

# Rats in the Rain

## *Part 1: Falling of the rain*

Rain has been falling heavily for several days, tempers are on edge, gutters are overflowing and a tangled web is forming between different factions in the city sewers.

It's an opportunity for new adventurers to get started and make their mark.

A 2-hour adventure for 1st level characters

by G Christopher Dyson



# Rats in the rain

A series of small adventures based in the city streets, the sewers and hidden places where low level characters can learn and grow.

Part 1: The Falling of the Rain  
Part 2: beneath the storm  
Part 3: The Black of the Rainbow

The Falling of the rain is a set of interconnected events that begin with a job offer to eradicate rats, but will end with encountering a desperate cultist and an enigmatic druid.

## Level of play

This module is designed for a group of 4-6 first level characters in a balanced party.

It could be adapted for a stronger group, but this is not recommended. It really isn't the sort of story that higher level characters would get involved in.

## Adaptability

If played as a [League of Rats](#) game, this module would be set in the [Golden Kingdom](#) town of Vollenchia. A mostly human city on the southern coast with a long stretch of elven lands to the north west, dwarven hills to the north and gnoll pride lands to the south.

It is a fairly dry city, so long periods of rain are unusual.



The module could be adapted to be set in any location such as a city near deep water in realms that have been forgotten.

It could also be placed in any large city in a world of your own device.



## Background

Rain has been heavy and continuous for the last few days. People are starting to get unhappy. Drains are blocked, the gutters are overflowing. Scavengers have been coming out of the sewers looking for food.

One particular merchant with a food stand has had problems with a creature he assumed to be a giant rat coming out of the sewer and stealing his wears. It was actually a very wet ape that lives down below.

Naturally, he has responded to this crisis by covering the drain by the back of his store. As a result, the gutter is now overflowing.

Flooding caused by the blockage has made a nearby intersection dangerous. Several people have fallen over after slipping on a greasy patch under the puddle. Each has then been helped out by an enterprising local pick-pocket who has pinched their coin as he's helped them up.

There is a young, angry man who lost an important brooch to the pick pocket. It identifies him as a member of a cult and he is very eager to get it back.

The overflow in the gutter has caused extra water to flood another drain which is now filling a hidden storage room down below belonging to a local fence. She is reacting by moving her wears to another location, but due to the water, the new area is infested with rats. What she needs is a team of rat catchers to go in and sort the rats out.

## Outline

For the players, the adventure begins in a tavern where they are asked to clear rats out of a room in the sewers.

To get this done, the party must travel the streets of town where they can learn about stolen property, they can encounter a pick pocket and they may see people trying to block up drains. Once in the sewer they must battle the rats and then meet a sewer druid who will speak to them about his concerns. Following this meeting is an encounter with a grey ooze in which the druid may assist the party.

After moving their employer's property, the party will encounter a cultist looking for stolen property and a wild ape that lives in the sewers.

**Tip:**

Starting adventures are a big challenge. You shouldn't start with something earth shattering or anything that looks epic as there is no reason first level characters would be involved. You want a simple low level adventure, that maybe foreshadows bigger things.

You want to set up some contacts, but above all else you want to give out 300XP quickly because first level characters are made of tissue paper.

This module barely has 300XP, but it is simple, short and drops hints of what comes in later modules.

## Part 1: Meeting

The adventure begins with the party staying out of the rain by sharing a round of drinks at the *Old Crow Tavern*. The tavern is in the west part of town near the gate used by wagons and traders. It is a good place to find work as a caravan guard and is often the first place in town that visitors will come, so can be a useful source of rumors.

The party are starting characters with no current income, minimal resources and no sign of a job. They may be drinking their last coins.

**Read Aloud:**

It has been raining continuously for three days. The local merchants are getting on edge as their customers are less inclined to brave the weather. The Old Crow Tavern is overflowing with folks staying by the fire out of the rain.

As thunder shakes the sky, the well-known local business woman, Kendra the Mouse invites herself to sit down at your table.

