

FantasyCraft

REALITY BLURS

OLD SCHOOL FANTASY

ADVENTURE FIVE

CALL OF THE CROW

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CALL OF THE CROW

INTRODUCTION

In the harbor city of Steelport, many secrets lurk down darkened alleys and behind shadowy storefronts. It is a city known for its seedy inhabitants and shady dealings, but rarely do the affairs of the underworld spill out onto the streets. Recently, however, an upstart gang of thieves calling themselves the Blades of the Crow have begun making a name for themselves, killing off their competition, and peddling dangerous drugs to the poorest of the poor. A bedraggled innkeeper, his wife recently kidnapped, needs a group of stalwart heroes to stem this deadly new tide of corruption.

Call of the Crow is the next installment in Reality Blurs' ***Old School Fantasy*** line of adventure modules. The scenario can be easily scaled for more experienced groups and can serve as an interesting sidequest in a port city the heroes happen to be passing through. In this adventure, the heroes track down a group of thieves, bust up a drug deal, and scour the streets looking for the thieves' den before learning that their leader, an ogre wizard named Crowbeard, has plans to bargain with a powerful outside force.

OVERVIEW

The heroes arrive in Steelport. Crime and corruption is rampant, and the city guards are notoriously unreliable. The heroes enter Steelport with their own goals, but soon learn that the real player on the scene, both above world and underworld, is a thieves' guild called the Blades of the Crow. After dealing with some random city encounters, the heroes have a chance to rescue an innkeeper and his shop, the Tarnished Goblet, from being burned to the ground by the Blades.

Hagrim Trumble implores the heroes to help him. Not only do the Blades of the Crow want to burn down his establishment, they kidnapped his wife a week ago. He needs help to get her back as he is in no shape to track down a gang of thieves.

Hitting the streets of Steelport gets the heroes some information about the gang's activities, including a rundown of its leaders, but a solid lead brings the heroes to a warehouse on the docks. Unfortunately, it's an ambush and the Blades of the Crow have summoned elementals to destroy the heroes. After dealing with them, the heroes learn about a drug deal behind the Golden Boar Tavern: a new shipment of witch weed is about to be delivered to Master Fingers, one of the guild leaders. Arriving at the Golden Boar, the heroes have a chance to disrupt the meet and learn that the location of the gang's guildhouse is in the sewers below Steelport.

The entrance to the Crow's Nest (as the guildhouse is called) is at an abandoned bell tower on the north side of Steelport, but how they approach it is up to them. Do they try to enter stealthily, or go in with swords swinging and spells blazing?

Regardless of how they deal with the Crow's Nest, the heroes find Hagrim's wife in the cells, but discover that Crowbeard and his most trusted associates are not present. The trail leads back to the Golden Boar Tavern where the owner, Jakk "One-Eye" Brin, knows more than he let on before. Brin tells the heroes that Crowbeard was meeting some orc warlord outside of town at a place called the Moon Rock at midnight.

Crowbeard is indeed meeting with an orc commander named Krank who commands a force of notorious Iron Legion orcs. Depending on how the heroes react, the meeting can end in a free-for-all combat spree, with the Iron Legion orcs suspecting treachery and Crowbeard and his thieves fighting for their lives.

AN ADVENTURE UNTO ITSELF

This scenario works very well as a jumping off point for a new group of heroes, but if you've played through the previous installments in the Old School Fantasy series - particularly ***Old School Fantasy #4 Slave Pens of Moss Stone*** - there are several ways you can entice your players to take the fight to the Blades of the Crow thieves.

The easiest way is to plant documents in Moss Stone Keep indicating that the gnoll slavers were harvesting the witch weed for shipment to the coastal city of Steelport. Not much more information will be needed to entice an enterprising group of heroes, which leads them directly to **Scene 1** of this adventure.

If your heroes have continued through the first three installments of the ***Old School Fantasy*** series, you can add connections between the powerful lich Lord Gravespawn and Crowbeard. Perhaps the witch weed is being spread amongst the populace of Steelport in order to make them ready for some terrible ritual that even Crowbeard has no knowledge of. Laying the clues for such a conspiracy can give your players a glimpse into the much larger fantasy world that exists around them, serving as its own springboard for future adventures.

LORE

IRON LEGION

Far to the west, in a land of unrelenting heat and sand, the orcs of the Iron Legion have organized themselves into a well-oiled military machine. They are well trained, well armed, and ruthless in combat. Though their numbers are currently few they have big dreams of conquest. The Iron Legion is led by an inner circle of orc commanders called the Iron Band, and they have given orders to their powerful subordinates to go out into the world and conquer in the name of the Legion.

STEELPORT

Steelport is a large coastal city that has fallen into crime and corruption. The magistrate knows all about the illegal activities, and even in on a good portion of it, but keeps a lid on the worst activity from boiling up to the surface.

Or at least he did until recently. A new player on the board arrived several months ago. Led by an ambitious ogre wizard named Crowbeard, he calls his organization the Blades of the Crow, and they have been strong-arming and bullying the powers-that-be to create a niche all their own. They are not afraid to murder those who get in their way, as dispatching a prominent guard captain a month ago proved, and their deeds are only getting worse. Recently, they started dealing in powerful drugs both magical and mundane, spreading them out to the poorest neighborhoods of Steelport.

PLACES OF INTEREST

CROW'S NEST

Below the streets of Steelport is a network of sewers dating back several hundred years to when the city was occupied by a larger empire. The sewers are still in use, though in poor repair, and some sections have collapsed over time, revealing larger caverns. One such section of caves is located below the old bell tower on the north side of town, which now serves as the guildhouse for the Blades of the Crow.

GOLDEN BOAR TAVERN

There are many taverns and places to get some ale in Steelport, and the Golden Boar was at one point one of the nicest. The tavernkeeper is Jakk “One-Eye” Brin, a jovial man who seems to know everyone—including Crowbeard, the guildmaster of the Blades of the Crow. Brin is notoriously shrewd, however, and doesn’t reveal secrets easily.

MOON ROCK

North of Steelport, along the treacherous bluffs and cliffs that face the ocean, is a large flat white rock of unusual color. The locals call it Moon Rock because the light from the moon makes it glow eerily at night. Long ago, a group of druids and shamans would offer blood sacrifices on the rock to pagan gods, but these cults have long since died out.

TARNISHED GOBLET INN

The Tarnished Goblet is a fine two-story inn located in Steelport. Its owner is Hagrim Trumble, an innkeeper whose wife was kidnapped several days before the scenario begins. The inn itself is a comfortable place, if a bit lonely, as the Blades of the Crow keep business away every chance they get.

THE ADVENTURE PROPER

SCENE ONE: STEELPORT, CITY OF SECRETS

In this scene the heroes are introduced to Steelport, City of Secrets, and have a chance to interact with some random elements of the city. Some of these encounters can lead to easier information gathering in later scenes, but they are all optional. Use them as you see fit to get the heroes acclimated to a city rife with crime and corruption.

SCENE TWO: FIRE AT THE TARNISHED GOBLET

Having likely seen some of the worst parts of Steelport, the heroes are ready to take a break and find an inn to rest their weary bodies. They are directed to the Tarnished Goblet Inn, and upon arrival they pass by some Blades of the Crow thieves leaving the inn. As the heroes speak with the innkeeper, the smell of burning wood fills the air along with curling black smoke. The Tarnished Goblet is on fire, and if the heroes don't help, it certainly burns to the ground.

SCENE THREE: AN INNKEEPER'S PLEA

Either the Tarnished Goblet was saved through the valiant acts of the heroes or it burned down. In either case, Hagrid breaks down and pleads with the heroes to help him, and in doing so, help all of Steelport. He provides some information about the Blades of the Crow, though he admits to not knowing much, and asks them to rescue his kidnapped wife and stop the nefarious thieves' guild.

SCENE FOUR: ASKING AROUND

With the goal of rescuing an innkeeper's wife and a city filled with crime and corruption, the heroes hit the streets looking for information. Here is where the seemingly random encounters from **Scene 1** can provide a benefit, as each resident has a different view into the Blades of the Crow operation. The information, unfortunately, leads the heroes into an ambush in **Scene 5**.

SCENE FIVE: WAREHOUSE WOES

The only reliable piece of information gleaned from the residents of Steelport leads the heroes to an abandoned warehouse on the docks. Unfortunately, the warehouse is not only abandoned, but magically booby-trapped by Crowbeard. Anyone that steps inside without the tattoo of the Blades of the Crow triggers a summoning trap, pulling a group of water elementals from the nearby sea! After dealing with the creatures, the heroes catch a thief assigned to watch over the warehouse, and from him can learn about the meeting at the Golden Boar (**Scene 6**).

SCENE SIX:

RUMBLE AT THE GOLDEN BOAR

The heroes know where to find Master Fingers, the second-in-command of the Blades of the Crow, and have a real chance to make a dent in the thieves' guild's operations. Behind the Golden Boar Tavern, the heroes see Master Fingers and a group of thieves taking delivery of a witch weed shipment from a shady-looking fellow. Busting up the meeting results in a free-for-all combat against a well-trained team of thieves.

