



ERIC HINDLEY  
RICK HERSHY  
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# Masters & Minions

THE HOOKCLAW GANG



HINDLEY ~ HERSHY

# Credits

**Author:** Eric Hindley

**Editor:** Kalyna Conrad

**Artist:** Rick Hershey

**Design and Layout:** Rick Hershey

**Fat Goblin Games Team Members:** Chris Bayes, Eric Hindley, Jeff Swank, John Bennett, Justice Mora, Kalyna Conrad, Kiel Howell, Lucas Palosaari, Nick Esposito, Rick Hershey, Richard Bennett, Troy Daniels, Tyler Beck

**Line Developer:** Eric Hindley

**Publisher:** Rick Hershey

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## About Fat Goblin Games

Based in South Carolina, USA, Fat Goblin Games was founded in 2011 to create Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible products. With a focus on high quality production values and providing a creative environment for our writers, Fat Goblin Games has quickly become a recognized force in the world of third party publishers.

With hundreds of support books, visual aids, campaign settings, and quality stock art, Fat Goblin Games continues to provide exciting content and fantastic worlds in which gamers can immerse themselves.

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# Masters & Minions

## Introduction

Welcome to Masters & Minions, a product designed to provide you with a band of close-knit NPCs that act in concert to provide a new organization complete with leaders, chief henchmen and minions oozing with character to your Pathfinder Roleplaying Games. These have been designed to provide antagonists or rivals for your heroes, though some may act as allies or support for particularly unorthodox groups.

Unlike a simple thieves' guild or tribe of orcs, these groups draw much more heavily on influences from comic books and action movies, featuring over-the-top characters and outrageous environments. Each book will contain everything you need to add a colorful rogue's gallery of villains to your game, including their stat blocks, a map of their lair and plot hooks. Any trademark items, uniforms, calling cards, techniques and styles will be laid out in detail. It is designed to make sure that you can easily and seamlessly include the new organization in your games, regardless of what setting you use.

This volume features the Hookclaw Gang, a band of thieves and extortionists under the control of a clawed mobster called Lobster. Armed with meat hooks and mischief, these thugs and rogues are sure to cause problems in any city. They put the lean on the local docks, operating out of an abandoned abattoir, using the hooks as a calling card. What makes things worse is that their enigmatic leader is seen as something of a folk hero amongst the poor of the city, a reputation mostly undeserved but still hard to dispute. It comes from his tendency to draw his minions from the unluckiest of thieves—those that have had a hand taken for their larceny. Serving as Lobster's chief agents are a brutal half-orc named Mr. Hook, a sadistic doctor known only as the Surgeon and a variety of one-handed thieves and brutal meat-hook wielding thugs.

This volume includes all of the background, statistics (ranging from CR 2-7) and encounter maps you might need to add the Hookclaw Gang to your Pathfinder Roleplaying Game campaign today!

# The Hookclaw Gang

## Hookclaw Gang

In a culture where the penalty for stealing is the loss of one (or both) hands, petty theft becomes the exclusive domain of the stupid and the desperate. Getting caught helping oneself to something as basic as a much needed bit of bread often means a loss of livelihood, whether the associated skill lies on the lawful or criminal spectrum. For the poor folk that are driven to stealing, it is usually a death sentence. Anyone down on their luck enough to risk a hand for something to eat or a smattering of coins likely cannot survive once that hand is gone. Thus, only the brashest of thieves tend to thrive in these environments. However, for many, the risk of starvation weighs heavier than the threat of dismemberment.

The Hookclaw Gang offers a refuge for those unfortunates unlucky enough to be punished in this manner. Led by a vicious man known as Lobster, the group has become one of the most affluent criminal organizations in the city, pooling their talents to pull big heists and run a protection racket amongst the poorer merchants. Many in the group see themselves as having immunity to the laws of the city, since they've already paid the full price for theft. They know that by their third offense, the punishment for their crimes is simply death. This makes them more daring than most, and pushes them to fight to the death if cornered.

