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# BLIGHT OVER BRYNDERWOLD



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## Rumours & Hooks

*Pinkscab Palsy* has struck the lake side outpost of *Brynderwold*, causing severe weakness or death in the afflicted. The *Burgomaster* is at his wit's end searching for the source, and is offering good coin to investigators to root out the cause, and cleanse the town.

## Troubling Times

*Brynderwold*, a longstanding mining and fishing outpost on the eastern shores of *Lake Argos*, is in trouble. Protected from most threats by towering cliffs and treacherous waters, the settlement's woes began four months ago, when a number of the residents contracted *Pinkscab Palsy*.

Despite compulsory quarantining, cleansing by fire, and *Apothecary Benceini's* (Karak albino, 5'4", often donning his beaked contagion mask and gloves) careful ministrations, the disease somehow continues to spread, corrupting the inhabitants at an increasing rate.

*Brynderwold's* leader, *Burgomaster Shand*, is growing desperate, and has offered 400 gold crowns to anyone who can solve the mystery and rid the outpost of contamination.

## Pinkscab Palsy

*Pinkscab Palsy* manifests as a red, irritating rash that swiftly extends across the body in 24 hours. Scratching leads to oozing scabs, until the third day manifests as severe muscle weakness, dragging gait and involuntary tremors (1d6 Str and Dex loss, half movement rate).

Previously healthy adults generally recover in four to six weeks, but children, the infirm, and the elderly often fail to pull through, succumbing to critical organ failure.

The hitherto unknown disease is normally propagated by vermin and their fleas or mites (body fluids, bites, faeces, etc). In this instance however, the palsy is also being spread by a tribe of humanoid ratfolk known as *Skratt* (hiding in the sewers by day, and infiltrating the streets by night).



The PCs might become involved in this adventure for the gold, because a friend or relative recently died to the disease, or because they get attacked on the streets at night (see *Street Encounter 10*).

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### The Skratt

The *Skratt* are 5 ft, rat like humanoids with rodent heads, furred bodies, and bald tails. They move on two or four limbs as required, communicating in low chirps, high chitters and aggressive hisses, baring yellowed claws and fangs when threatened.

Like most vermin, the skratt are disease laden, skulking scavengers, careful to avoid physical danger unless necessary. Once engaged however, the ratmen fight with desperate fury, exploiting any obvious weakness in their foe. The skratt take no prisoners, and leave no survivors, preferring to eat slain enemies whenever possible (whilst technically omnivores, they prefer carrion).

For just over four months, the skratt have been living in the sewers beneath Brynderwold, hiding and sleeping during the day. Between midnight and dawn the ratmen emerge for brief forays above ground, spreading the disease about the

complex, hoping for more dead to feed upon.

*Skratt*, AC 11, HD 1, Bite 1d6 or weapon, 19: the skratt uses its tail to trip the target, S10 D13 C8 I9 P13 W7 Ch8, L5, Mv 40 ft inc climb & swim. A skratt's bite has a 50% chance of infecting the target with disease (Con check resists, in this adventure *Pinkscab Palsy*). Skratt see as well in darkness as in light.

### Brynderwold

By any standard, Brynderwold has never been a happy place, but its present mood is palpably glum. A week of unrelenting rain, mud churned streets and frostbitten winds, compounded by the growing fear of contagion, have spun a depressing pall over the entire community.

The chance of random infection by a PC (via flea bites etc) is relatively low; 5% per week that they remain at the outpost. PCs that purposefully keep to themselves, don't drink the water, etc automatically avoid infection for the first month.



Most of the 300 strong town is presently clear of the palsy, but the numbers rise each week (30 last fortnight, increasing to 37 last week). The sick are quarantined in Area 13, the dead burnt and cast into the sewers (eaten by the skratt as carrion) or buried (a handful of bodies have been dug up by the ratfolk, see Area 5).

### Clues about the Disease

The town's sole apothecary and surgeon, *Benceini*, is flummoxed by the plague and unable to rein it in, despite all manner of herbal tinctures, skin flensing, blood leeching and fire cleansing. Nothing works.

Benceini is happy to chat with the PCs whilst he is around (see *Street Encounter 2*), but has precious little to tell, except that his inquiries failed to uncover the source, and his focus is now on quarantining and treating the ill (truth be told, he made very limited inquiries in the sewers, and

the *Skratt* were careful to lure him away from their base).

Benceini recommends rechecking the *Half Stump Inn* (Area 2), *Town Hall* (Area 11) and *Marketplace* (Area 12) as areas of high traffic, along with the *Stables* (Area 3, in case of animal infection), and the *Sewers* (p.11, exposure to filth and "foul odours" being widely accepted as common sources of taint and disease).

### Street Encounters

As the party explores Brynderwold, the GM may call for a street encounter at any time. Alternatively there is a 30% chance of an encounter every 12 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d12:

1. 1d6 *Guards*, led by *Rodric* (5'9", freckled, bitter & mirthless, but dependable, carries a *silvered* sword) harass the party



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for their weapons licences, and whether they have registered with the Town Hall (Area 12).