SCENE SEVEN: THE CROW'S NEST

With the information from Master Fingers, the heroes head out to the old bell tower on the north side of town. Descending down into the Crow's Nest, they will likely have to fight their way to the prison cells to rescue Ingrid, but they also discover Crowbeard is not there. Ingrid tells them the ogre wizard left to meet up with the owner of the Golden Boar Tavern to discuss a "meeting of extreme importance."

SCENE EIGHT: RETURN TO THE GOLDEN BOAR

With the lead provided by Ingrid and Crowbeard still at large doing who knows what, the heroes head to the Golden Boar to pry out information from its proprietor, Jakk "One-Eye" Brin. Unfortunately, the Iron Legion orcs learned of Jakk's involvement with Crowbeard and sent a squad to kill the tavern keeper, as part of the orcs' arrangement with Crowbeard was complete silence. By sharing information, which Krank found out through well-placed orc spies in the city, the Iron Legion warlord sees no other option but to silence Jakk. The Iron Legion orcs have a twisted sort of honor and loyalty, one that is not fully understandable to non-orcs. The heroes arrive just as the orcs do and it's up to the characters to decide how the scene goes down.

SCENE NINE: MIDNIGHT MEETING AT MOON ROCK

Crowbeard and a band of his thieves are meeting with an orc commander of the Iron Legion named Krank. A meeting of this kind cannot be good, and indeed it is not: the Iron Legion is planning to assault Steelport and control the valuable harbor city with the aid of the Blades of the Crow! Hundreds, if not thousands of people, would die at the hands of the Iron Legion, so it's up to the heroes to put a stop to it.

SCENE TEN: EPILOGUE

There are several ways for the scenario to end. The best way is for the heroes to have cleaned out the Crow's Nest below the city (which serve as the Blades of the Crow's primary guildhouse), defeated or driven off Crowbeard and Master Fingers to leave the guild leaderless, and to have killed or driven off Krank and his Iron Legion orcs. Crowbeard has several means of escape available to him, however, and if he can get away he can prove to be a recurring villain bent on vengeance upon the heroes in the future.

Krank and the Iron Legion also do not forget their encounter with the heroes, assuming they survive. Krank is a bit of a rogue warlord amongst the Iron Legion, so there are no reinforcements from the powerful western orc band if he is defeated. However, he bears grudges to his grave, so if Krank finds a way to escape being killed, he'll devote his life to hunting down the heroes and making them pay.

MENACE

Call of the Crow assumes a Menace of II (Routine) or III (Challenging), though you can easily adjust that if you like. Keep in mind that a higher or lower Menace will adjust the number of Dramatic scenes.

SLIDING DCS

To allow for play at any Threat Level, this adventure features sliding DCs (see *Fantasy Craft*, page 370).

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Blade of the Crow Thief: The thieves who make up the membership in the Blades of the Crow guild come from all walks of life, but they are predominantly human (male and female). They carry their short swords openly and walk around Steelport secure in the knowledge that no authority figure can touch them. They are universally mean, uncouth, and dangerous. They identify each other with a distinctive tattoo of a black bird clutching a sword in its claws, normally found on the shoulder.

Crowbeard, Blade of the Crow Guildmaster: Crowbeard stands nearly 10' tall, wearing deep purple robes adorned with symbols of the moon and stars. He keeps his coal-black beard well groomed, his general appearance almost gentlemanly. He is, however, still an ogre, so his tusks and protruding lower jaw do not add to his lordly presence.

Dire Wolf: These large, feral wolves have shaggy black fur and glowing red eyes. They are kept on leashes by the Iron Legion soldiers, but let loose at the first sign of trouble.

Hagrim Trumble, Innkeeper of the Tarnished Goblet: Hagrim is an older human man in his late fifties, with a receding hair line made gray by his advancing years and a wrinkled face. He keeps himself in shape by performing all of the physical duties of managing the Tarnished Goblet so he is healthy. Since the kidnapping of his wife, Ingrid, Hagrim has slumped into a deep depression that shows in his eyes.

Iron Legion Assassin: These orcs wear black cloaks with heavy cowls to cover their faces, moving with a grace and fluidity not normally seen among their kind. Their movements are silent and their blades deadly.

Iron Legion Soldier: Orcs of the Legion carry themselves with an authority unusual among orc-kind and are very muscular and foreboding. They are well disciplined and well armed.

Jakk "One-Eye" Brin, Golden Boar Proprietor: Jakk is an obese man with perpetual grease and ale stains on his shirt from many years slinging suds at the Golden Boar. He wears an eyepatch to cover his missing eye, hence the nickname, and seems like a jovial and friendly sort of bartender.

Krank, Iron Legion Orc Commander: A bulky, imposing sight, Krank is a veteran of many battles. He growls when he talks, treating all non-orcs as if they were the dirt beneath his feet.

Master Fingers, Blade of the Crow Lieutenant: Few people are as coldly calculating as the soulless killer Master Fingers. Although tall and lanky, he's quite agile, moving gracefully in the shadows as if he was a part of them. He has pale gray eyes, and a jagged scar running down his left cheek.

Steelport City Guard: The city guard that supposedly protect Steelport are a varied lot, some old and some young, all human, but they are all trained to use their blades, shields, and armor in combat. Most of them have seen a fight at some point in their lives so very few of them are green.

Steelport Pickpocket: Most of the Steelport youths engage in the larcenous profession of the pickpocket, hoping to catch the eye of the Blades of the Crow recruiters. They make a living off of the merchants and travelers who occupy Steelport.

Water Elemental: Each of these summoned creatures appears as a man-sized, vaguely humanoid shaped column of water, constantly fluid and always in motion, with forward movements reminiscent of crashing waves on a surf.

THE ADVENTURE PROPER

SCENE 1: STEELPORT, CITY OF SECRETS

Inside Steelport

OBJECTIVES

There are many reasons an adventuring band might want to visit Steelport. Perhaps they have some exotic goods to sell, such as rare art pieces, and the smaller trading posts and towns they've passed through couldn't offer reasonable coin for them. Or perhaps they come seeking a ship to carry them to some other distant land.

CHALLENGES

Getting to know the city of Steelport.

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: Introduce the heroes to Steelport, showing them that even in civilization danger lurks around every corner. Also, to provide them with contacts and clues hinting at the larger threat just below the city streets.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

Sitting at the mouth of Night Fish Bay where the Greenbone River meets the sea, Steelport is a city like few others. Ships sail to and from the docks, indicating that the city still has some commerce and life, but rumors speak of rampant crime and corruption up and down its streets. The gates of Steelport stand wide open, unguarded, beckoning you on into its shadowy embrace where the secrets you carry are your greatest treasure.

Ambiance: Alternating between eerie, fog-covered alleys that threaten danger and lively, festive taverns that promise entertainment, the city streets and establishments are typical of large urban establishments.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

A dozen taverns and inns line the streets, along with merchants of all sorts, with a market where every manner of good imaginable can be bought and sold... or so the merchants will tell you. Below are six random encounters you can use to spruce up whatever goals the heroes are pursuing when they enter Steelport. Feel free to pick and choose as appropriate, or let the dice fall where they may.

1-Pickpocket: Street urchins are common in Steelport and seem to outnumber even the rats. Pick a hero to be the target of one of these sticky-fingered thieves, but have all of the characters make Notice rolls opposed by the thief's Prestidigitation; heroes keeping a close eye on their coin pouch receive a +2 discretionary bonus to the roll. Anyone that beats the Pickpocket can make an opposed Dexterity check against him, and if they beat him they can catch him before he runs away. Otherwise the Pickpocket dashes off into the crowd initiating a chase. If caught, the boy—surrenders and begs for his life.

2-Beggar: Near the docks, beggars of all sorts roam the streets of Steelport. Many families have lost their homes to ruffians and thugs, and one such individual approaches the heroes as they walk by. He's an older man in his mid-fifties named Ronald, and he explains his woes in a pitiful voice: he worked in a fish market by the docks but the owner couldn't pay the "protection" fees of the local thieves' guild, and so the market was burned to the ground. If pressed, he remembers the name of the gang as the Blades of the Crow but didn't have any dealings with them on his own.

3- Victim: The heroes come across a young woman of once fair looks lying bloody and half-beaten in an alleyway. Other folks give her a wide berth or pretend they don't notice her weeping groans. If approached, she explains she worked for Master Fingers until recently and he was upset because she was not giving him his rightful percentage. With a successful Persuasion roll, she offers up a tidbit about his habits.

4-Unlucky Merchant: On the cobbled street in front of them the heroes see a lonely merchant, portly and mustachioed, standing next to a wagon that has just recently tipped over. He proclaims himself "Feltus Koneller, merchant of Steelport," and explains to anyone willing to listen that a group of "thugs and ruffians" came out of nowhere, robbed him and then pushed over his wagon full of goods. He's been in Steelport for quite a few years and knows most of the other merchants in town. If helped, he can give advice if the heroes are seeking something, pointing them towards the Tarnished Goblet Inn for a good night's sleep.

5-Guard Payoff: Guards are not an altogether uncommon sight in Steelport, but they are loath to do naught but slouch in one place and argue with one another. On a street corner, the heroes see a guard engaging in their other favorite activities—namely, accepting a bribe. A heavily cloaked figure passes a pouch full of coins to a guard, who looks around to make sure no one is watching (though he fails to see the heroes). The two exchange a few whispered words before the cloaked figure ducks down an alley, while the guard goes back to standing watch. What the heroes do with this information is up to them, and the exact nature of the payoff is left up to the GM (perhaps it was simply the designated monthly bribe for the guards).

