

# The Lapis Observatory



A system neutral adventure for  
The Swordfish Islands

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# THE LAPIS OBSERVATORY



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# The Lapis Observatory

**T**he Lapis Observatory was first built to observe the heavens. As the elves began visiting the planes beyond the stars the observatory was adapted to assist with their exploration, providing vital data. In time the elves outgrew the services provided by the arcanodemics, and the mappers of stars and planes were pushed out to make way for more modern elven pursuits of decadent excess.

Like most things that make money, the Lapis Observatory was most profitable when it was most useless. Much of the magical research apparatus was removed with the arcanodemia and the tower was converted into a hyper-exclusive hotel and event venue. The lower levels were converted into posh sipopa lounges, a grand ballroom and a swanky restaurant. These areas were open to any that could afford them and parties were held almost every day of the week. Some historians say Lady Hedonia herself hosted a party here shortly after the observatory's remodel, but others insist the mass orgy/suicide of the Kitflare Trading company was outside her influence. The upper levels of the tower were converted into "Hotel Lapis" and only the most powerful and best connected could secure a room or visit the Conservatory of Extraplanar Delights.

The observatory itself, situated atop the tower in a golden dome, was packed with the remaining magical research apparatus and occasionally opened for wealthy, museum loving, eccentrics. Despite the observatory's shuttering, the theme of space persisted throughout the tower in art, architecture, trinkets and small personal scrying or viewing devices.

When the cataclysm struck the Isle of Light, the giant floating staircase encircling the basalt outcropping that holds the Lapis Observatory crumbled and fell away. Many of the elven revelers, at the height of a sipopa binge, melted into orange sludge and remain trapped on the spire to this day. Almost every surface in the lower levels is coated in thick layers of translucent orange crystal. Much of the ancient opulence of elven society has been preserved beneath these protective layers, and the tower's relative isolation has deterred most would-be looters throughout the ages. Any looter not deterred by a 150' climb up a sheer basalt spire is typically finished off by one of the dozens of orange sludges roaming the halls. Astral spinners, muttering serpents, boltforagers, other adventurers and embercoral or salt vine from the Conservatory of Extra-Planar Delights, handle the rest.

**Note:** This setting is system neutral, so there are no stats for monsters or prepackaged treasure parcels. No levels are assumed, and there is no expected or correct path of advancement through this dungeon. In addition to the entrance on the ground floor, balconies and windows can provide skilled climbers with access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors from outside the tower.



## What's happening in Lapis when the party arrives? (3d6)

3	All orange sludge have retreated to <b>THE BALLROOM</b> . Salt vine covers all other rooms.
4	<b>An elf</b> is trying to rent the observatory. He's here with prospective tenants right now.
5	Tuning Day! Functional golems tune each other while sludges try to break them.
6	<b>3d6</b> adventurers are camped outside. Intend to survey tower. Likely all dead in 24 hours.
7	<b>d4+1</b> Goa are rock climbing the basalt outcrop on which the tower sits. For sport.
8	<b>d4+1</b> extraplanar party goers have arrived thinking Hotel Lapis is still open.
9	<b>3d6</b> orange sludge are attempting to suicide out the windows. Furious they cannot die.
10	Half the sludges inhabit broken singing golems and pretend to be elves. The rest are pissed.
11	The tower is lit for a party. Music plays. Fireworks at night. "Auto party" magic functional.
12	<b>2d12</b> Fuegonauts camp below the tower to collect gems from the broken stairway.
13	Steam imps sent <b>d6+1</b> adventurers to save imps in <b>THE KITCHEN</b> , but bet against them.
14	All the golems in <b>STORAGE</b> have reactivated and are attempting to clean the tower.
15	<b>An elf</b> is hosting <b>d4</b> extraplanar business associates in <b>THE OBSERVATORY</b> .
16	<b>d4x100</b> migrating boltforagers roost here for the night. The stench is overwhelming.
17	A nature deity's avatar has arrived to reclaim something powerful from <b>THE GARDEN</b> .
18	A roc roosts atop the observatory.

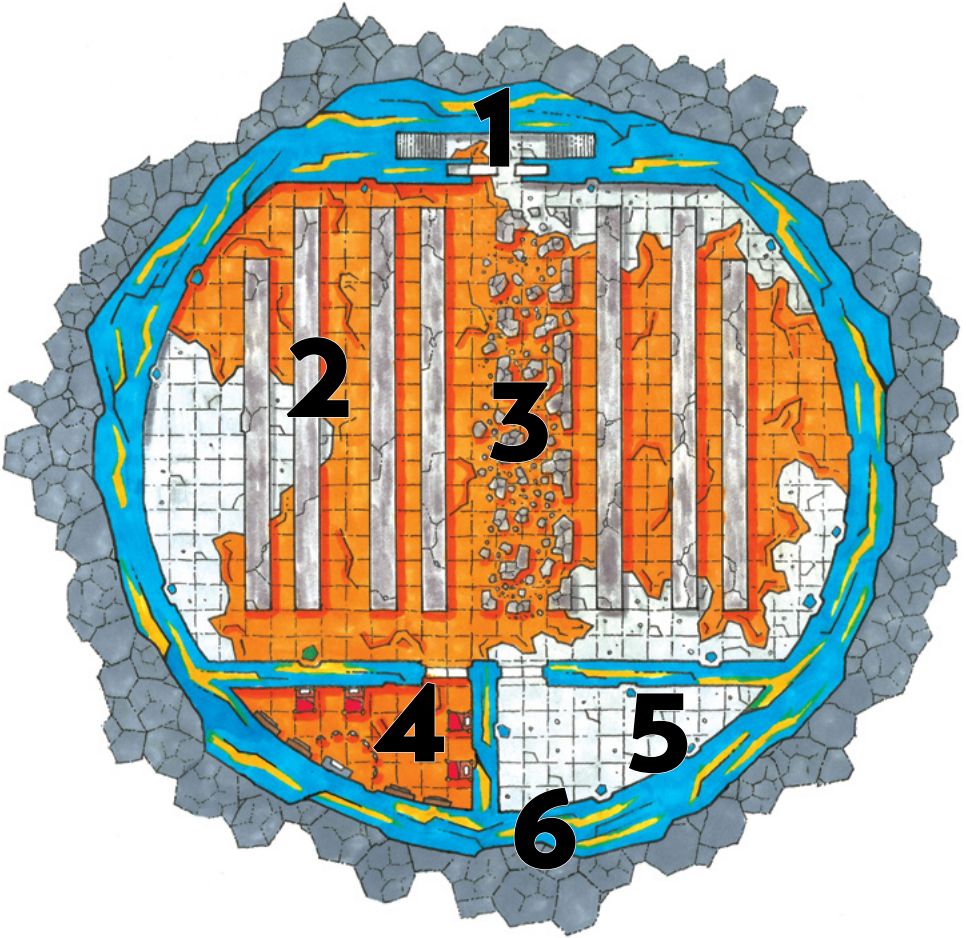
## Global Encounter Table

3d6	Encounter	Motivation
3	<b>3d6</b> Orange Sludge	Art/Performance
4	A Lizardman Shaman	Wounded
5	A Blindfire Vine	Setting up an ambush
6	An Adventurer	Fleeing*
7	A Singing Golem	Delivery
8	<b>d6+2</b> Astral Spinners	Laboring/Nesting
9	<b>3d6</b> Boltforagers	Eating/Drinking
10	An Orange Sludge	Investigating/Searching
11	<b>d4+5</b> Orange Sludge	Social/Creative
12	A Muttering Serpent	Interacting With*
13	<b>d4+1</b> Adventurers	Fighting*
14	A Singing Golem	Repairing/Maintenance
15	A Boltforager	Territorial Display
16	<b>3d6</b> Astral Spinners	Returning Home
17	A Lizardman	Just Passing Through
18	A Crystal Frog	Waiting (for you)

Once the What's Happening table has established the vibe of the Observatory, you may want to roll up the encounters for every location on a level. This way you can approach the encounters and their motivations from a more macro level and figure out how they (dis)harmonize with dungeon as a whole.

\*Roll again

# Basement



Room	Encounter	Motivation	Notes
1			
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## 1. The Sliding Doors

20' x 20', **two engraved panels**[white stone, highly detailed, left panel broken, passable, crawling, engraved with: stars, constellations, sipopa flower fractals], **rubble**[door chunks, statue fragments: arms and heads], **orange crystal** [thick sheet, covers rubble and bottom third of door]

The orange crystal is brittle and shatters loudly if broken

## 2. The Warehouse

20' ceilings, **dark, giant shelving structures**[7, stone and metal, 20' high, 4 tiers], **trunks**[wood, metal, broken, fallen, ransacked, goblets, jewels, lace, drug paraphernalia, preserved under orange crystal], **webs**[d4, large, silver, bright, astral spinners]

## 3. The Fallen Shelf

**Rubble**[stone, metal, jagged, chunks], **planks, statue fragments**[arms, legs, heads], **orange crystal**[thick sheet]

Rubble contains **d4+1** broken singing golems. Orange sludge in area may animate it and bust through crystal layer.

