

**SC-2**

# The Ooze Pits of Jonas Gralk

**A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE**  
**BY JON MARR**

COMPATIBLE WITH  
**DCC  
RPG**



Purple Sorcerer Games

# The Ooze Pits of Jonas Gralk

A Level 0-1 DCC RPG Adventure

## Introduction

The Great City is old and faded, a pale reflection of its former glory. Life is a challenge for most, but for the weak and unconnected, the city is a place of unrelenting hardship harboring neither hope nor promise of escape.

*With one exception: the Sunken City.*

Most find death in the crumbling ruins that stretch beyond sight into the mists southward; once rich districts now claimed by swamp and dark denizens. But for the desperate few, the ruins offer treasures the Great City denies them: fortune, glory, and a fighting chance!

## Overview

The Ooze Pits of Jonas Gralk is a beginning or 'funnel' Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG adventure for 16 0-level characters or 8 1st-level characters. (The adventure is also easily converted to your favorite 'old school' system.) Players running 0-level characters should have 3-4 each, as casualties are part of the fun!

**This adventure respects your initiative. If you think an encounter is too easy, increase the challenge! Too difficult? Just drop the number of foes. If a particular enemy doesn't fit in your campaign, replace them with a logical substitute with the same stats. Always bend the text to your vision!**

## Sunken City Background

For centuries the Great City has shifted north in hops and spurts as encroaching swamp swallowed the southern extents of the city. The ruins now stretch south for nearly 30 miles, with endless sunken avenues, courts and towers. Structures grow gradually more dilapidated the further one travels from the city, but pockets of higher ground remain in all areas, and the buildings in these locations have weathered the years somewhat more successfully – but these places also attract the worst sort of swamp denizens.

A powerful teleportation device, **The Sending Stone**, stands at the northern end of the ruins, connected to many other stones scattered throughout the city's rubble. The fearsome demon that powers the stone—*Sender*—transports adventuring parties for his own dark purposes between the stones, providing quick access to danger! In this adventure, Sender teleports the party to the humble hamlet of Slither's End.

For much more information about the Sunken City, check out adventure SC-1, **Perils of the Sunken City!**

## Adventure Overview

The Ooze Pits of Jonas Gralk is broken into three parts:

### Part One: Slither's End

Part one details the hamlet of Slither's End, where play begins and adventurers can learn about local troubles, uncovering clues about the grave digger Jonas Gralk and the many other mysteries that surround the village. Players will also experience a lively fair where they can test their skills, followed by a sharp battle with strange new enemies.

### Part Two: Dangers of the Swamp

Many horrors haunt the swamp between the players and their final objective. A side journey to sack the keep of a river warlord offers useful booty and potential allies. The party will likely need this aid to surmount the many terrors of the swamp awaiting them!

### Part Three: The Ooze Pits

Finally the players will confront the dark evil that has been destroying Slither's End from within. To defeat the loathsome power, and uncover its true identity and purpose, the party must successfully prosecute a large scale battle that will test the players' wills, planning skills, and mettle in battle.

## The Appendix Booklet

Players can overhear many rumors and uncover a number of clues as they explore Slither's End. All of the rumors and clues (and a number of other cool lists) can be found in the separate appendix booklet PDF that accompanies this adventure.

The rumors are all separated onto individual strips to make it easy for you to cut them out. Then just hand them out to players during play whenever it seems appropriate. Clues are organized in a checklist: just check off each clue as the players uncover them.

In addition there are adventure notes, pre-gen villagers that could be used as replacement characters, and more!

Print out and explore the appendix booklet: there's lots in there that will make running The Ooze Pits of Jonas Gralk easier.

## Credits

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# Part I: Slither's End

## Slither's End: Under Siege

Though located deep in a forbidding swamp, for most of its history Slither's End has been an idyllic place, marked by friendly folks, reliable crops, and competent leadership. But troubles of various sorts have descended on the village in recent months, and the hamlet is now in a state of crisis.

From without, their economic lifeline to the greater world is threatened on two fronts. **The Slither**, a twisting ribbon of land that makes its way nearly ten miles through the swamp to the town's nearest neighbor—**Rook's Crossing**—is a troublesome path at the best of times. But now the way is threatened by a new and unfathomable enemy: the **Mist Men**, who seem to strike without cause or reason. Additionally, the only other easy passage to the outside world, **The Flow**, a swift flowing river located just north of town, is now the lair of a gang of river pirates. **Wart Redhelm and his River Princes** lord over The Flow from their looming river-side keep, exacting crushing tolls that threaten to bring the town to its knees.

If these challenges weren't enough, danger stalks Slither's End from within as well. Recently, members of the community began to vanish in the night, without signs of struggle or distress. Over a score have been lost, and most mystifying of all, every missing soul is a second-born son or daughter of the community. A hamlet the size of Slither's End is ill-equipped to absorb such losses, and the muck melon fields stretching to the south of town are lying increasingly untended. **Jonas Gralk**, the town's Grave digger was seen dragging his mother out of town to the north three evenings ago, and all suspicion rests in his direction.

Locals have reached a point of desperation. In their quietest moments of reflection, they have finally come to a difficult realization: ***Darn it all: it looks like our unholy pact with the ravenous snake god Salissak just isn't up to snuff this time!***

## Slither's End: A History

It wasn't always this way. In generations past, the sturdy folk of Slither's End humbly followed The Lady of the Harvest. Prosperous and forward looking, the town possessed a well-drilled militia garrisoned in a tidy stone tower at the entrance to The Slither. Muck melons, the local crop, proved remarkably nutritious and bountiful, and most importantly to the economy, provided a ready food source for the local pig industry. Lucrative exports of pork paid for the robust local garrison: the garrison insured the swamp-ridden fields and roads to market were cleared of threats. All was well in Slither's End.

Eventually markets began to suffer as portions of The Slither began to sink into the swamp. New threats also arose along the river, as did increasing dangers encroaching from the swamp. As profits dried up the garrison dwindled, and the stalwart keep began to decay, eventually toppling into the swamp. Fewer patrols resulted in more lost crops and livestock, causing further economic hardship until finally the town was caught in a downward spiral from which it could not escape.

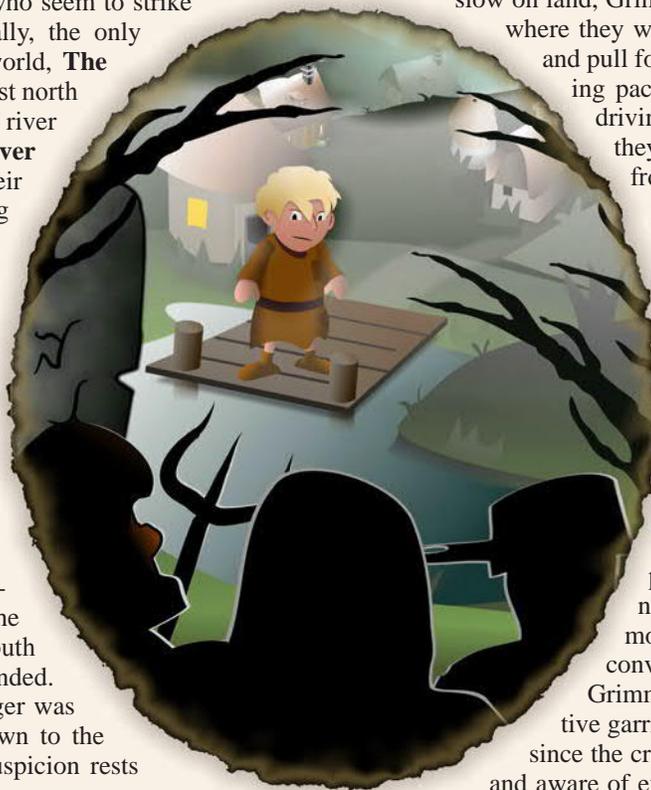
## Kindly Folks and Snake Gods

One of the new threats facing the town were a race of diminutive amphibious beings known as **Grimmels**. Relatively weak and slow on land, Grimmels are deadly foes in the swamp, where they wrap their dextrous feet in the weeds and pull foes under the murky water in swarming packs. They are extremely effective at driving out most threats from the swamps they control. (As well as poaching hogs from terrified farmers.)

Most Grimmels are incapable of human speech, but each tribe of 3-4 packs has a single shaman of greater intelligence. A local trapper named **Houtnard** eventually made contact with the shaman called **Rat Feaster**. A deal was struck to provide a supply of pork to the creatures in return for an end to the attacks.

One step led to another... first a payoff, then a regular allotment. Finally Houtnard, who was spending more and more time with Rat Feaster, convinced the local town council that the Grimmels could prove an even more effective garrison than the old militia in its prime, since the creatures were at home in the swamps and aware of every threat. But such a commitment from the Grimmels would not come cheaply. Their shaman demanded a show of respect to **Salissak**, their dark snake god. At first only harmless rites were performed during the *Feast of Flies*. Then ritual hunts during the *Stalking Season*. And finally, when the town was wholly dependant on the Grimmels for their security, a sacrifice was demanded: one villager each year to act as a welding bond between the two peoples.

Caught in an impossible situation, the people of Slither's End agreed. What is one life in the face of many? Each Winter's End for the past 15 years an unlucky villager has been lowered into the pool at the center of town, where a host of Grimmel hatchlings swarm, dragging the offering to the depths. The older folks of Slither's End cloak their shame in fantasy, postulating that the sacrifice is only being escorted away to enjoy glorious feasts in the underground halls of mighty Salissak! The younger folk harbor no such illusions. Their empty stares and deep connection to the swamp hint at a darker future, when in a generation's time Slither's End will no longer be such a friendly and welcoming place.



# Slither's End



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## Overview of Events in Slither's End

After arriving at the Sending Stone and making their way to the hamlet, adventurers will be greeted warmly by the city council. If the party consists of a large mob of 0-level players, a subset of the party (perhaps one character from each player) will be invited to take a guided tour of the town, while the remainder can take part in the fair's activities.

At the end of the tour allow the characters to gather information and test their skills in various challenges at the fair, detailed in **Encounter S-1: The Fair**. This could prove a useful time for the players to learn about each other's characters and their strengths. When you feel your players have had enough of the festivities, trigger **Encounter S-2: The Mist Men Attack**. This sharp battle will provide a nice contrast to the information gathering that comes before and after the conflict.

After the Mist Men have been driven off, the grateful town will throw a feast in the adventurers' honor, followed by a discourse on the dangers the town faces and a desperate plea for help. If the players take up the offer, they can use the following morning to gather more information, then head north into the dangers of the swamp on the trail of Jonas Gralk and the missing villagers.

### Mood in the Town

Almost all the adults the party encounter will initially seem distracted by unspoken concerns, but extremely friendly, perhaps displaying too much forced bonhomie. Young adults, with few exceptions will seem distant and unconcerned, avoiding eye contact but responding politely when spoken to. Young children will stare right through the adventurers, and rarely if ever speak or acknowledge the party in any way.

