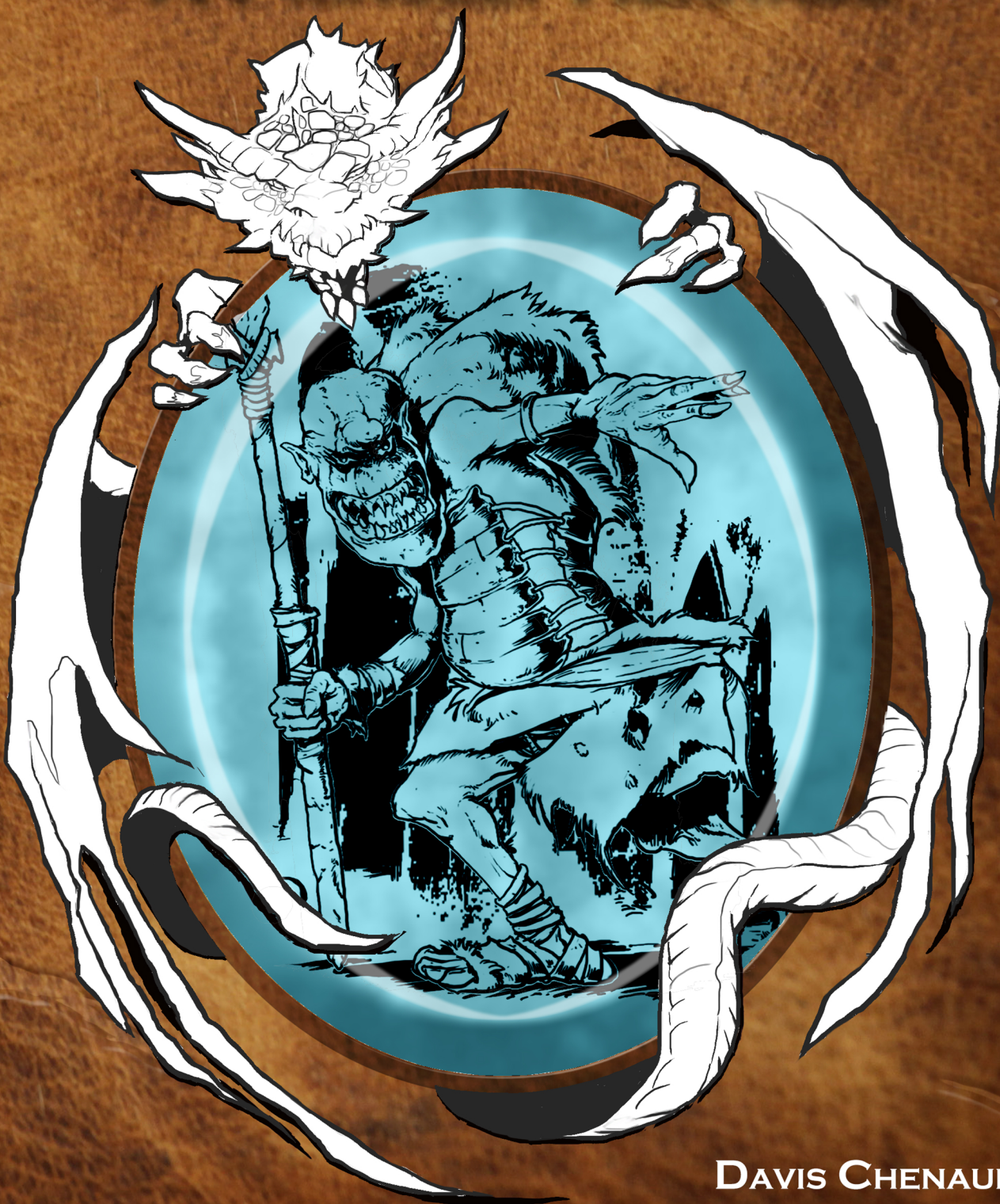


CASTLES[®] & CRUSADES

A PRINCELY HERITAGE



DAVIS CHENAULT



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BY DAVIS CHENAULT

EDITOR: STEVE EGE

FRONT COVER: PETER BRADLEY INTERIOR ART: PETER BRADLEY, JASON WALTON

ART DIRECTION/ CARTOGRAPHY: PETER BRADLEY



1818 North Taylor, #143, Little Rock, AR, 72207

email: troll@trolllord.com

website: www.trolllord.com or

www.knightsofthecrusade.com

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Hart Blemman rubs his fingers together as he speaks. Greasy black hair clings flat to his scalp and forehead. His nose, a Todavian nose, like a crooked beak, peaks over narrow wet lips where beads of sweat gather. He begins again, in his broken, halting, Inzaean. "It's a set of books. Perhaps a dozen, maybe fewer. My employer was unclear. I am interested in one in particular. They will be bound and locked. Leather, embossed, heraldry or something of that kind. Maybe in a case. Look, I just don't know. He says you will know it when you see it. And yes! It's valuable, very valuable. It's a book of lineages. My employer needs it. Believe me, my employer is generous in victory. In victory. Not generous in defeat. Up the fjord somewhere is a fort or tower? Not sure. I have a map."

Hart pulls a parchment from a small satchel hanging around his neck. He spreads it out on the table. It is new or relatively so. He pulls the lamp in closer. Here, he points with thin, tattooed fingers adorned in cheap copper rings. He traces a line with dirty fingernails from Rablesborg to a place nearby. "There is the fort. Its somewhere in there. I've never been to. I'm not going. That's why you. Why you are here. I've been told things about you. Your friends. Good things. Mostly. Some bad."

LEVEL RANGE

Designed for a mid-level adventuring party, this adventure needs only those willing to brave the dangerous nature of Rablesborg and its environs. Betrayal, assassination, deception, primordial magic, grotesque beasts, and the harrowing travails of the unknown are but a few menacing threats the characters face.

INTRODUCTION

One fateful night, Hart Blemann stumbled upon the journals of his mentor and teacher, Aldous Paltranis. Although he knew it to be unfaithful and wrong, Hart poured over Aldous' journals. Hart discovered much about Aldous he had not known. Aldous, as it turns out, had once resided in Rablesborg, having chosen that wretched place to hide while practicing and learning the arcane arts. The journals contained references to a collection of books relating to the arcane arts which Aldous had secreted away and left in Rablesborg. Hart, angered that Aldous had never shared this information, decided he needed the books to further his studies.

One fateful night, Hart used poison to immobilize Aldous and proceeded to interrogate the wizard. Aldous could not convince Hart of the truth, that the books no longer existed, having been destroyed in a blazing fire. Hart could not believe Aldous and became enraged, beating the wizard and threatening to kill him. Fearing for his life, Aldous told Hart of the tower in which he once resided and then lied to Hart, telling his acolyte that the books were indeed still in the tower. He then proceeded to tell Hart how to get the tomes he so desperately sought.

This was a ruse by Aldous. Knowing his life was forfeit, Aldous hoped that Hart would visit the tower and, being unprepared for what was in it, die trying to retrieve the non-existent books.

Though not a particularly evil man, as has been mentioned, Hart is not a good nor loyal person either. Hart realized that after having tortured Aldous, he could not let his mentor live lest his master seek to exact revenge in the future. Hart murdered Aldous. After killing him, Hart left Middlesax in the Troke with what he could carry and made his way to the coast. Then, over the passage of several years, Hart made his way to Rablesborg.

Being somewhat cowardly himself, Hart decided to hire some 'thugs' to go to the tower and retrieve the books for him. His intent, and this should not come as a surprise to anyone, is to ambush and kill those who return from the tower, take the books and leave.