## 4. "Servant's" Quarters

**Door: Oak**[heavy, gold sipopa detailing]  
**Beds**[4, four poster, lace or velvet curtains, crystal coating, shattered], **chairs**[6, wingback, velvet, fallen, ruined, broken, crystal coating], **trunks**[ransacked, wood, impossible clothing], **fireplace**[stone, cooking, large], **shelves**[wood, mostly fallen, books, ruined], **cupboards**[ransacked], **kitchen implements** [strewn about], **drug paraphernalia**

For a time it was fashionable for elves to pretend to be servants. They wealthy would vye for the privilege of staying here and "roughing it" as the help.

## 5. Golem Storage

**Door: Steel**[heavy, high relief, golems]  
**4d10+10 singing golems**[deactivated, stand in rows and columns], **2d8 sedan chairs**[posh, weird construction, gaudy with gold, jewels and precious metals]

Sludges have not made it into this room. Any non-stone objects are little more than dust.

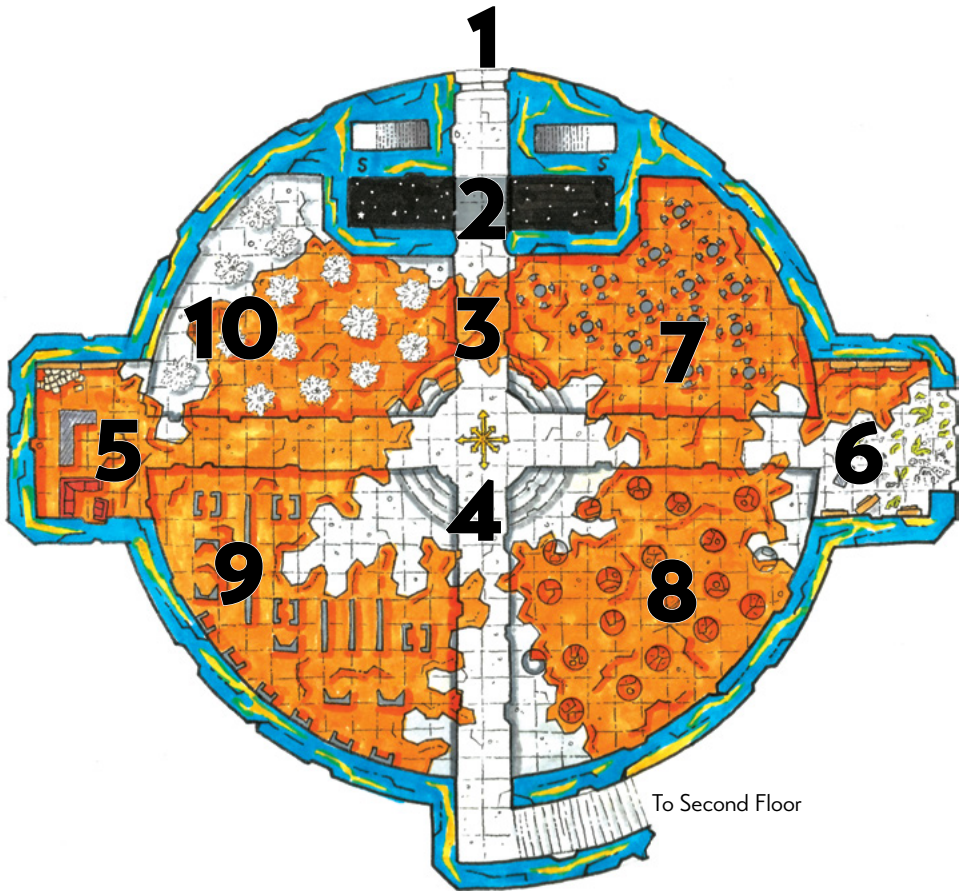
## 6. The Herald

**Singing Golem** - elf, male, black basalt, "perfect" features/body/structure, **gold shorts**[removable, fully functional sexbot]

The Herald possesses numerous chimes granting access to **3d10+10** locations throughout the Swordfish Islands. The Herald is active and says "Hello, who are you?" on a loop in 30 different languages (can function as a perfect translator). It will bond to the first person to answer its question, and serve this individual to the best of its ability. In any sort of social situation (other intelligent creatures involved), the Herald will loudly announce its master's name and an assortment of wildly exaggerated titles and accolades based on events it has witnessed or been told about. If the Herald recognizes other individuals in the vicinity it will loudly announce their name, titles, and accolades, but do so in a way that is as diminishing as possible without causing direct offense. The Herald is capable of recognizing the orange sludges in the Lapis Observatory and will loudly announce and introduce its new master and these elves to each other according to its protocols.



# Ground Floor



Room	Encounter	Motivation	Notes
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# 1. The Grand Door

20' x 20', **gold, high bas relief**[elves, idealized, naked, constellations, stars, comets], opens and closes silently and automatically when approached

# 2. "Space"

Walking into this room is like walking into space. Walls, floor, and ceiling are enchanted with ancient magic to show highly detailed, lifelike depictions of galaxies, nebulae, supernovae, pulsars, comets, asteroids and planets. The scenes are depicted on a 72 hour loop. Room is otherwise empty with no apparent exits. May induce feelings of insignificance.

After a short time a glowing, translucent **automated phantasm** will appear as a strikingly beautiful male or female elf. If acknowledged it will say the following in a language the guest can understand: "Welcome to Hotel Lapis. Please, unburden yourself and relax. Servants will come for your luggage. Would you like to enter?" An affirmative will open a door to [3].

# 3. The Walkway

**White marble, columns, railings**[carved, "impossible" lattices, mathematical], **sheer curtains**[partially preserved under orange crystal], **orange crystal**[varying thickness]

# 4. Directions

**White marble, arrows**[8, gold, in floor, elven moves], **stairs down, orange crystal**[lumpy]

Orange crystal partially preserves remains of sheer curtains[cloth]

# 5. Front Desk

**Lapis lazuli walls**[gold hexagonal mirror insets], **desk** [obsidian, mirror finish, glowing line insets], **vases** [toppled, shattered, porcelain, detailed, otherworldly flowers, preserved beneath crystal], **books** [disarray, piles, under crystal], **sofas** [partially burned, partially preserved], **painting** [nereid, trapped, depicts desert scene, stagnant oasis, sandstorm]

**Delfina** (nereid) - Was once one of the 50 Vision's most accomplished dancers. She killed a powerful elven trader just before the cataclysm and has been left in the painting ever since. Although the elf she killed deserved it, guilt consumes her, and her fearful emotional state is as tight as a drum.

# 6. The Gift Shop

Ransacked. **Windows**[large, gaping, no glass, stained sills], **jungle debris**[leaves, vines], **brick red feathers**[boltforager], **bones, shelving**[wood, toppled, broken, burned, preserved, red lacquer], **desk**[obsidian, mirrored, glowing insets, secret cash box], **orange crystal** [part of room, preserves some shelves], **stench**[rot, death], **splatters**[dried blood, throughout], **drug paraphernalia**

# 7. Drinker's Library

**High backed chairs**[groups of 4, around small round tables, some fallen, some preserved], **wood paneled walls, plush green carpet**[under orange crystal], **shelving**[wooden, ransacked, throughout], **books**[piles, ruined, throughout], **small round tables** [hollow, contain tea services], **broken statuary, drinking paraphernalia**[kettles, goblets, mugs, wooden boxes], **orange crystal**[throughout]

# 8. Smoker's Den

**Hanging cubes and spheres**[10'x10'x10', metal, woven, hang at different heights from ceiling, circular openings, like bird houses], **pillow pits**[3' deep, 10' diameter, under each cube or sphere, ransacked, pillows, boxes, containers, hookahs, censers], **pedestals**[by each pit, obsidian, gold inlay of sipopa flowers, button], **shag carpet**[gold, walls, floor], **orange crystal**[throughout]

Pedestals raise and lower the smoking "nests".

