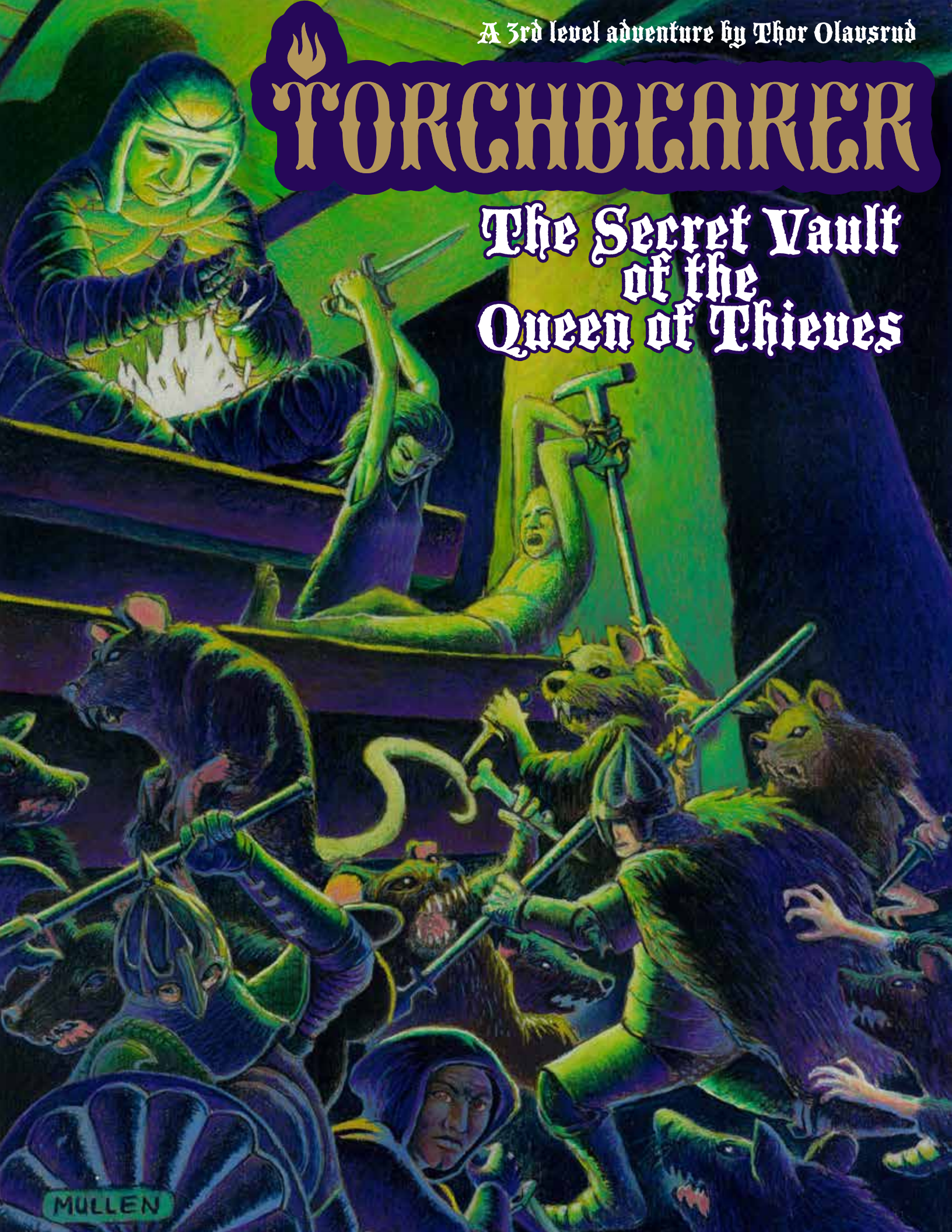


A 3rd level adventure by Thor Olausrud

# TORCHBEARER

## The Secret Vault of the Queen of Thieves



MULLEN

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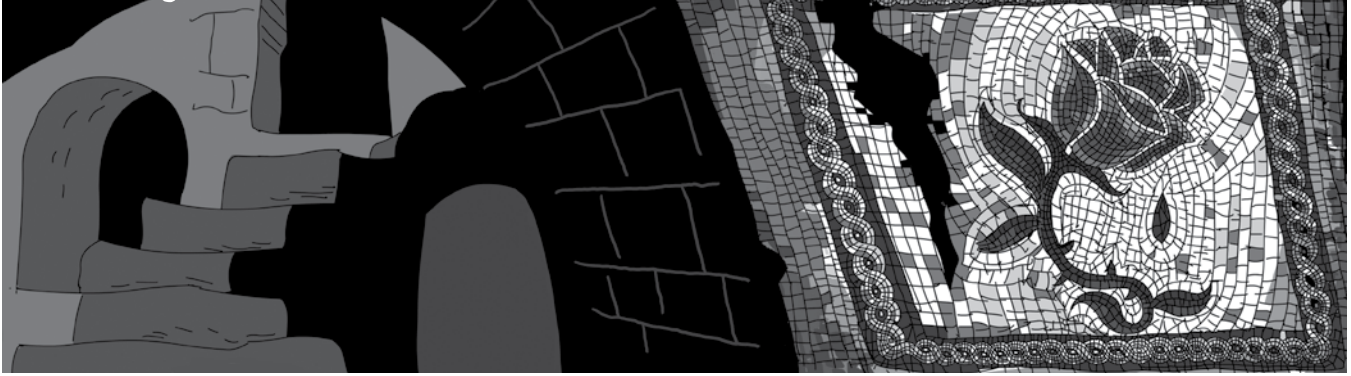


This game is based on and derived from:

*Burning Wheel*  
and  
**MOUSE GUARD**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME



# The Secret Vault of the Queen of Thieves



**T**amar, secretive master thief of the port city of Highwater, is dead. The rumors say she dropped face-first into a bowl of soup yesterday while supping with her lover, Lady Attar, at the Three of Cups in Saltown near the docks. It happened just days after she stole the fist-sized jewel known as the Jackal's Eye from the sinister Cult of Maata Re, Mistress of Plagues. Her lover has not been seen since.

Amidst the stories of conspiracy and murder, the underworld of Highwater is abuzz with tales of the secret vault of the Queen of Thieves, where Tamar is thought to have kept priceless trophies of her many adventures, perhaps even the Jackal's Eye, along with deadly traps to guard them. The race is on to find the vault; whoever does may become wealthy beyond their wildest imaginings.

## City-Based Adventure

*Torchbearer* is a game with distinct Adventure and Town Phases and the game makes it clear that the Town Phase is meant to be downtime—a chance to rest and re-equip your character. Thieves' Guilds, haunted catacombs, smugglers' warehouses and more can all make excellent adventure locations found in cities.

If the characters leave the adventure location to make use of the town's facilities, whether a quick trip to the market or to raise their wrists at the tavern, the group enters the Town Phase with everything that entails, from Town Events rolls to Lifestyle. Really, it's not much different than if the adventure location were a mile down the road from town.

## Setup

*The Secret Vault of the Queen of Thieves* is a short city-based adventure geared for 3rd level and higher *Torchbearer* characters, though even lower level characters are viable if played skillfully. It should take a session or two of play. This scenario is set in the port city of Highwater, but you can drop it into your game whenever the characters visit a Bustling Metropolis or Busy Crossroads in your home setting.

The characters can pick up rumors about the vault at a tavern, through a lead or hook, or they might be approached by Tamar's mistress, Lady Attar, as the result of a twist in town. Lady Attar is most likely to approach a thief or a character with the Criminal skill as a specialty.

Tell the party leader that Tamar, Queen of Thieves, is dead and that rumors place her secret vault in the Tangle, a series of connected catacombs and storm drains beneath the streets of Highwater. Many are searching for it, but Attar tells the leader to seek a rose with bloody thorns among the mosaics that decorate the catacombs. That's where the secret door to the vault will be found.

## Lady Attar

Lady Attar is a priestess (though not a cleric) of Samas, Lady of Perfumes, a funereal cult associated with the Lords of Death. The Cult of Samas is a small cult with an ornate temple and perfumery in the Overlook district near the necropolis.

If Lady Attar approaches the adventurers, she explains that she believes assassins connected with the Cult of Maata Re, the Mistress of Plagues, murdered her beloved Tamar in retaliation for the theft of the Jackal's Eye. But everyone believes that she killed Tamar for the jewel. She knows it's only a matter of time before the thieves of Highwater or the assassins catch up with her.

Lady Attar's only hope is to escape the city, but she needs money to do it. She knows to whom Tamar planned to sell the jewel and offers to split the proceeds of the sale with the adventurers if they can retrieve the jewel from Tamar's vault. They can keep anything else they find, of course. She notes that the jewel is so distinctive that most people would refuse to buy it for fear of the Cult of Maata Re. Only the buyer she knows will pay for it.

## Bringing Lady Attar Along

The players may well demand that Lady Attar join them on the adventure (see stats in the **Monster Appendix**). She is not a fighter, nor can she call upon miracles. She is a



priestess, not a cleric (and in reality, she's a charlatan; see *A Note for the GM* below). She will attempt to convince the adventurers to undertake the task without her. Convincing her to come will require a test.

If convinced to come, she will insist upon a full share of any treasure discovered in addition to half the proceeds of the jewel. She will also remind the adventurers that the jewel will be worthless to them if they allow her to come to harm.

In general, she will use *I Am Wise* if possible or provide help if asked. She will only lead on a test if she has the skill and the leader insists. In conflicts, the captain must distribute hit points to her. She will use *Beginner's Luck* to perform actions if necessary.

When it makes sense, use a twist to have her sneak off unnoticed.

If the Lords of Fate laugh and she hasn't managed to slip away before the adventurers discover that Tamar has used them as a distraction to steal the jewel, she will rely on her Manipulator, Persuader and Scam-wise to convince them she was duped as well.

## The Cult of Maata Re

The sinister Cult of Maata Re, Mistress of Plagues, has been slowly spreading its corruption through Highwater for years. Outwardly, the cult appears to focus on propitiatory worship to ward off disease — the folk of Highwater routinely make donations to the cult for prayers when loved ones fall ill, and the cult's coffers swell in times of pestilence. Many lepers and beggars flock to Highwater — much to the displeasure of the earl that appears to rule Highwater and the Thief-Lords that actually do — for Maata Re has many adherents among those downtrodden folk.

In reality, the cult is ruled by Hsivin the Defiler, a powerful agent of the Lords of Chaos. A wererat and priestess of the Mistress of Plagues, Hsivin works to summon a terrible pestilence that will swell the ranks of the cult, increase Maata Re's sway in Highwater and fill Hsivin's coffers with offerings.

The rumors of Tamar's death and the Jackal's Eye have confused Hsivin. She knows the Eye is safe in her vault. Fearing that the rumors will focus attention on her activities, she has decided to go forward with the ritual earlier than planned (see *The Ritual* below).

## A Note for the GM

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Tamar and Lady Attar are running a con, though the adventurers are only collateral victims. Tamar hasn't stolen the Jackal's Eye... yet. The Eye is the

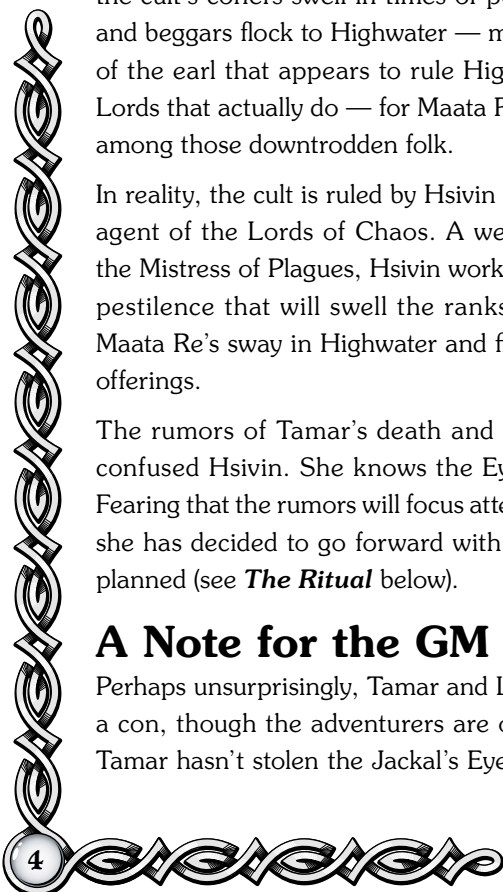
Cult of Maata Re's most sacred treasure. Tamar and Lady Attar seeded rumors about her theft of the Jackal's Eye and then faked Tamar's death to draw in the rubes, and also to shake the cult assassins that had begun stalking her. The cult of the Mistress of Plagues has a terrible and closely held secret that Tamar discovered: it's actually an infestation of wererats bent on taking over Highwater!

