

BF1

Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module

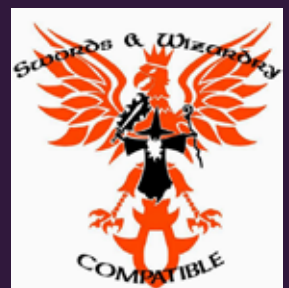
TOWER OF SKULLS

Written by "Weird Dave" Olson

An Adventure for Character Levels 10-12



LORD OF THE BONE FIELDS #1





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Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module BF1
For use with Swords & Wizardry

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*Death and darkness has risen from churned black soil! A festering evil returns to the land, spreading a palpable fear to all in its area. A brave band of heroes are needed to seek out the site and cleanse it once and for all. But be wary! Brave heroes have fallen victim to the traps and dangers contained within the legendary ... **TOWER OF SKULLS!***

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Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module BF1

TOWER OF SKULLS **LORD OF THE BONE FIELDS #1**

For use with the Swords & Wizardry game

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TOWER OF SKULLS

A dangerous cancer lurks in the shadowy crevasses of the land, spreading death and misery like a weed chokes the life out of a garden. Its foul presence spoils the natural order, creating pestilent beasts that stalk the unwary and grim hauntings to terrify the brave. It is known as the Tower of Skulls, an unholy site that rises from pitch-black soil, and it always hungers for fresh life.

BF1 Tower of Skulls is a *Fantasy Renaissance Adventure Module* filled with horror, darkness, undead, and nightmarish plants. It has been designed for a party of four to six characters levels 10 to 12. This adventure presents a twisted, evil dungeon for a party of adventurer's to explore and hopefully destroy, though in doing so they unwittingly release an imprisoned evil back to the world.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: ATMOSPHERE

DMS WHO RUN THIS ADVENTURE SHOULD STRIVE TO ACHIEVE AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR. TURNING DOWN THE LIGHTS, PLAYING IN THE EVENING OR INTO THE NIGHT, AND UTILIZING CREEPY ORGAN MUSIC ARE ALL GOOD WAYS TO ACHIEVE THE RIGHT MOOD FOR THE ADVENTURE.

Adventure Background

Within the evil-soaked realm of the Abyss, powerful demon lords and princes fight for dominion over the many layers. As a particularly powerful creature begins to dominate its fellow demons and outsiders, the layer of the Abyss twists and takes shape to the ruler's whim, sometimes unconsciously. Horrors beyond horrors can be found between those near-infinite layers, lorded over by heinous beings of unquenchable power.

Orcus, demon prince of the undead, is a name whispered in rumors on the Prime Plane, and in even more hushed tones on the Abyss. The powerful demon prince has fought countless battles against innumerable foes to control his land and his dominion over the undead. His victories have left scores of rivals dead, insane, or both.

One such challenger was Lamotruu, a demon lord who held sway over plants and undead alike. Lamotruu had many names - Keeper of the Bone Fields, He of the Withering Gaze, the Bone Flower, the Autumn Reaper, the Horned Shepherd. His favorite was the Skull Father, and Lamotruu had a fondness for skulls of all shapes and sizes. In the heart of his Abyssal domain, he held court in a grisly site called Kharrel-Tavox, Abyssal for the Tower of Skulls. A great spire whose exterior was embedded with hundreds of thousands of leering skulls, it commanded respect and housed the demon lord's greatest prizes and was the seat of his power.

Orcus and Lamotruu clashed many times over the centuries, sometimes in fierce multi-day long bloody combats that wet the Abyssal plains with demon blood and sometimes in darkness-shrouded assassin strikes with surgical precision. Orcus longed to be the sole demon lord with command and dominion over the undead, and Lamotruu saw Orcus as nothing more than a fetid goat demon with delusions of grandeur.

Their rivalry peaked when Orcus lured away a trio of Lamotruu's greatest generals with promises of power. Furious at the betrayal, Lamotruu launched a surprise offensive on Orcus' home layer, summoning great shambling graveyards and titanic elder night worms to overwhelm the demon prince's palace.

The surprise, however, was for Lamotruu. Orcus knew of the planned attack and used his mastery over the Abyssal plane to make sure that his palace was safe from any harm. With Lamotruu so preoccupied, however, it was easy for Orcus to cut through the former's defenses and set foot in Kharrel-Tavox itself.

It was the end for Lamotruu. Orcus, with his full host assembled, laid low to Lamotruu's defenders and captured the Tower of Skulls. The defeated demon lord waited for death to finally claim him, as was the natural cycle of existence.

But Orcus would not be so merciful. He bound Lamotruu to the Tower of Skulls, uprooted it wholly from the Abyss, and cast it into the Prime Plane using powerful, demonic sorcery. Lamotruu would live, forever bound to his home, which would eternally remain detached from the Abyss in the realm of mortals. Afterwards, Orcus assumed control over Lamotruu's Abyssal layer and the fallen demon lord faded into obscurity.

On the Prime Plane, Kharrel-Tavox became a site of horror and nightmares. Cursed as it was, it could only appear under a full moon and it moved across the land mysteriously. Wherever it traveled, death followed – nightmarish creatures rose from unnaturally blackened soil. Heroes sought out the Tower of Skulls to plunder its halls of treasure and to stop its evil influence, but so far few have penetrated deep into its madness-inducing walls. Many perish before they can even enter the legendary site.

Inside, Lamotruu has gone insane. He longs to be free of his torment and to let death overtake him, but he knows that feat requires strength and bravery – two things he lacks. So he has turned his former power base into a death trap for the unwary, cackling away at the mortals who blunder in to find naught but their doom.

Module Synopsis

The characters search for and discover the legendary Tower of Skulls. They could be actively searching for it, or they could just stumble upon it one night. The DM is free to use one of the adventure hooks described below or come up with his own reason.

Along the way to the tower, the DM could use on the optional encounters. The unwholesome power of the Tower of Skulls has given rise to the buried dead, breathing new life into their corpses. The tower's presence also fouls the land in unnatural ways, creating a pestilent zone of death and decay all around its unnatural position.

Those seeking the tower to put an end to its foul existence encounter an omen of ill-fortune at sunset just before the tower rises— a flock of grim ravens in the shape of skull.

Entering and exploring the Tower of Skulls should prove challenging and worthwhile to a group of experienced characters and players. The experience is made even better, however, with a clear, identifiable goal that the characters need to accomplish. The DM can use one of the hooks below or come up with his own reason for using the haunted and twisted halls of the demon lord's skeletal tower.

Using the Tower

The Tower of Skulls can be used in one of several ways in your game. The first way is exactly as presented in this module - a twisted, dangerous dungeon filled with traps and difficult encounters that the characters are not expected to complete the entire way through. By removing the ability of the party to take a full rest and regain spells and abilities, the encounters in the tower become more difficult the longer the characters go. This is intentional and maintains the mystery and threat of the site itself.

The second way is to integrate the tower into your campaign more fully. Perhaps you wish to utilize Lamotruu as an ongoing villain (utilizing the further modules in the LORD OF THE BONE FIELDS series), in which case the goal becomes to destroy the Tower of Skulls. In this case, you can ease up the difficulty of the module by allowing the characters to regain hp while resting in one of the Rooms of Respite. The tower appears only during a full moon but perhaps it shows up for three nights in a row, allowing the characters to recover during the day and return to conquer the site. This provides a sense of urgency without the breakneck and lethal pace of the first option.

Future Modules

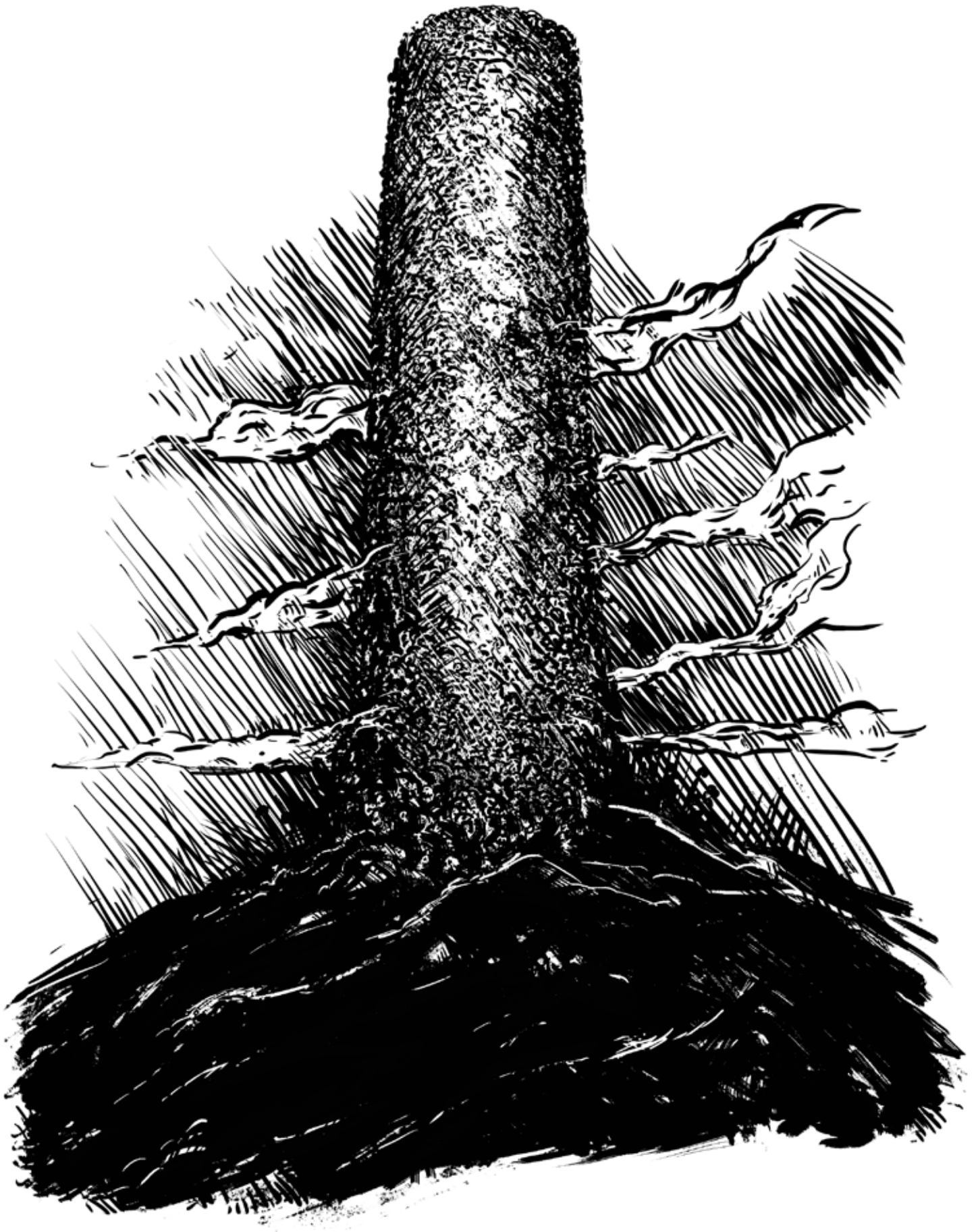
BF1 Tower of Skulls serves as a stand-alone module designed to challenge higher level characters in a grueling unwholesome dungeon filled with danger and despair. It functions on its own, outside of any connecting storyline, and works great for a one-shot night of adventure or as the culmination of a long quest.

If the characters manage to defeat Lamotruu in the tower's upper most level, they will have unwittingly released the demon lord from its prison. Additional adventures can be spawned from such an event as Lamotruu seeks to regain his former power and domain from Orcus and other fiendish beings. What happens when the Abyssal pecking order becomes upset? Lamotruu's story continues in the **LORD OF THE BONE FIELDS** series.

Involving the Characters

There are many ways characters could become involved in the legend of the Tower of Skulls. Below are some suggestions that the DM is free to use.

- An object that a character has been previously unable to find is discovered to be in the Tower of Skulls. This information could be gleaned from divination magic (the object is in the Tower of Skulls) and then a potent location spell (pointing the character in the right direction).
- The characters, having heard rumors of the Tower of Skulls and its purported stash of magical items, decide to risk the danger and hunt down the haunted location. They know (from divination or even rumor-mongering) that the tower appears only under a full moon so a quick strike is needed.
- Jakob Devileye, a hunter of the dead, has been searching for the Tower of Skulls for many years. He went inside two years ago alone, but failed in his endeavor to destroy the place and was ejected out, minus most of his equipment. He approaches the characters with a plea for help to destroy the accursed tower. Jakob has a skull from the tower, which points him in the right direction.
- Alternatively, one of the characters could be a hunter of the dead, and is on a mission to destroy the Tower of Skulls, a well-known symbol of undeath and corruption.
- In an unrelated adventure, the characters come across a human skull. It has no markings of any kind, but it becomes engulfed in harmless black flames two days before the Tower of Skulls



appears. When the characters are facing in the appropriate direction, the eyes of the skull light up with a crimson glow. Thus is the way to the Tower of Skulls illuminated.

- The characters find that they need to go somewhere nearly impossible to find and have run out of options. At the top of the Tower of Skulls sits the Orb of Dimensional Flight, a powerful relic that allows travel to anywhere in the multiverse. It is, of course, guarded by the denizens of the tower along with Lamotruu itself, but if the party can reach it they may be able to bargain with the deposed demon lord. Or defeat it.

Ability Checks in Swords & Wizardry

At several points during the module the characters are asked to make ability checks (Strength check, Dexterity check, etc.). You are free to use whatever method you find the most convenient for your group, but if you're stuck for something you can use this simple mechanic. A character making an ability check rolls 1d20 and compares the result to the ability in question; if the result is equal to or less than the ability the check is successful. Any modifiers listed in the module text are modifiers to the ability score (a +4 bonus to a Strength check would increase the character's Strength by 4 for the purpose of the ability check, for example).

Investigating the Tower

Whatever method the DM decides to use, characters can gain more information on the Tower of Skulls by using resources and spells. Refer to the appropriate section for examples of what is revealed using the three most common forms of investigation: consulting a sage, consulting a high-level wizard, and the *legend lore* spell.

Consulting a Sage

The Tower of Skulls has been encountered by many individuals across the years, and more than one of them has written of their encounters. Characters can find out more information about the tower by finding a sage with a well-stocked library. No check is necessary, but each piece of information below should take time, gold, or a favor to the sage (or all three!).

* The Tower of Skulls was the home of an ancient demon lord hundreds of years ago. The tower is constructed out of the bleached skulls of his enemies.

* A pair of individuals sought out the tower to destroy an ancient tome – a holy paladin of light and a dark necromancer. Why the two were together is a complete mystery, and if they were successful or not remains unknown.

* It is whispered that the coming of the Tower of Skulls is heralded by a flock of crows, flying in a skull formation. It is an omen of ill-will anyway, but doubly so in the evening.

Consulting a High-Level Wizard

The sorceries that created and uprooted the Tower of Skulls are ancient and demonic. A few sages and wizards have sought out this knowledge for their own gain, as consulting with a high-level spellcaster (ideally 15th-level or higher) can show. The bullet points below can be given out in exchange for gold or favors at the GM's discretion.

* The Tower of Skulls was created using magic of the darkest form – not just necromancy, but a form of ancient druidic magic so vile it was not meant for the mortal world. The demon lord who constructed the tower infused the building with powerful sorcery from this school.

