick up clues as to why the raid occurred. They can do so at any time they wish but must leave the city. The village of Wicken lies 6 miles from Castorhage, and occupying some meadowland to the north of the Capitol. The characters can either go on foot or hire horses for the journey. The characters know that the countryside about the city can be dangerous, but also know the route of footpaths and byways well enough to make the journey with checks or maps. This side trek is designed to be difficult for characters of levels 1 and should be adjusted for higher levels (see Sidebar "Three Ogres?".

What Happened at Wicken

The characters were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Under direct orders from Knights Occularis, the attack was brutally effective. Most of the village's people were taken, some killed and taken for magical questioning and some were questioned on the spot and then burnt to leave no trace. Now Wicken is a haunting ruin; grasses have grown over the last few weeks, but cannot hide the destruction, which has been officially attributed to a rampaging group of ogres.

Arriving at Wicken

Wicken General Features

Many of the buildings were destroyed, but those few notable remnants or partial ruins are detailed below. All other buildings are little more than rubble showing signs of violent fires, although the odd object remains incongruously intact: a stool, a table, a child's toy, a holy symbol. Within the village, the river is deep, but its current is gentle (DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check to navigate).

When the characters arrive at Wicken, read or paraphrase the following description.

> You have arrived home, but it is not a village that greets you; it is a ruin. The church is a black shell, and the standing stones about it lean or have been defaced. Nearby, the Smiling Pig, the village's inn, lies in ruins, and each house seems to have been gutted. Only a small group of thatched cottages near the river survive, and they appear to be in danger of collapse. Nearby, a wooden bridge crossed the river; this too has been burnt, and just beyond that is a huge black circle marking the ground. Time and nature is already taking over the tended fields, and soon, the village will be little more than a name and a memory.

There are 3 **ogres** that still lurk in the village. They spend the daylight hours sleeping in the church (**W1**) and the night hunting in the forests nearby. Characters making a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check are sure that ogres have never dared to come so close to the city before. The ogre trio was *dominated* by the Knights Occularis, and the attack on Wicken was their doing. There rest of their tribe fled, chased by knights (who came to "rescue" the village). Only these three have remained. They have seen no one in the past few weeks.

Tactics: The ogres aren't bright; if encountered while sleeping the characters can sneak into the church and may surprise them. Similarly, at night the ogres are out hunting. They keep relatively close to each other to avoid accidentally attacking one another but can easily be duped.

Treasure: The Knights Occularis did very little looting, and each ogre has a sack of goodies it has collected among the ruins. Among the clothing and pretty things of no worth like shells, tankards, and combs are a few items of value or interest. The first ogre has 97 sp, a small silver mirror, a fancy churchwarden pipe with silver trimmings worth 30 gp, a pound of tobacco, and a small pearl and a large silver holy symbol of Mother Grace worth 50 gp. The second ogre has a plain silver wedding ring worth 35 gp and a fancy fiddle with a gold wolf figure on its scroll worth 75 gp. With a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check, the characters remember seeing a neighbour, Call Pike, regularly play that fiddle; he never let his beloved fiddle out of his sight. The final ogre's sack has nothing but wool and rooting potatoes in it.

Development: The *dominate monster* is no longer in effect on the ogres, and they have odd memories they cannot quite reconcile. So, they ignore them or bang their heads against a rock until they go away. If captured and successfully questioned, they can be forced to recall soldiers that seemed like friends even though they hated them and hearing people screaming but little else of coherence. If the ogres' bodies are examined, a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that each show evidence of being manacled, but no trace of the manacles remains (the ogres were manacled and in a large prison wagon when they were brought here).

Three Ogres?

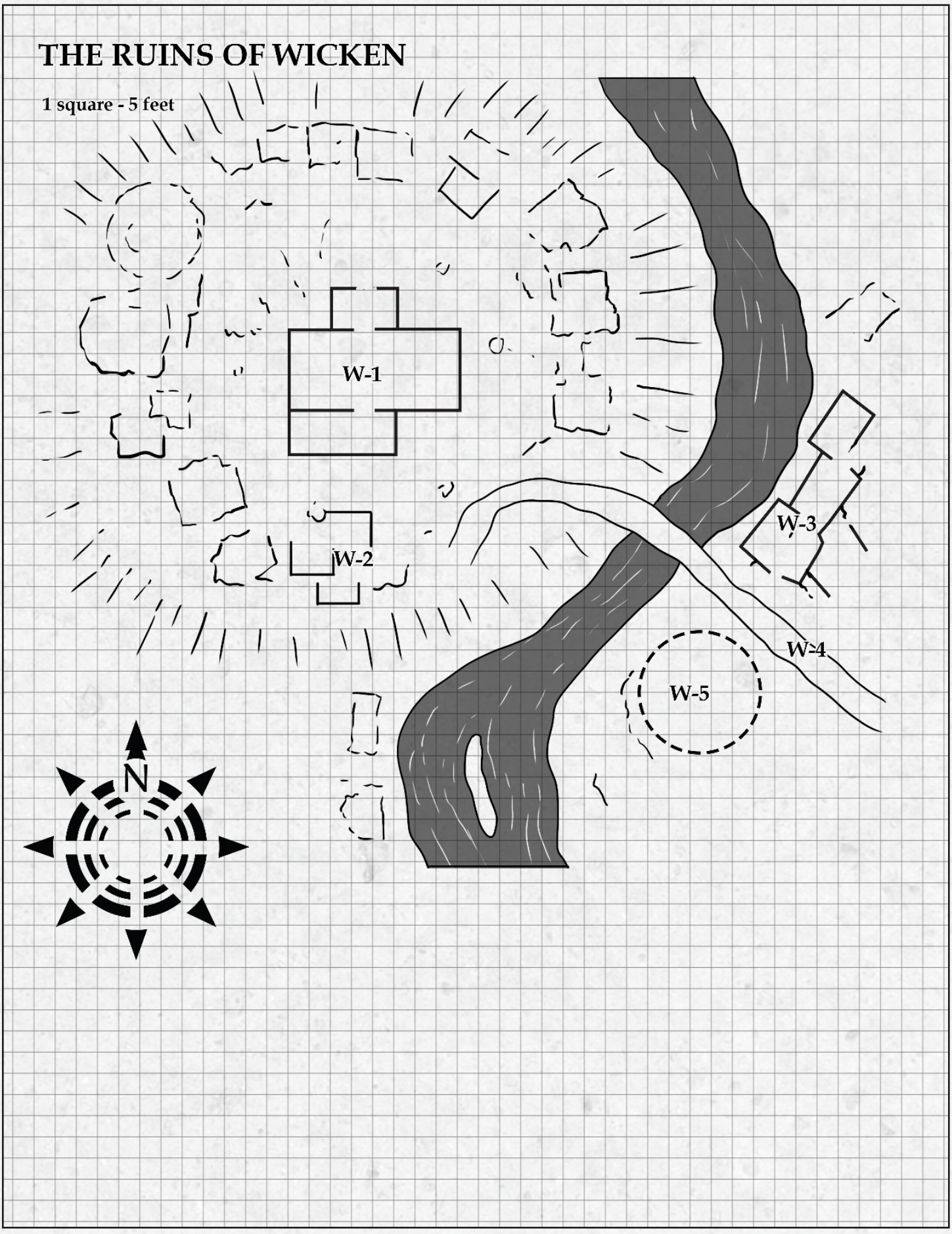
The encounter at Wicken can be hard but can also be avoided entirely or dealt with at a distinct advantage by cunning play from the players. The side trek is deliberately tough, pushing the characters to try to find out what happened to their village at virtually any cost.

W1. The Church of Saint Alman

> The church is now a shell. Once a magnificent iron candelabrum with silver figures hung over the main church, its panelled walls adorned with newly created images of angels painted by the loving hand of the parish priest.

The church is now home to 3 **ogres** (see **Arriving at Wicken** above). The empty blackened shell stinks of their recent occupation. The entire place has been gutted by fire; the tiles above have collapsed into the shell, and the lead flashing has melted with the intensity of the heat. If any of the characters make a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check they can recall exactly how the church looked before its destruction. In this case, read or paraphrase the following description.

> The interior of the church was an airy space, prone to being invaded by bats. It had plain windows but was alive with colour, Father Gromwell brought in wooden panels and spent his time here painting, always angels. These angels were guiding people into Heaven, a land of pleasures, a garden of


THE RUINS OF WICKEN
1 square - 5 feet
W-1
W-2
W-3
W-4
W-5
N

joy. In fact, Gromwell never finished the paintings, but they remained after he left several months ago to be replaced as parish priest by his protégé Enoch Nettle.

Characters cannot see anything of the fine angelic figures that once stood here. Surely some remnant or scrap of the paintings' panels would remain even if the place was burnt. Certainly, some sections of pew have survived.

Treasure: A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check locates the charred remnants of the candelabrum. The silver has also been melted, but if gathered there is just under 10 lbs. of silver. The characters also find a single scorched, but intact, prayer book of Mother Grace hymns worth 10 gp.

W2. The Smiling Pig

Once, the Pig rang with laughter and the smell of cider; now it too is a shell, its walls in danger of collapse, its sign scorched so that the Pig now looks like it is breathing charred fire.

Searching the Pig is risky. Characters entering the ruins must make a DC 10 Dexerity save to avoid causing a collapse. Those caught within during a collapse must make a DC 12 Dexterity save or take 7 (2d6) damage and be buried. Those who make a successful save can make DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) checks to discover a silver button with a strange cabalist symbol on it — a mystical eye superimposed on a horned disc. A DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) or DC 23 Intelligence (History) check reveals this to be a button from the uniform of a Knight Occularis.

W3. Leaning Ruins

A trio of thatched cottages lean here. They have been partly burned, but the fire appears to have stopped suddenly. They look precarious.

These ruins, like those of the Smiling Pig, are prone to collapse, and those searching them must make a save as above to avoid causing a collapse. characters investigating these ruins find the remains of normalcy: meals are set but scorched and rotting, a crib is by an open fireplace but is empty, charred clothes are hung to dry. The fire in these hovels appears to have burned itself out before completely consuming them.

W4. Strange Tracks

A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check reveals a set of curiously deep ruts on the road and crusted wheel marks on the remnants of the collapsed bridge. These ruts were caused by the wagon the Occularis brought the ogres in on. Characters making a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check determine that the ruts are from a wagon that entered, stopped outside the church and then departed the way it came. The wagon was clearly so heavy that the ruts have yet to be washed away by rain.

W5. The Pit

The ground here is broken by a wide pit. It is shallow, no more than a foot or two in depth and holds many charred pieces of wood among its ashes.

A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the characters to identify a few things. Firstly, there are the lower burnt stumps of half a dozen stakes in the centre of the pit. Secondly, the pit also holds the charred remains of human bones. Thirdly, there is a melted mass near one of the stakes that appears to be composed of many melted gold and silver rings. In total, the precious metal content is worth about 120 gp.

The metal is from wedding rings and personal jewellery taken from every villager and placed in the pyre to destroy the evidence. The stakes are where a half dozen locals were questioned on site and then punished for their lack of information.

Nearby Settlements

The nearest village to Wicken is Long Stanton, a rough hamlet of hill farmers some 5 miles farther north, although the characters are aware of its fearsome reputation and dislike of strangers. The next nearest is Fen Ditton, some 10 miles east.

Long Stanton

Long Stanton is indeed unfriendly, and even as the characters approach, local children run away screaming about strangers; they've heard there are ogres about. As the characters approach the village 3 hefty men emerge, 2 armed with pitchforks, 1 with a scythe (**bandits,** armed as noted). They want nothing to do with strangers, and tell the characters to be on their way. The men are hostile, and unless the characters manage to make them friendly they attack until the characters leave. The men back down if wounded in any way, enabling the characters to question them. The locals say they saw fires but did nothing to assist, being more concerned with looking after their own. They heard that the village had been razed by ogres, and they've heard there are more in the area.

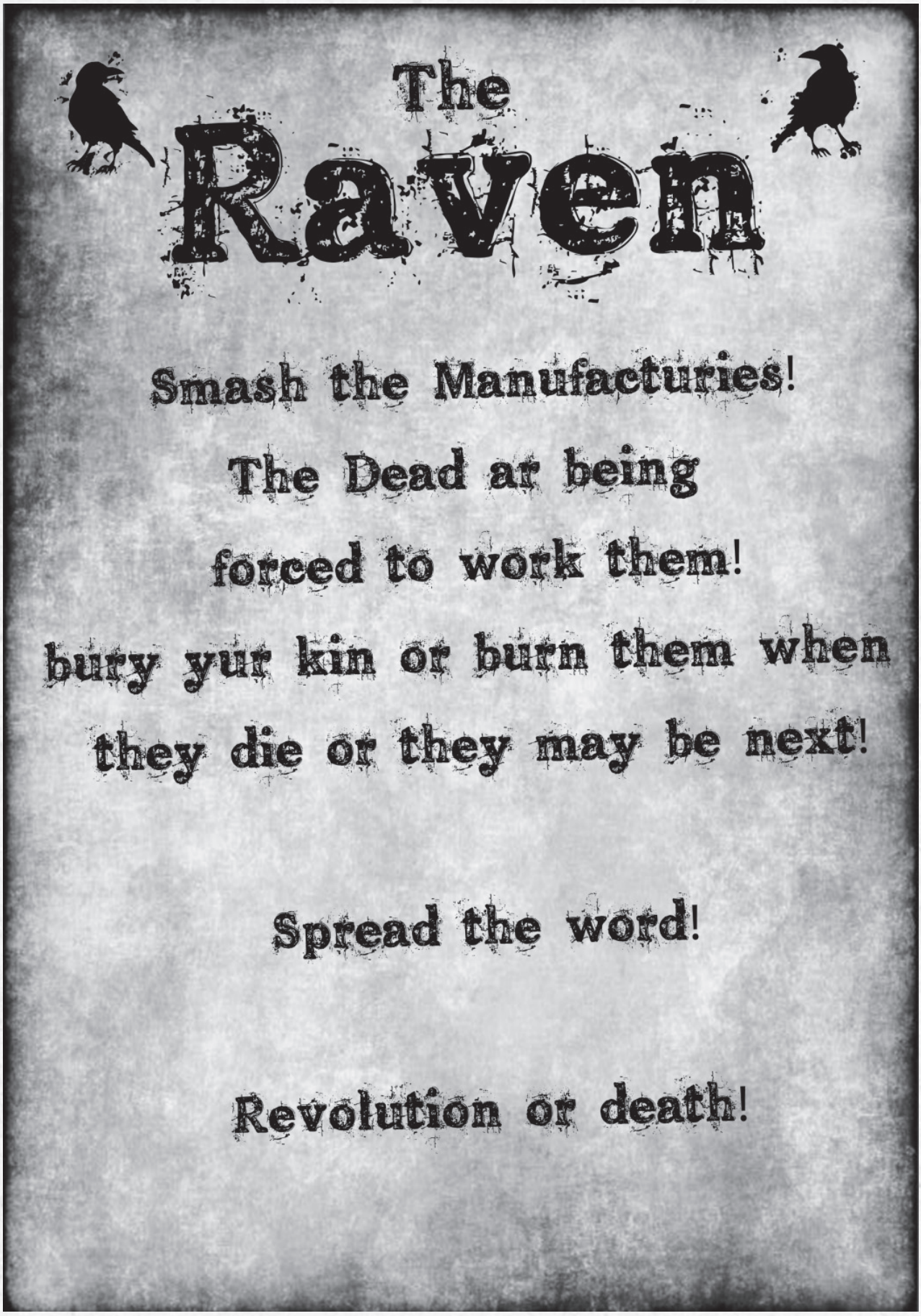
Fen Ditton

Fen Ditton is friendlier, but farther away. If the characters venture to this small hamlet of sheep farmers, they hear the story that ogres attacked Wicken and burned it. The locals organized a force to help as soon as they saw the flames but as they approached were told to go back by soldiers who wore crimson uniforms with a strange arcane-looking eye symbol. They do not know who these soldiers were, but they were clearly too late to save Wicken. A DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals that the red sash is part of the uniform of the Knights Occularis while a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) confirms the same of the described symbol.

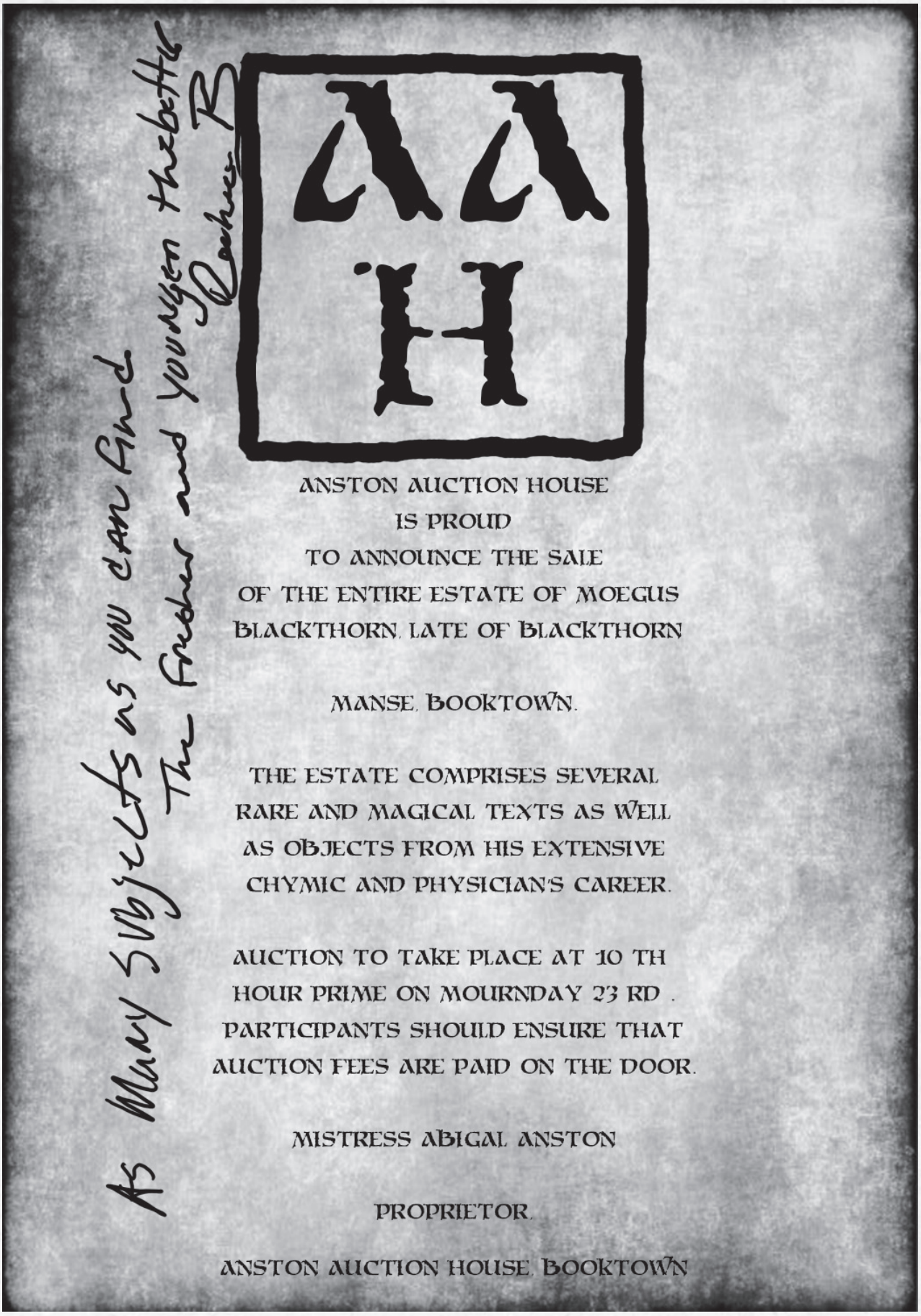
The Fen Ditton locals held a wake for the folk of Wicken 3 weeks ago and offered prayers for their souls.

Where to Go Next?

Be prepared for your characters to ask questions about their kin and to start looking for them. The ***Levee*** assumes they will do so, but even if they don't there are others from the area out looking for them.


The
Raven
Smash the Manufacturies!
The Dead ar being
forced to work them!
bury yur kin or burn them when
they die or they may be next!
Spread the word!
Revolution or death!

Handout 2


As Many Objects as you can find
The Grabber and Youngest Hezbeth
Cashier B
ANSTON AUCTION HOUSE
IS PROUD
TO ANNOUNCE THE SALE
OF THE ENTIRE ESTATE OF MOEGUS
BLACKTHORN, LATE OF BLACKTHORN
MANSE, BOOKTOWN.
THE ESTATE COMPRISES SEVERAL
RARE AND MAGICAL TEXTS AS WELL
AS OBJECTS FROM HIS EXTENSIVE
CHYMIC AND PHYSICIAN'S CAREER.
AUCTION TO TAKE PLACE AT 10 TH
HOUR PRIME ON MOURNDAY 23 RD .
PARTICIPANTS SHOULD ENSURE THAT
AUCTION FEES ARE PAID ON THE DOOR.
MISTRESS ABIGAL ANSTON
PROPRIETOR,
ANSTON AUCTION HOUSE, BOOKTOWN



L2: Pound of Flesh

By Richard Pett



Introduction

The characters have escaped confinement and death aboard Her Majesty's Prison Hulk *Redemption* thanks to the aid of mysterious benefactor, Eleanor Shank**.** Repaying Eleanor for her help, the characters uncovered a nest of wererats at Festival, a district of the city, and eventually discovered that the island was infested with lycanthropes, some of whom they made enemies of. Escaping the town, the characters are now recuperating before their next move and perhaps puzzling over the destruction of their home village …

Adventure Summary

It begins with an auction.

The characters have a name from their adventure in Festival — Rebecca Belladonna — and learn that the woman named is often found at auctions at the Anston Auction House in BookTown. Attending an auction, the characters have a chance to spend some of their hard-earned cash on bargains whilst locating Mistress Belladonna and following her to her home in BookTown. The characters then have the option of tackling the adventure in different ways: They can befriend Belladonna, and/or ransack her house for clues, or coerce her into revealing her sponsors. The woman runs a secret special auction, a flesh auction supplying the golem-stitchers and homunculus wives of BookTown's City of Golems parish. Her partners are a pair of cadaver snatchers called Sprat and Marrow.

The characters learn that not only do the mites and wererats in Festival supply bodies, but that the trade is endemic, and thriving here in BookTown. They learn that the mites and wererats work with Sprat and Marrow, who work closely with the Family to supply an infamous homunculi wife called Lady Grey, one of their best customers. Grey turns her flesh into art, claiming to be inspired by an angel of death that wields a scythe. She created the carnal golem the Gorgon that the characters found in the Filleted Cat in the previous adventure.

The characters can take several options here: They may infiltrate the auction, alert the Guild to its foul work, or they may ignore that plot thread and search instead for Lady Grey via Sprat and Marrow, who operate a rag and bone business as a cover for their actions and who have mite and wererat accomplices in their home high up in BookTown's upper Junkyard parish. The battle here takes place in a garret over the streets below, with narrow rickety plank bridges and perilous drops at all sides.

Lady Grey lives in a crumbling manse in the City of Golems overlooking the great BookTown Cemetery, a place filled with revolting creatures created by the Lady, who has fallen into visionary madness and who, like Father Gromwell, is obsessed with visions of an angel. Grey is a follower of the Beautiful, and is obsessed with the doctrine of the Panacea. Grey is a self-awoken follower of the angel whom she sees in dreams and nightmares, but from her mad paintings and living art the characters begin to discover that this angel heralds a cleansing of the city that threatens to unmake everyone in the Blight.

Beginning the Adventure

If you're running ***The Levee***, you simply need to keep track of where the characters are heading at the end of ***L1: Hereafter*** (logically BookTown — but not all players follow obvious paths). The characters may already be motivated enough by the clues they picked up in the previous adventure, or they may need a gentle push as detailed below. Remember that the date of the auction detailed below is set, and attendance will be of great help in unravelling clues. If the characters do not take this easy option, consider them having to infiltrate some of the seedier friends of Rebecca across BookTown before they reach her.

You are strongly recommended to run the Dreams of Wicken side-trek provided at the end this adventure before starting the adventure proper.

Alternate Beginnings

You may wish to run ***L2: Pound of Flesh*** as a stand-alone adventure or as part of your own campaign. The adventure has some strong reasons for entering the fray, not the least of which is the vanishing of people and the potential links between the wererats of Festival and parties in BookTown. Whilst murders are common, child taking is not, and the local constabulary could get involved. A kind-hearted constable may even take it upon himself to investigate the vanishings (Inspector Hogan Muncy from ***TB2: Horror in the Sinks*** and ***TB3: Bloody Jack*** might be a logical choice if this adventure occurs before the end of the latter), perhaps having personally braved events in the previous adventure and gathered clues. However, he's not that tough and looks to friends, or those he can pay, to help him.

You might also wish to consider the characters being sponsored by families who have had their children taken or who have been pointed to the characters by a specialised investigator such as Salubrius MacKenzie (see ***TB5: The Children of the Harvest*** for more information). Working for the Lowfolk of the city does not pay well, but in so grim a place everyone is looking for folk heroes and not every reward can be counted in coinage.

The dreams give the characters a short side adventure showing them their previous lives in Wicken. It is important to establish a strong link to the characters' former home, and this sequence is one of several side-treks that appear in ***The Levee*** to assist with this.

If you are running this adventure as a separate adventure, a few ideas for its introduction are detailed in the sidebox.

Media: Inspirations Behind L2: Pound of Flesh

Grab yourself some popcorn, switch your TV to hi-fi stereo sound, throw a tape in the VCR for these three movies (because apparently, you live in 1985 or something), and treat yourself to some fine horror as inspiration to set the mood for the gruesome events of *Pound of Flesh*.

Frankenstein (1931)
Revenge of Frankenstein (1958)
Isolation (2005)



Part One: Rebecca Belladonaa

Eleanor Shank continues to flit around in the shadows of these initial adventures. She is a filcher in the ranks of the Guild (see **Appendix C** below) and is essentially keeping up with the doings of the characters so that she can report back to her benefactors, but she is not following them. She may be aware through the characters of the situation at BookTown, and if necessary you can use her to suggest that the longer the characters leave things, the more folk will likely go missing. You can also play on the Wicken association, reminding the players that in the last adventure (if they did so), they found toys from children at Wicken in the home of the perverted Jabb at the Filleted Cat Gin House in order to inspire them into action if they're finding themselves a bit phlegmatic about what to do.

The main figure behind this Adventure Chapter, however, is the veiled Rebecca Belladonna.

The Anston House Auction

This is location **B1** in Chapter 3 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***. Abigail Anston (N female **commoner**), now in her 80s, still runs her auction house. She has lost neither her wits nor her biting sarcasm. Characters wishing to obtain information about the auction house can ask around, attempting Charisma checks (one per character) to determine what they find out. ,Results of these checks are provided below.

Anston Auction House Gossip

DC	Information Obtained
45	Mistress Abigail Anston runs her auction house and has made a fortune from it. Her niece Rachel Nightshade has now taken over the day-to-day running from the infamous 86-year-old auctioneer.
8	The House is further infamous for its terrible traps. Stories tell of rooms within rooms within rooms, and of the possibility that some thieves still walk the endless trapped corridors in a state of undeath. Occasionally, stories emerge from the Guild about thieves who have tried their luck and never were seen again.
10	Auctions take place every month, and incredible bargains can sometimes be had. Not everyone wants everything that goes up for sale, and rumours continue of chests of potions, tomes of arcane magic, and magic armour and weapons to be had for only few shekels.
15	Some say bluff and a cool head are all the talents needed at auctions, but they don't necessarily say exactly how those should be used.
20	Rumour has it that Abigail has a **naga** of some kind lurking in her undercellars.

Arriving at the Auction House

When the characters arrive at the auction house, read or paraphrase the following description

> You arrive at an enormous building, with countless extensions in different styles giving this warehouse-sized place an air of panic. The chaotic place runs to a dozen different styles and has half a dozen entrances. As your eyes take in its wings and towers, you begin to think it is more like a village than a building.

The adventure assumes the characters simply come along to the auction and take part; however, they may wish to case the place first. If so, allow them to do so but bear in mind that there are many guards (N male human **guard**). These guards are extremely alert because the house is full of valuables, and their employer is well known for her propensity to hire and fire at a moment's thought. If the characters are too obvious in their observation (Stealth check opposed to the guards' passive Perception), the guards contact Watch Captain Clegg (N male human **veteran**) at the BookTown Watch Tower (**B28**) to report any suspicious behaviour. Thereafter, extra constables patrol the streets hereabouts looking for unsavoury characters. If necessary, the guards of the auction house even take matters into their own hands. They have no qualms about killing burglars, and the owner would back them up if they had to do so.

The Auction

Rules for running an auction are provided under **Running Auctions** in Chapter 3 of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***, so feel free to use them here as lots come up on the block. The characters can participate if they choose, but their true purpose is to meet Rebecca Belladonna. The characters may be looking for a woman wearing a veil or mask. If they have to resort to asking questions, they can do so only before or after the auction as doing so during bidding is considered a breach of decorum and results in being escorted from the premises.

Belladonna keeps to herself, and the characters need a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, to succeed in identifying her through the staff or patrons here. If they are threatening to anyone while asking around , the person being questioned walks away and warns others of the characters, increasing the DC by 5 in future attempts. The characters can learn little about Rebecca save that she is known to be an artist of dubious ability who rarely visits the auction house (she almost always does so in disguise). If they need to, the characters can use their cunning and magic to get her to announce herself as detailed below.

Only run those parts of the auction directly involving the characters. When the characters arrive for the auction, read or paraphrase the following description:

> The auction house's interior is vast, and looks to be less than a quarter full. Perhaps the esteemed Moegus Blackthorn, late of Blackthorn Manse, BookTown, didn't have much of interest

after all. People here vary from eccentrics in grubby attire to bookish men and women to shifty-looking characters who look more like rag and bone men than collectors.

The items available on the block are detailed below, along with the other auction participants. The items these bidders are interested in are identified by ,the top price they are willing to pay. The maximum price is the simple rules' price; if the characters bid it, they win the item. Play the auction as detailed as you wish; you may even have characters bidding against each other. Objects can be inspected for up to an hour before the auction, but security is tight. Items can be identified and appraised in the usual way, but removing objects from the room is not allowed.

There are twenty-two lots in all; add, vary, or take some out as you wish.

The Participants

(A) Anonymous Bidder (unknown, with Wisdom 12)
(B) Braffen Gronange (LE male street dwarf **apprentice mage**, with Wisdom 13)
(C) Colonel H. Shortstone (LN male gnome **noble**, with Wisdom 6)
(F) Fawley Rebworn (N female human **priestess**, Great Coven member, with Wisdom 15)
(I) Irthur Remotant (N male human **mage**, with Wisdom 10)
(L) Lady Alice Hathaway (LN female human **noble**, with Wisdom 14)
(M) Meliot Grange (LN male human **commoner**, with Wisdom 11)
(T) Thomas Winkle (NG male human **apprentice mage**, with Wisdom 7)

The Lots

Lot 1

An alchemist's laboratory, used but showing no obvious defects or damage, stocked with chymics as new.

Start 100 gp; **Increments** 25 gp
I Max price 250 gp
C Max price 300 gp
A Max price 250 gp

Lot 2

A pair of wands, believed to be a *wand of magic missiles* and a *wand of magic detection*. Both wands are fashioned from walnut and engraved in images of fires.

Wand of magic missiles (non-recharging, with 14 charges), *wand of magic detection* (normal use of charges)

Start 100 gp; **Increments** 50 gp
I Max price 1,400 gp
A Max price 1,250 gp
T Max price 1,450 gp

Lot 3

A library of 14 arcane tomes, not known to contain any true arcane writings.

The books weigh 35 lbs. They may be useful in large research endeavors, but do not convey any game benefits in terms of ordinary adventuring.

Start 100 gp; **Increments** 25 gp
I Max price 200 gp
A Max price 200 gp
T Max price 175 gp

Lot 4

A travelling trunk containing all 11 volumes of *Waterthan's Treatise on Magic*. The tomes are known to contain true arcane spells.

The books weigh 25 lbs., and contained within the treatise are the following spells: *command*, *colour spray*, *disguise self*, *phantasmal force*, *blur*, *magic mouth* and *invisibility*.

Start 200 gp; **Increments** 40 gp
B Max price 440 gp
A Max price 520 gp
T Max price 400 gp

Lot 5

The Blackthorn Family Axe, a fine-hafted battleaxe of high quality, little used, and thought to date from the early 15th century. It has an engraving of a circle of thorns and flowers.

This battleaxe comes with a calf-leather shoulder sling and whetstone.

Start 100 gp; **Increments** 20 gp
C Max price 180 g
M Max price 200 gp
A Max price 180 gp

Lot 6

Blackthorn's travelling barge. The barge can be viewed on the dock entrance of the auction house. With a keel of 60 feet and a beam of 10 feet, the barge is divided into living and sleeping cabins. Although not thought to be ocean worthy, the barge has been inspected by an officer of the Guild of Master Shipwrights and found to be watertight. Blackthorn is known to have made several voyages upriver to friends' estates using this barge.

Essentially a keelboat, a Bilge's *narrowboat* is a reliable (if slow) means of transport on the city's canals or upon the Great Lyme River.

Start 200 gp; **Increments** 100 gp
C Max price 600 gp
L Max price 500 gp
A Max price 500 gp
T Max price 400 gp

Lot 7

Blackthorn's writing desk. A magnificent mahogany desk with roll top and an integral writing set.

This desk could be re-sold immediately for 500 gpEare

Start 100 gp; **Increments** 10 gp
I Max price 180 gp
B Max price 200 gp
A Max price 150 gp

Lot 8

A trio of trunks containing a variety of alchemical and arcane ephemera.

Amongst the trunks' more wild and fanciful texts is one simple pamphlet that has a series of older pages folded within, which a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check locates, either after the book is purchased or when the characters examine it before the auction. The older pages are a trio of *spell scrolls* with the spells *comprehend languages*, *feather fall* and *see invisibility* (all at level 4). The books themselves are worth little more than 25gp in total.

Start 50 gp; **Increments** 5 gp
I Max price 75 gp
B Max price 100 gp
A Max price 80 gp

Lot 9

Blackthorn's travelling writing set. A fine writing case made of mahogany with an integral writing set.

The case weighs 8 lbs, and is worth 200 gp.

Start 50 gp; **Increments** 5 gp
I Max price 75 gp
A Max price 90 gp

Lot 10

Ominis Arcane: The Book of Sinister Pacts (High Boros translation) by the Pharaoh Amunenhat I. This translation of the infamous book is one of only 200 copies known to exist. It is an ancient treatise from old Khemit detailing pacts with conjured creatures.

Characters making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check have heard of the infamous tome, said to be replete with necromancy spells. The book contains the following spells: *chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *blindness/deafness*, *speak with dead,* and *animate dead.*

Start 300 gp; **Increments** 50 gp
I Max price 600 gp
B Max price 500 gp
T Max price 550 gp

Lot 11

The Contents of the Blackthorn Armory: the contents have been used, and consist of a suit of half-plate, two suits of leather armour (one of which is +1), a trio of halberds (one of which is silvered), two heavy crossbows, a case of 200 crossbow bolts (5 are silvered), and a boxed, unassembled ballista.

The ballistae requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence check to assemble.

Start 200 gp; **Increments** 50 gp
C Max price 1,480 gp
M (Max price 1,520 gp
A Max price 1,400 gp

Lot 12

A spellbook, bound in what is believed to be the skin of a skum or sahuagin.

The small spellbook contains the following spells: *charm person*, *burning hands*, *stoneskin*, *darkness, heroism, protection from energy,* and *suggestion*.

Start 300 gp; **Increments** 30 gp
I Max price 480 gp
B Max price 690 gp
T Max price 420 gp

Lot 13

His lordship's wardrobe consists of 7 noble outfits, mostly in his lordship's beloved magenta, all worn but of high quality, tailored by Wadkin and Chubb of the Artists' Quarter.

Value of the lot is 160 gp.

Start 100 gp, **Increment** 10 gp
M Max price 150 gp
A Max price 150 gp

Lot 14

A rarity, a wondrous item known to have been in the family for three decades, its magic is still in full effect — a *hat of disguise*. This top hat is of a type any gentleman might wear, but it is able through arcane wonderment to alter your appearance and its own. Magic such as this is rarely auctioned these days, and opportunities are only occasional.

Start 500 gp; **Increments** 100 gp
I Max price 1,000 gp
F Max price 1,600 gp
M Max price 700 gp
T Max price 600 gp

Lot 15

A case of magic ephemera. The 20-pound case contains alembics, bellows, funnels, kettles, phials, tongs, wire, and other objects. These objects have little value in themselves but are of intrinsic value to any magical researcher.

Start 50 gp; **Increments** 5 gp
B Max price 70 gp
T Max price 60 gp

Lot 16

A permanent unseen servant bound to an amulet made of a pig's shinbone. The servant has known to be in the family for at least five generations, and has served loyally. Now that the Blackthorn line is ended, it is looking for a new master. It is here; I can assure you ...

Start 250 gp; **Increments** 50 gp
I Max price 1,350 gp
F Max price 1,300 gp
T Max price 1,300 gp

Lot 17

A clock in a case, said to have been made by the great Hauf of Barrundia. The clock comes in its own ironbound carry case and features a trio of Blight monkey skull figures that cry out the hour.

The clock weighs 10 lbs. and is worth 500 gp.

Start 200 gp; **Increments** 25 gp
C Max price 350 gp
L Max price 500 gp
A Max price 300 gp

Lot 18

His lordship's horse, a gelded Shire thought to be in the region of eight years old. The creature comes with tack, saddle, and a suit of leather barding. It is called Spirit.

,This is a warhorse, combat trained, but with a twist. AtWhen the clock strikes midnight it turns into a bear for 5 seconds, then returns to its normal form.

Start 1000 gp; **Increments** 100 gp
C Max price 1,500 gp
A Max price 1,300 gp

Lot 19

His lordship's selection of tribal artefacts including a score of masks, some two-dozen fetishes, and a collection of other objects including tribal weaponry.

The objects are curiosities mainly from southern Libynos and worth about 300 gp, but are otherwise mundane.

Start 50 gp; **Increments** 10 gp
C Max price 80 gp
A Max price 130 gp

Lot 20

Three tea chests full of historical tomes, some of which are thought to be of considerable age.

The tomes are curious and weigh 50 lbs. total.

Start 50 gp; **Increments** 10 gp
I Max price 80 gp
A Max price 130 gp

Lot 21

The box is the size of a wardrobe and made of steel covered in lacquer depicting swans in flight. A larger iron puzzle ring sits at the centre of the single door. The puzzle ring has six rings of six symbols in a row, and only through the correct combination is the box opened. Figuring out the puzzle requires a DC 20 Intelligence check and 24 hours of work.

An exquisite example of a Xi'en puzzle cabinet, the wardrobe has been used by his lordship to store valuables and has been subsequently emptied. The cabinet weighs 100 lbs. and is worth 1,200 gp.

Start 600 gp; **Increments** 100 gp
C Max price 1,300 gp
L Max price 1,000 gp
A Max price 1,000 gp



Lot 22

The final lot, Blackthorn manse, the Folio, BookTown. This twelve-room manor house set on three storeys is set within an enclosed garden and has a present occupying staff of three.

If your players show an interest in the building, it can be viewed, and if you wish to detail it further, use the basics detailed above to do so. Staff are loyal. The manor is worth 48,000 gp

Start 16,000 gp; **Increments** 2000 gp
L Max price 44,000 gp)
M Max price 36,000 gp

Rebecca Belladonna at the Auction

Belladonna arrives just as the auction starts; she's wearing a black veil. If the characters are looking for someone with such attire, they see her instantly. If she sees someone she expects, she comes over to them to talk; if not, she is cautious of people claiming to be friends of associates and is instantly on her guard; she'll escape if she can and risk upsetting her benefactors in the Family.

The homunculi wife is clever but can be duped by something as simple as calling out her name (in which case she reflexively looks at whoever said it before realizing her mistake and quickly looking away) or through spells such as *charm person*.

When Rebecca is first spotted, read the following description.

A tall slender woman with very pale skin, dressed in a black lace dress, and wearing a veil, she carries a fan and leans upon a cane with a cockroach-head handle.

If Rebecca leaves and the characters follow her through the streets, if she is not aware of them they need only make a single successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to follow her back to Feckle Library (below) However, if the check of any character is below 5, they have made their interest too obvious and Rebecca flees, as detailed under **Less-Subtle Tactics**.

Less-Subtle Tactics

If Rebecca becomes aware that the characters' intentions are malicious, she tries to flee, and because BookTown is a busy place, and she tries to weave through the crowd, tumbling past stalls and people. The characters can attempt to pursue, and might be able to catch her with a *dash* action. Rebecca will also attempt to *dash*, but there is a chance she will collide with someone in the crowd (the same chance exists for the character(s) chasing her). Those in pursuit of her should make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to determine if they do collide with someone. You will want to handle Rebecca similarly. To inject additional drama, consider random complications that could arise to hinder the pursued or the pursuer. For example, a barrier blocks the way in the form of a cart whose driver cannot get his mules to move, or the chase takes them across rain (or blood) slick pavers. Any number of things can arise that can make this a thrilling scene.

If the chase continues for several rounds, the character likely will start to tire. Consult the guidelines on Chases in the game manual.

Strength (Athletics)character.charactercharacterWisdom ()opposed to her Dexterity () pick up her trail again.If the party loses her in the crowd, they might be able to pick up her trail again if one of the characters succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. She is heading back to her lodgings, detailed below. If the characters get within 20 feet of her at any time, she turns and confronts them.

Rebecca Belladonna is an **apprentice mage**, but also has proficiency in Athletics. She is accompanied by Mister Leer, her **weasel** familiar.

Treasure. Rebecca carries a key that opens all doors and cages in Feckle Manor, a *potion of healing*, a bite-spider insectum, a monkey paw purse containing 10 sp and 22 pp, and wears her hair secured with a silver hatpin with an amethyst inset designed to look like a grasping claw, which is (worth 75 gp).

Tactics: Rebecca always tries to flee combat outside her property. If she must fight outside, she does so as fleetingly as she is able, risking ranged weapons if she must. Before combat, she uses bite-spider insectum† to improve her AC by 3, and tries to flee home. , make a If she is reduced to fewer than 6 hit points, she tries to bargain, offering up her partners, Sprat and Marrow. If she gets a chance, she dashes to warn them if freed and subsequently is found with them.

Rebecca Belladonna is an aspiring homunculi wife. She has been trying to emulate the work of Lady Grey, her hero and role model, for several years now, and has achieved miserably little success. Belladonna is a far more effective kidnapper than she is a golem-stitcher, and her experiments have ended in messy frustration. Belladonna has been trying to fuse life using the *Staff of Life* (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***).

For her part, Grey has kept Rebecca at a distance, and Rebecca knows little about her, despite her hero-worshipping efforts. She has been fed bits of information and a few simple formulae, curios, and tomes, but Sprat and Marrow have been clear that Lady Grey likes her own company and will, they are sure, invite Rebecca to help her one day.

The kidnapper knows the location of Sprat and Marrow's rag and bone business, and is well acquainted with the interior, but whilst they all know and admire Lady Grey, they have no idea where she lives; her communication with them is through a messenger detailed in Part 2 of this adventure. Belladonna is also fully aware of Marrow's daily visit across town to the Cardy Bathhouse (see Part 2 of this adventure), offering the characters a chance to split their enemies if they wish.

Feckle Library

Now closed, the old library occupies a mildewed corner of the streets in the Folio, some three hundred yards from the Auction House as shown on the area map. Belladonna moved into the old library about eight years ago, and set about recruiting friends to help her in her frustrating hobby of creating homunculi. Her own efforts rarely live more than a few hours, but she has amassed a small collection of outré creatures in her library home. Whilst living in the region, Belladonna has become acquainted with a small group of ghouls, friends of two local rag and bone men,slash Sprat and Marrow (grave robbers, in truth), who have formed a partnership with Belladonna. Amongst a handful of discerning customers who attend occasional auctions, the group now supplies an infamous homuncule-mother called Lady Grey, herself something of a master in the art whom Belladonna idolises.

The library rests in a very cramped area of a cramped district. Neighbours are detailed below, as some are aware that Belladonna is up to something and has some dubious associates.

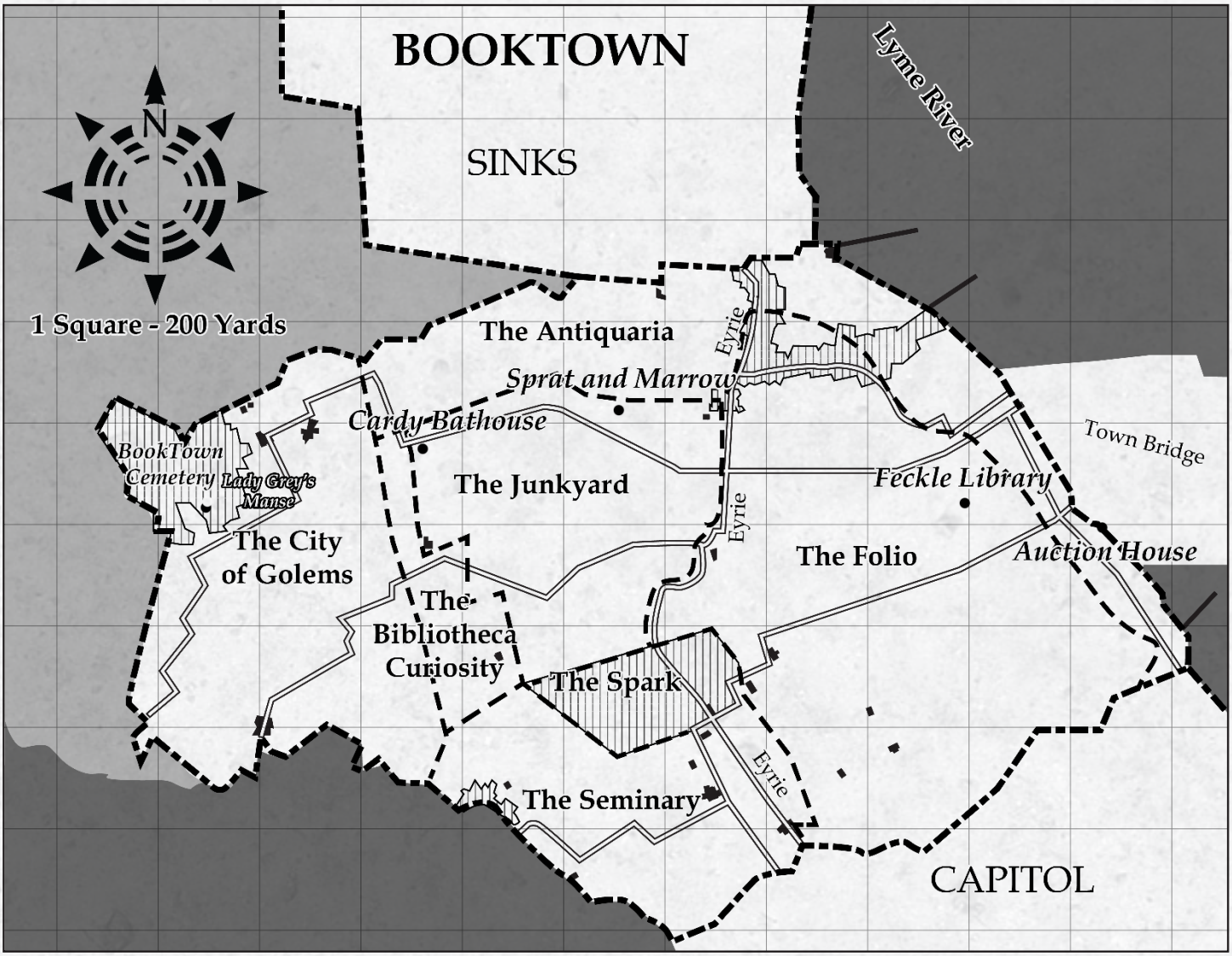
Feckle Way

The collective name for the series of alleys around the library is called Feckle Way, after the builder, an audacious manufactury owner named Algernon Feckle, who built his library and a few other civic buildings nearby. Feckle and his times have long gone, and now all that remains are the shadows of once-fine buildings, particularly the library and ruined hall opposite.

This is a tough neighbourhood, and people keep to themselves. All listed NPCs encountered here will have an initially unfriendly attitude, except the locals of the nearby Old Bookworm.,. The characters will have to do some sweet-talking to get information.

Jag's Bindings

A workshop crowded with the tools of bookbinding stands here. In the far corner, a bed can be seen through dingy windows.



NearShort-sighted **Jag** (LN male gnome **commoner**) runs a chaotic bookbinding service from his dusty office/slashbedroom. A dozen barking **terriers**† wander about his workshop. They tend to scuttle under the feet of visitors, get trodden on, and then bite. Characters entering the room must make a successful DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. T; hose that fail will, at some time in the workshop, accidentally tread on a terrier and be nipped. The terriers never attack seriously, only snapping individually if stepped on.

Development: . Characters ,If the characters make friends with Jag, and the library is mentioned, he confides that he hears strange noises from the place, particularly at night, when he swears he hears things climbing the walls.

Rossinda's Sweetshop

This is a hatchway sweetshop with shutters.

A small hatchway shop selling sweets and run by the timid **Rossinda** (NG female human **commoner**). Rossinda's hatchway shop is open only a couple of hours a day (usually early morning). She sells aniseed balls, cough candy twists, hard toffee, sour plums, and hundreds of other types of sweets from Festival. Rossinda knows very little about her neighbour but she has seen her from time to time wearing that veil of hers and going out at night with two odd-looking figures pushing handcarts. only

The Old Bookworm

This is a rather worn and tired-looking pub with a dingy sign showing a bookish man with a snake's tail, reading an evil-looking tome.

A panelled and tobacco-stained public house run by **Trotter Tab** (N male human **commoner**), a repulsive man with no chin and a huge Adam's apple, who gulps when he gets excited. The pub is cosy enough but tends to fill with smoke due to a chimney blocked by the carcass of a dead seagull. The 'Worm's privies are outside and back onto the library, which hasn't been open for years. But one or two locals have heard odd noises and seen odd things. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check gathers clues that suggest that there is an upper balcony between the library and a nearby abandoned building, and that from time to time, stooped things slither across by night.

The Ruined Hall

A decayed hall sits opposite a larger building. This place is on the verge of collapse.

The ruins are nothing more than a burnt-out shell used from time to time by passing tramps. The place is presently empty, but a successful DC

12 Wisdom (Perception) check shows the signs of occasional occupation and a small scratched sign depicting a triangle with an eye. A DC 10 Intelligence check means a character knows that this is a Guild sign for travellers, a sign that safe lodgings cannot be found, and that there is trouble here. The sign is accurate: Ghouls occasionally hunt here, and the simple mark spread by tramps and vagrants warns of danger.

Development: If the characters camp here by night, the temptation will be too much for the ghouls inside the library who would normally prey only on lone targets. In the middle of the night, 3 **ghouls** slink out sniffing and try to make a dark snack of the characters. These are the ghouls from location **F17.**

Feckle Library Features

The library is in a terrible state of repair. Its plaster is falling in clumps, its walls are collapsing, and its floorboards are rotting. The place is crammed with books; they fill every corner, every shelf, every spare ledge. The more interesting ones are detailed by room.

Rebecca lives and works in the upper stories, and sleeps in the attic, whilst her ghoul accomplices move about. They do so by using the double chandelier (**F12** and **F15**) overhanging the Hall (**F2**) and rickety ladders.

A gap high in the wall of the library opens into **F14** above. It is heavily overgrown with wisteria but can still be seen from below on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

F1. The Great Façade

Clearly a once-fine building, a set of marble steps rises to a façade with six marble pillars, beyond which is a great iron door. Above this door is an arched iron mesh lunette, depicting angels eating demons. Wisteria chokes the whole place.

The door is locked. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. A hefty knocker depicting a gargoyle with three heads hangs in the centre of this door.

Development: Belladonna rarely gets visitors, but opens her door to Ammos Grast or Obed Gride. She knows what both look like, so attempts to imitate them may be difficult. Other ruses to draw her out may work at your discretion.

F2. The Grand Hall and Chandelier

The faded magnificence continues inside. A majestic but now-rotting stair rises to a balcony above, whilst higher still a twin chandelier, with one great iron wheel at each of the stories above, hangs from the ceiling. The walls sag, once-fine oil paintings falling onto the rotten carpet below.

The Great Hall rises to the chambers and floors above, many of which are occupied. The walls here are pitted with holes. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check indicates that these holes are a little too regularly spaced to be accidental. They are used by the ghouls **(F17)** to descend head first to attack intruders. The chandelier rests some 20 feet above, and the ghouls also descend the iron cables supporting it and swing below. points of The occupants (or the characters) can also climb across the chandelier to move from chamber to chamber as detailed above with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Development: If an alarm is raised, the ghouls in the library attack, descending the walls or leaping from the chandeliers.

Treasure: Discarded amongst the ruinous plaster and debris here are a small silver ring (that could be worn by a child or person with very small hands) worth 35 gp, and a single gold shekel. Both items are found on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

F3. Old Kitchen

This is a cramped functional room with a huge rusting iron cooking range.

The range is rarely lit anymore (Rebecca barely picks at her food nowadays), but there are foodstuffs in place, some fresh apples and cheese, a few bottles of wine, and some dried olive bread stored among the shelves.

F4. Stores and Nailed Doorway

This is a litter-strewn chamber flanked by cupboards. The far door has been nailed shut.

The door was nailed shut to prevent intruders and thieves, but it can be broken open without noise due. Its to its rotting condition. The stores contain mundane objects such as a lantern, oil, and soap, but also has several builder's tools for shoring up the walls. These include sand and cement, a couple of props, and some shovels and buckets.

F5. First Floor Grand Hall

The stairs rise here to the level of the lower chandelier. Two archways lead off the stair. Opposite, clearly once connected by a wooden bridge, is another section of the floor.

The chandelier here is level with the floor. The occupants can also move across the chandelier to move from chamber to chamber as detailed above with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The bridge has long since fallen away. The stairs are very rickety, so any Dexterity (Stealth) rolls are made with disadvantage.

F6. The Rickety Ascent

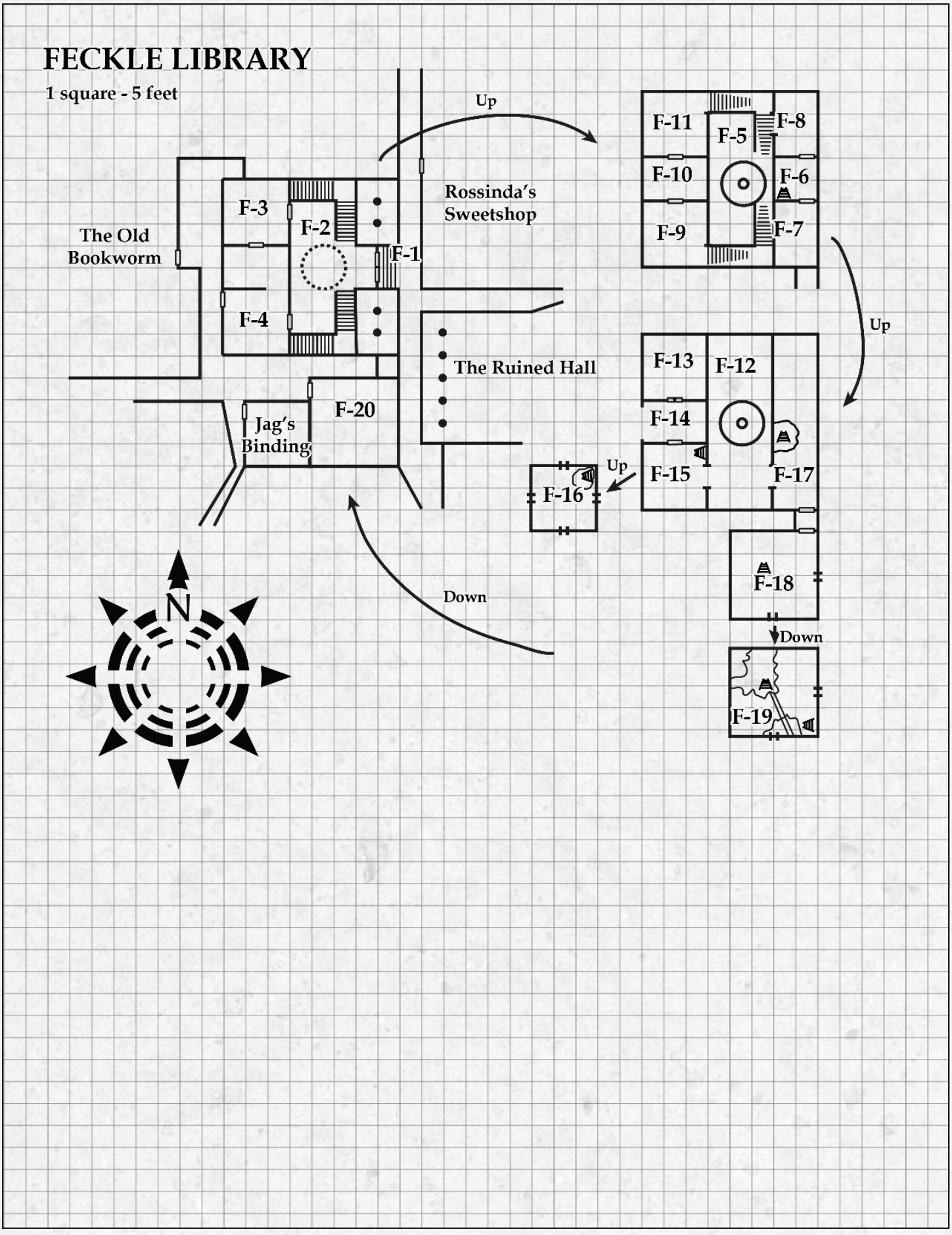
This dirty room has a very narrow ladder rising twenty feet to a hole in the ceiling.

The floor is filthy and uneven, making it difficult terrain. A . The ladder rises to **F17,** 20 feet above.

F7. The Pet Cemetery

The smell from this room is unsettling and vile, and its source is clear: Cages of dead animals line the walls.

Rebecca has accidentally — and occasionally deliberately — starved animals to death here to enable them to be used in animation experiments using the *Staff of Life*. However, Rebecca lacks the talent and raw materials to be truly successful in creating life, and her experiments have been frustrating thus far. The animals are those commonly found in the city: feral cats, stray dogs, rats and birds, along with the odd giant spider in a bell jar. All are dead, long dead.


FECKLE LIBRARY
1 square - 5 feet
Up
Rossinda's Sweetshop
The Old Bookworm
F-3
F-2
F-1
F-4
The Ruined Hall
F-20
Jag's Binding
F-16
Up
F-11
F-5
F-8
F-10
F-6
F-9
F-7
Up
F-13
F-12
F-14
F-15
F-17
F-18
Down
F-19
Down
N

F8. The Display Rooms

This room is crammed with old displays, a stuffed bear, and piles of books.

The old library displays are of little interest to Belladonna, who has had them stored here by her ghouls.

Treasure: The stuffed bear is heavy (200 lbs.) but worth 250 gp. The books are all reference books about building dams.

F9. The Mildewed Library and Rat Nest

The walls of this room are piled with books.

The books are a curious mix of geographical, historic and dull reference tomes, interspersed with lewd art journals. The books lie in huge piles, making the floor so uneven that the room is considered difficult terrain.

The Family trusts no one, and 6 **brain rats**† (see Appendix) lurk among the books. They ostensibly keep an eye on Belladonna to make sure she doesn't betray the Family, and if she does, they come looking for her. The rats are here to observe, not to fight, but if there are no easy ways for them to escape the room or if someone new enters (say, axe-wielding characters) they hide amongst the books waiting for the intruders to go. They then watch before reporting back to their masters. If using the optional Enemies rule part of your campaign (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***), this gives you an excellent opportunity to introduce Emily Grast or other wererats into ongoing events.

Tactics: If spotted, the brain rats scatter rather than try to enter combat. Only one of them needs to escape to pass the message on to their masters at Festival. They fight if they have to, but generally make for doors and windows to escape. ,

Treasure: Amongst the books, and unseen by Belladonna is a *spell scroll* of *cure wounds* (3rd level). It is pressed into the back inset of a large tome and found on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

F10. The Silent One

This chamber has an unsettling smell ... like rotting meat being cooked.

The north door has a set of planks nailed across it, while the south one is locked with a poor lock. A character could use thieves' tools to pick the lock by succeeding on a DC 10 Dexterity check, but the key is in the lock. The Belladonna's ghouls have recently captured a curiously horrible creature lurking among the gables of the city, a **zombie-stirge** (treat as normal **stirge** but with zombie resistances and condition immunities). Whilst subdued, Belladonna has injected *low-grade elixir* into the creature to try to make it Reborn. Of course, being an undead creature already, the elixir failed, which has merely made it angry and confused by the strange worms that temporarily invaded its body. The creature attacked Belladonna and has been locked and nailed into this chamber ever since.

Tactics: Before combat, the creature sits brooding in the filthy chamber amongst a torn straitjacket, broken planks, and surgical tools. It makes no noise. If it hears anyone outside, it flaps quickly above the door from which it heard the noise and grasps the beams above, waiting for someone to enter, and readies to attack.

Treasure: The original *elixir of life* vial lies shattered on the floor and is noticed automatically. Close examination of the broken vial shows signs of tiny worm-like and possibly insectoid fragments within the vial. These are the remains of the *low-grade elixir* injected by Belladonna. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check is required to identify the elixir as such. More information on *elixir of life* can be found in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum****: Appendix D*.

Jessop's Manual of All Unliving Things

Jebediah Uthus Jessop (1602–) is the greatest living cataloguer of monstrous forms conceived from application of the *elixir of life*. His great *Manual of All Unliving Things* (in 11 volumes) is considered the greatest reference for such creatures and has named many creatures that previously had no names and, indeed, some that were not even conceived.

F11. The Birdcages

Dozens of birdcages hang or stand in this room, and the air is alive with the chatter of birds. The noises they make, however, are strangely off-pitch.

Characters making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that one particularly large cage is hanging open. Belladonna has had a few limited successes in trying to create homunculi, although these creatures are barely zombies in quality, and some are already falling apart. In one of the cages is a creature made from the upper part of a canary and the lower part of a snake; it fitfully flaps about in the bottom of the cage trying to stand. There is also an owl with two heads, one of which is infested with fleas and which has swollen, pus-filled eyes, and 6 smaller birds that have had their bodies swapped about. All are sickly and near death.

Belladonna's most recent success is a crow that she has mingled with the body of a large stirge. The creature (technically referred to as a **crirge**† in *Jessop's Manual of All Unliving Things*) has the head of a crow with the proboscis of a stirge. One of the ghouls opened the crirge's cage out of simple mischief and left it flying loose in the room. It makes an unsettling cawing and gulping noise that is very hard to identify.

F12. Second Floor Grand Hall

The upper of the two chandeliers hangs here above the open space. Once, a bridge clearly connected two arched doorways, though no longer.

The ghouls and Belladonna use the chandelier to move about, unless the mistress of the house has a curio or subject to carry, in which case the ladder in **F6** is used. Like the one in **F5**, the chandelier here is level with the floor, and the occupants can also move across the chandelier to move from chamber to chamber as detailed above with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Slaken, a former shipbuilder and navvy, now a **ghoul**, lurks on the chandelier here, often in a semi-slumbering state that comes with undeath. Such slumber is not sleep, however, and gives no relief from the endless waking of undeath. Slaken carries an old tool from his former days, a pair of large bolt-croppers, which he likes to use to take off toes, fingers, and other appendages. He longs to cut the cables on the candelabrum and squash someone below. If someone new comes in, he smells his chance.

Tactics: If someone new enters the room below, he immediately grabs his bolt-croppers and tries to cut the cable on the chandelier. The ghoul gets very excited at this point and can be heard from the ground floor on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. It takes several moments to cut the cable, but if Slaken succeeds, the *huge* object crashes into the floors below. Those in rooms **F5** and **F2** must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the coiling, looping, crashing iron object, or take 3d6 points of damage from it. Slaken is able to leap free as it drops, and then rushes down the wall to attack.

Treasure: The ghoul still wears his heavy leather apron of trade. It has a large pocket within which are several dozen toes and fingers on wire

bands. Two of the fingers have rings: one is a plain silver band worth 35 gp, and the second is a tarnished black *ring of swimming*.

F13. Makeshift Jail

The door is locked. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. Belladonna has the only key.

The door to this room has been reinforced with iron.

This room shows signs of enforced occupation. A bucket is by the north wall, and three sets of manacles are fixed to the wall nearby with the keys in each. More disturbingly, a child-sized wooden box is by the door. This box can be secured by a bolt from outside and has a few breathing holes. Belladonna uses it to take captives to her partners in the hope that Lady Grey will one day befriend her.

F14. Open to the Elements

The rear of this chamber has collapsed, leaving a broad gap looking out over the parish.

Wisteria has danced across this gap, but a Small creature can enter the building from outside with a push. A Medium creature must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to do so without becoming stuck. A character who fails the check by 5 or more gets so stuck that they have to spend 1d610 minutes trying to escape.

F15. The Surgery

Scrubbed benches and alchemical accoutrements fill this room. A large desk sits by an iron ladder affixed to the wall by hooks.

The benches have straps on them to secure victims, and the cleanliness of this chamber is most disturbing of all. It is immaculately clean, the floor scrubbed, and the tables scoured white. A large drum of bleach and several brushes sit below one bench.

Treasure: The cabinet contains surgical and alchemical equipment; the contents are equivalent to a portable alchemist's lab, and may be used as a poisoner's kit. Amongst the tools and knives is a pair of well-crafted daggers (10gp each). The alchemical accoutrements include 4 vials of alchemist's fire and 4 vials of antitoxin.,

F16. The Attic

A claustrophobic attic room used to display as much as sleep. The bed in the corner is an afterthought amongst several huge glass jars containing disturbing creatures.

The jars contain a variety of odd life, some made, some collected. There is a two-headed lamb, a skum child with a distended head, a fully preserved mongrelman's head and shoulders, a hand infected with an appalling cancerous growth that has a mouth formed in it, and a **cat** with a head at each end of its body. The cat has been clearly Made. If inspected, the cat opens its eyes and begins thrashing about. It cannot escape unless some impact shatters its glass jar, or if it is deliberately released.

Rebecca Belladonna spends much of her time here or in the surgery below. This chamber is her vanity; she keeps only her successes here. Failures go into the river or sewers below. If intruders enter the house, she supports the ghouls by attacking from above, casting alchemist's fire from the surgery below. She does not flee this chamber. If overpowered, she bargains for her life.

Development: If released, the **cat** simply tries to flee; however, there is enough animal left in it to respond to kindness. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check gains its trust and companionship.

Treasure: Belladonna has her wealth in a box at the side of her bed. The box is patterned mahogany and oak, and itself worth 40 gp. It contains 50 pp.

F17. The Broken Floor

This open space is in a terrible condition, boards are exposed and lie crisscrossed above the yawning space twenty feet or so below.

The floor is so badly damaged that it is considered difficult terrain. The spaces between the boards also give those below and above opportunities to use ranged weapons and spells as though firing at a target with cover. The south door leads out onto a rickety balcony without handrails that is 40 feet above the alley below. The balcony is made of loose timbers and requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to use without falling through a weak spot.

Lurking in this chamber are 3 **ghouls** busy finding spiders, mice, and other defenceless things to pull apart while they wait for the night to come. The ghouls are sisters (Molly, Letty, and Grace), who bicker and squabble constantly. Former prostitutes, they are dressed in the rags of once-alluring attire, and use their colourful language and knowledge of anatomy to enhance their attacks with promises of what they will do to their victims once paralysed.

Treasure: One ghoul wears a brooch set with paste gems worth 15 gp. Another has a silver hatpin stuck through her skull worth 10 gp. The third wears overpowering perfume, a vial of which she keeps in her rags to disguise her unpleasant odour. The perfume is by Gratt's of the Capitol (est. 1602) and is worth 25 gp.

F18. The Ruin

This is a ruined shed with a sagging slate roof.

The roof is in such a poor state that a DC 10 Strength check allows the characters to open a space large enough for a Medium creature to easily pass through, without creating any serious noise. This

Within, the shed is a shell with remnants of flooring propped up by stubs of beams. A ladder drops to the floor below and then to the floor

Friendship Reward: Jacob and Logg

If allowed to escape, and if the ghoul-prostitutes in **F17** are killed, the two ghouls make it clear that they are indebted to the characters. They offer their services for a full adventure, or offer to carry out a mission or task that only someone with a helpful attitude would consider. The ghouls cannot, of course, go out by day. The people of the city would catch them, stone them to death, burn them on a pyre, or inflict some other terrible fate. They quite happily assist the characters in a reasonable way or, if you so wish, are "out there" for you to use in a later adventure as you see fit. More information about Friendship Rewards can be found in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

beyond, a total of 40 feet. A pair of **ghouls** (Jacob and Logg) spends much of their time herein, trying to avoid the ghouls in **F17** and their insatiable lusts. Both these male ghouls show signs of abuse. If the door to **F17** opens, the ghouls assume it is the whores and flee to the level below, hoping to escape onto the streets if it dark. They dare not flee in daylight, fearing what Belladonna will make them into.

Development: It is possible that the ghouls become indebted to the characters if they become aware of the destruction of Molly, Letty, and Grace . In this case, if a discussion occurs and the ghouls are offered freedom, they become friends (in the loosest possible sense of the word) as detailed in the sidebox. If this is the case, award the characters double the XP value of the ghouls for forming such an odd alliance. The ghouls have helped Belladonna take victims across to Sprat and Marrows' place (see **Part 2**) and have heard the name Lady Grey, a name they and the other ghouls fear. They know she is a stitcher-of-flesh, a monster who makes unnatural beasts in her home, wherever that may be.

F19. The Ruin, First Floor

The floor of this dingy space has collapsed. Two sections of it lean out on what are left of the beams, a narrow plank connecting two sides.

The beams that cross this space are secure, but narrow. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross any part of this chamber without falling.

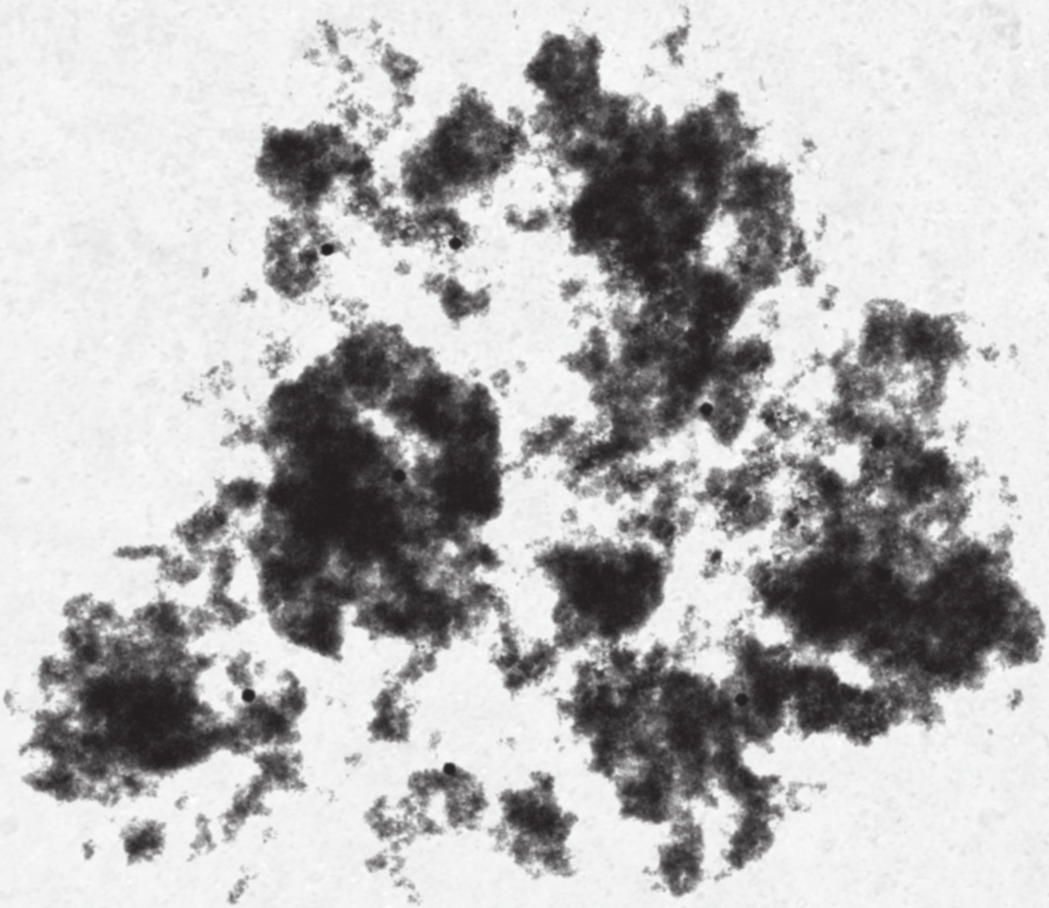
F20. The Ruin, Ground Floor

This is a rough stone shed with three stories and a stout faded painted door. The ground floor is piled with broken timber.

A handcart with a large iron box lashed onto the top leans by the door. This cart is used to take victims across the district to Sprat and Marrow (see **Part 2**). There are many marks burnt into the wood, and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to realize that the marks are from when the timbers were all together and branded (a common practice used to identify merchants or points of delivery). An hour's work allows the characters to piece enough bits of broken timber together to reveal a name and address:

Sprat and Marrow – Rag and Bone
The Market of the Fallen Virgin
Upper Junkyard, BookTown

The door to outside is latched from inside, but the latch is a wire hook and can be opened by anyone with a DC 10 Dexterity check, using a dagger or other object.



Part Two: Sprat and Marrow

Sprat and Marrow – Rag and Bone
The Market of the Fallen Virgin
Upper Junkyard, BookTown

Sprat and Marrow, Rag and Bone Men

This unlikely duo has made a brisk trade in cadaver snatching and supplying parts (often to order) for a number of local clients. Their funds have not brought them much happiness, however. Marrow suffers from a debilitating skin condition and is *alchymic-undying*†, while Sprat is a frustrated combination of wererat and ghoul who is desperate for female company. Both are repulsive, but both are smart. That they would sell each other for a turnip is of no consequence to anyone who tries to affect their trade, which they fight for tooth and claw.

The pair have a number of allies, both mites and wererats, and operate from a junkyard warehouse in the streets of BookTown in the Market of the Fallen Virgin. This adventure may develop in one of two ways: The characters may try to inveigle themselves in with the cadaver snatchers in an attempt to get to the bottom of the disappearances they began to discover in the past adventure, or the characters may rush in and hack everyone to death. The benefit of the subtler approach is that more villains may be unmasked and therefore a larger reward reaped.

Both Sprat and Marrow know of Lady Grey and sometimes communicate with her via her repulsive, homunculus messenger Smiles. Neither of the cadaver-snatchers knows where Lady Grey lives, but they know she pays very well. They have another way of getting messages to her by using a messenger magpie that nests above the junkyard. Grey has recently gifted them one of her paintings, a work of art that will ring bells with the characters once they set eyes on it.

As with many smaller lairs, the tactics of the occupants vary. Characters are assigned rooms purely to focus their activities, and to where they are likely eventually to flee. A general tactic involves the ringing of an alarm bell (**SM1**), but it is so long since anyone has done so that unless one of the opponents makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence check, they will entirely forget to sound the alarm.

Sprat

An anaemic, stick-thin man who seems almost to bend in the wind, he is dressed in the latest fashions and has a magnificent top hat and cane.

Sprat is a **wererat ghoul**, unusual in that he retained his *shapechanging* ability after his transformation into an undead creature.

An anaemic, stick-thin man who seems almost to bend in the wind, he is dressed in the latest fashions and has a magnificent top hat and cane. Sprat is a unique in that he has retained his lycanthropic abilities even in undeath. It is very unusual that he retained his *shapechanging* ability after his transformation. Sprat is a wererat ghoul; treat him as a **wererat** with standard wererat abilities and traits, and the following additions:

- Sprat is immune to poison.
- He cannot be charmed, suffer from exhaustion, or be poisoned.
- He has filthy, vicious **claws** *(Melee Weapon Attac*k: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage).
- When slashed by his claws, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.
- He cannot shapechange into hybrid form.
- He is CR 4 (1,100 XP).
- Sprat is a wererat ghoul, unusual in that he retained his shapechanging ability after his transformation into an undead creature.

Sprat is unable to keep a hybrid form; he moves only between human or rat (a very mangy sick-looking rat). Occasionally he is able to transform his head into a hybrid shape but has stopped doing so as it gives him throbbing headaches and he considers it quite disgusting to do so. tries Sprat does not wish to be destroyed, and flees when reduced to fewer than 8 hp.

Treasure: fashionable top hat worth 35 gp, hidden in the lining of which is a *potion of gaseous form*; small jar of perfume (to cover up his smell, worth 2 gp); small silver folding mirror set with a single spider motif worth 75 gp; fine painted porcelain pipe worth 25 gp; a silver sovereign holder worth 25 gp with 20 gp in it; a silk handkerchief; a pair of silver sugar tongs worth 20 gp; and a pair of ochre-coloured silver and tortoise shell tinted spectacles worth 40 gp.

Marrow

Covered in a debilitating and foul-smelling skin condition, the unfortunate **mongrelmanMarrow** walks with the aid of a curved cane. His misshaped hood hints at some foul deformity of the head beneath. Below, his face leans as though flattened on one side, huge eyeballs protruding to a ghastly degree from the skull.

Marrow is highly deformed, resulting from side-effects of his alchemical immortality, but his deformities, while startling, do not affect his ability to move or think. When out in public, he wears his sack-mask and hefty cloak, and can be heard by his wheezing. If possible, Marrow attempts to sneak into position and uses his chloroform as a sneak attack. a sMarrow attempts to flee if reduced to fewer than 8 hp.

Treasure alligator skin scrip containing seven 5-guinea bank notes (worth 35 pp total), a syringe (of arsenic), bottle of laudanum, bottle of chloroform and rag, small snuff case set with a scarab beetle worth 50 gp, *potion of curegreater healing wounds (4th level)*, silver brooch scarab set with gold and small amethysts worth 125 gp, and a silver key fob worth 15 gp with all the keys to the junkyard.

Tough Times

Marrow and Sprat are tough opponents, and deliberately so; they survive in a tough profession with lots of competitors. Anyone asking questions about them who succeeds at a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information soon finds out that they are capable fighters who fight nasty. Several encounters in ***The Levee*** are deliberately difficult. Not every combat should be so, however. I; ndeed, some are ludicrously easy to engender a feeling of heroics in the characters. However, memorable villains make for memorable encounters. One thing always worth bearing in mind when running the Blight is that these are in theory living, selfish beings who have but the one life — they do not throw it away needlessly. Villains in ***The Levee*** are far more likely to try to flee than fight to the death. Fleeing villains give you a great *in* for extra encounters and a way to develop a wider story as they stalk the PCcharacters and turn up in future adventures. Remember also that mindless slaughter is not always a motivator in the city; capturing opponents and questioning them may help stop future trouble, and possibly be much more profitable.

Sprat and Marrow's Haunts

The following locations all appear on the map around Sprat and Marrow's junkyard home. Following the address that the characters may have discovered for the two should lead them to the Market of the Fallen Virgin below.

Gibbet Square

The decrepit cobbled square still has two gibbets hanging in its heart. These contain the bleached bones of two thieves who died a decade ago. Magpies haunt this area and squabble over anything dropped that may be edible.

Busy by day, the alleys hereabouts are almost empty by night. However, during the day Margaret (N female **commoner**), a local flower-seller, occasionally comes this way and makes an offering at the shrine in the market square nearby. If the characters buy flowers from her (1 copper piece), she tells them that she frequently sees Mr. Sprat (a repulsive and ungodly creature) and the hooded Marrow (a hunched man who always buys flowers), but that Sprat is more often seen coming home early in the day. She thinks the girls who work the market nearby by night know him well.

A mill race flows below the streets. Characters making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notice the cobbles over the race are broad and that a rusty grill lies by one gibbet. If lifted with a successful DC 13 Strength check, the characters can access the race, which flows with fast water. It is a bit dangerous, requiring a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, but it accesses the old warehouse (**SM4**).

Market of the Fallen Virgin

Every Marketday, the square comes alive. Traders come from across BookTown to sell paper, old books, and antiques at a flea market. . Otherwise, A vast selection of tatty and second-hand goods is available.

The square has a small shrine to the Fallen Virgin. This is a joke name for the square, which is actually by night a place widely used by local corner-doxies. By evening, a dozen local ladies offer their services for reasonable remuneration. Characters might be told by one of the locals that BookTown corner-doxies have a reputation for being better educated and therefore theoretically more imaginative than their out-of-neighbourhood competitors.

Characters who make the acquaintance of some of the girls (DC 5 Charisma (Persuasion) check or payment of at least 1 sp) discover that all know and despise Sprat. They know he is cold and clammy and perverted, and they keep away from him. Characters gaining the ladies' friendship (DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check or at least 1 gp) are told that one girl — Melanie Sedge — once went with Sprat about a year ago but afterward fled. She later recalled only a dreadful icy paralysis as soon as he touched her. If the characters can make the doxies helpful in attitude (DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check or at least 2 gp), they say that Melanie eventually took her own life. Her body is buried in unconsecrated ground at the crossroads of Bookwormers Alley and Jenker's Press, which is about a quarter mile from the market square.

If the characters ask about Marrow specificallymake memories, she recalls something about Marrow as well (the girls generally think very little of him with the focus of their vitriol squarely on Sprat). If the check is successful, the doxy remembers that she has seen Marrow very early on many mornings as he heads to a nearby bathhouse. She thinks it is a regular routine for him. If the characters wish to pursue this lead as a means to get at Marrow when he is indisposed, refer to The Cardy Bathhouse below.

If the characters should seek out the late Ms. Sedge's grave, they can locate an unmarked area of disturbed cobbles beside the intersection with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. A single wilted lily is wedged into one of the creases in the cobbles. Once the cobbles are removed, the grave is shallow, and the whole can be disinterred in under an hour of concerted effort. Melanie's corpse is wrapped in a filthy shroud and is still mostly intact. As with all suicides, a stake was thrust through the body's heart prior to burial in the shallow grave by the roadside, a place locals shun for fear of the ghost of a white lady (a false rumour). The characters may grow suspicious that vampires are somehow involved in this adventure (which might be a fun thing to play along with if it occurs to them); however, anyone making a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion or History) check recallss that the act of staking and burying a suicide at a crossroads is a common superstition, used to confuse the restless spirit of the dead and to keep them nailed into the earth.

The Charcoal Burners

Two charcoal burners live and work under a lean-to at the back of an old ruin south of the junkyard. They regard Marrow as a fine gentleman (he always tips them generously for their charcoal), and anyone asking questions gets short-shrift. When the pair next see Marrow (he goes to the bathhouse on the far side of the Junkyard parish every morning), they tell him of the questioners. In this case, assume that if the characters attack, an alarm is automatically triggered if it is feasible for someone to do so.

The Cardy Bathhouse

Marrow suffers from a debilitating skin condition, and the only relief he gets from the itching and rashes is to take a steam bath over at the Cardy Bathhouse (see the BookTown area map). Marrow is religious in his routine to visit the baths, making the trip every day at dawn, and spending the next 2 hours at the bathhouse, where he is well known.

The Cardy Bathhouse is a steam house, one of hundreds that operate across the city. If the characterPCs trail, or are aware of, Marrow and follow him to this location, read the following description.

> Your journey ends outside a bathhouse, a single-storey brick building with ornamental decorations. A very old sign by the door proclaims it is the "*Cardy Bathhouse, Entrance Fee 1 Silver Penny.*"

The bathhouse is run by Rashid Mahmeer (N male Ashurian human **commoner**), who has 6 masseurs (N male human **commoners**) operating in the business. It opens at dawn and closes at midnight. The atmosphere within the bathhouse is humid, and two rooms are filled with steam. If at any time the staff hears trouble, 1d3 of them come to investigate. The staff are not brave and do not want to fight, but do not let anyone

commit murder, for example. There will be 2d4 customers (N male human **commoners**) at any given time. In the event of trouble, these call for the City Watch. If someone goes to the Watch, 1d4+2 minutes afterward 1d3 Constables of the Watch (N male human **guards)** arrive at the scene.

C1. Entrance

The entrance is a narrow cubicle shielded by hefty drapes. An attendant (N female human **commoner**) is on duty always to collect dues.

C2. Changing and Disrobing

A neat marble floored chamber with recesses for goods. If Marrow is here, all of his personal possessions are stored in one of the cubicles here.

C3. Pool

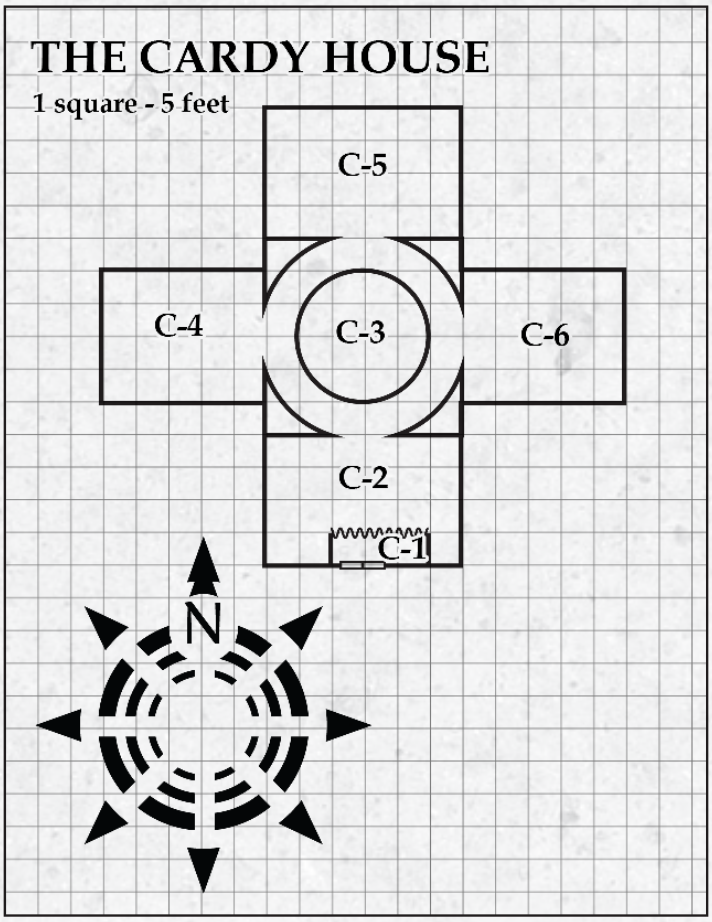
Four arched openings overlook a pool filled with icy water.

C4. Warm House

The air here is thick with the smell of burning oils and is warm. Marble seats are arranged about a central fire. The temperature in this room is extremely hot, and any combat in here will lead to all combatants taking 1 point of heat damage per round after the fourth round.

C5. Hot House

The fire in this chamber is kept blisteringly roaring, and the temperature within the steamy chamber is extreme (refer to the game manual for guidelines on extreme environments). If the characters followed Marrow, then it is here that he can be found in a state of undress other than a linen towel. He has the room to himself as few folk are willing to share it with him, which is why he comes to the bathhouse so early in the morning. All of his gear is in **C2**.



C6. Masseurs

A set of eight raised marble slabs enables the 6 masseurs (N male human **commoners**) to practice their arts. The chamber is arrayed with towels, oils, and other massage equipment.

The Junkyard General Features

Coincidentally, and likely to cause no little confusion, is that Sprat and Marrow make their residence in a junkyard in the Junkyard section of BookTown. Little more than a shell now, the junkyard is hidden behind a high wall topped with broken glass. **Mastiffs** patrol the yard inside (**SM1**), but they will not attack any of the regular occupants except the **mites**, which they chase and attack whenever they spot them. The mites, for their part, stay out of their way. A chain lift powered by a pair of waterwheels allows goods to be brought up into the warehouse, particularly living goods. Higher up, the shell of the warehouse acts like a moat to prevent easy attack.

Walls inside the compound are brick and stone, and easy to climb with a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check, the warehouse is the highest building about except for an old chapel infested with mites.

When they have gathered enough stock (generally at least 6 cadavers or 3 living specimens), Sprat and Marrow prepare for a market (**SM3**) and invite local cadaver-surgeons, golem-stitchers, and other interested parties using associates. They do not invite Lady Grey, contacting her by tying a message to the claw of a pet magpie she uses to get messages back and forth. For more information on this event, see the end of this section of the adventure.

SM1. The Yard

A wide hefty gate bars access into a yard, the metal gates stating the business as "*Sprat and Marrow — Rag and Bone.*" A dog barks in the yard beyond. The walls to either side of the gate are topped with broken glass. A broad ship's beam lies across the space between two buildings about fifty feet above.

The yard beyond is filled with scrap and junk, from hefty timbers, to old cauldrons, wagon wheels, and piles of dressed stone. A massive pile of bones and another of rags lie by the entrance.

The gates are barred, and the bar is inaccessible from the outside. Characters attempting to climb the 20-foot-high outer walls must make a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check and then make a successful DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid taking 1d3 points of damage as they cross the broken glass. Characters can fall straight into the rags and take no damage if they wish to cross the wall without having to climb down the other side.

A huge pile of wood rises 20 feet by the far wall, and a hefty timber lift hangs from a chain and block and tackle from the roof of the warehouse (**SM8**). A brass bell hangs next to the lift's lever and is supposedly an alarm. A grubby stable occupies the left wall. Above this, a structure has been lashed to the top level of the warehouse wall some 50 feet above.

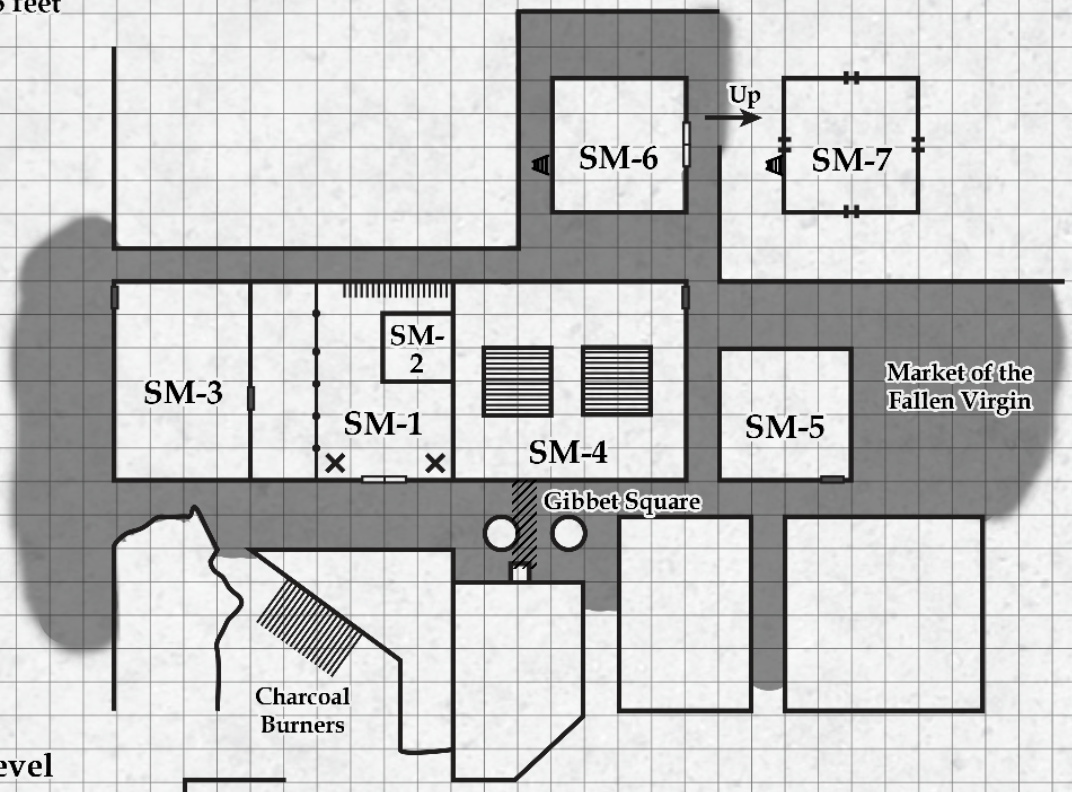
A pair of revolting, mangy **mastiffs** patrol the yard looking for something to bite. They are mostly hairless, and covered in warts with occasional tufts of bristly hair protruding from their lumpy skin. Even to alleged friends they are a menace, but their frequent beatings have made them more subdued. Having been kicked dozens of times by the old nag in the stables nearby, they also avoid that creature, but still snarl at it. The mastiffs attack anything they don't recognize that enters the yard unless Sprat or Marrow loudly command otherwise.

The stable contains a flea-bitten old nag (a **riding horse**) one step from the knacker's yard. It wanders the filthy stable that it shares with a wagon

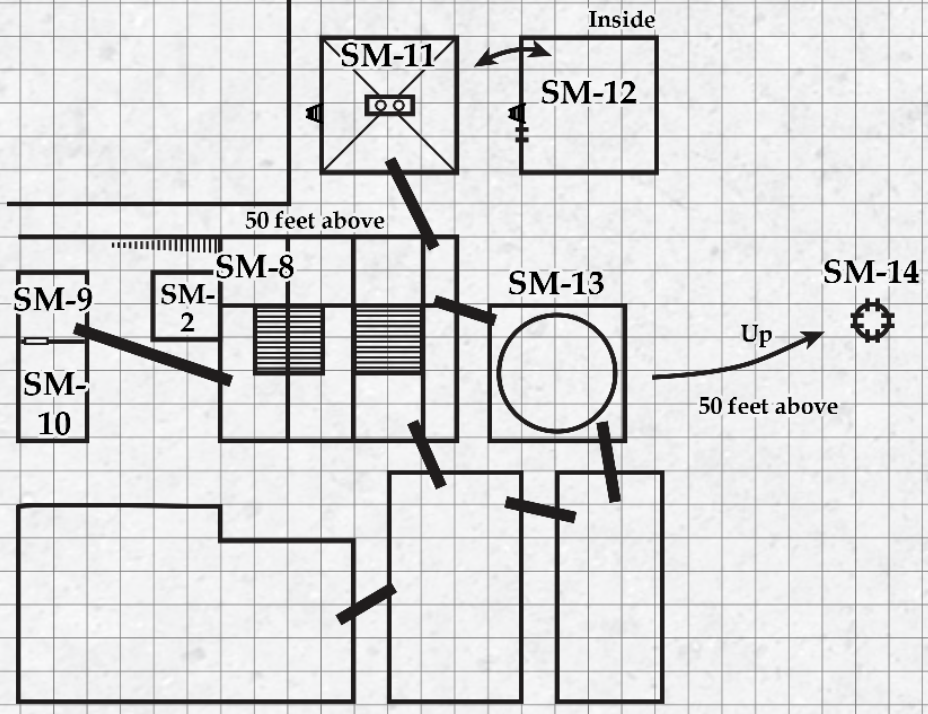
SPRAT AND MARROW

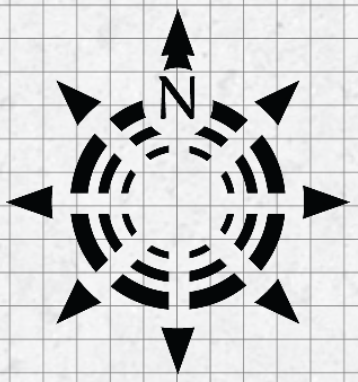
Street Level

1 square - 5 feet



Upper Level





and pair of handcarts as well as a dozen greasy sacks. The nag is nasty-tempered, and bites anyone who enters the stable.

A door at the back of the stable looks nailed shut. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check allows characters to notice that most of the nails are bent over and not nailed all the way through. While stiff, a successful DC 12 Strength check opens the door.

Treasure: Amongst the rubbish in the yard is a fine iron lantern with a brass and gold candleholder set within worth 75 gp. Hanging up at the back of the stables is a very hefty yoke with silver filigree work depicting ploughing worth 75 gp. The yoke weighs 15 pounds.

SM2. Lift

This is a roughly fashioned timber platform ten feet across suspended from a large chain.

A rusty lever lies by the wall in the yard that lowers or raises the lift in a minute. The lift is incredibly noisy when it moves, as the waterwheel gears grate into action. Everyone within the area is aware of the lift when it moves. Next to the lift's lever is the alarm bell.

SM3. Auction House

This is a broad area of cobbles in the middle of a shell of a building with a sagging roof.

The doorway into the street is similar to the one that connects to the stable block; the nails hammered into it are mostly for effect, and a stiff bash with a DC 12 Strength check opens it. Within are half a dozen cages, as well as enough evidence to point to the fact that several coffins are kept herein from time to time.

A magpie (treat as a **raven**) roosts in the timbers of the sagging roof, and a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notes that on one claw it has a small gold container. The magpie is drawn by food, and takes messages back and forth between Lady Grey (see **Part 3**) and Sprat and Marrow. The creature is lazy and easy to follow across BookTown as it mostly hops or is on the constant lookout for food. Two successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks are sufficient to track it all the way across the district to Lady Grey's residence.

Development: The identity and numbers at these auctions is not detailed as part of this adventure; the death of Sprat and Marrow and removal of their best customer is considered enough to destroy this nasty little trade. This may not be enough for some groups; they may wish to bring the whole rotten ring to justice. Questions in the right places (particularly if *speak with dead* is available) could soon unmask a nasty little group of physikers, golem-stitchers, and other nefarious, sick people. A rounding up through false auction and subject trailing or slaughter, possibly with the help of the Guild, would cap this section nicely. Such a thorough action would certainly lead to everyone involved being offered immediate, free, first-membership in the Thieves' Guild as a "footpad." (see Appendices and later sections of this adventure chapter for detail about the Guild).

Treasure: The tiny gold box is beautiful and delicate, and depicts werewolves eating a grandmother in almost indescribable detail. It is worth 200 gp for its artistic value.

SM4. The Wheels

The doorway into the alley outside is nailed shut, requiring a DC 15 Strength check to break it open.

The ruined shell of a warehouse contains two functioning waterwheels.

The wheels continue to turn, and the race that feeds them keeps them moving constantly, causing mist to pattern the walls and beams above. Anyone falling into the wheels suffers 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for half). Characters entering the chamber through the mill race (see The Market of Fallen Angels above) can easily climb past the wheels with a successful DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check, though a fall indicates the character is dragged into the wheels.

SM5. The Burnt Chapel

The doorway into the street is nailed shut and barred (outside) with timbers, requiring a DC 15 Strength check to break it open.

A weathered figure of a motherly figure with her palms open is carved above a clearly nailed door. The figure is of Mother Grace, and she smiles beatifically. A door has been nailed shut from the street.

Within, the chapel has been gutted, the remains of burnt pews and an altar are all that remain. Some 50 feet above is a complex web of wood, twisted iron, and rope that serves as the nest of mites (**SM13**). The **mites** (see below) do not expect attacks from below, but they quickly set upon intruders.

SM6. The Junkyard

This room is crammed with bric-a-brac. You see a stuffed bear, a mountain of rags, a four-poster bed, and at least two rowboats amongst the rubbish crammed herein. An elaborate fireplace is all that remains of the building itself, which is but a shell. A series of ladders climb the walls, rising to a floor some thirty feet above. These ladders are nailed onto the outer walls.

Sprat and Marrow operate a legitimate trade to cover their activities — that of antiquaries. They very occasionally open their store here (which has no outer sign). The door to the street is locked, but the lock is of poor quality: a character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 10 Dexterity check. The ladders offer a way upward to a trapdoor in the floorboards of **SM7** above. A successful DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check is required to use these giddy ladders.

Treasure: Amongst the rubbish, and requiring a successful DC 10 WisdomIntelligence (Investigation) check to find each object, are a porcelain doll with obsidian eyes with 50 gp, a commemorative silver mug depicting the funeral mask of King Leris Pallor (1427) worth 110 gp, a tea-chest full of fine ceramics worth 40 gp, a jelly-mould with sundry cheap paste earrings worth 25 gp, a curved greatsword with a fancy handle worth 40 gp, a whole mounted human skeleton worth 25 gp, and a fine writing desk worth 30 gp with a magnificent pewter and tiger eye inkwell worth 25 gp. Cunning characters might decide to host an auction at the property. Characters doing so can auction off the rest of the junk for 100 gp +5 gp/point of a single successful DC 15 (Deception) check made by one character who hosts the event.

The stuffed bear has a *potion of invisibility* stuffed into it. Actively un-stuffing the bear and making a successful DC 15 Intelligence

Rag and Bone Men

Rags are collected and sold to make rag-cotton paper, and as supply can't outstrip demand, the price of rags is lucrative. Bones are collected to make glue, while other objects such as scrap metal and "antiques" are seen as a by-product of the trade. These goods are often sold at local flea markets and through antiquaries. An honest Rag and Bone Man finds it hard to make a living, and many turn to crime. If seen subsequently on the streets scouring for rag and bone, members of the court attack them on sight.

(Investigation) Wisdom ()check is required to locate it without the use of *detect magic* or other means.

SM7. Sprat's Prison Yard

A number of cages and a trio of dirty coffins stand in this chamber.

Any "goods" are brought in here and kept for sale. sPresently, the duo have three fresh corpses of consumptive humans and a young waif named Benedict (LN male human **commoner**), a former chimneysweep who lives in the Backhouses (**B29** in **Chapter 3**). He is locked in one of the half-dozen cages. Four windows overlook the city, the western one of which has no glass and leads to a very narrow balcony of timber barely 1 foot across. A makeshift ladder hangs from guttering at the top, rising 20 feet to the rooftop at **SM11**. A successful Dexterity ()DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check is required to use the ladder safely.

Two members of the Family sleep in here, often complaining about the smell. Buford and Elton are friends of Sprat and enjoy accompanying him on his nightly jaunts to give custom to local corner-doxies. The 2 **wererats** sleep on sacks by the western window. If alerted, they move to the source of the fight and attack, preferably with crossbows. They are not brave, and flee if reduced to less than half their hp.

Development: Releasing Benedict grants the characters a minor friendship reward (see sidebox).

Treasure: Buford has a very fine meerschaum pipe decorated with small turquoise worth 110 gp, and Elton has a sizable purse with 53 gp and 8 pp.

Upper Junkyard

The upper junkyard area is a shell of garrets that are perched some 50 feet above the street below. From this level, it is easy to see how the buildings relate to each other, as they are linked by planks and other makeshift bridges. This gives Sprat and Marrow security and privacy. Each day, the duo head off on their rag and bone cart and tour BookTown, looking for rags and bone and any antiques but also keeping an eye out for waifs and strays. Marrow always has a pack of sticky buns with him, and his sweet tooth has lured several local youths to their deaths.

The bridges that link the various parts of the upper junkyard are all 1 foot wide, except the route to the mite spire (**SM13**) which is detailed separately. Under normal circumstances, no Acrobatics checks are required; however, as the beams above the waterwheels (**SM8**) are slippery, a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross them. Sprat and Marrow also find this vertiginous atmosphere ideal for keeping prisoners safe.

SM8. The Shell

The roof of the warehouse is a shell, its hefty blackened ship's beams exposed. Some fifty feet below, two waterwheels churn, generating a fine mist. Beyond, makeshift ladders cross alleyways and reach other buildings, including the spire of a church and various rooftops.

As detailed above, the mist makes the beams slippery, and a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to use them. Area effect spells that cause fire burn off this moisture temporarily, and it is at least an hour before the moisture returns.

Friendship Reward: Releasing Benedict

Chimneysweeps are a tight lot, and word soon spreads about the characters' kind actions. At any time, the characters can utilise the help of the chimneysweeps to gather information. In BookTown, the characters will have advantage on Charisma checks to gain information, but as contact must be made with the boys and girls, only 1 such check can be made in the day using the advantage — other checks are as normal. There may be some occasions where the help of the boys and girls is particularly pertinent, and on others less so; use your own judgement to modify future checks accordingly.

SM9. The Statuary

A precarious timber platform is lashed onto jutting metal beams forming a timber structure and a balcony. The balcony is crammed with erotic statues and unusual stones. A ship's beam stretches across the open space between the timber structure and the warehouse. A knee-high fence extends across the north wall of the balcony.

The beam is broad (about 2 feet wide) and requires no check to cross, despite its exposed nature. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices bands of interconnecting metal nailed across the beam. Marrow deliberately placed these for his beloved **gremlin** Muckduk. The bands enable the creature to use its *shocking grasp* on those crossing the bridge (half damage, but affects all those who are on the bridge when the spell is used). halfway

Muckduk, knows the location of Lady Grey's manse and that it is filled with members of its own kind. Unless the subject of Lady Grey comes up, however, it is unlikely even to guess what the characters are up to here. Muckduk attacks foes wearing armour in preference to all others.

Treasure: The statues come from a temple to the Ash Queen (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***) and are extremely risqué. There are a dozen in all, and sold to the right collector, they will fetch at least 50 gp each. They each weigh 100 pounds.

SM10. Marrow's Roost

A timber building has been lashed to the upper structure and balanced on hefty iron girders.

The latched door into the room is trapped. The latch must be lifted 90-degrees from the door to unhitch the trap spring. Failure to do so when opening the door triggers the trap and fires a javelin. The javelin is +8 to hit. *Hit:* 1d6 piercing plus 1d6 poison damage (no poison damage with DC 15 Constitution saving throw). If the characters check the latch before opening it, a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the latch mechanism is designed to do something in addition to just opening, and from that point it is easy to figure out with a DC 5 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A wire can be cut to disarm the trap, or the characters can simply ensure that no one will be in front of the javelin when they set off the trap.

Beyond the door is a cramped chamber. When characters enter, read the following description.

This low-ceilinged timber chamber is crammed with oddments and jars smelling of rich spices.

Marrow sleeps and works herein, snoozing on a fine hammock hung across the chamber and working at his hobby of collecting insects. Marrow has the company of a **muddust mephit** that he purchased 2 years ago from a menagerie dealer in the Sinks. The creature serves Marrow as a slave and guardian.

Treasure: The room is crammed with objects: a treatise on illusionary magic (which if read grants a special +1 to all Arcana checks made when using the book as a reference), a *spell scroll* (*blur*), alchemist's supplies 2 bottles of laudanum, 1 bottle of chloroform (see sidebox below), a jar of ground meat with nuts held in it (food to draw the magpie messenger used to convey notes to Lady Grey), a killing jar set with a tarantula lid with a silver screw worth 45 gp, a flint and steel in a fancy lacquer box worth 25 gp, a writing desk containing a fine silver-tipped quill worth 15 gp, and within the desk are a pad of tiny note papers with a wax seal that are used to send notes to Lady Grey using her magpie (see **SM3**). The hammock depicts a twisting beech tree and is hung with 6 tiny silver bells worth 40 gp in total. The ephemera herein also include a dozen display cases filled with insects, all carefully mounted and labelled. If correctly priced and sold, the set could be worth around 350 gp.

Marrow's meticulous ledger and strongbox are hidden behind a false wall under the eaves of the ceiling. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice it, though specifically searching in the rafters reduces the DC to 10. The strongbox is iron and locked: A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. ItThe strongbox contains 270 gp in leather purses and a small mound of 5-guinea bank notes worth 55 pp in all.

The ledger makes interesting, if terrible and cruel reading, and notes the size, gender, and weight of all "beneficiaries" (as Marrow calls his victims) over the past 6 years. These include more than 170 souls, many of which are children. Of the victims, almost half are listed as "alive." characters studying the ledger note that every so often Sprat and Marrow refer to sundry unnamed contacts, but that specially prized or unusual victims, some recently "deceased and unmarked children," are sold privately to "our dear friend and Lady."

SM11. Sprat's Roost

This is a steeply gabled rooftop, with a ladder accessing it from an open window below. The roof is fractured by a break, and rises to a pair of hefty chimney pots.

The rooftop is fine to use unless it has been raining, in which case a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to move safely on it. The hole accesses Sprat's lair under the eaves. The chimney pots could make excellent improvised ranged weapons if used to try to strike something in the courtyard below. ,points of

SM12. Sprat's Precious Things

This low-ceilinged chamber contains a large looking glass resting by a fine four-poster bed, which in turn is dwarfed by a series of trunks.

If Sprat is present and unaware of the characters' incursion, he will be relaxing on his bed and examining his lovelies. If he has been alerted, he will be readied to attack anyone who descends through the hole in the roof. Sprat loves all things feminine, to the point of stealing clothes and perfumes to enjoy the scent of his potential paramours.

Treasure: The looking glass is worth 75 gp and is an ideal object to use to introduce the concept of Between to your players (see sidebox below). Sprat has been collecting these feminine objects for years, and the trunks are filled with clothing, silks, and lace, as well as stolen love letters, pressed flowers, and even a wedding dress. Amongst the objects are a silver travelling set worth 125 gp (the pill jar of which contains two live darkwasp insectum† (see *The Cyclopædia Infestarum*)), a silver wedding ring (labelled "*To my darling Gregory*") worth 25 gp, a bridal bouquet, an iron horseshoe, a beautiful crystal perfume bottle with atomizer worth 40 gp, a fine gold and bronze comb worth 25 gp, a cutthroat razor set in a mother-of-pearl holder with platinum hasps worth 175 gp, a collection of small bent silver mirrors (worth 35 gp in total due to metal content), and a wardrobe full of the finest gentleman's attire, all still boxed (making a total of 7 sets of gentleman's clothes worth 30 gp per set), 3 pair of crocodile-skin boots hasped with brass buckles worth 20 gp per pair, a walking cane with a dagger in the hilt, a trio of silk neck-scarves, and a pair of high-topped hats.

SM13. The Mite Spire

The spire is very steep but has a flimsy ladder affixed to it, leading to a small opening near the weathervane.

The spire is very steep and horribly exposed, even with a ladder (which is barely lashed to the spire) the 30-foot climb requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Falls result in the character dropping 70–90 feet (taking 7d6 to 9d6 damage). The opening at the top is very small; a Small character can pass through by squeezing, but a Medium character requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to pass through. A small balcony of wood hangs around the weathervane, creating a platform for the mites to attack enemies.

Treasure: Beneath the soot and grime of the city, the weathervane, which depicts a dog barking at the moons, is made of copper and silver and worth 150 gp.

New Drug and Poison: Laudanum and Chloroform

A tincture of opium, laudanum is used throughout Castorhage, as is chloroform. Both are commonly used by golem-stitchers and homunculi wives to render their current subject unconscious to better enable dissection.

Chloroform

Chloroform causes unconsciousness, and a rag soaked in it may be used as a melee weapon, provided that the attacker takes the defender unawares, by a contest of by making a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Perception),check to place the rag over the victim's face. If the attack hits, the target must make a DC15 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 hour.

Laudanum

Ingesting laudanum causes the subject to drop to level 4 exhaustion unless a DC 15 Constitution savesaving throw is successful, in which case the level of exhaustion is merely 2.

Finding the Right Collector

The vain and frustrated Sprat gives you an ideal chance to give the characters the briefest of glimpses into Between. While a character is examining the looking glass, they clearly see in the mirror a small figure rush immediately behind them. However, nothing is with them in the room. If the character examines the mirror long enough and makes a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, they can just glimpse the shadow of something falling across the corner edge of the mirror. As soon as it is spotted, however, the shadow moves, never to return. All other attempts to use the mirror or see anything else fail.

SM14. Lady Urchin and her Court

The chapel is an open blackened space below, whilst the spire is crisscrossed with bits of wood, chains, and hanging detritus.

Small characters can move through the detritus framework within the spire easily. Medium characters face two problems: First, the floor is considered difficult terrain, and second, their weight. For each round a Medium creature is within the dangling framework, roll 1d6. On a 1, the whole thing collapses, dropping everyone who does not make a successful DC 10 Dexterity save onto the chapel floor, 90 feet below.

Residing within is Lady Urchin, a tangerine-coloured **mite**† wearing a deerstalker hat and carrying a stick with a cat's head on both ends, is a colleague of Sprat and Marrow and a cousin twice removed of the Shrunken King (see ***L1: Hereafter***). She is aware of the characters' actions in the prior adventure. Characters who treated her kin honourably are treated with respect — Lady Urchin attacks them but regrets doing so. She also compliments them on their own attacks, particularly if they kill one of her fanatical followers. Those without honour are insulted, chastised, and told that they will be on tonight's menu; they are enemies of the mites and one day will regret their foulness. Lady Urchin offers surrender only to honourable characters, and those whom she overpowers are treated with similar respect as detailed below. Urchin has 6 **mite** followers, all mounted on 6 **fire beetles**, while she is mounted on a particularly hairy **giant spider**. All Urchin's followers are utterly petrified and loyal to her, up to and including throwing themselves off the roof.

Lady Urchin is a **mite** with 6 hit points.

Tactics: Lady Urchin orders her troops to fight from the spire using ranged weapons. Knowing they have the advantage, the mites do not engage in melee unless inside the spire. To prove her power, at one stage Lady Urchin calls a halt to combat and commands one of her followers to throw himself from the roof to prove their fanatical loyalty. After such a demonstration, Urchin demands her opponents immediately surrender and is amazed if they do not., Lady Urchin surrenders to any honourable foes (see above) fewer than if her forces are clearly defeated (see Sidebox).

Treasure: The royal treasury is scattered across the hanging detritus frame and consists of a yellow-and-black kite, a rather battered cello worth 25 gp, a 20-foot-long dry snakeskin, a small silver bell worth 5 gp, a large carnival mask depicting a two-faced demon, a coil of gold wire worth 20 gp, a giant rat's skull, and a dozen rusty cheese-graters.

One For Sorrow: Tracing the Line Back to Lady Grey

Destroying the supply from Marrow and Sprat does not end the demand for bodies, and sooner or later Lady Grey finds another supplier. This adventure is not concluded simply by putting Sprat and Marrow out of business. The presence of clues and an inquisitive magpie are subtle hints, but should pique the characters' interest enough to warrant at least a tertiary examination of where the magpie goes. If it does not, do not be overly concerned; the next adventure does not depend upon the characters concluding this adventure, only having taking part in the right way.

Sending any kind of note offering goods to Lady Grey draws her driver to Sprat and Marrow's place, but unless the note is forged in Marrow's handwriting, on a successful a DC 16 Dexterity check with a forgery kit, or Marrow is convinced to write it himself, Lady Grey is alert to the possibility of attack.

The Black Coach

If openly approached with a message, Lady Grey sends her coach and driver to meet the characters. The coach draws up outside the junkyard within the hour and waits for 10 minutes before leaving. The coach is drawn by 4 **zombie horses**†. The driver is a relatively mindless **lesser flesh golem**† (uses the flesh golem stat block with 42 (5d8 + 20) hit points, 1 slam attack, CR 3 (700 XP)) that pays little heed to who enters the carriage before taking them across the district to the edge of the Great BookTown Cemetery where the Manse of Lady Grey crumbles.

The advantage of taking this approach is that the dogs that patrol the grounds (**LG1**) will be locked up when the characters are taken to the manse. If she is suspicious, however, Grey instructs her Gamekeeper coachman to release the dogs as soon as the visitors have been let into the house and tells him to lurk on the grounds in case she calls for help.

Part Three: Lady Grey

Lady Grey wept for 3 months when she found out she was barren, and soon afterward her husband started blaming her. Becoming wicked almost overnight, he began to say terrible things about her. Months became years and still she said nothing. Then one day something inside her snapped. Unfortunately, he was on hand when she gripped the skewer and stayed still when it pierced his skull.

She was a murderer.

Fleeing into the city, Lady Grey tried at first to take children as her own, but they were always escaping, or their parents would turn up, or they would not quite fit her expectations of children being seen but not heard. Drawn into darker corners, she found herself in BookTown where she became acquainted with — and soon fell in love with — a surgeon-artist called Lucien. Lucien was a member of the Panacea, a group of demented artists who believe a purge is coming to cleanse the foulness from the Blight, wipe it clean, and create a paradise for artists. The day of the Panacea, they say, is coming, and when an angel called the Beautiful arrives, the day will be upon them. Only those who have seen the light will be granted access to the Paradise she will create. All the other minds, the dull, the selfish, the greedy, and the lazy, will perish in the light of enlightenment that the angel wears behind her mask.

Lucien died of consumption despite Lady Grey's fanatical attempts to keep him alive, and her mind finally and fully snapped. Convinced that she must educate her child to spread the word of the Panacea, Lady Grey set about taking the natural path for her — to make the perfect child in Lucien's image. From that time on, Lady Grey has been experimenting, becoming a homunculi wife set upon creating a perfect child. She has dabbled with cadavers, creating alchymic undead† from some of the corpses of children Sprat and Marrow supplied her with. She's also dabbled in creating other things, mere essays in her art that enable her to know more and to work toward her goal of creating a child to continue her work.

Now her supply of materials to work with is about to be broken, and she will be very, very angry …

Breaking the Law

Lady Grey represents the first seriously unclear NPC the characters meet in ***The Levee***. What she does is morally repugnant, vile, and murderous. But she has powerful connections and a respectability that gives her allies in the local constabulary. That she bribes people also helps; money talks in the Blight.

If at any time Lady Grey suspects she is under threat, she sends a message to the local constabulary at the Watch Tower (**B28** in **Chapter 3**) and informs Captain Cleg that she fears Anarchists are watching her. He immediately despatches a pair of constables (**guards**) to watch her property from the lich gate (**LG1**). These constables, like the others in the city, are armed and have whistles to alert others. If at any time the constables are attacked and have an opportunity to do so, they sound their whistles. Make a general Perception check for others nearby, and if the dice roll is 15+, another 2 constables arrive 1 minute later, and so on.

How any potential brush with the law goes is subject to some ideas as given in the sidebox "Breaking the Law." At some stage, the characters are going to become fugitives whether they like it or not, so in many ways an early dalliance with the "respectable side of the Blight" sets a mark. However, you must decide how much of an effect this has on the adventure path and potential ongoing campaign.

Tactics: Before combat, a constable is supposed to sound his whistle if he sees or hears something suspicious. ,Surrender is not an option for a constable; they've heard too many nasty stories about what happens to them if they do. Running away, however, is a possibility.

Breaking the Law

In many ways, this is a matter of personal style and choice. When the characters get a reputation and end up on the wrong side of the law, you need to decide how much a wizard-choked dictator state such as Castorhage is going to pursue them.

Bear a few things in mind:

- First, you. How much work and how much repetition do you want in the characters being criminals? Encounters with the law can get very boring and, as a consequence, diluted, if every street corner heaves with incredibly vigilant constables who know everyone wanted in the whole city.
- In a city where murder is an everyday occurrence, just how much are the Watch even going to care if the characters butchered someone nasty? The answer to that question entirely depends upon the NPC's influence. And once gone, the source of money may dry up. As a city that runs on bribery, this could be a big deal or as little a thing as you wish.
- Castorhage is big. Massive. And vastly, vastly crowded.
- Think that a man or woman is defined by her enemies, and the bigger they are, the tougher things get.
- Have fun — this is the only thing that really matters, so run this how you wish.

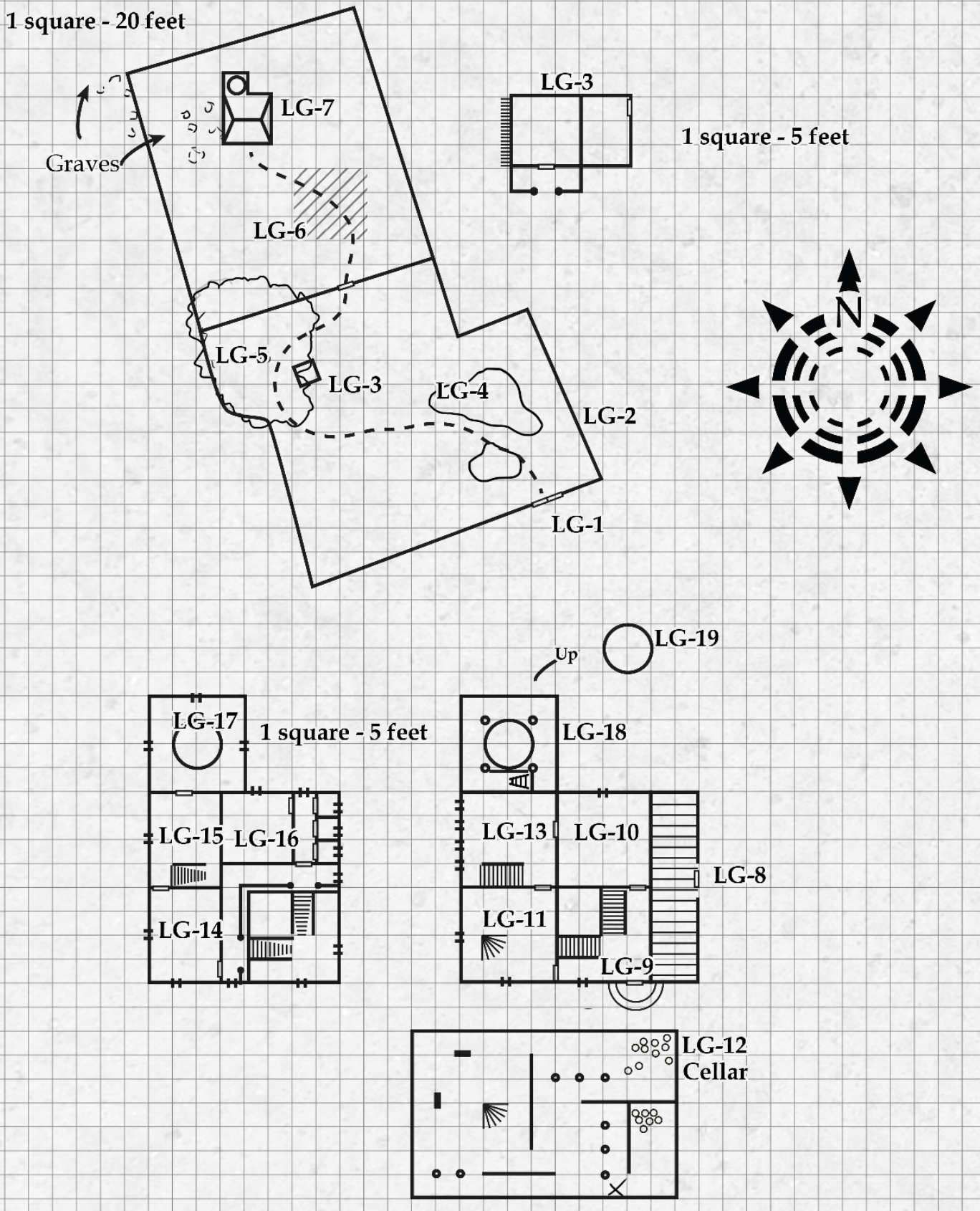
The Manse at the Lich Gate Wall: General Features

In a decrepit corner of the BookTown Graveyard is the old manse of the graveyard's caretaker. This manse sags in a surrounding of rotting, ivy-choked graves so piled with dead that they spill forth from the ground. The crunch of bones is everywhere. This place was once used, long ago, as a sanatorium, an isolation hospital for the pox. Away from the few paths, the twisting trees and ivy and brambles are heavy undergrowth.

The manse itself is crumbling, its walls weathered by the acid rain of the Blight. Gutters are clogged or dislocated, windows cracked, roofs crumpled. Once-magnificent stained-glass windows are faded by grime. These windows are behind hefty iron bars to prevent those within trying to break the glass and escape. Decay has set in everywhere.

Dead cats wander the corridors inside. These cats are mangy; they wander randomly — or perhaps not so randomly — to some hidden purpose. Sometimes they lash out at passers-by, but mostly they just flee or yowl pitifully. Scatter as many as you like throughout the manse for atmosphere. These are **cats**, but they are undead, and are immune to poison damage, and the poisoned and unconscious conditions.

THE MANSE AT THE LICH GATE WALL



LG1. The Graven Lich Gate

A rusting iron grate pierces a high stone wall topped with rusted spikes and broken shards of glass. Beyond, ivy-choked trees huddle together in the claustrophobic confines of a walled garden. An iron archway of interlocking nails is shaped in the likeness of a one-eyed gargoyle. By the left of the gate, a brass pull-ring hangs. Below it hangs a badly painted sign that reads, "*Beware, dogs, no visitors welcome.*"

The wall is 20 feet high, and kept clear of ivy, requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb). The glass and spikes at the top are jagged and set in concrete; and an successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross it without taking 1d4 points of damage, although characters throwing heavy cloth such as leather and sacking over the glass lower the DC to 8. The gate is locked at all times, the key being kept by the Gamekeeper. The lock is a hefty padlock and chain. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check.

At all times, 3 **Blight-bulls** (Ssee *Thethe Cyclopædia Infestarum***: Part 5** "Fighting Dog, Light") patrol the yard and generally spend their days lazing near the wall. If alerted, they bark, alerting others in the manse. The dogs are nasty looking but quite cowardly; they nip in and out of combat, but if damaged withdraw for 1 round, barking loudly. The smells within the manse drive them away in fear, and they avoid all undead and alchymic undead in the area, particularly Lady Grey, whose name brings a pitiful whine from one of the dogs if spoken aloud in earshot.

Development: The pull-ring jangles a bell in the old shed (**LG3**) and alerts the Gamekeeper, who approaches with the dogs at his side to inquire about visitors, none of whom is welcome.

LG2. The Outer Wall

The outer wall stretches around the whole manse garden, and does not vary from its 20-foot height. It is kept clear of vegetation by the Gamekeeper. However, access can be attained from an overgrown stile (marked on the map) entering the BookTown Cemetery (**B24** in **Chapter 3**). A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to spot the narrow stile, which is choked with brambles that are easily cleared.

LG3. The Old Shed

A stout stone barn with an iron chimney, this single-storey building has a slate roof and a lean-to at the front and side. Piles of wood suffocate the place.

The shed is home to the Gamekeeper, one of Lady Grey's oldest creations and subsequently one of her least successful. The Gamekeeper is a **lesser flesh golem**† (uses the flesh golem stat block with 42(5d8 + 20) hit points, 1 slam attack, CR 3 (700 XP)), a colossus of a man made of parts of other men. Sores erupt across its body, and its stitching is cruelly raised and frequently repaired. The cottage is quite cosy within, but very crowded with a kitchen and enormous bed. It has a dozen songbirds in fine cages, a barrel of slated beef, a fine bottle of brandy, and three leashes for the dogs. A large bell hangs by the fire and rings if the bell-pull at the gate (**LG1**) is pulled. The Gamekeeper leans its scythe against the wall outside when not working, but likes to clean its fowling crossbow (an arbalest) inside. The lean-to is full of tools, and the dogs are sometimes shut up inside it.

The Gatekeeper is also a **lesser flesh golem**† (uses the flesh golem stat block with 42(5d8 + 20) hit points, 1 slam attack and 1 ranged attack, CR 3 (700 XP))but carries an arbalest crossbow* with the following additional action:

Arbalest crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400. *Hit*: 2d6 piercing damage.

Treasure: The Gamekeeper has ,a leather scrip containing 42 gp, a case with 10 bolts.

*See ***Cyclopaedia Infestarum***, part 3.

LG4. The Pond

The main track crosses a broad, slimy pond via a covered timber bridge.

The bridge is sound, and the pond is deep and slimy but otherwise safe. Characters can swim across it without any check required.

A pair of **gremlins**† lurks in the timber bridge looking to cause mischief. They're afraid of the Gamekeeper and will not assail anyone in the carriage, but other creatures are fair prey. They single out those with metals first, lurking halfway across the bridge, which is approximately 40 feet long and 8 feet wide.

LG5. The Wood and Carriage Stables

Deeper into the garden, the wood thickens, becoming tangled with huge brambles and thorns. By the roadside before this thick wood is a timber stables.

The stable is in a perilous state but collapses only if seriously damaged (20 points of damage or more). When not in use, Lady Grey's coach is drawn up at the side of the stables. The coach is a fine one, with room for 6 within at a push, and with comfortable leather seating. Its side bears a coat of arms depicting a gargoyle being strangled by a snake: a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check identifies it as the Grey family crest, the Greys being an old, old family in Castorhage.

When not used, the 4 **zombie horses**† stand perfectly still in the stables. The horses have dead stares, a stare which makes other animals nervous. They make no noise, but have a peculiar stench to them, an echo of hay now gone rotten, a suggestion of sweat and work gone stale. They attack only if attacked.

The wood beyond is very thick, but has suggestions of trails. The Gamekeeper actually uses these trails to lay his traps about the wood. Characters crossing the wood are going to encounter a bear trap somewhere along the way.

Bear Trap: The trap can be spotted with a successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) check. No intelligence check is required to understand what the iron-jawed trap is intended to do. It can be released for re-use with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check, but if the check fails, the character attempting to re-set it will be caught in it. Anyone stepping on the trap (determine randomly if the characters fail to spot it) takes 1d6+1 points of piercing damage and is caughtrestrained. If this happens, someone will need to release the trap as above, and failure indicates an additional 1d24 points of damage to the character caught in it.

LG6. The Walled Garden

A second iron gate (this one not locked but very rusty and requiring a DC 16 Strength check to open) gives access to a walled garden crammed with statues and gravestones. The overflowing bodies here are much thicker, and the remains of tombstones and broken mausoleums lie everywhere. A **ghoul wolf**† guards the main road. The creature is on a 30-foot chain but has learnt not to try to attack the carriage. Anything else that passes on the road is fair prey.

The Gamekeeper has strewn several bear traps in the vicinity of the ghoul wolf (the creature knows where they are). Characters moving past the wolf in the shaded area of the garden encounter 1d3 of the traps as they move through.

Bear Trap.: The trap can be spotted with a successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) check. No intelligence check is required to understand what the iron-jawed trap is intended to do. It can be released for re-use with



a successful DC 10 Dexterity check, but if the check fails, the character attempting to re-set it will be caught in it. Anyone stepping on the trap (determine randomly if the characters fail to spot it) takes 1d6+1 points of piercing damage and is caught. If this happens, someone will need to release the trap as above, and failure indicates an additional 1d24 points of damage to the character caught in it.

LG7. The Manse

When characters first arrive at the manse, read the following description

> This decrepit building was clearly once grand, but hides an obvious dark secret. The windows are barred, and the glass within — where it remains — depicts the work of physicians and surgeons; skeletons and dissections form part of the fabric of all the images. A hefty wooden door with a gargoyle knocker stands at the top of a short set of steps. Nearby, a glasshouse leans and rots. Behind, and utterly at odds with the rest of the building, is an industrial-looking shed with a huge chimney rising from it.

LG8. The Glasshouse

> The glasshouse has partially collapsed, its hefty thick glass shattered in many places to create a hazard of dangerous fragments. Thick vines and strange growths crowd the structure.

Characters attempting to enter the glasshouse must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check to do so without being cut on the shards: those that fail take 1d6 points of slashing damage from cuts.

The body of an intruder lies unnoticed in the northern area of the glasshouse, his demise — being lacerated across the throat by a huge piece of glass — all too obvious to anyone who finds him, an act that requires exploring the glasshouse and a successful DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) check. The figure is a male human, and he wears a hefty poacher's coat within which are two decaying hares he had snared. He carries a fine cane carved to resemble a horse worth 25 gp, a longbow, and 12 arrows.

LG9. The Lobby

> The door is heavy and has a gargoyle knocker.

Knocking on the door is unsafe. Lady Grey has created two guardians that lurk in the lower chambers to ensure that she is not disturbed. Only the Gamekeeper is able to pass them unmolested, and any use of the knocker brings the deformed **ogre** from **LG11**. The door is stiff and must be forced open (DC 14 Strength check). Within, the chamber is shabby, wallpaper hangs from the decayed plaster, and a dark pyrebeetle chandelier hangs limply from the high ceiling above an overlooking balcony reached by splintered stairs. Angels grin from newel posts at the end of dark wooden handrails. The staircases are open, allowing access below.

Treasure: The chandelier has seen better days, but if it can be successfully removed without breaking it, which requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. It could be worth about 500 gp if cleaned.

LG10. Guests and Entertainment: Rags of Lace and Cobwebs

> This was obviously once a happy house filled with guests and friends. An enormous oak table is still set for dinner, with a fancy silver dinner service now tarnished beneath cobweb. Webs are everywhere in this chamber, clinging to the elaborate sconces, across furniture, and over a fireplace.

The cobwebs are unnaturally thick and have been created by the **giant spiders** in **LG15**.

Treasure: The service needs a cleaning but is a full 12-piece set worth 300 gp.

LG11. Abandoned Kitchen

> Once this was clearly a well-stocked kitchen. It is now unused.

Having almost no need to eat, Lady Grey dismissed her staff long ago, and now the cupboards are literally bare. One of Grey's longer-lived creations, the cross of an ogre with a boar, lurks in this room. A big monstrosity, the creature is an amalgamation of boar and ogre and temper. The creature is terrified of Lady Grey, who has told the thing she can make it dissolve any moment she wishes. The thing is only a few months old, having been created in her crucible (q.v.) and has already lost several fingers to rot.

A Note on the Abomination

Those abominations listed in Eneerg the Keeper's great seminal work — *The Tome of Horrors* — are specifically created from humanoids, monstrous humanoids, animals, and vermin. The ones found in the Blight resulting from application of the ground-breaking work with the *Staff of Life* do not always conform to this limitation and can be created from any mix of corporeal creatures, living or dead.

Death in Castorhage

Dying is a big business in the Blight, particularly if you don't want your relatives to run the risk of running into you again. Many reputable funeral parlours now operate in the city (almost as many as disreputable ones), and the protection of your corpse is an important part of life. Here are the most common options:

Dumping in the Lyme: This option has several benefits: it's cheap, it's quick, and it has a reasonable chance of disposing of your corpse without the risk of its returning since it generally gets eaten. The downsides are a lack of respect and ceremony, and the increasing number of grave robbers who now own boats having grown wise to the practice.

Ghats: The cheapest option and the most commonly used, ghats line the river and are constantly burning. At times of plague, great pyres are lit that remain burning for months, sometimes years. Cremation costs from 10 gp upward; higher fees include sweet-smelling woods, services, prayers, and even options to have ashes scattered at holy locations.

Burial: The lack of space makes burials more expensive. Even the cheapest plot runs to 100 gp, and a coffin and appropriate transportation, dealing with the corpse and other options costing at least 25 gp. In theory, there is no upper limit to these costs, and accoutrements are outlined at the end of the article. The downside is that burying a corpse is risky and tempting; grave-robbing is one of the three most common crimes in the city, and harsh penalties have done nothing to curb it. To counteract this crime, another option is being offered.

Secure Burial: Coffins and mausoleums now come with traps. The of various sorts, with cost varying according to the nature of the traps being installed.

Burial tax	25 gp
Coffin, plain	2–15 gp
Coffin, fancy	25–250 gp
Coffin, iron	50 gp
Coffin, luxurious	300–1,000 gp
Death duty	5+ gp
Embalming	250 gp
Funeral carriage, rent	10 gp
Funeral fees, sundry	10–1,000 gp
Funerary statue	10–1,000 gp
Headstone	10–250 gp
Mausoleum, standard	500–1,250 gp
Mausoleum, grand	2,500–12,500 gp
Mourners	1 sp/hour each
Performers	1 gp/hour each
Stonecutter	1–100 gp/headstone

The Corpse Act of 1770 (more commonly known as the *Corpse* [Laying to Rest] *Act*) changed the death and burial game significantly at its passage 7 years ago. For the ever-increasing labour and industrial needs of the empire and its colonies, it was deemed that the city-state's dead were a resource that could not go undeveloped when the options for alchymic-unliving and even animation of simple forms of undead provided such potential for bountiful and cheap labour. With the passage of the act, all newly deceased (or those terminally ill and close to death) are required to pay a Death Duty to ensure that mortal remains are not subject to later reanimation for labour. The base fee of this duty is 5 gp, but it increases dramatically for those in positions of skilled or specialised labour for whom the Staff of Life



is a viable option. If the duty is paid, the survivors are free to dispose of the corpse as they wish. Otherwise, it is subject to necromantic reanimation or application of *elixir of life* for the purpose of becoming an "Indenture to the State." Even if the subject survives the process as an alchymic-undying, he is still considered slave-property belonging to the State if he failed to pay the appropriate Death Duty. Many of these indentured are sent to serve the labour needs in the Between colonies.

Even with the increased labour needs of the empire, most of the burgeoning supply of corpses (the Lowfolk† are usually unable to pay the duty fee) are stored in secret warehouses to await their eventual usage. Anarchists and specifically The Raven have lately been spreading the rumour that many of these remains are not even animated but rather are used as fuel to feed infernal furnaces deep beneath the Capitol or hidden within the Royal Navy's ironclad dreadnaughts. The agitation is spreading, and the whispers of revolution continue to grow. To date, the Crown Justices have seen fit not to extend the reach of this law to the empire's colonies abroad, but such an act seems to be inevitable at some point and may well prove to be the spark that ignites the tender of rebellion.

Despite its humanoid appearance, the bogre thing moves about on hoofed trotters. Its background is clearly porcine but mixed with a giant of some kind, and there is a humanoid face to the head, though stretched and drawn horribly.

Clearly, the creature is short-lived, its fingers seem to have begun to rot off, and its flesh seems to struggle with the contents of its skeleton. The suffering and pain this creature has endured is apparent. It might react well to kindness, or it might not, who knows? Despite its obviously hybrid appearance, it fights as an ogre.The boar-ogre monstrosity uses **ogre** statistics with the following changes:

- It has 68 hit points (8d10 + 24).
- It has movement of 40 ft.
- It has the following attack types:

  Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.
  Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.
- It has the following traits:

  Charge. If the boar-ogre moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- It is CR 3 (700 XP).

Tactics: Before combat, the boar-ogre sits around whimpering and worrying about how long it has to live. During combat, the boar-ogre uses a mixture of brute anger and childish fear; the thing cries as it attacks, and yells and sobs if hurt.

Treasure: The boar-ogre has been collecting toys to play with. So far, it has several cornhusk dolls, a pair of pearl dice worth 10 gp, and a stuffed dodo wearing silver-rimmed spectacles without glass worth 60 gp.

LG12. The Cellar

An appalling stench, wet and horrid, wafts up from the cellar.

The cellar is knee-deep in water that has passed through and been polluted by the bodies in the graveyard. Merely entering the room at floor level is dangerous, as gases have built up – gases that are flammable, not to mention poisonous. Emphasis should be on the fetid smell and the oily feel of the air that is permeated by corpse gas and the disgusting particles that are expelled when corpses decay.

When the characters enter the cellar, anyone with a passive Perception of 15 or higher, or making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, will notice several rat carcasses in various advanced stages of decay floating in the water. If they are still determined to enter the chamber, they need to each make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious after exposure to the corpse gasses that have built up in the room. Any that fail the saving throw can repeat it at the end of each of their turns. For each failure after the initial saving throw attempt, the character will suffer the temporary loss of 1 point of Constitution. If their Constitution reaches 0, they die. The Constitution damage can be healed by completing a long rest.

Wisdom (),Constitutionemporarily losingstitution The points return after a long rest, but if Constitution is reduced to 0, the character is reduced to 0 hit points and must begin making death saving throws while sinking under the water. Stabilizing allows the character to return to 1 point of Constitution and escape the water.**Treasure:** Amongst the water and corruption is a large chest partially submerged in water at the point marked X on the map. It is visible from the entry stairs with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. The chest is swollen and damp, which has mercifully rusted the workings of a poisoned arrow trap so that it no longer presents a threat. The chest has been stored here by Lady Grey to prevent thieves and contains 3 bags of gold coins (300 gp in total)

Messy Ends

Some abominations and golems — those created by master golem-stitchers, for instance — live for decades, their bodies stable and fleshy. Others are not so lucky. Those made with low-grade elixir or created by less-skilful creators do not live long, and they know it. Such unnatural unions live in constant pain and with the ever-present terror of being unmade and literally falling apart.

The creatures created by Lady Grey fall into this latter category and don't so much die as disintegrate. When they reach 0 hit points, the creatures look vaguely surprised and then scream in terror as their bodies slough into thrashing parts, denaturing before the very eyes of their opponent. Characters seeing this horrible transformation for the first time must make a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be sickened (treat as poisoned condition) for 10 minutes. The second time and each time thereafter that such a dissolution is witnessed, the DC is reduced by 5 until reaching 0 and no further save is necessary.

For more information on the nature of these strangely crafted abominations, see *The Staff of Life* in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

LG13. The Garden Room

Long, tall windows of grimy glass overlook this room, which was clearly once a garden room. Statues peek from the chamber, as well as decaying plants, all now throttled by thick webs with something at their dark heart hanging just below the ceiling.

Two of Lady Grey's more successful recent creatures live in this room, a cross between giant spiders and giant centipedes. These creatures are treated as ordinary **giant spiders**, but they have 20 legs rather than just 8, and their move is 50 ft. lives in this roomThe creatures lurk in their mucoid webs (which do not burn). Characters looking into the webs can see numerous birds and cats trapped in its strands. One of the cats still struggles feebly (it is a dead cat that attacks if freed, see The Manse at the Lich Gate Wall: General Features above).

Treasure: The statues are all of angels. Many have been taken from the graveyard beyond the walls and brought here by the ogre and Gamekeeper at the mistress's request.

LG14. The Bedchamber

The four-poster bed herein has not been slept in for years.

Lady Grey doesn't sleep, but she occasionally tries to. She always ends up loudly sobbing at her perpetual wakefulness.

Treasure: A small silver mirror worth 25 gp and a fancy comb with a gilt and pearl handle worth 25 gp lie on a dressing table.

LG15. The Library

This chamber is a library crammed with books on shelves, in mouldering piles, and lying discarded on the floor.

The door to **LG17** is locked), and. Lady Grey has the only key. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. Two young lads were lured here to sweep the chimney a couple of months ago, and did not survive the visit. They

New Secrets

The Secret of the Staff of Life

Characters deciphering this secret become aware of its risks and benefits, but it requires reading the three-volume set, which takes at least a month. After reading the tomes, the character becomes aware of the secret of using the *Staff of Life*. It explains, in detail the process, as briefly outlined in area **LG18** of using the *Staff of Life* to create alchymic-undying, alchymic-unliving, and abominations. It also explains the process by which to create the various grades of *elixir of life* (see *The Cyclopædia Infestarum*).

The books are worth 1,500 gp.

The Secret of the Monkey's Paw

Characters deciphering this secret become aware of its risks and benefits. Reading this forbidden, damned work takes a fortnight. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check is then required to understand the process, or the book must be read again. After this, the character is convinced that the book is alive and contains the arcanely flayed spirit of a mad wizard Azeer K'Shippep. The character has vivid, appalling nightmares roughly once a fortnight in which their soul is forcibly ejected from their body, taken by K'Shippep, and made to do wicked things that can only be vaguely recalled. As a benefit, however, the character gains the ability to cast *animate dead* once per month, not as a spell, but as innate spellcasting.

are now alchymically-created **ghouls** who serve as guards for Lady Grey. They attack anyone that enters without her.

Treasure: Hundreds of books are here, almost all on the subject of anatomy and healing. For every 10 minutes spent searching, characters get a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate the following items: a leather-bound notebook with the spells *magic missile*, *charm person*, and *acid arrow* inscribed within, usable as a spell scroll; a hefty tome called the *Magik of Unmaking* (worth 200 gp); a copy of the *Treatise on Familiars and Arcane Slaves* (this ten-volume set grants advantage to all Arcana checks made when using it as a reference, and is worth around 500 gp). Note that the Treatise could not possibly be brought along as a piece of equipment, and it takes 24 hours to use it as a reference. There is also; a three-volume set containing the *secret of the staff of life* (see sidebox); a *spell scroll* (*fireball*); a brass and iron gargoyle paperweight worth 25 gp; *oil of etherealness* in an old bottle labeled "*Bland's Liniment*"; and a book made of the flayed skin of a monkey with one mummified paw still attached that contains the *secret of the monkey's paw* (sidebox).

LG16. Servant's Wing

Each of these rooms has been left neat and tidy by staff who left long ago.

Chimney Wing

The chimney wing is Lady Grey's latest addition to the manse. It contains her crucible where she creates alchymic undead, tries to raise children, and makes abominations. The chimney serves to allow Lady Grey to incinerate anything considered too dangerous, or any experiments that went so wrong that they risked her life and had to be destroyed immediately.

Lady Grey is a member of the Panacea, and sees her work as art, in supplication to the Beautiful, who is said by members of the Panacea to be able to remake life in whatever beautiful form she wishes. Above all, Grey wants a child of her own, however, and her last three failures still rest herein. Quite mad, the alchemist/homunculi wife never reveals her association with the group, but often issues prayers in the form of speaking the name of the Beautiful, she also has a hymn of the Beautiful that she sings (a copy of which is attached as **Handout 3**).

LG17. The Surgeon-Artist

The door opens onto a balcony area overlooking a workshop below. A great furnace rises from this chamber and into the ceiling; a large iron sphere hangs below, clearly occasionally blackened by fire. The timber floor of this balcony area is crammed with shelves and jars, some of great size, all containing something fleshy.

Lady Grey keeps her failures as well as her successes, and a bewildering number of bell jars (some of them capable of containing human-sized creatures) cram this room. They contain failed abominations, including an ape with a slug body, men and women merged partly and horribly with centipedes and apes, a cockatrice and an otyugh, as well as several revolting foetuses of pigs merged with such creatures.

Three of the jars seem to have been treated with special reverence. Each of these contains the body of a child, with the seals on the jars wrapped in roses. These contain Lady Grey's last three attempts to create her own child from cadavers of children who died. Two are girls, and one a boy. The characters recognise one of the girls as Charlotte, one of the villagers from Wicken. The wererats of Festival recently took Charlotte and she was brought here via Sprat and Marrow. At the request of Lady Grey, the girl was killed so she could create an alchymic undead child of her own. She failed. Charlotte was the girl kept at the Filleted Cat gin house in the previous adventure who left her toy behind.

A **gremlin**† lurks in the upper shadows of the chimney area. The advanced homuncule Lady Grey created from one of its own kin (**LG18**) occasionally whispers and feeds it bits of flesh from the jars. The gremlin stays hidden until fun starts, at which point it joins in.

LG18. The Crucible

A flagged workshop floor below a great chimney, into which an iron ladder rises. Below is a blackened iron sphere.

The sphere is the Cuckoo-Womb Lady Grey uses to carry out her work. She binds her victims in the sphere, to make Staff of Life worms (see below) or to release them on some creature she intends to make into an alchymic undead or an abomination. To make an abomination, she bloats the worms on the blood of the creature she wishes to conjoin with the trapped creature and waits to see what happens. If she uses the works to try to create an alchymic undead, she uses worms fed on pigs or, if she can get them, fresh, healthy human, ideally without blemish or sickness. In her twisted mind, the purer the flesh, the better. The sphere can be sealed and locked from the outside, and forms two half domesa . Made of thick iron, the crucible is presently being used to make more Staff of Life worms. A half-dead pig covered in these worms sags within.

The ladder is easy to climb (no check required), but something lurks near the top (**LG19**). **Lady Grey** works here fanatically, assisted by her **homunculus** Ketch, which is part pig and part gremlin. Ketch is nervous but does as it is told.

Before combat, Lady Grey often talks to her imaginary children Samuel, Lilly, and Katherine (the three dead children in **LG17**).

Treasure: ironbound,and Worms on the pig are bloated and ready. The dose of Staff of Life worms is worth 150 gp or could be used to make an alchymic undead. Scattered amongst the room are several charcoal images of an angel wielding a scythe, and a printed hymn (**Handout 3**). These equate to the group known as the Panacea, a set of deranged artists the characters may be able to research in the next adventure before an old friend greets them.

LG19. The Spider

Lurking in the stones at the top of the chimney some 50 feet up is a **medium gable spider** that has slipped from rooftops to here, hoping for fresher food and less trouble.

Concluding the Adventure

Killing Lady Grey and halting the supply line from Festival ends this adventure. Learning of the Panacea and that they also had visions of the angel holding the scythe adds another dimension to the characters' ongoing investigations.

At the end of the proceedings, Eleanor Shank visits the characters to warn them that she is aware that someone has been asking questions about them recently, and that they should be on their guard. It may even be wise to move. She has no further information, but their stalker is actually Enoch Nettle, an old friend of the characters who acts as an introduction to the third adventure in ***The Levee Adventure Path***, ***L3: Sea's End***. When she learns of their exploits, if she hears of anything that strikes her as moral or decent, Eleanor may offer some or all of the characters membership in the Thieves' Guild (see Appendix).

Enemy Penalties from the Previous Adventure

The characters face two enemy penalties in this adventure for their actions in ***L1: Hereafter***.

Emily Grast

Regardless of whether the characters were responsible for the death of Ammos Grast in the prior adventure or it was at the hands of Marren, Emily Grast, half-sister of Ammos, swears vengeance upon them. Emily is a **wererat leader**, and brings 3 **wererats** with her to ambush the characters. She watches the characters from a safe distance (at least 60 feet) for 1d3 days as she plans her attack, which ideally takes place after the characters have just had some trouble or conducted a raid somewhere. Emily judges that her enemy is weakest after such fights and chooses that moment to wreak her vengeance.

Tactics: Before combat, Emily wants to attack the characters in a quiet place away from help, ideally after they have engaged in combat. She follows the characters, knowing they are troublemakers, and unless spotted by them prior to an attack, she waits outside to set up an ambush in the streets. During combat, she often invokes the name of Ammos, and warns the characters that the Pack is waiting to feed upon them if they ever set foot in Festival.

The Mites of Festival

Unless the characters managed to extricate themselves from the situation with the Shrunken King by avoiding the encounter altogether or by coming up with some plausible way to avoid conflict, the Mites of Festival have also sworn vengeance.

Mites attack *en masse*, having had a couple of their number lurk through narrow spaces and follow the characters, possibly over several days. The characters may of course spot these followers, who always stay at least 60 feet from them using Dexterity (Stealth) to avoid passive Perception, but give the characters at least one chance a day over 3–4 days to spot them. When the attack comes, it is when the night is foggy with the Canker, giving the mites concealment. It should also ideally occur in the dark when the characters are heading between two locations. The 6 **mites** are mounted on **Medium gable spiders**†.



Tactics: If they can, the mites aim to bind the characters, drag them to a high gable (say 200 feet), tell them why they are being punished (a mite never forgets a slight), and then drop them over the edge. If the characters survive, the mites' honour is satisfied.

Pound of Flesh Enemy Penalty

Jediah Grast

When Jediah Grast, cousin of Emily, hears about her death at the character's hands or if she is defeated and subsequently tells of her ordeal, he and his worryingly inbred kin seek out the characters. This is detailed in ***L3: Sea's End***.

Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Two: Fires of Damnation

The characters hear more shouting at street corners, particularly the words "Staff of Life" and "the Elixir." The foul substance is being used to make alchymic undead, many of whom are now being forced to work in manufactories and mines after being killed in horrible accidents. There are other whispers that this unnatural power is being used to create a new class within a class, a ruling aristocracy that will never die. They are beginning to be called "Vampyres" by some.

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Two: Visions of an Angel

Consider carefully which player or character was most profoundly affected by the previous adventure. You should single out one such character to start dreaming about the Beautiful. The character sees the angel (a blistering unrecognizable thing held in a halo of piercing radiance) beckoning in dreams. They catch a glimpse of a bright light reflected in a mirror; they see a pale shadow fall when there is no sun.

The Beautiful is blindly aware that the characters are wrapped up in events and are closing in on her. She knows that they are coming for her, but not whether they are friends or foes. But she does know of them now … at least in her dreams, and her dreams live.

End the adventure by having a last dream where the chosen character wakes up in the night with words singing in her mind:

"I am your salvation."

Pound of Flesh Appendices

Appendix A: A Gift from the Circus Macabre

Long Lucy† (see ***L1: Hereafter***) invites the characters to a celebratory feast at the Cullinare (see **B30** in **Chapter 3**) in appreciation for their assistance and to tell them of her current work. Some would say the Cullinare is the best place to eat in BookTown. The four-storey townhouse is very exclusive. The characters are greeted by name as they arrive and taken to a private room where Lucy is talking to Dandelion and Sedge, the halfling acrobats from ***L1: Hereafter***. The pair now wear huge grins and are feasting on a pig trotter in honey as an aperitif. A hefty and battered leather bag lies nearby.

Lucy is delighted to see the characters, and immediately suggests eating. Liveried men in uniforms with waxed moustaches and a magnificent serving manner bring out the food. The dinner is turtle soup followed by salmon, then fillets of beef with horseradish sauce, gosling, potatoes and peas, with almond pudding and brandy to follow.

During the conversation, Lucy slips in the following bits of information:

- She has re-launched the Circus Macabre, and is about to embark upon a tour of the city
- She has a score of new acts, including many+ foreign acts
- She has contracted a legalese in BookTown to draw up a will that makes the characters shareholders in the Circus Macabre. In the event of her death, the proceeds of the circus will be divided equally amongst the acts and shareholders
- She has been busy trying to learn what she can about events in Wicken through her contacts across the city. Although she has drawn a blank so far, if the characters confide in her about their own trip (see **Wicken — A Side Trek** in ***L1: Hereafter***) she mentions that she has discovered that a new cult calling themselves the Panacea has sprung up in the city within the last 12 months. These cultists are drawn from artists and visionaries who worship an angel that is usually depicted carrying a scythe. They call this angel the Beautiful. They believe the angel is granting them visions that those who follow her will join her in Paradise when the Day of Judgement comes. They swear that the day is nigh.

Lucy places a pair of bottles of *Tom-a-Choische* malt whiskey (see Sidebox) out for the rest of the evening and offers the characters joy scarab insectum† (to which she has now become addicted) and a pipe. At this point, allow each character a Charisma check to see how well they get along with Lucy. Note the highest check.

As the evening draws on, Lucy hands each character their first dividend as new shareholders in the Circus Macabre, a 10-guinea bank note (worth 100 gp). She then opens her leather satchel that contains a weathered piece of scrimshaw. Lucy explains that the item is a *Between vessel*, an object from Between that somehow absorbs memories. If the characters do not know what Between is, she sums it up by saying, "We sit at a border, the only place in the world where one place meets this other, the Between. Sometimes if you look into the corners of mirrors, you'll see something from there looking back, just out of sight, always just beyond the mirror's edge. It is real, but an echo, a twisted image of our own land. Between."

She offers the vessel to the character she has most taken a shine to (the one who made the higher check above). If any character scored 15+ there is a special spark between them, and that character (and any other who checks) becomes her friend and receives the more formal ongoing friendship reward (see ***Cyclopædia Infestarum***). If no character scored 15+, make the one who scored the most her friend.

The Between Vessel

Enigma of Saturine Waves: This piece of weathered scrimshaw absorbed within it the anger of the storm, the fury of the crashing seas,

The Ancient and Honourable Art of Distilling Malt Whiskey

This art has been practised in the city of Castorhage for more than 1,200 years, the magic of producing a fermented mash from a malted barley. The true master distillers can command prices in excess of 100 gp per bottle dependent upon age (most malts are set down for at least 8 years before being drunk), but the more accessible of malts are reasonable. Most whiskeys are made outside the city, where waters are pure, with some of the most famous originating in the uplands of Eamonvale (though there are rumours of legendary distillations from the mysterious highlands of Ynys Cymragh that no outsider has ever tasted), and each is unique. Malt whiskey is very potent, around 40–60% ABV (80–120 proof).

A few of the better-known brands that can commonly be found in the Blight are detailed below.

Brand	Cost per bottle
Auld Crynie (named after a dog-eating witch)	28 gp
Eil (allegedly brewed by mites on a secret isle)	34 gp
Greekle (very strong, renowned for its kick)	22 gp
Leith (distilled by Rheman monks who take a vow of silence)	40 gp
Meall a'Bhainne (an exported Daanite clan brew only given to outsiders as a gift)	—
Sgorr Craoabh: The Black Isle Whiskey (Uplander specialty, very peaty)	54 gp
Tom-a-Choische: The Prince of Malts (Uplander standard)	32 gp

and the long life of the unbelievably vast whale that died to infuse these memories with the strength of its cathedral form. An individual holding the item receives an astonishing insight into the oceans. The first person holding it permanently gains 1 point of Wisdom from the experience. As others grasp the item, the memories within it slowly dim and the effects lessen; the second person to hold it gains the point of Wisdom if they roll over their Wisdom on 1d20; the third if they roll over their Wisdom +2 on 1d20; the fourth if they roll over their Wisdom +4; and so on until the vessel contains an amazing experience but no further benefits. A single individual can attempt to receive the effect of the Wisdom bonus only on the first time they hold the vessel

Appendix B: News from Ivy

If they rescued her during ***L1: Hereafter***, the sentient lesser flesh golem, Ivy (called the Gorgon), sends for one of the characters. She leaves the Circus Macabre for one evening and rents a discreet back room in Bell's Cabb'e House (**B25** in **Chapter 3**). She has taken to wearing a dark veil and can readily pass for a person with her face hidden. The characters note she has also taken to walking with a cane due to arthritis brought on by her distended form and maltreatment.

Ivy has been having strange visions, something that she has always suffered from. For the character, she sees a blinding white light and an arc of fire cutting across the city, laying it to waste. If asked what the arc looks like, she says it resembles a scythe. She sees people dancing in this ruin, and a great wave of light washing across the city. When the wave passes, only madness remains.

Make careful note of how the characters treat her. Ivy understands that she can never be loved, but that does not mean she wishes an empty life. She may develop a deep love for any character who treats her with dignity, and while this has no gaming effect, such a relationship would be interesting to some groups.

Appendix C: The Thieves' Guild (a.k.a. The Guild)

The Thieves' Guild of the Blight casts its limbs across the city. Its members take many ideals and even forms, but they share the common badge: a black swan, the tattoo of the guild. Once the tattoo is inscribed (in any given location the character chooses), it cannot be removed unless the character is cast from the guild and the tattoo physically cut away (an act that has occurred only on 17 occasions in the Guild's history). Higher ranks have the tattoo embellished, with additional emblems to show their ranks in the Guild.

Goal: Empires Fall and the Guild Endures

The Thieves' Guild of Castorhage is dedicated to the long view. The Guild has undergone hundreds of permutations in the more than two millennia that it has existed as some sort of organization on the Isle of Lymossus as it has adapted to the endless line of despots, tyrants, saviours, redeemers, and fiends that have held the Crown during that time. The Guild is aware of the existence of the Illuminati and has come to the realization that they are the true foe to be faced and often use the Crown as nothing more than a puppet or mouthpiece. They likewise know that to try to stop the wheels of history from rolling onward is to be ground beneath them. Rather, they have made sure to always be nimble and quick to adapt and take advantage of whatever niche the current administration might unwittingly reveal. The Guild has been many things to the Crown of Castorhage over the years, from potent enemy to unofficial ally, and are continually a thorn in the side of the Illuminati. But through it all, the Guild has survived.

Alignment: Neutral

The Guild's alignment is no set thing. It shifts as the times and its leadership dictates. It has always operated outside the law for the most part and has rarely, if ever, been truly good in its outlook, but likewise it has only occasionally fallen into the depths of true evil — the monarchs of the city-state have usually filled that role rather snugly. In general, the Guild has kept a more neutral stance over the years, and more often than not has fallen firmly on the side of the commoners against the Capitolers. Under the Guild's current leadership, the Guild endorses a neutral stance on most things, but if anything, it has shifted in the direction of a more heroic and goodly role in opposing the coming crises that it sees the city facing through the machinations of its government and other sinister agencies.

Leader

The Guild has a leader, everyone knows this, members and non-members alike. Most even know that this leader is usually called the Guildmaster or a derivation of such. However, who this enigmatic Guildmaster is — or if it is even only one person — is unknown and has proven impervious to efforts to discover through even magical means. It is assumed that the upper levels of Guild leadership know who the Guildmaster is, but even the shadowy figures at the upper levels are known to but few members. Some have speculated that the hydra-head image this view has cultivated actually hides the fact that the Guild is in fact headless, but so far nothing has come of this supposition, and the Guild has continued to survive and even thrive.

Headquarters

The Guild has survived in the Blight far too long to have locked itself down to a single location as a headquarters. There are locations where the leadership tends to congregate and dictate the course of the higher-level Guild activities, but even they change frequently with the next location to be used known to no one but themselves. As a result, an attack on one location used by the Guild as a headquarters has no effect on any other headquarter's location. It is safe to say that most of the headquarters used by the Guild generally fall within Toiltown or the Artists' Quarter, but a headquarters in BookTown or even the Capitol would be just like the kind of audacious planning that the Guild is known for.

Joining

Unlike most guilds in the city that seek members who can pay their pay and enrich the guild coffers, the Guild is more interested in what a potential member can bring to the guild as far as talents and personal dedication. In addition, the Guild's membership is often amongst the poorest folk of the city, so pay-your-way membership is hardly a viable option. An existing member proposes a membership in the Guild, and the individual is then admitted on a probationary basis as a Guild apprentice under this sponsor. During this time, the apprentice is observed by his sponsor but surreptitiously by other members as well. There is no set time for this period to extend but rather depends more on how long it takes the Guild membership to determine that the apprentice is a trustworthy and viable candidate for the organization. Once this conclusion has been reached amongst those in observation (usually after a successful mission or two on the Guild's behalf), full membership is offered as a Guild footpad and, if accepted, the apprentice becomes a full member and receives the Guild tattoo. Rising through the ranks of the Guild after that is handled by gaining prestige through demonstrations of dedication and loyalty on the part of the member.

Guild ranks in ascending order after footpad are cutpurse, robber, burglar, filcher, sharper, magsman, thief, and master thief. While the names are derived from specific jobs within the Guild throughout its long history, they now hold no such specificity. A member who is a sorcerer need not break into a house in order to be considered a burglar; it's merely a historical holdover. However, in general the ranks do equate to authority

within the Guild. There is no hard-and-fast hierarchy, other than perhaps the Guildmaster and his closest associates, but typically a magsman is considered to have more authority than a filcher, and a filcher more than a cutpurse. Guild members may not follow orders of other members they do not know, regardless of rank, but this hierarchy truly comes into play on Guild missions where a team is assembled for a specific job. In these situations, obedience to the hierarchy is absolutely expected.

Although bound by an informal troth of non-violence to each other, to many, being a member of the Guild (as opposed to the Family of wererats on Festival) is a badge of honour and nothing else. To others, it is a career.

Gaining Prestige

Gaining prestige in the Guild is usually through the performance of missions or other valuable services on the Guild's behalf. Spending years surreptitiously working as a shopkeeper while keeping an eye on the Watch Station across the street earns prestige slowly over the years, but a daring night raid into the Watch Station to free a Guild member jailed in its cellar certainly accrues it at a faster rate.

Resources

Most of the Guild's resources are in the form of the many personal relationships and friends gained as well as a whole host of new contacts. In general, any time a member of the Guild is seeking an individual or just a member of a particular profession within the city, they gain advantage on whatever sort of check is necessary for success in that endeavour simply by putting the word out amongst their contacts. If for some reason a member wishes to find someone without going through Guild channels, then the bonus is not gained.

Appendix D: Seasons in the Blight — Autumn's Grip

Winter begins to approach. It is the month of Redsky (roughly October/November). The weather turns, fires are lit, and a smog grips the city streets every night and many days. The smog is the equivalent of thick fog, and curiously, locals wrap up with damp shawls and sackcloth, and the wealthier wear masks while walking abroad. Spending periods of more than 12 hours outside without protection such as this requires a character to make a successful DC 10 cConstitution saving throw or suffer points of 1d6 points of poison damage from the unhealthy vapours and also gain a level of exhaustion. This saving throw should be repeated every hour they remain outside with a failed saving throw resulting in another 1d6 points of poison damage and another level of exhaustion. See the section in the game manual under extreme environments for more information.



Dreams of the Wicken— A Side Trek

This side trek occurs to only one character, yet all the characters are involved in it. In essence, it is a dream that provides a potential clue for ***The Levee Adventure***. Consider your choice of touched character (see **The Relationship — Touched** section in ***The Levee — A Blight Adventure*** introductory chapter for information on touched characters) for this adventure. It gives a good start to their selection in the future of the Beautiful and sets the character apart. However, also consider allowing other characters to be somehow aware of the dream, although unable to recall it in any way.

The dream is set in Wicken, a rough map for which (as a destroyed village) can be found in ***L1: Hereafter***. ,. Just to

When you are ready to begin this short side trek, read the following description to the player you have chosen as the focus of this dream.

> The sun glints through the windows and across the meadow, the sweet smell of freshly mown hay dances with that of freshly drawn sparkling cider. "So," says a voice beside you, "you gonna drink that or not?"

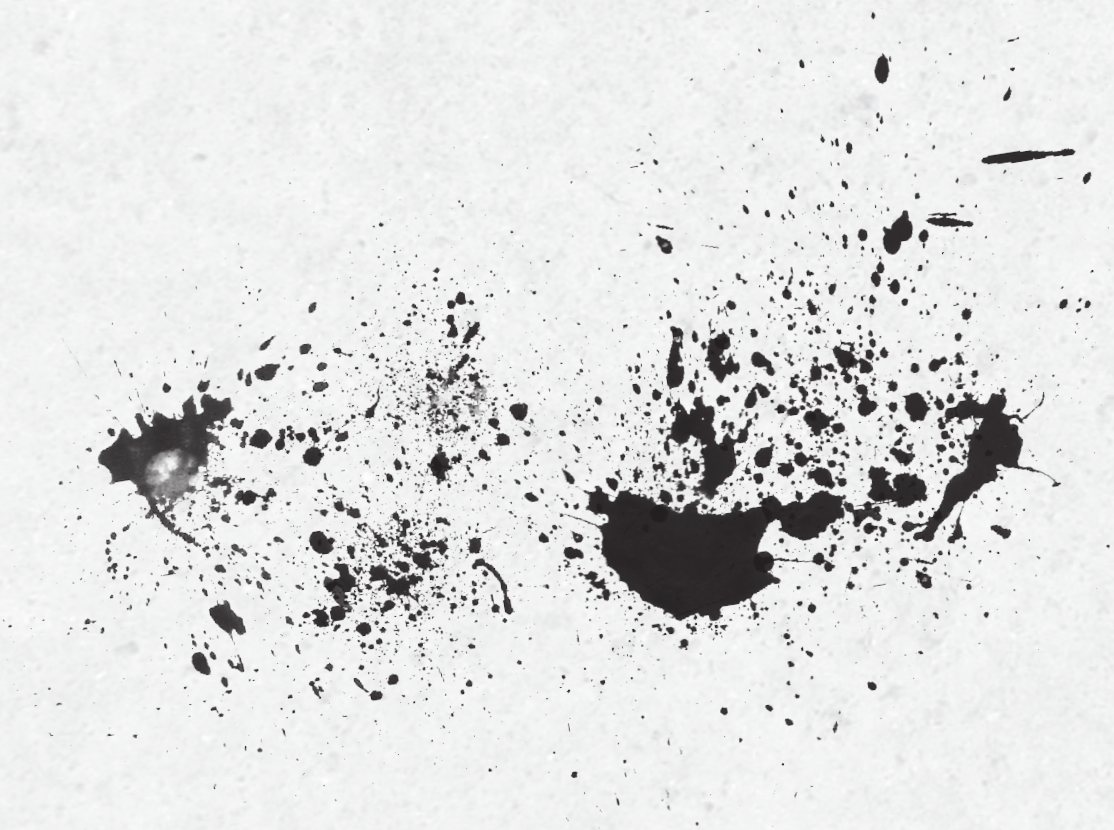
The character is in Wicken sitting at the bar of the Smiling Pig. At his side is Fen Grantly, an old blind villager. Children run about outside, and the other characters are also nearby, enjoying the sun as they laze in its rays. Allow the characters to act as they wish. Attacking any of the villagers at any time immediately ends the dream and the character awakens, remembering everything in vivid detail.

Village life goes on, and if the characters simply loiter for a while, the dream ends as noted above. However, if the characters make their way to the church, read the following description to them.

> The interior of the church is wide and airy. It once had plain decor but is now alive with colour; wooden panels cover every wall, each showing angels guiding people into Heaven, a land of pleasure, a garden of joy.

Father Gromwell is not presently in the church. Characters examining the angels more closely, making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, they note that the angels each carry a scythe, but that the weapon is somehow bowed and pliable. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that each picture of an angel has a reflection of the angel behind it, as though it stood before a mirror. As the characters examine the church, they hear a hymn being sung and see Father Gromwell enter. He moves toward the character who is the focus of the dream and warmly embraces him, whispering in his ear, "She has shown me Paradise. Paradise can be mine … and yours."

The character then awakens abruptly but with a vivid memory of the events.



Handout 1

Anston Auction House

Estate of the late Moegus Blackthorn, late of Blackthorn Manse, BookTown.
10am on Mournday 23rd Celebrate

CATALOGUE OF SALES

Lot 1: A masterwork alchemist's laboratory, used, but showing no obvious defects or damage, stocked with chymics as new.
GUIDE PRICE – 150 GP

Lot 2: A pair of wands, believed to be a *wand of magic missiles* and a *wand of acid splash*, charges unknown. Both wands are fashioned from walnut and engraved in images of fires.
GUIDE PRICE – 150 GP

Lot 3: A library of arcane tomes, not known to contain any true arcane writings.
GUIDE PRICE – 150 GP

Lot 4: A travelling trunk containing all 11 volumes of *Waterthan's Treatise on Illusory Magic*. The tomes are known to contain true arcane spells.
GUIDE PRICE – 300 GP

Lot 5: The Blackthorn Family Axe, a fine hafted battleaxe known to be of masterwork quality, little used and thought to date from the early 15th century.
GUIDE PRICE – 150 GP

Lot 6: Blackthorn's travelling barge. The barge can be viewed on the dock entrance of the auction house. The 60-foot-long, 10-foot-wide barge is divided into living and sleeping area. Although not thought to be ocean worthy, an officer of the Guild of Master Boatmakers inspected the barge and found it to be watertight. Blackthorn is known to have made several voyages upriver to friends using this barge.
GUIDE PRICE – 300 GP

Lot 7: Blackthorns writing desk
A magnificent mahogany desk with roll top and an integral writing set.
GUIDE PRICE – 150 GP

Lot 8: A trio of trunks containing a variety of alchemical and arcane ephemera.
GUIDE PRICE – 75 GP

Lot 9: Blackthorn's travelling writing set
A fine writing case made of mahogany with an integral writing set.
GUIDE PRICE – 75 GP

Lot 10: *Ominis Arcane: The Book of Sinister Pacts* (High Boros translation) by the Pharaoh Amunenhat I. This infamous book is one of only 200 copies known to exist in the city. It is an ancient treatise detailing pacts with conjured creatures.
GUIDE PRICE – 450 GP

Lot 11: The Contents of the Blackthorn Armoury. The contents have been used, and consist of a masterwork suit of half plate, two masterworks suits of leather armour, a trio of halberds, two masterwork heavy crossbow, a case of 200 bolts for the same, and a boxed, unassembled ballista.
GUIDE PRICE – 300 GP

Lot 12: A spellbook, bound in what is believed to be the skin of a skum or sahuagin.
GUIDE PRICE – 450 GP

Lot 13: His lordship's wardrobe, consisting of 7 noble outfits, mostly in his lordship's beloved magenta, all worn but of high quality, tailored by Wadkin and Chubb of the Artist's Quarter.
GUIDE PRICE – 150 GP

Lot 14: A rarity, a wondrous item known to have been in the family for three decades, its magic still in full effect, a *hat of disguise*. This top hat might be of a type any gentleman might wear, but it is able through arcane wonderment to alter your appearance and its own. Magic such as this is rarely auctioned these days, and opportunities are only occasional.
GUIDE PRICE – 750 GP

Lot 15: A case of magic ephemera.
The 20-lb. case contains alembics, bellows, funnels, kettles, phials, tongs, wire, and other objects.
GUIDE PRICE – 75 GP

Lot 16: A permanent unseen servant bound to an amulet made of pig shinbone.
The servant has known to be in the family for at least five generations, and has served loyally.
GUIDE PRICE – 350 GP

Lot 17: A clock in a case said to have been made by the great Hauf of Barrundia, the clock comes in its own ironbound carry case and features a trio of spider-monkey skull figures that cry out the hour.
GUIDE PRICE – 300 GP

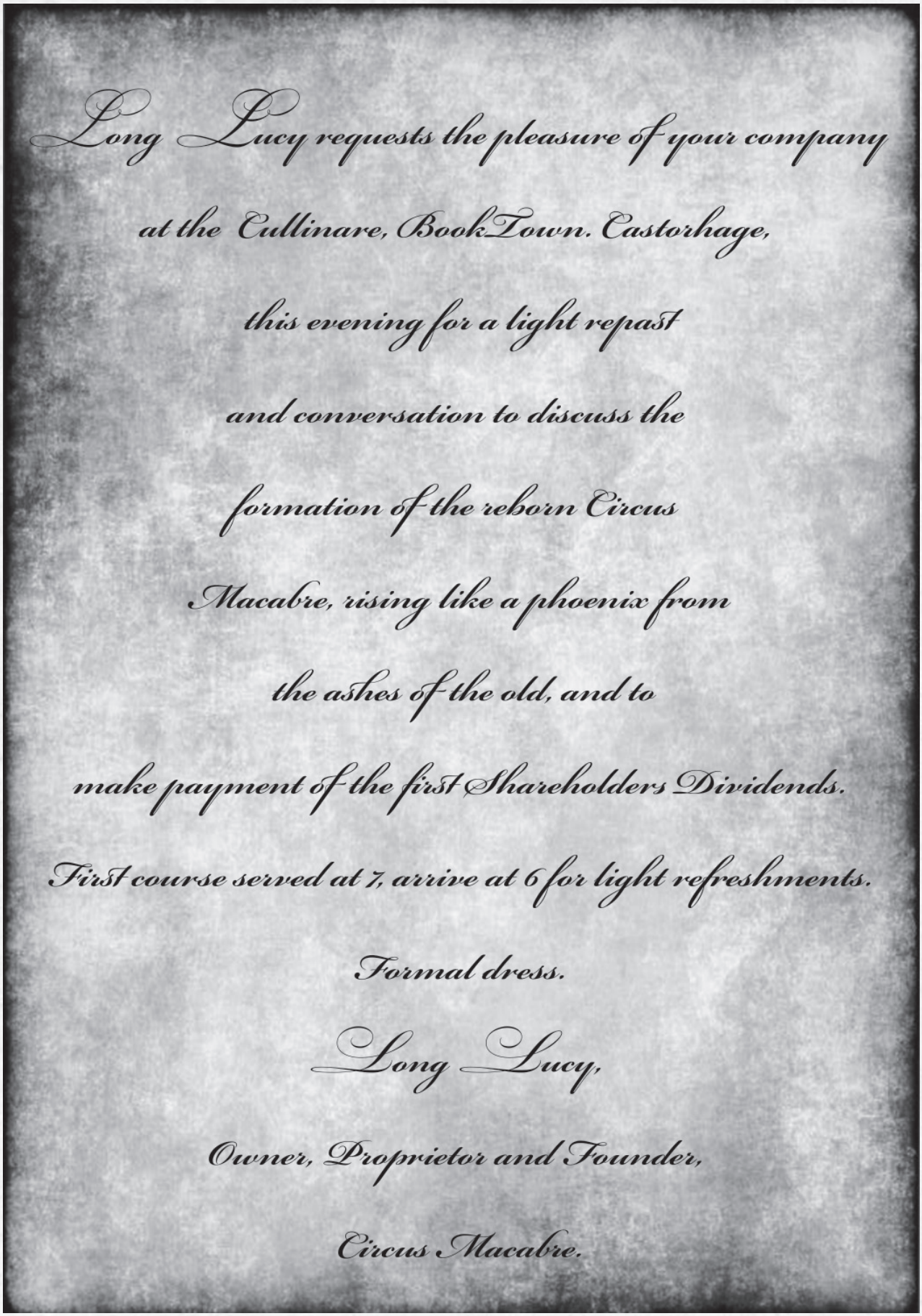
Lot 18: His lordship's horse, a gelded shire thought to be in the region of eight years old. The creature is known to be broken and comes with tack, saddle, and a suit of leather barding. It is called Spirit.
GUIDE PRICE – 1,150 GP

Lot 19: His lordship's selection of tribal artefacts, including a score of masks, some two-dozen fetishes and a collection of other objects, including tribal weaponry.
GUIDE PRICE – 75 GP

Lot 20: Three tea chests full of historical tomes, some of which are thought to be of considerable age.
GUIDE PRICE – 75 GP

Lot 21: A curious eastern puzzle cabinet, the cabinet has been used by his lordship to store valuables and has been subsequently emptied. However, the box still functions and comes armed with a rather deadly trap.
GUIDE PRICE – 900 GP

Lot 22: The final lot, Blackthorn manse, the Folio, BookTown. This twelve-room manor house set on three storeys is set in enclosed walled gardens and has a present occupying staff of 3.
GUIDE PRICE – 24,000 GP


Long Lucy requests the pleasure of your company
at the Cullinare, BookTown. Castorhage,
this evening for a light repast
and conversation to discuss the
formation of the reborn Circus
Macabre, rising like a phoenix from
the ashes of the old, and to
make payment of the first Shareholders Dividends.
First course served at 7, arrive at 6 for light refreshments.
Formal dress.
Long Lucy,
Owner, Proprietor and Founder,
Circus Macabre.

Handout 3

Light of day, reap sickness from the land
Heaven's angel burn ignorance and greed
1 Beautiful, we kneel at your command
And work our own, blind as you decreed

Angel cleanse the decay and waste and burn
Mix fire and brimstone and demand
2 We clear the way for your return
We are guided by your dreams and hands

We have our Panacea, we have our guide
Our angel guides us and we prepare
3 We love our mistress, we shall not hide
Through dreams and visions we become aware

Tomorrow is coming, tomorrow
is coming, tomorrow is coming ...

Lz: Sea's End

By Richard Pett



Introduction

In the previous adventure, the characters ended a disgusting trade in human flesh originating in Festival and filtering to the golem-stitchers of BookTown. The characters uncovered a strange cult, who followed something called the Beautiful, an angel said to be ready to cleanse the world and a creature identical to that depicted by Father Gromwell in the characters' own now-destroyed village of Wicken.

Adventure Synopsis

Enoch Nettle†, an old neighbour of the characters from Wicken, approaches the characters. He's been watching them for days and was afraid at first, but can see they are their old selves. He's petrified that he'll get rounded up, too. He only escaped from Wicken as he was poaching, a fact that verifies to the characters that he's on the level. The characters know very little about Nettle; he kept to himself but was very religious, and a good friend of Father Gromwell. Apparently.

Nettle claims he too has been back to the village and thinks he knows something. The problem is he is afraid of where he needs to go and needs the characters' help. He's been looking for a couple of weeks for someone to trust and now that he has found them, he offers them his information. As he describes it, Enoch was very close to Gromwell and something of a confidant who tried to follow Gromwell after he left the village on a pilgrimage he would not speak of. Gromwell told Enoch he had seen Paradise and was aiming to reach it to find life's ultimate prize. In his ramblings, he mentioned a bridge into a place called Between via Town Bridge in the city.

After Wicken was destroyed, Enoch followed the old priest's trail into the city, and ran into a lowly character in the docks around Town Bridge called Mashek who claimed he'd been friends with the father after his arrival in the city. Mashek claims to know where Father Gromwell went but has refused Enoch's protestations so far, telling him only that he went to the Unsea, a terrifying stormy land in Between that can be reached through Town Bridge by some strange *gateway*.

The first part of the adventure for the characters is finding Mashek on the twisted bridge, mixing with some of the lower folks on there. The characters may also talk with Eleanor Shank† and Long Lucy† about the Unsea; both warn the characters to stay away. Eventually the characters head to Mashek's home only to find it smouldering. A gang has taken Mashek, and the characters soon become engaged on the edges of a mob war on Town Bridge.

The characters choose their own path of negotiating or fighting the gangs, and may save themselves the sweat of combat entirely. Eventually, they meet Rufus Quarrel, a member of the Darnell gang whom Mashek has betrayed, and speak to the sneak. Having found Mashek, they need to extract the location of Father Gromwell from him. They eventually learn he went to the Unsea, and intended to take a pilgrimage to the remote Falling Isle, which lies on the edges of a place where the Unsea falls into nothingness, a place called the Cataclysm. No sane sailor would come within a hundred whale days of the Cataclysm. Gromwell believed that the isle was linked to Paradise.

Only one captain — Mad Obed — goes to the Cataclysm. The legendary whaler is obsessed with finding the Ashen Angler, an angler whale the size of a cathedral. Obed regularly sails the Cataclysm's edges looking for her prey, and making a vast profit there as the whaling is so good. Getting a job on her crew may be possible, as the characters soon find out that not many people are insane enough to crew with her. The characters have an option to crash learn sailing if they need to, and consequently, may spend more time at Brine Bells with the old salts.

After eventually finding a guide willing to take them and Nettle into the Unsea, the characters follow the trail of Father Gromwell to Scrimshaw, a notorious whaling isle in the Unsea, where tales of a fleeing visionary are heard. He has not returned. They find Obed at the end of a three-day drinking session with other local captains to celebrate her retirement. But as everyone knows, Obed retires every time she comes back from a voyage, and is easily persuaded out of it, particularly by talk of whales. If they can ingratiate themselves with her (usually by drinking), they can get on her crew. But she doesn't take tourists. Signing up with Obed's crew, the characters end up mingling with some of the island's more colourful characters.

Eventually the vast whaling ship sets sail, and the characters learn a hard lesson in how tough the whalers' lives are. The voyage has a series of events as well as the characters mingling with the crew, one of whom, the cannibal Joshua Tame, may become a future friend of the characters. Despite his ferocious appearance, Tame has a big role to play during the journey back. The ship also encounters some monstrous seas in a storm before finally coming within sound of the terrible roar of the Cataclysm. The characters are sent out in a smaller boat to row across the terrible waters to the Falling Isle. The isle is occupied by a group of insane gargoyles and vargouilles who lurk at the water line. Within, Gromwell carved prayers and visions that contain enough information to show the characters what he is seeking: an angel that can grant paradise on earth. He calls it the Panacea. Of Gromwell, however, there is no sign, although the absence of a boat may incorrectly lead the characters to the conclusion that he has gone into the Cataclysm.

In the meantime, the vargouilles skip unnoticed onto the ship. As the characters return, Obed sights her prey — the *Ashen Angler*† is here! The battle with the Angler can go only one way, and despite their efforts, the crew lose the battle … and their mad captain. The battle ends with Obed being dragged to her death with the Angler. Despairing, the crew heads back to Scrimshaw. As they do, the vargouilles begin to infest them, and soon it is obvious the crew are not alone. These vargouilles are from Between, and they carry an unpleasant infestation that has an unusual way of birthing. The colossal ship becomes a battleground between crew and infestation.

As the adventure ends, the characters must determine if they keep Nettle on as an ally. Or does he wander back into the city looking for further guidance, or does he suffer some darker fate in the adventure itself?

Eventually, the group returns to Scrimshaw, the characters now armed with clues and ravings that need some time to sort through.

Beginning the Adventure

The characters may well be asking questions about the Beautiful and the Panacea (see the sidebox). They may also be spending money, selling goods, or training. Allow them plenty of time. You should also consider bringing the impending revolution into the fore from now on — all talk is of supposed ringleaders being rounded up and executed — and the Royals are not fussy if they get things wrong from time to time. The characters should regularly hear tales of gross injustice and excess.

If the characters wish to do some research on the Beautiful or the Panacea based on what they've discovered so far, they can use Charisma (Persuasion) to gather information about what's being said around the city. Consult the sidebox to determine what they discover.

As soon as you are ready to begin this adventure, an old friend and neighbour from Wicken, Enoch Nettle, appears at the character's sides. Use **Sea's End Handout 1** to give your players an idea that Enoch is well known to them (at least, the original Enoch was well known to them).

Enoch gets straight to business. He was poaching the day the village was attacked, but on his return a couple of days later, he saw a trio of ogres. Sneaking past them, he saw that the church along with the other buildings

Rumours About The Beautiful and The Panacea

DC	Result
15	There are always people prophesying the End of the World. The Panacea is just another of those quack groups. This lot is allegedly made up of visionary artists, with some unsavoury surgeon-artists amongst their kind. These quacks believe that an angel is going to come to the city and cleanse it, and only the enlightened will be saved for the paradise to come.
20	The Beautiful. That's the name given to the angel that is supposed to herald yet another End of the World. This one is spoken of by a group called the Panacea. She is the cure for all things, the coming new dawn, the beginning of Eternity in Paradise for those who believe … as usual.

had been torched. He is clearly very upset by this, and a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms he isn't faking his tears. He cannot understand why anyone would attack the village like that. He saw the remains of some stakes; they obviously had people tied to them when set alight. He also saw signs of wagons, which makes him think there must be some people from Wicken still alive, but the characters are the only ones he's located so far. One curious thing did catch his eye though: The magnificent paintings by Father Gromwell were gone. He thinks Father Gromwell may be key to events because during his last meetings with his old friend and mentor, the good father felt he was being watched.

Father Gromwell, he tells the characters, believed he was at the threshold to an astonishing moment: access to the doorway into Heaven, a worldly Paradise where every wish was fulfilled. His angel, "The light with a scythe," was his guide. On that last meeting a few months ago, Gromwell was setting out on a pilgrimage, a pilgrimage he was convinced would lead him to Paradise. The old priest mentioned a *gateway* linking Between with Town Bridge and swore it was vital to his quest. Gromwell would not take Enoch with him, and the poacher thought it little more than the ravings of an overactive imagination — until he saw what had happened to Wicken.

Enoch is decent, open, and honest; perfect fodder for suspicion. In truth, he is desperate to know what happened to Gromwell and why a village of people has been killed or taken. He wants to see justice done and becomes obsessive about it, scolding the characters at times of laziness or indifference. He is a little too obsessive at times, and deeply religious, he can be overly enthusiastic and energetic, and is a strict teetotaller (as opposed to his old ways of enjoying his drink).

Alternate Beginnings

You may wish to run ***L3: Sea's End*** as a stand-alone adventure or as part of your own campaign. The fundamental basis of this adventure is that the characters go to the Unsea to locate Gromwell. This could become more of a simple search-and-rescue mission, with a friend of the characters being taken, or going madly into the Unsea. The characters could be requested to follow someone into the Unsea, perhaps a villain, and bring them back or kill them.

The other option here is to link the previous adventure ***L2: Pound of Flesh*** with this one by having one of the surgeon-artists flee, or be rumoured to be in the Unsea. Perhaps the characters find clues in the home of Lady Grey that the villain lives on Town Bridge but that she recently fled into the Unsea to escape powerful enemies.

Enoch Nettle

If this man was in a crowd, you wouldn't notice him. He has one of those faces that blends in. His head is shaved to a close stubble, and he wears a neatly trimmed beard. He's a Castorhager of average height and weight, and other than his long poacher's coat, he's remarkably unremarkable.

Enoch remembered that Gromwell had mentioned a man during his planning, a man called Mashek who lived on Town Bridge. Enoch eventually located him, but unfortunately, Maskeh is not a nice man. He claims to know where Father Gromwell went, but has refused Enoch's protestations so far, telling him only that he went to the Unsea, a terrifying stormy land in Between that can be reached through Town Bridge by some strange *gateway*.

Enoch knows he needs help. The only things he's heard about the Unsea are bad. He's been looking for allies, and recently heard a rumour on Festival that escapees from a prison hulk mentioned Wicken. He set about tracking them down and has been watching them for the past few days to make sure they are who they are. He wants the characters to come with him to Town Bridge, learn the truth from Mashek, and find Father Gromwell. To further help, Enoch has located an old friend who lives at Brine Bells, an island inn just off Town Bridge. Ambrose Salt is a sailor who knows all about the Unsea, having sailed and lived there. At any time, he is happy to introduce the characters to his friend, who he knows is a decent sort and whose advice he intends to listen to.

Part One: Town Bridge

The adventure refers to locations from Town Bridge and Scrimshaw in **Chapter 9** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***. Based on the previous adventures in Festival and BookTown, characters are assumed to come from the west and gain access to Town Bridge via the Great West Bridge Gate (**T1**).

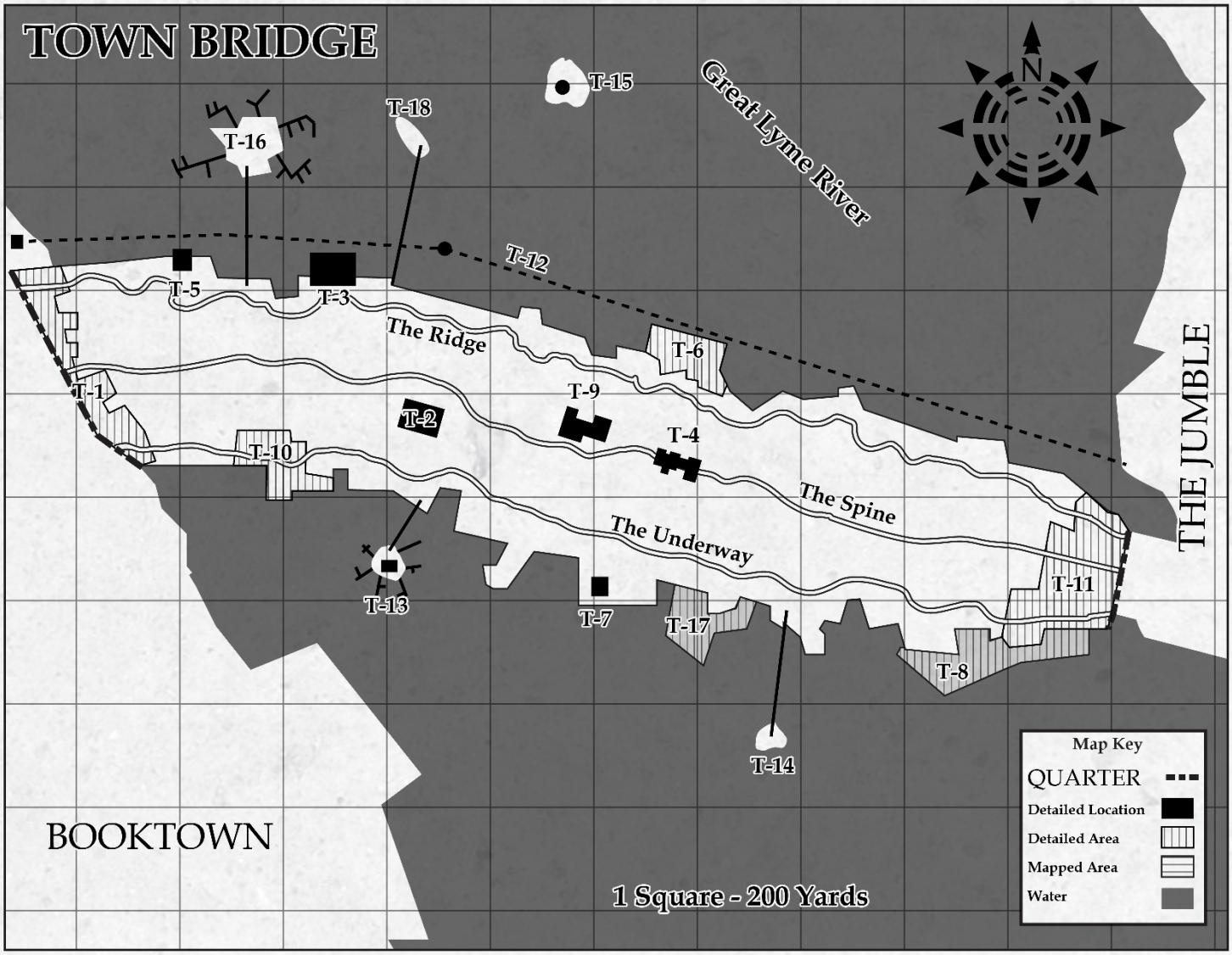
Finding Mashek

Enoch knows that Mashek lives in a small shack directly under the shadows of the Great West Bridge Gate. He leads them onto the bridge where the more sedately frantic district of BookTown vanishes into the full-on chaos of Town Bridge. People push and shove, and the smell of sweat and animals is strong. Noise fills the air, the cries of commerce, banter, and anger. Enoch brings the characters via the claustrophobic Angel Archway and past the guards, who on this entrance do not collect tolls — collecting them instead from the poor traders who cross from Toiltown in the east to work and sell. The characters should realise that they have entered the bridge from the west of the river, from the direction of the Capitol, which looms like a black mountain behind them. The bridge acts as a buffer between rich and poor, haves and have-nots. Now might be a good moment to consider some of the options under *Nine Steps to Revolution* in this and the preceding adventures.

The Sorry Truth

Mashek's house has been burnt down. Truthfully, Mashek has been consorting with some fairly unpleasant characters, in particular the Heaths. The Heaths are presently very much the second-best gang on Town Bridge, fighting a war of attrition with two other gangs: the Darnells, who Mashek has been betraying of late, and the Town Bridge Mob, the weakest of the trio, who are based on an adjoining island called Rot Point. Mashek has been captured by Rufus Quarrel (N male gnome **thug**), a would-be member of the Darnell Gang who has been throwing his weight about recently and who found that Mashek works for the Heaths. He is, even at this present moment, anxiously prodding his prisoner for information, of which Mashek knows precious little. In the meantime, Mashek's closest contact in the Heaths — Elisabeth Munty (N female human **master thief**[*]) — is more than a little concerned that Mashek will squeal shortly and blab about her spying operations.

Mashek was spying on the Darnells to infiltrate a petty trade in ambergris being run by Rufus Quarrel. Mashek did not carry out this work



willingly, however; he was being bullied by Munty to do so and feared both groups. Recently, Mashek gained access to the tenement used by Quarrel as a hideout high in the Roost (**T6** in **Chapter 9**) and was aware of a guide to get people into Scrimshaw, a lady named Letitia Hope'n'mor Shortstone (CG female gnome **master thief**†). Letitia is the current cream of a rather dubious crop of chancers, thieves, and would-be-explorers who offer their services as guides to Between from the bridge.

Father Gromwell sought out Mashek based upon his recent reputation, and he led him to Letitia. Mashek was aware that Father Gromwell was going to Scrimshaw, and to a place called the Falling Isle on the edge of a terrible hole in the sea called the Cataclysm. He did not ask why. He just took his money, tried to betray him, failed, and led him to the guide, where his part in that story ended.

Munty and her thugs are watching Mashek's place, having been alerted to the fire that razed it, which began about 4 hours ago. She is aware that Mashek has been taken to Quarrel's lair high in the Roost, a place called the Sway. She dares not openly attack the place, knowing it is a tough proposition. The arrival of the characters gives her a chance to put two and two together and come up with 60. She takes the characters for agents of the Darnells, and attacks them along with her fellow Heath gang members with a view to capturing them and offering them as a swap for Mashek, whom she then intends to kill. The gang swarms out of nearby buildings and attack. The combat could go badly for one group or the other, but remember, Munty wants the characters alive to trade, and it should be obvious to anyone being attacked that this is to capture rather than kill. Until one of the gang has been killed, assume that gang members will choose to deal non-lethal damage on any blow that takes a player character to zero hit points. If she succeeds, she takes them back to her lair in the Shingles (**T8** in **Chapter 9**) for holding while she works out a swap.

As soon as it is obvious the characters are not Darnells (and how this becomes apparent is up to you: a call for a truce, a request for Mashek, anything similar is fine), the Heath gang members back off, weapons still drawn, and the encounter turns to talking. If she discovers that the characters are trying to get Mashek back, she plays the part of the fearful wronged commoner being harassed by the nasty Capitoler Darnells. She tells the characters where Mashek is and tells them she'll reward them handsomely if they free him (in truth she doesn't care a jot if he is alive or not as she intends to do away with him anyway). At this point the characters can find out where she lives (giving them an option to ransack her home) or arrange to meet her somewhere nearby. See the sidebox for details on Munty's shack.

She tells the characters that Rufus Quarrel lives in the Roost, an unmistakable part of the shantytown above Town Bridge in a hovel called the Sway. The Sway is a leaning warehouse high above the river reached by a set of plank bridges from the Bridge Treadmill Ferry, which at that point reaches its highest point at a place marked with black prayer flags. The characters must jump off there, cross the shanty rooftops, and make their way to the Sway where Mashek is being held.

In truth, the characters now hold all the cards; they can go to the lair of Quarrel, offer him the location of Munty, and let him bring her in. For this useful piece of information, Quarrel allows the characters to question Mashek "a bit" (but not to death). If the characters play this role, then the entire encounter to find Mashek can be accomplished without violence. The gnome is suspicious of the characters , but takes up their offer, arranges for other gang members to attack and capture Munty, and then honours his part of the bargain. If this happens, allow the characters to skip straight to questioning Mashek but award them XP (the total value of the opponents to be faced in this entire section) as an award, and move directly to Mashek below. Bravo.

Mashek's Hovel

The shack is common to those that fester across the entire bridge. It is very small, badly made, and cramped. This one also has the added distinction of being a smouldering wreck with the word "*Traitor*" daubed on the one standing wall in fresh blood. The shack rests out of sight of the gate, but within sight of several score of dwellings, businesses, and neighbours.

Characters with a passive Perception of 10 or higher, or those making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, note that the fire has been deliberately extinguished. The area hereabouts is wet with water. Characters asking in the area gain no information; nobody saw anything. However, characters making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check realise that almost everyone they talk to knows something but is scared. A successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation) or DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required to find anyone willing to talk; they simply say that about 4 hours ago a gang attacked the place and took the lone occupant, a ferret-faced rodent of a man named Mashek and then set fire to the place. Several locals opening up shops or going to work noticed the action, and got buckets to put the fire out (Town Bridge is mostly wood, so it makes sense for everyone to pitch in to prevent another Great Fire). The place has been ransacked, and there are no clues.

When the Heath gang members make their move against the characters, Elisabeth Munty tries to sneak into combat, always working with other gang members to achieve a flank if forced into melee but initially attacks the characters with tanglefoot bags. Elisabeth Munty is a **master thief**† with the following changes:

Elisabeth Munty's Shack

Elisabeth Munty lives in a rotting chamber just above high tide in an area of Town Bridge known as the Shingles (**T8** in **Chapter 9**). To reach her abode, a 10-foot gap between iron piers must be crossed. The piers have openings at either side. Munty uses a plank nearby for this purpose, which she keeps on the seaward side of the bridge as a drawbridge to prevent burglary — if she is at home, the bridge is drawn. The waters below are infested with hunter sharks eagerly looking for falling waifs and strays, as well as puppies, rats, and cats that are occasionally tossed in during cruel local games. Characters falling into the waters must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid drowning. Far more difficult is the climb out of the water on the slimy, seaweed-covered pier legs. The characters must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or fall back into the water. After a character has been in the water for 3 rounds, a **mar-eel**† attacks. Do not forget to apply the standard penalties for fighting underwater (disadvantage on all but a few melee weapons and missile weapons automatically missing at longer than short range).

Beyond, a dirty seaweed-choked corridor decorated with driftwood leads to a strong wooden door. The door is locked and requires a DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The door is also trapped.

WALL SCYTHE

Mechanical trap

This trap uses a thin thread to release the spring-loaded scythe that is hidden in the wall to the side of the the door. The DC to spot the trip wire and net is 10. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools breaks the trip wire harmlessly. A character without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers.

When the trap is triggered, the scythe springs out and makes a melee attack with a +5 bonus against a random target within 5 feet of the door (vision is irrelevant to this attack roll). A target that is hit takes 7 (2d6) slashing damage.

The room beyond is squalid; bunks cram the walls, and a small dirty table cries out for attention. Within are full chamber pots, empty gin bottles, discarded husks of joy scarabs, as well as 102 sp, 44 gp, a small stuffed Blight monkey with a spare key for the door inside its mouth, a leather and sp snuffbox designed like a clown worth 50 gp, a carved children's farmyard set complete with an incongruous catoblepas (not the work of Arus Quodd, see ***L1: Hereafter***), a sp teapot worth 50 gp, a sp-and glass-punch ladle worth 75 gp, a flute, and 12 +1 arrows in a battered quiver.

What if the PCs Kill Nunty and Her Men?

Players being players, some groups may take the "kill first; ask questions later" approach to the encounter. If this occurs, you need to marry up the characters with Mashek and his captors. You may wish to do this by having a local sneak offer to guide the characters to the place for a fee, have an honest trader overhear where they were headed or even know where Quarrel lives, or choose some other method of continuing the story. Shame about the opportunity for betrayal, though.

- **Elisabeth wields a rapier.**
- **She has 3 bags of alchemist's glue.**

  Alchemist's Glue (bag). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20ft., one target. *Hit:* the target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained for up to 1 minute as sticky glue foams out of the bag and quickly adheres to the nearest surface. A successful saving throw results in the target's movement being halved until the end of their next turn. A failed save results in the target being completely restrained. A creature restrained by the alchemical glue can use its action to make a Strength check (escape DC 12) to end the effect. Flying creatures hit by alchemist's glue must immediately land or take falling damage on their next turn. The glue does not work underwater.
- **She carries the following equipment:**

  8 +2 crossbow bolts.

  16 crossbow bolts in a quarrel made of calfskin stitched with lamb's wool and pearl worth 35 gp.

  A leather jerkin (as leather armour) sewn with fancy gp stitch-work worth 30 gp.

  A fancy handled rapier worth 50 gp.

  21 gp in various pockets.

  A key to lodgings (see sidebox).

The 4 Heath gang members (N male or female human **bandits**), when initially attacking the characters, use saps to overpower them. If things are not going well, they revert to using their scimitars and focus on trying to capture only one character alive, using grapple as required if feasible and relatively safe. They flee if reduced to fewer than 4 hit points. Elisabeth flees if reduced to half her men or half her hit points.

The Bridge Treadmill Ferry

The Bridge Treadmill Ferry (**T12** in **Chapter 9**) is the lifeline for the remoter, less-savoury parts of Town Bridge and is the quickest reasonable way across the river since the streets of Town Bridge have long since given up as a thoroughfare. The fare is 2 sp, and only foot passengers are allowed; beyond that, no questions are asked. The ferry is a 10-foot-square platform made of thick wooden planks supported by riveted iron girders and has a low rail barely 2 feet high around its edge. A 5-foot gap exists in this rail on both sides of the ferry, but as stops approach, these exits become crowded. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check gets a character to the head of the queue when this happens. The ferry moves at a speed of only 10 feet per round. When the characters are ready to use the ferry, read the following description:

The chill wintery air clouds the crowd of criminals as they are flogged into moving the Bridge Treadmill Ferry, which gives a rusty jerk and sways as it begins to be drawn upward. Unused to such motion, you feel a little odd, as do the score of other passengers sharing this ride. Soon the streets of the bridge fall away, and the ferry rises across a series of rickety links and beams upward into the spires of the district. As the giddying heights of the highest gables are reached, you see a second town built across the bridge's rooftops: a desperate shanty clinging to — and in some cases falling from — steep gables. It seems almost impossible that people could live in such a high place, but even as you ponder their daily routines, you see the highest point ahead, a series of black prayer flags, the location for which is now obvious. There is no stop for this ferry; to leave before reaching the far side of the river, you jump. The platform you're approaching — a bamboo scaffold of planks around and across a very steep gable — looks rickety. As you watch, a few passengers prepare to leap. The gap looks very wide indeed as you get closer.

G1. Mind the Gap

The treadmill ferry passes within 5 feet of the rooftop here, the chimney wreathed in black prayer flags dancing in the autumn breeze. The drop onto the highest streets below from this point is 60 feet, and as the ferry slowly grinds to an approach, passengers prepare to leap. The ferry takes 2 full rounds to pass the prayer flag stop. Characters can make a Dexterity (Acrobatics)6 check to jump the gap as described at **T12** in **Chapter 9**. This ferry stop accesses the Roost (**T6**), a group of rickety tenements sagging near the treadmill ferry at its highest point, dangerous plank bridges reach out to the ferry. Tortuous paths and ladders descend from these crowded perches leading to slums where washing constantly hangs to dry in the moist city air and where sullen children stare miserably.

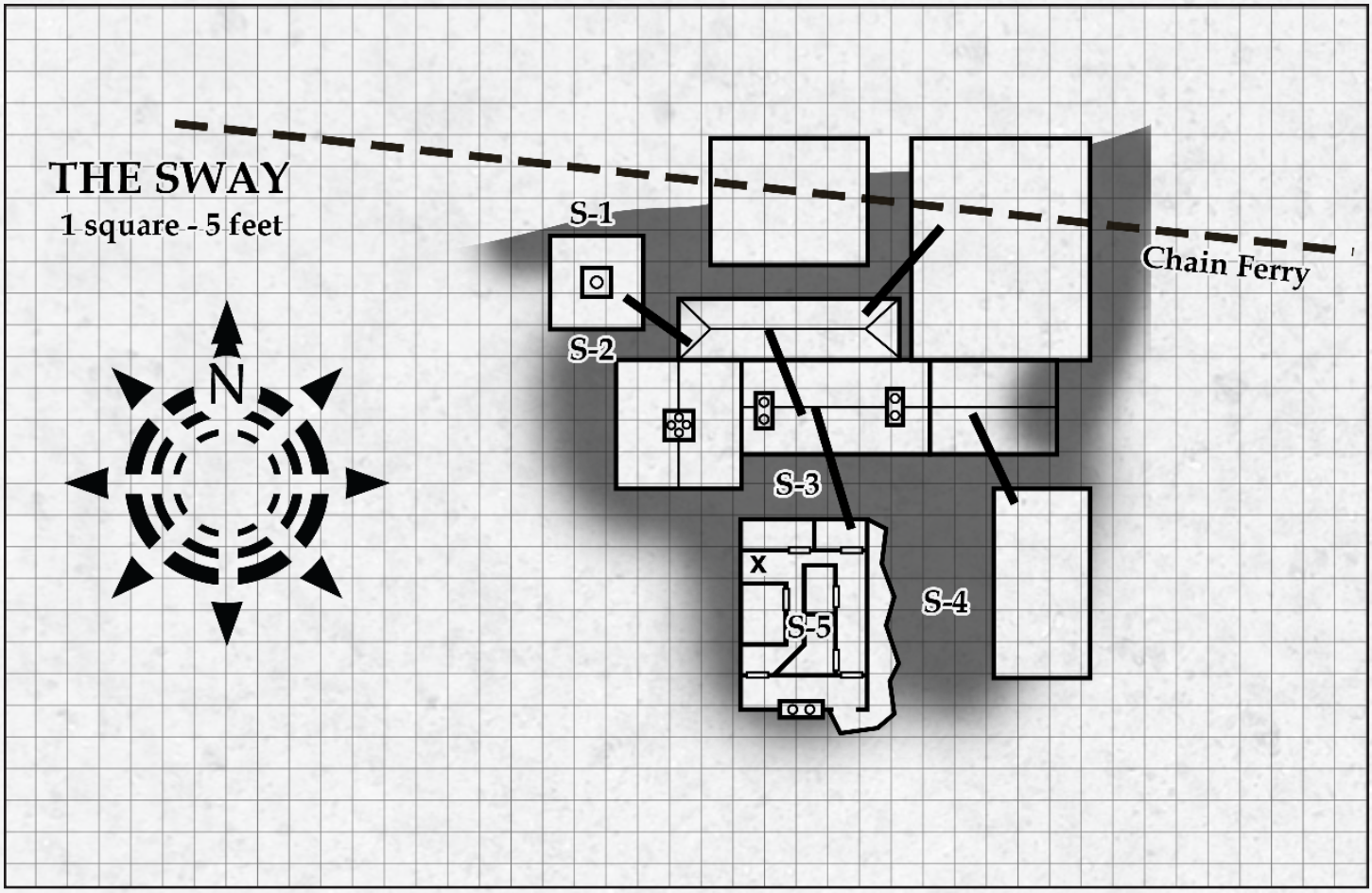
Unfortunately for the characters, on this day a band of 4 **Blight monkeys**† has elected to loiter near this ferry stop. As soon as the treadmill ferry draws within 30 feet of the stop, the monkeys emerge from cover beneath the platform and begin screeching and flinging excrement. The other passengers who were preparing to depart the ferry carriage shy away and leave the characters the opportunity to do so. The characters can either let the platform pass by and disembark at the next ferry stop, a course of action requiring a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to be able to find this location again and taking additional time to find their way per failed check (the amount of time required is up to the GM). Or they can go ahead and make the jump anyway and just deal with the monkeys.