Kendra is half elven, wood elf on her father's side, she would explain. She dresses in a long heavy dress and wears a scarf, which she unties as she sits down.

"The word is," she says without waiting for greetings, "that you can use a little work right now and that you don't mind getting your shoes dirty."

If nobody interrupts, she mentions her warehouse and pauses, though some of the characters may know her warehouse is an old underground pump room connected to the sewers.

**Read Aloud:**

"My warehouse is getting flooded and I need to move my stock. I've a new location pegged out, but it looks like rat problem. Would you do me the favour of clearing it out"

She knows nobody will accept the deal just as a favour, but it doesn't hurt to ask. She is prepared to go as high as 5gp if characters would like to negotiate.

If she needs to offer a sweetener, she will offer to sell them some weapons at reduced prices or even to pay "good rates" for anything they recover.

If players refuse to work for so little, remind them that the game ends if they don't accept the hook, though you could draw them in using the lost jewellery hook where the reward is better. Morally superior characters who refuse to work for a criminal could instead be recruited by the druid.

After negotiating, she explains the way to get to her new storage room will be down Smithon's street. Left at Cooper's lane and down the storm drain behind the stable. It'll smell, but there is plenty of fresh water coming in right now. Head down and to the right. At the end of the corridor is a locked gate. Behind that is a set of stairs leading up to a dry landing and a bolt hole. That will be her new storage place. As it's the only dry place down there, some rats have moved in. Get rid of them and then help move the stuff and Kendra will be happy.

If anyone asks, she gives them a “*well der*” look and says “yes this is all illegal. Tell anyone and you’ll find rats gnawing on your innards by morning.”

Roleplaying Kendra: Kendra is sure of herself and quick with a response. She is in a hurry to employ some rat catchers, but she also knows she has other options, so she won’t be ageing to premium prices.

She’s not going to hide the fact that her operation is illegal, but she’d rather not be too open about it either. She assumes the PCs are willing to do some shady work for a reward.



If questioned he’ll run (he’ll dodge the greasy spots, hoping pursuers will fall over)

Should he be captured or slain, the pickpocket carries 10gp, jewelry worth 20gp, Signet ring and brooch owned by Victoros. The brooch is black and shows an imaged of a black rainbow.

Either way, they should notice the puddles are extra deep here with the overflow heading into a storm drain near the smithy. This was the previous entrance to Kendra’s stock room. It is guarded by Morrow Crane, a half orc leaning against the wall of a nearby store.

This drain is a two-foot diameter hole covered by a rotting wooden grate. There is quite a flow of water going in.

Past the smithy, characters will know the stable is further down the road and on the other side. The storm drain there has nowhere near as much water flowing in, but it does smell due to the nearby horses.

This drain is basically a large uncovered hole, about two feet in diameter which characters should be able to climb down (over-weight and heavily armored characters may struggle)

One of the stable hands is carrying a metal grate back from the smithy. If characters have been delayed by anything he will attempt to use the grate to cover the drain entrance. If asked, he’ll say its to keep a large rat out of the stable. The thing has been spooking the horses.

He can easily be persuaded to not lock this in any way. (DC 10 persuade, intimidate or deception)

If the players have proceeded straight here, oblivious to any interesting distractions, they will enter the sewer easily, but the grate will be secured after they enter.

## Part 2: Smithon’s Street

On Smithon’s street, observant characters will spot a fresh notice:

Handout:

*Lost or stolen!  
Signet ring from the house of  
Ravens.  
Reward if returned.  
See Victaros Winter at Last Drop  
tavern.  
  
Pick pockets should be flogged!*

A DC 15 history check will reveal the House of Ravens as an unimportant noble family of tieflings. If characters know this, they should be able to identify the signet.

At the corner of Cooper’s lane, characters should make a DC 15 spot check to see the greased road under a puddle. If they fail, make a DC 15 dexterity save to avoid falling. A DC 15 perception check will also reveal a shady gentleman sitting on a nearby barrel paying close attention to the greasy corner.