The rumors spread by Lady Attar don't lead to Tamar's secret vault at all, but rather to the hidden lair of the plague cult wererats beneath the Temple of the Mistress of Plagues in the Overlook. While the cultists react to the adventurers' invasion, Tamar plans to use the distraction to snatch the jewel.

Tamar will give the adventurers a bit of a head start when Lady Attar takes them to the Tangle Entrance (Area 1). She will use all her stealthy arts to follow them. Once she sees them open the secret door that leads to the Entry Corridor (Area 2), she will head through the Tangle to the Privy (Area 11), a secret entrance she discovered while reconnoitering the temple. She will pick the lock to the grate and climb up before proceeding to the Boudoir (Area 10). There she takes a potion to ward off the effects of poison and then makes use of her stealth to add more of the drug to the braziers until Hsivin's consorts fall into a stupor. Once they are insensate, she will slip into the Eastern Corridor (Area 8), carefully avoiding the traps there, and proceed to the Library (Area 9). She will study the lararium and appease the Gargoyle Lares before moving the desk aside, heaving up the rug and picking the lock on the trapdoor. She will go through the trapdoor, closing it with the rug above it, and descend into the Trap Corridor (Area 17). She will proceed down the corridor, open the secret door and enter the Vault (Area 16). Once she has secured the Jackal's Eye, her plan is to climb the ladder into the Library (Area 9) and then escape either through the Entry Corridor (Area 2) or the Privy (Area 11). If the Library is occupied (preventing her egress that way), Tamar's last resort is to escape through the rat tunnels in the Trap Corridor (Area 17).

## Timeline

You can use the timeline to track Tamar's movement, the progress of Hsivin's ritual and uncanny events the PCs experience as the ritual progresses. It is not essential to do so—the adventure runs just fine without it. But keeping track of these movements can help you create a more dynamic environment. A very lucky and very speedy party might be able to overtake Tamar before she can escape with the jewel. If the adventurers enter the camp phase at any point, count any checks spent during camp as a turn with regard to the timeline.

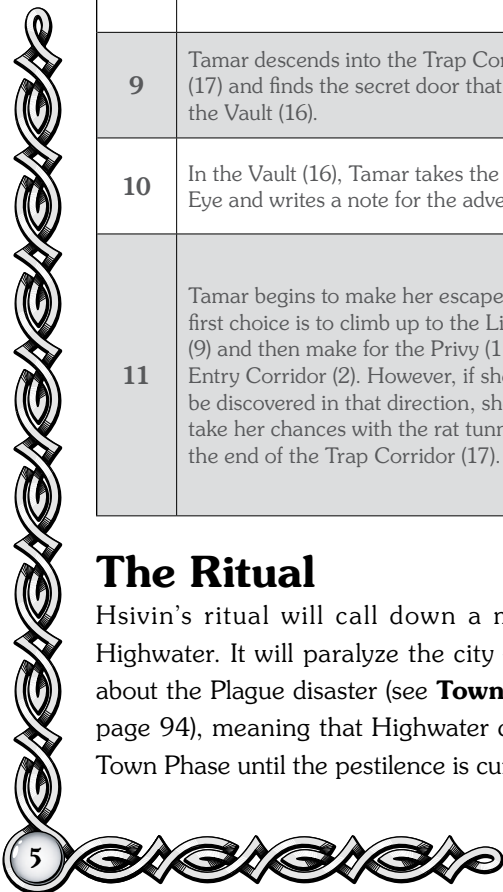


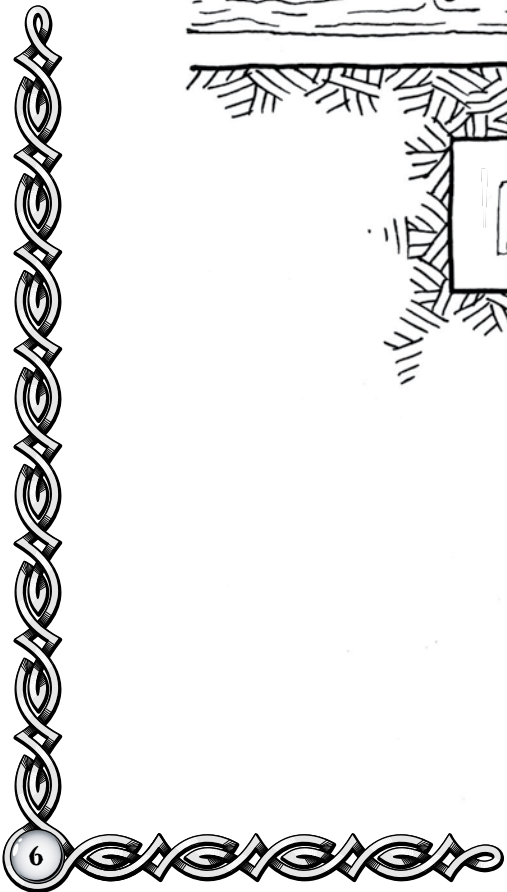
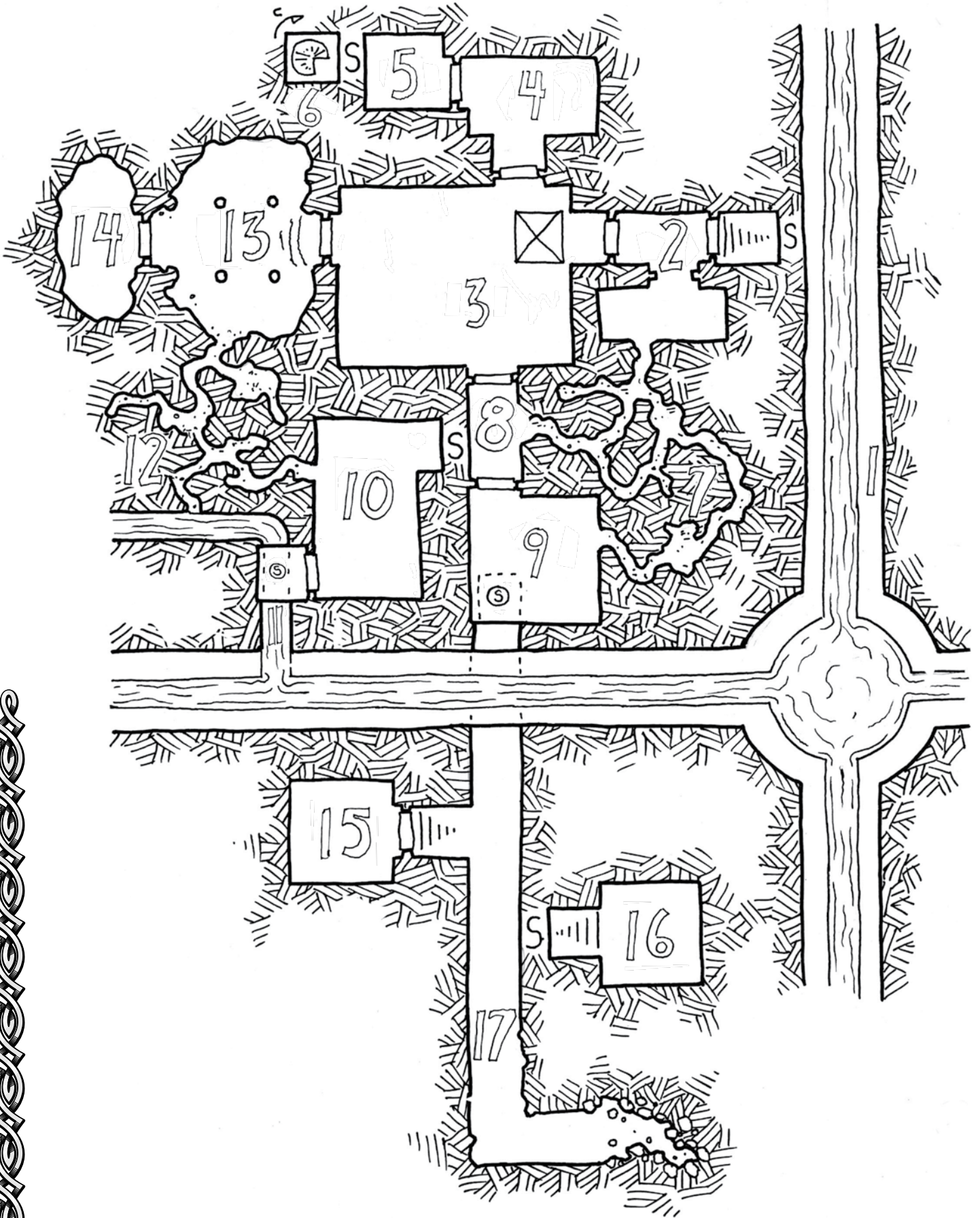
Turn	Tamar's Actions	Hsivin's Actions	Uncanny Events
1	Tamar watches the PCs enter The Tangle and follows to make sure they open the secret door. If the PCs are keeping an eye out for spies, call for a Scout vs. Scout test (make sure to apply Tamar's Hide in Shadows level benefit).	Hsivin ends the feast in the Central Hall (3) and retires to her Boudoir (10) for a dalliance with her consorts, leaving Dalander to oversee the drugging of the prisoners in the cages.	—
2	Tamar picks the lock to the grate that secures the Privy and climbs inside.	Hsivin orders her attendants to bring the drugged prisoners to the Chapel of Maata Re (13) and orders Dalander to remain in the Central Hall (to ensure the ritual is not interrupted).	—
3	Tamar stealthily moves into the Boudoir (10) and further drugs Hsivin's consorts.	In the Chapel of Maata Re (13), Hsivin orders her attendants to place incense in the braziers.	—
4	Tamar negotiates the trap in the Eastern Corridor (8).	Hsivin tattoos the body of the first sacrificial victim with arcane sigils.	An electric chill runs down everyone's spine, as if someone walked on their grave.
5	Tamar enters the Library (9) and studies the gargoyle lares and lararium.	Hsivin tattoos the body of the second sacrificial victim with arcane sigils.	The uncanny shiver returns.
6	Still in the Library (9), Tamar sacrifices some blood to the lares to appease it.	Hsivin tattoos the body of the third sacrificial victim with arcane sigils.	The uncanny shiver occurs a third time.
7	Still in the Library (9), Tamar moves aside the desk and discovers the trap door beneath the rug.	Hsivin performs the first of the three sacrifices required by the ritual.	Rats throughout Highwater (including the Tangle and the Secret Vault) freeze in place, quivering as if waiting expectantly.
8	Still in the Library (9), Tamar picks the lock to the trapdoor.	Hsivin performs the second of the three sacrifices required by the ritual.	As one, the rats of Highwater burst into motion and begin making their way to the Chapel of Maata Re. (This includes the giant rats that would otherwise lurk in the nests hidden in the rat tunnels throughout the Secret Vault.)
9	Tamar descends into the Trap Corridor (17) and finds the secret door that leads to the Vault (16).	Hsivin performs the third of the three sacrifices required by the ritual.	The rats of Highwater stream into the Chapel and make obeisance to the statue of the Mistress of Plagues.
10	In the Vault (16), Tamar takes the Jackal's Eye and writes a note for the adventurers.	Hsivin performs the ritual invocation, calling pestilence down upon Highwater.	As one, the rats of Highwater squeak a counterpoint to Hsivin's chant.
11	Tamar begins to make her escape. Her first choice is to climb up to the Library (9) and then make for the Privy (11) or the Entry Corridor (2). However, if she would be discovered in that direction, she will take her chances with the rat tunnels at the end of the Trap Corridor (17).	The ritual is complete. After four more turns pass, everyone in Highwater, except devotees of the Cult of Maata Re, must make a Health test (Ob 4). Those who fail gain the sick condition or, in a twist, become carriers (companions must make an Ob 4 Health test each phase or become sick). Hsivin retires to her Boudoir (10) via the Rat Tunnels (12) to celebrate the culmination of the ritual.	The rats, now carriers of the pestilence, scurry forth to bring it to every corner of Highwater. They board ships in droves so they might bring the plague to distant shores.

## The Ritual

Hsivin's ritual will call down a magical plague upon Highwater. It will paralyze the city — it effectively brings about the Plague disaster (see **Town Events**, *Torchbearer*, page 94), meaning that Highwater cannot be used for the Town Phase until the pestilence is cured or runs its course.