What Aldous did not tell Hart, nor even allude to, was why he left the tower and how the books were destroyed. Aldous was teaching himself how to summon creatures from the other ends of the Void and was eventually successful in doing so. The effort was so successful that several creatures came through the gate he created. Aldous managed to kill most of the beasts. Some escaped into the world. One is still trapped in the tower, held there by powerful magic. Aldous left the tower in haste as he could not defeat the remaining beast. He then spent years chasing down and killing those beasts which did escape. The only remaining creature from the Void is trapped in the summoning room at the bottom of the tower. Or more precisely, a portion of the Void is trapped in the room and the creature with it.

Realizing the dangers the magics posed, Aldous himself burned all the books relating to his research to prevent others of a more malicious nature from getting the information. He could not close the portal which he opened. Aldous visited the tower for years, constructing and renewing spells, placing magical guards around the tower to prevent the creature, and perhaps others from the void, from coming into the world. He also constructed many elaborate ruses and traps to deter or kill any who desired to go into his tower. Aldous then left Rablesborg in search of other magics that might allow him to close the portal permanently. He intended to return one day. Now, he cannot, and most of the magical protections have worn out and the traps outside the tower long spent. The beast inside is stirring, knowing full well its freedom may be at hand.

MEETING HART BLEMANN

The adventure begins in any city. If using Inzae, Hart Blemann is in Rablesborg. Through some means, Hart learns of the characters and contacts them about a job. Hart explains that he has an employer who is offering a reward for the safe retrieval of some books believed to have been left in the tower when abandoned. Hart offers 4000gp or more for the recovery of the entire collection. If asked, Hart explains that the books contain proof of a prince's bloodline and inheritance. He asks the party to meet him outside Rablesborg after the recovery of the books.

Hart has no intention of keeping his end of the bargain. Having met with the party and determined their strengths and weaknesses as best he could, Hart proceeds to seek out assassins and thugs to murder the party at their future meeting, take the books and leave Rablesborg.

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LOCATION

Many smaller clefts and channels riddle the fjord in which Rablesborg is nestled. Over the centuries, thorps, villages, towers, and fortifications were built along the fjord's perimeter. Nearly all have long been abandoned as those who lived in them were forced out, killed, or moved to safer lands.

Locating the tower which Aldous once occupied is difficult and time-consuming. It is roughly 60 miles north of Rablesborg in a tiny fjord. Hart has a map of the approximate location of the tower and supplies it to the characters. The map is inaccurate because a few landmarks are imprecisely located. With some effort, though, the characters should be able to locate the tower.

To get there traveling overland, the PCs must follow an overgrown, twisting trail through forest, scrub, uplands and cross many streams and creeks. From this trail is a barely discernable track that leads to the area of the tower. Once there, the trail splits and heads to other abandoned villages along the coast.

One trail does lead to the tower. It should take 5-12 (1d8+4) days to locate if traveling by land. The Castle Keeper should feel free to turn this aspect of the adventure into a mini-adventure itself should it suit the player's temperament.

The waters of the fjord are treacherous to navigate, but the PCs can travel along the waterways to the tower. If the PCs hire a local fisherman to take them up the fjord, it should take 5-8 (1d4+4) days to locate the tower. If the PCs are navigating themselves and are not experienced in the fjord, it should take 5-10 (1d6+4) days to locate. As before, this is an opportunity for other smaller adventures.

If traveling by boat or overland, there is a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter every day and evening. If an encounter occurs, roll a d12 and consult the appropriate chart below.

Water

1-6	Fishermen
7-8	Bandits
9-10	Predatory Eagles
11	Uffenshtumpf (water troll)
12	Doonklsatter (armored fish)

Overland

1-6	Peasants
7	Brigands
8-9	Herd animals (elk, deer or sheep)
10	Bear, great black
11	Zwetter Rorer
12	Shtumpf

ALDOUS' TOWER

A BRIEF HISTORY

This tower was constructed ages ago as a fortification for a local warlord. It was abandoned and reoccupied many times over the years by soldiers, warlords, pirates, bandits and others. As the settlements north of Rablesborg diminished, the tower was variously occupied by lesser bandits, itinerants, and even shtumpf. Eventually, people stopped coming this far north of Rablesborg. The tower and villages were abandoned. It remained unoccupied and intact through storms, earthquakes and manmade disasters for dozens of years, a lone monument to a time long passed.

Aldous arrived in Rablesborg decades ago to avoid the hexentoters, who had begun to seek him out for execution. He remained in Rablesborg for several years before moving to this tower. Here, alone and without any prying eyes looking into his undertakings, he began to study and practice the arcane arts again. To those in Rablesborg, Aldous was nothing more than a curiosity: a crazy man who lived north of Rablesborg, though a curiosity to be avoided.

Aldous expanded the dungeons underneath the tower a little at a time. He did this to practice the summoning spells which he had been working for years to master. Practice did not make perfect. Aldous lost control of the creatures he summoned. In the ensuing battle to contain or kill the creatures, the foundation of the tower gave way and began to collapse. Since that time, the entire upper portion of the tower and the bridge leading to it have collapsed into the fjord.

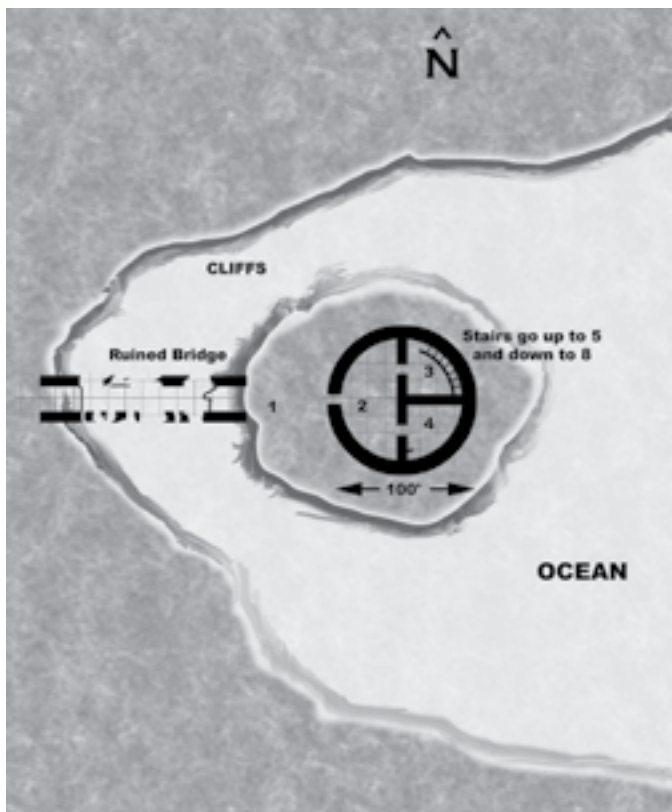
THE TOWER

The tower is located on top of and in a sea stack up a narrow fjord. There was once a bridge leading from the cliff to the sea stack, but that has collapsed. The upper portion of the tower collapsed some time ago and the remnants can be seen in the waters around the waters below it. Only portions of the two upper floors remain.

The cliffs wrapping the fjord are scoured clean of all vegetation except one of those small, highly prized cedars clinging, precariously and tenaciously, to the cliffside. The fjord twists and bends upon itself, ending, not in a beach, but with several large sea stacks poking up from the blue waters below. Atop one stack are the jagged remains of a tower. Moss and lichen grow over and amongst its crumbling walls. Lonely pylons and a few feet of stone are all that remain of a bridge that once stretched from the cliff to the stack.

The remains of the tower are on top of the sea stack. There is an entry to the lower sections of the tower on the bottom floor. The latter extends into the sea stack. The cliffs are 100 feet tall. The sea stack is roughly 80 feet tall. It is 40 feet from the cliff to the sea stack.

There is a 3-foot diameter hole bored into the sea stack just above the level of the water. This is a sewage hole and is connected to Area 16, the bathroom.



