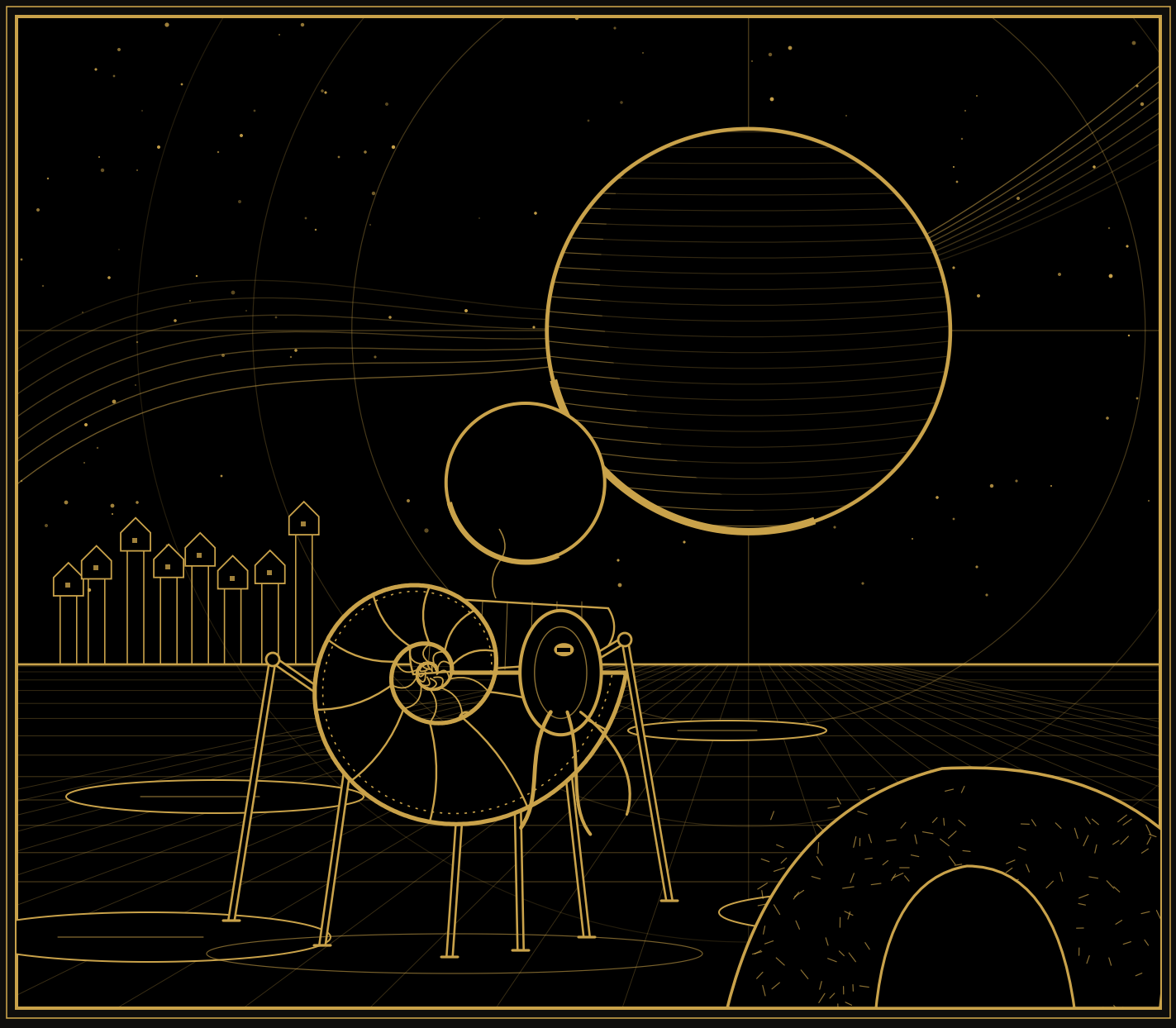
S1

BINARY RPG



A CAVE BENEATH THE SHALLOWS

An introductory adventure for 3–5 new characters

INTRODUCTORY SERIES · S1–S3

PLAYTEST DRAFT v0.6

TEACHING NOTE

HOW TO USE THIS MODULE

Read this, then look across → at the Story and What's Going On.

This module is written for a GM and players who are new to BINARY. It explains more than later modules will. If you already know the game, skip the explanations and use the tables.

The module is laid out in the order you need it:

1. **The Story:** the setup, in one paragraph.
2. **What's Going On:** the facts behind the adventure, the key people, and how to run it.
3. **Clues:** what the party can find out, and how to use clues in play.
4. **GM Aids:** people, places, prices and tables to build the Shallows on the fly.
5. **The Adventure:** the hook (Stage One), then **the Key**: every area by its map number or letter, with boxed text to read aloud and the GM's information (creatures, secrets, clues, treasure).

Read sections 1 to 3 before you play. Keep section 4 open at the table. Read each area before the party gets there.

THE STORY

Far has come, and the outer Shallows lie bare. Out past Longlegs, in the Wastelands, an old octopus called Thuul has been taking apart a buried Vael ruin beneath her cave, and trading the spare parts to the Mucklings of the Tilt. Some of those parts still hum. One of them found its way to a Dim Road fence, and word reached the Undertow. Down below, Thuul has woken something worth far more than spare parts: an Aevic key. The Undertow only knows that something old and valuable is coming out of the Wastelands, and they want it. Their fixer, Sallow, hires the party to find the ruin and bring back whatever's worth having. The way there runs through the Mucklings, who know the flats better than anyone, and ends at Thuul's cave, right on top of the entrance.

WHAT'S GOING ON

These are the facts. The players won't know most of them at the start. Finding them out is the first half of the adventure.

- **The Undertow:** the biggest criminal syndicate in the Shallows. A loose network of smugglers, fences, money-lenders, gamblers, enforcers and fixers running through the Dim Road, with no headquarters and no known leader (World Book, Chapter 11). Its reasons for wanting the ruin aren't revealed in S1.
- **Sallow:** an Undertow fixer. Hires the party to find the ruin, look inside and bring back anything old and Aevic. Knows only rumours. Doesn't know about the key; the boss might.
- **The ruin:** a small Vael sub-construct buried beneath the seabed, under Thuul's cave. Curved, ribbed, seamless walls, like the inside of a shell. Its machinery is part of the building, and most of it still works, badly. Far has drawn the water out of the caves around it. The party explores the caves in S1 and goes down into the structure in S2.
- **The Tilt:** the Muckling trading post a day's walk past Longlegs, run by Old Pell (World Book, Chapter 8). Pell knows exactly where the cave is. She trades with Thuul for spare parts, and one in her back room has started to hum. She's worked out that something far more valuable is down there, but not what. She'll have the party guided to the cave in exchange for one of two jobs: kill the Mud Borer nesting under the Tilt, or bring back Gloom Newt eggs.
- **Thuul:** a female octopus who lives on land inside a nautilus shell on slender, spider-like legs: an old piece of Aevic work she uses the way a hermit crab uses a shell, as home, armour and transport. She speaks through its systems. The mind is hers; the shell is a tool. She's a tinkerer, busy taking the old works apart and adapting them, and she trades spare parts with the Mucklings. She is not a fight.
- **The key:** while tinkering, Thuul found and woke an old Aevic key. It opens a way through the security of a **Fortress**, the Vael-built base of a Conduit: the nearest one, far inland from Port City. Thuul knows it matters to outsiders. She doesn't need it. It's on her bench below (room 10, S2). She'll trade it for help below.
- **The figure (S2):** Thuul's work has disturbed something in the deepest maintenance level. It is **Ythric**, a manifestation of Ythrum (World Book, Part Four). In S1 it's at most an omen. **Don't name it, explain it or call it undead.** S3 explains it.
- **Left open:** Thuul's origins, why the figure came, what the black pearl is and how far the linked old works reach are all unknown, on purpose.

