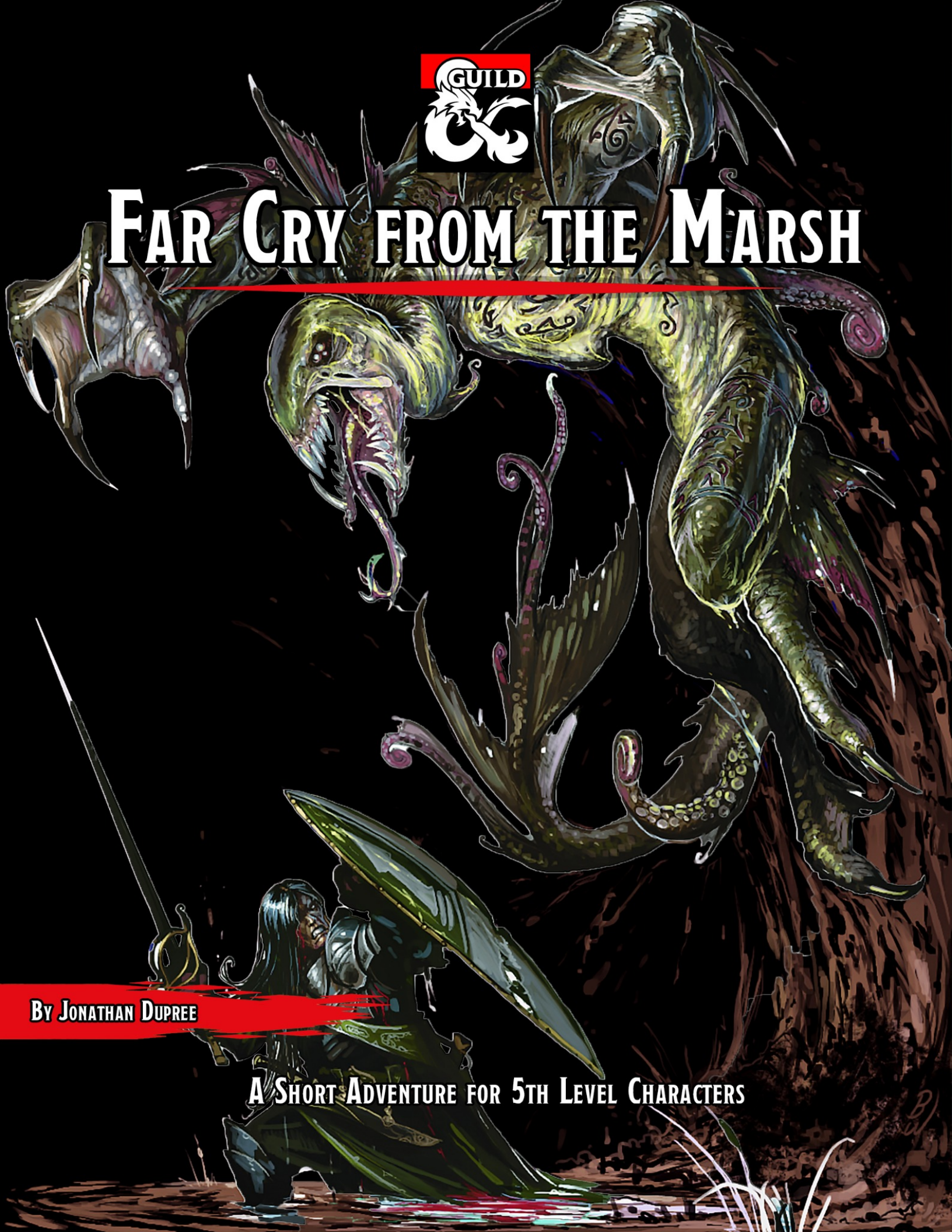




FAR CRY FROM THE MARSH

By JONATHAN DUPREE

A SHORT ADVENTURE FOR 5TH LEVEL CHARACTERS



BACKGROUND

A group of trolls is responsible for recent attacks in the docks. Driven out of their home in the marshes further down the coast where the river Dessarin deposits into the Sea of Swords, the trolls found a new lair in the basement of an abandoned warehouse connected to one of the wharfs on the north side of Deepwater Bay. The trolls are none too bright and are not aware that their continued depredations will draw attention to themselves. As far as they are concerned, their new lair is ideal as it has a source of readily available food, for both themselves and their offspring, within easy reach.