* The Tower of Skulls was enchanted with a strange incantation that actually made it alive. When the tower appears, the skeletal walls moan and groan for all to hear in the night, creating a most ghastly sight and causing insanity to those who are around it too long.

* Two individuals entered the Tower of Skulls and confronted the demon lord. One was a paladin of light, but the other was a practitioner of the undead arts – a necromancer of the highest caliber. The necromancer was half-dead herself, and used dark magic to prolong her life.

* The Tower of Skulls is enchanted in such a way that it bolsters the power of evil and weakens the power of good. Undead especially are a dire threat within the tower's walls.

Legend Lore Spell

A casting of the *legend lore* spell focused on the Tower of Skulls reveals the following information.

- The Tower of Skulls appears only in the light of a full moon in a random location. It is inaccessible during the day.
- The Tower of Skulls is also known as Kharrel-Tavox, which means the Tower of Skulls in Abyssal.
- Two powerful individuals sought the demon lord in the Tower of Skulls and were never heard from again. One was a necromancer, while the other was a paladin. The paladin was given the mission of destroying an evil book that was hidden within the Tower of Skulls. It is unknown whether or not he succeeded.

FINDING THE TOWER

The easiest way to find the Tower of Skulls is to locate a skull that's been taken from the tower. Visitors who manage to leave Kharrel-Tavox alive always find a single skull in their possession – the reason for this is unknown, but it happens every time.

Two days before the tower appears, each skull becomes limned with harmless but impressive black fire. When the skull is facing the direction of the tower, the eye sockets become illuminated with a malevolent, crimson glow. The skulls are resistant to destruction and seem impervious to magic.

The distance from whatever major city the characters are in to the Tower of Skulls is 64 miles. (At a movement rate of 20 feet, with 16 miles per day, it is a four day trip. With horses (some move at 50 feet and some at 60) the time is shortened considerably.) High-level characters no doubt have many items and spells at their disposal to make this time go faster – for instance, a carpet of flying or the fly spell. Both of these decrease the amount of travel time by so much for so long.

Using the skull to get to the tower is pretty straightforward – the DM may use one of the optional encounters presented here or make up his own random encounters on the road if he wants to prepare the characters (and the players) for the Tower of Skulls.

The Tower's Influence

Like an abhorrent weed, the Tower of Skulls spreads its unholy tendrils to choke out the life from the surrounding countryside. From a week out to its rise, a circle roughly encompassing 20 miles radius from the tower becomes changed and unnatural. This is referred to as the Influence Zone. Refer to the below table for how strong the effect becomes.

Days Before Rise	Effects
6-7	Birds (except for crows) flee the Influence Zone; earthworms crawl up to the surface at night to create great squirming swaths; wolves and other predators attack without provocation.
4-5	Patches of exposed earth turn black as pitch; the sickeningly sweet odor of grave flowers fills the Influence Zone; normally passive animals become hostile and vicious.

2-3	Graveyards expel zombies and skeletons in the Influence Zone to terrorize the living at random hours; black and green sap ooze from trees like wounds during the night; thick clouds gather in the sky accompanied by rumbling thunder and flashes of purple lightning, but no rain falls.
0-1	Packs of hungry wolves stalk the land seeking easy prey; thick patches of corpse flowers suddenly appear to cover open areas during the night; thick gray moss appears on trees in the Influence Zone, forming the image of leering skulls on the trunks.

The key with the Influence Zone is to show the malignant power of the Tower of Skulls and the threat that it poses to the surrounding area. Good-aligned characters and any that care about the well-being of the land the people who dwell on it should feel the pull to put an end to the unwholesome sight.

The Omen of Ill-Fortune

On the day before the tower appears, the characters witness the omen of ill-fortune that supposedly precedes the appearances of Kharrel-Tavox – a flock of grim crows in the shape of a skull.

The adventure assumes late autumn, before the snow, as the season. The DM should change the text appropriately if the season is other than that.

A cool, northern breeze blows across the land, causing the tall grass around you to ripple and sigh like the dying breath of an old man. A shiver runs down your spine as you gaze up at the steel gray clouds in the sky. Farther up the beaten path you see a tree. Or at least, what remains of a tree. It appears as though the towering oak had been struck with a horrible cancerous disease – its limbs are barren, devoid of the spark of life that once dwelled within its thick bark. The branches at this distance take on a twisted appearance, as if some grotesque giant with multiple limbs were grasping towards the sky.

As the characters draw closer to the tree they can see the branches aren't completely devoid of all life. Perched on the limbs are large, black birds – perhaps three dozen of them, standing silent and still.

A moment later, with a shriek the entire flock takes to the sky. The characters can see now that they've

seen in the walls and floors (impossible to pry loose, unfortunately).

Doors

There are no traditional doors within the Tower of Skulls. All doors are secret and revealed only by completing certain actions in the room, though the presence of a door can be revealed with a 2 in 6 chance after investigation check. All secret doors are locked but have no handle or keyholes – they are opened only by activating them. Activating a door is different for each room. When open the door remains open for 1 minute.

Though the rooms are close together, each doorway is completely enshrouded in impenetrable shadow that blocks all sensory perception between rooms. Passing through a doorway has an effect that people call “someone walking over your grave” – a chill runs up and down the spine and gooseflesh rises on arms.

Magical Properties of the Tower

The Tower of Skulls radiates an unholy aura, and has been fixed with a permanent magical effect that causes Turn Undead attempts within the tower to automatically fail.

Time Within the Tower

Due to the nature of the curse that Orcus placed upon it, the Tower of Skulls exists only at night. The night lasts twelve hours (sundown to sun up).

Resting

The unnatural properties of the Tower of Skulls prevents resting in most of its chambers. The moans of the dead, a subtle shifting of the floor and walls, and a psychic presence invading the sleeping mind all prevent rests. The only exception are the Rooms of Respite, one hidden on each of the first four floors, that each allow rests inside of them. Since the tower appears only at night, the party would have an opportunity to rest to regain spells and (some) lost hp in these rooms.

Leaving the Tower

There are only two ways to exit the Tower of Skulls. The first way is to jump through one of the portals that are located in the Rooms of Respite. The portal transports characters 1d% miles away from the tower, but each of their magical items has a 50% chance of being transported to **area 50d**, the Vault of Treasure. Upon taking stock of their possessions, the character finds a strange skull which points the way back to its home at the tower.

The other way – and far more dangerous – is to locate the four key skulls and use them to unlock the Gate of Despair and ascend to the fifth floor of the tower. There, in the Skull Throne, is the demon lord's Orb of Dimensional Flight, which transports the characters wherever they wish to go (with their equipment).



taken flight that they are gaunt, black crows. As they watch them take to the evening sky, they see a shape begin to take form from the movement of the flock. The form appears as that a large, leering skull staring down at them from the sky.

The flock of grim crows are non-combatant and fly away into the evening sky.

TOWER OF SKULLS

When the characters reach the location of the Tower of Skulls on the map, the skull they are using as their guide burns up with the hellish black fire that has illuminated it for two days. That's how the characters know they are in the right place – their guide goes away.

Walls and Floors

The walls and floors of the Tower of Skulls are not made out of any material known to the world currently. It is a demonic-style of material, found in many places in the Abyss. Known as bonemelt, it is gray and coarse, and is actually made of ground up bone. Not all the bones are ground up, however, and some can still be

The Tower Arises!

The tower appears in the middle of the night as a thunderstorm rages around the characters. Read the following text when night descends (or if the characters approach the site by night).

The chill breeze that has been blowing all day picks up in intensity, raising goose bumps on your exposed skin. The sky above you darkens with the advent of angry storm clouds – dark and malevolent, there's almost a palpable evil in their menacing shape and foreboding gray color. A low rumble of thunder ripples through the air. A rain drop hits your shoulder, and then another, and another, until the clouds unleash their fury in the form of drenching rain. A flash of unusual purple lightning streaks across the sky, illuminating the clouds in its eerie light, and the thunder rumbles like the footsteps of a thousand monstrosities.

As the characters get their bearing, an unusual rumbling begins as the tower itself rises up from the ground!

You feel the ground beneath you shiver and quake, but not from the thunder. About two hundred feet from where you stand, a large mound rises, like a great bubble beneath the earth. The mound must be at least one hundred feet in diameter and about ten feet tall. The rain continues to come down in sheets with the strangely colored lightning in the sky the only source of illumination any more. You watch the mound as it cracks and breaks under enormous pressure, creating a darkened crater. And inside that crater something massive moves. Rising up from the hole is a tower, stretching up to the sky in mere moments. It must be at least three hundred feet high, and, looking at from the brief flashes of lightning, you see that it is made entirely out of skulls – grim, polished, leering skulls, staring at you with empty sockets. Even at this distance, you can hear soft moaning echoing from it, a quiet murmuring that quickly grates on your nerves. The ground around the newly risen tower is covered in unearthly black soil.

Thus the Tower of Skulls arises from the ground to torment the living. Once the characters get within 80 feet of the tower the **night worm** arises from the ground in an eruption of soil and attacks.

Tactics: A single night worm acts as the guardian of the Tower of Skulls. It appear when a character comes within 80 feet of the tower and fights to the death, moving beneath the ground to launch surprise attacks against any intruders.

Outside the Tower

Once the characters have defeated the guardian, they can approach the tower. When the characters reach the end of the trail, read the following text.

The sound of tortured moaning grows louder as you approach the base of the skull tower, making it difficult for you to concentrate. There are no entrances that you can see, and, looking farther up the tower, you can see no windows as well. Only skulls, staring at you with their unearthly, empty eyes.

If a character comes within five feet of the tower, one of the skulls emerges from the wall and becomes alight with red flames. The **flameskull** snakes its way down to the characters before stopping about ten feet from them. It speaks in a grating voice from beyond the grave:

*The entrance to the tower is hidden
In a lock whose key is on the tongue
Use it by calling the past now forbidden
But be wary of death that moves among*

The answer to this riddle is to say the true name of the Tower of Skulls. By speaking Kharrel-Tavox, the entrance into the tower is revealed.

Read the following when the characters solve the riddle (or defeat the flameskulls):

The eerie, flaming talking skull retreats back to its niche in the wall. In front of you, the skulls in a ten foot by ten foot area began to shake and convulse, and then roll to either side as a huge dragon skull rumbles to the surface. The lifeless jaws open wide, creating an entrance into the tower through its gaping, skeletal mouth.

The PCs are now free to enter and experience the horror that is the Tower of Skulls.

Tactics: If the flameskull is attacked, it calls upon its allies and fights back. On the second round of combat, three more flameskulls appear to pester the characters.

The flameskulls concentrate their efforts on any divine spell casters – clerics, paladins, and druids, in that order. They are inexorably linked to the tower and cannot move beyond 100 feet of it. If the characters flee beyond that point, the flameskulls retreat back. If the characters approach once more, they are allowed a second chance at the riddle.

If the characters defeat all the flameskulls, the door opens up just as if they had answered the riddle correctly. If the characters answered the riddle,

award them XP for all four flameskulls. Change the flavor text to accommodate the situation.

TOWER LEVEL 1

1. Hall of Entrance

You step through the yawning portal, slightly leery of the ghastly motif that surrounds you. Inside is a chamber, about 30 feet long and half that wide. There are no doors visible in the hall – the ever-present moaning of the very walls is the only sound that reaches your ears. Great patches of quivering brown-colored mold cling to much of the walls and floor. An unearthly chill fills the chamber causing your breath to appear in puffs of warm air from your lips. On the west, south, and east walls you can see enlarged human skulls set about five feet from the ground. The skulls are twice the size of a human skull.

If the characters turn around to look, they will find that the entrance has also been sealed up behind them. Two rounds after the characters enter the Hall of Entrance, the wall-mounted skulls speak via a *magic mouth* spell. They repeat the following cryptic rhyme:

*Welcome to your final rest
Your life I claim as mine
Watch where dark shadows nest
Four skulls for you to find
Encased in pillars, only the best
A way out you must find
Or forever stay as my guest
And lose your life and mind*

After the skulls give their rhyme, they fall silent and remain silent. Two of the skulls are inanimate and completely lifeless. The one on the north wall hides the monster.

The patches of brown on the walls and floor is a dangerous hazard known as brown mold. Lamotruu cultivates the abhorrent substances in the areas close to **area 4**. Characters can easily pick paths around the brown mold to avoid the cold damage from contacting any of it. Unfortunately, the **frost giant zombie** currently covered in brown mold has no such inhibitions. The flesh on the monster's face has been removed and it is the skull on the north wall, the rest of it being walled up behind a thin layer of material. Two rounds after the characters enter the frost giant zombie lets out a roar and bursts free, lurching forward to attack relentlessly.

Tactics: The frost giant zombie is coated in brown mold and uses the hazard to the best of its ability.



Characters are going to be walking over the brown mold in the room if they wish to avoid the monster as well.

Doors: The door to **area 12** on the west wall is opened by placing a hand inside the mouth of the skull on the west wall. The door to **area 2** on the east wall is opened by defeating the frost giant zombie.

2. Field of Woe

The stench of carrion and death hangs heavy within this square room. You are standing on a five foot ledge that borders the entire chamber, beyond which the floor drops fifteen feet. As you inch closer, you see that the floor of the broad pit is gray and somewhat lumpy. As you look closer, you see that they aren't lumps at all - they are heads! Several of them writhe and wriggle ever so slightly, creating a moving field of eternal woe. Their mouths and eyes open and shut in silent agony.

It was in this room that Lamotruu imprisoned the souls of those who displeased him in his travels. They moan and writhe in eternal agony and woe, and can do nothing to the PCs if they do not touch the floor.

If one of the characters touch the ground, the defenders of the Field of Woe appear. It takes one round for the **4 wights** to break free of the field (they appear 5 feet away from the character who first stepped upon the field), after which they can attack normally. The wights, special servants of Lamotruu, cannot leave the Field of Woe.

Unlike the rest of the bodies, the wights in this room are the result of doomed experiments performed on soldiers who had proven themselves as competent warriors. The demon lord sought to create the perfect undead soldier, but failed miserably. The results are the tortured wights that now exist in eternal suffering.

Tactics: The wights fight with a terrible tenacity but use sound tactics against opponents. They engage in melee as soon as possible so as to negate the possibilities of a mass attack spell. They never surrender and do not talk.

Doors: The door to the north leading to **area 4** can only be revealed by killing the wights. The door on the east wall to **area 3** opens when the wights rise from the ground.

3. Sleep of the Roses

The thick scent of roses is heavy in this twenty foot by thirty foot chamber. It appears that this room is some kind of garden – there are some very large, crimson roses growing around at random intervals. They are each about five feet in diameter, and all are facing towards you. Hanging from the twenty foot high ceiling is a grisly chandelier made of finger bones. As you look the candles begin to flicker to life.

These flowers are indeed deadly, but not in any obvious way. There are six of them in the room, marked on the map with an "X". The chest holds the treasure of the room.

There are **6 roses of Lamotruu** in this room, appearing as large flowers. They once grew abundant in Lamotruu's Abyssal lair but now can only be found in the Tower of Skulls. When disturbed, the rose exudes a fragrance that puts mortal creatures into a deep slumber, after which the semi-sentient rose devours the sleeping creature.

The chandelier candles ignite completely after 1 round passes. All non-plant and non-undead creatures in the room must make saving throws or suffer from the *confusion* spell. The spell effect lasts for 1d4 minutes. The chandelier candles stay lit as long as one character suffers from the spell; once everyone has saved or the duration has passed the candles go

out. The chandelier is hung from the ceiling by thick iron chains.

