

# BEASTS BARBARIANS

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds setting

By UMBERTO PIGNATELLI

## GRAINS OF DEATH





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# GRAINS OF DEATH

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds Heroic Tale for Beasts & Barbarians,  
set in Jalizar, City of Thieves. For a party of 2-6 Seasoned heroes.

*Famine is spreading in the City of Thieves and grain is worth its weight in gold. Even adventurers like you must take whatever work they can find to full the belly.*

*"I'll be back tomorrow morning, and I want to find every single grain of wheat at its place!" said Merchant Valso, before leaving you in charge of the warehouse for the night watch.*

*"Don't worry, sir," you answered. "Nobody will touch your grain."*

*It's going to be a long night.*

## WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

These are dire times in Jalizar. The few grain fields surrounding the city, due to an exceptionally rainy summer, produced no harvest. The same rains manifested on the Drowned King Sea as terrible storms, sinking the grain ships coming from Syranthia and Tricarnia, causing a new impending famine in the City of Thieves. As always happens in times like these, the population laments, and a scapegoat must be found: in this case the blame is being laid on House Talum, the merchant house owning the greater part of the grain fields of the city. Lord Talum, to divert public rage, has blamed his personal agronomist and Master of the Fields, the old Master Ocrolas, a very poor way to repay a life of faithful service. Publically accused of being not able to save the harvest, the

old, faithful sage was stripped of his rank and thrown out of the city, under a hail of stones and mud from the enraged (and hungry) population.

A wretched man, he took the path to the Bogs, only hoping to find a spot where he could die alone.

But instead of death, in the Bogs Ocrolas found something worse: a solitary, hooded boatman, who seemed to know very well the injustice suffered by the old man and the rage in his heart. He offered the agronomist a way to take revenge on Lord Talum, and on the whole of Jalizar, if he wanted. In exchange he asked a small thing: Ocrolas' soul.

Old Ocrolas, having nothing more to lose, accepted the pact, and the boatman gave him a curious object: a bone wand, with the top sculpted to resemble a rat's head.



The owner of this wand, the boatman said, can control rats and rodents of any sort at his will. Surely Ocrolas could put it to good use, the boatman laughed with a sound of banging metal.

Returning the smile, Ocrolas grabbed the wand and returned to Jalizar. The morning after, disguised as a beggar, he entered the City of Thieves again, and found an entrance to the Sewer, ready to enact his vengeance on Lord Talum and all the other Jalizarans...

## A TASK OF RESPONSIBILITY

With the current famine hovering on Jalizar, every ounce of grain has become a commodity to be heavily guarded, because the price of food has skyrocketed in recent weeks.

One of the few men still owning some grain sacks is the independent merchant Valso Grat. The merchant bought a cargo of cereals a couple of weeks before the famine started, and now he is keeping it in a warehouse in the New Docks quarter, waiting for prices to reach their maximum before selling it for an outrageous sum.

This is detestable behavior, but there is a reason people call him Valso Stoneheart. The merchant put guards in the warehouse to watch over the grain, but in recent days a few sacks have disappeared. He suspected that the guards themselves stole the grain to sell it, so he got rid of them, denouncing the theft to the Copper Helms. The guards were arrested, despite claiming their innocence, and now Valso needs new guardians. He had heard well

of the heroes, so he hired them with a generous wage (100 Moons per hero). The party must guard the warehouse night and day for at least a week, and prevent any theft.

It is an easy, if boring job: the first day the heroes only have to shoo away some beggars asking for a scrap of food, and to watch over Valso while he does his business. Then, at night, the fat merchant goes home.

*"I am leaving you in charge of the warehouse." Vargo grunts. "Don't fall asleep and watch well over my possessions, in particular the grain. The sacks, the ten remaining ones, are piled in the back room. I don't trust you, as I don't trust anyone apart from myself, so I've locked it. There is a grate in the back room's door, so you can watch over it without any temptation. I'll be back tomorrow morning, and I want to find every single grain of wheat in its place!" He ends the phrase waving a menacing finger under your nose before going away.*

The warehouse is a two stores building, 24" by 24" on the battlefield, mainly made of wood. It has a front gate (4" wide, to let a cart pass), which can be barred from inside. Both floors are open spaces, filled with goods of various types (mainly pottery). On the ground floor there are two small rooms; one, near the front gate, is Valso's room, where he runs his business, while the other is the back room where he keeps the most precious wares (at this moment, the grain). Both rooms are locked. If need arises, the door can be bashed (Toughness 8) or pried open with a Lock-picking roll.

