

RATS IN THE CELLAR

A Swords & Wizardry Quick-Play Adventure
A tale of deadly rodents and free ale.

RATS & ALE

Damn your penchant for ale! "A *free night of drink*" Brock the tavern-keep promised, in return for a little help ridding the cellars of a rat infestation. And so here you are, stuck in the tavern's cellar while above the patrons partake in merry-making, feasting, and drinking.

Oh well...the quicker you start exterminating Brock's rat problem, the quicker you can partake of Brock's ale. And free ale, at that!

THE OLD CELLAR

What the party doesn't know is that Brock serves the evil Grimal, previous master of the tavern, who now resides deep in the tavern's cellar. Grimal was a cleric of an ancient and forgotten god known simply as the Rat-God. After years of servitude masked under the guise of a simple tavern-master, the eldritch entity would eventually reward the cleric with the Avatar Stone.

The Avatar Stone, a huge, ruby-like gem, possessed the power to bring nearby rodents under the cleric's control. While bound to Grimal's will, the Rat-God could effect change upon the rodents through the gem, growing them to gargantuan proportions. With this squadron of mutated vermin, Grimal hopes to attack the city and revive the cult of the Rat-God.

Two things have stalled Grimal's offensive foray into the city. The first is the effects of the stone upon the cleric himself. Close association with the stone has mutated the cleric into a frighteningly enormous rat-like thing. So enormous, in fact, that the horrid acolyte cannot fit through the cellar's corridors. In hopes of rectifying this, Grimal uses the rats under his control, both normal and mutated, to widen the corridors with tooth and claw.

The second snag in Grimal's plan are the mutated rats insatiable appetites. Until Grimal can transform enough rats to take the city, the mutated rodents need to be fed. The huge vermin need to be fed constantly and Brock has sent many a patron to the cellar to satisfy the monstrous rats' hunger. The party members are but the latest in a long line of patrons sent below to feed the horrid beasts.

TRAPPED!

Brock will let the players know that he'll need to close the door leading to the cellar. Should news of his little "*problem*" get out, the loss of patronage could very well threaten his livelihood. He'll beg the PCs to be as discreet as possible so that news of the residing vermin doesn't reach the merry-makers above.

In reality, Brock will lock the PCs in the cellar when he believes they've ventured far enough, so as not to raise suspicion. That way, the rodents may gorge upon the hapless PCs at their leisure.

EFFECTS OF THE AVATAR STONE

In addition to the changes inflicted upon the rodent population of the cellar, the Avatar Stone will affect the PCs the closer they get to the cursed jewel (Room #4). Every turn (10 minutes or 60 rounds) have the PCs roll a d20 modified by the room number minus CON bonus and check the result on the Avatar Stone Effects table below. Any subsequent lesser rolls on the table will not yield results (the curse may stay the same, get worse, but not better).

Avatar Stone Effects table

Roll	Effect
1-11	No effects other than a noticeable physical discomfort.
12-15	Detrimental physical pain. -2 to all rolls. Duration 1d6 rounds.
16-18	Intense physical pain. -4 to all rolls, -2 to damage. Duration 1d10 rounds.
19-20	Transformed into a giant rat (see stats below). Transformation takes 1d6 rounds during which the victim may not act. Victim retains original INT.
21+	Transformed into an ordinary rat (see stats below). Transformation takes 1d6 rounds during which the victim may not act. Victim retains original INT.

The effects act as a curse and may thus be removed via a Remove Curse spell (S&W p.36). Clerics may be found once above to preform such a spell, and if informed of the dreaded cult that spawned in the cellar, they will be happy to remove the curse at a lower cost or even for free.

INTO THE CELLAR

Room #1 (Ale Storage): The first chamber the PCs enter as they reach the bottom of the stairs which leads to Brock's cellar appears to be a storage area for the tavern's ale. The room roughly spans 30'X30' and ends in a south-bound, winding corridor. To either side of the room, barrels of ale are stacked up three by four. Perceptive players might notice a multitude of tiny claw and teeth marks upon the barrels, an indication of the cellar's rodent population.

To the south, passed the winding corridor, the way is blocked by a set of iron bars. A crank mechanism on the eastern wall allows the bars to be raised or lowered. Peeking through the bars will reveal that no matching mechanism seems to be present on the other side of the bars, as if these retractable bars were set in place to prevent anyone from beyond from venturing any further.

RATS IN THE CELLAR

Room #2 (The Old Storage):

This room spans roughly 50'X50'. Torn sacks of molding grain and spices can be found strewn across the room.

Lumps of decomposing edibles can be found here and there.

Rubble of tiny stones can be found resting along the eastern and western walls of the room.