KEY PEOPLE

Each block gives you what you need to play the character: how they look and sound, what they want, what they know and what they won't give up. Thuul's block is in her area (room 6).

SALLOW, the Undertow's fixer

- **Look:** polite and well dressed for the Dim Road. Clean hands, a good coat.
- **Voice:** quiet, unhurried, never says more than they need to. Very clear that the job isn't theirs; it's their boss's.
- **Wants:** the job done without noise.
- **Offers:** 5 AP each: 1 AP up front, 4 AP on delivery. Whether the rest ever appears is up to you.
- **Knows:** rumours only. Mucklings selling odd old parts at the Tilt. Stories of a walking shell out on the flats.
- **Won't say:** who the boss is, or why they want it. If the party finds something valuable and keeps it, the Undertow will take that personally.
- **Use Sallow to:** start the adventure, and to check in if play stalls.

OLD PELL, keeper of the Tilt

- **Look:** an old Muckling with one goggle-lens cracked, in a nest of cushions and ledgers behind the counter. Nobody has ever seen her stand up.
- **Voice:** sharp and quick. Remembers every debt anyone has ever owed her. Everything is a trade.
- **Wants:** the Mud Borer gone from under the Tilt. Gloom Newt eggs, a delicacy worth a fortune in trade.
- **Offers:** one of her grandchildren to guide the party to the cave, for either job. For the eggs, she lends a **Breath Pearl**; if the eggs come back, the party keeps it.
- **Knows:** exactly where the cave is. That Thuul lives there. That something down there is worth a great deal more than spare parts.
- **Won't say:** what's in her back room.
- **House rule:** no fighting on the Tilt. The Borer is *under* the Tilt, not on it, so the rule doesn't apply. Pell will point this out.
- **Use Pell to:** offer the two jobs, and point the party at Thuul.

NOTES

TEACHING NOTE

APPROACH

Read this, then look across → at running It.

Keep it simple. S1 teaches the game. Nothing here should leave the players guessing for long. If they're stuck, give them a lead.

Let them choose. Point the party at the Tilt or at Thuul, but let them decide who to ask, how to ask and which job to take. A choice the players made themselves feels like their own adventure.

Ask "how?" When a player says what they want, ask how they do it. Match the answer to one of the nine non-combat actions (Lore, Investigate, Aevum, Navigate, Traverse, Survive, Persuade, Deceive, Command). This is how players learn what their sheet does.

Tell them the difficulty. Before a roll, say how hard it is and what could go wrong. If they don't like it, they can try another way.

Not everything needs a roll. If it's simple, safe or obvious, just say yes. Watching carefully should get the party real information without a roll.

Talk first, but expect fights. Most encounters can be watched, avoided or bargained with, but the creatures are here to be fought. Nobody has to die for the party to get in.

Show the danger. Show tongue reach and leap distance, grinding, vibration and full machine cycles *before* anyone is caught. The old works are failing machines, not clever traps.

Resting. For Breathers in the caves, roll **Underground**. In the sub-construct, roll **Old Works**. Creatures come from the Shallows biome.

Room numbers are GM references. Use the cave and construct maps with this key.

RUNNING IT

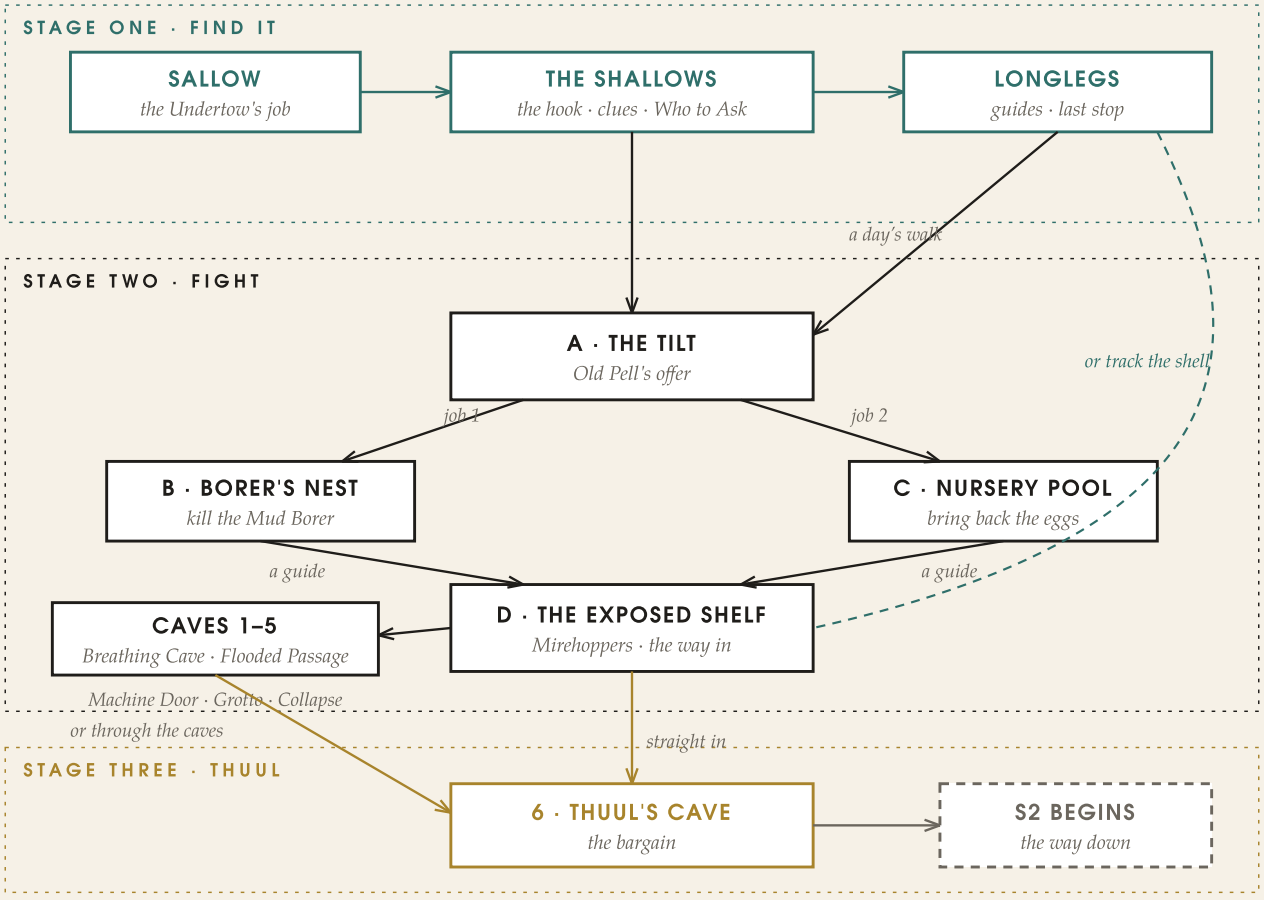
S1 plays in three stages. Each one teaches a different part of the game.

1. Find it. *Teaches: non-combat actions and clues.* Open play in the Shallows. The party asks around, follows clues and decides who to trust. There's no set path. Every road leads to the Tilt or to Thuul, and the party chooses which road. This stage ends when the party knows where to go and has a way to get there.

2. Fight. *Teaches: combat.* Old Pell's job at the Tilt, then the creatures of the flats and the caves. Each fight shows off a different part of the combat rules (see *Combat Practice*). Fights here are short and clear. Let the players learn the hex grid and their two actions a turn. This stage ends when the party reaches Thuul's cave.

3. Thuul. *Teaches: talking as a way through.* A conversation and a bargain. Thuul has what the party needs: knowledge, the way down and, later, the key. She can't be beaten in a fight, but she can be persuaded, traded with or reasoned with. This stage ends when the party has heard her bargain. The way down is open beneath her floor.

S2, *Still Waters Run Deep*, begins below.