Tactics: The roses of Lamotruu are connected to one another, and can sense each other's actions and movements. If one rose activates its sleep musk, the rest activate theirs to create a cloud of sleeping gas that fills the entire chamber. The grasping vines seek out sleeping victims but fight groggy ones just the same.

Doors: The door to the north that leads to **area 5** is opened by removing all of the candles from the chandelier (there is one candle for each character coincidentally). If the characters entered the room from the north the door on the west wall leading to **area 2** is opened via this way instead.

4. Riddle Pillar of White Winter

The chamber beyond the doorway is a fifty foot diameter dome with a ceiling reaching at least forty feet high. The ground and air is covered in snow, pushed and swirled around by strong, circular gusts of wind. In the center of the room is a stark white pillar, five feet in diameter and standing ten feet tall. Black arcane runes adorn its surface. The walls of the dome are coated in a thick layer of ice and the frosty temperature inside penetrates to the bone.

This is one of the four Riddle Pillars in the Tower of Skulls that holds a keyskull. In order to gain access to the fifth level, characters must possess the four keyskulls and then pass through the Gate of Despair. It is also the only way to gain access to the second floor of the Tower of Skulls.

The entire chamber is considered difficult terrain because of the snow generated from the Riddle Pillar. The wind and snow hide **4 yetis**, bound as eternal guardians to the chamber. The monsters obey the will of the **gwiddon** who is also bound forever to the Riddle Pillar.

Once the characters enter the gwiddon reveals herself from behind the Riddle Pillar. She demands to know what the characters are doing in the Tower of Skulls. She is only stalling to allow time for the yetis to position themselves for maximum effectiveness.

Tactics: The yetis move stealthily amidst the blowing snow, trying to position themselves so that they can hit as many characters as possible with their breath weapon. The gwiddon launches into attacks at the same time, focusing on spellcasters first.

Doors: The door on the east wall to **area 5** opens after the gwiddon is defeated. The door on the north wall

to **area 7** opens after the yetis are defeated. The door on the west wall to **area 10** opens when the holder of the Riddle Pillar's keyskull walks within 5 feet of it. A spiral staircase appears leading up to the second level (**area 13**) when the white keyskull is picked up.

Riddle Pillar of White Winter

In the center of the room is the Riddle Pillar of White Winter. Carved on its surface in Abyssal is the following riddle:

*One tooth to bite,
He's the forest's foe
One tooth to fight,
As all dwarves know.*

The answer to the riddle is an axe. In order to gain access to the hidden keyskull a character must hit the pillar with an axe. Any axe will do – battleaxe, greataxe, or hand axe. Allow some flexibility in solving the puzzle if the characters lack an appropriate weapon – a magical construct or similar effect could work just as well if it's in the shape or form of an axe. Once the pillar is struck by an axe, read the following.

Suddenly, a powerful gust of wind tears through the room, nearly knocking you off your feet. You watch in growing horror as the pillar you just struck begins to shake, sending large chunks tumbling to the ground with a crash. The bitter, cold wind blows strongly around you, growing stronger with each successive gust. And then, all at once, the wind stops completely and the pillar crashes to the ground. Lying in the rubble is a white skull, marked with a single silver rune upon its top.

The white skull is one of the four keyskulls. Any character who can read Abyssal knows that the rune is the symbol for the word winter.

5. Thorn Walls

Beyond the shadow-filled opening is a hallway, about fifty feet long and twenty feet wide. The east and west walls are covered with large, barbed thorns, about the size of a man's hand. You see a darkened path on the floor that zig-zags across the hallway to the wall on the opposite end.

This hallway is marked by two traps, which are both described below.

The zigzagging path that goes from one end of the room to the other is the way to avoid one of the traps in the hallway. If a character steps on a section of the floor that is not marked by the path, the north and south walls spit a multitude of barbed thorns at the victim. Each time someone steps off the path into a five foot section of thorns the vegetation shoots out

four heavy thorns at random targets in the room. Each thorn makes a ranged attack roll with a +8 bonus. A target that is hit takes 1d10 piercing damage and must make a poison saving throw or suffer 3d10 poison damage (or half on a successful save).

However, the path is marked by spiked *fireball* pits. Detecting the cleverly hidden pits requires checking carefully with a pole with a 3 in 6 chance. Each pit trap is 10 feet by 10 feet and triggers when 25 or more pounds of pressure are applied to it. Anyone unlucky enough to be standing on it must make a saving throw or fall down the 20 foot shaft, suffering 2d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall and 3d6 piercing damage from the spikes. Upon hitting the floor, the *fireball* spell triggers as well, though the prone victim at the bottom suffers -4 against the saving throw for half of the 5d6 fire damage.

Treasure: In the northeast corner a skeleton lies slumped on the floor. This is where a valiant hero succumbed to his bleeding wounds after making it through the Thorn Walls. For the most part, he's been picked clean by the other would-be heroes who have come across his body.

Characters can make Wisdom checks to notice the gleam of gold on the skeleton's right hand, middle finger. The ring is a *ring of protection* +2.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: AN OLD TRICK

IF YOU'VE GOT AN OLD RING LYING AROUND THAT FITS ONE OF YOUR FINGERS, YOU CAN USE THIS OLD DM TRICK ON YOUR PLAYERS. IN ORDER TO RETRIEVE THE RING, YOU CAN PLACE YOUR HAND ON THE TABLE AND INSTRUCT THE PLAYER WHOSE CHARACTER IS TAKING THE RING TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE SKELETON IS COMPLETELY INANIMATE, BUT THE PLAYER SHOULD BE NERVOUS NONETHELESS.

Doors: The doors on the north wall to **area 6** and the west wall to **area 4** open when the most northern pit trap on the floor is triggered.

6. Styxian Well

This thirty foot square chamber is littered with intact skeletons laying on the ground or against the walls. Some wear rusted armor while rotting robes and clothing hang from others. In the center of the room a wide well sits, ten feet across and five feet high, with a wooden bucket sitting on the ledge.

The well in this room descends ten feet before reaching unnaturally brackish water, churned slowly by some unknown force. At the bottom of the well twenty feet below the water's surface is a roiling portal that leads to the River Styx on the first layer of the Abyss. Unfortunately, the water in the well is fed from that portal and carries similar mind-altering powers. The skeletons in the room are those people who drank or

touched the water in the well and forgot what they were doing, laying down to eventually starve to death in this chamber.

The bucket on the ledge is dry and empty at the moment. Anyone that touches or tastes the water in the well suffers from the *feeblemind* spell (saving throw to avoid). The effects of the spell wear off after 1 hour's rest, however.

Unfortunately, the portal at the bottom of the well is unstable. Every minute the characters stay in the room roll 1d6. On a roll of a 1, the portal flares up and sends a geyser of Styxian water gushing out of the well! Everyone in the room must make saving throws or get some of the River Styx water on them, forcing a save versus its effects.

Doors: The doors on the west wall to **area 7** and the south wall to **area 5** open after the first geyser releases.

7. Pit of Screams

This small chamber is only twenty feet wide and twenty feet long. There is, however, no floor beyond the narrow two-foot ledge that skirts all around the black pit in the center. A mournful howl echoes up from somewhere deep in the darkness followed by a desolate scream that is suddenly choked off.

The Pit of Screams is the home to **3 wraiths**, which first appear on the third round after the characters enter. The three creatures attack without mercy.

The pit itself is actually a portal to the Negative Energy Plane. Those who fall into the Pit of Screams suffer 2d10 necrotic damage each round of falling (characters fall 50 feet per round) until they are drained of all life and are sucked into the Negative Energy Plane.

Tactics: The three wraiths that guard the portal to the Negative Energy Plane delight in pulling opponents down into the pit and hearing their screams.

Doors: The door on the east wall to **area 6** opens when someone screams into the pit. The door on the west wall to **area 8** opens when the wraiths are defeated. If the characters entered via one of these ways, the door on the south wall to **area 4** opens on the same trigger.

8. Demon Face Off

Passing through the shadow-filled doorway you are greeted with an awesome sight. A magnificent chamber is revealed with a floor of polished obsidian, as deep as night. Although there is no light source that you can see, the room is well lit, allowing you to see the two magnificent statues in the center. They are carved of ivory, each facing one another, and each is a fifteen foot tall and wide crouching toad demon, mouth open wide in a snarl and claws raised against its opposition. The only difference between the two statues is their eyes – the south statue has blue gemstone eyes and the north statue has red gemstone eyes. The ceiling is twenty feet up and made of polished obsidian.

This room is the doom of curious characters. The two demonic ivory statues in the center have five-foot tall open mouths, with darkness inside. Climbing into them is the only way to get to the treasure and to open the doors, but it is also the only way to trigger the trap. A closer examination of the mouths of each reveals an unnatural chill emanating from the inside of the blue gemstone statue and an uncomfortable warmth extending from the inside of the red gemstone statue.

Climbing into either one causes the statue's mouth to close shut, trapping the person inside. Escaping without magical aid to melt the hardened ivory is near impossible. Immediately after the mouth closes, energy begins to build up inside it - cold energy for the blue-eyed statue and fire energy for the red-eyed statue. At the same time the eyes of both statues begin to glow fiercely.

If no one is in the opposite mouth in 3 rounds, the energy buildup explodes in the statue's inside, dealing 6d6 cold or fire damage to the victim (depending on the statue). The victim is also spat out of the statue onto the ground in front of it. If both statues are occupied before the 3 round buildup is complete, the eyes of the statues sparkle with brilliant radiance before the built up energy is expelled at the opposite statue - the cold and fire smash together in a brilliant display of power that deals no damage to anyone, including the victims in the statues. After this display, the gemstone eyes become inert and can be removed easily.

Treasure: One of the blue and red gemstones are nonmagical gems worth 750 gold pieces each. The second items are *gems of seeing* that also confer +4 to saving throws against fire or cold effects to the person holding on to them (the red gem protects from fire and the blue gem protects from cold). If someone tries to pry out one of the gemstone eyes without triggering the energy release they are hit by a blast of 6d6 damage, cold or fire depending on the gem. The trap can be avoided with an antimagic field or similar magic.

Doors: The door on the east wall to **area 7** opens when the red-eyed statue releases its energy. The door on the west wall to **area 9** opens when the blue-eyed statue releases its energy. This includes if someone tries to steal the gemstones.

9. Forest of Graves

This octagonal chamber reeks of dirt and decay. The walls are covered in thick tangles of black brambles that extend over the twenty foot high ceiling. Scattered about the room, sitting in the black loamy soil that coats the ground, are a dozen or so granite tombstones. Some bear carved images on their rocky surface.

One of Lamotruu's favorite servitors lives in this room, waiting to lurch forward and consume intruders. Two rounds after the characters enter, the dirt on the ground rumbles and **2 shambling graveyards** rise from the western end of the room, skulls and bones sticking from their earthy form.

Tactics: The shambling graveyards attack all intruders indiscriminately, doing their best to keep people from leaving.

Treasure: Once the monster is defeated, the characters can search the remains for treasure the creature stole from previous victims. Inside the characters find a *staff of the snake* and a suit of *armor of arrow deflection*.

Doors: The door on the south wall to **area 11** opens when the shambling graveyard is defeated. Alternately, if the characters entered that way, the door on the east wall to **area 8** opens via this same trigger.

10. Room of Respite I

This small square chamber is only fifteen feet across, but inside you feel shut off from the rest of the tower. The consistent moaning that echoes throughout all the previous rooms is notably absent from here. A multicolored portal swirls to life on the north wall.

This is the only room on the first floor of the Tower of Skulls that the characters can take a short rest in. The portal on the north wall transports characters out of the Tower of Skulls, sans some of their equipment (see **Leaving the Tower** at the beginning for details).

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 11** opens after a short rest has passed (about an hour). Alternately, if the characters entered that way, the door on the east wall to **area 4** opens via this same trigger.

11. Blast Furnace

The dryness and heat in the air of this room sucks the moisture from your mouth in an instant. Inside this square chamber, on the western wall, sits four ten foot tall furnaces made to resemble ornate iron ogres. The furnaces open at the belly of each ogre, which glows red hot through the bars on the hinged door. Soot and black dust cover the floor and walls of this otherwise unadorned room.

Anyone stepping or passing into a line extending straight out from each of the furnaces triggers a flaming gout, shooting a line of fire 25 feet long, blasting the wall opposite. Anyone caught in one of these lines must make a saving throw or suffer 4d10 fire damage (half on a successful save). The flames last for 1d4 rounds before the furnace goes out.

Characters running across the chamber trigger each of the furnaces, but forward momentum means they only suffer 2d10 fire damage from each blast, or none on a successful save. They must still save against each one however.

The ceiling is 10 feet tall in this chamber so it is possible to fly or climb over the flaming gouts from the furnaces. The furnaces themselves reach to the ceiling and are incredibly hot to the touch (2d10 fire damage from touching them, no save).

Doors: The door on the south wall to **area 12** and the door on the north wall to **area 9** opens after all four of the furnaces have been triggered at least once. The door on the east wall to **area 10** opens when any object is placed and incinerated inside the most northerly furnace on the wall.

12. Changing Cages

This room is littered with tall iron cages, about eight of them in total, each standing ten feet tall. None of the cages seem to be locked but they are all currently closed.

The cages in this room are used to transform intruders into mundane beasts. There is a powerful compulsion put on the cages as well. Any character in the room feels a strong urge to climb inside one of the cages. Resisting this urge requires a saving throw. On a failure, the character opens one of the unoccupied cages and climbs inside.

Once inside, the magic of the cage *polymorphs* the character into a random creature (saving throw negates the effect). If the save fails roll on the below table to see what type of creature the character is transformed into. Once the transformation is complete the cage door swings open.

1d8	Polymorph Results
1	Bat
2	Cat
3	Frog
4	Hawk
5	Owl
6	Rat
7	Raven
8	Snake

The *polymorph* lasts for 12 hours or until the effect is removed as per the spell.

Doors: The door on the east wall to **area 1** and the door on the north wall to **area 11** opens when one of the cage doors is closed and then opened again.

TOWER OF SKULLS 2ND LEVEL

13. Cauldrons of Mystery

This large, expansive room is barren of features except for large, black cauldrons suspended from the twenty-foot ceiling by great chains. You count eight of them, each of them five feet in diameter, five feet tall, and hanging six feet off the ground.

This room has eight large cauldrons, each with different contents. The cauldrons are labeled A through H on the map and are described below. They all share the following characteristics: five feet in diameter, five feet deep, and six feet off the ground.

Grabbing the side of the cauldron will cause it to become off balance, spilling the contents onto the unfortunate character. Characters with the ability of flight can fly in the ten-foot space between the top of the cauldron and the ceiling.

There are **2 bone golems** that maintain the liquids in the cauldrons and protect the area from intruders. They move from opposite corners to confront characters, hissing and preparing to strike.

Each of the cauldrons contains a different liquid as described below.

