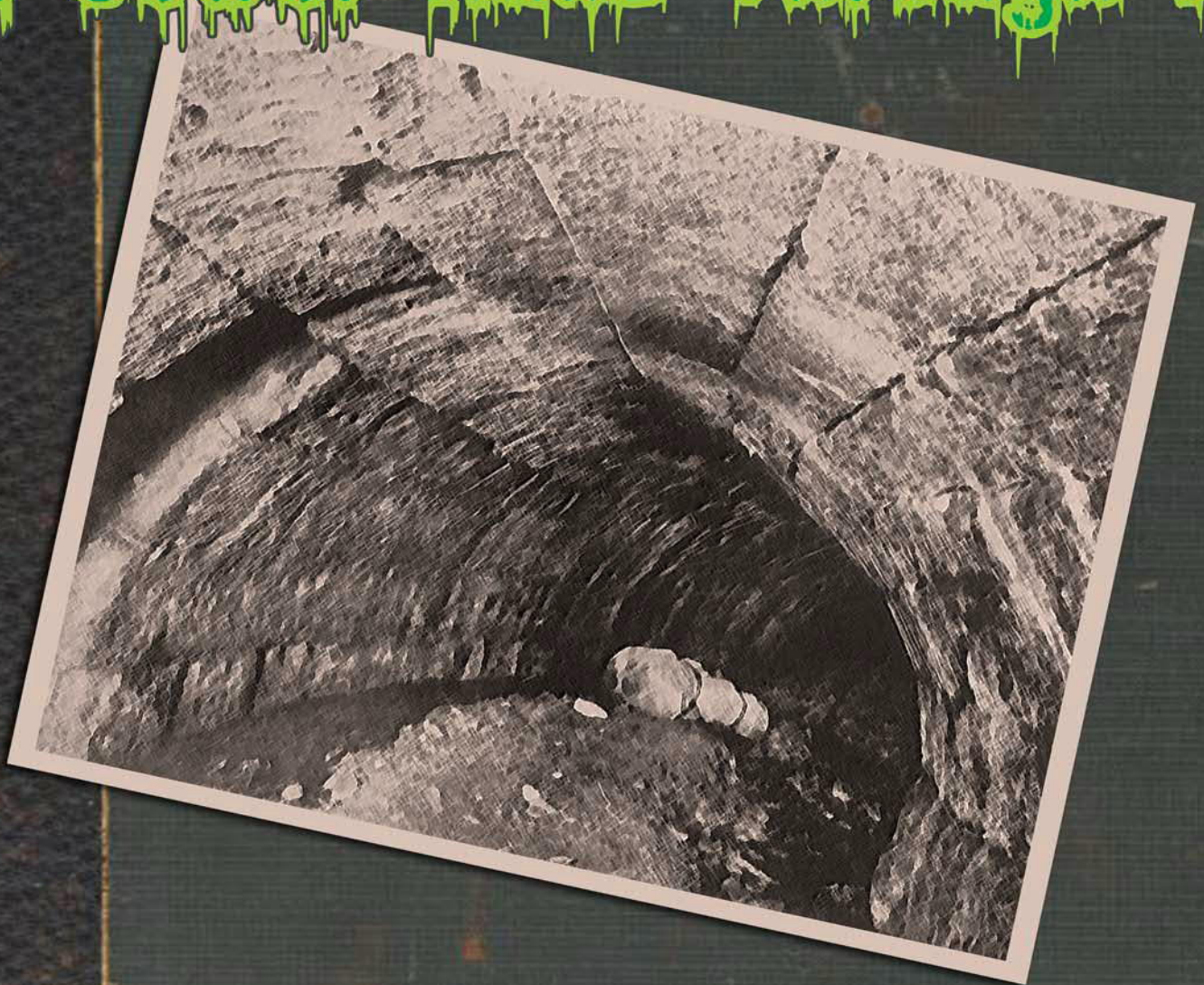




# A Sewer Runs Through It



*by Steve Johansson  
& Christopher Stogdill*



# A Sewer Runs Through It

**Designer's Notes:** This adventure was initially conceived as the initial adventure in an urban campaign centered in Bet Kalamar, the capital of the Kingdom of Kalamar.

I wanted to provide a variety of challenges both in opponents and other obstacles that novice explorers will have to overcome. While the humanoid enemies are significantly weaker than the norm, their lack of armor and proper weaponry is in keeping with the scenario and renders them far more manageable for a novice group of adventurers. The final battle with the gnole will be difficult but hopefully any spellcasters have husbanded their arsenal for this climax. If they've needlessly expended their firepower early on, well, that's an error in judgment that they may learn not to repeat. The gouger encounter (and to a lesser degree the alligator) are there as temptations best left alone. Nothing is to be gained by fighting these beasts.

Ironically, this dungeon has invariably proved to be a horrendous death trap though it was not intended as such. I've run it several times never failing to garner a 50% kill rate. The root cause of nearly all deaths is drowning. Unfortunately, in their mad rush to buff up all their combat bonuses, PCs often neglect to prepare themselves for routine hazards that they may face when exploring. Do not succumb to the urge to "go soft" on players that have made this error. They must learn that HackMaster is more than pure combat prowess. Should their dwarf end up on the fatality list, perhaps they will appreciate the value of knowing how to swim when they generate their next character.

Pay close attention to characters and monsters that fail Trauma checks. Given the foot and a half of water in most passageways, PCs incapacitated by trauma risk drowning as they collapse in pain. This danger can be eliminated if an ally assists them to keep their head above water but it demands that someone realizes this danger and takes action to prevent their comrades asphyxiating!

This HackMaster adventure is intended for four to six 1st level characters. It takes place in the slums of Bet Kalamar, the premier city within the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting. The adventure may be relocated to any other large city should the GM so desire.

## GM's Background

The Namirs, an unremarkable gang of thieves, operate a small smuggling ring in Bet Kalamar that utilizes a portion of the city's sewers to move their illicit goods through the city undetected. The Namirs have expanded this sewer network to connect a number of safehouses spread throughout the city. Most of their tunnels have connections to the main sewer lines and in recent months they have been working in earnest to extend their network to new safehouses in other neighborhoods.

During one such expansion their excavation broke through to another older tunnel system currently used by a group of humanoid escapees from the infamous gladiatorial arena that have managed to eek out a living down in the muck and filth of the sewer system. Minor tributes of food and liquor have brokered a fragile peace between the two groups, permitting the Namirs to continue their clandestine activities in the tunnels unobstructed while utilizing the humanoids as cheap security for this portion of their network.