2. Word reaches the PCs that *Benceini* (Area 10) has been murdered in his home (or perhaps the PCs hear his death scream). 1d4 *Skratt* broke in and killed him (a targeted attack, after they spied him treating the infected). The ratmen were forced to flee before they could drag his body away.
3. The *Overseer, Burgomaster Shand* (Area 9) is out on the street, en route to a meeting or running a personal errand of some kind. This might be a chance for the party to ask questions or introduce themselves.
4. A dozen chickens burst from a side street and towards the PCs. An eight year old child named *Rudy* (dark haired, energetic, has a cold) is chasing them. It's clear the fowl are much faster than *Rudy* and about to separate down different laneways. At the GM's option, *Rudy* might be the *Sergeant Kaden's* daughter (Area 1).
5. A pickpocket named *Scylla* (Nydisian female, dark skin/hair, attractive, baker's apron) "accidentally" trips and drops a basket of loaves as she walks by the PCs. If a PC helps to pick them up, she thanks them profusely while attempting to pick their pocket (Dex 14). If caught out, she might confess being one of *Argyle's crew* (Area 13), and that she has to meet her quota or *Argyle* will punish her (whether this is true, or a con, is up to the GM).

6. A *Priestess of Argona* named *Mabel* (50's, grey hair, star & shield motif on robe, walking stick) takes an interest in the new comers, introducing herself and welcoming them to the outpost.
7. A middle aged woodcutter is highly drunk, slumped against the side of a building, a bouquet of wild flowers scattered beside him. If questioned, *Umfrey* reveals that his infant son *Ethan* died to *Pinkscab Palsy* two weeks earlier.
8. The weather turns even worse, a driving downpour of needling rain and jaw clenching wind. The streets swiftly empty and shops/stalls close for the day.
9. A downcast woman in a brightly coloured dress (a rarity it seems in *Brynderwold*) is making her way down the street, eyes downcast. If queried, *Laurana* explains that her husband is infected with palsy, and she is going to see if she can visit him at *Quarantine* (Area 14).
10. 3d4 young, inebriated miners are itching to teach someone a lesson after gambling their wages away. They choose the most outlandish looking PC and try to goad them into a brawl.
11. *Badger* (male, 40's, bald, stubble on chin, sly grin), a bard of sorts, offers to make a song about the party's endeavours... If they'll just buy some of his famous bug mince pies; "*A healthy lunch packed with crunch*", as his mom always said, bless 'er soul.

12. Growing ever bolder, 2d6 *Skratt* attack the PCs sometime between dusk and dawn. If the PCs are at an Inn or similar, the ratmen scale the building and enter via the roof or windows to reach their bedroom. The targeting is coincidence.



### Area 1 – Guard Barracks

2d6+10 guard are on duty here at all times, with an array of weapons at their disposal, including heavy crossbows, fire pots a wheeled ballista. *Sergeant Kaden* (3 HD, 6 ft burly 40s male in half plate, shouter, hold grudges) greets outsiders with strong dose of old school suspicion. *Captain Hellinger*, recently slain by *Red Scale* raiders (barbarians), is yet to be replaced.

*Guards*, AC 16 (heavy chain and shield), HD 1, Spear 1d6+2 (two handed), Sword 1d8+1, Longbow 1d8+1, or Heavy Crossbow 2d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C11 I10 P12 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

### Area 2 – The Half Stump

The *Half Stump* is a two storey wooden inn with a large common room, fireplace, and a handful of small, clean upstairs guest quarters. The menu standouts are seared trout, mutton & beets, and pork with potato surprise.

A few bottles of *Magnar's Fist* (pale ale, crisp, highly potent) might be available if the owner *Ethel* takes a liking to the party (5'8" ft, slim, late 20s female, Int 13, Cha 14, limp, sarcastic but generous, enjoys trading good natured insults, "Yeah, better my gimpy leg than your gimpy face, am I right?"). At least 3d6 residents are here until late, drinking, socialising and complaining.

PCs hunting rumours might hear the following (or GM's custom rumours). Roll 1d8:

1. A winged monstrosity lairs in a cave hidden behind the cliffside waterfall (true: a *Dire Bat*, LFG p.100). amongst the bones 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).
2. There's something wrong with *Benceini*, the apothecary. He wanders the streets at night, lingering by the lake, as if in some kind of dream (untrue; he just had far too much drink/smoke that night).
3. The *Lake Ruins* (Area 15) are home to a giant reptile (true: a *Giant Crocodile*). Some say it's big enough to sink a caravel (untrue).
4. *Giant Rats* are breeding in the sewers beneath Brynderwold. If they aren't dealt with soon, the place will be infested with them (true, see *Sewers*).
5. *Sergeant Kaden* is planning to arrest *Burgomaster Shand* for fraud and

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treason (partially false, Kaden knows nothing of Shand's fraud, see Area 9, but might take action if he did).

