

# FABLES

CITADEL OF THE UNSEEN SUN



A MASQUE OF LIFE  
EPISODE 3 OF 6



GHOSTFIRE  
GAMING

5E  
COMPATIBLE



# FABLES



CITADEL OF THE UNSEEN SUN: EPISODE 3

## A MASQUE OF LIFE



# CREDITS

## **Episode 3: A Masque of Life**

**Written by:** Willy Abeel

**Head of Fables:** James J. Haeck

**Story Design:** James J. Haeck

**Art Director:** Zoë Robinson

**Citadel of the Unseen Sun Writers:** Willy Abeel, Leon Barillaro, Anne Gregerson, James J. Haeck, Sarah Madsen, Montgomery Martin, Kelly McLaughlin, Joshua "HTTPaladin" Mendenhall

**Editor:** Matt Click

**Managing Editor:** James J. Haeck

**Graphic Design:** Rich Lescouflair and Peter Wocken Design

**Layout:** Rich Lescouflair

**Cover Design:** Christine Foltzer

**End Page Design:** Abby Zweifel

**Episode 3 Interior Illustrators:** Alex Drummond, Amélie Hutt, Bethany Berg, Claudio Pozas, Cory Trego-Erdner, Elisa Serio, Jacob Walker, Josh Ketchen, Josiah Cameron, Lucas Durham, Luke Beaber, Narges Jafari, Nino Vecia, Pixoloid Studios (Mark Molnar, Janos, Gardos, Zsolt 'Mike' Szabados, Peter Lerner, Peter Kreitner), Rafał Hrynkiewicz, Stanislav Dikolenko, Tatii Lange, Tomasz Jędruszek, Vita Naum, WeirdUndead

**Episode 3 Cartographers:** Damien Mammoliti, Hannah Lavender, Luke Beaber

**Based on Locations and Characters from the Grim Hollow Campaign Setting by:** Jordon and Rex Gibson

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## **GHOSTFIRE GAMING TEAM**

**CEO:** Jordon Gibson

**Communications and Marketing:** Hannah Peart, Kathryn Griggs, Eduardo Cabrera

**Products and Logistics:** Matthew Witbreuk, Simon Sherry, Rex Gibson

**Game Designers:** Shawn Merwin, James J. Haeck

**Art Direction:** Suzanne Helmigh, Marius Bota, Ona Kristensen, Zoë Robinson

**Lead Graphic Designer:** Martin Hughes

### **Ghostfire Gaming Discord Community Managers:**

Ian "Butters" Gratton, Lukas "Toasti" Scheerer, Nelson "Deathven" Dicarlo, Tom "A Viking Walrus" Garland, Caleb "Connendarf" Englehart, Cameron "C4Burgers" Brechin

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# WELCOME TO FABLES!

You hold in your hands an episode of *Citadel of the Unseen Sun*, the first of many Fables which span worlds, genres, and the planes of existence. Each episode of this Fable contains four sessions of thrilling fifth-edition adventure—enough to entertain a group of weekly roleplaying game (RPG) players until the next episode arrives a month later.

## You Are a Game Master

As the Game Master (GM) of a Fable, you are given the power of a storyteller, telling tales of heroism and adventure to a rapt audience. Imagine yourself wrapped in the clothes of a traveling bard, your face cast in glowing firelight, as you weave a tapestry of words. Your words draw those who sit around the fire with you into another world, where they are not the mere audience of a tale, but actors, storytellers themselves.

The GM's role is to establish the setting of each scene in this Fable, introduce and roleplay its non-player characters (NPCs), and play monsters and villains that long to bring a swift end to the heroes' adventures. The players at your table are storytellers in their own right. Though they only embody a single character each while you embody many, the players' actions have the power to change the world of Etharis forever. The best GMs are willing to improvise, even ignoring the text of a Fable when necessary, to ensure the characters' actions have consequences—for both good and ill.

**If you are not planning on running this Fable, stop reading now. What follows is for the Game Master's eyes only.**

## Running this Fable

Fables is an episodic adventure series using the fifth edition of the world's first roleplaying game. In order to play, you need the free fifth edition System Reference Document, or the books that make up the fifth edition core rules.

This Fable takes place in the world of Etharis, a realm of darkness described in *Grim Hollow: The Campaign Guide*. Access to this book makes running this Fable much easier. Players who want to lean into the darkness of Grim Hollow's dark fantasy setting benefit from a copy of *Grim Hollow: The Player's Guide*, as well.

Additionally, the following information will help you run this Fable as its GM:

## Episodes and Chapters

A Fable is a complete story, released in six monthly episodes. Each episode is an arc of this overall story that presents a mini-sandbox environment. An episode has a specific range of levels for which it's designed. As the Game Master, you are empowered to run an episode for characters of a higher or lower level than recommended for an episode—but be prepared for a more challenging or easier session unless you alter the challenges and monsters the characters face.

The characters can explore each episode's region at their leisure. An episode is further divided into three or four chapters. Each chapter describes a specific location within an episode's sandbox environment—or it could represent a linear series of encounters that drive the plot forward. An episode typically has three to four chapters, each of which contains enough game content to fill one or two game sessions.

## Monsters, Magic, and More

When you see text in **bold**, that's the Fable's way of telling you that a scene or location contains a monster or NPC ready to fight. New monsters and NPCs in Fables are usually found in appendix A: New Monsters of the episode in which they appear. If a monster's name appears in bold but isn't followed by "(see appendix A)" or a similar pointer, then that monster's game statistics are found in the fifth edition core rules.

When you see text in italics, that's the Fable's way of telling you that you're looking at the name of a spell (like *hideous laughter*) or a magic item (like *winged boots*). Most spells and magic items are found in the fifth edition core rules. New spells and magic items are described in an episode's appendices as well, as indicated by a "(see appendix B)" pointer.

When you see text in a box like this, the characters have likely entered a new area, or have triggered an event like an NPC entering the scene. This text is meant for the GM to read or paraphrase aloud to the players to set the scene.



## Running a Dark Fantasy Game

Grim Hollow is a setting of darkness, despair, and terrible evil. Heroes are rarely paragons of justice; they are mortals with their own foibles and flaws. In turn, villains are rarely avatars of pure evil hell-bent on destruction. The heroes and villains of this Fable are operating at cross purposes—they stand in direct opposition to one another's goals.

Because of this, dark fantasy stories rarely culminate in purely happy endings. Innocent and heroic lives are lost just as frequently as evil ones, and people must sacrifice things which they hold dear to achieve their ends. As a story involving death and the undead, there are also many gruesome scenarios in this story.

Before you run this adventure, talk with your players about their comfort level with dark fantasy, with dark themes, and with gore and gruesome events. This “session zero” check-in won’t water down your game or spoil any surprises—it’s an opportunity to get everyone to buy into your game. If everyone’s excited for darkness, death, and despair, you can safely indulge in all the dark fantasy you want. If people have some reservations, you can make the informed choice to either avoid this Fable or tailor it to your group. Each Fable will be different, so it’s perfectly fine if one isn’t suited to your preferred play style.

## This Fable’s Story

This primer on *Citadel of the Unseen Sun*’s story and backstory will help you tell a compelling and cohesive story.

### Overview

In this Fable, a group of mercenary adventurers residing in the Ostoyan Empire are hired by a mysterious benefactor to recover an artifact from a long-lost civilization. Upon finding this artifact, they are slain by the lich Kasimir Sundrinker. A strange power within each adventurer saves them from death, but they awaken within a twisted, false afterlife.

The characters learn over the course of this Fable that this afterlife is the creation of Kasimir Sundrinker, and that they are actually deep in the bowels of an ancient Necropolis beneath the lands of the Ostoyan Empire. They must reach the surface—and once there, gain the power to defeat Kasimir and end his plot to use the sun stolen from the skies of Ostoya to ascend to godhood.

## Backstory

The Ostoyan Empire is a grim and gothic land ruled by vampires who prey upon their subjects. The sun itself vanished from the sky many years ago in an event called the Darkfall.

### Darkfall and the Vampires

A fearsome earthquake rocked the lands of Ostoya, tearing massive fissures in the ground. Necrotic energy surged from the fissures, darkening the realm and plucking the sun from the sky. These fissures also unearthed ancient, long-buried ruins. Countless Ostoyan explorers ventured into the chasms in search of answers—few returned. That is, until a horde of vampires and their undead minions emerged. These vampires conquered Ostoya and transformed it into their own dark empire, untouched by the light of the sun.

### Necropolis of the Holy Sun

Untold centuries before the Darkfall brought Ostoya to its knees, a civilization lost to history existed in the region. This mighty civilization venerated death and the dead. Great art was made from the bones of the departed, and a common idiom was “All are equal in death.” The bones of a commoner are no different from the bones of a highborn. Both can be used as art—and both can be turned toward the art of reanimation, or necromantic science.

None were more venerated in this civilization than necromancers, for they could reanimate the bones of the dead and turn them to the betterment of the living. And of these necromancers, none held a higher position than Kasimir, the Royal Necromancer. Kasimir was not king—the ruler of this land was a diplomat, not a mage—but he was the power behind the throne. This most powerful of necromancers was a stern man, but one beloved by the people for his self-sacrificing generosity. He raised armies of undead to protect the realm, made pilgrimages to small villages across the land, and even performed miracles to return life to the dead if they were vital to the fate of the realm.

### Emerging from the Shadows

The lost civilization now known as the Ostoyan Necropolis revered the sun. They saw it as the source of all life and power. Later civilizations on Etharis would agree, connecting it to the dead goddess Aurelia (see *Grim Hollow: The Campaign Guide*). Sigils of the sun adorned every surface in this ancient realm, often carved into stone or formed of magically preserved bone.

But this society dedicated to light became eclipsed by shadow. Vampires, accidents of overambitious necromancers, lurked in places untouched by the sun’s grandeur. In time, their numbers grew so great that they swept through the Necropolis like a wave. The wave only grew, as the vampires turned unwitting people into their spawn. Kasimir and his fellow necromancers tried to halt the vampiric advance with their incorruptible reanimated warriors, but in time they too were overwhelmed. Their king was lost, and the realm fell into eternal darkness.

### Swallowed by the Earth

Kasimir survived the vampires’ coup and retreated into his citadel. Using his magic, he sealed the citadel with rays of sunlight that would annihilate any vampire that sought entrance. Grieving the loss of his realm, he invoked a terrible rite that caused the earth itself to open its great maw and devour the Necropolis whole. By his design, the vampires would never again see the sky.

Kasimir toiled in his citadel to discover magic that would allow him to destroy his foes and resurrect his realm once and for all. At the same time, he delved into profane secrets of necromancy to grant himself eternal life—as a lich. Then, after countless centuries of study, he found it—the sun itself, if he could harness its power in full, would give him magical might sufficient to annihilate his enemies, and perhaps even restore everything he had lost.

He enacted a second dread ritual. An earthquake rocked the lands above, which had since become populated by humanoid peoples calling themselves Ostoyans. Necrotic power surged from below, darkening the realm and plucking the very sun from the sky. The sun appeared within Kasimir’s citadel as a blazing inferno: his Unseen Sun.

### Light Hunters and the Sparks

Kasimir’s scheme was not without its flaws. He unleashed the vampires he sealed away into the world once more. Now unhindered by the light of the sun, they quickly conquered the surface-lands of Ostoya and became more powerful than ever before. Worse, Kasimir’s ritual to claim the sun was imperfect. The sun resisted command by a single will, containing still a fragment of the divine mind of the goddess Aurelia, and this consciousness fractured portions of the sun’s power and delivered them into the souls of mortal beings.

These fragments were dubbed “sparks of sunlight” by Kasimir. These sparks linger, usually dormant, within the hearts of mortal people. Sometimes, they permit a person whose life is in mortal danger to manifest magical powers – it is one of the vanishingly rare sources of divine magic in mortal hands on the face of Etharis.

Ever since realizing his error following the Darkfall, Kasimir has sought these sparks and their wielders. He has no idea how many there are, or how far across the lands of Etharis they have spread. Once he gained his first, through divination and personal effort, he used his magical power, amplified by the Unseen Sun, to infuse a human skeleton with the blazing might of the sun. This warrior arose, and he dubbed it his first Light Hunter – a tireless stalker who can sense other sparks of sunlight in the souls of others.

Kasimir now has six Light Hunters, and he has spread them across the world in search of sparks of sunlight, so that he might unify the full power of the Unseen Sun and fulfil his ambitions.

## Kasimir’s False Afterlife

While waiting for his hunters to recover the prodigal sparks, Kasimir needed to survive. His phylactery hungered for souls to prolong his undead life. He devised another plan – and this one would be without flaw.

Aurelia’s divine power once drew souls to their afterlife. Kasimir used the Unseen Sun to divert the souls of all who lived under the shadow of the Darkfall into a false afterlife. He fashioned this metaphysical realm within the ruins of his old homeland. It would be a place where he could prey upon the souls of the dead. Though he denies these souls their eternal rest, Kasimir feels no guilt – they serve a greater purpose now: the resurrection of his lost homeland. It is from this fertile ground that this Fable begins.

## Skade, the Nightseer Sage

This Fable begins *in medias res*. The characters have been given a task by an old man who calls himself the Nightseer Sage. This sage is the guise of an Arch Daemon of shadow, shapeshifting, and deception named Skade – one which has long been content to watch the unfolding drama of the Necropolis and Ostoya as an entertaining opera.

However, Kasimir’s recent success with the Light Hunters has worried Skade. It longs for chaos and conflict in the world, and it has enjoyed seeing Kasimir sow the seeds of chaos across Ostoya. However, it has begun to worry that if Kasimir is successful, the lawful rule of the Ostoyan Empire –

evil as it may be – will merely be replaced by another society of law and order.

In the hopes of preventing this, Skade has assembled a group of adventurers who, by the daemon’s design, possess within their souls a spark of sunlight. These adventurers are the player characters; unbeknownst to them, powers greater than them have conspired to plunge them into a world of death and despair.

## Citadel of the Unseen Sun

This is a brief summary of the six episodes of this Fable.

### Episode 1: Death is Not the End

In this episode, the characters are hired by the Nightseer Sage to recover a relic of a long-lost civilization. In doing so, they are found and killed by Kasimir Sundrinker, but the spark of sunlight within their souls allows them to remain in their mortal bodies, even as their spirits are whisked away into Kasimir’s false afterlife.

After waking in the deepest, darkest bowels of the Necropolis, they must ally themselves with fellow survivors if they are to escape from this realm of undeath and horror.

### Episode 2: Dreams of the World Beyond

In this episode, the characters discover a realm within the Necropolis where ghostly spirits are trapped in an eternal, placid existence of dreams. Here they are preserved as food for Kasimir’s phylactery. When they enter, the characters are stripped of their bodies and must find a way to return to their physical forms, if they are to continue their ascent.

### Episode 3: A Masque of Life

In this episode, the characters enter a realm of Deep Rivers, where souls flow from the world above into the Necropolis. A group of powerful, ostentatious undead who call themselves the Doges have formed a society of endless revelry. The characters must find a way to navigate the politics of this endless fete to reach the surface world once again.

### Episode 4: Land of Despair

In this episode, the characters breathe the fresh air of Ostoya once again. They must navigate the infamous Labyrinth to reach the surface, and once there, they are faced with a decision: travel to Nov Ostoya to learn the secrets of defeating Kasimir once and for all, or abandon their quest and seek solace elsewhere in the world.

## Episode 5: City of Decadence

In this episode, the characters travel to Nov Ostoya in search of the Nightseer Sage, who apparently holds the key to destroying Kasimir Sundrinker. They must work arm-in-arm with the gangs of Nov Ostoya to reach the city's bloody heights and find their mysterious benefactor.

## Episode 6: Master of the Unseen Sun

In this episode, the characters are pursued by Kasimir's deadly minions: the Light Hunters. They must cross the lands of Ostoya to reach their final destination: the Citadel of the Unseen Sun. Once there, their task is laid bare before them: Kasimir must fall.

## Prelude

The episode begins in or near the Lichen Channel of the Deep Rivers. From there, the adventurers are introduced to the city of the Locks and are given near complete control over how they want to acquire their means of escaping this place. They'll engage in a general loop of acquiring information, interacting with the Doges, grabbing supplies from the Deep Rivers, then acquiring a key; all the while, they must contend with soul-draining masks and the underhanded tactics of the Doges.

Once they have everything they need, the adventure leads them down two more channels until they reach the Façade of the Surface, where a giant stone mask sits in their way. The episode ends as soon as the last character escapes through the giant mask's vacant eyes.

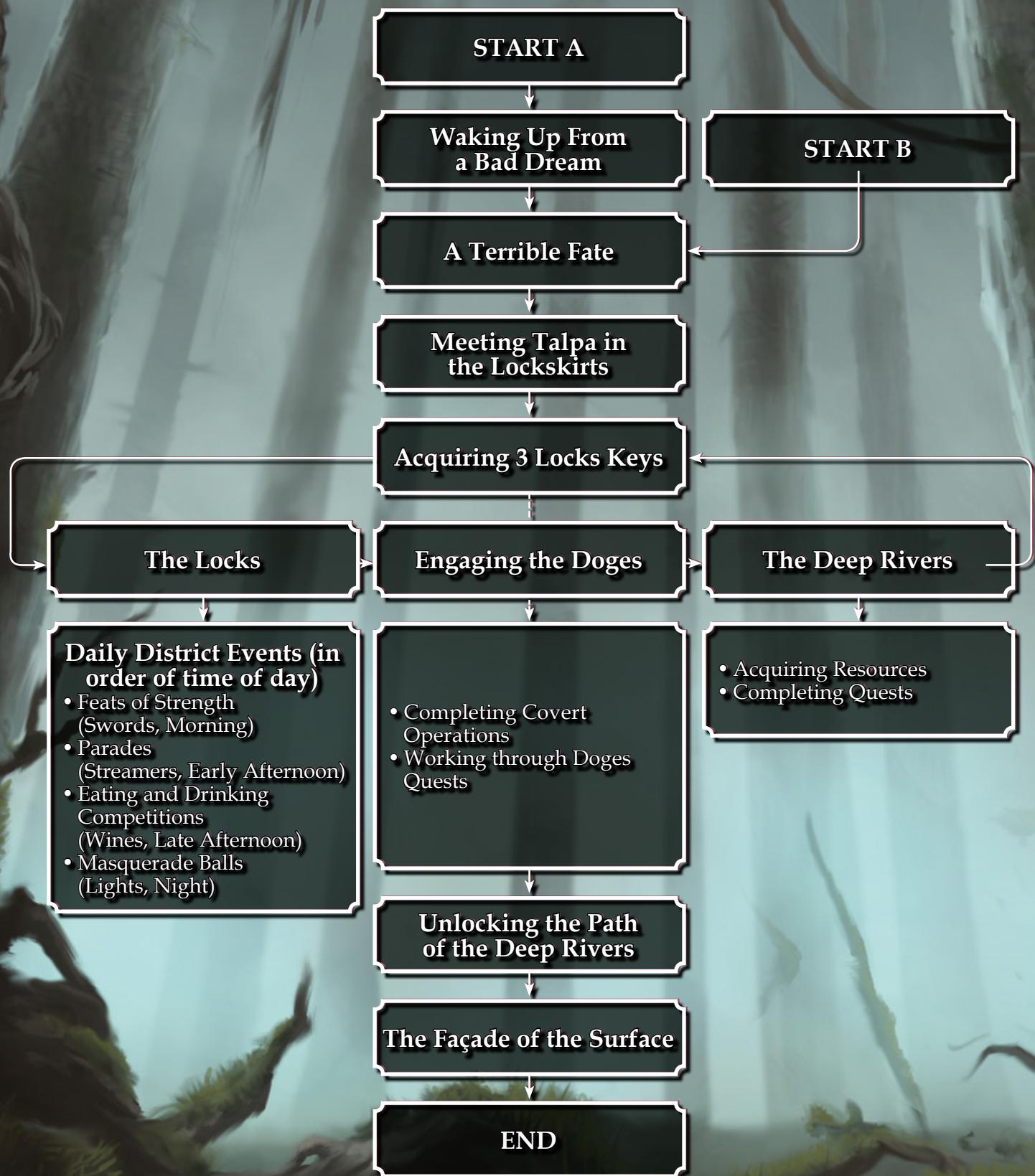
## Character Advancement

In this episode, characters can travel to a variety of different locations within the Locks in a nonlinear, sandbox adventure environment. Characters gain a level whenever they complete one of the following objectives. They can't advance beyond 7th level before the start of the next episode in this Fable.

- They acquire the first of the three Locks Keys they need to escape.
- They escape the Necropolis through the Façade of the Surface.



# EPISODE 3 FLOWCHART



# The Deep Rivers

The waters of Nov Ostoya plunge down caverns deep beneath the surface and form the Deep Rivers, carrying all manner of debris along with them. As the rivers carve tunnels and channels on their path deeper into the ground, their contents warp and poison the areas around them. This has created a series of unique ecosystems for powerful dark-dwelling creatures of all sorts in which to thrive.

A portion of the Deep Rivers has been enchanted by the lich, Kasimir Sundrinker, to be self-contained and loop endlessly, keeping his tireless operation from breaking. Most inhabitants of these caverns have never seen the main Façade Channel from which their rivers spring.

## The Soul Flow

Kasimir Sundrinker has rerouted the path of death itself. The corpses and souls of creatures are drawn deep into the subterranean by this gravitational force called the Soul Flow. Souls in its pull drag down one another like lobsters in a bucket, endlessly carried along on the Deep Rivers as the lich needs to feed.

The ghouls Kasimir utilizes in the Locks aren't aware of the specifics of the Soul Flow. To them, it's a force they can witness and build their unlivess around while doing the tasks bestowed on them.

## Bautas: Soul Masks

Bautas are a common sight throughout this adventure. These masks are compressed, physical manifestations of souls shucked from the underground rivers. Depending on who wears a bauta, they either imprint their memories and identity on the wearer, or they slowly steal the wearer's entire personhood.

Denizens of the Locks – known as Lochols throughout the Deep Rivers – won't soon be caught dead without wearing a bauta. The bauta allows its wearer to recognize if another bauta is real; anything that walks maskless or wears a fake bauta in the city is either a threat to its operations or an error in its system. Such problems are to be dealt with immediately and usually by force.

## Energizing the Undead

An undead creature that wears a bauta is invigorated by the soul and feels “alive.” Their body gains the capabilities the soul had in life, they’re able to think for themselves, and any sensations they experience



are amplified. This experience is amplified to a near lifelike degree if an undead wears a bauta made from its original soul.

The euphoria of this false life compels undead wearers to accentuate it in any way they can. They revel to reckless abandon, eat and drink (even though they don't need to), and adorn themselves with anything they can scavenge to make their appearance more alive.

## Wretched Celebrants

The undead who wear bautas are the various **wretched revelers**, **wretched drivers**, and **wretched masters of ceremonies** (see appendix A for these creatures' game statistics) the adventurers find throughout the Deep Rivers. Their bautas provide them with an even temperament, letting them judge when it's in their best interests to work or play.

## Enervating the Living

The experience of wearing a bauta while already alive is far different. The bauta steals the creature's soul away in pieces until they are left feeling hollow and drained. The process is slow, but nearly impossible for the victim to notice on their own.

## Progression of Bauta Exposure

The bauta's exposure increases by one level in the following circumstances:

- Each time the creature dons the bauta
- Every 24 hours the creature wears the bauta

The effects of the exposure linger even after the bauta is removed or destroyed. A *lesser restoration* spell can reduce the victim's exposure level by 2 and restore a piece of the victim's soul, while a *greater restoration* spell can undo the bauta's effects completely.

EXPOSURE LEVEL	EFFECTS
0-2	The victim's head feels tingly.
3-4	The victim forgets small details such as their favorite color or people's names.
5-6	The victim has difficulty feeling or expressing strong emotions, such as happiness, sadness, and anger.
7-9	The victim forgets more vital memories of their past and has difficulty recognizing their companions.
10 or higher	The victim gains one level of exhaustion. Their exhaustion level can no longer be reduced below 1.

## Sundrinker's Failsafe

The bautas were a means for the lich to create a reliable workforce that can manage his source of life. To that end, the masks have a secret, built-in failsafe to mitigate any souls from leaving the Sundrinker's possession. Bautas traveling too close to the surface world animate and attack nearby creatures attempting to escape.

Nearly no one currently wearing a bauta is aware of this failsafe, nor have they traveled far enough to trigger it. The endless loop of the channels prevents them from becoming aware of it and keeps the system running smoothly.

## Subterranean Adventuring

The horizon is nowhere to be seen while traveling underground. These caves and tunnels twist and turn with the land, impairing any sense of direction, progress, and time spent surviving within the rugged landscape. The soul-suffused rivers that carved these channels present their own particular challenges in addition to the assortment of difficult terrain and hazards naturally present here.

## Travel

The undead town known as the Locks is surrounded by water, fed by five rivers. These rivers form a magical loop that forbids any creature who does not know the proper way out from departing. These channels have rocky banks, allowing them to be traversed on foot—but it is much faster to travel downstream in a gondola.

### Channels

To the north of the Locks are the upper channels: the Lichen Channel, the Twisting Channel, and the Misty Channel. These waterways flow towards the city.

South of the Locks are the lower channels: the Flooded Channel and the Surging Channel. These waterways flow away from the city.

After traveling 20 miles downstream on the lower channels, the characters reach the waterway's end, which then magically loops into a new one. The GM rolls 1d3 to determine which upper channel they enter.

Likewise, if the characters somehow manage to fight 20 miles upstream to the start of one of the upper channels, the GM rolls 1d2 to determine which of the lower channels they enter.

**Traveling.** Note that rowing upstream against a channel's current doubles their travel time, and all characters rowing must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour of travel. On a failed save, the character gains 1 level of exhaustion.

Tracking travel time isn't vital in this section; the story can move "at the speed of plot" to determine how fast the characters get to their intended destination. If you wish to track time meticulously, see the "Travel Pace" section of the fifth edition core rules for the benefits and drawbacks of traveling at a normal, fast, or slow pace.

**Encounters.** The GM should check for encounters twice while traveling in a channel: once when they enter a channel, and once after traveling for 10 miles (halfway). Check for an encounter again whenever the characters enter a new channel by reaching another channel's end.

If the characters are having an easy time, you can also decide to check for an encounter if the characters choose to moor their vessel and rest within a channel.

### Gondolas

Bigger groups of Lochols exploring the upper channels from the Locks typically carry a gondola for the trip back to the city. Carrying a gondola over land prevents characters from traveling at a fast pace, but using a gondola to travel downstream cuts the travel time in half.

The players gain access to a gondola with a gondolier when they reach the end of the Lichen Channel. They can procure additional boats from the Lockskirts through trade, larceny, or by asking a gondolier for a favor. A gondola can move 40 feet per round through the water.

## Time

Days and nights are difficult to track in the channels and the city. Denizens of the Deep Rivers keep time based on the croaks of the ranalunes (see appendix A), cave frogs that gather along the riverbanks. The ranalune emerge and croak when most creatures are asleep and then quietly hide when predators are active. Their schedule is regular, and a character can determine it with a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check or by nicely asking a Lochol.

## Foraging

Staying nourished down here is a tall order. Other than moon frogs, most creatures in the channels are undead. And the food and wine found in the Locks are old spoils scavenged from corpses.

The Lichen, Flooded, and Surging Channels are home to edible flora and mushrooms. While traveling at a normal or slow pace, a character can forage for food by making a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check.

## Scavenging for Scraps

The rivers are filled with the spoils of the fallen. Lochols commonly scavenge for scraps for their outfits, and characters can do the same similarly to foraging for food.

It takes 10 minutes to scavenge scraps while exploring a channel. While traveling at a normal or slow pace, a character can make a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to see if they find anything. On a success, they can roll a 1d100 to determine the type of scrap they scavenged.

d100	SCRAP
0-9	Flesh (scale, bone, teeth, hide, feather)
10-19	Wood (staff, shield, figurine)
20-29	Glass (bottles, jewelry)
30-39	Metal (armor, shield, or weapon)
40-49	Leather (armor, clothing)
50-59	Stone (armor, jewelry, pet)
60-69	Cloth (silk, cotton, wool)
70-79	Coin (1d10 + 5 cp)
80-89	Coin (1d10 + 5 sp)
90-99	Coin (1d10 + 5 gp)
100	Rich haul (2d10 + 10 gp, and roll again)

The environment that the scraps were scavenged affect its color. Lochols can note where scraps come from based on the color scheme of one's wardrobe:

COLOR	LOCATION
Green	Lichen Channel
Blue	Flooded Channel
Orange	Surging Channel
Purple	Twisting Channel
Pink	Misty Channel
Yellow	Greater Locks Canal (within the Locks)
Red	Lockworks Canal (within the Locks)
Untinted	Façade Channel

## Keys of the Locks

The loop of the channels can be circumvented using a series of magical artifacts called the Locks Keys. The keys are palm-sized pieces of shaped metal with unique circular sigils cut out of their centers. The keys are imbued with a faint aura of abjuration magic. There are five Locks Keys in total, four carried by the Doges and one lost to the Deep Rivers.

Each key corresponds to a trapped channel and can focus a portion of the looping magic toward this channel. Their potency magnifies when they are combined with one another. Using enough keys, the loop can be bypassed by refocusing the magic down specific channels, leaving the remaining tunnels with dampened effects. It takes three keys to focus the right amount of magic away from the way out; any more would misbalance the magic back to normal.

The following table shows the original distribution of keys and the channel each locks.

KEY HOLDER	CHANNEL LOCKED
Volto	Lichen Channel
Harle	Flooded Channel
Gatto	Misty Channel
Colet	Surging Channel
The Latoré	Twisting Channel

When the adventurers collect and combine the Locks Keys, their cut-out sigils reveal the two channels they must travel through in order to bypass the loop. The magic of the keys causes those two open channels to now connect to one another instead of jumping to a random channel, making it a straight expedition to the Façade Channel and the way out.





# CHAPTER 1: REACHING THE LOCKS

FOR 5TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

The adventurers must find their footing before they jump into the city of the Locks. Whether they start midway through the Lichen Channel or at the edge of the greater canal, they have a chance to acquire bautas, understand their current circumstances, and learn what it takes to escape this place.

When the characters begin this episode, they find themselves at the midpoint of the Lichen Channel. This episode begins with Waking Up from a Bad Dream, one of the two featured encounters in the Lichen Channel.

