

Players:

Do you have to be trained to help with?

Review rules for helping, for picking locks.

does drawing a weapon provoke an attack of opportunity

Steve: Barbarian Beowulf; 6'5 235. Like Conan. Here for 19 years, brought here as a baby.

Jeff: Artificer Jennish; making his way in the city. Likes to tinker. Looking at mechanical gizmos.

Rod: thundering armor +1 power bonus to AC. **Looking for interesting mechanical gizmos.**

Keith: Kaskar rogue; leather armor, could be bouncer for local gang; could be between jobs.

Against press gangs. Good but as close to neutral as possible. Native of

Who is the fence for goods? Helpful to have one around.

100 gp

+1 broadsword

+1 chainmail

ring +1 AC

wand of herblore

+1 leather armor

5 +1 arrows

+1 spear

+1 long spear

Who's stuff is this?

Walking order:

kaskar

beowulf

jennish

gregor

stiles

Items in caverns

I guess these are split between Aachen's things and the fairies' shiny things.

Passive perception checks

It looks like passive perception checks are not rolled -- rather the characters are "taking 10". So, we can figure out ahead of time what passive perceptions that characters need to figure out each thing.

See burrows in rooms 1, 2, 3: DC 15 -- two of my stock characters would get this.

See fireflies in those rooms: DC 20 -- none of my stock characters would get this.

If they fail both they'll see turtles

See the flash of the telescope from Apogee: DC 15 -- two of my stock characters would get this.

Opposed checks

Being tricked by "Puck" in the spider nest. I guess they can realize but they can't stop it. Realizing it actually brings on the attack.

Gregor

Gregor the naturalist collects cures, specimens, and hints from foreigners coming into Braddock's port. Some of the cures seem outlandish, like touching an elephant's trunk to cure headaches. On the other hand, a doctor near port named Burgess has confirmed Gregor's claim that mosquitos spread malaria.

When they go to Gregor's lab, they'll notice a lightning rod going into the roof. You've seen those in a few other places around the city, now that they think about it.

He has many mummified animals -- a crocodile, a crane -- and a coelacanth that Anhalt Company fishermen found recently. But giant squid are his real obsession. No one has ever seen one alive, but last year whalers brought him a giant squid's tentacle still wriggling on their hook, and with Brunn he's trying to keep it alive in a salt bath and make it move again.

Now, Gregor has word from a trusted source that a giant squid has taken up in the flooded caverns below Lofton Keep, across the river from Braddock. He's proposing to go check it out.

Setting out

Also would like to get:

Kaskar: long spear

Beowulf: great spear

Let's start with this stuff in figuring out what the party always has when they set out?

healing

The apothecary Chambers can supply some nonmagical healing "potions". He'll suggest his own tincture -- a mix of quinine, opium, capsaicin, ether, and other secret ingredients -- as a nonmagical alternative to the standard D&D healing potion. It's the Hollin equivalent of the orc medicine in The Lord of the Rings -- harshly unpleasant but effective.

He'll also suggest treacle as a poison antidote, which will be effective against venom and possibly other things. Also, some smelling salts to rouse some characters.

kit

The adventure's kit from p. 222 is backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, pouch, rations, rope, sunrods, waterskin.

light

Torches
Lanterns, lantern oil
Flint, steel, kindling

other

lockpicks
writing material

Loften Castle

From the bridge and nearby they can see the castle consists of a hexagonal keep, with a large attached area surrounded by a high wall and towers.

The characters see fisherman with rods on the shore and its boats. They see stray dogs who live on the abandoned keep grounds. The dogs follow them curiously, they can shoo them off or let them follow into the keep.

The keep has been abandoned for a long time and since it's right in the city, any possible treasure was probably been found by scavengers a long time ago.

As they make their way through the keep to the bottom levels, they see some prisoners' skeletons still chained to the wall with spiderweb on them. Something chewed on some of the

bones and dragged them around. And then see some homeless guys hanging out in the keep.

Caverns

1: This is a large flooded cavern, about 100 feet diameter and the ceiling is about 100 feet high. It's silent. The water here seems to black -- you can't see below the surface. It smells stagnant here. The water flows slowly to an exit tunnel to the SE, and there are natural landings with tunnels existing to the SW and NE.

Perception: If they roll very well on perception, that can notice a swirl in the water (Aachen); fireflies; or burrows in the walls and ceilings. If they fail the roll, they can instead make out some turtles on the landing to the SE and NW. When the turtles think they're spotted they scurry into the water.

2: The characters can roll perception here for swirl, fireflies, burrows. If the characters go into here that gives Aachen time to take an interest in their boat. He knocks on the bottom of it to see if it will respond -- maybe the characters think they've hit a boulder in the water. Soon after he knocks louder and rocks the boat, maybe when they return to 1.

3: Water here, an island with scurrying turtles on it. The knocking can happen here also.

4. When they come onto the landing here, they see some of Aachen's collection: a cracked figurehead from a ship; a rudder.