6. Some manner of furred beast, walking on hind legs, was seen on the docks a week ago. It was skulking about a ship a few hours before dawn. When spotted, it dove into the water and disappeared (true: skratt scout).
7. A witch is afoot in Brynderwold, hiding in plain sight amongst the outlanders, her sorcery responsible for the plague. The curse won't be lifted until she is ousted and burnt at the stake (false).
8. The copper mine has unearthed a 3 ft wide sink hole in one of the deep shafts, growing larger by the week. Miners say strange noises emanate from within (possibly true – see Area 7).

### Area 3 – Stables

Large, half empty stables house half a dozen horses, 2d6 hounds and a single pig. The hay loft might be used as sleeping quarters in a pinch. *Stablemaster Asger* (Fighter 2, 16 hp, 6' Varnori/Viking, blond haired, beard, tattoos, criminal brand under left ear, short tempered, bullying manner) sleeps next door, keeping an ear out for thieves or vagrants.

### Area 4 – Domiciles

These multi level wooden buildings are typical of Brynderwold homes; timber & white walls, cramped, locked and/or barred, with curtains drawn. The glow of lanterns and fireplaces can be seen at night. 1d6 outlanders live in each domicile.

*Outlander*, AC 11 (leathers), HD 1, Hammer or Shortsword 1d6 or Short bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S10 D10 C11 I10 P11 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

### Area 5 – Great Falls Graveyard

A roaring waterfall cascades down the cliffs here, neatly dividing Brynderwold into eastern and western banks. Winding caves behind the downpour lead to series of catacombs where some of the town's dead are buried (others choose to be cremated, or released on flaming barges into the Lake).

A thorough canvas of the area reveals two recent graves were dug up and the bodies carried away. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check confirms at least one set of bipedal footprints were clawed (skratt stole the bodies and dove into the water, making their way to the sewers to devour the corpses in peace). A handful of sentimental trinkets (no gp value) were left behind.

### Area 6 – Temple of the Starmaiden

1d4+1 Priestesses of *Argona* (Goddess of health, wealth, happiness and hope) tend to the only temple in the complex, a large stone church with a tall belltower. Argona's shield and star icon is emblazoned above the entry doors. The vast majority of Brynderwold's population attends services each week. *Mother Jenora* (5'9" female, S14, Will 14, dark haired, heavy set, pious and protective) heads the order, and is often out and about tending to her flock.

### Area 7 – Mines & Forge

A small copper mine operates here, digging shafts into the cliffs of the *Ironhull Mountains*. In recent times, a sinkhole appeared in one of the deep tunnels, possibly as a result of recent tremors. The sinkhole is growing larger each week, and is now approx 3 ft wide. At least one

miner swears to hearing strange noises emanating from it.

Mine Boss *Wo Gong*<sup>1</sup> (6' Asian/Shenzu, S15, C15, long moustache, bulging frame, practical, well mannered, favourite phrase "*You disappoint me, wo mai*") wants access to the rich copper veins beyond, and has placed sturdy planks across the hole for now. What lurks below (if anything) is a matter for the GM.

Adjacent to the mines is the forge, run by *Mastersmith Raffbogen* (4'6" dwarf male, standoffish, alcoholic), a "free dwarf" and genuine smithing prodigy (tools, weapons, armour, etc). Raffbogen despises Karoks (including the apothecary) and has an arrangement with *Burgomaster Shand* that insures against any attempts to return him to his "owners" in *Dol-Karok*. Raff recalls some of the old legends, told to him by his great grandmother, and might know the location of some lost Holds, ripe for exploration.

### Area 8 – Watch Towers

1d6+1 watchmen man each tower, keeping a lookout for pirates, barbarians, beastmen and other obvious threats. Each tower includes a stash of 2d6 javelins, 1d4 crossbows, and 2d4 fire pots. Prisoner cells are located below ground.

### Area 9 – Overseer's Residence

*Burgomaster Shand* controls the settlement, empowered by a partnership of merchants to act as Outpost *Justicar*, and ensure the mining and fishing operations continue to meet caravan schedules.

Shand is presently up to his earholes in problems, including: constant skorn raiders, opportunistic pirates, the pinkscab palsy plague, worrying rumours from the mines (Area 7), giant croc concerns (Area 15), grave robbers behind the falls (Area 5), and talk of strange sightings in the docks (Area 13).

Generally speaking, he has no time for fortune hunters, but will gladly put expendable warriors to task to solve the palsy mystery (for 400 gold on completion, directing them to the *Exchequer* in Area 12). He has 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure in a strongbox (bolted, double locked, LFG p.140).



*Shand*, AC 11, HD 3, Sword 1d8+3 (two hands), 19: 1d4 guardsmen appear to assist Shand, S10 D15 C11 I14 P11 W16 Ch15, L6, Mv 30 ft. Shand

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<sup>1</sup> Brother of *Lu Shen*, owner of the *Yellow Lotus* (Midlands p.137).