# The Lichen Channel

The river overflows its banks and muddies the terrain, forming a humid, underground swamp. Tall mushroom stalks loom like trees over the water, while weeds take root just under the surface. Pockets of fog drift lazily along with the river current, serving as perfect hiding places for predator and prey alike.

The Lichen Channel is both the quietest and loudest of the channels. These tunnels remain placid and undisturbed for hours at a time, until giving way to a cacophony of smashing and splashing about from the channel's biggest resident: a massive alligator known as the Latoré. Creatures must move fast and stay out of sight to survive in these caves.

Unfortunately, this channel is where the characters resume their adventure.

## Lichen Channel Features

The Lichen Channel has the following features:

**Light.** The channel sits in a perpetual twilight, dimly lit by distant **will-o'-wisps** and the soft glow of souls meandering down the river.

**Ceiling.** In most parts of the channel, the ceiling reaches 30 feet high and is lightly obscured by fog. Tall mushrooms grow to nearly kiss the cave ceilings.

**Ground.** The ground is muddy throughout the tunnel, even where the river is narrowest. A creature sinks into the mud if it stands in place for more than one turn, reducing its movement speed by 10 feet until it ends its turn in a new space. The riverbank is typically 20 feet wide on either side of the river.

**River.** The river flows slowly in the Lichen Channel. Occasional corpses and loose debris meander down the current amid the soft moans of lost souls. The river is considered difficult terrain in the stretches where a creature can stand in it. The river is typically 100 feet wide.

## Lichen Channel Encounters

The daily encounters on the Lichen Channel are usually hard to spot, due to the fog in the channel. Roll once on the Environmental Conditions below, and then once on the Creature Encounters further below, to determine the environmental conditions and creatures involved in the encounter.

## LICHEN CHANNEL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

d20	CONDITION
1-9	No special conditions
10	Distant music
11	Flooding
12	Growing lichen
13	Haze
14	Heavy foliage
15	Narrow tunnel
16	River blockage
17	Sinkhole
18	Soul activity
19	Stalactites
20	Waterfall

### Distant Music

An eerie song seems to follow the adventurers along the swamp, seemingly coming from the tops of the tall mushrooms just within earshot. If they ignore the music, the adventurers are caught in a loop repeating the same 2-mile stretch of cavern.

Approaching the tall mushrooms reveals that they vibrate from the music emanating from their caps. A creature touching a vibrating mushroom must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw to avoid the intense urge to climb to the top and sing along to the music for 1d4 hours. Creatures that succeed on their save are immune to this effect for 1 hour.

Climbing a tall mushroom requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. Atop the mushroom waits the result of the Creature Encounters table. (If that roll landed on no creatures or the Latoré, the adventurers instead find lost souls that broke away from the river.) The creatures appear to be entranced, singing along with the music. When the mushroom caps are cleared of everyone atop them, or if the mushrooms are cut down, the music stops, and the loop is released.

### Flooding

The channel overflows with no place to stand or make camp. Treat the entire cavern floor as though it were the river, reaching down to a depth of 12 feet.

### Life-Leeching Lichen

The channel narrows to a 40-foot-wide tunnel with the river taking up 30 feet of it. The banks and walls are covered in a sickly yellow lichen. If a living creature touches this lichen, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned as lichen rapidly grows across its flesh.

A creature poisoned in this way takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage at the end of its turn and can repeat this save. On a success, the lichen withers. On a failed save, it takes 2d10 at the end of its next turn, taking a cumulative 1d10 extra necrotic damage at the end of all future turns until it succeeds on this save (3d10 on the third turn, and so on). A character that makes a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check learns that this lichen is susceptible to fire, and that if an infested creature takes at least 5 points of fire damage, the lichen withers and dies.

The lichen has also extended to some of the corpses floating in the water. Creatures that swim in the river here must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or come in contact with a corpse overflowing with yellow lichen.

## Haze

The muggy fog fills the entirety of the channel, heavily obscuring everything that isn't in an area of bright light. Creatures that investigate low to the ground or from the surface of the river notice a 1-foot clearance where the fog doesn't reach, possibly providing an opportunity to spot an impending ambush from any creatures about to ambush them.

## Heavy Foliage

The tall mushrooms and water weeds have grown dense, and remains from the river have piled up. All terrain here is considered difficult terrain.

A creature searching through the pile of remains must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check to find a *potion of healing*.

## Narrow Tunnel

The channel shrinks to 10 feet across, all of which is river. The water is 3 feet deep with muddy terrain below. The ceiling closes in at 10 feet high in some areas, close enough to see splatters of dried blood and viscera across it.

## River Blockage

An avalanche of corpses tumbles out of a cavern in the ceiling, as the ever-shifting underworld deposits new bodies into its depths. This dam of corpses blocks the river, causing it to overflow. The cavern is 15 feet tall and wide, and the water rises 5 feet every 10 minutes.

The blockage must be cleared in order to proceed farther and bring the water level back down. A character that spends 10 minutes clearing corpses can make a Strength (Athletics) check with a variable DC to break through. On a success, the water level doesn't



rise 5 feet that turn, and after 3 successful checks, the dam is completely removed. The DC of the first check is 12, then rises to 15 after one success, and then rises to 18 after two successes.

Alternatively, the blockage can be cleared by hacking at it. It has an AC of 10, 200 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Whenever it takes damage, creatures within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from falling debris.

## Sinkhole

The ground here looks muddier than usual. A group of creatures that travels at least 30 feet across the ground in the span of 10 minutes is sure to encounter a sinkhole. The sinkhole is 10 feet in diameter and 30 feet deep. All creatures in the party must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw as the sinkhole opens up, falling or sliding into it on a failure and taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

When a creature ends its turn climbing the walls of the pit, or climbs up to the top of the pit, it must make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failure, the creature falls to the bottom of the pit.



**LOCKS KEY FROM THE  
LATORÉ'S GUTS**

## Soul Activity

The river is suffused with wailing souls all throughout this stretch of tunnel. It's difficult to hear anything over their clamor.

At the end of each hour while traveling along this tunnel, any creature that can hear the noise must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion. A creature wearing a bauta has advantage on this save.

## Stalactites

The ceiling drips with tepid moisture, and huge stalactites have formed over eons.

Any loud noise or impact might cause a stalactite to fall nearby. Creatures within 5 feet of a falling stalactite must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

A creature that fails this save by more than 10 is also restrained by the broken stalactite, requiring a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to free themselves.

## Waterfall

The river suddenly drops down a 30-foot cliffside while the walkways on either side gently slope downward. The 80-foot-long marsh valley brims with bone shards and mangled pieces of scrap.

Creatures attempting to explore behind the waterfall must succeed on a DC 18 Strength or Constitution saving throw or be repelled by its force. Regardless of the roll on the Creature Encounters table, 2d4 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) lurk behind the waterfall, having a private celebration over their collection of scavenged items. They might be willing to trade if the adventurers are wearing bautas and don't appear to be a threat.

## LICHEN CHANNEL CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

d20	CREATURES
1-9	No creatures
10	Ghouls
11	Giant ranalune and family
12	Green hags
14-15	The Latoré
16	Will-o'-wisps
17-20	Wretched revelers

## Ghouls

The adventurers discover 1d8 discarded bautas in the area. The masks are scratched and muddy with loose straps, but are perfectly serviceable.

Nearby is a number of **ghouls** equal to the number of discarded bautas plus 2. They're scavenging for any bits of flesh they can find, still wearing the remnants of their reveler clothing but unrecognizable in all other aspects. They attack as soon as they discover the adventurers.

A bauta can be held to a ghoul's face as an action. The ghoul must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or the bauta affixes itself to its face. It takes 1 minute for the affixed bauta to subdue the ghoul, at which point it falls unconscious for 1 hour. When it awakens, it becomes a **wretched reveler** again (see appendix A). These revelers wish to be returned to the festival in the Locks, and each rewards saviors who return them home a sum of 5d10 gp from their personal savings.

## Giant Ranalune and Family

A particularly large gathering of 1d8 + 4 **ranalunes** (see appendix A) are babbling or huddling quietly (if encountered at night or day, respectively). A giant ranalune (use **giant toad** statistics) watches over its family not too far away. If other creatures get too close to the frog family, the giant ranalune attacks them relentlessly.

## Green Hags

The adventurers are harassed by Sig Nasty and Padder Olma, two **green hag** sisters. They hold fresh food and supplies over the party's heads in an attempt to lead them into whatever environmental peril is within the channel.

Sig and Padder have a hut in a small tunnel just off the Lichen Channel. They normally brew potions and lead unwitting revelers to their doom with their other sister, Miss Mae Mae. However, Sig and Padder have no idea where Miss Mae could be. If the adventurers manage to stay amicable with the hags, they are more forthcoming about their problem. Miss Mae Mae is currently trapped and hidden in the Misty Channel, and the adventurers can find hints to the fate of the hag in the Twisting Channel (both described later in this chapter).

The reunited coven could be a potent ally for the characters while they explore the Deep Rivers. Each of the hags fight by the party's side, but flee and cower if reduced to half their hit point maximum.

## The Latoré

The adventurers encounter the massive prowler of the Lichen Channel. **The Latoré** (see appendix A), a monstrous, undead alligator, endlessly stalks the length of the tunnel for anything to satisfy its undying hunger, living or dead. Its restless spirit is bound to the channel by magic akin to the power affecting the rivers, causing the Latoré to return even after its body is destroyed.

When the Latoré opens its mouth, the glint of an old Locks key can be spotted. A character can retrieve the key from the alligator's guts if it's grappled or incapacitated. The character must use an action to make a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), or Wisdom (Survival) check. This check is made at disadvantage if the Latoré is grappled instead of being incapacitated. When the key is retrieved, the Latoré loses its ability to reform.

## Will-o'-Wisps

1d4 + 3 **will-o'-wisps** increase their brightness and use their invisibility in an attempt to mislead the adventurers into an environmental hazard or the deepest part of the river. If the adventurers fight back or distress the wisps in any way, they awaken two **wights** from among nearby corpses to help them.



## Wretched Revelers

1d4 + 1 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) can be found in the Lichen Channel for a variety of reasons. Roll on the following table or choose one.

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	The revelers celebrate amongst themselves.
3-4	The revelers forage for additional scraps with which to decorate themselves.
5	The revelers follow a rumor of living people lurking in the tunnels. A Doge gave them orders to kill them on sight.
6	The revelers were tasked by Doge Volto to hunt the Latoré but were told to keep it a secret.

These revelers immediately attack the adventurers if they aren't wearing bauta, or masks they can pass as bauta. Otherwise, they converse cordially until they suspect something is off.

## Lichen Channel Featured Encounters

Instead of rolling for random encounters, you can use a featured encounter instead. The following encounters take place in the Lichen Channel and can be used to kick off this episode.

If the characters destroyed Dream Town in episode 2, run "A Terrible Fate." If they were tricked by Octavian in episode 2, run "Waking Up from a Bad Dream."

### A Terrible Fate

This short encounter covers the trip from the channels to the city. You can use this the encounter to start this episode if the party destroyed Dream Town and escaped by boat.

The party starts near the mouth of the Lichen Channel at the edge of the Greater Canal, a basin filled with pitch black water. In the center of the basin, about a mile from the edges of the cavern, stands the decadent, rotten city known as the Locks.

### From Dream Town

They emerge in a tiny, lightless channel and drift through the dark until it opens up into the Greater Canal, which surrounds the Locks itself. Once the party reaches the middle of the canal by boat, either from Dream Town or the Lichen Channel, read the following:

It's a quiet trip across the black canal. Across the water is a city, filled with light and noise. The din of the city at its center never seems to grow louder. All you hear is the rhythmic splashing of the placid water.

The dark of the subterranean seems to blend with the ichor of the water, enveloping you in a lonely darkness. It's almost peaceful, a calm preceding whatever horrors lurk in the approaching city—or whatever approaches from below. Then, a voice from the darkness:

"My, what wretched faces you carry," gravel a voice off the side of your boat. A handsome corpse floats into view, its grinning face barely breeching the black surface of the water.

### Meeting the Drowned Prophet

The body in the water belongs to the Drowned Prophet. A character that examines it can make a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check; on a success, they see that it doesn't appear physically dangerous. If attacked, the corpse sinks into the water and resurfaces on the other side of the boat. The Drowned Prophet doesn't anticipate the adventurers' trust and laughs off any disrespect until the corpse has shared its piece. If they continue to attack, it eventually gets bored and grumbles, "Well, that's what I get for being generous. Ta-ta," and sinks, not to appear again.

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters allow the body to board their vessel.

Floating before you lies a stiff, blue humanoid corpse dressed in tattered finery. Its hands are cupped upon its chest. Its sunken eyes are open wide, and a toothy grin stretches across a blue face. Its mouth never moves when it speaks, but its speech rings loud and clear. Its movements are sudden and sharp when it does move, as if it moves only when you blink.

### Small Talk

The corpse introduces itself as "a stubborn soul making connections with other stubborn souls." It has been called many things while floating in these waters: prophet, peddler, chatterbox. It knows the adventurers head for the city to continue their plan to climb out of the grave atop a ladder of corpses. There's still plenty of time until their boat makes it across the canal, however. Plenty of time to chat.

Certainly, if the adventurers aren't willing to humor the corpse, it moves along to its purpose or questions they might have. Otherwise, the Drowned Prophet asks the adventurers about their journeys until this point, giving them a moment to reflect. If this is the beginning of the party's adventure together, it asks each character why fate would lead them to such a terrible place as this.

If the adventurers are receptive to the small talk, the corpse gives them one more question to consider before moving on to its purpose: Would you regret your victories if you couldn't recognize your face in the end?

## The Prophet's Purpose

Though the characters may not be aware of it, the Drowned Prophet is another incarnation of the shapeshifting Nightseer Sage. The sage wishes to see them learn and grow from overcoming suffering and hardship within the Necropolis. He doesn't see them as disposable pawns, but as an investment. He wants to give them just enough of an edge to triumph on their own merits. As such, the Drowned Prophet is willing to help the adventurers escape the Locks to reach the surface and gives them a straightforward overview:

The corpse's smile glides into a grimace, and its voice becomes pointed and clear. "I'd like to see you climb out of this watery grave where souls are fated to float in an endless loop. You'll need three Locks Keys to escape the magic that binds these tunnels. As fate would have it, the lovely Doges of the city before us have four."

"But the Locks has trouble with those that don't wear bautas—their soul masks. Wear one, and you'll be just like the other Lochols down here. Without one, you'll be hunted like a feral beast."

Blank white masks bubble to the surface of the water alongside the fetid cadaver. There's one for each stubborn soul without. The corpse's face cracks back into a smile, "Don't let them know your face—but don't forget what it looks like. Obtain the keys, but don't lock yourself in a box. Escape the channels and lose only what you never needed."

Whether or not the adventurers grab the bautas from the water, the corpse suddenly teleports to the other side of the boat with one finger pointed at the ceiling and a stern look stretched across its face.



"When you do reach the surface, all I ask is you seek an individual in Nov Ostoya. They'll be delighted to hear escape is possible, I'm sure. What did you say their name was? The...Nightseer Sage?"

The corpse chuckles at some private joke, then composes itself. It spreads its decrepit arms wide and says, "I'm free for a few minutes more. The Deep Rivers are a strange place—I'm sure you have a million questions."

## Questioning the Prophet

The corpse willingly answers the adventurers' questions. It speaks the truth, but its responses might be intentionally cryptic or unhelpful. It is incredibly hard to determine whether or not this corpse is honest. A character that makes a successful DC 21 Wisdom (Insight) check determines that the corpse is being intentionally churlish and evasive, but gains no deeper understanding into its motives.

Once the characters have exhausted all of these questions, or the questioning is losing steam, move on to the Development section, below.

**What/where is this place?** "These are the Deep Rivers, a subterranean series of tributaries through which souls unfortunate enough to be claimed by the lich Kasimir endlessly swim."

**What is the city?** "The city of the Locks is a festive scrapyard filled with the dead celebrating their liveliness day after day."

**What do they do in the Locks?** "Besides celebrate? They scavenge through corpses for things to make themselves look more alive."

**What does Kasimir have to do with it?** "Ah, the lich. Down there in Dream Town is where souls go to be preserved—he feeds them to his phylactery, you know. Here, souls slowly drain from the water into countless other little Dream Towns, deep, deep down. And the bodies of the dead—why, they throw grand parties here."

**What's up with these masks?** "The bautas? Souls compressed into headwear that breathe new life into the undead. I wonder whose life is in yours?"

**How long can we wear these masks?** "The longer a living being wears a bauta, the harder it gets to live without it. You all look strong; you could probably last...let's say a week."

**Who are the Doges?** "The four leaders in charge of the Locks' operations. Their power is only surpassed by their personalities ... and their dislike of one another."

**What are the keys?** "The Locks Keys? A set of tools to unlock the loop of the channels. Three is all it takes, but where you go from there remains unseen...right? Up? Left? I couldn't tell you when they were last used."

**What happened to Dream Town?** "You tell me."

**Are you connected to...?** "No, no connections. I am a corpse in a sea of infinite remains. Most would pass me by if I didn't reach out first."

**Why do you know all this?** "I've floated down here for quite some time. Listen long enough, and you begin to learn."

**Why are you helping us?** "I'm merely nudging you in the right direction. No need to thank me, thank your friend in Nov Ostoya."

## Development

With this conversation concluded, the Drowned Prophet has accomplished everything it was able to do. It's up to the adventurers to handle the rest.

The Drowned Prophet erupts in gurgling laughter. "Oh my, I am quite late. Our time is up, and the Locks await. You'll be fine! Surely, you can do it. Believe in your strengths. Believe."

The corpse sinks into the pitch of the channel, and the docks of the city creep into focus.

## Waking Up from a Bad Dream

This short encounter can be used to introduce the adventure if the characters emerged from Dream Town with the town intact—most likely because they served the will of its sinister overseer, rather than defying it.

In this case, they wander for some time through the tunnels before making camp and falling into a fitful slumber.

The party awakens to two **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) named Kriffin and Yagon, rummaging through their things on the banks of the Lichen Channel. The revelers assume the adventurers are corpses or soon-to-be corpses, so they scavenge for anything colorful to wear or affix to their outfits before leaving.

If the party accosts the revelers, they're met with shock instead of immediate aggression; Kriffin and Yagon don't engage in any fight they know they can't win.

These revelers were ordered to make a supply run in the channel for Doge Volto. They have no intention of staying in the channel for long and start to head back toward the Locks while talking. Whatever happens to the adventurers is none of their concern, as they'll either "get eaten dead in the tunnels" or "get eaten alive in the Locks."

The pair offer to lead the adventurers to the Locks if they are promised even a meager reward, but the trip is riddled with mockery and rudeness.

## Questioning the Churlish Revelers

Kriffin and Yagon are willing to divulge several pieces of information, but only if asked:

**Where are we?** "The Lichen Channel: the "liveliest" of the five caverns. Nasty monster here. Let's not stay longer than we must."

**Nasty monster?** "The Latoré prowls here. A huge scaly, dead beastie. We reckon it's upstream—the blighter could find us at any moment."

**Who are you?** "Servants of four masters, we are. The bosses regularly hire Lochols like us to make supply runs and the like. They're too busy for simple matters like that, what with all their politicking in the Locks."

**Who are Lochols?** "Dwellers of the Locks. You know, folk like us. Jaunty, fun-lovin', mask-wearin' Lochols."

**How far to the Locks?** "Traveling back to the Locks takes about two days if you're lucky. We'd have brought a gondola for the return trip, but Volto instructed us to travel light."

**Who's Volto?** "Doge Volto is one of our leaders. One of the four masters of the Locks. Real stiff-upper-lip type. He pays well, at least."

**What are those masks you're wearing?** "Bauta: soul masks. Can't quite think so clear without 'em. I've always wondered what'd happen if a flesh-person were to wear one—he, you can't have mine, though!"

**What are the Locks like?** "The Locks is a nice city if you wear a bauta. You're no better than a lowly beast without one. So, you'd better find one, fleshy!"

## Warm-Up Encounter

While heading to the Locks with the revelers, roll once on the Lichen Channel Environmental Conditions table and once on the Lichen Channel Creature Encounter table to determine what the characters encounter on the way down the channel before they reach the Greater Locks Canal at its end. Reroll a result of the Latoré.

If you roll no encounter—lucky day! The characters face no challenges until later, and get to bicker more with the revelers. If they do have an encounter with creatures, those creatures target the revelers first. Once this encounter is completed, they travel safely until they reach the mouth of the Greater Locks Canal—which is when the Latoré approaches. See the next encounter below.

## The Latoré Approaches

The placid stillness of the Lichen Channel gives way to a growing applause of water splashing closer and closer. The monstrous undead alligator has found the party and is in pursuit.

The characters are likely trudging along the banks of the Lichen Channel; the waterway is 100 feet wide, with 20 feet of riverbank on either side. The mouth of the tunnel where the Lichen Channel connects to the Greater Locks Canal is within sight: a mere 300 feet away.

**Fighting the Gator.** On the first round of combat, the Latoré surfaces in the water 30 feet away from the characters. It dashes in a straight line and attacks the nearest character. It fights viciously, attacking Kriffin and Yagon first—but otherwise attacking the creature that damaged it last before its turn.

Once one character is reduced to 0 hit points, it uses its action to take their body in its massive jaws and absconds with it into the water. If the Latoré is reduced to half its hit point maximum, it drops whatever it's carrying and flees into the water, roaring bloody vengeance.

**Fleeing the Gator.** If the characters flee, the Latoré continues to pursue the party until they reach the opening at the end of the Lichen Channel (300 feet away from where this encounter starts). There it stops, for its spirit is bound to this channel. It roars in hungry fury, and then unceremoniously retires to feed on less sumptuous prey.

Meanwhile, the survivors are greeted to the unwelcoming canal and the thriving Locks looming at its center.





## CHAPTER 2: LOCKS AND KEYS

FOR 5TH- AND 6TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Unlocking the loop of the Locks is no easy feat. The adventurers must blend in with the lively undead while contending with the leaders of the city: the Spectacular Doges. Opportunities abound to make an impression on the Doges through the city's daily events, run covert missions in the city or out in the Deep Rivers to earn their trust, and find the right opportunity to steal the keys to freedom.

The Lochols call their rotten burgh a city, for its tall, crumbling towers and clean stone streets—but with its scant population, it hardly even qualifies as a village.

Before running this chapter, it is imperative you read appendix C and get comfortable with the personality and schemes of the four Doges that control the Locks. Depending on how improvisational a game you like to run, your level of preparedness will vary, so don't feel compelled to memorize the full contents of appendix C unless that suits your GMing style.



*An Impression of the*  
**DEEP RIVERS CITY**  
**THE LOCKS**

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Lockworks             | 4. District of Swords |
| 2. District of Streamers | 5. District of Lights |
| 3. District of Wines     | 6. The Lockskirts     |

# Overview of the Locks

**Population.** 500 masked ghouls, known as Lochols; about 350 of these ghouls are in town at any one time; the rest are out in the channels.

**Leadership.** The four Doges (see appendix C for all vital information about the Doges).

**Defense.** All citizens fight back to the best of their ability, as they have no other home but the Locks.

**Commerce.** Scrap trade, valued by personal and exterior appeal—brightly colored scrap is worth most of all.

A colorful, decadent, gruesome, rotten, splendid city stands at the center of the Deep Rivers, surrounded by a basin of rotting flesh and weeping souls. Spires stretch to the ceiling of the massive cave, from whose distant towers tattered streamers drape. The clamor of the Lochols parading through the festive streets can be heard for miles around, engaged in a carnival that never ends.

This is the Locks, a civilization of ghouls that has spiraled out of control. On occasion, the bodies of those Ostoyan peoples whose souls Kasimir Sundrinker collects in his false afterlife travel with them. Unlike the characters, whose sparks of sunlight kept their body and soul united, these poor folk had their souls shucked from their flesh husks and deposited into the rivers, where they will eventually flow into a Dream Town for preservation.

In time, a semblance of life grew within the bodies that were left behind. Aided by the creation of bauta—masks which contain the essence of a soul—these undead became a civilization unto themselves.

## Gondolas

On the outside is a stretch of docks where gondolas endlessly circle the perimeter. The city districts deeper in are always bustling with excessive fanfare. And sitting at the core of the city is its soul-processing center, the original purpose of the settlement sent down by the Sundrinker.

## Law of the Locks

The rules that govern the city are concise yet firm: get your work done, and anyone without a bauta in the city must be leashed or destroyed. All other commands come from the Doges, the four most powerful Lochols designated to respond to problems as they arise. For all the raucous in the Locks, its operation has been running with little issue for decades.

## Locks Features

The city of the Locks has the following features:

**Light.** Its streets are always lit, lined with dim lamps containing multicolored **will-o-wisps**, perpetually stunned by an unknown force and kept in place.

Conversely, the docks and alleyways have no light.

**Time.** **Ranalune** frogs (see appendix A) make their homes in dark alleyways. Their nighttime croaks are usually easy to hear nearby.

**Decor.** The buildings and walkways are all old, reinforced by scrap metal and bones, roughly painted with blood and other bright colors. Bannisters and streamers perpetually adorn every tall surface in the city.

**Noise.** The Locks are loud with jubilation and chatter at all hours. Quiet can only be found behind rusty closed doors.

**Inns.** The Lochols have no need of food or sleep, but a few inns can be found throughout the city for those looking to rest their weary bones after a long day of working and celebrating. The only tavern that serves food here is the Grandemensa in the District of Wines, and its food is unsavory to say the least.

**Canals.** The Locks are lined by small canals, 6 feet wide and deep, leading into and out of the center canal. Gondolas regularly push past the carcass-filled waters to make deliveries.

## Approaching the Locks

The Locks are surrounded by the greater canal and offer no means of access by foot. All creatures usually enter the city via the Lockskirts by boat. Most of the Lockskirts' docks are regularly populated with gondoliers and **heletros** (see appendix A), but the docks that don't directly face a Deep River are sometimes completely deserted.

Nearby Lochols are quick to point out any face without a bauta. Fake or soulless masks especially are seen as a sign of aggressive infiltration, and the revelers act to contain or destroy the threat. That said, adventurers wearing bautas should be careful of revealing their living nature; gossip moves through the Locks quickly and could garner unwanted attention from the Doges.

## Citizens' Arrest

If the characters are caught in the Locks without bautas, they are swarmed by all of the Lochols in the area. This is a swarm of 5d10 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A). This overwhelming force is all but certain to subdue the characters, unless they flee, spreading chaos throughout the Locks.

If the characters surrender, or are all reduced to 0

hit points (the Lochols knock them unconscious) they are bound and brought before the Doges.

## Brought Before the Doges

If the adventurers are brought to the Doges directly by Kriffin and Yagon (or their Lochol captors), their hands are bound before they are brought through to the Lockworks (described later in this chapter).

## Lochols, the Masked Revelers

The denizens of the Locks are the liveliest dead creatures still walking the Material Plane. These ghouls, arisen from the corpses of various humanoid creatures, are capable of thinking, talking, and thriving thanks to their bautas. They celebrate and worship this gift of life to gratuity, adorning their masks and outfits with fanciful decorations that all but distract from the rotting bodies underneath.

Interactions with Lochols are akin to a fun-house mirror. Their movements and reactions are all exaggerated, and their thought processes quickly stretch to the extremes of logic—and if pressed even slightly, can reach beyond into wild leaps of illogic. They are a grotesque facsimile of what they vaguely recall civilized life to be on the surface.

When Lochols aren't tending to their daily tasks (and occasionally even then), they scavenge for scrap (see "Foraging," earlier in this episode) washed up out of the rivers. Any piece of refuse that doesn't work with their costume can be used for trade. This frequently leads to revelers trading their collections of scraps to other Lochols in exchange for taking on their tasks, leaving them free to venture into the channels and find even more materials.

There are some Lochols who forgo their tasks and the trappings of costume culture to revel in isolation along the Deep Rivers. The Doges are aware of this

## WORD TRAVELS FAST

The Lochols like to talk to one another about one another. Gossip is as big of a pastime as reveling in the Locks, making for an informed population. Everything from missing neighbors to the daily mood of each of the Doges is on the table.

If the adventurers left Dream Town in ruins, the Lochols have been gossiping about their exploits since before they arrived. However, none of them may be able to immediately connect the adventurers' faces to the gossip (especially if they are wearing bautas).

Adventurers are able to gossip with the Lochols in major social events to gather useful information. Details about how gossip can aid and deter to the characters' in achieving their goals can be found in the appendix C.

and have been working on solutions for bringing them back to the Locks.

## Featured and Example Lochols

The city is filled with everchanging masked faces, and the adventurers might rarely meet the same Lochol twice. Presented here is a list of standout revelers for characters to run into on the city streets and build rapport with. These Lochols can show up at any event in the Locks and possibly help with learning new gossip.

## The Four Spectacular Doges

Leading the operations of the city and its canals are the Doges. These four revelers are among the oldest—and certainly most extravagant—inhabitants of the Locks. They've made themselves up to be shining exemplars of what the other revelers could be, meticulously constructing their outfits and egos with the finest finds and folds from the rivers.

Each Doge carries a Locks Key, keeping the

## EXAMPLE LOCHOL TABLE

NAME	APPEARANCE	FAVORITE COLOR	ROLE	WANTS
Amuy	Average and unassuming	Green	Trader	Wants power
Bofflin	Big and composed	Blue	Socialite	Wants to be noticed
Chivae	Dirty and strong	Red	Boatswain	Wants to build a boat
Eno	Short and loud	Blue	Ghoul hunter	Wants to relax
Gandiano	Built and quiet	Pink	Warrior	Wants a greater purpose
Jikke	Lanky and droopy	Yellow	Artisan	Wants to drink fine wine
Lileva	Stocky and nervous	Red	Decorator	Wants to find excitement
Pamplu	Small and skittish	Purple	Hoarder	Wants and wants and wants
Rag	Scrawny and hunched over	Green	Artist	Wants to befriend everyone
Sooter	Square and stern	Purple	Lineworker	Wants to explore more

## DOGE DETAILS

The Doges are critical characters in this adventure who don't wait for the adventurers to come to them. Even while the adventurers are exploring the districts or the channels, the Doges are running their own operations and spying on one another.

A detailed overview of each Doge and running intrigue with them can be found in appendix C.

channels flowing infinitely through the Locks. Each Doge also wishes to join the nobles thriving on the surface and knows that they only need three keys to do so. However, each of the prideful, grudge-holding Doges refuse to make the trip alongside so much as one of their peers.