### Part 3: The Sewers

Conditions in the sewers: It is cold and wet. A lot of fresh water has been washing in, so the smell is less intense than usually expected. There are numerous grates and drains that water falls through but also allow a small amount of light to come in. Human eyes will adjust to it quickly, while light sensitive eyes will not be at a disadvantage. It is not necessary to carry torches.

Moving through the sewer to the correct location is pretty easy. There are two swarms of rats eating something large in the room. They will immediately attack any characters who enter. What they were eating was a large bag of fruit stolen from up above by the ape.



Characters making a knowledge nature roll (DC 10) will notice refuse in the room is from an animal bigger than a rat.

After the fight, Jasper Grain, the sewer druid will approach.

Read Aloud:

The bodies of the rats lie strewn about the room along with the remains of a large bag of fruit. Grapefruit juice covers the floor, mixed in with refuse and blood.

The room will certainly need cleaning before Kendra can make use of it.

In the tunnel outside there is a flicker of light and a voice says "Hello in there"

Unless met with threats or hostility, Jasper carefully steps into the room.

Read Aloud:

Stepping through the entrance you see a young man in soaked hide armor carrying a ball of fire in one hand.

"Hello," he says, "rat catchers I take it, good job, it needs doing. I am Jasper Grain, sewer guardian."

If the PCs peacefully engage Jasper in conversation, they will find he is quite interested in what creatures they have seen in the sewer and what they have notices about the water flow.

He does not care at all about Kendra's business and feels she can do what she wants with the room.

From Jasper they can learn the following:

- He is a sewer druid and specialises in looking after the world below the city.
- He can identify the faeces in the room are from a larger mammal than rats.
- He has heard reports of a giant rat in the area.
- There have been some blockages in the drains that are now causing flash flooding which is what Jasper is investigating.

He is even prepared to offer a reward if the group can find and fix the blockage. He doesn't carry money, but can give them a pair of hunting traps that could sell for 5gp at the market.

Once the room is cleared and cleaned, the characters can return to Kendra.

On the way back, they will be hit by a flash flood (maybe just a large wave) headed their way. What looks like an oily puddle in the wave is a grey ooze that slams into the party?.

Read Aloud:

Rounding a corner, you feel the current turn for a moment and a large wave rushes at you. An oily puddle seems to ride atop the wave with light glistening off it with odd rainbow like reflections.

There is no time to marvel in this, as the wave hits.

Characters should make a dexterity or strength saving throw to avoid being knocked down. DC is 10, but the wet and slippery conditions mean they have disadvantage on their rolls.

Once the wave hits, the grey ooze will attack any of the fallen characters.

If the party struggles, they can get assistance from Jasper Grain who will charge in with a shillelagh.

**Tip:**

Inexperienced players may not be very good working in a team, so they may need a suggestion or two to help them.

Between battles players should look at their hit points and consider their healing capacity. New gamers haven't learned this yet, so they may need a nudge.

If nobody says anything, it may help to simply say, "Does anyone need to talk to the cleric about healing?"

They should get into the habit of being as healthy as possible before a big fight.

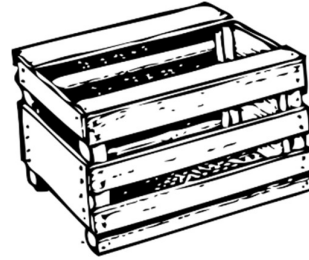
It is not your job to keep an eye on their health and it's funny when they go into a big battle with no hit points, but you should at least help them to learn.

When they return to the storm drain they may find it locked. This will happen if they rushed in or annoyed the pickpocket enough.

If it is locked, getting out will require two characters to make strength checks. One to support (DC 10) and the other to break out (DC 18) otherwise they must find another exit. The one near the smithy is not far away, but the water flow makes exiting difficult (make them roll to determine time taken)

Kendra will be waiting with Morrow and be thankful the rats are dead. Her next priority will be moving the crates which she will expect the characters to take care of.

