



The Blight Pathologies



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Volume 5: The Last Fleshgineer



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The Blight: Pathologies

The Last Fleshgineer

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Pg. 4
Adventure Synopsis	Pg. 4
Adventure End	Pg. 6
Maps.....	Pg. 8
Legal Appendix.....	Pg. 101

Introduction

In the aggressive race for absolute power and wealth in Toiltown, two contestants have prevailed over the rest of the would-be contenders: Joseph Sedge and Rudyard Brome. Sedge controls nearly all the manufacturing in Toiltown, including twenty cotton mills in his own private section of the city, Sedgetown. Brome owns almost ten new slaughterhouses, utilizing new techniques to gain efficiency in his production of meat for Castorhage. Each man is constantly seeking new methods to speed up his operation to pass his adversary in financial prestige and influence. Trusted engineers and workers are in high demand in both organizations, often making the difference as each tyrant tries to outdo the other.

One such man is the last surviving fleshgineer working for Sedge. A member of the four-man team that developed the new cotton-splitting machine, Grazle Adamsby recently found himself as the lone survivor after the other three contributors died in freak accidents. Grazle's nervousness about the situation has led him to make mistakes, and although he has not yet fallen victim to a bizarre accident or strange illness, he has been placed on "probation," a fate often viewed as worse than death. In probation scenarios, Sedge places a *dungeon ring* upon his target until he gains all the information he needs to either better control the individual or to dispose of them.

Adamsby foresaw the day when he would eventually be viewed as disposable and set in motion a plan he developed years ago. He would hide out in the slums of Toiltown, avoiding his family and loved ones to keep them from Sedge's minions. He also would contact agents close to Rudyard Brome, knowing that his knowledge and abilities would be eagerly accepted by Sedge's rival. Hoping that Brome would eventually rescue him and his family from Sedge's hunters, Adamsby would be freed of his miserable existence in Sedgetown.

Grazle's wife was well aware of the plan and expected to hear from her husband as he hid waiting for Brome's instructions. However, rumors in Toiltown suggest that Brome isn't interested in making a deal but instead wishes to abduct Grazle by force and lock him in one of his slaughterhouses until he builds a new machine. Grazle's wife has no choice but to hire mercenaries to rescue her husband from the slums near the cotton mills and bring him home.

a crude drawing of Grazle and instructions to kill the man and get his work, or get his work only if they cannot get to him.

Background Information

Grazle Adamsby's contribution to the recent burst of success in Sedgetown is immeasurable. He and his team have invented new technologies using the living and the dead that have propelled manufacturing practices forward. Instead of rewarding his workers for the new inventions, Joseph Sedge has decided to kill them to prevent their knowledge from reaching his greatest competitor, Rudyard Brome. Sedge is known to be extremely paranoid and irrational; his decisions are often illogical and desperate, resulting in the loss of life simply to preserve trade secrets.

If Sedge's minions find Adamsby first, they certainly murder him before stealing back his plans. Their instructions are to kill anything standing between them and the documented designs. In the maze of sewers below Sedgetown, they are likely to encounter Brome's assassins or the characters as they search for the hiding designer.

Rudyard Brome isn't interested in the fleshgineer beyond the plans that he's carrying — his agents have seen the fleeing man with folders of designs. Knowing that Adamsby carries a vast wealth on paper has tempted Sedge's greatest adversary to infiltrate the Sedgedown sewers to try to find the old man first. If his assassins capture the fleshgineer alive, they are instructed to bring him back, too.

Adventure Start: Getting the Offer

Characters are approached in a location that is private and easy to exit — a narrow street, a dark tavern, or an abandoned warehouse are all acceptable locations. Agents have been watching them for a day or two to gauge their trustworthiness, and only contact them once they observe their habits and behaviors (chaotic or evil characters will likely not be asked to help).

Six cloaked figures approach the group, wishing to discuss a private matter. If the characters agree, they indicate that they have a rescue mission for them, and offer a chest of gold as payment. Without indicating the amount, they ask the group if they're interested. The payment amount will be discussed only if the characters agree to hear more about the job. The names of Grazle and his family will not be used until the group swears to help. If the group haggles for more money, the cloaked figures offer a special reward to be added by the target after his rescue (one of his plans, no doubt). No portion of the reward money is given in advance.

Instructions to the warehouse and trapdoor (to the sewers below) is given once the group agrees to the mission. They are told only Grazle's first name and that two other parties are also searching for him, but with different intentions; no other parties are to be trusted once the rescue begins. Once rescued, they are to escort Grazle to the Workclock (Toiltown, TT-9) where the same cloaked agents will accompany all to an abandoned warehouse nearby. The pass-phrase, "Where flesh and blood meet ..." when spoken by the characters will be answered by "... is where the work both begins and ends" to confirm legitimate agents on both sides. At the warehouse, the final reward payment will be exchanged for the rescued man.

