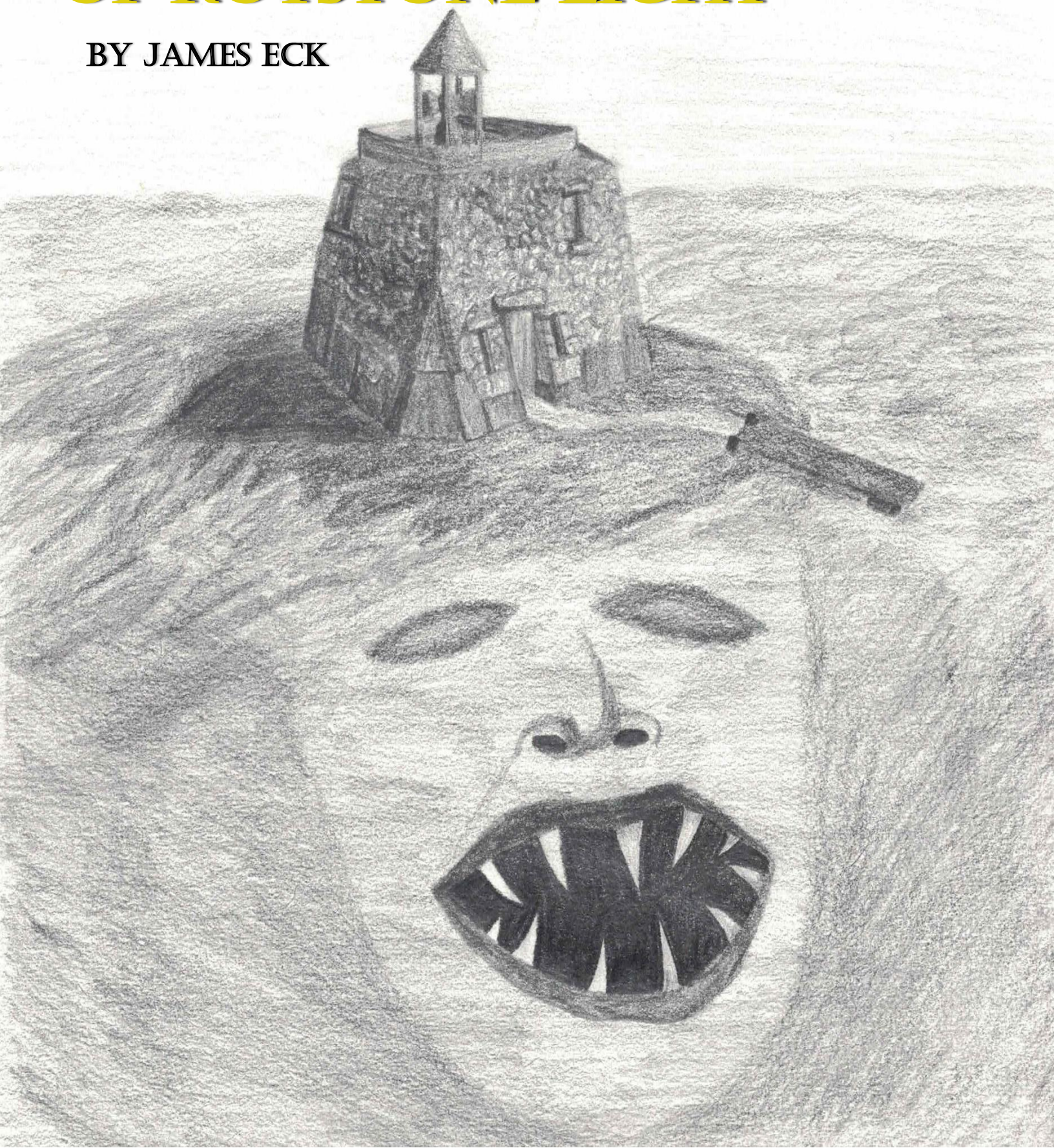


THE MISSING WATCHMEN OF ROTSTONE LIGHT

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This is a module intended for four level 5 characters. It can typically be run in 3 or 4 hours and is aimed at confronting experienced players with thrilling new technical challenges. Significant text is dedicated to describing the challenges to help the Game Master bring them to the table. Ideally, it ends with the party in possession of a submersible ship from which they can embark on exciting new adventures near, on, and below the sea.

FOR THE GAME MASTER

This module begins with mystery, turns to action, and ends in a thrilling escape from a collapsing dungeon. This section provides lore and setting details and a summary of the module phases the players are intended to move through. The Adventure section contains more detailed and step-by-step descriptions of the phases meant to be used at the table.

BACKGROUND

The Rotstone lighthouse was built on the ruins of an island tower from which an evil wizard once wreaked havoc on the coast. Though his origins and nature are not well recorded, dedicated students of local history may know of certain evidence that the wizard came from deep in the earth and brought with him servants blind from generations there (grimlocks). They may also be aware that he was rumored to have powers of the mind and to have been squid-like in appearance.

The effort to break the wizard's influence in the area culminated in the destruction of all but the foundations of his tower. The last measure to make the surrounding waters safe for ships again was to erect a lighthouse on the site. The local Watchmen's Guild commissioned the new lighthouse and since that time their efforts to find Watchmen crews for it have been plagued with rumors that the island is haunted by the evil that was slain there. Decades have passed since that time and the rumors have begun to fade in the absence of evidence.

Recent events have brought the rumors back to the forefront. Ships desiring to sight by Rotstone Light complained that the light was

dark. The Watchmen's Guild attempted to contact each of the crew members via *sending* but received no answers. Word soon got out of their mysterious disappearance and the Guild has been unable to incentivize any of their available members to join a new crew for the Rotstone Light. For this reason, they have hired an adventuring party, the PCs, to accompany Devlin Richter—a retired watchman—to the lighthouse to assist in its operation and, if possible, get to the bottom of the crew's disappearance, proving that it wasn't the supposed haunting. They plan to stay and man the lighthouse for a month, but if they solve the mystery and eliminate any threats sooner than that, they will be allowed to leave and let a more experienced crew take their place immediately.

The truth is that the wizard's remaining servants in the tower's hidden dungeons have seen their food source cut off by the dungeon's degradation and took to the crew to eat them. New arrivals on the island will be perceived as new food opportunities.

PHASE 1:

ARRIVING AT ROTSTONE LIGHT

The content of this module opens with the PCs and Devlin already making their way to the island in choppy seas and a leaky dinghy from a Watchmen's Guild cutter. A few sailors from the cutter guide the dinghy to the island and will return the boat to the ship after delivering the crew and supplies to the island. The stirges that nest on the island if the lighthouse crew doesn't deal with them attack the boat. While the shifting dinghy offers some hazard, the stirges themselves aren't a significant threat. This is intended to be a potentially humorous encounter which they easily manage. Once on the island, they encounter the mystery of the watchmen's disappearance.

