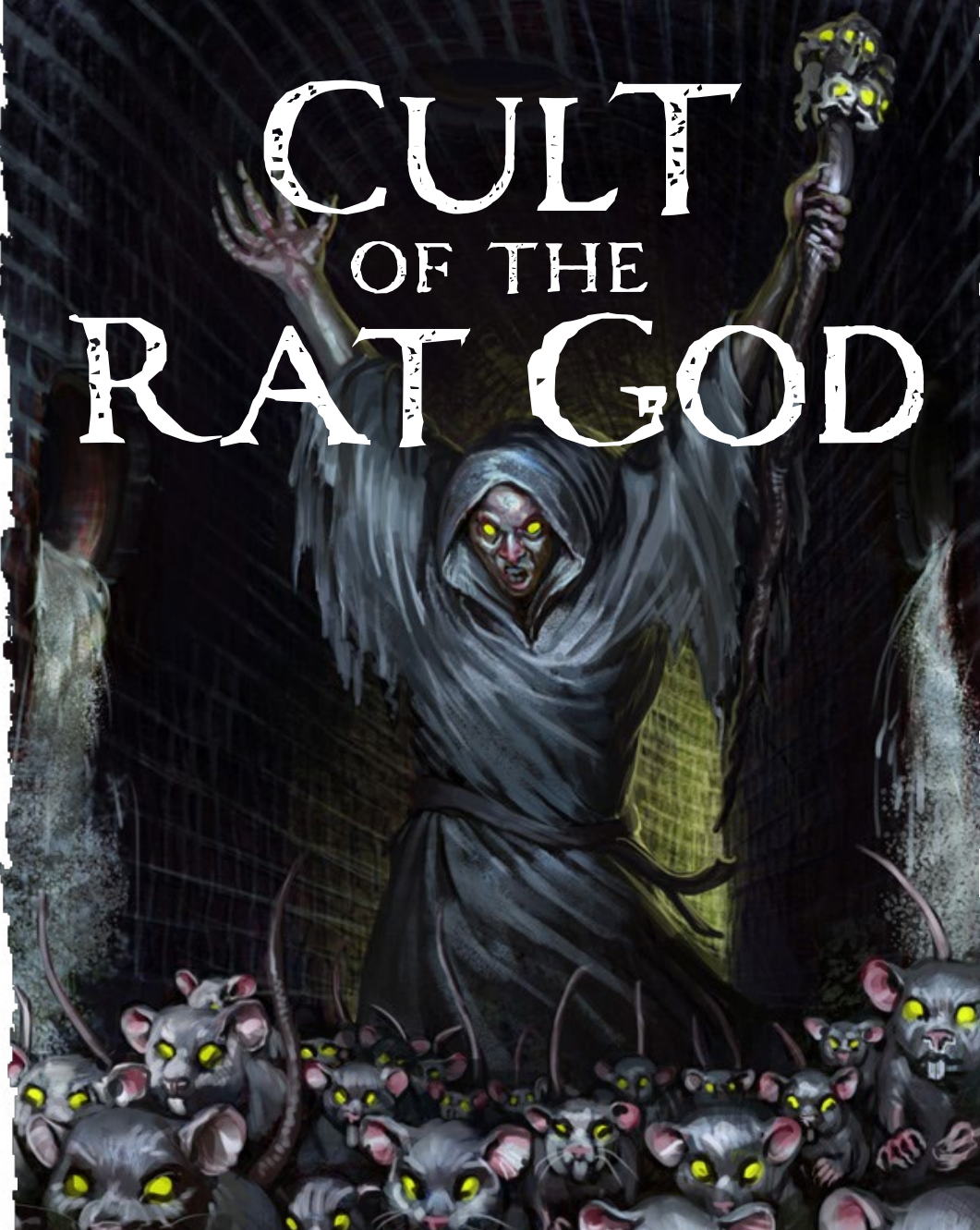


# CULT OF THE RAT GOD



A 5E URBAN MINI-ADVENTURE FOR 4-5 CHARACTERS OF 3<sup>RD</sup> LEVEL

A FOOLISH INNKEEPER SEEKS to compete with a famous establishment that features a grand dungeon down the street. He's created a tunnel into the sewers below and promises adventure to any who enter, but unfortunately it's created a rat infestation and

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now patrons are complaining of stolen coin--and those who have sought their fortune within have not returned. Things have gone beyond his control and he's willing to pay to figure out what is going on below his tavern. In the sewers underneath a druid seeks to overthrow society with an army of rats, creating a false deity worshiped by a cult-like following who dwell below the streets, none of them realizing that their Rat God can be replaced at any time.