The upper floor is crammed with less valuable, more burdensome goods. Consider



all the ground Difficult, apart from a series of passages 1" wide and a couple of clearings 4" by 4". The piles of goods are usually three yards tall (so they can be climbed).

**A Nightly Visit.** All is calm and boring. The heroes can check the floor, eat something, gamble and similar activities. If the Game Master wants to keep them alert, he can devise a couple of false alarms or a minor distraction of some type (such as finding a bottle of good wine among the goods). Then, during the Thieves' Hour, the darkest moment of the night, something happens. Let the heroes make a Notice roll. With a success, they hear some noise on the upper floor. There is a band of thieves, members of the Guild, which have come to steal the grain. Since the warehouse has no windows, they arrived on the roof, and are removing the tiles to sneak inside. If the heroes are quick to react, they arrive on the upper floor when only half of the thieves are inside (the others will enter in the second round), if they are cautious, all the thieves are already inside, and try to hide themselves among the goods and to ambush the party.

If everyone fails the Notice roll, the thieves stealthily reach the ground floor and attack the party by surprise.

The thieves are no heroes and try to escape after half of them fall in combat. If the characters question a prisoner, he reveals himself to be a

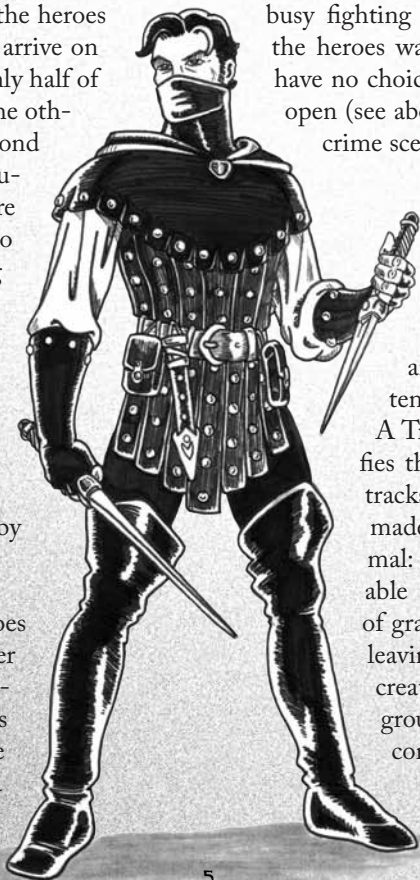
member of the Thieves Guild (and tries to bully the heroes into freeing him to avoid the vengeance of the Guild). He also says this is the first attempt to rob the warehouse, and the band has no responsibility for the thefts of the past nights.

**(M) Grain Robbers (1 per hero + 1)**

## PESKY LITTLE THIEVES!

After dispatching the robbers, the heroes may think their job has ended, and relax a bit. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whenever one of them looks at the sacks of grain again, he has a very bad surprise. The sacks lie empty on the floor of the back room! The door is locked from the outside as Valso left it. The mysterious theft happened when the party was busy fighting the Grain Robbers. If the heroes want to learn more, they have no choice but to force the door open (see above) and examining the crime scene.

Once inside, they discover that the sacks were broken by some creature with tiny sharp teeth, and the precious contents are entirely missing. A Tracking (+2) roll identifies the droppings and small tracks around the sacks as made by rats. This isn't normal: no rodent would be able to eat such a quantity of grain in so little time, and leaving so few remnants. The creatures came from underground: the wooden planks composing the flooring are rotten, and if the





heroes remove them, they discover an old Sewer manhole. The grate protecting it is too small to let a man pass, but there is no doubt that the grain thieves passed through it.

Removing the grate is simple, and reveals a sort of well going down, into the smelly darkness.

If the heroes want to discover what really happened they must go inside.

## IN THE DARK

The well leads directly into a network of tunnels, part of the Sewers of Jalizar. The place is in a Pitch Black lighting condition, but the heroes can find lanterns in the warehouse. The mysterious thieves left a track: some fallen grains of wheat, which the party can follow quite easily.