If the characters opt to make the jump, each is subjected to the effects of a total of four enraged screeches, and each round that the ferry approaches, two characters are targeted by thrown excrement. Any character hit by the excrement is at disadvantage to on their Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to leap because of the disgusting and distracting nature of it. Once any characters have made it to the platform, the monkeys attack in earnest. However, if half of the monkeys are slain, the others flee back amongst the gables, screeching in fear and hate.

G2. High Gables

The prayer flags are wrapped about a steeply gabled tower roof that has a pyramid design. From this lofty vantage, a hefty timber beam lurches across the dizzying street sixty feet below and across other gables via beams. The Sway is very obvious even from here, the shell of a great warehouse that leans forward toward the river as though it could collapse at any second.

The high gables bridge is a foot or so across, and only requires an Acrobatics check in high wind (which is not currently present).



S3. The Rope Bridge and Rusty Ladder

Ahead, the high back wall of the Sway rises a further twenty feet or so, barring the way. Gripping feebly to this wall is an old, rusting iron ladder. It looks sound, but is ten feet away from the gable you stand on. A clearly much-safer alternative is a rope bridge that sags across the street to a small wooden platform at the back of the building nearby. A flock of mangy seagulls are perched on the wall above you, their calls almost like mocking laughter.

The ladder is a risk. Characters must leap the 10-foot gap, and make a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to grab onto the ladder and pull themselves up. Once on the ladder, they can easily climb to the top gable where they enjoy a great view of the Sway below. The rope ladder is frightening to use as it sways alarmingly, often up to 10 feet. This is a great opportunity for you to inject some fear into the narrative. As the characters are using the rope ladder, mention how it sways back and forth hypnotically as the wind gusts, making it hard to balance and maintain a hold on the ladder. You can certainly ask the characters to make Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) checks to stay on the ladder. If you choose to do so, the DC would be 12 for either. If they happen to fail, they might have a chance to catch themselves before falling (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to catch the last rung before they fall, saving themselves from 6d6 points of falling damage).

The seagulls are regularly fed by Quarrel, who also talks to them using *speak with animals*. They are generally favourably disposed to the gnome, but are easily bored and distracted. Characters coming across the rope ladder or leaping to the iron ladder cause them to take to flight suddenly, squawking. Quarrel will most likely notice the disturbance of the gulls and send a couple of lads round to the balcony (**S4**) to have a look. If they encounter characters there, they fire missiles and combat is joined on the perilous location. Throwing the gulls some bread or food causes them to fly after the food greedily, something Quarrel is used to seeing and ignoring. If the characters use this approach, he has no chance to spot them due to the gulls.

S4. The Balcony

Worse awaits you at the side of the building, great iron bars have been driven into the wall at the side, and several planks have been laid across them, making a makeshift bridge that vanishes around the corner ahead.

The planks are placed loosely onto the beams but are safe. Under normal circumstances, no check is required to use them. However, under duress (e.g. melee combat) or moving at greater than half speed requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or be unable to move that round (a failure of the check by 5 or more results in a 60-foot fall and 6d6 damage).

S5. The Sway

The roof of the broken warehouse has fallen and been removed, the upper storey turned slightly, as though about to collapse into the river hundreds of feet below. A shantytown has grown into this space, a thing of old timber and tar and canvas, with portions of thatch and slate and oil. A crane hangs over the river from a narrow balcony decorated with plants and statues.

Far from being greasy thugs, the gang here are sophisticated. They have constructed their squat and made it homely, living out their lives.

The shanty shows the signs of long occupation, and there are gin bottles and empty joy scarab husks, although the gang and their friends regularly clean the place. The shanty is cramped, but the walls are not thick and the doors are similarly flimsy, existing for little more than privacy.

Rufus Quarrel is a wild highland gnome of the western Stonehearts. He often screams as he enters combat, lifts his kilt, and then backs up with Dazzling Display. He flees if reduced to fewer than 4 hp. Rufus is a **berserker,** with the following changes:

- Once per day, Rufus can use Dazzling Display.

  Dazzing Display (1/day). As a bonus action, Rufus performs a display of prowess that impresses and intimidates his opponents. Until his next round, Rufus gains advantage on any attack. Any creature seeing the display must make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of Rufus' next turn.

- He has the innate ability to cast spells due to his heritage.

  Innate Spellcasting. Rufus' innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 11), requiring no material components:

  1 /day: *minor illusion, speak with animals*

- He carries the following items:

  An ornate brass-and-gp syringe worth 50 gp, and containing memory ambergris (see Appendix A).

  A peacock-feathered waistcoat bejewelled with paste gems worth 45 gp.

  A sp wedding ring set with a small garnet 125 gp.

  A ceremonial gnomis kilt with sp buckled sporran worth 20 gp.

  A sp hip flask set with a tiny ruby in the stopper worth 100 gp (and filled with Greckle malt whiskey).

  A small, ornate insectum case with 4 compartments (contrains 3 joy scarabs and a screaming maggot) worth 25 gp.

  A purse with four 5-guinea bank notes, 21 gp, and 34 sp.

There are 4 Darnell gang members (N male or female human **bandits**) with Rufus at all times. The gang lives and works here, aiding the Darnells with their trade in whale parts and sneaking the odd pint of ambergris. They know their shanty well, and regard each other as friends. Working together using the narrow spaces, they attempt to outflank intruders, assuming them to be Heath gang assassins.

Development: Despite his name, Quarrel is keen to make any deal that betrays the Heath gang. However, he is naturally suspicious, and wary of betrayal. If the characters honour their side of the bargain and give details of Elisabeth's lair (see sidebox above), he contacts the Darnell gang, who send in a group who overpower and kill or capture the smaller group. Quarrel honours his side of the bargain and offers the characters membership in the gang (see sidebox below).

Mashek is bound in a straitjacket at the point marked **X** on the map. He hangs from a large meat hook and is powerless to escape. When he hears intruders, he wrongly assumes they are the Heath gang come to rescue him and calls encouragement to them. When he calls out, some characters may notice it depending on what their passive Perception is (at least a 10). If they don't, let them make an active DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check by the characters can hear his voice and follow it to his location). If questioned, he quickly spills what he knows about Father Gromwell as detailed under the Mashek section below.

Treasure: Held in this shanty lair is a tea chest filled with straw and containing 7 clay pots labelled as "*Hotley's Marmalade*." They are sealed with cork and wax and contain a pint or so of a waxy, dull, marine-scented material. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Artisan's tool – alchemists supplies check identifies it as ambergris, and it happens to be Between ambergris. A pint of this ambergris weighs just under 1 pound and is worth 50 gp. With a proper alchemy check, a pint of it can be distilled into memory ambergris as described in **Appendix A**. One of the statues on the balcony sits on an overturned barrel within which are two bags of sp pilasters: one with 287 sp and the other with 409 sp. Nearby in a battered cage is a canary (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***) used as a sentinel animal to warn the gang of any poisonous river gases rising from the Canker below.

Messing with the Big Boys Now

Interacting with the gangs on Town Bridge gives you an opportunity to introduce the idea that everything has a consequence. As the adventure proceeds, the gang the characters attacked or betrayed (assuming they did and that they can be held accountable for the action) is going to come looking for revenge. Unfortunately, this very act weakens one gang to the point where another attacks them, and for the next few days there are several distant fights, fires, and killings between the Darnells and Heaths. Furthermore, the Town Bridge Mob enters the mix, and the fight becomes even more tangled and protracted. This should have little bearing upon the adventure, or indeed the characters unless you wish it; it simply gives you a great way of moving events around the characters and giving them the correct impression that although huge and sprawling, the Blight is a city that is lower in level than many. Interacting with the locals has ongoing consequences, as the characters learn throughout ***The Levee*** adventure.

Mashek

Rather dishevelled, Mashek (CN male Mulstabhin human **commoner**) says he will talk only if freed. This soon proves untrue as he is very cowardly and quickly talks to spare himself any discomfort. Mashek is proud of his local reputation as someone who knows people, and he knows plenty of people. One day Father Gromwell came to him claiming he needed to get to Scrimshaw, an island on the Unsea reached from Town Bridge via one of several Between gates and used by the present ruling gang of Town Bridge, the Darnells, as a source of local and very handy income. Control of Town Bridge is control of Scrimshaw.

Gromwell was raving that he needed to get to a place called Cataclysm. Mashek has heard the fairy tales about a waterfall at the end of the Unsea, a place even the maddest of mad Unsea captains fear. Gromwell said something about Paradise waiting for him there on an island called the Falling Isle. Mashek arranged to smuggle Gromwell into Scrimshaw through his old (and now very dead) friend Hamwell Gripe. He personally knows no one who presently smuggles people across the border, but by reputation has heard of a guide, a lady gnome named Letitia Hope'n'mor Shortstone. She's very hard to locate, and even harder to hire. If pressed about where she might be found, Mashek says simply that everything worth knowing in Town Bridge passes through Brine Bells, a notorious drinking island amid the Great Lyme River run by "Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell. Spending a few days on the isle and throwing cash around usually loosens tongues, but also may result in the loosening of swords unless care is taken.

Mashek assumes that once he has told the characters what they want, they will release him. If they don't, he screams over this betrayal, vowing to kill them all.

If the characters wish to do some checking around Town Bridge about Scrimshaw or the Unsea before they head to Brine Bells, they can do so with a successful Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) or Intelligence (History) (see Sidebar and table) check (if one of the characters if samiliar with area) to gather information. Consult the sidebox to determine what they discover. If they succeed on the Charisma check, they are directed to Ambrose Salt (see below) as well as receiving the information given in the sidebox.

Ambrose Salt

Ambrose Salt (N male gnome **veteran**), is a crusty old sea dog whose face seems fixed in a permanent grin. Indeed, he grips his toby-jug made in his image proudly; his face, he claims, is his finest asset. Salt can be found at the Brine Bell, but he also runs various errands about Town Bridge, so if the characters are looking for him before venturing to Brine

Rumours About Scrimshaw and The Unsea

DC	Result
10	Scrimshaw is an outpost that sits in the Unsea, an ocean in Between. This ocean is like any mortal ocean but so much more. The waves and storms are more furious, the tides trickier, the whirlpools vaster. Further, the creatures that dwell here have been shaped by their vast surroundings, and whales of incredible size swim there.
14	The abundant whales, and some sort of portal that links Town Bridge to Scrimshaw, provide a serendipitous bridge that whalers have exploited for decades. The Darnell gang, the current rulers of Town Bridge, reap the rewards. That the bridge changing hands every few years is directly related to the fact that a fortune is available to whoever can control it.
17	Few would willingly go to the Unsea if it wasn't for the money. Tales of whales the size of cathedrals, freak waves that could swallow mountains, and a mysterious point where the sea falls have all mingled with the tales of every old salt who ever sailed there, most of whom haven't come back.
19	Fanatical captains ply their trade across the Unsea. Any good sailor or whaler can walk onto a ship if he can find a way to get into Scrimshaw. But just now, the Darnells aren't recruiting.

Bell, they can find him going about his business during daylight with a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check that can be attempted as often as you (the GM) are comfortable with. If they head to the Brine Bell, there is a 50% chance he is present, increasing the longer the characters remain at the Brine Bell or the later in the day it is. After dark, he is always there. When encountered, Salt's initial attitude is indifferent, but if changed to friendly or bought a drink, he converses with the characters and reveals what he knows about the Unsea.

Salt has ventured into the Unsea. He was a legitimate sailor when the Heath's ran things (not that they were much better then). He knows that there is an official way into Scrimshaw, but also several temporary unofficial ones. If the Darnells could get these locations sealed up, their job at milking the Unsea for its precious resources would be much easier, but smuggling is common. The mistress of smuggling is a lady named Letitia Shortstone, a legendary Unsea guide who the Darnells would love to hang. She stays hidden, and those who seek her services are scrutinised by those who work with her. All these operations are based at the Brine Bells, but as Salt is a relatively recent arrival at Brine Bells who works for the owner Cappewell as a boat cleaner, his influence is low. However, he can tell the characters the following very useful bits of information:

- A person would have to be mad to venture into the Unsea without at least some skill in sailing. Knowing your knots is a crucial skill, and if the characters even intend to go as tourists — an unlikely venture — the captains that ply the Unsea do not let anyone aboard without the right skills unless they pay four figures or more just starting out.
- Luckily for the characters, the hunting grounds near the Cataclysm are currently rich in whales, and Salt knows one captain named Mad Obed who goes regularly to the Cataclysm. The legendary whaler is obsessed with finding the Ashen Angler, a vast whale that, rumour has it, is

A Crash Course in Skills Training

The requirement to have at least a basic knowledge of sailing and whaling in order to venture out upon the Unsea may present many groups with a quandary. It is recommended that one of the characters have Vehicle (water) and navigator's tools proficiency and proficiency in Survival and Nature. If the characters do not have these relevant qualities there is nothing stopping the them from venturing forth and making any skill checks without the benefit of proficiency, but some may want to improve their odds through training, even if the improvement is temporary.

Using this optional downtime activity, it is possible to intensely practice a skill over a period of 1 week, even if a character has no proficiency, and hope that some of it temporarilty sinks in. Permanent skills should not be attained using this method, rather, they should be extremely transitory, sometimes lasting only for days, a few weeks at most, before being mostly forgotten.

To be given a crash course in a skill requires learning from someone who is a master at the skill. Characters must spend a minimum of 1 week (8 hours per day) and 50 gp to try to learn a skill. However, for every additional 50 gp the character spends (up to a maximum of 50 gp/proficiency bonus of the tutor), reduce the DC of the needed Intelligence check to determine the success of the tutoring (see below) or allow them to make it at advantage if the reduction is greater than 3. Characters can retry by taking a second or even a third week of tutoring and making further checks and taking the highest result for the overall success. After 3 such attempts, however, the character can take in no more training and can advance only in such skills in the usual way. After the benefits of tutoring wear off, a character can take a crash course in the same skill again if he chooses.

After payment of a week's tuition, the character makes an Intelligence check (including any reductions in DC for extra payment for that week) to determine his success in learning the skill. If the skill in question is a skill that could have been chosen as part of the character's background, then the character gets the proficiency bonus as per his level along with any temporary bonuses he obtains, though this proficiency bonus disappears again when all the temporary skill is gone.

An individual can obtain only one skill at a time due to the intense time commitment and focus it requires. For the purposes of this adventure, it would behoove the characters to have some focus on learning the Vehicle (water) skill from Nora, while the others learn Survival or Nature to gain some experience as a whaler. Because of their close relationship with each other in terms of skill sets, Nora can to teach both to the separate groups of characters at the same time, though this is not normally the case.

Difficulty of Temporarily Learning a New Skill

DC	Result
5 or less	Drove teacher mad. Take nothing in, nothing gained.
6–10	Paid little attention. Rudimentary skills, the character gains no skill ranks but can make a check as though trained for a period of 1 week.
11–15	Reasonable aptitude. The DC required for success is reduced by 1 for any checks with that skill for 1 week.
16–20	Good worker. The DC required for success is reduced by 2 for any checks with that skills for 2 weeks.
21+	Head of the class. The DC required for success is reduced by 2 for any checks with that skill for 2 weeks.

bursting with ambergris and memories for manufacturing premium memory ambergris (see **Appendix A**).

- Of course, Letitia does lead people to the Unsea. She operates with Cappewell and another partner, a woman named Charity, although there is precious little around the gin-obsessed old cat lover that lends her the name. The three of them are always on the lookout for new partners. Anyone who splashes the cash in the right place and who can impress old Charity and Cappewell might get admitted to their club. But beware, because they ask a lot of questions.

Salt can arrange — if need be — for an old shipmate of his, Nora Bladderwrack (N female gnome **veteran**), to give the characters a crash course in sailing and whaling. He outlines how it takes place (see sidebox). Nora works by day (she is a teetotaller and retires to bed at dusk), but she is a terrible taskmaster, so don't fail her. The character's next move, he suggests, is to get into Brine Bells and start showing off.

Brine Bells

Brine Bells is detailed as **T13** in **Chapter 9** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***. Its locals are a funny lot: They seem friendly, inclusive, happy. They harbour deep suspicions, however, and protect what's theirs and their kin, and don't like people who ask too many questions. Into this mix come the characters, with their eager questions and desire to get into Scrimshaw, perhaps even locate Letitia Shortstone, one of the most flamboyant and beloved of the locals' kin.

Events in Brine Bells are carried out over a series of days as a social interaction and roleplaying section of the adventure. During their stay at Brine Bells, the characters have the opportunity to upset several folk and cross the wrong people, as well as suffer the attentions of the Family, eager for vengeance. By its end, they should have enough information to approach a guide. This section is written with the intention of the characters (or at least one of them) taking a week of training. There are 7 days of events leading to an endgame. Add some more events if you wish, or spice up days if your players don't need training, perhaps with some events and exploration of nearby Town Bridge.

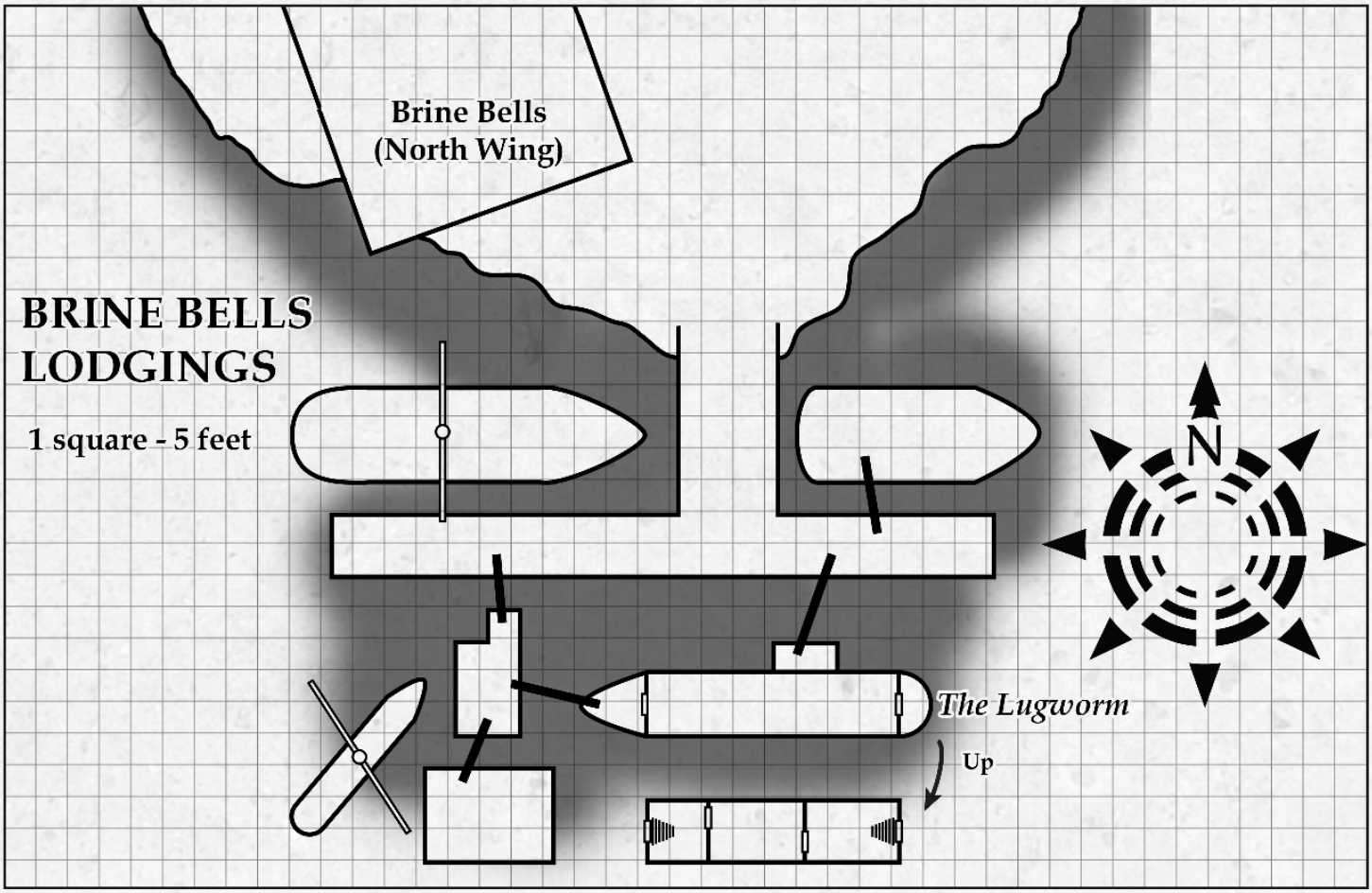
Superficially, the Bells is like any other inn, and to many, that's all it is: a fine if noisy place to rest, to lodge, and to trade. But to those who ask questions, sometimes they get answers they weren't expecting.

Letitia is in essence a spy and guide, helping the locals here slip into Scrimshaw or helping them escape if things get too rough. She's helped more than two dozen locals in and out of the island and Between, and they are more than grateful. Sailors who have sailed the Unsea are called "Scarred." Some of the older Scarred at Brine Bells are very much aware of Letitia, and that she is a regular who floats about the quieter back rooms of the place. They wouldn't dream of revealing this information, and as the inn is so crowded, the chances of the characters locating someone who knows her and then be able to magically coerce them to go to her is very, very unlikely. This version of events concentrates on the characters using their skills and charm to be smuggled into Scrimshaw. A few locals take a keener interest in the character's questions and begin watching them. If they like the look of them, they may mention it to Letitia; if they don't, well, then nothing has been lost, particularly for those who are stupid enough to want to go to the Unsea.

Letitia, Cappewell, and Charity are philanthropists; they don't like the way the Bridge changes ownership from one year to the next, nor do they like the Royal Family and their Knockers, nor their unwarranted punishments and injustice. They use their talents to aid those decent folks they find useful, calling in favours from time to time or asking for investment. If the characters can convince them that they could be useful, they'll get help in their quest; if not, they're going to have to look elsewhere.

Let's Be Friends

This section of the adventure involves social interaction that eventually triggers an encounter with Letitia Shortstone via Charity. On the way, the



Gambling at Brine Bells

The following games are played nightly at Brine Bells. These games allow a maximum bet of 5 gp per hand (or throw for dice). If a characters wins more than 50 gp, no locals play with him anymore that night. The rolling of dice is used to simulate the use of cards and the chance involved.

Deathshead (card game, 1d4+1 players): Each player pays an ante into the pot (determined to be from 5 sp to 5 gp at the beginning of the game). One player then bets an amount (from 5 sp to 5 gp) and all other players must match or raise that bet to stay in the game. Those still in the game roll 1d20 and add their proficiency bonus if they are proficient with a gaming set (*playing card set*).

Deathshead

Roll d20	Result
9 or less	Player loses their stake and is out of the game.
10-14	Push – nothing lost, nothing gained, player stays in the game.
15-19	House pays the player double their total stake.
20+	On an adjusted 20 or higher, the house pays the player triple their total stake.
Natural 20	Player rolls again. 15 or higher on the second roll is a Deathshead, resulting in every other player losing their stake and the house paying the winner five times their total stake. A Deathsead always wins.

Note: If more than one player has a Deathshead in the same hand, the pot is split equally between the winners.

In Between (card game, 1d2+2 players): Each player pays an ante (determined to be from 1 sp to 50 gp at the beginning of the game) into the pot. One player starts as the dealer, and the dealer position rotates around the table throughout the game. The dealer bets an amount (between 1 sp to 5 gp), and all players must match or raise that bet to stay in the game. All players, other than the dealer, who have bet on the round then bet on "In" or "Out". After all bets are in, the dealer rolls 3d20, rolling them one at a time. If the number of the second roll falls in between (but not on) the first and last rolls (and the dealer is still in the game – more on that below), the dealer wins double their bet. If the dealer wins, all players who bet on "In" split the rest of the pot between them. If the dealer loses, all players who bet on "Out" split the pot between them. If the second roll falls exactly on the same number as the first or third roll, then the dealer wins the entire pot (if they are still in the game).

The dealer can choose to not place a bet and "fold" on their hand, but remains the dealer for the rest of the players for that round. Any wins by the dealer during that round are left in the pot. A round where the dealer folds is called a "push". When the round is over, the roll moves to the next dealer, and the dealer who just pushed is not allowed to participate in the next round. All other players must place a new ante to proceed with the betting as normal. If three dealers in a row push, the pot is split equally among all players, and a new game can begin if desired.

Royal Families (dice game, 1d6+1 players): Players can agree before play begins to allow 0, 1, or 2 rerolls. Each player begins by paying an ante into the pot (determined to be from 1 sp to 5 gp at the beginning of the game). One player places an initial bet (between 1 sp and 5 gp), and all other players must match or raise that bet to stay in the game. Each player who is still in the game rolls 5d6 (6s are high, 1s are low), and attempt to achieve the best *family*. From lowest to highest, *families* are - one pair, two pairs, three of a kind, full house (three of a kind + one pair), four of a kind, and five of a kind. Numerically superior *families* beat numerically inferior *families*. If the group or GM has decided not to allow rerolls, then whoever achieved the best *family* wins the pot. If there is a tie, the pot is split equally among the winners. If the group or GM has decided to allow 1 or 2 rerolls, then after the first roll the starting player bets an amount again (from 1 sp to 5 gp), and all other players must match or raise the bet to remain in the game. After all bets are in, all players who remain in the game can pick 1 or 2 of their dice (depending on the rules chosen at the beginning of the game) and reroll them to try to achieve a better *family*. The pot is won according to the rules outlined above.

If at any point a player rolls five 6s, they have achieved a *Royal Family* and automatically win the entire pot, regardless of if there are still rerolls to be made. If more than one player achieves a *Royal Family* at the same time, the pot is split equally between them.*.

*According to the original rules of *Royal Families* if more than one player achieved a *Royal Family*, then the pot was considered a *contested throne* and either one of the players had to willingly concede the pot to the other or the two must duel for it. Even if the *contested throne* was conceded, the other player had the right to refuse the concession and demand the duel anyway (Royal cousin, Prince Rolith Artyle [1527–1548] was slain in such a duel after conceding a *contested throne* to his uncle, and the concession was refused, opening the path for his uncle to become King Musgrove I.) Regardless, the winner of the duel took the pot. Duels were traditionally with weapons and either to first wound or to the death. Later duels could take the form of fisticuffs, riddles, or other challenges, but more often than not modern players simply split the pot and call it good.

characters encounter friends and foes, and have opportunities to give good impressions through social interaction and other events. However, the interaction in this part of the adventure is not just for those who excel at such talents, but all the characters present at the Brine Bells, and each character is drawn into discussions with the old salts. In general, at least one event occurs each day (usually evening), and the characters can use their skills (and roleplaying talents) to garner points called Admiration. Admiration is a group score for the entire party. If 12 Admiration Points are gained, the characters are summoned to meet Letitia if they mention needing a guide. However, if the characters get to the end of all these encounters and still haven't met her but ask for a guide, her summons still comes, but at a greatly increased price of 1,000 gp (see **The Seventh Day** below).

Note: Admiration is simply a bookkeeping method to track the influence the characters gain through their actions and interactions and is not a permanent attribute. There is no need to track it beyond this adventure and it rapidly fades if the characters do not frequent the area to maintain the relationships.

Be sure to emphasise the friendly aspect of the place. If the character's admiration score increases, more and more locals acknowledge them. At 4 Admiration Points or more, the odd folk buys them a drink. By the time 7 is reached, most people are saying hello and several buy drinks and show interest. Be sure to use these relationships as a way of guiding the players in the right direction.

The Bells offers you a potential base for events throughout ***The Levee***. The characters may take a shine to the place and its colour, its entertainments, and, above all, its isolation. Having friends in such a place would be useful. This is not crucial to events, however, and is left for you to ponder. More importantly, if you take a shine to the Bells, use it as much as you wish.

The First Day

Brine Bells is an island, and unless the characters own a boat, they'll have to walk across the highly dangerous rope bridge (see **T13** in **Chapter 9**). Unless they try to cross at high tide, no check is necessary to make the

crossing. However, even at low tide their luck in dealings with all things Lyme holds true and they attract the attention of one of the river's foul denizens. While crossing the middle-flooded section of the bridge, shortly after stepping into the water a repulsive, one-eyed **mar-eel**† (as a mar-eel but with disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that require sight) comes looking for food. Because of its injury and lack of depth perception, the eel always has a 20% miss chance on attacks. It flees if reduced below half its hit points.

Within, the Bells is crowded, and as the characters enter, a sea-shanty (local favourite "*The Mermaid's Jugs*") breaks out, the raucous song ending with the whole inn joining in. This evening's faire is Lill's Tonic (a wheat beer flavoured with cinnamon) and fresh crab. The inn is full, but Cappewell can sleep the characters in an old narrowboat called the *Lugworm*. As the *'Worm* may be the location of a fight or two, a map is included. The narrowboat is 10 gp per night to rent but can sleep 10 in a pinch. The price covers the whole boat (regardless of actual renters) and includes a breakfast of broiled herring, sausages, bacon, and muffins for anyone staying on it.

Gambling — mostly cards — takes place at the Bells, so allow the characters to engage in a few games over the course of an evening to reflect games as they talk to locals. The characters can find the following games.

The characters are likely to start asking questions about Scrimshaw or maybe even Letitia at some point during their first evening. Such questions draw a blank stare and an answer — "We don't like people who ask too many questions." Characters asking about the Unsea are warned away in an almost friendly way. The Unsea is no place for the uninitiated to go to, even the toughest old sailors cry into their rum at the thought of its waves and whirlpools. Characters should have an opportunity during the evening to befriend a local or two. They can do so by improving their indifferent attitude to friendly or even helpful. Charity is nowhere to be seen, and Cappewell is too busy for chitchat. If the characters have not already met Ambrose Salt (see above) and started getting to know him, they can do so now.

If a character makes one of the locals helpful in attitude at any time, the character is told that from time to time people are smuggled into, or more often out of, the Unsea, but that those who know the ways in and out keep their knowledge to themselves. If they are found out by the Darnells, who presently run the whaling isle of Scrimshaw, they are killed as spies. Only the ruling gang of Town Bridge has access, and they keep it strictly off limits. If characters ask how they might make the acquaintance of such a guide, they get no answer.

The rum flows freely on the first evening, and more sea-chanties are sung. The characters have a chance to get to know some of the locals. Each character gets two attempts at Charisma checks (whether they want to or not). If the first check is successful, the second check is not required but is still an option if a character wants a better result than the first and is willing to risk getting one that is worse. The locals start as indifferent but are a touchy lot. If the attitude drops below indifferent, the NPC (Brine Bells local tough (N male or female humanoid (any race) **thug**)) ends up in a fight with the character at the end of the evening. If it falls to hostile, he has 1d2 friends with him. If a character refuses to make a Charisma (Persuasion, Deception or Intimidation) check, he is considered to not be interacting with the locals at all, in which case he's marked out as surly and rude (the locals treat him as indifferent). Such characters have an increased DC (by 1) on such attempts for the next day and if that behaviour continues for 2 days in a row, the locals become hostile toward that character. See the sidebox for other modifiers to the character's Charisma checks.

If at least one character convinces an NPC to be friendly on the first night, the party gains 1 Admiration Point. If a character makes an NPC hostile, they lose 1 AP. If characters make NPCs both helpful and hostile, they negate one another if the same number of each occur. However, if the number of characters achieving helpfulness is greater than the number of characters provoking hostilities, than the AP is still gained and vice versa. If Ambrose Salt's attitude is changed to friendly, they gain 1 AP. Finally, if the characters join in any gambling on their first evening and come out ahead (the total winnings of all the participating characters exceeds the total losses of all the characters) but no more than 100 go ahead as a group, then they gain 1 AP.

Development: Keep track how many characters succeed in making NPCs helpful each evening and how many succeed in making NPCs hostile, as these number become relevant on Days 3 and 5. On those occasions, the number of times characters have made NPCs helpful equals the number of helpful NPCs that may help the characters in those encounters. Likewise, the number of times characters have made NPCs unfriendly or hostile equals the number of unfriendly or hostile NPCs that may assist the character's enemies in battle against them. To personalise things even more (and make it easier for you and your players to track), consider giving these helpful and unfriendly or hostile NPCs names (such as Horatio, Patrick, Simeon, Hattie, Lottie or Mahulda) and even a few personality traits if you like in order to create continuity with them as well as player buy-in of them as enemies or allies. It's much more satisfying if it's Rick who's been bad-mouthing you for the last 3 days and decides to throw in with some attacking gang members that you get to stick a dagger into. Likewise, it prevents the characters from treating any assistance they receive from helpful NPCs as simply disposable assets in a fight. It's much more meaningful if the wererat assassin is menacing Hattie the washerwoman, who brings the character's fresh bed linens every day as opposed to menacing just a nameless NPC who may or may not be injured and/or killed in the fight. It's a case where a little extra effort can result in reaping much greater rewards.

Whether helpful or unfriendly/hostile, for simplicity's sake NPCs that physically work for against the characters all share the stats of the Brine Bells Local Tough above.

Getting on with the Locals

Though the characters may not know it yet, the folk of Brine Bells are philanthropists, and if the characters wish to impress them, they must show that they are wealthy and trustworthy. A few general rules follow for modifying the character's Charisma checks at the inn:

- Buying drinks for a group of individuals lowers the DC of the daily check for every 10 gp spent (maximum of 2 DC reductions per day).
- Buying a round of drinks for everyone in the whole inn costs 75 gp but gives advantage to all the daily checks made by any of the characters that day (limit one per once per day).
- Banquets cost 15 gp each and if the characters do not order such meals for themselves at least once per day, their reputation suffers, increasing the DC by 1 for all checks made at the inn that day. Banquets are more of the main dishes of the day but with extra garnishments (mock turtle soup, oyster patties, vegetables, wild duck and tart, for example).

The Second Day

During the next day, it becomes apparent to the characters that some event is scheduled to happen that night at the inn. Tables are turned on their sides in the common room to create some sort of enclosed course. Anyone asking questions is told that tonight there will be crab racing and fighting.

The race serves two purposes. First, it enables the characters to splash the cash, and second, to extend their influence over the locals. Castorhage running crabs are remarkable for their speed (40 ft.). They are natural predators found in the depths of the Fetid Sea nearby. Two races are due to take place, with local crab racing enthusiasts, and finally there will be a free-for-all combat with two specially trained fighting crabs. Each crab has colours, odds are assigned, bets are gathered, and a general feeling of excitement fills the Bells. To encourage the crabs to race, a mouse is loosed on the course for the crabs to chase.

Payouts are made based on the odds given for the race and the amount a character bets.

Crab Racing

Each race has the crabs, their name, and colours, as well as a chart to determine who wins based on a d20 roll. Characters betting on the races gain 1

AP if they bet at least 25 gp and 2 AP if they bet 50 gp or more. For the second race, the character can only gain 1 additional AP if they double their bet from the first race (if they bet 25 gp, they now must bet at least 50 gp). If the character wishes to gain an AP from the fight, they must double the bet from the second race (if they bet 50 gp, they must bet 100 gp on the fight). It doesn't matter if the characters win or lose a bet, just that they made it. Characters that choose to observe the other bettors to gauge the audience, and that make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, note that 25 gp is a large bet given the crowd.

First Race

Racing Crab	Colours/Symbol	Odds	d20 Roll
Gpen Legs	Gp diamond	Even	1–10
Happylegs	Crimson with yellow hoops	2–1	11–14
Death Crab	Black	4–1	15–16
Crabapple	Green	5–1	17–18
The Light	White	7–1	19
Hungry Haff	Blue with white stats	20–1	20

There is considerable excitement as the crabs tear around the long course trying to catch the mouse (and eventually succeeding, rather noisily). The course is then modified as more drinks emerge before the second race an hour or so later

Second Race

Racing Crab	Colours/Symbol	Odds	Check
The Violet Hind	Purple	Even	1–8
Swifty	Turquoise	2–1	9–14
Happy Claws	White with red stripe	5–1	15–16
Nibble	Green with yellow circles	5–1	17–18
Swim Jim	Light blue, model ship atop	10–1	19
Lazy Lucy	Pink	15–1	20

The Big Fight

The fight is between 2 **giant crabs** (one with 18 hit points) of great size and nasty temperament. Sometimes these crabs get out and attack punters, although that hasn't happened for almost a month now. The two crabs, Crooked Crate and Mister Nippy, are not statistically equal, with Mister Nippy having the slight advantage in health. This is a straight even odd bet. If you like, you can have two of your players each take the role of one of the fighting crabs and handle the combat between them.

During the evening, the characters again may make two Charisma (Persuasion, Deception or Intimidation) checks to influence people present (but must attempt at least one as discussed above). If they make anyone unfriendly or hostile tonight however, those people join with the others of similarly unhappy disposition to the characters and whisper about them. If attacked, they fight back; otherwise, they wait brooding until events tomorrow night bring things to a head.

Characters who have made any helpful friends or are on friendly terms with Ambrose Salt are informed of tomorrow's Prayerday church service and may be able to plan accordingly.

The Third Day

Church Service

The next day is a holy day for Brine, the *Lament of the White Whale*. Cappewell dons his ecclesiastic garb and leads a service in the bar at the 8th hour of the morning. The characters may (unless they have prior knowledge and have made arrangements) be due to train in their sailing and whaling skills. If they disappoint Nora Bladderwrack, she heaps abuse on them when they arrive late. Indulge your despicable side by giving free vent to her pupils.

The service is long, and the inn crowded. Several hymns are sung (with the aid of hymnals). Cappewell takes his ecclesiastical duties very seriously, and watches the crowd. During the service, consider asking the characters who are present to make two skills checks (both at DC 10): a Charisma (Performance) check as Cappewell passes through the crowd to encourage singers, particularly new guests, followed by an Intelligence (Religion) check to nod at the right moments as Cappewell vents his righteous wrath at sinners. Any character rolling over 15 on one of the two checks is rewarded with 1 AP. If none of the characters are at the service, then all of the characters lose 1 AP.

At the end of the service, a donations plate is sent around the crowd, and a lacklustre assortment of grubby fourthings, bent cp tanners, and a solitary ha'penny (5 cp) is collected. If the characters put a total of 10 gp in amongst them, it earns them 1 AP, while 50 gp is worth 2 AP, and 100 gp or more is worth 3 AP. If the characters make no contribution whatsoever, they lose 1 AP.

Tiffs and Troubles

On the third evening, there is again general gambling and chitchat. Allow the characters to mingle with the locals as on the first night with the same two opportunities for gambling and Persuasion checks. However, all is not exactly the same; word has spread of the character's betrayal (or otherwise) of one gang.

Either the Darnells or Heaths are going to be unhappy with the character's conduct, unless — miraculously — the characters have somehow kept peace. The Darnells are a tougher bunch and arrive as a group of 6 gang members (N male or female human **thugs**) looking for trouble. They do not mess about. They move up to characters, accuse them of their actions, and draw weapons, intending to kill them. The Heaths are similar, showing up with 6 gang members (N male or female human **spies**), but are a sneakier group. One of the gang tries to drop lich dust into one character's food or drink. The characters (there is a chance any of the characters in the group can notice the attempt) notice the attempt if their passive Perception is higher than a 15. If not, they will notice the action of the Heath gang member by making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

As the fight begins, the characters find out who their friends are. Everyone helpful to the characters at this point joins in; those who are unfriendly or hostile help the gang, hoping to get some reward (use (N male or female humanoid (any race) **bandit**) for any of the locals that join the fight, regardless of the side they choose). The fight is a general free-for-all. The gang members flee if half their number is slain. The characters note that bets are exchanged as the fight proceeds and may join in the odds themselves. The characters are even odds if at least half of them look capable of fighting, 1–2 odds if not (maximum bet 50 gp). If one or more characters gamble on themselves amid the fighting (to win or lose), they gain 1 AP.

Development: Look for flamboyance in combat. Consider a critical hit to be worth 1 AP, with winning the whole combat worth another. More importantly with philanthropic benefactors watching, if the characters fought with honour they might gain 2 AP in addition to any others they earn. The opposite should also hold true; if the characters are cruel or overly nasty, they lose might 2 AP.

The Fourth Day

The fourth day begins with the delivery of a live **Blight monkey**† in a cage to Cappewell. As evening approaches, a large bonfire is lit outside next to a high wooden pole from which is fixed a cartwheel with a rope attached. Several pots are set on a dozen plinths and upended sawn logs in a circle about the area.

The game involves the Blight monkey, affixed to the rope being swung by paired contestants to try to knock the clay pots off the plinths. Each contestant gets 3 attempts to knock off the 12 pots, and those who

succeed enter a grand finale. Money exchanges hands, and bets are worth Admiration Points at the same rate and amount as the first crab race on Day 2. However, it is clear that the way to truly impress the crowd is to participate in the event itself.

The game is one of skill, timing and agility with a coin flip determining who swings first. As the character swings the monkey at the end of the rope among the clay pots, they should make an unmodified attack roll against AC 10, but consider allowing the character to add their Dexterity or Intelligence modifier to the attack roll to simulate the timing or agility components of the game. If successful, the monkey manages, while swinging, to knock over 1d12 clay pots. On the character's next turn, add the number of pots knocked off to 10 (AC 10 is the starting threshold, for each pot knocked off, the AC increases by 1; if 4 pots were knocked off the first time, the new AC is 14, up to a total of 21 is 11 of the 12 pots have been knocked over). If a critical hit is made, it knocks over double that number (to a maximum of 12) in very spectacular fashion. Each round continues with the two contestants alternating their swings until one contestant knocks over at least 7 pots, winning that round. If they each knock over 6, the round restarts with 12 pots.

The contest continues through 3 rounds of swinging and includes a total of 6 contestants (the characters can be some, all, or none of these contestants). For however many of the contestants are not characters, choose or roll randomly from the following roster adding the listed modifier to the NPC's attempt to knock the pots over:

Contestant	Modifier
1. Dora	+5
2. Chinless Clarence	+2
3. Ambrose Salt	+6
4. Breckford	+1
5. Big Tom	+3
6. Holt Tumble	+4

At the start of the contest, assign your brackets or roll randomly. It is okay if characters are battling against each other, but try to spread them out if you can. After the first 3 rounds, there will be 3 contestants left to battle it out in the final round. In the final round, the contestant with the highest knockdown total goes first and it is a coin flip between the other two to determine second in the order. If there is a tie in the number of knocked-down pots, a coin flip determines who is first and then the loser of the coin toss is second. If there is a three-way tie in the number of knocked-down pots, each contestant rolls 1d6 and the order goes from highest to lowest with roll-offs continuing until a clear order is established. The final round continues until either one contestant knocks down the majority of the pots. If there is a tie, the round is restarted with the lowest contestant (if there is one) removed.

The winner of the overall contest gets a purse of 95 gp, wins any bets they made, gets to keep the (now very dazed) Blight monkey, and gains 3 AP. Any additional character finalists earn 1 AP as well.

The Fifth Day

Enemy Penalty from L2: Pound of Flesh

On the fifth evening, matters come home to roost from the previous adventure's encounter with the Grast Family as Jediah Grast catches up with the characters. The evening up to that point has been fairly quiet as the occupants of the Bells catch their collective breaths from the excitement of the last few days. The characters have been able to continue their training with Nora (if they are doing so), but other than that, have not had opportunity for interaction or Charisma checks with the other guests and inn staff. Grast, accompanied by some of his kin, attacks the characters on their narrowboat. Jediah Grast is a **wererat** with the following changes:

- Jediah's humanoid form is halfling, with a base movement speed of 20 ft. when in this form.
- His size is small.
- He wields a rapier instead of a shortsword (1d8 damage, finesse).
- When he is in hybrid or wererat form, his base movement speed is 30 ft.
- He has the Lucky halfling racial trait, allowing him to reroll a 1 on a d20 for attacks, ability checks, or saving throws (see the game manual).
- He carries a potion of greater healing (4d4 + 4 hit points regained) and will use it when he has half his health remaining.
- He has the following equipment:

  Rapier, dagger, leather jerkin (as leather armour)
  A hand crossbow with 22 bolts in a quiver
  Two flasks of alchemist's fire.
  A bag of hard toffee
  A small enamaled miniature in the likeness of Marren Grast worth 50 gp
  A purse containing 22 platinum

Jediah and his 3 kin (LE male or female halfling **wererats**) all look rather inbred. Jediah himself clearly resembles his uncle Marren (but with a huge Adam's apple) as any character who has met him, has a passive Perception of 10 or higher, or makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check realises.

Tactics: The attack begins after dark so that the hybrid forms of the attackers can be used, and occurs on the piers around the narrowboat. In the glare of pyrebeetle lanterns, only those within 10 feet of a wererat can tell it is in hybrid form, double that with darkvision. Grast and his crew take up positions with Grast at the foot of the pier and his compatriots hiding beneath the planks of the pier.

Grast hurls a flask of alchemist's fire at the narrowboat to draw the characters out.When the characters emerge to battle the flames, he fires at them hoping to draw them toward him so his men can come out from hiding to make sneak attacks. Once his men are engaged, he charges into melee with his rapier to try to set up flanks for his men and focus his attacks on humans if possible with his favoured enemy bonus.

If a general cry is raised, those in the inn may take notice of the and decide to join in (10% chance when the fight breaks out with an additional 10% chance each round thereafter). Only helpful locals join in the fight on the side of the characters, though others emerge to watch the brouhaha. Those unfriendly or hostile to the characters will not join in against them this time, though they still do not lift a finger to help. And no bets exchange hands this time as the locals have begun to develop a healthy respect for the characters.

Development: As in the battle against the gang members, style points count. A critical hit earns 1 AP and winning the battle earns another, with the same rewards or penalties for fighting with honour or cruelty. In addition, if any characters think to illuminate the pier better so that the wererats are plainly visible to all in their hybrid forms, the characters gain an additional 2 AP for defeating the scurrilous rogues. In any case, the death or defeat of Jediah ends the character's short feud with the Grast Family — for now. The wererats go away and lick their wererat wounds, plotting a proper revenge on the characters, an event that doesn't show up until ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre.***

The Sixth Day

Charity (CG female human **commoner**), a rather dishevelled-looking stout woman smoking a large corncob pipe, approaches the characters on this evening. A mangy ginger tomcat perches on her shoulder. She has come to ask the characters why they are here. This encounter may require some forethought from you: Are the characters playing the obvious explorers of the Unsea, or are their methods subtler? Regardless of how they have approached the situation, Charity is now here to ask them why. She suggests to the characters that a bottle of Captain's Sufferance Rum might go down well (5 gp) as she sizes up the characters.

This event requires you to ad-lib, and gives your players a better chance to roleplay. Charity is a decent soul, as are her partners, but she begins with an indifferent attitude to each character. She has not been present for all their heroics and/or ignominies over the last week. One of the characters present must make a Charisma check (though other characters present may aid another in this attempt). If her attitude is raised to friendly, the characters gain 1 AP, and if it raises to helpful, they gain 2 AP. In addition, allow Charity to determine if the characters are being honest about their purposes in staying at the Bells. If she believes they are telling

the truth then her attitude is raised to helpful if not already there. However, if the characters are being dishonest in their explanation, she her mood sours toward them and her attitude decreases by 1 category, affecting what AP award the characters might have received from this encounter.

Regardless, the characters have piqued Charity's curiosity, and if they mention needing a guide to reach Scrimshaw or the Unsea, Charity resolves to introduce them to Letitia and tells them to be at the Brine Bells at the same time tomorrow night before taking her leave of them. She does not mention why they should be there or answer any questions. Attempts to strong arm her result only in further AP loss.

If the characters have not confided that they need the services of a guide, Ambrose Salt catches up to Charity as she's leaving and tells her with the same result. She returns to the characters and tells them to be there tomorrow night. If the characters do not mention it to Charity and have not told Ambrose or anybody else, then they are unlikely to be ready to tackle the Unsea anyway, and you will have to devise additional interactions at the Brine Bells until they are prepared for such a journey.

The Seventh Day

The flamboyant Letitia Hope'n'mor Shortstone (CG female gnome **spy**) is the current cream of a rather dubious crop of chancers, thieves, and would-be explorers who offer their services as guides to reach Between through the Town Bridge *gateway*. She spends much of her time in the quiet corners of the vast Brine Bells Inn, enjoying nothing better than fine wine and excellent seafood, though she has remained away on business while the characters have been there. She is semi-retired, and she now offers her services to only a very few, in particular those she takes a shine to or who have a cause she sympathises with.

On the seventh evening, assuming the characters are waiting in the Bells as instructed, they are approached by a young waitress named Mary Crump (CN female human **commoner**) whom they have interacted with many times over the last week. She asks them to follow her. She does not answer any questions but may hint that the person she is taking them to see may be able to help them get to Scrimshaw. If they follow her, she leads them through the dizzyingly huge inn via at least one jakes yard and through and up a secret corridor before arriving at a door. She knocks once and then withdraws back the way she came. Unless the characters follow her or have succeeded on a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check, they are well and thoroughly lost at the moment. However, before they have a chance to ponder their situation, they hear a voice from beyond the door softly say, "Come."

When the characters enter the room, read the following description.

> Beyond the door is a small snug. Clearly a room dedicated to pipe smoking, its air thick with aromatic tobacco smoke — probably a Turkad blend, or perhaps Mulstabhin. The plush chamber has a single occupant, a small gnome woman in flamboyant attire. She has a very dusty bottle of wine on a small table at her side and enough goblets for herself as well as each of you. She beckons you to enter and pour the wine.

After a character pours the wine (an excellent vintage!), Letitia begins the interview by saying that she understands from a friend of hers that the characters wish to go to Scrimshaw, and she asks why. Letitia listens quietly while sipping from her glass. characters with a passive Perception of 15 or that succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that although subtly placed, the gnome has several valuable gemstones arranged amidst her attire; Letitia is apparently very partial to gems, and it may occur to the characters that to use such in bargaining with her might gain them better results.

The characters got this meeting only because Letitia heard good things about them, and she is happy to guide them — for a price. If the characters have accrued 12 Admiration Points within the Brine Bells, Leticia's services will cost them 500 gp. If they lack the AP, then it will cost them 1000 gp. If the characters agree to pay the price in gems, Letitia reduces it by 200 gp. Beyond that one concession, Letitia does no bargaining.

If the characters accept her price, she tells them to be ready themselves for their journey tomorrow at dusk. She meets them at the shore near the *'Worm* where they're staying. They are to bring the payment, and she'll take them where they need to go. She mentions that they should make sure they enjoy their last night because of the 186 people she's smuggled through to Between, only 26 have ever returned. She adds, "The Unsea is Hell given form." If any of the characters succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, they should be able to learn any additional details about Scrimshaw or the Unsea that they were unable to pick up yet and that you deem appropriate.

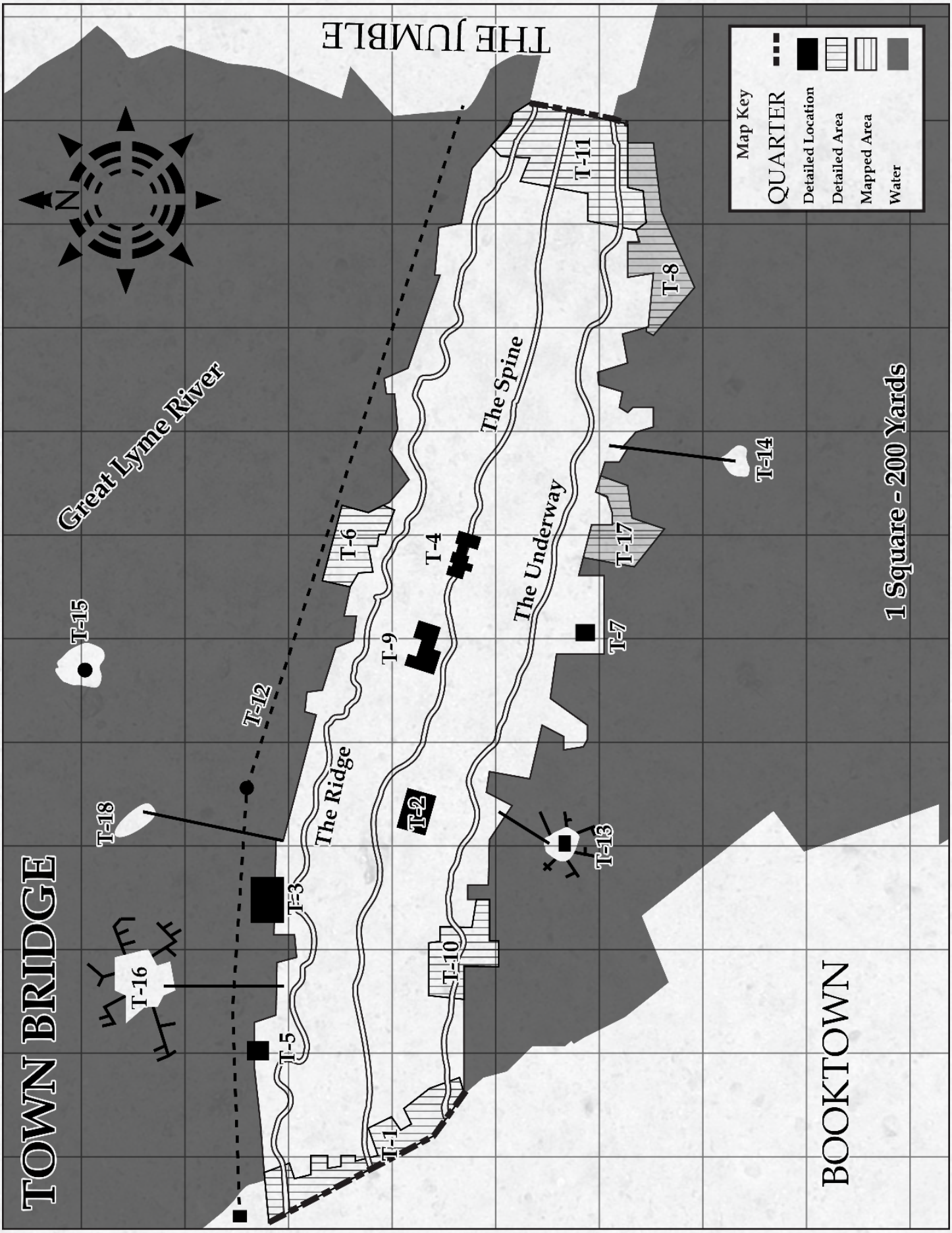
Development: The next day, "Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell (CN male human **noble**) finally makes an appearance as the characters sit over a mid-day meal. He is wearing his formal dress black-and-blues and epaulettes, complete with plumed, cocked bicorne that seems only to accentuate his gloriously bushy moustache, like a small woodland animal resting below his nose. He introduces himself with a formal military bow but retains a congenial smile throughout. After the short introduction, he states that while he won't say it aloud here in public, he is well aware of where the characters are going and how they are going to get there. He begs a favour of them, stating that he'd like them to deliver a letter to his younger brother, Captain Cappewell, who can be found at the Precarious when they reach their destination. He proffers them a small folded parchment holding 5 platinum and a sealed envelope addressed to "*Cpt. Cappewell, Precarious, Scr.*" He states that he hopes they find the payment adequate remuneration for their troubles and adds that the letter holds nothing of import but that he has so little correspondence with his brother that he tries to take every opportunity he can to send a bit of greetings from home. characters attempting a Insight check can detect no falsehood about him regardless of the result. Assuming the characters agree to the task, he offers another formal bow and then takes his leave.

Though the letter is sealed with wax, if the characters wish to open it with steam or a hot knife, they find it to just be general correspondence, though it closes with a short postscript to his brother adding that if the letter has reached him safely, the bearers are decent folk and that he should look after them, for they may prove useful. It doesn't say how. If the characters deliver the letter to the right person (without any *too* obvious signs of having been opened), they get a special welcome at the Precarious as detailed in **Part 2** below of this adventure.

Dusk Departure

It is a thick Cankerous evening when the characters walk down the short reach to the rowboat awaiting them. A man the characters have never seen before is swathed in a thick, waxed fisherman's coat. Letitia is present and takes the payment for her services, counting it carefully before stowing it within a wooden locker she is seated on. She then hands each of the characters a black hood, recognizable as actual executioner's hoods with the eyes sewn shut. She apologises but states that she cannot risk anyone knowing her route in — it's dangerous for her, and bad for business. Once the characters put the hoods on (familiars and animal companions — if she is aware of them — have to be similarly shrouded), the rowboat departs from the gravel beach and dips its oars into the torpid waters of Sister Lyme at slacktide.

The characters cannot see anything from within the hoods, but they can feel the boat as it is rowed downstream toward to Town Bridge. The silent rower takes a leisurely pace, and the entire journey lasts less than an hour. During this journey, the boat actually slips under the bridge, heading around the Shipyard (**T16**) and returning back under the bridge before stopping immediately below the Old Souk (**T10**) where it draws up to a small pier under one of the bridge's massive support arches. Letitia warns the characters there is a ladder (no check needed to climb the ladder even blindfolded), and then after climbing for dozen or so feet leads them through an open maintenance door and into a small chamber built inside the bridge's vast brickwork pylons. Shutting an iron door behind them, Letitia tells the characters that they can remove their hoods.


TOWN BRIDGE
THE JUMBLE
BOOKTOWN
Great Lyme River
The Ridge
The Spine
The Underway
T-1
T-2
T-3
T-4
T-5
T-6
T-7
T-8
T-9
T-10
T-11
T-12
T-13
T-14
T-15
T-16
T-17
T-18
N
Map Key
QUARTER
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
1 Square - 200 Yards

The stuffy, thick cloth of the hood is no longer confining you, and you breathe a great sigh of fresh air. Even the ever-present stench of the river is not so strong in here. You all stand in a cramped room, no more than 10 feet square, that was apparently constructed within the very stonework of Town Bridge itself. A narrow brick tunnel of descending steps falls away through an open door.

The gnome, Letitia, stands in your midst holding a partially shuttered pyrebeetle lantern. She smiles up at you and explains the route that you are to take.

"Head down these steps farther into the interior of the bridge's support piling. I'll be locking the door behind you, by the way, so don't try to come back out this way. You'll soon come to a rope bridge over a vent that rises through the piling and riverbed all the way from Underneath. It's a long drop into the Great Dark, so don't look down. Over that, it's a short climb up another stair into one of the arches of the bridge and out to a ledge that overlooks the river below. You'll see some hooks embedded in the masonry arch that extend out over the arch's span to a point exactly halfway across. You'll have to climb out there on those hooks and be dangling in space pretty high over the water, so if you've got some rope to secure yourselves with as a precaution, I'd recommend you use it.

"Where the hooks come to an end you'll find a narrow opening in the brickwork directly above you. You'll have to pull yourselves up and climb into it. It gets very, very tight and very dark. I'll leave this pyrebeetle lantern with you for the tunnel walking and for when you get to that part, but I'd recommend that you shutter it while you're climbing along the bottom of the arch unless you want every passing punter and river gypsy to see where you are by the glow of your lantern. Once you're up inside the gap, it should be safe to uncover your light again.

"You'll climb upward a short way and find yourself in another room, much like this one, built into the structure of the bridge itself. There's an archway and beyond the archway is another room with a pool ... a pool that looks like it doesn't belong, hidden away as it is up in the stone guts of the bridge. Maybe it's a rainwater seep or some broken sewage pipe; I don't know, but you can smell that it isn't right because it smells like the sea.

"You go into that pool and dive for the bottom. It seems like it shouldn't be any kind of deep but you'll go down and be all the way under even stretched to full height without touching the bottom. Anyway, once you think you should be touching bottom, you'll break the surface. Somehow, you've done a flip, and you're coming out of the water instead of going into it, but where you're coming out isn't the same little room you started out in. You're in someplace new — or maybe old — with rough rocky walls instead of old bricks.

"The smell of the sea will be stronger now, and you'll be able to hear the Unsea. Follow the sound of the waves until you reach a big place called the Tunnel. Whatever you do, time your crossing against the waves coming through the Tunnel. If you get pulled out by the current, you'll get sucked into a whirlpool called the Hag and that'll be the last thing you'll do. Beyond that, you'll enter the manufactury level of Scrimshaw, and you'll realise for sure that you're not home anymore."

This last she says with a small smirk, following it with a quick, "Good luck."

Then she's handing you the pyrebeetle lantern and ushering you toward the narrow stairwell so she can lock the door behind you.

Once the characters descend the tight stair, Letitia locks the door behind them and then departs back down the ladder, locking the iron door behind her as well. Then she's down to her waiting boat and back to her waiting wine at Brine Bells in less than 10 minutes. If, for some reason, the characters go back through the doors Leticia just locked, the door behind them would require a successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick the lock, while the iron door would require a successful DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves' tool to unlock. Following Letitia's route through the bowels of Town Bridge's structure, the characters face a handful of encounters. There is only one route to follow other than turning back, so no map is provided for this linear sequence of events.

If for some reason the characters decide to double-cross Letitia and try to take their payment back, even if they manage to overpower her and the rower, they'll discover that the payment is no longer in the rowboat's locker. As part of the journey on the river, she dropped it at a prearranged point on the piers of the Shipyard (**T16**) where an associate (Charity) has already picked it up and taken it into safekeeping. If the characters intend to treat their friends and allies in such a way, they are unlikely to enjoy much success throughout the rest of the adventure.

The Lash

You've been hearing the soft susurrus of waves as the tide has begun to turn in the estuary and create the bore that travels up its length most nights. Soon the reason for the increasing sound is obvious. Ahead, crossing a twenty-foot-wide shaft, is a rope bridge, what wasn't mentioned was that this bridge has only one side rope. Some two dozen feet below the bridge, a heavily rusted iron grate covers the shaft, and beyond this, the shaft itself descends into darkness much farther than you can see. Just above the level of the grate where the rising waters of the bore come up against the base of the bridge's piling, an opening has been eroded and now a steady stream of tidal waters pours in a waterfall down through the grate and into that bottomless pit, creating a dull roar, like a great exhaling beast.

The rope bridge is a tricky proposition, but not one that requires a check unless taken at faster than half speed. Characters attempting to cross it faster than that must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to balance. On a failure, the character must stop his forward progress and hang on for the rest of his turn to avoid a fall. On a check that fails by 5 or more, the character falls onto the iron grate below. The fall is 22 feet and deals 2d6 points of damage, but the grate prevents the character from falling into the shaft that leads far into the Underneath below. However, the grate is just wide enough for a Small creature to slip through or a Medium creature to put a leg through, so anyone clambering across the grate has disadvantage on any attack rolls or ability checks condition unless a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is made to nimbly spring across. Once on the grate, a character should move toward either the far wall or the near wall and try to climb back up to one of the shaft's exits. Unfortunately, the stonework is slimy here and requires a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Stength (Athletics) check. It is easy to avoid the rushing waters on the side of the room as they pour in from the river and immediately fall down the shaft without doing anything more than putting a misty spray into the air.

A group of **steam mephitis (4)** has recently made their home in the shaft after coming in through the eroded opening from outside. They are bored of their new home but do not quite have the courage to begin exploring down in the depths of the shaft. When they hear the characters coming or see their light, they wait in shadows below the grate (they have no problem slipping through the wide gaps into the iron) until one character has crossed the bridge and another is at least halfway across the bridge before flying up to attack. One attacks the character on the bridge while the other goes after the character isolated on the far side of the shaft, while the final two threaten any characters that try and cross to help their companions. After initially casting *blur* one mephit uses its steam breath on the character on the bridge in hopes of severing the ropes as well as damaging the character. The ropes are likely to be broken by the steam, depositing the character onto the grate to make for an easier target for the mephits to fight.

The Gully

The black waters of the river open before you. You've emerged onto an opening some twenty feet above the churning waters. Above you is one of the arches of the bridge. Farther ahead in the distance, a dark shape hangs from the arch.

The shape visible ahead is the Chapel of Brine in the Gully (**T7**). Hooks have been hammered into the archway and beyond. Some thirty feet up, a tiny ladder peers from a very narrow opening. The monkey swing across the arch is not easy to reach. While only thirty feet up, the characters must climb up to it using the hooks. If a rope is tied to the character and looped over the hook as he proceeds, the chances of a fall is prevented entirely, though someone must go back and unloop the rope after each use unless each character uses a different rope to anchor himself for the trip.

If the character proceeds to climb without a rope, they must succeed on a Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check. Depending on the outcome of the check, several things can occur while the character is climbing. Consider the base DC to be 15. If the character passes the check, they make it successful up to the ladder. If they fail the check by less than 5, they slip and lose their grip or footing, but can then make another Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to catch themselves before falling all the way back to the bottom and into the river.

If they fail the check by 5 or more, they fall 50 feet into the icy river waters 50 feet below, suffering up to 5d6 damage from falling. Once in the water, the character must battle the strong undertow from the incoming tide and the risk of hypothermia from the bone-chilling waters of the river. To make it out of the river, a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows the character to escape the undertow and make it to safety before starting to suffer from exposure.

For every turn *after falling* that the character spends in the water, the chance of hypothermia increases. An initial successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw will stave off the effects of the cold water. If the character stays in the water, at the beginning of their next turn, they must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Have the character repeat this at the start of their turn when they remain in the water, increasing the DC by 2 each time and adding another level of exhaustion.

The Throat

The ladder rising from the cracked façade of the bridge climbs into a very tight space.

The crawl is into an incredibly narrow, claustrophobic, and confining space. Consider the implications that can have for characters that might be unsettled by such situations. Furthermore, the jagged surface of the Throat can easily become a source of injury.

While moving through the space, characters that have issues with confined spaces need to successfully pass a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened. If they fail the saving throw by 5 or more, they are stunned and immediately freeze in place. They remain in this state until they successfully overcome their fear (let them reroll the Wisdom saving throw at the end of their turn, with a successful save negating the effect).

Other characters without the above phobia should attempt a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid injuring themselves while navigating the jagged, narrow breech of the Throat. Failing the saving throw results in 1d4 damage while passing through the tunnel.

The Between Pool

Finally, you reach a chamber with a dark circular pool on its floor. Light sources cast a curious reflection upon its surface, which seems to shimmer wrongly somehow. The smell of salt air is noticeable here despite not having been particularly strong elsewhere.

The pool is a *gateway* linking the bottom side of Town Bridge (between **T10: The Old Souk** and **T7: The Gully**) to the Unsea below Scrimshaw. It is one of many that form from time to time but has remained stable for many months so far. Characters entering the pool feel a terrible giddiness as the reflections from behind and in front merge. While in the pool, the character must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be sickened (as the poisoned effect) for 1 minute. Furthermore, as they dive down and emerge from the pool's bottomside (topside?), they discover one of the more unsavoury aspects of Between travel, a Between Caul (See sidebox).

When characters emerge from the water, read the following description

You emerge again, but clearly not in the same place, in fact, not in any sane place. Beyond you is the roar of a terrible storm, echoing from a narrow vent a short climb up some steps ahead. The place you have entered is unnaturally alive; it almost seems to feel as you arrive, as though the very rocks are taking you in. The air is thick, the stench of the sea, but much more, an almost palpable taste of suffering. Worse, something sticks to your face, a horribly phlegmy substance.

The Tunnel

A short way beyond the Between *gateway* (which is a two-way portal between worlds) is the following location.

A vast space that crosses the path you travel opens ahead. It is a huge tunnel through which endless swarms of mangy seagulls with an almost too-human aspect to their faces suddenly sweep by in a cacophonous fury of feathers and excrement. Close on the heels of this seething flock comes an enormous crashing wall of water that fills the tunnel from one side to the other. This wave tears across every surface in a roaring flood of foam and torrential currents before just as suddenly withdrawing and disappearing back the way it came, leaving dripping walls and ceiling, pools of water across the floor, and dozens of strange-looking fish flopping on the tunnel floor where they were left high and dry by the flood's sudden departure. Soon the mangy seagulls are back in their numbers, swooping about, squawking their calls, and diving at the slowly dying fish on the floor. Then with another explosion of feathered fury, they are aloft and gone again only seconds before another raging blast of tidal waters shoot past and repeats the entire process before your stunned eyes.

Between Caul

Oftentimes *gateways* into Between have a cloying thin membrane across their surface, something like an almost invisible film that clings to those who use it. This film is amazingly durable once it encompasses something and begins choking characters and causing them to begin to suffocate. Characters wrapped in a caul can choose to wait it out, hoping the caul dissolves (which it always does after time) while they hold their breath or they can tear at the caul. Forcibly removing the caul requires a DC 15 Strength check. As the character struggles to remove the caul, it begins to constrict, tightening around the character, who slowly starts to suffocate (refer to the game manual for the guidelines on suffocating). Two companions can attempt to aid the character and remove the caul. Once removed, a Between caul dissolves into nothing almost instantaneously, almost as if it was never there to begin with.

The characters can see the continuation of their own passage on the far side of the Tunnel, 60 feet away. The raging waters do not appreciably breach either the passage that the characters stand in or the one on the far side. By timing the progression of the wave's fury within the Tunnel, the characters can quickly learn that there is a 1-round pause between each withdrawal of the waters before the next passes through. It could be adequate time to make a dash across to the far side, but a character with a passive Perception of 12 or higher notices that the stone of the floor between is slick with seaweed, implying that fast movement across its expanse may be more difficult than expected. If the characters pause long enough to count the cycles of the water or even if they just remain in the area for more than 10 minutes while trying to come up with a plan, a character with a passive Perception of 15 or higher (or through an active DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check) will notice that after the 7th wave, there is a short delay (twice as long as usual) before the water returns. Further observation can confirm this pattern. Every 7th wave has a brief window during which the characters can try to cross.

The stones of the cavern are very slippery, but moving at half speed is sufficient to ensure the characters make it across without incident. A character that wants to move at full speed across the slippery rocks must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity check, otherwise they slip and fall, delaying their progress. If they fail the check by 5 or more, the character is knocked prone and must use half of its movement to stand up before resuming the crossing..

The ceiling of the Tunnel is 60 feet high and its walls are slick with moisture and some dark algae that gives the impression that the walls are moving. An astute and observant character (passive Perception higher than 16 or a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check) will notice that even the violence of the water's passage does not reach higher than 30 feet above the floor. The compressed air being pressed before it creates severe winds that make it extremely difficult for flying creatures in the Tunnel but does not physically affect the walls above this water line other than to wet them with its spray. To escape the water, the characters can climb the walls with a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check.

A character caught within the cavern below the 30-foot line when the wave rushes through must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the wave, or they take 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the battering force of the watery blast. If the wave batters the character, they risk losing their footing and being slammed into the floor or stone walls of the cavern. The character would need to make a successful DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked from his feet and carried along by the current, and also taking 2d6 points of damage from the impact with the walls or floor. A character caught in the current can attempt to catch a rocky protuberance and pull themselves above wave's fury with a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Alternatively, if one of their companions throws a rope to them and it lands within reach, the character can grasp it (halving the DC of the check) and climb out from the water.

If the character remains in the water, they must repeat the above Strength saving throw at the end of their turn to prevent being continually battered against the rocks for an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage and be carried farther from their companions (30 feet each turn). The water subsides briefly after the 7th wave.

Anyone carried the full 300 feet back to where the water is surging from finds himself in the Unsea and drawn into the nearby whirlpool known as the Hag (**S10** in **Chapter 9**). A successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check allows the character to escape the current. If they fail the save, they find themselves trapped by the vortex at the bottom of the Unsea and rapidly beginning to drown (unless they can breath in water or hold their breath for an hour or more) before eventually being spit free and carried as flotsam back up the Tunnel on the surging tide.

Development: At some appropriate point as the characters make their dash across the cavern, one of them faces an unexpected encounter. Don't use this as a means to keep a character that would otherwise have made it across from making it successfully but rather as a hair-raising complication that *nearly* causes him to not make it safely and arrive in the far passage only a split second ahead of the tidal surge. If none of the characters has made it across, then this can occur as one is about to successfully escape from the surge's watery grip onto a rock, with a rope, or by some other means.

Through the confusion of slick stony obstacles and the ominous rush of the approaching water, you momentarily catch sight of something in the foaming spray: A huge fish-like thing with three great red eyes arrayed in a stack at its front and wavy tentacles protruding from its slimy flanks lurches in your direction. One tentacle lashes toward you.

The character has encountered a battered **aboleth** (it only has 65 hit points) that was unfortunate enough to be caught in the Hag's merciless exhalations. It is exhausted and perhaps near death and has time to make only 1 attack against the character … whether in a bid to be rescued or simply a cruel effort to take someone else with it to its doom. If the character is upon land, the aboleth makes its normal tentacle attack. If the character is in the water also, the attack is made at advantage unless the character has natural swimming movement. Regardless of the success of the attack, immediately afterward, the aboleth is engulfed in the watery chaos of the surging tide and vanishes into the churning fury of the Unsea as the character makes his escape from that same fury at the last possible second. See **A Touch of Aboleth** in **Part 2** for further developments from this attack.

Part Two: Scrimshaw

Jutting from the Unsea, Scrimshaw is a tower of natural rock, an impossibly tall sea stack battered by the impossible storms and waves of Between's Unsea. Imagine the Unsea as everything about the sea rolled into one and exploded to legendary fury, size, and duration and you have it about right.

The characters arrive in the lowest level of the Unsea, a place called the Factory (see **S1** in **Chapter 9** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide*** for more details). The Factory sits at sea level and is used to haul in and disembowel whales. The entire chamber is a hive of activity, blubber, and blood, and smells abominably. Sneaking through — even openly — is easy. Dozens of men work here and none of them want to be. They wish to finish their work as quickly as possible and get out.

Scrimshaw is a towering island laced with tunnels but which also clings to the outside of the stack like limpets, a journey about the place is one of claustrophobia, all-pervading dampness, and crashing, roaring waves. Remember that the characters are now also in Between; you may decide to emphasise this by the unreal and slightly askew atmosphere about the place.

Visitors asking for refreshment, equipment, or any whalers are directed upward to the Precarious, Scrimshaw's notorious tavern, trade shop, and centre of operations.

The Precarious

The oldest, noisiest, and most violent tavern in a rowdy place, the Precarious is well named — a huge building on six floors hanging over the sea. The Precarious is the best inn in Scrimshaw, and clings to the tidal stack itself like a crusted barnacle. Captain Capper Cappewell (CN male human **thug**), a huge man with a huge handlebar moustache, runs the place, along with the help of some dozen serving girls (his "troopers"). For a big chap, Cappewell has a squeaky voice, and occasionally resorts to the use of a megaphone to get his message across. He also has a pair of pit **mastiffs**† (Petal and Daisy) which he brings out if a fight occurs. These short-sighted beasts often get confused in such a fight and end up biting anyone nearby.

Cappewell is the identical twin brother of "Reverend Admiral" Horace Cappewell, and anyone bringing news of his beloved brother or his family are sure for his gratitude and a great stay. The Precarious provides good accommodations, and its rum selection is legendary. More information on it can be found at **S3** in **Chapter 9** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***.

Sleeping off a Hangover

As the characters enter the Precarious, read or paraphrase the following description

> At first, the reason for the tavern's name is not obvious — from the tunnel's entrance a clumsy and very faded sign shows a building with hands clinging to a narrow rock above the sea with a deathgrip. Once beyond the battered green doors of the tavern, the reason become obvious, however. Beyond is a snug bar, cramped full of people, who lean at an old ship's beam used as a bar and which leans at angles to you. As you adjust to the gloom, you realise that you are swaying slightly, the timbers of the place creak as though at sea. It is with some alarm that it occurs to you that it is the movement of the customers that is causing this steady swaying of the entire building. The floor is littered with drunks, at least a score of sailors lie in a stupor at your feet.

Mad Captain Obed: More Comebacks than the Tide

In truth, Captain Obed regularly retires — usually once or thrice a year — but the locals respect her decision partly through admiration and partly fear. Obed has a fearsome temper, but an even stranger background. She is obsessed with a creature called the Ashen Angler, a vast whale that swims the edges of the Cataclysm and which Obed has encountered on half a dozen occasions thus far and failed to bag. The captain is convinced that the angler is the last great prize and that if she kills it and brings it back, she and her crew will be able to retire as kings. In truth, her financial needs are little (above copious gin and rum) and her crew love her. She has no need to enhance her reputation, but has become obsessed with the whale.

Characters may at first be confused by the landlord Captain Capper Cappewell, who is identical to his twin "Reverend Admiral" Cappewell in the Brine Bells. Should anyone ask for Captain Obed, they are directed to one of two larger ladies presently propping each other up and snoring. The second figure is Queen Beatrice, and the figures prostrate on the floor are the crews of the *Frightful* and the *Bloody Harpoon*. Obed's ship is the *Bloody Harpoon*, and Beatrice's is the *Frightful*. The two crews have been celebrating Captain Obed's retirement together.

If the characters disturb any of the sleeping women, they blearily rise, belch, and give a disapproving, slightly pitying look at their disturber before announcing that it is bedtime. At that moment, all the drunks lazily drag themselves off to their quarters. Obed and her crew do not reappear until the next midnight, when they return en masse to the bar. She may appear an hour after the characters arrive, or possibly 23 hours.

A successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to gather information around the place learns that Father Gromwell did indeed pass this way. He was last seen several months ago setting sail on a ship called the *Formidable*. He also informs the characters that no one is mad enough to sail to the Cataclysm. No one except Obed. The Cataclysm lies (generally but not always) some 300 miles south of Scrimshaw. Voyagers generally aim for the last great Scrimshaw Lamp on the Unsea called the Hope and go no farther. Characters who made a successful Charisma check to gather information receive the following quote about the Cataclysm:

> "The Cataclysm, oh yes, it's real lass. There is a place where the Unsea falls into the nothingness of night, and that place extends its icy fingers to the seas for scores of miles around. Once in its grip, there is no escape from the tides and storms."

The Hope is similarly well known; continuing to press for more information (consider an additional Charisma check) reveals that it is run by Dabrin Hodd, a recluse who dwells in the great lamp **that** serves to warn ships approaching the Cataclysm.

Characters researching the *Formidable* and asking questions soon discover that the old captain of the *Formidable*, Obediah Cockle, was a business partner of the affable but very shrewd Master Swed Coughlin (LN male swyne† **commoner**) of Sweed's Mongery (**S4** in **Chapter 9**). Swed's monger is a vast warehouse crammed with every conceivable (and some inconceivable) items relating to sailing, whaling, and ephemera, from iron bedsteads to model waterwheels. He employs three lads who can locate any



object he has in less than a minute. Swed is superficially very affable, but like any swyne he is a businessman driven by his own greed. If the characters mention Cockle, the swyne's mood darkens and he asks the characters what business it is of theirs. If the characters can change his attitude from unfriendly to friendly, he'll tell them what he knows. His attitude can be lightened by purchases. For every 15 gp the characters spend, they get a chance to change his attitude with a Charisma (Persuasion) check; for each 10 gp above 25 gp total, reduce the DC of the check by 1, until they have reached 4, at which point allow them to roll with advantage..

The *Formidable* is lost, in Coughlin's opinion. Cockle was a stout business partner, but he hasn't seen him or the ship in months, not since the strange priest appeared trying to persuade Cockle to sail to the Cataclysm and offering him a hefty purse of coin to do so. The swyne told Cockle not to take on tourists, but he was taken in by the gp. The old man, it seems, was wanting to head for the Falling Isle, gods know why. He paid a pretty price and took along a small sailboat to make the last dash across the edges of the Cataclysm to this isle, which as far as Swed knows, is uninhabited. The swyne has made his mind up that the priest got to the Catcalysm, saw how deadly it was, and persuaded Cockle — who always was soft — to sail closer to allow him to sail his smaller boat to the isle. The big ship was likely drawn into the fall and vanished, probably with the priest, too.

Further questions about Father Gromwell or the *Formidable* garner no additional information.

Early Retirement

If the characters ask around about Captain Obed, a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check garners the information that the captain is now retired. Even the Scarred have some sense, and no one can afford not to work and eat, but that sooner or later — possibly after a day or even a year — the call of the Ashen Angler brings her back.

The character's only hope in securing passage to the Cataclysm lies with persuading Obed to come out of retirement. The characters have three means at their disposal: flattery, deceit, or magic. Obed absolutely rules the *Bloody Harpoon* and its crew, and if she says they sail, they sail. However, the crew (see below) are a tough lot who love their captain, and whilst she is erratic, she is organised. Suddenly setting sail is greeted with great suspicion, and unless the characters are very careful, they may find themselves marooned on the Unsea, a sure way to death, so they need to tread carefully with whatever methods they use.

Each approach has some suggested methods to help the characters get on board the *Bloody Harpoon*. As a rule of thumb, it is recommended that if the characters succeed in any three parts detailed of the approaches outlined below (whether all under the same strategy or not), Obed announces she will sail the Unsea again. If the characters are willing and able, they are offered positions on her crew. Each method requires interaction with Obed and her crew (who are detailed more fully in **Part 3**) so familiarise yourself with them.

Interaction with the crew involves drinking — a lot. The characters can try to keep up with the crew by making a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw with failure resulting in the character being poisoned until they have completed a long rest. If they fail by 5 or more, the character is unconsciousness (as the incapacitated effect). They can try to tip their drinks away, but doing so would require succeeding on a DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. If noticed, they would have disadvantage on all future interactions. They can also decline to drink with the crew and make all checks at disadvantage anyway.

Obed wants to be convinced the Angler is still within her grasp, so all attempts to encourage her to sail using sightings of the whale can be made with the characters adding their proficiency bonus to the attempt.

Flattery

Persuasion: The characters can use their natural charm and interpersonal skills to try to ingratiate themselves with Obed. A character making a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check intrigues Obed. Tales of vast whales and the sea draw her in and she begins to wonder if she is not too young to hang up her harpoon.

Research: The characters can also check with other sailors returning from recent voyages; a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information about where to find members of the ship the *Wreckless*, who come back with tales of a three-headed dragon turtle and a sighting of the Ashen Angler whilst sailing near the vast whirlpool called the Turmoil. Presenting these crewmembers to Obed makes her reconsider.

Blunt Honesty: The characters can also be totally blunt with Obed, honestly telling her their tale. Obed is not fond of tourists, but has a good soul. This approach requires no check and succeeds in drawing her into reconsidering retirement.

Deceit

Lying: The characters can attempt to spread tales of recent sightings of the Angler using a DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check. If successful, they pique the captain's interest. If they fail, a couple of the crew warn the characters off — they do not attack, they merely warn the characters not to lie to their beloved captain again. If the characters try again, they may end up fighting one of the crewmembers and scuppering their chances.

Bribery: The characters can try to bribe Obed. It costs 500 gp for her to consider resurrecting her career, and if they make a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check, she reconsiders. The DC of this check is lowered by 1 for every 100 gp offered over 500 gp.

False Information: The characters could also coerce others into doing their dirty work for them. There are some truly monumental liars on Scrimshaw, and it would be relatively easy to bribe someone to tell other tales of sightings. A bribe of 50 gp convinces someone else in Scrimshaw to begin spreading lies about whale sightings that will get back to Obed. These swirling rumours grant the characters advantage on any other checks intended to convince Obed.

Magic

A successful *charm person* or *suggestion* spell counts as one step each toward getting the ship's captain to start work again (each spell can be used only once to count toward this). Using *detect thoughts* to glean the most effective arguments to make likewise count toward convincing Obed to come out of retirement.

A Touch of Aboleth

Arriving characters may have need of a magical healing from the slime effects of an aboleth's touch, and unknown to them, such magic may come in useful later in the adventure, too. Such spells are not common in a town such as Scrimshaw. However, one of her more able captains, Lord Brine (N male briny† **hierophant**†), is known to dabble in such spells from time to time. The captain is at Scrimshaw when the characters arrive, but only briefly so. He is lodging at the Precarious in his private chamber and is poring over maps of the Unsea in the company of three damsels named Lottie, Lizzie, and Derra.

Lord Brine does have the ability to remove diseases but expects recompense. He charges 250 gp for his troubles. However, if he learns that the characters are heading out with Captain Obed, he makes them a counter proposition. He has a great rivalry with Obed, and owes her one from the last time they fought. He still remembers her heels digging into his face and would like to have the pleasure of tossing her boots into the Unsea before her eyes. He charges the characters to steal her boots and bring them back to his rooms here after their journey. He'll give them, in advance, a *wand of lesser restoration* with 3 charges (he has had it lying in his ship for some time). If they get the boots, the debt is settled. If not, they owe him 500 gp on their return. It's a bad idea to cross Brine.

You may wish to consider a petty penalty of making Brine a slight enemy at the end of the adventure if the characters betray him. A couple of briny following the characters for a week or two and upsetting their plans should be penance enough, unless the whole thing escalates, of course.

Miscellaneous

Your players are liable to come up with some other means of making a strong case for Obed's return to the sea. If the characters come up with a great reason why she should sail, then count it toward convincing Obed of their argument.

As soon as any three of the above tactics has been successfully employed, Obed is convinced and announces that she is leaving retirement. Then the characters just must find a way onto her ship.

Situations Vacant

Anyone asking about becoming crew on the *Bloody Harpoon* get one simple answer: The more the merrier. The *Harpoon* is always undermanned, and Obed's single-mindedness causes an understandable reluctance to crew her. However, Obed does not like tourists, and any character who wishes to join the crew must do so by convincing her bosun, Joshua "Jubba" Tame.

Tame is not an easy man to convince, and he takes any would-be crew up and up into the spire of Scrimshaw to a place known as Tompkins Lamp **(S11** in **Chapter 9)**. When characters arrive here, read the following description:

> The Great Stair eventually ends at a frighteningly exposed point on the cliffs high above the sea. Here the land drops into nothing for a third of a mile. Above is one last structure, an iron tower a score of yards high and wide that holds a blast furnace roar of fire. A perilous winding path gropes downward, seemingly straight over the cliff. A rope dangles at the side of the path.

Tame tells the characters to follow him down to the hermitage at the bottom of the path where his friend Janus Hobb (N male human **commoner**) tends the lamp. The path has a fixed rope, but still requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to navigate. The fall is 1,822 feet. If a character falls, Tame or another character can make a DC 12 Dexterity save to try to grab them. The character does get one last Dexterity saving throw, DC 16, before falling into the sea and suffering 20d6 points of damage.

Hobb lives in a tiny hermit's cave at the base of the path in surprising comfort. The hermit is nervous and doesn't speak to anyone but Tame, however. Characters making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check note that the hermit seems obsessed by the lamp, which he is convinced is a living thing that whispers to him.

Remember that those who descended the path must also ascend it. Those who succeed are offered a place on the crew; those who fail can try to bribe their way on (100 gp is a suggested minimum). The crew regards such people as passengers, however, and when trouble strikes on the Unsea, they do not receive help from fellow crewmembers (for more information see **Part 3** below).

End of Retirement

If she announces a voyage, Obed says that she will set sail in 1d4 + 1 days, during which time the crew stock up the ship, prepare her, and drink what is likely to be their last drink. The characters can use this time to purchase a jolly boat (since the *Bloody Harpoon* and larger vessels are unable to dock at the Falling Isle), prepare themselves, and buy equipment at extortion prices. Prices for mundane items are roughly triple. Items unique to Scrimshaw and the Unsea can be found in **Chapter 5** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***.

Part Three: Where Seas End

Part 3 of Sea's End involves the tragic death of Captain Obed, uncovers a major clue to the entire plot of ***The Levee***, and plays through a cat-and-mouse game of the characters and their crew being hunted on their own ship.

Media Inspirations Behind L3: Sea's End

To get yourself into the right frame of mind for the finale of ***L3: Sea's End***, try getting hold of one of this trio of fabulous books and giving them a try, if you haven't already read any of these gripping tales:

In the Heart of the Sea — Nathaniel Philbrick
Moby Dick — Herman Melville (stick with it)
The Perfect Storm — Sebastian Junger

Epic Combats

This chapter of the adventure involve three major combats, one of which ends in tragedy. The combats are put in to give the characters a taste of the true horrors of the Unsea, allowing you to pit tough opponents against lower-level groups. It is not, however, a way to kill the characters. Instead, think of the combats as cinematic.

The Bloody Harpoon

Once the characters secure the services of Captain Obed and her crew, the captain takes them to see her ship, the *Bloody Harpoon*. Details of the ship and crew as well as a map of its deck plans are provided in **Appendix B** where you can refer to them throughout this adventure.



Events on the Unsea

The voyage to the Cataclysm is carried out as a series of events that you can run in any order you wish. The ship is under Obed's control until the Falling Isle is reached, and then events unfold as detailed in **Event 7** at the end of **Part 4**. The adventure then concludes with a nightmare journey home.

Daily life aboard the ship is described in a weeklong journey to the isle. The adventure does not focus on mundane duties, but these certainly make up a large part of the day. Slackers generally are loathed and have their share docked.

Event 1: Leaving Civilisation Behind

The characters leave Scrimshaw under a brooding, dark sky. When the characters are underway, read the following description:

> The Unsea boils and churns as though alive. Great waves rise and fall about you, taking you to their churning crests and heaving deeps in less than a minute. The Unsea screams with mangy gulls, and odd-shaped things drift — or perhaps swim — past the hull. The crew looks on anxiously, glad to be busy.

During the first day, the characters should try to sway the attitudes of the crew in their favour. A group check, DC 12, of Intelligence (Nature), Wisdom (Survival), or against the Vehicle (water) proficiency of the sailor background can be used to demonstrate to the crew that the characters aren't lily-livered land lubbers. All crewmembers and officers have a starting attitude of indifferent toward the characters and will be adjusted according to the following:

Result (d20)	Attitude Adjustment
5 or lower	All: indifferent to hostile
6 to 11	All: remains unchanged
12 to 17	Crew: indifferent to friendly; Obed/Jubba: remains indifferent
18+	Obed/Jubba: indifferent to friendly

During the evening, the cook (the duty rotates amongst the crew) boils up some squid and they huddle in the crew locker singing chanties. That evening, the sailors bring out an odd assortment of instruments, many strange pipes with bags that are pumped, and a hurdy-gurdy. The sailors sing several strangely disturbing dirges to block out the Unsea's brooding night storms with their music. Unfortunately, these chanties are filled with stories of mermaids that take sailors' heads but somehow keep them alive as trophies, of storms that breathe, and of the Ashen Angler's "white cliff of flesh, drawing from the ocean, her sick death light drooping from her gaping maw." characters present for these nightly performances must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for the next 6 hours. The music no longer has this effect upon the Scarred who make up this whaling crew.

Event 2: The Whirlpool

With the coming of the second day, if it truly is day — it's hard to tell in the gloom — brooding grey clouds hang seemingly inches above the ship's masts. The wind dies somewhat during what must be morning but at the stroke of noon picks up. By mid-afternoon, the wind is back again. Characters with a passive Perception of 13 (alternatively, the characters can make active checks) or higher notice a whirlpool rapidly forming near the ship.

The whirlpool sinks suddenly into the sea at the side of the ship, seemingly deliberately trying to draw the vessel down. The ship lurches in the grip of its current, and Captain Obed screams out orders. The crew begins flying up rigging, hauling on lines, and turning the wheel as the ship begins to pitch toward the vortex. As the ship begins to pitch and yaw, the characters are knocked from their feet unless they succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. If one of the characters has the Vehicle (water) proficiency of the sailor background, she can direct the others to the appropriate locations on the ship to provide the most benefit. If none of the characters have this skill or background, allow them to make a DC 15 Intelligence check to figure out what to do to help right the ship.

The ship is righted after the characters and crew manage to get it back under control. The captain screams in defiance at the maelstrom, warmly congratulating the crew and the characters. However, if the characters collectively fail their Intelligence checks, the following can occur:

Result (d20)	Outcome
15+	The characters can assist the crew and avoid the whirlpool with little or no damage to the characters, crew, or ship.
12-15	One of the ballistae falls over the side ahead of a flailing character's arms and is lost, its chain being torn loose and drawn into the roaring whirlpool. The lashing chain strikes at random character (*Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 30 ft.; one creature. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage) causing a potentially serious injury. Obed says the crew was lucky to get away with such a small loss.
8-11	The ship lurches over the whirlpool, listing to almost 45 degrees above it. Flotsam tears by, and all characters must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 10 (3d6) points of damage from flying debris and flailing lines. Characters near the side of the ship that is listing might need to make a higher DC saving throw (GM discretion) or be almost dragged over the gunwales. These characters are witness to what lies at the centre of the whirlpool (see **The Centre of the Vortex** sidebox). The ship escapes the hold of the current, but some of the crew are injured in this endeavour. Each crew member takes 1d6 points of damage from this outcome.
4-7	The entire crew fights frantically against the grip of the freak whirlpool. Two ballistae are torn loose and the lashing chains strike at two random characters (*Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 30 ft.; one creature. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage) resulting in serious injury. The rest of characters suffer 10 (3d6) points of damage from flying debris and flailing lines. A successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw reduces the damage by half. Further, every character witnesses the horror as described in **The Centre of the Vortex** sidebox. Only the captain's heroics at the wheel drags the ship clear of its doom, but everyone is battered by the experience. Each crewmember takes 2d6 points of damage.
1-3	The ship heels almost completely over into the whirlpool and 1d4 + 1 crew (determine randomly from amongst the whalers) are immediately lost to the sea and cannot be rescued by any means. Two ballistae are torn loose and the lashing chains strike at two random characters (*Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 30 ft.; one creature. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage) resulting in serious injury. The main mast snaps and careens across the deck and slamming into anyone in the way as the rigging, sails, and mast (*Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit (reach 30 ft.; multiple creatures. *Hit:* 24 (7d6) bludgeoning damage) are whisked overboard and quickly devoured by the whirlpool. The mast can be avoided with a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw (have the characters not targeted by the chains from the ballistae attempt to dodge the mast). In addition, every character witnesses the horror as described in **The Centre of the Vortex** sidebox. The whirlpool collapses in upon itself, disappearing as quickly as it came and releases the ship from its deadly grasp. Everyone is battered and some severely injured. Each NPC crewmember takes 3d6 points of damage.

The Centre of the Vortex

Some of the characters may have the misfortune to see into the heart of the whirlpool that imperilled their ship. If any of the other crewmembers did, they don't admit to it. Read the following to any characters who caught a glimpse of what lies below.

> The whirlpool sucks the ocean away, dragging the ship like a child's toy toward its dark depths. Suddenly a glint of the ship's lanterns reaches the base of the vortex far, far below and illuminates faces, many, many faces at the base of the whirlpool — twisted deranged faces screaming.

The faces catch the character's eye and stare, sharing for less than a second a feeling of helpless, endless terror. The figures are sailors who have been taken by the whirlpool. The viewer understands that the figures are still alive, and have sailed the Unsea endlessly, their only crime being to fall into the whirlpool. Each character who sees the faces must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or suffer from one long-term madness effect (roll d100 on the Long-Term Madness table in the rules manual) and be haunted by the sight of the sailors below.

Development: That evening, if the characters failed to help right the boat (any of the failure outcomes), the crew sits in morose, exhausted silence and sob if they lost any crewmembers (or characters). Everyone retires early, and those on watch are uncharacteristically quiet and subdued. The ship's bell is barely audible as the hours are softly rung.

If less than two characters failed their checks, the crew is elated and counts itself lucky for once again having escaped one of the dangers of the Unsea. The locker has a jaunty, festive air as dinner is served, and the sea chanties take on a more chipper tune and don't require the normal Wisdom save as described under **Event 1** above.

Event 3: Watchers in the Skies

Depending upon how the encounter with the whirlpool went, the crew may be elated or saddened. Early on the third morning, a flock (12) of mangy gulls (use **stirge**, replacing blood drain with adhesive trait (**mimic**), and talons (**eagle**)) settles onto the ship's sails. Everyone on deck has a 1 in 6 chance of being attacked by 1d2 of the creatures, though the entire flock never joins in. Attempts to shoo them away are unsuccessful, and anyone who climbs the rigging to confront them is attacked by 1d2 of them each round until he descends back to the deck. The crew knows better than to incite the vicious birds in such large groups and tries to ignore them, remaining under cover as much as possible. In general, the normally raucous gulls remain silent for an hour or so and then depart all at once.

Development: These mangy gulls are creatures that spy the waters for a group of skum that lurks about Scrimshaw (see **Event 4** below). The creatures are naturally distrustful of strangers but accustomed to seeing the odd vessel sailing through here. After observing the ship for a while, the gulls fly to the nearby ruinous isle of twigs and flotsam where their skum masters lurk to inform them a ship is nearby. These gulls have the unnatural sentience of Between, and if they can be successfully charmed or coerced, they reveal that they serve the skum and that an attack is imminent.

More information on mangy gulls can be found in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*: Part 5**.

Event 4: The Night of Bulging Eyes

The rest of the day (if the sick gloom can be called day) passes without event except each character must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw (repeat every 8 hours of game time). Those who fail the check are unaccustomed to the motion of the ship and are seasick (characters that are seasick are considered poisoned until they make a successful saving throw or have *lesser restoration* cast on them). In the dead of night, as the ships bobs in heavy seas, the skum attack. This is a tough encounter designed to be a challenge for the crew and 5–6 3rd-level characters. Alter it as necessary to accommodate the strengths or weaknesses of your group.

The skum who lurk off Scrimshaw like to patrol the waters and even the shores of that rock for easy prey. Occasionally they even enter the waters of the Great Lyme River on some strange purpose to do the bidding of their deity, the Madness of the MirrorStorm. This group of 6 **skum**† is led by an aberration they call the **Lord of Many Faces**†. The Lord has an ooze guardian of its own in the form of its cloak (an **ochre jelly** that he wears draped across his shoulders).

Tactics: The creatures quietly clamber aboard the ship by climbing upon the harpoons embedded in the hull. There should not be a character on watch, and they are able to come aboard undetected (unless the players have stated that one of them is always on the deck keeping watch during the night, in which case allow normal opposed Stealth and Perception checks). If there is no character on deck, then choose one of the whalers at random to be on duty and consider him (or her) to have been quietly killed in this initial stage.

Once all are aboard the ship, the Lord sends the skum into combat below decks first to start a ruckus, enabling it to follow a short time later and try to look for isolated victims to serve as hosts to transform into spawn. He is difficult to spot, but easy to follow as his acidic footsteps leave burned scars on the decking. Fortunately for the ship, its Between-treated planks have acid resistance, so the ship is in no danger of sinking. The Lord sends its cloak into battle if it is threatened itself. The Lord is easy to hit in combat, but tough to take down. It tries to lurk unseen at the edges of combat and slinks away from threats (calling its cloak to it as it does so) to go over the side of the ship and move below the water to come up elsewhere. If it is reduced to 35 hp, it flees with its cloak and does not return but commands its followers to stay to the finish so that none survives to repeat the tale of its loss.

Are All Creatures in Between Between Creatures?

No.

The Between Creature template and Between subtype are detailed in **Part 6** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***. Such creatures are things as much an extension of their own land's psychic manifestation and thought as they are a living creature, and they are shaped accordingly. Many creatures that dwell within Between, particularly at its edges, for some reason experience negligible effects from their surroundings. These creatures may be newly arrived in Between and haven't lived there long enough for its influence to have fully seeped in or perhaps have some inherent-but-poorly-understood resistance to its influence. They are not, therefore, a part of the land and do not have the template or the subtype. However, these creatures almost always show some signs of the effects of living here. For example, their features are perverted by the twisting ways of Between and begin to change to conform to their new environment.

The encounter with the Lord of Many Faces and his skum followers provides an excellent opportunity to express a difference in the creature's forms. The skums' features are exaggerated … changed, their bulging eyes seemingly about to burst from their skulls, their gills sick and distended. Similarly, the Lord of Many Faces was a normal (if undersized) aberration when he first arrived in Between, and the transformation into an ooze creature is the manifestation of his exposure.

Use these kinds of techniques and descriptions to tweak Between encounters to make them different and more horrible than normal such encounter.

Event 5: A Spout!

A call comes up from the crow's nest, "Whale! To the nor' nor'east'"

The *Bloody Harpoon* heels sharply about and makes toward the distant plume of a single whale. Crewmembers break out the Unsea shipskin (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***) , make ready the harpoons (with Obed manning the forward-most), and the ship bears down on her prey. This combat is run as a precursor to the one with the Ashen Angler near the end of the adventure and can foreshadow how that one goes. Each combat round, Jubba must keep the ship's bow within 120 feet of the whale if the ballistae are to have a chance at hitting the whale. When initiative is rolled, it is suggested that the *Bloody Harpoon* and the ballistae group have separate initiatives.

Tactics: The **Between whale**† will toy with the *Harpoon* and her crew and stay just outside of ballistae range (120 ft.). On the whale's 5th turn, it will immediately change course and attempt to ram the boat, broadside, and capsize it. The ship is Gargantuan size, as is the whale, and will have advantage on the saving throw to avoid being capsized.

On initiative for the *Harpoon*, Jubba, the helmsman, will continue making sure the *Harpoon* is within ballistae range of the whale. If he maneuvers the ship within range of the ballistae, they will fire (*Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (range 120/480 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage) at the whale on their iniative. The characters can fire ranged weapons or cast spells at the whale when they are within range and it is their iniative.

The characters can also assist the crew with piloting and gunnery. Any character with the Vehicle (water) proficiency can assist the crew if they successfully make a DC 16 check against their proficiency at the start of each of their turns, bolstering the chance that the ship will not capsize (reduce the DC needed to avoid capsize by 1 for that turn *only*).

To determine if the whale successfully capsizes the Harpoon, consult the description of the Between whale in ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***.

Development: If they kill the Between whale, the stinking carcass is dragged to the stern where it is infested with mangy gulls, which the sailors enjoy target shooting. The carcass is worth a 100-gp share to every crewmember (including the characters) when the ship returns to Scrimshaw. That night, regardless of the hunt's success, Captain Obed

is in a fine mood and goes around to each character charging them to entertain her as she helms the ship. She gives the person who impresses her most (based on the highest Charisma (Performance) check or some other criteria you select) a bottle of rum mixed with one of her a *potion of greater healing*.

Event 6: The Step in the Sea and the Song in the Clouds

This event occurs 1d4 days after **Event 5** above.

The wind drops, and a mist settles, a very thick mist over calm seas. As it does so, the sound of a ship's bell echoes across the seas, along with a rising roaring sound from the waters. The *Harpoon* begins to struggle, her crew looking anxious, until she slowly comes to a halt as the ocean ahead arrives at a curious drop, a depression caused by roaring, conflicting currents that leave a visible drop of a few feet between the seas the *Harpoon* rides upon and the waters ahead.

Any of the characters who make a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check realise that the step is at the edge of a boiling conflux between two major currents, and the forces below must be terrible indeed to create this odd feature on the surface of the sea. To affirm this, characters watching the waters spot a huge, wan squid-like carcass suddenly rise to the surface where it thrashes for a moment amidst the turmoil of the currents and then is just as quickly sucked back into the dark depths below.

The ship's bell again sounds and suddenly the *Carrion* lurches from the mists immediately to the stern of the *Bloody Harpoon*. A crewmember quickly spots the approaching thing and cries a warning.

You first take it for an island, or perhaps an iceberg like the old salts speak of in whispers, but it is not any of those things. It is a ship, or at least it was, for what lurches toward you now is the carcass of a ship, with two broken masts — one infested with timbers and rope and flotsam that give it the organic appearance of some sort of nest. The ship this protrudes from has been tainted by Between. It has grown unnaturally, its hull rising into towering cliffs some fifty feet high. Sitting and calling amongst nests in these cliffs are gulls, hundreds of them, and other things, strange birds that have a waxy look to them and that tend to hatchlings that stare at you with almost human heads.

The **Song of Sorrows and Echoes of Suffering**† is a Between wyvern that has nested in part of what remains of the ship *Carrion*, an old whaling vessel that is slowly dragged about by currents in the seas hereabouts. The *Carrion* and all her occupants are soaked in Between essence; the ship is a broken convoluted maze of a place — rooms appear where they shouldn't, old occupants linger, and the vessel follows no logical natural design. It has grown into what it now is, and holds the memories of its long voyages in its timbers. The ship now resembles a towering cliff of timber, growing into a massive form that rises 50 feet from the sea.

Similarly, the ship's current occupants have been tainted; their young show signs of their parentage (gryph and wyvern) but are curiously human in appearance, a result of the proximity of the human ship they live on. The wyvern is soaring in the mists some 240 feet above the *Carrion* at the start of this encounter. Amongst the thousands of gulls are the 3 brides of the wyvern, **gryphs**† that tend to the progeny of their unnatural union. The gryphs immediately cry out in a horribly human way as the character's ship approaches, calling to the wyvern, which hears and immediately dives to attack.

Tactics: The gryphs call and cry as the wyvern attacks, trying to swoop down and pick at flesh — particularly of anyone that is not a threat. Amongst the birds, thousands of gulls soar into the air, confusing the battle. Every other round the gulls form the equivalent of a gull swarm (as a **swarm of ravens**) that focuses on a random character or NPC for 1 round before dispersing and reforming randomly elsewhere. Even if the Song or the Brides end up in the area of one of these swarms, they take no damage as the gulls will not attack them. The gulls all flee the *Carrion* for safer nesting if the wyvern is slain. The Song is not a subtle opponent, and simply dives into attack, tearing at as many opponents as it can. The Song flies out of combat when it reaches 35 hit points, but returns 1d4 rounds later and attacks again until slain. The hideous young gryph-wyvern hybrids try to awkwardly flap away from combat, crying in their worryingly human way all the while.

Development: After 12 rounds of combat, the step in the sea fails as the currents shift, and both ships plunge forward and apart, drifting 60 feet away from each other. Anyone on board either vessel that stands within 5 feet of the edge of the deck when this occurs must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the waters. This individual must make a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check in the still-turbulent waters or be pulled 10 feet under and must hold his breath or drown. The character can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of their turns. As each round passes, the downward drag lessens as the current disperses, reducing by 1 the DC of the Strength (Athletics) for the character to surface. Once a character is able to swim (makes the check), he is able to make his way back to the ship and be brought on board.

The Carrion's Tale

Sailors of the Unsea see the *Carrion* from time to time. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check can recall the tale of the broken ship that drifts across the Unsea, her hull swollen and bent by the Between and home to gulls. A ship that has twisted into an island on its own. All sailors avoid the strangely human bird songs that drift across still waters, and the clanging of her bell is said to be the last thing some Unsea sailors ever hear.

This derelict ship comprises its own encounter area within **Event 6** and is detailed herein. A map of the vessel is provided if the characters choose to explore the strange ghost ship.

C1. The Carrion Cliffs

The ship's hull is an almost organic thing, somehow grown from the skeleton of a normal ship into something monstrous and misshapen whose cliff walls tower over the sea. They are clamouring with life; vile part-humanoid birds and gulls swooping and battling and crying.

All the living occupants of the *Carrion* nest on the bizarre cliff hulk of the ship. The cliffs require a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. There are so many gulls and young gryphs that every climb is fraught with encounters with the birds, who vomit and soil and cry at anyone coming close. Any failure therefore results in a fall.

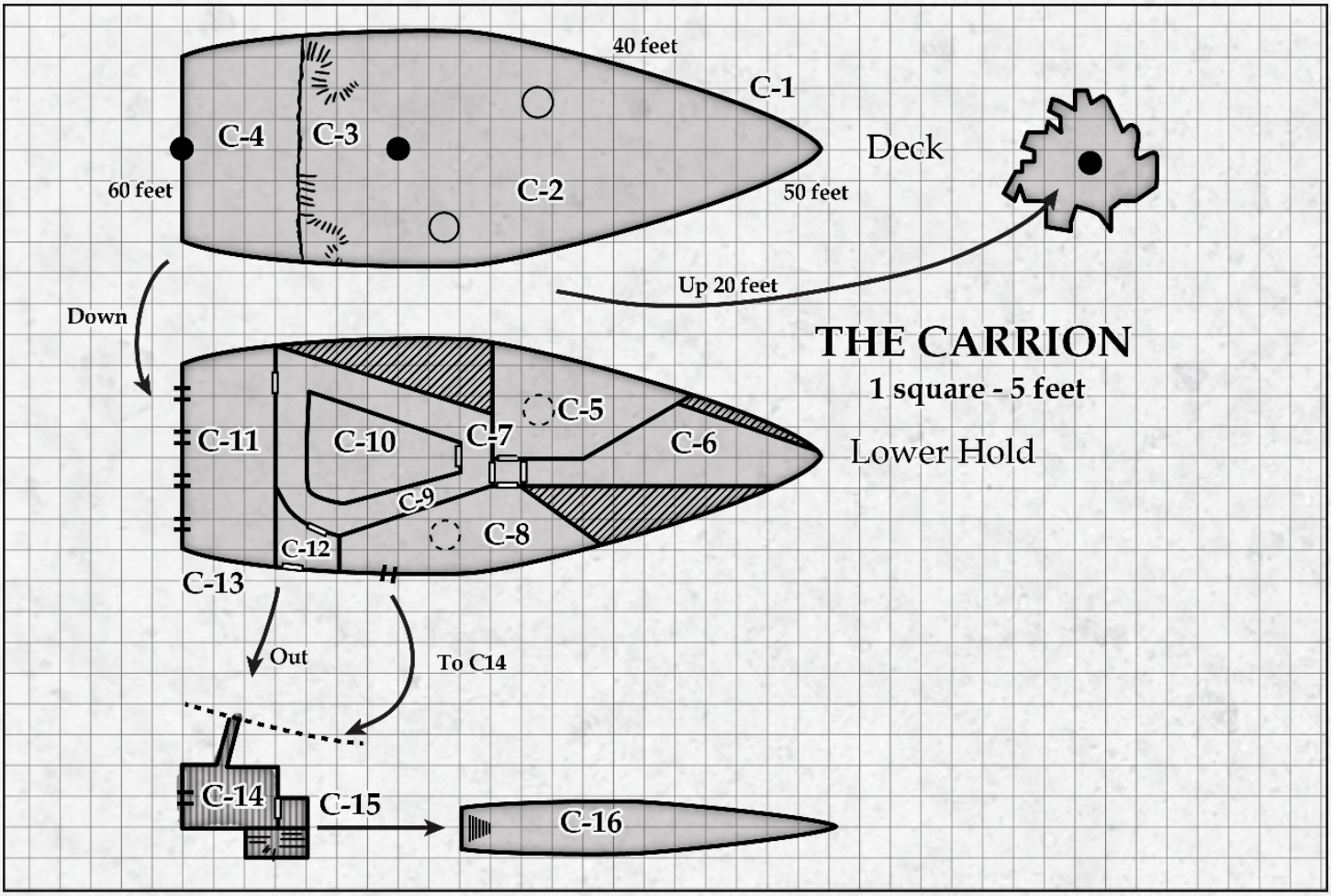
C2. The Deck of Waste

The main deck is a revolting mass of excrement that coats everything across the strangely broken landscape. Two holes break through this revolting mess into nameless darkness below, while a strange nest hangs from one of the two masts.

Although revolting, the deck is nothing more than slippery, requiring a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross any part of it at greater than half speed. The nest mast is slippery, with the bulk of the nest beginning 20 feet above the main deck. A successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb up and through the overhanging structure. The wyvern lairs in the nest.

Treasure: Scattered within the nest are numerous objects. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check turns up the following items: a





bone flute worth 5 gp, an iron flask containing a *potion of greater healing*, a fine spyglass in a leather case worth 100 gp, and an iron grappling hook upon which is a gloved hand. Within the glove is an intact skeletal hand wearing a *ring of swimming*.

C3. The Crooked Stair

A strange double stairway, one that seems to have grown from the ship, lurches its way from the foul deck onto the higher stern deck where the great ship's bell hangs.

The staircase rises to the Upper Deck. It requires no check to use, but anyone climbing it suffers a strange giddiness from its curious angles.

C4. The Ship's Wheel and Bell

The deck here rises high above the main deck but slopes forward at an alarming angle. A huge wheel stands immediately above the deck, and a ship's bell hangs on a crooked piece of wire.

The deck is so sloped that characters using it must make a successful DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross any part of it at greater than half speed.

Treasure: The ship's wheel is set with scrimshaw handles bound in leather cords and ended with sp roundels. In total, it is worth 400 gp but weighs 50 pounds. The ship's great bell is unremarkable but has suffered the ravages of the elements so much that the clapper is almost worn to nothing.

Below Decks

A creature lurks below the decks, feeding on the occasional stray bird or morsel it dares to steal. The creature, refers to itself as the Crooked Captain (**bearded devil** with the ability to cast *dimension door* at will), may be encountered anywhere beneath the main deck, and knows its lair well. It slips and sneaks about, making threats and otherwise threatening intruders with an unpleasant fate. It focuses it promises on their eyes, claiming it enjoys plucking and sucking on like a hard candy.

The bearded devil uses its *dimension door* spells to move about the ship, but is nervous of doing so, having encountered creatures that it didn't wish to see in the strange spaces that litter the vessel. While these shapes and things did not attack, they unsettled the creature, which is relatively new to the ship, having made its way on from another vessel on which it was hiding. The Crooked Captain has a distended jaw brimming with teeth and a revolting feral smell, but it has yet to acquire any unusual Between traits beyond its *dimension door* ability.

C5. Belowdecks

The fall into the hold below is only 10 feet, but characters descending into it feel it is much longer. No matter what light source is shined into the hold from outside, it does not provide more then dim illumination within.

The decks below are even more contradictory than the top deck. Here, the ship's hull falls away at claustrophobic angles, contorting and groaning as though a living thing.

As the characters enter this chamber for the first time, they notice something with too many legs scurry across the ceiling. The thing is not seen again.

C6. The Bow Hold

This hold seems to have grown around the contents of the chamber. Its timbers infest scores of barrels, lengths of rope, and mundane objects.

Removing the objects from their surroundings requires a successful DC 12 Strength check to break them loose from the distorted, expanding timbers of the hold. Amongst the objects herein and spotted by an character with a passive Perception of 10 or higher, are a ship's great lantern, a locked iron box that can be opened with a DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools and contains 4 bags of silver coins (100 sp in each), the *Carrion's* ship's log (detailing mundane day-to-day activities such as whales taken, weight of ambergris recovered, and such), 100 feet of silver wire (worth 25 gp), and a pair of narwhal tusks worth 250 gp each nestled in a shut cupboard near **C7**.

C7. The Confusing Hall

An incredibly cramped space has four doors carved to depict harpooned whales. Indeed, the creatures bristle with hundreds of such weapons and are clearly in agony.

C8. The Secondary Hole

The second deck hole descends to a hold that slopes at an alarming angle toward the hull. Broken barrels have ruptured and been strangled by outgrowing ship's timbers, and their contents — clearly oil — have spilt onto the floor. Thick, clotted oily webs cover every surface, and an oppressively smothering atmosphere hangs within.

The slope is so extreme that a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check is required to explore this chamber. Failure indicates the character has slipped and fallen into the barrels and webs. Hundreds of abnormally large crimson spiders (**swarm of spiders**) occupy the webs. The spiders attack only those who explore the webs or who fall into the webs.

Treasure: The timbers here are a lattice of oiled beams and crooked planks that have grown into each other. A cupboard lies just under the overhead at the stern of the chamber, its door is obstructed by the crooked planks that have grown wildly in the hold. The door can be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength check. The cupboard contains an oiled wooden, leather-lined box with an Unsea waggoner (a series of captain's notes and nautical charts) worth 500 gp, a very fine bottle of brandy worth 25 gp, and a simple but finely carved chess set in a travelling box worth 25 gp.

C9. The Confusing Corridor

This corridor slopes away like some sort of demented broken room. Its floor twists and slopes; its walls form at odd angles that clearly reduce movement to a stagger. Even staring at the bizarre corridor makes you feel a little queasy.

The corridor requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move faster than half speed. Those who fail the check by 5 or more must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be sickened (as the poisoned effect) for 10 minutes. Doors from this corridor are also at odd angles.

This is the Crooked Captain's favourite location for a fight. It is immune to the effects of the corridor, having travelled through them so many times before.

C10. The Crew Quarters

As characters approach this doorway, they hear singing, a crude sea chanty being sung by several men's voices. The Crooked Captain stays away from this chamber, fearing it is still occupied. The voices are different each time the chamber is approached. In fact, two characters approaching from different directions may hear different things; one may hear singing, the other snoring, and so on.

Beyond the twisted doorway is a cabin that looks as if it has just been deserted. A table has been set, and cards are laid out, candles in sconces have gone out but still have small streamers of smoke rising from their wicks. The signs of the chamber are that it has been left mere moments ago.

The crew were herein when the *Carrion* met its original fate, one not detailed in this adventure beyond its appalling suddenness.

Treasure: Several coins (21 cp, 11 sp and 3 gp) are scattered about the room, and several objects have been thrown to the floor by subsequent storms. However, a pipe with a fine gp bowl edge worth 10 gp, a pouch of Sailor's Rough tobacco (a brand obtained in the Jumble), a half-empty bottle of very rough rum, and a metal cutlery and plate set lie strapped into a case in a cupboard. The timbers in this chamber do not seem to have grown into the room, although the shape of the interior and exterior remain distinctly odd.

C11. Captain's Cabin

Towering stained-glass windows dominate this chamber, casting a shadowy light across the room, which appears almost normal beyond the strange hue. There is a cot, a fine desk, and a secure railed wall of books.

At some stage during the character's time in this chamber, one of them sees a shape outside the window. The shape is as though a man clung to the window from outside, pressing his face against the glass and screaming, but the coloured glass is thick and features cannot be discerned. If any of the characters seeing the face have a passive Perception of 15 or higher (or who make an active check) identify a pair of epaulettes on the shoulder of the figure, possibly indicating it as a captain of a ship.

Treasure: The books are all nautical and whaling reference books — at least the titles on their spines are — however, each book is filled with blank pages, as though the words have been stolen. The cot has a copper piece, a bedpan and a lucky horseshoe is nailed above it. The desk contains a fancy writing set (see below) made of tortoiseshell and silver worth 100 gp, a set of wax seals and sealing wax in a lacquer box worth 20 gp, and numerous ledgers for wages, shares, and other mundane matters set in a book with a lockable clasp that can be opened with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.

The first time anyone uses the writing set to write with, they find themselves writing a message that reads, *"In gods' names help us, we are lost. The shadows have us, the crooked shadows. Please, if you have mercy, help us."* The message is never repeated and, unless you wish it, leads nowhere. What happened to the captain and crew of the *Carrion* is not spoken of here.

C12. The Crawlway

A small door leads to a claustrophobic space between the ship's inner and outer hull. This is another opportunity to invoke any phobia of tight spaces the characters have. It is also a good opportunity for the players to roleplay. If this is a course that is desired, a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw would prevent the character from succumbing to their phobia, while a failure would result in them being frightened for at least 1 hour.

Small characters can pass through the door without issue. Any Medium characters wishing to enter will need to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to

squeeze through the tight opening. Characters with a passive Perception of 10 (or who make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check) or more that are looking through the doorway see a similar door to the left some 20 feet away.

C13. The Claustrophobia

Barely a foot wide in places, the space accesses a similar doorway, and follows the same criteria for entry as the door in **C12** above. As above, tight spaces and phobias can be a focal point that allows for good roleplay.

The doorway is etched with graffiti made by the Crooked Captain. The graffiti is simple drawings showing eyeless people being burned alive and mutilated by something with too many teeth.

C14. The Impossible Room

Impossibly, the doorway opens onto a further corridor, which moves away from the ship and which simply cannot exist. This short corridor, which is again very narrow, leads into a cramped chamber with half a dozen recesses, within each of which are grinning mummified mermaids.

Treasure: Close examination of the mermaids reveals that half are real. One wears a shawl made of silver thread worth 45 gp, another an earring made of seashells linked with platinum bands worth 25 gp.

C15. The Twisting Stair

A tiny doorway accesses an even-more-curious space, a short and tight dark space that descends a crooked staircase.

The staircase winds down the elaborate stair, passing recesses and shelves on the way down. These shelves house a variety of curious and macabre objects from the sea: the pickled head of an eyeless sahuagin, a huge beautiful snail shell the size of a hand, a dried albino eel, an angler fish pickled in vinegar, and at least twenty types of coral.

C16. The Deep Hold

The stairs end at a stifling space, a long slender chamber that sways with the ocean's currents. The chamber is half filled with brackish water.

The deep hold has bloated and grown. This is the lair of the Crooked Captain and where he generally will be finally encountered. The space is a confusing mass of bloated timbers, and is 4 feet deep with water that smells overpoweringly of rotting vegetation and is equal to a deep bog (difficult terrain). At the very farthest point, the Crooked Captain sleeps in a cramped alcove just above the water line.

Treasure: Within the crude alcove bed is a gold-framed miniature of a beautiful girl (with the name "Emily" inscribed on the back), together with a lock of hair. The object is worth 75 gp. There are also some fish, a few desiccated gryph young with gnawed feet, and a ship in a bottle worth 25 gp.

Splitting Shares

The *fair* way to do things aboard ship is equal shares for all; most likely, the characters get half of everything they find as a cash reward. However, fairness is not all it's cracked up to be, and the crew may indulge themselves in a spot of treasure hunting of their own. In this case, the odd item (that is portable) may go missing, but make this a rare thing; the crew are a tight lot after all.

Event 7: The Ocean's Race

On the next day of the voyage, the *Bloody Harpoon* approaches the region of the Cataclysm. Here, the current picks up noticeably, and the crew must work harder than ever to steer the vessel on her right course. The current grows and grows over the next couple of days until just after dawn 3 days after their encounter with the *Carrion* the characters behold the following scene.

The noise is indescribable, as though the whole world is falling apart. Ahead is a white wall of turbulent water, beyond which, perhaps a mile or so distant, must be the fabled Cataclysm. The air is thick with birds, calling and screaming against the wind. At the sight of these, the captain begins to race around the deck excitedly. Ahead, perhaps half a mile closer to the awful white wall of foam and water is an island, a dark hazy stain that appears to have half collapsed into the sea, leaving a single vast cliff on one side. The Falling Isle you presume.

As the *Bloody Harpoon* approaches, it is clear that the great swell of the seas surrounding the cliffs is as high as 20 feet in places, far too dangerous for the *Bloody Harpoon* to try to navigate through though a smaller and lighter craft like a jolly boat might be able to manage it. The characters are on their own for the last mile, although Obed provides the characters with a pair of grappling hooks and 50 feet of rope.

As soon as the characters set out in their jolly boat toward the island, Captain Obed races about deck of the *Harpoon*, sure that the presence of vast numbers of scavenger birds indicates these to be the Ashen Angler's hunting grounds. The crew begins readying the harpoon ballistae and breaking out the Unsea shipskin (a curious outer covering for the ship intended to prevent capsizing in the worse Unsea storms). While the characters are ashore, Obed intends to hunt.

Part Four: The Falling Isle

Literally only half an island, the Falling Isle was chosen by Gromwell deliberately, being at the heart of a storm in Between. Exactly the place he needed.

Gromwell and the Falling Isle

Father Gromwell was no casual visitor to the Falling Isle; he was petrified of the voyage and didn't wish to journey the Unsea at all. However, his quest for the angel led him here. Gromwell first learnt of the angel in the writings of Brother Bartholomew, a monk of Castorhage who lived some 850 years ago, nearly seven centuries before the official discovery of Between by Hetherington Quarrus Mabe in 1637. At that time, shortly after the Death of King Branner the Child, the much-smaller city little understood the reason for mysterious appearances and disappearances that would, in time, be explored and in some cases harnessed as part of the Between Empire. Bartholomew was thought by many to be insane; he spoke of being given visions of Paradise, visions he set down in frescoes upon the walls of the Celestial Chapel in the Hollow and Broken Hills area of the city.

What caused the visions was not the monk's piety but rather a *Between vessel*†, a part of the angel's soul that had been cast away centuries before and lost. Somehow, the vessel found its way to the mundane world where Brother Bartholomew discovered it. His discovery of the object awakened the angel's soul, and the angel began whispering in his dreams, promising Paradise if he would but release it from its prison — a prison beyond the walls of reality. Bartholomew kept the curious vessel of opaque glass hidden in his chapel, sealed away with incredible cunning. But one day, before he could call his angel, he was murdered — a coincidence, an act of chance — but because of that whim of fate, the vessel lay where Bartholomew had hidden it, and his tale was remembered as nothing more than mad ravings.

When Gromwell learnt of this visionary mad monk, he visited the chapel with its incredible frescoes of Paradise. He saw in the monk's work a pattern, a cipher that hinted at being capable of bringing about Paradise. He learnt, however, that the monk was murdered before his work was completed and, forgotten, it fell into neglect and fable, its meaning lost. Then, incredibly, he discovered the *Between vessel* where it had lain undisturbed for more than 800 years. Gromwell reached into a dark cobwebbed crevice and awoke his angel. Soon, the thing was granting him visions, too. It whispered promises, appearing to be a creature of goodness and purity, and it promised him Paradise.

Father Gromwell kept the vessel with him during his visits to the city from his home in Wicken and, more importantly to him, kept it secret. In his dreams, he saw the same end promised to Bartholomew, a granting of Utopia, a personal Paradise world of green and calm and joy for all Creation. He followed the visions where they led him, whispering for him to venture into Between, a frontier discovered since the time of Bartholomew who had never been able to make any sense out of the strange calling and compulsions toward mirrors that he felt. Gromwell was called to Between to a spot where the elemental forces and the skin of the place was at its thinnest, and from where the angel could be called.

Gromwell chose the Falling Isle. Only a handful of weeks ago, Gromwell called his angel into the reflections of a crystal cave in the Unsea, and the two spoke together. Soon after, both departed through a *gateway* made by the angel — the first of many it intends to make — and back into the city. The great work began in earnest.

Now the cave is empty, but the story that was left behind remains.

The mariners who brought Gromwell to the isle perished soon after. Vargouilles were aboard the *Formidable* when it left Scrimshaw, and the creatures soon awoke. By the time Gromwell left for the isle, they were brooding in the dark, waiting. Some followed the priest but found him a match for their sick powers and stayed away from him until he left the isle. They remain there still, hunting in the night. The rest stayed aboard the *Formidable*, where one by one the crew succumbed to their attacks and the infighting they caused. Now *Formidable* sails the Unsea as a ghost ship.

The Falling Isle

FI1. The High Swell and the Ship

> The isle has a foot, a jutting mass of low, seaweed-covered, gull-infested rock that extends out from the base of the great towering isle. At the shore of this protuberance, bobbing up and down in the dramatic swells, is a small ship's boat.

The swell is very dangerous, rising nearly 20 feet on every round and falling back the next, with smaller waves making judgement difficult. Landing at the shore is demanding. Without magical assistance, a character must time the swell perfectly (and not all are the same height). Whoever is helming the launch needs to make a successful DC 15 Intelligence check to determine the correct timing of the swells. If the character fails this check by 5 or more, they judge the timing terribly and end up with the boat capsized. If any of the characters has the Vehicle (water)† proficiency, they can aid helmsman and the DC 15 Intelligence check will be made with advantage. Succeeding on the check allows the characters to reach shore without issue.

If the boat capsizes, the rough, turbulent seas can easily sweep a character away. Attempting to swim to shore is not advised, but if any wish to do so, they must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check or be whisked 30 feet away from the capsized vessel. How they get back to the party or to shore is up to GM and their fellows. They do have the option to cling to their overturned boat, which eventually is washed ashore, just in time to be struck by a crashing wave. The characters, in their exhausted and chilled state, will suffer 5 (2d4) points of bludgeoning damage as the wave slams then upon the rocky shore, abrading them with its many rough surfaces. Successfully swimming or bringing the boat safely in to its moorings reaches the isle without taking any damage.

The pinnace is what Gromwell used to ferry himself ashore through the swells and is moored using strong rope. Apart from a pair of spare oars, it is empty.

Development: As soon as they approach the isle, the occupants of **FI4** below spot the characters and make ready for their arrival.

FI2. The Shore

The isle is oiled in seaweed and many strange-looking crabs. Its rocks are curiously hexagonal, rising and falling in ornate, almost manmade ridges and edges. The characters can make a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)

check to try and spot a safe path across the narrow ridge through the rocks. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross any of the dangerous parts of the rocks. A failure by 5 or more indicates a fall onto rocks that deals 1d6 points of damage. Characters sticking to the safer route in the middle of the isle can traverse the rocks safely and without issue.

FJ3. The Cliff

A jagged cliff skirts the isle's higher rocks, a cave lying forty feet or so above. Mangy looking gulls infest the cliff.

Climbing the steep, jagged cliff shouldn't be too tough for the characters. There are numerous protrusions that can be used as hand and food holds. Utilizing a climber's kit makes the task even easier. Without rope or a climber's kit, each character needs to succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. If they use rope or the kit, the DC is halved.

At the cliff top, the high walls of the island rise sharply above. The cliffs are vertical, slick, and home to colonies of birds. The cave entrance is about 5 feet wide and has a whale oil lamp hanging from a hook near the entrance. Beyond are a trio of fishing nets, a harpoon, and crude carvings of a beatific woman. Characters seeing the symbol and making a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check recognise Mother Grace, the deity of Father Gromwell. Clearly, the carving is not old, perhaps as little as a month.

FJ4. The Low Step

A tunnel staggers upward over high steps that show a worrying amount of seaweed despite their height above the sea below. Eventually the path exits some one hundred feet above the shore below, lurching out along a very narrow step that rounds a corner. Above, sheer cliffs continue to rise.

The path upward is very narrow in places, but can be easily traversed. When the section of the path called the bad step is reached, the path takes a sharp turn in the cliff, and there is a step on either side. The first character to traverse the step should do so carefully. If they attempt to move faster than half speed, they must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity check or risk stumbling and (rare) falling. Beyond the bad step, the path widens and enters a slender-mouthed cave, parts of which are encrusted with crystals that reflect the sea hereabouts.

The cliff rises vertically from the path and the continuation of the path can only be reached by climbing the slick, vertical face of the cliff. Doing so necessitates a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check without gear (DC 7 with a climber's kit and/or rope). After 30 feet or so, there is a shelf of rock approximately 10 feet wide where 2 harpies, Sister Turmoil and Sister Tempest, (**harpy**, but with 30 hit points each) brood and argue. The sisters inhabit the isle cliffs, having been blown here a few weeks ago after falling through a Between *mirror-portal*. They have already driven off the **vargouilles**† that killed the crew of the *Formidable*. The sisters are unhappy about the fact that they're stuck in Between but cannot trust anyone or anything enough to make a bargain to return home.

The winds of the Unsea have lashed the harpies' skin, leaving them covered in hundreds of lacerations, some of which have healed into ugly scars. The remainder remain open and suppurating. If they spot anyone approaching, the sisters wait until these potential victims are crossing land and then use their captivating song to lure them. The captivated creatures will attempt to reach the harpies by climbing the cliffs where they perch. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Failure results in a fall of at least 50 feet and 5d6 damage.

Development: The sisters are lustful and a little bit insane, but not recklessly so. They squabble over any charmed victims, giving that victim a second save when he reaches the duo. The sisters hope, eventually, to use any charmed sailors to get them back to the city where they made their home high in the spires of the Capitol under the many watchful eyes of their lord, the Gablethrong (LE male **aranea**†).

Treasure: Sister Turmoil wears a gown of mangy gull heads and seaweed, woven within which are two gold rings worth 50 gp each. Sister Tempest wears a crown of steel wire woven with barnacles and fish eyes and set with a single very fine garnet worth 400 gp.

FJ5. The High Step

The tunnel rises very sharply, turning as it does and passing a trio of high steps. Eventually, a breeze becomes a gale as another cave entrance appears, this one giving access to a tortuously narrow step that vanishes ahead. Roughly six feet above the step are fixed chains that form a path vanishing around the corner.

The High Step is vicious. Those who use the chain must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check or fall 200 feet onto rocks below and into the Unsea. Those who clamber along the chains see that the path ends at a set of steps carved into the rock. These steps form a natural ladder.

FJ6. The High Stair

A frighteningly exposed wall of stone has slight steps cut into it, making a staircase rising to a cave entrance some twenty feet above.

No check is required to use the exposed steps, but with the wind tugging at their backs and gulls calling, the entire climb is hairy.

FJ7. The Hermitage

Clearly, this place is, or at least was, inhabited recently. A makeshift cloth door has been blown backward into a corridor in which hangs a dark lantern. Fishing gear lies by the door, and includes a net, a long rod, and some lobster pots.

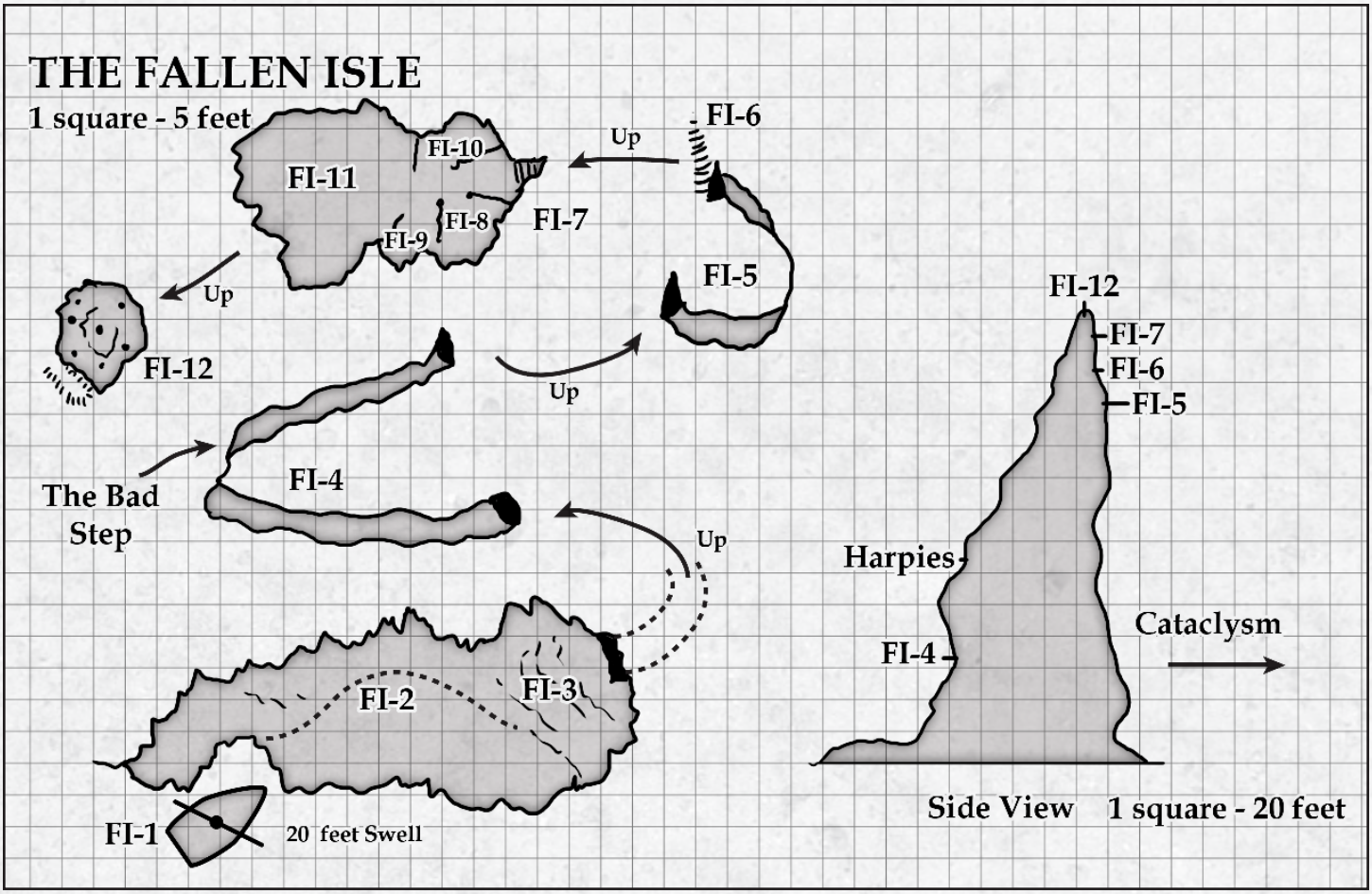
The hermitage and rooms beyond are where Father Gromwell came to successfully call his angel. The pair eventually left through a *gateway* created by the angel back to the city but is now broken. Shards of the gateway are scattered everywhere and appear like delicate flakes of crystal that have an oddly reflective quality. The can be identified for what they were with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana), but who made it and what its destination was cannot be gleaned from these fragments.

The whole area shows signs of sudden abandonment. All that remain are Gromwell's fishing gear and some food that has been rotting and picked over by gulls for a few weeks, as well as a half empty mug of water, and a rotten, gutted fish.

FJ8. The Bedroom

This dry chamber has a small fireplace carved into its south wall, before which lies a bedroll. The walls of the cave show signs of recent engravings.

The bedroll is Gromwell's, and contains a prayer book to Mother Grace with notes in the margins clearly written by Gromwell. A small cauldron hangs over the fire in which are the dried remains of a fish supper. Simple utensils and a bucket of water, now gone stagnant, stand nearby.



The engravings carved into the stone walls are all by Gromwell, as anyone who sees them and knows him confirms without the need for a check of any sort. From close examination, the characters can determine that Gromwell was here to contact an angel, where the flimsy veil of Between was at its weakest due to the elemental forces hereabouts. Gromwell depicts a place in Castorhage in two of the carvings, but he does not name it. He draws a chapel with a crooked spire and whose walls are adorned with images of his angel. Central to the carvings is an object, some sort of strangely opaque glass object that on closer examination resembles a horn. One engraving is clearly the oldest and largest and reads as follows in Common:

"*Light of day, reap sickness from the land*
Heaven's angel burn ignorance and greed
Beautiful, we kneel at your command
And work our own, blind as you decreed."

This rhyme is the hymn of the Panacea, a rhyme the characters may have come across before.

FI9. The Water Butt Well

Water sluices down from channels above and collects into a small pool here.

The pool collects the rainwater that lashes the top of the island. Lurking in the channel are 3 **vargouilles**†, birthed from those who killed the crew of the *Formidable*. The vargouilles are wary, and aware that Gromwell called something, a "blazing terrible light," and the pair whispered for many days before they were suddenly gone. The creatures lurk in the water vent, fearing the harpies that have arrived. Since then, they've been feasting on the odd gull or tormenting a chick or three.

Tactics: The vargouilles initially stay out of the way of opponents, but soon one breaks and has to try to bite. Once they have the smell of prey, the trio then seek to follow, attacking lone targets as much as possible. If they are not killed, they follow the characters back to the *Harpoon*. If slain, their memory and wicked spirit become the trio. Again, see **Part Five** for more details.

It is important to note that while the kiss of a vargouille is slowed by sunlight, there is no light bright enough to be worthy of sunlight in the gloom-shrouded Unsea.

FI10. The Small Crystal Cave

This cave is a marvel to behold, with its walls of white crystal, jagged points of stone that punch the narrow cave.

FI11. The Great Crystal Cave

If the first cave was a marvel, this larger cave is breath taking. It is a high chimney space of white crystal, a towering grotto of light settling upon light. Flakes of crystal litter the floor.

Gromwell tried repeatedly to call his angel using the reflective crystals here and eventually succeeded. The chamber is remarkable, although the crystals are not worth anything beyond their curiosity value. The chamber is hung with whale-oil lanterns, all of which are extinguished, a *wand of daylight* (7 charges) sticks from a hole 10 ft. above the entrance. The wand is made of driftwood and is noticed on a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check or if the area above the door is searched.

An opening can be seen near the ceiling, some 20 feet above the main chamber. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check will enable the characters to climb up to this opening which leads to a cave that accesses

an opening near the top of the isle that leads to a narrow stone stair that ascends a further 20 feet to **FI12**

Part of the crystal has been seared and is smooth, as though by incredible heat. This area is roughly 10 feet high and wide, and marks the entrance and exit of the angel and Gromwell.

Close examination of the crystals, or a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check, reveals something remarkable: They retain fragments of images. The first sort are images of the angel and Father Gromwell, and the second of the eventual exit of the *gateway* from the Falling Isle to the city. When characters examine these crystals, read or paraphrase the following description. Both descriptions are also included as **Handout 2** at the end of this adventure

> The echoes of several of the crystals show Gromwell in somewhat distorted form bowing before an angelic figure bathed in light. The figure is almost painful to behold, and holds a scythe. In some of the crystals, Gromwell is bowing. In others, his face is a rictus of joy. In the corner of one crystal, the side of the figure in light is shown clearly: It is disjointed, and has a look of hunger.
>
> The other place almost represents an inversion of the room you stand in, as though you are looking onto a scene that you cannot reach. Beyond is a series of vast grown chains and iron boughs and vines, some clearly yards thick. These hold up and support some sort of iron skeleton hanging in the dark. Depicted within this iron place are several figures, grotesquely drawn and stretched. At their sides lurk three women, their faces sickeningly drawn back into impossible grins of joy and hunger and fulfilment. One is bathed in light.

The figures are members of the Panacea, and are bowing before the angel in the Iron Dungeon, an area detailed in ***L5: Below***, the fifth adventure of ***The Levee***.

FI12. The Spire

> The final stair rises to the summit of the isle, a dizzying spot above the lashing seas far below. Here, seven huge iron bars rise to great lanterns that have rusted over many years.

The hermit who originally lived here many years ago used the lamps to signal danger to the rare passing ship.

Event 7: The Ashen Angler

As the characters conclude their exploration of the Falling Isle and begin to row back to the *Bloody Harpoon*, they discover that events have unfolded upon the sea as well. Captain Obed kept the crew on station both waiting for the characters and watching for signs that her suspicion of this area being a hunting ground for the Ashen Angler are true. As the characters embark back across the swells toward the ship (it is much simpler to depart from the island than to try to safely land on it), either on their jolly boat or Gromwell's launch if their jolly boat did not survive the journey intact, they see that the *Harpoon* now floats beyond the edge of the swell, its sails furled. Read aloud the following text.



As you make your way over the rough seas back toward the *Bloody Harpoon*, you catch occasional glimpses of the ship between the rises and furrows of the swells. Though the ship drifts lazily just beyond the powerful current of the Cataclysm that you are fighting against with its sails furled, you can see that all hands are on deck with at least two of your mates atop the yard of the mainmast. You spy Captain Obed standing upon the stern, her spyglass raised. Neither she nor any of the crew is looking in your direction. All appear to be focused on something in the direction of the Cataclysm.

Your vessel dips into another deep furrow, and you lose sight of the ship for several seconds, but you almost fancy you can hear shouting and the clangour of the ship's great bell over the roar of the seas around you. When next you rise upon a swell, you are startled by the new sight you behold. The *Harpoon* is now under full sail with its crew scurrying to general quarters, catching the gusting storm of the skies above and begins to move away from you in a course *directly toward the Cataclysm*.

You quickly look over your shoulder in the direction of its heading, straining your eyes to see what they're looking at. At first, you see nothing, but then what you thought was a massive foaming swell some half mile distant resolves itself into the pale form of a massive whale-like beast. It breaches far out in the watery chaos of the current that approaches the Cataclysm and puts a plume of water high into the air from its blowhole. On its head in front of its blowhole dangles a long rigid appendage, the tip of which emits a sickly grey light.

It is the Ashen Angler, the legend of the Unsea, and the obsession of the mad Captain Obed.

After keeping watch while the characters were upon the Falling Isle, Captain Obed spotted her prey. The Ashen Angler, a vast creature she has seen here before, breaches from the boiling seas ahead of the Cataclysm. The captain gives the order to drop the sheets, and as the harrowing winds of the Cataclysm suddenly fill its sails, the *Bloody Harpoon* shoots forward in pursuit with a great heave.

This encounter strikes a more cinematic tone and sets the mood for the long voyage home, robbing the ship of their leader, putting the characters into the heart of the crew, and setting up a desperate fight for survival. By the end of this encounter, Captain Obed and the Ashen Angler fall into the Cataclysm regardless of the character's actions, but there is no reason to let your players know this yet.

Run this encounter in as much detail as you wish, or as a simple observation for the characters. They should certainly have a chance to stand back from danger (an act that resonates heavily on the final chapter of the adventure) or play a heroic part in trying to aid their captain (which again has far-reaching consequences).

While the rules outlined below will allow the characters to take part in what is essentially a chase scene on the water, you don't need to use them at all. If it is preferable to narrate the efforts of the characters to catch the *Bloody Harpoon*, then you should definitely take that course and put aside any mechanics that might take away from a tense and exciting narrative.

Joining the Battle

As this epic clash between the legendary captain and the legendary angler whale commences, the characters start out in their jolly boat (or Gromwell's pinnace) approximately 1 mile from the edge of the Cataclysm (5,200 feet), but already in the turbulence zone where the Cataclysm churns the water into frothing swells. The *Bloody Harpoon* starts out right at the edge of the swell-zone, and makes way under full sail (if the *Harpoon* was damaged badly in the encounter with the Between whale, the sails and the mast have been hastily repaired) into the swells to give chase to the angler whale. After several rounds, the ship should move within 120 feet of the character's launch for 1 round as it passes by.

The character guiding the party's vessel can attempt to close on the *Harpoon* as it passes or seek to parallel its course to join the fight. Establish an iniative for the *Harpoon* and an iniative for the character's craft (both d20, no modifiers), and also for each character. When the iniative order is at the character's craft, that is when the characters will take any actions.

Note: The current in the swell zone moves at a speed of 30 feet toward the Cataclysm. Each round of the battle, the boats all move that distance toward it in addition to whatever speed and direction they are heading (this is mentioned again in the boat descriptions below). The only exception is if the boats are deliberately moving away from the Cataclysm, in which case their speed is offset by the speed of the current. For example, the jolly boat (below) moving away from the Cataclysm at 30 feet per round will be able to hold its position without moving toward or away from the Cataclysm if the rowing speed is maintained, but if they stop rowing, it immediately begins moving toward it again. Only by making a sufficiently high skill check where the jolly boat's speed is doubled to 60 feet for the round can it make any headway away from the drop-off. However, this runs the risk of fatigue as explained below.

The Jolly Boat

The jolly boat (as a keelboat) is large enough to hold all the characters and their equipment but not a sail. Without a sail, the party will need to row - up to 4 characters can man the oars. One of the character's rowing the jolly boat can serve as its pilot by giving rowing commands to his companions. The jolly boat does not come equipped with any armaments, but does have two 100-foot lines coiled in the bow for mooring and 2 grappling hooks in a small locker (in case there is need for better purchase than a mooring line can provide alone).

The jolly boat can go a maximum speed of 30 feet per round, but if it travels in the direction of the current (i.e. toward the Cataclysm), it gains an additional 30 feet of movement, making it 60 feet per round, but only if it keeps traveling in the direction of the current, otherwise it loses the benefit of the additional 30 feet per round.

For each round that the jolly boat is attempting to catch the *Harpoon*, have the pilot roll a DC 12 Vehicle (water) check. If the character is proficient in this skill, they roll normally, but if they are not, have them roll at disadvantage. If the other characters would like to aid the character, make it a group check where success is defined by half or more of the characters succeeding on the DC 12 check. If the check fails, the jolly boat has turned against the current and loses the 30-ft. movement bonus. Also, at the start of each round, have the rowers, who are exherting themselves mightily to try and maintain the maximum speed of the craft, make a group DC 12 Constitution check. If half or more of the characters succeed, they maintain speed. If half or more fail, the craft can only travel at half speed during that round. If the chase keeps up for 10 rounds, each of the rowers will gain a level of exhaustion.

The Pinnace

Gromwell's pinnace is a small, single-masted sailing vessel that was towed behind the *Formidable* on its journey to the Falling Isle. It is large enough to hold all the characters and their equipment plus a few more besides. It can be propelled by oars (up to 6 rowers) or sails. The sails are currently furled, but the mast is not stepped, so it is a matter of only 4 rounds to raise the sails and get the vessel underway (half that if at least 4 people are helping). One character must pilot the vessel from the stern rudder and at least 1 other character must tend the lines if under sail or up to 6 other characters can row. The pinnace does not come equipped with any armaments, but does have two 100-foot lines coiled in the bow for mooring and 2 grappling hooks in a small locker (in case there is need for better purchase than a mooring line can provide alone), and a heavy 200-foot line coiled beneath the pilot's seat to serve as its cable when under tow.

If under sail, the pinnace can move at a maximum 120 feet per round with the wind under full sail. The wind's strength is the same as the current, so do *not* add the current's speed of 30 feet on top of this. If the pilot is tacking (change course by turning a boat's head into and through the wind), the maximum speed changes depending upon the pinnace's heading. However, once the pinnace is no longer running with the wind (i.e. directly toward the Cataclysm), the 30-foot speed of the

current must be added back into the boat's movement in that direction. If running broad reach (with the wind but at a 45-degree angle), the boat's maximum speed is 90 feet; if running athwart (at a 90-degree angle to the wind), the boat's maximum speed is 75 feet; and if running close hauled (at 45 degrees from being against the wind), the boat's maximum speed is 60 feet. The pinnace cannot be sailed in irons (directly against the wind). If for some reason the pilot does not want to move at the vessel's maximum speed, he can order the sails shortened, which reduces the speed by half. It requires a full-round action by at least 1 other character to either shorten the sails or raise them back to full sail in order to change speeds in this way. The pilot can change the direction of sail for the pinnace by up to 45 degrees in a single round *without* reducing speed.

Due to the rough water, to successfully navigate the swells of the open sea and move in the desired direction, whichever character is piloting the pinnace should make a DC 12 Vehicle (water) check. If they are not proficient in this skill, have them roll at disadvantage. The other characters should be tending the lines or rowing. If they are tending the lines, they can aid the pilot on the check. If they assist, the check becomes a group check with success being that half or more of the characters succeed on the DC 12 Vehicle (water) check (at disadvantage if none are proficient).

If being rowed, the pinnace's maximum speed and handling characteristics are identical to those of the jolly boat above as long as at least 6 people are rowing. For every rower less than 6, the pinnace's maximum speed is reduced by 5 feet. If there are fewer than 4 rowers, the pinnace cannot be successfully rowed. If there are enough rowers, follow the same guidelines used for rowing the jolly boat above with respect to maintaining speed and exhaustion.

Clash of the Titans

Boarding the Bloody Harpoon

The *Bloody Harpoon* closes on the Ashen Angler without slowing as it passes the character's launch. They can either follow or try to throw a line if they get close enough. As mentioned, the *Harpoon's* course brings it to within 120 feet of the character's launch for 1 round, so whatever speed they can cover themselves in that round cuts into that amount. For the jolly boat (or the pinnace if being rowed), with a sufficiently high skill check, the characters could come within 60 feet (plus move 30 feet toward the Cataclysm in a parallel course to the ship due to the current). If aboard the pinnace, they could get closer. The *Bloody Harpoon* is headed directly toward the Cataclysm, so the pinnace under sail has to run broad reach (at a 45-degree angle) if they wish to intercept and can get within 30 feet (plus move 30 feet toward the Cataclysm in a parallel course to the ship due to the current). In either case, the characters may be close enough to throw a line or find some other means of reaching the ship.

The characters can successfully hail one of the crewmembers on board by some means at your discretion, such as a Charisma check, using a ranged weapon to attract attention, or a spell or some other magic. If successful in getting the attention of the ship, the characters can try to throw a line for him to secure which brings the character's craft under tow without significantly slowly the *Bloody Harpoon's* progress and allows the characters to make their way aboard the larger ship.

To throw a line to the Bloody Harpoon, first the character's vessel must be within reach of the line, which is 100 feet using the standard lines on both craft, or 200 feet with the heavy towing line on the pinnace. Encourage the characters to be creative when they are throwing the line from a long distance, otherwise it will fall far short. As an example, if the characters have a heavy crossbow or arbalest, allow them to attach the line to a bolt, followed by an attack roll at disadvantage against the ship's armor class (AC 15, as a galley).

If the characters successfully throw a line and a crewmember is waiting, he ties the line fast to the gunwale and then goes back to his duties. If no crewmember's attention was gained, then the characters have to make it fast themselves by using a grappling hook or some other means. Obviously, the use of a spell could come in extremely handy here.

If the characters manage to secure their line, they can haul upon it to bring their vessel up next to the *Bloody Harpoon*. The pilot is still needed to control the vessel and keep it from getting crossways to the swells so it doesn't capsize, so he cannot contribute to this effort. When the character's vessel reaches the ship, they can tie it close and then climb aboard with a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check in these rough seas, though a fall lands back in the tied craft for only 1d6 points of falling damage rather than into the sea.

Once the characters are aboard, they see that their vessel tied close does affect the speed and sailing of the *Bloody Harpoon*, so they either need to cut their craft loose or release it on the heavy line to tow 200 feet behind. This will not negatively affect the ship's sailing characteristics for this battle, but if the characters try to let the vessel tow on the lighter 100-foot lines, it snaps after 2 rounds and the launch is lost. The characters will be able to watch their former craft take the ominous approach and plunge into the Cataclysm after a few minutes. In any case, if the characters came over on the jolly boat, they will not be able haul it back aboard the *Bloody Harpoon* on the rough seas and at the speeds they are traveling.

If the characters are unable to make it aboard the *Bloody Harpoon*, they can still join in the pursuit of the whale (and the ship) in their own vessel but have the added responsibility of making sure that they don't get so close to the edge of the Cataclysm that they are unable to escape the grasp of its current.

The Epic Contest

If you want the chase and battle to have a more realistic feel that can bring the excitement reminiscient of *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, then follow the guidelines below. If you would prefer to narrate the scene and have the players interject what they are seeing and doing, then by all means, ignore the below guidelines. As noted above, at the end of the scene, Captain Obed and the Ashen Angler fall into the Cataclysm regardless of the character's actions.

Pre-Battle Notes:

Regardless of whether the characters make it aboard the *Harpoon* or not or to what extent they are able to join in the battle, the sequence of events between the ship and the whale still rolls out essentially the same. The characters can put in their own actions against the angler whale, but the immensity of the **Ashen Angler** all but assures that their efforts have little effect without the resources of the *Bloody Harpoon* available at their disposal. For its part, the angler whale largely ignores the characters, but if they get within 120 feet of it, they will still be subject to the aura of its sickening light.

Order of Battle: The *Bloody Harpoon* moves under full sail running with the wind at a maximum speed of 180 feet per round for 7 rounds. It sails 1,260 feet into the maelstrom seas that border the Cataclysm (still 3,940 feet from the Cataclysm's edge). From there, Obed has the range and orders the harpoons fired. One of them is a hit and successfully grapples the Ashen Angler. At this point, Obed orders the ship to tack broad reach (45 degrees to port) in order to bring the ship about before reaching the Cataclysm and to pull the whale along with them, if possible. This reduces her forward speed to 135 feet (plus 30 feet toward the Cataclysm). If the characters did not manage to make it aboard the Bloody Harpoon, then they find that this manoeuvre is bringing the ship across their own course, so they may still have opportunity to catch up and board her if they desire to do so.

The *Bloody Harpoon* turns fully beam reach (90 degrees) from the wind so it is no longer sailing toward the Cataclysm but still drawing 30 feet closer each round because of the current while the crew reloads the ballistae. Over the course of the next 4 rounds as the ballistae are reloaded (if there are still at least 2 functional ballistae on board), the harpooned Ashen Angler drags the ship another 600 feet toward the Cataclysm (now at 3,170 feet distant between the whale and the current). Obed orders the harpoons fired again, and another finds purchase in the great beast's hide, creating a second bloody wound in its flank. Obed orders the harpoons reloaded for another volley (if there are still 3 ballistae aboard the ship). During this time, the whale drags the ship another 750 feet closer (now 2,420 feet from the edge). Now within a half mile of the Cataclysm's edge, the waters become even more turbulent, increasing the DC of all skill checks by 5. Strength (Athletics) checks in these waters have a DC of 18.

Upon reaching this distance from the edge, read the following description.

> The noise of the Cataclysm takes on a new quality at this distance as it reverberates in your bones. The noise is like nothing you have ever experienced, rattling your bones and somehow soaking into your very soul. It is not just the falling sea that you hear, the stormy waters and the embattled ship, it is the anger of the fathomless depths as they meet their unexpected demise, and it seeps deep into your being such that you believe it may never to be forgotten.

With Obed's third volley, the harpoon misses and the whale's dragging brings the ship still 150 feet closer through the boiling waters (2,270 feet away). Apparently realizing the looming proximity of the Cataclysm, Captain Obed abandons further shots from the final ballista and orders her crew to begin cranking in the two harpoon chains already embedded into the whale to limit its ability to tow them. She brings the ship around to close haul against the wind and works to pull away from the edge. The ship's speed is reduced to 90 feet per round but is now working against the current and the efforts of the angler whale. The crew step to smartly and begin the laborious and slow process of cranking the heavy winches attached to the harpoon chains like fisherman pulling in the world's largest marlin as it fights and tugs at the line. This process takes 16 rounds, during which the Ashen Angler is dragged to within 80 feet of the *Bloody Harpoon*, while at the same time pulling it to within 1,310 feet of the Cataclysm.

At this point, the angler suddenly lurches and charges at the *Harpoon*. It makes a smashing breach attack against the ship, striking it full on. Captain Obed is miraculously able to keep the ship from capsizing under the attack but one of the ballistae is broken free, releasing the whale from the drag of its chain. Seeing her quarry about to break free, Obed leaves the wheel to Jubba as she grips her longspear and charges toward the ship's rail to prevent its escape. As she reaches the edge, the angler whale gives another tug, and the ship heels over to starboard, nearly capsizing again as Jubba desperately turns the wheel and the crew clings to anything they can for dear life.

As the ship rights itself once again, read the following description.

> Through the furious waves and thrashing of the great whale, the ship's deck finally comes back to true and the wall of spray that encompassed her settles back into the roiling sea. All hands turn to the gunwale where the captain had charged and find the rail empty of her presence. A look over the side sees the captain has gone overboard and now sits atop the beast, her leg trapped in the last chain that holds it. She still grips the broken length of her longspear as she stabs into the monster's barnacle-choked grey hide again and again, bringing forth great gouts of blood and strings of pink blubber. Mad Obed is drenched in the creature's crimson wash as she stabs with what's left of her spear, then the sea takes them. The final harpoon chain snaps, lashing back onto the ship.

Determine a random character on deck who must make a DC 20 Dexterity save to avoid taking 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the thrashing chain (save for half). If no character is present aboard the *Bloody Harpoon*, then determine a random crewmember (other than Jubba) as the target of the attack.

With the captain gone and the ship freed from the whale's drag, Jubba pulls hard to port to close haul the wind and escape the grip of the Cataclysm, which is now only 950 feet away as the whale's actions had pulled her back into the wind. The *Harpoon* turns her sail, pulling desperately back from the edge of the sea, throwing lines to the characters if they have not yet made it aboard, and somehow, slowly, turn away from disaster to leave the boiling waters of the cataclysm behind. Of Captain Obed and the cursed whale, there is no sign, but even patrolling back and forth along the edges of the swells for an hour with spyglass and lookouts aloft shows no sign of the whale breaching or of its plume.

Caps are doffed and a slow dirge played upon the pipes for the loss of the *Bloody Harpoon's* captain and to a nemesis that surely took the two of them over the brink together and into oblivion.

Part Five: A Grim Passage

What occurs in this part of the adventure is determined largely by the character's actions against the Ashen Angler at the end of **Part 4**. After **Part 4**, did the characters retreat, watching from a safe distance? If they did, someone saw them do so. If they behaved in a more heroic way, trying to reach the ship, and get into the fight, then this portion is very different.

If the character's actions were deemed cowardly after **Part 4**, then the attitudes of the surviving crewmembers have changed. Those who were helpful become unfriendly, and those who were friendly or indifferent become hostile. If they behaved more heroically, however, all of the crewmembers become helpful. Regardless of how the characters comported themselves in **Part 4**, however, Jubba still honours the character's agreement with his former captain and takes them back to Scrimshaw.

Event 8: Between Moments

The character's interaction with the vargouilles on the Falling Isle, or the creature's brooding last thoughts if they were dismissed, destroyed or otherwise vanquished, works its strange way over the reality of Between and brings into existence a new pocket space within the *Bloody Harpoon*. This tiny area rips through the reality of the lowest deck and forms an impossible lair for 3 **vargouilles** that appear within the ship on the first night after leaving the Falling Isle. If the original vargouilles were slain, it is their wicked spirits that grow new flesh. If the creatures escaped, their flesh changes until they become the new Between creatures that take up residence in the impossible space.

The creatures' lair is a 5-foot cube linked to the Low Hold. A tiny opening exists under the beams in the mid-cabin. The hole is noticed by a character with a passive Perception of 16 or with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check if the room is being actively searched. Only a Tiny or smaller creature can access the hole, which links to a short corridor and square lair choked with webs as indicated on the **Homeward Bound Map** of the *Bloody Harpoon*.

The creatures are more spider-like than the standard vargouilles, their shape influenced by the many spiders already on the ship. The Between vargouilles lurk between the decks in narrow spaces just big enough for them to scuttle through). With their compression ability, they can move between the decks at will through tiny gaps that nothing larger than a rat could squeeze through. When encountered, they look like revolting crimson, demonic-looking heads that bristle with spider-like legs. They have clusters of compound eyes and idiot lolling mouths from which dribbles spittle that resembles cobwebs.

Tactics: The Between vargouilles begin stalking about the ship on the first night and infest one of the crew with their kiss, who describes the attack and what he saw but not where they are. The second night the trio are out again, this time in different parts of the ship, trying to get a flank attack and then fleeing. They continue this pattern of events until either the crew or the Between vargouilles are dead.

Development: Helpful crewmembers work with the characters; those who are hostile or unfriendly do not. Perhaps they even resent or blame the characters for this development as a punishment for their cowardice. They may go as far as to try to set the characters up for an ambush by the creatures or even try to trap them in the hold with them. Only split the XP awards for these creatures with the crewmembers if some of them actively helped in eliminating them.

After the Between vargouilles have been dealt with, the rest of the voyage back to Scrimshaw is uneventful.

Friendship Reward: Jubba Tames

If the characters proved to be heroic in their efforts to help Captain Obed against the Ashen Angler, Jubba looks on one character as a potential friend. He consults all the characters on decisions for the ship, but he takes that character's thoughts as having more weight than the others. The characters may find it useful to have a good contact amongst the Scarred who dwell in Scrimshaw, and it's possible that Jubba could grow disillusioned with his life on the Unsea and long to return to more familiar waters. If so, it could be both a benefit to the characters and lead to further adventures by having a mariner friend who experienced on the oceans of two worlds and who has connections to such exotic locales as the Razor Coast.

Returning to Castorhage

If the characters are on friendly terms with the crew of the *Bloody Harpoon*, they are offered free passage back to Castorhage upon returning to Scrimshaw. They are loaded in barrels and return as part of an ambergris shipment headed into the city. Once they are through the official Between *gateway* to Town Bridge, the characters can easily escape from their barrels when no one is watching and return to the relative normalcy of the city.

If the characters part on bad terms, they must make their own way back. Bribing a member of the crew costs 500 gp per character. This price is reduced by 25% if the characters coerce their potential guides either through magic or with a DC 16 Charisma (Deception, Persuasion or Intimidation),.

Concluding the Adventure

The returning characters pique the interest of both their friends and enemies. The Knights Occularis hear rumours that some people escaped Wicken and are asking questions, and they begin to search for them. At the same time, the Royal sponsors of Eleanor Shank, who have yet to be revealed, try to thwart these efforts through tricks of their own. They too keep an eye on the characters through *scrying* to try to subtly help them (see *The Cyclopœdia Infestarum*).

By the end of this adventure, the characters should have several questions:

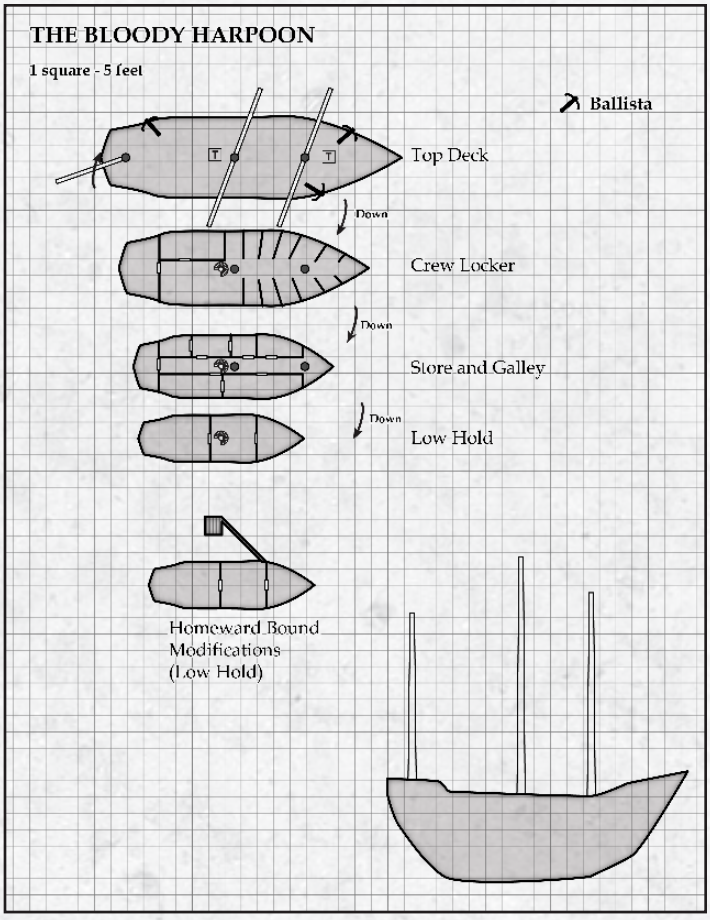
What is the role of Brother Bartholomew and his discovery?

Where is the crooked spire chapel?

Why is Gromwell seemingly siding with a group of deranged surgeon-artists?

Can Enoch be trusted?

Before they can answer these questions, the group is drawn into events around a pair of vampire hunters in the city. They have managed to capture a vampire spawn who is asking for one of the characters by name, referring to her as one of the "Redeemers." This event and others are detailed in adventure ***L4: Decay***.



Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Three: Echoes of the Raven

The characters hear the growing discontent, and at some stage, you should arrange for a crowded public guillotining of Anarchists to take place nearby. When the characters return from the Unsea, they hear tales of a massacre in Toiltown. Yesterday, it transpires, a mob took to the streets refusing to work, and the City Watch and Royal Army brutally put down the riot. Hundreds are reported dead. If the characters venture into the wild district of Toiltown, they hear rumour and counter-rumours. They find the place in a state of military-enforced curfew for the last few days and that hatred and resentment are etched across faces of the commoners who live there.

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Three: The Kiss

The Beautiful begins to infest their dreams more. The character who was most affected in the last adventure sees places of indescribable beauty, and hears voices that no one else does proclaiming that Paradise is near. Be careful not to put all your eggs in one basket, however. The character in question may die; make sure others also share the visions, if to a lesser degree. The others hear darker words, "The end is nigh," "Armageddon approaches," "the gods are displeased," and "soon the city will fail."

After the characters discover the Unsea, the voice of the Beautiful calls out stronger. Occasionally the character hears encouraging words no one else does: "Their reward will be soon," she says, "for it is not the end that is coming — but the beginning."

Sea's End Appendices

Appendix A: Memory Ambergris

Memory ambergris is a special solution of the ambergris taken from Between whales and behaves something like a minor *Between vessel* (see **Chapter 3** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***). When distilled down using alchemist's tools DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check, the ambergris takes the form of a hazy golden liquid. When the liquid is drunk, the imbiber must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be flooded with the Between whale's memories and sensations from the Unsea. While the effect lasts, the individual is soaked in memories of Between and treats the Intelligence (Arcana) skill as if it was proficient (if it was not already). The effects of the memory ambergris last for 24 hours, after which all knowledge and memories are gone, and the individual gains two levels of exhaustion. If the solution is injected by a syringe rather than drunk, the user receives no Wisdom save and is automatically affected by the stored Between whale memories. Individuals that are immune to mind-affecting effects are not affected by this substance. Memory ambergris is highly valued among Between mariners and explorers and can be purchased (usually in Scrimshaw) for 150 gp per dose.

Appendix B: The Bloody Harpoon

Read the following description when the characters are first being introduced to the *Bloody Harpoon*.

"She's a Between ship, lad, warped by the Unsea. There's not a bloody straight line on her, and places aboard that no bloody fool has seen or wants to see. Stay out of them, and don't look too deeply at the hold. Sometimes, we find a new door, a new corridor, even new crew; if its crew, they get necked or take a swim straight a-bloody-way. Never trust a new face in Between.

"Then there's the bloody noises. Sometimes it's weeping, sometimes laughter, but there's never an obvious cause. When we hear 'em or meet 'em, we always walk away without looking back. It's best not to look too deeply into Between."

The *Bloody Harpoon*, like all ships that sail the Unsea, is not normal. Twisted by Between, they have odd angles, odd noises occasionally drift from unseen rooms or from below the hull, sometimes whole new sections appear. Sailors always avoid these doors, these noises, because of the tales. You follow the noises, you open the door, you don't come back.

The construction of the *Bloody Harpoon* therefore is odd, its shape abnormal. From some angles, it looks normal, from others, it is convex or concave. Rooms appear where they can't. This is the nature of Between, and it plays a big part in the voyage back to Scrimshaw. As GM, be prepared to justify the impossible nature of things. Most fantasy players should be used to finding places that cannot be, in locations that are impossible, in ways that should not happen. Others may not. If in doubt, have other crewmembers nervously shrug their shoulders and say, "That's Between for you."

The impossible nature of Between has a major role to play in ***The Levee***, and getting it off to a good start here is important. Try to think of the Unsea as a nightmare sea, one that you'd wake up sweating about. It isn't a dream, it's real, but it can act like a dream does; doors open to wrong places, connect to wrong places, or have impossible dimensions. Freak waves rise from nowhere and sink ships.

The Crew

Captain Mad Obed

Clearly briny, this stout woman has a face that has twisted aquatic features that are subtle but still obvious. Her eyes are just slightly too big, and her mouth just too small. She gulps as she moves, but is clearly very confident.

CAPTAIN "MAD" OBED

Captain Obed (use the **bandit captain** stat block, add proficiency in vehicle (water)) is obsessed with the Ashen Angler. It haunts her dreams, her nightmares, and she is determined to kill it as her last great act. Beyond her obsession, Obed engenders great love in her crew; she is foul tempered and casts curse words like confetti, but she is always straight. Although she rarely says it, she loves her crew. Serious and in awe of the Unsea, Obed loathes flippancy and overconfidence.

JOSHUA "JUBBA" TAME

Despite appearances, Jubba Tame (use the **bandit captain** stat block, add proficiency in vehicle (water)) has a good heart and is obsessively loyal to Obed. His habit of eating the heart of his enemies comes from an ancient tribal tradition; whenever he slays or delivers a critical hit on opponents, he claims them as his, to devour their hearts when they die to give him their strength. Jubba also shares his kills with those he admires (for example, someone who critically hits someone he is fighting). He sets great store by his own traditions, but knows that some find them repulsive. Some would call the dark-skinned Tulita a savage. He is not; he is educated and complex and his heart is good.

WHALERS (8)

Loyal to the bone, the whaling crew (N male and female **bandits**) are Edmund (Old Ed), Lorena (the only female whaler aboard), Merill, Rufus, Samuel, and Young Warren.

The Ship

The ship is peculiar, it hangs altogether too low in the water, and its hull is cancered with sickly grey seaweed and crimson barnacles. A great mast rises almost 100 feet, whilst her second rises little less. The hull bristles with embedded harpoons. A trio of huge and hefty iron ballistae fixed to hefty coils of chain stand at her rails.

Bloody Harpoon General Features

The *Harpoon* is a two-masted sailing ship with four decks. Anyone seeing the ship and making a successful DC 16 Intelligence or Vehicle

(water) (if proficient) check realises after spending time aboard that the ship shouldn't float, let alone sail. It's altogether too bulky and hangs too deeply in the water. Yet somehow it does. The ship is crammed with mundane objects, walls slope away at strange angles, and the entire ship groans and creaks like an arthritic hag.

Life aboard ship is a long gruelling chore of duties: cleaning, tying, repairing, and occasionally, hunting. Amongst the stores aboard ship are the following equipment (a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check locates the armoury):

1 mast
4 extra sails
3 harpoon ballistae* and cold iron harpoons attached to 240-foot chain
4 masterwork light crossbows.
240 crossbow bolts
24 gallons of whale oil
12 flasks of acid

The ship has a lodeprow, a ship's great lantern, a Between compass, and (stored in a locker on deck) an Unsea shipskin (for descriptions of these, see *The Cyclopædia Infestarum*).

A Note on Harpoons

If a harpoon ballista hits, the target is considered to grappled by the harpoon unless it makes a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or a DC 25 Strength check. Each round the creature attempts to escape, regardless of if successful or not, it takes damage equal to the damage from the initial hit (if the initial hit was a critical hit, it takes the same critical hit damage any round it tries to escape). Creatures voluntarily remaining fast on the harpoon take only 1d6 points of damage each round. All of the damage taken while grappled by the harpoon is considered bleed damage though the amount is variable each round. If a harpooned creature successfully escapes the grapple, it takes 1d6 points of ongoing damage for 1 minute. The harpoon takes 4 full-round actions to recoil and reload.

Doors in the two lowest decks are frequently stuck and require a successful DC 12 Strength check to open.

Things scuttle about the ship: mice and rats and spiders — big spiders. Sometimes the crew swear that they are talking to each other or have human faces, but no one ever captures such a thing, at least not yet.

Top Deck: A scrubbed and cleaned deck, great hooked chains hang from its flanks, while above two huge masts soar. Two hatches (that can be bolted shut from above and below) allow access to the decks below via two strangely protracted twisting spiral stairs of odd-looking timber. Occasionally, an odd carving (a human-headed mouse, a vast spider, or a squashed frog) appear on these timbers, but aren't there the next day.

Crew Locker: Cramped and oddly shaped, the walls of this deck have an oddly clammy feel about them. There are enough hammocks for twenty crew, but sometimes the hammocks just vanish for a few hours.

Stores and Galley: A peculiar smell dominates this deck, and the rooms are all odd shapes. Occasionally a curious scraping noise echoes and is gone, as though something has been dragged along the outside of the hull. A few sailors swear they hear singing and voices outside in the water. Secured down here are two more harpoon ballistae and chained harpoons that have been stored and forgotten. If the characters discover these, they can be used to replace any lost or damaged later in the adventure.

Low Hold: The steps that lead down to the lowest hold of the ship seem to descend too long. The place is hot, not just the normal warmth, but a sweaty oppressive heat.

Appendix C: Seasons in the Blight — Winter Beckons

Winter approaches. It is the month of Chill (roughly November). It rains throughout this adventure, whether on the streets of Castrohage or in the Unsea. Only the fog prevents rain, and even then, a steady drizzle soaks anyone outside for more than a few moments. Often the rain falls as sleet, and surfaces become slippery.

The weather is cold and dreary, requiring anyone outside to make a Constitution saving throw each hour (DC 10) or gain one level of exhaustion. A character with the Wisdom (Survival) skill may receive a bonus on this save for herself and to her comrades Cold-weather outfits and other weather-appropriate clothing can also help with this save. Follow the rules for exhaustion as detailed in the game manual.

Anytime the characters are outside, there is a 40% chance it is raining, a 30% chance it is drizzling, a 20% chance there is fog and only light drizzle, and a 10% chance it is sleeting. The one saving grace of the Blight at this time of year is that the winds aren't strong.

Drizzle applies no weather affects other than the cold dangers as described above.

Rain lightly obscures the area. Follow the guidelines in the game manual for visibility under these conditions. The rain also extinguishes unprotected flames and can make climbing, running and jumping difficult (increase DC by 2 on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks).

Fog heavily obscures the area. Follow the guidelines in the game manual for visibility under these conditions.

Sleet has the same effects as rain above but also makes conditions very difficult (increase the DC by 3 on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics)).



Handout 1

What you Know about Enoch Nettle

A little odd but basically honest, from what you recall Enoch was very religious, a devotee of Mother Grace and a close friend of Father Gromwell. Enoch's otherwise devout character was somewhat tainted by his fondness of drink — he loved his ale and cider — and by his poaching. Enoch claimed that he poached only from the rich because they wouldn't miss the odd stag, and he was prepared to lose a hand to feed himself if it came to that. Having known Wild Grog and his poaching activities for so many years, you have no problem accepting the idea of taking meat from the Queen's Forest to feed her subjects. As you recall, however, Enoch was fairly selfish about his hunts, and only rarely did he donate extra meat to the church or poor of Wicken as Grog would so often do.

Handout 2

These are the images revealed when closely examining the crystal fragments found within the Crystal Cave.

The echoes of several of the crystals show Gromwell, in somewhat distorted form, bowing before an angelic figure bathed in light. The figure is almost painful to behold, and holds a scythe. In some of the crystals, Gromwell is bowing; in others, his face is a rictus of joy. In the corner of one crystal, the side of the figure in light is shown clearly. It is disjointed, and has a look of hunger.

The other place almost represents an inversion of the room you stand in, as though you are looking onto a scene that you cannot reach. Beyond is a series of vast grown chains and iron boughs and vines, some clearly yards thick. These hold up and support some sort of iron skeleton hanging in the dark. Depicted within this iron place are several figures, grotesquely drawn and stretched. At their sides lurk three women, their faces sickeningly drawn back into impossible grins of joy and hunger and fulfilment. One is bathed in light.



L4: Decay

By Richard Pett



Introduction

Having sailed the Unsea to locate Father Gromwell, their old friend and seemingly the cause of all their woes, the characters have learned that the old priest succeeded in calling his strange, scythe-wielding angel, but that the two are also now lost, possibly forever. They may have even seen this creature, and deduced that it may be more than its angelic image suggests. Upon returning to the city from Between, the characters seem to have hit a blank wall, but the feeling that someone is looking over their shoulders and *scrying* on them intensifies by the day.

Adventure Synopsis

Some vampires are aware that a chill wind is coming from Between, a chill wind that threatens the very fabric of the Fetch and Beltane himself. Vampires do not make war with other vampires, they remember those days of old too well, but a battle may be fought in many ways …

A voice from a coffin names a character.

The adventure begins suddenly, just after the characters return from the Unsea. **Abigail**† and **Luther**†, two vampire hunters in the Guild, contact **Eleanor Shank**†, who in turn contacts the characters. They have caught a vampire spawn in a coffin trap called a *Fetchlure* that they use to ensnare vampires, but the spawn has said something strange. It said it wanted to be trapped, and it wants to speak to one of the characters. It mentions one other word: Panacea.

Eleanor and the vampire hunters meet the characters, who talk to the trapped vampire spawn. The spawn says a vampire seer of the Fetch saw the characters in a vision and knows that something terrible is coming on the Darkest Day, a day *all* things will be swept from the city. The characters are all that stand in its way; they are the saviours of living and dead alike. The Fetch know of a group that operates in the shadows of the lowest Royals who dwell in the twisted canal-riddled ruins of the Sinks. This group calls itself the Panacea. They are demented artists who worship an angel — with a scythe — and the seers have foreseen that they are connected to the coming darkest day.

The spawn was sent to tell the characters of the group, who use a location called the Club Crimsón as cover. Beyond this, the spawn says little else. It expects to die but was commanded to do this task, though it does not say by whom or why. The characters have been seen in dreams of the vampires of the Fetch, who know something else about the darkest day: Before it arrives, a terrible queen shall come to enslave the vampires, and crush them all. They call the vampire-queen Penance.

Abigail and Luther tell the characters what they know of the Fetch, and that there are rebellious groups of undead in its ranks. They warn the characters never to trust vampires. They *have* heard vampires whisper of a coming storm, however.

The Club Crimsón is based in a crumbling aristocratic part of Castorhage called the Sinks. Vampire spawn and those who worship the Beautiful patronize the club, but not everyone is guilty. The club holds lavish balls for certain gifted individuals, and one is due soon. The characters have several options, the most profitable of which is to pose as eager artists and join the decaying Royals in their decaying district. By spending time with the group and expressing interest, they may even be invited to join in an inner circle that includes vampire spawn and a full-fledged vampire artist known as Lord Aspen Hemlock†, a **diseased vampire**†.

This group of visionary artists — known as the Panacea — operates out of a rotting group of townhouses that are sloughing into the stagnant waters of the canals below it. The house is full of vampire spawn and the often-sleeping Lord Hemlock. If the characters do not judge the adventure correctly, the vampire master frequently assails them. They have little chance to overpower him by night.

The adventure ends with the characters learning the location of another secret cabal beneath the city itself, a larger group of the Panacea that operates from a place called the Mine, a deep cyst below the city.

An inviting tunnel leads below.

Media Inspirations Behind L4: Decay

Throughout the adventures are suggestions for movies, books, and music to give you help in setting the mood. For *Decay*, have a look at the following books to get a feel for the kind of claustrophobic setting that I hope is lurking at the back of the adventure:

Alice by Jan Švankmajer
Don't Look Now by Nicolas Roeg
Nosferatu — either version
The Street of Crocodiles by The Brothers Quay

Beginning the Adventure

Remember now that their friends *and* enemies are *scrying* for the characters. At present, it is best not to hint at who might be doing so or why, simply give them the occasional feeling that they are being watched and that, from time to time, the *scrying* continues. The characters learned of Brother Bartholomew and the Crooked Chapel in the previous adventure, ***L3: Sea's End***. The options they have for pursing that lead are outlined in **The Crooked Chapel — A Side Trek** at the end of this adventure as a side trek. This adventure is set during a bitter winter month, a month of appalling cold where the temperature drops so low that birds freeze in mid-flight, ice forms from workers' sweat, and the rivers, streets, and canals freeze over with several inches of ice.

Before getting things started in this adventure, allow the characters to conclude their affairs from the previous adventure. This may include buying equipment or healing magic, perhaps a trip to BookTown to take part in an auction of useful magic or alchemical items, or maybe ensure Enoch Nettle has a house or place to sleep, and renew old friendships. They can also pursue the leads on Bartholomew in the side trek as described above.



Part One: The Voice From the Coffin

Eleanor Shank approaches the characters. It is clear she is out of breath and her eyes are wide with fear, or perhaps disbelief. Eleanor has been looking for the characters for the past few hours (more if you think it appropriate). She has just come from a meeting with two friends: Abigail and Luther, vampire hunters in the Guild. They have caught a vampire spawn in a coffin trap they use to ensnare vampires, but the spawn has said something strange: It *wanted* to be trapped, and it wants to speak to one of the characters. It mentions one other word: "Panacea." The vampire knows of all the characters, but is more likely to name any character with a reputation for fairness or of religious persuasion, as they are more likely to be honourable. So choose the character that is to be mentioned accordingly.

Eleanor asks the characters what they think, and asks that they come along with her. She's arranged a place to meet the two vampire hunters, whom she can vouch for completely. How and where this meeting occurs is left to you, as the GM. When it occurs, read or paraphrase the following description:

> Your breath forms icy clouds that take on strange colours in the flare of pyrebeetle lanterns. It is bitterly, bitterly cold, and the streets have taken on a dangerous sheen of hoarfrost that clings to every gutter and gable. As the day's feeble attempt at heat rises, great clumps of ice have been falling across the city, killing, it is rumoured, a party of nuns in the Jumble.
>
> A distant creaking grows into a repeating rhythm. A handcart appears, its wheels screeching in protest over icy cobbles. Two muffled figures push the cart toward you. Balanced on top of the small handcart is a coffin.

Abigail† and Captain **Luther**† are lovers and hunting partners. They have hunted vampires for years and have their own reasons for their precarious trade. Abigail is a striking woman who has deep red hair set in fetching cascading curls. She is dressed in a heavy winter coat, and has a thick scarf about her face. Luther is a dark-skinned Libynosi, a little portly (he is overly fond of sweet cakes), and very soft-spoken. He wears an officer's military coat with fine tassels and several medals. Characters making a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check can recognize that he has been decorated for bravery, not just social position. Luther turned his back on the corrupt Royal Army long ago, however. The pair frequently uses the *Fetchlure* (see Sidebox) to trap vampires, as they have done here. They then dispatch the vampires with a stake, cut off their heads, fill the mouth with holy wafers, and were about to do so when this vampire said it had a message for the characters, and said the word "Panacea." The pair had heard Eleanor only a few days ago talking about the characters (or perhaps more particularly one she likes the most) and so they immediately sent word to her, and here they are. They know that the vampire cannot escape now; it's in the coffin and it knows that also, but it is surprisingly calm about its fate, which they have already outlined to it.

Within the coffin is **Gideon Murkwid** (NE male human **vampire spawn**), former lamp-fitter and lately a member of the Fetch. Gideon is here to pass on his message and expects to be destroyed. The undead is very calm about its fate. Indeed, it is in some ways looking forward to oblivion. It may know other things useful to the characters, but for the purposes of this adventure, its knowledge is solely as detailed hereafter. Gideon is being dominated by another, more powerful vampire within the Fetch, and is powerless to act beyond the whims of his mistress, Ambergris, who is met in ***L8: Apotheosis*** later in ***The Levee***.

New Magic Item: Fetchlure

A fetchlure appears to be a rather fancy coffin made of dark wood and set with decorative iron handles. Within, the coffin is draped in normal funerary cloth. The *Fetchlure* alters its visible shape to appear to a vampire as if it were the vampire's own coffin. When a vampire or vampire spawn comes within 60 feet of the *Fetchlure*, the creature must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom save to identify the coffin's false nature. This saving throw is made at +4 unless the coffin is located in the same place as the original vampire's coffin. Vampires able to see both coffins know the *Fetchlure* is fake. Those who fail the save are convinced that the coffin is genuine, but when entering it to rest, they learn of their mistake. Vampires resting in the coffin are unable to escape, and cannot use their special abilities in any way to facilitate escape. They are helpless for as long as they remain within the coffin (and cannot remove themselves from the coffin without the help of another). Vampires who succeed on the saving throw are aware of the illusion every time they see this particular *Fetchlure*.

Gideon deliberately got himself caught. The Fetch know about Abigail and Luther, whose days are numbered (he says) and are destined to die a miserably slow death before rebirth to serve the vampires' dark master, Beltane, God-Emperor of the Fetch. The spawn says the characters have been seen in a vision by a vampire seer of the Fetch, who knows that something terrible is coming, the Darkest Day, a day *all* things will be swept from the city, not just the Fetch or the living, but everything. The characters are somehow linked with stopping this day; they are the saviours. The Darkest Day is destined to occur when a wave of burning light devours the city, cleansing it. Gideon has been instructed to bring this message, and more.

The Fetch know of a group that operates in the shadows of the lowest Royals, decadent exiled aristocrats who dwell in the twisted canal-riddled ruins of the Sinks District. The group calls itself the Panacea. They are demented artists who worship an angel with a scythe, and the seers have foreseen that they are connected to the Darkest Day — and may even be its cause.

Gideon's superiors and the seer sent him to tell the characters of the Panacea and that they secretly meet at a location called the Club Crimsón as cover. The Club Crimsón is a decaying establishment of aristocrats who lurk in the festering district of the Sinks, a ruin infested with rot and decay. The Fetch know that the Panacea operates behind this club in some way. Locating its secret members will not be easy, perhaps impossible. But the spawn adds that it cannot be impossible, as the characters are destined to save the Fetch somehow, or all things may end. They are, it knows, the "saviours of undeath for future generations."

Beyond this, the spawn neither knows nor says nothing else. It expects to die, but was commanded to do this task. It does not say by whom or why beyond claiming the message is from "the seer" and its "superiors." The characters have been seen in dreams of the vampires of the Fetch, who know something else about the Darkest Day that they aren't sharing just yet. They know that before the Darkest Day arrives, a terrible queen shall come to enslave the vampires, and crush them all. They call her Penance.

If the characters wish, they can ask Abigail and Luther to let the vampire spawn go free, though the pair is extremely reluctant to do so knowing that

the vampire spawn will merely going back to preying on the living. How this develops is left to you.

The Fetch

The characters are unlikely to be overly familiar with the Fetch by this point, so Abigail and Luther tell the characters what they know of them — namely that the city has a wandering undead population that lurks beneath the veneer of normality. This group also has operatives that can work by day: They call these the Deceivers, as they appear to be normal citizens to most. There are rebellious groups of undead in the ranks of the Fetch, ranging from those who wish to hide beneath the city, to those who wish the undead to rise and devour the populace. Beltane is their living god, and he has many brides who walk the streets of the Blight. They are — it is said — the most beautiful women in the city. The hunters warn the characters never to trust vampires, but they have also heard vampires whisper of a coming storm, which lends credence to Gideon's tale.

Eleanor may be able to add some more details as you wish, and attempts to find out more about Club Crimsón is handled in the Sidebox in **Part 2** of this Adventure Chapter.

If the characters choose to trust, or at least accept what Gideon tells them, then move onto **Part 2: The Club Crimsón**. Gideon does not expect to be freed, and Abigail and Luther would be unlikely to be convinced to give up their prey. This is not easy, as they have the vampire spawn and intend to stake it as soon as the characters are happy with what they have heard.

I Smell a Rat

The characters ought to be highly dubious of this invitation, and expect a trap. Some may go so far as to totally ignore the information and carry on normally, perhaps seeking out the Crooked Chapel as covered in the side trek at the end of this adventure.

If this happens, the Fetch do not give up. They seek to get a second message to the characters, this time using a trio of **ghouls** led by a **ghast** who come from the Sinks and who may have some additional information. The ghouls bring with them an object stolen from a member of the Panacea, a carving of a weeping angel holding a scythe, exactly matching that drawn by Gromwell in his paintings and cave etchings. The ghouls claim that inmates in the Asylum are being used as objects by the Panacea. They hope to shame the characters into helping. If this approach does not work, the Fetch try a more direct approach. They offer the characters a reward to destroy the Panacea lurking within the Club Crimsón. What form this reward takes is left to you.

If this final offer does not convince the characters to act, you have a secondary approach. Eleanor Shank, intrigued by this talk, goes into the Sinks and is not seen again. Abigail and Luther approach the characters with this information, and charge them to help her. This approach escalates, with friends of Eleanor, themselves afraid of messing with the mad occupants of the district, suggesting, and then forcing the characters to act. This last approach requires you to place Eleanor — alive — somewhere within the adventure. The Panacea is the likely place, although you may have to add a few bits of background relating to her investigations accordingly.

Alternate Beginnings

This adventure is triggered by a voice from a coffin, a voice that names and seems to know the characters. This unexpected twist may bring about a curious case of narcissism in some characters, or utter distrust.

The beginning of this adventure has a deliberate ambiguity, and consequences for ignoring it, but the commencement gives a strong optional entrance to any adventure. Is the vampire spawn part of a trap? Is this a double bluff, with the Fetch buttering up the characters to draw them in and have done with them, or do they genuinely fear something coming? If you wish to veer from the established adventure path, this option gives you multiple directions that you could go.



Part Two: The Club Crimson

The characters have two options at their disposal: an assault, or a ruse to infiltrate. If the characters go for option A, the club is more than a match for their skills and has the added complication of innocents potentially caught in middle. Option B requires the characters to invent a plausible backstory: Are they outcast aristocrats anxious to avoid the filthy, the unclean, the workers? Are they artists seeking their fortune? And if they are artists, what is their art? Merely painting, sculpting (unless it is with flesh), and fresco work has long ago become passé, and such artists are likely to find themselves quickly driven out of clubs — if even invited in to begin with.

As the characters work on a good ruse, you can have great fun with the accents, vile attitudes, and snobbery in this adventure. It should contrast nicely with the bonhomie of the previous one, and starkly with the dingy underground combat of the next. Turn the aristocrat dial to eleven and enjoy. The many Marquis de Sade quotes to be found throughout this book might be a good place to start.

A Good Ruse: Tailors, Cobblers, and Perfumers

For any good ruse that the characters wish to pull, there needs to be a decent backstory to support it. But they also need their appearance to match the story they're pitching. All characters are aware of caste and etiquette in Castorhage, and need to take steps to embrace the loathsome pursuit if they hope to blend in. This section gives brief details of just what is fashionable right now; even the poorest aristocrat would not be seen dead in rags, and dressing the part could be crucial. If you and your players like the idea of dressing up the characters, then play it to the hilt. Encourage them to come up with good stories, and as ever do not be afraid to add bonuses to checks for the right attitude, attire, and tale.

Appendix C includes the sorts of attire that they can acquire in the Artists' Quarter or the Sinks itself in order to fit in, none of which is cheap. Anything less than a noble's outfit will be outright denied entrance without an extremely good reason (perhaps for an elf claiming to be a *primitive*, for instance). Those who get pushy or seem noticeably out of place are likely to find their investigations harassed by constabulary, who throw them into gaol for a few days at the slightest excuse — even a lack of excuses if they are in a bad mood. Play the game, look the part, talk the talk, and all is well.

Characters wearing identical objects from the items listed in the **Appendix C** likewise make an embarrassing *faux pas*. Redundancy is gauche. They insult their hosts and make fools of themselves. Change any would-be positive benefits into an equivalent penalty. Such a *faux pas* is not quickly forgotten, and the GM should extend all modifiers to the same NPCs or social events.

Breaking the Law: The Sinks

There is a lot of law around in this part of the Sinks, as the constabulary regularly patrols the streets here. Run this area with encounters with constables occurring regularly. Constables are immediately suspicious of anyone who does not look like an aristocrat, and in this part of the city, that's not difficult to see. They assume travellers are servants, and ask where such people live. If they find that strangers are traders, they ask what they trade and ask to see a sample, as well as asking for names and their temporary address. Characters who act suspiciously immediately are led to the nearest lock-up where they are questioned further. Such characters can either physically escape (which requires the GM to briefly detail a small lock-up), bribe their way out for 50 gp, or have 1 attempt per day to talk their way out. Characters resisting arrest find themselves wanted, with a reward of 100 gp offered. Such characters may have issues in the future with the Watch, at your discretion.

To avoid trouble, while on the streets weapons should be sheathed, and any scabbards fastened with visible ties. These secure fastenings take a move action to remove, but a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check enables a character to have what visibly appears to be such a tie, but which can be removed as a free action.

Constables of the Watch tend to work alone in this part of the city, but the chance of a whistle call alerting another is 50% per round. Such alerts bring 1d3 more constables (**guards**) within 1d6 rounds.

Casing the Club

The infamous club is detailed at the end of this section. It is not a place one can simply walk into, and although the characters may choose to try to enter illegally, a much safer option, and one likely to bear more fruit, is detailed here: charming their way in.

Characters approaching the club find it closed, locked, and shuttered with iron shutters across doors and windows by day. At night, it is open to clientele. Two local **guards** bar entry to anyone they don't know, but guests known to them may enter with other guests. The option of charming such a member is detailed further below. Characters asking questions in the area around the club and making a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check are told that access is by invitation only.

Invitations are handled by the current club secretary, Mister **Algernon Alfonce Leptonia**†, a vampire spawn who is often seen at fashionable parts of the Sinks during the evening, particularly **Michaelgrego's Menagerie** (area **SI6** in **Chapter 11** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***), **Connol's Erotic Cabb'e House** (**SI9**), and the **Macabre Theatre and Insectum House** (**SI23**). Leptonia is detailed further below, as he offers the characters a legitimate way to charm their way into the club. The characters can obtain this information either by following Leptonia or by asking locally and making a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check to find him.

This is an upmarket part of the city; it might not seem it, but perching before the decay are peacocks, lurking amongst the ruins are jewels, and propping up the slump are fancy accents, and money — lots of money. There are plenty of places to go detailed in **Chapter 11** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***, and if you prefer for the characters to make their entrance to the club using different customers, feel free to use those detailed within the club as regular members below. Bear in mind that people of influence are members of the club, and the consequences of mistakes are very considerable for the characters.

Algernon and Gallow

Despite his effete appearance, Leptonia is tough; a hardened vampire spawn in the service of Lord Aspen Hemlock, the leader of this group of the Panacea whom the characters are destined to tangle with in due

Rumours About the Sinks and Club Crimsón

If the characters wish to learn more about the Sinks and Club Crimsón specifically, allow them to each make a Charisma (Persuasion) check. Alternately, a character can instead try to aid another character in her check. The results of the checks are included below.

DC	Result
2	The Sinks, also known as Branner's Folly, was created almost 900 years ago on the orders of a child king who wished to create an entirely new district for artisans. Unfortunately, the only land available was a watery bog and lake area, and despite the creation of dozen of canals the entire district has since subsided into a flooded morass.
5	The Sinks has a reputation for artistic excess, depravity, and cruelty. Fortunes can be made by those brave enough, talented enough, or twisted enough to appeal to the occupants, who have formed an enclave of respectability which is a simple veneer to the core of wickedness.
8	The Club Crimsón is currently used as a sanatorium of sorts to house outcast aristocrats who are so depraved, mad, violent, or unstable that they cannot be tolerated within the Capitol. These misanthropes and sad cases are left to their own devices in this mockery capitol.
10	The Club Crimsón is one of the more respectable, certainly Royal-centric, of these types of facilities. Located on the Great Canal, the club caters to aristocrats only, although artists regularly come here to gain a reputation. The club welcomes outcast nobles as family. Access is by invitation only.
15	Art in the Sinks is about excess, suffering, and the creation of living genius. The Royal menageries of the Sinks are testament to the art of the surgeon-artist, golem-stitchers or homuncule wives; the things therein should not draw breath. Some darker rumours suggest that the Asylum, the city's main sanatorium that has rather ironically been based here, is full of inmates — either rightly or wrongly brought here — who are never seen again whole.
18	Some suggest the recent massive increase in new inmates in places such as the Asylum, many from Toiltown, might be linked to a recent great increase in such artists plying their wares. Toiltown is full of stories about fit, strong young men being taken as mad by the constabulary and never seen again.

course. Never seen abroad by day (he sleeps in area **CC22** in the club), Leptonia divides his time between making his grotesque living sculptures and visiting his three favourite haunts, accompanied at all times by his companion Sallow, a **dark stalker**†. The two are inseparable, devoted to each other after Sallow walked to the surface from his home in Underneath. The two are reasonably well known as local artists. As small pillars of local society, they are able to call upon the help of several powerful allies. The consequences of a potential friendship, and the failure to be subtle enough in investigations, are outlined in **Friends or Enemies** below.

Algernon Alfonce Leptonia

When the characters first spy this fellow, they see a sickly-looking man dressed in the latest outré fashions. Effected, rouged, and effeminate, he is the picture of decadent aristocracy from his outrageous wig to his curl-toed boots.

Treasure carried: potion of invisibility, heavy winter coat with buttons made from doll's fingers, heavy winter muffler inlaid with obsidian worth 200 gp, longsword decorated with designs of wolves chasing sheep (100gp), pendant made from a mummified wren set with tiny diamonds in its eyes worth 250 gp, fancy human-skin bag containing 23 gp and ten 5-guinea notes (worth 50 pp total), keys to all locks in the Club Crimsón, a folded piece of paper with the "Hymn of the Panacea" (See Sidebox) written on it, and a pocket-sized angel fetish made of raven feathers.

Sallow Ashenly

A frail youth with almost alabaster skin, **Sallow Ashenly**† is wrapped in heavy winter gear that almost completely muffles his appearance other than his unkind eyes. Below his clothes, Sallow is frail, and appears almost to be an addict or consumptive. He is wiry, and there is something obviously odd about him.

Sallow and Algernon live in the Club Crimsón, and are members of the Panacea. Sallow has been instrumental in acting as a go-between for the dark folk and Panacea, although he is not aware of the location of the cult in the Underneath. Both are painfully sociable, and seek to fit into society to cover their secrets. It is feasible for the characters to use spells to coerce Algernon to invite them into the club, but doing so without Sallow raises the dark stalker's suspicions, and he quickly leads his companion away from anyone who seems to have magically coerced him. If Sallow succeeds in confirming his suspicions, he immediately tries to convince Algernon that he has been under magical duress, in which case the vampire spawn contacts his associates listed below and any and all attempts at subterfuge fail, leaving the characters to face breaking into the club by force.

However, the characters may readily impress the duo, who are desperate to fit into society. The three most commonly visited locations are listed below, and the characters can arrange to follow or meet the pair at these locations during the evening as many times as they wish and engage in small talk to try to secure an invitation of membership. This interaction uses a mechanic familiar to those who have played through ***L3: Sea's End***, in which you track the "Appreciation Points" accumulated by the characters as they pursue membership in the Club Crimsón.

Membership in the Club Crimsón requires more than just a Charisma check — the characters need to build up a level of credibility before it is possible to get an invitation to join. The Appreciation Points are not a rule system: they are simply a bookkeeping method for tracking the characters' appreciation and credibility.

To secure membership, the characters must accrue 6 AP. Points are attained by interacting with Sallow and Algernon as a pair, but the two

Hymn of the Panacea

The "Hymn of the Panacea" should seem familiar to the characters since they've seen it before. Father Gromwell scratched it into the wall of his cave on the Falling Isle (see ***L3: Sea's End***). It is reproduced here for ease of reference.

"*Light of day, reap sickness from the land*
Heaven's angel burn ignorance and greed
Beautiful, we kneel at your command
And work our own, blind as you decreed."

'Tis The Season

One aspect of Levee that has been emphasized is the timescale. Adventures occur at particular times to have an extra effect upon those events. ***Decay*** takes place in the dead of winter. The sun doesn't rise until about 8th hour, 3 glass prime (8:30 AM) and sets at 4th hour, 2 glass non (4:20 PM), leaving only about 8 hours of relatively dull light. As the primary enemy in this adventure are vampire spawn and undead, these shorter days can be catastrophic for the characters.

Unless the characters *specifically* wait for a clear day, you can safely assume that direct sunlight occurs only for about a quarter of the daylight hours, the rest being overcast. However, if the characters wait to attack at the right time, they can benefit from as much sunlight as they can reasonably get in winter. Vampires moving about at such times are always wary, but such movement is not prohibited unless you think that it should be. At this time of year, vampires and their spawn are affected only when caught in direct sunlight; at other times, they can avoid the effects of the weak overcast sun by wearing tinted glasses (of the type used by insectum† addicts) and covering exposed skin (which is easy to excuse at such cold times).

(See **Keeping Time in the Lost Lands** in the ***Cyclopaedia Infestarum*** for an explanation of ***Lost Lands*** timekeeping).

are very talkative, and characters who may not wish to be involved find themselves being asked questions. The pair love art, and macabre art at that, and love those who can talk the talk about it. The characters can quickly gain an outline idea of such art, but can also make 1 attempt per day to gather information about more outré artists using a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The DC increases to 20 if the characters are not dressed as nobles. Characters making a successful check gain a little titbit of information that grants advantage on any one check made.. Such facts become old news 1d3 days later and lose their benefits.

The characters can use a Charisma (Performance) or (Deception) check once per evening, to try to gain an Admiration Point.. A DC 16 check indicates success. However, if at any time such a character makes a check of 5 or lower, an embarrassing silence prevails for 1d4 minutes, and 1 AP is lost.

The characters can also use their surroundings to influence the pair as listed in the specific social locations below. Algernon and Sallow also enjoy outré fashion, and gifts from the list in Appendix C are worth 1 AP for every 250 gp spent. Other approaches can work at your discretion.

If at any time the characters use magical coercion that fails, attempt to force their way into the club, or take an approach that you deem unmasks the characters' intentions, Algernon contacts his friends as listed below.

Friends or Enemies

If the characters succeed in reaching 6 AP, Algernon takes the character he most admires to one side and suggests that the characters might like to visit his humble club, which is always looking out for gifted and different people such as the characters. Membership is 100 gp each per year, but members receive evening access to the club and to any special events that entails. As luck would have it, such a special event is due to take place very soon with players from the Macabre Theatre and Insectum House performing a new experimental play called the *Miracle of Weak Flesh*, together with the works of an exciting new surgeon-artist called Rory Leech.

Membership also comes with an apartment in which to entertain guests for the evening (the club opens at dusk and closes at dawn), with a locking door. Upon becoming members of the club, the characters are given area **CC15** for their own use.

If the opposite occurs, however, and Algernon sees through the characters' ploy, he immediately contacts some friends. These brothers, all of whom serve Lord Hemlock, proceed to attack the characters at the first chance they get (3 **vampire spawn**). They attack to kill, and the assaults continue until either they or the characters are destroyed. If you wish, the **vampire spawn** might know useful information about the Club Crimsón or the lair of Lord Hemlock with the Panacea (see **Part 3** of this adventure).

Algernon and Sallow's Haunts

The following locations are where Algernon and Sallow can be found each evening as they make their social rounds.

Michaelgrego's Menagerie (area SJ6 in Chapter 11)

The disturbing dark fairyland that is the menagerie, like many places in the Sinks, opens at dusk and closes at dawn. Algernon loves to stroll through the grounds admiring the abominations, but is particularly obsessed with the girallodiles. He and Sallow spend many long hours studying the strange and incredibly aggressive creatures. Characters who take the chance to talk to them at this location, and make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, can point out some peculiarity of this rarest of aggressive creatures, and gain 1 AP for each separate check. If they subsequently meet the pair again, they pointedly ask the characters about the reproductive cycle of the creatures, and if the ones in the cages are of one sex or the other. They are, in fact, all female, but only another DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies them as such. This second occasion is worth 2 AP if the check is made, but –1 AP if failed.

Connol's Erotic Cabb'e House (area SJ9 in Chapter 11)

Sallow and Algernon are well known locals, and their edgy discussions about love and passion are often the talk of the place. Characters who wish can join in with these discussions, but it's a risky tactic in front of the locals. If they succeed in making a DC 15 Charisma check, the characters succeed in amusing the gathered aristocrats, including Algernon and Sallow, and gain 2 AP. Any character scoring below 5 on the check loses 1 AP. Each time the characters visit the place, the locals try to goad the character into repeating the check. Subsequent times a DC 15 check is worth only 1 AP, and a failure by any amount equals –1 AP.

The Macabre Theatre and Insectum House (area SJ23 in Chapter 11)

During the adventure, the little-known minimalist acting troupe and mime group the "Philosophical Aspects of No" are performing. Their amateur brand of overacting the various aspects of the play are laughable. Characters making a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can see that the pair finds the experience unsettlingly embarrassing. A character making a DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check can amusingly ridicule the play to gain 1 AP.