There are eagles nesting in the remains of the tower. See Area 6 below for details. When the party arrives, the eagles are hunting nearby. It is not long before the eagles spot the PCs and make their way back to the tower. Several eagles will show up within the half hour. By the time the characters reach the upper floor of the tower, a half-dozen, aggressive, eagles are circling above the tower.

The water around the sea stack is 80 feet deep. The detritus of the eagle's food falls into the waters below the tower. This debris has attracted a large octopus. The creature lives at the bottom of the sea stack. When anything or anyone enters the waters nearby, the octopus is alerted and slowly makes its way to the surface, attempting to drag anything and everything it can beneath the waters for food.

OCTOPUS (*This neutral animal's vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 21, AC 15, BTH +4, and MOVE 40 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with four tentacles for 1d4 damage. Its special abilities are constrict and cloud.*)

THE TOWER

AREA 1 BRIDGE

A trail of cobblestones ends abruptly at the cliff's edge. Across from the cliff is a sea-stack. Lodged on top of it, like a broken tusk, is a tower. A crumbling arc stretches out from the sea-stack, the only remaining portion of a bridge which once spanned the distance between the tower and the cliff.

Nothing's left of the bridge except a ten-foot section coming off the stack. It is 40-foot from the cliff edge to the sea-stack. The

eagles, hunting nearby, note the characters from afar and begin taking to the air and head back to the tower.

AREA 2 ENTRY

Nothing but crooked hinges remain to the door of the tower. Beyond is a small room, soaked in water and the detritus of nature's storms. There are entries to two other rooms in here, their doors, likewise, long since gone. Several pieces of wood are scattered on the floor. A pile of rotten wood is piled up against a wall.

This is the entry hall. Water has been blown in through the door and from the upper levels for a long time. The furniture was destroyed and used as firewood a long time ago. The ceiling, a mixture of stone and wood beams, has six images carved into the stone. These are reliefs of the faces of six carnivores; a wolf, hyena, lion, tiger, bear, and alligator. These six images are also, coincidentally, the same six images engraved on the door in Area 13.

AREA 3 STAIR CHAMBER

Empty except for the wind, this chamber has nothing more in it than a spiral staircase leading up to the floor above and down into the darkness of the stack. The steps hug the walls and wrap around the room. Small pools of water dot the well-worn steps. Brown and black mosses and lichens cling to the steps in an angry stranglehold.

This room provides access to both the upper and lower portions of the tower. There are a few iron pegs in the walls where clothing and gear were once hung. The steps are narrow but wide. The chute containing the stairs is eight feet across. The central portion of the chute is open and takes up five feet of the space. Sconces are located every ten feet down the steps.

The steps are 18 inches long, six inches deep and 12 inches wide. Fighting on the steps is difficult under the best of conditions, and the current conditions are horrible. The steps are covered in water, moss, and mildew, making them very slick. The stairway has no handholds or rails that can be held on to. Moving up or down the stairs normally is possible, but every ten feet a CL0 dexterity check with a +4 modifier is required to have characters avoid slipping and losing their balance. CK's should not let the characters fall if one of these checks fails, as their only purpose is to remind the players that fighting on open, slick, poorly spaced steps is going to be dangerous. If fighting does occur or there is strenuous activity that requires great dexterity, to remain standing a CL3 dexterity check is required (+4 modifier mentioned above does not apply). Failure results in slipping and quite likely falling down the chute.

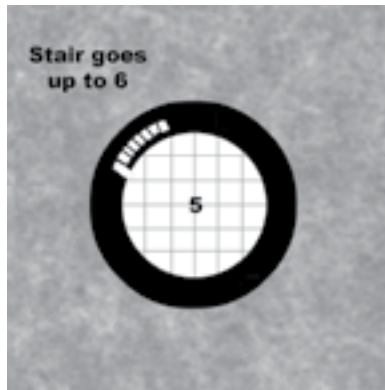
AREA 4 CHAMBER

There are several scattered piles of old, ragged and rotted cloth, tarp, and burned wood piled on the floor.

Nothing remains of the contents of this room. Long ago, before the bridge collapsed, this room was used as a resting place for travelers, looters, shtumpf, or adventurers. Under one of the piles of rags

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are two old, decayed leather satchels. One contains a metal lamp, some empty ceramic jars, rusted knife, and several sacks. The other satchel contains rotted gloves, hat, rusted hatchet, two empty ceramic jars, and 10cp. The last people who were here dared to go further down in search of treasure. They never returned.



AREA 5 CHAMBER

The stairs, wrapping around the room, lead up to another room. A portion of the wooden ceiling in this room has collapsed and much of it has burn marks. Water puddles on the floor. Scattered around the room are the small tiles that were once a part of the mosaic on the floor. Leaves, twigs and other debris, blown in through the hole in the ceiling, are strewn over the floor. The screeching of eagles grows louder.

The ceiling in the room cracked open when the top of the tower collapsed. The stairs continue to Area 6 above. The hole in the ceiling is 8 feet wide. There is nothing in the room.



AREA 6 TOP OF TOWER

The stairs continue up and one can see the sky above. What was once a room but is now little more than a roof for the room below. The upper portion of the tower has collapsed and all that remains is a small section of the wall by the stairwell. Two large nests are near the edges of the chamber and another just behind the stair opening. Above, half a dozen massive eagles circle.

The upper portion of the tower has collapsed. Its remains can be seen scattered down the sides of the sea-stack and in the water below. In addition to the hole in the floor mention in the previous room, it shows evidence of burning and massive gouges

taken out of the wood. All of the walls but a small portion by the stairs have fallen into the sea.

There are three giant eagle nests here. The six eagles that nest here are circling overhead when anyone comes up the stairs. As soon as anyone steps foot on the roof, one of the eagles attacks. The eagles swoop in, attack for a couple of rounds, then fly out and rest before attacking again, unless a character is grabbed. In that case, the eagle takes the PC up into the air some 500 feet before dropping them. If an eagle takes 8 or more hit points of damage in a round, it immediately leaves. Others then move in to attack. Up to three eagles can attack in this area at one time though usually only two attack at the same time. The nests contain 11 eggs in total. Each egg is worth 200gp to a collector.

EAGLES, GIANT X6 (These neutral good animal's vital statistics are HD 4d10, HP 32, 30, 26, 26, 20, 20, AC 16, and MOVE 20/100. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two talons for 1d8 damage and a beak for 2d6 damage. Their special abilities are dive, twilight vision, improved sight, and detect falsehood.)

THE DUNGEON

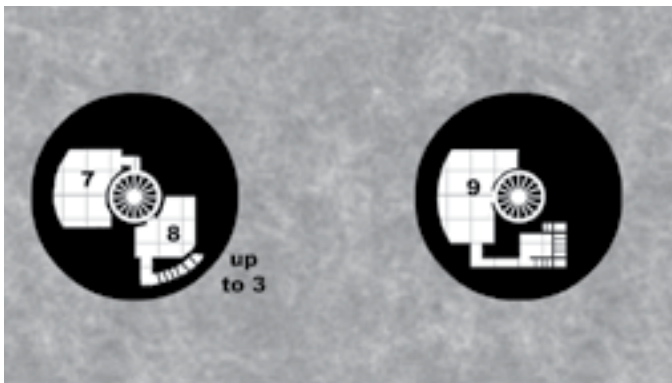
All the halls and chambers in this section of the complex are beneath the ground. They have wood paneling on the walls. Time, damp weather, and lack of care have taken their toll on the wood and it is mostly rotten, falling apart or are easily pulled off the wall. There are also dozens of score marks, burnt sections, and pieces torn out of the paneling. If a ranger examines the score marks and makes a successful tracking check, it becomes clear these are claw marks and perhaps what appears to be tooth marks.