### The Adventurers Arrive

When the players arrive read or paraphrase the following:

*After what seems minutes lost in the swirling dark of the Sending Stone's transporting magic, you emerge into dull light. You find yourself on a small island surrounded on three sides by open swamp. The air is thick with the fetid fumes of the mire, and low mists run along the surface obscuring vision beyond a few hundred yards. Ahead of you across a thin strip of open water the ground rises leisurely above a small dock, a cluster of buildings and a large colorful tent. Pennants flap from tall poles, and the distant strains of pipe and viol echo across the water. It appears a fair of some sorts is underway in this hamlet in the heart of the swamp. A solitary boy in rough peasant garb stands mutely on the dock, but he pays no attention to your calls. Instead he gazes intently at the strip of water between you and the town, slowly shaking his head from side to side.*

Slither's End sits in a very old section of the Sunken City. In ancient times these lands rested near the city's border, but now they have been completely conquered by the swamp for generations. The highlands of the town itself are dry, but everywhere else is a twisting maze of hidden waterways, tall grass, and clinging muck.

## Key Figures of Slither's End

**Jonas Gralk:** Town grave digger. Lives with his mother above their home/shop located just south of the village graveyard. A loner, Jonas is now viewed by most as the chief suspect in the recent disappearances since Onus One-Arm and others witnessed him dragging his mother into the swamps three evenings ago.

**Clotilda Desiré Gralk:** Herbalist and proprietor of "Clotilda's Flower Pot". A quiet woman with a long memory.

**Mayor Beecham:** Head of the city council. Owns the muck-melon/pork processing complex on the south edge of town.

**Miriam Pendreyson:** City council member and tailor. Head of the Slither's End Tourism Board and town greeter.

**Grimchops Leatherman:** City council member and tanner. Miriam's right hand dwarf.

**Vokas the Fire Mage/Man Ape:** Eccentric old mage who believes he's been transmuted into the form of a fearsome giant ape. Wanders the town in nothing but a loin cloth and a smile. Not to be taken lightly.

**Onus One-Arm:** Manager of the processing complex. Injured years ago by a crocodillo in the swamp. Heavy drinker.

**Tollybogs the Giant Halfling:** City council member and proprietor of the Asp and Tattles, the only inn or tavern within ten miles. Serves a limited clientele in quality. Though Tollybogs will regale the party with all sorts of 'halfling blarney', in every way he looks like a normal man. (A full listing of Tollybogs' rustic wisdom can be found in **Appendix D: Tollybogs!**)

### The Tour

After the party crosses from the island to the town, Miriam and Grimchops will immediately descend upon the adventurers with broad smiles and lots of glad-handing. Miriam will express suspicious wonder if anyone refers to the Sending Stone, but will soon demonstrate delight about the party's arrival:

*It's so wonderful to have guests at this special time! Welcome to our humble village, where our borders are small, but our hearts are big! They say there's 'no end' to the hospitality you can receive in Slither's End, and by golly, I think they're right!*

She will insist that select members of the party take a quick tour of town, filled with enthusiastic burbling about the wonders of Slither's End, but little mention of its trials and struggles.

The tour proceeds as follows: Fair area; melon/pork complex; central pool; the fallen keep; the Asp and Tattles; the Mayor's Manse; the bridges north; and finally a return to the Fair. A complete list of quotes describing the various town landmarks can be found in **Appendix C: Slither's End on Five Smiles a Day!**

### Key Locations

**Area S-1 – The Stone:** The monolith here looks like a smaller version of the Sending Stone used to travel from Mustertown. When the party is ready to return, placing their hands on the stone for ten seconds will transport them back to the Proving Stone near the Great City.

The locals fear and avoid the stone, thinking it is cursed with some type of dark death magic. (Since no one has ever returned after being transported away.) Two cages mounted on poles hold the rotted remains of diseased pigs to warn children away.

The strip of water between the small island and the village is narrow but deep. Players will likely need to swim to cross. Grimmels are already swimming to the waters surrounding the island, detecting the strange new vibrations and scents, but the boy shaking his head on the dock will keep them at bay as long as the party is peaceful. Players might detect dark shapes moving in the murky water, but the Grimmels will keep their distance.

**Area S-2 – Town Fair:** The annual fair is normally a joyous time for the locals, but the recent disappearances have tempered things. Known locally as “All Fang’s Friday” the banners festooning the pavilion and tent declare “Happy Harvest Hoedown”. The adventurers can participate in many events at the fair, described in **Encounter S-1: The Fair**.

**Area S-3 – The Pool:** This deep pool is central to the worship of Salissak. Grimel hatchling grow to maturity in its depths, fed by a steady supply of fresh pork (and occasional villager). The water is stained a deep red and looks disturbingly like a churning cauldron of blood. The alter extends over the pool, where a cage hangs by crimson-stained chains from a boom arm. A large wheel mounted to the crane raises and lowers the cage.

If asked about the crane or pool, Miriam and Grimchops have ready answers, but will dissemble if pressed:

**Miriam:** *Cage? Oh no! That’s the speaker’s lectern, don’t ya know? The view from up there is simply bracing!*

**Grimchops:** *Blood? Nay, tis’ but a touch of rust in the groundwater; don’t you see? Good for the constitution if you ask me! Would you like a sip?*

As long as villagers are present, it’s safe to enter the pool. The hatchlings and their minders will stay hidden in the depths. If the players enter the pool on their own, events would likely unfold like feeding time at the piranha pool.

**Area S-4 – The Melon/Pork Complex:** The muck melon fields stretch for miles to the south, interspersed with pig farms and rustic dwellings. Ripe melons are gathered in the elevated warehouse, while pigs ready for slaughter await their fate noisily in the pens. Normally a hive of activity, the complex is quiet due to the fair and recent goings-on.

Onus One-Arm, who appears to have started early on the fair spir-its, will grumpily show the party around, and answer forcefully about what he witnessed the evening before. (Onus’ statement and other clues can be found in **Appendix B: Clues**.)

Each time Onus mentions ‘muck melons’, Miriam will interject ‘Golden Water Plums’ to Onus’s increasing frustration.

**Area S-5 – The Asp and Tattles:** A fine source for good eats at good prices. Tollybogs can also track down most basic equipment at normal rates. The large upper room is rarely used and can accommodate the entire party easily.

**Area S-6 – The Tower of Vokas the Man-Ape:** Vokas will often be found resting on the steps to his tower, or wandering about town in his signature loin cloth. His home is protected by deadly fire traps, far beyond the abilities of low-level adventurers. His mind was addled by a failed scrying charm years ago, but his mastery of fire magic is now focused to an ‘idiot savant’ level. His fire spells won’t fail: up to 4 times a day he can unleash a 5d6 bolt, or a 3d6 ball of fiery death.

Vokas will confront any direct attack on the town, but he’s uncomfortable in the swamp, and clearly can’t patrol the fetid mire. Thus his value as a defender is limited, but he loves Slither’s End, and hopes to protect it. (He doesn’t really comprehend the ‘whole snake god thing.’) His manner is friendly:

*“Don’t let my fierce appearance fool you, young ones. Underneath it all I’m just a kindly old man...”*

If contradicted about his ape-like appearance, Vokas will give the party an ‘oh the foibles of youth’ look and ignore the conversation completely.

**Area S-7 – The Fallen Keep:** All that remains of the once fine keep are tumbled stones half buried in the muck. A 25-30 yard wide berm of raised land, The Slither, twists away into the mists.

**Area S-8 – Bridges to the River:** Stout wooden foot bridges stretch between islands of solid ground heading north to the relatively swift-flowing river known as The Flow. See “Part 2: Dangers of the Swamp” for more information.

**Area S-9 – The Mayor’s Manse:** Easily the largest home in Slither’s End, the Mayor’s Manse sits atop a low hill, granting the finest view in town. Burglary could result in 2-300 SP of treasure, but it’s difficult to imagine the party going about unobserved in town.

**Area S-10 – Gravedigger’s Retreat:** A faded sign bearing the title “Clotida’s Flower Pot” hangs from the eaves of this humble two-story structure: The house is unlocked. The first story is filled with herbs and apothecary equipment, a back dining room, and kitchen. The upper floor is wildly overdecorated in feminine style, featuring one large living space and a bedroom with three beds. (One clearly not used for a very long time.)

The ancient town graveyard rests behind the house. Numerous hints can be uncovered in these areas and are listed in **Appendix B: Clues**.



## Encounters at Slither's End

**The Fair:** After the tour, the "Happy Harvest Hoedown" is a great time to introduce characters. Mayor Beechem will call out event participants with gusto, so it's a good occasion to learn names and character strengths! (Also note that the enthusiasm of the participants is exactly opposite what one might expect: the older folks jump about with giddiness, but the younger the villagers get, the more dour and rote their actions become.)

At the simplest level each of the events can be broken down into simple stat checks: each contestant rolls a d20. For games with 'rounds', if the player rolls under the pertinent stat, the character is still 'in the running', continuing on round by round until everyone is eliminated. For opposing challenges like arm wrestling, add the pertinent stat to the die roll, with the highest result winning. For races, you could link a series of rolls together, with results determining whether a player falls back or surges ahead.

Narrate the events in rapid-fire style, playing up the defining traits of players and the local competition! Prizes are simple affairs like pies and decorated ribbons, but you might throw in something of actual value (like a fine axe or spear) to increase tension. If a former occupation could reasonably help, consider a character's stat to be 2 points higher for the skill check. Example games:

**Serpent's Eye Dagger Throw** (agility). **Pin the tail on the crocodile** (luck/intelligence). **Swamp Shanties** (personality). **Muck-melon eating contest** (stamina). **Gigantic moss ball toss** (strength). **Race around the border** (agility/stamina)

A list of possible local competitors and prizes can be found in **Appendix E: Villagers at the fair**. (Have the players speak with Vokas at some point during the fair. When you have the seemingly crazy old man blast a massive fireball into the sky as a form of fireworks during the festivities, it should open some eyes about the dangers of fooling with him!)

**Attack of the Mist Men:** When you've determined that everyone has been introduced and it's time to move on from the Fair, read the following: *In the middle of the sack race, a muck covered young man suddenly dashes into the field, yelling at the top of his lungs. As the excited shouts of the fairgoers suddenly fade, you can make out his words: 'The mist demons are back! Yes, those bug-eyed devils the bubblers can't see! By Salissak's grasping scales, they're attacking my farm and Torku's as well! Please help everyone, they're taking our stock!'*

The village is ill-prepared to deal with threats that the Grimmels ('bubblers') can't handle. (Read **Appendix F: The Mist Men** to learn why the Grimmels are no help against this new threat!)

After the town council consults for a few minutes, Mayor Beecham and Vokas will approach the party: *"We know you have no duty to help us, but ask we will! If you accompany Grik back to his farm and help him rescue his hogs, we'll reward you with all the pork and ale you can feast on! And Grimchops has agreed to throw in 2 sets of fine leather armor. Will you rise to our aid?"*

If the party agrees, those few villagers who are able to fight will rally about Vokas and set off determinedly toward Torku's farm. Grik (the distraught pig farmer) will guide the party to his prop-

erty. If the party refuses, the villagers will shake their heads sadly, split their forces, and head off. It will be almost impossible to get willing information from villagers from this point on.