There is no set path. Every road leads to the Tilt or to Thuul, and the party chooses which.

TEACHING NOTE

CLUES

Read this, then look across → at the Party Needs to Learn and the clue tables.

A **clue** is any piece of information the party can find. Every clue is one of three types:

- **Lead:** points somewhere. A place to go or someone to talk to. Leads keep the party moving.
- **Fact:** true. Facts tell the party what's really going on.
- **Misdirect:** false but believable. Rumours, gossip, half-truths and lies. Misdirects make the world feel real. Not everyone knows the truth, and some people lie. In S1, every misdirect is harmless. It might worry the party, but it won't lead them into danger.

Reading the clue tables

Each clue table has five columns:

- **Die:** the number to roll for a random clue (d12 for Leads, d6 for Facts and Misdirects).
- **Clue:** what the party learns. Say it in the voice of whoever tells them.
- **Could come from:** ideas for who or what could give this clue. These are suggestions only. *Who to Ask* (in GM Aids) has ready-made people for each.
- **Difficulty:** the base difficulty to find it, using the normal targets (Easy 6, Standard 8, Hard 12).
- **Suggested actions:** the actions that best fit. These are a guide, not a requirement.

Using clues

Place them anywhere. The generic clues below aren't tied to a place or a person. When the party goes looking, pick a clue that fits and give it to whoever they're talking to or wherever they're searching. Areas with their own clues list them in that area's section. Those can only be found there.

Or roll for one. If nothing comes to mind, roll on the tables (see *Random Clues*).

Roll only when it matters. If the approach is good and the clue is Easy, just hand it over. Roll when the outcome is uncertain and failure would be interesting.

Suggested actions are a guide, not a requirement. A player can use any action if they describe a good approach. Set the difficulty to fit: usually the same, or one step harder if it's a stretch. Early on, the suggestions help everyone get the hang of matching actions to the situation.

On a success, give them the clue.

On a miss, things don't stop; they change. Pick one:

- **It costs something:** time, coin, a drink, a favour owed.
- **Word gets around:** someone now knows the party is asking.
- **They hear a misdirect instead.**
- **It turns up later:** the clue comes from somewhere else.

Never let a miss lock the party out of something they need to learn.

On an Epic Success, give them the clue and something extra: a second clue, or who else knows.

> EXAMPLE
>
> The party is in a Dim Road tavern. Maren's player says, "I buy the old fisher at the bar a drink and ask about the Wastelands." The GM says, "Sounds like Persuade. It's Easy." Maren rolls 1d12 + 1d6 and gets 9. The GM picks a lead: "He leans in. 'Out past Longlegs there's a door in the flats. Drowned door, my father called it. Don't go out there.'"

The next player tries to read the old tide charts on the wall instead. The GM checks the leads table: the worked stones under the mud, Standard 8, Navigate or Lore. The player misses. The GM picks a cost: "You can't make sense of it, but the barkeep's watching you. She'll remember you were asking."

CLUES

THE PARTY NEEDS TO LEARN

To finish Stage One, the party needs to learn three things:

1. The ruin is real, and lies out in the Wastelands.
2. The Mucklings at the Tilt know the way.
3. The entrance is under Thuul's cave.

Each of these can be learned from several clues. If the party misses one route, there's always another. Any two good leads should be enough to find the cave. Keep an eye on these three. If the party has all of them, they're ready to go.

RANDOM CLUES

When you need a clue fast, roll 1d6 to pick a table, then roll on it.

D6	TABLE
1–3	Leads (roll 1d12)
4–5	Facts (roll 1d6)
6	Misdirects (roll 1d6)

If the roll doesn't fit the moment, pick the nearest clue that does, or roll again. You can also roll when you just want a rumour for colour, with no roll from the players.

LEADS: POINT SOMEWHERE

D12	CLUE	COULD COME FROM	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
1	Old fishers talk about "the drowned door" out past Longlegs	Fishers, tavern talk	Easy 6	Persuade, Command
2	A Driftmarket fence bought a piece of old work from a Muckling, and it still hums. She'll say where she got it, for a price	Dim Road gossip, the fence herself	Standard 8	Persuade, Deceive, Investigate
3	A great shell on long legs has been seen picking over wrecks on the flats at dusk	A salvager, a child, a drunk	Easy 6	Persuade, Survive
4	The walking shell leaves tracks. Follow them back across the flats and they lead to a cave	The flats at dusk, an old salvager	Standard 8	Survive, Traverse
5	The Tilt is a Muckling trading post a day's walk past Longlegs; follow the salvage sledges	A Longlegs guide, a carter	Easy 6	Persuade, Navigate, Survive
6	Old Pell at the Tilt buys anything Aevic, and lately she's been selling odd old parts	A scrap trader, a salvager	Easy 6	Persuade, Investigate
7	The Mucklings trade with "the clever one", who lives in a cave out in the Wastelands	Any Muckling, a salvager	Standard 8	Persuade, Deceive
8	The clever one cares more about useful hands than good manners	A Muckling, an old salvager	Standard 8	Persuade, Lore
9	At low tide, a line of worked stones runs out under the mud towards the Wastelands	An old chart, the Customs House, the flats	Standard 8	Navigate, Survive, Lore
10	A cave out on the flats breathes: warm air out, then cold air in	The flats, a nervous guide	Standard 8	Survive, Investigate

D12	CLUE	COULD COME FROM	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
11	A Gloom Newt guards her eggs in a deep black pool out on the flats	A forager, a Muckling	Standard 8	Survive, Investigate
12	Longlegs guides know the flats as far as the Tilt, and no further	Any Longlegs guide	Easy 6	Persuade, Command

FACTS: TRUE

D6	CLUE	COULD COME FROM	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
1	Mucklings know every channel in the Wastelands, and Old Pell will have you guided, for a favour	Any Muckling, a trader	Easy 6	Persuade, Lore
2	A Mud Borer has nested in the sand bank under the Tilt, and it's eating the stores	Mucklings, churned mud and collapsed burrows	Easy 6	Persuade, Investigate, Survive
3	Gloom Newt eggs are a delicacy worth a fortune in trade	A cook, a trader, a Muckling	Standard 8	Lore, Persuade
4	The humming parts all came from somewhere out past the Tilt	A fence, a scrap stall, a careful look at a part	Standard 8	Investigate, Aevum
5	The Mucklings know there's something valuable down there	Overheard at the Tilt, a loose-lipped Muckling	Standard 8	Investigate, Deceive
6	The walking shell is old Vael work, and something alive rides inside it	An old salvager, a scholar, a close look	Standard 8	Lore, Aevum

MISDIRECTS: FALSE BUT BELIEVABLE

D6	CLUE	COULD COME FROM	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
1	A cursed temple sinks and rises with the tides	Anyone	Easy 6	Persuade, Deceive
2	Mucklings eat anyone who wanders into the Wastelands	A tavern far from the flats	Easy 6	Persuade, Command
3	Something in a cave on the flats cuts nets and eats fishers (Thuul has never hurt anyone)	Fishers, a shrine-keeper	Easy 6	Lore, Persuade
4	Whatever's down there is a weapon that can sink ships	Anyone	Easy 6	Persuade, Command
5	"That old ruin? Just a drowned fish trap."	A Muckling playing it down	Easy 6	Persuade, Command
6	Bones on the flats are the cave beast's victims (they're the Mud Borer's leftovers)	The flats, a nervous guide	Easy 6	Investigate, Survive

NOTES

TEACHING NOTE

GM AIDS

Read this, then look across → at the GM Aids tables.

Everything here is optional. Use it to answer the questions players always ask ("Who's here?", "What does it look like?", "How much?") without stopping the game. Roll on a table, or just pick the line that fits.

GM AIDS

WHO TO ASK

Twelve Shallows locals, ready to drop into any scene. "Good for" points to the clues each one is most likely to know. They can know more, or less.