Wandering Monsters in the Sewers

1d10	Result
1	1d4 Assassins
2	1d4 Bearded Devils
3–10	No Encounter

Adventure Synopsis

The characters are approached by loyal agents of the Adamsby family who are looking for trustworthy mercenaries to rescue their beloved Grazle. They are offering a large sum of money, pooled by family members and friends for the one-time effort. Additionally, they believe that Grazle has the designs to his mechanical inventions, both those currently in use and future but unproven ideas. They are sure that Grazle will reward the group with future earnings from the sale of his plans or may give them one in reward.

Adamsby is a talented and intelligent man, and has figured out how to dull the scrying ability of the *dungeon ring*. By escaping into the lower levels of Sedgetown, beneath the stone and dirt streets and into the sewers, he's dampened the ring's power, making it hard for Sedge's hunters to find him. This technique has been thwarted by Sedge's mages, and his location is almost known. Chain devils, fiends, and golem-hounds have been sent down into the sewers to fetch the man, dead or alive. Each creature has been given the scent of their target and is hunting for the silent call from the *dungeon ring*.

Meanwhile, Rudyard Brome has sent his secret agents into the sewers to try to capture the plans first — whether the fleshgineer lives or dies is of no great importance to him. Assassins loyal to the slaughterhouse mogul are en route to the sewers at the start of the adventure, likely clashing with Sedge's minion and the characters. Each assassin carries a parchment with

THE EXILED (OR THE DIRTY BOWL)

S-1. Sedge-town Warehouse

After several turns along a winding back alley, the door with the special markings in the instructions can be found. The door is a little-used back entrance to one of the older mills in Sedge-town and is secured with a rusty padlock that is easy to pick or break open. Inside, a cluttered room of empty barrels and crates provides the perfect hiding area for **4 assassins** who are lying in wait for a pair of **bearded devils**. The devils are just opening the trapdoor to the sewers below. Either the characters or the assassins find the devils first, with the other group arriving at the start of a battle.

S-2. Sewer Junction

Polluted water, debris, and other unspeakable materials float along the slow-moving sewer tunnel traveling west to east through the area. Some of the current naturally shifts north and south as it redirects around a center island in the chamber. A ladder from area **S-1** descends into the area, providing a dry place to begin a foray into the dark tunnels. Water in most places in the sewers is 3 feet deep; in junction rooms, however, it tends to be deeper, closer to 4 feet.

Two planks of rotting wood provide slippery but secure access to the 1-foot-wide ledges at the outer edges of the chamber. The north and east tunnels lead to several more sewer junction locations unimportant to the story and probably filled with more of Sedge's and Brome's agents searching for Grazle.

S-3. Tunnel Junction

A bloated, partially submerged body is caught upon a plank of wood laid across the tunnel. A successful examination of the body reveals an older, human male who suffered a dozen knife wounds in the back and neck. He appears to have been dead for more than a week. The characters may think this is Grazle but it is not. This man was the unfortunate victim of a mugging, and the perpetrator dumped his body into the sewer. A thorough search of the body reveals a gold locket around the neck, inscribed "To My Love, Herbert."

S-4. East Storage Location

Primarily used to store sewer machinery parts, spare ladders, and extra wooden planks, the two portcullis-blocked storage rooms are secured with large padlocks. Although the wooden planks can be reached and removed through the bars, ladders and expensive machinery parts are unreachable without opening the barred doors.

There is a 50% chance that **2 assassins** are waiting below the surface of the sewer water, ready to spring on unsuspecting characters. They attack quickly before diving into the water, disappearing from view. The two assassins follow the characters, attacking again whenever possible before retreating to the safety of the murky water once more.

S-5. West Storage Location

Built much like area **S-4**, this location differs in that the western portcullis door has been torn away from the wall by a large **chain devil**. The fearsome creature is found searching the western wall within the storage room as the characters arrive. Using several animated chains, the devil attempts to hold one or more creatures below the water to drown while engaging other foes.

The assassins in area **S-8** already discovered and passed through the secret door, but the chain devil has not yet discovered the secret to opening the portal. It is a challenging secret door to find and operate, but the devil's attempts should provide a clue to the characters that something important is found on the western side of the small room.

The eastern portcullis storage room is locked with a partially broken padlock, rusted from the ever-present wetness of the sewers. Although difficult to unlock, it can be easily broken open. Under boxes of machine parts, a short ladder, and several wooden boards, a small metal box contains a magical hammer named *Repeater* (see sidebox).