## Districts of the Locks

The Locks are divided into loose sections based on the function and professional makeup of the Lochols residing there. The four main districts are Streamers, Swords, Wines, and Lights. Surrounding them all around the edge are the Lockskirts. Finally, at the heart of the city is the Lockworks district.

These districts are described in detail later in this chapter.

## Navigating the Locks

The entirety of the Locks is accessible by foot or by boat. Gondolas navigate the canals in and surrounding the city and avoid most of its excitement. Conversely, walking across the city provides plenty of opportunities for notable encounters and small vignettes of unlife.

The adventurers potentially run into an encounter each time they move between the city districts. Roll on the following tables to determine the people involved and a complication provided by the setting of the encounter.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED

d20	PEOPLE
1-7	Unfamiliar Lochols
8-11	Familiar Lochols
12-13	Lochol with Unmasked Ghoul
14-15	Heletros
16-17	Loose Monster
18-19	Doppelganger
20	Doge



## Unfamiliar Lochols

This scene involves 1d4 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) that adventurers haven't met before. These revelers can be found celebrating, working, trading, or building their outfits up when the scene takes place.

## Familiar Lochols

This scene involves 1d2 Lochols the adventurers have previously met. This includes **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) like Kriffin and Yagon, the Lochols from the Example Lochols table, or any other contact they made in the city that isn't one of the Doges.

If the adventurers haven't met any Lochols yet, it is an opportunity to introduce an NPC with fewer Lochols around. Otherwise, run the scene with Unfamiliar Lochols instead.

## Lochol with Unmasked Ghoul

This scene involves a **wretched reveler** (see appendix A) handling a tied-up **ghoul**. The ghoul is set to get a bauta and join the Locks as a new Lochol. The reveler might have taken in the ghoul themselves or was attacked by the ghoul rising out of the Soul Flow and needs someone else to handle it.

## Heletros

This scene involves 1d4 **heletros** (see appendix A) performing a task for the Lochols. None of these heletros are out to attack anyone but defend themselves if they are threatened.

## Loose Monster

A creature is on the loose in this scene. Lochols on the scene do their best to contain the threat or eliminate it, although some creatures are more harmful than others.

d4	CREATURE
1	Giant ranalune (see appendix A)
2	Ghoul
3	Phase spider
4	Cloaker

## Doppelganger

This scene features 1d4 **doppelgangers** in disguise. These odd shapeshifters are the result of a dozen or more souls abhorrently melding together in the Deep Rivers. They're looking to drag other Lochols into the Misty Channel and take over the city reveler by reveler. Their disguises include:

d4	DISGUISE
1	Unfamiliar Lochols
2	Familiar Lochols
3	Gatto and her Lochols (see appendix C for information about Doge Gatto)
4	Members of the adventuring party

## Doge

One of the four Doges (see appendix C for more information about the doges) and 1d4 + 1 of Doge's minions (use **wretched reveler** statistics in appendix A, (or see appendix C for information about their minions) are involved in this scene. The Doge might also be heading toward another district in the same direction as the adventurers, dealing with infrastructure matters in the city, or sorting out Lochols causing problems for them.

Roll 1d4 on the table below to determine which Doge the characters encounter in the streets:

d4	DOGE
1	Volto
2	Harle
3	Gatto
4	Colet

Any Doge takes the opportunity to engage with the party and ask them invasive questions, such as:

- "Why are you here?"
- "I heard you were talking to one of my rivals, that wasn't hearsay...was it?"
- "How gauche. Where did you find *that* piece of scrap?"

Positive interactions with the Doge make them more likely to discuss personal matters within one of the districts. Meanwhile, negative remarks will not soon be forgotten.

## SETTING COMPLICATION

d20	SCENE
1-9	No Scene
10	Accident
11	Altercation
12	Back Alley
13	Chase
14	City Work
15	Dance Battle
16	Ground Rupture
17	Performance
18	Protest
19	Rushing Crowd
20	Solicitation

## Accident

A chunk of a city building crumbles and crashes to the ground. Roll a d4: a random party member is in danger on a 4. Otherwise, the result of the People Involved roll is in jeopardy.

The sounds of metal scraping along stone rings loud and clear before the chunk falls. The endangered party must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage and be restrained by rubble until it is cleared. A creature can attempt to push the endangered party out of the way, making the same saving throw at disadvantage.

## Altercation

A loud argument or fight rings out in the middle of the street. The situation has drawn the attention of a few bystander Lochols ready to flee if things get out of hand.

The conflict could be the result of a number of reasons depending on the people or creatures involved:

d6	REASONS FOR FIGHTING
1	Made a bad trade
2	A disruptive force, such as a monster
3	Punished by a Doge for shoddy work
4	Jealousy over costumes
5	Emotions are high over a scandal
6	Had a bad day

## Back Alley Trade

Creatures with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher hear faint whispers and murmurs emanating from a nearby alleyway. The people involved might be conducting a deal, hiding out, or trying to get the adventurers' attention away from the riffraff. If a fight occurs, these shady merchants flee.

## Chase

A chase has broken out, barreling past the adventurers and through the city streets. The people involved could be chasing one another, pursuing an unfamiliar Lochol, or fleeing a mob of Lochols.

Other than Harle, the Doges don't typically engage in chases. They opt to send their minions after the target and stroll casually behind the action.

## City Work

This portion of the city is obstructed by repairs or cultivation work: reinforcing crumbling buildings, covering damage and decay with decorations, or installing new statue work. If a monster is involved, it could be in the process of being captured.

The adventurers might need another way around unless they know someone else on the scene.

## Dance Battle

A small group has started a private party on the street, dancing with one another while a Lochol jams on a broken lyre. If a monster is involved, the Lochols are keeping it appeased by dancing. Otherwise, they're competing with one another. The NPC dancer is able to match a wager of up to 50 gp.

An adventurer might be allowed to join the battle if they up the ante and wager a piece of scrap of their own. The battle is a best-of-three contested checks, where participants make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Charisma (Performance) check against one another. The winner receives all wagered prizes.

## Ground Rupture

A fissure suddenly cuts through the street and upsets the terrain. Though the source of the fissure is unknown, a cloud of wailing spirits erupts from

below, soaring high into the sky. The party in the area dims for a moment, and then picks right back up again.

Getting to the other side of the fault requires a character to succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. They can also spend an hour pushing through the crowd to find another way around.

Nearby Lochols are caught off guard by the event, but no one seems to be hurt. A crowd of Lochols slowly starts to form before this area gets sectioned off for city work. A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that this sort of strangeness is par for the course in the Locks.

## Street Performance

A crowd has formed around a performance in the street. It has them all enthralled by virtue of being either really good or really bad. A loose monster in this encounter would probably be handled by a foolish Lochol, and the crowd waits for something terrible to happen.

d6	TYPE OF PERFORMANCE
1	Dancing
2	Playing an instrument
3	Singing
4	Poetry recital
5	Lecturing
6	An act of strength

## Protest

A protest has broken out, rallying against an aspect of the Locks causing a lot of Lochols problems. The cheers and shouts are loud enough to rival the parade's clamor in the District of Streamers.

d6	REASON FOR PROTEST
1	The work hours are too long.
2	The good scraps are being hoarded.
3	The city keeps falling apart.
4	The canals are overcrowded with bodies.
5	There aren't enough Lochols.
6	The adventurers are causing problems for the Lochols.

## Rushing Crowd

This area is filled with Lochols moving throughout the city. It's tightly packed and hard to hear anything or notice anyone. This area is considered difficult terrain, and all creatures' passive Wisdom (Perception) scores are halved.

If a Doge, a monster, or a doppelganger disguised as a Doge is in the scene, the crowd tries to avoid them.



## The Lockskirts and Greater Locks Canal

**Representative:** Doge Colet

**Typical Work:** Supply Distribution and Transportation

**Inns:** The River Styx, An Ordinary Bench, Talpa's Inn, Swainers

**Lochol Activities:** Gondola Races

**Notable Sights:** The Greater Canal

Anyone leaving from or arriving at the Locks must pass through the Lockskirts, an extended series of docks extending around the outer limits of the city. Its piers reach out into the Greater Locks Canal, populated by pallets and heletros (skeletal servitors; see appendix A) awaiting the order to depart.

Gondolas can be found even on the most desolate sections of the Lockskirts, loosely tied down to the docks and left to bob and rock on the gentle tide.

The Lochols put in a good effort to transport scraps and supplies to the different parts of the city. As other Lochols prepare to depart into one of the channels, the Lockskirts natives craft new gondolas to replace the boats that will inevitably be destroyed. And between their jobs and responsibilities, the Lochols enjoy racing their gondolas on increasingly harrowing bets.

If the adventurers first arrive at the Lockskirts alone, they have their first experience with Locks-wide pastime of gossiping thanks to a curious old Lochol named Talpa.

### Talpa

Talpa is a well-put-together **wretched driver** (see appendix A) with massive arms and an arch in his back. He's an old gondolier who's seen the Locks built from nothing. His bauta and outfit are all adorned with nautical affects, and he could almost pass for a living creature if it weren't for the exposed bony fingertips he keeps clutched behind his back.

Talpa warmly greets the adventurers when they first arrive and quickly ushers them away from the other Lochols. Whether or not they're wearing their masks, the old reveler can tell something's up with this group and wants to ensure they won't immediately cause disaster to strike the Locks. His goal is to impart the following values upon them:

- "Keep your bautas on. The Lochols will treat you like a threat if you don't."
- "Gossiping with the Lochols is how you survive. It's a little city, and they're always talking about its goings on."

### Solicitation

A charismatic Lochol talks loudly about their scraps and wares, trying to interest someone into trading with them. They have a wide selection of garbage and refuse on a makeshift table.

Creatures that make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a glass bottle with blue liquid among the scraps. The Lochol picked up this *potion of greater healing* in the Lichen Channel and will only part with it for a character's most treasured possession. A character that honestly offer their most treasured possession is taken at face value. A character that tries to cheat the vendor must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check to offer up their so-called treasured possession.

**Other Wares.** In addition to a heap of knick-knacks, scrap, and junk, the solicitor also carries a soul weapon from Dream Town. It is a +1 longsword (or another weapon type of your choice), and contains a restless soul shaped into a weapon. It can't speak, but a character that holds it can sometimes feel emotions radiating off of it—foul ones if the characters followed Octavian's goals in episode 2, or friendly ones when they speak of reaching the surface or defeating Kasimir Sundrinker. The merchant is willing to trade it for a character's second-most-prized possession—or 500 gp.

- "Play nice with the Doges. You might not like them, but they have a lot of power here."

Whenever the adventurers arrive on the same part of the Lockskirts that Talpa is working, he's happy to answer their questions about the city or the different channels. Between encounters, Talpa deals with Volto, attempting to glean more details about the adventurers. The old Lochol does his best to keep his mouth shut, but Volto causes him to relent after about a week.

## Chartering a Vessel

The characters can find plenty of Lochol gondoliers (use **wretched driver** statistics; see appendix A) willing to offer their services to anyone wearing a bauta. One such gondolier is a hunched Lochol missing her left arm named Colombina Fairweather.

She eschews the daily festivities of the Locks, instead hanging around the Lockskirts, daydreaming about venturing out into the Deep Rivers with a party of warriors and claiming the head of the Latoré (in the Lichen Channel; see appendix A) as a trophy. If the characters are searching for a vessel within which to travel the Deep Rivers, they can easily find her. She offers her extra-large gondola, a sizeable vessel called *Il Arlecchino*, capable of carrying up to 10 Medium-sized creatures at once. It is 10 feet wide and 20 feet long.

## Other Gondolas

If the characters wish to pilot their own vessel, they can easily purchase one from the many gondoliers of this district for 100 gp, or 20 pieces of scrap salvaged from anywhere in the Deep Rivers. These gondoliers are tired of the red and yellow scrap typically found within the Locks, and want scrap of other colors, from the more distant channels of the Deep Rivers.

## Gondola Statistics

A gondolier—be they an adventurer or a Lochol—can use their movement to guide a gondola through the water up to 40 feet per turn. Most gondolas are 5 feet wide and 10 feet long, making them capable of fitting up to 5 Medium-sized creatures. A gondola has AC 11, 40 hit points, and is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

A gondola can be mended during a short rest by spending 1 wood or metal scrap and making a DC 13 Intelligence check with woodcarver's tools. This restores up to 20 hit points to the gondola. Multiple creatures can mend a gondola at once.

Woodcarver's tools are sold for 1 gp per set by anyone selling a gondola.

## Lockskirts Gossip

Most information and stories touch the Lockskirts. Every gondolier is bound to have an interesting tip they've picked up out in the channels or deep in the city. Talpa makes sure the adventurers are aware of how to gossip before letting them go on their way.

An adventurer can get advantage on their check to acquire gossip here by passing a Lochol a piece of scrap as a bribe. Four pieces of gossip get passed around the Lockskirts daily. That said, an adventurer might be able to pick up additional pieces of gossip by winning a gondola race (see "Gondola Races," below).

To learn a piece of gossip, a character can spend 1 hour haunting a place with lots of Lochols, then make a special Charisma (Investigation) check. (See "Variant: Skills with Different Abilities" in the fifth edition core rules.) The result of the check determines how juicy the gossip they hear is; choose one item of gossip from the appropriate result below.

### Result of 0 to 4

- The Doges, Donalo, and Talpa are some of the oldest Lochols to come out of the Locks. I wonder if I'll thrive that long.
- All these bodies and garbage throughout these waters...it's a wonder nothing springs back to life halfway down a channel.

### Result of 5 to 9

- Harle sometimes swims across these waters like they were invincible or something. Hey, I'd believe it.
- A lot more bautas come floating into the Greater Canal lately. Gatto wants them collected and brought back to the Lockworks, but it's a little unsettling, ain't it?

### Result of 10 to 14

- Volto keeps reserving sections of the 'Skirts for "private engagements." Just call it conspiring; it's not a secret!
- We've lost a lot of good gondoliers to those hags in the Lichen. You'd think Colet would do something about it!



## Result of 15 to 19

- I miss Donalo. Incredible Lochol that guy. Lured in by the healing waters of the Surging and never came back.
- Harle's got something going on down the Flooded. You'll never catch me down there; it's an absolute deathtrap for boats!

## Result of 20 to 24

- Gatto keeps traveling down the Misty, sometimes twice in a day. What's down there?
- Old Talpa out here in the 'Skirts used to blatantly pass information along to Volto. I wonder if he still does?

## Result of 25 or Higher

- That gator down the Lichen? Absolutely has a key in its guts. I think Volto knows it, too.
- Colet's been bribing a lot of us to tell her about what the other Doges are up to. She could just gossip like the rest of us!

## Gondola Races

A gondola race is usually conducted against one or two other **wretched drivers** (see appendix A). It can be across any stretch of water, but commonly takes place within the Greater Locks Canal. Whatever the adventurers are willing to bet, whether it's scrap or money, the Lochols match their offer.

Running a gondola race is similar to combat:

- Each round accounts for a half-mile of water; a typical race is a loop of two and a half miles—a total of 5 rounds.
- Racers roll initiative at the top of each round to determine who is ahead.
- On a racer's turn, they can attack the other racers or take any action that would give them the upper hand in the race. Whatever improvised action the character takes, the GM sets a DC appropriate to the action's difficulty and chooses an ability check for the character to make. If the attack roll hits or the contested ability check is successful, that character has advantage on their next initiative roll.
- Racers that are attacked or are put into a poor position as a result of the other racers or the environment must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they have disadvantage on their next initiative roll.
- Whoever has the highest initiative at the end of the race is the winner.

# District of Streamers

**Representative:** Doge Volto

**Typical Work:** Decoration

**Inns:** The Dream Stream, Coriandoli

**District Events:** Parades

**Notable Sights:** Main Street, Good Hauls Lantern

This district features the most color and frills of any district in the city. Lochols come here to express themselves loudly by dancing and reveling in the streets. Natives to the District of Streamers are mostly decorators who take it upon themselves to regularly change out the theming and colors of the Locks and maintain the passage of time.

## Good Hauls Lantern

Just off the main street stands an old stone statue of a man holding out a lantern. Its cracks and wear are covered by a variety of scraps fashioned into a costume for the figure, including a cracked bauta obscuring his face.

Lochols visit the Good Hauls Lantern before spelunking into the channels to scavenge more scraps. They say that offering a piece of scrap to the statue will provide them with good hauls on their expedition and taking from the lantern without giving anything would damn them.

Sure enough, creatures that affix a piece of scrap on the statue get advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks and scrap rolls made to scavenge for scraps for 24 hours. Conversely, creatures that take scrap from the statue without replacing anything have disadvantage on the same rolls for 48 hours.

## Main Street Parades

Every day, there is a new parade in the Streamers District. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters step out onto the Main Street of this district.

The streetlamps seem much brighter here. The minor canals are packed with ribbon-laced gondolas as corpses pile and wedge themselves between boats. Lochols line the edges of the District of Streamers' main street. The cracked cobblestone rattles and bends as the costumed revelers stomp their feet in anticipation for the parade. You can feel the excitement in the air as it hangs thick in your lungs.



The main street is 35 feet across and weaves throughout the District of Streamers. It is the largest and oldest street in the Locks, and the daily location of the mid-day parade.

The parade is an opportunity for Lochols that have collected scraps in excess to put together a magnificent float and win the hearts/envy of their peers. Lochols without floats try their hand at performing down the street. All the while, the crowds along the route cheer and shout to let the entire city know who they liked best.

When the adventurers arrive at the parade route, roll a d20. The parade deals with troublemakers along the route on a roll of 15-20, as detailed in the "Troublemakers" section, below.

## Parade Route

The entire parade route is confined to the main street and takes the marchers from one end of the district to the other. The starting position of the parade alternates, taking the procession from the border of the District of Lights to the District of Swords on one day, and then vice versa on the next.

The procession is relatively slow and easy to follow. When the parade encounters no troublemakers, the entire route takes an hour to complete. Depending on the nature of the interruptions, that duration can stretch up to three hours in the worst cases.

## Doge Appearance

The four Doges all enjoy the relatively quick and in-the-open parade event. However, the parade is clearly Colet and Gatto's time to shine. Colet takes this opportunity to scope out the outfits of the other Lochols to see if anyone has dredged up more money. Gatto, conversely, enjoys this opportunity for the other Lochols to scope her out. Volto and Harle are slightly more formal, spending more time engaging with the other parade marchers than with the procession itself.

The first time the adventurers attend a parade, have all four Doges show up. Roll a 1d4 for each Doge's appearance on subsequent visits, rerolling if no Doges would appear:

- Volto appears on a roll of 3-4.
- Gatto appears on a roll of 2-4.
- Colet appears on a roll of 2-4.
- Harle appears on a roll of 3-4.

## Parade Events

The parade usually starts once everyone is ready to march and doesn't feature a set announcer. If Volto is present, he takes the opportunity declare the start of each portion of the event, usually leading the announcement with:

"My Lochols, my Lochols! I now command your attention."

## Setup

Read or paraphrase the following once the characters have decided to either watch or march in the parade:

The marchers and floats have put together incredibly haunting displays. You see great wheels made from spines and armored wagons festooned with rusty plate mail and fresh guts. Everyone is almost ready, but you can see a few Lochols calling out for help with getting grease in the right joints.

## MARCH OR WATCH?

This event can be enjoyed by the adventurers passively or actively. Marching gives characters another opportunity to directly interact with the Doges, whereas watching offers characters plenty more gossip at their disposal.

If Doge presence is an important factor for the adventurers' decisions here, they can ask a Lochol who is showing up today. Most revelers can provide that answer even as they start to arrive.

**VOLTO,  
DOGE OF ORDER**



The present Doges have donned truly extravagant costumes. They appear taller, thornier, more colorful, and more brilliant, especially juxtaposed with their helpers and skeletal servants running messages back and forth.

There are three to four groups of  $1d4 + 1$  **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) hastily preparing themselves at start of the route, fixing up floats and arranging their order for the procession. The adventurers can help with struggling Lochols for an opportunity to march alongside their float, find spots along the order to be a performer, or position themselves in the line with their own float.

The Doges spread themselves out evenly along the line to allow one another plenty of room to wow the crowd. Their order varies with each parade, but there's usually a Doge at the front, the rear, and near the center. If the characters are interested in any of the Doges in particular, give them time to investigate what they're doing. If not, give a brief description of the present Doges, and then move on to the "Procession" section, below.

**Volto.** Doge Volto is talking to the performers near his position and arranging them to best take up the nearby space. He welcomes anyone who wants to sing and dance to march close to him.

**Harle.** Doge Harle sets themself up off to the side of the street, leaving enough space for any float that dares parade next to them. A creature who succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that Harle keeps looking through the crowd, but every so often fixes their gaze on the dancing performers setting up to march.

**Gatto.** Doge Gatto sports an elaborate float that puts her on a pedestal, and her cats cannot help with the final touches. Her revelers are doing what they can, but they're inclined to reach out to a nearby adventurer to pin up the last lines of garland.

**Colet.** Doge Colet is busy directing Lochols either to position themselves closer or farther away from her based on their costuming. She's focused on marching near revelers that wear gold or black, and keeping everyone else far away.

The Doges may be inclined to march alongside characters that engage with them, provided their disposition toward them is neutral or positive. The adventurers will still have opportunities to get a Doge's attention when the parade finally starts.

## Performing in the Procession

The parade begins when everyone is ready and in order.

The crowd throughout the route watches in awe as music echoes down darkened alleyways. Skin and parchment confetti rains down from the tops of nearby buildings. The Lochols wave proudly and show off their outfits and floats. The parade has begun!

Throughout the route, the marching adventurers have a total of five rounds to perform ability checks to appeal to the crowd. Any of the Doges in the procession take great notice of who successfully draws the crowds' eyes (see "Appealing to the Doges," below).

Each round, all marching characters can make a check in one of the following ways, but no two characters can choose the same option, unless all three options have already been chosen:

- A character marching in the parade must do something interesting, like blowing kisses to the crowd or throwing copper pieces, and then succeed on a DC 10 Charisma check to gain the crowd's attention.
- A character can perform by making a DC 15 ability check using any ability. If the character is proficient in the Performance skill, they can add their proficiency bonus to the check. On a success, the crowds cheers wildly for them.
- If Harle is in the parade, the Doge competes with the character and makes their own Charisma checks. If Harle's check matches the character's, the tension between them drives the crowd into a frenzy, counting as two successful appeals.

Once during the parade, a character in the crowd can attempt to cheer loudly for their allies as they proceed by, granting them all advantage on their checks for this round of the parade.

## Appealing to the Doges

The Doges are communicating with one another through their subordinates throughout the parade. Their conversations quickly shift to discussing who has the attention of the crowd, especially when it's not them. When certain conditions are met, they reach out to the appealing marchers through their minions or directly if they're nearby.

The Doges are all eccentric characters, and have very particular conditions regarding who they show favor to:

- Volto is impressed when a performer succeeds on two appeals in front of him. He looks to be having a covert conversation in the middle of parading.

- Harle is excited when the marcher they're competing with gets more appeal than them. However, if Harle or their competition succeeds on all five appeals while the other fails all five, they become unreasonably upset about it.
- Gatto is eager to meet the marcher who got four appeals anywhere within the procession but wants nothing to do with any show-off marchers who succeeded on all five.
- Colet wants to talk to whoever succeeded on one appeal wearing gold or all five appeals wearing black.

Other than Volto, the Doges intend on having covert conversations with the marchers they're interested in after the parade has concluded (see "Covert Conversations," later in this section).

## Troublemakers

If the GM rolls a 15–20 at the start of the parade, troublemakers barge in from a side street during the procession. For ease of play, this happens after all marching characters have made their five checks. You can roll for who is involved in the encounter, and why, on the following tables.

### WHO'S CRASHING?

d4	CREATURES
1	1d3 + 1 wights and 1d4 wretched revelers
2	1d4 + 2 wretched revelers
3	1 wretched reveler and 1 ghost
4	1 dragon float (see appendix A) containing 2 wretched revelers

The dragon float is an elaborate but rough construct made from discarded armors and shields. Its wheels tear up the street and acid drips down its mouth in big droplets. The dragon float isn't allowed at the parade for how destructive it is to the Locks.

### WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	They wanted to stop all parades so that the Main Street can be opened up again.
3-4	These troublemakers were continually turned down from joining previous parades and have a grudge.
5-6	A Doge has hired them to cause problems either for the adventurers or the other Doges.



## Parade Route Gossip

Adventurers watching the parade are privy to up to four pieces of gossip being passed around by other bystanders. Characters who march only have access to one other piece of gossip but can learn a second piece of gossip if they help smooth out trouble in the parade, or help someone cause trouble (see “Troublemakers,” below).

To learn a piece of gossip, a character can spend 1 hour in or around the parade, then make a special Charisma (Investigation) check. (See “Variant: Skills with Different Abilities” in the fifth edition core rules.) Characters who march in the parade have advantage on this check. The result of the check determines how juicy the gossip they hear is; choose one item of gossip from the appropriate result below.

### Result of 0 to 4

- The Doges all seem to enjoy passing notes to one another during a procession. At least notes are what I assume the Lochols are moving between them.
- Harle's float is always super cool to see. I don't think they ever clean up the blood from the previous troublemakers they've run over.

### Result of 5 to 9

- Colet glows brightest when the Lochols surrounding her either wear gold or something dull. Nothing in between will do.
- Gatto always seems like she needs a few extra hands to help her stand out at the parade.

### Result of 10 to 14

- Harle does this thing where they stare at all the people watching the parade, like they're looking for specific individuals or something.
- A couple of troublemakers jeered Volto at a parade a few weeks ago. I don't think I've seen any of them outside of the Lockworks since then.

### Result of 15 to 19

- Gatto and Colet used to parade nearby one another, but now Colet seems to join the procession farther and farther back.
- Harle enjoys parading side by side with someone else's float. It must be another competition to them.

### Result of 20 to 24

- Volto likes to talk to the performers that elevate his presence in the parade. I've seen him do more chatting than parading at these things.

- I swear I've seen Gatto marching twice in the same procession before. There was distance between them, so it is possible she ran to the back of the parade to march a second time? That seems like too much trouble.

## Result of 25 or Higher

- I remember Volto being proven wrong in a debate only once a long time ago. Don't remember what, but he didn't attend a single parade or event for a week after that.
- Colet's incredibly hard to read, and I heard it's the result of magic! I wonder where she bought it?

## After the Parade

Read or paraphrase the following to signal the end of the parade:

With the final float reaching the end of the route, the crowd lets loose a big cheer. Another day of grandstanding for themselves was in the books. Several Lochols help with street cleanup and unloading the floats, while the rest head off to another district for more entertainment.

## Covert Conversations

The Doges make sure they end up in separate locations from one another at the end of the parade. If any adventurers appealed to one of the Doges, they approach them in a relatively secluded area and converse in a way that draws no attention to themselves. However, if the adventurer brings up a gravely serious matter, the Doge suggests taking this conversation into an alleyway alongside 1d4 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A).

The Doge sees this as an opportunity to discuss a covert operation or their great plans. The adventurer can choose to work with the Doge, make any sort of arrangements or threats, or keep them occupied amid parade cleanup. The Doge's goals—along with their special game statistics, should the adventurers attack—are in appendix C.

Any troublemakers (possibly including the adventurers) that attempt to walk away after the parade are pursued by 2d4 **wretched revelers** for each Doge slighted by the incident. It's the middle of the day, and the Doges don't bring any attention to themselves during this encounter. They casually head off to their next destinations.



## District of Swords

**Representative:** Doge Harle

**Typical Work:** Infrastructure

**Inns:** Good Knife

**District Events:** Feats of Strength

**Notable Sights:** Wall of Weapons, the Quarry

Most of the buildings and streets in this district are reinforced with irregular pieces of brass or copper, giving the area a distinct edge and a dangerous thrill. The District of Swords is home to most of the supplies and equipment the Locks uses to repair itself, but it's also the location of a massive pit Lochols visit to marvel at the abilities of their peers.

### Wall of Weapons

The streets throughout the District of Swords are lined with a fence composed of an impressive collection of scavenged swords, spears, and axes. Most of the equipment is rusted and damaged beyond repair, but an inclined creature can scavenge a random weapon from the weapons table out of the wall with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check – or a special Strength (Survival) check (see “Variant: Skills with Different Abilities” in the fifth edition core rules.).

If this check is attempted more than twice in 10 minutes, a group of 1d4 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) accost the offenders for damaging their wall.

### The Quarry

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the tall stone walls of the Quarry:

Within tall stone walls is a massive dirt pit. Peering down, you see a huge steel plate dug into the ground. This square forms an area; its edges are beaten down into the ground and obscured by all manner of heavy equipment: iron boulders, rusty weapons, an empty dragon turtle shell. Lochols are stretching, standing in groups, or sitting on makeshift seats to prepare for the event.

Stairs are dug into the edge of the 80-foot-deep pit that spans nearly 300 feet across. The entire floor is stamped flat with little variation, save for the piles of clay and dirt at the edges. The steel plate at its center is 100 square feet with the shell of a deceased dragon turtle resting on one of its edges.

There isn't much infrastructure in the way for bystanders or the Doges. Lochols make their own seats and watch the action from the edge of the plate. When Doges conduct private business, they simply walk far away.

## Feats of Strength

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters arrive in the Quarry in the morning, when the festivities are beginning:

Within the District of Swords and dug far below the water level is the Quarry. Its edges are littered with mounds of red clay and fallen pieces of the cityscape. Meanwhile its center plays host to the Feats of Strength. Imposing Lochols wait at the Quarry's edge to be cleared for entry by the guards.

The Feats of Strength occur in the morning, and the Lochols here are ready to show their grit. Two **wretched reveler** guards (see appendix A) make sure that individuals are tough enough to enter a Lochol-made hazard area. The party can prove they're tough enough together with a DC 18 group Strength check. If that doesn't work, they can bribe the guards with a piece of scrap (see "Foraging," earlier in this episode).

## Setting up a Quarrel

When the adventurers reach the bottom of the Quarry, roll a d20. The pit contends with quarrelers on a roll of 15–20, as detailed in the "Quarrelers" section, below.

## Doge Appearance

The Doges revel in the Feats of Strength. Volto and Harle enjoy the structure and passion of the Feats and its competitors. Gatto admires the pride of Lochols showing how strong they are in death, but respectfully watches from a distance. And Colet sees it as an opportunity to hire new muscle.

