

# Realm of the Rat King

A [Dungeon Delvers](#) adventure

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Rat art by Peter Seckler, CC-BY-3.0.

## Introduction

When the rats swarmed out of the woods and through the village of Roarke, nobody paid much attention. But when they swarmed through Trent and Yarah only a few days later, the locals knew something foul was afoot.

Survivors describe the event as though a wave of rats crested at one end of the village and rolled all the way to the other. Along their chosen path they would enter every building by door, window, or chimney, seeking any small shiny object or food they could easily carry away.

The villagers were largely unharmed if they simply got out of the way, but a few stopped to fight back and paid the price. Other local villages have asked for help, but in the meantime have started a network of lookouts to give the people even a little warning to flee for their lives.

## Getting the PCs Involved

The PCs may hear about the problem in a number of ways, including:

- Visiting one of the affected villages and speaking to the villagers.
- Noticing a bounty posted on trees along the road asking for help.
- Contacted directly by one of the village elders or local law enforcement to discover the origin of the rats.
- Coming across the trail left behind by a group of rats heading to or leaving a village.

With just a little investigation, the group can determine:

- The direction the rats come from (WIS roll).
- The fact that the rats seem to be compelled to perform this behavior (INT roll).
- The direction the rats left in (WIS roll).

When hundreds of rats all head the same direction, it only takes a little bit of tracking know-how (WIS roll) to follow them through the forest to arrive at where they may be coming from: the ruined keep of Sir Gyle....

## The Ruins of Sir Gyle's Keep

The ruins have existed in the woods for at least three generations. It's a reminder of a different time when a local lord helped keep the peace and ensure prosperity for all. But as with all good things, the golden age came to an end after Sir Gyle passed on without an heir and the kingdom pulled back from the edges of civilization. Since then, the locals have largely been on their own and grown used to fending for themselves.

Little is left of the once proud keep beyond a fallen tower and a few walls, yet it is apparent to a sharp eye (INT roll) that someone or something seems to have made its home here. Many small tracks and a few larger ones crowd the area in and around the ruins.

It turns out that a smart ratling trying to prove himself to the pack has a plan. Rathfus has the gift of conversing with animals and has managed to convince a large rat pack to work with him towards amassing a giant hoard. They will take what they want from the unprotected villages in the area and grow fat and rich.

He and a few trusted lieutenants started putting things in motion three weeks ago in Roarke and are happy with the progress so far. The basement of the old keep was a perfect place to set up camp for their campaign of terror.

## The Entrance

Within the crumbled tower lies a partially concealed (INT roll) hole in the floor with a crude ladder (1 in 6 chance of breaking under heavy strain). As the PCs enter the ruined tower, a group of Rats climbs out of the basement.

**6 Rats:** 1 hit. An attacked enemy must make a CON roll or be *weakened*. The rats will swarm a single enemy in an attempt to take them out of combat quickly, then move to the next target. Rats will have advantage of numbers until 4 or fewer remain.

**Hole to Basement:** Any combatant who misses in melee combat must make a DEX roll or fall through the hole and take 1 hit.

## Rat Holding Room

This room is where Rathfus has asked the rats to wait while heading out or coming back. The floor is littered with food scraps, bedding, and waste. The PCs may have the element of surprise unless a combatant fell through from above.

**8 Rats:** 1 hit. An attacked enemy must make a CON roll or be *weakened*. The rats will swarm a single enemy in an attempt to take them out of combat quickly, then move to the next target. Rats will have advantage of numbers until cut to 4 or fewer.

**2 Giant Rats:** 2 hits. An attacked enemy must make a DEX roll or be *immobilized*.

**Treasure:** Hidden among the refuse are several single coins of different values and a jeweled dagger.

## The Sorting Room

Here is where Rathfus' lieutenants take the goods from the incoming rats and sort things into piles: coins, weapons (all small), gems and jewelry, and food. None of these piles is very large, as the bulk of the take has been moved to the throne room.

Oddly, only half of this room is used. Along one wall is an alcove containing a shattered statue and a defaced mural depicting what may have been the gods of law and order. The gods are unhappy with this state of affairs. If the ratlings are forced to this side of the room during the battle, any good-aligned characters will automatically gain advantage against them. (If the PCs should return and re-consecrate the temple with the help of a cleric, the gods may grant them a boon.)

Just one ratling is stationed here. However, he can summon more of his brethren from the throne room with a single shout.

**1 Ratling:** 2 hits. Armed with a short sword.

**3 Ratlings (backup):** 2 hits. Also armed with short swords.

**Treasure:** Three bags of small coins. One bag of loose pearls and low-quality gems. Two unremarkable daggers. Assortment of bread rolls, small vegetables, small sausages, and so on.

## Throne Room

This is where Rathfus, the Rat King, holds court with his subjects. He is flanked at all times by three ratling bodyguards and holds the sole key to the chest behind his throne. If the PCs make it this far, he knows he is in trouble and will call for a horde of rats as backup. They will stream through two cracks in the foundation to come to his aid.

**Rathfus, Grand Ratling:** 3 hits. Has a fine short sword, which gives advantage.

**3 Ratlings (Bodyguards):** 2 hits. Each fights with two fine daggers, which gives advantage.

**10 Rats (backup):** 1 hit. An attacked enemy must make a CON roll or be *weakened*. The rats will swarm a single enemy in an attempt to take them out of combat quickly, then move to the next target. Rats will have advantage of numbers until fewer than 5 remain.

**Treasure:** Locked Chest (Must make series of three DEX rolls to avoid traps and pick lock or have key from Rathfus. Contains fine suit of armor (ratling size), two jeweled daggers (ornamental), one fine hand axe, two fine rapiers, a bag of fine gems, and a bag of large denomination coins.