



HONEY, THE RATS IN THE BASEMENT UNIONIZED

RATS IN THE UNDERCROFT HAVE BEEN MAGICALLY AWAKENED BY IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF BOTCHED POTIONS AND HAVE DECLARED SOVEREIGNTY.

HONEY, THE RATS IN THE BASEMENT UNIONIZED



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RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, you need the Fifth Edition core rulebooks.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

The core 5th Edition monster book contains stat blocks for most of the creatures found in this adventure. Monster stat blocks created specifically for this adventure will be included at the end. When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the core monster book. If the monster is not included in the core monster book, it will be included in the appendices of the adventure.

Adjusting Encounters

This adventure contains advice for adjusting encounters based on the number of characters in the party. You are empowered to modify the number of enemies in an encounter and their hit point totals as you see fit. If you need to adjust the difficulty of an encounter during combat, you can alter hit point totals without the player characters ever knowing and have enemies retreat or reinforcements arrive as needed.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this adventure:

hp	hit points
AC	Armor Class
DC	Difficulty Class
XP	experience points
pp	platinum piece(s)
gp	gold piece(s)
ep	electrum piece(s)
sp	silver piece(s)
cp	copper piece(s)
NPC	nonplayer character
LG	Lawful Good
NG	Neutral Good
LN	Lawful Neutral
N	Neutral
CN	Chaotic Neutral
LE	Lawful Evil
CE	Chaotic Evil
NE	Neutral Evil



Honey, The Rats in the Basement Unionized

Honey, *The Rats in the Basement Unionized* is a Fifth Edition adventure for 3 to 7 characters, optimized for a party of 4 characters of 1st or 2nd level. Rats in the undercroft have been magically awakened by improper disposal of botched potions and have declared sovereignty. The characters are called to exterminate the rats. Will they do the dirty work or make new friends?

This adventure is intended to be run as part of the Rafiton: Arcane School for Monsters adventure path. However, this adventure can be run as a one-shot in any semi-urban setting. The adventure location is a rocky cave situated beneath a potions classroom, shop, or similar building.

BACKGROUND

Franklin, a monstrous giant snail and a professor of potion-making, has been indiscriminately disposing of potions, which have been draining into the local water supply. An unforeseen byproduct of this was the incidental awakening of giant rats that were drinking from the tainted water supply. The awakened rats have taken over the undercroft where Franklin stores his treasure and old supplies for potion-making.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The characters are invited to a meeting with Franklin, a monstrous giant snail (treat as a **mage**). Franklin has bulbous eyes on boney stalks, drooping pale-green skin, a heavy brown shell with four spiked whorls, and four spindly legs that slide his mass across the ground. He's overeager and can't help but smile with an uncanny toothy grin. Franklin has a problem: he has accidentally spawned a society of awakened giant rats in the undercroft.

Franklin explains that disposed potions from a class he instructs magically awakened a swarm of rats in the tunnels below the school — the swarm of awakened rats has been gestating into a full-fledged society for months. Franklin attempted and failed to un-awaken them by dumping more potions in the water. He wants the characters to get rid of the “uncivilized pests.”





PREVIEW
PREVIEW
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THE UNDERCROFT

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of The Undercroft.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in The Undercroft have the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The undercroft is built out of a natural stone cave. The ceilings are 7 feet high.

Lighting. The undercroft is dark with spots of light provided by torches.

Climate. The undercroft is warm and humid.

Awakened Giant Rats. There are a lot of *awakened giant rats* present in this adventure, however not all of them are named. For consistency, Shakespearean names are preferred for the rats due to the Shakespearean reading material they've found.

1 - Parley Room

Read the following:

A pile of crates and barrels illuminated by an oil lantern sit in the center of this open cavern with a domed ceiling.

Encounter: Theodore the Rat. There is one **giant rat**, about the size of a 20-pound dog, perched on the top-most barrel. The rat introduces himself with a curtsy as Theodore and asks each creature present to introduce themselves. After pleasantries have been exchanged, Theodore asks what the characters are here for.

Theodore is good-natured and observant. If the characters are plain about their task to exterminate the rats or express genuine curiosity, he suggests the characters learn more about the rats that live here by participating in a few activities with them. Theodore will guide them through the following areas:

- The Pit of Despair (area 5)
- The Rat Shrine (area 4)
- The Workshop (area 6)
- The Nesting Cavern (area 8)

If the characters attack, Theodore flees to area 5 and the **giant rats** hidden behind the arrow slits throw acid at the characters. After the acid is thrown, they flee to area 5 and begin alerting the rest of the **giant rats** throughout the caves. Once the characters have chosen violence, the rats respond with violence.