- A. This cauldron has light green liquid that steams slightly. It contains acid (anyone touching it takes 4d10 acid damage, spilling allows a saving throw for half).
- B. This cauldron contains a clear liquid. It is a rare water known as everclear, and characters that drink from it are healed 4 (1d6+1) hit points. Characters who are immersed in it are affected by the *heal* spell. The waters work in such a way only once for each character in the span of seven days.
- C. This cauldron is filled with red hot, molten lava. The heat can be felt from up to ten feet away. The lava deals 4d10 fire damage to anyone that touches it, and if the cauldron is spilled onto a target a saving throw is allowed for half damage.
- D. This cauldron contains a liquid that is incredibly dangerous. It is a large vat of poison, similar to shadow essence but it is considered contact poison (4d10 poison damage, saving throw for half) and it only lasts 1d4 minutes if taken out of the pool (coating a weapon with it will have this duration).
- E. The steaming liquid in this cauldron is similar to liquid nitrogen (freezes things on contact). Touching the liquid nitrogen deals 4d10 cold damage, and if the cauldron is spilled onto a target a saving throw is allowed for half damage.
- F. This cauldron contains a golden liquid that gives off a warm glow that can be felt from up to 5 feet away. Characters who drink from this pool gain 4 temporary points of Wisdom (lasting for 1d6 hours). Drinking from the pool more than once creates an overflow in the brain, reducing Intelligence by 4 points of temporarily (lasting 1d6 hours). The waters have no effect unless ingested.
- G. The silver liquid in this cauldron is the equivalent to a *potion of heroism* that lasts for 1d4 hours. Its effects do not stack with itself or a *potion of heroism*, but it can be used multiple times.

H. This cauldron contains simply cool water.

Tactics: The bone golems, though large, can move beneath the cauldrons without impediment by shifting their bones, giving them access to the whole room.

Doors: The door on the north wall to **area 14** opens when the chain is pulled down on cauldron A (can happen when it is spilled). The door on the south wall to **area 18** opens when the chain is pulled down on cauldron H. The door on the west wall to **area 17** opens when the bone golems are defeated.

14. Hall of the Ebony Armors

This long chamber contains eight magnificent suits of armor, four lined up on each of the east and west walls. The armors are black as night, complete with helmet, well-crafted sword, and ornate shield. Intricate designs of demonic trees are laid with great detail on the suits of armor, which stand as though waiting for an order.

These are the ebony armors of Lamotruu's personal bodyguards, now just empty shells of their previous existence. However, they are not without destructive merits themselves. There are **6 helmed horrors** that move to animation as the characters enter the room.

Tactics: The helmed horrors are animated by the will of Lamotruu and they fight ruthlessly against any intruders into this hall.

Treasure: The two suits at the most northerly part of the hall are not monsters. One is a nonmagical suit of plate armor, while the other is *demonic armor*.

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 15** and the door on the south wall to **area 13** open when the helmed horrors are defeated.

15. Gelatinous Haze

This square chamber is nearly thirty feet across and filled with a hazy mist that makes discerning details difficult. The only thing you see is a large golden key suspended in midair in the center of the room.

The mist obscures a **gelatinous cube** in the middle of this room, which holds the key in its bulk as a lure. It takes a Wisdom check to spot the cube. The ooze monster knows to wait for hapless people to simply walk into its bulk.

However, as the characters enter the room, the trap triggers and a greed-inducing gas quickly fills the chamber (near invisible in the misty haze). All characters must make saving throws. Those that fail are affixed by the golden key suspended in the center

of the room (actually in the middle of the gelatinous cube) and run towards it. Anyone that fails the saving throw receives no saving throw to avoid the gelatinous cube's engulfing mass. Any damage suffered breaks the greed-inducing gas effect.

The key itself, though nonmagical, is needed to exit to the next chamber.

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 16** and the door on the east wall to **area 14** open when the key is brought within 5 feet of them

16. Room of Respite II

This small square chamber is only twenty feet across, but inside you feel shut off from the rest of the tower. The consistent moaning that echoes throughout all the previous rooms is notably absent from here.

This is the only room on the second floor of the Tower of Skulls that the characters can take a rest in.

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 22**, the door on the south wall to **area 17**, and the door on the east wall to **area 15** open after a short rest has passed (about an hour).

17. Riddle Pillar of Brown Spring

The chamber beyond the doorway is a fifty foot diameter dome with a ceiling reaching at least forty feet high. The ground is covered in thick gooey mud that bubbles at irregular intervals. In the center of the room is a dark brown pillar, five feet in diameter and standing ten feet tall. Black arcane runes adorn its surface. The walls of the dome ooze more mud, black and brown, and great clouds of small buzzing insects move about the whole area.

This is one of the four Riddle Pillars in the Tower of Skulls that holds a keyskull. In order to gain access to the seventh level, characters must possess the four keyskulls and then pass through the Gate of Despair. It is also the only way to gain access to the second floor of the Tower of Skulls.

The entire room is considered difficult terrain because of the mud, which makes moving strenuous. In addition, it hides sinister guardians. Slithering beneath the mud are **3 black puddings**, who instinctively begin moving towards the characters stealthily.

As the characters enter, a **gwiddon** steps from behind the pillar in the center of the chamber and demands to know what the characters are doing in the Tower of Skulls. The gwiddon tries to keep the characters occupied while the black puddings slither into the best position to strike.



Tactics: Concealed beneath the mud, the black puddings are near impossible to spot. The gwiddon waits until the characters are surrounded by the oozy monsters before launching into attacks of her own.

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 22** opens when the gwiddon is defeated. The door on the south wall to **area 20** and the door on the east wall to **area 13** open when the black puddings are defeated. The door on the north wall to **area 16** opens when the holder of the Riddle Pillar's brown keyskull walks within 5 feet of it. The spiral staircase in the northwest corner of the room only reveals itself after the characters possess the keyskull. It leads up to the 3rd floor (**area 24**).

Riddle Pillar of Brown Spring

This is the Riddle Pillar of Brown Spring, and written on it in Abyssal is the following riddle:

*My tines are long
My tines are short
My tines end ere
My first report*

The answer to the riddle is lightning. In order to gain access to the hidden keyskull, the pillar must be struck by some kind of lightning attack, such as a *lightning bolt*, a *shocking grasp*, or something else the characters think of. Once the pillar is so struck, read the following.

Suddenly, a great gust of wind tears through the room, nearly knocking you off your feet. You watch in growing horror as the pillar you just struck begins to shake as large chunks of it tumble to the ground with a splash of mud. The west wind gusts around you, growing stronger with each successive blast. And then, all at once, the wind stops completely and the pillar crashes to the ground. Lying in the rubble is a small brown skull, marked with a single silver rune upon its head.

The brown skull is one of the four keyskulls. Any character who can read Abyssal knows that the rune is the symbol for the word spring.

18. Out of Body Experience

The chamber beyond this secret door is rectangular, thirty feet across and twenty feet wide. The floor slopes downward towards the middle, creating a large bowl-like depression in the middle of the room. And there, in the center, is a peculiar item. It appears as though someone took four massive, iron thrones and jammed them together, one facing in each of the cardinal directions. The seats of each of thrones are three feet off the ground and stretch ten feet into the air, at which point they meld together to form an iron pillar, which stretches up to the fifteen foot high ceiling. Cables, tubes, and wires surround and permeate all the thrones and the pillar.

This is a very peculiar room. No traps can be detected upon the four iron thrones, but they all glow brightly when subject to a *detect magic* spell.

If one character sits in any of the chairs, nothing happens. Make sure to note which one the character sat in (north, east, south, or west). If another character sits down, note which seat he sits in. If at any time two characters are sitting at polar opposites (north and south, east and west), then the trap is triggered.

Both the characters must make saving throws or be paralyzed for the duration of their "operation." Characters who succeed have the option of jumping out of their seat before something happens (unknown to the PC what is going to happen); if one character jumps out and the other character failed, then see below.

If either characters fail, or they don't jump out, then the pillar begins to make a groaning sound. Iron manacles clamp the character's hands and legs to the throne, and lightning leaps around the wires and cables. Within a round, the show ends - but the brains of the two characters have been switched around!

The effect is permanent, and can be reversed only through divine intervention or a *wish* spell. The characters retain their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, and gain the body of the other character (which includes the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores, and any other physical features). The brains have physically been transported from one character to another, and all spells currently prepared have been lost. All abilities are retained by the PC.

If only one character endures this process (the other one having leapt out of the throne), then his brain lands with a wet thud upon the opposite chair. The character is dead, having no brain to replace the lost one. Restoring a brain to the body requires intense surgery and at least 8 hours which must be completed before an attempt can be made to return the

character to life (except through divine intervention).

Doors: The door on the south wall leading to **area 19** and the door on the north wall leading to **area 13** open after the machine has been triggered (even if no brains were swapped).

19. Golden Pool of the Blade

A square chamber opens up to you, roughly twenty feet by twenty feet, lit only by a strangely luminescent pool of golden liquid in the center. It's difficult to tell how deep the pool's bottom reaches as the surface is constantly disturbed by small waves emanating from the center. There you can see the hilt and handle of a long sword, the blade plunged down into the golden water. A shining ruby in the pommel competes for light in the chamber.

Lamotruu imprisoned the soul of a paladin in the ruby long ago as a form of punishment. The ruby and the sword both glow as magic as does the golden water, which at its deepest in the center is only 3 feet deep.

Anyone that touches the water suffers from a dangerous disease that acts swiftly, reducing one of the character's ability scores (roll randomly) by 2d4. The afflicted character must make a saving throw each round to try and end the effect (three successes ends the disease, three failures causes the disease to last 7 days). Once a character has been subject to the water's disease they are immune to further effects from the golden water for 24 hours.

Treasure: The sword is a +2 *long sword* and the ruby in the pommel contains the trapped soul of Demetrius, a paladin defeated long ago. Anyone peering into the ruby can see the tiny form of the paladin in gilded armor pounding futilely on the inside of the gem. Destroying the ruby utterly destroys Demetrius' soul, a fact that anyone that makes an Intelligence check can deduce. How to free the paladin is up to the DM but may involve a quest outside the Tower of Skulls.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: AN ALLY IN THE RUBY
IF THE CHARACTERS ARE IN DESPERATE NEED OF SOME ASSISTANCE, OR ONE OF THEIR NUMBERS HAS FALLEN TO SOME TRAP IN THE TOWER OF SKULLS, YOU CAN USE THE TRAPPED PALADIN TO AUGMENT THE PARTY. ALLOW A MAGIC-USING CHARACTER A FEW SKILL CHECKS TO DETERMINE HOW TO RELEASE DEMETRIUS FROM THE RUBY, WHO SHOULD BE EQUAL TO THE LOWEST LEVEL CHARACTER IN THE PARTY. OR PERHAPS INSTEAD OF DEMETRIUS THE CHARACTERS FIND ANOTHER PLAYER'S PC THAT HAS SHOWN UP LATE TO THE GAME!

Doors: The door on the west wall leading to **area 20** and the door on the north wall leading to **area 18** open when someone touches the golden water.

20. Gnarled Guardians

A large room opens up before you fashioned to look like the center of a great looming forest. The walls are cleverly positioned with the trunks of gnarled black trees with grasping branches filled with gray, listless leaves. The ceiling, thirty feet above you, is fashioned like the canopy of the gray forest, covered in leaves that obscures whatever material the ceiling is made of. Several of the black trees stand curiously around the room, their branches swaying in some unfelt breeze. Upon each you see twisted, angry faces in the black bark composed of knots and holes.

When Lamotruu was a full demon lord with possession over an Abyssal layer, he had miles upon miles of forests that resembled this room. Now this is all that remains, and Lamotruu's anger and hatred over losing all of his domain has transferred to the guardians in this chamber. Inside is a single **black treant**, an evil plant creatures that feeds off blood and misery. It moves to attack as soon as a character enters.

Tactics: The black treant uses its animate trees power to compel two of the normal trees into creatures just like itself. It and its animated servants use straightforward tactics against characters, moving to slam either the strongest or anyone who seems to possess fire attacks.

Treasure: If defeated, a careful search of the black treant turns up a *luckstone* inside its hollow trunk.

Doors: The door to the north leading to **area 17** and the door to the east to **area 19** open when the black treant is defeated. The door on the west wall to **area 21** opens when fire is used on a carved rune upon a tree next to the door (the rune's meaning is lost to antiquity).

21. The Grinning Skull

A single feature dominates this square room. In the center stands a ten foot tall skeleton dressed as a jester, holding a scepter in one hand and a flute in the other. Upon the bone statue's head rests a jester's cap, but despite the intricate details in the statue's costume the skull is completely flat and blank.

This is the Grinning Skull, a **bone golem** possessed with random action. Upon entering the room roll on the below table to determine what the Grinning skull does first. Each action it takes lasts for 1 minute before it must roll again. The Grinning Skull's attitude and effective alignment is listed first followed by some suggestive details on how it acts.

1d10 Grinning Skull Aspect/Action

1	Hostile (Chaotic Evil); Attacks immediately anyone that has entered the room, cackling manically the entire time.
2	Hostile (Neutral Evil); Takes immediate offense to the characters intruding in the room and moves to attack, but can be talked down with a Charisma check.
3	Hostile (Lawful Evil); Immediately hates the characters but chooses to accuse them of some imaginary crime and stand trial over them rather than attack.
4	Indifferent (Chaotic Neutral); Begins to tell terrible jokes.
5	Indifferent (Neutral); Begins to speak loudly and vehemently on the benefits of balance in existence.
6	Indifferent (Lawful Neutral); Takes on a stern look and demands to know why the characters have broken a litany of imaginary laws.
7	Friendly (Chaotic Good); Talks animatedly about how freedom is not free, it's a choice for you and me.
8	Friendly (Neutral Good); Begins to chat about wine from all over the planes in a cultured, well-mannered tone.
9	Friendly (Lawful Good); Advises the characters on the tenements of a made-up knighthood that upholds truth, justice, and a patriotic way.
0	Inanimate; No actions.

Each time the Grinning Skull takes an action its face appears from the blankness to take on a frozen aspect related to its outlook (angry look for Hostile (Chaotic Evil), stern frown for Indifferent (Lawful Neutral), etc.). Each of the aspects of the Grinning Skull represents a different personality with distinct memories and thoughts.

Developments: Three of the Grinning Skull's aspects know something of interest to the party, but getting the information out of the random-acting golem might prove difficult. The Neutral Evil aspect knows that the secret to passing the pit in **area 22** is to trust in wisdom. The Lawful Neutral aspect knows that the safest path through the Hall of Weakness (**area 24**) is to listen to the pillars. The Chaotic Good aspect knows that the door to the "safe room" (**area 16**) can only be opened when the keyskull is brought close to it.

Doors: The door on the north wall to **area 22** and the door on the east wall to **area 20** open after 3 minutes have passed.

22. Wraith Stone

This expansive chamber is about 30 feet wide and 40 feet long. However, the deep shadows that seem to dwell within the corners make you doubt whether or not your estimate is accurate. In the center of the room, on a large pedestal, is a great black stone, about five feet in diameter. It pulses with a dark and eerie glow. In front of it rests a plaque, upon which something is written in crimson letters.

This is a strange item that Lamotruu discovered on one of his many pillages. The stone is a link to the Negative Energy Plane that draws upon a living body's life force to create wraiths.

The plaque in front of the stone reads the following in Abyssal – "TOUCH ME." The large black stone is a nefarious portal to the deepest reaches of the Negative Energy Plane. Doing as the plaque instructs drains the victim of 2d4 hit points permanently (saving throw for half, minimum 1), and each hit point drained creates a **wraith** immediately, which attacks on the next round. The drained character is stunned for 1d4 rounds, and any conjured wraiths concentrate their attacks on the stunned PC.

