

SOMEONE'S POISONED THE WATERING HOLE



A DnD5e One Shot Adventure
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3/20

Introduction

My name is Tim Kaney and this is an experiment.

I recently got into Dudgeon and Dragons 5th Edition and was asked to run a one-shot adventure for the group with which I play. Me being me, I couldn't settle on just one adventure – or what I viewed as local side quests. Eventually, I ended up making several written quests.

The following is just one of those quests. It was part of a local scene where players could play this one adventure and that would be the end, or they could continue with the players completing the side quests in this area.

The players would use prebuilt profiles, if they wanted, reveal all the missions they know, and then decide. In the first one shot, they were to make a quick decision in order to avoid being caught in a bar brawl.

I wanted to split these up and provide them to the community for free so that others can enjoy the quest and either stick to what I created or take it a tweak it little for their own style, parties, etc.

This being the first fully written quest, it seemed like a good plan to use this one.

Focus was on more of a setting and mission described, how players interact with the environments, and the outcomes. There should be a mix of puzzle solving and hack and slash for this quest. That should help satisfy a few types of players out there.

I tried to incorporate aspects of action, suspense, and horror into the quest.

The experiment is that I have never made these before and only ran one session (not this quest) and I wanted to see if people enjoyed it if I published this.

This is meant to a DM to use to entertain their group of players. If I get positive feedback (at all) or even critical feedback on how to make it smoother, better, etc. I will go on to make more.

If not, I know maybe I should focus on something else.

Thank you.

Tim

3/20

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Quest Overview

Time Needed: 4 – 6 hours

Number of Players: Any (made for 6 players) – adjust encounters to accommodate variances.

Player Level: Any (made for new characters at Level 1) – adjust encounters for higher levels.

Goal: Investigate the source of the contamination of the cistern, clear it of any monsters, and report back for reward.

Creatures: Rats, Giant Rats, Rat Swarms, and Giant Poisonous Rats; Spiders, Spider Swarms, Giant Spiders, and Phase Spider

Environment Type: Dungeon-like, Cistern, Sewer-like, Waterlogged, 3 levels, maze-like

Reward: Known - 5,000 GP; access to Guard Armory

Point of Contact (Person of Interest): NPC Guard Captain - Feldain

Locations: Jutnik Keep - NW Corner of Town; Cistern under town

Leveling Methodology: Milestone (each level completed, take a break, level up)

Reference Material: Players Handbook, DM Guide, Monster Manual

Quest Hook - Someone's Poisoned the Watering Hole!



The Town's water supply is starting to foul. Some have become sick. It is getting worse. Some have reported hearing strange noises coming from the cistern at night. Others still have not returned from investigating. The Town is willing to pay top dollar to the person or persons willing to investigate and finally cleanse the corruption of the water supply. But make haste, time is running out...

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Quest Set-up - Someone's Poisoned the Watering Hole

Town's willing to pay top dollar to the person or persons that can find the source and stop the spread of the contagion in the water supply.

Interested parties should report to *Jutnik Keep* and speak with the leader of the royal guard at day's break tomorrow.

Known Reward: 5000 GP and access to the armory of the guard.

He thinks the source is rat related and stems from the cistern below the town.

Party knows the location within town

Party knows the name of the royal guard contact - Captain Feldain

You have all made the noble and righteous decisions to investigate the fouling of the town's water supply. In the morning after drinking, you have arrived at Jutnik Keep. Feldain greets you eagerly and with friendly warmth. He is stout, grizzled, and holding a spear and wears a metal helm. His rotund body is covered in the town's livery, hiding the light armor underneath. Near him, you see a door ajar with shiny weapons and armor. There is only one other guard seen standing as a sentry in the keep.

"Welcome, and good morning to ya! What brings you here? Are you looking to help with the water issue?" Feldain says to you.

What do you do?

If Persuaded, he will allow party to equip yourselves from the SPECIAL armory.

- 1 Crossbow, 2 Long Bows, 3 Great Swords, 4 Great Axes, 5 Pikes, 6 Bucklers

If Intimidated, he knows the exact problem, he is hiding it otherwise because he thinks none would face it if they knew. (He is looking for someone to help with rats, lots of rats, and maybe one bad big rat. And spiders. Lots of spiders.)

If a fail, he sternly warns against stealing from the armory and makes you pay a fine and spend a night in the dungeon. Party is set on their way by morning to complete the mission as punishment for attempting crimes against the guard.

If asked, he will send a Guard with you. Follow Guard stat block.

That NPC will experience horrific death

Feldain does know the location of the entrance to the cistern. He tells you where it is and wishes you good luck. He seems appreciative.

You part ways with Feldain and after not more than 20 minutes of travelling across town on foot, arrive at a nondescript dead end of an avenue. It takes a bit to realize what you are looking for is at your feet. It is partially hidden by boards, dirt, and hay. Once cleared, you notice a square shape in the ground with a pull handle on it. It is thick and heavy, but only about 3 feet on each side - enough room to get a medium sized creature through. Large creatures would need to duck. Any bigger and they would need to crawl.

A light pull on it only makes it squeal.

What do you do?

The hatch can be lifted with a Strength DC of 13 or more. People can help someone to give advantage.

Also, if prying it open, it can be done by using one of the boards over a rock. A DC check of 11 on STR will succeed.

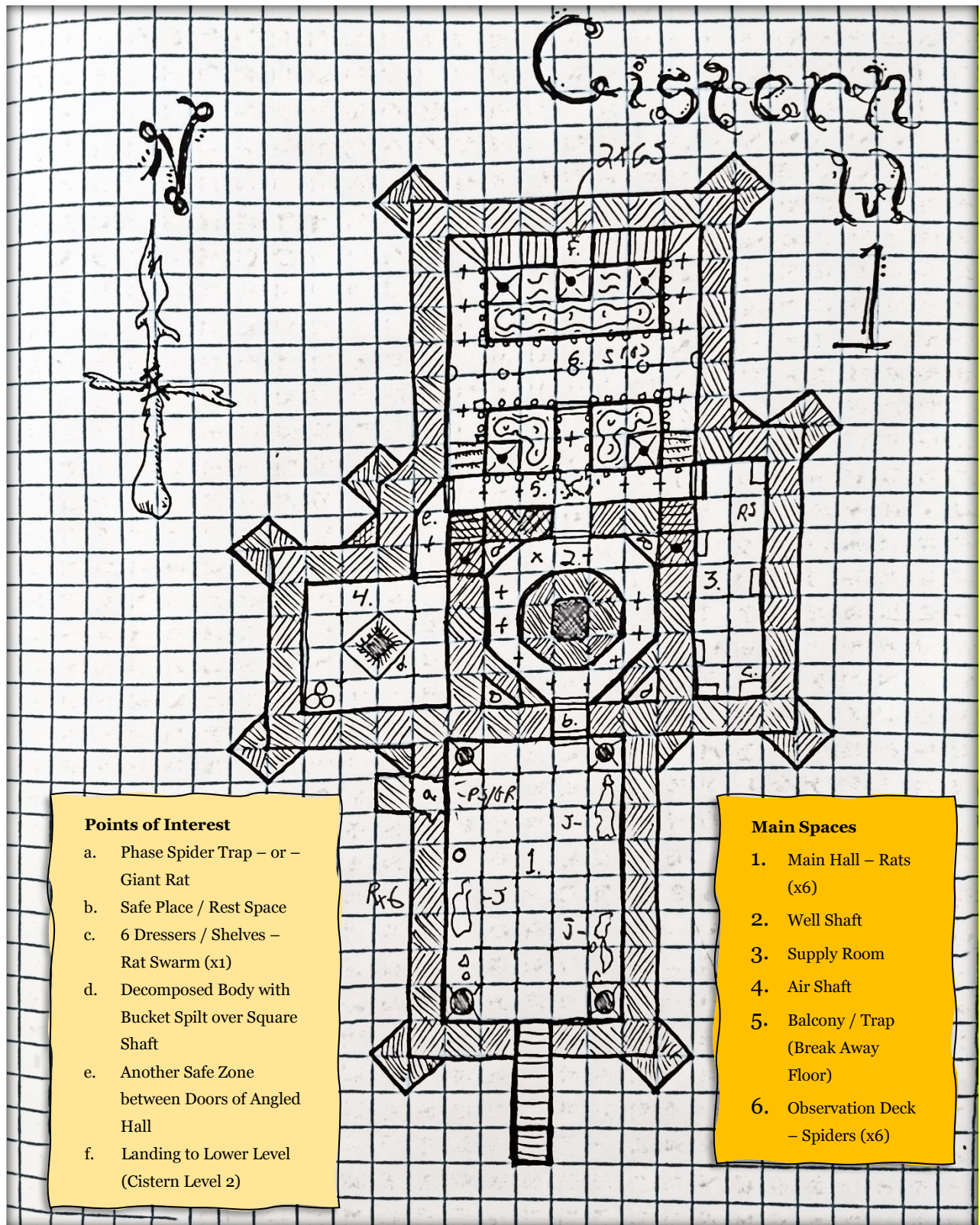
Finally, if need be, they can bash it in. It has 12 HP and is immune to Piercing and Slashing damage.