## BACKGROUND

Veisin (CN) is a wood elf druid (use the statistics for a [druid](#)) whose people were displaced by the city's settlers millennia ago. He was exiled for trying to raise an army to assault the settlement, and decided instead to infiltrate it to bring it down from within. He soon fell in love with rats, believing them to be the key to overthrowing civilization, and about a year ago established a modest base in a forgotten catacomb within the sewer where he began to build his army of befriended vermin.

Half a year past Veisin crossed paths with a human [wererat](#) going by the alias of Seck (N). Seck was conflicted about her lycanthropy and fell into the mad elf's influence because of his confidence, hoping to come to terms with her affliction by joining his cause. She convinced Veisin to use his magic to establish the Cult of the Rat God, aiming to make both rats and lycanthropy more acceptable. The elf saw the value of having humans as fodder for his revolution and enthusiastically agreed--now all of his army sneak into the city, pilfering what they can to fund the revolution.

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Recently the relationship between Seck and Veisin has strained. Seck has realized that the elf doesn't care about normalizing her condition, only destroying the city that she's grown fond of--and he seems more interested in his rats than he is in her. She continues contributing to the cause for now hoping that things will change, but any serious challenge to the Cult of the Rat God could be enough to spur her departure.

A month ago a dwarf innkeeper named Martin dug a hole into the sewers not far from Veisin's base of operations. The mad elf views this as a personal assault and has instructed his rats to harass the denizens of the establishment. Seck has advised a cautious approach which has been prevented Veisin from murdering Martin and seizing the inn for his own purposes, and now the beleaguered tavernkeep is getting curious and asking for aid...

## PLOT HOOKS

These are a few ways to incorporate this mini-adventure into a campaign.

- The adventurers have seen handbills or heard rumors of an innkeeper willing to pay well for the removal of a rat infestation.
- An associate of one of the adventurers had something of sentimental value stolen from them at the Brisque Inn.
- The adventurers are merely visiting the Brisque Inn when they notice the rats, and any inquiries prompt the innkeeper to offer them the quest.

## OVERVIEW

This sidequest begins when the adventurers accept an offer from the innkeeper to explore what lies in the sewers below. Traveling through the passages to Veisin's lair involves random encounters with a limited number of [rat swarms](#) (15; the GM should keep track of how many are destroyed). There are no safe places to rest within the sewer so PCs that try it face the possibility of more rat swarm encounters.

Within the Temple of the Rat God the party faces several cultists, a giant rat, and summoned

rat swarms. It may seem that putting an end to this subterranean shrine will nullify the threat, but further investigation reveals there are higher powers behind the infestation--should they leave and return, the Rat God reappears. Further into the lair the adventurers discover the wererat and druid responsible for the cult, both of them able to summon more of their tiny defenders.