D12	WHO	LOOK	WANTS	GOOD FOR
1	**Old Hesk**, net-mender	One milky eye, fingers like rope	A spare pair of hands for an hour	Lead 1, Misdirect 3
2	**Tamsin Rook**, tide-watcher	Sits at the top of a Longlegs ladder with a slate and chalk	Someone who'll actually listen	Leads 9, 10
3	**Sorrel**, Driftmarket fence	Rings on every finger, never looks up	A better offer than the last one	Lead 2, Fact 4
4	**Ama Velt**, keeper of the Low Lantern	Sharp-eyed, sleeves rolled, never sits	Paying customers, no trouble	Any misdirect
5	**Pip**, street kid	Barefoot, quick, all elbows	Bits, and a story to tell	Lead 3
6	**Corrin Dask**, Customs House clerk	Ink-stained cuffs, tired of everyone	A small bribe	Lead 9
7	**Sister Oyl**, bridge-shrine keeper	Shell beads, loud voice, kind eyes	Someone to bless	Misdirects 1, 3
8	**Fenn**, flats forager	Sun-dark, quiet, smells of weed and salt	Salt, which is hard to come by out there	Lead 11, Fact 3
9	**Nib**, Muckling scrap trader	Tiny, many bags, sharp teeth when smiling	Anything shiny	Leads 6, 7, Fact 5
10	**Garret Thole**, old salvager	Three fingers missing, laughs at his own jokes	A drink, then another	Lead 4, Fact 6
11	**Jory**, Longlegs guide	Long-legged, wind-burnt, rope over one shoulder	A paying expedition	Leads 5, 12
12	**A quiet stranger**	Plain clothes, watching the door	To know who's asking questions	Reports to Sallow, or someone else

PLACES TO ASK AROUND

The Shallows is a sprawling water-city on the shelf below Port City (World Book, Chapter 8). At Far, it stands on legs in sand and mud. These are the places the party is most likely to go looking. Numbers point to *Who to Ask*.

- **The Low Lantern:** a Dim Road tavern under the High Road, lit by one green lamp. Where Sallow finds the party. Fishers, salvagers and gossip. (1, 4, 12)
- **Driftmarket:** the floating market, settled on the sand wherever it happened to be when the water went out. Fences, bargains and nobody asking where anything came from. (3, 5, 9)
- **The Pillars:** the oldest pillar village. Fishers, elders, shrines, and the best fish stew in the Shallows. Suspicious of strangers asking questions. (1, 7)
- **Gatefoot:** below the Sea Gates. The Customs House, hiring-halls and old tide charts, for clerks who want paying. (6)
- **Longlegs:** the stilt-town on the edge of the Outer Shallows, with ladders as long as ships' masts. The last settlement before the Wastelands: guides, supplies and Wastelands traders. (2, 8, 9, 10, 11)

THE SHALLOWS AT FAR

Roll once on each, or pick, to describe any scene in a sentence.

D6	YOU SEE…	YOU HEAR…	YOU SMELL…
1	White limestone and stranded pools to the horizon	Mud sucking at boots	Rotting weed
2	Ladders as long as ships' masts hanging from Longlegs	Hammering on a hull	Woodsmoke and frying fish
3	Weed drying in the sun, crusted with salt	A fish-seller's call	Hot tar
4	Veyr, small and pale in the daytime sky	Wind hissing over the flats	Wet salt mud
5	Boats lying on their sides in the mud	A shrine bell on a bridge	Sweet pipe smoke
6	Muckling salvage crews hauling sledges across the flats	Something clicking under the boardwalk	A metal tang in the air, like a storm coming

PAY AND PRICES

Money in BINARY is **Bits** (everyday coin) and **Aevic Pearls** (**AP**). 100 Bits make 1 AP. Use these prices as a guide. Haggling is welcome; it's a Persuade roll.

ITEM	COST
A cheap drink or a hot bun	1 Bit
A meal	5 Bits
A bed for the night	15 Bits
A day's honest labour pays	50 Bits
A small bribe, or loosening a tongue	10–50 Bits
A Longlegs guide or a boat for a day	1 AP
Sallow's offer	5 AP each: 1 up front, 4 on delivery

A day's work comes to a bed, a few meals and something left over. 1 AP is two days' wages. The Mucklings don't take coin for guiding to the cave. Pell wants the job done.

WHEN THINGS STALL

If the players are stuck or going in circles, roll or pick one. Each one hands them a way forward.

D6	WHAT HAPPENS
1	A Muckling is caught unbuckling a party member's pack. "You weren't using it!" Follow it, and it runs for Longlegs and the flats beyond.
2	Sallow sends word: "Progress?" The message comes with a name worth asking (roll on *Who to Ask*).
3	The tide turns early and strands a forager on the flats. Help them back and they share what they know (roll a lead).
4	At dusk, a great shell on long legs is seen walking slowly across the flats, back towards the Wastelands.
5	A rival crew of salvagers is asking the same questions. Whoever gets there first gets the prize.
6	A piece of old work turns up on a Driftmarket stall, still faintly humming. The stallholder bought it from a Muckling.

STAGE ONE: FIND IT

THE HOOK: THE BOSS WANTS A LOOK

READ ALOUD

The water has gone out. For the first time this Cycle, the outer Shallows lie bare: miles of white limestone, stranded pools and weed drying in the sun. Out past the last stilts, where the Wastelands begin, the retreating sea has opened a cave nobody has seen in living memory.

Somebody on the Dim Road wants to know what's inside. Somebody else already does.

The offer. Sallow finds the party in the Low Lantern, a tavern under the High Road. Sallow is polite, well dressed for the Dim Road and very clear that the job isn't theirs: it's their boss's. The boss is never named, but everyone on the Dim Road knows Sallow works for the Undertow.

- **The job.** There's a ruin out in the Wastelands, drowned most of the Cycle, that's supposed to be bare now the water's out. Go and find it. Look inside. Bring back anything old and Aevic, and tell the boss what's there.
- **The pay.** 5 AP each. 1 AP up front, 4 AP on delivery.
- **What Sallow knows.** Only rumours: Mucklings selling odd old parts at the Tilt, and stories of a walking shell out on the flats. Give the party one lead from Sallow for free.
- **What Sallow doesn't say.** If the party finds something valuable and keeps it, the Undertow will take that personally.

FINDING THE RUIN

Stage One is open play in the Shallows, and it's all non-combat rolls: asking around, bargaining, tracking and finding the way. The party knows roughly where to look and nothing else. Use the clues (above) and the GM Aids. Let them choose who to ask, where to go and what to pay. Save the fighting for Stage Two (the Key, below).

- **Most roads lead to the Tilt.** Longlegs guides will take the party as far as the Tilt. Beyond that, the Mucklings know the way.
- **Some lead straight to Thuul.** Following the walking shell's tracks, or careful navigation across the flats, can take the party to her cave without the Mucklings. It's slower and riskier, and they'll meet the Mirehoppers on the way.
- **Out on the flats,** roll on **In the Wilds** if you want an interruption, but steer it towards locals, weather and signs rather than a fight.
- **Let it take as long as it takes.** One scene or a whole session. When the party has a way to the cave, move on to Stage Two: the Key, starting at area A or D.

TEACHING NOTE

READING THE KEY

Read this, then look across → at the Key.

Every area is keyed to a map. Numbers (1–6) are on the cave map. Letters (A–D) are the areas outside: A and B are on the Tilt map, D is the shelf at the top of the cave map, and C has no map.

Each entry follows the same order:

1. **Boxed text:** read it aloud, or say it your way, when the party arrives.
2. **GM information:** what's really here, the creatures (with a short stat line; full profiles in the Appendix), secrets, clues and treasure.

Areas A to D and 1 to 5 are Stage Two, the fighting. Area 6 is Stage Three, Thuul.

TEACHING NOTE

COMBAT PRACTICE

Read this, then look across → at the outside areas and the caves (each fight teaches a rule).