Repeater

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

After the hammer *Repeater* is used to strike an object once, it attempts to strike the same object over and over until the command word "cease" is spoken. If the object moves, so will the magical hammer, continuing to strike as its target moves. If the object is an unmoving target, the subsequent strikes are automatic. However, if the object moves or attempts to defend itself against the hammer, *Repeater* strikes with a +2 bonus to hit. The hammer deals 1d3 points of damage on each successful strike.

Although originally crafted by a blacksmith to make short work of his most tedious chores, the hammer can be used as an independently striking weapon. Attackers must successfully strike their target once to get the hammer to continue to repeatedly strike thereafter. The hammer continues to strike a foe even after it is dead until the command word is given.

S-6. Sewer Junction

A ladder in the middle of the sewer junction leads up to a busy warehouse above. Characters using this exit encounter dozens of Sedge's workers, foremen, and guards, and will be captured as trespassers immediately. The water is especially deep in this area, reaching nearly 5 feet in the western side of the room. Tunnels in the east and south sides of the room lead to more junction chambers and tunnels within the vast Sedge-town sewer system.

If the characters find the exit from area **S-12** in the ceiling and escape their pursuers into this chamber, they encounter a hunting party of **4 bearded devils** and **2 golem-hounds** (treat as an undead worg for statistics) entering from the east. The devils release the hounds, who run along the ledges quickly to get to their victims. Two devils secure the south tunnel while the other two hold the east tunnel. If the dogs fail to bring down their foes, the devils advance to capture and slay the group.

S-7. Hidden Meeting Room

Disgruntled Sedge-town workers once met in this now abandoned area located behind the secret door.

Although it hasn't been used for a long time, several of Sedge's knowledgeable workers (including Grazle) are aware of its location. A slight ramp up from the east takes characters into a dry, dusty chamber. Dozens of makeshift beds and old chairs fill the deserted place.

Tracks in the floor lead northward through a dark tunnel. Up ahead, several assassins have tracked down Grazle, who now hides in area **S-8**.

S-8. South Secret Room

Another hiding room for escaped workers, this chamber appears not to have been used for some time. Rotting hammocks and molding straw mats cover the floor. Preparing to climb up into an opening in the top of the north wall as the characters arrive are **4 assassins**. (If the characters arrive via the north, reverse the encounter and place the assassins in area **S-9**.)

Grazle is trying to hide in the tunnel between areas **S-8** and **S-9**. He cowers in fear, having been pursued for days within the dark and wet tunnels. He carries a knapsack filled with a few pieces of fruit, half a loaf of bread, and several parchments with intricate designs. He tries to hide the papers from characters as long as possible before reluctantly revealing their purpose and value. He wears a *dungeon ring* and hopes it can be quickly removed by one of the characters (only a *remove curse* spell can remove the magical ring).

The narrow tunnel crosses over the sewer tunnel below, opening into area **S-9**.

S-9. North Secret Room

Once used to store hidden supplies, this area is now filled with smashed wooden boxes, rotten burlap bags, and empty shelving units. A thick layer

THE BLIGHT: PATHOLOGIES

of dust covers the floor. A poorly constructed secret door opens into a dead-end tunnel just south of a sewer junction. The tunnel descends to the water level in the northern junction room. The entry door from area S-9 to S-8 is well-hidden, requiring a thorough search from the north side to find. The door to the opposite room is simple to detect from within the dark overhead tunnel, however.

A search of the discarded crates and bags should awaken a **grey ooze** from hibernation. Realizing its hunger, it attacks the nearest searching character.

S-10. Sewer Junction

Low-lying water slowly meanders through the room, reaching only 2 feet at its deepest point. A debris jam farther in the eastern tunnel prevents much of the water from pouring into the area. If a character disturbs the pile of wood, garbage, and waste, it unleashes a wave of sewer water westward, knocking clumsy characters underwater and into the northern or western tunnels.

If the characters entered this chamber from area S-9, they hear the splashing footsteps of large creatures in both the northern and western tunnels approaching the junction room. As they narrow their search for the missing fleshgineer, **4 chain devils** are closing in, with 2 arriving from each direction.

S-11. Shadowy Alcove

Guarding this exit in the hope that the missing fleshgineer passes through the area are **2 assassins**. They attack viciously, surprising the characters and Grazle from the shadows. They try to capture Grazle and his bag, but settle for the latter if the characters are quick to defend the old man. Grazle pleads with the group to recover the bag if it is stolen, declaring it worth a fortune. The assassins exit through area S-12, then flee east toward area S-6. They move northward, hoping to exit at area S-2.