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has advantage on persuasion related checks and speaks a bit of everything (Bardic Knowledge). He may use the Bard Inspire Greatness ability twice per combat.

Shand (6'2" male, dark goatee, aura of gravitas, efficient, spectacles, never without his hat) is a reasonable warrior but is most respected for his outstanding leadership. Loved by his allies and hated by his foes, the Overseer is generally fair but is growing increasingly jaded, and hard on those who break the rules. In recent months, the Overseer has begun skimming ore from the mines, turning a tidy profit with smugglers in Area 13. Shand believes the outpost can't last forever, and means to secure his future before it collapses.

#### **Area 10 – Apothecary**

*Apothecary Benceini* resides in a relatively large home which includes an attached infirmary. Currently 1d6 recent infected are impounded here, the front door barred from the outside, and 1d3 guards on duty. Benceini has access to 1d3 healing kits and 1d4 anti-toxins if the PCs can demonstrate a need for them.

#### **Area 11 – Marketplace**

The main cluster of shops and services are located here, including a general store (clothes, lighting, some foods, etc), growers' market, fish market, leatherworker, weaver, herbalist, and brothel. The seven owners collectively refer to themselves as "the marketplace" and wield considerable political clout. At the GM's option, the party might pick up a rumour or two here (see Area 2).

#### **Area 12 – Town Hall**

The town hall is a large two storey stone structure with an internal balcony, able to hold up to 400 people. The town's coat of arms (a

black kite shield with copper anvil) is displayed on a large tapestry above a raised stage.

A small office off to one side belongs to *Exchequer Sarsi* (6' female, skinny, expensive garb, honest and shrewd with a piercing gaze), who manages the outpost's taxes, licences, bounties, etc, and their records. The Exchequer is quite meticulous in her role, and has begun to notice discrepancies in some of the mining records (due to the Overseer's fraud).

At the GM's option, the party might be required to register their details at the Town Hall when they arrive, and/or pay for weapons or "treasure hunting" licences (either flat fees, or a tithe).

Notices regarding bounties are posted here, presently 5 silver florins thuels (barbarians), skorn (beastmen), or pirates, and 2 gold crowns per giant rat. More monstrous trophies are by negotiation. Any bounties the party might end up claiming will be paid to them by Sarsi.

#### **Area 13 – Docks**

Brnyderwold's docks are fog shrouded until early morning. but with the recent poor weather, the mists linger all day. *Harbour Keeper Rummage* (5'9" male, dark hair, beard, amiable and efficient, never without his nameless hound) manages the area, including the warehouses and security.

A smuggler from way back, Rummage has never been shy about making extra coin on the side, and currently has an arrangement with the Overseer (Area 9) to skim some of the mining ore off to southern Nydissia. Additionally, Rummage has connections with a small gang ("*Argyle's crew*", led by *Argyle*, Rogue 3) of 2d6+2 pickpockets and burglars (dock workers, miners,

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guardsmen) that occasionally fence things through him.

In the last few days, a bipedal rat creature was spotted loitering about some of the ships after midnight (see Rumour 6, p.7). When challenged, it dove into the lake (and swam underwater back into the sewers).



So much can be confirmed by stevedore *Shamus* (male, 30's, jet black hair, jovial except when playing dice games about which he is deadly serious) who observed the rippling water trail into one of the sewer outlets. Shamus is happy to share such info *for a small donation, keep the wife happy, eh?*.

### Area 14 – Quarantine Zone

Approx 25 infected are quarantined in two multistorey residences, the doors barred from the outside, with 1d6+1 guards keeping watch. No-one enters except in the company of *Apothecary Benceini*.

Every few days someone leaves (alive and having finally shaken the illness, or dead, wheeled out in a cart, to the tolling of bells). A temporary shrine to *Baal* (God of the dead, disease, suffering) has been set up nearby, attended to by a handful of (increasingly fervent) lay worshippers.

### Area 15 – Lake Ruins

Burnt out stone ruins and rotting pylons are all that remain the old lake watch house (razed by pirates eight years ago). The area is now home to a *Giant Crocodile* that feeds on fish and other marine creatures. The locals avoid the beast, and by and large it avoids them (a few even consider it a kind of “town mascot”).

Alternatively, something has happened recently that has led to the reptile attacking careless sailors (perhaps it is mating season and a female has recently entered the area, prompting “mating ritual” behaviour, including protecting territory). If lured or driven away, old pirate and barbarian bones give up 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147).

*Giant Crocodile*, AC 14, HD 6, Bite 2d6+2, 19: special, S20 D10 C19 I3 P10 W12 Ch5, L8, Mv 30 or swim 50 ft. On a 19+, the target is caught in the croc's jaws and rolled/drowned if water present (lose action each turn until successful *Luck* (Dex) save to escape the croc's vice like jaws).