**The Metal Grate and the Lurker.** The track of grain goes down a large tunnel, with a river of black water running in the middle. Luckily, there is a raised walkway along the side of the tunnel that the party can use to avoid getting wet.

After ten minutes of walking, the tunnel is blocked by a big metal grate. The water continues to flow through it, and the passageway continues on the other side.

*You see a very peculiar scene on the other side of the tunnel. A long line of rats, in perfect order like an army of little soldiers, are walking in the tunnel. Some of them walk on four, others on two legs, and all of them carry tiny sacks, full of grain. You have found your thieves! The strange beasts hastily disappear into the dark passage in front of you.*

If the party wants to follow the rats, they have two choices: they can try to break the metal grate, or can take a side passage nearby, hoping that this allows them to bypass the grate.

*Breaking the Grate.* This can be done with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative. Having an appropriate tool, like a crowbar, grants a +2 bonus to the Strength roll. Heroes can try multiple times, but any hero rolling 1 or less on the Strength roll, suffers a level of Fatigue (which wears off at the beginning of the scene An Evil Plan).

*The Lurker in the Side Passage.* The side passage is narrow and smelly, and seems unused. Large webs hang from the ceiling. The reason is simple: it leads to the nest of a dangerous creature, a Sewer spider and its hungry children.

The passage ends in a room, littered with bones. In a corner lies a human body, half eaten and blackened from death, and the shells of several large eggs. An opening, on the other side of the room, provides an exit from this place.

When the heroes enter the room, the Lurker and its family attack. The beasts are hanging on the ceiling and drop directly on the heroes. Unless the players explicitly say their heroes look toward the ceiling, they are surprised, and the creatures get the Drop on them. The room is 8" by 8", with two 1" wide openings on opposite sides.

If the heroes slay the monsters, they can examine the human body. He was an unfortunate Sewer Cleaner of Cairnlander origin. He still has a rope 20 feet long, a bronze dagger and an Ancestor amulet on his neck (a finger bone with a rune



carved). Identifying the clan (the Dead Horses) from the rune and returning the amulet to his family can lead to an interesting adventure.

The opening leads the heroes into the main tunnel again, bypassing the grate.

**(M) The Lurker (1).** Use the Sewer Spider stats. It is a Henchman.

**(M) Lurker Offspring (1 per 2 heroes).** Use the Sewer Spider stats, reducing Size to +0 and dropping Fighting to d6.

**A Peculiar Rat and the Corridor of Traps.** The tracks of grain continue for a while in the Sewers' tunnel, then they turn right, leading into a corridor, with an opening on the other side. The corridor is empty, apart from a single rat, laying in the middle of it. When the heroes are on the doorstep, the rat stands up on its forelegs,

showing a bald patch on its back, and talks them with a human voice.

*"Ah! My dear friends, it is a real pleasure meeting you! Pardon me if I don't come to greet you in the proper way, but I have a little problem." Then the rat turns with an almost human gesture, showing that its tail is imprisoned in a mousetrap.*

**The Impudent Rat.** This creature is one of the legendary beings of Jalizar, the King of Rats, a Beast King (see *Beasts & Barbarians Golden Edition*, page 164 and sidebar in the current adventure). He rules over all the rats of Jalizar, and since he felt that someone is messing with his subjects, he came to investigate. But Ocrolos, as he has fought rats all his life, knows of his existence, and prepared a trap for the King. It is a simple mouse trap, but it is made with the fang of a feline, which makes impossible for the King to free himself. Charac-



## THE KING OF RATS

*The King of Rats is a powerful being, fully described in Jalizar, City of Thieves. In this adventure he needs no stats, because the presence of the bone wand in the city has temporarily deprived him of the greater part of his powers (and this is the real reason why he is investigating).*

**Blood Curse.** *If the heroes swear on their blood to free the King of Rats, and don't respect the pact, they call down a curse upon themselves. Each character must make a Spirit (-4) roll. In case of failure they immediately lose a Bennie, if they have any. Then, at the end of the adventure they have a strange fever, gaining the Anemic Hindrance. This malady can only be healed by the King of Rats, after proper deeds of atonement.*

**The Rat on the Shoulder.** *A character with the King of Rats on his shoulder gains an extra Bennie, called the Rat Bennie, which he can share with his companions as per the Common Bond Edge. Use a different gaming stone to represent it, because, apart from the normal uses of a Bennie, it grants +2 to the roll if used for a Soak roll or to reroll an Agility-based Trait roll. In addition the King of Rats has the Helper Edge, which he can use with Notice d10. The Rat on the Shoulder can be hit only with a Called Shot (-4, Toughness: 3). If killed, the King of Rats reincarnates in a new body.*

ters can know of the existence of the King of Rats with a Knowledge (Arcana) (-4) roll, a Knowledge (Legends and Lore) (-2) roll or a simple Common Knowledge roll if they are Jalizaran.

