

Death from Below

A World of Arkara

Adventure for Levels 1-3



by Charles Rice

This product uses the OSRIC™ System.

The OSRIC™ system text can be found at <http://knights-n-knaves.com/osric/>.

DEATH FROM BELOW

CREDITS

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to "Death from Below", an adventure for the OSRIC game system. This adventure takes place in the world of Arkara, specifically underneath the city of Bondaea in the Canterbury Isles. While other books in the world of Arkara line will be helpful, they are not required. The adventure could take place in any city with a large sewer system set near the sea.

"Death from Below" is an urban dungeon crawl. Something from the sewers has devoured 17 citizens of the fair city of Bondaea. There is adventure and profit in removing this threat, as well as the potential for the players to become minor heroes to some bereaved fellow citizens of their fair city.

This adventure is suitable for characters from 1st-3rd level. 1st level characters might find the second level of the sewers too difficult and might need to gain more experience elsewhere before exploring the deeper depths. 3rd level characters will find some of the early encounters easy but will still find challenges in the second level, particularly in some of the "optional" rooms that the Lizard Men have sealed off.

ENCOUNTERS

1. SERIAL KILLER

Read or paraphrase the following from the town crier of Bondaea:

My fellow citizens! As you know seventeen of your fellows have gone missing in recent weeks. Body parts of at least five individuals have been recovered. Have faith! The Duke will keep us safe and see us through this troubling time! This morning guards swept the city in force, conducting a thorough search for the killer. This will continue until the monster is found. We will have order. So says the Duke! Long live the Duke!

The truth is somewhat different. Asking around will allow the PCs to learn that the only quarter of the city being "swept in force" is the Demi-human Quarter, especially the Tenement District. The Noble and Arena quarters have seen stepped up patrols for safety but no actual searching for the killer. Drop Town has seen no activity, being in charge of its own affairs.

2. CHASING A KILLER

This encounter assumes the PCs are looking into the murder. If they need motivation to stick their noses into other people's affairs, the GM can provide a little extra motivation (and reward): Perhaps a friend/contact of the PCs has been swept up as a suspect.

Perhaps a friend has gone missing, or one of the missing is the friend of one of the PCs' contacts.

Of course, the PCs might simply see it as their duty to protect the city, especially these days with the Duke seemingly going a little more mad with each passing day.

If the PCs make some discreet inquiries (and pay a bribe or two totaling not more than 5 gp) they can actually see the most recent body part discovered. It's a human leg and shows evidence of teeth marks, at least to eyes familiar with monster attacks.

2A. CHASING REMAINS

Once the PCs start looking into the case, they are approached by Father Mason, a priest of Therran the White. Normally, the PCs might not want anything to do with a priest of an evil deity, though if they have the means to check the priest who approaches them is not evil.

Regardless, the priest has an interesting and potentially profitable proposition: he will pay the PCs 10 gp for each corpse (or partial remains) of a missing citizen they discover during their investigation. He also remarks that he has a spell scroll he would be willing to part with if all 17 corpses are returned.

If all 17 corpses are returned to Father Mason, he gives them an additional reward, a spell scroll with the following Cleric spells: Cure Light Wounds x2, Find Traps x2, Cure Disease and Cure Serious Wounds.

As a worshipper of the god of Heritage, he is disturbed by the loss of family by so many citizens of Bondaea. Worse, many are not even sure if their missing loved one is among the victims. To put their minds at ease and allow them to properly say their good-byes, he is willing to pay for each corpse returned to him. He assures the PCs he will be able to determine, through his divine offices, which corpses are relevant to the case.

For GMs who prefer not to use either of the "personal" motiva-

tions suggested above, this offer of cold hard cash could be a great way to entice the PCs into getting involved. Even if the PCs do get involved on their own, this offer could make them a tidy return for their time in the dank sewers beneath the city.

