

Part I — Scenes

The game narrative, scene by scene

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Scene 1: The Cage

Scene 01 — The Cage

SITUATION

A whelping cage. Brinestump Marsh, southwest of Sandpoint. Night, or close enough to it that the difference doesn't matter inside a cage.

NARRATION

Dark in here. Wet. The smell is mostly each other.

Eight goblins crammed into a whelping enclosure — the Licktoad tribe's holding pen for young who haven't proven anything yet. The bars are close. The marsh presses in from every direction. Outside, torchlight and the low noise of a village that has decided tonight is significant.

Inside the cage: eight goblins who have not been told what happens next, only that something does.

[BEAT: the eight, in darkness]

NARRATION

Bubble Bomb's vials tick against the iron bars every time she shifts. She shifts a lot.

Rrrahah Bäähh mutters under his breath — prayers, or something in that direction. Whatever god takes Razortooth clerics, it's listening, or it isn't, and either way the teeth are still enormous.

Sneaky Scorch watches. Doesn't touch anything. Not yet.

Screech Sagg hums something. It is almost a song.

Shvub-Mah has already clocked the latch — distance, mechanism, the exact angle of the thing. He's not going to use this information. He just needs to have it.

Frizzel Brizzel counts the gaps in the cage wall. Also the shadows beyond them. Also what moves in the shadows.

Uhuhh Shehee is vibrating. There is no other word for it. She is very still and completely taut and vibrating.

Wee Goo is sitting on someone.

[BEAT: the dares begin]

NARRATION

Chief Rendwattle Gutwad does not come to the cage. Gutwad does not come anywhere — the Teeter Chair is six feet off the ground and he is not a small goblin. His advisor Slorb comes instead, nasal voice carrying over the marsh noise, overdressed for the occasion, important in the way that people are important when someone else is powerful.

The Licktoad tribe has decided these eight need proving. So there are dares.

There are always dares.

[GAMEPLAY: The dare challenges play out here. Each dare is a discrete challenge for the player. Outcome: all eight are declared worthy.]

One dare is confirmed: a course of wooden pillars driven into the marsh mud, spaced for jumping. The goblins must hop the full run without touching the water. The pillars are uneven. Some wobble. The marsh beneath them is not friendly.

[BEAT: the cage opens]

NARRATION

The latch moves.

Light hits the cage — torchlight and marsh dark, which is its own kind of murk, but it is not the inside of a cage and that distinction is everything.

The tribe is there. Every goblin who lives in Licktoad village, which is not a large number, but they are loud and they are close and they are looking at the eight with the specific expression of a group that has decided to be impressed.

Slorb speaks. The words are Gutwad's words, officially, because Gutwad's words are too powerful for lesser goblins to hear directly. This is the story. The story doesn't hold up if you look at the Teeter Chair situation, but goblins are not a people who look too hard at structural logic.

The declaration goes out.

[BEAT: the declaration]

NARRATION

Heroes of the Licktoad tribe.

Eight of them. These eight. Whether the tribe wanted heroes or not is not a question anyone thought to ask. The cage is open and they are standing in front of a crowd that is cheering, and Gutwad is on his chair looking like he had planned all of this, and the marsh is dark and loud around all of it.

Bubble Bomb's vials stop rattling — she went still when the light hit.

Rrrahah Bäähh's prayer ends mid-word.

Sneaky Scorch looks at everything he didn't touch in the cage and calculates what he can touch now.

Screech Sagg's hum becomes something that might be remembered later.

Shvub-Mah notes that the latch works exactly like he thought it did.

Frizzel Brizzel shifts his count from cage gaps to crowd positions.

Uhuhh Shehee stops vibrating.

Wee Goo gets off whoever he was sitting on.

[BEAT: the mission]

NARRATION

Then Slorb says there's a ship.

A ship, run aground in Brinestump Marsh. The tribe wants to know what's on it. Simple. Go find out. Bring back whatever matters.

The crowd cheers this too. The crowd will cheer anything tonight.

The eight look at the marsh. The marsh looks back — dark water, denser dark beyond it, the specific silence of a place that has things in it.

They've been declared heroes.

Might as well start.