Once the ritual is complete and four additional turns elapse, the adventurers must make an Ob 4 Health test. Those who fail the test either gain the sick condition or, in a twist, become carriers. The companions of carriers must make an Ob 4 Health test each phase or become sick.





Anyone who falls ill from the plague will see a vision of the Mistress of Plagues wrapping them in her filthy, torn leper's robe. The sick will immediately become feverish and break out in boils.

The 3rd Circle prayers *Absolution of the Lord of Endings* and *Catholicon of the Lord of Plagues* can both be used to cure individual carriers.

## The Jackal's Eye

The Jackal's Eye is Pack 2 and easily worth 24D of cash whole. It is extremely unlikely that the adventurers will get their hands on the Jackal's Eye before Tamar can abscond with it. Only lucky groups that drive directly for the vault have a chance. But player characters are known to eat the improbable for breakfast. If they do get hold of the gem, they'll have trouble selling it.

Stories of the Jackal's Eye are well known and few fences or merchants are willing to risk the cult's displeasure by buying it. Even Tamar would have no use for it if the adventurers reach it before she does — her interest is stealing the unstealable, not trading in baubles.

A member in good standing with a thieves' guild can use Persuader or Manipulator to get a fence to offer 6D of cash for the gem.

A dwarf may be able to cut the gem into two gems (Crafting Nature, Ob 6) worth 8D each.

Finally, adventurers may be able to get close to full price for the gem if they can travel to a place where the far-flung Cult of Maata Re is unknown — assuming they can find a person there with the wealth and will to buy it.

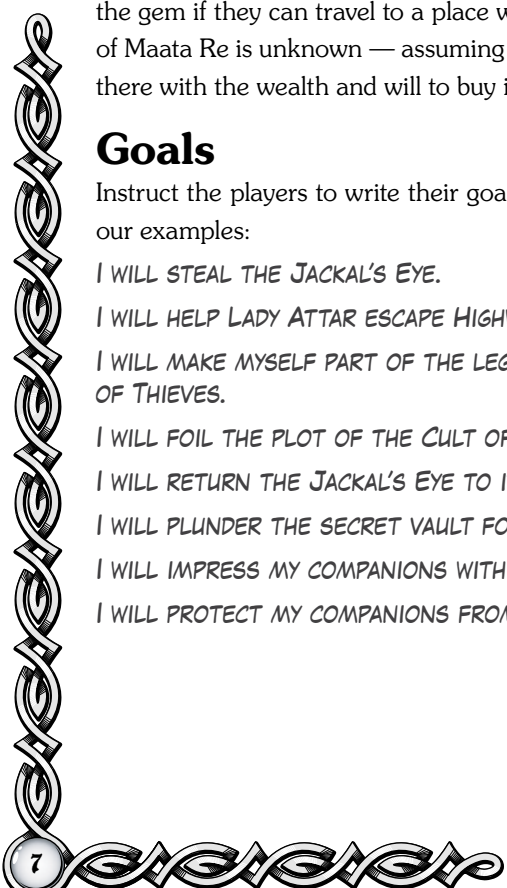
## Goals

Instruct the players to write their goals now or choose from our examples:

- I WILL STEAL THE JACKAL'S EYE.
- I WILL HELP LADY ATTAR ESCAPE HIGHWATER.
- I WILL MAKE MYSELF PART OF THE LEGEND OF THE QUEEN OF THIEVES.
- I WILL FOIL THE PLOT OF THE CULT OF MAATA RE.
- I WILL RETURN THE JACKAL'S EYE TO ITS RIGHTFUL OWNERS.
- I WILL PLUNDER THE SECRET VAULT FOR ALL IT'S WORTH.
- I WILL IMPRESS MY COMPANIONS WITH MY SKILL.
- I WILL PROTECT MY COMPANIONS FROM THE VAULT'S TRAPS.

## Wandering Monsters

- ☉ *Rats.* The Tangle is infested with them, as is the vault. They will scurry for cover when encountered and then watch the adventurers from protected or hidden places. When the adventurers hold aloft their lights, they will see hundreds of beady eyes reflecting in the shadows, always watching. Whenever the rats are encountered, several will scurry off to relay information about what they have observed to Dalander. If Dalander has been captured and bound, they will gnaw through his bindings. If Dalander has been killed, they will bring information to Hsivin instead.
- ☉ *Giant Rats.* 1d6 giant rats. They're most interested in rations and shiny objects, but will carry off a halfling if the opportunity presents itself. The cultists keep these rats as "guard dogs." They will attack small groups of adventurers, but their first priority is to alert the cultists about the intruders. Giant rats that are driven off will seek out Dalander, Hsivin or Hsivin's consorts, whichever are closest. See Torchbearer page 154 for stats.
- ☉ *Cultists of Maata Re.* 1d6+3 cultists. These fanatical human cultists serve in the hopes of attaining the blessing of Maata Re (transformation into a wererat), which will relieve their sickly coughs and weeping sores. They wear hooded gray robes and carry vicious daggers. See Monster Appendix for stats. There are a total of nine human cultists in the vault. If they are all killed or otherwise incapacitated, stop using this wandering monster. The cultists will normally only be encountered in the Entry Corridor (Area 2), Central Hall (Area 3), Kitchen (Area 4), Larder (Area 5) or Chapel of Maata Re (Area 13), as they are forbidden from entering other areas. However, once Dalander or Hsivin become aware there are intruders in the temple, all bets are off and the cultists can be encountered anywhere except the Rat Tunnels (Area 7 and Area 12) and the Vault (Area 16). They will only be encountered in the Trap Corridor (Area 17) or Armory (Area 15) if Dalander or Hsivin are leading them.
- ☉ *Rival adventuring party.* The PCs aren't the only adventurers acting upon the rumors of the Secret Vault of the Queen of Thieves. Use three to four of the first level sample characters and give them new names. These adventurers aren't above robbing a worn-down party that looks like they've won some riches, but an adventurer with a silver tongue might convince them to join forces instead.



- ☉ *Tamar, Queen of Thieves (disguised).* The adventurers are a distraction, but Tamar still has to win the jewel for herself. She will seek to evade the adventurers if they stumble upon her, running and hiding if necessary. See Monster Appendix for stats.
- ☉ *Damaged gear.* Some important bit of gear—rope, a grappling hook, a lantern, a backpack, tools for a skill—is broken, ripped or otherwise damaged as a result of the failed test.

## Life as a Tunnel Rat

There are several places in the dungeon where the adventurers might choose to get on their hands and knees to snake their way through tunnels dug by giant rats. For the most part this is a very bad idea. But never underestimate the determination (or desperation) of adventurers. If they should crawl into the tunnels, keep the following considerations in mind.

### Crawling Through the Rat Tunnels

As long as the characters aren't under any time pressure, crawling through the tunnels is an arduous process but does not require a test. However, if the characters are being chased or otherwise have to crawl through the tunnels in a hurry, call for a Dungeoneer test. Don't forget to apply a factor (+1 Ob) to anyone wearing a backpack. If a player is making a test for the entire party, only apply the factor once; don't add +1 Ob for every character who's wearing a backpack.

### Fighting in the Rat Tunnels

Unless the adventurers split up and approach a target from multiple directions, combat in the tunnels will be desperate and limit the adventurers' ability to help each other. Only the foremost character may take an action; the others can't help though an appropriate wise might provide aid. Furthermore, only daggers are viable weapons in the tunnels, though a loaded crossbow may be used once. Characters attempting to use other weapons count as disarmed and do not have access to the weapons' normal benefits.

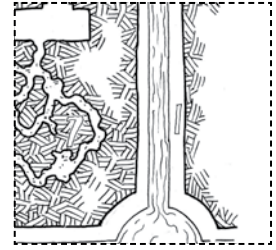
### Start

Lady Attar brings the adventurers to an old wine cellar under a crumbling, ivy-covered house — apparently abandoned — in the Overlook, not far from the Silverfish tavern. The cellar conceals an entrance to the Tangle, the catacombs under Highwater. She tells the adventurers to descend the rusting iron ladder and head west. She tells them to seek the image of a rose with bloody thorns among the mosaics upon the walls of the tunnel. That is where they will find the secret door that leads to the vault.

## Map Key

### 1. Tangle Entrance

*This maze of catacombs and storm sewers is clearly ancient—far older than the city above. Broad tunnels with high, arching ceilings connect with crumbling chambers bedecked with delicate porcelain mosaics depicting flowers, the occasional pastoral scene or just simply abstract patterns. Many of the mosaics are dewed with condensation, or even rust-streaked trickles of water from above. Streams of filthy storm water run along many of the tunnels. Ledges, most of them breaking away and falling into the water, line the sides of many of these tunnels; others lack such amenities, forcing you to slog knee-deep through the stinking muck.*

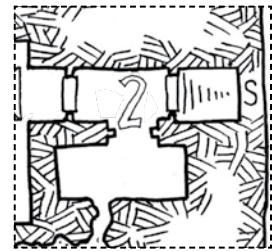


Spotting the secret door (mosaic of the rose with bloody thorns): Scout test Ob 6. If spotted, the door swings open silently when pushed, no roll required.

Failure (Condition): Angry for the tester, Hungry/Thirsty for the helpers.

### 2. Entry Corridor

*You find yourself in a corridor lined with floor-to-ceiling wooden panels carved in high-relief depicting a procession of cowed figures following a pipe-playing figure toward a leafless tree that stands before what seems to be a solar eclipse. The relief of the three and eclipse are on a door at the far end of the corridor; it glints like gold in your torchlight. To the east, an open arch leads to a small chamber where filthy cloaks and gray robes hang from hooks lining the walls. To either side of the arch stand two porcelain basins—one filled with what appears to be clear water, the other with a handful of silver coins. A faint but unpleasant odor lingers here.*



The secret door is cunningly weighted so that it slides closed on its own after the adventurers pass through, but it is obvious from the inside and opens easily with the pull of a latch.



**The Basins**

The basin of water is for the faithful to wash their hands and feet as they enter the temple. There's enough water in the basin to fill two skins.

The other basin is for offerings and it is trapped with a pressure-sensitive plate at the bottom. Failure to leave at least 1D worth of coins or the equivalent weight in the basin causes a portcullis to seal the entry from the catacombs when one attempts to open the door to the vault (see **The Portcullis Trap** below).

There's 2D of silver already in the basin. Taking it causes the portcullis to slam shut immediately.

If someone studies the offering basin for traps, call for a Scout test (Ob 4) to notice the pressure-sensitive plate at the bottom.

**The Portcullis Trap**

A heavy iron portcullis is hidden within the stonework of the lintel on the interior side of the secret door. The mechanism is built into the stonework and connects the portcullis to the pressure-sensitive plate in the offering basin.

Looking at the lintel of the secret door from inside is a Good Idea. Flush against the stone is a thick metal band (the bottom brace of the portcullis). A few seconds of studying it will reveal what it is. If the adventurers undertake a more general search that might include the lintel, call for a Scout test.

If triggered, the noise of the falling portcullis alerts Dalander in the central hall to the approach of the adventurers. He gets ready to engage the pit trap when they enter.

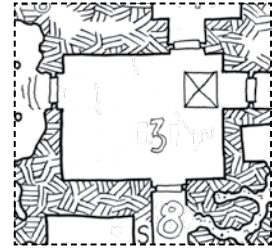
**The Cloak Room**

There are 16 cloaks and 12 robes hanging upon the walls. The cloaks and robes conceal an entrance to the rat tunnels that connect the Entry Corridor (Area 2) with the Eastern Corridor (Area 8) the Library (Area 9) and the pit trap in the Central Hall (Area 3). Pushing aside the cloaks and robes to see what's behind them is a good idea that will reveal the tunnels. If the adventurers perform a more cursory search, an Ob 1 Scout test will reveal the tunnels.

The unpleasant odor is the result of rat waste in the tunnels. The odor gets more pronounced as the characters get closer to the entrance to the tunnels.

**3. Central Hall**

*A great chamber filled with trestle tables and what appear to be the remains of a feast for more than a dozen. Threadbare, dirty tapestries cover the walls and the sagging wooden floor is scattered with rotting straw. A massive iron candelabra hangs from a pulley over the center of the room. It is covered with reeking and smoking tallow candles. About half the candles have gone out; others still flicker fitfully, dripping fat to the floor below. There are wooden doors in the east and west walls, partially obscured between tapestries. To the south, the room is dominated by wall-to-ceiling double doors covered in yellowing ivory relief of a solar eclipse emanating rays like arrows. Along the eastern wall are five large metal cages with heavy padlocks. An unpleasant odor hangs faintly in the air. A dishevelled man in stained finery lies snoring in a puddle of vomit beneath the head table.*



Swarms of rats, including several giant rats, have burrowed into the straw and are feeding upon the remains of the feast. The man is Dalander, and he is actually a wererat assassin of the plague cult, keeping watch as Hsivin the Defiler conducts a ritual in the chapel to bring down pestilence on Highwater. He thinks he's rather clever.