Morrow will keep watch at old location until after the move. It will take four characters three trips to move things. There are a few crates, two barrels and some bags. Morrow will aid in the last run.



On second trip, they meet Victoros Winter, a tiefling who is now searching furiously for his brooch.

**Read Aloud:**

As you carry to crates, you see another figure in the water up ahead. His red skin and horns mark him as a tiefling. Although he is wet from the sewer water, he is wearing fine clothes as though this is a man of means. Hovering by his shoulder is a small orb radiating light.

"You there!" He shouts sternly. "I would have words!"

He will ask what the party has found. If pressed, he will say he has had an important signet ring stolen. What he is more worried about is a brooch.

**Roleplaying Victoros:** He is scared, desperate and rude. He responds quickly and will draw steel if anything does not go his way.

He will not admit to losing the brooch and will resort to violence if he can reclaim it from the characters.

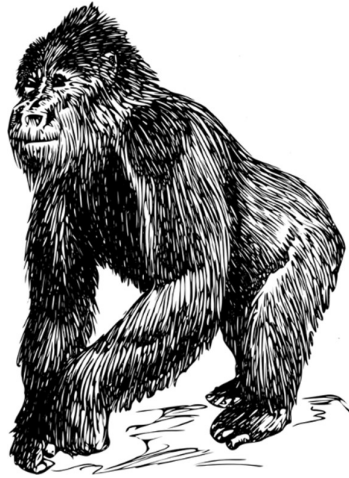
He will be quick to accuse the party of being thieves.

If they have the ring or brooch they can negotiate, but he would rather blame them than pay out a reward.

If the party gives them information about the pickpocket, he will look surprised, but not be ready to trust them.

If they surrender the brooch to him, he will want to kill them to keep his secret.

This is when the ape turns up. People keep blocking its access to food and its getting hungry. Once defeated, someone can identify that blocked drains are causing the problems.



The party will immediately face a battle on two fronts.

## Wrapping Up

Following the battle in the sewer, the party can complete the job uninterrupted. Kendra will reward them as agreed and will offer to purchase any recovered treasure.

If they have the brooch, she will refuse to buy it. "This is too specific an item to have resale value and it is dangerous." She shakes her head and hands it back.

Should the party wish to purchase weapons from her, she has some orcish made hand axes for 3gp

Should the party seek out the cause of the drain blockage, they can find the blocked drain behind the food vendor. Once the ape is defeated, he will be happy to unblock the drain. Jasper will then hand over the promised traps which Kendra will pay 10gp for.

## Rewards

Award the following rewards for completing this module:

### Treasure

The party receives the following rewards:  
 Payment from Kendra 5gp  
 Carried by Victoros 50gp  
 Carried by pickpocket 10gp, jewelry worth 20gp,  
 Signet ring owned by Victoros can be sold for 5gp  
 Brooch owned by Victoros cannot be sold  
 Reward from Jasper 10gp

## Magic Items

Victoros had a Driftglobe (See core rules)

## Experience Points

The following should be awarded for defeating enemies:

Ape	100
Ooze	100
Rat swarm	50 per swarm
Victaros	450
Pickpocket	25

The following bonus should be awarded for achieving specific outcomes:

Get Kendra set up in new base: 50 each  
 Unblock all drains: 50 each

## Downtime

Characters earn 5 days of downtime.

## Character Directory

**Kendra the Mouse:** A half elven fence with a few connections around town.

**Victaros Winter:** A Teifling member of the Cult of the Black Rainbow.

**Morrow Crane:** A Half Orc thug working for Kendra the Mouse.

**Jasper Grain:** Human druid specializing in sewers and life under and around cities.

### Tip:

Introduce NPCs slowly. If the players are not taking notes they will blur into each other.

Where NPCs have a surname, always use it until the players are certain they know who you mean. Using obvious nicknames can help. Remember that the name becomes a symbol used to identify the character.

Kendra the Mouse sounds like a female rogue. The name can quickly be learned.

Many NPCs do not need a name and should not get one. Don't name the bar keep or the blacksmith: Their title is all the players need to know.