Each fight in S1 teaches one or two things. Run them roughly in this order and the players will have used most of the combat rules by the end.

ENCOUNTER	WHERE	WHAT IT TEACHES
Mud Borer	The Borer's Nest (the Tilt)	Ambush and the free round; terrain that matters (it can't dig through hull or rock); flanking and the Back Foot; a tough, slow enemy.
Gloom Newt	The Nursery Pool	Push and collision; fighting at the water's edge; an enemy that stops when you back off.
Mirehoppers	Outside: the Exposed Shelf	Reach; Tongue Grab and the grapple rules; Drag; Leap; several enemies at once.
Pale Skitterswarm	Room 1	A swarm across several hexes; one shared Health pool; what flanking can and can't do.
Carrion Leeches	Room 2	Fighting in water; latching and the Back Foot; helping an ally (pulling it off).

Rules to make sure come up. The core attack roll and the bonus die; Defend; Move and Pass Through; the d3 cup when someone falls; a Breather between fights; Back Foot from flanking, grabs and leeches.

PLAYTEST NOTES.

Note how long each fight takes, which rules players had to look up, and anything that felt slow or swingy. In particular, watch: how often the bonus die and Epic Success come up; whether a Breather's Armour recovery feels right; whether the d3 cup works at the table; and whether the Mud Borer's AC 15 feels too hard for starting characters. For the clues, note how many the party needed before they set out, and which actions players reached for.

THE KEY

OUTSIDE

A THE TILT

READ ALOUD

A barge lies on its side on a bank of sand and shell, as if it rolled over to sleep and never woke. Ladders, ramps and rope-bridges sprout from it at every angle, and smoke leaks from places smoke shouldn't. A long ramp climbs to a hole in the deck. Up on the roof, someone has already seen you, and is shouting to someone inside.

The Muckling trading post, a day's walk past Longlegs (World Book, Chapter 8). Mucklings are small, amphibious natives of the Shallows: salvagers, tinkerers and bargainers who would much rather trade, scavenge or run than fight (World Book, Chapter 5). If you're not using it, it's salvage. At Far, the Tilt sits high and dry, and that's when the party arrives. The front door is the hole in the deck at the top of the long ramp.

When the party reaches Pell, read:

READ ALOUD

The hold is a maze of shelves, nets and hanging salvage, every piece tagged with a price. It smells of lamp oil, old rope and fried fish. At the far end, in a nest of cushions and ledgers, an old Muckling peers at you through a cracked goggle-lens. "Buying or selling?" she says. "Everyone's one or the other."

Who's here. Old Pell runs the counter (see *Key People*). Her many grandchildren do the fetching, carrying, haggling and lookout, and most of the pickpocketing. No fighting on the Tilt: that's the house rule.

Pell's offer. She'll have one of her grandchildren take the party straight to the cave if they do one of two jobs:

- **Deal with the Mud Borer** nesting in the sand bank under the Tilt (area B). Kill it, drive it off or find some cleverer way to move it on.
- **Gather the Gloom Newt eggs** from the Nursery Pool (area C). She lends **one Breath Pearl** for the job. If the eggs come back, the party keeps the pearl.

Let the party bargain for a better deal, offer something else, or refuse and find the cave another way. Pell remembers everything. If she thinks she's been cheated of the big prize later, so will every Muckling post in the Wastelands.

SECRET. Pell's back room, which nobody is allowed into, holds the spare parts she buys from Thuul. One of them has started to hum.

CLUES AT THE TILT

CLUE	TYPE	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Pell trades with the clever one for spare parts. One in her back room has started to hum	Fact	Standard 8	Persuade, Investigate
Pell knows exactly where the cave is, and so does every grandchild old enough to carry a sledge	Fact	Easy 6	Persuade, Deceive
The clever one is an octopus, and she lives in a shell that walks	Fact	Standard 8	Persuade, Lore

TREASURE. None to take. Everything is for sale. Pell buys anything, including all *Salvage*.

B THE BORER'S NEST

See Map 1 at the back: The Tilt.

READ ALOUD

The sand bank under the Tilt is churned and soft, pocked with sunken holes. Half a crate of Pell's stores sticks out of it at an angle. As you watch, it slides a little deeper, and the sand around it shivers. On the roof above, a grandchild starts shouting.

The nest lies in the sand bank right under the Tilt. It's under the Tilt, not on it, so the house rule doesn't apply. Pell will point this out.

CREATURES. Mud Borer (1): AC 15, Health 12, Move 1, Burrow 2; attack d12 + 1d6; mandibles d6; Erupt (2 actions: burst out and attack).

- It burrows through the loose sand and bursts up under its prey. Describe grinding and vibration before it emerges. Unless the party saw it coming, it gets a surprise attack before their turn.
- It can't dig through the hull, the ramp, the platforms or the hatched shell-rock, and its land Move is slow. That's where it's vulnerable.
- Pell's grandchildren will happily point out where it's been, and where it hasn't, from a safe height.

Map. One hex per Move. Loose sand (dotted) is where it burrows. Burrow holes mark where it can burst out. Ladders join the sand to the platforms and the hull.

TREASURE. **2 AP**, what's left of Pell's crate (give it back and prices at the Tilt come down), and one roll on *Salvage*. Pell's guide to the cave, and her good opinion.

C THE NURSERY POOL

READ ALOUD

A black pool sits in a hollow of the flats, deeper than it has any right to be. The water is perfectly still. Pale eggs, each the size of a fist, quiver on the bottom. Beside the pool, a broad newt as long as a man is tall uncurls her tail across the wet stone and watches you.

A deep pool out on the flats, too deep to wade. The eggs lie on the bottom.

CREATURES. Gloom Newt mother (1): AC 11, Health 10, Move 2, Swim 3; attack d12 + 1d6; bite d6; tail swipe d4 and push 2 hexes (1 damage per hex blocked by something solid).

- She guards the clutch. She warns, then drives intruders off. She won't chase far from her eggs, and backing away can end the fight.
- The party can withdraw, distract her, try a quiet approach or fight.
- With the Breath Pearl, one carrier can reach the eggs. Before anyone dives, describe the depth, the light and the danger. There's no fixed underwater penalty or time limit.

TREASURE. Gloom Newt eggs: a delicacy worth a fortune in trade. Pell wants them. So, if the party thinks about it, would plenty of buyers on the Dim Road.

D THE EXPOSED SHELF

READ ALOUD

White limestone runs to the horizon, gleaming with brine. Weed trails between stranded pools, drying and popping in the sun. In the nearest pool, two broad heads sit motionless, just breaking the water. A tongue cracks against the stone like a whip, and is gone.

The bare shelf above the caves, at the top of the cave map. Two openings lead down: one to the Breathing Cave (1), one straight into Thuul's Cave (6).

CREATURES. Mirehoppers (2 visible, up to 2 more hidden): AC 11, Health 8, Move 2, Leap 3; attack d12 + 1d6; bite d4; tongue strike d6 (reach 2); tongue grab (reach 2, holds); drag a held target 2 hexes.

- Keep the hidden two in reserve for a group that wants more danger, and show signs of movement before they emerge.
- Show leap distance and tongue reach before anyone gets grabbed.
- Watching them, distracting them or finding a way round the pools all get the party inside. Getting in never requires killing them.

TREASURE. None.

THE CAVES

See Map 2 at the back: Caves (GM).

Maps. Use the GM map with this key. The players' map (*S1 Map - Caves (Players)*) leaves off the numbers, the submerged passage and Thuul's seam. Show it, or let the players draw their own as they go.

Routes. The caves loop. From the shelf (D), one way in leads to the Breathing Cave (1) and on to the Machine Door (3), by the boulder-choked dry passage or the Flooded Passage (2). The other leads straight into Thuul's Cave (6). From 3, the Collapsed Passage (5) runs to the Drowned Grotto (4), which joins Thuul's Cave by a submerged passage. Thuul's seam drops from 6 straight into 3.