The humanoid derelicts were recently joined by another escapee – a powerful gnole named Urdu'ak. He quickly asserted his dominance over the orcs and goblins becoming the new leader. He is an arrogant fool given to drink and quickly upset the precarious détente the goblins (with the begrudging support of the orcs) had brokered with the human smugglers.

He sought to improve his personal situation by extracting more money from these miserable humans. As fate would have it, a group of three smugglers fell into his clutches. After some torture, one revealed himself to be Sulat Namir, nephew of the Namir godfather. (In truth Sulat volunteered this information in a bid to spare his life by presenting himself as someone having value to the humanoids!)

Sulat's disappearance was initially written off to some foolish caper the headstrong boy got himself mixed up in. Inexplicably the body never surfaced. When the ransom note later appeared in the customary spot where Namir's agents would leave bribes of liquor and food for the humanoids, the mystery was solved.

The Namirs now knew their allies had turned hostile and rerouted their smuggling around this presumably now unsafe portion of the sewers. Scant thought to mounting a rescue operation was given – they are low-life criminals after all and “having your back” is not part of their modus operandi when you go rogue. The safehouse directly over this portion of the sewer network has lain vacant and unused. Urdu'ak's expectation of ransom has so far gone unfulfilled.

Tani Namir, the gang's boss, has been getting an earful from his wife's sister over the disappearance of her son, Sulat. Although he fears risking additional casualties determining what happened to this idiot, he soon will reach the limit of his tolerance of this badgering and will send a heavily armed reconnaissance team into the tunnels simply to get some peace and quiet at home.

It has been two weeks since Sulat and his crew was captured and it will be at least another week before Tani Namir acts on the matter. The gnole is far less in control of its emotions. It's been getting increasingly worked up about the humans disrespecting his 'generous offer' and will finally blow its stack and dismember the prisoners in five days time.

## Getting the Players Involved

Hopefully the players are citizens or at least recent immigrants to Bet Kalamar and have some familiarity with the neighborhood. This is an easy choice if the characters are newly generated and this is their first adventure.

It is thus presumed that the characters are aware of the existence of the unoccupied house though not necessarily its owner. Merely presenting the opportunity of a vacant house may be lure enough for many players as it could be an opportunity for exploration, looting, or even free lodging. In one iteration I ran, the characters (all teenagers as 1st level characters are wont to be) decided to take advantage of the house by hosting a massive party.

▶ If you would rather the characters take the opportunity to explore the neighborhood before revealing the existence of the Namirs' safehouse, an Easy Observation or Glean Information skill check will reveal its presence.

If this is insufficient background material for your taste, following are a couple of rumors that can be seeded into normal interactions with civilians and other NPCs that the PCs can pick up on in the course of other adventures. These should be used in addition to other rumors in advance of attempting to play this particular adventure.

It is highly unlikely that the PCs would be aware of the sewer tunnel network and the Namirs' use thereof and troubles within. Their discovery of the sewer network should be a surprise.

*“I heard that one of them Namir boys got himself in a bit of trouble with the law and high-tailed it out of town to lay low for a while.”* (Partially true; Sulat Namir is in trouble, but not with the authorities. This is just pure speculation that just happens to have some truth to it.)

*“I heard the guard hasn't been checking on that vacant house over yonder like they used to. Some kids got in there the other day.”* (Partially True; The Namirs continue to make donations to the constabulary in order to ensure they ignore any nocturnal activity on the part of the Namirs while rousting anyone else that might attempt to make use of the vacant property. The standard signal to “ignore what's going on tonight” is to leave a single flicking candle alight in the back room (incidentally this coupled with figures in dark clothing and face black sneaking around at night is the source of the haunting rumor below...) However, some clever neighborhood kids have figured out that the patrols are very lax at night and broke into the house though did not vandalize it.)

*“That old vacant house is haunted. That is the only reason it still stands. Nobody wants to risk building too close to it. The closest neighbors are even afraid to build windows fac-*

*ing the house.*” (False; The house is not haunted though suspicious nocturnal activity and eerie lights have acted upon the overactive imagination of some residents of the quarter naturally given to superstitions.)

*“That empty house must be worth a small fortune for all of the work that has been done on it recently. Too bad all that work went to waste since ain’t nobody taken up residence.”* (Partially true; There have been workers going into the house from time to time, but they have been working under the house in the tunnels.)

These rumors should help entice the PCs to check out the abandoned house. If the PCs do not choose to start this adventure, they may find other reasons to need a quiet place away from prying eyes.

**Important Scenario Note:** To facilitate their smuggling, the Namirs have paid off the constabulary to ignore their furtive late-night endeavors while keeping the property clear of squatters. The beat cops have found it easier to simply ignore all activity at night and deal with squatters during the day. If the PCs make reasonable attempts to conceal their presence, they will not draw the attention of the night watch.

If the Party foolishly trespasses during daylight hours, one of the neighbors, an old lady who spends almost her entire day looking out her window, will alert the city guard. This will draw a patrol within 30 minutes to investigate the disturbance. If they catch trespassers, the crooked constables are inclined to simply shake down the PCs for all of their coins and then chase them away rather than going through the trouble of actually arresting them.

## The Namirs’ Safehouse

### Outside the Safehouse

Located on the edge of one of Bet Kalamar’s many slums is a small venerable brick home far older than most of the structures comprising the surrounding neighborhood. This house curiously stands apart from the sprawled mess of shanties, shacks, and flophouses that make up this particular slum. Almost an island unto itself, the worn and pitted cobblestone street haphazardly winds around three sides of the fenced-in property while a narrow alley separates it from the neighboring buildings.

The house is owned by the Namirs, one of Bet Kalamar’s Thieves’ Guilds, and serves as an entryway to the sewer network. The Namirs are smugglers and move their illicit goods through the city by means of this subterranean network. The house is customarily vacant.

As the PCs approach the abandoned house, read (or paraphrase) the following text aloud:

This house appears vacant as the usual clutter of closely packed urban life is notably absent and several of the windows are boarded up. A couple weeks’ worth of growth threatens to intrude upon the small garden behind the front gate. The structure appears to be in better shape than most and you guess it must be older than the surrounding houses from a combination of style and the fact that the road splits to surround the house on three sides. A narrow alley runs between the home and several shanties and a flophouse to the west.