AREA 7 TROPHY ROOM

The dark filling this room lifts away with many beasts leaping to attack. Pedestals, stands, and shelves are arranged throughout the room. Upon them rest creatures and beasts, rare in the world, that seem to have gathered here in the misty dark for an eternal slumber, dead eyes shining in the dim light.

The door to this room is off its hinge and hangs open. This room contains a few of Aldous' souvenirs and trophies he collected over the years. Aldous was an avid taxidermist. There are a great number of pedestals, shelves, stands, and tables in this chamber. Stuffed animals, in various aggressive poses, are placed on them. The heads of other larger animals hang on the walls. Amongst the collection is a few rare and unusual vases shaped like animals and statues of animals. One glass case contains a dagger on a stand.

All the creatures stuffed and stored in here are rare or unique. They are all significantly waterlogged, damaged, and rotting. They have no value except as a curiosity to those who might care (those that could be recovered). There are 34 statues and vases in here. In Ranglesborg the statues and vases are worth 1-12gp each. In Bergholt or Firstenfeld, the statues and vases are worth 20-80gp each.



The dagger in the glass case is a family heirloom used to denote a certain rank. Aldous befriended the last person to be handed the dagger. Sadly, Aldous' friend died. If the dagger is returned to the family, a 1500gp reward is offered, as well as friendship and a chance to join in a war that family is currently fighting.

AREA 8 GUEST ROOM

The stairs continue into the darkness past a landing. A half-open door leads off the landing. Beyond the door is a broad room, puddled with water and lined with moldy paneling. Inside are a broken four-poster bed and shattered bureau. Rotted clothing is piled on the floor in front of the bureau. The remains of a mattress have a large rat nest in it.

The door is open and is so swollen it can't close. A secret door is located on the wall behind where the bureau once stood, hidden within the seams of the paneling. With the paneling now rotted, the secret door is easier to find. Anyone searching for a secret door in that area receives a +3 modifier to their check.

An examination of the ceiling above the bed may reveal some deep score marks in the shape of a rectangle. A successful wisdom check notes this on a casual examination. If some time is taken to examine the ceiling, the examiner receives a +3 to their check. The grooves are from where a 2'x2' stone is placed in the ceiling though not attached to the surrounding stones with mortar. This is a trap for those sleeping in the bed. The stone in the ceiling is attached to a chain. The chain is attached to a wheel in the hall behind the secret door. A lever holds that wheel in place. Releasing the lever would have dropped the stone onto whoever slept in the bed. The stone no longer drops because the chain holding it is rusted to the wheel.

The secret door opens onto a small 5'x5' alcove and a tunnel twisting down into darkness. In the alcove is a wheel with a chain wrapped around it. The chain stretches up to a hole in the ceiling. Beside the wheel is a lever. The lever is struck and the chain rusted to the wheel. If someone manages to get it working, when the lever is pulled, it drops the stone onto the bed (or those underneath the stone) causing 2d6 damage to whoever it hits. The tunnel leads down to Area 10. However, Aldous collapsed the ceiling of the tunnel midway down. The debris must be excavated to go further. Digging it can take one person 20 hours or two people fifteen hours. See Area 10 for details of the corridor beyond the collapse.

AREA 9 STORAGE

The stairs end at a landing in front of a large room carved from the dark stone of the sea stack. The floor is slippery and puddles form everywhere. The bare wisps of stalactites form in the crannies on the ceiling. The detritus of broken crates and barrels are scattered across the room mixed with cloth, rotted rope, broken tools, and long decayed logs sprouting luminescent mushrooms. A single large iron door on the other side of the chamber is dented and bent – into the room!

This chamber was used for storage and offered entry to the lower halls. Most of the goods stored here were for use in the tower and for excavating. These have long since been pilfered or rotted into uselessness.

The door is magically and mechanically locked. The mechanical lock is destroyed and can no longer be picked. The hinges to the door are in the room and must be beaten out for the door to be removed and, in that manner, opened. This could take 20 to 60 minutes. There is also a protective spell placed on the door by a 12th level wizard. A successful *knock* or *dispel magic* spell negates the magic. Otherwise, the door does not give way.

The dents in the door are from one of the creatures Aldous summoned. It was trying to beat its way out of the lower halls. The door opens onto the lower halls.

LOWER HALLS

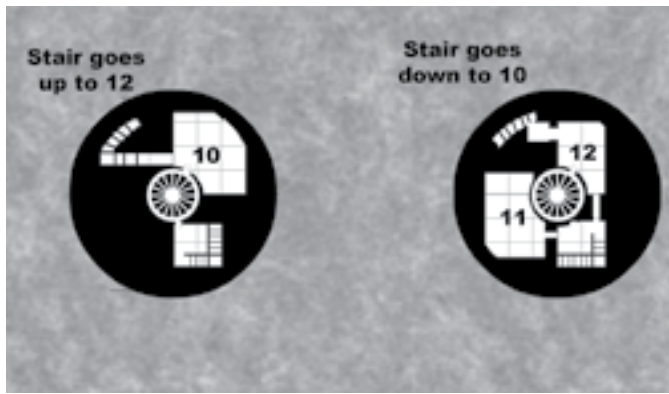
There is a single staircase leading down into the lower levels. Rather than like the spiraling staircase in the upper section, this section of stairs is squared with no space in the middle. The steps descend ten feet, stop at a landing, turn 90 degrees to the left, descend 10 feet to a landing etc. There is a sconce on the wall at every landing. This continues to the bottom of the lower halls at Area 21.

AREA 10 CORRIDOR AND SECRET ROOM

This chamber is hidden behind a secret door on the landing in front of it. The door is opened by pulling the sconce on the landing below this one. This pulls up a pin that releases the door and it opens slightly. It must be pushed open after that. The door is well disguised in the wall. A CL 5 wisdom check is required to locate the secret door. Pushing on the wall reveals the whole seam and even causes the door to budge slightly, but it does not open until the metal pin holding it in place is lifted up by pulling the sconce. Beating down the door is extremely difficult. Should one try to force the door, the CL is 6. In this case, if the check results in a success, the pin is broken and permanently lodged in the door. If the check is failed, the pin in the door snaps and lodges in the floor. The door can no longer be opened normally but must be torn down.

The chamber beyond is small, no more than several arm lengths across. Across from the door is a tunnel curving up and into the sea stack. An old rotting chair with a metal pail are in here. Rat droppings cover the floor around old rat nests.

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There is nothing in the room of interest. The tunnel leads up to where the tunnel has collapsed. This is described in Area 8. Refer to that area for further details.

AREA 11 WARD

The landing, walls, and ceiling at this juncture are covered in emblems and glyphs, scrawled onto the stony surfaces of the staircase with a thick, dark, blue paint. The glyphs are disorienting to look upon and make little to no sense in style or replication. The paint, thick and old, is raised and cracking. Flakes are scattered on the landing and down the stairs. Beyond the landing, deep gouges crisscross the walls, ceiling, and floor.

This is an arcane ward that keeps the beast below from moving further up the landing. Anyone who casts arcane spells or reads that language immediately recognizes the writing and glyphs as wards, though it is unclear of what nature. With a successful intelligence check, CL7, it can be gleaned that the wards are against creatures who came before the rise of the Firmin – or during the early ages of the world.

Should these symbols be copied into a book, the ward can be used in the future if properly learned and replicated. These are learned by study and practice writing them. With a successful intelligence check, CL 5, within 4-16 days one can learn the proper alignment of the characters and symbols to properly reproduce the wards. This can be attempted as many times as necessary until learned. Another try can be made 1-6 days after a failed attempt.

The paint used to write the symbols must be copied precisely as well. Only an alchemist can come up with the correct materials for the paint. These are wild blueberries found in the foothills of mountains in the far east, traces of silver, and ground nickel from a meteorite, mixed with the blood of a giant and heated over a fire of dung collected from a varnilmil. This ward acts to enclose all Inzalberd in an impenetrable sphere. No Inzalberd can pass over this ward. This wall of impenetrable force extends for 200 feet in a sphere from the ward in any direction the caster chooses.