The first time the adventurers attend the Feats of Strength, all four Doges show up. Roll a 1d4 for each Doge's appearance on subsequent visits, rerolling if no Doges would appear:

- Volto is always present when the characters are.
- Gatto appears on a roll of 3–4.
- Colet appears on a roll of 3–4.
- Harle is always present when the characters are.



**HARLE,  
DOGE OF BLOOD**

## Quarry Gossip

Usually,  $1d4 + 2$  groups of Lochols show up to the Quarry, each with their own piece of gossip. It might look a little suspicious for an adventurer to walk up to each group individually to gossip. If the party divides and conquers then there shouldn't be any problem.

To learn a piece of gossip, a character can spend 1 hour haunting a place with lots of Lochols, then make a special Charisma (Investigation) check. (See "Variant: Skills with Different Abilities" in the fifth edition core rules.) The result of the check determines how juicy the gossip they hear is; choose one item of gossip from the appropriate result below.

## Result of 0 to 4

- I don't doubt Harle defeated that turtle, but I wonder who had to bring it out of the Deep Rivers.
- I've talked to a lot of Lochols, and we'd love to have more Lochol neighbors, but we'd probably lose this Quarry for space before long.

## Result of 5 to 9

- Volto once attempted a shell pull as an example for the crowd, and it must have gotten *negative* distance. I won't ever forget it.
- Honestly, if someone intimidating enough made their presence known, none of the other Lochols would want to compete.

## Result of 10 to 14

- A Lochol once dedicated their iron ball run to Gatto and she swooned! I don't think she was expecting it, usually that sort of thing doesn't work.
- Volto's interested in the Lochols that keep trying to move the shell even when it won't budge. Must be trying to figure out their strategy.

## Result of 15 to 19

- If a Lochol soars through the boulder Feat too handily, Harle challenges them to a rope tug. It's incredibly exciting!
- Colet seems to chat solely with the winners of either Feat of Strength. Whomever she can buy.

## Result of 20 to 24

- I swear I've seen Gatto crawl out of that shell at one point. It was incredibly bizarre.
- Volto clutches his chest in a way that makes me think he's holding onto something under his outfit.

## Result of 25 or Higher

- Harle's been trying to wrangle all the Lochols in from the channels and all these events. Must be packaging us up before they go, huh?
- If Volto used to be such a smart advisor, how does he not see Colet piling her work on him?

## Quarry Events

A Lochol from each of the groups (from Quarry Gossip) is looking to compete in today's Feats of Strength. If an adventurer manages to intimidate one or more of them, they might not compete. Volto is displeased while Colet's interest is piqued. If the

adventurers have no competition, Harle steps in to compete as well.

The Feats of Strength are hosted by whichever Doge is present and eager, typically in the order of Volto, Harle, Gatto, and then Colet if no one else is available. If Harle is incensed to challenge a competitor, the next Doge in the list takes over for them.

When Volto is announcing, lead each description block with:

“My Lochols, my Lochols! I now command your attention.”

## The Iron Ball Run

When everyone is present, Volto, who likes to serve as master of ceremonies, calls for the Iron Ball Feat of Strength.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Volto takes to the center of the arena as Lochols set up scrap metal boulders next to clay pillars behind him. His voice carries across the Quarry like a thunderclap. “We are about to engage in our first of two Feats of Strength: The Iron Ball Run. How fast can you place these incredible weights upon their pedestals? I am ready to be amazed.”

Five 5-foot-tall clay pillars are moved to the center of the arena, while the five iron spheres are placed between them. This feat is set up for one person to attempt at a time. Roll initiative to determine the order for the contestants. (If there aren't at least four characters interested in playing, use **wretched revelers** in their place; see appendix A)

**Placing the Iron Balls.** The contestant must place the boulders on the pedestals in the shortest amount of time as possible. To do so, the rules are as follows:

- The contestant must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) to place the iron ball on a pillar before moving onto the next one. Doing so counts as a single success.
- The contestant gets a number of attempts at making the check to place the ball equal to their Dexterity modifier (minimum 1) before it counts as a single failure. The attempts count resets after every success and failure.
- When all five balls are on the pedestals, the contestant's score is equal to their number of successes minus their number of failures.
- The contestant with the highest score is the winner.

BOULDER ORDER	STRENGTH (ATHLETICS) DC
First	14
Second	16
Third	17
Fourth	18
Fifth	20

**To the Victor.** Volto gives the winner a piece of gorgeous metal scrap: a very heavy iron marble. Colet will be interested in chatting with the winner if Harle isn't incensed enough to challenge them.

**Harle's Challenge.** Additionally, if a single contestant ends up with a score of 5, Harle rushes in to challenge them to a tug of war before the Iron Ball Run can be properly called.

Volto, as master of ceremonies, slips in the following:

"Harle isn't impressed! The Doge of Blood has issued their challenge to the Iron Ball Bullet! It's time for the tug-of-war!"

## Tug-of-War

Both Harle and the contestant take part in a best-of-three Strength (Athletics) contest to pull the fraying rope. Regardless of the outcome (and Harle's fuming reaction if they lose), Harle is thrilled by the contestant's ability and will be interested in chatting after the contest (see "Covert Quarry Conversations," later in this section).

With everything resolved, the Volto commands the attention of their audience:

"Let's have a hand for today's Iron Ball Bullet!  
Congratulations!"

## The Dragon Pull

When the pillars are cleared, ropes are attached to the front of the dragon turtle shell.

"Ready yourselves," Volto proclaims to their audience. "The last Feat of Strength today is the awe-inspiring Dragon Pull. Who can move this dragon turtle's shell the farthest? Who can move it at all? Show me your most determined Lochols!"

The goal is to pull the shell farther than anyone else. This feat is set up for one person to attempt at a time. Roll initiative to determine the order for contestants. (As before, if there aren't at least four characters participating, use **wretched revelers** in their place.)

**Dragon Pull Rules.** The rules are as follows:

- The contestant must succeed on a DC 21 Strength (Athletics) check to pull the shell 1 foot forward.
- The contestant can attempt this check a number of times equal to their Constitution modifier (minimum of 1).
- The contestant can push past their limit after running out of attempts. All subsequent checks are made with advantage. However, the contestant gains 1 level of exhaustion after each check.
- No one in the Quarry is responsible for contestants who get themselves killed.
- The contestant with the greatest distance pulled wins.

After the last contestant makes their pull, Volto congratulates the winner:

"And here they are, today's Shell Shaker! Let's give them a hand!"

The winner is given a piece of random scrap (see "Foraging," earlier in this episode) by the emcee. Volto wants to chat with the winner if they gained any levels of exhaustion. Otherwise, if Colet didn't reach out to the Iron Ball winner, she approaches this winner of the Dragon Pull (see "Covert Quarry Conversations," later in this section).

## Quarrelers

If the GM rolled a 15–20 when the adventurers entered the Quarry, four **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) take to the arena and challenge someone to combat. You can roll for who they challenge, when they start their assault, and why on the following tables.

## WHO THEY CHALLENGE

d4	CREATURES
1	The adventurers
2	The Doges
3	Everyone present
4	A one-on-one duel with the creature with the highest Strength score

## WHEN DO THEY ARRIVE?

d6	EVENT
1-2	Before the first Iron Ball Feat of Strength
3-4	Before the second Dragon Pull Feat of Strength
5-6	After all Feats of Strength are finished

## WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	They haven't been able to win a single Feat of Strength.
3-4	They were a part of the team that transported the dragon turtle shell, and they want it back.
5-6	A Doge has hired them to make a big scene that the Lochols will talk about for days.

If the Doges are challenged to fight, they brawl with relish (see their special game statistics in appendix C). They also encourage the adventurers to destroy them—if they dare.

## Leaving the Quarry

The Master of Ceremonies grants their permission for everyone to leave after the Feats of Strength have concluded. “Come back tomorrow, beautiful Lochols! You may leave here with my blessing. Revel today and show me your strength tomorrow! Good hauls, and take care!”

As Lochols start to leave, the Doges make their way to their next obligations and their covert conversations with the victors.

## Covert Quarry Conversations

When the Feats of Strength are concluded and Lochols discuss strength-building techniques, the Doges walk the adventurers far enough out into the Quarry alongside their minions—1d4 **wretched revelers**—where no one else can hear them talk. The other Doges make note of who talks to whom, but refrain from interfering for the time being.

The Doge uses this opportunity to discuss covert operations or a plan they’re scheming. The adventurer is encouraged to make a dramatic response, working with the Doge, forming an alliance, or threatening to take them down. The Doge’s goals—along with their special game statistics, should the adventurers attack—are in appendix C.

## District of Wines

**Representative:** Doge Harle

**Typical Work:** Janitorial Services

**Inns:** The Wine Down, Powl's Keep

**District Events:** Eating and Drinking Competitions

**Notable Sights:** The Grandemensa Tavern

This entire area has an unmistakable scent, developed from years of handling expired goods. When the streets need cleaning and perishable spoils must be collected, the Lochols from the District of Wines take on the responsibility. At all other times, the Revelers gather here to celebrate and socialize over “food” and “drink.”

## Eating and Drinking Competitions

When the characters enter the District of Wines, they arrive near the Grandemensa. Read or paraphrase the following.

The District of Wines is the home of the Grandemensa, the only inn throughout all the Locks that is also a tavern. Working noses can’t ignore the rancid odors billowing down the decrepit building’s walls. Lochols mill about the Grandemensa as they please, each holding what looks like a small rusty tube in their filthy hands.

Lochols arrive at the Grandemensa in the late afternoon to partake in the pleasure of eating and drinking. They brought their own straws for the task. These scrappy tubes are usually bigger than straws for liquids but are still slight enough to fit under a bauta. If the adventurers do not craft their own, any Lochol is happy to loan theirs out.

## The Grandemensa

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the Grandemensa tavern:

The horrible smell intensifies as you enter a humid cafeteria. Dried intestines line the walls with rib bones hanging from them, evenly spread apart. Wooden benches stretch the length of the house, dotted with masked ghouls slurping their food up through straws. The back part of the room features an open “kitchen,” and you can see multiple Lochols arranging rotten rations and spoils onto plates. And on the right is a large bar filled with revelers singing ballads off-key.



## PLEASE DON'T EAT THE FOOD

A character that eats a plate of rotten food from the Grandemensa must make a successful DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, the character must repeat this save whenever they take damage or try to eat more food, vomiting violently on a failure. A vomiting character is incapacitated until the end of its next turn. Whenever the character completes a long rest, they can repeat this save—on a success, the effect ends.

The adventurers are welcome to enter the eating competition themselves if they can cast *purify food and drink*, or are immune to being poisoned.

While the wine is safer to drink, it's an incredibly potent alcohol. None of the Lochols are capable of becoming inebriated for all of their reveling.

The Grandemensa is a single-floor, 80-cubic-foot box filled with raucous cheering and singing around the time the competitions kick off. There's typically enough space here for Doges to take to the corner at one of the benches to conduct private business.

The food here is explicitly not humanoid flesh fit for ghouls; Lochols have scavenged and preserved the scraps of rotten or stale food found on the corpses

from the Deep Rivers. Similarly, the wine reserves are a mixture of different bottles that tastes of potent vinegar. The wine is less toxic than the food.

When the adventurers arrive at the Grandemensa, roll a d20. The tavern gets rowdy on a 15–20, as detailed in the "Ruffians" section, below.

## Doge Appearance

The Doges are no strangers to the Grandemensa. Harle particularly enjoys watching Lochols stuff their faces in heated food wars. Colet has a taste for the wine here and revels along with the tavern songs. Volto and Gatto show up usually to eat and drink as they please, especially if the events earlier in the day were stressful.

The first time the adventurers attend a competition here, all four Doges show up. Roll a 1d4 for each Doge's appearance on subsequent visits, rerolling if no Doges would appear:

- Volto appears on a roll of 3–4.
- Gatto appears on a roll of 3–4.
- Colet appears on a roll of 2–4.
- Harle appears on a roll of 2–4.

## Grandemensa Gossip

Four pieces of gossip tend to float around a competition at the Grandemensa, whether patrons are eating or drinking. If an adventurer takes part in singing along at the bar, two more pieces of gossip become available.

To learn a piece of gossip, a character can spend 1 hour haunting a place with lots of Lochols, then make a special Charisma (Investigation) check. (See "Variant:



**GATTO,  
DOGE OF PRIDE**

Skills with Different Abilities" in the fifth edition core rules.) The result of the check determines how juicy the gossip they hear is; choose one item of gossip from the appropriate result below.

### Result of 0 to 4

- I don't think anyone here enjoys this food. They just like eating in general. You know what I mean?
- There are three Lochols who always sweep these competitions. You're honestly better off gambling.

### Result of 5 to 9

- Angeem, Hyottone, Malata are here each day powering through plates and practicing against one another. I always bet on Hyottone though.
- Gatto likes to ask Lochols to make bets for her and then has them mugged when they bet wrong. I won't let that happen to me again.

### Result of 10 to 14

- Volto and Colet like to have heated conversations at the bar when the other two Doges aren't around. Maybe it's a philosophy thing!
- Harle competed in an eating competition just once. They didn't lose miserably, but I think they're looking to challenge someone more on their level.

### Result of 15 to 19

- Colet has a beautiful voice. Either that, or the song she likes to sing at the bar is simply entralling.
- Harle enjoys parading side by side with someone else's float. It must be another competition to them.

### Result of 20 to 24

- When Malata stares up at the ceiling, you know that's the winning bet. I learned that from Volto.
- Angeem never beats Hyottone unless she sees Harle. Then she always beats him.

### Result of 25 or Higher

- It seems like a lot of the mishaps that happen around the Locks have a "Volto" feel to them, like they're calculated.
- Gatto excuses herself early from a lot of events because she has a serious mean streak. It almost seems like Harle pushes her whenever she can.

## Grandemensa Events

Preparations for the eating and drinking competitions get underway when the three major competitors sit down. Events at the bar usually kick off shortly after the competition ends. The competitions are hosted by whichever Doge is present and eager, typically in the order of Harle, Volto, Colet, and then Gatto if no one else is available. When Volto is announcing, lead each description block with:

"My Lochols, my Lochols! I now command your attention."

### Betting and Eating

Read or paraphrase the following as the eating contest begins:

The room grows quiet as three unassuming Lochols seat themselves at a bench near the kitchen. Their outfits are coordinated with one another with similar trinkets, but each reveler has their own unique color scheme: red, orange, and yellow. Their masks are all cut to reveal more of their corpse-blue mouths and jagged teeth.

The leading Doge heads to their table and calls everyone's attention. "We come to another daring food and drink contest. Angeem, Hyottone, and Malata are ready to feast! Will anyone join them?"

Angeem, Hyottone, and Malata are all **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) with a Constitution of 20 (+5). Angeem dons her red bolero, Hyottone has his orange bolo tie, and Malata wears her bright yellow choker collar.

No other Lochols come up to challenge the champions unless prompted by the adventurers. If that's the case, the master of ceremonies is surprised:

"Is that so? Dear Lochols, we have a new challenger in our wings! It remains to be seen if they will explode from this heated competition."

When the competitors are in, the emcee opens up bets. All bets in currency return double the wager, and bets made in items are returned, plus an item of similar value (of the GM's choice).

Adventurers can make a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check to get an idea of how well the champions are



going to perform. The result of the three Lochols ability checks are fixed for the competition. If a Lochol appears twice on the table below, it's because they have a special condition that affects their performance—and thus the fixed result of their check.

### LOCHOL CHAMPIONS

CHAMPION	CONDITION	SCORE	INSIGHT
Angeem	Harle is present	16	"Angeem is looking intently at Harle."
Angeem	Harle is not present	13	"Angeem keeps looking for someone in the crowd."
Hyottone	—	15	"Hyottone is raring to go!"
Malata	Roll 1d6; result of 4 or higher	17	"Malata has a huge smile, like it's her lucky day."
Malata	Roll 1d6; result of 3 or lower	14	"Malata is growling and pounding the table."

If Gatto is present, she asks a random adventurer which competitor she should bet on. She doesn't take it personally if the adventurer isn't sure. If the adventurer does make a suggestion, it becomes a serious matter.

When all bets are in, the emcee counts down. Large plates piled with rancid food and brimming goblets of sour wine are placed before each competitor, and the champions each ready their straws. On three, they slurp up as much food as they can as fast as they can in three minutes, while Lochols keep passing new plates in front of them.

Competitors other than the champions must make three Constitution checks and use the highest single score. If they roll a natural 1, subtract 5 from the highest score. On a natural 20, they add 5 to their highest score. The competitor with the highest single score wins. The emcee then bellows,

"We have our greatest consumptor on this day! You truly live and we all aspire. Thank you for competing."

The emcee hands the winner a fine prize of 100 gp, and pays out the prizes to the winning bets. The Doges develop opinions of the characters based on the results of the contest:

- Volto is eager to talk to the adventurers that bet on the winning competitor.
- Harle is excited by the bravery of any new competitor and wants to talk to them—or whoever sponsored a newcomer Lochol, if that character didn't participate personally.
- If Gatto was given the right competitor to bet on, she's incredibly thankful and wants to talk to the adventurer who suggested it. If she got it wrong, she shoots that character a dirty look and stalks off to prepare her revenge (see "Leaving the Grandmensa," later in this section).

## At the Bar

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters approach the bar, rather than the eating contest:

The bar is crowded with Lochols singing and sipping wine. It's a different kind of energy from the fervor surrounding the cafeteria tables; still loud, but almost melancholy and nostalgic.

Colet spends her time here when she's not announcing. If she's present, read:

At one scrap per glass, you can tell it's a decent price for vinegar. Colet prefers to pay with coins, however.

If an adventurer buys her a drink using coins, Colet is willing to chat with them privately. If the adventurer pays with scrap, they can still earn a chat, but only after learning a tune.

The Lochols stumble through three different songs on rotation. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check notice Colet humming along without joining in.

The adventurers can attempt to follow along with the slurred caroling of the Lochols by making a DC 11 Intelligence or Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, the character has advantage to sing the song next time. If they succeed by 5 or more at any time while Colet is present, she titters coquettishly and offers to properly teach them the song in private, and otherwise discuss their presence in the Locks (see "Private Talks," later in this section).

## DRINKING SONGS

d6	SONG
1-2	"Soulful souls soar swift; such sadness should see their freedom come 'round the bend; Lock three doors and through two windows their somber swim sees sunlight again."
3-4	"Come one and all and <i>sing</i> like you mean it; He's beckoning you to rise and shine; Douse the lights and <i>strike</i> all the matches; The sun tastes like his wine."
5-6	"Give an ear (over here?) and we'll pack up our lives for some tinsel and bone; Big Mask appears (never fear!); and we'll take back our lives and float off on our own."

## Ruffians

If the GM rolls a 15–20 when the adventurers arrived at the Grandemensa, tensions get high, and ruffians start to cause problems. You can roll for who's in the encounter, when they start their assault, and why on the following tables.

## WHO'S CAUSING TROUBLE?

d4	CREATURES
1	1d4 + 2 <b>wretched revelers</b> (see appendix A)
2	1d6 + 2 <b>maskless ghouls</b>
3	1 <b>ghoul</b> and 1 <b>flesh golem</b>
4	1 <b>gibbering mouth</b>

## WHEN DO THEY ARRIVE?

d6	EVENT
1-2	Before the competition
3-4	After the competition
5-6	As Lochols begin to leave

## WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	They continue to lose wagers and can't take it anymore.
3-4	The food or drink had a strange ingredient that boiled their blood.
5-6	A Doge has hired them to cause problems either for the adventurers or the other Doges.

Any present Doges don't immediately respond to or help with the ruffians unless the adventurers refuse to. Bad food is not to be trifled with outside of the Grandemensa. If any ruffians survive the encounter, the Doges send hirelings to finish the job after the event.

## Leaving the Grandemensa

Lochols start to leave on their own as the competition dies down, but the emcee makes a statement before taking off as well.

The Master of Ceremonies makes the end of today's competition official. "Leave with my blessing, Lochols! The eating and drinking competitions are over, and we will return tomorrow hungry to start again. Good hauls, everyone!"

Any Doges present leave separately from one another. If the adventurers incurred Gatto's wrath, if ruffians escaped the Grandemensa, or if the adventurers have bad blood with a Doge, their hirelings appear on the scene to rough up the offenders. A Doge doesn't take matters into their own hands unless the Locks Keys have already started changing hands.

## REVELER HIRELING GROUP\*

d4	CREATURES
1	1d4 + 1 <b>wretched revelers</b> (see appendix A)
2	2 <b>wretched revelers</b> and 1 cloaker
3	1 <b>wretched reveler</b> and 4 wights
4	1 <b>wretched reveler</b> and 1 flesh golem

\* Replace 1 reveler with one of the Doges if they choose to involve themselves.

## Private Talks

When a Doge invites an adventurer to chat, they take them to one of the ends of the room out of earshot of everyone. That said, other Doges can still see the conversations take place. They might not immediately interfere, but they take notice of who they're talking to and potentially bring it up in future conversations.

A Doge in private looks to chat over a covert operation, their greater plans, or to learn more about the adventurer. In turn, the adventurer can choose to work with the Doge, form an alliance, or issue a threat. The Doge's goals—along with their special game statistics, should the adventurers attack—are in appendix C.

Should the adventurer attempt to attack the Doge, 1d4 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) arrive to defend them.

## District of Lights

**Representative:** Doge Volto

**Typical Work:** None

**Inns:** None

**District Events:** Masquerade Balls

**Notable Sights:** The Key Ballroom

The District of Lights exists purely out of vanity. The finest scraps from the channels are built into the infrastructure of its buildings and streetlamps. Glass shard chimes dangle from nearly every tall surface. Even the Lochols visiting this district do their best to spruce up their outfits before taking a step onto its polished gravel streets.

## Masquerade Balls

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the District of Lights at night, and behold the exterior of the Key Ballroom.

You approach the crown jewel of the Lights District: a blood-red building festooned with billowing, tattered curtains and decorated skulls. It is surrounded by a crowd of Lochols dressed in vaguely formal outfits. Abandoned pieces of plate mail now serve as ridiculous headdresses and stiff petticoats, all to impress the rigid bouncers at the door and join the growing cacophony inside.

Late in the day, Lochols flock to the District of Lights for a chance to enter the Key Ballroom for the masquerade. Two **wretched reveler** bouncers (see appendix A) stand at the door to make sure only the most lavishly dressed individuals can enter. The party can attempt to appeal to the bouncers with a DC 17 group Charisma check, made with advantage for anyone who made an effort to dress up for the event. The party can also attempt to bribe the bouncers with scrap or other goods to lower the DC by 5.



## Acquiring Costumes

There is only one way into a masquerade ball in the Locks, and that is to have an outrageous costume. Doge Volto ensures that a tailor in his district is able to accommodate the needs of any who wish to attend—so long as they have the salvaged material to make it. Because characters need to recover salvage from the channels in order to create their own costumes, encourage the characters to attend the ball after having explored the channels throughout this episode. See “Foraging,” in the introduction of this episode.

Once a character has the requisite scrap, either from foraging in the channels or by trading or betting scrap in the Locks, they can exchange it here to create a costume. Costumes have different tones—and the Doges like and dislike certain tones at the masquerade.

### CREATING COSTUMES

COSTUME TONE	REQUIRED SCRAP
Symmetrical	2 cloth and 2 leather
Elegant	5 cloth
Striking	2 leather and 1 glass or stone
Scary	4 of flesh, glass, or metal in any combination
Plain	2 cloth and 1 wood
Feline	2 cloth, 1 wood, and 1 flesh
Gaudy	1 cloth and 3 glass or stone in any combination
Slapdash	3 of any scrap

## Key Ballroom

The bold exterior of the building gives way to a ghastly, exorbitant interior. The decor of the ballroom feels almost simultaneously antiquated and timeless, strewn together with different generations of shining armors, polished glasses, and bones from assorted creatures. The black and white marble dance floor is flanked on two sides by high-rise tables, and opposite the entrance is a small band of Lochol musicians performing haunting waltz melodies. And high above the floor loom eight balconies, each sculpted from the skull of a long-forgotten horror.

The ballroom stands a spacious 6,000 square feet, but quickly fills up with tables and costumed Lochols socializing like their idea of aristocrats would. The Doges have their own tables at separate ends of the room that sit empty when they aren't present. On the second floor of the ballroom are eight balconies made of bone, each with enough room for two people to have quiet conversations above the dance floor.

When the adventurers arrive at the ball, roll a d20. The masquerade will endure party crashers later on in the night on a 15–20, as detailed in “Party Crashers,” later in this section.

### Doge Appearance

All four Doges typically show up to the ball, but Gatto and Volto become engrossed in the ball's events. Gatto takes every opportunity to dance and revel. Volto takes it upon himself to loudly announce the start of an event at the top of each hour. Harle and Colet keep to themselves when they appear, making their rare participation a cherished event in the ballroom.

The first time the adventurers attend a ball, have all four Doges show up. Roll 1d4 for each Doge's appearance on subsequent visits, rerolling if no Doges would appear:

- Volto appears on a roll of 2–4.
- Gatto is always present when the characters are.
- Colet appears on a roll of 2–4.
- Harle appears on a roll of 2–4.

### Ballroom Gossip

Adventurers have a better chance of getting more information by asking Lochols to dance or helping to elevate their outfits, granting them advantage on their check to acquire gossip. They can usually acquire about five pieces of gossip before the night festivities get away from them.

To learn a piece of gossip, a character can spend 1 hour haunting a place with lots of Lochols, then make a special Charisma (Investigation) check. (See “Variant: Skills with Different Abilities” in the fifth edition core rules.) The result of the check determines how juicy the gossip they hear is; choose one item of gossip from the appropriate result below.

## Result of 0 to 4

- One night, Harle had a bad dance partner. They split his mask and destroyed him in the middle of the dance floor. They chose to dance by themself in the viscera for the rest of the night.
- Gatto always finds the best dancer on the floor and dances with them, even if they have a partner already. It gets loud and messy whenever she does this to one of the other Doges.

## Result of 5 to 9

- When Colet judges the costume contests, she votes for whomever has the most gold on their person. I've also heard she has winners mugged after the ball if they're covered in more gold than she is.
- Volto always asks the winner of the costume contest to dance with him for one song. It's the only time he dances. He's good at small talk, too.

## Result of 10 to 14

- You usually see party crashers at these balls. If no one deals with them, Harle does.
- When Harle dances, it's like a gladiator battle. They usually like to chat after a particularly rousing dance session, though I couldn't tell you what about.

## Result of 15 to 19

- I hear you can buy Colet's time with gold—though I wonder for how much gold she would sell her key? She'd probably get it back one way or another, wouldn't she?
- A Lochol once styled her costume like Gatto's kitty-cat costume for the contest. Gatto threw a fit when she didn't win, but boy did she love the look.

## Result of 20 to 24

- Volto keeps whispering about a “scaly bastard” to groups of Lochols. I never see or hear back from any of those Lochols again.
- The other night after Gatto left the ball early, Colet and Harle had one of the tensest dances with each other. It was like they were about to rip each other's masks off.

## Result of 25 or Higher

- Harle seems cold, but they get swept up in dramatic displays of passion. I only saw it once when Volto was giving a rousing speech. It was like they were a completely different person!
- I've heard Gatto's bauta contains her original soul. The ball must have been one of her favorite activities when she was alive, huh?

**COLET, DOGE OF GOLD**



## Ballroom Events

The events are hosted by whichever Doge is present and eager, typically in the order of Volto, Gatto, Colet, and then Harle if no one else is available. When Volto is announcing, lead each description block with:

"My Lochols, my Lochols! I now command your attention."

## Costume Contest

About an hour into the festivities, the call for the costume contest is held. Read or paraphrase the following:

The Master of Ceremonies stands in front of the band as their voice booms throughout the hall. "The costume contest is about to begin. Bring me your ten best dressed socialites, and we shall see who might be royalty this evening and who falls short."

Up to ten participants line up on the dance floor to be judged by the present Doges in front of the entire ballroom. The Lochols are slow to join the lineup but eventually fill in the remaining spaces if the adventurers don't participate.

The contest takes place over the course of three rounds. Each round, the participants must make a Charisma (Performance) check to determine their level of appeal. If there is a tie, the tied participants reroll amongst themselves to see who has the higher appeal level. The five lowest are eliminated in the first round, the three lowest in the second round, and the winner is selected in the final round.

Before participants are eliminated, the judges grant bonuses and penalties to the adventurers' appeal level based on their personal preferences and disposition:

- Volto favors symmetry and elegance (+3) and disdains outfits that feel slapdash and thrown together (-2).
- Harle likes striking, scary ensembles (+3), and hates elegant costumes (-2).
- Gatto especially likes costumes that look like her feline-inspired ensemble (+5) and dislikes plain outfits (-2).



- Colet only reacts to the gaudiest looks (+3), but despises looks that are gaudy and made from green scrap (-4).

Adventurers can attempt to increase their appeal by using magic or getting a particular judge's attention:

- If a participant dedicates their performance to one Doge in particular that Doge's bonus is doubled, but so are penalties from other Doges.
- If a participant uses what they know about a Doge to win their favor, such as intimidating Harle, impersonating Gatto, or bribing Colet, that judge's bonus is tripled.

When the winner is chosen, the emcee commands the room's attention once more:

"We have our winning costume! Tomorrow may see someone new, but tonight now belongs to you. Congratulations!"

The winner is met with applause and two random types of scrap from the Scrap Table (see "Foraging," earlier in this episode) by the judges. Volto asks the

victor to dance, although the other Doges might jump at the chance if they were appealed to during the contest.

## Dance Floor Is Open

At the top of the next hour, when the contest has cleared and Lochols have resumed their conversation at their tables, the dance floor is officially opened.

The band's music begins to rise in volume and tempo. The lighting focuses on the marble dance floor while the corners of the hall are blanketed in darkness. The Doge host stands in the center with outstretched arms. "The dance floor is now open. Embrace the music and revel with your movements. Revel in being alive!"

Over four dozen **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) rush to the dance floor and look for a dance partner. If the adventurers don't have their own dance partners, they are approached by Lochols they've interacted with during their time in the Locks.





This is a good opportunity to reintroduce characters from earlier adventures (such as Octavian, hiding in a Lochol's body on vacation from Dream Town, or one of the Dredgers that's been following the characters since escaping the Ditches), playing out quiet conversations and personal developments between dancers as they move and spin to the music.