3. THE SISTERS HARESPRINT

After beginning their investigation, word gets around to the sisters, who have a clue for the PCs. They ask them to come to the demi-human quarter at night. There they show the PCs a trap they laid with a leg of lamb as bait, which contains a dead Batrachian. The city guard will never catch “the killer” they explain, because they aren’t looking low enough.

The sisters explain that dwarves used to patrol the sewers and keep them clear of “denizens” but the city threw them all off the payroll almost a year ago. Still, the presence of Batrachians in the city sewers is rare, as there is a large sturdy gate to keep aquatic monsters out. If the gate has become damaged, the Batrachians will just be the first of many monster incursions into the city.

3A. THE GATEKEEPER

Getting into the sewers won’t be easy. The gate is of dwarven construction and is especially well-built, reducing any Open Locks or Bend Bars chance by one-half. Also the PCs can’t use the manholes used by the Batrachians unless they are Small size (the holes are too small to allow an adult Medium sized creature through).

However, there is another alternative the sisters will suggest: the old head of the dwarves who maintained the sewers, a “gatekeeper”, named Verx. The old dwarf “accidentally” carried off his master key to the sewers when his services were no longer required and the sisters think he would be willing to give it to the PCs so they could continue the work he did for so long, keeping the sewers clean.

While the PCs are talking with Verx, a group of Jagged Ear’s men show up. They also want the key and are more than willing to kill the PCs (and Verx) to get it.

The PCs can either save Verx, in which case he will give them a key as a show of his gratitude, or they can allow Jagged Ear’s men to kill Verx, then deal with them and take the key for their own. Either way, they now have a means to get into the sewers and see what’s going on.

Thieves (8): Thief 1, hp 4, dm 1d6 (shortsword), XP 14

Treasure: Sewer Key (Master)

4. INTO THE SEWERS

Read or paraphrase the following:

You descend below the city into a hidden world you never expected to find. This is not the meager crawlway you imagined but a spacious vault of dwarven construction. You have arrived in the main pump artery room and need to find your way to the main sewers below.

SEWERS LEVEL 1

Miscellaneous animals that find the dark dank conditions of the

sewers welcome make up most of the inhabitants in this area. For now, the Batrachians only control two rooms, leaving most of their brethren below fighting an even more dangerous menace: a group of Lizard Men who want this prime hunting territory for themselves.

S1. CENTRAL PUMP ROOM

There are three corpses in this enormous circular room, as well as several rusted valves and four exit hallways. The valves have been out of use for so long that it would take days of noisy work to chip away the rust and get them moving again. Any attempt to do so will certainly attract unwanted attention from nearby rooms.

Corpses (3): These corpses are of Bondaeen citizens and are worth 10 gp each if returned to Father Mason at the temple of Therran.

S2. REFUSE ROOM

This room is strewn with junk the former dwarven maintenance workers used to maintain the sewers. A lot of random stone blocks can be found here, as well as body parts (mostly skeletal) of four more victims. Searching the stone causes a group of giant rats to spring out and attack.

Giant Rats (10): 3 hp, dm 1-3+ disease, XP 10

Corpses (4): These corpses are of Bondaeen citizens and are worth 10 gp each if returned to Father Mason at the temple of Therran.

S3. SLANTED, SLIPPERY HALL

The hall here slopes sharply down and is slick from years of wetness and algae growth. Characters have a chance to slip as follows:

- 1 in 6 if unarmored (wearing no armor);
- 2 in 6 if lightly armored (wearing leather or studded leather);
- 3 in 6 if moderately armored (wearing ring, scale or chain mail);
- 4 in 6 if heavily armored (wearing banded or plate mail); being heavily encumbered, such as carrying significant amounts of treasure or a fallen comrade increases this chance by +1.

Characters with a Climb Walls chance use that rather than the random roll above to determine slippage.

Characters who slip suffer 1d3 points of damage and are automatically surprised by the giant frogs in S4.

S4. CLOGGED OVERFLOW CHAMBER

This chamber was designed as an overflow chamber during extreme flooding of the sluiceway below. It has clogged into a deep brackish pool that has become home to a group of giant frogs. Many animals lose their footing in the sloping hallway that leads into this room, giving the frogs an edge in hunting. That, plus the water makes this room a natural home for them.