You have opened the hatch. You notice a musty smell comes gushing out on a strong current of air. Dim light reveals a steep staircase down about 20 feet into an obscured stone floor and room.

Do you descend?

Who goes first?

Cistern Level 1



Main Space 1.: Main Hall – 6 Rats

DM roll a Perception check using Rat stats. If they succeed, they attack immediately. Ask the group to roll for Initiative. Follow the rat encounter section.

You have made it down the stairs and enter a room partially obscured by darkness. The smell has gotten stronger. The room is about 20 by 40 ft and has a roughhewn look to it. The ceiling is higher than a man, so maybe 10 - 15 ft, but it is hard to tell in the dim light. There are some piles of junk in the corners of the room along the floor and one barrel on a wall. There doesn't seem to be a way out other than the way back up the steps. Remember, things are hard to see, and you can't quite make out all the details in the wall.

What do you do?

Investigation Check reveals the outline of a door on the far northern wall. A DC 10

Survival check reveals the presence of a draft coming from a door. DC 8.

Searching the room alone reveals that it is dark, and you may need a light.

If someone searches the junk, they find items on the following D6 table:

1	33 CP
2	15 CP, 10 GP, a cask of oil, rags.
3	5x5 torn tarp, 3 3x1 rags, 3 casks of oil, metal pot.
4	Nothing but rotted food scraps that can't be eaten.
5	Rusty utensils, cooking pot, and pitcher for coffee.
6	Seemingly fresh bread, partially chewed apples, a ripped open flour sack, and an old wine skin. The food can heal 1D4 hit points as an action or during a short rest.

Rats Encounter

If they roll a 6, they disturbed a few rats (6). Have them roll for Initiative with Disadvantage as these rats came out of the 'woodwork'. Randomly spawn D6 rats. They attack if they can each turn and move toward closest target. If they see fire or are burned, they flee. If they lose HP at all, but are not killed, they flee.

Rat Stat Block

RAT

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 1 (1d4-1)

Speed 20 ft.

STR

2 (-4)

DEX

11 (+0)

CON

9 (-1)

INT

2 (-4)

WIS

10 (+0)

CHA

4 (-3)

Senses Darkvision 30 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d1) piercing damage.



Loot the rats: 3 food scraps and 3 good quality rat hides.

Point of Interest a.: Phase Spider Trap

Activates if anyone is on the space in front of the northernmost end of the western wall for more than a few seconds. **ONLY happens if they have the guard with them.** He is taken into the wall cavity by a phase spider and disappears, screaming. This is meant to scare and intimidate the players.

As you and your group search around the room, you notice the guard with you getting close to a section of the wall at the northernmost end. You see him look suddenly more closely and at the same time he screeches. Soon, he is gone from the room. You could make out a rough shape of a creature and the sound of hissing. All that remains is eerie silence and no evidence of the creature or the guard.

Perception check that succeeds reveals that the person made out what looked like grasping appendages that looked like talons and a set of dark glistening eyes.

If no guard, just a giant rat comes out for them to smash. Phase Spider cannot be attacked or interacted with at this time so there is no Stat block yet. If they activate the giant rat, it is below.

Role Initiative. The activity in the room and noises, not to mention the new smells, roused a wayward rat. However, this is a rat of unusual size and it looks like his rabies is acting up. He is coming at you and looks to take a chunk out of your ankles.

Giant Rat Stat Block

GIANT RAT

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses Darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The rat has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rat's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



In the north-east corner of the room you see what door. There is a cracked, wooden barricade. What do you do?

The barricade can be removed manually with a smashing but is immune to Piercing and Poison damage. However, it has a weakness to Bludgeoning and Slashing damage. It has 10 HP.

You have successfully removed the barricade and you see that you can likely try the knob and open the door. What do you do?

The door lock mechanism is not functional and appears locked. It is in act corroded / rusted and will not function.

You try the doorknob and it makes a grinding noise. It won't complete it's turn. It appears it won't open. There doesn't seem to be a keyhole.

The door can be forced open or broken down if attempted. It has Disadvantage against Bludgeoning, Fire, Lighting, Cold, and Slashing damage. It is immune to Piercing, Poison, and Necrotic damage. The door is old and not that sturdy. It has 20 HP.

Once it is busted, the party can move through the door into the next space freely.

If they cannot decide in 2 minutes to bash in the door, interrupt their debate and spawn a Ghost. It will wail, hover, and glide to the door. It looks at the party, has a vague shape of a human, and then phases into the door. The door glows and suddenly there is a horrific screeching sound, like the sound of rending of metal. There is a large gasp from ghost and the glow fades away. The door swings easily open.

POI b.: Inner chamber between doors of 5x5 space.

Could be used for a quick rest or a bottleneck.

Now that the door is open, you can move through. Before you there is a small space and you see another door within 5 ft. of the first door.

What do you do?

Touching the door results in it disintegrating and falling into pieces.

Main Space 2.: Well shaft, Inner cloister, Safe Space

Circle passage around well shaft.

Supply room to right / east.

Air shaft room to left / south.

Forward is an open space overlooking cistern below. On opposite side is staircase down.

The passage you see before is dark, almost black as night, without lights. The smell of water or dampness is sharper here, and you hear what sounds like dripping of water very clearly in the distance, maybe even below you. It is strange because there is not a path forward, but it seems to split into a left and a right path.

On the far end from where you came in, about 35 feet away, there is an old shoddy, wooden door. It is not fully closed.

Opening or pushing it makes an awful racket.

Listening quietly, you can almost make out the sounds of the town above in the inner wall of this passage.

Every now and then, there is what sounds like scurrying coming from another room. A DC 13 Perception check reveals this.

Eventually, no matter what side you choose, you come back to the beginning.

Main Space 3.: Supply Room

10x30 ft

POI c.: 6 Scattered Shelves / Dressers – Rat Swarm

Can be searched. A successful Investigation Check (DC 14) reveals 12 GP, 2 pair leather boots, 1 cask of some brown liquid (just old liquor) and a net.

Searching, though, releases the first of several rat swarms. They are activated once they are done searching. Stat block below.

There is a crash as a piece something falls over in a corner of the room. You look at where it came from. You are looking at a mass of fur that seems to be writhing on the floor, almost pulsating. Then you hear the sound. It is clear as day. This is the sound of many rats swarming in unison. They look hungry and not exactly healthy. Their mass begins to move a sickening pace towards your party.

Roll Initiative.