The Southern (front) gate to the small grounds is secured with a cheap lock requiring only an easy Lock Picking attempt to bypass.

The old wrought iron fence extends from the southwest of the house, around the property to end at the northeast corner of the building. It can be scaled with an easy Climbing check.

The western alley is about 6 feet in width and almost always in shadow, making Sneaking and Hiding checks average difficulty at worst (the conditions afford a +40 bonus to opposed checks).

The houses only openings are a southern (front) door, a backdoor that opens to the street, and several windows on the south, north, and east sides of the building. There were once windows on the western side, but they have were obviously bricked up some time ago. All windows and doors save those on the front of the building are currently boarded up.

Once the PCs determine their approach, you should consider the conditions. Broad daylight intrusion will draw the attention of the nosy old lady (Observation mastery 16) unless all of the PCs can succeed at an opposed Sneaking skill check. Sneaking onto the property at night will not draw any attention provided the adventures have absconded before dawn.



## Inside the Safehouse

### Potential Yield: bulky mess kit (5 cp)

Once inside, the PCs will find the rather plain house stripped almost bare. There is some trash lying about but it should be readily apparent that any permanent occupants moved out long ago. The house consists of a small kitchen, a larger communal room, and a small bedroom. There is also a small ladder just outside the bedroom that leads up to an attic half-filled with empty crates.

Upstairs in the attic, there is a sizable pool of melted wax on the floor from where some local kids hung out.

The room in back was once the kitchen and in the top of a small closet, almost hidden in the back, are a couple of small pots and extra utensils, enough to constitute a somewhat bulky mess kit.

The only furniture remaining is a rather large bed in the bedroom. Only the massive frame and the straw mattress remain.

- ▶ An easy Scrutiny check reveals that the bed frame seems to be unusual in that it is overly large for the room. Upon further inspection it will be noted that the frame is actually nailed down to the floor and that the straw ticking is not supported by ropes as is customary, but instead is fastened to a solid framework of planks.

Read the following if the bed is thoroughly searched:

When you investigate this unusual bed you notice that the mattress is a bit unconventional in that it is attached directly to a small platform of planks instead of to the sides of the bed. There is a latch that allows you to lift up the bedding to reveal a large hole and ladder leading down into the darkness.

## The Sewer Network

### 1. Descent into the Sewers

The wooden ladder descending into the sewer is bolted to the wall to prevent its theft. It is by no means valuable but its loss would prove extremely inconvenient when access to or egress from the sewers is required.

- ▶ Anyone with mastery in the Carpentry skill can ascertain that it is no more than a few months old and appears to be adequately constructed. It is not trapped and time

spent determining this fact serves no purpose other than to showcase said character's paranoia.

Should the PCs climb down the ladder, the vertical shaft terminates in a narrow (5' width) corridor that extends off into the darkness.

The ladder leads down to a narrow corridor and ends abruptly about a foot above opaque and foul smelling water.

The floor is covered in about 18" (50 cm) of murky noxious water. Those on the ladder may be hesitant about simply leaping into the water not knowing how deep it is. This warranted caution may be allayed by prodding with a 10' pole, a spear or a similar lengthy object.

Upon hopping into the corridor, you create a large splash and have no doubt, tactility or aromatically, that you are in a sewer. As if to add an explanation point to your recognition, a large floating piece of horse manure drifts slowly towards you.

The sewer water is only be knee-high for the average human, but it is nearly waist deep for smaller races. Size M characters (excepting dwarves) may not sprint but they may run and cover distance at jogging velocity. Jogging or walking both equate to walking velocity. Dwarves and size S creatures may run or jog – either of which nets only walking velocity. Walking nets only crawling velocity for diminutive characters.

If measured, the floor of the tunnel is 27 feet below the surface. The tunnel is rough-hewn from the soft stone that lies under a good 15 foot of packed earth.

- ▶ A successful (easy) observation check will reveal that there is a lone torch sconce a few feet from the ladder.

Unless otherwise noted, all 5' wide tunnel corridors are rough-hewn from the rock strata. All of the larger 10' wide tunnels are part of the old sewer system and are lined with ceramic tiles. There are sconces for torches every 50' in the rough-hewn tunnels but no such fixtures are present in the main sewerlines.

### 2. Sudden Drop

Fifteen feet down the corridor from the entry ladder is situated the first of several water hazards. The floor opens to a pit that, while a mere three and a half feet deep, presents a drowning hazard to shorter individuals

laden down with equipment and lacking any swimming proficiency. Coupled with the foot and a half of standing water, the bottom of the pit is 5 feet (150 cm) below the surface.

PCs that have no proficiency in swimming will sink like a stone and, if under 5' in height, are subject to drowning.

A tall character (i.e. most male humans) can effortlessly bypass this hazard even if they cannot swim. Such individuals may ferry shorter PCs across the pit.

The opposite end of the pit ramps up to grade allowing anyone on the bottom of the pit to walk up to the far side.

### 3. Rat's Nest

**Encounter:** 6 giant rats (72 EP)

This area was slated for an expansion of the main sewer when further work ceased due to financial sequestering imposed upon the city's engineering department. The main corridor has been roughly excavated. A temporary support wall bisects the tunnel ending in a large pile of tailings.

The tailings mound has subsequently become home to giant sewer rats. Their warren is in the rubble and the majority of the giant rats reside in rat holes just above the water line.

The corridor opens up to what appears to be a small low cavern dominated by a large pile of rubble.

▶ Characters declaring they are making an Observation check (average difficulty) will notice a number of ripples forming in the water as giant rats bob to the surface. Permit this/these character(s) to roll a d6 for initiative – others roll a d12.

6 Giant Rats			
SPEED 10	ATTACK +0	INIT +0	DMG REDUCTION 1
DEFENSE -1	DAMAGE d4p+1		TOP SAVE 7
REACH 0 ft			

While the rats themselves don't pose an inordinate threat, they are carriers of Rat Bite Fever. Any character bitten by a rat must check communicability to determine if he contracts this disease. This may have deleterious effects that can come into play should the adventure last beyond a single foray. Details on Rat Bite Fever can be found on page 257 of the *Hacklopedia of Beasts*.

Searching the tailings pile yields nothing.