6-Dealer: Most illicit deals are conducted behind closed doors, but not all of them. Down by the docks, some less reputable merchants have begun selling drugs to customers in broad daylight. The heroes come upon one such dirty merchant. A small crowd of roughs, each with a sallow, gaunt look to their faces, clamor to buy his addictive merchandise. He is a reseller of the witch weed and works through a complex network of connections, so doesn't deal directly with the Blades of the Crow.

CAST

STEELPORT PICKPOCKET (STANDARD NPC)

"Excuse me, sir, didn't me to bump into you!"

Description: Most of the Steelport youths engage in the larcenous profession of the pickpocket, hoping to catch the eye of the Blades of the Crow recruiters. They make a living off of the merchants and travelers who occupy Steelport. There are few ways for a poor youth in Steelport to make it in the city outside of turning to a life of crime. Some of them come from families of pickpockets who usually operate under the noses of the larger guilds, of which the Blades of the Crow is the most powerful.

Motivations: The pickpockets of Steelport are not bloodthirsty monsters, and most of them are simply poverty-ridden children who have no other means to survive, so they should not come across as threatening. Inconvenient, but not threatening, so engaging in combat with them is certainly NOT heroic. Use them to keep the heroes alert and ready.

Steelport Pickpocket (Medium Folk Walker — 41 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground (Run 150 ft.); Init IV; Atk III; Def V; Res II; Health II; Comp II; Skills: Blend VII, Disguise IV, Prestidigitation VII; Qualities: *Class ability (Assassin: quick on your feet 1/session; Burglar: stash it), superior runner I*
Attacks/Weapons: Dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: *bleed, hurl*)
Gear: Partial leather armor (DR 1; Resist Fire 3; DP –1, ACP –0, Spd +0 ft., Disguise +0), Thieves' tools
Treasure: 2C

NEXT STEPS

The heroes decide to rest and are directed to the Tarnished Goblin Inn.

SCENE 2:

FIRE AT THE TARNISHED GOBLET

Inside the Tarnished Goblet Inn

OBJECTIVES

The Tarnished Goblet is a good if somewhat rundown inn with a friendly innkeeper and cozy atmosphere. Benevolent and kind-hearted heroes need no reason to help, but if pressed Hagrid can offer a reward for their assistance, though such mercenary actions are hardly befitting a hero!

CHALLENGES

Deciding to assist Hagrid in his moment of need to save the Tarnished Goblet Inn from arson!

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: Hagrid Trumble is a good man who has lost hope in the residents of Steelport. He doesn't know who to turn to, so he doesn't lay his burdens down on the heroes at first. Of course, once the fire starts, he's in a desperate panic and pleads for help, but none of the residents lift a finger. It's up to the heroes to pick up the slack.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

The sun is hanging low over the horizon, which means it's time to find a place to stay for the night. Asking around the consensus seems to be that the best and most affordable inn in Steelport is the Tarnished Goblet located near the docks. Arriving, you find it's a simple two story wooden building with a faded sign hanging over the door depicting a silver goblet overflowing with wine. A

pair of darkly clad men exits the building just as you arrive, where inside you see the innkeeper smiling at your arrival.

Ambiance: Typical tavern atmosphere, warm and inviting, but with signs that the inn has seen better days, both from the standpoints of appearance and clientele volume.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

Hagrim Trumble introduces himself and welcomes the heroes to the Tarnished Goblet Inn. The prices are only 3 silver pieces a night for a room, and he explains business has been slow of late so he has no other guests. But a room rental comes with a dinner of stew and a breakfast of porridge at no extra charge, so he builds upon that as a solid selling point.

As the heroes converse with him, have them make an Awareness check (Easy DC). Success reveals the smell of burning wood from the front of the inn. Anyone approaching the front door must make a Dexterity check (Average DC) to avoid 1d6 points of fire damage from the explosion.

The two thieves who passed the heroes, along with a group of their fellows nearby, are responsible, having thrown several flaming oil flasks into the building to start the fire. They are long gone by the time the heroes discover the fire.. Luckily, several nearby barrels filled with rainwater can serve to put the fire out but Hagrim cannot do it on his own.

The inn burns down in 8 rounds unless the heroes can achieve 5 successes within that time. Throwing water from the barrels is a good idea, but you should allow the heroes to help in whatever imaginative way they can. The first and second Challenges are DC 10, the third and fourth Challenges are DC 15, and the fifth Challenge is DC 20. Keep track of the number of successes and the number of rounds it takes (and assume Hagrim effectively fails at his checks); once they reach 5 successes total between them the fire is put out. Failure results in the inn burning to the ground.

CAST

BLADE OF THE CROW THIEF (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

“You don't know who you're messing with, friend”

Description: The thieves who make up the membership in the Blades of the Crow guild come from all walks of life, but they are predominantly human (male and female). They carry their short swords openly and walk around Steelport secure in the knowledge that no authority figure can touch them. They are universally mean, uncouth, and dangerous. They identify each other with a distinctive tattoo of a black bird clutching a sword in its claws, normally found on the shoulder. Membership in the Blades of the Crow is a mark of honor amongst the thieves and cutthroats of Steelport, and those accepted work to make a name for themselves. Crowbeard and Master Fingers value tenacity, ruthlessness, and ingenuity in their members, so the thieves who belong to the guild are eager to prove their worth.

Motivations: Unlike the pickpockets, a thief inducted into the Blades of the Crow is a merciless killer, entirely willing to slit a throat to make a point.

Blade of the Crow Thief (Medium Folk Walker—54 XP):

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground (Run 150 ft.); Init V; Atk IV; Def IV; Res III; Health III; Comp II; Skills: Blend VII, Intimidate IV, Prestidigitation VII; Qualities: *Class ability (Assassin: quick on your feet 1/session; Burglar: I'll cut you! I, stash it), menacing threat, superior runner I, tricky (Cheap Shot)*

Attacks/Weapons: Short Sword (dmg 1d8 lethal; threat 19-20; qualities: *keen 4, poisonous*), Dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19-20; qualities: *bleed, hurl*)

Gear: Partial leather armor (DR 1; Resist Fire 3; DP -1, ACP -0, Spd +0 ft., Disguise +0), Thieves' tools

Treasure: 2C

HAGRIM TRUMBLE, INNKEEPER OF THE TARNISHED GOBLET (STANDARD NPC)

"I just can't do it anymore", "Please, can you find my wife?"

Description: Hagrid is an older man in his late fifties, with a receding hair line made gray by his advancing years and a wrinkled face. He keeps himself in shape by performing all of the physical duties of managing the Tarnished Goblet so he is healthy. Since the kidnapping of his wife, Ingrid, Hagrid has slumped into a deep depression that shows in his eyes. Hagrid was born and raised in Steelport to a family of innkeepers. His father owned the Tarnished Goblet, and his father before that. The inn doesn't need a large staff to serve its customers, as Hagrid's wife Ingrid was both cook and maid, but lately things in Steelport have gone so far downhill that the Tarnished Goblet is more often empty than occupied.

Motivations: Hagrid should be used to keep the plot moving forward; he is a wretched old man with no one to turn to in a city filled with criminals and thieves.

Hagrim Trumble, Innkeeper of the Tarnished Goblet
(Medium Folk Walker — 32 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init II; Atk IV; Def III; Res IV; Health III; Comp I; Skills: Athletics III, Notice III, Sleight of Hand III; Qualities: *Grappler*
Attacks/Weapons: Club (dmg 1d8 subdual; threat 20)
Gear: Booze (6 uses), Spirits (3 uses)
Treasure: 2C

NEXT STEPS

The heroes confront Hagrim about his recent difficulties and must decide on a course of action.

SCENE 3: AN INNKEEPER'S PLEA

Inside the Tarnished Goblet Inn

OBJECTIVES

A man in trouble needs their help. What is a hero for if not to answer the plea of the helpless?

CHALLENGES

Deciding to assist Hagrid further with his difficulties and deciding a course of action.

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: Hagrid should be a sympathetic character, so try playing on the heroes' good and noble sides. He's just an innkeeper in the big city, and the problems he's been facing are simply beyond his ability to deal with. Hagrid needs the heroes, and at this point he's not afraid to express that

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

The Tarnished Goblet Inn is a simple two story wooden building with a faded sign hanging over the door depicting a silver goblet overflowing with wine.

Ambiance: Typical tavern atmosphere, warm and inviting, but with signs that the inn has seen better days, both from the standpoints of appearance and clientele volume.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

Hagrim Trumble has been having problems, and at this point he unloads on the heroes with all of his burdens. He first explains that the men who left just as the heroes were arriving were members of a thieves' guild called the Blades of the Crow. They control almost all of the activity in Steelport and certainly all of it on the docks, and businesses here must pay a "protection" fee to them to avoid any "accidents." Lately, the Tarnished Goblet has not been pulling in many customers so he simply didn't have the coins to pay. The result was the fire.