1 THE BREATHING CAVE

READ ALOUD

A warm breath rolls out of the dark, then a cold one, slow as sleep. Inside, shells and bent metal glitter in a heap against the wall. A Muckling no taller than your waist crouches on top of it, goggles pushed up, and raises a three-pronged spear. "Mine," it says. "I got here first."

The cave breathes because the air moves through the flooded passages below. A dry passage leads east towards the Machine Door (3), choked with boulders. The Flooded Passage (2) leads down and round.

CREATURES. Muckling (1): AC 10, Health 5, Move 3; attack d12 + 1d6; crude trident d4 (reach 2); Flee (both actions, move 9). Pale Skitterswarm (1): AC 11, Health 9 shared, Move 3; attack d12 + 1d6; swarm attack d4; fills up to 3 hexes.

- **The Muckling** is one of Pell's grandchildren (or a cousin from another post), scavenging alone. It's cautious and very keen to survive. Give it room to talk. It might trade its find, or warn the party about the flooded passage and the machine door further in. If it's killed, its find can still be recovered, and the Tilt will hear about it.
- **The Pale Skitterswarm** lives under the scrap heap: fine pale legs stir before the heap breaks apart. Digging through the heap, or a fight with the Muckling, sets it off. Talking doesn't.
- **The boulders** in the dry passage can be cleared, but it's noisy and takes time. Make that clear before the party commits.

CLUES IN THE BREATHING CAVE

CLUE	TYPE	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
The flooded passage leads to a machine door, with an air pocket partway	Lead	Easy 6	Persuade (the Muckling), Survive
"The door below eats the greedy," scratched into the wall	Misdirect	Easy 6	Lore, Investigate

TREASURE. The Muckling's find: **1 AP** and one roll on *Salvage*. Trade for it, or take it.

2 THE FLOODED PASSAGE

READ ALOUD

Black water fills the passage from wall to wall. A few steps in, the ceiling dips and meets the surface. The air is cold and smells of rot and iron. Bubbles rise from somewhere in the dark, one at a time.

The passage runs from the Breathing Cave (1) to the Machine Door (3). Partway along there's an **air pocket** (marked *a* on the map): a gap of air under the ceiling, enough for a few breaths.

CREATURES. Carrion Leeches (2): AC 10, Health 5, Move 1, Swim 3; attack d12 + 1d6; latch d4 and cling (target on the Back Foot); feed 1 Health a turn while attached. Pull one off with an action and a Melee or Finesse roll against its AC.

- The leeches lie in the silt, drawn by warmth and blood. Before they strike, describe the water moving the wrong way and something pale and ribbed brushing a leg. Out of the water they're sluggish and easy to escape.
- With the Breath Pearl, one carrier can swim it easily. Otherwise, describe the swim, the air pocket and the risk before anyone tries.

SECRET. Coming into room 3 this way lets the party arrive quietly and look around before anything notices them.

TREASURE. None.

3 THE MACHINE DOOR

READ ALOUD

The raw limestone stops, and the wall becomes something else: pale, seamless, ribbed like the inside of a shell. Curved seams divide it into panels taller than a door. Behind them, something ticks, slowly, like a great clock. The floor here is warm.

This is the edge of the buried Vael structure. Its walls are part of the machine. Most of it still works, badly.

CREATURES. None.

- The dry passage from room 1 comes in from the west, past the boulders. The Flooded Passage (2) comes in from the south-west. The Collapsed Passage (5) leaves to the east.
- The mouth of Thuul's seam opens in the ceiling here (the X-box on the map). It's a climb up to room 6.

SECRETS.

- **The panels.** A careful look shows linked wall panels that open on to stairs down to room 7 (S2). Don't hide the rest of the adventure behind a single roll. From Thuul's Cave (6), the way down is easier.
- **The seams.** Pearls and parts have worked their way into the curved seams over the years.

TREASURE. A palm-sized **Aevic Conductor** and **2 AP** lodged in the seams, found by a careful look. There's no chest. The Conductor is *not* the relic.

4 THE DROWNED GROTTO

READ ALOUD

Black water turns in a slow circle, carrying scraps of weed and wood around and around. Dry ledges cling to the walls above it. Each time the water dips, it bares the lip of a passage below the surface, then hides it again.

A round cave around a slow whirlpool. The dry ledges are a good place to scout and rest.

CREATURES. None.

- Following the floating debris, or studying the waterline, shows the way to room 5.
- Show the current before anyone gets in, and say what their crossing risks before rolling.

SECRET. The passage the water keeps hiding is the **submerged passage** to Thuul's Cave (6). It's a short swim, but the current pulls.

TREASURE. None.

5 THE COLLAPSED PASSAGE

READ ALOUD

Broken limestone lies heaped against a wall that isn't broken at all. Its pale surface curves away and down into the dark, smooth as an egg. Loose stones tick and settle under your feet. Somewhere below, something hums.

The passage runs between the Drowned Grotto (4) and the Machine Door (3), along the outside of the buried structure.

CREATURES. None.

- Point out the unstable stones before anyone climbs or shifts them. A careful route leads through to room 3.
- This is a glimpse of what's coming, not a dig.

SECRET. A patient look along the smooth wall makes it clear the Machine Door belongs to something much bigger, running down and away under the flats.

TREASURE. None.

6 THUUL'S CAVE

Stage Three begins here. The fighting's done, for now: this is a conversation.

READ ALOUD

Salvaged parts lie in neat, careful heaps on a dry ledge above the water: gears, panels, coils, things without names. Between them, a great nautilus shell steps on slender jointed legs, picking one piece up and setting it down somewhere better. Something wet shifts inside the shell. Then a voice comes from the housing: "Mind the coils. They bite."

Thuul's den. It opens straight on to the shelf (D). Mineral curtains hang like torn sails, and between them run fresh scrape marks where she's dragged parts up from below. A pool at the back hides the submerged passage to the Drowned Grotto (4).

CREATURES. Thuul (1): non-combatant, no combat statistics (see Appendix). She is not a boss fight.

THUUL

- **Look:** a nautilus shell on slender, spider-like legs, stepping precisely between her heaps of parts. Inside, an octopus, watching.
- **Voice:** comes from the shell's housing. Practical, inquisitive and busy.
- **Wants:** help below. The service route to the hardware she needs is narrow, and something is in it.
- **Offers:** the key, in return for the job. Hints and tools. An Aevic repulsor with a single charge.
- **Knows:** exactly what the key does. Where the way down goes. That something has gone wrong in the deepest level since she woke the key.
- **Won't say:** much about the figure. She doesn't know much, and she doesn't like it.
- **Playing Thuul:** she notices useful hands and good tools long before good manners. She offers her bargain plainly. Questions, counter-offers and refusal can all change the conversation.

Thuul's bargain. The service route to the hardware Thuul wants is narrow, and something is in it. She knows the key matters to outsiders, but it's no use to her. The party's hands are. **Her terms:** drive the figure off, reach the regulator, fix it, and come back. In return, she gives them the key. She explains the job, and the repulsor's single charge, clearly, through her shell. She can offer hints and tools. She can't go down the passage herself.

SECRETS.

- **The seam.** The way down is right here: a seam in the floor of her cave, Vael panels she's pried half open. It drops into the Machine Door (3) and on to the Machine Gate (room 7, S2).
- **The figure.** Thuul knows very little about it, and she doesn't like it. She has noticed the stopped patterns and the blank stone spreading from the maintenance level since she woke the key. She won't guess at what it is, and if the party shows her the black pearl, she'll want to keep well away from it.