Giant Frogs (4): HD 1, 5 hp, dm 1-3, XP 35

If the PCs search the deep pool, they have a 3 in 6 chance every 10 minutes of searching of discovering a corpse. This corpse is worth 10 gp if returned to Father Mason at the temple of Therran and has a gold wedding band worth 10 gp on its hand.

While the band is obviously valuable as is, an inscription can be dimly made out that reads "Emily Beloved Wife of Harold". The PCs can spend 1d6 hours asking around the city and return the ring to Harold, informing him of his wife's death.

Harold is a blacksmith and while he has little money, is willing to reward the PCs with either a longsword or suit of chain mail that he will make himself. The PC can pick up the chosen item in 1d6 days.

Alternately, the PCs could show the ring to Father Mason, who can find out who Harold is and will offer the PCs 25 gp to return it to him. If the PCs are paid to return the ring by Father Mason, Harold learns they've already been rewarded and offers nothing but his thanks.

S5. DWARVEN BREAKROOM

This chamber served as a breakroom for the dwarven maintenance workers. There is still some edible food in the crates, the ale in the kegs is still good and a fire could easily be built in the old fire pit in the northeast corner. In short, once its current occupants are removed, this would make a perfect place for the PCs to rest without returning to the surface, as they explore the lower reaches of the sluiceway.

One of the crates of food has split open and the rotten meat inside has drawn a cloud of acid flies to it (see New Monsters below). When the PCs enter the room they will go berserk and attack.

Acid Flies (4): HP 3, Dm 1-4, XP 14

Skeletons (3): These corpses have been picked clean by the flies but are worth 10 gp each if returned to Father Mason at the temple of Therran.

S6. STAGNANT POOL AND THE WALKING DEAD

This room has a stagnant, foul-smelling pool of water that drained into it during a long-ago flood. Since there is no drainage from this room, the water is choked with algae. There are four skeletons around this foul pool (three adults and one child) that rise up and attack as the PCs enter.

A thorough search of the pool reveals a Potion of Super-Heroism in a stoppered iron container.

Skeleton (4): HP 5, dm 1-6, XP 20

Once defeated, the remains of these skeletons are worth 10 gp each if returned to Father Mason at the temple of Therran.

S7. DWARVEN BUNKHOUSE

This room was a place for off duty dwarves to catch naps during times of extreme rain and flooding, when they might be called upon at any time to clear clogged drains or man hand pumps. There are nine beds here composed of molding blankets and dry uncomfortable straw.

The blankets might be salvageable with a lot of work for use when the PCs camp outdoors, though so badly stained (and a little smelly) that no one would buy them. The mattresses are less comfortable than sleeping on the wood frames of the beds themselves but the ancient straw makes excellent tinder for PCs wanting to build a fire in the fire pit in S5.

Up in the ceiling of this dark room rest 5 giant bats. Each round the PCs spend in this room there is a 50% chance the bats will attack.

Giant Bats (5): HP 3, dm 1-4, XP 8

S8. STORAGE ROOM

This room was used to store building materials and tools. While there are numerous useful items to scavenge here (including some tools, a lantern or two, torches, numerous 10' poles and miscellaneous wood), the main use the PCs will likely find for this room is to repair the gate in the lower sluiceway, to prevent more creatures from infesting the sewers.

Hidden behind one of the crates is a single corpse worth 10 gp each if returned to Father Mason at the temple of Therran.

S9. JUNCTION ROOM

This room contains numerous rusted hand pumps that would take several hours of work to be made usable. There is a small group of Batrachians here guarding the stairs down. The upper sewers are a great place for a lair, with a steady supply of food (the humanoids in the city above) and the Batrachians are currently fighting over this upper level with a group of Lizard Men. This room and S10 are their "high ground", keeping anyone else from staking claim to their hunting grounds.