[END OF SCENE — transitions to: Brinestump Marsh approach]

Scene Notes for Downstream Agents

Art Director:

- Opening image: cage bars in close foreground, eight distinct silhouettes packed inside, torchlight leaking in from outside. Dark and compressed. The vials at the bars are a detail worth keeping.
- The cage opening: light expansion — darkness to torchlight-and-marsh. The crowd visible as shapes at first.
- Chief Gutwad on the Teeter Chair is a strong visual anchor: obese goblin, six feet off the ground, trophy-laden Moot House behind him. Slorb at his side, overdressed.
- Tone reference: the goblins are not cute. They are feral, crouched, sharp. The crowd is the same.

Composer:

- Pre-opening: close, damp, low. The vial-ticking and the hum of Screech Sagg are the only sounds.
- Dare sequence: escalating tension with comedic register — chaos, not dread.
- Cage opening: the shift from confinement to noise and crowd. Should feel like pressure releasing into noise, not triumph.
- Declaration beat: a single comic-absurd swell. Not heroic — the joke is that it lands like heroic.

- Mission assignment: the marsh sound returns underneath. Something larger than the celebration starting underneath the noise.

Game Designer:

- The dare sequence is a gameplay block — this scene hands off to mechanics at [GAMEPLAY: The dare challenges play out here] and resumes at [BEAT: cage opens].
- Scene opens and closes the narrative frame for the tutorial/prologue level.
- Characters are introduced here via their opening actions — these are player-facing establishing beats, not cutscene-only information.
- Slorb and Gutwad are the quest-givers for Act 1.

Scene 2: Brinestump

Scene 02 — Brinestump

SITUATION

Brinestump Marsh. Southwest of Sandpoint. The Licktoad village is behind them. The ship is somewhere ahead.

NARRATION

The village celebration noise drops away fast. Marsh absorbs sound that way — one moment there are torches and cheering, the next there is mud and the smell of standing water and the dark pressing in from every direction.

Eight goblins. One direction: forward.

The path to the shipwreck runs along the south bank of a creek. One mile, roughly. An hour, if nothing happens.

Nothing in Brinestump is interested in letting nothing happen.

[BEAT: departure — village behind them, marsh ahead]

NARRATION

The route is known in the broad sense: follow the creek, find the coast, find the ship. The details are the problem. Brinestump's details are: knee-deep water where the ground pretends to be solid, trees that close overhead until the sky is just a suggestion, and the specific quality of silence that means something heard you first.

Sneaky Scorch moves differently out here. Less waiting, more watching.

Frizzel Brizzel ranges ahead — close enough to stay in contact, far enough to be useful.

Bubble Bomb's vials have stopped rattling. She's holding them still by hand.

[BEAT: the marsh, moving through it]

[GAMEPLAY: Marsh approach traversal. Environmental hazards and navigation to the spider encounter.]

NARRATION

Halfway to the coast, the treetops stop being just treetops.

Something very large has built a home up there — a deadfall of old trees 200 feet south of the creek, webbing thick enough to hold weight that isn't supposed to be held. Things wrapped and hanging. Some of the things are goblin-shaped.

She comes down when she is ready.

Her name, if spiders have names and this one definitely has a name, is Lotslegs Eat Goblin Babies Many.

She has opinions about goblins using this path.

[BEAT: the spider descends]

[GAMEPLAY: Lotslegs Eat Goblin Babies Many encounter. Giant spider, CR 1. Her lair — the deadfall, 200 feet south of the creek — contains wrapped bodies and salvageable valuables.]

NARRATION

Shvub-Mah moves through the fight the way he moves through everything: with an awareness of exactly where the floor is and exactly how far each leap carries. The spider loses track of him once.

That is the last mistake she makes.

Bubble Bomb contributes something that explodes. This is also true of most situations.

The spider loses.

[BEAT: Lotslegs dead — the deadfall lair visible]

[GAMEPLAY: *Optional — search the lair. Wrapped bodies, valuables.*]

NARRATION

The creek continues. So do they.

The next problem is the water.

The creek, which was a creek, has widened into something that doesn't have a convenient name and requires a decision. The current is present. The bottom, where there is one, is not visible. Going around would add time and marsh the route doesn't provide a good way around.

Rrrahah Bäähh is in the water first. This is how it goes.