CLUES IN THUUL'S CAVE

CLUE	TYPE	DIFFICULTY	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
The way down is a seam in the cave floor, Vael panels pried half open	Lead	Easy 6	Investigate, Persuade
The key opens a way through the security of a Fortress, the Vael base of a Conduit	Fact	Standard 8	Persuade, Aevum
Thuul has no use for the key, and will trade it for help below	Fact	Easy 6	Persuade, Investigate
Patterns have stopped and stone has gone blank in the deepest level since she woke the key	Fact	Standard 8	Persuade, Investigate
The marks on the panels match the seals on a Fortress	Fact	Hard 12	Aevum, Lore

TREASURE. None here. The key is on her bench below (room 10, S2).

ENDING S1

S1 ends when the party has heard Thuul's bargain. The way down is open beneath her floor, the key is waiting on her bench below, and Sallow's boss is waiting back on the Dim Road. If the party accepts, S2 begins with the descent. If they refuse, let them try another way, or go home and explain to the Undertow why they came back empty-handed.

TREASURE IN S1

- **Aevic Pearls.** Five of the adventure's ten ordinary Aevic Pearls are in S1: **2** in the Borer's nest, **1** in the Muckling's find (room 1) and **2** at the Machine Door (room 3). The other five are in S2. Keep one running count across both. There are no set chests. Five AP is about what Sallow pays one character, so a careful party comes home from S1 with real money.
- **Salvage.** Wherever the module says "one roll on *Salvage*", roll 1d6 on this table. Most of it is junk to most people. Pell buys all of it.

D6	SALVAGE	WORTH
1	A bent brass fitting, green with age	5 Bits
2	A coil of good rope, stiff with salt	10 Bits
3	A sealed jar of lamp oil	10 Bits
4	A tin of fishhooks and a folding knife	15 Bits
5	A cracked lens of pale Vael glass	25 Bits
6	A small Aevic part that still hums faintly	50 Bits, or more to Pell

- **The Aevic Conductor.** Found at the Machine Door (room 3). It mounts on a weapon *or* armour and has three slots. Three Aevic Pearls of the *same* colour activate its +1 bonus. Mixed or incomplete sets do nothing. [*To develop: which colour gives which bonus, fitting limits and stacking, in the Equipment chapter.*]
- **Pell's deal.** Deal with the Mud Borer or bring back the Gloom Newt eggs, and Pell has the party guided to the cave. Bring back the eggs and the party keeps the Breath Pearl.
- **Sallow's pay.** 1 AP each up front. 4 AP each on delivery, if they deliver.
- **The key** is not won in S1. It's on Thuul's bench, below. See S2.

PLAYTEST REPORT

S1 is a playtest module. After the session, jot down answers to these. Short notes are fine.

Finding it (clues)

- How many clues did the party find before they set out? Which ones?
- Which actions did players reach for? Did anyone use an action that wasn't suggested?
- Did any miss leave the party stuck? Which miss cost did you use most?
- Did anyone believe a misdirect? Was that fun or frustrating?
- Did you use the GM Aids (Who to Ask, Places, the Shallows at Far, When Things Stall)? Which ones?

Fighting

- How long did each fight take?
- Which rules did you have to look up?
- How often did the bonus die and Epic Success come up?
- Did a Breather's Armour recovery feel right? Did the d3 cup work at the table?
- Did the Mud Borer's AC 15 feel too hard for starting characters?

Thuul

- Did the party talk or try to fight? How did the bargain go?
- Did the players understand what Thuul wanted?

Overall

- Did the pay and prices feel right?
- What did the players remember afterwards?
- What would you cut? What was missing?

TEACHING NOTE

READING A CREATURE PROFILE

Read this, then look across → at the creature profiles.

Each profile gives the creature's size and home, a line to describe it, and a stat block: AC, Health and Move, the four attributes, the attack roll and its weapons and specials. The bullets say how it behaves and how to show the danger before it bites. General rules are in the Adventure Book; these entries cover what's special about each creature. They will move into the Creature Book.

APPENDIX: CREATURES

MIREHOPPER

Large amphibious ambush predator · Shallows

A broad, motionless head breaks the water. Its tongue snaps out before its body moves.

AC 11 · Health 8	**Move** 2 · **Leap** 3
Might +4 · Agility +1	**Wits** −5 · **Spirit** +1
Attack	d12 + 1d6 vs AC
Bite	Adjacent · d4. It has to let go of a held target first.
Tongue Strike	Reach 2 · d6. Doesn't grab.
Tongue Grab	Reach 2 · On a hit, holds the target, no damage.
Drag	As its move, drags a held target up to 2 hexes.

- **Held.** A held character is restrained and on the Back Foot. They can't move or attack. To break free they spend both actions and roll Melee or Finesse against the Mirehopper's AC (the grapple rules).
- **Leap.** As its move, it can jump up to 3 hexes, over water, a gap or a character, and land in an empty hex. *Playtest wording.*
- **Behaviour.** Picks off prey near the water. The party can watch it, distract it or go round. Getting into the cave never requires killing it.

MUCKLING

Small amphibious native · Shallows

A scavenger no taller than your waist, goggles pushed up, grips a three-pronged spear and keeps one eye on the nearest way out.

AC 10 · Health 5	**Move** 3
Might −2 · Agility +2	**Wits** +1 · **Spirit** −1
Attack	d12 + 1d6 vs AC
Crude trident	Reach 2 · d4
Flee	Both actions: move 9 hexes. No attack.

- **Behaviour.** Would much rather bargain than fight. Defends a claim or a find with a lot of noise, then runs when alone and in danger. Whatever it's carrying can be traded for or recovered.

PALE SKITTERSWARM

Swarm 3 · Shallows caves

Fine pale legs stir beneath the scrap, and then the whole heap seems to come apart.

AC 11 · Health 9 (shared)	**Move** 3
Might −3 · Agility +3	**Wits** −5 · **Spirit** −4
Attack	d12 + 1d6 vs AC
Swarm attack	d4
Swarm 3	One creature filling up to 3 hexes. It can pull into one hex and spread out again. Extra hexes don't give it extra turns, and it keeps one Health pool. It can help another creature flank, but can't flank on its own.

- **Behaviour.** An optional disturbance under the scrap. Show movement before it emerges.

CARRION LEECH

Draft creature · Shallows caves and flooded passages

Something pale and ribbed, as long as your arm, uncoils from the silt and turns towards your warmth.

AC 10 · Health 5	**Move** 1 · **Swim** 3
Might +1 · Agility +2	**Wits** −5 · **Spirit** +0
Attack	d12 + 1d6 vs AC
Latch	On a hit, d4 damage and it clings on. The target is on the Back Foot while it's attached.
Feed	At the start of each of its turns while attached, the target loses 1 Health. No roll.

- **Pulling it off.** One action and a Melee or Finesse roll against its AC, by the victim or an adjacent ally. Fire, salt or strong spirits make it let go on their own.
- **Behaviour.** Lies in the silt and waits for warmth. Out of the water it's slow and easy to escape, and it won't follow onto dry stone.
- **Draft.** New for S1: stats not yet playtested; it needs a Creature Book entry.

GLOOM NEWT

Medium amphibian · nursery guardian · Shallows

A broad newt raises her head beside the eggs and lays her heavy tail between the nest and you.

AC 11 · Health 10	**Move** 2 · **Swim** 3
Might +2 · Agility +1	**Wits** −4 · **Spirit** +2
Attack	d12 + 1d6 vs AC
Bite	Adjacent · d6
Tail Swipe	On a hit, d4 and push the target 2 hexes straight away.
Collision	If something solid stops the push, the target takes 1 damage for each hex it couldn't move. Water and open ground don't stop it.

- **Behaviour.** Protects the clutch. Drives intruders off and doesn't chase far from the nest. Backing away can end the fight.

THUUL

Intelligent octopus · tinkerer and oracle · non-combatant · Wastelands

A great nautilus shell steps between heaps of salvage on slender jointed legs. Something wet shifts inside. Then the shell speaks.

AC · Health · Move	Not rated. She is not a fight.
Might · Agility · Wits · Spirit	Not rated.
The shell	An old Vael construct, a nautilus on spider-like legs. Home, armour and transport, used the way a hermit crab uses a shell. She speaks through its housing.
The mind	Hers. The intelligence is biological, not the machine.