Members of the Hookclaw Gang can be recognized by their distinctive hook hands, ranging from simple small hooks to tremendous affairs, requiring the use of their good hand to assist. They wear dark leather armor underneath ragged beggar cloaks, both a sign of their origins and to help them blend into the ghettos they frequent. Many of the group are simple poor folk unable to survive on their own, but the most prominent members are vicious fighters or daring thieves—folk that have proven useful to Lobster.

Anyone foolish enough to anger Lobster or his cronies is usually punished in the way most fitting to them—they cleave off the victim's hands. Sometimes they will allow a target to simply bleed out from these wounds, but far more often they make an effort to stem the blood flow—leaving the victim alive, but generally helpless and useless. To leave no doubt as to the group responsible, the Hookclaws will often leave a rusty meat hook dangling on a line around the victim's neck as a calling card.

The Hookclaw Gang operates out of a dock side abattoir, complete with waterwheel-driven sawblade and alchemically cooled meat locker. This large building houses the entirety of the gang, as well as providing them with a source of food and a legal cover story to front their operations.

Lobster himself is rarely seen at crime scenes, leaving most of his dirty work to a hulking orc brute named Mr. Hook and other lesser henchmen. He chooses his targets carefully, sending his gang after shops that are beneath the notice of the city's nobility, often ale houses, small dry goods stores, and other day-to-day operations of the working class. He knows his gang wouldn't stand up to a raid by the city guard and keeps a low profile for just this reason. He dreams of one day pulling the kind of heist that would allow him to retire in luxury, but so far has seen no such opportunity present itself.

Thus far, the Hookclaw Gang has had moderate success, providing shelter, security and community to a group that most of society has discarded. For all of Lobster's malicious intent and selfish actions, most of the city's poor look to him as a bit of a hero. His gang's doctor is often the only person who will save the lives of these one-handed would-be thieves and the gang's operations provide food and shelter for those who would otherwise starve on the streets. While Lobster is not actively seeking this heroic reputation, neither is he stupid enough to dissuade the rumors.

# Masters & Minions

## The Boss

This tall, dark-haired man wears red-tinted chain armor over his ropey torso. His hands have been replaced by crude but vicious-looking iron claws.

### JOHN "LOBSTER" METHOS

CR 7

XP 3,200

Human fighter 3/rogue 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; Senses Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 57 (8 HD; 5d8+3d10+13)

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee claw +9/+4 (1d6+4/19-20) and claw +9 (1d6+2/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6 +3 bleed

#### STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 22

Feats Dazzling Display, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Stealthy, Step Up, Two-weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (shortsword)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Appraise +9, Bluff +11, Escape Artist +12, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand -1, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Orc

SQ armor training 1, rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, ledge walker), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear brooch of shielding, oil of magic weapon (2), potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of gaseous form; Other Gear +2 chain shirt, crude claws (treat as shortswords, 2), cloak of resistance +1

#### TACTICS

Before Combat Lobster tries to find a hiding place so he can ambush his foes.

During Combat Lobster opens with Dazzling Dis-

play, attempting to intimidate his opponents. He tries not to fight alone, relying on his lieutenants and henchmen to provide flanking for sneak attack.

**Morale** If reduced below 20 hp, Lobster will drink his potion of gaseous form and try to flee.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Lobster Hands (Ex)** Lobster has no hands. In their place are crude iron claws. These can be used in combat as shortswords. Because he has no fingers, he suffers a -10 circumstance penalty on Climb, Disable Device and Sleight of Hand checks. Lobster gains a +10 circumstance bonus to CMD checks against disarm attempts.

In many cities, the crime for stealing is the loss of a hand. Repeat offenders lose a second hand, usually resulting in their rapid descent into uselessness, homelessness and death. John Methos has proven to be the exception to that rule.

Growing up in back alleys and drug dens, Methos rapidly became a hardened thug and skilled thief. He watched as many of his close childhood friends eventually tried for a score that proved too ambitious, only to lose their hands, and with them their livelihood. Methos was always careful to stick to jobs he could handle; mostly mugging and other forms of violent crime.