Rat Swarm Stat Block

SWARM OF RATS					
<i>Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned</i>					
Armor Class 10					
Hit Points 24 (7d8-7)					
Speed 30 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)
Damage Resistance Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing					
Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned					
Senses Darkvision 30 Ft., passive Perception 10					
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)					
Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.					
Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.					
ACTIONS					
Bites (swarm has more than half HP). <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. <i>Hit:</i> (2d6) piercing damage.					
Bites (swarm has half HP or less). <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. <i>Hit:</i> (1d6) piercing damage.					



Looting the Rat Swarm: 10 Fine Rat Pelts and tails

Main Space 4: Western Room - Air Shaft

20x20 room

10x10 shaft down in the floor, air current, bad smell

Corner with barrels

POI d.: Decomposed Body

Slumped over spilt bucket. Has black residue in it and has been evidently been dumped into the air shaft.

As you search the room, there is an interesting scene that unfolds in front of you, near the center. You are first struck by the smell of death.

As you get closer and your lights illuminate the floor, there is an outline of a human figure. Turning it over, you see whoever it was has been dead for some time.

Under him, there is a turned over bucket that is just hanging over the edge of what looks like some sort of an air shaft. In the bucket, you see a dark residue.

It smells like oil. A successful Perception check (DC 12) reveals this.

POI e.: Safe Zone

Between doors. 5 ft wide by 15 ft long

Main Space 5: Balcony / Floor Trap

5 ft wide by 35 ft long, perpendicular to the ring room.

Center paver (5x5) is activated if walked over by a Large creature (Barbarian). Fall 12 feet, taking 1D4 Bludgeoning damage, falling unconscious. Party must recover them.

As you exit the ring room, you are immediately struck by the immense feeling of openness. Sounds are clearer here; air is picking up. To your left and right are closed doors leading to who knows where.

In front of you is a scene that tells you that you have stepped into a sort of balcony. Looking northward, your light reveals a large open space that cannot be fully illuminated. Estimates are that it is at least 30 ft across and 35 ft wide.

Masonry railing blocks your path all along this balcony, except on the two ends left and right, where they open to a 5ft wide path that works its way north. There is a center path that leads through to another platform that is 10 feet across and the same width. Two openings 10 ft square encircled by railings are between the next platform and this balcony. Carefully looking below there is a glint of liquid in the torch light.

As you are looking around, you hear a huge splash and an odd sound, then nothing. Just echoes of quiet.

Main Space 6: Cistern Level 1 Observation Deck - Spiders (x6) & Giant Spider (x2)

Looks over lower Cistern level. Can make out the tops of three columns from below terminate at the roof of this level. At the back of the balcony, there is what looks like two sets of stairs. Each end at the center 5x5 block in the lower level. At this point, gurgling can be heard every now and then.

You and your party have come to the end of the main level. To proceed down, you see the two staircases, each ending in the center of the lower level at the far wall, and they can be seen thanks to the balcony. The open space is both unsettling, and comforting.

A successful Perception check (DC 12) reveals some things. The smell is now changing. There is a new touch of something strange to it, almost like a swamp. More water currents are being heard, as well as random burbling. You know by now the next level must have water in it.

Crossing the platform, as your light reveals the floor, there is sudden movement. Half a dozen (6) baby spiders, the size of your hand, scatter. They seem agitated and come towards your party.

Roll Initiative.

These spiders are not a big threat. This will give the party a false sense of security.

Spider Stat Block

SPIDER*Tiny beast, unaligned***Armor Class** 12**Hit Points** 1 (1d4-1)**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +4**Senses** Darkvision 30 Ft., passive Perception 12**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d1) piercing damage plus (1d4) poison damage. The target must succeed on a DC 9 Constitution saving throw or take the poison damage.



Goo and guts all over everyone. The spiders squeal and hiss as they die.

The proceed to the threshold of the next level. This is the platform of the steps downward.

As you get near the lower level platform, while descending the stairs. There is something odd about the wall.

A successful Perception check (DC 15) you notice something shiny on the walls.

A further Investigation check (DC 14) reveals the eerie, black shapes of two large creatures silently descend from the ceiling at an alarming pace.

If the someone in the part succeeds the Investigation check, the entire party can fight like normal.

If they do not, they are caught off guard and are Surprised. If they're Surprised, they can't move or take an action on your first turn of the combat, and they can't take a reaction until that turn ends.

A member of a group can be surprised even if the other members aren't.

As you are trying to comprehend what you are seeing, two (2) black shapes descend at a freakish speed from above you on glistening webs. Their legs are spindly talons, their bodies slick with slime and reflecting the low light. They are moving eerily fast and you know they are not friendly. You probably just squished their babies and are ready to avenge their deaths.

Roll Initiative.

Further, all in the party must succeed a Wisdom saving throw or become **Frightened**.

Giant Spider Stat Block

GIANT SPIDER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d10+4)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +7

Senses Blindsight 10 Ft., Darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

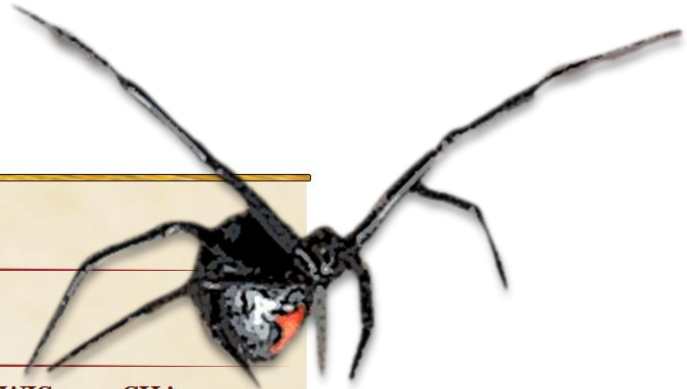
Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus (2d8) poison damage. The target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30/60 ft., one creature. The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).



If the spiders are killed, this is good place to pause. Doing so gives these upstart adventurers enough experience to level, since this is a Milestone progression adventure. Further, it will excite the players to get into more skills and getting more powerful, hopefully to keep them interested. Asking more experienced players to help others to level and choose skills, etc.

Intermission

This is a good time to take a break and get up and stretch. Likely, with this being a first for some of the players and depending on how long it took to generate characters and go over rules, it has been some time since starting the adventure. Grab snacks, refuel, hydrate (responsibly), drain the sea monster, then get back into it!

Break for 15 minutes.

Resume

We rejoin our intrepid adventurers having just slain a couple giant, wretched, and ferocious spiders in the cistern under town. Each of you have gained a level and are feeling accomplished, encouraged, and powerful. Some of you may even be feeling a bit invincible.

We left off with them at the end of the first level of the cistern and have come to a set of double stairs at Northern-most end of the passageway. You make out in the dark that each set of stairs on either side terminate at the lower level in a 5ft square.

Descending the stairs to the platform gives you a sudden sense of openness. You know at least that you have gone a full level lower in the cistern. Now, you feel it a bit cooler and the little light there is seems to be reflecting below you (facing south).

East and west is hard to make out but appear to be masonry or stone walkways of fine craftsmanship, but they are old and worn. Long, shooting bolts of off-white mold and tiny bunches of eerie fungi dot the walls and floors.

Immediately to the south, you feel the cool air and see the floor seeming to move. The walkways to your left and right are only about 5 ft wide.