PHASE 2:

FINDING THE HIDDEN DOOR

The state of things in the lighthouse provides clues to the abduction of the watchmen. Both general and specific investigation checks turn up clues guiding the players to the secret

trapdoor into the dungeons below the tower. If the players are unable to find the trapdoor, then grimlocks come up through it to try and take them, thereby revealing the trapdoor.

PHASE 3: INTO THE DARKNESS

Once in the dungeon, sighted grimlocks flee through a darkened room. The room contains a captive cyclops who attacks the party if he can see them. Passing without slaying the cyclops is difficult if the room is lit, but not impossible. In either case, the cyclops damages the dungeon and trickles of water start to enter the dungeon.

PHASE 4: THE CONFRONTATION

The boss grimlock, who has psionic powers, has commanded the grimlocks since the loss of their wizard master. During the ensuing battle, the psionic grimlock deals catastrophic damage to the dungeon structure with its attacks. In its death throes, it seals the way back up out of the dungeon.

PHASE 5: THE ESCAPE

With the way up sealed, the party must find a way to escape a collapsing and flooding dungeon. The provided route is in the wizard's submersible ship, which is the main source of loot from the adventure. Other spells and abilities may be able to forge another escape path.

After the escape, the party can report that the cause of the watchmen's disappearance has been dealt with, allowing the Watchmen's Guild to find a crew to replace them in short order.

ADVENTURE

This section provides encounter details to help the phases described above to run smoothly at your table. This includes blocks of descriptive text to read if desired, monster stat blocks relevant to the encounter, DCs for particular events, and references to the necessary maps.

At the beginning of each section is a list of Aesthetics of Play the phase is intended to serve.

PROLOGUE

Your players may expect some of this information during character creation to help inform their backstories. Most of it is intended to be shared at the start of the session to ease the players into the scenario.

The Rotstone Light is a lighthouse off a remote section of coast in whatever world you prefer. A DC 20 Intelligence (History) check might reveal that the lighthouse was built on the ruins of a tower from which a squid-faced wizard once terrorized the local seas and the coast. A critical success can foreshadow the submersible as the character recalls legends that the wizard had a ship that could appear out of nowhere and attack.

Use the text below or something like it to explain how the party has become involved with the Rotstone Light:

After reports from ship captains that the Rotstone Light was dark, the Watchmen's Guild was unable to contact them via sending. None of their watchmen were willing to accept an assignment there due to rumors that it is haunted, which the missing crew seems to confirm. As a result, you have been hired to help a retired watchman, Devlin Richter, tend the lighthouse until they can find a real crew, which will be easier if the cause of their disappearance can be found.

The players may have questions, some of which are answered in the Background section, some which their characters will not know the answers to, and some which you'll have to improvise answers to. Devlin Richter can be described using the text below:

Devlin Richter is a weathered old man. A long life of hard work and discipline is apparent on his face, but age has left his once strong body withered and frail. Though he knows how to run a lighthouse, he will need help with the manual tasks.

The players have accompanied Richter on a small cutter to the leeward side of the island where they, Richter, and their supplies have been sent to the Rotstone Light in a dinghy with five sailors delivering them to the rock.

ARRIVING AT ROTSTONE LIGHT

Aesthetics: Fellowship, Fantasy, Challenge

The action begins with the players aboard the dinghy in choppy seas. The dinghy is a tight fit (35 feet long and about 6 feet wide) and in the coming combat encounter will be difficult terrain with some additional obstacles to movement. The combat can be introduced with the following description:

As the sailors row the dinghy toward the small island and the waves cause it to pitch and bob, you hear a droning sound. Large insects soon appear approaching the ship. Richter cries out, "Stirges! They nest on the island if not kept away!"

Have the party roll for initiative. Four of the sailors are at the oars, partially occupying the four spaces in the middle of the boat, Richter is at the bow, occupying that space, and one sailor is at the stern manning the helm. The party members are in some of the middle spaces. The stirges are first spotted 50 feet away from the dinghy, plus 5 feet per point above 10 for the highest passive Perception in the party.

Stirge Tactics

The stirges come in waves, about 40 feet apart, and dash to reach the dinghy if they can't attack with their action. The numbers in the waves are random, 1d6 in the first wave, 2d6 in the second wave, and 1d6 in subsequent waves until at least 16 stirges have been rolled. The stirges choose their targets randomly and are just as likely to target Richter or a sailor as one of the party members if both are in reach.

Devlin and the sailors can use the *bandit* stat block (*Monster Manual*, pg. 343) without armor. Unless rowing or commanded otherwise, they take the Dodge action each round.

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Stirge (*Monster Manual* pg. 284)

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages –

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the stirge attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the stirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

The stirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

Fighting on the Boat

Moving on the dinghy is hazardous and there is little room. When a character moves through a space on the boat occupied by a creature of small or medium size, they must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a success, they can either swap places with the creature or move into their space. On a failure, both must succeed on a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw or fall overboard. An adjacent character can use its reaction to make a DC 12 Strength check to keep them from falling.

Any critical failure on an attack roll, Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, Dexterity saving throw, or Strength check to save a falling character causes the characters in the furthest 10 feet of the boat to make a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw or fall overboard.

Dinghy Movement

The stirges are first spotted when the dinghy is 90 feet from the dock. Unless ordered otherwise, the sailors will continue forward at their top speed of 30 feet per turn. They can also be told to keep the boat still, row backward (retreating at 20 feet per turn), or turn broadside to the island in a turn. The stirge waves approach the dinghy more quickly if it

continues to advance, but it is possible to reach the island and gain flexibility in dealing with the stirges. Retreating causes the stirges to arrive more slowly, making them easier to deal with. The dinghy moves each round at initiative 20.

Conclusion

With the stirges defeated, for now, the sailors can approach the dock and unload the good, oil, and other lighthouse maintenance supplies for the coming month. The sailors are happy to handle this themselves if the party wishes to go ahead and make sure the lighthouse is safe. They are eager to finish this task and get off the island, having heard of the haunting.

FINDING THE HIDDEN DOOR

Aesthetics: Discovery, Narrative

Having arrived at the island, the party enters the lighthouse to find it left in an unusual state. There is not immediate danger, but it's okay to let them think there is and leave them to investigate as they see fit.

This section is broken down roughly by room, including example descriptions and Wisdom (Perception) and Intelligence (Investigation) DCs for key clues in those rooms based on general searching as well as targeted inspection.

The Entryway

As they approach the lighthouse, describe what they see:

The path winds up the rock to the lighthouse, where the first course of stones is black and pocked with age. Newer, white stones form the better part of the lighthouse tower. The front door is ajar and shudders in the wind.