When all adventurers choosing to dance make it onto the dancefloor, they must make a Charisma (Performance) or a special Dexterity (Performance) check. The present Doges then take to the dance floor seeking partners if they haven't chosen one already:

**Volto.** Doge Volto chooses the winner of the costume contest. He makes idle conversation with his partner, dismissing any questions about business matters until after their dance. He then invites them to a balcony.

**Gatto.** Doge Gatto seeks out the dancer with the highest Performance check. If no one scores above a 14 on their check, she grabs (in order of availability) Colet, Harle, the winner of the costume contest—or, finally, fuming, the door to leave the ball early. Gatto muses on how honored her partner must feel to dance with her, even while dancing with another Doge. Whoever she deigns to dance with, she takes to the balcony afterward.

**Colet.** Doge Colet either takes the richest looking adventurer or an opulently dressed reveler to the dance floor. If offered gold, she suggests

immediately leaving the dance floor to discuss business matters from a balcony.

**Harle.** Doge Harle takes the dancer with the lowest result on their Charisma (Performance) check as their partner—and then seeks out the dancer with the highest result to best them in a waltz battle. The battle consists of a best-of-three opposed Charisma (Performance) check between Harle and the best dancer. While Harle makes each of their rolls, Harle's partner must make a DC 10 Charisma or Dexterity (Performance) check. If their partner succeeds, Harle has advantage on their Performance check. If their partner fails the check, Harle also fails his.

**Besting Harle.** If Harle is defeated in the waltz battle, they invite the winner to chat from a balcony about dancing technique and how it applies to combat. However, if Harle's partner failed them all three times, they proceed to attack the poor dancer until they are stopped by another Doge or they take 10 hit points of damage. Harle immediately dismisses themselves from the ball afterward.

## Balcony Business

The balconies can be reached by taking a small staircase behind the band up to the second floor. A 10-foot walkway wraps around the building with eight thresholds leading out onto the individual balconies.

If a Doge invites an adventurer to a balcony, they have an opportunity to discuss a covert operation, or into detail about the plans they are currently working on. The adventurer can choose to work with the Doge, form an alliance, issue a threat, or keep them distracted and away from the dance floor. The doge's goals—along with their special game statistics, should the adventurers attack—are in appendix C.

Should the adventurer attempt to attack the Doge, 1d4 **wretched revelers** burst onto the small balcony to protect them. The other balconies are visible from one another. While the Doges won't immediately interfere with one another's private conversations, they will take notice of who they're talking to and potentially bring it up in future conversations.

## Party Crashers

If the GM rolled a 15–20 at the start of the ball, party crashers show up at some point during the night. You can roll for who's in the encounter, when they crash, and why on the following tables.

### WHO'S CRASHING?

d4	CREATURES
1	1d4 + 1 <b>rust monsters</b> and 1d4 + 1 <b>wretched revelers</b> (see appendix A)
2	1d4 + 2 <b>wretched revelers</b>
3	1 <b>wretched reveler</b> and 2d6 <b>shadows</b>
4	1 reveler with the statistics of a <b>wretched master of ceremonies</b> (see appendix A)

### WHEN DO THEY ARRIVE?

d6	EVENT
1-2	During the costume contest
3-4	While everyone is dancing
5-6	At the end of the masquerade

### WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	They wanted to prove they could get past the bouncers. The other party-goers are mortified by the disturbance.
3-4	They were actively seeking out the adventurers, having figured out their secret.
5-6	A Doge has hired them to cause problems either for the adventurers or the other Doges.

Any present Doges don't immediately respond to or help with the party crashers unless they are actively threatened. If the party crashers survive any intervention from the adventurers, the Doges wait until after the party to ensure they don't attend future events uninvited.



### ENDING THE PARTY

As the night draws to a close, the Master of Ceremonies gives their permission to the guests to leave. "Our masquerade has concluded its events. You may leave with my blessing, as we will continue our dance tomorrow evening. Good hauls, beautiful Lochols!"

The partygoers slowly start to leave after they get their fill of dancing. Now that a long day of partying has come to an end, the Doges return to the Lockworks separately from one another, but not without 1d4 **wretched reveler** guards (see appendix A) by each of their sides.

Depending on the evening's events, either the adventurers may be followed the Doge's revelers, assailed by reveler hirelings, or bear witness to the party crashers being ambushed by reveler hirelings. A Doge won't take matters into their own hands unless the Locks Keys have already started to change hands.

### REVELER HIRELING GROUP\*

d4	CREATURES
1	2d4 <b>wretched revelers</b> (see appendix A)
2	1 <b>wretched reveler</b> and 2 <b>cloakers</b>
3	2 <b>wretched revelers</b> and 3 <b>specters</b>
4	1 <b>wretched reveler</b> and 1 <b>flesh golem</b>

\* Replace 1 reveler with a Doge if they choose to get involved.

# The Lockworks and Inner Canal

**Representative:** Gatto

**Typical Work:** Soul Shucking, Locholization

**Inns:** None

**Lochol Activities:** Toil

**Notable Sights:** The Inner Canal, Ghoul Holding Area, the Center Ring

This district is less dense with buildings compared to other districts. There are no guards or bouncers here, the most important fixture of the Locks, but there is no need for any. The Lochols come here to get work done, quickly and quietly.

Being assigned to the Lockworks is considered both a punishment and an honor. There's no reveling here, but this job is what allows Lochols to revel in the first place. Soul shucking at the Inner Canal is at the core of all operations in the Locks, continuing in the footsteps of the Lochols' predecessors following the command of Kasimir Sundrinker.

Whenever the adventurers visit the Inner Canal, roll a d4. On a result of 4, the Doges are having a meeting at the Center Ring for the next hour.

## The Inner Canal

In the heart of the city is one unified waterway. All of the Locks' canals converge and diverge from this central waterway.

The water flowing from the upper channels and into the Locks eventually passes through the Inner Canal before sweeping out into the lower channels. This solid brass waterway stands out from the shoddy metals employed throughout the city. Its embankments are waist high with enough room for a row of Lochols on either side to reach into its waters and move debris around.

The canal is enchanted with powerful necromantic magic. Whenever a humanoid being in sunless lands of Ostoya dies, its soul is diverted from its natural course to Kasimir's necropolis by the power of his mysterious Unseen Sun. Most every soul—with the exception of the characters and others touched by a spark of sunlight—find their way into this waterway.

## Purpose of the Inner Canal

Lochols stationed along the canals shuck souls from their bodies, then clear corpses and detritus

from the inner canal and dump the remains into the Greater Locks Canal. It's unclear to the Lochols why both souls and physical bodies alike enter this false afterlife—certainly the bodies of the dead don't disappear from the world above! The unknown magic of the Necropolis must be hard at work to create a duplicate corpse within which the soul resides until it arrives in the Deep Rivers.

**Ghouls.** Whenever a corpse is fished out of the canal for shucking, the canal's personnel appraise the body. If it is mostly physically intact—that is, with only minor dismemberments; of which only a small percentage of the dead actually are—they place it in a holding cell in the north of the Lockworks (see "Ghoul Holding Area," below). Within a few hours, this body becomes animate with a ravenous, soulless hunger; it becomes a ghoul. Any bodies not sufficiently whole are discarded into the water, where they become shambling, dismembered ghouls.

**Bautas.** Souls become physically malleable while they move through the waterway.

A Lochol can grab a soul and shape it in their hands until it forms a bauta, the mask tightening and eventually taking a more rigid shape as it dries. Souls are the property of Kasimir, so bautas are only created as needed to maintain to Lochol population.

**Locholization.** The inhabitants of the Locks are created when soulless ghouls are outfitted with soul-bearing bautas in a process called Locholization. The Doges forbid any ghouls from being purposefully outfitted with bautas made from their own soul, as it provides them with clarity of mind that might prove dangerous to the Doges' hegemony.

## DESTROYING THE OPERATION

Any clogs or destruction to the adjacent canals can be repaired by the Lochols. If the adventurers want to shut it down, they must destroy the Inner Canal itself.

A 50-foot section of the Inner Canal's walls have an AC of 14, 200 hit points, a damage threshold of 20, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Destroying its walls collapses thousands of pounds of stone and debris into the canal, blocking its flow. The moment the canal takes any damage, any creatures wearing bautas within 1 mile of it are compelled to come to its aid. An adventurer wearing a bauta must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw to resist this compulsion for 1 minute.

When the canal is destroyed, it takes at least a week for the soul flow to weaken and its souls to regain their connection to their original destinations.



## Canal Personnel

On any given visit, there are  $2d4 + 2$  **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) in the process of soul shucking. They hardly do any reveling or gossiping while they work, as if entranced by the frothy waters. Occasionally, several workers are approached by another Lochol with instructions to create a new bauta for a ghoul in the holding area.

On either side of the canal is a steel staircase that leads up to the Center Ring, an elevated walkway that looks down at the waterway from its glass floor.

## Ghoul Holding Area

There is a squat stone structure in the north of the Lockworks. Creatures with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 13 or higher hear growling and shuffling inside its iron-barred windows. Peering into the window between the bars reveals  $4d4 + 4$  ravenous **ghouls** packed tightly inside, awaiting their turn to be Locholized. The bar sealing the door is sturdy but light, and only requires an action to lift and open.

When the canal workers receive orders to make a new bauta, at least two Lochols approach the building and carefully retrieve a ghoul without letting the rest out. The ghoul is affixed with the bauta and watched for 1 hour before becoming a new **wretched reveler** (see appendix A) ready to join the Locks.

## The Center Ring

The steel stairs lead up to a thick glass disk platform with a 30-foot radius, positioned directly above the inner canal.

This see-through platform is distinct, ornate, and a liability. The canal below gives you the feeling of standing on air. The outer edge of the glass disk is a clean, brass handrail, as if this structure was meant for a powerful visitor.

This viewing platform is meant for Kasimir Sundrinker whenever he chooses to visit; something that has not happened in a long time.



### A. The Locks

### B. The Greater Locks Canal

1. The Lichen Channel
2. The Flooded Channel
3. The Surging Channel
4. The Twisting Channel
5. The Misty Channel

In the meantime, the Doges use the Center Ring to discuss matters involving the city together. They don't congregate here unless all four Doges are available, choosing only to conduct matters on equal footing.

If a 4 was rolled when the adventurers arrived, the Doges are in the middle of a meeting with one **wretched reveler** per Doge attending them. Creatures that manage to sneak into earshot with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check can listen in on their conversation with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Their conversation is highly animated and loud, as if they were putting on a performance, but the subject matter is mundane so long as no keys have changed hands:

### DOGE DISCUSSIONS

d6	DISCUSSION
1	Adding more Lochols to the Locks
2	Appearances of the adventurers
3	City damage report
4	Creature attacks in the Locks
5	District event timing
6	Lockskirts timetables

As the adventurers start to collect keys, the Doges focus their discussions on the meddlers' exploits. They agree to work with one another (at least on the surface, for the Doges working with the adventurers in secret) and share their knowledge, but they take care not to discuss plans.

## Back into the Channels

Once the party reaches the Locks, they might be inclined to stay in the city for the majority of the adventure. It's possible to navigate the dramatic trappings and acquire the Locks Keys without venturing down the channels earlier than necessary. That said, the Deep Rivers provide a number of opportunities and resources for the adventurers that can significantly aid their operations.

### Reasons for Exploring the Deep Rivers

Why should a character explore down here? The reasons are multitudinous:

**Food.** The Lochols don't require fresh provisions. Any food in the Locks is usually spoiled, which might be a problem if the adventurers will be spending an extended period of time there.

**Scrap.** The denizens of the Locks value dress and presentation over nearly all other things. Lochols scour through the remains floating in the rivers for scraps to work into their costumes or to trade. In particular, having a bountiful supply of scrap helps win the Doges' favor at the nightly masked ball in the District of Lights.

**Information.** The Lochols like to talk and gossip while outside of the Locks, even when doing covert work for the Doges in the tunnels. If the Adventurers run out of leads, any channel can be a great place to turn to.

**Favor.** Attending to the needs of the Doges or other powerful figures may require investigating the rivers and solving their problems. The adventurers can leverage this for good favor or alliances in the greater struggle between Doges.

**Escape.** Eventually the Locks Keys present the right order of channels to navigate in order to escape their loop. The Deep Rivers call out to the adventurers one way or another.

## The Flooded Channel

The river becomes akin to a vast sea as it surges down these wide caverns. Its briny waters hide near endless depths. Coral reaches up to tear through the bottoms of poorly handled gondolas. It is a graveyard of corpses and boats where only the undead merrow thrive.

The Flooded Channel is a behemoth beyond anyone's control – entering into its domain puts one's fate into jeopardy. That said, it's impossible to navigate on foot, as the tunnel is filled with water. Boatswains must be smart about navigating the channel and anchoring their ships to survive the terrors of the deep. Thrill-seeking revelers nevertheless race their boats through this channel, gambling their unlivess on valuable scrap-work trophies for their abilities.

Hiding amid the coral is a submerged trove where the Doge of Blood, Harle, hides their key. Its exact location is a secret, but it's one Harle dares anyone strong enough to seek out.

## Flooded Channel Features

The Flooded Channel has the following features:

**Light.** The Flooded Channel sits in total darkness. Creatures must provide their own light sources to navigate these tunnels.

**Depths.** The river fills most of the channel, leaving 15 feet of headroom above the water. This channel is about a mile wide at most points, with depths ranging from 50 to 500 feet.

**Current.** The river's current is strong, pulling anything unanchored away from the Locks at a rate of 30 feet per round. Expeditions down the Flooded Channel can be a day shorter over the other channels. But camping while unmoored risks crashing vessels along the coral.

**Coral.** Beautiful, jagged coral growths protrude outward along the edges of the river's surface.

**Undead Fauna.** The creatures that thrive in the Flooded Channel all have the undead creature type instead of their original type.

## Flooded Channel Encounters

The two daily encounters in the Flooded Channel are in constant motion and threaten to capsize the adventurers' vessel at every turn. Roll on the following tables to determine the environmental conditions and creatures involved in the encounter.

### FLOODED CHANNEL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

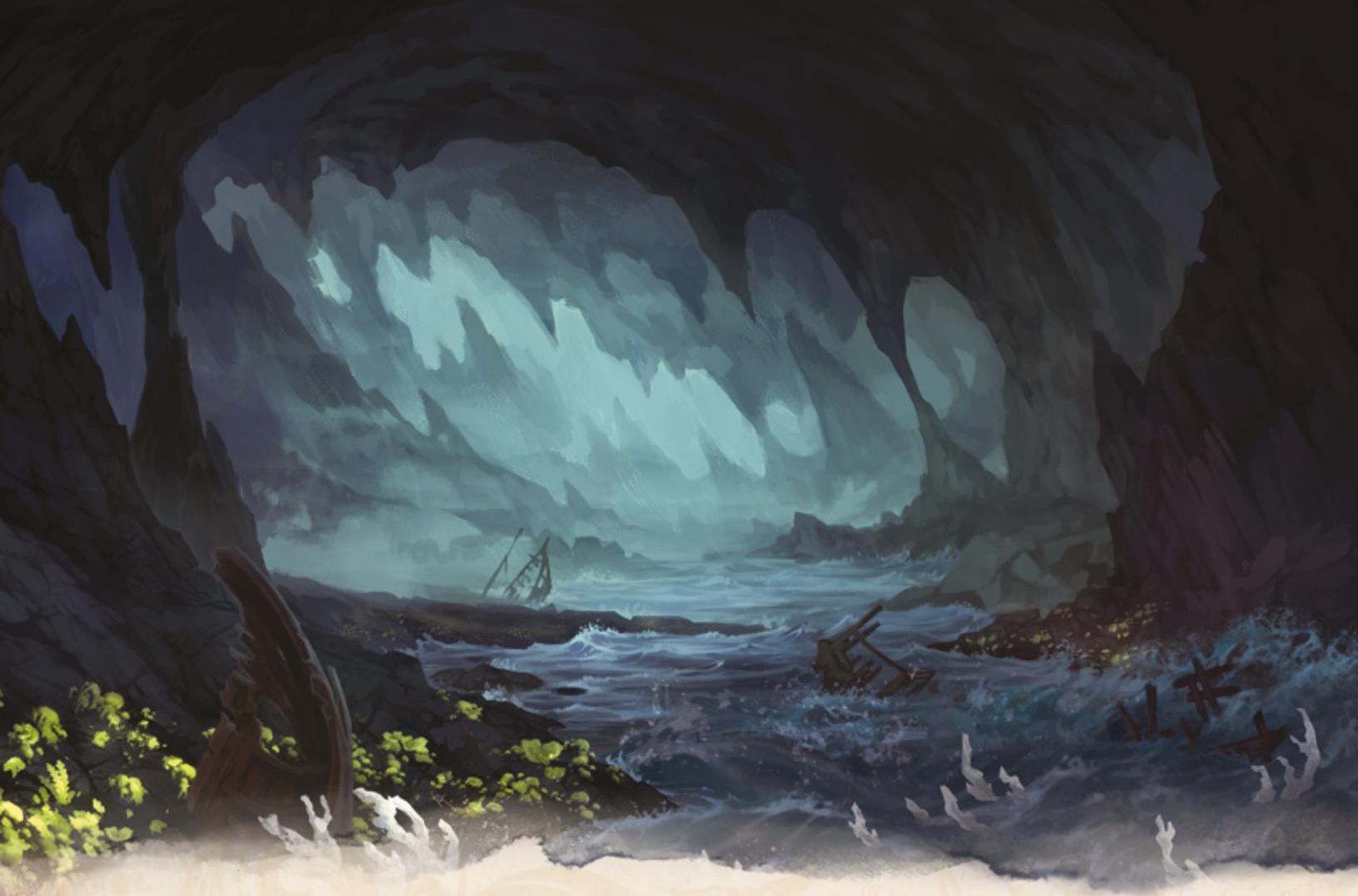
d20	CONDITION
1-7	No special conditions
8-10	Coral Shelf
11	Harle's Trove
12	Low Ceiling
13	Narrow Tunnel
14	Putrid Pools
15	Rushing Current
16	Soul Activity
17	Split Waters
18	Stalactites
19	Waterfall
20	Whirlpool

### Coral Shelf

Massive branches of coral jut out of the water like teeth, ready to rip apart anything floating near them. There are 1d3 coral shelves in this area.

To avoid running into the coral, the creatures on the boat must succeed on a DC 13 group Dexterity check to keep the ship safe (a **wretched driver** automatically succeeds on this check; see appendix A). A creature swimming on its own must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. A shelf deals 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage to a creature or vessel on a failure.

Alternatively, characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher spot the coral 1 round before they crash into it. In that time, they could be destroy it before crashing. A shelf has AC 12 and 15 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.



## Harle's Trove

The coral bows unnaturally in the water, almost forming an archway off to the side of the channel. Run the “Sunken Fight Club” featured encounter, later in this chapter.

## Low Ceiling

The headroom in this section of the channel shrinks to 2 feet above the water as the water flows higher in the cave.

A standard Locks gondola scrapes the ceiling with its edges as it floats down the river unimpeded. The characters automatically fail Dexterity (Stealth) checks in this area, and the gondola takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage when it finally emerges from this area.

Additionally, while in this area, Medium or larger creatures can't stand up and must crouch or swim.

## Narrow Tunnel

The channel gradually shrinks to 5 feet across here, causing large boats to squeeze awkwardly half-submerged to navigate the water.

A standard Locks gondola does not need to squeeze but scrapes along the walls and causes noise if not handled carefully. The creatures on the boat must succeed on a DC 13 group Dexterity check to avoid attracting any unwanted attention (a **wretched driver** automatically succeeds on this check; see appendix A).

On a failure, roll a second time on the Flooded Channel Creature Encounters as the noise is heard throughout the area.

## Putrid Tides

The waters here brim with old bodies and garbage. The current slows to a crawl, and boats cannot move ahead until the dam of a dozen humanoid cadavers are cleared. A creature that spends 10 minutes clearing the dam can make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, clearing the dam on a success.

On a failed check, the creature clearing the dam loses its footing and is pulled underwater, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall plus 7 (2d6) poison damage from the putrid water. The water has also changed to a sickly brown color. Creatures submerged in the water that aren't undead must make a successful DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

## Rushing Current

The waterflow is particularly violent in this segment of the channel. The speed of the current doubles to 60 feet per round.

Boats are jostled and rocked by the waters. The creatures on the boat must succeed on a DC 13 group Dexterity check to keep it steady (a **wretched driver** automatically succeeds on this check; see appendix A). On a failure, the boat takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage, and everyone on board must succeed on a DC 10 Strength or Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling overboard.

## Soul Activity

The river is suffused with wailing souls all throughout this stretch of tunnel. It's difficult to hear anything over their clamor. At the end of each hour while traveling along this tunnel, any creature that can hear the noise must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion. A creature wearing a bauta has advantage on this save.

## Split Waters

The water gently bows down the center of the channel. The 20-foot-wide center column is devoid of any water while the river maintains its usual height on both sides, forming awesome marine curtains 100 feet high.

The open riverbed is dry and sprinkled with heaps of damp corpses shattered and smeared along the rock, having fallen from the surface of the river above. The river curtains maintain their form despite anything breaching its exterior.

## Stalactites

The ceiling drips with tepid moisture, and huge stalactites have formed over the ages.

Any loud noise or impact might cause a stalactite to fall nearby. Creatures within 5 feet of a falling stalactite must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) piercing damage on a failed save. While riding in a boat, if all creatures succeed on their saving throw, the boat takes the damage in their stead (a **wretched driver** automatically succeeds on this saving throw; see appendix A).

## Waterfall

The tunnel splits off ahead, with a small portion of the river suddenly plunging 60 feet down in a roaring waterfall, while the rest continues along the main tunnel.

Any creature with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 13 or higher can hear the rapids up ahead. All creatures in the boat must succeed on a DC 15 group Strength (Athletics) check to help steer their craft toward the gentler side of the river (a **wretched driver** automatically succeeds on this check; see appendix A). A creature swimming on its own must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check to do the same.

All creatures (or groups of creatures) that fail tumble over the waterfall. Those creatures, and any vessel they're traveling in, must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

## Whirlpool

The river swirls into a raging whirlpool in this area, leaving only five feet of clearance on either side. The effect is similar to the Whirlpool option in the *control water* spell.

A creature can swim away from the vortex by making a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. When a creature enters the vortex for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and is caught in the vortex. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage, and isn't caught in the vortex. A creature caught in the vortex can use its action to try to swim away from the vortex as described above, but has disadvantage on the Strength (Athletics) check to do so.

The first time each turn that an object enters the vortex, the object takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage; this damage occurs each round it remains in the vortex.

## CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

d20	CREATURES
1-9	No creatures
10	Roper
11	Ghost Boat
12	Harle
13-15	Merrow
16	Quippers
17	Reef Sharks
18-20	Wretched Revelers

## Roper

Hiding on the ceiling of the channel is a **roper** mimicking a stalactite and waiting for travelers to pass beneath it. As the boat passes by, the upside-down roper uses its tendrils to snatch one of the characters from behind.



If the Tendril attack hits, it wraps the tendril around the target's mouth, stifling any cries of alarm. The grasping tendril then hoists the roper's prey up 40 feet up to the ceiling, where it can feast on its flesh.

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notice their companion hoisted out of the boat. If none of the characters notice in the moment, however, they only notice their ally's absence after 1d6 rounds—or when the character escapes the roper's grapple and can make noise again.

## Ghost Boat

A spectral gondola follows the adventurers. It appears to be a scarred, pitted boat with no gondolier or passengers.

This gondola is the wreckage of a Lochol that wiped out during a race. The Lochol's bauta is still affixed to the boat's seat, awakening it as an angry spirit.

The **ghost boat** (see appendix A) attempts to destroy other boats on the channel by ramming into them relentlessly. Its spirit cannot be calmed, and only promises to come back with a vengeance if it is destroyed but its bauta isn't removed.

## Harle

The adventurers come across Harle (see appendix C). This Doge is making their way to their hidden trove. The Doge is flanked by  $1d4 + 1$  **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) across two gondolas, while Harle chooses to swim; this Doge appears to be incredibly experienced with maintaining composure in the Flooded Channel's current.

Harle only offers the adventurers a nod and unless the adventurers established a close relationship with them. Otherwise, they offer a hint toward the location of their trove if the adventurers haven't found it yet and are up for the challenge. The next encounter the characters have in the Flooded Channel after receiving this hint is always Harle's Trove.

The adventurers are in no position to threaten Harle. At the first sign of hostility, the Doge and their minions destroy the party's boats and leave them for dead in the Channel.

## Merrow

$1d4 + 1$  undead **merrow** hunt for prey nearby. If Harle is in the area, the merrow follow their orders. These merrow once inhabited the saltwater channels that led from the ancient, buried Necropolis to the sea.

Over time, they succumbed to death and despair, like the rest of the ancient civilization which made up these ruins. Even in death, they are too stubborn to leave.

## Quippers

A ravenous school of  $5d10 + 5$  undead **quippers** feast upon the fetid flesh in the water, but quickly turn their attention to fresher flesh floating nearby. The quippers jump out of the water and attack with no sense of self preservation. Hunger alone drives them to pounce.

## Reef Sharks

The adventurers encounter  $2d8$  undead **reef sharks** circling the coral near the surface. They strike at anything that comes within 10 feet of their homes.

The sharks pursue any creature reduced to half its hit point maximum throughout the channel until it's killed, or healed above half its hit point maximum.

## Wretched Revelers

A group of  $1d3 + 1$  **wretched drivers**, each ferrying  $1d3 - 1$  **wretched revelers** (see appendix A for both) sail down the channel in heated races with one another. If there's no environmental condition in their way, they barrel through. All creatures on a boat when they rush past must succeed on a DC 16 group Dexterity check to avoid getting hit by the racers (a **wretched driver** automatically succeeds on this check). A creature swimming on its own must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. The speeding gondola deals 14 ( $4d6$ ) bludgeoning damage to a creature or vessel on a failure.

These Lochols ignore fellow bauta-wearers, but attack the adventurers if anyone in the party isn't wearing a mask.

# Flooded Channel Featured Encounter

The Sunken Fight Club encounter can occur when the adventurers come across Harle's trove in the Flooded Channel. This encounter is a means of acquiring a Locks Key if the adventurers are up for the challenge.

## Sunken Fight Club

Creatures with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher notice the underwater archway built into the coral. The current here is slow and shouldn't present too many problems to creatures diving in to investigate.

Through the threshold is a short, rocky tunnel that forks into two distinct paths. Both paths curve upward, and then open up into pools of water on the east and west sides of a cavern in an air pocket above the waters of the Flooded Channel.

You burst through the surface of the water and find yourself in a cave more akin to an arena than a natural cavern. Ornamental skulls adorning rocky, bloody walls.

On one end of the cave is a large woven mat decorated with an image of crossed blades. The mat is stained with countless blood spatters. Upon the mat, several sickly merrow have prostrated themselves before a squat, many-armed creature with craggy skin. On the other end is a throne of bones, looming imperiously over the combatants.

If the adventurers didn't see or run into Harle on their way into this trove, the Doge is here:

Looking down at you from the throne is the Doge of Blood. Their masked chin rests upon their knuckles as they think of a way to address your arrival.

## Throne of Bones and Scrap Heap

The ceilings of this strange throne room are 20 feet high, disappearing into shadows as the only illumination comes from two brass braziers glowing with eerie violet flame.

A throne made of carved bones stands atop a three-tiered structure of stone—and all three tiers are covered with hoarded scrap. (Characters can forage for scrap here a total of 25 times before the hoard is exhausted; see "Foraging," earlier in this episode.)

If Harle isn't present, or the Doge has a bad disposition toward the adventurers, Harle points a finger towards the intruders and grimly intones a command: the three **merrow** and the **xorn** upon the battle mat are to attack the interlopers. If Harle has no grudge against the characters, then they are actually pleasantly surprised when the adventurers arrive.

The Doge holds their Locks Key in their hand and offers the adventurers a challenge if they wish to leave the Locks and return to the surface: take on gauntlet of creatures and survive to receive Harle's Locks Key, no questions asked. They must face three encounters with only an hour of rest in-between each.



If the adventurers decline, Harle shoos them away. If they accept, the xorn walks to the other end of the room and the merrow approach.

**Round 1.** The three **merrow** try to grapple characters and drag them to the water. If they can get a creature into the water, they do what they can to trap them there and force their allies to follow.

**Round 2.** The **xorn** weaves in and out of the walls of the cavern to protect itself and sneak up on the adventurers. If its assault gets too close to Harle, the Doge takes a reaction to attack the xorn and tell it to stay focused.

**Round 3.** Harle (see appendix C) challenges the adventurers themselves. If the party can half his hit point maximum, Harle concedes, having seen everything they need to from the battle. If the party continues their assault after that, Harle furiously counterattacks and fights until their doom.

## Development

Harle is true to their word and gives the adventurers their Locks Key, making it clear that their engagement here is to be kept a secret. The Doge of Blood is willing to work with the adventurers to escape the Locks as long as they escape along with them. If they suspect that the party will go against their wishes,

then Harle waits until they return to the Locks, and then summons a hoard of 4d10 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) to come after the party and get the key back.

For now, the Doge of Blood takes this time to revel in the damage and blood spray throughout the room, allowing the adventurers to leave.

## The Surging Channel

The air visibly ripples and bends around the waves of heat escaping the vents of these tunnels. Its waters run from warm to scalding and pool into tiny hot springs across its length. Sudden bursts of steam threaten to erupt at every turn, challenging the channel's inhabitants to soak for even a minute longer.

The Surging Channel's river is said to have minor healing properties. Revelers escape to these caverns and relax their decaying bodies for hours. The risk of being ambushed by natural predators or blown away by a steam burst is worth it. After all, any harm can be undone with a few more hours of soaking, right?

Some revelers have lingered in the Surging Channel for years, no longer able to leave without completely falling apart. They've been hanging on to secrets most people in the Locks seem to have forgotten.

## Surging Channel Features

The Surging Channel has the following features:

**Light.** The Surging Channel is nearly pitch black, save for the dens of **giant fire beetles** burrowed into the bends of the tunnels.

**Ceiling.** The ceiling is 15 feet high in most places, extending upward to 20 feet where the tunnels open up into hot spring chambers.

**Ground.** The terrain is dry and craggy. Tiny vents endlessly hiss with puffs of hot air. If a 5-foot square section of ground is damaged, any creatures touching that area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 2d12 fire damage from the escaping steam.