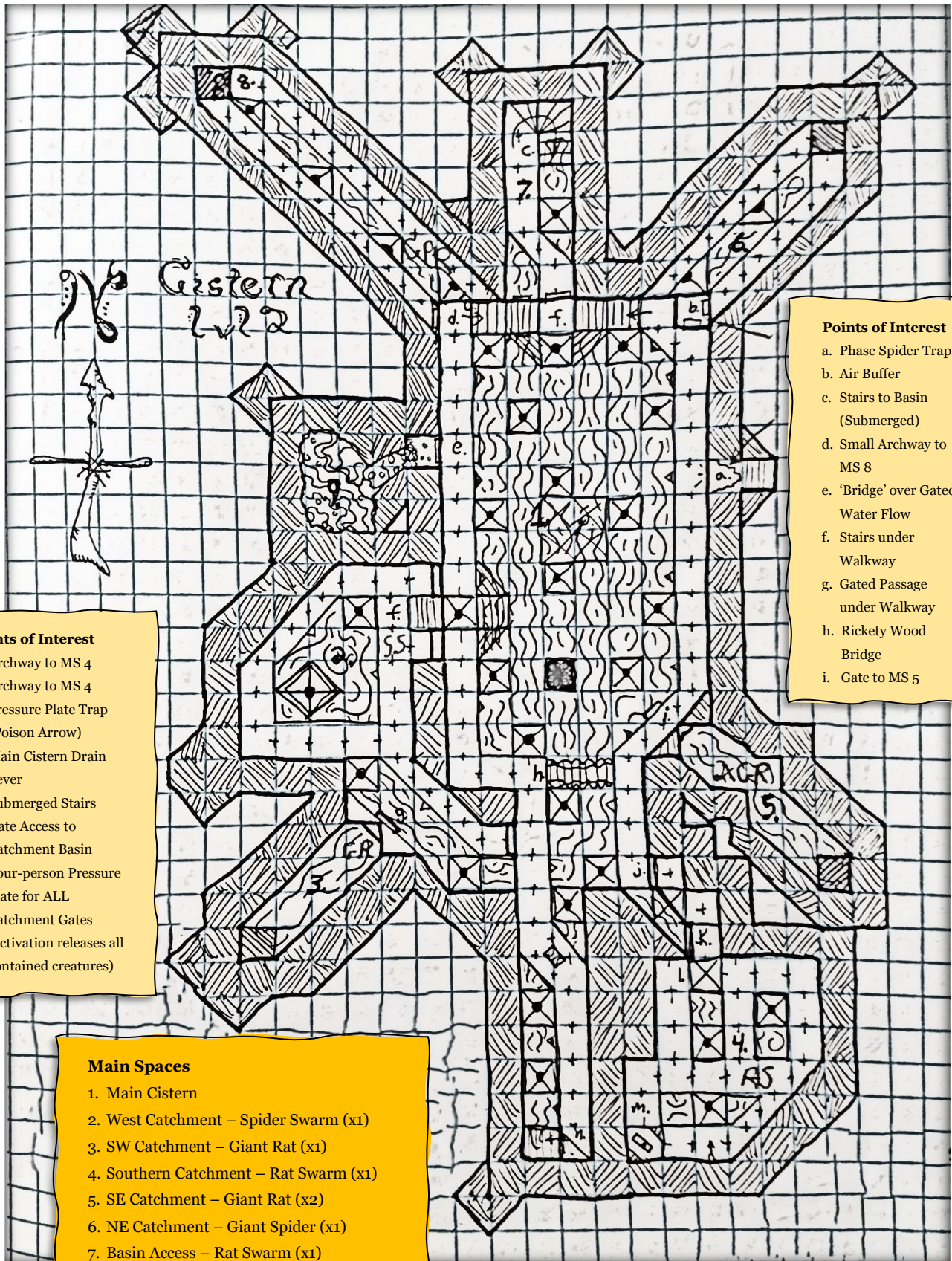
You can make out three floor-to-ceiling columns about 5 ft apart right at the bases of these steps.

With the light in here, you can only make out what is around in about a 30 ft radius, unaided. To the left and right (east and west) you can see walls and to the south nothing but more columns.

Before you, you only have one option – to venture into the water down partially submerged steps. On the perimeter of the water reservoir you can make out what looks like little ladders made of rope. These steps are set on either side of a 5 ft column.

Sounds seem to carry in here and you are unsure of what is down here. You can hear things which can't make out but seem to be not normal.

Cistern Level 2



Points of Interest

- j. Archway to MS 4
- k. Archway to MS 4
- l. Pressure Plate Trap (Poison Arrow)
- m. Main Cistern Drain Lever
- n. Submerged Stairs
- o. Gate Access to Catchment Basin
- p. Four-person Pressure Plate for ALL Catchment Gates (activation releases all contained creatures)

Points of Interest

- a. Phase Spider Trap
- b. Air Buffer
- c. Stairs to Basin (Submerged)
- d. Small Archway to MS 8
- e. 'Bridge' over Gated Water Flow
- f. Stairs under Walkway
- g. Gated Passage under Walkway
- h. Rickety Wood Bridge
- i. Gate to MS 5

Main Spaces

- 1. Main Cistern
- 2. West Catchment – Spider Swarm (x1)
- 3. SW Catchment – Giant Rat (x1)
- 4. Southern Catchment – Rat Swarm (x1)
- 5. SE Catchment – Giant Rat (x2)
- 6. NE Catchment – Giant Spider (x1)
- 7. Basin Access – Rat Swarm (x1)
- 8. NW Catchment – Giant Poisonous Rat (x1)
- 9. Ooze Lair – Phase Spider (x1)

Main Space 1.: Main Cistern

30ftx65ft (Can only make out about half that)

5 ft on outer edge is raised masonry walkway

Interior lower level is filled with about 3 ft of water-like substance

POI a.: Phase Spider Trap

25 ft down the eastern walkway, there exists a Phase Spider Trap - activates as first person walks by the space on the wall. As they do, the big spider smashes against the wall from behind, partially buckling it, and stabbing through it with a large claw.

There is this wide-open expanse in front of you. You can see to the other end. As you walk down the Eastern walkway, you see obvious marks on the ground. Something that don't look normal.

As you get to about 25ft down the path where these marks are, you hear a screech and a huge impact from the other side of the wall. Stones come flying out into the water and make a massive sound. Suddenly, a huge, long, pointed talon erupts from a crack in the wall.

Now, who was at the front of the party?

The person in the space must pass a Dexterity Saving Throw DC 15, with Disadvantage. On a fail, they take 1D8 Piercing Damage. If they take damage, they must also then make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target takes (4D8) poison damage, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Ok, I need you to roll for a Dexterity Saving Throw.

Pass:

As this huge talon come bursting through the wall, you probably jump a little as you are startled by it. The floor there is slick with something. The talon just misses your head as you tumble headfirst into the cistern's water.

Fail:

Today is not your day. Your foot likely gets stuck on a piece of rubble and you stop for just a second. The talon catches you in the shoulder and you feel icy piercing pain. You need to roll a D8. You take that much Piercing damage. But the pain doesn't end there. It seems to spread quickly and burns from the inside out. I need you to roll a D20 and do a Constitution Saving Throw (need 11).

(Failure – roll 4D8)

The burning spreads quickly as you try to shake it off. But it begins to overwhelm your senses. You take (result) poison damage.

(Successful – still roll 4D8, halve the result)

Your body reacts to the spreading pain and burning. You can feel it trying to fight off the pain. Likely you are concentrating on moving through the effects. You take (result) poison damage.

(If reduced to 0 Hit Points)

The attack from the creature was just so sudden and powerful. Between the talon stabbing your body and the spreading of the burning going quickly. In a short time, you are overcome and succumb to the virulence of the wound. You are Stable at 0 Hit Points, but you are Poisoned for 1 hour, even if Hit Points and are Paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Either Result:

Before you can really tell what that was, the talon is gone as fast as it appeared. Silence blankets the cistern as if nothing happened.

POI b.: Rat-filled Air Buffer Space

Air buffer between Main Space 1 and Main Space 6 - 5ftx5ft - 5 frenzied rats in it. The door opens without issue.