He quickly rose to prominence within the notorious Cheapside Gang by showing above average sense and intelligence. After only a short time in the ranks, Methos was elevated to serve as muscle for their boss, a thief named Roverte, who put his blades to use in gang wars and extortion rackets. He seemed to be on top of his tiny world when it all came crashing down. Roverte had planned a grand heist to raise the Cheapside Gang above the rest of the city's scum, but when they were caught in the act, Roverte died in the escape and Methos suffered the fate that befalls all thieves—he lost his hands.

# The Hookclaw Gang

For most people, this would have been the end of a criminal career, but Methos wasn't most people. He found a surgeon, a drug-addled doctor living on the streets, and had the woman graft a pair of claws to his cauterized stumps. That day the petty thug John Methos died, and the Lobster was born. He soon found the streets were teeming with criminals who suffered the same indignant fate as he had and were left to begging.

With a new lair in a recently evacuated butcher's shop, a smattering of one-handed henchmen, and a mad doctor, Lobster was well on his way to becoming the most notorious gang boss in the city. All he needed was a little more infamy to seal his place. And so the Hookclaw Gang was born, leaving meat hooks in the bodies of their dismembered victims as a sort of macabre calling card.



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## Henchman

### Mr. Hook

Standing nearly seven feet tall, this massive bald-headed orc has beady red eyes and a toothy slack-jawed grin. His left hand has been replaced mid-forearm by a massive harpoon.

#### MR. HOOK

CR 5

XP 1,600

Orc fighter 6 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary)

LE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 49 (6d10+12)

Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +5 (+2 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities ferocity

Weaknesses light sensitivity

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee harpoon hand +13/+8 (1d8+10/x3 plus grapple)

Ranged harpoon +9 (1d8+10/x3 plus grapple)

Special Attacks weapon training (spears +1)

#### STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 6

Base Atk +6; CMB +11 (+12 grapple); CMD 22

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (harpoon), Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Step Up, Weapon Focus (harpoon), Weapon Specialization (harpoon)

Skills Escape Artist -1 (+0 to break a grapple), Intimidate +12, Survival +9

Languages Common, Orc

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath*, *oil of magic weapon* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of enlarge person* (2), *potion of invisibility*;

Other Gear +1 breastplate, harpoon hand, steel harpoon, *armbands of the brawler* (Ultimate Equipment), *cloak of resistance* +1

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If he knows a tough fight is coming up, Mr. Hook drinks a *potion of enlarge person*. This is not included in his stats.

**During Combat** Mr. Hook prefers to fight his opponents toe-to-toe. He picks on spellcasters, relying on Step Up to keep them threatened. If a foe attempts to flee, he uses his thrown harpoon to drag them back in. If confronting multiple foes, he will use his *elixir of fire breath*. If he is having an easy time hitting his foes, he uses Power Attack.

**Morale** If reduced below 0 hp, Mr. Hook drinks his *potion of invisibility* to retreat and drink his *potion of cure moderate wounds*. If it looks like he stands a chance, he will return to combat.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Harpoon Hand (Ex)** Mr. Hook has only one good hand. His other arm has been replaced with a massive harpoon. He needs his good hand to fight with this harpoon, and as such uses it “two-handed”. Due to his missing hand, he suffers a -4 circumstance penalty on Climb, Disable Device and Sleight of Hand checks. Mr. Hook gains a +10 circumstance bonus to CMD checks against disarm attempts against his harpoon hand.

The SeaHunter Tribe has been a scourge of the coast for decades. Unlike most orcs, they are excellent sailors and raiders, and also excel at hunting the great beasts of the oceans, using their harpoons with tremendous skill to bring down whales, sea serpents, and other aquatic terrors. They sail in great longships, making their home in the shattered isles off the mainland. Their raids had long plagued the human populace of the great cities of the mainland, until eventually something had to be done. An alliance of fleets attacked the tribe's homes, killing their fighters and adults, sparing only the SeaHunters' children, who were brought ashore with the intent to raise them in human society.

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Most of these children slowly died due to the prejudice of the locals—stoned by scared mobs, slain by overeager “adventurers”, or similar fates. Many of them drifted from orphanage to orphanage, eventually joining criminal gangs. One such child was Brock, the orc who would one day serve as the strong right hand of the Hookclaw Gang.