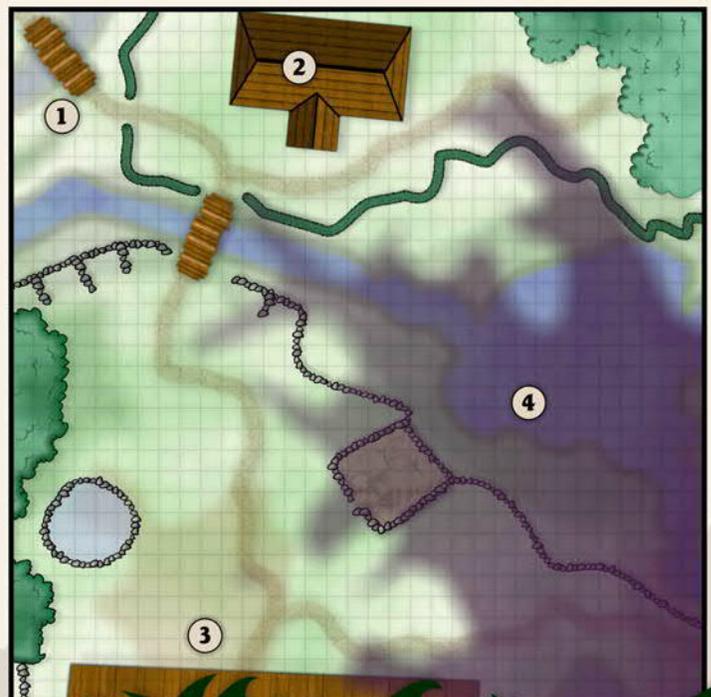
Grik will lead the party along The Slither for ten frantic minutes, arriving at **Location 1** to a scene of chaos at his farm:

*A roiling black/red mist obscures much of Grik's farm, tendrils reaching out like grasping arms. Man-like shapes move about the edge of the mass. The mists seem to follow the figures: their features difficult to discern. The shrieks of pigs echo from the barn to the south, where the majority of the figures seem to be dragging lifeless hogs through the open double doors. Other figures stand near Grik's house, holding some strange metal device up as if measuring it in some way. Others crawl about on all fours, or stomp woodenly in the mire, seemingly fascinated by the splashing water. One is gazing intently at a chicken it holds up by its foot.*

The invaders are Mist Men and for the purposes of this encounter most of their actions will seem incomprehensible. Twenty are at the farm: half are coming and going from the barn/pen at **Location 3**. All will ignore the party unless attacked, at which point those who aren't dragging pigs will turn on the party drawing 18 inch silver tubes from bands at their waists. The tubes shoot tiny darts that either stun (DC 10 Fort save or unconscious for 5-20 minutes) or wound (1d4 Dmg). Once a Mist Man has been slain the rest will switch to wounding darts. Players who attempt to grasp a silver tube will be burned (DC 10 Ref save or 1 point of damage.)

**Mist Men (10):** Init 0; Atk ranged +2 melee; Dmg 1d4; (or Stun: DC 10 Fort Save or unconscious for 5-20 minutes) AC 12; HP 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref 0, Will +2; AL N.

Once six Mist Men have fallen, the roiling mist will turn bright red and the remainder will turn in the direction of the heart of the mist at **Location 4**, dropping whatever farm goods they're carrying. After a round of rising electrical fury, all Mist Men (dead or alive) and their artifacts will seem to evaporate into the mists, and the mass will retreat into the swamp at unbelievable speed.



During the fight, those who move deep into the mist will be at -2 to all actions, as visibility is very poor. Anyone caught in the mist when it retreats will suffer 1d4 electrical damage. (Give them fair warning that something nasty is about to occur, they have one round to sprint out of the mist before it's too late.)

Much more information about these mysterious foes and their purposes can be found in **Appendix F: The Mist Men**.

## Conquering Heros

If the party helps Grik save his stock, they will be welcomed back as heroic saviors. The promised feast will be like one that few in the party will ever have experienced, with an unending supply of delicious pork delights, accompanied by surprisingly tasty uses of muck melons. (Even a muck melon spirit that isn't half bad!) Tollybogs will put the party up for free at the Asp and Tattles, where they can sleep things off well into the next day.

If the party refused to help Grik, no doors will be open to them, and they will be forced to sleep in the open fair field. Rumors other than those gained at the fair will be difficult to acquire.

When the party finally arises, the town council will approach them with an offer (alter the text if the party refused to help):

*Brave champions of the Swamp! We can not express our gratitude enough for your help with those strange creatures. As a community we could hardly afford to lose all of Grik's hogs! But as you might have heard mentioned, we've been suffering other losses as well of late. Folk from the village have gone missing almost every night. No signs of struggle! No others in the home aware of anything until they awake in the morning! Who could do such a thing, or WHY they would do such a thing is beyond us! Can you help us find our missing folk? Our fair village will die if this continues for much longer!*

As a reward, the villages will offer the party six fine hogs, 4 good short bows and arrows, two suits of leather armor, two short swords left over from the militia days, and a guide north to the river. If the party helped with the Mist Men, the villagers will even allow them to depart with the weapons and armor as they embark on the mission.

Allow the players to spend a little more time gathering clues and rumors about town. (Refer to **Appendix A & Appendix B** for a list of both.) At the very least, the players should understand that Jonas Gralk the grave digger has been acting particularly strange of late, was seen dragging his mother into the swamp three evenings past, and that heading north would be a good place to start looking.

## The Grave Digger's Dilemma

The local gossip is accurate in part. The recent troubles began with Jonas Gralk, but are now being driven entirely by the grave digger's controlling mother Clotilda. A month ago while digging a fresh grave, Jonas uncovered a strange bone mask, inlaid with brass, which had lain buried for ages untold. The mask is a totem of great power once worn by shamanistic priests of a forgotten god of decay known anciently as *It That Rot*s.

Jonas dutifully took the mask to his mother, who while cleaning it felt compelled to place it against her face. The magic of the mask is powerful, and its essence amplifies the deepest desires and energies of the wearer. Though a quiet woman, Clotilda has silently burned with rage for years since her second born, a daughter named Miranda, was chosen by lot and sacrificed to Salissak eight years past. She now wishes to punish the village in any way she can, and the twisted council of the mask has shown her how to fulfill her desires: kidnap all the second born of the town in Miranda's memory, and work them to death unearthing an even more powerful mask of gold, hidden deep in a pit of poisonous ooze cradled between the foundations of two ancient towers to the north. Clotilda has made many trips to the towers, and when she obtains the power of the golden mask she will lay waste to Slither's End.

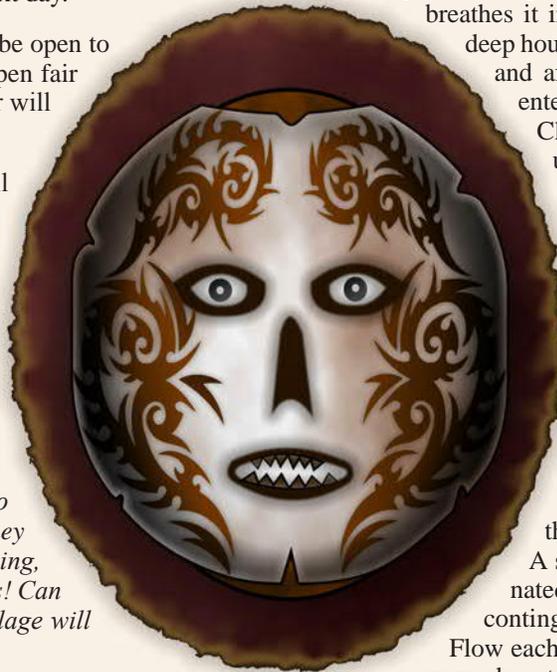
Clotilda has used her vast knowledge of herbs to prepare a powerful sleep smoke capable of knocking out everyone who breathes it in. Jonas sneaks into homes in the deep hours of the night to release the smoke, and after a suitable amount of time re-enters to carry the chosen victim away.

Clotilda then applies a sticky green unguent called *Viper's Kiss* to the victims lips, which slowly releases a toxin that both pacifies and increases its user's susceptibility to suggestion. Jonas has snuck out of the village every night for three weeks, guiding the poor souls on the twisting path north.

The mask is also a powerful scrying device, allowing Clotilda to cast her mind out to the surrounding swamps and dominate the minds of the very weak willed. A small army of those she has dominated now guards the dig site, and a contingent waits on the far side of The Flow each night to meet Jonas and escort the new workers to the ooze pits.

But Jonas has grown tired and frightened. He hates what happened to his sister, but many of the villagers stolen away have been his friends. As his mother grew more dependant on the mask, his concern for her increasing fanaticism overwhelmed his passive nature. While she dozed in the early evening, he stole and hid the mask. Then when she woke and discovered his deed, he dragged her away from the village, an act witnessed by many in town.

In the light of day Clotilda was able to patiently reassert control over her son, and convinced him to return for the mask. She knows she can never return to her home since the town now suspects Jonas, and has redoubled her efforts. If the party delays, villagers will continue to die digging in the pits. Many more will perish when Clotilda recovers the dreadful artifact, which possesses powers that can scarcely be imagined!



The appendices to this adventure are packed with useful information. Much of it is designed to be used at the table, so print it out and keep it handy. Also be sure to get the adventure extras at [www.purplesorcerer.com](http://www.purplesorcerer.com)!



# Part 2: Dangers of the Swamp

## Overview

Once the players leave the relative safety of Slither's End, they'll have to overcome many dangers to confront Jonas and Clotilda at the Ooze Pits. They can gain valuable information by speaking to the Sisters who live in a tower overlooking the small docks linking Slither's End by river to the greater world. Though elderly, the Sisters are crack shots with their crossbows, and will brook no foolishness from the adventurers!

At the docks, the party will encounter a wily river trader named Eraskus Triskanian, who will make the party an offer. If accepted, the adventurers can help both Eraskus and Slither's End, acquire safe passage across the The Flow, and supply the party with much needed weaponry, but to do so they must overcome a deadly foe in Wuart Redhelm and his River Princes. (And overcome a nasty surprise on the road.)

Once across the river, the party will move northeast to the Ooze Pits. Along the way they'll encounter an angry pixie and a tree the size of a mountain (with suitably large inhabitants). All that remains is to ford a small river, and the Ooze Pits are in their sights!

## Environs Encounter Table

Area	Type	Encounter
E-1	T/C	Flying Piranha Path
E-5	C	Snapdragon Lair
E-6	C	Wuart Redhelm and his River Princes
E-7	C	Swamp Pixie and Revenger Trees
E-8	T/C	Nik-Nik the Squirrel King
Any	C	WindReaper the Enormous Owl

## The Grimmel Presence

As the party moves north, they will sense that something is shadowing them in the water. (Lots of bubbles, strange splashes, small animals suddenly vanishing under the muddy water...) It's assumed that one of the older boys will be leading the party as far as E-1, so the Grimmels will not attack. Once the players reach the dry land south of E-2, they'll leave the unseen menace behind; the Grimmels are terrified of swift moving water and won't approach The Flow under any circumstances.

## WindReaper

The description of Area E-8 details a gigantic tree and its inhabitants, but one foe that calls the tree home could be encountered anywhere: an enormous predatory owl called 'WindReaper'. The Sisters will warn players to 'watch the skies' and WindReaper can strike at any time you feel things need to be livened up.