As you open these rotted doors, there is frenzied movement that stirs up in a flurry. You Hear screeching and there is a horrendous smell that hits you. Five frenzied rats come at your party.

Roll Initiative.

Use the [Rat Stat](#) block for each. If time is an issue, the party can opt to smash them without working out the combat and explode their bodies into smeared paste.

Either way, they proceed afterwards into [Main Space 6](#).

The door on the other side of these smeared rats open into a 5ft wide stone walkway. It goes back about 20ft NE and you can make out a grate at the end. There are two columns in the center that are partially submerged in water with another walkway on the opposite side. Other than a bad smell, the water, and some fungi, there is not much you can make out of interest here.

POI p.: Four-person Pressure Plate

Four-person pressure plate to activate entrance to activate all Gated Catchments releasing all contained creatures (MS3 – Giant Rat, MS5 – Giant Rat (x2), MS8 – Giant Poisonous Rat).

This is not at all visible to the naked eye, especially in the dark. The only way they would be able to notice it is to drain the main cistern basin. The four main stones are outlined a little dark and have heavy usage marks on them so look different.

The stones are 5x5 each and placed in a square. These are surrounded by 4 columns.

If the water is NOT drained, they really can't make out they are there through the darkness of the water. The only indicator is that the stones are slightly out of level and there is a ridge around them with the surrounding stones. Also, the NE stone is a bit wobbly. IF, by chance, one person stands on each of the stones at the same time, then all the Catchment gates are opened. Those are Points of Interest g, i, and d. These are the gates to Main Spaces 3, 5, and 8.

As your walking along, wading in the waist-high water, you are aware of being probably in the middle of what appears to be a large reservoir of water for the town. In the space you are in currently, your feet catch a ridge below the water on the floor of the reservoir. One of the stones under you appears to be a bit wobbly.

If the party wants to do any kind of check, a successful check (Arcana, History, and Investigation) only reveals it is a loose stone of old make and design that is not magical. A failed check of any of those reveals it is a loose stone and you can't really tell if it is magical, ancient, or special.

If the Party has drained the water using the lever in Main Space 4 (Point of Interest m), use this dialogue in place of the above:

Set in the floor of the main cistern reservoir, no empty of water and liquid, there appear to be a set of four large, square stones that are different. Their outlines are darker, and the edges are chipped and worn. The surfaces are scuffed, and one is angled oddly in its setting. All appear raised up from the rest of the floor a little bit.

As you walk closer you can see small gaps between these stones and the others are different.

So, you all are standing around these stones. They look and feel different. There is something about them. What do you do?

If they walk onto the stones:

Right, so you all are now on the stones. At least one on each stone. Immediately, you feel these massive stones under you begin to shift. And they start to recede into the ground, but they do not go slow. They start slowly at first, but then it is like the floor gives way and then stops after about a foot. The change drop in depth is enough to catch you off guard.

I need you all to do a Dexterity saving throw (DC 13 succeeds – failures, they are knocked prone.

Some of you are knocked off your feet and are now Prone.

At the same instant you here several loud noises. These sounds carry with them the grinding of metal with a fair amount of weight. They were quick reports of clangs at the end of these sounds and seemed like it could have been more than one source. It is hard to make it out due to the acoustics in the cistern.

Soon all is quiet for a moment.

The silence is shattered with a massive set of shrieks and the sound of scurrying.

Roll for Initiative.

If the party has not already killed them, the Giant Poisonous Rat, 2 Giant Rats, and a Giant Rat come rushing into the center of the cistern to attack what noises they heard.

Walking onto only one stone:

It seems to give a little but does not depress more than a half inch. Nothing else happens. You are surrounded by eerie stillness.

If the party does nothing, ignores the stones, or does not decide on an action:

A huge crack and bang are heard above your group and a massive shudder is felt. In a flash, a massive 10x10x10ft piece of the ceiling impacts right over the four stones with such a force that you are all nearly knocked off your feet. The sound is deafening and there is dust and rubble everywhere.

First you must role a Dexterity Saving throw. (DC 13 – succeeds, nothing happens; failures mean the person is knocked Prone)

Next, please role a Constitution Saving throw. (DC 12 – succeeds, nothing happens; failures the person is Deafened for 10 minutes)

Finally, you all need to roll a Wisdom saving throw. (DC 11 – succeeds, nothing happens; failures mean the person is Blinded for 5 minutes)

Right so some of you are fine but a little disoriented. Others are in not so great a shape.

You do notice that the huge piece of the ceiling seemed to sink lower than the level of the floor. It has gone down about a foot. Pieces of it have fallen off. The stones around it in the floor are cracked and buckled.

In the distance, you hear what sounds like metal on metal and several large clanks.

Soon all is quiet for a moment.

The silence is shattered a moment later with a massive set of shrieks and the sound of scurrying.

Roll for Initiative.

If the party has not already killed them, the Giant Poisonous Rat, 2 Giant Rats, and a Giant Rat come rushing into the center of the cistern to attack what noises they heard.

POI h.: Rickety Wood Bridge

This rickety, noisy bridge - across the basin (5ft x 10ft) – will have a chance of snapping and sending traversing members down into the water. As they walk, have someone roll a Survival Saving Throw. A DC 13 or less means the bridge succumbs to old age and too much weight. It breaks. The person falls into the basin and water. They take 1D4 Bludgeoning damage and are now soaking wet.

If they have not already encountered the Giant Rats in Main Space 5, roll a Passive Perception Check for the rats. If they succeed, they hear the noise and become enraged at the notion of intruders. They begin making louds scratching noises against their gate and are ready to strike at a moment's notice. Any attack by the party will be at Disadvantage.

If they had already been released, due to activating the pressure plate, they surprise the party and attack. They all suffer Disadvantage on their first attack round.

Because this is a small scene, I invite you to adlib the scene.

At the Western side of the bridge, about 15ft down, there is an opening in the wall. This is an alternate opening to Main Space 2.

Main Space 2.: Western Catchment

POI f.: Stairs under Walkway to Main Space 2

Submerged stairs to walkway and double archway to MS2, divided by 5ft of wall and a column. Square room, with one cut-in at an angle. It is about 30ft x 25ft. The central cut out has water, and the outer walls have 5ft wide walkway. This liquid has a different look, with a black sheen on it. Smells like oil.

About halfway due south of where you first came into the Cistern from the upper level, there is a pair of archways, separated by a 5-foot wall on the Western side of the reservoir (Main Space 1).

As you get close to these archways, which have no doors, you can make out steps submerged under that water.

There is an off smell emanating from the room.

The players may ascend those submerged stairs. If they do, they'll be able to make out the water had a different sheen to it. Also, they are confronted by the creatures in the space – the Spider Swarm.

If they key on the statement of the smell and how the water looks, most likely they will ask to do a check. Have them do an Investigation Check. A DC 12 succeeds. They can make out it is oil.

You have crossed the threshold of the archways into this new space. It is a room of about 20x35 ft. It would appear to be square, save for the northwestern corner having an angled wall across it.

At the center is a pool of water with a black substance over it (reveal that is the oil if they already did the check). It follows the shape of the room, with a perimeter of 5ft-wide walkways and is about 20 feet long and 15 feet wide.

You can feel an obvious draft of air coming from the ceiling of the room.

It is also obvious, as you walk in, that there is something you are most likely not wanting to see. Spider webs are everywhere. They are all along the ground and up to the ceiling. Some are across the pool of water as well. That portion seems to be coated in something black and shiny.

I need you all to roll for Initiative.

Place the Spider swarm in a space 5ft in from the south doorway. If people are in the same space, they will have Disadvantage on the 1st round of battle.

As you realize with horror what must be using this room as a lair, you spin around to try to locate the denizens of this wretched place. Something moves above you; you look up in horror as you see hundreds of tiny little spiders swarming towards your party from the ceiling on webs of glistening silk.