### 1: The Brisque Inn

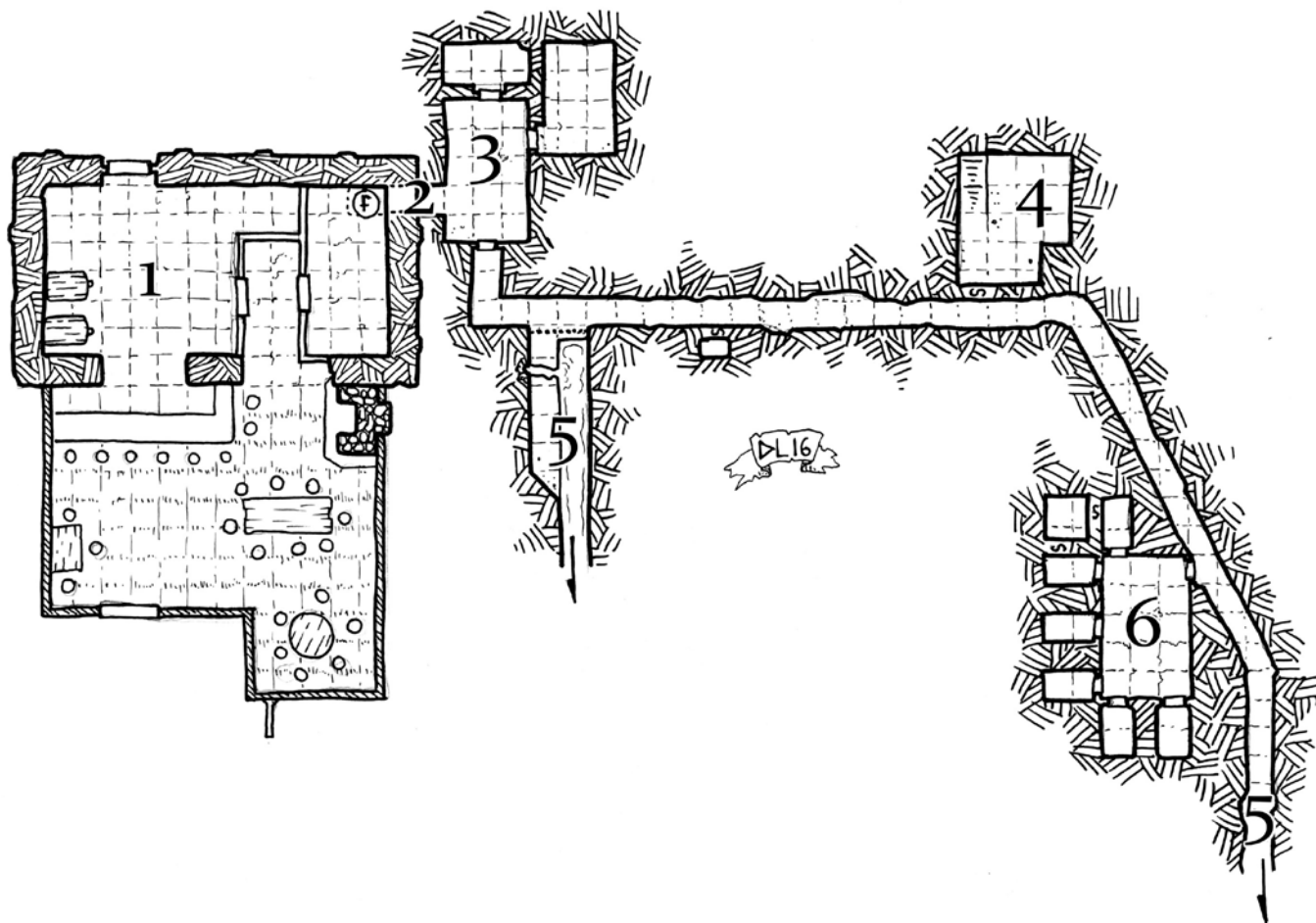
The Brisque Inn is run by a dwarf commoner named Martin (N) that desperately needs to solve the rat infestation that has plagued his tavern since he dug a tunnel into the sewers a month ago. Boarding over the hole has not helped as the rats find other ways of entering his establishment, and no matter how many he kills more reappear soon after. He offers 50 gold to anyone that can make the rats go away for good and *"won't ask any questions"*

### PESKY RODENTS

Adventurers that use magic to communicate with any of the rats discover that they have a fondness for Veisin, describing him as their kindly benefactor. A rat could potentially be commanded with magic to take the party to Veisin's lair, but the other creatures along the way (cultists, rat swarms, and the like) can sense the rat is charmed and do not trust it.

about anything brought back from below--and recently many customers have complained of items that went missing in his tavern, things he figures have been taken underneath the tavern.

*Describing the Inn:* The furniture and bar are of decent construction but much of it appears to be soiled or in disrepair. There is an obvious effort to keep things presentable in some areas, but there are also spots scratched up with marks or still bearing offal--there are too many rats for the short-staffed





## FEATURES OF THE SEWER

As the adventurers move through this space use descriptions of dank, dripping sewers with the constant chattering of rats in the background. On occasion they might see hundreds of eyes just beyond their vision staring back from the shadows, or hear the scratching footfalls of tiny creatures nearby. These all intensify as the PCs move deeper into Veisin's territory.

**Corridors:** Unless otherwise indicated the corridors are 5-feet wide by 5-feet tall square passages. The walls, floors, and in some cases ceiling are covered in filth and accumulated waste. There is a groove in the floor through which disgusting water and waste flows.

**Light and Sound:** There is no source of illumination through most of the sewer, and the sound of skittering and chattering rats is ever present.

**Difficult Terrain:** Unless otherwise indicated the sewers are difficult terrain due to the slippery footing, but the GM may select a few locations to be especially troublesome--a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is necessary whenever a creature takes an action while in one of these squares, falling prone on a failure. Creatures who fall prone might then be at risk of contracting a disease (such as [sewer plague](#)).

**Cultists & Rat Swarms:** There are 6 [cultists](#) and 15 [rat swarms](#) loyal to Veisin (whenever any are destroyed, reduce their totals). These might be encountered randomly in long passageways, or because they are summoned by one of the other creatures. As long as there are any remaining rat swarms, neither Veisin nor Seck can be surprised in the sewers. If the PCs take a long rest, Veisin uses the time to replenish 1d8 rat swarms (up to a maximum of 15). When all of the rat swarms are destroyed, the sewer takes on a sudden eerie quietness and the other encounters in this mini-adventure need to be played with this deficiency in mind.



inn to keep up. There are 2d4 patrons ([commoners](#)) in the inn at any time, many of them oblivious to the rat infestation. When the PCs arrive, there is a 25% chance that anyone with a passive Perception of 11 or higher notices a rat crawling through the inn.