The owl's attacks are described in E-8, and it's assumed any unlucky adventurer carried off by WindReaper is lunch. But if the party numbers are dwindling, consider having the character catch up to the party before they enter the Ooze Pits, scratched and covered in saliva, mumbling about nests, long falls, and the luck of the gods!

## Player Introduction

*The swamp surrounds you as you make your way north of Slither's End. You trudge from one island of solid ground to another using the slippery pontoon bridges your young guide insures you are safe. The presence of the swamp is overwhelming, and you can't help but feel that something is shadowing your every move, hidden just beyond site in the muddy waters of the fens.*

*Ahead, the landscape appears to rise, with only a single isle and two bridges between you and solid ground. As you prepare to press on your guide stops suddenly, staring at the water suspiciously.*

**Area E-1 – Flying Piranha Path:** *Your young guide tenses, then suddenly drops into a defensive crouch. Immediately, shapes begin bursting from the water on both sides of your foot bridge! The air is filled with hundreds of forearm-long winged fish leaping over the bridge, each bearing a mouthful of razor sharp teeth! 'Sorry strangers', your guide shouts, 'this is where I depart. I suggest getting to the high ground as quickly as possible! Don't follow me, they don't know you!' He then barks something in a guttural tongue at the water, and after a few seconds jumps in, disappearing into the murky mire.*

Ask each player whether they want to dash over the last two slippery sections of foot bridge, or move more cautiously. (Going back is a very poor choice...) Careful characters will require two rounds to reach safety. Each round they suffer one serious attack from a flying piranha. (The fish attack at -1 to hit, doing 1 hp Dmg)

Fast moving characters only suffer a single attack, but must make a DC 7 Ref save or slip off the bridge into the water. Characters in the water will be immediately consumed by piranha in glorious gouts of blood unless they make a DC 12 luck save. If they are lucky, the Grimmels in the water will encircle them and thrust them back out onto the bridge without harm. The character will feel strong hands, and might catch a glimpse of bulbous eyes and lanky weed like hair, but will get no clear view of the creatures.

**Area E-2 – The Sisters & Eraskus:** *The horrors of the open swamp behind you—at least for the moment— you catch your breath and sense a freshness in the air: the dank miasma of the mire has fled! Ahead of you the ground rises, then falls down to the lip of a free flowing river. A rough stone tower and two storage sheds overlook a small dock, at which a colorful river boat rests.*

Two elderly sisters, May and Rosie Fenn, manage this outpost where they transact trade between Slither's End and the outside world. Business has been poor of late, since Wuart Redhelm and his cohorts set up camp down river. The ladies are very cautious with strangers, and as the players approach the tower, they will clearly hear the sounds of crossbows being cranked, and smell the unmistakable scent of burning oil on the air.

May will call down from the tower top, wispy grey hair peeking out from under a rusty helmet. As long as the characters are respectful there shouldn't be any bloodshed. (Both sisters are +2 with their massive heavy crossbows which do 1d8 damage! Each has two cocked weapons at the ready. A large vat of bubbling oil guards the stout iron bound door below.)

# Slither's End Environs



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May will respond to questions as follows, Rose nodding at her side:

**Travelers:** *Traffic has been poor of late, since those benighted bandits set up shop! 'Lord' Redhelm my wrinkly backside! That strange boy Jonas and his Mother did pass through a few days back. Took one of the rowboats across The Flow but didn't return it! I've seen many strange fires on the far side of the river at night, but no one ever crosses over...*

**The Gralks:** *I used to be friends with Clotilda back in the day. But she got so quiet after her youngest was given... err... left town suddenly. Jonas is usually so quiet, but he seemed pretty worked up when they passed through.*

**The Bandits:** *They've got a rope across the river about a mile down the way, and a great mucking ballista that shoots lead tipped arrows the size of anchors: hole your boat quick as a snake strike! They'll want half of what you're carrying to pass. You'll want to talk to Eraskus down at the docks, he's looking for help to take down Redhelm and his River Dunces!*

**Rumors about Slither's End's Strange Ways:** *Look, folks have to do what they have to do, though don't believe everything you hear, especially from that rascal down by the river.*

**WindReaper:** *Watch the skies! That owl is as big as a house and will carry you off like a field mouse! When the mists lift you can see where it must live: a tree the size of a mountain! I mean it!*

### Eraskus Triskanian

The river boat down by the docks is painted like an elaborate fair attraction. Its owner Eraskus plies The Flow accompanied by 2 bulky guards, 5 lovely maids dressed like river faeries, and two enormous ensorcelled crocodiles attached to the front of the boat by enchanted elven rope. Eraskus is prepared for most threats (his guards are skilled fighters and his girls are all trained in the use of poisoned-dart blowguns) but giant weights falling from the sky through the deck of his boat is one challenge he's ill prepared to handle. After meeting briefly with the players, Eraskus will offer a deal:

*Ho my dear new friends! What say we scratch each other's back parts, as they say? If you can root the foul bandits out of their keep down the river, Eraskus will reward you well! 4 fine longbows and a barrel of deadly arrows will be yours to treasure! And you can keep anything you find in the keep, I'm sure it's drunk with loot!*

Depending on how well the players barter, Eraskus can be convinced to include a barrel of halfling stout, 2 old spears, and a silver cup shaped like an embarrassed bear hiding its face behind its paws, worth 20 sp. (Eraskus hates that cup.)

Eraskus can sketch out a very general layout of Redhelm's keep. Wise players will coordinate with Triskanian so that he arrives at the rope across the river as the players approach from the land side. This will make entering the keep vastly easier since all of the band's attention will be on the river below...

Eraskus has heard many rumors about Slither's End and can relate any from **Appendix A** that the players have not yet uncovered.

**Area E-3 – The Flow:** The river is only fast-flowing in relation to the stagnant waters of the swamp. Anyone with boating experience can lead a team rowing diligently across without moving downstream too much. The speed of the water increases dramatically as it narrows near Redhelm's keep. There are two large rowboats on this side of the river, each can accommodate ten passengers, with six spots for oar men.

**Area E-4 – The Far Hut:** *Two additional row boats rest on this side of the river at a small dock in front of a rustic hut. There are obvious signs that a band of slovenly folk have camped here recently, but no one is present now.*

The rough road was once of high quality stone, but is now largely broken up. Still, compared to the swamp it's a pleasant highway, and stretches in both directions along the river as far as the eye can see. A well trod path heads off north into the trees from the hut.

**Area E-5 – Snapdragon Lair:** *This stretch of the river seems almost pleasurable after the swamp, and you make good time along the rough but serviceable road. Ahead of you a small river runs into The Flow, a sturdy wooden bridge crossing its depths. As you get closer, you detect high-pitched snarls emitting from under the bridge!*

A mating pair of Snapdragons guard a clutch of eggs under this bridge and will swarm out and attack anyone who draws close. They will fight to the death.

**Snapdragons (2):** Init +2; Atk claws +1 melee; Dmg 1d4 or bite +1 melee; Dmg 1d3 and poison (DC 8 Fort save or -2 to all actions for 1 hour) AC 11; HP 7; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref +2, Will 0; AL N.

Snapdragons are the size of large dogs and as ferocious as badgers. Their wings allow them to glide up to 50 yards at a stretch, much further if they take off from a height. Snapdragon eggs can fetch five gp per egg if players can find the right buyer. (There are three eggs in the clutch under the bridge.)

**Area E-6 – The River Keep of Wourt Redhelm:** *Ahead of you a low bluff rises from the swamp, apparently cut in half by the river. Its entire crown on this side of the river is dominated by a ramshackle castle! A mad-man's blend of stone and wooden walls, the castle's rickety towers threaten to plummet into the river over which they hover. Smoke rises from a number of fires beyond the walls, and a single banner hangs from the tallest tower, featuring a crude red helm on a black field.*

Behold the noble fortress of Wourt Redhelm and his River Princes! Before embarking on his recent role as a despotic river bandit, Wourt made his way in life as a career strangler and amateur thespian. While traveling down The Flow with the aging all-lute festival band 'The River Princess', he was captured by the castle's previous bandit leader Fat Karnokus. Quickly rising through the ranks, Wourt eventually ousted Karnokus, who took a long lonely plunge into the river.

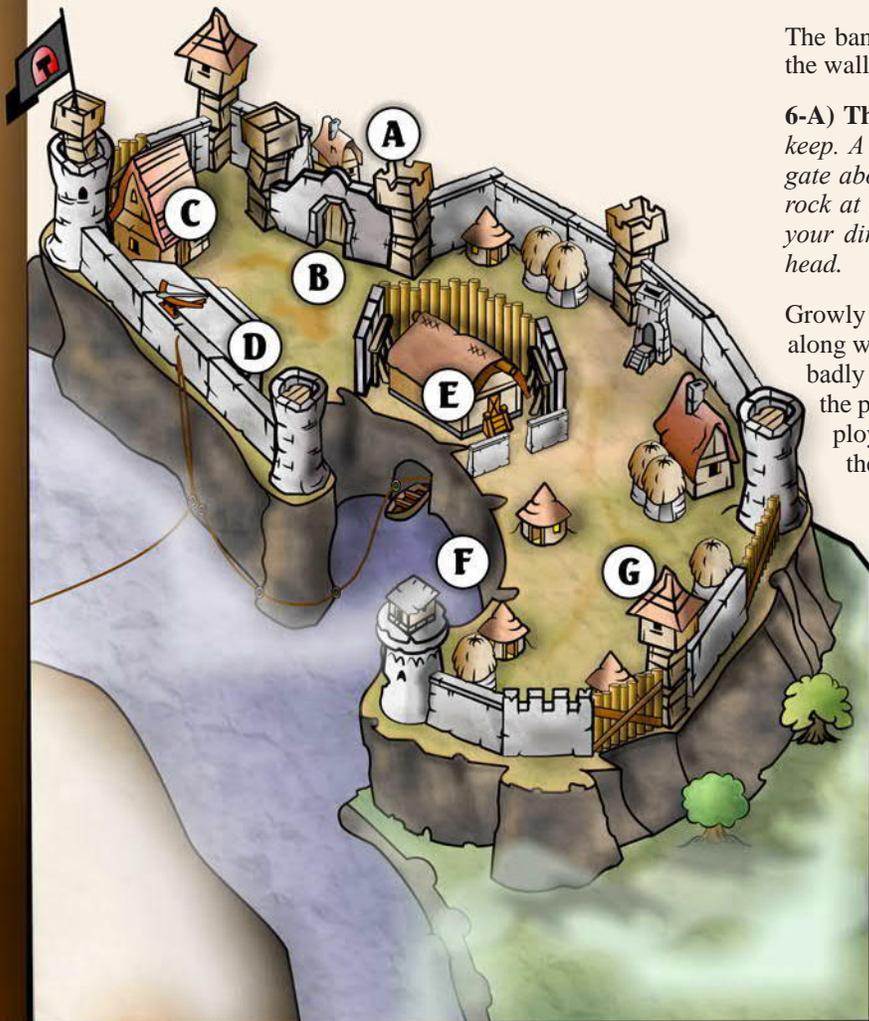
With the former lute-men turned bandits at his side, Wourt went about recruiting the best talent he could find along the river (with



little success), and increased the frequency of the raids on river shipping (having some success but losing half his band). Two months ago he captured a master wood smith and weapon maker named Thomas Dorapple. Redhelm soon coerced him into building the massive ballista that now threatens all traffic that passes beneath below, improving Wwart's future prospects immensely.