1a, Arrow Slits. There are two **giant rats** hidden in the cavity here. They have three-quarters cover and four flasks of acid between them. The rats can use their action to throw a flask of acid up to 15 feet as an improvised ranged attack, dealing 6 (2d6) acid damage on a hit. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or has a passive Perception of 20 notices the arrow slits, but cannot see what's inside them.



2 - Rocky Corridor

Hazard. A Medium or larger creature that attempts to move through this area must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to squeeze through the area. A creature with a Strength score of 16 or higher has disadvantage on this check because of the bulk of their muscular physique. On a failure, a creature is restrained between the rocks in the center of the passage and begins to panic. Each round, a restrained creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to stay calm. On a failure, the creature begins hyperventilating (use the rules for Suffocation from the core rules).

Another creature can use their action to dislodge a restrained creature by succeeding on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, choosing to either pull the restrained creature back 5 feet or shove them forward 5 feet on a success — if the restrained creature is still in the rocky corridor, they must repeat the DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move in or out of the corridor. Applying a flask of oil or other lubricant to the restrained creature provides advantage on this check.

3 - Mud Trap

Hazard. A creature that succeeds on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check or has a passive Perception of 15 notices the mud trap. A creature that walks into the mud pit immediately sinks 5 feet into the mud. If the creature is shorter than 5 feet, refer to the rules on Suffocation in the core rules. Each round, a creature in the mud pit can use their action to make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to try and pull themselves out, escaping the mud pit on a success. If the creature is coated in oil or another lubricant, they have disadvantage on this check.



4 - Rat Shrine

A stone ramp leads down into a sunken section of floor where a large stone carving of a rat's head is illuminated by a dozen candles scattered around it.

Encounter: Rats in Reverence. There are three *awakened giant rats* in this room. Two are meditating quietly while the third is dusting off the stone carving. The meditating rats are named Orsino and Lavinia. The one tending the carving is named Camillo.

If the characters have been violent, the three rats are cowering and hiding beneath the edge of the sunken area. A character that succeeds on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check or has a passive Perception of 13 notices them.

If the characters have been peaceful, Camillo greets any newcomers warmly and invites them to take a moment to meditate with the other rats. A creature that meditates in the sunken area enters a dreamlike state and experiences a vivid hallucination wherein they're transported to an idyllic meadow with fresh water and blooming flowers. To wake up on their own, a creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature remains in a blissful meditation for another hour. After each hour, they can attempt the saving throw. Another creature can wake up a meditating creature by shaking them awake, however Camillo frowns upon this.

5 - Pit of Despair

Five bright torches illuminate a large pit in the center of the room lined with sharp, protruding sticks and barbed wire.

Encounter: Poetry Battle. There are fourteen *awakened giant rats* in this room.

If the characters have been violent, the rats break the pit's exit platform and are hiding in two of the dead-end alcoves, waiting for the characters to enter. When the opportunity presents itself, they run out and attempt to shove as many characters into the pit as possible.

If the characters have been peaceful, there are two *awakened giant rats* in the pit verbally sparring with one another. Twelve *awakened giant rats* are standing around the perimeter of the pit listening and snapping their nails when one of the rats in the pit makes a stinging remark. If the characters observe for a moment, you can use the following dialog:

The characters are invited to participate in the poetry battle. The participating creatures must make contested Charisma (Persuasion) checks. If a participating player recites a poem or otherwise leans into the roleplay, grant them advantage on this check.

Pit of Despair. A character shoved into the pit takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from falling and 3 (1d6) piercing damage from the barbed wire.

Climbing out of the pit requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check and a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics). A character that fails the Athletics check falls back into the pit, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. A character that fails the Acrobatics check



takes 3 (1d6) piercing damage from the barbed wire as they try to climb past it.

5a, The Hole. Rats that misbehave and can't get along with the others are chucked into this 20-foot-deep hole as punishment. Currently, there is an *awakened giant rat* named Theseus in the hole. He was thrown into the hole for sitting on the queen's throne.