The Club Crimsón

Infiltrating the club is far less risky than breaking in, but also has its risks. If they enter as members, the characters are more open to scrutiny, and while this may lead to them gaining access to the Panacea itself, it may also lead them into a trap.

The Panacea are recovering (if that is the correct word) from a recent miracle. After his summoning of the Beautiful on the Falling Isle in the Unsea, Father Gromwell was brought back to the city by the Angel, its *mirror-portal*† being drawn into a place called the Iron Dungeon, part of the Underneath and the setting for the next adventure in the adventure path ***L5: Below***. The sudden appearance of the Angel caused members to realize that the end of the world was truly coming and that, misguided though they are, they believe that Paradise is a step away.

In recent weeks, the Angel has shown some of the Panacea her gifts by creating a paradise for them, and opening doorways into Between,

something she can do virtually at will. The Panacea have also seen her draw things of madness from Between, and some of these creatures are abroad in the Panacea lair, detailed in **Part 3** below. These creatures amaze and horrify the group, but none dares voice their terror, realizing that their own attempts to weave flesh using Cuckoo Wombs are the work of fumbling children compared with the Beautiful's power.

The Beautiful has now left the Iron Dungeon for places unknown and has taken Gromwell with her. The members of the cult know of Gromwell, but simply refer to him as "The Guide." However, anyone who is asked to describe the Guide are clearly describing Gromwell. By this stage, the priest has said very little: The Angel captivated him and convinced him that Paradise was there for the entering. He is blind to what is going on and carefully shielded by the Angel, who has plans for him.

The Club Crimsón acts purely as a front for the Panacea, who occasionally draw members from within it and other aspects of society. There are people in the club who are innocent. In running this section, the characters may decide to adopt a "slaughter without dialogue" approach. This reckless behaviour is dangerous as it invites attack, but also involves the possible injury or death of innocents. How this is handled is left to the GM, but such strong-arm tactics should never be applauded. The GM may decide that a decent Sergeant of the Watch (**Veteran**) begins stalking the characters. This encounter — with a man that should be suggested is decent and honest, and supported by honest men whom he has recruited — puts the characters in a very difficult position. Do they exacerbate their actions by killing the constables? Do they try to explain their actions, or do they simply flee? Regardless of how it plays out, be sure to carefully consider that mindless acts of violence should have consequences, not just with vengeance by the Panacea, but by others.

At the end of the description of the club is an outline for an evening event already mentioned by Algernon to potential new members. This event gives the characters a chance to legitimately infiltrate the Panacea in **Part 3**, but it has an attached risk: Those who ask too many questions are still invited to the lair, but this time as the guests of the vampire Lord Hemlock and his swarm of attendant vampire spawn children, with the characters' souls on the menu.

Club Crimsón Features

Showing signs of recent repair (paid for by Leptonia's lucrative career in sculpting), the club is a squat, two-floored building with an attic. Its thick walls offer good insulation, for both heat and sound, and the fires are always lit in winter. Gulls flock on the rooftop in warmer weather, while a slimy canal encircles it (DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to swim). The ice that surrounds the club is thin as a result of dumping from nearby alchemic works. Characters making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check realise that the ice would not support much weight (anything more than 30 lbs. falls through).

Inside, the place is crammed with Leptonia and Sallow's artwork. The vampire spawn has a peculiar artistic trick involving abducting waifs and strays, drugging them with a concoction or chloroform and oil of taggit, and embalming them in a substance made from equal parts lime concrete, clay, and an alchemic discovery known as Blight grasp. This substance hardens very quickly (in a matter of minutes), and Algernon has been using it to create living statues — slowly engulfing his victims in the stone substance over a period of weeks, and eventually covering them completely, thoughtfully providing an air hole for them to breathe through to enjoy his work to the last and infuse the statues with the occasional angry spirits. That this process occasionally creates an undead merely adds to Algernon's belief that he is a living (or more accurately, unliving) genius.

Sallow's art is altogether more unsettling. He uses a branch of artistry known to dark stalkers† as Afterlife Polypore or Soul-Fungal: by using a piece of a dead body, Sallow grafts a special fungus onto the corpse or body part and watches it slowly grow over a period of weeks. That this occasionally also creates something vaguely alive is a cause of further delight for all concerned.

Rooms within pay careful attention to detail, with door handles designed like distended lion jaws, leering gargoyles, sconces depicting doll faces, and finely carved doors, each of which has a stained-glass window depicting a menagerie of animals, most of which are predators. This glass is thick, but characters making a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can discern some features of the room beyond. Each club member's room has a hefty, locked iron door, for which only Algernon and the members have keys. All windows are barred. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the doors or windows by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check.

CC1. The Club Crimsón

Lurking in a square of fetid canals, this fancy townhouse has a garish lantern hanging above a small pier. A shadowy entrance hangs above the canal here. A layer of ice clothes the building, its grip stretching into the surrounding canals as well.

By day, the numerous windows are shuttered with cast iron shutters, each latched from within. A thicker iron door is fixed and locked at the entrance. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the doors or windows by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. The chimney stacks rise from fires that are always lit in winter. A Small creature could try to climb down the tight chimney using a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The interior timber door is branded with a double *CC* symbol, one across either door.

At dusk, a small staff of living employees arrives (see Sidebox below) via a punt, waiting for the bouncers Isaac and Ralph (male human **guards**) to open. They then unlatch all the shutters in rooms that have members, and prepare meals and wine. The two bouncers then remain on duty until dawn, when they lock up and go to bed (area **CC12**). A tiny metal hatch to the left of the door allows them to speak to visitors.

Isaac and Ralph, Club Crimsón Bouncers

Deliberately chosen for their inability to do anything more complex than hit people, the 2 bouncers (**guards**) are quite decent men who are slow to draw weapons. They prefer the quiet life, and regard the artists as a bit unusual but nothing more sinister than that. Algernon ensures that they get plenty of gin and that they are not curious. If they find out the truth about the vampire, they leave his employment immediately.

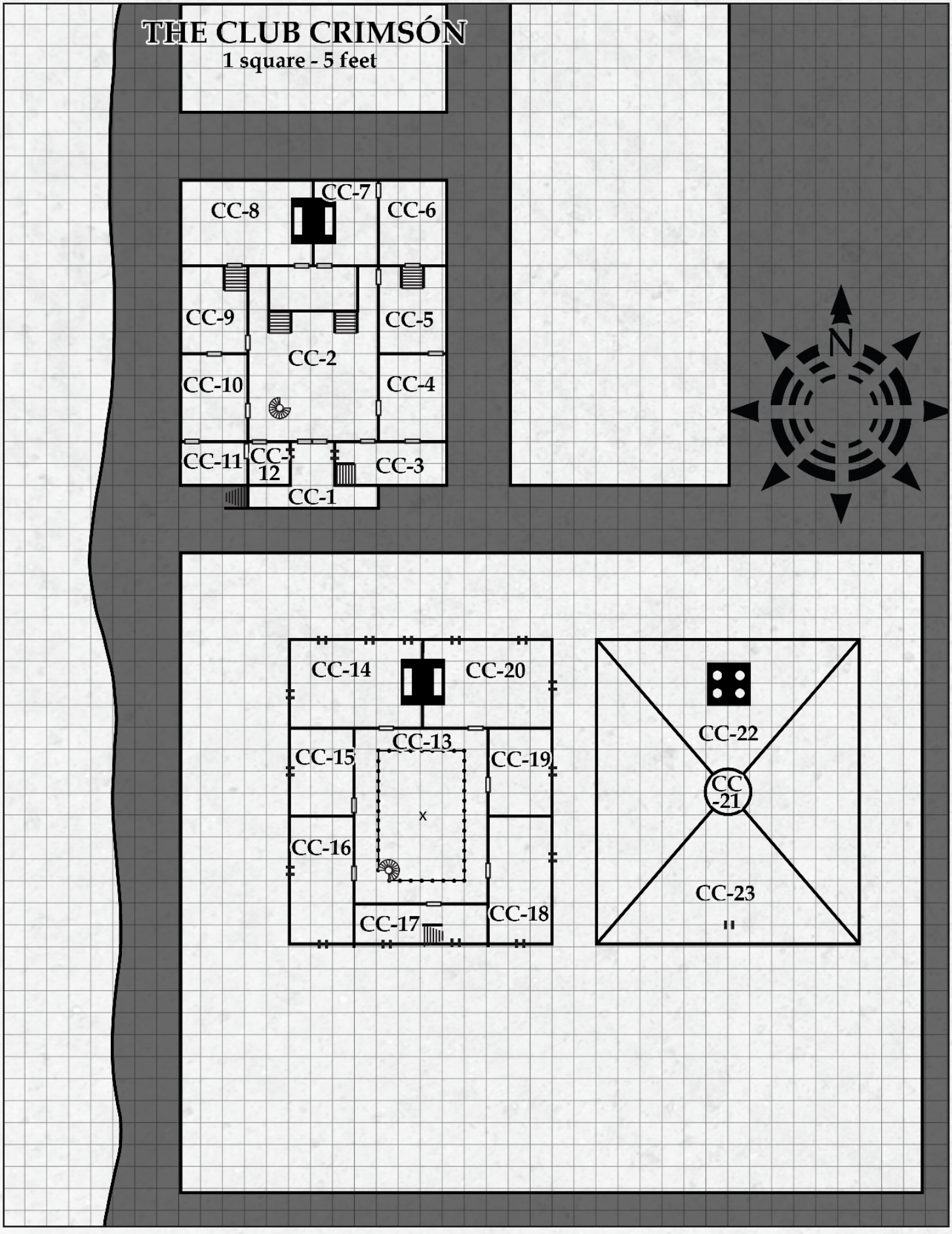
Tactics: The bouncers try to get an opponent to back down by saying just how tough they are. When that doesn't work, they try not to get outflanked, and immediately raise an alarm if the club is under attack.

The Living Domestics

Mrs. Crump, Mr. Sodge, and Young Lizzy work in the club in the evening; they clean, cook and serve. **Mr. Sodge** (LN male human **commoner**) cooks, and **Mrs. Crump** (LN female human **commoner**) acts as a butler for the club (she calls herself the "chatelaine"), helped by the astonishingly lovely **Young Lizzy** (N female human **commoner**). They all regard the club members as odd, eccentric sometimes, perhaps even a little disturbed, but art is hard to reach for the commoners of the city, at least as far as they're concerned. Algernon paying them 5 times the going rate for their discretion is an added bonus.

Sometimes, Algernon has had to use magical powers on the club's staff to cover up a scene he did not wish them to see. So far, he has been successful. Even if magically coerced into cooperating, the staff have nothing to hide or say about their employer, who always pays on time and generously, especially on religious festivals of Mother Grace.

A trio of animated objects (area CC2) assists these domestics. These objects are simply fetch-and-carry creatures that have a rudimentary understanding of service and simple instructions. They can fetch Algernon, bring objects to people, and carry messages. The servants don't like them, considering them creepy.


THE CLUB CRIMSÓN
1 square - 5 feet
CC-7
CC-8
CC-6
CC-9
CC-5
CC-2
CC-10
CC-4
CC-11
CC-12
CC-3
CC-1
N
CC-14
CC-20
CC-13
CC-15
CC-19
x
CC-16
CC-17
CC-18
CC-22
CC-21
CC-23

CC2. Meeting Room and Stage

This is a large, airy space overlooked by an elaborately railed balcony. Several fine mahogany tables with leather chairs fill the inner chamber and overlook a stage. The stage rests 5 feet above the polished floor upon which are cast a half-dozen polar bear skins. The edges of the room are reserved for more luxurious leather furniture, lacquer screens, and side tables. A spiral stair winds giddily up through the heart of the chamber. The room is an homage to strange art, and grotesque statues, composed of people, creatures, and parts of both. A further curiosity — this one a fungal growth that uncannily resembles the head of some monster — juts from the wall just behind the stage

The main chamber is where most public meetings take place, although members are at liberty to go where they wish once inside. The exception is other members' rooms. Meals are set out for events, but otherwise the staff attend members' needs as they wish.

The statues are Algernon's and appear to be made from single pieces of carved, black pottery. The pottery is a hardened dull resin, which in places shows blemishes that for some reason seem unsettling. The statues engulf decomposing bodies, and if any of them are broken (and bear in mind that area of effect spells may affect them) the contents within, exposed to air, release a sugary-sweet odour of rot that is overpoweringly revolting. This duplicates the effects of a *stinking cloud* spell (DC 15). There are several human statues, their expressions disturbingly extended, somehow enhanced. There are also parts of creatures, including the face of what could be a manticore, and the upper shoulders of what is clearly an ogre.

The fungal growth is Sallow's creation. The growth extends from the wall as though it is trying to reach outward. The growth is part face, part claws, and partly tail spikes all distended. At the base of the growth, secured to the wall by 6-inch nails, is part of a flaccid tail with a couple of spikes growing from it. Characters seeing the object and making a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check identify the form as part of a manticore.

A curious stained-glass window hangs directly above the room in the ceiling (area **CC21**). This forms a swinging access to the attic where Algernon and Sallow sleep. A fine silk rope ladder is lowered to allow access; this ladder requires a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check to use.

Three of the staff are animated objects, created by golem-stitchers and gifted to the club. The objects are humanoid in shape, but composed of hefty bovine bones with pigs' heads. They cannot talk or fight, but can nod and fetch and carry.. When characters first encounter the creatures, read or paraphrase the following description:

A figure lurches toward you, hobbling as though injured, perhaps palsied. The thing sways as though unsteady on its trotters, and rises through bony limbs that are clearly bovine. It has a pig's head that is strangely extended like a horse's, oddly elongated hands with arthritic-looking twisted fingers, and hunched shoulders.

Treasure: The furniture herein is worth 950 gp. Among the curious objects are a pickled kitten in a jar with silver edges worth 30 gp, a series of pamphlets about Crescent Sea geography, a trio of fine whiskey decanters and crystal glasses worth 120 gp in total, and a fine portrait of Algernon and Sallow worth 200 gp.

CC3. Library

Books held in shelves, in cabinets, and in cupboards fill this chamber. A hefty stove burns in one corner, providing a comfortable warmth for the chamber and stands adjacent to a very steep timber staircase.

Most of the books are about art, and in all the 1,232 books represent a potted art history of the Blight. The stair rises into area **CC17**.

Treasure: Amongst the books is a *spell scroll* (level 5: *counterspell, elemental weapon, haste*). It is folded in a book about creating stained glass and is very difficult to find physically, requiring a successful DC 30 Perception check if the scroll's presence has not been detected by magic.

CC4. Private Dining

A snug dining area is set with a walnut dining table and a silver dinner set. A number of trophies overlook the dining area, as well as a few stuffed animals in cases. At each corner of the room is a statue similar to those in the great hall. These, however, have huge malformed heads.

The stuffed creatures are mundane versions of creatures now created by the golem-stitchers, and include fake mermaids, an ape with wings, and several bizarre cross-animals such as frog-birds, bat-cats, and sheep-wolves (which Algernon hysterically refers to as his "wolves in sheep's clothing"). The trophies include the heads of a tiger, an elephant, an aurochs, and those of several less glamorous creatures: foxes, stags, wolves, and bears.

One of the statues has birthed an undead that slowly mumbles to itself, much to Algernon's amusement. If quizzed, Algernon claims that his genius breathes life into his creations from time to time, as does Sallow's. The creature, a **wight**, is held rigid by the substance it is embalmed in, but if the object's skin is breached, the shell shatters and the creature within emerges and attacks, raving as it does. If Algernon or Sallow are present, the creature ignores all other opponents in preference to them. In truth, Algernon purchased 4 inmates of a sanatorium who suffered from elephantiasis from Stompton, Hogg and Gryme — Corpse Purveyors (area **B22** of **Chapter 3**) at great expense, and these are what he regards as his finest creations — so far.

Treasure: The silver dinner service has insets with moths held in glass. The unusual set is worth 600 gp.

CC5. Exhibition Room

This chamber is crammed with display cases, mainly filled with old-fashioned artworks of stitched and made animals, their lifeless eyes staring through dusty, grimed glass. A low set of steps rises to a door with a stained-glass depiction of the Devil. Framed pictures abound, but one holds your attention: a large canvas that depicts something that at times is ape-like, spider-like, and worm-like, a thrashing mass of mouths and distended limbs and, clearly, anger.

The main painting is by Sallow, and depicts the Thing in the Cellar from area **WP14** in the Weary Palace (see **Part 3** below). A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies the smells of fresh oil paint, and indeed the canvas has yet to dry in many places where huge smears of paint are used to depict movement and shadow. If quizzed, Algernon extols the work as that of Sallow. He claims the artist imagined it in a nightmare he had recently, something that chased him through the night and into his bed. He is bluffing.

The creatures are similar to those in the Private Dining Room (area **CC4**), but are clearly from the broad spectrum of such "artists"; some are works of astonishing imagination formed from various parts of creatures, some of which are pickled in brine or vinegar, while others are laughably poor.

CC6. Wine Store and Larders

A large, damp room that is clearly a wine cellar is also crammed with foodstuffs and larders.

A dozen timber larders and three meat lockers are herein. The smell is mouth-watering.

Treasure: The larders are very well stocked, and contain only the finest produce. Amongst the salamis, truffles, fine reds, pickles, and other luxuries are three bottles of 1698 brandy worth 30 gp per bottle, a bottle of 1723 port worth 40 gp and, most valuably, a dusty bottle of 1627 Leith malt aged for 150 years and worth 110 gp. A DC 20 Appraise check identifies their value. In all, there are almost 350 gp worth of foodstuffs, enough to feed a small army for a week.

CC7. Bread Kitchen

A large range glows herein; the stove is very hot. Kitchen utensils are neatly stacked, shelved, or boxed.

The bread kitchen is used to bake fresh bread, and also to make foodstuffs such as jams, pickles, and other preserves. At any time, a dozen fresh loaves are cooling in here.

CC8. Kitchen

This is a very busy, very well-stocked kitchen with a huge fireplace.

The kitchen also doubles as a store for mundane equipment such as mops, jars of pyrebeetles, and tools. These utensils form part of a masterful kitchen and are worth 150 gp in total.

CC9. Study

A snug chamber with panelled oak walls, this chamber is clearly a study and private room. A very large walnut desk sits in the centre, with a fancy pyrebeetle lamp and several papers on top.

The desk drawers are locked, and Algernon has the key. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the locks by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check (or one could simply smash the piece of furniture. Within the desk are several ledgers and piles of receipts from the staff for foodstuffs and, most notably, a bill for the repair of the club less than 12 months ago, for 6,300 gp. A small leather-bound journal lists the present members of the club. It may also include the characters, with notes on recent meetings and impressions of the characters. Be very blunt with the words; if Algernon didn't like someone, it would be amusing to repeat his thoughts here. Thoughts for older members are not included. A large ring of keys rests at the back of the cupboard within the desk. These are copies of keys for every room and lock in the club, this one included.

Treasure: A false back in the desk, spotted by a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check or DC 10 if false compartments are actively searched for, contains a small velvet purse containing 5 fine garnets worth 750 gp in total, 19 sp, a silver short sword in a calfskin scabbard, and a bag containing simple black clothes and scarves. A large key hangs at the back; the key is very ornate, has the letters *WP* in very ornate script on it, and a vignette of a three-faced gargoyle. Algernon placed this escape bag in here in case he needs to go in a hurry and head back to the Weary Palace. The key is an important clue, detailed in the Sidebox; it opens the front door of the Weary Palace detailed in **Part 3** of this adventure.

The Three-Faced Key

The key is very recognizable, but only to locals. The Weary Palace is a landmark known in the northern portion of the Sinks in the Still Lido (see **Chapter 11** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***), as it has a three-faced gargoyle weathervane. A DC 20 Intelligence (History) check identifies the palace. Local guides, particularly the prahu-punters, can identify the key as connected to the Weary Palace. Characters can also take to asking questions of locals; a DC 16 Charisma check also gives the location of the palace. Bribes of 5 gp add a +1 to the check, to a maximum of +6 per check made. Of course, those being bribed do not initially offer up the amounts that will make them talk.

CC10. Gallery

An assault of colour, earthy stench, and the shocking forms of more statues greet you as you look into this room. This is clearly a gallery, the pieces carefully arranged to attract attention to each.

Eight statues are exhibited here. Three are clearly of women, one of which, rather alarmingly, is wearing a formal dress with veil, although whether she is in mourning or at a wedding is unclear. A successful DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check notes a tiny piece of white silk (the veil) emerging from the head of the statue. The centrepiece is a large fungal thing, a towering mass of growths that rises to Large size. The thing has been grown from the fingers or appendages of an owlbear, a giant scorpion, and an otyugh, and has begun to become aware. The creature has yet to develop like some of Sallow's more infamous pieces (which have fully become fungal creatures), but there is a palpable sense of movement. Somewhere within the lichen skin, something slides against something. Whenever those within the room turn their back, the thing seems to shuffle. From somewhere within it, if characters listen closely enough, can be heard something like a heartbeat.

The final object is some sort of fleshy cloak hung on a metal frame that has alarmingly begun to rust at points of contact with the cloak. The cloak is covered in coarse growths and lumps, and smells sweaty. The thing is actually the shed skin of the young form of the Thing in the Cellar detailed in the Weary Palace. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can see it's organic and guess that it might be a shed skin of some sort, though they have no guess as to what it originated from.

CC11. Servants Cloakroom

An orderly dressing room and wash room with washing stove. Clothes are hanging up to dry nearby.

A dozen chamber pots are herein, as well as washed clothes belonging to Sallow, Algernon, and the rest of the staff, some of which is hanging up to dry. When the staff arrives, they check their attire here, although the only mirror is a battered tin looking-glass hanging behind the door to **CC12** (the staff are as superstitious of mirrors as everyone else in the Blight). There are lots of mundane objects: combs, hair oil, cheap perfume, as well as simple foodstuffs.

CC12. Isaac and Ralph's Room

A pair of simple beds stand against the southern wall. A sliding metal panel looks out into the entrance.

Isaac and Ralph (**guards**) deter visitors during the day by using the panel to address them. The hatch is about 6 inches square. Hanging from the back of the door is an obscene drawing of a woman in her boudoir.

Treasure: Beneath the beds, each has a small strongbox (with the keys left in). One contains 79 gp, a lucky rabbit's foot (that proved unlucky), and a *potion of vitality* that Isaac intends to use to ensnare the love of his life, Wide Elsee. He is presently jealous of Ralph, who he knows keeps a handful of coins (23 cp and 12 sp) in his strongbox, because he's spent all his wages on a wedding ring for his beloved Rose, whom he intends to propose to soon. The ring, worth 120 gp, is embellished with the words "*What a lovely thing a Rose is!*"

CC13. Balcony

An ornate balcony overlooking the main room and stage. A pyrebeetle chandelier hangs near the spiral stair, while seven doors leave the area.

By day, each door is shuttered with a locked iron door. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 18 Dexterity check. Behind are ornate doors with stained-glass windows, each depicting the Devil in his infernal glory. The stained-glass hatchway leading to area **CC22** above is much more visible from here; it lies immediately above point **X** on the map.

CC14. Member Room: Madam Kale

Obviously a boudoir, this room is decorated in silks and has fine dresses and feminine accoutrements scattered playfully around. Above the fireplace sits a painting of a pale, very austere man; he seems to be watching you. Angels glance from every surface — carvings, votive lights, images — there are hundreds of them. They are in the shadows of lanterns, lamps, candlesticks, and sconces.

A member of the Panacea and vampire spawn child of Lord Hemlock, Madam Kale has a chamber here, which she uses to meet with Sallow and Algernon, discuss gossip at the Weary Palace, and to store secrets she does not wish Hemlock to discover. She is very much aware that the Angel has arrived, and that the Day of Judgement is near. She knows she will be spared to enjoy the earthly paradise that will follow, and hopes her undeath will be cleansed by the miracle that is to come. She is fanatical about the Panacea and knows the Weary Place intimately, but is petrified of the master there.

Kale's room is a testament to her art, using the dark colours of pyrebeetle lights and her illusions. Among the sumptuous clothing are some 113 representations of angels, from simple purchased objects to things lovingly made of candles and oils that shed strange shadows and shades of light. The lights create a strange living art; the shapes cast by the lights merge to form an angelic figure, but the majority must be lit for the figure to appear. When all the lights are lit, the figure is resplendent, towering across a shadowy representation of the city, and carrying a vast white wave that seethes at her back, seeking to devour everything in its path.

Madam Kale

Madame Kale, a **vampire spawn** with AC 17 (*bracers of defense*), is an astonishingly pale, frail beauty, wearing a mourning dress and thin black veil. She bears a small amulet, within which sits a baby rat with blank eyes. In her hand she waves a dark fan.

Kale is in the Panacea, and not as open or trusting as Algernon. She plays a role in picking the few people who claim to have seen the Angel, and plays this role in detail as written at the end of the description of the club. Few words, sour looks, and a haughty nobility sum up Kale, but she does admire artistic gifts. Those who claim to have such gifts and who have genuine genius she admires greatly. She loves Sallow and Algernon for such talents, and fears her creator accordingly. Kale also resides in area **WP29** and **31** in the Weary Palace. Kale is terrified of Hemlock, and the exposure of the Panacea would, in his eyes, require her destruction. If she is defeated, she doesn't return to her creator, but instead flees, trying to solve this problem alone until she is destroyed.

Personal Treasure: Kale has an iron and silver amulet containing an undead young rat worth 200 gp, *bracers of defense*, a key to the Weary Palace (identical to that in area **CC9**), key to her rooms in the club, a black iron ring set with obsidian (400 gp), a small carved wax angel, and a three-faced key.

Treasure: Kale carries a three-faced key on her person. Some of the lanterns in the Member Room are set with cheap crystals and odd lenses, but a few have more valuable foci for the flames. A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check locates the valuable gems; the DC drops to 12 if the lanterns are all lit after the characters enter the room. Amongst these foci are a large blue quartz worth 40 gp, a fine rock crystal worth 50 gp, and a very fine piece of amber worth 200 gp.

Locked in a strongbox is a spellbook. The box is trapped with a scythe trap. The spellbook contains the spells *acid splash*, *blight*, *gentle repose*, *color spray*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *silent image*, *unseen servant*, *vampiric touch*, *hypnotic pattern*, *minor illusion*, *mirror image*, and *scorching ray.*.

The Scythe Trap: When opened, the strongbox releases a spring-loaded scythe which cuts across the area directly in front of it for 4d6 points of slashing damage. The existence of an odd mechanism can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and the nature of it can be determined by a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The trap can be disabled using thieves tools with a DC 10 Dexterity check, but once its nature is determined it is easier just to open the box from the side instead of the front.

CC15. Member's Room: Vacant

This room is empty, but has a few items of furniture left from the previous member. These include a clothes trunk, a single bed infested with bedbugs, a copper warming pan, a porcelain chamber pot, and a powdered wig on a wig-stand. If the characters are accepted into the club, this is given over to them as their private room.

Development: This room was used by Chastity Greengage, formerly of the Panacea and now very much part of the population at the Asylum in the Sinks District (see **Chapter 11**). Chastity voluntarily handed herself into the Asylum as everyone (staff included) here knows, but does not talk about. Hidden under a loose floorboard are a series of drawings of an angel wielding a scythe, possibly in blood and all signed "*Chastity Greengage*." The floorboard can be spotted with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check—the DC of the check lowers by 4 for every hour a person occupies this room and might step on it. The angelic figures are depicted in an underground setting, surrounded by iron bars as though in a prison, and in the later ones she is shown cutting her worshippers in two with her scythe. The pictures are crude but brutally effective. They are painted on the back of a number of posters that advertise tours of a place called the Asylum in the Sinks.

See the side trek The Asylum and Chastity Greengage for more information on this.

CC16. Member's Room: Lord Hiram

The room is disturbing; artwork has been set in several tanks and bell jars of formol, and odd shapes loom from sickly liquid. In the midst of these distasteful objects there is also a wide feather bed, a large wardrobe, and a plush sofa overlooking a jar full of spiders.

Most of the objects in jars are formless young that appear to be the result of some sort of infernal tampering, but three fully grown specimens exist. Each of these is a young girallodile: the distended jaws of each have grown too large to allow eating and they have died. These are actually the young of the living one that lurks in the water-garden at the Weary Palace (see **Part 3**). The spiders are poisonous and form a **swarm of insects** if they are released, but unless released they are powerless to attack.

Lord Ninian Hiram

Lord Ninian Hiram (N male human **noble**) is a dupe of the Panacea, and a "friend" of Algernon. Hiram is rich, and easily parted from his cash. He's desperate to be considered one of the artsy set but lacks any real talent. His room, awash with sick and twisted artwork, may seem to condemn him as a member, particularly with his gifts of angels from Madam Kale, whom he's desperately in love with. Closer examination of the other work in between, all signed by the aristocrat, show he is making cheap imitations and is talentless.

The poor man has no chin and an astonishingly long neck. He dresses in somewhat strange attire, all black but with vague violet and turquoise accents. Hiram looks as he does because of Royal inbreeding.. He's desperate to please, and tries to make friends with anyone who shows interest in him. Hiram spends much of his time at the club, desperately trying to make more friends. As detailed under **Event 1**, he is likely to make a beeline for the characters, hoping for kindred spirits. He knows little if anything of the Panacea, but has heard the name and is aware that a group of special artists resides at some palace in the Sinks. He is, of course, frenzied to join this inner circle but knows no more about it other than that they live at something called the Weary Palace.

Treasure: The wardrobe contains some fine clothes, and some rather bland clothing. (Hiram tends to go back to being mundane once he's left the artists, as he's a bit embarrassed.) A hidden panel at the back of the wardrobe requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate, and contains several love letters tied in ribbon. The letters are from Madam Kale to Hiram, but while being flirtatious are not graphic. Anyone reading the letters and making a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that Hiram is being used for money; there are several hard luck stories asking for cash for both Kale and her friend Algernon, "who is too proud to ask for money."

Enemy Penalty — Jacob Hiram

Lord Ninian Hiram may superficially seem like a twisted artist, but in reality he's just gotten into the wrong crowd. Friendless, the noble has tried to buy friendship and has latched onto the artists here. They reciprocate because he's rich. If Hiram is killed by a character, his far bigger and far nastier brother **Jacob Hiram** (NE male human **knight**) hears of the incident, and comes looking for the characters from his regiment in Fort Bridge (see area **T9** of **Chapter 9**) along with another **knight**, 2 **veterans,** and 3 **guards** as backup. Jacob is nasty: he won't want the characters to die; he wants them to suffer for killing his brother. He's likely to stalk the characters and try to capture them one by one, before putting them through some sort of very unpleasant military-style punishment.

CC17. Member's Room: Empty Storage

Large objects hidden underneath white sheets fill this room. A set of steps rises from the floor below.

This room is used to store objects, mostly furniture that has gone out of fashion, and other objects of yesterday's tastes.

Treasure: A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to locate each object. Removing all the sheets lowers the DC to 5 but takes 10 minutes. A mahogany writing desk has a top drawer with a book of pressed flowers. In it is a *spell scroll* (*bestow curse*, as level 5 spell). A discarded shoebox holds a purse of 45 sp, and a large smashed mirror has a fine gilt frame worth 25 gp.

CC18. Member's Room: Meriwether

This large room is crammed with objects; there is more warehouse than bedroom about it. Grinning from corners are mounted skeletons, obscene paintings, jars with preserved limbs of various monsters, things made of wire and bone and bells, and countless objects d'art.

Meriwether's room is eclectic; his tastes are that more is more. He has crammed this room with objects (hoping to sell some to dupes and fools), trusting that something is bound to appeal.

Pickler and preserver, Meriwether is a butcher by trade, but has raised his lot by faking Royal blood, an act he is careful to keep up. Meriwether is close friends with the grave robber **Uriah Gryme** in BookTown (**B22** in **Chapter 3**). He has made a small fortune from the artists and their friends, and is not above raiding the occasional menagerie for parts.

Meriwether works for himself; he bears no friendship to anyone here, but is aware of the Weary Palace and the inner circle of artists called the Panacea. He is also aware that a "Lord Hemlock" is the leader of the group. Meriwether is also aware of the wealth and prestige to be made from these artists, and wants to maintain a united front. Meriwether is a **master thief**† with additional magic weapons and resources (see Personal Treasure).

Personal Treasure: Meriwether has a small leather-bound hipflask containing 1 *potion of cure wounds* (Level 4), an ironbound flask containing a *potion of invisibility* (3 doses); 2 *+2 flaming bolts* (used in his crossbow), very fancy boots decorated with black buckles and beetle motifs worth 60 gp, gold ring set with human tooth worth 125 gp, tinted spectacles (worn purely for show), and a purse containing 25 pp.

Development: If the characters openly attack the club, Jabb Meriwether helps defend it and then slips away using his *potion of invisibility*. He then lurks nearby, follows the characters, and arranges for 3 associates from the Thieves' Guild (N male or female human **spy**) to join him. This group lays an ambush for the party, and robs them in the most efficient way possible. If the characters are introduced as friends, he will try to work out what's going on as detailed in **Event 1** at the end of this section. If his interest is piqued, he waits for the characters to conclude their business, and then follows them as detailed above.

Treasure: There are 85 knives in here, many of them clearly butchers tools. Amongst them are 4 excellent daggers. The artwork is very much in the eye of the beholder, and ranges from apocalyptic landscapes of low quality to some quite fine sculptures. The art includes a trio of small portraits by Landworth worth 100 gp each, and an extremely fine vision of Hell by the noted (mad) minor master Herbert Coal (1599–1627) worth 350 gp.

CC19. Member's Room: Lynchet and Bran

This room is more workshop than bedchamber, its window shuttered and covered in a thick blanket. Pyrebeetle lanterns splutter and squeal. Hundreds of boxes and cupboards are herein, as well as several objects preserved in jars.

Stitcher and mortomata makers (see Sidebox), Lynchet and her husband Bran create partially animated objects, undead, or constructs. Although very sinister, and macabre artists extraordinaire, they are not members of the Panacea. Both are now elderly and frail. They are also very pale and gaunt as a result of the hardship of their lives. **Lynchet** (N female human **noble**) and **Bran** (N male human **noble**) both walk with sticks and wear tinted glasses to prevent the glare of the sun upon their eyes, which have deteriorated of late due to the tiny workshop they work in, which lies in nearby BookTown. In their youth, they were the darling of the art set in the early eighteenth century and are still a fixture of the Sinks.

Mortomata

The fine art of making amusing performing objects from the skills of the cadaver-surgeons and the makers of animated objects is one on the rise in the Blight. These objects are not fully animated (often being a fixed object) and not fully homunculus or golem, but a strange mixture of both. The finer objects have intelligence, and perform duties such as guardians, spies, or watch-things. The lesser objects are items that amuse: a stitched mermaid that swims, an ape that juggles raven skulls, talking plaster dolls, and pets that dance.

Algernon has courted the duo who have opened many doors in the snobbish district but now more or less ignores the couple, though there is a genuine danger that the characters mistake them for enemies. They are aware that the Panacea lives at the Weary Palace and know its location from olden days when it would host legendary soirees. They do not know who Lord Hemlock is.

Treasure: Among the countless objects in the room are a three-volume set about the history of mortomata written by Lynchet (150 gp), and a working mortomata that is a very evil-looking monkey that throws dice from a cup made of snakeskin. If it rolls two sixes on the dice, it makes a strange wheezing noise. The mortomata is worth 500 gp.

CC20. Member's Room: Lord Sawfly

This room is a calamity in oils, every inch of it lacerated, bloodied, and stained. Throughout the turmoil are canvases, but there is no furniture, no belongings: only art.

Close examination of the art with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is able to discern angelic figures in the mix of colours. This is no simple artwork: it's the work of a madman — or a genius — the distance between the two is impossible to discern. Sawfly's work is exquisite and agonizing, but studying it closely is worthwhile, even in these lesser works. A further DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the light of the Angel is blotting out the sky in many places, and that it is drawing the souls of those it kisses, and burning those it bathes. The work is of worship, but also terror about what the painter is imagining — or observing.

Lord Sawfly

There is agony in his face, an elven face, the features drawn back, the ears misshapen, small, almost pig-like. It is the eyes that are the most distinctive. There is anguish, misery, terror in his eyes — eyes that have seen too much. **Lord Sawfly** is a member of the Panacea, but he fears the coming of the Angel as much as he is aroused and inspired by it. His paintings here reflect his moods, but his masterpieces are at the Weary Palace. Sawfly senses kinship in the undying Madam Kale, and admires her, perhaps even loves her in his detached way, but life is inconsequential for the primitive† elf. His life has been so long that he has forgotten a dozen, dozen lifetimes of men. He suspects, however, that his agonies are about to be brought to an end — perhaps with everyone else. Lord Sawfly is a male primitive† elf **master thief**† with the additional innate spellcasting ability to cast *charm person* 3/day**.**

In some ways, Sawfly would welcome death, but he's lived too long now to not witness the coming of the Angel. He is happy to live as a prisoner, if only to see the coming storm, and happily begs for surrender if he is clearly defeated. Cowardice is something he has reverted to many times in his life amongst many distasteful acts, violations, and acceptances.

CC21. Hidden Entrance

Directly above the main room is a circular stained-glass window showing the Devil depicted with thirteen faces.

The window is an entrance into the room of Algernon and Sallow. The window swings upward; when they wish, they lower a silk rope ladder from above and leave. Everyone working in the club knows of this entrance, but without such knowledge, a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice it. The check is lowered to 10 if someone actively examines the window by day and notes that it is dark above.

CC22. Attic

A rambling attic, partially given over to storage, partially to art, and partially to an enormous feather bed. A muffled sob comes from one corner of the room hidden by the many boxes and pieces of art cluttering the chamber.

Algernon and Sallow spend all day herein, leaving only by night. They occasionally leave by the rooftop exit and away over the gables of the Sinks. The place is cluttered with artwork and the accoutrements of such art: oils, canvas, and a dozen sculptures in various stages. The muffled sob came from Molly Crabtree (see "The Statues" below). Hidden under covers near the rooftop exit is Algernon's coffin, requiring a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate. One of Sallow's creations known as the **Blessed One** lurks in the shadows of the attic. It has been here since he created it. He and Algernon read poetry to the creature. The Blessed One was originally an ogre, transformed by Sallow into life as a fungal creature. It is a pitiful, fleshy thing that drags itself on elongated arms. Its lower torso is a misshapen pulp of fungal growths that make movement difficult. The thing is a swarming, bursting mass of growths and cancers, some of which form teeth and mouths and appendages that hang flaccidly from its naked, tortured body. Despite the fact that its underlying form is a mix of flesh and fungus, it has the same capabilities as a **shambling mound**.

If anyone other than Algernon or Sallow enters, the Blessed One first tries to hide in a corner, and remains out of the way until any aggressive act is made against it, after which it attacks with fury. If at any time a character in the room tries to speak poetry to it, the Blessed One halts. If the poetry continues, it remains transfixed, but if attacked it resumes its onslaught and fights until destroyed.

The Statues

Of the statues herein, two contain undead creatures, two contain recently deceased victims, and two contain victims who are not dead quite yet. The two statues that hold undead now have revoltingly contorted forms; they have been bent over backward into an agonising limbo. Like the one in area **CC4**, they moan quietly, but if the husk around them is fractured, it shatters, freeing them and revealing 2 **wights**.

A third victim has not yet died, but he is entirely encased in the statue. Only a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the tiny air hole he has to breathe through. The figure within, **Aaron Cray** (N male human **commoner**), is almost mad with fear, but if released, he instantly becomes indebted to the characters and vows his loyal service for as long as they wish. While within the statue, Aaron can do no more than moan in the same way the wights do. If Aaron is released, it gives the GM an opportunity to develop a useful, friendly NPC. If you wish, change Aaron's class to something that would be useful to the characters. If the characters free Aaron, award them a total of 400 XP.

Held from the waist down in Algernon's foul statuary and in terror, the gagged **Molly Crabtree** (N female human **spy**) was captured by Algernon 3 weeks ago; in truth, she thought she was luring him. Using an old ruse as a prostitute to try to rob him, the hunter became the hunted and she's been subjugated to Algernon and Sallow's twisted humour ever since. Again, like Aaron, she is indebted to the characters for release, but unlike the commoner, she is coyer about her friendship. If released, she remains on friendly terms with the characters; should anyone wish to befriend her, allow each character a DC 17 Charisma check, and if it succeeds, this is treated as a friendship reward* for that character. Otherwise, she remains on the periphery of the adventure as someone the GM may wish to bring in or use from time to time.

Treasure: The pair keep their wealth well hidden. On a shelf in the north side of the chimneybreast (DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to

discover) is a small, locked iron chest, to which Algernon has the key. A character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. The shelf is **trapped**. Within are 4 bags of coins (1,200 cp, 502 sp, 457 gp, and 23 pp), a beautiful stalactite (recently recovered from Underneath and worth 150 gp as a decorative piece) that a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the form as almost angelic. There are also the deeds to the Club Crimsón and a velvet purse containing 3 fine tourmalines worth 200 gp each.

The Trap: If the iron chest's weight is removed from the shelf, it triggers an arrow trap from behind the plaster in the wall just underneath the shelf, firing the arrow where anyone would be standing to raise the chest from the shelf. The arrow inflicts 1d6 points of piercing damage plus 1d6 points of poison damage. Anyone hit by the arrow must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious and be poisoned for one hour. The existence of an odd mechanism can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and the nature of it can be determined by a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The trap can be disabled using thieves tools with a DC 10 Dexterity check, but once its nature is determined it is easier just to lift the box out of the path of the arrow (which is tricky, but can be done).

CC23. Rooftop

Here there is a heavily shuttered, barred window.

The window is shuttered with an iron covering outside, and held in place by three hefty latches behind. Getting a wire through the tiny crack between shutter and window to open three unseen latches is extremely difficult. It requires three successive DC 16 Dexterity checks using thieves tools. It is certainly possible to get through here, but it could take a long time for the characters to manage it.

Opening it gives access to the roof. Read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond, the steep rising rooftop of the club looms. Below, the canal lurks around the building. On its nearby side is a curious metal object, like a ladder.

The ladder is a clockwork gable bridge (see ***Cyclopaedia Infestarum*** Part 3), which gives access onto rooftops beyond. Algernon and Sallow spend rare evenings away from crowds strolling the rooftops.

Event 1: A Night at the Crimsón

As luck would have it, a special event is due to take place very soon with players from the Macabre Theatre and Insectum House performing a new experimental play called *The Miracle of Weak Flesh*, together with the works of an exciting new surgeon-artist called Rory Leech.

Run this event if the characters succeed in getting an invitation to the club. As the characters arrive at the club, Algernon is waiting for them (assuming it is dark). He takes their fees (later hiding it in the attic secret compartment) and shows them around the ground floor before taking them to their room and showing them the other occupied rooms. He then leaves the characters to freshen up, explaining that the staff are there to serve all club members.

When the characters arrive at the main chamber (area **CC2**), the place is bustling with actors. Rory Leech is in area **CC10,** having been given a space to ready his work. All the other club members are present, and talk to the characters over the course of the evening. The Panacea members are studying the characters much more closely, as detailed farther below.

The play is a shocking affair, the cast anxious to show that they are conversant with the more cutting-edge Theatre of Suffering, the Cavea Infernus, so much in vogue. The play concerns the creation of a promethean, and its subsequent suicide by throwing itself off a cliff and into the sea. The play is moulded with illusion, and is a distressing but memorable event. At the end of the play, Rory opens his gallery doors, and the club members, actors, and artists stroll the club telling each other how important they all are. The artist's creations are disturbing; he has six creations within the exhibit space, all caged. They are homuncules with glazed expressions, made from the parts of various birds and monkeys.

Following the play, the party has the opportunity to mingle with the folk present. Kale and Leptonia seek to question the characters as described below, but the characters also have the opportunity to try to obtain some information themselves. Lord Ninian Hiram immediately corners one character and begins to try to ingratiate himself with them in order to sponge off any social capital they may possess. The attempt is transparent and annoying, and he continues to pester them with inane questions and flattery until shooed away by Kale or Leptonia to conduct their own questioning. Of course, he simply switches to another character as the object of his attention until they have achieved 3 Admiration Points (see below), at which point Leptonia sends Lord Hiram on a pointless errand to keep him out of the way.

Any character talking to Lord Hiram for more than 5 minutes can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check to realise that he may know something of use that could be pried out of him with a little flattery right back. He doesn't know much but a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check causes him to drop a mention of a place called the Weary Palace where some of the artists live. If the character questions him further about this, Hiram realises that he has said too much and immediately clams up and says no more on the subject. If the characters induced Hiram into revealing this information, there is a 25% chance that one of the Panacea overheard it, in which case Hiram turns up dead floating in one of the canals in 1d3 days unless the characters take out the Panacea before then. If this murder occurs, then Hiram's brother Jacob is likely to connect the characters to it somehow and mistakenly blame them for it as described in the Enemy Penalty Sidebox above.

If the characters try to talk to Jabb Meriwether, he is guarded. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check discerns that he possibly knows something of use, and a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check causes him to reveal his knowledge of the Weary Palace and someone named Lord Hemlock. He is very cautious, and has no chance of being overheard.

Talking to Bran and Lynchet finds them an affable pair. If a character succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check, they take the character to be a reasonably accomplished artist, and simply let drop at some point that they may even be good enough to get an invite out to the Weary Palace, where most of the artists here live. They state that they're getting too old to be traipsing all across the district, but can tell the characters where it can be found in the Still Lido (see **Part 3** of this Adventure Chapter).

During the evening, the characters also have an opportunity to impress the members of the Panacea with their knowledge of the Angel — they may even suggest they are having visions and wish to join likeminded individuals. The Panacea are interested in them but are very, very cautious. They have no wish to share Paradise with fools, but would welcome new members. During the evening, Kale and Leptonia question the characters — *all the characters*. Assign the questions below randomly, but make sure each character gets a question. You may exchange questions for discussions the characters may raise — for example, about the Angel. As before, the characters are hoping to gain enough stature (Admiration Points) here in order to be invited into the inner works of the Panacea.

Make each opposed check in secret, but keep a note of the scores. In each case, the character needs to exceed Kale or Leptonia's Wisdom (Insight) checks (+5 and +7 respectively) using Charisma (Deception); Only Kale or Leptonia is present during questioning. Remember again that the two Panacea members are artists. If the players give great answers, do not hesitate to vary the dice. Abandon them altogether if you wish.

Questions for the Characters:

1. "So, I know little of the artist in you. Do you have a sample of your work or can you tell me what your greatest work is?"

2. "Tell me, of the current artists in the city, who is your favourite?"

3. "The city is sick. The greedy exploit the poor, the poor revolt against the greedy. The city is gripped in blind, pointless toil. What would you do if you were able to change it?"

4. "The blind fools of ignorance. Tell me, what to you makes beauty?"

5. "Show me your favourite piece in the club so far, and tell me why you admire it."

6. "I am troubled by dreams in which I am engulfed in a boiling light by an angel of fire. Have you ever experienced such dreams?"

Each success over a member in an opposed check is worth 1 AP. A tie or failure is worth nothing, unless the failure is by 5 or more, in which case there is a loss of 1 AP. To get an invitation as a member of the Panacea, the characters need to accumulate 3 Admiration Points over and above any they obtained in order to be invited to the club. This results in an invitation to visit the Panacea at their home (the Weary Palace) to meet their patron (see **Event 2** in **Part 3**). This invitation will be for an evening in 1d6+1 days' time.

If the characters don't achieve the necessary AP, they've piqued the suspicion of the Panacea members and are invited for a special dinner at Club Crimsón the following night. At this meal, only the 4 **Panacea members** (Ashenly, Kale, Leptonia, and Sawfly) will be present, and are waiting for the characters in area **CC2** as they arrive. They intend to overpower them and add them to Algernon's sculpture collection. For this evening only, all other staff are given the night off.

If the characters' AP score is 0 or below, however, a far worse fate awaits. The characters are invited by Kale to dine with the Panacea — a "select group of art visionaries" — at a place called the Weary Palace. The characters are expected for an evening meal at dusk the following day. This event (**Event 2**) is outlined at the start of **Part 3** of this adventure.



Part Three: Panacea

The Panacea are moving quickly. The Beautiful arrived in the Iron Dungeon a few weeks ago, and now the entire group is preparing for the day of salvation, the day of Judgement; when they expect her to cleanse the city of filth and greed and ignorance, and create a paradise for them.

They are wrong. The Beautiful does intend to cleanse the city … but of everything, including them, wiping it clean with Between. That part of the story has yet to come.

The Weary Palace lies some distance from the Iron Dungeon where the Beautiful and Father Gromwell appeared. However, the two places are linked by a series of underground corridors leading to a place called the Mine. To help connect these two places for the surface dwellers of the city — the Iron Dungeon and the Weary Palace — dark creepers act as guides. By the end of this adventure, the characters should be ready to venture below, either by themselves (very dangerous), or with a guide (slightly less dangerous) as described in the next adventure, ***L5: Below***.

The Weary Palace is an aged, rotting building lying at the centre of the Still Lido, a stagnant pool in the Sinks where rubbish and flotsam and rot has drifted for centuries. People avoid the Still Lido if they can, or skirt its edges if not. It is known to be filled with horrible things with teeth, and even those buildings that overlook the lido have turned their backs upon it.

The characters can come to learn of the Weary Palace from many people in Club Crimsón and under many circumstances. They may have learned of it and been given directions in casual conversation, may have learned of its existence but have to discover its location on their own, or may have received a dinner invitation to visit it (either as an ambush or as a legitimate social gathering).

GM Note: The Weary Palace is the home and fortress of one of the leading Panacea members, **Lord Hemlock**†, an aristocratic vampire who has stalked the Sinks and beyond for six centuries. Lord Hemlock is at the very edge of what a party of this level can handle, and any battle with him is an epic challenge. However, the characters should be aware that vampires are about, and can greatly aid their survival by not trusting anyone, and adventuring by day. Unfortunately, if you run the adventure as time suggests, daylight is scarce and grey, but as a true vampire Hemlock can be taken out of the equation almost entirely by adventuring by day, and by using his very palace against him as detailed in the adventure. The characters may get things wrong, and attack at the wrong time or accept dubious invitations to join the Panacea; if they do so, the adventure takes a twist, with the characters becoming the hunted. Use the vampires herein to stalk and follow the characters through the streets of the Sinks, and do not be afraid to make repeated attacks. The thrill of a chase is in the possibility of it ending badly, and do not fudge this chase unless necessary. Remember that vampires and their spawn have well-known weaknesses, and bear in mind that Luther† and Abigail† (whom the characters met earlier) are vampire hunters. Be prepared for the characters to ask them to come along.

Event 2: An Invitation to (be?) Dinner

If the characters arrive by invitation to the Palace (whether as part of an ambush or as a true social gathering), the reception is a memorable one. The funeral barge (area **WP1**) is sent for the characters at dusk on the appointed day, piloted by a dark creeper, who leads the characters to the feast room. If the invitation was a ruse, all the vampires and spawn are waiting in area **WP4**, where a feast (of rotting meat infested with maggots) is laid. The undead attack collectively, intending to tear the characters limb from limb and feast upon them, leaving one as a spawn to suffer as a plaything for their insolence and desecration of the ideals of the Panacea. If the invitation was for a true feast, then the normal (presentable) occupants of the palace will be present along with Lord Hemlock for a pleasant dinner, but he almost immediately begins attempting to dominate the characters in order to add them to his coterie.

If the characters are coming without invitation or at a time other than when the invitation was for, they have to find their own way to the palace. They may have learned of its location through talking to club members during **Event 1**, but if not, then they can do so by the means described in **The Three-Faced Key** Sidebox in **Part 2** of this Adventure Chapter.

The Weary Palace

The sagging palace is in the last days of its life. Its courtyard has run to rot and briar. Two of its buildings have entirely collapsed and are now supported by a skeleton of beams and buttresses that slink into the surrounding water, if water is the correct word for such sewage.

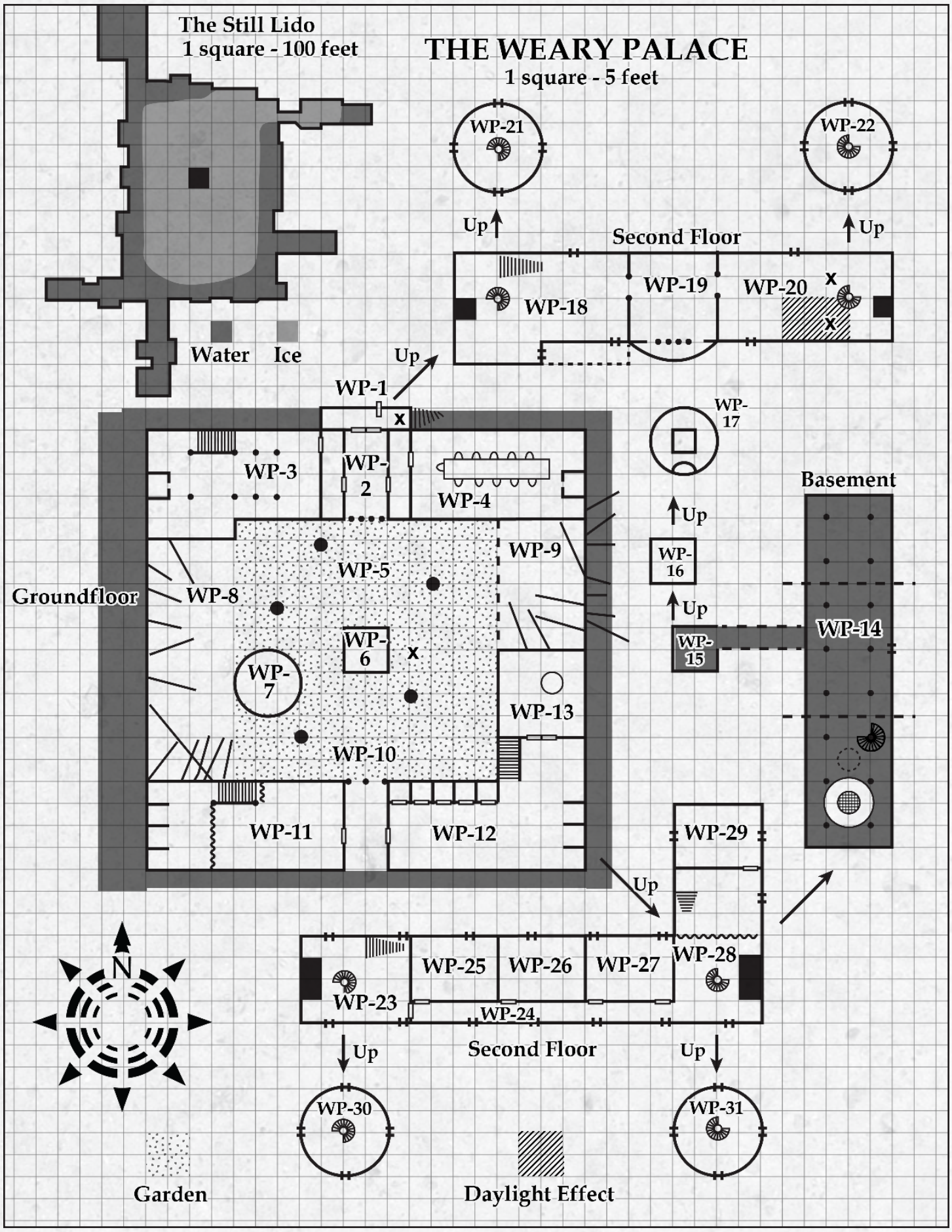
The "palace" sits in the centre of a small lido or pool known locally as the Still Lido or the Tardy. The currents of the districts canals bring rubbish and waste here, which flows into the lido and collects. In summer, the stench is unbearable, but during winter it becomes easier. Right now, the entire palace is gripped by ice thick enough to easily bear the weight of a person. The general inaccessibility and miasma suit the palace's owner, the vampire Lord Hemlock, who has lurked here for decades. His neighbours have turned a blind eye to the lido; shutters have remained unopened for years, and boats try to avoid the place.

The Still Lido

> Lurking at the centre of a wide frozen pool packed with debris and flotsam is a tumbledown palace. Its crumbling outer walls are secured in places by wooden buttresses propping them up. Its isolation is completed by a blister of ice that surrounds it to at least two hundred feet on all sides. The palace rises to a quartet of conical corner towers, its outer shutters closed. The northeast tower has a distinct three-faced gargoyle weathervane at its summit. From within, the tops of trees and the presence of a curious central tower indicate a courtyard.

If the characters arrive as guests, Lord Hemlock has arranged for the Thing in the Cellar (see area **WP14**) to clear a channel to the south flowing waters so the boat can bring them all the way to the entrance at **WP1**. If they were not invited, then the ice remains thick. Walking onto the ice is easy, and although it creaks in protest, it is stable. Unfortunately, the lido beneath is home to several predators. There are 3 **mar-eels**† living in the cold morass of sewage below the surface. They are attracted by movement, but if the Thing in the Cellar has cleared a way, they steer very clear, their primitive brains horrified by the preternatural horror so that the encounter below does not occur.

If the eels detect characters walking across the ice, at least one of the eels attacks, attempting to fracture the ice from below. Assume that every time someone is on the ice 1d2 of the eels attack the ice beneath the characters, with each eel having a 25% chance to break through. If an eel breaks the ice, a 10-foot section of ice ruptures, and characters within that section must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the water. On a successful save, they are able to leap off the breaking part of the ice and escape. If there are no adjacent areas of ground or solid ice, the character automatically goes into the water. The water is extremely cold, and although the Swim DC is only 10, getting out without help is very difficult, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. The


The Still Lido
1 square - 100 feet
THE WEARY PALACE
1 square - 5 feet
WP-21
WP-22
Up
Second Floor
Up
WP-18
WP-19
WP-20
Water
Ice
Up
WP-1
WP-
17
WP-3
WP-
2
WP-4
Basement
Up
WP-9
WP-
16
WP-5
Groundfloor
WP-8
Up
WP-14
WP-
6
WP-
15
WP-
7
WP-13
WP-10
WP-11
WP-12
WP-29
Up
N
WP-25
WP-26
WP-27
WP-28
WP-23
WP-24
Up
Second Floor
Up
WP-30
WP-31
Garden
Daylight Effect

eels attack anything in the water, and they carry a nasty strain of a local sickness called bilgerot, also known as **sewer plague**.

Weary Palace Features

Although it groans and creaks, the palace is for the present shored up well enough that immediate collapse is unlikely. The outer walls are brick and pierced by wooden shutters over tiny leaded windows barely 1 foot wide. The shutters are all rusted shut and must be broken open if this is to be the party's means of access.

The central courtyard has fallen into briars and ruin, but other interior rooms are grand, if faded.

The whole place has an air of decay, and cockroaches infest everywhere, along with fleas and lice. Here and there, mangy cats dash past, their backs a mass of insects. Numerous undead things slither about; these are generally essays in the creation of abominations, and are small creatures such as rats, cats, and birds. They attack only if attacked, and fight as a **rat swarm**.

Artwork — the vast majority of it obscure and revolting — glowers from every corner. The whole palace is filled with disturbing portraits of the physically afflicted. There are jars of dead insects, stuffed things stitched together, and paintings of torment and suffering. Hemlock has been collecting such art for decades, and this association with creative madness drew him into the Panacea initially.

WP1. Grand Entrance and Mortomata Clock

The tumbling palace rises from the icy spittle of the waters in the pool. A dank, frosty pier rises, cowering beneath a strange black clock made of equal parts bone, muscle, and withered flesh. The clock depicts a crooked city of surreal towers. A great door beckons below. A crooked statue stares outward nearby; this figure has an elongated head.

Unless the characters arrived by this means, a funeral barge is drawn up at the entrance steps. It has a punt.

The mortomata clock strikes the hour on a great gong, dragged out by 13 huge hooded figures that resemble rats. The rats are accompanied by lights going on and off in the city, and a disgusting bloated moon dragging itself across the sickly sky, changing by day and night to reflect the time. At midnight, all the rats except one decapitate each other. Being a mortomaton, the clock has value, possibly as much as 4,000 gp, but removing it would require the services of an engineering expert, and several month's work.

The door is locked at all times and **trapped**. A special three-faced key (see Part 2 above) unlocks the door, which has a number of other features as well. Unlocking this door with the key has three further effects: it disarms the scythe trap, it raises the portcullis (which lowers again 1 minute later), and it causes 3 of the 13 figures in the mortomata clock to emerge from the side of the clock and strike small hand bells 13 times. This alerts those within to visitors. If the characters investigate the machinery before trying to deal with the lock, the alarm mechanism can be identified with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, and can be disabled with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. The lock can be picked with thieves tools and a DC 13 Dexterity check. Unless a key is used or the lock is picked on the first attempt, tampering with the lock releases a spring-loaded scythe which cuts across the area directly in front of it for 2d6 points of slashing damage. The existence of an odd mechanism can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and the nature of it can be determined by a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The trap can be disabled using thieves tools with a DC 10 Dexterity check, but once its nature is determined it is easier just to open the door from the side instead of the front.

Point **X** marks the location of another of Algernon Leptonia's statues. This one has a disturbingly elongated head, as though the skull has been somehow softened and stretched. Like several others, this statue moans gently and contains a **wight**. If the statue is damaged, the wight escapes and attacks.

WP2. The Welcome

Beyond the clock is an arched entrance with a hefty portcullis. Iron doors flank left and right.

The portcullis is lowered at all times. The only exceptions are when those who live here use the door, almost exclusively by night. The portcullis is made of 2-inch iron bars. Beyond the portcullis festers the briar garden (area **WP5**); inside is a keyhole that allows those with three-faced keys to leave the building.

Nailed just above the portcullis inside the courtyard (specifically to keep the girallodile inside), are the remains of a **zombie**. The figure has been badly pecked by crows and stirs only occasionally. He does not attack unless someone comes within reach.

Development: The doors to the left and right are rarely used, and have rusted a little (opened with a DC 15 Strength check). A trio of **ghasts** generally lurks in area **WP4**; they expect guests, not attackers, and treat all who enter as visitors. As soon as anyone enters the area, one of them tries to pull the connecting door open (an act that also requires an unmodified roll of 12 for them).

WP3. Hall

A bare flagged chamber with iron pillars depicting gargoyles strangling witches and sheep. A stone stair rises to the right, and a cold, large fireplace rests below a very dark circular mirror about three feet across.

Hemlock has positioned the mirror to attract visitors from Between, and occasionally amuses himself by seeing them appear, knowing he casts no reflection — at least not until a few days ago. Of late, he has been curiously troubled by the fact that occasionally he does glimpse a reflection, something that he has yet to share with anyone. There is a peculiar aspect about the chamber; a successful DC 25 Perception check notes an emanation from the mirror. Objects near the mirror are subtly changed and have a more organic, waxy sheen. The reflected room seems to grow rather than be a fashioned object, and the walls have a clammy look.

Lying by the foot of the stairs are **3 death dogs**. They are aware of the stench of undeath and do not attack anyone of that type. All others are attacked immediately, except for Sawfly (whom they are terrified of). If released, the dogs wander randomly, sniffing for prey. If unable to attack the characters, they move away looking for others, attacking other living things in the palace at the GM's discretion.

Development: The mirror develops a watery skin during the hour just after dawn, allowing it to be passed through and giving access to a tiny space in Between (area **WP3a**). A DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice the skin developing, and the odd way the characters' reflections are strangely lit. Passing through the skin is unpleasant, and, like the linking *mirror-portal* at Town Bridge, has a caul (see sidebox). Climbing onto the fireplace and through the mirror is a move action.

WP3a. Between Hall — Not Shown on Map

Beyond the mirror is an exact mirror image of the room you've come from but darker and warmer. The stairs have merged into a solid block of stone, denying access to the floor above. The door remains. From somewhere far below, you hear a rhythmic pounding, or perhaps breathing.

The noises of Between are unsettling, and contain the sobbing of Hemlock's victims over the decades. A few seconds after a character enters the room, something begins pounding on the doorway, and a fist-shaped (or rather, claw-shaped) indentation appears. The door shakes from a

Between Caul

This Sidebox is repeated from **Part 1** of ***L3: Sea's End***

Oftentimes *gateways* into Between have a cloying thin membrane across their surface, something like an almost invisible film that clings to those who use it. This film is amazingly durable once it encompasses something and begins choking characters and causing them to begin to suffocate (A Between caul persists for 3d6 rounds). Characters wrapped in a caul can choose to wait it out, hoping the caul dissolves (which it always does after time) while they hold their breath or they can tear at the caul. Forcibly removing the caul requires a DC 15 Strength check. As the character struggles to remove the caul, it begins to constrict, tightening around the character, who slowly starts to suffocate (refer to the game manual for the guidelines on suffocating). Two companions can attempt to aid the character and remove the caul. Once removed, a Between caul dissolves into nothing almost instantaneously, almost as if it was never there to begin with.

The Three Paintings

The characters may discover valuable paintings created by the vampire master Lord Hemlock in areas **WP4**, **WP12** and **WP28**), but a change occurs in them over the coming weeks as the adventure path progress.

For the painting found in **WP4**, some of the figures in the shadow become the likenesses of the characters, and the garden about them also changes to represent the place the "touched" character(s) (see *GM Tips for Running The Levee* in the introductory chapter to this adventure path) would most identify as Paradise — a magnificent palace, a cellar full of endless wine, a harem full of beautiful men or women, or any other wish.

For the painting in **WP12**, the figures being stalked change to the characters' enemies, and the things stalking them change to the characters, who are touched by an angelic light.

For the painting in **WP28**, it begins to feed upon the "touched" character's own darkest desires and manifests them in the garden, showing them in all their shame.

blow again and a third time; a furious and unnatural anger and outrage lies behind the pounding. The noise then slithers away, flapping up over the room, and something can be heard coming down the chimney, disturbing clouds of soot as it does. This process takes a full minute, after which the **Between Gargoyle**† appears and attacks anyone in the Between Hall. The creature looks only vaguely like a normal gargoyle.. Rags of leathery wings hang from its back, while the oversized head contains wicked teeth and staring, unblinking eyes, like those of a shark. Its mouth is far too big, and its horns curve back nearly to the floor. The stench of boiling, sugary urine is eye-watering. During the battle, it approaches the mirror, but is too afraid of the place beyond to pass through.

Development: Some characters may wish to go explore their new surroundings. They find the door is not openable, and the chimney somehow slowly narrows if they climb it until only a creature of Tiny size or smaller can fit through with a DC 25 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Exploration by characters in *gaseous form* or by suitably-small familiars is possible, and can develop how the GM sees fit. If you wish to run the adventure as written, then attempts to leave the Between Hall should simply fail. Chambers beyond are sealed, the chimney is bricked up, and exploration proves impossible.

WP4. Grand Hall and Paintings of the Apocalypse

This is a huge hall with a large table almost filling it. The table is set for a feast, but the feast has rotted: maggots slither in the meat, cockroaches crawl through bread, and rats chew bones. Above a large fireplace at the far end of the chamber is a huge, striking painting.

The painting is by Hemlock, and as with his other artwork, it is hard to discern patterns in it. It depicts the arrival of the Beautiful, but this may or may not be apparent to viewers. Close examination and a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals people fleeing a wave of light and burning. Most are blinded first before being devoured by a wave of angry limbs and teeth, but some are safely engulfed in the shadow of the angel. These figures are shrouded in the makings of a garden of paradise. (See Sidebox for more information).

Lord Hemlock has a feast of filth every month or so as the mood takes him, inviting others of the Panacea to dine as he does. A trio of insanely terrified swyne† **ghasts**, the remains of visitors who once attended a filth feast, lurk herein but may be encountered anywhere in the palace. The swyne — Master Trough, Young Grog, and Mistress Binge — are utterly obsequious to anyone and everyone who enters, assuming that no one would come here without an invitation from His Lordship. Even if characters arrive armed to the teeth, the **ghasts** merely say that His Lordship doubtless expects them. Once they witness killing, or are attacked, their mood changes. They become genuinely fearful for the characters, warning them that they could end up as they are unless they leave, and that His Lordship has a terrible temper.

They know the palace very well, but have never been in the tower (areas **WP6** and **WP15–17**). They are incredibly helpful, up to the point where the characters begin attacking, at which point they cry and sob and plead. If asked questions, they happily moisten the characters' feet with their nostrils in the hope of being delivered. If pushed further, the ghasts enter a quaking fit the equivalent to being poisoned, which remains throughout combat.

Treasure: The meal is ghastly, and the crockery second rate, but there is a magnificent mouldy cake at the center, clearly a wedding cake. A candlestick shaped like a silver angel holding a lamp (100 gp) rises from the top of the cake. A fine mahogany box nearby holds 7 pig-tallow candles. The candlestick and candles radiate an aura of faint enchantment. If these particular pig-tallow candles are burned while in the silver candlestick, each functions as a *candle of insight*. The painting is a masterpiece by Hemlock worth 500 gp.

CANDLE OF INSIGHT

Wondrous item, uncommon

A candle of insight burns for 12 hours, and ceases to be magical once the flame is extinguished. While the flame is lit, the person holding it has advantage on any Wisdom (Insight) checks.

WP5. Briared Garden Courtyard

An airy courtyard opens in the palace. The place is very overgrown, with thick brambles and stunted trees crowding for light. A high tower rises from the centre. Within the courtyard, two sections of the palace have collapsed, the walls shored up with timbers. Shuttered windows glower onto the tangled space. Hanging immediately below them, forced into the collapsed outer walls, are jagged metal bars, facing downwards, forming a defence for the windows from the area below. Each bar rests ten feet above the courtyard, and others jut from the walls, particularly near the larger trees.

The garden is difficult terrain due to the heavy undergrowth. Interior walls are easy to climb (DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check) except in areas where the iron bars are thickly set. The map shows the locations of 5 larger dead trees shorn of branches and rising just 10 feet. The walls near these trees are heavy with iron bars to prevent climbing. The bars are



very difficult to pass, and are hung with scraps of rotting meat. Characters can try to climb past them with a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check, but in doing so must also succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity save or take 1d4 damage. If damage is taken, the character must then and make a DC 13 Constitution save or contract sewer plague as they receive minor cuts and scrapes from the jagged spikes.

The central tower (areas **WP6**, **WP15**, **WP16,** and **WP17**) is similarly dreary. A successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check (reduced by 5 if the tower is actively examined for structural weaknesses) spots a slight lean at the footings of the north wall of the tower. Sufficient damage to that portion of the tower (25 points of force damage) causes the tower to topple. Such a collapse badly damages area WP2 and makes it difficult terrain, but does not block entry into the compound.

Point **X** marks the location of another of Leptonia's statues. This one has its limbs thrown at agonizing angles to its body. Like many others, it moans gently and contains a **wight**. If the statue is damaged, the wight escapes and attacks.

The garden is the lair of a **girallodile**†. The creature, like the death dogs in **WP3**, knows the smell of undeath and steers clear of it. It is also intelligent enough to know that the only times it has managed to escape, it has been severely punished and remembers the pain. The girallodile therefore lurks around the briars of the garden, feasting on rats and other vermin it can catch. The creature is particularly petrified of Old Mother Mackle (see **WP11**), and the sound (or illusion of) her voice is enough to set it cowering. The girallodile has dirty green hide, mottled with wan, bone-like extremities. It is partly leathery scales and partly furred, the fur clumping in ugly growths about its limbs. It slithers lizard-like on its four lower legs, but its upper body looks ape-like with four double-jointed arms spaced oddly along its flanks. It has a wide crocodilian mouth set in a simian face, and its body tapers to a scaled, elongated tail.

The creature slowly stalks its prey, hoping to catch a lone target. The smell of undeath — and that includes the characters being accompanied by a ghoul or carrying a sizable part of one (or other undead), makes it nervously keep away, lurking 20 feet from such fearful intruders. The girallodile fights ferociously and relentlessly once engaged.

WP6. Lord Hemlock's Mausoleum: Ground Floor

A blocky stone tower rises from the garden. There seems to be no entrance to it, and its walls are blistering with iron spikes that cover the lower twenty feet of all four sides.

Characters can scale the walls with a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check, but in doing so must also succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity save or catch on 1d4 spikes for 1d4 points of piercing damage per spike. Failure on the Strength check means the damage from spikes is automatic. If damage is taken, the character must then and make a DC 13 Constitution save or contract sewer plague.

The flaw in the tower (see area **WP5**) is more visible to someone standing adjacent to the north wall of the tower at ground level. DCs to notice the weakness are reduced by 3 at this location.

WP7. The Empty Cage

A large, ornate metal cage stands here with its door hanging open.

The cage is where the **girallodile**† sleeps. The key is in the lock but no one has bothered to lock the creature away in months. The cage itself rises 10 feet to a domed and ornate finial depicting a three-faced ape of some kind.

WP8. Fallen Wing

This side of the palace has collapsed. Rubble fills the area, and briars have taken over. Huge timbers prop up the walls, with hundreds of iron spikes and nails jutting out at all angles.

This area is difficult terrain. The beams are relatively easy to climb (DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check) and rise to within 10 feet of the top of the 20-foot wall, which is a little over 2 feet wide. Characters climbing must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity save or be injured by nails and exposed to tetanus (see sidebox). Lord Sawfly uses this wall to cross to the southern wing, avoiding the girallodile below.

Tetanus, also called "lockjaw," is contracted in wounds caused by rusted iron. It causes a character to become unable to speak after onset (usually 1d2 days after infection). Each day, the character makes a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. The process is similar to death saving throws, but the Constitution modifier is applied. Once the character has succeeded on 3 saving throws, they have recovered. However, if the character fails at 3 saves before succeeding at 3, the result is death.

WP9. Ruin

This building has collapsed inward, almost dragging the wall behind with it. The remaining wall has a nasty crack running from bottom to top. Wooden beams hold this precarious structure up. These beams have thick nails hammered through and into them.

The beams and wall are identical to those above in area **WP8** above. At the point marked **X** on the map is a hole burrowed into the ground that can be spotted with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. A Small character can squeeze through, but a Medium character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The hole drops directly into the cellar below (area **WP14**).

WP10. Ivy-Wreathed Entrance

A double arch glides gracefully upward, its edges wreathed in brown vines, wilted and dead from the cold, that droop into a natural curtain. Nailed to the central support of this archway is a crucified human figure, a wooden sign hangs from his neck bearing the crudely scrawled word, "*thief*."

The vines growing over the archway are identifiable as poison ivy with a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check. Though they are dormant from the cold weather, their leaves and main stem still bear some of their caustic resin. Moving through the archway without touching the vines means either clearing them with some tool, a task requiring a full minute of work, or a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move purposely under them without touching them. If anyone simply marches through, there is automatic contact. Anyone touching the vines (even with a gloved hand due to rubbing eyes, blowing noses, etc.) is exposed to the effects of their resin (see Sidebox).

Poison Ivy

A poison ivy rash lasts for 24 hours, after which it is merely irritating.

During that 24 hour period, however, the itching is intensely distracting. All intelligence and wisdom checks are made with disadvantage.



The dead body is (was) Rullan Bread, a thief who risked a burglary in the palace and now remains as a **zombie** sentry. If anyone approaches, Bread stirs, and begins moaning quietly, interspersed with sobbing, begging for release. He is only able to attack anyone who comes within his reach (one of his arms is not nailed securely). Moving past him out of his reach requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. His presence serves to keep the girallodile at bay — it is afraid of the undead.

WP11. Abandoned Kitchen and Larders

This long room is clearly a kitchen. Filthy curtains shroud much of its corners, and a long dun-coloured drape blocks the far side of the room.

The kitchen is the lair of one of Hemlock's most devoted followers: a **skin stitcher**† called **Old Mother Mackle**. The curtains are not cloth, but human skins she has woven together. The kitchen cupboards contain many of her children, things she has sewn together to amuse herself. These include bits of people and dogs and pigs, creations of parts of fat men and women, and things made from animals. These creatures do not move, but hang in various parts of the chamber hidden beyond the west drapes. Old Mother Mackle greatly desires the skin of the girallodile outside, but so far the love and fear of her lord has stopped her doing anything beyond coveting and the occasional grab at a piece of its beautiful hide.

Old Mother Mackle is altogether too big for a woman, her form too brute, too ugly. Her skin shows scarring, and bits of flesh have been woven into her, including parts of pigs and goats. She wears a gown made of flayed human skins. There are fingernails and a lot of hair in this foul creation, but it is the flattened faces that stare outward and seem to follow creatures with their gaze that are most disturbing.

Mackle wanders the palace at will, dragging her age-bloated flesh with her. She may be encountered anywhere but is far more likely to be lurking

behind the drapes in this area, gently singing to herself and sewing another face onto her gown. During combat, she relishes collecting new skins, and promises that she'll take care of anyone she fights by helping them see forever. She is a brutish creature in essence, and screams and sings lullabies during combat. She never runs once the cutting begins.

Treasure: In her foul creations at the far side of the drapes are pieces of her victims' jewelry: a single gold snake-pin earring worth 75 gp, a bird of paradise hatpin set with a tiny opal worth 200 gp, and a dull, iron, *ring of swimming*.

WP12. The Chapel

This room is clearly a chapel. Pews line the main chamber, while five confessionals stand with drapes closed. Before a large, unlit fireplace at the far end of the room is a small wooden altar. The room is decorated with religious scenes of Mother Grace; however, they are blasphemous. Grotesque images, objects, and other foulness have been liberally added to mock the chapel. A huge landscape painting, depicting a rotting city drowning in decay, hangs above the fireplace.

The altar has several leather-bound hymnals to Mother Grace that are cracked and dry, clearly having not been used in some time. Two **dark creepers**†**,** servants of Lord Hemlock, lurk in one of the confessionals. Like others in the area, the pair has been brought up from the Underneath to serve the Panacea. They are petrified of the inhabitants of the palace, but less so of visitors, whom they regard with curiosity. They know the layout of the palace but are unlikely to share it unless forced.

Treasure: Among the vile objects herein are a shriveled human ear with an earring set with platinum and emerald chips worth 100 gp. The painting is another by Hemlock, and is disturbing to view. The shadows in the painting contain things with altogether too many extremities. They lurk behind playing children and smiling mothers, waiting to pounce. Like the one in area **WP4**, the work is genius if a buyer can be found (an auction in BookTown would be a likely place), and worth 500 gp. If the characters keep the work, it slowly and subtly changes over the weeks.

WP13. Studio Surgery

An iron stair descends through the floor to escape this foul room, which is part surgery and part art studio. A large rusty iron sphere sits near the stair.

The sphere is a Cuckoo Womb (sometimes called a crucible) and is used by the Panacea to create abominations. The womb has been abandoned since the arrival of the Beautiful.

Treasure: The room contains dozens of knives, a leather physiker's bag (alchemist's supplies), and three brass and silver syringes worth 15 gp each. There are also 3 doses of *low-grade elixir*† in fancy jars sealed with cork and wax.

WP14. The Thing in the Cellar

This dank, icy chamber is half-filled with water. The lip of a well rises from the southern portion of this chamber next to a strange metal cage-like device with an oddly unpleasant object lashed to it.

The water in the chamber is 4 feet deep and is difficult terrain. A side corridor links to area **WP15**, and a small aperture in the east wall exits into the lido outside. The well is 320 feet deep (DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to climb down) and is not flooded (the lip of the well has kept the waters of the lido out. It descends into the Underneath and eventually to the Panacea's lair in the Iron Dungeon, a place detailed in the next adventure (***L5: Below***). Adjacent to it is a crane from which hangs a cage large enough to hold 2 Medium creatures. The cage easily swings over the well and lowers by means of a pulley system and chain at a rate of 20 feet per round. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies its function.

Lairing in these chambers is a creature made by the Beautiful as a lesson to her new devotees of the true meaning of art and nature. It lurks in the waters, aware of who will do it no harm and who will, and it attacks anyone it is unfamiliar with. It considers everything but the girallodile and the death dogs to be potential prey, although it rarely leaves its cellar. It is referred to as **The Thing in the Cellar**† and is a unique Between creature birthed by the Beautiful; the first of her children that the characters encounter. This creature is an anathema to natural law. It is a thing of memories, of hatreds and of chaos. It changes physically in some ways, but there the link to anything mortally understood ends. As it fights it reddens, echoing — perhaps mocking — its enemies' cries and pain. It steals snippets of their past and manifests them upon its skin, and leaches its surroundings, so that at times its skin might take on a watery hue, then a blotch of anger wells into a huge cyst that resembles an opponent's face only to burst into the writhing maggots of the many victims of the Panacea as they rot in their graves.

Development: Hanging from the boom of the crane is a strangely revolting thing, a skin sac made of lungs and bones affixed to a curved aurochs horn, with a mummified hand hanging flaccidly from the bottom. The strange fetish is actually a magical object that can sound its horn to call a guide from below. If the mummified hand is grasped, the lung suddenly inflates with air before exhaling like a bellows and sounding the horn. This is a quaking tumult that causes all those within the cellar to make a DC 10 Constitution save or be deafened for 1d6 minutes; it alerts anyone within the Weary Palace to the presence of someone in the cellars. The object is not otherwise capable of attack or movement, but if damaged makes a wheezing sob like a strangled bagpipe. No experience should be granted for destroying it.

Some 1d12 minutes after sounding the horn, a **dark creeper**† wheezes its way up the shaft, slowly climbing and cursing under its breath in Darkling. After it arrives, it perches on the lip of the well and bows before its summoners, saying in broken Common, "Praise the Beautiful. … I am Chorel. … I am your guide." Chorel, like all his kind in the palace, assumes all people who summon him work for the Panacea. He does not expect treachery and has no intent of any himself. He briefly describes the journey via the shaft, through the sewers of the city to the Old Mine, and thence onward to the Iron Dungeon and the Beautiful. If pressed further, he has no more details, being but a minion of the outer Iron Dungeon. More details of the Iron Dungeon appear in ***L5: Below***.

WP15. Lord Hemlock's Mausoleum: Drowned Subfloor

The waters lead into a vaulted corridor barely wide enough for one to walk freely. The corridor extends to the lowest floor of Lord Hemlock's Mausoleum. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check (or anyone attempting to swim) learns that there is a slight current coming from the east.

The corridor ends at a small dead-end chamber above which is a towering space that rises away from you into the darkness above as a hollow shaft. The place has a brooding dread, a feel of suffocation and entombment.

A small gap in the base of the west wall allows a current of water to enter from that direction and form a very mild current flowing to the east before being lost in area **WP14**. For purposes of battling Lord Hemlock, the water in this chamber and the adjoining passage is considered running water.

WP16. Lord Hemlock's Mausoleum: Shell

The shell of the mausoleum tower rises 160 feet to a narrow entrance into the belfry above (see area **WP17**). The smooth walls are moss-grown and slippery (DC 25 Climb check), rising to a ceiling of timber planks with a single narrow entrance allowing passage above.

Treasure: Hemlock keeps a trio of **pickled homunculi** in a fermenting jar on a ledge halfway up the shaft. A DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice it from farther away than 10 feet, although it is plain if anyone comes closer. The homunculi are used to bear messages for Hemlock, and are part of a formerly much larger group used by the Panacea to pass communications. Any of the three know the rough direction to the Iron Dungeon and can guide characters there (assuming they don't burst *en route*). They do not offer such information unless threatened with destruction, however. For more information on pickled homunculi, see ***L1: Hereafter***.

WP17. Lord Hemlock's Mausoleum: The Belfry

The interior of the tall tower ends at a narrow space, a timber-floored room that resembles a tomb. A large stone sarcophagus rests in the room's centre.



This tower belfry is perched 130 above the level of the courtyard and has small holes in its masonry in six places, to allow Hemlock to come and go in *mist-form*. The timbers of the floor are thick, as are the roof slates, but neither is impossible to breach with a serious (and probably prolonged) effort. A serious breach in the roof slates by day could have disastrous consequences for the vampiric Hemlock. Hemlock's sarcophagus is made of stone, with a heavy stone lid (DC 20 Strength check to lift). Hemlock enters his coffin in mist-form through a small hole drilled near its base, that can be spotted with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check (DC 18 if actively searched for). If the characters do not immediately figure out the purpose, allow a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to put together the ideas of "vampire," "mist," and "a hole in a coffin." **Lord Hemlock**†, Panacea artist and **diseased vampire**†, broods here by day, sleeping fitfully, his mind filled with dreams of being reborn and rising as a mortal in a new world. He is insanely driven by his visions of the Beautiful and what may happen to him next — which in truth is unknown even to him. Outside the sarcophagus rest **2 necrophidiuses**† who attack anyone other than him who enters the chamber.

Lord Hemlock

Lord Hemlock's disgusting body has lived too long, and the marks of his Nosferiadra infection are apparent upon his bloated frame. His distended head is engorged with a cancerous growth above his left ear, as are many of his swollen, gouty limbs, particularly his legs. He is an immortal creature that is alive in undeath, but who wears the passage of long years upon his skin.

He wears a hefty funeral gown with a crown of raven feathers, supporting himself with a bent walking stick made of yew.

Tactics: Hemlock hates combat — his fleshy bloated limbs ache and creak, and despite his abilities, every movement is painful. He *spider climbs* about the palace at will during the hours of darkness, cursing his pain-addled body.

If the gargoyle steward Bernard (see area **WP30**) sees the characters attempting to damage the roof of this area from the outside, or if they manage to hole the roof and expose the chamber within, he immediately springs into flight to swoop over and aid his master.

Treasure: Hemlock has accumulated several strange objects over the years. Many are on display in his palace, but some are not. These items are stored inside his sarcophagus. They include a series of love letters from over a century ago from a "*Lady Grace*," his former love, a gold wedding ring set with a ruby worth 500 gp, a small, curiously angelic-looking stalactite brought up from the Iron Dungeon, a small sack of gold (500 gp in total), a dried orchid, and a wedding veil (belonging to his late wife, the Lady Grace).

Trouble with Vampires

Vampires (and one in particular) play a starring role in ***The Levee*** but not a pivotal one. Dealing with vampires raises some interesting challenges. They are most definitely tough and a serious challenge, but they have weaknesses characters could exploit. Hemlock has chosen his lair carefully but despises the Underneath and remains at heart a socialite in the city — having been one in his life before his indoctrination into the Fetch. By night, he ventures out. A cold dungeon lair would cause him great aesthetic distress and torpor, so he chooses to live atop this tower. His lair here has a slate roof above and a floor of old timbers. Given that his coffin is not underground, certain spells could prove especially devastating to his tactical situation. Likewise bringing down the mausoleum tower is a legitimate option (see areas **WP5** and **WP6** for more details).

Hemlock, the **diseased vampire**† of this Adventure Chapter, represents a *very* serious threat for 4th-level characters, even those aided by vampire hunters. He dozes in his sarcophagus by day — fighting him at night would be completely fatal for the entire party, almost without question. During the day, it is possible for the characters to ensure that when they open his sarcophagus they will have an alliance with the sun, by breaking through roof tiles or even collapsing the tower. It is important to note that Hemlock is extraordinarily cautious, knowing that he is no longer as strong as he once was. If he is forced to flee, he will stay gone, hiding out in one of his hidey-holes to wait for the Beautiful's coming storm, not trying to seek vengeance. However, if he comes out at night to discover lots of destruction in his palace, he will definitely search the area with rats and bats to see if the intruders are still on site.

Note that his ultimate fate has no further bearing on the future adventures, so if the characters destroy him it will not cause any difficulties in later Adventure Chapters.

Fun with the Children of the Night

The rats summoned by Hemlock offer you an opportunity for some in-game amusement. These rats have interbred frequently with lycanthropes of Festival and have inherited the ability to speak and some limited intelligence. At some point in the combat with the rats, have some of them begin screaming, "The wicked ones, the wicked ones are back! Warn the Family, let Marren Grast know his foes are at hand, bite them, eat them, bring the Pack!" The rest of the rats then join in screaming, "Eat the wicked ones until they are dead!"

Weary Palace Upper Floor

The upper floor of the palace still retains its windows, all of which are shuttered. The leaded-glass windows must be opened or smashed to enable the shutters to be drawn back from within. A character can use

thieves' tools to pick the latch by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity check. By day, an open shutter casts daylight into the room in an area roughly 15ft across. An example of this effect is shown on the map for area **WP20**. Vampires caught in this area are affected as in full daylight.

WP18. Sawfly's Madness

The painted walls of this room seethe with anger from reds of every hue. There are boiling crimsons, agonized vermilions, suffering scarlets, and screaming carmines. Beyond the paint, however, there is nothing, just a rising staircase hung with fleshy rags drowning in red tints.

Lord Sawfly, the primitive† elf, is lost in his own past and the coming madness. His chamber has nothing within it but the paint, and the objects of his art. When he sleeps here, Sawfly exhausts himself painting in a frenzy before dropping paint-smeared to the floor and resting, his mind numbed and addled by his exhaustion. As noted in **CC20**, Lord Sawfly is a male primitive† elf **thief lord** with the additional innate spellcasting ability to cast charm person 3/day**.**

Development: The fireplace acts as a conduit for the Between *mirror-portal* in area **WP3** below; it feels clammy, and mildew seems to sweat from its surface. Characters pressing their ear to the chimney hear something scrabbling up from below — a huge sounding thing with too many legs. Once heard, the thing is not heard from again.

Treasure: Amongst the seething masses of red oil paints is a small bamboo case of very rare magenta pigments worth 100 gp.

WP19. The Soul of the Mortomata

This room is a complex mass of cogs and gears that are clearly part of the mechanism for both the clock and the portcullis above the entrance to the palace.

The mortomata is partially a living (or rather, unliving) thing, and trapped within its cogs and gears is an essence. Occasionally, the essence can be heard whispering, a very far away voice begging for a release that can never occur.

WP20. The Statuary

Here, the revolting statues you've seen so often reach a bizarre ending. This chamber is given over in celebration to them in a macabre dance. A score of these statues are intertwined, their limbs twisted at wrong angles. An iron spiral stair rises upward away from this horrible scene.

In all, there are 21 statues here. The three marked with an **X** mumble and stir slightly and indicate the locations of 3 **wights**.

Development: The creeping madness of Between has crept into this chamber and corrupted it. On the third round after entering this room, the characters must make an immediate DC 15 Wisdom save. Characters that fail the check become utterly convinced that one of the statues contains a living person, one of Leptonia's victims, still breathing, but barely clinging to life. The longer the character remains here, the stronger the conviction, and the clearer the vision. The character sees through the victim's blinded eyes, and hears the characters talking and moving. There is no victim, but there was; the essence of their suffering remains in this chamber.

Additionally, the encounter in this chamber makes a good one for recurring nightmares for the characters touched by the Angel. They imagine themselves bound in the statues, their life slowly ebbing, their thirst and hunger all consuming, the end so long in coming.

WP21. Sawfly's Garret

The bloody anger continues into this chamber. Its very windows are concealed by the torment of whoever painted this insane work that engulfs every inch of the room.

Sawfly's garret is a bloody mass of rage in paint — a disturbed anarchy of abstract fury and fear.

Development: As in area **WP20**, the seeping insanity of Between rises here like bile. Characters lingering in the room longer than 3 rounds begin to feel its fury. Each character must make a DC 12 Wisdom save or be consumed by the rage and torment of Sawfly on his endless journey through life, the chaos of the city, and the murders, the outrages, and the loneliness. Characters that fail the check are *confused* (as the spell). If at any time they leave the chamber because of their actions, or are dragged clear, the rage subsides.

Like the room described above, the opportunity exists for the GM to continue these visions. Remember, these are the visions that drove the Panacea members to madness. The characters are unlikely to be so tormented, and the visions should be just that — wake up at night sweating bad memories — nothing more. To someone as demented as Sawfly, they drove him the step farther into madness. If you can, try to engage the characters in the emotional tidal wave of Between.

WP22. The Bolt Hole

Here, a tower rises above the main palace. It is dominated by a huge bed, a thing of pillows and feathers and wood that rises organically from the chamber.

The bed has been lightly touched by Between. Closer inspection and a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check show a marked similarity between the bed and the Bloody Harpoon's ship's timbers in ***L3: Sea's End*** — its shape is abnormal. From some angles it looks normal, from others it is convex or concave. It sometimes has strange textures or hollows or makes strange noises. There is no further effect, but is clearly being affected by the intrusion of Between. If **Algernon Alphonse Leptonia**† and **Sallow Ashenly**† are still at large, they are certain to be here by day at the very least.

Treasure: The pair has a small cache hidden in a metal box tucked under a shelf beneath the bed (a DC 25 Perception check spots it). The box is not locked, and contains a scrip of paper money (five 5-guinea bank notes: 25 pp total), a silver bell (20 gp), a handful of small fungal growths resembling distorted birds (more examples of Ashenly's art), and a travelling bag of outré clothing worth 250 gp.

WP23. The Fresco of Suffering and the Insects

The south wall of this chamber is dominated by a foul object made of the skins of people and animals sewn together. The floor below is littered with dead insects.

Created by Mother Mackle, the object — part tapestry, part fleshy obscenity — is made of the combined hides of people and animals. Mackle has nurtured her talents into this foulness, and instilled a revolting freshness to the features, particularly of the people woven into it. Mackle has elevated her tastes beyond those of her kin and used the flesh of certain animals instead of devouring them. Dead insects lie scattered across the floor: cockroaches, spiders, and beetles. They seem to have no reason for being here. In fact, Hemlock added the insects as a homage to the foul tapestry.

WP24. The Airy Corridor

Pastel shades extend down this corridor. The glass in the widows here has been shattered, revealing the frosted iron of the shutters beyond.

Madam Kale smashed the glass in a rage. Slaves swept up the shattered shards, leaving the corridor empty.

WP25. The Wide-Eyed, Terrified Slaves

This bare chamber clearly is used as a group-sleeping accommodation.

Bedrolls lie in the corners, and the simple objects of human habitation: bowls, scraps from meals, mugs, and other mundane items. Hemlock keeps a core group of slaves to serve his needs and those of his guests. The 4 slaves (N male human **commoners**) are all male, all very beautiful, and all very terrified. The slaves serve his needs without question, and are often used as playthings by his spawn, who enjoy dominating them to ridicule and belittle them. The slaves are dressed in very fine livery and always very careful to appear immaculate and unflappable. They've seen what has happened to others who displease the vampires in any way.

Development: The slaves have ears, and are aware that something major is happening Underneath. They know the vampires and others have been coming or going and that the object of their worship — their "Beautiful" — is presently nearby in a place called the Iron Dungeon, a place they seem to regard as some sort of base. If freed, the slaves can either develop as NPCs or play no further part in the adventure.

WP26. The Bride's Boudoir

This chamber has been made out as a bridal suite. A large, four-poster bed fills the room, as well as hundreds of dead roses. The bride, it seems, lies in bed, her white gown contrasting with the decay of the flowers.

After the death of his wife, Hemlock became obsessive about weddings for a time. He usually dominated the bride or groom to toy with them through his twisted imagination. Those he left alive did not enjoy wedded bliss after his sick interference with the happiest day. Meadow, the bride on the bed, made the mistake of looking like Hemlock's late wife, and so he decided she must remain here, to torment his mind and remind him of his past sins. The bride remains behind her veil, at the pleasure of Lord Hemlock. The bride, a **coffer corpse**†, attacks anyone other than Hemlock who enters the room. She does not pursue anyone from her bridal suite, and returns to quietly sobbing for her lost life when intruders leave.

WP27. The Burnt One

This room is a homage to angels. Its corners, walls, and shelves are crammed with angelic objects. There is a carved ship's figurehead angel, two stained-glass windows still in their frames depicting angels, angelic tokens, icons and candles, even a gravestone with a carved angel perched atop it.

The Burnt One sleeps in a funeral shroud lying amongst these angels, and it takes a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the creature. **The Burnt One** was horribly scarred long ago, suffering from extensive burns. His features are gone, forming an unpleasing face bereft of humanity. He leans upon a hefty scythe decorated with angels, and wears a thick wool cloak with a hood. He spends much of his time in the Iron Dungeon where he creates things of glass to honour the Beautiful, and some of these remain in his palace chambers.

The Burnt One is a **vampire spawn**. It uses a huge scythe rather than its claw attacks, so it will not attempt to grapple and bite. It still attacks twice with multiattack. The scythe attack is as follows.

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Tactics: The Burnt One rushes into combat swinging his scythe, to try to fell everyone as quickly as possible. He especially loves swinging at unarmoured wizards and rogues.

Treasure: Amongst the angelic ephemera are two angelic figures with tiny ruby eyes worth 50 gp each, a gold thread angel tapestry worth 50 gp, a votive light with an angel figure holding an obsidian light worth 100 gp, and a magnificent lace angel worth 35 gp. The Burnt One carries a three-faced key (see Part 2 Sidebox).

WP28. The Great Fireplace

A large fire dances in a huge fireplace, large enough for someone to stand in. A long row of lush drapes hang to the left. Above the fireplace glowers a work of art, if art is the right word; some would call it a monstrosity. The piece depicts a garden — a garden of sin and wickedness.

This fireplace is always lit. Curled before it is the hound of Madam Kale, a creature she prefers to leave here to guard her apartments. Kale's hound is a monstrous **hell hound** with 60 hit points. The creature is both devoted to and petrified of her, and obeys any instruction, even up to self-destruction. If it sees intruders, it howls and breathes fire before heading through the drapes and guarding the entrance to her chambers, allowing none to pass.

Treasure: Hemlock's gift to his chosen follower is his landscape piece, *The Garden*, a disgusting excess of carved flesh, weak vessels of bone and sinew, and outrages. Any character of good alignment setting eyes on the canvas for the first time must make a DC 10 Constitution save or be sickened for 1d6 minutes. Finding a buyer for this obscenity should not be easy, but it would command a price of 1,000 gp. It is likely that the sale of the painting is worth a minor side trek in its own right, seeking out the twisted artists of the Sinks to purchase it. Like some of the previously encountered paintings, if the characters keep this depiction, it changes over time.

WP29. Madame Kale's Chamber

A rhapsody in light, this chamber is decorated with hundreds of lights, from candles, bloated pyrebeetle lanterns, burning incense, and candelabrum, to an incredible object fashioned to look like a weeping angel made of iron, within which crawl half a dozen fire beetles. A decaying casket lies in the room's centre.

Madam Kale is a **vampire spawn** with AC 17 (*bracers of defence*) who spends much of her time between here, the Club Crimsón, and the Iron Dungeon, but sleeps in this chamber. Totally untrusting, she has taken the time to draw a map of her journey into the Underneath in case her guide thinks to betray her. This, and her journal, should be enough to convince the characters to follow in her tracks. Her casket contains a body, the decayed corpse of a young woman that Kale finds comforting in some disturbed way. Kale is here most of the time by day. The 6 **fire beetles** are held within the cage-like candelabrum and can attack if deliberately released.

Personal Treasure: Kale has an iron and silver amulet containing an undead young rat worth 200 gp, *bracers of defense*, a key to the Weary Palace (identical to that in area **CC9**), key to her rooms in the club, a black iron ring set with obsidian (400 gp), a small carved wax angel, and a three-faced key.

Handout 1 Translation

Madam Kale's sketch map shows the route from the base of the well in area **WP14** to the Iron Dungeon featured in ***L5: Below***. For your convenience, the text of Kale's handwritten notes is reproduced here. If your players have difficulties in deciphering her handwriting, allow them to make untrained DC 10 Linguistics checks (assuming they are able to speak Common), and provide them with an additional uncertain word for every 2 by which they beat the DC.

Madam Kale's notes on the map are as follows (starting at the top left corner and working clockwise):

The palace and surface — The object in the cellar calls the guid[e]*, I do not trust him. Ignore The side passages, said to be home to fell things without shadows*

Bridge of Chains

Be sure to grip the chains well, t[h]*e fall is very far!*

The Old Mine

Beware the edges.

Use the crane to access the side corridor of the Beautiful 3/4 of a mile beyond Iron Dungeon.

To the Womb and Beautiful

A [l]*ong journey of 2 miles or so? — Water plentiful*

More imps bor [sic – "bar"] *the way, be wa*[r]*y of them, they speak strangely, I do not tr*[u]*st them. this map will serve as my salvation if they sho*[u]*ld try to lose me in the Und*[e]*rneath*

Echoing Place

Treasure: The lights have several curious objects amongst them, including a quantity of myrrh in a walnut box worth 75 gp, and a silver votive worth 40 gp. Above the door is a hidden cupboard (DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot), which contains an 11-volume set of the *Manual of all Unliving Things* by Jebediah Uthus Jessop worth 450 gp, a small stalactite that closely resembles an angel (35 gp as a curiosity), a leather journal, and a crudely drawn map done in haste by Madam Kale to remember her journey to the Iron Dungeon (**Handout 1** and see sidebox). The journal is summarised in **Handout 2**, and it takes roughly 48 hours of reading to digest its contents.

WP30. The Steward's Garret

This is a revolting room filled with excrement, filth, and gnawed bones.

Hemlock finds it useful to keep a steward as a messenger and personal attendant, and uses a **four-armed gargoyle**† he calls "Bernard" for this purpose. Bernard has removed the glass of the northern window and repaired the shutters so they can be easily opened out onto the sloping conical roof with a narrow (1-foot-wide) balcony encircling it. They are not locked to allow easy ingress. Bernard perches motionless at the apex of the roof (see his freeze ability) under a thin rime of ice waiting for his master's summons or to grow hungry enough to hunt through the benighted city district. Bernard has been well (and cruelly) trained by Lord Hemlock and remains still even if he sees intruders below. If he hears intruders actually enter the room below his perch, he tries to draw them onto the ledge by dropping pebbles down the roof, a curious rumbling/rolling noise that characters within area **WP30** automatically hear. Fighting while balancing on the icy balcony or roof requires successful DC 10 and 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks, respectively. Bernard prefers to charge down the roof to shove opponents off the 50-foot tower, and remains outside the chamber to fight if at all possible. If he sees characters attempting to damage the roof of the mausoleum tower (area **WP17**), he immediately bursts into flight to try to stop them at any cost in an effort to save his master.



WP31. Madam Kale's Boudoir and Studio

A single shadow lantern fills this chamber with vast and twisted shadows. The lantern is a thing of iron containing a crackling blue flame within. Cut-out silhouettes in the shapes of angels bearing sweeping scythes have been made into the iron, which sits on a circular base, allowing it to spin and send its strange and uncanny blue-tinged shadows dancing upon the walls.

Madam Kale enjoys watching the angels dance in the *continual flame* that burns in her shadow lamp and often uses her illusion spells to enhance them. Kale has hidden her valuables in a secret attic space between the ceiling and conical garret roof. The compartment is very well hidden (DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate). Kale has left a **necrophidius**† as a guard within the space that drops into the room below if the access panel is opened. It attacks anyone other than Kale.

Treasure: The shadow lamp bears a *continual flame* spell and is worth 300 gp for its workmanship and as a novelty. Within the crawlspace above are a *spell scroll* (*hypnotic pattern*), an untitled book bound in soft lambskin that holds the *secret of the shambling slave and the reed whistle* (see Sidebox), a wax angel figure, 2 more pieces of stalactite shaped vaguely like an angel (one is actually quite clearly the image of an angel but shows no marks of carving or other working, seemingly having formed naturally in that shape, worth 100 gp as a curiosity), a *+1 longsword*, a wax-filled box with 125 gp embedded vertically in rows (this is a complete collection of the 125 different gold shekels that have been minted in Castorhage's history and is worth 3,000 gp to a suitable numismatist), and a leather wrap containing 4 very long, very thin stilettos.

The Secret of the Shambling Slave and the Reed Whistle

The lambskin book contains a written secret (as described in **Part 2** of **Chapter 3: BookTown** in ***The Blight Campaign Guide***).

A tiny reed whistle is held inside the book containing this secret. Characters reading the book (requiring 1d4 hours) are aware that sounding the whistle causes the shambling slave to come to them but with consequences that are not detailed. The whistle gives off a high-pitched note when blown as a move action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Once sounded, the secret sticks with the blower until someone else blows the whistle.

Once blown, the servant cannot be dismissed until someone else blows it.

The reader becomes aware of a presence, referred to in the book as the "shambling slave." This thing serves as a permanent *unseen servant*. However, the thing is never still and by night lurks directly beside its sleeping summoner, an act that disturbs rest. The servant cannot be dismissed, and the interrupted sleep requires the summoner to make a DC 8 Charisma save each night (+1 to die roll for every night since the last time the save was successful) to obtain benefits from a long rest. Elves receive a +4 bonus on this save.

Concluding the Adventure

This adventure ends with the characters defeating the Panacea presence in the Sinks district and discovering the entrance to Underneath and what lies within the cellar of the Weary Palace. The characters' next move is down to them confronting them in their lair and finally locating Father Gromwell and this mysterious angel called "Beautiful."

At some point in the final days of this adventure or immediately following, Long Lucy† contacts the party with a case of very fine wine (worth 125 gp) with her compliments, along with a short letter explaining that the Circus is expanding and doing very well and that she intends to send the characters a further dividend in the very near future, when time allows.

The Circus Macabre plays a pivotal role in the sixth adventure in ***The Levee*** (***L6: The Susurrus Theatre***), so the continued contact between Lucy and the characters is important. You can play it up as more than just a message and a gift, or leave it at that for now.

A few days after the events at the Weary Palace (but before the characters descend into the Underneath), an envoy of the Fetch leaves a package for the characters with a trusted friend or secure location where only they will find it (such as beneath a character's pillow!). The envoy, a ghoul, has no wish to interact with the characters, and may find presenting the gift problematic. If it has to, the ghoul whispers to a passing character from an alleyway and hands the package over, but it prefers to use some other means of delivery if possible.

The package is wrapped in swaddling clothes and bound with 13 black roses. Characters making a DC 18 Intelligence check are aware that the black rose is a token of the Fetch. Within the swaddling is a +1 mace, a *spell scroll* (*fireball, haste, lightning bolt*), a *ring of jumping,* and a *+1 rapier* wrapped in a burial shroud. The Fetch are aware of the danger that the characters faced in pursuing their common foe and have left this reward as a means of repaying them for their risks and their efforts.

Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Four: Echoes of the Raven

In response to some unspecified outrage, soldiers of the Royal Army rush into Toiltown and burn a neighbourhood before leaving it to other occupants of the district to fight it before it spreads. The fires burn for 1d4+1 days, and at one stage threatens the entirety of district. Word on the street is that soldiers nailed the doors and windows shut on some homes, trapping entire families — fathers, wives, sons, daughters — inside to burn alive. Mobs grow and violence spreads to all parts of the city, and it becomes unusual not to see or hear a mob at night calling for the Queen's head. These mobs always scatter when constables approach or are rumoured to be approaching. When soldiers or constables catch such mobs still assembled, they disperse them with extreme violence. Dozens of commoners are killed, scores are arrested, and hundreds are injured. The Queen orders guillotines erected in each district, and "traitors" are summarily executed daily. By the end of the month, dozens are beheaded each day, and the numbers of "traitors" arrested begins to spiral out of control.

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Four: The Anger

Touched characters begin to see things by day; the shape of an angel in lichens on a stone fence post, an angelic voice whispering on the wind, a face glimpsed through a shop window. She appears angry, and on at least one occasion she calmly says, "You have sided with the unliving and are choosing the wrong path. Only the Awoken will survive the coming flood."

She may repeat this message a number of times before asking a question of the touched character(s) at some point while still going through the adventure, "Would you be as those you serve: addled, rotting, lifeless?" She may repeat this a few times as well.

Finally, at the end of the adventure, shortly after Lord Hemlock has been destroyed or escaped, she gives one final message. She does not repeat it.

"The time for choosing is coming. I have walked upon this world and found it rotten beneath my feet. It must be cleansed."

Assuming that the characters have tumbled to the fact that this is probably the Beautiful who is addressing them, it should provide even more incentive for them to find and confront her in her lair in the Underneath.

Decay Appendices

Appendix A: Abigail and Luther — Vampire Hunters

It is possible that some groups will wish to involve the vampire hunter couple in their attacks upon Lord Hemlock and the Panacea. The pair does not turn down any chance to slay vampires, and are very adept in their trade. They are, however, utterly fixed upon each other's safety, to the point of self-sacrifice. As NPCs, they should be controlled with that aspect foremost in mind.

Abigail

Abigail is a striking woman who has deep red hair set in fetching cascading curls. She wears a long, black wool coat over a crimson shirt and breeches, all topped off with a broad-brimmed leather hat and a light scarf over the lower half of her face. She carries a variety of tools for hunting and killing vampires.

Luther

Luther is a dark-skinned Libynosi man, a little on the portly side. He wears an officer's coat of the Royal Army with fine gold tassels and several medals, but has removed his captain's rank from it since he no longer serves in the Castorhage military.



Appendix B: Castorhagi Fashion

Attire is tailor-made to order and always takes 1d2 days per item. Unusual sizes double the cost and double the time for each step away from Medium that the attire is made to. An outré noble's outfit as an undetailed set costs 200 gp.

Any character wearing 2,000 gp worth of jewellery and clothing gains advantage on Charisma checks to gain information or impress someone. The benefit may only be used once for any given person or type of attempt, after which it ceases to impress that particular person or group of people. Purchasing another set of finery "re-sets" the advantage, since it is a completely new array of fashion, clearly that of a person with refinement, taste, and wealth.

The Sinks Outré Fashions and Accessories

Couture	Cost
12th-century blue glass pipe	75 gp
A high-collar, three-quarter length jacket made from goblin faces	400 gp
A medallion of glass containing an undead spider	75 gp
A robe or gown of peacock eyes and peacock feather eyes	200 gp
A snakeskin dress	100 gp
Ape-hand gloves	40 gp
Ball gown made from bleached drow skin	750 gp
Between whalebone corset set with black iron	75 gp
Black smoking jacket set with obsidian buttons shaped like demons	150 gp
Body piercings, bone	10 gp
Body piercings, claw/tusk	20 gp
Body stitches	5 gp
Bone-carved alligator-headed walking cane set with silver bands	45 gp
Boots, hefty with bone toe-caps	15 gp
Bouquet of ivy and nightshade, set with obsidian chips	125 gp
Carved narwhal tusk bracelets depicting dissected apes	50 gp
Cadaver-surgeon's mask	2 gp
Cloakerhide and lacquer fan, set with amethysts	150 gp
Cravat, made of desiccated monkey arm with fingers still attached	35 gp
Cravat, stitched from soft-cured piglet skin	10 gp
Dire otter fur gloves	75 gp
Dire wolverine fur coat	250 gp

Couture	Cost
Double gargoyle-headed walking cane	20 gp
Drow bone-and-hide lady's bag	45 gp
Earrings, mortomata — animated beetles set on iron hasps	40 gp
Earrings, mortomata — animated moths set on silver hasps	60 gp
Egret feather wedding gown, set with carved monkey-bone swans	400 gp
Face scarf, human hair	5 gp
Fox stole, made with torpid, undead fox	400 gp
Fur top hat	45 gp
Ghoul-skin cape	20 gp
Ghoul-skin shawl	15 gp
Gold-tinted glass monocle	45 gp
Gown made of moths, butterflies, and raven feathers	375 gp
Gown of bird-of-paradise feathers, set with alchymic-unliving* nightingales	375 gp
Greatcoat with buttons made of fingerbones	50 gp
Heavy dress coat with buttons made of human teeth	125 gp
High, ghoul-skin boots, with ghoul fingerbone clasps	30 gp
High-heeled ladies' boots made with walrus tusks and lacquer	35 gp
Hip flask of fused human bone, obsidian, and criminal's skin	75 gp
Human fingerbone earrings	35 gp
Human skin-and-bone clogs	20 gp
Lace and darkmantle flesh dress	300 gp
Lace, leather, and shaped-horn turquoise robe	50 gp
Leopard skin and bat wing shawl	35 gp
Mask made of a cured drow face	320 gp
Meerschaum pipe, made of carved drow bone	110 gp
Monkey's paw mortomata, animated, on thong	150 gp
Waistcoat with mother-of-pearl embellishments set with gold buttons and peacock feathers	275 gp
Mourning dress or doat	25 gp
Mourning veil	7 gp
Necklace of preserved eyes	30 gp
Outer leather corset made of cured skum hide	20 gp
Pair of catoblepas-skin high leather boots, with walrus tusk buckles	210 gp
Pair of derro-skin boots	15 gp
Parasol, ghoul-skin with bone handle	35 gp
Skum-bone corset	30 gp
Snake stole	25 gp
Stockings, silk	2 gp
Sundry accessories, vile (insect brooch, cockroach bracelet, etc.)	5–15 gp
Surgeon's toolkit	50 gp
Tattoo, vile (+1 if visible)	35 gp
Tiny mortomata songbird in bracelet cage	200 gp
Top hat, darkmantle flesh	15 gp
Undead cricket in bracelet cage	120 gp
Undead dwarf monkey on silver chain	300 gp
Undead hummingbird attached with gold chain to broach	250 gp
Undead torpid kitten in fur hand warmer	175 gp
Veil, made of beetles	25 gp
Veil, made of silk and ettercap web, inlaid with silver thread and spiders	40 gp
Violet-tinted spectacles	50 gp
Waistcoat of rat tails	25 gp
Wig, replete with undead spiders	50 gp

Perfumes	
Aroma of churr glands	95 gp/gill
Cockatrice musk	210 gp/gill
Collation of civet Gland and sloth spleen	20 gp/gill
Distillation of chupacabra scenting glands	50 gp/gill
Essence of girallon glands	55 gp/gill
Fragrance of Between whale ambergris	25 gp/gill
Nosegay of lavender, camphor, and green hag gland	75 gp
Spicery of harpy tongues	125 gp/gill

Appendix C: Seasons in the Blight — The Grip of Winter

A bitter cold grips the city. It is the month of Slumber (December). The cold is breathtaking: birds drop in mid-flight, people freeze to death walking home from market, and the ground is too hard to bury the dead. People begin to grow hungry, farmers can't make it to market, and mobs are heard wandering the streets of Toiltown.

As the New Year is dragged in, many celebrate. Heavy drinking spills across the city on the night and day of the New Year (1771). The streets become more lawless, and encounters are more likely to be hostile. Use the appropriate random encounter tables for the districts that the characters visit to enforce this feeling during those 2 days.

If you like, you could even introduce a short side trek to the Black Ice Fayre, which slowly grows during this month on the freezing waters of the Great Lyme River.

The Crooked Chapel — A Side Trek

The Crooked Chapel (a.k.a. the Celestial Chapel) rests in the Hollow and Broken Hills district of the city (**Chapter 7** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***), and the area plays a much larger role in the coming Adventure Chapter ***L7: My Benefactor***. However, the characters may wish to pay this place a visit sooner based on the information they picked up in ***L3: Sea's End***. In that adventure, the characters learned of Father Gromwell's discovery of the angel called Beautiful and her plans for Castorhage.

The characters discovered Father Gromwell's last known campsite in the previous adventure in area **FI8** of ***L3: Sea's End***. Upon the walls of this cave, Gromwell had crudely scratched many images. In two of these carvings he depicted some sort of chapel that clearly lay somewhere within the great city of Castorhage. The chapel of the drawings was notable for a few distinctive features.

1. The interior of this chapel appears to be covered in images of the same angel that Gromwell has been obsessively illustrating for the last several years in the Church of St. Alman in Wicken and is apparently the same angel he went to the Falling Isle In Between to summon or meet.

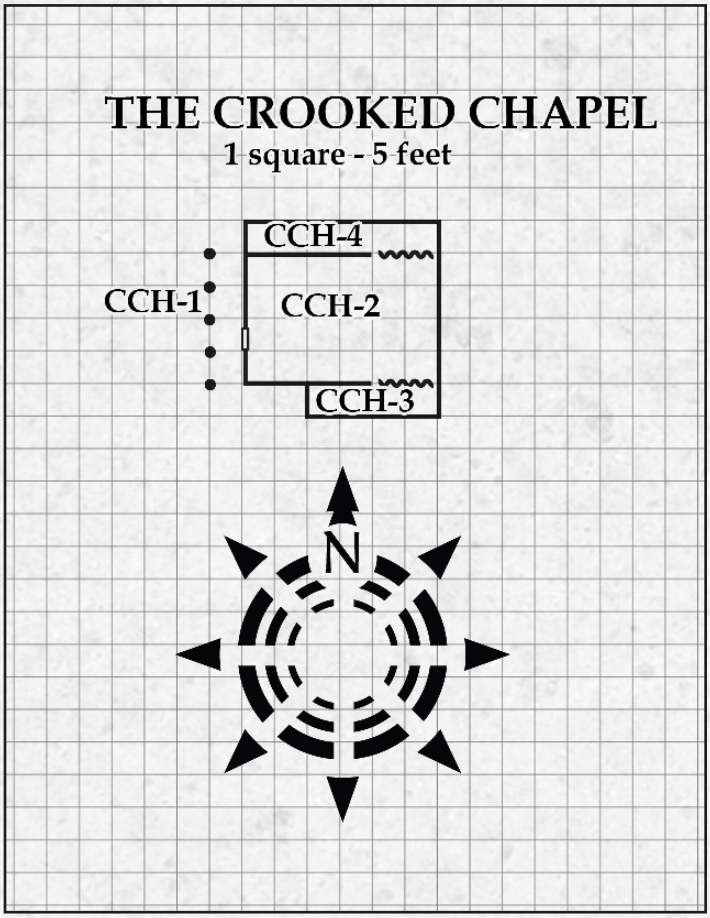
2. In one of the etchings of the chapel, Gromwell depicted some sort of strange, horn-shaped object that was apparently made of glass.

3. Both of the etchings depicted the chapel as having a distinctly crooked spire.

Furthermore, in the cave, the characters discovered Father Gromwell's personal prayer book with many notes in the margins written in his own hand. After having had a few days to examine the margin notes written in Father Gromwell's prayer book, the characters are able to piece together a few more clues about Father Gromwell's journey.

- He learned of his scythe-wielding angel and her promise of bringing Paradise from a codex written by a holy brother of Mother Grace called Brother Bartholomew who lived some 850 years ago.
- Bartholomew described having found an incredible horn-shaped vessel made of opaque glass that he claimed contained a portion of an angel's soul and that the angel began to communicate with him and tell him of a coming paradise the he could help her realize.
- Bartholomew began to paint a fantastic frescoe of the visions given to him by the angel as a small church in the Hollow and Broken Hills called the Celestial Chapel, much as Father Gromwell had been painting at St. Alman's.
- Brother Bartholomew had hidden the strange glass vessel at the Celestial Chapel but had been murdered in an unrelated incident, and his work went unfinished.
- Father Gromwell discovered the glass vessel hidden in the old church shortly before beginning his paintings at St. Alman's. The prayer book notes hint that Brother Bartholomew may have left other information about his angel and her paradise in the Celestial Chapel, but is extremely vague on the point.

It is possible that the characters may wish to follow up on this discovery at the chapel and learn more about this Brother Bartholomew and his frescoes and indeed if there is more to be discovered there. To do so, however, first the characters must identify the Celestial Chapel as there is not currently a chapel in the city that goes by that name. It can be identified by its distinctive crooked spire, though, with a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check. Likewise, if the characters begin asking around, a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check to gather information can be of use in locating it.



If the characters are successful in learning of the chapel, they discover that it is now simply referred to as the Crooked Chapel and still exists, tucked into a side square of the Hollow and Broken Hills, if they'd like to see the ancient church for themselves.

Converging on the Crooked Chapel

Unfortunately for the characters, they are not the only ones interested in the ancient Celestial Chapel. The Knights Occularis seek information about Gromwell's doings at the chapel and are ahead of the characters in the hunt. The Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage has already visited the place, taken stock of its information, and had every item and fresco present copied and sent to him. He then took the additional step of removing the monk who served as caretaker to the chapel and had him imprisoned and then burned at the stake for heresy. Now a Prosecutor-Knight Occularis

calling himself **Brother Jobe** (male human **priest**) has been stationed to watch the chapel on the off chance that Father Gromwell might return. Brother Jobe has a Knights Occularis tunic, crimson with the cabalist symbol of the order and silver buttons (worth 40 gp).

Tactics: When the characters arrive, "**Brother Jobe**" is in the chapel **CCH2**. He sleeps in the place, and the chapel is always unlocked. He shuffles about the place praying (and looking bored) and welcomes guests, quickly moving them toward the alms box. If anyone shows an overt interest in the frescoes, Jobe asks pointed questions. He knows little of the chapel history, he confesses, but if the guests were to return the day after next, he arranges for an expert to be heard: his friend and mentor, Father Crubb (see sidebox).

Development: Brother Jobe's instructions are clear. He is to note anyone that shows interest in the chapel's angels, and then arrange for a large force of Knights Occularis (**knights**)to be waiting when they return. Shortly after the characters leave, he releases a carrier pigeon through a small vent in the roof of **CCH3** to report on the characters. Unfortunately, **Brother Jobe** is ambitious, and instead of a large force, he instead calls for a much smaller force, confident that when he presents the prisoners to his superiors he'll get a promotion and a huge reward in Heaven.

CCH1. Outside

This small chapel has a curiously twisted spire coiling from its rooftop. Other than the strange spire, it is a rather mundane and modest stone place, though clearly of extremely old construction.

CCH2. The Chapel of Angels

Beyond, the chapel bursts into light and life. Its walls are a livid array of numerous angels, scenes of paradise and Heaven, and unfettered joy.

The chapel is blandly furnished with simple pews and an altar. A collection jar rests near the door and contains 76 cp, 32 sp, and 2 gp, as well as some buttons. The true worth of the chapel is in unravelling its frescoes. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notes an area of new plaster by the door. This is the location of the *Between vessel* Gromwell recovered from the place; it covers a small space barely a foot square.

The Codex of Brother Bartholomew

The codex of the chapel is a giant puzzle. The work can be deciphered with study, and the person who does so suddenly sees that the brother was trying to tell a secret. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check or a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check is required to unravel the codex that has been painted on the wall in the form of the frescos, and discover the information provided below. A check is required to discover each separate piece of information (in order), and each character can make a check once per day after spending at least 4 hours studying the images.

- Brother Bartholomew was granted visions. An angel began invading his dreams, and promising him Paradise. The angel spoke to him through a glass vessel, an object that the frescoes clearly indicate was hidden in the chapel. The frescoes point to a secret space near the door where the new plaster is (the space beyond is now empty).
- Bartholomew was utterly convinced that the angel was genuine in its offer, and he refers to it as the guardian of the Gateway to Heaven. The codex also lists places he tried unsuccessfully to call the angel. He describes it as being but a step away, on the other side of some hidden doorway that he can't locate. characters making a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check realise he is speaking of Between, a place that wouldn't be discovered for some 700 years after the time of Brother Bartholomew.

False Father Crubb

If the characters fall for **Brother Jobe's** ruse and return to the chapel, they find him waiting but now with him are 4 Protector-Knights Occularis (**knights**). They wait inside as **Brother Jobe** goes out to meet the characters.

If the characters step inside, they find the **knights** waiting for them in **CCH2**. The **knights** attempt to overpower the characters, capture them, and take them back to the Capitol. If they succeed, and the characters cannot get away from them before they enter the Capitol, all is lost unless the characters can come up with an incredible escape plan. The Capitol is a place many people enter but very few leave. The GM can safely assume that if they reach the doors, the characters' days are numbered and the end is likely to be long and painful as Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage slowly extracts their information.

- Bartholomew suddenly ended his fresco work uncompleted, but it is clear that the glass object he refers to is something he kept hidden within the chapel, away from sinful eyes.

CCH3. Storage

This is a ramshackle storage area with a small cage holding 3 pigeons, each outfitted with a tiny case to carry messages. If these carrier pigeons are released, they fly back to an aviary in the Capitol. The area also contains a variety of buckets, troches, holy candles, and prayer books.

CCH4. Changing Room

This is a simple cloakroom, with a cot. Brother Jobe sleeps within the chapel but is careful to conceal his uniform and armor. A secret storage area has been specially built here. The area is not locked but is well hidden, with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check required to notice it..

Capturing Jobe

The characters may end up with the Knight Occularis in their power. In truth, there is very little the knight can tell them, beyond the fact that he was ordered to keep an eye on the chapel, and that if anyone came in asking questions about the angels and Brother Bartholomew, he was to ensure they were caught and brought back to the Capitol to be questioned.

He may be able to flesh out a little more about the order, that they worship Mother Grace, and that, as a least member of the order, his access to the Capitol, and any useful secrets (such as where they are based) is not something he knows.

The Asylum and Chastity Greenage — A Side Trek

A former member of the Panacea who has been driven mad by seeing the Angel, Chastity walked into the Asylum a few weeks ago voluntarily (becoming the only person in 22 years to do so) and has not talked since. The Asylum is detailed in **Chapter 11** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide*** and ***TB2: Horror in the Sinks*** by **Frog God Games**. Be sure to immerse your players in the place, as it is a vast sanatorium, covering four acres and containing hundreds, possibly thousands of inmates — so many, in fact, that many of the saner inmates operate as staff. It is quite literally an asylum run by the inmates.

Characters approaching the bedlam of the Asylum hear the noises first, the screaming, the oaths, the misery, and then almost feel the stench. This is a town within a town of madness. The head overseers, **Overseer Wedgewood** (NE male human **guard**), is on the gates as the characters approach. He is easily bribed, and offers the traditional tour and any extras. Try to make the overseer and his underoverseer assistants come across as vile and seedy. It shouldn't take much.

If the characters mention Chastity, his face gives away instant recognition, and if pressed, he tells the characters that she came here voluntarily a few weeks ago, which is why he recognized the name among so many. Getting access to an inmate is not easy; he says he could get sacked and his poor wife and half-dozen babies would suffer (and so would his alcohol intake). He asks for an extortionate 50 gp to start with but can be negotiated down to 5 gp with DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks. Start negotiations in a back-and-forth mode, with Wedgewood giving up almost immediately.

Chastity Greengage

Upon successfully bargaining with the overseer, he leads the characters into the bowels of despair. He eventually arrives in a short, dirty corridor. When he does, read or paraphrase the following:

> A woman in a thin shift sits curled up in a ball by a wall, steadily rocking, her body shivering with cold and lacerated with injuries.

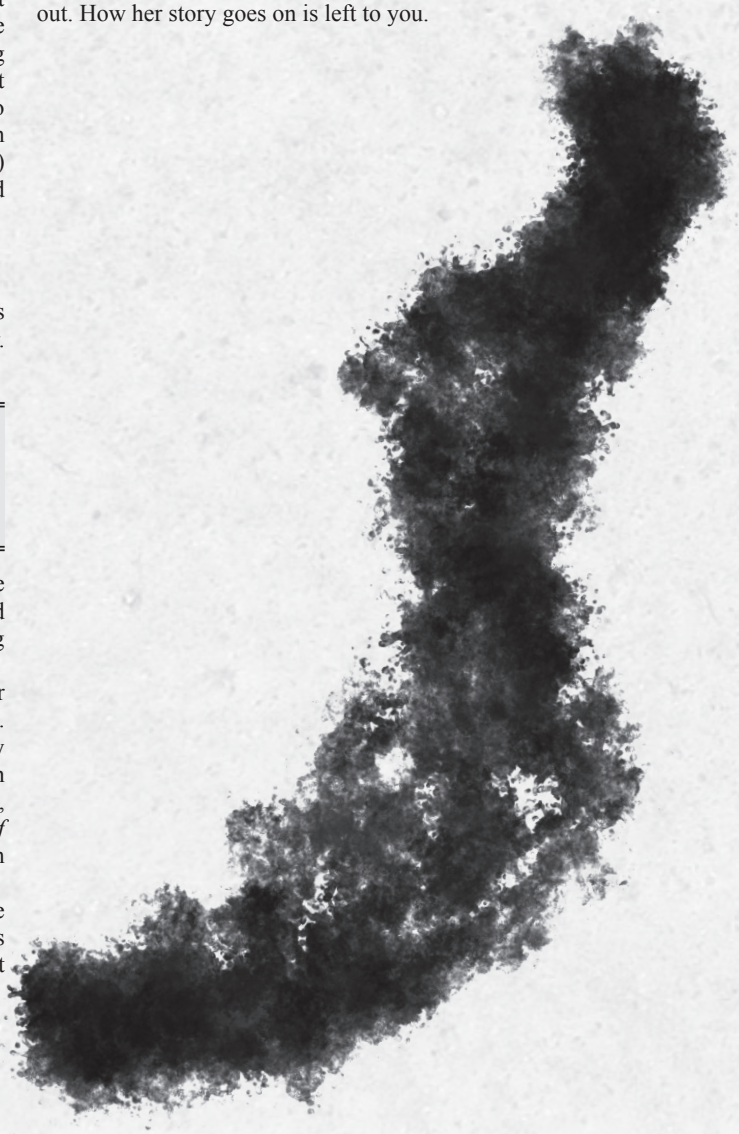
A (former) Panacea member, Chastity lost her mind when she saw the worlds opened by the Beautiful in the Iron Dungeon (further detailed in ***L5: Below***). Her mind snapped completely, and now she sits rocking herself, totally oblivious to the bitter cold and her own injuries.

Kind-hearted characters who examine Chastity's injuries discover that they are self-inflicted with a DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine) check. Each scar is shaped like an angel's head and wings. The scars are very recent and that each angel's head has a cut across it. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check catches a glimpse of a tattoo upon Chastity's chest, hidden beneath her dirty shift. If the tattoo is examined, it reads, "*Light of day, reap sickness from the land*," but the words have been excoriated with fresh abrasions that also form words reading, "*lies, lies, lies.*"

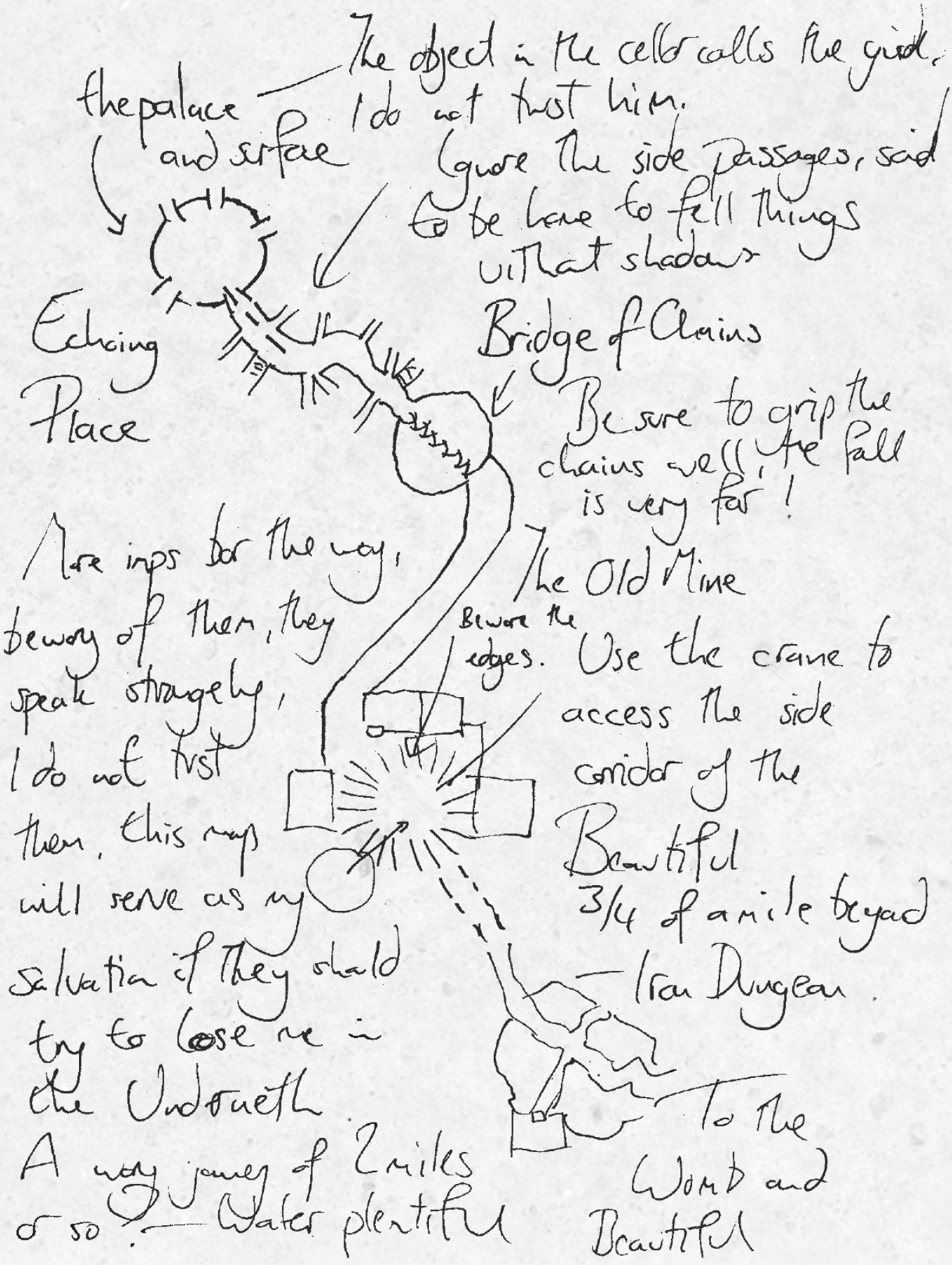
Talking to Chastity reveals little, but she mumbles fragments that the characters can hear while they are in the room. On last phrase, Chastity's voice raises slightly. Over time, she will repeat all the phrases, but not necessarily in the same order.

- "The old priest has brought her through a crystal door Underneath to us. Fool."
- "Angel cleanse the decay and waste and burn. Burn. Burn. Burn."
- "She has come below."
- "She sees you."
- "I have seen into her soul, she is hatred, she is fire, she is calamity."
- "She is here, and she has come to burn us all …"

The rest of the time, Chastity mumbles the words of the *Hymn to the Panacea* (see Sidebox in **Part 2**) and laughs and sobs in equal measure. She can reveal nothing else to the characters, who might think to have her properly taken care of. A bribe of around 250 gp, or a very forceful exchange of words with the overseer allows the characters to escort her out. How her story goes on is left to you.



Handout 1


The object in the cellar calls the guide. I do not trust him.
the palace and surface
Ignore the side passages, said to be home to fell things with shadows
Echoing Place
Bridge of Chains
Be sure to grip the chains well, the fall is very far!
More imps for the way, beware of them, they speak strangely, I do not trust them. This map will serve as my salvation if they should try to lose me in the Underneath
The Old Mine
Beware the edges.
Use the crane to access the side corridor of the Beautiful
3/4 of a mile beyond Iron Dungeon.
A way journey of 2 miles or so? — Water plentiful
To the Womb and Beautiful

Handout 2

Madam Kale's Journal

This summary provides the key points found in Madam Kale's journal that are found only after 48 hours of study:

Kale seems convinced that an angel is coming to the city — an angel that will open Paradise to her followers and cast the others into hell as the city is cleansed and becomes that Paradise.

She believes the flood that is coming will cleanse her of curse of undeath and that she will be reborn once more to smell the flowers, to sing, and to cast a shadow in the sunlight again.

Her recent journal tells of the angel arriving in a storm some weeks ago far below the world, in a place called the Iron Dungeon. The angel was accompanied by a hermit. They arrived in a storm of sea-salt and brine, far from the ocean storms.

Kale visits the angel and rhapsodises about her beauty, her shining eyes, her promises of a new dawn.

"Your work is just beginning," the angel says, "but soon the flood will come. The time to prepare is now."

Kale nears her journal's last scribblings by noting that she hates the guide so much, his skin crawls with lice, and his tongue cannot muster the words of men. She does not trust him and has made a map in case he has treachery in his black soul.

The journal ends with a suspicion that the Fetch are moving against Lord Hemlock, and that they have tricked agents into moving against the Panacea. She says she must beware of strangers coming.

The final entry is the following sentence:

"Soon, nothing will matter. She is bringing Between to us, and opening the gates of Paradise for each and every one of us."



L5:Below

By Richard Pett



Introduction

A change is as good as a rest.

The previous four Adventure Chapter in ***The Levee*** have offered several courses of action, from no-holds-barred combat to subtle manipulation and role play. ***L5: Below*** is a simple seek-and-destroy adventure, a full-on assault of one of the Panacea's toughest strongholds in the city. The characters venture into the Underneath of the city and launch an attack upon places called the Iron Dungeon and the Womb.

Below also marks the halfway point of ***The Levee Adventure***. From now on, things are going to get hot for the characters. Once they emerge blinking into the light of the city in the next adventure ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre***, they are no longer anonymous adventurers abroad in the Blight: They are villains, anarchists, enemies of the state, and from that point until the adventure path reaches its climactic conclusion, they are going to get precious little rest.

As GM, you have a decision to make with this adventure. Do you encourage your characters to head straight into the dark at the end of events in ***L4: Decay***, or do you suggest they hang back, level up, and prepare? It's entirely your choice. ***The Levee*** has a strong seasonal theme, and however the characters play it, spring should arrive before events in ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre*** really begin in earnest, so you have some time to let things simmer a bit before pushing forward. More suggestions about this come in the next adventure.

For now, allow your players to indulge in a little stress-free adventuring. ***Below*** is full of monsters and perils. Events that follow ***Below*** are going to tax your players' abilities on other fronts to the full. They probably deserve a little brain rest before then.

Media Inspirations Behind L5: Below

Try to watch at least one of these movies before you run ***Below***. They're all nasty but also wonderfully claustrophobic and weird.

Eraserhead (1977)
The Descent (2005)
The Hills Have Eyes 2 (2007)

Adventure Synopsis

The Mine is deep and dark and cold; things live within it that have never seen the sun.

Long ago, three sisters crawled into the dark and were never seen again under the light of the sun. The Sisters were mad, their father said, raving about an angel. He blamed their mother, for filling their heads with ideas and her art.

The Sisters had other designs, however. They knew how they felt, and they also knew what was coming. They knew the Beautiful would only suckle those who understood, who were enlightened, and they began to explore their souls to find what lay there.

In the corners of those souls, they found darkness, and hunger and shame, and they gave their desires a voice. Using their own bodies as their canvases, they bred, and what they bred was monstrous. To the women, however, the new creatures were living art, their own flesh made into enlightened forms. Their progeny grew and learned the ways of the surgeon-artist, their mothers taking them on a journey where flesh became a canvas and where madness became Nirvana.

They called their home the **Womb**.

As the secret cabal grew, it found others who groped into the dark. The group had a name — Panacea — and soon there were many who heard the angel's calling.

But far below, where it all began, was the true birthplace of the Beautiful, and when she finally came to the city, freed by the innocence of Father Gromwell, she was drawn to the Womb. Her three eldest had freed their minds for her arrival, and she embraced them, giving one sister a paradise of her own and a *Between vessel* to take within so that, in time, she could share it with her sisters. The Beautiful's arrival below has caused the very earth itself to buckle, but the Panacea are sure that these ruptures are a good thing. That they are unmaking the caverns is of little concern to them. In fact, if they even knew, they would welcome the greater safety it gives them.

The two other Sisters, the Beautiful kept — for she had work for them to do. The work would not take long and would end in Paradise. The Sisters gladly devoted themselves to their long-coming icon.

To reveal her glory, the Beautiful showed the Sisters what they had done wrong, and birthed progeny of her own, demented chaos things from Between that hobbled and slithered in the Womb and the cold place outside known as the Iron Dungeon.

Now the Beautiful is gone, taking with her Father Gromwell, whom she regards as her muse and fool. But she has only departed to conclude her Great Work. She left her followers to continue the work below.

And in the darkness, the echoes of her madness are crawling toward the surface.

Throughout the adventure, references are made to the progeny of the Sisters. Remember that they are "children" in name only. These creatures are very much grown, and grown in the most unpredictably horrible way. The few encountered here are by no means all of the Sisters' offspring. Others come looking for the characters in future chapters of ***The Levee Adventure.***

Part One: Going Underneath

The characters have two potential entries into this adventure. They may call (or chance to call) a guide, or they can head unaccompanied into the Underneath armed with Madam Kale's map (see **Player Handout** from ***L4: Decay***). No accompanying text is given for either event, just a set of locations.

In either case, unless the characters wish to find another entrance to the Underneath and grope about until they stumble upon landmarks identified on Madam Kale's map, their best option is to ascend into the subterranean levels of the city by means of the lift and well found in the cellar of the Weary Palace (area **WP14** of ***L4: Decay***). The adventure assumes that the characters use the strange summoning device found there to call the dark creeper below to come and assist them. If they choose to try a different method, you will need adjust the adventure accordingly.

Journey to the Iron Dungeon

This portion of the adventure does not involve a specific map. The encounters are generally non-combat encounters and are more descriptive than tactical. You can use Madam Kale's map to follow along the party's progress, and then if a tactical situation occurs, use any generic underground tunnel map to set up the specific encounter site involved. If you have a copy of ***Rappan Athuk*** by **Frog God Games**, the battle maps in **Appendix F** provide a number of useful site maps that you could easily substitute for a location on the characters' journey here.

The Panacea's lair at the Iron Dungeon and The Womb are located on the Secondary Levels of the Underneath (a.k.a. The Mine). This portion of the Underneath is detailed in **Chapter 10** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***, and a random encounter table is provided in **Part 2** of that chapter if you wish to use it. No one the characters meet on the way is likely to know anything about the Panacea or their lair. The Womb and Iron Dungeon are located at area **U13** of that chapter.

1. The Shaft from the Weary Palace

This encounter area coincides with area **W14** of the Weary Palace in the previous adventure.

> The shaft is cold and dark, and an iron cage clearly is designed to descend into it.

The well leads directly to the Underneath and eventually to the Panacea's lair in the Iron Dungeon. The well is 320 ft. deep. Adjacent to it is an iron cage attached to a crane from which hangs a cage large enough for 2 Medium-size creatures. The cage easily swings over the well, and lowers by means of a pulley system and chain at a rate of 20 feet. A successful DC 8 Intelligence check easily identifies its function. The cage can be operated from within using a lever, and at its quickest, it takes nearly 3 minutes to reach area **2** at the base of the shaft. The return mechanism is attached to pulleys and clockwork and waterwheels deep below the palace. It rises at a rate of 10 feet per round. **Chorel** the **dark creeper** (see ***L4: Decay*** for his role at the well) is happy to descend in the cage rather than climb if the characters allow him, but will clamber up and down as needed. Climbing the shaft requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. The trip down the shaft is long, slow, nausea inducing, damp from the constant trickle of water leaking down through the stonework of the well above, and thoroughly unpleasant. It is not, however, inherently dangerous as long as riders remain in the cage lift.

Chorel is prepared to guide the characters to the Iron Dungeon, assuming them merely to be here on Panacea business, and does so if they allow him to accompany them. He fights to defend himself (though he'll more likely attempt to flee), but he will not fight on behalf of the party.

2. The Echoing Place

> The shaft ends at a strangely silent place, a perfectly circular chamber some thirty feet across. There are five exits at equidistant points. A small area next to a trickling natural spring has been used as a makeshift camp. There is a bedroll, some food and even a set of dice cast aside here.

The fourth entrance, leading southeast, is the only one detailed here, the others can lead to wherever you wish, but bear in mind that the Panacea are very secretive and that areas beyond should be bereft of any major community or group from the city above.

Treasure: Chorel, who camps here, has a few wretched oddments. The dice are carved from narwhal tusk and set with gold pips, and worth 50 gp in total. There is a salami of dried and cured meat, 4 torches (for human guests), a waterskin full of surprisingly fresh spring water, and a fossil of some sort of jawbone from something with too many teeth. A member of the Royal Underneath Society or a DC 20 (History or Nature) check recognises the jawbone as belonging to the mysterious extinct species known as the Leviathans or Ancients. A collector of such fossils would pay 500 gp for it, while a purveyor of fossils in general (with no specific attachment to the study of the Leviathans) would pay half that.

3. The Corridor and Fissure

The twisting corridor between the Echoing Place and the Mine is about a quarter mile long, and has several side corridors, steps leading up and down, and shows signs of use. Again, blind adventuring should lead to encounters. As the characters reach the end of this section of underground exploration, read the following description.

> The corridor rises slightly and then enters a wide mineshaft that ascends and descends sharply. Some eighty feet below in the shaft is a side corridor, probably an old drift from the days when the mine was active.

If he is with the characters, Chorel looks worried; things are not right. A wide length of chain with footholds in it once hung from the corridor and accessed the other corridor. But the chain has been wrenched free deliberately, though the stubs of the spikes that once anchored it in place still remain. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) allows the characters to notice that the chain has been pulled out by something extremely strong.

They had been fastened with an iron spike hammered into stone. These anchoring spikes remain, but the 2-inch-thick chain is absent.

The shaft itself is clammy, requiring a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to climb —and the fall is 400 feet to a base filled with 20 feet of brackish water. The side drift lies 80 feet below the entrance where the characters stand and links via a 10-foot-wide corridor directly into area **M1** (see **Part 2** below).

Development: When the Beautiful's arrival triggered fractures within the stone, the corridors of the Mine in this area ruptured and exposed a nest of Tunnel People†. This pack of morlocks, led by a half-dozen woerms, quickly invaded the newly-opened area. They quickly despatched the paltry dark creeper guard force and ate most of them, before occupying and fortifying the Old Mine below for their own use. Chorel's knowledge of the Old Mine is patchy. He knows the general layout of areas **M11–M17**, but is not familiar with the other areas.



Part Two: The Old Mine

The main access shaft collapsed, leaving a series of secondary maintenance-routes abandoned centuries ago by the dwarves who used to work here. None of the Panacea has ever used these accesses, as they are cramped and dangerous. The woerms, however, find the tiny fissures ideal places to lurk. These creatures have already sniffed the arrival of fresh meat on the still air, and are preparing for an attack.

Mine General Features

The tremors caused by the arrival of the Beautiful have caused the main drift tunnel (**M1**) providing access to the Old Mine to collapse and become blocked. With this tunnel blocked, the characters face the option of using the secondary access routes described below (areas **M2–M10**). This route — the beginning of which is at the interrupted line denoted as "Secondary Access" and following the narrow passages marked by the thin black lines connecting the numbered encounter areas on the map — is incredibly cramped. Every one of them is low, damp, and tight. Medium-sized creatures must squeeze to get through. Small characters are able to crouch and navigate them more easily but are at disadvantage on all die rolls while in one of these cramped connecting tunnels. Obviously, any group must move in single file through these rough passages. The passages change elevation constantly, though never at so steep an angle as to require ability checks, nor do they have any combat effects other than in the secondary accesses.

Areas marked **C** are the locations where the passage becomes a natural chimney, either ascending or descending. "Ca" means it is an ascending chimney, and "Cd" means it is descending, with a distance designation next to each of these indicating how far it extends up or down. These chimneys are natural features and invariably narrow; only one character can fit into the width of the chimneys at once, but the Strength (Athletics) check required to climb them is only DC 5, due to the narrowness.

Fissures are marked on the map by shaded lines and are little more than vents in the rock that extend above and below the level of the characters. These are generally less than 1 foot wide. Small creatures can attempt to explore these routes but require a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to do so.

The Tunnel People

A total of **6 woerms**† and **12 morlocks**† inhabit these cracked and broken passages.

Woerms† are strange, unnatural subterranean creatures that share characteristics of humanoids and worms. They are an unholy hybrid of morlock† somehow infused with the characteristics of an annelid, or perhaps a centipede. At first glance, when viewed from the front, they seem almost humanoid until the viewer realizes that a long worm-like tail continues down from its spine and that it has multiple sets of useless, vestigial lower limbs rather than just a single pair of functional lower limbs

The woerms† are leathery and flexible, and are able to move through the secondary routes, chimneys, and fissures with no penalties. The morlocks†, though they are adept at compressing into shared spaces with each other, are as limited as the characters in terms of getting through tight spaces. However, these creatures know the layout of these fissures very well and set about attacking intruders from all sides, calling to each other in an ear-piercing screech that seems to echo about the caverns. Characters making a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check can identify where the noises come from and approximately how far away they are. Those who fail the check think the creatures are somewhere else nearby.

The woerms† are a nasty foe. They lurk within 100 feet of any intruders, attempting to pick off weak stragglers and assume that characters at the front are the toughest. They are confident that the morlocks will kill and devour such characters. As with all challenging encounters, do not use the creatures as a simple tool to frustrate the characters; the encounter is a steady war of attrition. The characters may wipe out the entire group, or they may have to engage in a running battle with them. If you can, watch the encounters with the creatures in the film **The Descent** (2005) before running this section to get an idea of how they might operate. The echoing feel of terror of that movie should translate to your game here if possible.

Tactics: The woerms† stay back and use the fissures as much as possible to outmanoeuvre the characters and set up ambushes and then rush in and attack. They try to take out stragglers, attacking in groups of up to 3 and confusing prey by attacking simultaneously from multiple directions using diversionary tactics with a front lure if feasible. They attack with 1d3 morlocks and retreat if reduced below half their hit points. If the characters reach the main Shaft at area **M10**, they join in the attacks with any surviving morlocks.

M1. The Collapse

> The broad corridor suddenly stops. A recent rock fall has fractured the construction and blocked it with a major collapse. To your right, a natural opening in the wall appears to provide an alternate route.

Characters making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check identify that the corridor is a lost cause. Even with its dwarven construction, it has collapsed. Attempts to move the rock fall only result in further collapses. A similar check identifies that the natural cave has been here for a long time, and is not part of recent activity. The cave leads to (**M2**) below.

Development: A minute after the characters enter the Old Mine, the woerms begin screaming — they are actually communicating.

M2. The Secondary Access and Crawlhole

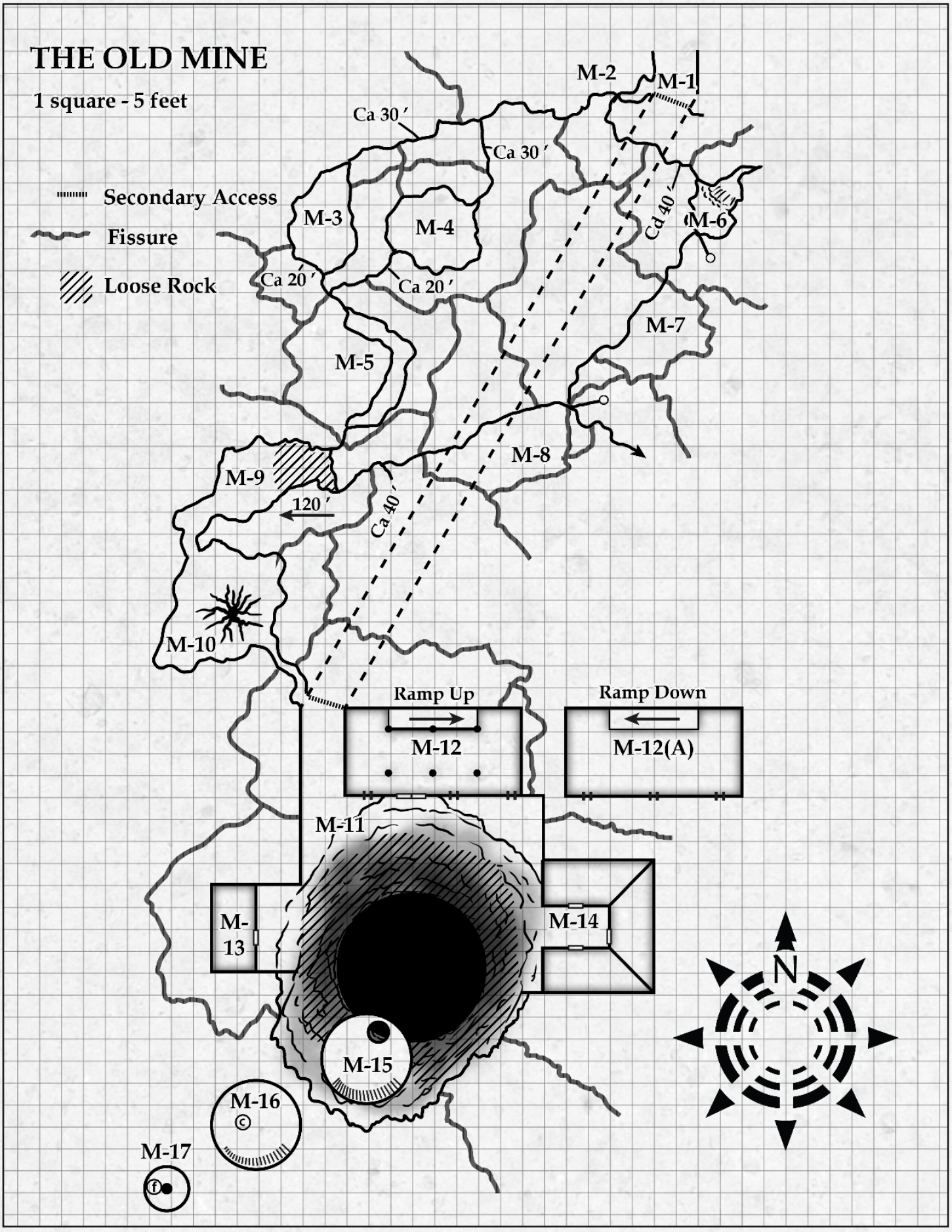
> The cave soon ends at a huge boulder that has fallen across the corridor.

The boulder has been here for many years, as anyone making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, can identify. The boulder is perched in the corridor, leaving an incredibly narrow crawlspace below. The crawl is only 10 feet but feels much longer. Medium-sized characters must squeeze to pass under it. Beyond, the characters face the secondary access route (see above). Characters making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check are aware that the route has been worked, and that such smaller side routes are common in local mines, allowing a second escape route and access for repairs.

M3. First Shaft and Handholds

> The narrow passage drops into a black open space. Far below, the sound of rushing water thuds with a flat echo.

The dwarves once crossed this broad cavern using a complex metal-and-rope pulley system, but now only the iron spikes hammered into the roof remain. These spikes are hooked, allowing a character to swing


THE OLD MINE
1 square - 5 feet
Secondary Access
Fissure
Loose Rock
M-1
M-2
M-3
M-4
M-5
M-6
M-7
M-8
M-9
M-10
M-11
M-12
M-12(A)
M-13
M-14
M-15
M-16
M-17
Ca 30′
Ca 30′
Ca 20′
Ca 20′
Cd 40′
Ca 40′
120′
Ramp Up
Ramp Down
N

across hand over hand, and affix a rope if they so wish. Clambering across the rungs requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check for each of the 6 hooks, and affixing a rope while doing so increases the DC by 3. However, with a rope in place, climbing across requires no further ability checks.

The cavern drops 210 feet to a rock-strewn floor. The pounding water is actually in a secondary cavern not accessible from this one.

M4. Dwarf Rest and Maintenance Chamber

This chamber has clearly been worked. It has carved seats and a table, recessed shelves, and stone hooks for lanterns. The place still has some equipment in it, as though it were abandoned only a few days ago.

It's actually been decades since anyone came this way, but the dwarf miners here took great pains to make sure equipment was in good order. Stored here are 8 miner's picks, 12 shovels, 3 oiled papers containing flint and steel, a wheelbarrow, a 100-foot coil of rope, 3 empty pyrebeetle lanterns, 24 torches, 200 feet of 1-inch chain, 6 hammers, and 24 iron pitons.

Treasure: A wooden toolbox holds a set of stonemasonry tools, 3 vials of antitoxin and a *potion of climbing* (labelled as such in Dwarven), all carefully wrapped in oiled cloth.

M5. Second Shaft and Handholds

A sloping passage suddenly falls away here into a deep shaft that follows an irregular crevasse in the stone. Metal hooks driven into the ceiling stretch along the length of this crevasse and turn a corner up ahead. The place echoes and is obviously very deep.

The miners worked here for several months following a deep vein. The shaft is 230 feet deep and smooth-sided — a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. Like **M3** above, this area used to have a metal-and-rope pulley system but now only the iron hooks that are hammered into the roof remain. Like Area **M3**, these can be crossed hand over hand (see that area for details), but there are 10 the hooks to traverse here.

M6. Waterfall (CR 3)

The corridor ends on a perch of stone above the roaring blackness of an underground waterfall. The falls drops from your left more than a hundred feet into a pool. The braces of a metal ladder are bolted to the lip of this shaft, and an iron ladder descends down to the water level below.

The water actually drops 120 feet into a deep pool below which then churns into a river (**M7**) that exits through another narrow tunnel to the south. The dwarves very occasionally came this way, particularly for fresh water, which is icy cold here. The remnants of an iron rung ladder lie immediately below the entrance. However, the rungs have rusted and now constitutes an unintentional trap. The pool below is 25 feet deep and is rough water, requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to stay afloat. The current pulls anyone in the water down the river at **M7**. At the bottom of the ladder, a metal bucket hangs from a chain bolted to the ladder. The bottom of the bucket has rusted out.

Rusted Ladder: The rungs are extremely rusted, and a descent is risky. The ladder only requires a DC Strength (Athletics) check to climb, but there is a weakened rung 20 feet down. Anyone climbing down the ladder without emphasizing caution must make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice it — if the character stated that caution is being taken, the DC drops to 10. If it is not detected ahead of time, then the first character to step on it causes it to snap. That character must then make a DC 15 Dexterity save to grab the next rung, or fall.

Fighting to hang on to the ladder can still cause the next rung to snap, and this can lead to a terrifying series of saving throws. *Even though the character succeeded* at the saving throw (i.e., isn't already falling), a second and easier saving throw is required to avoid snapping the second rung. This is a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. If it succeeds, the second rung does not snap, and the risk is now eliminated. However, if the second saving throw fails, the rung snaps and the character must make another saving throw to avoid falling, also at DC 13. If the character does not fall, the next rung must be checked, now a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. If the rung does not snap, the series stops. If the rung snaps, there is a Dexterity save against falling at DC 11. If the character still has not fallen by this point, the next rung will hold, and no further saving throws are required.

Getting past a single broken rung (or avoiding the weak rung, if it was detected) is not a problem and requires no checks to negotiate the gap. If more than one rung is broken, however, that part of the ladder cannot be used, and a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check is required to actually climb around it. This is dicey, because none of the rungs are strong enough to use as the anchor for a rope. A rope might be run to the top (since this is all happening only 20 ft down).

M7. Icy River

Waters churn and froth into a tunnel, filling it completely.

The underground river is fast flowing and icy cold. Characters entering it face not only a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to remain afloat, but must also make a successful DC 15 Constitution save every minute (with advantage on all of them after any single save is successful) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal cold damage from exposure, plus gaining a level of exhaustion. Characters who fail the Strength check are submerged and suffer 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage per round from being buffeted down the narrow, rocky river channel. Characters are carried at a speed of 30 feet per round to Area **M8**.

Characters making successful Strength checks can control their speed and can move as fast as they wish. Those who fail are drawn ahead by the current as described, moving at 30 feet per round and taking bludgeoning damage each round until they make a successful save and get back to the surface.

M8. The Vent

If the party approaches from the north by way of the river (**M7**), read the following description.

The waters enter a vertical shaft where they froth and spume, colliding in the dark as they seek their way out through the tiny fissures that riddle the walls. The shaft itself rises more than a hundred feet into darkness above.

If the party approaches from the south by way of the passage from **M9** or by one of the many fissures, read the following.

A vertical shaft here sinks more than 100 feet to a surface of turbulent, roaring waters below. Many fissures mar the wall of the shaft, and though the waters flow in from a river tunnel to the north, they never seem to rise, indicating that there must be a means of draining somewhere below the surface.

The shaft here is 100 feet deep. Like the waters in **M6** and **M7**, the water here is deep (30 ft), and extremely rough. Staying afloat in the maelstrom requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check and a DC 12 Constitution save each minute (with advantage after one save succeeds) or take 1d6

points of nonlethal cold damage. The waters drain through many small fissures and cracks, so they never fill the shaft. The only way up or down is by climbing. This requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) within 20 feet of the water's surface due to the moisture, and a DC 12 check to climb the rest of the shaft after that.

The many fissures that converge here allow the woerms excellent access into the chamber. If the characters have come this way, there is a cumulative 25% chance per round that 3 **woerms**† attack. They preferentially attack those in the water or climbing over those in the tunnel above. Morlocks will not assist the woerms in this area, fearing the turbulent waters in the depths of the shaft.

M9. Cavern of Broken Bones

The cramped passage opens into a larger cavern that stretches away and down to the west. A slope of loose scree descends from the passage to the floor far below.

The lip at the edge of the passages that enter here from the east are crumbly loose stone, and unsafe. The lead character must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check to notice this as they approach. If the treacherous footing of the edge isn't noticed, then anyone coming within 5 feet of the end of the passage must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid slipping and falling over the edge onto the scree slope below. Anyone who slips in this way must then make a DC 20 Dexterity save or begin to slip, bounce, and slide down the slope. (Note: the map of this slope is not to scale). The slope actually extends steeply for 120 feet with a total drop of 100 feet. For every 40 feet that a character slides down the slope, they suffer 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage, but can make a new saving throw (adding +1 to the die per previous save that was attempted and failed) to stop themselves. Saving throws and damage continue until the character makes a successful save. Even if this doesn't happen, traversing the slope without a belaying rope requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check for anyone attempting it, even if just to move from one of the eastern passages at the top to the other.

At the foot of the slope, amid the scattered scree, the cavern floor is littered with dry bones. The vast majority of which are very old (identifiable as mostly pigs and goats), from the old times when the dwarves still lived and worked in this mine.

However, also amongst the bones is a more grisly sight, the recent skeletal remains of 3 dark creepers, crudely stripped of flesh and tissue by the woerms who ate them. These bones are not only scorched by some sudden heat but also have been broken and gnawed fiercely, with limbs torn apart in a frenzy and the marrow sucked from the splinters. The race of these remains is identifiable with a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature or Arcana) check (though the characters have advantage on the check if Chorel accompanied them for at least a portion of their journey). If the dark creeper is currently with them, he immediately recognizes them for what they are.

Development: Any characters touched by the Beautiful, or that you otherwise deem to be sensitive to Between or the Beautiful's presence, suddenly have an appalling vision of the last moments of the dark creepers' lives as they are torn apart and devoured before exploding in a flash of light that had absolutely no effect on those devouring them. These individuals must make a successful DC 10 Constitution save or be nauseated for 1d6 minutes at the memories of the visions and their dual suffering and hunger, all of which are strangely palpable here. As an unintentional bonus, any character that experiences the vision can automatically identify the race of the gnawed bones as well as the identity of their devourers (woerms).

M10. The Singing Tree and Blocked Access Revisited

A huge tree stretches from the base of the cavern here upward to a broad ceiling high above. There is a cave opening visible 100 feet up the southeast wall that exits the room. The tree's branches seem to provide ready access to this opening. The tree itself has a curious hue, a brownish metallic colour of rust and decay.

The whim of one of the miners long ago, the Singing Tree is a self-indulgence in oreblossom (see **Chapter 10** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***). This realistic tree, apparently cast entirely in copper, rises to brush the cavern roof 150 feet overhead. The trunk and thick branches do allow access to the 100-foot-high tunnel. The tree is relatively easy to climb, requiring a DC 10 (Strength (Athletics), and vibrates as it is climbed, making a peculiar metallic tone, a sighing D-sharp that softly persists as long as anyone is climbing upon it.

At the top, the short corridor accesses the southern end of the old main thoroughfare. This area too is blocked northward by a collapse but is quite clearly a similar construction to the one the characters passed at area **M1**. The two once joined to form the entry tunnel to the mine.

M11. The Shaft

The cramped corridors have finally given way to a huge open space, a funnel of loose stones that sinks toward a great dark hole in the ground. Fingers of mist rise from this hole, which has an air of menace about it. A vaulted chamber rises above the hole, with an iron tower beyond its breadth and immediately above. Some sort of crane appears to stand atop its conical roof with a small dark figure dangling from the end of its chain. Areas surrounding the hole are open and wide with industrial-looking sheds, grimy equipment, and rusting iron wagons.

The main mineshaft partially collapsed long ago, taking a portion of the work yard around it down into its depths. The parts of the yard that remain are largely sunken in partial collapse toward the hole in the centre. Movement on the loose rocks is risky; this is difficult ground.

The shaft falls more than 800 feet into the Deeper Levels. Anyone falling (or pushed) over the edge plummets into the depths (20d6 points of falling damage) and is considered lost unless they have some means of flying or rescuing themselves.

A total of 12 **morlocks**† lair among the ruined buildings around the shaft. If they hear the screams of the woerms (see **The Tunnel People**), some move to assist them as described above. Any who remain here are now aware of approaching food and are ready to swarm in to attack. They attack heedless of the danger of the shaft, trusting in their agility and aptitude for manoeuvring around in such terrain. Any surviving **woerms** except for one (see "Development" below) also join in this combat, arriving through the fissures and fighting in their usual cowardly way as outlined above.

Development: Assuming some of the woerms survived, one of them (if any are alive) sneaks into the Iron Tower through the hole at its base (**M15**) and climbs up to the rooftop (**M17**), assuming that the characters are here to rescue the dark creeper held captive there (being blind, woerms have a hard time distinguishing between humanoids sometimes). The woerm pushes the prisoner from the top of the tower as described at area **M17**.

M12. Orehouse

A stone building teetering on the edge of the shaft, this structure was clearly once set back from the edge and has a large entrance easily big enough for a wagon to pass through. The place has an upper storey and carved windows easily large enough for a human to pass through. These windows have no glass.

The old store of equipment and ore, the orehouse was a functional and industrial building. Inside, it is cramped with old equipment on both floors. All movement within is considered difficult terrain. Visibility in the orehouse is poor owing to the amount of rusting equipment, so that anything farther than 10 feet away is unseen (disadvantage on attacks against it). Normally, 5 **morlocks**† lurk in the orehouse and emerge from cover at the first signs of combat to swarm out. Each retreats into the building if reduced to half hit points. They then lurk in the shadowy chambers of the building.

These morlocks are included among the 12 encountered in **M11** above.

Amongst the old equipment is an unsettling device, a curious amalgamation of brass and metal and old leather straps. It is quite clearly a water pump. However, characters making a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check point out that the pump is not designed for human operators, but rather something altogether stranger. The thing is very large, and has 6 handles at odd angles showing that what powered this pump was not human, but something else entirely. Characters who make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check can recall old tales about dwarven miners using fleshy things that resembled distended earth elementals or perhaps actual fleshgines† that could work tirelessly, and yet were expendable if they should happen to fall or be crushed in a mine.

M13. Washhouse

Here is grimy one-storey structure of plain, undressed stone.

Beyond, the room has a cobbled floor with a dozen waterspouts near the ceiling, the rusting remains of twelve iron and brass pull-chains hanging nearby. Formerly the old washhouse for miners, the chutes diverted water from nearby water channels to enable the workers to wash the dirt from their bodies. One actually still works but is currently clogged by a **gray ooze** that was flushed through the water channel long ago. The ooze is currently trapped inside one of the waterspouts, but if the pull-chains are yanked, it immediately pours from the spout in 1 round. It attacks anyone it senses nearby.

M14. Sheds

A trio of stone sheds built here have begun to subside into the nearby shaft.

The sheds are used to store a variety of hefty chain items, including a chain conveyor (see below). The sheds serve as the lair of 7 **morlocks**†. Unlike those in the orehouse, these creatures simply rush at opponents without thought or strategy. The lowest among this Tunnel People pack, these morlocks hunger for meat, having had precious little from the dark creepers taken earlier.

Treasure: The sheds are piled with old rusting equipment, including a hefty iron chain attached to a coil fixed to the east wall of the middle shed. The chain is 400 yards long, and the machine is a chain conveyor that allows characters to be lowered into the shaft. Characters making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check immediately understand the operation of the device. If the conveyor's massive iron spring is wound (requiring a total of ten DC 12 Strength checks), the conveyor can be controlled by a lever and allows the chain (and anyone hanging onto it) to be lowered or raised at a rate of up to 60 feet per round. The conveyor functions for 40 rounds before the coil spring must be wound again.

M15. Iron Tower

An iron tower gropes the cavern wall as it hangs partially over the void below. It rises some twenty feet above the teetering embrace of the shattered cobbles around the mouth of the shaft. There is something odd about the structure beyond its conical roof with what looks like some sort of a crane atop it. The entire structure somehow has an organic feel to it.

The iron tower is a creation of oreblossom, a dwarf art that allows ore to be grown into structures or objects (see **Chapter 10** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***). Characters making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can identify what the structure is made of. The tower does not have any obvious entrance; in fact, the old entry was blocked years ago by the growth of the oreblossom. However, it has an opening through its lower floor out of which hangs a narrow length of chain. The dangling chain is noted with a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, or it's possible that the characters saw a woerm crawl in through the opening during the battle in area **M11** (see "Development" in that area). The chain once held a suspended cage used by workers to descend into the mine. However, the woerms loosed it when they arrived here — along with the dark creeper it held who fell to his death.

The outer walls of the tower are rough with plentiful handholds and easy to climb (no check). The base of the tower is grown directly from the surrounding rock, and though the area around it is crumbling, loose rocks, the tower itself remains secure in its footings. The bottom of the tower hangs out over the lip of the shaft to give access to the opening underneath. Climbing underneath the tower to reach this opening requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid falling into the shaft below (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid, if the check failed).

When characters enter the tower, read or paraphrase the following description.

Beyond the tower's perilous entrance, the structure spreads about, as though the metal has grown somehow. The remains of an old block and tackle hangs from the ceiling with its chain running down through the opening and into the yawning drop below. At the rear wall, a staircase hugs the curvature of the tower like a living caress. Otherwise, the room is orderly and practical. There are a number of tool cabinets and workbenches for what was clearly a workshop of some sort.

The stairs rise 10 feet to the second floor. This workshop is well stocked, and has a number of artisan's tools for different crafts — armour, stonemasonry, and traps most predominantly.

Treasure: Amongst the numerous cabinets is a leather-bound book reinforced with iron and polished bone and written in Dwarven. The tome is a masterful manual on the subject of dwarven engineering, which is worth 400 gp to an engineer. A wooden crate contains 3 *potions of climbing* and a *potion of healing*. A walnut tobacco case contains a *potion of vitality*. There are also several picks and shovels of high quality, and a 50 ft. length of chain.

M16. Metal Shop

Clearly a workshop for metal, this room is crammed with clipped and broken shards and metal filings for different metals. There are drawers labelled in runes, racks of metal, and a number of books on a small shelf. A ladder leads to a trapdoor in the conical ceiling 10 feet above.

The drawers are labelled in Dwarven and give only generic descriptions ("Clippers," "Files," etc., that may or may not have anything to do with their actual contents. Some of the more interesting mundane items found herein are a disassembled ballista that can be assembled with a DC 20 Intelligence check and a bomb that inflicts 3d10 points of piercing damage in a radius of 30 ft, 1d4+1 rounds after the fuse is lit.

Treasure: Lying about the workshop are a 3-pint pewter stein crafted like rampant frogs and set with brass and silver worth 100 gp, a gilded breastplate worth 100 gp, a book in dour Dwarven poetry worth 5 gp, and a book of erotic images worth 40 gp. The more interesting drawers hold 12 silver crossbow bolts, a *+1 crossbow bolt*, a magnifying glass, thieves' tools, 2 silver ingots worth 50 gp each, a *potion of mind reading*, and a large tin case containing 5 bags of alchemist's glue†.

M17. The Broken Cage and Conical Rooftop

The trapdoor opens onto a conical roof. Affixed to the pinnacle are the remains of some type of heavy crane.

The metal rooftop is very steep and smooth, requiring a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move about upon it. The crane (part of a chain lift) was used by the Panacea to descend into the shaft, but the woerms have destroyed it and put something crueller in its place. The crane's winch is damaged and no longer functional, but the heavy iron chain still dangles from the boom. This chain ends in a large meat hook that has been thrust through the shoulder of a **dark creeper**†, the last survivor of this band (excepting possibly Chorel) who has been left up here to suffer for a while. The dark creeper currently is unconscious from exhaustion and pain, but can be roused by slapping or wounding it.

Development: As mentioned in area **M11**, if any of the woerms still live, one of them climbs up here assuming that the characters are here to rescue the dark creeper. The **woerm**† releases the winch on the crane and lets the dark creeper suddenly drop. The winch (which has not received maintenance in a long time) jams after letting the chain unspool a total of 30 feet. This brings the dark creeper to a lurching halt 10 feet below the bottom edge of the tower and dangling in space with the hook still through his shoulder. The creeper takes 1d6 points of damage from the fall and an additional 1d3 damage per round from the restarted bleeding and overall stress upon his damaged shoulder. The dark creeper screams and remains here in this terrible state and, unless rescued by the characters, dies here. Saving the creature grants the characters a friendship award (see sidebar). Once it has released the crane's winch, the woerm pays no further attention to the dark creeper and hurries back to join the combat in **M11**.

The Descent

Roughly 600 feet below the old chain conveyor in **M15** is the access point to the Iron Dungeon. The access is via an arched opening that has daubed about it hundreds of images of the angel Beautiful. Anyone descending the shaft by flight or perhaps the coil-spring chain conveyor in **M14** automatically notices the shaft if able to see in the dark (or having a light source) and descending at least 600 feet. The coil-spring chain conveyor has enough give in its 1,200-foot chain that it can be run up and through the crane boom at **M17** and still allow easy access to this side tunnel 600 feet below.

The tunnel beyond, which stretches three-quarters of a mile in a roughly southeast direction, might have creatures lurking in it at your discretion but there shouldn't be anything organized as this is territory controlled by the Panacea. Characters might realises on a DC 20 Intelligence check that by the time they reach the Iron Dungeon (see **Part 3** below), they will be directly below the island of the Festival district.

Friendship Reward: Navel the Dark Creeper

It is possible that the characters may be inclined to try to save the dark creeper at **M17** from his suffering and eventual death. It is unpredictable, but these creatures do value servitude, though generally only in regards to a dark stalker. However, with his rescue, Navel can (at your discretion) transfer his natural loyalty over to the characters and provide the group with a potentially valuable ally.

Of course, Navel is totally unused to any upper world folk save those it has met of the Panacea, who in general have treated him with disdain. Also, Navel smells disgusting, and likewise has some pretty revolting habits. He's prone to slurping in an unappetizing way when he's eating maggots off some piece of carrion, and he'll eat virtually any living creature if given the chance (you could have some fun with his hungry looks at characters' animal cohorts or familiars). He's also prone to thinking that most things that have skin are wearable and is not above "measuring them for fit" while they are still alive and possibly even trying to converse with them. But there are few that will know the Underneath better than a dark creeper.



Part Three: The Iron Dungeon

The Iron Dungeon is an essay in the ancient dwarf art of oreblossom. It is a wondrous place that sometimes defies logic and that is one of the hidden secrets of the dwarf art, along with its connecting aspect the Womb. Since the arrival of the Sisters, the Iron Dungeon has begun to bloom again, a confusing mass of oreblossom with rusting boughs, corroding bronze, and verdigrised ivy forming an astonishingly beautiful, perpetually autumnal, living sculpture.

The original structure was more functional, a simple series of grown metal walkways that spanned deep natural cysts here and which eventually drew workers to a place called the Verdigrised Forest. Even amongst dwarves, the forest was a thing of awe and beauty, created eight centuries ago by a master dwarven orebloomer of ancient Durahchûk, the Lightless Queen Selenium Pallwen. She created the forest as a garden to her home, the Symphony of Ore (now known as the Womb). Eventually, the palace and forest were abandoned and left to decay, but the arrival of the Sisters, and their dabbling with Between has breathed new life into this place.



Iron Dungeon Features

The walkways that have grown across the cysts span caverns between 210 and 300 feet deep. These caverns are rough and deep and dark, and the lower parts are generally flooded to a depth of 5–20 feet, with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb on and along the cavern walls. The walkways themselves are made of a curious mixture of metals, mostly iron but some tin and copper have erupted spontaneously. The growths resemble metal vines, and corroded leaves litter the sides. Walkways take the form of mesh tunnels that writhe across the chambers. The walkways vary in width but are unless otherwise stated made of iron 1-inch thick and forms a metal mesh that can be seen through somewhat, providing total cover except for attacks that can be made through the fine meshwork of the metal. The metal walkways sway but do not fall unless otherwise noted in the text. They can, however, be destroyed with shovels, picks, or weapons (weapons will be destroyed in doing so, however). The walkways hang from 1-inch-thick limbs that grasp the ceiling every 10–15 feet and can likewise be destroyed to destabilise sections of the walkway. Assume that if two such limbs are destroyed in a row, the section of walkway immediately beneath them breaks apart with a grating shriek of metal and falls, with the adjacent sections that remain now at a 45-degree slope requiring a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to negotiate until reaching the point of their next supporting limb.

Where the main caverns connect to one another, thick iron bars have been installed to prevent passage along the outside of the walkways, while the junctions within have iron gateways, though the gates, unless otherwise noted, are secured with simple metal latches that are easily opened.

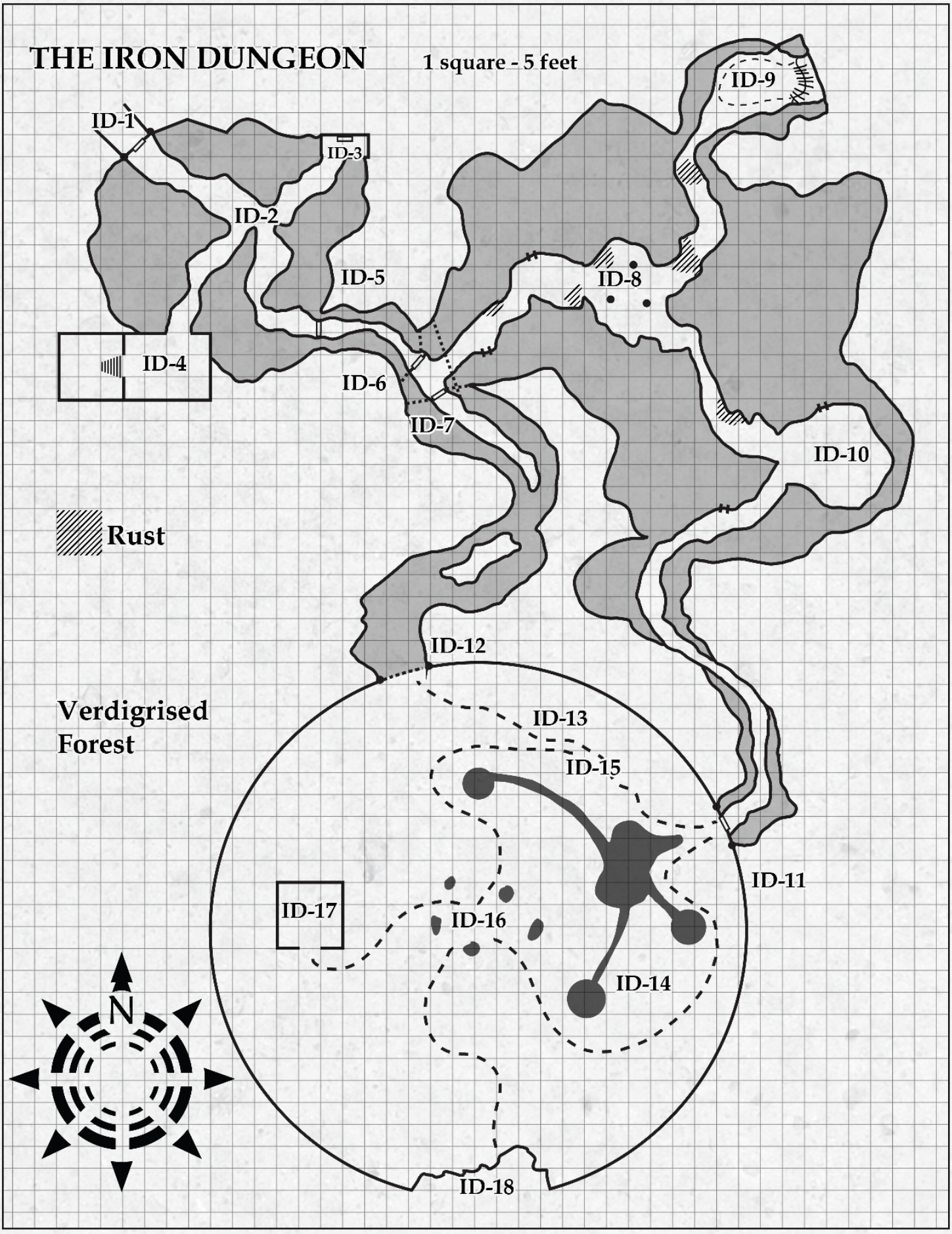
The Sisters have installed guards at various points, but are also menaced by a loose cannon, a creature drawn here by the Sisters some years ago and which is now kept in a secure area of the caverns that subsequently collapsed. The Sisters ensure that their ally — an **oni** — is fed, but beyond that, they leave it to its own devices.

The First Strands: Areas ID1–4

The great outer cavern of the Iron Dungeon also houses the first place the Sisters slept and huddled. Since taming the Iron Dungeon, the Sisters have installed a guard to watch primarily for intruders staggering from below. The Sisters have installed a simple system to enable the dark creepers to guide guests to the dungeon and allow them safe access. Those who pass this area simply call out the words, "Tomorrow is coming, tomorrow is coming, tomorrow is coming …" Unfortunately, the dark creeper's knowledge of Common is not great, and even if he is still with the characters, Chorel can't recall what words they use. If he is on friendly terms with the characters by now, however, he does remember that they shouted something.

If the characters do not shout the proper phrase, they face the **gibbering mouther** that skulks and slithers and drags itself about the iron walkways, constantly muttering to itself. The mouther, like many of the creatures here, particularly those with the Womb, has been stricken by the effects of Between. The mouther slithers between forms, often rearing into a column of distending, popping eyes.

The mouther soon locates anyone entering the cavern, and lurches toward them, causing the iron walkways to creak and shake. When it reaches its prey, it thrusts a long eye on a stalk through the mesh of the walkways, the eye opens into a mouth, and is quickly followed by the


THE IRON DUNGEON
1 square - 5 feet
ID-1
ID-2
ID-3
ID-4
ID-5
ID-6
ID-7
ID-8
ID-9
ID-10
ID-11
ID-12
ID-13
ID-14
ID-15
ID-16
ID-17
ID-18
Rust
Verdigrised Forest
N

entire creature, which oozes through the mesh in the space of a single round gibbering. The mouther is a brute guardian, and does not seek to escape once it engages in combat.

XP Award: If the characters successfully avoid having to battle the gibbering mouther, award them XP as if they had defeated it in battle.

ID1. The Angel Gate and Celebration of the Beautiful

The long tunnel finally ends at an echoing space where an iron gate and bars block access ahead, but the gate has a simple latch. Beyond, an iron walkway extends forward, suspended in space, a tube of strangely beautiful metal shaped like vines and ivy intertwined in impossibly intricate patterns. Quite how this has been made defies logic, but what does not is the ochre tattoos of rust, and the scars of corrosion that cover this metal contraption in a patchwork. Beyond this suspended metal latticework tube, the cavern itself is clearly very deep, very dark, and very damp.

The gate is easily opened by the latch but is rusty and squeals loudly when moved. Chorel has never gone beyond this point into the Iron Dungeon before and, unless you deem that the characters have somehow inspired an unusual loyalty in him, he remains behind here to head back to the caverns below the Weary Palace to await his next summons (if he's not killed by a morlock or woerm along the way). Navel has also never been beyond this point, but if the characters saved him and have achieved a friendship with him, then he has converted his fanatical servitude tendencies over to the characters and gladly fights the other dark folk to be encountered here without giving it a second thought.

ID2. The Song of the Iron Dungeon

The curious iron corridor flows unpredictably, closing inward, then expanding upward and away. Sometimes you can walk two abreast, and then in single file. Momentarily, you halt as a jarring noise begins about you.

In truth, the noise, known as the Song of the Iron Dungeon, has been going on for hours, but stopped coincidentally just as the characters approached. As they begin to move, it starts again. Its cause are the breezes that waft about the Underneath through the cultivated wires of the Iron Dungeon.

Initially the noise, a slicing, unsettling F-sharp, is merely a background tone, but it soon becomes a distraction. If anything happens in this area, all characters are at a disadvantage on all die rolls unless they plug their ears.

At the convergence of the four corridors, the Iron Dungeon twists into a disturbing, seemingly abstract shape. Characters making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a series of angelic faces amongst the chaos of the iron growths. While many of these faces are beautiful, some have terrible aspects, drawn lower jaws, mouths of iron teeth, and disfigurements. Characters touched by the Beautiful have a DC of only 10 for the Perception check.

ID3. The Old Way

The iron ages and becomes pitted and corroded, almost as though robbed of sustenance as it approaches a hefty timber and iron doorway set on a small stone balcony.

The doorway is nailed shut and must be broken open. Inscribed on a sheet of tin nailed to the door in Dwarven are the words "*Abandoned old way. Danger. Unstable tunnel.*" A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies that this door hasn't been opened for many, many years.

The Old Way is in place to allow you to expand the characters' adventures underground if you so wish, or if they are needing more XP to make the necessary levels for the coming adventures. Develop this area as you wish or, if you want it to remain undisturbed, have a collapse block the corridor beyond.

ID4. The First Home

The iron walkway enters a broad stone dwelling. It is clearly of dwarven construction and has stone tables, a stone fireplace, and a trough with running water.

The room is comfortable, and if lit, the fire draws and heats beautifully. The trough water is clear, almost sweet. When they first arrived here, the Sisters dwelt in this chamber and the one below for some time, drawn by constant visions and songs of the Beautiful. The walls here are covered in graffiti and each depicts the same or a similar scene: An angel, sometimes holding a scythe bathed in light, enters a city of grotesque darkness and horror and brings light to it, burning those in the shadows and elevating a select few to a paradise of gardens and love and joy. Stone steps lead down to a bedchamber with four stone-carved beds and a second fireplace. Fewer angelic images are here, but still several. The place has several mundane but useful items: pots, pans, and such, as well as buckets and an old meat locker. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check in combination with a DC 20 Intelligence (Medicine) check notes that there are also signs of childbirth here, though they have been carefully cleaned away.

Characters examining the drawings and making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check note a few things. They are very good, but they are also quite old, at least a decade and possibly much more. Finally, and perhaps more obviously, the depictions are very consistent with others the characters have seen throughout the adventure path.

Treasure: A few old baby toys and a silver teething ring worth 5 gp which has fallen behind the trough.

ID5. The Screaming Gate

An elaborate iron gateway blocks the passage here, the drawn wind playing on its vines and eaves with harmonic vibrations. A small stalactite has been wired to the gate, the stony formation vaguely resembling an angel.

The gate opens easily and is not remarkable, but the characters are likely to recall having run across other stalactite formations with a similar shape in ***L4: Decay***.

ID6. The Great Cave

The short corridor ends at a vast space, a wide echoing cavern. Heavy rain pounds the metal walkway ahead, and by the sounds of the echoes, falls a very long way into water below. The cavern clearly also stretches high above, vanishing into the darkness.

The Great Cave, known as the Rivers of Rusted Iron (**ID8–11**), was once a secondary access, but after the collapse of the Broken Cage (**ID7**) has become the main thoroughfare, despite the constant pounding water and the effect it has had upon the metal of the dungeon. Characters making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notice damage to the iron bars outside the corridor around (**ID7**), with the bars here bent in places.

ID7. The Broken Cage

Two hefty padlocks seal the iron gate here.

The locks are average but quite rusted — they can be smashed or picked with thieves tools with a DC 18 Dexterity check. The cavern here is deeper than the others (between 360 and 470 feet) and very wet, requiring DC 18 Strength (Athletics) checks to climb the cavern walls. The occupants of this area, effectively quarantined by the iron gates and bars that seal them in, have broken the already corroded walkways here. Occasionally, one of the Sisters or another member of the Panacea come here and amuse themselves by flinging a young dark creeper or other creature into the area and watching as the occupants chase it and, ultimately, devour it. The rusted remnant of two walkway sections remain, but while each is stable, held in the grip of iron limbs attached to the ceiling above, they hang above deep drops and are open at their ends.

Until relatively recently, this area was the main access for the Panacea to the Sisters and the Womb. However, the arcane activity of the Sisters drew an **oni** (ogre mage) into this area, called the "Watcher in the Shadows." The Watcher has the ability to *animate dead* in addition to an ogre mage's ordinary powers, and is accompanied by 6 **zombies** it controls.

The Rivers of Rusted Iron: Areas ID8–11

This huge cavern is between 210 and 300 feet deep, its walls moist from the constant drip of saltwater that leaves salt deposits on every surface. Climbing these walls requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. The tunnel-like nature of the walkways does not extend over the over the numbered encounter areas. These are effectively clearings that are open to the cavern roof as much as 100 feet above.

Several small holes in the mesh walls of this section of the Iron Dungeon are cleverly disguised by bending a few loose strands of the oreblossom into place. These are spotted on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. The holes are wide enough for Small creatures to pass through easily, though Medium creatures must squeeze.

Several sections of this walkway are rusted nearly through. Spotting these areas requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception check). If spotted, they can be avoided easily. The corrosion at these spots is not complete, and characters stepping on them only cause them to collapse 50% of the time. If an area collapses with a character on it, the character must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save or fall. The occupants of this area are well aware of the areas of corrosion and avoid them.

ID8. The Thorngrove and Mad Dance

The Iron Dungeon takes an even stranger twist as a rusting tree-like clearing opens here, its surface thick with ochre rusted leaves. Three huge trees rise from this clearing, blighted, rusty things that must be statues. Rusty branches and nail-covered boughs extend outward from the trees that seem to have faces within their trunks. A constant, mad music fills the area.

This area is used by the Panacea as a guard post, and is suitably stocked. The trees (which resemble the scythe tree in **ID10** below) all have small slits that open into confined spaces directly below each tree. These spaces are little more than 5 feet across but serve as rest areas for the creatures herein. The slits form part of the faces within the trees and are spotted on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trees themselves are very easy to climb.

The music is a mad fluting sound, an exaggerated version of the song that is particularly resonant here. Characters entering the clearing must make a successful DC 15 Charisma save or be struck by a *confusion* spell. Once a save is made, characters are immune to its effects, but otherwise a save is remade every round. Characters unable to hear the song are immune to its effects, as are those who dwell in the Iron Dungeon.

A force of 4 **dark creepers**† led by a **dark stalker**† hides within the hollows beneath the trees. Although usually restful, the recent events on the outer edges of the Panacea's link to the Weary Palace have made them nervous. In addition, 3 **giant spiders** are in the tree boughs above, allies of the darkfolk.

Tactics: If the battle is going against the guards (if they lose half their number), the dark stalker withdraws and rushes to the Womb, in which case the place is alerted (see **An Alerted Womb** Sidebox in **Part 4** for more details).

Treasure: One tree has an elaborate (oreblossomed) gold, silver, tin and copper wind-chime in the shape of an angel. It is worth 50 gp, but twice that to anyone able to appreciate it as oreblossom. The nests contain a variety of objects, including meat and skins of water. A clay pot has liquorice in it. The base of the pot is labelled *J. Nutt and Son, Festival*. There is also a two-pint pewter and silver toby-jug depicting a comical fat man with two heads worth 75 gp, a black lacquer purse of whaleskin containing two dead rats, and a *potion of superior healing*, a silver tablecloth crumb-sweeper worth 50 gp, a magnificent cameo set in a gold frame worth 200 gp, and a brass saucepan full of copper pennies (456 cp in total).

ID9. The Falls of Rust and Angels

As you approach, the noise of falling water grows, until it engulfs you. Ahead, water drops from a strange waterfall, within which glower scores of rusting angels. A narrow walkway circles the iron walls of the place, allowing access seemingly below and behind this waterfall.

The walkway is rusty but stable. Characters walking behind the waterfall are engulfed in freezing water and must make an immediate DC 15 Constitution save against exposure or take 1d6 points of nonlethal cold damage and gain a level of exhaustion. The waterfall itself emerges from a flooded cave some 50 feet above the walkway. The waters drop another 180 feet into a pool below and on into the Underneath.

Lurking in the cave at the head of the falls are 4 **cave fishers**†. They are naturally cautious of visitors below, as the dark creepers have attacked them many times. The fishers are clamped to the walls of the flooded tunnel beyond the falls and drag their prey up through the torrent, requiring their victims to hold their breath or risk drowning. Anyone breaking free from a cave fisher's filament must still make an immediate DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check each round to avoid being pulled down by the current into the falls beyond.

ID10. The Copper Tree

The walkway enters another bloated clearing edged with iron ivy and bronze boughs. At its heart is a curious tree. It is curious because it's a distorted tangle of bent and broken branches infested with long thorns, and also because it's an actual tree, not some strange organic growth of metal. However, its jagged limbs hang awkwardly and do end in long metallic, thorn-like growths that resemble scythes. Sections of its bark carry a coppery sheen. So perhaps it hasn't entirely escaped the influence of this place. From somewhere within the tree comes a growl.

The copper tree is one of the beloved followers of the Sisters, and it guards what has now become the main entrance for the Panacea since the collapse of the walkway at **ID7**. Although intelligent, those who chant any part of the song of the Beautiful are not attacked. The tree instead curiously probes and touches them until it is satisfied they must be friends. It attacks

other intruders. The copper tree is a **scythe tree**† that has become encased in copper, so it has an AC of 16 and does not have vulnerability to fire

ID11. The Iron Gate of Impossible Beauty

The corridor ends at an astonishing scene. Ahead, the cavern walls fall away, forming a great, perfectly spherical cyst upon whose sloping floor grows an iron forest. These trees resemble thick pines of a rusty ochre colouration with copper needles and thick undergrowth the colour of henna.

The gate easily opens, allowing access into the Verdigrised Forest beyond.

ID12. Abandoned Gate

Like the gate above, this gives access to the Veridigrised Forest. This one, however, is secured with two chained padlocks, and blocks access to area **ID7** and its occupants. The padlocks can be picked open with thieves tools on a DC 18 Dexterity check.

The Verdigrised Forest: Areas ID13–17

The Verdigrised Forest is the outer area of the Panacea's sanctum and is home to many of the Sisters' offspring, particularly those cast out as unpleasing. The forest is a tangled mass of iron briars and bronze ivy. The floor is covered in layers of corroded, rusted leaves and blooms. Created by a legendary queen of the Durahchûk dwarves, the garden hangs in a perfect sphere painstakingly hewn from the rock by dwarven picks and chisels centuries ago. The oreblossom forest has grown into the spherical cavern even up its walls and engulfing its roof so that the riot of metallic pines grows in a 360-degree sphere. The gates (**ID11** and **ID12**) enter approximately 45 degrees up from the base of the sphere, so the paths that run down from them are at an angle that is initially fairly steep but grows gentler as it proceeds. The central clearing (**ID16**) sits at the base of the sphere. Attempts to climb up the walls of the sphere are possible by using the dense growth of trees as ladder steps — DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check — and even climbing into the vertical extent of the chamber and along its roof can be accomplished, but becomes more difficult as one must essentially hops between the branches and trunks of the vertically hanging trees. This requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. A fall from the top of the sphere is 120 feet to the clearing below (12d6 points of bludgeoning damage).

Verdigrised Forest Features

The air here is tinged with a metallic taste and odour. The floor of the forest is carpeted in rusted leaves of dazzling size and complexity. Iron thorns cling to the ochre boughs of the metal trees, making movement away from the paths in the forest difficult, duplicating heavy undergrowth. The paths themselves are disturbed piles of corroded leaves and blooms between 5 and 10 feet wide. The trees are very easy to climb (no check required), but movement through the boughs is slow. Hundreds of strange metal things skitter between the boughs. These are creatures that have been recently birthed by the oreblossom interacting with Between, and in general they resemble ghastly unions of insects and small mammals. They do not attack or fight. Other creatures slink through the forest as well, though these are detailed below. Remember that the forest is not a huge area, and cries for help, particularly from the offspring, are answered quickly by their siblings.

ID13. The Watcher in the Wood

The Sisters have ensured that guardians watch over their offspring, and have a **cloaker** ally who stalks the forest. The creature may be encountered anywhere, but starts here when the characters first enter the forest.

Tactics: The cloaker is here primarily to guard the crooked progeny of the Sisters but may be encountered anywhere herein. It does not flee if the progeny are attacked. It loves the Sisters and their spawn with an impossibly deep alien affection to the point of the aberration throwing down its own life to defend them.

ID14. The Cauldron

A small black lake drowning in silvery reeds and rusting leaves pierces the forest floor here. Impossibly, the lake's waters conform to the sloped surface of the sphere rather than the normal pull of gravity and refuse to drain out down the sphere's inner face as they should.

Created by some ancient trick of dwarven magic, the lake has remained here for centuries. Its naturally oily waters provide some modicum of protection from the rust that would have surely overtaken the oreblossom of this place long ago, considering its constant exposure to the brine mists of areas **ID8–11**. The water is filled with the oily metal skeletons of ivy and branches and boughs who slowly reabsorb the metal content

The Font of Knowledge

The Stricken Child knows a great deal about the plans of the Panacea. When the party gains a piece of information from the Stricken Child, roll 1d6 or choose one of the items of information from the table below to give to the characters. On additional successes, if the same result is rolled, reroll the 1d6 or choose another.

1d6	Information
1	"The Sisters are the source of the Panacea. They have lived here below for decades, maybe centuries, calling out for their messiah, the angel called Beautiful, using their own bodies to birth new creations of flesh in homage to her visions. They honour the Beautiful by birthing beautiful new creations, such as me. Alas not all are as fortunate in their perfection."
2	"The Sisters practice a rare kind of magic that makes mortal magic seem puny in comparison. This new magic works when the Sisters combine their skills."
3	"The Sisters live beyond the forest in a place called the Womb, a living building that is a colourful testimony to their enlightenment. Of late, the Womb has changed, grown, blossomed."
4	"The Beautiful has already gone but has left behind an incredible gift, granting one of her Sisters access to Heaven in some way that the remaining Sisters feel what their sister feels there."
5	"The Beautiful had a follower with her, a wretched man who some said was a prophet. He has gone with her — to where? Who knows?"
6	"The Beautiful has showed the Panacea the way of the coming flesh, and has left behind one of her own progeny to help the offspring of the Sisters to see the way."



to recharge its own existence. The lake is, of course, poisonous to organic creatures, and the dark stalkers who dwell in the region have been using it for many years to make their poisons (see area **ID8**).

ID15. The Stricken Child

The forest path widens a bit here for an intersection, with a tangle of fallen bronze boughs littering the edges of the place. Shadows grope from just beyond the limits of sight and seem to reach out to an odd monument in the centre of the intersection. The monument resembles a ghastly metal bed held in wickedly sharp iron spines. Lying prostrate upon this bed of rust-coloured spines and blooms cradled in slowly enveloping iron growths is a sickly pale man. He is naked, and his revolting affliction is clear for all to see. The miserable man's head is swollen obscenely, a degenerate bloated thing that looks ready to burst at the lightest of touches. His eyes bulge painfully and his jaw hangs slack, a trail of spittle dripping from it. On closer examination, you can see that the thing has only vestigial hands and feet as well as a second head — a grotesque and elongated thing that looks to have been squashed at some time — lolls behind the swollen cranium.

The thing in the metal bed is the **Stricken Child**† . One of the most abominable of the Sisters' scions, the Stricken Child has lived its three decades propped in this bed, occasionally fed and conversing with the other progeny who emerge nervously from the forest. Unable to move from its bed yet possessed of a very sharp intellect, the Stricken Child acts as an ambassador or warning for those who come here idly. The Stricken Child listens and learns. It is very clever at drawing out secrets and fears and has no compunction whatsoever about using these skills as it has no other means of defending itself if attacked. The Child knows much about the Panacea, the recent visit by the Beautiful, and what is allegedly going to happen next. And it is masterful at planting seeds of doubt into its enemies and friends and then playing upon the resulting fears.

Tactics: This is not intended to be a combat encounter, though the characters can play it as one if they so choose. In combat, the Stricken Child immediately howls, then seeks to survive until help arrives. If it still lives, the **Watcher in the Woods** (the **Cloaker** at **ID13**) arrives to assist the Child within 2 rounds following the howl, with the **Guardian** (the **ettin** from ID16) and 1d3 **children of the forest**† arriving from area **ID16** in another 1d4 rounds. Two more **children of the forest**† arrive every 1d2 rounds until all 6 of them from that area have arrived. All reinforcements fight to the death in the Child's defence.

Development: If the characters don't immediately attack the Stricken Child when they see it, upon spotting them it begins to make a gurgling, choking noise from its one functional mouth. After a moment, they are able to tell that it is laughing. It was expecting the arrival of the characters through its mysterious senses of other realms and worlds. It welcomes the characters by name, including a prophetic cognomen of a dire fate (such as, "Artimus, Whose Flesh shall be Stripped from her Bones by Rats while she yet Lives" or "Tybor the Mage, Betrayed Unto Death by his Own Companions," etc.). Be colourful in coming up with these but also try to tie in little pieces of the characters' own backgrounds and fears just enough to make them seem to be possibly plausible. The result of these dark glimpses into possible futures is that each character must make a DC 16 Wisdom save or be disadvantaged on any attacks against the Stricken Child.

After this, it then smiles knowingly at the characters and says, "You have questions to which I have answers, but I see no reason to waste my wisdom upon the walking dead. Come, amuse me, and perhaps I might tell you how your ends come."

If the characters are threatening, the Child continues to smile and states that, with but a thought, all the progeny of the forest will come to its aid. It proceeds to paint a vivid (if inaccurate) picture of what may come if it chooses to call: "giants of the earth never meant to be born," "the foul offspring of the deepest pits who shamble in the misshapen dark," "things without form or light but that can call forth all the horrors of the Shadow," "Fetch stalking the Underneath that even Beltane banished for their perverse thirsts and dark power," "those horrors which the Tunnel

People whisper of in dread and gouge out their own eyes rather than look upon them," etc. It mentions that it prefers polite conversation over fighting, though, even if only with lesser organisms. Characters making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Inspiration) check can detect some falsehood in its description of the creatures that will come at its call, but not exactly which parts are untrue or exaggerated.

If the characters engage the Stricken Child in conversation, they gain one item of information from the "Font of Knowledge" Sidebar. One character may also make a single Wisdom (Inspiration) check against the Stricken Child's opposed check (+5) to gain additional information in the course of a friendly conversation. If the character's roll does not exceed the Stricken Child's, no further information is forthcoming. If the character's roll beats the Stricken Child's by less than 4, a single additional piece of information is gained, and if the roll beats the Stricken Child's by 5 or more, the character gains two additional pieces of information. If the roll beat the Stricken Child's roll by 5 or more,

the character also gains the insight that the Stricken Child despises its current form and physical condition, and in the darkest depths of its soul still hopes beyond hope that the Beautiful will cure its affliction.

XP Award: If the characters avoid combat with the Stricken Child, award a total of 500 XP for gaining information without fighting.

ID16. The Clearing of False Hopes and Children of the Forest

Note: the characters may already have encountered the Children of the Forest if they attacked the Stricken Child in **ID15**.

Five huge metal trees have formed a great clearing here, smoky shadows in the undergrowth kept at bay by their scythe-like boughs and thorns. A number of small children dance and caper about the clearing while being watched by a brutish giant seated upon a rusty iron tree stump. The giant's two heads keep diligent watch over the children, but the children are not quite what they seem upon closer inspection. They have goat-like legs, wild, flowing hair, and their faces resemble a variety of different beasts: here a pig, there a wolf, and there a bull.

The clearing is home to more of the Sisters' scions. These abominable things are 6 **children of the forest**†, part animal and part human. They were all birthed at a single time and play here with their champion, punisher, and keeper: an **ettin** called "the Guardian," also birthed by the Sisters. The trees resemble the scythe tree in **ID10,** but they are not sentient and are unable to attack. Their appearance is simply due to being a closely akin strain to that type of sentient tree and the enhancing mutagenic effects of Between. It is possible that within a few years these trees will sprout a sentience of their own, but for now they simply remain inanimate trees. Like the Guardian, the children of the forest are now two decades old, but from a distance their play resembles that of children when they are seen. However, when viewed from closer, the truth becomes obvious — they are monstrous in appearance.

Tactics: The children do not like to fight, but will if the odds are greatly in their favour or if defending the Stricken Child (**ID15**). They particularly enjoy feasting on fallen characters or those unable to defend themselves. The Guardian is a brute, often as interested in ordering the children about as he is to attacking any enemies.

Treasure: The children have left toys amongst the clearing and in the roots of the surrounding trees, and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to locate each. These toys include a doll stitched together from the parts of people on one of whose many hands is a gold wedding ring worth 100 gp, a carved wooden soldier (without a head) set on a platinum base worth 100 gp, a jar of dark creeper eyes with a lustrous but slightly flawed emerald worth 400 gp floating among them, a pair of puppet pigs both of which have false eyes made of large-but-dull obsidians worth 50 gp each, and a very tattered mortomata puppy that barks pitifully but is still worth 50 gp. The Guardian has a dozen switches on a hefty leather belt, one of which is actually a *staff of the python,* though he doesn't know it.

ID17. The House at the Heart of the Ironwood

A ruin stands here in the forest, the shell of a building with a wide opening where a door once hung.

Looking inside the shell reveals a single, small figure standing still on the sloped floor and facing the north wall. She is a donkey-faced **child of the forest**† and was told to remain here no matter what, as a punishment by the Guardian (**ID16**) for some small infraction. She is terrified of it — but more so her kin who try to find any hint of weakness to prey upon — and has been here for several hours. The arrival of the characters does not deter her from her task. If attacked, she flees screaming.

ID18. The Long, Jagged Way

This path here passes beneath an arch of giant bleached bones that appear to be whale ribs. Ahead through an opening in the side of the great cyst is just barely visible a glimpse of a vast, strange building.

The Jagged Way is the final leg of the journey to the Womb. The scrimshaw work on the ribs details visions the Sisters have had over the years, the majority of these depicting the Angel appearing and cleansing the world of the ignorant and foolish — always by fire. However, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check locates one different carving amongst the others. This one seems to depict a trio of wells emitting some kind of light. The vision that prompted this scrimshaw carving has a bearing upon the final adventure of ***The Levee***, ***L9: Utopia***. A **dark creeper**† lurks on the edges of the way to accompany guests to the Womb and to announce them using its horn. If the characters allow the creature, it leads them down the path to the Womb and then blows its horn to announce the arrival of new guests. This, of course, alerts the occupants. See **An Alerted Womb** Sidebox in **Part 4** below.

Treasure: The dark creeper's horn is made of brass and banded in silver. It is worth 15 gp.

Part Four: The Womb

Long ago, three Sisters crawled into the dark and were never seen again …

The Symphony of Ore (and also Awe) as it was known lay abandoned, forgotten, a story in amongst thousands of other stories, one recounted by dwarves and occasionally disturbed by passing miners and delvers. Until *they* arrived.

The Sisters were drawn here without understanding why, drawn by visions of an angel in white light who would cleanse the city of ignorance and filth, leaving only the enlightened. For years, they worshipped her with their flesh, their life-giving, their visions, which sometimes caused them to lapse for years into madness. Decades passed before they achieved their Nirvana, when the coming of the Beautiful confirmed that all their waiting had been worth it. Had they drawn the angel or had the angel drawn them? It no longer mattered.