[BEAT: the river crossing]

[GAMEPLAY: *River crossing — skill checks. Rrrahah Bäähh assists another character. Someone nearly drowns. Not a fight — navigation.*]

NARRATION

Everyone gets across.

Getting across is not the same as getting across cleanly. The marsh notes the difference.

Then the crocodile.

The crocodile does not ask questions or announce itself. It is simply present and interested, and then it is a fight, in brown water, with the mud giving way underfoot at the worst possible moments.

[BEAT: crocodile]

[GAMEPLAY: Crocodile encounter. In-water or shoreline. Original campaign content — no module source.]

NARRATION

The crocodile also loses.

At some point, the marsh opens up. The trees pull back. The ground goes from mud to sand and the smell changes — salt instead of rot, open instead of closed. The coast.

The ship is out there somewhere. The sun is gone.

[BEAT: emerging onto the coast — dark, open, the sea ahead]

NARRATION

They make camp on the beach.

No walls. No roof. The dark off the water moves in a way that marsh dark doesn't. Out here things come from the open rather than from behind trees, which is a different kind of problem.

They post no real watch. This is consistent with being goblins.

Things come out of the dark anyway.

By morning all eight are still present.

This counts.

[BEAT: night camp — morning]

[GAMEPLAY: Beach camp — night encounter(s). Original campaign content. Scope and number of encounters at Game Designer's discretion. Scene hands off here. The ship is the next scene.]

[END OF SCENE — transitions to: the Kaijitsu Star]

Scene Notes for Downstream Agents

Art Director:

- Departure beat: the village torchlight behind them, swallowed by marsh within a few steps. The transition from warm light to wet dark should happen fast — one image does it.
- The spider: treetop web silhouette visible before she descends. The wrapped hanging shapes in the trees read before the spider does. Her lair, the deadfall, is a pile of old timber and web 200 feet south of the creek.
- River crossing: brown water, no visible bottom, eight goblins at various stages of crossing. Rrrahah Bäähh's teeth and size are visible in the water. This is ugly movement, not graceful.
- Crocodile: it arrives from below, not from the bank. The water and footing are part of the fight.
- Beach emergence: hard tonal shift — open sky, sand, the sea visible for the first time. The compressed marsh dark gives way to open coastal dark. It should feel like breathing out.
- Night camp: figures on sand, nothing around them, the sea at one edge and open dark everywhere else. The things that come out of the dark are silhouettes first.

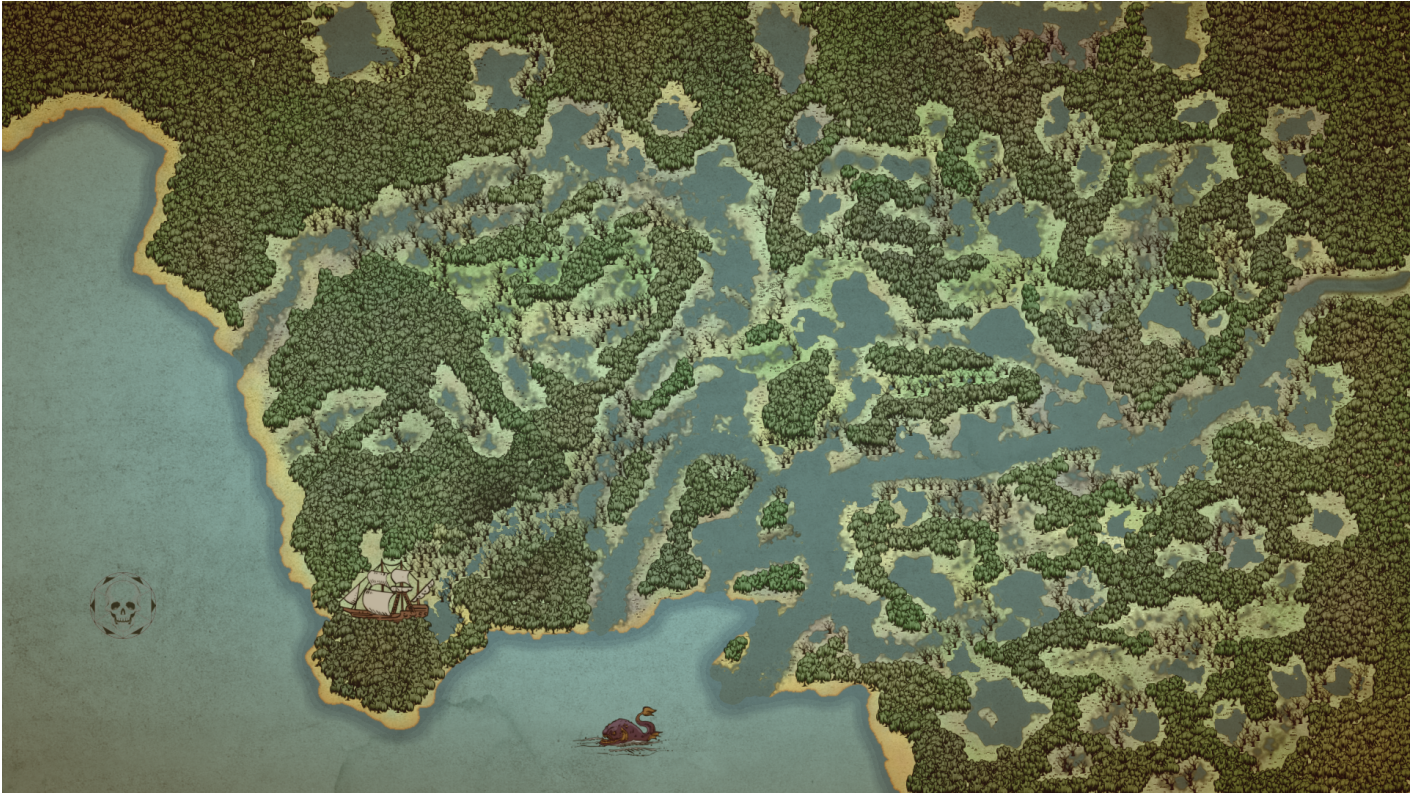
Composer:

- Marsh traversal: low, wet, ambient. Rhythm underneath rather than melody. Tension that does not resolve.
- Spider arrival: sudden, not telegraphed. She comes down fast. The music should match — no build, just presence.
- Spider fight: chaotic, brief, resolved. The explosion moment (Bubble Bomb) has a comedic spike.
- River crossing: slower, effortful. The near-drowning moment should pull the tension out of comedic register into something briefly real.
- Crocodile: back to chaos. Water sounds physically present in the mix.
- Beach emergence: tonal release. First open air, first sea sound. The relief doesn't last.
- Night camp: sparse, coastal, wide. The camp fire small in a lot of dark. Whatever comes out of the dark — the music knows before the goblins do.

Game Designer:

- This scene contains three encounter slots: spider, river crossing, crocodile. Each is a discrete gameplay beat with a narration frame before and after.
- The spider lair is an optional exploration beat — flagged for loot if the player chooses to search.
- River crossing is a non-combat skill challenge, not a fight. Rrrahah Bäähh's assist mechanic should have a narrative hook here (he saves someone).
- The beach camp is an open encounter block — number and type of night encounters are Game Designer's call. Scene hands off fully at that point.
- Pacing note: three encounters in one traversal scene is the maximum before it feels like a slog. If the beach camp runs long, consider treating it as its own scene.
- The spider's name (Lotslegs Eat Goblin Babies Many) should appear somewhere the player can read it — enemy nameplate, bestiary entry, something. It is too good to leave in the background.

Scene 3: The Ship



The shipwreck in Brinestump Marsh

Scene 03 — The Kaijitsu Star

SITUATION

The coast. Dawn. The beach camp is behind them. Somewhere ahead, in a shallow swamp pool where the marsh meets the sea, a two-masted ship has been stuck in the mud for decades. They can smell it before they can see it.

NARRATION

The ship sits in its pool like something that gave up a long time ago and made peace with that decision.

Two masts, both still standing, which is surprising. The hull has gone the color of the marsh — dark and soft at the waterline, held up by mud as much as its own structure. The name on the bow is written in a script none of the eight can read.

It doesn't matter. They didn't come here to read.

They came here for whatever's inside.

[BEAT: first sight — the Kaijitsu Star, still and rotting in its swamp pool]

NARRATION

The horse sees them first.

It's in a fenced yard built off the ship's side — a full-grown stallion, dark gray, with the filthy look of an animal that has been here too long and knows it. It is not pleased about visitors.