AREA 11 BEDROOM

The door to this chamber has been ripped from its hinges and shredded. The remnants are scattered all over the landing and in the room beyond. There, a bed and chair

have been destroyed, a bureau crushed and partially burned, and a desk cracked in half. The floor is littered with rotted clothing, papers, broken bottles, busted jars, and other personal belongings. Blue emblems and glyphs cover the far wall to this room.

Aldous used this room for relaxation and sleep while staying in the lower halls. The beast from below destroyed the room at some point after Aldous left. There is little of interest in the room. There is a book underneath the bed. This is part of a journal Aldous kept. It is written in Illian and would only be known to those who have attended the august halls of the learned in Todavia, the Gravia, or the Troke. Anyone who casts arcane spells will know this language. The portion of the journal which remains relates a brief point of Aldous's experiments with incantations pertaining to the summoning. It does not discuss successes or failures, rather just theory and thoughts.

AREA 12 SCRIVENERS

An open door reveals a room with two scrivener's desks laying broken on the floor. Papers, ink wells, and quills are scattered around the desks. A large oaken desk, with its single drawer lying on the floor, sits in the middle of the room. Shelves have been ripped from the wall and their contents broken, ripped, and spilled. In the center of all this is a large pile of ash and wood. An acrid electric smell lingers in the room, burning the lips and tongue.

This is a scrivener's room. Aldous used it to make notes, copy books or spells, and sundry tasks related to his studies. He also stored various herbs, spices and other material used in the casting of spells in this room. There is very little of use in this room other than some of the quills. The smell in the room is a result of so many of the materials used for casting spells mixing and burning. It lingers to this day and will for many decades to come. The smell is also the reason why the beast from the void has never entered the room.

Three of the dozen quills on the floor are enchanted. They appear as nothing special and in no way stand out from the other quills until closely examined. These quills are from a mythical bird, the hippogriff. A ranger, with a successful track check, notes the unusual nature of the quills. However, unless the ranger has some previous experience with hippogriffs, cannot determine the origin of the quills. A wisdom check notes that the base of the barb is flecked with golden dust. *Detect magic* does not reveal the feather's nature. Each feather is unique.

One feather writes by dictation. One must lay it on vellum and begin speaking. The feather then rises and begins writing what is spoken. The vellum must be from a very particular goat. That goat, a 'bint' is only found in the northern portions of the Urstin Peninsula.

One feather never runs out of ink.

The last feather allows the holder to write a little more eloquently than they might otherwise have. In the composition of letters intended to convince the recipient of something or

motivate them to take action and in which a charisma check is required, the recipient receives a penalty of -1 to -4 to their check to avoid being influenced by the letter.



AREA 13 TREASURY

A metal door, strapped, banded, and riveted fills one wall of the landing. Within each banded square is an embossed face of some carnivorous animal – tiger, zwitter rorer, lion, etc. The door fits tightly in the jamb. There are no hinges, handle, nor lock, visible on the door.

This is a door to a false treasury. The door has not been entered since Aldous left. When he left Aldous shut the door with three *close* spells (cast at 12th level), one spell for each of the three locking mechanisms in the door. The easiest way to open the door is by using three *knock* spells on it. Another method of opening the door is to press the correct faces embossed on its surface. Regardless of how the door is unlocked, if unlocked the door swings slightly inward.

If a character attempts to open the door using the faces, they are given three chances to open the door. On the fourth attempt a pair of large paddles with spikes on them are supposed to swing out from the left and right of the door and slam together in front of it. However, age and decay mean the trap no longer works as planned. The right arm swings out but catches and comes to a stop about 20 degrees into its movement. The left arm stays in the wall until three rounds have passed since the right arm swung out. It then swings out so hard and fast that it flies off its hinge and slams into the other arm. Anyone caught in its path takes 3d6 damage (half damage on a successful dexterity check). Once the trap is sprung, the entire locking mechanism breaks and the door opens.

The trap is easy to detect as the stones hiding it on the left and right of the door are thin and easily broken.

Inside the chamber on the other side of the door are two large trunks, four smaller trunks and a dozen boxes of various sizes. The lids of all the boxes are open. All the trunk lids are closed. There are rotted rags on the floor, some strips of cloth, a hammer and some leather satchels hanging from pegs on the wall.

Although Aldous left in a hurry, he did take the time to clear this room of anything of real value and important items. The boxes or crates contained some dried food, which has rotted, tools, cooking utensils, cloth, and the like. One box contains 18 flasks

of oil. All but four of the flasks have cracked and spilled. Another box contains 50 spikes. Another has two lamps inside and one has nearly 100 feet of hemp rope which is still serviceable.

The boxes have been stacked against the far wall. Behind the boxes is a concealed door. The seams of the door are fairly easy to detect now. The door rests on a pivot and one need only push on one side of the door for it to open.

The door opens on to a narrow hallway. Musty and dank, the stones are all painted with blue emblems and glyphs similar to those seen previously. These emblems, unlike the ones above, have a slight luminescence to them. There is also a musty smell with a hint of electrical energy in the air. The hallway bends to the left and then descends at a steep angle.

The hallway descends in a spiral. The tunnel levels out on a landing in front of each door. The angle is fairly steep and the curve tight.

BOTTOM HALL

There are no steps from this point. The corridor twists down at a steep angle. The doors to the rooms along the corridor have small steps in front of them allowing level entry, but there is no landing. The corridor is slick and difficult to maneuver along. The walls, ceiling, and floor are moist and the air humid and warm.

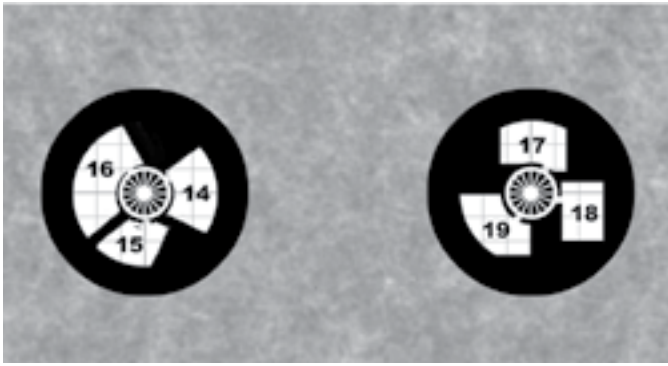
Fighting in the corridor is difficult under the best of conditions, and the current conditions are horrible. The corridor is at a steep angle and is covered in water and mildew, making it very slick. Every ten feet a CL0 dexterity check with a +2 modifier is required to have characters avoid slipping and losing their balance. CK's should not let the characters fall if one of these checks fails, as their only purpose is to remind the players that fighting in a steep, slick corridor is going to be dangerous. If fighting does occur or there is strenuous activity that requires great dexterity, to remain standing a CL5 dexterity check is required (+2 modifier mentioned above does not apply). Failure results in slipping and quite likely falling down.

AREA 14 KENNEL

The door to this room has been crushed and lies scattered along the floor of the room and hallway. Beyond are numerous metal cages. These are stacked, one on top of another all around the perimeter of the room. The cages vary in size with the larger ones on the bottom and the smaller cages on top. There are skeletons in nearly every cage. A table in the center of the room is partially covered in jars and bottles, mixing bowls and other similar items. A scatter of broken bottles is sprayed out from one side of the table.

The animals and other beasts kept here were experimented on for various traits and capacities or had spells cast on them to see the effects. Some were kept for parts required in spell casting. The cages on the bottom are roughly 3x3 feet in size with those on top being as small as 6x6 inches with very tight mesh around

8 CASTLES & CRUSADES



them. Only one cage is empty of skeletal material. The door to that cage is bent open and crushed.