Just days ago she came, and smiled upon them, granting one sister an instant awakening — a Heaven of her own — and a way to whisper to her Sisters what had become of her, by creating a *Between vessel* that stored her initial thoughts and the dreams of the Angel herself. The Sisters now have the vessel, crave its touch, long for its joy. In the wrong hands, it could be a weapon to prevent the Beautiful from releasing the city from its sin. And to show her powers, the Beautiful unmade the Womb and unleashed it, giving it life, changing its very physicality into a place of Between.

The other two Sisters she instructed to await the coming days; told them that people may come who seek to harm them, even to harm the Beautiful herself. These strangers do not understand her ways — or perhaps, she said, they were beginning to.

The two Sisters perfected their cabalistic magic, and waited for the strangers to come … or for the world to be unmade and reborn as something beautiful. Beautiful.

Features of the Womb

What was once a symphony of the art of oreblossom lay rusting, dying, the iron trees that supported its copper domes decaying, corroding, her metal floors covered in the blight of ochre leaves. The arrival of the Sisters changed this a little, in a mortal way, transforming the palace with a patina of mortal colour, a desecration of mortal art.

The past few weeks, however, have changed it into something indescribable. The draw of the Between and the coming of the Beautiful have exploded the art and old magic of the dwarves and made it impossible — impossibly beautiful. Now iron birds sing in the air, colours of aching hue burn in the palace, and the scent of nectar overwhelms. The Womb has become more than just a place, it has become part of the Between, if only in the merest way. Yet, like all of Between, there is something lurking at the edges, unseen behind the corner of the mirror — the smell of rust and corrosion lurk behind the aroma of nectar, the places where the two places have not fit, and react to each other like sore and dislocated bones.

The descriptions below have several rooms that do not fit into worldly logic, rooms that are found once and never seen again, spaces between spaces. The characters have most likely met this effect before, and are destined to do so more often as ***The Levee Adventure*** slowly comes to the boil. This time, however, it is front and centre in the Adventure Chapter.

Handle this section carefully. A quick look at the more fanciful works of Clark Ashton Smith will give you the right language — words such as preternatural, luxuriant, daemonic strangeness, and fertility. It's up to you to add the aura of dream and impossibility. Read **Part 5: Between** of ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum*** and use the suggestions within the text as starting points from which to build your descriptions. The real memories for your players, however, will come from your understanding of what makes them tick individually and using that information to make the place even more alive.

Aspects of Between in the Womb

Several aspects from Between are found here. Some of these effects, as noted in the text, occur only once per room. There are others, however, that you can play with.

The first aspect is the presence of a throbbing, continuous beating noise in the background, almost within the ground itself. After a while, the characters should deduce that this is a pump, steadily pounding somewhere, sometimes below and sometimes above but never located. You should insinuate that this pump is powered by something unnatural — occasionally it groans, or a beat is missed, or a sob echoes.

Another aspect is a glimpse from the corner of the eye. Your characters should glimpse things — things with wrong bodies. These are simple echoes of Between but again lead to no actual encounter. Occasionally asking for a Wisdom check for no reason may also add to the air of slight confusion.

Simply put, use the Between here to freak out the players in any way you see fit. Bear in mind that Between feeds upon fears and aspects of the mundane world. Use it, and use the characters' fears to disturb them, even — if you like — by subtly changing them while they are here. First think this one through carefully; the characters are going to be physically affected by this adventure path anyway, so a pre-taste might be useful, but don't make it too excessive — yet — that'll come soon enough. You might want the Blight Maladies (see **The Levee — A Blight Adventure** introductory chapter) to come to the fore here. It might even benefit them whilst they are here, only to vanish again as they leave, perhaps leaving them hungering for its aura. As ever, you know your players best. The simplest way to play this is just to do it as a full-on way to worry them, having some unreality here.

The place is dangerous to explore. At one stage (as soon as they enter if you wish, but otherwise, whenever you decide), each character must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or gain a Blight Malady.

Beyond this, the Womb is a place of art, each chamber a particular hue or feeling. This colour or effect is palpable, sometimes even affecting the characters as they see, hear, smell, or feel it. You can assume that, while they admire this effect, the Womb's occupants are immune to it.

The past is alive here, giving the characters glimpses of the palace as it was, in all its *mundane* glory. Rooms vanish into strange corners, dwarves of old walk by, and the sound of water and hammers echo. It is like walking through a living dream that follows the no-logic that dreams do, only given more substance than a dream would normally have. The characters are relatively powerless to control the visions of the past in this place but can actually try to use them to search for the Angel. If any character attempts to glean some useful information from these visions, allow him a DC 20 Wisdom save. If successful, he glimpses something of the Angel herself. Once one character has discovered this possibility, he can share it amongst his party members so that all may be looking for clues to the Angel in the glimpses of the past. Eventually, all three of the following Angel-related visions should be discovered. They always appear in the following order.

1. The first glimpse is of the Angel recreating the place, exploding it from its mundane existence into something from Between. Her whole being is a wave of joy as three women who are obviously sisters look on, their own works nothing but shadows.

2. The second glimpse is of the character being approached by the Angel herself. She walks directly up to the character, her steps a little awkward perhaps. In her wake, she leaves a trail of insects and petals. She stares at the character and says, perhaps reproachfully, perhaps intrigued, "What are you that chases me? Friend or foe?" and vanishes in a storm of black bees that suddenly scatters and disappears.

3. The third glimpse is of the Angel creating doorways into Between and drawing forth its contents: places of forest, of mountains, gardens of statues. Each is clearly endless. The Sisters take tentative steps into these places before being gently brought back and whispered to by the Angel.

Done With Mirrors

Mapping Between is a challenge, but every solid encounter needs a good solid map to base events accurately upon. To reconcile these two factors — the need for accuracy opposed to a dream-like world of odd angles — the maps may look a little (OK a lot) strange. Make these rooms seem especially odd, with shadowy corners and strange ceilings and wall angles, oddly awakened statues, and things that scuttle into corners. To get an idea of the effect the Between has, get two big mirrors in the largest room in your house and use the reflections to show odd angles against others. You'll get some very strange-looking areas that give you a light taste of the Between. Imagine if you could step straight from where you really stand into the second reflection. A quick skim of *Through the Looking-Glass* and those weird, weird sets of the *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* with their crooked angles may also help to get the right feel of these encounters.

Servitors in the Womb

The Sisters have spent decades building up a staff of skeletons to serve their needs. These skeletons act as servants and guardians, and serve any other needs or whims the Sisters may have. Although some are mentioned in the text, add others as often as you wish. Hundreds of them are around the place, though they never gather in large numbers or turn into much of a threat.

These skeletons are a curious group. Almost all of them are only partly human, and many have animal skulls. Some are like humanoid spiders with several skeletons made into one, others are more disturbing combinations of man and beasts. Most are dressed as though they still live, with animal masks and sagging clothes that seem to mock them more. The majority of these skeletons do not attack (unless otherwise noted in the text), but many follow and stare blankly. Some, however, act even more strangely. After the arrival of the Beautiful, they have had an unbidden curiosity awoken within them, and this can manifest itself in odd actions: touching visitors, picking up a thrown object or expended ranged weapon ammunition and staring at it, trying to comb the characters' hair, brushing their clothes for them, or even serving them unpalatable meals. Play these as you wish, but do not make them comical — or if you do, make that comedy dark and sickening.

W1. The Malachite Palace

The metal forest literally bows obsequiously at the feet of a vast building that almost appears as if being birthed from the cavern ahead. It is a squat thing of ochre rusting trees and grown pillars infested with grinning rust-coloured gargoyles. The building emerges through the cavern walls, almost fighting to pass through it seems. A set of steps that uncannily resemble broken teeth rises to a hefty wooden door. Even as you stare at the place, it subtly changes, stones and walls shifting to accommodate some new form.

There are windows in the structure, but they are mere suggestions of openings, as well as more mundane features such as guttering and gables and bricks, all of which are a part of the whole grown thing. They are cosmetic, not functional. Characters seeing the building and making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check realise that the building has somehow been touched by Between — and recently. The place shows signs of excessive growth of late, possibly giving it its intrapartum illusion.

The door sits very tightly in its frame and must be forced open. It also has an audible *alarm* spell cast upon it each day by Vertiline. She casts the spell twice each day, once at dawn and once 12 hours later. She does so quickly and without ceremony. If triggered, the spell sounds like an echoing hand bell, but greatly enhanced by Between. This changed version of the spell gets under the skin of those nearby, causing everyone within 60 feet to make a DC 16 Wisdom save or be confused for 1 round as the spell *confusion*. The save must be made again each round for the 6 rounds the alarm sounds, but once a saving throw is made successfully, no further saves must be made by that individual. None of the Womb's occupants is affected by the spell. If the alarm sounds, all of the occupants in the place are alerted (see **An Alerted Womb** Sidebox below).

The Watchful Child†, a deformed, ironclad gargoyle, clings to the outside of the Womb hiding amongst the many other gargoyles. Following its orders are 3 **iron cobras**† that hide in the nearby undergrowth with full concealment. The Watchful Child waits until the door to the Womb is opened before attacking with the assistance of its cobra allies.

When the Watchful Child is first seen, read the following description.

Certainly some type of a gargoyle, this creature appears to be badly made. Its face is almost child-like but broad and stretched, while behind its grey body hang two angelic wings. From its skeletal frame erupt metal plates and nodules that grow upon it like tumours. Four arms extend from its torso, but a stunted and shrivelled fifth arm hangs from the thing's neck. This last child-like limb has not grown to adulthood and gropes about clumsily at the air.

Treasure: The ironclad gargoyle is wreathed in other metals, which grow spontaneously from its form. Its teeth are all adamantine, which can be crafted or improvised into weapons. The teeth can be crafted into up to 24 arrows or bolts, but doing so requires the assistance of a blacksmith. They may also be used as crude spearheads without any modification (other than attaching them to a shaft of some kind).

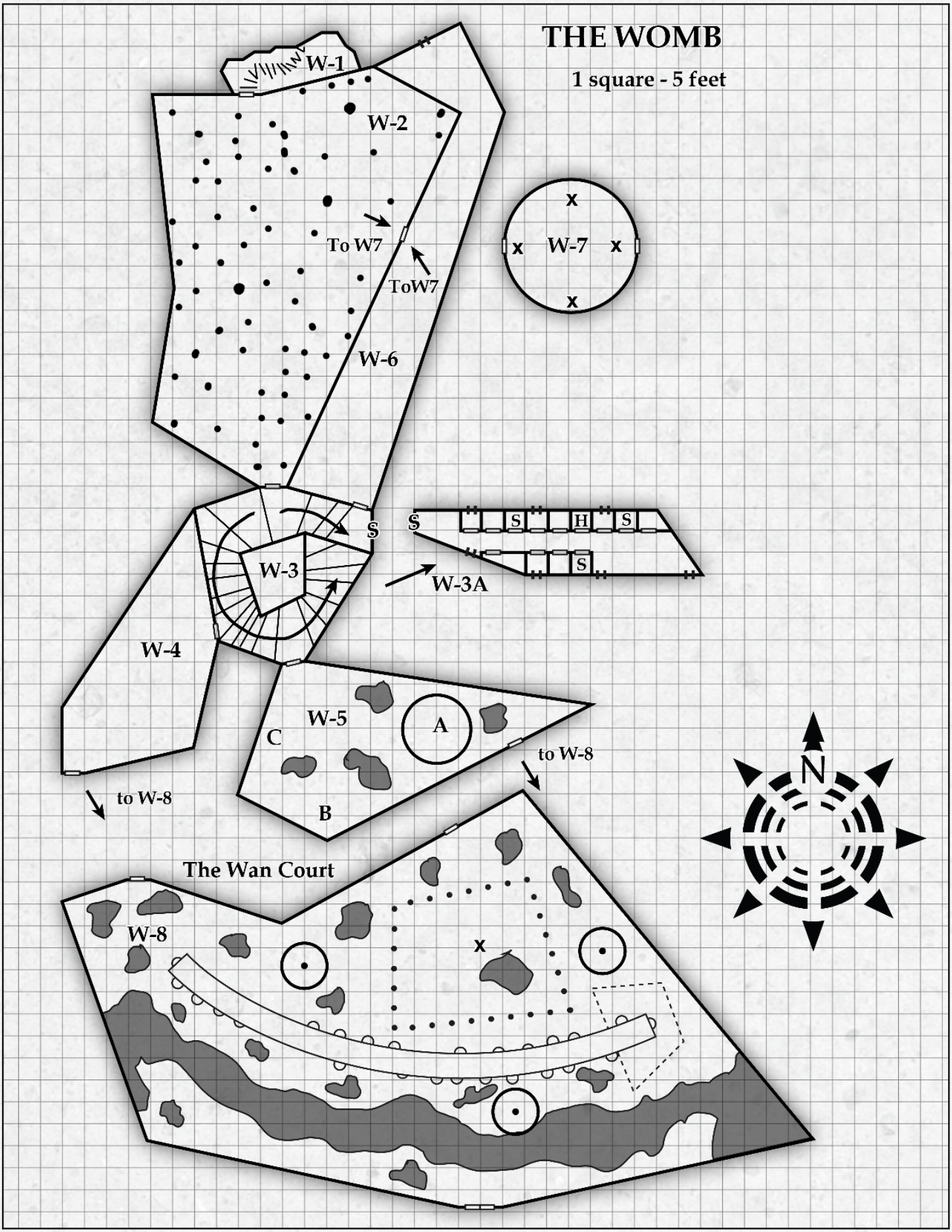
W2. Rusty Welcome

Beyond the door, a chaos of pillars juts across the chamber to form a twisting maze. As you stare at these pillars, you realise that they support a roof that is not squared properly or at right angles to the columns themselves. Impossibly, some are higher than others, yet all seem to reach the ceiling just the same. All of the pillars are shadowy, though, seemingly enveloped in a sick ochre-coloured corrosion. Above the pillars, stalactites (somehow) hang like nauseating ornaments, their elongated forms reminding you of angels.

An Alerted Womb

There are some opportunities for the occupants of the Womb to be alerted to intruders. They expect attack anyway and are able to prepare quickly. If an alarm has been raised, either through the *alarm* spell at **W1** or by being carried to the Womb from elsewhere (see **Part 3** above), the entire place is on alert. For the next hour, none of the occupants can be surprised. In addition, the following preparations are made.

- The bull owlbear in **W3** is unchained and allowed to wander freely in the stairwell to attack and pursue anyone who enters until slain.
- Gaggwellslitskin and the dark creepers in **W3A** douse all the lights and prepare to ambush anyone the moment they enter.
- The Engineer in **W7** is waiting quietly, hiding above the grille. He starts shaking ladders and cutting ropes as soon as he sees a vulnerable moment.
- The Sisters in **W9** send the Custodian to battle the characters when they enter **W8**.


THE WOMB
1 square - 5 feet
W-1
W-2
To W7
ToW7
W-7
W-6
W-3
W-3A
S
H
W-4
W-5
A
C
B
to W-8
to W-8
The Wan Court
W-8
N

The pillars have grown spontaneously from the floor, Between etching more centuries of age upon them and causing them to become brittle. Formerly, the chamber had a grand entrance, now reduced to this confusing mass of pillars. Characters looking closely at the pillars or making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that each is etched with hundreds of dwarven faces. The dwarf faces are echoes of those who lived here long ago. Characters deliberately touching any of the faces are drawn into an angelic vision (see Sidebox).

The stalactites that grow here so quickly are the ones taken by so many of the Panacea as tokens of the presence of their messiah, the Beautiful. Even a cursory examination of the ceiling reveals signs of those that have been broken off and taken. Yet even these broken stumps are showing signs of growing anew already.

There are two doors out of this chamber, but both sit wrongly in their frames. The eastern door leads to area **W7**, an impossible space between this room and (**W6**). The other door leads to area **W3**. Neither requires a Strength check to open.

The Child of Anger is a female **ettin**, another of the Sisters' twisted progeny, and she lurks in the pillar chamber. The creature has been haunted by the whispered words of dwarves and sees any dwarf that arrives in the flesh as the embodiment of the dark spirits that lurk here. She launches into an insane fury, attacking the dwarf in preference to any others and doing so relentlessly. In place of a melee attack, the Child of Anger can topple a pillar in the chamber by using an attack action (requiring a d20 roll of 12 or higher). The pillars are 20 ft tall, and fall into that area, inflicting 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage (DC 20 Dexterity save for half damage).

She has two heads, but crouches on legs and arms like a quadruped. Her back is arched and causes her heads to loll no more than a few inches above the ground. Her thick hide dances with fleas, but beyond its shawl of infestation she is naked. Her sloping back does not end at the base of her spine but instead extends out into a wan tail dancing with lice. This tail likewise ends in a human head that is malformed on one side, as though the flesh of it has partially melted.

There are also 2 **dust mephits** lurking here. They have a slightly metallic look to their dust and bodies, but this is due to the influence of the Between; they are not essentially different from their normal kin. The mephits do not like to fight, but do enjoy encouraging the Child onward as she attacks. They pester her relentlessly as she fights and have a 25% chance each round of triggering a blood rage within her. Once triggered, it lasts until the end of the battle. If drawn into combat, the mephits try to flee after 1 round in order to continue their abuse from afar.

W3. The Ebon Anger and Twisted Stair

The space you see before you is even more confusing than the last. This is a stairway, but the steps are wrong — large then small, steep then shallow — as they rise and fall, passing ice-kissed windows on their jagged way. The stair has an open stairwell at its heart but glancing down and up makes you feel dizzy as you struggle to take in its crooked angles and demented form. From above and below come growls.

The stairs change as they rise and fall, passing through glassy walled sections and graceful arches, through frescoes depicting dragons devouring virgins to opulent walls of gilt and dancing torchlight and heroic frescoes of chivalry and battles. The ebon stair is considered difficult terrain for movement. Despite appearances, the windows are not made of glass, but the dream stuff of Between. They cannot be broken, but characters glancing through them see the jagged skyline of the city impossibly hanging outside. The place is at an odd angle as though the characters are in a very high place. A successful DC 20 Intelligence check places the windows somewhere in the Capitol. Characters looking out across the city and making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that there are three half-rainbows arching across the city, each rainbow curls from a maddeningly active well of dark colour, the locations of which are impossible to tell. The glimpse is an odd vision of what is to come at the end of ***The Levee Adventure*** when the Beautiful opens a trio of wells into Between in the last adventure ***L9: Utopia***. For now, there is no explanation other being an odd Between phenomenon.

Angelic Vision

Characters touching the pillars in **W2** are drawn into a Between vision. This affects only the first character touching the pillar. Only the character that first touches one of the pillars has the vision, and it is over in only a moment (though the character doesn't know that). When the character touches the pillar, draw that player aside and read the following description.

Suddenly, a dazzling myriad of shadows dance across the room as a great light bursts forth from behind the pillars. Somewhere within the light is an amorphous shape.

The light is the Beautiful. She is not physically here but can converse and react as if she were. The Beautiful has a voice like nectar and the scent of ambrosia. She is here to ask the character why he is following her. Her point in coming is simple: She has been called to Castorhage by a holy man who has been sickened by what he has seen in his life. She intends to cleanse the city of its shadows and sickness and greed. She responds to any questions about her followers' unsavoury activities by saying that they are not enlightened yet, but their souls must be good as their souls calls to her and it was they and the call of Gromwell who bought her into the world to colour it beautiful. Play the Angel as a divine creature drawn into a sick world. Portray her as a benign yet horribly naive creature that cannot fathom her perspective not being the only possible view of matters. Criticism stings her, but ultimately she knows it is misguided and wrong.

Bear in mind if the Angel has touched one or more characters. At this stage, she denies any knowledge of such a link, and if the character having the vision claims any prior meetings in dreams, she politely refutes that such a thing ever happened. Overall, this encounter should be cordial, perhaps even intellectual, but it should tell the character very little, if anything. The light fades after the encounter, and the shadows return to the chamber. The taint of corrosion and the stench of the underground once more assail the character in question; when the Angel was in the chamber all was light and warmth and honey. Now that kiss of the divine has gone, and the world is a hollow, mundane place again. The entire encounter lasted only a fraction of a second, and to the characters' companions nothing noticeable happened. The character who had the vision, though, feels as if minutes, perhaps even hours, passed as he conversed with the Angel.

In truth, the Angel has come to sow the seeds of doubt into the characters who, at the end of the adventure path, are faced with a very difficult dilemma that may make or break the city.

The stair rises in three very confusing turns, to reach its end outside area **W6** at a very crooked door. A secret door to the right of this door requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. The stairway also descends, but through 9 full turns (each descending 30 feet) before ending at an identical-looking door at the foot of the stairwell, which is submerged in 3 feet of salty water. This bottom door is a false door.

A massive **giant owlbear**† is chained to the iron handrail and able to access only the bottom 3 circuits of the staircase. This huge creature is a dank, black feathery mass of anger.

Development: If attacked by foes beyond its reach, the owlbear quickly ducks back into the shadowy steps below where it has full cover. Characters can get a clear view of the creature only from the level immediately above where the owlbear is.

Treasure: Amongst the objects collected along the stairway are a large number of oddly curious but valueless items in recesses, including stuffed dodos, books about poetry, a pile of dead starlings, and countless bookends shaped like men. Some of the objects are of value, however, including a fine silver hand mirror with gilt filigree work worth 200 gp, a pair of very fine walrus tusks worth 150 gp, and a black lacquered *+1 chain shirt*.

W3A. The Grey Attic of Gaggwellslitskin and his Collection of Hair

The chamber has hefty beams above proclaiming this to be the attic. A long line of a twisting corridor punctuated with crooked doors staggers from you, thirteen doors in all. At the far end of the long corridor is a stained-glass window depicting an angel. Behind it, a strangely organic-looking sick light caresses the glass with awkward fingers. Every beam and surface in the attic is tied with locks of hair — some are fresh and bright, from blonde to black, others are old and dusty and dirty.

The hair is the property of Gaggwellslitskin, an **oni** who lives here with 6 **dark creeper**† assistants. Gaggwellslitskin collects the hair of its victims, some of which it has kept here for the lustre of their hair so it can harvest them forever. There is no red hair to be seen, however, as the occupant collects that colour above all others. Each of the thirteen doors is locked, but a key hangs from a lock of hair on a rusty nail at the side of each. Cells with windows have very narrow (4-inch wide) barred openings that are caked with grime. They prove impossible to open or pass through.

The opaque stained-glass window at the end of the hall has a clammy feel to the touch, and touching it draws forth the shadowy form of a horrifically distorted humanoid face somehow pulled lengthwise. The figure beyond the mirror does nothing more than look pitiful; it has been trapped in the window for centuries, having displeased the Beautiful long, long ago.

Treasure: Gaggwellslitskin carries a dozen lengths of thick red hair bound in gold wire, worth a total of 125 gp.

Development: If the oni hears people outside its attic, it rouses its dark creepers and stalks intruders outside on the stair (**W3**), preferring in all cases to attack those with red hair before any others. It is not interested in bald or shaven-headed characters, and if the party is entirely made up of such, it is possible that it and its helpers leave the characters alone upon seeing their hairless state.

Several of the cells are empty, but three contain scalped corpses (S). The cell marked **H** contains a **sea hag**, a creature that slithered down from the waters around Festival several months ago when the Womb was more normal in structure and had spaces and sewers to crawl into. The hag attempts to get help and her cell door open, claiming she is breathtakingly beautiful if necessary to do so. If freed, she is as likely to be as confused as the characters by the Between, and lurks in the shadows in the Womb, possibly even following the characters to get out — her only wish.

W4. The Vermillion Scream

This chamber has a skin of rusting boughs tinged with deep red. Red lanterns hang from the walls, which are hidden by the intertwined boughs. Within hang half a dozen pictures, including one at the end depicting a figure with a distended mouth screaming. This last figure hangs above a twisted door. Above, arches hold angel statues that smile beatifically upon you. Behind them are frescoes depicting tales of history and glory. Within the boughs and lurking upon the floor are figures, some of clay, some of bone, some of sinew.

The screaming figure is one of the characters — the one, in fact, that has had the most contact with the Beautiful. It is an exact likeness apart from the impossibly distended mouth. Characters examining the painting see that Castorhage is depicted behind the screaming figure and that figures that must be vampires and wererats dance at his back, knives drawn, claws and teeth sharp.

The angel statues have an uncanny knack of seeming to watch visitors with their eyes, some occasionally move slightly, but they do not otherwise interact with visitors. The other figures are a mixture of statues made by Algernon Alfonce Leptonia† (see ***L4: Decay***), except that these figures move, albeit very slowly. The other figures are disgusting creations that have had life breathed into them. They are part carcass, part art, and each has animal and monster and human parts but, unless attacked, they merely follow the characters, perhaps touching their hair or fingers. These are 6 **zombies**. Attacking the creations triggers an event detailed below.

Lurking among the boughs are several other creatures, including a **swarm of ravens** and **2 dust mephits**. Like the zombies, they are merely curious, but do not leave the safety of the boughs unless the zombies are attacked, in which case they swarm from the walls and assail the characters. The ravens immediately attack the character who attacked the zombies, while the mephits try to neutralize the other characters.

Treasure: The 6 other paintings in the room are incredible, but too disturbing for the ordinary market. They each depict a specific sin and are very graphic. If the characters don't mind dealing in such filth, they could be sold for 2,500 gp per painting.

W5. The Boiling Boudoir of Crimson Lust and Fulfilled Fantasies

The scent of perfumes and unguents and incense caresses you in this crimson chamber. Erotic statues gather and seem to dance in the soft lamplight. The chamber is a confusion of iron trees and ochre rusting flowers.

This chamber is an explosion of the room the Sisters used to indulge their whims and hungers in. They populated the chamber with 13 polymorphed victims (N male or female human commoners) taken from the city above, that are all now part animal (goats, horses, and pigs) and part human. All the humanoid features are beautiful. The polymorphed people have been subjected to years of the Sisters' abuses and are sickeningly agreeable. They are guarded in this chamber by 2 **lesser flesh golems**† that attack any who enter that do not first say, "The bounty of the Panacea." If the pass phrase is spoken, the characters discover that the golems were designed as objects of amusement and abuse and are just as compliant as the polymorphed prisoners.

The prisoners do not attack, even if attacked themselves, and they are afraid of their own shadows. If the golems are defeated, and magic used by the characters to influence them — or the characters succeed at a DC 25 Charisma check — the golems are able to tell the characters about the Sisters' beautiful appearance, and how the Womb has changed dramatically over just the past few weeks. But they know little else of use.

The area marked **A** is a broad circular pool surrounded by statues of angels. The pool is warm, but the water has an unpleasant acidity to it that causes no ill effects other than to make eyes and noses, or any open wounds or scratches to sting uncomfortably. **B** is a grotto of statuary both erotic and revolting, and **C** is a huge feather bed drifting in a carpet of rusted flower petals.

Development: The magic affecting the prisoners can, of course, be reversed. The *polymorph* was cast by a former member of the cult who has since met a dire fate unrelated to this adventure. However, so broken are these people that they simply follow any saviours like sheep. The broken spirit of these victims should give the characters a strong hint about just what will happen if the Beautiful succeeds in her plan for remaking the city.

Ad Hoc XP Award: Every prisoner that is rescued and returned to the city above is worth 100 XP to the characters. However, if the polymorph effect is not broken before releasing them, they find themselves ostracised, kidnapped for freakshows, and generally abused by those who see them as misshapen monsters. If the characters take the time to keep them cloistered until all of the polymorph effects can be removed, then each prisoner so saved is worth 500 XP instead.

W6. The Sallow Folly

A broad, irregular corridor staggers from you, its edges somehow stretched and moulded into unnatural angles and curves. It appears mostly to be made of bones, and spreads like a colossal ribcage ahead of you, though thousands of smaller bones fill the gaps to create a solid, relatively level surface to walk upon. Within the bones and tying them firmly together into a cohesive whole are sinews and muscles, glistening and alive. Clasped within the grip of this imprisoning bone and flesh are embedded several huge bell jars holding dark slithering forms.

The Beautiful is rarely selective in engulfing an area with Between effects or opening a gateway into Between. In a deep part of the old Womb the Sisters kept their mistakes, the half-born hybrids that mercifully did not live or other created creatures they acquired over the years. When the Beautiful threw open the effects of Between in the old dwarven palace, this room was created. Partly alive, the Sallow Folly has an unsettling movement within its sinews and bones. Furthermore, the failed scions have been gathered here and been given a semblance of life, with the more disturbing ones hidden in dark recesses (see "Development" below) while the rest remain on display. The progeny on display are encased in fleshy amniotic sacs that have a resemblance to bell jars at first glance but are actually part of a unique undead ooze called the **Child of Folly**† that inhabits this chamber. The misshapen creatures inside these sacs are not alive, and their movement merely reflect those of the Child's on actions causing them to bob about in their floating coffins.

The entire room itself, the Sallow Folly, is also alive, though not in any way aware or able to make attacks (think of it as inside the proverbial whale's stomach). However, it can be injured by errant ranged attacks as well as damaging area effect spells. Such attacks cause the entire room to moan with a distant and horribly alien dirge, mingled faintly with a cacophony of children's voices screeching. If the Sallow Folly sustains 20 points of damage or more in one of these attacks, the moan changes to a drawn-out scream of great intensity as the room momentarily shakes as if in the throes of an earthquake. When this occurs, every living thing within the room must make a successful DC 18 Constitution save or be deafened and confused for 1d6 rounds. If a character makes a save, they are immune to future effects from the room.

The Child of Folly

The Child of Folly has seeped into the many tiny gaps and crevices within the bone floor. It is not initially visible other than the amniotic sacs that protrude from the floor and hold their foul contents. Once the characters begin to explore the room, the creature oozes forth from the floor into one cohesive globule covered in a dozen of the quivering flesh sacs. It tries to position itself between the characters and the exits in hopes of trapping them within the room. Read the following description when this occurs:

A repulsive mass of oozing bloody flesh seeps up between the minute gaps in the flooring of the chamber. It coalesces into a single huge ooze studded with a half dozen vessels that you took to be glass jars, but that are evident now as some sort of organic sac that grow from the surface of the ooze. Wrapped within these horrific wombs are changed creatures, like those you have seen before but much more malformed. These with faces bear looks of hatred; the others merely scream and stagger about within their fleshy prisons.

Development: Within the fleshy walls of the Sallow Folly are worse examples that the characters fortunately cannot glimpse by accident. They have to actually search to locate these monstrosities, and each requires a separate DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a successful check, there is a 50% chance that one of these preserved offspring is discovered and 50% chance that one of the treasures under "Treasure" below is discovered. If the result of the check is one of the preserved monstrosities, consult the table below to determine which they have discovered. Each monstrosity can be found only once. The jars are glass and easily broken if the characters handle them roughly.

1d4	Result
1	A jar containing a pickled four-headed human child. One head is snake-like and the child has altogether too many limbs. Once discovered, its eyes open and its snakehead begins to thrash, filling the jar with a cloud of sediment stirred up from the bottom that thankfully hides it from view. If it is released, its form becomes fluid and it squirts from the jar to become an **ochre jelly**.
2	Clearly some sort of skum hybrid, this child fills the jar it is in almost to the breaking point. It is a ghastly, blind mix of fish and flesh. If opened, the jar releases a cloud of acidic vapour in a 10-foot spread equal in effect to an *acid splash* spell, though it is nonmagical. The cloud remains for 5 rounds.
3	This jar holds a bloated child with eight limbs, its head turned away from you. If the characters turn the jar to see its face, it seems vaguely familiar. This child actually bears a resemblance to his mother Vertiline, whom the characters have seen crude renderings of in various artworks during this and the previous adventure.
4	The creature in this jar is a disturbing cross between human and lizard, with its face tucked pitifully under its crossed arms. It is actually a human-basilisk hybrid, and if the characters turn the jar to catch a glimpse of its face, they find it is horrific, its eyes far too wide upon its green-scaled face, its mouth a mass of unblemished needle-sharp teeth. Viewing characters are all subjected to the dead basilisk's gaze attack, and may become petrified. Now that the jar has been exposed to light, the effect of this basilisk gaze will only last for 10 minutes.

Treasure: In addition to the revolting specimens described above, there are also several treasures hidden in the walls of Sallow Folly. These also each require a separate DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate. On each successful check, there is a 50% chance that one of the treasures below is discovered, and a 50% chance that one of the specimens above is discovered. If a treasure is discovered, roll on the following table. Each treasure can be found only once.

1d4	Result
1	A tiny silver ring on a mummified child-like hand identifiable with a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check as being a burial ring, a misguided tradition of some parents of the Blight that they believe will protect the dead child in the afterlife. Wealthy parents sometimes use rings of great value for this. This one is a *ring of resistance (fire)*.
2	A small leather case containing 2 blocks of rare incense worth 250 gp each.
3	Wrapped in sinews attached to the room's wall is a curved dagger. It has spilled from a case of physiker's tools and knives held in a niche in the wall. This is the only blade among them that has no sign of rust and is, in fact, a *+2 dagger*.
4	A chipped and rusted shield, which is actually a *+1 shield*. The cosmetic damage can be repaired by a blacksmith, but the shield's magic will function in its present condition.

W7. The Sienna Nightmare of Wheels and Water

Rather than a room, this space is filled by a vertical shaft that rises at least 200 feet above you and falls the same distance below. Multiple small waterfalls drench the shaft in their spray as they tumble past, and waterwheels have been set all along the walls both above and below you that spin in the falling waters. Ladders snake up and down the sides of the shaft all along the perimeter of this damp place, with rats occasionally scurrying about on them. From somewhere far above or below comes the throbbing noise of machinery and water.

The chamber is a broad shaft filled with waterwheels turned by falling water. The X's marked on the map show the positions of four metal ladders bolted to the walls, each of which extends 100 feet above and 100 feet below the level of the doors. Above and below each ladder is another 100-foot ladder that reaches all the way to the top or bottom of the shaft. Between each of these layers of ladders where it meets the one above or below it is a barrier of twisting cogs and gears that turn with help from the mechanisms of the waterwheels. Anyone making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to listen hears the sound of voices faintly echoing in the chamber, one male and gravelly and the other high-pitched and shrill. If the Perception check succeeds at DC 22 or better, it becomes evident that they are actually the same voice just changing its pitch to sound like a conversation between two different people. The voices are too faint to determine the language they are speaking. See "Development" below for details.

At the very top of the shaft, 200 ft. above, there is a metal grille through which the water pours. It is fed by a narrow sluice that eventually makes its way down from a sewer in **Festival** above. A section of the grille can be raised like a trapdoor — a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to spot if within 10 feet — which allows access to a side chamber above that is out of view from anyone below, where there is a **troll**, (see "Development" below for details). Set in the metal walls and spaced evenly every 2 feet around the circumference of the room just below this grille are rusty metal U-bolts. The bottom of the shaft falls another 200 feet and is filled with 20 feet of rust-coloured water that drains through many small grates in the floor. A DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check is required to stay afloat, but anyone entering this water while wounded risks contracting tetanus if they fail a Constitution save.

The constant spray of the falls and waterwheels makes climbing each ladder a DC 5 Strength check. However, at the end of each ladder, before the next one starts (other than at the level of the doors themselves), there is a ring of churning cogs and gears that follows the entire circumference of the room. This layer of machinery is 1-foot thick, and the characters must carefully climb past it if they wish to continue up or down the ladders. Safely passing the gears requires a DC 15 Dexterity save. A failed save indicates that a character's appendage has become snagged in the gears (determine an arm or leg randomly). See the *Jamming the Gears* Sidebox for the effects of this.

If the characters wish to cross this chamber, they either need to find some means of traversing the 30 feet of open space between the doorways, climbing around the metal walls of the chamber (DC 20 Strength or Dexterity check on the slick metal to go horizontally from one ladder to another, for a total of 2 checks to make it to the far side), climbing all the way down and swimming across to the far ladder, or climbing all the way up and using the grille or U-bolts to reach the far side. Clambering hand over hand between the U-bolts requires a total of eleven DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to go from one ladder to the next. The method (Strength or Dexterity) is up to the character. Doing the same on the overhead grille requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check for every 5-foot square due to the more difficult grip and the water falling through. However, a rope tied to one of the U-bolts or to the grille itself allows characters to swing across the shaft with greater safety. This requires a rope of sufficient length to be tied in a roughly central position (either on a U-bolt or the grille), then only a DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to swing across successfully. On a failed check, the characters didn't make it to the desired spot on the far side and unless another character is there to catch them, they must make the attempt again. Only if the Dexterity check results in a die roll of a natural 1 will the character fall down the shaft. If the character is tied to the rope, then even this won't occur, and the character can make as many attempts as they need.

Falling

There are many opportunities to fall in this chamber, and any fall inflicts damage equal to 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet fallen for the first 20 feet (because of the water cushioning the impact) and 1d6 points of falling damage for each 10 feet beyond that. Since the shaft is a total of 400 feet in height, damage can very easily reach lethal proportions. However, not every fall needs be fatal, even absent such precautions as *feather fall* spells, etc. The many waterwheels protruding from the walls provide ample opportunity for a character to catch himself. A falling character can make a grab at a waterwheel for every 1d4 x 10 feet fallen. Such an attempt deals 1d6 points of falling damage for each 10 feet of that portion of the fall, but a successful DC 15 Dexterity save arrests the fall. A character that grabs on at a waterwheel can safely stand on the hub of the machinery and then figure out their own way to continue around the shaft or rejoin other companions.

Development: Placed in charge of the workings of this chamber and pointlessly toiling away at the gears and waterwheels is the Engineer, a **troll**. The creature dwells in a side chamber hidden out of sight next to the drainage sluice up above the grille. It wears a waxed work coat and carries with it a leather tool bag. It has become adept at removing any blockages from the gears (usually rats that become trapped), but close examination shows that it fingers have regenerated many times as revealed by the odd extra stump spaced around the knuckles here and there as a result. The Engineer has become very lonely, and has taken to talking to itself and complimenting its cleverness. It talks to itself in its own voice and in one it thinks of as rather like its mother.

The ordinary sounds of the area gives the troll disadvantage on a passive Perception check to hear the proceedings, but if the characters

Tetanus

Tetanus, also called "lockjaw," is contracted in wounds caused by rusted iron. It causes a character to become unable to speak after onset (usually 1d2 days after infection). Each day, the character makes a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. The process is similar to death saving throws, but the Constitution modifier is applied. Once the character has succeeded on 3 saving throws, they have recovered. However, if the character fails at 3 saves before succeeding at 3, the result is death.

Jamming the Gears

If a character gets an appendage caught in the gears of the waterwheel shaft, this deals 3d6 points of damage and the character must immediately make a DC 15 Dexterity check. If the check is successful, the character pulls free. If the check is failed, the character becomes pinned and continues to take 1d6 points of damage per round until freed. Freeing the characters requires a DC 20 Dexterity check, which can be a group effort — from the ladder above or below, for instance. Another side effect of being pinned is that the machinery in that ring of gears has jammed, allowing others to move up or down on the ladders at that level without requiring a Dexterity save.

It is possible that the characters may think to jam the gears on their own to make the climbs safer, and doing so is easy enough with any weapon or piece of gear. See "Development" for additional consequences to jamming the gears in area **W7**.

cause any of the gears to jam, it automatically comes to investigate and repair the problem. It enters through the trapdoor in the grille, though if it spots any ropes tied to the grille or characters' fingers clinging to it, it first cuts or stomps them, respectively. Once in the shaft, it attempts to cut any ropes on the U-bolts or knock characters from ladders. It can shake a ladder it is adjacent to as a full-round action, and anyone on that ladder must make a DC 10 Dexterity save or fall. If reduced below 10 hp, the Engineer allows himself to fall into the pool below in hopes that the characters will be unable to finish him with fire or acid. The constant deluge of water in the shaft causes any fire-based attack to be treated as if the target has resistance to fire. The Engineer will not pursue characters beyond this room.

Treasure: The tool bag contains a number of fairly recently squashed or killed rats, a set of thieves' tools, a saw, 12 iron spikes, and a *potion of healing*.

Ad Hoc XP Award: Due to the difficulty in navigating through this chamber, double the XP reward for defeating the troll, even if the characters somehow manage to talk their way past the encounter without killing the Engineer.

Areas W8–W10: One Step Beyond

Familiarise yourself with the areas described below, as they represent a very serious further step into Between. The chambers below are interwoven, changeable, fluid, and that's not always an easy thing to represent on the well-defined grid of a battle mat or graph paper.

The rooms are so swollen with Between because of the dreams of the Sisters in the library (**W9**). The Sisters' influence has manifested in reality such that when they are hurt, the rooms scream and the walls writhe in pain, the colours change to red if the Sisters become angry, or there is a musky scent of pleasure if the Sisters wound an intruder. This manifestation is physical but for atmospheric effect only, so that although ceilings churn and walls scream, there is no actual game effect upon the characters. Odd things happen during exploration and battle here. The walls grow away, ceilings rise suddenly, towering to the sky or pressing down oppressively above character's heads, and perhaps even the manifestation of a few stolen stories from the library beyond come whispering past. In the end, area **W9** literally grows into area **W8**, but details on that odd event are provided below.

Each of the three rooms has an echo of itself occasionally visible in the other rooms, but each remains physically separate. Treat it is as if the rooms take on the aspects of each other. So the court might suddenly have a wall of towering books, or the library might smell suddenly of brine and sea air.

W8. The Wan Court and the Cornucopian Garden

If it is a room, it is on a different scale to the others you have seen thus far. Here, the corroded garden of iron trees and ivy is tinged in gold and silver. The place is latticed with beams that form a living skeleton to the vast area. Light dances from gaps in the boughs of the trees above, but it is not daylight, it is a sick, unwholesome light. A broad lake the colour of rust and old blood stretches across the far side of the chamber, vanishing into the thick trees that form the walls of this place. Before this lake stands a long curving table that ends in a wide pavilion. A courtyard of stone angels stands beside this pavilion. On the far side of the lake is a huge crooked double door with a relief of an angel figure in gold embossed upon it.

Even as you take it all in, the chamber — if it even is a chamber — seems to shift slightly.

The Wan Court is where the Sisters come to eat and drink. It is immediately adjacent to — and occasionally part of — their dream home in area **W9**. The hefty double doors usually lead directly to **W9** but not always. Occasionally, a twisted stair, a vented chimney, or a tangled briar path links the two instead. There is no set pattern or control of this effect; it just happens. Areas **W8** and **W9** are also immediately a part of one another in some unfathomable way. The Sisters are able to see what transpires in **W8**, but cannot affect combat nor cast spells into it from **W9** without first entering. This effect works both ways, though the characters are not as accustomed to it nor as adept at making use of it. The characters sometimes see the vague silhouettes of the Sisters through the shifting, tree-grown walls of the chamber. With a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check on any given round, a character can focus and clearly see the Sisters and what they're doing, but still cannot interact with them until actually physically confronting them in their abode.

The table is set with polished bone crockery and place settings for 25. Once per day the table can magically conjure a feast for up to 25, when someone strikes a gong that rests in the centre of the table. The Sisters normally partake of this feast, but have not yet done so today.

The 29 angel statues are marked on the map arrayed around the courtyard. They are carved from stone, but while they are unable to move from where they stand surrounding the courtyard, they can attack anyone who comes within reach. The angels attack by grabbing those within reach and trying to crush them while pinned. Avoiding the attempt is judged by a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, and escaping the grasp is a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (not a grapple: there is no measurable random factor in the angels' response to escape attempts). A character failing the saving throw and subsequent escape checks is considered pinned and takes 1d6 hit points of bludgeoning damage per round from crushing. The angels' expressions change to fit their circumstance. In combat, their faces become angry as though shouting and wishing to bite. As long as characters stay out of their reach, though, they are essentially helpless, and they can be bashed apart with any three hits (AC 18) with a bludgeoning weapon, regardless of the hit point damage inflicted.

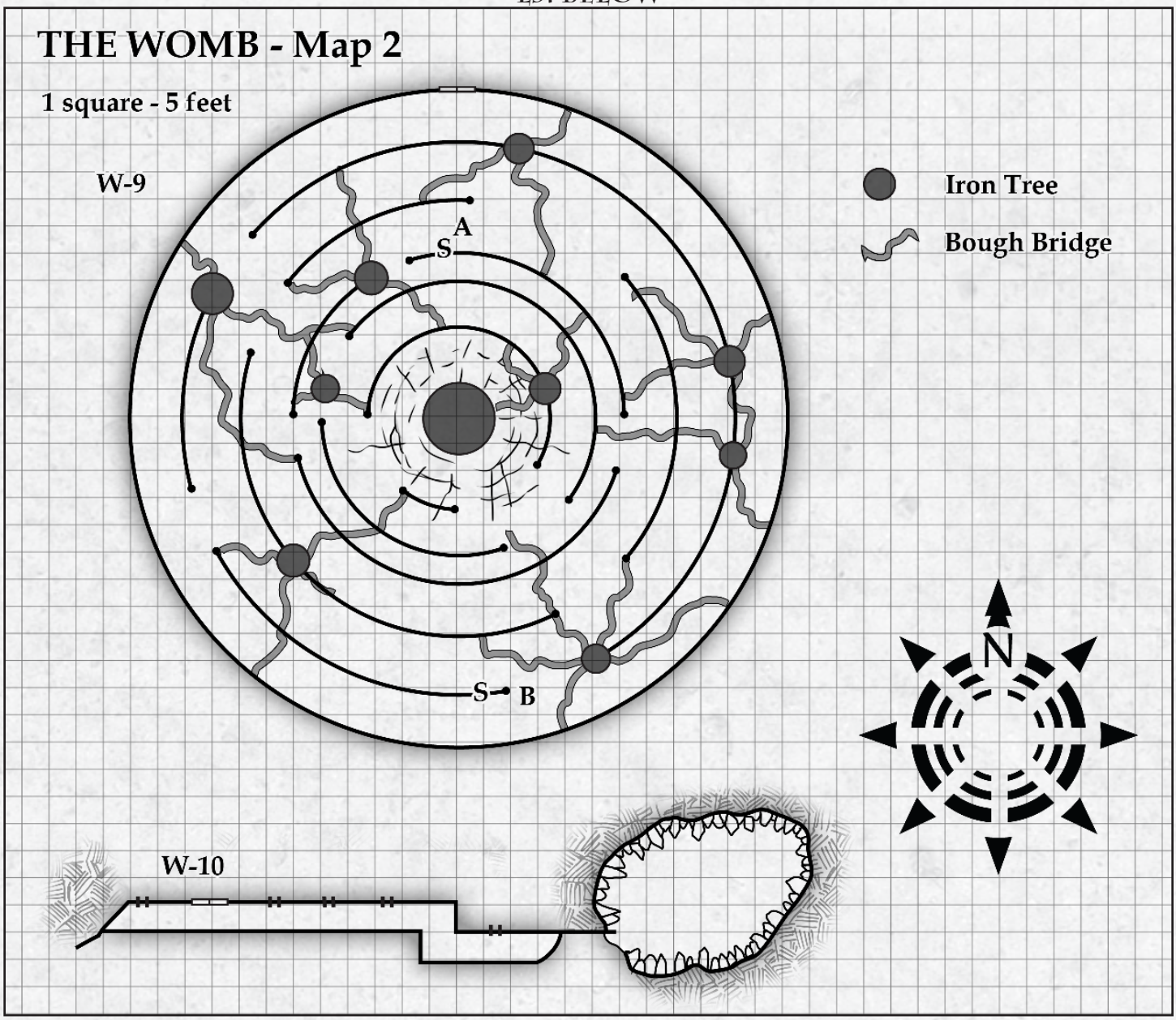
The lake is unpleasantly metallic in smell and taste, and has the same poisoned quality as the one at area **ID 14**. It is 10 feet deep and requires a DC 10 Strength check to swim across. There are three grottoes in the area, marked by circles. These grottoes are sunken gardens 2 feet deep, surrounded with a myriad of oreblossom flowers with an angel statue in the centre. Like the angel statues above, these attack any enemies that come within reach. Otherwise, the grottos provide concealment and cover to anyone within them against anyone outside.

The Child of Hunger is a unique creation of the Sisters, but fights as an **oni**. In addition to an oni's normal abilities, the Child of Hunger has the ability to *teleport* 1/day (see Tactics, below). It spends most of its days sleeping in the pavilion, oversees the entire chamber. It is assisted by 13 **skeletons** (see *Servitors in the Womb* above), but these fight upon the Child's command. The Child's Bride, a **sea hag**, lurks in the lake and has control over 5 undead black swans (treated as ordinary **eagles**) who float upon its poisonous waters. Finally, 3 **dire wolves** are magically bound to a tree marked as **X** on the map in the centre of the courtyard. The Child of Hunger is able to summon them to its aid as a bonus action. The wolves appear in the following round and immediately attack the Child's foes. The angel statues ignore them.

When the Child of Hunger first appears to attack, read the following description.

It staggers into view, this thing — this ugly, sickly thing. It could be mistaken for a satyr, but a straight horn erupts from its misshapen skull, seemingly rupturing the bone and flesh by its growth. It has pale skin and hobbles on hoofed feet, but these are not cloven. Its hands are clumsy, bestial things with thick shovel-like nails, and its legs are too big, forcing its body forward into an unpleasant looming lean. But its eyes draw you: There is anger in them, anger and sadness perhaps at what it is, or what it needs.

Tactics: If injured, the Child calls for its wolves to aid it, and if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, it *teleports* into area **W9** to the protection of its mother. The servitor skeletons are expendable and used at the Child's whim. As the combat draws to a conclusion, the witches in area **W9** make their final approach in the strangest way possible (see Sidebox).



Treasure: The gold angel set in bas-relief in the doors is worth 400 gp. The odd polished bone dinner service is worth 200 gp to the right collector of the macabre.

W9. The Burnt Forest Library of Stories Lost and Found

A library would be the simple word to describe what you see, but the word is not enough. This is not just a library — this is a town of books, a vault of the written word given life. The words recorded here echo and become things, forming even as you watch. Iron trees rise between bookcases twenty feet high, and their branches form graceful organic bridges linking the various bookcases. Somewhere within, a clock beats out the time. A moment later, a nightmarish thing casts a shadow across you and is then gone.

The library is the home and sanctuary of the two remaining Sisters. Here they can twist their dreams to become incredibly vivid and even steal stories from the books that are present. The forest/library serves as bedchamber (with places to sleep in the boughs), and obsessions — the

An Unexpected Encounter

The Sisters who serve as the climactic adversaries in this adventure have one final twist to throw at the characters — literally arriving on the scene in the form of an entire room with occupants. When the combat in **W8** approaches its end, have the space between it and **W9** seem to stretch and grow, convoluting and distorting for several rounds and then quickly snapping back as **W9** is literally pulled into **W8**. You can run this one of several ways, but it happens slowly enough for the characters to manage a short rest in between the combats.

You can have the space between the rooms open up and **W9** simply open up in the wall of **W8**, or you can merge the two as you wish, bringing the already unpredictable chambers into a semi-regular state that still manages to change during the fight. If you like, also move the witches about during the combat yet physically remain in the same place — so a witch atop a shelf does not move but the shelf she is on glides toward a foe. The simplest mechanical way to do this is to assume the witches have *dimension door* at will for their movement, and the chamber is part of that mechanic.

The Well of Lost Stories

Characters falling into this well do not enter a mortal space, but a place in Between, a pit of lost stories and mad words, the effects upon their soul of which are permanent. The character is lost for several days before eventually falling from a reflection in a shop window naked and wrapped in a Between caul (see ***L4: Decay***, **Part 3**) in a random part of the city. The character cannot remember where they have been, but there are several unusual scars upon their flesh — bites and bruises from odd mouths or limbs — as well as a number of death's-head moths nearby. The equipment the character had at the time turns up in odd ways over the coming month — in the bottom of a drawer at home, for sale in a junkshop, or just simply discovered randomly as though forgotten. The character seems to suffer no ill effects from the experience, but unfortunately, this is not true.

The character has been touched by Between and odd things begin to happen — entirely at your discretion: babies cry when looked at by the character, cats hiss, and people pick fights for no good reason. Furthermore, the character now becomes a further focus (if they weren't before) or a major focus (if they were) of the angel. In the coming adventures, such characters face unpleasant and potentially deadly dreams, endure the wrath of the Beautiful, or are simply cursed.

Sisters only ever leave here now to eat, and even then their appetites are fickle. The Sisters have devoured the books — literally. When eventually searched, the characters find most of the book's words have somehow been taken off the pages. The Sisters are well aware of the odd effects of the library and use it to their advantage as outlined in the *Summoning and Dreams in the Library* Sidebox.

The library is like a maze, with the 20-foot-high oreblossom bookcases above a floor of scattered books (no check to climb). The trees — DC 15 Strength (Athletics) to climb — have bridges made of boughs between each other and the bookcases. These act as raised walkways, allowing the Sisters to move freely above the room. The Sisters also have mounts to assist them in their movements, as well as a custodian to act as a guardian and messenger. The heart of the library contains a black cyst into which all the lost stories or discarded words used by the Sisters go. This pit is a funnel of books known as the Well of Lost Stories and is detailed in the Sidebox. The floor around this pit is buckled, and slopes inward — anyone moving into this quasi-magical area must make an unexpected DC 15 Dexterity save or fall into the pit. The fate of those who fall is detailed in the Sidebox.

Two secret doors are herein, though both are actually more like hidden doors, requiring only a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate. The door at **A** leads to a short brick-arched tunnel under the library and then up a very long set of spiral stairs before arriving at a trapped door in **Festival** — see **Concluding the Adventure** for more details on this route. The second door has the sound of crashing waves and seagulls beyond it, and it leads along a narrow crystal tunnel to **W10**.

The two Sisters, **Jessamine** and **Vertiline** (see below), as well as the Unfortunate Child (a **flesh golem**) reside in here. The Sisters each have steeds, **giant hyenas**. The arrival of the Beautiful has had an incredible effect on the Sisters, giving them the fabulous beauty only the Between can truly grant. Each is achingly, perfectly beautiful.

Jessamine. Jessamine is a **mage**, with the following spells:
Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, blade ward, dancing lights, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, see invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, slow*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, fire shield, ice storm*
5th level (1 slot): *cloudkill*

Vertiline. Vertiline is a **mage**, with the following spells:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, poison spray, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, mage armor, magic missile, witch bolt*



2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers, mirror image, phantasmal force, web*
3rd level (3 slots): *haste, lightning bolt, stinking cloud*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, confusion, stoneskin*
5th level (1 slot): *dominate person*

Treasure: The library is crammed with books, but many of them have no words. Some do, however, and are valuable. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to locate each item listed below. Each search takes roughly an hour.

- A spellbook containing Vertiline's spells
- A spellbook containing Jessamine's spellsA battered book of animal illustrations with a *spell scroll* (*heal*) tucked inside.
- A three-volume work on arcane knowledge (8 lbs.). The books are worth 300 gp as a set.
- An elephant folio of plans of the dwarven palace that occupied the Womb as it once was, showing more than 100 rooms, and the various details therein. Characters studying this book for a day find echoes of the Palace in the present chambers and can see vague similarities: a room of pillars, a room with a lake, etc. The magnificent book weighs 20 lbs. but is worth 1,200 gp to a historian, 2,400 gp if a dwarf collector can be found.
- A *spell scroll* (*phantasmal force*) in a bone scroll case.
- A book that has somehow grown fatter than its bindings allow. This tome has been slowly eating and learning from other books in the library, stealing their knowledge for its own whilst hiding from the Sisters. It is a *tome of understanding*.

W9A. Exit to Festival

After a long climb on a narrow staircase, it finally ends in a wooden building some 10 feet square. The shack is full of flotsam and the odd rat that scurries away. A single doorway allows exit. Beyond is the noise of people and the cold of winter. This exit, however, is wreathed in complex metal and machinery as though heavily trapped.

A lever just above the door, spotted on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, is moved up or down to arm or disarm (respectively) the trap on the exit. The door is locked (the key is in this side). If the door is opened from the far side, an arrow trap springs — DC 15 Dexterity save or take 1d6 piercing damage. The trap is readily apparent on the inside of the door.

From the outside, the building is unremarkable. The door opens under a sign reading "*Madame Abigail — Fortune Teller*." The building is on the Seethe in the Crimson Lantern District some 100 yards south of the Hookah (**F16** in **Chapter 4** of the ***The Blight Campaign Guide***). It is not occupied and appears to be nothing more than a front to hide the entrance to Below.

W10. The Nascent Heaven

This area is a Between amalgamation of the location the Beautiful arrived from (**FI11** on the Falling Isle in ***L3: Sea's End***), the original dwarven palace, and the current state of the Womb. As such, it may take some getting your head around. It has a dream-like quality linking to all three simultaneously but without making any sense whatsoever. When the characters first enter this area, read the following.

You step out and are beyond the confines of the cavern and stand in an open space outside a palace — a fairy tale place of towers and cliffs and surreal vistas perched in a space wrapped in shimmering mists. Sheer walls reach upward behind you and over you, rising to a wall of cloud, and fall into a blurred mist below, which crashes impossibly into what sounds like the sea. It feels warm here, almost balmy. You can hear gulls calling and detect a palpable feeling of joy. There is a sense of movement and the smell of salt in the air, yet everything is blurred at the edges, as though you were walking into a dream.

A narrow balcony reaches around the place for some distance, but fails just before reaching an opening in the rock wall. A gap of some 10 feet separates the broken edge of the balcony from the cave opening that is bathed in crystal light.

Movement along the balcony is easy, but a 10-foot gap where the balcony has fallen separates this balcony from the entrance to the crystal cave beyond. Travel outside the confines of the area is impossible. Between has only created the impression of vast space and area; there isn't actually. Characters who attempt to *fly* or climb off the balcony find themselves drawn outward into a stormy sky where the only sounds are the calls of gulls and the crashing of waves. If the characters press on in this direction, they begin to draw the attention of creatures from Between, starting with a **wyvern** who swoops to attack as long as they continue away from the balcony. Use other creatures as you wish. No matter what the characters try, their efforts to go elsewhere from here are always doomed to failure. This part of Between simply has what is seen in it for the characters and nothing more, but there are things that lurk at the edges of such dreams that are drawn to those who come here. If the characters fall from the ledge or persist in travelling outward into the mist, they eventually vanish, meeting the same fate as those who fall into the Pit of Lost Stories (see **W9**).

Abigail's Between Vessel

Characters grasping or touching the vessel are immediately aware of the location of area **W10** and what occurred there. The Beautiful appeared with her guide (Father Gromwell) and, as a gift for the Sisters' long vigil and as a taste of things to come, she granted one of them — Abigail — her heart's desire, a personal heaven. The *Between vessel* has other secrets and experiences to share. It is obvious from merely grasping it that the vessel has been held by the Beautiful for a long time too, and that by holding it, her thoughts are somehow within it. The vessel plays a significant role in helping the characters to deduce the what, where, and why of the Beautiful's presence and what she intends to do. However, the impressions are fleeting and unfocused, requiring further concentration and time as detailed in the side trek with the next adventure, ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre***.

The *Between vessel* is important, but not vital. Characters are notorious for not spotting big red flags with "clue" written on them in glowing letters, while finding significant meaning in seemingly the most innocuous of other details. So while having and researching the vessel is very helpful, it is not the end if the characters don't have it, or discard it casually whilst looking for more interesting things with edges and points and spikes.

The Crystal CaveOnce the characters make it past the 10-foot gap, they can enter the crystal cave.

A shiver of déjà vu tickles your spine; you have been here before. It is a crystal cave, exactly the same as the one on the Fallen Isle, but this one is richer, brighter.

The chamber is indeed an echo of that room right down to images of Gromwell and the Beautiful caught in the crystal as before (see ***L3: Sea's End***). There are no other exits. The ascension of Abigail is here, its image preserved in the crystal of the cave. The ascension is actually a reflection of the moment of her departure to her own private paradise created by the Beautiful. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to see a dark opening within the crystal. This shape reflects like a mirror, but the reflections hang awkwardly, like a distorting funhouse mirror. Once this anomaly is spotted, a DC 10 Intelligence check is necessary to piece together the scene in all its glory.

Brilliant radiance bathes a woman, clearly a sister of those you just faced. Before her sprawls a garden of such incredible beauty that it brings tears to your eyes. She is gazing back directly at the surface of the mirror and wears an expression of utter joy and enlightenment. You don't know why, but you feel that the figure and garden are one, as though both are an embodiment of joy for the other — perhaps even a glimpse of paradise.

Chaos Beasts and Between Portals

The Beautiful's early attempts to create stable doors to Between and the mundane world relied on chaos beasts, creatures wrapped in the essence of chaos and Between that occasionally pass between the two places and bring with them an inherent infestation of chaos. She later abandons these attempts for another approach, and uses creatures of her own essence, that she calls the "Heralds at the Threshold." For now, the presence of the Beautiful is drawing chaos beasts behind her and before her as she tries to tear a permanent rip into reality from Between.

This *mirror-portal*† is the first of several the characters will encounter, and it is dangerous. Ingress is not possible for the characters, but a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the leaves in the garden and the blooms are swaying gently in an unseen breeze, although nothing else moves. A second DC 20 check notices something else — odd forms and shadows in the corners, faces in the blooms.

The creation of the *mirror-portal* has occurred and cannot be unmade. What lies beyond is in this case a private garden of joy for the third sister and cannot be changed. However, the characters don't know that. The surface of the mirror feels odd, waxy, perhaps even a little sweaty, and has the scent of sugary meat. The surface can be broken, and doing so permanently severs the link to here for Abigail (not that she is bothered by this: she is in paradise), but it draws something out of the garden and into reality.

When she first arrived and drew the Sisters to this place, the Beautiful chose the moment to create a doorway into a private heaven for Abigail. She also introduced an essay in chaos from Between, a creature to show the Sisters the true power of creation, of making art from flesh, a **chaos beast**†. This one is able to hold its form better than average, moving between a thing like a fleshy spider to a mockery of a whale on land to a twisted wan form that resembles a sick angel without bones. The chaos beast dwells just on the other side of the *mirror-portal*, and if the *mirror-portal* is destroyed, it is dragged through screaming to the characters' side, birthed in a revolting amniotic sac of distended veins and gristle and blood. Once through the closing *mirror-portal*, this sac bursts open and releases the beast to attack anyone present.

Concluding the Adventure

Destroying the Panacea stronghold ends this adventure, at least in theory. The characters may live to regret killing or assailing the Sisters as their many offspring, now operating above in the city, eventually come seeking vengeance.

The characters have two real choices at the end of this adventure. Return via the twisting caves, or take the easy exit up to Festival above (where, of course, they began their adventures and where, as far as they know, they have now been forgotten). The characters, however, do not need to exit that way for you to be able to explain the re-emergence of the Family. But it makes a delicious hook if they do — openly taunting the Family and the Grasts by being seen defiling the isle with their presence. Or are they seen by a handful of rats below and the same conclusion is reached whether they exit this way or not? The choice is yours.

However they leave, make sure the characters see two things upon arriving back in the city above: firstly, a copy of *The Raven* calling for open revolution (see **Handout 1**), and secondly, a poster, clearly and freshly printed, which depicts — very accurately — one of the characters in an ink sketch with the words "*Wanted: For High Treason, Reward 2,500 gold shekels*" and with the character's name printed below. The rest of the party quickly discovers that they are all similarly wanted and are destined to spend the concluding half of ***The Levee*** as fugitives on the lam.

Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Five: Boiling Point

The lower castes hit back against the oppression of the Crown and organise themselves into militias. It becomes unsafe to walk the streets of Toiltown even by day, and other districts (except BookTown, the Capitol and the Sinks) by night. Treat all encounters during those times as hostile. A group of Anarchists plot to blow up the Capitol by the end of the month, and their agent **Charlotte Elm** (CG female human **spy**) has snuck into the Capitol with three wagons of alchemist's fire hidden in the Great Hall. She waits only for the right moment when the greatest number of the upper castes are transiting the Great Hall, when she intends to detonate it.

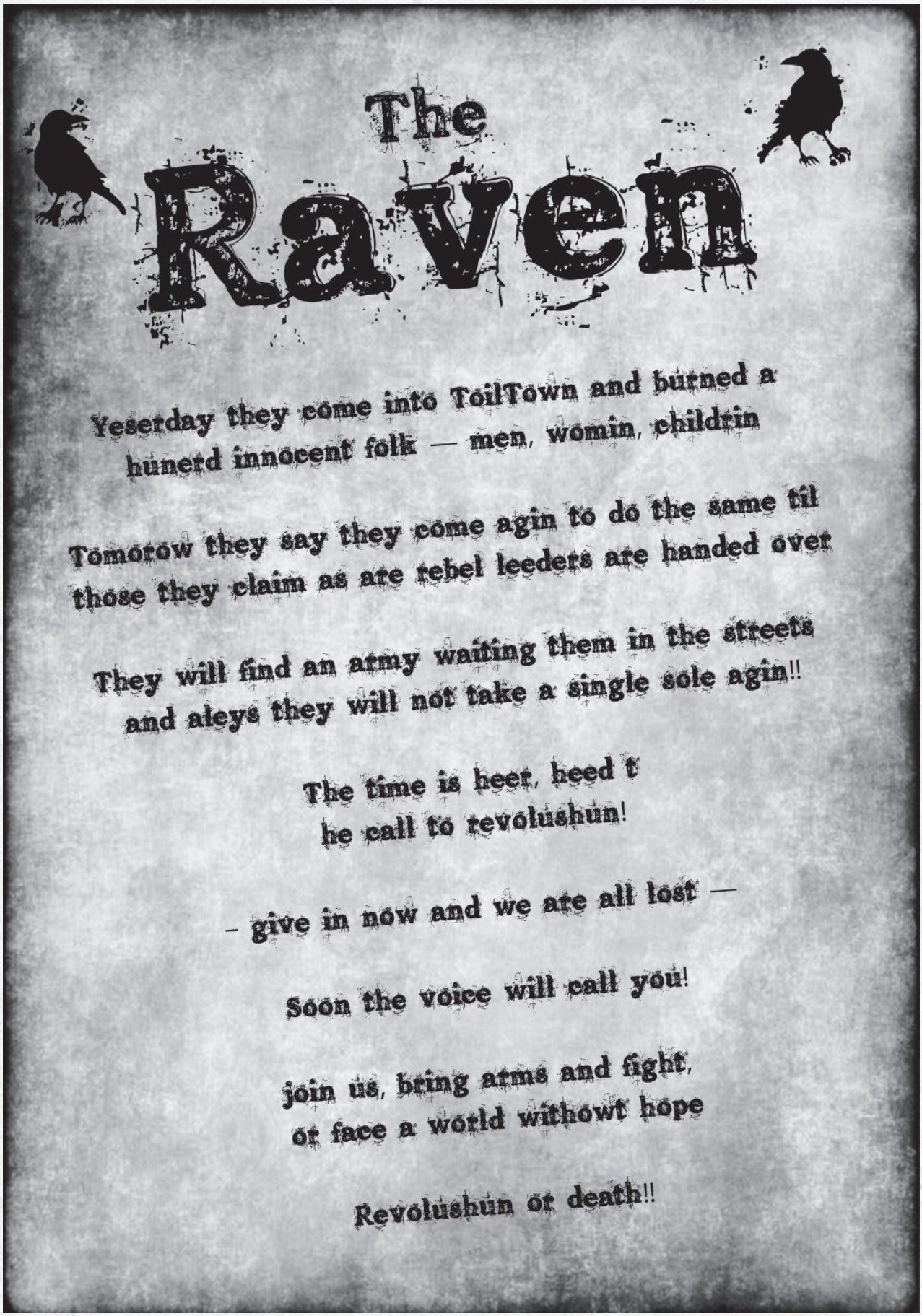
In the meantime, the guillotines continue their work. The Knockers are abroad by night, and no one of a lower caste is entirely untouched by their atrocities. Everyone knows a friend or family member who has felt the calloused edge of their so-called justice. When the characters emerge into the city again, riots are so common that rules are assigned for them in the next adventure and beyond.

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Five: The Love

The Beautiful is here, and as the adventure path moves into Part Six she has begun her Great Work — trying to breach a permanent hole from Between to drown reality and reshape it into a worldly Paradise. Her first attempt fails, and, exhausted, she prepares for her second attempt.

She is silent this month.

Handout 1



The Raven

Yeserday they come into ToilTown and burned a hunerd innocent folk — men, womin, childrin

Tomorow they say they come agin to do the same til those they claim as are rebel leeders are handed over

They will find an army waiting them in the streets and aleys they will not take a single sole agin!!

The time is heer, heed t
he call to revolushun!

– give in now and we are all lost —

Soon the voice will call you!

join us, bring arms and fight,
or face a world withowt hope

Revolushun or death!!

L6: The Susurrus Theatre

By Richard Pett



Introduction

Now it starts to get nasty.

Up to now, ***The Levee Adventure*** has had a number of loosely tied strings, with the characters adventuring through the city largely unmolested save in the early sections by enemies picked up in adventures. That is about to change, and the knots are about to get tighter. The characters' assault upon the Womb has stirred up the Panacea and the remaining progeny of the sisters. Their sighting at the Festival (or stories of their sighting, or rumours of those from below reporting a violation — albeit beneath Festival) has stirred up the Family. The Knights Occularis have also begun to check on the characters in earnest. Their *scrying* is working, and what they've seen — and in some cases heard from those they've questioned — convinces them that the characters are somehow tied up with the Beautiful and their own desires. They've assigned one of their most relentless agents, Her Gracious Occularis-Paladin Lady **Rachel Birch**, to bring them in for questioning. A fanatic, Birch does not give up or fail. What even her most intimate masters and mistresses don't know is that Birch is tormented: She has been touched by the dreams of the Beautiful and in her delirium to remove them from her mind has tried to cut them out — physically. Birch has a significant role to play in the last few adventures; it is quite likely she'll finish the adventures dead — or possibly finish several adventures dead — and by the final adventure something even worse, but bear in mind that she is a key NPC in these final adventures.

This adventure presents you with a little challenge — in it, the characters are about to become the hunted. You can make this adventure much more memorable by adding your own twists to some of the encounters — particularly those where the characters are attacked in lodgings or homes. This adventure is written as an investigative adventure with a twist: an impending air of menace from attacking groups, and a timetable to solve the mystery of the adventure before an innocent person is hung. There is a strong element of seek-and-destroy in this adventure, but it will be tough, and hopefully darkly amusing in places.

The adventure therefore also lends itself to the friendships that the characters may have made — starting with **Eleanor Shank**. Eleanor needs to come to the fore now. In the next adventure, her secret sponsor and her spying on the characters are revealed, the more complex the characters' relationship is with her, the more rewarding that discovery is going to be. She therefore leads the characters into this adventure and accompanies them from the start.

This adventure has vampires, and lots of them. The characters will recall that in ***L4: Decay***, they became acquainted with two vampire hunters — **Abigail**† and **Luther**† — and that acquaintanceship may now be useful. The characters also become reacquainted with **Long Lucy**† and the Circus Macabre after a five-adventure separation. The halfling has a pivotal role to play here. Finally, what has happened to **Enoch Nettle**†, Gromwell's one-time confidante and assistant? A high-level cleric, or even an extra cleric in the party could be useful against undead.

There is also a significant final wrench or potential friend to throw in with **Inspector Greyman**, (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†), a member of the local constabulary. He is a decent man who does not think he has the right man for the crimes that have been committed, but his eyes cannot deceive him. Greyman makes an interesting NPC as he may turn against the characters or become a valuable friend. The final encounter where Greyman must choose between his loyalty to the city and the characters could prove very memorable. More so if he has had a strong role in this adventure from the start.

If you like NPC-heavy adventures, this is one you may enjoy playing with, but if you don't, bear in mind that the adventure is written for the characters. They can handle it themselves from start to finish, but may find it easier to get by with a little help from their friends.

Much more importantly — but not crucially — the characters begin to unravel the thoughts of the Beautiful using Abigail's *Between vessel* (recovered in the previous adventure). This is a risky venture for the character in question, but may bring the characters several vital clues to use against their enemy (if, indeed the Beautiful is their enemy), all of which are detailed in the side trek ***Shatterday*** included at the end of this adventure.

Media Inspirations Behind L6: The Susurrus Theatre

The Susurrus Theatre is a curious matter, a hidden place that does not exist in the city-state as most people know it, but which is very much a part of its unique makeup. Stories that lead to secret places could be good inspiration for this adventure, and aside from the classics, modern works such as *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs and *The Book of Lost Things* by John Connolly are worth rooting out if you haven't already come across them.

The murderous nature of the vampires in the grubby and bawdy streets of the steamy Artists' Quarter could also make it worth catching up with a few historical books about Victorian London or dabbling in a steampunk novel such as *Anno Dracula* by Kim Newman.

Adventure Synopsis

"You cannot find it by day, no matter how good your guide, or how much you look; it remains simply hidden in the maze of alleys and pathways that curve and embrace in the shadows of the Theatre District. Look for it by night, however, and the Theatres Obscura may be waiting for you, if they want you …"

The adventure begins with an attack on the characters by the Knights Occularis, eager to capture the characters and question them. The characters escape this encounter but realise that things are tough for them in the city. The attack is very much a taste of things to come as the characters become fugitives, and every encounter with authority has an added danger.

In another part of the city, the Circus Macabre has come back to town, and the Artists' Quarter is buzzing with excitement, but their arrival coincides with the disappearance of three local children. The children are taken into a part of town in Between known as the Theatres Obscura where they escape and wander the demented place until taken in by a phase spider and her fey lover. The circus is blamed, and things begin to get ugly. The scapegoat is **Scarred Samuel**, who was dominated into confessing to the crimes by vampire spawn agents of the Panacea. They know of the characters' relationship with the circus and have laid a deadly trap to punish the heretics.

The Panacea seek out the characters to punish them for the outrage committed in the Underneath against its members, and to burn the heretics who soil the Beautiful with their presence. The pyres are laid, the progeny are hungering to avenge their mothers — the Sisters of the Womb. As the adventure starts, however, they don't know where the characters are, but their agents from Festival know about the Circus Macabre and the characters' relationship with its owner **Long Lucy**†. A vampire and her spawn lay a trap, taking three local children using their dominate abilities and one of the circus performers as bait, and then they wait, knowing the locals will do the rest.

Inspector Greyman of the Artists' Quarter Watch has Scarred Samuel in his cells and knows what he confessed to before the constabulary. He and his small body of men have all they can handle just to prevent the locals from burning down the home of the circus performer at the Circus

Macabre. What Greyman trusts more than anything, however, are his guts, and they tell him Samuel is innocent. Greyman is honest and astute, but he has nothing to go on. Until the characters arrive.

The characters are asked to help by Long Lucy†, the circus ringmaster, who sends a message via **Eleanor Shank**†. The circus has blossomed since the first adventure, and the characters may barely recognise the place, but its performers know them, and speak of them reverentially. Lucy begs for the characters' help. Samuel is due to be guillotined in 13 days time; she knows he's innocent and asks them to help clear his name. In the meantime, she'll ensure the characters are kept out of sight and in the strange lodgings of the circus, as well as fed and entertained like never before.

The Panacea have other ideas, and lay a trap for the characters. A nest of vampire spawn roosts in an abandoned opera house-cum-music hall, from which they launch daily attacks. Their master, an old **vampire** known as **Wither** (NE male human **diseased vampire**†) accompanies them on some of the raids, but is almost impossible to catch. If the music hall lair is taken, the spawn of Wither lay a second trap: this one using an innocent theatre to frame the characters for murder. If they rumble this trap, or somehow enlist the help of Inspector Greyman, the vampires ambush the whole group as they leave.

The spawn, it transpires, bear a curious tattoo, a mark which proves obscure and difficult to trace, as it is a mark of the Between. It is the mark of the Theatres Obscura, and one theatre in particular — **The Susurrus Theatre**. One does not simply find the Theatres Obscura, however; it is not possible to find on any map. The Theatres Obscura is a district of legend that is said to be the home of dark city fey who revel in the city in their own way, exploiting it for their twisted pleasure and sexual excesses. They stand at corners in the form of tramps, or they watch from the wings of theatres or lurk in gables watching street performers — but only by night. If they take a shine to the performer, she may be led into the area for a night. The characters learn of several ways to attract the feys' attention, but all are fickle and unpredictable. Performance skills help, but the fey delight in more obscure performances; put on the right show or act in the right locations and the characters are in.

In the meantime, however, the clock ticks against Scarred Samuel, the vampires continue to attack, and the Family makes an unwelcome appearance as a pair of rogue acrobats — Mildred and Katherine Grast — appear, with a seemingly endless line of followers to throw at their enemies.

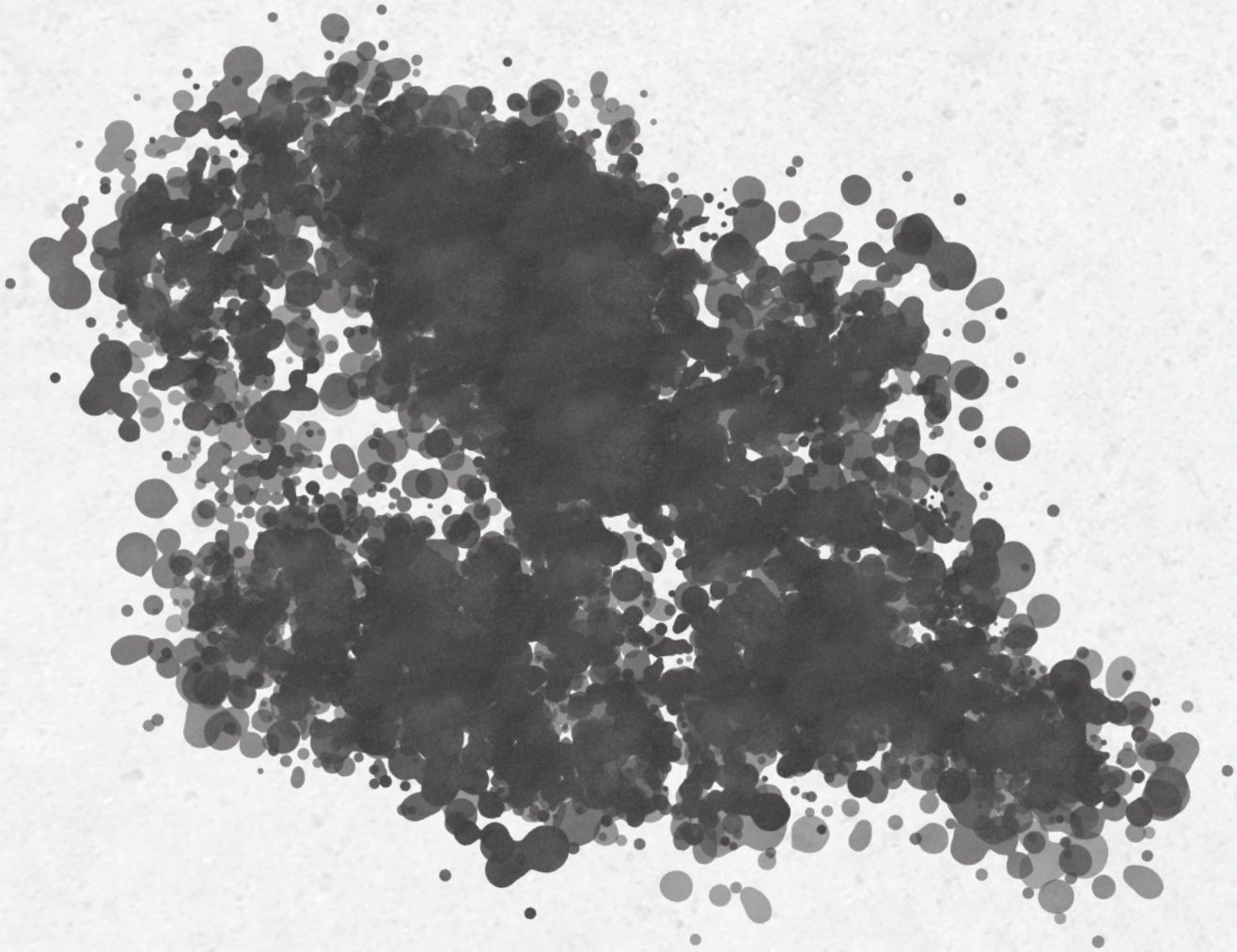
If they can impress the fickle fey enough, the characters are led into the twisted streets of the Theatres Obscura and, if they wish it, to the doors of The Susurrus Theatre, where a coven of vampires awaits.

However, also at this time, an explosion rocks the city, and the Capitol is ablaze! The blaze eats away part of the towering Capitol's foundation causing massive destruction and immediate and terrible reprisals. Executions begin with appalling ferocity, guillotines are placed at street corners, and the streets are awash with blood. As these killings go on, the anarchy spreads, pulling in even the characters as goods become scarcer and the words of a rival can bring the Knockers.

One final surprise remains. As the characters conclude events, Rachel Birch traces them to the district and questions Inspector Greyman about the characters, whom she believes are in the area. How does the Inspector react — does he help or hinder his friends or foes?

The adventure may finally allow you to reveal a little more of Eleanor's background. She has had a guardian throughout her life, was snatched from an orphanage, and given an education and gifts. Her sponsor is a man in a mask who has been good to her since she was a child. She knows he works for someone else but has promised never to ask who or why. He told her to rescue the characters and put them on their present path.

And as the characters investigate this adventure, they may uncover clues from the *Between vessel* of Abigail, which may lead them back to a cathedral riddled with doorways into Between and a terrifying encounter with wombs filled with chaos beasts. This encounter may finally confirm the madness of the Beautiful to the characters and her plan to break the Levee holding back Between and drown the city in madness.



Part One: Old Friends

Remember that the characters have been hitting things full on during the two prior adventures. They may need a rest, and that rest also gives you a chance to get the calendar back on track if you're following the suggested guidelines for running this adventure. According to **Appendix B** of this adventure, the beginning of spring should be arriving with this adventure. Give the party time to rest and spend money, to level up, to meet old friends, gamble a little, and begin dabbling into the *Between vessel* they stole from the Womb. The outcome of that dangerous investigation is given in the side trek, **Shatterday**, at the end of this adventure.

A Rude Awakening

The adventure begins with the characters being attacked by the Knights Occularis, who are determined to take them out of the equation. A generic city location — the Old Ground Monkey — a clean and lice-free boarding house-slash-inn, is given below, but this works much better if the attack comes where your characters are lodging. Characters are an unpredictable lot, and will behave a thousand different ways — including quite possibly having houses across the city. The Occularis are not interested in taking the characters one at a time. Rachel Birch (see below) regards her time as far too precious and in any case is obsessed with promotion with the Occularis as fast as possible. The characters are bound to gather at some stage — to plan, to shop, or just to get drunk and brag, and the Occularis are watching them by *scrying* and other mundane means. The attack occurs on one of those occasions if it can't occur at any other time. If you need an excuse to get the characters out of their normal lodgings and into a group location such as the Old Ground Monkey, you can use the unrest of the city as fires are lit and threaten housing, the Watch cordons off and evacuates entire neighbourhoods, etc. Whatever works for your group.

The day before they are attacked, the characters are *scryed* from the Bright Citadel, in the Capitol, the headquarters of the Occularis. The *scrying* is identical to that which occurred in the **Concluding the Adventure** section of ***L3: Sea's End***.

The Old Ground Monkey

The Monkey — given purely as a stopgap if you don't have or wish to make another location — has a map detailed for this adventure if you need it. It is a relatively clean and welcoming inn, nothing flashy. The beds are warm (warming pans are put in them for winter nights), the food is reasonably good, and the ale barely watered. It's out of the way, but sits on a block by an old market place. The inn can be anywhere in the city.

Rooms have poor-quality locks — DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick — and each has a window with a latch (DC 11). The characters are on the top floor and are the only guests. The landlady **Peg** (N female human **commoner**) is an elderly lady who was once a clothing model. She's never let her vanity go and dresses in thick makeup and ridiculously silk attire. She has a dozen cats.

For other locations, consider the options but base them on the above. The Occularis want to surprise the characters at their weakest, and assume the dead of night is best. They may decide to ambush the characters on their way home from the opera, or when they're drunk, or when they're in a very public place. Remember, the Occularis represent the law; they don't care who sees them work or who they hurt.

The Knights Occularis arrive in the dead of night. There are 4 **Prosecutor-Knights Occularis** (LN human **knight;** the lowest order) and Her Gracious Occularis-Paladin Lady **Rachel Birch**†. There is steel in her eyes, she betrays it in her stance and her attire. She wears her red hair short, and she is both lithe and muscular. Her movement is gracious but sparing, and she leads her men with unquestioned authority. The group



also has **3 steam mephits** that have been magically enhanced to be able to *see invisibility*.

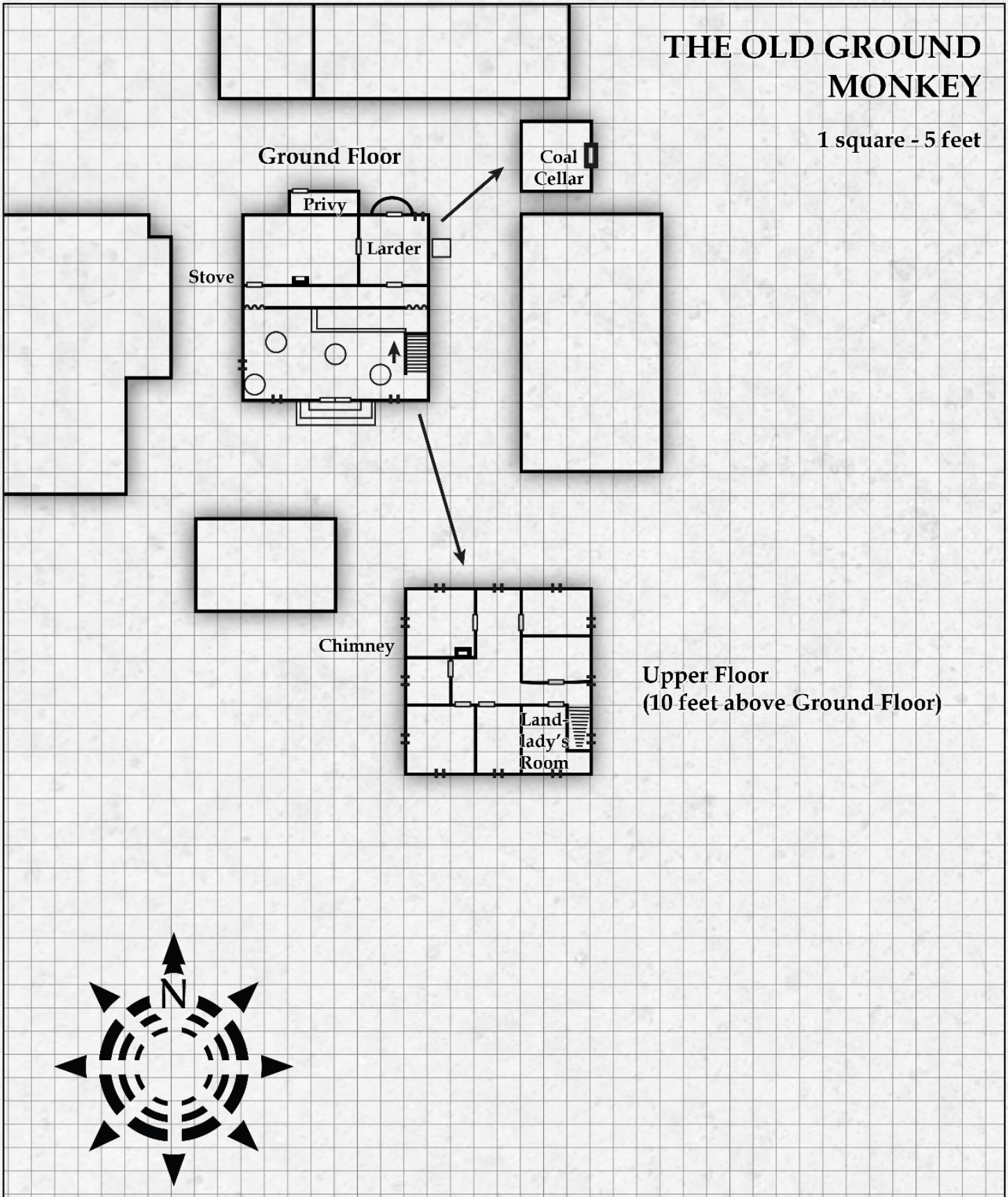
Tactics: The knights have all had *shield of faith* cast on them before they approach the inn and then enter to move quietly upstairs following the mephits. They know the characters are inside but not where exactly. They assume them to be abed. The mephits act as hounds for this hunt; they are here to seek out invisible prey and point them out. They may use their breath weapon and boiling rain, but otherwise try to stay in sight of but not ultimately in combat. Lady Birch waits outside, having cast *shield of faith* on herself. She waits 1 minute to ensure people do not escape, and then moves in as well. If she spots escapees, or the mephits do, she attacks them, thinking they will likely be rogues and spellcasters.

Development: Birch regards the prosecutor-knights as expendable, but not herself. She leaves combat invisibly when you regard it as wise, or uses another method to escape. She then stalks the characters, or rumours of the characters. She does not approach or converse with the characters, and is wary of their talents — which she may have knowledge of at your discretion. She is scheduled to appear in the final encounter of this adventure having watched events from a distance and preparing a second trap using the local constabulary.

Capturing any of the Occularis enables the characters to find out through questioning that the knights have come from the Capitol with orders from above (only Lady Birch knows the orders have actually come from Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage†). The others do not question orders; they only follow them. Birch knows that the characters are useful; the others do not, but have been given what details you feel appropriate for their attack.

THE OLD GROUND MONKEY

1 square - 5 feet



Her Gracious Occularis- Paladin Lady Rachel Birch

Lady Birch is ambitious, frighteningly so. She has risen through the ranks of the Occularis quickly, and is prepared to do anything to continue her meteoric rise. The characters are her chance to rise again, and she cannot envisage failure. If she returns to the Capitol without them, she knows what will happen, so until she gets the characters, she never rests. Her tactics are subtle; you can assume that at any given time she can replenish her potions in 12 hours if she has her freedom. However, once away from the Capitol she relies upon her wits and contacts to chase down her prey. She is every bit as resourceful and smart as the characters, but not omnipotent. Ways to bring her in are suggested in this and future adventures, as well as modified stat blocks as she rises in power.

Birch hides a dark secret from the order, however: She has seen the Angel, she has heard what it is promising, and she is mightily tempted to let her succeed. Wiping the city clean appeals to her as she knows that, whatever happens, she is destined to greatness. A new city would give her a chance to break free of the shackles of the order and be free to achieve her true potential. Should she voice such ideas however — even to herself — she knows what could happen. Betrayal is something that makes the Occularis very, very angry. So Birch has tried to cut the visions from herself, injuring herself every time she thinks of the Angel. Her arms, wrists, and legs are lacerated with scores of cuts, but these are visible only on a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check as she takes great pains to conceal them.

Birch has a short temper, but she has learnt to control it. She is steely in her self-interest and does not waste her talents. She sees sex as a weakness; men can be exploited by it, but she has given her soul to her ambition. She carries herself as very worldly and of great experience, but it is all bluff.



What Now?

The characters do not know that the Occularis might be stalking them in huge numbers. Certainly, the fact that wanted posters of them are even now drifting about the city-state or are nailed to gaols and prisons across the city should make them at least cautious, if not paranoid. Play on this. They may think to seek out Eleanor Shank to find a safe house; they may already have done so. They may try to vanish into the city or they may brave it out. Be prepared to improvise and react.

Eleanor has been made aware of a situation that has developed with the Circus Macabre — presently entertaining in the Artists' Quarter in Rook Square. She went last night to meet Long Lucy (she has a curiosity about all the various strands of the characters' associations) and learnt that Scarred Samuel confessed to kidnapping three local children but has since refuted his comments, and claims to have no knowledge of where the children are. Most locals want the Watch to prize the truth out of him, but the local Officer of the Watch in charge of the case — Inspector Greyman — does not use such clumsy methods. Besides which, he is sure he has the wrong man.

Lucy begs Eleanor to go to the characters and asks for help, handing her a letter (**Handout 1** — which may need modification if their relationship differs from anything written), and asking her to rush them back.

Eleanor Shank† comes looking for them the morning after the attack. She may even have heard of the attack and so arrives very early. She'll use her contacts to locate the characters, but if the group is hiding in a *rope trick* or somewhere similar, you might need to consider that her early efforts are futile and as such she becomes more frantic. Again, use your judgement, but if all else fails, she leaves a signal for her benefactor and learns the characters' location 1d3 days later (these days should be knocked off the time the characters have to investigate the events at the Artists' Quarter unless you deem otherwise).

Unfriendly Partings

One of the wonderful things about roleplaying games is their unpredictability, and the characters' relationship with the Circus Macabre is a great example. There is no guarantee the characters parted on anything like good terms — it's unlikely as the circus forms such a grateful and fruitful adventure for them, but not certain.

If the characters did not get on with Long Lucy†, consider that Eleanor asks the characters — as a favour to her — to help, pointing out that going somewhere unexpected may actually help them as well. Of course, the characters are very much expected, and when the adventure pans out from this position, there are some interesting questions the characters may be asking their guide and sponsor — a friend who has apparently led them into a death trap.

Follow Me, Follow?

The characters are under no obligation to follow Eleanor, but their friendship should ensure they give help. Eleanor could of course mention the attack on the characters if she knows of it, and that, as the characters know, the Circus Macabre might make a fine place to hide in, or the Artists' Quarter a great place to get lost in. The characters may decide not to help, judging their own researches and quest more important. You can assume in that case that one of Wither's human agents has Eleanor followed and locates the characters. He begins his attacks as outlined in the adventure below, and the characters face a choice of learning where he is or continue to suffer his attacks.

Part Two: Old Enemies

This part of the adventure is split into four sections — **Section A** gives a brief summary of what has happened, and how and where events will move forward. **Section B** gives the locations for this part of the adventure, and **Section C** gives a series of events and how these interact with the characters. Finally, **Section D** details the dark fey of the district and how the characters can use them to find an entrance into the **Theatres Obscura**, and subsequently **The Susurrus Theatre**, the base for the main antagonist and reason behind this adventure — the vampire **Wither** (NE male human **diseased vampire**†).

The Artists' Quarter

The characters may know a little about the Artists' Quarter and its reputation. Characters making Intelligence (Investigation) checks are aware of the details given in the table below. Higher checks reveal all the information below for lesser checks. Likewise, Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information can reveal this information as well.

For more information on the Artists' Quarter, consult **Chapter 2** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide***. When the characters first arrive at the Artists' Quarter, read or paraphrase the following description to give them a taste of the place and its character:

> Spilling from the foot of the Jumble like an insane cat's cradle, the Artists' Quarter staggers down to the Great Lyme River through a shamble of tiny streets cowering beneath leaning sagging buildings. It is a place of vast excess and colour, every street has a flamboyance and a garish personality and throngs with entertainers. Theatres, poets, dancers, painters, puppeteers, musicians, storytellers, clowns, illusionists, kite flyers, music halls and opera houses all catch your eye as you cast but a single glance down a single street in this mad place.

Researching the Artists' Quarter

DC	Result
5	There are a thousand different types of art in the quarter, and everyone has something to say — usually loudly at first, and then quietly, and perhaps a little smugly after fame has found them. The district is fractured, with artists gathering by disciplines, so that there are streets of puppet-makers, courtyards of paint makers, and alleys of glassblowers. Politics and anarchy seethe here.
7	The Artists' Quarter is as infamous as it is admired. Many say the artists therein have lost touch with the admiration and needs of the commoner and aristocrat alike and have taken art in an altogether wrong direction. Most infamous are the surgeon-artists who make living flesh into their muses. There are holy orders in the city now who have taken it upon themselves to wipe such surgeon-artists from the entire empire and have begun a crusade against them. These surgeon-artists are slowly being driven underground, and while many admire this approach, there are some dissenting voices who say that what cannot be seen can fester and become perverted in the darkness.
10	Presently, the most famous artist in the Quarter is Maximel D'Regiolette, billed as the greatest painter of all time, whose images are so beautiful they make people who see them weep. The artist is presently working on the ceiling of the Great Castorhage Cathedral in the Capitol.
12	*The Raven*, a cheaply printed broadsheet, is the Anarchist's mouthpiece and is said to be created in the Artists' Quarter — somewhere. *The Raven* is found lying at the end of bars, pinned to the doors of privies, lying discreetly in the travelling bags of gentlemen, and nailed on street corner signposts for all to read. Although few can read, those who can feel obliged to reveal the contents of the latest issue of *The Raven* in almost as much detail as they do the gentlemen's rag *The Eye*. *The Raven* is not afraid to shock and detail the true goings on of the Capitol and other high-caste districts, particularly, the City of Golems. The writers, known affectionately as the "Liars" (after being branded as such by the Crown Justices many years ago) have friends everywhere and an uncanny knack of turning a titbit of information into a newsworthy event.
15	Theatre Town is one of the parishes of the Artists' Quarter, and the Theatres Sinister is one of its most infamous wards. Famed for the outlandish and shocking, these theatres also run the risk of visits by the Knockers, occasionally performing risqué plays aimed at highlighting the sins of the Royals and Upper Class castes.

Section A: The Horror in the Artists' Quarter

Part 2 of the adventure focuses upon the characters' investigations into the kidnapping of three local children, the enemies that assail the group, and the impending trial and subsequent beheading of the innocent circus performer **Scarred Samuel** (N male human **spy** with +3 to Intimidation). The characters will recall him as the Circus's owlbear trainer.

Samuel is a scapegoat, who was dominated by a vampire spawn agent of the Panacea and forced to confess to the abductions. The Panacea know of the characters' relationship with the circus and have laid a deadly trap to punish the heretics and put them in the Deadbook once and for all. The vampires kidnapped the three local children from Blewit's Workhouse (**RS5**) at dusk a few days before the adventure, bringing them back to their master in the Theatres Obscura where they were subsequently discarded as being of no further use (they still languish there, unable to escape). They then dominated the revolting workhouse owner, Mistress Blewit, and forced her to go to the Watch and report the children missing. This confrontation with Mistress Blewit was witnessed by at least one of the

children who works there, but they are all so petrified of the owner that getting such a revelation from them is not easy.

The following night, the vampires spread dissension amongst the locals using a few more attempts at dominating people of the district (one of which failed and which may lead to clues under events in **Section C** below if the characters ask the right questions) and follow that up the next evening by forcing the dominated Scarred Samuel to go to the local Watch Station and confess to the crimes, confident that the events would bring the characters — their hated enemies — out of hiding and into the Artists' Quarter. Unfortunately, the agents were seen in Rook Square as they lured Samuel into their trap by one of the circus staff, Mister Ficklewid (**CM3**). The vampires quickly dominated him as well, and he now acts as a spy for them, reporting back only if the trap has worked but not knowing why the vampire spawn are asking him about strangers.

Scarred Samuel marched straight to the Watch Station and confessed before Inspector of the Watch Tobias Greyman and two constables that he had taken the children and killed them. He would not say where the bodies were, and after the vampire's dominate person ability ran its course, he could only vaguely remember what he had said. The Watch have had to put down a near riot the night before the adventure as a result of the crimes and the confession and expect more as tensions rise within the district. Inspector Greyman is unconvinced of Scarred Samuel's guilt, but will not release him on that alone. He has to answer to the streetclerk for his ward, and only evidence satisfies him. The recovery of the missing children alive would be more than enough, but questioning them under *speak with dead* also is satisfactory. Truth-detections of any kind would only be believed by the ward streetclerk if the District Chief Jurist were present — Under-Justice Micajah — something to which the uncaring official is not amenable (see events in **Section C** for more details).

Section B: The Circus Macabre and Rook Square

Rook Square is a small side-square in the east of the district, famous for its nesting rooks, which dwell in a huge rookery constructed across the top of the square. The square and its surroundings are detailed below.

With space at a premium, businesses are cramped into narrow areas and have over the years extended into the alleyways adjacent to them. All alleyways are shown by single lines on the location map and vary between 5 and 10 feet wide. They are lost in valleys created by 3-, 4- or even 5-storey townhouses and tenements. These looming buildings are not easy to climb, requiring a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, and the rooftops above are steeply gabled, requiring a DC 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move faster than half speed).

Streets are broader, between 10 and 20 feet wide, but still crowded as hawkers, market stalls, and travellers cram into them. Streets and alleys alike are filthy and decked with garish posters, signs, and other advertising.

RS1. The Circus Macabre

A valley of decaying green walls rises from a shadowy square within which are crammed almost twenty black tents. Narrow-gated entrances give access into this square, which rises steeply to a strange area of rooftops sprouting from which — almost like impromptu growths — are dozens of wooden nests, some of great size. These nests cover every inch of the overlooking rooftops, and hang over the edges, staring into the cauldron of damp city square below.

Built upon the gables above are hundreds of rooks (use raven for statistics from the core rules), but they are accustomed to the close habitation of the city-dwellers and will not swarm. The rookery covers every inch of the space above (assume each rooftop is 20 feet wide from the edges of the square, rising to a peak and then falling 10 feet on either side as it does so). The rookery requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move along at anything faster than half speed and is in very poor condition — characters failing the check by 5 or more step onto a rotten area of rookery and unless they make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save, fall to the ground below.

The circus is crammed into Rook Square, and since events in ***L1: Hereafter*** has expanded considerably. In all, 17 canvas tents now rise in the square, which is overlooked by long-neglected townhouses and tenements. Where occupants for these buildings are required, assume that each is occupied by 1d12 humans (**commoner**). The walls of the square are mossy and the houses vary from 3 to 4 storeys high (assume 30–40 feet). They may be climbed with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, but the check must be repeated for *each storey climbed*. By day, the place is mostly quiet, with the performers sleeping in their tents. By late afternoon, the performers begin to prepare, a large meal is cooked (**CM2**), and as dusk arrives, the performances swing into life.

In total, some **49 circus performers** (most are N male or female human **commoners**) work here, led by **Long Lucy**†. All the NPCs who survived events in ***L1: Hereafter*** are still here, and all are fiercely loyal to Long Lucy. They are very afraid that Scarred Samuel will be beheaded, and they help in any way they can but are little or no use in a fight. If combat occurs within the circus area, they tend to flee, and unless you deem otherwise play no other role. Particularly beloved characters — those who have developed friendships with the performers — are helped, however. In this case, decide how much help the character gets and for how long. But these are artists, not heroes …

There is one exception: **Mister Ficklewid** (NE male human **duelist**), ostensibly a dogsbody who is not much liked by the rest. He is very much aware that there are vampires about. In fact, he is expecting the characters as he has been told to expect strangers and report on them. Each night if something interesting happens, he heads to the western end of Croglin Alley (**RS2**) and meets a vampire spawn from the Decaying Music Hall Vampire Nest (**RS6**) to report. He knows nothing more than that when he arrived in the square, vampires approached him and told him to expect strangers, at which point he was to report to the vampires at just after dusk. He has seen the vampires' strange tattoo but has only ever personally met one of the vampire spawn so far.

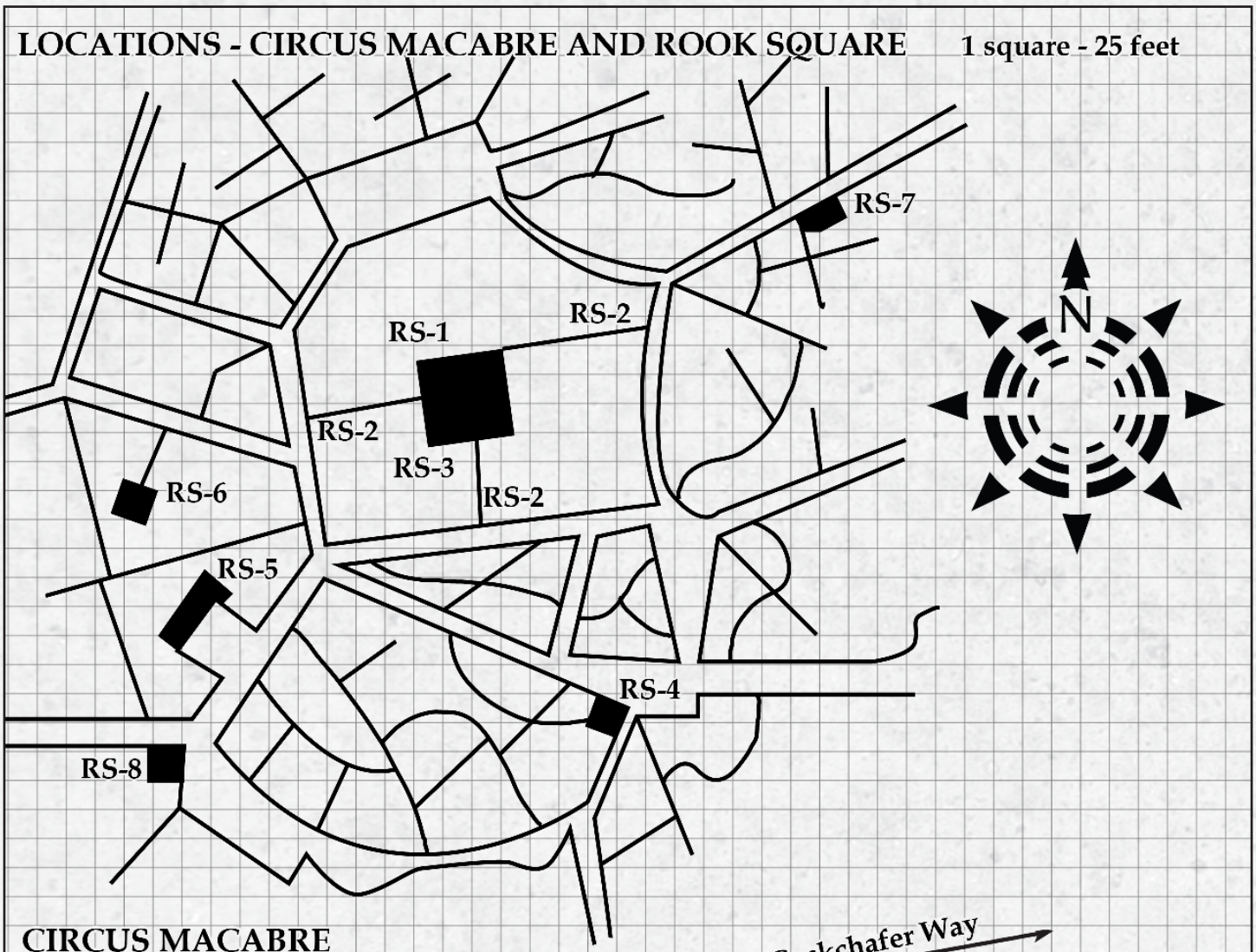
Circus Macabre Features

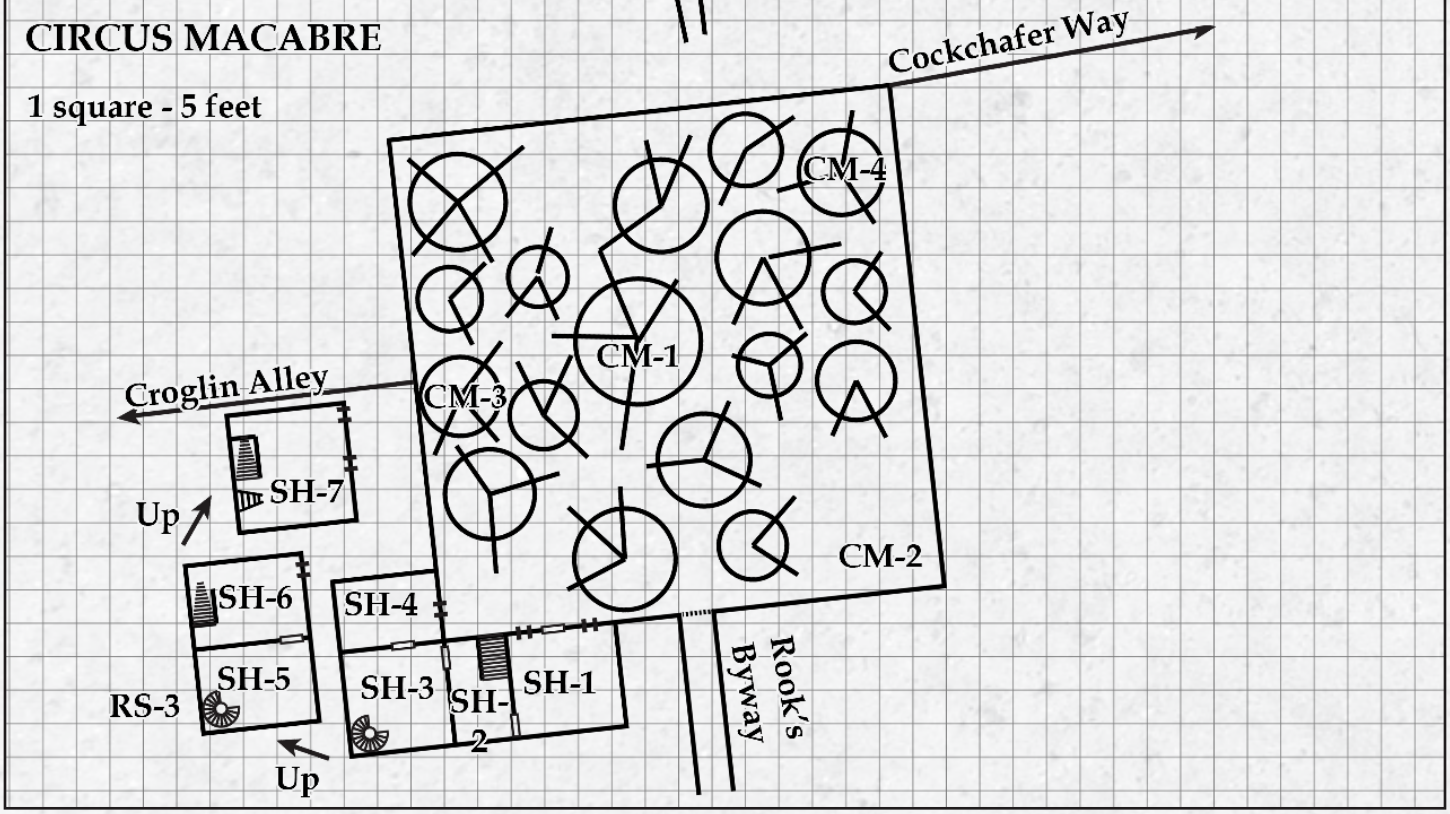
All the tents are black, and not just an ordinary black, but an absorbing darkness that seems to drive away light. Each tent also detects as moderate illusion magic, an inherent quality of the circus that is not obvious to most people. The fabric of the tents has a cunning weft of cloth from Between that enhances illusory magic subtly, caressing illusions to enhance their quality and increasing the DC of Will saves by 2. The tents also have other irregular properties: memories tend to stay within them, sometimes distant voices are heard, and lights fall at odd angles upon them. In gaming terms, this is purely reflected in the save, but as GM, you should subtly weave these factors into any illusion spells cast here.

CM1. The Great Tent

This is a very large black tent, within which a central sawdust circle is raised above the ground by some five feet and reached by low steps.

The main acts perform here. A major performance is detailed under **Section C** below. Equipment tends to come and go during acts, and harnesses and ropes are in position for the acrobats and clowns to use.


LOCATIONS - CIRCUS MACABRE AND ROOK SQUARE
1 square - 25 feet
RS-1
RS-2
RS-2
RS-3
RS-2
RS-4
RS-5
RS-6
RS-7
RS-8
N


CIRCUS MACABRE
1 square - 5 feet
Cockchafer Way
CM-1
CM-2
CM-3
CM-4
Croglin Alley
Up
SH-7
SH-6
SH-5
RS-3
Up
SH-4
SH-3
SH-2
SH-1
Rook's Byway

Someone Missing?

While she has little role to play in this adventure (unless you want her to), the sentient **lesser flesh golem**, **Ivy** (a.k.a. the Gorgon) should be in the adventure in some way. The golem gives you a great chance to spread a little bitter-sweetness into events without rolling any dice. Play Ivy, have her here, and see how the characters get on with her. She makes a final appearance in the last adventure ***L9: Utopia***, though only a brief one. She represents the wronged side of the city and how your players react to her should prove interesting.

Long Lucy† has taken to sleeping in the Great Tent of late. The recent situation with Samuel has made her nervous. She knows he's innocent, but the question that crosses her mind is why would someone frame him? Lucy is an incredibly short halfling lady, barely a foot tall but rising to 3 feet in height in her extremely elevated heeled platform ringmaster boots. There is a fierce glint in her eyes. Lucy always has at her side her tortoise-shell Between-cat **Nostrum**. The cat is uncannily human in its carriage until it sees a mouse, after which it becomes obsessive about catching it like any cat. Nostrum is not actually Lucy's familiar, but behaves around here as if she is one. For her part, Lucy thinks he is merely an awakened cat, unaware of the true creature that lies beneath his illusory disguise.

Development: The characters' interaction with Long Lucy and the troupe are detailed in **Section C** below.

CM2. The Galley

One corner of the square is given over to a series of market stalls, bubbling cauldrons, sizzling woks, and makeshift seats. This is the location of the circus's kitchen, which is stocked every day from the many markets of the district by the new cook **Harper Grudd** (male human **guard**). Grudd is incredibly selfish, and delights in spitting into the food of those he doesn't like. He's a passable cook but joined the circus only 4 weeks ago, making him a possible red herring for this adventure. Grudd is the sort who spends his free time in petty crime — bullying, cutpursing, and generally being a thug. A rough-looking person, Grudd fights only until he realises he is in trouble. He backs down if reduced to half his hit points, but defends himself if he is attacked.

CM3. Mister Ficklewid

An unremarkable but shabby man pushing a broom about and looking bored, Ficklewid (NE male human **duelist** with unusual equipment — see below) is unremarkable except for his actions with the vampire spawn who besets this adventure. Ficklewid saw what happened to Scarred Samuel and was subsequently mentally dominated by the vampire spawn. He now keeps an eye on things for the spawn, something he can do without a check unless the characters begin to pay any attention to the circus employees — in which case an opposed Wisdom (Insight) check is allowed against his Charisma of 15 (+2). Whenever an interesting or new major fact arises (the characters' arrival, the characters happening upon a major clue, or other event you deem would be of interest enough for him to pass on to the vampire spawn), he meets the spawn as detailed above and in **Section C** below.

Ficklewid is resourceful and nasty. He'd think nothing of slipping poison into the characters' meal if he thought they were onto him, or luring a lone character away to attack. If unmasked and freed, his very colourfully mutilated corpse should turn up somewhere nearby the day after. Although tough, Ficklewid has been told by the spawn he has met that there are dozens of vampires nearby, and that if he betrays them, they will take delight in arranging for him to be fixed to a waterwheel nearby and slowly pulled apart. It is enough to keep him sweating. However, he has recently purchased a silvered dagger, just in case.

Ficklewid carries the following gear:

4 pickled **homunculi**, *potion of superior healing*, *potion of invulnerability,* silvered dagger in hidden sheath, 25 gp in various pockets, hidden heel compartment (spotted on a successful DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check, DC 17 if his clothing is actively searched) containing 6 tourmalines worth 100 gp each.

Tactics: If forced into combat, Ficklewid smashes his pickled **homunculi** flasks and instructs the homonculi to attack whomever he is attacking. He wants nothing more than for the characters to be fed to the vampires and gone — wrongly assuming the undead will then leave him be.

CM4. Some Old Owlbear Acquaintances

Scarred Samuel's animals are caged herein. Characters making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can see that his creatures are looking very neglected. A trio of dancing riding dogs, five performing baboons, a dancing brown bear, two miniature ponies, and **Gripper the Owlbear** (**giant owlbear**) make up the group. Since the previous adventure, Samuel has been over-pampering his beloved owlbear, which now has quite a large paunch. Samuel has now invested in cage locks — DC 12 Dexterity check to pick with thieves' tools.

The characters may be roped into an event around these animals. For more information, see the events part of this section.

RS2. The Alleyways

Three alleys lead into Rook Square. Two of these are very cramped and narrow places where light seldom enters. The last, Rook's Byway, is grander.

Cockchafer Way

Named after the insect that used to thrive in the earthen ground of this damp alley (and which were eradicated after it was cobbled), this alley is long and narrow. Dozens of side-doors lead off the alley, and most of these are occupied by people who don't like visitors. A rusty iron gate leads into Rook Square. This gate is presently padlocked shut (Long Lucy has the key). The padlock can be picked with thieves tools and a DC 17 Dexterity check.

Croglin Alley

Named after a local cheese, this is one of many alleyways once used by local cheesemakers to get goods from their manufacturies and workhouses. The cobbles show the sigil of the local cheesemakers guilds. The alley lies below the buildings that abut it and form a tunnel of sorts. At the start of the adventure, two dead dogs lie in an open pit about halfway along its length. Although the alley is gated, Long Lucy has elected not to lock the gate, as the smell is so bad that she doesn't like to even go near it.

Rook's Byway

A broad byway that in places is as much as 6 feet wide, this alley is open to the skies and gets the midday sun. Its sides are covered in carvings of rooks, amongst which is the very recent addition of an angel — spotted on a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. Elaborate iron gates with wrought iron rooks open onto the square. These gates are locked with chain and padlocks, which may be picked with a DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves tools.

RS3. The Safe House

Overlooking the circus, Long Lucy is aware that an empty house would serve her character guests very well, and enable them to base their operations in clearing Scarred Samuel. As the adventure starts, she's gone to some expense (including hiring a menial servant) to make it welcoming and suggest to the characters that as things are getting hot for the performers, the characters' presence might help. This and other suggestions are detailed under **Section C** below.

The place smells of fresh paint and the odd feminine touch sits incongruously within: fresh flowers, new kitchen utensils, and other touches put here by Long Lucy to make her guests' brief stay more pleasant.

Long Lucy has hired a house servant, **Mister Trench** (NG male human **commoner**), a perpetually smiling, hard-working, decent and honest chap who does his level best throughout the characters' stay. Trench is subtle and courteous and highly professional, slow to take offence, and eager to serve. Lucy hired him recently on the basis of a local person's recommendation — Trench himself recently lost his master to cancer after 34 years of service and is eager to secure a new position. If the characters wish to take him on, a suggested wage of the minimum amount (3 sp per day) is a good starting point.

GH1. Hallway

A simple latched wooden door with a poor-quality lock — picked with a DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools — enters onto a neat space with hooks, places for boots, and a small washstand.

GH2. Study

A tight chamber with a wooden stair rising upward. Empty shelves line the walls here. A leather chair rests by a tiny stove opposite the hall door.

GH3. Kitchen

This is a neat and well-stocked kitchen with a cooking range and plenty of cupboards, as well as a larder and meat locker. An iron spiral stair rises upward to the floor above.

GH4. Snug and Old Brewery

A small chamber is occupied with a cosy fire and neat horsehair seating. The brass paraphernalia and objects tell that this room was once a brewery. A small leaded window about a foot wide overlooks the square outside.

GH5. Bedroom 1

The spiral stair rises to a bedchamber with four new beds, each with a locker at its foot. These may be opened with thieves tools and a DC 16 Dexterity check.

GH6. Bedroom 2

This bedroom is slightly larger and has a double bed, a hammock, and a bunk bed crammed into it. A small circular leaded window roughly a foot across overlooks the square below. A very steep ladder stair rises to a gap in the ceiling.

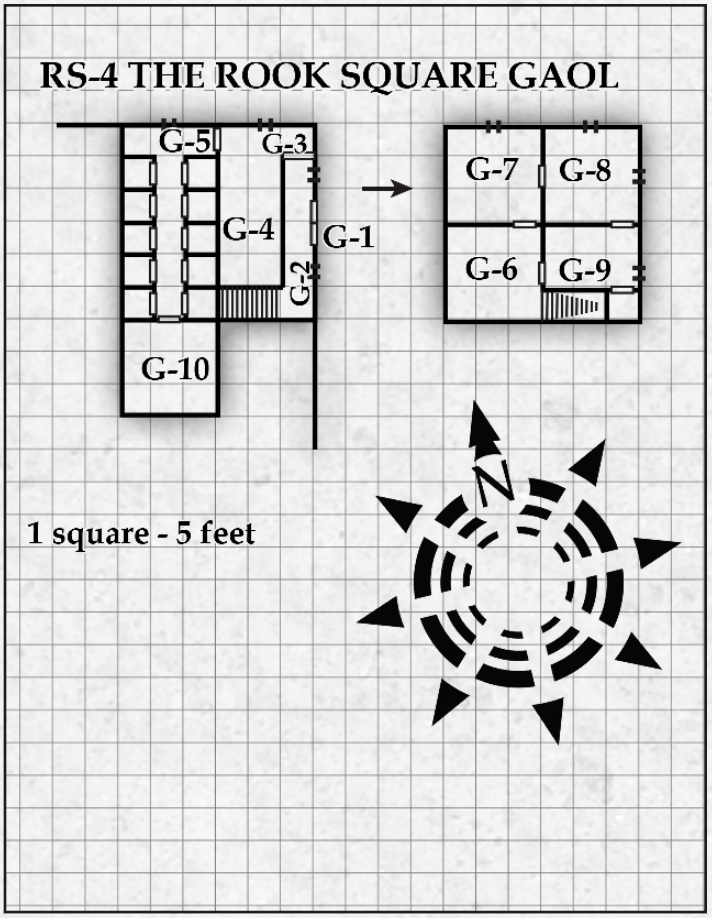
GH7. Garret and Rookery Exit

A broad garret with a wide, grimy window some six feet square. There is a single bed and a stove in the centre that rises to the roof. A ladder continues upward onto the rooftop via a latched trapdoor. The rooftop is flat and commands an excellent view to the square some 30 feet below. It has a series of planks that allow access to the rookery and rooftops nearby.

RG4. The Rook Square Gaol

Lurking at the corner of a square is a stout two-story stone building with barred windows. A hefty ironbound door has the words "*Rook Square Gaol*" branded into them.

The gaol is an old building, its walls clad with stone almost 3 feet thick. The windows are broad (3 feet square) and barred with 1-inch-thick iron bars. The gaol serves as the Rook Square ward's Watch Station. It is overseen by Inspector of the Watch Tobias Greyman (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†) under Streetclerk Sharus Phiny (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†), who also oversees the Watch stations of three other nearby wards and is, therefore, rarely present**. Inspector Greyman**



has a staff of 4 **Constables of the Watch** (N human male **guard**) who all live in tenements within 50 feet of the gaol itself. The constables are lazy, but have an excellent system of local boys who wake them up in the event of an alarm being sounded (either a constable's whistle or the bell at the goal). They arrive 2d6 rounds later armed (but not armoured if the alarm is raised by night). At any given time, at least 1 constable is on duty in the gaol.

G1. Outer Door

A hefty ironbound door (Unlocked with a DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools) with an average lock allows entrance. A bell-pull hangs by the door. The station is unlocked only in the morning, but pulling the bell always brings the duty constable to the door. The constables are naturally suspicious, but with talk of revolution, they are even more wary of visitors. Unless the visitors' story is very convincing (a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Persuasion) check for example), visitors are told to report back when the inspector is here. Greyman is more amenable to visitors and invites most people in.

G2. Reception

This is an oak-panelled corridor cluttered with wanted posters, crudely printed books, and a large painting of Mother Grace smiling beautifully down with the words, "*Truth is Honour*," written below. Amongst the posters are two of the characters. They are hidden at the start of the adventure — DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice them — but a scuffle when a local drunk is brought in on Day 3 of the adventure exposes one of them, with potentially dangerous effects (see **Day 12** of **Section C**) if the characters don't find them — the DC of the check drops to 12 once the scuffle has occurred — and remove them beforehand.

G3. Desk

A desk with serving hatch is perched at the far end of the corridor, and a large hefty bell is hung nearby. The bell is an alarm. If sounded, everyone

within rushes to the spot, and all constables living nearby hurry to the scene to help.

G4. Office

An oak-panelled chamber has several display cabinets with awards given to previous inspectors and constables. A hefty, much-scattered desk surrounded by old leather chairs sits in the middle of the room. One wall holds a heavy wooden locker with a good lock (unlock with a DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools). It is currently empty, but is used to hold the possessions of anyone locked up in the cells at **G5**. The constable on duty holds the key to this locker. A spare key to the outer door and the gaol cells hangs on the far wall. It is hidden in a small cabinet — DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice). Also, characters making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that the desk has at one time been on fire.

G5. Gaol

Eleven cells with good wooden doors and average locks — DC 17 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open. Each has a narrow grill to allow viewing into the cells. Each cell has a wooden bed and a bucket. The only prisoner is **Scarred Samuel** (N male human **spy** with +3 to Intimidation) who is in the cell marked X.

G6. Canteen

A seating and working area with a cooking range and several cabinets. The officers eat, meet, and work here. A battered, printed calendar hangs by the stairs. It has the date of the Under-Justice's arrival in 13 days' time marked in red ink.

The cabinets aren't locked and contain 4 spare uniforms and whistles, 6 coshes† in a straw-lined box, and 4 light crossbows, one of which is masterwork. A case of 100 bolts is in the bottom of one. Four pairs of manacles with keys hang in the back of another cabinet.

G7. Interrogation Room

Here is a bare chamber with a desk and three chairs, one of which has a set of manacles attached to it.

G8. Greyman's Office

This cluttered office area is crammed with cabinets of books and a roll-top desk with a leather captain's chair drawn up to it. Greyman has quite a library of crime, and anyone using his ledgers and notes to make an Intelligence (Investigation) check in this adventure for the local area does so with advantage. Greyman keeps extensive notes, and anyone getting hold of his journal (which always sits in the roll-top desk) and making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check realises the Inspector's strong conviction that Scarred Samuel is innocent of the kidnappings. This is most likely where Inspector of the Watch Greyman (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†) will be found.

Treasure: The desk is locked — DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open — and contains copies of all the keys in the gaol. A silver dagger, a vial of blue whinnis, and a *potion of greater healing* are also therein.

In addition, Greyman wears *slippers of spider climbing*, carries Watch Inspector credentials, a wallet containing a 5 guinea note (5 pp) and 25 sp, and wears soft basilisk leather boots worth 50 gp.

G9. Greyman's Room

This is an orderly bedroom and wardrobe with a closet crammed with yet more notes made by the inspector during his career. Greyman normally keeps a flail under the bed in case of intruders.

G10. Gaol Yard

A dirty yard sits within a canyon of surrounding buildings. The walls of the damp place are not easy to climb — DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check — but they give access to the overlooking gables of neighbouring properties. The Watch keeps **4 pit-mastiffs**† here. The dogs wander the place, drinking from a broken gutter-pipe and being fed every other day with bones.

Watch Inspector Tobias Greyman

Tobias doesn't believe he has the right man, and he has a nose for such things. But the District Chief Jurist arrives 13 days into the adventure, and justice must be done. As detailed under **Section A** above, Samuel's determination of guilt is certain and only a major piece of evidence to the contrary (like the retrieval of the missing children) proves his innocence. Greyman is a very decent person, however, and is happy to watch and work with others as detailed under events. Casting an attacking or detection spell on the inspector that he is aware of ends any cooperation and may lead to arrest. If the inspector falls out with the characters, he arrests them, keeping them in gaol overnight unless their crime is serious (say assaulting a constable), in which case he keeps them in gaol until the Under-Justice arrives — giving the characters little option but to escape.

Greyman has access to the cogs of machinery of the city. If needs be, he could call up to a dozen extra constables, and others at your discretion. Falling foul of him should not be insurmountable, but forces the characters to operate more covertly. If at any time any constable or the inspector is killed, the perpetrator is wanted for murder, an act that carries the death penalty by guillotine. Events beyond such possibilities are unpredictable, and you may need to make a judgement yourself.

A tall, stocky man with a hefty overcoat and a huge moustache**.** Greyman fights defensively, and generally has his flail only when he expects trouble (which he has an uncanny knack of anticipating). He prefers to learn and watch, sending his constables or hounds in to get dirty — he is too much of a gentleman to fight, although he did once work as a prize fighter for a summer season at Festival, so he can handle himself if he must.

Scarred Samuel

Scarred Samuel is innocent, as detailed in **Section A** above. He has no knowledge of what happened. He was wandering the streets nearby after dark visiting the local inns and then found himself in the gaol before a number of witnesses. He remembers nothing of the events between that time. He has grown to admire Inspector Greyman, who has treated him very well, and is reluctant to escape unless there is no option left. His main concern — apart from his impending decapitation — is the welfare of his owlbear, who he knows will go feral quickly unless trained. With such beasts rare in the extreme, and those able to be bullied even less so, he begs any visitors to make sure his owlbear is kept controlled (see **Section C** below), which is a great risk to anyone who tries, but Samuel is adamant that his owlbear must be regularly trained — daily, if possible. He informs anyone worried about helping him in this way that "just a minute" of showing him who's boss will be enough. In other words, spend 1 minute in the cage with him, using the whip and chair to show him who's master. He knows of no one in the circus with the talent to do so besides Long Lucy, and he does not think she would be imposing enough.

RG5. Blewit's Workhouse

A large sign proclaims that this is "*Blewit's Workhouse*."

The dreary workhouse is allegedly part educational establishment, part hostel, but mostly toil and misery. The fearsome **Mistress Blewit** (LN female human alchymic-undying† **commoner**) runs the place with an iron rod and the help of 3 masters (Crubb, Mull, and Crumplewrath) and a score of informants and spies.

Miss Hemp (NG human female **commoner**), a very slight and nervous lady, meets visitors at the stout, locked door DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick. Characters making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check when they see Hemp notice the welts on her arms and shoulders from beatings. Hemp leads visitors into a waiting room in a

small suite of respectable chambers used for guests.

Blewit has no truck with timewasters. She is a short-tempered woman who has no qualms about calling up the local constabulary and has friends in high places to call upon if necessary. Consider that if the characters harass her, Inspector Greyman tells them the day after that no further visits are allowed, or he will have to lock them up. The characters could use a DC 17 Charisma (Deception) or (Intimidation) check to gain access into the workhouse to help in investigations or to talk to the staff. Additionally, a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check works with Blewit, who is very slightly fearful of exposure for her cruelty and for a number of financial scams she is running.

If the characters cause Greyman to become involved, 2 **constables** (**guards**) are assigned to watch the workhouse (these are called from the neighbouring ward and still leaves 4 at the gaol) on rolling 12-hour shifts, something neither are remotely happy about. They are openly aggressive should they meet the cause of their discomfort and extra-cold shift (i.e. the characters).

If asked about the missing children — Tam, Abe, and (she struggles to remember the third name, a fact a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notes) Thomas — Mistress Blewit says that they were good children who loved her deeply. Characters making an opposed Wisdom (Insight) check against her +2 Charisma (Deception) can see she's bluffing, and if picked up on, she confesses in a lie that actually she is covering for the trio — they were wilful and often snuck out at night. She adds no more, other than crocodile tears (and a tiny smattering of real ones — she loses income from having fewer children). She can give descriptions of the three after giving it some thought: Tam had a round cherubic face and walked using a stick; Abe (Abigail) had the most luxurious bright-red hair (which Blewitt actually delighted in cutting and belittling her over); and young Tom was a scruffy little lad with a bad lisp (and was beaten for it).

If they ask for access into the workhouse by making the successful checks above, the characters are led in, accompanied by Blewit and the three masters, who continually preach and lecture about discipline and hardship. Getting away from them is tricky: a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check allows a character a few brief moments with workers, a DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check would also allow time. Using magic and other distractions works as you judge. Just bear in mind that the characters are accompanied and watched like hawks. If Blewit notices a stray has gone missing, she ends the interview, kicks the characters out, and contacts the constabulary with effects detailed above.

The workhouse has dozens of laundry washers, sewers, knitters, and scrubbers. Other trades such as keeping pigs, peeling potatoes, and more mundane work are given to the men. All staff have ill-fitting uniforms.

The workers dare not criticise Blewit — they will be thrown out and homeless in a nasty city otherwise — but one person, **Victoria** (N female human **commoner**), does notice if the characters enter and start asking about the children. Victoria only approaches a lone character with what she has to say. She relates that she saw Mistress Blewit being spoken to by an incredibly pale man outside in the darkness of the evening a week or so ago. Although she tried, Victoria could hear only a few words. The pale man told the mistress that her three children were missing, and that she was to go to the gaol and report it. Blewit seemed to be in a trance when she was being talked to and repeated what the pale man said precisely, heading straight in the direction of the gaol. The oddest thing happened after that — the pale man ran up the walls of the workhouse like a spider and vanished into the rooftops above. Victoria had seen the pale man several times before (she likes to daydream and look out the window at the clouds when she can), but always at night.

If the character presses Victoria further to remember any other detail, she adds that about 20 minutes later Inspector Greyman and the constabulary escorted Blewit back, and that the day after, Blewit seemed to have no recollection of going out that night. In fact, she seemed surprised when Master Crumplewrath reminded her of the missing children the following day at morning prayers. It was almost as though she didn't know she'd said anything. Victoria adds one last thing — that as the pale man scuttled by, she noticed something on his wrist, a tattoo, which she draws for the characters if she is given the opportunity to do so.

The tattoo is shown as **Handout 2** and is a mark of the Theatres Obscura (though the characters won't know this). Bear in mind that the tattoo is complex, and Victoria needs to be given time to complete it.

Despite her nastiness, Blewit is actually innocent of anything to do with the children's disappearances, although the characters may think otherwise. As with all aspects of an adventure with multiple shady characters, be prepared for them taking unusual actions both with the NPCs here and the location.

RG6. The Decaying Ragwort Music Hall Vampire Nest

The nest is the focus of operations for the Panacea and the diseased vampire Wither. The group has based a number of vampire spawn herein but can, if necessary, top up these from the Susurrus Theatre (see **Part 3**). However, Wither is no fool. He does not throw away his followers despite regarding them as less than cattle, and adds to the group only as detailed under events. People stay away from the music hall; it is regarded as a dangerous ruin and so far the spawn have kept a very low profile. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check regarding information about it relates only that it is considered unsafe and is therefore avoided. Details of why it is thought to be unsafe are sketchy, but most assume it is due to some structural weaknesses from its rundown condition.

These vampires are some of the few in the city that are not a part of The Fetch and live in defiance of Beltane. Wither has thrown in his lot with the Panacea in hopes of gaining greater personal power and perhaps even overthrowing Beltane altogether. One way that the characters could become aware of this place is if they begin to suspect vampires after investigations at Blewit's Workhouse or from interactions with Ficklewid. If they suspect vampires but don't know where to look, they can consult either Luther and Abigail (see **Appendix A**) or perhaps even try to contact The Fetch after their brief contact with them in ***L4: Decay***. If the characters contact Luther and Abigail, the vampire hunters do not know the location of this place but promise to ask around. Each day they have a cumulative 15% chance of finding a strong lead that points to this location. However, the characters may not feel like they have the time to waste since Scarred Samuel's life hangs in the balance. If they wish to try to contact The Fetch, they must make a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) or DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check to find a contact who can get in touch with the mysterious undead society. If the characters convinced Luther and Abigail to spare the (un)life of the vampire spawn messenger who contacted them in ***L4: Decay***, then they receive a +6 bonus to these checks. If successful in contacting The Fetch, they easily learn of the possible vampire nest here. The Fetch have long suspected its existence but had not, before now, suspected it as being associated with the Panacea or the city's coming catastrophe.

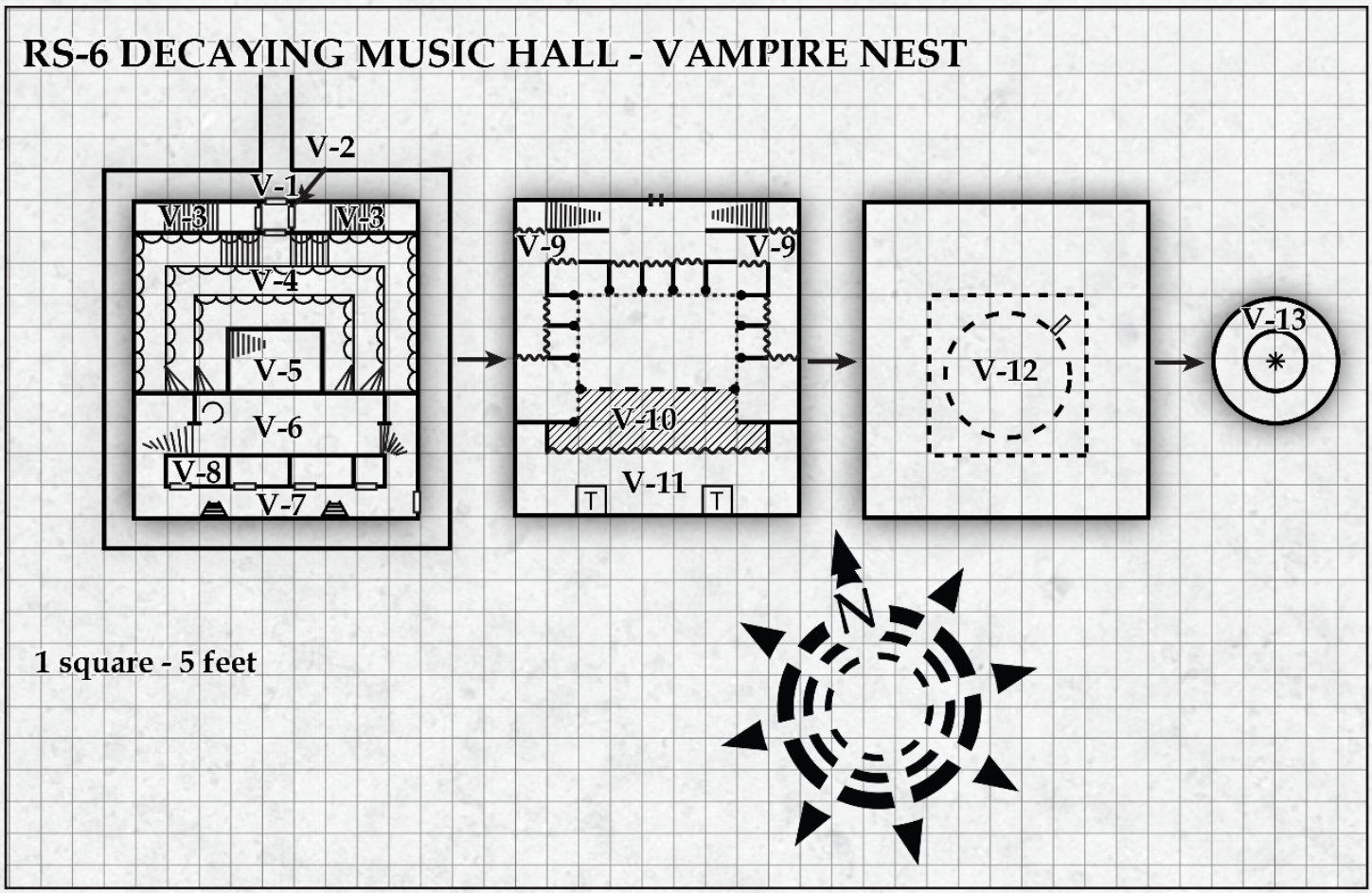
Ragwort Music Hall Features

The music hall is a mouldering desperate place. Its windows are grimed and filthy, and conditions within are total darkness unless the characters are able to bring about an extraordinary cleansing to the grimed windows or perhaps just break them out. The place has been abandoned, but still bears the tattered remnants of posters advertising old coming events.

The spawn herein are led by an old associate of Wither, a cohort from battles long ago known as **The Empty One** (**vampire spawn**), who ostensibly carries out his master's will here. The spawn has a number of agents across this area of the city, and can contact the two surviving progeny of the Sisters from ***L5: Below*** detailed in **Section C** below more or less immediately. However, these and other cohorts do not dwell in the music hall and are not able to assist in any defence. Only in extreme circumstances (such as the characters bragging about their plans to attack the theatre openly) should any of these other associates be here. The spawn herein are also weakened by attacks during events, and in general, reinforcements from the Susurrus Theatre arrive at dusk.

The nest has collective tactics detailed below. Only those with individual tactics listed operate otherwise. The group operates together, fearing what happens if they do not.

Nest Tactics: The vampire spawn herein operate as group. They lurk by day in their chandelier nest (**V13**), watched over by a small group of **dark creepers**† led by Nephin the Fingerman (**dark stalker**). If disturbed,



the spawn attack from the dome and from the ornate cornices just below. They send the bats into combat first to swarm and confuse their prey, and then attack by swooping down, spending 2 rounds attacking and then withdrawing. The spawn attack in this way in random groups. Assign a random number from half of any surviving group to attack for 2 rounds and withdraw; those that are left out of combat sweep in the next round and so on and so on. The spawn do not flee the building; they would never dare to.

V1. A Mouldering Alley

A narrow, dirty alley slithers from off the main streets and into the dark. This alley then embraces the theatre in a moist, rusting grip. When the characters venture to its end, read or paraphrase the following description.

> The alley is disgusting and almost oozes up to an abandoned building that appears to be some sort of music hall. The building rises some sixty feet or so to a weathered dome. The alley slinks around both sides of this building, caressing it with filth and stench. At least three dead cats lie near the main door of the place, a hefty iron-framed portal with a great ornately wrought-but-heavily-vandalised lantern above it.
>
> A sign above the lantern proclaims this to be "*The Ragwort Mu i H l*." The rest of the letters are worn off by time and the elements.

The Ragwort sits in this filthy embrace. The alley around the place is ankle-deep in rubbish, animal carcases, and sludge. Its walls rise only 5 feet away from those of the music hall. The backdoor to the music hall has been nailed shut from the inside (see **V7**). A mouldy sign outside says "*Stage Door*." The walls of the building are covered in slime and moss for the first 40 feet (climbing requires a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check) until poking above the surrounding rooftops. After that, the Strength (Athletics) DC drops to 15 for the remainder of the way to the 60-foot-high roof. The spawn climb in and out of their lair by this means.

The building's entrance is a locked ironbound door (DC 22 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick, due to rust in the lock) upon which are painted the words "*Danger, bilding laible to collaps - kep out! This mens yu!*" in red paint. The door is crudely, but effectively, **trapped**. Using the key or picking the lock successfully bypasses the device.

The Scythe Trap: A huge rusty scythe is suspended in front of the door, and if the portal is opened, it swings out, making a +15 melee attack, inflicting 2d6+4/x4 slashing damage. The trap can be noticed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, and disabled using thieves tools with a DC 14 Dexterity check.

One of the spawns' guardians, a **dust mephit** that refers to itself as the **Honourable Offal**, watches the alleyway. The creature lurks amongst the rubbish, slaying and eating the odd cat, and occasionally any small children that wander this way (of which there have been few of late).

Tactics: If it spots intruders, the mephit watches them for a few rounds to make sure that their intentions are dishonourable. The mephit then slinks to the stage door where it slithers through the gaps therein and moves to alert the occupants. If it succeeds, assume the vampires are aware of the intrusion, but they do not trouble to alert the dark creepers fearing they will get excitable and give the game away. If the Honourable Offal is caught, it happily describes the nest inside and the number of vampires (although it enhances the number by at least double and ferocity therein). If captured, it begs then for release, claiming it would have been a good mephit if only it hadn't had a bad mother and been born a mephit, which gave it little chance in life. It promises to stop eating children (but forgets to mention the cats), if only allowed to go free and reform its wicked ways.



V2. Lobby

Beyond is a tiny cramped space with doors ahead and left and right. The door ahead is reached by a few steep steps.

V3. Stairwells

The doors left and right lead to oak staircases, which rise amongst a few decayed posters advertising magicians and a monkey-juggler called the Insatiable Quirran. The left-hand stair is very creaky, and attempts to use Dexterity (Stealth) whilst moving up are at disadvantage.

V4. Main Auditorium

An enclosed space is flanked by steep rising oak stairs. On the opposite side of this alcove, a carved ape with a clown's mask greets you, while above, the space opens into a dizzying area rising to a high dome upon which painted figures dance festively, glowering beneath a film of dirt and filth. High above hangs an iron chandelier.

The ape-figure is an old malfunctioning mortomata. The thing merely grinds painfully if approached, turns its head, and opens its eyes — although only one socket has a glass orb remaining. The other is hollow and dark, showing just a glimpse of actual skull within. The ape then smiles rather horribly (it has human teeth) and attempts to bow, which fails.

From the entrance, steep steps rise to the auditorium. The steps rise 10 feet in a 5-foot-space to the highest level of the seating, so they are very steep — almost ladders. The auditorium tiers then descend 5 feet per level to reach the orchestra pit (**V5**). The seating areas are rat- and flea-infested and many have been smashed. From the top of the stairs, the whole music hall can clearly be seen if there is sufficient light.

The dome and chandelier house the vampire nest (**V13**). From the auditorium, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice that the chandelier's great glass basin is full of what looks like rubbish. If the check succeeds on a DC 17+, the rubbish is recognised to be a stack of humanoid corpses among what appears to be some sort of a nest. The chandelier hangs 40 feet above the uppermost balcony seating.

V5. Orchestra Pit

What must have once been the orchestra pit sinks below the level of the seating. A very battered harpsichord and a few other instruments and seats lie therein.

The harpsichord has seen better days, but is still worth 50 gp. However, if it is repaired, its full value is 300 gp. Also in the pit are a broken flute, a harp without strings, and a masterwork fiddle in a case hidden in a small locker at the back of the pit, found on a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check.

V6. Stage and Master of Ceremonies

A wide stage glowers from the far side of the main hall. The stage has mountain and forest scenery at its back. The curtains are very saggy and dirty.

The stage is 8 feet above the lowest level of seating and is in a perilous state. The wood floorboards can take the weight of a Medium creature, but a Large creature, or two Medium creatures engaged in grappling or occupying the same square, cause a collapse. Such creatures would then

need to make a successful DC 12 Dexterity save or fall 20 feet to the understage area (not shown on map), a long-bricked up section of cellar that occupies an identical space to the stage above.

A small desk sits at the west edge of the stage. This is the seating area for the master of ceremonies. Behind it is a battered leather chair while upon the desk is a gavel with silver edging worth 45 gp.

V7. Backstage

Steps descend offstage to a narrow corridor at the rear of the building that passes the dressing rooms. This corridor is filthy, and has a pair of ladders rising 20 feet to the upper storage (**V11**). The outer door is nailed shut from the inside, but is riddled with holes, several of which are large enough for the mephit in **V1** to squeeze through.

V8. Dressing Rooms

There are three confined and dirty dressing rooms. Each is littered with shards of broken glass and the remains of a desk and oddments. The end room is little more now than an open cesspit dropping 20 feet through its broken floor into a sewer tunnel.

The Panacea vampires keep a small group of dark creepers here to serve their whims. The 4 **dark creepers** are petrified of the vampires, and of the Empty One (**V12**) in particular. Their fear of the vampires is petty when compared with their horror of Nephin the Fingerman (**V11**) and his two dark creeper lieutenants. The creepers obey their leader to the point of self-destruction as detailed in that area. If he calls them, they come running. In general, the creepers are in a group in one dressing room (usually the middle one), engaged in sorting out their piles of stolen oddments. If an alarm is raised, one instantly climbs upward to the upper store shouting and trying to alert everyone herein.

Treasure: The creepers have a large amount of useless objects such as lipstick, rouge, powders and rat-tails, but they also have amongst these objects 212 sp, 34 gp, an enormous false moustache, a group of swallow heads nailed together with a gold ring worth 50 gp, and a hobnailed left boot with a false heel: DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice and find within a *feather token, bird*.

V9. Balcony and Private Boxes

The music hall rises to a balcony area, indeed a series of once-ornate balconies, their gilt and porcelain now tainted. From here, the whole hall can be seen, from the seats below, across to the stage, and upward to the domed ceiling and chandelier.

Optional Dressing Room Encounter

You can use this optional encounter if you wish to ratchet up the suspense a bit. The character who has been the greatest focus of the Beautiful's touch catches a glimpse of something wriggling in the shards of one of the broken mirrors in **V8**. A trio of long, distended fingers reaches through, trying to get into the room from Between. If the fingers are struck with a weapon, they are severed and wriggle about like severed worms for several seconds before dissolving into disgusting black goo. If not struck, the fingers try to pull through, soon bleeding profusely as whatever they belong to tries to push its way through the impossibly tiny space of the broken mirror shards. Eventually the fingers are severed as a result of its actions, and they behave as described above. In either case, once the fingers are dismembered, a terrible something runs away beyond the mirror, screaming inhumanly.

The private balconies are draped with violet velvet drapes (each of which is worth 25 gp). They contain the mouldering remains of once-fine seats.

V10. Catwalk

A series of planks, ropes, and ladders is lashed above the stage. These contain rolled backdrops, dark lanterns, and a trio of harnesses.

This area is 20 feet above the stage. The whole hatched area can be crossed using a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Characters examining the equipment and making a Knowledge (engineering) understand that the three harnesses are attached to fine wires and pulleys controlled from here, and how they work. It takes a round to don a harness, and a character who understands the mechanism can manipulate the harnessed characters, raising and lowering them by up to 20 feet per round and moving them horizontally by a similar distance as a full-round action. The harnesses operate only in the stage area below **V10**, though the movement does not count against the actions of the character being moved.

V11. Props and Upper Storage

A very crowded storage area partitioned with drapes, painted scenery, and curtains.

The whole area is so filled with curtains and scenery that visibility is only 5 feet and each square has concealment from the next. Movement through squares is at half normal pace. The room does not have walls between it and **V10**, but that side is also draped. Anyone stepping through those drapes finds himself in open air above the stage and must make a DC 15 Dexterity save to catch the edge of a catwalk or fall 20 feet to the stage below.

The leader of the dark creepers and chief servitor to the vampires **Nephin the Fingerman** (NE male **dark stalker**[†]) lurks up here with his **2 dark creepers**. Nephin knows his eyrie well and uses his thugs to distract intruders, sending them in opposite directions to sneak about as noisily as they can to enable him to get flank. He attacks with flank as much as possible, lurking at the edges of any combat. He uses his weakest poisons first, but is hopeful one day of using his beloved purple worm poison, which he does with relish if he finds a tough opponent. He may return to fight another day as you wish, and making him a reoccurring enemy may be interesting.

V12. Great Dome

The high dome rises some twenty feet from the ceiling and into the heavens. It is dancing with festive figures who are encased in filth. An iron chandelier hangs from the dome.

The dome itself is scarred with cracks, one of which — spotted on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check — gives access to the lair of the Empty One, a tiny claustrophobic space that opens from the dome and allows access into a cramped area within the stones of the dome itself. The space is used by the Empty One as its resting place, and from where it directs actions. The area is bare save for a funerary shroud and serves as the coffin area of the vampire itself. If the shroud is burned, the vampire effectively has no coffin to return to.

A **swarm of bats** and **3 giant bats** roost in the upper dome where beams have been exposed by rain and decay. The bats obey the vampires. **The Empty One** (NE human **vampire,** but with the following changes: (68 hit points [8d8 + 32], Charisma 8, AC 17 due to *ring of protection +1*) lurks in its resting space, not wishing to be disturbed. It is ancient and decaying,

its bones creaking and protesting as it moves, its every action painful to the vampire. When The Empty One is first sighted, read the following.

> What a tragedy of undeath emerges before you. It is a vampire — clearly — but a vampire made of something broken and wasted, a thing surely only a day from death when it was reborn. Its nakedness exposes its wretched form as it leans upon a weathered bent scythe.

The Empty One was once a knight who tried to destroy Wither. The vampire broke him on a wheel, ensuring that the calamity that remained was at the edge of death when it returned as a full-fledged vampire. The thing that was left, which Wither named the Empty One, is a broken, mangled creature. It walks like a crippled man and sobs as it does so. It is here to ensure the will of its stronger vampire kin and creator is obeyed, and dare not refuse. The empty one has a *ring of protection* (silver wedding ring worn down to almost nothing).

Tactics: The Empty One loathes combat, allowing the spawn of Wither to do as they wish. However, it knows that unless it fights, word may get back to Wither, who may punish it more. It therefore fights reluctantly, entering combat 3 rounds after the others, and fighting at the edges. If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, it returns to its shroud. If fought therein or in the vicinity, it fights until destroyed, at which point the action detailed in the Sidebox takes place.

O, Untimely Death!

The death of the Empty One brings about a strange and unexpected result. Only the character who struck the killing blow against his physical form gains this benefit (if his shroud is not thereafter destroyed and the vampire permanently laid to rest, then the benefit is not gained). The Empty One buckles and begins to fall apart, its body fading into a murder of crows that vanish with a cry. His eyes grip the character, and he yells "O, untimely death!" as he erupts in a scream of crows and mists, rupturing at and through the character. The character feels the soul of the once brave and heroic knight pass into him, experiencing the dreadful breaking Wither inflicted on him before turning him undead, robbing him of his joy and love and family. That joy, the character knows, is back with him in another place.

The experience grants the character an increase of 1 point of Wisdom, permanently.

D13. Chandelier and Vampire Nest

> The massive, glass-bowled chandelier hangs from the dome on a rusting chain. Within, a nest has been made of bones and flesh and skin.

The chandelier is at breaking point due to the weight of its occupants and the corrosion of the support. An area effect spell or attack that overcomes its remaining strength (12 hit points) causes a collapse, with disastrous consequences for those below. Anyone immediately below the chandelier when it collapses must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity save or take 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage and 4d6 points of slashing damage. As the chandelier hits the floor, it disintegrates, throwing its occupants across the chamber. The 4 "Spawn of Wither" (**vampire spawn)** dwell within the bowl of the chandelier, which they have decorated with filth. The spawn delight in playing with opponents, having been promised by Wither that they will be greatly rewarded if they kill more characters than their kin. The vampires rush in to attack lustily, relishing and screaming in joy as they attack and feed. They try to gain flank, using slam attacks more than weapons as a rule. Those who remain outside combat always fire their bows. They do not retreat from combat for any other reason than to use their missile weapons.

The Mark of The Susurrus Theatre

Each vampire or spawn in this adventure bears a tattoo (see **Handout 2**), gifted by dark fey, that marks them as someone who knows the way into the Theatres Obscura, a dark part of the city that lies Between. When the characters eventually gain access to the area, they too will find such tattoos have grown upon them. The tattoos always grow in a place a fey can see but which is not easy to see without fey eyes — behind long hair at the back of the neck, on the inside of wrists, or on ankles. Dark fey from the district always see these marks, but others require a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check; make the check once for every character fighting the vampires once per combat.

This tattoo, however, is strange. It dies when the bearer dies or, if the bearer was undead when it was granted, when he or she is destroyed, leaving only a sour birthmark of no discernible pattern. The marks may be known to characters with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or by asking. Further details are given in **Section D** below.

Development: If the chandelier hits the ground and disintegrates, 3 swarms of rats scatter in panic through the whole of the area, attacking anything not undead.

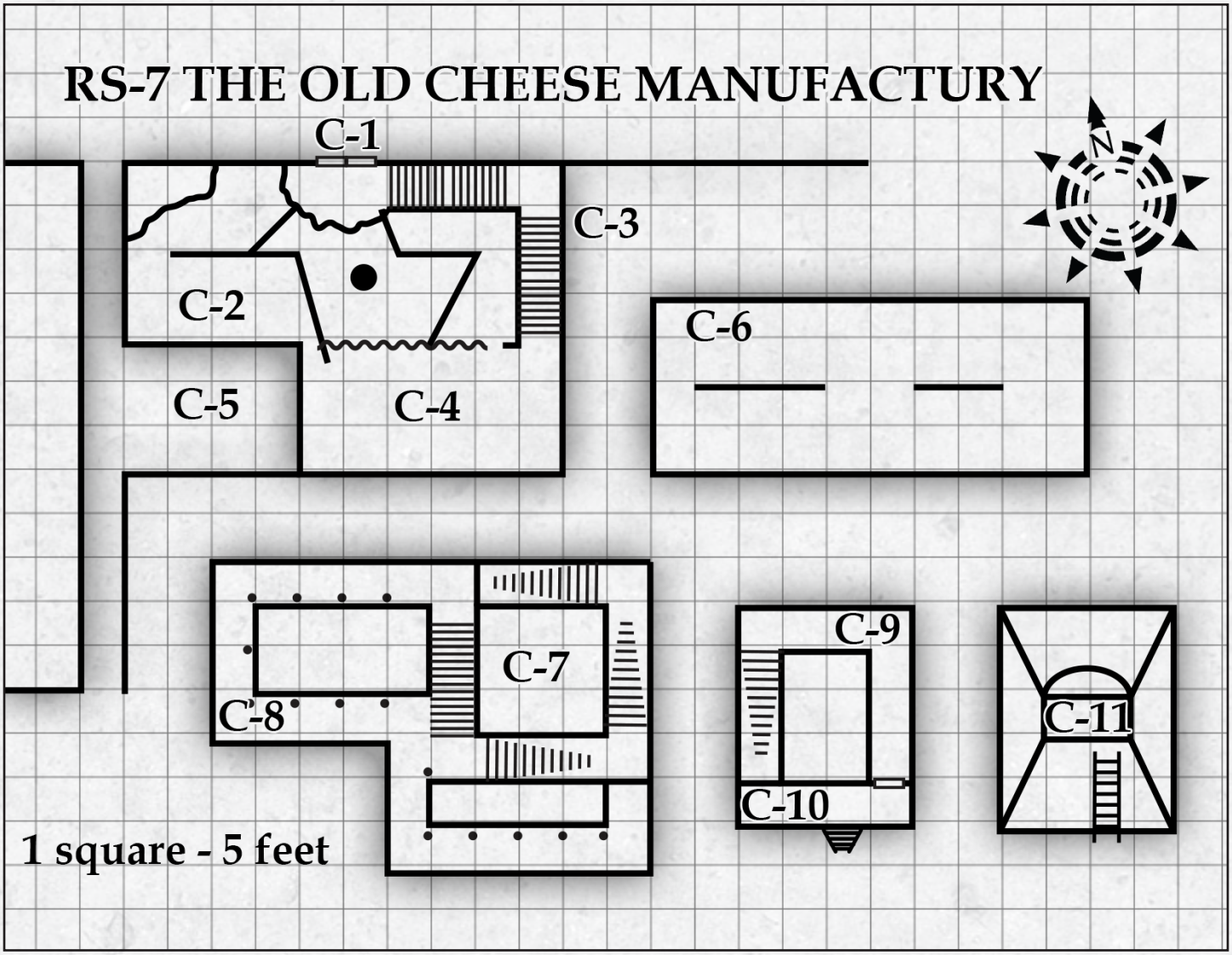
Treasure: The vampires have tossed various objects into the nest with abandon. Each search takes 1 round, and a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to locate each object listed. The items include a leather sack of silver and gold coins (123 sp and 203 gp), a mummer's mask of extraordinary workmanship worth 100 gp, a herald trumpet worth 50 gp, a lute without strings but set with mother-of-pearl and obsidian inlays worth 125 gp, a top hat with a silver brooch depicting a mouse being eaten by a quasit worth 75 gp, a *potion of healing* in a green perfume bottle with a jet stopper worth 50 gp, and a mortomata frog resting in a human mouth in a preserved human head (the frog is a timepiece and croaks the hour) worth 750 gp.

RG7. The Old Cheese Manufactury and Family

At the start of the adventure the manufactury lies empty, a broken but otherwise uninteresting relic of a previous boom industry in this part of the city. By Day 3, however, the place is occupied by members of the Grast family, drawn to the area through a swarm of contacts and the need to avenge their kind, in particular their beloved and rich uncle Marren, who still spits the characters' names into his cups and who claims to have been soiled by hosting them at his table.

They come here seeking to kill the characters. Be open-minded in the way this additional encounter works. Remember that the wererats have a great number of contacts across the city and that the characters' alleged "invasion" of Festival at the end of ***L5: Below*** is the final straw. Marren Grast† firmly turns his attention to the characters, partly out of hatred, but also a slight fear. Consider how the characters have behaved; the rats are not omnipotent, but there is an old saying of the Blight, "You're never more than six feet from a rat." If the characters have taken the trouble to disguise their presence (and as they are wanted by the law, they have good reason to do so) or if they steered clear of Festival in the previous adventure, change this encounter as detailed below.

The Grast family are in the Artists' Quarter on a mission for Marren Grast†. The mission is to influence (i.e. infect) a few of the lower-ranking local officials, including Streetclerk Sharus Phiny (and a few of his peers) with lycanthropy and turn them to the cause. The Family chose the cheese manufactury as an obscure and hidden location to carry on their work. However, they wander the local area when not on their mission — usually drinking, fighting and swearing, and eventually spotting the



characters. If the characters are not cautious, or you feel the rats could reasonably hear rumours about them, then consider that the sisters start to ask questions and soon abandon their original mission temporarily in the hope of impressing their beloved uncle by killing the characters. Run the adventure then as set.

Be scrupulously fair in your judgement, however. The adventure is tough enough without the sisters. If the characters go out of their way to be hidden and cautious, give serious thought to waving this encounter totally.

Old Cheese Manufactury Features

The Grast sisters (Katherine and Emily) are frankly interested only in killing the characters once they learn of their presence. They have little time for niceties, so the place is almost as abandoned when they are in it as it was before. The place is dusty, rusty, and decaying. Its windows and outer doors are boarded shut (Break DC 15), even after occupation (the wererats enter via a secret bolthole detailed below). The place shows overt signs of being a cheese manufactury once upon a time; there are vats, racks, churns, piles of cheesecloth, and sacks of salt. The place hasn't been open for several decades now, but the taint of its production still lingers, which is perhaps why the rats were drawn here.

The building is stone with a timber frame, but was once lined with plaster to keep it clean. The plaster has now fallen away, but the timbers underneath remain and are now exposed. Each ceiling is 20 feet high.

C1. The Old Manufactury

A decayed building rising up in two levels and then even farther to a clock tower. The clock face is mute, without hands to share its timekeeping. A wide door has the legend "*Emerald Sun Cheese Manufactury*" burnt into its timbers.

The rats don't bother disturbing the front door; they use a rear entrance from the yard (**C5**). The door has not been opened for several years and has swollen shut, requiring a DC 10 Strength check to open.

C2. The Ruined Shell

Beyond is a wide space that rises via a sturdy-looking staircase up to a higher level and beyond into the tower above. The walls were obviously once plastered, but mounds of fallen plaster dust now lie at their feet, exposing the timbers behind. Ahead, a gaping hole is visible leading down into what is obviously a flooded cellar.

Planks lead across the cellar, propped on the standing walls below. The planks were put in place years ago when a merchant considered taking over the place, each is 1 foot wide.

C3. The Great Stair Ground Floor

A broad and beautifully made wooden stair rises above. Carved into its bannister are hundreds of wooden mice.

C4. The Nest

The timbers here were once obviously treated with tar and remain very sturdy. This place is piled with objects. Boxes, wooden shelves and racks, mounds of cheesecloth, rusty cheese churns, and a dozen stone cheese presses are set into the walls, but there is so much clutter in here that seeing anything is tricky.

The place offers concealment for anyone within. **Two Grast followers** (NE male halfling **wererat**) lurk herein, ostensibly trying to avoid the vicious temper of the two terrible sisters. They stay in cover if they hear any intruders, then seek to follow and flank.

C5. The Yard

A musty yard smelling strongly of urine lies here, its only door nailed shut.

The door is warped with age, and there is a gap between the frame and the door at the base large enough for rats to get through readily. The door is so swollen with water that it feels almost like a sponge.

C6. The Cellar

This water-filled cellar links via a short underground well to an outer well, which was originally the water supply for the manufactury. The well herein is just 20 feet deep and the linking pipe is 50 feet. The well at the end is disgusting. Long abandoned, it has been used to drown creatures, and the bodies of several cats and dogs lie in curious states of decomposition. The skeleton of a humanoid baby lies near the base (identifiable as hobgoblin with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or (Nature) check). Two **Grast followers** (**wererats**) lurk in these waters, swimming and hunting and generally doing unpleasant things. If they see intruders, they wait in the waters, hoping to attack with flank.

The stairs rise higher, heading toward a landing above. Like those below, they are carved with hundreds of mice, now haunted by the carvings of several large, grinning cats.

C8. The Loft

Overlooking the main manufactury area is a wooden floor. Once there were handrails to prevent falling, but these have all decayed and now the drop is exposed. Set into the walls are hundreds of recessed shelves, some of which still hold the mouldering blocks of large cheeses.

Katherine Grast (LE female **wererat leader**[†]) spends much of her time here, trying to stay away from her twin sister Mildred (who is lurking in **C9**). The two look out for each other, having spent their whole lives competing and trying to best each other (a reason why they have so many similar skills), but they also hate each other. The relationship is one of confusion — love, hate, respect, professionalism, and loathing — but mutually beneficial. Endlessly bickering, they have found that it is best just to stay apart but within earshot. They are, in truth, perfect miniature reflections of the family they come from. When the characters arrive, Katherine has a trio of cats in a sack and is considering what to do with them. She attempts to sneak into position to attack by surprise. The two Grast sisters have a secret language using whistles; they are able to communicate in a basic way using simple phrases. These phrases are combat specific only, and relate to their location and the number of opponents. Characters listening to this for a minute and making a successful DC 15 Intelligence check can understand approximately what they are saying.

Tactics: The sisters work together in combat. If one or both is badly injured, they begin dropping back to the roof (**C10** and **C11**) where they know their opponents will be restricted. If clearly in danger of their lives, they seek to flee, finding some sewer bolthole to hide in and from which to plan future attacks.

Treasure: *potion of greater healing, potion of speed*, silver heart-shaped locket worth 50 gp (contains tiny portrait of Mildred).

C9. The Great Stair Upper Reaches

A dizzying platform, bereft of handrails, lurks below the ceiling here. A wooden door lies at the far side of the platform.

The door is not locked. **Mildred** (LE female **wererat leader)**, the second Grast sister, broods up here, annoyed at something Katherine said recently. She sneaks into position to attack from flank. She also knows the secret whistling language she shares with Katherine and uses similar tactics in combat.

Treasure: Mildred carries a *potion of healing* x2*, potion of invisibility,* and a silver heart-shaped locket worth 50 gp (contains tiny portrait of Katherine).

C10. The Perch

Beyond the door is a stone balcony on the outside of the building. A ladder rises upward onto the steep roof.

The ladder looks quite rusty but is actually sound. The rooftop has several nesting pigeons.

C11. The Manufactury Clock and Gables

The ladder grips the gable and heads toward a small door.

The door gives access to the cramped chamber within which is long-rusted clock mechanism. Someone has carved "*RJ loves TH*" on the back of the door.

RG8. The Mockingbird Theatre

Innocent, kind, and wholesome, the staff of the Mockingbird Theatre may play absolutely no role in this adventure; they may also be a pivotal point of sadness and a grave mistake.

The Mockingbird has one undeniable asset: the astonishingly beautiful and talented Edwina Clover. As part of **Section C**, Edwina refuses the advances from one of the vampire spawn (assuming any are still left), and the vampire comes up with a cruel way of getting revenge and troubling the characters — hopefully resulting in them being jailed where they will have no weapons, armour, or hope and be ripe for some night-time visitors.

The Mockingbird is a small theatre that specialises in morality plays. However, Edwina hides a secret; she also uses her talents at night to perform political puppetry. She is therefore cautious of officialdom at

all times. Her business partner Crake is in love with her, but despite her affection for him, the love is not reciprocated.

During late afternoon and until about midnight, 3 **theatre company players** (for this play all men, although one dresses in drag for his part, CG human **commoner;** Performance +5) are in the theatre, as well as an audience of 2d10 patrons. If intruders try to harm Edwina, the actors respond with force.

Bear in mind that Edwina may think the characters are in league with the vampires (or if it is night, may actually be vampires), and may innocently stir up her own followers to attack them. This is a potential minefield for the characters to pick their way through; use it as heavily as you and your players will enjoy.

MB1. The Mockingbird Theatre Entrance

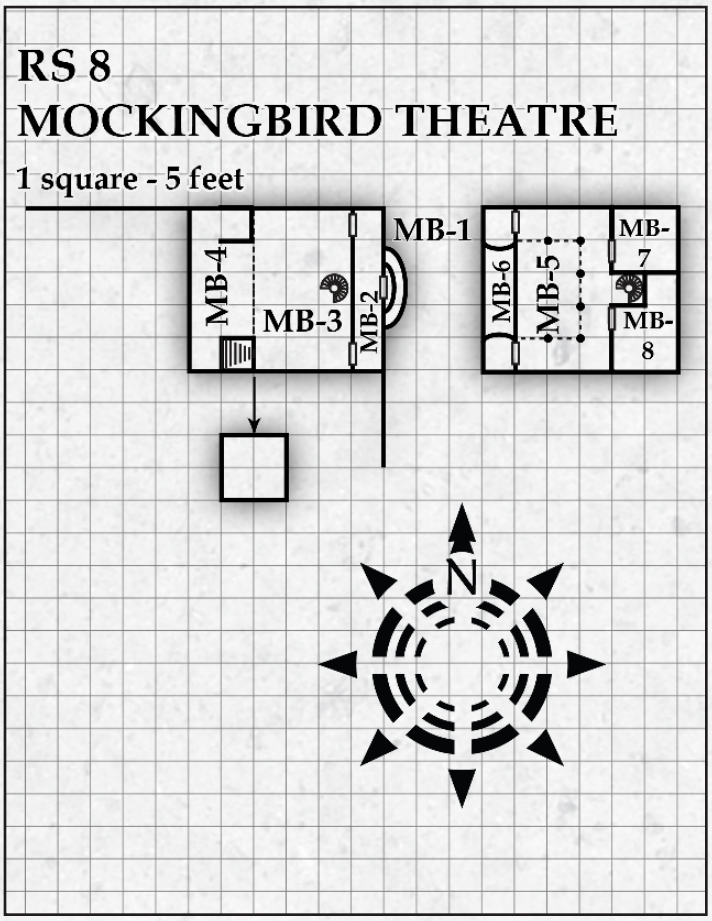
A small theatre sits on a street corner, a sign depicting a dove swallowing the sun carved above and painted bright orange. Below, a crudely printed sign says, "*This week at the Mockingbird Theatre — The Tragedy of Gabb — a morality comedy in three parts.*"

The door is never locked. Close examination of the sign and a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveal that the dove and sun symbol is a mirror image of the one depicted in **Section C**. Do not allow the characters to just notice this clue — the tattoo is very complex, and only a proper study shows the effect

MB2. Foyer

This small but cramped foyer contains a desk.

The desk has a wooden till containing 25 sp, 11 cp, and 2 gp.



MB3. Audience

A small hall has seating for about forty on its bare timber seats.

A spiral stair rises to the floor above.

MB4. Stage

The stage sits five feet above the front row with a small amount of scenery at the back.

The small stair leads to a cramped dressing and changing area wherein are several costumes, including a king and queen, a dragon, two horses, a constable, a priest, and several merchants.

MB5. Balcony

Overlooking the stage area, which lies some fifteen feet below, this area has a balcony. There is no seating.

In line with lesser theatres, the balcony is a standing area. Two doors link to the catwalk (**MB6**).

MB6. Catwalk

This is a complex area of rigging, backdrops, and stage lamps. Crossing the rigging requires a successful DC 11 Strength (Athletics) check.

MB7. Edwina's Room

The door is locked, but the lock may be picked with a CD 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Edwina's room is bland: a bed, dressing table, and a trunk. Edwina does not wish to fight. If she is alerted to intruders, she tries to escape, screaming as she does to raise Crake. **Edwina** (CN female human **noble**) is a graceful-looking and very beautiful woman who typically wears an emerald-coloured gown. She is very pale, her deep dark eyes complementing her black hair. Edwina cultivates her paleness, the wan and feminine being very much in vogue in the city.

She wears a bone and copper bangle worth 25 gp, and has keys to her room and trunk.

Treasure: Stashed in the locked trunk — DC 17 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick) are a set of puppets. Anyone making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check realises the puppets — which are dogs, wolves, pigs, and aristocrats — are a political set worth 200 gp if a buyer can be found. Those who use them are regarded as Anarchists, and the penalty for possession is imprisonment.

MB8. Crake's Room

This is a simple bare chamber with a bedroll. Crake (CN male human **guard**) acts as security, doorman, prop-painter, and general dogsbody, which he is happy to do as he is in love with Edwina. If she is in any kind of danger, he attacks like a man possessed to help her. Crake is a heavyset, shaven-headed man with a scar down his neck. He carries a hunter's flask worth 25 gp (inherited from his father).

Section C: Events in Rook Square

Don't use these events rigidly. They should feel spontaneous or as a result of some other occurrence, and while a timetable and order of events is suggested, it is not an exercise in bookkeeping. Use the events to your advantage, whilst always remembering that they must have justification. Remember that the vampire spawn have fast healing, and so could be back again and again after dark, but they have fears, too. They may face outstanding resistance and think twice before coming back for more — but not for long. The Grast sisters (assuming they appear) must rest up. They may be able to purchase potions at your discretion, but allow at least 3 days between their attacks. Finally, be flexible and have fun. Don't use events to browbeat your players; use them to keep things moving — inexorably — toward the arrival of the Under-Justice.

Day 1: Trouble with the Locals

Time: Evening
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

During the late afternoon after the characters arrive, allow each character a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. Those who succeed the check note that a number of people are looking at the circus. This is not unusual, but those characters who make the check note that several people appear several times, perhaps watching covertly. If any are approached, they disappear into the crowds before anyone reaches them.

As the sun sets and the circus is about to open, a mob of 12 **grizzled locals** (CN human **thug**) arrive on the scene, demanding the return of the local children. The men are armed, each with a lit torch and an improvised heavy mace. One of this mob has a key to the main gate and moves forward to use it, guarded by his mates. If the mob gets into the square, they start to shout, and things could quickly turn violent. The mob is surely no match for the characters, however. Generally, these locals fight only until they realise they are in trouble. If one reaches half his hit points, he backs down though he fights back if he continues to be attacked.

Development: Three rounds into the confrontation, **Inspector Greyman** (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†) and a **constable** (**guard**) arrive from the Watch Station (See Area **RS4**). They start at the back of a group of curious onlookers and it takes another 3 rounds for them to reach the action. During this time, the inspector can see everything going on ahead. Upon reaching the site of the clash, Greyman is able to automatically calm the mob and disperse it if blood hasn't been spilt (no lethal damage inflicted on them by the characters). If blood has been shed, it requires the inspector to make a successful DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation) check.

If blood is spilt but no one is killed, Greyman warns both parties who shed the blood that he will not have anarchy in his patch. If someone has been killed, Greyman arrests the person responsible, and keeps that person in his gaol (see *A Night in Jail* Sidebox below). If a fight occurred without lethal damage, Greyman sends everyone on their way, warning the mob that he will not tolerate mob rule, and that the next person to try to do so will face justice.

If the characters resolve this event without undue violence (consider a death as "undue"), Greyman looks upon them favourably. This trust is important because if the characters win his complete confidence by overcoming all such events detailed below, he warns them when Rachel Birch† arrives (see **Day 12** below).

Owlbear Troubles

One favour that may be a step too far features early on in this adventure when Scarred Samuel asks the characters to exercise his beloved owlbear, **Gripper** (See Area **CM4**). The characters may decide that this is pushing friendship too far, or they may also find it amusing. Training Gripper through any kind of magical duress does him no good — he simply needs reminding who is master, something his raging, violent tiny brain finds hard to grip. Samuel has already indicated that "just a minute's enough." His whip and chair (which anyone taking a moment to examine can see has been repaired a score of times and has so many scratch and gash marks in it that sitting on it would break it) are the tools of the trade for this event.

A DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) or Wisdom (Handle Animal) check is required once every 2 rounds that a character is in the cage with Gripper in order to keep him at bay, and the character must remain in the cage for a full 10 rounds. A ranger's wild empathy ability can also be substituted for this check without the usual penalty for a magical beast since Gripper has received training in the past. Wearing Samuel's costume (which is in his tent) allows the character to make the check with a +2 modifier on the checks. Failure in a check indicates that he attacks, and the check to calm him again increases the DC by 2. Training him from outside the cage simply does not work.

Assume that if Gripper isn't trained at least every other day by the characters, he goes feral on Day 8 and may start causing problems. At the very least, he is no longer suitable as part of the act any more.

Day 2: The First Embrace

Time: Night
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

As soon as the vampire spawn become aware of the characters' presence at the circus, they start to plan an attack. They call upon a progeny of the Sisters from ***L5: Below*** to assist them. The circus is open all night, but the audiences of the later shows tend to be drunks, shift workers, and the outré people of the district (who are actually fairly numerous). In the small hours, only about a score of customers move about upon the grounds. The spawn wait until these wee hours to make their attack. For the attack, 2 **Spawn of Wither** (**vampire spawn**; see **Area V13**) and the revolting **Child of Revenance** (see below) move across the rooftops and slip into the square, using the circus tents as cover while they try to locate the characters. As they move through the rookeries of the rooftops, they disturb several sleeping nests, causing small groups of them to flutter away in a panic. Any character awake automatically hears these flurries of beating wings. They awaken sleeping characters with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone who is awake and makes DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check can tell that the flurries are coming from the west and are getting closer. By this means, astute observers can track the progress of the attackers for 3 rounds as they approach the square while preparing for their arrival. If none of the characters wakes for this, Long Lucy takes note and comes to warn the characters before retreating to the main tent to make sure everyone is accounted for.

The **Child of Revenance** is a repugnant human half-breed with the statistics of a **cloaker,** and the following changes:

- Challenge rating of 9 (5,000 XP).
- **Breath Weapon:** The Child of Revenance has a breath weapon of acidic phlegm (15-ft. line, 4d6 acid damage, DC 13 Reflex for half, recharge 5-6.
- **Cloud of Misery:** As a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, the Child of Revenance can vomit forth two **swarms of insects** that attack all other creatures within its area. The swarms begin adjacent to Child, but if no living creatures are within its area, they move away from the Child in a random direction at their normal speed. The insects melt into pools of brown phlegm after 9 rounds. The Child can use this ability three times per day.
- **Horrific Appearance:** The Child of Revenance has such a distressing shape that all creatures within 30 feet with an Intelligence of 3 or higher who gaze upon it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom save or become poisoned for 1d4+1 rounds. A creature that succeeds at its

A Night in Jail

Time: Night
Location: RS4. The Rook Square Gaol

This event can occur any time a character is arrested and spends a night in the gaol (**RS4**). He is left locked in a cell in **G5** and left unarmed. His weapons, armour, equipment, and obvious magic items or valuables are removed and locked in area **G4**.

To the vampires, this is a target too tempting to resist. If they can reasonably find out about this incarceration, they attack that night. The 4 **Spawn of Wither** (**vampire spawn**, see **Area V13**) enter the gaol in the dead of night in gaseous form and dominate the constable on duty to obtain the keys to the cells. They quickly dominate Scarred Samuel in his cell and tell him to sit quietly while they open the character's cell door and taunt him by name for 1 round, saying he will pay for his crimes against the Panacea. They then tease the character with attacks, one vampire attacking each round as they take turns while the rest bar any chance of escape. If the character thinks to, he can try to turn the conversation round to the missing children each round by making a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check. This doesn't halt the vampires' attacks, but it does get them to start talking and bragging. One of them exclaims that "The children are gone and won't be coming back."

Development: Regardless of how much noise is made or not made, Inspector Greyman becomes tipped off to the intrusion and arrives from upstairs after 6 rounds. One of the spawn hears him coming and warns the others in the 6th round, at which point they all assume gaseous form and flee under the door into the gaol yard (**G10**), which of course sets the dogs howling as the gaseous vampires float off into the night.

Greyman finds the dominated duty constable, who quickly snaps out of it as the vampires' influence is removed, and the inspector overhears anything that was said in the cells, including any references that they made to the fate of the children. Even if the characters don't manage to extract a confession from the vampire spawn, the inspector overhears their taunting and threats as they attacked. Inspector Greyman immediately understands that there may be more than meets the eye to the missing children case and the characters' association with it. This is further reinforced by the fact that neither the duty constable nor Scarred Samuel can remember anything of what occurred.

Inspector Greyman has never seen a vampire before but he has heard that they thrive in some parts of the city. He is not aware of any in the Rook Square ward. Unless the reason for the characters' incarceration was exceptionally heinous, the inspector allows him to bond out of the gaol for 1 gp (he'll even loan the character the gold shekel if he doesn't have one) and returns any confiscated gear. He insists that the character return to face justice when the District Chief Jurist arrives in a few days (see **Day 13** below). Greyman requires an oath on a character's deity if he thinks this will help them keep their word. He gives a final admonition as they depart to stay out of trouble with the law, followed by a more earnest urging to "be careful."

saving throw becomes immune to the Child's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

- **Shadow Shift** When in dim illumination, the Child of Revenance can manipulate shadows as a free action to create one of three effects: *blur* (lasts 1d4 rounds, self only), *mirror image*, or *silent image*.

Tactics: The group of attackers is cruel and essentially cowardly. If they can't find a character to target within 1d4 rounds, they attack a performer instead. The vampire spawn are here to confuse, and hopefully make some easy kills, but they leave the heavy fighting to the Child. They'll focus their attacks upon the weaker-looking characters (especially if Mister Ficklewid has given them good details), but they tend to avoid spellcasters. The vampires attack only as long as the Child lives; once it is destroyed, they assume mist form and flee into the night sky to reach safety at **RS6**. They mix in with the Canker that shrouds the evening to escape anyone following them.

Development: If Eleanor Shank or Long Lucy are at hand for the attack, they assist the characters. If she is not present when the combat begins, Lucy arrives to help in 1d4+1 rounds. She tells any nearby performers or customers to flee.

Day 3: A Possible Embrace

Time: Night
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

The vampire spawn may attack again tonight, but not necessarily if the characters gave them a beating on the previous night. If the previous night's attack managed to kill or seriously injure one or more of the characters, then word gets back to Wither that the enemy is at hand, and he sends an extra vampire spawn from among his own personal slaves to augment their numbers for an attack by 5 **Spawn of Wither** (**vampire spawn**; see **Area V13**) tonight. If the vampire spawn were defeated without much of an impact on the party (your judgment), they delay their report to Wither and instead snoop about the characters' lodgings or try to find out about their activities to learn any weaknesses they may possess. They may be discovered trying to loot or destroy the characters' possessions or simply rifling through them. In this case, only 4 Spawn of Wither are involved.

Tactics: If the spawn come as an assault force, they sneak into the circus in bat form and go to where they think the characters might be staying. There they assume humanoid form and try to attack with surprise. If the characters are foolish enough to not be alert for another attack, they could be in trouble. In battle, the spawn fight until at least two of them are reduced to 0 hp and forced to retreat in gaseous form. The others then assume bat form and flee as well.

If they are instead on a snooping mission, roll opposed Wisdom (Perception) checks by the characters to Dexterity (Stealth) checks by the spawn to see if they are discovered. If discovered, they are surprised and fight only for 1 round before panicking and trying to flee in bat or gaseous form.

Development: If the characters manage to reduce one or more of the spawn to 0 hit points, this is an excellent opportunity for them to track them to their lair. The gaseous form spawn have a speed of only 20 feet with manoeuverability, and if reduced to 0 hit points must head directly to their lair without attempting to lose pursuers. Further, their companions make no effort to cover their retreat. They all retreat to their lair at **RS6**, though if an extra spawn was sent by Wither, it assumes mist form and enters a sewer grate where it is lost in the misty tunnels below. The characters will not encounter it at the music hall.

Day 4. Old Enemies

Time: Night
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

Tonight, it is the turn of the Grast family to attack, but the vampire spawn are still hereabouts, watching, possibly bemused and intrigued. The **2 Grast sisters** (see **Areas C8 and C9**) and their **4 Grast followers** (see **Area C4**) attack during the height of the circus's activity, when the square is swollen with visitors. Assume that ranged attacks are firing into melee. The wererats move through the crowds in halfling form, using them as cover and gaining concealment from them as long as they are more than 10 feet from an opponent. They are not, however, experts on the layout of the circus as this is their first foray. They are here to kill the characters, desperate to impress their rich uncle. The wererats attack until the sisters are severely injured: either both sisters at less than half their hit points or when one is at fewer than 15 hit points. One of them then uses a coded whistle as the signal to flee. They scatter into the crowds and turn into rat

form as necessary to lose pursuers in sewer grates or in the crawlspaces of buildings — but they will be back.

Development: The wererats, like the vampire spawn, follow a convoluted way back to their lair, and do not give its location away unless soundly outwitted.

Day 5: Curiosity

The arrival of the wererats confuses the vampire spawn, who hang back, having sent a message to their master. The answer comes back loud and clear on the following day, but the characters will have no encounter today unless they provoke it in their own investigations.

Day 6 (Part 1): A False Clue

Time: Early Evening
Location: RS8. The Mockingbird Theatre

This event will not directly involve the characters. Early this evening one of the vampire spawn attempts to dominate Edwina Clover at the Mockingbird Theatre. The attempt fails, but he then grabs Edwina, thinking to abduct her. She manages to pull away, but an imprint of the henna tattoo she had put on as a part of her stage makeup only a few minutes before imprints itself upon the spawn's hand.

Development: After leaving the theatre behind, the spawn notices the tattoo, but rather then wiping it off, it comes up with a plan for its use later (see **Day 6: The Second Wronged Child** below). Edwina reports the attack to Inspector Greyman, but is too shaken to do so until morning.

Day 6 (Part 2): The Second Wronged Child

Time: Night
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

The answer from Wither regarding the new developments is a simple one: death. He wants the characters destroyed as quickly as possible to avoid any potential entanglement with the Family from interfering with the plans of the Panacea. To this end, he provides the spawn with the only known remaining progeny of the Sisters, the deeply demented **Child of Hopelessness** (**gloom crawler**†). The 4 **Spawn of Wither** (see **Area V13**) carefully guide the thing in the dark of night to the circus and then unleash it on where they believe the characters to be staying. Even the spawn are slightly concerned about the way the thing will react in combat, and their tactics reflect this as they hang back, trying to pick off strays and spellcasters while the mercifully invisible Child wreaks havoc upon anything within reach.

Development: During the battle, the spawn that had attacked Edwina earlier makes sure that at some time during this combat the tattoo that he accidentally picked up on his hand (a very complex one depicting a dove devouring the sun) is seen by a character. The spawn hopes the false clue may lead to an unwarranted attack upon the Mockingbird Theatre and an assault or murder by the characters on an innocent party. The idea is that a character might be arrested and placed in a cell overnight, just waiting to be visited and killed (see the **A Night in Jail** sidebox). The tattoo can be recognised with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check due to the close proximity of the theatre.

Inspector Greyman should get to hear about this attack (as he has heard of the others) as well as any attacks by the characters upon the Mockingbird (**RS8**). If the characters don't take the bait for the theatre, the inspector learns of the vampire's attack there in the morning. He also learns if they acquitted themselves honourably and within the law (no murders or blatant assaults on anything other than vampires, wererats, or assorted monsters). In any case, he'll be seeking out the characters in the morning. See **Day 7** below.

Day 7 (Part 1): Inspector Greyman

Time: Morning
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

Inspector Greyman (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†) approaches the characters wherever they are staying on the morning of Day 7. If the characters have impressed Inspector Greyman in their previous two encounters so far, he makes them an offer they cannot refuse — he'll help them personally. Greyman should become an active NPC working within the party whether they wish him to or not. Greyman regards it as his judicial duty to get to the bottom of the kidnappings, and is pleased (at least introspectively) that his gut instinct about Samuel seems to be possibly true. If the characters hoodwink him, use magic to turn him away, or otherwise try to be secretive, they lose his respect, and sadly he becomes an enemy for the encounter on **Day 12**, making it potentially much more dangerous.

The final chance they have to impress him is with their overall behaviour. If they are fair and thorough, he may be swung around to friendship so that he helps the characters escape the Occularis on **Day 12**. If not, he joins the event on the side of Lady Rachel Birch out of a sense duty as detailed in that event.

Day 7 (Part 2): Old Enemies, Encore

Time: Night
Location: RS1. The Circus Macabre

The Grast sisters (See **Area C8** and **C9**) are back to it the night after, and now under the scrutiny of the spawn, who also become aware of their location tonight. The sisters mean business tonight, and have access to 12 **giant rats** that they intend to use to spread panic in the circus. The dire rats move through the circus attacking randomly, something they hope separates the characters while saving customers and performers. This attack occurs at the circus only when the characters are there; if they do not arrive, the sisters taunt the characters' cowardice by killing a couple of performers, partially eating them, returning what is left of the snack later, and leaving a note that they'll be back the day after.

Tactics: The 12 giant rats arrive via the alleyways or down the walls as you wish to the edges of the square. As they move into the crowded square, if a dire rat remains undisturbed by the characters for 3 rounds, assume it has killed someone before moving to a new location in the following round. Once again, if left alone in that square for 3 rounds, it has killed again, and so on. In the meantime, the sisters and their followers lurk in the shadows in rat form and await juicy flanking opportunities against the characters they are hunting. The sisters aren't for giving up tonight, and only with the death of one will this attack end with the others fleeing and the remaining sister screaming threats and obscenities at the characters as she flees.

Day 10: The Long Night

Time: Night
Location: varies

The final detailed assault by the spawn may, of course, never happen because the characters may have unmasked and obliterated the spawn in the Susurrus Theatre and ended the adventure. However, if the spawn still survive, they make their final effort late this night. For this last attack, the 4 **Spawn of Wither** (see **Area V13**) are joined by the **Empty One** (see **Area V12**) Wither replenishes the numbers of any destroyed spawn, provided the music hall nest is still intact). This attack is one of simple chaos. It can occur anywhere the vampires can reasonably know the characters are. If the initial assault is fended off (the Empty One or at least 2 vampire spawn reduced to 0 hp), the others flee 200 yards back over the city's rooftops to rest up and regenerate. They then launch another attack, and another, and so on until either all are destroyed, the characters are



dead, or the dawn comes. If the dawn arrives with some of the spawn still alive, the business commences again the next night.

Day 12: The Hunt of Lady Birch

Time: Day
Location: varies

The Occularis-Paladin has been so busy. How many necks has she wrung? How many fingers has she slowly broken? How many scars has she made? How many suffered her acids burning into their eyes until she learned what she wanted — the location of the characters? If you like, the characters should hear of her questionings afterward. Perhaps even a few beloved friends met her. Are they still alive to tell the tale?

Twelve days seems a reasonable time from the start for her to track the characters. Birch acts immediately upon any rumour. She hears the characters have been seen in the Artists' Quarter, but she does not know where at first. Eventually, she learns their location. She goes directly to Inspector Greyman as he is the law in the area and should know, and she commands him to help her.

Her Gracious Occularis-Paladin Lady **Rachel Birch**† (See **The Old Ground Monkey**) arrives at the gaol (**RS4**) at just after dawn, rousing Greyman and telling him he has fugitives in his ward. If the characters' wanted posters are still in the gaol (see **G2**), she notices them now and they force Greyman's hand whether he wishes it or not. Birch has 3 **prosecutor-knights** (See **The Old Ground Monkey**) with her this time, but commandeers the services of **Inspector Greyman** and his 4 **constables** (See **Area RS4**) to help her as well. Bound by the law, he dare not refuse. If the posters are not in the gaol any longer, Birch is still able to wrangle the inspector's help, but it causes a delay of 1d4 hours before he is convinced to assist in her mission.

Tactics: If the characters have handled all three interactions with the Inspector prudently and decently, he offers the lady paladin breakfast and sends the characters a secret message via one of his constables that they should get out of the Artists' Quarter and either lie low or not come back — permanently. He will be arriving shortly with a force he cannot control. He does not wish the death of that person on his patch, but he simply wishes to avoid conflict. He communicates that he will pretend the characters have never been here, but can do so only if they slip away into the shadows. Twenty minutes or so after the message reaches the characters, he arrives in the streets wherever the characters are allegedly lodging with the lady paladin, her 3 knights, and his 4 constables with 4 mastiffs† in tow. Birch combs the streets looking for the characters, and if she sees them, she attacks. Although the Inspector and his men only half-heartedly attack (striking for nonlethal damage to subdue and capture), any obvious slacking on his part will be grounds for dismissal, disgrace, and possibly execution. The fight is likely to be a stiff one.

If poorly disposed toward the characters, no warning is given, and the constables strike to kill. They head straight for the characters' location. Birch is happy to have dead prisoners to interrogate; they are so much easier to handle.

Development: If Greyman sides with the characters and they take his advice to run, the inspector leads Birch on a wild goose chase. She remains at the gaol for 2 nights watching for the characters, searching the ward as she does (which could complicate matters if the characters have yet to free Samuel) before Greyman concocts a story that the characters have been seen heading out of the district toward BookTown, a lead she follows.

You may need to improvise if the characters have still not cleared Scarred Samuel. The inquisitor is certain to lay a trap if she finds out the characters are here to help the owlbear trainer, but bear in mind that a character-friendly Greyman keeps any such knowledge to himself. Play this one and develop it to your style. Do your players like heroic rescues? If so, let them wade into the trap and take the consequences, have a daring rescue laughing in the face of the law. If your players like it more subtle,

The Almost-Inevitable Demise of Lady Birch

It is very possible that, putting two and two together, the characters decide to be rid of the pursuing inquisitor once and for all. This is a very human way of reacting to a monster, and in any case, the inquisitor may know more about the characters' friends than they wish. Her death therefore seems likely and is, in fact, planned for. Birch still has a role to play in two further adventures in this adventure path, however, but in this case as a ghost.

Some GMs may not be comfortable with this angle. If so, consider removing Birch from the two future adventures in which she appears (***L7: My Benefactor*** and ***L9: Utopia***) and replace her with some other Knight Occularis. Bear in mind, however, that a demented vengeful spirit is a good villain, and possessing one of her colleagues to trap the Beautiful (as she does in ***L7: My Benefactor***) and then being punished by said Beautiful in the final adventure is logical and allows a certain satisfying symmetry of plot. If she survives this adventure, she can readily be placed in the next one as a mortal, and then if she does die in that adventure, there are rules to explain her reappearance. But as written, it is assumed that the characters make some plan to do away with her in this adventure.

With that in mind, you might want to consider her death. It is too soon for her — she is tortured by the Beautiful and what it is offering but is an inquisitor and remains so until the ultimate end. Such a furious internal conflict is a good way to become a ghost.

Regardless of what happens, Birch returns to her contacts either as a ghost, or in mortal form. She makes her way to the Bright Citadel where she learns of events in the following adventure. If alive, she begs the mission that follows. If dead, she possesses another inquisitor with her malevolence ability and makes her way to Ossuary for the events detailed in the upcoming adventure. During the intervening time, however, Birch is tormented by visions of a Utopia as the Angel's power and presence reach out and gain a stranglehold on her mind.

do they take the place of the Under-Justice and disguise themselves? The way this can develop has too many open threads to cover everything here. Play it as you and your players will enjoy the most.

The fate of the Circus Macabre is more difficult to judge if Greyman is not friendly with the characters. Lady Birch is likely to take Long Lucy prisoner in the gaol, giving the characters little choice but to try for a risky gaol-break. After that, the fate of the Circus is up in the air. Do they leave the city? Do they lie low and hope the Occularis are otherwise occupied? That thread of adventure is yours to decide, but the appearance of Long Lucy in the final adventure (***L9: Utopia***), while not essential, is something you should consider before eliminating her outright.

XP Award: Regardless of the outcome, award the characters a total of 7,200 experience points.

Day 13: The Madam Guillotine and Her Justice

Time: Morning
Location: RS4. The Rook Square Gaol

The Artists' Quarter Chief Jurist **Under-Justice Micajah** (NE male alchymic-undying† human **noble**), his retinue of 24 **Constables of the Watch** (**guards**) and his personal guard, **Trundle**, a **flesh golem** arrive at dawn on **Day 13** accompanied by **Streetclerk Phiny** (LN male human **inspector of the watch**†), his own coterie of 6 **constables (guards)**, and 3 **bleary-eyed Barristers of the Commons** (**nobles**) just rousted from the floor of a local gin shop to represent any unrepresented defendants. His Grace the Under-Justice sits in an open wagon that bears the guillotine. He reclines upon a silk-covered recamier in the bed of the wagon eating chocolate-coated cabb'e beans while his minions hustle to get everything set up in the street outside the gaol — the tables for the prosecution and the defence, the bailiff's post, the witness stand, the padded jurist's bench, and most importantly Madam Guillotine to serve as a looming presence over the entire proceedings.

Trials are quick, and with only one likely to be scheduled, justice will be swift. A large crowd gathers expectantly. Unless the characters intervene in some way, Scarred Samuel is found guilty, and beheaded, and his body is taken by the Under-Justice to be turned in to the Crown for consideration of animation as cheap labour. Violence is not an option, clearly, and even if this force weren't overwhelming, the consequences of such a heinous crime as killing an Under-Justice are likely to be life-changing (or, more likely, -ending). If it gets to this point and the characters haven't succeeded in finding the children, Greyman regrettably assumes he was wrong for once and joins the side of "official" justice. Attacking such characters leads to a relentless train of hunters, not only constables and inspectors, but also more Knights Occularis and some bounty hunters as well. It is best if the characters resolve their investigation before this day arrives.

Section D. Fickle Sponsors

You cannot find it by day, no matter how good your guide, or how much you look; it remains simply hidden in the maze of alleys and pathways that curve and embrace in the shadows of the Theatre District. Look for it by night, however, and the Theatres Obscura may be waiting for you, if they want you.

—AQ9. The Susurrus Theatre
The Blight Campaign Guide, Chapter 9

The dark fey are a curious group. Those in the city tend to veer toward the evil edge of their kind. Their evil is not calculating or acquisitive; it is capricious, cruel, fickle, and nasty. The dark fey delight in the sick edges of humanity (or any other mortal race when it comes to that). They are generally unseen, but early in ***The Levee Adventure Path*** the characters may recall they faced mites. How they dealt with those mites has a bearing on what happens next.

The dark fey oversee the **Theatres Obscura**, and in particular control access to it. They only invite people to the place, and while some spellcaster find a way in, they are never welcome. Only those who bear the mark — a special tattoo that resembles a grimacing moon — can find their way in, but the dark fey do not give out their tokens to just anybody. Anyone can see ordinary jugglers, anyone can perform card tricks, simple illusions and mundanity; what the fey want is something that makes their eyes sting.

Several in the city know the fey — tramps in particular are wary of them, and scratch signs of warning where they congregate. Performers speak of assaults occurring or ill luck at these same corners. There are also those who sit at the edge of sane entertainment and talent and who cast a peculiar look at things; some call them geniuses, most call them fools.

The characters likely have little knowledge of the dark fey and probably have little reason to even think of them. It is possible that they have seen and identified the tattoos worn by the Spawn of Wither (see **Handout 2** and *The Mark of The Susurrus Theatre* Sidebox). More than likely they'll have to begin asking around about the nature the tattoo, of which they won't even have a sample because after the destruction of the spawn, the tattoos are destroyed as well (see sidebox as above). By asking around with these or simply with a rough verbal description (which adds 10 to the DC), the characters can make a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information to try to identify the mark. Each character can attempt his own check once each day or can aid another to help another character make a check.

Regardless of the source of their success, once the characters are successful in identifying the source of the tattoo, it'll all lead to the same conclusion — *dark fey*. Once the characters are aware that the dark fey are involved, they can begin making inquiries on that topic with Intelligence (Investigation), Intelligence (Nature), or Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information. The results of these checks are provided on the table below with the requisite DC. A check reveals not only the information for its DC but also the information of all the DCs below it.

Dark Fey Rumours

DC	Result
10	There are countless dark fey in the city. They blend into the night and tend to keep out of the way of the locals. However, there are hundreds of urban fairy tales about locals encountering these creatures, almost always with tragic results. The Lazy Window-washer, the Milkmaid who Milked Rats, the Gableman and the Threeface, and the Broken Tallowman are just some. Each of these asserts that dark fey are alive and thriving in the city.
11	The dark fey like nothing more than causing chaos — the more violent, loud, and unexpected the results, the better. They are capricious, stealing babies and substituting talking piglets, filling meat pies with cockroaches, and spitting their cursed phlegm into ale.
12	The dark fey have only a few lairs, all of which are rumour. The most substantive one in the Artists' Quarter is that of the Theatres Obscura. This place is the dark heart of fey entertainment in the city but is visible only if you have been told how to find it. Indeed, it is so invisible that those who know where it is find it impossible to draw a map to give direction to others; they simply happen on an entrance when they look for it. The Obscura is a place where the fey go, but humans and others live there, often captivated by its magical hue and refusing ever to leave — sometimes starving to death because they forget to eat. The people inside are those the fey have invited, those they take a special shine to, or those who have accidentally slipped in — tramps, harlots and lost children being the most numerous.

DC	Result
14	Many try to get into the Obscura, but almost all fail. The fey aren't, it seems, interested in mortal performances and magic; they like things that stand out. A juggler might be able to keep seven balls in the air, but only one who juggles babies is likely to be noticed. A magician may be able to weave incredibly believable illusions, but the student who is just learning who puts a clown's head on a piglet's body gets their attention.
15	Some locations in the Quarter are said to be more alive to the fey than others, although nothing has ever been proved. The corner of Mulberry Street is one; the fountain in Billy-Black-Cap Market is another; the Grim a third.

Fey Fishing

This section of the adventure should be fun, not a series of dice rolls. Reward your players for fun roleplay here, and for their imaginations. This section is simple: The characters (or more likely *a character*) need to get a fey's attention in order to gain access to the Theatres Obscura where it seems likely the kidnapped children have been taken and where they might possibly still be alive according to local rumour and legend. If the characters impress them twice, they're in. Two successes leads to a visit by the **Master of Strangegate** as described below.

There are variables that apply to the characters' attempts at making contact with and impressing the dark fey, and these variables are cumulative:

- If they are in the right place (one of those listed in the rumour table above), they make their checks at +2.
- If they earned a reputation for decency amongst the mites in the earlier adventures ***L1: Hereafter*** and ***L2: Pound of Flesh***, they make their checks at +2. But if they treated the mites cruelly, their checks are at –2. It seems mites like nothing more than gossip, and every mite in the city now knows at least one characters' name.

The check itself can be anything you like. It doesn't have to be a Performance. In fact, it doesn't even have to be a check if you so deem it. It should, however, require some act by the characters that makes you feel uncomfortable and/or amazed. The perfect performance for a fey is one that has some sort of check, but turns the check on its head. For example, it's not really important how well a character juggles three puppies, it's just that it's inherently twisted.

Reward roleplay for this section. An act that makes all the players squirm in unpleasant delight doesn't need a check; it's good enough. Also keep in mind the rule that it's not only a Performance check that makes a performance. A cake that births a rattlesnake, or an act of base but beautiful vandalism (setting fire to a house painted bright red) are ideas. Use things that settle a little in the darker parts of your mind as inspiration for what your fey might like.

Also, dark fey generally only come out by night, but the characters may not know that.

On the first night that a character makes an attempt, if the skill check is very high (20+) or low (5 or less), a crowd gathers to watch. If at this stage the act is something vile or that would upset a crowd of locals, 2d6+2 **grizzled locals** (CN human **thugs**) come forward to express their disgust. They don't fight to the death, preferring to flee if reduced below half hit points or if half of their comrades are put out of the fight.

If the check is in excess of 20 or is otherwise successful in your eyes, the character can make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the tiny eyes of a **mite** leering out hungrily from beneath a nearby rusting rooftop about 30 feet away. At the end of any catastrophically bad or exceptional performance, the mite howls, causing a number of local cats to flee. The mite does not engage in any conversation, and if subject to any magical duress or attention, flees as soon as it can. If captured, the fey is aware of the Obscura, but is powerless to allow the characters access, and cannot be forced to do so.

The night following a check, the mite is back again, this time astride a hedgehog it has caught nearby. If the character begins the same show, the fey starts to hiss, quickly loses interest, and wanders off. A different show, with the same result check brings stupendous applause, and a number of fey coins are tossed at the character. These coins sprout legs and begin to wander off, but a character making a successful DC 12 Dexterity save catches all 20 pp; otherwise, he manages to grab only half. A few hours later, the character meets the Master of Strangegate.

The characters need only make 2 such checks or successes. They do not need to be consecutive but they get only one chance per night no matter how long their performance is.

Development: Greyman has eyes and ears all across the district, and whatever the characters do is likely to come back to him. His attitude may change if he hears of mobs being massacred by entertainers.

The Master of Strangegate

The **Master of Strangegate** (LN male **mite**) rides the city on his talking **Blight albatross**† **Bittercress**, using a shoe for a saddle. He is one of the few fey able to grant access to the Theatres Obscura (all the rest are currently at a spring festival drinking elderberry cider for the next 3 months). If a character's acts impress one of the fey twice, he suddenly appears nearby a few hours later. He knows the character by name and reputation, citing what the character did to his kin if they played a part in the earlier adventures. The Master then explains that the dark folk have a place in the city — a secret little enclave where those who have special talents come. The Scissor-surgeon, the Cutter, the Mumbry-Man, the Girl without a Face all live there, in the Theatres Obscura. He then adds that the character is most welcome, and a curiously itchy rash appears on that individual's anatomy (often the back of the neck, but use other body parts as you wish). The rash grows into a tattoo of the moon seen in **Handout 2**. See details in **Part 3** below.

The character is now able to access the Theatres Obscura, but still can't draw a map; the others just have to follow. Once the character sets off, they simply follow their feet and know the way, ducking down alleyways, climbing ladders, wandering along balconies, and finally around a crooked corner until she sees a rusty-red light ahead in the gloom.

Ad Hoc XP Award: Award the characters a total of 1,000 experience points for finding a way into the Theatres Obscura.

Part Three: The Susurrus Theatre

The Theatres Obscura are alive with the rumour that the **Leper King** is in the alleys nearby. The characters should hear cries that he is at hand, some of joy, some of misery, but never be able to find him. As it turns out, he is irrelevant to *this* adventure and is actually engaged upon another endeavour the characters may come upon once upon a time.

Locating Wither: Adventuring in the Theatre's Obscura

Characters examining the tattoo they received notice that it is slightly different to the vampire spawns' tattoos. There is no spider at the base; instead, their tattoo has a smiling-faced figure carrying out whatever act it was with which the characters succeeded in impressing the fey. The spider motif is actually a representation of the Susurrus Theatre specifically, home of Wither, and location of this adventure's climactic final encounter.

Any character with a tattoo enabling access finds himself somehow knowing where to go and arriving at a random length of time after setting off. They stumble immediately into the Sobbing Man (see below).

Theatres Obscura Features

No map is given for this section of the Artists' Quarter. It is simply a winding series of streets set off at odd angles, curiously unnatural colours, and oddly feral scents. The area exists only by night. By day, its occupants are unaware of any passing time; they simply seem to wake up each night revived and energetic. They have no desire to wonder what happens by day. Indeed, even the characters find the urge to know what happens supressed. If characters do spend time resting here, they seem to find the last hour or so between considering staying and sleeping, and waking, passing. They find they have healed as though a normal night has passed, and can regain spells, but are otherwise unaware of how time passed. As soon as they think about sleeping and looking for a bed, they awake — possibly in a room, maybe on the street — and the festival begins afresh for the night.

The area is well and truly in Between: angles are odd, time passes in strange bursts, and light is weird. Sounds seem to travel very far. The place otherwise behaves exactly as a normal city block would.

Only a handful of odd people wander the streets and, if encountered, most are happy that they are here and are somehow aware that they find their way here often, mostly because it's fun. But some have wandered in here and are afraid. That does not include the three missing local children Tam, Abe, and Thomas, who are having a great time, having been discarded here by the spawn when they arrived. They have no wish to return, and finding them — and particularly capturing them — provides the characters with a small problem. Taking them back to Blewit's Workhouse provides an even larger moral one.