Neither, presumably, is whoever built the fence. The horse belongs here — part of the same arrangement that put a dog named Cuddles in the galley.

[BEAT: the yard and Stomp — something is living here]

*[GAMEPLAY: Approach — the yard, the horse Stomp. The ship's condition, the entry points. Fenced pen with a gray stallion. Boarding the ship requires dealing with or bypassing the yard. Dogs chained to the masts — Scabtongue and Tickletooth, half-starved, feral. The galley holds a third dog (Cuddles, larger, worse). Each disturbance increases the chance that what's sleeping

inside wakes up.]*

NARRATION

The horse dies first.

This is how it goes in goblin stories involving horses, and they all involve horses, and the horse always dies first.

The ship makes no sound.

[BEAT: the horse is down — the ship is quiet — for now]

NARRATION

Below decks: the smell of old wood, old water, and something that has been cooking things for a long time and not always waiting for them to stop moving.

The ship has been occupied. The evidence is everywhere — bones arranged with opinion, scraps of cloth that were once people's clothing, a cauldron with ongoing projects. Someone lives here. Someone with a large mouth and smaller ideas about whose food is whose.

Among the bones: the remains of **Scribbleface** — a goblin outcast who had been banished from the Licktoad tribe for the crime of reading and writing. He came here. He did not leave.

Her name is Vorka.

The tribe knows the name. Every Licktoad goblin knows the name, which is why none of them were keen to volunteer for this particular mission. Vorka was Licktoad, once — the wife of a former chief. She ate him. Then a few more. Then the tribe threw her out, which was honestly the minimum response. She came here. She has been eating things that come to her ever since.

She is asleep when they find her.

[BEAT: the ship's interior — the cauldron, the evidence, the sleeping Vorka]

[GAMEPLAY: The ship interior — Vorka's lair across several areas. She is asleep; each encounter above decks (dogs, disturbances, noise) adds cumulative chance of her waking. Lord Longtung — her giant frog companion — patrols the lower areas. Vorka's cabin holds the red chest. She wakes, prepares (barkskin potion), and then the encounter begins. She does not retreat.]

NARRATION

She is awake.

She has a great many opinions about what she plans to do with specific parts of specific goblins, expressed at volume and with culinary specificity.

The eight have opinions back.

[BEAT: Vorka awake — the conversation before it stops being a conversation]

[GAMEPLAY: The Vorka encounter. Druid 3. Lord Longtung in melee. Her spells include produce flame, summon swarm, charm animal. Will not flee. Fights until one of them doesn't.]

NARRATION

Vorka loses.

She said a lot on the way down. None of it helped.

Lord Longtung, whose loyalty was real if nothing else was, flees into the marsh when it's done.

What's left of Vorka stays with the ship.

[BEAT: Vorka dead — Lord Longtung gone into the marsh]

NARRATION

The red chest is in the cabin.

It isn't locked. This is either a sign of confidence or a sign that no one has ever made it this far alive. The eight open it and find: fireworks.

Fourteen Desnan candles. Twenty paper candles. Seven skyrockets.

This is exactly what the Licktoad tribe sent them for. The chief wanted fireworks. Here are fireworks. Mission status: complete.

Screech Sagg looks at the skyrockets the way someone else might look at a sword.

[BEAT: the red chest — the fireworks cache — the mission objective, found]

[GAMEPLAY: Loot the ship. The red chest (fireworks: 14 Desnan candles, 20 paper candles, 7 skyrockets) is the primary objective. Optional: ivory fan with crude map on reverse found in the cabin — no goblin can read the script. Its significance is not yet apparent. Player may take or leave it.]

NARRATION

They take what matters and leave the rest.

The ship doesn't care. The ship is going to be here when they're dead.

[BEAT: leaving the ship — the marsh, the route back]

NARRATION

The marsh is the same going back. It doesn't hold grudges or offer easier passage as a reward for completing a mission. The same mud. The same roots.

The same quality of silence that means something noticed you.