As they enter, they see more: *Directly opposite the door is a closet, and to the right a hall rounds a corner past a fireplace. Three tarpaulin coats hang on hooks in the hall with one empty hook.*

Have party members passing through the door make Wisdom (Perception) checks with a DC of 16 to notice dried blood caked on the left side of the stone door frame.

A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the entryway in general reveals the dried blood, an 8 or better on this check makes the deduction that the three watchmen left their coats and therefore were not lost in a storm while working outside.

A DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the door specifically discovers the dried blood.

Inspecting the coats specifically at all reveals that the watchmen were not lost to the sea due to a storm.

Inspecting the fireplace reveals that it has not been cleaned out since the last fire there, which Richter may mention as a breach of protocol, or a character might recognize with a DC 16 Intelligence (History) check.

Further inspection of the dried blood reveals at DC 4 that it is indeed blood, at DC 8 that it is from a little before ships reported the Rotstone Light being dark and that the person hit the frame low, fell, and bled on the floor a little, and at DC 12 that they were dragged a little before being lifted away.

The closet contains lighthouse maintenance equipment, including stirge repellent and a *necklace of fireballs* with 2 beads remaining.

The Kitchen

As they enter the kitchen, use the following description to describe clues concerning the scene of the disappearance:

As you come into the kitchen, you see a round table set with three place settings in good order. One chair is pushed into the corner, away from the table and turned at an angle, another is pushed in under the table at the space without a setting, a third lays on its side not far from the table. The place setting against the back wall of the lighthouse has no chair near it despite having a bowl of food. There is still a pot on the stove and dirty cooking utensils in the sink. A spiral stair to the next level obscures a pantry door.

A DC 10 general Intelligence (Investigation) of the room reveals that while the spoons are untouched beside the porridge bowls, most of

the porridge has been scooped out by hand from two of the bowls, but not the one against the back wall. The pot on the stove has been similarly emptied.

A DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the table specifically reveals the hand-emptied porridge bowls and that some of the porridge was spilled on the edge of the table and floor, as if eaten by the fistful while standing up, as well as that the third bowl is untouched. A result of 10 or higher concludes where each of the three present chairs was placed around the table before the violence occurred, raising the question of a missing fourth chair at the place with an untouched porridge bowl.

A DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the chairs specifically reveals that the chair in the corner was pushed there violently; there are wood chips along its path away from the table and a mark where it struck the wall. If a 12 or higher is rolled, then blood spatter is found near the toppled chair. A 16 or higher reveals that there commonly was a chair in the empty space at the table, but there isn't now. A 20 or higher reveals the trap door where the missing chair should be.

A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the space with the missing chair specifically reveals the trap door leading down into the rest of the dungeon. A 6 or higher is sufficient to confirm that there was a chair there that is not accounted for.

The pantry still has significant food supplies like those brought on the dinghy, but an inventory of the supplies or a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that all of the meat is missing from the supplies.

Inspecting the stove reveals that the porridge was taken from the pot by hand. A DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check shows porridge spills on the edge of the stove and floor in front of it. The fire under the stove is completely burned down and ashes left uncleared.

The dirty dishes are a breach of protocol and should have been cleaned after dinner.

The Second Floor

The second floor is of little consequence to solving the mystery, other than the log book. The northwest room has a bunk bed and two lockers of personal belongings, as well as a closet of clothes. The southeast room has a single bed, a trunk of personals, and a closet as well. All beds are well made and the rooms are well kept.

The northeast room contains various lighthouse supplies like those on the dinghy, including oil for the light and cleaning supplies for its lenses. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the importance of the logbook on the table in this room, though players presented with the map may focus on it on their own.

The last logbook entry is dated three days before the first ship captain reported the light being dark. It reads:

Last night our sleep was disturbed again by the howling. We hear it during the day, but never so anguished or so starved as when we sleep. Argus was on light duty during the worst of it and it bothered him less. It's as if the island itself is moaning with hunger and I can't help but fear it will swallow us up. Gods protect us and help us sleep.

The Roof

The roof is open with a low wall around it. The light is not maintained. It hasn't been lit in some time and grime needs to be cleaned from the lenses. If a party member lingers here, a stirge or two may attack, for consistency.

Some players may insist on dealing with the stirges before doing anything else. The stirge nest is easy to find on the back side of the lighthouse. With only 1d6 stirges left to defend it, the party can easily destroy the nest.

Failing to Find the Trap Door

The possibility is left open that the party does not find the secret door. They may miss all the clues or enough to become disinterested in the secret door. If so, never fear, three grimlocks will come up through the secret door in the night for another meal. They will try to take the first person they see but once one grimlock goes down, the others flee toward the secret door.

Their stat block is in the section below. All three together pose little threat to a lone PC at this level on even footing, but with their stealth, they may manage to get some damage in on a surprise round.

INTO THE DARKNESS

Aesthetics: Fantasy, Challenge, Discovery

Whether they have found the trap door or the grimlocks attacked and revealed it to them, the party now descends:

The stairs descend in a gentle spiral into the darkness. On the first landing you see the missing chair in the light from the trap door. After a turn or two, those without darkvision find themselves completely blind and stumbling on uneven stairs. Those with darkvision can see only dimly.

It is at this point that a grimlock springs an ambush. Treat the passive Perception of those with darkvision as 5 lower and those without darkvision as 7 lower if they haven't made a light yet. The grimlock's stone camouflage gives it advantage on its Dexterity (Stealth) check (+3). Even with a surprise round and disadvantage for blind characters, the grimlock poses little threat and should go down quickly, at which point the party hears steps running away further down the stairs.

If the party continues without light, any characters without darkvision are limited to a movement speed of 10 feet or 20 feet with help from someone who can see. These characters can choose to move at their full speed, but must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity check or fall prone on the stairs and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. The goal is for them to

Grimlock (Monster Manual pg. 175)

Medium humanoid (grimlock), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3, Stealth +3

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 30 ft. or 10 ft. while deafened (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 13

Languages Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Blind Senses. The grimlock can't use its blindsight while deafened and unable to smell.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The grimlock has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Stone Camouflage. The grimlock has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in rocky terrain.

Actions

Spiked Bone Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) piercing damage).

feel pressure to create a light to help the cyclops see them in the room ahead.

The Cyclops

Whether madly pursuing the fleeing grimlocks or proceeding with care, the party comes into the cyclops' fish hall. Water flows down the center of the hall, and seaweed makes this water course slippery. The cyclops is visibly starved, as the fish no longer flow in his hall.

If they are moving quickly and have a light, they arrive in time to see a grimlock slip into the corridor behind the cyclops. The cyclops can clearly see by their light and attacks. Roll for initiative.

If they are moving quickly in the dark, characters with dark vision may make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check at disadvantage to see a grimlock sneaking past the cyclops into a passage. The cyclops hears them and attacks with disadvantage. Roll for initiative.