The Batrachians are camouflaged and if they are not detected they will wait until the PCs are in the hallway connecting this room with S10, then they will leap to attack. There is a 50% chance each round of the Batrachians in S10 hearing and responding to a battle here, meaning if the Batrachians surprise the PCs in the hallway and are not dispatched quickly, the PCs might find themselves trapped in the narrow passageway.

Batrachians (4): HP 4, Dm 1-6 (x2 on a charge attack), XP 22

S10. STAIRWAY DOWN

This room has been the source of much conflict between the Batrachians and a group of Lizard Men who are trying to dislodge them. The Batrachians started with greater numbers but have slowly been pushed back by the more powerful Lizard Men. Still, the plentiful food from the city above has caused the Batrachians to fight viciously for every inch of territory despite heavy losses. The Batrachians here are elite warriors and hunters, responsible both for defending this most valuable piece of real estate and hunting the city above at night to feed what remains of their tribe.

Batrachians (4): HP 8, Dm 1-6 (x2 on a charge attack), XP 26
Treasure: 3 moss agates (11 gp each)

S11. CROCODILE WADING POOL

This overflow room is filled with algae-choked water three-feet deep, and spotted with tall, thick grasses and cat's tails.

A crocodile comes in from the sluiceway to sleep here and will attack if the PCs seem weak (50% hit points across the entire party) or are few in number (three or fewer party members).

Crocodile (1): HP 19, Dm 2-8/1-12, XP 88

S12. BUCCANEER PRISON

This locked room contains the last three survivors of a group of buccaneers unlucky enough to be captured by the Batrachians. They don't know what happened to their fellows, only that one of them is dragged out every day and never returns. There were originally 10 of them.

The buccaneers offer to serve the PCs for the rest of their lives if freed and provided with food and equipment. One of them, a former navigator, speaks the Lizard Man tongue, which will come in handy in avoiding some of the more dangerous rooms on the far side of the dungeon, such as the Otyugh room.

Buccaneers (3): HP 4, Dm by weapon, XP 14

S13. LOWER GUARDIANS

Here another group of elite Batrachian warriors guard the lower stairs. They have orders not to assist in battles on the first level of the sewers and so will wait here, camouflaged to ambush anyone coming down the stairs if they hear combat in the room above (S10).

Batrachians (6): HP 8, Dm 1-6, XP 26

S14. RITUAL DROWNING POOL

The passage leading into this room from the main hallway (the one leading off the sluiceway that connects S12, S13 and S14) has been barricaded to make Lizard Man attacks on the drowning pool harder. Breaking down this barricade requires a battering ram or heavy axes and 5-10 minutes of extremely noisy work. Any attempt to break down this barricade will surely draw the elite Batrachians from S13 and The Devoted from S16, along with any Batrachians sleeping in the barracks (there is a 50% chance of Batrachians being present in the barracks).

This room contains an unholy font dedicated to Icarra, known to the Batrachians and Lizard Men as the Dark Goddess. This pool has two effects: any Batrachian baptized in the pool by a priest of the Dark Goddess gains the benefits of a Bless spell for the next 24 hours; any non-Batrachian drowned in the pool by a priest of the Dark Goddess rises as a Zombie under his control.

The pool can only perform one of these functions and only once per day. For the past week, the Batrachian shaman in S17 has been drowning one captured Buccaneer each day and converting them into zombies.

S15. BATRACHIAN BARRACKS

This room is lined with piles of moist, moldy straw. These disgusting mats are perfect sleeping quarters for Batrachians. There is a 50% chance of encountering 1-4 Batrachians here.

S16. QUARTERS OF THE DEVOTED

This chamber is home to a Devoted Batrachian (see new monsters below for details). This beast will usually wait in this chamber. It will not, for example, respond to any sounds of battle from the barracks or the stairwell (S15 and S13 respectively). It will respond to a call for help from the Shaman or to an attempt to break down the barricade in S14.

However, anyone but the shaman who enters its room unannounced (even Batrachians) will be attacked and (if killed) eaten.