## NPC/Monster stats

### Ape

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 19

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16	14	14	6	12	7
(+3)	(+2)	(+2)	(-2)	(+1)	(-2)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** ½ (100 XP)

#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The ape makes two fist attacks.

**Fist. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, range 25/50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

### Gray Ooze

Medium ooze, unaligned

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 22

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12	6	16	1	6	2
(+1)	(-2)	(+3)	(-5)	(-2)	(-4)

**Skills** Stealth +2

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** ½ (100 XP)

**Amorphous.** The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Corrode Metal.** Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the ooze 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 ooze is destroyed after dealing damage. The ooze can eat through 2 inch thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.

**False Appearance.** While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock.

#### Actions

**Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) 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.

### Pickpocket (Bandit)

Medium human, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 9

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11	16	12	10	10	10
(+0)	(+3)	(+1)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)

**Skills:** Sleight of hand +5

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

#### Actions

**Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

### Rat swarm

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 24

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9	11	9	2	10	3
(-1)	(+0)	(-1)	(-4)	(+0)	(-4)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** ¼ (50 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**

**Bites. Melee Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. **Hit:** 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

**Victoros Winter (Cult Fanatic)**

*Medium humanoid tiefling, Lawful Evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armour)

**Hit Points** 33

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11	14	12	10	13	14
(+0)	(+2)	(+1)	(+0)	(+1)	(+2)

**Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Dark Devotion.** The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Spellcasting.** The fanatic is a 4<sup>th</sup> level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks).

The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared: Cantrips (at will):

*light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots):

*command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots):

*Hold person, spiritual weapon*

**Actions**

**Multiattack.** The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

**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.

**New Rules**

**Sewer Druid**

A sewer druid is a druid belonging to circle of the Land who has chosen the city sewer as his terrain type. Often they will patrol sewers looking for rogue animals, water blockages or any other problem that may affect the city above.

It grants a new set of circle spells, but is otherwise identical to any other circle of the land druid.

Circle of the Land: Sewer Spells

**Druid Level / Circle Spells**

3rd *darkness, darkvision*

5th gaseous form, *stinking cloud*

7th control water, *stone shape*

9th cloudkill, *contagion*

**Rat Catcher**

You come from one of the most noble of all backgrounds of any adventuring group.

Some people start rich and some start poor, but the Rat Catcher is more than just poor, they are hardworking and willing to do whatever it takes to better themselves. They accept a hard job because they are responsible and there are bills to pay. They accept an impossible job because they know that someone must control the pests.

The life lessons learned by a rat catcher will lend themselves to an adventurer more than any other role.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Animal Handling, Stealth

**Tool Proficiencies:** Poisoner's kit

**Equipment:** A set of common clothes, a hunting trap and a belt pouch containing 10gp

**Feature: Ways of the under-city.**

The know the ways of tunnels and sewers and can tell from signs of rats where these can be found. Rat Catchers can find an entrance to a city sewer or underground tunnels and navigate them as if he had local knowledge.

**Suggested Characteristics**

Rat Catchers have humble beginnings, but you need to ask yourself why they became a rat catchers and why are they now moving on to another career. Have they earned enough to get out of the sewers? Have they found a more noble goal?

The Rat Catcher background appears in [Heroes of the Dawn](#)