If they are moving carefully and have a light, they hear trickling water ahead. The cyclops sees their light and is prepared to fight when they arrive in the hall. Roll for initiative.

If they are moving carefully in the dark, the party can make a group Dexterity (Stealth) check against the cyclops passive Perception: 8. If half or more succeed, they can enter the room unseen and characters with darkvision see the cyclops. They can attempt to sneak past the cyclops with individual DC 8 Dexterity (Stealth) checks at disadvantage in order. If one fails, roll for initiative, possibly with the party split. Alternatively, they may explore other parts of the hall or attack the cyclops with a surprise round.

In combat, the cyclops is chained in the corner against the downward stairs and can't move to make melee attacks. If the party keeps its distance, it attacks with hurled rocks, with disadvantage if they keep over 30 feet back. When the cyclops' rocks miss, they damage walls beyond the target, creating cracks through which water trickles if the damage is over 30 and creating a gushing hole if the damage is over 40. Handled carefully, this battle can be easy, but it is on the difficult side of medium encounters and should consume some resources.

The Fish Hall

With the cyclops defeated, the party may want to explore the hall. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) for the hall in general reveals that the water level in the hall had been much higher for brief periods, but not for some time.

Three passages off the corners are slick with water and seaweed and ascend to closed and seaweed-clogged shutters through which the water trickles. A DC 12 Strength (Athletics) is required to climb to the shutters. Once there,

The cyclops is wearing a collar of restraint (see appendix A) that prevents it breaking its bonds.
It can only be removed once the cyclops is dead because it is cursed.

Cyclops (Monster Manuel pg. 45)

Huge giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages Giant

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Poor Depth Perception. The cyclops has disadvantage on any attack roll against a target more than 20 feet away.

Actions

Multiattack. The cyclops makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

an Intelligence (Investigation) check can reveal at 8 or higher that the shutters are greatly overgrown, at 12 or higher that the shutters can be opened by a separate mechanism, at 16 or higher that they are holding back significant water pressure, and at 20 or higher what the control mechanism is in order to disarm it and prevent it opening in a controlled way.

If the mechanism is found, a DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools can prevent the mechanism opening the shutters in the future, but an 8 or lower causes the shutters to open (intentionally opening the shutters with thieves' tools is a DC 6 if the mechanism is known), unleashing a furious stream of water that requires a DC 20 Strength saving throw to resist being thrown down the ramp. If thrown down the ramp, the character suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 5 feet of ramp, 3d6 for the shorter ramps at the back of the hall and 5d6 for the longer ramp at the front.

Remember:

Investigation checks are at disadvantage in dim light, such as a character with darkvision in darkness, and impossible in darkness for a character without darkvision.

Don't encourage them to investigate!

It is not the intention that the party disable or open these shutters, as they play a narrative role in the boss battle to come. However, since they do play a narrative role, it is vital players have an opportunity to take a crack at them if they have the presence of mind to.

A DC 16 Strength check can force a shutter open, subjecting the character to the same stream of water a badly failed thieves tools check entails with a DC 20 Strength saving throw and the corresponding 3d6 or 5d6 bludgeoning damage for failure.

A shutter accidentally opened with thieves' tools continues to stream water, but one forced open with strength closes again almost immediately. A character who has opened a shutter and succeed in a Strength saving throw to resist being driven back down is positioned to make a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see that the water chamber on the other side of the shutters is the inside of a fish trap, but that the fish entrances have been clogged with seaweed. They can also attempt a DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools at disadvantage to fix a shutter broken with thieves' tools.

The fourth corner, behind the cyclops, is a curving stair that descends, the stream from the hall running quickly down beside it. This is the path the grimlocks took and the way forward to confront the grimlocks and their leader. This is also where the boss will emerge if all three shutters are destroyed or permanently opened, flooding the chambers below.

THE CONFRONTATION

Aesthetics: Challenge, Fantasy, Narrative

As the party descends the spiral stairs, they have the same darkness difficulties as the on the prior stairs. Furthermore, if more than one set of shutters has been opened (three gushing holes from the battle above are equivalent to one shutter), then significant water is flowing over the stairs, making them difficult terrain. If

all three are open, then the water on the stairs is quite deep and requires a DC 6 Strength (Athletics) check to descend safely and a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. Failure in either case results in falling prone on the stairs and taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage, as well as sliding down 5 feet.

Entering the Boathouse

At the base of the stairs, a bridge crosses the water course as it divides into two channels descending either side of a wide stair. Statues of the tentacle-faced mage adorn the room and human bones lay on an altar before the throne where a massive grimlock sits. The water pools at the far corner of the room, filling an area where a sailboat floats. Any remaining of the three grimlocks lay in wait in the water, ready to ambush once the fight begins. They again have advantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) check (+3), an average of 17, against the party members' passive Perception (or Wisdom (Perception) checks if they call for them before entering). Treat the passive Perception of those with darkvision as 5 lower (disadvantage on sight Perception checks in darkness) and those without darkvision as 7 lower (automatically fail on sight Perception checks in darkness), if they haven't made a light.

Whether or not they have a light, Mervelk is aware of their approach (assuming they are living) and whether they have killed the cyclops. When they enter, he attacks, yelling in undercommon. Roll for initiative!

Mervelk's Undercommon Ranting

- "Who dares intrude in my Master's boathouse?"
- "We will feast on your flesh and gnaw your bones."
- "Tell me, when you are eaten, what it is like to be a part of my power."
- "Darkness will overwhelm the world and only the blind will see."
- "You are already in your grave."
- "My mind cannot perish!"
- "The infinite awaits!"

Mervelk

Large humanoid (grimlock), neutral evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 180 (24d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., fly 10 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +7, Cha =1

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +4

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 120 ft. or 30 ft. for non-living objects or 10 ft. while deafened (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 17

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Psychic Sight. Mervelk can sense living creatures. He can't use his blind sight on non-living creatures and objects while deafened and unable to smell.

Dominated. Mervelk was cowed by his wizard master and remains vulnerable to dominating effects such as Charm Person, Dominate Person, and Suggestion. He has disadvantage on saving throws to resist such effects.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Mervelk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Stone Camouflage. Mervelk has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in rocky terrain.

Psionic Defense. Mervelk's AC includes his Wisdom modifier.

Vengeful Spirit. When Mervelk dies, his psionic projection rages out of his body, lashing out at everyone and everything. All creatures and any objects that aren't being worn or carried within 120' must succeed on a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw taking 21 (6d6) force damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one. Objects and structures always fail the Dexterity saving throw and take double damage.

Actions

Multiattack. Mervelk makes three great club attacks, two telekinetic boulder attacks, or one of each.