- **What she does.** Takes the old works apart and adapts them, and trades spare parts with the Mucklings of the Tilt. She can repair and adapt Vael systems.
- **Behaviour.** Practical, inquisitive and busy. She notices useful hands and good tools long before good manners. She bargains plainly and fairly.
- **If attacked.** Don't roll for her. She pulls back into her shell and leaves by the water, and the bargain is gone. *Working detail.*
- **In S1 and S2.** She holds the key and offers it for help below. See room 6.

MUD BORER

Burrowing beetle · Shallows caves

A squat armoured beetle with shovel forelegs and grinding mandibles. Loose rubble shifts above it as it comes.

AC 15 · Health 12	**Move** 1 · **Burrow** 2
Might +3 · Agility −1	**Wits** −5 · **Spirit** +1
Attack	d12 + 1d6 vs AC
Mandibles	d6
Erupt	2 actions: burst out of the rubble and make one Mandibles attack.

- **Burrowing.** Through loose ground and rubble only, never solid stone. Its slow land Move matters wherever it can't dig.
- **Behaviour.** Comes through loose ground. Scraping and vibration warn the party before it emerges. Flanking puts it on the Back Foot as normal (AC 14).

Purpose (11 Nov 2026). S1 is the combat test and practice module of the introductory series, and the first module ever: it presumes everything needs an explanation and gives the GM plenty of aids.

Structure (11 Nov 2026, author). S1 is a very simple adventure in three stages: 1 find the ruin with non-combat rolls; 2 fight, fight, fight; 3 Thuul. Going down under is S2. Series: S1–S3, then T1–T3 on Temple Island.

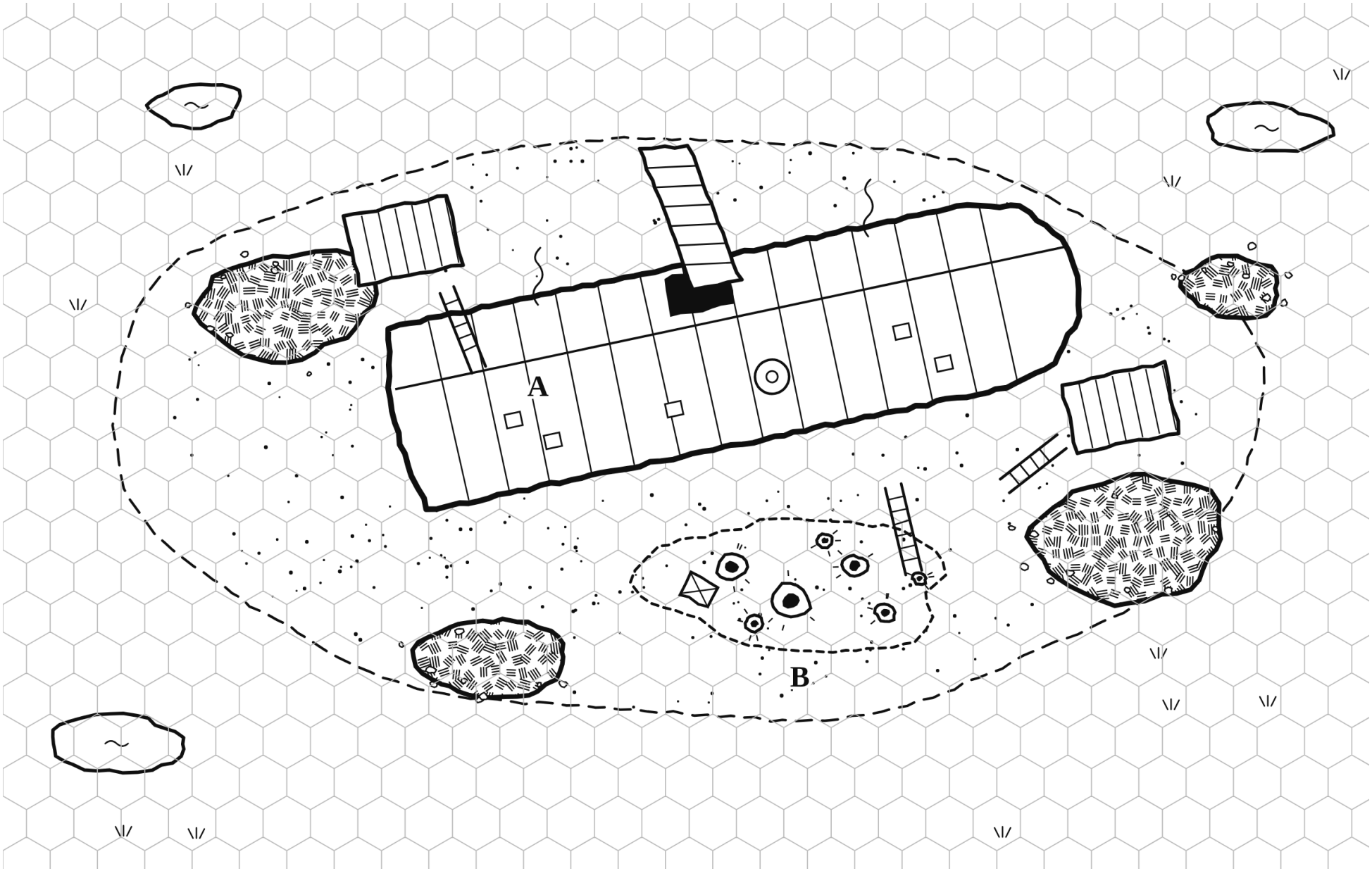
Module template (11 Nov 2026, author). Every module opens with the story, then what's going on and how to approach it, then the clues and how to use them mechanically. A clue is a Lead, Fact or Misdirect. Generic clues go in rollable tables up front and can be placed anywhere; area-specific clues go in a table inside that area. Suggested actions are a guide, not a requirement.

Working details (not yet approved). The Combat Practice table and playtest notes; Sallow (name) and the boss as the Undertow; Sallow's pay (5 AP each, 1 up front); the price scale (day's labour 50 Bits, bed 15 Bits) as a starting point for the Adventure Book's price list; the Who to Ask locals and their names; the Low Lantern; the relic on Thuul's bench in room 10; the AD&D-style key (boxed text, then GM information, by map number; outside areas lettered A–D); Thuul's cave as room 6 (the old Limestone Galleries cut; Grotto and Collapsed Passage renumbered 4 and 5); the Tilt as the Muckling post (approved); the Borer nesting under the Tilt; the Nursery Pool out on the flats; Pell trading with Thuul and the humming part in her back room; room 2 now a flooded passage with two Carrion Leeches (new creature, draft stats); the Skitterswarm back in room 1; room 3 the machine door; the Mucklings wanting a cut; the consequences for S2; the figure kept as an unnamed omen in S1, with Ythrum fully introduced in S3; Thuul's unease about the pearl; Mirehopper Tongue Grab using the grapple escape rules; encounter-table pointers; consequences line.

Maps (11 Nov 2026). New playtest maps drawn from this key, in simple OSR line style, easy to trace: S1 Map - Caves (GM), S1 Map - Caves (Players), S1 Map - The Tilt (hex battle map for the Borer's Nest). SVG sources are editable in Affinity. Old maps kept as backups.

Still to develop. A hex battle map for the Nursery Pool and the Exposed Shelf, if wanted; Aevic Conductor colours and bonuses; placing the cave on the Wastelands map. Playtest placeholders added 11 Nov 2026: pearl placement (5 in S1), the Salvage table, Mirehopper Leap wording, the Playtest Report. Flavour text for areas and rooms done (11 Nov 2026): three to four sentences, second person, present tense, ending on something to act on.

MAP 1: THE TILT · AREAS A AND B



MAP 2: THE CAVES · GM MAP · AREAS D AND 1–6