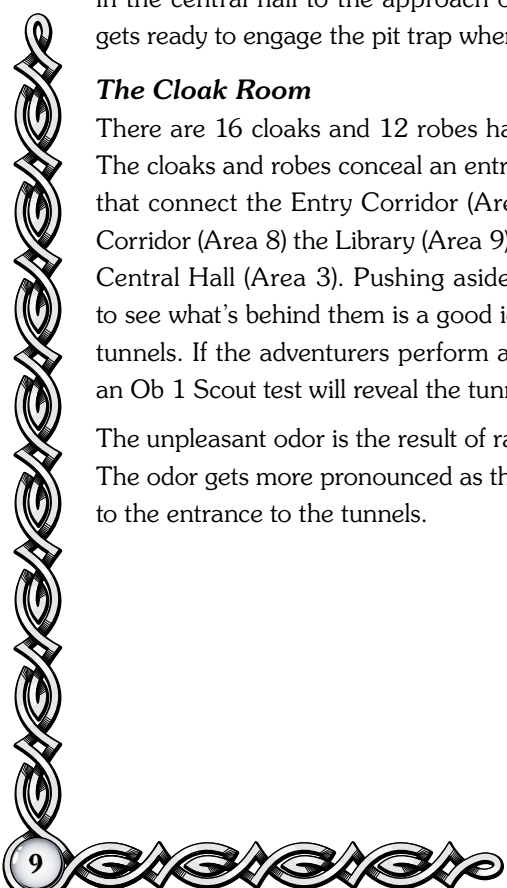
**Pressure Plate Pit Trap**

There is a pit trap in the wooden floor, disguised by the rotting straw at the northern end of the Central Hall, near the entry corridor. The pit is the reason the floor seems to be sagging, and the giant rat nest in the pit is the cause of the foul odor.

- ☉ Determining why the floor is sagging is a *Carpenter* Ob 2 test.
- ☉ A general search for traps will reveal the pit with a *Scout* Ob 4 test.
- ☉ Deciphering the cause of the smell is a *Hunter* Ob 3 test.

Simply standing on the pit trap won't trigger it. The pit is triggered by a pressure plate hidden on the floor under the center of the head table, so the person sitting in that spot could trigger it with a foot.

Dalander can trigger the pit trap surreptitiously with his hand from where he pretends to sleep. If he was alerted to the adventurers' approach by the sound of the falling portcullis in the Entry Corridor, he will trigger the pit trap as soon as the adventurers enter the Central Hall.



If Dalander triggers the trap, anyone standing atop it must make a Health test (Ob 3) or fall in. Anyone who falls takes no damage thanks to the refuse at the bottom, but is immediately swarmed by four giant rats (*Torchbearer*, page 154) that nest in the pit.

Tunnels dug by the rats in the pit connect to the rat tunnels at Area 7.

After the pit has been triggered, set of gears and counterweights under the floor causes the plate to automatically reset to its starting position.

### The Winch

In the northwest corridor of the room, near the edge of the pit trap, a winch and chain are hidden by the tapestries, though perfectly obvious to anyone who looks behind them. The thick chain goes through a port in the northern wall. The winch can be used to raise the portcullis trap in Area 2.

Turning the winch is an Ob 2 Laborer test. The winch is positioned in such a way that anyone turning it will have to stand on the pit trap.

### The Cages

These cages were used to hold the young men that Hsivin will sacrifice for her ritual (see 13. The Chapel of Maata Re). The floor of each cage is scattered with rotting straw and human bodily wastes. Anyone who pokes through the straw may make a Scavenger test (Ob 1) to discover a signet ring. Anyone with Highwater-wise will recognize the symbol immediately, otherwise a Scholar test (Ob 3) will reveal it bears the sign of House ven Narre, marking the previous occupant of the cage as Atli ven Narre, scion of that noble house.

### Dalander the Assassin

If the adventurers 'awaken' Dalander, he will pretend to be a friendly but addled nobleman who has no idea where he is or how he got there. He claims the last thing he remembers is attending Lord Jocelyn's delightful garden party at his estate in the Goldvine borough. He will attempt to convince the adventurers that he was drugged, and will go along with the group until he can spring an ambush with the giant rats in the room. He's very clever and will alter his story based on any information about themselves the adventurers let slip. For example, if the PCs reveal that they think they're in a secret treasure vault, he might change his story to claim he's a fellow thief. Why not join forces? Honor among thieves, right?

If left alone or missed, Dalander will begin following the group with his wererat companions in tow, ready to spring an ambush.

## The Black Dagger of Qdaz

Dalander wields the Black Dagger of Qdaz, a magical relic of the Cult of Maata Re. It is a wicked-looking black misericorde a foot long.

**Level:** 3

**Effect:** Ignores chain. Increases the likelihood that plate is damaged. Once per combat, delivers Exhausted condition on successful strike. Once per combat, can convert Exhausted condition to Sick condition.

**Inventory:** Hands/carried 1 or belt/weapon 1

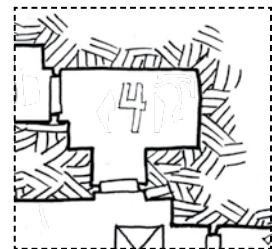
**Type:** Magical weapon

### Treasure

The table is laid out with silver and porcelain plate (though some of it is chipped and broken). Pack 3, worth 4D.

## 4. Kitchen

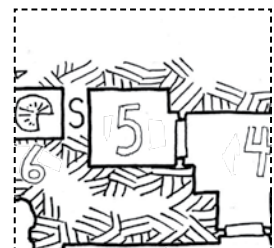
*You immediately begin to sweat as you enter this sweltering chamber, illuminated by the red glow of coals from the oven set into the western wall. Worktables for preparing food fill the room. Rats scurry to and fro. A ham, mostly carved to the bone and covered with flies, sits upon one work table. There is a door to the south.*



The ham doesn't come from a pig!

## 5. Larder

*This room is lined with shelves stacked with urns and pots. Hams and sausages are tied to the rafters, as are a number of whole, exsanguinated human corpses that have been split breast to belly, with viscera removed.*



Anyone who searches the shelves may make a Scout test, Ob 3, to discover the secret door in the southwest corner.

## 6. Stair to the Silverfish

*A rickety spiral staircase ascends to a trap door.*

The stair emerges in the cellar of a tavern called The Silverfish. The tavern is owned and operated by the cult.



## 7. Rat Tunnels

These twisting earthen tunnels are no more than a few feet in diameter and reek of animal waste.

The rats have tunneled through the dressed stone walls of the Cloak Room (Area 2), Eastern Corridor (Area 8) and Library (Area 9) and into the earth beyond to create these tunnels. The tunnels also descend to connect to the pit trap in the Central Hall (Area 3). The rats have even established a nest just north of the Library. The stench of rat waste is incredibly strong in these tunnels. Also, adventurers taller than a halfling will have to crawl, pushing their packs ahead of them or dragging them behind.

There are four giant rats (*Torchbearer*, page 154) and their litters of young in the nest north of the Library. They will attack if the adventurers approach the nest.

### The Rat's Nest

The nest is a foetid pile of detritus, rat droppings and squirming young. Searching it will reveal the shiny treasures the giant rats have amassed: one ruby (3D, pack 1), a smattering of random silver utensils (2D, pack 3) and a brass ring.

### Ring of Protection

A brass band engraved with runes.

**Level:** 2

**Effect:** +1D to defend in kill conflicts.

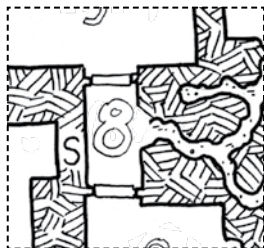
**Inventory:** Hand/worn 1

**Type:** Magical ring

## 8. Eastern Corridor

This corridor is lined with bronze statues of cowed figures holding their right hands to their breast, with two fingers pointed upward just below their lips. The floor is a pebble mosaic in an abstract floral pattern.

Careful adventurers will note there appears to be a narrow gap between the nails and fingers of the two upraised fingers on each statue (looking is enough, no need to roll). If the characters walk blithely forward, they will step on pressure plates hidden in the mosaic. These trigger flames to erupt from the statues' fingers, followed by an exhalation of a stream of naphtha from the statues' mouths.



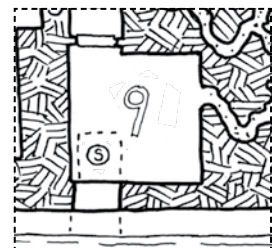
- ☉ A cursory search for traps will reveal the pressure plates with a Scout Ob 4 test.
- ☉ Pouring water or some other liquid upon the floor to detect hidden seams is a Good Idea and will reveal the pressure plates without a test. Tell the clever player to empty the waterskin on their character sheet.
- ☉ If the adventurers trigger the trap, they must each make a Health Ob 6 test. Failure: Injured (or dead if already injured or sick).
- ☉ There's only enough naphtha in the trap's reservoirs to trigger three times. The adventurers can disarm the trap by placing a weight on one of the pressure plates so the statues spew fiery death until the fuel runs out.

If someone looks closely, two of the statues along the southern wall are irregularly spaced, leaving just enough room for a person to squeeze between them. There is a secret door there.

- ☉ A cursory search for secret doors with a Scout test. The test is normally Ob 4, but Tamar didn't quite close it when she passed through, so an Ob 2 Scout test will be sufficient to notice it.
- ☉ Roughly measuring the distance between the statues by eye is a Good Idea and will reveal the secret door.

## 9. Library

Shelves stuffed with scrolls, codices and knickknacks line every bit of available wall in this room. An elaborate cornice tops each—a crow-like gargoyle perched upon it, leering down into the room below. In the center of the shelves to the north is a space that contains an ivory tile painted with the image of a crow with red eyes. An elegant wooden desk and chair sit next to a very fine looking rug at the back of the room.



### The Desk and the Rug

Note, the desk is only beside the rug if Tamar has already passed through the Library. If she hasn't reached the Library, the desk sits on the carpet.

The desk is quite fine, but ordinary. There are writing materials and papers. Inspecting the papers requires a Scholar test (Ob 1) and will reveal a number of reports from Hsivin's agents on young noblemen that would be suitable for "the Great Ritual." The requirements include: being the male bastard of an aristocratic father, youth, vitality, a clear

complexion free of blemish and an abstemious nature. (If Dalander has wormed his way into the adventurers' good graces, a suspicious soul will note that Dalander is no longer a youth and has faint pox scars on his cheeks.)

Anyone who looks at the rug will see that it bears indentations as if something heavy was situated on it for a very long time—the desk. A trapdoor hidden under the carpet reveals a rusty iron ladder that descends into a long corridor. The trapdoor is locked with a complex lock (Ob 4) trapped with a dart trap (page 128). Tamar picked the lock and avoided the trap, but the mechanism is designed to reset itself when the trapdoor is closed.

**The Stacks**

The library itself is worth a fortune to a collector. Scrolls (non-magical treatises, one slot) are worth 1d3-1D each. Codices (non-magical, two slots) are worth 2d3-1D each.

The gargoyles are the physical body of a lares, a guardian spirit. The ivory tile is its lararium or shrine. Taking from the shelves without appeasing the lares will provoke its ire.

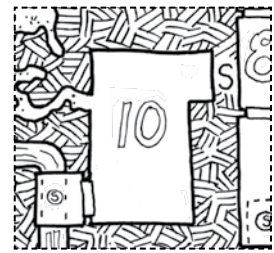
**Gargoyle Lares**

Arcanists and Ritualists contract these strange guardian spirits to protect their most precious belongings.