Brock was taken at the age of 4, which was young enough that it was agreed he could be nurtured into a productive member of society. His strength was put to use on the docks, where he worked as a porter from the age of 8, serving his adopted father more as a slave than a son. Growing up around the sea was too much for the orc, who was constantly reminded of his barely-remembered home and the tribe that he was born to. When he was 14, he fled from his foster family and ended up working with the gangs that frequented (and often ran) the dockside region of the city. His quality of life improved, even if he was simply a servant to new masters. His strength served him well, and he became feared throughout the underworld. When he was caught blatantly stealing a simple bottle of liquor and lost a hand, he was certain his life was over.

When he heard word of the Hookclaw Gang and their surgeon, he found a new hope. He threw himself down at Lobster's feet and begged for a chance in the gang. Seeing the promise in having the renowned thug in his gang, Lobster accepted the orc's loyalty, and christened him Mr. Hook.



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## The Surgeon

This lithe half-elven woman wears a blood-splattered white apron over her form-fitting red studded leather armor. Brilliant green eyes shine under close-cropped red hair.

### THE SURGEON

CR 4

XP 1,200

Half-elf alchemist (vivisectionist) 5 (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic)

LE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 38 (5d8+10)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; +2 vs. enchantments, +4 bonus vs. poison

**Defensive Abilities** fortification 25%; **Immune** sleep; **Resist** poison resistance

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 war razor +6 (1d4/19-20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6 +3 bleed

**Alchemist (Vivisectionist) Extracts Prepared** (CL 5th; concentration +9)

2nd—cure moderate wounds, invisibility, lesser restoration

1st—comprehend languages, cure light wounds, deathwatch, disguise self, shield

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Brew Potion, Dodge, Martial Weapon Proficiency (war razor), Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Appraise +12, Craft (alchemy) +12 (+17 to create alchemical items), Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +12, Survival +9, Use Magic Device +8; Racial Modifiers +2 Perception

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Orc

**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +5), discoveries (bleeding attack +3, preserve organs), elf blood, mutagen (+4 Dex/-2 Wis, +2 natural armor, 50 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy

**Combat Gear** healer's kit; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 war razor

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Given foreknowledge of combat, the Surgeon casts *deathwatch* and *shield*, and drinks her mutagen. None of these are reflected in her stat block.

**During Combat** The Surgeon prefers to avoid combat, especially if caught alone. When forced to fight, she tries to ensure she has some backup to flank with, wielding her war razor with deadly skill, using sneak attack and bleed to put foes down quickly.

**Morale** If reduced below 15 hp, The Surgeon casts *invisibility* and heals herself and any allies still fighting. If fighting alongside Lobster, she fights to the death, knowing that capture would most likely result in a hanging anyway.

Melise Ogdor was a poor woman just scraping by in the worst district of the city. She used whatever means she could to survive, taking odd jobs and sometimes even resorting to theft or prostitution when things got truly dire. She held few notions of rising above her station in life until she met a handsome elf noble seeking pleasure in the ghetto. Melise coupled with the elf, believing against all hope that this exotic man would whisk her away to a grand life. The next morning, the elf was gone, leaving Melise with nothing but heartbreak and a small bag of gold.

It was a few weeks later when Melise realized that the elf had left one more memento—she was pregnant. She named her half-elven daughter Belle, and swore that she would use the noble's money to get her girl a better life than she had ever had. Belle grew up in poverty, her mother hiding away the elf's gold until such a day as she could use it to better

# The Hookclaw Gang

the girl's life. She sent Belle to school, where the girl was mocked mercilessly for her exotic nature and her impoverished lifestyle. Melise passed away shortly after Belle began school, leaving Belle orphaned to the city. Belle studied hard, her natural intelligence fueled by a bitter need to exceed her classmates and prove herself useful to society. The girl later apprenticed to a talented doctor and alchemist, and finally Belle was living a better life than Melise could ever have imagined.