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## The Sewers

Direct access to the sewers is via any number of street drains (by pulling up metal grates, requires a Str check if in a hurry) or lake outlets (the largest tunnels can be found here). The skratt section of the sewers appears on the p.12 map, with direct access via Area 1 or 12 (vertical access pipes) or 10a (main storm drain out to *Lake Argos*)

Generally speaking the drain tunnels are fashioned of worked stone, approx 4 ft wide and 5 ft high, very dimly lit during the day (some ambient light filters through from above, 33% miss chance), or completely dark at night (skratt see in the darkness well enough). Doors are wooden and unlocked unless noted otherwise.

As might be expected the smell is nauseating, punctuated by constant dripping, chittering, and slurping sounds. Most of the sewer has narrow 1 ft walkways running alongside the walls, albeit these are often slippery with filth, especially after a powerful storm. Those wanting to wade through the channels of muck will generally find them two feet deep.

Anyone moving about the sewers for more than half an hour is exposed to the palsy, requiring a *Luck* (Con) save to resist (max once/day).

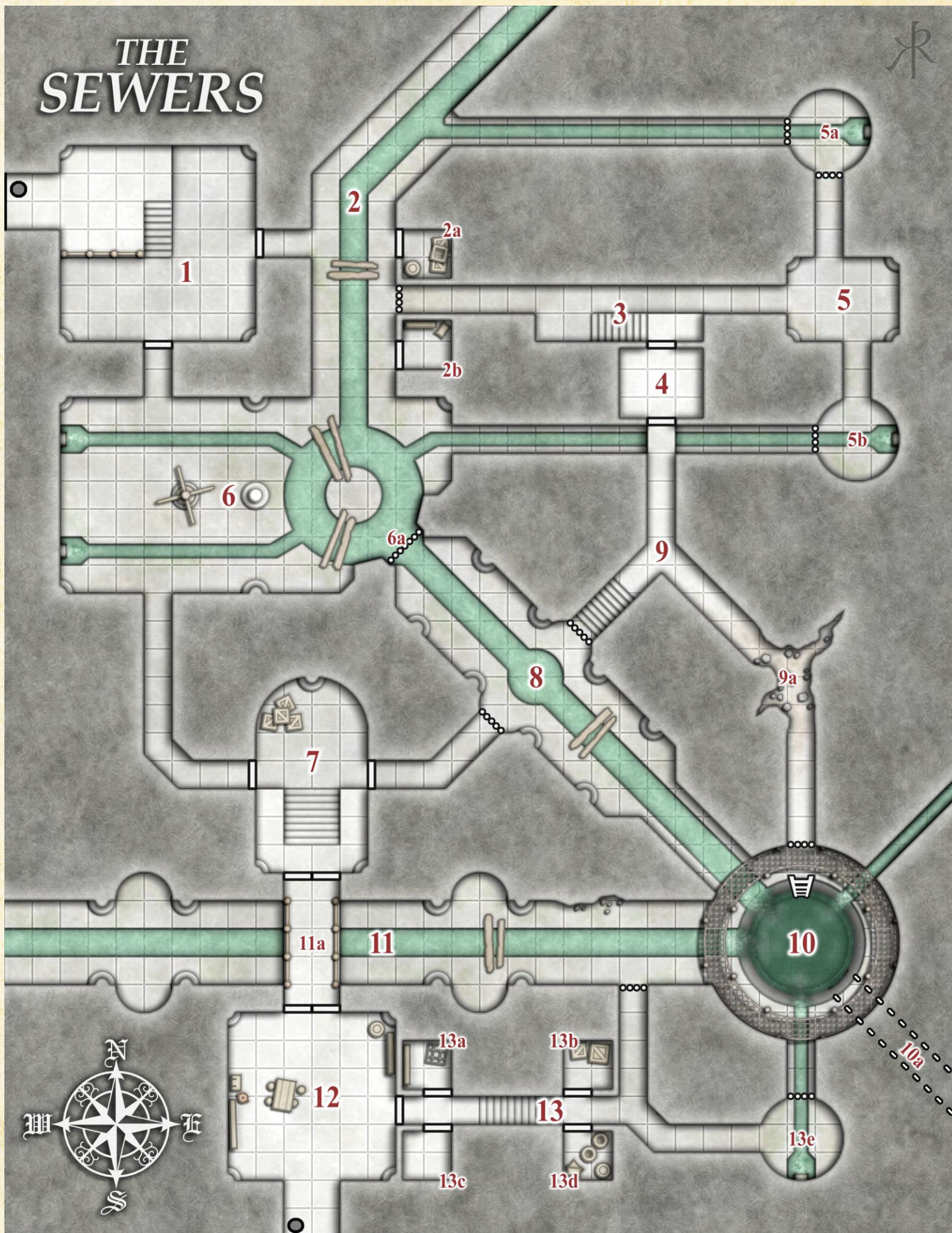
## Sewer Encounters

The Skratt are holed up in a particular section of the sewers as outlined on the map. Finding the right area requires a Perc (Detection or Wilderness Lore) check. There is a 30% chance of a random encounter every half hour. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

- i. A flock of bats come swooping out the darkness, making a loud chittering (might draw nearby threats).