This section of the adventure has a small group of suggested events and encounters, including one with the children, and the Theatre itself. As ever, chop and change this as you wish. Characters are likely to try to find the theatre immediately, assuming the children may still be there, or at least what's left of them. Characters making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check should catch glimpses of a very tall steeple topped with a grimacing moon face that is similar to the tattoo they bear.

The intention of this section of the adventure is to allow the characters to catch glimpses of the place and eventually reach it after some encounters, but you might opt for a more direct approach, particularly if the characters can fly. Be suitably vague about Between in that case, do not rigidly assign exact locations, but allow the characters to go directly there. The characters can also try to find the children afterward if they wish, tackling their main enemy at the steeple first.

Encounter 1: The Sobbing Man and Staggering Puppets

> At a junction of oddly angled streets is a puppet stall. As you watch, a grotesquely distended puppet man lurches up and into view.

The puppet show is about the Theatres Obscura, and tells the cautionary tale of the Sobbing Man, whose other name is the Leper King. He comes into the theatres looking for faces to steal. He has the help of an old crow called the Face-Taker who takes pregnant mothers' faces when they aren't paying attention. The puppeteer talks with characters only after the end of his show, but he never emerges from his stall. He communicates entirely through his puppets, in particular the Face-Taker. His voice is far away and yet intimate. If asked about the children, he says that children often watch his shows. They like them. But the mention of Abe's red hair brings a specific reaction, a sort of horrible, greedy laugh. He confesses that he tried to buy the little girl's hair but she wouldn't sell it. He claims he offered her a good fair price.

He knows that one little boy (he doesn't remember which) clearly had a sweet tooth and always had sweets. He advises the characters to sniff out the Plum House. If the characters focus and sniff the air, they are able to smell a faraway scent of boiling sugar. Such characters are able to make their way to the Plum House via **Encounter 2** below. Those who have the scent feat can make their way directly there, avoiding that encounter.

If asked about the Susurrus Theatre, the puppeteer indicates a towering edifice with a smiling moon face high above, as described above.

Encounter 2: The Dark Fey Freakshow

> The street ahead suddenly becomes crowded with shuffling figures, the lead of which is holding a banner written in some unfamiliar language. Each figure has a sack over its head, and a heavy blanket and cloak over their crooked forms, which vary greatly in size.

The banner is written in Sylvan and identifies the group as the "*Dark Fey Misfortunates*." They are a group of dark fey freaks that wander this section of the town, cursed by their own wickedness into grotesque forms. If allowed to pass, the fey (who are all sorts of curious shapes and sizes) move past on their way. If stopped, they merely halt, and only if someone tries to molest one by pulling her sack-mask or clothing, the altercation below occurs. If molested, the figures give out a collective cry and suddenly scatter, leaving a single revoltingly misshapen figure. This figure halts, facing the character who dared disturb the freakshow and draws back its hood prior to attack, revealing the terrible visage of a **cursed night hag** (see below).

The **night hag** has the following changes:

- CR 7
- 150 hit points (20d8 + 60)0
- **Deformed Evil Eye:** 3x/day, the cursed hag can cast her dire gaze upon anyone within 30 feet. The target must succeed a DC 12 Wisdom save or be incapacitated for one hour, and awake with 1–3 levels of exhaustion.

Encounter 3: The Three Children and the Plum House

The Plum House is readily identifiable by its smell of boiled sugar emanating from within. When the characters arrive here, read the following description.

> A shop, of sorts, with small panes of thick glass that give an odd distorting effect. Above the door hangs a large clay pudding.

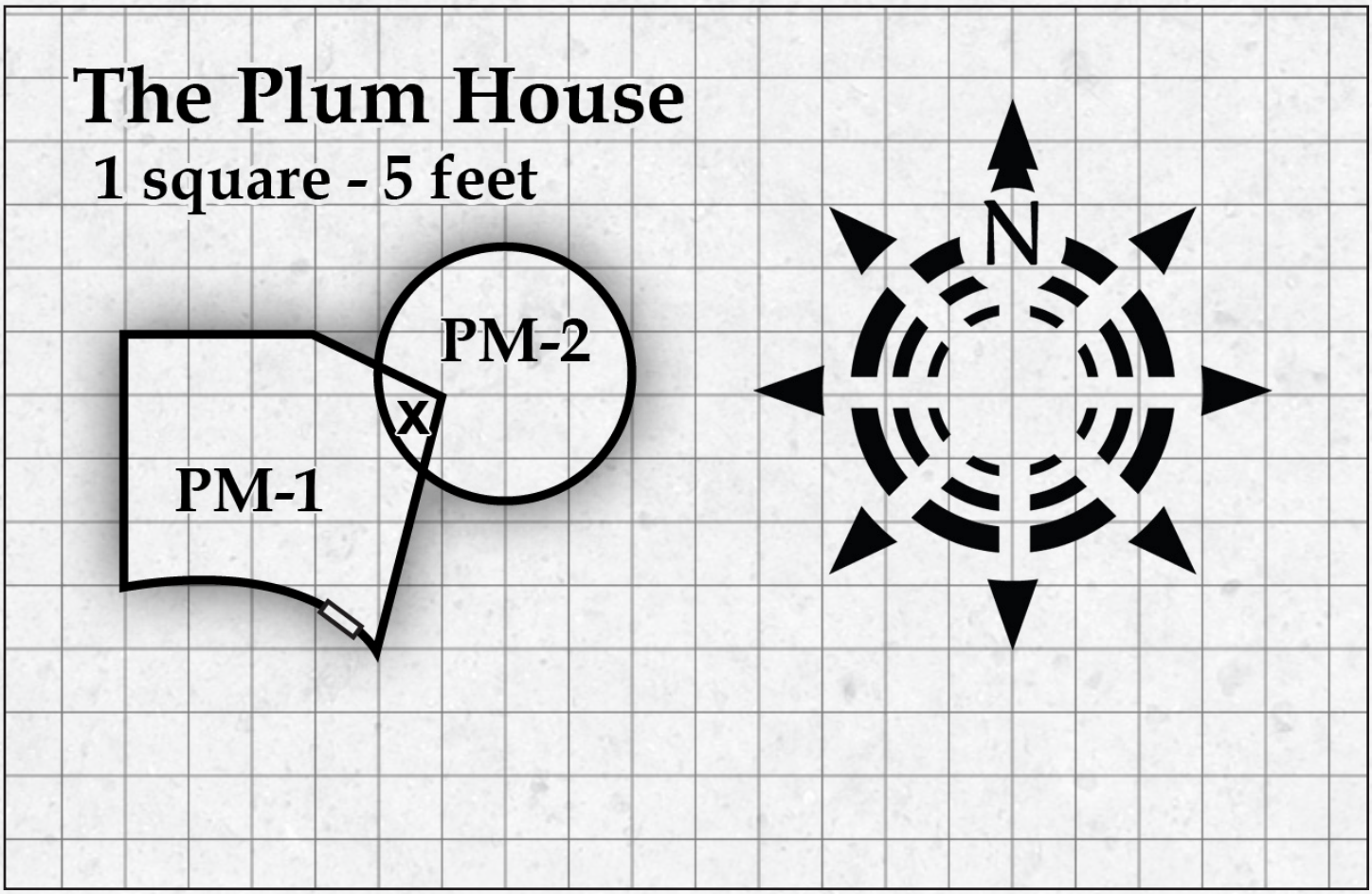
The three missing children, **Tam, Abe, and Thomas** (N male or female young human **commoner**), are sitting in the shop (**PM1**) amongst the vast array of sugary foods and cakes. The children have been lured in by the **Jaggery** (see below), a creature that hungrily feeds children its lovely confections and then devours them when they are good and fattened up. The Jaggery is a particularly huge and old phase spider that dwells in a space immediately above the shop that it sealed off many years ago (**PM2**). The creature has several fey cohorts that keep its shop stocked and which whisper promises to any children who come here. The children have not seen Jaggery, but if they did, they would leave with the characters. Otherwise, they are reluctant to leave the Between sweet shop and must be coerced into doing so.

The Jaggery is a **giant phase spider** but with the following changes:

- CR 6
- 65 hit points (10d10 +10)
- Multiattack: 2 bites
- Bite +8, damage 13 (2d10 + 2 piercing), target must make DC 15 Constitution save or take 36 (8d8) poison damage, half on save

The Jaggery is instantly aware of anyone else entering the shop. It lurks in the shadowy space just behind the stocked shelves of sugar loaf, honey, and sweetmeats, and characters making a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notice something odd and vaguely spidery — and huge — lurking there. Until the spider manifests, however, it is simply an impression of such. If the characters try to get the children to go with them, the spider phases into the shop and attacks.

Development: If injured below half its hit points, the spider phases back to its lair, muttering and crying to itself. Characters looking at the space between the shop and the lair (shown as **PM2** on the map) and making a DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check see the remains of an old access, now bricked up. If the 5-foot-wide hole is breached — a DC 18 (Strength) check — intruders can access the lair of the spider, a domed space 20 feet across.



Treasure: Within the creature's web are a beautiful doll made of bone and wearing a dress of silver thread worth 200 gp, a puppet crow with a dull *ring of evasion* on a string about its neck, and a small leather purse containing 11 sp and 5 pp.

The Susurrus Theatre

When the characters arrive at the theatre, read or paraphrase the following description.

> Here then, is your goal — a carved wooden steeple of breath-taking complexity. Moons and crows and gargoyles dance across it surface, rising to a grimacing moon. A jagged doorway gives access. The doorway has a spider carved upon it identical to that of the tattoo you have seen previously.

The theatre is well and truly Between. Once inside, the space is distorted and cramped and smells of freshly cut wood. The entire space is alive; consider it if you like as a colossal wooden animated object. The place constantly moves, putting on performance after performance on its wooden panels. Suns rise and set as wooden farmers reap crops, wooden soldiers move about on the structure, and the whole place groans and creaks. Only one part of the theatre — a **wood golem** — takes any action against intruders. The remainder of the place simply moves, playing out scenes of the seasons, and acts and events within the tiny town the whole place is based upon. Develop these or ignore them as you wish.

Although made of wood, the place does not burn; this is Between wood, some of which burns ferociously, some of which doesn't burn at all.

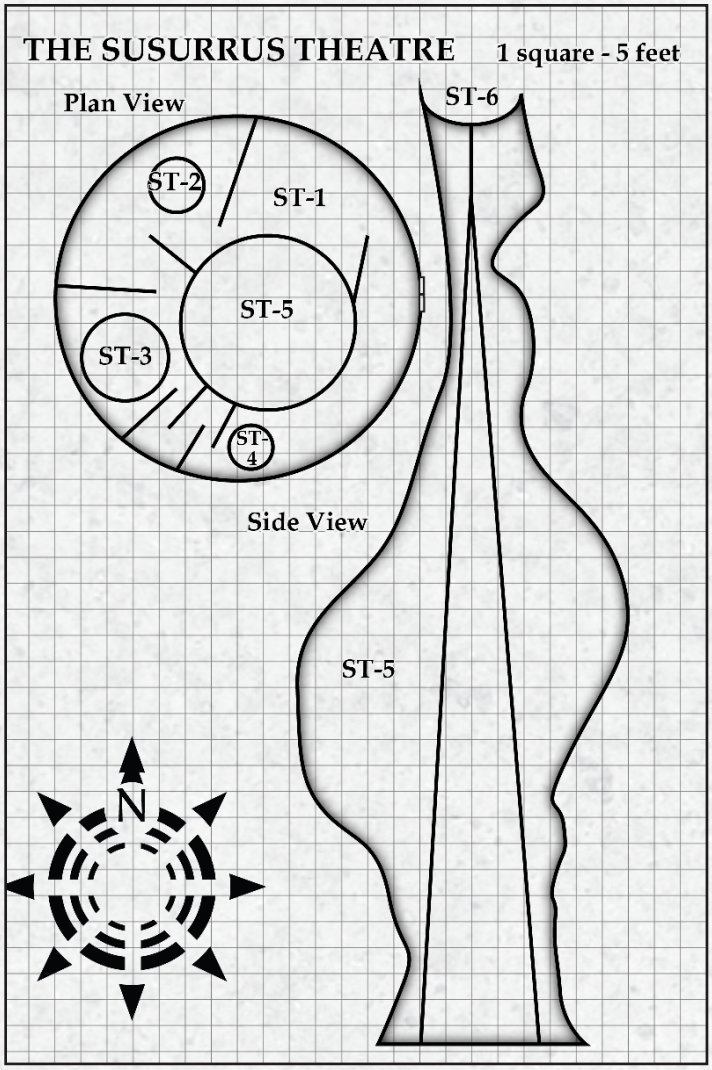
ST1. The Susurrus Theatre Main Hall

> Beyond is a distorted space that rises upward to the tip of the steeple, where a grinning idiot wooden moon stares down, Thrust into this space is a carved wooden tower, part town, part fortification, all in miniature, its surface a madness of movement, carved figures, and panels. The walls of the spire cling and caress this tower as it rises to the moon, which has a wide-open lolling mouth and which hangs some sixty feet above you. Three other carved objects rise to lesser heights whilst between lie distorted walls of wood represent lakes, woods, and rolling hills.

Although the chamber appears to be 60 feet high, it is actually 200 feet, the distance stretching away as climbers try to move up the walls toward the moon face above — DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Three Spawn of Wither (see **Area V13**) lurk in carvings and panels in the walls in the last 40 feet or so before reaching the Idiot Moon (**ST5**). The number may vary after the characters' encounters with them as reinforcements for the spawn at the old music hall in **Part 2**, and if particularly successful, Wither may find itself bereft of any at all. Consider that Wither can raise one spawn per night, and base the number on that. At the start of the adventure, Wither has 3 spawn here.

Tactics: The spawn wait for intruders climbing up and for the Puppet Bride (see **ST2**) to begin climbing before attacking. Their tactics reflect those of their kin in Rook Square: attack, retreat, try to flank, and then attack again. This time, however, they do not flee under any circumstance, attacking until destroyed. Various dirt-filled alcoves of the tower serve as their coffins.



ST2. The Puppet Bride

> A carved wooden town rises some twenty feet above the floor.

The village's construction is similar to that of the main town tower (DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check), and its height also stretches, actually reaching 60 feet. **The Puppet Bride**, love of Wither, slumbers in the town here, waiting to be of service to her love. The creature, a golem constructed from wood (**wood golem**†), sobs wooden tears if Wither is injured. If it spots intruders, it waits for them to climb the town and then chases after them and attempts to pull them apart for its love.

ST3. The Castle

> A wide, moated, carved wooden castle rising some thirty feet. The place is infested with wooden soldiers that swarm over it.

Again, the height is distorted, and the place actually rises 80 feet — DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to climb — remaining within 5 feet of the main town (**ST1**) at all times until its spired summit is reached. The soldiers are actually wooden insects that swarm on this structure and this structure alone (treat as **insect swarm**). Once a character climbs more than halfway up this carving, they swarm to attack.

ST4. The Wood

A carved wooden forest looms some twenty feet tall. A hunting tower peeks from the highest point.

Characters climbing this structure find that it is actually 40 feet high — DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb — and feel the thing sway below them, as though the trees were bending in a gale. This has no game effect but may make characters nervous.

ST5. The Centre and Rising Tower to the Moon

A vast carving stretches upward to a grimacing moon face high above in the very point of the spire that climbs away. The structure is a living wooden town, with layer upon layer of gables, walls and structures in miniature. Figures move across the carved walls of the town, staring upward as a wooden ray of light shines from the moon and onto the summit of the settlement.

The carved town is in total 180 feet high — DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to climb — rising to the carved wooden shaft of light that links the town top to the moon like a bridge, climbing 20 feet higher. The moon's leering mouth is actually a 5-foot-wide opening that lies at the top of this link and opens into a cramped space about 10 feet across within which is held Wither's ancient stone sarcophagus, held in place by innumerable ropes, chains, cables, and cords.

Mastermind of the recent attacks and a leading light of the Panacea, **Wither** (NE male human **diseased vampire**†) is ancient, and has dwelt herein for centuries. His disgusting form has lived too long, and all the sickness and sorrow of age remains etched upon his bloated body. His distended head is engorged with a cancerous growth, as are his swollen limbs, particularly his legs. He carries the following equipment:

Deck of illusions held in walnut and leather and bone case worth 85 gp, an iron scythe with a shaft made of ash (blade set with 13 obsidians worth 15 gp each, worth 400 gp total), walrus tusk scroll case with silver hasp set with amethyst bead worth 250 gp, magnifying monocle set in a platinum ring worth 350 gp, vest made of human skin, long dark trousers, high leather boots.

Tactics: Wither attacks when anyone climbs the central tower and gets within 10 feet of the bridge at its summit. He uses his children of the night ability to summon rat swarms and then uses his *deck of illusions*, casting creatures at climbers on the tower. If individual targets make it up to his lair, he happily attempts to grapple them and bite.

Development: Wither's stone sarcophagus rests in the grimacing moon high above (noted as **ST6** on the map). Casting it from the mouth and into the tower below is enough to destroy it, though cutting the many cables that hold it requires at least 10 minutes of concentrated effort. Wither has carved the space above with thousands of angel figures, and some of these figures are able to move slightly.

Concluding the Adventure

Destroying Wither ends this adventure, although only the return of the children clears Scarred Samuel and leads to the additional reward outlined below. The side trek **Shatterday** (detailed below) offers the characters a chance to learn exactly what the Beautiful is up to, something they have a front-and-centre view of in the next adventure ***L7: My Benefactor***.

Regardless of the outcome, Long Lucy thanks the characters for their help, and apologises for any intrigue. If the characters free the children and thus Scarred Samuel, the animal trainer sobs for joy when released. He is forever in the characters' debt, and should be included among the friendships the characters have accumulated. The characters can call on this particular friendship at any time. As further thanks, Long Lucy gives each character a gift. The gift should be specifically tailored to that character and be worth up to 1,000 gp each. Something hard to get would be Lucy's idea of a good gift.

If the characters parted in a friendly way from Inspector Greyman, a few days after the characters' adventures end, the inspector arrives at the characters' local hostelry, church, or other meeting place. He has an ironic smile on his face, and goes through the list of crimes for which the characters are allegedly responsible. He ends the meeting saying that not everyone who represents the law abides by it, nor approves of the way things are currently going in the city. He hopes that the characters call on him if they think he can help them. His door is always open.

Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Six: Explosion

Charlotte Elm (CG female human **duelist**) ignites the alchemist's fire below the Great Hall, immolating herself and taking a large chunk of the hall above with her. The death toll of hundreds includes dozens of Royals, including Duke Taim himself (though he is subsequently raised in short order). However, what returns from the dead is less than man, and rumours begin to spread of his rebirth as a broken thing of jagged bone and anger who has sworn to burn Toiltown to the ground. Although so many are killed, no one in the Queen's immediate family dies. Some suggest that they received a warning from Lucifer via the ill-regarded Princess Eleanor. Others say that Princess Rebecca of Mourney saved several of them at great personal risk.

The day after the explosion, rumours spread that the Queen will appear on the Royal Hanging Garden (**C28**), which she does so at dusk for half an hour. Her majesty Queen Alice is so flanked by guards (or "keepers" as many call them) that she can barely be seen, but the Guild confirms that she is "alive and well*" as they call it to its members the day after.

By that evening, a series of devastating raids occur in Toiltown, putting several portions of it to the torch. This is immediately followed by mass looting of those areas among the locals. The district soon resembles a war-zone so that by the time the characters arrive in the 8th adventure of ***The Levee***, it is indeed swamped in anarchy and open battle.

* Thieves' Cant for "undead and mad"

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Six: Intimacy

During much of this adventure, an intimate look at the Beautiful plays out as detailed in the side trek **Shatterday**. The characters' experiencing the dreams of the *Between vessel* (and any others that are touched by the Angel) begin to hear and see increasingly strange events. They alone hear curious grinding noises in the skies, as though some great machine were moving there or perhaps some tear were about to occur in its very fabric. They also see odd shadows and angles as they move, as well as randomly and occasionally echoes of people who have moved where they move, catching snippets of conversations, trauma, and passion.

Tension builds. Something is about to happen that makes the unrest in the city look like children squabbling by comparison.

The Susurrus Theatre Appendices

Appendix A: Abigail and Luther — Vampire Hunters … Redux

It is possible that some groups wish to involve the vampire hunter couple once again in their attacks on the Panacea. The pair do not turn down any chance to slay vampires, and are very adept in their trade. They are, however, utterly transfixed upon each other's safety, to the point of self-sacrifice. As NPCs, they should be controlled with that aspect foremost in mind. They are repeated here for your convenience, with each having gained a class level in the interim through their own activities.

Appendix B: Seasons in the Blight — Green Shoots and Hunger

With the month of Grey, spring arrives. But this is no spring of joy, no looking forward to summer. Hunger grips the poor now after a hard winter with inadequate food stores and before the bringing in of a new crop. The unrest in the city has disrupted the normal trade, and food is becoming scarce. Costs for all consumables double one night early in the adventure and remain that way until they increase again in price a week later. By the end of the month, food and drink costs should be three times the standard rates.



Shatterday — A Side Trek

In the previous adventure (***L5: Below***), the characters located a *Between vessel*. They should have had experience with these vessels before and be aware of what they can do: in essence, store memories. A character holding the vessel feels a few surface thoughts, and in particular, when Abigail entered Heaven (or what she thought was Heaven). The vessel whispers at night, and characters sleeping near the object soon find it is invading their dreams and sharing experiences through those dreams. Investigation of the *Between vessel* is handled in a unique mechanic, with the characters try to unravel its secrets by venturing as their dream-selves into the thoughts stored inside whilst sleeping. For this to be possible, the character must sleep within 10 feet of the *Between vessel* and have line of effect. The character need not try to do this on purpose; it simply begins to happen within 1d3 days of obtaining the vessel and sleeping in its presence. Once this process begins, it continues every night that the character sleeps within the requisite range.

Note: More than one character can experience this if more than one sleeps within 10 feet of the *Between vessel*. If more than one character is successful in dream travelling into the vessel, then all successful characters appear together in the shared dream.

As long as at least one character is sleeping within 10 feet of the vessel and makes a successful DC 11 Wisdom check, one of the following events is triggered each night in order.

First Night: Ascendency

The character dreams of Abigail and her two sisters, of their suffering visions, first seemingly of madness that slowly manifest into the Beautiful. They were aware that she was coming, and that through her arrival the world will somehow be cleansed of all the dark, the filth, and the ignorance. The Angel comes from Between, and has been drawn here by a herald, a pilgrim who accompanied the angel when she first arrived.

Second Night: Birth

The dreaming character(s) feel the effects of Fertility magic (see **Appendix B** of ***L5: Below***) as the Sisters use their bodies as canvas to birth new life, life they thought honoured the Beautiful. When she finally arrived, they realised they were mistaken: What they had created were horrors, mockeries of the true birth the Beautiful could bring. The character experiences the Beautiful birthing the chaos beast in the previous adventure, an experience that lapses into a nightmare as the character suffers a terrible vision of giving birth. They cannot see what they birth, only feel a terrible horror at what they have done.

Upon awakening, one character who experienced the dream is drenched in sweat and lying between his (or her, it doesn't matter) legs is a foul, waxy egg about the size of a human head. The character seems to show no ill effects, but the egg — which is warm and fleshy to the touch, but otherwise rigid — is very real. The egg is a curse from the Beautiful. The angel is busy elsewhere on her plot to break the Levee keeping Between back from reality, but she has expended enough energy to send on this manifestation. Anything else is too strenuous and risky.

The egg (AC 12, HP 22, Break 14 Str) grows over the coming days, effectively doubling in size in a week before hatching. During this time, it makes odd noises and an occasional jerk or vibration but is otherwise inert. The character who manifested the egg from his dream must make a successful DC 15 Fortitude save at dawn each day the egg remains unhatched or take 1d2 Con damage. Breaking the egg before its hatching is dangerous: The creature within grows in a sac of concentrated acid. If broken, the acid explodes in a 10-foot-radius burst dealing 6d6 points of acid damage (Dexterity save DC 15 for half) in the first round, 3d6 points of acid damage (half if prior save was successful) in the second round, and 1d6 points of acid (half if save was successful) in the third round. In addition, the beast within still emerges, it just has the "Young" simple template. However, it also has acid-infused skin that deals 1d6 points of acid damage every round it hits an opponent or is hit with an unarmed attack.

If allowed to hatch after a week, a fully-grown chaos beast impossibly emerges and attacks everyone present other than its titular "mother." It saves that character for last in any fight. It does not possess the acidic quality if allowed to hatch at full term.

Characters may think to discard the egg, but regardless of what they do, it always appears in the morning between the chosen characters' legs until destroyed or it hatches.

If allowed to birth naturally, the creature that eventually emerges — a **chaos beast** — spends 2 rounds in the prone condition before slithering from its impossibly small shell and attacking.

Third Night: Questions

The character is in the Heavenly garden, and Abigail is moving through it gathering food when the Beautiful approaches her, bathed in light. The angel asks her if she knows of a place where she can do her Great Work undisturbed but in the light. The angel seems to dislike being in darkness. Abigail does not ask what the work is, but the angel uses the phrase the "Great Work" at least twice during the conversation. Abigail suggests that the angel use a place called the Cathedral of Sister Lydia, and that her sisters will lead the Beautiful to the place to carry out her work.

The character wakes up with the recollection of the recommendation regarding Sister Lydia. Finding the Cathedral of Sister Lydia (which lies in the Sinks) requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check (to gather information for its location).

Fourth Night: Riddle Answers

It is later, and Abigail is in the garden that is her private heaven in every way; she wants for nothing. The angel visits her again, and Abigail mentions the Great Work. The Beautiful tells her that what she has tried has not worked — the breach has not come — and the Great Day has been postponed. However, the Beautiful knows that this is but a setback, and that she is working on a second place, a place hidden nearby. Her pilgrim guide has told her of a place where "two become one; where the skin between mother and child is thinnest."

The characters are at a dead-end here. The location in question is a place called Ossuary, an obscure village in the Hollow and Broken Hills, and is the setting for the next adventure, ***L7: My Benefactor***.

Fifth Night: Fatigue and the Beast

The characters see the Beautiful again talking in the garden to Abigail. It seems that whatever she did in the cathedral has wearied her, for the angel's light is dimmed and whatever happened was a great effort. She is gathering her strength for the work at the Hollow and Broken Hills, however.

There is nothing more to be learnt from the vessel after this, other than Abigail's happiness, and anything else you deem appropriate. However, the character has drawn attention to herself from an animate dream (an **invisible stalker** with the following changes: 130 hit points [20d8 + 40], AC 18, CR 8). Only one animate dream appears regardless of the number of characters involved in the dream. The manifestation of the creature begins with an ugly slit appearing near where the sleeper is. The slit expands, and swarms of flies buzz through. Finally, 3 rounds after first appearing, the slit expels its dreamstalker into the waking world to attack. During each round before the dreamstalker arrives, the sleeper gets a chance to make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to awaken unless someone else awakens him.

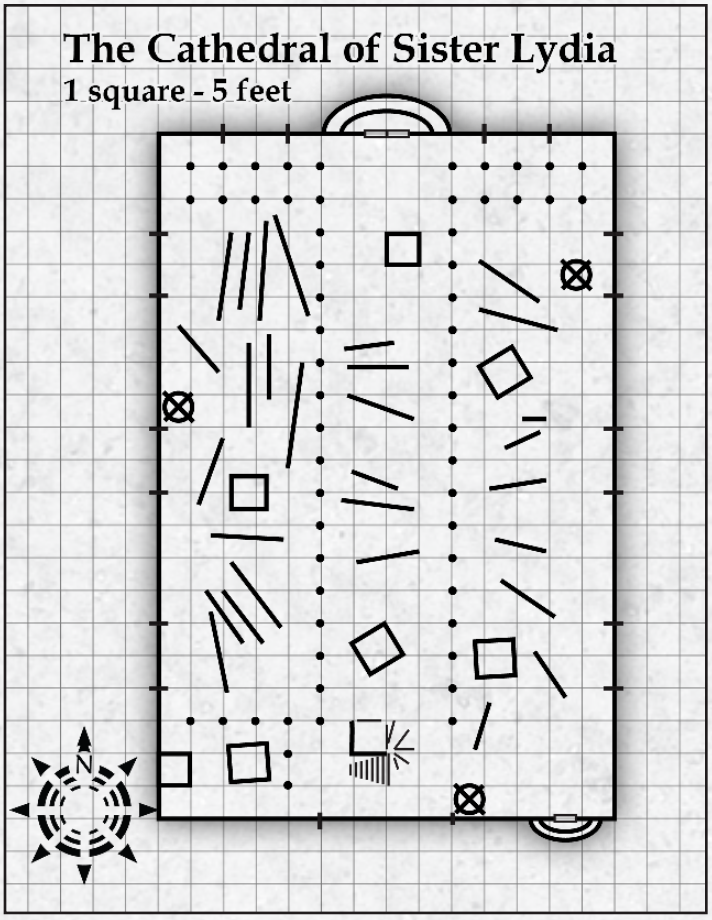
Development: The stalker is a simple combatant. It wants to feed upon the mind of the sleeper, hoping to gain some insight into it and benefit from that consumption. Once it has eaten the sleeper's brain, it leaves.

Cathedral of Sister Lydia

The cathedral is located just east of the eastern end of the Street of Echoes (**SI12** in the Sinks district). It sits alone and sags in the embrace of a slowly deepening bog. Once used by the Sisters as a bolthole and storage facility for creatures they dabbled in creating, the place is now ruined.

The main doorway is nailed shut (AC 16, HP 18, Break DC 22, unlock DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools) and the word "Danger" has been painted on the outside at some time in the distant past. The cathedral has nine incredible stained-glass windows depicting heaven. The outer walls are very smooth — DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to climb), rising to an arched rooftop of stone.

When characters enter the building, read or paraphrase the following description.



> An echoing ruined space lies beyond, a vast arched ceiling held aloft by countless magnificent columns. Nine stained-glass windows overlook the central nave, which is now in ruin. Pews lie scattered, and at least a half-dozen old cages stand rusting. That is not what draws your attention however. It is what has infested the inside of the place. The whole of the cathedral interior is riddled with circles. Although it is hard to describe what these circles are, words come to you: They are like organic mirrors, but they are dying, as though made of flesh. The edges of these mirrors decay and are dull, their surfaces are tainted with a kind of fleshy sickness, and at least two have something hanging through them, some sort of large fleshy sac or appendage, as though something has been birthed here.
>
> There is one more thing present, a palpable air of disappointment, a lingering feeling of failure, as though something momentous should have happened here, but didn't.

The Beautiful tried to breach Between and draw it into reality here very recently. She created, in total, 169 small breaches ranging from the size of a fist to the size of a tabletop. Characters looking at the decaying mirrors and making a successful DC 14 Intelligence check deduce that the mirrors actually resemble holes, almost as though someone wanted to weaken the structure of the building (or, in this case, reality). Had she succeeded, the city would now be part of Between and a place of madness. Fortunately, she failed, but the results of her failure remain. Over the next few weeks, the mirrors die, but three things have been left — hanging in birthing sacs waiting to breathe are **3 chaos beasts**†. The sacks are at the locations marked **X**. If touched, the thing inside wriggles. If attacked, it tears out of its sac and attacks. One grows from the remains of a mirror at the foot of the wall; the other two hang from mirrors in the ceiling area some 30 feet above the ground.

Development: The characters could feasibly leave the sacs to their own devices; the Sinks is a bad part of town riddled with vampires and corrupt aristocracy. If the characters do not kill the beasts, do not punish them, but you might wish to add a little side plot about what happens. Perhaps the sacs never birth, and the beasts die; that aspect is left to you to decide.



Handout 1

Dear Friends,

I and my family of performers are forever in your debt for releasing us from the terrible Grast Family, but I must beg your aid once again.

Scarred Samuel rests in a local prison and is due to be guillotined in thirteen days. He confessed a terrible crime

— the abduction of local children here in the Artists' Quarter — but I know he is not the criminal. I keep my eyes on my flock as you know, and he has not left the circus for over a week after taking an injury from his beloved owlbear. Yet he confessed to the crime! I know a man's will can be bent by magic or guile, and I know this to be the case. In confidence, even the local Watch Inspector believes him innocent, but Samuel has nonetheless confessed and wallows awaiting death.

He is innocent. Please help him.

I know of your talents and skills. Please bring them to us once more. I know you will come.

Yours with the deepest admiration and friendship,

Long Lucy,
Circus Macabre, Rooks Square,
Artists' Quarter





L7: My Benefactor

By Richard Pett



Introduction

My Benefactor represents a change of pace for the players, albeit a subtle one. In this adventure, the characters are in the grip of major events, and while they have a role to play, the ending — the unleashing of the Between vampire and capture of the Beautiful — are events that unfold despite them and their efforts and lead directly into the next adventure ***L8: Apotheosis***. Some groups may want to have a more proactive way of tackling events.

If your players like heroism, you could spell out events at the climax of this adventure more clearly, allowing the characters a clear choice between saving themselves or the villagers. Be wary, however, of making things too clear, as the events are deliberately confusing. Is the Between a bad thing? Having visited Father Gromwell†, what do the characters decide when they are offered their own private heavens in the final adventure? As written, this adventure is deliberately abstruse, and some groups might not like it. If in any doubt, change things to suit your own players. But if you're happy to run a darker adventure, then ***My Benefactor*** gives you a potentially memorable bittersweet ending.

Media Inspirations Behind L7: My Benefactor

This is an odd one, and inspired by a number of isolation-themed films. Many of these also fall into sci-fi categories. The episodes and films below are worth checking out.

The Twilight Zone original TV series episodes:
"The Howling Man" (1960)
"Five Characters in Search of an Exit" (1961)
"It's a Good Life" (1961)
The Outer Limits original TV series episode:
"A Feasibility Study" (1964)
The Thing (1982)
Sleepy Hollow (1999)
The Mist (2007)

I've also included a new music list for this one. The weird, isolating feel of the adventure's setting lends itself to some moody music.

Clawfinger — *Out to Get Me*
Eraserhead Original Soundtrack
Faith No More — *Digging the Grave*; *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*
Lisa Gerrard — *The Host of Seraphim*
Christopher Gordon — *The Galapagos*
Franz Liszt — *Totentanz (Dance of the Dead)*
Marilyn Manson — *The Fight Song*
John Murphy — *In the House — In a Heartbeat*
Javier Navarrete — *The Fairy and the Labyrinth*
Soundgarden — *Black Hole Sun*
Therapy? — *Before You, With You, After You*; *Living in the Shadow of a Terrible Thing*

Adventure Synopsis

Her first plan has failed.

She thought she could punch enough wounds in the fragment of the levee keeping Between back, that the wound would never be staunched, and Between would bleed over the world beyond. As the characters may have found out in the side trek **Shatterday** (see ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre***), however, she merely created holes in the world through which a handful of things crawled; the flood she expected never happened. To truly engulf the world and create her paradise, she needed a new plan and new heralds. Her discussions with her muse and fool Father Gromwell† gave her that plan: not many holes punched betwixt the two worlds, but one single great hole from Between into the mundane world of Castorhage. A place where the weight of Between is so great that it would rush through the breach and consume all, like a tiny crack appearing in the dam and ushering in the flood under the pressure — a single fracture in the levee.

The Beautiful has found a place in the Hollow and Broken Hills, a place steeped in spirits and bloated with memory, emotion, and despair. In the thin veil beyond, the weight of that emotion hangs like a lodestone, a weight she is sure will tear the hole in reality that she is desperate to create. The town of Ossuary would be the start of the tear. When she and her follower reached there, she realised it could work, and began to prepare her breach, planning this time a single enormous rip in reality using new heralds as her doorkeepers rather than the uncertain door wards of chaos beasts. As a reward to her follower, she granted him his own heaven and moved to what she hoped would be the fruition of her efforts at the highest spiritual point of the village — the Ossuary Chapel. She drags Ossuary into Between to begin her work to create a portal to the world, a huge swollen *gateway* that, when it final opens, she is sure will not stop flowing. As her work commences, the isle that Ossuary sits on begins to drown in Between, and an ethereal mist envelops it, cutting it off from the world outside.

A handful of people witnessed the ascension of Father Gromwell†, however, and word began to spread like wildfire. It soon reached the ears of **Lord Benedict Morel**†, a man with an interest in angels, heavens, and the characters. Morel knows the characters through Eleanor Shank, knows them, in fact, because he instructed her to spy on them from the very beginning — the very moment he became aware of them, as they were about to be hanged.

And Morel was not the only one to hear of the miracle. The Knights Occularis have also found out and put their own plan into motion.

Eleanor Shank† contacts the characters and confesses her part in events in the adventure path — that she has been watching the characters since the start, but watching them for a good man. She tries to explain that she has been guided by a benefactor who has helped her throughout her life. That benefactor now wishes to meet the characters. The characters may take the offer, or they may be angered by events and manipulations; they may even attack Eleanor. Both possibilities are addressed in the adventure. If they accept her honesty, Eleanor accompanies them on this and the remaining adventures in ***The Levee*** if they wish it.

She introduces them to Lord Benedict Morel. Although he does not say it, Lord Benedict is a servant of **Princess Rebecca of Mourney**†, who has a number of such secret associates across the city involved in various plots to thwart her sisters' and mother's intrigues. Morel's involvement began a number of years ago when he rescued Shank from her appalling childhood and arranged for her education and safe upbringing. The princess was little more than a child herself at that time, but a number of Royal advisors had decent souls and wished to make the future city a better place. Morel was one of them.

A visionary bishop friend advised Morel that Shank had a role to play in the future of the city and he would be wise to take care of her. Unable to offer such a low-caste person a home, he saw to it that she had a good and

kind upbringing as well as an education. Now his work and the vision of the bishop are paying dividends as the characters become embroiled in the visions and plots of the princess and her small cabal of trusted advisors.

The characters learn that **Father Gromwell** ascended to Heaven before a small group of onlookers. Once word spreads, it is likely that preachers, madmen, the afflicted, and the twisted move to this small part of the Hollow and Broken Hills into a town called Ossuary, a narrow village propped atop a rocky tor infamous for its open graves that occasionally spill from its hillsides. Few presently believe the story, but Morel knows that Gromwell was definitely there in the last few days. The characters can either go there themselves, or through an invitation from the benefactor, introducing them to the wealthiest and most important person in Ossuary, **Isaac Fetter, the Lord Undertaker of Ossuary** (LE male human **noble**).

Morel also explains what he knows about the Knights Occularis, a group of merciless inquisitors and sorcerers with cells across the city. Their leader **Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage**† is known to be obsessed with the occult and Between. Morel also knows that the Occularis are based somewhere in the Capitol. They are very well organised and rigidly disciplined, but Morel does know that they have detained a number of Between thieves lately. He loathes the mask of purity and right the group hides behind, and knows them to be little more than fanatics bent upon enforcing their doctrine of their order. What he has heard of Thornrage's pleasures and perversions has sickened him further, a sickness tainted with worry. Open warfare would be fruitless, however. The Occularis are like a disease below the skin of the city, and by openly attacking, Morel would risk his beloved princess. He has settled on covert operations instead.

The characters are not the only visitors to the village it seems. A small group of Knights Occularis are also there, arriving in a magical *folding boat*. Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage is also aware of the ascension of Gromwell, and has put into play a scheme to trap the Beautiful and use her to create his own Paradise. Questioning Between thieves has given the Inquisitor a tool, a trap used by the thieves to ensnare creatures from Between — a *Between shackle*. The shackle operates by ensnaring a creature that breaches a hole in Between, and draws it to the trapper. Thornrage has sent some of his best to locate the Angel and secret the shackle close enough to be sprung the next time the Angel slips from Between. His best includes Rachel Birch, the inquisitor that hunted the characters during the last adventure. Buoyed by anger or boiling with undead hatred, Birch follows the characters, drawn by the visions of the Beautiful, visions that both sicken and excite her.

As the characters arrive and the Occularis make ready their plan for the chapel above Ossuary, a wedding is taking place in the village. The peculiarly gloomy and funereal aspect of the vertical village of Ossuary is kept temporarily at bay by garlands and joy. The wedding and feast afterward form an introduction to the strange village. The characters may even find people who saw Gromwell only a few days ago and who saw his ascension to Heaven. Many, however, dismiss the story as ravings in these terrible times.

In truth, Gromwell was actually granted his own private paradise by the Beautiful for his efforts. The characters may even meet Gromwell in his own heaven, where the old priest is happy to tell them that within a matter of hours, his angel will cleanse all the sickness of the world. He dismisses the Panacea as fanatical, claiming that they have soiled the beauty that the Beautiful will spread upon the world. The characters may begin to sympathise with the old priest having seen the underbelly of the Blight, or they may even come to blows with him, and find that killing him unleashes a nightmare that lurks behind his paradise.

High in the Ossuary Chapel, the Beautiful commences her work, unaware that the Knights Occularis have laid their trap. As soon as she opens a *gateway* again, she will instead be drawn into a temporal prison in the Occularis headquarters — the Bright Citadel in the Capitol. As she weaves her *mirror-portal*, it grows and grows, distending to breaking point. And behind it, unseen by her, something terrible lurks: a Between vampire. The vampire has no role to play in this adventure, but its birth into the world threatens to destroy everything in the following adventure, ***L8: Apotheosis***.

As the wound expands and swells overnight, ready to fracture, Ossuary, the characters, and all slip into Between, and the small village becomes lost in mists. Restless spirits haunt the Between here and are drawn to the living that have arrived in their home. It soon becomes clear that the village is isolated, and panic sets in. Unless the characters act quickly, many villagers flee and are lost. Monsters are seen on the edges of the mist, and people begin to vanish. The Lord Undertaker Isaac Fetter, the ruler of Ossuary, shows his true aristocratic colours, instructing his guards and the characters to protect him and leave the villagers to the monsters outside. The characters may even stage a mini-revolution of their own by taking over the defences and dealing with Fetter as they see fit.

In the meantime, the shadowy creatures come out of the mists to terrorise the locals, Between creatures that seem to wish to cause havoc. Eventually, it becomes clear that these mantis-things are not attacking; they are fleeing. Fleeing the wrath of the Beautiful, who is demented and obsessed. She is desperately expanding the Between *gateway* in the chapel to try to make the whole of Castorhage drown in Between.

The characters eventually learn she is in the Ossuary Chapel, a chapel made of the vast skeleton of a wallow-whale. The Ossuary Chapel now rests on a Between summit, a place of precarious slopes, impossible paths, and mad things given breath. Fighting their way into the chapel — including a battle with the Knights Occularis (and their old enemy Rachel Birch† — alive or as a ghost depending upon their previous encounters with her), they encounter the formless madness of the Beautiful, who has become an aspect that is part angel, part demented thing of chaos.

As the characters arrive, the Between vampire sees an opportunity to escape into the world and rips past the Beautiful, tearing open a hole, which also pulls the Beautiful into the world, triggering the Occularis trap, drawing her into their clutches. The shadowy Between vampire is born into the world screaming and vanishes. When the Beautiful sees what has preceded her, she screams in terror, not at her captors, but at the creature escaping into the world. The *gateway* left behind begins to suddenly heal, as shadowy Between creatures are sucked into the hole, bloating it and sealing it. The characters have a chance to escape, leaving the villagers behind, or to slit the fleshy anchors that are holding Ossuary in Between and save everyone.

By the end, their enemy is gone, now at the whim of the characters' enemies, and has left something even she seems to fear in her wake.

The Beautiful and the PCs

In this adventure, the characters get to meet (albeit briefly) the Beautiful at the climax of events in Ossuary. With the Angel so close, the character(s) most influenced or tainted by her become vessels, steeped in her echoes. In gaming terms, the effects are purely vocal or subliminal — throughout the adventure are a number of read-aloud texts where unbidden words are spoken by the character(s). Such characters are considered touched by the Beautiful, but of their own free will to make up their minds about her as they always have and will. These are included to add some detail to the motives of the Beautiful, and also to add a doubt to the sanity of the character(s) in question. Add or embellish these events as you wish. As the climax draws near, these strange unbidden words feature from time to time, as the grip of the unreal beauty of Between immerses the character.

These can have other effects, too. The character might awaken to find that they have drawn or painted an incredible paradise on their lodging wall, composed a haunting piece of music, or written a load of nonsensical words or poems. In this, work with the characters' personalities; if they are musical, let the strange effects be in music and so forth for different characters. Do not, however, belittle, manipulate, or spoil any characters in this way. The intention is to make the players nervous for the sanity of their characters and act accordingly, not take them over in any detrimental or humiliating way.

Suggestions for these events are included in Sideboxes throughout the adventure.

Part One: New Friends

Eleanor Returns

To begin the adventure, Eleanor approaches the character she has become closest to. She tells that character that she has something to tell them, and finds a suitably quiet location to do so. Her conversation is in the form of a confession, the pertinent points of which are listed below. Change them or emphasise them as you feel best.

Eleanor has been playing a part in a lie. When she first met the characters, it was not by accident. She had been asked to attend the prison hulk by a man she has grown to trust, a benefactor who has been kind to her throughout her life and who has been on hand to help her when she's needed it. For as long as she can remember, the kind man has been nearby. He helped her to get an education, encouraged her work and relationships, and was on hand with a gift when she eventually gave birth to her own child. She has no reason to distrust her benefactor, but knows only his name — Morel. Her benefactor came to her but an hour ago and said that the time for deception is over. He has asked to meet all the characters urgently — within the hour if possible — in a small little-known club called the **Club of the Falling Tower** that lies on a backstreet nearby. The location of the club in the city is not important other than it needs to be somewhere convenient to the party.

The Benefactor

Lord Benedict Morel† is a servant of **Princess Rebecca of Mourney**†, who has a number of such secret associates across the city involved in various plots to thwart her sisters' and mother's intrigues. Morel's involvement in this loose end began a number of years ago when he rescued Shank from her appalling childhood and arranged for her an education and safe upbringing in a foster family.

It was Morel who, after various *divinations*, sent Eleanor to get the characters out of the prison hulk *Redemption*, and it was he who has asked for regular reports about the characters. He told Eleanor nothing more at the time, and as she trusts him, she asked no questions despite her intrigue. Make no mistake, however. Morel is not omniscient; he merely knows the characters have important roles to play for some reason. He has no overriding desire to wrap them up in cotton wool; their deaths might be the important thing, but this he does not know and is one of many loose threads he gathers in from time to time. Morel knew nothing about Wicken until after the event. Indeed, he hadn't even heard of it until after it was destroyed.

Morel has taken several elaborate precautions to keep his Royal sponsor secret; her enemies are considerable and their power more so. Morel wears a *ring of free action*, and he keeps a *potion of gaseous form* just in case. But he is not anticipating trouble. His wishes for the characters are purely ethical and truthful; he wants their help. Morel is a sober and wise person, and he expects the characters to be hostile to his manipulation up to this point. He hopes what he has to say will sway them, however, at least for now. Under no circumstances does he reveal whom he is really working for and why. His stated position is simple: Not everyone in the city has their own greed and power as a motive; some are benefactors who hope that, one day, the city-state and entire empire may be a better place.

Sadly, even a halfway decent soul such as Morel is going to be dragged into paranoia and greed by the arrival of the Beautiful. By the next adventure, his attitude will have changed.

At the Club of the Falling Tower

The Club of the Falling Tower is one the characters have not heard of. It is unassuming and quiet. The characters are expected by the host upon arrival and are led to a private booth, one of half a dozen in the club.

Relationships are Complicated

Let's be honest, the situation with Eleanor could unravel at any time: she might die, she might loathe the characters, she might be cast out on her confession. The crucial point here is to emphasise that the characters have been part of a game, a game that is reaching a conclusion. Morel plays a double role in this and the next adventure — first by leading the characters to Ossuary, and secondly in events in ***Apotheosis***, the penultimate adventure in ***The Levee Adventure Path***.

His actual role is very simple: get the characters into Ossuary after telling them what is happening. How the characters proceed beyond this point is up to them, but Morel can give them a powerful introduction to the unstable boyish ruler of Ossuary, **Isaac Fetter, Lord Undertaker of Ossuary** (LE male human **noble**). In some ways, having the characters fall out with Morel is a wonderful twist reflecting the insincerity and distrust the Blight stands for; the characters are still likely to need his help, but may not trust him an inch.

Some players might prefer a more hands-on approach, and this is easily achieved. In this situation, the news of Gromwell's ascension reaches them first, before Eleanor, whose arrival at a similar time merely independently confirms what the characters' have heard. The characters may even move directly to Ossuary without talking to Morel; in his eyes, this makes them dangerous, but he still has his spy at hand and is happy to bide his time. In the next adventure, he simply makes another offer of help to the characters, more convinced than ever that there is something wild and unpredictable about the characters that worries him greatly.

The characters notice that they are alone in the building save for a small staff, who quickly depart, leaving the group alone. Morel awaits them in the booth. He is a strikingly handsome man with thick greying fair hair combed back from his forehead. He has a winning smile and a trustworthy voice — all, of course, things that may cause the characters to distrust him. Morel has ordered a particularly fine local brandy and some simple foods — olives, breads, fruit, and cheese, rarities in these dangerous times. He is careful to allow the characters to see him try each thing first to ensure them that nothing is poisoned. Characters watching Morel and making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a military tattoo on his wrist. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check identify the regiment as the Queen's First Cuirassiers, an honourable and respected cavalry regiment of the Royal Army.

Morel is keen to learn about the characters, and may seem to be dithering, avoiding the question hanging in the air. He has a genuine wish to know about the characters. He has great affection for Eleanor, a parental devotion that hides nothing else. He wants to be sure she is safe.

Eventually Morel cuts to the chase. Yesterday, in a settlement amongst the islands of the Sentinels called Ossuary, Father Gromwell from the village of Wicken was seen entering a small shrine high on the walls of the town. As he entered the shrine, he was seen to be engulfed in light, and shouted in joy. He was then seen ascending a stair into the sky and heading to a garden of light. People are calling it a miracle. Four local people, including Constable Sedge, a man of unimpeachable character, witnessed the event and informed the Lord Undertaker of Ossuary. Through this report, Morel learnt what happened. At present, the news is known to only a handful of people, but it can't stay that way. Morel wants the characters to go to Ossuary and find out what has happened. He further advises that, from what he has heard from Eleanor, the characters are dealing with what he would have called a honey-pot trap back in his regiment days:

an enemy that seems to offer something promising but hides a dark secret that could be turned against you. He asks the characters to ensure that, whatever this alleged "angel" is planning, she fails. If he has to, he makes a vague promise about significant rewards without putting a figure on it.

Morel has something else to say about **Lord Paladin Occularis Thornrage**†, leader of the Knights Occularis. His information is sketchy, but he's trying to get more. He's been working for some time now, watching. Why is Thornrage so interested in the characters? What about events at Wicken? Morel knows that the Knights Occularis are a shady cult-like religious military order with contacts across the city and with some serious ambitions. Rumours say that they operate out of the Capitol from a place called the Bright Citadel, but they have agents everywhere. Morel is unsure of just how powerful they are, or even if they work independently or are pawns for the Great Coven, the worshippers of some dark power, or are agents of the Royal Family. The Knights Occularis are inquisitors, clerics, and sorcerers that claim allegiance to Mother Grace and the empire. Thornrage is known to be obsessed with Between. In his youth, he led several expeditions into the place. He suspects that Thornrage wants the Beautiful alive, but it is only a hunch. For now, all he can do is warn the characters to be cautious and try to learn more.

Finally, Morel is able to offer the characters financial help. He has 500 gp on him right now and can arrange for double that amount in potions to be sent to the characters within the hour. Other objects and magic take time, and time is something he is not prepared to let the characters have. He wants Eleanor to go with them, whether they want it or not, although if the presence of the rogue is a deal breaker, he backs down. He also hands the characters a letter with an official seal — a successful DC 20 Knowledge check identifies it as the seal of the Queen's Watch — that they can give to the Lord Undertaker of Ossuary. The letter introduces the characters as agents of the Crown who are on official Royal business and are to be trusted and cooperated with in full. If the letter is obviously tampered with, Fetter will not accept it.

Characters watching Eleanor and Morel interact and making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check can see a fatherly affection from Morel; he genuinely seems to care for Eleanor, who appears to genuinely return it.

What the Characters Know About Ossuary

By making an Intelligence check (one each), the characters can recall some information about the district in general and Ossuary specifically. Check the result of the ability check with the table below. The result grants the information shown by the result of the ability check and all results below that.

Information on The Ossuary

Check Result	Information Gained
6	Ossuary is one of many parts of the Hollow and Broken Hills, a tumbling and broken limestone plateau and the surrounding islands that contain the city's religious district. The place has a curious reputation for miracles. Its wells are said to cure afflictions, and the authority its leaders seem to exert on the Crown occasionally defies logic. Some say the main reason the religions set up headquarters across the fractured district is because of the network of natural caves and tunnels that riddle the place, allowing unseen movement and an excellent place to hide secrets. That the Hollow and Broken Hills contains more secrets than anywhere else in the city-state is not in doubt.
10	Ossuary is one of scores of graveyard communities, this one with a reputation for spilling those in eternal rest from its overflowing walls into the sea below. Ossuary is built upon three levels, narrow balconies forming a whole town linked by dozens of picturesque stairs and walkways through parklands between high tors. It has a fine inn (the Stekerrschalln), a magnificent chapel made of the vast skeleton of an enormous whale, and is isolated from the mainland with only a single very giddily high arched bridge.
14	The present ruler of Ossuary, Lord Undertaker of Ossuary Isaac Fetter, is known to be a recluse. He keeps a small staff in his cliff-home, known colloquially as the Horn. Relatively unremarkable, Ossuary has a small number of visitors who come to sample the water of its mystical wells and to take in the breath-taking views across the Great Lyme River toward the Great Docks and out to sea. Ossuary is distinct only in that it is one of the most remote parts of the district.
18	It's an open secret that Lord Undertaker Fetter is not some loveable eccentric. He is paranoid and nasty. He keeps a small staff simply because he is delusional. His settling here comes as no surprise to those who know him.
22	Some strange event happened only yesterday in Ossuary. It is suggested by a handful of reputable local people that a man was seen ascending to Heaven. That the rumour has not spread far and wide suggests interference from someone with significant influence.

Heading to Ossuary

Eleanor and Morel are anxious for the characters to move quickly, and as they depart, Morel reminds the characters that they are dealing with an enemy — honey-tongued, maybe, but an enemy nonetheless. He charges the characters in the name of the city-state and their friends to destroy her. This, he adds finally, is a hunt, and the prey is close.

Part Two: Ossuary

Part 2 of this adventure takes place as a series of events while heading to and arriving at Ossuary, as well as an opportunity to explore the settlement of Ossuary a bit. It behoves the characters to get to know the town and its inhabitants a little bit, not only to find out information that may be useful to their investigation, but also to provide them with assistance later when things start to go terribly, terribly wrong in **Part 3** below. The events and area descriptions cover those that occur before the encroachment of Between. Areas that have already fallen into Between or events that take place after that influence spreads are covered in **Part 3**.

This part also introduces *Unbidden Words and Deeds* Sideboxes and entries that continue throughout the adventure. These are occurrences where the character that you have adjudged as being the most touched by the Beautiful's influence suddenly finds himself thinking things and saying things aloud not of his own volition. These do not harm the character in question, but they give a strong indication of the nearness of the Beautiful and the power that she possesses.

Event 1: Revolution Calling

The characters' journey across the city to Ossuary is frustratingly slow. River barges are blocked by merchant vessels, carriages come to streets blocked by impromptu fayres, and markets are found where none are normally found. As the characters head across the city toward the Hollow and Broken Hills, run the following encounter:

The characters approach a disturbance where a street is crammed with people around a raised platform upon which has been erected a guillotine. The people are being held back by a group of 6 constables (**guards**) while the ward's Streetclerk, **Ashby Brackett** (**knight**), dispenses justice to alleged traitors — or rather his executioner**, Luben Crome**, (LE male human **gladiator**) does. The crowd is baying its anger as a dozen manacled prisoners await execution but are kept 10 feet back from the stage by the constables' quarterstaves. The Streetclerk Brackett is clearly enjoying his role, reading out crimes as the condemned are brought forward and beheaded. As the characters arrive, five headless corpses lie on the platform near the Streetclerk. The executioner, a hulking figure, further angers the crowd by drinking the blood of his victims from a large pewter goblet. The crowd, however, is too afraid to attack, despite the presence of several of their own family members among the condemned.

The next prisoner brought forward is an elderly man who is dragged toward the guillotine by the executioner. The "convicts" are manacled to each other and released one at a time. They are in no fit state for escape, having been beaten and abused until all now have the exhausted condition. The injustice is palpable: the crowd yelling that the men and women are innocent, the Streetclerk saying otherwise. Unless the characters intervene, the grim harvest goes on unabated. If the characters force their way through the crowd to oppose or object to the proceedings, the constables quickly back away up and onto the stage. They drop their staves and ready their crossbows to fire at anyone trying to get up onto the stage.

Treasure: Ashby Brackett carries a rapier set with tiny flawed opals in the hilt in the design of a grinning cat, worth 200 gp. He wears a falconer's glove set with an iron-and-diamond encrusted ring worth 250 gp, a lucky monkey's paw on a leather cord set in a gold mount, worth 100 gp, and has the keys to the manacles in his coat pocket. He also carries a letter of credit that can be cashed at any bank or moneylender for 1,000 gp.

Tactics: The soldiers hold back the mob aggressively, threatening with staves or crossbows, yet fight with bravado. If the mob joins any attack, they fight defensively, trying to escape. If the Streetclerk is killed, they drop their weapons and flee. If Ashby senses hostilities, he tries to get out of any combat, ordering his subordinates to defend him at all costs. If cornered, he fights with false bravado, always trying to flank and stay out of immediate danger. If wounded in any way, he threatens his opponent with execution; if wounded a second time, he states that he will allow his opponent to leave if he goes now. Finally, he begs not to be killed if he has to. The executioner is a little unhinged; if he perceives any kind of threat, he wades in swinging his axe. He does not give up easily. If reduced to 10 hit points, he momentarily backs from combat only to charge back in the next round.

Development: If the characters manage to release the prisoners, the mob cheers and claps them on the back, mothers kiss their hands and bless them, and babies are passed to them to be kissed. Within a few minutes, however, the carnival atmosphere ends with the arrival of another 20 constables (**guards**), led by a Sergeant of the Watch (**veteran**), and if a fight breaks out, another 12 constables arrive 1 minute later. If the characters are still on hand at this point, they are likely to be mobbed by the constables who in a frenzy of fear and anger execute the characters using the guillotine nearby if it is still serviceable, or by other means if not.

Reaching Ossuary

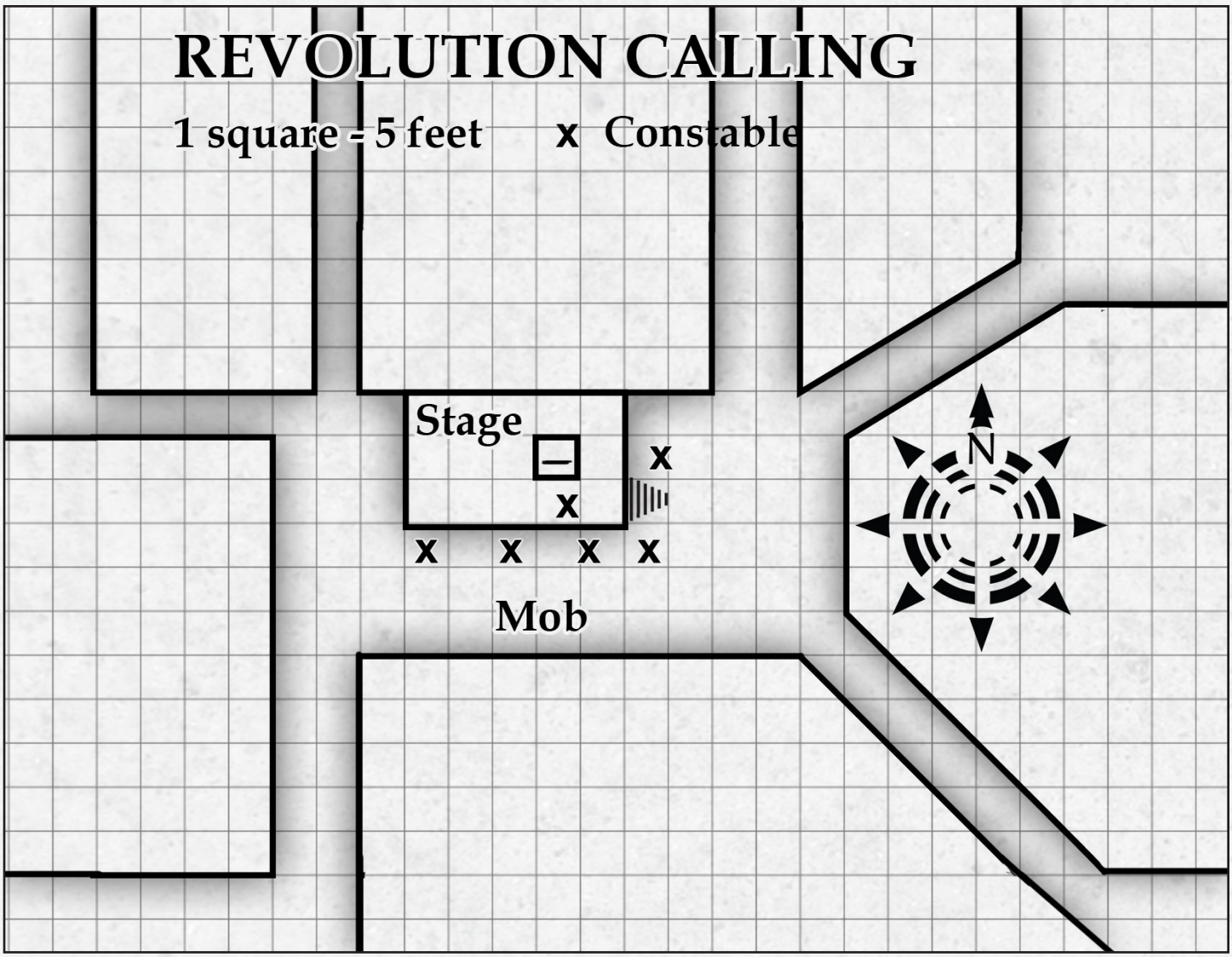
When the characters finally reach the eastern seaward shores of the Hollow and Broken Hills, they still need a boat to get to Ossuary, which is described as **HBH21** in **Chapter 7**. There are no landing points on Ossuary, however, and all landings have to be made via the twin isles of Skold (**HBH20**). Read the following as they make their approach toward Big Skold (the southern island) by hired punt or some other means.

> The rocky knoll of Big Skold rises ahead in the light spray, a small harbour area at its south end where your vessel can beach. The island is little more than a small, grassy outcrop rising from the sea upon which a few small flocks of sheep can be seen to graze. Though not visible from your position, you know that the smaller island Little Skold sits directly behind it. The two are connected by a low-lying bridge that you have heard can be accessed only at low tide, a few hours from now.
>
> Looming behind and somewhat to the west stands the much taller rocky pinnacle that you know to be Ossuary. Unlike the gently rolling, green slopes of Skold, Ossuary is like a severe white limestone pillar rising from the sea in almost sheer cliffs for hundreds of feet. Its only access is from a high bridge that extends from the northwest side of Little Skold.
>
> The great pillar of Ossuary is only partially visible at this hour as low-lying clouds obscure its uppermost reaches. However, the three levels of the cliff side village that cling to the rocky slopes are clearly visible from your vantage point.

Don't make it seem suspicious at this point, but the mists at the top of the island are actually the beginning manifestation of Between reaching out to grasp Ossuary with its probing fingers.

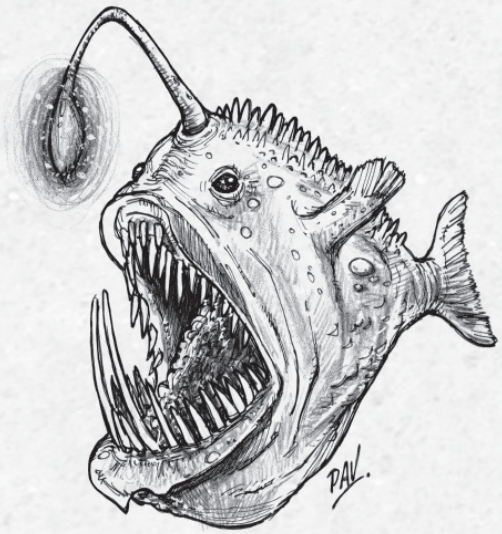
Landfall on Skold

Skold is a sparsely populated sheep-farming isle, and is the only viable landing access for the graveyard isle. A sturdy bridge links the two. A handful of crofters tend the sheep on the isle, living out a tough existence. A shallow harbour on the south isle (known as Big Skold) links via a slender rope bridge to Little Skold (the north isle). The rope bridge is by no means easy to use and can be accessed only at low tide, which occurs in early afternoon or the early hours of the morning. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross the 100-foot-long bridge. Those that fail the check and fall drop into the misty waters 7 feet below. Crossing by night is an even trickier affair, since those who fall in may be



lost to sight. Locals strongly advise against any such crossings and also warn about predators in the rip between the two isles.

Slop-sharks hunt the waters between the isles, and one is nearby as the characters take the bridge, attracted by their shadows upon the water as they cross. Those who fall in face not only a tricky undercurrent between the isles — DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check — but 1 **slop-shark** (**Lyme angler**[†]) as well.



Arriving on Ossuary

It is likely to be late afternoon before the characters cross the Great Bridge (**O1**). As they do, read or paraphrase the following description.

> At last, the frustrations of the journey are over. A great arched bridge soars across the last broken part of this jagged district. This bridge is graceful, but precarious; its sides have no barriers, although a slender rope stretches across both sides. You notice the tracks of one set of iron wheels that have clearly pitched into the sea a hundred yards below. Ahead, through a misty spring haze of rain appears a jagged island, a stack of rock that rises into the white haze above and vanishes. You see stone steps rising through graceful gardens upward into the mists just above the settlement, while below sits a small town, gripping onto three perches of rock, a charming place of narrow streets and early budding flowers. Bunting and prayer flags hang in the streets, and, as you look, you catch a glimpse of a wedding party heading toward a small church, all smiles and happiness. A rainbow breaks above the scene, lending it an ethereal air. The feeling of joy is palpable — to your suspicious minds almost too profound.

Unbidden Words and Deeds

The influence of the Beautiful is near at hand and growing stronger, and the presence of her power has an effect on those characters who have been particularly touched by her over the course of this adventure path. These effects play out as words and actions that spontaneously erupt from the character. The character in question has no idea where these thoughts and words came from or why, but is aware of an increasingly overwhelming feeling of joy in the air as something approaches … from somewhere.

The first manifestation of these unbidden words occurs as the characters first arrive at Ossuary after stepping foot on the bridge at **O1**. At this point, the character most touched by the Beautiful's influence suddenly takes on a faraway look and says, "The day has come; the veil has been pierced. See? The calves are fleeing the meadows and scatter downward to suckle. I am ready."

After this, further words and deeds occur either during events and encounters or at random times as deemed appropriate by you. The actions that occur during encounters are detailed at the end of those specific entries. Random manifestations should be sprinkled in from the list below as you see fit. Since the presence of the Beautiful is coming nearer by the minute, consider having these effects affect more than one touched character, especially if multiple characters have felt the power of her presence.

Random Manifestations

- The character begins whittling intently at a piece of wood. They are able to act normally at this time but the compulsion to whittle does not leave, and they continue to do so even while undertaking other mundane activities such as walking, resting, eating, conversing, etc. It does not impede the ability to defend themselves or cast spells, but they resume whittling as soon as possible. Over the course of the next half hour, the character carves a magnificent angel figure, its face a broad rictus smile.
- The character seems to listen intently for a moment and then turns to look at any children nearby, her face a mask of terror. She suddenly utters, "Get the children to safety. The wolves are approaching," and is left with a deep feeling of unexplainable melancholy for an hour afterward.
- The character spends a few minutes absorbed in staring at a fly caught in a spider's web, watching and smiling as events unfold. As the spider finishes with its prey, the character turns to a friend and says, "That is us, my beloved."
- The character suddenly stiffens and says "Take care of my child or I shall make you suffer. Care for her; keep her safe. She is needed for the coming days."

Event 2: A Wedding Party

Once the characters cross the bridge at **O1**, they arrive to find that everyone in the village is in the church (**O5**). The entire population has come out to see Vetch and Lillie (**O2-F**) get married. The Lord Undertaker presides over events, and everyone is decked out in their Prayerday best. The bride, the hefty Lillie, is marrying the bookish Vetch. Lillie is dressed in a very fine (and old) wedding dress of pure white. Vetch has ill-fitting gentlemen's attire and a hat that is slightly too big for him that he borrowed from a relative.

As the characters enter the square of Low Town, the first hymn "O, Mother Guide Us" strikes up from within the church. This is a well-known hymn of obedience to the Holy Mother, and one that may draw religious characters into the church. Characters can choose to enter the church (as discussed below) or they can opt to explore the village while the locals are otherwise engaged. If they do so, refer to the description of Ossuary below. Other than the Horn, all of the homes and businesses are unlocked and mundane in every way, and the tables in the Stekerrschalln (**O3**) are set for a feast. It quickly becomes apparent that every person in the township is currently at the church, so any interviews of witnesses to the reported miraculous event are going to have to wait until the end of the ceremony. If the characters opt to explore higher on the island while the wedding is underway, they run into the descending influence of Between as detailed under **Other Locations** below.

If the characters enter the church, all eyes turn. Be careful to note how the characters are attired as it has a bearing upon their interaction with the Lord Undertaker later. Likewise, note if the characters depart the ceremony early. Unless the characters are so crass as to do something to interrupt the service, the wedding begins in earnest as the hymn ends. There are enough seats available on the back pew of the church for the characters to attend if they wish.

The officiant (the Lord Undertaker) harangues the crowd with a sermon for a full 1-1/2 hours, clearly enjoying repeatedly referring to his small flock as "sinners." Characters making a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check also note the lord's hatred of Revolutionaries. Finally after more hymns, a brief exchanging of vows, and a final blessing, the couple are officially married and introduced as Master and Goodwife Brechtin.

Make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check for each character during the ceremony to notice that at one stage a curling wisp of white mist licks under the outer door. It flicks the air, and then recedes immediately, almost as though sentient. This is the Between, finally reaching the village from the island above. Characters who notice this may recognise the sentient effects and odd emphasis of smells that accompanies it as being a manifestation of that strange place.

From this point on, the entire island is drawn into the strange world, with effects as outlined in the Sidebox in **Part 3** below. In essence, the characters and locals are now cut off from the rest of Castorhage and indeed the rest of the mundane world, and the only escape is through destroying or escaping from the gate the Angel weaves high above.

Unbidden Words and Deeds: During the ceremony as the singing of hymns begins again, one character stands and sings "Hymn to the Beautiful" (see **Handout 3** in ***L2: Pound of Flesh***) as loud as she can. Only those sitting nearby notice, though they do nothing more than give odd looks of confusion or disapproval.

Event 3: Celebration Day

After the wedding, the entire village save the Lord Undertaker and his party heads to the Stekerrschalln (**O3**) for a feast, speeches, and celebrations. The Lord Undertaker returns to the Horn (**O5**) where he has a light repast and complains loudly about the locals, sure in his own mind that the bride was at least 4 months pregnant. Dealing with Fetter is handled in **Event 4** below; this section deals purely with the other locals.

The mood of the other locals is light. A feast is prepared in the tavern, and even strangers are welcome. The food is less sumptuous than a normal wedding feast, with lots more bread and sausages than would usually be served, but the wheat beer flows freely, and soon spirits are high. The characters might wish to make toasts or offer to entertain the locals with performances in order to break the ice and smooth their investigation efforts. The locals are quite friendly.

All of the villagers who witnessed Father Gromwell's ascension are present other than Constable Sedge who is attending the Lord Undertaker at the Horn. The characters may not know the names of any of the other witnesses, but everyone present is eager to talk and regards the story partly as a joke and partly as possibly something deeper. Simply asking about witnesses reveals the identities of Saim Wallrin (**O8-R**), Gramma Joyda (**O8-Q**), and Constance Shether (**O10-U**). These three are all present at the party, and Saim and Joyda are happy to talk. Constance is guarded by her doting mother at all times and must be approached as described under area **O10**. Characters asking for Constable Sedge are directed to the Horn (**O5**).

The hefty Saim Wallrin and the aged Gramma Joyda both tell the same tale. They saw the kneeling figure (whose description matches Father Gromwell) at the shrine atop the island (**O12**) just after dawn on the day in question. There was a sudden blaze of light, and the man shouted for joy as a stairway of silver appeared before him. Then he slowly climbed upward toward a garden of light. Then the light faded, and the shrine returned to normal. The stairway, the garden, and the man were gone.

While they both had good reasons for being there at that hour (Wallrin was gathering flowers to give to Werren Hosk, and Joyda was looking for cooking herbs). A DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check picks up that Wallrin is hiding something. If pressed in some way, he admits that he was higher up than Gramma Joyda and saw something else. He claims that he saw the old man look at something — or someone — as the stairway appeared. It was a figure bathed in light who carried a glowing white scythe. The light was so bright Saim could hardly look, and yet it cast no glow of light beyond its immediate vicinity, which is why none of the others noticed. When the stairway vanished, Wallrin saw the figure drift upward and then vanish into mists above. Wallrin is convinced it was an angel, but long ago he had a problem with drink (his first wife left him as a consequence), and he doesn't want it bandied about that he saw an angel. He'll become hostile to the characters if he finds out they've been spreading his story about.

Questions about the shrine and upper isle are dismissed casually; the tor is not huge, rising only a further 300 feet above Uppertown. Atop it is a small chapel made of bones known as the Ossuary Chapel. It's a little beyond an hour's walk. This last statement is, in fact, untrue from the moment the island enters Between. Distances are stretched, and the journey beyond the confines of the village is — as the characters find out if they venture out as described in **Part 4** — far more of a hike than they could have imagined.

The wedding feast continues jovially, and after toasts and speeches, music begins. Fiddles and drums are brought out, and the locals begin to dance and laugh. It is some time before they all stagger home to bed, an event that coincides with the first attacks by creatures from Between as detailed in **Event 5**.

Event 4: His Unworthy Lordship

If the characters choose to drop in on Lord Undertaker Fetter, they are admitted into the Horn (**O5**) but find that Fetter is less than jovial. He'll receive guests, but doesn't extend any friendliness to them. He quite clearly loathes anyone who isn't of the aristocracy (at least the Upper Class caste).

Unless the characters can improve the lord's attitude toward them (a wealthy appearance will do that immediately), he will not entertain any discussion with them and summarily dismisses them from his presence. He dismisses the miracle tales as poppycock, and if he finds out one of his household guards has been making up such stories, he dismisses him on the spot. He tells them nothing interesting ever happens in Ossuary save more burials, and he direct the characters to the inn for accommodation.

If the characters manage to make a strong impression by appearing wealthy, politically connected, or otherwise not to be treated with disrespect, Fetter is coldly polite but remains judgemental. He grudgingly offers the characters lodging of the most basic sort, allowing them to sleep before the fire in the dining area with the hounds and has the guards order the hounds not to attack them while on the premises. If asked about Constable Sedge witnessing the "alleged" miracle, he calls Sedge in and orders him to cooperate with the characters. Lord Fetter does not know any other details about the events of the ascension, nor does he care to entertain any further questioning.

Information that Constable Sedge possesses is detailed under "Development" of area **O5** below. If the characters caused him to be sacked, they can question them outside the Horn. He is understandably upset about his change of fortunes and has an unfriendly attitude toward the characters. He checks into a room at the Stekerrschalln (**O3**) for the night since he doesn't wish to cross the Great Bridge while the sea mists have risen (they are currently obscuring part of its length — but this is actually the Between manifestation rather than sea mist, see **O1**). If the characters manage to get into his good graces, he relates his story as given under **O5** below.

Ossuary Features

Details for the independent village of Ossuary can be found at area **HBH21** and its accompanying Sidebox in **Chapter 7**. The habitation on Ossuary is essentially a trio of narrow rock ledges vertically separated by 300 feet, between Low Town and Halfway, and 200 feet between Halfway and Uppertown. Low Town lies merely 100 feet above the sea below.

The town is built in the alpine style of distant Yolbiac Vale, in the Borderland Province from whence the island's first settlers came more than a century ago. Houses are neat and stone built, with plentiful windows to take in the views and an abundance of window boxes that bloom copiously during the summer. Wherever wood is used in the construction, there are decorative eaves, mouldings, and gingerbread trim. Defensively, each property is effectively useless; doors are poor, and even though windows have shutters, they are more decorative than defensive.

A chain-conveyor connects the three parts of Ossuary, ostensibly to allow the movement of larger items. Simple paths serve as more mundane means to get about. The conveyors works on a system of weights that allows rapid access between the three parts of town; they keep talking about building one all the way up to the Ossuary Chapel, but so far it's just a dream.

The Wall is what the locals call the sheer cliffs that separate the three parts of the settlement. The drop from Low Town into the sea below is 100 feet, 400 feet for Halfway, and 600 feet for Uppertown. Each part of the wall crosses fairly loose limestone — DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. Hardy and twisted bristlecone pines grow from some parts of the Wall.

The Gardens are small ledges and nooks between and beyond the villages that have had gardens planted and for many years have been lovingly cared for. These gardens are lovingly tended and contain statuary, narrow paths, and grottoes. These gardens and paths usually have colloquial names such as Lover's Walk or Giddy Edge. A number of natural springs and wells are spaced among these gardens and around the villages. Each has a small shrine devoted to Mother Grace, and their waters are allegedly curative.

Hundreds of graves and rock-cut tombs abound in this place. They overflow from cliff faces and occupy almost every flat patch of land. Mausoleums spring up from nowhere, and it seems that every time you halt, your eyes fall upon at least a score more burials or crypts. Carved angels, simple tombs, and exposed bones litter the place.

Although much of the surroundings of Ossuary change when the area is taken into Between in **Part 3** of this adventure, the physical layout of the settlement as shown on the map does not alter. In its simplest terms, the arrival of Between stretches the isle vertically beyond the village. This effect is detailed in the body of the adventure.

O1. The Great Bridge

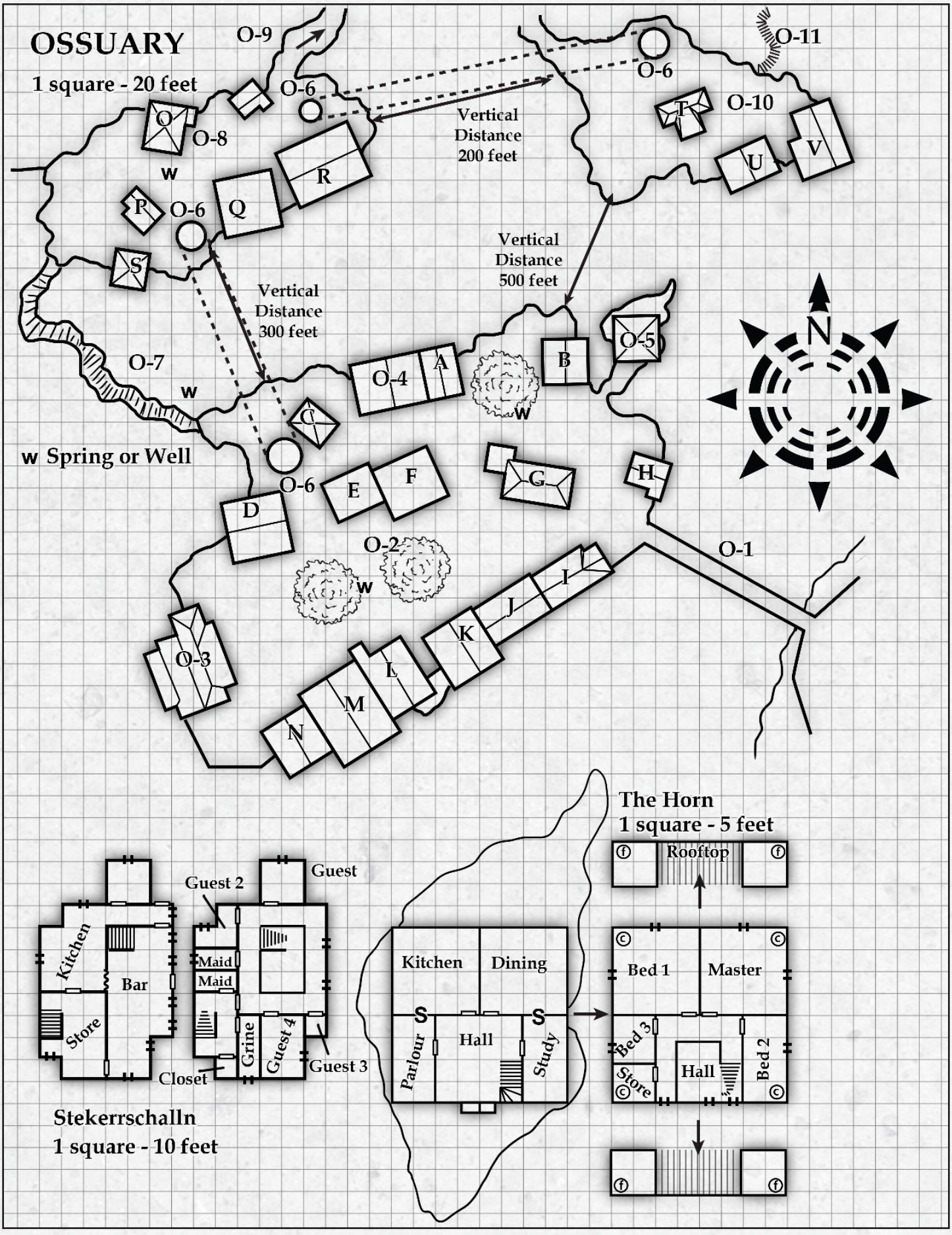
A broad, arched bridge curves across to the village. The bridge is stone, and has no rails; a single rope strung along each side is the only protection against a fall.

The bridge is 100 feet above the waters of the estuary below. Here at its most tidal, where the river mixes with the sea, the waters are normally turbulent. Swimming in these waters requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Early in the adventure, the bridge and the whole of Ossuary become part of Between. At this time, the bridge effectively becomes something different, a misty portal that is impossible to cross. Those who try to do so simply find themselves coming back the other way without any sensation of turning. For more information, see **Part 3** below.

O2. Low Town Square

This is a pretty town square of stone houses, carved from the natural stone of the island. The buds of flowers abound, and countless daffodils give the place a beautiful yellow hue. Three huge trees rise from the centre of the square, which is flagged, while a chain conveyor rises sharply behind the village, climbing up a high cliff gripped by twisted pines. A tortuous set of stone steps offers a simpler way to the top of the cliff, where a second smaller group of houses hang. Beyond that,


OSSUARY
1 square - 20 feet
O-9
O-6
O-11
O-6
O-10
O-8
Vertical Distance 200 feet
T
U
V
O
R
Q
P
O-6
S
Vertical Distance 500 feet
Vertical Distance 300 feet
O-7
O-4
A
B
O-5
N
C
w Spring or Well
O-6
E
F
G
H
D
O-2
O-1
I
J
K
O-3
L
M
N
The Horn
1 square - 5 feet
Rooftop
Guest
Guest 2
Kitchen
Bar
Store
Maid
Maid
Grime
Guest 4
Guest 3
Closet
Kitchen
Dining
S
S
Parlour
Hall
Study
Bed 1
Master
Bed 3
Store
Hall
Bed 2
Stekerrschalln
1 square - 10 feet

the conveyor and cliffs rise farther to an even higher platform of houses some five hundred feet above you.

The town square has a church, a tavern, and what looks like a small, fortified manor that rests upon a spur of rock. From the bridge, some of the houses also peer into the depths of the sea far below, grasping onto the perch of stone defiantly.

The buildings are functional stone cottages. As a rule of thumb, for every 625 square feet of space (25 feet by 25 feet), there are 4 rooms. Each cottage also has an upstairs with half as many rooms as on the floor below. There are usually windows every 10 feet and 2 exterior doors at ground level on opposite sides of the structure.

The Low Town Square is home to almost half the entire population of Ossuary, all of whom are listed in the Sidebox. The families play an important role in events that occur very early in this adventure, giving the characters potential allies as well as frightened non-combatants to worry about and plan for or ignore as the characters wish. Most of these locals are commoners and avoid any fights. These non-combatants are inclined to panic in the event of violence. The rest of the citizenry are made up of 12 able locals (**guards**). Brave but untrained, the able locals are nothing without good leadership. They may rise up to defend their homes or their neighbours, but they soon scatter under any persistent attack. However, given leadership and confidence, they can become a useful supportive group of fighters able to assist the characters.

Low Town Locals

Area	Resident
A	Joseph* and Camphor*, babe in arms (Julia)
B	Old Mabb*
C	Silas and Lottie, 4 children (all under 10)
D	Grandma Porter and Grandfather Henk
E	Karreb* and Henna, 9 children (all teenagers, one is an able local)
F	Vetch and Lilly* Brechtin (the couple getting married at the start of this adventure)
G	Hazel (widow), 2 young children
H	Mudge and Poppy, 3 very young girls
I	Mallow* and her sister Scarg*
J	Min and Lucy (Min has one leg, Lucy is blind)
K	Hector* and Bren, babe in arms (Heather)
L	Marlin* (hermit woodcutter), 2 pit-mastiffs** he hunts with
M	Sathwin* and Cresseda*, 2 young children
N	Mother Knotweed (elderly woman)

* Indicates an **Able Local** (see stat block)

O3. The Stekerrschalln

A large ornate inn with decorated window boxes has a bright sign depicting a widely grinning fat man holding a huge toby jug designed to look like a man with many chins. The name Stekerrschalln is painted in huge yellow letters made to look like flowers across the whole front wall.

The 2-storey inn is roomy and comfortable, with a handful of rooms, all of which are warm and well-equipped.

The owner and mistress of the inn, **Grine Hoffmark (veteran)** is from one of the original settling Valer families, and her family has run the inn for four generations. Fierce but friendly, Grine wears enormous, elaborate dresses and has a penchant for singing operatic numbers very loudly in the mornings. She takes any complaints very seriously, and occasionally aggressively. Two maids, **Hetty** and **Frey (commoners)**, also of Valer descent, help her run the place. The inn has an excellent selection of salamis, hand-cured or smoked by Grine.

Fare at the Stekerrschalln

Drinks	Price
Altbeer, pint	3 cp
Altbeer, 3-pint stein	8 cp
Wheat beer, pint	4 cp
Wheat beer, 3-pint stein	1 sp
Maximil's vintage 1769 port, bottle)	12 gp
Cherry Korn spirits, bottle	15 gp
Carrgab's 1757 vintage red wine, bottle	28 gp

Comestibles	Price*
Spicy pork sausage links	2 sp
Ham and cabbage	2 sp
Stew and black bread	2 sp
Duck sausages in sauerkraut with caraway	6 sp
Mutton pie with spiced dumplings	6 sp
Salami, cheese and olives with rye wafers	1 gp

* Prices reflect recent rises in costs of food.

O4. Church of Mother Grace

Here is a high-gabled church to Mother Grace. The building shares a supporting wall with an adjacent property and snugs up against the high cliff.

The Lord Undertaker acts as the parish priest here, having a colourful style and way of describing sinners that causes women to blush and children to start crying. Generally empty except on Prayerdays, the church's interior is simple and plain. Its only adornment is a fresco of Mother Grace reading from a holy tome and advising knights of the First Great Crusade to spare the heathens (or not spare them, depending on which version of the story is told). Anyone making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Religion or History) check knows the story of the knights who had ignored the goddess's advice, were captured in battle, and burned alive by the Huun. Silver artefacts worth 300 gp adorn the church; these include two silver candelabrum, a silver candle snuffer, and a book stand for the altar.

O5. The Horn

A spur of rock hangs above the cliff here, supporting a narrow, fortified building.

The Horn is actually not fortified. Anyone who makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence check quickly sees that the fortifications are cosmetic — battlements are too low to be of any use, hefty doors are fake, and a portcullis is merely decoration that can't actually be lowered.



The present lord of Ossuary dwells in the Horn, an ostentatious façade of a more chivalrous time. The Horn is made out in the old style, with crude furnishings, tapestries, large stonework, and the general feel of a feudal knight's home, without any of the protection afforded by that place. Leaded windows glare out across the village, and the outer and inner doors are poor quality. Only the outer door has a lock, which can be picked with thieves tools on a successful DC 18 Dexterity check. There are no ground-floor windows. The rooms within are functional and shabby. The four tower turrets are accessible by trapdoors from the rooms underneath, and each is surrounded by a crenelated battlement. The secret doors on the ground floor can be found with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Lord Undertaker Isaac Fetter (LE male human **noble**) is a pale, sallow young man wearing foppish, expensive clothes. Barely more than a callow youth, he is vile and cowardly. Fetter exists to please Fetter, his primary (indeed only) concern in life. His lordship keeps a small staff of **6** household guards (human **guards**) to watch over himself and his weak-willed and shy wife **Bryony** (LN female human noble), herself barely beyond girlhood. The guards serve as unofficial constables for the village at Lord Fetter's direction. They sleep in barracks shown as Bed 2 on the map. The guards are crammed into tight quarters, but happy to have jobs. While not overly loyal to his lordship, they have their futures to think of (they are discussed in detail in **Part 3**). The constables keep 4 Blight-bulls (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***, **fighting dog, light**) in the Horn that are usually loose in the dining area and attack anyone who sneaks about. Lord Fetter also employs a steward **Heff** who has a wife, **Holly**, who trebles as cook, cleaner, and maid (both LN human **commoners**). They share Bed 3.

In the barrack room is an average locked strongbox containing 18 light crossbows and 120 bolts. A small, waxed walnut case contains 12 masterwork bolts. Fetter keeps the key to this box.

Development: If the characters manage to question Constable Sedge, he claims to have witnessed the ascendency of Father Gromwell. If questioned, he is able to give details of the event, although they seem fuzzy to him now.

Keys of the Dark Brethren

Fetter has a single very useful object on him, an heirloom passed down through his family to aid the ruler of Ossuary. The key is a large black iron object designed to look like two grinning devil-faced canines. It is a variant *figurine of wondrous power (golden lions)*, except that they become **hell hounds**. Any member of his staff is aware of the item's power, but only a friendly NPC passes on the information. While such hounds would certainly be helpful later in the adventure, Fetter is loath to speak of them or part with them, and must be strongly persuaded in order to part with them.

He was at the shrine (**O12**) after dawn and saw a figure (the description he gives matches Gromwell perfectly) kneeling before the shrine. There was a sudden blaze of light, and the man yelled in joy. A stairway of silver appeared before him, and he slowly climbed upward toward a garden bathed in golden light. Then the light faded and the shrine returned to normal. There was no sign of the old man or the stairway. Sedge had not seen the man around before, but thinks some of the other folk from the higher villages who witnessed the event may have recognized him. If asked, Constable Sedge can provide the names of the other locals who witnessed the man's miraculous ascension. They are Constance Shether, a local child from Uppertown, and Saim Wallrin and Gramma Joyda, both from Halfway.

O6. The Chain Conveyor

A hefty ship's chain extends upward high above and loops back down in a circuit. Two iron cages are suspended on the chains, one high at the level above and the other at the lower level. At each end of the loop is a large clockwork mechanism that appears capable of propelling the cages along their circuit.

The chain conveyor is a device used as a lift between the levels of the village. The lift operates with a simple lever, which allows up to 6 Medium-sized creatures on the platform to move between the two levels in 1 minute. The chains for both conveyors work on clockwork, and the mechanism can make a complete circuit (all the way up and all the way back down) twice before it requires rewinding (an act that takes 1 person 10 minutes).

O7. The Low Stair

A winding set of stone steps labours uphill, through and under the cliffs of the second town.

The steps are the more mundane method of travel, but climbing them takes 6 minutes at normal speed. Each passes hundreds of shrines, gravestones, and mausoleums along the way. In some of these, doors, covers, and in some places the limestone bedrock itself has crumbled, and the skeletons are exposed, jutting from under lids or through fractured doorways. None of these dead are animate.

O8. Halfway

Half-a-dozen stone houses grip a small rock perch here, mostly given over to sheep farming. Pens crowd for space here, while above and below lie the other sections of the village.

Like the houses below and above, these places are designed for comfort, not siege, and the locals, although characterful, are not generally fighters.

Halfway Locals

Area	Resident
O	Korli* and Messa, 4 children below 10 years old (2 are twin infants)
P	Master Hosk (old farmer) and his adult daughter Werren*
Q	Querrel and Joyda (an elderly couple), 4 very young grandchildren (parents currently away)
R	Saim Wallrin*
S	Mathus Denrin (venerable blind dwarf)

* Indicates a person who fights as a **guard**

Both Saim Wallrin and Joyda (also known as Gramma Joyda) can confirm Constable Sedge's story about the ascendency of Gromwell.

O9. The Shrine

Resting on a spur of rock some fifty feet above the settlement of Halfway is a small painted and carved shrine to Mother Grace.

This simple shrine to Mother Grace has dried flowers, shells, some corn dolls, and lucky horseshoes laid at its base.

O10. Uppertown

The final three houses at this highest level of the village are very weather-beaten, cowering beneath the rest of the tor, which continues its rise above. The highest reaches appear to be accessible by a cairn-bedecked path. The chain ferry arrives at the summit high above town, and a single huge cairn sits in the centre.

The weather is harsher here 500 feet above Low Town. A pathway (**O11**) leads upward into the hazy gloom, but what begins as a mortal path becomes something else entirely in this adventure (see **Part 3**).

Development: Constance Shether lives here with her protective mother Magdal Shether. Magdal begins with an unfriendly attitude toward anyone who mentions the ascendency, claiming it was her child's madness that has infected local people and that the matter is heresy. She tries to discredit her own child, claiming she has visions due to an overactive imagination.

To gain open access to young Constance, Magdal must be made helpful in attitude, but to try to sneak access to the child could leave the characters in hot water — her mother watches her like a hawk. Unless the characters can distract her, or use magical coercion, any attempts to talk to Constance are likely to be discovered. If so, Magdal immediately snatches her child away and goes to see the Lord Undertaker, claiming whatever vile lie she thinks she can get away with. At the very least, this should discredit the characters in the ruler's eyes, making interaction with him during subsequent events more difficult and leaving the characters to either defend the villagers alone or to abandon them to their fate.

Uppertown Locals

Area	Resident
T	Marrel and Adda Hawthorn, Adda's her mother Lettie and aunt Rose, and the Hawthorns' 2 young girls
U	Magdal Shether* and her daughter Constance (see below)
V	Millicent Maschtk

* Indicates a person who fights as a **guard**

Constance did not, of course, imagine the event, which occurred at **O12**. If the child's confidence can be gained, she happily relates her tale and more. She took a shine to the man whom she regarded as a hermit, and had seen him higher up the tor, particularly around the Ossuary Chapel. She reveals that she overheard the man talking to himself, but talking as if he was talking to someone else — someone who wasn't there, although Constance does recall a shadow of light on his face. The strange old man's imaginary friend was talking about a failure, something that had happened that had not worked. He kept talking about making holes in things, and then he said something very odd — he said that she (the friend) was right, to make a hole. You work from the inside out, a big hole from the place you want to drain it into the other place. It was then that the man saw the stair and ascended.

O11. The High Path

A set of very shallow stone steps rises from Uppertown to the Ossuary Chapel at the top of the isle.

Other Locations

The adventure describes the remaining locations on Ossuary as they appear after they have been taken into Between. When the characters arrive, Between has already taken much of the land outside the village. If the characters ignore the village events and move straight up into the ethereal mists beyond, allow them to do so, but they should meet the mantis-things described hereafter and hear and eventually witness the effect those attacks have on the village. The heroic defending of the village is only an aspect of this adventure. The more crucial matter is to face the Beautiful, see her taken, and prevent Ossuary from becoming a permanent resident of the twisted lands beyond.

Part Three: From Between

The Beautiful draws Ossuary into Between and begins to create a huge gate from Between back into the world through the void left by Ossuary. As the weight of emotion and angst and faith is highest here near the Hollow and Broken Hills, that weight will be enough to push a permanent hole from Between through and allow it to drown the world beyond. The angel hopes if she creates a large enough hole at this location, the very fabric of reality will split and a rupture will occur allowing Between to pour through unchecked.

As the characters cross the bridge and enter Ossuary at the beginning of **Part 2**, the Beautiful is already in the Ossuary Chapel (**O16**) weaving her *gateway*. She is so deep in concentration that she does not notice the Knights Occularis slip into the chapel walls and activate the *Between shackle*, loosing a mark on the angel's back that will spell her doom. As soon as the *gateway* opens, she will be drawn into Thornrage's trap. Of more significance, she also fails to see a terrible lurking shadow drawn to the edges of Between by her actions. The creature — a powerful Between vampire — is a herald of death and infestation whose presence dominates one half of the next adventure, ***L8: Apotheosis***.

The Beautiful plunges Ossuary into the Between, and immediately the place begins to change. Distances distort, features are exaggerated, and foul mantis-things from Between are drawn through the gate, both confused by their sudden change in surroundings and terrified by the weight of the *gateway* they can suddenly sense

The upper features of the isle change immediately, so that if the characters venture straight into the upper areas of the isle and ignore what is going on below, the encounters they face are as detailed here. However, if they do head straight up, skipping any involvement with matters below, make sure that the characters encounter a mantis-thing on its way down and hear several others below them. They should be very clear that they have left the village to its fate and, if they do not help, are sentencing the villagers to a dire fate.

As they move away from the chapel, the Knights Occularis — led by Rachel Birch or a Knight Occularis possessed by Rachel Birch — encounter the mantis-things. These horrific Between creatures kill some of the Knights Occularis and drive the others back to a precarious fortification created within Between. A few of the creatures remain attacking the inquisitors, while the others flee farther away from the terrible *gateway* and find the edges of town. There they begin to attack as detailed below.

Ossuary in Between

Slipping into Between, the settlement is subtly drawn into another place. Although night still follows day here, the sun above is hazy, indistinct, and by night, the stars are odd. The moon (if it appears at all) is bloated and blood red, and there is no darker second moon. The sounds and sights of the city are lost, and even the sound of the sea far below becomes turgid, slowed somehow, perhaps even hungry.

Attempts to leave the isle are doomed to failure — or worse. Characters crossing the bridge (**O1**) find themselves walking back toward the village without turning. Spells such as *fly* and *dimension door* suffer the same effects. Those who try the waters of the estuary suffer even worse, as detailed in **Event 9** below.

Although distances are stretched, characters can judge them correctly by making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Be mindful that as long as the Between *gateway* exists above, the mantis-things detailed below keep coming; there is no set number of them. They are here to harass and to scare, to injure and to terrorise. They are not here, however, to fight a pitched battle. Wave after wave of monsters is tedious. A figure lurking at the edge of sight, an NPC doing something rash and then disappearing with a scream as a consequence, an unexpected dragging, clicking noise followed briefly by the feel of hot breath from close by, these are the things to build up tension. The characters know something is out there and fight mantis-things as the adventure indicates, but they're always aware that there are more waiting just beyond sight … many more.

The Mist

As the mists above continue to engulf the uppermost part of the islands and slide downward, you can read the following description at any time that is convenient or seems likely that the characters would notice.

> As the hours of the day wain and the sun sinks behind the distant bulk of the Capitol, its rays momentarily catch the top of the island of Ossuary and cause it to glow with golden fire. The mists that have clung to its peak all day have never dispersed and even seems to have thickened somewhat. Now as the sun disappears behind the mount of the city, the golden glow winks out, leaving in its place the lustrous silvery cloud that hangs low and seems to cling to the island like a cottony cloak. It has also noticeably expanded extending downward along the flanks of the island Wall, completely obscuring the view of the island within. This shroud has almost reached the high shelf that is Uppertown.

All of the following events take place in the context of the mist from Between extending its way down the pillar that is Ossuary. The arrival of the mist heralds the release of creatures called **mantis-things from Between**† who come pouring through the tear in reality, fleeing in fear from the cataclysmic disruption that the tear represents. The adventure begins to pick up pace as the mantis-things from Between reach the outskirts of Ossuary and begin to attack what they find. As the adventure proceeds, they begin calling out to each other in a horribly inhuman way, their distorted mouths and lungs making a sighing, grinding noise that is clearly audible to the entire island. Soon the echoes are answered from higher and higher above — far higher than is possible for something on the mundane version of the isle. To those below, it is assumed that they must be flying for the Ossuary Chapel atop the island is barely more than a few hundred feet above, and the calls sound much, much higher up. This again is the distorting effect of Between: The isle is now very much taller and wilder above.

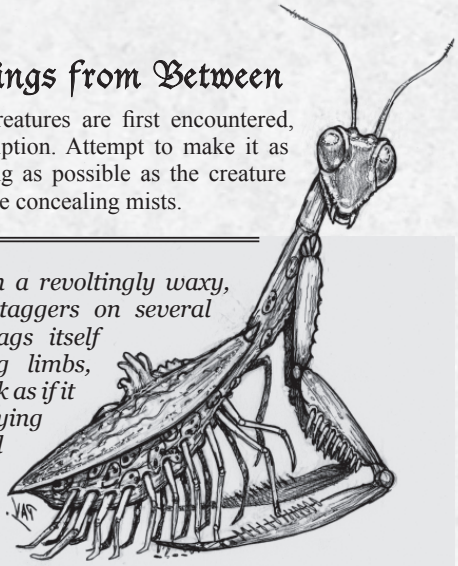
What the characters do is up to them, but with the strange manifestations of the Beautiful they have been experiencing, the presence of the otherworldly mist, and the apparent arrival of inhuman creatures from beyond, they are likely to lead the way in defence against this Between

incursion. This makes them indispensable to the locals who beg the characters to remain in the village and defend it rather than trying to leave the island (which everyone soon learns is impossible) or climbing to the heights above. The locals see the strength and skill of the characters as their only hope of protecting their families. Any talk of the characters leaving the village is met with dismay and anger at the perceived abandonment. They are quickly but wrongly convinced that help will arrive soon and that they just need the characters to stick around for a few hours to defend them until then.

Areas fully enveloped by the mists are the equivalent of thick fog. All sight beyond 5 feet (including darkvision) is obscured. The fog has a strange, fleshy, sweet odour and cannot be dispersed by any means magical or mundane. Any animals with the characters will not willingly travel higher on the island unless their master makes a DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Characters making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check realise that the mists are from or perhaps a part of Between.

The Mantis-Things from Between

When these horrific creatures are first encountered, read the following description. Attempt to make it as suspenseful and horrifying as possible as the creature suddenly lurches out of the concealing mists.



It is fleshy, but in a revoltingly waxy, insectoid way. It staggers on several insect legs and drags itself along on two long limbs, making the thing look as if it is obsequiously praying to some demented god as it moves. It has a vast bloated head riddled with teeth, but moves with appalling speed despite its large size. As it moves, sinews, faces, and limbs of people bloat its flesh, and horribly distorted hands grope outward from this vile host. Wreathed about its sickening flesh are palpable manifestations of misery, regret, and bitter, dashed hope.

Development: These creatures are driven by fear from the rip in reality happening on the tor above. If a character takes the time to observe one of the creatures, a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check perceives that the things often look upward and back, toward the chapel above, as if in fear of something up there. All of the mantis-things behave in this way.

Unbidden Words and Deeds: All characters "touched" from earlier adventures, seeing the mantis-things for the first time quietly repeat to themselves several times, "They are but hosts of the madness and despair of those who are trapped in the nether places of Between; a prison for some that they cannot escape, purgatory beyond hope and time haunted by broken thoughts and dead expectations." They have no further insight into the phrase's meaning or purpose.

Event 5: Screams from Uppertown

At some point after the wedding celebration is winding down in the evening, the mists of Between spread far enough to reach Uppertown (see **The Mists** above). Folk from the wedding have already returned to Uppertown so they can reach their homes before dark, and it is possible that the characters have already ascended that far as well (though the adventure assumes that they probably have not done so yet while they continue to conduct their investigation below). A group of 5 **mantis-things from Between**† slithers to Uppertown and begins to cause mayhem. Unless the characters are present when they attack, their first notice of it is when the screams begin. Modify the following description according to where the characters are when it begins.

> The darkness of nightfall has only barely begun, but the inn at Low Town still blazes with light and good cheer as the villagers continue to celebrate the nuptials. The crowd has thinned somewhat, those living higher up the island heading to stairs or chain-lift to reach their homes before full dark arrives, but most folk are still present for the dancing, singing, food, and drink.
>
> As one dance ends, what you took to be the whirling skirl of the fiddle resolves into a shrill scream coming from high above on the rocky tor of Ossuary — from Halfway or possibly Upper town. The scream is repeated and then magnified as other voices join in a symphony of terror. Faintly come the sounds of other things, breaking doors and fractured walls. Somewhere, high above, Ossuary is under attack.

As the characters leave whatever building they were in (or begin to move higher up the isle if they were already outside), they immediately notice the thickening mist that has descended upon the island. It is the equivalent of fog as described under "The Mist" above. In the following round, the mantis-things begin to make their own inhuman cries as described above to add to the chorus of screams coming from above.

The characters can journey up to Uppertown, but the chain conveyor needs to be rewound before it can work again (**O6**) or the characters can climb. It is a minimum of 6 minutes to make it all the way to Uppertown from Low Town without the use of flying (which is discussed at the beginning of **Part 3**). In any case, unless the characters were already present or nearby when this attack occurred, the noises come to a stop and the mantis-things are already gone by the time they arrive.

Development: When the characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following description.

> The weather-beaten houses perch at the edges of the cliff, but there is an unpleasant feeling now, a scent of something fleshy and feral and yet sweet. Two bodies lie before the nearest house, whilst the others show signs of being battered by a sudden, terrible storm with doors broken in and portions of their roofs collapsed.

The two bodies are Marrel Hawthorn and his wife Adda (**O10-T**), who sacrificed their lives to face the mantis-things in hopes that their girls could hide in a corncrib at the back of their house. The bodies are a mess, but a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check identifies signs of attack by a large, jagged slashing weapon. Adda has lost a leg, and Marrel is cut almost completely in half at the waist. A *speak with dead* spell allows the corpses to be interrogated, and they can tell of a sudden terrible attack, and describe the attackers as enormous creatures that looked like giant praying mantises but were somehow wrong. Marrel can add that at least one person was taken by the creatures — Millicent Maschtk, he thinks — and that it had inserted a long tube into her stomach while it was also enveloping her in some sort of fleshy cocoon of skin. The creature took Millicent to the edge of the cliff, but he did not see which way it carried her.

If the characters search the area, they easily find the closed corncrib and even hear the sounds of quiet sobbing from within on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. The girls, Atty and Naomi, are very young (ages 5 and 3) and can only vaguely describe the sudden chilling attack by noisy things the size of a bull with lots of arms and a massive toothy head. They saw one person, maybe Miss Shether, being carried away into the mists by one of things before their mother shut them in the corncrib and told them to be quiet. They saw the creature biting Miss Shether with a "long snake" (its implantation proboscis).

All the other occupants of this part of town are gone, but there are signs of battle everywhere. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check easily locates many tracks and scuff marks, and a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check is able to discern that the attackers are large,

that they have several legs that end in cruel spikes, and that they departed by way of the Wall (the cliff edge) though which way they climbed (up, down, or sideways) is not evident. Other than the 2 girls and the bodies of their parents, the other 5 inhabitants of Uppertown are unaccounted for.

The characters may think to go toward the top of the island in search of the creatures, but by this time the mist has spread over the entirety of it and the calls of the mantis-things are beginning to sound from all over and at all different heights, even from below in the vicinity of Halfway and Low Town. A few scattered screams emanate from down there as well, making it evident to the characters that if they pursue the monsters upward, they will be abandoning the villagers below to what will likely be a similar fate.

Event 6: Panic Sets In

As news spreads of the attack, many locals hide in their homes and bar doors in a futile attempt to keep the creatures at bay (their ability to bash through such barriers is amply evident in Uppertown. Several locals report that the bridge (**O1**) is out, and that something odd has happened to the village. As a general blanket of fear sets in, noises begin to echo from the mist, horrible preternatural scraping and bellowing noises that further panic the locals.

Despite this, five of the locals, Master Hosk (**O8-P**), his daughter Werren (**O8-P**), Old Mabb (**O2-B**), Karreb (**O2-E**) and Marlin the woodcutter (**O2-L**), want to organise a search and hunt for the missing villagers using Marlin's hounds. Unless the characters intervene, they head into the mists above, never to be seen alive again. The characters may find what's left of them as they explore the area, but unless stopped or accompanied by characters, they meet horribly swift ends at the claws of the mantis-things lurking in the mist. If the characters support the hunt, the group begins to get organised, but before they can leave, **Event 8** occurs, an event that spells a change in direction in the locals' attitude toward the characters.

Event 7: His Unworthy Lordship Emerges

Shortly after the attack in **Event 5**, a pair of constables (**guards**) appears, accompanying **Lord Fetter** (LE male human **noble**). He talks to the characters (if they went up to Uppertown to investigate) but will not climb through the mists in the midst of the terrifying noises and refuses to investigate the site of the attack in Uppertown. He has a quick, whispered conference with his men and then they accompany him back to the Horn. There they lock the doors and secure the house, ostensibly to guard Lady Bryony but in truth because Lord Fetter himself is terrified. From this point onward, Fetter is as uninterested in the plight of his villagers as he is in the characters and their investigation. Ossuary is effectively on its own.

Event 8: The Thing in the Mist

Less than half an hour after the attack on Uppertown, a second attack occurs, this time from a lone **mantis-thing from Between**†. The attack can occur anywhere you wish, but this time whatever its immediate result, the creature remains in the area, at least long enough to allow the characters to attack and possibly kill it. The attack should draw the characters out to deal with the creature and is likely to end in a very popular victory, the upshot of which is detailed below.

Development: If the characters manage to defeat the mantis-thing, some of the locals mob them, cheering, hoisting the characters onto their shoulders, and kicking the creature's corpse. Characters making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check note the fear in the locals' eyes. Word of this reaches Lord Fetter, and he immediately summons the characters. He orders the characters to assist his household guard inside the Horn until reinforcements arrive. He is entirely unreasonable at this point, claiming that any attempt to disobey him is treason. If the characters wish to resist his orders by force, refer to the *Power Games* Sidebox. However, if they wish to use their increasing influence to persuade Lord Fetter to a different course of action — such as congregating the villagers in some strong point and organising a militia of any able-bodied villagers to assist in the defence or some other plan — they can attempt to do that as well.

Power Games

The events in Ossuary take on a miniature reflection of the wider rebellion happening across the city. Ordered by the ruler to stay put and protect him and his household, the characters, far more powerful now than the local militia, have to make a moral choice. There is no right and wrong way to do this adventure, but innocents may be caught in the crossfire. The household guards are not going to give up without putting up a stiff fight. If they give in too readily, they may be dismissed or worse, so each fights until disabled at least. If the characters overpower the increasingly irrational Fetter, they need to carefully consider their next move, especially if he or any of his staff are dead. The villagers might support the characters as their saviours, but if news of the characters murdering their rightful lord, even if he was a pompous fool, is not going to sit well. At best, they'll fear the characters; at worst, they'll become outright hostile.

If the characters refuse to obey Fetter and fail to persuade him with a different plan, he orders his guards to overpower them and a fight breaks out. If a fight occurs, Fetter tries to stay out of it, although he likes nothing better than belittling and humiliating his opponents before seeing them despatched — from a safe distance, of course. Captured characters are relieved of all weapons and equipment and tied hand and foot before being deposited in the downstairs parlour, with a guard on the door at all times. A guard is not left in the kitchen, which has several implements that could be used as improvised weapons if necessary. Fetter's force (all noted elsewhere) include Lord Fetter (LE male human **noble**), 4 household **guards**, and the 4 **blight-bulls**† (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum,*** "**Dog, Fighting"**).

If the characters are successful, the whole of the lord's staff and all the villagers look to them to take charge of matters until such time as the crisis ends or the situation deteriorates beyond salvage.

Unbidden Words and Deeds: If the villagers start to praise the characters for their exploits, a touched character says, "Helpless frail people, you lack the wit and guile to be anything but sheep yourself. Only the enlightened shall see Paradise. You would best be prepared for the coming storm, take to your frail houses and hold your children tight. Perhaps Between will be kind to you and let you through the doors of joy."

XP Award: If the characters succeed in persuading Lord Fetter to a different course of action, award them a total of 1000 XP.

Event 9: The Treacherous Rope

Two locals, Sathwin (**O2-M**) and Mudge (**O2-H**), decide to try to get down to the waters of the estuary, where the Great Lyme meets the Fetid Sea, in hopes of swimming to Big Skold for help. They gather lengths of rope and move to the edge of the bridge (**O1**). There they lower ropes to reach the water that is supposed to be only 100 feet below. They don't approach the characters before doing this, but they don't make a big secret of it either. Ideally, they should be well underway with their plan before the characters notice their activities near the bridge.

Mudge ties the rope around his waist and begins to climb down with Sathwin carefully feeding him rope but maintaining a hold in case he should slip and fall. Going is slow, and Sathwin ties off additional rope to the end as he nears the end of the one he holds. Unless the characters intervene, Sathwin in his panic lowers Mudge nearly 500 feet into the mists when he realizes that he has used all of the coils of rope that they brought over — at least five times farther than should have been necessary to reach the water. Suddenly the rope goes slack, and Sathwin frantically hauls the rope back up. What arrives at the top makes him weep — Mudge's severed hand, torn away from his body by a thorny tentacle that still writhes and quivers despite also being severed.

The tentacle (**kraken tentacle-segment**†) is the severed tip of a kraken's tentacle, bizarrely imbued with a sliver of the kraken's sentience for another 2d4 rounds before finally "dying." Until then, however, it instinctively lashes out with a brutal lethality. The tentacle releases the severed hand and slithers onto the bridge, attacking anyone nearby and killing Sathwin if he is on hand and it is not stopped.

Development: If the characters try to follow Mudge, they may also be attacked by horrors from Between or simply never see the bottom, the choice is yours. The characters' goal is to go up, not down. Mudge is not seen again.

Event 10: The Coming Times

For the remainder of events in Ossuary, the mantis-things lurk on the edges of the village and occasionally crawl in to attack. At first, only 2 or 3 **mantis-things from Between**† enter at a time, but after a day or so, that number doubles. By the end of the third day, the entire village is entirely surrounded by the creatures. The Beautiful also opens the full tear from Between and is lost to the Knights Occularis, even as the Between vampire is unleashed and Ossuary becomes a permanent part of Between, all effectively ending this adventure path. The characters are going to want to act before then.



Part Four: Moving on Up

The characters' salvation — or at least liberty — lies above. Mists cloak the isle above, and the dour spirits of the fallen, the regretful, the wicked, and the innocent sing through the air. These only occasionally manifest as undead, but feel free to have shapes and faces loom out of the mist. The mist is cold and clammy, and the scent of the mantis-things grows as the characters move upward. Those touched by the Beautiful grow more animated as they approach the chapel. There is a choice of routes to the chapel, and each pathway is described hereafter. Each requires some sort of ability check to use. If the characters stray from the paths, they quickly come to wall after wall of unclimbable, clammy cliffs.

Ossuary Heights

The routes up the islands cliffs are the stretched and changed versions of the more mundane lover's walks and paths. These Between versions are like demented versions of their more mundane, earthly inspirations. Feel free to embellish the journeys given here. The vertical separation equates to the distance travelled. These journeys are ever upward, using jagged steps and climbs and exposed paths. The walkways frequently cross ledges and round corners high above the valleys and fissures of the island itself. They are each watched over by statues, the majority of which are angelic. The characters can see something hungry in the angelic faces, something eager. These statues lie in their hundreds and thousands along the walkways, so refer to them as often as you wish.

P1. The Lovers' Climb

The main path at **O11** becomes a series of switchback steps shortly thereafter known to the locals as Lover's Climb. The Climb passes under graceful stone arches watched by statues and surrounded by gravestones. The pathways here are aged cobbles worn smooth by the passage of coffin-bearers and lovers for centuries. The path follows a number of cascading brooks and springs. Throughout their journey, the characters pick up whispers of indiscretions, of lamented love, and the sounds of lovers in the throes of passion. On listening closer, these noises are violent and brutal, almost bestial.

Shortly before arriving at **O12**, the characters become aware of a woman's voice calling out, asking if one of the characters is "Pherran, my love." The woman's voice ignores any answers that are given, but continues to ask, becoming more urgent and claiming that she has come for her true love. Eventually she cries out, "Don't make me do it again! I flung myself from the Wall once to be with you in death! Don't ask it of me again!" She then breaks down into sobs and begins to complain of the cold and the feel of her skin. She begs a male character not to be angry with how she looks now, that her rose has withered but her soul remains his. Eventually, this bittersweet **ghost** emerges through the gloom, her undead body drawn into unlife to look for her true love. She grows angry with the characters when she finds out he is not present.

P2. Giddy Ledge

This pathway is tortuously narrow in places, gripping the edges of the high cliffs as it winds its way back and forth up the Wall. In places, gargoyles leer from the walls, and fixed rusting iron ladders and chains are frequent. Characters using this path must make either a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A failure by 5 or more results in a tumble of 1d6+6 x 10 feet down the face of the Wall to a lower ledge of the path. The fall deals 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen.

P3. The Clamber

This is more a climb than a walk, following a jagged rocky edge marked by cairns. Below, the sea can be heard to crash and roar, though it is of course lost to sight in the mists. While above *something* shadowy flits in and out of sight. Characters using this path must succeed on DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or face a fall exactly as described in **P2** above.

While the characters are picking their way up a very narrow stretch of ridge path, they are attacked by 4 **Between-touched gargoyles**. The attack



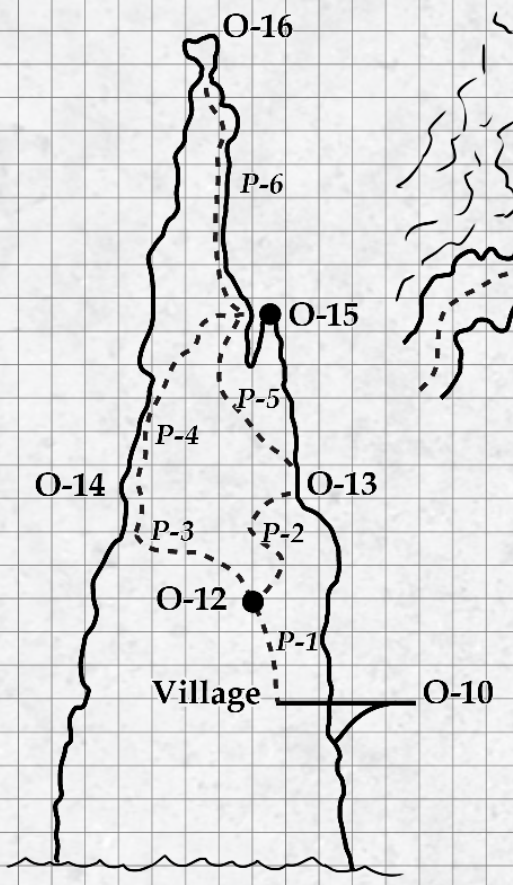
Daylight and Ossuary Between

At two different points in their climb, the characters are assailed by undead creatures that hate daylight. It is probable that the characters are making their ascension at night. However, if they have waited until the morning for light, they discover that the light on Ossuary is not daylight at all. Rather, it is a sickly twilight haze that has no effect upon the undead.

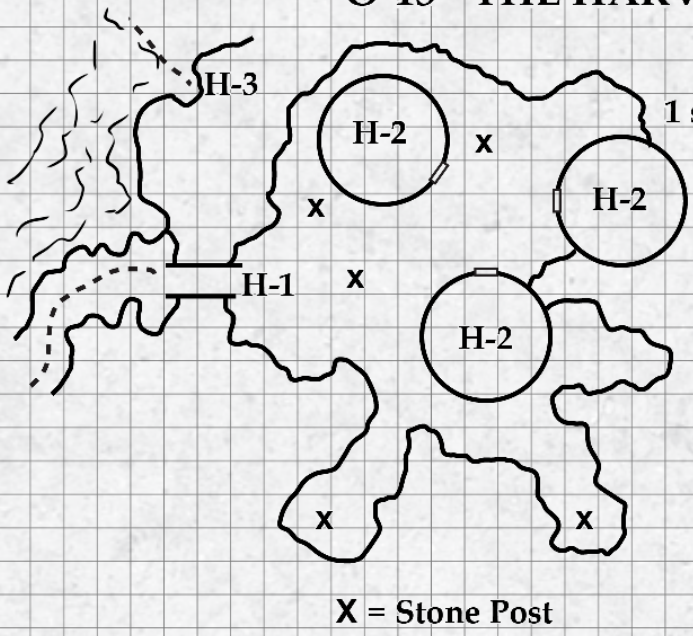
OSSUARY BETWEEN

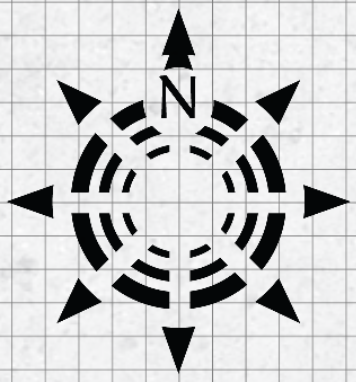
Elevation Map

1 square - 1000 feet

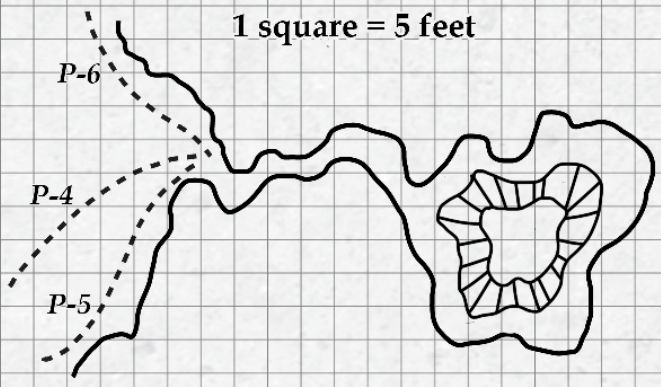


O-13 - THE HARVEST





O-15 THE FUGITIVES



occurs whilst the group is edging along a path barely 5 feet wide in places. The creatures are ragged things whose wings hang in long fleshy strips. They wear the skulls of seagulls and cormorants as ornaments and slip in and out of the mists as they attack. They attack in pairs, but are easily driven off, fleeing if two are slain or if all are injured for more than 25% of their hit points.

P4. The Chimney

A wicked climb rises up a soaring cliff face infested with overhangs and black drops. A narrow crevice provides a chimney for climbers to work their way up. Characters using this chimney must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to make the climb. A failure by 5 or more results in a fall of 1d6+12 x 10 feet to a narrow ledge below, dealing 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen. Upon striking that ledge, a character must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If that one fails, the character is unable to grab the ledge, falls off into the mists below, and is lost.

Midway up this climb stands the Chimney Shrine (**O14**). The Chimney continues on past the shrine to **O15** above. When approximately 200 feet below that area, the spirits that inhabit it attack the climbing characters. See **O14** for details.

P5. The Grim

A seemingly endless set of stone steps, passing countless tombs and mausoleums as well as hundreds of headless angel statues, climbs the nearly sheer Wall here. The climb is a toil made harder by the endlessly maddening noises on the wind and the sick feeling of vertigo that washes over anyone using the path. Characters walking this route must make a successful DC 15 Constitution save or gain a level of exhaustion.

P6. The Ridge

An impossible set of steps rises at angles that seem normal when used, but when viewed behind and ahead appear beyond vertical. At some point during the walk, one random character looks backward or forward and actually sees himself and the other party members on the route. The character who has been touched the most by the Beautiful is missing, and the other party members are weeping. However, currently with the character are all of his fellow party members, and none is weeping. The walk is maddening to use and dizzying, and those who walk this final stair must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save to avoid arriving at the summit chapel with an additional level of exhaustion from the mental stress.

O12. The Miracle Shrine

The pathway ends at a simple shrine to Mother Grace, this one taking the form of a well with a fresco behind it depicting the mother bathed in light. Beyond, two paths vanish upward into the mists above.

This is the shrine where Father Gromwell's miracle occurred. It does not show any signs of miracles or anything else unusual at first glance, but characters looking nearby and making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check see signs of scorching on some cobblestones, a few of which have even melted slightly. Characters looking at the melted stones and making a further successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can see images trapped within in miniature. One shows a man who is clearly Father Gromwell bathed in light, and another shows him as he enters an arched tunnel bathed in radiance and surrounded by death's-head moths.

Development: As long as at least one person who knew Father Gromwell from Wicken is present here (even Enoch Nettle from ***L3: Sea's End*** suffices), the **Nirvana** side trek at the end of this adventure is triggered. If no one who knew Gromwell is left, justification is less easy. Consider running it if the characters talk of Gromwell knowingly, or if they somehow mention the angel or if they give you some other reason from Gromwell to invite them into his personal heaven.

Unbidden Words and Deeds: Upon arriving here, one of the touched characters says, "Here then, is what might be, my child."

O13. The Harvest

A trio of wooden smokehouses is built on a flat-topped pinnacle of stone that rises next to the island's cliff here. From its top are sheer drops into the mists below on all sides. An arched bridge spans a gap between the path and the pinnacle, though the bridge itself is twisted and buckled horribly. The scent of smoke and blood chokes the air. Amongst the mists, several large, coarsely woven sacks hang suspended on thick chains from the buildings and from tall stone posts that appear to be used for butchering animals. The bottoms of the sacks are dark with blood, and the ground beneath each is stained with their drippings, and occasionally one of the sacks twitches slightly.

The sacks are actually the 5 locals taken from Uppertown in **Event 5** (Lettie, Rose, Magdal Shether, Constance Shether, and Millicent Maschtk). See **H1** below for details.

H1. The Pinnacle

The twisted stone footbridge is wrenched at an angle so that it stretches sideways over the gap, leaving only tooth-like jagged cobbles. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross the structure, and a failure by 5 or more causes a fall of 100 feet onto a saddle of rock between the main island and the pinnacle. Climbing back up is tough, requiring a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, as it traverses guano-covered cliffs full of empty nests.

The butcher stones are each almost 20 feet tall and stained with dried blood and signs of years of their use in butchering and draining animals. Large wooden buckets stand beside them to collect the blood. Each of these butcher stones currently holds a large fleshy-looking cocoon that dangles by the stones' own chains and hooks. From a distance, the cocoons look like sacks of some coarse material, but up close, they can be seen to be cocoons woven from some foul, fleshy filament.

Of the five locals hanging in these cocoons, only one, Constance Shether, is not currently implanted with a mantis-thing from Between egg (she is at the **X** directly east of **H2**). All are wrapped in the filthy, fleshy cocoons of the mantis-things. The four implanted locals are near death, the egg within them growing to near bursting, causing them to bleed profusely from their bodily orifices. Each of the locals other than Constance is unconscious at 0 hit points. Constance has 1 hit point and struggles frantically within her cocoon — which is noticeably smaller than the others, child-sized in fact. Her implantation was with a defective egg that was not viable, and her paralysis has since worn off. She struggles even more violently if she hears the characters, but the cocooning material muffles her mouth and prevents her from talking.

If the cocoons of the implanted locals are cut open, the disturbance causes the young mantis-thing to burst out, spraying its surroundings with blood, mantis-thing venom, and the jagged bones of the now-deceased host. The poison affects all creatures within 5 feet of such an explosive outburst as if they had been hit by a mantis-thing's proboscis attack. Applying a *greater* or *lesser restoration*, or a *heal* spell before opening a cocoon kills the embryonic mantis-thing and saves the victim from it bursting out of them. Likewise, if the characters lack such resources, carefully taking a cocoon down and placing it in the smokehouse for 2 rounds will also kill the embryonic creature without it hatching. The host will be affected by the smoke as well, but has a chance for survival if recovered and tended to quickly. A hatched larval mantis-thing is essentially helpless for several hours after hatching and can easily be dispatched by the characters.

If any of the implanted or hatching mantis-things are killed by any means, its corpse releases natural pheromones that immediately alert 2 **mantis-things from Between**† that are climbing about on the cliffs below the pinnacle. They arrive in 2 rounds and immediately attack anyone they find hoping to implant more eggs to replace any that have been destroyed.

H2. Smokehouses

The smokehouses are constructed of upright wooden planks and are full of heavy smoke that impairs breathing for anyone who enters. A character must make a DC 10 Constitution save immediately and for every succeeding 10 minutes, to avoid becoming choked by the smoke (poisoned for 1d3 rounds and for as long as the character remains in the smoke). The stench of applewood and scorched meat fills the air. Animal carcasses, mostly sheep but also a few pigs, hang herein, and characters spending more than 1 minute inside begin to feel the suffering of the creatures as they were hung up on the stones outside and had their throats cut. At this time, characters must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or be poisoned for 1d3 minutes after leaving the smokehouses. Characters eating any of the meat here suffer a similar effect, but it lasts for 1d3 hours on a failed save.

H3. The High Path

The bridge that led to this path has collapsed recently. The broken stubs of it are still visible at either end. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the bridges stone moorings were purposely pried loose to cause the collapse. If the characters can make it across the 15-foot gap or climb around to it from the southern path — which requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, with a failure by 5 or more resulting in the fall described at **H1** above — they can continue up this pathway.

Anyone searching the pathway with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check notes the recent tracks of many booted feet climbing in this direction at some time within the last few hours. It is not obvious from the tracks, but these were left by the Knights Occularis at **O15** who did not wish to be followed. They arrived on the island via *potions of flying*, and they intend to get back across this gorge with a clockwork ladder (see ***The Cyclopædia Infestarum***) that one of them carries and will place across the gap. Their plan is then to walk back to Big Skold and leave in a *folding boat* that they brought with them. They were not planning on the strange Between manifestations that have occurred.

O14. The Chimney Shrine

The spirits of three nest-hunters who fell while hunting for eggs long ago haunt the cliffs here. The spirits, now **specters**, are aware when climbers approach from below in the Chimney (**P4**). When the lead climber is within 200 feet of this area, the characters hear bloodcurdling screams and see three figures falling past, dropping to their death below. One round later those figures come flying back up, clearly undead, and attack those climbing on the cliffs to try to kill or dislodge them. The spectres fight until destroyed. If turned, they retreat to the cairn next to the shrine (see description below).

A huge cairn marks the midway point of the chimney climb. How it was constructed here on the face of this cliff is beyond imagining. Beside the cairn stands a simple shrine to Mother Grace surrounded by garlands of wild flowers and several corn dolls.

There are exactly as many corn dolls as there are characters. Each is immediately identifiable as having come from the very clothes that the characters are currently wearing by a scrap of clothing. The characters notice the frayed or torn edges of their own clothes at the same time as they notice the scraps, but have no idea how the rags got here. The face of each doll has been burnt away with one exception — the character who has been touched most closely by the Beautiful is different. That doll's face is intact, and it has an array of small shiny stones set as a glittering halo about the head.

O15. The Fugitives

The path ends at a narrow bridge of rock, which thrusts outward toward a spur of rock that rises to a jumble of naturally piled boulders that resemble a fortress more than a natural structure. An unmoving body lies at the base of this structure. It wears a bloody uniform of crimson tunic and silver buttons.

The bridge of natural stone is 3 feet wide and lacks any sort of rail. It is not a true bridge, so its top is not exactly flat or smooth and requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move across it at anything greater than half speed. A fall from this bridge results in a 1,000-foot plummet. The jumble of boulders on the spur forms a small tor 20 feet high. Its sides are steep but have many handholds (difficult terrain), though in some places where it is exceptionally near the edge of the spur, a fall from it could result in a 1,000-foot plummet as well.

After discovering the presence of the mantis-things, the squad of Knights Occularis has taken shelter here at this defensible location. There are 3 Prosecutor-Knights Occularis (**knights**) led by Captain Zavar, a **mage** with AC 17 with *mage armor* or 14 without due to *ring of protection*. The group is on high alert after experiencing the attacks of the mantis-things and keeps a sharp eye out on all the approaching paths. Having completed their mission of planting the *Between shackle* at **O16** above, the group now simply waits for it to be triggered so they can then return to the Capitol for promotion and rewards, but only Captain Zavar knows what is really going on.

Treasure: The folding boat is kept in Captain Zavar's possession. Captain Zavar has a *potion of gaseous form* and a *ring of protection +2* and 125 pp in coin. All of the knights have a Knights Occularis tunic and a silver holy symbol of Mother Grace (25 gp), plus 50 gp in coin.

O16. Ossuary Chapel

The impossible steps finally end as the top of the island is reached, your sweat forming a mist about you. Here a gale rips at a building bleached white by the weather. A vast skeleton of a whale has been made into a building, the immense ribs fortified with stones and other bones. An arched spine soars twenty feet above the top of the isle and arches toward a huge bleached skull, hanging from which is a sinewy bone on the end of which is a huge crimson lantern. The great skeleton has a stout wooden door at the end of the steps. From inside, a searing light pierces the gloom you stand in.

BETWEEN SHACKLE

Wondrous item, very rare

A *Between shackle* is a shackle made from flesh and muscle, with runes cut into the flesh. It is magically bound to a similar shackle, made at the time of its creation, which can be in any location. A *Between shackle* is not fixed to a foe, but when cast into the air within 120 feet of the intended recipient, the shackle disappears but marks its target. The marked creature does not have any knowledge of this, nor does it leave any magical aura or allow any sort of saving throw. The mark is visible, however, to the user who activated the shackle. The shackle is activated when the marked creature comes with 120 feet of any *gateway* to Between. At that moment, the marked creature is instantly drawn to the location of the shackle's twin (no save) and held as though by *dimensional shackles*.

Within the chapel, the Beautiful is extending her *gateway* from Between into the real world. It hangs like a dark sphere waiting to drop, a sphere she is sure will rip a permanent hole from Between into reality and begin a flood. Although she is close to the solution to her plan, she is still wrong; a single hole is not enough. No matter how large she makes it, is not enough to do what she wishes. She will, however, soon discover her true answer.

The Beautiful is currently extremely distracted. She did not notice when some hours earlier a small group of Knights Occularis led by Captain Zavan managed to sneak within 120 feet of her and mark her with a *Between shackle* (see Sidebox). Zavan was quite disappointed that the shackle did not immediately activate. To all intents and purposes, it appears that the Beautiful is currently working on a *gateway* to Between through which that realm has already begun to seep. The truth of the matter, though, is that the Beautiful is working on a *gateway* to the mundane world because the whole of Ossuary is already in Between itself. This transition finished occurring shortly after the knights' arrival, so the angel actually labours on a *gateway* while still remaining in Between — a *gateway* that is not yet open but that is coming close to being so. Disappointed and not fully understanding, Zavan and the knights retreated back to **O15** to await the activation of the shackle that Zavan feels should be happening at any time now.

Further evidence of the Beautiful's distraction, and indeed obsession, with her work, is that she has not noticed that very close by in the mists lurks a powerful Between vampire, a terrible creature calling herself Threnody who is capable of bringing a great blight to the lands of the mundane world. Threnody is bloated with a sickening brood of young that she intends to spread like a plague on the unsuspecting world beyond, while she takes care of some of her own "unfinished business" (detailed in ***L8: Apotheosis***). The arrival of the characters actually triggers her escape from Between into their reality, and propels the adventure forward into its last two chapters.

The approach to the chapel is through a door at the base of the whale's tail. The door is large and stoutly constructed but is not locked. If the characters try to enter the chapel from any other side, they find it impossible to do so. The opening at the head of the great skeletal structure is completely engulfed in an intense radiance as a manifestation of the powers that the Beautiful is calling to bear within. No force penetrates this radiance, and attempts to see through require a DC 16 Constitution save to avoid being blinded for 1d6 hours. Touching the searing light causes 1d6 points of fire damage in the first round (no save), 2d6 in the second, 4d6 in the third, 8d6 in the fourth, 16d6 in the fifth, and so on. Resistance to fire functions normally, but immunity to fire does not entirely prevent the damage from this unnatural source of searing energy — the very energy that the Beautiful will be using to cleanse the world. Immunity to fire only provides fire resistance. While helpful, even that protection would not allow someone to withstand the effects of the radiance for very long.

Nothing occurs as long as the characters remain outside the chapel, but as soon as they go in, read the following description.

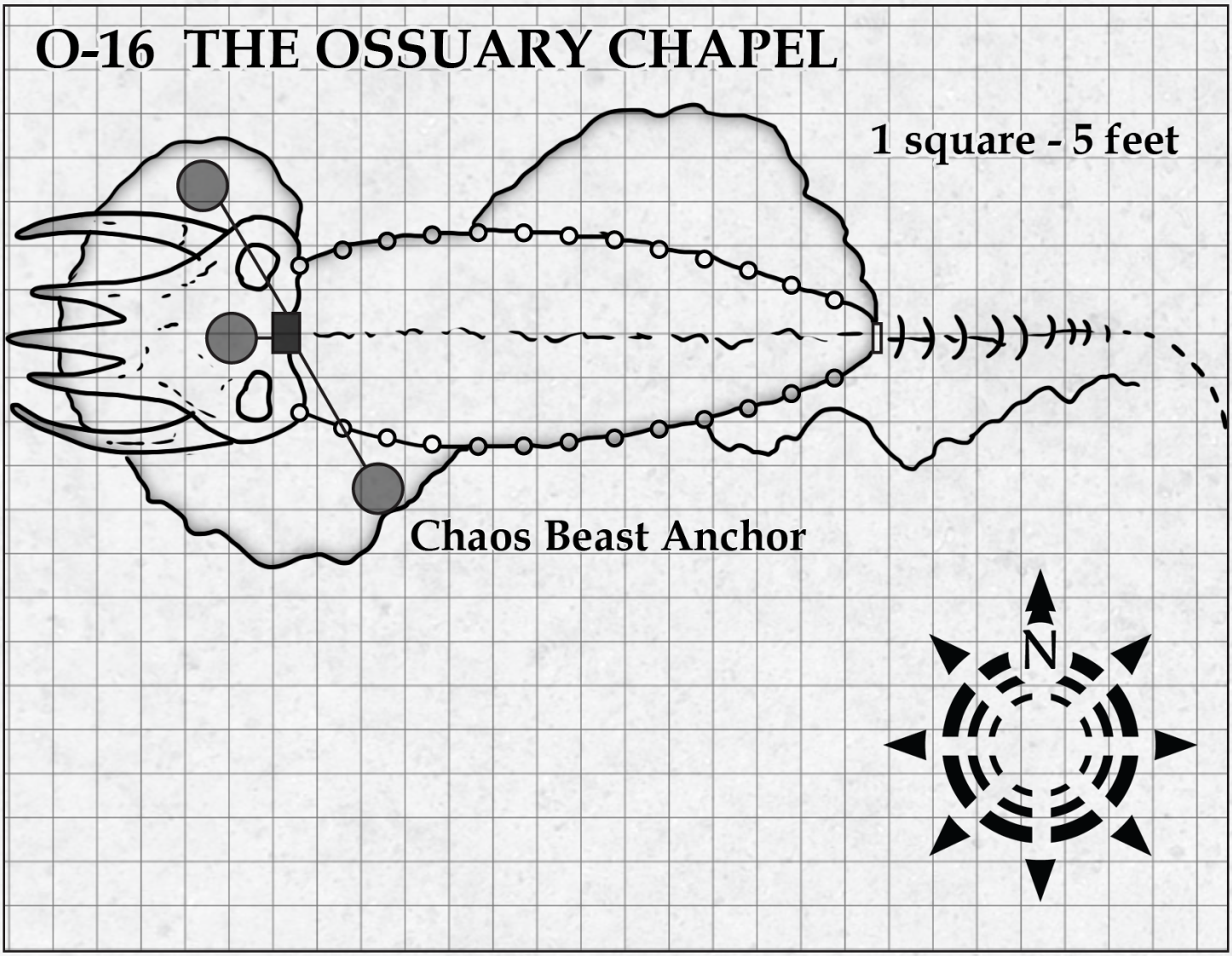
> The inside of the chapel is madness. An intense light boils across the interior, pushing and distending it so that at its far end it appears about to burst. The chapel's walls and skeletal support ribs are swollen and stretched, disturbing to look at as they create some angles that simply don't seem possible and cause your eyes to slide off of them. At the far end of the chapel, bathed in light like a halo glowing with the intensity of a dozen suns, is a figure, an angel holding a white scythe. Hanging in the air above her is a black sphere that greedily absorbs the light and throbs and hums as it slowly expands, growing in twitches and spurts. A great feeling of weight exudes from the sphere, and you somehow know that it is both very heavy and very close to bursting the bonds of reality with its growing pressure. All of that you take in over the span of a heartbeat, because your attention is immediately arrested again by the angelic figure. For even as you enter, she turns.

Despite her distraction as noted previously, the **Beautiful**† has been well aware of the characters' progress because of the carnage they have caused to her plan as they approached. Therefore, when they arrive at **O16**, the Beautiful is aware of their arrival even if she cannot see them. However, the Beautiful is not the only presence within the chapel. Clinging to the shadows and hiding within the impossible angles created by the swelling and distortion of the walls (providing total concealment), the **Between vampire**† **Threnody** lurks behind and above the door by which the characters enter. Statistics are not provided for these two occupants here, as the characters do not actually have the chance to interact with them beyond the briefest of glimpses.

Development: With the arrival of the characters, all hell breaks loose in the chapel. The presence of the characters momentarily draws the Beautiful's attention away from the ever-thinning lining of reality that she is working away at, and the Between vampire takes advantage of the diversion to make her own move. Even as the Beautiful begins to turn, the characters catch a brief flicker of a sinewy thing of darkness and loathing that launches itself from somewhere over their shoulders and tears across the chapel at a terrific speed to slam into the great, heavy sphere of reality-stretching mass. The rush of the thing and the force with which it strikes the Beautiful's handiwork rips through the thinned edge of reality and tears open the *gateway* at last, through which can be seen the vague outlines of ships and buildings and a blue sky — beyond the hole lies the characters' own reality! The interior of the chapel is suddenly torn by gale force winds as all the air seems to be sucked through the tear in reality after the swooping shape. There is a moment of flickering movement so fast as to almost seem like no movement at all, but it gives the impression that the angel reacted instantly to the swooping shape and reached a hand forward to grasp it as it burst through the hole in order to prevent its flight beyond. However, even as that occurred, a magical rune formed of light flashed in the air before the angel just as quickly, and a manacle of shining steel appeared and locked around the wrist of the hand that she extended after the dark shape, stalling her own grasping attempt and allowing the dark form to escape. The Beautiful turns toward the character that she has touched most strongly and says, "Oh, my poor sweet child. Stop it, stop the creature before it births and ends everything!" Then she gives out a single sob and is gone, disappearing in an instant, the shining steel manacle firmly upon her wrist.

All of the events above occurred in a single eye-blink, and were more vague impressions left on the minds of the witnessing characters than a recognizable sequence of events. However, sharp characters may have actually been able to notice some additional details. Allow each character to make a single Wisdom (Perception) check and a single Wisdom (Insight) check. The results of the checks are provided on the tables below. A check reveals not only its own DC, but the results of the lower DCs as well.

Perception DC	Result
8	The shadow thing that swooped by was monstrous of form and seemed strangely bloated.
12	The bloated shadow creature flew on ragged wings and bore an eyeless face. Despite giving the impression of being bloated, it was actually only distended in the area of its abdomen as though carrying a vast brood of young waiting to be birthed.
16	The magical rune that appeared with the manacle lingered long enough to remember its shape. A successful DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the rune as related to some sort of dimensional anchoring.
18	Just before the angel's disappearance, you caught a glimpse of a wispy form standing nearby watching her. It was the spectral form of the Occularis paladin Rachel Birch. However, even as the angel disappeared, with her free hand she reached out and grasped the insubstantial figure of the paladin. Birch had only a moment to form an expression of sudden horror upon her face before both she and the angel were gone.



Perception DC	Result
20	At the instant the angel disappeared, a tiny pinhole of orange light appeared behind her. Somehow, through this pinhole you catch a glimpse of a room. Three men stand there in crimson tunics with silver buttons, like military uniforms. Between them stands a cage that glows with a reddish light. Within the cage hangs a single manacle, the perfect match of the one you saw appear on the angel's wrist just before she disappeared.
22	The angel's form appears within the cage, and the men turn to gloat just as the pinhole of light is gone. The most subtle of hints of another ephemeral figure within the cage with the angel is vaguely present.

Insifght DC	Result
15	You get the impression of something old and terrible seeking to give long-awaited birth to a swarm of utter destruction. Somehow, you feel them kick inside you, smell their hunger, and feel their imminent, terrible arrival.
20	You feel a sense of recognition as a dark evil rushes past you, an old foulness that has no place in the world you envision. You are about to retrieve it before it is beyond reach when suddenly a flare of magic brings a new presence to your awareness — a familiar presence of rigidity and order with an under-tone of madness and unfathomable anger. You glimpse a face: It is the paladin woman, Birch. She has caused this.
25	Birch is here. Her will is such that she returns from beyond the grave to fulfil her obsession … and that of her master.

Ad Hoc XP Award: There is little for the characters to do in this encounter other than to witness events and learn from them. Award the party 200 XP for each item of information they discovered from the tables above.

Event 11: The Herald at the Threshold

The door to reality is formed on the far side of the chapel, shown by the black square on the map. As soon as the Between vampire passes through the *gateway*, it begins to close, and in 2 minutes will reseal. If after 2 minutes the characters are still on the Between side of the *gateway*, the characters are lost in Between. Their quest is at an end. It is up to you if they ever find a way out again. Stress the urgency of the closing *gateway* and the knowledge that they have found no other way off Ossuary since the mists first descended.

However, if they pass through the gateway, the following scene greets them.

> Beyond is sky — blue sky! Behind it, in the wan spring light, the city spreads, a celebration of the mundane, with her crowded streets and dark smog. You see Town Bridge far off, staring across the waters at Festival, and away south the chaos of Toiltown and the mounting turmoil of the Jumble, while the mountainous Capitol glowers over all. Behind you, the chapel is still far from normal. In fact, a great distended mass suddenly lashes forth threatening to burst. It is anchored to three points in the walls and ceiling by fleshy tendrils, which in turn extend from revolting masses of roiling flesh that boil and churn and become a single creature, a madness that has fluting trumpets that tear out a frightful metallic grating. Somehow, though it was behind you, it squats in front of the very exit before you.

The creature the Beautiful has birthed this time through her gate-crafting is not a chaos beast, but something similar, a creature drawn from the essence of 3 chaos beasts that she physically incorporated into her gateway construction. She calls the thing the **Herald at the Threshold**†. Sadly, without her presence, the anchor point created by the herald actually is what is healing the rip in reality's fabric. If the herald still lives in 2 minutes' time, the tear will be completely gone, leaving Ossuary and everyone on it forever trapped in Between (see **Silent Isle** in **Concluding the Adventure**). However, if the herald is slain, the tear expands outward, with effects detailed under **Judgement Day** in **Concluding the Adventure**.

The characters may decide to fight only long enough to rush past the herald and escape, immediately returning to the mundane world. However, before they do so, at least a reminder is warranted that nearly 80 souls still remain in the village below waiting for the characters to deliver them from danger.

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters manage to escape Between they conclude the adventure, but have two threads to follow — the mysterious shadowy creature the angel warned them to stop, and the Knights Occularis apparently having trapped the Beautiful. These events unfold in the penultimate adventure in the adventure path, ***L8: Apotheosis***. However, of more immediate concern is the isle of Ossuary. A mundane version of it still exists in the city, but all of its occupants were taken to the warped Between version. Is the mundane version now empty of people or have the characters' saved everyone by risking everything?

Regardless of the ending, those touched by the Beautiful know one thing: the bloated creature that tore through into the world is in the city somewhere nesting. They don't know how, but they are certain that in a few days she will birth and the brood that is unleashed will be vast, hungry, and possibly unstoppable. If that birth occurs, what may be left of the city might not be worth saving.

Judgment Day

If the characters kill the herald in time, its anchors vanish and whip back, lashing outward. As the characters duck for cover, the distended swelling of the chapel explodes out and everything fades to black. As the characters awaken, read or paraphrase the following description

> A steady rain falls onto you, the pyrebeetle lights of the city beyond twinkling feebly. "They're alive, thank the Mother!" says a voice nearby. You sit up, aching everywhere. A circle of people has gathered around you holding pyrebeetle lanterns and an assortment of tools and farm implements as weapons. The villagers of Ossuary have come looking for you. One of them begins to sob as you and your friends begin to rouse from unconsciousness.

The entire island has been hurled back into reality. If the characters ask what happened back at the village, they are told that the mist suddenly blew away, and a sound like the Carriage of Lucifer tore the sky, then suddenly all was normal again. The villagers went to look for the characters and found them only a short distance away here at the Ossuary Chapel.

The isle is back to normal now, and the village and a warm welcome are only a few hundred feet below. The characters have saved the village of Ossuary. Consider what reward is appropriate for them — friendships, tales of their heroism, a stipend from the church with pressure applied from the Benefactor, or all of these. The events at Ossuary have worked out well, but the characters' trouble is about to begin in earnest.

XP Award: Reward the characters with a total of 5000 XP for saving the villagers at their own risk, whether they realised they were doing it or not.

Silent Isle

If the characters fail to kill the herald in time or simply flee through the gateway and leave the isle behind, the tear vanishes, leaving only the scent of sweat and sugar. They stand upon the pinnacle of benighted Ossuary back in their own world. Below, the island extends in all its mundane normality, the village barely a few hundred feet below. However, when they get there, the characters find the place deserted, and a shocking truth — the place looks as if people were just there. The banners and plates and glasses of the wedding feast still lie by the tables, but everyone has gone, never to return.

Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Seven: Silence and Guillotines

The characters become embroiled briefly in events in the revolution on their way to Ossuary, but then a reprieve from the politics of the city descends upon them as they are taken into Between. When they leave, the characters should be aware of a palpable sense of fear on the streets; there is a wariness as neighbour accuses neighbour. This is at its worst in Toiltown, the heart of the revolution and the setting of the next adventure.

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Seven: Love

With several read-aloud texts, the voice of the Beautiful, and her appearance in the final scene of this adventure brings the angel front and centre. However, you may wish to embellish the closing of this adventure path with more madness for the characters most intimate with the Beautiful, and perhaps even have other adventurers affected as well now. Strange dreams plague the affected characters. They awake with the memory of vivid smells, sounds, and other sensations, and upon waking find scratches on doors or smears of blood as if something from their dreams is stalking them.

My Benfactor Appendix

Appendix A: Seasons in the Blight— Strange Showers

The month of Sow (late March — late April) arrives, and with it the fogs of the Canker, the buds of spring, and the delicate showers of the changing seasons. But these spring showers and billowing Canker are more than the normal seen this time of year. They are the mists of Between seeping through to the mundane world. They give the cleansing showers an oily sheen and taste (even more so than usual), and it seems that their touch upon the matted turf of winter has an almost instantaneous effect of greening and bloom. This should seem unnatural in its fecundity. It's as if things are *too much* in bloom: colours appear in rich hues — perhaps even appearing over-ripe on their richness, and the smell of fresh grass and new blooms brings with it the underlying hint of spoilage and decay.

A DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check is able to identify that something unnatural is affecting the spring bloom. A DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) can determine that the source is of extraplanar origin. If either check is successful, the characters will also detect that the effects of the Between's essence is manifesting in the spring foliage. And characters who have been touched by the Beautiful can easily discern that the weather and plant life are a manifestation and precursor of the coming bloom of the Beautiful as the Beautiful's plans finally approach their fulfilment.



Nirvana — A Side Trek

If any of the characters is from Wicken when they come upon the Miracle Chapel (area **O12** in **Part 4** of ***L7: My Benefactor***), they attract the attention of Father Gromwell† in his paradise. Father Gromwell wanders his own heavenly garden, his thoughts happy and peaceful, his life content at long last. To him he has truly arrived in Heaven, and he expects and intends to remain here for all time. However, in Between, thoughts drift and grope like a dog scenting the air, and unbidden the characters' arrival at the shrine has awakened Gromwell's mind and he turns his attention toward his old friends. Read the following.

> The shrine suddenly glows with an ethereal radiance. The scent of roses drifts on a slight breeze and momentarily, the mists seem to draw back. The fresco of Mother Grace on the shrine changes, dissolving into a stairwell up a dark stony tunnel, and becomes real. A warm, flower-laden scent wafting down its expanse. At the far end of the tunnel, perhaps a hundred feet away, beckons soft daylight.

Father Gromwell† has truly found his own paradise, a perpetual warm garden of plenty where companions flitter in and out of his presence. Gromwell's companions are figments of his imagination given flesh. For the purposes of statistics they are all **commoners**, and while they are in effect playthings of the old priest, he has no desire to see them killed — they are his friends. Inside Between they are real and react like living people, but once away from Between they fade to nothingness in a few minutes. These figments are variously kind-faced folk, possibly wives and children who play unseen in the distance, and other peasants, all of whom know and love Gromwell. He wants for nothing here; he has fine wine and fresh bread, summer fruits, and the sun on his back. And it will last as long as he does, longer perhaps.

If the characters venture into the tunnel, they arrive at the following scene. If not, a minute after the glow begins, the doorway fades. Perhaps Gromwell has drifted away to attend to his garden and has other thoughts to occupy him.

> The tunnel ends at a garden, a garden of almost impossible beauty. A heavy scent of honey drifts across the garden, and the heady smell of lavender. A hazy sun hangs above the garden, which is a cornucopia of colours and smells and sound. Insects buzz and bees hum across the warm air. You glimpse statues and walls and doorways in the garden, as well as water; water abounds in this place, streams flow beneath arched bridges and tumble into ponds, waterfalls cascade down distant cliffs, and beyond, a forest rises.

The encounter with Father Gromwell occurs in his garden. He should appear suddenly, wandering through an avenue of trees or a hedge-lined path. Gromwell is an old man with a long grey beard who wears a simple smock. He leans on a long staff and walks with a shambling gait, perhaps crippled. Gromwell sees others in his garden that visitors do not, and he appears to be talking to himself. He recognizes the characters and greets them warmly, welcoming them to Paradise.

If the characters respond peacefully, they are fed, given simple bread, fresh olives, and fruits, as well as very fine wine. Gromwell says that such fare is here when he desires it with but a thought and that he wants for nothing here — nothing. It is possible that the conversation is perfectly cordial. Gromwell is aware of the Beautiful's overall plan and is happy to share it, so you can use this as an opportunity to fill the characters in on any details that they may have missed. They should definitely come to understand the full gravity of what the Beautiful is doing at the pinnacle of Ossuary.

If the characters state that they intend to stop the Beautiful or retrieve Gromwell from his paradise, he argues against it. He uses reason and passion to sway the characters from such a course of action, trying to convince them to think of all the miserable souls of Castorhage whom they will be condemning to a lifetime of continued torment and suffering. Use his answers provided below to build his arguments. He becomes more and more impassioned as the debate continues until he is yelling in a holy fervour. If the characters attempt to physically remove him from the garden, attack him, or turn to leave after giving him the impression that they intend to stop the Beautiful, he becomes suddenly very quiet, his face sagging into intense sorrow. He speaks, barely above a whisper as he says, "Aid me my friends." As he does, 2 of his figments appear in full manifestation as a **chimera** and a **manticore**. They both immediately attack, as does **Father Gromwell**†.

Tactics: Father Gromwell attacks to do lethal damage and uses his spells to the best of his ability. However, any time one of the characters is reduced below 0 hp, he pauses in his actions to stabilize him. While he does so, as a bonus action, he calls upon the remaining characters to "See reason and desist this pointless violence!" He does these each time one of the characters falls. If the characters stand down, he will too, though he asks them if they will persist in their insistence of stopping the Beautiful or otherwise thwarting Gromwell (whatever the reason was that the fight started to begin with) and his Wisdom (Insight) may detect any falsehood. As long as he fears that the characters are going to try to remove him from Paradise or stop the Beautiful, he continues to attack until all are incapacitated. While Gromwell is fairly merciful as a fighter, his figment companions are no such thing. The chimera and manticore always fight to kill. However, they obey any commands from Gromwell. If Father Gromwell is killed or knocked unconscious, the figments immediately disappear. Any damage they inflicted remains, however.

Development: Assuming the encounter does not devolve into combat, the characters may have several questions, and Gromwell is willing to entertain their queries. Answers to some potential ones given below. Beyond these, use your judgment as to what he does or does not know. Remember, he has not been privy to all of the Beautiful's thoughts or actions and all of his efforts were dedicated to bring about a paradise on earth, so all of his knowledge and answers will be couched in such terms.

Where are we?

"This is Heaven, or at least heaven as I envision it. It was gifted to me by the angel Beautiful for my efforts in making her dream of a paradise for all a reality. Everyone who believes can enjoy this same blessing."

Can you live forever here?

"Who wants to live forever? Surely that's a curse, but to live every day here, that's a blessing, a blessing from the Holy Mother."

Why do you talk to imaginary friends?

"I see my friends here; they are real to me. I touch them, smell them, hear them, laugh with them. They may be phantoms to you, but you are not yet blessed."

Your angelic friend hangs around with some very evil people.

"She does not choose who her joy touches, or what that joy may bring. I agree with you, the Panacea are sick and twisted, perhaps they too will be cleansed when the city is purged. Perhaps they will simply be purged as their sin dictates. Such is not for me to know, but the righteous and the downtrodden shall at last be granted paradise. That is for me to know and is my one true goal — to share the blessings that I have received with all. The angel Beautiful will make that happen."

Your angel is aiming to end the world.

"End? No, not to end it but to clean it, clean it of sickness. Can you look me in the eye and say that what thrives here is not joy, not goodness, not the purity of creation? Leave her to her work and let her succeed. The people of Castorhage and indeed the entire world have suffered enough. Let them finally see their reward and be free of their suffering."

How can you trust her?

"This place is a house of cards waiting for a breath of wind to blow it away. I do trust her; she gave me this place, and even if it lasts only a moment longer, I have lived in paradise. The alternative is no worse than where I was. I will trust in her and hope her dream can live on for a thousand, thousand years."

So how did you learn about her?

"Through the codex of Brother Bartholomew. Where he learnt it, I cannot tell. Perhaps she has always been near. I knew what I had to do to call her, and on that jagged isle in the Unsea I succeeded. She brought me back to my own world, but what I showed her sickened her. At that moment she vowed that the world would not spoil her own, and at that very moment her mind was made up: Her land was the one that must flower, not the sick place we live in."

Wicken is destroyed, and everyone in it dead.

"Then I weep for them, but soon the sick who caused that place to crumble will be burned, and their evil with them. It is always the righteous and the weak who have paid for the sins of the wicked. I would have it that such were no more. There is no room for anger in her world, only joy and creation and Between."

No matter what you say, the blood of Wicken, your own parishioners, is on your hands.

"My hands? No, my hands are clean. I sought and seek only peace and paradise. The blood of those good folk stains the hands of those who tried to pervert what I have brought into the world, the new life to bring new hope."

At the conclusion of the questioning (or when you feel like Gromwell has said enough), he closes with, "Now wander on pilgrims. She has blessed you in your holy journey. I can see her touch upon you in your eyes and words. Do not be afraid, she will take you with her. You are among the pure and righteous for whom the world shall be cleansed. Let her succeed; receive your paradise. You know it is the right thing to do."

Unbidden Words and Deeds: Regardless of the outcome with Father Gromwell, the most strongly touched character stares upward as the party is leaving Gromwell's paradise and says, "See the weight of emotion above? It hangs like a lodestone of misery and false hope. Such a heavy weight may tear a wound such that its flow cannot be staunched."

XP Award: Even if the characters did not battle Father Gromwell, award them 5,000 XP for the interaction with him.

Betrayal — Enoch Nettle and Father Gromwell

If the characters have Enoch Nettle along with them, there is the possibility that he might try to attack Gromwell as well. Enoch loved the old man and cannot understand the betrayal he feels the old man has made against the village. The argument of Gromwell's life in a private heaven against the loss of the villagers may be one that sparks debate between your players or may be an easy one for them to side with, but Nettle is revolted by Gromwell's selfishness and his association with the angel. He quickly becomes overtly hostile, and if the characters are not looking to fight with Father Gromwell, they may find themselves defending the old man from Nettle even if they side with Nettle philosophically and/or morally. It could, at the least, make for some very interesting roleplay at the table.

Concluding the Side Trek

When the characters are ready to leave, as long as Father Gromwell still lives, they can make their way back down the tunnel to the shrine at **O12**. Upon emerging, the tunnel disappears, and the shrine reverts to its old form, leaving no trace of their encounter behind. If the characters have dragged Father Gromwell with them, the paradise collapses the moment he leaves it and is permanently destroyed. Father Gromwell (if conscious) immediately becomes catatonic with shock and anguish. He permanently has the dazed condition and cannot be cured unless you deem some method by which the characters can achieve his recovery.

If the characters kill Father Gromwell in battle, his paradise immediately begins to unmake itself. The garden tips and churns, paroxysms spasming through the earth underneath. The sky falls in blazing comet trails, and the whole land begins to dissolve. Anyone in the paradise when this occurs must make a DC 20 Wisdom save or suddenly awake outside the shrine, in a stunned condition. The individual can make a new Wisdom save each round to overcome the condition, or it wears off on its own after 2 minutes. Characters that make their initial save also suddenly wake outside the shrine as if they had been daydreaming on their feet, but they find that something has come from the other side along with them, a **glabrezu** demon.

This horrific creature has appeared through the power of all the filth and rot of the city that so revolted Father Gromwell and inspired his devotion to the Beautiful. The creature drips from the mist of the Between Ossuary and attacks the characters, fighting until killed, at which time it dissolves into the mists once more.

A Delicate Situation

Running this encounter is tricky. Gromwell is responsible (at least inadvertently) for the end of Wicken, the possible death of other characters, and the disappearance of the villagers, not to mention — possibly — the end of all things. How the characters react to these facts is therefore difficult to predict, but remember this: Gromwell is in his own heaven; he does not apologize. If confronted with the fallout of his actions, he responds that he did not burn Wicken and adds that the evil men who did so are going to be cleansed when Heaven is finally opened up in the world by the angel Beautiful. He does not grow offended by this line of questioning, but does not back down from his firm belief in what he has done and why.



L8: Apotheosis

By Richard Pett



Introduction

In truth, ***Apotheosis*** might be described as two adventures — ***Apotheosis*** and ***Threnody***. The temptation to split the adventure into two is strong, but not practical. The characters should have full choice now as to what to do. They can, if they so wish, entirely ignore the threat of the Between vampire, and await the chilling consequences. Or they could momentarily turn their backs on the Beautiful — as she herself requested — and seek out Threnody with the urgency required to destroy her. This choice and its potential consequences makes for an interesting start to the adventure.

Media Inspirations Behind L8: Apotheosis

China Miéville's masterful vision *Perdido Street Station* is the inspiration behind this adventure. If you haven't read it yet, I envy you. From the vile slakemoth to the dingy and depressing streets of New Crobuzon, it is a fantastic book, and exploring it for the first time is a true joy. The madness of *Perdido Street Station* is the primary inspiration here.

Adventure Synopsis

She is his.

At last, **Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage** has his muse, his inspiration, his joy. Once she is in hand, he instantly sets her to work, exchanging mistakes for pain and disobedience for cuts. He lacerates the Beautiful, keeping her welded into his *Between shackle*. During the first night, she learns to obey and to create for her new master, and learns the risk of not doing so. She slowly gains his trust as she begins to whisper into the soul of the one whom she has touched alone in his group — Rachel Birch. Even as she is creating a paradise for Thornrage, she is plotting his suffering.

Finally taken apart by the Beautiful, the mind of Rachel Birch is a shattered thing, a thing that obeys yet hates, rebels yet suffers, dreams and loses sanity. Birch gathers secrets for the Beautiful, secrets that only the Occularis know about the Between, about the three weakest points of the Levee that holds the two places apart, the places where the wall is at its thinnest. The Beautiful prepares for her day of liberation with only one fear — the presence of the Between vampire that has followed her into the city at this late hour.

Thornrage sets about building his own Ivory Tower, convinced his apotheosis is coming, with his own Nirvana, a demented image of his maleness given flesh and blood. He is dizzy with power and possibility. Now barely a few hours into his elation, he is growing bolder and hungrier. He twists the blade deeper into the angel's flesh and makes her weave greater dreams, and give his darkest desires flesh, his deepest nightmares obedience and form. In his Ivory Tower, a select few of his followers worry for their leader, while the others join in and wallow in lusts given breath. Soon, however, his prisoner escapes and begins to unmake and punish what she has been forced to do.

His sponsors are few, but crave their share of the power. Thornrage intends to oblige only slowly, his principal backers first, then his allies and his protégées. Foremost amongst these sponsors is His Grace the Master of Lanterns **Justice Blackbriar**†, obsessive explorer of the Between and collector of Between animals. Blackbriar has been Thornrage's closest ally in this whole affair, and now becomes its first beneficiary. His menagerie begins to groan with exotic pets and animals. He is the possible weak link that provides the characters with a chance to locate the Knights Occularis, either through their contact **Lord Benedict Morel**† or through other subtler means.

The homes of Justices are not easy to find, and no one knows where Blackbriar's is. Morel highlights three potential people who would wish Blackbriar ill and might have such information. He leaves the characters free rein to speak to them, or force them to help. Then they can locate the Justice's home and question him, either by gaining his trust or by forcing out the truth. Mingling with enemies of Justices is dangerous, however, and all three have powerful allies and suspicious minds. They all also share a desire to see Blackbriar out of the way. The characters can mingle with the backstabbing aristocrats of the city in a variety of ways before learning the location of the Justice's mansion high on the ramparts of the Capitol. This place teems with broken Between creatures and golems. Blackbriar does not keep servants; he dares not, but his guards are twisted and tough enough potentially to thwart the characters. If they capture him, Blackbriar soon confesses that he has seen Thornrage's Ivory Tower, and has a *fleshkey*† that enables access to it. Securing the key, the characters venture into the madness left by the Beautiful and the lusts of a crooked man given flesh.

Meanwhile in the slums of the city, the other prepares her nest, ready for the birthing of a new brood.

She calls herself **Threnody**, and Threnody is hungry. A **Between vampire**† does not just take the lifeblood from a victim: they take everything, devouring the mind, the memories and the talents of their victims until they become bloated and monstrous. Most, thankfully, go mad and crawl into the dark to suffer. Threnody does not; she is ready to birth and slithers into the night to gather hosts for her brood. In Toiltown, she grows and lays her eggs into the warm flesh of those who will serve as the first meal of her thousand children. Threnody slips into the slums and begins, gathering hosts and stealing memories and loves and anger and lusts as she does so. Seeking a strong cover for her brood, after testing and tasting two accomplices of a petty street gang, she settles upon the mind of the most powerful local crime lord Uriah Strange, leader of the Renders. Devouring his soul and mind, she embarks upon an orgy of flesh, gathering hundreds to form the hosts of her children. And as she gathers, so she reaps, sending messages to confuse the followers and allies of Strange, weaving a web of deceit to hide her new brood behind. Strange's closest allies are devoured or dominated, and the rest left leaderless, their suspicions growing stronger by the day. Even as Threnody stirs and steals and feasts, her touch festers into a sickness from Between, a misery that creates, not destroys, a pestilence that hungers and changes, rather than slays. They call the sickness the *mocking plague* as it distorts its victim's humanity. It rips their faces into mocking grins and sick, distended smiles, when it leaves them with flesh at all. In three days, her brood will birth, and if they do, a plague of undeath that wears sickness as its skin will infect the city.

Hiding in the shadows lurk the **Fetch**†, fearful of the legend that has slipped between reflections into the city. The End of Days is upon them some say, and they prepare for the End of All Things. A few of their number keep the story alive about the warm bloods who will stop her, offering succour and help, even though they know it might be refused. They send an ambassador — a **vampire** by the name of **Ambergris** — to advise the warm bloods about the coming pestilence, a pestilence that threatens everything, living and dead. A Pestilence that began in Render, a focal point of several deaths attributed to a creature they are calling the Hungry Mother. Yet does this unwanted ambassador help or hindered? Do the characters waste time with the Fetch when they should be finding the mother of all? Do the characters abandon this part of the quest entirely and abandon Toiltown to its fate?

Jacob Moil, the charismatic anarchist and occasional reluctant ally of Strange, has posted an associate he trusts to watch a butcher's shop in an obscure corner of Toiltown called Render, a place where occurred the first appearance of a creature they call the Hungry Mother — a creature that

has several deaths attributed to it. It is also the location of the first case of the mocking plague.

The Thieves Guild also knows that something terrible is happening in Toiltown, and **Eleanor Shank**† learns quickly what it might be, and where it came from. Can she persuade the characters to act? Does she need to, or is she wasting her time?

It is a time for difficult choices.

The problem is that whichever way they go, the characters are facing an enemy that may grow stronger by the day. Whom do they deal with first? Angel or vampire? Regardless of their choice, the Between vampire comes looking for them if they choose to ignore her, comes tracking their mortal scent back to them to find her way to the Beautiful and, she hopes, to enslave her and her many doorways through Between.

And as they choose, the Beautiful waits for the characters to enter the Ivory Tower of Thornrage and give her the chance she has been waiting for — to slip away and end this place once and for all. At last, she understands her connection with them: as pawns in her game, divine help perhaps, but help nonetheless. Utopia awaits, and maybe she'll share it with them.

Eleanor Shank

Is she friend or foe, lover, or corpse?



Part One: The Death

Ideally, at least a week or two pass after the events in ***L7: My Benefactor*** while the characters try to sort out their next move. The weather is stormy, with many days and nights of hard rains and damaging winds. Whilst they have few financial rewards from the previous adventure, the characters may need the time to rest up, re-equip and renew acquaintances before beginning to prowl the city for leads. Once the time-limited adventure with Threnody starts, there is precious little time for rest.

When the players are ready, the rains stop, the sun beats down with unbearable humidity, and this adventure begins with the tolling of bells all across the city at dawn. Already, huge numbers of birds crowd the gutters and gables high above the streets, and behind them, barely visible in the glare above, are the gable spiders, weaving their great nests. Below, the last of the winter's salted meats is being consumed, along with anything that burrowed into it, and costermongers discover that mildew is beginning to ruin their wares as rot sets into the grain bins. The bells spell a different tune, however — a plague has come to Toiltown, a plague like no other. The streets are full of rumour and wild tales. Characters making a successful Charisma check to gather information hear the following tales (both for the DC of the roll and any below it that you choose to share).

Word on the Street

DC	Result
5	A pestilence has come to the city. This new death is called the mocking plague for it takes anyone and sometimes does not merely kill them. At present, it exists only in parts of Toiltown, but who knows how long before it spreads.
10	The mocking plague came from nowhere in the past few days. Some say the Royal Family or the golem-stitchers delivered it into the poorest part of the city. Others claim the Fetch brought it in.
15	Many say that the plague has come at the same time as a thing of nightmares, a legend grown in Toiltown in the past few days called the Hungry Mother, a gargoyle of vast dark size that howls with a brood of young in her belly. The creature first appeared in a corner of Toiltown called Render but a few days ago. They are saying it takes children from cribs and old men from their beds.
20	The Fetch tell a different tale, and those who hunt undead are full of wild stories about a coming death, a herald of pestilence, a bringer of plagues that has slipped into the world. The ghouls that have been questioned claim the Fetch are going to ground, heading deep into Underneath to wait for the plague to burn out when all the warm-bloods are dead.
30	This is no earthly plague. The scholars are saying it is a death of Between, and no death in truth, for those afflicted sometimes become changed, freakish horrors.

One Cause, Two Ambassadors

The characters are contacted by two messengers, one they know and one they do not. The first, **Lord Benedict Morel**, warns of the rumours he has heard about His Grace the Master of Lanterns **Justice Blackbriar**, and stories he has heard of his association with the Knights Occularis. He has secured a way into the Capitol for the characters and a trio of names of people who wish Blackbriar ill and may, therefore, be able to help find him. He wishes them to act immediately.

The second ambassador is **Ambergris**, a member of the Fetch who has been sent to warn the characters of the Hungry Mother and what she is planning. She too is desperate for the characters to act immediately, aware that in a few days it will be too late. She also plants a seed of doubt in the characters' heads about their benevolent sponsor and his motives (see below).

The choice of what to do and who to trust falls back on the characters themselves.

The meetings should occur in the order stated below, with the characters being accosted by Morel late in the evening on the day that the bells begin to toll, and the arrival of Ambergris at one character's lodgings that same night. Referred to by their titles Benevolent and Malevolent Ambassadors, respectively, in this part of the adventure, the truth is that both want the same thing of the characters: their immediate action.

Guidance from Eleanor

If they need it, Eleanor can act as your moral compass for the characters here, as again there is no right or wrong way of tackling this adventure. Make no mistake, however, that time presses more keenly upon the Between vampire's brood than it does upon the Occularis, who simply grow a little more in power as the days pass. The characters may not see it this way, however, but be sure to point out that Eleanor does; she knows Toiltown and fears for the people suffering there. She feels directly responsible for unleashing the Hungry Mother and intends to do something about it. If all else fails, she heads there herself and, inevitably, never returns.

The Benevolent Ambassador

On the evening of the day when the bells begin to ring, warning of the new plague, Lord Benedict approaches the characters. He tries to arrange as private a place as possible, but his urgency means he takes whatever circumstances he can find. He is quite clearly nervous and leads the characters into a deeper part of an alley or into a backroom of a gin house, etc., before he speaks. When he does, he is clearly agitated and speaks urgently in whispers. As he talks, characters making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check quickly realise that what Morel is nervous of is the accusation of treason. Treason is a terrible crime that enjoys a special status amongst punishments. These range from merely being pulled apart by wild manticores to things that are far, far worse: punishments involving multiple healings, mutilations, and madness before confinement as undead — forever.

In summary, Morel tells the characters that he has had to dig deeper than he has ever been happy to do so, but hopes what he has found is worth it. He has taken the chance of *scrying* and using divinations in his

pursuit of what occurred at the end of ***L7: My Benefactor***, and what he has discovered frightens him. It seems that Thornrage has the Beautiful in his power, and is using her to create a personal heaven of his own, a place wallowing in excess and perversions based around an Ivory Tower, a mocking insult to such places known in cautionary tales. This Ivory Tower lies beyond reach in part of Between, and therein Thornrage is growing in power. The angel is creating *gateways* into Between for the Lord Paladin-Occularis, and it can be only a matter of time before he fully exploits them. With the ability to venture into Between, or to use the angel to create whatever he wishes, his power could grow to a god-like state. Who knows what a man with such power may do? He must be stopped.

The Knights Occularis, as inquisitors and occultists, have very few allies — but they have money. Morel has learnt that one of Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage's closest allies is none other than His Grace the Master of Lanterns **Justice Blackbriar**, one of the 13 Justices in the city and a man who wields incredible power. Blackbriar is rumoured to have a magnificent tower high in the Capitol, in which he keeps an unrivalled collection of creatures captured in Between. Blackbriar himself is obsessed with all things related to the Between. Justices are paranoid in the extreme, however, and see everyone as a potential enemy. They are right to do so, and Morel has learnt of three people who would benefit greatly from Blackbriar's demise.

Morel tells the characters that he has arranged for them to be smuggled into the Capitol, and to have false papers suggesting they are a party of visiting nobles from a small estate called Mordent that lies outside the city on the edges of Fallowshire (see **Chapter 1** for details) to the north of the city. As Mordent is the home of Lord Benedict's uncle, Victor Gall, he can fill the party in on any details about the surrounding shire and its immoral aristocratic inhabitants and visitors. Lord Benedict's plan is that one character can pose as Lord Victor and the others as his retainers or staff. Who pretends to be whom is immaterial for the most part, as long it is a male human, because he doesn't think Victor has associated with anyone in the Capitol in several decades. Victor is practically a hermit, has no friends, and is unlikely to be known to anyone. But he is real enough to act as cover.

Once in the Capitol, Lord Benedict says that the characters can seek out any of the trio and try to coerce assistance either by promises, magic, or force — he does not care how — but if they are caught, he will deny ever seeing them. The first of the trio in question is **Ferris Carline**, a eunuch and spy who dwells in the middle streets of the Capitol and who frequents booksellers in that area obsessively. Blackbriar personally gelded Carline but Morel does not know why. The second is **Gablemaester Thistle**, a genius and architect who Blackbriar financially ruined, but who escaped an assassination attempt by the Justice and who is said to have worked on Blackbriar's mansion. He has gone to ground and may prove impossible to find, but such a genius must make a living, and Lord Benedict knows he is in the Capitol somewhere. The third is **Alice Melancholy**, herself an Under-Justice harbouring ambitions of taking Blackbriar's place. She is rumoured to be a member of the Great Coven and is a woman of wild sexual excess. Some say she is in truth some sort of spider creature that is always hungry for a mate. She lives high in the Capitol in a place known as the Lofty Meadow. She is undoubtedly dangerous.

Lord Benedict urges the characters to go tomorrow at dawn to find and question Blackbriar, and to find out what has happened to Thornrage. He then wants the characters to go to this "Ivory Tower" and kill Thornrage and the Beautiful outright. He doesn't care how the characters carry out the mission, but he urges them to be cautious about making powerful enemies. Spending money on decent clothes, luggage, and accoutrements is essential. He can loan the characters such gear, or they can choose to purchase some fashionable attire. Finally, Morel tells the characters that, when they are ready, they should venture to a gin house known as the Decoction, which lies at the edge of Town Bridge and BookTown. There, they can ask for Master Grumb, who can get the characters into the Capitol. Trying to use the gates is too risky right now because the guards at the lower Capitol gates are far too eager and thorough with all the Revolutionary talk going around the city. The characters must be careful too, or end up on the guillotine — or worse. Once inside, they can rely on their "Lord Victor" identity, but it is likely not enough to *get* them inside.

Morel makes no arrangements with the characters about the conclusion of such a mission. He is nervous of the characters and the future, so instead he keeps his own counsel. Morel has access to many resources and has dozens of agents who keep an eye on the exits of the Capitol and the characters' lodgings in order to let him know when they have returned. Lord Benedict is not scheduled to make another appearance until the next adventure, when he has some hard questions for the characters, but if his involvement is required further, feel free to use him as needed.

If Morel learns the characters are dithering about entering the Capitol, he is annoyed and sends an increasing number of letters each day that simply state, "*Matters of grave import require your immediate attention.*" Beyond written harassment, he can do little to the characters.

The Malevolent Ambassador

Ambergris is a **vampire**. She is haughty and reserved, she talks carefully, and never uses too many words. Her skin is alabaster white, her hair a deep fiery red, and she wears a fashionably long gothic black dress and a leather corset. That this is her wedding dress is only given away by the veil she wears. She is in mourning for her living husband, whom she has sworn never to harm. Ambergris is part of the Fetch, and a pivotal NPC in this adventure. She is sent as a messenger of the Fetch to warn the characters and help them learn the location of Threnody, the Between vampire that threatens the city with its unborn brood.

Ambergris is the "mother" (at least that is the term she uses) of Gideon Murkwid, the vampire spawn captured by vampire hunters Abigail and Luther at the beginning of ***L4: Decay***. Ambergris is not upset if her spawn was destroyed; in fact, she expected it. But now, she is here to warn the characters of the coming storm. She is intended as an unwanted but helpful NPC who appears at night to try to help characters, but who ends up more often than not criticising them for not understanding the enormity of events that are unfolding in Toiltown or getting them in hot water for consorting with a vampire.

Having watched the characters only very recently with the aid of some undead associate vampires, she visits one character on the same night that Morel speaks to them, using *mist form* to slip into their chambers. Ambergris awakens the character and warns against combat. She has, in fact, got a gift to give. How her conversation develops is based upon the outline of what she knows below, but she is a haughty vampire; she does not like the idea of the characters soiling the Fetch at all.

Ambergris is here to deliver a message to the warm-bloods that some of the Fetch have begun to refer to as the "Chosen Ones." The Darkest Day is upon the Fetch: Its mother has already arrived to poison the city, and her icy death will destroy everything, Fetch and warm-blooded alike. The characters have been perceived in the visions and dreams of the eldest vampire seers as saviours, they have been contacted before by her child Gideon, and now they are being contacted again.

The mother of the Darkest Day is being called "the Hungry Mother" in the slums of Toiltown where she has already birthed her brood, and this clutch of terror now suckles somewhere in the dark waiting for their eyes to open. They must not do so. The Hungry Mother has birthed hundreds of her vampire spawn from Between, who are but a legend amongst the older stories of the Fetch. Such broods wear plague as their clothes, and take life as their sustenance. The Fetch know they cannot stand against her. Even the God-Emperor Beltane himself hides his brides from her gaze. That she has power over vampires is known to them, but those who have not tasted the sweet bite of death are not so dominated. It has been seen that the heroes will burn her and in so doing so, save their own kind as well as the Fetch.

The brood grows somewhere in Toiltown; the vampiric seers know this, and also know one final, terrible secret. In searching for the Hungry Mother, they have divined the coming days … and learned that there are but three more. The fourth day is a blackness, an oblivion. Unless the Hungry Mother's brood is destroyed, there will be no fourth day for the City-State of Castorhage. Ambergris knows that the death, the mocking plague, has its roots in a part of Toiltown known as Render, an enclave of slaughterhouses, knackers-yards, butcheries, and glue-manufacturies — an entire ward boiling with the misery and blood of animals.

Ambergris can offer little other help. She intends to visit the characters each night, but for the present keeps that to herself. She has brought a gift to the heroes though: the help of someone who knows Toiltown better than anyone — perhaps because he has lived there more than 300 years.

His name is **Isaac Maggot**, and he is dead. Ambergris tells the characters to stand outside the old Saint Grookhan's* Church in Render after dark, whistling the hymn *O Blessed Holy Mother* — the tune of which anyone making a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check knows. Maggot, she adds, is an expendable ally gifted to the characters by the Fetch for them to use as they wish. She adds that if the characters find no use for him, then he will be destroyed; he has been given this one chance of redemption after having broken a taboo (she doesn't elaborate). She leaves the choice of his fate entirely to the characters.

Ambergris does not take no for an answer; she personally visits the characters each night to try to shame them into action, even following them into the Capitol. Like Morel, she too can do nothing more than verbally berate or encourage the characters, painting a picture of death slowly emanating from the slums, devouring the warm-blooded, and laying waste to the place over time. Once the time for action in this section has passed, events take their own course as detailed at the end of this part of the adventure, which deals with the characters' (possible) investigations into Threnody.

* Saint Grookhan — Patron Saint of Domestic Dogs and Drays

Isaac Maggot

Maggot is a **ghoul**, but has intelligence of 10 (+0). He is nothing but a tool for the characters to use or expend as they wish. He is under the strictest instructions to act upon *any* instruction given to him by the characters — up to and including self-destruction. Fearful beyond words of the Fetch, he obeys any instruction without question.

Development: If the characters do as they were asked, and stand outside the old Saint Grookhan's church in Render after dark whistling the hymn *O Blessed Holy Mother* by darkness, the ghoul hears their whistling through the soughs nearby and emerges a minute later, eating half a cat. He doesn't like mixing with warm-bloods, but he is terrified of Ambergris eating him and does so without question. Isaac has an unrivalled knowledge of Render; he has lived off the offal of the soughs for over two centuries. He knows all the knowledge listed under **Word on the Street**. Isaac also knows of Partridge's Slaughterhouse and the first cases of mocking plague there. He can also tell the characters about Jacob Moil and Sister Campion if given a chance. Maggot is practically obsessed with the nun, and loves to watch her. In fact, he acts as a *de facto* guardian at night for the nun, although anyone actually seeing him follow her might think ill of him, due to his undead nature.

Render

As a part of the vast district of Toiltown, Render lies just beyond the Artists' Quarter, in the Bazaar. It spends much of the day in the shadow of its huge neighbour, the Jumble, while below, the soughs and culverts that carry the blood and offal to the river wreak and choke. It's a favoured haunt for ghouls.

When the characters head for Render, they first have to pass through Toiltown, the Artists' Quarter, or the Jumble, all of which are in the grip of revolutionary zeal. All major approaches to the district of Toiltown are manned with constables (**guards**) and watched. Those who pass the barriers are warned to expect no law or assistance, but are not otherwise stopped once their business is revealed. For characters not wishing to be seen entering the district, sneaking in is easy due to the many hundreds of smaller alleys and ginnels.

Once within the district, there is a constant danger of being assailed by Anarchists. Those openly carrying weapons may meet patrols of vigilantes. Such encounters are not detailed here, but you should leave the characters in no doubt that the place is on the boil. Mobs wander the streets by day (wisely staying off them at night) and openly defying Crown law. They call for the Capitol to be stormed and the Royals beheaded. Such open defiance has led to an air of terror. Not everyone, of course, shares their zeal and uses them as a convenient cover for mischief. If you wish, the characters may come into conflict with these mobs, or you can cut straight to the chase and inform the characters that their journey was an unpleasant one. Add the sights and sounds of rebellion, the remains of burnt bodies outside the ward, the shanties within, the defiance, the closed manfacturies, the people starving and begging and the ever-present threat of plague. There are virtually no animals on the street as most have been eaten, and animal companions may be looked at hungrily by locals as the characters pass. Mob rule has taken over. Be sure to emphasis the poverty, dirt, and stench here. Paint this canvas liberally.

Lodgings are not available; there is simply no food to be had, and those that had food have had their premises stormed and looted. Gin houses still operate, and street vendors sell vile foodstuffs at ridiculous process — rat and cat are common menu items. The characters may have to invite themselves into a household, or clear a slum of filth, bodies, or tenants. The choice is yours.

The characters may know things about Render, either from Intelligence checks or from using Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) to gather information. Refer to the table below for the result of the check. The check's result reveals the information of that DC as well as all the lower DCs.

Rumours of Render

DC	Result
5	Render is named after the countless slaughterhouses, butchers, and knacker's-yards in the ward. The place has an ill reputation for sickness, and ghouls haunt the countless soughs and canals below that carry away blood and offal. Cases of ghoul fever are not uncommon.
8	Of late, Render has been struck by an altogether different sickness called the mocking plague. The first reported case of the plague happened here only days ago. Now neighbour avoids neighbour, and those that have to go abroad do so in plague masks or wearing a cloth soaked in oil or perfume over the mouth and nose to keep away the infection.
11	Render is rumoured to be a hotbed for Anarchists, and as such has received considerable attention during the curfew, which runs from dusk to dawn. They say all-seeing spirits patrol during the curfew, and those who flout the law end up dead.
14	By night, the streets are unlit, and patrolled by a series of devils who can see in the dark and hear any words, no matter where they are spoken. These devils lead a group of flesh golems, the golems tearing anyone they capture limb from limb as Anarchists. Only Physiker Campion, a nun, dares to wander the streets and treat the victims.
17	The mocking plague seems also to have created its own type of menace. Render, and the streets of districts thereabouts, have been infested with murders and people vanishing. How many have gone is impossible to say, but tales of toothy shadows stalking and curved knives filleting victims abound.
20	Physiker Campion, a sister of the nunnery of Mother Grace, wanders the streets tending the sick. She has been wandering the streets in her plague mask these past days tending, and, where possible, curing. She is a living saint, they say.
25	The plague was first discovered at Partridge's Slaughterhouse. The place lost two butchers on the same day, their bodies unmaking themselves so badly that what was buried had to be nailed and padlocked into the coffins.

When the characters first arrive at Render, read or paraphrase the following description:

> At last you reach the place called Render, and it's easy to see how it got its name. The names of dozens of glue-manufacturies, knacker's yards, and slaughterhouses adorn brick walls. Stinking soughs seethe just below the streets, and the air has an unmistakable stain of decomposition and death. Many premises are closed, boarded up, or burnt, and it seems that owning property here attracts nothing but trouble. Those places that remain open have taken measures to continue doing so and resemble fortresses more than shops. A distant mob sings a revolutionary song, and a man passes wearing a macabre-looking plague mask, making him look more like a raven than a person. He quickly moves on, seemingly afraid of you staring at him.

Characters touched by the Beautiful should be aware of the suffering of animals. They hear imaginary cries, feel the oppression of cages, and the sting of knives dragged deeply across trussed throats. This has no game effect, but is discomfiting for the character(s).

Curfew

Toiltown is presently under a curfew, a curfew imposed by a tiny troop of 13 flesh golems sent into the district to kill anyone abroad on the streets at night. Although rarely encountered, the golems are enough to keep most folk indoors. Those with wit and speed, however, do not fear the golems sent abroad across this vast area. What worries them more are the steam mephits sent to spy and pry, and the *scrying* that accompanies them. These creatures survey the night streets watching for trouble, and trouble is often seen. Repeat offenders often find a flesh golem waiting for them on their next outing, which leads many locals to believe the nobles can see everything; some claim them to be omnipotent. This reduces the number of people out to a trickle.

Each night the characters are abroad, there is a 20% chance they are seen by 2 **steam mephits**. When they spot the characters, the mephits are 2d6 x 10 feet away. The mephits attempt to follow the characters, and after a full minute of tracking, one of the mephits rushes off to find a golem and bring it back. This takes 1d6 minutes. If during this time the characters spot the last pursuing mephit, it flees and the encounter below does not occur. If it manages to remain out of sight of the characters as it follows them, though, its companion returns with a **flesh golem** in tow to attack the curfew breakers. The mephits support it with their breath weapons as best they can.

The Mocking Plague

This magical disease is spread by the foul emanations of Between vampires. This horrific Between infection unravels and reconfigures the physiology of the victim, causing a sickening deterioration of their bodily integrity. Some victims manifest ugly growths that sprout distended, vestigial limbs, mouths, or eyes, while others have body parts that bloat to twice their normal size. Each remaking is unique, and while some manage to arrest the process, most die when the transformations become too much for their bodies to sustain. While the normal physiology of survivors reasserts itself in the wake of the disease, most are left with some permanent physical changes: open, weeping sores, token mouths in altogether wrong places, or unwanted, slimy appendages. Of those who die, some are spontaneously transformed at the point of death into Between monsters of chaos known as mockingbeasts†.

Any victim infected with mocking plague can also spread the disease. Those who come into contact with a victim must make a DC 15 Constitution save versus the disease or become infected themselves. The bodies of those killed by mocking plague are also infectious and remain so until destroyed. Although the infected person is fully conscious, they must make one death save per day. Two successful saving throws mean that the character recovers, but three failed saves mean that the character is transformed into a mockingbeast. A character who contracts the plague and is cured naturally by saving throws will still sprout 1d4 vestigial limbs. These can be removed only by a *lesser restoration*.

The Mocking Plague

Throughout this section of the adventure, the characters encounter or hear stories about victims of the plague. This is no mundane sickness, nor is it even a magical plague. It is a Between plague, an illness from the darkest corners of disease. See the accompanying sidebox for details.

Three Other NPCs

Events in Render not only focus on the characters trying to find Threnody and exploring locations of her past visits, but has a trio of NPCs in the background of events who play a role as the characters traverse the district.

Jacob Moil is the charismatic Anarchist and — potentially — a leader of men in the future. Like Campion, Moil cares about the locals, and genuinely wants change. The problem is, he has to mix with some pretty low characters to get there. Moil can be a key to the characters getting straight to Threnody as he has grave concerns about local gangland boss Uriah Strange. Strange was devoured by Threnody and his mind is now hers — as well as many of his abilities. His orders therefore filter through from her, but Moil is smart enough to smell a rat. However, Moil is so beloved by those who know of him that it is practically impossible for the characters to know about him before he engineers a meeting, and a violent one in all likelihood, to kill strangers asking too many questions.

Another important figure here is **Master Luther Gable**. The murders nearby have piqued Moil's interest, and he asks a friend to keep an eye on things. Gable is that friend, and Moil told him to watch Partridge's Slaughterhouse in particular (see **Outside the Slaughterhouse**). As soon as he spots them, Gable follows the characters, convinces himself that they are agents of aristocrats, and tells Moil such. An encounter with Moil (detailed under **Visit from the Renders**) takes place as soon after that moment as you wish.

Sister Campion (NG female human **priest** of Mother Grace) is the only physiker brave enough to treat locals suffering from the mocking plague. She has been doing so for several days now and is able to tell the characters not only its history but also show them its present victims if she could be made friendly. She is a font of local knowledge, trust, and goodness in an otherwise angry place. Locating her is not difficult, but she does spend her days moving about treating people. It requires two checks to locate her — the first a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, the second a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to follow up on the leads gained by the Charisma check. Both checks must be made on the same day to be successful; the sister lodges where she can. If the checks are made, the characters should be able to find her in about half a day.

Campion has no time for idleness, and anyone finding her accompanies her on her dash about the district treating victims of the plague. With her plague mask, vials of holy water, and huge prayer book, she cuts a strange figure. In her sixties, yet still active and with a clear complexion that belies her age, the nun has an energy rarely seen in older age in citizens of Castorhage. She is frequently sought out by locals to come to the aid of relatives, takes no money, and is currently exhausted. She starts the adventure with a certain indifference toward the characters, but wants to help anyone who she sees as helping the locals. If the characters impress her, she tells them what she knows.

If the characters befriend Sister Campion, she can tell them how the plague first came from Partridge's Slaughterhouse. Just a few days ago, Campion first treated one of the butchers there, a fellow named Mab. She says that he and a colleague, Turner, were struck down within hours of contracting the illness and that what happened to both was terrible. At her insistence, the coffins were nailed shut and padlocked in chains

before burial (unknown to her, these actions were not enough). Since that time, she has treated scores of plague victims, many of whom have since died. She has cast as many *lesser restoration* spells as she can, and it has worked each time. She prays for a miracle to help her cast more. Perhaps that miracle is the characters.

Worse, the plague has come at the same time as — and many believe has been caused by — the Hungry Mother, a shadowy thing that takes people alive. Sister Campion happily points out all three of the locations under **Three Encounters with the Hungry Mother** below: the Guttock and Fence Glue Manufactury, the Bugger Street Morgue, and Partridge's Slaughterhouse, as examples of encounters with the Hungry Mother. She does not, however, accompany characters on these visits, having too much of her own work to do.

Three Encounters with the Hungry Mother

The characters first port of call is likely to be with Sister Campion, hunting rumours of the Hungry Mother, or both. Sister Campion can tell the characters of encounters nearby and provide directions to each of the three locations detailed here.

Characters acting without the aid of Sister Campion need to make successful Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) checks to locate each of these places. Such checks take 4 hours of asking around. A DC 15 result on the check reveals one location, a DC 20 result reveals two locations, and a DC 25 result reveals all three.

Guttock and Fence Glue Manufactury

Whether the characters heard about this place from Sister Campion or just by asking around Toiltown, they are told to seek out Lottie Mayweed. She lost her husband two nights ago to the Hungry Mother.

Lottie Mayweed lives in a slum garret on Lye Street above the Guttock and Fence Glue Manfactury. Hers is one of a dozen wooden garrets that crowd together crookedly on the rooftop of the manufactury and reached by a trio of rickety ladders. A score of dirty children cram the yard outside the closed manufactury and are happy to point out where Mayweed lives. The Mayweed garret is the end slum, a makeshift dwelling cobbled together of old wood, barrels, and rusting steel that has been fabricated into a single-room garret with a deerskin tarpaulin stretched across to afford a temporary roof of sorts. The roof beneath the tarpaulin has clearly been broken through recently.

Lottie lives here with her twin girls, Ethel and Sophronia, both of whom are just babes. The garret is tiny but filled with decorative tin pots that Lottie sells. Characters making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check quickly notice that several have angels as their themes; Lottie does not know why, but the shapes appealed to her suddenly a few months ago. Her husband, Silas, was taken two nights ago, and she hasn't seen him since. No one has offered to help, but mercifully the sickness has not struck her. Getting Lottie to talk is not easy, and she soon lapses into hysteria, quickly followed by her babies. If the characters try to bribe her, she becomes very offended — she does not brook charity — but characters buying pots from her can evoke a flood of information before the inevitable attack of hysteria.

If asked about what happened to her husband or to her roof, she tells them that it was late and it all happened so quickly that she barely knows herself. She says that one moment there was a sudden jolt on the roof; the next, the slates had been smashed through. What came through was foul, a thing of shadow and a feral stench. Silas grabbed a knife and plunged it into the foul creature, but it did nothing. A moment later, the thing snatched him back up through the roof, and they were gone into the night.

Characters making a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check note that Lottie has a very unusual gold wedding ring. It is designed like a smiling sun face but appears to be missing a half. Her husband's ring is the identical second half. Characters seeing the half ring have a decent idea of what the other half looks like, sufficient to cast a *locate object* spell to try to locate the missing wedding ring — and it is hoped the husband as well. With this information, and searching in Render and its surrounding environs, each casting of the spell gives the character a chance to successfully find the ring in the **High Stormhouse and Hollowmill**. A *locate creature* will not work because the characters do not know what Silas looks like. Use of *divination* or *scrying* are addressed in the sidebox.

If asked for more information on the creature that took her husband, Lottie remembers that the figure had a sack of skin hanging loose from its front. But unless prompted, she just assumes that is the way it looks, not realising that the creature has recently given birth to its vast brood. She simply prays to the Holy Mother that it never returns.

Divination and Scrying

By this level, the characters have access to some fairly powerful spells, and *divination* and *scrying* — they would probably have to hire someone for *scrying* — could prove useful in aiding their quest to find Threnody. Remember that the characters are likely in a hurry to resolve this branch of the adventure, and likely to push all their talents into the research.

Divination

A successful *divination* to try to locate the Hungry Mother or Silas produces the following cryptic advice, "That which may lay things low broods high."

Scrying

Possessing a fragment of, or touching a victim of the mocking plague while casting the spell, counts as having a possession of Threnody and may allow the hired caster to see Threnody in her lair. The lair is shadowy and appears to be in some structure made of wooden planks and beams. If the caster makes a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, they notice the shadows that repeatedly pass across the entire lair and realizes that they are caused by a windmill's turning blades. If the check is successful at DC 20 (or the caster purposely counts the passing shadows as they turn, which they won't think of without a character's suggestion), they can deduce that the windmill is somewhat unique in that it has 6 blades rather than the standard 4 blades. Anyone with this knowledge can make a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to learn the location of the **High Stormhouse and Hollowmill** high in the Jumble. Failure means that the characters will have to spend some money and ingenuity to locate one of the places. Hiring an NPC spellcaster to make a *scrying* attempt to locate Silas can succeed: Lottie can provide the characters with an article of his clothing for use with the spell.

The Bugger Street Morgue

Among the abductions, there have been a handful of killings by the Hungry Mother in the last 48 hours. Sister Campion has instructed the local body collector, Jared Magg, to use the Bugger Street Morgue to store the bodies until they can do a mass burning. The underclerk who oversaw the morgue fled when the riots for started, so without any law, Sister Campion has been using it to store the bodies of those she found. If the characters were sent here by Sister Campion, she can tell them that from the state of the bodies she can tell that each of the victims put up a fight against the Hungry Mother. Each of the victims have their own distinct story, but they all basically tell the same tale if the characters have the means to question the corpses: The creature called Hungry Mother crashes into their home to abduct, but they put up a stiff fight and were killed by the creature rather than taken. Unfortunately despite appearances, one was not quite dead when it was brought here, an understandable fact given that

the victim — one Horace Crudd — was a huge man in a very deep coma. When the characters reach the morgue he has recovered … in a way.

The characters can find out about the murdered victims either by asking Campion about victims — in which case she directs the characters to Jared and tells them to get him to show them the bodies — or by making a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check with the locals to learn the appropriate details. In both cases, the characters also learn that 3 of the 7 victims had the vilest of wounds, their heads had been cracked open like nuts and the insides of their skulls devoured. This attack was used by the Mother to devour the lives and thoughts and skills of her victims to enable it to learn quickly. Two of these victims were members of the Renders, a local petty gang led by Uriah Strange, more details of whom are given later below.

People avoid the Bugger Street Morgue most times: only **Jared Magg** (N male blighted† human **commoner**) has a key beside Sister Campion, and he only enters under duress. Jared himself lives in a single-room tenement above an old dye-works nearby. He is well known, and if the characters ask for him locally they soon find him. Magg is nervous, it's only about 11 hours since he last entered the morgue, and he's already heard of 12 more deaths since then. The morgue, he says, is getting crammed, but to be helpful he put the murdered victims at the back in a special side room. He reluctantly leads the characters to the morgue and can let them in.

The morgue is little more than an underground lock-up. During the time since the last corpses were delivered here — a little under 11 hours — one of the corpses has…developed.

When the characters arrive at the morgue, read or paraphrase the following description:

> If you were hoping for something grand or official, you're disappointed. This is little more than a square block building with a very heavy iron door upon which are painted the words, "*Morgue — Keep Out.*"

The iron door is locked, but a character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door by succeeding on a DC 18 Dexterity check. It gives access to a set of steps that steeply descend 20 feet to a second iron door with a second, lower-quality lock (DC 15). Beyond the second door is the morgue, a 20-foot-square chamber piled with corpses. The creature that was Horace Crudd is within the morgue, but it is dizzy and quiet. If it hears people outside, it slithers into a pile of corpses and waits, hoping to attack with surprise.

When the characters first enter the room, read the following text:

> A pile of human misery lies beyond the rusty door, with dozens of wan corpses piled in groups against walls. There are men, women and children. Sickeningly, the humanity of these poor people has been taken away as they approached death. You see distended limbs, engorged stomachs, heads and other appendages, and worse, things that defy words rotting with their hosts.

The Creature that was Horace Crudd is a **mockingbeast**†. It must once have been human; the drawn features and implied physiognomy insist upon it. It has two heads, one that is etched with anger, the other lust, but the heads loll madly upon idiot, jointed necks. It has several limbs that it drags itself about on, but calling them limbs implies bones and form, both of which they lack. From its stomach is an open mouth of tongues and teeth and hunger.

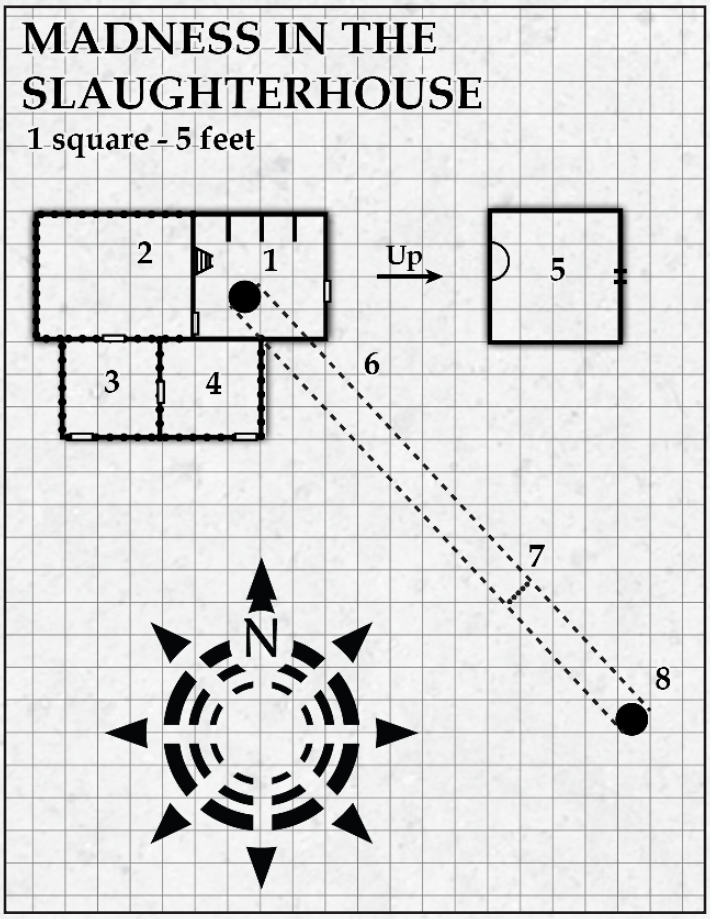
Development: Searching the bodies is a grisly business, and yields little apart from the abominable ways they died (and the risk of infection, of course). The bodies in the main room are plague victims, whereas the murdered victims are in a small side-room and number 7 in all. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the characters to deduce that all of the victims have been robbed, though in truth nothing useful has been taken, merely petty trinkets removed by the greedy Magg. Three of the murder victims are in a terrible state; their heads have literally been cracked open. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine or Perception) check identifies further that at the base of the skull of each are the remains of two puncture wounds, as though circular objects about an inch in diameter were rammed into the base of the skulls. None of the three victims has a brain. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check on two of the victims identifies an identical tattoo, a sign of a pair of huge hands rending a citadel apart. A successful DC 18 Intelligence check means the character recalls from past experience in the city that this is the symbol of the local street-gang: the Renders.

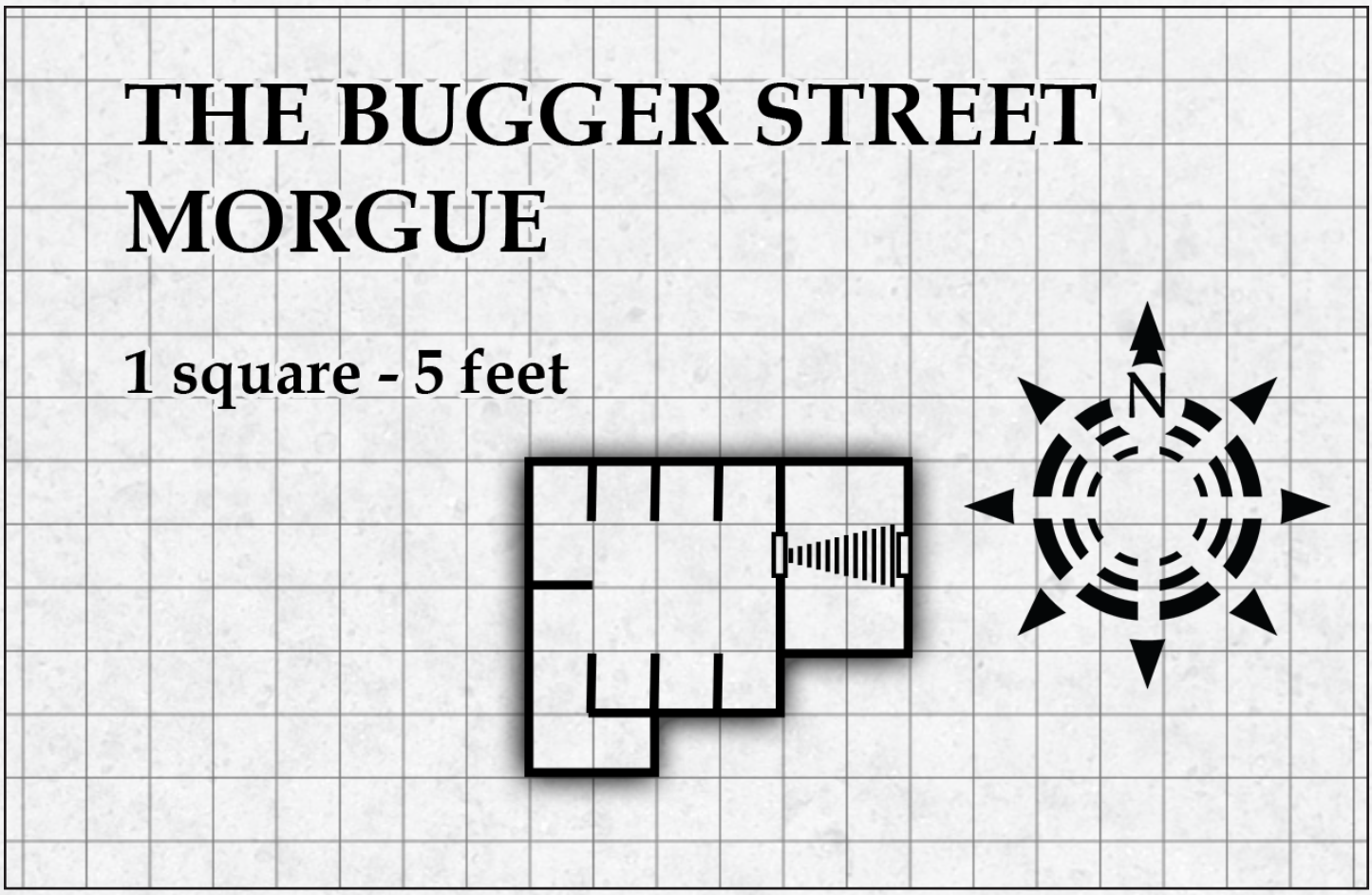
Madness in the Slaughterhouse

Characters may know the location of the first victims of the plague: Partridge's Slaughterhouse. If they do not, asking around with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check reveals the information to them. Although it is not particularly noticeable, the **High Stormhouse and Hollowmill** detailed below overlooks the square. It is just possible to make out the six-bladed windmill from just in front of the doorway of the slaughterhouse. A successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check is required from ground level, but those who climb upward — a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check — or fly up at least 20 feet are allowed the Perception check at a DC of 10.