<b>Might:</b> 4		<b>Nature (Manifest Spirit):</b> 4	
<b>Descriptors:</b> Protecting, Punishing Transgressors, Crouching Motionless			
<b>Conflict Dispositions</b>	<b>Conflict Weapons</b>		
<b>Drive Off:</b> 10	<b>Drive Off Weapons</b> Attack: +2D, <i>Savage Beak</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Stony Wings</i>		
<b>Kill:</b> 9	<b>Kill Weapons</b> Attack: +2D, <i>Savage Beak</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Stony Wings</i>		
<b>Banish:</b> 5	<b>Banish Weapons</b> Attack: +1D, <i>Sworn Duty</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Summoning Contract</i>		
<b>Banish:</b> 5	<b>Flee Weapons</b> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Stony Wings</i>		
<b>Armor:</b> Stony Flesh (as plate).			
<b>Instinct:</b> Savor sips of sacrificial blood.			
<b>Special:</b> Gargoyle Lares remain perfectly motionless until that which it has been summoned to protect is threatened. It then springs into action. It is one spirit with four bodies. As bodies get knocked out of a kill or drive off conflict, it gathers power (its Nature increases by 2 for each body knocked out). Describe this as faint, orange energy leaving the defeated body to enter the remaining ones. Gargoyle Lares may be appeased with the sacrifice of a few drops of blood upon the lararium. Recalling the details of the ritual offering requires a Theologian test (Ob 2). Performing the offering requires a Ritualist test (Ob 1). Once the offering is made, the gargoyle's bodies will animate and fly to the lararium to lap up the hot blood. They will ignore any and all actions around them while doing so.			

**10. Boudoir**

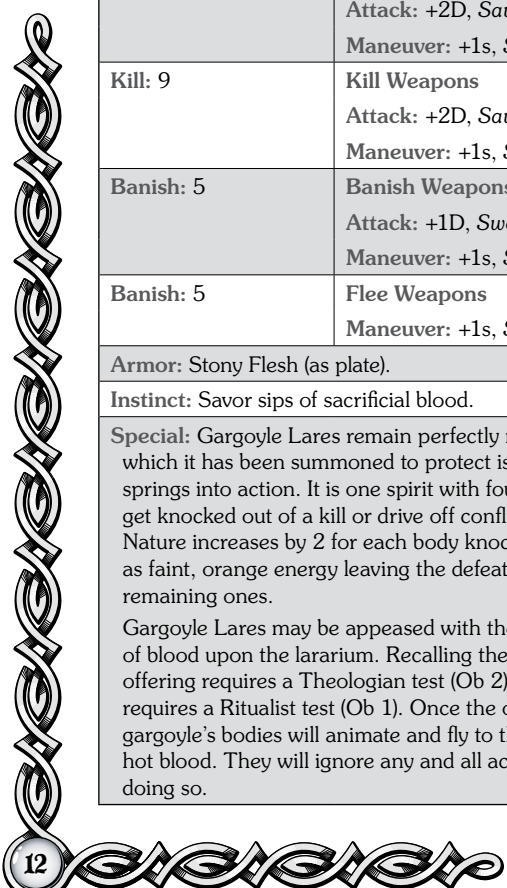
*This large bedchamber is dominated by an ornate four-poster bed with a gauzy white canopy. You see the flesh of naked bodies slick with sweat entwined upon the bed. Thick, sweet-smelling smoke hangs thick in the air, emanating from two braziers on either side of the bed, nearly covering up an acrid, animal odor. Rich carpets are piled thick on the floor, and a very fine-looking wooden chest sits against the eastern wall*



The smoke is drugged. Anyone who inhales it must make an Ob 3 Health test. Those who fail lose the Angry condition (if they have it) and gain the Hungry/Thirsty condition. Anyone who already has the Hungry/Thirsty condition gains the Exhausted condition.

The people in the bed—two men and one woman—are the consorts of Hsivin the Defiler. They are wererats (Ayyur, Irat and Kahina). They are drugged by the smoke (they have the Exhausted condition and thus are -1D to all actions), but will fight if threatened. They are addled enough that they will talk freely for a short time before realizing the adventurers don't belong here. Looking closely, one can see that rats are curled up on the mattress with the people.

The chest is filled with finery. The chest itself is Carried 4 and worth 6D.



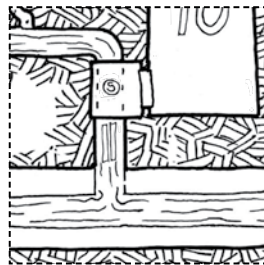
**Wererat Consorts**

Hsivin's consorts have been granted the blessing of Maata Re.

<b>Might:</b> 4	<b>Nature:</b> 5
<b>Descriptors:</b> Scheming, Devouring, Skulking	
<b>Conflict Dispositions</b>	<b>Conflict Weapons</b>
<b>Kill:</b> 6	<b>Kill Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Drive Off:</b> 3	<b>Drive Off Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Flee:</b> 9	<b>Flee Weapons</b> Defend: +1D, <i>Rat Allies</i>
<b>Trick:</b> 11	<b>Trick Weapons</b> Feint: +1s, <i>Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Cunning</i>
<b>Instinct:</b> Always plan an escape (into the sewers).	
<b>Special:</b> The consorts are unarmed and will fight with tooth and claw.	
<b>Lycanthrope:</b> A wererat's bite spreads the disease. Any character who receives an injury as a result of a kill, capture or drive off conflict compromise in which they used the Diseased Bite weapon gains a special sick condition. This condition may only be removed by a cleric with the third circle Absolution of the Lord of Endings prayer. If the condition is not recovered by the end of the next town phase, the character becomes a wererat and thus a GM-controlled character.	
<b>Note:</b> The stat block above is for the consorts in their man-rat form. In human form, reduce Might to 2 and Nature to 3. In rat form, use the Giant Rat stat block.	
<b>Note:</b> These stats represent the consorts in their unaddled states. While drugged they are -1D to all actions.	

**11. Privy**

A small chamber featuring a wooden seat with a hole in it. It is filled with the sound of rushing water.



The wooden seat of the privy can be lifted, allowing someone in this room to drop down to the rushing water of the sewer below. A simple, rusted lock secures a metal grate beneath. It stands open after the second turn. Anyone inspecting the lock can determine if it has recently been picked with an Ob 1 Criminal test. Opening this grate allows passage back to the Tangle. Hsivin will use this to escape, if necessary.

**12. More Rat Tunnels**

These twisting earthen tunnels are no more than a few feet in diameter and reek of animal waste.



The rats have tunneled through the eastern wall of the cavern of the Chapel of Maata Re and into both the storm sewer and

the boudoir. They've established a nest in the dead-end northern tunnel just east of the chapel. The stench of rat waste is incredibly strong in these tunnels. Adventurers taller than a halfling will have to crawl, pushing their packs ahead of them or dragging them behind.

There are six giant rats (*Torchbearer*, page 154) and their litters of young in the nest. They will attack if the adventurers approach the nest.

**The Rat Nest**

The nest is a foetid pile of detritus, rat droppings and squirming young. Searching it will reveal the shiny treasures the giant rats have amassed: a pile of copper coins (3D, each 1D is pack 2), a number of once-fine rugs so fouled as to be worthless and two soiled but usable scrolls (*Rhyme of Opening and Dweomercraft*).

**13. The Chapel of the Maata Re**

This high-ceilinged chamber is shrouded in shadows, fiercely hot and redolent with the sickly-sweet scent of incense burning in heavy copper braziers situated to either side of a long, red rug that runs the length of the chamber from the doors to a marble altar carved in intricate relief depicting dancing skeletons. Behind the altar sits the huge, cross-legged bronze statue of a grossly bloated figure swathed in lepers' bandages, hands outstretched in an open position on its knees. Flames leap up between the statue's crossed legs, heating the underside of its hands to smoking.



After turn 4, a naked female figure—her skin scrawled with arcane sigils that are beginning to run from sweat—brandishes an evil-looking dagger above the chest of a beautiful young man cruelly bound to the altar with leather straps. Blood-smearing attendants stand to either side of her, one of them guarding another bound and naked young man shivering with terror.

The woman is Hsivin the Defiler, wererat high-priestess of Maata Re. She is working a ritual intended to bring down pestilence on Highwater so that she might expand the power of her cult and cause everyone in the city to fill the cults coffers with propitiatory offerings. She needs to cut the hearts from a total of three sacrifices and place them in the hands of the statue of her patron before the ritual is complete. If interrupted, she will enjoin her attendants to deal with the intruders. If they fail but manage a compromise, she will cast Blessing of the Lords of Light

and Darkness and make her escape, trusting to her traps to protect the Jackal's Eye.

The sacrificial victims are Jaaka, Finn and Atli, young noblemen. They will be extremely grateful if rescued. Secretly Jaaka and Finn are members of Well Spenders gang. If at least one of them survives the, Rook, guildmaster of the Well Spenders, will extend the adventurers an invitation to join (see the **Thieves' Guild** in the **New Town Locations** section of the Appendix).

**Wererat Attendants**

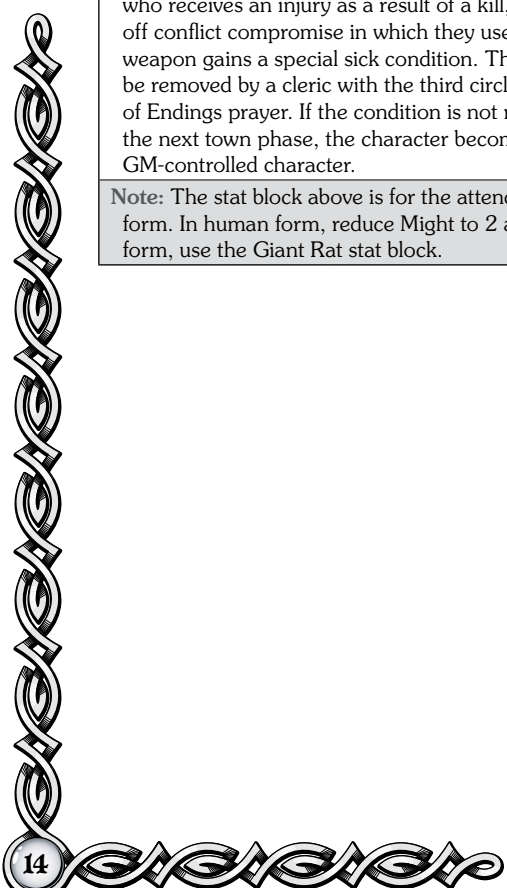
These novitiates have recently been granted the Blessing of Maata Re and are fanatically loyal to Hsivin the Defiler.

<b>Might:</b> 4	<b>Nature:</b> 5
<b>Descriptors:</b> Scheming, Devouring, Skulking	
<b>Conflict Dispositions</b>	<b>Conflict Weapons</b>
<b>Kill:</b> 6	<b>Kill Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Drive Off:</b> 3	<b>Drive Off Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Flee:</b> 9	<b>Flee Weapons</b> Defend: +1D, <i>Rat Allies</i>
<b>Trick:</b> 11	<b>Trick Weapons</b> Feint: +1s, <i>Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Cunning</i>
<b>Instinct:</b> Always plan an escape (into the sewers).	
<b>Special:</b> The attendants will fight with their sacrificial knives unless they are disarmed.	
Lycanthrope: A wererat's bite spreads the disease. Any character who receives an injury as a result of a kill, capture or drive off conflict compromise in which they used the <i>Diseased Bite</i> weapon gains a special sick condition. This condition may only be removed by a cleric with the third circle Absolution of the Lord of Endings prayer. If the condition is not recovered by the end of the next town phase, the character becomes a wererat and thus a GM-controlled character.	
<b>Note:</b> The stat block above is for the attendants in their man-rat form. In human form, reduce Might to 2 and Nature to 3. In rat form, use the Giant Rat stat block.	

**Hsivin the Defiler**

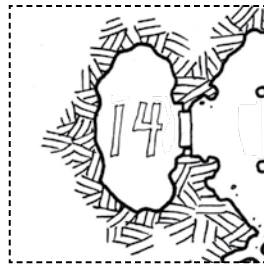
Hsivin the Defiler is a powerful agent of the Lords of Chaos in their schemes against the Lords of Law. She has methodically wormed her way into the underworld of Highwater, surrounding herself with a fanatically devoted cult that will murder or die at her command.