The King asks the heroes to be freed from the mousetrap: humans can touch feline bones without any harm. He is ready to bargain for this little task. In particular he has two pieces of information he can trade: first, that someone is messing with his subjects, and he is looking for him (not very important info), second, and more important, that the current room is full of traps, and that he knows where they are and how disable them.

**The Corridor of Traps.** This place was part of the defense system of the den of an ancient master thief of Jalizar, Tippiick Three-Fingers (the King knew him and has a couple of salacious anecdotes to share), and is littered with traps, vicious blades concealed in the ground which can stick a man dead. The corridor is 15" long; each round a hero is moving in it, he must draw a card from the action deck, and check the table below.

Note the color of the card too: if it is red, the trap can be spotted and avoided with

### Corridor of Traps Table

CARD VALUE	FIGHTING DICE	DAMAGE	NOTE
2	d10 + Wild Dice	2d8	
3-5	d8	2d8	
6-8	d6	3d4	
9-10	d8	2d6	
J-Q	d6	2d6	Triple blade, three attacks.
K-A	d8	2d10	Scythe from the ceiling, attacks with the Drop.
Joker		No trap!	



a Notice roll, if it's black, the roll suffers a -2 penalty. This if the characters are moving cautiously (half Pace). If they are moving at full Pace they suffer an additional -2 to the Notice roll, and no roll at all can be made if they run. In this case draw two cards for the character and apply both of them.

The King of Rats knows the position of any trap, and can give +4 to the Notice roll. He also knows how to disable all the traps, but reveals it only if the party swears on their own blood (a sacred oath, see sidebar) to free him. In this case he points out a slightly different stone on the other side of the corridor. Pressing it disarms all the traps. The stone can be pressed with a Power like *legerdemain* or shot with a projectile. It is 15" away and quite small (Called Shot -4). A damage roll of 6 or more is enough to press it.

If the heroes free the King of Rats, after thanking them with a bow, he disappears in darkness (but will appear later in the adventure). If he is left to his own devices, he simply stares at the heroes. If the party swore to free him, and then leaves him trapped, they suffer the effects of the Blood Curse (see sidebar).

Whenever the group manages to pass the corridor of traps, they can go on with the next scene.

## AN EVIL PLAN

After leaving the Corridor of Traps, the heroes are near to their objective. They hear a voice coming from a nearby tunnel, and then a faint light guides their steps to an underground room. Spying from the entrance arch, they see the following scene.

*In a large hall, under the smoke of the torches, you see a large pile of cereals, each grain shimmering like gold. A man, dressed in rich garments, even if now they are tattered and dirty, is busy mixing up a cauldron full of some liquid nearby. The room is full of mice and rats of every sort and size, watching the scene intently. Some of them even ride on the shoulders of the man, who pats them with affection.*

*"Good job, my little friends, good job," he says. "I passed all my life fighting you, and I never imagined how useful you can be. And now, a bath for everyone, quick!"*

*The old man picks a strange wand from one sleeve and points it toward the beasts. You note that its tip is shaped to resemble a rat's head. As if enchanted by the strange artifact, one after the other the creatures dive in the cauldron and come out dripping, then they roll over the grain pile, tainting it.*

*"Come on, you must smear every single grain with poison!" The man says.*

*At this point a little mouse jumps onto his shoulder and whispers something in his ear.*

*"So, what do we have here? Guests?" the old man asks. "Come on, come on, don't be shy."*

The little rat has seen the heroes, and is reporting to his master. The heroes have no choice other than entering, but a sneaky character (no more than one in the party) can try to stay back in the shadows, with a Stealth (-4) roll. If they try to attack immediately, when they move over the trap (see below) he immediately opens it.

When the heroes step in the light, they can see better the strange man. Any char-



acter which was in the City of Thieves in the last two weeks must be told the following information.