Alas, this fortune was not to last. A break-in at the lab left Belle's master dead and his shop in ruins. Belle was once again left with nothing, no home, no savings, and no master. She drifted on the streets for a time, concocting, selling, and using drugs to ease her pain. She likely would have died if she hadn't been found by John Methos. She now serves as the Hookclaw gang's healer, grafting on their hooks and patching them up after scraps. She is mostly clean of her drug abuse now, but still provides the gang with painkillers both alchemical and magical.



# Masters & Minions

## Minions

### The Thief

*This desperate looking figure wears heavily patched leather armor. One of its hands has been replaced with a hook.*

#### HOOKCLAW THIEF

CR 2

XP 600

Male and female Human expert 2/rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 31 (4d8+10)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** shortsword +6 (1d6+1/19-20) or  
hook hand +6 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** dagger +6 (1d4+1/19-20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Great Fortitude, Team Pickpocketing[UC],  
Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Escape  
Artist +11, Perception +6, Profession (fisherman)  
+6, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +11

**Languages** Common

**SQ** rogue talent (fast stealth), trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** potion of cure light wounds (2),  
potion of invisibility; **Other Gear** leather armor,  
dagger, hook hand, shortsword

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Hookclaw thieves try to set up an  
ambush, using Stealth to hide.

**During Combat** Hookclaw thieves work in groups,  
setting up flanking opportunities.

**Morale** If reduced below 12 hp, a hookclaw thief  
will attempt to withdraw. If he still has a *potion of cure light wounds*, he will drink it and return  
to combat, otherwise he drinks his *potion of invisibility* and flees.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Dire Straits (Ex)** Hookclaw thieves have considerably less than their expected wealth. Due to their missing hands, they suffer a -4 circumstance penalty on Climb, Disable Device and Sleight of Hand checks. Hookclaw thieves gain a +10 circumstance bonus to CMD checks against disarm attempts against their hook hands. These combine to give them an ad hoc -1 CR penalty.



# The Hookclaw Gang

## The Enforcer

This burly figure wears well-made armor and carries a massive two-handed hook. Its eyes have a slightly glassy look.

### HOOKCLAW ENFORCER

CR 2

XP 600

Male and female Human fighter 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 27 (3d10+6)

Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2 (+1 vs. fear)

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk ogre hook +8 (1d10+4/x3)

Ranged alchemist's fire +4 (1d6 fire) or improvised weapon +4 (1d6+3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD 17

Feats Improved Initiative, Point-blank Shot, Power Attack, Throw Anything, Weapon Focus (ogre hook)

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +5, Perception +4, Survival +7

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds (2), alchemist's fire (3), antitoxin; Other Gear mwk breastplate, mwk ogre hook, drug (flayleaf, 3 doses)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** There is a 50% chance that a Hookclaw enforcer is under the effects of flayleaf (GameMastery Guide).

**During Combat** Hookclaw enforcers are straightforward attackers, lashing out with their ogre hooks with little regard for tactics. Against lightly armored foes, they use Power Attack.

**Morale** If reduced below 10 hp, a Hookclaw enforcer withdraws to drink a healing potion.

If she is out of potions, the Hookclaw enforcer surrenders.

Many desperate folk join the Hookclaw Gang. Most of them are former thieves who have lost a hand to the authorities, but Mr. Hook has started to employ some thugs who still possess both hands. The hard life in the gang toughens up even ordinary folk, so that even newer recruits can hold their own in combat with a little support. Mr. Hook's thugs have top quality gear, but most Hookclaw thieves get by with whatever they can scrounge. Members of the gang can be distinguished by their bright red armbands, depicting a vile-looking lobster.



# Masters & Minions

## Hideout The Meat Locker

### THE MEAT LOCKER

*This room contains hunks of meat hanging from chains on an ingenious track system. The floor is slick with frost. A water powered saw spins on the north wall.*

This room is alchemically cooled by a machine in the northeast corner. The hanging slabs of meat provide cover to adjacent creatures. They can be moved easily along the gridlines. Any bull rush attempt using the meat provides the cover bonus to the attacker for attacks of opportunity and grants a +4 circumstance bonus to CMB. The slick floor means creatures must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check to move at full speed, failure by 5 or more means the creature falls prone. Any creature that touches the saw takes 3d6 damage (DC 15 Reflex save for half). During the day, a handful of enforcers and thieves can be found here, working with the meat.