<b>Might:</b> 4	<b>Nature:</b> 7
<b>Descriptors:</b> Scheming, Devouring, Skulking	
<b>Conflict Dispositions</b>	<b>Conflict Weapons</b>
<b>Kill:</b> 8	<b>Kill Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Drive Off:</b> 5	<b>Drive Off Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Flee:</b> 12	<b>Flee Weapons</b> Defend: +1D, <i>Rat Allies</i>
<b>Trick:</b> 15	<b>Trick Weapons</b> Feint: +1s, <i>Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Cunning</i>
<b>Instinct:</b> Always plan an escape (into the sewers).	
<b>Special:</b> Hsivin is the equivalent of a Level 5 Cleric, allowing her to invoke three first circle prayers and one second circle prayer. She has the following prayers memorized:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☉ Blessing of the Lords of Light and Darkness (1st Circle, page 51)</li> <li>☉ Execration (1st Circle, page 52)</li> <li>☉ Malison of the Lords of Terror (1st Circle, page 52)</li> <li>☉ Chains of Fate (2nd Circle, page 53)</li> </ul>	
Hsivin prefers to allow her attendants to do the fighting while she makes good her escape. As such, when confronted, she will generally invoke the Blessing of the Lords of Light and Darkness in an effort to blanket the area in darkness and prevent the adventurers from being able to fight. She will then escape through the rat tunnels at 12, make for the boudoir at 10 and slip into the sewers through the privy at 11.	
If the adventurers get her into a conflict anyway, she will invoke the Chains of Fate with help from her attendants, targeting at least three of the adventurers. She will invoke Malison of the Lords of Terror on her first action and Execration on her second action, before resorting to her dagger or bite.	
Lycanthrope: A wererat's bite spreads the disease. Any character who receives an injury as a result of a kill, capture or drive off conflict compromise in which they used the <i>Diseased Bite</i> weapon gains a special sick condition. This condition may only be removed by a cleric with the third circle Absolution of the Lord of Endings prayer. If the condition is not recovered by the end of the next town phase, the character becomes a wererat and thus a GM-controlled character.	
<b>Note:</b> The stat block above is for Hsivin her woman-rat form. In human form, reduce Might to 3 and Nature to 5. In rat form, use the Giant Rat stat block. She may transform without a test normally. In conflicts changing form requires margin of success 1 on a Maneuver action.	



**14. Trap Vault**

*This natural cavern, braced with stout wooden beams, incongruously has a well-made wood slat floor built over the rough stone to make it level. It is piled with chests and coffers.*



Unlike other parts of the vault, this room has no elaborate decorations. A glance will reveal that stalactites have been broken off the ceiling, and efforts have been made to open up the cavern a bit. The wooden beams bracing the ceiling appear to have been placed haphazardly.

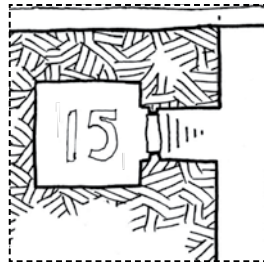
The chamber itself is a trap. Weight placed on the wooden floor will cause it to sink, almost imperceptibly, taking the load of the ceiling off the wooden braces. After a few moments, the ceiling will collapse, dropping tons of stone upon anyone inside.

- ⊗ Determining whether the braces are load-bearing or safe is a Carpenter Ob 2 test. Success reveals the nature of the trap.
- ⊗ A cursory search for traps will reveal the trap floor with a Scout Ob 4 test.
- ⊗ If the adventurers trigger the trap, they must each make a Health Ob 6 test to escape the cavern before the ceiling comes down. Failure: Injured (or dead if already injured or sick).

**15. Armory**

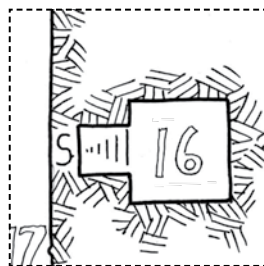
*This utilitarian chamber is filled with racks of weapons and armor.*

The Armory has stands with five sets of leather armor, three sets of chain, three helmets and four shields. It also has five swords, three bows and a dozen knives.



**16. Vault**

*This rough stone chamber is filled with treasures! Chests overflowing with coins, jewels, objets d'art and more. At the center stands a pedestal, about waist height.*



It's clear that the pedestal was meant to display something precious. But now all it holds is a slip of paper.

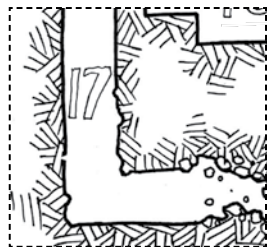
The paper is a note: "You were wonderful! Thanks for keeping them busy. XOXOXOX—Tamar, Queen of Thieves"

The vault holds:

- ⊗ 3 slots of gold coins (2D each, total 6D)
- ⊗ 3 slots of silver coins (1D each, total 3D)
- ⊗ 8 slots of copper (1D/2 slots, total 4D)
- ⊗ Two rubies and an emerald (each one is pack 1 and worth 3D, total 9D)
- ⊗ 1 tiara set with sapphires (worn 1 on head, neck, hand or pack 1, worth 4D)
- ⊗ A leper mask sized for a giant, carved of jade (pack 4 or carried 2, 4D)
- ⊗ A massive malachite vase, intricately carved with writhing rats (pack 4 or carried 2, 3D)
- ⊗ A pair of very fancy shoes

**17. Trap Corridor**

*A rusty iron ladder, riveted to the undressed stone wall, descends into a corridor below. The air of the corridor is dank and heavy. Water drips from the ceiling in places and the walls are slick with condensation that trickles down and puddles in dips and hollows in the rough floor. Along the southern wall, a set of uneven stone stairs have been cut into a passage that ascends to a stout wooden door, swollen with the damp.*



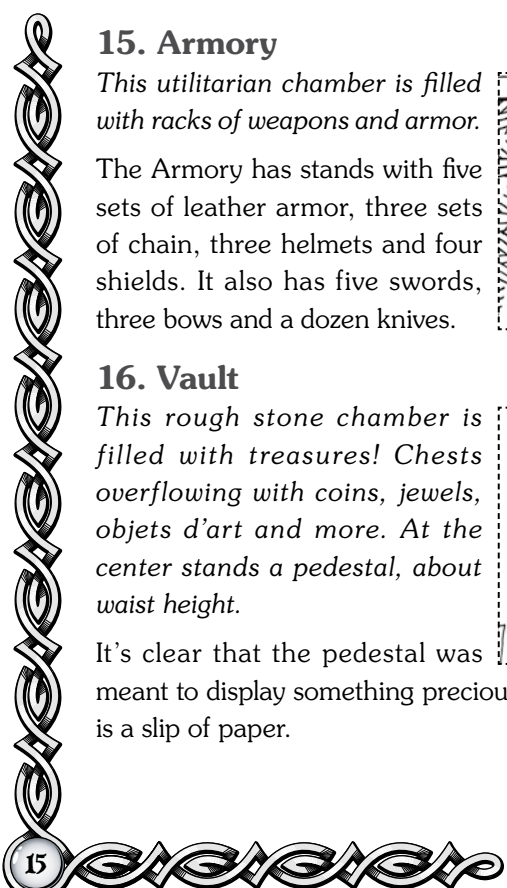
The rusty iron ladder that connects this corridor to the library above is a good 30' long. Observant adventurers may realize that this corridor passes under the storm sewer above. About 10' or so east of the ladder, looking up will reveal a closed metal sluice gate set into the ceiling.

**The Ladder and the Lever**

Anyone who uses the ladder will notice that to the right of the top of the ladder is a recessed niche in the stone to which the ladder is riveted. Within the niche is an iron lever attached to a gear mechanism.

Pulling the lever will open the sluice gate and close the floor slots, filling the corridor with water from the storm sewer. It takes a turn for the water to fill the corridor.

Pushing the lever will close the sluice gate, causing the water to slowly drain from the corridor via a series of slots cut into the floor of the corridor near the walls. For the space of a turn afterward, water trapped behind the secret door to the



Vault (16) will slowly seep out through the seams of the secret door.

The mechanism by which the lever opens and closes the sluice gate is built into the wall and can't be accessed without breaking through the stone via a Stonemason or Laborer test.

### **The Pressure Plate Trap**

The corridor continues to the east before turning north, where they abruptly end, except for a number of rat tunnels. The floor where the corridor turns north is one big pressure plate. Stepping on it will open the sluice gate, causing the water from the storm sewer to flood the passage. Triggering the pressure plate also moves the lever near the ladder into the 'open' position.

- ☼ A cursory search for traps will reveal the pressure plate with a Scout Ob 4 test.
- ☼ Pouring water or some other liquid upon the floor to detect hidden seams is a Good Idea and will reveal the pressure plate without a test. Tell the clever player to empty their waterskin on their character sheet.
- ☼ If the adventurers trigger the trap, rushing into the Armory (or the Vault if they've found it) is a Good Idea. They escape the flood but are trapped. Otherwise, they must each make a Health test (Ob 6) as the whole corridor fills with filthy water. Failure (Condition): Sick (or dead if already injured or sick), or trap them in the Armory as a twist.

The waters won't rise as high as the Armory or Vault, but escaping will require one or more adventurers to swim the corridor, ascend the ladder and reset the lever at the top, causing the water to drain. If the adventurers escaped into the Vault, the vacuum created by the water will prevent them from reopening the secret door. They'll have to break it down to get into the water-filled corridor.

- ☼ Swimming the corridor is an Ob 5 Dungeoneer test for a single individual, Ob 6 test for two adventurers and Ob 7 for the whole party. Don't forget to increase the Ob by 1 if they attempt to swim it in darkness. Failure: Sick (or dead if already injured or sick).
- ☼ Breaking down the secret door is a Health Ob 5 test. Increase the Ob by 1 if they don't have adequate tools (adventurers with Laborer, Stonemason or Dwarf Nature have adequate tools with them, otherwise the adventurers will have to scavenge something).

### **Yet More Rat Tunnels**

The rat tunnels at the end of the corridor slope gently upward and lead into another rat nest before exiting into the sewers.

The stench of rat waste is incredibly strong in these tunnels. Adventurers taller than a halfling will have to crawl, pushing their packs ahead of them or dragging them behind.

There are seven giant rats (*Torchbearer*, page 154) and their litters of young in the nest. They will attack if the adventurers approach the nest. Fire can be used to ward them off.

### **The Rat Nest**

The nest is a foetid pile of detritus, rat droppings and squirming young. Searching it will reveal the shiny treasures the giant rats have amassed: a pile of silver coins (4D) and a delicate necklace of silver filigree and sapphires (pack 1, worth 5D).





# Monster Appendix



## Lady Attar

Dressed in gauzey, white funeral robes complete with veil, Lady Attar appears to be small, delicate and in need of protection. But it's just an act. She's a brilliant actor and con-woman, who's almost always one step ahead of her marks. You have to be to work Highwater without Guild protection.

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	4	Resources	4
Will	5	Circles	4
Health	3	Might	2

**Descriptors:** Boasting, Demanding, Running

**Skills:** Manipulator 5, Alchemist 4, Persuader 3, Criminal 3, Theologian 3, Ritualist 2

**Wises:** Highwater-wise, Scam-wise, Perfume-wise

**Traits:** Clever (2), Poised (1)

**Instinct:** Always get someone else to do it for you.

## Tamar, Queen of Thieves

A master thief with a reputation for stealing the unstealable, Tamar is a celebrity in Highwater and beyond. Young and aspiring thieves dream of becoming her apprentice.