All the creatures in here, excepting one, starved or dehydrated. Their skeletal remains are in the cages. The beast from the void cared little for this room or the creatures in it. It only came in here on a few occasions. One of the creatures in a cage would shriek and scream so loudly that it eventually began irritating the beast. It came in here to quiet it once. Later it came back and ate it.

AREA 15 LIBRARY

As the characters descend to this door, they note a few sheaves of paper on the floor and a couple of rotted books. In the corridor, slightly before the library, are the shattered remains of a door. Visible on some of the planks are engravings of books.

ROWS AND ROWS OF SHELVES WRAP AROUND THIS ROOM; EMPTY, BARREN SHELVES. THAT IS, EXCEPTING A FEW SCATTERED BOOKS, SOME OLD PAPER, VELLUM, AND A FEW KNICK-KNACKS. IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM IS A LARGE, WHAT WAS ONCE, STUFFED CHAIR. BESIDE IT IS A TABLE, A SMALL DOG EARED COPY OF A BOOK SITS ON A TABLE AND A PILE OF SEVERAL DUSTY AND MOLDY BOOKS ARE ON THE FLOOR.

The vilgenbirst comes to this room on rare occasions. It sits in the chair and reads the book on the table. At least, it pretends to read. The vilgenbirst has no desire to read it nor has it ever managed more than a few words before it becomes distracted. It cares nothing for the thoughts of any man ever to have existed. It is just bored.

On one sheaf of paper on the floor has a list on it. There are hundreds of books on the list. All but twelve of the books on the list have a line drawn through them. Those twelve books match the titles of the books in the room. All but one of these books are unimportant being stories, fairy tales, and covering other mundane subjects.

One of the books that does not have a line drawn through it is titled, "The Elixirs of Nalfoon von Fozen," is not in the room. A successful intelligence check by any spellcaster means they know of the author. Nalfoon was a famous alchemist who supposedly discovered a series of elixirs that extended life for many centuries. It is said he lived for a thousand years before being slain by an angry wyrm and his book of elixirs lost to time. The real book is not anywhere here, nor was it ever. Aldous

had purchased a book of that name knowing it was a fake. He did so because he found it humorous. The fake book is found in the bathroom.

AREA 16 BATHROOM

There is a long wooden bench with several holes in it across a stone pedestal in this small room. A book, open, sits on the bench.

This is a bathroom. The bench or plank of wood sits across and covers a 3-foot wide hole in the floor. This hole extends down the stack and emerges a few feet below the water mark. Several creatures Aldous summoned escaped through this hole.

The book is the fake "The Elixirs of Nalfoon von Fozen," Several dozen pages have been ripped out. The book has nearly a hundred potion recipes in it. These cover all manner of life extension recipes. None work.

AREA 17 STORAGE

Shattered crates, burst barrels, broken jars, cracked bottles, and ripped burlap bags are haphazardly strewn across the room. One whole corner is a heap of broken crate and barrels parts mixed with a sprawl of delicate mushrooms growing out of what little remains of the foodstuffs which were in the containers.

Aldous never had the time nor inclination to empty this room. All things considered, everything in this room was replaceable. Mostly dried grains, dried fruits, whisky, wines, beer and food for the animals in Area 14 were stored here. There were two crates of rare herbs and minerals used in casting spells.

The vilgenbirst destroyed almost everything in the room. Time, rats, and fungus destroyed nearly everything else. The only thing that remains is a small box underneath the large pile where the mushrooms are growing. The mushrooms are not quite what they seem.

The mushrooms are vilgenbirst. One of the vilgenbirst which was killed here shed some material. That has grown in the shape of a mushroom. Once disturbed, the mushrooms begin to wiggle and glow a bluish color. Then a barely audible whispering sound emanates from the cap. This becomes louder and louder with each passing minute. Being in a confined space (the wards placed on the area by Aldous), the noise reverberates like ripples in a pond, only increasing with intensity. In the void of space, the noise just dissipates.

3-6 rounds after being disturbed, the noise becomes audible. 3-6 rounds after that it starts to become loud enough to cause physical damage. It causes 0-3 damage to all who can hear it. It also prevents normal conversation and spell casting that requires verbal components. The damage is increased by one point every 1-3 rounds. The sound only stops if the mushrooms are not bothered.

The mushrooms are absolutely impervious to all damage except water. There is not enough humidity in the air to kill them,

but should they be doused with water, they all die. The other method of killing them is to crush each cap.

The box at the bottom of the pile contains 12 glass jars. Each contain a valuable and rare component for casting spell; diamond dust, ground meteorite, ground bone of a wyrm, silver dust, dried blood of a basilisk, rare berries, eyeballs of an eagle, finger of a shtumpf, etc.

AREA 18 DRAGON'S CHAMBER

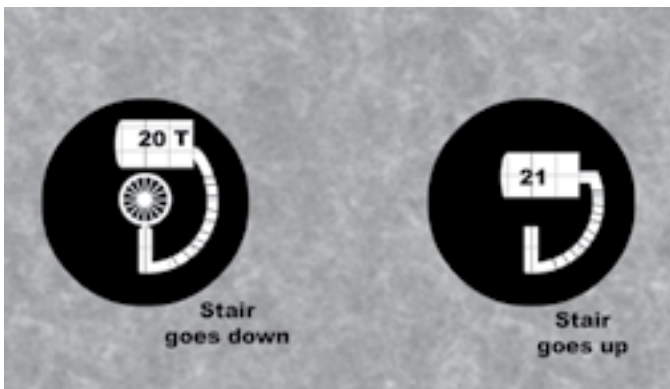
A Dragon! Blue and Fury! Belching death! Gnashing teeth!

There is a statue of a dragon consuming the whole of this room. It is intricately carved and so well detailed it appears to be alive. Aldous spent a great amount of energy and time on this statue. He also dabbled with dragon worship at one time. This consumed him for years and towards the end of his life was beginning to take over again. This type of statue is considered exceedingly evil and its destruction a good thing.

AREA 19 CASTING ROOM

The door to this chamber is broken. The burned wood is scattered across the floor. Tapestries, showing signs of burning hang on one wall, and a broken podium is knocked onto the floor. Runes are engraved across the floor.

Aldous used this room to practice casting spells. A fight occurred in here before he left. The runes are protective in nature. Each is quite large being about 3 feet across. Standing on a rune offers some protection against specific elements. There is a rune for protection against each of the following elements: electricity, fire, frost, wind, water, iron, and stone. It is possible to copy these runes and engrave them elsewhere to the same effect. Each rune negates all damage from that particular element.



AREA 20 SUMMONING ROOM

The acrid stench coming from the tunnel burns the lips, tongue, and eyes, with a distinctive electrical taste in the air. The tunnel curves slightly ahead. From the end of the tunnel comes a fog of dim reddish light sparkling with faint yellow flashes and blue wisps of dancing miasma weaving in arrhythmic patterns.

The tunnel opens onto a broad, circular room. A glowing cloud of red, yellow, and blue mixed with black

shadows hovers at one end of the room. The floor is covered in engravings; a script of bizarre origin. The symbols twist and turn in harmonious patterns only to be punctuated by abrupt angles driving wedges in an otherwise mellifluous design. Glints of silver, gold, and platinum sparkle amongst the engravings. A large gold lectern sits lightly on the floor across the room.

A shadowy red-figure emerges from the cloud at the other end of the room. It stirs and rights itself, gleaming blue eyes emerge from the ochre mass, as arms, carrying heavy wings, extend outward.

This is a lesser creature from the void and is unique. It was created by the Dragon in the dawn of the world and resided for ages in the world before escaping the Dragon's wrath. It hid on the other side of existence for ages beyond count. It was brought back to the world when Aldous opened the gateway into the void with one of his summoning spells. Sensing the Dragon slumbering, the creature intends to remain in the world as long as it can.