But this is only the most recent attempt by the Blades of the Crow to strong-arm Hagrim. A week ago they kidnapped his wife, a crime for which he has received no help from the guards, who simply shrug and muse that maybe she simply left him. He spends his days tending to the inn and his nights wandering the streets searching for his beloved Ingrid, but his searching has been in vain so far. Hagrim is a good man, but he's at the end of his rope, and this should be clear to the heroes.

The beleaguered innkeeper pleads with the heroes to rescue his wife and put a stop to the Blades of the Crow. Hagrim knows that their leader is some ogre wizard named Crowbeard but little else beyond that; they come and go with the shadows, and the few times he tried to follow them ended in failure. He also tells them the troubles of Steelport, while deep, have only recently begun to get worse. Stop the nefarious gang of thieves and Steelport should return to its normal state of squalor and decay.

Hagrim has no coin to offer, but assuming the Tarnished Goblet still stands, he offers free room and board for as long as they stay in Steelport. For now it's the best offer he has to give.

CAST

See Hagrim's statistics in **Scene 2**.

NEXT STEPS

The heroes must decide on a course of action to pursue to rescue Hagrim's wife.

SCENE 4: ASKING AROUND

City of Steelport

OBJECTIVES

Someone in this crazy, mixed-up city knows about the Blades of the Crow, and now it's time to hit the cobblestones and start asking questions. Some questions might be asked a bit more forcefully than others, of course!

CHALLENGES

Convincing the local populace to divulge information regarding the Blades of the Crow and their whereabouts and activities.

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: This is a great opportunity to revisit the places the heroes visited in **Scene 1** to make Steelport feel like a living, breathing city. It's also a chance to let urban-oriented characters, such as rogues and thieves, to earn their keep.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

Steelport is known as the City of Secrets, and it's becoming clear why that is. Everyone here has a story to tell, and many of those stories involve the Blades of the Crow and Hagrid's missing wife Ingrid. Now to find the right storytellers and get that information.

Ambiance: Your average urban city, filled with a myriad of dark alleys, cobblestone streets, inns and brothels, and plenty of intrigue, danger, and mystery.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

The direction this scene can go is entirely up to the players. They may seek out a specific acquaintance that they met before or they may simply head out into the streets and start asking questions. The bulk of the action is handled by various Canvass checks. If the heroes approach one of the characters they met in **Scene 1**, give them a +2 bonus to that Canvass check.

Below is a list of information that can be gleaned by asking around. Some of it is true, and some of it is false. Each tidbit of information is followed by either a [True] or [False] tag to determine the truth of the rumor and should be given out with each successful Canvass check. You can roll randomly or choose which one is found. Each Canvass check requires 1d4 hours of snooping, waiting, and interrogating and has a check modifier of +10. See Table 2.13: Canvaassing in the *Fantasy Craft* core rulebook.

The important clue to gain from this scene is #1 listed below. The informant who provides the information really believes that it is accurate, but unfortunately it's a trap.

1. The Blades meet at an old warehouse on the docks. Everyone knows where it is, but no one does anything about it. [**True**, leads to **Scene 5**]
2. The Blades of the Crow are led by an ogre wizard named Crowbeard who eats people alive! [**True**]
3. The magistrate of Steelport is in debt to Crowbeard which is why they are left alone. [**True**]
4. Members of the Blades can walk through walls and jump from shadow to shadow at night. [**False**]
5. Master Fingers is second-in-command of the Blades of the Crow. [**True**]
6. If you say the name "Crowbeard" five times in front of a mirror the ogre wizard instantly knows where you are! [**False**]
7. A recent shipment of witch weed, a potent drug, hit the streets in the past week and came in from some place inland rather by sea. [**True**]
8. Each Blade of the Crow is marked with a tattoo on their arm, that of a black bird clutching a sword in its claws. [**True**]
9. The guards of Steelport receive generous "donations" from the Blades of the Crow in exchange for information and a license to do whatever they want. [**True**]
10. Crowbeard keeps the bodies of dead thieves, and has formed a huge monster made of the dead bodies that he uses to guard his guildhouse! [**False**]

CAST

Various city dwellers, depending upon the avenue of the hero's interrogation. See the NPC's presented in this adventure and use the ones listed in the Rogue's Gallery in the *Fantasy Craft* core rulebook as guides for the types of people the heroes may interrogate.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the rumors, the heroes eventually make their way to the abandoned warehouse on the docks, where they encounter some of the Blades of the Crow gang that has laid a trap for the heroes!

SCENE 5: WAREHOUSE WOES

An abandoned warehouse in Steelport

OBJECTIVES

After a day of asking around this warehouse is the only lead uncovered. So it's either investigate this building or go back to Hagrid and tell him they failed.

CHALLENGES

Surviving the trap!!

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: Trigger the trap, of course! Since there's no one here at the moment, luring the heroes into the warehouse shouldn't be terribly difficult. That's when the real fun begins.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

The only solid lead from your asking around has lead you to the docks of Steelport, and specifically a rundown but still standing warehouse. The building is made of wood and is identical to the other dozen just like it along the docks, where the sea water laps up against the boards. The windows are boarded up and there seems to be two entrances, a rear door and a loading door leading out to sea where the adjoining dock has washed away.

Ambiance: Rundown section of the docks, with filth and squalor evident in every corner of the streets.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

The door to the warehouse is locked with a decent lock (it can be opened with a successful Disable check (Tricky DC; treat as a padlock for purposes of Disabling the lock)), though the air around the docks has turned the wood moist so breaking it open may be easier (Strength check (Average DC)). The other entrance, the one facing the harbor, has no adjoining dock and so requires a successful Swim check to navigate to.

Inside is a fairly barren and abandoned warehouse. Have the heroes make Notice checks (Tricky DC) just to get them thinking there's something for them to find. If anyone can detect magical auras they detect something faint on the floor, though it seems to be fading—Crowbeard's magical summoning trap activates upon contact with the floor.

After a few rounds, a mob of water elementals bursts up from the floor! Heroes can make Notice checks opposed by the water elementals' team Sneak check to avoid being surprised. Being mindless summoned elementals, the creatures fight to the death.

Once the water elementals are dealt with, the heroes hear a thud from outside followed by a cry of pain. Investigating discovers a Blade of the Crow thief who fell off the roof in his haste to get away, a painful fall that resulted in a broken leg. The thief explains that no one has ever defeated Crowbeard's water elementals before, and he was about to run off and tell Master Fingers. Getting the thief to talk requires a successful Coerce check (Average DC), and when he cracks he tells them that Master Fingers is at the Golden Boar Tavern overseeing the delivery of a witch weed shipment. Unfortunately, he's still a novitiate thief and he doesn't know where the Crow's Nest is (the guildhouse for the Blades of the Crow).

CAST

BLADE OF THE CROW THIEF (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

See Blade of the Crow Thief's statistics in **Scene 2**.

WATER ELEMENTAL (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

gurgling noises reminiscent of a growling dog

Description: Each of these summoned creatures appears as a man-sized, vaguely humanoid shaped column of water, constantly fluid and always in motion, with forward movements reminiscent of crashing waves on a surf.

Motivations: Summoned by Crowbeard as a trap for the too-curious. They are bound servants with no will of their own. The trap laid by Crowbeard in **Scene 5** that triggers the water elementals is pretty typical for the ogre wizard, so if the heroes get too nosy in other areas the setup and scene can be used again.

Water Elemental (Medium Elemental Walker — 116 XP):

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 20 ft. ground; Init IV; Atk IV; Def IV; Res III; Health V; Comp I; Skills: Athletics VII, Search IV; Qualities: *Achilles heel (cold, heat)*, *blindsight*, *class ability (Burglar: evasion II)*, *contagion immunity*, *damage immunity (bows, edged)*, *everlasting*, *fearless II*, *feat (Ferocity Basics)*, *grappler*, *improved stability*, *knockback*, *natural spell (Mass Water Walk, Move Water)*, *never outnumbered*, *superior swimmer X*, *tough I*

Attacks/Weapons: Slam II (dmg 1d6+3 subdual; threat 19–20; upgrades: *grab*, *reach I*), Drown (Swallow II: dmg 1d10+3 lethal; notes: Grapple benefit — Tiny and smaller only), Riptide (stunning attack I: 30 ft. beam; Will DC 10 or become *stunned* for 1d6 rounds)

Treasure: None

NEXT STEPS

A solid lead finally leads them to one of the Blades of the Crow commanders, Master Fingers, and a known meeting with other members of the guild.

SCENE 6: RUMBLE AT THE GOLDEN BOAR

Inside the Golden Boar Tavern

OBJECTIVES

Stopping the exchange is certainly within a hero's duty, but Hagrim's wife isn't going to be rescued by just stopping this one drug deal. The heroes need to find out where the Blade of the Crow gang's lair is, and if anyone's going to know, it's going to be Master Fingers.

CHALLENGES

Defeating the thieves and getting Master Fingers to talk is not going to be easy!

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Dramatic

GM Briefing: This scene should have a sense of urgency to it, so try to keep the players moving towards the rear of the tavern. The tavern keeper of the Golden Boar can be introduced after the scene though he should appear as an innocent.

