Sewers are a vital part of any large community. They help prevent disease by filtering out waste and give excess water accumulated during a rainstorm somewhere to go instead of on the roads or into a citizen's basement. But sewers also attract a certain amount of danger, be it annoying beasts like skittering rats or terrifying monsters such as otyugh dwelling mere feet from the populace. These creatures' presence is seldom deliberate; instead they crawl, squirm or barge their way into the sewers in search of food or shelter. And when they nestle in and begin to breed, that's when the infestation begins.

Infested sewers are often some of the first places local authorities send the PCs when they arrive in a new settlement. Whether to test their mettle or to simply send someone no one will miss into a life-endangering situation, infested sewers make for classic encounters, but they are often designed to be extremely short and linear affairs. Their lack of terrain options and physical features are often uninspiring for GMs, making the design of a truly memorable adventure within an infested sewer a chore. This section provides GMs with advice for transforming common tunnels and canals into a memorable adventure site.

DEFINING THE DUNGEON

An infested sewer is a series of underground tunnels, usually no wider than 20 feet across built underneath a settlement in order to control the flow of water and waste. Because sewers tend to stretch the entire length of a settlement, the only limit to the size of an infested sewer is the size of the settlement above. Places within the sewer that aren't infested are likely boring to explore, so choose a specific area defined by the structures above or near the sewer. For example, running a dungeon in "the infested catacombs beneath the trade district" helps to define the dungeon more clearly than the more vaguely described "catacombs beneath Dulwich".

DESIGNING THE DUNGEON

Designing an infested sewer as a dungeon is little different to designing any other dungeon. Like most classic dungeon settings, a sewer is a subterranean setting specifically designed to perform a specific task. Unlike most dungeons, which are built as strongholds, vaults or similar defensible positions, a sewer's primary function is to allow things to exit the area, typically using flowing water. Additionally, sewers are seldom spacious and are typically designed in a very predictable, almost formulaic manner and seldom possess manufactured traps. Below are some considerations a GM could use when designing infested sewers.

Dangerous: Infested sewers are literally crawling with life and most of it is hostile. Increase the chances of encountering wandering monsters within an infested sewer by up to 20% to represent this threat.

Filth: Settlers use their settlement's sewers to dispose of just about anything and everything, from rotten food and discarded goods to their own biological waste. Because of this, all sewers (not just infested ones) are disgusting places. Upon entering a sewer, a character becomes sickened for as long as she remains within the sewer unless she makes a DC 15 Fortitude save. Each hour she remains within the sewer, she must save again or become sickened.

Far worse than the stench is the sewer water itself. Creatures swimming in sewer water must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or contract filth fever:

- **Filth Fever**: *save* Fortitude DC 12; *onset* 1d3 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; *Cure* 2 consecutive saves.

At the GM's discretion, characters suffering hit point damage may take up to a –2 penalty on saving throws made against filth fever, as their wounds are prone to infection in such a filthy environment.

Flowing Water: A sewer's primary function is to transport filth away from the settlement. Typically this is done using running water. Although the water isn't as fast as, say, river rapids, it moves quickly enough that creatures must make a DC 10 Swim check to move through the water. In some locations, the water is considerably rougher, such as when water is gushing out from one part of the sewer into another. This increases the DC of Swim checks.

Landless: Not all sewers are designed with adventurers in mind. Most, especially those built within small settlements, are more likely to have simple passageways without any way to avoid trekking through the murk and filth. In such a sewer, the PCs are always considered to be swimming for the purpose of the filth feature (see above) and all passable terrain is considered difficult terrain.

Unkempt: Sewers often fall into disarray because few settlers are willing to perform the necessary maintenance work. As a result, there is a 20% chance every door, manhole, lock or similar device within the sewer is stuck and cannot be opened without a DC 15 Strength check.

Running the Dungeon

Running an infested sewer as an adventure site is little different to a traditional dungeon. Below are some considerations GMs should keep in mind when using an infested sewer as a dungeon.