- ii. 1d4 *Skratt* in the middle of mating. A curious mix of purring, chittering and scratching can be heard before the tangle of furred bodies is revealed. If the PCs are sneaky, they might catch them by surprise.
- iii. A swarm of 4d6 *Slush Beetles* (1 to 2 ft long) are swimming in the muck here, happily gorging their fill. They attack only to defend themselves (1 hp, bite 1 damage). They are afraid of fire, and make high pitched squeals if cornered.
- iv. A half eaten human corpse (recent missing dock worker) floats in the muck. Closer examination reveals a mix of bite marks and blade cuts (some of the skratt use swords, etc).
- v. A pet rodent of the *Skratt Brute* (Area 5) is hiding quietly nearby, observing everything it can about the PCs (Perc (Det) check to spot). Unless stopped, it scuttles away to report the intruders to its master.
- vi. 1d6+1 hungry *Giant Centipedes* (LFG p.102) are crawling along the ceiling, drawn to the PC's light source.
- vii. A 2 ft glob of *Green Slime* (LFG p.112) is stuck to the ceiling nearby, waiting for a PC to walk under it.
- viii. The *Skratt Brute* (Area 5) is nearby, stalking the corridors in search of manflesh. He has detected the faintest whiff of the party's scent, and is drawn to investigate.

# THE SEWERS



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### Area 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> Manhole Entry

Pulling up a manhole on the street allows access to a 3 ft vertical chute and 15 ft ladder. The 35 ft square chamber includes a raised 20 ft square platform, with stairs descending a further 10 ft to the lower chamber.

If entered during the day, 1d4 *Skratt* (with swords) are sleeping here in a nest of refuse under the platform (supposed to be on sentry duty, a group Stealth (Dex) check keeps them that way). If night time before midnight, the sentries are awake, if after midnight there is no one in this room (the sentries are instead out on an above ground scouting mission).

### Area 2 – Northern Drain

This 15 ft wide tunnel includes a 5 ft wide channel of foul, burbling slush. Sturdy planks have been placed at certain points to allow easy crossing (albeit these are covered with scattered moss and slime). There is a 50% chance of 1d2 wandering *Skratt* passing through.

### Area 2a – Rat Catching Supplies

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). Opening all the crates garners a dozen rat traps, a net on a stick, 1d4+1 bear traps (for giant rats), and 1d4 fire pots.

### Area 2b – Blockage Clearing Supplies

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). The room contains 1d3 10' poles, a spear, two work hammers, a portable block & tackle pulley system, and a small wheelbarrow.

### Area 3 – Corridor

The western iron gate to this 70 ft corridor is locked (Dex (Lock & Traps) check to open) but rusty (may be broken down with 2 x Str (Athletics) checks). To the east, foul chittering, whimpering and hissing noises may be heard. The stone steps ascend 10 ft to a small balcony and wooden door to Area 4.

### Area 4 – Tide of Rats

This 15 ft by 10 ft room is home to a single *Skratt* and her pets; a colossal swarm of many hundreds of rats. Listening at the door reveals a soft cooing and muffled scratching. The *skratt* is a loner and quasi druid amongst her kin, more comfortable with tiny rodents than her own kind. At first, neither she nor her pets will necessarily move to attack the PCs.

Like all *skratt*, the vermin druid unable to speak common, but is intelligent and can communicate via hand signals and body language. She has also learnt to write a handful of common words (gained via study from stolen papers, observing signs, etc).

If the party attempt parlay, the druid tries to convey that she would rather abandon the complex than fight, and presents a token of goodwill (a scroll case with a ragged map inside, suggesting the distant location of a treasure: a rat idol made of solid gold<sup>2</sup>).

If the parties come to blows, the tide of rats fights to protect their mistress (covering her body in a kind of living armour, as the remainder surge to attack). The swarm will not move more than 30 ft from her. If defeated, the druid carries a *cold iron* knife.

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<sup>2</sup> Adventure Framework 29; *Riddle of the Golden Rat*.

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*Skratt Druid*, AC 11, HD 3, Bite 1d8, 19: the tide of rats overwhelms the PC, biting and gnawing them all over (Will check or flee for 1d4 rounds), S13 D18 C8 I11 P14 W11 Ch14, L7, Mv 40 ft inc climb & swim. The druid has *Off Turn Attacks*, and her bite infects the target with pinkscab palsy (Con check resists). She sees as well in darkness as in light. When the druid suffers damage, there is a 50% chance the attack is negated (the blow absorbed by her body rats, which drop off, only to be replaced by more).

The *Tide of Rats* is more of an environmental affect than a monster. The vermin cover every available space and flow down the corridor (move 30 ft) like a chittering wave of doom, leaping onto PCs, dropping from the ceiling, scrabbling underfoot, burrowing under clothes etc.