### DOCTOR'S OFFICE

*A large surgical table dominates this room. Strange bubbling elixirs brew in glassware to the north.*

This office is used by the surgeon for her alchemy and for the surgery the gang needs. A small desk and cot complete the furniture, alongside the medical gear. A full alchemist's lab and a healer's kit can be salvaged from the equipment here. Typically the Surgeon can be found here.

### LOBSTER'S ROOM

*A large aquarium filled with assorted shellfish dominates the north wall of this small bedroom.*

This room is used as Lobster's office as well as his bedroom. A small chest under his bed contains the gang's accumulated wealth, a dozen rubies worth 500 gp each. Typically Lobster spends his time here.

### THE CAMPS

*This large room is covered in crude sleeping pallets. A meat smoker churns acridly in the corner.*

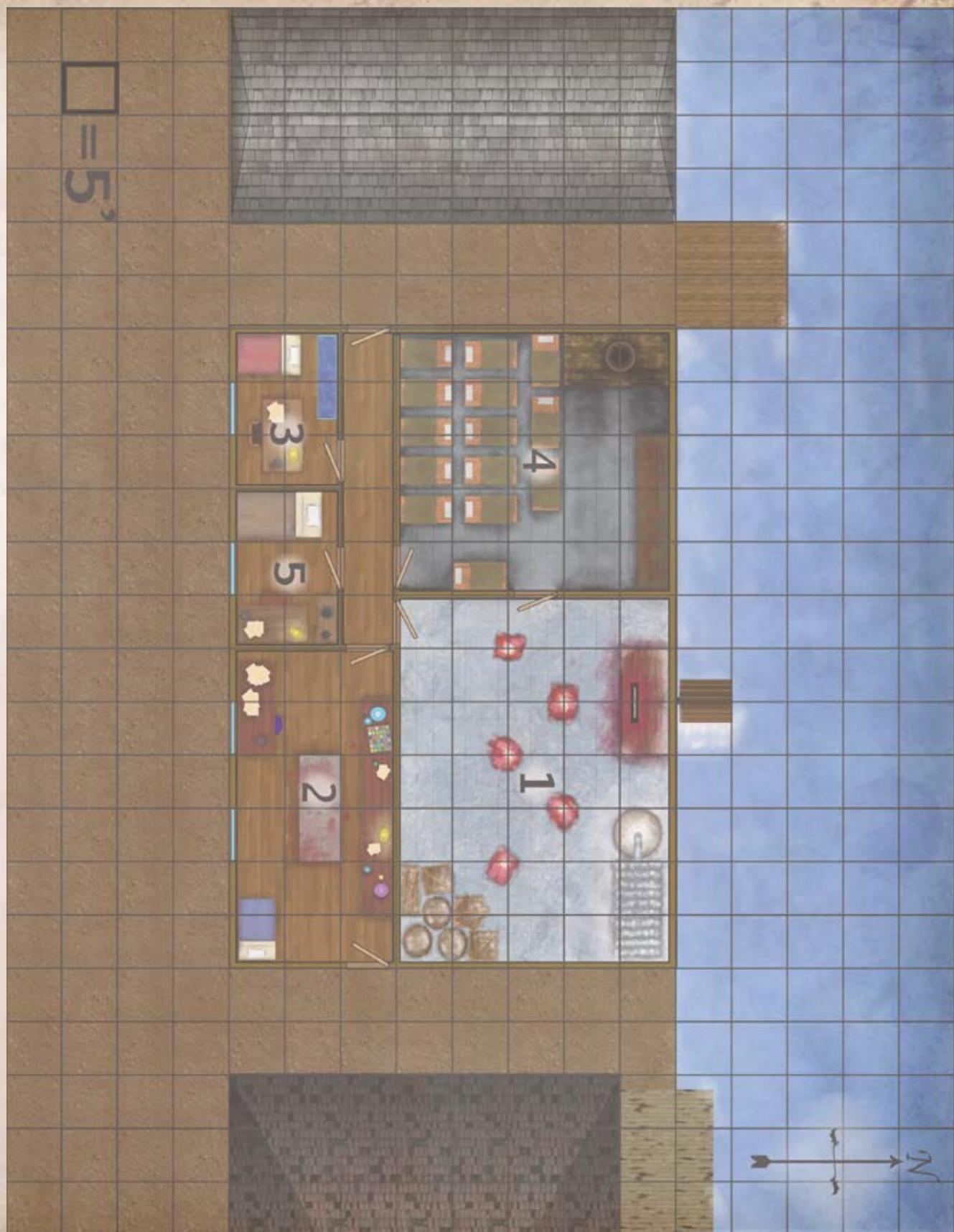
This room is smoky, providing concealment to all within. Most of the gang sleeps here and cooks their meals. During the day a handful of thieves can be found here smoking meat.