Devoted Batrachian: HP 21, Dm 1-4/1-4/1-8+2, XP 168

Treasure: 17 gp; Potion of ESP

S17. BATRACHIAN SHAMAN'S QUARTERS

This chamber is home to the leader of the Batrachians attempting to hold onto these sewers and resist the Lizard Man encroachment.

Note: This shaman uses the optional rules for tribal spellcasters found in the monster section of the OSRIC core rules.

Batrachian shaman (3rd level shaman): HP (1d8 plus 3d6): 15, Dm 1-6, Spells: Cure Light Wounds x2, Resist Fire, SA +2 to attack rolls, XP 130

Treasure: 15 gp; Potion of Climbing

S18. ALTAR TO THE DARK GODDESS

Read or paraphrase the following:

This small room contains an altar to the Dark Goddess, a foul creature of the depths who is worshipped by both the Batrachians and the Lizard Men. There is an unholy text here in an unknown tongue that makes your skin crawl to hold. The eyes of the altar also seem to follow you as you move around the room.

Characters receive 100 XP for destroying this foul altar.

S19. SECRET TREASURE ROOM

The short hallway leading into this room is concealed by a secret door. Should the players find it, they will have to make their way past a collapsing section of floor that leads to a spiked pit. The only way to avoid the pit is to hug the sides of the hallway, pressing your back or stomach to the wall and inching along. Otherwise, the middle of the floor gives way and inflicts 5d6 damage.

In this room is a remarkable sword that seems to bubble and move, almost like the sword is crystal and somehow filled with moving water. It is the item the Sea Prince came here to reclaim, the birthright of his people, the Waveblade.

See the new magic items section below for more information on the Waveblade.

S20. REFUSE PILE

This large pile of trash contains a silver comb worth 50 gp. The chance of finding the comb during a search of the room is equal to that of finding a secret door.

S21. SEALED ROOM

The door to this room has been sealed. Boards have been nailed over the door and spikes driven into the floor in front of the door. In short, someone really wanted to keep what was in this room, in this room. Scrawled on the door is the word "Ghoul" in the Lizard Man tongue, which is fairly accurate, as there are two Lacedons trapped in the room.

Lacedons: HP: 7, Dm 1-3/1-3/1-6 plus paralyzation, XP 84

S22. GIANT LIZARD CHAMBER

This room contains a "guard lizard" trained by the Lizard Men. If a fight breaks out here there is a 50% the Lizard Men in S24 will hear it and join in.

Giant Lizard: HP: 22, Dm 1-8+1, XP 208

S23. SEALED ROOM

The door to this room has been sealed in a similar fashion to S21. The word "Otyugh" is scrawled on the door in the Lizard Man tongue. The smell of garbage and back-up sewage is detectable even with the door sealed. This room contains the final corpse for return to Father Mason.

Otyugh (lesser, 6 HD): HP 26, Dm 1-8/1-8/1-4+1 plus disease, XP 431

S24. LIZARD MAN GUARD POST

This room contains 6 Lizard Men who act as a guard on the Sea Prince in S25.

Lizard Men: HP: 11, Dm 1-6, XP 42

S25. SEA PRINCE PRISON

This pitiful room contains the Sea Prince, a captured prince of the sea elves that the Lizard Men and Batrachians are at war with. He came here seeking the Waveblade in S19. Though dying, he will tell the PCs where the Waveblade is and beg them to take up the quest that he has failed.

The barriers between this world and the elemental planes are weakening and soon destruction will pour through and kill all native life. The four portals must be sealed with the four elemental blades. The first portal is underwater, at the bottom of the Sheltered Sea.

To allow the PCs to reach that gate, the Sea Prince provides them his amulet, which the Lizard Men could not remove from around his neck. He tells them its basic functions, that it sheds light and allows breathing and movement underwater, as well as protection from cold and the pressure of the depths. Occasionally it can provide a small amount of healing.

More information about the amulet can be provided below.

Note: If the DM does not wish to drop any continuing adventure seed on the players, he can have the Sea Prince be dead when the players arrive, or have his purpose be to merely retrieve the Waveblade.