*"You recognize this man! He is Orolas, the Agronomist of Lord Talum, the merchant house owning the grain fields of Jalizar. The lord used him as a scapegoat for the famine, saying that it was his fault that the fields gave no harvest this year. He was thrown out of the city two weeks ago, stoned and covered in filth!"*

Orolas understands if the heroes have recognized him, and continues with a wicked smile.

*"Yes, I am Orolas the agronomist. I have come back for vengeance. Merchant Valso, your patron, isn't the only one hiding grain during the famine. Lord Talum, my former master, after giving me to the crowd, did the same. He has an underground granary, under his mansion, full of cereals. He is waiting for prices to skyrocket before putting it on the market. But I'll play a little joke on him: I poisoned Valso's grain with a deadly mixture, I know some of them from my agronomist days, and now I and my little friends will sneak into Talum's granary and mix it with the lords' cereals. What do you think will happen when people will eat it? They'll die, everyone will die! Jalizar will remember me forever!"*

He ends with hideous laughter.

This should be the moment for the heroes to act, but before they can do anything, the madman continues.

*"You think you can stop me? You are wrong!"*

*With a quick movement the man pushes a lever, concealed under the cauldron, and the floor opens under your feet!*

*The last words you hear are "Goodbye, my friends!"*

## IN THE PIT

The heroes, apart from any character who stayed hidden in the darkness, falls down in a well. The well is 20 feet deep, but the bottom luckily is half submerged in water and full of filth and garbage, thus giving them a handy cushion. The heroes are allowed an Agility roll to avoid any damage, if they fail they suffer 2d6 damage.





The pit closes automatically over their heads. Now, how they can leave this place? This isn't their most urgent problem. The real problem is that they aren't alone.

*You hear deep grunts and hisses coming from a pile of garbage, and something emerges from it. It is one of the most monstrous creatures you have ever seen in your adventures: a giant rat, big as a horse, with two heads, which stares at you with terrible hunger. You can only imagine what weird mutation caused a being like this to be born!*

The pit the heroes are in is round, 6" in diameter. It's partly full of water, and is considered Difficult Ground. Place up to three small garbage piles (SMT) around the room, which are quite solid, and count as normal ground. See *Jalazar, City of Thieves* for other uses of garbage piles.

The monster starts the combat on one of the garbage piles.

### **(WC) Two-Headed Rat (1)**

### **IN THE MEANTIME, OUTSIDE THE PIT...**

If a hero stayed outside, he witnesses the following scene. The rats, under the orders of Ocrolos, pick up their small sacks again, and fill them with poisoned grain. Then, in an orderly line, they follow their master through a dark passage, towards to the underground granary of House Talum.

The character can attack the rat master, if he wants, but being alone against all the opponents (see Grains of Death scene), he would be easy prey for them. At GM's discretion, if the character attacks now, Ocrolos can use his powers and the help of the rats to throw the pesky character in the pit

with his friends. The best thing he can do is wait for Ocrolos to go away and then free his comrades from the pit (see below).

### **ESCAPING**

Once they have killed the monster, the heroes must escape the pit: there are basically three ways to do this.

First, if they helped the King of Rats before, the creature arrives and uses his weight to push the lever, opening the trapdoor. At this point the heroes can get out with a Climbing roll.

Second, if a character manages to escape the pit he can open the pit himself (Climbing roll required as above). Note that if the heroes helped the King of Rats, he shows up in the scene as above.

Third, if they don't have a friend outside and cannot count on the help of the King, they must climb the sheer surface of the well (-4 to the Climbing roll), and then they must bash the trapdoor (Toughness: 10, if they roll 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the Wild Die, they fall down due to the awkward position).

Once free, if the King of Rats helped them, he boldly jumps onto the shoulder of one hero (choose the one with the highest Charisma) and says:

*"I heard the madman speaking. We must stop him, or he'll bring destruction to your people and mine. Come on, my stalwarts, we have a mission to accomplish!" he adds, waving his paw like a miniature condottiere.*

The King of Rats stays on the shoulder of the hero till the end of the adventure. See sidebar on page 8 for the effects bestowed.



# GRAINS OF DEATH

Following the tracks of the horde of rats and their strange master isn't difficult. The creatures leave a large trail, and the King, if present, can track them by smell.