### MR. HOOK'S ROOM

*This sparsely decorated room contains a simple shelving unit, cot and desk.*

This small bedroom is used by Mr. Hook, there is little of value. The shelves contain a spare set of leather armor and small golden locket containing a worn portrait of a young woman (worth 10 gp). Mr. Hook is seldom here, preferring to spend his time out working the streets.

# The Hookclaw Gang



# Masters & Minions

## Hooks/Plots

There are many ways that the party may come into contact with the Hookclaw Gang. Presented below are just some of the possibilities:

Lobster finally has a plan for his big heist. The PCs have been hired to either defend (or alternatively recover after the fact) the one really big score that would allow the criminal to retire for good—probably a shipment of gold, a large gem or a similar non-magic valuable. Only once the heroes have tracked down the gang do they realize that the stolen property will mean a better life for many of the downtrodden of the city.

A close acquaintance of the PCs (or even one of the PCs themselves) has been sentenced to lose a hand for stealing. The Hookclaw Gang has decided to attempt to recruit this unfortunate victim and is unwilling to take “no” for an answer. Mr. Hook and a band of enforcers provide the first taste of the gang.

The PCs are hired to track down the missing sibling of a merchant, who was caught stealing and rather than face the shame of admitting to his crime, has decided to join the Hookclaw Gang. Ideally, the PCs will be able to convince the runaway to admit their mistake and face their shame, but the Hookclaws are quick to defend any of their own.

It is important to note that the Hookclaw Gang should have a sympathetic element to it. Though Lobster and his cronies are by no means good people, they provide a service to the poor unfortunates that run afoul of the harsh penalties that face anyone caught stealing. If the Hookclaw Gang is eradicated, many of these one-handed poor are likely to suffer grim fates in the unforgiving environment of the city’s slums.

Once the PCs have run afoul of the Hookclaw Gang, it is best to slowly build them before they attack (or infiltrate) their lair. They might encounter a pair of Hookclaw thieves at a crime scene, who then fight back. If the PCs are causing trouble for the Hookclaws, Mr. Hook might send a trio of enforcers to teach them a lesson. If they overcome these thugs, Lobster might send Mr. Hook himself (plus a few enforcers as needed).

Lobster is unlikely to be present at the scene of any crimes that his gang is committing these days—his lack of hands makes him too much of a liability in day-to-day thieving. He is far more likely to send Mr. Hook and a band of thieves and/or thugs, depending on the actual scheme’s demands. Thus the party will likely have to interrogate a captured foe or use information-gathering techniques to track down the gang’s headquarters and confront the master of the Hookclaw Gang. When the PCs finally track down Lobster, he will most likely try to wear them down with his gang before retreating to the meat locker for a final encounter with whatever followers he has left.

Depending on the care they take, the PCs may find themselves ostracized by the poor of the city. Many look at Lobster and his Hookclaws as folk heroes, seeing them as a haven for the victims of an unjust punishment for minor crimes. If the PCs are callous or brutal in their approach with the gang, they may soon attract the attentions of other downtrodden interests.

# The Hookclaw Gang

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