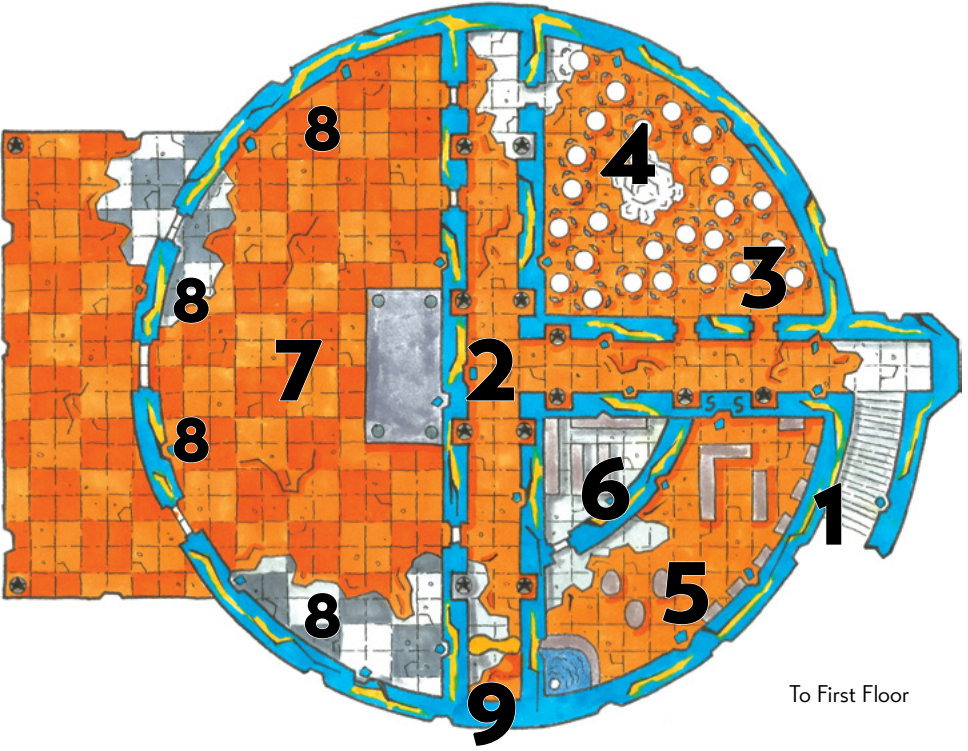
# 9. Duster's Gymnasium

**Wooden floor, mirrored walls, standing tables**[20, mirrored], **targets**[along North wall, darts and archery], **rings on poles, gymnastic equipment**[pommel horses, uneven bars, parallel bars, broken, fallen], **pointed sports equipment**[lawn darts, javelins, arrows, bows, atlatls, fallen, disarray], **orange crystal**[throughout]

# 10. Chaser's Stone Garden

A giant garden carved of white stone. **Stone sipopa bushes**[seed pods are beds for one], **forest creatures**[stone, stylized birds and animals, 1d10 are singing golems], **orange crystal**[thick layer throughout]

# Second Floor



To First Floor

Room	Encounter	Motivation	Notes
1			
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# 1. Scintillating Concourse

Hallway. **Music**[faint, from THE BALLROOM], **shining movement on walls** [small triangles, gold, lapis, obsidian, tessellation, kinetic sculpture], **alcoves** [10, black basalt, arched, statues, elves, gold plaques, prominent arcanodemics, broken, rubble, legs remain standing], **rubble** [statue pieces, faces, drug paraphernalia, black basalt chunks], **orange crystal** [throughout, partially up walls]

Kinetic sculptural "wallpaper" of gold, lapis and obsidian triangles. Moves when passed by sapient creatures if not coated in crystal.

# 2. The Crack

**Cracked opening**[in wall, size of two fists], **orange crystal**[thick, heavily trafficked]

# 3. A Taste of Space

**Doors: Basalt**[fallen, broken], **orange crystal**  
**Within: Ransacked, crystal coated, once plush fine dining.** **Carpet**[plush, white], **chairs**[-100, white, nondescript, fallen, broken], **tables**[25, white, nondescript, fallen, broken], **china**[broken, food on some, extravagant], **drinkware, goldware, vases**[giant, otherworldly pompom flowers]

Thick orange crystal preserves the opulence beneath. The ceiling is on the same loop as "Space" [2] on the First Floor.

# 4. Jagged Crystal Column

**Floor to ceiling. 10' diameter. Milky white crystal** [jagged, uneven, chunky, translucent, soft glow]

Activates three times per day. Changes all fixtures in the room (but ceiling) to an extravagant theme(oriental, medieval, underwater, made of lightning, gold!, impossible geometry, surreal, etc). Also permanently changes clothing/armor of guests to coordinate in the most revealing yet "high fashion" way possible. Changed garments still afford the same warmth/protective qualities.

# 5. The Kitchen

**Doors: secret**[two statues in hallway]  
**Within: Ransacked industrial kitchen.**  
**Tables**[metal, prep work, utensils], **cabinets**[metal, broken doors, empty], **small waterfall**[from crystal egg into stone basin, water imp visible in egg, nonresponsive], **large metal eggs(?)**[Three, hinged doors, ovens, two contain trapped steamimps, non-responsive], **orange crystal**[throughout]

# 6. The Pantry

**Door:** [steel, sealed]  
**Within: Empty. Metal shelving. No crystal.**

# 7. The Ballroom

**Doors (interior): White stone**[heavy, high bas relief, constellations, naked elves, sealed]  
**Doors (exterior): Metal and glass**[fractals]  
**Exterior(balcony): telescopes**[4, point west, gold, intricate, ornate], **statues**[2, 10' tall, male and female elf, naked, hold gold jugs, pour water endlessly], **jungle debris**[leaves, vines, flowers, sticks]  
**Within: Ballroom. Black and white "checkerboard" floor. Hanging orrery**[ceiling, gold, gems, accurate, planets glow, no obvious suspension], **orange crystal** [thick layer, throughout] **Obsidian stage**[mirror finish, reflects stars and comets], **pillars**[4, on stager, chunky, abstract, glowing insets, play to movement on dance floor]

d10+1 orange sludges are here at any given time enraptured by THE MIRROR [8].

# 8. The Mirror

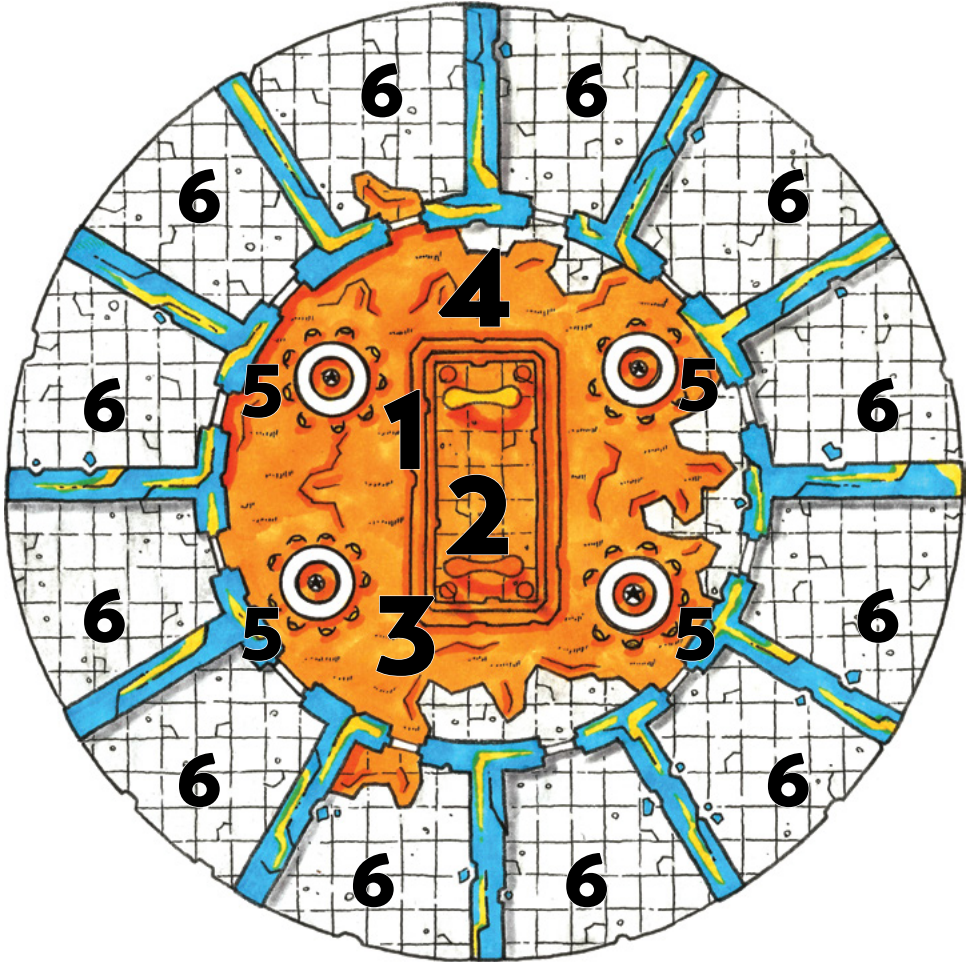
Floor to ceiling. Shows the viewer as the most perfect and idealized potential form. Others appear as almost, but not quite, as perfect. Effective sludge trap.

# 9. The Gold Arch

10' x 10'. **Gold arch**[abstract tessellations, chunky], **shimmer**[purplish, inside arch]

Anything passing through the arch teleports to The Other Gold Arch on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

# Third Floor



Room	Encounter	Motivation	Notes
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# 1. The Other Gold Arch

10' x 10', **gold arch**[abstract tessellations, chunky], **shimmer**[purplish, inside arch]

Anything passing through the arch teleports to The Gold Arch on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

# 2. Raised Platform

**Lapis platform**[smooth, blue, gold and white veins], **orange pillars**[4, crystalline, translucent, chunky], **stairs**[lapis], **orange crystal**[thick layer throughout]

# 3. The Orange Arch

10' x 10', **orange arch**[crystalline, translucent, chunky, abstract tessellations], **shimmer**[white, inside arch]

Anything passing through the arch teleports to The Other Orange Arch on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.