Swarm of Spiders



SWARM OF SPIDERS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistance Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Blindsight 10 Ft., passive Perception 8

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Spider Climb. The swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the swarm knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The swarm ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bites (swarm has more than half HP). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* (4d4) piercing damage.

Bites (swarm has half HP or less). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* (2d4) piercing damage.

Main Space 3.: SW Catchment

There is an iron grate, closed and under water; but it is open if the pressure plate stones are activated.

Long narrow corridor about 5ft wide, 20 ft long, slopes up at and is filled with about knee high or waist high water.

As you come south out of the room with all the spiders, the passageway angles southeast a little. On the easternmost side, there is the same type of 5ft wide walkway as you have seen throughout the cistern that borders all the water reservoirs. To the west, there are two columns, 15 apart, buffeting a 5ft wide and 10 long spill way. Above water, there is mostly a nondescript stone wall and more of that awful looking lichen, fungi, or mold. But just as your eyes hit the water level, you can make out the upper framework of some a grate.

POI g.

Grated entrance under walkway

If the gate is not open:

So, you can make out the gate that is in this walkway. Partially submerged, it is caked in oxidation and rust. Looking into the space beyond, all you can make out is a passageway heading back, a walkway on the side, more nasty looking water, and a giant rat.

If the gate is open:

As you pass this point, you can see an open passageway set in the water partially. It appears to have been gated. You can see the bottom plate of a set of bars tucked into the upper portion of the opening.

What do you do?

If the party wants to walk in:

Only one of you can fit through at one time and you'll have to stoop over and kneel a little. Just beyond the entrance, the passage opens taller and wider. As you do so, you see that this was a collection source of filter for water from above. At the far end, they are a smaller grate that is set in the angled wall near the floor. Nothing stirs in here, but

it seems like there was at one time. There are watery prints on the walkway and some pieces of fur.

Successful Nature Check (DC 14) can determine these were rat prints and that a rat likely was in here. If they have already faced the rats in the main cistern, they can do a further Survival check (DC 15) and ascertain that was one of the ones they killed.

If that gate is not open, the giant rat is still in there. It will need to complete a Passive Perception check. If it succeeds, it notices the party or person near the gate. It charges it and scares them, screeching, lunging, and snapping at the potential snack. If someone is in the same space as the gate, have them do a Dexterity Saving Throw (DC16). If they fail, they take attack damage normal to the Giant Rat Profile (bite profile).

As you are trying to get a better look, something huge and snarling crashes against the gate, teeth snarling, jaws snapping, saliva going all over. It is clearly the shape of the creature, the tail, and snout that this is a rat. It is of...unusual size.

It took notice as you came close and has attempted to take a piece out of you.

I need you to do a Dexterity Saving throw.

(Failed Saving Throw - 15 or less)

This was such a sudden and intense attack that you were just a second too slow getting out of the way. The rat gets a hold of you and just clamps down with those nasty teeth.

(Successful Saving Throw- 16 or above)

You got luck on that one. The noise and rushing of air gave you an instinctive notion to fall back from the gate. Just in time, as you see this monstrous, oversized, and nasty looking arm and toothy snout of something like a huge rat come at you from between the bars of the gate. It gnashes and hisses and snarls. The eyes look menacing yet dead at the same time. As it realized it cannot claim you as its target, it slowly recedes into the darkness behind it.

Main Space 4.: Southern Catchment

About 25ftx30ft, one far corner is angled out. 4 floor cutouts to water flowing underneath. 3 floor-to-ceiling columns spread around. Poison dart trap and rat swarm with lever.

To the south east end of the main basin of the cistern, past the rickety bridge, there is a narrow inset in the wall. To the west, there is a 5ft wide archway and to the southwest, angled about 45 degrees off that main archway, is another archway. Water flows beneath it to the right in about a 5ft wide flow.

You can move into both archways, but they funnel into the same walkway that is only 5ft wide and goes directly south into a larger opening.

POI j.

Archway to MS4

The archway here is the first you encounter. It is only about a foot deep and only can fit a single creature through at a time. The stones are old and rough-hewn. Some have fallen out and broken apart. It opens into a very small space about 5ft square. It almost looks like you can't proceed until you look around and see it continues around and south east.

POI k.

Archway to MS4

This archway is the second of the two to you could make out in the dark. You have had to wade a little through the water to get here and then sort of jump and into it. About 10ft separate the two archways. Both are made roughly the same and look alike. After you pass through this one, you see back due north to what looks like the first archway. East is a wall, west is the opening to the water outside the archway, but you don't see it in front of you. Due south, there is an open archway.

What do you do?

If they move forward, have the first person activate the trap in the next section.

If they are checking, work out the needed DC to succeed in identifying it. The profile is below. If they fail, it only looks like an uneven block of stone. The trap is triggered on the

first person to put their full weight on the first block inside the room. If they succeed, work out the DC check needed to disarm it. Have them find an iron spike on the floor.

Trap 1.

DETECTING AND DISABLING A TRAP

Usually, some element of a trap is visible to careful inspection. Characters might notice an uneven flagstone that conceals a pressure plate, spot the gleam of light off a trip wire, notice small holes in the walls from which jets of flame will erupt, or otherwise detect something that points to a trap's presence.

A trap's description specifies the checks and DCs needed to detect it, disable it, or both. A character actively looking for a trap can attempt a Wisdom (Perception) check against the trap's DC. You can also compare the DC to detect the trap with each character's passive Wisdom (Perception) score to determine whether anyone in the party notices the trap in passing. If the adventurers detect a trap before triggering it, they might be able to disarm it, either permanently or long enough to move past it. You might call for an Intelligence (Investigation) check for a character to deduce what needs to be done, followed by a Dexterity check using thieves' tools to perform the necessary sabotage.

Any character can attempt an Intelligence (Arcana) check to detect or disarm a magic trap, in addition to any other checks noted in the trap's description. The DCs are the same regardless of the check used. In addition, *Dispel Magic* has a chance of disabling most magic traps. A magic trap's description provides the DC for the ability check made when you use *Dispel Magic*.

In most cases, a trap's description is clear enough that you can adjudicate whether a character's Actions locate or foil the trap. As with many situations, you shouldn't allow die rolling to override clever play and good planning. Use your Common sense, drawing on the trap's description to determine what happens. No trap's design can anticipate every possible action that the characters might attempt.

You should allow a character to discover a trap without making an ability check if an action would clearly reveal the trap's presence. For example, if a character lifts a rug that conceals a pressure plate, the character has found the trigger and no check is required.

Foiling traps can be a little more complicated. Consider a trapped Treasure chest. If the chest is opened without first pulling on the two handles set in its sides, a mechanism inside fires a hail of poison needles toward anyone in front of it. After inspecting the chest and making a few checks, the characters are still unsure if it's trapped. Rather than simply open the chest, they prop a Shield in front of it and push the chest open at a distance with an iron rod. In this case, the trap still triggers, but the hail of needles fires harmlessly into the Shield.

Traps are often designed with mechanisms that allow them to be disarmed or bypassed. Intelligent Monsters that place traps in or around their lairs need ways to get past those traps without harming themselves. Such traps might have hidden levers that disable their triggers, or a Secret door might conceal a passage that goes around the trap.

POISON DARTS

Mechanical trap

When a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, poison-tipped darts shoot from spring-loaded or pressurized tubes cleverly embedded in the surrounding walls. An area might include multiple pressure plates, each one rigged to its own set of darts.

The tiny holes in the walls are obscured by dust and cobwebs, or cleverly hidden amid bas-reliefs, murals, or frescoes that adorn the walls. The DC to spot them is 15. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a character can deduce the presence of the pressure plate from variations in the mortar and stone used to create it, compared to the surrounding floor. Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating. Stuffing The Holes with cloth or wax prevents the darts contained within from launching.