**6 Giant Rats** (12 EP each): HP 8; Init 0; Spd 10; Rch short; Atk +0; Dmg 1d4p+1 (Rat Bite Fever Comm. -2, Sev. +7); Def -1, DR 1, ToP 5; Trauma Save 7; Size S; Move 2.5ft./sec

### Drowning Rules

Characters with no mastery in swimming are subject to panicking when suddenly immersed in water above their heads. They must succeed at a Wisdom check (roll a d20 and score their Wisdom ability or below) else they lose their composure and may not take any actions until rescued. In theory, the hazard presented in "2. Sudden Drop" could easily be bypassed by simply walking through it and emerging via the ramp on the opposite side long before drowning becomes an issue. However, in real life, people do inexplicably drown in shallow water. This mechanism is meant to portray that reality.

An average person (having a Constitution score of 11/01) can hold their breath for 2 minutes (120 seconds). This assumes the PC was able to get a good breath in before they start holding it. Taking such a full breath takes 1 second. If immersion was unexpected, they can only hold their breath for a baseline of 90 seconds.

For every 10 fractional points of Constitution (e.g. 0/10) above or below the median, add or subtract 1 second to the baseline of 2 minutes (120 seconds).

The Pain Tolerant, Tough as Nails, Long Distance

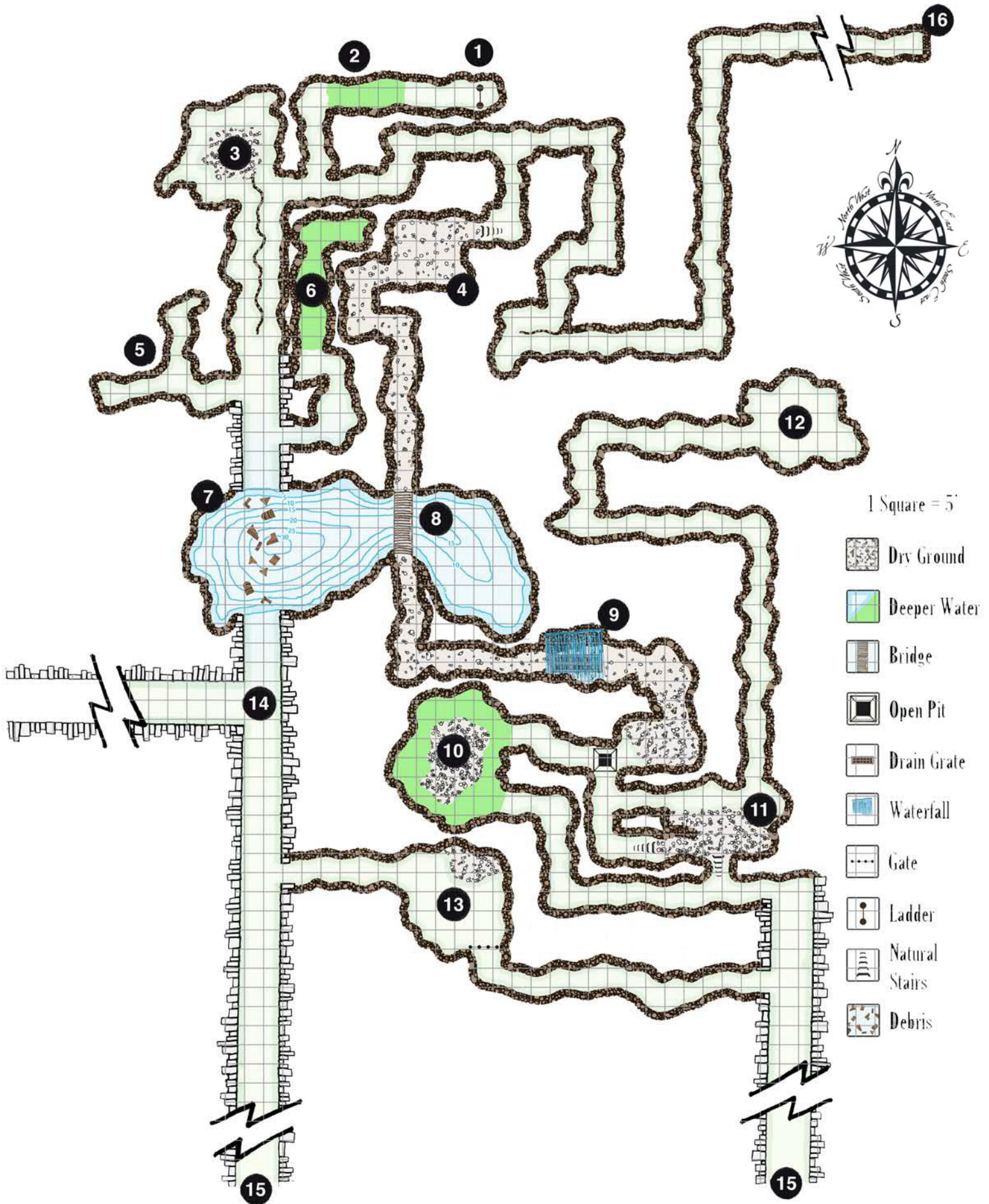
Running, and Physical Conditioning talents each add 20 seconds to this baseline.

Once a character immersed in water reaches his breath-holding time limit, he can no longer take the pain of holding his breath any longer and will attempt to breathe. Should his next breath be devoid of oxygen (or full of something else, like water) he begins to drown.

A character who is drowning is immediately and automatically ToPed for the duration of the drowning incident. For every second he remains in this state he loses 5 fractional points of intelligence PERMANENTLY (i.e. after 20 seconds he will have lost 1 full point of intelligence). Once his intelligence reaches 0, he is dead.

A character dying this way is in cardiac arrest, and no blood is reaching his brain. To save their life, they must be removed from the situation that is depriving them of oxygen. However, this is not enough to magically restore them to health. To restart their heart and lungs, a difficult first aid check must be successfully performed on them (representing the unlikelihood of a first aid provider knowing CPR). As soon as this check is made, their loss of intelligence stops and they are stabilized.





## 4. Guardpost

**Encounter:** 3 orcs (72 EP)

**Potential Yield:** medium shield

This small chamber is a couple feet above grade and thus dry except when there is a significant downpour that appreciably raises the water level in the sewer.

► An easy Scrutiny check of the room reveals a striation of black mold along the bottom portions of the wall testifying to occasional flooding.

It is currently occupied by a group of three horribly scarred orcs. They were previously kept as sparring partners for gladiatorial training before murdering their drunken and inattentive guard some weeks ago and escaping. They are from different tribes whose dialects are mutually unintelligible ironically compelling them to communicate with each other in broken Kalamaran – the only language they share.

