SCARHIDE VARD

ABOUT

Scarhide Yard is a shipyard in the Black Loch. A group of deep gnome engineers oversee shipbuilding operations here, while a tribe of grimlocks known as the Scarhide clan performs most of the labor. This unusual partnership is the result of an even more unusual agreement made around 60 years ago.

The shipwrights at Scarhide build vessels for anyone with the ability to pay. Their customers include drow, merchant companies, the orog pirates of the Tideborne clan, and other factions based outside of the loch.

THE GROMES AND THE GRIMLOCKS

Scarhide Yard was founded by a deep gnome named Gnorr Barlinzet. Gnorr spent years working as an engineer at a shipyard in a large gnomish city far to the west, down the Blackrun River. After a heated dispute with their employer over unpaid wages, Gnorr and several of the other engineers decided to leave.

Their plan was to open a competing shipyard nearby, but the gnomes soon found their efforts blocked by city officials, who had been taking bribes from their former employer. With limited resources, they decided to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Far to the east, the Black Loch had become a significant center of trade in the waterways of the underdark. Gnorr and the others saw this as their best opportunity and made their way to the loch.

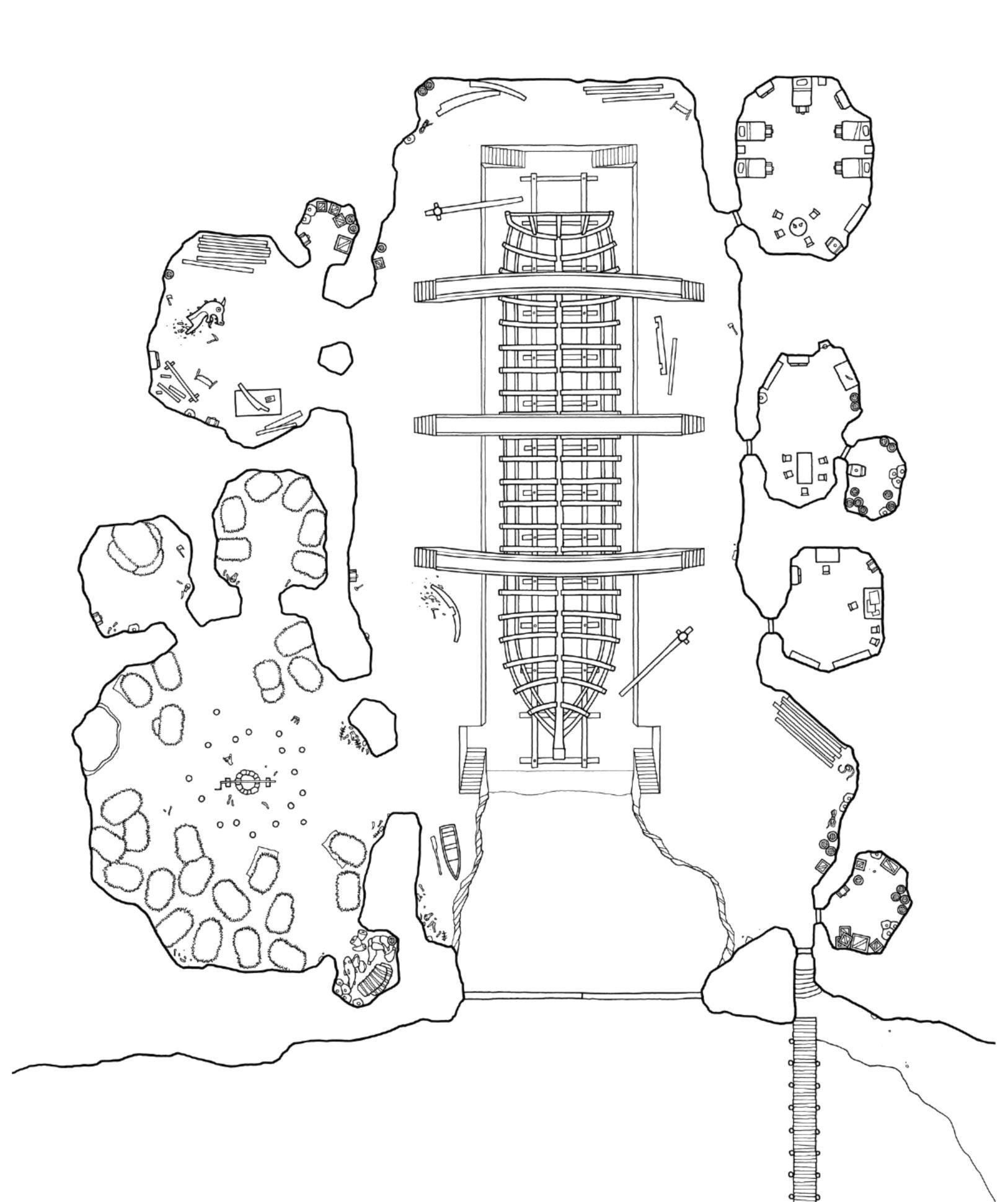
While the gnomes brought plenty of expertise in naval engineering, they needed laborers. This proved to be tricky, as there were no gnomish settlements in the loch. The only place they could find a few dozen laborers was the drow city of Vlyn'darastyl, but the drow would not work cheaply enough and, in any case, gnomes were not permitted to own property in the city. After spending a few days digging up information on all the settlements of the loch, Gnorr found one that he felt *could* be worth looking into: a clan of grimlocks living in caves on the northern shore.