The band's numbers are quite small, and Redhelm depends on the castle's inaccessibility to keep danger at bay. The bandits have grown overconfident of late with the success of the ballista, and are not being particularly diligent. There are three broad scenarios the party will encounter when approaching the keep (though your players will undoubtedly come up with something unexpected!):

- 1) The party is both cautious and employs Eraskus as a decoy. Getting through the gate without being spotted should be a breeze, with a good chance of falling on the bandits gathered at 6-D with complete surprise.
- 2) The party is cautious and sneaky. They'll have to figure out how to neutralize the bored guard(s) at the gate and deal with the bear on the steps quietly. Once the players get inside the bandits will be spread out and much easier to handle.
- 3) The party is clumsy and detected by the keep's guards. Bandits man the walls with short bows and spears, and things will likely go very poorly for the players.



## Wwart's Bandits

Wwart's band consists of the halfling Roscoe Twin-chops, bandit treasurer, Onk, a hulking former circus performer, the three 'River Princes' Prunk, Grimly, and Boog, the angry sisters Iphy and Trinkle, and Phil the Barbarian. (Don't ask.)

There are a number of camp followers and children near area 6-G. As soon as trouble starts they will kick loose a portion of the fence, and slide down the embankment to the swamp below. (They do this regularly for fun, and will get out of harms way immediately.)

Everyone left after the children and camp followers flee are stone cold murderers, torturers, and lutists.

**Wwart Redhelm:** Init +2; Atk axe +2 melee, Dmg 1d6+1; AC 11; HP 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

**Roscoe Twin-chops:** Init +1; Atk cleaver +0 melee (x2), Dmg 1d4; AC 11; HP 5; MV 20'; Act 1d16; SV Fort 0, Ref +1, Will 0; AL C.

**Onk the Strong:** Init -2; Atk great axe +2 melee, Dmg 1d10+1 or large rock +2 ranged, Dmg 1d6+1; AC 8; HP 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will -1; AL C.

**The Rest(6):** Init 0; Atk rusty short sword +1 melee, Dmg 1d4 or shortbow +1 ranged, Dmg 1d6; AC 11; HP 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref 0, Will 0; AL C.

The bandits also have rough spears (1d6) they can use to defend the walls with if they have time to grab them.

**6-A) The Stair:** A simple hut squats on the road here below the keep. A steep set of stairs is cut into the living rock rising to the gate above. The area is deserted save for a bear chained to the rock at the base of the stair. It raises its head to stare angrily in your direction, a bright red fez perched jauntily on its massive head.

Growly is a dancing bear from the distant land of Keev, captured along with a troupe of circus performers a month ago. He has been badly mistreated by Wwart and is spoiling for a fight. If however, the players approach him with kindness, (especially if they employ music) he will hold off attacking, and if freed will follow the party and wreak unholy revenge on Wwart and his men.

Growly's fez is a magical item of some power that grants him both limited telepathy with his master who wears a matching fez, and increased intelligence/awareness. If removed, or mangled in any way, the fez will reappear on Growly's head at some future point when no one is looking, in perfect condition. Growly's master Kim-Kim is a prisoner in the keep above, and if freed will happily join the party. (Or alternately, Kim-Kim could have died at the hands of Wwart and his cronies, in which case whoever recovers Kim-Kim's fez can become Growly's new master/friend.

**Growly the Empathic Dancing Bear:** Init -2; Atk claw +1 melee; Dmg 1d6 or bite +0 melee; Dmg 1d8 AC 8; HP 12; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will 0; AL N.

**6-B) The Gate:** At the crest of the steep stairs sits a dilapidated gatehouse. An awkward fusion of timber and stone, it looks vulnerable to a stiff breeze, but the beams of the oak door appear new and solid.

Normally one or two bandits man the rickety wooden towers, but if Eraskus is being waylaid on the river below, they will have foolishly abandoned their posts to watch the fun. The gate can be climbed with a DC 10 Ref check, or boards can be torn loose with a DC 14 Str check. The gate is easily opened from the inside.

(If there isn't a distraction on the river or sbattle cry, the Angry Sisters will be here.)

**6-C) The Treasury:** Here rests the surprisingly meager treasures of Woart and his bandits. (Woart has recently invested hundreds of gold coins to have skilled craftsmen from a distant city upriver design and acquire supplies to build a lovely theater on site.)

The current treasures include a box with 140 sp, eight casks of oil, three grappling hooks, and 30 sheets of fine paper. A trapdoor locked with a beam leads to a dank pit below that houses the surviving captives of the keep. (Kim-Kim, Thomas Dorapple, and two captives from the circus. All the rest have died under the cruel ministrations of Woart and his followers.)

(If there isn't a distraction on the river, or a general battle cry, Roscoe Twin-chops will be here.)

**6-D) The Ballista:** From this stone platform, Woart shouts down at passing river traffic from behind his massive ballista. Six individual missiles are each equipped with 5 pound lead points and thin but strong trailing lines: the ballista has just enough strength to lob them with speed onto the boats below. Two thick ropes are attached to winches near the ballista, passing through metal rings at the top and bottom of the river wall. The first can be raised to block river traffic. The second is used by the bandit's boat to inch forward against the current to go alongside surrendering boats.

(If the party has arranged a diversion on the river, all of the bandits will be here, leaning over the wall and hurling insults and taunts at the boat below. Otherwise, the Princes will be lounging here.)

**6-E) The Palace:** Woart has great plans for this smelly, rat-infested former warehouse. He has began isolating it from the rest of the keep with a series of precariously stationed walls. Inside the single great room are a dog's breakfast of discarded and sagging furniture, and at least four beds. (Woart's thinking big...)

Hidden under a pile of moldy fur cloaks in the corner is Woart's personal treasure: A platinum engraved makeup case worth 200 gp. (This would constitute a Grey Prize in Mustertown. Learn more about the Mustertown prize system in SC-1: Perils of the Sunken City!)

In the center of the room what appears to be a well is actually a rung ladder leading down to the boat landing in the castle's bay. If a passing boat surrenders, Woart sends the Princes down the ladder to access the bandit's boat to ride out and claim their booty.

(If there isn't a distraction on the river, or a general battle cry, Woart will be resting inside while Onk guards the door.)

**6-F) The Landing:** The Princes lead the boat out onto the river from here using the guide rope to pull themselves against the current to the rope that blocks the river and waiting prey.

**6-G) The Commons:** The camp followers and children spend most of their time here. A captured baker, Mrs. Fritts, attempts to bring a little civilization to the chaos of bandit life, and will lead the escape should trouble get past the walls.

If things go very badly for Woart, he will attempt to escape to his room, grab his makeup case, and flee using the rung ladder and the boat below to reach the open river.

Regardless, once the threat is neutralized, if Eraskus is nearby he will guide his boat into the landing and give the players their reward if successful. (Otherwise the players will need to return to the docks.) Anything the players find in the keep is theirs to keep. (Don't overlook the six short bows and Woart's fine axe!)



**Area E-7 – Swamp Pixie:** As you follow a twisting path through the trees, you come upon a gruesome site: what's left of a villager lies next to the path, his body bearing grievous wounds as if hacked apart by an axe! Just when you notice his rictus lips are also stained a bilious green, a high pitched voice rings out from the surrounding trees. 'More flesh my minions! Give the woodsmen a taste of their own cruelty!' Suddenly two of the smaller swamp trees shamble toward you, bearing rusty axes in their misshapen tree-limb 'hands'!

Everyone in these parts hates swamp pixies. They are intemperate and never forget the slightest wrong. In this case, this pixie's favorite tree was cut down 300 years ago, and he's not ready to forgive! The trees are the crudest of foes, flailing blindly about with their dull axes, mindless save for the driving compulsion of their pixie master. But their strength is great, and their reach is long...

No weapon the player's bear other than fire can harm the trees to any real extent, and fire will require lots of oil. An easier method is to bulls-eye the pixie with a ranged weapon as he darts about the woods taunting the players. The pixie will re-spawn the following morning from the nearest swamp-lily if killed, but his compulsive power over the trees will end immediately upon his 'death'. (And he will drop an emerald worth 40 gp from his wooden crown as his body evaporates.)

**Revenge Trees (2):** Init -4; Atk great axe -5 melee, Dmg 1d12+3; AC 12; HP 30; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP Most normal weapons only do 1 point of damage per strike; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will 0; AL N.

**Lestyr the Swamp Pixie:** Init +4; Atk none; AC 17; HP 2; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP Control of bonded trees, flight; SV Fort 0, Ref +4, Will 0; AL C.

The lips of the villager were stained by Clotilda's herb paste. (All villagers encountered will bear the same mark.)

Players can always run away from the trees. Lestyr will follow and taunt the players mercilessly to the edge of the woods, and each tree will manage a single free attack upon the fleeing characters.

**Area E-8 – The Unusually Large Tree:** *As you emerge from the thick stand of trees, the fog clears and you can finally understand what the old woman was talking about: rising above you is a tree so enormous that it stretches up into the clouds themselves! Impossibly large with a trunk the size of a castle and branches like looming towers! How the thing could stand without collapsing under its own weight is beyond your understanding. What at first glance appears to be butterflies flitting about the branches are in fact soaring eagles, dwarfed by the unimaginable size of the thing.*

This enormous tree is the result of one of the most spectacular spell failures of the last age. Some 35 years ago, the Arch Mage Morlak the Magnificent was cornered by a band of Death Knights of Blix on what was then a small hillock rising from the swamp. Since the Death Knights were nearly immune to arcane powers, Morlak poured all his power into a single spell to grow to enormous size, enabling him to stomp his foes into paste.

The mage was unaware that as he unleashed his spell he stood almost directly over the buried tomb of the fabled Lich of Wex, and the tomb's arcane wards. The two powers interacted disastrously: Morlak and everything within 20 feet grew to enormous size. Everything, that is but Morlak's skin, with suitably horrific results.

The combined spells created a closed loop that continues to feed power and arcane sustenance from the tomb below to the enlarged tree and occupants above. Eventually the power of the tomb will be sapped, and the collapse of the tree will lay waste to everything in its vicinity. (And unearth the tomb of the Lich of Wex as the massive roots erupt from the ground!)

The tree is now home to a raft of gigantic wildlife, all sustained by the power of the tomb. An entire adventure could be run exploring its upper reaches, but for the sake of this module, players will interact with only three of the tree's inhabitants: the self-proclaimed Nik-Nik, lord of the Squirrels, a gang of acorn dropping gigantic squirrels, and WindReaper the enormous owl.

Nik-Nik (formerly Nicholas) was a trapper working the local swamp at the time of the spell misfire. Witnessing the tree's transformation was too much for his simple mind to handle. He now fashions himself the protector/prophet of the tree, and has spent the last 35 years defending it. He is dirty and unkempt, and speaks in a strange patois combining common speech and simulated squirrel sounds.