PCs automatically suffer 1 point of damage at the end of their turn, and must make a Dex check or fall prone (unbalanced by the skittering horde). If the druid is killed, the tide immediately disperses, squealing in anguish (at the GM's option, future rats hiss at the PCs for months to come). Torches and other small fires don't faze the tide, but large fires (fire pots, a wall of flame, etc) will give them pause, or disperse them for a round.

#### **Area 5 – Brute Lair**

This 20 ft by 15 ft chamber is the *Skratt Brute's* lair, littered with stolen hay, straw, rags and mats. 1d6 *Skratt* live here, sleeping, socialising and mating. If not already encountered (per Random Encounter viii), the hulking 7 ft *Skratt Brute* is here, feasting on recent carrion.

*Skratt Brute*, AC 13, HD 4, Bite 1d12 or weapon, 19: the skratt uses its tail to whip stun the target

(loses next action), S18 D11 C10 I8 P13 W10 Ch9, L8, Mv 40 ft inc climb & swim. The brute has *Minor Exploit Protection* and its bite infects the target with pinkscab palsy (Con check resists). It sees as well in darkness as in light.

The *Skratt* have gathered a collection of glinting baubles to decorate their nests (2 x Carry Loot, LFG p.136).



#### **Area 5a – Northern Drain**

This 15 ft diameter chamber has a west flowing drain running through it. The iron gates barring entry from the west and south are locked (the *Skratt Brute* has the key, Area 5).

The *Skratt* have captured an 8 ft mutant *Scorpion Roach*, which they keep confined here (the eastern drain is too small for it to fit through). The *Brute* likes to torment the creature, and uses it to punish defiant ratfolk. Releasing the monster from the cage would be a bad idea for anyone nearby (although it hates the *Brute*

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above all, and will prioritize attacks against him if possible).

*Scorpion Roach*, AC 15, HD 8, Bite 1d6 and Stinger 1d6 + poison, 19: the monster spews foul vomit on the target (Con check or target infected with random disease), S17 D15 C13 I1 P10 W10 Ch3, L8, Mv 40 ft. 10 ft reach. The stinger's poison causes immediate agonizing pain (*Luck* (Con) save or helpless for 1d3 rounds). The scorpion roach has *Major Exploit Protection* (LFG p.95). If slain, 1d4+1 doses of venom may be harvested with an Int (Apothecary) check.

#### **Area 5b – Eastern Drain**

This 15 ft diameter chamber has a west flowing drain running through it. The iron gate barring entry from the west is in good repair and impassable without proper cutting tools.

#### **Area 6 – Western Den**

This large 70 ft by 35 ft chamber has a 10 ft ceiling and multiple branching sewer canals. The chamber is one of two main dens for the ratfolk (the other being Area 8), scattered with nests of straw, rags and dried mud/scum. There are 2d6 *Skratt* eating or socialising here at any one time. A large winch operates the large iron portcullis (to 6a), which is currently in the raised position. Any commotion here will draw allied *skratt* from Area 8.

#### **Area 6a – Portcullis**

The iron portcullis here is currently in the raised position. The winch to lower it is in Area 6.

#### **Area 7 – Rounded Hall**

This 35 ft by 20 ft rounded hall has a 10 ft high “u” shaped balcony and descending stairs. 1d6 *Skratt* are here fighting over stolen goods spread about the area or stacked in crates. Roll 1d10 five times to determine the booty:

1. Bales of hay (5 sp).
2. Bundles of clothing (30 gp).
3. Basket of apples (2 gp).
4. Stacks of blank paper and ink (20 gp).
5. Crate of ceramic bowls, mugs, etc (5 gp).
6. 30 ft length of chain (10 gp).
7. Crate of 2d6 random weapons.
8. Random suit of heavy armour.
9. A pick, hammer and box of nails (4 gp).
10. Crate of ceramic tiles (15 gp).
11. Sack of salted meat (3 gp).
12. Crate of fine wine (60 gp).

#### **Area 8 – Eastern Den**

This 45 ft by 15 ft chamber has an 8 ft ceiling and is one of two main dens for the ratfolk (the other being Area 6), scattered with nests of straw, rags and dried mud/scum. There are 1d4+4 *Skratt* sleeping or mating here. Any commotion here will draw *skratt* from Area 6. Barred metal gates (locked with chains, Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open) prevent direct access to Areas 7 or 9.

#### **Area 9 – Junction**

If the PCs approach this junction from the south, there is a 50% chance the *Skratt Druid* in Area 4 coincidentally opens the southern door, immediately spotting the PCs (unless invisible or similar). If the *skratt* are already on alert, the chance increases to 90%.

#### **Area 9a – Damaged Tunnel**

Recent tremors have opened large cracks in this section of tunnel, dropping large chunks of rock to the floor. The ceiling is in a precarious state, but an Int (Wilderness Lore or General Lore) check deduces that it will not fall unless action is taken to purposefully collapse it (eg blackpowder bomb, using a hammer or pick, prodding it with a 10 ft pole, etc). Causing a cave in blocks the tunnel completely (requires many hours with the right tools to clear).