**River.** The river runs relatively fast and deep between its springs. The temperature of the water varies between a healing warm to a threatening hot. The water temperature and effects are rolled alongside the daily encounters.

**Heat.** While out of the water, the heat throughout the channel is uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous. Before each encounter, creatures not submerged in water must succeed on a DC 8 Constitution saving throw or take one level of exhaustion. Creatures wearing heavy armor also have disadvantage on this saving throw, while creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage have advantage.

## Surging Channel Encounters

The two daily encounters on the Surging Channel can be anything from an easygoing, drawn-out engagement to a spontaneous disaster. Roll on the following tables to determine the environmental conditions and creatures involved in the encounter.

Unless otherwise noted in an area's description, the water in this channel is scalding hot. A creature that enters the water for the first time on a turn, or starts its turn in the water, takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

d20	CONDITION
1-9	No special conditions
10	Combusting Bodies
11	Dragon Turtle
12	Heat Wave
13-14	Hot Spring
15	Lights?
16	Narrow Tunnel
17	Seismic Chaos
18	Soul Activity
19	Steam Vents
20	Surging Waters



### Combusting Bodies

Jets of flame erupting from fissures in the ground have caused corpses that have washed onto the shore to catch fire. The flaming piles take up the dry land on both sides of the river. The air above them swirls with a terrible smelling smoke cloud.

Creatures attempting to move through the flaming bodies must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failure or half as much on a success.

The clouds of smoke linger 8 feet off the ground and reach to the ceiling. A creature that is completely within the smoke cloud at the start of its turn must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature spends its action that turn coughing and tearing up. Creatures that don't need to breathe or are immune to poison automatically succeed on this saving throw.

### Dragon Turtle

The 20-foot-wide river deepens to 30 feet down, enough room for an old **dragon turtle** to soak just beneath the surface. The water here is scalding, heated to a most pleasing temperature for the turtle.

The dragon turtle doesn't move much other than occasionally shifting to scratch its side. However, if it detects too much commotion in its vicinity, it shoots its Steam Breath directly up out of the water, hoping to shock troublemakers into submission. It only attacks the creatures nearest to it if intruders refuse to stop fighting.

## Heat Wave

The heat grows particularly oppressive in waves throughout this mile of the channel. Until a new environmental effect is rolled, any creature in physical contact with a metal object takes 9 (2d8) fire damage.

If a creature is holding or wearing the object and takes the damage from it, the creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or drop the object if it can. If it doesn't drop the object, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the start of its next turn.

## Hot Spring

In an offshoot from the river, the characters find an elevated cavern containing a wide, round pool; a hot spring nearly 60 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep. The water temperature cools from scalding to a hot, but pleasant, temperature. These waters have healing properties, and a character regains 1 hit points for every minute they spend in it. A character can regain up to 50 hit points per day in this channel's hot springs.

If this is the first time the adventurers arrive here or an odd numbered subsequent visit, run the "Spring Talk" featured encounter, later in this chapter.

## Lights?

Up ahead, creatures spot what appears to be beams of sunlight shining down through racks in the tunnel's ceiling, some 30 feet above. A vibrant blue sky stares down through the crevices at anyone who looks up. This phenomenon is confounding for any local inhabitants.

Anyone who makes a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check can tell that this is a magical illusion, almost like a mirage in the desert. A DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check could also reason that there's no way this tunnel runs that close to the surface.

If a creature does make it up to the cracks in the ceiling, it is suddenly blasted by steam. It must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) fire damage and get knocked prone. The illusion fades away shortly afterward.

## Narrow Tunnel

The channel shrinks to 10 feet across, with no riverbank. The water is 5 feet deep, and the ceiling closes in at 10 feet high throughout.

Dotting the ceiling here are stalactites that appear visibly hot to the touch. A creature that touches the spire takes 2 (1d4) fire damage.

## Seismic Chaos

Without warning, the earth heaves. Water surges, and spines of stone suddenly burst up through the river or out from the sides of the tunnel. All characters in a boat or on the banks must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failure, as they are splashed with scalding water. If this save fails by 5 or more, they fall into the water, taking this damage every turn until they can escape the water.

The cave is nearly segmented by the time the movement stops, creating a fence of stone nearly 20 feet high that blocks the characters from continuing down the river. The ground is considered difficult terrain until the next time you roll on the Flooded Channel Environment table.

## Soul Activity

The river is suffused with wailing souls all throughout this stretch of tunnel. It's difficult to hear anything over their clamor. At the end of each hour while traveling along this tunnel, any creature that can hear the noise must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion. A creature wearing a bauta has advantage on this save.

## Steam Vents

The surrounding terrain rumbles and hisses. If combat occurs in this area, roll 1d6 at the end of each creature's turn. On a roll of 5 or 6, a steam vent bursts open near it, spraying it with scalding steam. That creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

## Surging Waters

The river floods with scalding water. The cavern here is 20 feet tall and the water rises to just under 15 feet. A surge lasts for 20 minutes.

Corpses and other debris bob on the water's surface, serving as temporary flotation devices until the water returns to its regular level.

## CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

d20	CREATURES
1-9	No creatures
10	Gibbering Mouthers
11-13	Masked Skeletons
14	Melting Gelatinous Cubes
15	Otyugh
16	Roper
17-20	Wretched Revelers

### Gibbering Mouthers

The adventurers come across 1d4 **gibbering mouthers**, melted amalgams of ghouls and bautas that have soaked in the water for too long. They appear to be attempting to have a conversation with one another (or with itself if there is only one). It does not appear to be going well.

Creatures wearing bautas are invisible to these gibbering mouthers.

### Masked Skeletons

The adventurers see a **heletros** (see appendix A) dancing for a crowd of two dozen cheering **skeletons**. These skeletons wear scavenged bautas, and possess clarity of thought and free will so long as they wear these soul-masks. When the dancing stops—or if the dancing is interrupted—the skeletons become hostile toward anyone they believe will utilize them as tools again.

If the characters find this encounter again, they find the crowd of skeletons lounging contentedly in the river.

### Melting Gelatinous Cubes

The adventurers are very slowly stalked by 1d4 **gelatinous cubes** struggling to maintain their shape. They leave a trail of ooze along the riverbank as they melt. A creature that ends its turn in this ooze trail must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) acid damage.

### Otyugh

An **otyugh** hides within a 20-foot-wide by 30-foot-long floating island of scrap and humanoid remains, cheerfully devouring the decaying waste while also waiting to ambush new prey. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher notices the refuse pile quivering and shaking, and a yellowish otyugh tentacle sticking out of it.

### Roper

A **roper** looms on the ceiling opposite the water. It attempts to dunk its victims into the water if the temperature is scalding, or it otherwise attempts to drown them.

Its tentacles appear to have several bautas loosely hanging from them, most likely from previous prey.

### Wretched Revelers

1d4+1 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) can be found in the Surging Channel for a variety of reasons. Roll a d6 or select one of the following motives.

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	The revelers were looking for a place to soak away from the Locks.
3-4	The revelers are collecting junk to trade for more outfit decor.
5	The revelers are looking for Donalo Rattles to trade secrets. He should be soaking in one of the channel's hot springs (see "Spring Talk," below).
6	The revelers were tasked by Doge Harle to find revelers who haven't been back to the Locks in a long time.





These revelers immediately attack the adventurers if they aren't wearing masks and realize they are alive. Otherwise, they converse cordially until they suspect something is off.

## Surging Channel Featured Encounter

The Spring Talk encounter can occur when the adventurers come across a hot spring in the Surging Channel, or as the GM sees fit. This encounter provides an extra opportunity to collect gossip on the Doges.

### Spring Talk

The adventurers come across a populated hot spring. 1d4 + 3 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) relax in the waters. They're all convening around an older reveler missing half his flesh.

This is Donalo Rattles, a Lochol information broker who has thrived in the Surging Channel for years. He has Lochols who carry him between hot springs and protect him, and he returns the favor in kind. Donalo usually has the disposition of a funny uncle, but immediately turns cold at the first sign of betrayal.

Donalo Rattles uses **wretched master of ceremonies** statistics (see appendix A), except his speed is reduced to 0 feet; he can only move by being borne on the back of one or more of his attendants.

If this is the first time the adventurers are encountering Donalo, he makes himself perfectly clear:

The masked ghoul outstretches both his arms toward you, flesh barely clinging to the bone. "Good morn, good evening, good when-ever-time-it-may-be, my friends! You'll find nothing but hospitality with Donalo, secrets with Donalo, family with Donalo!" he exclaims. "Share your secrets with Donalo, and Donalo will share his world with you. The bigger the secret, the happier you will make Donalo, and a happy Donalo is a generous one, eh?"

The drippy Lochol is asking for a deep secret from each character, something that might surprise their own compatriots. If the character has no such secrets of their own, Donalo also accepts big secrets they've learned about other important figureheads such as the Doges or someone from Nov Ostoya.

His revelers stand and prepare themselves for their visitors' response. None are concerned about bautas or time sensitive matters; if the adventurers don't pay the toll, they don't get to stay here with Donalo.

If the adventurers do share their secrets, they are welcomed into the hot spring to relax and soak as long as they please. The revelers continue their previous conversations with Donalo loudly, allowing anyone to contribute as they see an opening.

### Hot Springs Gossip

Four pieces of information are being discussed amongst the revelers. If a character brings up a new fact about a Doge that occurred within the last week, that character can roll for one additional piece of information.

#### Result of 0 to 4

- It's incredible that the Doges are all trying to leave the Locks and think no one else has noticed.
- Have you ever wondered how easy it would be to impersonate a Doge? Wear the right things on your bauta and you could get away with whatever you wanted.

#### Result of 5 to 9

- None of the Doges like Donalo. Volto in particular is just jealous of his information network.
- Harle keeps sending Lochols to turn in Donalo, but they all find out it's much better to be a part of Donalo's family.

## Result of 10 to 14

- Gatto would never admit that she's soaked here with us. We've been nothing but hospitable!
- Not a lot of coin money finds its way down here. When it does, most Lochols just wear them in their costumes. That must be so hard for Colet.

## Result of 15 to 19

- Harle keeps showing up to events completely soaked. I've never seen them take a dip in the springs, so what's up with that?
- Someone said they've spotted Colet talking to someone in the Twisting Channel a few weeks ago. It's not the first time I've heard that.

## Result of 20 to 24

- They say there's a fossil of a whole city fossil hiding near the Misty Channel. There must be plenty of goods to rummage through in there if you can survive it.
- Volto only needs two keys, doesn't he? That guy could negotiate for the world and give nothing in return.

## Result of 25 or Higher

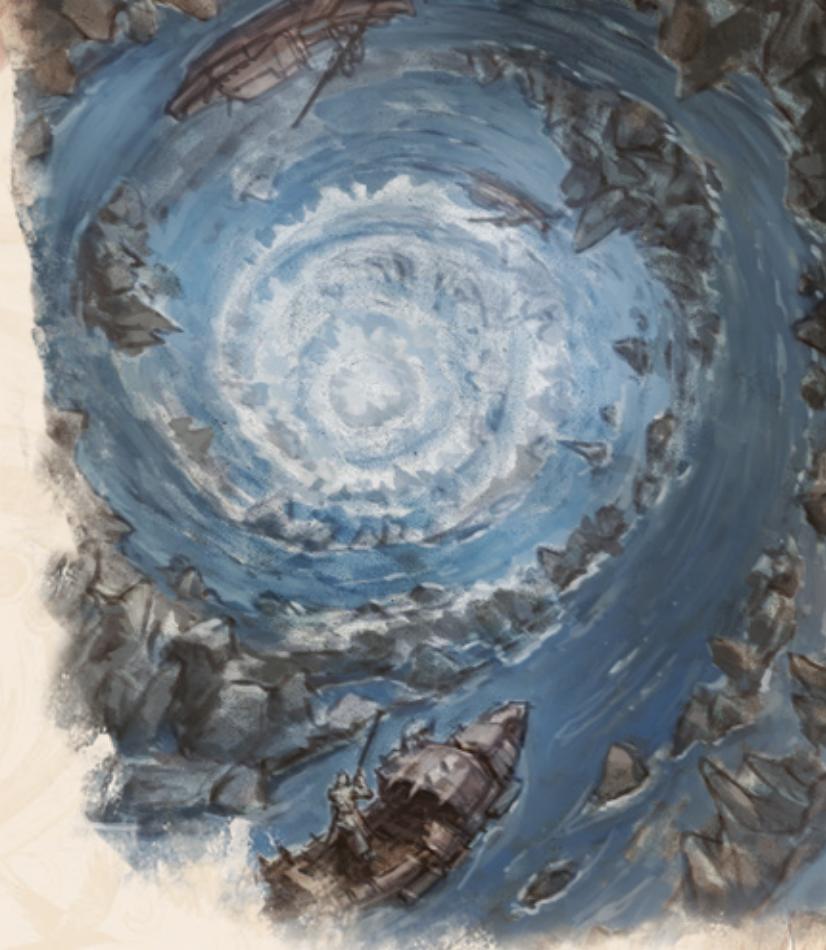
- Harle and Colet tried to escape the Locks before, and no one says a word about it.
- As I understand it, those Locks Keys make a specific path through the channels that ignores the loop. "To unlock the Locks, they lock the unneeded stops!" Uh, whatever that means.

# The Twisting Channel

This cavern stands defiant against the reality it exists in. The river and its banks crawl up the walls and down the channel in a seemingly endless corkscrew. Stalactites change to stalagmites and back again, stippling the cave with their purple, green, and blue salts.

The Twisting Channel is suffused with incredible amounts of arcane magic collected in its river for decades. Its shape constantly changes, and unlike the other channels, the time it takes to travel through it is unpredictable. Creatures must watch their every step or risk an endless fall out of reality as they know it.

The excitement of the channel attracts the foolhardiest of revelers. They know full well the dangers of magic cast in these caverns and hope to find the opportunity to liven up their facsimiles of life.



## Twisting Channel Features

The Twisting Channel has the following features:

**Light.** The Twisting Channel is the brightest section of the Deep Rivers. Its rock is illuminated by dim, cool-colored light. Souls from the river that touch the ground take on their own warm tints as well.

**Ceiling and Ground.** The terrain is rocky and jagged, providing plenty of cover from predators. The two planes are approximately 30 feet apart, their jagged stalactites and stalagmites threatening to bite anyone who falls upward.

**Gravity.** The gravity of the Twisting Channel is relative to the surface of the river. As the river twists "up the wall," the plane of ground adjacent to the river becomes the new floor. If an object or creature moves 15 feet away from its floor, it gets pulled down by the gravity of the opposite plane.

**River.** Unless otherwise specified, the river twists clockwise around the tunnel downstream and counterclockwise upstream. Its flow is relatively fast. A creature that ends its turn in the water must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pulled 15 feet downstream.

**Weird.** Wisps of magic streak like ribbons along the river. Whenever a spell 1st level or higher is cast in this channel, roll a d4. On a 4, the caster and creatures within a 15-foot radius of it are subjected to the *color spray* spell, cast at 3rd level.

## Twisting Channel Encounters

As in other channels, the characters have two random encounters while traveling in this channel: one when they enter it, and another when they emerge from it—with additional encounters occurring whenever they make camp and rest.

Roll on the Environmental Conditions table below to determine the environmental conditions and creatures involved in each encounter.

### Bottomless Void

The “ceiling” opposite the river fades away, revealing a starry, empty void that appears to extend endlessly. Any loose object or creature that passes the gravity threshold falls up into this bottomless pit and quickly fades out of sight.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

d20	CONDITION
1-7	No special conditions
8-9	Bottomless Void
10	Gravity Well
11	Free Floating Water
12	Hag Tracks
13	Living Cavern
14-15	Magic Buildup
16	Silence
17	Soul Activity
18	Squeeze
19	Stalactites/Stalagmites
20	Vanishing River

Anything that falls into a bottomless pit from a previous encounter reappears and falls out of the pit during this encounter. The falling body and anything underneath it take 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage upon landing. If a character falls into a bottomless pit, consider running an additional encounter in the day with another bottomless pit they can fall out of.

If all of the characters fall in, they tumble through the void for an indeterminate amount of time before tumbling out again into the river, elsewhere in this channel. Roll for another creature encounter when they emerge, also with this environmental condition.

### Gravity Well

A massive pillar of salt stretches through the river, between the “top” and “bottom” the channel. The pillar is imposing with its 15-foot diameter barely leaving half the tunnel unobstructed. Its surface is

smooth and densely packed due to the sheer force of its gravitational pull. Streams of the river split and wrap around the pillar in thick bands.

Unanchored creatures and objects that come within 30 feet of the pillar are immediately pulled toward its surface. Creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw to both avoid falling prone on impact and to get up from being prone while pulled by the pillar.

The salt pillar has an AC of 14 and 40 hit points. Its gravitational pull disappears when it is destroyed.

### Free Floating Water

The water and remains in the river lift out of its banks and freely floats in midair, irrespective of either plane's gravitational pull. This loose tube of water has a 15-foot diameter and wobbles down the channel for the next mile.

The bed of the river where the water originally ran is damp and soft with glints of treasure and scrap throughout it. Creatures can dig for potential treasures using a Wisdom (Survival) check. On a result of 10-19, the creature finds a random form of scrap from the Scrap Table (see “Foraging,” earlier in this episode). On a result 20 or higher, the creature finds a brilliant peridot worth 100 gp. After digging for treasure five times, this secret stash is depleted.

### Hag Tracks

The cavern is damaged in this area in a notable way as if there was a large quarrel. It's difficult to determine if this is one of many battle sites, the same battle site being echoed throughout the channel, if it happened recently, years ago, or if it hasn't happened yet.

Each instance the adventurers come across this encounter, they can find a new piece of evidence with a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check. With two or more pieces of evidence, it's clear that it comes from the same source.

d6	EVIDENCE
1	Long strands of white hair are draped along large claw marks in the rock
2	Dried blue blood and chunks of gooey flesh coat the top portion of a stalagmite
3	A humanoid eyeball, sliced across its pupil, lies in a crater
4	A small curtain of clouds lingers in place just above the ground with faint sounds of screaming emanating from it
5	A tattered bauta that appears to be melting into blue goo floats in the river
6	A streak of green magic frozen in midair can be identified as a <i>ray of sickness</i> spell with a DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check

## Living Cavern

A Huge-sized portion of the tunnel opens up into a gaping maw, muttering to itself in a low, grumbling voice. Smoke billows endlessly from its mouth. When creatures come within 30 feet of it, it goads the creatures into entering its mouth for treasure in an attempt to eat them.

This section of the Twisting Channel is alive and speaks for the entire tunnel. It is willing to answer questions for anyone that feeds it flesh, though it does not know any names or have a concept of time.

The living cavern has blindsight out to 50 feet and can cast the *move earth* spell at will. It attempts to bite anything that comes within 5 feet of it, with a +2 bonus to hit, dealing 45 (10d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage on a hit. About 15 feet deep into its mouth is an eversmoking bottle.

## Magical Buildup

Thick clouds of multicolored magical weird blanket the area. These clouds are approximately 15 feet in diameter and float 1 foot above either plane; there are 1d4 clouds in this area.

Each cloud has the properties of a spell, corresponding to the cloud's color. Creatures that enter the cloud's area or start their turn there are subjected to its effects. The DC for any saving throw is 14, and the spells are effectively cast at their lowest level.

d6	CLOUD COLOR	SPELL
1	Red	<i>Slow</i>
2	Orange	<i>Fear</i> (the cloud is the source of the fear)
3	Yellow	<i>Calm emotions</i>
4	Green	<i>Faerie fire</i>
5	Blue	<i>Cloud of daggers</i>
6	Purple	<i>Spirit guardians</i> (GM's choice of good or evil)

## Silence

As creatures travel deeper into this section of the channel, all sound and color slowly drains away. It is stark silent, and any sound created in this area is inaudible. Everything in the landscape appears in varying shades of gray and flickers as though the creature looking around was repeatedly blinking.

Any creature or object in this area is immune to thunder damage, and creatures are deafened while inside it. Casting a spell that includes a verbal component is impossible there.



## Soul Activity

The river is suffused with wailing souls all throughout this stretch of tunnel. It's difficult to hear anything over their clamor. At the end of each hour while traveling along this tunnel, any creature that can hear the noise must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion. A creature wearing a bauta has advantage on this save.

## Squeeze

The tunnel shrinks smaller and smaller until its "top" and "bottom" planes are 10 feet apart. Large-sized objects and debris spin in midair, caught between the two gravitational pulls.

Creatures with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher notice that some of the corpses in the water here appear noticeably smaller. Objects and creatures that touch the water must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be subjected to the effects of the 'Reduce' option of the *enlarge/reduce* spell until the end of the next encounter or the end of a long rest.

## Stalactites/Stalagmites

The stalactites and stalagmites here appear to be stuck in a deadly loop. They rapidly form, break off, and crash into the opposite plane. Rubble covers the floor of the cavern and floats among the debris in the river, rendering the entire landscape into difficult terrain.

The spires fall at regular intervals, usually at once per round. Creatures within a 5 feet of a crashing spire must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

## Vanishing River

The river effectively stops. It appears to flow into nothing, leaving ahead an untouched stretch of cavern floor.

The river is just under the surface around this entire section of the channel. A creature can hear running water when they place an ear to the ground on either plane. If the ground is broken about 3 feet down, water rushes out in a geyser, cracking the stone away and erupting to its full size.

Anyone or anything in the way must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or take 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage and fall prone 20 feet away.

## CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

d20	CREATURES
1-9	No creatures
10-11	Animated Objects
12	Chuul
13	Colet
14	Ghosts
15	Phase Spiders
16-17	Ranalunes
18	Shadows
19-20	Wretched Revelers

## Animated Objects

A hoard of  $1d6 + 2$  **animated armors** and  $1d8 + 2$  **flying swords** arise from a pile of scrap and corpses when a creature steps onto the riverbank in this area. They appear to be propelled by magic, but if a Doge or an older Lochol is nearby, the ghouls recognize the phenomena being similar to bautas and their construction.

If the adventurers run into this encounter three or more times, the animated weaponry are joined by an tormented **wight** with a fragmented soul still trying to cling to the Material Plane.

## Chuul

The adventurers encounter a **chuul** stalking this section of the channel. It's either looking for a meal or a magic item, and strikes wherever it finds either. When it gets what it's looking for, the chuul slinks into the river and continues its hunt elsewhere.

## Colet

The adventurers come across Colet searching for Miss Mae Mae the **night hag** if she hasn't been found yet (see the "Missing Miss Mae Mae" featured encounter in the Misty Channel, later in this chapter). The Doge is flanked by  $1d4 + 3$  **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) or an assortment of the other Doges' minions.

Colet isn't forthcoming about her business in the channel unless the adventurers established a relationship with her in the Locks, or she is paid at least 100 gp for her time. Creatures that succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell she's worried about something; if pressed regarding her worry, she outright demands compensation for her explanation.

If Miss Mae Mae was found, Colet is visiting her in this channel to have her crown reenchanted in secret. Colet is willing to work out a deal with the adventurers if she is blackmailed about it.

## Ghosts

A group of  $1d2 + 1$  **ghosts** are trying to find their way out of this channel. Their souls would be at rest anywhere else except the Twisting Channel. They are unaware that their ghastly forms have bound their souls to the Twisting Channel, and they cannot leave. The ghosts become enraged and attack anyone who points this fact out to them.

## Phase Spiders

The adventurers encounter  $1d4 + 2$  **phase spiders** building a nest of webs across the Material and the Ethereal Planes. The webbings stretch through the cave walls and into the river without tearing. Loose remnants of corpses dangle on silk threads, almost appearing to struggle to break free.

If a creature makes contact with their webs, the spiders attack. They don't travel farther than the web unless it is destroyed.

## Ranalunes

A family of  $1d6 + 2$  **ranalunes** (see appendix A) are starkly quiet regardless of the time of day. The adventurers see the frogs struggling against a predator they cannot handle.



If the ranalunes are successfully defended, they follow the adventurers wherever they go, and may become pets or familiars.

d4	PREDATORS
1	1 basilisk
2	2 gricks
3	3 black oozes
4	4 ghouls

## Shadows

As the adventurers pass by a particularly bright stalactite or stalagmite, their shadows stretch to the opposing surface and animate. A number of **shadows** equal to the number of creatures in the party appear and attack, attempting to take the party's supplies and escape deeper into the channel.

## Wretched Revelers

A group of 1d4+1 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) appear in the Twisting Channel for a few reasons. Roll a d6 or select one of the following motives.

d6	MOTIVE
1-2	The revelers are scouring the landscape for any magic they can harness.
3-4	The revelers are foraging for additional scraps to decorate themselves with.
5	The revelers are looking for the adventurers to take pieces of their fancy-looking clothing for their own outfits.
6	The revelers were tasked by a Doge to confirm rumors that Colet comes out to this channel.

These revelers immediately attack the adventurers if they aren't wearing masks and realize they are alive. Otherwise, they converse cordially until they suspect something is off.

## The Misty Channel

The tunnel feels open and boundless, yet always on the edge of existence. The air is thick and rolls into itself endlessly. Glimpses of figures disappear in the distance as fast as they are found. It would be lonesome if it weren't for the choir of moaning souls tumbling down an unseen river.

Most of the river's water flows through the air as a thick, all-encompassing mist. Creatures can stand upon the surface of the remainder that covers the ground. The natural inhabitants of the channel can seamlessly move through both, quickly reminding their prey that the Misty Channel is the most dangerous of the Deep Rivers.

Many secrets hide amid the Misty Channel for the adventurers to find. A forgotten city has recently remembered itself nearby. A hag fights for her life unbeknownst to her coven. And revelers wander having lost their way, only to be replaced by doppelgangers.

## Misty Channel Features

The Misty Channel has the following features:

**River Floor.** The water covers the entirety of the ground in this channel, 40 feet across and sitting 3 feet above the terrain in most places. It lazily drifts down toward the Locks. Creatures can stand on the surface of the water as if it was the ground. Anything submerged in the water unanchored slowly floats to its surface.

**Light.** The river floor dimly glows throughout Misty Channel. The light quickly vanishes into the gray fog, limiting sight out to a distance of 60 feet even with superior darkvision.

**Ceiling.** The ceiling almost seems nonexistent. The roof of the cavern sits about 40 feet high in reality, but creatures cannot feel anything physically restrict them if they touch it.

**Mists.** The mists echo with the cries of its previous victims and the fears of its current inhabitants. Every hour or so, a creature might see/hear something or someone they're insecure about in the mist even if their vision is obscured. No one shares the same experience in the Misty Channel.

**Obscuring Mists.** The mists hide many things. All Wisdom (Perception) checks are made at disadvantage except when peering into the river.

## Misty Channel Encounters

The Misty Channel's two daily encounters quickly blend into one another. Days in this cave can seem to go by in an instant, threatening to turn into weeks, months, or even years for the most unfortunate spelunkers. Roll on the following tables to determine the environmental conditions and creatures involved in the encounter.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

d20	CONDITION
1-9	No special conditions
10	Compression
11	Cries for Help
12	Demistified
13	Fallen City
14	Free Floating
15	Twisty Misty Channels
16	Hands of the River
17	Mist Pit
18	Soul Activity
19	Icicles
20	Swapping

### Compression

The mists grow thicker than before and press down upon all that they cover. In this segment of the channel, all movement speeds are cut in half, and creatures that end their turn in midair immediately fall to the floor.

At the end of a creature's turn, it must roll a d6. On a 1, it feels as though the fog is literally trying to hold it in place with massive hands. It has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws until the start of its next turn.

Creatures who succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check determine this phenomena to be a natural diffusion of souls breaking down over a prolonged period of time.

### Cries for Help

The adventurers hear the sounds of someone calling out for help in the mists. They appear to be coming from behind a set of 10-foot-diameter stalagmites 60 feet ahead and close to the side of the cavern.

The source of the cries is the result of the Creature Encounters roll. It's an illusion from the mists if a result of 1-10 or 15 was rolled on the Creature Encounters table.

Roll on the Creature Encounters table again to determine what accosts the victimized party. If the creatures from both rolls match, one of the parties features **doppelgangers** in disguise as Lochols. Reroll if the predatory party result is the night hag.

Any genuine revelers are Lochols who have been lost in the Misty Channel for weeks and are fighting to survive. If the night hag is involved, run this encounter in conjunction with the Missing Miss Mae Mae special encounter.

## Demistified

The mist appears to clear, and the landscape is wide open. No one appears to occupy the tunnel. Even the corpses and souls appear to be missing.

This is an illusion of the cave. Any result from the Creature Encounters roll is still there, but invisible. As soon as the creature interacts with the characters, its invisibility breaks. Creatures that succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check hear the muffled sounds of reality outside the illusion.

The illusion ends when a creature is reduced to 0 hit points or when the adventurers move on from the area.

## Fallen City

Large chunks of an old building float among the refuse in the area. The debris forms a trail off to the side of the main tunnel and leads to a small fissure in the channel wall.

Beyond this crack is a tunnel that leads to the ruins of a lost city. Proceed with the “Cat’s Old Cradle” featured encounter, later in this chapter.

## Free Floating

Gravity loosens its grip upon this channel, and creatures and objects begin to float in the mist. The ground and the river floor also disappear, leaving nothing but a swirling void of fog in the darkness.

While floating in zero gravity, creatures attempting to propel themselves need to make contact with a solid surface or create a force to launch themselves with. A creature that starts its movement adjacent to a solid surface can make push themselves forward a number of feet equal to  $5 \times$  its Strength modifier. A creature that starts its movement while floating through midair has no choice but to drift 5 feet in the direction it moved previously. Creatures with a flying speed can move through the air without issue.

## Twisty Misty Channels

This channel fractures into a maze of twisty little passages, all very much alike. All of these passages are roughly 20-foot-diameter cylinders, filled halfway with water, with no riverbanks.

Creatures must use their action to attempt to escape the maze. The party must follow one character’s lead; that character must make three successful DC 15 Intelligence checks to escape the maze and return to the main channel. On a failed check, the creature and their allies go in circles until they realize their mistake, and the entire party takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage.

If there are hostile creatures in this encounter, the characters can evade them by making this Intelligence check. Stay in initiative, and make an Intelligence check for the creatures on their turn. On a success, they are able to catch up to the characters on initiative count 20 of their next turn. Otherwise, the creatures get lost, too.

## Hands of the River

The river floor here undulates more fervently. It reaches out to grab creatures and objects with humanoid-like hands resembling that of a mob of infants with sharp, yellowed nails.