**Nik-Nik:** Init +2; Atk club -1 melee; Dmg 1d4; AC 14; HP 6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref +2, Will 0; AL N.

He lives in a tent fashioned from Morlak's cloak, and his prized possession is the Arch Mage's wand of fire itself! If the players can drive Nik-Nik away from his tent at the base of the tree, they can claim the powerful magic item for themselves! The wand can unleash goutts of fire (2d6 damage in a five foot wide, fifty foot long swath, DC 12 Ref save to dodge out of the way) 3 times per day.

On the downside, the wand is 6 feet long and weighs 160 pounds. Two characters might be able to lug the thing around and try to aim it. Luckily for the players, the activation word, which was once tiny and hidden, now stands out like a billboard. ('Dimpleskins')

And there's one other tiny caveat: the enlarging spell has weakened the magical bonds of the wand. On a roll of 1, it will detonate like an arcane bomb, incinerating everything within 5 feet. Any player

with a background as a magical or holy apprentice will recognize the warning signs.

When players break the cover of the trees, Nik-Nik will begin dancing about and shrieking at them in his strange tongue, commanding them to leave. If the players ignore his warnings, Nik-Nik will begin screaming up toward the branches of the tree. It will take players six rounds or so to cover the ground between the trees and the tent, and about halfway there the gigantic squirrels above will begin lobbing down equally enormous acorns. The acorns take a while to hit the ground, so dodging is not that difficult. Randomly select 2 characters each round to make DC 4 Ref saves to dodge or be crushed like a 0-level grape.

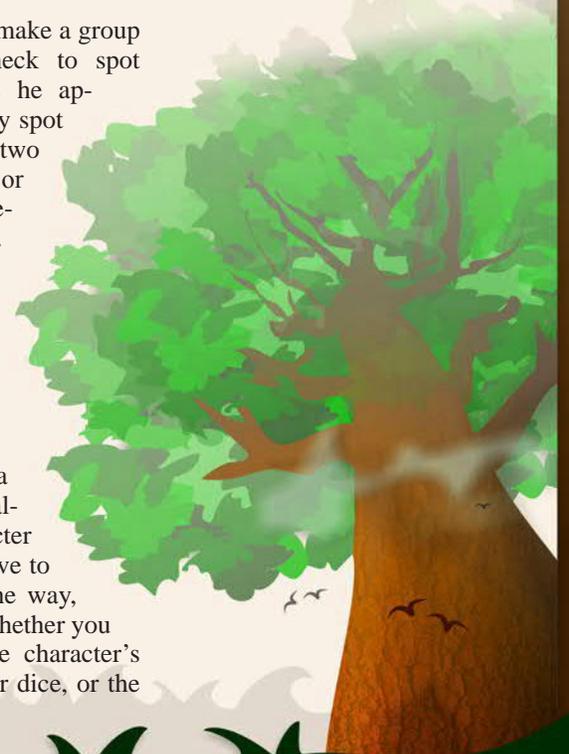
The acorns are so large, however, that when they hit the ground they cause the entire hill to bounce. Everyone must make a DC 6 Ref or Fort save (whichever is better) to stay on their feet. Any who fall will become the pool of potential targets for the next attacks. Fallen characters attacked on the following round must make a DC 6 Ref save to avoid being squashed. (Since their attention is distracted while they get back on their feet and underway.)

If the players reach the tent, Nik-Nik will flee to the tree trunk, entering hidden cracks and byways that the players will find impossible to follow. At this point the squirrels will lose interest and stop dropping acorns. The tent holds the huge wand, hand carved furniture shaped from giant acorns, a collection of enormous squirrel teeth, and a polished ivory walking stick worth 25 sp.

Remember that WindReaper the Giant Owl can arrive at any time to spice things up in this or any other area of the environs! The great owl will generally just swoop down out of the mists for a fly-by grab attack. If the players manage to hit it with an arrow (AC 17) it will veer off for the time being. It's unlikely the players could seriously hurt WindReaper, but you never know...

**WindReaper:** Init 0; Atk claws +2 melee, Dmg 1d10+3 or grab; AC 17; HP 85; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP; Bite (if foe is grabbed) +8 melee, Dmg 1d12+6; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will 0; AL N.

Have the party make a group DC 10 Int check to spot WindReaper as he approaches. If they spot him they have two rounds to fire or seek cover before he strikes. Otherwise, they'll only have a single round to act. You can either have the Owl attack with a +2 bonus to grab a character, or allow the character a DC 12 Ref save to dodge out of the way, depending on whether you want to put the character's survival on your dice, or the players!



# Part 3: The Ooze Pits

## Overview

The players have finally tracked Jonas and Clotilda to their lair! As the party approaches the Ooze Pits they will have an opportunity to ambush the guards overlooking a work party, and gain valuable allies or replacement characters.

How players approach assaulting the Ooze Pits is important. Careful players will plan their attack to maximize their strengths. Overly bold parties that charge in recklessly will likely experience the realities of mortality!

Once the party has defeated the Ooze Pit's defenders, and freed the captive villagers, all that remains is to confront Jonas and Clotilda in their tower. If the players overcome a final guard, and cross a precarious bridge over the caustic ooze, they will finally uncover the dreadful secret of Clotilda Gralk, and face her in all her twisted maternal fury!

## Encounter Table

Area	Type	Encounter
E-9	C	Working Party Ambush
E-10	C	The Ooze Pits of Jonas Gralk

**Area E-9 – Working Party:** *A slow moving, muddy river -more of a stream- meanders in front of you, cloaked in concealing mist. On the far side of the stream, you hear the unmistakable sounds of axes striking wood, mingled with coarse laughter.*

This encounter gives the party an opportunity to replenish their numbers before the final battles. Twelve drugged villagers are gathering timber to help in the exploration of the Ooze Pits. Eight lazy guards watch over them. The guards represent the type of weak-willed rabble one would expect to be snared by Clotilda's powers: three human drifters, and five smelly opossumen.

The human guards stand apart from their guard brothers, ignoring the workers and watching the cannibalistic opossumen with trepidation. For their part, the opossumen are occupied playing the popular opossuman game "Rock or Stick", where an opossuman holds a rock and a stick in his hands, throws one down on the ground, and puts the other hand behind his back. The other opossumen then bet on which item he's still holding. They're right about half the time...

**Drifter Guards (3)** Init +0; Atk club +0 melee; Dmg 1d4; AC 11; HP 3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref 0, Will 0; AL N.

**Opossumen (5):** Init +0; Atk javelin -2 melee; Dmg 1d4; (or club/bite - 2 melee; Dmg 1d4) AC 11; HP 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref 0, Will -3; AL C.



Character sheets for the villagers can be found in the Appendix. Use them to fill out a badly damaged party! More details about opossumen can be found in adventure *SC-1: Perils of the Sunken City*.

(On attack rolls of 1 an opossuman "plays dead": becoming immobile while its face sets in a rictus smile, releasing foul fluids from unsavory orifices. All foes within 10 feet must make a DC 8 Fort save or be at -2 to all activities while in range.)

If the party approaches with stealth, give them a free round of attacks before the guards respond. If things are going badly for the guards, any surviving humans will drop their weapon and beg for mercy, the terror of the moment overwhelming and breaking Clotilda's compulsive mental powers.

The villagers will stand around in dazed confusion during the attack, but of the twelve present, eight are adults capable of eventually joining the party as replacement characters or temporary hirelings. (The other four are children who might bring trouble to the party.) One of the adults, a crafty farm wife name Emiliias has managed to avoid this morning's application of the *Viper's Kiss*, and is largely free of its effects. She can answer many of the party's questions:

**Why are the villagers so compliant?** *It's that horrid paste they put on our lips. They call it 'viper's kiss' and it fogs your brain like a winter morning! It wears off quick enough though - in a couple hours all these folk will have their minds back if they don't get another dosing.*

**The Ooze Pits:** *Don't speak of it! Almost the entire interior is filled with a pit brimming with poisonous muck! It glows it does! And those foul feral creatures and the worst sort of river scum imaginable force us to dig! What they're seeking I know not, but they'll kill every one of us to get it!*

**Jonas Gralk:** *That fiend... he wanders about with this blank expression like he's above it all. He smears that horrid paste on us every morning, then climbs up to that bridge between the towers, and just sits! Staring at us like he's watching a parade! I never trusted that boy.*

**Clotilda:** *She just showed up a couple days ago. Jonas whisked her up to the far tower, and I haven't seen her since. I hope he hasn't done anything to her! She's been such a sad women since she lost her young daughter...*

**Guards and Prisoners:** *There's about ten more of us beyond the walls. They herd us into foul smelling sheds at night, but during the day we're in the pits! There's probably twice that number of feral beast men and scum watching over us. They've got clubs and spears, and aren't afraid to use them! There's also something horrid rumored to be living in the near tower. Krista had to pass there once to carry food up, and she couldn't speak for days!*

**The Towers:** *There's two. The near one has a door, and a foot bridge links it to the second from the upper floor. The far tower is beyond the pits, and the entire first level is bricked up tight! The only way in is that rickety, swaying bridge over the heart of the ooze!*

**The Children:** *Uh, why don't you give the little ones a wide berth, eh? The... uh, horrors of the pits have unnerved them a bit.*

If the party is willing to wait for the Viper's Kiss to wear off in two hours, up to eight villagers can join the party, depending on how much replacement help the party needs.

The guards of the Ooze Pits will notice the delay in returning, but they'll just assume their compatriots are dawdling unless the party delays for more than three hours.

The work party has two blunt axes (1d4 Dmg.) The guards possess 8 clubs, 4 javelin, and 47 sp scattered amongst them.

### A Decision

If the players have defeated the guards, and allow the villagers to recover from the Viper's Kiss effects, the party will be faced with a decision. If any of the guards have survived, the four village children will stare at them intently as soon as they come to their senses. After speaking briefly with the increasingly troubled older villagers, the children will approach the party.

*[pointing at a guard] He That Slides demand this one for the swamp. We must introduce him to the mist. It will go well for you and your efforts if you stand aside and let the swamp claim its rightful prey.*

The other villagers will be of no help, feigning that they don't understand what the children are talking about. They are terrified of the children, and will do nothing to interfere with their plans.

If the players allow the children to carry the guard away, they will disappear into the mists. 20 minutes later they will return without the guard or any explanation of what they've done. This will earn the favor of Salissak: at some key point in the coming battle at the Ooze Pits, a gigantic snake will flow out of the river, surmount the wall, and wreak havoc against the party's foes for a few rounds before sliding back over the wall into the water's depths. Unfortunately for the characters, Salissak will also now consider the party members in his debt.

If the party refuses to release the guard to the children, the young ones won't fight. No aid will come in the battle, and the players will need to walk very carefully in the swamp near Slither's End from this point forward.

## Area E-10: The Ooze Pits

Anciently, this low hill housed a temple holy to *It that Rots*, with charmed tunnels digging deep into the earth below. When the cult died off, a twisted Aspect of the forgotten god was left to fester forever in the pits below.