Concealment: Sewers of all sorts are seldom visited by surface-dwelling folk. As a result shadows permeate the area. As most adventurers rely on torches or torch-like spell effects to see in such areas, most of the sewer's unwanted residents make use of the shadows to ambush intruders. The smartest creatures, however, often rely on hit-and-run tactics, striking fast before scurrying back into the shadows.

Slick: Sewers are damp and filled with running water. When this water splashes onto the few passable routes within the sewer it creates areas where it is difficult to move safely. This terrain is considered difficult terrain and requires a DC 2 Acrobatics check to safely move across if the passageway is at least 3 feet wide. If the passageway is narrower, the DC increases as noted in the Acrobatics skill description.

Sneaking: Although the sound of running water obscures soft sounds, it is difficult to move quietly while walking in a sewer because the vaulted spaces creates an echo, magnifying the sound of trespassers. All creatures using Stealth to move silently on land suffer a –4 penalty on Stealth checks. Creatures lurking within the sewer's filthy water do not suffer this penalty.

Wandering Monsters: Most creatures move into a sewer because humanoid waste provides an adequate (though not preferred) supply of food that requires little work to obtain. Most creatures living in sewers are scavengers and seldom scoff twice at attacking whoever wanders into their domain. Using the darkness to their advantage, most sewer dwellers wait until their prey is alone or preoccupied to strike. For this reason, there is a 1 in 20 chance during any encounter an additional monster joins the fray, eager to snag a bite of hero to sate its own belly. Each round a monster does not appear in a given combat increases the likelihood one appears on subsequent rounds by 1 in 20.

Additionally, remember a creature suffers a –1 penalty on opposed Perception checks for every 10 feet between the creature and a hidden foe.

Sacking the Dungeon

Despite being a trash refuse, sewers are filled with the promise of wealth and treasure, though PCs often have to search harder for it then they would at other adventuring sites. Listed below are inspirational ideas for unique, thematic treasures that await PCs adventuring within an infested sewer.

Fungi: The dim light and the ready source of fertilization make fungi a common find within most sewers, especially types that thrive in damp environments such as mould. Although most fungi possess insignificant value, some rare types are used to craft different types of poison or as alchemical reagents. The following types of poison (and their gp value) can be crafted using rare fungi harvested from the sewers: drow poison (25 gp), id moss (40 gp), stripped toadstool (60 gp) and violet venom (250 gp).

Hoards: Many of the different kinds of creatures infesting sewers also hoard shiny objects within their nests. Small, light objects such as gold and silver coins, keys and jewellery can all be hoarded in this manner, assuming the creatures are large enough to gather these treasures. A single hoard is usually worth as much as a CR-equivalent encounter for the PCs. Larger hoards kept by more powerful (or more numerous) creatures can exceed this figure.

Immurement: The grisly practice of entombing someone within the sewers' walls serves as a means of execution through starvation and dehydration. In most civilized societies, immurement is illegal, so most tombs PCs stumble across hold missing persons or ritualistic sacrifices. Masterwork chains and locks, masterwork daggers and missing persons bounties are trademark "treasures" the PCs can recover from a sewer. The reward for a missing person (whether immured or not) is often equal to 1 gp per 100 residents within the city, up to four times the recommended gp value for an encounter of the PCs' level.

Labour: Occasionally, PCs can find a way to make themselves useful within a sewer, such as by clearing blockages or replacing a damaged manhole. These tasks are menial and seldom worth more than 1 silver per task. If the task requires skilled labour, a PC may make an appropriate Profession check to complete the task. Since this check represents a full day's work, the PCs must remain within the sewer for 8 hours while the work is completed. Typically there is a chance for a random encounter with the sewer's denizens every hour. This time does not count against the amount of time the PCs need to perform their job.

Taxidermy: The hides of powerful creatures infesting sewers are often worth a sizable sum to collectors, conspiracy theorists or local authorities. Typically, the amount of gold offered for a creature is set when the PCs accept the job. This value is often enough gp to make up for at least half of the recommended wealth for the encounters the PCs face within the infested sewers, with discovered treasure making up the rest of their bounty. However, if a character with Profession (tanner) or a similar skill prepares the body before it is delivered to the authorities, increase the bounty the PCs receive by an amount equal to the Profession check result.