Doors: The door on the north wall to **area 23** and the door on the south wall to **area 21** open when the black stone is touched by a living creature. The door on the east wall to **area 17** opens when a living creature touches the plaque.

23. Rest of the Bone King

The smell of dust and decay lies heavy within this chamber, and as you glance around, you find that dust-covered cobwebs fill the corners and cracks. There is no light source within, forcing you to bring your torch within, illuminating the 20-foot wide, 40-foot long room. The only thing of note is the large stone sarcophagus at the opposite end of the chamber. It appears unremarkable in every way except for some ancient writing upon the lid.

This is the resting place of a creature, a great warrior and king that Lamotruu defeated. Instead of granting his opponent death, however, the nefarious demon lord brought him back into the clutches of undeath. Now, mockingly called the Bone King, he waits to be awakened.

On the Bone King's sarcophagus is written the following

inscription in Abyssal.

*Here lies the king of all that he saw
A world without chains, a land without walls
Now he sleeps in a timeless place
Waiting for the embrace of cold dark grace
Rise now, king, to claim what is yours
Upon every land, upon all the shores*

Anyone reading this inscription (out loud or not) summons the **Bone King** from his sarcophagus. He arises the round after the inscription is read, trying to catch the characters by surprise. On the same round four of the tombs on the walls burst open to reveal **4 wights** that join the fray.

WEIRD DAVE'S NOTEBOOK: HANDOUT POTENTIAL

IT IS GOING TO BE EASIER TO GET THE PLAYERS TO READ THE INSCRIPTION IF YOU HAND THEM A PIECE OF PAPER WITH THE RHYME UPON IT. THAT WAY YOU ARE GIVING THEM THE OPTION OF READING IT RATHER THAN ASKING THE LEADING QUESTION "DO YOU WANT TO READ THE INSCRIPTION?" CURIOUS PLAYERS ARE A DM'S BEST FRIEND!

Tactics: The Bone King is a unique undead. He was a powerful fighter before falling victim to the demon lord long ago, and still retains his impressive fighting ability. Lamotruu increased the Bone King's size and fighting prowess, making him a very deadly opponent to those who would dare read the inscription on his sarcophagus.

Treasure: The Bone King's tomb holds his prized possessions from his former life – a *figurine of the onyx dog* and a *ring of telekinesis*.

Doors: The door on the east wall leading to **area 16** and the door on the south wall to **area 22** only open when the Bone King is defeated in combat.

TOWER OF SKULLS 3RD LEVEL

24. Hall of Weakness

This long hallway is lined by large, stone pillars, seven on each side all the way down the thirty-five foot length of the room. At the end stands a large statue of a monstrous bipedal figure made up of hundreds of bones fused together, about 12 feet tall. Each of the stone pillars is engraved with a different rune.

Each of the stone pillars is inscribed with a different word. Starting on the left side and going north, the words are as follows: "ALL," "WHO," "HERE," "FOR," "STORY," "IS," and "AND."

On the opposite end, starting on the south end and moving north, the pillars read: "YE," "PASS," "WEEP," "MY," "TRULY," "SAD," and "TRAGIC."

When read from left to right, the pillars give the following riddle: "ALL YE WHO PASS HERE WEEP FOR MY STORY TRULY IS SAD AND TRAGIC." In order to bypass the creature, the characters must do as the riddle commands – weep.

The statue is a **bone golem** created to prevent access to further parts of the Tower of Skulls by weeding out the incompetent. If the characters answer the riddle written on the pillars by weeping the door on the east and west walls open. If the characters touch the golem at all, it attacks.

Doors: The door on the east wall to **area 31** and the door on the west wall to **area 25** both open when the riddle is solved (someone weeps).

25. Bone Grinder

Beyond the door stretches a narrow tunnel-like tube only five feet wide and five feet tall. The sound of pumping and grinding fills the air and steam belches forth at regular intervals into the tube in front of you, which you can see disappears behind a corner only five feet away.

Lamotruu enjoyed tinkering with some devices and imprisoned a group of gnomes to force them to build a machine that could grind up bones into powder. The gnomes were successful, more or less, and Lamotruu managed to smuggle most of the machine away when Orcus imprisoned him in the tower. This room contains a maze of tubes and tunnels that lead to grinding gears and pulverizing hammers meant to crush bones.

Navigating the tubes to an exit requires three successful Wisdom checks. On a failure, the characters must make saving throws to avoid being crushed by pistons for 4d6 bludgeoning damage (no damage on a successful save). The exit that the characters reach is determined randomly.

The tubes are made of a thin metal that resist cutting (each 5 foot section has 30 hp and resistance to piercing, bludgeoning, and slashing damage). Outside the Bone Grinder is a mess of belching steam, confusing pipes, and pumping pistons. Crawling around outside requires a saving throw each round to avoid either a jet of steam for 4d6 fire damage (save for half) or a chomping piston for 4d6 bludgeoning damage (save for half). Roll randomly to determine which hazard a crawling character faces each round. Navigating to one of the walls and then cutting into a tube that holds an exit requires 1d4 rounds to find.

Doors: Finding the doors is the most difficult part of the Bone Grinder. Once reached each door opens when someone approaches within 5 feet of it.

26. Carrion Drips

The smell of rotting meat fills this large chamber. The stone floor is slick with blood, which drips down at irregular intervals from the ceiling like a crimson rain. There, 30 feet up, hang dozens of bodies in various states of decay, each flayed of flesh and stripped to muscle and bone. A daemonic cacophony, like the chorus of unholy birds, fills the air.

Lamotruu held vrock in high regard in his Abyssal plane, sending great flocks of them out to feast on the carrion that dotted the landscape. Reduced now in power and influence, the demon lord was only able to retain the services of a handful of these creatures in their exile within the tower, keeping them happy with promises of fresh meat.

There are **2 vrock**s that keep to this room, drying out skinless victims from the ceiling and savoring the juices that run down to the floor. They move to attack anyone who enters, driven mad at the sight of fresher meat.

Tactics: The vrock try to focus their attacks on a single opponent if possible, targeting the least armored first. They fight with savage ferocity until death.

Doors: The doors on the north wall to **area 25** and the south wall to **area 27** open when the vrock are defeated.

27. Riddle Pillar of Red Summer

The chamber beyond the doorway is a fifty foot diameter dome with a ceiling reaching at least forty feet high. The floor is covered in small dunes of red sand, whipped about by a hot, dry wind that sucks the moisture from your lips. In the center of the room is a dark crimson pillar, five feet in diameter and standing ten feet tall. Black arcane runes adorn its surface. The walls and ceiling are golden and radiate intense heat causing sweat to bead on your foreheads.

This is one of the four pillars in the Tower of Skulls that holds one of the four keyskulls. In order to gain access to the seventh level, characters must possess the four keyskulls and then pass through the Gate of Despair. It is also the only way to enter the fourth level of the Tower of Skulls.

The red sand impedes movement – the entire area is considered difficult terrain. Entering the room alerts

the guardians, **4 mummies**, who move silently beneath the sand to engage the characters as they continue forward. The mummies each have a burrowing speed of 30 feet. Behind the Riddle Pillar stands a **gwiddon** that steps forward once the sand mummies reveal themselves.

Tactics: The mummies use their burrowing movement to sneak up on the characters, closing into melee as soon as possible, while the gwiddon uses her spells to hammer on the characters.

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 28** opens when the gwiddon is defeated. The door on the north wall to **area 26** opens when the mummies are defeated. The spiral staircase in the northeast corner of the room only reveals itself after the characters possess the keyskull. It leads up to the 4th floor (**area 36**).

Riddle Pillar of Red Summer

In the center of the room stands the Riddle Pillar of Red Summer, and written on it in Abyssal is the following riddle:

*I have a mouth, but cannot talk
I can run but never walk
I have a head, but never weep
I have a bed, yet never sleep*

The answer to the riddle is a river. In order to gain access to the hidden keystone, the pillar must be struck by some kind of running water for one round (not just water itself). Once the pillar is struck so, read the following.

Suddenly, a great gust of wind tears through the room, nearly knocking you off your feet. You watch in growing horror as the pillar you just struck begins to shake as large chunks of it fall to the ground with a crash. The dry, hot wind blows strongly around you, growing stronger with each successive gust. And then, all at once, the wind stops completely and the pillar crashes to the ground. Lying in the rubble is a small red skull marked with a single silver rune upon its head.

The red skull is one of the four keyskulls. Any character who can read Abyssal knows that the rune is the symbol for the word summer.

28. Night Worm Soil

An earthen smell is thick in the air in this massive, 50-foot long, 30-foot wide chamber. Peering into the darkness that permeates the room, the reason for the smell is evident – unlike the previous areas, the ground in this room appears to be freshly churned dirt.

The creature that dwells within this strange room is an abomination known as a **night worm** – a horrible undead beast similar to a purple worm. The creature keeps a chest of treasure hidden in its belly.

The dirt covers the entire room, and is 30 feet deep. Other than the fact that it is the home to an undead abomination, the dirt is normal in every respects.

Tactics: The night worm lies 10 feet underneath the surface, stretched out from one end of the room to the other and then back another 30 feet. Its head is on the eastern wall (right in front of the secret door) and its tail is on the western side, 30 feet away from the western wall. It rises to attack targets that enter the chamber.

Treasure: If the night worm is destroyed, the characters can split it open to reveal an iron chest. It is locked

(-20% open locks check) but not trapped. The chest contains the following items: *boots of flying*, *ring of fire resistance*, and *gauntlets of ogre power*.

Doors: The door on the east wall to **area 29** and the door on the west wall to **area 27** open when the night worm is defeated. The door on the north wall to **area 30** opens when the iron chest inside the night worm is opened.

29. Garden of Lamotruu

A pleasant aroma of flowers in bloom fills this octagonal chamber. Four large topiary statues depicting fierce bipedal dinosaurs with mouths filled with rows of painted petal teeth stand guard over a ten foot square patch of pristine garden in the center. A wire fence, only five feet tall, encircles the garden, within which you can see great multi-colored roses, drooping pink flowers, and narrow bushes bearing purple fruits amidst the greenery.

Lamotruu's gardens in his once grand palace were known throughout the Abyss for their dangerous beauty and tempting fruits. Since his fall at the hands of Orcus, the demon lord has had to reduce his once mighty gardens to only a handful of locations, this room being the greatest amongst them. The guardians of the garden, **2 shambling graveyards** in the form of topiary dinosaurs, do not activate unless someone disturbs the plants within the fenced garden.

The flowers in the garden smell divine and fill the room with an intoxicating scent. Each character entering the room must make a saving throw or suffer under the effects of the *confusion* spell, lasting for 1d4 minutes. Once a character succeeds on a saving throw against the scent they are immune to its effects for 24 hours.

Treasure: The fruit in the garden is edible as anyone with proficiency in Nature can identify, but each berry is subtly different. Some are covered in short hairs, some are thin skinned, some are round, some are ovoid, etc. Anyone eating a berry rolls on the below table to determine what effect they fall under.

1d10 Berry Effect

1	Character gains a +2 bonus to Strength for 1d4 hours.
2	Character gains a +2 bonus to Intelligence for 1d4 hours.
3	Character gains a +2 bonus to Charisma for 1d4 hours.
4	Character gains a +2 bonus to Wisdom for 1d4 hours.



5	Character gains a +2 bonus to Dexterity for 1d4 hours.
6	Character gains a +2 bonus to Constitution for 1d4 hours.
7	Character suffers -2 to Strength and Intelligence for 1d4 hours.
8	Character suffers -2 to Constitution and Charisma for 1d4 hours.
9	Character suffers -2 to Dexterity and Intelligence for 1d4 hours.
0	Roll again, except the duration lasts for 1d4 weeks. If you get this result again, roll again and the result is permanent.

Tactics: The shambling graveyards fight to the death against anyone who would dare touch one of the plants in the center garden. They do not utilize tactics very well, however.

30. Creeping Vines

Hanging vines of every shape obscure sight in this humid, jungle-like room. Something rustles in the thick forest causing the vines to shiver unnaturally.

While the demon lord did not create them, Lamotruu is known to have cultivated many species of assassin vines in his Abyssal lair. This chamber holds the prizes of his collection, **4 assassin vines** that cling to the 20 foot high ceiling.

The mass of vines makes movement difficult (treat this room as difficult terrain), though spending a round to hack away at a section clears that space up for 1 minute.

Tactics: The assassin vines wait for the characters to move in before they launch their assault. They try to immobilize targets as quickly as possible, focusing on characters with bladed weapons first, trying to drag them up to the ceiling.

Treasure: Hanging in the center of the room is the body of an adventurer moldering amongst the vines, a human male fighter who met his end at the hands of the assassin vines. In the fighter's pocket is a *horn of blasting* that did not help him out in the end.

Doors: The doors on the south wall to **area 28** and the north wall to **area 31** open when the assassin vines are defeated. The door on the east wall to **area 35** opens when the vines covering the wall around it are hacked away (which takes a single round with a slashing weapon).

31. Chest of the Chaos Pudding

This nondescript, twenty-five foot by fifteen foot chamber has only one item of note - a large, iron box in the center. It stands about five feet high, five feet wide, and five feet long. There is something written on the lid that you cannot see from your vantage point.

The chest is a container for a great chaotic slime, a primordial ancestor to a black pudding, that has been locked up for many centuries.

Written in Abyssal on top of the box is the following simple phrase - "DO NOT OPEN." Characters that do not open the chest do not face the challenge and do not gain the XP for defeating it.

If the chest is opened, pent up chaotic energy is released in a wild maelstrom of power. All within the room are affected just as if they were struck with a *wand of wonder*. The chest also releases the **black pudding**, which arises and attacks the characters the round after the chest is opened.

Treasure: If the black pudding is defeated and the chest is searched, the characters find a small cache of items at the bottom. The items are a *ring of protection* +1, an *amulet against scrying*, and a *dagger* +3. All of the items are coated in a thick, black slime exuded from the pent-up pudding (but otherwise unharmed).

Doors: The doors on the east wall to **area 31** and the south wall to **area 30** open when the chest is opened. The door to **area 34** opens when a piece of slime from the black pudding is placed against it.

32. Hang On

The chamber beyond this shadowed door is long, perhaps 30 feet, with a myriad of thin, sharp bone spikes on the east wall from floor to 20 foot high ceiling. Six great iron rungs hang from the west wall about 10 feet above the floor. A brass plaque bearing letters in the Abyssal language hangs on the north wall.

The bone spikes are incredibly sharp but hollow, which are set as they are to allow for poison to flow through the tip. Anyone breaking one of the spikes triggers the trap. The brass plaque on the north wall reads "HANG ON" in Abyssal.

This room has a powerful magical trap laid upon it. The first person that grabs on to one of the iron rungs on the west wall triggers a reverse gravity effect that turns the east wall into the "ground." Anyone not holding on to something (like an iron rung) plummets into the spikes, suffering falling damage as appropriate to

how far they fall along with 3d10 piercing damage from the spikes. The spikes also release their poison upon impact, which forces a victim to make a saving throw or suffer 5d6 poison damage.

After 1 minute the reverse gravity effect ends.

Doors: The doors on the south wall to **area 31** and the west wall to **area 25** open after the reverse gravity effect of the trap ends. The door on the east wall sits behind a clump of spikes and can only be opened by breaking off several of the surrounding bone spikes (which triggers the trap again).