Creatures that end their turn touching the water must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled by the river’s hands and dragged 10 feet backward each round. Unanchored objects are automatically grabbed and pulled backward the same amount. The grapple can be escaped or broken on an adjacent creature or object with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

## Mist Pit

A group of creatures that travels at least 30 feet across the ground in the span of 10 minutes is sure to encounter a pit concealed by a thin layer of mist. The pit is 10 feet in diameter and 30 feet deep. All creatures in the party must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw as the sinkhole opens up, falling or sliding into it on a failure and taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

When a creature ends its turn climbing the walls of the pit, or climbs up to the top of the pit, it must make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failure, the creature falls to the bottom of the pit.

## Soul Activity

The river is suffused with wailing souls all throughout this stretch of tunnel. It’s difficult to hear anything over their clamor.

At the end of each hour while traveling along this tunnel, any creature that can hear the noise must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion. A creature wearing a bauta has advantage on this save.

## Icicles

The ceiling has frozen over here, forming 15-foot-diameter icicles ready to crash to the river floor at any moment.

Any loud noise or impact could cause a stalactite to fall nearby. Creatures within 10 feet of a falling stalactite must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. A creature that fails this save by more than 10 is also restrained by the stalactite, requiring a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to free themselves from the rubble.

## Swapping

The mists roll violently and start to thunder. They accumulate around any moving bodies, thickening increasingly as creatures begin moving more deliberately within this section of the channel.

At the end of every hour of travel through this area, all creatures in the area must roll a d20. Creatures with a matching roll have their positions swapped, including any items they're carrying and trappings they're bound by. If creatures match on a 1, their consciousness swap bodies for 1 hour.

If initiative is rolled, the heightened tension agitates the mists and the swapping happens more rapidly. All creatures in initiative make the swap roll at the end of the round.

## CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

d20	CREATURES
1-9	No creatures
10	Cloakers
11-13	Doppelgangers
14	Flesh Golem
15	Ghouls
16	Invisible Stalker
17	Night Hag
18-20	Wretched Revelers

## Cloaker

Flying silently through the mists is a **cloaker**. It attempts to stalk the easiest prey to isolate from the rest of the group and devour.

The cloaker doesn't stick around if it is overwhelmed by a retaliation. If it survives the engagement, the same cloaker appears the next time this creature encounter is rolled.

## Doppelgangers

A gang of  $1d6 + 1$  **doppelgangers** encounter the adventurers while shape-changed (see the table below). They attempt to find out where the party is going, either through questioning or reading thoughts, in an attempt to catch them off-guard and trap them.

d6	DISGUISE
1-3	A group of Lochols
4	The Doge Gatto and her minions
5	Miss Mae Mae the night hag and her ghouls
6	Members of the adventurers' party

If the doppelgangers are searched, they find traces of fine gray hair and claw marks on their person. These shapeshifters can lead the adventurers to the missing night hag if they are kept alive.

## Flesh Golem

The adventurers encounter a shambling amalgam of Lochols lost in the mists.

This **flesh golem** carries several broken bautas with it. It's distressed at being unable to make the masks work and attacks anything that comes near it with reckless abandon.

If a total of three functional bautas are attached to it, the souls become intelligent—but are overwhelmed by the horror of their situation, and lash out violently. The pitiable amalgamation goes Berserk.

## Ghouls

A roving pack of  $1d8 + 2$  **ghouls** are scavenging any bits of flesh they can find. They attack as soon as they discover someone else is nearby.

These ghouls are still wearing bautas, albeit old masks that are cracked and no longer contain any souls.

## Invisible Stalker

An **invisible stalker** scurries between the mists. It attacks if any creatures are actively seeking out the fallen city. If Gatto is nearby and acknowledges the invisible stalker, it follows her every command.

This elemental is executing its orders to defend the city. It was given this command by the city leaders a long time ago.

If the invisible stalker is destroyed, this creature encounter is replaced by two **air elementals** formed by the mists.

## Night Hag

Miss Mae Mae the **night hag** is trapped in this area. Run the "Missing Miss Mae Mae" featured encounter, below.

## Wretched Revelers

A troupe of  $1d4 + 1$  genuine **wretched revelers** can be found in the Misty Channel for several reasons. Roll a d6 or select one of the following motives.



d6	MOTIVE
1-2	The revelers got lost while scavenging for scrap.
3-4	The revelers are looking for lost Lochols still out in the mists.
5	The revelers are exploring to find the rumored fossil of a city that got unearthed near this channel.
6	Colet secretly tasked the revelers to find a missing hag named Miss Mae Mae. They aren't good at keeping this a secret.

These revelers immediately attack the adventurers if they aren't wearing masks and realize they are alive. Otherwise, they converse cordially until they suspect something is off.

## Misty Channel

### Featured Encounters

There are two featured encounters in this channel. The "Cat's Old Cradle" encounter can occur when the adventurers find the lost city in the mists. Meanwhile, the "Missing Miss Mae Mae" encounter follows up on any leads to the missing hag's whereabouts. Both encounters can provide the adventurers with powerful allies, potentially in conflict with one another.

### Cat's Old Cradle

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters begin this encounter:

The long, narrow passageway is uneven and derelict. Even the mists seem to have abandoned this portion of their domain, leaving only somber gurgling of water as the river cuts through this slim corridor of stone.

Then, a new sensation. A stale, warm air wafts. The passageway grows wider the farther you go, until finally opening into a tucked-away cavern. The area is filled with wreckage and destroyed buildings lost to time. A lone figure of stone with an outstretched hand greets you in what was once a city square.

These ruins are a tiny fraction of the ancient civilization that was once the vibrant heart of the Necropolis. No living being remains here now, but it is decorated with ostentatious murals made of human bones, and reverent sigils that depict the sun in the sky.



The stone figure carries a lantern that burns with a *continual flame*. It depicts Kasimir as he was when he was alive, and the royal necromancer of a forgotten domain. It's not unlike the dressed-up statue in the Locks. Characters who saw Kasimir Sundrinker in episode 1 of this Fable can make a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, they feel a sense of familiarity, but can't place it. On a success by 5 or more, they have the slow, dawning realization that this statue of a once-living being vaguely resembles the skeletal monster that cast them into this living hell.

Under the dust and rubble are cobblestone walkways that stretch and wind into the inaccessible reaches of the cave. A good portion is caved-in completely, with only a few lingering buildings nearby that can still be entered.

### Gatto's Chateau

This ruin appears to be the foyer of a once lavish manor. The cracks in the floor and fallen beams abound fail to hide the large cat face painted at your feet.

This was once the estate of Gatto's family. The other rooms no longer exist, but it's clear that this place winded across three floors and multiple hallways at one point.

A lone **cat** (see appendix A) cleans itself in the corner of the foyer. It wears a collar adorned with rat skulls and a name tag in Common that reads "Tre Niantino." If creatures are friendly with the cat and succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, or if Gatto interacts with the cat, it leads them to the

other side of the foyer and slips under the rubble. It pulls out a tarnished, ornate locket with a picture of a young human woman on one side and an engraving in Common on the other that reads:

To my dear Giana Niantino, the pride of my life.  
—Godot Niantino

### Political Office

This ruin near the center of the city must have been an office. It still features several desks under the huge chunks of collapsed ceiling. Dozens of people must have worked here once, though now you only hear the uneven breathing of one.

A lone **vampire spawn** hides under one of the desks, waiting to bite its first meal in untold years. The vampire's clothing is in near unrecognizable tatters. However, a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals what looks like cat face cufflinks still dangling from the monster's wrists. If asked about it, Gatto believes this could have been her father at one point, but her memories are still foggy. She's also of the opinion that his corpse is better off destroyed than continuing on in this feral state.

### Skeleton Stockyard

This warehouse ruin is littered with bones, almost purposefully. The piles are arranged in neat rows that stretch into the rubble toward the back.

Creatures that succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check while looking through the bones will find a *dieadem* (see appendix B), an old ivory diadem still brimming with necromancy magic.

### Developments

If Gatto is brought to this city or evidence from it is brought back to Gatto, her demeanor becomes a little more somber. The memories of her past are still faint, but painful. The Doge does not want the other Doges to know about this revelation, fearing it could be used against her.

Gatto becomes more willing to work with the adventurers and escape to the surface alongside them. She's willing to part with her Locks Key and provide them with nearly any resource they need, so long as they respect and praise the great Doge Giana Niantino—and only use that name in private, of course.



## Missing Miss Mae Mae

Whether this encounter takes place in a regular portion of the Misty Channel or as a part of an environmental condition, the adventurers eventually take notice of a doppelganger encampment. Corpses and scraps are piled into barriers to keep out any wild threats.

A **night hag** is encased in a glass box near the center of this encampment and is unable to make noise or fight back against her captors. She is guarded by three **doppelgangers**, one of which is deep purple and holds onto her staff.

## Sosia

The purple doppelganger is Sosia, an old creature hellbent on infiltrating the Locks and taking over the Deep Rivers. These doppelgangers, of which Sosia is the first, are the unintended, unpredictable, and unreplicable amalgamation of a dozen disparate souls from the Deep Rivers. Though their minds are unified, this combination of powers gives them uncanny control over their physical forms.

Sosia and its brethren have been confined to the veils of the Misty Channel ever since the Locks

were discovered and filled by the populous, bauta-wearing Lochols. In response, Sosia regularly sends doppelgangers into the Locks to lure Lochols to their doom. But even this single-minded being knows that individual murders aren't enough to topple a society.

Sosia knows about the inner canal at the heart of the Locks' operations and has been looking for a way to destroy it before succumbing to the population of Lochols. After learning a powerful hag regularly traveled on her own, Sosia dispatched its kin to capture her. Many doppelgangers died in the process, but now believe they can control the night hag's magic and use it to destroy the Locks.

While Sosia carries the night hag's staff, it has the ability to shapeshift into a giant doppelganger in addition to impersonating humanoids. Use **hill giant** statistics for this giant shapeshifter while keeping the doppelganger's original Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Every time Sosia uses the staff in this way, Miss Mae Mae's maximum hit points are reduced by 10. While transformed, Sosia can use a reaction to cause all the damage she takes to be taken by Mae instead.

## Miss Mae Mae

The captive night hag is Miss Mae Mae. Her cage is one of invisible force, woven from the mists by Sosia using the hag's staff. The cage can only be destroyed by striking it with the staff. It has an AC of 11, 1 hit point, and immunity to all damage except bludgeoning damage dealt by Mae's staff.

Mae a part of a hag coven with Sig Nasty and Padder Olma in the Lichen Channel. They would normally only harass the undead Lochols and live in relative peace together, but Miss Mae Mae was enticed by a new opportunity to cause problems in the Locks. The hag arranged a deal with Colet to enchant her equipment once a week in secret. She would abjure the Doge's dress and transmute scraps into gold, and in exchange Colet fed her with the underlings of the other Doges and any unused bautas she could gather. The Twisting Channel was the best place to have these meetings without anyone knowing.

Before they could have their last meeting, Miss Mae Mae was set upon by Sosia and the other doppelgangers, leading to a conflict that echoed throughout the channel. She was eventually overpowered and dragged to the Misty Channel to be used like a battery to fuel Sosia's ambition. While her staff is within Sosia's hands

## Fight or Polite

This encounter can be resolved through combat and still provide plenty of impact on the adventure. Take note, however, both Miss Mae Mae and Sosia both seem to be aligned in causing problems for the Locks. Mae is furious at Sosia, and Sosia sees Mae only as a tool. However, characters that make three successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) checks can ultimately convince the three to work together.

- The first check is to make both parties view the characters as unthreatening to their ambitions
- The second check convinces either Mae or Sosia that one can trust the other
- The third check convinces the other to reciprocate that trust

If the adventurers call for a diplomatic resolution between the hags and the doppelgangers, they may well become allies mutually bent on the Locks' destruction. This begins by this new, unified force quietly assassinating Colet in the dead of night. Sosia replaces her, and impishly smiles as she gives the characters Colet's Locks Key.

## Development

If Miss Mae Mae is freed, her first priority is to reunite with her coven and let them know what happened. Even if an agreement is reached with the doppelgangers, the coven will undoubtedly scheme their revenge for the inconvenience. Miss Mae Mae's willing to work with the adventurers as thanks for their help regardless; the hag isn't able to send them directly to the surface world, but she can provide potions and magical services for a price. She still intends on working with Colet, although the cost of her services has been raised with the recent uptick in demand.

The doppelgangers stay the course whether Sosia lives or dies, either targeting the adventurers more aggressively or starting to appear disguised in the Locks more frequently. If Colet is present, or given proof that the leaders of the hags and the doppelgangers have been eliminated, Colet proudly grants the characters her Locks Key as a reward.



LICHEN KEY



SURGING KEY

## Locks Keys Developments

The adventurers are marked as a serious presence in the Locks as soon as they get their hands on a Locks Key. The Doges are suddenly faced with the harsh reality that they don't have complete control over the situation anymore. Their tactics must change.

If a Doge has their key taken from them without their consent, and they know who stole it, they send two **wretched drivers** (see appendix A) in gondolas to pursue and ambush the adventurers each day (add these assassins to the first encounter the characters have each day while exploring the Deep Rivers) while feigning ignorance to the incidents until they get their key back. The other Doges' responses depend on how many keys the adventurers have acquired.

### Getting the First Key

Each Doge see this as an opportunity to court the adventurers and use the upset power balance to their advantage. They're forthcoming with their plans at events, and they offer the adventurers hirelings and resources to keep the Doge they have a negative disposition toward at bay. This is unlike a genuine connection developed with the Doge, as they plan to eventually backstab the adventurers on their way out of the channels.

### Getting the Second Key

When the adventurers get a hold of two keys, the Doges reluctantly begin to work together to get them back. The amount of gossip the adventurers can acquire in an area (except in the Surging Channel) is reduced to 1, as the Doges start to put pressure on the Lochols.

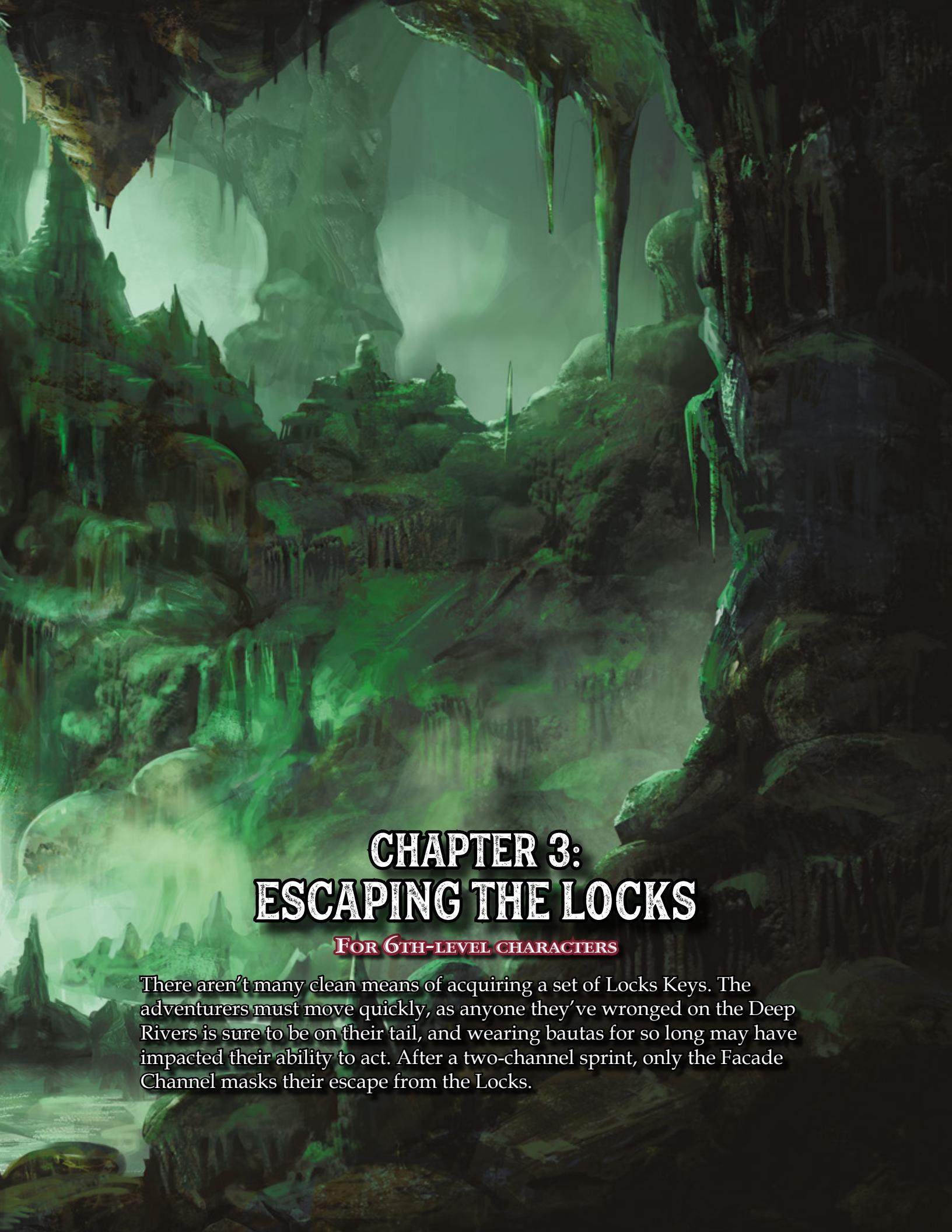
Each event in town now includes two **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) hiding and spying on the adventurers to feed to the Doge information about their plans. Unless the adventurers are doing something incredibly dear to the Doge, such as finding Gatto's old city or taking on Harle's Sunken Fight Club, the Doges refuse to engage with the adventurers socially without a Locks key on the table.

### Getting the Third Key

The Locks Keys are about to leave the channels for good, and the Doges are desperate. The adventurers will only have one night to get away from the Locks before the slighted Doges come after them personally (see appendix C). Doges without keys will follow and attempt to subdue the adventurers, even traveling into the channels after them. Doges that still have keys send word to groups of  $1d4 + 2$  **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) already deep each channel to block the adventurers exit and catch them in a pincer formation: the Doge at one end of the tunnel, the revelers at the other.







## CHAPTER 3: ESCAPING THE LOCKS

FOR 6TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

There aren't many clean means of acquiring a set of Locks Keys. The adventurers must move quickly, as anyone they've wronged on the Deep Rivers is sure to be on their tail, and wearing bautas for so long may have impacted their ability to act. After a two-channel sprint, only the Facade Channel masks their escape from the Locks.

# Keys in Hand

The adventurers must figure out how the Locks Keys work and combine them to determine which channels they must travel through. Creatures who succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check, or a special DC 16 Intelligence (Sleight of Hand) check (see “Variant: Skills with Different Abilities” in the fifth edition core rules) while examining a single key will notice that its sigil is reminiscent of the shape of the city. The long notch running toward it lines up with one of the channels. Creatures have advantage on this check if they examine multiple keys at the same time and can glean that each notch covers a channel when the keys are combined, leaving the remaining channels open.

A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence check realizes that in order to escape, the characters must travel through one of the “open” channels as shown by the key. When the characters approach the mouth of a channel with three keys in hand, they find that the river redirects its flow toward the Locks; all travel must be upstream while these keys are in hand.

## Changing Channels

With three keys in hand, the two “opened” channels connect. The end of the first opened channel the characters pass through is now the beginning of the second opened channel.

At the end of the second opened channel is the final gauntlet: the Facade Channel.

## The Facade of the Surface

Traveling far enough upstream against the two opened channels leads to the Facade Channel, a wide cavern with a powerful stream. This place is the source of all five waterways of the Deep Rivers. Water and souls drain downward from the surface into this river. The sound of rushing water is loud and imposing throughout the cave. Stalactites hang low and sharp, as the cave bears its fangs at those to attempt to escape it.

### Facade Channel Features

The Facade Channel has the following features:

**Space.** The channel is about 100 feet wide at most points. The channel is 1,000 feet long, and in the distance, a giant stone mask can be seen embedded in the rock wall at its opposite end.



**River.** The river splits the cave down the center. The river is 80 feet wide and surges down from the eye sockets of the giant stone mask at the far end of the channel. Fresh corpses continually flow down the river in huge waves and sometimes crash onto the land.

**Light.** The Facade Channel is nearly pitch black. The giant stone mask produces a faint green glow at the other end of the channel, but its light reaches out to only 150 feet.

**Sound.** The heavy pink noise of the water renders most communication nearly impossible. All creatures are deafened while in this channel.

**Ceiling.** The top of the cave reaches 25 feet high in most places. Huge size stalactites line the entire channel and sometimes hang as low as five feet off the ground. A stalactite has an AC of 14 and 10 hit points. It falls when it is reduced to 0 hit points; creatures underneath must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

**Ground.** The stony floor has receded to either side of the river and is nearly polished smooth from the regular crashes of waves.

### Shadowy Encounters

Every 300 feet the adventurers traverse into the channel, they are accosted by 2d6 **shadows** that rise out of the river. These souls still cling to any semblance of life they can find before flowing out into the inescapable loop of the channels.

## Sundrinker's Failsafe

As the adventurers come within 150 feet of the other end of the channel, they see the stone mask peering out of the darkness. The mask sits fixed and askew into the wall and stretches from floor to ceiling.

In the distance, a green glow gently traces the contour of a massive face: a stone mask. The raging river pours down from its vacant eye sockets, and bones seem to fall and pile at the mask's base.

When the adventurers come within 50 feet of the mask, the stone mask begins to animate and gets a good look at the potential problem heading toward the surface.

You notice the glow of the mask's eye flicker. No—it's winking. Now both of the mask's eyes blinked. It's furrowing its brow, causing the cavern to quake with its every subtle movement. Lips crack through stone and peel back into a grimace as it begins to talk, speaking telepathically into your mind:

"It's you. You've been doing this."

The stone mask is being taken over by Kasimir Sundrinker. Kasimir sensed that people were moving through the Necropolis and wanted to confirm it for himself.

The lich takes this opportunity to taunt the adventurers into revealing their plans, making no effort to explain anything to them other than the futility of their efforts.

"No soul has ever escaped my grasp. Kindling. Mere twigs fueling my existence. Your souls will fail you before you leave here, so why not turn back and burn for me?"

If the adventurers come any closer, Kasimir cackles as the cave shakes violently. The lich quickly fades from the stone mask, returning it to its neutral closed mouth position.

Any intact bautas within the cavern suddenly break free of all faces or parcels and begin to float in midair toward the stone mask. A Lochol or Doge who was wearing a bauta is suddenly rendered incapacitated.

Once the bautas get as close as they can to the mask, they grow long, rubbery tendrils that stretch, twist, and bend into new bodies. The bautas shape themselves to resemble either the creature that wore them, or the creature that once owned the soul the bauta is made from.

If there isn't at least one bauta per player character, two **earth elementals** burst from the wall next to the stone mask to guard it as well.

The bautas' new forms are **bautano guards** (see appendix A). These unquestioningly loyal soldiers make sure no one gets through the facade, especially no undead. All of the guards stand completely still, only moving to attack anyone who either comes within 30 feet of the area or touches the mask.

The stone mask is mostly sheer and difficult to get a handhold, except where the water rushes down its face. A creature needs to succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to scale the face, or a DC 18 Strength saving throw to withstand the waterflow in order to reach an eyehole exit the channel.

## Conclusion

As the last adventurer climbs through the eyehole of the stone mask, they bid farewell to the Locks and the Deep Rivers. The eyehole of the statue leads to a stair, which winds up, up, and higher up still. As they depart, they hear Kasimir's voice echoing from below, musing aloud:

"How curious. I have never seen a soul so determined to remain with its flesh. Unless..." A pause. "Oh, I see. I see now indeed. A spark within their souls. A spark of sunlight, which binds crude flesh to flickering animus, even in the depths of my false afterlife. Magnificent. How cruelly played, Nightseer. To trick me into casting that which I sought so deep beneath the earth, forever.

"It matters not. Flee! Flee to the surface! My light hunters will find you, little sparks. No matter how far you run, they will find you, and they will bring you to me."

The voice trails off, fading as you wind higher and higher, up toward the surface.

This episode ends as the characters reach the surfacemost level of the Necropolis. This is the Labyrinth: one final challenge before the heroes can breathe free air again.

The Fable continues in episode 4: Land of Despair.

# APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

This appendix details the new creatures that appear within this adventure.

## Bautano Guard

Bautas that come close enough towards the facade of the surface start to shape themselves into their wearer and move around on their own. They stand in the way of any Lochols attempting to leave the Deep Rivers should the Locks keys fail at keeping the area contained.



Since living creatures can become bautanos, these statistics are a baseline for a typical bautano guard. If a creature with an AC higher than 14, or maximum hit points higher than 75 becomes a bautano, they use their original values for AC and hp.

### BAUTANO GUARD

*Medium construct, neutral evil*

**Armor Class 14**

**Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 20)**

**Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft (Hover)**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Perception +6, Insight +6

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned, prone

**Senses** truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Terran, any languages that the creature who wore it knows

**Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) Proficiency Bonus +3**

**Impressionable.** The bautano has advantage on attack rolls and ability checks made with the highest ability score of the creature that wore it.

**Hidden Secret.** The bautano can use one feature or spell that the creature who wore it uses frequently. Any spell is performed using the bautano's Charisma (spell save DC 16), regardless of the type of spell.

**Damage Transfer.** While grappling a creature, the bautano takes only half the damage dealt to it (rounded down), and that creature takes the other half.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bautano makes two whip attacks, two bolt attacks, or one of each, depending on the typical approach of the creature that wore it.

**Whip.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing or bludgeoning damage.

**Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 60/80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) force damage.

# Cats

The cats found within the Deep Rivers are unique in their ability to come and go from the Locks as they please. They appear to exist somewhere in-between life and death and are incredibly difficult to pin down. In this episode, cats use the following modified statistics.



## CAT

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Perception +3, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands all languages but can't speak

Challenge 0 (10 XP) Proficiency Bonus +2

**Extra Nimble.** The cat doubles its Dexterity modifier when making Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks (included above).

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

**Next Life.** If the cat's body is destroyed, it gains a new body and returns to the area 24 hours later.

## ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.



# Dragon Float

The dragon float is an elaborate but slipshod construct made from discarded armors and shields. Its wheels tear up the street and acid drips down its mouth in big droplets. The dragon float isn't allowed at the parade for how destructive it is to the Locks.

Each time the dragon float is destroyed, dismayed Lochols make poor attempts at rebuilding it and the quality of its make plummets.



## DRAGON FLOAT

Huge construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (plate armor) -1 each time the dragon float is encountered during this episode

**Hit Points** 104 (11d12 + 33) -12 hit points each time the dragon float is encountered during this episode

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	7 (-2)	17 (+3)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** acid, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

**Hazardous.** Any terrain the dragon float moves over becomes difficult terrain.

**Siege Vehicle.** The dragon float deals double damage to objects and structures.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The dragon float makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Acid Stream (Recharge 6).** The dragon float exhales a stream of acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

# Ghost Boat

This gondola is the wreckage of a Lochol that wiped out during a race. The Lochol's bauta is still affixed to the boat's seat, awakening it as an angry spirit.

## GHOST BOAT

*Large undead construct (10 ft. by 5 ft.), unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 50

**Speed** fly 60 ft (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Incorporeal Movement.** The ghost boat can move through other creatures and objects as if it were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Assailing.** If the bauta affixed to its seat isn't destroyed when the ghost boat is destroyed, it reforms in the same area after 24 hours.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The ghost boat can make two ramming attacks.

**Ram.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d12 + 2) bludgeoning damage; if the target is a boat with passengers aboard, each creature on the boat must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked out of the boat prone.



# Heletros

Heletros are skeletons raised with instructions to serve as gondoliers and vehicle operators within the locks. They idle when they aren't working and show no hostility. Heletros use **skeleton** statistics, provided below.



## SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it spoke in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

## ACTIONS

**Shortsword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

# Ranalune

The ranalunes are cave frogs that gather into small colonies all across the Deep Rivers. Their croaking pattern is regular, quiet by "day" and loud by "night," allowing other inhabitants to track time against it. Ranalunes use **frog** statistics while giant ranalunes use **giant toad** statistics, both provided below.

## Giant Toad

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class 11**

**Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)**

**Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge 1 (200 XP)**

**Amphibious.** The toad can breathe air and water.

**Standing Leap.** The toad's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

## ACTIONS

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the toad can't bite another target.

**Swallow.** The toad makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the toad dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.



## Frog

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class 11**

**Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)**

**Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.**

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Perception +1, Stealth +3

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge 0 (0 XP)**

**Amphibious.** The frog can breathe air and water.

**Standing Leap.** The frog's long jump is up to 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

# The Latoré

The Latoré is a powerful undead alligator that lurks within the Deep Rivers hunting for anything it can fit into its massive maw. The Locks key in its throat keeps it bound to the Lichen Channel even after death.



## THE LATORÉ

Huge undead, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d12 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +6

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) Proficiency Bonus +3

**Turn Immunity.** The Latoré is immune to effects that turn undead.

**Regeneration.** The Latoré regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Latoré takes radiant or necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the Latoré's next turn. The Latoré's body is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

**See You Later.** If the Latoré's body is destroyed, it reforms with all of its hit points 24 hours later within 100 feet of where it was killed.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Latoré makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the Latoré can't bite another target.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the Latoré. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

# Wretched Celebrants

The Locks are home to grand carnivals and festivals that celebrate the joys of unlife. The scope and details of these celebrations change from season to season, but the general atmosphere is one of jubilation and excess. Participants eat heartily and drink excessively, elaborate costumes are on display, and parades with dazzling floats mark the day.

**Improvised Weapons.** The revelers attack with whatever they have on hand, but each weapon is infused with elemental power. For example, a lantern might do bludgeoning and fire damage, while a large fan might do slashing and force damage.

**Wretched Driver.** Celebrations of this nature usually involve transportation of some kind, from floats or carriages to gondolas to fast-moving joyrides. Wretched drivers enable these carnivals to take place, offering rides to those looking for transportation or just a thrill.

## WRETCHED REVELER

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Persuasion +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP) Proficiency Bonus +2

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The wretched reveler attacks twice with its melee or ranged weapons.

**Tankard.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeon damage, plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

**Dart.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

**Inescapable Song.** One creature that can hear the wretched reveler must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or dance uncontrollably until the end of its next turn. While dancing, the target cannot use actions, bonus actions, or reactions, and attacks against them are made with advantage.