Great Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (4d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Actions continued

Telekinetic Boulder. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 26 (5d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Entropic Shield. Mervelk adds 3 to his AC against one ranged attack that would hit him. To do so, Mervelk must sense the attacker.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Mervelk takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Mervelk can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- One source of cover currently in use by an enemy of Mervelk is telekinetically broken. Full cover becomes three-quarters cover, three-quarters cover becomes half cover, half cover is destroyed.
- One 5-foot square of bridge is telekinetically cast down. Any creatures standing on it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to land in the rubble safely, on a failed save, they are washed in the direction of water flow under the bridge: 5 feet for the larger bridge and 20 feet for the smaller bridge at the top of the sloping channel.
- Mervelk telekinetically throws the switch to open the fish trap gates in the fish hall above. Water rushes down the stairs into the channels in the boathouse. Creatures standing in any channel or on the stairs make a DC 16 Strength saving throw (6 lower per disabled shutter, 4 lower per already open shutter). This saving throw is at disadvantage if the creature is in the channel before it diverges. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone and thrown 15 feet down the channel, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. On a successful save, the creature is not knocked prone and takes no damage but is still pushed 5 feet downstream.

Battling Mervelk

Mervelk is not trying to be sneaky, and he is on the edge of player-race darkvision ranges, so if the party is traveling in darkness or has a light smaller than a 50-foot radius (such as the *light* spell or a torch), then only those characters without darkvision are surprised. If they have a light with a 60-foot or greater radius, then none are surprised. If not detected, the hidden grimlocks spring their ambush on Mervelk's turn, but could also wait until some of the party have moved into the room before ambushing those in the rear.

Your goal, before Mervelk dies, is to get the party away from the entrance stairs so Mervelk can collapse them with his *vengeful spirit*. The available cover away from the entrance is intended to entice them out, and Mervelk's lair actions should be primarily used to force them out, first destroying the small top bridge and then using the flood gates to wash them out and begin flooding the room.

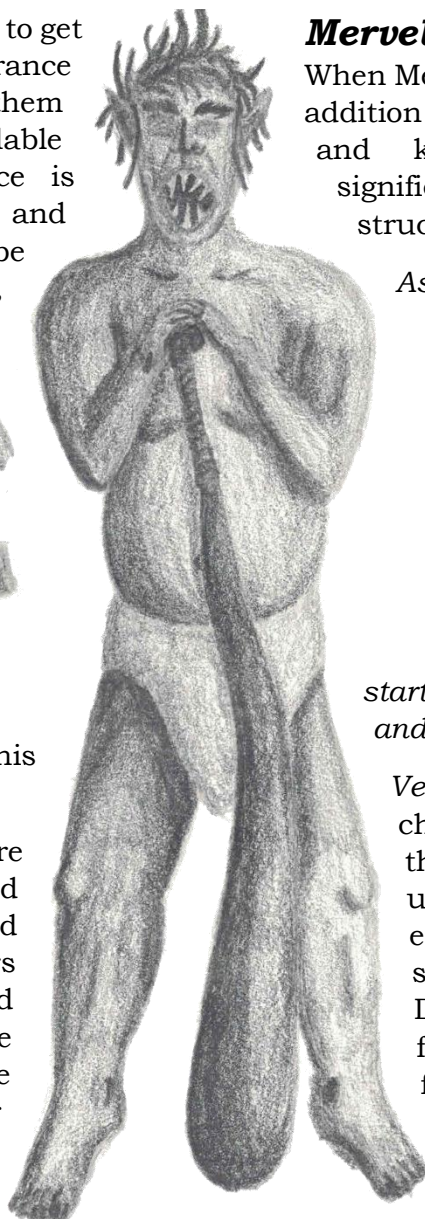
Once the party has left the entrance and is taking advantage of cover, Mervelk uses his lair action to destroy cover. Mervelk favors his *telekinetic boulder* attack but may use his maul if engaged in melee.

Throughout the battlefield are options for cover. Pillars and statues of the tentacle-faced wizard provide three-quarters cover (+5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws), while benches on the lower level, the altar, and the lip beside water channels provide half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws). If Mervelk's *telekinetic boulder* misses only because the target has cover, then if it is three-quarters cover it is reduced to half-cover and if it is half cover the cover is destroyed.

Optional Telepathy Notes:

Mervelk has telepathy. Consider using it to pass ominous notes to the individual players with his whispers:

- "Turn against the others and I will spare your life."
- "You are weak."
- "Your companions will betray you."
- "My master will return, worship him."
- "You will serve in this house."
- "Join us."



Mervelk's Death

When Mervelk is defeated, his *vengeful spirit*, in addition to dealing a parting hit to the party and killing any remaining grimlocks, significantly damages the surrounding structure.

As a ghostly apparition rages out of the fallen grimlock and sweeps through the room, pillars are cast down, the walls tremble. The ceiling caves in above the stairs, burying the way in as rocks fall from throughout the room and sea water starts to spray in through cracks in walls and the lower edges of the domed ceiling.

Vengeful spirit won't outright kill any characters at this level, even if they fail the save, but it may leave a PC or two unconscious to complicate the coming escape. Any character on the collapsing stairs must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to escape the falling rocks, taking 4d6 damage on a failed save. They can try to escape up the stairs, but the saving throw is made at disadvantage and on a failed save the character is also trapped under the falling rocks, providing an additional challenge in the coming escape.

THE ESCAPE

Aesthetics: Discovery, Fantasy, Fellowship, Narrative

With the stairs the party entered by buried under rubble, they must find a way to escape a room flooding both from the fish hall (assuming Mervelk used that legendary action and that they did not disable the shutters) and from damage to the room. Fallen or trapped party members may provide immediate concerns that distract from escape, but ultimately they are looking for a way out. The primary way out is

the submersible boat, where the bulk of the adventure's loot is found.

The Water Rises

While this phase is not a combat encounter, the party does face a time constraint. The water isn't rising so quickly that it merits an initiative order, but the players should perceive the passage of time. We achieve this by describing the rise of water after each action they take or after a minute of discussion.

Immediately after Mervelk's death causes the collapse, allow about a minute of discussion before warning them that they can see the water level rising and calling for action. This action might include:

- Healing fallen companions.
- Trying to move rocks from the stairs. If trying to free a trapped companion, it is a DC 18 Strength check. If trying to escape up the stairs, Strength checks exceeding 12 increase the rush of water and reveal that the hall above is rapidly filling with water. (A trapped character can push out on their own, but has disadvantage trying to get out up the stairs. If two people try to clear rocks, the stronger character makes the roll for both with advantage, treating the second rock clearer as taking the Help action.)
 - Searching the room for loot or another way out with a Wisdom (Perception) check.
 - Results 4 or higher bring attention to how unusual it is that a boat is down here.
 - Results 8 or higher indicate that the flow of water could be slowed from the stairs by reaching the lever 20 feet above the channel along the north wall.
 - Results 16 or higher notice the unusual make of the boat might indicate a unique or specialized function and that the room seems to be intended to flood using the fish trap gates and maybe another source.
 - Results 20 or higher and critical successes draw attention to the second lever above the boat positioned to be flipped from the boat.
- Investigating particular parts of the room, details of which are explored in the section below.