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	5	Resources	7
Will	6	Circles	4
Health	5	Might	3

**Level:** 10

**Descriptors:** Boasting, Stealing, Running

**Skills:** Criminal 6, Scout 6, Dungeoneer 5, Manipulator 5, Fighter 4, Hagglor 4, Lore Master 4, Persuader 3, Scavenger 3, Scholar 3, Theologian 2

**Wises:** Trap-wise, Hiding-wise, Secret Door-wise

**Traits:** Devil May Care (2), Quick-witted (2), Quiet (1)

**Instinct:** Never let them see you sweat.

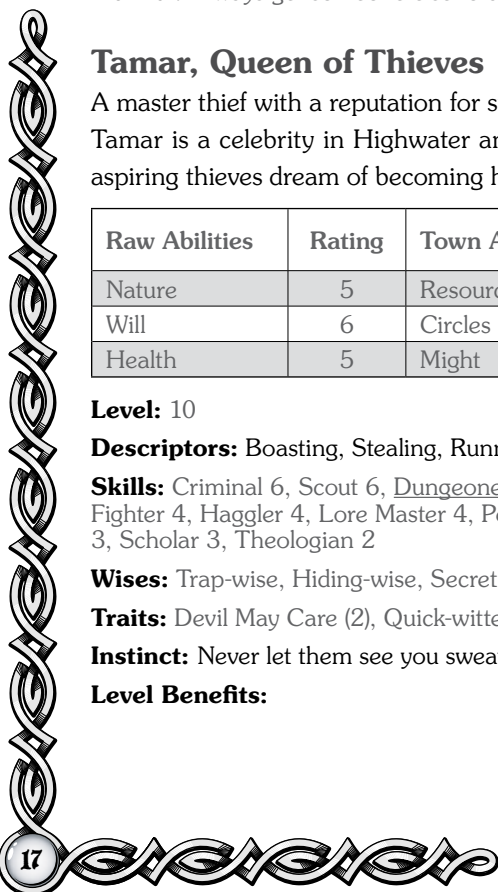
**Level Benefits:**

- ☉ **Level 2:** *Surprise Attack* — Add +1s to any Feint action (in addition to any weapon or Might bonuses) when made from a concealed or hidden position.
- ☉ **Level 3:** *Cloak and Dagger* — A cloak (worn or held in the hand) can be used as a shield. Must be armed like a regular shield in a conflict.
- ☉ **Level 4:** *Hide in Shadows* — When hiding in dim light while wearing a cloak or appropriate dark clothing (and remaining quiet and slow moving), your opponents suffer a -1s penalty to all attempts to detect you. You do not suffer a -1s to hide in dim light.
- ☉ **Level 5:** *Pickpocket* — Make a free Criminal test in town to alleviate one of the residents of some of their financial burdens. Success generates 1D of cash.
- ☉ **Level 6:** *Symbolologist* — +2D to Scholar skill to decipher runes, symbols and strange languages.
- ☉ **Level 7:** *Ear to the Ground* — Take +1 to the Entering Town roll, town events roll, tavern rumors roll, or life on the streets roll.
- ☉ **Level 8:** *Luck of the Devil* — The thief may choose twist or condition for a failed test when acting alone or at the forefront of the test (i.e., you're the one rolling the dice).
- ☉ **Level 9:** *Transformed* —(Demanding Nature becomes Stealing Nature).
- ☉ **Level 10:** *A Life in the Shadows* — Suffer no penalty for dim light and only -1s in darkness. You can act in darkness normally (without conflict restrictions) provided you can smell and touch.

**Special:** Once per session in which she appears, Tamar may tap her Nature or use the Of Course! ability of Wises. She may also use the Wise ability Deeper Understanding once per session.

## Cultists of Maata Re

These human cultists of Maata Re are fanatically devoted to Hsivin the Defiler. They serve in the hopes of someday being



rewarded with the Blessing of Maata Re — lycanthropy that will overwhelm the terrible diseases they suffer and turn them into Maata Re's chosen.

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	3	Resources	1
Will	3	Circles	2
Health	6	Might	2

**Descriptors:** Boasting, Demanding, Running

**Skills:** Fighter 4, Theologian 3, Ritualist 2, Scout 2

**Wises:** Mistress of Plagues-wise, Rat-wise

**Traits:** Fanatical (2), Wiry (1)

**Instinct:** Get them!

**Weapon:** Dagger.

## Dalander the Assassin (wererat)

Dalander is a presbyter-assassin of the cult of Maata Re, ranking just after Hsivin the Defiler among the cultists in the temple. It is his responsibility to safeguard the temple and to assassinate the cult's enemies.

Might: 4	Nature: 6
Descriptors: Scheming, Devouring, Skulking	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Kill: 7	Kill Weapons Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
Drive Off: 9	Drive Off Weapons Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
Flee: 10	Flee Weapons Defend: +1D, <i>Rat Allies</i>
Trick: 12	Flee Weapons Feint: +1s, <i>Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Cunning</i>
Armor: Stony Flesh (as plate).	
Instinct: Always plan an escape (into the sewers).	
Special: Dalander will fight using the Black Dagger of Qdaz (see below) as his weapon, inflicting its magic upon his opponents, unless he is disarmed.	
Lycanthrope: A wererat's bite spreads the disease. Any character who receives an injury as a result of a kill, capture or drive off conflict compromise in which Dalander used the <i>Diseased Bite</i> weapon gains a special sick condition. This condition may only be removed by a cleric with the third circle Absolution of the Lord of Endings prayer. If the condition is not recovered by the end of the next town phase, the character becomes a wererat and thus a GM-controlled character.	
Note: The stat block above is for Dalander in his man-rat form. In human form, reduce Might to 2 and Nature to 4. In rat form, use the Giant Rat stat block.	

## The Black Dagger of Qdaz

Dalander wields the Black Dagger of Qdaz, a magical relic of the Cult of Maata Re. It is a wicked-looking black misericorde a foot long.

**Level:** 3

**Effect:** Ignores chain. Increases the likelihood that plate is damaged. Once per combat, delivers Exhausted condition on successful strike. Once per combat, can convert Exhausted condition to Sick condition.

**Inventory:** Hands/carried 1 or belt/weapon 1

**Type:** Magical weapon

## Wererat Attendants

These novitiates have recently been granted the Blessing of Maata Re and are fanatically loyal to Hsivin the Defiler.

Might: 4	Nature: 5
Descriptors: Scheming, Devouring, Skulking	
Conflict Dispositions	Conflict Weapons
Kill: 6	Kill Weapons Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
Drive Off: 3	Drive Off Weapons Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
Flee: 9	Flee Weapons Defend: +1D, <i>Rat Allies</i>
Trick: 11	Trick Weapons Feint: +1s, <i>Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Cunning</i>
Instinct: Always plan an escape (into the sewers).	
Special: The attendants will fight with their sacrificial knives unless they are disarmed.	
Lycanthrope: A wererat's bite spreads the disease. Any character who receives an injury as a result of a kill, capture or drive off conflict compromise in which they used the <i>Diseased Bite</i> weapon gains a special sick condition. This condition may only be removed by a cleric with the third circle Absolution of the Lord of Endings prayer. If the condition is not recovered by the end of the next town phase, the character becomes a wererat and thus a GM-controlled character.	
Note: The stat block above is for the attendants in their man-rat form. In human form, reduce Might to 2 and Nature to 3. In rat form, use the Giant Rat stat block.	

### Hsivin the Defiler

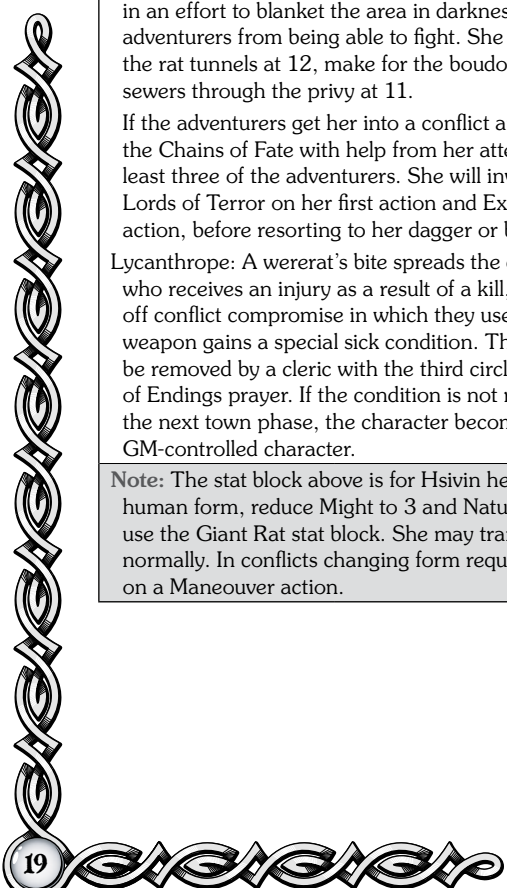
Hsivin the Defiler is a powerful agent of the Lords of Chaos in their schemes against the Lords of Law. She has methodically wormed her way into the underworld of Highwater, surrounding herself with a fanatically devoted cult that will murder or die at her command.

<b>Might:</b> 4	<b>Nature:</b> 7
<b>Descriptors:</b> Scheming, Devouring, Skulking	
<b>Conflict Dispositions</b>	<b>Conflict Weapons</b>
<b>Kill:</b> 8	<b>Kill Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: -1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Drive Off:</b> 5	<b>Drive Off Weapons</b> Attack: +1s, <i>Diseased Bite</i> Defend: +1D, <i>Diseased Bite</i>
<b>Flee:</b> 12	<b>Flee Weapons</b> Defend: +1D, <i>Rat Allies</i>
<b>Trick:</b> 15	<b>Trick Weapons</b> Feint: +1s, <i>Cunning</i> Maneuver: +1D, <i>Cunning</i>
<b>Instinct:</b> Always plan an escape (into the sewers).	
<b>Special:</b> Hsivin is the equivalent of a Level 5 Cleric, allowing her to invoke three first circle prayers and one second circle prayer. She has the following prayers memorized:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☉ Blessing of the Lords of Light and Darkness (1st Circle, page 51)</li> <li>☉ Execration (1st Circle, page 52)</li> <li>☉ Malison of the Lords of Terror (1st Circle, page 52)</li> <li>☉ Chains of Fate (2nd Circle, page 53)</li> </ul>	
Hsivin prefers to allow her attendants to do the fighting while she makes good her escape. As such, when confronted, she will generally invoke the Blessing of the Lords of Light and Darkness in an effort to blanket the area in darkness and prevent the adventurers from being able to fight. She will then escape through the rat tunnels at 12, make for the boudoir at 10 and slip into the sewers through the privy at 11.	
If the adventurers get her into a conflict anyway, she will invoke the Chains of Fate with help from her attendants, targeting at least three of the adventurers. She will invoke Malison of the Lords of Terror on her first action and Execration on her second action, before resorting to her dagger or bite.	
<b>Lycanthrope:</b> A wererat's bite spreads the disease. Any character who receives an injury as a result of a kill, capture or drive off conflict compromise in which they used the Diseased Bite weapon gains a special sick condition. This condition may only be removed by a cleric with the third circle Absolution of the Lord of Endings prayer. If the condition is not recovered by the end of the next town phase, the character becomes a wererat and thus a GM-controlled character.	
<b>Note:</b> The stat block above is for Hsivin her woman-rat form. In human form, reduce Might to 3 and Nature to 5. In rat form, use the Giant Rat stat block. She may transform without a test normally. In conflicts changing form requires margin of success 1 on a Maneuver action.	

### Gargoyle Lares

Arcanists and Ritualists contract these strange guardian spirits to protect their most precious belongings.

<b>Might:</b> 4	<b>Nature (Manifest Spirit):</b> 4
<b>Descriptors:</b> Protecting, Punishing Transgressors, Crouching Motionless	
<b>Conflict Dispositions</b>	<b>Conflict Weapons</b>
<b>Drive Off:</b> 10	<b>Drive Off Weapons</b> Attack: +2D, <i>Savage Beak</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Stony Wings</i>
<b>Kill:</b> 9	<b>Kill Weapons</b> Attack: +2D, <i>Savage Beak</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Stony Wings</i>
<b>Banish:</b> 5	<b>Banish Weapons</b> Attack: +1D, <i>Sworn Duty</i> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Summoning Contract</i>
<b>Banish:</b> 5	<b>Flee Weapons</b> Maneuver: +1s, <i>Stony Wings</i>
<b>Armor:</b> Stony Flesh (as plate).	
<b>Instinct:</b> Savor sips of sacrificial blood.	
<b>Special:</b> Gargoyle Lares remain perfectly motionless until that which it has been summoned to protect is threatened. It then springs into action. It is one spirit with four bodies. As bodies get knocked out of a kill or drive off conflict, it gathers power (its Nature increases by 2 for each body knocked out). Describe this as faint, orange energy leaving the defeated body to enter the remaining ones.	
Gargoyle Lares may be appeased with the sacrifice of a few drops of blood upon the lararium. Recalling the details of the ritual offering requires a Theologian test (Ob 2). Performing the offering requires a Ritualist test (Ob 1). Once the offering is made, the gargoyle's bodies will animate and fly to the lararium to lap up the hot blood. They will ignore any and all actions around them while doing so.	



# Highwater



The decadent port city of Highwater is one of the great trading powers of the north, sitting upon both the Post Road and the King's Road, and with fleets that control the northern reaches of the Middle Sea. It is a city of mist-shrouded, narrow alleys, tall houses, swaggering thieves and countless strange and sinister cults. Among scoundrels, lowlifes and ne'er-do-wells, it is better known as Thieftown, for though Highwater nominally pays homage to its overlord, Earl Jermod the Lambe, it is the thieves' guilds that truly rule the city. Even the members of the Merchant's Council appointed by the earl to run the city bend knee to one thieves' guild or the other, according to the shifting tides of influence and prestige among the guilds.

The common people love nothing so well as to gossip about the latest brilliant caper or daring heist. Even wretched folk like adventurers can become the talk of the town, if only for a brief time, should stories of spectacular plunders spread.

Highwater is six day's journey south on the Post Road from the House of the Three Squires.