You can also use this scene to sow another future adventure seed, as the mysterious person delivering the witch weed can be whomever you want him to be. Perhaps a gnoll from Moss Stone who doesn't realize that his masters were defeated, perhaps an agent of Lord Gravespawn, or perhaps someone entirely new.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

The Golden Boar Tavern.

Ambiance: Typical tavern atmosphere, warm and inviting, with average appearance and clientele volume.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

The meeting is indeed happening behind the Golden Boar Tavern. By the time the heroes arrive, Master Fingers and two mobs of thieves are about to take possession of the witch weed, which comes in several large bags, from a mysterious cloaked figure. The figure disappears into a back alley as soon as trouble begins.

Sneaking up on the thieves is difficult at best (any Sneak checks must beat a Hard DC) as they are well-trained in detecting such subterfuge, but they didn't bother posting any guards since this is just a routine witch weed delivery (and who's going to stop them in Steelport?). There is a back door to the Golden Boar and a few narrow alleys, but otherwise the area behind the tavern is just an open lot. Rooftops can provide heroes with ranged attacks a good vantage point, assuming someone can make a successful Climb check to get up to the roofs.

The oncoming dark of night means that all attacks and actions suffer a -1 discretionary modifier to those without darkvision.

When alerted, the thieves fight until death, except for Master Fingers. If he is the only survivor, or is reduced to 1 wound, he drops his weapons and surrenders. Getting him to talk still requires at least three successful Coercion checks (his Attitude starts out as Hostile), but once he cracks, he can tell the heroes how to get to the Crow's Nest. Access is through an abandoned bell tower on the north side of town leading down into the sewers.

WHAT IF MASTER FINGERS DIES?

If Master Fingers dies before the heroes have a chance to interrogate him, all is not lost. A straggler thief could arrive on the scene too late and try to run, giving the heroes a night time chase through the Steelport streets. Upon catching him, the thief can be forced to give up the location of the Crow's Nest.

CAST

BLADE OF THE CROW THIEF (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

See Blade of the Crow Thief's statistics in **Scene 2**.

MASTER FINGERS, BLADE OF THE CROW LIEUTENANT (SPECIAL NPC, ADVERSARY)

"Looks like someone's looking for a bloody smile across their throat"

Description: Few people are as coldly calculating as the soulless killer Master Fingers. Although a tall and lanky human, he's quite agile, moving gracefully in the shadows as if he was a part of them. He has pale gray eyes, and a jagged scar running down his left cheek.

Motivations: Master Fingers arrived in Steelport with Crowbeard, helping to establish the Blades of the Crow guild from the very beginning. He was a long-standing member of an order of assassins called the Brotherhood of Knives in a city in the far south, but something happened that forced him to flee. Whatever it was he doesn't talk about it, but rumors persist that the Brotherhood of Knives have a standing bounty for his head on a stick. Master Fingers is a smart and tough opponent, so he does his best to avoid capture. However, his overconfidence often puts him into situations where he can't get out of easily, so if the heroes are having a tough time, have Master Fingers make a blunder where he arrogantly overestimates his own abilities.

Master Fingers, Blade of the Crow Lieutenant (Medium Folk Walker— 89 XP): Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground (Run 150 ft.); Init VI; Atk III; Def V; Res III; Health III; Comp V; Skills: Haggle X, Impress VII, Intimidate VII, Prestidigitation VIII; Qualities: *Class ability (Assassin: offer they can't refuse; Courtier: never outdone; Sage: best of the best I), condition immunity (Baffled), superior runner I*

Attacks/Weapons: Longsword (dmg 1d12 lethal; threat 20; qualities: *poisonous*), Dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: *bleed, hurl*), light crossbow of speed + 30 standard bolts (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; range 50 ft. × 6; qualities: *AP 2, load 5, poisonous*; notes: See **Prizes** section for details)

Gear: Moderate leather armor (DR 2; Resist Fire 5; DP –1; ACP –0; Spd –5 ft.; Disguise +0)

Treasure: 2A, 2C, 2L

NEXT STEPS

With the information obtained from Master Fingers, the heroes likely head out to the old bell tower on the north side of town.

SCENE 7: THE CROW'S NEST

Inside the Crow's Nest

OBJECTIVES

The primary goal should be to rescue Hagrid's wife Ingrid, and a secondary goal should be to stop Crowbeard and try to put an end to the Blades of the Crow guild altogether (or at least cripple their operation). Striking at their base of operations seems like a good idea!

CHALLENGES

Vary, depending upon the location accessed by the heroes.

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: The Crow's Nest is an active thief guildhouse, so feel free to play around with the locations of the thieves. If the heroes are having a tough time of it so far, consider putting less thieves in the rooms to give them a break. On the other hand, if things have gone very smoothly so far, a few more of the residents can be at home during the heroes' visit.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

Varies by area

Ambiance: Varies by area, but typical of the inside of most buildings of the day.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

AREA 1-BELL TOWER ENTRANCE

DESCRIPTION

The iron rungs of the ladder lead you down roughly thirty feet or so. It ends in a small cave, lit only by a hung lantern on the wall. There is writing on the walls, and a ten foot-wide roughly hewn tunnel exits the cavern into the dark.

DETAILS

The writing on the wall are the bragging points for the thieves of the Blades of the Crow, and include such phrases as "easy mark on the corner of Yellow and Bradford", "try the lady at the fourth stall, lots of gems for the having!", and most recently, "the Tarnished Goblet burns."

AREA 2-CHECKPOINT & GATHERING

DESCRIPTION

After several winding yards, the roughly hewn tunnel opens into a large cavern lined with flickering torches. A burly man dressed in a black, sleeveless leather jerkin stands at the entrance.

DETAILS

There are many members of the Blades of the Crow and it's hard for any one person to know them all. That is why they use tattoos to identify members, and this Blade of the Crow thief is ordered to check everyone who comes by for their tattoo. There is one mob of thieves milling about the room as well, and if the heroes don't produce a tattoo they are attacked by the mob of them.

AREA 3-TRAINING ROOM

DESCRIPTION

Inside this large rough hewn chamber lies the various equipment used for thievish training purposes. To the left is a wide bench upon which rest a half-dozen chests of various sizes and quality. In the middle are three worn leather mats upon the floor, each faded to a dull gray. To the right are a dozen or so makeshift wooden dummies, adorned with a varying number of small bells attached to the dummies' clothing.

DETAILS

This is the chamber where the members of the Blades of the Crow practice their larcenous duties. The chests test lockpicking skills, the mats are used for combat training, and the dummies are for pickpocketing. There is a 50% chance of finding a group of 1d6 unarmed thieves practicing their skills here. Due to the volatile nature of the guild members, fights – even deadly ones – are not uncommon, so these thieves do not automatically come to aid their fellows if combat breaks out in nearby caves.

AREA 4-SLEEPING QUARTERS

DESCRIPTION

The overwhelming stench of stale sweat assails you as you come upon what appears to be a sleeping chamber. Ragged bedrolls in varying states of disarray lie strewn about the floor. You spot the slumbering bodies of six people amongst the blankets and bedrolls.

DETAILS

This is indeed where many members of the Blades of the Crow sleep, though just as often a thief spends the night in one of a dozen safe houses located throughout Steelport. At any point during the day or night there are six thieves sleeping here. They are unarmed and unarmored.

AREA 5-PRISON CELLS

DESCRIPTION

This broad cavern is divided into eight uneven cells with iron bars and rough wooden walls. Each of the eight cells is locked with an iron lock of questionable quality. The cells are empty, save for the farthest right corner, where the flickering torchlight of the chamber illuminates a woman huddled in little more than dirty rags.

DETAILS

The huddled woman is Ingrid, Hagrid's kidnapped wife. She is extremely grateful to the heroes for rescuing her, and tells them that she overheard Crowbeard talking to someone else about meeting the owner of the Golden Boar Tavern about a special "meeting" outside of Steelport. Of similar age and demeanor as Hagrid, Ingrid is also weak and in no condition to fight, but can make her own way out if the passages are clear. Ingrid knows nothing about the secret cache (**Area 6**), though she did notice something odd about the wall where it is located, if asked.

AREA 6-SECRET CACHE

DESCRIPTION

The secret panel slides away to reveal a cobweb-filled cave. The skeleton of a man sits against the far wall, his body slumped over a dusty locked chest.

DETAILS

The skeleton is not an undead monster, but simply the remains of a thief who hid himself and his treasure a little too well. None of the Blades of the Crow thieves know this chamber exists, not even Crowbeard. Finding the secret chamber requires a Search check at a -2 discretionary penalty. Elves and those with Elven blood can spot something strange about the wall with an unmodified Search roll.

The treasure is that of a long-lost thief whose greed was his undoing. The chest is locked but not trapped (it can be opened with a successful Disable check (Tricky DC; treat as a padlock for purposes of Disabling the lock)), and inside is a treasure cache (2A, 2C, 2M – roll randomly from the *Fantasy Craft core rulebook* to determine the contents).

AREA 7-MEETING HALL

DESCRIPTION

This impressive chamber is different in several aspects, most notably because of its workmanship. Unlike the rest of the Crow's Nest so far, this room is of worked stone. It is also the largest seen so far, at least thirty feet wide and twice as long. Though it is largely barren, at the far end there is a raised platform with a wooden podium. Two banners hang on the wall behind it. The largest bears the symbol of the Blades of the Crow, a black crow clutching a sword on a pale gray background. The second is smaller, depicting the head of a red-eyed iron gray wolf on a black background.