One of the assassins carries a well-crafted long dagger with a hidden poison reserve filled with a single-dose of a lethal flower poison. Additionally, the dagger is razor sharp, dealing 1d8 base damage and adding a +1 to-hit.

You may elect to have the assassins run into the bearded devils and golem-hounds when they reach area S-6, creating a large battle between all three factions in the recovery of the bag and the rescue of Grazle.

S-12. Secret Exit

Dozens of tables and workbenches are found in various states of abandonment. Tools for metal and leather working are found near a small, cold fire pit. An old loom for cotton work lies broken to the other side. Bits of leather, cotton, and twine are found scattered about the floor.

Escaped workers long ago created a one-way secret door in case their hidden chambers were discovered by Sedgetown hunting parties. The difficult secret door exits onto the ledge of a sewer tunnel that leads to area S-6 to the east and a great drain (dead-end) far to the west.

Exiting the Tunnels

The characters' best option for escape is to exit where they entered, at area S-2. Exiting in other locations (both shown on the map and elsewhere in the sewer system, not shown) have the group emerging in well-populated, hostile territory, deep within Sedgetown. Nearly the entire town is on the lookout for Grazle and the large bounty being offered for his capture.

One last ambush should occur somewhere between areas S-2 and S-6 as the characters try to escape with or without Grazle. You should create an ambush from the wandering monster table at the start of this section or create a custom encounter to rival the surviving characters' strength. Either way, the characters have to pass one last test to get free of their pursuers.

Assuming the characters exit through the same warehouse door they entered, they should have no problem navigating the shadowed streets and dark alleys at the southeastern edge of Sedgetown as they flee the hunters. You may add additional encounters if desired, but the group should eventually arrive at the predetermined meeting location.



Meeting at the Workclock

The area around the massive clock is extremely busy as residents travel between work and home at all hours. Hundreds of people near the famous landmark at night are replaced by thousands during the day. If Grazle is not hidden or disguised, he is noticed immediately. The reward for his capture is a dozen lifetimes of wages for any Sedgetown worker; the cries of his sighting cascade throughout the crowd, creating a frenzy of searchers and reward-seekers.

If Grazle is disguised, the group should have little problem finding the six cloaked figures near the great clock. If approached, they wait for the characters to offer the beginning of the pass-phrase before answering in turn. If no phrase is spoken, they move away, seeking a new place to wait within view of the Workclock.

Adventure End

Once the escort to the empty warehouse is completed, Grazle is returned to his waiting family. His wife and children emerge from the shadows under the watchful eyes of nearly a dozen cloaked figures. As promised, a chest of gold is brought out to the group. If the negotiations required the trade of one of Grazle's plans, he begrudgingly relinquishes a

THE EXILED (OR THE DIRTY BOWL)

smaller invention to the group. The invention for a piece of manufacturing machinery likely fetches a good price from one of the major players in Toiltown.

Optional Endings

Although the group can walk away after the delivery of the rescued fleshgineer and subsequent payment, you can choose to add another adventure hook or change the ending:

Ending One: The cloaked figures are Anarchists, fed up with Sedge's relentless paranoia and destruction of lives in Toiltown. They propose a temporary union of forces between their members and the characters, and a raid on Sedge's Refuge (Toiltown, TT-8). They have been organizing a raid on the secluded fortress and could use the characters' help. The Anarchists openly suggest infiltration and the murder of Joseph Sedge. Payment for the characters' services will be made with the riches found within the refuge, rumored to be vast and immeasurable in value.

Ending Two: Now that Graze Adamsby has been returned safely, the Anarchists would prefer to eliminate the "loose ends" — namely, the characters. As guards escort Graze and his family away, a dozen cloaked figures assault the group, hoping to eliminate them from any complications in the Anarchists' future plans.

Dungeon Ring

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A jailer's dungeon ring is worked gold, set with carnelians. The ring is magically attuned to one or more iron prisoner's dungeon rings. When the wearer of a jailer's ring places a prisoner's ring on a subject, the prisoner cannot remove the ring without the use of a remove curse or wish spell. The wearer of the jailer's ring can also remove a linked prisoner's ring at any time.

The jailer is aware of any wearer of a linked prisoner's ring like a constant status spell. Additionally, all wearers of linked prisoner's rings count as familiar to the jailer for purposes of spells such as scrying and teleport.