At last, the heroes arrive at the base of a flight of stairs going up. If the King of Rats is with them, he whispers:

*"This is the secret entrance to the granary of House Talum, we must be cautious."*

The granary is a very large and shady hall. It is composed of several pools, 2" deep and 4" by 8", mostly empty, surrounding a central one 8" by 8", where the cereals are stored in a tall mound. Each pool is divided from the other by a passage 2" wide, and there are some wooden planks (1" wide, 3" long) to walk over the smaller pools. Some large columns (1" by 1") hold up the ceiling. The area is in a Dark lighting condition, and scuttling sounds of small things are heard all around.

The heroes enter in the granary through a concealed door in the southwestern wall, while the main entrance, leading to the upper floors of House Talum, is placed in the middle of the northern wall.

There is no sign of the agronomist; the madman, with his army of rats, is going directly to the central pool, moving in the shadows. He hopes to stealthily poison it, go away and wait for his hideous plan to work.

The granary, given the current value of the cereals, is heavily guarded by soldiers, the famous Talum Falcons. Three pairs of guards, with lanterns, patrol the granary. Each round the heroes spend in the granary, draw a card from the Action Deck. If it is a Club, it means that a couple of guards appear within 6" + 1d6"

from the characters. Use the standard stealth rules to check if the characters are discovered or not. They are Inactive sentinels.

If they are spotted, the guards first order them to halt, then raise the alarm, and only after that do they engage the intruders. After the alarm is given, 2d4 additional guards run into the granary in the next 2d4 rounds.

The heroes can try to speak to the guards. Convincing them that they are actually there to save the grain, not to steal it, can be done with a Persuasion (-2) roll or good role-play. With a success the guards are willing to hear the heroes out and lower their weapons, while with a raise they are convinced and run directly to the central grain pool. Only with a failure do they immediately attack the party.

After the heroes have been in the granary for six rounds, whether or not they have managed to persuade the guards or to avoid them, the agronomist reaches the central pool, and is discovered by a couple of guards, who shout aloud, attracting everyone's attention. At this point, everybody runs to the central pool.

## THE SHOWDOWN

*The agronomist, a hideous figure in his tattered garments, surrounded by an army of rats, raises a fist, in a show of rage. "You've found me! No matter. I'll have my vengeance just the same!" Then he points the bone wand toward the rats. Half of them jump into the pool of grain and start unloading the poisoned grain over the good, while the others snarl and hiss, ready to defend their master.*

*You must stop him, if you want to save the grain!*



This is the final battle of the scenario. The heroes must stop the agronomist, and his rats, before the biggest grain supply of Jalizar is irredeemably compromised. Orola's creatures start within 6" of the central pool of grain, which is surrounded by his creatures. His tactic is simple: he must engage the party and the guards to allow the rats to poison it (see below). During the fight House Talum's guards are allies of the heroes, and are under the players' control.

*Poisoning the Grain.* Each round a swarm of rats stays on the central mound of grain (Difficult Ground), they can make a Smarts roll. For each success and raise, assign a Poison Token to the grain. When there are five or more Poison Tokens on the cereals, it means that the supply is totally ruined, and must be destroyed. In this case at least part of the agronomist's plan worked. When the battle starts, if the heroes took longer than six rounds to get into the granary, the grain mound starts with a Poison Token, because the agronomist has already started his foul work.

**(WC) Orolas the Agronomist (1)**

**(M) Swarms of Rats (1 per 2 heroes, plus 1 per 3 guards)**

**(M) House Talum Guards (6)**

## TERRAINS AND PROPS

• **Cart:** A cart (2" by 2") lies nearby. It is small but with big, sturdy wheels, the ideal thing to smash a rat swarm! Moving the cart requires a Strength (-2) roll, which can be cooperative. Each success and raise allows the user to move the cart 2" in a direction of his choice. If it passes over a swarm of rats, it reduces it to a bloody pulp, causing 2d8 damage to it.

• **Wooden Planks:** Weapons aren't effective against swarms, but one of the planks used as catwalks can be used to smash them. They are considered Improvised Weapons, but deal Str+d6 damage and require two hands to use.