DETAILS

This is the main meeting room for the Blades of the Crow, where the thieves gather to hear announcements from Master Fingers or Crowbeard. The smaller banner is that of the Iron Legion, a ruthless band of orcs from the west who seek conquest and bloodshed. Heroes with a background in fighting orcs can make a Knowledge check (DC 15) to recall most of the general information outlined in **Lore: Iron Legion**.

There is usually a mob of thieves lounging in this area, armed and armored but not expecting any trouble.

AREA 8-MASTER FINGERS' CHAMBER

DESCRIPTION

This rather spartan chamber contains little more than a plain bed and an exotic, colored rug from some far away land.

DETAILS

Master Fingers is a simple man when it comes to his sleeping. He keeps his valuable possessions with him at all times, but underneath his bed is an unlocked chest containing spare clothes.

The door to his room is locked with an exceptional lock and it can be opened with a successful Disable check (Tricky DC; treat as a combination lock with the *complex mechanism* upgrade for purposes of Disabling the lock); it is not trapped.

AREA 9-CROWBEARD'S CHAMBER

DESCRIPTION

The first thing noticed as this door is approached is the smell, reminding one of fresh garden herbs. The chamber beyond the door is lavishly decorated. A fine silk rug rests on the floor, and against the far wall is a large bed, its blankets folded neatly. Next to the bed is a desk with various writing utensils in proper containers. A book shelf next to the desk seems sparsely occupied but well kept. Everything in here is neat and ordered.

DETAILS

Despite his ogre nature, Crowbeard keeps his chamber ordered and meticulously clean. He may be a ruthless wizard and master of a guild of thieves but that doesn't mean he has to live in squalor!

The door to Crowbeard's chamber is locked and trapped with a magical trap. A hero can make a Search check opposed by the trap's Stash check. With a success, he finds the trap after a few rounds of searching, with a failure he finds nothing, and with a critical failure the trap is triggered. Disarming it is tricky, as it is magical, but it can be done with three successful cooperative Disable checks opposed by the trap's Difficulty. Failure with even one Disable attempt triggers the trap, as does failing to disarm

the trap. Anyone trying to simply open the lock triggers the trap automatically, preventing it from being picked. Once the trap is triggered, it does not reset.

Lightning Trap (55 XP): Mechanism: tripwire; Difficulty: Sophisticated; Concealment: Average; Target: Entire party; Effect: Electrical damage (1d6 electrical damage per 2 TL, Ref DC 15 for 1/2 damage)

Inside, the bookshelf contains titles on a variety of mundane topics, including general herbalism and alchemy. The desk contains a locked drawer with a magical trap. A hero can make a Search check opposed by the trap's Stash check. With a success, he finds the trap after a few rounds of searching, with a failure he finds nothing, and with a critical failure the trap is triggered. Disarming it is tricky, as it is magical, but it can be done with two successful cooperative Disable checks opposed by the trap's Difficulty. Failure with even one Disable attempt triggers the trap, as does failing to disarm the trap. Anyone trying to simply open the lock triggers the trap automatically, preventing it from being picked. Once the trap is triggered, it does not reset. Inside is a pouch containing a treasure cache (2C, 2L).

Fire Trap (60 XP): Mechanism: tripwire; Difficulty: Intricate; Concealment: Average; Target: Entire party; Effect: Fire damage (1d6 fire damage per 2 TL, Ref DC 15 for 1/2 damage)

NEXT STEPS

Ingrid is safe, for now, but Steelport won't be until the Blades of the Crow are dealt with. And that means dealing with its leader, the ogre wizard Crowbeard, and finding out what this secret meeting is all about. Your only lead is back to the Golden Boar Tavern where it seems as though the proprietor is more than what he seems.

SCENE 8: RETURN TO THE GOLDEN BOAR

Inside the Golden Boar Tavern

OBJECTIVES

Find out what's going on. Whether that involves rescuing the Golden Boar tavern keeper from the orcs or interrogating the orcs is up to the heroes.

CHALLENGES

Either rescuing the Golden Boar tavern keeper from the orcs or successfully defeating and interrogating the orcs.

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Standard

GM Briefing: Force the heroes to make a decision in this scene. Do they fight to save the proprietor of the Golden Boar even though they know he's in league with Crowbeard, at least on some level? Or do they deal with the Iron Legion orcs first and leave Jakk alive?

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

This room was designed to be home to the lord and lady of the keep, and it's one of the few chambers that still bears resemblance to its original purpose.

Ambiance: Tapestries depicting random acts of violence in a slipshod artistically poor manner hang on the stone walls. Furs and rugs in clashing colors and motifs that make one's head spin line the floor. The two beds have been pulled together in one corner to form one giant bed. Silver and gold coins lay scattered all about.

Terrain: Indoors/settled

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

Upon arriving at the Golden Boar the heroes find that the owner, Jakk "One-Eye" Brin, is not alone. A mob of Iron Legion assassins stand with their blades drawn approaching the tavern keeper menacingly! For the moment the orcs don't notice the heroes so they have an opportunity to gain the upper hand (the heroes gain a free surprise round). Do they seize the moment or do they let them run Jakk through?

The Iron Legion assassins fight until death, but one or more of them can be knocked unconscious if a hero so chooses. If Jakk lives, he spills his guts to the characters and tells them Crowbeard and the Blades of the Crow use the Golden Boar Tavern as one of their puppet businesses for dealing drugs and controlling prostitution in Steelport. Tonight, Crowbeard was meeting an orc warlord named Krank out at a point called Moon Rock outside of town; Jakk is happy to show them exactly where it is. The meeting is supposed to take place at midnight, so that doesn't leave a lot of time.

If Jakk doesn't survive, the heroes can learn the same information by interrogating one of the Iron Legion assassins. If all of the assassins and Jakk are dead, Crowbeard could have left a physical note with Jakk that he has in his pocket explaining the meeting location.

CAST

IRON LEAGUE ASSASSIN (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

“Right between the eyes”

Description: These orcs wear black cloaks with heavy cowls to cover their faces, moving with a grace and fluidity not normally seen among their kind. Their movements are silent and their blades deadly. Within the powerful and organized Iron Legion, a sect of assassins exists to deal with problems that a soldier or even an army might have difficulty with. They wear black cloaks with heavy cowls covering their faces and their skill with the crossbow is legendary.

Motivations: The assassins of the Iron Legion are not as bloodthirsty as the soldiers but they are every bit as nasty. They prefer to hang back, using their crossbows to fire at opponents from a distance, preferring to target spellcasters first.

Iron League Assassin (Medium Folk Walker — 68 XP):

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init III; Atk VII; Def III; Res IV; Health IV; Comp II; Skills: Blend V, Bluff V, Disguise V; Qualities: *Always ready*, *class ability* (Assassin: *cold read I*, *convincing*, *fake it*), *expertise* (Disguise), *feat* (Basic Skill Mastery (Actor), Iron Will), *grueling combatant*, *light-sensitive*

Attacks/Weapons: Kukri (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19-20; qualities: *finesse*, *keen 4*, *poisonous*), light crossbow + 30 standard bolts (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19-20; range 50 ft. × 6; qualities: *AP 2*, *load 5*, *poisonous*)

Gear: Moderate leather armor (DR 2; Resist Fire 5; DP -1; ACP -0; Spd -5 ft.; Disguise +0)

Treasure: 2G

JAKK "ONE-EYE" BRIN, GOLDEN BEAR PROPRIETOR (SPECIAL NPC)

"Take a seat and tell your story to ol' One-Eye"

Description: Jakk is an obese man with perpetual grease and ale stains on his shirt from many years slinging suds at the Golden Boar. He wears an eyepatch to cover his missing eye, hence the nickname, and seems like a jovial and friendly sort of bartender.

Motivations: Jakk Brin didn't mean to end up as the primary informant for the Blades of the Crow. It just sort of happened, though at this point he doesn't complain: the steady influx of coins, both from the business the thieves bring in and his generous kickbacks, means he doesn't have to worry about customers. Crowbeard has taken a liking to him, and often times the ogre wizard can be found at odd hours enjoying a mug of the Golden Boar ale and swapping stories with the otherwise affable Jakk Brin. Jakk Brin is not a bad person, but is opportunistic and very greedy. He loathes physical confrontations and does his best to stay out of peoples' ways (especially people who look like they can handle themselves in a scuffle). He should be portrayed as a jovial fat man who is always missing when things go wrong. He gives up any treasure he has if the heroes save him in **Scene 8**.

Jakk "One-Eye" Brin, Golden Bear Proprietor (Medium Folk Walker — 31 XP): Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init II; Atk III; Def III; Res IV; Health IV; Comp I; Skills: Investigate IV, Notice IV, Prestidigitation III, Sleight of Hand III; Qualities: *Critical hesitation*

Attacks/Weapons: Dagger (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; qualities: *bleed, hurl*)

Gear: Booze (6 uses), Spirits (3 uses)

Treasure: 2C

NEXT STEPS

The heroes have defeated the Iron League assassins and learned of the secret meeting, one way or another. They must now decide how best to stop this meeting from happening!