33. Kennels of Death

The smell of dust and the weight of a thousand years hangs heavy in this large chamber. Setup along the north wall are a series of great cages, each 10 feet wide and 10 feet tall, made from the bones of hundreds of creatures fused together. A low growl echoes from the shadows of each of the cages, which are pierced only by a set of great ruby-red eyes.

Hell hounds are a common enough creature in the Abyss, but Lamotruu enjoyed the company of a different type of beast. He bred two-headed death dogs to serve as his hunting beasts, and they roamed the Bone Fields in great packs. This room holds **6 death dogs** within the cages, though none of the doors are locked.

Tactics: The death dogs leap forward to attack the characters. They retain their pack instincts and try to focus on a single opponent at a time rather than split their attention amongst many targets.

Treasure: Each of the death dogs wears two black leather collars studded with sparkling sapphires worth 250 gold pieces each.

Doors: The door on the south wall to **area 35** opens when the death dogs are defeated. The door on the west wall to **area 32** opens when one of the sapphires from the collars is pressed into a nearby socket (identifiable with an Intelligence check).

34. Room of Respite III

This small square chamber is only ten feet across, but inside you feel shut off from the rest of the tower. The consistent moaning that echoes throughout all the previous rooms is notably absent from here.

This is the only room on the third floor of the Tower of Skulls that the characters can take a short rest in.

Doors: The door on the west wall to **area 31** and the door on the east wall to **area 35** open after a short rest has passed (about an hour).

35. Hanging Hags

The predominant feature in this large chamber are the great number of chains that hang from the ceiling. The chains vary in length, from about a foot off the ground to about 4 feet off the ground. You feel a warm breeze against your exposed skin, which causes the chains in the room to rattle, making conversation difficult. You also notice that the ceiling is higher than normal, stretching up 40 feet.

Lamotruu bound three creatures into this room, crones who had displeased him. For a great number of centuries the hags (**3 wights**) in this chamber – named Greta, Ingrid, and Haska – have served their demon lord master against their will. The chains that hang from the ceiling serve as their prison, but since Orcus cast Lamotruu out of the Abyss and rooted the Tower of Skulls in the Prime Plane, the hags have gone insane.

This room has the following special trait.

Hanging chains: The chains that hang in this chamber impede movement (consider the entire room to be difficult terrain). The chains can be climbed with a Strength check or used as a weapon (the chains are considered improvised weapons, have a reach of 10 feet, and deal 2d6 plus Strength modifier bludgeoning damage if they hit). A target can be restrained in the chains with an opposed Dexterity check as an action, and can be freed with a Strength or Dexterity check as an action.

Tactics: The three hag wights use all of their available powers to try and destroy intruders. They cackle as they attack, promising to use the bodies of their victims as an offering to Lamotruu to restore their good graces with the demon lord.

Treasure: Each of the three wights keeps a small trinket on their person that they use as a worry stone, rubbing it for good luck at all times. Greta carries a *gem of seeing*, Ingrid holds a *brooch of shielding* (protects against *magic missile* spells), and Haska has an *elemental gem* (can be crushed to summon an 8 HD fire elemental for 1 hour).

Doors: Three of the doors leading out of this room (the door on the north to **area 33**, the doors on the west to **area 30**, and the door on the south to **area 29**) open when a hanging chain nearby the doors is pulled. The door on the west wall to **area 34** opens when the hags are defeated.

TOWER OF SKULLS 4TH LEVEL

36. Last Skull of the Graveseers

A broad stepped pyramid dominates the center of this large square room. The pyramid appears to be made of polished obsidian, reflecting the dim light from torches that spring to life along the walls. The pyramid's steps climb up to a height of 30 feet, but what sits at the flat top you cannot see.

Once long ago, Lamotruu was advised by a cabal of wicked warlocks known as the Graveseers. They owed absolute fealty to the demon lord, but over time Lamotruu came to trust them less and less, until one day in a fit of paranoid rage he had the entire cabal wiped out. He kept the skulls of the warlocks as trinkets, which still held the unhinged mind of its once living possessor. This room contains the only Graveseer skull in the tower, though what happened to the others is a mystery.

The pyramid radiates a faint aura of divination magic, and if the characters climb them (or fly above them), a harsh whisper echoes out from the dais at the top – “Who dares disturb the slumber of Kravikovic, Graveseer of Lamotruu?”

At the top of dais stands a squat pillar, only 5 feet tall, upon which rests a black velvet pillow. Resting on the pillow is the pale yellowed skull of a human with green fire burning in its eye sockets. This is all that remains of Kravikovic the warlock, and he is quite lonely.

Doors: Kravikovic is the only one that can command either of the doors to open (the door to the north leading to **area 37** and the door to the east to **area 42**).

37. The Black Graveyard

The stench of death and decay fills this chamber, which slopes downward from the southern wall to the northern wall. Churned black dirt fills the ground, loamy and soft beneath your feet, and something begins to stir beneath the surface. Several hands burst forth from the ground, pale and bloated, clawing up from hastily dug graves all around you.

Many people have died in the Tower of Skulls over the years and across the Prime Material Plane, and most of their bodies have come to the Black Graveyard. Here they return to attack the living intruders, rising as **6 wights** all around the area. The wights are covered in corpse flowers - a pale yellow flower on a black vine wrapped around their bodies.

NPC Profile: Kravikovic, Graveseer of Lamotruu

Perhaps the most gifted warlocks of the Graveseer cabal, Kravikovic devoted his life to the whims of Lamotruu. When the demon lord's paranoia got all of the warlocks killed, it was Kravikovic's foresight that enchanted their skulls with their personalities and memories, which he saw as one potential outcome. Unfortunately, with the Doomseers no longer advising him, Lamotruu fell victim to Orcus' schemes and was imprisoned within the Tower of Skulls. Kravikovic swears he saw this coming but the demon lord would not listen, instead interring him atop an obsidian pyramid to taunt travelers and adventurers who had made it to the fourth level.

Kravikovic is insane but knows a good deal about the layout of the Tower of Skulls and the history of Lamotruu and Orcus. He speaks in a grating whisper and laughs at odd intervals. His skull is impervious to damage from anything less than a demon lord at this point, and he physically cannot be transported out of this room. If the characters speak politely Kravikovic responds in kind, for at least a little while.

Kravikovic craves knowledge as he can no longer see, physically or through divine magic, the world outside the Tower of Skulls. He relishes stories about death, decay, and suffering, and may be willing to trade opening a door for just such a tale.

Tactics: The wights require one round to climb out of the ground, lurching forward to attack immediately after. They fight until slain and do not back down under any circumstances.

Doors: The doors on the north wall to **area 38** and the south wall to **area 36** open when all of the wights are defeated. The door on the east wall to **area 40** opens when one of the flower petals is pressed against a panel next to it (the panel has a carved image of a corpse flower).

38. Fountain of Many Colors

The sound of splashing water greets your ears as you gaze into this room. A small flight of stairs broadens and leads down to an expansive chamber, somewhat hexagonal in shape. In the center of the room is a large pillar, upon which are seven sculpted skulls. A constant flow of water goes from each of the skull's mouths to a grate on the floor. Each head spews a different color water: red, green, indigo, orange, violet, blue, and yellow. Surrounding the pillar in the middle is a small pool, within which resides swirling, multi-colored water.

Each of the different colored liquids provide a different beneficial effect (described below) once per character per 24 hour period. The chromatic pool in the center, however, is a volatile mixture that can cause various ill effects.

Drinking from one of the colored water spouts has the following beneficial effect. Even if the effect is not applicable (for example, if a character is at full hit points and drinks from the red spout) the character still cannot gain any further benefit from that spout for 24 hours.

Color	Effect
Red	Heals 4d10 hp
Green	Removes poisoned condition
Indigo	Removes all exhaustion levels
Orange	Regenerates missing limbs if immersed for 1d6 rounds
Violet	+4 bonus to Constitution saves for 1 hour
Blue	Cures blindness and deafness
Yellow	Cures diseases

The multi-colored liquid in the center pool is a toxic cocktail of random effects, however. If anyone drinks or touches the multi-colored liquid with bare flesh, roll 1d4+1 to determine how many colored effects they suffer and then roll 1d8 on the below table to determine the results.



1d8	Effect
1	Saving throw or suffer 4d10 psychic damage
2	Saving throw or suffer 3d6 poison damage
3	Saving throw or suffer from the <i>confusion</i> spell for 1d6 hours
4	Saving throw or have a limb wither and fall off (roll randomly for the limb, arms and legs only)
5	Saving throw or be turned to stone
6	Saving throw or be blind and deaf for 1d6 hours
7	Saving throw or lose 2d4 points from a random ability score lasting 24 hours
8	No effect

The waters gain their powers by cycling through the fountain; any water removed from the fountain immediately loses its magic.

Doors: The doors on the east wall to **area 39** and the south wall to **area 37** open when they are splashed with liquid from the multi-colored pool.

39. Shadow of the Great Mushroom

A titanic mushroom, easily reaching up to the fifty foot high ceiling, dominates this great octagonal chamber. The cap of the mushroom sits over the entire room, its massive shadow falling over the dirt-filled ground. The center stalk of the mushroom is pale white and covered in black patches of fungus. Dancing around the base, howling in some debased foreign language, are a dozen squat mushroom men wielding spears. From the huge cap above a white ball plummets to the ground, sits and quivers for a moment, and then bursts in a shower of black spores. The mushroom men, also covered in patches of black fungus, seem to revel in this moment.

Lamotruu was fond of corrupting mushroom men across the planes and converting them to his worship, using them as debased cultists where it was convenient. In this regard he clashed with another demon lord known as the Lady of Fungi, though the two never came to open warfare.

A tribe of **12 demonic mushroom men** dance and cavort around the base of the Great Mushroom, which they view as a living extension of Lamotruu. They speak no known language but gibber to themselves in their curious tongue. They see any travelers who are not covered in black fungus as intruders into their sacred land and attack immediately. The Great Mushroom assists by dropping spore bombs.

Tactics: The demonic mushroom men shout strange things as they rush to confront and kill the intruders. If anyone shows a sign of being infected with black fungus rot (see below), they do their best to keep anyone from helping the victim, but they do not attack the victim. To see someone suffer and die from the insidious extraplanar disease is a great sight to them.

Once every 3 rounds, a spore bomb drops from the Great Mushroom. It tries to drop the spore bomb to be within 10 feet of the most number of characters. It can target a character as well (who must make a saving throw or suffer 4d6 bludgeoning damage, half damage on a successful save). At the end of the round in which the spore bomb drops it erupts and sends black fungus spores flying into the air 10 feet from it on all sides. Anyone caught in this radius must succeed on a saving throw or contract black fungus rot, an insidious disease.

Black Fungus Rot

Once someone is infected with black fungus rot, it takes 1d10 minutes for the quick-acting disease to show the first round of symptoms. Black patches appear beneath the skin around the arms, legs, and abdomen, and the victim loses 4 points of Constitution and have their movement speed reduced in half. The second round of symptoms occur 1d10 minutes later as the black patches burst from the skin, causing 5d10 poison damage and inflicting -4 on all attack rolls and saving throws. The last round of symptoms occurs 1d10 minutes after that and kills the victim as the black fungus takes over the body and putrefies the insides.

Doors: All of the doors leading out of this room are opened by touching a piece of the Great Mushroom to it. There is a door on the west wall to **area 38**, a door on the southwest wall to **area 40**, a door on the south wall to **area 41**, a door on the east wall to **area 44**, and a door on the northeast wall to **area 45**.

40. Slime Trail

A strange trail of thick yellow slime winds its way down the length of this L-shaped chamber. It leads from the wall in the southwest corner to the other end in the northeast corner.

This room is used by a cleansing worm developed by Lamotruu to keep the Tower of Skulls tidy. The room itself contains only the slime trail of the worm, which is not located here (the cleansing worms exist in the spaces between the levels). There is no threat in this room. The slime is nonmagical, clear, and a bit cold to the touch. It dissolves bones eventually but not quickly enough to pose a threat to any sentient or animated creature.

Doors: The door on the northeast wall to **area 39** and the door on the southwest wall to **area 37** open when someone touches the walls with a bit of the slime from the floor.

41. Riddle Pillar of Black Autumn

The chamber beyond the doorway is a fifty foot diameter dome with a ceiling reaching at least forty feet high. Four black trees, their gnarled branches devoid of leaves, stand vigilant amongst piles of dead brush and black leaves. In the center of the room is an ebony pillar, five feet in diameter and standing ten feet tall. Red arcane runes adorn its surface. The walls and ceiling are ashen gray and resemble a great gathering of angry storm clouds on the precipice of releasing a torrential rain.

This is one of the four pillars in the Tower of Skulls that holds one of the four keyskulls. In order to gain access

to the sixth level, characters must possess the four keyskulls and then pass through the Gate of Despair (**area 49**). Before the characters can get to the pillar, however, they must deal with the guardians.

The branches of the dead trees hide **3 flameskulls**, lost souls forever bound to the whims of Lamotruu. They are commanded by a **gwiddon** who appears from behind the Riddle Pillar to direct the attacks of the flameskulls. Because of the brush and leaves piling the ground the entire room is considered to be difficult terrain.

Tactics: The flameskulls move to engage the characters quickly as the gwiddon steps forward and hurls spells their way. The flameskulls move about as much as they can, unimpeded by the difficult terrain, while the gwiddon focuses on spellcasters.

Doors: The doors on the north wall to **area 39**, on the east wall to **area 44**, and on the south wall to **area 42** open when the gwiddon and the flameskulls are defeated. In addition, once the Riddle Pillar crumbles a spiral staircase descends up from the ceiling leading to level five (**area 47**).

Riddle Pillar of Black Autumn

In the center of the room stands the Riddle Pillar of Black Autumn, upon which is written in Abyssal the following riddle:

*It comes in on little cat's feet
Is neither sour nor sweet
Hovers in the air
And then is not there*

The answer to the riddle is fog or mist. In order to gain access to the hidden keyskull, the pillar must come in contact with some form of fog or mist. The best way to do this is to use the scroll of obscuring mist from area 7 or to use a horn of fog. Once the pillar is struck so, read the following.

Suddenly, a great gust of wind tears through the room, nearly knocking you off your feet. You watch in growing horror as the pillar you just struck begins to shake as large chunks of it fall to the ground with a crash. The dry, hot wind blows strongly around you, growing stronger with each successive gust. And then, all at once, the wind stops completely and the pillar crashes to the ground. Lying in the rubble is a small black skull, marked with a single silver rune upon its head.

The black skull is one of the four keyskulls needed to open the Gate of Despair (**area 49**). Any character who can read Abyssal knows that the rune is the symbol for the word autumn.

42. Mirror of Prisons

This long chamber has a single feature – a floor to ceiling reflective mirror that occupies the entirety of the south wall. As you look, shadowy figures appear in the mirror as if they are behind you, but you look and see no one. The figures seem to exist only in the mirror.

This room contains a permanent version of a *mirror of life trapping* that Lamotruu was fond of using to imprison foes that proved too difficult or too valuable to kill. It currently holds 8 occupants, which are listed below. Each prisoner occupies a 5 foot section of the mirror that cannot cross nor see anything but what is in front of the mirror.

Developments: Communication with any of the prisoners must be done via some form of magical telepathy – voices and sounds do not penetrate the mirror's prison walls. If contact is established with an occupant, they plead for release. They all know that the mirror is controlled via a command word, though the only person who knows the command word is Kravikovik the Graveseer (in **area 36**).