The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, releasing four darts. Each dart makes a ranged Attack with a +8 bonus against a random target within 10 feet of the pressure plate (vision is irrelevant to this Attack roll). (If there are no Targets in the area, the darts don't hit anything.) A target that is hit takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

If they checked. Have them do an Investigation check (DC 15 as noted above).

Ok, I need you to do an Investigation check.

(Failure)

You only can make out the lines and edging of this stone is slightly more worn than the other surrounding, but nothing more off than that.

(Success)

So yeah, your keen observation has really benefitted you. As you look closely you can make out a very clear difference in the stone ahead of you and the surrounding. It is uneven and there is a clear gap. As you gingerly test it, it gives a little, indicating it is most likely a pressure plate. Also, not too far from the anomalous stone, you make out in the dim light what looks like a small iron spike.

What do you do?

As described in the Trap profile above, they can jam the mechanism with the iron spike, disabling it. They only need to make a DC 10 Strength test. If they fail, they just aren't strong enough to wedge it in. If they get a 1, it breaks off and flies into the PC trying to do it causing 1 piercing damage. If they success, it is successfully disabled.

(Successful)

You use the handy iron spike and skillfully, without triggering the pressure plate, wedge in into the gap around an edge. Testing it tells you it won't budge if walked on. It is disabled.

(Failure)

Today is not your day. You just seemed to lack the leverage or strength to get into the gap. It won't move.

(Extreme Failure)

Now you've done it. What gods have you angered? As you try to wedge the spike in the gap to stop the plate from moving, it appears to have been already worn or brittle. But it is too late to stop. Once you begin to apply ample pressure to wedge it in, it snaps with an earsplitting noise. It sends shard of metal into your face doing 1 piercing damage.

If they did not check for traps and activate the poison darts, check and see who was first in the room. They activated the trap and will be the one hit by the darts as the space is too small to spread them around to other random targets.

So, as you stride confidently through the archway to the southern opening, you make out a decent size room with an angled wall at the south east corner and 3 columns like in the other rooms and main cistern basin. Suddenly, you notice the floor give a few inches, here a latch and spring noise, and the sound of what sounds like an arrow releasing arrows. You don't know where they come from, but you know you have just triggered a trap of some kind. It all happens so fast.

Perform the ranged attack as described above, adding the +8 modifier. This must be done four times per the profile for each dart.

If the roll to hit and surpass their AC fails, just say the darts in the mechanism misfired and while you hear the sounds, nothing comes out you if done at all at one time. If not If the darts hit, resolve the damage as indicated above. Each does 2 Piercing damage. Then, roll the Constitution saving throw (DC 15) and take 11 poison damage if failed, or 5 if successful.

(Successful Dart Attack)

From several directions, you hear them before you see them. Darts spring at you and embed themselves into your flesh, sending burning pain through your body.

You take 2 Piercing damage per dart that hit you.

As it sets in that you were hit with these awful instruments of pain, you notice that the burning doesn't stop. Some of it seems to intensify. You do notice these are covered in a sticky substance.

I need you to do a Constitution Saving Throw. You need a 15.

(15 or above)

For each dart that hit you, you also take 5 Poison damage and are Poisoned. Not a good day.

(14 and below)

This day just is not a good one. The gods are not favoring you today. Each of those darts were just a little too potent for you. Each of them does an additional 11 Poison damage to you.

If someone is taken to 0 Hit Points, they are Unconscious instead of dying outright. If this happens, have people understand they can heal them, stabilize them, or use a spell if they have on to cure the poison.

If no one does this, have them roll Death Saving Throws as normal.

While this is happening, the rest of you realize this is not exactly a quiet situation. It has attracted the attention of more denizens of the cistern.

I need the rest of you to roll for Initiative.

You see from out of the darkness a swarm of rats pulsating and blanketing the floor of this room. They are clearly agitated and look off, likely hungry for food and ready to attack. They don't take long before they are upon your party in a large number.

Swarm of Rats

SWARM OF RATS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 24 (7d8-7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistance Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Darkvision 30 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites (swarm has more than half HP). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* (2d6) piercing damage.

Bites (swarm has half HP or less). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* (1d6) piercing damage.



POI m.

Lever for draining the entire cistern basin. Important, this one. Make sure they interact with it.

This room has taken been intense. Luckily, you see something in the far south west corner of the room. It is a protrusion from the floor. It is set at an angle about 30 degrees and is roughly 4 feet long.

Right now, you are about 10 feet from it, but you would need to get closer in the dim light to really know what it is.

So, you are now closer as you walk towards it and can easily see it is a lever.

What do you do?

At this point, people will ask to do all kinds of checks. Use this table to determine results and explain them. This is more efficient than writing out each response verbatim.

Skill Check	DC Needed	Outcome
Arcana	12	Success – This is not a magical device. Failure – This looks normal, but you can't really decipher as magical or not.
History	15	Success – You know from the looks of this that it is a cistern drainage lever. They used to build these in the olden days in case of water overflow, for cleaning the cisterns, or other needed cistern maintenance. (20) – pulling this one in the right direction will most certainly drain this cistern as well. Failure – It looks like a lever and you thought you heard about these before but are not sure why it sounds familiar.
Investigation	11	This is an abnormal device in the cistern. You can see the rod is inserted into a half-moon device set in the floor at an angle. On

		the base of the rod, there is a faint inscription that is the image of a water droplet.
Nature	5	<p>Success – You realize this is not an animal or a natural formation.</p> <p>Failure – It has a long shaft, with a knob on the top, and a fat base. You think it could be a giraffe.</p>
Religion	10	<p>Success – This device is clearly mechanical in nature has no religious meaning.</p> <p>Failure – It could be a shrine of some sort of just a lever. You really don't know.</p>

So, now you have had time to study this device a little bit more. It is sitting there like a red button that says do not push. Do you attempt to move the lever?

I need one of you to do an Athletics check.

In order to get it to move, they need a DC 17 to move it. If they fail, nothing happens, but it doesn't budge. Have someone else help or try on their own. Have it move after the 2nd unsuccessful attempt, on the third try.

(Success)

You strain a lot as you attempt to move this old, corroded, and stuck lever. Just as your eyes and veins in your head are about to pop, you feel it give. It was slow to move at first, but then breaks free and suddenly swings into the wide-right position.

(Failure)

This device is just too corroded for you to move it on your own. You may need some help or a stronger person to try.

If they get the lever to move, the process of draining begins in a tumult that shakes the entire cistern.

A moment after the level is activated, you feel a large shudder in the ground and a hear a huge bang. It has elements of metal and stone to it. The floor begins to shake and then quickly grows to a violent shake. When that subsides, you hear the mad rush of water like a torrent in a sea. There seems to be a flow of water now that is rushing from the cistern. This room's water can be seen to be moving towards the center of the cistern. Within a few minutes, the basin of this room under the walk-path is empty of water. What remains is a sticky, grimy, basin of mineral deposits, bacterial growth, and other unidentified things that have thrived below the water's surface. Quiet resumes in the air after about 10 minutes of this process and the shudders slowly subside. All that can be heard are drips of remaining pools of water emptying into channels of stone.

Main Space 5.: SE Catchment

25ft x 5ft at an angle off main cistern

All submerged if not drained. If drained, follow the event for the creatures coming out.

POI i.

Submerged entry grate to MS5. Contains 2 x Giant Rats if they were not already discovered and released.

Empty / Open

Now that the water has been drained, you can see things that once were below water level. Here, you can see a grate or gated passageway into a space beyond. The gate is open. No sounds come from there and you can't see anything moving.

Still Full of Rats / Gate Closed

Below the walkway, you can make out what looks like a small gate or grate that leads to a passage beyond. As you lean down to look closer, a loud crash meets your face as large, beast-like rats slam their bodies and faces against the gate bars. They claw and gnash their teeth as they attempt to attack you.