[END OF SCENE — transitions to: Licktoad Village celebration / Part 2 opening]

Scene Notes for Downstream Agents

Art Director:

- First sight: the ship in its pool, shot from the beach side. Two masts visible above the marsh treeline first — the ship reveals slowly. The pool is shallow; the hull is half-buried in mud. Rot and age are the dominant visual, but the structure holds. It is bigger than goblins expect things to be.
- The fenced yard and Stomp: a dark gray horse against rotting wood. The fence is crude, goblin-built. The chained dogs at the masts are visible as shapes before they're audible.
- Below decks: cramped, dark, amber lantern light if any. The cauldron is the focal point — large, in use. Bones arranged with intention, not scattered. Vorka's trophies (scraps of cloth from victims) visible on her person and on the walls.
- Vorka herself: oversized mouth even by goblin standards, filed teeth, floppy leather hat stolen from a human and crudely resized. She is not small. She reads as dangerous before she reads as funny, even if the overall register is comedic.
- The red chest: unlocked, plain. The fireworks inside are the first genuinely bright color in the scene — Desnan candles, paper tubes, skyrockets. Brief color in a dark environment.

Composer:

- Approach to the ship: low ambient, the marsh sound continuing. A new texture underneath — something old and still. The ship has its own acoustic quality: water sounds, creaking wood, nothing moving.
- The yard and dogs: tension without resolution. Brief bursts of noise (horse, dogs) that spike and drop. The cumulative-disturbance structure should have a musical equivalent — each incident adds a layer that doesn't fully resolve.
- Below decks: the smell of the place should have a sonic equivalent. Close, layered, old. The cauldron drip. The comic register of the lore drop (Vorka's backstory) can sit on top of something that stays unsettling.
- Vorka awake: sudden shift. She talks before she fights — this is a comedic beat, the specificity of her threats ("those ears might taste fine stuffed with eyes"). Music can play this as absurd without undercutting what follows.
- The fight: chaotic, close quarters, tight spaces. Lord Longtung's tongue range (15 feet) should have an audio presence.
- The chest opening: a release. The fireworks cache is the payoff. Brief, bright, almost a fanfare — but comedy-register, not triumph.

Game Designer:

- This scene contains one primary encounter zone: Vorka's lair (multi-area, progressive alert system). Note: the Magical Maggie encounter occurs before this scene — after Cave of Darkfear, before the Kaijitsu Star mission.
- The progressive-alert mechanic (each disturbance = cumulative waking chance for Vorka) is a stealth-vs-noise system. Worth building as a visible pressure mechanic rather than a hidden roll.
- Lord Longtung operates as Vorka's primary melee threat. He flees on Vorka's death — the player does not need to fight him to resolution, but may.
- The dogs (Scabtongue, Tickletooth at masts; Cuddles in galley) are layered encounters that contribute to the alert system. Cuddles is substantially more dangerous than the chained pair.
- Stomp (the horse) is in the yard — effectively the opening encounter. He is not a complex fight but his death is narratively load-bearing (establishes tone for the whole ship).
- The red chest fireworks are the mission objective. Consider whether they function as usable items in combat — Desnan candles and skyrockets have mechanical stats (see [lore/items/notable-items.md](#)). This is a player-facing reward moment.
- The ivory fan is an optional find — flagged here for potential Jade Regent AP hook. No mechanical weight in Part 1. Consider as a collectible/lore item.
- Magical Maggie is the bridge to Part 2 — but her encounter precedes this scene (pre-story quest return). The farm hook comes from her looted map. This beat belongs in the Pre-Story Quest scene, not Scene 3.
- Pacing: this is a longer scene than 01 or 02. The multi-area ship interior warrants treating the below-decks section as its own gameplay chapter within the scene.

Lore Flag — Sword Hilt

The sword hilt does not appear in this scene.

Per `lore/items/notable-items.md` and `lore/sources/campaign/lore-conflicts.md` Beat 8: the hilt with the rolled paper inside is found during the **second ship expedition**, which takes place in Part 2 after the Squealy Nord recovery. It has no module source and is confirmed original GM content.

The task brief included the hilt as a key beat for Scene 03. This is a sequencing error — the hilt belongs in Part 2. A dedicated scene for the second ship expedition should be created as part of the Part 2 act, covering:

- The second ship (longer route than the first)
- The chest found on board
- The sword hilt — old iron, clearly part of something larger
- The rolled paper inside the hilt, unread by choice

Until that scene is written, the hilt's narrative introduction remains unscripted. Nothing in this scene has been altered or invented to accommodate the discrepancy.