OVERVIEW

The old warehouse has been abandoned for some time - ever since its owner, a wealthy merchant, mysteriously disappeared. The warehouse is on the waterfront of Deepwater, just near the northeast wall. The warehouse itself was constructed with smuggling in mind and was used for this purpose right up to the unfortunate demise of its last owner. The sewer outlet that opens beneath the wharves has a removable grill that allows small skiffs to be poled down the sewer into the secret pool beneath the warehouse. It is down here that the scraggs have set up their lair. If the PCs are providing security for the Riverdockers' Union (see "Union Safety" below) or on patrol with the town guard (see "Strange Beasts" below) their first encounter with the scraggs is late, when two of the scraggs venture out of their lair in search of food. They lurk under the wharf waiting for someone to venture close enough to the edge for them to grab him or her. See Dock Encounter below for more details on this encounter. If the PCs are patrolling the wharf on their own, then the scraggs attack them if they venture too close to the hiding place. This attack, if survived, allows the PCs to being investigations of their own that eventually lead them to the abandoned warehouse (area 0). In the end, the PCs will confront the scraggs. If they prove victorious, they will receive renown among the Riverdockers' Union and town guard as well as any appropriate pay for their services.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Missing Folks. People have been disappearing from the docks at night. While this is a fairly common occurrence in Waterdeep, the disappearances are becoming more and more frequent and the authorities want them stopped. A reward of 100 gold pieces has been posted for the apprehension of the culprits.

Union Safety. The Dockers' Union is threatening to strike unless the safety of their membership can be guaranteed while they work at night. The PCs are asked by representatives of the city watch to provide security for the night-workers.

Strange Beasts. Patrols of town guard nightwatchmen have been attacked by fearsome beasts in the docks. The town guard are looking for brave folk and sellswords to bolster up their patrols in the area and put an end to these attacks.

Chance Meeting. The heroes are attacked on the docks (See Dock Encounter) and their investigation into the attack leads them to the scrag den.

DOCK ENCOUNTER (OPTIONAL)

If the PCs have been hired to find out what has been going on around the docks or if they are simply walking them on their own by happenchance, the following encounter might occur.

The docks are quiet at this late hour, but a man seems to be fishing up ahead. Suddenly, a large shadow appears behind him and takes on a bestial and hostile stance.

If the PCs engage immediately, have them roll for initiative. If they simply watch, the man is snatched up by the fearsome grasp of the scrag and is taken back into the water. A Wisdom (Perception) or (Survival) check DC 10 will denote where the scrag is headed: a sewer entryway just off the wharf that appears to lead under an old abandoned warehouse.

Scrag (1) see Monsters section below.



0. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

The warehouse itself is singularly unspectacular. Like most warehouses in this area, it is fairly dilapidated, except that this one has been boarded up and hung with signs reading (written in Common and Dwarvish) "Danger! Keep Out! Unsafe Structure!" The warehouse should really have been pulled down long ago, but the authorities of the town are notoriously slow in taking action, and there has been some complicated legal wrangling on the part of the absent merchant's relatives and potential beneficiaries from his will (even though no proof of his death has yet come to light).

The warehouse is built on two levels: one above the wharves and a secret basement that no one, except a handful of old smugglers in the Mardigan Family and two or three dubious merchants, knows of. There are no windows on the ground floor. There is a back door (boarded up) down the alley at the side of the warehouse. This leads to a corridor that runs the length of the building and also grants access to the small office at the rear of the warehouse. Beneath the old desk in the office is a trap door that opens into the secret storeroom in the basement below (see area 5). A ladder was once used to climb back and forth between levels but this is now long gone. The drop from the trap door to the floor of the room is some 20 feet, a fall from which would deal 2d6 bludgeoning damage to the falling creature and knock it prone. Allow PCs trained in Acrobatics to roll a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check DC 13 to avoid the negative effects of falling. The area of the floor surrounding the office in the main part of the warehouse looks distinctly unsafe - and indeed it is! Any weight in excess of 500 lb will cause part of it to collapse, precipitating a fall down into the secret dock below, which the scraggs now use as their lair (see area 4). PCs unfortunate enough to take the plunge here take the falling damage, lessened by 1d6 if they land in water, and are immediately attacked by the scraggs in area 4.

1. MAIN OUTLET

You find a weighty iron grill set within a pipe. Its lock appears to have been forced open. Upon walking through the pipe, you enter into a sewer canal. The fetid smell of waste seems to be tinged with the scent of carrion.