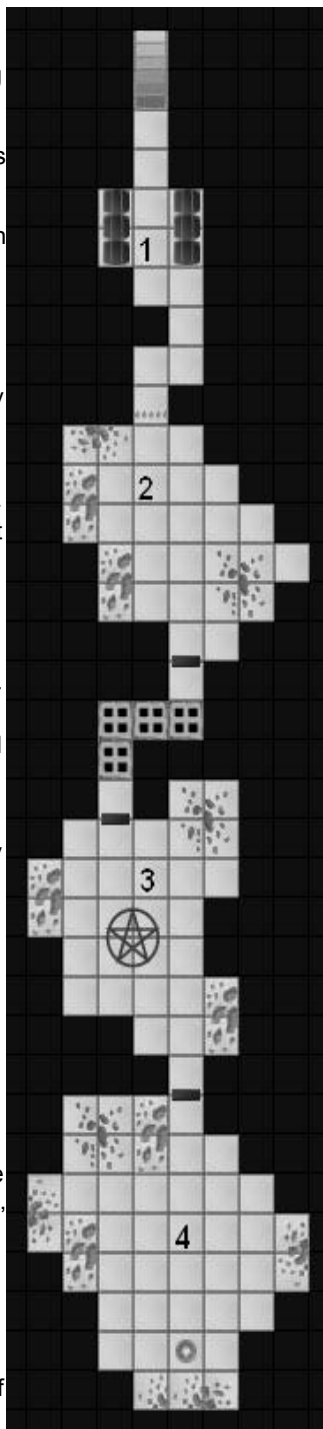
The origin of the rubble is clearly the stone around the southbound door, which appears to have been eroded by the scraping of a million tiny claws and the gnashing of a million tiny teeth. The wooden door leading further south is being held upright by the drop-bar alone, the hinges holding it in place no longer connected to the wooden door-frame, which has also suffered the assault of the rats' single-minded attempt to widen the way for their master and larger kin beyond.

Hidden within the accumulated rubble, a swarm of rats (ordinary) will watch the party enter the room, awaiting the command from Grimal (by way of the Avatar Stone) to pounce upon the party.

Room #3 (The Old Worship Room/Giant Rat Lair):

This room is similar in dimensions to the previous one. Both northern and southern doors show the same treatment as the tooth and claw widened door from the previous room, but on a larger scale. Upon the floor, in the middle of the room, a large symbol has been painted in darkened red (a stylized, horned rat's head). Humanoid bones, picked clean, can be found strewn across the room. Unlike the previous room, the denizens of this chamber (giant rats) do not hide from the party, awaiting to be prompted by their master, but viciously attack the party on sight in a frenzy of hunger and blood-lust.

Room #4 (Grimal's Chamber): The only objects of note in this room are the Avatar Stone, a sickly red stone the size of a man's head, and a rune laden chest which, judging by its size, is meant to hold the stone. Locking the Avatar Stone



within the chest will stifle the stone's nefarious powers. Behind the stone crouches the grotesque and gargantuan form of Grimal. A pulsating melding of human and rat, with claws, teeth, and tail coexisting in an unnatural and unholy alliance with basic human anatomy. The large, shambling high-priest of the Rat-God will immediately spring to attack the party.

THE AFTERMATH

Should Grimal and his rodent minions be defeated, the GM may wish to inject a confrontation with an enraged Brock. Any clerical order told about the dark cult found below the tavern will be indebted to the party. How this gratitude is manifested is up to the GM. Healing at a reduced price would certainly be in order. A lawful clerical order will also offer to destroy the Rat-God's unholy relic.

ANTAGONISTS

Rat, Ordinary (5d10): HD 1hp; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 bite/group of 10 (1d6); Save 18; Move 9; CL/XP A/5XP per rat; Special: 5% are diseased (S&W p.53).

Rat, Giant (3d6): HD 1d4hp; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Save 18; Move 12; CL/XP A/5XP; Special: 5% are diseased (S&W p.53).

Brock, Dwarven servant of Grimal: HD 4; 28hp; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 weapon (see equipment, below); Save 13; Move 6; CL/XP 4/120XP.

Equipment: Chain Mail, Battle Axe (1d8, +1 if two handed), Heavy Crossbow (1d6+1), Dagger (1d4), Potion of Healing (1d8+1 hp), key to lock the Avatar Stone's chest, 250 gp.

GRIMAL, MUTATED HUMAN/RAT HYBRID

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Hit Dice: 5

Attacks: 2 claws, 1bite (1d6/1d6/2d6+disease)

Saving Throw: 12

Special: Disease

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 6/400 XP

The mutated human/rat hybrid is a large, pulsating melding of human and rat, with claws, teeth, and tail coexisting in an unnatural and unholy alliance with basic human anatomy. Much like its rodent kin, the human/rat hybrid's bite is also infectious. On a failed save, the human/rat hybrid's bite will reduce the victim's CON by 1 point per day until a Cure Disease spell is cast, halting further CON loss. For every additional Cure Disease spell cast upon the infected victim, 1 point of depleted CON is restored, up to the victim's original CON.

SPOILS OF VICTORY

Other than treasures amassed from defeating the foes found in the cellar, there are no noteworthy spoils in this adventures. GM's may add loot from the previous patron sent down to feed the rats. Also, if the GM decides to include a confrontation with Brock, the players may loot the tavern.