S26. LIZARD MAN GUARD POST

These Lizard Men guard the entrance to the Shaman's private pool.

Lizard Men: HP: 17, Dm 1-6, XP 54

S27. LIZARD MAN QUARTERS

This room serves as a barracks for off-duty Lizard Men. Though they are supposed to bunk here to serve as an additional defense for the Shaman, many slip away to the sluiceway to sleep in the comforting water and wet mud. There is a 50% chance of encountering 1-6 Lizard Men here.

Lizard Men: HP: 11, Dm 1-6, XP 42

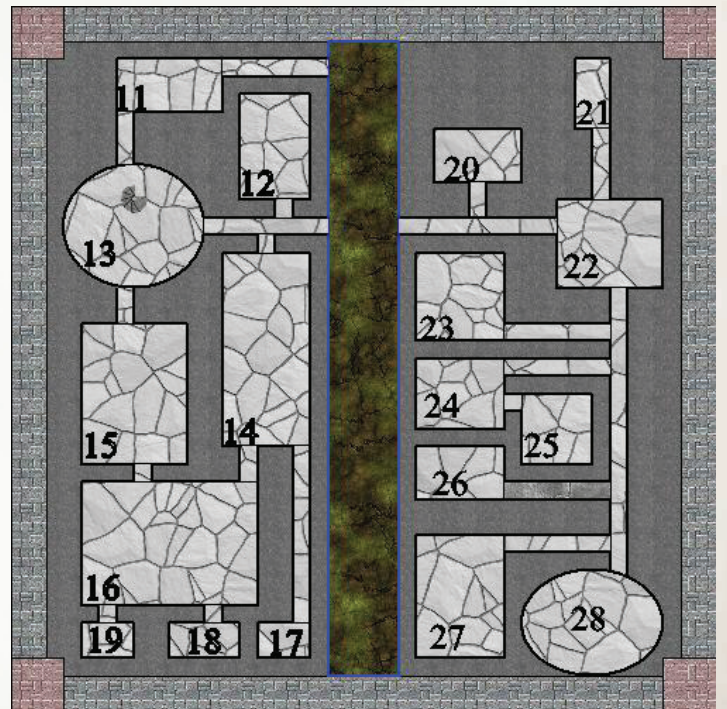