Grimlocks are a race of eyeless humanoids who perceive the world around them with keen senses of smell and hearing. They were said to be able to "see" echoes, letting them perceive nearby objects perfectly, even without sight.

These grimlocks, known as the Scarhides due to their custom of ritual scarification, largely subsisted on hunting. Gnorr was told that they were excellent hunters, but had become victims of their own success, as most of the creatures in the area had been driven off or hunted to extinction. The grimlocks were said to be very gaunt in recent years.

Understandably, the gnomes did not unanimously agree that visiting this tribe of hungry predators was a good idea. But, with their resources running low, they reluctantly agreed to go. In an effort to avoid being eaten, they brought along a gift.

Their gift was well-received and the grimlocks did, in fact, spare them. The gift was meat. A lot of it. The gnomes had cleaned out every butcher in Vlyn'darastyl to bring almost 300 pounds of flesh for the grimlocks. Once the hunters had eaten their fill, Gnorr asked for a word with their chieftain.



Gnorr explained his need for workers and proposed that he could provide more meat in return. When the chieftain asked how much, Gnorr told him he could bring as much as the tribe could eat. An endless amount. Endless meat.

This was an appealing offer and the chieftain discussed it with his clan. Would the gnomes teach us? Yes. Would we still hunt? No.

Ultimately, the clan decided in favor of the offer. Over the next few months, the gnomes carved out a dry dock, acquired tools and materials and taught the grimlocks how to use them. The grimlocks were initially reluctant to cease their hunting, but the regular shipments of meat were keeping them well-fed for the first time in years. They quickly came to prefer this new arrangement.

In order to cover their expenses, the gnomes had to trade away everything they owned, even sending someone back home to sell their houses. But, after almost a year of hard work, the shipyard began to turn a profit.

6o years later, Gnorr and the other engineers still oversee the operations at Scarhide Yard. Most of the grimlocks, however, have been replaced by their offspring. This new generation was not raised to hunt, but to saw, hammer and plane. The resulting improvement in the quality of the ships they produce has been dramatic and Scarhide Yard is now considered by some to be the best shipwright in the underdark.

THE TİDEBORME FLEET

All the ships of the Tideborne Fleet-- the foremost naval power in the Black Loch-- have been built at Scarhide Yard. The first ship built at Scarhide was a small galley that was given to the clan as a gift, in the hope of gaining their patronage.

The Tideborne, who built their own vessels at the time, considered the ship better than their own. The Tideborne were respectable shipwrights, but shipbuilding was among the least-desirable duties and was often assigned as a punishment.

After purchasing a few more vessels from Scarhide, the clan held a vote and decided to close their shipyard at the Deep Spire, keeping only enough workers to perform repairs. This has left the Tideborne reliant on Scarhide for their vessels, but has freed up more manpower for raiding. The clan has become the shipyard's biggest customer and about one in three ships built there is for them.

For more information on the Tideborne, see the DM notes for the Deep Spire.

NOTES

The current generation of grimlocks, who were born after the deal with the gnomes was established, have never known hunger, even briefly. The gnomes consider it very important that they never experience it, going to great lengths to procure regular shipments of food in greater quantities than they anticipate needing. They do not ever want to be the last meat in the shipyard.

Over the years, the endless supply of food has left the Scarhide grimlocks very fat. They would probably have more strength than a typical grimlock, as well as double the hitpoints.

A map called the "Grinning Widow" was designed as a ship for the underdark. It is similar to the kinds of ships that would be built at Scarhide Yard and may have been built there itself.

The carved dragon head on the floor of the carpentry workshop is a figurehead.

The saw with crossed oars carved into the floor of the grimlock caves is the recently-established sigil of the Scarhide clan.

Grimlocks have no eyes, but can "see" the shape of nearby objects perfectly well, using a sense similar to echolocation. This has some limitations, however. They can only perceive shapes, not colors. They are also unable to read, since they cannot detect ink on paper. Grimlocks can only understand a picture or diagram if it is etched. Some of their tools may reflect this.

These days, Scarhide Yard is very profitable and the gnomes who established it are fairly wealthy. They work at the shipyard on rotating duty, spending 3 months there and 3 months back in their home city.

The arches over the dry dock allow the grimlocks to cross the pit or to work on the ship from above. Since ships in the underdark have no sails or masts, they do not get in the way.