**Spending Time There:** After spending 1 hour observing things in the inn, any adventurer that makes a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a rat attempting to chew through a customer's coin purse. Any member of the party that chooses to drink at the bar instead of doing lookout is targeted by the rat, making the check with disadvantage. On a failure, they find their coin purse has been eaten through and 1d4 coins are missing. Martin doesn't stop any PCs who attempt to kill the lone rat, but if they spend more than an hour investigating the inn he grows impatient and says, "the same thing will keep happening if you don't do anything about it!"

## 2: Entering the Sewer

The distance between the Inn and Area 3 is a quarter mile (much greater than indicated on the map). Each time the PCs move through this space (whether entering from the tavern or returning to it) check for an encounter by rolling a d20. On a result equal to or lower than the number of rat swarms left, the party encounter with 1d4 [rat swarms](#).

## 3: Temple of the Rat God

This room has full 10-foot tall ceilings with torches on each wall for illumination. It is as filthy as the rest of the sewers. A very large rat is inside of a golden cage about 2-feet in diameter sitting on a rickety table in the center of the area, bolted to the floor by a 10-foot long iron chain. In front of the table lay a dented gilded plate bearing a few coins. There are three doorways from the chamber, all of them little more than bits of wood dangling from rusting hinges.

As soon as the PCs enter, the Rat God begins chittering, calling forth 6 [Cultists](#) that emerge from the side room and defend it with their lives.

**The Rat God:** The Rat God is a [giant rat](#) with the following changes: it has 12 total hit points, on each of its turns it can use a bonus action to

summon a [rat swarm](#) to its defense (summoned rat swarms arrive and take their actions immediately before the Rat God's next turn), and it gains additional abilities from its gilded cage.

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**Gilded Cage:** The cage is attuned to the rat inside it until that rat leaves the cage. While a rat is inside, the creature gains +3 bonus to AC against attacks made from outside the cage, advantage on saving throws, and it gains 2 temporary hit points at the beginning of each of its turns if it starts its turn inside the cage.

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**Tactics:** The Rat God is unwilling to leave the cage, summoning rat swarms each turn and attacking anyone that gets within 5 feet, although when no targets are available it takes the Dodge action instead. Attempts to reach inside the cage to grab it provoke opportunity attacks, and when removed from, the Rat God takes the Disengage action and flees to Area 5.

**Cultists:** The cultists defend the Rat God to the death, focusing their attacks on anyone who has harmed their deity. They are sometimes sent to the surface to steal gold for their master although they do not know its origins, only that whatever gifts they bring are taken away by rat swarms every day. The cultists know about Area 4 but not about Seck.

**Treasure:** While it has no magical value (the benefits to the Rat God are from a ritual enacted by Veisin) if it can be removed from the room the gilded cage is worth 25 gold. Seck and Veisin each have a key to the lock, but it could also be picked with a DC 20 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check. Should anyone attempt to break the chain, Seck arrives in the next round and attacks with rat swarms. The tray was once valuable but now might only fetch about 2 gold. The word 'Benevolence' is written on it in Elvish and it holds some coins (3 silver and 55 copper).

**Barracks and Side Chambers.** There are several moldering cots in the larger of these rooms, and the smaller one shows evidence of a cookfire and stacks of rotting food. Nothing of any worth can be found in either chamber and

anyone that eats the food is afflicted by [cackle fever](#). Despite what it contains Area 3 is not safe for resting--clever adventurers might construct a barricade using items in the room, but it is unable to keep out rat swarms. If the PCs attempt to take a short rest in here, before it is complete Seck arrives with 1d4 [rat swarms](#). Should the party leave the sewers for a short rest and return, a dead Rat God is replaced with another giant rat that has the same bonuses (though there are no cultists to defend it).



#### 4: Seck's Place

This room has 15-foot high ceilings and is marginally cleaner than the temple, with a staircase that ascends to an upper doorway where sunlight pours through the cracks onto several barrels, bags, and boxes strewn about the stone floor. Veisin's companion Seck lives here and as of late, she has grown cunning and begun to focus on her own survival. The revolution she's been fighting for--and a society less revolted by her lycanthropy--is





no closer to realization, and her dedication wanes as it becomes more apparent that the mad elf is more interested in his pet rats than he is in her.