Once players have taken actions or discussed for another minute or so, warn them that the water is starting to wash over the lower platform of the room, lapping over the tiles around the altar and benches there. Fallen characters in the low area may now be in danger of drowning and the ramp to the boat is barely spanning the gap.

As the water continues to rise, for each action taken by the party or minute of discussion, describe the water rising up another step (the 24 steps descend about 15 feet, about 8 inches per stair).

By the second stair, the ramp to the boat is below the deck of the boat and requires a DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to climb to the boat. This check DC is 2 higher per additional stair underwater, topping out at 22 when the 9th step is covered and the ramp provides no help, being completely under water.

By the third stair, small characters treat the low areas as difficult terrain.

By the fifth stair, medium characters treat the low areas as difficult terrain.

By the sixth stair, small characters must swim over low areas.

By the tenth stair, medium characters must swim over low areas.

By the 15th stair, the deck of the boat is level with the statue pedestals flanking the stairs and the window for jumping to the deck from them is closing.

By the 16th stair, the masts of the boat stop it from rising any further as they hit the roof. At this point the deck is level with the top of the stairs.

By the 24th stair, the water starts to wash over the deck of the boat and it is easy to climb onto the boat from the water. After this point, it is difficult to enter the boat without flooding the area below decks. Ideally, the characters have solved the puzzle of releasing the boat by now and all gotten aboard.

Interacting with the Space

The rising water is intended to create a sense of urgency in finding a way out, but the party should have plenty of time to find their way into the boat and launch it. This section describes how to handle some of the things they might try.

The lever to disable the fish hall flow can be flipped by *mage hand* or by succeeding on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to leap to it from the highest level or climb to it from the channel. If this flow is disabled, indicate that the water rises more slowly as flow through the stair rubble slows and allow them two actions or two minutes of discussion per stair.

Reaching the deck of the boat is easy at the start of the water rising. Once on deck, the open hatch to below decks is clearly visible and any Intelligence (Investigation) check of it indicates how to close it; a result of 8 or higher reveals that it closes with a water-tight seal. An Intelligence (Investigation) check of the switch above the boat indicates that a rod from the boat to the switch can be used to easily switch it from the boat; results of 8 or higher indicate that the rod can be worked from inside the vessel through a water tight seal; results of 12 or higher indicate that the switch opens a hole in the roof large enough to allow the boat to pass; results of 16 or higher also indicate that the opening will greatly increase the flooding of the chamber. Investigating what the switch does specifically allows this check to be made again at advantage.

Throwing the boat switch causes water to pour into the room in massive volume. Increase the water's rise to 5 stairs per minute of discussion or action as the characters scramble either to switch it back or pile into the boat. Once the party is all inside, describe how the water rises and the boat launches: *through the portholes, you can see the water roiling around the boat as the air in the room escapes through the massive hatch above. The boat lurches up and forward, launching out of the stone into open sea, calm again beneath the waves.* Once out of the dungeon, the party has plenty of time

to figure out the boat's complex controls, but you could call for an Intelligence (Arcana) check to see how quickly they can get it to do what they want: surface, return to the island, and approach the dock (where the sailors may well be still unloading).

Aboard the Boat

The boat and its contents make up most of the dungeon's loot. While the outside is water-tight and strongly built, the inside is opulent like the party might recognize from the inside of a noble's carriage. Velvet cushions are built into every chair and elegant patterns of gold filigree adorn the walls and furniture. There are three bed chambers, one with one bed and two with two, for five beds total. The wizard also had an alchemy lab/study off the common room. While the boat itself is a formidable prize, the boat also contains 1200 gp in art objects and gems that can be easily removed, as well as magic items: an *ioun stone of sustenance*, a *folding boat*, a *ring of x-ray vision*, and a *trident of fish command*.

The onboard laboratory is a good place to furnish the party with tools and quest hooks for what they can do now that they have a submersible vessel of their own. Is there a machine that can generate *potions of water breathing* at a rate of four a day, but only with a one-day shelf-life? Is there a map of all the places a moving island has been spotted that the wizard was trying to track? Is there information about a sunken treasure the wizard was trying to find? Is there a journal describing an encounter with an aquatic civilization yet unknown to the surface? These follow-on materials are beyond the scope of this module but may merit future development on my part if there is interest.

RESOLUTION

Having slain the remaining servants of the wizard and escaped, the party is still assigned to assist Devlin Richter until a new crew arrives to replace them. With the cause of the "haunting" and the disappearance found and destroyed, the Watchmen's Guild soon contacts

them via *sending* and, when informed that the threat is dealt with, quickly finds a replacement crew for them. They only have to spend a week or two with Devlin before taking off on their unique submersible boat for new adventures.

APPENDIX A:

MAGICAL ITEMS

Most of the magical items in this module are found in the SRD and Dungeon Master's Guide. Their SRD stats DMG pages can be found here.

COLLAR OF RESTRAINT

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this iron banded collar, you can use your Strength modifier instead of your Dexterity modifier to make Sleight of Hand checks.

Curse. Once you don this cursed collar, you can't doff it unless you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. While wearing the collar, you have disadvantage on Strength checks to break bonds.

FOLDING BOAT

Wondrous item, rare

This object appears as a wooden box that measures 12 inches long, 6 inches wide, and 6 inches deep. It weighs 4 pounds and floats. It can be opened to store items inside. This item also has three Command words, each requiring you to use an action to speak it.

One Command Word causes the box to unfold into a boat 10 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. The boat has one pair of oars, an anchor, a mast, and a lateen sail. The boat can hold up to four Medium creatures comfortably.

The second Command Word causes the box to unfold into a ship 24 feet long, 8 feet wide; and 6 feet deep. The ship has a deck, rowing seats, five sets of oars, a steering oar, an anchor, a deck cabin, and a mast with a square sail. The ship can hold fifteen Medium creatures comfortably.

When the box becomes a vessel, its weight becomes that of a normal vessel its size, and

anything that was stored in the box remains in the boat.

The third Command Word causes the folding boat to fold back into a box, provided that no creatures are aboard. Any Objects in the vessel that can't fit inside the box remain outside the box as it folds. Any Objects in the vessel that can fit inside the box do so. (DMG pg. 170-171)

IOUN STONE OF SUSTENANCE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

When you use an action to toss this clear spindle into the air, the stone orbits your head at a distance of 1d3 feet and you don't need to eat or drink while it orbits your head. Thereafter, another creature must use an action to grasp or net the stone to separate it from you, either by making a successful attack roll against AC 24 or a successful DC 24 Dexterity (Acrobatics check). You can use an action to seize and stow the stone, ending its effect.