The runes and script Aldous left on the walls, floor, and ceiling make it impossible for the creature to leave the tower. It is bound inside those glyphs and has no manner of escaping their power and has been stuck in that small protective bubble created by Aldous for decades. This will eventually remedy itself. The paints used to scrawl the glyphs on the walls throughout the lower halls are slowly peeling. Once one of them decays or is destroyed, the protective powers, the spell has ceases to work and the creature can exit the tower.

When Aldous cast the summoning spell and brought the various creatures into Inzae, he brought a portion of the void in as well. When released into Inzae, the void caused damage to the tower and surrounding areas (hence the collapsed tower, bridge, etc). If the current protective bubble is dissipated, the portion of the void still in this room with the creature is released into Inzae. The immediate cause is an earthquake with the epicenter being this room. Finally, if the creature is allowed to escape, it takes on a more powerful form than the one encountered in this room. Each is described separately below.

The script engraved on the floor is a summoning circle. In the center of the circle is a small gold and copper bowl.

The lectern is gold and floats about 1/8 of an inch off of the floor. Words are engraved on top of the lectern. This is the verbal component of the summoning spell. Moving the lectern aside reveals a small latch in the floor. This is a trapdoor that leads down to the treasure (Area 21).

A small slot in the lectern holds a glass vial. This vial has a line engraved about midway up the side. An investigation by a jeweler or similar reveals the presence of diamond dust. For those who might be able to recognize diamond dust, such as a dwarf, a successful intelligence check reveals its presence.

All that is required to activate the summoning spell is to repeat the words engraved in the lectern and pour 12 ounces of diamond dust in the center of the circle. Should the characters

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do this, they will summon 1-12 creatures from the void. These creatures are each unique in nature and power with some being exceedingly weak and others quite strong. This and the nature of each is left entirely up to the Castle Keeper.

The creature (a Vilgenbirst) is not intent on killing the characters. Rather, the creature is intent on leaving the tower. However, the creature is, in and of itself, destructive and crackles with primordial energy. The Vilgenbirst first attempts to communicate with the characters. As it has no voice, it does so by pointing with tendrils of energy. These tendrils of energy remain in the air for several minutes. The Vilgenbirst can create 3d images in the air as a manner of illustrating its desire to leave the tower. The typically dissipate in a few minutes and the Vilgenbirst does not speak any tongue known to man. If attacked, the Vilgenbirst attacks the characters without remorse and no chance of quarter.

If freed from the tower or the spell keeping it here ceases to function, allowing the Vilgenbirst to leave the tower, it immediately makes its way out and begins wandering the land aimlessly. It has a few particular desires but no needs. It just exists and wanders and desires to live longer. It is powerful and becomes even more so once the void stops draining its energy.

VILGENBIRST - TRAPPED (*This neutral creature's vital statistics are HD 8d12, HP 71, AC 18, BTH +8, MOVE 40/100 feet. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with either its wing or feet claws (1d6+4 or 1d8+4 damage) and a bite (1d6 damage). Its special abilities are enhanced senses (identical to an elf), twilight vision, improved grab (identical to the anhkheg), 8d8 lightning bolt 1/10 rounds, gaseous form at will, ethereal jaunt 3/day, SR 5, restore 1d10 hit points 1/day, immunity (fire, cold, electricity, full).*)

VILGENBIRST - FREE (*This neutral creature's vital statistics are HD 10d12, HP 81, AC 18, BTH +10, MOVE 30/60 feet. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks with either its wing or feet claws (1d8+4 or 1d10+4 damage) and a bite (1d10 damage). Its special abilities are enhanced senses (identical to an elf), twilight vision, improved grab (identical to the anhkheg), 10d8 lightning bolt 1/6 rounds, gaseous form at will, ethereal jaunt 3/day, earthquake 3/day, SR 6, restore 1d20 hit points 1/day, immunity (fire, cold, electricity, full).*)

21: TEMPLE AND TREASURY

The stairs beneath the trapdoor twist deeper into the earth. The sound of the bay is a barely audible rumble. The steps are slick with water. Around the first bend, the stairs descend into water.

The stairs twist down into the stack. The power of the summoning spell caused damage to both the upper portion of the tower and the lower portions. Here, small cracks in the wall and at the lowest portion of the tower allowed water to seep in. The water in here is equal to the waterline outside the tower.

The real treasure room is located at the bottom of the tower. The water is as cold as that outside the tower. The stairs extend 30 feet more before ending at a closed and locked metal door. The

door is, at this point, basically rusted in place and no amount of lock picking skills will open it. Luckily for the characters, the frame to the door was damaged so badly that the door can be pulled down.

There is a metal handle on the door. If pulled with a combined strength of 30, the door comes out of its frame and falls slowly to the floor. If any characters are in front of the door, they must move fast enough out of the way to avoid being trapped beneath it. The door weighs nearly 700lbs.

The room is filled with water. The most valuable items were removed from the room by Aldous, though he did not have the time nor the ability to remove the bulkier items. There are three chests, two boxes, a wardrobe and a weapon rack in the room.

The first chest is 2 feet long and 3 feet tall. It is rusted shut and locked. It contains 2000cp, 1000sp, and a dozen silver-coated plates each worth 20gp.

The second chest is 3 feet long and 2 feet tall. It was left open. It contains twelve large gold-plated urns of various shapes worth 10-60gp each and six large silver urns each worth 100gp.

The third chest is 2 feet long and 3 feet tall. It is made of copper and is locked shut. The chest is magically protected so it has not rusted. However, opening it requires a *knock* spell (CL 5) and then the lock must be picked (CL 6). The chest weighs almost 600 pounds. The chest contains 1000gp, 3000gp in jewelry and +3 bracers of defense. At the bottom of the chest are several small vials. Each has one drought of a *potion of ethereal jaunt*.

The weapon rack has several spears, polearms, and the remains of a bow. The shafts of the spears and polearms have long since rotted away, while the bow appears intact. The head of one glaive is a masterwork piece with a +2 non-magical bonus if cleaned, sharpened, and set onto a new shaft. When the bow is picked up, the wood disintegrates instantly, leaving only the string. The string is magical; any bow using this string receives a +3 to hit bonus, though there is no bonus to damage. Being magical, the string will never decay, though it can be destroyed by fire.

EMPTY HANDS

RETURNING TO RAGLESBORG

The characters may have taken one book out of the tower. It is not the book Hart seeks. That book nor others like it exist. The characters and Hart should have arranged a meeting place before leaving. If not, the characters should be able to find Hart at any of the local bars. Hart has several people around Rablesborg, keeping an eye out for the characters. These report to Hart as soon as the characters return to Rablesborg.

In the meeting that follows, Hart is enraged at the characters should they not produce the books required. He claims they are failures and did not do their job so they should receive no money. He goes so far as to accuse the characters of thievery and of hiding the books he sent them to recover. The meeting with Hart should end poorly no matter the case.

This changes nothing. Hart is so angered that he sends the assassins to kill all but one of the characters. His intent to torture the captured character and force them to tell him where the book is. Should one of the assassins be killed in the ensuing battle, the others run or try to escape. If any is captured, they quickly tell the characters of Hart's plan.

HART BLEMMAN (*He is a lawful evil, human 5th level wizard/rogue whose vital statistics are HD 5d6, HP 10, AC 12, BTH +2 and MOVE 30 feet. His primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom and dexterity. His significant attributes are intelligence 16, wisdom 14, charisma 14 and dexterity 16. He wears breeches and shirt, leather armor and ring of blinking. He carries a +2 dagger, type II poison, staff of charm and diadem of mind shielding (this diadem acts as the magical ring of the same name). He has 1000gp worth of coin and jewelry on his person.*)

ASSASSINS

If the party is too weak to take on the assassins, then have one of those assassins recognize one of the party and refuse to carry through with the assassination – perhaps they will turn on Hart. This is where prior role play in the setting pays off and the contacts characters make add up to future twists and turns in adventures.