This area is a small network of 3 connected rooms (4 rooms if you include room 5 below). Collectively the 3 rooms are a giant spider lair; a tunnel from the room is their inlet here, it comes in through the ceiling. There's a Puck-like fairy here who has been communing with Aachen, and he'll beguile the characters into moving perpetually between these three rooms until the spiders can move on them.

After they're three rooms in, they'll start to enter "duplicate" copies of those rooms. This is "Puck" making them "choose" to return even if they don't intend it. Each time this happens, "Puck" has to make an opposed check or they figure out they're being beguiled. Let's say Puck's Bluff skill is 20. Then, my best stock character would have to beat Puck by 10 on the roll; given that they all can roll maybe this isn't crazy. And then increase Puck's by 2 each time until they get it. The penalty for failing is each time one more spider marshalls up to attack them.

They notice that the first room there is a tunnel going up in to the ceiling, but probably no way to reach it and it smells unhealthy. Next room has a luminescent fungus on the right hand wall. Third room has a stalagmite and stalagmite that have grown together on the left forcing the characters to go around on right.. Then, they enter a third room and it has a luminescent fungus on the left hand wall -- or are they coming into the first room from a different direction? Give them

a roll to figure it out. Now the next room has a burrow on the right wall. Give them an easier roll. When they figure it out, now the spiders come out.

Once this happens, spiders will come from the burrows and attack.

Spiders

There are 3 spiders equivalent to the deathjump spider in MM p. 246 but *all* stats are cut in half; I'll possibly bring in 1, 2, 3 more if the PCs beat them too easily.

7. This room is actually part of the spider warren on the combat map. But, the characters can also pause here, find a few things, healing surge before going on to Aachen.

little incense stand

looks like brass fixtures from a ship

glass eye

tinwhistle -- like the kind you'd get 10 for a penny on Thoroughkill Avenue

8: When the characters enter here, they'll be on a crude stone staircase cut from the wall. It's only 2-3 feet wide so single file -- they'll want to use their hands to help move on the stair and running would be difficult. The stone goes down toward the water, starting at about 40 feet and going down to zero. As the characters start to go down on the stair, they might notice a boat in the water -- actually, it looks like their boat, how did that get in here?

At about $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ way, Aachen will try to pick pocket them or otherwise pick a fight. At that point, the stair is low enough that the characters will survive a fall into it (10-15 feet), and then the water is only knee deep along the wall.

Aachen

In short, each of Aachen's tentacles has stats like the thief I rolled up, Grimsby.

Pick pocketing

When the characters first get within range -- $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of the way down the stair -- Aachen will try to pickpocket their goods and continue until caught. After he's caught, he'll continue trying to take their stuff -- now bigger stuff like weapons -- until they fight back or try to run away.

Aachen/Grimsby has thievery 10. This gives each attempt a 25% chance of the characters

noticing. Pickpocketing is restricted to “small” objects, so possibilities that could be:

- something that the characters picked up from the shore, which is possibly Aachen’s stuff anyway
- potions
- flint and steel
- pouch
- gold
- rations
- water thing.
- Or, he could loosen a belt or a bowstring to have a weapon fall off.

The rules for pickpocket are on page 189 of the Player’s Handbook. In short:

- DC 20 + target’s level, so DC 20 in this case.
- Fail by 4 or less, the target doesn’t notice.
- Fail by 5 or more, the character notices.

Attacks -- tentacles

- The melee basic attack is the same as Grimsby’s. This is the same whether he slaps or e.g. uses an oar as a pole weapon.
- Rules on grab, move, squeeze:
 - STR vs. REF to grab; PC makes an athletics check to escape.
 - STR vs. FORT to move a grabbed target. If grabbed, he can pull a character down into the water or throw it
 - How to squeeze for damage? I don’t see that, let’s just treat it as a basic melee attack.
- Drowning rules
 - PH has some information under Endurance skill check p. 184-185.
 - DM guide p. 159: “...during underwater combat...make a DC 20 Endurance check at the end of his turn in a round where he takes damage.” “When a character fails the check, he loses one healing surge and must continue to make checks. A character without healing surges who fails a check takes damage equal to his level.”
- He’ll throw the boat at them.

Attacks -- sonic

- sonic attack: can blast all the characters in the room: an anguished scream -- look up some kind of sonic boom spell. It will be blast 20, damage similar to wizard first level spell Force Orb -- int. vs. fort, 2d8 + int mod damage. it causes the room to start coming down.

If they stop at the landing on the far side of the cavern before going to Apogee, they could find:

Elegant looking small desk with lockable drawers; could still be good stuff in there.
Narwhal horn, very valuable, particularly to Gregor and Apothecary.

Apogee

When the characters reach Apogee, they'll see some interesting sites down in Braddock:

- Admiralty headquarters
- Prison and asylum hulks
- Prison, asylum, hospital, foundling home
- The Mooncalf and the busy avenue that leads to it.

Also, their attention is drawn to a flashing light down in the city -- it's the telescope on Volland House's roof watching Apogee.