# 4. Hotel Lapis

**Carpet**[plush, black, silver constellation patterns], **ancient finery**[ruined, rotted], **art**[defaced, ruined], **chandeliers**[crystal tubes, broken, fallen, glowing], **rubble**[throughout, lapis chunks, statuary fragments], **orange crystal**[thick layer throughout]

# 5. Sipopa Bars

**Circular bar**[alabaster, smooth, 20' diameter], **tall chairs**[gold, plush, fallen, bent, broken], **pedestal**[center of bar], **broken statue**[alabaster, elf, fragments, shattered, no orange crystal on fragments], **orange crystal**[thick layer throughout]

In ancient times the statues were bartender/security golems, but now a days they are the **ALABASTER GUARDIANS**.



# 6. The Rooms (d20 table)

Roll, or drop dice on map to determine ruined rooms, then roll **d20** to determine the feel/style of non-ruined rooms. The external walls are ancient floor to ceiling walls of force to maximize the view of the jungles and island. In ruined rooms this wall failed, and boltforagers or something awful has probably moved in.

d20	Style	Motivation
1	Drinkers	An overgrown private patio decorated with exhibits of impossible weather
2	Drinkers	Limestone hearths decorated with exhibits of undead creatures
3	Drinkers	A stone gazebo in an aquarium of aquatic cacti
4	Drinkers	Limestone hearths in a library of mechanical songbirds
5	Drinkers	Pub booths in an aviary of iridescent beetles
6	Smokers	A collection of small beds encircle soil filled pits
7	Smokers	Screens of wood and pearls hide embroidered cotton tents
8	Smokers	Enclosed opim beds hide embroidered cotton tents
9	Smokers	A collection of small beds hide small private rooms
10	Smokers	1000 floating lanterns hang above soil filled pits
11	Dusters	A swimming pool made of ever-shrinking fractal flowers
12	Dusters	A shooting range covered in glowing petals
13	Dusters	A squash court of glowing petals
14	Dusters	A dance floor decorated with distorted golden statuary
15	Dusters	A gymnasium of kinetic sculpture
16	Chasers	A column of ringing glass sarcophagi
17	Chasers	A pile of multicolored sipopa pods
18	Chasers	A pile of bladed metal hexagons
19	Chasers	Illuminated crystal skull beds
20	Chasers	A sphere of floating multi-colored stasis tubes

# Fourth Floor



Room	Encounter	Motivation	Notes
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The conservatory of extraplanar delights was once one of the most beautiful gardens in the multiverse but time has not been kind to it. Embercoral and salt vine have grown wild throughout the area leaving most of the floor uninhabitable for mortals except for The Opalized Forest[3] and a small strip across the center of the area where neither plant can firmly establish itself before being killed by the other.

## 1. The Other Orange Arch

**10' x 10'. Orange arch**[crystalline, translucent, chunky, abstract tessellations], **shimmer**[white, inside arch]

Anything passing through the arch teleports to The Orange Arch on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

## 2. Glory

**10' statue**[alabaster and gold], **elf**[female, nude, arms outstretched, triumphant, face appears rapturous, wavy hair made of gold but moves and feels like hair], **dais**[lapis, inset gold elven runes spell "GLORY"] **orange moss**[on dais, ambermoss]

With the correct chime the statue and dais will rise 10' and open a portal arch to the fifth floor observatory.

## 3. The Opalized Forest

**Gravel floor**[polished semi-precious tiger's eye], **pillars(?)**[17, trees, no branches, naturally petrified/opalized], **benches**[5, black iron, floral styling], **jagged boulder**[semi-metallic, like oiled bronze, sleeping spine dragon], **orange moss**[on trees and benches]

Standing next to a tree for 30 seconds causes it to split apart in a spectacular fashion to show its insides. Some split horizontally, some vertically, and some come apart into many floating pieces. Information about the tree and its particular petrification is engraved on each. Embercoral and salt vine do not grow on the tiger's eye gravel because the plants are eaten from time to time by the spine dragon.

## 4. The Glass Vivarium

**Glass(?) cube, 7' x 7' x 7'. Embedded into floor. Miniature pastoral scene within**[hills, pastures, streams, purple grass, neon green fungal "trees", terracotta village of spheres, 100% self contained]

Tiny green mold men and their black mildew dogs tend flocks of fuzzy white mold sheep in the purple pastures.

## 5. Pod People

**Pods**[7, planted in circle, horizontal on ground, mottled green-brown-yellow, 5' long, clearly humanoid in shape]

Pods contain desiccated remain of the last members of a dying race of plant men. Resuscitation unlikely.

## 6. The Dead Oak

**Large tree**[reaches ceiling, dead, no leaves, scorched, cracked, 20' diameter, ancient oak]

This is/was a dryad's tree. If not dead, the dryad should be well beyond insane.

## 7. An Acorn of Yggdrasil

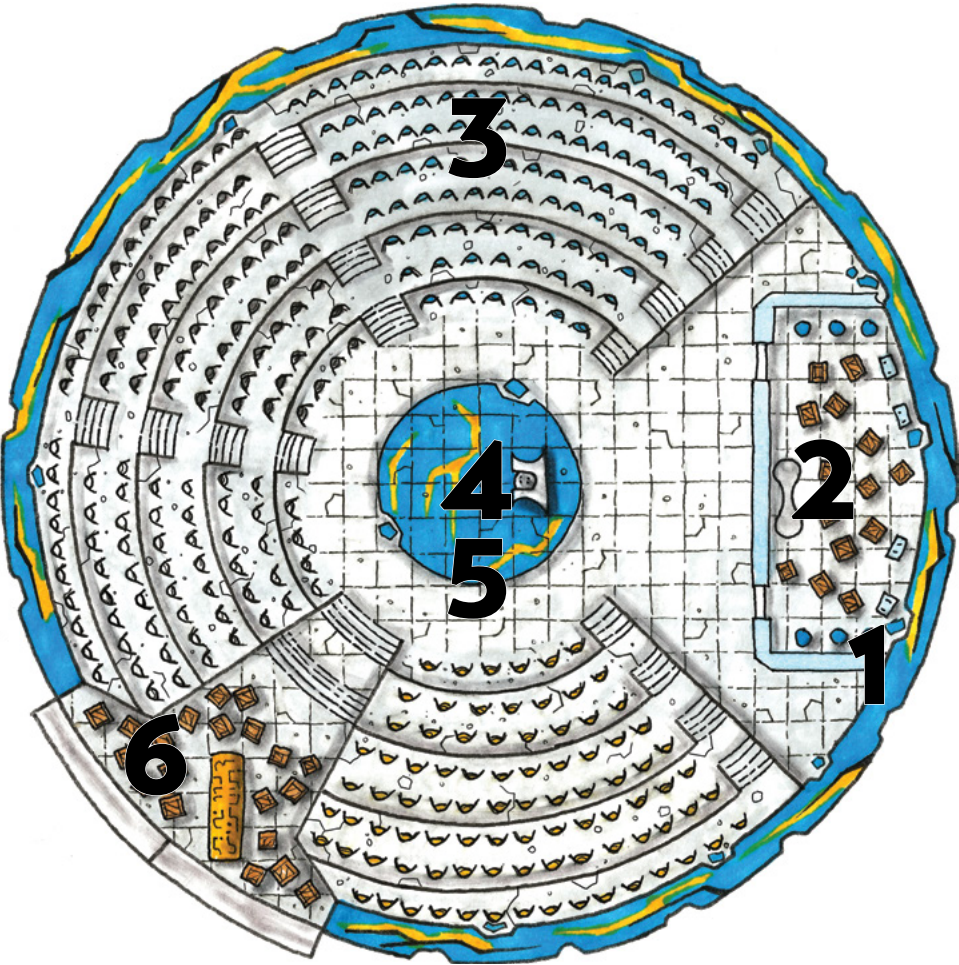
**A giant acorn**[10', appears to be a bronze sculpture, rings beautifully if struck]

## 8. The Gold Grove

**Trees fill area**[white bark, black details, gold leaves, real gold, aspen trees], **pink boulders**[throughout, pink quartz, translucent]

Trees bleed black if cut. All interconnected by roots and are a single, dying colony. Leaves are real gold, but only grow once and never regrow. If leaves are picked the branch drips black blood until stunted or all connected trees die.

# Fifth Floor



Room	Encounter	Motivation	Notes
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# 1. The Silver Arch

**10' x 10' silver arch**[chunky, abstract tessellations], **dark shimmer**[inside arch, starfields, space]

Anything passing through the arch teleports to GLORY on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.

