



VERMIN ADVENTURE – “PEST CONTROL”

Suggested for character levels 3 - 5

Setting

The adventure takes place in a village called Eassly. It is a small place, perhaps on the edge of a city-state's territory, or simply in the neutral lands. In any event, it is far enough away from larger settlements that it must fend for itself most of the time. The time of year is early fall.

Premise

The villagers have been dealing with an escalating rodent problem, which is about to surge out of control. Fortunately for them, your players' PCs are soon to arrive.

The people of Eassly dealt with a rising population of rats all summer. They've measures to store their food more securely, and increased the number of cats and dogs in the village to keep the rats under control. However, the problem has only grown worse. Not only are the rats arriving in greater numbers than before, they are also coming in greater sizes.

The result has been swarms of rats digging and chewing through hay bales, planks, and walls to reach the village's food supplies. There have even been incursions into several basements lined in wood, prompting the villagers to store the harvest in only the most secure locations: a small central grain silo, and the stone-lined basement of the village's only inn, 'Mosley's Longhouse.'

Opposition

While details for the PCs' enemies are on the next page, it is worth noting for the GM that a wererat necromancer is the source of the village's problems.

Arrival & Invitation

The PCs arrive in Eassly around sunset, and find that Mosley's Longhouse is the sole place for food and housing. They will notice the outside of the building being closely patrolled by villagers armed with spears, and with large dogs sniffing the area. Inside the longhouse, the Party will find warmth and a good meal, as well as smaller dogs like terriers on rat-detection-duty. Any villagers inside Mosley's will gladly share new of Eassly's uncontrollable pest problem.

Dinner is nearly finished when a pair of panicked villagers rush inside with terrible news. They were part of a hunting party in the nearby woods. They'd found a fresh rat warren, and were burning it out with oil when a handful of giant rats attacked from behind. One was enormous (the wererat in animal form), almost the size of a person. It killed both hounds, and was dragging a man away when these two hunters fled back to Eassly for help.

As well armed adventurers, the PCs will be asked to help and can easily negotiate for payment. At least one villager will volunteer to assist the Party with hunting hounds for tracking. (Granting ADV to PCs rolling Survival to track.)

Encounter Areas

Burnt Out Warren: This is where the hunters were ambushed. Two different tunnel holes lead into an underground rat warren, located beneath a grouping of moss-covered boulders. One entrance has a still-burning oil fire, making it easy to find. The corpses of two dead hounds are being feasted upon by swarm of rats and two giant rats.

The Tree Warren: This is the wererat necromancer's home. It is burrowed out beneath the roots of a vast dead tree. It has multiple entrances, including two big enough to accommodate medium sized creatures crawling through. This warren is home to dozens of rats, and the PCs should encounter multiple swarms or giant rats along their way to the wererat's personal lair.

Eassly: The wererat could end up launching a full direct attack on the village (1) if the PCs provoke them enough, (2) if it appears the villagers' defenses are substantially weakened. In this situation Mosley's Longhouse is likely the most defensive building for the people and PC to gather within.





Enemies

The creatures encountered in this adventure fall into three categories: rats, master, and optional.

There are three types of rats. Dire Rats are stated below, while rules for Giant Rats and Swarm of Rats are found in *That Basic 5e Monster Book*.

The master enemy is a Wererat Necromancer, stated in *The Fading Embers Gamemaster's Manual*.

The optional enemies are undead zombies or skeletons, animated and controlled by the wererat necromancer. These could be rats killed by the villagers, dogs killed by the rats, or even dead villagers! Skeletons and zombies are both found in *That Basic 5e Monster Book*.

DIRE RAT

*Small beast
unaligned*

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 18 (4d6+4)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Abilities

Keen Smell

The dire rat has advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics

The dire rat has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the dire rat's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4+3) piercing damage.

Wererat Necromancer - Kapas

Born a true wererat, Kapas has spent his life hiding at the fringe of societies. He was always the outsider, always shunned and hunted. Then he learned the forbidden art of wizardry. Now, near the village of Eassly, Kapas intends to be the master.

He fostered a large horde rat species over the last year, and seeks to ensure they are well fed through the winter months. Now that villagers are hunting his warrens, Kapas is entering combat himself. He plans to kill several of the hunters, then animate their corpses and enter the village en masse, where he will break the village's fighting spirit, forcing them to pay tribute to him in the long winter.

Kapas' personal lair should have an odd treasure trove of everyday items stolen from the village, along with a substantial amount of coins gathered over the years. There should also be a great many bones. The *Fading Embers Gamemaster's Manual* has many magical items appropriate for Kappas, including: *heart stove, ritual bones, sentinel skull, and staff of the grave*.