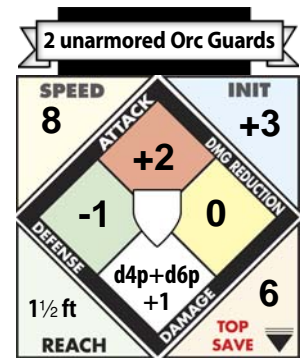
Like many wanted humanoids dwelling within Bet Kalamar, they found shelter in the sewers. Here they have banded together with other non-humans temporarily setting aside lifelong antagonism in pursuit of pragmatic survival. As battle hardened killers, they are tasked with perimeter security. This task is complicated by the fact that they have been forced to scrounge for weapons – making do for the time being with large meat cleavers they reclaimed from the garbage. Although the blades have been sharpened, they are not purpose-designed combat weapon thus should be considered as shoddy-quality hand axes (-1 penalties to Attack and Damage). The strongest orc has a standard quality human-made medium shield but none have any body armor.

Unless the PCs have been extremely quiet and have forgone the use of illumination in the tunnels, the orcs will be prepared for their arrival. They will not attack first, as they are expecting an envoy from the Namirs seeking an audience with Urdu'ak the gnoles in order to ransom their men. As all humans look vaguely alike to them, they will interpret the approach of a group of human PCs as said envoys and will attempt to parley with them. However, the presence of full-blooded elves or dwarves in the band will immediately abrogate any mistaken identity and provokes an attack (halflings though are assumed to be scampish human urchins – a not uncommon sight down here).

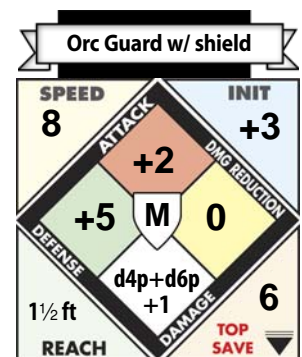
As you round a narrow bend in the tunnel, you approach a short flight of steps leading to a small room elevated above the slimy water. A porcine snouted humanoid brandishing a meat cleaver emerges from said room. It addresses you in broken Kalamaran, asking if "You from Namir?"

The ball is in the PCs' court now. They may play along and pretend to be "from Namir" (whether or not they realize what that means).

If so, the orcs will lead them to area 11 to negotiate with Urdu'ak. One will lead while the other two follow behind the party. Assuming they have the patience to restrain themselves from preemptively trying to murder their escorts, they can effortlessly bypass the obstacles in area 9.



Although it may seem that the PCs can totally get over on the humanoids via this approach, it may not work out as well as they presume. Urdu'ak is awaiting payment and envoys showing empty pockets will infuriate him. The PCs will now face their orc escorts, the goblins from Area 9 (who will tag along with the orcs as they are insatiably curious little bug-gers) and an enraged gnoles as a unified enemy force. It could get ugly quick...



---

**3 Orcs** (24 EP each): HP 26, 24, 24; Init 3; Spd 8; Rch 1½'; Atk +2; Dmg 1d4p+1d6+1; Def -1 (or +5), DR 0, ToP 10; ToP Save 6; Size M; Move 5ft./sec

---

## 5. Uninteresting Dead Ends

This abbreviated side tunnel was excavated parallel to the old sewer main. It branches off into two perpendicular shafts each of which extend a mere 15' before abruptly terminating.

► A successful (average) Mining check reveals that the rock strata changes here and it is obvious that this stone was much harder to work.



## 6. Interesting Dead End

Another small side tunnel branches out from the old sewer main. It loops around before constricting to a narrower width of only 4'.

This passageway was dug as a sump to drain the main sewer whilst repairs were being performed. The darker colored area indicates a sudden 10 foot (3 meter) drop masked by the opaque water. Anyone progressing unawares past that point will suddenly plunge into very deep water. See Section 3 if drowning is a concern for said individual.

This side tunnel loops around until it is parallel with the main sewer. Some twenty-five feet ahead it veers to the right. At that point you can see a large wooden object bobbing in the water. You can just barely make out a small glint of something shiny resting on this platform just at the edge of your torchlight...

The wooden object is a broken table that washed into this area during a significant rainfall. When the water subsided, it became trapped in the corridor. The shiny object is a pewter fork that an irate diner apparently jammed into it before flipping the table and breaking it.

## 7. Flotsam Lake

**Encounter:** 1 small albino alligator (200 EP)

The sewer main was breached here by subsidence that created a large void space that subsequently filled with water. The roof is only 8 feet high leaving just barely enough rock at its peak to support the pocket. In a few years this will collapse creating a sinkhole in the city above.

Those without any mastery of or interest in Geology simply encounter a subterranean pond. The edge of the pond cannot be determined other than by prodding ahead so anyone carelessly walking around the pond's perimeter risks slipping into the depths.

The residents of Bet Kalamar routinely dump all kinds of unwanted material into the sewers. Larger objects such as furniture, barrels or timber become trapped in this deeper area when the water level is too low (as it is now) for them to wash through.

Ahead the old sewer system has been broken apart by a rift in the earth creating a fetid pond. Within it bob numerous pieces of flotsam – easily recognizable as furniture and barrels. The sewerline continues on past this breach just a scant 20-30' feet away.

The PCs may wish to attempt to traverse the lake using the flotsam as floatation devices for non-swimmers. These may be gathered by anyone possessing Average or better mastery in swimming. Non-swimmers clutching on to barrels will have to be towed across either by an individual with Average or better mastery in swimming or dragged from the opposite shore by a rope affixed to the floatation device. However, long before this turns into a farcical river crossing, such efforts will draw the attention of the chamber's sole occupant – an albino alligator (based off of the Lesser Crocodile, HoB p. 74).

Albino Alligator			
SPEED	7	INIT	-1
ATTACK	+5	DMG REDUCTION	3/2
DEFENSE	+4	DAMAGE	2d4p+2
REACH	1 ft	TOP SAVE	7

▶ Given its low profile above the water, the alligator has an effective Hiding skill of 40. Characters performing an Observation check must succeed at an opposed roll in order to spot the creature.

▶ If the alligator sustains 8 hp or more of damage from missile fire, it will withdraw and avoid any further confrontation.

**Small Albino Alligator (200 EP):** HP 30; Init -1; Spd 7; Rch short; Atk +5; Dmg 2d4p+2 (will drown prey after successful attack, FoS +7 to break free); Def +4, DR 3/2, ToP 12; Trauma Save 7; Size M; Move 5ft./sec

With appropriate lighting and vantage point, a small wooden bridge crossing the pond can be seen just past the midpoint of the cave.