What they don't know is that the command word simply swaps out a prisoner for another – whomever happens to be standing closest to the mirror when the command word is spoken (the speaker of the command word may be the one!). If an evil creature is released they do all in their power to remain outside and free, but a neutral creature can be convinced with diplomacy attempts. A good creature likely takes their place once they realize the awful price.

- Sophyriel, a powerful female angel (LG)
- Oloris Greeneye, an elven archer (CG)
- Lucas, a wicked vampire nobleman (LE)
- Vaarog, a hill giant (CE)
- Nargul Blacktooth, a female orc shaman (CE)
- Ranahr, a slaad (CN)
- Xaeden, a male human necromancer (N)
- Bloodstrike, a bone devil commander (LE)

Doors: All of the doors in this room open after a round of direct mental command. All of the prisoners know this information, though few would willingly give it up without something in return.

43. Curtains of the Beyond

A small chamber, only 15 feet wide and 15 feet long, stands bare before you. An ornate and large curtain hangs on the wall opposite to the door you just came through, depicting a beautiful night sky with twinkling stars. You cannot see what is beyond the curtain, which appears to be made of a heavy cloth.

Beyond the curtains lies a chamber that resembles the great space above the planet. The walls are painted black and there is no gravity (though there is still atmosphere in this room), so the characters can move in three dimensions as if they were underwater. The ceiling stretches down 30 feet and the ceiling climbs 30 feet from the 10 foot middle section. Four curtains hang in the middle section, one on each of the four cardinal directions.

Lamotruu used rooms such as these to please the vrock demons he was so fond of. "Swimming" around in the air are **2 vrock**s. They move to attack as soon as a character opens a curtain.

The northern alcove in this room holds the door to **area 44** and the western alcove holds the door to **area 42**. Both of these are normal with nothing unusual about them (the anti-gravity effect does not extend to the alcoves). The eastern alcove resembles the other two, but if anyone touches the wall they trigger a lightning trap (5d6 lightning damage, saving throw for half).

The curtain on the south wall is also trapped. Anyone that touches the curtain triggers the trap, which has the curtain reaching out to suffocate the character! The victim must make a saving throw or become restrained and choked, and then must make saving throws each round. After three failures the victim falls unconscious and then is suffocated to death the next round. Characters in the grips of the curtain can try a Strength check to break free, or the curtain can be cut with a slashing weapon. The curtain has an AC of 16 and 50 hit points. If it is reduced to 0 or less it releases any suffocating targets immediately. Behind it is only a blank wall.

Tactics: The vrock's focus their attacks on the least armored and most wounded targets. They are smart enough to know what the curtain on the south wall can do, so if they find an opportunity one of them tries to push a character into the curtain. They do not attack someone in the curtain, instead focusing on people trying to help them.

Doors: The doors on the north wall to **area 44** and the west wall to **area 42** open with a simple mechanical trigger discovered after a round of searching the wall.

44. Hall of Nightmares

A grand hall opens up before you, though its exact dimensions and features are obscured by a shimmering haze that warps and distorts your vision along with deep shadows that stretch across the floor and walls. Suddenly the sound of clashing blades and the roar of dozens of monsters ring out!

Lamotruu was fascinated by illusions, specifically by the power of the *weird* spell and the effects it could have on mortal minds. This room is dedicated to experiments of that nature. Every character in the room must make a saving throw or suffer a powerful illusion inflicting their worst fears onto them. Victims suffer 4d10 points of mental damage each round, but they receive a new saving throw at the end of the round to try and end the effect.

Unfortunately, illusory monsters are not the only ones that lurk in this chamber. As the effects of the illusory nightmares overtake the party, a gang of **4 wraiths** slink out of the shadows and attack, doing their best to keep themselves hidden before each strike.

Tactics: The wraiths focus on any target who seems to be suffering from the nightmare effect first. They hide in the shadows as best they can, striking and then merging back again as quickly as possible.

Doors: The doors on the west wall to **area 41** and on the north wall to **area 46** open after the wraiths have been destroyed. The door on the south wall to **area 43** opens when a mechanical trigger is flipped, discoverable after a round of searching the wall. The door on the west wall to **area 39** opens when someone not suffering the *weird* effect comes within 5 feet of it.

45. Room of Respite IV

This small square chamber is only 20 feet across, but inside you feel shut off from the rest of the tower. The consistent moaning that echoes throughout all the previous rooms is notably absent from here.

This is the only room on the fourth floor of the Tower of Skulls that the characters can take a short rest in.

Doors: The door on the southwest wall to **area 39** and the door on the east wall to **area 36** open after a short rest has passed (about an hour).

46. Ode to the Necromancers

Tapestries decorate the walls of this room. Although they may once have been brilliant in hue, they now hang in graying tatters. Despite the damage of time and neglect, you can perceive once-grand images of wizards' towers, necromantic arts, and symbols of magic and death. The tapestry in the best condition bulges out weirdly, as though someone stands behind it. That tapestry depicts a bald woman in splendid black robes grasping a staff made of bone topped with a leering skull.

The tapestries depict worshippers of Lamotruu, necromancers of great skill and magical expertise, at the height of their respective powers. Time has not been kind to the depictions, except to the one of the bald woman. This is Laxaura the Harvester, a grand necromancer from an age long ago (recognized with an Intelligence check).

Behind the curtain stands a **bone golem** hunched down to conceal its height. It moves quickly to attack anyone that disturbs any of the tapestries by ancient decree of Lamotruu.

Tactics: The bone golem targets the person who disturbed the tapestries first and foremost. Once riled, however, it fights until destroyed.

Treasure: The spine of the bone golem is actually a magical item, recognizable from its intricate runes. If removed, the golem's head becomes the top of the staff and it resembles the one held by Laxaura in the tapestry. It is a *staff of withering*.

Doors: The door on the south wall to **area 44** opens when the bone golem is defeated. The door on the west wall to **area 45** opens when the *staff of necromancy* is touched to it.

NPC Profile: Lendor and Deviah Al'Tanariv, Ghost Servants of Lamotruu

The story of Lendor and Deviah Al'Tanariv began long ago, when Lendor set out from his temple to rid the world of a great evil that had begun festering in the north. He was a paladin of a righteous god, and gathered together a loyal band of fellow adventurers to help him on his quest. They went out to defeat the necromancer known as the Skull Father, who had gathered a great host of skeletons under his banner to march on the lands of the living.

With sword and spell, Lendor and his companions fought their way into the Skull Father's fortress. There, they found Deviah, a woman skilled in the arts of necromancy whom the Skull Father was planning on raising as a possible heir. But Deviah had no evil in her heart, and sensing this Lendor and his band released her from the clutches of the evil necromancer. Deviah and Lendor fell in love that day, and together they smashed the power of the Skull Father.

Or so they thought. The Skull Father was merely an apparition of Lamotruu, an extension of his will that he was able to extend outside the Tower of Skulls. His puppet defeated, Lamotruu raged, and Lendor and Deviah knew that their quest was not at an end. They sought out the Tower of Skulls for many years, during which time they married and went on many adventures. Eventually their searching brought them to the tower itself. In they went, but the demon lord was too much for them. They died, and Lamotruu grasped their souls and bound their bodies to the Throne of Bloodrose to eternally serve him and the defense of the Tower of Skulls.

TOWER OF SKULLS 5TH LEVEL

47. Bloodrose Entrance

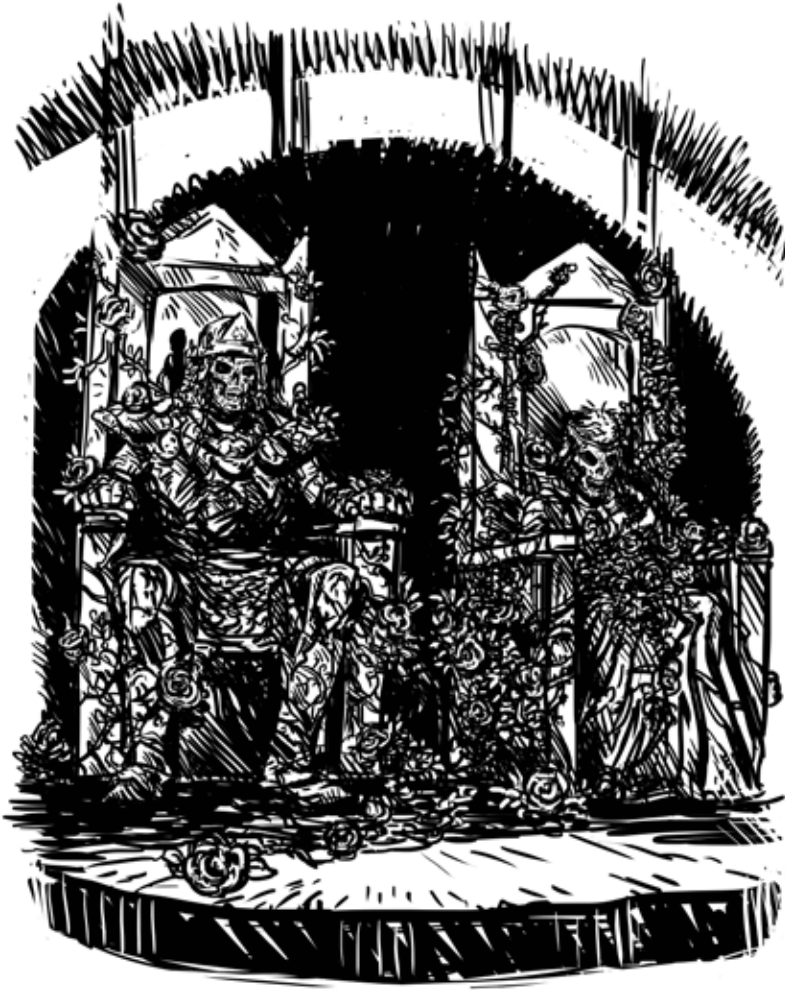
The stairs up further into the Tower of Skulls terminate in a square chamber devoid of any furnishings. However, the north wall holds a grand set of ornate double iron doors adorned with bones intertwined with intricately carved rose stems and flowers. In the center of the doors squats a great skull, twice as large as a human, with more roses woven in and around the eye sockets and open jaws.

The 5th level of the Tower of Skulls is reserved for Lamotruu's greatest servants. They were once a paladin and necromancer come to slay the demon

lord and destroy the tower, but they failed utterly and Lamotruu used what last vestige he had of his power to turn them into formidable guardians of the last level.

There is no trap or creature in this chamber, however.

Door: The only door on the north wall to **area 48** opens when pushed.



48. Throne of Bloodrose

A huge chamber stretches out before you, easily 80 feet to a side with a vaulted ceiling that stretches up 60 feet. Six pillars constructed out of fused bones line a grand path made of a blood red carpet leading up to a broad dais at the far end of the hall. Small steps ascend to the dais' top where upon rests two fantastically ornate thrones, each covered in thick rose vines that do nothing to hide the sparkling rubies and velvet cushions. Upon each throne sits a body, a man in dulled silver armor on the left and a woman in moldering black robes on the right. Their skin has been withered and dried and no life sparks in their hollow eyes. Like the rest of thrones the bodies are entwined in the roses. Squatting in front of the dais are two hunched figures made of fused bones, their empty eye sockets staring malevolently towards you. A chill runs down your spine as two laughs echo around the chamber – one a harsh, guttural below, the other a shrill cackle.

This is the Throne of Bloodrose, which serves as the resident for one of the two heroes who entered the Tower of Skulls to banish the demon lord Lamotruu. Unfortunately, they failed and now they are cursed to guard the entrance to the highest level of the tower.

The harsh laughing is from the two cursed heroes, **Lendor Al'Tanariv** and **Deviah Al'Tanariv**, now formidable foes filled with hate and malice (they are 8 HD wraiths with 64 hp each). They materialize from out of the throne itself, and as they do the **2 bone golems** rise to move forward as well.

The Throne of Bloodrose itself is a strange item. If a living creature sits in the cursed throne, they are jolted with a powerful shot of negative energy, suffering 4d8 necrotic damage. The victim must make a saving throw or have their hit point maximum reduced by the amount of damage taken. The lost hit points are recovered after resting for 8 or more hours.

Tactics: Lendor and Deviah work together as much as possible to take down the biggest threats.

The most effective way to defeat the ghosts is to attack their physical remains on the Throne of Bloodrose. Each body suffers only half damage from all effects, AC 16, and 15 hit points. Once a body is reduced to half hit points or less, the corresponding wraith becomes enraged, gaining +4 on attacks but all attacks against it have +4 as well. Once a body is destroyed, the wraith is stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Treasure: Beneath the Throne of Bloodrose, in a secret compartment that is not locked, the characters find a removable chest. Within the chest are the following items that once belonged to Lendor and Deviah Al'Tanariv: *flaming long sword* +3, *ring mail* +3, *wand of fear*, and *cloak of protection* +3.

Door: The doors on the north wall to **area 49** and on the south wall to **area 47** open when the physical bodies of Lendor and Deviah are reduced to 0 hit points.

49. Gate of Despair

At the end of this square room stands a large, wrought-iron gate. The bars of the gate are spaced so closely that your gaze cannot penetrate the blackness beyond it. There is no handle or lock that you can see, only a large, central, flat piece of metal, with four indentations – one on the top, one on the bottom, and one on each side. They are round in shape. The indentations are surrounding the image of a leering skull, staring at you with soulless eyes.

The four indentations are meant to house the four key skulls gathered from the Riddle Pillars in the tower. They must be placed in sequence, though where the first one is placed is irrelevant. The sequence is – white, brown, red, black, signifying the cycle of the seasons.

Placing them in an incorrect sequence elicits a blast of negative energy that washes over the entire. Everyone in the chamber suffers 4d8 necrotic damage and must make a saving throw. On a failure, the character's maximum hit points are reduced by the damage taken. This effect lasts until the character rests for 8 or more hours. Any creature that is killed by this effect disintegrates and becomes absorbed into the Tower of Skulls.

Door: Once the four keyskulls are placed in the correct sequence, the gate lets out a grinding sound and swings open slowly. Into the darkness, the hallway spirals up sharp steps towards **area 50A**.

TOWER OF SKULLS 6TH LEVEL

50. Bone Fields of Lamotruu

The spiraling ramp leads you into a massive hall in what must be the top of the Tower of Skulls. The ceiling is domed, and hanging from it are dozens upon dozens of skeletons. Some humanoid, but most of are unrecognizable – beasts on six legs or more, giants, horned demons, and so many others. All of the eye sockets in the skulls are lit with dancing green fire that casts an eerie light throughout the hall. The floor is covered with shards of broken bones, yellowed, though none of the hanging skeletons seem to be missing pieces that you can see. In the center of the chamber, in what must be the center of this top level of the tower, a squat black stone ziggurat rises up from the piles of surrounding bones, about ten feet tall. You can see that this massive area continues on to the left, right, and behind the stone ziggurat, all of it covered in bone shards.

This room has become the home of the deposed demon lord Lamotruu and it has come to resemble the imprisoned lord's former Abyssal realm (which was also known as the Bone Fields). As the characters enter, Lamotruu calls out to them from his position hidden in the ceiling (he blends in with the other bones to become virtually invisible) – his voice is grating and harsh but he is curious to find out more about the intruders that have come so far. Lamotruu does not hide his predicament nor his anger over being forced to languish for eternity on the Prime Material Plane by his archrival, Orcus. He reveals as much about his background and the tower itself as the characters are willing to listen.