The stone has AC 24, 10 hit points, and resistance to all damage. It is considered to be an object that is being worn while it orbits your head. (DMG pg. 176-177)

NECKLACE OF FIREBALLS

Wondrous item, rare

This necklace has 1d6 + 3 beads hanging from it. You can use an action to detach a bead and throw it up to 60 feet away. When it reaches the end of its trajectory, the bead detonates as a 3rd-level *fireball* spell (save DC 15).

You can hurl multiple beads, or even the whole necklace, as one action. When you do so, increase the level of the *fireball* by 1 for each bead beyond the first. (DMG pg. 182)

POTION OF WATER BREATHING

Potion, uncommon

You can breathe underwater for 1 hour after drinking this potion. Its cloudy green fluid smells of the sea and has a jellyfish-like bubble floating in it. (DMG pg. 188)

RING OF X-RAY VISION

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you can use an action to speak its command word. When you do so, you can see into and through solid matter for 1 minute. This vision has a radius of 30 feet. To you, solid objects within that radius appear transparent and don't prevent light from passing through them. The vision can penetrate 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, or up to 3 feet of wood or dirt. Thicker substances block the vision, as does a thin sheet of lead.

Whenever you use the ring again before taking a long rest, you must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. (DMG pg. 193)

TRIDENT OF FISH COMMAND

Weapon (trident), uncommon (requires attunement)

This trident is a magic weapon. It has 3 charges. While you carry it, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast *dominate beast* (save DC 15) from it on a beast that has an innate swimming speed. The trident regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. (DMG pg. 209)

APPENDIX B:

SUBMERSIBLE BOAT

The wizard's boat, rescued from the collapsing dungeon, is in many respects a sailing ship from the waterborne vehicles, Player's Handbook pg. 157, SRD pg. 72.

Size 55 ft. by 15 ft.

Speed 2 miles per hour during normal, above-water operation, 1 mile per hour during below water operation.

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 300

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

Diving. The boat is capable of diving below the surface of the water at a rate of 10 ft. a round, or 100 ft. a minute, up to a maximum depth of 300 ft. For each 10 ft. below 300 ft. the boat descends, the boat takes 1d10 bludgeoning damage each round spent below maximum depth.

Embarkment Hatch. The boat has a magical water blocking hatch in the bottom of the hull that can be used to embark from the water and embark into the water below the boat.

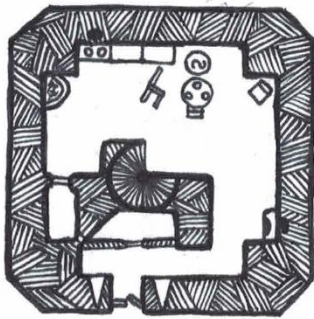
APPENDIX C:

USING THE MAP FILES

Two maps files are provided with this module: *Player_Map.png* and *GM_Map.png*. The difference is that *GM_Map.png* has the location of the secret trap door and other labels for where the grimlock ambush ("G"), cyclops ("C"), and Mervelk ("M") are located along with the space they occupy in combat. *GM_Map.png* is a full size image of that included below.

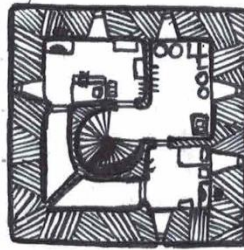
The player map is safe to give the players in pieces or to copy for them as they explore. If you intended to use the map online, my Roll20 settings are 34 squares by 47 squares with 58-pixel squares. This setting lines up the boat house, where the most tactical encounter occurs, perfectly with the grid when the image is stretched to fill the full map. Other parts of the map line up less cleanly in the vertical but are less critical to be gridded anyway.

First Floor

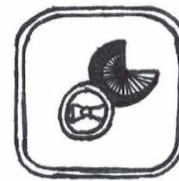


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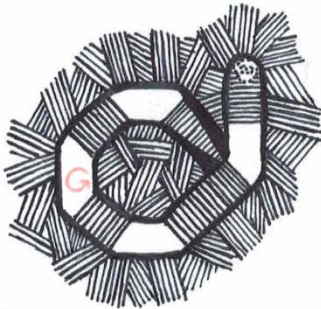
Second Floor



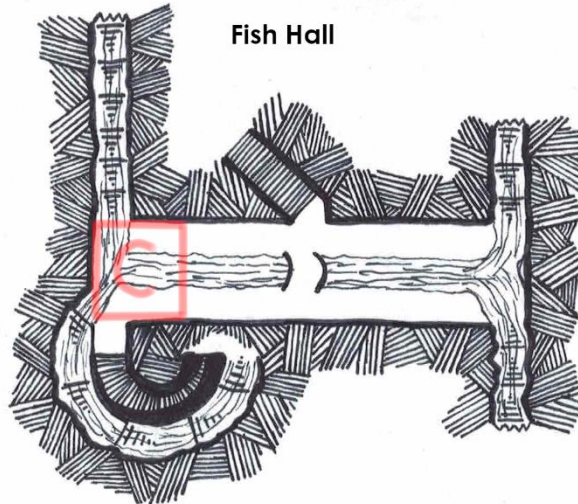
Roof



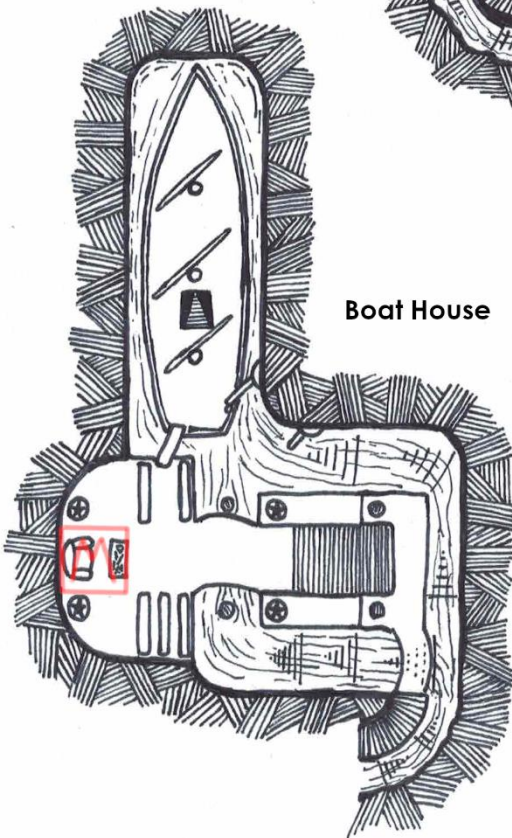
Stair



Fish Hall



Boat House

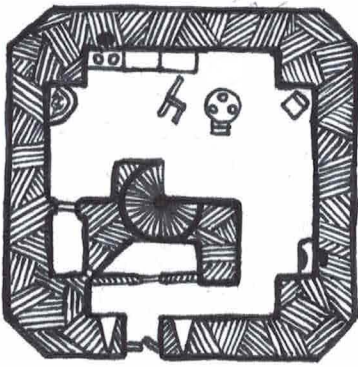




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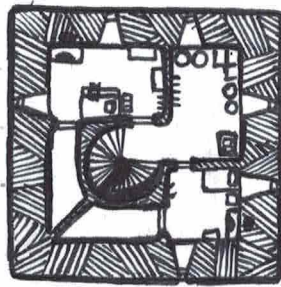
For more, visit mindweaverpg.wordpress.com