# 2. The Empty Museum

**Glass walls**[clear view of the observatory beyond], **display cases**[glass, empty, no dust], **pedestals**[lapis, empty, no dust], **crates**[14, wood, contain straw], **plaques**[gold, elven runes]

# 3. The Observatory

**Domed roof**[gold, 20' to 30' high at apex, panels on south side appear to open], **stage**[center of room, lapis, silvery chair], **theater seating**[low, recline, magically bolted to floor, seat folds down, distinct seating groupings(gold, basalt, lapis, alabaster)]

# 4. The Star Chair

**Large reclining throne(?)**[platinum, chunky, abstract, covered in runes and star maps]

Sitting in the chair activates the Star Map [5] and causes engravings on the chair to glow softly. Speaking while seated causes elven runes to appear on the map (like a sub title) and can be clearly heard throughout the entire room.

# 5. The Star Map

**ONLY visible when the Star Chair is in use.**  
Fills the dome above the stage and darkens other lights on this floor

Three dimensional map of the galaxy and the top layer of **d10+3** populated planes of existence. Known portal locations (accurate as of several thousand years ago) light up and provide information on how to reach that destination, what the inhabitants buy/sell, a count of known elven deaths at the location, and basic survivability requirements. The map is controlled by hand gestures (swiping,

zooming, rotating) and basic instructions are found on the chair. Without training it is easy to cause the map to move too rapidly and induce vertigo in onlookers.

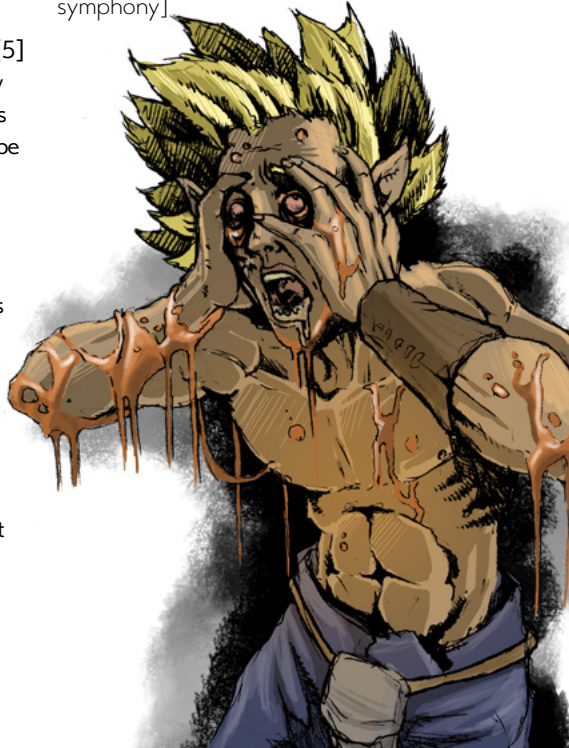
Specific location maps are low resolution and only provide a general feel of the area (prominent terrain features like mountains or deserts are typically all that is visible), but the high level galactic map is exceptionally accurate with stellar distances and locations.

A secret map showing large chunks of Ygrassil's root and branchways can also be accessed from the chair.

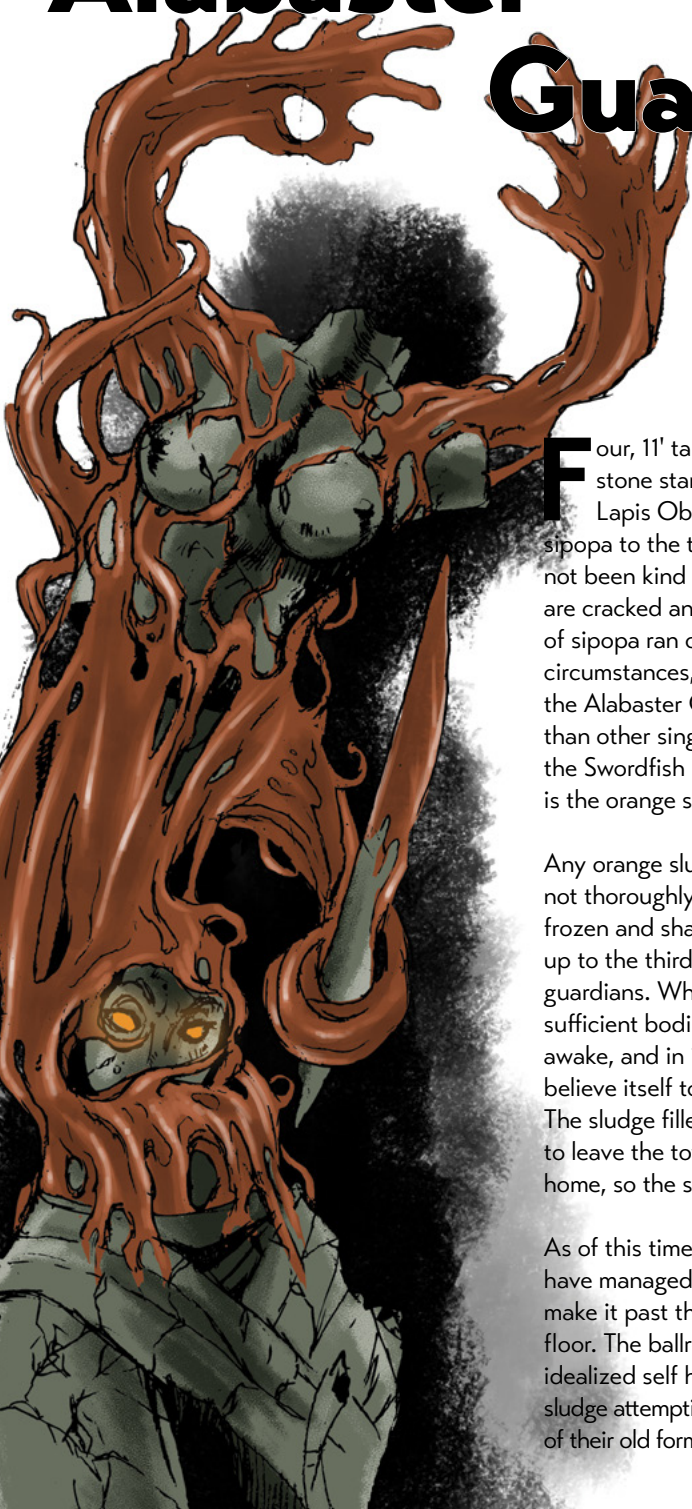
# 6. Disassembled Telescope

**Stairs**[black iron, 10'], **golden tube**[gold, 20' long, resting on floor, engraved, runes, 28889, looks like it connects to another (missing) piece], **crates**[20, wood], **tool chest**[fallen, tools, screws, strewn about]

Crates contain: straw, 18.5' mirrors, 2 self ringing bells, gold gears, gold tubes, gold mechanical parts, sheet music[incomplete symphony]



# Alabaster Guardians



**F**our, 11' tall, golems of translucent white stone stand on the third floor of the Lapis Observatory ready to serve sipopa to the tower's guests. Time has not been kind to the statues. Their forms are cracked and broken and their stores of sipopa ran out long ago. Under normal circumstances, aside from their larger size, the Alabaster Guardians are no different than other singing golems found throughout the Swordfish Islands. What sets these apart is the orange sludge found in observatory.

Any orange sludge defeated in the tower but not thoroughly slain (burned, melted in acid, frozen and shattered, etc.) furtively retreats up to the third floor and into one of the guardians. When the sludge has regenerated sufficient bodily mass (**2d12** hours) it will awake, and in its sipopa starved insanity, believe itself to be a beautiful elf once more. The sludge filled guardian will normally want to leave the tower and return to its posh home, so the statue will walk downstairs.

As of this time, none of the oozing guardians have managed to leave the observatory, or make it past the ballroom on the second floor. The ballroom's floor to ceiling mirrors of idealized self have thus far enraptured every sludge attempting to pass with perfect visions of their old form. Standing still and unfocused

for a prolonged time causes the sludge to drip out of the statue, and once the golem is no longer under the elf's control, it will return to its post on the third floor.