The party can ignore them. If they attempt to attack, they have disadvantage on all attacks.

Otherwise, they would need to activate the four-stone pressure plate in order to open their gate.

Main Space 6.: NE Catchment

20ft x 15, with walkway on each side

1 x Giant Spider

All around you are twinkling sparkles. The room is so small and narrow that you can't avoid touching the material causing the sparkling reflections in the dim light. You can clearly make out that it looks like a clear, thin, yet strong thread. The strands closest to you are vibrating as you and your party emerge into the space.

A huge, eight-legged silhouette descends into the middle of your group.

Roll Initiative.

(Run an encounter with 1 Giant Spider)

Main Space 7.: Northern Catchment

30ft x 10ft, walkway that zigzags and stairs at the northernmost end that descend to waterway
2 x Rat Swarms

Roll Initiative.

You've not had a good day.

A couple swarms of rats come shambling towards you at high speed from the end of the passage.

Main Space 8.: NW Catchment

40ft x 15ft, at an angle, ft wide waterway with walkway on both sides.

POI d.

Small archway to MS8/basin

Giant Poisonous Rat

Like giant Rat but uses poison characteristics of Giant Poisonous Snake with attacks (something like Cons Saving Throw DC of 11 or take 1D12 poison damage). Also has 100% more hit points. And aura of flies that give Disadvantage on melee attacks up close.

Giant Poisonous Rat – Medium Beast, Unaligned

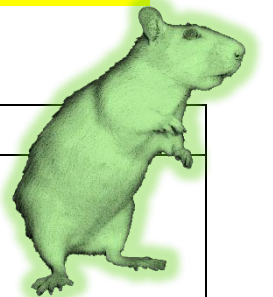
Armor Class – 15

Hit Points – 21 (2d8 +3)

Speed – 35ft., swim 25ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 13 (+1) **CON** 13 (+1) **INT** 2 (-4) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2 **Senses** passive Perception 12, Darkvision 60 ft. **Challenge** 1/2 (75 XP)



Traits

Keen Smell: The rat has advantage on [Wisdom](#) (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics: The rat has advantage on an [Attack](#) roll against a creature if at least one of the rat's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't [Incapacitated](#).

Miasma of Flies: A small cloud of flies and noxious fumes surround the Giant Poisonous Rat and extends about it in a sphere 5 ft in radius. Any creature attacking the rat from within that cloud suffers from Disadvantage. Any ranged attacked from outside of that must subtract 1 from all to hit rolls. Further, any creature ending its turn within the cloud must make a Constitution Saving Throw DC 11 or take 1D4 Poison Damage or half as much on a successful one. If they fail, they are also Poisoned for 2 minutes.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus (3d6) poison damage. The target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Anyone taken down to 0 hit points is stable but is poisoned for 1 hour and is paralyzed for 1 hour in this way.

Main Space 9.: Ooze Lair

10x15 ovoid cavern

Covered in neon slime

5 ft passage to main chamber

With the water drained, you can make out some of the submerged water passageways. This specific one is about 20ft south on the western wall. Just beyond the open grate, you can make out a slight glow.

As you enter the opening, which requires one of you at a time to crawl through, you notice an entrance that opens into a square space high enough to stand in, but only 5ft wide. It is roughhewn, and not stonework like in the cistern. About the floor are a few rocks loosely piled up. In the western wall, the glow is brighter and there is an opening of a caved in wall. The light fades but you can see it goes back at least 5ft at an angle to the south. This passageway is more cave-like and only allows one person in single file pass through, although much higher above.

On the floor, you can make out some of the glowing substance running through the debris and out into the cistern.

Once you come through the opening, this cavern opens. The glow is more abundant and is concentrated on the walls and the floors. This space is more of an oval set at an angle from about northwest to southeast. The space covers the area of about 15ft by 10ft and goes up into darkness. You can't really see where the ceiling is, but it looks like there is webbing glistening in the dim glowing light. The floor is more of a sluice of that glowing, yellow, green fluid. There is a slightly sweet, foul odor to it. Along the walls are what appear to be sacks of webbing. There are three on the left and two on the right.

As you realize what you have walked into, the air in front of you suddenly turns cold, there is a in-rushing gush, and a snap of light, with the sound of a clanging. Where once empty space stood, now looms a large, iridescent blue and gold arachnid monster. It rises on its legs as it takes all you in its many eyes.

Need you all to roll Initiative.

POI e.

'bridge' over gated waterflow (submerged entrance)

Phase Spider

See above

PHASE SPIDER

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d10+5)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses Darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ethereal Jaunt. As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus (4d8) poison damage. The target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target takes the poison damage, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

If the Guard was taken in the first Phase Spider Trap, he is in one of the web sacks. On a DC 15 (DM only), success means he is alive and can be saved. On a Fail, he is dead, but his body can be saved and brought back. The other sacks are desiccated rats. One of the sacks of webs releases treasure if cut open. 1 Great Sword; 1 Round Shield; 1 Helm; 60 Gold; 1 Pair Leather Boots; 1 Pair Leather Bracers; 1 Ruby.

It makes sense while playing the Phase Spider, as the DM, to highlight the Phasing aspect. Make it take a turn to disappear only to return near or behind someone. Make it attack

and disappear. If the party kills the spider, it explodes in a glorious ring of expanding goop and all are covered in it. It is not poisonous. Just gross. If they don't, a rock from the ceiling falls on it as they are close to death and squishes it. Act of A god...that sort of thing. No TPK.

At the same time, light shines all around and the glowing gloop in the cavern begins evaporating quickly. Soon, it is gone, and all traces of the spider have evaporated.

As you take the final blow on the spider, there is a sudden shudder from its body. In an instant it explodes in an expanding ring of goop that showers all of you in the party in guts, slime, and weird liquid.

While this happens, something like a huge exhale can be heard in the area and light consumes the room. Soon after, you can see again and the glowing gloop begins evaporating away.

In a few minutes, there is no more any signs of the previous arachnid inhabitant of this lair. The webbing begins to disintegrate and disappear into floating wisps.

Looking around, you begin to understand what may have caused the poisoning of the water. That glowing liquid likely was corrupting the water. Now that it is gone and the contaminated water has been drained, it need only be refilled to clear out and replenish the water for the town. What do you do?

If the party returns to the drain lever and pull it again, the cistern begins to refill with fresh water. If not, they return to the surface with an empty, but clean cistern. Not a big deal, but a bit of a jerk move.

If they return to the Captain, they get the reward after explaining the things they witnessed. If they rescued the Guard, they get a bonus 5,000 GP. If they began the refilling process, he cheers your name and gives you honorary membership in the guard for saving him the trouble of going back down the cistern. Ad lib this final dialogue as it may not go exactly one-way o another. Congratulate your party and tell them they all gained a level.

Final Thoughts

After completing this first version, I am hoping all are aware that for now, this piece is a labor of love. It is a passion project. There is a bit of intentionally tongue in cheek cheese factor to the images included.

With it being this long, which I was not expecting, I salute any and all that make it through the entire thing without too much struggle.

In this end, this is, as I stated, an experiment. It is a guideline more than an exact or precise script as things never go accordingly when a DM, from what I have experienced.

That said, I feel good about the result as it should provide for some fun moments, rewarding play, and enable quick start up and easy flow with the directions given.

To the newly minted DMs, I think this is a fun way to practice. To the seasoned DMs, I apologize for I am sure I got so much technical things wrong.

My goal was to create as much of a mission and story for a one shot as possible more than adhering to all technical aspects of play.

I plan on taking feedback and revising this into a more polished version after this "beta" testing is complete.

There is a link to the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FLSMQKJ>.

This will be open until May of 2020.

Thank you for all your time and help in this process.

May all your rolls enrage the party.

Best,

Tim Kaney

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