First Floor



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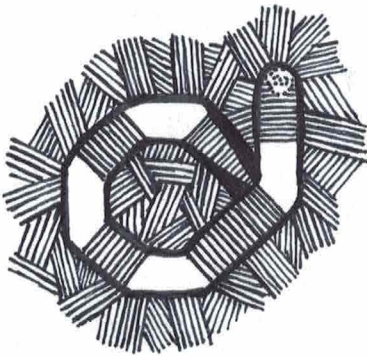
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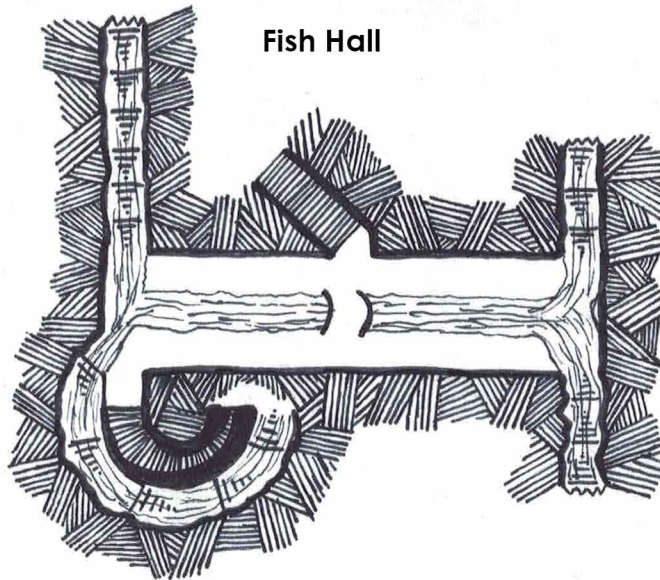
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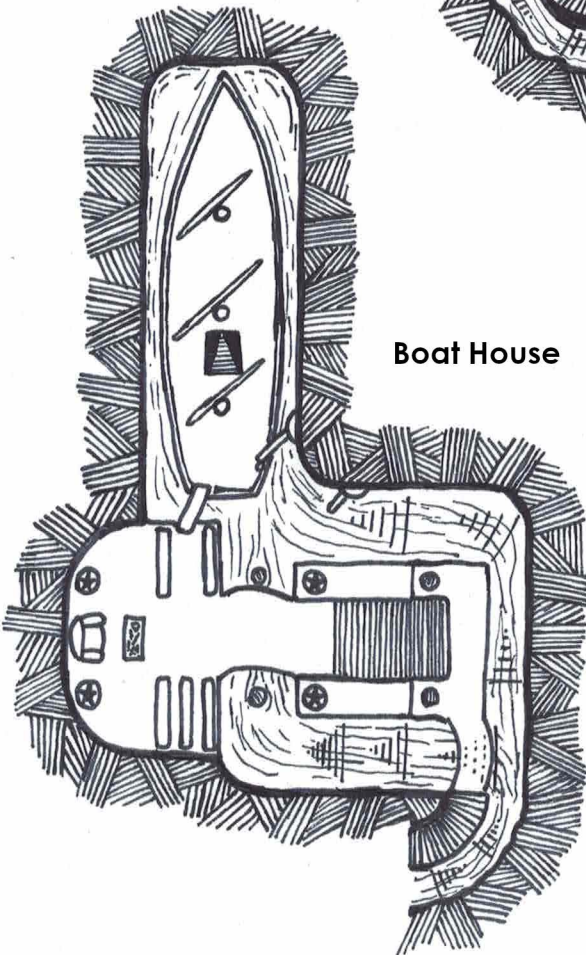
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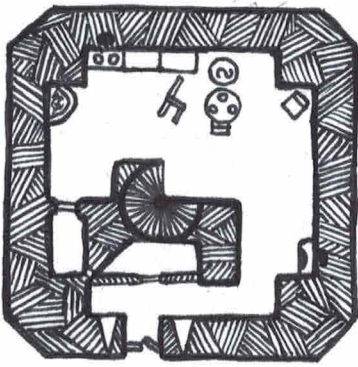
Fish Hall



Boat House

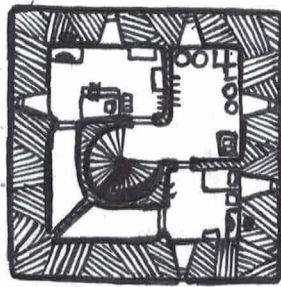


First Floor



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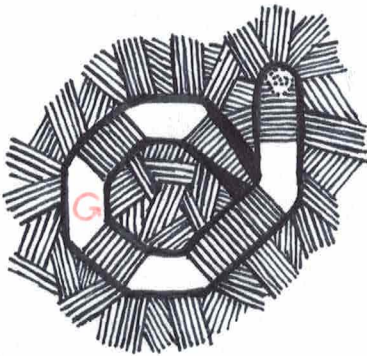
Second Floor



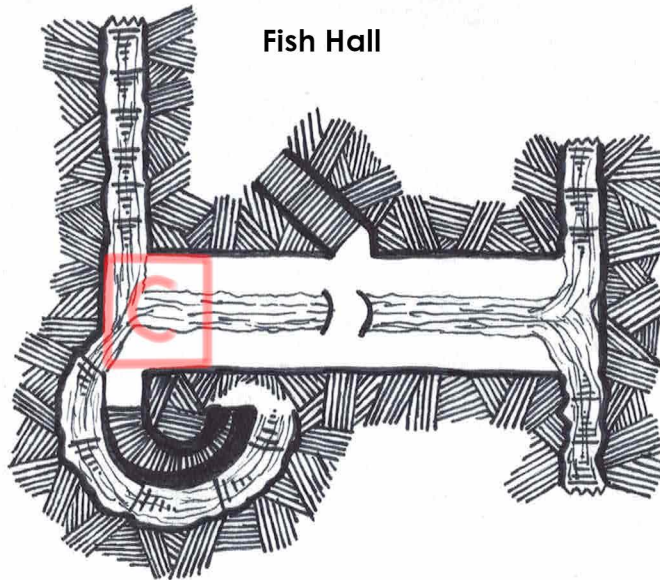
Roof



Stair



Fish Hall



Boat House