• **Oil Vases:** Apart from grains, other valuable things are stored in the granary. Among them are several big earthenware vases, full of precious oil, imported from the southern lands. Oil can be poured on the ground by smashing the vase (Toughness 5) or simply rolling it over. This creates a Large Burst Template of Difficult ground. If set afire with a torch, it deals 1d0 damage, and the victim is considered very flammable. There are at least three vases of oil on the battlefield.

## THE END

The following text supposes the King of Rats is with the party when Orolas is finally defeated.

*The mad agronomist falls down, and his mysterious wand rolls over the ground. Before you can do anything, the King of Rats jumps down from your shoulder and seizes it in his jaws, crushing it. You hear a distant, angry shout, while the horde of rats, now without anyone commanding them, escapes. The last one escaping is the King himself. You are not sure, but it seems he winks at you before disappearing in the darkness.*

*Then you hear enraged voices and clangors of weapons as a whole company of Talum soldiers storms in.*

*Your night is definitely not over yet.*



Unless the players declare immediately they're trying to escape, the heroes are quickly surrounded by House Talum guards. Fighting, in this case, is not an option. After few minutes Lord Perikles himself, ruler of the House, comes down to see what has happened in the granary. Then the heroes have their chance to talk and to justify their break-in.

If their explanations succeed, Lord Talum agrees to let them go, and he graciously gives them enough sacks of grain to replace the ones stolen from Master Valso. If the heroes are bold enough to ask for a reward, he is amused, and gives them a thousand Moons. In truth, the money is more to pay for their silence: nobody must know of the hidden grain before House Talum decides to sell it, otherwise there could be food riot. In this case Lord Talum could even look for them in future, for delicate missions.

If the party accepts the money and then lets slip the information instead they gain a powerful enemy: Lord Perikles has a very long reach.

If Orolas managed to ruin the grain (five or more Poison Tokens on the mound) Lord Talum isn't in his best mood: any Persuasion roll toward him suffers -2 and no reward is offered. The heroes will be lucky if they are thrown out of the palace without a hard beating. In this case they also have the problem of explaining the missing sacks to Valso the merchant.

Good heroes could also try to blackmail Lord Talum: if he agrees to donate part of the grain to the poor, they will keep quiet about the detestable behavior of the Merchant House, which hoarded grain in a time of famine. This is a very dangerous game; Lord Perikles can be convinced to

act in this way, but he gives the heroes no reward, even if he is secretly amused by their boldness. The player who first proposes this idea should be rewarded with an extra Bennie at the beginning of the next adventure.

## CREATURES AND NPCs

### GRAIN ROBBER

A low-ranking thief of Jalizar, little more than a thug. He hopes to fill his purse with the grain of Master Valso.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Lockpicking d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6.

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6) or bronze crowbar (Str+d6, AP1, +2 damage to break doors), bronze dagger (Str+d4, range: 3/6/12), light leather jerkin (+1), patched short cape; one of them carries a 'Thieves' Lantern with enough oil for the whole adventure (see sidebar on the next page).

### HOUSE TALUM SOLDIER

A skilled mercenary, at the orders of House Talum. Noble House soldiers usually wear a tabard and a mantle with the colors of their House, so as to be easily distinguishable during the not-so-rare fights erupting in the streets of the City of Thieves. House Talum's colors are blue and gray, and usually guards have a falcon emblazoned on the coat.



**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Riding d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

**Charisma:** +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6/7; **Toughness:** 7(2)

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes.

**Hindrances:** Loyal (Noble House).

**Gear:** Iron long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), medium bronze armor (+2), small shield (+1 Parry), tabard with House emblem, cloak with House colors.

### Special Abilities

• **House Talum Generosity:** This House is famous for its political skills and its wealth. Guards of House Talum are always properly dressed and have no problem with paying generous tips, which opens many doors to them. They receive +1 Charisma.



## OCROLAS THE AGRONOMIST

This mild tempered man came north from Syranthia more than thirty years ago, and served three generations of Talum Lords loyally as their agronomist. He always managed to keep the grain fields of the merchant family safe and productive, but against the flooding rains, he can do nothing. Lord Perikles Talum blamed him for the famine in front of the Jalizarans, and had him banished from the city. Ocrolos is now only an empty shell animated by hate and anger against the Talum family and all Jalizar. The gift of the boatman, the bone wand, only magnified these feelings.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Knowledge (agriculture) d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8.