## Town Rules

**Skills:** Criminal, Hagglor, Sailor

**Traits:** Witty, Jaded

**Alignment:** Unaffiliated

**Hagglor Ob:** 3

## Available Locations

Tavern, Street, Stables, Flophouse, Inn, Hotel, Home, Temple, Market, Guild Hall, Docks, Thieves' Guild

## Current Laws

- ☉ Theft is a criminal act. Punishable by loss of limb or facial branding.
- ☉ Piracy is a criminal act. Punishable by hanging until dead.
- ☉ One may not wear fashionable shoes above one's station. Punishable by three days in the stocks or a fine (Ob 2 Resources test).

- ☉ One may not wear fashionable clothes (finery) above one's station. Punishable by three days in the stocks or a fine (Ob 2 Resources test).

## Special

Characters can tell true (or outrageous) tales of their spectacular adventures in the tavern to win the respect and adulation of the commons. Make an Oratory Ob 3 test and then roll on the Telling Tales Events Table. If successful, you may choose to keep the result that you roll or the next higher result. If failed, subtract your margin of failure from your result.

### Telling Tales Events Table (3d6)

3	<i>Run out of town.</i> No one has patience for your fish tales anymore. You're run out of town and no longer welcome.
4	<i>Your face pisses me off.</i> Gain a new enemy and detractor in town.
5	<i>Them's fighting words!</i> You manage to start a tavern brawl. Take the injured condition and mark a test for Fighter (pass or fail, your choice).
6	<i>Liar.</i> No one buys your stories anymore. Factor to all Persuader and Manipulator tests during this town phase.
7	<i>You pulled how much out of that tomb?</i> Some enterprising thieves mark you for a visit...
8	<i>Laugh out loud.</i> They're laughing at you, not with you. Take the angry condition.
9-10	<i>Let me buy you a drink.</i> Make a free recovery test for angry or afraid in the tavern.
11	<i>OK, well have you heard this one?</i> Some talkative wag shares a free rumor (as tavern result).
12	<i>Your money's no good here.</i> Your fans insist on buying you drinks. You may drink for free in the tavern for the duration of the town phase.
13	<i>You're so brave!</i> The adulation brings a smile to your face. Remove the angry condition at any point during this town phase.

Telling Tales Events Table (3d6)	
14	<i>Charming.</i> +1D to all social tests involving romance during this town phase.
15	<i>Toast of the town.</i> Your reputation gets a boost. +1D to all Circles tests during this town phase.
16	<i>Winning friends and influencing people.</i> Gain a new friend in town.
17-18	<i>Local hero.</i> The people adopt you as one of their own. You may now treat this town as a home town: You get +1D to Resources tests here (see <b>Hometown Advantage</b> , Torchbearer, page 28), +1D to Circles tests here beginning at 3rd level (see <b>Reputation</b> , Torchbearer, page 29) and clerics no longer have to make a Theologian test to memorize prayers here (see <b>Memorizing Prayers</b> , Torchbearer, page 50).

Telling Tales Lifestyle Cost: +1

## New Town Locations

### Docks

Always bustling, often dangerous, the docks are a place to find work and buy passage to other ports.

#### Find Work

There are always guild talent masters at the docks looking to hire persons of low repute for odd jobs like collections (in town or at sea), protection, recruitment of reluctant individuals for oar-duty or the safe transport of items of dubious morality, legality or provenance.

Make a Circles test to make contact with someone who is hiring.

This type of work can range from a single test to “persuade” someone or an entire adventure of its own. Pay for simple work is usually a bag of gold. For extended operations, pay is usually a share of the haul. The successful completion of three jobs frequently leads to an invitation to petition the thieves’ guild for membership.

**Find Work Factors:** At sea (or on a river); at a busy crossroads, bridge or ford; in town; in a nearby town

**Finding Work Lifestyle Cost:** +1

#### Buy Passage

At the docks you can find a ship or barge captain willing to take on passengers if their coin gleams brightly enough. Passengers must supply their own food during journeys and are expected to stay the hell out of the way.

**Buy Passage Resources Factors:** Nearby port on ship’s route, nearby port off ship’s route, distant port on ship’s route, distant port off ship’s route

**Number of Passengers:** One or two, a party of adventurers

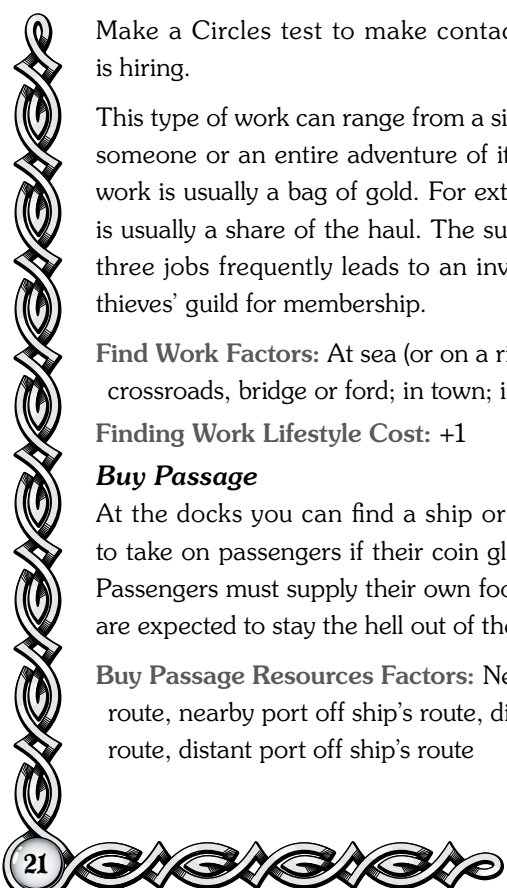
### Failed Tests at the Docks

If you fail a test to find work or buy passage at the docks, unfortunate things can happen. Roll on the Docks Events table.

Docks Events Table (2d6)	
2	<i>Press Ganged!</i> You’ve been stripped of your gear and gifted with a new career at an oar bench or hauling lines on deck. There’s even a friendly taskmaster with a flogger to keep your motivation from flagging. If you manage to escape, take Back-Breaking Labor-wise.
3-4	<i>Brawl:</i> You manage to insult some salty dogs and start a brawl. You should see the other guys! Take the injured condition and mark a Fighter test (pass or fail, your choice).
5-7	<i>Thieved:</i> Your purse is stolen. All cash lost.
8-9	<i>Clothing soiled:</i> Factor this into all Circles tests until clothing replaced.
10	<i>Animal pal:</i> Roll 1d6. You’re befriended by a monkey (1), parrot (2-3), trained rat (4-5) or polydactyl (extra-toed) cat (6). Monkeys grant +1D to Criminal, parrots grant +1D to Oratory, trained rats grant +1D to Health tests to avoid traps and polydactyl cats are beloved of the Sea Lord, granting +1D to Sailor tests. The cats also prevent minor inconveniences in camp involving vermin. Consider such results to be a Safe Camp instead. Caring for your animal companion increases Lifestyle costs in town by one. Failure to pay your bills means your animal companion is lost.
11-12	<i>Fall in with Pirates!</i> Your new friends are part of the Pirate Brotherhood. With an axe to your neck, the fair lads and ladies invite you to swear on and sign the Articles of Agreement, which binds you to their discipline and provides you with a vote in their affairs and a share of the proceeds of plunder from raids and slaves sold. When you leave the crew, take Dread Pirate-wise.

### Thieves’ Guild

This den of thieves is a members-only affair. Unless you’re crazy enough to try to break in, you need an invitation. Guildmasters may extend an invitation based on an adventurer’s reputation. Generally though, the best way to earn an invitation is to prove yourself with freelance work for the guild at the docks. Any class is eligible, though thieves are the most common class represented. Membership in the thieves’ guild comes with a number of benefits and



responsibilities: mentorship, jobs, hiring help, fencing and dues.

## **Mentorship**

A member in good standing can hire a mentor that can teach the Criminal, Dungeoneer and Scout skills. Make a Resources test using the factors below. Success allows you to mark one test toward advancement of the skill in question (pass or fail, your choice).

### **Criminal Mentorship Factors (character's current skill):**

Unskilled, skill rating 1 or 2, skill rating 3

### **Dungeoneer Mentorship Factors (character's current**

**skill, start counting at 2):** Unskilled, skill rating 1 or 2, skill rating 3

### **Scout Mentorship Factors (character's current skill,**

**start counting at 2):** Unskilled, skill rating 1 or 2, skill rating 3

Note, characters with Criminal, Dungeoneer or Scout 4 or 5 who desire additional training must seek out a master to mentor them. Such training is outside the scope of the guild's normal services.

## **Jobs**

The guild is happy to offer its members job placement assistance. Members in good standing can go to the guild for a job with a bit of research thrown in; no need to dig for leads. The GM provides a job — a caravan or shipment to rob, manor to burgle, upstanding citizen to extort, etc. — along with two details that could be had from Asking Around or Doing Research. Any further information gathering is up to the adventurers.

## **The Master's Cut**

Guildmasters expect a cut of any job taken under their auspices. Adventurers must show their appreciation for the guildmaster by providing an equal share of any treasure won (i.e., if there are three adventurers in the party, the guildmaster is owed 1/4th of the treasure. If there are four adventurers in the party, the guildmaster is owed 1/5th of the treasure. Etc.). Failure to pay results in making an enemy of the guildmaster and revocation of guild membership.

## **Hiring Help**

At the thieves' guild you can hire pickpockets and lockpickers, thugs and lookouts to assist you on jobs. You must be at least level 2 to hire help. All such services must be paid in advance and thus add to your lifestyle cost.

Pickpockets and lockpickers have the Criminal skill and will help (+1D) with all tests related to that skill in town or other 'civilized' environments (like a caravan). Thugs will help you hit things with Fighter (+1D) if you've got the other party

intimidated or outnumbered. Lookouts will help with the Scout skill (+1D) but won't enter dungeons.

Only one group of each type of help may be hired by the group at one time. If you hire a group of lookouts, you cannot hire another to gain an additional +1D

## **Putting Out the Word**

To find these useful hirelings, test Circles against the appropriate obstacle determined by the factors below.

**Hire Help Factors:** pickpockets and lockpickers, thugs, lookouts

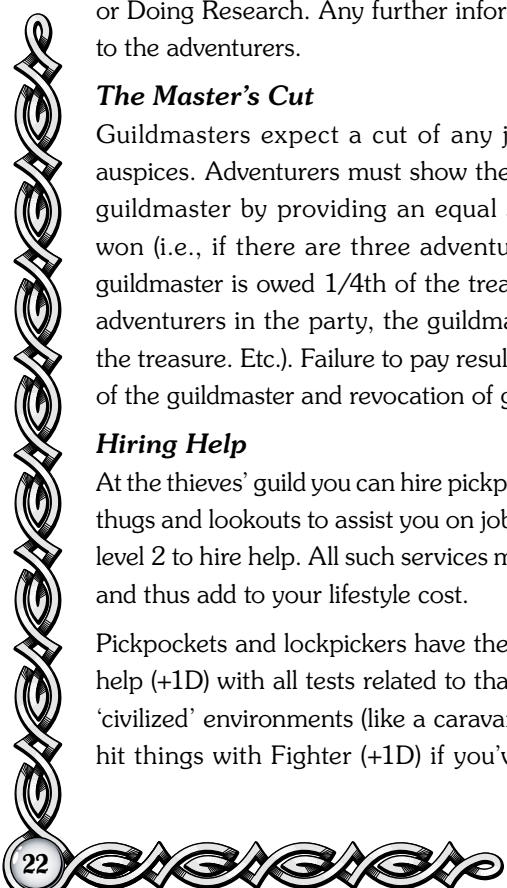
**Hired Help Lifestyle Cost:** pickpockets and lockpickers +1, thugs +2, lookouts +3

## **Fencing**

Unloading stolen goods can be difficult. The Thieves' Guild will take wares of dubious provenance off your hands that legitimate merchants would refuse to deal in, but the fences take a healthy commission. When it comes to jewelry, objets d'art and other valuables, fences will offer half (rounded up) what a legitimate merchant would take. If it's a diamond tiara worth 6D of cash, the guild fence will offer you 3D. For other items you might steal, if the object is worth an Ob 5 Resources test, it's worth 1D of cash from a guild fence. If it's worth an Ob 9 Resources test, it's worth 2D of cash.

## **Dues**

Maintaining good standing in the thieves' guild requires paying one's dues. As long as a character is a member, town Lifestyle costs are increased by 1. Leaving the guild without the guildmaster's permission and blessing can be hazardous to one's health.



# TORCHBEARER

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