This is one of the main sewer outlets that opens out under the wharves to the bay. The grill here is hinged to allow access by smugglers. Scraggs being pursued by the PCs do not think to close the grill, but normally the scraggs make sure that the grill is kept closed, not necessarily to avoid unwarranted attention but to catch items that may slip by their catch-nets in area 2, and also to prevent any of the bay's numerous predators from finding their lair. The sewer canal water in this area and throughout the lair is about 3 feet deep, which allows for Medium creatures to move through it as difficult terrain and forces Small creatures to swim in it. The walkways are angled slightly inward and are slick with filth and fluid. If any creature takes the Dash action on them, it must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check DC 15 or fall prone, sliding 5 feet into the canal.

2. MAIN JUNCTION

A short walk down the sewer canal leads to a junction of four such canals in a swirl of deep filth. There are three exits from this junction besides the one you entered from.

This rounded junction chamber is constantly guarded by one of the scraggs. The scraggs have rigged up an old fishermen's net over the main sewer entering this chamber to catch any interesting debris that may be washed down from the city. This chamber is filled with water up to four feet deep (creatures without a swim speed have disadvantage on their attack rolls made against creatures with a swim speed and vice versa). Although the leeches in area 3 have found troll blood to be distinctly unappetizing, they are attracted by any disturbance or commotion in the water (such as combat) and swim down to attack. If the PCs have already fought the scraggs who attack the wharves, any surviving scraggs join the scrag here to repel intruders. The entrance to the secret pool beneath the warehouse is behind a concealed door that has been disguised to look like the surrounding brickwork. This door is hinged so that pressure on the outside causes it to swivel, revealing the short corridor to the pool. If the combat is very noisy, the giant leeches from area 3 may move to investigate.

Scrag (1) see Monsters section below.

3. OFFSHOOT JUNCTION

This sewer passageway seems to lead towards the bay, but looks as though it descends and might fork back and around to the city as well. The water here is not still and large lumps of dark matter appear to float around within.

This sewer junction is the lair of a pack of giant leeches. As mentioned in area 2, they are attracted by fighting in the water in area 2, but otherwise are encountered in this area. The leeches have no treasure.

Giant Leeches (6) see Monsters section below.

This pathway leads deeper into the city. It connects directly with the sewers under the North Ward and can even lead directly underneath Gem Street. If you have the module **Final Resting Place**, this could serve as a connective point to the sewer access under Krane Manor.

4. SMUGGLER'S POOL

A large pool hidden behind secret doors and apparently underneath an old warehouse seems to have been built with a specific purpose. Ruins of a walkway feature on a lead up to a broken up door. The signs of habitation by scraggs is evident.

The secret pool beneath the abandoned warehouse is now the home of two female scraggs and their offspring (however, if the PCs have entered this area during daylight through the warehouse, the two male scraggs, who hunt on the docks are also here - unless, of course, they were killed in a previous encounter). The chamber is filled with water four feet deep (creatures without a swim speed have disadvantage on their attack rolls made against creatures with a swim speed and

vice versa). A partially collapsed stone landing stage runs along one wall linking with the door from the secret chamber below the warehouse office. The female scraggs are fanatical in defense of their offspring (who also join in, nipping at attackers). If the mother scrag are killed, the scragglings try to escape; if captured alive, they could fetch a good price to alchemists or arcanists at any one of Waterdeep's marketplaces.

Scraggs (2) see Monsters section below.

Scragglings (2) see Monsters section below.

The scraggs have no particular interest in treasure, but by searching among the bones and general debris on the surface of the pool, the PCs can amass what treasure has found its way into the chamber either from the scraggs' victims, from debris caught in the net in area 2, or simply dropped in the days when the pool was used for smuggling: 3d10 gp, 3d20 sp, 1d100 cp, a finely cut ruby (250 gp), a polished garnet (worth 50 gp), and two uncommon magic items.

5. SECRET STOREROOM

This secret storeroom is connected to a secret pool and the warehouse above. A number of items remain from the previous owners in crates.

The secret storeroom still contains some of the merchandise stored here when the warehouse was in operation. There are six bales of fine (though slightly musty) silk from the Shou Expatriate (worth 250 gp a bale), two crates of fine longswords (10 to a crate, worth 30 gp apiece), and eight casks of fine brandy from Luskan (150 gp apiece). If the PCs enter from above, the scraggs from area 4 are alerted and will move in to protect the scragglings.