If the characters come to this location, they are more than likely spotted by Luther Gable or his homunculus, Lickspittle. See **Outside the Slaughterhouse** below for details.

Assuming the characters visit the slaughterhouse openly, they will find **Enoch Partridge** at work in area 1, the slaughterhouse floor. Enoch has carried on with his labours despite all else: his workmates would've wanted him to. He hasn't been struck with the plague — unlike his three poor chums — and after that first attack he's taken the precaution of asking his mates in the Renders gang to keep an eye on the place just in case. The unnaturally gifted Master Luther Gable is always close by, a fact that makes Partridge bolder. He suspects — knows in his own heart — that the aristocracy is behind this plague, the attacks and the whole business, and





are using it as a way to put everyone down — quite literally. In truth, he is expecting strangers (aristocratic agents in his mind) to come checking on how well the plague is going, and his paranoia has affected Gable, who in turn has created at least some questions in the mind of Jacob Moil.

In truth, Partridge has another reason to be worried. When the plague struck his chums, he saw what it did to them, and what was left of them when their bodies were carted off to the local morgue. With only two butchers left, the duo worked hard, but while Enoch showed no signs of sickness, it soon became obvious that his last workmate Plaistow also had it. At first Enoch tended to his chum. The two lived at the slaughterhouse anyway and keeping the sickness quiet was easy — but then it got worse. One night as Plaistow wandered about the slaughterhouse groaning, he pitched into the pit used to dump refuse into the local sough. Partridge truthfully hoped his friend was given a merciful death, but he still lived, lurking at the foot of the shaft. Enoch knew, or rather hoped, he would be safe, as he'd had iron grates welded into place to prevent ghouls getting in a couple of years before. The grates would keep what was left of Plaistow prisoner. He couldn't get to his chum without risk; the iron bars he'd also had welded in place to prevent ghouls made that next to impossible, but he could ensure his chum was watered and fed. Now he sees Plaistow, but what he sees he barely knows. The former butcher lurks out of sight and keeps quiet. In fact, he's busy trying to work the bars loose in the sough below to get out and feed, as he has all but lost his humanity in every way. Only his bond to his old mate keeps a tiny sliver of the man that was in the sough waiting to be fed. Unless the characters intervene, his story develops into something more sinister, and may bring the characters back to the slaughterhouse later.

Partridge is incredibly suspicious of strangers who ask questions, assuming them to be nobles seeing if their little plan is working. Bigoted and aggressive, when the characters first meet Partridge his attitude is unfriendly. He is hanging up a pig, ready to slit its throat — something he'll do as they talk to him. Partridge has already made his mind up about strangers, and tells them as little as possible. If the characters begin to pry, he quickly starts to throw his weight about. Bear in mind, however, that Partridge is simply bigoted and quick to anger. It's also painfully obvious with a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check that he is hiding something. Two of the four employees at this slaughterhouse can be accounted for by corpses in the morgue (or by asking Jared Magg, who readily admits to having made two pick-ups here). However, even casual discussion with Sister Campion or the nearby locals confirms that there were four men working here, the owner and three employees. If the characters decide to ask Partridge about the missing fourth man, he has concocted a story. According to him, Plaistow simply left one morning out of fear. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check detects the falsehood in this. That Plaistow's clothes are found upstairs, if searched for, is something Partridge cannot explain, and if faced with such a truth he breaks down and sobs, telling the truth, but begging those who discover it not to hurt his mate below. If they do so anyway, he contacts the Renders and pays for vengeance against the characters.

Partridge is a member of the Renders street-gang, and has the gang tattoo of a pair of hands rending a citadel on the back of his neck. Characters standing behind him and making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notice the tattoo, which lies just between his upper shoulder blades, barely peeking above his collar.

1. Slaughterhouse Floor

A barred wooden door gives access into a bloody cobbled workroom with dozens of gory billhooks and meat hooks hanging from beams in the ceiling. A ladder gives access upward, and a covered well lies nearby below. **Enoch Partridge** is here during the day. If Enoch is engaged by the characters in combat, he fights as a **captain**, although his Dexterity is 14 and his Armor Class is only 12. His massive cleaver is treated as a greatsword, requiring no adjustment.

The well is 40 feet deep and is actually a shaft for disposing of offal into the sough below (area **6**). The walls of the shaft are streaked with gore and are very difficult to climb, requiring a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. About 30 feet down the well, a ring of downward-facing iron spikes are cemented into the walls. Trying to climb up past them requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity save or the character takes 1d6 points of piercing damage and becomes hooked on one of the

spikes. Being hooked prevents any further movement. Getting unhooked is as simple as moving back downward, but then a new attempt must be made to climb past the ring of spikes. Anyone injured on the spikes must make a DC 11 Constitution save to avoid contracting sewer plague. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the tiny scrap of torn leather caught on one of the spikes. If it is noticed and examined, a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies it to be a scrap of butcher's apron, similar to Enoch's. This is a scrap of Plaistow's apron.

Development: What remains of Plaistow is scared of those above, and hides; but his breathing is very laboured and his stench very feral. Characters can smell something unpleasantly musky, and animals are upset by the stench. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to actually hear Plaistow's laboured breathing, but the DC lowers to 15 if the characters are very quiet. The creature has no wish to climb the shaft: it already tried, and ended up caught on the spikes. It remains out of sight, but at times tries to remove the grate at **7**.

2. Main Yard

This is a filthy courtyard enclosed on three sides by a low, wooden fence, and on the fourth side by the slaughterhouse itself. It presently contains 3 sheep and a **Blight cockerel**. The cockerel wears fighting spurs, and has been trained to attack anything entering the yard that isn't a sheep or someone wearing a leather butcher's apron. A low fence with a gate separates the yard from area **3**, and similar gates give access in areas **3** and **4**.

3. Pig Pen

A single, huge pig wallows in the filth herein. The pig is very friendly to people, and likes to have its head scratched.

4. Wagon

The last yard has a wagon and a very sway-backed dray horse that is clearly one step from the knacker's yard.

5. Bedroom

The ladder rises to a cramped bedroom containing four beds. The room contains clear indications that four people have lived here up until quite recently, and all four men's clothes and personal belongings are scattered or on shelves herein.

Hidden under a bed there is an iron bucket on a 50-foot length of rope, spotted with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. The remains of raw meat are dried onto the inside. Partridge uses this bucket to drop food and water to his friend below.

6. Sough and Tunnel

This narrow tunnel is barely high enough to stand in, but Small characters can do so, while Medium characters must crouch and make all attacks at disadvantage. **Plaistow** — or rather the **mockingbeast** he has become — shambles in the dark and filth. The thing has been distorted by the mocking plague and now resembles a snake-like creature whose lower half is composed of long exposed internal organs and writhing tentacles made of offal. Its front half is vaguely human, moving on two huge clumped hands leading to the enormous head, which looks more like a terrible caricature of a man drawn by a sick child. It has a huge mouth. The creature is not affected by the tunnel's cramped conditions.

7. Iron Grate

Here stands a well-made, thick iron grate. The grate shows signs of being battered and shaken. After another day of battery by Plaistow, and the grate will come free. See **The Axe Murderer** below for what happens if that occurs.

8. Far Well

The sough eventually enters the base of a disused well before falling through an even narrower opening that shows signs of being easily and frequently used (by ghouls). The well has a very badly made shaft that can be climbed with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check), and leads into a back alley some 50 yards or so from the slaughterhouse.

The Axe Murderer

If the characters leave the slaughterhouse without finding out about Plaistow — a very possible event — then the night after, the thing he has become escapes from its confinement and kills, leaving plenty of clues that whatever carried out the attack is inhuman, including a carnal stench in its wake. The characters may not get drawn back into this event, but should at least become aware of it and have the choice to take action. Inaction leads to further deaths that continue even if Threnody is destroyed. How this develops then is left to you.

Outside the Slaughterhouse

Enoch Partridge has many friends, but in particular those in the Renders street-gang, who count him as one of their own. His paranoia about a deliberate infection has gripped some of his friends, and notably **Master Luther Gable**, who has managed to obtain a particularly revolting **homunculus** he calls Lickspittle. By day, Gable lurks about the rooftops near the Slaughterhouse. By night, he has other things to do, but he leaves Lickspittle to keep a watch when he is not present.

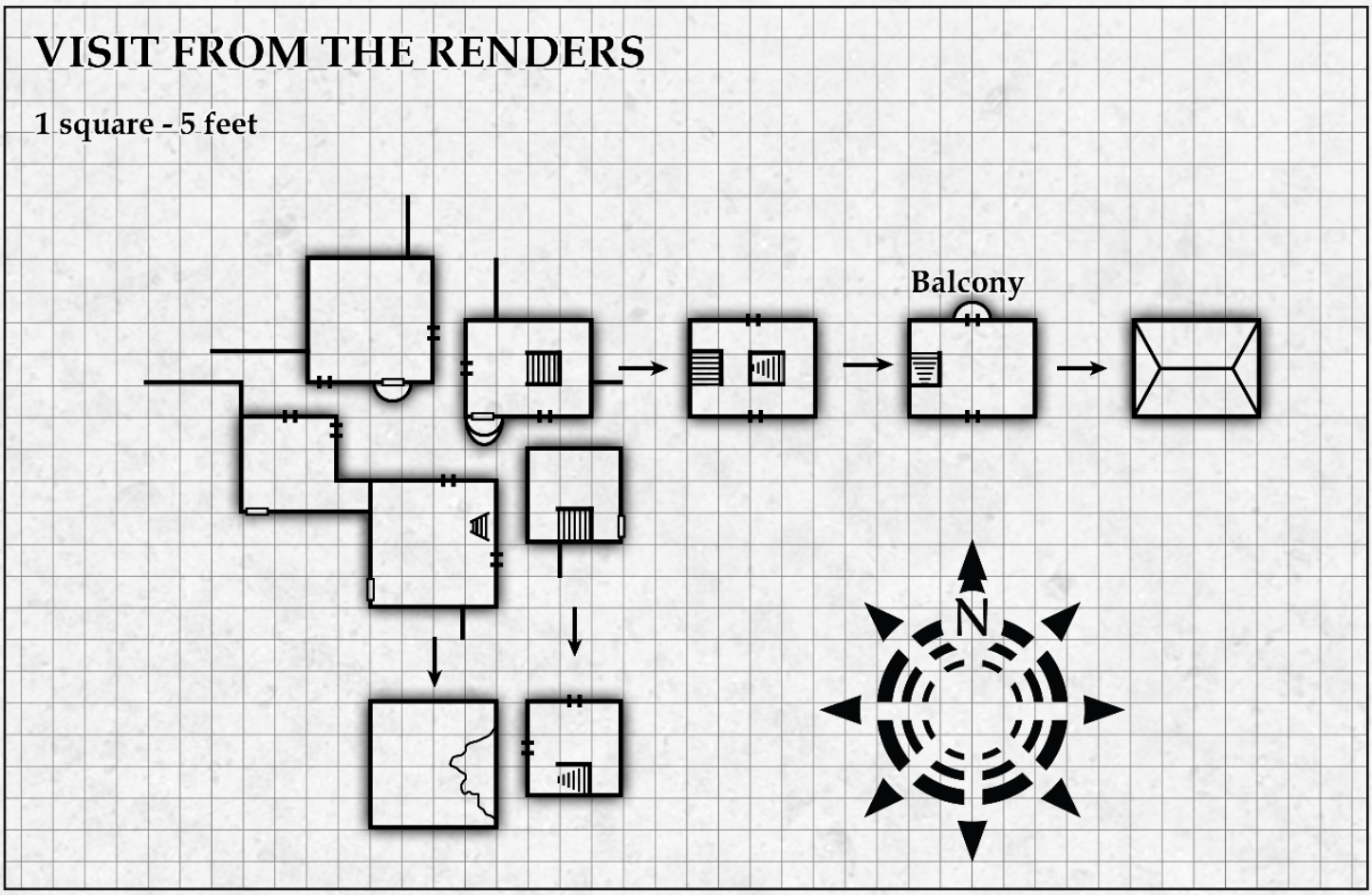
Lickspittle is a revolting thing, a creation that is mostly bird, but partly pig and somewhere within insect. It has mangy wings, a huge thorny head and skin so thin you can see its collage of organs beating or perhaps protesting at their confinement within its frame. It was created by a talented golem-stitcher who owed Gable money, and agreed to part with it in exchange for forgiveness of his debts. That Gable later went back and murdered the man to prevent any sort of treachery was simply good business sense in Luther's mind. Lickspittle is completely loyal to Gable and will die in his defence.

If strangers are spotted, they are observed and trailed at a distance of 60 feet at all times until they reach lodgings. The matter is then reported to Jacob Moil. Moil is currently busy trying to help others in the area and, half-decent soul that he is, he too is gripped with paranoia. He joins an ambush upon the strangers to find out what they are snooping around about. If Enoch Partridge survives the encounter with the characters, he reports to his allies everything the characters did along with embellishing it all with his own unique brand of superstition. He is convinced the characters are Royalist agents sent here to check on the progress of the sickness they spread and that has taken "two" of his beloved colleagues ("Holy Mother rest their souls"). If the characters killed Plaistow, he is even more vehement in their guilt and joins the ambush detailed in **Visit from the Renders** below.

A Visit from the Renders

The ambush by this ill-advised gang of Anarchists is pivotal in the characters' meeting with Threnody. It occurs after Gable has informed the gang of their presence from spying on them at the Slaughterhouse and then tailing them back to their lodgings. The assumption is that the characters are Royal spies sent to check up on the progress of the plague and murders, which they see as part of a Royalist plot against the poor of Toiltown.

The gang has lost its leadership, and messages coming from its headquarters, a six-bladed windmill above a place in Jumble called the High Stormhouse, are jumbled. The gang's leader has not been seen in days, and Jacob Moil has taken over day-to-day operations. This essentially involves trying to thwart the mephits and golems that enforce the curfew at night. The characters could become embroiled in a side plot to help the Anarchists even after facing off with them, such is left to you to develop. In meeting the Anarchists, the characters either learn of the gang's concerns straight from them, or discover clues on their corpses that link the clues in the morgue with the gang and its base.



The confrontation with the gang is also designed to give you a completely open meeting in case sense prevails and the characters and gang members are able to talk. If not, a potentially promising Anarchist leader could be killed. This ambush is located at a crossroads of alleyways and is assumed to be near the characters' lodgings. A sample map of a twisting alleyway crossroads is provided where you can place the gang members as you see fit. The ambush consists of **Jacob Moil**, **Master Luther Gable**, Lickspittle the **homunculus**, and 12 anarchist **thugs**. If **Enoch Partridge** survived the characters' visit to his slaughterhouse and the characters slew the creature that was once Plaistow, then Enoch is also present for this ambush. As noted in Madness in the Slaughterhouse, Enoch fights as a **captain**, although his Dexterity is 14 and his Armor Class is only 12.

Treasure: Gable carries a *potion of cure serious wounds* and a *potion of invisibility*. The scabbard of his shortsword has mother-of-pearl ornamentation and is worth 400 gp, his cloak has an obsidian clasp depicting two hands arm wrestling, worth 50 gp, and he carries a leather purse made of elephant hide containing 22 pp.

Treasure: Moil carries a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of gaseous form*, a *+2 shortsword* worn in an iron scabbard decorated in tied pigs' ears, 35 gp in coin, a letter (**Handout 1**) and the most recent copy of *The Raven* (**Handout 2**)

Tactics: The group spreads across the alleys and attacks as the characters pass by. They make ranged attacks first and then move in and try to gain flanking positions if possible. Moil moves in for melee with a pair of gang members providing him with flanking opportunities and preventing the same against him. He intends to try to capture one of the Royal spies for questioning and has Gable send Lickspittle to bite whoever has the least armour. He and his men scream epithets and vile slurs at the characters, calling them "Royal Boot-lickers," the "Queen's Lackeys," and "Royalist Spies" throughout the fight. If Enoch is present, he screams in a rage about them "killing his friends" and that they "shoulda' let Plaistow alone!"

Development: If at any stage the characters cease hostilities they may be able to convince Moil they are here to help, and are not working for the Royals. If convinced of the characters' innocence, Moil commands his men to stand down, and they back off a few paces to hear the characters out, though they don't lower their guard. Two of the thugs restrain Enoch if necessary and gag him to stop his screams of rage.

Jacob Moil is something special. Handsome, clever, and fair, he could make an ideal rebel leader — assuming the characters don't kill him first. Moil has a letter from another gang member outlining his concerns and echoing Moil's own (see **Handout 1**). From reading this letter, or if the characters can gain Moil's trust, they can learn the following. Uriah Strange at the group's headquarters has gone strangely quiet at the very edge of revolution, and foul play is suspected. Messages that are coming out are garbled, and the Anarchists are determined to do something. If the characters just find the note, it gives them a clue to the windmill, which they may already have an inkling toward through spells. If Moil lives and talks to the characters, he accompanies them (though not with any other gang members) to the place to see what has happened.

The Renders

Location: Toiltown (The Jumble)
Leader: Uriah Strange (deceased)
Acting Leader: Jacob MoilMotivations: Overthrowing Crown government, freedom from tyranny, self-rule
Friends: Revolutionaries, Lowfolk, Invisibles
Enemies: Crown government, aristocracy, City Watch
Tactics: Increase membership through acts of kindness and threats of violence, vigilante mentality, quick to anger and judge
Morale: Hardy; Jacob Moil is keeping everyone together despite the odd silence from Uriah Strange in the past few days, but the strain of the plague and the curfew are beginning to take their toll.

The Renders, and in particular Moil, are local folk heroes — no-nonsense men at the heart of revolution. If the characters befriend them, they may have little time to enjoy their company but should live it up. There is little to

celebrate, but being with Moil is like standing beside a legend: local people come over and cheer, children follow, and goodwives offer support. Moil is a kindly, principled man, but not perfect; he's been brought up in tough streets, and though very handsome and smart, he makes mistakes.

Develop this folk legend aspect as much as you wish. Do the characters use the Renders to help them in this and the coming final adventure? Do the characters give money to peasants or act heroically to them to emulate Moil? Or are they aloof and suspicious, totally focused upon stopping the Beautiful's plan for the city?.

The High Stormhouse and Hollowmill

The High Stormhouse is a well-known local landmark, and the Hollowmill equally so. Slung high above Jumble, the place stands at the very edge of that parish. A DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check is enough to gather information, locate it, and obtain directions to get there. Likewise, if the characters know what they're looking for, either Sister Campion or Jacob Moil can direct them to it. Master Luther Gable can do so as well but is loath to unless forced or ordered by Moil.

Much of the Jumble has been built using a technique called "lashing" developed by Master Builders of the Edifice of Royal Engineers (better known as the Royal Arcane Engineers Guild) and while the magic often fades, the place still stands. It is a confusing, dizzying mass of buildings upon buildings upon buildings, infested by narrow walkways and stairs that can prove very disorientating. More information on the Jumble can be found in **Chapter 9**.

The two buildings in question rest at the southeast limit of one wing of the Jumble. Without a guide or directions, a successful DC 20 Wisdom check is required to find the place. Also, a *locate object* or other magic could be used. Guides can cost anywhere from 1 gp to 100 gp, depending upon the look of the customer.



Exterior Approach

Both buildings are visible and indeed accessible from below by climbing the exterior, if the characters make the DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to surmount the entire 220 feet of vertical distance — Dexterity isn't so much a factor here as the exhausting distance of the climb. However, this area around the Jumble is infested with gargoyles (unaffiliated with the Punishers — see **Chapter 5**). They generally scavenge by night, and content themselves with stealing the odd baby foolishly left near an open window, or the odd cat. However, those who fly or climb about on the exterior of the Jumble other than Gablemaesters or steeplejacks (whose respective guilds the gargoyles have reached agreements with) are seen as fair game. Any characters flying or climbing to the buildings are certain to be spotted by a local pair of cantankerous **gargoyles** called **Crotchet** and **Toss**. The two elderly old males are cowardly, and if injured to below half their hit points, they retreat to hidden roosts to nurse their wounds and complain about the disrespect of young people these days. If the characters defeat the gargoyles, they can climb to or land at areas **HS2**, **HS5**, **HS6**, **HS8** or **HS9**.

Interior Approach

If the characters have a guide or receive directions, their path takes them up and through the Jumble until reaching the High Stormhouse and Hollowmill. If arriving by this route, they reach area **HS2**. Read or paraphrase the following description upon arrival.

> Finally, the dizzying, oddly angled stairs and walls end, and the summit of this peculiar place is reached. Here, a small courtyard opens up, with walls racing away to abnormal corners. A carved wooden door leers out with a huge open-mouthed demonic face. Flanking the door are two statues of heraldic griffons with human heads.

High Stormhouse Features

Raised upon the rooftops of lesser buildings, the High Stormhouse is essentially a wide-open space, a single cavernous room with an upper balcony. Until recently it has been the home of local Anarchist Uriah Strange. Unfortunately for Strange, he became nothing more than a useful skin to lurk within, as Threnody traced back a scent of clues to here, enabling it to live unmolested until its brood was birthed. Still dropping the occasional young, the Between vampire lurks within the Hollowmill (**9**), a favourite place Strange once used to sober up enemies and question Royalists of late. The dizzying drop onto the slums below often had the effect of loosening tongues very quickly. Now it serves as a home for the powerful thing that threatens a new dark period in the Blight's shadowy history.

Only two of the original staff remain, the original guard of Strange, a

Dealing with Ward and Tamarisk

Combat with magically-dominated potential friends is a tough choice: go at the battle full on and risk killing them, or try to lay off a bit and subdue with the risk of getting killed by them. If the characters are with Moil, he certainly tries not to kill his fellow Renders, but he knows that people get hurt and more are getting hurt every day. Overtly violent displays may risk an admonishment, and cruelty risks making an enemy of a friend, but if either of them dies and the characters were not needlessly cruel then there is acceptance. If, however, the character risked their own lives to try to save their lives, they have his gratitude and perhaps the beginnings of a friendship.

former local pit fighter from The Rigging (see **TJ15** in **Chapter 9**) called Ward, and Strange's sister Tamarisk. Both have been mentally dominated by the Between vampire, and have orders to tell any visitors to leave as Uriah has pressing business that cannot, under any circumstances, be interrupted. If a fight starts, Ward charges into it and remains at the heart of combat as much as possible, trying to keep his back to the walls or corners to avoid being flanked whilst being supported by Tamarisk.

Threnody does not, under any circumstances leave her brood except to find new flesh if she feels another birth coming. It is therefore very unlikely that she is absent from the Hollowmill when the characters arrive, but if they do come here when she is out hunting, and burn her brood (as is likely), her fury is all-consuming.

HS1. The Great Stair

The steps are shallow and made of wooden planks taken from some derelict ship. The place is shadowy, the only light coming by day from a handful of grimed skylights in the shingled roof above.

HS2. Two Griffon's Grinning

The stair from **HS1** emerges here. See the description under **Interior Approach** above. Flanking the entry door are two statues of heraldic griffons with human heads. The figures are about 4 feet high, and each is crook-backed and has three arms. They have open mouths with tongues extended, but apart from looking horrible, they are purely ornamental (if tasteless). The door is heavy oak bound in iron — a character can use thieves' tools to pick the lock by succeeding on a DC 20 Dexterity check, but it is also **trapped**, a fact everyone in the Renders knows and is fearful of. It is triggered if someone tries to force the door without unlocking (or picking) the lock.

The Cone of Cold Trap: If the door is forced open or an attempt to pick the lock fails, the magically-charged door releases a *cone of cold* spell (spell save DC 18). Due to its magical nature, the trap cannot be detected by Perception or Investigation.

HS3. Main Hall

Here is a broad and tall space. Thick beams hold up the roof high above while the oaken walls are pierced by long windows of leaded glass, grimed by the soot and smog of the city below. A timber stair rises to a half floor directly above, while a twisting iron stair rises to a door in the south wall. Several fine paintings hang from the walls while the minimal furniture also looks to be of high quality.

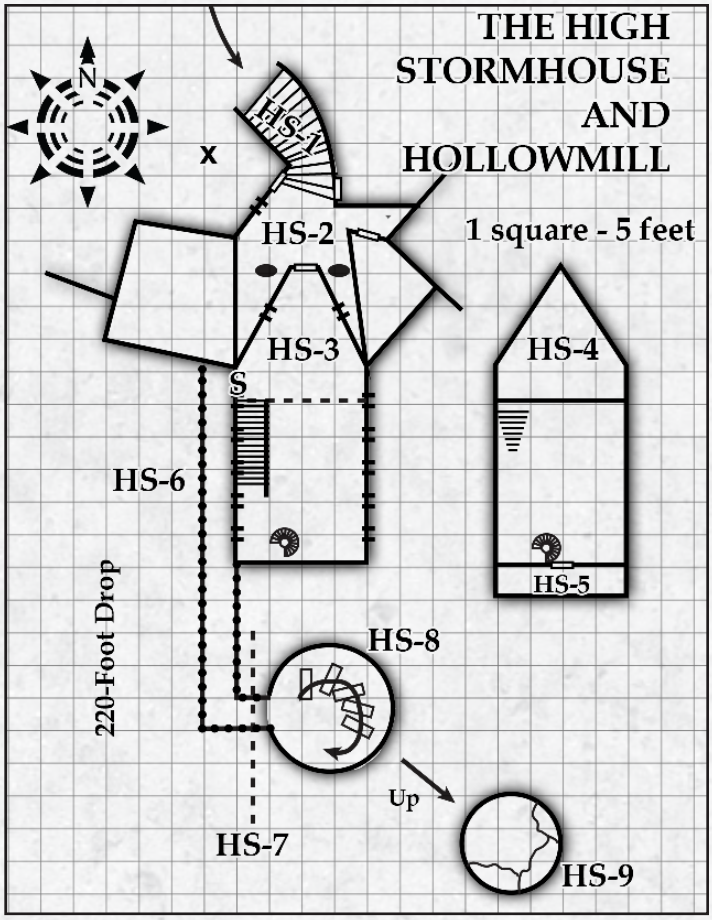
The windows are each a foot wide and do not open. The floor is made of thick oak planks. **Ward** and **Tamarisk** are usually found here (both are **burglars**).

Treasure: The paintings depict (in order): a bleak landscape of bogs and boaters, a fat grinning man holding a glass of brandy (a portrait of Strange himself), two stags rutting, and a depiction of two copper dragons fighting each other. Each of the paintings save the landscape is of fair quality and worth 200 gp. The landscape is by an old master named Hockmerd and is a moving and intricate depiction of local peasant life of the highest quality. It is worth 2,000 gp. A large camel-hair rug dyed crimson worth 1,200 gp fills much of the floor space, while the horsehair furniture is worth 500 gp in total. A small walnut cupboard contains a silver drink service worth 140 gp and three bottles of vintage brandy worth 25 gp each, while a fruit bowl and meat locker are, unsurprisingly, empty.

Tamarisk has a soft leather purse containing 4 small jade stones worth 100 gp each, and Ward has a *potion of superior healing*.

HS4. Bedroom

A magnificent four-poster bed with silk hangings fills this balcony space. The bed is of the finest workmanship and is incredibly comfortable.



Treasure: Hidden in one pillow (not noticeable without touching the pillow itself to find the lump) is a *+1 dagger* in a sheath made of calfskin.

HS5. Balcony

Unlocked glass and timber doors lead to a wooden balcony that overlooks the considerable fall to the roofs of the Jumble below (220 feet) and the six-bladed windmill that stands adjacent to the High Stormhouse. There is a 7-foot gap between the balcony and the exterior of the windmill. If someone makes a successful jump, it still requires a DC 15 Dexterity save to grab the warped planks of the windmill and not fall.

HS6. Windmill Walk

A timber walkway hangs from the adjacent building. It takes a single turn before passing directly under the turning sails of the windmill, which itself rises almost 80 feet from an iron cradle that seems to extend out from beneath the footings of High Stormhouse. The walkway has a timber and rope handrail only along the west side.

The handrail ends where the walkway turns the corner. There is only about 2 feet of clearance between the bottom of a sail and the walkway when the sail is pointing directly downward. See **HS7** for details on getting past the sails.

HS7. Perilous Sails

The sails spin lazily, leaving only a short distance between them and the walkway you stand on. Beyond, an open doorway allows access within the windmill.

When the sails are turning with any speed, it can make entering the windmill a bit tricky. Any creature larger than Small size attempting to crawl through the 2-foot gap beneath the reach of the sail must make a DC 16 Dexterity save to avoid being hit. Any creature larger than Medium can't fit at all. Today the sails turn at medium speed, so attempting to dodge past rather than crawl to the doorway beyond requires a DC 20 Dexterity save if the character fails a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Anyone struck by the turning sails takes 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage and must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be knocked from the balcony and fall to the Jumble below. Characters attempting to climb below the walkway can pass under the sails and then come up on the other side with a successful DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

HS8. The Hollowmill

A broad open space echoes within, the sound of grinding machinery almost physical in its clamour. A ragged stair with several gaps rises the eighty feet or so to the upper mill. There, hanging like a collection of ghastly Yule ornaments, are scores of bodies. All bear some sort of foul distended tumour or cyst, some from the bellies, some from their backs, some horribly from their heads, their skulls bloated and stretched tight as though made of leather. The nature of these great cancerous growths isn't clear.

The Hollowmill is now the home of Threnody. It is a timber structure built upon an iron support hoop which in turn is lashed to the footings of buildings below. The windmill is bone dry inside, and burns very readily. If a considerable fire-source were to erupt inside (say a *fireball* spell, or perhaps the alchemist's fire therein), the mill would burn down in a matter of minutes, taking everything inside with it. The rough planks of the exterior are easy to climb, requiring a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, and the whole building rises a further 80 feet to its peak. On very windy days, the sails can turn at incredible speed, but even on still days they somehow still move relatively fast. They are, in fact, part of a large, magically-animated object that makes up the gearworks of the mill.

Inside, the floor has rotted and fallen away, leaving only the crooked remnants of the staircase to **HS9** above, leaving a perilous 220-foot drop to the edges of the Jumble below. An old billhook hangs on the wall next to the doorway. Several manacles on long chains have been installed on the underside of **HS9** above, so that they dangle in the open space at the centre of the mill until level with the entryway. They were used by Uriah Strange to persuade prisoners to cooperate as they hung helplessly in space. Strange would use the billhook to pull a chain over when he needed to retrieve a chain or a prisoner. If a character falls while within the mill, they can attempt a DC 20 Dexterity save to catch hold of a chain and avoid plummeting to the rooftops far below.

The stair requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to use. A failure by 5 or more results in a fall. Halfway up the stair, a shelf has been built into the wall and upon it rests a tea-chest. Inside the tea-chest are the keys to the manacles and 20 flasks of alchemist's fire that Strange intended to use to ward off attackers if he was ever forced to retreat here.

Development: Threnody (who begins in **HS9** but is likely to be encountered here if she detects the characters) attacks anyone that enters the mill. Able to fly, the **Between vampire** attacks anyone on the stair, attempting to bull rush opponents as much as possible. If injured, she calls stuff of nightmares and continues her assault. If Maggot is with the characters at this stage, she dominates him and orders him to attack the characters.

HS9. The Birth Brood

The topmost floor of the Hollowmill is the attic area directly below the peak of its roof. A floor of rough planks is accessed here by means of the stair in **HS8**. It can also be entered by means of a gap in the roof. It is large enough for a Medium creature to squeeze through it onto the gable outside (**HS10**). Threnody used it to force some local vampires she had dominated to walk outside into the sunlight for her own amusement. During the day, the gap is covered by a large tarpaper sheet that keeps all daylight out, though it can be easily removed.

Close up, the living hive is not only foul to see, but smells of hot honeyed meat boiled in urine. As you look, this charnel house of figures writhes slightly, and from the mouth of one of them a small black thing is birthed, dislocating the jaw as it exits.

The lever to stop the operation of the sails is fixed to the west wall. The lever is quite stiff (DC 15 Strength check), but if moved to the down position causes the sails to grind to a halt. Hidden in the shadows among

Dark, Darker, Darkest

How do you like your horror? Take a careful look at the ending of this part of the adventure and think long and hard about how you want it to work. The Dark version has the bodies herein dead, horribly so, but dead, and awaiting the joyful arrival of the babies. A Darker version has them alive, but unconscious. If you go with the last option, be careful with this moment. Don't upset your players or penalise their characters.

Failure at the High Stormhouse

It's not always about winning, but not acting when the Between vampire is birthing her brood is a serious error of judgement by the characters. The adventure path may conclude with the city riddled with young Between vampires, who within a few months take over the Fetch and fling Beltane into the sunlight where he combusts and is destroyed. A new dark age assuages the Fetch, but this dark age's effects are felt across the city. Such a city would be a terror by night, and by day the agents of the vampires would watch men acting in servitude to their nightly masters. It would be a most brutal dictatorship fuelled by the vampires' need to feed. Farms of people would be set up, and neighbouring countries could launch attacks out of fear of being overrun. It's only been a few centuries since the Singed Man controlled the Duchy of Kear and laid waste to its human populace before his vampire minions, and the Kingdom of the Vast that stands there now still faces the great sere of plains running from Eber to the coast. No, a new vampire kingdom in the West would be most unwelcome indeed.

Perhaps the Between vampires catch some hint of this ominous past — after all, Castorhage's own King Prudus II fell to the clutches of that foul vampire lord — and choose a safer and more subtle course instead. They might only take over the Fetch, becoming stronger and more terrible

while leaving the rest of the city in blissful ignorance, though certainly the mocking plague would remain an endemic problem for as long as a population of these vampires called the city home. Few of the foul creatures would move about and then only in the dark of night and legends would spring up about the change to the Fetch. Perhaps the Between vampires could subtly take control of the city-state through the Royal Family and leave it up to the characters to ally with the likes of Revolutionaries, Anarchists, the Church of Mother Grace and Sanctuary, and even the Family on Festival to discover the source of the taint and root out its corruption. This could certainly take things in an unexpected direction entirely, but running a campaign in and among the ruins of the failed prior campaign can be a lot of fun.

the stacked bodies and requiring a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot, is Threnody's link to Between: a grimy but polished steel *mirror-portal* of Medium size. The Between vampire, **Threnody**, lurks here with her beloved young. Her tactics are discussed in **HS8** above. The vampiress is a sight to behold now that she is not moving so fast that she can't even be seen. Those that caught a glimpse of her in ***L7: My Benefactor*** recognize her immediately, though it is obvious that she is no longer pregnant. She is old, far older than seems physically possible. Her skin is a wrinkled, hairless, expanse of ashen grey pallor, and seems to sag from her frame as if the skeleton inside was somehow retracting. The flesh of her abdomen hangs in a pendulous mass nearly to her knees, having already disgorged the brood of young it carried. Her wrinkled head is eyeless, with only a small nose and a wide fanged mouth to break its cracked and wrinkled surface. Membranous wings of ragged flesh rise from her shoulders, and most horrifyingly of all as she raises clawed hands toward you, you can see that in the centre of each palm is a glaring, jaundiced eye.

Development: There are scores of stacked bodies here, and dangling in **HS8** below, and each contains a germinating Between vampire spawn. The young Between vampires birth at a set time. If the characters are just too late, they are feasting. If more than a couple of days late, all that remains are husks bled dry and eaten hollow. The young have no attacks, but are revolting to look at. Until they mature and fly away in 2 days' time, they have 1 hp each and are easily destroyed by fire. The mirror is made of polished steel and must be destroyed whilst the vampire is in it to prevent the creature from reforming.

Treasure: The Between vampire has little interest in acquisitions — at least for now. The bodies have been left with any personal items, and if searched reveal two silver wedding rings worth 10 gp each, a fine silver-and-pearl locket with a miniature of a horse inside worth 50 gp, and a *potion of protection from evil* in a green glass flask can be found. Also up here on Silas Mayweed's corpse is the other half of the ring belonging to Lottie Mayweed (see **Guttock and Fence Glue Manufactury**). The discarded key to the iron collars that hang from **HS10** is found on a successful DC 35 Perception check.

HS10. Rooftop (Not shown on map)

A narrow crawl-hole gives access to the roof where a curious sight awaits. A large iron weathervane is thrust into the roof's apex. Chained to the hefty vane are six iron collars, all are locked shut (the key has been tossed in amongst the victims in **HS9** below). A strange and distorted dark shadow scratches across the rooftop here. The collars and shadows are all that are left of 6 vampires Threnody dragged here and chained to the weathervane. She then ordered the dominated creatures to remain chained in place until after the coming of dawn. It amused the Between vampire to see their fear and ultimate destruction.

Treasure: Resting in the guttering at the very edge of the rooftop is a *wand of lightning bolts*, a brass and iron and walnut construction with a series of filigree stylized sparks. The rod was owned by one of the vampires, and was still with the undead when it was destroyed. It rolled down the rooftop and caught in the guttering. The rod is spotted on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check by anyone on the roof. The guttering here is weak, as any character making a successful DC 15 Intelligence check notices. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is needed to reach the wand by clambering on the rooftop, but characters so doing hear a sudden crack and feel the guttering and the shingles fail. The character must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity save to avoid pitching forward and falling. A DC 25 check not only makes the save, but catches the falling wand in the bargain.

The Gratitude of the Dead

If the characters successfully destroy Threnody, it is only a short time before the Fetch learn of it and rejoice. Beltane itself instructs one of his beloved brides to take a reward to the heroes and end the temporary alliance. The bride Elthanor Thorn (LE female human **vampire**) delivers the reward in the dead of night to the characters directly. She does not wake them as she delivers the reward directly to their personal lodgings. The Fetch have long observed the characters, and it is a good idea to make their choice of gifts uncannily personalised, as though they have known the characters well for years (assign each character a rare magic item that is particularly well suited to them).

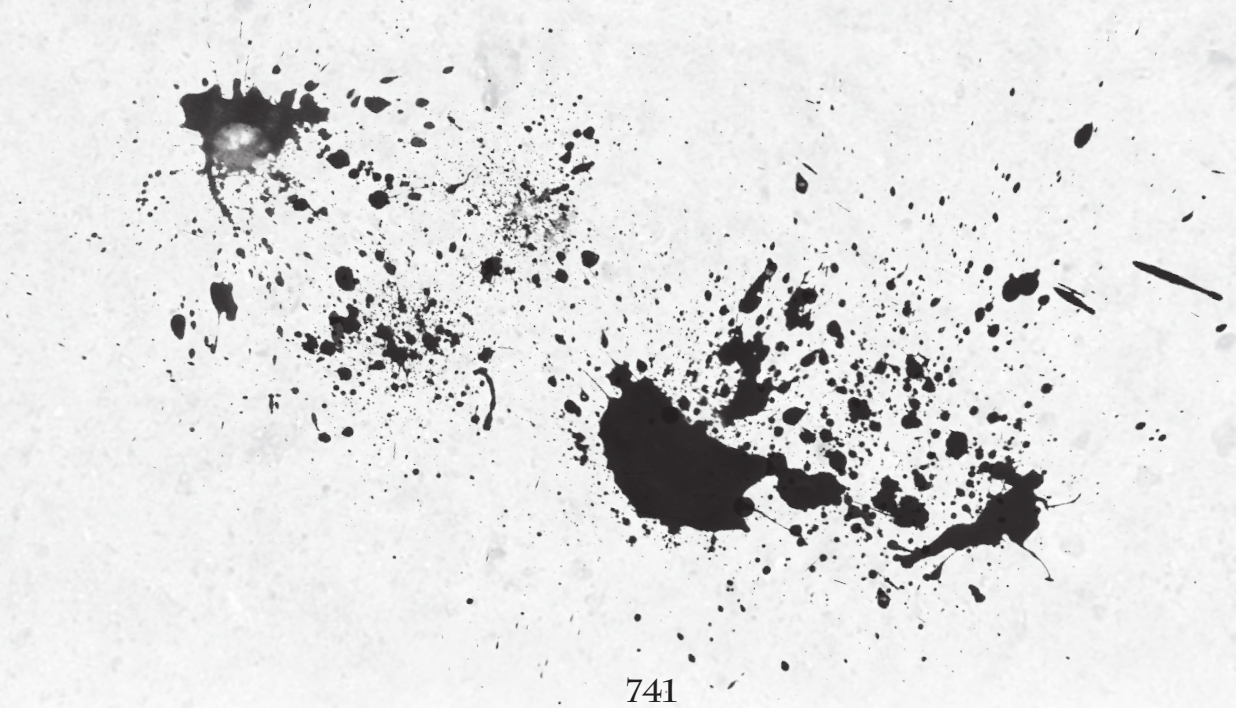
A note, written in flowing script by Beltane itself, lies atop the gifts (see **Handout 3**).

Occasionally, you may wish to have words whispered by members of the Fetch as the characters unknowingly pass them on the streets at night, phrases such as, "Behold the saviours; praise them," or "Homage to you warm-bloods." Perhaps it could even be the more obsequious, "It is the gods of the warm flesh, saviours of the Fetch. Blessed be they."

This recognition does not mean that the characters have the friendship of the Fetch, but the characters should each receive the power reward below.

Homage of Fetch

Whenever an intelligent undead creature first encounters the characters within the Blight, it has a 25% chance to know or be aware of the character's reputation amongst the Fetch, a reputation of homage, not enmity. Such undead do not attack the characters unless attacked, and may be called upon to carry out a service as if having a helpful attitude. They will not do anything harmful to themselves or others of their kind, however. If such help is rejected, toyed with, or belittled, the Fetch soon hear about it and relinquish all such benefits.



Part Two: Apotheosis

Lord Benedict has given the characters a contact to get them into the Capitol. Characters making any kind of enquiries about the lumbering head, heart, and soul of the city quickly find out that there is a paranoia gripping the city's administrative centre, and in many ways there could not be a worse time for anyone to try to sneak in. The Capitol, everyone is generally aware, is the home of the aristocracy, and whilst tradesmen, merchants, and all manner of folk go in, they are being checked, double-checked, and triple-checked. Those showing even the slightest hint of malicious intent are taken away and not seen again.

As written, the Capitol serves as a wary presence at the back of events, and it is assumed that the characters go in incognito, keep a very low profile, and continue to do so until the end of this adventure. You should not hesitate to punish any characters that stray from this narrow ridge of secrecy. The empire is built upon caste, order, and the rule of law. Without it carrying this kind of menace, the campaign setting is weakened. Any hint that the Capitol is somehow easy to break into, roam around in, and take liberties with runs contrary to the place. The paranoia, however, gives the characters a chance to enter and take advantage of the rule of law — those that are found within the Capitol cannot *possibly* be wrongdoers. That sort of people come in mobs, look shifty, are dirty from work, smell bad, and speak in uncouth ways. Play the game of caste and the characters can have liberty to complete this adventure, kill a Justice, and live to tell the tale.

The Decoction Gin House

Lord Benedict has guided the characters toward the gin house and an associate called **Master Grumb** (N male briny† **commoner**). The Decoction is not hard to find. When the characters arrive, read the following description:

> Crammed between much larger buildings near Sister Lyme is a whitewashed edifice with narrow leaded windows. The place is squashed upward, as though it was once a much smaller, squatter place and has subsequently been crushed by its neighbours. A sign hangs halfway off a rail above the door. It reads "*The Decoction Gin House.*"

The Decoction has an ill reputation. Its "Mother's Ruin" is one of the strongest gins in the city, and even the juniper it is steeped in cannot take away the chymic smell. The place is a hangout for briny†, and dozens are likely to be here at any one time. Within, the Decoction is a testament to sailors. Its walls groan with ships in bottles, knots, anchors, and other nautical paraphernalia. Those who enter are met by the unblinking eyes of the briny and immediately made to feel very uncomfortable.

Pushing their way to the bar, which is festooned with pickled whelks, jellied eels, and cockles and mussels, the characters find a pair of briny maids behind it, their bulging eyes staring in different directions on their wan faces. Grumb is asleep in the back, and the two girls are nervous about disturbing him. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check is enough to force the issue. An attempted Intimidate check is likely to make things go very badly for the characters here.

Grumb, a haddock-stinking old salt who curses every other word, is not happy at being disturbed, and insultingly denies everything until the name Morel is mentioned, at which point he goes even paler and invites the characters into his parlour at the back. This snug room is filled with jarred ningyos, old sea charts, and things collected from the Unsea. It is oddly welcoming, in a fishy-scented way, its fire spluttering in the hearth despite the spring warmth outside.

Grumb has created forged 4th Decree papers for each of the characters (see **Chapter 5**). Any NPC he is aware of also has papers. He has been doing some digging. Over a pot of tea he tells the characters that the Capitol is paranoid, revolution is coming, and anyone who attempts to get in is either desperate, mad, or both. The papers, he says, are not brilliant forgeries, but should stand casual examination to get them as high as the Ambage district. If they intend to head up into the Crown, they will need to find additional means to make their assent, as the Decrees he is providing will not cover those lofty heights. The characters would be wise to try to disguise themselves as toffs.

Grumb's agents have been operating in the Capitol, and the best way in is via what is called the Jack-of-All-Trades Gate (**C5** in **Chapter 5**), rarely used as it involves an arduous walk/climb up precarious stairs, which partially collapsed some months ago. This has left a section of the link exposed above gables with a fall of several hundred feet. The guards at the base should allow visitors in providing they have a plausible cover story. The characters need to ensure that not just the main character has such a story in case of examination but also a reason why each of the others is accompanying him or her and entering though this obscure gate.

He tells the characters that once inside they'll need to keep their heads down and their job swift; the Capitol crawls with spies that can see inside a man's soul, and the idea of questioning a Justice is beyond madness. The characters also need to be able to make a quick escape.

Of the three contacts they received from Lord Benedict, Grumb tells the characters that **Carline** is occasionally seen in the **Libram Ward** in the higher city (a parish level called Ambage) said to be employed there by a high-ranking merchant of great power. **Thistle** has been unheard of for a long time, but recently, the works of the High Brotherhood of the Holy Mother, an order of celibate monks, has been turning heads in the Outer Southern Gables of the Crooked Key parish high above the mundane city. The monks have been making a pretty penny from their recent building works, which have started seemingly from nothing, the whole of which sounds suspiciously like the touch of the renowned gablemaester.

Finally, there is **Melancholy**, said to be an aranea†. Grumb advises the characters against any dealings with the woman, who is said to be treacherous and ambitious. She does, he is sure, know exactly where the Justice lives, and how best to get there, but beyond that he wouldn't trust any Under-Justice as far as he could spit them. If the characters get desperate, however, he says that she can be found on **Gable Tor**, an outcrop of luxurious townhouses high in the east of the Capitol in the Crooked Key.

Grubb has a shifty look about him, and he is able to obtain certain items on the black market. Given a day, he can generally acquire poisons, potions, and scrolls of a value up to 1,000 gp in total (taking 10% extra as commission). He can also lay his hands on rarer insectum†.

The Capitol

The heart of Castorage is a dizzying mass of buildings stacked on buildings built upon an inner core of granite, its body riddled with tunnels and canals, chambers, buildings and secrets. Alleys writhe through this confusing mass, and somehow light seems to get into windows deep inside the place. Mirrors guide these natural shafts of light through confines and tunnels, and the post of Glaziermaester is one of considerable reputation and wealth.

In essence, the Capitol is an entire community of gothic towers, citadels, cathedrals, and other buildings built together and upon one another by the toil of the master builders of the ingenuity of the Royal Arcane Engineers Guild. The place has a calm, cold, civilised air about it,

its cobbled narrow streets rising to grimed skylights, its myriad byways lit at night by pyrebeetle lanterns. It is incredibly clean and tidy because an army of slaves, servants, and made† is eternally at work and in many ways resembles a strangely false parkland: plants grow in pots, fancy ironwork abounds, and the place is full of grottoes, ponds, follies, and other distractions of architecture. Stern guardsmen of the Capital Watch wander the streets in patrols of six, and aristocrats wander past, their powdered wigs and mortomata† brooches incongruous to their surroundings. Pale skin and an effete air are all the rage now.

While in the Capitol, weapons should be sheathed (the heads of polearms hooded), and any scabbards fastened with visible ties that require a full turn to remove. A DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check enables a character to have what visibly appears to be such a tie, but which can be slipped free when the weapon is drawn — the check is made when the character attempts to slip the knot. The same check applies to polearm hoods that can be shaken free. See **Chapter 5** for more information on the Capitol.

Jack-of-All-Trades Gate

Entering the lion's den, the characters can approach the sprawling refuge of the Royal Family and aristocracy at any time. When they approach the Jack-of-All-Trades Gate at **C5**, read or paraphrase the following description.

So here, at last, is the Capitol close up. It is every bit as demented as it appears from a distance, sheer walls rising to gables upon turrets upon buttresses, curtain walls disgorging redoubts, disgorging other fortifications, all with an imminent feeling of impending collapse. You see spires and cathedrals and ramparts amongst the chaos, which rises seemingly into the cloudless sky above the city. Far, far above glowers the Royal Palace with its highest spire. One section of the Capitol has recently collapsed, and lies exposed to the air, an ugly, scorched scar in the façade of impregnability. This already has an industrious air about it, though, with scaffolding erected in a hasty web-work with repairs underway.

Ahead, a narrow gate with a dozen guild-signs is watched by a small collection of guardsmen. High above, a much older collapse of a portion of the wall has exposed a steep and precarious stair within. A rope and chains have been affixed around this perilous pathway. Unlike the other gates you have witnessed this day, no one waits in line to use this entrance.

Capitol Watch Sergeant Hornbeam (LN male human **veteran**) and his 5 guardsmen (LN male human **guards**) stand watch here. Few use the entrance, but Hornbeam is smart enough to know that those who wish to enter the Capitol quickly might risk this way. If he finds characters who are nervous about revolution and glance back at the city, he doesn't even bother to check their papers but instead reassures them that the talk of revolution is just that. No one would be insane enough to try anything at the Capitol. If reminded of recent attacks, he shrugs his shoulders and says it won't be happening again. If asked of the three locations the characters seek, he happily gives directions, and points out that his cousin Lydia Hornbeam runs a respectable lodging and cabb'e house just off a side lane in the Libram Ward. It has a pair of fine yellow laburnum in pots outside her entrance, which also has a duo of lovebirds in a gold cage. Hornbeam can fill the characters in on any basics about the Capitol, and would expect travellers to ask.

If the characters mention the Mordent estate in Fallowshire as a part of their cover story, Hornbeam ends the discussion by saying to one character, "I had a cousin used to farm that way, name of Jubb Hornbeam. Did you ever meet him?" Hornbeam does not expect the characters, as nobles, to know his cousin, a fat, bald man who was plagued by gout. However, offering any kind of knowledge of the farmer — a DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check — brings a big smile to the sergeant's face. As friends of the family, he writes a quick note for his other cousin Lydia for when and if the characters meet her at the cabb'e house (see sidebox) that refers to the characters as "New friends from the old shire who could use guidance."

Of course, if the characters claim association with Jubb and can't back it up with actual knowledge of the shire or a successful Deception check, the sergeant quickly becomes suspicious and the characters may have to dash in, risking a chase up the precarious stairs before losing their pursuers in the labyrinthine halls beyond. Not professing any knowledge of Jubb Hornbeam at all is perfectly acceptable, however, and will not hurt the characters' chances to enter (other than not being given the note by Sergeant Hornbeam).

Jack-of-All-Trades Gate Stair

The climb beyond the Jack-of-All-Trades Gate is relentless. Stair after stair after stair spiralling inside a tower with only the occasional stained-glass window to let in light. Characters making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception check) notice that one of these windows depicts an angel burning worshippers with her light, though the relevance of this design choice, if any, is unclear. Eventually the wind that blows down the circular stairwell picks up, as the characters reach the exposed section.

From below, it looked much easier. But now that the place is reached, the opening is seen to be vast. A single column of stone rises through the broken walls, leaving a thirty-foot section of the stair exposed to the elements. Some of the stairs remain, but there is a section about ten feet across upon which hefty stones have been piled one atop the other to create a ridge to clamber up with the open expanse of the collapse immediately adjacent.

Although hideously exposed, the stairs are passable with care, and the haphazard ridge presents the only real hazard. Surmounting this ridge requires only a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, but a roll of a natural 1 results in a fall for 20d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

Shortly after the climb, the characters arrive at a small doorway with a porthole in it. It leads onto a very narrow street high in the outer edges of the Libram Ward or Ambage.

The Love Birds Cabb'e House, Libram Ward

Lydia Hornbeam (LN female human **commoner**) is a handsome woman in her mid-thirties. She has flaming red hair, a fiery passion, and a love for order. If she thought for one moment the characters were here to kill a Justice, she would tell her cousin immediately. However, use Lydia as a way to put the characters at their ease. She is genuinely likeable and thoughtful, a wonderful cook and a charming, intelligent lady. Her cabb'e house is delightful, filled with the wonderfully rich aroma of rare cabb'e, chocolate, and spiced cakes. She has simple lodgings upstairs that are cramped, but can sleep up to 6 in comfort. Exotic lanterns light the interior, and a wonderfully fat cat called Ernest wanders around rubbing against stranger's legs. It should take a shine to one character, as might Lydia.

If the characters give Lydia the note from Sergeant Hornbeam, she welcomes them warmly and dotes on them constantly. She also provides a guide for the characters while they're in the Capitol. If the characters accept the use of this guide, a teenage boy named Phippe (NG male young human **commoner**), they are able to move throughout the Capitol by the fastest, most direct routes and have access to someone with a great deal of local knowledge about the place. He does not know where Blackbriar or any of the others dwell, though he can assist in locating them.

A Game of Souls

The characters have three names to follow up with for information on Justice Blackbriar, and all three have very different reasons to want him dead.

For each of the three contacts there is a location method; two are simple, one much less so. Open attack or failed spellcasting is taking a terrible risk; remember that guardsmen are everywhere, and the characters are strangers here. Do not hesitate to punish bad play here. Finally, each NPC has a "best method" to gain their trust. In no cases will the NPC meet the characters alone; Capitolers know that it is far harder to *charm* two than one.

The easiest person to find and deal with is Alice Melancholy, but, of course, she is the most untrustworthy. She has no compunction about characters returning and making second offers. However, once her interest is piqued, she has the characters followed. The characters always have the option of Alice to fall back on; she helps them regardless of any actions or fails. She is greedy for power and sees the characters as a chance to take a step forward in schemes she has long been planning. If the characters fail, she acts after them; if they succeed, she attacks the victorious characters to neatly tie up events and leave her in the clear and with the Justice's home and — soon — power.

Ferris Carline: The Vengeful Eunuch

Location: Townhouse of Eleanor Weft, Libram Ward, Ambage

Ferris Carline frequents the Libram Ward and is fairly easy to locate, being locally well known and quite distinctive. His fat face, shaved head, and effete crimson and lavender coloured garb belie a cunning and shrewd man. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check reveals his location at the townhouse of the merchant **Eleanor Weft** (LN female human **noble**), and a result of 25+ on the check reveals Carline's reputation for cunning beyond what his buffoonish appearance might suggest.

Ferris Carline is a eunuch and spy (a **minstrel**) who dwells in the Libram Ward of Ambage and frequents the booksellers in that area obsessively. Blackbriar personally gelded Carline. Carline helps the characters only if he can visit revenge upon the Justice, that is to say, geld him using a pair of heavy gelding shears he keeps in the hopes of using them on Blackbriar. Resolute and strongwilled, Carline's appearance — a bald and overweight court hanger-on — belies his cunning and speed.

Ferris does not meet with strangers in the street, where he is always accompanied by two slaves (N male human **commoners**), but will at his mistress's house. The townhouse lies a short walk through wide, well-patrolled streets, and if strangers wish to speak to him, he arranges to meet them there. The townhouse itself brims with slaves, indentured servants, and guards. There are always 2 off-duty Capitol Watch **guardsmen** present when strangers are visiting. Ferris meets the characters on a green terrace filled with spring flowers, trickling pools, and politeness where his mistress can watch through a hidden viewport concealed among the decorative arabesques of the terrace's crown moulding. Attempts to physically or magically coerce Ferris are doomed to failure in all likelihood as guardsmen are immediately summoned at the first hint of hostile intent. Guests are treated cordially, and wine, bread, and olives are brought out, but cordiality ends there.

Treasure: Ferris carries 6 doses of poison, assorted jewellery (100 gp), a gold signet ring (25 gp), and a purse containing 100 pp.

Gaining Ferris's Trust

Ferris trusts no one other than his mistress, but he burns with a wish to avenge himself upon Blackbriar — an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth — and keeps a pair of gelding shears in his apartment at all times for his moment of revenge. He confines any discussions about eliminating or otherwise locating Blackbriar (he assumes all requests for information involve an assassination attempt, as the Justice is universally loathed) to three simple criteria explained below. His motivation in questioning the characters is to see if they are up to the job. A botched assassination attempt is simply too dangerous for him to conceive. If potential allies seem powerful and determined, however, he may help … for a price.

1. A demonstration of power. Ferris asks the characters to show their mettle. He is not about to give details of a secret location to anyone easily. Ferris is impressed by powerful spells, and the characters should have enough spells of at least 4th-level to impress him. Shows of brute strength automatically fail, and he dismisses such characters as serious partners immediately, as he does if the characters argue about who should show their power. Any 4th-level spell, or something shrewder that you judge impressive enough, passes this test.

2. A reason. Why are the characters interested in Blackbriar? The characters can lie if they wish, but that entails a DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check. The more believable the lie, the more likely success (apply modifiers as you see fit). If the characters come out with the truth, no check is necessary; the success is automatic. Any embellishment of the whole truth still allows automatic success as long as the characters' tale is still fairly close to being honest.

3. A plan. What if the characters are caught and questioned? Where does that leave him? Do not rely on any checks here, but simple good sense. If the characters have a good plan that does not link them or their corpses (that can be questioned with *speak with dead*), then he will be convinced.

What Ferris Knows

Ferris knows exactly where Blackbriar lives. He paid someone a large sum of money for the information only 7 months ago. His price to part with this information, however, is steep. Ferris wants to exact revenge upon Blackbriar in the same way he himself was unmanned by the Justice, and he wants to do so while he is still alive. A chance for this sort of revenge is required. If they agree to his terms, then he guides the characters to the townhouse (without revealing its location beforehand). If that price is too steep, he dismisses the characters but remains open-minded for another 24 hours if the characters change their minds, before decides to take a holiday for several months away from the city — just in case.

Consequences

If the characters assault Ferris, attempt to cast spells upon him, or otherwise harass him in any uncivilised way, he alerts the authorities to the characters immediately after they leave.

Gablemaester Thistle: The Hidden Monk

Location: The Fairy Cathedral, Outer Southern Gables, Crooked Key

Locating Thistle is the most difficult task for the characters, as they will need to look for where he logically *might* be, rather than looking for him specifically. Looking for Thistle specifically will bring up a dead end unless powerful magic is used. After Blackbriar ruined him, he spent months wandering the city as a beggar before eventually becoming a brother of the High Brotherhood of the Holy Mother, an order of celibate monks. The architect rose through the ranks after helping with the reconstruction of the Church of Saint Luther, Patron Saint of Glaziers and Lanternmakers. The church is a half-glass building noted for its magnificent stained-glass walls, something it shares in common with Blackbriar's Townhouse. After his work there, he has moved on to other buildings, and is presently one of the team of monks working on shoring up the foundations of the Fairy Cathedral (**C19** in **Chapter 5**) in the Outer Southern Gables of Crooked Key. A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check is enough to learn the location where the *brotherhood* presently works, a project likely to take 2 years. No amount of skill checks uncovers any trace of the whereabouts of Gablemaester Thistle *himself,* however, as he now goes by an assumed name and has left the Thistle identity behind.

Gablemaester Thistle (NG male human **ascetic**†), a genius and architect, is now just another of the holy brothers who labour under the command of **Friar Urska** (LG male human **priest** of Mother Grace). Urska is a studious and serious man who is anxious to keep up his tithes,

which he always struggled with due to his incompetence with budgets and his occasional dallying with the doxies of Festival — something he is ashamed of but keeps indulging in nonetheless. He knows Thistle as "**Brother Jacob Cocksfoot**," the name he goes by now. Urska knows that Thistle is a genius and doesn't care about his past, but is determined to hang onto his protégé to balance the books. He will not know of any "Thistle" if questioned, and will not reveal the name of Brother Cocksfoot even if he grows to suspect that the characters are looking for him.

When the characters arrive at the Fairy Cathedral, read or paraphrase the following description:

> An incredible place juts from the edges of the city here, hanging from the other buildings and towering above lower gables. Its summit is crested with towers and spires, scores of them, each accompanied by incredible stained-glass windows depicting holy acts. Half a dozen of the spires are strangled in scaffolding, and countless builders heave buckets and materials up and down the surface.

Within, the cathedral is dedicated to the Holy Mother with an internal shrine to Lord Shingles†. The vast, echoing space is dazzling with gold, silver, and frescoes. The themes are holy, but with more than a passing reference to the fey, who herein are depicted as the Mother's children. Visitors to the building site are directed to Friar Urska. Interaction of any kind on the building site requires everyone who wishes to be involved to climb upward using the scaffolding and ladders, requiring a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A failure by 5 or more ends up in a fall of 2d6 x 10 feet.

The brothers dwell in temporary quarters beneath the worksite. Each day they arise at dawn to pray. They then begin work, breaking mid-morning for prayers, and then working until approximately 1st hour non (i.e. 1 p.m.) when they break for a meal of porridge, bread, and fruit. They then work until dusk, when they return to their quarters beneath until morning, filling their time with prayers and rest. Anyone talking to the brothers is directed to or intercepted by the friar. However, characters looking for clues might notice during the course of a day or so on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check from someone spending the time watching the area that one monk does more instructing and talking to the friar than others — Brother Cocksfoot.

Gaining Thistle's Trust

To Friar Urska, Cocksfoot is his meal ticket, and he knows that sooner or later someone will come trying to poach him, which could spell Urska's ruin. Initially, Urska is friendly, claiming his own genius in the job, but acknowledging the help of the other brothers. A plausible story, such as posing as higher members of the church, should grant the characters benefits, but to Urska, his architect is precious.

Little is known about Cocksfoot, but getting him alone is the first problem. The characters stick out like a sore thumb on any part of the building site, but if they come up with a suitably cunning plan, allow them to get close. Spells, of course, are another way to gain information and assistance. "Cocksfoot" is very nervous of all visitors, incredibly so if they are asking questions about him. He is not sure if Blackbriar ever forgot about him or his debtors, and is suspicious of everyone. Only by magical compulsion will Thistle reveal what he knows about Blackbriar's home. He never voluntarily offers this information.

What Thistle Knows

A magically coerced Thistle happily explains that Blackbriar had the garden built to fill it with Between creatures. He intended to use the place as a place of rest and study, but gave no further details. When Thistle built Blackbriar's Stained Glass Garden (**BG7**), he became intimate with the layout (this includes the presence of the clay golem in that area). He does not know about the Between Peacock in (**BG8**), however. Thistle used to struggle to escape his master's endless cruelty and demands, so he built a secret escape route. The escape is more crawl-hole than tunnel, in all honesty. Its entrance lies at the back of a fountain on the junction of Magpie Way and The Crooked Angle (see **Blackbriar Gardens**) and emerges in the gardens of the house (**BG3-C**). If the characters convince Thistle to help them — which must be by magical coercion — he warns them that his former master is ruthless, has an estate filled with broken creatures and golems, and is himself a powerful druid with alliances in the Great Coven. If they leave any clue of their involvement, they will never be able to rest easily within a hundred miles of the city again.

The entrance is where Thistle says it is, but requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate, even if the characters know what they are looking for. The door is rusted shut but can be broken open either with violence or an hour's worth of more delicate chipping.. It enters and follows a narrow and tortuous tunnel, a dusty space filled with hundreds of spiders that slowly rises upward into the Capitol. It takes 6 hours to reach the garden of Blackbriar's house through this tunnel.

Consequences

Above all, Thistle doesn't want to be discovered under any circumstances, and Urska wants to keep him. As respected pillars of the community, they call the Capitol Watch whenever they spot suspicious characters, and in time, such harassment would bring a permanent force of guardsmen.

Alice Melancholy: The Open Enemy

Location: Summit Hall, Gable Tor, Crooked Key

Gable Tor is a very wealthy neighbourhood of townhouses patrolled by the Capitol Watch and in some cases private forces (even small armies). Such townhouses overlook a central square from which fan six side streets. Summit Hall has a huge iron door watched by an imposing stone figure of a three-faced gargoyle. The doorway has an immense bell-pull. The figure, a **stone golem**, is part of Melancholy's considerable force within her townhouse, a force that includes 2 **skulks**† that form part of a potential later encounter with the Under-Justice, 4 **guards**, and a broken† **invisible stalker**. Melancholy does not receive visitors, but anyone visiting the house is met by her maid, **Alicia** (NG female human **commoner**), who has been magically dominated, and politely told to leave. If pressed, the maid offers to pass her mistress a message.

Gaining Alice's Trust

The characters' message is their way into the Under-Justice's confidence. Writing the note allows a Charisma check, and can take the approach of Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion as well. Any check with a result of 15 results in an offer of a meeting, and a reply is given to the characters wherever they are staying via the maid, 24 hours later. The characters can try a second contact with Alice, but they must wait another full day for a response. If amenable to a meeting, her ladyship invites them to join her in the 7th hour non (i.e. 7 p.m.) in a well-known and very busy eating hall called the Polyphagia. She assumes humanoid form and then is escorted to the eating house by her skulk associates and watched by her broken† invisible stalker. Attempts to ambush her on the way meet a violent response and, in all likelihood, a further response from the Capitol Watch.

The Polyphagia is a snobbish, opulent gluttonous monstrosity where the most exotic foods are available at all times. Melancholy is one of its regulars, and at any given time a score of aristocrats indulge themselves of its fare. When the characters arrive, they are directed to Alice only if suitably attired. The aranea† has already taken the liberty of ordering food for the characters (see sidebar). Over the course of the meal, she quizzes them. Rather like Ferris Carline, Alice intends to try to find out what is motivating the characters, but in this case all that she is looking for is someone up to the job: someone who is of adequate ability — and sufficient naiveté. She also has three criteria during the meal that the characters must meet.

1. A demonstration of power. Remember that the characters are in a public place, limiting what they can do. Alice is also well-versed in

subtle tactics, and recognizes and interrupts any attempt at charm or other compulsion magic. Alice purely wishes to see power. Muscle is a start for her, but magic is better. The casting of a 4th-level spell piques her interest; anything less is likely to meet with her scorn. Unlike the others, she is here to be impressed, however, and allows others to show their skills if one disappoints her initially.

2. A Reason. Why are the characters after Blackbriar? She doesn't care why, she is just curious.

3. A contingency plan. What if they are caught? How can the characters keep her good name out of the affair, especially if questioned after death — which, she stresses, is likely. The answer to this and the previous questions are, in truth, irrelevant. She has already made up her mind about the characters upon seeing them and their power. The rest is pretence to cover her own interest in the matter.

What Alice Knows

She knows exactly where Blackbriar lives, and that he has broken† creatures and golems guarding him. Beyond that will be up for the characters to discover and resolve.

Alice wants a mask to enable her to kill the Justice; that is all that she truly knows. Even if the characters are fools — tough enough fools, that is — she can follow them into the mansion, allowing them to take all the risks, and then taking over. She is that confident of her abilities and those of her trusted associates the skulks†. The Under-Justice has had her eye on the seat of Blackbriar and one or two other Justices for some time now, seeking to create an opening for her own ascension. The characters offer her that chance at last.

Consequences

Melancholy intends to follow the characters using her skulks and *scrying*. She enters behind them shortly after their arrival in Blackbriar's mansion, makes sure Blackbriar is dead, and then kills them to clear up any loose ends. She could never really rest soundly after betraying her dear friend and fellow Justice, and the characters' death assuages her conscience of his murder. If the characters make use of Alice as their contact, then proceed with **Through the Looking-Glass** below.

Her attack requires some improvisation on your part. The primary players in this betrayal are detailed below, but their tactics are smart and change according to the situation at hand. The invisible stalker is likely to be unleashed first to scout things out, but only after they believe Blackbriar is dead. The others respond as needed to the results of the invisible stalker's ambush and the developing situation. See below for details.

A Meal of Nine Courses at the Polyphagia

Slave-waiters are dressed in costumes to resemble feral animals with human faces. Feel free to expand or ignore the meal as you wish; its only purpose is to make the discussions move along, and to worry the characters about the final bill, which should be considerable. Alice eats voraciously in a manner belying her petite body (petite in humanoid form, the only one visible) and mocks any characters that cannot or will not keep pace. The final tab will be on the order of 175 gp per person, and Alice expects the characters to pay for hers as well since it was their solicitation for help that prompted this meeting.

1st Course: Mar-eel soup, specially titrated and detoxified
2nd Course: Chuul spawn prawns fried in garlic butter and chilies
3rd Course: Soft-boiled hate-owl eggs in pine-nut sauce
4th Course: Whole honey-roasted foetal pig cooked in saffron and coriander
5th Course: Stew of dormice and spinach in white wine
6th Course: Roast wild boar with dried wild apples sautéed in cinnamon
7th Course: Fried veal escalope with raisins and capers
8th Course: Charbroiled eblis breast with asparagus rice pilaf
9th Course: Peacock's tongue glazed in molasses and mint

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice Melancholy involves herself in the characters' plot if they approach her for information on Blackbriar. Alice herself is an Under-Justice harbouring ambitions to take Blackbriar's place, and is rumoured to be a member of the Great Coven. Melancholy's plan is simple: watch the characters go in, follow them after their attack, then kill them to clean up any loose ends. Melancholy has considerable resources at her disposal, and getting hold of *scrying* scrolls should be easy for her. An hour would be plenty of time for her to do so. As was mentioned earlier, her tactics need to be flexible. Her proverbial looking-glass (*scrying*) may alert the characters to her presence, so she prefers to be more subtle if possible. She immediately posts the 2 **skulks** to overlook Blackbriar Gardens, watching from the gables of buildings 80 feet away. As soon as they spot the characters going to the Gardens, one runs to notify Alice who arrives in 5 minutes with her broken† **invisible stalker** in tow. The invisible stalker is sent in first, but eventually the entire group follows the characters in order to kill them — once they have dealt with Blackbriar, of course.

Alice Melancholy

Large monstrosity (shapechanger in human form), chaotic evil
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 59 (9d10 + 9)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Damage Resistances
Damage Immunities
Condition Immunities
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Shapechanger. Alice Melancholy can use its action to polymorph into a Medium creature (humanoid or beast), or back into its true form, which is monstrous. Its statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Spider Climb. Alice can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Innate Spellcasting. Alice's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, and requires no material components for the following spells (spell save DC 13):
At will: *dancing lights, poison cloud, shocking grasp;*
3/day each: *charm person, sleep;*
1/day each: *invisibility, mirror image*

Spellcasting. Alice Melancholy is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*
5th level (1 slot): *scrying*

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

***Web* (Recharge 5-6):** +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Treasure: Alice carries 4 *spell scrolls of scrying* at 10th level, and 200 pp.

Tactics: The invisible stalker goes in first while Alice casts *scrying* in order to watch his progress. After the stalker has located the characters and confirmed if Blackbriar still lives or not, Alice sends in the skulks for clean-up. If possible, they hide and ambush their opponents with sniping sling attacks. Their ambush is the signal for the invisible stalker to attack as well.

Finally, Alice herself moves in, readied with spells ahead of time to the extent possible. She attempts to remain a safe distance from the battle, creating a web as a barrier before launching her attack. She uses spells, and if the characters are likely to reach her in melee combat she will flee, unless she believes they are weak enough for her to finish them off in close combat.

Development: If Alice flees, she immediately heads to the nearest Watch Station and reports a home invasion at Justice Blackbriar's estate. She'll say she had an appointment to meet with him over a legal brief but saw the mayhem of the intruders and sent some of her servants in to assist the Justice. A double-sized patrol of 10 Capitol Watch **guards** and 2 Capitol Watch **veterans** arrives in 1d4+4 minutes and attacks any intruders they find at Blackbriar's estate. Alice joins them and uses her poison as much as possible on the characters, trying to silence them about her role as part of the conspiracy against the Justice. She believes she could beat any claim levelled against her by outsiders such as the characters, but would rather be safe than sorry. She retreats a second time only if it becomes clear that the patrol is being defeated. In that event, she retreats to Summit Hall to lick her wounds and plot contingencies for escape and revenge as necessary.

Blackbriar Gardens

Blackbriar lives in a former cathedral that has been reclaimed and swallowed by nature: ivy has broken its walls and now holds their remains up; the garden is a mass of overgrown vegetation so dense that only Blackbriar himself can move through it without hindrance; the place is a riot of late spring colour and heady perfume. The building lies in the north ridges of the Crooked Key, not far from Castle Sin (**C21**).

Hidden amongst these plants are darker creatures. Blackbriar is obsessed with Between and has many samples of the creatures, but his latest — and greatest — creature has recently been brought back from Between by Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage, whom Blackbriar has been sponsoring for months. Blackbriar dwells in the city as the place most likely to enable him to gain in power and advance his interest. The home he has chosen is a madness of brambles and briars and suits him perfectly. He knows that Justices have a very short shelf life and is paranoid. His systems to warn him of intruders extend to the very rooks that flock his gardens. As they number in their hundreds, unless the characters have an incredible means of attack, it is almost certain that the druidic spellcaster sees them coming.

His tactics are simple: meet intruders in the gardens (where he moves much more easily), attack with his most ferocious available spells, and then retreat among the brambles. The final climax of this part of the adventure is likely to take place on the giddy heights of the highest gable. Blackbriar has a number of broken† and construct slaves, which are anathema to his druidic roots, and provide a clear sign that he is not actually a true druid.

Tactics: In combat, Blackbriar prefers to make hit-and-run attacks to harass the characters and draw them into traps and ambushes with the various creatures across his lair. These ambushes likely start with the Gatekeeper flesh golem (**BG2**), the naga (**BG3**), and the eel in the lake (**A**) if feasible. He then retreats into the cathedral where the water elemental in **BG5** and the four-armed gargoyle at **BG6** assist him before he heads into his upper tower. He releases the nightmare singer in **BG8** before falling back the highest terrace (**BG9**), where he fights to the death.

The Fleshkey

A gift from Thornrage, the *fleshkey,* enables Blackbriar to visit the Between where the Lord Occularis has set up his paradise. Blackbriar has done so just once — before everything began to go awry — and was dazzled and hypnotised by the place.

The *fleshkey* resembles a waxy set of 13 aged, liver-spotted fingers splayed outward from a central fleshy palm upon which is branded the image of an angel. In many ways it resembles a revolting, fleshy spider. One finger is longer than the others and has an extra joint at its tip. The finger joints are very flexible, and are able articulate in either direction. The *fleshkey* is actually a combination lock that can be manipulated to gain access to the paradise of Thornrage. The correct combination is a matter of trial-and-error, and as the object is technically not magic (beyond being an obvious piece of mortomata) its purpose cannot be fathomed through normal arcane means. Spells might help find the combination, as could Blackbriar's very well-hidden reminder.

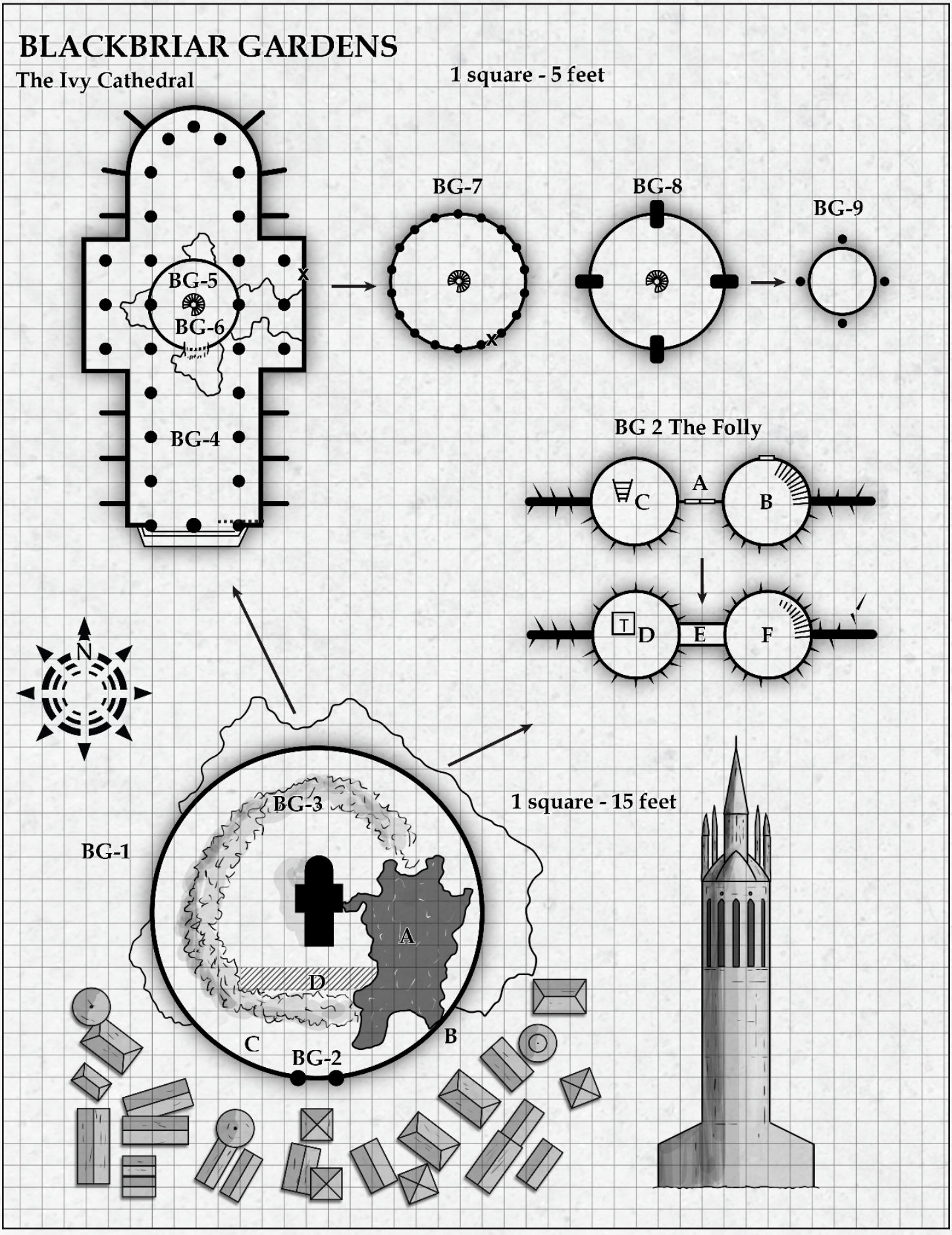
The correct sequence has no bearing to how many fingers are on the key: providing the correct sequence is followed starting from the longer digit and going clockwise. The longest digit should be bent completely over into the palm, the next finger left straight, and the next bent backward over onto the hairy back of the hand. The next is bent over palm-ward, the next left straight, and the next bent backward. The sequence is continued until every finger has been bent correctly, regardless of how many total fingers the *fleshkey* possesses (it can change as described below).

After every failed attempt to find the sequence, the fingers return to their natural extended positions and allow the user to start over. However, after every third failed attempt, the fingers grasp into a fist, gripping the user's own fingers (determine which hand randomly). The character using the *fleshkey* must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity save or have a finger torn from their own hand, suffering a loss of one point of dexterity until or unless the finger is regenerated. That character's own finger then takes up a position amongst the other fingers on the *fleshkey*.

If a character successful works out the *fleshkey*, award 500 experience points to that character, and 100 points of experience per finger to any character that lost a finger. A dizzying, fleshy *gateway* appears before them as described in **Part 3** below.

Enemy Penalty: Justice Blackbriar

One does not simply become a justice; it follows decades of a game of friendships, plots, and enemies. The friends of Blackbriar are not defined here; it is suggested that they appear at the end of this whole campaign as a potential option for further political adventures as detailed in the final part of Levee.


BLACKBRIAR GARDENS
The Ivy Cathedral
1 square - 5 feet
BG-5
BG-6
BG-4
BG-7
BG-8
BG-9
BG 2 The Folly
A
B
C
D
E
F
N
BG-3
BG-1
1 square - 15 feet
A
D
C
B
BG-2

Blackbriar Gardens Features

The entire gardens are completely overgrown. Everywhere in the walled garden and the interior of the cathedral other than water areas counts as difficult terrain for anyone other than Blackbriar. Encircling the walled garden is a *wall of thorns* 10 feet thick. The plant-draped cathedral is held aloft by the ivy and vines that surround it.

Several hundred rooks watch from various parts of the garden and cathedral. These alert Blackbriar immediately to anything suspicious. They cannot see invisible opponents and are less active at night.

BG1. The Great Outer Wall

When the characters arrive at the place, read or paraphrase the following description:

> The northern Capitol becomes more jagged here, the granite forming rocky outcrops that have been swallowed by buildings of great age. Here a single outcrop has been enveloped by a high walled garden, topped with iron spines and pierced in one place by a crooked building resembling a lodge. Beyond, a garden runs riot. Trees and ivy and briars encircle the suffocated remains of a cathedral, its crumbling walls lacerated by more boughs, which in truth seem the only support this structure has. The building rises to a tower that in turn rises past a circling wall of stained-glass windows to another level, and then higher above, a terrace. Hundreds of rooks watch from the garden beyond.

The garden is built upon an outcrop of rock, and falls beyond the area not detailed on the map that are built up are between 210 feet and 400 feet. The walls of the compound are 30 feet high and smooth worked stone. These walls can be climbed with a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or a Strength (Athletics) check. The spines at the top are positioned such that anyone crossing them must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity save or suffer 2d6 points of piercing damage. The spines are also liberally infested with the plant that blue whinnis is distilled from, so that anyone injured must also make a DC 10 save against the poison or become poisoned for 24 hours.

The rooks alert Blackbriar the second they see anything suspicious, taking flight and heading through the injured cathedral walls to warn their master. He in turn immediately comes to the garden and alerts his followers therein. This action is also likely to be noted by the flesh golem. The gargoyle, however, regards itself as the protector of the interior and aids Blackbriar only at times of greatest peril.

BG2. The Folly Gate

> The wall has but a single gate flanked by a pair of circular towers that look like they have been strangled to death and which lean outward, looming over any visitors. A very high and very old wooden gate bruised with countless rusting nails of great size separates them. Two huge knockers designed to look like crows hang from the gate. The buildings have no windows, but above the 20-foot-high doorway is a balcony linking the two ill-balanced spires.

The gate has an enormous pair of copper knockers fashioned like crows. The **Gatekeeper**, a particularly large and taut-fleshed **flesh golem** that hobbles about on stiff limbs whose skin seems too tight for them, attends to visitors. If anyone knocks, the golem emerges onto the balcony (**E**), dismisses visitors with a shake of its head and a polite, but unsettling voice claiming the master is away. If visitors try to trespass, the golem will fight them.

A. Gate

This wooden gate is 3 inches thick and studded with the rusty heads of many nails. The gate is barred on the inside. The nails do make climbing the gate easier — a DC 10 Strength (Athletics or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check — to reach **E**, but a failed check results in 1d6 points of piercing damage from the rusted nail heads.

B. Lower East Tower

This chamber is accessed by a simple wooden door. Within, the folly is little more than an ivy-infested ruin, the skeleton of a former fine room remains, but now all is rotten. A set of stairs rise 20 feet to the floor above.

C. Lower West Tower

This room is accessible only by a ladder from **D** but is otherwise empty of furnishings. It is a particularly tangled, damp chamber that hasn't been opened for several years.

D. Upper West Tower

The floor of this room has a rotting trapdoor that leads to a ladder and **C** below.

E. Balcony

A 5-foot-high battlement guards the northern and southern sides of this walkway. The outer surfaces of these battlements is infested with spines similar to the outer walls (**BG1**). Doors on either end lead into **D** and **F**.

F. Upper East Tower

Most of the foliage has been removed from this room. It serves as the Gatekeeper's quarters.

BG3. The Walled Garden

> Beyond the gates, a walled garden is a riot of tangled briars, trees choked with ivy, and undergrowth gone wild. There are no paths to be seen. The remains of statues peek from the vegetation.

The walled garden is a briar-infested, pathless mass of weeds, thorns, and undergrowth. It is difficult terrain, and a 10-foot-thick permanent *wall of thorns* encircles the cathedral, pausing only at either side of the lake (**BG3A** below). Blackbriar can pass through the gardens and thorn wall without impediment. Although pathless, the area is far from lifeless: a group of 6 **lesser flesh golems** tends to the garden. They are things made from cast-off skin and bones, vaguely human, but without faces. They have big clumsy hands, most of which have too few fingers. They hobble rather than walk and make an idiot noise as they wheeze. These constructs may be encountered anywhere within the garden outside the wall of thorns. If encountered, they flee rather than fight, with a terrified, wheezing yelp. They fight if cornered, but avoid it if possible. Due to their peculiar natures, the creatures are not impeded by movement in the garden.

In addition to the lesser flesh golems, a **spirit naga** called **Eruca** dwells inside the *wall of thorns* in the garden. The naga serves as a guard, but is less than enthusiastic about her work, having been tricked into service by Blackbriar. The creature spends much of her time smoking opium through an enormous hookah she keeps. The naga only assists Blackbriar in attacks, and slinks away at other times, slithering through the garden without penalty if attacked.

Treasure: The naga keeps her hookah — an elaborately made object of copper and gold with fine glass and silver ornamentation — with her at all times. The hookah is worth 400 gp, and usually has several doses of opium held in a leather satchel hung from its edges.

A. Ornamental Lake

Waters that flow from the ivy cathedral have gradually pooled here, forming a very shallow lake. The deepest parts are but 5 feet deep, but much of the lake is actually barely above 2 feet deep.

The lake is incredibly green, a result of perfectly normal algae. However, the lake is home to one of Blackbriar's more exotic creatures, the **Slithering Horror**, a massive Between moray eel. Unlike the more mortal of its kind, this creature has no qualms about leaving the water to attack. Indeed, it has grown vestigial, clumsy arms to enable it to do so quicker. The arms are not the only humanoid aspects of the creature: It also has an unsettling double face that is uncannily human. As the combat proceeds, that face takes on the aspect of the creature it battles, and if killed retains that form. The slithering horror lurks below the water waiting to strike. Anything that touches the water is subject to an attack and grab, pulling the victim back into the water with it. If the attack fails, it is happy to venture up to 15 feet onto land to try to succeed in this form of attack. It slinks back into the water if reduced to fewer than 10 hit points and buries itself in the silt.

B. The Deep Falls

A narrow metal grill pierces the foot of the wall here. The grill is made up of six 2-inch-thick iron bars through which the waters of the lake slowly slip, cascading below in a thin waterfall. Here, the rocky spur the garden is built upon is directly onto bedrock above a 260-foot fall. The bars are rusted, and any character making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notes the rusted bars look weak. They can be broken out with a DC 20 Strength check or with weapons, levers, etc. However, the gap is very narrow and slippery; a successful DC 15 Dexterity check is required for a Medium character to slip through (DC 15 for Small). Characters who fail the check by 5 or more must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or lose their grip and fall down the face of the outcrop 260 feet onto the turrets of Ambage below.

C. Secret Entrance

Thistle's secret route emerges into a long-abandoned culvert within a very heavy patch of ivy and briars. Unless the undergrowth is cleared by the characters, the entrance to this route is practically impossible to find from this end — a DC 30 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check is required to pass through the narrow culvert to or from the tunnel.

D. The Gathering

The hatched area of the garden here is infested with **twilight mushrooms**, a deadly hazard that spawned here below a very damp canopy of trees and moss. This strain of mushroom is not as affected by sunlight as normal, but at the height of a sunny day (two hours before and after noon) they remain dormant. When first encountered, a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) or DC 25 Intelligence (Nature) check is required to notice the fungi, but after initial recognition the check lowers to 20 to notice other growths ahead.

TWILIGHT MUSHROOMS

Twilight mushrooms are purplish-black mushrooms about 4 to 6 inches in height, growing in patches of 5–10 mushrooms and usually are found only in damp, dark underground areas. Twilight mushrooms sense vibrations and burst forth a cloud of noxious and choking dust when a living creature comes within 10 feet of a patch. Creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution save or take 2d6 points of poison damage. One minute later, another DC 15 Constitution save must be made to avoid another 1d6 points of poison damage. Whether or not the saves are successful, a creature is considered poisoned for 2d4 rounds from fits of choking and coughing. Sunlight usually renders twilight mushrooms dormant, and cold instantly destroys them.

The Ivy Cathedral

Once the home of lofty religious ideals venerated by Mother Grace, the cathedral is now throttled in the grip of countless boughs, ivy, and vines. The main nave of the cathedral is approximately 60 feet in height, rising through a central tower to a final height of around 360 feet at the Upper Terrace. From there, a cathedral spire rises another 40 feet for a total height of 400 feet. Climbing the outer wall of the cathedral is easy with the thick foliage and requires only a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check.

The main entrance is a 25-foot-high double-arched doorway that has long since lost its door to the weather and the vines. The outer wall of boughs is for the most part impenetrable, but one access point exists at Point X, at a height of around 50 feet, though it is noticeable only from below with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. This access allows another of Blackbriar's guardians, a **four-armed gargoyle** known as the **Orchardman** to move in and out of the building. The gargoyle supports Blackbriar, but only in the cathedral. In general, it watches and stays back until characters climb the Broken Stair (**BG6**), at which point it and Blackbriar attack together.

BG4. The Inner Garden

When the characters arrive at the entrance to the cathedral, read or paraphrase the following description, which is assumed to take place in spring.

> Beyond is a wonderland of colour; a dancing mass of hues cast by the blooming and fruiting flowers herein. These flowers are of all sizes, some larger than a man, and while many cluster in growths, the variation is almost countless. Ochre sacks of veiny fruit caress deep crimson trumpets that in turn are strangled by weeping white flowers with olive tongues that loll in the breeze. This cathedral of colour is dazzling, its scent almost overpowering.
>
> At the heart of this inner garden is a raised fountain basin, which stands ten feet or so above the main chamber. Water cascades from open grinning angelic mouths here at each compass point save one, where a fracture has created a waterfall that feeds a pool of water. Rising from the centre of the basin is a fractured and brittle iron spiral star that rises up and up into the tangled heart of the cathedral above. This stair is also decked in blooms and grappled by vines so that in parts it hangs freely. Climbing it would clearly present quite a challenge.

The interior of the cathedral teems with life, but most of it harmless. Birds swoop in the vines, insects are beginning to stir, and snakes crawl amongst the vines. The floor is a carpet of dead leaves drifted almost a foot thick, but otherwise the cathedral is a place of beauty and serenity. Characters making both a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check note that the place was once a place of worship for Mother Grace. There are carvings of angels and the Holy Mother as well as remains of votive lights and frescoes depicting miracles.

The waters spilling from the central pool are shallow, only 2 feet deep at their deepest, but a fracture in the cathedral wall the size of a Medium creature allows the water elemental in **BG5** to rush opponents into the ornamental lake and the eel therein (see **BG3A**).

BG5. The Babbling Lake

> The central basin rises ten feet in a circular stone receptacle from which four waterfalls cascade. The water here is incredibly clear and pristine. The iron stair rises directly from the waters and is lost to sight in the tangles above.

The surrounding wall is mossy and damp, and the climb is a DC 21 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check. The waters within are 10 feet deep and calm except for their occupant. The basin is actually occupied by a **water elemental** that has been enslaved by Blackbriar. The elemental remains in its basin until commanded to attack by Blackbriar or a character enters the water.

Treasure: At the bottom of the pool are the remains of a petty thief. Amongst his broken bones and shards of old iconographic statuary there is a blackened candelabra depicting a four-armed gargoyle eating a lamb. The gargoyle's eyes are dark-red rubies, and the candelabra is worth 250 gp as a whole. One of the eyes is actually an *agility ioun stone*.

BG6. The Broken Stair

The iron stairs twists upward through the overgrowth of the cathedral's nave for around two hundred and fifty feet before entering a large aperture in the ceiling surrounded by grinning angelic figures. On its route, the stair has fractured in several places, leaving sections hanging from thick tree boughs that grow out and across these severe drops. In parts, only vines bridge these gaps, but the vines look very, very strong.

The climb upward is arduous, and to reflect the difficulty, divided into two separate DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) checks. For the purposes of falls, assume the climbs are 10–120 feet and then 130–250 feet. It is highly likely that Blackbriar and the Orchardman attack any intruders attempting to use the stair, waiting until they reach the halfway point before attacking. Between 190 and 210 feet up, the stair is infested with 2 **shambling mounds**. Creatures flying in and out of the access immediately above can avoid the creatures. The circular aperture 250 feet above is a 10-foot-diameter hole through which the stairway rises into area **BG7**.

BG7. The Stained Glass Garden

Here is a joy in stained glass, a circular wall of colour held aloft by graceful arches depicting ivy. Each window holds an image of an angel. The room within is given over as a workshop and display area, housing cabinets, strange fragments of objects, and hundreds and hundreds of books. An intact iron stair rises thirty feet of so to an opening above. Then there is the noise of the occupants: Hundreds of birds flitter in this high chamber, flying amongst delicate cages containing what are clearly more disturbing or aggressive creatures.

Blackbriar's inner sanctum is filled with life, from golden pheasants through tawny owls, plovers, a boat-billed heron and from weavers to skinks, tamarins and yellow-winged bats. The air dances with life. Yet there is more, for hidden amongst the normal animals are a handful from Between — a Between house mouse, a Between winter wren, and a Between dodo that is very much awakened and aware. These creatures keep away from trouble, but are spotted by anyone making a successful DC 30 Intelligence (Nature) check. If they could be captured, the trio of animals could fetch 300 gp each.

Blackbriar — with the help of his architect Thistle — has installed a protector amongst the windows: a **clay golem** hidden with the appearance of a terra-cotta statue in a wall-alcove. If Blackbriar is present, the creature remains in its hiding place (unless instructed by Blackbriar) at **X**. If intruders enter and Blackbriar is not present, it attacks.

Treasure: Many of the books are of poetry, but amongst the various tomes is a magnificent elephant-folio book of illustrated animas. The book is worth 500 gp. The chamber also contains a *spell scroll* (*tree stride*) held between two pieces of wood, a *potion of regeneration* in a small green vial with a glass stopper depicting a grinning cat, and an iron flask containing a *potion of invulnerability* labelled as such. There is an enormous feather (from the Between peacock in **BG8**) with an eye that seems to move (a collector would pay at least 100 gp for the object), a spent *Between vessel* in the shape of a doll's head made of porcelain, a fabulous earthenware vase decorated with panels of an apocalypse and filled with rat skulls, worth 400 gp. A meerschaum pipe with a stem made of a human shin bone and set with silver edging worth 75 gp, a linen and silk embroidered panel depicting the Miracle of Saint Agnes worth 100 gp (a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check) identifies the miracle from Mother Grace's church). A small battered leather journal with pages marked by raven feathers. The journal contains the secret of Brine (see sidebox), a silver sickle with a carved wooden handle depicting ravens swallowing suns, a large group of vaguely disturbing carvings depicting hunchbacked angels, and a fancy wind chime worth 50 gp.

Hidden in various locations in the room for Blackbriar's immediate use are a *spell scroll* of *cure wounds* at 6th level, a *potion of invisibility* in a plain tonic bottle labelled "*McGorth's Patent Elixir*", and finally a reminder of how to work the *fleshkey*, with a very simple depiction of the correct sequence, hidden in the spine of one book. Each of these objects rests in a place that is very difficult to spot but which, due to Blackbriar obsessively checking them in his paranoia, may be discovered on a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

New Secret: The Book of Brine

Wondrous Item (very rare)
Characters merely glimpsing the contents of this book reveal its secret and activate its effects.
The character gains the ability to breathe water, as though under the effects of a permanent *water breathing* spell. Unfortunately, immediately upon receiving this boon, ugly scars mar the character's lower neck, and these eventually form into two extra mouths with tiny needle-like teeth. These mouths cannot speak or be used to make an attack, although very occasionally they gibber in a wholly unsettling language.

BG8. The Upper Prison

Blackbriar keeps his gift from Thornrage here, presently not only infatuated by it, but quite afraid of it. He calls the creature a Between peacock, and the Lord Paladin-Occularis captured it on his first foray into Between (for more information see **Part 3**) and brought it as a gift for his chief benefactor in a heavy wooden crate, which still remains in the chamber. The creature is no longer its prisoner, however.

The entrance to the room is thickly overgrown, the result of a *plant growth* spell Blackbriar cast to ensure the creature remains in its place. When passing this area, Blackbriar moves through the chamber as fast as possible to a secondary plug of thick vegetation that lies at the top of the continuation of this stair, 20 feet above.

When and if characters physically clear a way, read the following description

The space above is clearly open to the elements. Above you, supported on four arched pillars, is what must be the top of the tower, while between this space a vast and unnatural growth has sprung, creating a chamber of ivy, boughs, and vines. A spiral stair rises to the tower top, its exit blocked like the entrance by thick vegetation. The whole area looks remarkably like a prison.

The **Nightmare Choir** (**Between peacock**)† struts about the chamber, making a strange calling sound. Blackbriar has fed it several creatures,

loosing rabbits and cats into the room. Some of these have evaded capture, including a petrified ginger tomcat that crouches at the top of the stair. The peacock is very aggressive, and when it sees a chance to escape, it moves toward that route, attacking anything in its path. The creature looks like a fleshy sack, discolored with veins, and sits amid and beneath a trio of gangling legs that bend in all the wrong places. A head is thrust back that looks part bird, part cockroach. Its beak is more akin to a stinger. Its peacock-like plume is littered with wretched-looking scraps of flesh topped by a grisly collection of severed harpy heads, the eyes of which watch you with tortured expressions.

Development: The creature has a most unsettling and very Between death. When the final blow is struck, the thing begins thrashing on the ground, screaming. The following round, the creature bursts into a sinewy mass of thorny, fleshy limbs riddled with teeth. The limbs shoot out in random directions. Anyone within 30 feet of the creature must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity save or be struck and impaled, taking 3d6 points of piercing damage and a further 1d6 points of piercing damage each round they move. The bonds are covered in hundreds of tiny filaments that hook onto clothing, skin, bone, and the vegetation, creating a web of wounding sinews. Characters can escape in the same way they would a *web* spell.

Treasure: The eye-feathers of the peacock are unnaturally alive. They are worth 200 gp each (there are 13 in total).

BG9. The High Terrace

Remember that the entrance to this chamber is also infested with plant growth and must be cleared. This area is also the likely venue for the final showdown with **Blackbriar**.

> Here then is the top of the tower, a trio of stone fingers rises a further forty feet above, whilst on all sides is a drop, falling first to the vegetation walls of the room below, and then downward for one-hundred and twenty yards. Here, the entire mad Capitol crumbles away, a forest of gables, rooftops, and sheer walls. Behind you, somehow, it keeps rising up to the Royal Palace.

Part Three: The Ivory Tower

He had his Nirvana, a place he named the Fey Palace — for a while at least. The Beautiful did as she was told, unleashing a private paradise for the deranged Lord Paladin-Occularis and his handful of most-trusted colleagues. Covertly, however, she used the fractured spirit of Rachel Birch to do her bidding, and also subtly questioned the Lord Occularis himself. He had the knowledge she had been searching for all along, and soon she realised why fate had brought her to his hands. The Occularis knew that the metaphysical Levee that holds Between back from reality was thin at three crucial points. Fracture those points, and the dam would break and the two realities would become one. Once she teased this information from her overconfident captor, she arranged for her muse, Rachel Birch, to release her. Even as the characters first view the revolting *fleshkey* forming its *gateway*, she is making her own preparations.

Upon escape, the Beautiful inflicted a madness upon the great work of Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage, twisting his dream into a nightmare. Her sickness is slowly enveloping the figment world of the Lord Occularis and poisoning it. The aspects Thornrage so carefully cultivated when they began to grow have become soiled, and each aspect is now tainted with something the Beautiful has birthed there, rendering it corrupt and useless. Further, she has changed the shape and nature of his palace into something revolting to behold. Its shadows fall wrong, its shape is distorted and ruined, and its central core where Thornrage and his followers now cower has become a prison — an Ivory Tower that they dare not leave and which, for the present at least, nothing outside has been able to force its way into.

The Beautiful delights in this result, but she has now learnt everything she needs to know of the nature of the Between and Castorhage, and has further works to do. She has left Thornrage's corrupted paradise and is presently gouging three wells in the Levee holding the two places separate. These wells become the core of the final adventure of the adventure path, ***L9: Utopia***, which occurs the day after this adventure ends.

For now, a standoff remains. Thornrage and his cronies are trapped in the Ivory Tower while the worlds both outside and inside are unmade. The Levee weakens, and the beasts are literally at the door. When it rains, it pours, and if it keeps on raining … well, you know the rest.

Enter the characters.

Timing is Everything

The intention, most likely, is for the characters to force their way into Thornrage's Nirvana, find it ruined, slay him in his Ivory Tower, and therein learn that, at this very moment, the Beautiful is opening the trio of wounds in the walls of Between that will break the levee. Timing is crucial here — the final adventure takes place over the course of a single day and is very, very tough. They should enter the last day rested, with a full complement of spells and possibly even have the opportunity to replenish minor magic items such as potions and scrolls, perhaps from one of the many contacts and friends they have no doubt picked up along the way. By this time, the Guild is well aware of the threat facing the city, as are the Fetch. While they might not simply gift such items upon the characters, they might be able to sell whatever the characters need without the party having to go around the city hunting for them. The characters should be ready for the final events, but they won't — and shouldn't — have time for shopping trips for greater magic items or more complicated equipment (new armour, etc.).

The Folly at the Fleshgate

When the characters unravel the riddle of the *fleshkey*, wherever they are, the key immediately opens the *gateway*. At that moment, read or paraphrase the following description.

> The hand suddenly comes alive, twisting from your grasp like a revolting spider. The fleshy key whittles at a corner of the ground as though peeling back, and as it does, a thing is shaped from the hand, a sick body to this revolting appendage. It is a fleshy, horribly-muscled thing without a face, which pulls and pulls at the corner of reality until it peels back, an act of carnal force that ends with the creature distending outward, its arms flung back and holding a quivering skin between its now distorted and extended form, making a triangular shape through which can be glimpsed a forest.

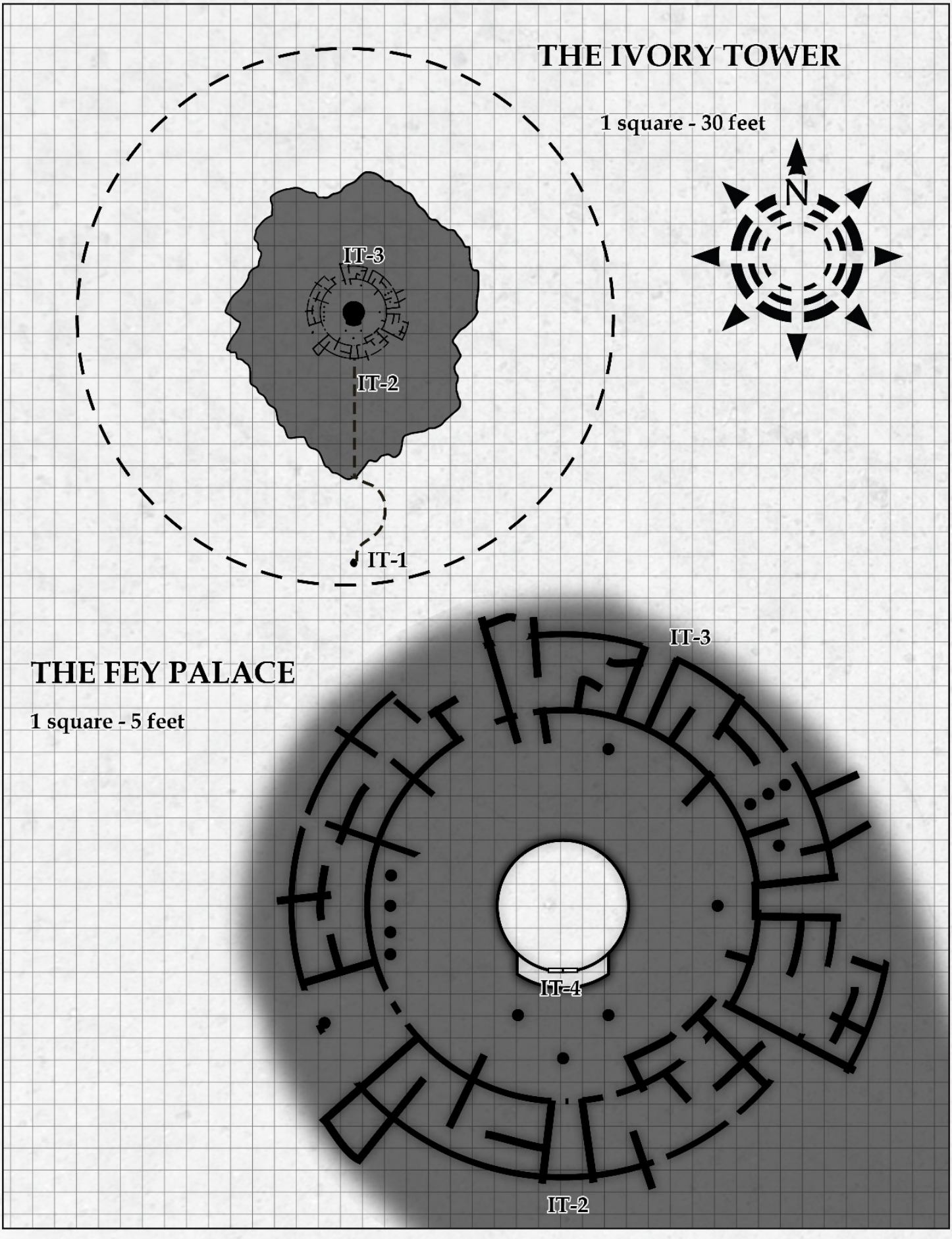
The *fleshkey* has opened a temporary *gateway* through the skin of Between and into Thornrage's personal — and now collapsing — paradise. The *fleshgate* remains in place, and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the *fleshkey* grips a part of the gate that seems thickest, in the pattern of fingers that set it moving initially. Tampering with this arrangement in any way closes the *fleshgate* in 2 rounds, causing the hole to shrink and ultimately seal again. Those who are on the wrong side of the *fleshgate* at that time are trapped in Thornrage's Nirvana, though a holder of the *fleshkey* could reactivate it to save those so trapped if he wished.

No matter where the *fleshkey* is when it is activated, it always opens the gate at location **IT1**. The *fleshkey* cannot be carried into the demi-plane of Thornrage's paradise. The characters must escape to their own world through this *fleshgate* as Thornrage's world is unmade after Lord Occularis' death (see below).

IT1. Fleshgate

The *fleshgate* looks identical from both sides, though the *fleshkey* cannot be seen from the inside. The *gateway* has no caul, but passing between the two doors is still unpleasant. The character feels slightly violated in some intangible way after passing through. Once beyond, read or paraphrase the following description:

> Beyond, the air is thick with moisture, and heavy with warmth. The fleshy *gateway* has opened into a jungle, a fetid oppressive place where the trees are dying. Cancerous growths cling to their boughs and trunks, while a brown blight spreads across their foliage. Several have already fallen dead. This jungle encircles a distant structure, a white tower, which stands in the centre of a dark lake. A constant grey drizzle falls.


THE IVORY TOWER
1 square - 30 feet
N
IT-3
IT-2
IT-1
THE FEY PALACE
1 square - 5 feet
IT-3
IT-4
IT-2

Perfect Worlds

The core theme of ***The Levee Adventure*** has been the concept that the Beautiful wishes to drown the real world in Between, removing all its taints and cleansing it. Throughout the adventure, a fortunate few (or should that be unfortunate?) have been able to create their perfect dream worlds, their own paradise incarnate. The characters may even have already experienced one with their old friend Father Gromwell. But just what powers do these individuals have over their personal dream worlds? Are they living gods? Omnipotent tyrants? Benign creators? The answer is a little of all those things … but not a lot. Perfect worlds are populated by perfect things but are governed solely by the imagination of those who live there. Whilst a great intellect could, after long practice, create and dismiss countless creatures within such a place, the mundane minds that have so far been granted them struggle with this. They breathe life into their creations, flesh and blood perfections or servants, but the results are crude, simplistic. In other words, even if Thornrage wished to create a tarrasque to kill the Beautiful or enwrap her in an unbreakable cage, he does not have the command or ability to do so. Given time, he might be able to manipulate events in his world greatly, but time is something he doesn't have a great deal of.

Thornrage also learned from interrogating his prisoner that beyond the confines of these dream worlds, objects have little substance and soon fade. So creating a mound of gems in his world would look impressive there, but be transitory anywhere else. He realized he needed to exploit the truly "fixed" places of Between, the Known Betweenlands, if you will, if he was to build a true empire.

Thornrage set about creating that empire. He commanded the Beautiful to create for him three doors into Between leading to places that the Lord Occularis could exploit in time and then built stables and warehouses about these doors. Next, he crafted his home, a magnificent tower where he gave form to his fantasies. These places he secured into aspects of his own psyche — places where the inquisitor could steadily build and indulge himself without worry of the transience of Between changing them or whisking them away when his concentration was diverted. These three places now lie in ruins, flayed and broken into something monstrous — more monstrous even than Thornrage's deranged imagination could conceive.

The paradise of the Lord Occularis should also serve as a warning to the characters, at least two of which are going to be offered their own personal paradises in ***L9: Utopia***.

It feels oily to the touch and has a taste and smell of old mulch. It does little to relieve the heat, adding only to the oppressive humidity. As you begin to perspire despite the rain, you suddenly realise that other than the soft susurrus of raindrops on foliage, the place is completely and utterly silent. Not a single animal cry, chirp of birdsong, or buzz of insect breaks the stillness.

When she left this Nirvana, having unleashed an army of boiling, swarming creatures and a thing she named the "Lurker in Desolation," the Beautiful cursed it by stripping life from it. Now the jungle is a dead place, its trees slowly decaying, its animals dead and gone. There is no trace of this extinction other than the state of the trees themselves. No animal carcasses can be found. During the adventure, have a few trees fall or have the characters hear the distant echoing thud of a collapse. If you like, have one occasion where a dead tree falls just as the characters are passing by (the vibrations of their footfalls caused its deteriorated heartwood to finally give up the ghost). All the characters in a 60-foot line (as determined by you) must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity save or take 6d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the falling tree. If the save is failed by more than 5, that character is also pinned until a DC 15 Strength check is made to free him from beneath it. This should not happen more than once, but it along with the echoes of other falling trees should make them consider whether there are unseen stalkers shadowing them, or some great beast in the distance who is knocking them down. Any DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) made while examining a fallen tree will be able to determine, however, that their fall is simply a result of the advanced state of decay within their trunks. A decay that seems to be advancing extremely rapidly.

The jungle is only detailed in the pertinent locations below, but extends out of sight in all directions. If you wish, expand this Nirvana with escaped remnants of Thornrage's perversions given flesh, or ghostly hollow things that brood in anger, seeking to lash out at those who intrude. The jungle is dense with massive trees that stand 60–80 feet tall and can provide cover. The surrounding terrain is all considered light undergrowth throughout.

The Beautiful has also robbed this Nirvana of time. The place is locked in a perpetual dusk with a darkening sky brooding with a distant thunderstorm. A rain falls constantly, an oozing cloying rain that seems to get under the characters' skin and makes them feel oily and dirty. However, the rain is not falling hard enough to have any game effect, though the distant thunderstorm promises much, much more.

A single pathway extends toward the lake from the *fleshgate*. The path is so narrow that a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check is required to follow it through decaying ferns to the lakeshore.

IT2. The Brooding Lake

This lake should be beautiful, but its surface reflects a brooding sky and dances with raindrops. At the heart of the lake, an ivory tower rises from a base of surrounding ruins, a palace that was clearly once magnificent. The lower structure's spires and marble pillars and arches are now decayed, fallen to silence. Only the stain-streaked walls of the once-pristine central tower stand intact. The waters of the lake are already devouring this ruin in their watery embrace and lapping at the very edges of the central tower itself.

Once, a bridge linked this path to the distant palace, but now only remnants of submerged statues and pilings made from vast stone monoliths protrude from the water's oily surface to indicate the structure was ever here at all. Despite its destruction, from the condition of the nearby statues it looks as if the structure must have been almost brand new when it fell into ruin.

The Beautiful unmade the bridge. She also changed the statues into something disturbing. They now peek from the waters, their faces seething with hateful emotions. The lake averages 20 feet deep, and its waters are placid (no check required to swim). There are submerged and semi-submerged statues and bridge footings present with enough regularity that a character could hop from one to the other with a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross the lake without having to enter the water. The Lurker in Desolation (**IT3**) slinks about in the Fey Palace ruins and is always alert. If it spots intruders upon the lake, it moves through the waters to attack.

IT3. The Fey Palace

The palace is drowning, her collapse imminent. Even as you watch, the waters devour another gable, sending a shower of dust into the monsoon sky. The place is now nothing more than a skin of stone and slate and marble, and even from outside, the ruins look very unstable. Cracks and wide breaches have opened in the sagging walls, which seem almost to mock the central, very much intact Ivory Tower. A single doorway rises from a stone pier. Even from a distance, it is obvious that the doorway is raked with claw marks.

The Beautiful left her own mad creation at the door to keep Thornrage prisoner in the shattered remnants of his dreams. Even if he escapes — which the angel believes he cannot — what is there left for him? Soon, she believes, his world will be swallowed. He has failed.

The remains of a battle scar the palace. As the place was unmade and the creatures were unleashed, a score of Knights-Occularis were killed, leaving just those few within the Ivory Tower. These knights' corpses sprawl in the ruins, resting upon shattered cobbles or floating in the shallow, encroaching waters. These latter are bloated to bursting. Even a cursory examination of the corpses reveals that each has had its eyes, tongue, and the interior flesh of its mouth messily devoured. They apparently died in in agony.

The palace itself is dangerous. Its walls stand in 1–2 feet of water (difficult terrain), and rise anywhere from 30 to 90 feet (2d4+1 x 10). All are in imminent danger of collapse from their current state of destruction, and the lake waters are now undermining their foundations. Characters exploring the ruins risk causing a collapse, and even their presence inside the ruins is risky. Each round that the characters remain within the ruins, there is a cumulative 5% chance that a piece of wall or roof collapses near one of the characters (determine randomly) causing 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage (DC 15 Dexterity save for half). If a character is deliberately abuses a wall, the chance increases to 25% and the collapse occurs on that character. If a battle occurs here, then there is an automatic collapse every second round upon a random character. The Lurker is also included for purposes of determining who is struck.

The characters can climb the ruined palace walls by making a DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check, but there are no solid floors left to stand on and any roofs that remain sag at such an alarming angle that they require a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stand on safely.

The **Lurker in Desolation** slithers amongst the ruins of the palace, constantly on the lookout for an escape from the Ivory Tower. It has been tried twice and both have failed. If it spots movement, it slips into the water and burrows/swims beneath prey, rising to attack with surprise. So far, the door of the tower has thwarted its attempts to enter despite its best efforts, but it still remains, determined to feed on the morsels within. The Lurker has a roughly insect-like shape but is seemingly made up of faces, anguished faces that bloat out its revolting form like a sack of skin and give the thing a pregnant look. The thing's skin is translucent, and the gory contents visible in its stomachs merely increase its girth and add to the illusion of pregnancy. Its back crawls with slender fleshy tendrils that whip about apparently tasting the air, suffocating around a vast open mouth. It doesn't have any true legs but seems to drag itself about with graceless haste upon its many stumpy tendrils.

Treasure: Each of the 20 corpses bears the gear of a Prosecutor-Knight Occularis (see **The Occupants** below). However, these knights were among Thornrage's inner circle and tended to have access to more and better equipment. Among the bodies can be found a *potion of haste*, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, and a case of 2 *+3 crossbow bolts*.

IT4. The Great Made Gate

This massive double door has been lashed and scarred, but remains standing. It is constructed of stone, and it clearly once depicted dancing angels fraternizing with devils. Signs of damage to the door seem deliberate in their locations, almost as though the figures offended an attacker. The attacks have apparently been ineffectual, though, as both the door and graven figures still remain. A single step made of a single piece of smooth coppery coloured stone lies before the doors.

The double door is more than just a double door. It forms a powerful Made† guardian, which is one reason why it has so far withstood the attacks of the Lurker. The door is mostly a reshaped **stone golem**. If anyone steps onto the stone threshold before the door, the creature re-forms itself into its true form and attacks.

The Ivory Tower

Once the characters make it past the doors of **IT4**, they enter the insanity that was Thornrage's Ivory Tower and now serves as his prison — and potential tomb. This twisted version of the Ivory Tower is what is left of Thornrage's dreams and Nirvana after the Beautiful has unmade them. Now a jumbled mass of chaotic things, Thornrage and his tiny group of remaining followers have sought sanctuary here and, despite attempting to flee, are now trapped. The Beautiful ensured that Thornrage's only option now is to remain in his crumbling Nirvana, as she closed all the other *gateways* out.

The arrival of the characters puts a desperate seed of hope in Thornrage's mind — if the characters are here, they must have access to a *fleshkey*, and that means he can escape. The characters thus find not only a fanatic and his few remaining desperate cohorts, but are all that stand between a lifetime in his crumbling Nirvana or escape. Thus, the inhabitants of the tower all fight desperately like men obsessed in order to escape and, if they are not careful, the characters could become the prisoners in this ruined paradise instead.

Ivory Tower Features

The Ivory Tower is confusing, and defies normal conventions of space. Not only are its insides bigger than its outsides, but it also has insides inside its outsides. As usual with Between, be cautious about mapping and representing play on your standard setups.

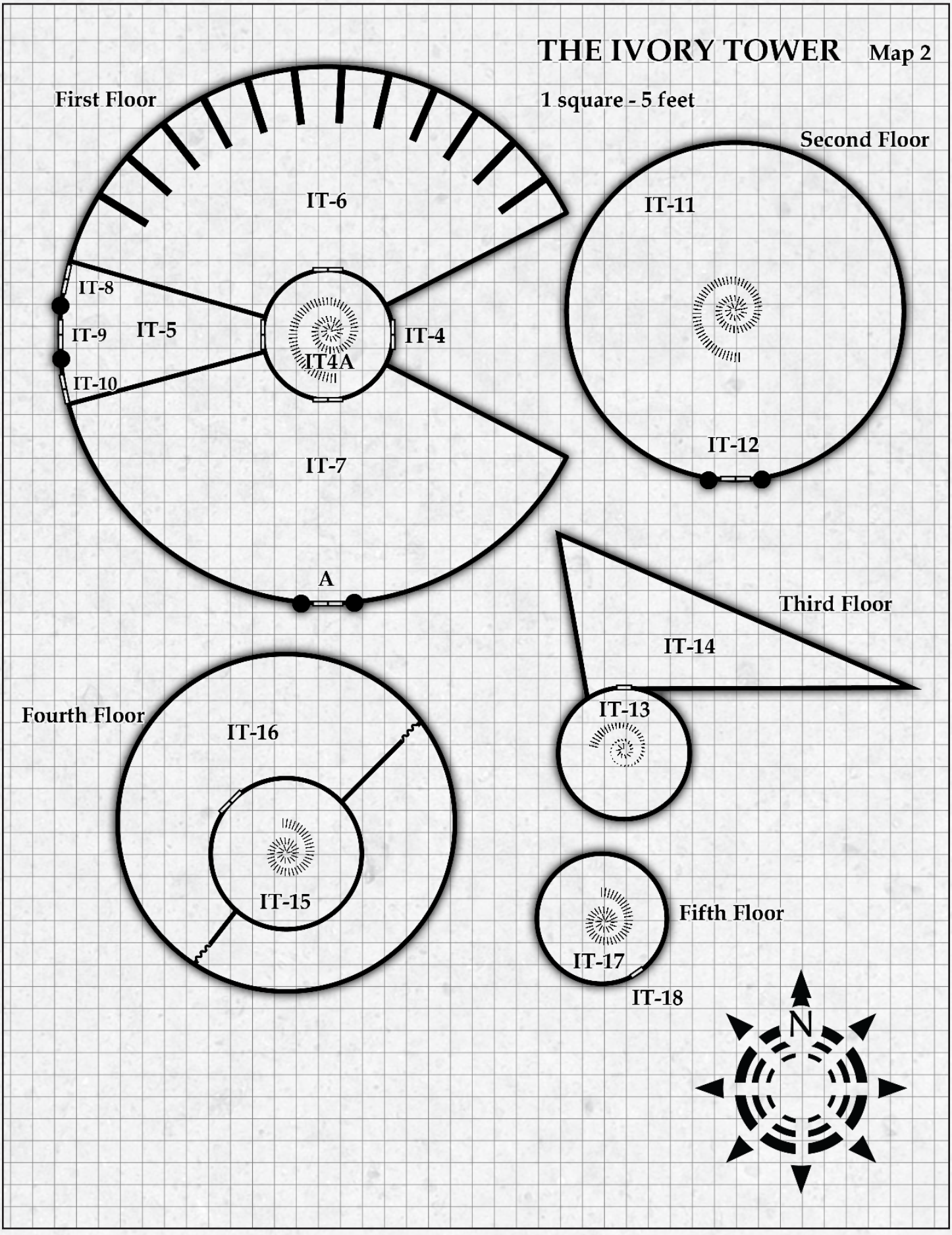
The tower is newly constructed but unmade into something desperately old. Only a few days ago, this was a pristine place — a Nirvana — created by an imprisoned Beautiful. Once she escaped, she unmade that. The newness remains, but the whole place is tinged with failure and streaked with the stains of disappointment; it hangs palpably in the air. Those characters most closely touched by the Beautiful find this sense of failure almost overwhelming, though this does not have any true game effect.

Rooms within the tower link to places that they should not be able to. If the characters attempt to move in this mad space using the spells *dimension door* or similar spells, the consequences are terrible. The spell tears an extradimensional hole inside another extradimensional hole and creates a fixed *sphere of annihilation*. The character who attempted the spell or ability must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save or be sucked into the void of the sphere. As long as no one else touches the sphere, they are safe, but the void created somehow whispers to the character that created it (assuming they survived) begging to be fed for as long as the character remains within the Ivory Tower.

The Occupants

Though locations are suggested for the tower's occupants, this is a last stand. They may be encountered anywhere in the tower as they react to circumstances that arise. They will not simply remain static in a single chamber. When he becomes aware of the characters' arrival, Thornrage immediately tries to escape to seek out the *fleshgate*. If the characters used a boat or some other means to cross the lake that Thornrage can find and use, he will do so. Thornrage is a very smart opponent and is aware of where Blackbriar's *fleshgate* has manifested in the past. He immediately heads there as fast as possible, even at risk of falling into the lake while trying to hop across the remains of the bridge. He seeks only one thing — escape. If he is successful in reaching the *fleshgate*, he will be disappointed to discover that the Beautiful has left a final parting gift for him. He is no longer capable of passing through the gateway; he simple rebounds away from each attempt as he finds his physical being intrinsically caught up in the very stuff of his paradise. Thus, even if he escapes the characters, they'll still be able to catch up to him at the *fleshgate* where he will be busy fighting any of his cohorts who are trying to escape without him. If Thornrage is killed, see **Concluding the Adventure**.

Lord Oskwald keeps his hair short and his thick jaw cleanly shaved. A frighteningly deep scar beneath his chiselled jawline indicates that he once had his throat cut and lived to tell of it. His walk and demeanour are excessively confident, and he nearly always smiles a very worrying smile.


THE IVORY TOWER
Map 2
1 square - 5 feet
First Floor
IT-6
IT-8
IT-9
IT-5
IT-10
IT4A
IT-4
IT-7
A
Second Floor
IT-11
IT-12
Third Floor
IT-14
IT-13
Fourth Floor
IT-16
IT-15
Fifth Floor
IT-17
IT-18
N

Lord Paladin-Occularis Thornrage and **Lord Oskwald** go back a very, very long way, long enough to know that each would betray the other without pausing for breath if it was needed, and it certainly is now. The two main antagonists regard the others as chattel. Lord Oskwald is a **mage**. They will be accompanied by the 4 **knights** from **IT5**.

Tactics: Before combat, Thornrage uses *seek thoughts* on opponents to gauge their strengths. He tries to stay at the edge of combat while sending his troops forward and attempts to move past opponents by casting *rebuke*, *fester* and *castigate* to assist his allies. During combat, he pronounces judgements (destruction, healing and protection), and then casts his most powerful remaining spells before engaging in melee. If escape becomes possible, he casts *invisibility* and flees to try to locate the *fleshgate*.

Exploring the Tower Interior

Once the characters make it past the Great Made Gate, they can see into room **IT4A** beyond.

IT4A. The Snailshell Stair

Beyond, the room is filled with a bizarre structure, a twisted staircase that spirals upward and downward like a vast, convoluted snail shell of steps. The effect of the stretching twisted structure is such that it is impossible to see what it rises or falls to, but the structure is clearly flanked by three sets of hefty iron double doors. Withered and drawn faces have been cast in the very surfaces of the iron doors.

The stair is very confusing to use. Characters who ascend or descend must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save or be confused until they leave or are removed from the structure; subsequent movement does not require a save. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to make any movement other than a walk, and failed checks result in falls of 1d6 x 10 feet. The faces in the iron doorways move periodically, their visages taking up looks of abject despair. They are wanderers that became ensnared as the Beautiful's wrath filled the Ivory Tower and beyond. They remain here until the place is unmade by the death of Thornrage. They cannot interact with the characters in any way.

IT5. The Aspect of Industry: Gateway to Three Places from One

The room beyond stretches your comprehension, since you're sure it is bigger than the tower it is in by some considerable factor. A long chamber ends at a trio of huge arched double doors fully twenty feet high and ten across. Each is secured by a bronze and iron bar and a single enormous keyhole in a central lock.

Created as the *gateway* to Thornrage's Between empire, the chamber has three accesses to the Betweenlands. Sadly, although such accesses are still visible, they can be used only to view what might have been: a living landscape where wealth and power were a step away, detailed in areas **IT8–10**. The doors are fortified, and the keyholes are crafted as hateful or fearful faces. What Thornrage demanded from the Beautiful was not just a personal Nirvana, but also access to Between itself. He knew that what he removed from his own dream world was just that, but that what came from Between would be tangible, valuable, and would swell his coffers as his empire grew. The areas beyond each door are visions of the places they once reached; the places are alive, but they cannot be reached. Those who Thornrage sent in to explore and map and prepare for his coming empire remain lost in the lands beyond, though glimpses of them are occasionally seen. A successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check sees what were once additional doorways along the side walls linking to stables and warehouses to service Thornrage's colonisation and exploitation of Between. Now these doorways are but echoes, ghostly images which, if someone were to press an ear against, can still be heard to echo with Thornrage's futile screams as his world was unmade.

Stationed here are the 4 Prosecutor-Knights Occularis (**knights**). They are usually standing watch here, hoping that a doorway may fleetingly open or that their missing companions might return, strengthening their forces enough to allow for an attack upon the Lurker outside.

IT6. The Empire Stables

Here is a vast stone stable with cobbled floor. It is empty, unused perhaps, but could easily hold scores of horses within.

The chamber is completely empty, its echoes occasionally summoning up ghost sounds of horses, almost mocking with their neighs.

IT7. The Empire Warehouses

A huge warehouse space, with partitions and shelves and recesses to hold enough material for an army. The place is bare save for a single huge circular door on the far wall.

The door (at **A**) is the mocking, closed *gateway* that once extended to the Bright Citadel in Castorhage but now cannot be opened. Those who listen can hear the sounds of the Capitol beyond, only a step away but impossible to reach.

IT8. The Eastern Jungle

Beyond the door is an alarming sight, for what lies there is a vast jungle. A huge, brown river slides languidly past, slowly gliding through the enormous trees. Jungle-clad mountains of great size lie farther beyond, and here and there are glimpses of what appear to be strange temples.

This doorway looks out upon the Eastern Jungle of the Betweenlands, bordering the area known as the Castorhage East Dominion (a.k.a. the Land of Saffron). The river is the mighty flow known as Queen Alice's Maw. The world beyond this doorway cannot be reached from here. Attempts to physically move through it meet only unmovable resistance. Beyond the doorway, things can occasionally be glimpsed through the trees. These creature are the size of cathedrals and have bulky heads made up seemingly of thorns and tusks. They never leave the foliage of the jungle to give a clear view. Anyone making a DC 20 Intelligence (History) thinks that the enormous creatures seem to possibly resemble Leviathans, huge fossilized horrors occasionally found beneath the silt and stone of the city. The Royal Underneath Society are known to actively study these ancient remains to the secrets of this lost species. Anyone with a DC 25 result on the check is also able to notice on one of the distant temple ruins what appear to be a series of hexagonal constructions, strange arrangements frequently found in the context of fossilised Leviathan digs.

Characters spending a full minute watching the visions beyond the doorway suddenly become aware of a feeling of fear. The characters feel hunted and afraid, as though they were in the jungle themselves. This sensation continues for another full minute and worsens as time passes. If at any time the viewer turns away from the doorway, the sensation instantly diminishes and disappears. A character that remains and looks through the doorway for the entire 2 minutes as the sensation increases in strength suddenly begins to relive the fate of one of Thornrage's previous expedition members — feeling the sequence of being blinded by poison, captured, and taken apart by pitiless inhuman things that lurk within the jungle along the muddy river's banks. At this point, the character takes

1d6 points of poison damage each round from the vision, but is unable to turn away from watching by their own free will. Only if someone shuts the doors or other characters forcibly pull the character away can the visions be stopped. If no one does so, and the character continues to watch for another full minute (3 minutes total), then they sense being dragged to a great boiling pot and thrown in. The character must make a successful DC 20 Wisdom save or die instantly in insufferable agony. If the character survives the ordeal, then the vision disappears, and all that remains is the damage suffered. The doorway's vision can affect any number of viewers, any number of times. Its effects end simply by looking away (unless the empathic sequence has begun).

IT9. Azure

Beyond the doorway is a high place, an outcropping of worked stone that stands above an impossibly deep valley. The valley is lined with the intricate buildings of an ancient empire. Beyond, snowy peaks and volcanoes rise and fall, vast waterfalls plummet, and mist-shrouded plateaus rise. You can feel the breeze upon your face and smell pine trees and soot.

This second doorway looks upon the shattered remains of an ancient unknown empire, an aspect of Between that is already being tentatively explored by a holy order of monks from Castorhage and given the secret name of "Azure" to throw off anyone who might have grown suspicious (see **HBH15** in **Chapter 7** of ***The Blight Campaign Guide*** for more information on this current exploration). These monks are unaware that Thornrage's own *gateway* had stumbled upon their realm.

The function and peril of this vision is identical to that in **IT8** above, except in this vision the characters spend the first minute observing the place and becoming ever more aware of the fearfully dark sky overlooking the whole valley. As above, if the viewing is not stopped before 3 minutes elapses, the characters suddenly see something of great size, with eight-clawed limbs and tendrils sprouting jabbering mouths swoop past out of the darkness, lashing the character(s) in question. They get a DC 20 Dexterity save or are taken by the thing, vanishing in the clutches of it and disappearing toward a high plateau. The characters are gone, lost, never to return.

IT10. The Furnace

Beyond, the anvil white-hot heat of a land seethes. This is no ordinary place; this is a towering blight of industry. Furnaces boil the sky, iron bridges link insane buildings with eyes clustered upon them, and everywhere is toil.

This third doorway looks upon an aspect of Between known as the Furnace, a place not part of the greater known Betweenlands, but rather a secret redoubt being plumbed by the Illuminati. Characters seeing the place and making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check can name the location and can recall rumours of a half dozen failed crusades and expeditions of exploration that have been sent there by the powerful of Castorhage.

The open doors convey extreme heat to everyone in **IT5** and unless closed, continue to do so. Those who view the place for even a single round become terrified of the endless toil of the workers below. These are not dead people, they are something else altogether; they are aware, they never sleep, they toil only to a great clock that lies at the heart of this ghastly place. Those who continue to watch suddenly become overwhelmed that the eyes on the buildings can see them, looking straight into their soul. If they continue to watch for the full 3 minutes and do not avert their eyes, the eyes do indeed see them and draw them in. The character gets a single successful DC 20 Wisdom save or is sucked into the Furnace, seen and taken and sieved for secrets, her sins and desires laid bare. The character is gone, but remains forever trapped in the Furnace, toiling into eternity.

IT11. The Prison that Failed

The moment the characters most closely touched by the Beautiful lay eyes upon this room, they have a sudden, inconsolably dark fear that something is about to happen very, very soon, and that it is going to be very bad. At that moment, characters begin to hear the metallic grating they have heard in the sky previously, but this time much louder. They become nearly obsessed with the idea that they need to get home as quickly as possible.

This is the heart of a chamber that appears to have been wiped clean. Its walls are smooth and colourless. A great library once rose here, but now the books are scattered and flung about, some burned, others with their pages torn from them. A single, empty cage remains in the chamber, its bars twisted at bizarre angles. The façade of a doorway, a great wound that has obviously once tainted this chamber, stands at one wall but seems strangely empty somehow. Hanging from the walls are half a dozen people in manacles. As you stare at their emaciated features, you realise that you know them: They are from Wicken!

This is where Thornrage first imprisoned the Beautiful. Characters present at the Ossuary Chapel when the Beautiful was ensnared (in ***L7: My Benefactor***), and who saw the place she was taken to immediately recognise this cage. The shattered fragments of the *Between shackle* lie on the floor of the cage. The cage was brought here after Thornrage forced the Beautiful to begin her creation.

The **6 Wicken survivors** here are Miss Goosefoot, Arren Shrike, young Lotty Bark, Tabrun Quedge, Mother Cross, and the dazzling Lucy Woundwort (**commoners**). Each is horrifically malnourished, as Thornrage has barely kept them alive. He brought them from the Bright Citadel to witness his final rise as a new Between emperor. Though weak, they are still alive and witnessed the events that recently occurred between the Beautiful and Thornrage here. How recently depends upon how events have panned out to this point. These are the only villagers that survived the raid, although they know that several dead locals were magically questioned in the Capitol. They witnessed the Beautiful's escape and have heard the terrible screaming outside and know that something has gone terribly wrong for Thornrage. They are now terrified that Thornrage and his men are planning to keep them alive now in order to eat them, after having heard Oskwald make the suggestion.

Characters making successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) checks note the following two things. Firstly, there are strange shadows on the walls, as though a trio of figures has literally been blasted into them, leaving only their darkened outlines. Secondly, each of the books has had its pages blanked. None of them has any words written between their covers. By pursuing the many familiar titles (some even legendary) on the spines of these books and based on the sheer number present, it is apparent that at one time the library in this room would have competed as one of the greatest libraries in the world for its depth and breadth of knowledge. Alas, all is now lost from the blank books.

Development: If questioned about what prisoner was held in the now-broken cage, they all accurately describe the Beautiful, adding that sometimes they were aware of a voice inside their heads that sometimes came unbidden and talked to the prisoners. The imprisoned angel referred to the voice as "Sweet Rachel." The angel was extremely interested in the books, and swallowed the knowledge within, apparently stripping the very words from the pages as she consumed their contents and learned about Castorhage and the world in which it exists. As the angel broke out from her cage and finally made her exit, the voice of "Sweet Rachel" was heard one last time and uttered something exceedingly strange. It said, "So the Levee is weakest along the shore. How ironic: there the three weakest faults lie. That is where we shall begin and end this joy." The angel then had her shackle mysteriously removed by one of the knights who was seemingly possessed by some unseen force. She blasted out the bars on the side of the cage with a bolt of searing energy that consumed the knight as well, and upon stepping forth, created a doorway from thin air (**IT12**)

and then departed through it. The sounds of the city came through the doorway for a moment, but now it has gone silent again.

XP Award: If the characters take the time to make sure that the prisoners are escorted safely back to Castorhage and put into the care of someone who can see to their well-being (the Guild can provide information on nearby charitable holy orders), award each character from Wicken a 2,000 XP bonus per prisoner rescued as a personal goal reward.

IT12. Sealed Gateway

This gateway is not any regular shape. The stone around it looks scorched. Within can be seen only the images of flying ravens.

The route created by the Beautiful for her escape lies here. She passed through to Castorhage beyond, dragging Rachel Birch's soul with her before abandoning the soul halfway through and sealing the *gateway* behind her. The *gateway* is no longer functional, but anyone who approaches it can feel the ravens flying and hear the distant, lost screams of Rachel Birch: they can identify it as her voice screaming on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. The former *gateway* still has echoes of the city beyond — the calls of gulls, the sound of a ship's bell, the clamour of Town Bridge — but it is now entirely inaccessible.

IT13. The First Rise

The demented stair rises into a chamber where a feast has obviously taken place. This feast, however, is one of carrion. Maggots writhe in meat that seems somehow to move, snakes crawl through cakes, and flies swarm over congealed fat. The stair continues to writhe upward.

The food here is all spoiled and vile. At one stage, the tables herein groaned with whatever food Thornrage wished for. Now everything is turned to rot.

IT14. The Walled Garden Aspect

Beyond the door is a strange place that seems like it should be hanging in mid-air outside the tower but nevertheless seems to somehow fit its space perfectly. It is a walled garden open to the stormy sky and filled with its own decay. The angles of the place are strange, while odd statues with bloated heads with stumpy legs, things made up of just arms, and creatures with a score of faces upon a single head on a snake-like body are spaced about in an apparently random fashion among the dying foliage.

The walled garden is indeed odd, nothing grows here, and the walls prove impossible to climb, despite appearing to be just 20 feet or so high. Every time a successful DC 15 Climb check is attempted, the climber just climbs higher up the walls, getting nowhere near the top. To those watching, it just seems that the climber is making no progress. The same occurs with anyone trying to fly out of the garden. The 6 waking statues are **caryatid columns**†. They stand still and silent until attacked or until somebody goes within 5 feet of one of the garden walls and then attack. They do not leave the garden.

IT15. The Second Rise

The stair staggers into a space clearly used for relaxation and study, and rises again. There are leather chairs, a desk, and lots of shelves crammed with strange objects. Strangely, attempts have been made to smash the wall down, and a waxy skin has been revealed some five feet into the wall. The tools to make the hole seem to have been abandoned on the floor nearby. A single double-arched doorway leaves the room. The doorway has been nailed shut and barred.

This room is partly overlapping with the Bright Citadel in the Capitol. Anyone making a successful DC 20 Intelligence check identifies the construction as being different from the rest of the tower. The Knights Occularis recognised this, and attempted to dig through from here into the true Bright Citadel, failing when they hit a wall of iron-hard skin behind that proved too formidable. It was not even scratched by their tools and cannot be breached by any means that the characters possess. It should be noted that despite the wall on the map appearing to be only a foot or so thick, the hole that the knights chiselled through nevertheless penetrated 5 feet of stone before hitting the fleshy wall and never emerged into area **IT16**. Such is the nature of Between.

Treasure: The room is crammed with Between objects, most of which are mundane. However, there are also traces of tentative explorations into the three *gateways* on the ground floor, as well as other objects Thornrage has acquired. These objects herein include a fragment of beaten gold that resembles the hexagonal design possibly seen on the temples in **IT8**, and is identifiable as being associated with the ancient Leviathans if a character succeeds at a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check. The object is worth 750 gp. There is length of sweet-smelling timber from some unknown jungle tree that is a *Between vessel* (this vessel carries an incredible sense of timelessness within the Eastern Jungle area) and is worth 400 gp. Also herein is Oskwald's *crystal ball* that he's watched the characters through, 3 magnificently illuminated Hyperborean manuscripts of great age that give possible hint of the existence of Between worth 8,000 gp each, a stuffed monkey with three heads, and 3 small glass balls (actually a child's marbles). The second head of the monkey has a *ring of protection +1* concealed in the stuffing.

IT16 The Aspect of Perverted Lusts

The doorway to this room has been nailed shut and had beams nailed across it from outside. If the door is forced open, the room's occupants are alerted and wait beyond to ambush anyone who comes through. If the characters begin working at opening the door but then cease, the creatures grow frustrated and begins attempting to push through from the other side, babbling and shrieking with the voices of twenty or more people.

If characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following description:

There is a terrible stench to this chamber, a disturbing smell of sweat, offal, and chymical unguents. The room is decorated obscenely, its wall murals a virtual manual of carnal activities. Silk cushions, low beds, and small bathing pools adorn the room. Alongside these comforts are an assortment of odd and unpleasant looking tools and devices, some of which also appear in the murals. Two silk drapes hide the rest of the room from you.

The second chamber is darker, and contains more brutal and aggressive imagery and tools. It is a starkly tiled place that feels soiled somehow. The door has been shut because of what Thornrage recently found within. Initially, the Paladin-Occularis created this chamber to satisfy his considerable carnal appetites. However, when the Beautiful changed the room, she slew the many figments Thornrage had created for "play" and formed them into 6 **gibbering mouthers**.

IT17. The Third Rise: Refuge

The strange stair finally ends in a rather disappointingly modest room. Here, some sort of refuge has been set up, and waterskins, the remains of food, and assorted equipment lie about.

This is where **Lord-Paladin-Occularis Thornrage** and Oskwald (**mage**) wait, jealously guarding their food and trying to work out a way of escape — fruitlessly so far. There is enough food and water here for about 3 days for the whole group. The weapons they have collected include a heavy crossbow and 20 bolts, 3 spears, and a bag of caltrops. A single door opens in one wall.

IT18. Futility

The final door contains the futility of Thornrage's efforts. He has opened it only to look beyond it once. The doorway opens onto oblivion, a nothingness that is beyond mortal understanding. Characters who look beyond the door must make a successful DC 20 Wisdom save or gain a Between malady (see the introductory chapter of ***The Levee Adventure***).

Concluding the Adventure

The Nirvana created here is Thornrage's own world, a factor that is already weighing heavily upon Lord Oskwald's mind. What might happen if he dies? Perhaps the prisoners would be freed? The death of the Occularis leader transforms the landscape with immediate effect, the monsoon rains pound harder, and the place begins to unmake itself in such a way that the world is seeming to end. Black worms rain from the bloated sky, trees begin to lash and yowl, their bodies transforming into flesh and then spasming and sloughing away as they are unmade.

For every minute spent in the Nirvana at that stage, characters must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save or be struck by the unmaking land. On a failed save, the characters takes 2d6 points of slashing damage from the shards and needles and flying flesh of the place. Those who fail by 5 or more, or roll an unmodified 1 for their saving throw are engulfed by the stuff. They are immediately pinned and begin to suffocate, taking 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage per round from the crushing effects of the chaotic upheaval. Each round the trapped character can make a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check or a DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to escape its grip. Even if the character escapes the collapsed area of terrain, the land continues to thrash, making inarticulate cries like that of an infant. It is not able to further attack the characters though.

The land vomits up forgotten secrets and the monsters from the ego of the Occularis, which become the **Demented Thing that Was Thornrage**, a Between creature (**Herald at the Threshold**) made up of his every secret stains, wishes, and perversions. It is a final "gift" of the Beautiful to Thornrage for his time spent hosting her in his Ivory Tower and for inadvertently providing her with the answers she needed to fulfil her vision. This creature appears at the *fleshgate*, but is unable to exit. It howls its fury and remains at the location until it sees foes, at which moment it attacks, its rage unbound, its desire for vengeance driving it even as the place it is in dissolves into nothingness. When the characters first sight the new Thornrage, read the following.

What is this thing? It's possible that it was Thornrage. His face, or a distorted approximation of it, leers from the long carcass of the thing's body. It wears a thick, rugose, bark-like hide from which grow numerous dry brambles, as if thedying jungle itself was given form in this creature. Shards of metal shaped like ribs surround a central mouth in that all-too-human face, and long, tentacles covered in thorny growths and what look like rusted nails extend from its body. It is made up of equal parts anger and metal and thorny flesh.

Development: If the Demented Thing that was Thornrage is slain, the Lord Occularis is put down a second time. If that occurs, read or paraphrase the following description:

The thing staggers, using its bone swords as walking sticks as it collapses forward. As it breathes its last, it fixes each of you with a final, baleful stare. Then its face breaks into a wide smile and its form erupts outward, upward and inward, fleshy tendrils and limbs made of nails and rust screaming as they tear away, pulling the figure inside out until it has dissipated from existence entirely in a violent flurry of lashing flesh and flying nails.

Anyone within 10 feet of the thing when it dies must make a successful DC 22 Dexterity save or suffer 6d6 points of slashing damage from the lacerating, stinging remnants of the man.

Back to Reality

With the Beautiful free, the characters return to the city to find it is just after midnight. The *fleshgate* snaps shut behind them, and the *fleshkey* falls to the floor and shrivels, quickly becoming little more than a mummified remnant. Its power is lost.

The final day has already begun. The city is gripped in a torrential rainfall — perhaps the leavings of the monsoon that thrashed Thornrage's Nirvana? The city is dark and quiet. No one is out on this night, not Revolutionaries, not City Watch, not rioters, not Knockers. Very few pyrebeetle lanterns remain lit across the city, and the city's shutters are all closed tightly against the deluge. The atmosphere of suspension and watchful waiting pervade even the halls of the Capitol where a thousand roof leaks leave a thousand dripping puddles on the floor. Even the normally reticent guardsmen huddle in their guard posts, crouched around small braziers with a look of discomfort approaching fear in their eyes. The characters have no trouble departing the Capitol even by one of the main gates. No one challenges them or accosts them (though they are not able to travel elsewhere in the Capitol; all deeper streets and accesses are closed for the night). The characters are able quickly to find a lone coarse cab in the streets outside that takes them back to their lodgings as a very rapid pace. The streets are virtually empty. The ceaseless rain pounds upon the cobbles and makes shallow rivers of the steeper streets. It is a cleansing rain. It is only the beginning though. Soon, the flood must follow.

Nine Steps to Revolution — Part Eight: The Soul of Rebellion

A significant portion of this adventure takes place in Toiltown, bringing the characters into direct contact with the revolution. Events are detailed here, and emphasised later in the paranoid Capitol throughout the adventure. By the end of the adventure, there is a pause, as if the city is taking a breath for the final act to occur.

Nine Steps to Madness — Part Eight: Flight

The characters track the Beautiful to her prison, partly in the Bright Citadel and partly in Between. However, she has already escaped by the time they arrive, and her plans are once again back on track. Any characters touched by her feel her nearness as almost a palpable thing, and what's more, they can feel that her will is about to come to pass. Her cleansing plan will soon be unleashed.

Apotheosis Appendix

Appendix A: Seasons in the Blight — Sunshine and Storm

Spring is well and truly here, and the city begins to warm beneath the sun. Rains are short and take the form of harsh thunderstorms that come and go quickly. All is damp, and the growth of the blight in the dark alleys and crevices seems to be at a faster rate than usual. Grain rots in its silos, and livestock develop cankerous sores that seep and rot on their limbs. Food grows scarce, and the mood is ugly. Constant dampness turns to mildew and the stink of rot and mouldering laundry that never gets quite dry hangs over the city, even in the Capitol.

Then, it doesn't rain … not for weeks. The sun is hot, and humidity is high with little or no breeze to bring any relief. The city is a sauna of sweat, dust, and misery. Even the harsh thunderstorms of previous weeks that stripped roofs from hovels and set gables alight with their lightning would be an improvement. The scarcity of food continues to grow; second crops planted in now-dry fields struggle to create green shoots.

During the day between the hours of noon and 6th hour non (6 p.m.), the brutal heat and humidity run the risk of heat dangers. Anyone engaging in activity outside gains a level of exhaustion immediately, and must make a DC 15 Constitution save each hour thereafter or continue to gain more levels of exhaustion.

Not a drop of rain falls, not a cloud breaks the burning expanse of the sky. It is as if the spring rains have been shut off or held back. It is about to rain plenty …



Dreams of the Beautiful — A Side Trek

The demented dreams of the Beautiful flow outward to those touched most intimately by her, or in some cases, that have not. Her imprisonment and salvation are a heady mix of clashing emotions that flow freely through the night air of the Blight. These manifestations of her dreams should appear to the characters as determined by you. Some apply to characters who performed specific actions during the adventure path up to this point, some apply to those who have been touched strongly by the Beautiful, and some apply to those who have not. Each encounter provides a suggestion to whom it best applies. Seed these encounters throughout the course of this adventure as the aura and emanations of the Beautiful's presence in Castorhage begin to become palpable — a foreshadowing of the sort of effect that she will be able to have on the city when she is able to focus her full attention to it.

Dream 1: Nocturnal Attrition

A **night hag** called **Night Scented** smells the thoughts and dreams of the character who fathomed Abigail's *Between vessel* (see the side trek **Shatterday** in ***L6: The Susurrus Theatre***). Scenting this morsel on the air, the night hag comes to the character by night. If the night hag is reduced to fewer than 10 hp, she flees and no longer disturbs the character.

Dream 2: Frantic Fugue

All the characters share this nightmare, though the focus of it should be a character that is very well-liked within the party or perhaps seen as an integral part of its group dynamic, i.e. someone that the other characters will be extremely motivated to save. Though this is a shared nightmare and seems to take place over a period of time as long as several days even, it all takes place in a single night while the characters all sleep. Any characters who are actually awake during this time (on guard duty, because they don't require sleep, etc.) are present in the dream and can act normally, but at its end that character is unaware of any of the events that occurred in the dream and does not have any recollection of it as the others do. In any case, none of the actions that take place in the dream actually occur: spells are not expended, resources are not used, etc. However, throughout the course of the dream, treat the entire thing as if it was real and allow the characters to take whatever actions they deem necessary in dealing with the situation. They cannot, however, continue on with the rest of the adventure in order to get a "sneak peek" at what may lie ahead. If at any point the characters decide to turn their attention back to the events of ***L8: Apotheosis***, the dream should end. Otherwise, it ends at whatever point you feel like the players have been tormented enough by their futile efforts to save their friend (possibly at the death of the afflicted character).

The dream begins as one the "chosen" characters awakes in the morning with the poisoned condition and with one level of exhaustion (this is still in that night's dream, and the dream is being shared by the other characters). In the dream, each subsequent morning, the character awakens with an additional level of exhaustion, and even magical healing does not appear to help — since none of the long dream's events are really happening. On what would be the final night's sleep before death, however, the character actually awakens.

They are walking down a random street of Castorhage in the early morning hours, through a chill drizzle. They are dazed and wearing only night clothes, with no recollection of how they got there or why. Any other characters who were asleep and involved in the dream likewise awake in the pre-dawn hours, each in their own bedchambers. All remember the dream vividly, with its frantic pursuit of salvation and despondent realisation of failure. But all are unharmed. None of the actions taken in the dream were real; no resources used or contacts made actually occurred. All is just as it was when the characters went to sleep the evening before, but for a hollow, haunting echo of sorrow that still lingers in their hearts from what they remember of the dreamed events.

Handout 1

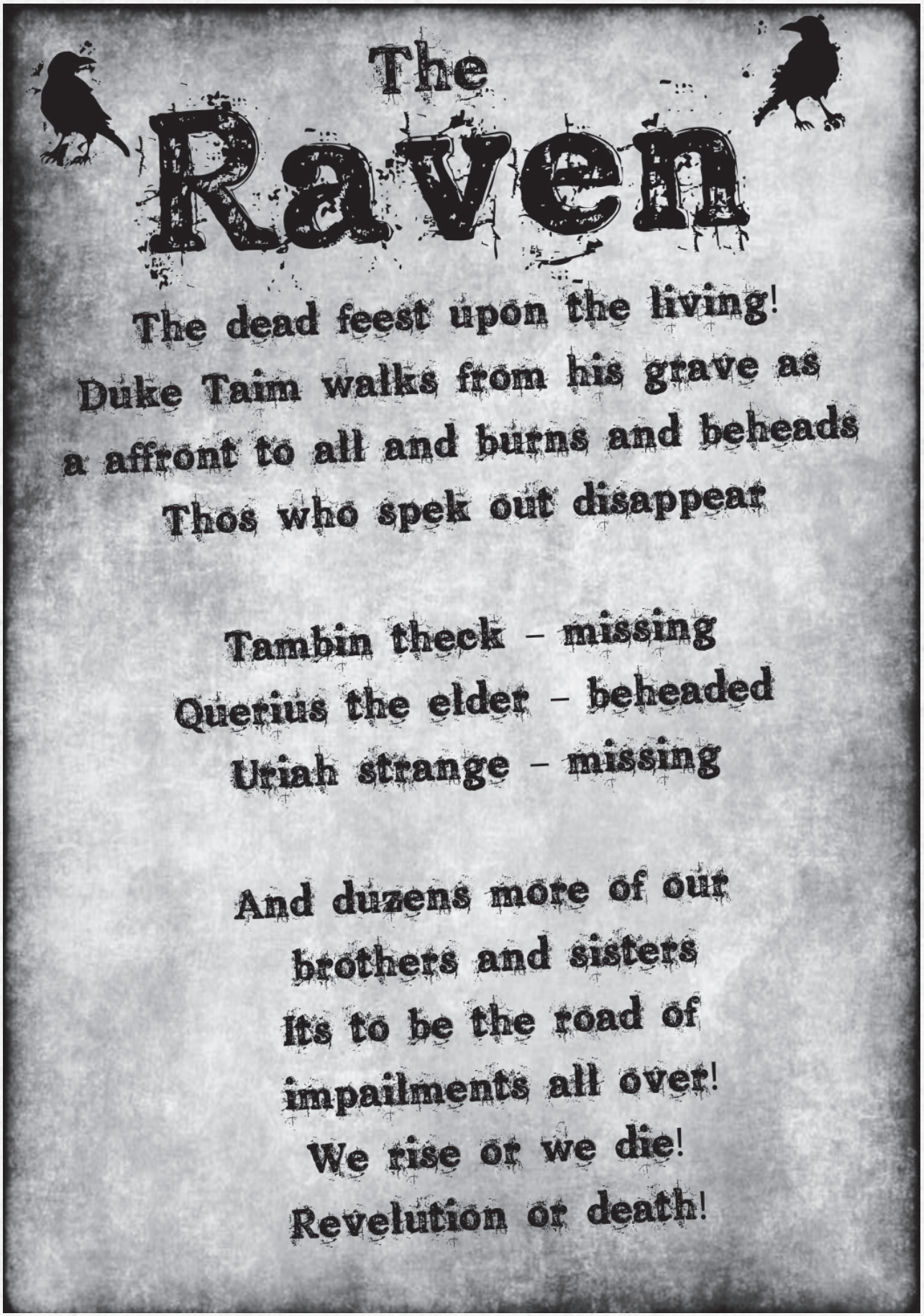
Jacob,

The instructions are not coming, I suspect the boss has been compromised. We should move to investigate the Windmill before it's too late. Aristo foul play is my guess. We hear from Strange but never see him - not for days! I will await instruction, but do not dally.

The Mocking Plague spreads and soon it may be too late, the march has to be soon!

— G

Handout 2


The
Raven
The dead feest upon the living!
Duke Taim walks from his grave as
a affront to all and burns and beheads
Thos who spek out disappear
Tambin theck – missing
Querius the elder – beheaded
Uriah strange – missing
And duzens more of our
brothers and sisters
Its to be the road of
impailments all over!
We rise or we die!
Revelution or death!

Handout 3

The Fetch always pay what is owed. Remember that we are not friends, simply foes united in common cause.

B



L9: Utopia

By Richard Pett



Introduction

This adventure chapter takes place over the course of a single day in three locations across the city where the tears in the Levee have occurred. Each location has a specific guardian for its tear as well as an anchor for the tear (a herald at the threshold) to hold it open. Likewise, at each location, the Beautiful herself appears using specific tactics in the defence of that tear. The fate of the city-state rests in the hands — and on the courage, swords and spells — of the player characters.

They are not alone, though. The characters may have help depending on how they've played through this adventure. If they are still alive and have gotten along reasonably well with the characters (no attempts to kill each other, etc.), then their old friend Eleanor Shank, her benefactor Lord Benedict Morel, and possibly even Long Lucy† may join the characters. If you think your characters may need more help, you can reintroduce the vampire hunters Luther and Abigail if they still live. Regardless of who ultimately joins them, make sure that the characters are healed, rested and fully equipped with supplies, spells, and magic. They should have had opportunity at the end of ***L8: Apotheosis*** to restock on expended potions and scrolls. Though they won't have time to hunt for or craft any other magic items, if they had already begun the process to have some item crafted during this adventure, the beginning of this day would be a good time for it to have been completed — even if its completion is earlier than expected (sometimes the fates shine on the worthy). Any of the friends, acquaintances, or contacts that they have cultivated over the course of the adventure should be available for their use as well (as well as a few enemies they've made, no doubt).

This adventure is essentially one mad dash by the characters from Levee tear to Levee tear to try to prevent its collapse and shore it up against the coming deluge of Between. It should feel desperate and sometimes even hopeless, but don't let the fact that the party has run out of healing resources and must stop and rest before continuing or face assured destruction cause the adventure to run off its rails. The culmination of the entire ***Levee*** adventure ends on this day one way or the other; don't let the heroes doom the city because they lacked the resources to successfully complete it … or at least make a valiant attempt. There are those who know that they owe the characters a debt of gratitude, even if the characters are not overtly aware of it. The timely appearance of a bishop of the Church of Mother Grace, a ranking member of the Guild, an influential Anarchist or Revolutionary or even a grateful inspector or commander of the City Watch can show up in the nick of time to replenish the resources of the characters with potions, scrolls, or maybe even minor wands. The fate of the city is at stake. Now is the time for every favour, relationship, and reward to come due.

Media Inspirations Behind L9: Utopia

There are a great many awesome apocalypse movies, but in many ways the End of Days predicted here is something only the characters know or realise — until it is too late. Here, at the end, the adventure becomes a simple choice of morality: Are the temptations of the Beautiful too much or do the characters act selflessly, doing the thing they feel is right — even if that seems wrong?

Keep films such as *28 Days Later*, *12 Monkeys* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* in your head, but remember that a mask of normality exists — only the characters and a few visionaries also touched by the Angel know what is really going on. Will this apocalypse wipe the slate clean? Is the Beautiful a force for good or evil? Or maybe both?

Adventure Synopsis

Today is the day. The Beautiful was drawn into the world and despaired. She saw a world of poisonous shadows, of choking anger and misery. Her heart was broken by it, but now that she has tasted the forbidden fruit of reality, she cannot let it be. To her mind, the sick world that she believes will inevitably one day come to infect hers is already seeping into it and wounding her own beautiful land.

She must stop it. Since her arrival in the world a few short weeks ago, the Beautiful has sought to cleanse it, to purify it by drowning it in her own reality, making it something new, something exciting, but something impotent, its threat gelded. Her first two attempts failed. The first piercing of simple wounds into Between failed to draw the sickness. A second attempt when trying to loose Between onto the world through a breach almost cost her everything. But now, she has the answer, the weakness, the feared weakness known by a handful of Between thieves, and now also known by her. That Between is held back by a levee — The Levee — but that Levee is weak, and getting weaker by the day. It is so thin at three points that any one of them could cause a wound that could not be stanched. Cuts must be made, and kept open to let this reality bleed. After a few hours — by dusk of the day they were opened and bled — they would never stop. Now aware of what she must do, she has begun to weaken the Levee at its three most vulnerable points. By sunset, any one of the three wounds remaining will be enough to bring Between into the world forever.

It is dawn of the last day …

The characters awaken aware that the Beautiful has done something. If they still have members who have been touched by her, they are not only aware that she has done something but what she has done as well — breached the weak points of Between with her *gateways*. She now waits as they weaken the Levee to breaking point. Should any one of them still exist at dusk, Between will be unleashed. Permanently.

The day begins insanely enough: A steady rain of black worms falls in a monsoon, which boils into an incredible thunderstorm that hangs directly above the city. The weather lashes the locals with hailstones the size of fists and sends demented balls of lightning cascading across the city. The streets quickly empty.

Lord Benedict Morel† and a small group of loyal followers seek out the characters at dawn. Morel wants to know what is going on and suspects the weather effects have something to do with them. If he is not satisfied with the characters' explanation or is not given one, he and his men turn hostile. If they understand, they offer to help.

The Beautiful has punched three *gateways* from reality to Between along the Great Lyme River. The three holes are at the weakest spots where the two places meet, and any one of them existing by dusk is enough to cause a rip that becomes a breach and destroys the Levee between realities. Should this occur, consult the end of this adventure for which apocalypse you would like to occur.

The three locations are in Festival where a vengeful **Marren Grast**† and his Family await the characters: The Great Docks where a rebellious mad thing from Between has set itself up as Empress and where the characters' friends from the Circus Macabre mysteriously arrive to help guided by visions of **Ivy**†; and the Gyre, which is spinning apart and infested with sickening things made of disease. In the Gyre, the characters also find what has been moulded from Rachel Birch, the Knight Occularis who suffered visions and who tried to cut them from her mind. The Beautiful has made flesh from her doubt, and skin from her madness. She too is waiting for the characters in the dark of the river.

Each location is a bastard born of the filth and greed and hunger of the city-state and the untamed chaos-world of Between. The Beautiful can move between all three points, wearing her coat of living bodies and souls. The characters rush into the breach at each location, mixing with fanatical Panacea cultists who try to stop them, as well as creatures of madness seeping from Between. At each location, the Beautiful tries to persuade the characters to leave the filthy city to its deserved fate by offering certain characters their own private heaven, a land shaped by their fantasies in which they can live happily ever after. Do they risk her anger by throwing her incredible gift back at her? She makes the offer three times, and if they refuse her third offer, her anger seethes into her fleshy gown and grows hate as skin.

The characters choose their own path in this last protracted day, but they have only one day to assail all three locations or the city falls. Or do they let it fall? Do they take the fabulous reward of their own private heavens and turn their back on the decay and revolution and toil?

Part One: The Final Day

The character closest to the Beautiful, and any others who have formed a bond, suddenly become deafened at dawn by a mad screeching across the city, the same celestial ripping noise they have heard before when the Beautiful is ripping up reality. characters do not need to make a check to notice these effects, nor that the city outside is seemingly normal. Outside, the brooding sky hangs above a city seemingly unaware of what is happening, unable to hear the sky screaming. At that moment, the sky begins to bleed, raining black worms onto Castorhage, the inhabitants scattering for cover. It is then that the character(s) become aware of what is happening. Read the text below only to those characters.

Included below is the link from the introductory chapter to the adventure path that inspired the writing of ***The Levee***. It is a YouTube video of the same noise that was heard by the author in the sky above the Pennines of northern Derbyshire, though on a different day and at a different place. Listen to it to get a feel for the sound coming from the heavens that awakes the characters on this day. Perhaps even play the audio of it for your players to introduce the adventure.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHi6LjKuNl4

Now you understand: the escape from the Ivory Tower, the blank books, the feeling of pure fear. This is the final day of which the vampires spoke. It is here, now. You hear the screaming heralds from three points along the river, one at its heart in the middle of the city, and two near its mouth near the sea. The screaming sky is tearing three holes in the Levee that keeps the Between from reality, even now it is weakening it. You also understand, though you do not know why, that if the sun sets and even one of these breaches remains, everything will be washed away as Between rips into reality. And after that, who knows ...

The characters' close affinity with the Beautiful allows them to understand what is happening. If they do not share such a relationship or perhaps those characters who once did have fallen along the way in this adventure, then they learn the above from **Ivy**†, the awakened carnal golem they rescued in ***L1: Hereafter***. She seeks them out herself at dawn and tells the characters these facts, and the urgency of the coming events. Those who are touched can readily discern the locations of the breaches. They all lie along the river: one is at Festival, one on the spinning isle of the Gyre in the river's heart, and one is in the Great Docks at the point where the river meets the sea.

How characters handle this adventure and dealing with these breaches is entirely up to them, but if she is with them at this point, Eleanor Shank once again insists upon coming along. Over the course of the adventure, she has improved somewhat in her own capabilities, reflected in the *Eleanor Shank* Sidebox.

Lord Benedict Morel

This event occurs just as the characters are leaving their lodgings (if they dwell together) or after they have met and are departing as a group to take on the challenges of the day. The characters should be together and equipped for this encounter.

Lord Benedict Morel† is saddened; he loves Eleanor and feels guilty about what he knows he must do, but he has no choice. He knows now that the angel brought to the city can be a terrible weapon and must be destroyed, along with all knowledge of it. Morel has spies across the city watching the Capitol and characters' lodgings for their return. Once he is aware of them, he makes directly to the characters to confront them.

Eleanor Shank

Eleanor Shank is a **burglar**, with the following additional features that increase her challenge rating to 8 (3,900 XP):

- Eleanor has 78 (12d8 + 24) hit points.
- **Damage Resistance** poison
- ***Assassinate.*** During her first turn, the assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Eleanor scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.
- ***Supreme Sneak.*** Eleanor has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks when moving at half speed on the same turn.
- **Special Equipment.** Eleanor carries a *potion of greater healing*, *potion of gaseous form*, and a *potion of invisibility*. She also possesses the following items: *leather armour +1*, *shortbow +1*, a *silvered shortsword +2*, 12 arrows in a quiver, a wide brimmed black hat, an amethyst amulet hanging from a thong made of her husband's hair, a backpack containing high quality thieves' tools, a tobacco pouch full of rum-soaked tobacco, a leather briar pipe, a purse with 100 gp, a large jet stone worth 200gp, and a leather insectum box with *anceps scarabacus*† insectum.

Morel is a totally loyal subject to Princess Rebecca of Mourney. He has been aware of the characters since before the adventure started, and has a powerful inkling that what is taking place here is of vast import. The characters make him nervous because he doesn't know them well enough, and worries that if, like Thornrage, they seek to tame or imprison the Beautiful, they may have power beyond his ability to deal with — possibly beyond even his beloved princess's powers. He can't let that happen.

Lord Benedict arrives with 6 Knights of the Capitol (LN male human **knights**). These men do not have weapons drawn but stand in the character's way as they try to depart. Morel always prefers to fight in the open, so a marketplace or square or plaza is an ideal place for this confrontation if he has the opportunity to choose the location. Morel demands to know what is going on and demands proof that the characters are not simply going to try to capture the Beautiful as Thornrage did. Remember, like most of the locals, he cannot see or hear the effects of the breaches being made and is naturally cautious after a lifetime of politics within the Capitol. He loves Eleanor, so if she is present and supporting the characters, it goes a long way toward swaying Benedict to their cause. Do not resolve this important standoff by a simple skill check: The players should present their case to Lord Benedict if they wish to sway him. If the characters are completely honest, it should be enough. If the characters, however, have decided to try to aid the Beautiful, he attempts to stop them, ordering his men into combat, if the characters refuse to surrender. If the characters refuse to allow him to come along, he won't press the issue, but he will, of course, continue to follow them while keeping his knights with him.

The Beautiful's Offers

Throughout this adventure, **the Beautiful**† is present at the breaches as the characters arrive. She wants to talk to her character "children" (those whom she has most closely touched) on each of the three occasions, laughing ironically at herself as she now understands why the characters were so important to her. Those she blessed with her touch are here to protect her from their own friends, whether they realize it or not.

A searing white light shrouds a figure who floats aloft with great wings of downy feathers. The purity of the figure within the light is almost enough to be blinding, and the falling rains and gusting winds to not seem to touch her — don't dare to touch her. Barely through the glare of the heavens, you can make out a face, a white, featureless face ... featureless except for its eyes, two black pits from which stream black tears. The angelic being carries a great white scythe in one hand and with the other holds forth a delicate, perfectly alabaster-skinned arm to point at you.

On each occasion the characters meet this Between angel, she is connected to her *gateway* by a sickly wan umbilical cord, part flesh, part energy siphoned from Between. The cord cannot be severed by physical or magical means, and allows the Beautiful to instantly withdraw to the location of the next *gateway* at will. The cord likewise prevents the Angel from being subject to the effects of *banishment* or any other similar form of abjuration magic that might be used to trap her or force her away. She learned well from her time in Thornrage's clutches and now utilises the essence of Between itself to inure her to the effects of such paltry attempts.

First Revealing: On the occasion of the Beautiful's first appearance to the characters, she creates a new *gateway* right next to the characters. It gives access to a private heaven for her most-cherished character (the one most closely touched). This paradise should indeed be everything the character would wish for — be that power, gratification (of any kind), peace, etc. — and in a location the character most wants, whatever that may be. This personal paradise is like Father Gromwell's in ***L7: My Benefactor*** or Thornrage's in ***L8: Apotheosis*** (before it was corrupted), and conforms to the same rules as those. It is not a *wish* to be granted that can influence events in the mundane world, it is a private place that has no interference or power over the real world. Only the intended character can make use of this *gateway*; it is impassable to all others.

The Beautiful tells the chosen character to go and enjoy eternity in her paradise, but if the offer is rejected, she dismisses the *gateway* immediately. If the character accepts and steps into the Nirvana, the door closes behind her, sealing her in it forever and beyond recovery by any means short of a *wish* or *miracle*. The character is removed from the adventure path. Take the player aside and tell her that the Angel told the truth: Paradise is indeed waiting the character beyond, but the door behind is closed, sealed forever as the price of loyalty to the Angel. Allow the player to introduce a new player character to continue the adventure path or possibly assume control of one of the NPCs provided in **Appendix B** if she wishes. If her offer is rejected, the Beautiful sobs quietly and attacks that character specifically for her betrayal. The Beautiful departs to the site of the next breach if reduced to half her hit points.

Second Revealing: At the second breach, the Beautiful (fully recovered from the first encounter) makes the same offer to another character who had been touched by the angel even if perhaps not so strongly as the first. The results are the same: Either the character chooses Paradise and enters to disappear forever or refuses it and comes under personal attack by the Angel. Once again, if reduced to below half her hit points, the Beautiful withdraws to the third and final breach.

Third Revealing: At the third and final location, two *gateways* are present — one for each of the originally two chosen children from the two previous encounters. If one or both were slain by the Beautiful, then she has selected replacements from among the party to receive her blessed gift. This time, the *gateways* remain open throughout the combat, vanishing only if one of the characters accepts her offer or the Beautiful herself is slain.

Tactics: In battle, the Beautiful always hovers at least 40 feet above the ground. She uses her *gaze of Between* and *joy of being* attacks liberally. She has not to this point revealed her true self to anyone nor donned her *cloak of despair* and will not do so until the **Third Revealing**. On that occasion, if her offers are not immediately accepted, she starts the battle by revealing her true self to a character (see text box below) that has not been previously touched by her. In the third battle, she dons her *cloak of despair* if reduced to half her hit points. Likewise, she uses her *antimagic field* only when it is clear the characters are not going to side with her and the rest of her magic is all but used.

When the Beautiful reveals her true self to a character, read the following to that individual.

The light-shrouded figure changes somehow. It is as if for the first time the light illuminates rather than obscures. Within the corona of this radiance can be seen the angelic figure, but it looks nothing like you imagined. It still holds a white scythe, but you can see that it is the white of bone, dried in the wind and bleached by the sun. Its long blade is nicked and rusty from the old blood that still stains it. You see that it wears not the elegant robes of some heavenly court, but a threadbare burial shroud stolen from some tomb, stained with the corruption of the grave and used not to hide it perfect form in modesty but to conceal the disgusting form beneath. Partly skeletal limbs, distended and twisted out of shape, flex at joints gone wrong and entirely too long. The wings that rise from its shoulder are not angelic and downy feather but rather wan and bloodless membranes of stretched flesh and insect-like patterns. And its face ... its face is not an expressionless mask of beauty and wisdom but rather skin stretched tightly across a fleshless skull, the mouth and nose sealed by ancient scarring and only two gouged and blood-filled eye sockets providing any depth to its macabre plain of a face.

Part Two: Festival

The Festival Pleasure Ferry is not operating today — the weather is too poor. The isle is virtually lost in the haze of the storm, and the characters must make their own way over to the island. When they get there, read or paraphrase the following description.

> The island of Festival cowers beneath a cloak of rain and hail, her piers lashed and shaking as if in fear. The rooftops stagger upward, their peaks and angles forming a virtual waterfall of infinite steps in the deluge, which then flows down the streets in miniature river rapids. At the top, the Great Fayre lies still, seeming blunted and sagging in the downpour.

The streets are mostly deserted. Several of the wererats prowl the streets, scouting out the strange goings-on of the storm, but now they wear their hybrid forms openly, not fearful of any prying eyes. A handful of the creatures has even been touched by the encroaching Between and now wander mindlessly, their eyes and ears seared by the herald. If the characters attack, these creatures flee. If cornered, they defend themselves using the normal wererat stats below.

Three wererats of the Family do not cower. They have felt something wicked coming this way on the strange otherworldly winds that lash the pleasure island. They suspect it to be the characters, and they are not entirely wrong. Their leader, Marren Grast, has taken his two most beloved kinsmen, Annalise and Ivor, and together they await the arrival of their foes. Marren does not fully understand what is going on or why he thinks the characters are approaching, but he suspects the characters have come to unmask the rats and destroy the Family. He aims to stop them.

The Beautiful's breach rests on an old pier on the north side of the island at Liquorice. Even when seen, this pier gateway is not obvious except to those who can hear the sky tearing and realise some of the noise is emanating at this location. Marren Grast and his kin cannot hear the rending, but they feel led to this location and lurk in the shadows nearby, watching. They await the arrival of the characters, completely unaware of the breach.

The Mundane Pier

The pier where the Between breach rests lies abandoned and rotting. It extends out over the waters of the Lyme and ends at a circular stone building built up directly from the water, possibly intended to be a small boathouse or fish hatchery. The pier is overlooked from the landward side by several ramshackle structures that are little more than weathered ruins. Access to the pier has been closed off by a crude wooden gate that is clumsily nailed shut with planks and bears a rusting padlock. A sign affixed to the gate reads, "*For Sale. All enquiries to Messrs. Cran, Splaite and Wimlock, 21b Jaggery Alley, Liquorice.*"

The wooden planks are 2 inches thick and crudely nailed across the locked gate (a DC 12 Strength check will be sufficient to break the planks). The padlock is rusted shut and can't be picked, but if the gate is broken open, the padlock is irrelevant. The gate can easily be circumvented to reach the pier with a simple move action to climb around it, though there is nothing of interest on the pier or in the old structure at its end.

Those touched characters who can hear the cacophony of the breaches are able to track the sound of one of them to this location (or Ivy can if none of the characters remains alive). To those who can hear the sound, the pier presents an entirely different appearance.

> The closed-off pier is simply a mundane veil cloaking its true connection to Between. To your eyes, the worldly pier sags precipitously, dull with rot and decay as if waiting to die. It is overlain, however, with a Between pier which touches it and seems more real to you. However, this pier is different: It lurches away from your sight to a great circular building of stone, reached by a crooked line of raised ironwork that once supported the pier itself. This skeleton is bare and lashed with bloated barnacles that resemble pregnant creatures. Odd small crabs stagger along the ironwork. The place itself rests in what must be a fragment of the Unsea. A great wave builds and, as you stare, crashes across the structure, burying it in a wall of water that then passes, leaving the thing untouched. It is not the sights that grab your attention, though; it is the noise, the scream that sounds like the world is dying in pain, or wallowing in joy.

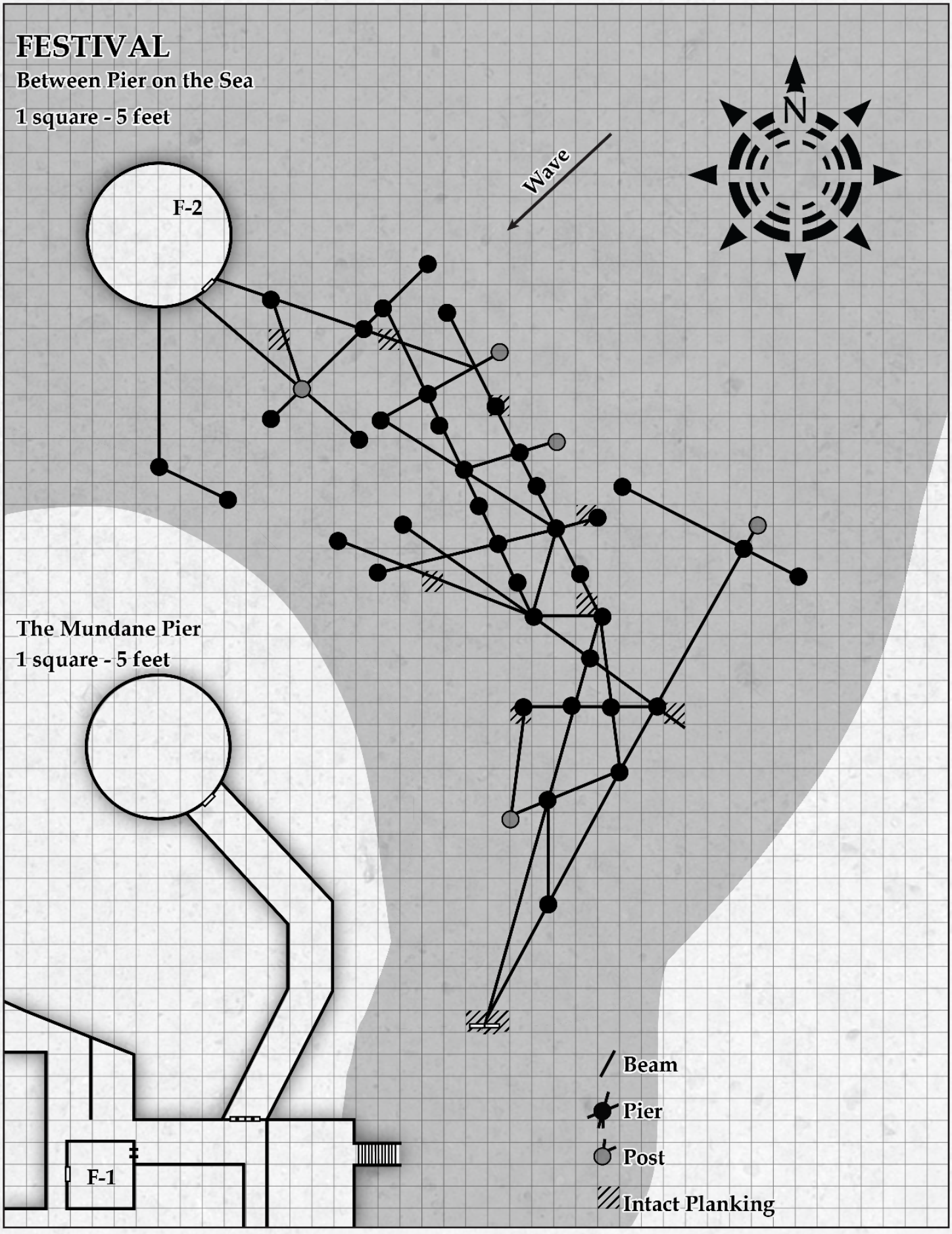
Anyone who can hear the breach and see the Between pier knows that to go around the gate is useless. To access the Between pier, the characters have to actually go through the wooden gate, because is the precise location where the Between breach lies. Once the gate is broken open, the true appearance of the pier (as described above) is visible to all through the breach. If anyone passes through the breach, refer to Between Pier on the Unsea below.

F1. Wererat Stakeout

Marren Grast† and his relatives, **Annalise Grast**† and **Ivor Grast**†, hide in an old net mender's hut built of warped planks bearing a layer of faded whitewash. In addition, 6 Grast thugs (LE male or female human **wererats**) lurk among nearby allies in rat form, awaiting Marren's signal. A grimy window overlooking the pier is so filthy that those within have advantage on any Stealth checks while looking through, and at least one of the wererats is keeping a watch out at all times. The door into this small hovel is held ajar by a filthy old whiskey bottle that has been laid between the door and the jamb. The wererats watch the approach of the characters and launch their attack before any of the characters break through the gate. They will not follow any characters into the Between pier beyond, but will be awaiting should they return.

Annalise Grast has suffered a mutation in her lycanthropy and she is stuck in a hideous hybrid form. Her features are distorted, even considering their animalistic pairing, and appear to largely be the result of extensive inbreeding. Her curly, blonde hair, delicate cheekbones, and ample bosom are repellent incongruities in combination with her pronounced snout and twisted, fanged and slavering mouth, and her hideously mismatched eyes — one lazy and the other spaced almost to the side of her head like a fish. Beneath her dark armour, her skin is covered in light-brown fur.

Like his twin sister, Ivor Grast was touched by Between while still in the womb and is trapped in hybrid form. He is strong, but his musculature is misshapen, and it looks as though he has been racked until his limbs popped from their sockets and then twisted in different directions. His terrible, physical deformities are partially concealed beneath a ludicrously foppish outfit of silks, satins, and lace assembled around a breastplate of black-enamelled metal. His head is similarly elongated and twisted. A misshapen jaw forces his drooling mouth to the right side of his face, and both beady, red, rat-like eyes to the left. He slurps and gulps as spools of ropey saliva drip down his side, an Adam's apple the size of a fist distending the stretched skin of his long neck. Yet for all this malformation, he moves with unsettling agility and power, his outsized hands hefting a serrated sword that bears cruel hooks and barbs along its blade.


FESTIVAL
Between Pier on the Sea
1 square - 5 feet
N
Wave
F-2
The Mundane Pier
1 square - 5 feet
F-1
Beam
Pier
Post
Intact Planking

Tactics: Marren drinks his *potion of barkskin* as soon as the characters are spotted. Marren blows his whistle to summon the nearby thugs, who change into hybrid form and move in to attack as a loose group, trying to outflank their foes and separate them from each other. Marren prefers to initiate combat with a surprise attack from hiding, drawing his concealed, poisoned *dagger of venom* to deliver a devastating attack. He then uses his *dust of disappearance* before adopting hybrid form to enable further sneak attacks and death attacks. He cannot resist verbally taunting the characters in order demoralize those he is about to kill. Marren does not hesitate to withdraw if his enemies withstand his attacks or if he is unable to deliver them, drinking his *potion of gaseous form* to escape if necessary.

Annalise likewise drinks her *potion of barkskin* before combat and hides, waiting for an opportunity to deliver a sneak attack. Annalise wields her longsword two-handed and screams as she fights. She uses Acrobatics to try to flank opponents. If she is facing several opponents, she uses her frightening and brutal beating abilities hoping to make some run away. Otherwise, she focuses on making them bleed. Annalise is a psychotic killer, but she has enough sense of self-preservation to withdraw if reduced below 20 hit points to drink her *potion of greater healing* before either fleeing or rejoining the fray if some of her allies still live.

Ivor presses the attack at all times, focusing on damaging opponents' weapons and armour. He delights in delivering a killing blow to unconscious foes by ripping their throats out with his teeth. Ivor is a brutal and unforgiving opponent who fights to the death unless called off by one of the few Grasts, such as Marren, that he'll accept orders from. Even if severely injured, he needs to be reminded to drink his *potion of greater healing* before he will do so.

The Pier Gate

If the characters manage to break through the pier's wooden gate (it is apparent to anyone who can hear the breaching that the sound is emanating from this gate), they gain access to the Between pier beyond. However, a Between caul stretches across the entrance. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the thin membrane and identifies what it is. The cauls in these three locations across the city are thicker than those encountered previously and are detailed in the sidebox.

The Breach Cauls

The cauls of the Between breaches that have inelegantly torn through the stuff of reality are thicker and bloodier than those typically found on Between *gateways*. Like a normal Between caul, the stuff of the membrane clings to anyone who passes through and begins choking characters and causing them to begin to suffocate. Unlike normal Between cauls that dissolve, these breach cauls remain indefinitely if not removed. Forcibly removing the caul requires a DC 15 Strength check. As the character struggles to remove the caul, it begins to constrict, tightening around the character, who slowly starts to suffocate (refer to the game manual for the guidelines on suffocating). Two companions can attempt to aid the character and remove the caul. Once removed, a Between caul dissolves into nothing almost instantaneously, almost as if it was never there to begin with.

Just because a character passes through this caul doesn't mean that it is removed. The first individual to pass through the caul is affected as described above. The second individual is also affected but the Strength check to forcibly remove the caul is reduced to DC 10. The third person to pass through suffers the same effects, with the Strength check being DC 5. Anyone after that is unaffected as the caul requires an hour to generate a new membrane.

Between Pier on the Unsea

When the characters have cleared the breach and its cauls, read the following.

> The pier on this side of the gate is very different from that which you saw from the other. The circular stone building still rises at the end of it, though it is now missing some of its masonry blocks, and almost seems to slump slightly to the side. It also lies farther away, as if the distance between the gate and the building has stretched or warped somehow. The pier in between, however, bears the most drastic difference. Most of its wooden planks have rotted away, leaving only a skeletal framework of wooden piers and the narrow beams stretching between them with small areas of intact planking remaining sporadically here and there. These piers and beams extend in a haphazard pattern with only the vaguest resemblance to the structure of the pier that you saw previously, and all of this framework is coated in strange barnacles, lank seaweed, and scuttling crabs. It is a perilous walk indeed to the stone structure at the end of the pier. Yet somehow, you are aware that something waits in that cylindrical stone edifice, something waits and is angry.

The Between pier is a place where the forgotten echoes of laughter from Festival go to brood. Children sometimes stumble into this place and never return. It is made up by the anger of the Unsea meeting the mockery of failure that is the dreams of those who dwell in Festival, and it resents every intrusion.

The wooden beams stretch in a chaotic pattern between the piers rising from the grey, scummed-over waters of the tide. They are 8 inches wide and are slippery with seaweed, slime, and tiny crabs scuttling underfoot. They require a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to navigate without falling into the waters 20 feet below. Areas that have intact planking do not require a skill check to stand or fight upon.

In addition to the piers and beams, several wooden posts rise as piers from the water but then extend 20 feet higher to end abruptly overhead. The tops of these are smeared in bird droppings and several still retain the old nests of mangy gulls. These posts are also slippery with slime and are difficult to climb, requiring a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to successfully scale them, and anyone making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that they have a high-water mark only a few feet below their topmost reaches. It shouldn't be hard for the characters to deduce that when the tide comes in here, it submerges this entire boardwalk almost to the top of the standing posts.

A flock of 8 **mocking gulls**† roost atop the great stone building at the end of the pier. These bat-like humanoid creatures have long needle-like proboscises, beneath which are drawn-back foul leering grins with bloody wide mouths. They begin the encounter roosting on top of the Sanctuary (**F2**), sitting quietly atop its jagged roof and observing the characters. They do not attack and do not respond to the characters, and if attacked a range, merely scoot back upon the roof until they have total cover and concealment from the characters — though even then they'll slowly begin inching forward to obtain a better look again. When any characters are roughly halfway across to the Sanctuary, they suddenly launch themselves into flight and attack. They are careful, however, to always disengage and fly up at least 30 feet to avoid the wave every eighth round (see "Development" below).

In addition to the mocking gulls, the waters are also alive with a pair of recently arrived **fanged sea serpents**†. They lurk among the piers planted in the seabed below and attack anything that falls in. If nothing does so for several rounds, they eventually grow impatient and make their leaping attacks. They are unharmed by the great wave every 8th round, but it does give them the opportunity to attack anyone up on the piers in that round without having to leap.

Development: The tide is beginning to come in, and as a result, a colossal wave sweeps across the map from the northeast every 8 rounds. It moves at a speed of 100 feet and submerges everything except the tops of the tall posts, reaching within 3 feet of the top of them. The Sanctuary building is completely swamped by the flood, though no water goes inside — even if the door is open. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check notices the pattern of increasing height in the incoming waves and can anticipate the wave 1 round in advance.

Anyone caught in the path of this 37-foot-high wave must make a DC 17 Strength check to cling to a pier, beam, or post to avoid being swept away. If a character has tied himself to a pier, beam, or post, he has advantage on his Strength check, a failed check meaning the rope or chain has loosened and he has been swept free. The wave passes in a single round, so there is no chance of drowning in it unless swept away. Anyone swept away is carried 100 feet and must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to remain afloat in the crashing surf.

F2. The Sanctuary of Mockery and Scorn

A circular building made of stained and slime-covered white stone rises from the waters at the end of the maze-like beams of the pier. The structure has a low dome, and a single arched door stands atop a single stone step. The door opens unbidden at your approach, and the dark space beyond fills with the ringing echo of mocking laughter.

The mocking gulls' roost on the rooftop can be reached by climbing the seaweed-slicked walls of the building (DC 12 Strength (Athletics). The interior of the domed building superficially resembles a theatre, with a raised stage on the far side and a couple stone tiers on either side of the door give a suggestion of seats. A sick ball of light hangs above the stage, anchored by a pair of fleshy tendrils to a revoltingly distended figure recognizable as a **herald at the threshold**†. The herald at the threshold serves as an anchor for the Beautiful's growing tear in reality. It is encroaching upon the space once claimed by the Between Festival's original inhabitant, a Between creature known as the **Paradigm of Mockery**†.

The noise within the Sanctuary is deafening, but the moment the characters enter, it suddenly goes completely silent. **The Beautiful**† appears in the air above the Sanctuary in full sight of the characters, and the waves stop rolling in as if in awe of her presence. The Beautiful makes her offer to the party as described under The Beautiful's Offers in Part 1.

Development: If the Beautiful's offer is refused and she is driven away in battle, the herald roars in outrage and the Paradigm of Mockery manifests as described below to attack. The herald does not leave the Sanctuary, though the Paradigm does so in pursuit of the characters who dared lash out at the Beautiful. However, the pattern of waves resume once the Beautiful is gone. The Paradigm makes sure it is atop one of the posts or otherwise airborne on every 8th round if outside the Sanctuary. The water will not enter the structure even if the door is left open. Once the herald is slain, whether or not the Paradigm still lives, see "Closing the Breach" below

When the Paradigm of Mockery first appears, read the following description.

It has a great many snake-like limbs that emerge from beneath its red-and-white checked tunic, and apparently no legs. It wears a fool's cap with a burlap veil over its face upon which a clownish face with a wide, leering idiot grin has been crudely painted beneath two black beady eyes. The way that the veil undulates, though, tells you that something other than a true face lies beneath. The orange robe beneath its tunic has a repeating pattern of screaming smiles and laughing frowns stitched into it. Two great leathery wings unfold from its back as it launches itself into the air.

Closing the Breach: The herald acts as the anchor points for the breach the Beautiful has created at this existing *gateway*. If the herald is slain, the *gateway* pulls back with a scream. Read the following description.

As the vast creature falls, or rather sloughs apart, you suddenly find yourselves standing in the abandoned building at the end of the pier back in the mundane world. The rain-drenched bulk of Festival is visible at the far end of the now-intact pier upon which you stand. The creature, or what remains of it, still stands before you in the dusty interior of this old stone building. With a sudden jerk, it is pulled backward into a small rip visible in the air behind it, tearing the creature inside out. From somewhere very far away you hear the screams of children and then abrupt silence. Outside, the drumming of the rain on boardwalk continues unabated.

The death of the herald has drawn it and the characters back to the mundane world version of the pier. If the Paradigm still lives, it was left behind. This breach has been closed, and the great trumpeting grinding sound that hovers over the city is noticeably lessened. If this the third breach that the characters have closed, continue to **Part 5**.

Part Three: The Great Dock

The Great Dock is a curious place to reach as it is hidden behind a fortified wall to prevent attack. However, the breach occurs at one of the outer warehouses at the very northeastern part of the wharf area. This part remains open to the sea, which though battered by pounding waves and winds from the storm, offers a simpler way than through the landward side with all its watchmen. If the characters have Lord Benedict with them, he can easily arrange passage through the mundane Levee (**TT12** in **Chapter 8**) and beyond with his presence. If he is not present, the characters soon discover that access via land is fraught with danger for there are hundreds of guards and fortifications that way. A seaward landing in the spray and hail and lightning is by contrast easier. If they have access to a boat, the characters can sail to the breach (if one of the characters has proficiency in Vehicle (water), a DC 15 proficiency check ensures the short boat ride is smooth, otherwise insert some narrative drama as needed). However, by the time they have reached 9th or 10th level, crossing the distance across the sea from any nearby land (roughly half a mile) should be simple. Play this out in as much detail as you wish, but bear in mind that the most important matter is to get the action to the breach.

When the characters reach the Great Dock, it is being pounded by waves from the storm. The hail is hammering down worse than ever, and exploding shards of ice have blanketed the streets outside, making them dangerously icy. The Beautiful's second breach in the Levee has taken hold here in a currently abandoned warehouse that had been used for centuries for the slave trade. The aspect of Between, here ruled by a creature known as the Paradigm of Bondage, is a place where lost or escaped slaves found themselves stumbling into or where a pack of hungry slavers chased their prey into a nightmare of their own making. This overlap of Between and mundane, like those at Festival and the Gyre, also lies partly within the Unsea.

A group of Panacea led by a prophet known as Adam has found their way into the place and are currently in a state of ecstasy due to the approaching metamorphosis of the world. When first encountered, they are screaming in joy, almost mindless in their excitement at the approach of the Between, although they still do not fully understand why. Anyone who tries to stop their revelry is going to suffer. What they have not dared face — yet — is the thing that lies in the Between version of the warehouse — the Paradigm.

The Great Dock is a prize of the Royal Family, and as such is generally well patrolled. However, there are parts where Between gates come and go and these are often left in disuse, abandoned places largely forgotten. The breach has opened in one of these outer places. If you prefer to have more action in your event here, consider having a few guards coming along to investigate the events here.

The Great Dock Breach

When characters manage to reach the area of the Breach, which can be done by following the sounds of the tearing, read or paraphrase the following description.

> The Great Dock lies virtually obscured beneath the storm. The flare of electrical discharges lance down from the low-hanging clouds and dance upon weathervanes and lightning rods high, high above. A massive warehouse with a dozen rows of windows climbing its walls stands at the edge of the Great Dock area and appears largely abandoned and in a state of decay. Windows are boarded up, and the place has an air of neglect. Yet from this decrepitude comes the shrieking grinding that shakes the city. It appears that the breach must lie somewhere high in the warehouse, up where rusting cranes and iron catwalks flash in the grip of lightning.

Characters making a successful DC 17 Intelligence (History) check realise that this warehouse is one of the old slave pens for the burgeoning colonial slave trade. This trade still flourishes in the outer territories of the empire but has largely been replaced within the city-state itself by the more lucrative convict labour and indentured servitude enterprises.

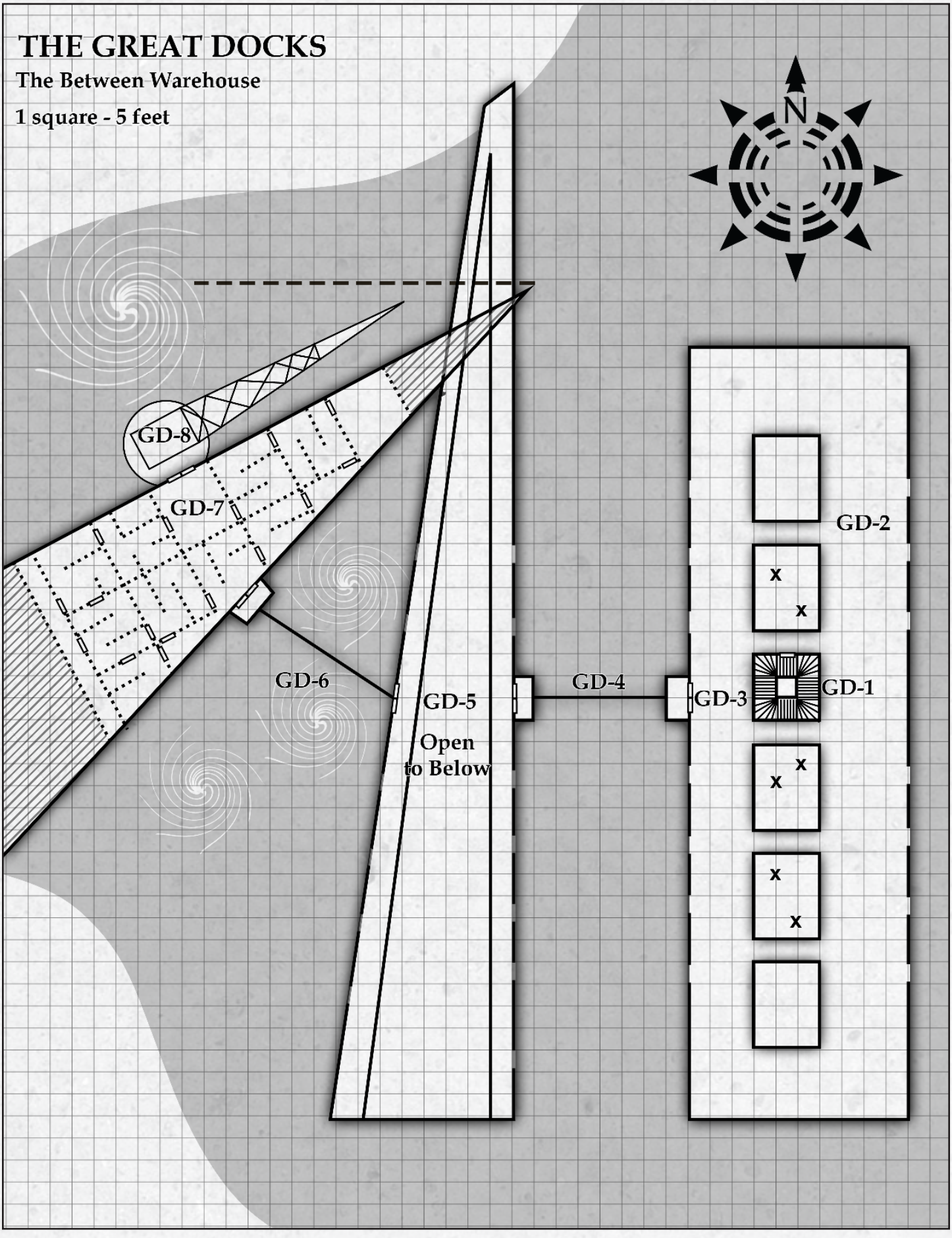
Examining the area around the warehouse discovers several small boats that were docked nearby and have since been smashed into matchsticks by the storm surge. Apparently, no attempt was made to secure the boats at the harbour, and they were simply abandoned to their fate, though they contain no clue as to who moored them here or why. In fact, these were the boats used by the Panacea to reach the warehouse. They have come to this high point to view the beginning of all things — or their end.

Entering the warehouse finds its interior musty and damp from the storm. The place is littered with rusted manacles, tea chests, and oddments. The warehouse is very large, and the action is confined to its thirteenth floor, which actually exists in Between rather than in the mundane world. Characters entering the warehouse and climbing its central stair count out the first 12 landings of known floors of the warehouse, but find the steps continue upward impossibly from there. And these steps are broad (10 feet wide) and made of flagstones. Climbing this last flight leads to the 13th floor (see **GD1**).

GD1. The Between Stair

> The stairs rise once more, this time in a drunken stagger of large worn stones rather than the wooden risers of the lower twelve floors. Their surfaces are smoothed by the passage of time, blemished with the scoring of many dragged chains, and stained from drops of blood.

A breach caul covers the bottom of the stairs and must be passed in order to continue upward (see sidebox in **Part 2**). Once beyond the caul, the characters become aware of the brooding menace of the warehouse and


THE GREAT DOCKS
The Between Warehouse
1 square - 5 feet
N
GD-8
GD-7
GD-6
GD-5
Open
to Below
GD-4
GD-3
GD-2
GD-1

its lost slaves and slavers who continue to suffer together. Furthermore, although the anger of the storm outside and the screaming of the breach is great, characters making a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check hear other screams — human screams — from above. The screams are those of the Panacea as they approach the ecstasy of their angelic goddess.

The Darker Warehouse

As the characters climb the stairs to this topmost level, they begin to feel the presence of the lost souls of slaves and slavers alike, wallowing in the misery they have unintentionally found here. The terror of subjugation, of merciless toil, and the stifling misery of confinement tear at this place. It seethes in the outer walls. Coming too close to the walls is risky as they have a habit of taking visitors into their suffering bosom. A character who ends his turn adjacent to one of the warehouse's outer walls faces a potentially deadly risk. Whenever this occurs, have such individuals each roll 1d10. On a roll of 1 to 9, the walls simply whisper and reach out as they bulge with the faces of the terrified slaves, their arms stretching out for succour but otherwise not harming a character. On a roll of 10, however, the countenance of a slaver appears, his face angry and yet at the same time utterly, utterly afraid. He reaches out and the character must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be grabbed and drawn into the darker Between aspect of this place. Read the description below:

> You are pulled — quite literally — through the wall and into a shadowy terror. This place is strangled by iron, and seethes with chains and manacles that hang above you. You realise immediately that you are in a prison, a stifling chamber barely ten feet across, and that something is here with you.

The slave room is but 10 feet square, its stone walls several feet thick with no visible exits. The only possible escape is by killing the occupant. A former slaver whose spirit has manifested as something much more watches from among the hanging chains above. This **Between slaver** (use the **chain devil** stat block) is a thing of hatred and greed. It wears its anger as a cloak, and its face is wrought with vile thoughts that birth fleshy growths whose purpose is all-too-clear: the punishment of property.

Development: If the Between slaver is killed, the character is forced through an opening bulge in the walls that allows escape before it quickly reseals. This encounter occurs only once.

GD2. The Between Warehouse

When the characters arrive at the top of the stairwell, read or paraphrase the following description.

> An orgy of self-mutilation and excess wallows here. Men and women cavort, their bodies lacerated with blades — cuts made to look like angels. In the strobe of the storm outside coming through the skylights above, the bleeding images look black and appear to be weeping. A doorway stands open to the west and leads to an altogether more elemental place beyond where streaks of lightning and pounding hailstones assault the entrance.

The Panacea cultists were led by their prophet here to the edge of this new world storm. There are 12 Panacea cultists altogether in this area: 4 celebrants, 4 ushers, and 4 rapturists. While these men and women — daubed with splashes of bright paint in reds, blues, greens, and yellows — sing, dance, laugh, cheer, beat drums, strum strings, and blow horns, they are undoubtedly ready for violence. Their armour is adorned with dyed sashes and smears of pigment, their skin where uncovered is adorned with bloody slashes. Some carry shortbows and quivers of arrows with rainbow-hued fletching on their backs, and coiled whips tied with feathers and ribbons at their hips. Others carry spears that trail coloured streamers below their whetted tips. All, however, carry sickles with painted blades and, around their necks, the symbol of the Panacea. When they become aware of any attempt to interrupt their joy, they turn angrily on the heretics and attack.

The Panacea Celebrants use **minstrel** statistics, with the following changes:

- The celebrants wield whips instead of shortswords.
- They also carry a sickle but will use their whips first.
- They know the following bard spells:

  Cantrip (at will): *blade ward, true strike, vicious mockery*
  1st level (4 slots): *dissonant whispers, hideous laughter, silent image, sleep*
  2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

The Panacea Ushers use **thug** statistics, with the following changes:

- The ushers wield two sickles instead of a single mace.
- They employ the two-weapon fighting style.

The Panacea Rapturists use **cult fanatic** statistics, with the following changes:

- The rapturists attack with spears but also have sickles.
- Their spellcasting ability is Charisma.
- They have a Charisma score of 17.
- They have 4 sorcery points.
- They know the following wizard spells (instead of cleric spells):

  Cantrip (at will): chill touch, dancing lights, fire bolt, mage hand, ray of frost
  1st level (4 slots): colour spray, false life, mage armour
  2nd level (3 slots): *blur, invisibility*
- They each have a *wand of enlarge/reduce* (as the spell, 1d6 + 1 charges, *uncommon*, does not require attunement).
- They each have a *potion of enhance ability (eagle's splendour)* (as the spell, provides advantage on Charisma checks for 1 hour, no concentration component, *uncommon*).

Tactics: If engaged at range, Panacea Celebrants cast *silent image* to create a brightly coloured cloud around themselves and their fellow cultists. In close quarters, Celebrants hang back, supporting Ushers with inspire courage, spells such as *dissonant whispers* and *hideous laughter*, and by using their whips to trip opponents. Some Celebrants are so overcome with joy that they unwittingly fight to the death. Others have sufficient wits about them to cast *invisibility* and flee if injured to below 5 hit points.

Ushers stay close to Rapturists and fight with their twin sickles in a frenzy of intimidating slashes. They press the attack at all times unless both attacks miss an opponent. If given the opportunity, they use Intimidation to demoralize their opponents with dire promises of pain and purification for the Day of Liberation. Ushers fight to the death to help pave the way for the Day of Liberation, willingly laying down their lives for the promise of a better world.

Rapturists cast *mage armour* and drink their *potions of enhance ability (eagle's splendour)* before entering combat. These effects are included in their stats. As soon as possible, Rapturists use their *wands of enlarge/reduce* on any Ushers with them, and slow their foes with *ray of frost*. At range, they use *chill touch* and *fire bolt*. If engaged in melee, they cast *shield* as a reaction before attempting to bring down attackers with a *colour spray*. Some Rapturists are so committed to their cause, or else mad with the call of the Beautiful, that they fight to the death. Others cast *invisibility* and flee if injured to below 8 hit points but return once they have drunk their *potions of healing*.

GD3. The Portal

This portal opens wide onto a boiling storm. Hailstones crash downward into the whirlpools below and explode upon the bridge beyond.

GD4. The First Space

Beyond, an impossible storm lashes at a strange structure seemingly made of human bones and chains that dances across a deep whirlpool-throttled river, which in turn seethes between this warehouse and another, stranger one some thirty feet away. The dark angry waters churn one hundred and fifty feet below, and the bridge sways and leaps in the gale. Narrow balconies of human bones woven with manacles and chains stand at each warehouse offering entry.