## NEW ITEM: THIEVES' LANTERN

*A lantern with up to four slits, which can be closed to project light in particular directions. Imported from Lhoban, these decorated lanterns were originally used in rituals where creating complex shadows was important. The thieves of Jalizar quickly found a new use for them, because they can focus light on a very small area, such as the lock on which a burglar is working, without revealing his position. In game terms, a thieves' lantern can create an area of light as big as a Medium Burst Template, a single large light beam (use the Cone Template) or a small dot of light. Any attempt to spot a thieves' lantern in the darkness suffers -2 to Notice rolls. It is a Rare Item, costing 100 Moons.*

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Poisoner (only vermin killing concoctions - 6 Power Points).

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty.

**Gear:** Bone wand (Str+d4, see notes), dirty garments, tattered black cloak.

### Special Abilities

• **Bone Wand:** This strange artifact is made from a single piece of bone from some forgotten creature. It has a rat-shaped head, with a sort of light shimmering in the eyes. The wielder can use the *beast friend* Power at will, limited to rats, with a range including all the City of Thieves. He can control a number of Swarms of Rats up to half his Spirit die. In addition, the wand grants 20 Power Points and the following Powers: *barrier* (rats create a wall of flesh), *bolt* (rabid rat jumps on the victim, biting him savagely), *smite* (greenish aura around the wand or swarm of rats in a fighting frenzy). The Powers are cast using the wielder's Smarts.



## ABOUT THE BONE WAND

*This evil artifact is too powerful and dangerous to be left in the hands of the player characters. If the King of Rats didn't manage to destroy it, there are various ways for the GM to get rid of a potential game-breaker: the easiest way is to say that after a couple of days the wand crumbles to dust, while another consists of the hooded boatman sending someone to retrieve it, potentially leading to another adventure.*

- **Low Light Vision:** One of the gifts of the bone wand and the time passed in the Sewers, Orolas ignores Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Protection of the Hooded Boatman:** This evil power lingering outside the City of Thieves granted his protection to the Agronomist, giving him an almost supernatural ability to avoid blows. He has the benefits of the Loincloth Hero Edge.
- **Weakness (Bone Wand):** The bone wand can be hit with a Called Shot (-4), and has Toughness 6. If it is destroyed the user immediately loses all his powers and the Protection of the Hooded Boatman Special Ability.

## SEWER SPIDER

Sewer Spiders live in the darkest tunnels of the City of Thieves, and are vicious hunters. Brown and furry, they lack the webbing capabilities of their surface brothers, but they compensate with razor sharp claws and a tremendous bite.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10.

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Dweller in the Darkness:** Sewer Spiders see perfectly in Dim, Dark or Pitch Darkness conditions.
- **Eight-legged Monstrosity:** Sewer Spiders have eight legs as all arachnids, but luckily they use only the two front ones in combat. They make two Fighting attacks with claws per round without any penalty. In case both attacks hit the same target in the same round, the victim receives a free third bite attack, made with -2.
- **Size +2:** Sewer Spiders are bigger than men.
- **Wall Walker:** It can walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 8.

## SWARM OF BATS

Swarms are treated just like a creature. Swarms cover an area equal to a Large Burst Template and attack everyone within it every round. When a swarm is wounded, its size decreases to a Medium Burst Template (see the Split Special Ability for smaller size swarms). Another hit reduces it to a Small Burst Template and a third one disperses it.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Notice d6.

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

### Special Abilities

- **Bites:** A Swarm of Rats inflicts hundreds of tiny scratches every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Split:** This swarm is clever enough to split into two smaller parts (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The



Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 4 each) and their Agility is lowered by a dice step.

- **Swarm:** Parry +2; because the swarm is composed of dozens of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do only half damage. Area-effect weapons work normally.



## TWO-HEADED RAT

This hideous creature is surely the result of some weird mutation, caused by the dark powers lurking in the Sewers of the City of Thieves.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6.

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

### Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.

- **Fear:** Any character seeing the Two-Headed Rat for the first time must make a Fear check.

- **Size +3:** The Two Headed rat is as big as a horse.

- **Tail Slap:** The creature has a long, rope-like tail, which it can use to slap down opponents around it. It counts as an Agility Trick, affecting all characters in a Medium Burst Template centered on the monster.

- **Two-Headed:** This monster has two, independent heads, so he can make any combination of two bites or Tail slaps without any multi-action penalty.