▶ An easy scrutiny check reveals that there is a noticeable current flowing through the chamber emanating from a broken storm drain on the cave's eastern edge.

▶ A difficult Listening check will reveal the sound of rushing water from somewhere beyond the chamber.

## 8. Rickety Bridge

A seemingly rickety makeshift bridge spans this narrowest portion of this cave. In reality the bridge is sturdy and of sufficient elevation above the water to allow any debris to safely pass underneath.

The narrow tunnel opens up into a wide cavern. Fortunately you don't need to check how deep the water is in this area because a rickety bridge spans the chamber. The loosely boarded rope bridge seems like it might just be sturdy enough to allow one person to cross at a time, assuming it holds together that is.

- ▶ Require each PC to make a Feat of Agility check (versus 0) to safely cross the bridge. Roll a d20p to create the appropriate tension so it seems dangerous.

If the player rolls really poorly, describe how they stumble, briefly slipping a leg between the loose wooden planks before recovering. False scares aside, all attempts will succeed.

The bridge is perfectly safe and just seems unsafe.

There is a small pile of flotsam corralled together at the end of the cavern. Its movement seems to indicate an underlying current – no doubt caused by water emanating from a broken storm drain on the cave's eastern edge.

- ▶ An average Listening check reveals the sound of rushing water from somewhere beyond the chamber.

## 9. Natural Shower

**Encounter:** 4 goblins (64 EP)

**Potential Yield:** 4 light crossbow bolts +1

A dry tunnel continues past the rickety bridge. The sound of rushing water grows louder as you walk down the corridor. Upon rounding the bend, it becomes clear where this noise originates. Thirty feet ahead a shower of water fills the passageway.

The downpour of water erupts from a small fissure near the roof of the tunnel. It does not pool or fill the corridor, rather it flows directly into a large drain in the floor that is covered by a crude bronze grate making it safe to walk over.

While it is impossible to see through the waterfall, any light sources the PCs bring up to the waterfall will

be noticed by the keen-eyed goblins waiting on the other side.

Walking through the waterfall will extinguish torches and likely lanterns as well unless the latter is shielded from the downpour by being held under a large garment or similar plausible means are used to protect the flame.

The area beyond the waterfall is illuminated only by a candle set in a sconce located on the south wall of the adjoining room. The goblins, with their extreme low light vision, can operate normally in this gloom. Once alerted to the presence of intruders, they wait patiently for someone to emerge from the shower before attacking – presumably with great advantage for even dwarves with normal low light vision suffer significant penalties while other are essentially blind. They are armed with scavenged chef's knives that are not purpose-designed combat weapons thus should be considered as shoddy quality knives (-1 penalties to Attack and Damage).

4 unarmored Goblins			
SPEED	7	ATTACK	+2
INIT	+3	DMG REDUCTION	0
DEFENSE	+4	DAMAGE	6
REACH	0 ft	TOP SAVE	6
d6p-2			

The next room is a small roughly 10'x 20' chamber that serves as the goblin's quarters. They live like derelicts sleeping in piles of cast-off clothing they have gathered. As the longest inhabitants of the sewers amongst the humanoids, they have acquired several changes of clothes. Their best ones they hang from the wall using 4 **light crossbow bolts +1** as pegs. The fact that the clothes are draped over these missiles will only be discovered if they are removed from the 'pegs' not merely patted down or searched.

It is important to note that there is a 30' deep (flooded) shaft at the edge of this room and if the goblins need to flee they will most likely nimbly cross the edge of pit to the tunnel leading to area 11. This hazard is not readily apparent as it is covered by 18 inches of sewer water like most of the rest of the complex.

**Important Rules Note:** PCs in total darkness are subject to a -8 attack and -4 defense penalties unless they have low light vision which reduces those penalties to -4 attack and -2 defense. The goblins with their extreme low light vision have no penalty due to a lit candle in the next room.



It takes d4p seconds to ready a new torch under duress, d6p seconds and an average Fire Building check to get one lit. Once lit the penalties for fighting in darkness are reduced for PCs having low light vision that are within 30' of the torch (and on the right side of the waterfall). It takes an additional 2d6p for the torch to put out "good" light in a 30' radius.

**4 unarmored Goblins** (16 EP each): HP 18; Init 3; Spd 7; Rch short; Atk +2; Dmg 1d6p-2; Def +4, DR 0, ToP 8; Trauma Save 6; Size S; Move 2.5ft./sec

*Skills of note:* Goblin #4 is literate in Kalamaran (12)

## 10. Prison Island

Beyond the central lair of the humanoids lie two different water-covered tunnels that lead into a circular chamber that is roughly 30' in diameter. This area was also intended as a catchbasin and is 6 feet deep. An island was subsequently built out of rubble and mining tailings.

Three humans currently reside on this small island as prisoners of the humanoids and are eager to leave with the PCs, should the opportunity arise.

The tunnel opens into a small chamber maybe 30' across. You light reflects off of three pairs of eyes and you can make out a small group of humans huddled together on a small dry island in the middle of the room. Each man cradles a makeshift club and you can tell they are trying to adjust to the light.

The leader of the humans is Sulat Namir, his two associates are some street punks that work for him. Sulat and his crew tried to be clever and do some business on the side but ended up getting waylaid by the orcs. Since their ploy was duplicitous and not cleared with the Namirs, they had no backup and now are being used to extort the guild for ransom.

Upon seeing humans, they will clamor to be rescued. ("Hey youse guys gonna get us off this rock or what?")

Sulat is a typical hoodlum – mouthy, brash and a bully. Given his current predicament, he will mangle to keep some of these traits in check until rescued. However, he will not take orders and will react poorly

if he senses he's being pushed around or if his personal honor is questioned. Like all bullies, he and his crew will not start a fight they feel they cannot win so it's unlikely they will directly confront their rescuers whatever the perceived provocation. That said, they will openly question any decisions, refuse to practice noise or light discipline and will avoid endangering themselves by fighting any of the party's adversaries. Should it come to pass that the PCs are gravely weakened, they are not above murdering their rescuers.

3 Brigands			
SPEED 10	ATTACK +1	INIT +2	DMG REDUCTION 0
DEFENSE +3	d4p+d6p -1		DAMAGE 5
2½ft REACH			TOP SAVE 5

If questioned as to how they ended up here, they sarcastically claim to be sewer inspectors who were working in one of the tunnels before they were captured by orcs. If the veracity of their story is questioned, they will stick to it but cannot help laughing as they do so.