## What do they want?

- To destroy beautiful non-elfen humanoids
- To collect beautiful objects
- To be friends with other elves and commiserate with their new friends about how beautiful they are and how tough it is to be so beautiful in a world that doesn't have the capacity to understand
- To get laid (has a "You're welcome I'm interested" mentality)

## What do they NOT want?

- To see what it actually looks like
- To be rejected
- To feel slighted, irrelevant, or ignored
- To not get the joke (over the top laughter at the wrong time)
- To see the truly ugly or deformed
- To see sipopa use

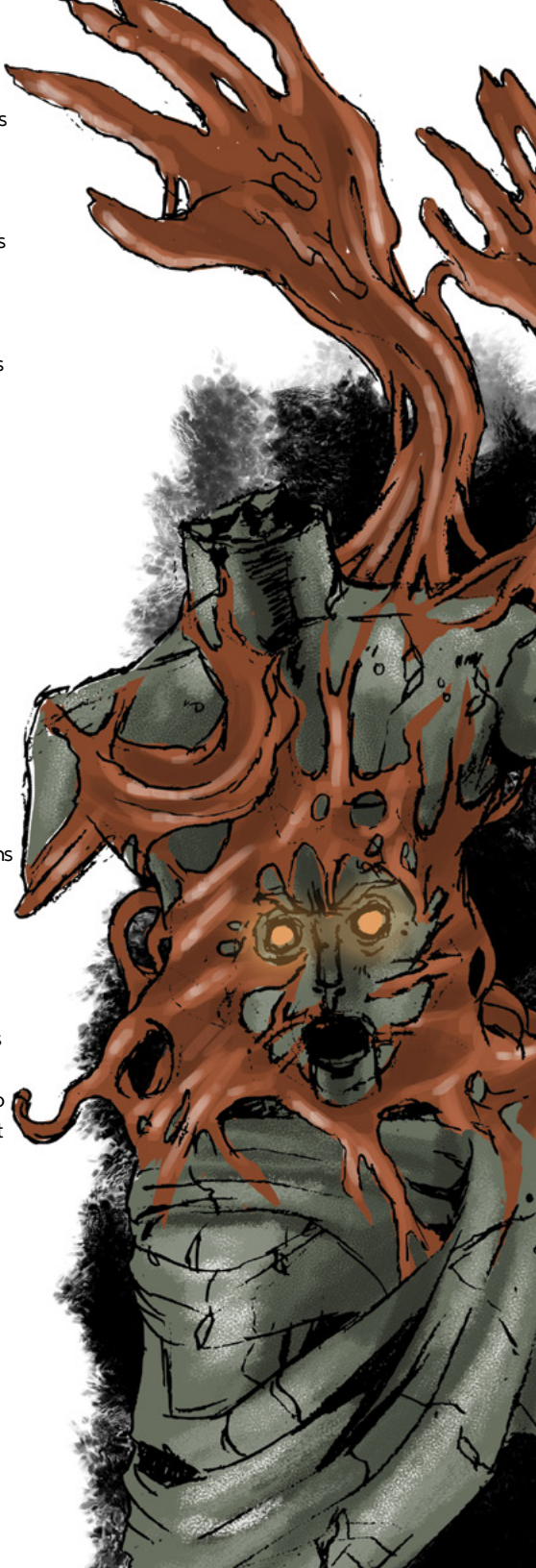
## What else?

The wants and not wants of the Alabaster Guardians are considerably flexible and should reflect the personality of an insane elf who has lost much and now thinks it has regained it.

If orange sludges are rapidly defeated inside the Lapis Observatory up to six sludge remnants will inhabit the same guardian. This is sufficient biomass to control a guardian without needing to spend any time regenerating. The most dominant personality will control the guardian and will probably be considerably angry.

The sight of dwarves makes the ooze filled statues physically ill as they're all just so reprehensibly ugly.

The orange sludge is capable of inhabiting other broken singing golems as they do the Alabaster Guardians. They prefer the guardians however because of their size, beauty and "status".



# Plants



**EMBER CORAL**

Growing as tall as 7', the otherworldliness of ember coral is undeniable. Its forking, tree like branches, resemble many of the larger corals dredged up from the Shorken Reef on their way to become jewelry for Banuvish nobility, but unlike those watery corals of pale yellows and deep pinks, ember coral grows on land and resembles cooling lava flows. Its branches of ashy black, cool to the touch, are split with a myriad of cracks that pulse and glow with the unquenchable red's and gold's of a blacksmith's forge. The dull black "bark" of ember coral is as dense and strong as steel, and if properly harvested and shaped, can maintain its soft glow. One foot of properly treated ember coral produces illumination equivalent to a single beeswax candle.

Ember corals defend themselves like any other coral (by extruding their threadlike guts and digesting their foes) only they do it in real time and add fire. Search "fighting corals" videos online for more ideas on how this could play out.



**SALT VINE**

The grey, ropey plant known as salt vine produces clusters of transparent crystals in place of leaves and flowers that absorb moisture from anything they touch. As the crystals drink up their surroundings they gradually change to a milky white and cease to function. Librarians and curators pay top coin for salt vine to protect their collections from moisture and some chefs and butchers use it as a secret ingredient in jerky production. The crystals should be handled with extreme care however as a single handful can suck all the water out of a human in about four hours. All known attempts to transplant a salt vine have resulted in the deaths of the adventurers digging it up. The plant cannot survive without its root system, but once the roots are exposed to air they rapidly drain all moisture within a radius of about 10'. When alive, the roots of a salt vine seem to be unquenchable, and if the plant is killed, will retain their draining aura for upwards of a week.

## SIPOPA



The elves turned sipopa into a variety of drugs that greatly augmented their magical abilities. None grows in the observatory, but it defined their culture and artistic references to it abound. It is a bushy, medium sized plant (3' - 5' in diameter) with thorny branches, and leaves that are almost black. The flowers are fuzzy and vibrantly orange and, when pollinated, drip nectar.

## AMBERMOSS



Ambermoss grows throughout the observatory usually above doorways and archways where it can hang and move freely. Its texture is like a fine cotton velvet, but great care should be taken to avoid touching it with bare skin as the moss secretes a translucent orange liquid of exceptional toxicity. The effects of the poison begin to take effect in as little as fifteen minutes and can have vastly different effects on two different people

touching the same spot on the plant. Once a person has been poisoned by ambermoss they will experience the same reaction in any subsequent encounters. **While the effects are temporary they can last up to four hours.** The liquid, toxic or not, is an incredible lubricant.

## d12 AMBERMOSS EFFECTS

1. You hear the sound of bees buzzing constantly.
2. Things seem normal, but when a person you care about speaks all you can hear is awful noise.
3. Your vision is inverted. Constant nausea and penalties to actions requiring sight.
4. All living creatures appear to you as being inside out, and you can smell it all. On the plus side, you can check everyone for tumors.
5. You are struck blind whenever you attempt to do something significant. The rest of the time, everything is tinged orange.
6. There is orange powder all over your body. And in your things. And in your hair. And under your feet. And you can't get rid of it.
7. In order to move any of your appendages you must concentrate on it directly (e.g., "I pick up my left foot and leg and set it on the ground in front of my current position.").
8. You can feel everything. Every hair. Every dust mite crawling in your nose. Every itching fiber in your clothing. Only total nudity, shaving off all of your body hair and a strong constant wind can bring you anything resembling relief.
9. You are compelled to vocalize every thought. All the time and in any circumstance. No matter how petty or inappropriate it may be.
10. You are mortally afraid of water. And the color orange. If you see orange colored water you must immediately save or lose half your health and be stunned for **d6** minutes.
11. You are compelled to speak obscenities in the presence of holy people, places or objects until they leave your line of sight.
12. You have severe narcolepsy

# Monsters

## ASTRAL SPINNERS

Astral spinners and their hosts are a sort of aberrant symbiote attracted to the ripples of planar disturbance caused by frequent, rapid, magical travel. Although their webs are located on the physical plane, spinners dwell in the astral on their host.

When a web is disturbed, **d4** spiders appear and investigate. Scouts attempt to goad stuck creatures into becoming completely immobile. Sections of a body wrapped in the silver webbing appear transparent, phasing into the astral. Webbing can be cut away by normal weapons until the body has been fully wrapped at which point only magical weapons can sever the transparent bonds. When their target is completely wrapped the host begins to feed, sucking the fluids from the squirming, fully wrapped and fully astral creature. After all bodily fluids have been drained, the desiccated corpse is returned and the webbing begins to disintegrate.

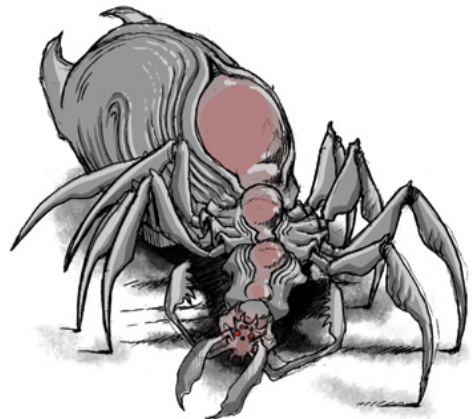
The thorax of every spinner holds a glowing, liquid filled orb of red, blue or purple. If the liquid is consumed it causes the imbiber to astrally project for **d4** hours. There are no apparent negative side effects to this consumption (the juice tastes like candy), but consuming too much (perhaps 12 uses) they and are transformed into a host over **d6** days and become fully astral.

The new host's body emaciates and stretches one to two feet. Fingers and toes lengthen by at least six inches. Ears, nose and nails fall off, and teeth

are replaced by hollow fangs. The hair on the host's head turns an iridescent beetle black and grows to a length of at least 300 feet, and the host's eyes change to glowing, liquid filled orbs of red, blue or purple. The orbs cause extreme irritation unless plucked out, and the hungrier a host is, the faster these globes grow back (**2d4 -1** hours).