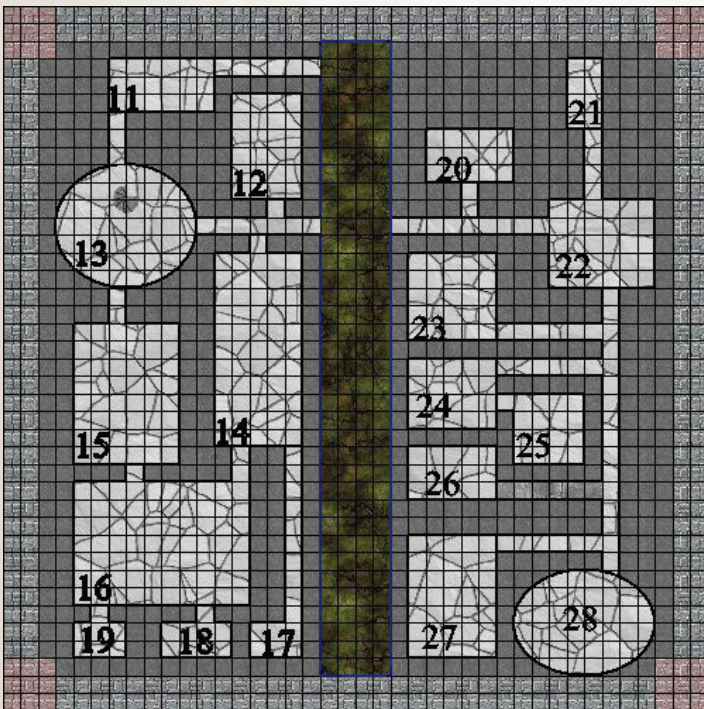
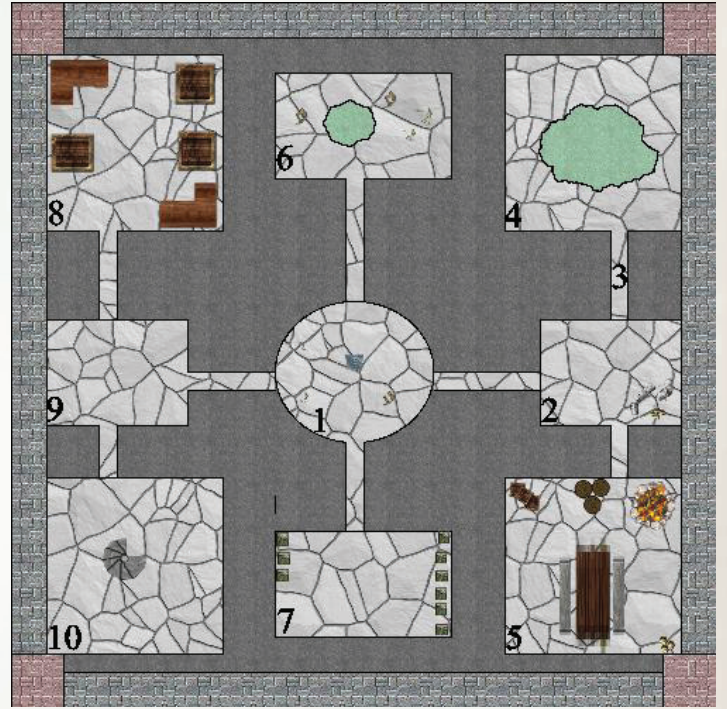
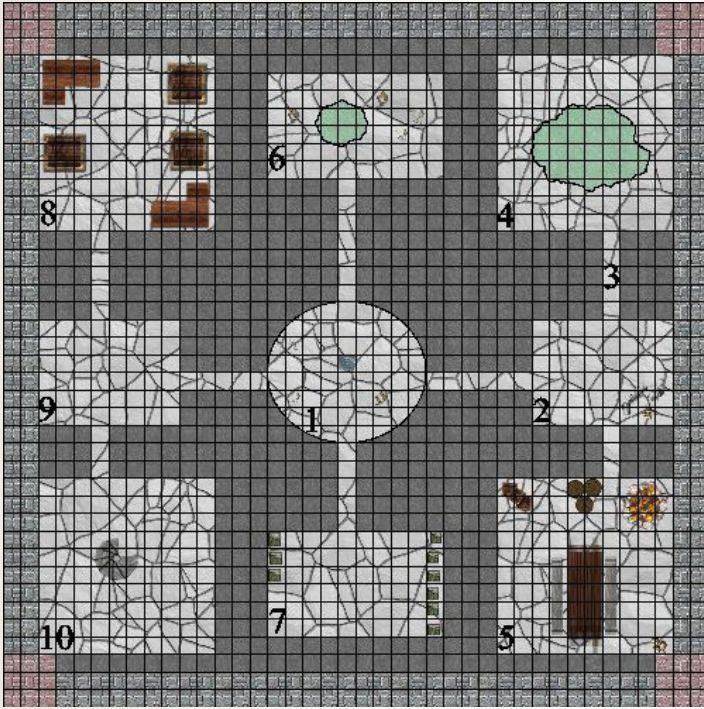
S28. LIZARD MAN SHAMAN PRIVATE POOL

This is a deep pool and serves as the quarters of the Lizard Man shaman leading their efforts to control all of the sewers. He also seeks to control the altar and drowning pool (S18 and S14) and the death of every Batrachian in the sewers.

Note: This shaman uses the optional rules for tribal spellcasters found in the monster section of the OSRIC core rules.