All four wear leg irons that restrict them to walking speed and make broad jumping impossible. Since none of them can swim, this low-tech prison is remarkably effective. They have armed themselves with shoddy clubs scavenged from the garbage.

The locks on the leg irons are in very poor condition having originally been busted open by the orc escapees (one of which has died in the interim). Any Lock Picking skill checks receive a +80 bonus [easy check].

**Sulat Namir and Associates, 3 Brigands:** HP 15 ea (24 uninjured); Init +2; Spd 10; Rch 2.5'; Atk +1; Dmg d4p+d6p-1; Def +3, DR 0, ToP 8; ToP Save 5; Size M; Move 10ft./sec

## 11. Urdu'ak's Lair

**Encounter:** 1 drunk gnole (65 EP)

**Potential Yield:** 123 cp, 3 gallons of rum (24 sp), crystal flask (6 sp), 2 oz. paprika (7½ sp), Miner's Lantern (10 sp), 3 flasks lamp oil (18 tc)

This rectangular chamber has been packed with loose rock, forming a dry floor. The room itself is above grade and serves as home to the ruler of the humanoids, a smallish gnole named Urdu'ak.

Urdu'ak has keen hearing and will be alerted by any noisy ruckus with the goblins. He will come out to investigate but will stay behind the deep well using his

exceptional reach to poke at enemies within the goblin's room. His intent is to trick his opponents into approaching him and barking with glee as they sink into the deep shaft before him. Should the PCs breach this obstacle, he will whip out his dagger and fight it out mano-a-mano hoping to score a knockback that propels his adversary into the pit.

Someone has expended quite a bit of labor to make this area of the sewers a little nicer than most. The tunnel floor has been filled in and a ramp built up to a niche, creating a small 10' by 20' room. There is a cold fire-pit here as well as some damp blankets and some crude furniture. A lantern set on a wooden box illuminates the room.

Hidden underneath a crate missing its bottom is half a keg of rum with 3 gallons remaining and a cloth bag containing 123 copper coins.

There are some edible trail rations remaining from the last tribute paid. A crystal flask about a quarter full of red powder sits next to the food.

- ▶ An easy Appraisal: Spices & Perfumes or average Cooking/Baking skill check identifies the powder as 2 ounces of paprika.

The area, while relative dry, smells a lot like wet dog.

Urdu'ak has been nipping at his rum and is currently Sloshed. His stats reflect this impairment. He is armed with a shoddy spear (-1 to Attack and Damage) but also possess a **dagger +1** (a combat knife to him).

**Drunk Gnome** (65 EP): HP 32; Init +6; Spd 11 (or 6); Rch 14' (or 2'); Atk +1 (or +3); Dmg 2d6p+5 (or 2d4p+4); Def -4, DR 2, ToP 12; ToP Save 7; Size L; Move 10ft./sec

## 12. Gouger Nest

**Encounter:** 1 juvenile gouger (100 EP)  
**Potential Yield:** 4 gouger claws (1 sp each)

A long winding tunnel leads north from the gnome's

lair making several ninety degree turns before reaching another subsidence induced cave. The ceiling is uneven with portions having collapsed effectively filling in the floor to approximately the same grade as the tunnel.

This chamber is currently the abode of a juvenile gouger that has been chased out of the more desirable portions of the tunnels (if such a thing can be said of a sewer...) Its clutch-mates were eaten by the albino alligator while this specimen barely survived a thrashing by the orcs. It is voraciously hungry and will attack anyone foolish enough to venture into its lair.

This rough-hewn tunnel makes a series of jogs and ends in a small roundish cave maybe 20 feet across. The chamber appears to be maybe 10-15' tall with an uneven ceiling – portions of which have evidently collapsed in the past.

- ▶ A successful mining check reveals that there is no imminent danger of the roof collapsing.

The gouger will attempt to remain camouflaged (90% mastery in Hiding) in its hidey-hole in the ceiling whilst spying out a size S character to attack (should the explorers be comprised exclusively of size M characters it will not attack as it cannot lift such a weight to the ceiling).

If an appropriate target exists, it will dart down and with a successful attack grab the individual and withdraw to its nook to begin devouring its meal. From this height it is safe from all but pole arms, staves and ranged weapons.

**Juvenile Gouger** (100 EP): HP 21; Init -1; Spd 10; Rch 8 ft; Atk +4; Dmg special (2d6p on initial grab attack, does 1d6p+3 every six seconds thereafter). FoS +7 to break free; Def +4, DR 2, ToP 7; Trauma Save 7; Size M; Move 2½ ft./sec

## 13. Leech Man Nest

**Encounter:** 6 leech men (300 EP)  
**Potential Yield:** studded leather armor, 8 sp

This recently constructed tunnel connects two spurs of the old sewer tunnels in a vain attempt to alleviate the excessive demand on the eastern line by providing



a relief valve. The tunnelers excavated a large 20' square room in the tunnel as a sump. The end closest to the humanoid lair is walled off with a well-built locked iron gate.

The gate was installed by the Namirs to restrict access to their smuggling route so as to reduce the risk of their couriers being waylaid. The gate's key was held by Sulat Namir, but was lost during his capture. A successful average Lock Picking check (+40) can unlock or lock the gate.

During the last two weeks, a group of leech men have wandered into the sewers and taken up residence in this room. Safe from the humanoids, they have been able to leave the sewers and feed on Bet Kalamar's sizable population of vagrants with impunity.

The leech men will flee any group they do not outnumber 2:1 only fighting if cornered. Assuming the PCs enter this area from the east, the leech men will flee towards the flotsam lake (area 7) and attempt to swim across. They are unaware of the alligator and one of their number will be eaten in the crossing! The leech men will not

return to this lair after their encounter with the gator.

If the PCs come through this area from the west and the gate has not been left unlocked, the leech men will be trapped and may be compelled to fight for their lives.

On the small island in the northwest corner of the chamber lies the corpse of a man. The leech men ambushed this private security guard as he was urinating in an alley. They dragged the corpse down to the sewers and there bled him dry. The body is still clad in studded leather armor and has a coin pouch with 8 silver coins.