Baby astral spinners (the size of a thumbnail) are vomited forth by the host in groups of 50 to 100, one to two times a day. These silver babies grow rapidly, killing and consuming one another until they are large enough to claim an orb. Astral spinners with orbs, nest in the hair of the host, weaving it into elaborate hives and do not fight or kill each other.

The true curse of the host is that it does not remember its past until it feeds, at which point all the old memories rush back, momentarily paralyzing it with total clarity and despair.



## BLINDFIRE VINE



Feathery leaves cover the core of the blindfire vine disguising a circular maw ringed with long teeth used to chew its prey. About a dozen vines, dotted with red flowers and orange peppers, snake from the central cluster. The ends of some vines widen into a diamond shaped leaf like structures with a barb covered underside to help the plant grasp its prey.

Blindfire peppers are flavorful and spicy and a number of cook-offs and festivals have sprung up in Swordfish Bay that celebrate or make use of them. The more a blindfire vine or carpet kills, the spicier and more prized its peppers become, especially around festival time.

## BOLTFRAGERS

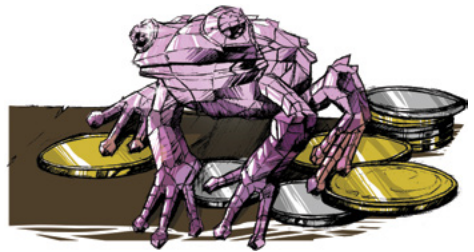


Brick red feathers covered in light orange dust cause boltfragers to stand out against tropical

blue skies so they rarely take wing in broad daylight. They hunt most frequently from skies painted by sunrise or sunset when their wings will blend with the pinks and oranges. A bony yellow ridge protrudes in a long spike over the creature's beak, and the small feathers covering its head resemble a furry mohawk from a distance. The birds stink of death and their feathers emit clouds of dust with each wingflap.

Boltfragers only eat dead, rotted creatures, but that doesn't mean they don't help make them that way. The birds attempt to impale targets with their horn or rake with their talons. They flap their wings vigorously during these attacks creating clouds of orange dust before flying away. This dust contains the eggs of a species of carnivorous worm that hatches 3 to 5 days after entering the blood stream of a warm blooded creature. Once inside a host, the worms bore into the victims bones, consuming the juicy marrow within. This process kills the host and causes the worms to produce an abundance of foul smelling gas that bubbles out of the corpse, attracting boltfragers to their decaying meal.

## CRYSTAL FROG



Magical constructs capable of reproducing, these tiny frogs of clear, angular crystal are usually no larger than a human's thumb. The frogs will bond with intelligent creatures, similar to a mundane dog or cat, and a tiny heart beating within changes color to match its owner's mood. Instead of croaking like a normal frog, crystal frogs twitter and chirp like a nightingale.

Crystal frogs enjoy being bonded with an intelligent creature that will give them attention. If a frog has chosen to stay with a creature, and feels well treated, it can heal its owner of one disease, curse or poison each day by singing a special song in their ear.

## MUTTERING SERPENT

No one knows what the head of this large serpent, covered in mirror like scales, actually looks like as it always appears as the observers head, even in death. The mirror like scales shift to match the muttering serpent's surroundings providing it with excellent natural camouflage when not in motion. The serpent secretes an oil, smelling like fresh wood shavings, allowing it to silently glide through its territory.

Muttering serpents are extremely territorial and consider any entry into their domain as an affront, despite the fact they take great pains to ensure their territory is unmarked. When a serpent detects trespass they slink silent through the territory to determine who or what disturbed them. Unintelligent interlopers are eaten immediately and intelligent creatures are played with. Muttering serpents can read the surface thoughts of intelligent creatures in their

territory and communicate with them telepathically. The serpents tend to use questions exclusively, and almost constantly when communicating with potential victims. The target of this barrage hears the questions as if they were being said by their own voice. A single serpent can communicate with up to eight individuals at once, and seeks to separate and turn party members against one another. When a victim finally sees a muttering serpent they will be alone as their own face unhinges its jaw to consume them.

“When death finally comes, the last eyes you want to see are your own.”



## ORANGE SLUDGE

The orange sludge that gloops and schlorps about the Swordfish Islands used to be elves. When the cataclysm struck, those at the height of a sipopa bender, melted and deformed into slop. Hate filled, ravenous, violently insane slop. The sludge hungers for sipopa. Fiends for it in a way that only Tantalus can understand, yet cannot consume it.

The insanity of the orange sludges stems from a couple of reasons. First, they are elves. Ageless things that were once beautiful and powerful, but are now anything but. They miss their bodies and hate their forms and their mind has snapped accordingly. Second, each sludge suffers from a permanent negative effect because of their unfulfillable sipopa addiction. These manifest in different ways, see the **d12 Ambermoss Effects** table.

In many ways, sludges are one big sensory organ. They can smell sipopa from long distances and are drawn to it, even though they cannot consume it. When they are hit, it hurts. Tremendously. The rain stings them. The wind burns them. Loud noises are explosions and in their burning and twisted despair they must engulf the offender and make. it. ALL. STOP.

### What do they want?

- Sipopa
- To be what they were, find what they lost, and go home
- To take their agony out on the world

### What do they NOT want?

- This continued existence
- To die
- To experience pain
- To be reminded of what they were, and what they lost
- To see their reflection
- To see anyone using sipopa, or making motions similar to using

### What else?

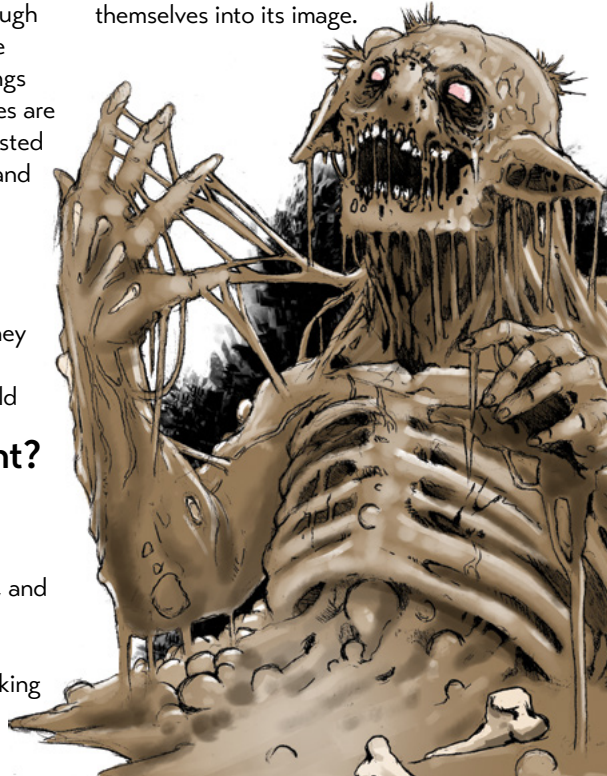
Sludges prefer to be where they will be protected from the elements.

As they move, they leave behind translucent orange residue. In darkness (or even shadow) it hardens like amber. This has preserved many delicate elven artifacts (wood, cloth, paper) that should have rotted away long ago in transparent orange crystal. In sunlight this crystal melts and evaporates completely.

Instead of attacking with shapeless pseudopods like common slimes and oozes, orange sludge strikes out with vaguely humanoid appendages (heads, legs, bones, hands, etc).

Some sludges will inhabit broken golems to try to be a normal elf.

Seeing their reflection, or an elf, throws orange sludges into a ballistic rage. If they kill an elf they will spend a great deal of time with the body trying in vain to shape themselves into its image.



## SINGING GOLEMS

The Isle of Light was a place without keyholes. This is not to say the elves did not lock up their homes or valuables. Quite the opposite. Their mechanisms were often complex to the point of absurdity. Instead of using keys to manipulate a lock's tumblers however, the elves struck enchanted metal tubes near the door or object they wished to open and let sound do the work.

Most chimes were simple metal objects, but porcelain, bone, wood, crystal and other materials came into use as different fashions rose and fell. Individual chimes were often attuned to a single door or chest, but could be setup like regular keys. For example, an elf might have a chime that opens every lock in her house and a separate one for her lab. If she stayed in a swanky hotel she would receive a chime to her room (and maybe a separate one for the sipopa minibar) and the hotel staff would have a skeleton chime for all the locks. Locked objects were typically inlaid with decorations of the same material as their chime, so a

door unlocked by a chime of gold would normally be adorned with gold in some way. Symbols on or around the object might also indicate the resonant frequency required for opening, but this is not guaranteed and a knowledge of both the elves' language and music would likely be necessary for decoding. All the locks can be brute forced (they're more mechanical than magical), but would still require a chime (or chimes) of the correct material and resonant frequency. Elves typically only kept important and showy chimes on their person, using singing golems (chime filled stone golems) as their mobile key rings. Show chimes became increasingly important cultural objects in the centuries leading up to the cataclysm with elves constantly striving to shock and awe one another with the latest prestidigitative memes.