Golem hound

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 56 (8d10 + 8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The golem hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

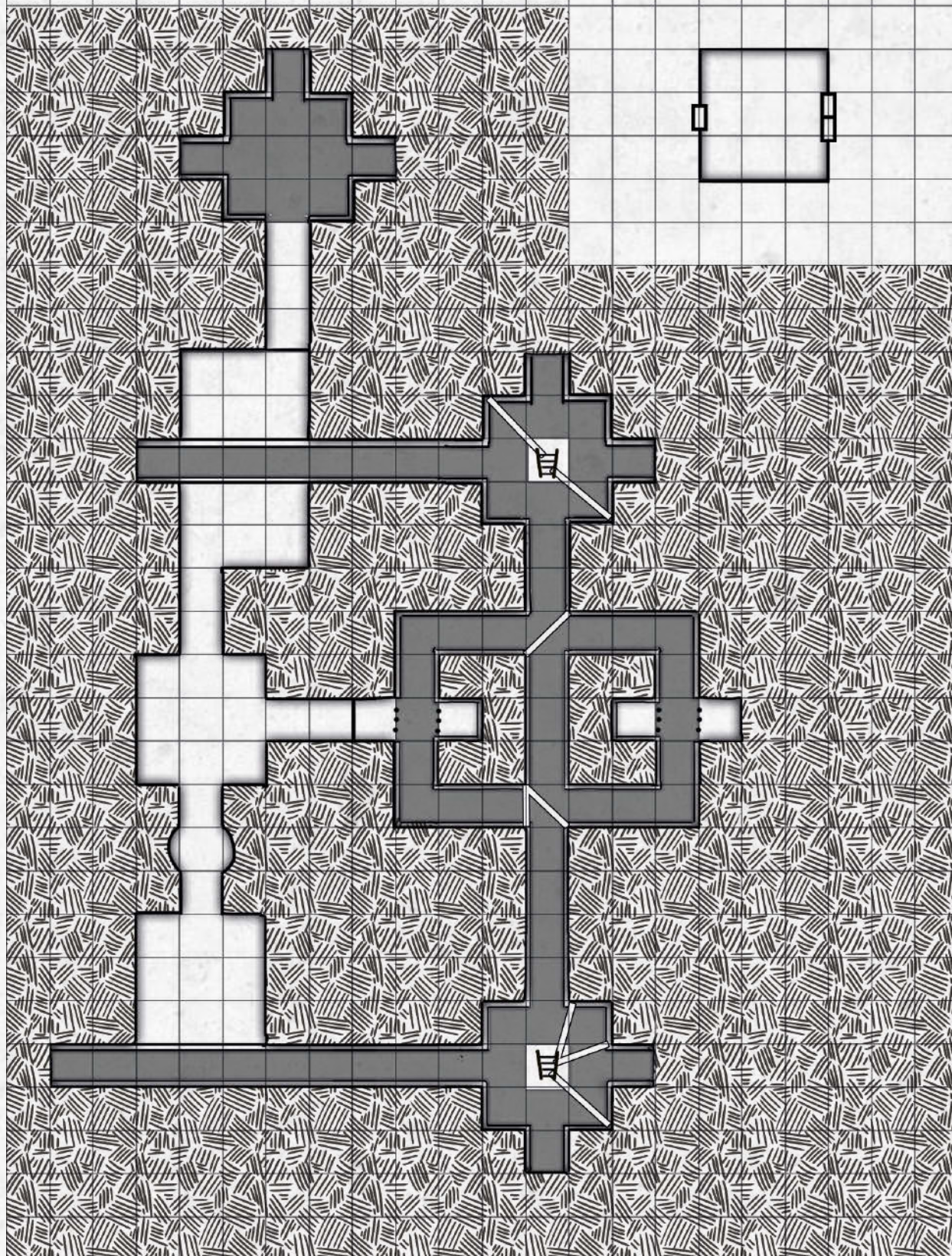
Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the golem hound to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the golem hound drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Last Fleshgineer

1 Square - 10 Feet



THE BLIGHT: PATHOLOGIES

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THE EXILED (OR THE DIRTY BOWL)

The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

EB1: The Crooked Nail

For decades, Theatre Infernalis offered shocking and frightful entertainment to customers who entered its gaping demonic façade and saw a frightful portrait of the eternal torments that await all sinners. Now rumours tell of the aging and supposedly-cursed proprietor's deteriorating health and the theatre's impending sale, and the Artists' Quarter has been abuzz with those seeking one final fright with a walk through the crucible-licked walls of the infernal house of the macabre before its final curtain call. But are the theatre's smoke-and-mirrors and cheap scares hiding a truly wicked secret? What is the nature of the curse and illness that afflict the owner? And did foul and profane rites once take place between its walls that outside forces now seek to exploit? What happens when the spookshow's fun and games transform into a terrifying reality, threatening to spill forth an infernal malevolence onto the streets of the Blight?

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