---

**6 Leech Men** (50 EP each): HP 12; Init -1; Spd 6; Rch short; Atk +4; Dmg 2d4p (virulence factor +8 poison or suffer -1 Attk & Def for 30', cumulative effects); Def +7, DR 0, ToP 4; ToP Save 2; Size S; Move 5ft./sec

---

<b>6 Leech Men</b>			
SPEED <b>6</b>	ATTACK <b>+4</b>	INIT <b>-1</b>	DAMAGE REDUCTION <b>0</b>
DEFENSE <b>+7</b>	DAMAGE <b>2d4p +poison</b>	TOP SAVE <b>2</b>	REACH <b>0ft</b>

### 14. Sewer Exit

This smooth-tiled tunnel is comfortably wide at a steady 10' across. The sewage runs in a steady stream down this tunnel, away from you, joined by the occasional rivulet stemming from narrow pipe jutting out from the ceiling. Aside from the occasional missing tile, there isn't anything interesting that you can see down this tunnel



Depending on the time of day, some of the smaller sewage pipes leading into this tunnel lead directly to the surface, which allows a wee bit of light to penetrate the darkness.

The further down the tunnel the PCs travel, the shallower the stream of sewage becomes. The sewer tunnel leading west extends for a couple of miles before disgorging into the Badato river.

## 15. Sewer Exits

Both main sewer tunnels exiting to the South are identical with the exception of length. The Western tunnel is several hundred feet shorter than the Eastern tunnel. Eventually both tunnels emerge onto the banks of a small tributary of the Badato river where they spew forth their vile contents.

The PCs can safely exit the sewer system via these tunnels.

## 16. Another Safehouse

Much further down this tunnel is an entrance to another one of the Namirs' safehouses in a different neighborhood. The entrance is similar to the one the players entered the sewers through. However, the ladder is absent. As such, access from the subterranean network is effectively blocked.

The fact that this tunnel dead ends may prompt the characters to look upwards where they will see a shaft that ascends some 30 feet.

Scaling the shaft necessitates a difficult climbing/rappelling skill check. Failure indicates a fall from somewhere between 15 and 20 feet. As the water is only 18" deep, it will not break this fall as effectively as deeper water resulting in the climber sustaining d6p-1 damage.

The top of the shaft is covered by a bolted trap door. Hacking away at it with a chopping tool while precariously gripping the wall is abject foolishness that mandates an immediate (difficult) climbing/rappelling check to prevent falling. A fall from this height inflicts 2d6p damage.

Incorrigible PCs will discover that pitons can easily be driven into the packed earth that forms the upper 15 feet of the shaft. Even with such assistance, attempting

to chop away at the hardwood trapdoor is a dangerous undertaking. This will take 20 minutes of time and necessitate two further (average) climbing/rappelling checks.

Should the PCs doggedly persevere and breach the trapdoor, it leads to another safehouse much like the one sitting atop the tunnel they entered the tunnels through. This one will be furnished and occupied by Namir gang members who will have some questions for the party...

## Conclusion

### 1) Eliminating the Humanoids from the sewers (150 EP story award)

All of the humanoids are escapees from the gladiatorial pits and, as such, are wanted criminals. Killing them is not explicitly sanctioned by the authorities as they are property but the constabulary always turns a blind eye to such incidents as it spares them the danger of having to hunt down such convicts themselves.

Resourceful PCs who take the time to capture any of the humanoids and think to return them to the gladiatorial pits will be rewarded for their return by their owners. Two gold coins will be granted for the return of the gnoles, 5 silver coins for each orc and a lone silver for each goblin.

If the PCs have not killed all of the humanoids down in the tunnels, the Namirs send down a large team to clear them out before installing additional iron gates to seal off their network.

### 2) Meeting Tani Namir (300 EP story award)

If Sulat Namir and his crew are rescued from the sewers, they immediately depart without so much as a word of thanks. This seemingly is the end of the story. However, a few hours later the PCs will be approached by a pair of intimidating men that invite them to drop by a seedy bar [The Cockeye Club] later that evening. They are reticent as to the purpose and will only state, "Just be there." if questioned.

The PCs are under no obligation to show up though they will forfeit the story award if they blow it off. Should they case the joint or make inquiries via Glean



Information prior to going there, they'll learn that the club is a known gangster hangout and that they shouldn't go there unless they're looking for trouble.

Assuming they haven't been scared off, a pair of muscular bouncers will frisk PCs at the door and their weapons will be confiscated. If questioned, they reply, "Nobody gets in here packing. Youse gets these back when ya leave." Again, the PCs are free to leave and nothing will be said.

If the characters have braved the gauntlet, they enter into a crowded bar with a central stage featuring nude dancers. Soon a burly middle-aged man approaches them with a familiar face in tow – Sulat Namir. The kid is noticeably demur and barely looks up from the ground. The stout man introduces himself as Tani. "I just wanted to express my thanks for helpin' out my numbskull nephew here. Say thank you to the nice gentlemen Sulat." Sulat momentarily hesitates and is slapped upside the head after which he mumbles "Thank you..." He is immediately dismissed to perform some menial and degrading task.

Tani then takes the time to shake hands with each party member, deftly slipping them a gold coin as he does so. "C'mon, lets head on over to my table where we can talk."

Tani's purpose in inviting them to his club and proactively rewarding them is to settle any obligation he feels may be made on him for rescuing his nephew. He now considers the debt paid. What transpires thereafter is entirely up to you. The PCs have this mobster's ear and the meeting can serve as the hook for subsequent adventures. You may alternatively use this as an opportunity for young thieves to join a guild or simply to establish Tani as a notable NPC contact for future development. Either way, he offers full hospitality for the evening – good food, liquor and whores. PCs have their weapons returned upon departure and will be surreptitiously trailed to ensure they aren't mugged on the way home.

### **3) Gator Tales (150 EP + 1 point of Fame)**

If the party killed the albino alligator and drags its body up for public display, they will create a sensation. News quickly spreads and predictably wildly exaggerated stories are soon circulating. The PCs will become temporary celebrities and each should be accorded 1 point of fame.

**“I am haunted by sewer waters.”**

A chance discovery leads down into the twisting depths below the city of Bet Kalamar. Unseen threats fester beneath the murky waters and such things as shun the light of day writhe in the darkness of the putrid tunnels. The sewers hide many secrets and those brave enough to venture into this nether realm may find themselves entangled in the bizarre goings-on of the septic world.

Designed as an adventure for 1st level characters, *A Sewer Runs Through It* balances challenge with brutality and is sure to have new players scrambling back to the table for the next session.