## WRETCHED DRIVER

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) Proficiency Bonus +3

**Vehicle Master.** When driving a vehicle, the wretched driver can use a bonus action to control the vehicle instead of an action. In addition, as a bonus action, the vehicle master can drive recklessly, forcing every creature on the vehicle (except itself) to succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The wretched driver makes two spear attacks or uses its cursed shout twice.

**Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

**Cursed Shout.** One living creature that can hear the wretched driver must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and be frightened until the end of its next turn.

## WRETCHED MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +5, Cha +7

Skills Deception +7, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages the languages spoken in life

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP) Proficiency Bonus +3

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The wretched master of ceremonies makes two whip attacks.

**Whip. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage.

**Dominate (2/Day).** The wretched master of ceremonies casts *dominate person* (spell save DC 15). The master of ceremonies does not have to concentrate on this ability.

**Puppetmaster (1/Day).** The wretched master of ceremonies can take control of the minds of up to 6 humanoid or undead creatures of CR 1/4 or less. These creatures follow the commands of the master of ceremonies until they die or are knocked unconscious, or for 24 hours, whichever comes first.

## ZOMBLINO

Tiny undead, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

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

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but speaks only through the use of its *Mimicry* trait

**Challenge 0** (10 XP)

**Telepathic Bond.** While the zomblino is on the same plane of existence as its master, it can magically convey what it senses to its master, and the two can communicate telepathically.

**Mimicry.** The zomblino can mimic phrases and sounds it has heard, such as a person's command or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

### ACTIONS

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is instead poisoned for 5 (1d10) minutes and unconscious while poisoned in this way.

## Zomblinos

These cadavers are stitch-work monsters pulled together from the remains of tiny beasts that either float in on the rivers or slain in the tunnels. Their uncanny ability to mimic sounds they've heard finds great utility for sending covert messages across the Locks.



# APPENDIX B: NEW MAGIC ITEM

A new magic item found in this episode is detailed here.

## Dieadem

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

This diadem is made from finely polished bone with vertical slits running up the three main bone shards on its front. While attuned to the dieadem, you can

focus on a pile of bones as an action to cast the *create undead* spell. Once you have cast this spell, you can't cast it again until next dawn.

The diadem can't animate bones if they are within a living creature or already animated into an undead form.

# APPENDIX C: THE DOGES

This section details the Doges in all of their glory: their personalities, goals, minions, and how to play them. It also provides advice for running a game of intrigue between the adventurers and the Doges, offering multiple secret missions they can run for or against Doges that can lead to serious inter-party conflict.

## Playing the Doges

Similar to the revelers that celebrate a grotesque ideal of life, the Doges carry a festered and exaggerated idea of what it means to be a noble. They all act like out-of-touch celebrities who believe the world revolves around them. Their lives are filled with intrigue and melodrama. Each of their actions and reactions should be made as though they were on a stage performing.

The Doges have their own desires, ideals, and vices as described in the following sections. However, when faced with a decision that may compromise their morals, they will always lean toward the most dramatic option.

A Doge uses the **wretched master of ceremonies** stat block (see appendix A) with the following changes:

- It has 150 hit points
- Its whip attack has a +8 bonus to hit; on a hit, it deals 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage plus 17 (5d6) psychic damage
- Any of its traits and actions that can affect humanoids can also affect undead
- It has the following additional trait:

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the Doge fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

## Volto, Doge of Order

*"My Lochols, the evening's events shall begin without delay! If you are late, you will be assigned to a different set of events, and I cannot ensure your entertainment or your survival."*

A tall and rigid masked ghoul with a posture to rival the oldest oak tree. Dodge Volto has adorned himself with blues and gold, signs of stature and levelheadedness. The amount of polish in his wardrobe does nothing for the grime that creeps up his boots and cracks throughout his bauta.

## Background

Volto has taken on the scheduling and bookkeeping of the Locks. Anything he cannot (or will not) do himself has been delegated down to his subordinates. New Lochols may see him as stuck up or too drab for the festive thoroughfare of the Locks. However, Volto's ability to announce events is unmatched even among his fellow Doges.

Volto's bauta was once the soul of a political advisor. His wisdom was frequently ignored in life, but death has provided an opportunity to utilize his own advice and do things the right way. His *own* way.

## Ideals

These ideals guide Volto's behavior.

**Automate.** Volto's system of rule in the Locks comes closer and closer to perfection the more it works without him being there.

**Society is Structure.** The other Doges can handle the Locks reasonably well, but they aren't fit for the fabled civilization of the surface world like Volto is.  
**Control.** Volto can get what he wants through reason, even if it means manipulating the circumstances from the shadows.

## Flaws

These flaws can be manipulated to guide Volto to ruin, or into aiding the characters.

**Stubbornness.** Volto is never wrong about his process. Even when he's wrong, he'll claim to have "built in time for the next phase of his process" and work in isolation on changing course.

**Hedonism.** Volto does get lost in the revelry of the Locks, if only for the time he's allotted himself to.

## Volto's Key

Volto keeps his key hidden within the breast pocket of his coat at all times. As long as it is on his person, he can be assured it is in safe hands. The key can be stolen by killing him, or by pickpocketing it with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Unless this check succeeds by 5 or more, Volto realizes that the key has been stolen within 1 minute of its theft—and likely who did the thieving.

## Starting Relationships

This is where Volto stands with everyone when the adventurers arrive in the Locks. He's quick to change his mind when a relationship appears to not work out in his favor.

### Harle

*Positive*

Volto knows where Harle stands on things and can use their wrath to his advantage.

### Gatto

*Neutral*

Gatto's pride gets the better of her judgment and she cannot be reliable in an organized system. Respects how others respect her though.

### Colet

*Negative*

The system cannot be built around money when regular money flow is impossible (and worthless) in this environment. The basis of all her decision making is completely out of line.

## Adventurers

*Neutral*

Their circumstances are unique in the Locks and definitely outside of the system. Any unseen problems can be mitigated by keeping them seen at all times.

## What's Volto Scheming?

When Volto is in private with someone he trusts, he'll open up about one of his plans. If it means he can escape the Locks and the other Doges do not, Volto will help the adventurers to escape.

### Destroy the Latoré

The undead alligator-behemoth in the Lichen Channel is said to have consumed an old Locks key. Volto has been using the cover of investigating flow issues within the locks, when really he's been sending multiple parties of Lochols to retrieve the key. Having even one of the lost keys would give Volto the upper hand in negotiations with the other Doges.

### Foresee Unforeseen Disturbances

Volto knows the adventurers are unlike the undead "living" in the Locks. If the Lochols find out who they are, they'll literally eat the party alive. Volto wants to use the party to his advantage and stir up disarray at the daily events for the Doges to investigate, providing him with cover for escaping.

### Order Under Harle

The stalemate between Doges has halted progress on multiple decisions beyond simply acquiring the Locks keys for decades. Volto is building a case for Harle to have final judgement in the Locks once he inevitably escapes leaves so that it can run even a modicum as smoothly as it did with his input.

## Working with Volto

The Doge of Order takes all covert affairs seriously. If he finds that his co-conspirators cannot follow instructions or be timely, he immediately discontinues further conspiring.

Volto is the most vulnerable and erratic when he is caught off guard or proven wrong, even in the most minute of circumstances. He will attempt to isolate himself for the rest of the day to restructure his plans, leaving himself open to his Locks key being taken.

## Volto's Minions

Volto keeps a regular flow of **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) scheduled into his employ. Even when Volto expects a plan to go smoothly, he sends along 1d4 + 2 revelers to watch all operations from the shadows and dissuade any betrayal.

Additionally, Volto utilizes up to 1d6 **zomblinos** (see appendix A) for relaying messages and keeping track of events. Only Volto and the Lochols he employs knows how to craft a zomblino, much to the exasperation of the other Doges.

## Harle, Doge of Blood

*"If you're not prepared to crack my spine open, then I suggest you either leave now or lay your head at my feet as I perforate your skull."*

A vibrant humanoid dressed for both a gala and a battle. They always position themselves to look down upon whomever they talk to, leading their thorny crown like an outstretched sword. Their purples and yellows are stained with the viscera of their victims, doubling as a warning sign and a fashion statement.

## Background

Harle uses might to reinforce their authority in the Locks. They ensure that Lochols who aren't getting their work done are brutally punished. They also ensure Lochols that don't do a good enough job are punished even harder. It may seem unnecessary, but Harle's method has proven to provide balance to the otherwise laissez-faire city.

The Doge's bauta featured a mild soul of a retired dancer. Interestingly, Harle's personality stems from their body's tenacity, "overtaking" the dancer's soul. There are times where Harle seems like a completely different person, usually in the throes of a rare passionate moment.

## Ideals

These ideals guide Harle's behavior.

**Discipline.** Harle creates and leads by example. Blood leaves an impression on people both alive and dead.

**Passion.** Harle wants to engage with people who put everything into their work. They only stand above the rest because no one can stand up with them.

**Combat.** Nothing should go unchallenged. Harle will fight their way to the top until they're given a reason not to.



## Flaws

These flaws can be manipulated to guide Harle to ruin, or into aiding the characters.

**Irascible.** Harle is dangerous and has a short temper.

When someone falls short of a task Harle requests them to do, Harle uses violence to make an example of them.

**Provocable.** Harle cannot turn down a competition.

They are always looking to prove their might to others. Declining even the smallest battle would reflect poorly on them.

## Harle's Key

Harle's key is kept guarded in a vent at the bottom of the Flooded Channel. Hiding the key like this serves as a challenge to those bold enough to take it from them. They visit the trove every other night in secret, and still the key remains in their possession.

## Starting Relationships

These are Harle's standings with everyone at the start

of the adventure. When Harle's mind is made up, little can sway them in a different direction.

### Volto

*Negative*

For all the respect Volto commands, he does nothing with it. Harle is incredibly disappointed in him.

### Gatto

*Positive*

Harle knows that nothing can stack up to Gatto besides Gatto herself, and they admire her charisma.

### Colet

*Neutral*

Colet and Harle have precious little in common, and try to avoid speaking with one another unless necessary.

### Adventurers

*Neutral*

Unlike the rest of the Lochols, these newcomers might prove to be a challenge to Harle. The Doge attempts to goad them and assess their abilities before making up their mind.

**GATTO,  
DOGE OF PRIDE**



**COLET,  
DOGE OF GOLD**





**LOCKS KEYS**

## What's Harle Scheming?

Harle responds well to emphatic individuals and those who can go head-to-head with them. The other Doges are proven to be unworthy of reaching the surface, but Harle will go with the adventurers if they can keep up.

## Test Their Might

Harle will find every opportunity to challenge the adventurers. After going toe to toe with the party in three competitions across three districts, Harle wants to see how dedicated the adventurers are and actively challenges them to take their Locks key. If they can get it, well then that's an opportunity to get it back.

## Wrangling the Revelers

The Doge would never think of ending the daily festivals, but they feel as though most Lochols aren't doing enough labor for the operations of the Locks. Harle's also certain some Lochols never come back to the Locks altogether. If they can prove what they saw, there *will* be blood.

## Gatto's Gift

Harle knows Gatto has a ruthless side, and they want to cultivate it. They do whatever they can to get under Gatto's skin and make her consider her every action. Then when Harle rules the surface, Gatto can easily rule the subterranean.

## Working with Harle

Harle only works with those who can go toe to toe with them. Even then, the Doge of Blood usually acts independently of their co-conspirators. Their fellow Doges even treat them more like a force of nature to be worked around.

If Harle is caught in the heat of a passionate moment, they almost change into a completely different person. They become more forthcoming and cordial to their present audience in defiance of themselves. But when they gradually return to being the Doge of Blood, they choose to overlook the entire event.

## Harle's Minions

Harle has a set of eight **wretched drivers** (see appendix A) that they call on when they need more hands. These minions are notably covered in various scars and protrusions accrued from Harle's disappointment, but they are hardy enough to stick by the Doge.

d8	NOTABLE BLEMISH
1	Deep lacerations across skin
2	Ribcage torn through back like wings
3	Large holes dug through palms of hands
4	Legs and arms sewn on backward
5	Head relocated within torso
6	Body torn partway down the center
7	Limbs stretched and ripped twice their length
8	Completely embedded with daggers

## Gatto, Doge of Pride

*"Now, now. Praise will get you nowhere, but a lack of praise will get you sent to the bottom of the canal. I know I've made myself perfectly clear."*

A decadently dressed humanoid covered from head to toe in a feline motif. Her greens and reds always stand out amongst her fellow Lochols. For the lack of expression in her bauta, her arms are constantly in motion and flourish with the waves of her mood. Every aspect of Gatto ensures that all attention is always focused on her.

## Background

Gatto's responsibilities preside over the population of the Locks and the processing of souls that flow through it. The decision of which undead receive bautas and become Lochols and which are put down, stripped of flesh, and made into heletros—skeletal

servitors—is solely hers, giving her the presence of a queen among the wretches.

Her bauta is one of the rare instances where it contains the original soul of her body. She once presided over a city long since lost and forgotten. The memories of her past life feel hazy and displaced from her mind, but the faintest knowledge of her previous status fuels her present self-importance.

## Ideals

These ideals guide Gatto's behavior.

**Respect.** Gatto's time and presence are important and deserving of respect. Anything less will not be tolerated.

**Destiny.** The Doge of Pride is meant for greater things beyond the Locks and knows the future belongs to her.

**Life is Frivolous.** The living are no different from the dead, especially with how lively the Locks can be. It's all about how useful you are in either state.

## Flaws

These flaws can be manipulated to guide Gatto to ruin, or into aiding the characters.

**Praise-Seeking.** Gatto is easily won over with praise and adoration despite declarations of the contrary. Things are good as long as things are all about her.

**Perfectionistic.** Gatto will not accept incomplete work or failure. The Doge of Pride sees inexecution as a reflection of her own abilities, and quickly sees to the elimination of such weak links.

## Gatto's Key

Gatto has affixed her Locks key to the collar of one of her many cat followers. The cats are all decorated and bedazzled to a similar level as she is, making the key difficult to point out even when the correct cat is located. Gatto is confident the key is safe in the possession of the cats, as detailed in "Gatto's Minions," below.

## Starting Relationships

Gatto appears amicable in all her starting relationships, but the truth becomes clearer as she interacts with the adventurers. For her, pomp is more important than personal feelings.

## Volto

*Neutral*

Volto's inflexibility makes him difficult to work with in everchanging situations. His charisma with the crowd is admirable, however.



## Harle

*Negative*

Harle's incessant taunting reflects their ego in a way that reminds Gatto too much of herself, and not in a good way.

## Colet

*Positive*

Colet's incredibly glamorous. Gatto enjoys her company because it makes her more glamorous by proxy.

## Adventurers

*Positive*

These new souls have come from the surface and must be filled with stories of a more patrician life. If not, they can always be killed to liven things up in the locks.

## What's Gatto Scheming?

It doesn't take a lot to win Gatto over. The Doges have all disappointed her plenty in the past, and a little attention from fresh blood can go a long way. Gatto is willing to get dirty if it means she can join the socialites of the surface without the baggage of her peers.



## Something's Missing

A recent earthquake has supposedly unearthed a trove of forgotten relics somewhere near the Misty Channel. Gatto feels inclined to explore this rumor herself but hasn't had the opportunity or the cover to do so in secret. This find has kept her distracted to the point of obsession, like it has something to do with her past.

## Another Gatto?

Gatto absolutely loves idolatry directed toward her, but she has reason to suspect that she has an impersonator lurking among the Locks. The other Doges can't even tell the difference, which is completely unacceptable! Fake Gatto must be dealt with or exploited for personal gain and *then* dealt with.

## Buying Off Colet

Gatto is amassing whatever gold and treasure she can find to pay off Colet for her Locks key. It's less about

the money and more about making a diplomatic decision that'll establish relations between the Locks and the surface when Gatto gets there. She's almost certain Colet will agree if the price is right.

## Working with Gatto

Gatto is eager to take on exciting opportunities. However, she does not respond kindly to failure; any early fascination with the adventurers will quickly turn to malice if they do not live up to her expectations. Maybe they'll be more competent when they're dead.

Gatto's greatest vulnerability is herself. She will always value her future or her past over any immediate battles, convinced that her destiny has always been elsewhere. Defeating Gatto is a matter of holding something that belongs to her over her head.

## Gatto's Minions

The Doge of Pride does keep 1d2 **wretched revelers** nearby, usually to compliment her and inflate her ego. Gatto's real pride lays with her menagerie of 4d4 + 3 **cats** (see appendix A). Each cat is named for a regal title (like Duchess or Hierophant) and is adorned with their own regalia and bautas, presenting them as extensions of herself. She can call any one of her cats to her at any time, simply by speaking its name.

Gatto has hidden her Locks Key on one of these cats—a fine black cat named Empress—certain that it won't be found by anyone other than her. Unless the characters get Gatto on their side, it's unlikely they'll ever get her key.

## Colet, Doge of Gold

*"If this is how you choose to spend your time, then I will invest in my self-interests elsewhere. I'm much too expensive for you wastrels."*

A radiant being more akin to a golden statue than a costumed humanoid. She's adorned from crown to heel in golds and oranges, all polished to a finer quality than when the scavenged pieces were first made. The room seems to brighten whenever Colet speaks, as if her input increased the value of the space it was added to.

## Background

Colet ensures that supplies are available throughout the Locks. She's responsible for the creation of the Lockskirts and the gondolas that connect the furthest reaches of the city. Colet has also been working toward introducing a currency into their society, but it has been infeasible given the limited resources of subterranean.

The soul of her bauta belonged to a banker in life. She found comfort in balancing numbers, but always pined for a life of luxury. Luxury only came to her after death when her hard work finally paid off, and now she makes sure everyone can see her worth.

## Ideals

These ideals guide Colet's behavior.

**Balance.** Every service has its price, and every offense will be repaid in kind.

**Society is a Game.** None of the Doges can play to the rules of the surface world and exploit it like Colet can.

**Value.** Gold is everywhere and yet so scarce. The value it brings to other societies is control, and Colet wants all the control she can get.

## Flaws

These flaws can be manipulated to guide Colet to ruin, or into aiding the characters.

**Pay to Play.** Colet comes across as flippant whenever her attention is needed but not paid for. Working with Colet isn't difficult, but it grows costly quickly.

**Distractable.** Colet can't pull her eyes away from gold or treasure. The allure of wealth can become overwhelming.

## Colet's Key

Colet's Locks key is hidden within her dress. Her crown is enchanted with abjuration magic, preventing prying eyes from knowing what's on her person. Once a week, Colet travels into the Twisting Channel to refuel the magic in her crown and maintain her privacy.

## Starting Relationships

Here are all of Colet's impressions of everyone by the time the adventurers arrive. She calculates how to best utilize a person even when she doesn't think highly of them.

### Volto

*Positive*

Volto's schedules and systems are incredibly effective. Colet would take him on as her advisor if he wasn't her equal.

### Harle

*Neutral*

Colet has nothing to say to Harle, and they have nothing to say to her. Elegant.

### Gatto

*Negative*

Colet sees through Gatto's adoration as a means of making herself look good. She won't turn down her gifts, however.

### Adventurers

*Negative, unless the party has brought riches with them*

The operations of the Locks are too delicate as is; if Harle doesn't do their job then the adventurers will break everything.

## What's Colet Scheming?

No matter how much she despises someone, if they pay for Colet's time, she's willing to listen. Working with the other Doges to reach the surface is out of the question but working with the adventurers is an easy deal to make.

### Haggling With Hags

Colet had cut a deal with a hag named Miss Mae Mae to enchant any materials she brought to her in exchange for unused bautas. She hasn't been able to find Miss Mae Mae on her last few trips into the Twisting Channel. Colet reasons that she's worried about the hag, but the reality is that she's in danger of her operation being exposed.

### Eyes on the Water

The Doge of Gold has been setting up deals and arrangements with gondoliers throughout the Lockskirts to provide her with information on her fellow Doges and other pieces of gossip they come across. The gondoliers have started gambling with their intel and challenging one another to races through the channels. Colet isn't happy with this development.

### To Volto Go the Spoils

Colet has been attempting to entangle Volto in more of the administrivia of the Locks, including some of her own duties. When she gets up to the world above, she plans to maintain her control on the Locks through Volto. She knows she can't manipulate the other two Doges to the same degree of success as the Doge of Order.

## Working with Colet

Colet's involved with a lot of precarious deals. She needs to be sure her co-conspirators are valuing her time; money, treasure, and information can all be



utilized even if a plan goes awry. If she senses that her partners aren't dependable, then she counts on their unreliability.

If she's exposed in any of her schemes, she retreats into isolation until the attention on her dies down. Only her most trusted confidants know where she goes, if she gains any.

### Colet's Minions

The Doge of Gold appears to be alone in most of her public appearances. However, she bought off several of her fellow Doges' minions to serve as her own.

Whenever one or more of the other Doges aren't in attendance, she has  $1d4 + 1$  of their minions by her side (see below).

DOGE	MINION
Volto	Zomblinos
Harle	Mangled Wretched Revelers
Gatto	Cats (see appendix A)

## Intrigue with the Doges

Adventurers looking to acquire Locks Keys won't be able to forcefully contend with the Doges and their minions. They won't be able to ask nicely either, especially when goodwill does nothing to further the Doges' individual plans. The most effective plan of attack is to operate on the Doges' level and use subterfuge.

Each Doge has their own values, flaws, and plans that they are working toward, and keeping their Locks Keys secure is one of their top priorities. They won't let just anyone get close enough to them or they would risk those plans going up in smoke. For a chance at taking their key, the adventurers must:

- Learn about the Doge
- Get the Doge's attention
- Work with the Doge without the other Doges finding out
- Earn the Doge's trust

### Gossip

The Doges are all noticeable figures in the Locks. Everyone has their eyes on them, including the other Doges. Most Lochols have seen a Doge do something unusual or react in a specific way, and then they talk about it among themselves while socializing.

The adventurers can tap into a world of knowledge on the Doges' every sneeze and quip by gossiping with the Lochols. While mingling at a District's social event, a character can make an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (Investigation) check to learn a piece of gossip the Lochols are talking about at the moment. The higher the result of their check, the juicier the gossip being passed around is. Most events only have a few stories being shared at a time, meaning the adventurers must visit and revisit several events daily in order to learn everything they need about the Doges.

To that end, the more the adventurers accomplish around the city and in the Deep Rivers, the more the Lochols gossip about them. The Doges learn about the adventurers through gossip at a similar pace to the adventurers learning about them, and they almost certainly press the adventurers about their exploits.

### Getting the Doges' Attention

Engaging with the Doges requires the adventurers to appeal to their interests. Each character is already a unique presence in the Locks and will make the Doges interested in learning more, but they won't approach the adventurers without a reason or opportunity.

The adventurers can usually grab a Doge's attention at the daily events within each of the Locks districts. The Lochols swarm to these celebrations to express themselves and show off their costuming, usually with a Doge or two present. Should the adventurers stand out above the rest, one of the present Doges might make their move.

## Working with the Doges

The Doges are working against one another to collect the Locks Keys and leave the others behind, but they must publicly work with one another to keep the Locks afloat. Instead, they turn to their subordinates to do their dirty work for them. In the adventurers' quest to acquire the Locks Keys through intrigue, they quickly learn that the Doges are playing the same game.

Once the adventurers have connected with a Doge, they'll be asked to run a task for them without the other Doges finding out. This can include a variety of different covert operations.

## Earning the Doges' Trust

After successfully performing a task for a Doge, the adventurers are trusted enough to know what the Doge is up to. The Doge sees them as their means of escaping the Locks and are usually willing to lend their key toward the cause once their business is completed.

The adventurers can use this vulnerability to their advantage, especially if they are working with multiple Doges at the same time. While working on one Doge's big operation, another Doge's minions can arrive to support or ambush them and allow the party to grab the keys they need. Conversely, this can potentially become a disadvantage if individual characters are working with individual Doges. There may be moments where the party is pitted against one another in order to keep from blowing their cover.

A Doge defeated in the game of intrigue cannot stay defeated for long. They will quickly regroup their resources and do everything in their power to reclaim their Locks key. This can be a huge risk to other covert missions if the adventurers choose to go after Doges linearly. Balancing when to multitask on operations and planning out when take the keys will both be critical to success.

## Operations for the Doges

A Doge typically picks an operation for the adventurers they conspire with based on their dispositions toward everyone and the context within the adventure. Volto won't dare sabotage Harle's plans if he's on good terms with them, nor would he be worrying about spreading rumors if a Locks key is already missing.

The following list contains a few sample missions the Doges could delegate. Feel free to run different missions as the Doge's needs and dispositions change.

## OPERATIONS LIST

D8	OPERATION
1	Assassinate a Mole
2	Commit Sabotage and Shift Blame
3	Curry Favor
4	Distract a Doge
5	Espionage
6	Lock Down Resources
7	Spread Rumors
8	Spy on a Doge

### Assassinate a Mole

A **wretched reveler** (see appendix A) or other minion of this Doge has been leaking information about their plans to a rival Doge or gossiping with the Lochols. This Doge wants someone to join a group of their 1d4 + 1 **wretched revelers** while they scavenge for scraps in a random channel, find out who it is, and take out their mark.

D6	CHANNEL
1	Lichen Channel
2	Flooded Channel
3-4	Surging Channel
5	Twisting Channel
6	Misty Channel

The scavenging party heads out as soon as the Doge gives the word and doesn't plan on traveling too far into the channel. The adventurer on this operation is welcome to scavenge for scraps as well, but their main task is to listen to the revelers' conversation. A creature that succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell which minion is the mole. The adventurer is then expected to destroy them.

Other revelers witnessing this understand if informed that this is a request from the Doge. If the adventurer wants to keep the mole alive, they must deal with the witnesses, who will definitely tell the truth to the Doge.

### Commit Sabotage and Shift Blame

Having a rival Doge deal with the fallout from the Lochols will prevent them from meddling in this Doge's operations. The adventurer is tasked with participating in a random district's event in disguise, causing havoc within the district or preventing them from running the event that day, and getting the Lochols to believe it was the rival Doge's fault.

D4	DISTRICT EVENT
1	Parade at the District of Streamers
2	Feats of Strength at the District of Swords
3	Consumption Competitions at the District of Wines
4	Masquerade at the District of Lights

The adventurer's disguise needs to be convincing enough that the Lochols and other Doges cannot recognize them. When the adventurer has caused enough problems at an event, the Lochols can be convinced this was arranged by a particular Doge with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check.

## Curry Favor

The adventurer is tasked with getting on the good side of a rival Doge without revealing who they're working for. This Doge might tell the adventurer a few things that the rival Doge values and suggests bringing them scrap in addition to getting their attention. The goal is to be able to learn more about what the rival Doge is up to and eventually lower their guard.

## Distract a Doge

The next district event the adventurers and the rival Doge attends,  $1d2 + 1$  of this Doge's **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) or minions will be present as well. The adventurer is tasked with getting a rival Doge's attention and keeping them distracted while the minions attempt to take one of the rival Doge's minions hostage. If all goes to plan, this Doge will be able to probe the hostage for information on their rival.

## Espionage

The adventurer is tasked with collecting intelligence from a **wretched reveler** (see appendix A) mole that's been following a rival Doge around. The goal is to meet them out in a random channel without anyone finding out.

D6	CHANNEL
1	Lichen Channel
2	Flooded Channel
3	Surging Channel
4-5	Twisting Channel
6	Misty Channel

The mole isn't waiting that deep into the channel but isn't sure if they were followed or not. The adventurer must make a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check to see if they notice the  $1d3 - 1$  **wretched revelers** hiding nearby. The operation is a bust if they get word back to the rival Doge.

The mole has valuable information about one of the rival Doge's schemes and shares it directly with the adventurers if the coast is clear.

## Lock Down Resources

The adventurer is tasked with capturing a creature from the channels and letting it loose in a rival Doge's area of authority, locking down their resources and keeping them preoccupied for a while. This operation can endanger (or at the very least upset) Lochols in the affected district of the Locks, and this Doge recommends the adventurer avoid witnesses for their own sake and not just the Doge's reputation.

The creature needs to be a significant force, but not an impossible to deal with monster. This Doge provides a few options and where to release it to best affect the rival Doge.

## EXAMPLE CREATURES

CHANNEL	CREATURES
Lichen	Giant ranalune
Flooded	Merrow
Surging	Gelatinous cube
Twisted	Phase spider
Misty	Cloaker

## DOGE AND DOMAINS

DOGE	AREA OF AUTHORITY
Volto	Districts of Light and Streamers
Harle	Districts of Swords and Wines
Gatto	Lockworks
Colet	Lockskirts

Releasing a monster in this area will affect events that take place there, if any. The events will resume the following day, provided the damage caused wasn't catastrophic. The Lockworks and the Lockskirts will still be able to function as normal.

## Spread Rumors

This Doge wants to take a more subtle approach toward tying up another Doge, for better or for worse. The adventurer is tasked with spreading lies about the Doge amid the gossip of the Lochols and affecting their overall impressions. For example, Volto might spread a lie about a true act of kindness Harle performed for a Lochol, or Colet could spread a rumor about Gatto hoarding scraps from the Lockworks.

Getting the rumor to spread requires the adventurer to succeed on a DC 13 Charisma (Deception) check while gossiping with Lochols at a social event. Alternatively, they can spread the rumor to three individual Lochols while traveling between districts.

## Spy on a Doge

This Doge is aware of a rival Doge's upcoming private meeting on an empty segment of the Lockskirts. The adventurer needs to find which dock they'll be on and listen in on the meeting without being caught. The Doges must inform the Lochols on the skirts when they want to clear a segment of the docks for an evening, and this Doge suggests asking someone there for the details.

At the Lockskirts, any unfamiliar Lochol would be hesitant to reveal this kind of private information unless they were bribed with scraps or intimidated. The adventurer must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check to get the meeting location—this location is typically a crumbling, nondescript building in the Doge's home district.

The meeting takes place in the evening after acquiring the information, and the rival Doge arrives with 1d4 + 2 **wretched revelers** (see appendix A) in tow. They're talking to a Lochol that's either familiar or unfamiliar to the adventurer. The adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check, otherwise the guards notice someone spying upon them, and the meeting is dispersed, to be had again the next day in another location. If the check is successful, the Doge relays information about their upcoming plans to show up their rivals and gain social power within the Locks.



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