MONSTERS

Below are the blocks for all monsters featured in the above.

GIANT LEECH

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (1d4 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., 30 ft. climb, 30 ft. swim

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+4)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 5 (2d4 + 3) piercing. The giant leech attaches to the target. While attached, the leech doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the leech's turns, the target loses 8 (2d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss. The leech can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 20 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the leech. Additionally, dealing 5 or more point of fire damage causes the leech to detach automatically.

SCRAG

Medium giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 63(6d10 + 30)

Speed 30ft, swim 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (2)	9 (1)	7 (2)

Skills Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Giant

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

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

Regeneration. The scrag regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the scrag is in water, this regeneration increases to 10. If the scrag takes acid or cold damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the scrag's next turn. The scrag dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

(Variant) Loathsome Limbs. Whenever the scrag takes at least 15 slashing damage at one time, roll a d20 to determine what else happens to it:

1-10: Nothing else happens

11-14: One leg is severed from the scrag if it has any legs left

15-18: One arm is severed from the scrag if it has any arms left

19-20: The scrag is decapitated, but the scrag dies only if it can't regenerate. If it dies, so does the severed head.

If the scrag finishes a short or long rest without reattaching a severed limb or head, the part regrows. At that point, the severed part dies. Until then, a severed part acts on the scrag's initiative and has its own action and movement. A severed part has AC 13, 10 hit points, and the scrag's Regeneration trait. A severed leg is unable to attack and has a speed of 5 feet.

A severed arm has a speed of 5 feet and can make one claw attack on its turn, with disadvantage on the attack roll unless the scrag can see the arm and its target. Each time the scrag loses an arm, it loses a claw attack. If its head is severed, the scrag loses its bite attack and its body is blinded unless the head can see it. The severed head has a speed of 0 feet and the scrag's Keen Smell trait. It can make a bite attack but only against a target in its space.

The scrag's speed is halved if it's missing a leg. If it loses both legs, it falls prone. If it has both arms, it can crawl. With only one arm, it can still crawl, but its speed is halved. With no arms or legs, its speed is 0, and it can't benefit from bonuses to speed.

Actions

Multiattack. The scrag makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 8 (2d4 + 3)

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 10 (2d6 + 3)

SCRAGLING

Medium giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 22(3d10 + 6)

Speed 30ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	7 (2)	9 (1)	7 (2)

Skills Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Regeneration. The scragling regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the scragling is in water, this regeneration increases to 10. If the scragling takes acid or cold damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the scragling's next turn. The scragling dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

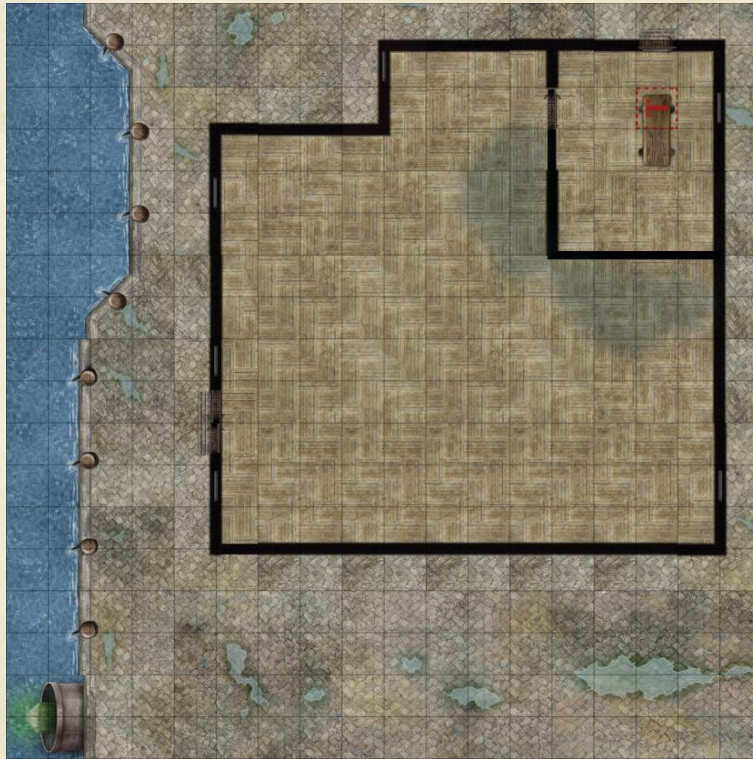
Actions

Multiattack. The scragling makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