Ages later, a monastery was built over the same spot. The corrupting effects of the Aspect oozed up from below, eventually driving the initiates mad, and the site was abandoned. The remains of the monastery should have tumbled into the swamp long ago, but somehow much of it remains intact. The circuit wall is broken in many places, and only rises to 8 feet where it's intact. The two much more heavily constructed squat conical towers have mysteriously weathered the ravages of time even more successfully,

bound together by the Aspect's power. Any dwarf or character with a building background will notice this incongruity immediately.

Between the towers a bilious, bubbling pool of phosphorescent ooze the consistency of thick oatmeal rises up, eating away the surrounding terrain like an irregular sink-hole from hell. Anyone who comes in contact with the stuff must make a DC 8 Fort save or become infected with a wasting rot. (-2 points of Fort per week. Victim takes on a greenish hue within hours. In one week the Fort losses begin.) Those who spend significant time in the stuff, or who are completely submerged automatically become infected.

Wooden bracing walls have been added to the pit in various places to ease access. Captive villagers enter the pit with wooden buckets to scoop up the stuff, depositing it in low sifting boxes near 10-B on the map, where other villagers search through the ooze for anything of interest.

Given another week, half of the captives will die from rot and hunger, but one of the remaining souls will uncover *The Golden Mask of It that Rots*.

## Defenses at the Ooze Pits

In addition to the guards in the work party, there are 6 men and 14 Opossumen spread about the grounds directing the workers, their weak minds controlled by Clotilda's powers. (Feel free to adjust these numbers based on the party's remaining strength.)

Most are armed as those in the working party, but half of the number also carry burst-able fist-size bladder bags filled with a particularly noxious blend of ooze Clotilda is manufacturing in the far tower. (The other guards were issued bags as well, but stashed them away to avoid having to carry the deadly things around. One of the men with a face that appears to be melting found this out the hard way.)

If struck by one of these thrown bags (both men and opossumen attack at +0 up to 30 feet away) a character takes 1 point of burning damage and must immediately make a DC 10 Fort save or become infected by the wasting rot, and roll on the minor corruption table and suffer the effects. (The corruption will remain as long as the character is infected with the rot. There is a chance for them to be cured if they best Clotilda.)

If a player hits a guard bearing one of the bags, there's a one in three chance the bag will burst, covering the guard with toxic ooze.

Two guards are stationed in a rickety wooden tower mounted to the top of the wooden building at 10-D. The surrounding mists make spotting anything quite difficult, so they've stopped trying. However, once the fighting starts, they have a primitive sling shot set up to lob large toxic bags down on invaders. The bags attack at -3, but if a player is struck, they take 2 points of damage, and the Fort save is DC 13. The slingshot's range is 75 feet, and the guards have 8 ooze bags in their inventory.



## Ooze Pits Area Key

**10-A: The Guardhouse.** Two guards are always stationed here. (Which would seem to be a strange choice, as there are many gaps in the wall that enemies could squeeze through that aren't guarded.) The guardhouse is 15 feet tall, with stout wooden double doors to both the interior and exterior areas.

**10-B: Sifting Station.** Most villagers can be found here sifting ooze in a number of crude boxes with mesh on the bottom. Any villager not found here is working in the pit.

**10-C: Villager Barracks.** Foul smelling barracks where the villagers sleep. Ragged canvas bags are the only cover, and the food consists of a bucket full of meager roots and a pail of dirty water.

**10-D: Guard's Quarters.** The humans have taken to sleeping in the shack next to 10-C to avoid lying down next to the opossumen. The interior of the opossumen barracks defies description. A rough ladder leads up to the watch tower constructed on its roof.

**10-E: The Ooze.** The further one goes toward the center of the pit, the deeper one sinks and the less thick the ooze becomes. (Human characters sink to their waists near the center, and it's far easier to become submerged if one falls.)

**10-F: The Near Tower.** A short, squat, round structure, 40 feet tall consisting of two floors and an attic. A stout wooden door blocks the entrance to this tower on the ground floor, but it is unlocked and unbarred at most times. The tower's rooms are detailed later.

**10-G: The Bridge.** This rope and plank contraption stretches shakily between the two towers. Jonas likes to sit up here.

**10-H: The Far Tower.** A twin of the near tower, only the entire first level of this tower is bricked up. The only access is by crossing over the bridge from the Near Tower to the upper level. The upper level is now Jonas's home and Clotilda's workshop.

## Player Description

As players view the Ooze Pits complex for the first time, read or paraphrase the following: *As you reach the north end of the small stand of trees where the villagers labored, you see the castle they have described rising from the mist. A low broken wall circles the gentle hill the compound dominates, numerous sections along its length collapsed into the wet ground. Beyond the wall, two thick towers, seemingly in much better condition, rise to forty or fifty feet high, topped with wooden spires.*

*A gatehouse with sagging wooden doors guards the entrance. The cracks in the walls give you a tantalizing glimpse into the space beyond, but the ever present mist makes it difficult to discern details. The distant sounds of muffled shouts echo in the misty air.*

Most of the guards loaf near the barracks at 10-D barking orders at the villagers unless the general alarm has been raised. A detachment of opossumen hunters has recently returned with a wild pig, and the aroma of pork over the fire fills the court.

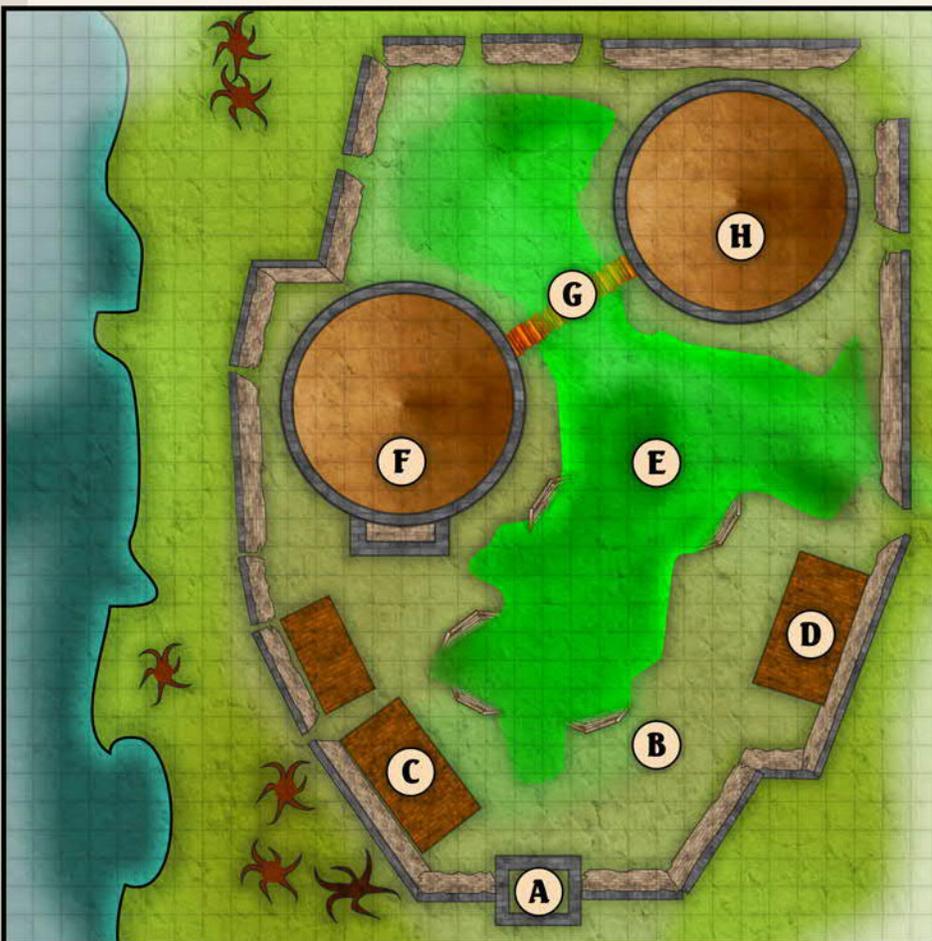
If the party has delayed for more than three hours after rescuing the work party, or if the characters have somehow managed to make their presence known, the keep will be on alert, and the chance of surprise or subterfuge succeeding will drop considerably.

## Attack Plans

The battle of the Ooze Pits will likely be a chaotic, swirling affair considering the number of combatants and innocent bystanders involved! The players have many options available to them in planning their assault, including infiltrating the compound disguised as guards escorting the work party, approaching stealthily and swarming through the openings in the wall, or creating diversions to draw guards out. Creative groups will think of many other approaches! (Don't forget the possible game changing influence of the Arch Mage's wand, Growly the Bear, or Salissak's snake Aspect, and the possibility of characters/guards being shoved into the ooze!)

If you will be employing the Aspect, and the party is in good shape as they prepare for the battle, you might consider adding to the number of guards for the purpose of providing fodder for the snake, while leaving enough bad guys alive to represent a real challenge. In most cases, there should be twice as many guards as players at the start of the battle.

If the players do an exceptional job planning and initiating their attack, allow them one



round of free swings at any guard in range. Additionally, on the second round of the conflict, half of the guards will be unable to respond while they retrieve their weapons!

A reasonable plan will grant one round of free attacks.

If the guards are aware of and waiting for the players, each will open the battle by lobbing an ooze grenade from the protection of the walls. Guards will be watching all the breaks in the wall, and things will likely be very difficult for the party.

When half of the guard have been slain, Clotilda's powers will no longer be strong enough to hold the remainder in check: they will break and flee by any path available!

## Concluding the Assault

Once all the guards have been killed or have fled, the grounds will fall silent. The villagers have been recently dosed with Viper's Kiss, and won't be free of their daze until the following morning.

Players can recover 25 clubs, 16 javelins, two sets of filthy hide armor (+2 to AC), and 6 ooze grenades from the fallen guards. (If they dare carry them!)

Jonas and Clotilda will take no part in the battle, other than spying on events from the safety of their tower.

Any characters who have been poisoned by the ooze rot will begin to feel its effects, Stat losses don't begin for a week, but characters will feel slightly weak and feverish, and their skin will begin to take on a greenish pallor.

At this point, technically the players have rescued the villagers. Villagers who have recovered from the Viper's Kiss could be tasked with escorting their dazed brethren back to town, but the road might prove fatal for many. If the players escort them back to town, assume everyone gets back safely. (Unless you want to spice up the return with encounters of your own!)

## The Towers

If Clotilda is not dealt with, she will just go about slowly reassembling another army of slaves to complete her dig. To stop her, the players must defeat her in her tower lair!

**Tower F1:** *The squat tower looms over you, it's obviously new door set into a thick portico of stone. A noxious green mist escapes from under the door. Gazing up at the bridge which connects this tower to its twin across the ooze, you see no sign of movement anywhere.*

The new door is impressive, but unlocked. Clotilda considers her guard protection enough. When players open the door, read the following: *As you open the door, your eyes burn as a caustic mist flows out to the surrounding grounds. Visibility inside the tower is very poor; but you can see that a single room fills the entire first floor; with a stone stair to your right rising to the second level. The back side of the room is covered in a large pool of green ooze, in which something large is wallowing. Suddenly a ball of caustic ooze flies from the mist, and the large mass begins to shamble forward, dripping ooze from its form with each multi legged step!*

The guardian of the first floor is a deadly Ooze Spider that Clotilda managed to attract and dominate. It attacks anyone other than Jonas, Clotilda, or those under the effects of the Viper's Kiss.