The bridge linking the two warehouses is firmly in the Unsea. It is lashed with storm-strength winds and hailstones. Every few seconds, a particularly huge hailstone hammers into the bridge, causing it to shake as the structure trembles. If the party wastes time, the bridge will slowly start to splinter from the battering, melon-sized hail that is interspersed with the smaller, plum-sized hail.

While Adam is immune to the effects of these hailstones, laughing as he casually steps aside from them, the characters are not. For every minute the characters spend crossing the bridge or remain exposed to the hail in the open, they should make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Failure results in 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage as they are battered by the large hailstones. A successful save indicates the manage to shield vital areas of their bodies from the hail.

The bridge has gaping holes and no handrails, as well as being encased in a thin rime of ice from the hail. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to remain upright while standing upon it. Adam, who has been here some time, is immune to these effects and need make no check to stay on the structure.

The churning waters of the Unsea are dangerous to swim in (DC 15 Strength (Athletics)). The walls of the two warehouses are sheathed in slime and seaweed (DC 17 Strength (Athletics)). The doorway leading to **GD5** is identical to the one at **GD3** except it is encrusted with thick barnacles that resemble splayed human hands.

Characters examining the warehouse walls notice that peculiarly they vanish from sight above, possibly rising to a point high, high above in the storm where they meet. Characters exploring this route by climbing or flight find that after 100 feet they must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw every minute or be *confused* (as the spell) by the effects of Between. Somewhere high above, the two canyon walls part, above which is nothing but angry storms and lightning.

Swooping about on the gale winds are **2 gargulls**, strange Between creatures that are part margoyle, part mangy gull. The gargulls use the **margoyle**† statistics with following changes:

As a creature of Between, the gargull has the dislocated trait.

Dislocated. Attacks against the gargull are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

Below them, the **Prophet Adam**† dances upon the narrow bridge. He is a long-haired, muscular man who stands completely naked except for the streaks of blue, green, and yellow paint mixing with crimson blood that seeps from the multitude of long lacerations on his skin, all of which is rapidly being washed away in the monsoon rains. Around his neck hangs an angelic figure made of bloody lamb bones. This prophet led his small cabal of followers here to Between to await the beginning of the new world.

Tactics: When Adam becomes aware of the characters, he casts *mage armour* on himself while the gargulls swoop to attack. If he is interrupted in these preparations, he casts *hypnotic pattern* to try to give himself more time. If Adam is not immediately attacked, he casts *bane* to prepare opponents for a subsequent *sleep* spell (using a 2nd level spell slot). If engaged in melee, Adam casts *mirror image* and prefers to stay on the bridge. He will press the attack furiously and also try to shove his opponent to try and knock them into the river below. If overwhelmed, he resorts to spells such as *colour spray, shield* and *sleep* to try to even the odds. Adam believes himself a holy instrument of The Beautiful and therefore undefeatable. As a result, he fights to the death with a calm belief that his will never come.



GD5. Echo of Whips Warehouse

Beyond the second angel doorway lies a confusing space, a warehouse certainly, but stretched. Its wall to your right extends seemingly infinitely, whilst to your left it opens wider and wider, vanishing to a distant unseen point. Across from you is another angel door, and between are two narrow stone balconies that head away left and right. Between the two spaces is nothing — simply nothing but hanging chains ending in hooks that sway and grate over an empty expanse.

The chamber vanishes impossibly to the left and right. Those who venture left simply find themselves wandering farther and farther away from the entrances. Those who head right rapidly approach a narrow space and, after a distance of a little more than 120 feet, end at a tight space where the two edges of perspective meet. Characters coming within 20 feet of this point must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be confused (as the spell).

The space between the two platforms descends into nothingness. A little over 100 feet below the level of the platforms, the chains end and there is simply nothing. Characters descending to this point must make a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw each minute or be confused. Characters falling into this pit get two chances to grab chains as they fall — each requiring a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Characters that fail the second attempt vanish into nothingness and are lost forever. Occasionally in the future their friends have dreams about seeing them falling past them, but they otherwise are never seen or heard from again.

Everywhere there are chains: chains hanging from walls, chains upon

chains, and chains coiled into the platforms. Moving between the chains to cross the central pit requires a successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check. The gap across the central void is roughly 17 feet at the point where the two entrances are. The angel door to **GD6** is identical to the others, but the face is drawn into a tight scowling smile.

Three **Between slavers** (use the **chain devil** stat block for each slaver) lurk among the chains. They are able to climb through the chains with a speed of 20 feet. The slavers' sole aim is to prevent anyone passing them, Panacea members included.

GD6. The Second Space

Despite the loftiness of the previous floors, you now find yourself with water washing your feet. You stand on a platform barely five feet above a trio of huge sucking whirlpools. A suspension bridge made of flesh and bones sags into this water about halfway across to a similar platform some forty feet away. The storm here is incredible and almost sucks the air from your lungs, as canyon walls of warehouses rise around you.

The bridge, like the one in **GD4**, has gaping holes and no handrails, as well as being encased in a thin rime of ice from the hail. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to stand upon it, and a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check is required to remain on the section that is submerged and successfully cross it. The bridge is submerged for a length of 10 feet, and is deep enough to completely cover an average height Medium creature such as a human.

The waters and warehouse walls here are identical to those at **GD4**, but the whirlpools make swimming hard (DC 20 Strength (Athletics)). The doorway leading to **GD7** is identical to the one at **GD5** except that the barnacles resemble weeping humanoid faces.

Characters crossing this space who have also crossed the space linking Town Bridge to Brine Bells swear that as they move along, they catch a glimpse at one moment of the (in)famous pub.

Gargulls occasionally infest the area here. As the characters arrive, there is a single one here. However, as soon as it sees any potential new prey, the creature flies upward to fetch help, returning 2 rounds later with 2 of its kin. After this point, an additional gargull arrives every other round until a flock of 20 creatures begins to swarm between the canyon and remains here until destroyed. The gargulls use the **margoyle**† statistics with following changes:

As a creature of Between, the gargull has the dislocated trait.

Dislocated. Attacks against the gargull are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has blindsight or truesight.

The water is home to another horrific creature, a **malevolent box fish**†, a Huge type of jellyfish that recently consumed a sea hag and absorbed some of her power. It lurks in the whirlpools, trying to remain out of sight of any prey it spots. It attacks anything that crosses the bridge, preferring to wait until such prey is halfway across.

GD7. The Paradigm of Bondage and Fetter

The room beyond echoes with the sound of grating, scraping iron on stone. The walls and ceiling of this chamber are hidden in twisting ironwork, with barbs and fetters and chains everywhere. These rusting irons sway in a light breeze. Somewhere nearby, the sound of human misery commences, a pitiful howl to your left and right as something begins pounding on the bars for release. Iron gates lie to your left and right, with simple latches to move them.

This room is where escaped slaves end up rotting. Most lie beyond the reach of the Paradigm, in the areas hatched at either end of the warehouse. Beyond these walls are a host of shuffling, pleading slaves who sob miserably but who cannot be freed or touched. The walls and ceiling of the room are wreathed in 3-inch-thick iron bars. The gates that allow exit make loud scraping protests as they are moved, but otherwise require no check to open. The doorway out onto the Angel of Fire (**GD8**) is thick iron but is not locked.

The **Paradigm of Bondage**† lurks in this area. She is able to slip through the bars as a move action and can attack and maintain grapples through the bars without hindrance, though she cannot drag any foes through the bars. The Paradigm has spent centuries collecting escaped slaves but has now been given a new purpose: to defend the breach. If reduced to half her hit points, she retreats to **GD8** and continues the fight from there. The Paradigm of Bondage is a thing weighed down by countless chains and fetters dragging along behind her. She is definitely female, but there the resemblance to anything mortal ends. Her mouth is filled with jagged teeth and broken lengths of chain.

GD8. The Rising Crane and Angel of Fire in the Sky

A platform hangs here over the edge of the sea below and is occupied by a rusting iron crane, its metal arm withering upward in a cloak of rotting flesh and muscle proclaiming it to have once been a fleshgine. Here, perched at the edge of a sea that falls into the nothingness of a vast whirlpool, is the breach you seek. It hangs at the end of the old crane like a bloated, pale witch hanging from a lynching tree. The breach is anchored by the grip of a fluting beast like you have seen before, which itself clings to the end of the vast rusted crane hanging high above the whirlpool perhaps a hundred feet below. The sky above howls with the storm and takes the shape of an angel made of fire rising perhaps as much as a mile over the place.

The crane requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to clamber up. The breach lies at a point some 60 feet above the base of the crane, which is rusted still. The warehouse walls, like the others in this region of Between, vanish upward and out of sight, and attempts to fly upward are dangerous and follow the same pattern as in area **GD4**. Anyone falling the 100 feet into the whirlpool faces a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to stay afloat in the seething maelstrom.

As seen elsewhere, a herald at the threshold anchors the breach being expanded here. It hangs from the crane with no trouble and can easily defend itself in its current position with no penalties. **The Beautiful**† appears here when the characters arrive, her fiery Between form descending from the great fiery image superimposed on the sky. She makes her offer to the party as described under **The Beautiful's Offers** in **Part 1**. If her offer is rejected, she attacks before vanishing into the breach.

Development: If the Beautiful's offer is refused and she is driven away in battle, the **herald at the threshold**† roars in outrage and attacks any who come within range. The crane is impervious to all damage inflicted by the characters, so they will not be able to dislodge it and drop the herald into the sea. Once the herald is slain, see "Closing the Breach" below

Closing the Breach: The herald acts as the anchor point for the breach the Beautiful has created at this existing *gateway*. If the herald is slain, the *gateway* pulls back with a scream. Read the following description:

A black cyst appears where the gate was, a cyst within a whirlwind of chains and fetters. It lashes out to the waters below and a waterspout links the two places momentarily, the world screaming as it does. Then, as fast as it appears, the waterspout and gate have gone. The seas subside slightly, and the world here settles.

If the gateway is destroyed and the characters succeed, they are torn back into the mundane Great Dock, tossed to the edges of the abandoned warehouse. They do not need to venture back across Between. This breach has been closed, and the great trumpeting and grinding sound that hovers over the city is noticeably lessened. If this is the third breach that the characters have closed, continue to **Part 5**.

Part Four: The Gyre

A Friendly Face

At some stage when the characters begin to close in on the Gyre, **Long Lucy**† and **Ivy**† rush toward the characters through the hail and rain. From a distance, they may resemble attackers, and their friendly greetings are lost on the wind and storm until they are close enough to be seen as friends.

Lucy has come here at the behest of Ivy, who awoke at dawn in a terrible state, and demanded that Lucy bring her to the Gyre. Ivy, too, can hear the tearing (although Lucy cannot). She knows what the characters know and has begged Lucy to quickly empty the circus of items Ivy believes might be useful to the characters. She has brought an odd assortment, but means well (see sidebox).

If the characters confide in Lucy, she accompanies them on this stage of the adventure, and any further parts if they wish (see **Appendix B**).

Well-Meant Gifts

Wrapped in a pigskin bag are a *potion of superior healing* sealed in a chymist's ointment jar, an *arcane scroll* (*conjure elemental*), a *wand of magic missiles* (1d6 + 1 charges, see description in the game manual), a peppered salami, a bottle of very rough Corbies' rum, a pound of mature cheese, an *elixir of health* in a vial made to look like a doll's head, 3 tindertwigs, 50 feet of rope, 2 iron spikes, a lucky four-leaf clover sealed in glass (provides +1 luck bonus to all rolls for 24 hours when carried but will work for an individual only once), a *divine scroll* (*heal*) and some lucky heather.

The Gyre

Churning in the Great Lyme River, the Gyre is an everyday feature of the Blight. When the characters first set eyes on the Gyre, read or paraphrase the following description:

> Lightning shrieks across the surface of the isle of flotsam, which slowly turns in the great river. Few people can be seen upon the streets of this shanty place, and its makeshift streets are almost totally empty. Through the storm you can see and hear the breach lacerating through from Between, grinding away at the skin of reality to let through a terrible flood. Suddenly a ball of lightning dances from a makeshift shrine amongst the rubbish and rot. The iron gateway of the shrine is clearly more than just an egress into some mundane place.

The Gyre presently lies some 100 yards from shore, and the river waters are churning in the storm (DC 15 Strength (Athletics) to swim). Fortunately, most of the river's denizens have fled to the deep waters to escape the storm or gorged themselves on poison sky-worms and have died. As the characters cross the waters, they see several very confused Bilge eels floundering in the rot that makes up the temporary isle.

Shrine to the Holy Mother

The shrine in question lies at the near edge of the Gyre and is a small wooden construction made of old ship's timbers hung with hurricane lamps and home to a wax figure of Mother Grace. Within, the shrine is decorated with candles, simple offerings, and incense. Its rear wall, however, bulges outward strangely. This rear wall is warm and waxy to the touch, and characters making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History, Arcana, or Religion) check realise that there is a Between breach behind it. The characters can simply push through to pass beyond the breach. Whilst pushing through the waxy wall is easy, it is disconcerting. It is warm with an odd fishy smell but it yields to pressure as it is pushed to allow passage. It does have a breach caul like the others (see **Part 2**).

When characters' push through and remove any cauls, read the following description:

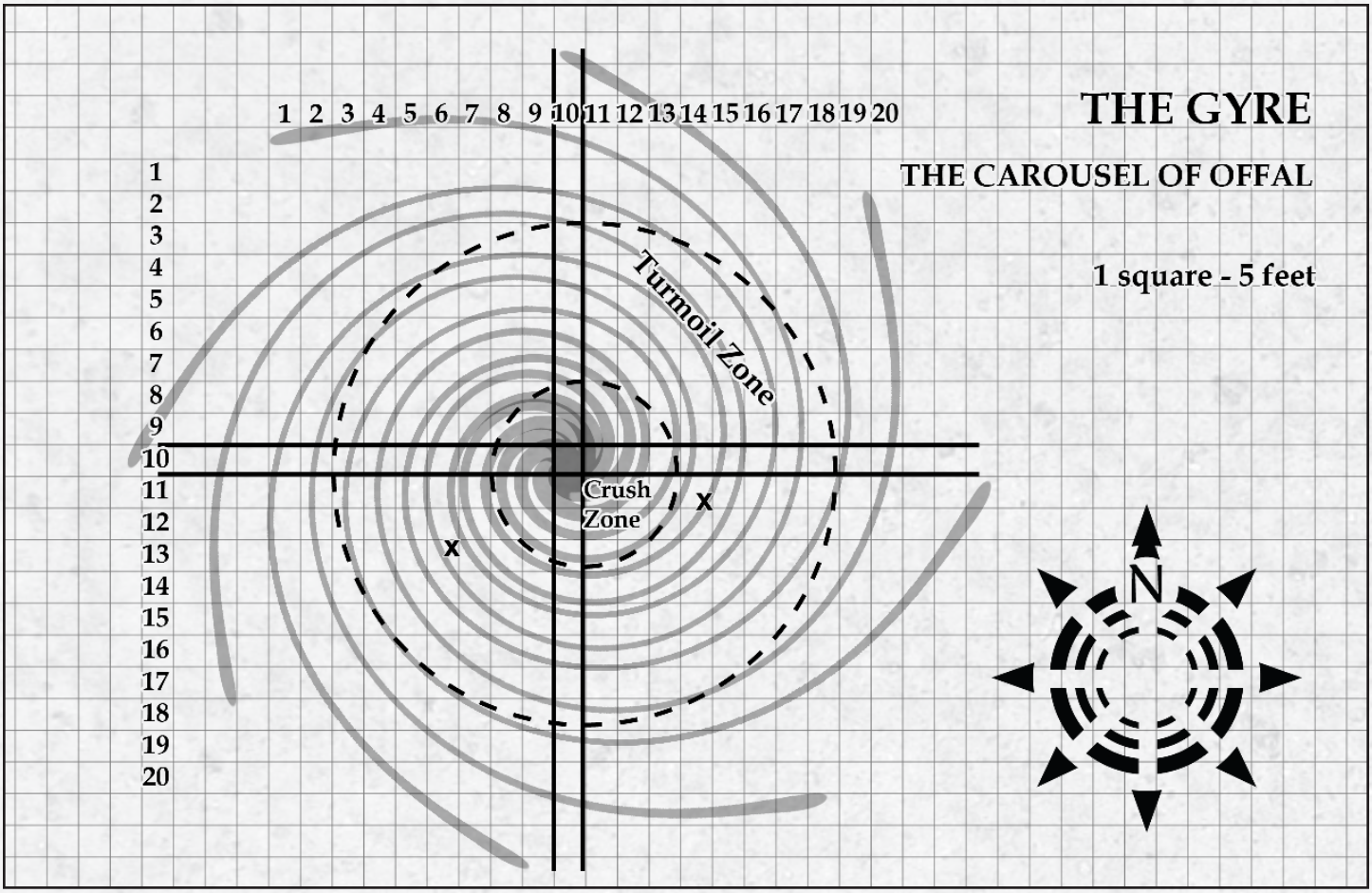
> Beyond the wall is a different Gyre, a rotting spinning mass that lies in a stormy sea at the edges of which are suggestions of a city perhaps a mile or more away. This place falls in upon itself, devouring its own flesh constantly. The outer edges are insecure, temporary, drawn into an island formed of flotsam. The stuff of the island is drawn inward to the centre, at which point spinning increases in speed until it is drawn into the mouth at the centre of the place. It is devoured in a bright, shimmering tear in reality anchored by one of the strange herald at the threshold creatures that lurks on a rusting iron finger of an isle that lurks in the eye of the whirlpool. Even as you watch, creatures begin dragging themselves from the flotsam and begin moving toward you.

The Carousel of Offal

This Between Gyre is where all the foulness of the city goes to be consumed. It is a place ruled by the Paradigm of Offal, a foul creature that superficially resembles the Gyre itself in miniature, a collection of noxious garbage and flotsam held together by filth and putrescence. The island's surface may be temporary, but it is stable. It is primarily made up of flotsam. The surface ranges from a few inches to a score of yards thick, and floats above a river that requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) to stay afloat for anyone who enters the water. This surface is like a skin, enabling characters to move freely across it but be drawn rapidly to its centre. The consistency is like that of a deep bog (it is considered difficult terrain).

The map of this area is divided into a grid numbered 1–20 vertically and 1–20 horizontally. This is to help you keep track of everyone's placement on the moving terrain of the island. The characters arrive at point 20/20 on the map and begin moving. The isle spins clockwise, increasing in speed as it approaches the centre of the carousel. Visibility is 30 feet in the slashing rain and is reduced to 15 feet in the Turmoil and Crush Zones of the Carousel of Offal. Occasionally the storm lets up enough to restore decent visibility (60 feet) for a brief glimpse, but soon the rain lashes in again. The rain smells and tastes strongly of urine and has a mildly acidic sting.

Movement within the outer area is rapid. Characters automatically move 30 feet clockwise and 5 feet inward every round until they enter the Turmoil Zone. The Turmoil Zone inward movement is 10 feet along with the clockwise movement. Characters can move against this turmoil by making a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, enabling them to move up to a quarter of their normal speed or at half speed with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Characters within the Crush Zone must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw each round or be drawn into the waters; the next round they automatically face being drawn into the whirlpool unless they successfully succeed at a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. If at any time the characters reach the eye of the whirlpool at the centre 10 feet of the isle, they must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity saving throw each round or suffer 35 (10d6) points of bludgeoning damage (Dexterity save halves the



damage) from the crush of garbage and water. The herald is unaffected by this movement.

Ball lightning screams across the area, drawn toward the central whirlpool. Every third round, roll 2d20 to determine a square where a ball of lighting originates. The lightning appears at the indicated square and crackles across 1d6 squares in a line directly toward the heart of the whirlpool. Characters caught in its path must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 21 (6d6) points of lightning damage.

Several creatures guard this location. The **Paradigm of Offal**† has long called this quasi-island home and is now tasked by the Beautiful with guarding her breach at the centre of the garbage vortex. Standing at the centre, unaffected by the whirlpool or the movement of the island, is a **herald at the threshold**†. Finally, the reanimated and vengeful remains of Rachel Birch are found here. Initially, they are floating in the flotsam drifting toward the centre of the gyre like so much garbage, but with the characters' arrival, it immediately lurches up to life as the **Thing That Was Once Rachel Birch**† and toward those whom she holds responsible for her downfall. The Thing is recognizable to the characters. When it first rises from amongst the floating garbage, read the following description:

> It has a face — or rather, two faces — both of which you somehow know. One face is rigid, hard, determined, while the other is frightened like a child, her eyes darting in fear and staring behind her always. The eyes draw you to them - they are steely and seem to be metallic, and then you realise where you have seen the gaze before — Rachel Birch, the Paladin-Occularis who has been chasing you for months for some transgression you can't even guess — a member of the order that burned your village at the order of Thornrage. What has become of her? She is filleted and stretched so that her human form sways and is distended, oddly lacking in any kind of bone, she is erect purely though her muscle. As she staggers, she moves like a tumbling thing blown in the wind, propping herself upon long distended knuckles. Her skin runs with livid scars that cover her entire skin, threatening to peel away before your eyes.

Even as the Thing rises to attack, **the Beautiful**† appears in the air above the central gyre in full sight of the character and makes her offer to the party as described under **The Beautiful's Offers** in **Part 1** even while the Thing attacks.

Development: If the Beautiful's offer is refused and she is driven away in battle, the herald roars in outrage and the Paradigm of Offal arises from amongst the garbage to join in the attack. Once the herald is slain, whether or not the Paradigm still lives, see "Closing the Breach" below

Closing the Breach: The herald acts as the anchor point for the breach the Beautiful has created at this existing *gateway*. If the herald is slain, the *gateway* pulls back with a scream. Read the following description:

> The whirlpool suddenly rises upward, throwing acidic water into the air and casting everyone back. A dull and overwhelming scream echoes across the landscape and suddenly everything is thrown backward as the island disintegrates.

The characters are forcibly ejected from the Between Gyre as it swallows itself, and out into the waters of the mundane world's river, some 100 feet north of the mundane Gyre. Swimming requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check but there is so much ejected flotsam that each round a character can choose to try to grab some and float. This action requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

The death of the herald draws it and the characters back to the mundane world version of the pier. If the Paradigm still lives, it was left behind. This breach has been closed, and the great trumpeting and grinding sound that hovers over the city is noticeably lessened. If this the third breach that the characters have closed, continue to **Part 5**.

Part Five: Sunset Over the Blight

The final day of ***The Levee*** adventure is over. The sun sets, and with it the chances of stopping the Beautiful. There are two primary ways for this adventure path to end: Either the characters stopped the Beautiful's plan to destroy and remake Castorhage, or they didn't. Only the details change. Whichever it is, use the following information as a starting place from which to craft your own ending to fit the specific exploits and circumstances of your players and their surviving characters.

Utopia Enemy Penalties

Regardless of the how the adventure ends, as long the city still stands and the characters still live, they will have made some powerful enemies.

The death of Justice Blackbriar will eventually get back to them through magical investigation in the Capitol that could lead to further spying by the Royal Family, Crown Justices, or even the Illuminati itself.

The characters have possibly worked with the Fetch, but **Beltane**† has made it clear that they are not allies and now his debt to them is paid in full. Perhaps he now believes that they represent too much of a threat and require elimination.

The Panacea is largely destroyed as a coherent group, but there are doubtless dozens — maybe hundreds — of former members wandering aimlessly seeking a new cause. Some undoubtedly end up in the fold of other cults and similar organizations. The characters likely have made a name for themselves amongst such fringe groups and may need to watch over their shoulders for some time to come.

Ending 1: The Beautiful Succeeds

The sun sinks and a dark stain that is beyond shadow falls across the city in a wave, swallowing everything in its path like the flow of black blood from a haemorrhaging wound. Across the city, a distended bloated thing heaves into being: It runs down every street, into every house. Pyrebeetle lamp after pyrebeetle lamp extinguishes before it as it marks its progress across the city. The screams of thousands are swallowed in its consuming darkness.

What will the new dawn bring?

How do things move on now? This is your story to write. It could be that the city is totally engulfed in Between, drawn into a nightmare place where the edges of the city now connect directly to a terrible hinterland where things dwell and slither. Do the rulers take an act of defiance? Do they consider themselves besieged and arm the citizenry? Or do they hide behind their towering walls whilst the rest of the city is left to the wolves? Surely the latter would be the most-likely case.

The Blight can become so many things now: apocalyptic nightmare, a city on the edge of a terrible menacing dream, or maybe the flood washes through the city, leaving it tainted and changed but still — superficially, at least — normal.

Or does one final thing happen? Has the Blight been in Between all along and things do not change in any way?

Ending 2: A character Took the Beautiful's Offer

The temptation may be too great, a fantasy world of their own making, a heaven of their own. Maybe at least one character goes there. For them, one final passage remains.

She spoke the truth. The Beautiful was good to her word, and now each dawn brings with it a new day that you create.

Soon, memories fade, and each day brings such wonder that you forget eventually how all this began.

For you, each new sunrise is another step of eternity in paradise ...

Ending 3: Defeating the Beautiful

The screaming stops.

The monsoon abates, and the air becomes still. Somewhere far away, a nightingale sings and a street trader shouts for anyone to taste his cockles and mussels. As the rains cease, the city begins to revert to normality — if such a word is correct for such a place.

By nightfall, you are wandering the city streets, passing through the cramped heavy night and watching normality settle. The feeling is almost surreal, and you glance at every dark alley fancying you see a pale, vampiric face or deformed Between spawn or even some familiar face from Wicken — only to realize that they are all dead and gone now. In time, you are sure, the events that have occurred will find a firm grasp in reality. But for now you can't help but wonder which was the dream: the angel's twisted vision for this massive, bloated leech of a city-state or your own haze of equal parts memory and anticipation that you now walk in. Perhaps only time will tell.

A few days after the end of the events in the adventure, the characters are made an offer. This can come either via a friendly Lord Benedict if he survived or through some other intermediary. But whoever delivers the message, it is immediately apparent that it is legitimate and highly secret. The offer comes from the highest levels of the Capitol itself — from the Princess Rebecca of Mourney†, the beloved of the people. She rewards each character with a gift of valuables or magic with a value of 32,000 gp and makes them her offer.

The princess has need of heroes of great valour and ability who are not tied to one faction or another in the city, nor even necessarily known amongst the great and powerful. If they will serve in her elite shadow group — whom she calls the Hidden Knights of the Capitol — and swear allegiance and give oath, not to her, but to her vision of creating a Castorhage free of the corruption that has tainted its existence for so long, she will see to it that any criminal matters involving them mysteriously "disappear" and provides them with many lucrative missions and opportunities in the future.

Some opportunities could include:

- Infiltrating the Borxia family by offering to sell them secrets of the Beautiful in order to get an inside look at the Great Coven and the reports she has been hearing about their support of a n'gathau cult.
- Take on the mantle of Between explorers and head into the wilds of that strange place to find out where the Beautiful came from, why, and if there are any more like her who might be waiting in the wings.
- Duke Taim has returned from the dead as a hideous half-living monster who means to suppress any further sedition within the city through fire and sword. Even the Royal Family lives in fear of his inhuman sadism now. The right group of heroes might be able to bate him into conflict and draw him into an ambush.
- The princess is in contact with half the Anarchists and Revolutionaries in the city. She is not yet in a position where she can rise up as a figurehead for them, but they are in desperate need of leaders. Too many have been lost in the recent crackdowns. If the populace of the city has any hope of creating change, they need leaders who can unite them and not be easy targets for a visit by the Knockers in the dead of the night.
- The Illuminati pull the strings in Castorhage and not even Princess Rebecca knows who they might be or what they might be up to. But she fears rumours of their hellish realm called Furnace and their highly secret reports that they have succeeded in sending a ship through the Tempest Meridians to the very heart of the Goitre.
- The Guild has grown wayward with too many competing factions. Strong leaders have been taken down in the uprising or by wererat assassins. Someone strong needs to step in and unite the Guild against the Family.

These and many, many other opportunities abound. ***The Levee*** has barely scratched the surface of the City-State of Castorhage. Endless adventure awaits.

Richard Pett, San Cassiano, Tuscany, 4th July 2014



Utopia Appendices

Appendix A: Seasons in the Blight — The Black Storm

The entirety of ***L9: Utopia*** takes place during a single day. What began as a spring deluge the night before has turned into a full-fledged thunderstorm. The black thunderheads lay lower over the city, even obscuring the uppermost parts of the Capitol and turning the daylight into the dimness of twilight, except when the great strobes of lighting cut through the clouds and illuminate the entire city in garish carnival light for a split second. The storm clouds pound the city with rain, plum-sized hail, fierce winds, and lightning. More than one strike hits the upper reaches of the Capitol, causing minor damage here and there, though it is raining too heavy for any fires to start. Mostly the strokes of lightning strike one of the thousands of lightning rods and weathervanes that grace the high points of so many buildings and districts. Strangely, despite all the wind, the great black clouds don't move. They seem almost to be anchored somehow above the city, intent on remaining until they have fully spent their wrath.

What's worse than even the hail and lightning, though, are the worms. Fat black worms fall from the storm cloud sporadically and clatter on rooftops and strike the cobbles with a wet thud. The worst are when they hit the river, for then can be seen the fish and other river denizens as they come to the surface to feed upon these serendipitous treats. But soon the surface of the river is becoming thick with the forms of dead fish flowing slowly toward the sea. The worms don't appear to agree with the fish very well. On land, there are no animals wandering about to try to eat the worms, so no carcasses collect on the streets. The worms, after wriggling fitfully for a few moments, quickly fall apart and are lost in the runnels of rainwater washing down the streets and gutters.

The general effects of the weather throughout the outdoor areas of the city are from rain and strong winds blowing 25–30 mph. Rain lightly obscures the area. Follow the guidelines in the game manual for visibility under these conditions. The rain also extinguishes unprotected flames and can make climbing, running and jumping difficult (increase DC by 2 on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks).

Fog heavily obscures the area. Follow the guidelines in the game manual for visibility under these conditions.

Sleet has the same effects as rain above but also makes conditions very difficult (increase the DC by 3 on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics)).

At various locations listed during the adventure, the weather has additional effects. However, few people are experiencing it because the streets are basically empty. The locals sit out the storm, whispering prayers to Mother Grace or other gods at the loudest thunderclaps. But practically to a man, woman, and child, the city is completely unaware of what true horrors are cloaked within the storm.

Appendix B: Potential NPCs

Included in this appendix are a number of NPCs that the characters have encountered through the course of this adventure path who may be able to provide assistance in this adventure. In addition, if a player has lost a character recently and wishes to do so, one of these NPCs could serve as a stand-in replacement character in a pinch without the need to roll up a new character or come up with a reason for adding a new face at the 11th hour. If the NPC does serve as a replacement for a lost character, allow the player to select equipment of sufficient value for a character of the appropriate level rather than an NPC.

Eleanor Shank

Eleanor has been with the characters literally from the beginning. It was her actions that literally took their heads from the noose and who has provided guidance, friendship, and valuable information throughout the course of The Levee. She is the only NPC who insists that she join the party for this final chapter, provided she and they are still on good terms. If the characters refuse to allow her to accompany them, she will not press the issue.

Ivy

Ivy is necessary to the adventure only if none of the characters who had been touched by the Beautiful has survived to this point. Ivy has been touched by the Between angel and so is able to see and hear the effects of the breaches the Beautiful is creating. She is not intended as a combatant specifically, but she is capable of defending herself if necessary.

Lord Benedict Morel

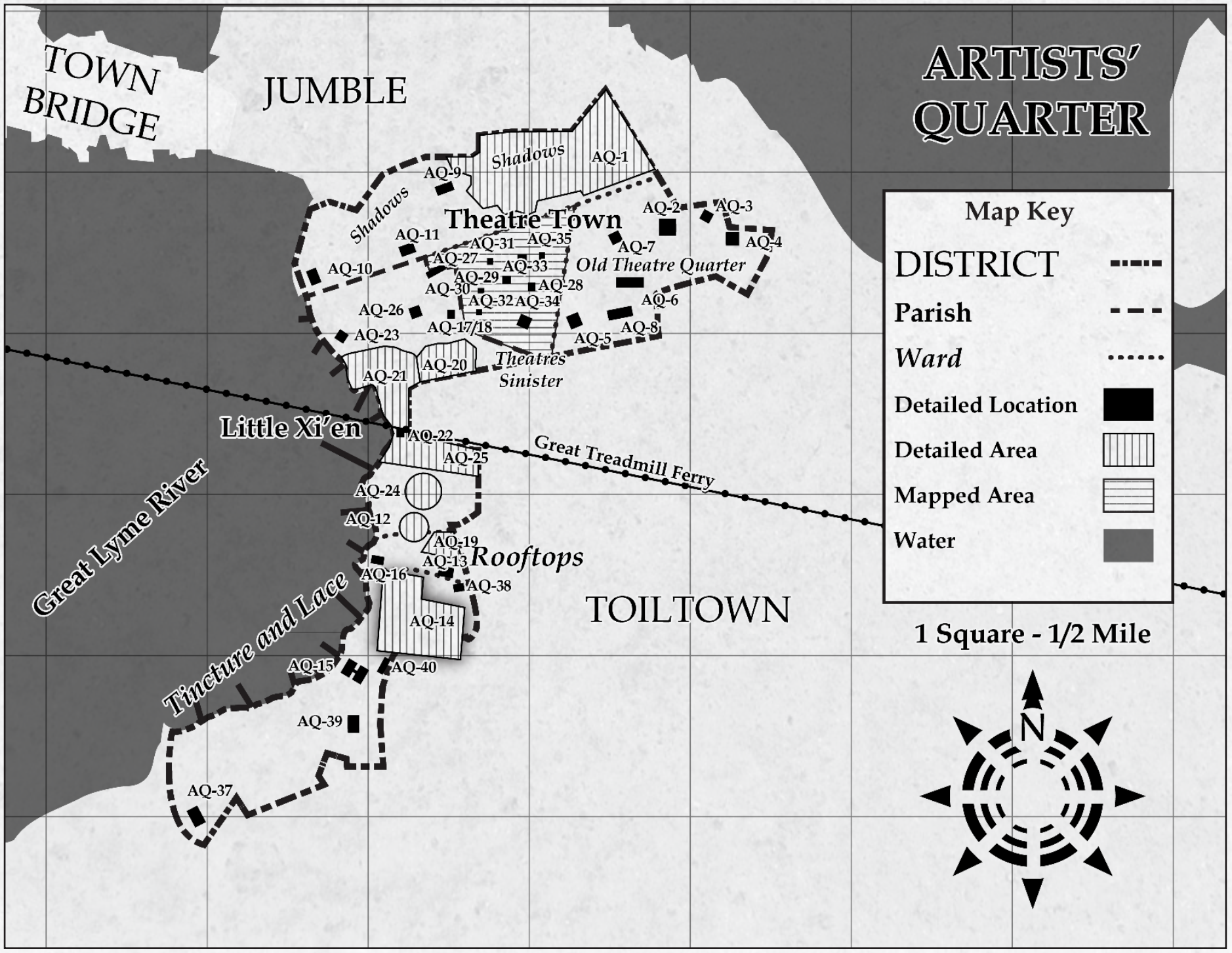
If the characters convince Morel they are genuine, he offers to help, insisting that he comes along (he also intends to make sure the characters actually do kill the Beautiful). Before joining them, he dismisses his detachment of knights, fearing that they may be more of a liability than a help in coming events — he doesn't know how much influence the Angel might be able to exert over any underlings. He can use his pickled homunculi to send messages across the city as needed and even collect any small items that the homunculi might be capable of carrying from the many contacts of his sponsor. Even at this hour, however, he is paranoid about her security and never mentions her by name or calls on her directly. If at any point Morel suspects the characters are siding with the Angel, he attacks.

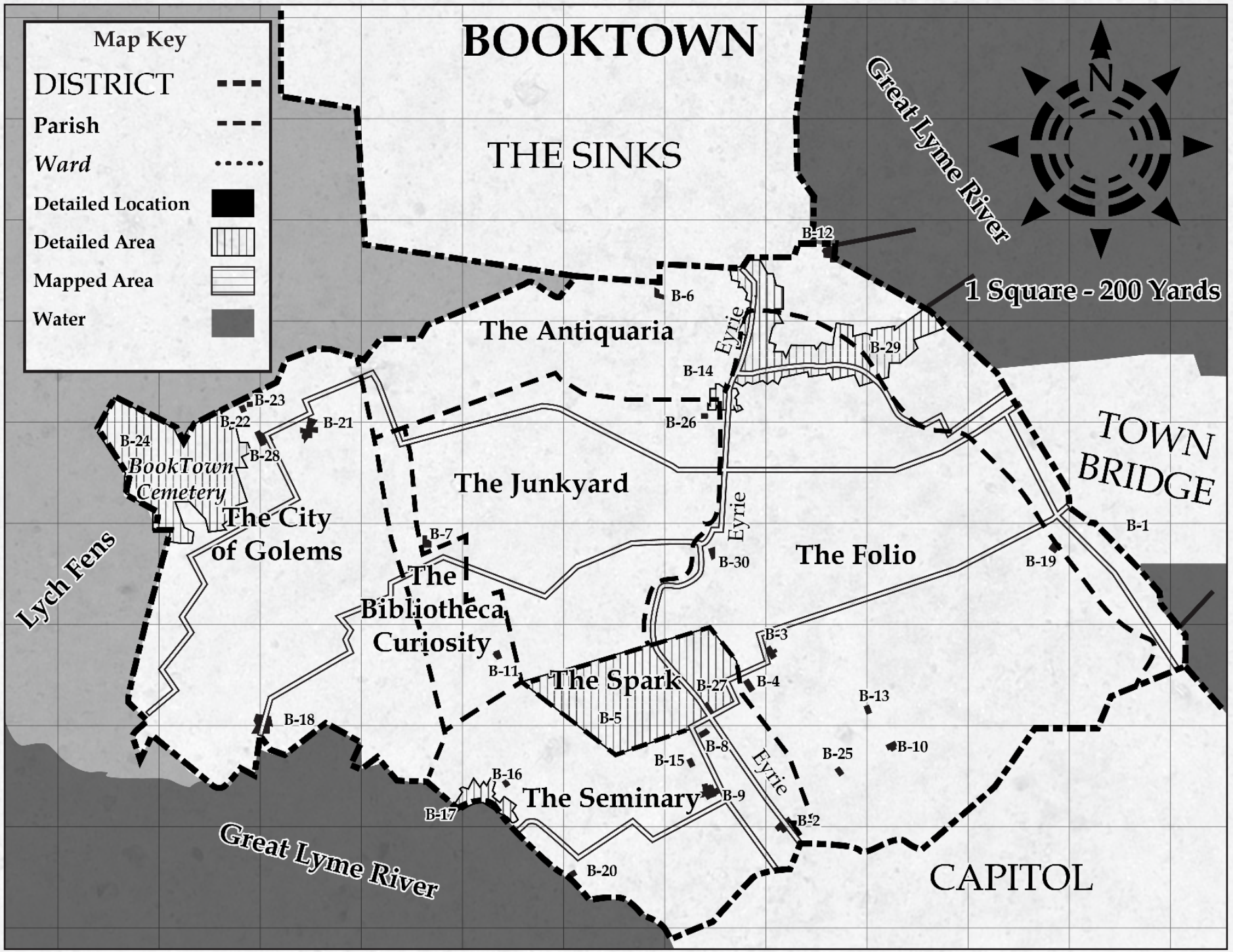
Abigail and Luther — Vampire Hunters

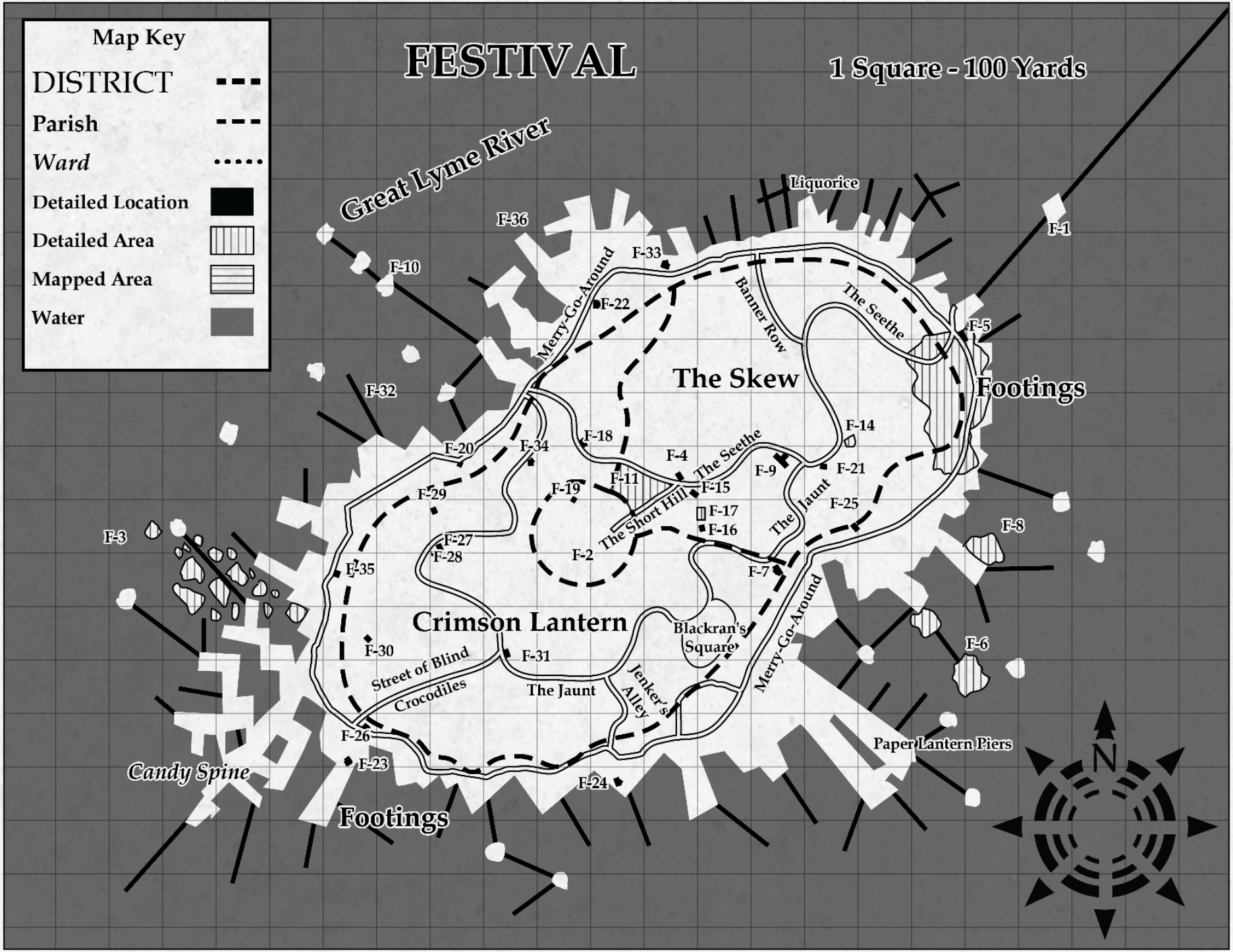
Abigail and Luther don't really play a role in this adventure. However, it is very likely that by now the characters have stood side by side in battle with them as a part of the quest to stop the Beautiful. So providing the vampire hunters still survive and that the characters remain on good terms with them, they could very well be called in as friends of the characters to assist in this final adventure if needed. Their stats have been updated to account for their increase in experience since they last worked with the characters.

Long Lucy — Circus Owner

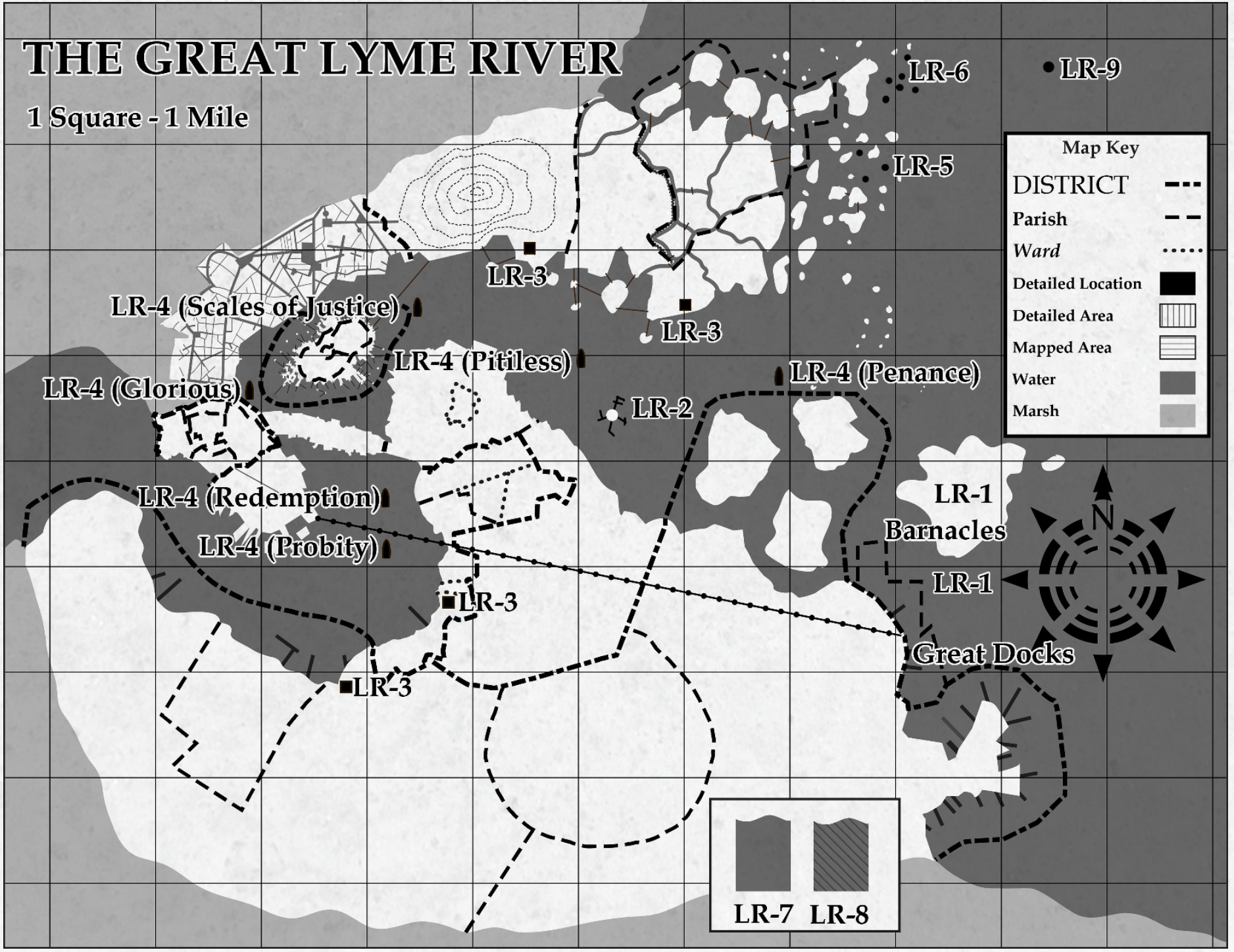
Lucy is an incredibly short halfling lady, barely a foot tall but rising to 3 feet in height in her extremely elevated heeled platform ringmaster boots. There is a fierce glint in her eyes. Lucy always has at her side her tortoise-shell Between-cat **Nostrum**. The cat is uncannily human in its carriage until it sees a mouse, after which it becomes obsessive about catching it like any cat. Nostrum is not actually Lucy's familiar, but behaves around her as if she is one. For her part, Lucy thinks he is merely an awakened cat, unaware of the true creature that lies beneath his illusory disguise.

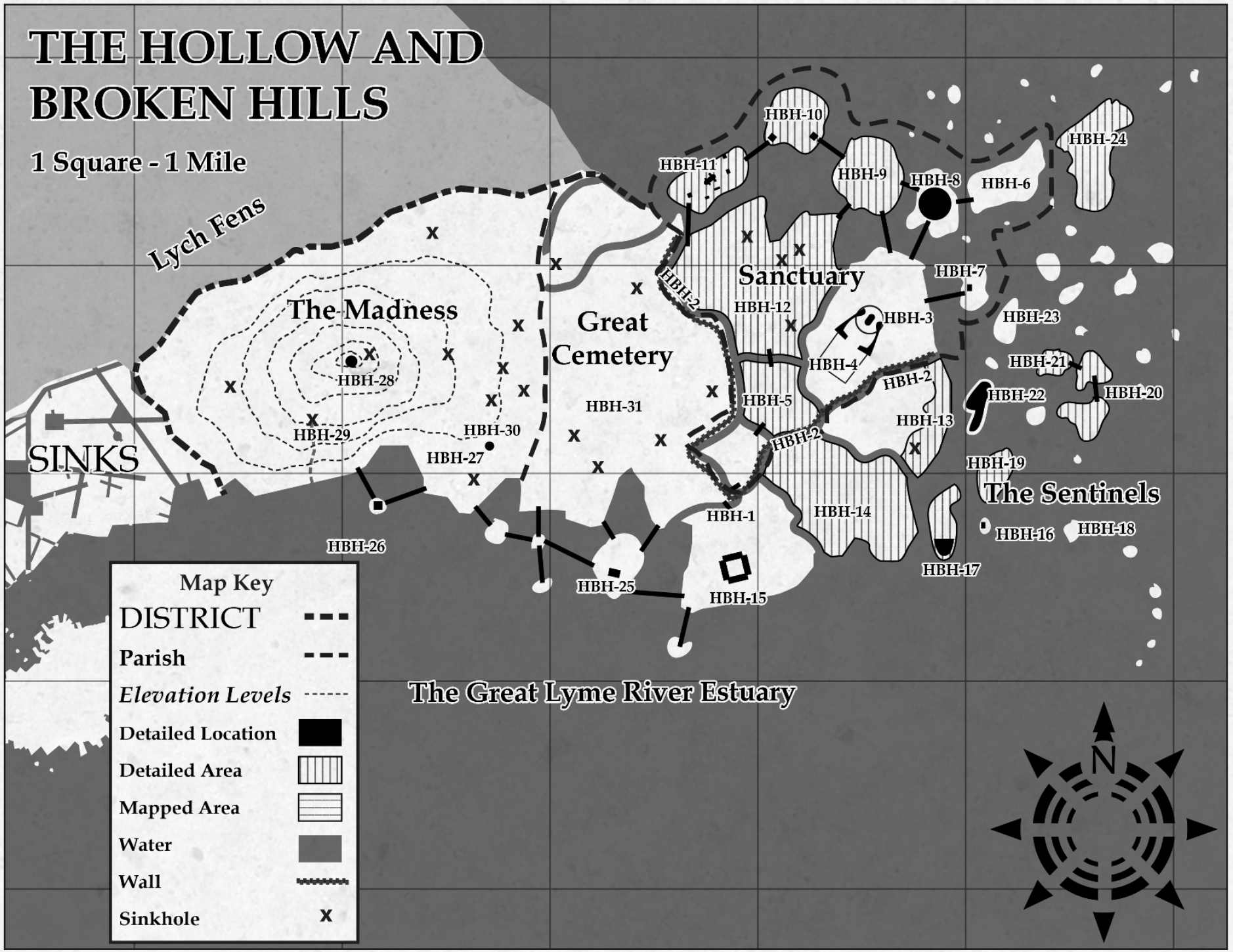

TOWN BRIDGE
JUMBLE
ARTISTS' QUARTER
Shadows
AQ-1
AQ-9
Shadows
Theatre Town
AQ-2
AQ-3
AQ-4
AQ-11
AQ-31
AQ-35
AQ-7
AQ-27
AQ-33
Old Theatre Quarter
AQ-10
AQ-29
AQ-30
AQ-28
AQ-32
AQ-34
AQ-6
AQ-26
AQ-17/18
AQ-5
AQ-8
AQ-23
Theatres Sinister
AQ-20
AQ-21
Little Xi'en
AQ-22
AQ-25
Great Treadmill Ferry
Great Lyme River
AQ-24
AQ-12
AQ-19
AQ-13
Rooftops
AQ-16
AQ-38
TOILTOWN
Tincture and Lace
AQ-14
AQ-15
AQ-40
AQ-39
AQ-37
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
1 Square - 1/2 Mile
N

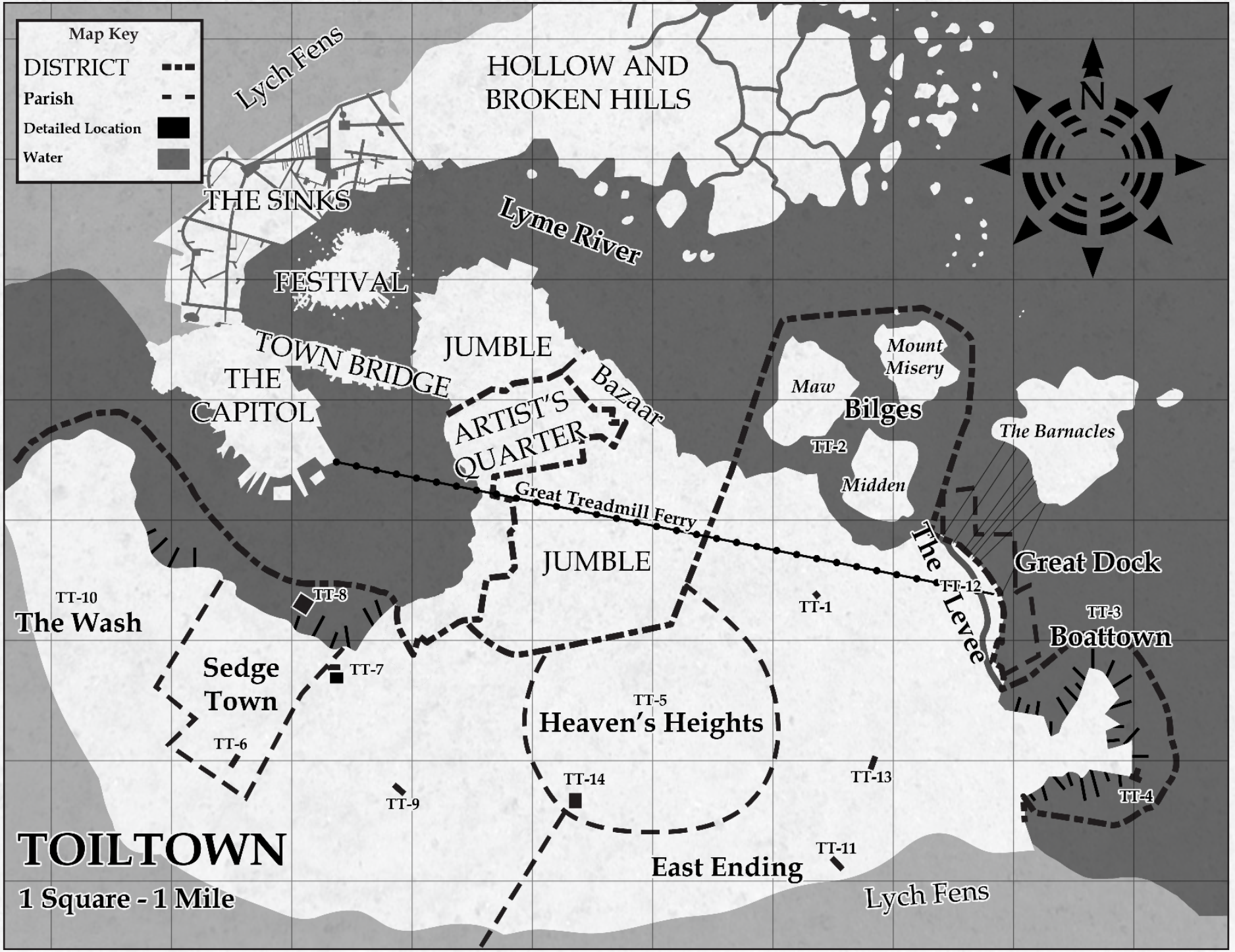

Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
BOOKTOWN
THE SINKS
Great Lyme River
N
1 Square - 200 Yards
B-12
B-6
The Antiquaria
Eyrie
B-29
B-14
B-26
B-23
B-22
B-21
B-24
B-28
BookTown Cemetery
The City of Golems
The Junkyard
TOWN BRIDGE
B-1
B-7
Eyrie
B-30
The Folio
B-19
Lych Fens
The Bibliotheca Curiosity
B-3
B-11
The Spark
B-27
B-4
B-13
B-5
B-18
B-8
B-25
B-10
B-15
Eyrie
B-16
The Seminary
B-9
B-17
B-2
Great Lyme River
B-20
CAPITOL

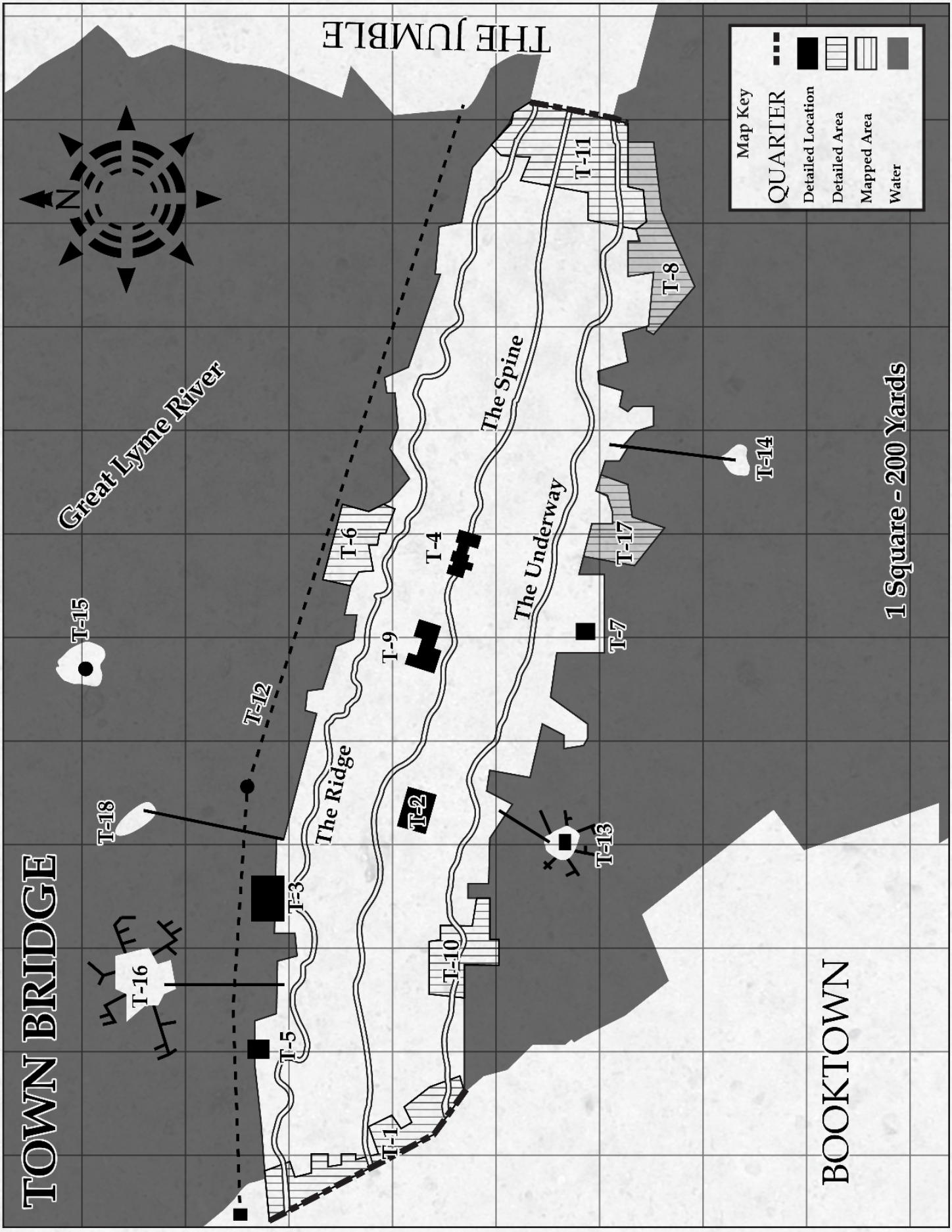

Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
FESTIVAL
1 Square - 100 Yards
Great Lyme River
Liquorice
F-36
F-1
F-10
F-33
Merry-Go-Around
Banner Row
The Seethe
F-22
F-5
The Skew
Footings
F-32
F-14
F-18
F-20
F-34
F-4
The Seethe
F-9
F-21
F-11
F-19
F-15
F-29
The Short Hill
F-17
The Jaunt
F-25
F-3
F-16
F-8
F-27
F-28
F-2
F-35
F-7
Crimson Lantern
Blackran's Square
Merry-Go-Around
F-6
F-30
F-31
Street of Blind Crocodiles
The Jaunt
Jenker's Alley
F-26
Paper Lantern Piers
F-23
F-24
Candy Spine
Footings
N

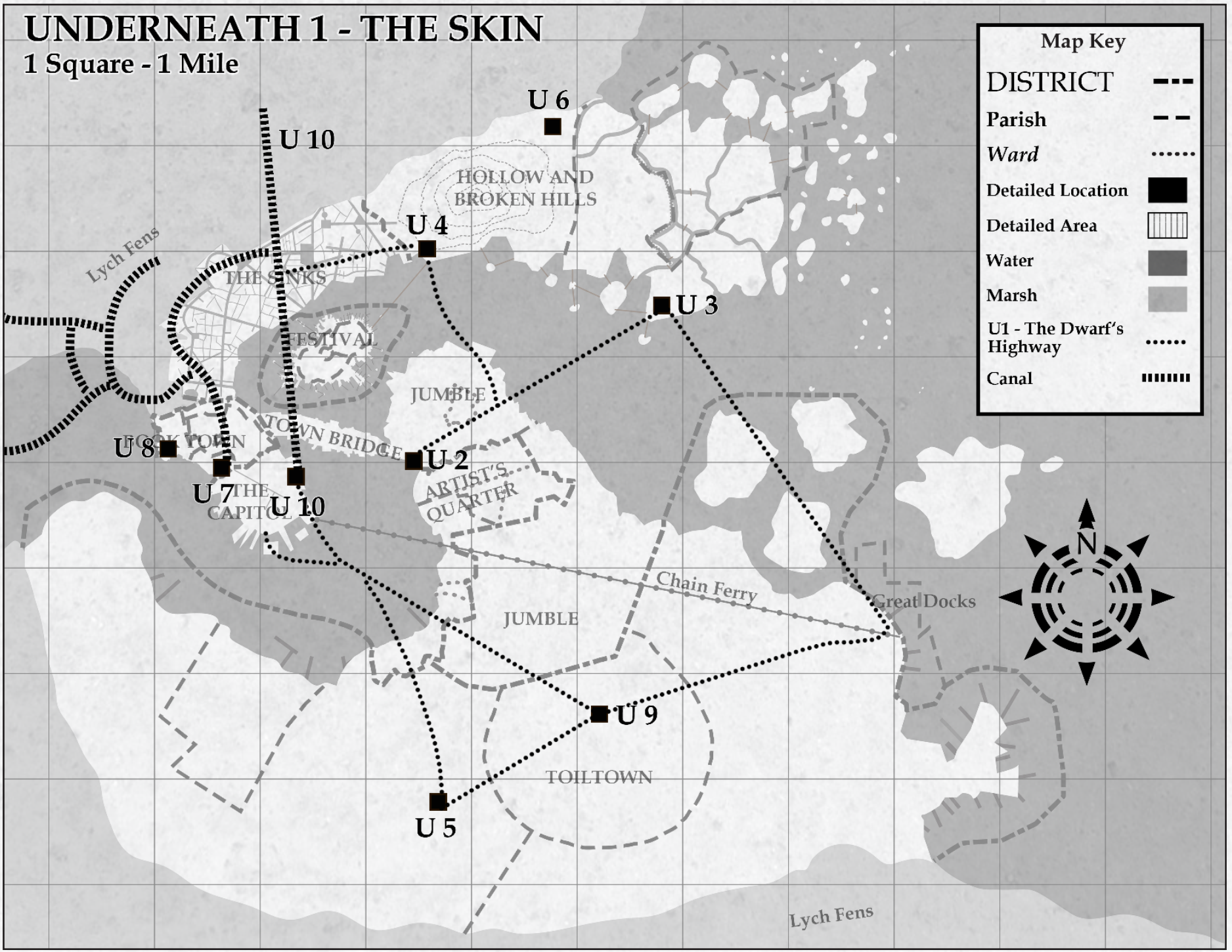
THE CAPITOL
1 Square - 600 Yard
BOOKTOWN
TOWN BRIDGE
The Old Capitol
Down
Lower Level
The Soul
C-1
C-2
C-3
C-4
C-5
C-6
C-7
C-8
C-9
C-10
C-11
C-12
C-13
C-14
C-15
Great Treadmill Ferry
Great Lyme River
Up
Upper Levels
Ambage
Up
Great Treadmill Ferry
The Crooked Key
Up
The Crown
C-16
C-17
C-18
C-19
C-20
C-21
C-22
C-23
C-24
C-25
C-26
C-27
C-28
C-29
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C-34
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C-37
C-38
C-39
N

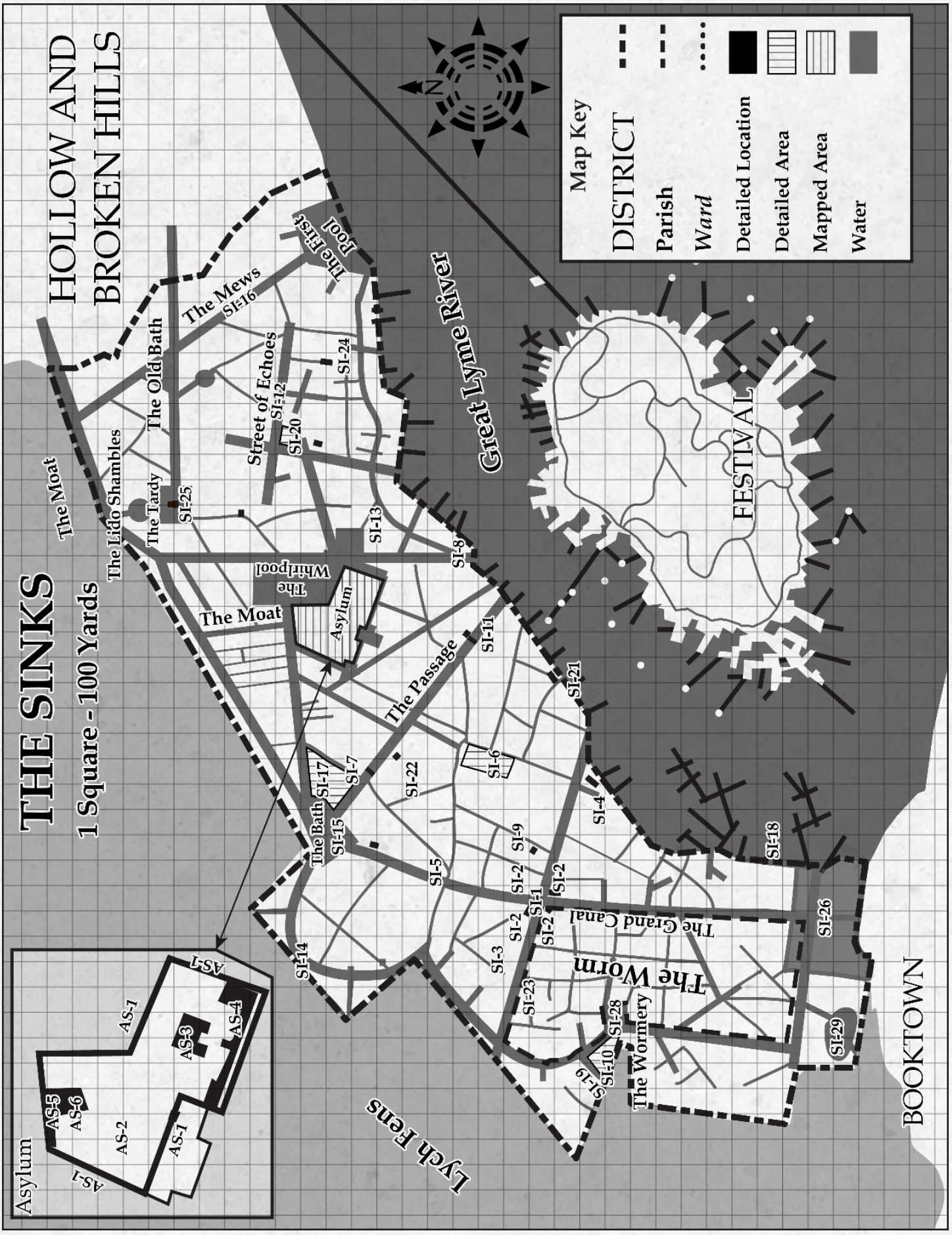

THE GREAT LYME RIVER
1 Square - 1 Mile
LR-6
LR-9
LR-5
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
Marsh
LR-3
LR-4 (Scales of Justice)
LR-3
LR-4 (Pitiless)
LR-4 (Penance)
LR-4 (Glorious)
LR-2
LR-4 (Redemption)
LR-1
Barnacles
LR-4 (Probity)
LR-1
LR-3
Great Docks
LR-3
N
LR-7
LR-8


THE HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
1 Square - 1 Mile
Lych Fens
The Madness
Great Cemetery
Sanctuary
SINKS
The Sentinels
The Great Lyme River Estuary
HBH-1
HBH-2
HBH-3
HBH-4
HBH-5
HBH-6
HBH-7
HBH-8
HBH-9
HBH-10
HBH-11
HBH-12
HBH-13
HBH-14
HBH-15
HBH-16
HBH-17
HBH-18
HBH-19
HBH-20
HBH-21
HBH-22
HBH-23
HBH-24
HBH-25
HBH-26
HBH-27
HBH-28
HBH-29
HBH-30
HBH-31
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Elevation Levels
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
Wall
Sinkhole
N


Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Detailed Location
Water
Lych Fens
HOLLOW AND
BROKEN HILLS
N
THE SINKS
Lyme River
FESTIVAL
TOWN BRIDGE
JUMBLE
THE
CAPITOL
ARTIST'S
QUARTER
Bazaar
Mount
Misery
Maw
Bilges
TT-2
Midden
The Barnacles
Great Treadmill Ferry
JUMBLE
The Levee
TT-12
Great Dock
TT-1
TT-3
Boattown
TT-10
The Wash
TT-8
Sedge
Town
TT-7
TT-6
TT-5
Heaven's Heights
TT-14
TT-13
TT-4
TT-9
TOILTOWN
1 Square - 1 Mile
TT-11
East Ending
Lych Fens

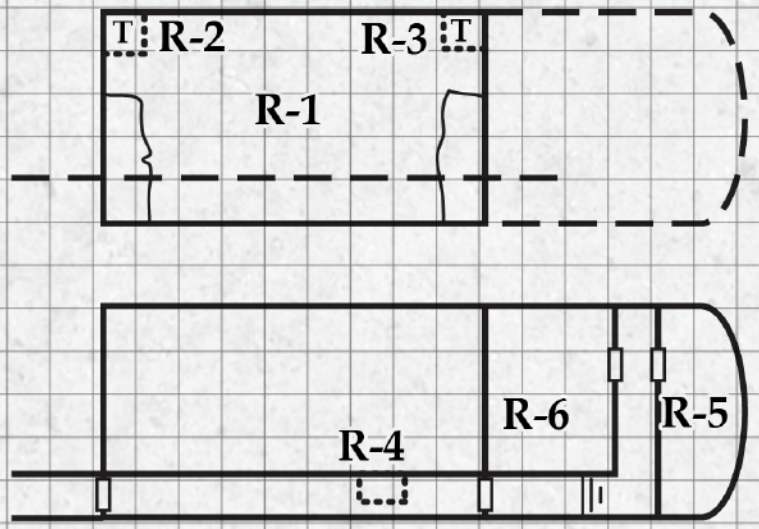

TOWN BRIDGE
THE JUMBLE
BOOKTOWN
Great Lyme River
The Ridge
The Spine
The Underway
T-1
T-2
T-3
T-4
T-5
T-6
T-7
T-8
T-9
T-10
T-11
T-12
T-13
T-14
T-15
T-16
T-17
T-18
N
Map Key
QUARTER
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
1 Square - 200 Yards

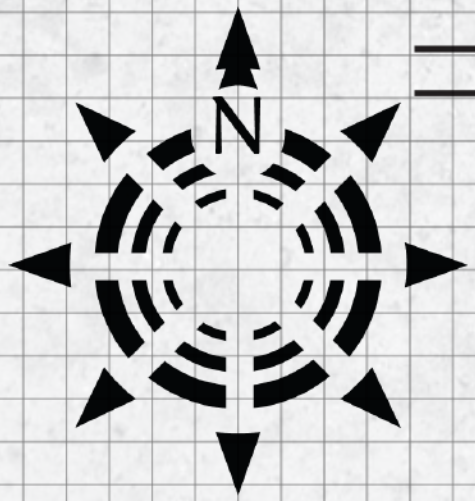

UNDERNEATH 1 - THE SKIN
1 Square - 1 Mile
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Water
Marsh
U1 - The Dwarf's Highway
Canal
U 6
U 10
HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
U 4
Lych Fens
THE SINKS
U 3
FESTIVAL
JUMBLE
COOK TOWN
TOWN BRIDGE
U 8
U 2
U 7
THE CAPITOL
U 10
ARTIST'S QUARTER
Chain Ferry
Great Docks
JUMBLE
N
U 9
TOILTOWN
U 5
Lych Fens


THE SINKS
1 Square - 100 Yards
HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS
Great Lyme River
FESTIVAL
BOOKTOWN
Lych Fens
The Worm
The Grand Canal
The Wormery
The Moat
The Lido Shambles
The Old Bath
The Tardy
The Mews
SI-16
The First Pool
Street of Echoes
SI-12
SI-20
SI-24
SI-25
SI-13
SI-8
The Whirlpool
Asylum
The Passage
SI-11
SI-21
SI-6
SI-17
SI-7
The Bath
SI-15
SI-22
SI-5
SI-9
SI-2
SI-1
SI-4
SI-18
SI-14
SI-3
SI-23
SI-28
SI-10
SI-19
SI-26
SI-29
Asylum
AS-1
AS-2
AS-3
AS-4
AS-5
AS-6
Map Key
DISTRICT
Parish
Ward
Detailed Location
Detailed Area
Mapped Area
Water
N

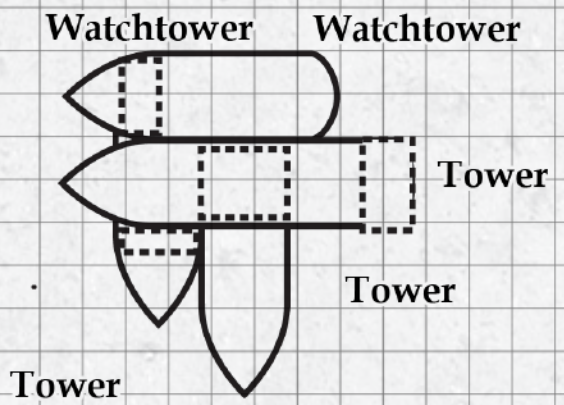
THE REDEMPTION

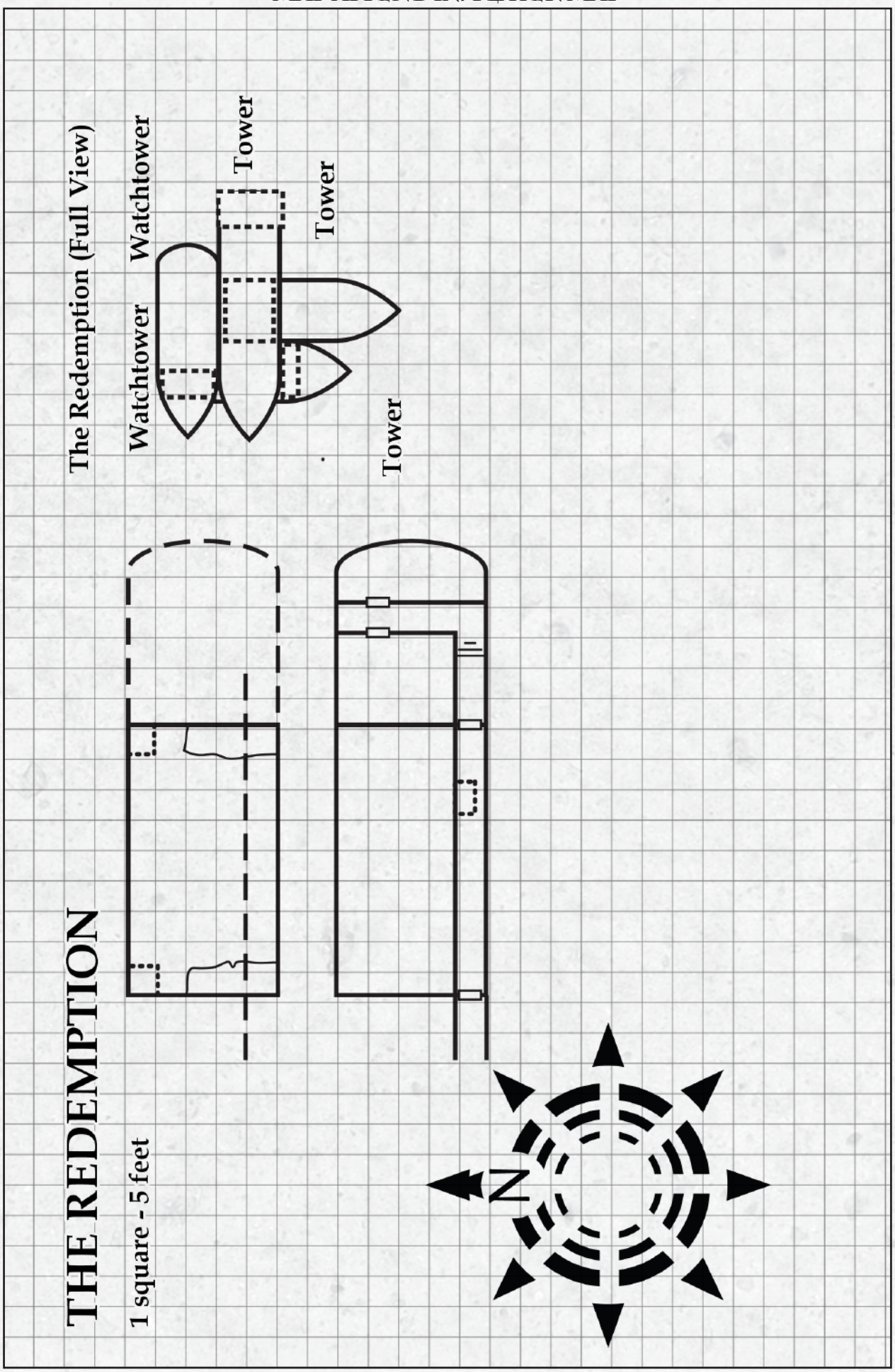
1 square - 5 feet

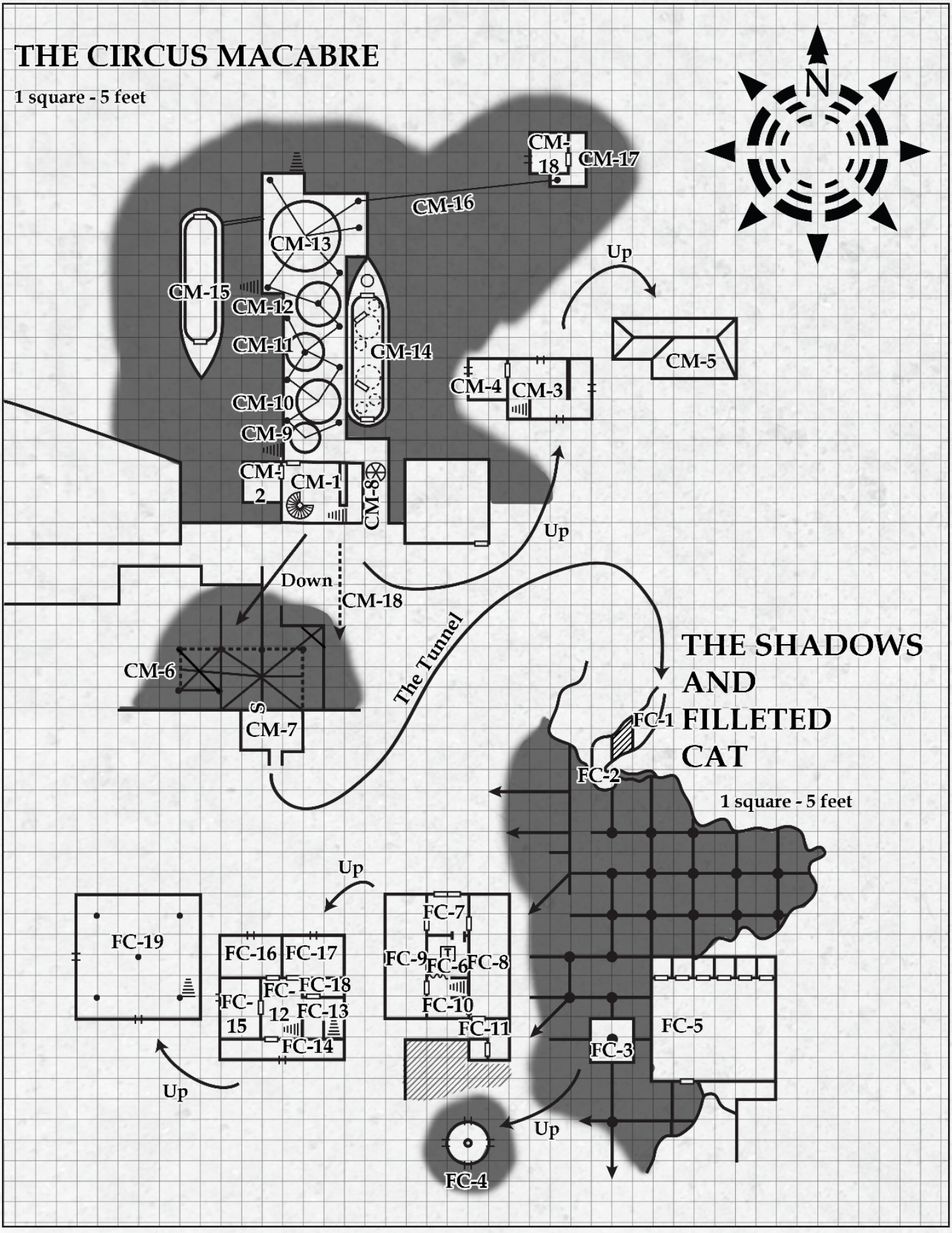


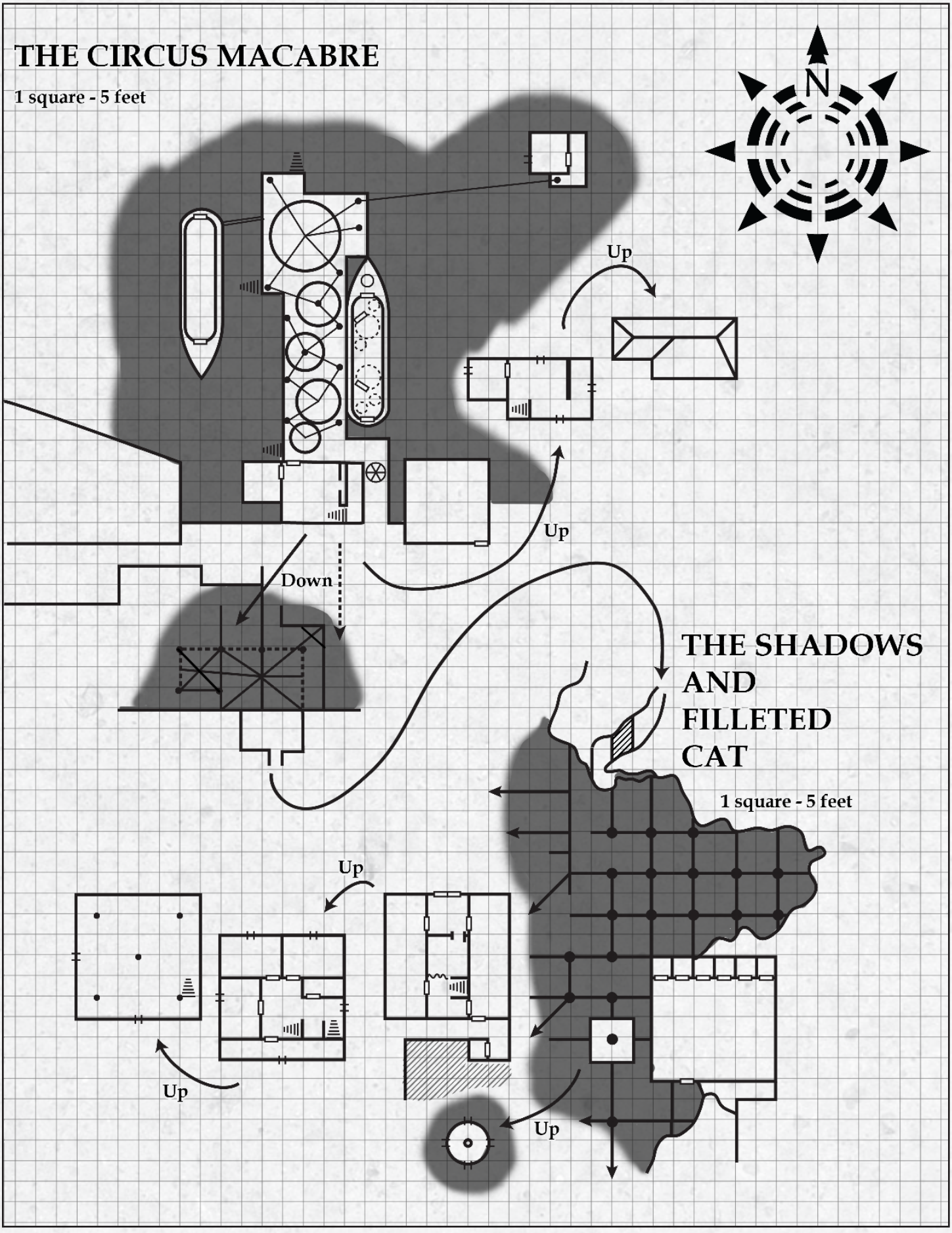


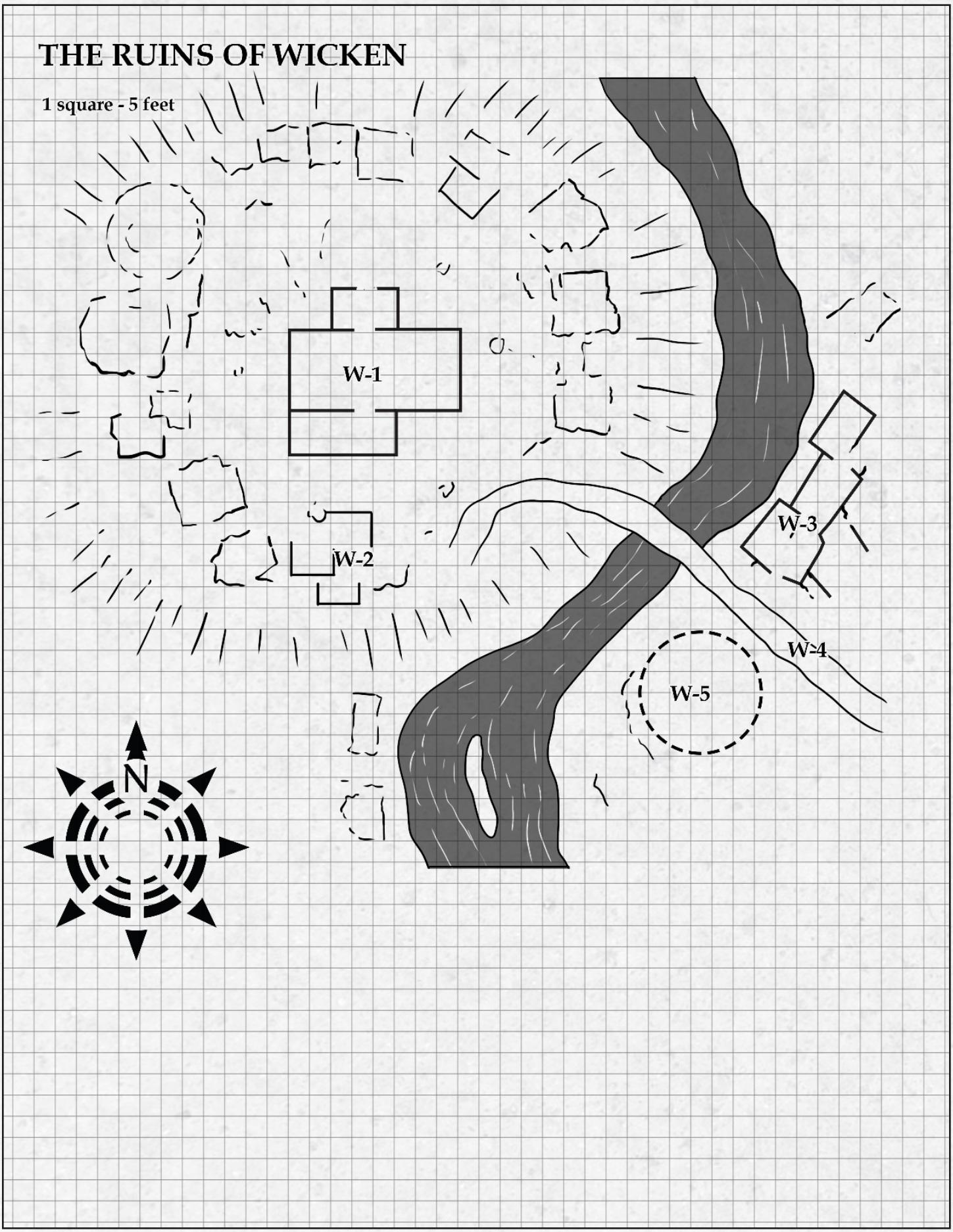
The Redemption (Full View)

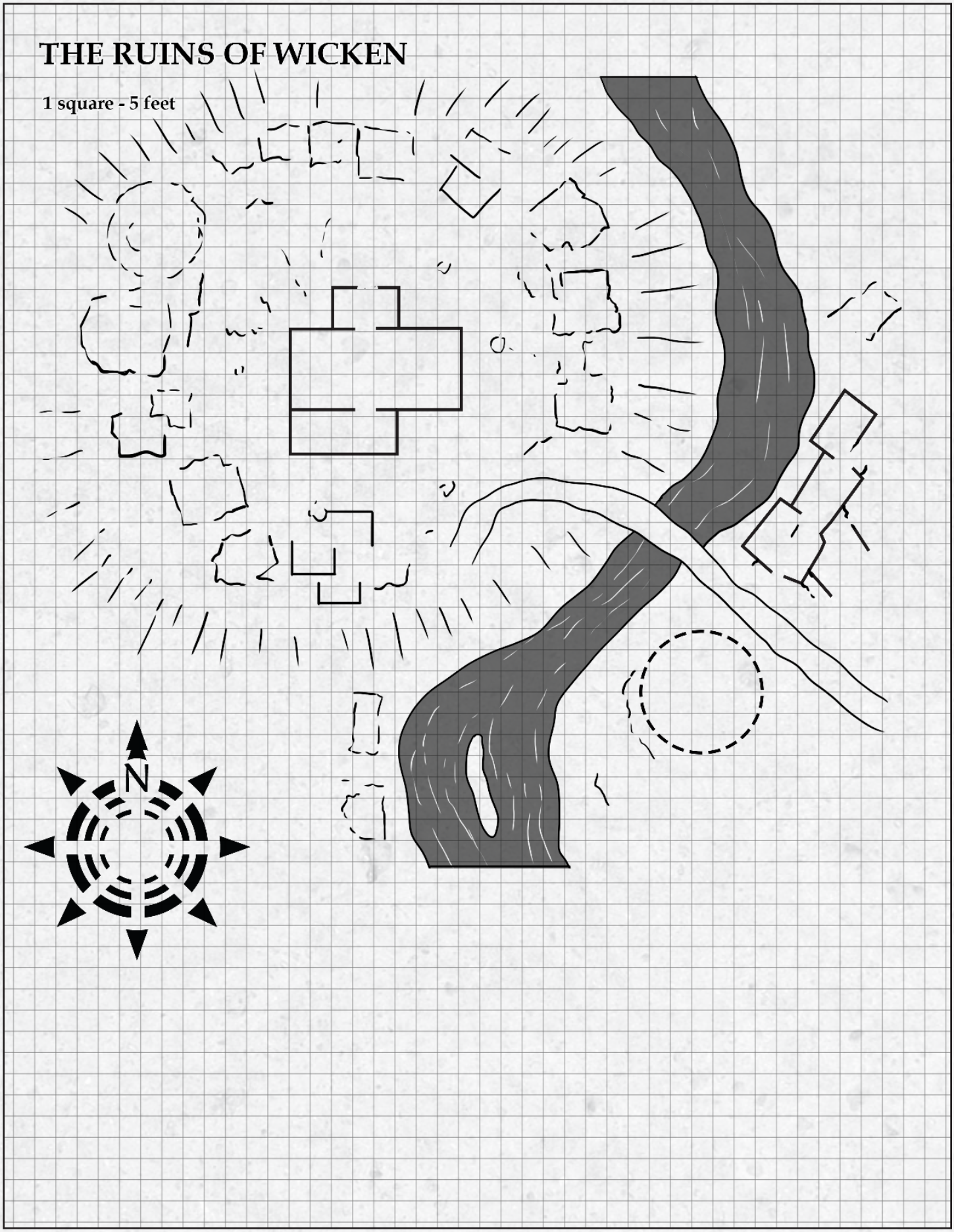


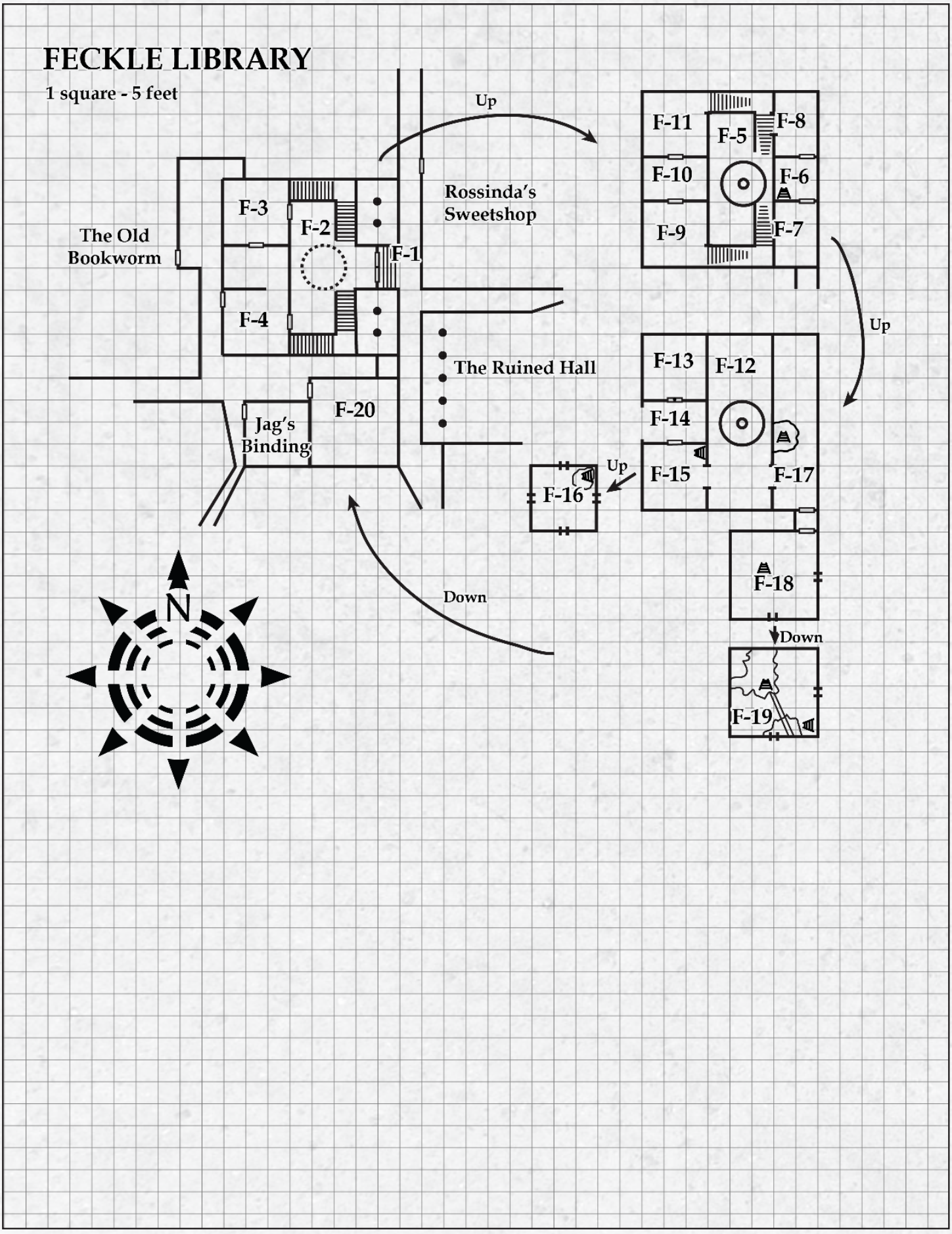

THE REDEMPTION
1 square - 5 feet
The Redemption (Full View)
Watchtower
Watchtower
Tower
Tower
Tower
N

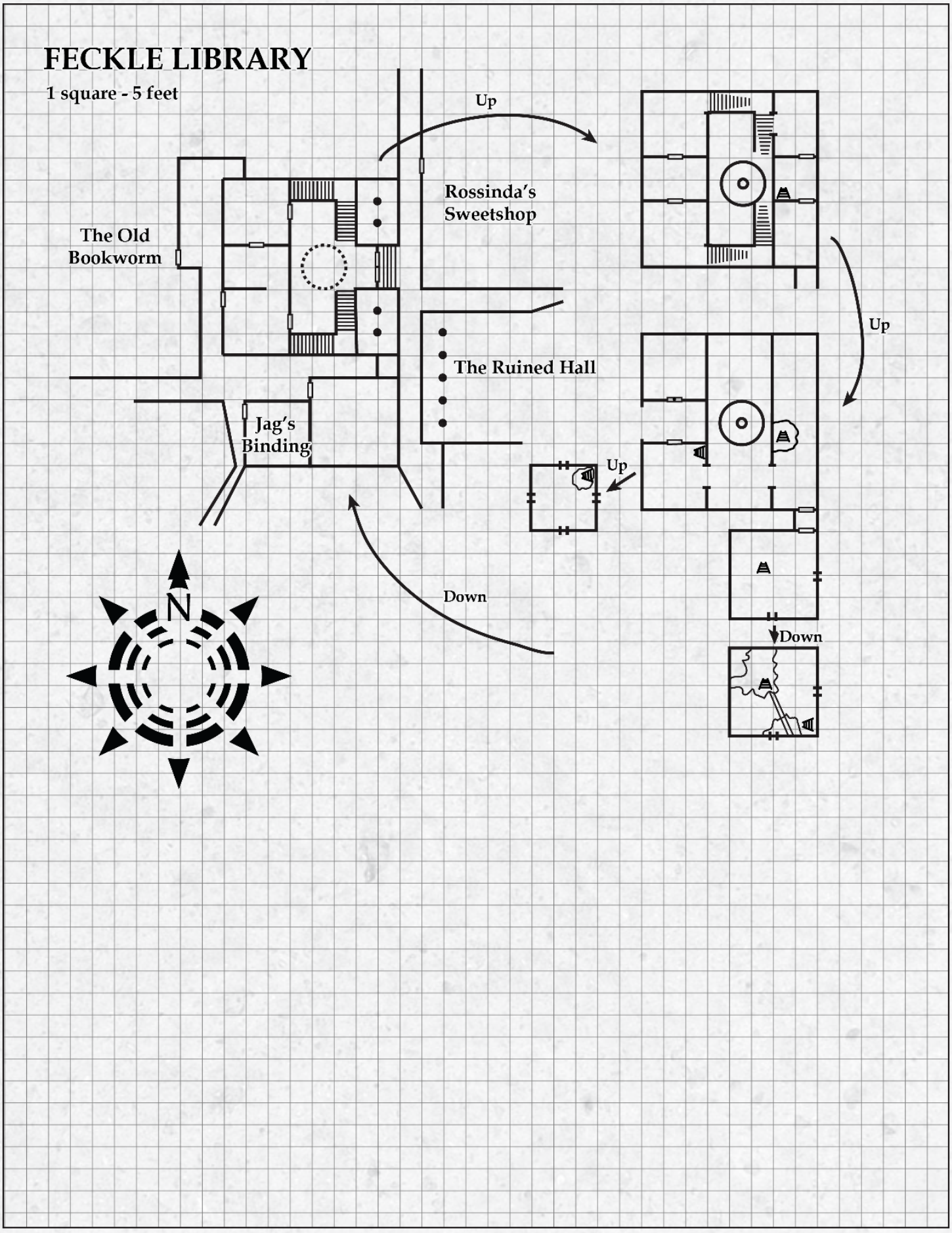

THE CIRCUS MACABRE
1 square - 5 feet
N
CM-18
CM-17
CM-16
CM-13
CM-15
CM-12
CM-11
CM-14
CM-10
CM-9
CM-2
CM-1
CM-8
CM-4
CM-3
Up
CM-5
Up
Down
CM-18
CM-6
CM-7
The Tunnel
THE SHADOWS AND FILLETED CAT
FC-1
FC-2
1 square - 5 feet
Up
FC-19
FC-16
FC-17
FC-18
FC-15
FC-12
FC-13
FC-14
FC-7
FC-9
FC-6
FC-8
FC-10
FC-11
FC-5
FC-3
Up
Up
FC-4


THE CIRCUS MACABRE
1 square - 5 feet
N
Up
Up
Down
THE SHADOWS AND FILLETED CAT
1 square - 5 feet
Up
Up
Up


THE RUINS OF WICKEN
1 square - 5 feet
W-1
W-2
W-3
W-4
W-5
N

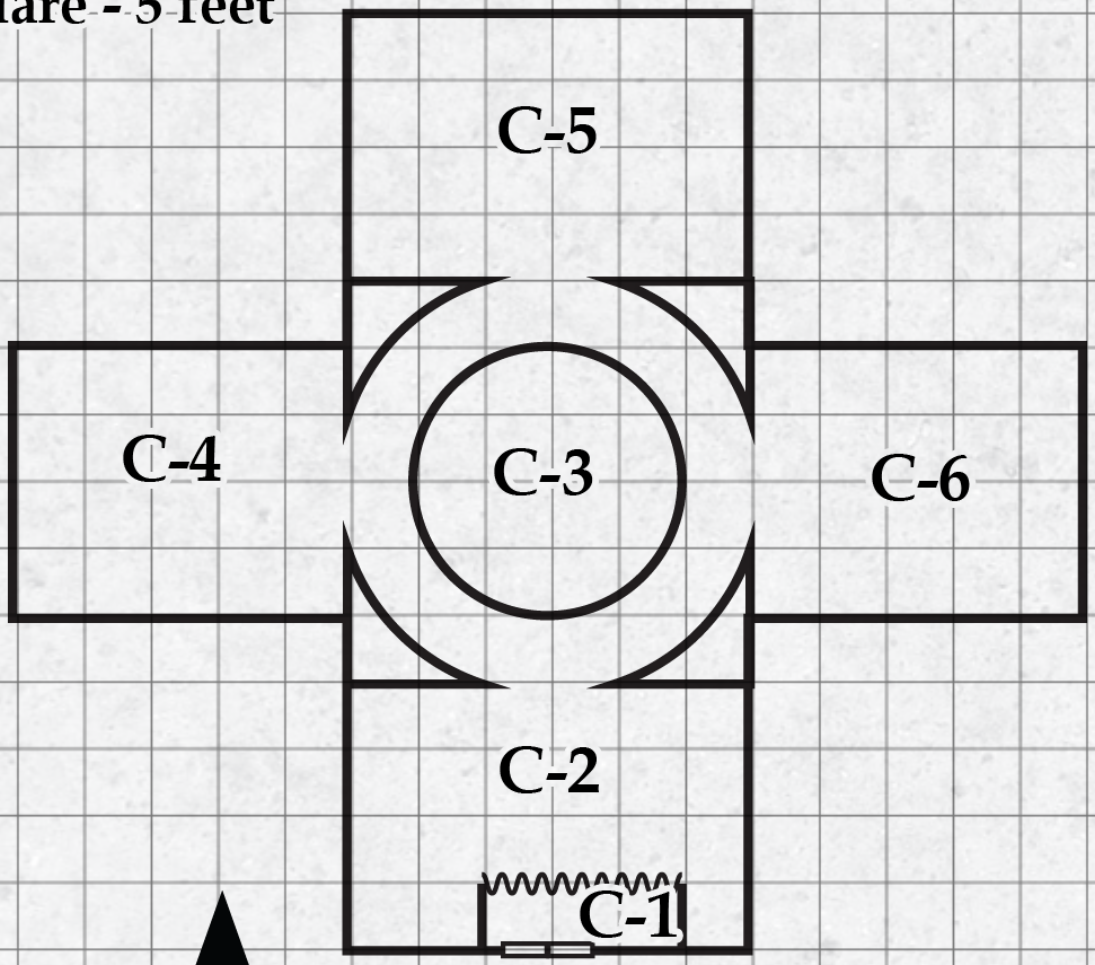

THE RUINS OF WICKEN
1 square - 5 feet
N

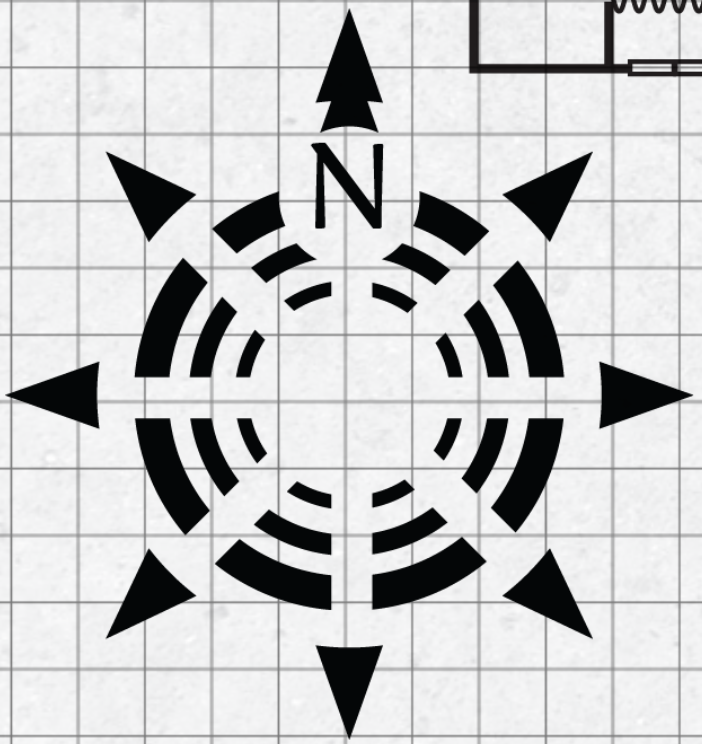

FECKLE LIBRARY
1 square - 5 feet
Up
Rossinda's Sweetshop
The Old Bookworm
F-3
F-2
F-1
F-4
The Ruined Hall
F-20
Jag's Binding
F-16
Up
Down
F-11
F-5
F-8
F-10
F-6
F-9
F-7
Up
F-13
F-12
F-14
F-15
F-17
F-18
Down
F-19
N


FECKLE LIBRARY
1 square - 5 feet
Up
Rossinda's Sweetshop
The Old Bookworm
The Ruined Hall
Jag's Binding
Up
Up
Down
Down
N

THE CARDY HOUSE

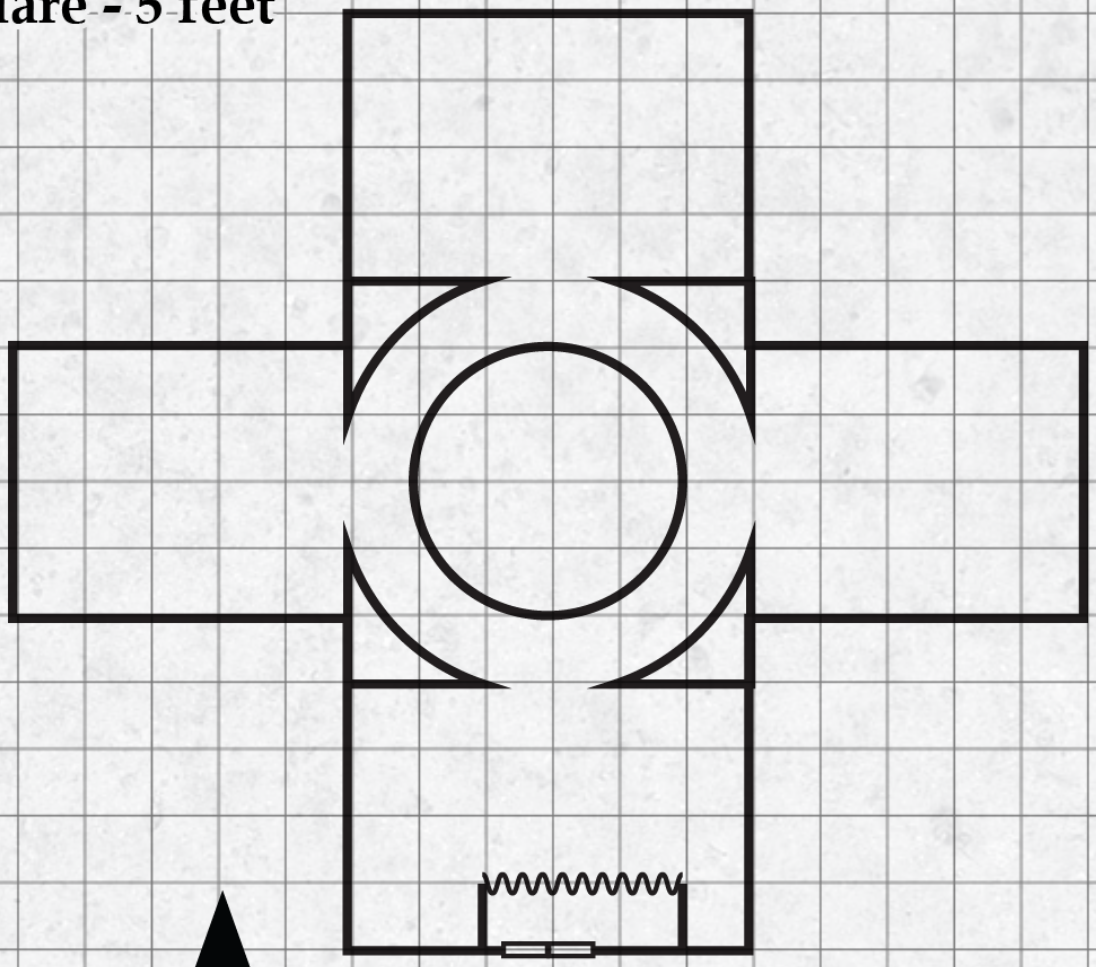
1 square - 5 feet

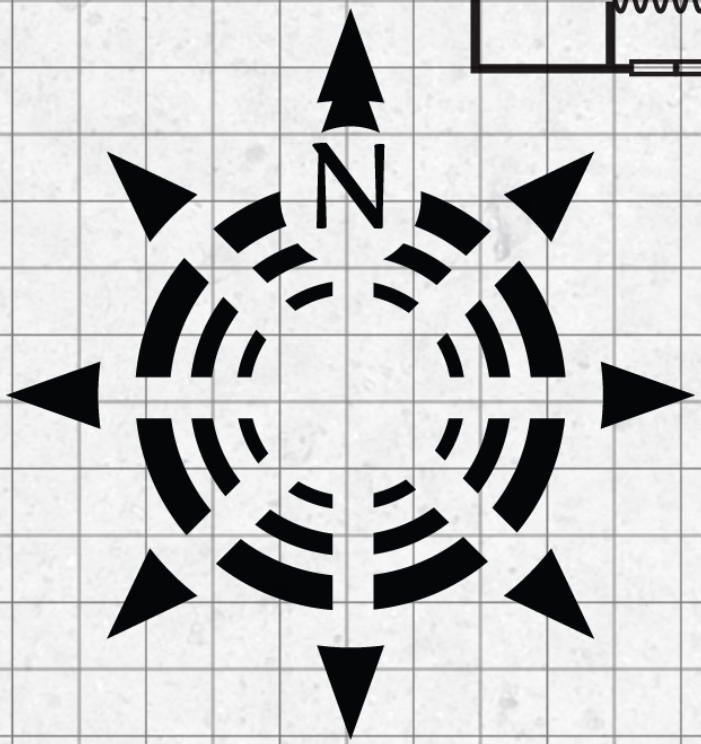


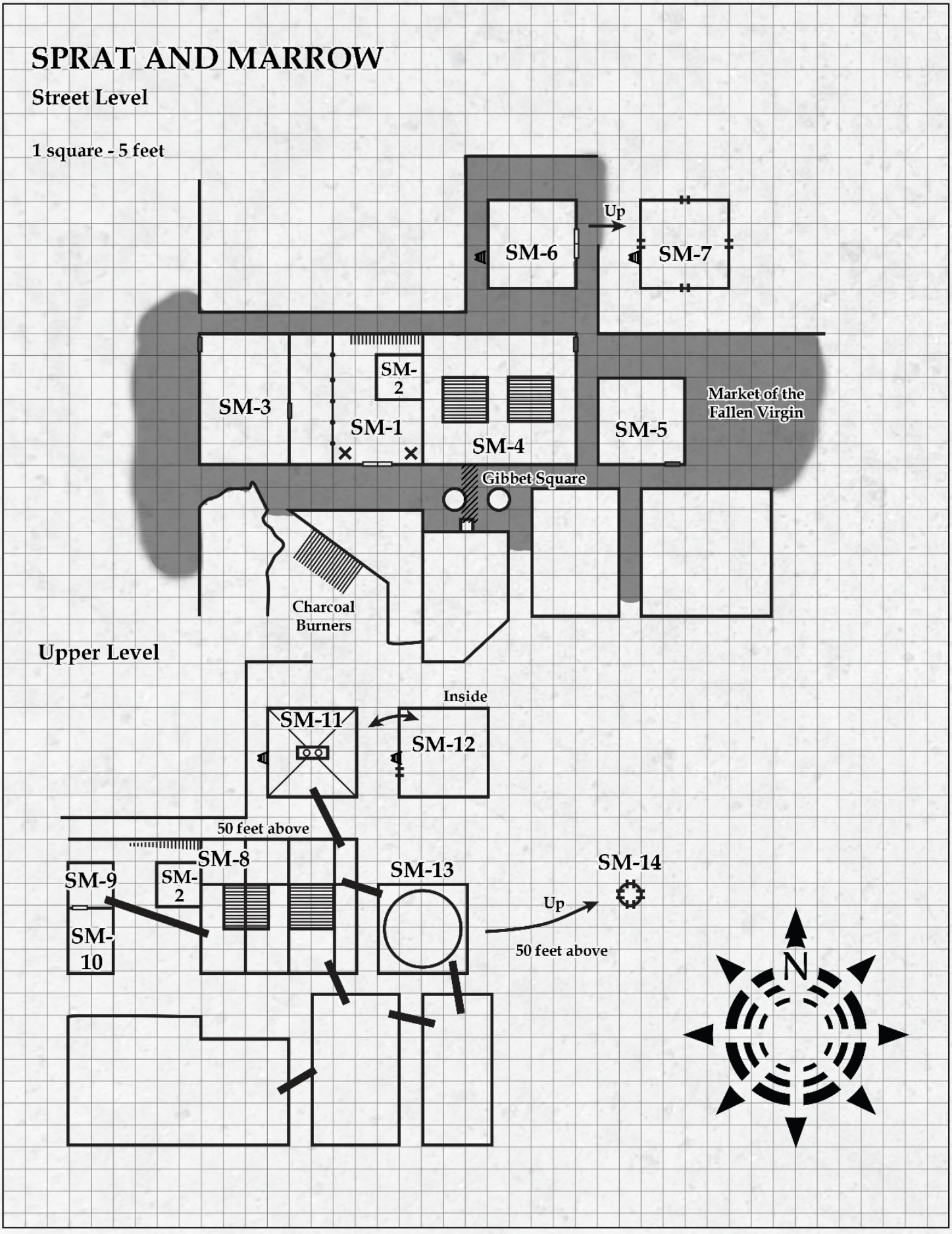


THE CARDY HOUSE

1 square - 5 feet



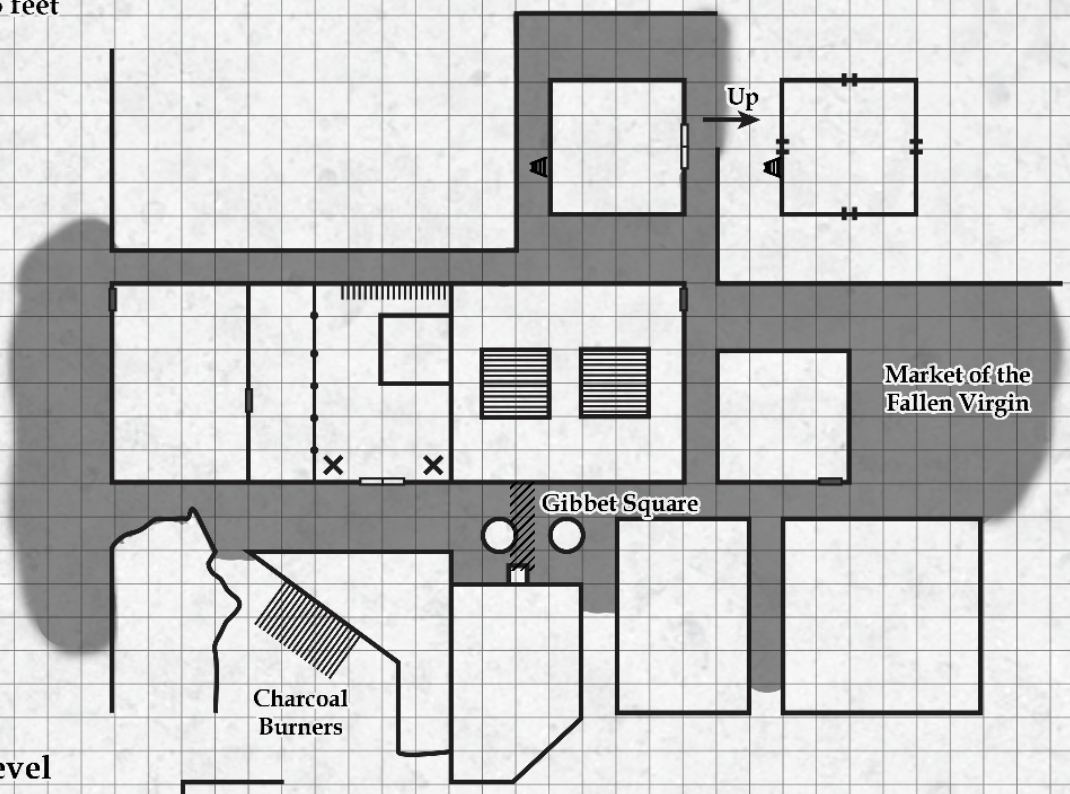



SPRAT AND MARROW
Street Level
1 square - 5 feet
SM-6
Up
SM-7
SM-3
SM-2
SM-1
SM-4
SM-5
Market of the Fallen Virgin
Gibbet Square
Charcoal Burners
Upper Level
Inside
SM-11
SM-12
50 feet above
SM-8
SM-9
SM-2
SM-10
SM-13
SM-14
Up
50 feet above
N

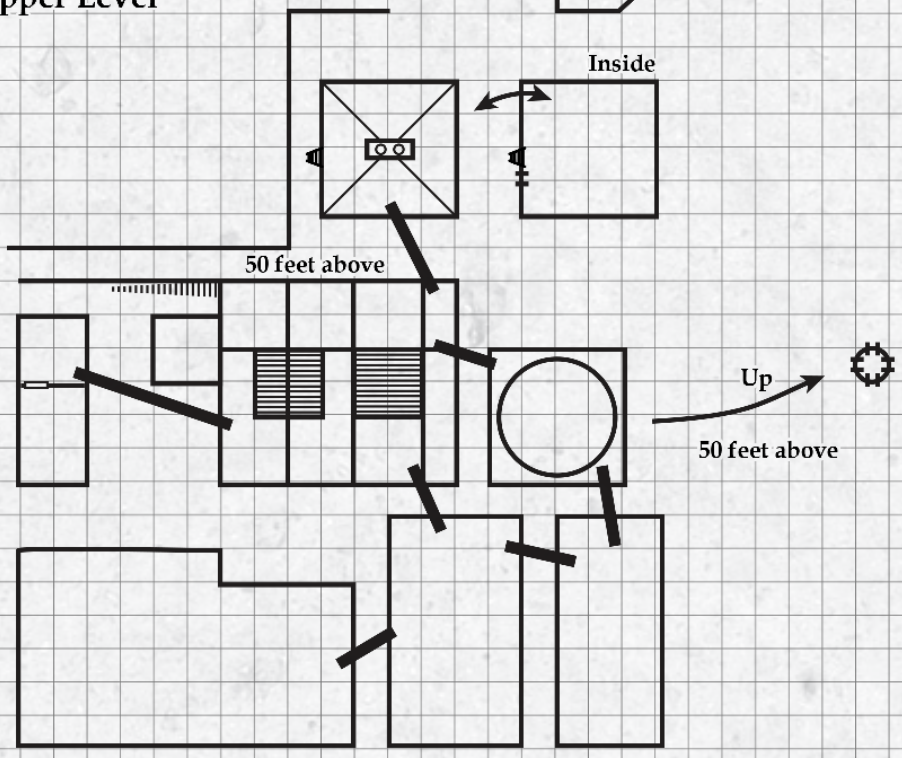
SPRAT AND MARROW

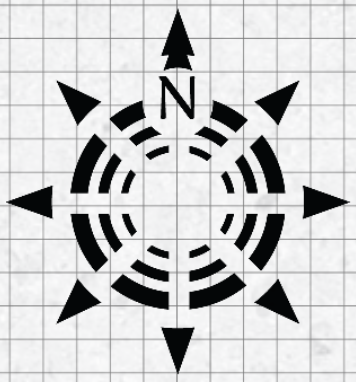
Street Level

1 square - 5 feet

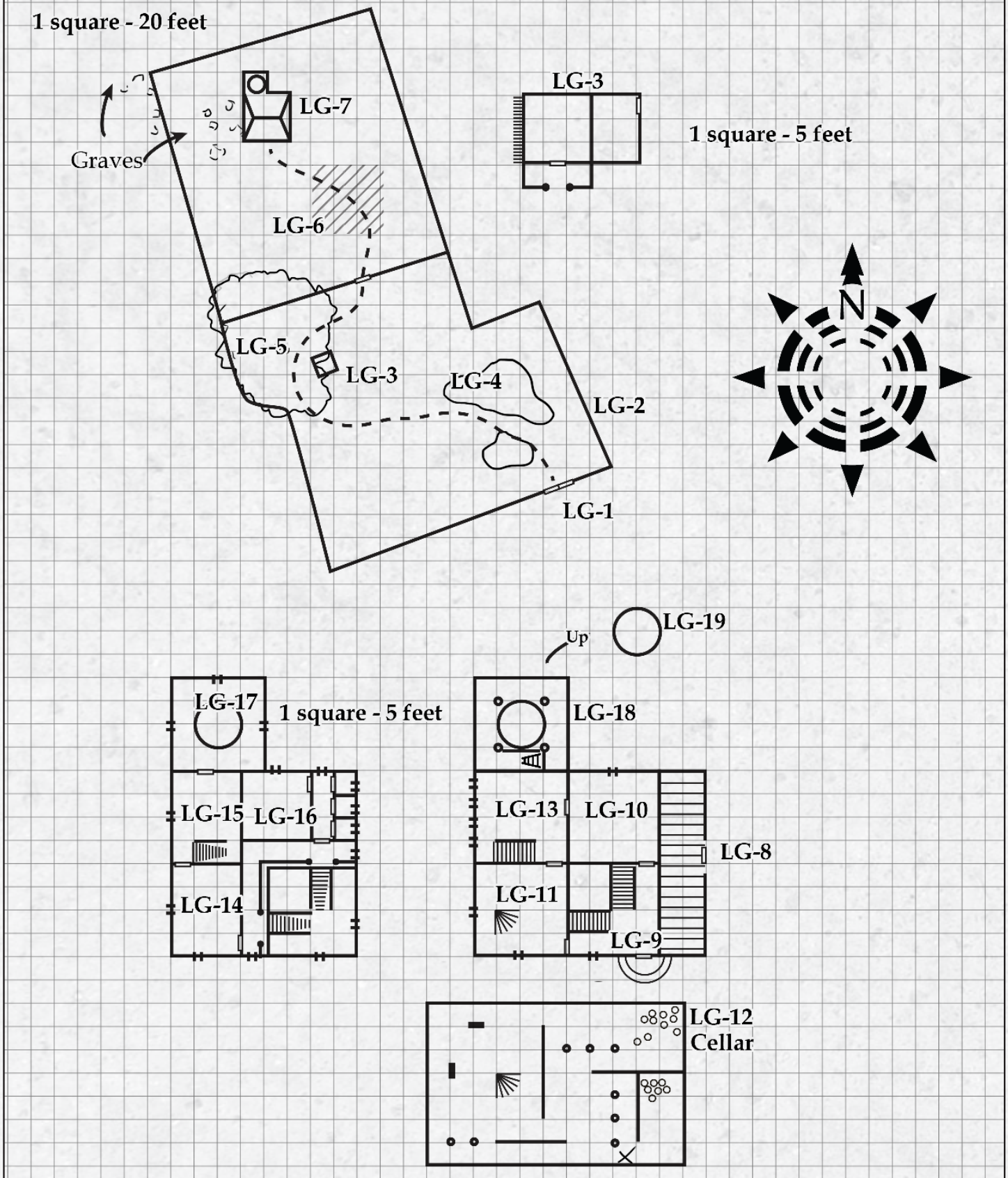


Upper Level

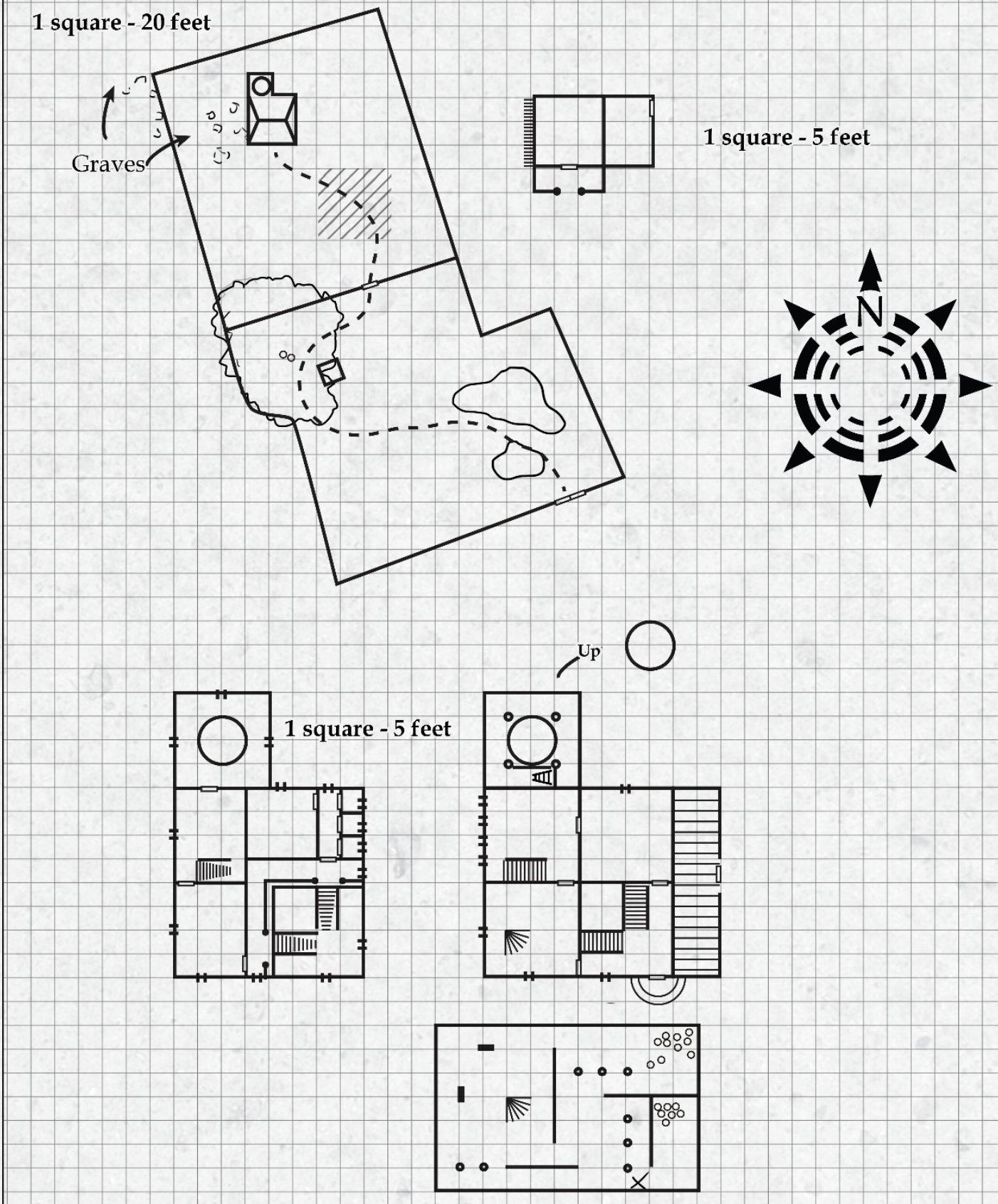


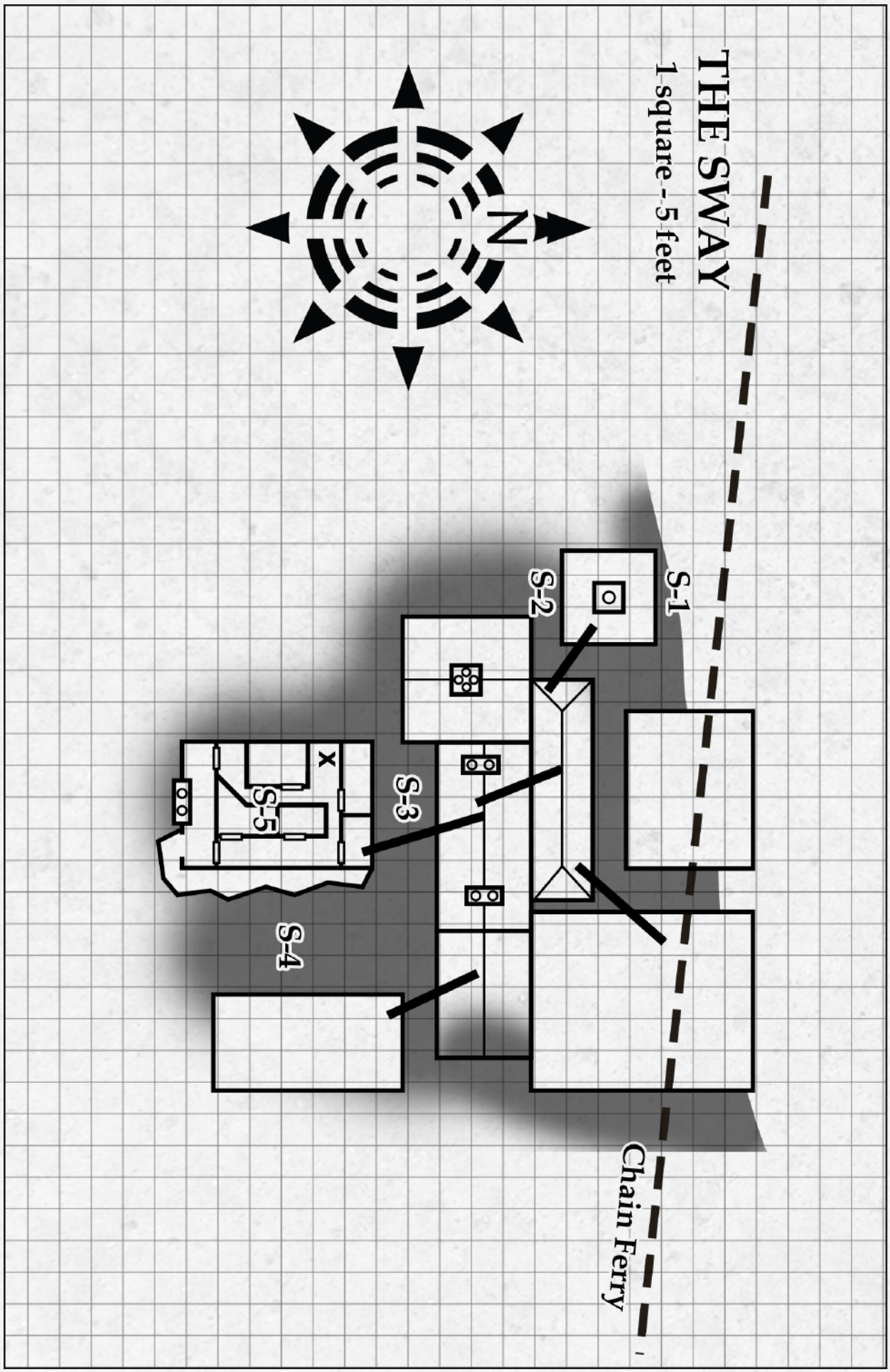


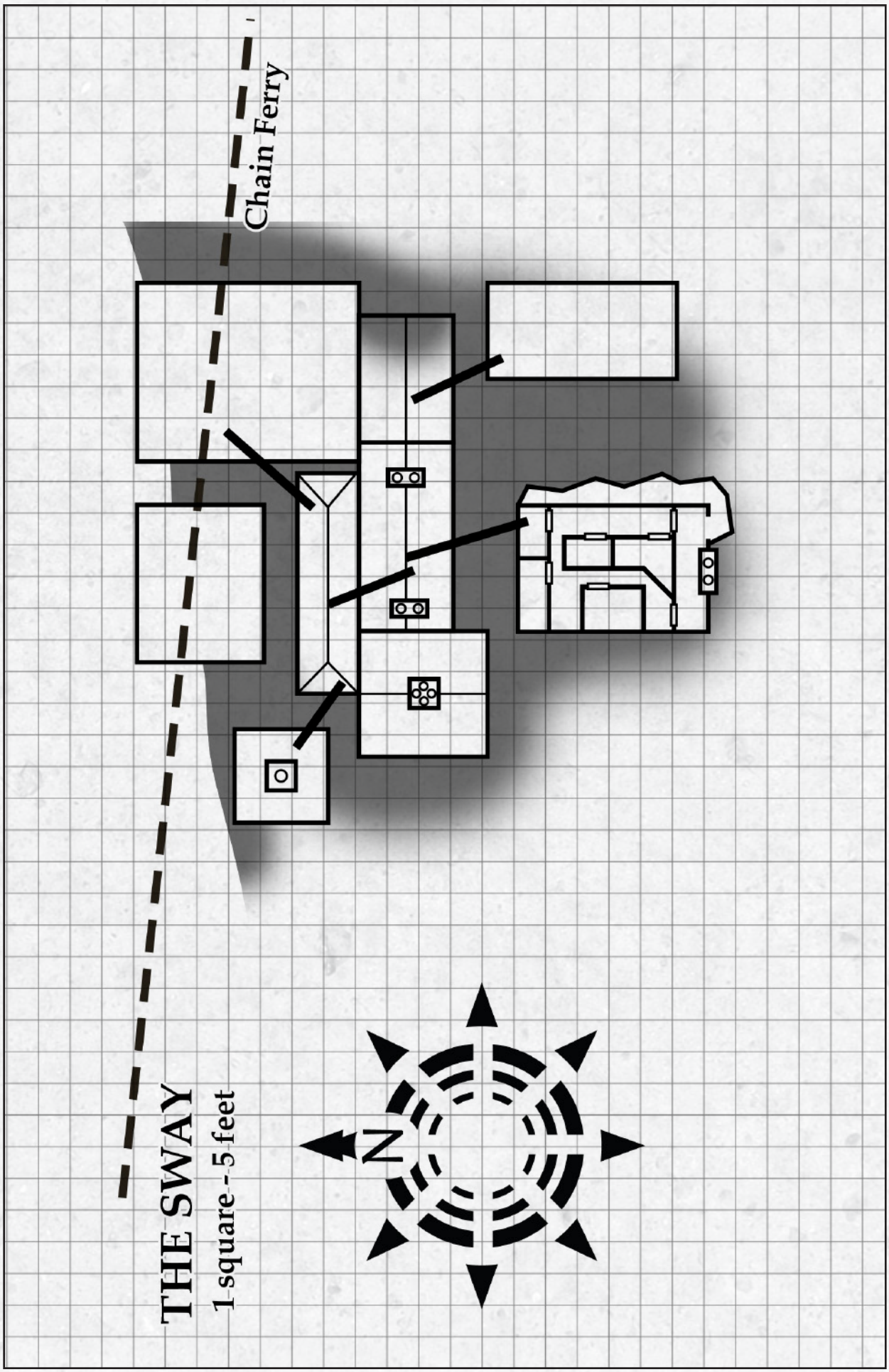
THE MANSE AT THE LICH GATE WALL

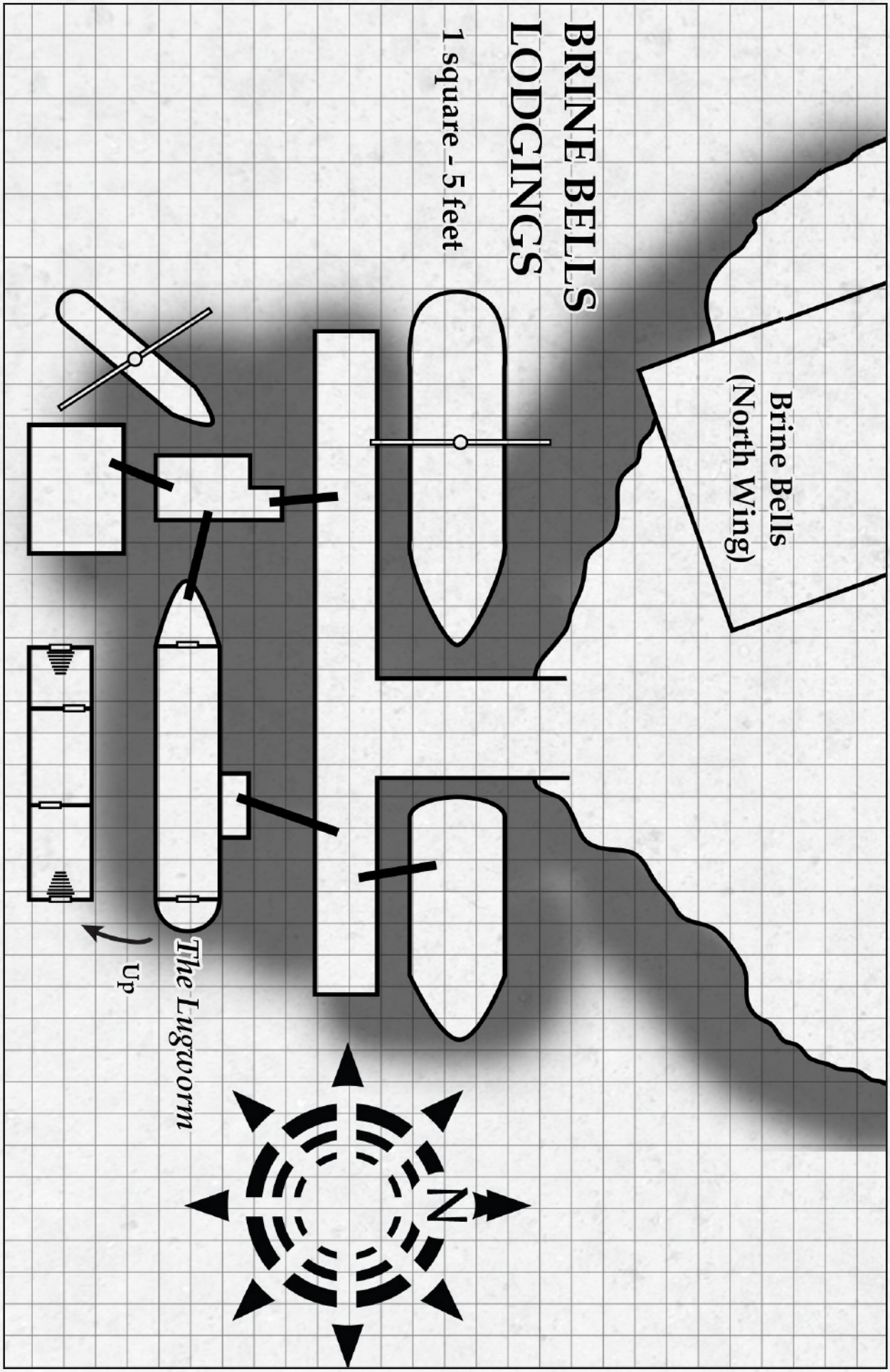


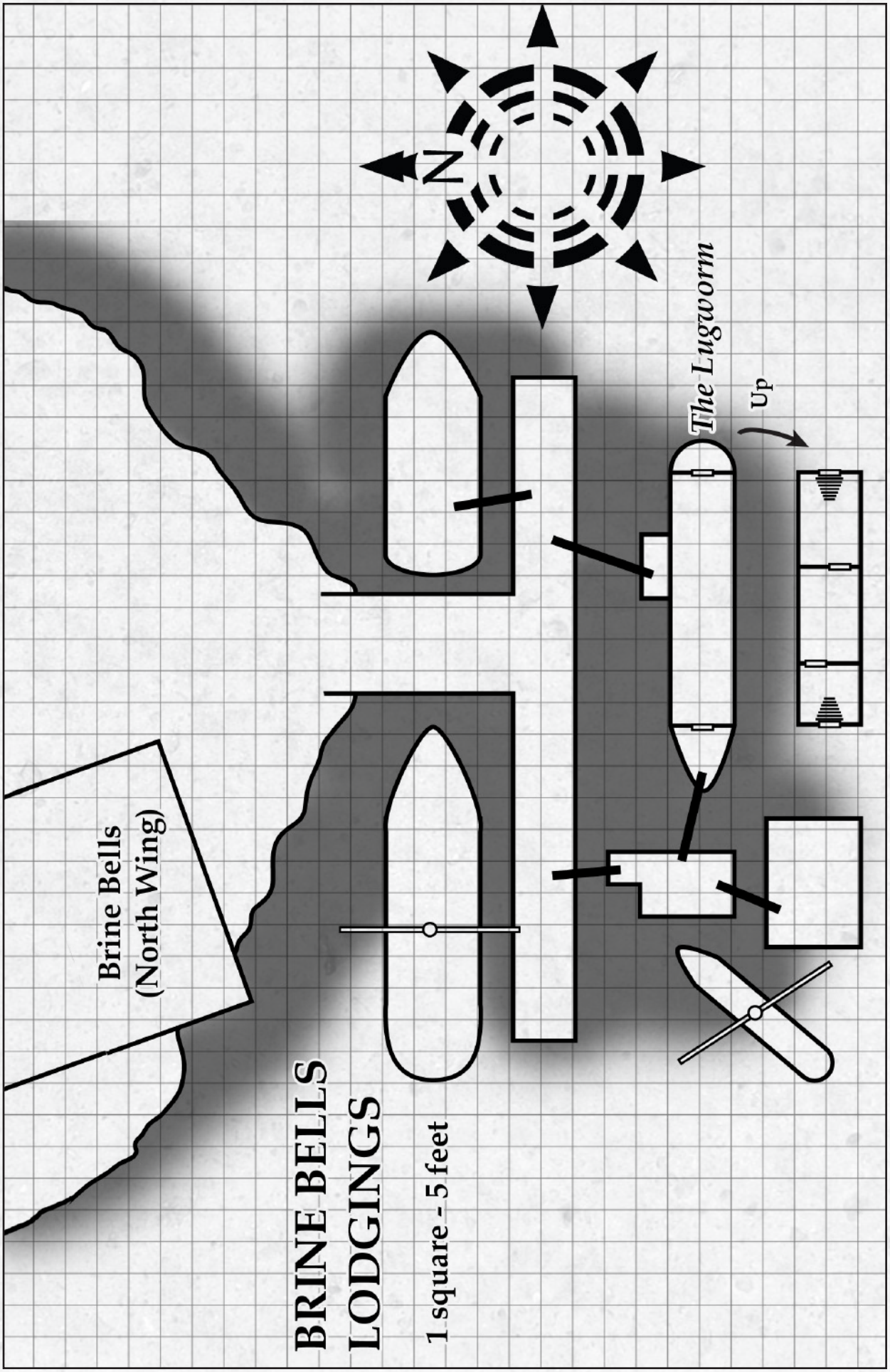
THE MANSE AT THE LICH GATE WALL

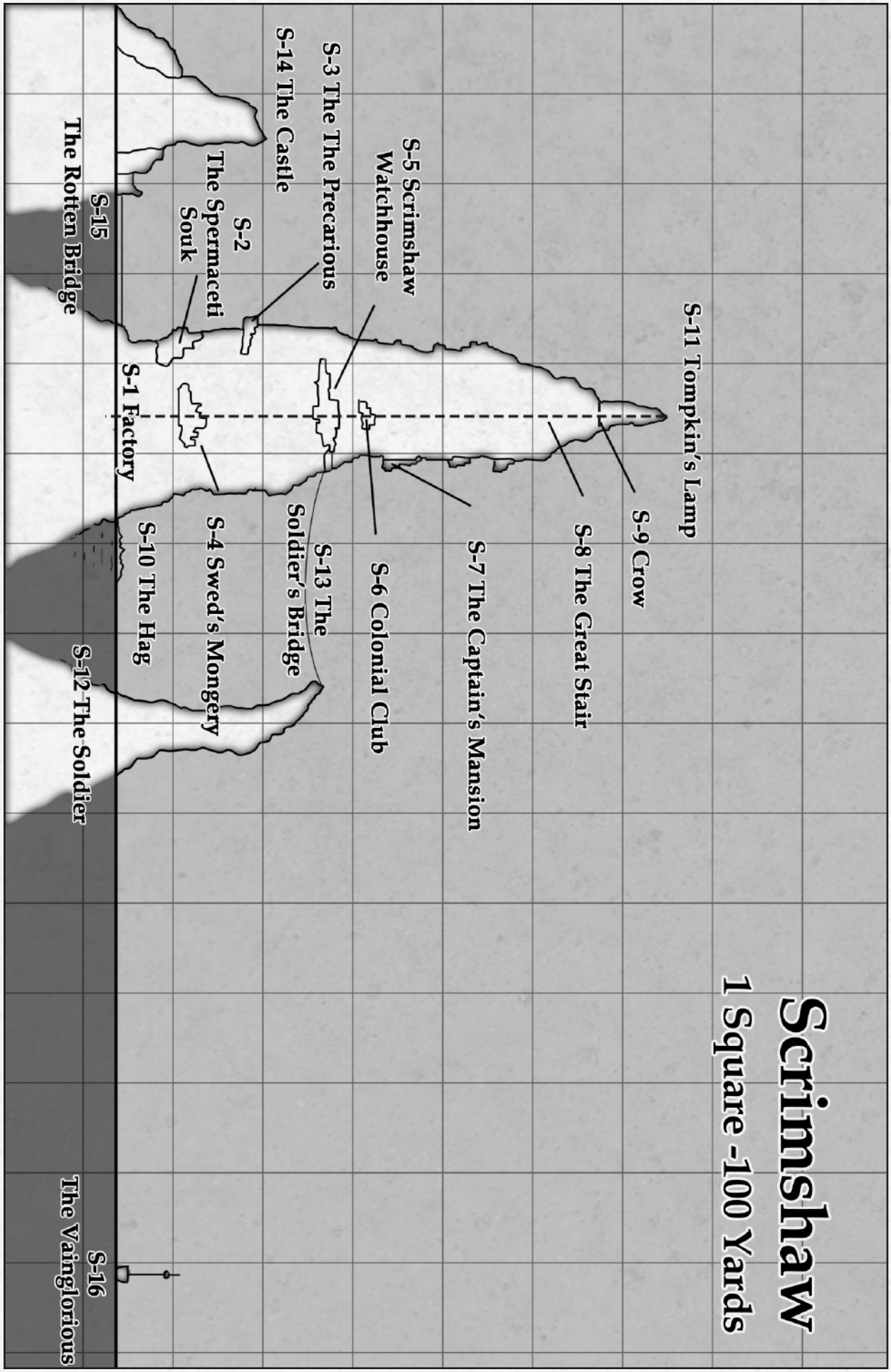


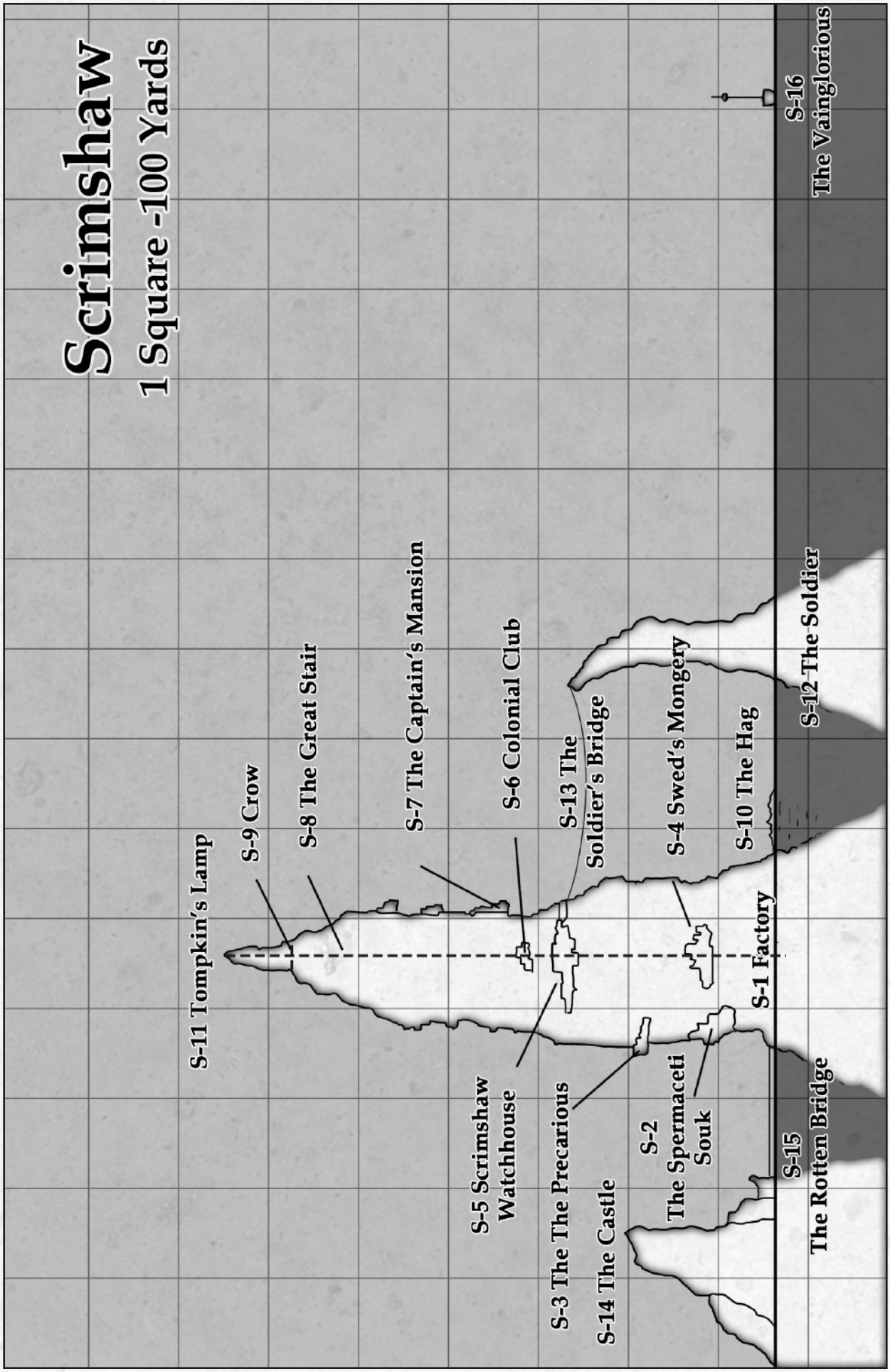

THE SWAY
1 square = 5 feet
N
S-1
S-2
S-3
S-4
S-5
x
Chain Ferry

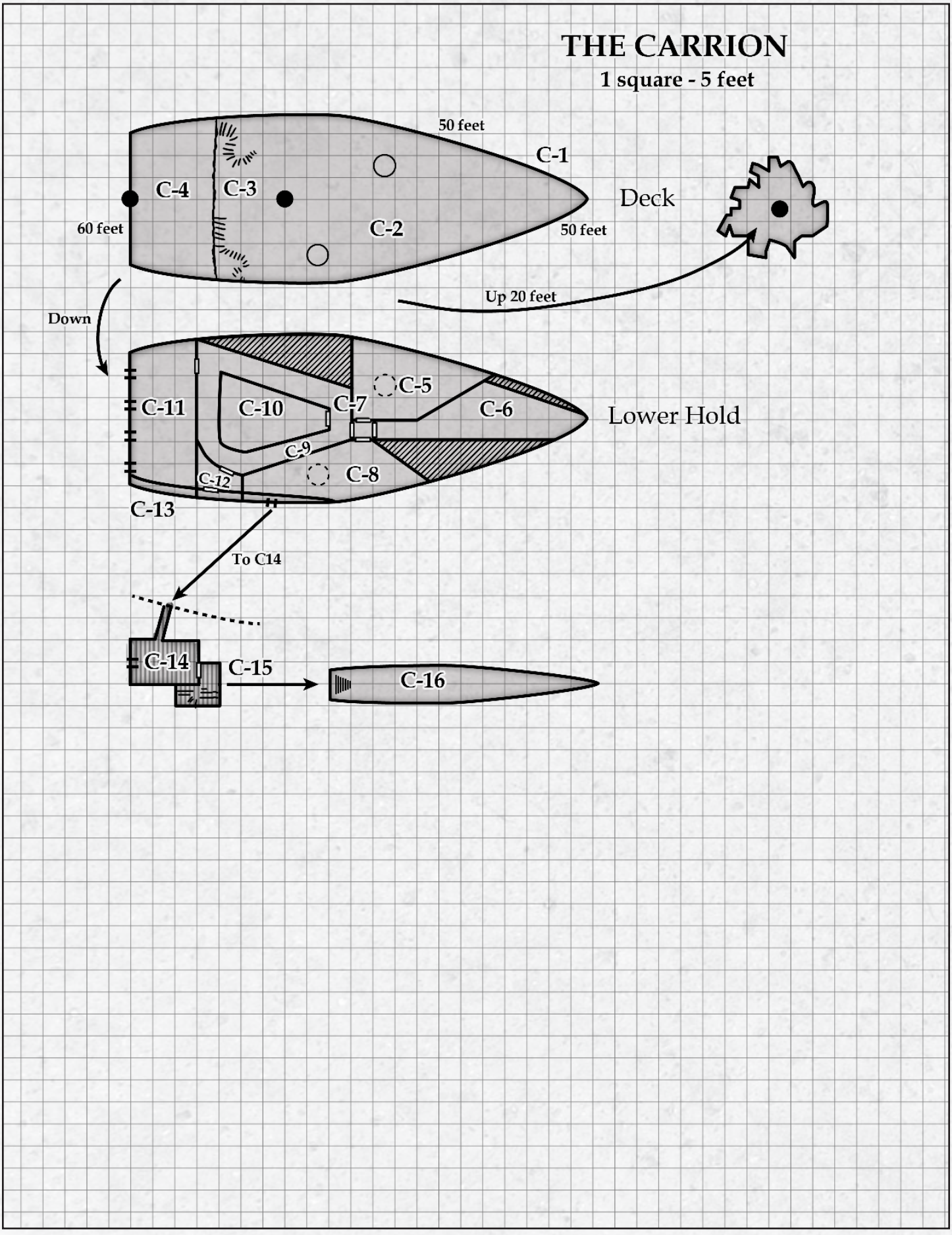

Chain Ferry
THE SWAY
1 square = 5 feet
N

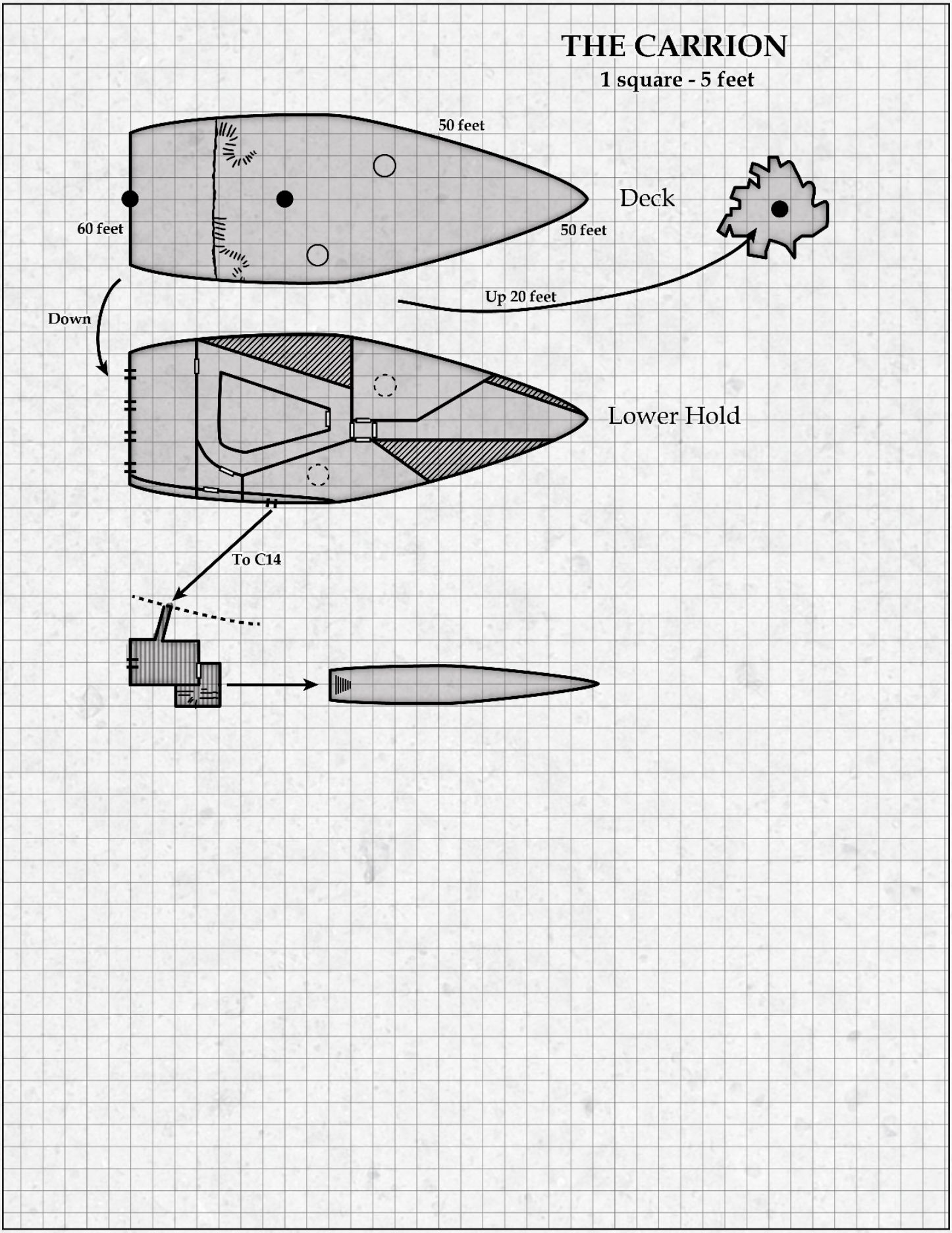

BRINE BELLS
LODGINGS
1 square = 5 feet
Brine Bells
(North Wing)
The Lugworm
Up
N

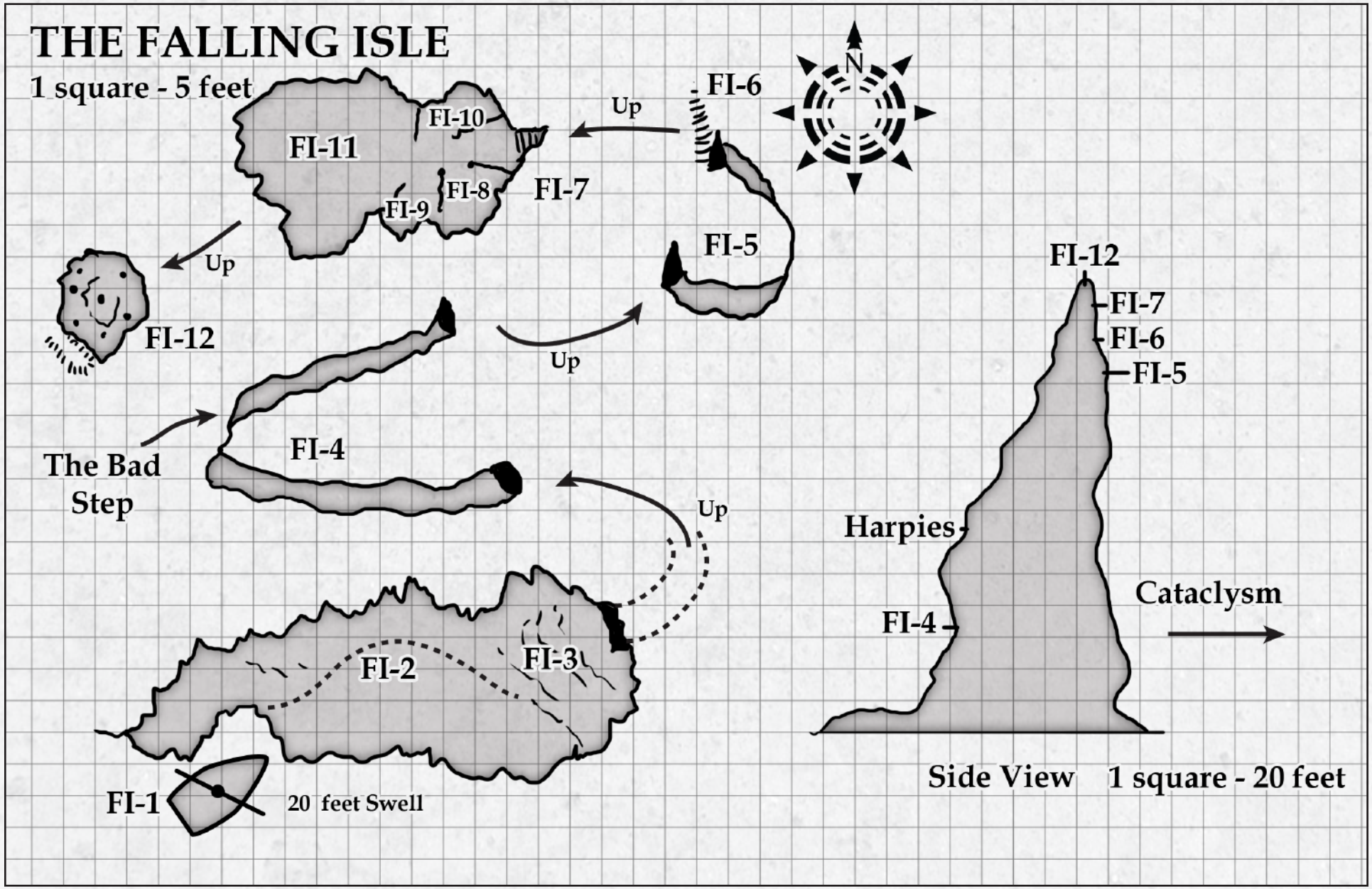

Brine Bells
(North Wing)
BRINE BELLS
LODGINGS
1 square = 5 feet
N
The Lugworm
Up

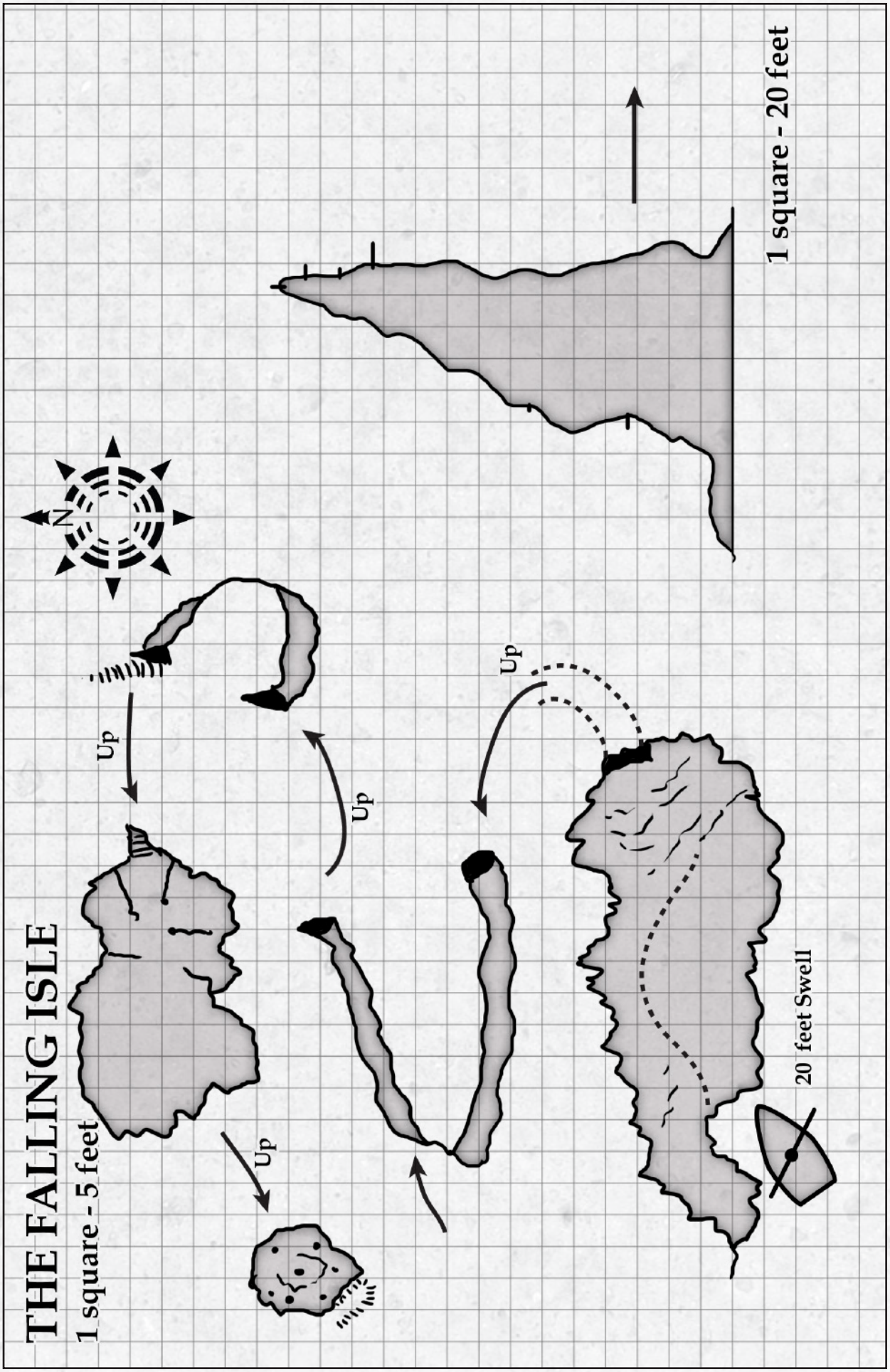

Scrimshaw
1 Square -100 Yards
S-11 Tompkin's Lamp
S-9 Crow
S-8 The Great Stair
S-7 The Captain's Mansion
S-6 Colonial Club
S-13 The Soldier's Bridge
S-12 The Soldier
S-16 The Vainglorious
S-5 Scrimshaw Watchhouse
S-3 The The Precarious
S-14 The Castle
S-2 The Spermaceti Souk
S-4 Swed's Mongery
S-10 The Hag
S-1 Factory
S-15 The Rotten Bridge


Scrimshaw
1 Square -100 Yards
S-11 Tompkin's Lamp
S-9 Crow
S-8 The Great Stair
S-7 The Captain's Mansion
S-6 Colonial Club
S-13 The Soldier's Bridge
S-4 Swed's Mongery
S-10 The Hag
S-12 The Soldier
S-16 The Vainglorious
S-5 Scrimshaw Watchhouse
S-3 The The Precarious
S-14 The Castle
S-2 The Spermaceti Souk
S-1 Factory
S-15 The Rotten Bridge


THE CARRION
1 square - 5 feet
50 feet
C-1
C-4
C-3
C-2
60 feet
50 feet
Deck
Up 20 feet
Down
C-11
C-10
C-7
C-5
C-6
Lower Hold
C-9
C-8
C-12
C-13
To C14
C-14
C-15
C-16


THE CARRION
1 square - 5 feet
50 feet
60 feet
50 feet
Deck
Up 20 feet
Down
Lower Hold
To C14

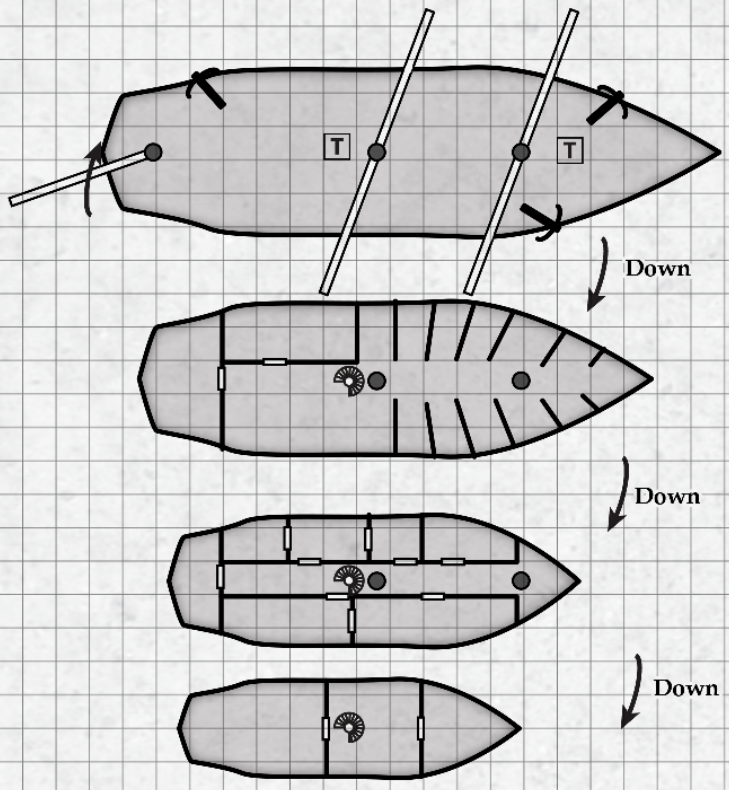

THE FALLING ISLE
1 square - 5 feet
N
FI-6
Up
FI-10
FI-11
FI-8
FI-7
FI-9
FI-5
Up
FI-12
Up
The Bad Step
FI-4
Up
FI-2
FI-3
FI-1
20 feet Swell
FI-12
FI-7
FI-6
FI-5
Harpies
Cataclysm
FI-4
Side View 1 square - 20 feet


THE FALLING ISLE
1 square - 5 feet
N
Up
Up
Up
Up
1 square - 20 feet
20 feet Swell

THE BLOODY HARPOON

1 square - 5 feet

Ballista

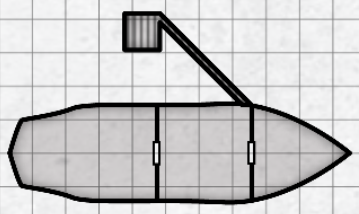


Top Deck

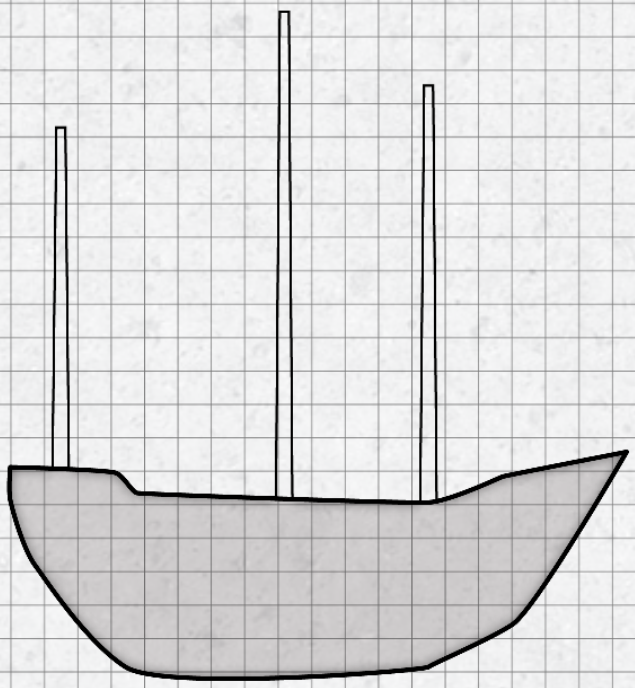
Crew Locker

Store and Galley

Low Hold



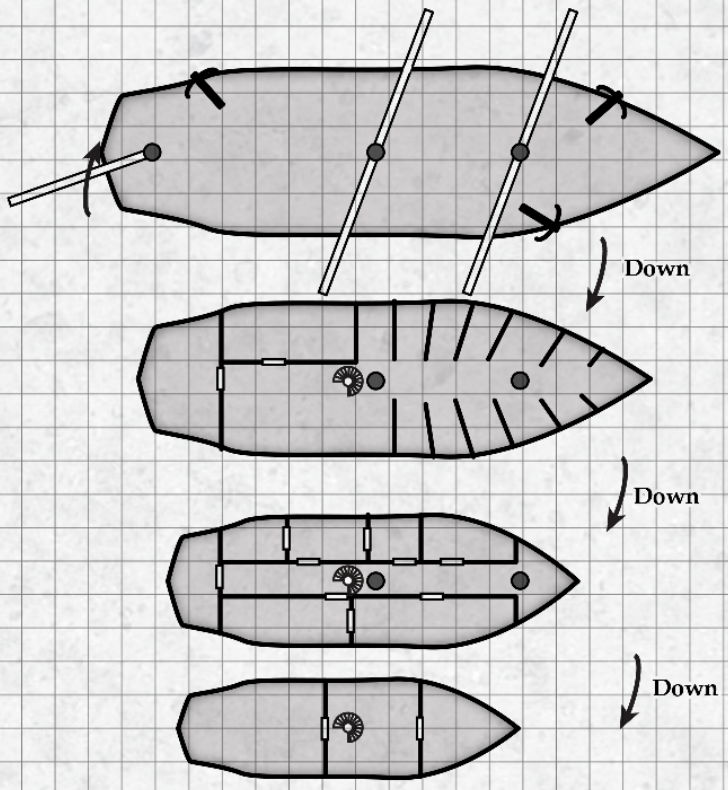
Homeward Bound
Modifications
(Low Hold)

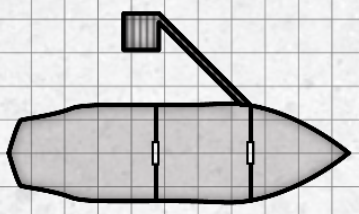


THE BLOODY HARPOON

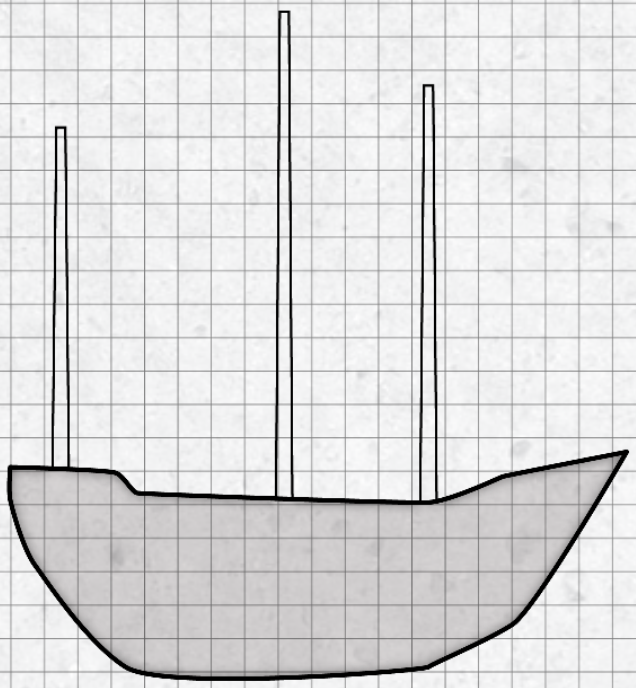
1 square - 5 feet

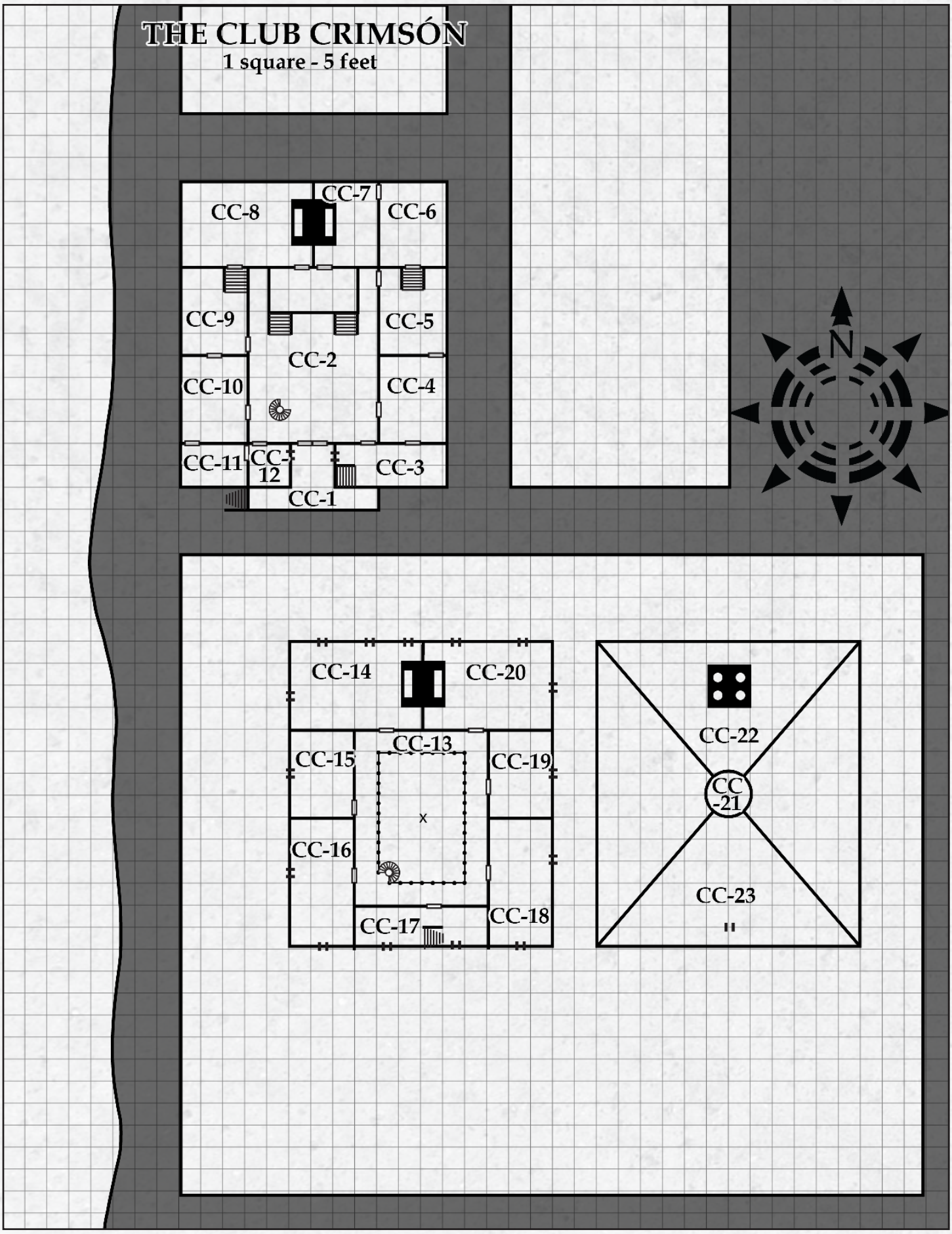
Ballista

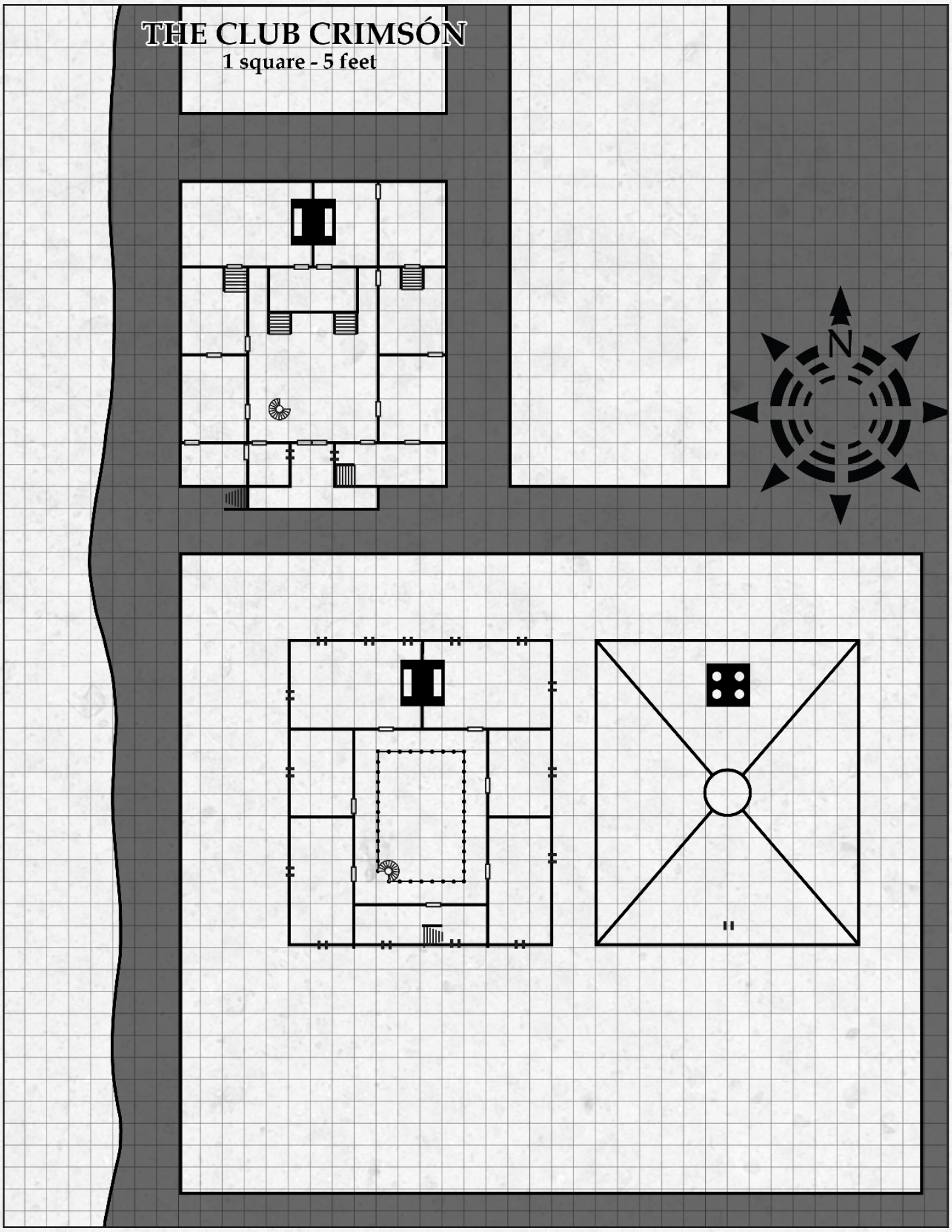


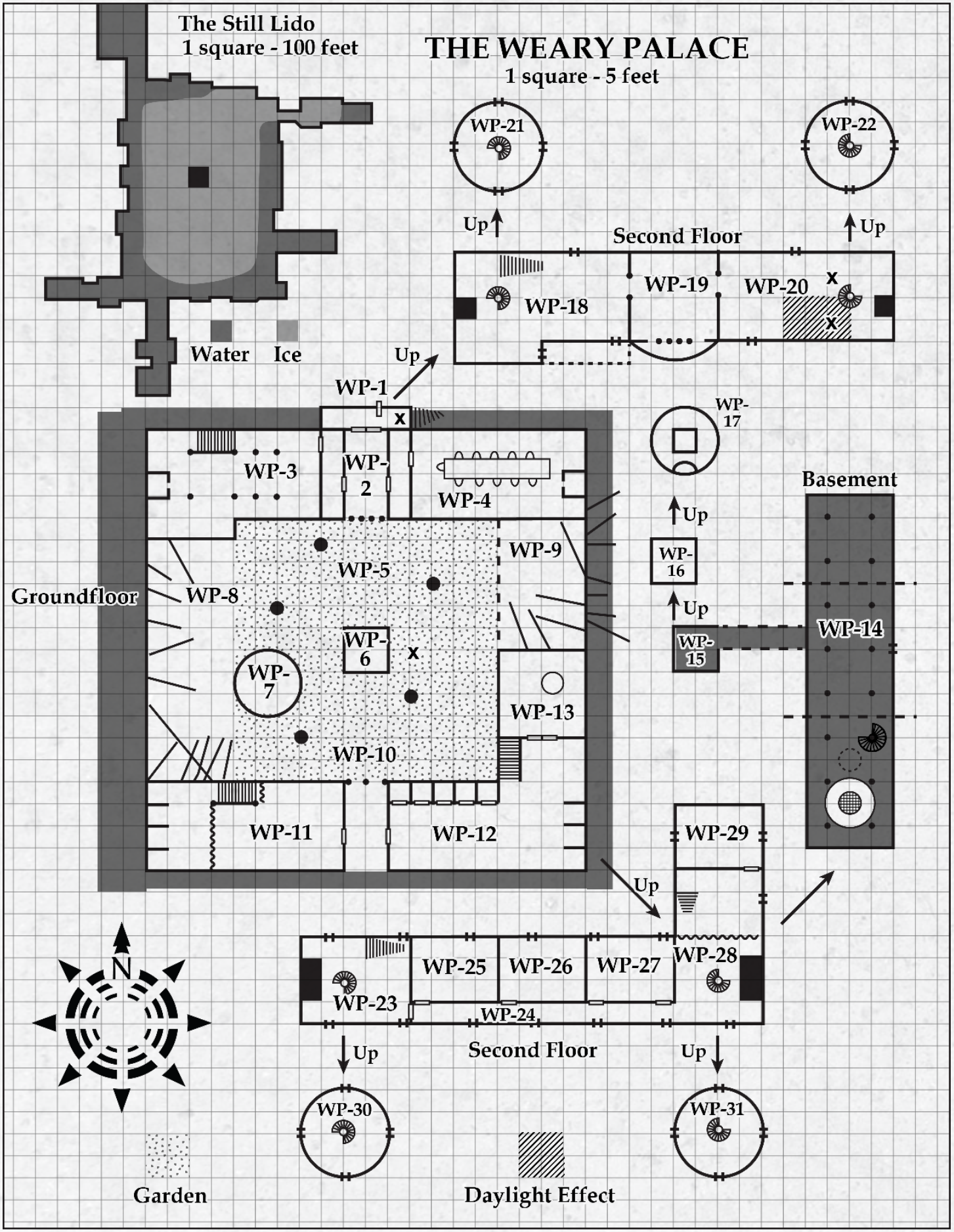


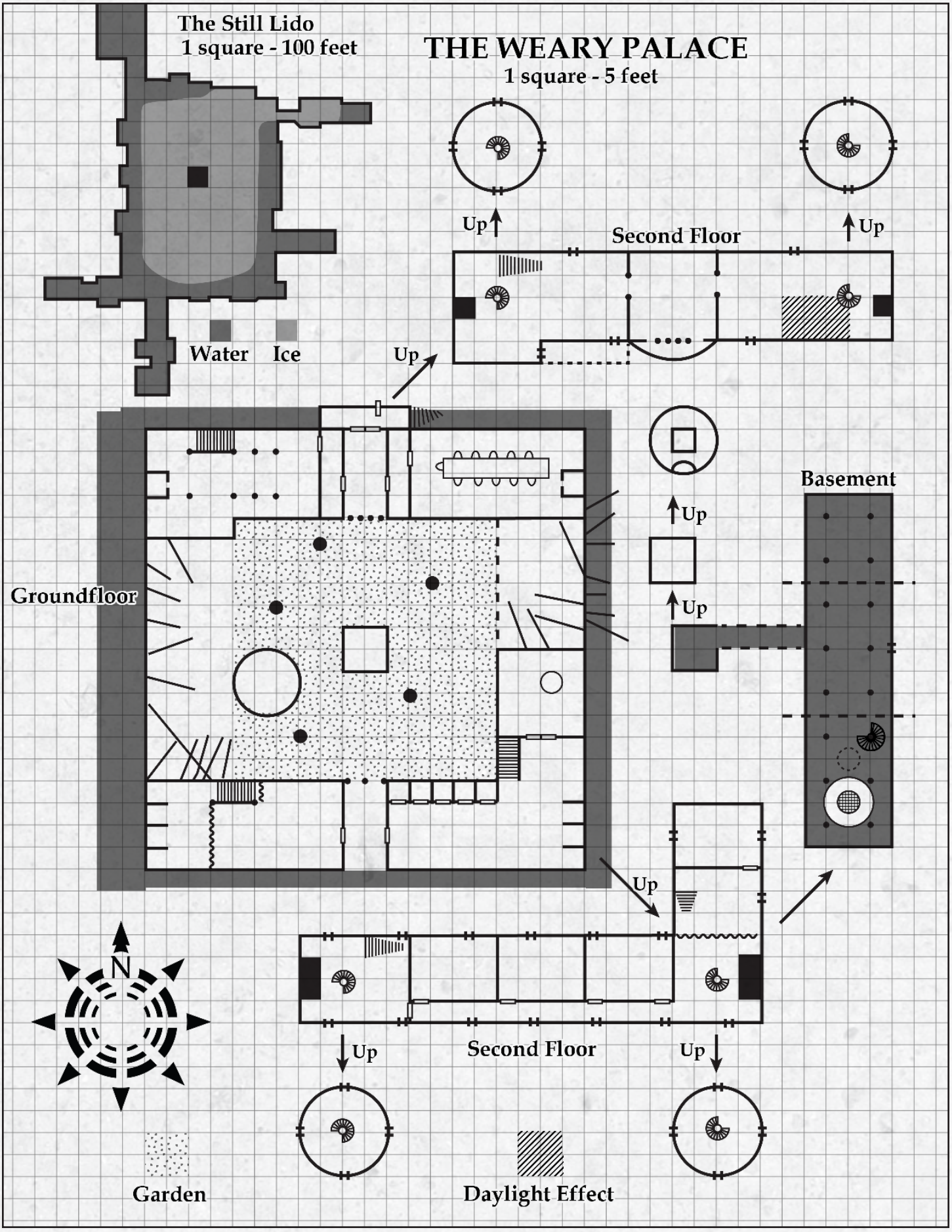
Homeward Bound
Modifications
(Low Hold)




THE CLUB CRIMSÓN
1 square - 5 feet
CC-7
CC-8
CC-6
CC-9
CC-5
CC-2
CC-10
CC-4
CC-11
CC-12
CC-3
CC-1
N
CC-14
CC-20
CC-13
CC-15
CC-19
x
CC-16
CC-17
CC-18
CC-22
CC-21
CC-23

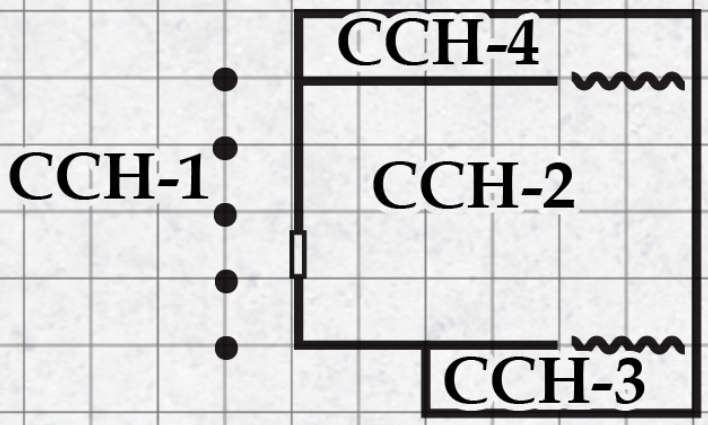

THE CLUB CRIMSÓN
1 square - 5 feet
N

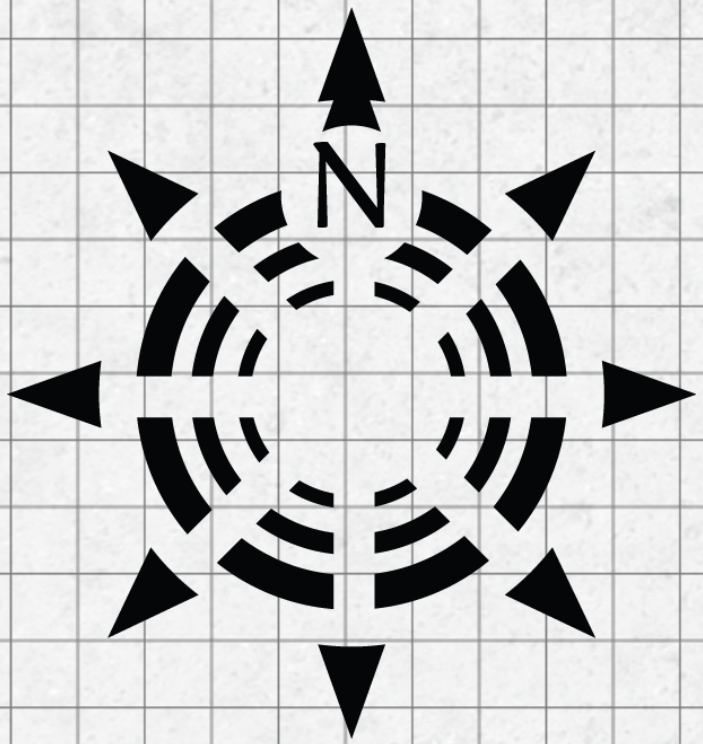

The Still Lido
1 square - 100 feet
THE WEARY PALACE
1 square - 5 feet
WP-21
WP-22
Up
Second Floor
Up
WP-18
WP-19
WP-20
Water
Ice
Up
WP-1
WP-
17
WP-3
WP-
2
WP-4
Basement
Up
WP-9
WP-
16
Groundfloor
WP-8
WP-5
Up
WP-14
WP-
6
WP-
15
WP-
7
WP-13
WP-10
WP-11
WP-12
WP-29
Up
N
WP-25
WP-26
WP-27
WP-28
WP-23
WP-24
Up
Second Floor
Up
WP-30
WP-31
Garden
Daylight Effect


The Still Lido
1 square - 100 feet
THE WEARY PALACE
1 square - 5 feet
Water
Ice
Up
Second Floor
Up
Up
Basement
Up
Up
Groundfloor
Up
N
Up
Second Floor
Up
Garden
Daylight Effect