Lizard Man Shaman (5th level shaman): HP (2d8+1 plus 5d6): 26, Dm 1-6, Spells: Cure Light Wounds x2, Resist Fear, Augury, Detect Charm, Resist Fire, Cause Blindness, SA +5 to attack rolls, XP 282

SEWER MAPS



NEW MONSTERS

ACID FLY

Frequency: Uncommon
No. Encountered: 1-6 (wild) 7-12 (Hive)
Size: Small
Move: 10 ft, flying 120 ft.
AC: 8
Hit Dice: 1d4
Attacks: 1
Damage: 1d4
Special Attacks: None
Special Defenses: Immune to Acid
Magic Resistance: Standard
Lair Probability: 20%
Intelligence: Animal
Alignment: Neutral
Level/XP: 11+1/hp

Acid flies are scavengers that can only eat liquefied meat. They dissolve corpses off the bone by regurgitating their extremely foul and potent stomach acid onto a creature, turning the meat to liquid and leaving the bones pristine and polished-looking. They then lap up the puddle of liquefied meat, leaving the skeleton and all non-meat on the corpse behind.

Acid flies will not attack living targets except to defend any corpse they are feeding on. They will fight to defend any corpse to the death once they have begun feeding on it. They gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls while defending their food.

Once they have fed, they fall into a stupor lasting several hours, during is an attack that does damage. For example after feeding one could pick up an acid fly and carry it away and it will barely stir. Alchemists and taxidermists have domesticated these creatures with great success. Alchemists use them as a ready source of acid, waving a piece of meat under the creature's mouth and then scooping up highly acidic drool. Taxidermists set them on corpses and let them do the work of cleaning the body, carefully returning the creatures to their cages only after the body is completely cleaned and the flies have fallen into their customary stupor.

Treasure: Nil

BATRACHIAN, DEVOTED

Frequency: Rare
No. Encountered: 1
Size: Large
Move: 60 ft, 150 ft. swim
AC: 3
Hit Dice: 3+3
Attacks: 3
Damage: 1d4/1d4/1d8+2
Special Attacks: None
Special Defenses: Permanent Bless
Magic Resistance: Standard
Lair Probability: 75%
Intelligence: Low

Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Level/XP: 105+3 per hp

During unusually high tides, which occur approximately once every 10 years when the planets align, a special ritual can be conducted in a drowning pool. A group of 13 Batrachian children are released into a drowning pool and allowed to fight until only one is alive. The survivor is left in the pool for several days and allowed to consume all 12 of the Batrachians it killed. The Dark Goddess then grants this devoted child great size and strength.

Treasure: 4d6 gp; in its lair 30% chance of 1-4 gems and a 25% chance of a random magic item

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

AMULET OF THE SEA PRINCE (AN)

This amulet sheds light in a 60' radius on command. It grants water breathing, free movement in water and protection from cold and pressure in that same radius. Once per day it will heal 1 hit point of damage per level of the wearer to all good creatures within the radius of its light.

WAVEBLADE (F)

The Waveblade is an enchanted longsword +1. It is +2 against evil creatures, +3 against Batrachians and Lizard Men and +4 against fire elementals. Though it inflicts no damage against water elementals, each successful hit has a 25% chance of sending the creature permanently to the elemental plane of water. It is rumored that the Waveblade is one of a set of four weapons, each dedicated to combating a particular element.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Bondaea is a city consumed with order. As such, the city is locked down every night and is occasionally locked down day and night while the guard pursues some "threat" to the city. If the PCs managed to get the key to the sewers, they will find themselves subject to all sorts of attention by those who covet the ability to come and go from the city as they please, without detection from the guards.

Depending on the morals of the PCs, this could open up new business opportunities with Jagged Ear, who would be willing to pay them to ferry small items in and out of the city discreetly. Of course, if the PCs aren't willing to be "reasonable" and share, this will bring them into conflict with Jagged Ear. And of course, the city guard, paranoid and controlling as ever, will try and retrieve the key.

Either way, the ability to come and go from the city at will has set the PCs apart from other local adventurers and could serve to open the door to further adventures in and around the city of Bondaea.

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