**Ooze Spider:** Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee; Dmg 1d6 or ooze blob +1 ranged; Dmg 1d3 and poison (DC 8 Fort save or minor corruption and additional point of damage) AC 11; HP 17; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref 0, Will 0; AL C.

As you would expect, the Ooze Spider is immune to the effects of ooze grenades. (Clotilda uses its poison in fashioning them.)

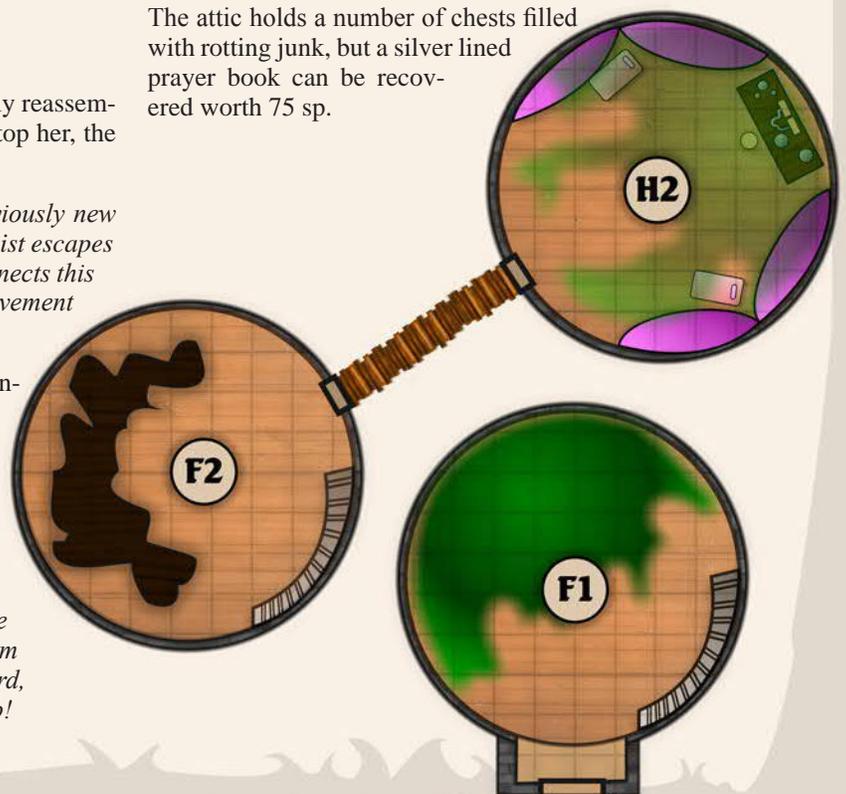
If the players dare poke around in the spider's ooze wallow, they can uncover an ancient brass helm, buried in slime, but seemingly immune to its corrosive effects. Once the helm is cleaned up, re-padded and strapped, anyone wearing it will find themselves immune to the ooze effects, healed of all rot after a day of use, and will receive a -1 bonus to all criticals rolled against them! (They will also be slowly tainted by the corrupting influence of *It that Rots*, but it will take weeks to begin manifesting.)

Up to one person a day can wear the helm to take advantage of its healing effects.

**Tower F2:** *After climbing the stone stairs from the ooze wallow below, you find yourself in a large, seemingly empty room. A large section of the wooden floor has rotted away, leaving a hole to the slime below. Beyond the rotted section, a ladder climbs to a trapdoor; apparently leading to the attic above. A single large door to your right grants access to the bridge. It is closed.*

The floor here is shaky at best, but if players are careful, they can skirt the hole in the floor to the ladder. However, when climbing the ladder there is a 1 in 6 chance one of the rungs will rip loose, sending the character plummeting down, breaking through the floor to the ooze below (1d6 Dmg), unless they make a DC 10 Ref save to catch themselves while falling.

The attic holds a number of chests filled with rotting junk, but a silver lined prayer book can be recovered worth 75 sp.



**The Bridge:** The rope and plank bridge between Tower F2 and Tower H2 is unstable at the best of times, but Jonas will make crossing it even more difficult. As soon as players open the door to the bridge from F2, read or paraphrase the following:

*As you pull the stubborn door open to the rope and plank bridge, its matching door on the far side opens as well. A young man, a shovel in one hand, the other behind his back, steps out onto the bridge. 'Go back strangers.' he calls, tears streaming down his face. 'There's no point in fightin'. You can't win. You just can't win. She'll find a way in the end... she always does.' Suddenly his hidden hand appears, and he throws a glass ball filled with swirling smoke in the direction of the party!*

The glass ball is full of sleep smoke, but will be diluted in the outdoor air. As it shatters at the feet of the party, each round party members must make a DC 7 Fort save, or be rendered woozy for the rest of the combat.

It takes three rounds to cross the bridge under normal conditions. As soon as players start walking across, Jonas will begin swaying from side to side, causing the bridge to swing back and forth dangerously. He has lots of practice playing around up here, but the inexperienced characters attempting to cross will need to make DC 7 Ref saves each round (DC 12 if woozy), or be tossed off into the ooze below. (1d4 damage and automatically infected with the rot.) If players are just trying to hold on, and not attempting to cross, assume they can cling to the bridge without risk of falling. Anyone firing a ranged weapon from the bridge is at -2 to the attack due to the movement.

If players cut the ropes or otherwise seriously damage the bridge, it will collapse sending everyone into the slime below. Survivors will then need to find some other way up into the tower!

If characters reach the far side, the swaying will stop as Jonas begins laying about with his shovel. He's no fighter, but will die protecting the mother he has grown to hate, weeping the entire time.

**Jonas Gralk:** Init +2; Atk shovel -1 melee; Dmg 1d4; AC 12; HP 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref +2, Will 0; AL N.

**Tower H2:** *The grave digger is dead, but where is his mother? The door to the far tower is open, and from within you hear the sound of chanting, the voice unearthly and guttural.*

When the players enter the tower, read or paraphrase the following: *Within, the tower seems to have been hastily decorated like a rich girl's room, with frilly pink linens hanging from the stone walls. But the frippery is now dripping with green ooze, and a bubbling assortment of pots and tubes burble away from the far side of the room. One vat seems to have human bones simmering in some foul liquid!*



*A stooped figure stands in front of the alchemical devices. It must be the aged mother of the grave digger, but her face is hidden behind a primitive mask of bone inlaid with bronze. The chanting issuing from the mask is not that of an old woman, but something deeper and older still. As she raises one hand in your direction, the chanting ceases, and she speaks in your direction:*

*'The guilty will continue to pay. They MUST continue to pay for their sins. You cannot stop me from unearthing the greater mask! It is my destiny! Do you imagine that the foolish snake God the fools from Slither's End prostrate themselves before can protect you here? Do you seek to defend those willing to sacrifice CHILDREN to stave off their inevitable decay? We'll all sink in the end. You must know we're all only fit to rot!?'*

*As the old woman stops speaking, she lifts her mask and sips from an oozing vial. Suddenly, her body begins to change. Her robe distorts as twisted limbs begin emerging from the folds, green ooze dripping from every opening. Within moments, the old woman is gone, replaced by a shambling mass of amorphous limbs, the mask riding on top like some horrific face!*

**Clotilda:** Init +1; Atk ooze limbs +0 melee (x4), Dmg 1d4 + rot; AC 11; HP 18; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Those struck must make DC 12 Fort save or be infected with the rot. On a critical, foes suffer minor corruption. Those slain by an ooze limb rise 2 rounds later as an ooze slave (2 Hp +0 Atk, Dmg 1d3); SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +3; AL C.

Clotilda will spread out her ooze limb attacks on as many foes as possible in a round. When she is in her ooze state, she's too large to fit through the door, and won't be able to follow characters that flee. It takes her 10 minutes to revert back to human form, and each time she shifts, it grows increasingly more difficult to do so accurately. After a couple more shifts, it will be impossible for her to maintain human form any longer.

If the players manage to slay her in ooze form, she will slowly revert to human form after the mask falls away from her body. If players manage some 'called shot' attack to knock the mask off during combat, it will trigger the reversion, but the effect will come long after the combat is over.

If players deliver the death blow, read or paraphrase the following:

*The horrid creature suddenly bellows in a voice almost too deep to comprehend. The limbs spasm wildly as the mass lurches about the room. Finally it collapses to the ground motionless, the mask rolling off the remains to settle on the floor in the middle of the room.*

With the defeat of Clotilda, the mask is the party's to claim. As an objet d'art, the mask is worth 300-400 gp to the right buyer interested in ancient relics. (And would constitute a 'Bright Prize' in Mustertown.) As a magic item, it holds great power, but any character who claims it will eventually walk down the same path as Clotilda. Its magic is tied to *It that Rots*, and anyone who wields it will eventually be bent to that foul one's will. (Feel free to craft it's specific powers for your campaign for the fools who persist!)

Also scattered in numerous small chests about the room are items Jonas stole from the homes of those he abducted in Slither's End. The collection of silver combs, jewelry chests, salt cellars and the like would bring about 30 gp if sold in a large town or city,

but many of the objects would be recognized by their owners in Slither's End.

The alchemical equipment could be sold for 10 gp to an interested party. Many of the components are labelled in Clotilda's neat hand. Including one large bottle marked 'rot cure'. There are at least 25 doses of the foul-tasting mixture in the bottle, and it will cure anyone who has been infected with the rot. (But the characters will be at -1 Fort for two days while they recover.)

## Wrapping Up

As mentioned, Judges can make the return trip to Slither's End as easy or difficult as they wish. Depending on the success of their efforts, the party's reception will vary.

Regardless of outcomes, the City Council will thank the party for their efforts, and reward them appropriately. If a large percentage of the villagers have been rescued, another massive celebration will be thrown in the party's honor. They will be declared 'Champions of Slither's End' and treated as such from that day forward whenever the players return. (Villagers who joined the party will be more than happy to leave with the players when they depart.)

How the players react to the folk of Slither's End once they learn of the village's unholy pact is up to them. The older villagers will never admit to any dark deeds, mumbling that the player's just don't understand the situation while trying desperately to change the subject to anything else!

Younger folk will react based on how the party dealt with the rescued children. If the party allowed the children to sacrifice the guard, the children will remain silent as usual, but will occasionally smile knowingly at the players in suitably creepy fashion.

Players will be guarded by the Grimmels as if they were part of the village, and intuitive players will sense that the thirty eyes of Salissak are upon them!

If the players kept the children from taking the guard, the young ones will be particularly cold. Secretly they will encourage the Grimmels to vex the characters wherever possible, and it will be unsafe for the party to enter the water near Slither's End at any time. (Save for when the party returns to the Sending Stone with the town watching.)

The town leaders will be horrified by the tale of Jonas and Clotilda, offering the Gralk's home to those who wish to remain. In fact, they will enthusiastically encourage one or two players to stick around as permanent residents. The Winter's End festival is only months away, and the players will surely find it fascinating, perhaps even acting as the town's special guest of honor!

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If you wish your players to experience the hospitality of Slither's End once again, be on the lookout for the 1st level mini-adventure 'Lair of the Mist Men' which will give your players a chance to confront the mysterious enemy at their source!

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