SCENE 9: MIDNIGHT MEETING AT MOON ROCK

Outdoors around the formation of Moon Rock

OBJECTIVES

Find out what's going on should their primary goal. Crowbeard is a wicked, evil ogre, despite his gentlemanly pretenses, and the Iron Legion are ruthless conquerors from the west. A combination of the two can lead to no good.

CHALLENGES

Stopping Crowbeard and the forces of the Iron Legion and preventing large scale bloodshed!

SYNOPSIS

Scene Type: Dramatic

GM Briefing: Now's the time to pull out all of the stops. The orcs are naturally suspicious of the thieves, and Crowbeard has not yet pledged the information or support he promised to Krank, so tensions are high between them. The appearance of the heroes in whatever fashion pushes the Iron Legion to the breaking point and they attack, so things devolve quickly.

Gear: The heroes are traveling with all adventuring gear on their persons.

LOCATION

Moon Rock is located north of Steelport by a mile or so, along the seashore bluffs overlooking the sea. The moon hangs high overhead and the midnight hour approaches quickly. Thankfully, the spot is easy to find on a night like this, as the large white stone that gives the site its name reflects the moon's glow intensely. Around the Moon Rock stand an impressive ogre wizard, a group of thieves, and a small contingent of well-armed orc soldiers. The soldiers are led by a grizzled, scarred orc with a hateful gleam in his red eyes. The orcs all bear the symbol of the Iron Legion on their plate armor.

Ambiance: Moonlight shines brightly and reflect intensely off the formation known as Moon Rock.

Terrain: Forest/jungle

Cultural Interests: GM Preference

ACTION

How the heroes approach and handle this scene determines how everything unfolds. The clearing where Moon Rock sits is roughly one hundred feet wide, with Crowbeard and his two mobs of thieves on one end and Krank and his two mobs of Iron Legion soldiers and one mob of dire wolves on the other. Both groups posted single sentries, one on the north side and one on the south side (the bluffs prevent access to Moon Rock from the east and west), so the heroes need to deal with the sentry first.

Krank is impatient and angry, and he already suspects Crowbeard of treachery. Crowbeard knows the Iron Legion is too small right now to take and hold Steelport without his guild's help, and also knows the coffers of the orcs are deep, so he's holding out for more coin. The situation is delicate to say the least, and the appearance of the heroes should be the match that ignites the whole situation.

When combat does break out, Crowbeard does his best to attack the heroes while Krank and the Iron Legion soldiers focus on the thieves. If things go badly for the ogre wizard, he backs out and tries to use the *teleport* spell to escape. Krank and the Iron Legion have no such contingency and fight until all of their opponents, heroes and thieves, are dead.

CAST

CROWBEARD, BLADE OF THE CROW GUILDMASTER (SPECIAL NPC, ADVERSARY, VILLAIN)

“Your presence here complicates matters considerably. I shall correct that problem now.”

Description: Crowbeard stands nearly 10' tall, wearing deep purple robes adorned with symbols of the moon and stars. He keeps his coal-black beard well groomed, his general appearance almost gentlemanly. He is, however, still an ogre, so his tusks and protruding lower jaw do not add to his lordly presence.

Motivations: Crowbeard arrived in Steelport with Master Fingers almost a year ago, traveling from some point in the south. The ogre wizard learned his arcane craft from a cabal of sorcerers called the Prismatic Order, a fraternity of arcane casters who owe their loyalty to the seven governing wizards of the Prismatic Circle. Crowbeard disagreed with them on several points, and eventually his larcenous attempts to gain more knowledge from his fellow sorcerers got him expelled from the Prismatic Order. He met up with Master Fingers, a fugitive himself, and together they traveled to Steelport to make a name for themselves. Crowbeard is a canny, powerful wizard, a fact that his monstrous appearance belies. He tries to always have an exit strategy from any situation and rarely gets cornered, and he always keeps his magic ring on his finger and his wand at his side. He also carries a small assortment of treasure with him.

Crowbeard, Blade of the Crow Guildmaster (Large Folk Walker— 117 XP): Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10; SZ L (2×2, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init III; Atk V; Def VII; Res VI; Health VI; Comp V; Skills: Intimidate IX, Investigate VI, Spellcasting VI; Spells: Command II, Fireball I, Fly I, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Teleport I; Qualities: *Class ability* (Assassin: offer they can't refuse; Mage: arcane wellspring I-II, master of magic), expertise (Resolve), feat (Casting Basics,

Casting Mastery, Hidden Spells), interests (Arcane Lore), spell defense II

Attacks/Weapons: Quarterstaff (dmg 1d8+3 subdual; threat 20; qualities: *double, trip*), Wand of Sluggish Reflexes (slowing attack II: 60 ft. ray; Will save DC 15 or become *slowed* for 2d6 rounds)

Gear: Mage's pouch, mana potion, ring of protection (see **Prizes** section for details)

Treasure: 2A, 2C, 2M

DIRE WOLF (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

growling and snarling

Description: These large, feral wolves have shaggy black fur and glowing red eyes. They are kept on leashes by the Iron Legion soldiers, but let loose at the first sign of trouble.

Motivations: The Iron Legion is proud of its horde of dire wolves, which are used by the soldiers as shock troops and hunters. Dire wolves obey the word of any Iron Legion orc without question, allowing Krank and his orcs to use them for special tactical maneuvers whenever possible.

Wolf, Dire (Large Beast Walker — 76 XP): Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 10; SZ L (1×2, Reach 1); Spd 50 ft. ground (Run 250 ft.); Init IV; Atk VIII; Def II; Res X; Health IV; Comp I; Skills: Notice V, Sneak II, Survival III; Qualities: *Cagey I, damage reduction 1, improved sense (scent), superior runner I, tough I, treacherous*

Attacks/Weapons: Bite II (dmg 1d10+3 lethal; threat 17–20; upgrades: *trip*)

Treasure: None

IRON LEGION SOLDIER (STANDARD NPC, ADVERSARY)

“The Iron Legion is strongest of all!”, *“The blood of the true orc runs in our veins!”*

Description: Orcs are a strong race with green skin, but an Iron Legion orc is different than others of their ilk. Their muscles are thick and bulging, and they carry themselves with an authority unusual among orc-kind. They are well disciplined and well armed.

Motivations: Soldiers of the Iron Legion undergo rigorous trials to prove themselves to their superiors, a process which weeds out the incompetent and weak. Those who survive are the best of the best, sent forth in units to spread the influence and power of the Iron Legion. Treated as the finest of all orcs, the soldiers of the Iron Legion are fearless but not foolish. They follow the commands of Krank without hesitation or question.

Iron Legion Soldier (Medium Folk Walker — 40 XP): Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init IV; Atk IV; Def III; Res II; Health IV; Comp I; Skills: Athletics III, Intimidate III, Notice III, Tactics III; Qualities: *Always ready*, *class ability (Soldier: rugged weapons)*, *feat (All-Out Attack, Combat Instincts)*, *grueling combatant*, *light-sensitive*
Attacks/Weapons: Long sword (dmg 1d12+1 lethal; threat 20; qualities: poisonous), long bow + 30 standard arrows (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; range 40 ft. × 6; qualities: AP 2, *poisonous*), metal shield (dmg 1d4+1 subdual; threat 20; qualities: *guard* +2)
Gear: Partial chainmail with light fittings (DR 3, Resist Edged 2; DP –1; ACP –1; Spd –5 ft.; Disguise –8)
Treasure: 1C

KRANK, IRON LEGION ORC COMMANDER (SPECIAL NPC, ADVERSARY, VILLAIN)

“The Iron Legion will crush all oppose us. This I vow.”

Description: A bulky, imposing sight even for an Iron Legion orc, Krank is a veteran of many battles. His chain mail is dirty but serviceable, and he keeps his magical long sword close at all times. He growls when he talks, treating all non-orcs as if they were the dirt beneath his feet.

Motivations: Krank is somewhat of a rogue warlord amongst the Iron Legion. He commands a group of soldiers who owe fealty to him first and the Iron Legion second, and he uses them to fulfill a destiny only he sees for the Iron Legion: to take Steelport and use it as a staging point for conquests further south, sailing out across the ocean in a frothing wave of steel and blood. Krank is a tough physical opponent but he fights straightforwardly, commanding his soldiers to take up flanking positions, using tactics to get the upper hand with fights against other strong physical opponents. His zeal and distrust of non-orcs is what causes the breakdown of his arrangement with Crowbeard, so you can play up that angle as combat ensues.