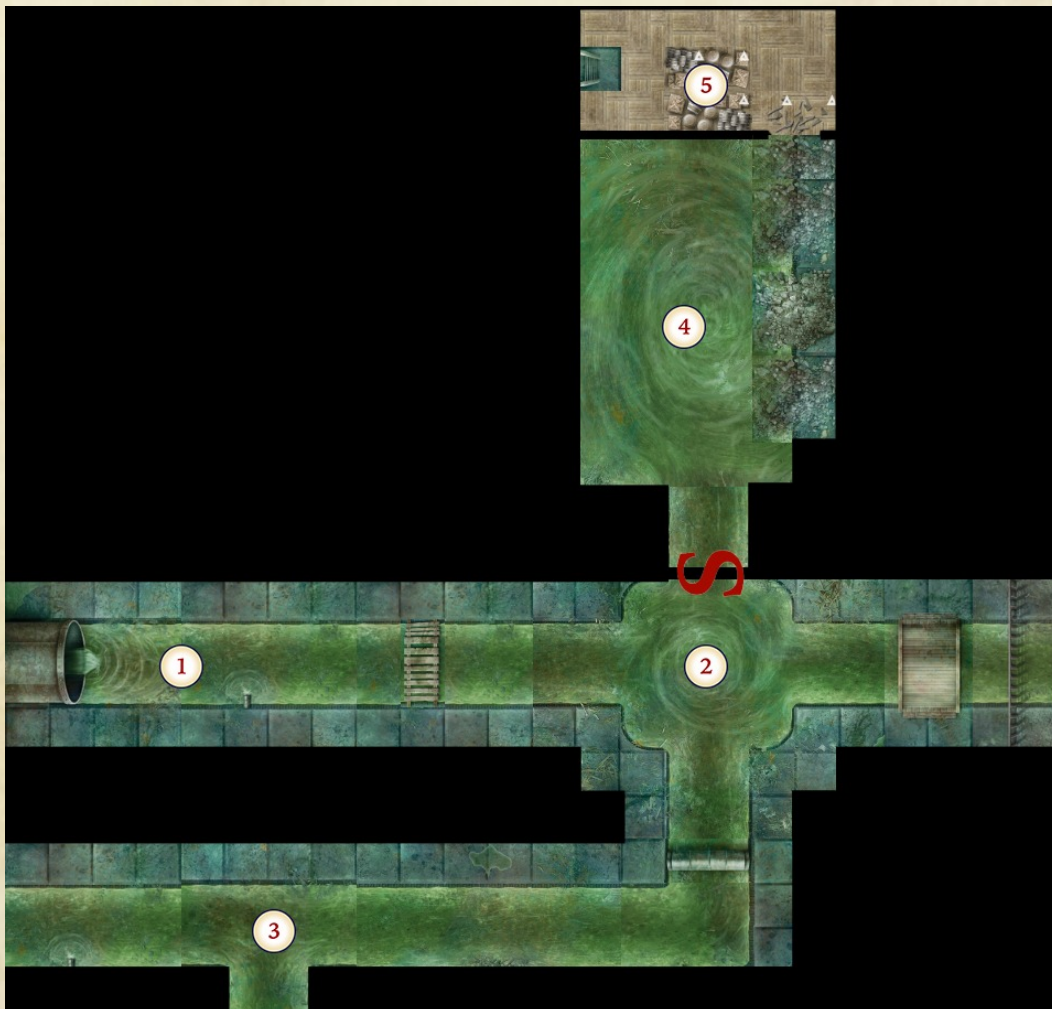
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 5 (1d6 + 2)

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 7 (2d4 + 2)

ABANDONED WAREHOUSE



SEWER LAIR



ADDITIONAL NOTES

This module is set in the city of Waterdeep, but very few conversions need to be made to set it in any port city in any realm. It could just as easily occur in Saltmarsh, Port Nyanzaru, or even a river-based city or town. The main goal of this is to provide a little intrigue in between stories, most specifically between *Dragon Heist* and *Dungeon of the Mad Mage*. I hope you enjoy this short excursion.

CREDITS

Author/Designer: Jonathan Duprée

Graphic Design: Jonathan Duprée / The Homebrewery

Cover Illustrator: DM's Guild Resources

Playtesting provided by

Andy Manno, Matthew Barnette, Steven Veenema, Zach Wilbur

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