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### Area 10 – Main Cistern

This 25 ft diameter cistern is 30 ft deep, filled up to 25 ft high with sewer and storm water. Due to continuing heavy rains, the Area 10a exit drain (which is positioned at the 25 ft point), is constantly drawing sewer water away from the cistern and channelling it into *Lake Argos*.

An iron ladder attached to the northern wall extends to the base of the cistern. There is a 50% chance of a nest of 2d4 *Projectile Leeches* undulating about in the filth.

*Projectile Leech*, AC 10, HD 1, Bite 1d3 + blood drain, 19: the leech latches onto the target's face, causing an eye injury; (*Luck* (Con) save resists, with advantage if wearing a helm), S10 D10 C16 I2 P14 W8 Ch3 L3, Mv: 20 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. May launch up to 10 feet to attack. Immune to bludgeoning damage. On a hit, latches on automatically causing 1d4 damage and 1 Con loss each turn. A Str contest (Str 16) at disadvantage removes the parasite, or salt, fire or acid automatically kills it.

Weighed down at the bottom of the cistern is a small sealed strongbox (hidden by a since deceased smuggler) containing 1 x Valuables and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.147, 141).

### Area 10a – Harbour Drain

The Harbour Drain is 5 ft high and runs a slight decline several hundred feet out to the edge of the docks, dumping filth and storm water into the lake. The skratt make occasional use of the tunnel to survey the docks and climb about sleepy ships. The water level is roughly 6 inches deep. Any fighting here risks slipping over in the muck riddled tunnel (Dex check or fall prone).

### Area 11 – Eastern Drain

This 125 ft long drain corridor has a 15 ft ceiling and is occupied by 1d6+1 *Skratt* sniffing and pawing at the sewer slush, dragging out the charred body of a recent pinkscab palsy victim. The far eastern end eventually empties into the main cistern (Area 10). A 10 ft high bridge extends across part of the tunnel (area 11a).

### Area 11a – Bridge

A 10 ft wide bridge with wooden railings extends 10 ft above the Eastern Drain (Area 11) below. The ceiling is 5 ft above the bridge, and 15 ft above Area 11.

### Area 12 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Manhole Entry

Pulling up a manhole on the street (Str check required if in a hurry) allows access to a 3 ft vertical chute and 15 ft ladder, opening into a 30 ft square chamber.

2d4 *Giant Rats*, pets of the *Skratt*, keep watch in this room. In daytime they are asleep in a large cluster, otherwise they are gnawing on the remains of *Wallace*. Wallace was an odd jobs worker (including maintaining the sewers) but hadn't been down for some weeks, and was murdered by the *Skratt* a few days earlier (no-one has noticed the poor scob missing). The keys to Areas 2a-b and 13a-d are in his pocket.

*Giant Rat*, AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: If appropriate, another *Giant Rat* (60%) or *Dire Rat* (40%) comes to aid this *Giant Rat*, S3 D14 C8 I2 P13 W6 Ch4, L3, Mv 40 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to *Pinkscab Palsy*.

A poor quality table, stools and shelves (constructed by Wallace in this room) have been ransacked. Spread about the chamber are various stone/wood working tools, shattered

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lanterns, playing cards, a drinking mug, and broken bottles (bleach stains are everywhere).

### **Area 13 – Rising Corridor**

This 5 ft wide corridor includes stone steps that descend approximately 10 ft.

### **Area 13a – Cage Room**

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). Inside is a single 5 ft iron cage. The decaying corpse of a long dead *Giant Rat* lies inside.

### **Area 13b – Lighting Supplies**

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). Opening all the crates garners 2d6 torches, 1d6 lanterns and 2d6 oil flasks.

### **Area 13c – Empty Room**

This 10 ft chamber is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). The room within is empty.

### **Area 13d – Cleaning Fluid Supplies**

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). A number of barrels are filled with bleach, vinegar and other medieval cleaning agents. One barrel, although labelled bleach, in fact contains a high quality whiskey (1d6 x 10 gp worth). 1d6 empty flasks sit on a small table in the corner.

### **Area 13e – Gas Pocket**

An unfortunate mix of chemicals in this 15 ft diameter chamber (part of which includes the remains of the highly rare and poisonous *Buckfang Turtle*) have percolated into an invisible cloud of (non-flammable) toxic gas.

A scattering of dead roaches near the western entry are the only warning (Perc (Detection)

check). Characters entering the area must make a Con check or suffer 1d2 Dex loss each round. The northern portcullis is unlocked but requires a Str (Athletics) great success to lift.

### **Aftermath**

All of the skratt must be killed or driven off to give Brynderwold any chance of eradicating the palsy. If the ratkin are removed, vermin exterminators clear out enough of the ordinary rodents to give the outpost a chance to recover.

If any of the skratt survive, they continue to spread the contagion, weakening the populace to such an extent that nearby barbarians take advantage to attack the settlement, razing it to the ground before abandoning the area as “cursed”. Whether the skratt escape and resurface at another outpost (or city) is left to the GM.



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