ASSASSIN X7 (*These are neutral evil, human, 3rd level assassins whose vital stats are HD 3d6, HP 12, AC 14, BTH +1 and MOVE 30 feet. Their primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and wisdom. Their significant attributes are dexterity 14 and intelligence 13. They wear laminar leather armor and carry daggers and small crossbows. Each has 1-10gp on their person.*)

DOONKSLATTER

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1	SAVES: P
SIZE: L	INT: Animal
HD: 3d8	ALIGNMENT: Neutral
MOVE: 60 feet	TYPE: Animal
AC: 16	TREASURE: None
ATTACKS: 1 bite (2d6), 1 slap (1d6)	XP: 30+3
SPECIAL: Clasp	

The doonkslatter is a large predatory fish that lives in deep, cool, waters near coasts. The fish can reach up to 20 feet in length. Its front and head are covered in thin, interlocking bony plates while its back is portion is a flexible skin. It has four fins for swimming and a long, low dorsal fin running the entire length of its back. Its tail end is long with a narrow fin of its own running nearly its entire length on the top and bottom. The mouth of the doonkslatter is broad. Several large and sharp teeth are in the upper jaw and a row of razor-sharp teeth line the bottom jaw.

The doonkslatter usually hunts in deep cool waters near a coast. They are typically found near fjords or where mountains meet the sea. They are not found near shallow coastlines. The doonkslatter usually hunts deep and primarily dines on smaller fish. However, once a day the doonkslatter rises up to

shallow water. While there, it hunts larger prey and is known to attack people.

The doonkslatter grasps its prey in its jaws, trapping it by clamping down and locking its jaws. It does not rend prey; it dives into very deep water trying to exacerbate blood loss through pressure increase. Once its victim stops struggling, the doonkslatter releases its prey and slowly eats it.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CLASP: On a successful hit, the doonkslatter is allowed another to hit roll. If it rolls an unmodified 19 or 20, it clasps its opponent in its jaws.

UFFENSHTUMPF (WATER TROLL)

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4	SAVES: P
SIZE: L	INT: Low
HD: 4d8	ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil
MOVE: 40 feet	TYPE: Monstrous Humanoid
AC: 13	TREASURE: None
ATTACKS: 1 bite (1d6), 1 claw (1d4)	XP: 80+4
SPECIAL: Hide, Quick Strike	

The uffenshtumpf is an ugly beast that lives in shallow waters near rocky coasts. It prefers areas that are thick with seaweed and have many underwater caverns. This shtoompf has a blueish and scaly skin with long hairs growing all over it. These hairs have the appearance of seaweed and can reach up to four or five feet in length. Often, the uffenshtoompf is mistaken for seaweed. The head of the uffenshtumpf is grotesquely broad with a mouth like that of a fish with lips. Inside are hundreds of tiny dark teeth.

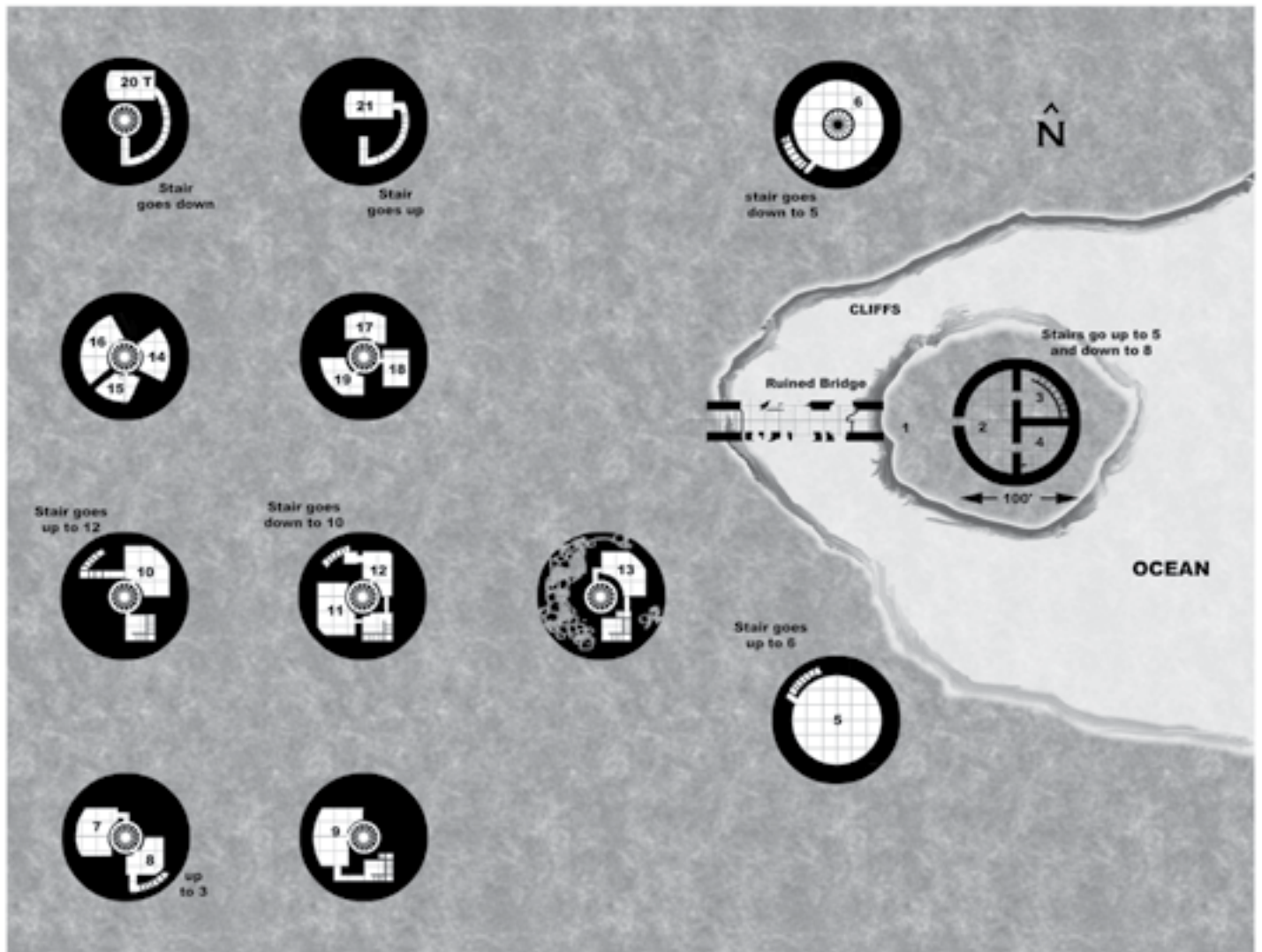
The uffenshtoompf primarily hunts and eats fish of all types. It is an opportunistic hunter and eater. If particularly hungry, it eats seaweed, dead fish or corpses. It can eat virtually any living thing and gain some sustenance from it. The uffenshtoompf is, however, particularly fond of humans. Though it does not go out of its way to hunt humans, when given the chance, it attacks ferociously. The uffenshtumpf never willingly leaves the water as it cannot breathe more than a few minutes out of water. This does not prevent it from trying to board a ship and pull some prey overboard.

The uffenshtoompf never uses any weapons. It glides through the water, usually in seaweed forests seeking its prey or rests, floating and still awaiting prey to come to it. It is not a fast swimmer but it can move its arms with extraordinary speed.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

HIDE: In a seaweed forest, the uffenshtoompf can hide as if it were an 8th level rogue.

QUICK STRIKE: When sitting still and waiting for prey to come to it, the uffenshtoompf gets a +1 to its initiative and +3 to hit on the first round of combat.



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