In addition to the normal statistics for a [wererat](#), on each of her turns Seck can use a bonus action to summon a [rat swarm](#) (summoned rat swarms arrive and take their actions immediately before Seck's next turn), and she is invisible to any of the cultists though they can hear her voice. They rationalize any actions Seck takes as being a miracle caused by the Rat God.

**Tactics:** Seck is in her hybrid form and hiding under the staircase when the PCs arrive. She does not interfere if they simply leave through the staircase, but if they return to the sewers or descend the staircase she makes a surprise attack against whoever is last in the marching order. She attempts to fight in a bottleneck where only one of the adventurers can reach her at a time, and uses her bonus action to summon rat swarms to flank the party. When reduced to half health, Seck tries to parlay with the PCs--she's willing to tell them where to find Veisin if she is allowed to flee into the city. If this offer is not granted, she fights to the death.

If the adventurers follow the staircase, it leads into an alleyway in the city above. Seck observes them leaving through the staircase, spending an

hour boarding over the doorway and luring any remaining cultists here to guard this entrance. Entry through the boarded over doorway requires breaking the door down (Strength DC 19, AC 7, 14 hit points).

When all of the rat swarms are defeated, Seck changes into her human form, gathers her belongings, escapes into the city above, and abandons the revolution, returning to her previous life as a cobbler.

**Loot:** Searching the area reveals bedding underneath the stairway. Seck also has some personal belongings hidden here (absent if she left in human form) including a purse containing 15 gold and a silver locket worth 20 gold (a picture of a mother and her child is inside--the child bears a striking resemblance to Seck).

Investigation of the boxes reveals foodstuffs weighing 50 pounds and worth 5 gold. While some are about to spoil, they are in better condition than those in Area 3.

## 5: The Rest of the Sewers

When the PCs journey beyond Veisin's territory the chattering of rats subsides. With a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check they realize this before they have strayed too far from the lair and can return without consequence. Should all the adventurers fail this check, they have gone around a quarter mile beyond the area before they realize it and may have random encounters (roll a d20 to determine if they cross paths with a rat swarm, as described in Area 2.)

## 6: Veisin's Lair

This room is larger and cleaner than any of the others yet the musky odor of rats is stronger here than anywhere else. The ceilings rise to a height of 15 feet, there are 5 openings a foot off the ground along the south and west walls, and a doorway

on the northern wall. The stone floor has a large, soiled rug with a repeating pattern of rats chasing their tails. There is no illumination in the chamber unless the PCs have a light source. In the center of the area an elvish man stands holding a small rat in one hand and a wooden staff in the other. When he sees the adventurers he hisses at them as giant rats emerge from the walls to attack!

This is the madman behind the Cult of the Rat God. In addition to the normal statistics for a [druid](#), Veisin has darkvision, on each of his turns he can use a bonus action to summon 1d4 [rat swarms](#) (summoned rat swarms arrive and take their actions immediately before Veisin's next turn), once per day Veisin can use his reaction to cast a spell when one of his giant rats is slain, and Veisin is invisible to the cultists. Finally, he can perform a ritual to attune any giant rat to the gilded cage, transforming it into the Rat God.

**Tactics:** Veisin has prepared for the party by casting *barkskin* on himself and *shillelagh* on his staff. He casts *thunderwave* as a readied action as soon as they enter the room. When combat begins 4 [giant rats](#) come to his aid and attack anyone within 5 feet of him. Veisin generally tries not to use an attack that might harm any of the giant rats, but when his favorite rat is killed he uses his reaction to lash out at whoever killed it with another *thunderwave*--even if it hurts other rats. If all of the remaining rat swarms have been summoned and none of the giant rats are left, Veisin uses *entangle* and *longstrider* to flee.

**Area Details:** Searching the area reveals that the openings lead into cells where bedding has been prepared for each of the giant rats. More immaculate bedding is behind the door to the north, and an adjoining somewhat larger cell is where Veisin humbly resides.

**Treasure:** The immaculate bedding has 2d6 gems sewn into it (each worth

10 gp) but is otherwise worthless. Nestled in its corner however is a *bag of holding* that contains 2,500 copper, 500 silver, 30 gold, a *potion of fire breathing*, and an item stolen from a PC or an associate (if the party came here looking to reclaim one).

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When Veisin is defeated the rat infestation goes away. Martin waits a week before making his payments to be sure the rats are gone for good, though he can be convinced to offer half immediately with a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If Veisin escaped, he attempts the same thing again in another part of town, while Seck tries to reintegrate into regular life and ignore her lycanthropy as best as possible.