After the elven population was almost completely annihilated, they turned to golems to help maintain their civilization. Almost all golems made by the elves were stone with cavities in their chest or head to hold some of their master's chimes. Early golems were exceptionally simple and utilitarian, but models grew more decadent and elaborate along with society.

Many golems remain in good working order and, being simple automatons, attempt to carry out their last programmed routine before the cataclysm occurred. Very few singing golems were programmed or equipped to fight but (contrary to popular belief) all golems will defend themselves against attacks (as a normal stone golem) unless specifically programmed otherwise.

## d6 CHIME EFFECTS

1. The user is surrounded by a light fog while in possession of the chime.
2. A small raincloud forms over anyone currently in a bad mood (50' radius)
3. Paper flowers bloom from the ground and are consumed by golden flame that does not burn.
4. Closures on clothing of members of the opposite sex of the user (within 30') come undone
5. Rings mundanely, but if a different chime was rung <1 minute before, the holder of that chime is covered in orange paint
6. All members of the same sex as the user within 20' become clean, groomed, oiled, and perfumed



# NPCs

**Claire (wizard):** The first apprentice to a powerful wizard flung to Hot Springs Island when her spell was interrupted by witch hunters. Claire has platinum blonde hair, green eyes and a terrible sun burn that her tattered blue-grey robe and floppy green palm frond hat do little to prevent. She was attempting to summon a creature to protect herself and her master from witch hunters, but Neville (one of the hunters) disturbed her in the spell's final moments and the two were flung to this remote place. They overcame their differences in order to survive and after a series of adventures have fallen in love. In addition to an exceptional intellect, Claire wields an ancient elven spell book she found in the ruins of Hot Springs City and a slim metal wand of lightning.

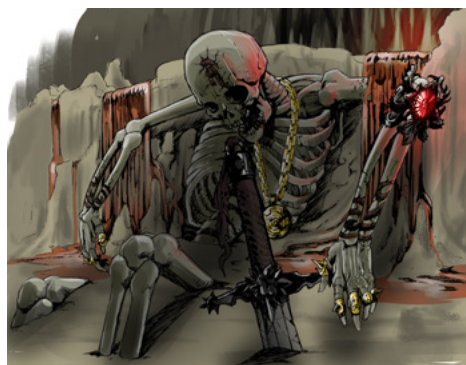
**Neville (fighter):** Oldest son of an ancient family of witch hunters. Neville was part of an expedition to kill Claire's arcane master, but during the battle he disrupted her spell and they both wound up on Hot Springs Island. He has chestnut colored skin and smooth, black shoulder length hair. His clothes and armor were once bright red, but they are stained and streaked with mud. He has come to love and respect Claire deeply during their time on the island, and never wants to go back home. Neville is terrifying with a spear, and he currently wields a golden model with a superheated head.

**Jus (druid):** A flock of starlings came to Jus as he wandered the wetlands of his homeland and told him of a dying dryad trapped on an island half a world away. He left immediately and wanders the jungles of Hot Springs Island seeking the dryad nature called him to find [4<sup>th</sup> floor]. Jus is a large, jolly man who wears

a robe of living woven blindfire vine. He speaks to the animals and laughs with the trees. Even though he has a deeper connection to nature than his fellow man, he is kind hearted and always offers a warm smile and helping hand. Just wields a gnarled staff of ash and calls upon nature for aid in combat.

**Gretchen (wizard):** A powerful hydromancer drawn to Hot Springs Island due to legends of mythical aquifers. Gretchen has red hair and blue eyes, but they are hardly ever seen as she dresses in robes and veils of dark green set with crystals on tinkling chains. She is an adjunct professor at the Royal College of Banuvo and her plan had been to secure a number of grants for (what she hoped would be) ground breaking research. Unfortunately, her first drill hole unleashed a torrent of crystal back wydarr and her party was slaughtered. Not content to simply survive, Gretchen maps springs on the island and knows the complete lay of the land in **d4** hexes. The nereid Daphne has begun to secretly observe Gretchen, and plans to enlist her aid if she proves to be a true water friend. Gretchen wields an enchanted staff with crystal inlays and each night she suspends herself from the branches of a tree, in an orb of water, to sleep.

**Ulysses (fighter):** The only survivor of a group that came to Hot Springs Island to find living statues made of gold. Ulysses wears a steel breastplate over studded leather armor and has black hair and noble features. In the ruins of Hot Springs City spiders appeared from nowhere, wrapped and ate his party (Astral Spinners). Ulysses was wrapped up too, but his enchanted sword and martial prowess saved his hide once again. He managed to recover the map the party leader had been following and he plans to hunt the statues once he figures out how to get off this rock. Ulysses fights with an enchanted long sword that grows hotter and hotter the more he fights with it.



# A Selection of Elven Treasures

Illustrations by Eric Quigley

**J**ewels, coins, hoards, treasure chests, cash and bullion are not detailed because the way gold values tie into experience can vary substantially across game systems. As you design cash treasure parcels for your groups these are the core assumptions we have when we run Swordfish Islands. To bastardize Coleridge:

**Money, money, everywhere,  
The adventurers did roam  
Money, money, everywhere,  
But how to get it home?**

The elves were loaded like gods and fetishized gold. It's everywhere. Gold gold gold gold gold! Some areas of their ruins could easily be plated in it. It was so abundant that it was boring. As their civilization tapped into the extra-dimensional markets they could access whatever they wanted and as time went on, the true currency became attention. Surviving the ruins and getting cash back to civilization should be difficult and problematic, but a couple of successful show up, loot, and leave missions could absolutely lead to wide scale inflation and economic destabilization back in the home country, echoing Spain's conquest of the New World. Consequences and Chaos!



**Barren Mother:** A fist sized porcelain statue of a naked, weeping pregnant elf. If it is gifted to a woman who has borne no children she will become barren. If it is gifted to a pregnant woman she will miscarry before the sun sets.

**Blank Crimson Tome:** A hardbound tome of crimson leather bound with a platinum clasp. The pages are empty but if held and the phrase "I demand [BOOK NAME]" is spoken, it will fill with a copy of the book demanded.

**Box of Bladed Scars:** An ornate gold box engraved with scenes of nude figures in martial combat. All engraved figures have a distinctive spiral tattoo on their forearm. The box contains six belt sized strips of fresh, bloody skin branded with elven runes. Two say long sword. Two say short sword. Two say dagger. If a strip is held it will start to move towards its holder's dominant forearm. If it is not stopped it will spiral around the arm, fuse to the flesh, and turn bright orange. Once fused, a flick of the wrist will place the weapon in the dominant hand. The weapons are silver, and vanish after 10 minutes of inactivity.

**Daphnee's Vambrace:** A delicate, decorative gold gauntlet. Any article of clothing or outfit (but not jewelry) touched by the gauntlet will be consumed and stored. If the wearer says "clothe me", the gauntlet will dress them in something fresh and stylish. Up to 65 tons of clothing can be stored this way, and the glove can vomit forth a torrent of clothing the wearer has stored but now considers outdated. Once expelled however, the gauntlet will refuse to consume those clothes again, for its wearer's own good.



**Embroidered Bloodcoat:** A slender short coat of deep red with geometric black embroidery on the cuffs. The coat never dirties, but as fresh blood is spilled upon it, the embroidery grows and expands. The coat cannot be removed until it is completely black, which takes about 10 humans worth of blood.

**Gold Faceball:** A smooth sphere of gold about the size of a human head. When held with both hands a face extrudes and (d6):

1. Yells **your** deepest, most scandalous secret.
- 2-5. Vomits forth a cloud of 100 translucent, iridescent butterflies.
6. Yells the deepest, darkest, most scandalous secret of **your sworn social enemy**.

For a time, this was an exceptionally popular game on the Isle of Light.

**Honeypot of Hallucination:** A glass jar decorated with tiny platinum bees and holding a platinum honeycomb shaped dipper. Any honey placed in the jar becomes highly hallucinogenic. Whoever holds the dipper can control and guide the hallucinations of all who have eaten the honey.

**Lucid Dreamer's Blackout Bag:** A hood of fine silver mesh with no face hole that can be easily mistaken for a bag. Wearers will believe they are in a forest where everything is made of candy and the evil sun threatens to melt it all. In this state the wearer's body will go completely limp (as if asleep). The hood cannot be removed unless another pulls it off (1 hour of severe disorientation), the wearer defeats the sun, or the wearer realizes they are dreaming and takes full control.



**Ornamental Short Sword:** An ornamental short sword of silver and onyx made to resemble two highly stylized birds with crossed beaks. Their entangled feet decorate the hilt, a wing of each make the crossguard, and their other wing rises up to make the blade.

**Pipe Bombs:** A polished wooden box with velvet lining and six glass pipes. The clear glass of the pipes contains free floating metallic specks of color that drift and swirl constantly. Any smokeable substance put into the pipe will catch immediately. The pipes will not break if dropped, but if they are purposefully thrown or crushed they explode like a couple of fireballs.

# SWORDFISH ISLANDS

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