## Maps and Handouts

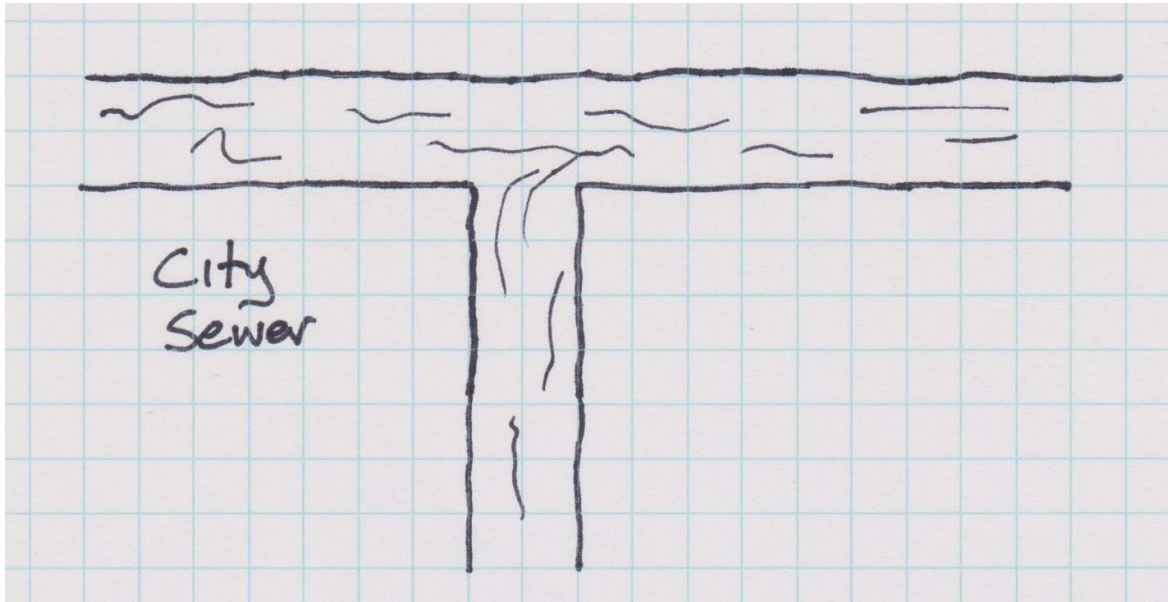
Handout

*Lost or stolen!*  
*Signet ring from the house of Ravens.*  
*Reward if returned.*  
*See Victaros Winter at Last Drop tavern.*

*Pick pockets should be flogged!*

Map 1:

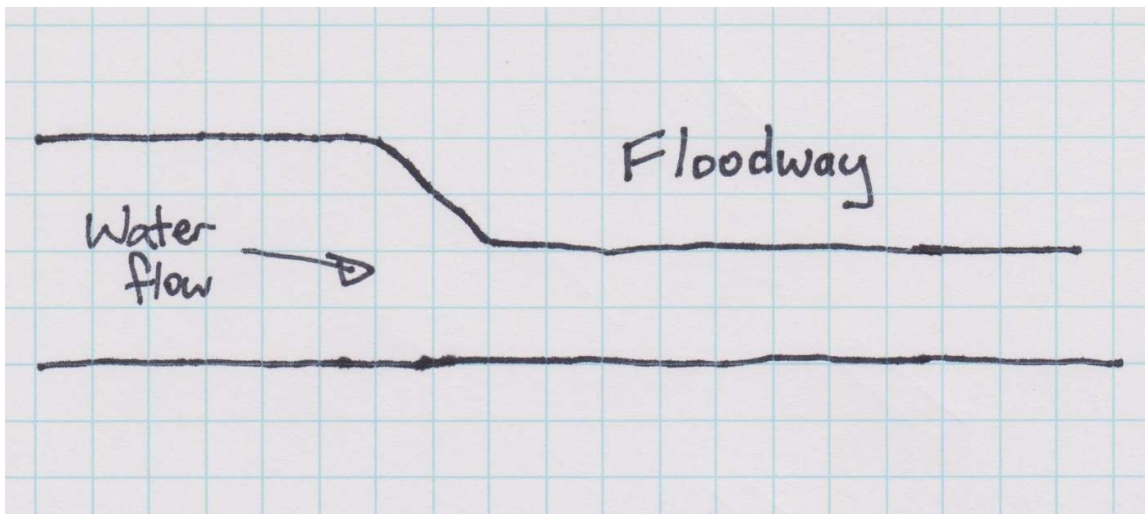
Used for encounter with Victoros and Ape



1 square = 5 feet

Map 2:

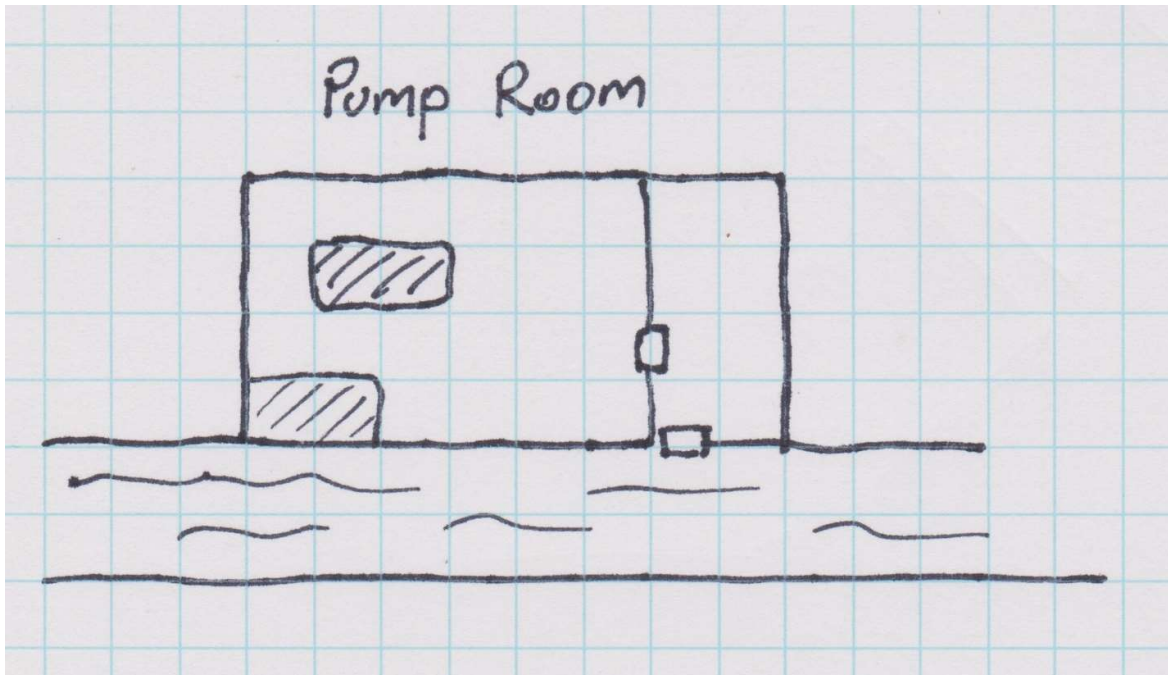
To be used for the ooze encounter. Characters start in narrow part of sewer, with ooze coming from the wider section. The narrowing of the sewer causes water to move faster.



1 square = 5 feet

### Map 3: Pump station

To be used for encounter with Rats and meeting with Jasper.



1 square = 5 feet

#### Tip:

Maps may or may not even be needed. Quite often you don't need them, but if you suddenly do (if players pursue a fleeing pickpocket) just improvise and don't worry if important things are missing.

If you are using whiteboard maps, you can always get the players to draw it for you. It keeps them involved and makes your life easier.

## Playtest

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The module was originally tested with a first level party consisting of:

- Hill Dwarf Cleric
- High Elf Rogue
- Tiefling Sorcerer
- Dragonborn Barbarian
- Human Bard

They won the battles with very little trouble although the rogue and barbarian were both knocked unconscious more than once. There was enough healing in the party to handle that. A less balanced party may have some trouble.

In the first battle, the rogue was knocked out by a critical hit. If he hadn't been healed right away, it would have been bad. First level characters are made of tissue paper.

### Tip:

Learn from your mistakes. Don't worry when things go wrong. Don't fight over anything and don't let anyone blame anyone else.

Just think about what happened and why and then think what can be done better.

Every group of players is different and it takes a while to gain the flexibility you really need.

Mostly, just don't dwell on anything

## Acknowledgements

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