6 - Workshop

This area features a stone table with a makeshift hammer, wooden block, and several potions laying out. Three shelves along the walls hold various potions and crates, many of which have damp or moldy bottoms, as if partially submerged.

Encounter: Valeria the Crafter. There is one *awakened giant rat* quietly reorganizing some of the materials on the shelves. Her name is Valeria and she has a knack for fishing out debris from the stream that cuts through the area and turning it into something useful. She lacks formal training in engineering but has a strong intuition for it.

She is easily lost in her work, so regardless of whether the characters have been violent or not, she is here working. She is eager to show any newcomers her latest concoction: bottled fire.

A lanky rat with frizzled hair burnt at the tips walks over to one of the shelves. She pulls out a brown bottle with crackling blue flames inside of it. "Look!" she pronounces, "I put fire in a bottle!"

She lets each creature hold and examine the bottle before asking if they would like to help her create more. A creature

that accepts the invitation is seated at her table or on the ground and given a set of supplies for potion-making: a colored glass container and three small chemical vials. Following Valeria, the creature must carefully mix the three vials together into the glass container. To do this, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a failure, the chemicals react unexpectedly and blow up in the creature's face, burning off any facial hair (eyebrows, mustache, etc.) and stunning them for 1 round.

Treasure: Flasks. There are two flasks of oil and four flasks of acid on the workshop's shelves.

7 - Water Well

This natural well provides an easily accessible source of freshwater for the rats.



8 - Nesting Cavern

Piles of straw are scattered around the walls of this cave. A campfire roars in the center, casting light on a throne made of bones. Sitting atop the throne is a giant rat wearing a crown made of humanoid finger bones.

Encounter: Marion, the Rat Queen.

Marion is an old *awakened giant rat* that takes great pride in her family. She's extremely intelligent and surprisingly well-read for an awakened creature thanks to a wealth of discarded books that she's found. She carries a broken piece of wood with a page of her favorite book pinned to it.

If they have been violent, Marion recognizes that there is little she can do to stop them from killing her and hopes that they can live with what they've done.

If the characters have been peaceful, Theodore introduces the characters and then encourages them to explain why they are here. Marion is amenable to any arrangement with Franklin the characters might propose that allows them to remain autonomous and live here in peace.

Throne of Bones. The throne is sized for a Small creature and is composed of a combination of rat and humanoid bones. A creature that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that the humanoid bones are old enough to predate the *awakening* of the rats.

Visible plainly behind the throne is a path that descends deeper into the winding caves around the undercroft.

Larder. An alcove to the east of the throne contains old food that the rats have been eating. Additionally, there are a handful of old books, shakespearean plays, stacked on the crates.

Hidden Vault. Between the nesting cavern and the pit of despair is a section of cave with a hollow interior containing the treasure vault (area 9). A creature that is standing within 10 feet of the vault's entrance and makes a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notices grooves in the stone indicating a passage. Opening the vault requires shoving the stones inward with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

9 - Treasure Vault

A stone ramp descends into this dark chamber. Gold is piled on the ground amidst wooden crates and barrels.

Trap: Glyph of Warding. There is a modified *glyph of warding* cast on the stone ramp. The glyph is nearly invisible and requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check to be found. When a creature that is not Franklin walks onto the glyph while carrying any items stolen from the vault, the glyph explodes with magical ink. Each creature in a 10-foot radius is covered in magical bright tie-dye ink. The ink stains a creature's skin for 5 (1d10) days and cannot be removed by any means short of a *wish* spell.

Treasure: Gold. There is 1,000 gp spread between two piles on the ground. Additionally, inside of the crates and barrels is 500 gp worth of materials for crafting potions.



10 - Hatchery

There are thirteen red eggs set carefully on piles of straw.

Eggs. Each egg contains the embryo of a **giant rat**. In a strange turn of events, one of the potions that Franklin drained into the water supply changed the rats' reproductive systems such that they produce eggs now.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Parley with the Rats. If the characters have parlayed with the giant rats, they need to return to Franklin and explain the situation to him. Franklin isn't happy with the presence of the giant rats, but if the characters present a compelling argument for why he should stop trying to kill the rats, he will relent. The characters are rewarded with a *potion of poison*, which Franklin huffs and says he will "no longer need."

Killing the Rats. If the characters chose to kill the rats, Franklin is thrilled. He gives the characters two *potions of healing* for their help.



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