Krank, Iron Legion Orc Commander (Medium Folk Walker — 82 XP): Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M (1×1, Reach 1); Spd 30 ft. ground; Init V; Atk IV; Def IV; Res IV; Health IV; Comp III; Skills: Intimidate VIII, Resolve IV, Tactics VIII; Qualities: *Always ready*, *class ability (Captain: battle planning I (crush them!, press on!), take heart)*, *fearless II*, *feat (Battlefield Trickery, Coordinated Attack, Coordinated Move)*, *frenzy II*, *grueling combatant*, *light-sensitive*, *menacing threat*

Attacks/Weapons: Sword of the Iron Legion (dmg 1d12+4 lethal; threat 20; qualities: *poisonous*; notes: See **Prizes** section for details), metal shield (dmg 1d4+4 subdual; threat 20; qualities: *guard +2*), short bow + 30 standard arrows (dmg 1d6 lethal; threat 19–20; range 20 ft. × 6; qualities: *AP 2*, *cavalry*, *poisonous*)

Gear: Moderate chainmail with heavy fittings (DR 5; Resist Edged 3; DP –2; ACP –1; Spd –10 ft.; Disguise –12)

Treasure: 1A, 2C, 1M

SCENE 10: EPILOGUE

AFTERMATH

There are several ways for the scenario to end. The best way is for the heroes to have cleaned out the Crow's Nest below the city (which serve as the Blades of the Crow's primary guildhouse), defeated or driven off Crowbeard and Master Fingers to leave the guild leaderless, and to have killed or driven off Krank and his Iron Legion orcs. Crowbeard has several means of escape available to him, however, and if he can get away he can prove to be a recurring villain bent on vengeance upon the heroes in the future.

Krank and the Iron Legion also do not forget their encounter with the heroes, assuming they survive. Krank is a bit of a rogue warlord amongst the Iron Legion, so there are no reinforcements from the powerful western orc band if he is defeated. However, he bears grudges to his grave, so if Krank finds a way to escape being killed, he'll devote his life to hunting down the heroes and making them pay.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Iron Legion are still out there, lurking on the fringes of civilization. What greater plan was Krank and his orcs trying to perpetuate?

Who was the mysterious buyer in **Scene 5**? Perhaps an agent of another power yet to be revealed?

Who steps in to fill the power void left in Steelport? The Blades of the Crow were simply the most recent larcenous organization to take over from the shadows; without real change in the form of a new magistrate or other radical upstart, things revert back to the way they've always been. Perhaps a hero could step up and clean up the streets of Steelport?

Crowbeard belonged to a group of wizards called the Prismatic Order. Perhaps the ogre stole something from them, and now that the heroes possess it the powerful wizard order now hunts them down to get it back?

Likewise, Master Fingers was running away from his past in the Brotherhood of Knives. Exactly what this assassin's guild's goals are and what resources they have at their disposal is left up to you to decide.

REWARDS AND PENALTIES

Don't forget to add XP for adversaries (listed in their stat blocks).

SCENE 1: STEELPORT, CITY OF SECRETS

A. Helping the merchant and finding out about the Tarnished Goblet 25 XP

A. Finding out information about the Blade of the Crow 25 XP

SCENE 2: FIRE AT THE TARNISHED GOBLET

A. Successfully saving the Tarnished Goblet 50 XP

SCENE 3: AN INNKEEPER'S PLEA

A. Deciding to assist Hagrim in rescuing his wife, Ingrid 50 XP

SCENE 4: ASKING AROUND

A. Successfully determining the base of the Blade of the Crow thieves 50 XP

A. Finding out the role of Master Fingers 50 XP

A. Finding out the role of Crowbeard 50 XP

A. Finding out about the Blade of the Crow tattoos 50 XP

A. Finding out about the witch weed shipment 50 XP

A. Finding out about the corrupt guards and magistrate 50 XP

SCENE 5: WAREHOUSE WOES

A. Successfully defeating the water elementals 100 XP

SCENE 6: RUMBLE AT THE GOLDEN BOAR

A. Successfully defeating the Blade of the Crow thieves 25 XP

A. Defeating Master Fingers & taking him alive 100 XP

B. Defeating and killing Master Fingers 50 XP

SCENE 7: THE CROW'S NEST

A. Defeating the Blades of the Crow thieves & clearing hideout 25 XP

A. Rescuing Ingrid 50 XP

A. Finding the Secret Cache 50 XP

SCENE 8: RETURN TO THE GOLDEN BOAR

A. Saving Jakk "One-Eye" Brin 75 XP

A. Defeating the Iron League Assassins 75 XP

SCENE 9: MIDNIGHT MEETING AT MOON ROCK

A. Defeating Crowbeard and his forces 75 XP

B. Defeating Krank and his forces 75 XP

C. Defeating Both Crowbeard and Krank and their forces 150 XP

PRIZES

These are a few of Prizes the party may earn in this adventure. This is, of course, just a limited example, as heroes with enough ambitions might earn a Favor from Hagrim and Ingrid or from Jakk “One-Eye” Brin. Heroes might also earn a Holding in the form of the Tarnished Goblet.

CROSSBOW OF SPEED

Item: Light Crossbow (1-handed item)

Essence: Feat (Surge of Speed)

Reputation Value: 20

Ring of Protection

Item: Ring

Charm: Greater Defense Bonus (+2 at Level 1–2, +3 at Level 3–6, +4 at Level 7–10, +5 at Level 11–14, +6 at Level 15–18, +7 at Level 19–20)

Reputation Value: 16 (Level 1–2), 24 (Level 3–6), 32 (Level 7–10), 40 (Level 11–14), 48 (Level 15–18), 56 (Level 19–20)

SWORD OF THE IRON LEGION

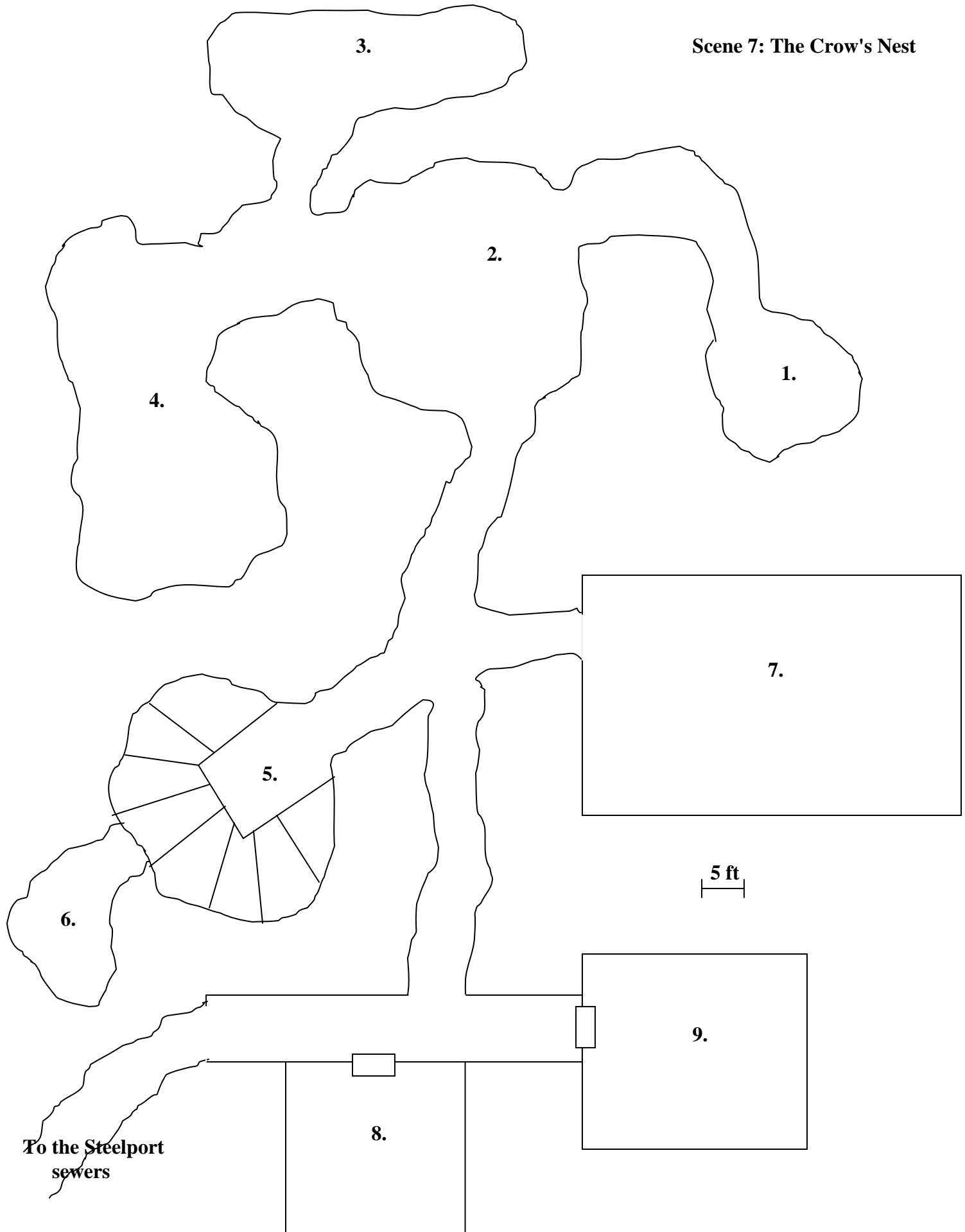
Item: Long Sword (1-handed item)

Essence: Feat (Rage Basics)

Charm: Greater Accuracy Bonus (+2 at Level 1–2, +3 at Level 3–6, +4 at Level 7–10, +5 at Level 11–14, +6 at Level 15–18, +7 at Level 19–20)

Reputation Value: 31 (Level 1–2), 39 (Level 3–6), 47 (Level 7–10), 55 (Level 11–14), 63 (Level 15–18), 71 (Level 19–20)

Scene 7: The Crow's Nest



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