THE CROOKED CHAPEL

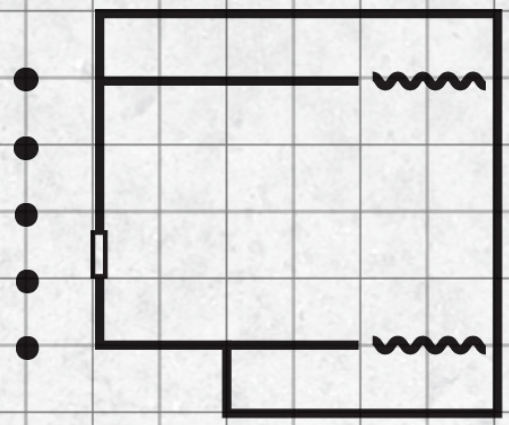
1 square - 5 feet

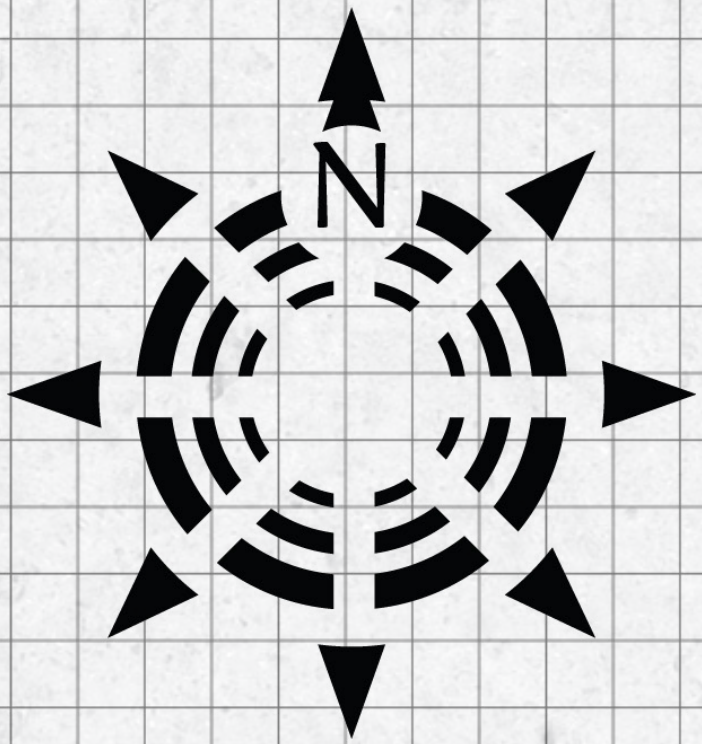


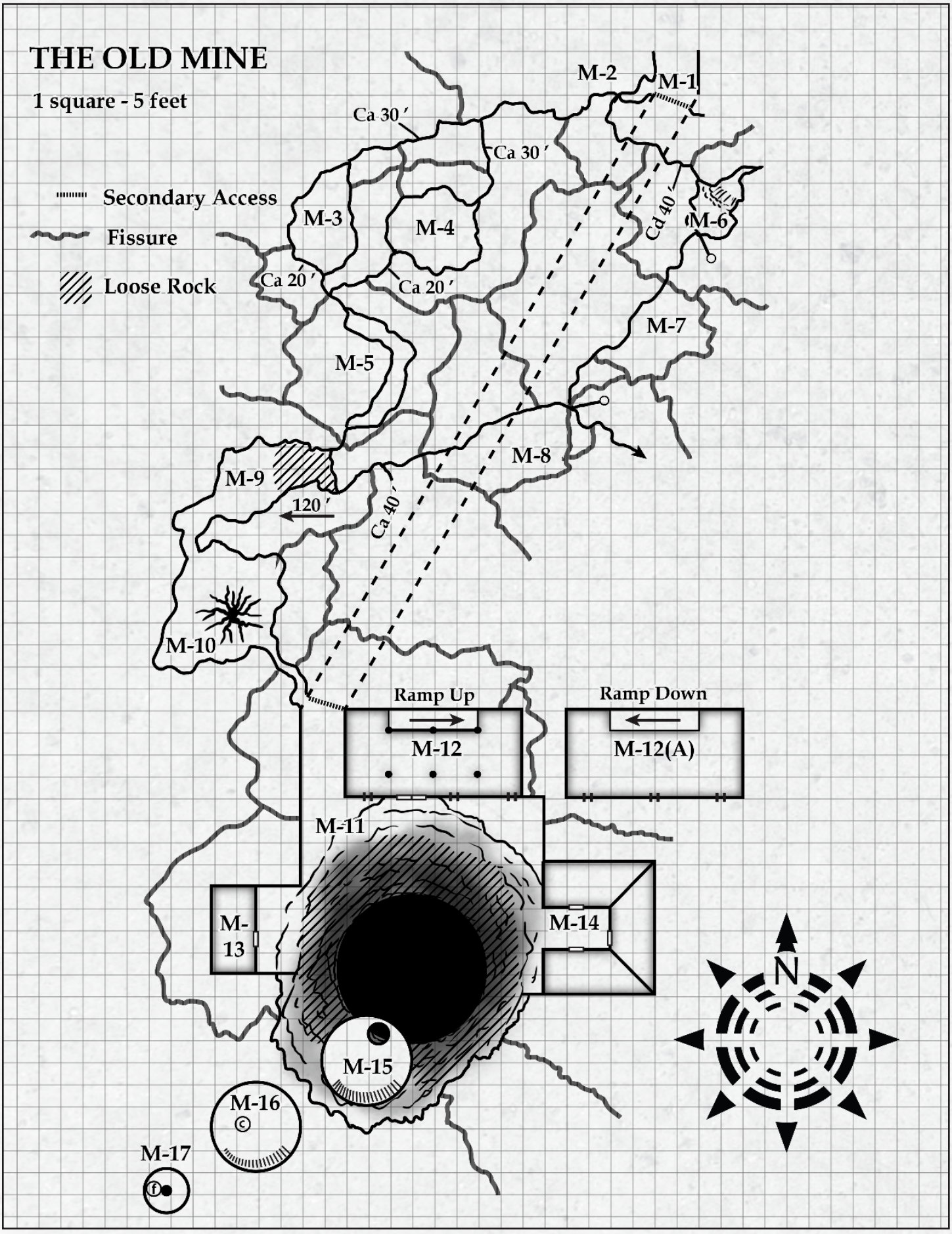


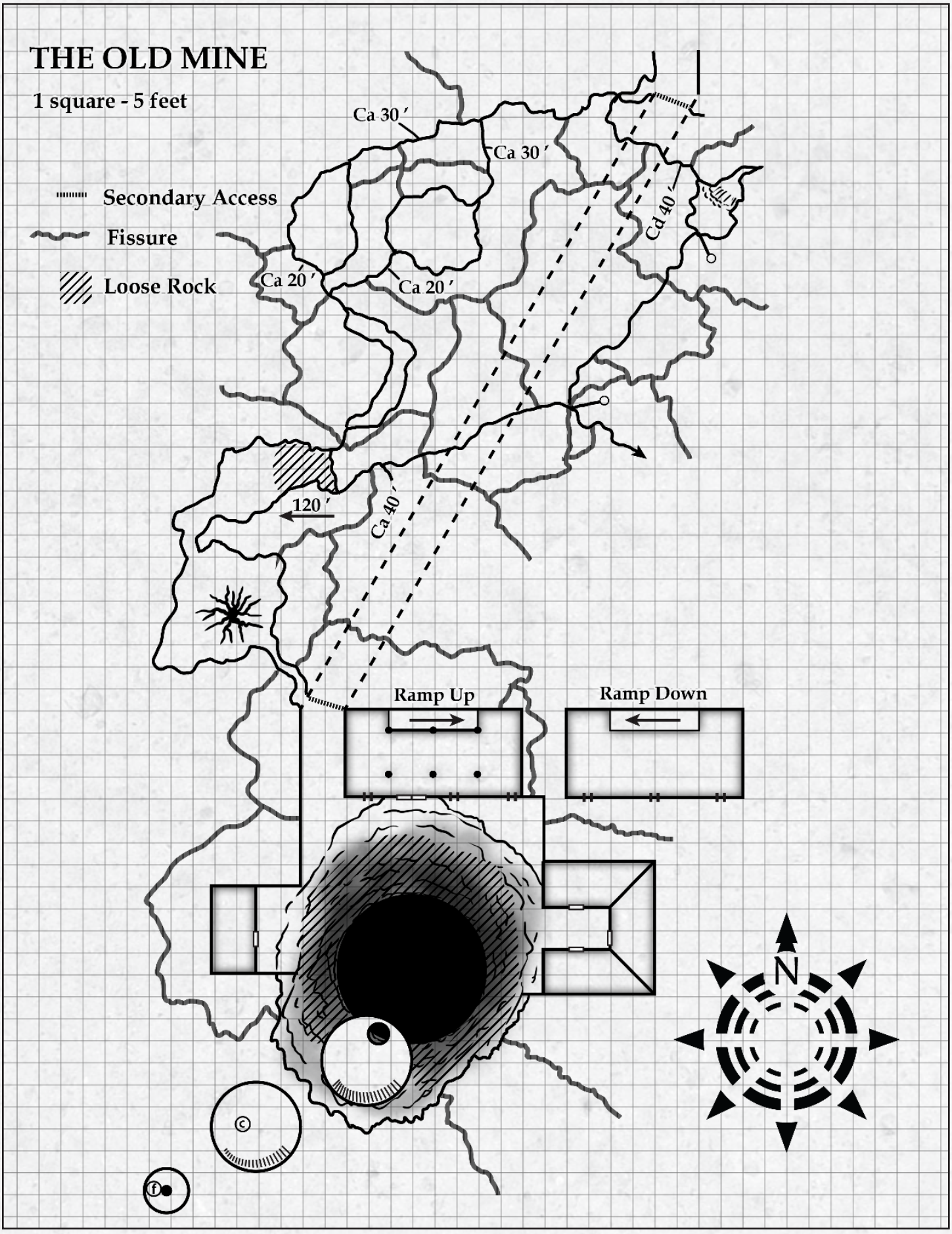
THE CROOKED CHAPEL

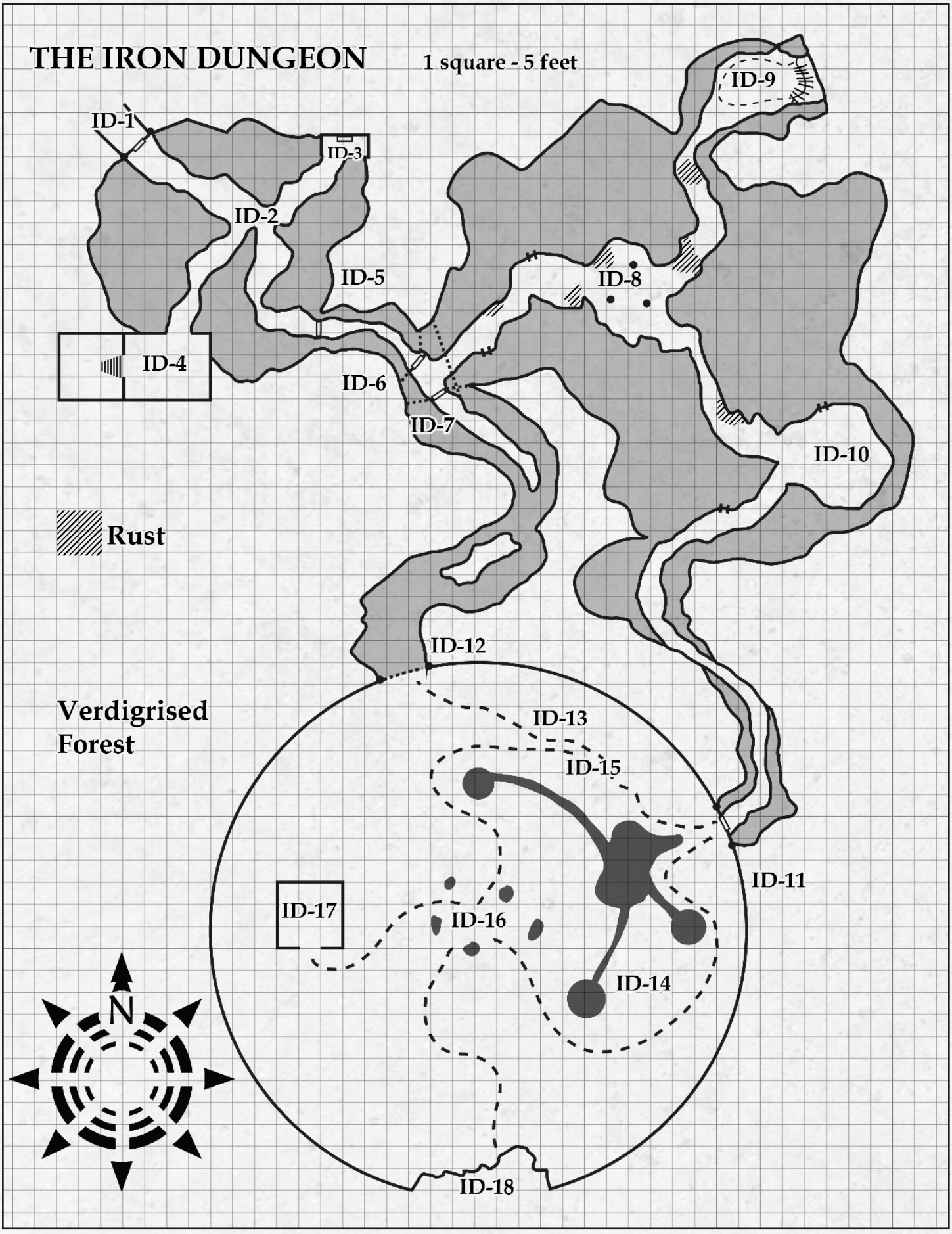
1 square - 5 feet

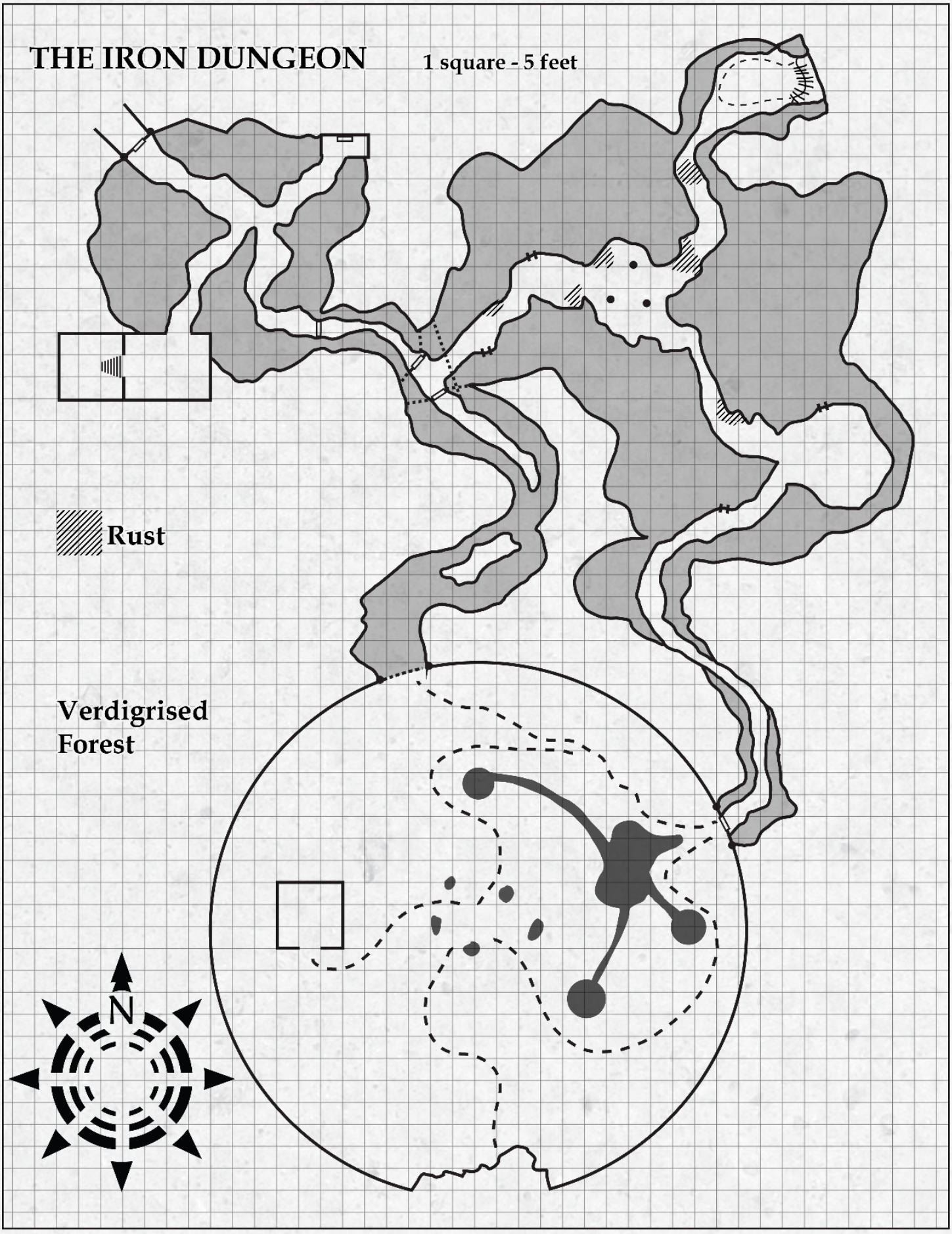


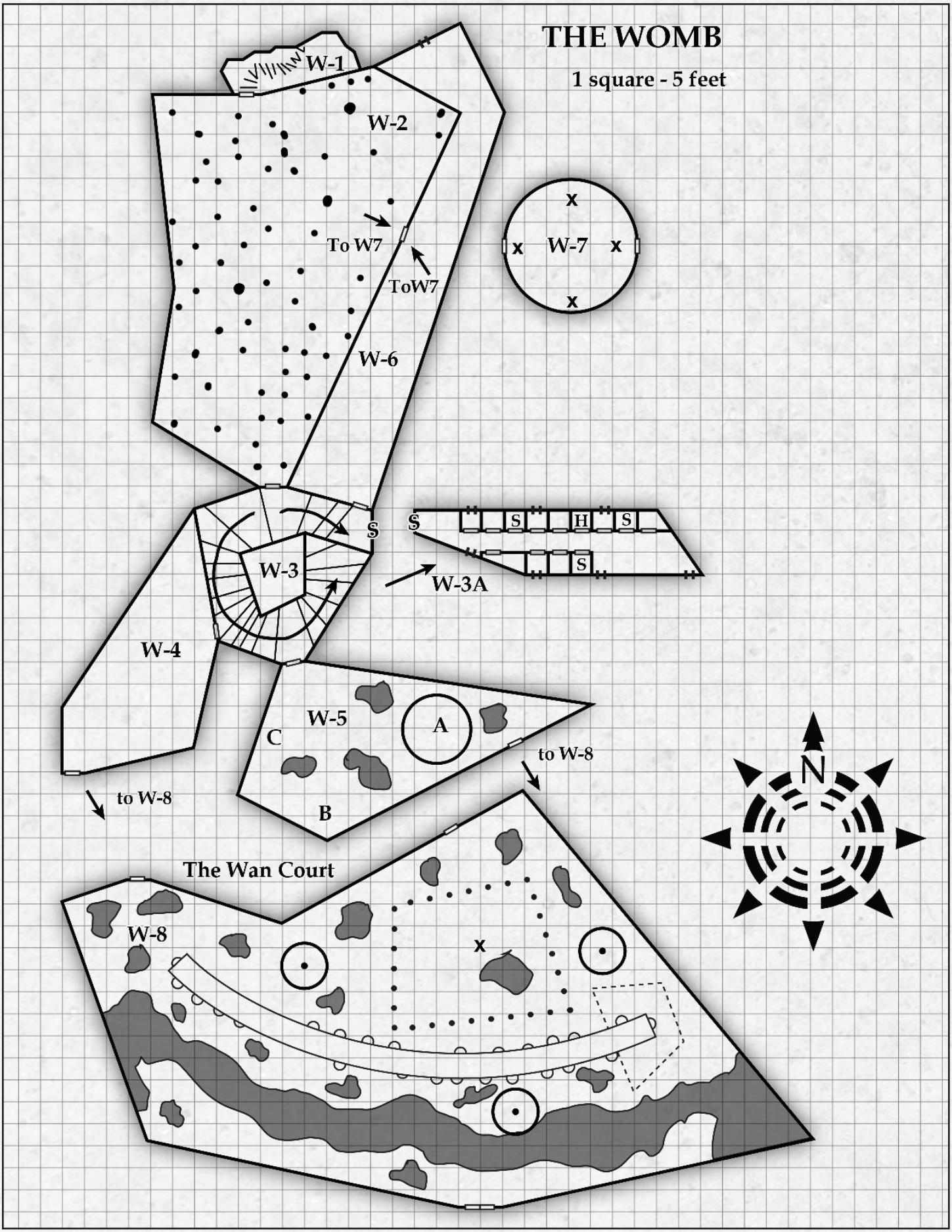


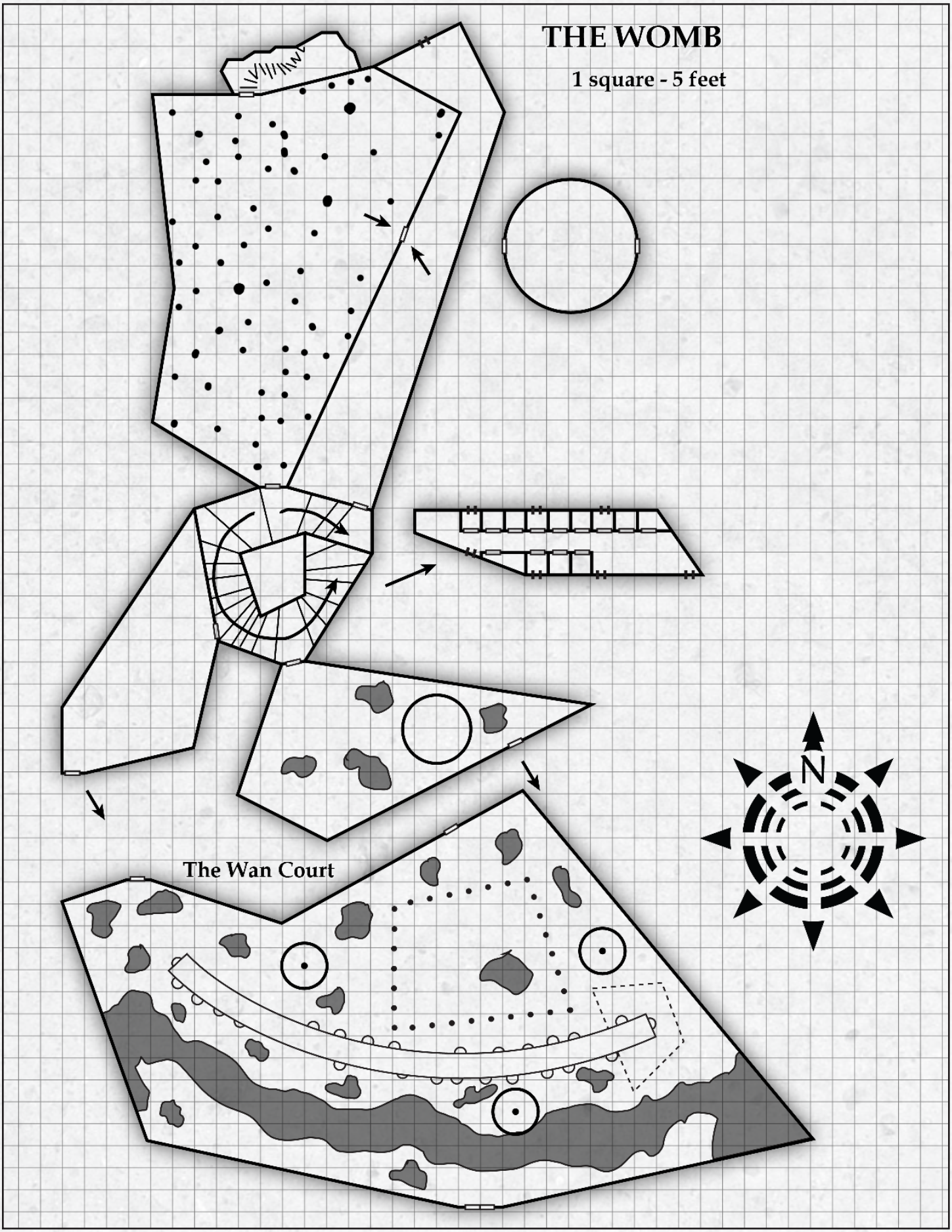

THE OLD MINE
1 square - 5 feet
Secondary Access
Fissure
Loose Rock
M-1
M-2
M-3
M-4
M-5
M-6
M-7
M-8
M-9
M-10
M-11
M-12
M-12(A)
M-13
M-14
M-15
M-16
M-17
Ca 30 ′
Ca 30 ′
Ca 20 ′
Ca 20 ′
Ca 40 ′
Ca 40 ′
120 ′
Ramp Up
Ramp Down
N


THE OLD MINE
1 square - 5 feet
Secondary Access
Fissure
Loose Rock
Ca 30 ′
Ca 30 ′
Cd 40 ′
Ca 20 ′
Ca 20 ′
120 ′
Ca 40 ′
Ramp Up
Ramp Down
N


THE IRON DUNGEON
1 square - 5 feet
ID-1
ID-2
ID-3
ID-4
ID-5
ID-6
ID-7
ID-8
ID-9
ID-10
ID-11
ID-12
ID-13
ID-14
ID-15
ID-16
ID-17
ID-18
Rust
Verdigrised Forest
N

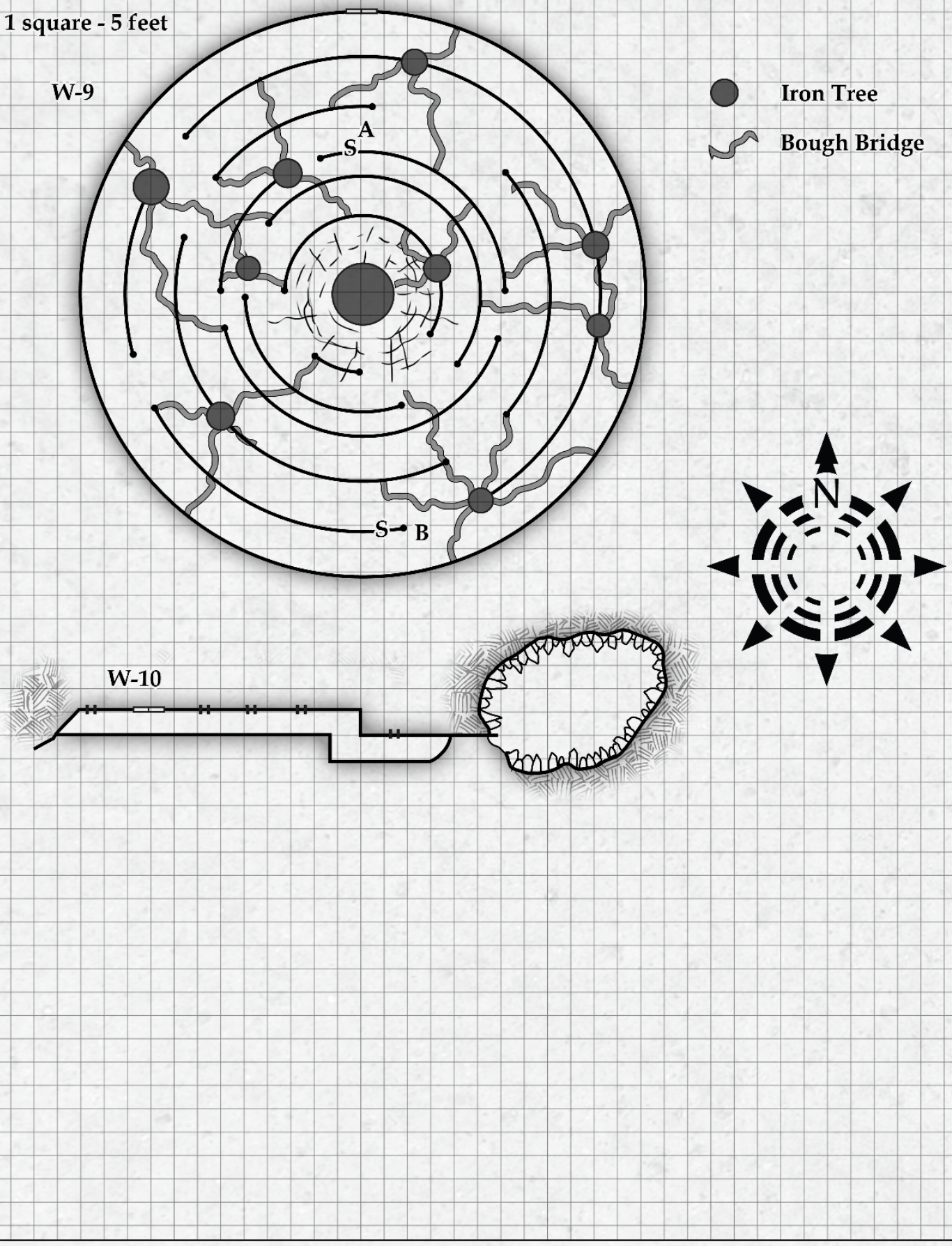

THE IRON DUNGEON
1 square - 5 feet
Rust
Verdigrised Forest
N


THE WOMB
1 square - 5 feet
W-1
W-2
To W7
ToW7
W-6
W-7
x
x
x
x
S
S
S
H
S
S
W-3
W-3A
W-4
W-5
A
C
B
to W-8
to W-8
The Wan Court
W-8
x
N


THE WOMB
1 square - 5 feet
The Wan Court
N

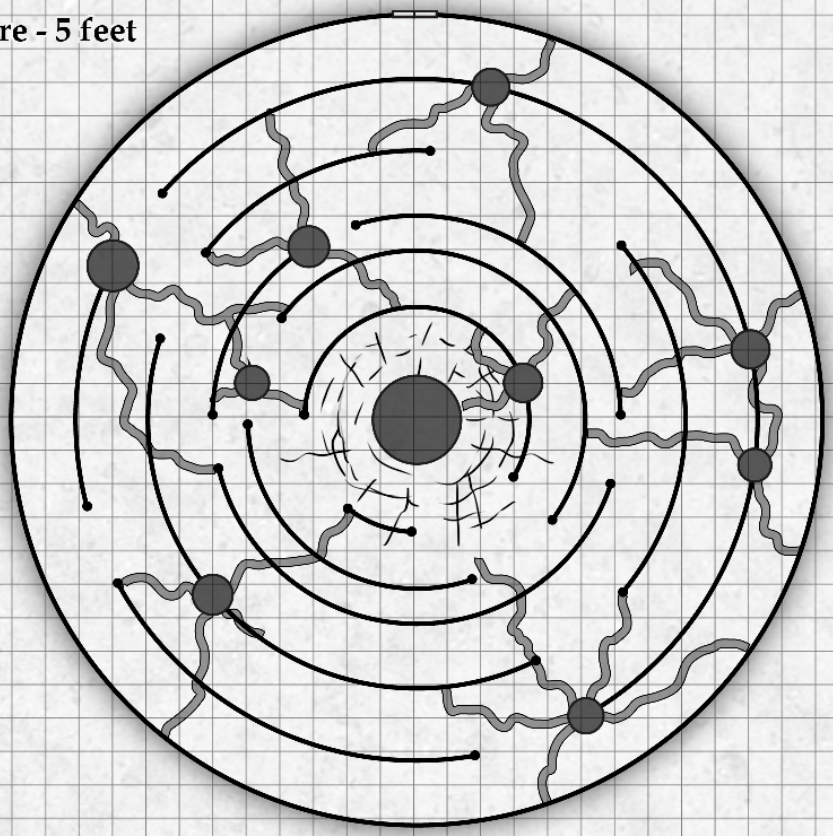
THE WOMB - Map 2

1 square - 5 feet



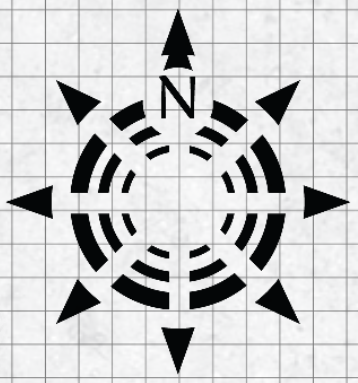
THE WOMB - Map 2

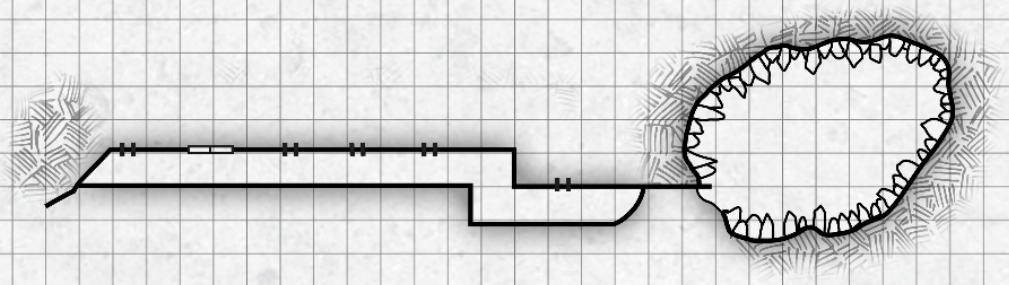
1 square - 5 feet

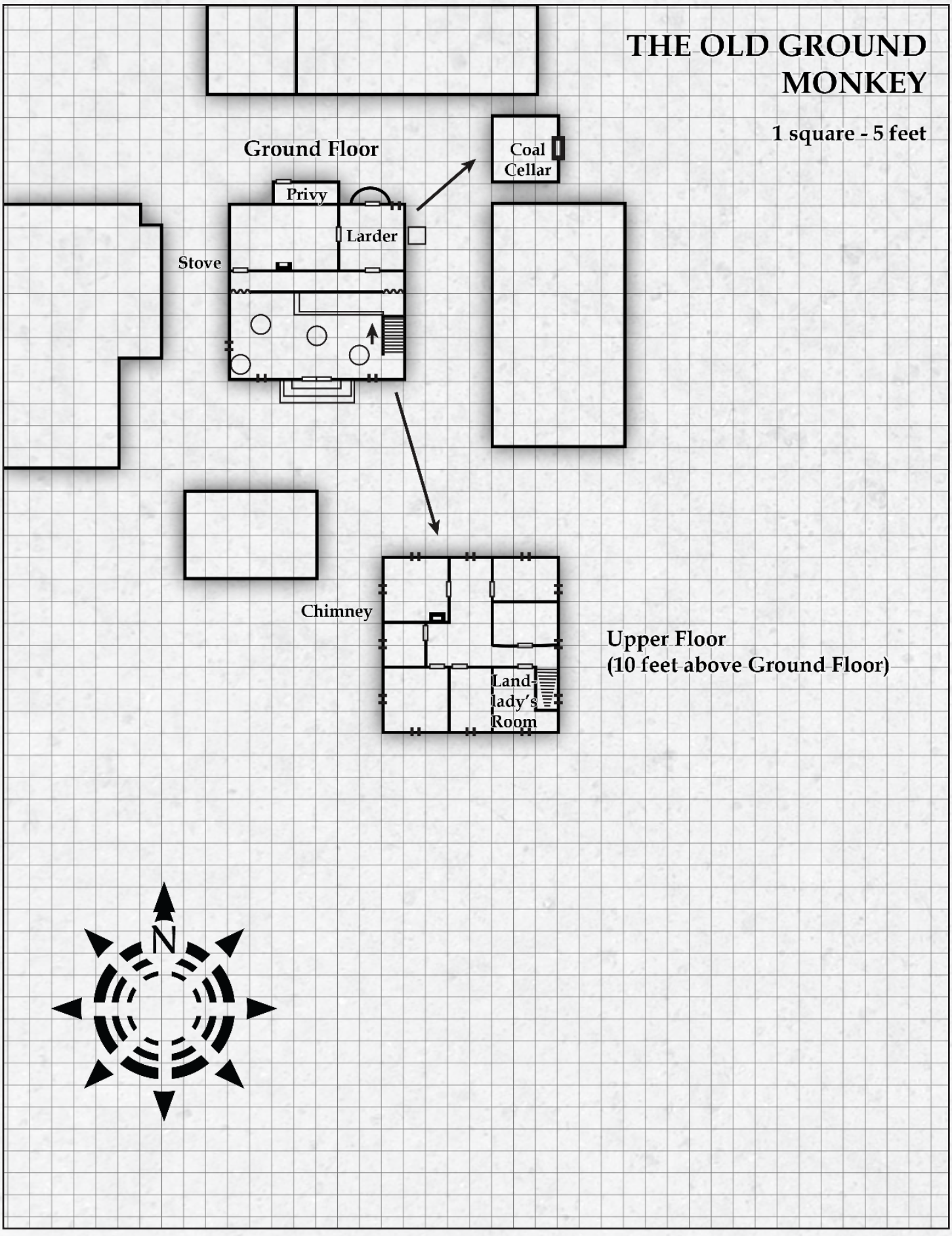


Iron Tree

Bough Bridge

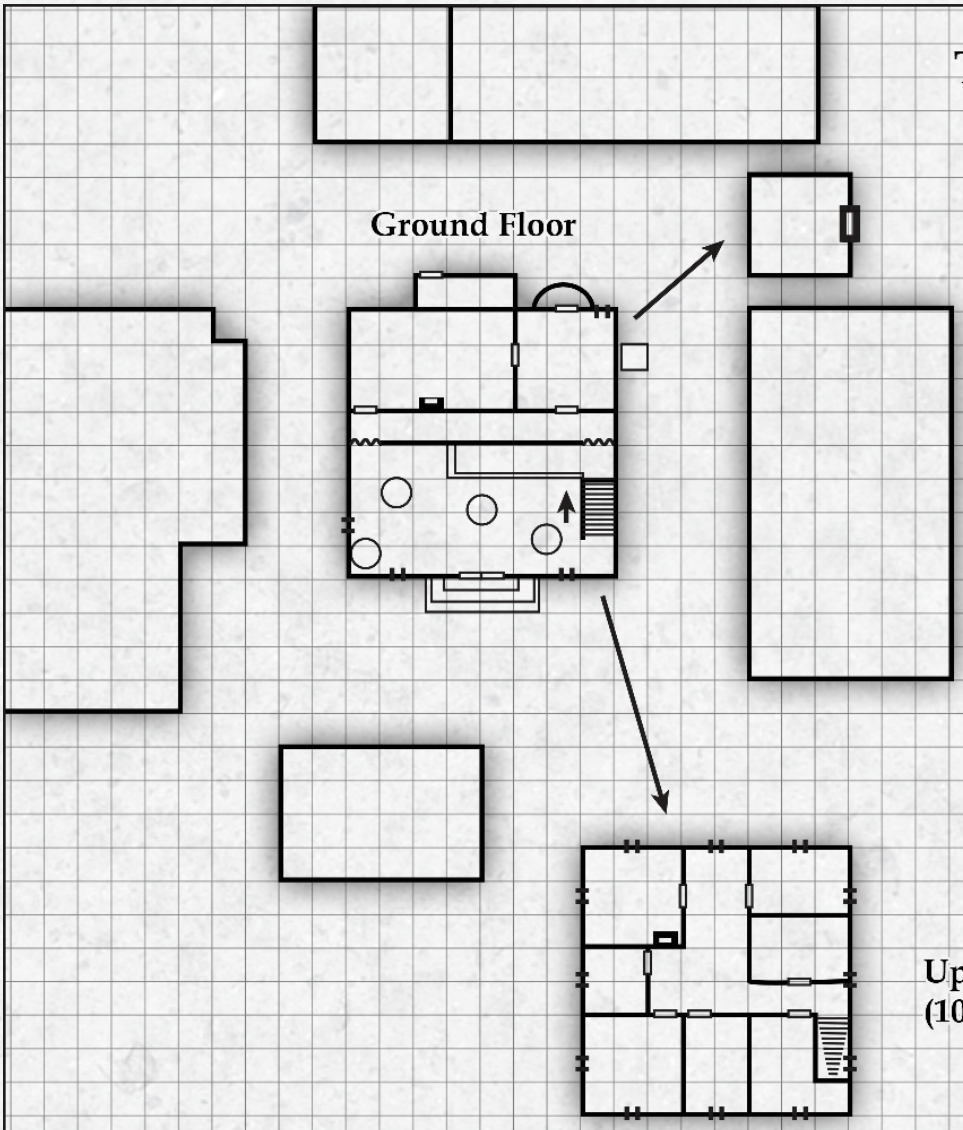




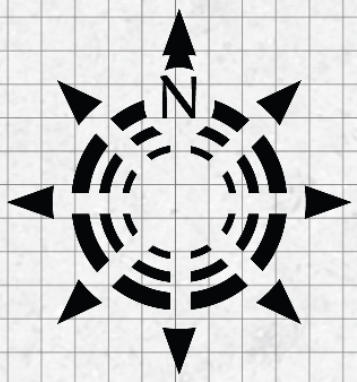

THE OLD GROUND MONKEY
1 square - 5 feet
Ground Floor
Coal Cellar
Privy
Larder
Stove
Chimney
Upper Floor
(10 feet above Ground Floor)
Land-lady's Room
N

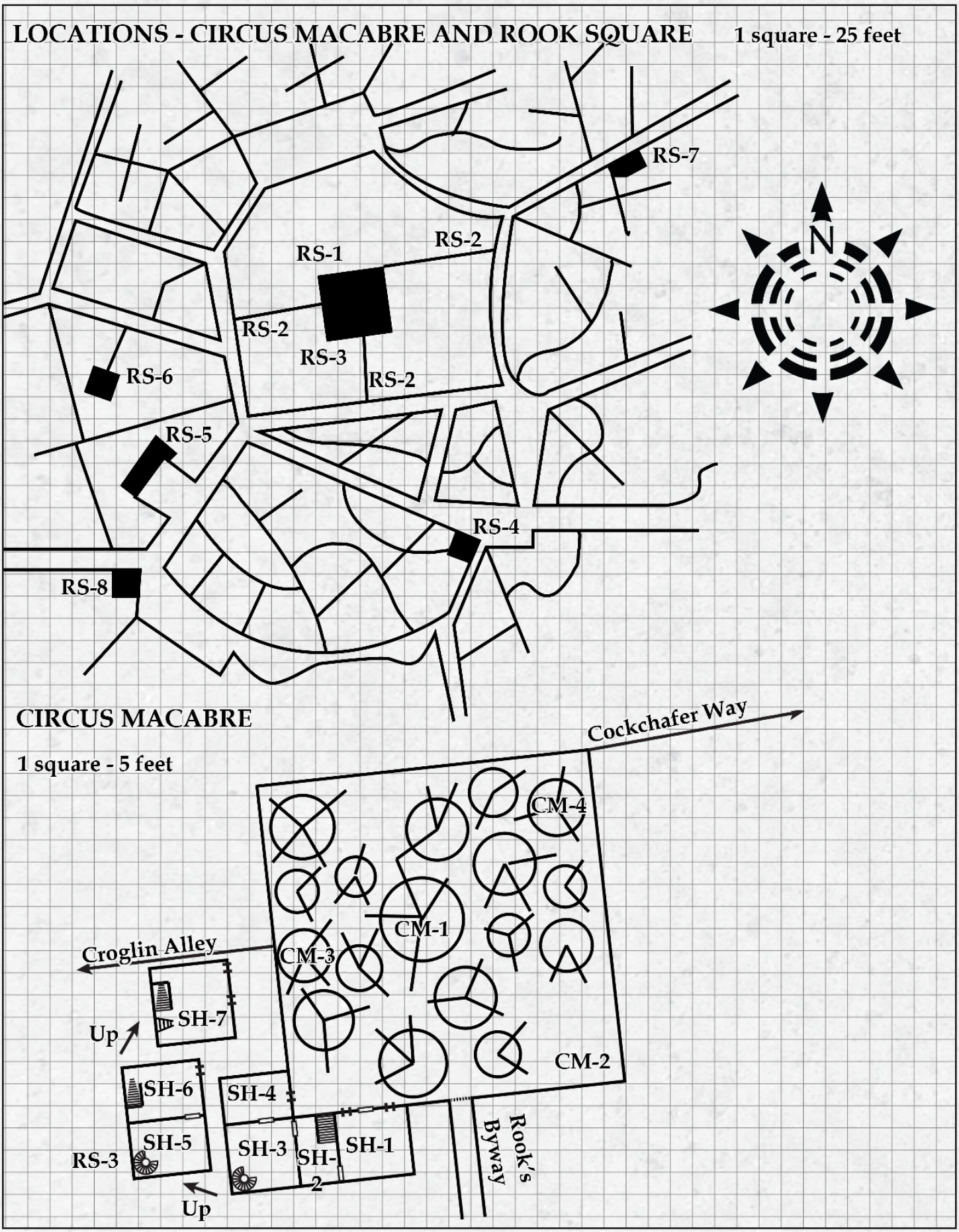
THE OLD GROUND MONKEY

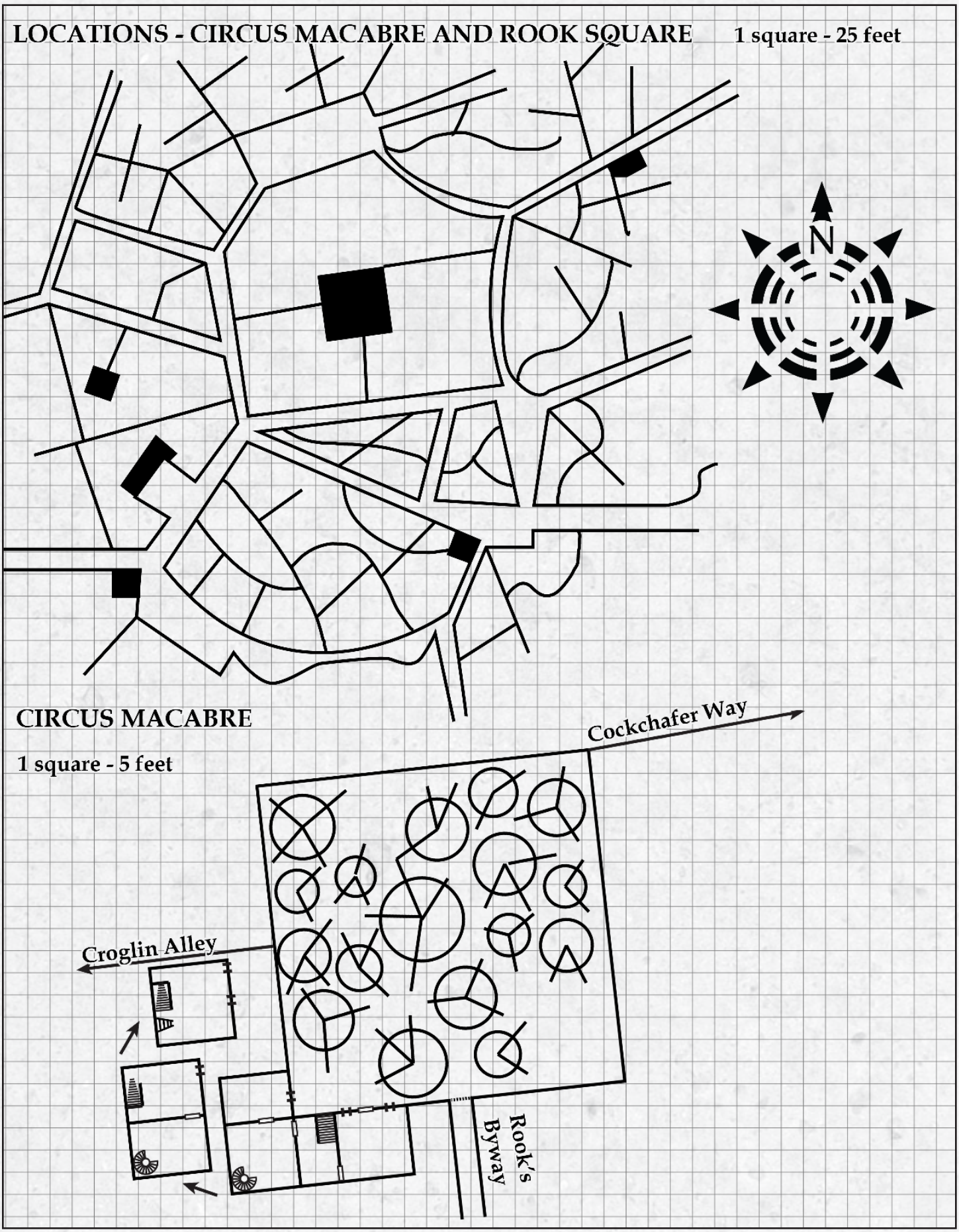
1 square - 5 feet



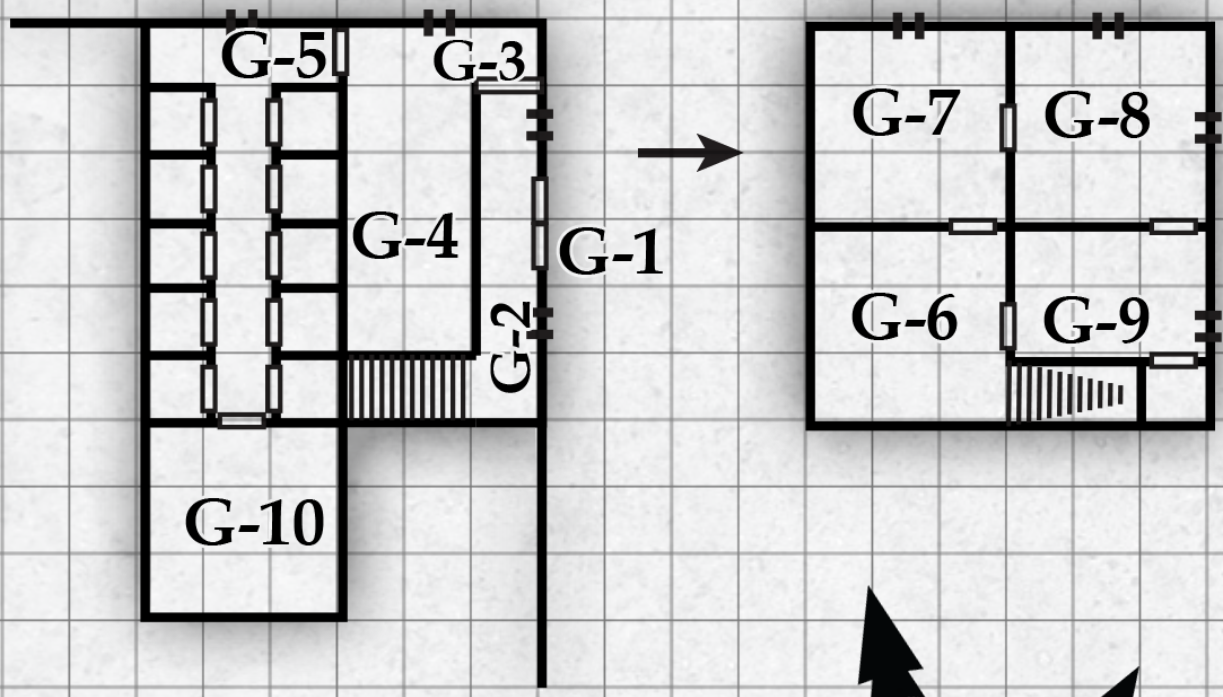
Upper Floor
(10 feet above Ground Floor)



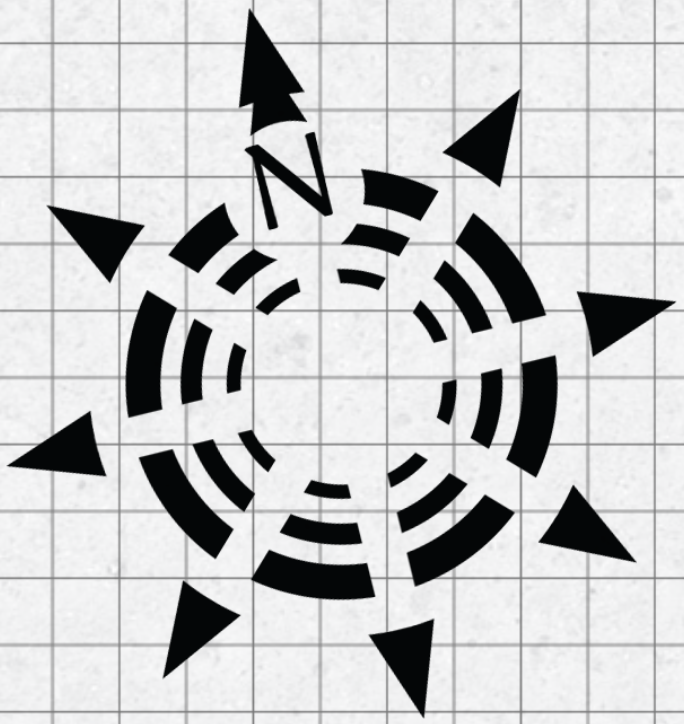

LOCATIONS - CIRCUS MACABRE AND ROOK SQUARE
1 square - 25 feet
RS-1
RS-2
RS-2
RS-3
RS-2
RS-4
RS-5
RS-6
RS-7
RS-8
N
CIRCUS MACABRE
1 square - 5 feet
Cockchafer Way
CM-1
CM-2
CM-3
CM-4
Croglin Alley
Up
SH-7
SH-6
SH-5
RS-3
Up
SH-4
SH-3
SH-2
SH-1
Rook's Byway


LOCATIONS - CIRCUS MACABRE AND ROOK SQUARE
1 square - 25 feet
N
CIRCUS MACABRE
1 square - 5 feet
Cockchafer Way
Croglin Alley
Rook's Byway

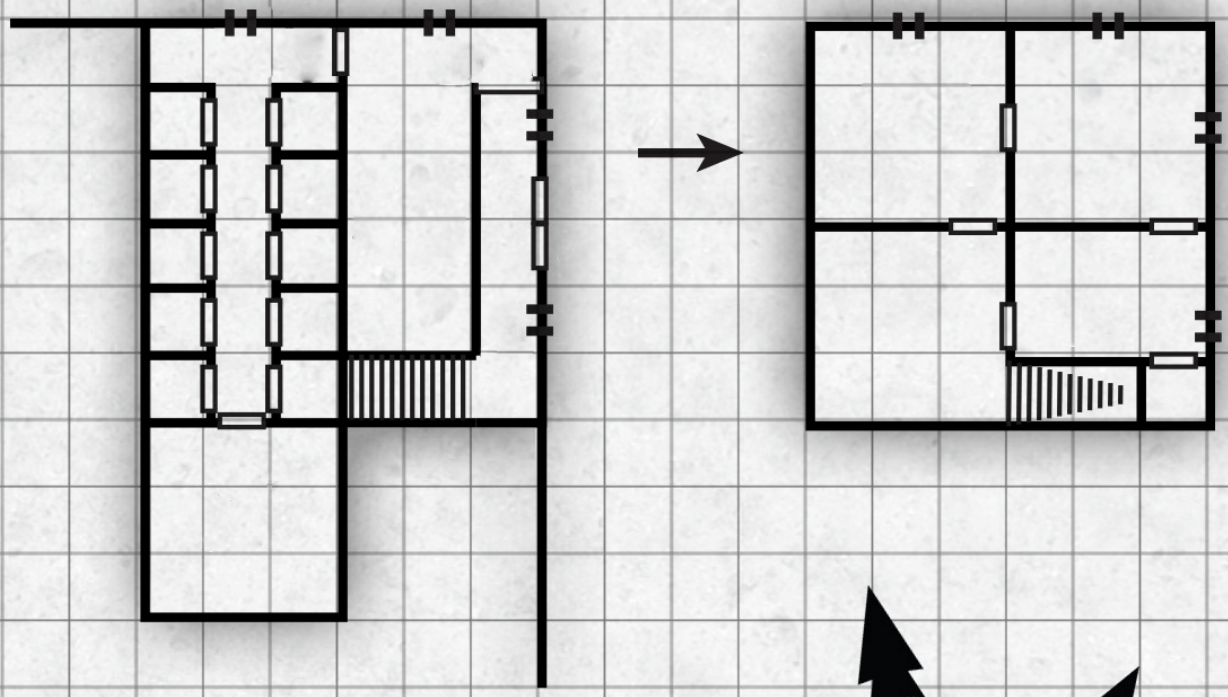
RS-4 THE ROOK SQUARE GAOL



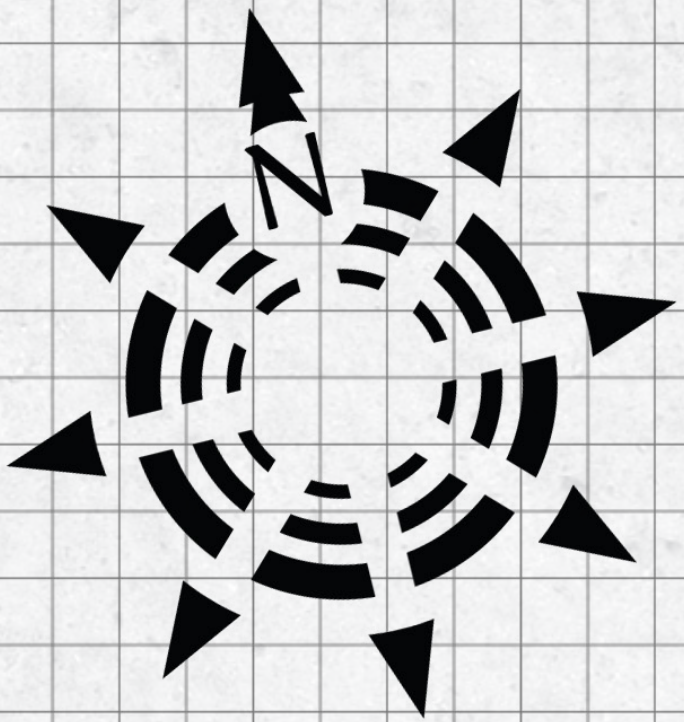
1 square - 5 feet

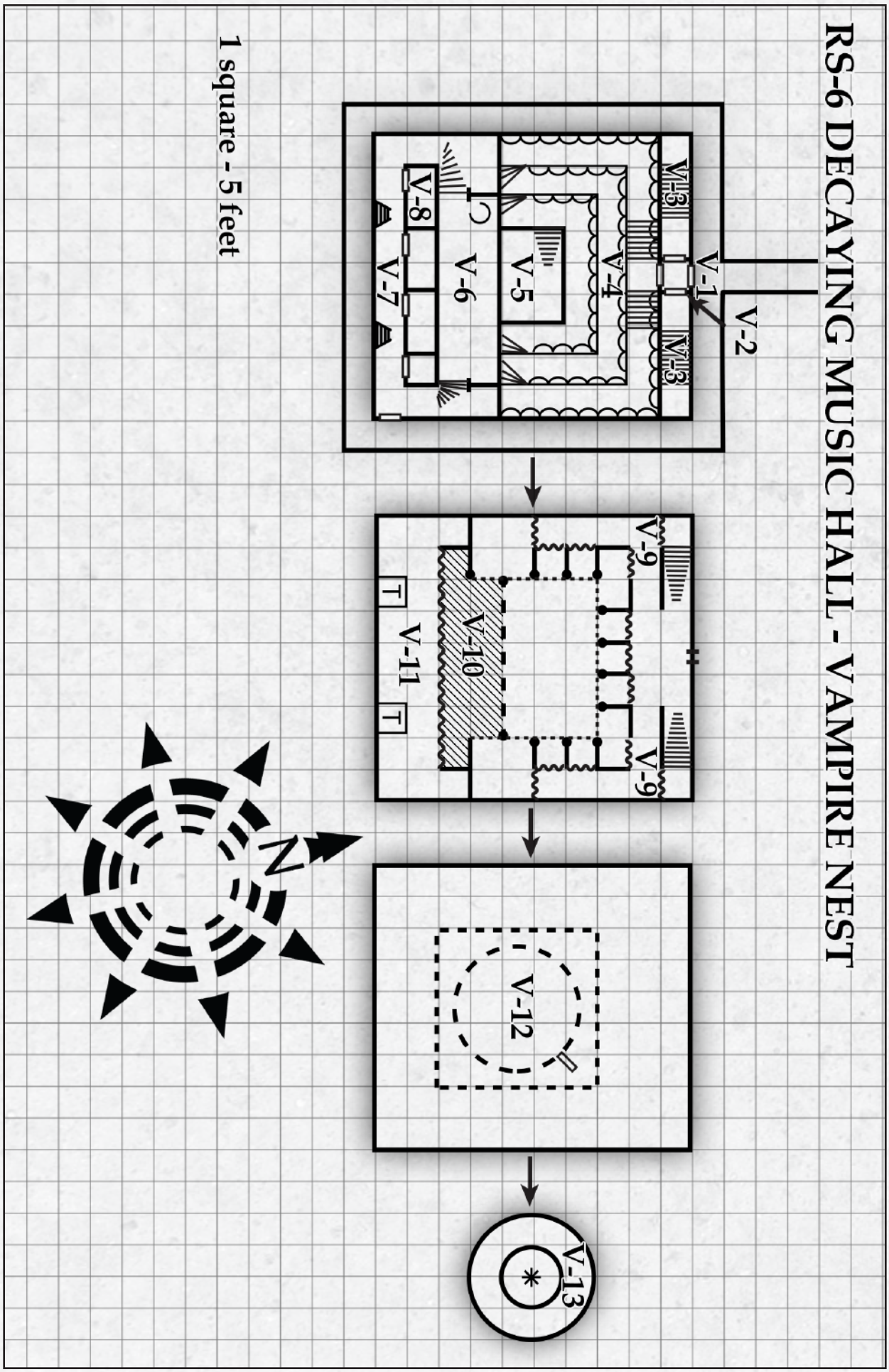


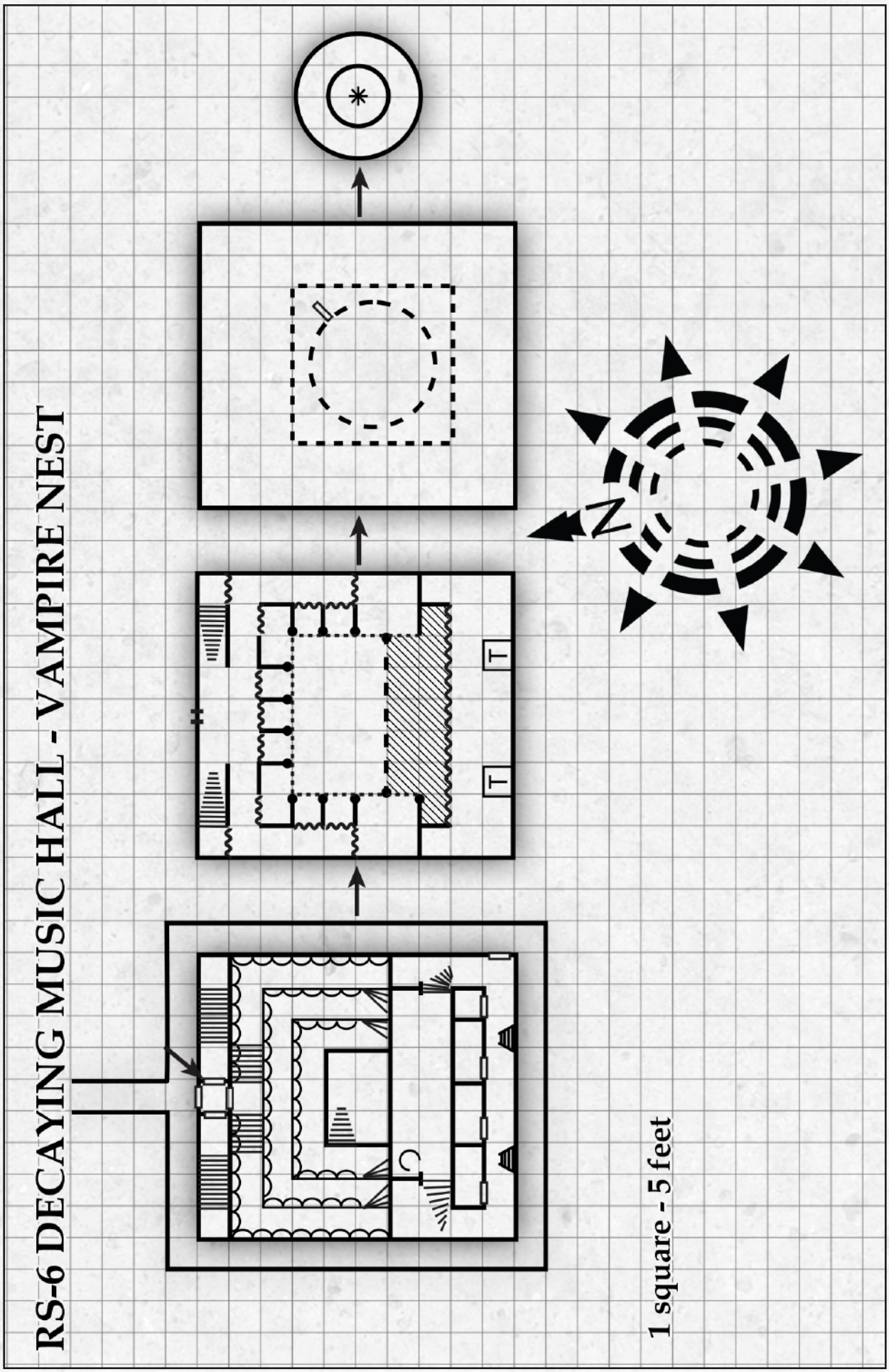
RS-4 THE ROOK SQUARE GAOL

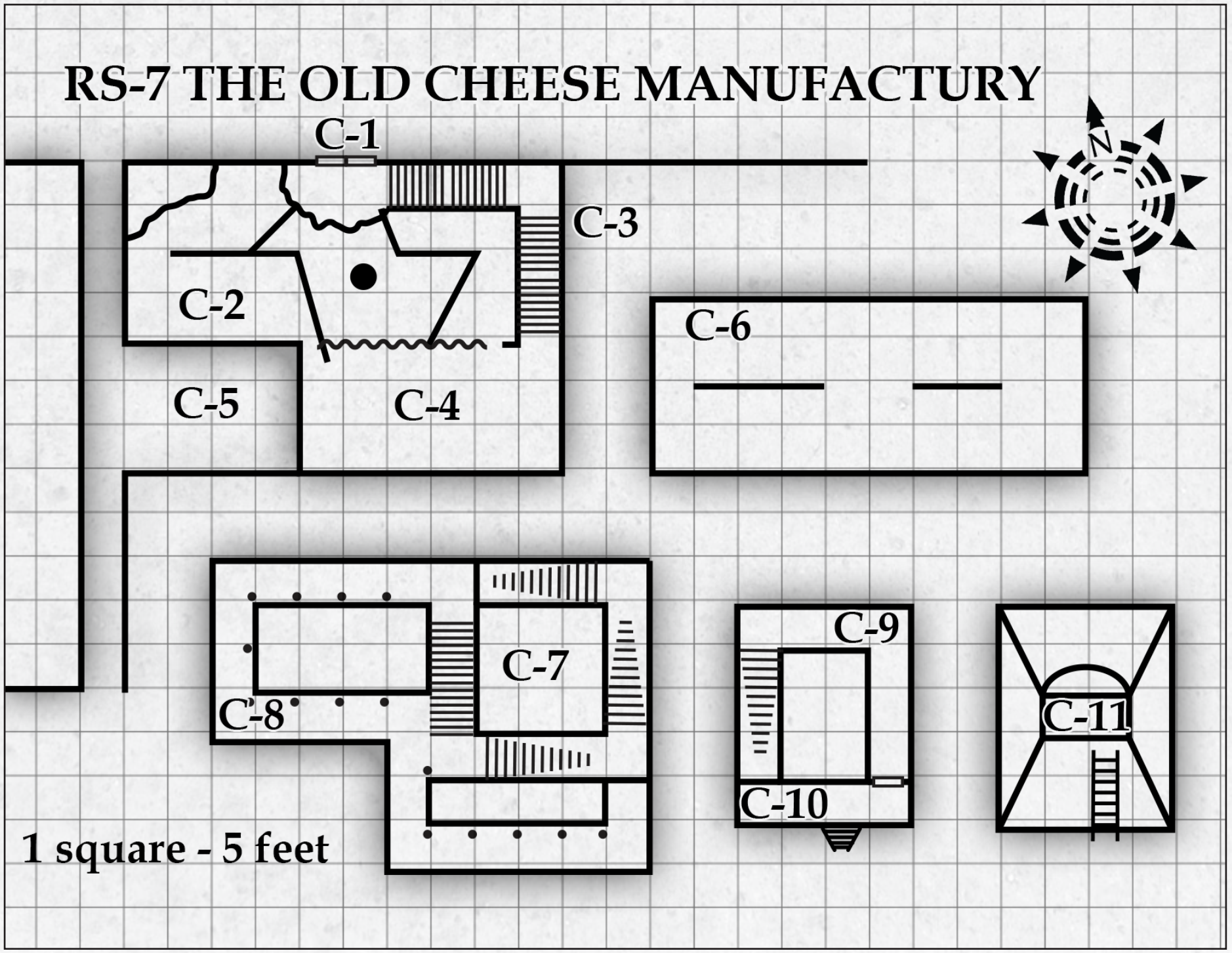


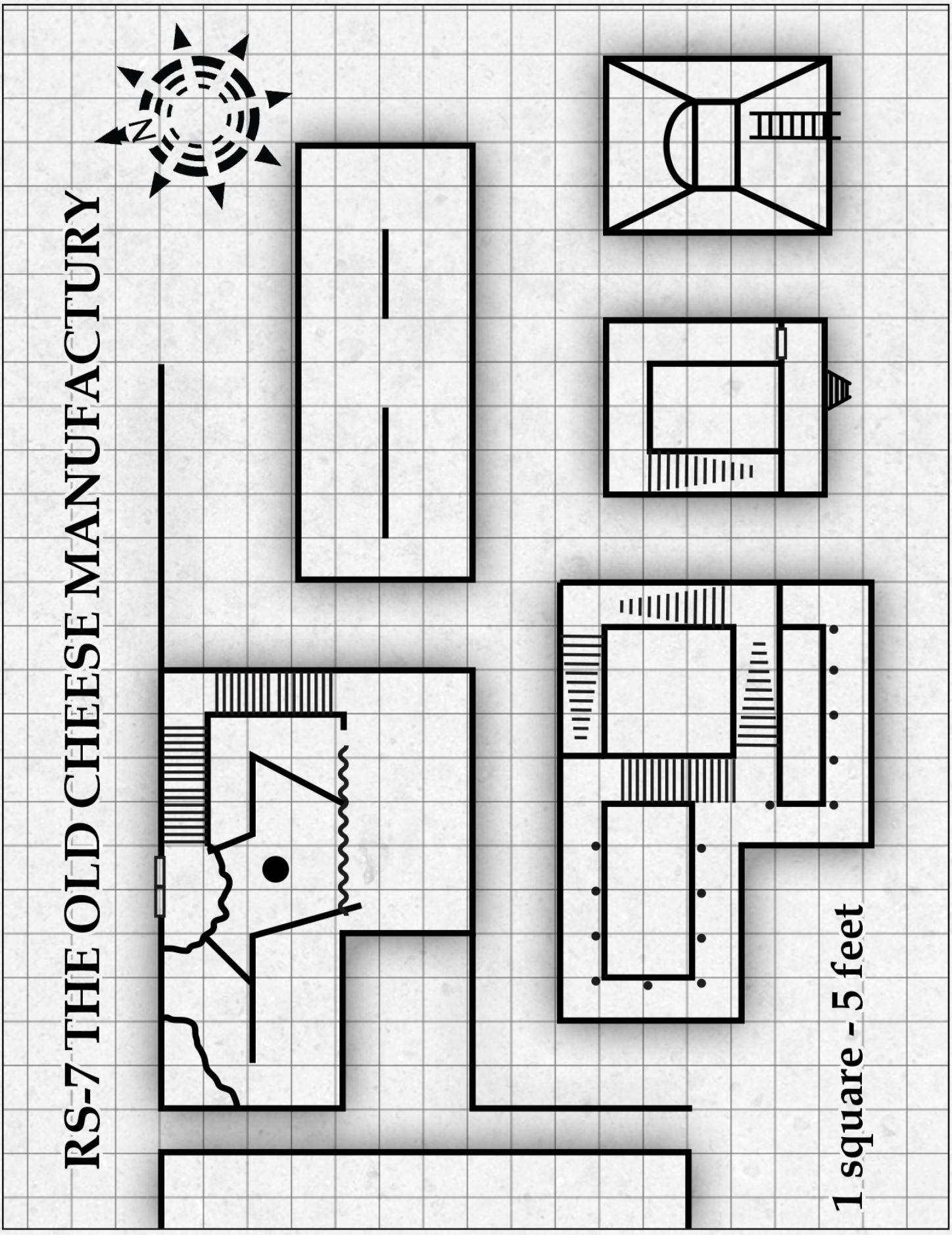
1 square - 5 feet




RS-6 DECAYING MUSIC HALL - VAMPIRE NEST
V-1
V-2
V-3
V-3
V-3
V-4
V-5
V-6
V-7
V-8
V-9
V-9
V-10
V-11
V-11
V-12
V-13
1 square = 5 feet
N

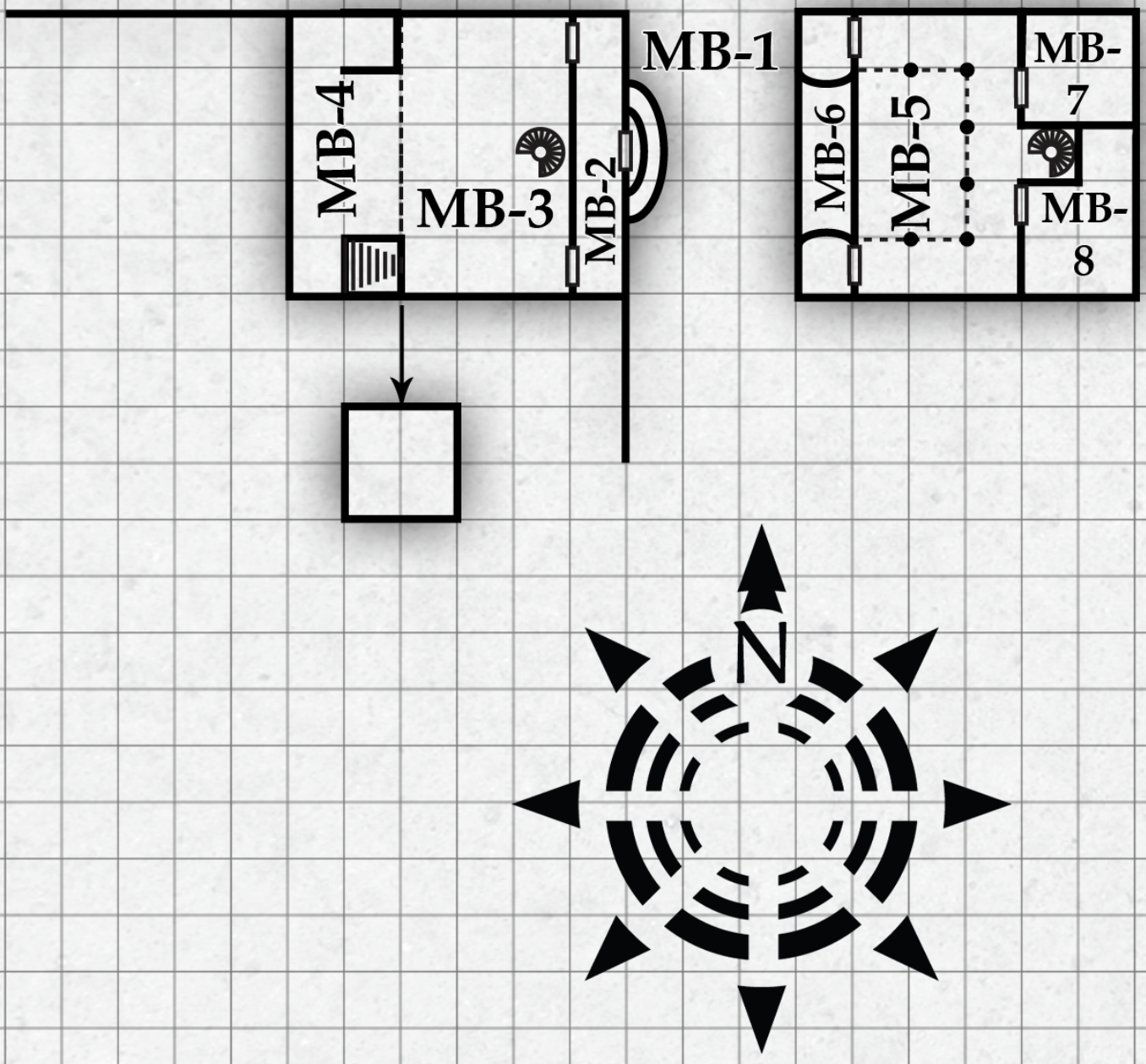

RS-6 DECAYING MUSIC HALL - VAMPIRE NEST
N
1 square = 5 feet


RS-7 THE OLD CHEESE MANUFACTURY
C-1
C-2
C-3
C-4
C-5
C-6
C-7
C-8
C-9
C-10
C-11
N
1 square - 5 feet


RS-7 THE OLD CHEESE MANUFACTURY
N
1 square = 5 feet

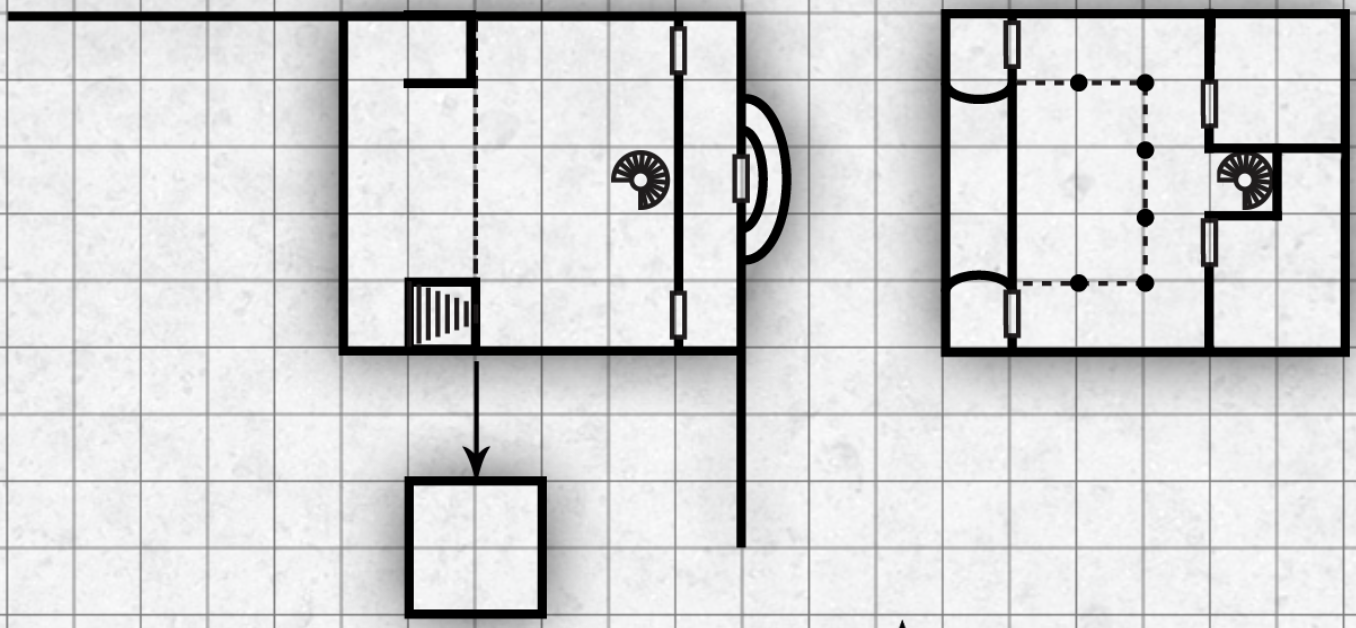
RS 8
MOCKINGBIRD THEATRE

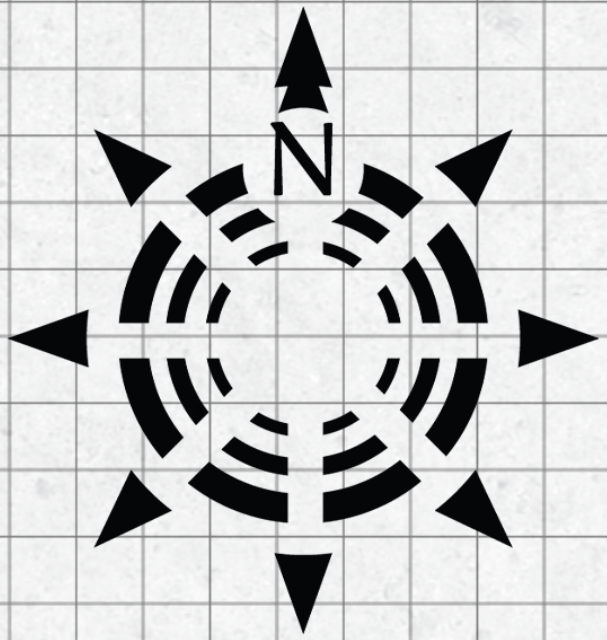
1 square - 5 feet

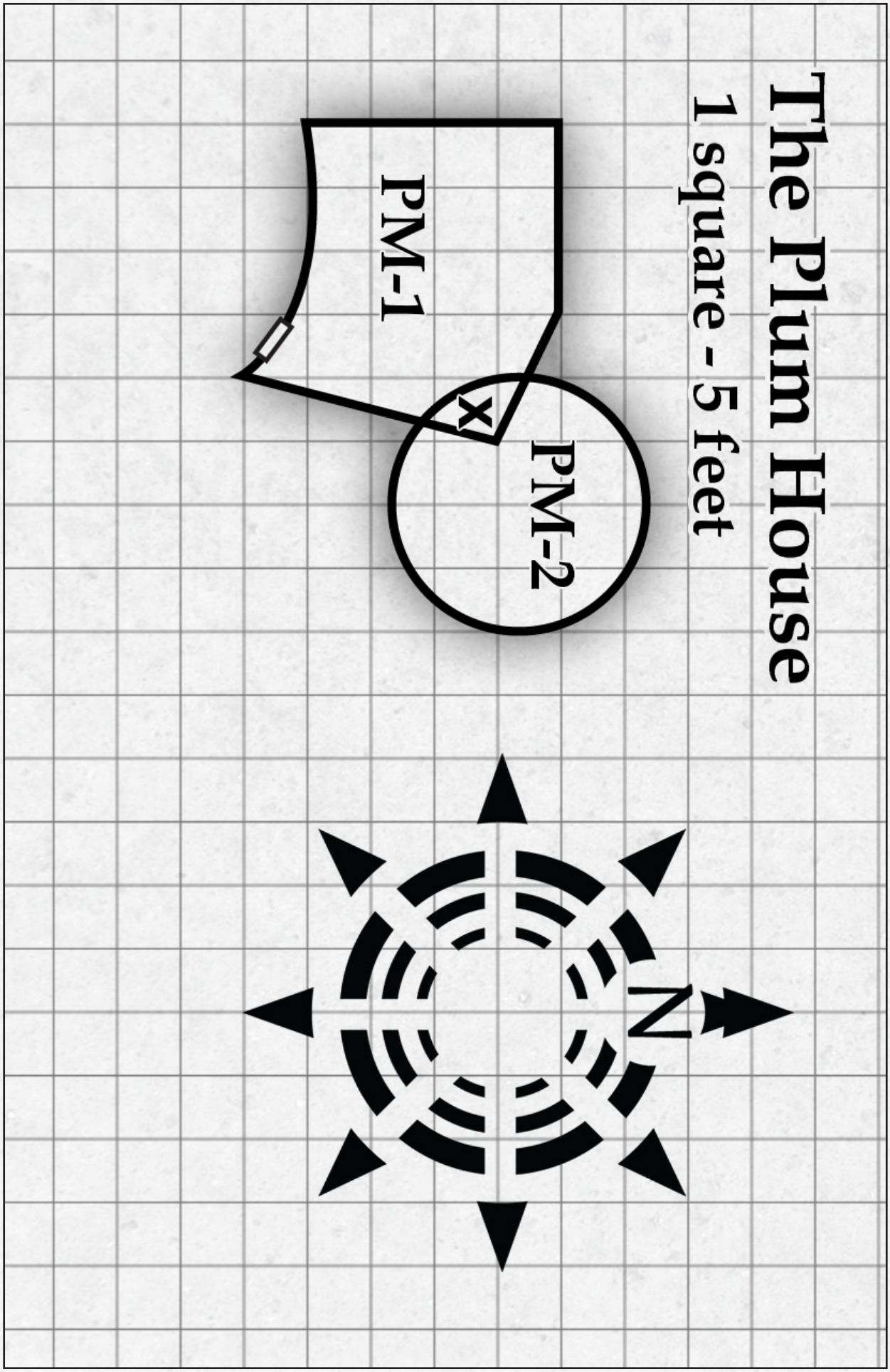


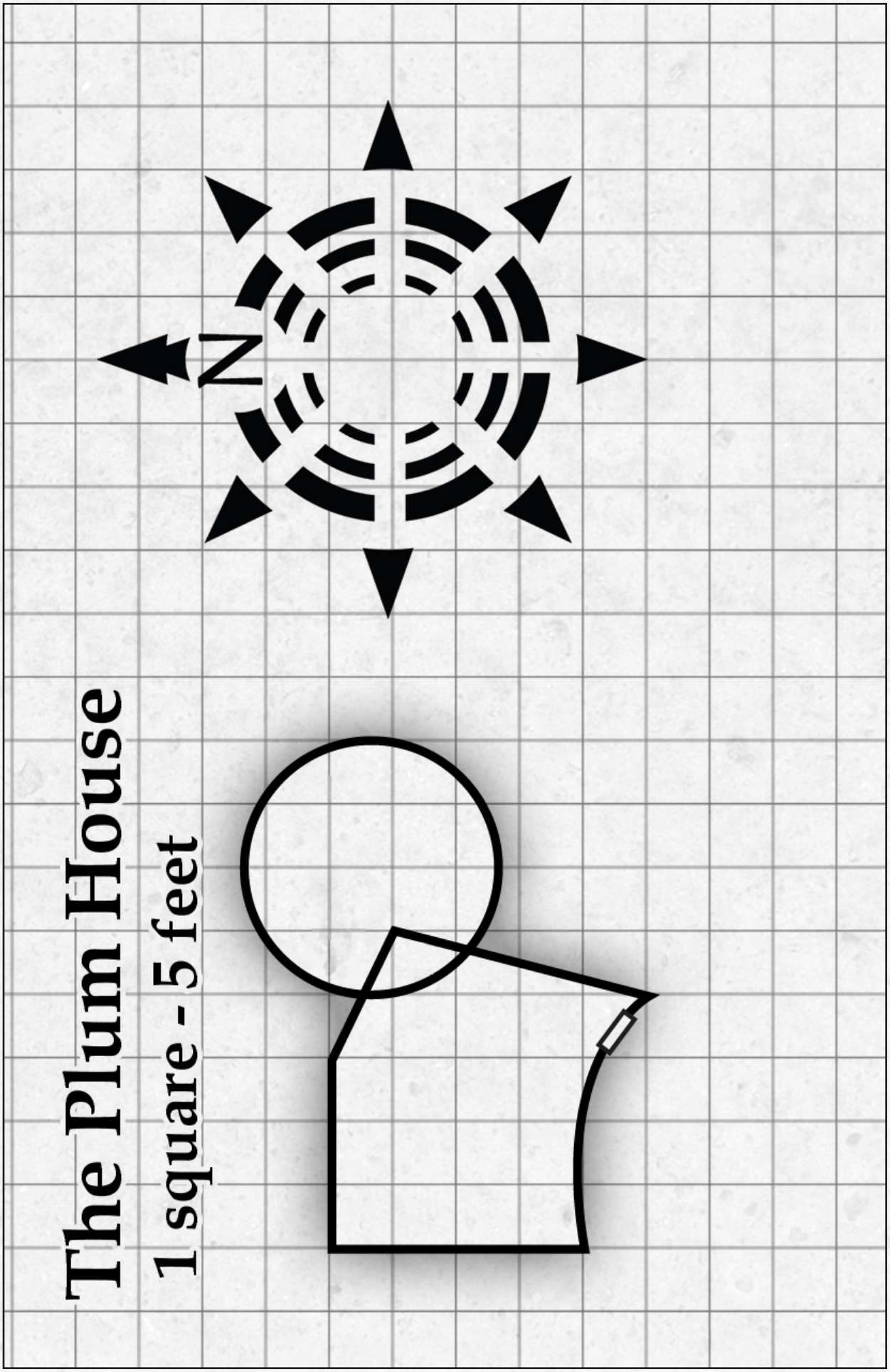
RS 8
MOCKINGBIRD THEATRE

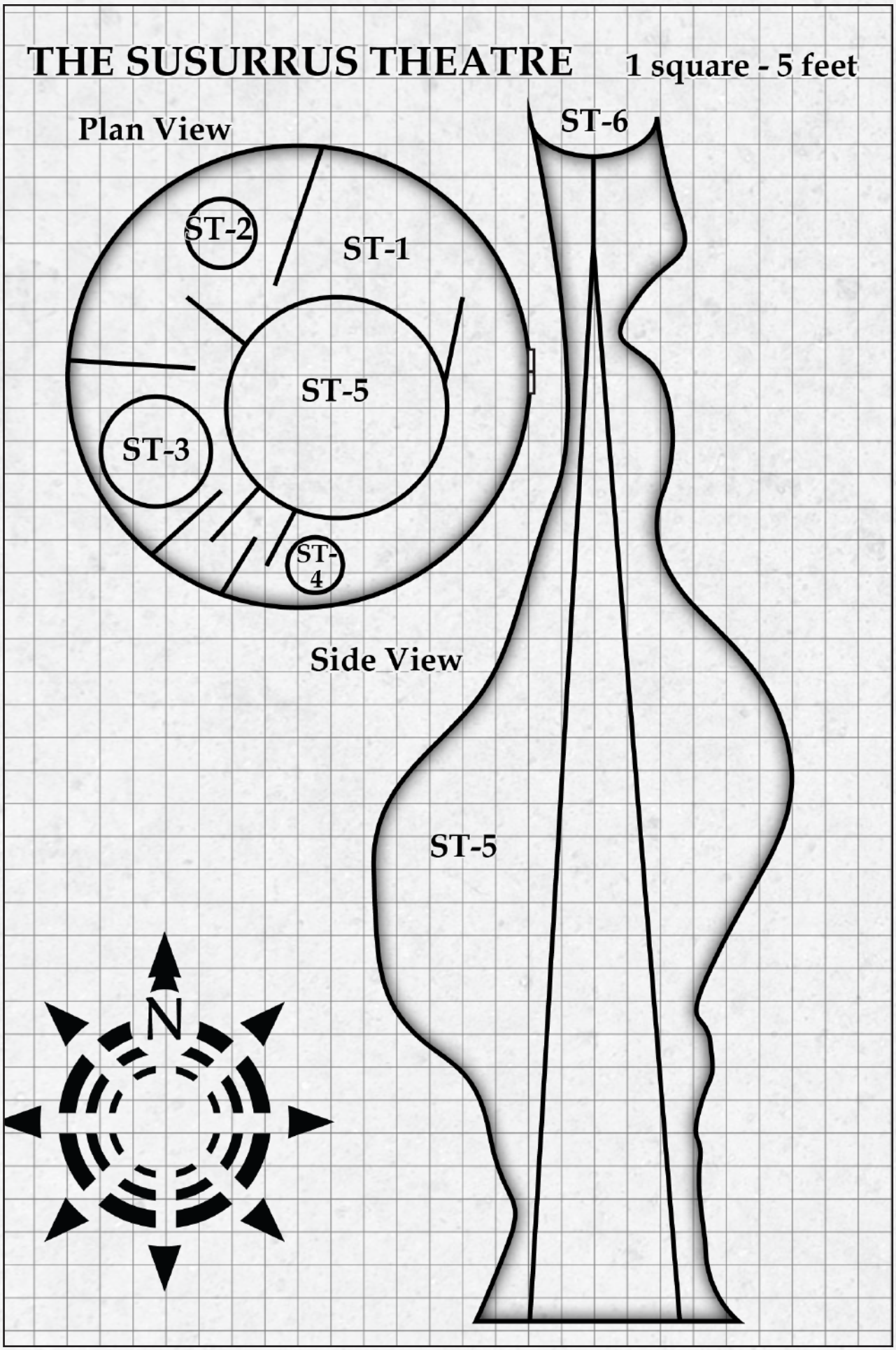
1 square - 5 feet

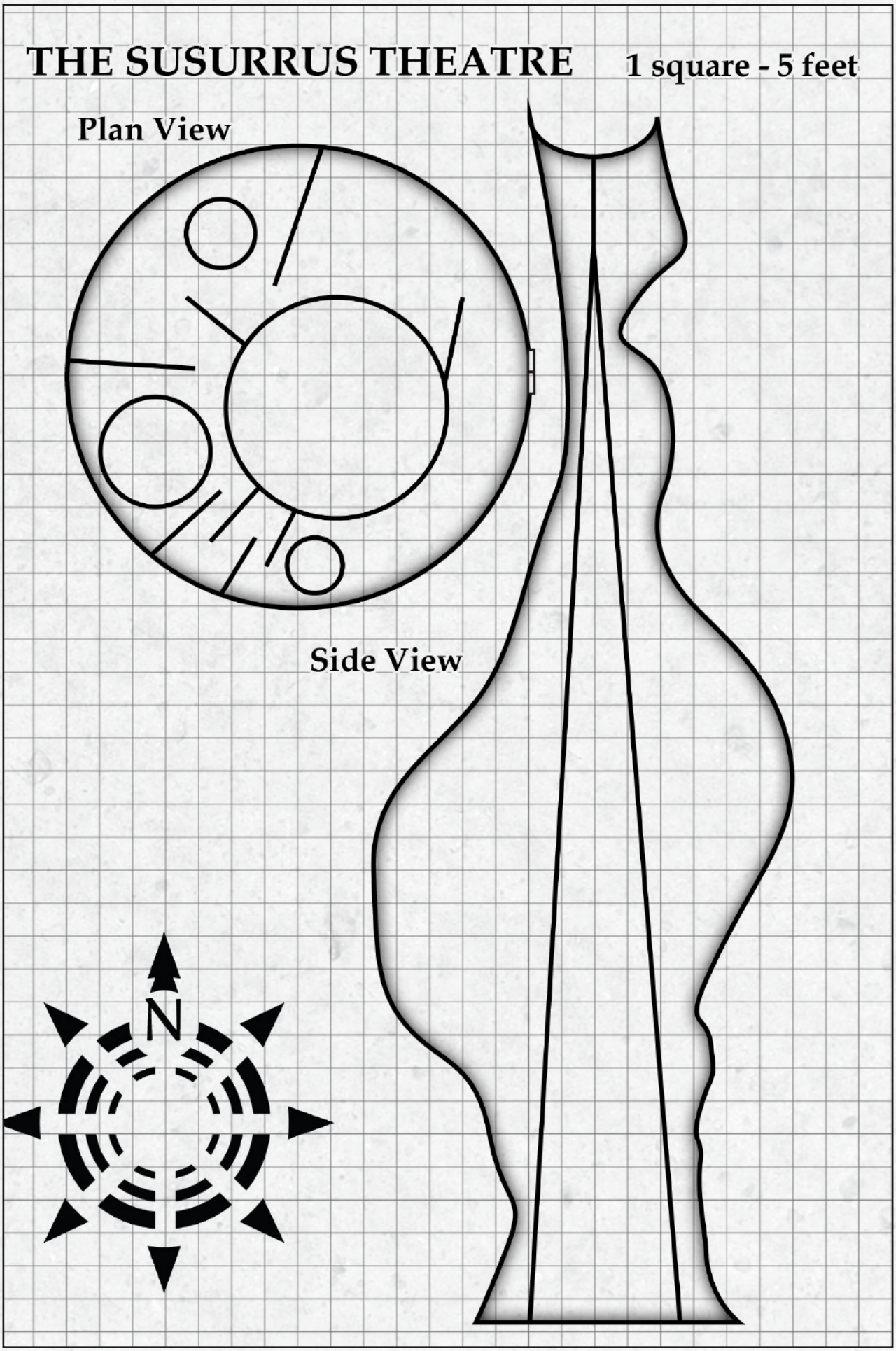





The Plum House
1 square - 5 feet
PM-1
PM-2
N

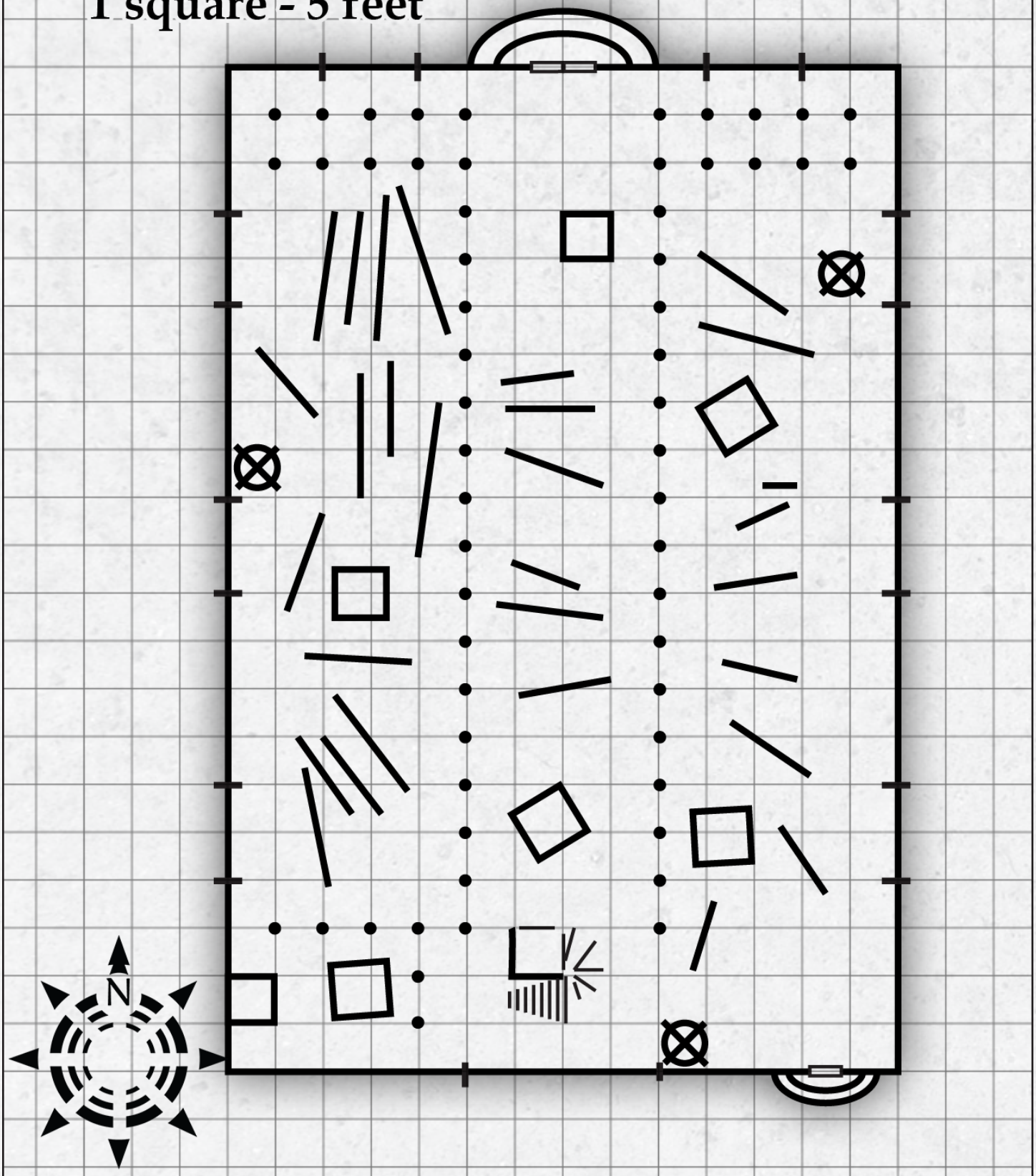

N
The Plum House
1 square - 5 feet


THE SUSURRUS THEATRE
1 square - 5 feet
Plan View
ST-2
ST-1
ST-5
ST-3
ST-4
Side View
ST-6
ST-5
N


THE SUSURRUS THEATRE
1 square - 5 feet
Plan View
Side View
N

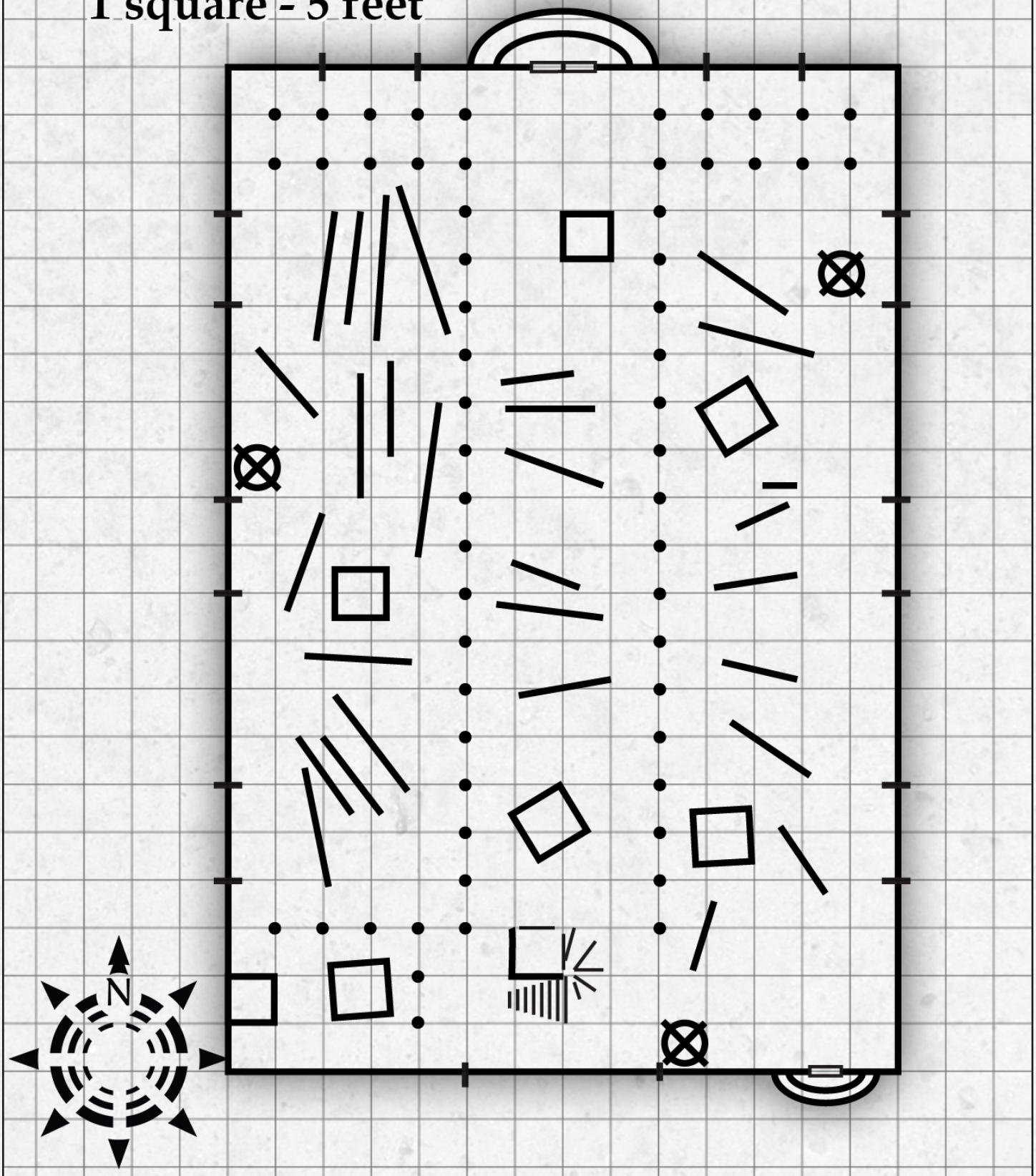
The Cathedral of Sister Lydia

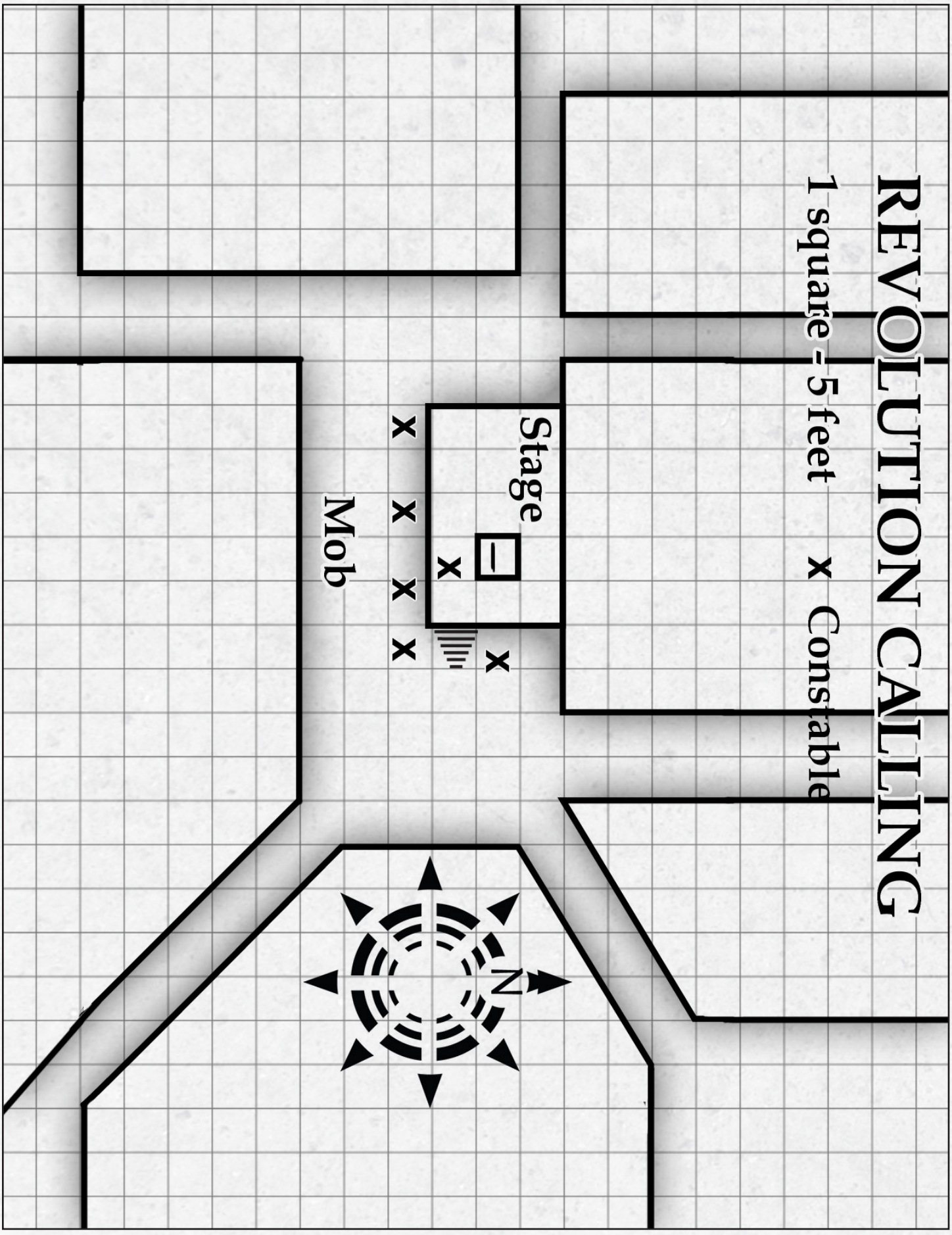
1 square - 5 feet

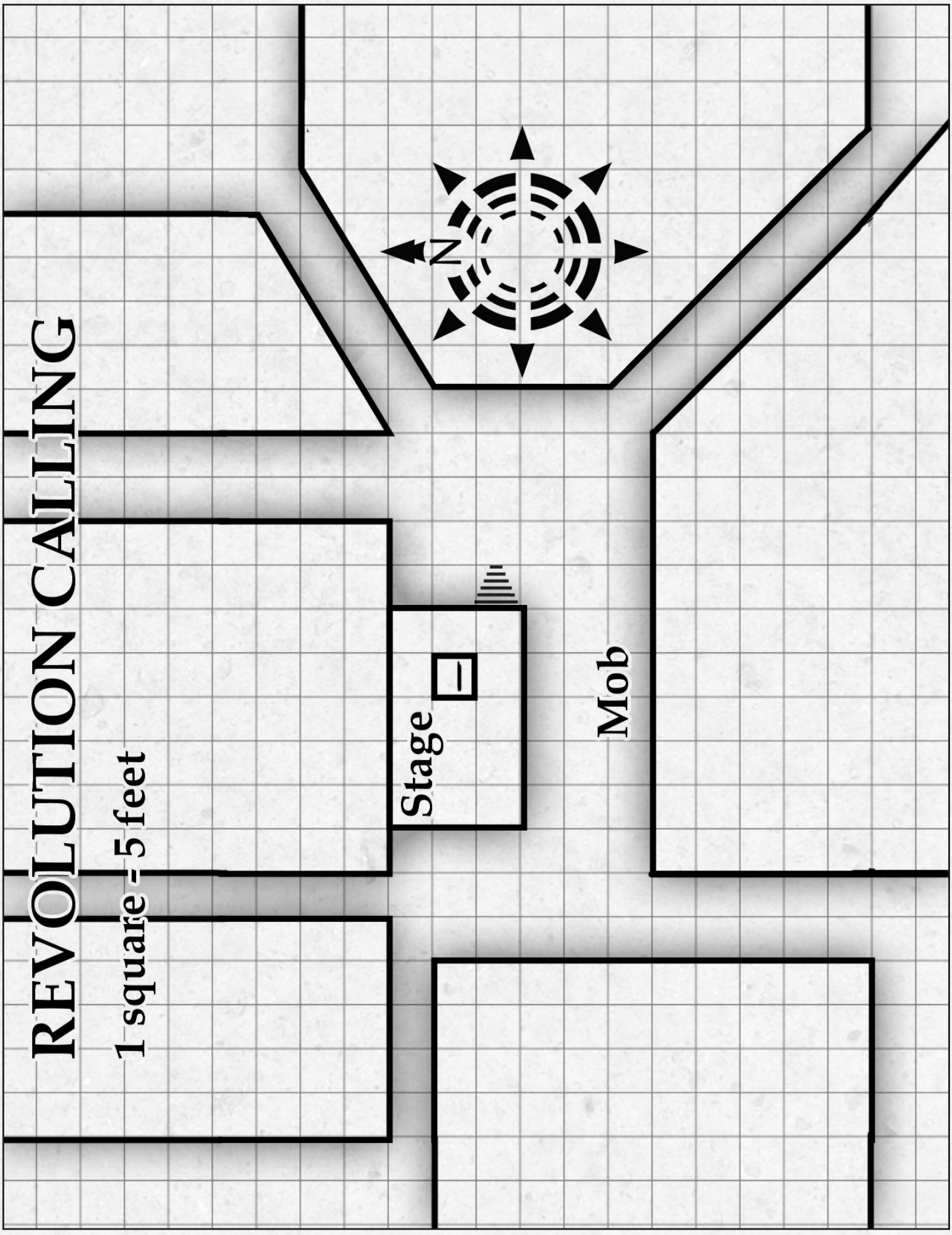


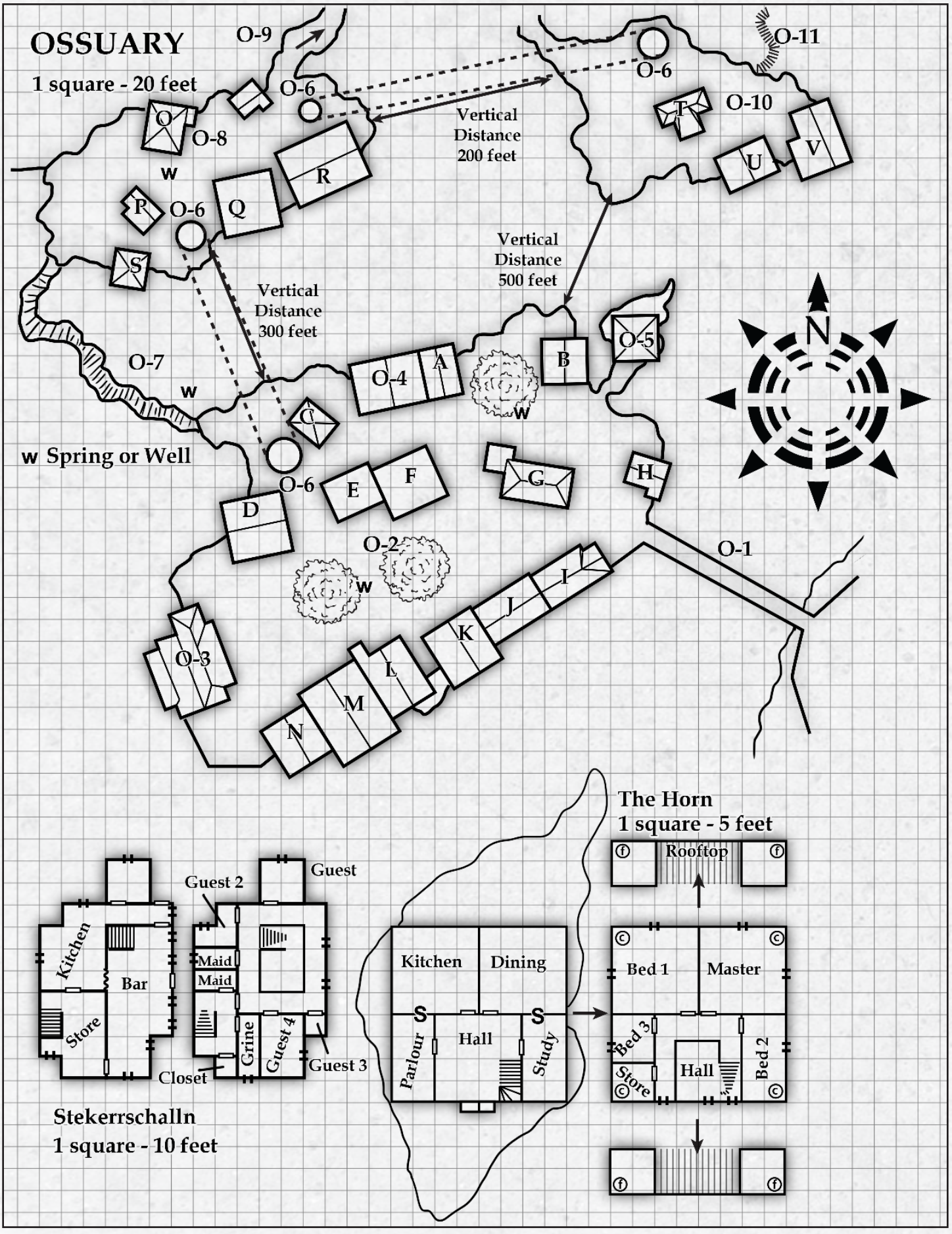
The Cathedral of Sister Lydia

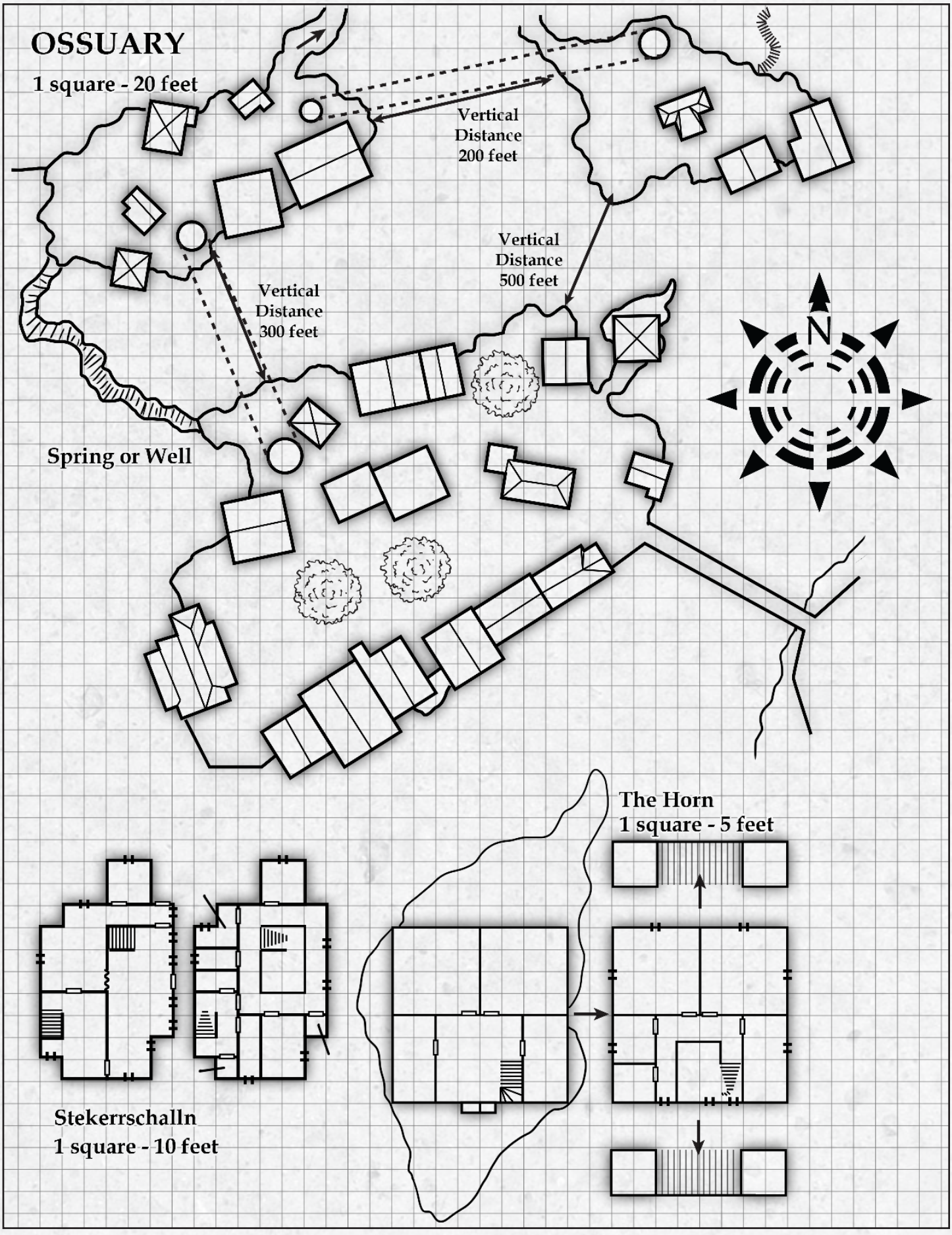
1 square - 5 feet




REVOLUTION CALLING
1 square = 5 feet
x Constable
Stage
Mob
N


REVOLUTION CALLING
1 square = 5 feet
Stage
Mob
N

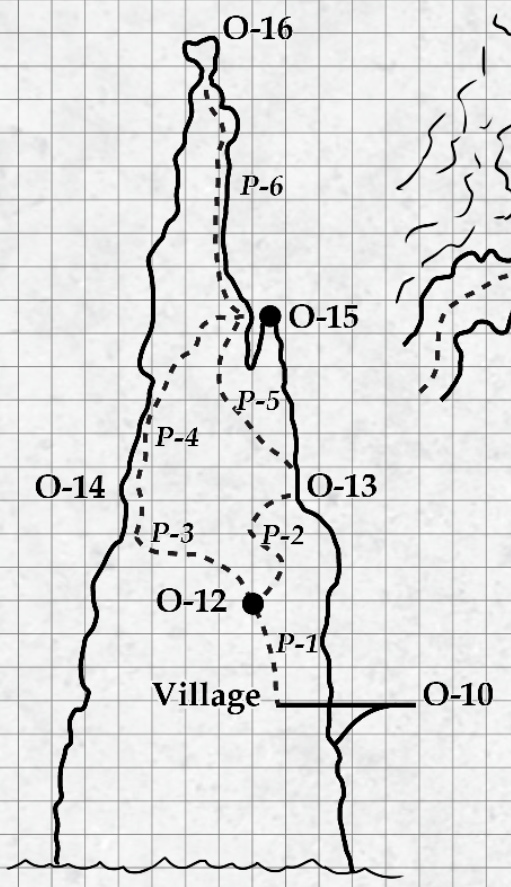

OSSUARY
1 square - 20 feet
O-9
O-6
O-11
O-6
O-10
O-8
Vertical Distance 200 feet
R
T
U
V
P
O-6
Q
S
Vertical Distance 500 feet
Vertical Distance 300 feet
O-7
O-4
A
B
O-5
N
C
w Spring or Well
O-6
E
F
G
H
D
O-2
O-1
I
J
K
O-3
L
M
N
The Horn
1 square - 5 feet
Rooftop
Guest
Guest 2
Kitchen
Bar
Store
Maid
Maid
Grime
Guest 4
Guest 3
Closet
Kitchen
Dining
Parlour
Hall
Study
Bed 1
Master
Bed 3
Hall
Store
Bed 2
Stekerrschalln
1 square - 10 feet


OSSUARY
1 square - 20 feet
Vertical Distance 200 feet
Vertical Distance 500 feet
Vertical Distance 300 feet
N
Spring or Well
The Horn
1 square - 5 feet
Stekerrschalln
1 square - 10 feet

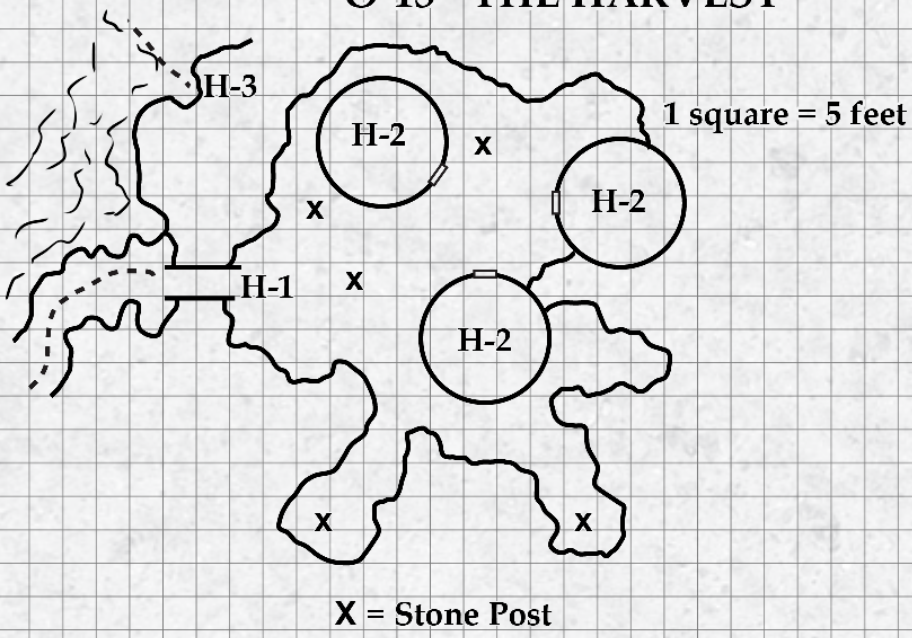
OSSUARY BETWEEN

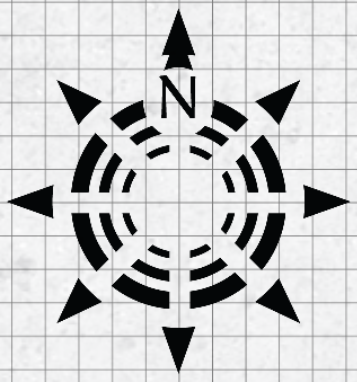
Elevation Map

1 square - 1000 feet

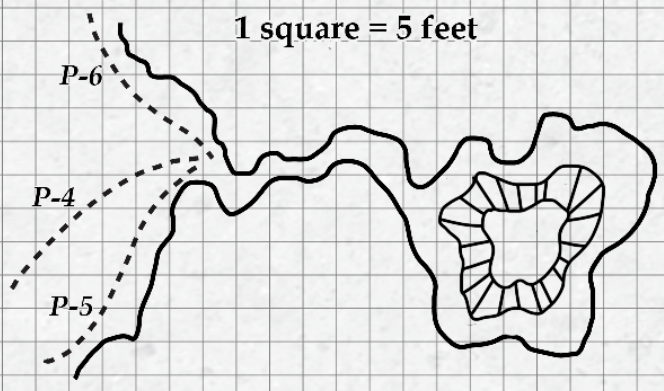


O-13 - THE HARVEST





O-15 THE FUGITIVES



OSSUARY BETWEEN

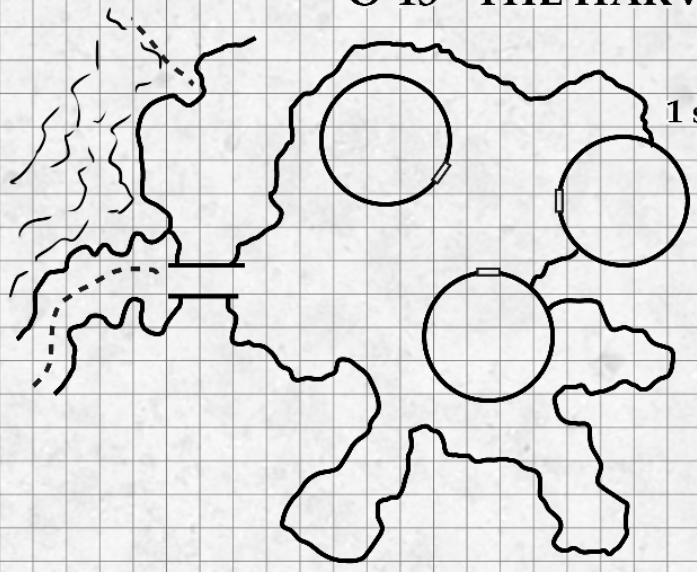
Elevation Map

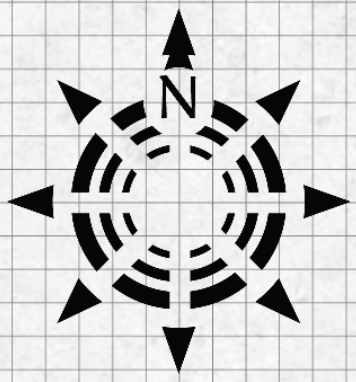
1 square - 1000 feet



O-13 - THE HARVEST

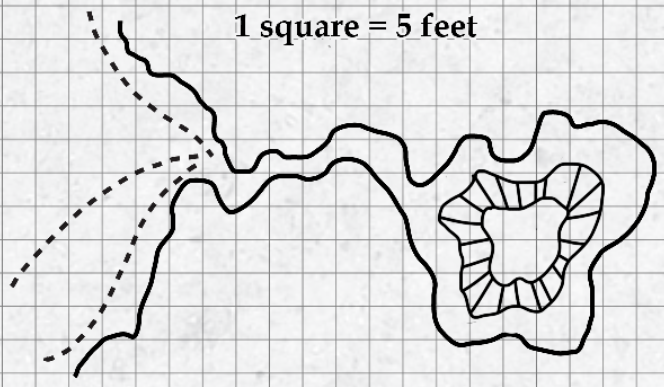
1 square = 5 feet



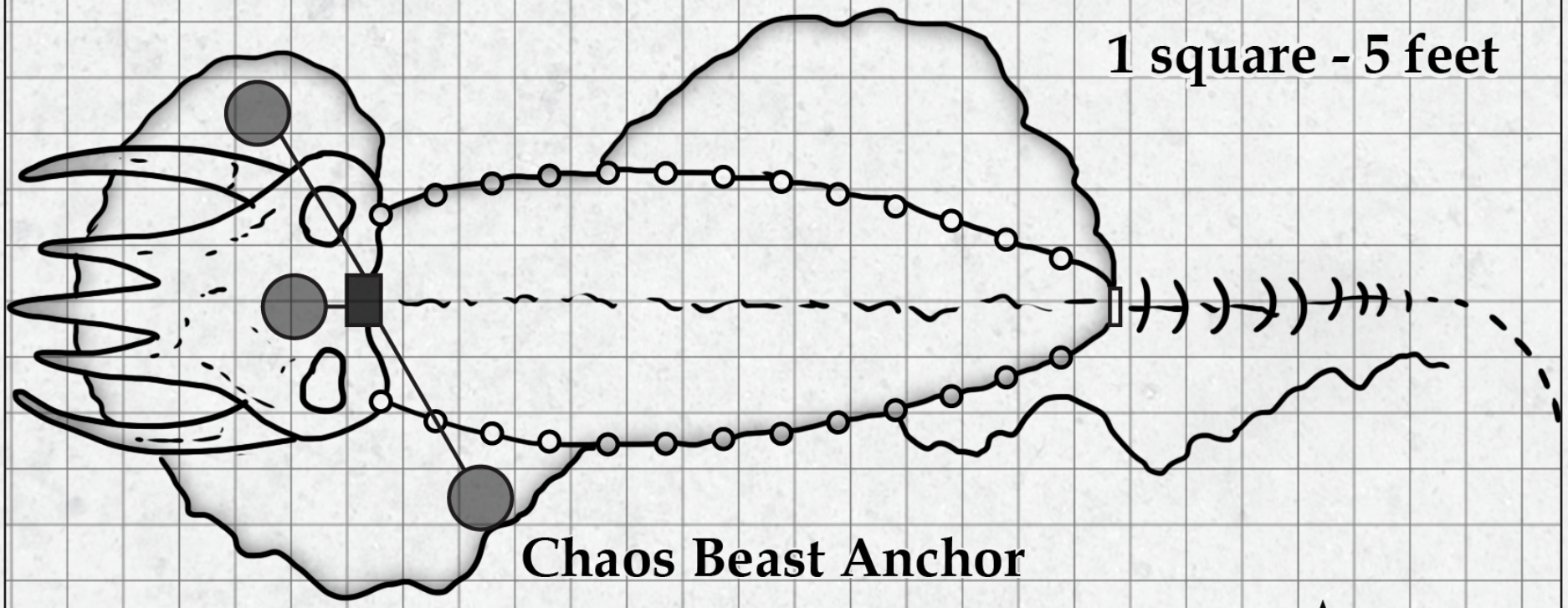


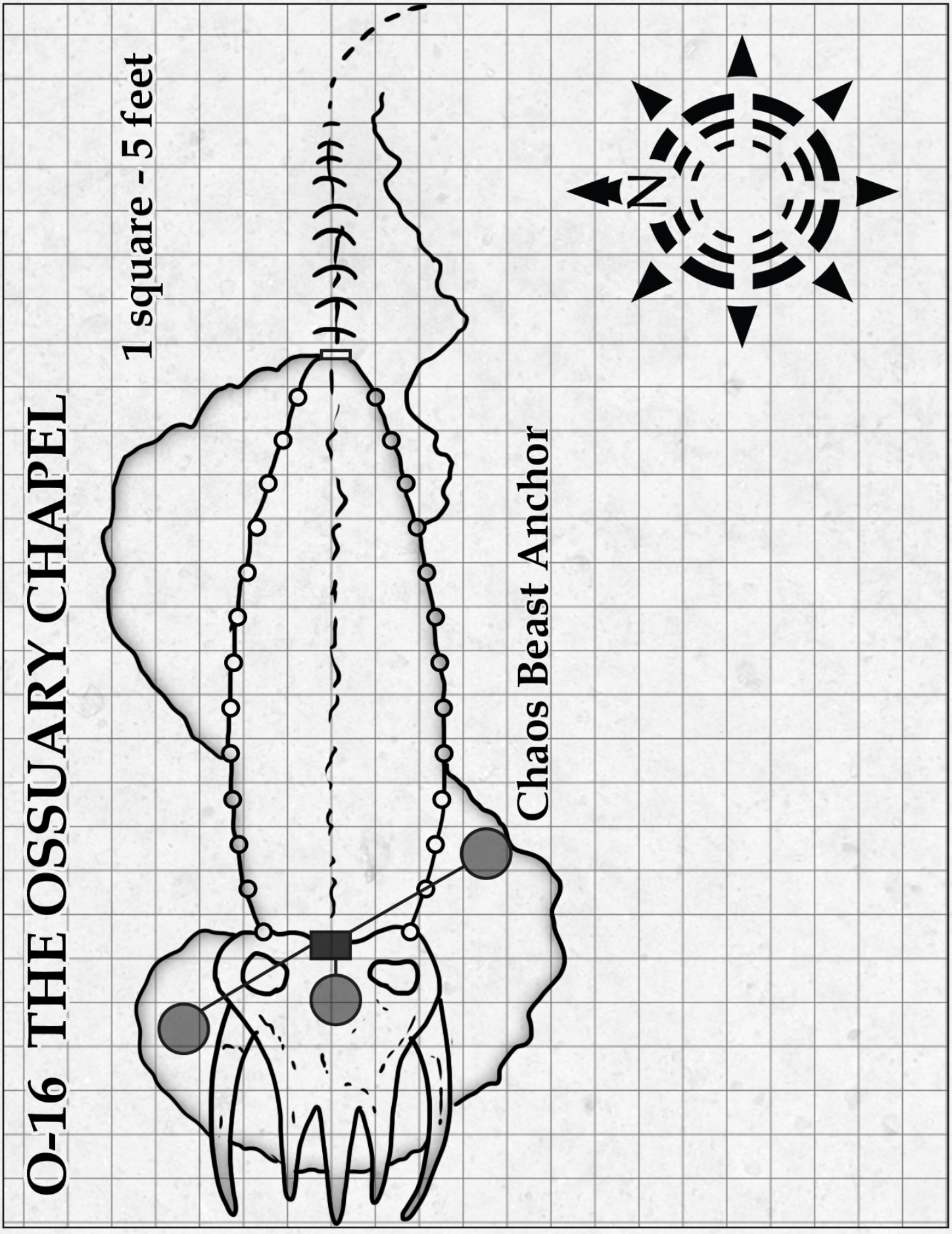
O-15 THE FUGITIVES

1 square = 5 feet



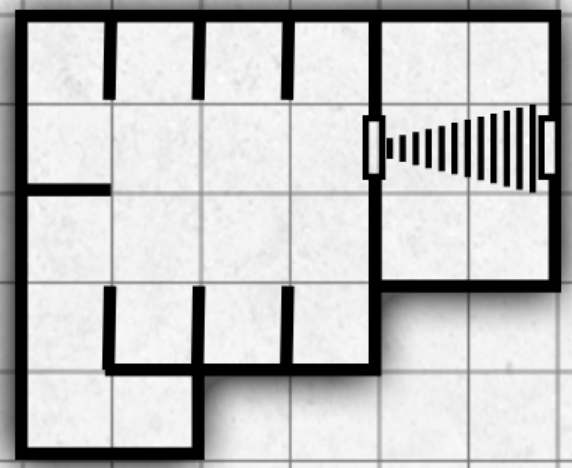
O-16 THE OSSUARY CHAPEL



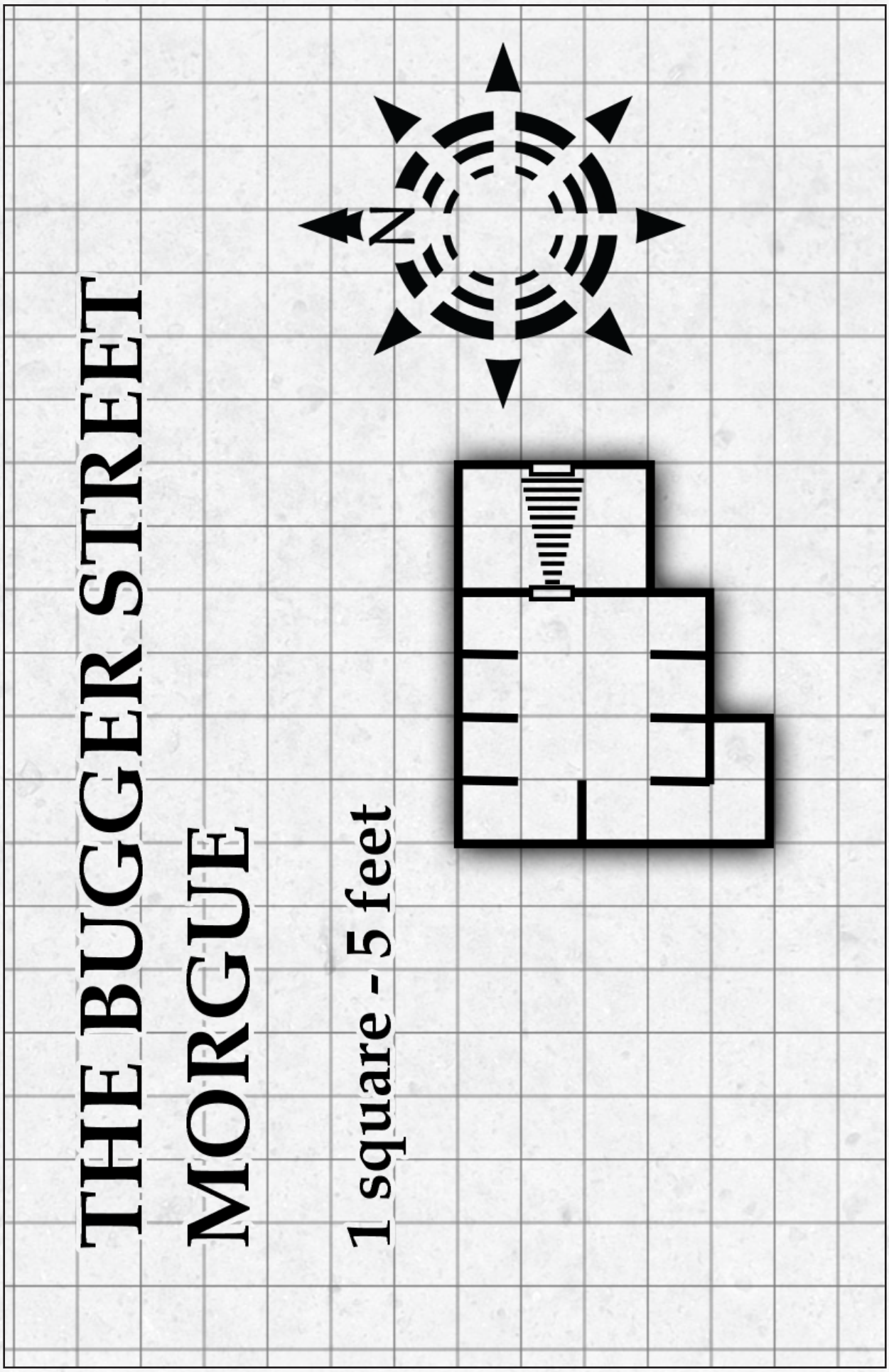

O-16 THE OSSUARY CHAPEL
1 square = 5 feet
N
Chaos Beast Anchor

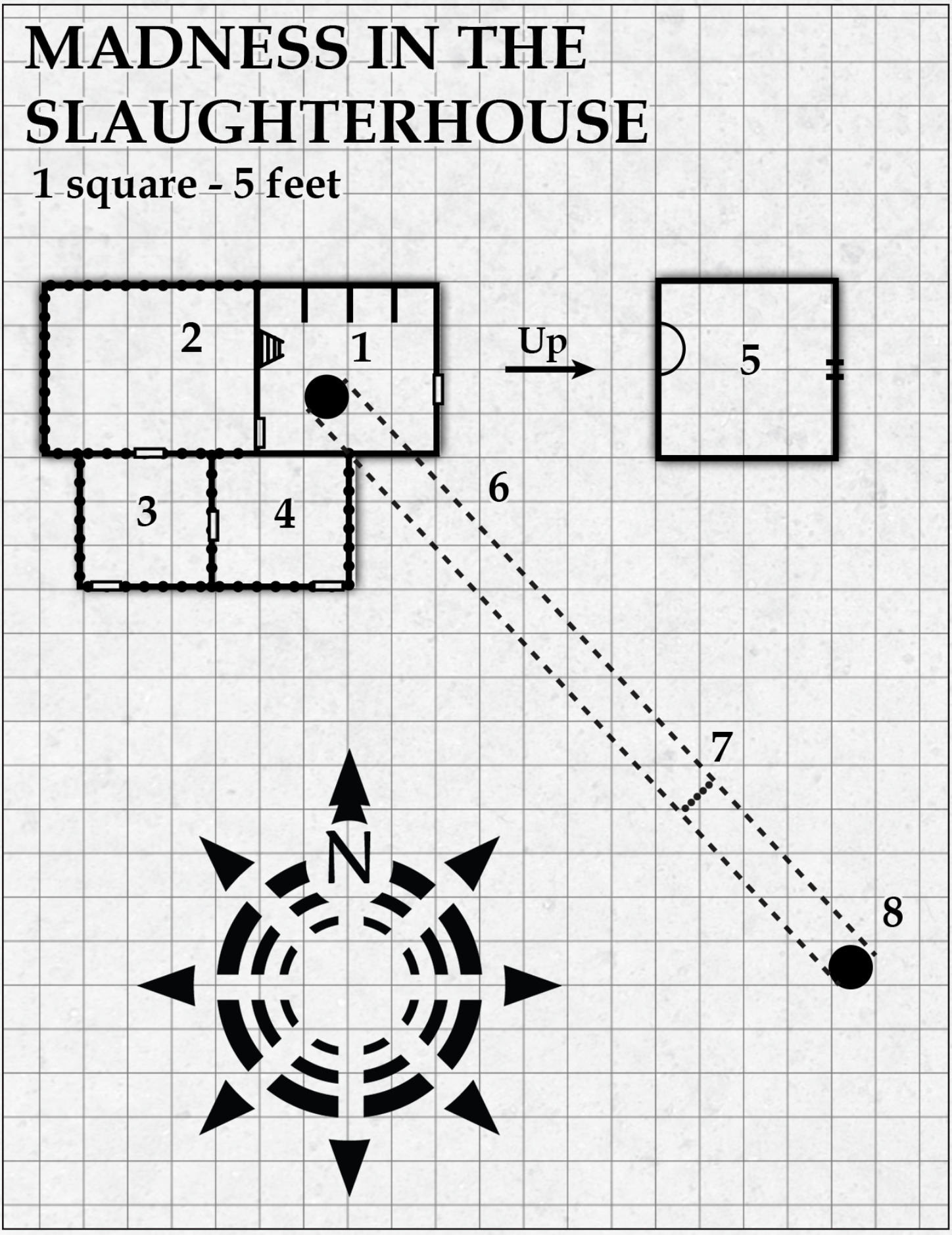
THE BUGGER STREET MORGUE

1 square - 5 feet



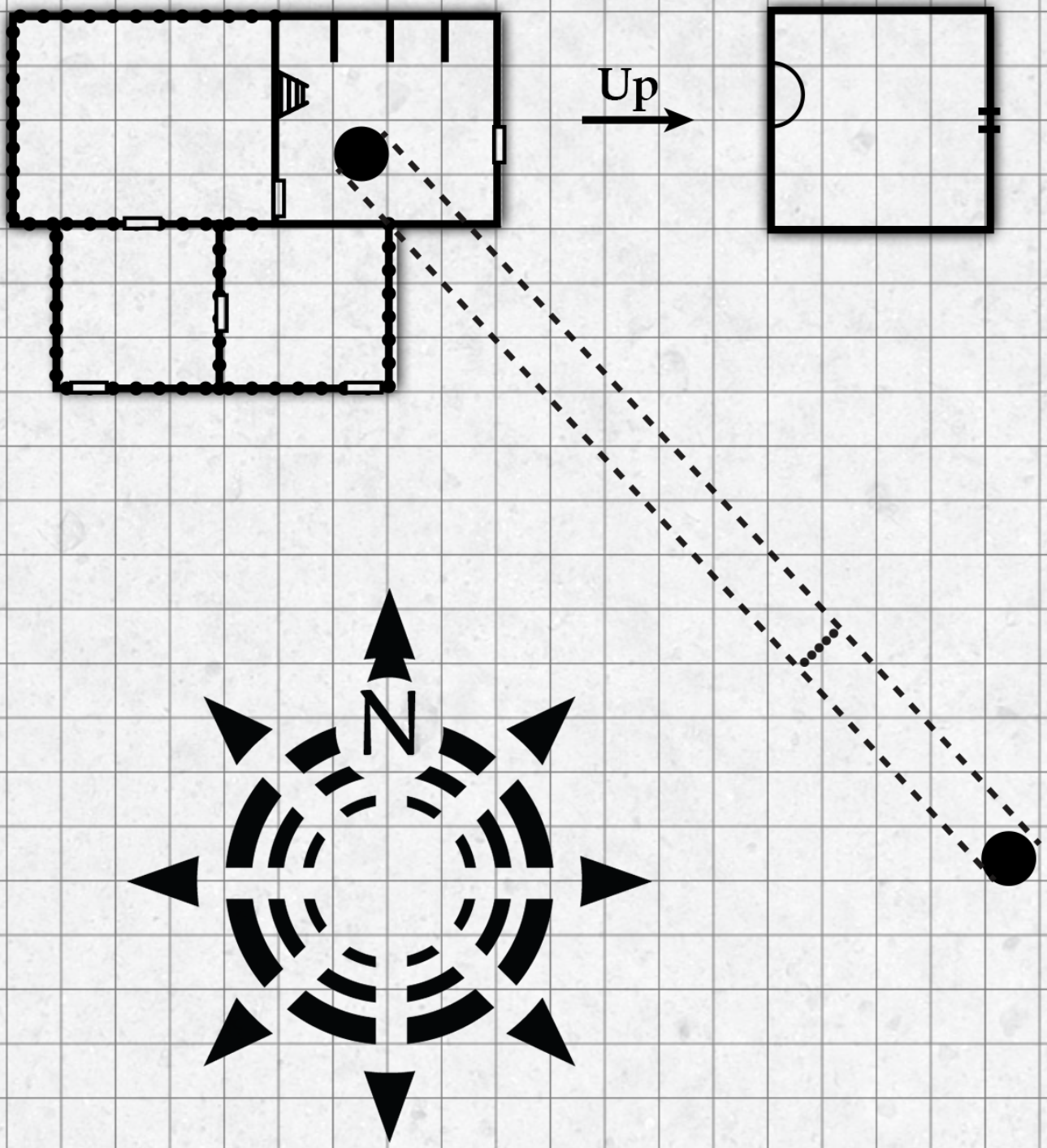


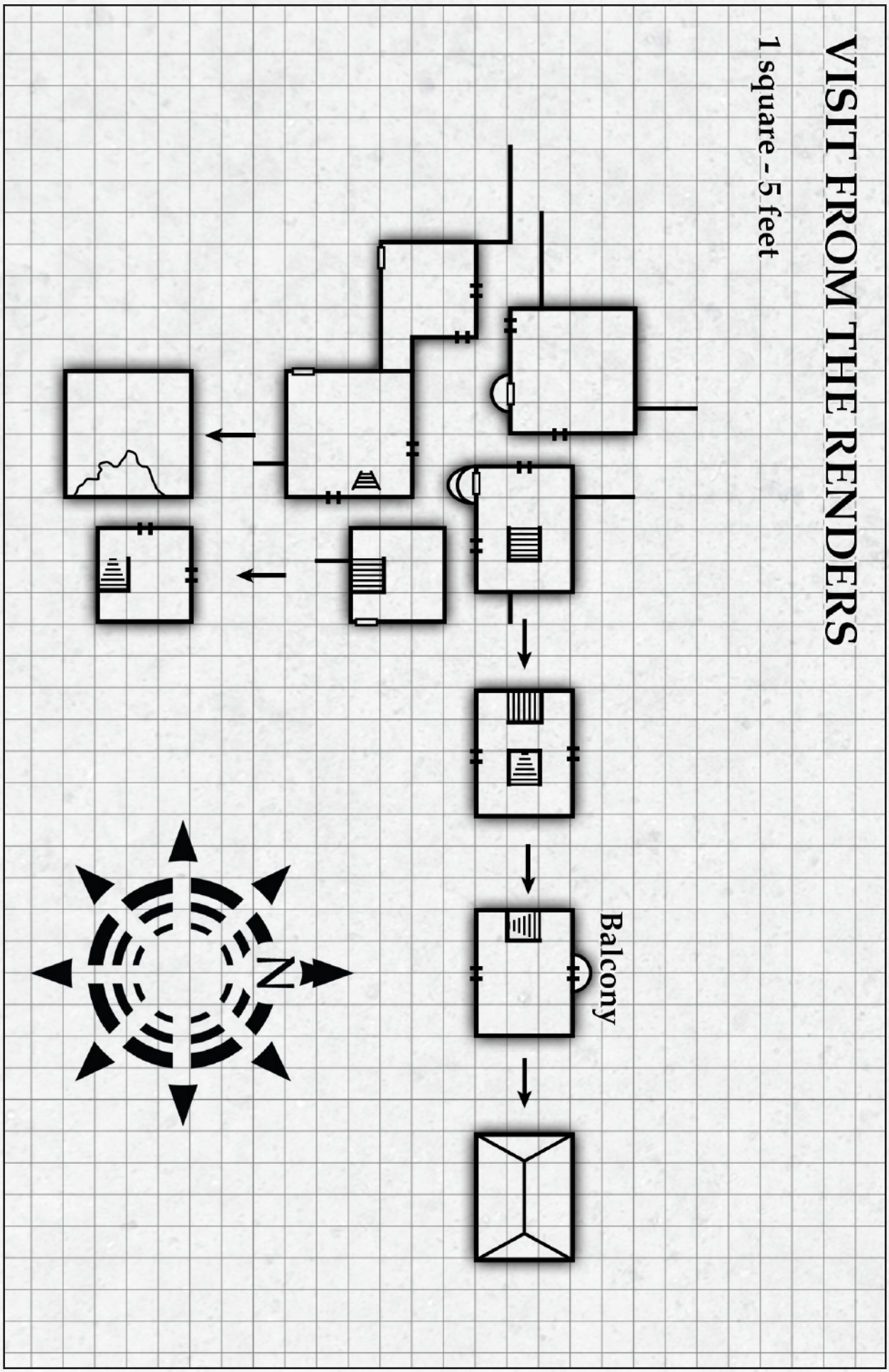

THE BUGGER STREET
MORGUE
1 square - 5 feet
N

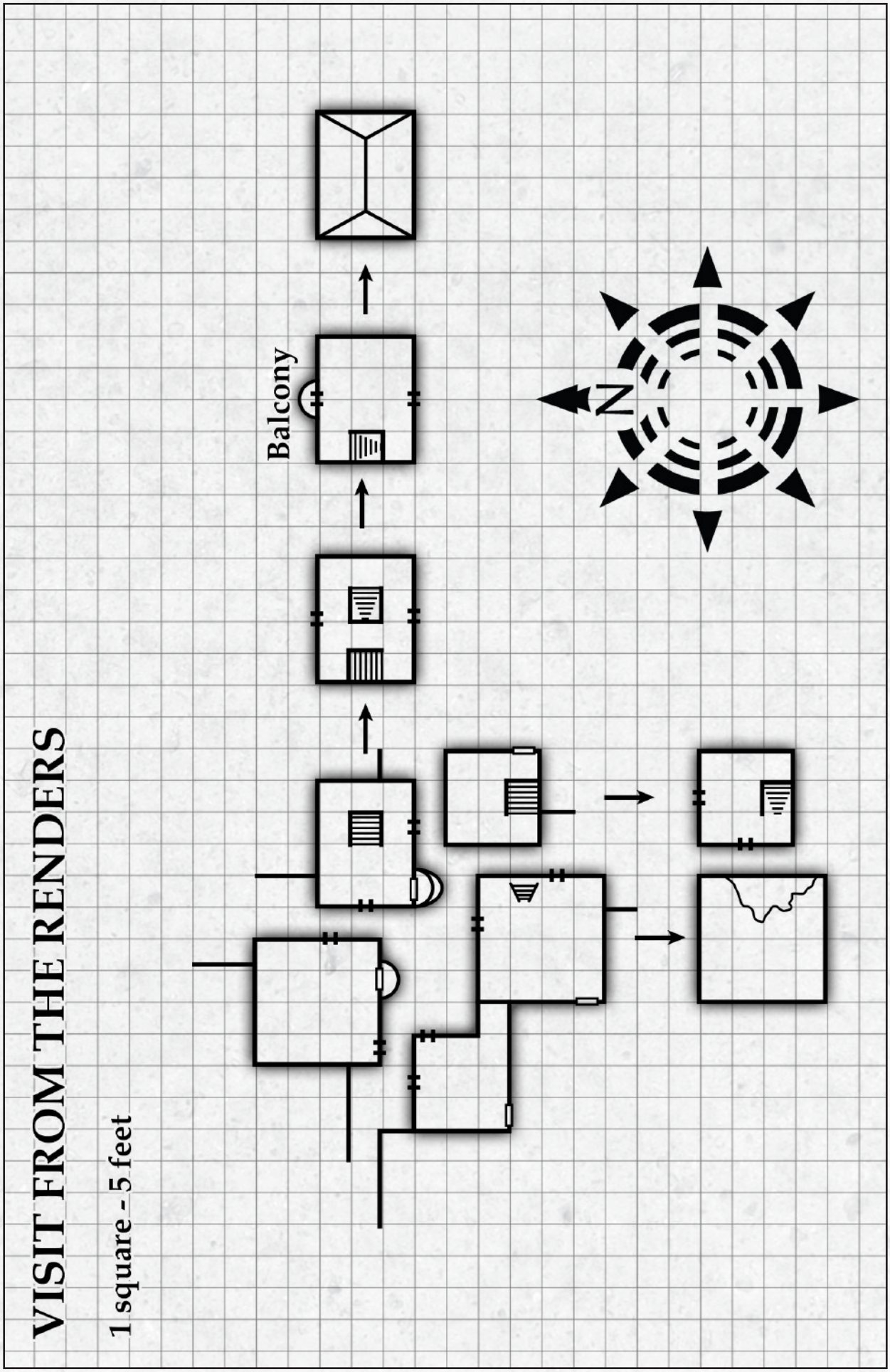

MADNESS IN THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE
1 square - 5 feet
2
1
Up
5
3
4
6
7
8
N

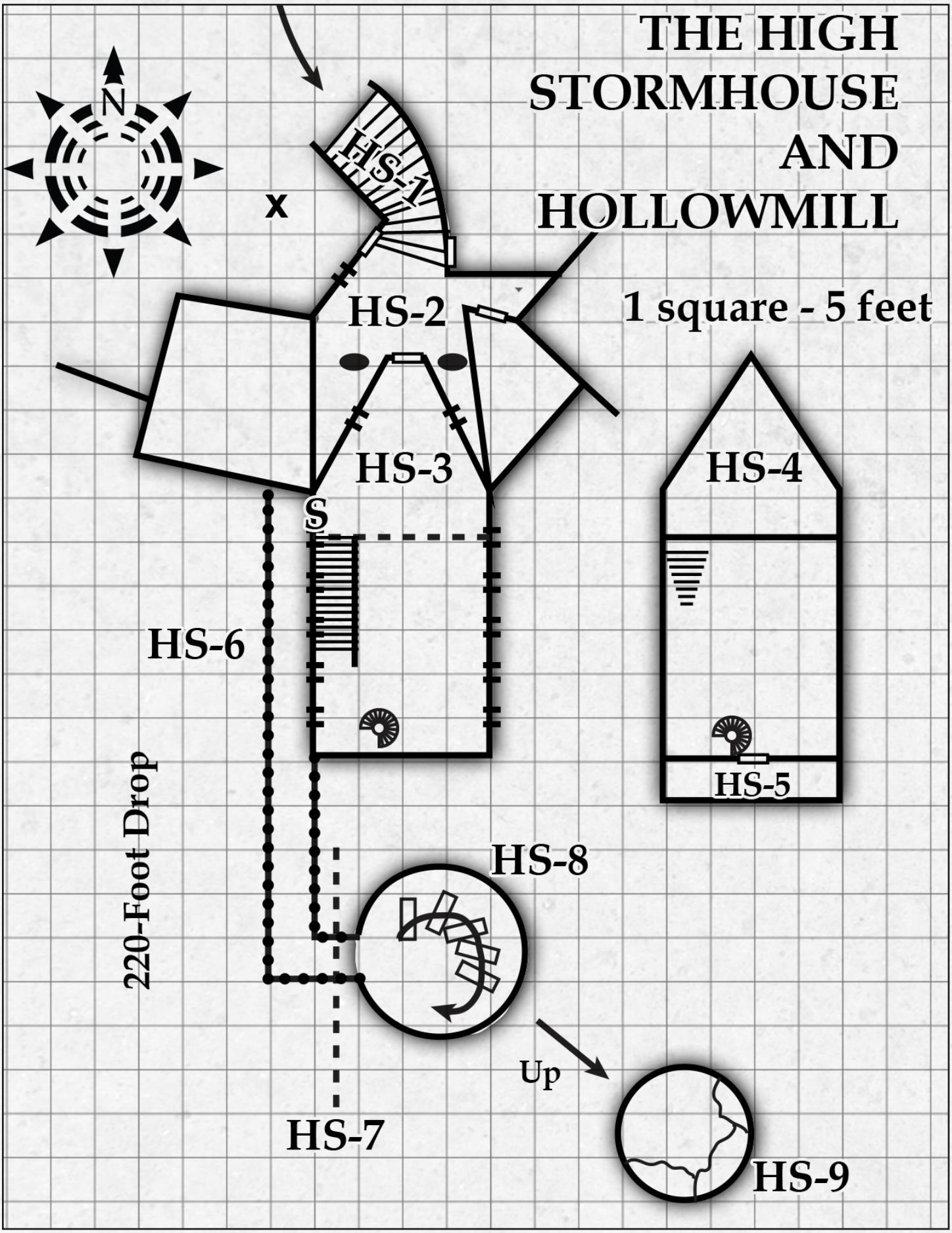
MADNESS IN THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

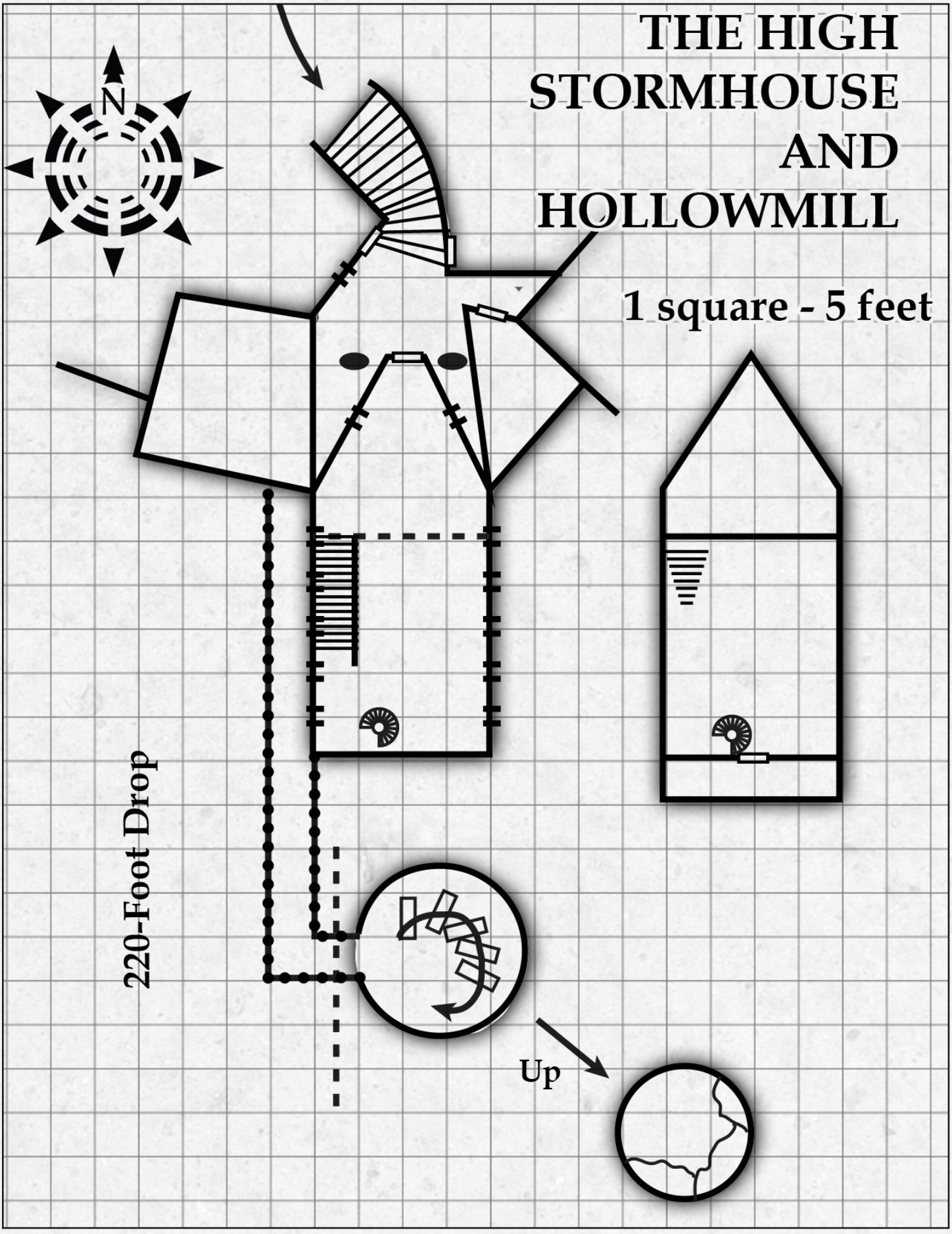
1 square - 5 feet

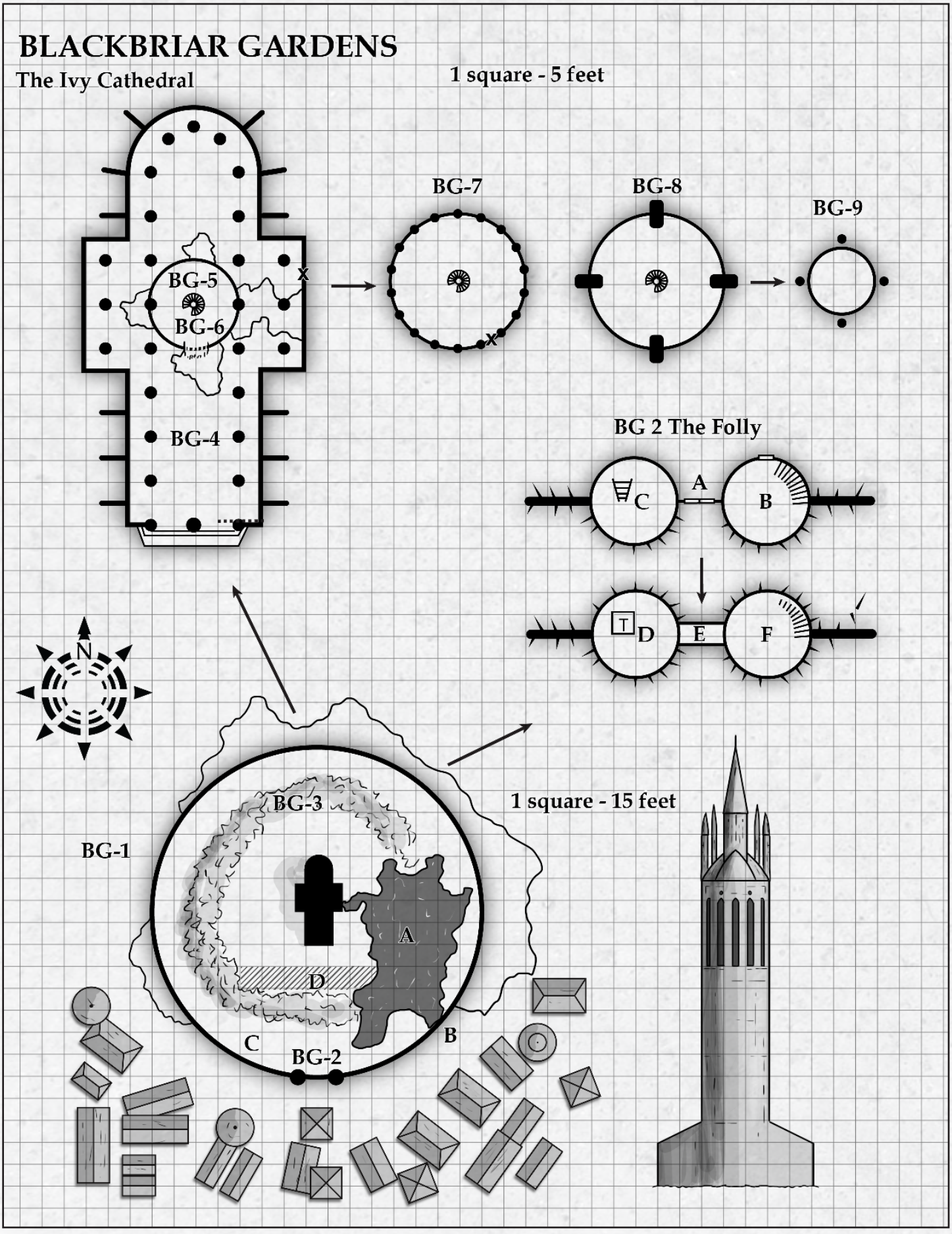


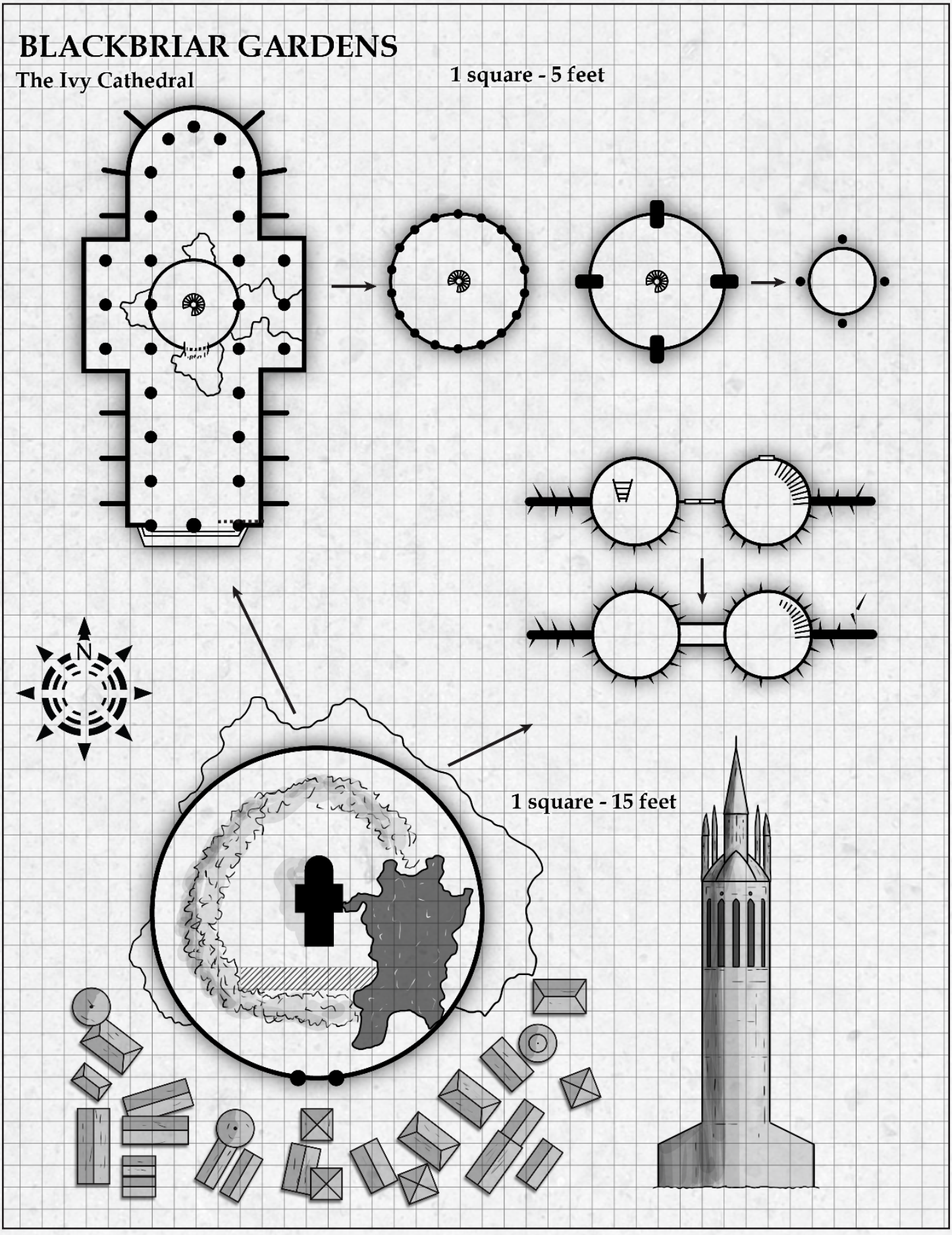

VISIT FROM THE RENDERS
1 square = 5 feet
Balcony
N

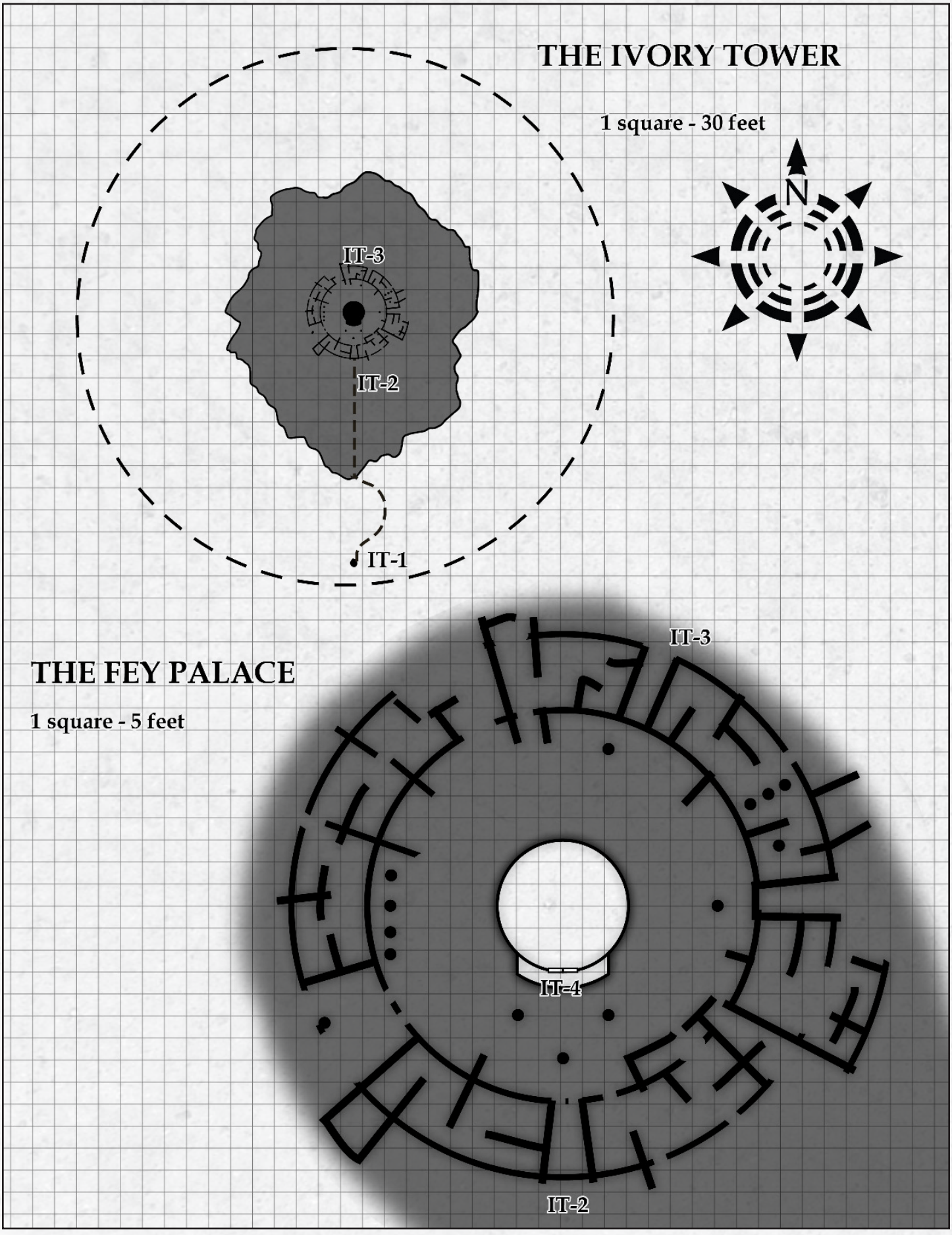

VISIT FROM THE RENDERS
1 square = 5 feet
Balcony
N


THE HIGH STORMHOUSE AND HOLLOWMILL
1 square - 5 feet
N
x
HS-1
HS-2
HS-3
HS-4
HS-5
HS-6
HS-7
HS-8
HS-9
S
220-Foot Drop
Up


THE HIGH STORMHOUSE AND HOLLOWMILL
1 square - 5 feet
N
220-Foot Drop
Up

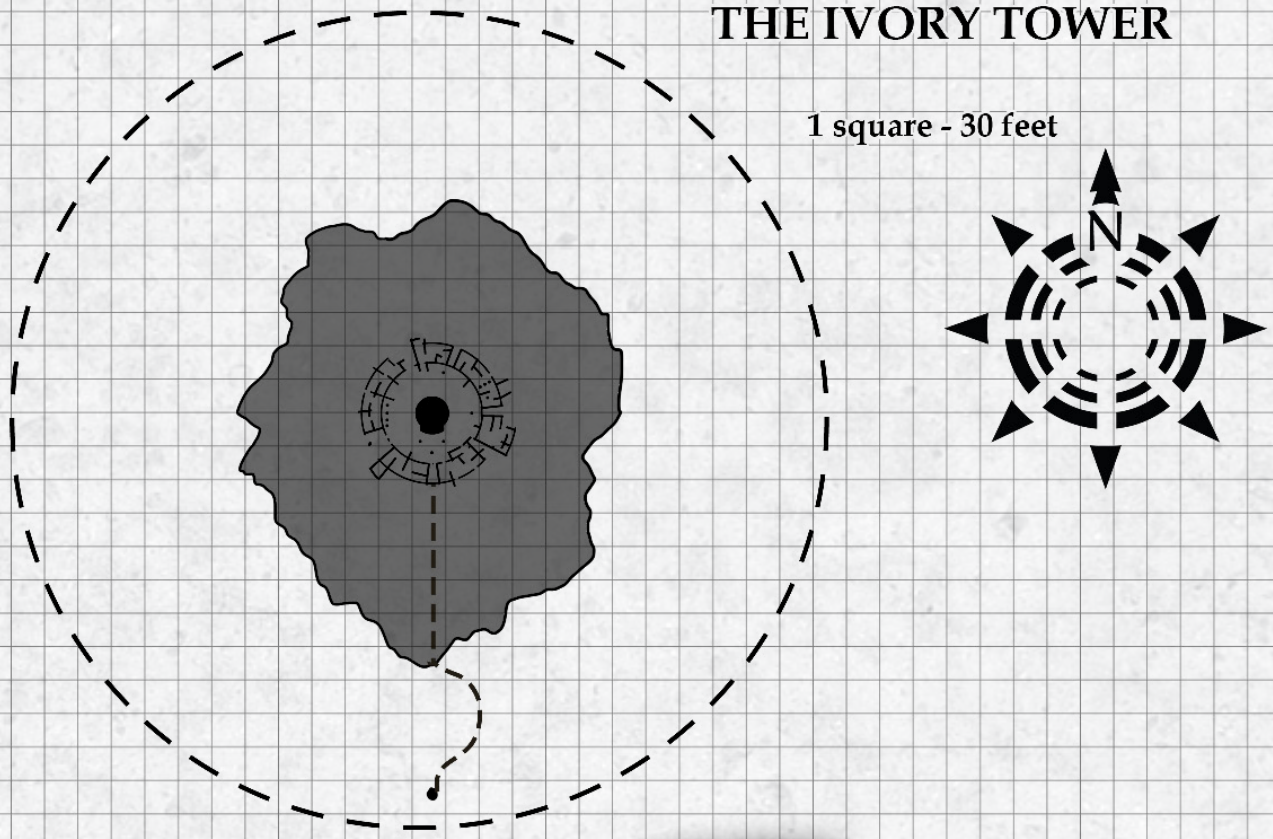

BLACKBRIAR GARDENS
The Ivy Cathedral
1 square - 5 feet
BG-5
BG-6
BG-4
BG-7
BG-8
BG-9
BG 2 The Folly
A
B
C
D
E
F
N
BG-1
BG-3
1 square - 15 feet
A
D
C
B
BG-2


BLACKBRIAR GARDENS
The Ivy Cathedral
1 square - 5 feet
N
1 square - 15 feet


THE IVORY TOWER
1 square - 30 feet
N
IT-3
IT-2
IT-1
THE FEY PALACE
1 square - 5 feet
IT-3
IT-4
IT-2

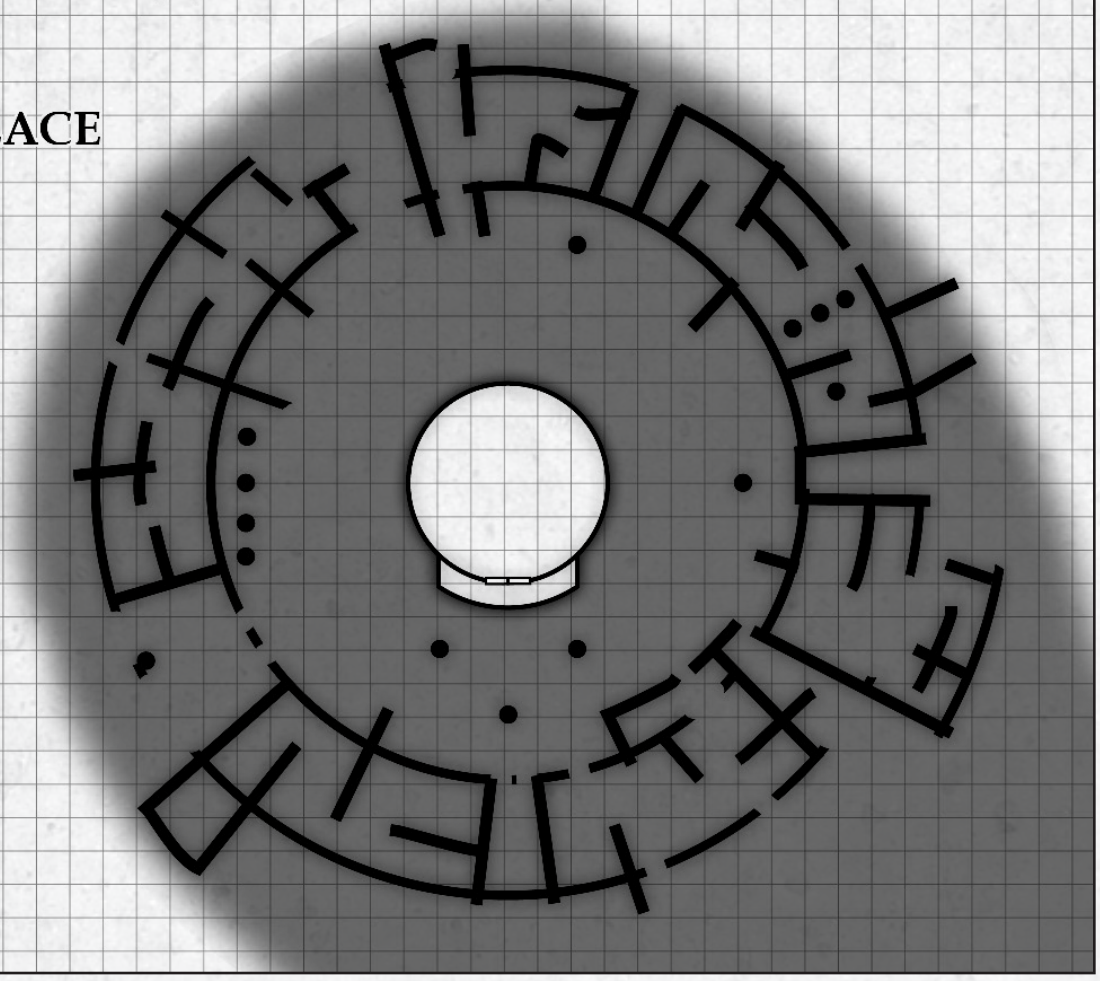
THE IVORY TOWER

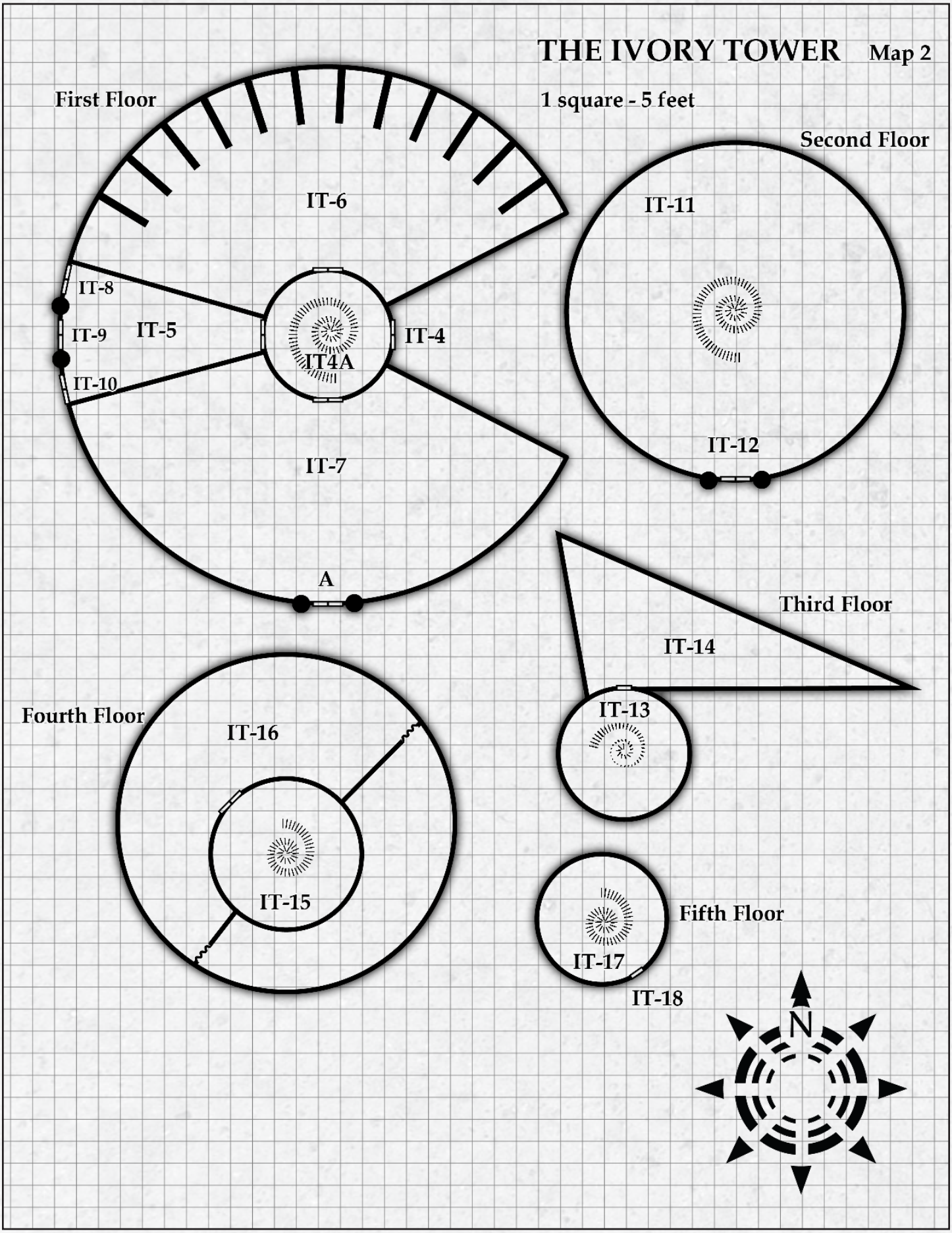
1 square - 30 feet

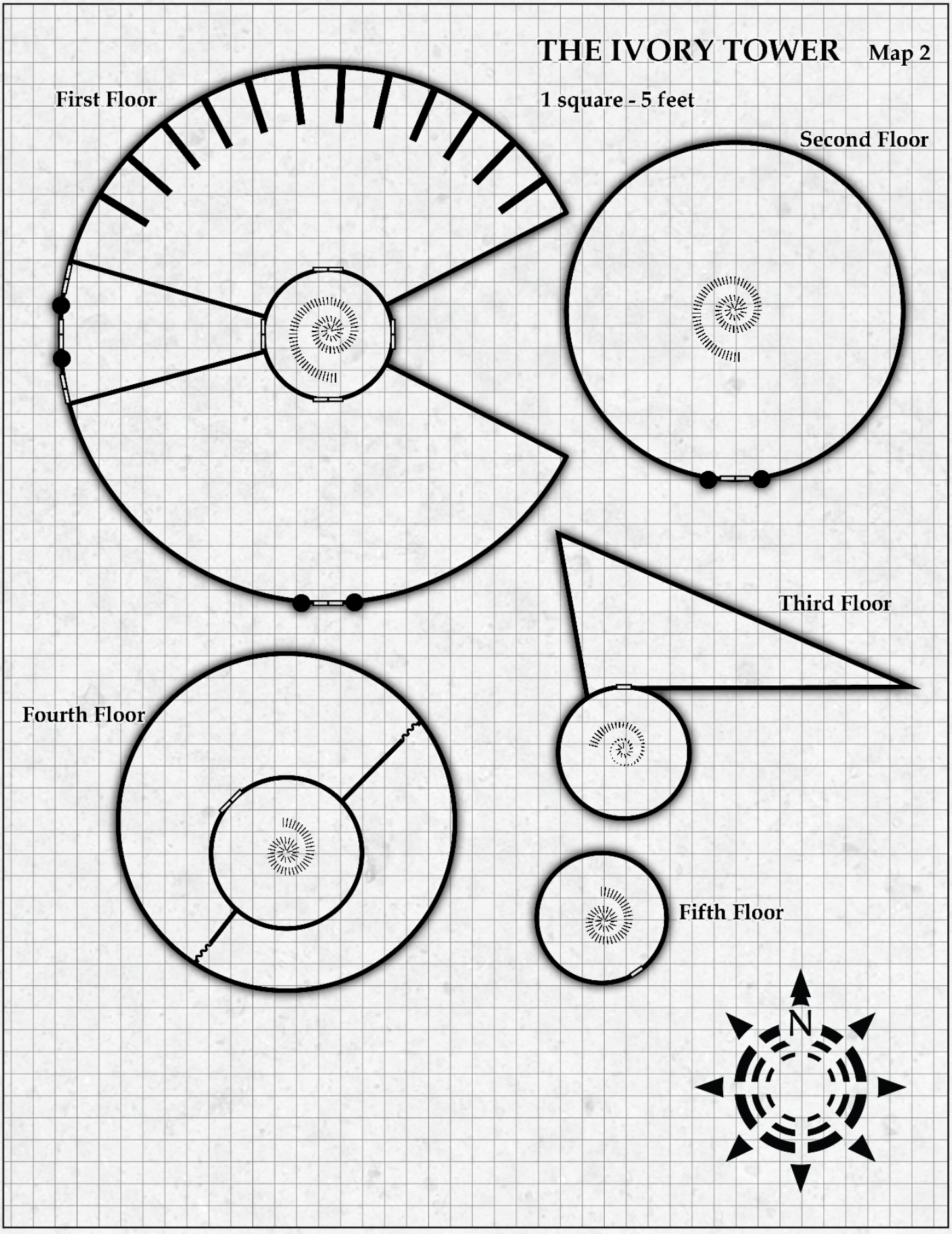


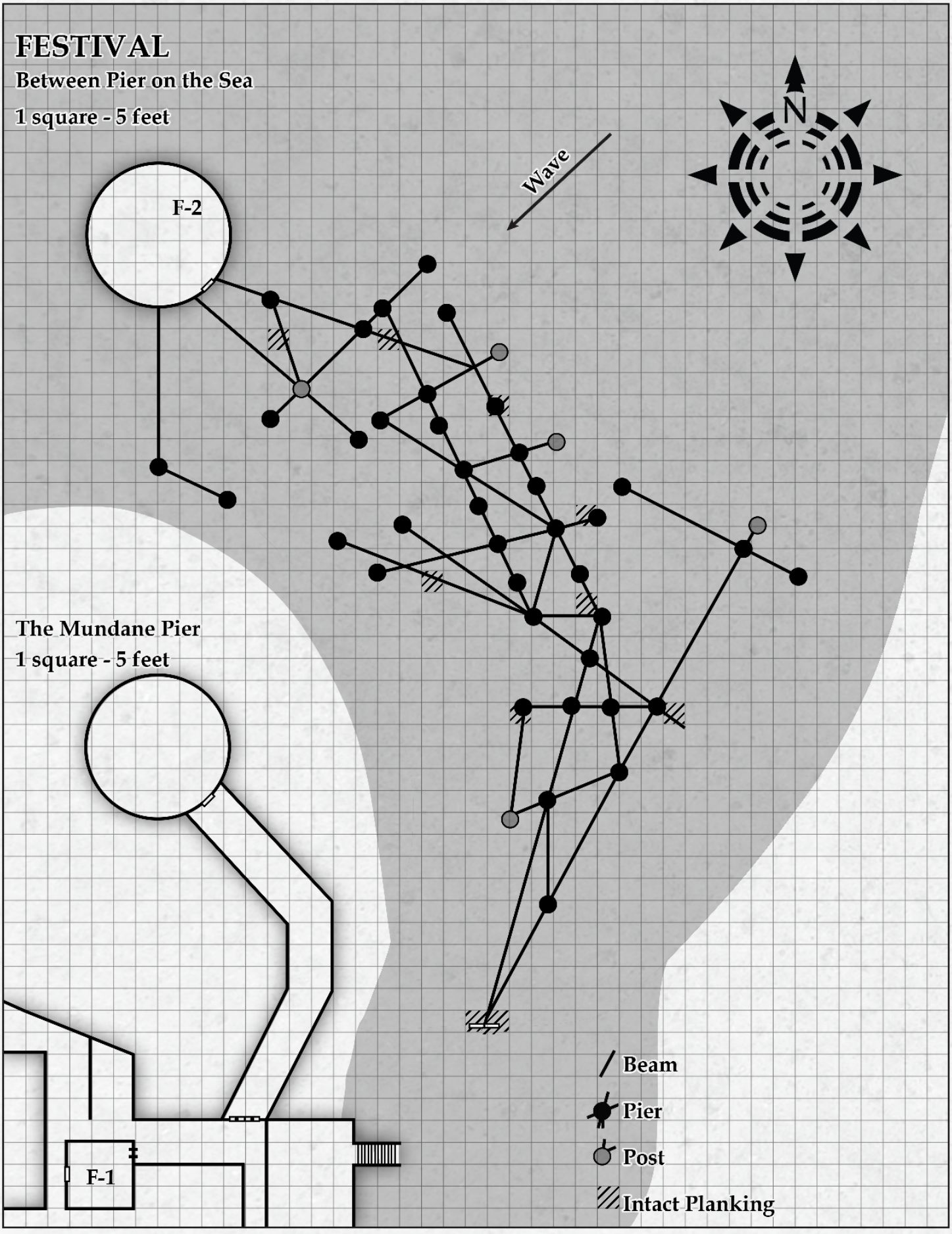
THE FEY PALACE

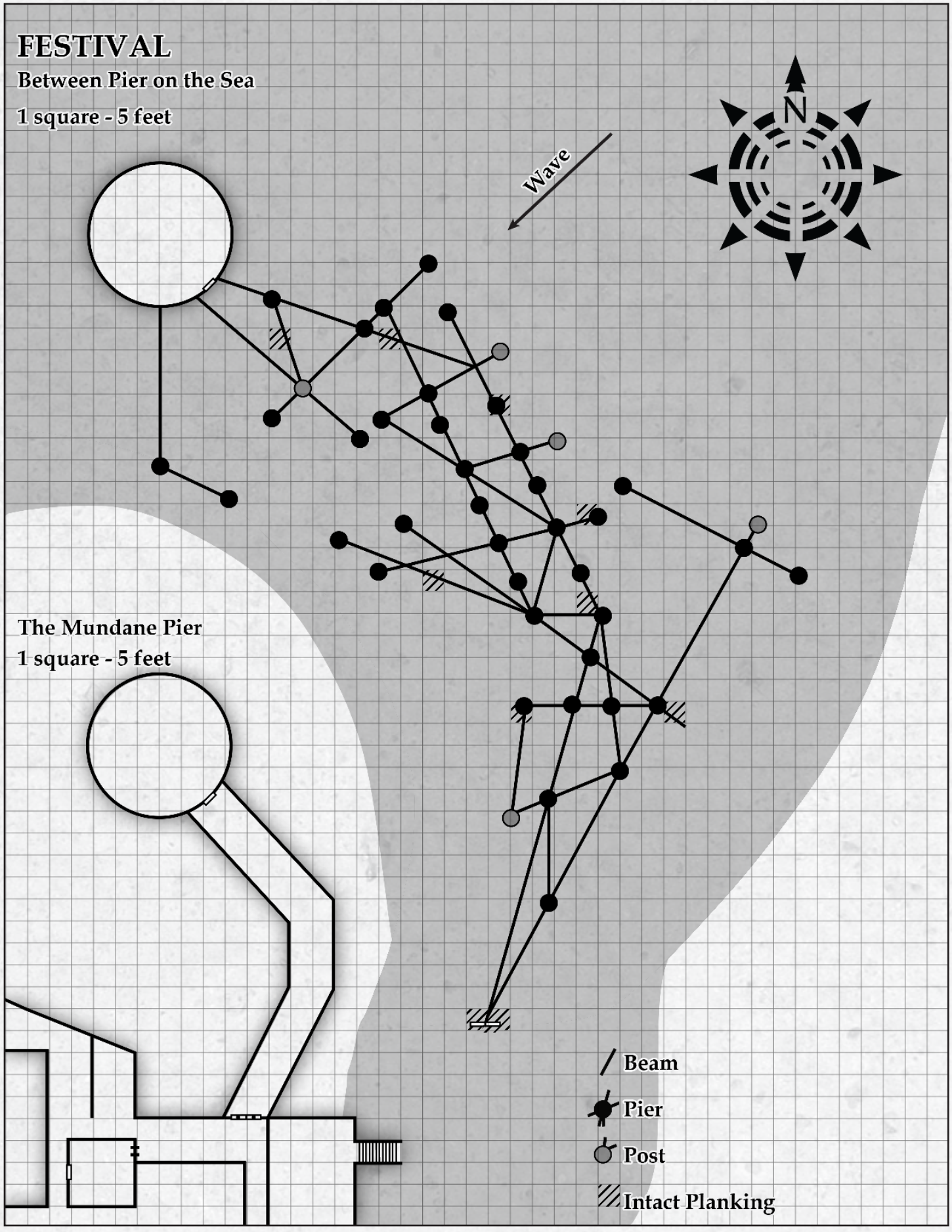
1 square - 5 feet

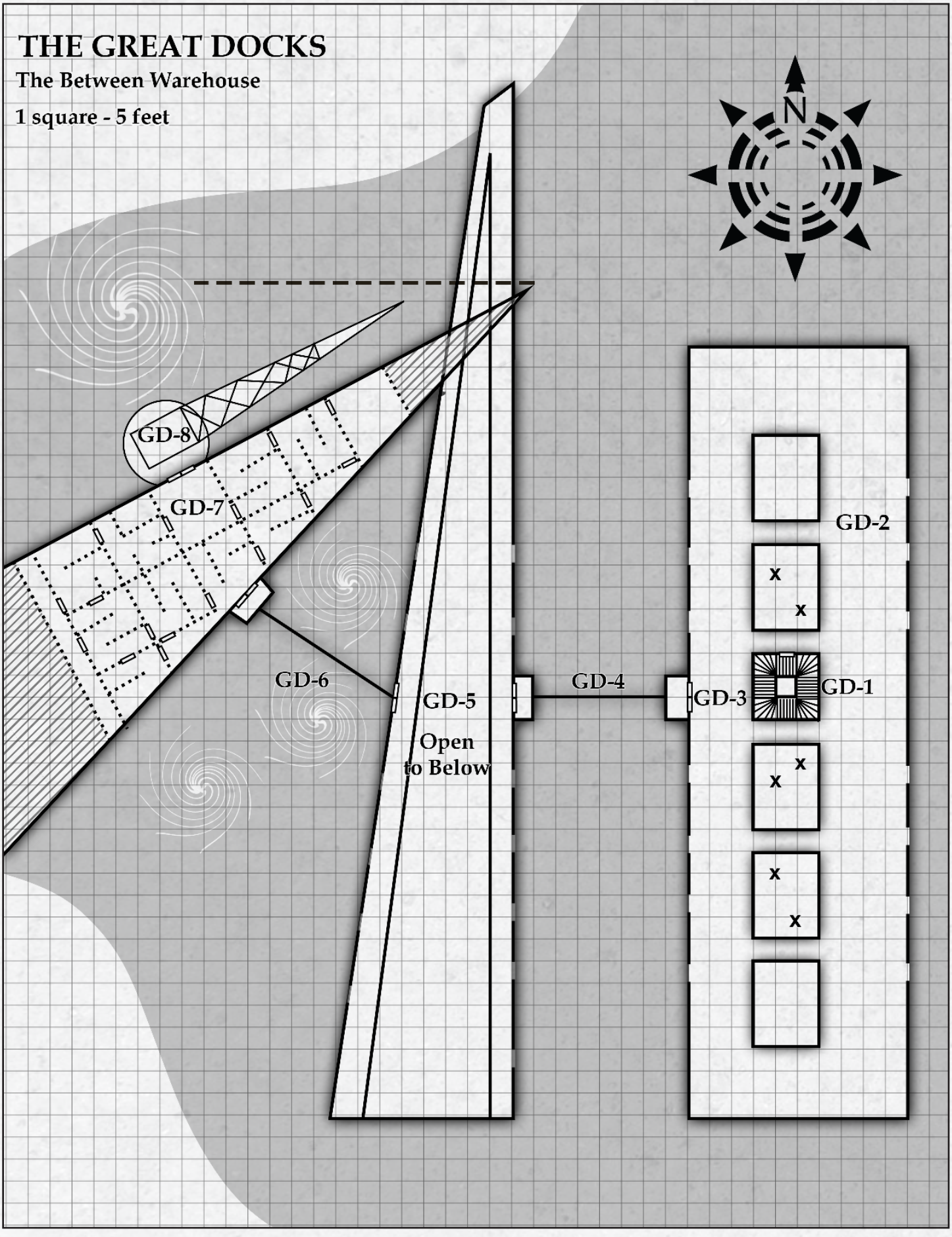


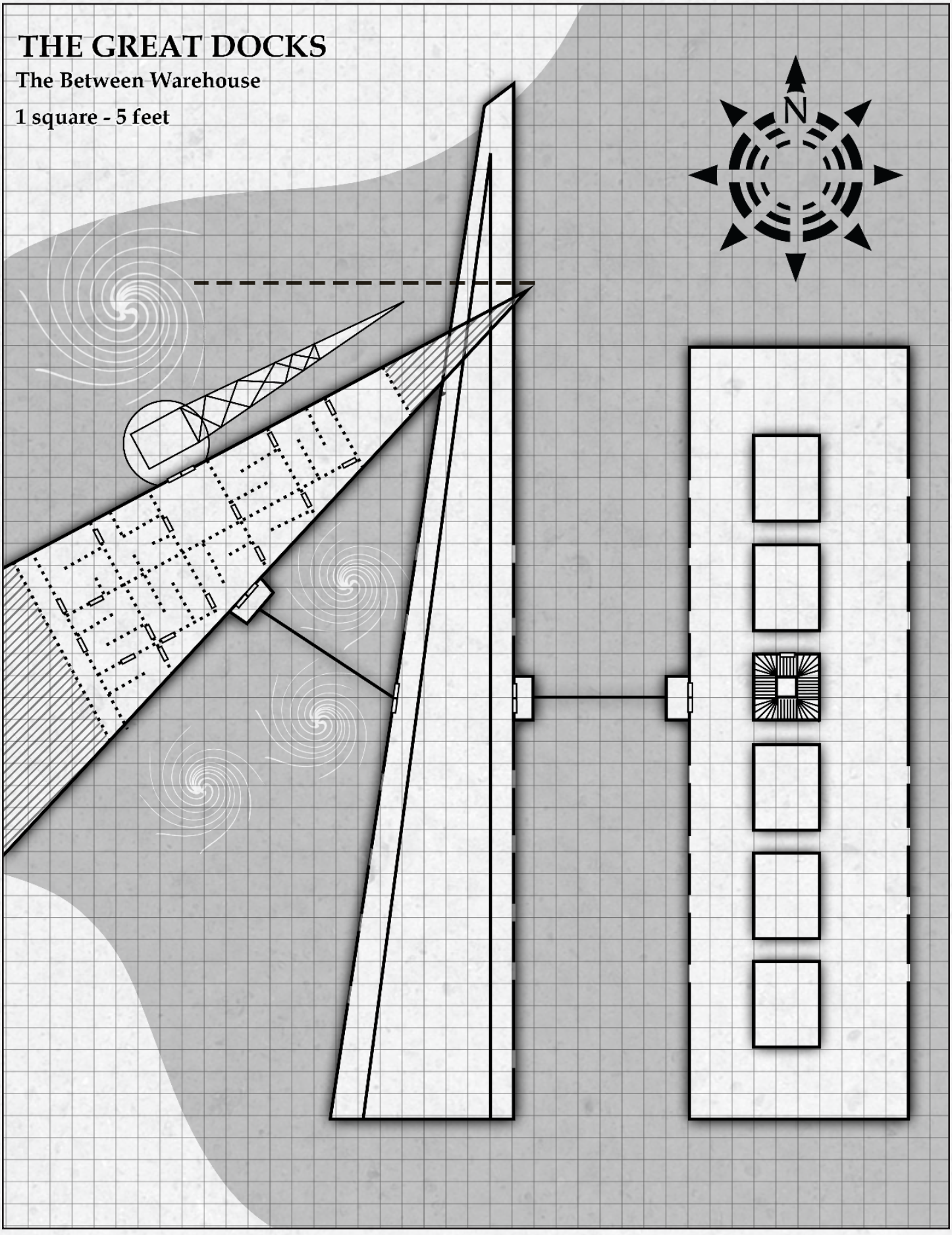

THE IVORY TOWER
Map 2
1 square - 5 feet
First Floor
IT-6
IT-8
IT-9
IT-10
IT-5
IT-4
IT4A
IT-7
A
Second Floor
IT-11
IT-12
Third Floor
IT-14
IT-13
Fourth Floor
IT-16
IT-15
Fifth Floor
IT-17
IT-18
N

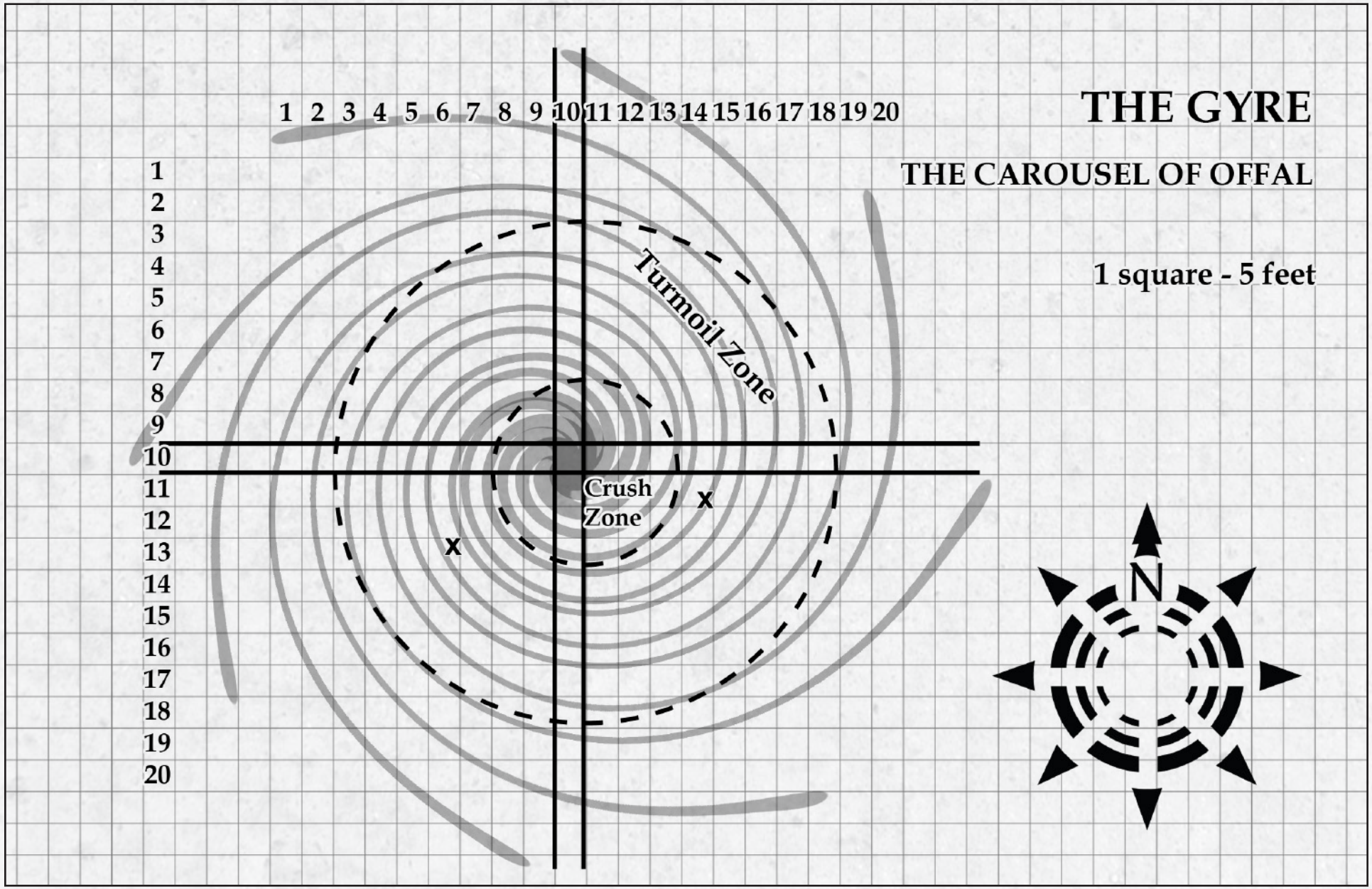

THE IVORY TOWER
Map 2
1 square - 5 feet
First Floor
Second Floor
Third Floor
Fourth Floor
Fifth Floor
N

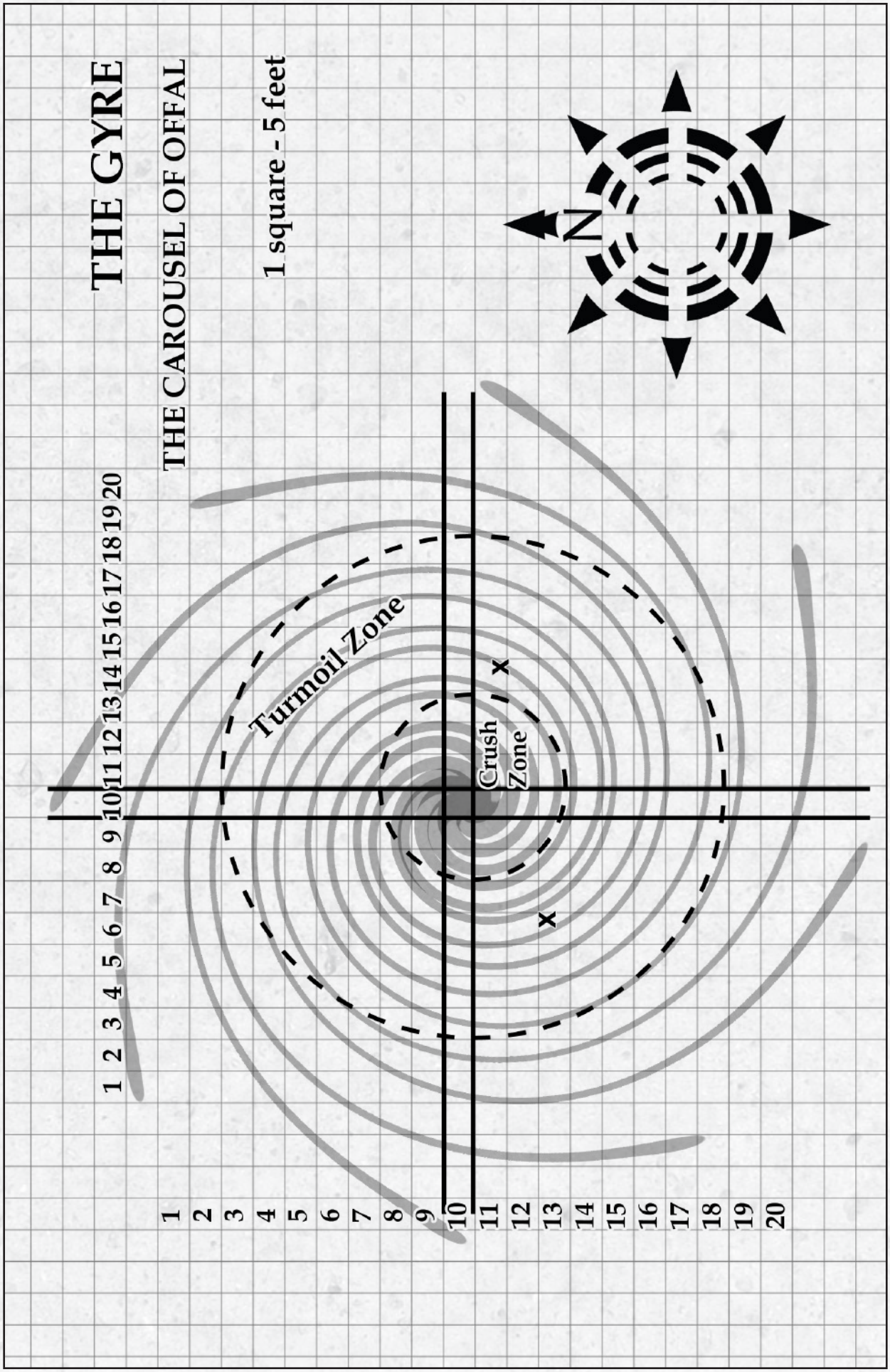

FESTIVAL
Between Pier on the Sea
1 square - 5 feet
N
Wave
F-2
The Mundane Pier
1 square - 5 feet
F-1
Beam
Pier
Post
Intact Planking


FESTIVAL
Between Pier on the Sea
1 square - 5 feet
Wave
N
The Mundane Pier
1 square - 5 feet
Beam
Pier
Post
Intact Planking


THE GREAT DOCKS
The Between Warehouse
1 square - 5 feet
N
GD-8
GD-7
GD-6
GD-5
Open
to Below
GD-4
GD-3
GD-2
GD-1


THE GREAT DOCKS
The Between Warehouse
1 square - 5 feet
N


THE GYRE
THE CAROUSEL OF OFFAL
1 square - 5 feet
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
Turmoil Zone
Crush Zone
N


THE GYRE
THE CAROUSEL OF OFFAL
1 square = 5 feet
N
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
Turmoil Zone
Crush Zone
x
x
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

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Obituaries

Name & Level	Player Name	Cause of Death

The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

A vast and sorcerous city, poisoned by alchemy, extending its empire through necromantically-powered industries, the City-state of Castorhage is gritty, often-horrific, and heartless. The city-state has begun exploring realms beyond the normal world, heedless of the dangers, and unaware that these other worlds are exploring the city-state in return. Ruthless factions, many of them quite monstrous, wage a hidden war for control of the city, its bizarre "technologies," and its cruel empire.

Two books in one, *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* is everything you need for a campaign set in Castorhage, the city known to most simply as the Blight. Set in the Lost Lands campaign setting, this book consists of *The Blight Campaign Guide* — which includes the *Cyclopædia Infestarum*, a huge collection of new monsters, NPCs, and other resources for the setting as well as a ten-chapter gazetteer to the city's individual districts — and also includes the *Levee Adventure*, a nine-part series of adventures that introduce your players to their first taste of the Blight and its rotten and degenerate urban confines.

Bring your players to a truly novel city-setting, where adventures are utterly different than the ordinary fare of traditional fantasy. *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* provides countless hours of adventure for your game and the seeds to endless campaigns spawning from its grimy, crowded environs.

You've just entered the wrong side of town . . .

Warning!

This product contains materials that may not be suitable for all audiences.
It is recommended for use by individuals age 13 and older.



FROG GOD GAMES

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BETWEEN

The Edge of the World
The Brittle Ice
Greensward Hell
The Broken Lands
Lands of the Echo Queen
Mallen
Edge of Ruin
Corrun's Labyrinth
The Great and Secret House
Frostrime
Tyrant Kingdoms
Between Lands
Queen Alice's Maw
To Priory Gateway
Ste. Anne's Field
Fort Toil
Ships' Necropolis
Providence
THE UNSEA
Fort Industry
Point Hope
Port Welcome
CASTORHAGE WESTERN PROVINCE AND SLAVE STATE
CASTORHAGE 'EAST' DOMINION
Fort Labour
Sea of Mists and Creeping Things
Scrimshaw
The Choir
Penance
Pech Pit
The Turmoil
Leviathan Graveyard
Carrion
Grace
The Cloven Sea
Hope
Brogmyre Manor
The Myre-Between
The Mockery
Spiral Fable
Fowler's Stair
The Theatres Obscura
The Falling Isle
The Wall
Hrondhuss
Great Between Forest (The Unquiet)
Land of Hateful Things
The Cataclysm
Land of the Long Night

LEGEND
- Town or Plantation
- Scrimshaw
- Fortress or Tower
- Ruins
- Place of Interest
- Known Gateway
- Road
- Wilderness Track

Presumed North
West
~~East~~
East (consensus)
Unknown

0 50 100
MILES
~~(accepted)~~ excepted!

The Isle of Lymossus

Crescent Sea

Norshore

Kingdom of the North Heath

Shunta

Poison Lands

Almanass

The Brine Heath

Crispin's Quay

Dunnage

Pekinspince Run

The Duntide

Fetid Sea

The Floodtides

Preterhouse

The Damps

Tarry

Deepside

Silomen

Tarry-Sale Road

Duness

Towside

Skelt

Durast

Payt

Crestfall

Kess Firth

Kalares Croft

Burningfield

The Ash Road

River Radlee

The Apyrion

Tumescir

Fallowshire

Crow's Fallow

Kirksterry

Lesser Lyme

Wicken

Queen's Forest

City-State of Castorhage

Lych Fens

Devil's Holt

Caskow

Tatum's Light

Aldwark

Reading Slough

Great Lyme River

Upper Lyme

Mourneyshire

Lymoss Highlands

Taff

Mourney

Quent's Wood

Purple Lows

Culden Field

Perish Shire

Plover

River Dene

Ludlow Castle

The Highhorn

Lakland

Hollyhay

Hudd

Berkleyshire

Rose River

Purcher-on-Rose

Sheklan

Telosmere

Pence Islands

Wormtooth Peaks

Kear

N

W

E

S

1 hex = 12 miles

LEGEND

- Town or Village
- City
- Capital or Free City
- Imperial City
- Fortress or Citadel
- Ruins
- Place of Interest
- Road
- Trail or Unused Road
- Mountain Pass

CITY-STATE OF CASTORHAGE

1 Square - 1 Mile

HOLLOW AND BROKEN HILLS

THE SINKS

The Tardy

The Whirlpool

Lych Fens

FESTIVAL

The Great Lyme River

JUMBLE

BOOK TOWN

TOWN BRIDGE

THE CAPITOL

ARTIST'S QUARTER

Great Treadmill Ferry

Great Docks

TOILTOWN

Lych Fens

Map Key

DISTRICT

Parish

Ward

Detailed Location

Detailed Area

Mapped Area

Water

Marsh

Chain Ferry

N

CITY-STATE OF CASTORHAGE

1 Square - 1 Mile