The Bone Fields are divided into five sections, labeled A, B, C, D, and E. The characters arrive from **area 49** in area A.

NPC Profile: Lamotruu, Lord of the Bone Fields

Lamotruu was never a mentally stable creature, and his Abyssal realm was host to all manner of monstrous abominations fusing grave dirt with bones to suit his unearthly desires. He held many titles – Lord of the Bone Fields, Master of Graves, the Unearthen One, the Skull Thorn King, and a host of others. His realm was a place of suffering and torment, where the very ground was a weapon that rose up to serve its master's chaotic and wild whims.

Centuries being trapped in the Tower of Skulls has not been kind to Lamotruu's state of wellbeing, and he suffers from wild mood swings. He's curious about the affairs of the Abyss and eager to hear everything he can, though any mention of his hated foe Orcus sends him into a primordial rage. He has a fondness for death and rebirth and a fascination with plants that can feed off the flesh of the dead, leaving only bones.

Physically, Lamotruu appears a tall humanoid, about 10 feet tall, with gaunt white skin stretched so thin over his frame the outline of his bones can be seen. On his skull and several places around his body unusual spurs protrude through the skin, and rings of black razor thorn encircle parts of his arms and legs. His tongue is a hideous purple thing able to move out of his mouth at great lengths. Lamotruu is fond of letting his tongue curl around his head and body while he communicates telepathically with creatures. His most prized possession is the Staff of Black Thorns which never leaves his hands.

A – The Entryway

The area the characters enter in is filled with bone shards. Moving in the area faster than half speed forces a saving throw, with several of the dangerous bone splinters lodging into flesh on a failure. The character must then make a saving throw as the slivers travel through the body and seek out the heart – on a success the slivers are forcibly ejected by the character. A failure means the heart is pierced and the character dies in 1d4 rounds.

B – The Lord's Lounge

The black stone ziggurat in the center is the platform upon which Lamotruu spends most of his time. When the characters enter the demon lord is hiding in the ceiling, but eventually he comes down and reveals himself in all of his glory. The ziggurat is 10 feet tall.



C – Puppet Show

The bone shards of area A give way to smooth stone in the eastern section of the Bone Fields which contains a variety of skeletons dressed in moldering garb propped up by stiff black thorns. Each of the dozen unanimated skeletons was once an adventurer who died exploring the Tower of Skulls, but now they are puppet playthings of Lamotruu. The demon lord can animate them at will and uses them to make a point to the characters about how dangerous he is (the skeletons pose no threat and the weapons they wield are wooden).

D – Workshop

The western section of the Bone Fields is where Lamotruu creates new creatures to amuse himself and restock the lower levels of the tower. Bones and skulls lay in great heaps around the area along with chunks of metal and piles of black dirt. A furnace sits against the north wall, the iron door closed to keep the flames inside. The passage to **area 51** to destroy the Tower of Skulls is through the furnace, which requires a character to pass through and take 6d6 fire damage, saving throw for half. Noticing the secret passage in the furnace requires looking and a 1 in 6 chance.

E – The Treasure Pile

Beyond the stone ziggurat in the center lay piles of glittering coins and gemstones. People who die inside the Tower of Skulls or are unlucky when they leave through one of the portals have their magical gear transported to this section. The amount of magic contained in this section should be enough to tempt even the most equipped adventurer. On a golden pedestal several feet high sits an orb filled with swirling prismatic fog. This is the Globe of Flight, and is the safest way out of the Tower of Skulls for any character. Using the Globe of Flight requires only a touch and a thought to a place, and unless a greater divine power blocks it the holders are transported immediately to that place.

Dealing with Lamotruu

Lamotruu is a coward at heart. He knows that if the Tower of Skulls were to be destroyed his torment would end, but there's enough doubt gnawing at his thoughts that he doesn't invite characters that reach the Bone Fields to simply destroy the Orb of Oblivion in **area 51**. He has no interest in fighting (hence he has no stats in this adventure), and if combat does break out he simply uses illusions to disappear and hide. The tempting treasure in **area 50E** is also carefully guarded, and if greedy characters decide to try and

take something Lamotruu can lay down a curse upon the stolen object (the details are left up to the DM to decide).

How do the characters deal with Lamotruu? Largely it depends on their goals. The demon lord is impressed with anyone that reaches the Bone Fields alive and is willing to entertain any conversations. If the characters do not threaten him and deal honestly, Lamotruu is willing to grant requests to use the Orb of Flight and throw in a piece of treasure from the pile in **area 50E** (you can roll randomly for a piece of treasure or give out an item the characters have been seeking).

Lamotruu does not stop the characters from wandering around the area except to warn them about taking any of the treasure in **area 50E**. If the characters notice the secret passage in the furnace to **area 51** on their own, the demon lord pretends not to know where it leads, but if they are persistent he grows angry and demands that they leave immediately. Time is on Lamotruu's side – at some point the tower expels living intruders when the sun rises, so the characters can't stay in this room indefinitely.

51. Orb of Oblivion

A pulsating green and yellow light fills this square chamber, emanating from a pedestal in the center. Atop the pedestal rests an orb, perhaps a foot across, with ribbons of emerald and topaz energy swirling around like clouds just below the glass. You sense some sort of presence from the orb, an almost palpable intelligent tugging at your mind, but you can't make out words.

This is the Orb of Oblivion, the beating heart of the Tower of Skulls, the anchor that keeps it rooted in the Prime Material Plane. It was originally a prized possession of Lamotruu, but the power of Orcus twisted it and turned it into the source of the demon lord's imprisonment. Lamotruu does not have the will or strength to destroy it, though he suspects it would free him.

The Orb of Oblivion is an intelligent item and speaks in a whisper telepathically to anyone in the room. The Orb is lonely and speaks of serving as Lamotruu's counsel when they were in the Abyss. Since Orcus cast them down, however, Lamotruu has grown insane and no longer communicates with the relic. The Orb longs to be back in its home, and tries to encourage anyone in the room to destroy it so that it and Lamotruu can be free of their torment. It is a vile, evil artifact, capable of skimming the mind of anyone unless magically protected, and it uses whatever knowledge it gains to further its own end. For now, the Orb of Oblivion seeks a means of destruction for it and its master's sake.

Destroying the Orb of Oblivion requires only a solid blow from a magical bludgeoning or slashing weapon. If struck so, the orb cracks, and a torrent of green and blue energy releases into the air from the crack. Lamotruu screams in agony, a knell that sounds throughout the tower, and the walls and ceiling begin to crumble. The characters have only a few rounds to reach the Globe of Flight in **area 50E** to escape the collapsing Tower of Skulls. On their way out they may be able to grab some of the treasure in the area – ultimately this decision is left up to the DM. Lamotruu wails and shouts and appears on his ziggurat as the tower is destroyed, and if the characters reach the Globe of Flight they see the demon lord nod in approval to them just before the magic of the item takes them away.

EPILOGUE

In order for the adventure to end, the characters must somehow leave the Tower of Skulls. This could be done one of three ways.

The first way is to simply spend too much time in the tower. Once dawn breaks over the land, the tower collapses back to the earth and any non-resident is expelled, minus some of their magical equipment (50% chance per magical item). This transports them 1d8 miles away in a random direction (1d8 – 1 north, 2 northeast, 3 east, 4 southeast, 5 south, 6 southwest, 7 west, 8 northwest). Any equipment goes to **area 50E**, to become part of the accumulated pile of treasure stashed away in the Tower of Skulls.

The other way is to get passed the guardians in the Throne of Bloodrose, breach the Gate of Despair, and enter the Bone Fields of Lamotruu. The guardians must be dealt with, but after that, the PCs are able to use the Globe of Flight in **area 50E** to travel to whatever point on the Prime Material Plane they want to travel to.

The third way is to destroy the Tower of Skulls.

Destroying the Tower of Skulls

If the characters discover the secret passage in the Bone Fields of Lamotruu that leads to the Orb of Oblivion, they have the opportunity to destroy the Tower of Skulls and set free its inhabitants. The exact details of doing this are found in **area 51**.

If the characters succeed in this task, they have performed a monumental feat worthy of any high-level hero. Unfortunately, they also release Lamotruu from its prison, though severely weakened.

Rewards

Treasure found in the Tower of Skulls can be kept by the characters depending on the circumstances of their leaving (see above). If they came into the tower with an explicit purpose, hopefully they complete that purpose and leave willingly.

If they destroyed the Tower of Skulls and freed Lamotruu, they have unleashed a great evil back into the Abyss. However, the demon lord – now greatly diminished – bides his time, seeking to regain his once mighty place of power in the Abyssal hierarchy. How he reacts to the characters freeing him is a story for another day, but demon lords do not forget.

Next Steps

What is next for the brave characters? What new danger lies over the horizon, just waiting for a band of stalwart heroes? The answer can only be found out by going there!

If the characters managed to destroy the Tower of Skulls, they unwittingly release Lamotruu from its prison as well. The demon lord does not rest on its laurels, however, and quickly begins to seek out a way to reclaim its former glory and position of power in the Abyssal realm.

Appendix A: Monster and NPC Information

Frost giant zombie: HD 10; hp 55; AC 4 [15]; Atk 1 large axe (4d6); Move 6; Save 5; Special: immune to charm and sleep, immune to cold, no critical hits; CL/XP 11/1,700

Wight: HD 3; hp 16; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 claw (1 hp + level drain); Save 14; Move 9; Special: level drain (drain 1 level with hit), hit only by magic or silver weapons; CL/XP 6/400

Yeti: HD 5; hp 24; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 fists (1d6); Move 14; Save 12; Special: hug (if it hits with both fists, hugs for 2d6 damage), fear (anyone caught in a hug must make a save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d3 rounds), immune to cold; CL/XP 7/600

Wraith: HD 4; hp 18; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 touch (1d6 + level drain); Move 9, fly 24; Save 13; Special: level drain (drain 1 level with hit), hit only by magic or silver weapons; CL/XP 8/800

Helmed horror: HD 5; hp 26; AC 0 [19]; Atk 1 sword (2d6); Move 12; Save 12; Special: magic resistance 50%, spell immunity (immune to *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, and *magic missile*); CL/XP 7/600

Gelatinous cube: HD 4; hp 19; AC 8 [11]; Atk 1 devour (2d4); Move 6; Save 13; Special: paralysis (victims hit by the cube must make a save or be paralyzed for 6 turns), immune to lightning and cold; CL/XP 5/240

Lesser black pudding: HD 5; hp 24; AC 6 [13]; Atk 1 attack (2d6); Move 6; Save 5; Special: acidic surface (any weapon or armor contacting a black pudding is eaten away, magic items can last extra rounds of contact per +1), immune to cold, divide (if hit by lightning, splits into 2 puddings with half hp but same HD); CL/XP 7/600

Bone King: HD 11; hp 68; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 great sword (5d6); Move 12; Save 4; Special: half damage from slashing and piercing weapons; CL/XP 12/2,000

Vrock: HD 8; hp 39; AC 0 [19]; Atk 1 beak (1d6) and 2 foreclaws (1d8) and 2 rear claws (1d8); Move 12, fly 18; Save 8; Special: magic resistance 50%, immune to fire, create darkness (5 ft. radius); CL/XP 11/1,700

Mummy: HD 5+1; hp 26; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 fist (1d12); Move 6; Save 12; Special: rot (those hit cannot benefit from magical healing, *remove curse* to remove), hit only by magic weapons; CL/XP 7/600

Assassin vine: HD 7; hp 31; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 vine (1d6+1); Move 1; Save 9; Special: animate plants (plants in a 30 ft. area animate to immobilize victims, save to avoid); CL/XP 8/800

Death dog: HD 6; hp 22; AC 5 [14]; Atk 2 bites (2d6); Move 18; Save 11; Special: poisoned wound (bite damage heals at half normal rate includes magical healing), immune to sleep and charm; CL/XP 7/600

Demonic mushroom man: HD 2; hp 10; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 fist (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; Special: paralyzing spores (1/day can release a cloud of paralyzing spores spreading out 20 ft. from them, save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds), reproduction spores (when killed, releases 1d6 spores that grow into 1 HD demonic mushroom men each in 1d4 rounds); CL/XP 5/240

Bone golem: HD 10; hp 53; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 fist (3d10); Move 8; Save 5; Special: half damage from slashing and piercing weapons, hit only by magic weapons, magic resistance 90%, cackle (can release a horrendous cackle, everyone that can hear it must make a save or run in terror for 2d6 rounds); CL/XP 14/2,600

NEW MONSTERS

Night worm: HD 15; hp 70; AC 6 [13], Atk 1 bite (2d12); Move 9, burrow 12; Save 3; Special: swallows whole (if attack roll is 4 or higher than needed to hit the victim is swallowed, suffers bite damage automatically each round), poison breath weapon (3/day the night worm can exhale a cloud of poisonous gas in a 60 foot cone, victims in the cloud must save vs. poison or suffer 5d6 damage); CL/XP 16/3,200

The **night worm** is a monstrous creature that dwells in certain layers of the Abyss and other outer planes. It appears as a monstrously huge worm, black in color, with raised markings all over it 40' length in patterns of shapes and lines.

Flameskull: HD 5; hp 25; AC 4 [15]; Atk 1 fire ray (range 50 ft., 2d6); Move fly 12; Save 12; Special: magic resistance 25%, spells (3/day *magic missile*, 1/day *fireball*); CL/XP 9/1,100

Animated from the severed heads of dead wizards, **flameskulls** are roughly human-sized undead skulls limned with unnatural green flames. They are intelligent but usually quite surly as they are typically bound to serve the one who created them.

Rose of Lamotruu: HD 6; hp 28; AC 7 [12]; Atk 4 tendrils (1d4); Move 3; Save 11; Special: sleep musk (any living creature that breathes within 30 ft. must make a save or fall into a deep slumber for 1 hour, if the victim takes damage an additional save can be made at the end of the round); CL/XP 8/800

Created by Lamotruu in great gardens on his home plane, each **rose of Lamotruu** appears as a bundle of lush green leaves at its base. Extending from the base are a handful of stalks, each ending in a gorgeous bloom of red and purple flowers resembling a common rose, though much bigger at 5' across. The rose of Lamotruu can release a powerful sleep musk to knock out living prey nearby, and then can extend long tendrils out to 10' to grasp them and pull them in to be devoured.

Shambling graveyard: HD 10; AC 1 [18]; Atk 2 fists (2d8); Move 6; Save 5; Special: immune to cold and fire, graveyard aura (anyone seeing a shambling graveyard must make a save or be paralyzed with fear for 2d4 rounds), fester (victims hit by the fist suffer 1d8 damage on the following round unless the wound is healed first), half damage from weapons, engulf (if it hits a victim with both fists, engulfs victim who suffers 3d8 damage each round); CL/XP 14/2,600

Appearing as a large, vaguely humanoid shaped pile of dirt and broken tombstones, the **shambling graveyard** is a plant-creature similar to a shambling mound. It can pound on foes with great fists, the wounds of which fester unnaturally on their own very quickly. A victim that becomes engulfed in the graveyard's mass can attempt to break free with a Strength check at -4.

Black treant: HD 8; hp 47; AC 2 [17]; Atk 2 strikes (2d6); Move 6; Save 8; Special: control trees (control 2 trees within 60 ft. to attack as 4 HD monster with same AC, hp 22 1 attack for 2d6), half damage from piercing and bludgeoning weapons; CL/XP 9/1,100

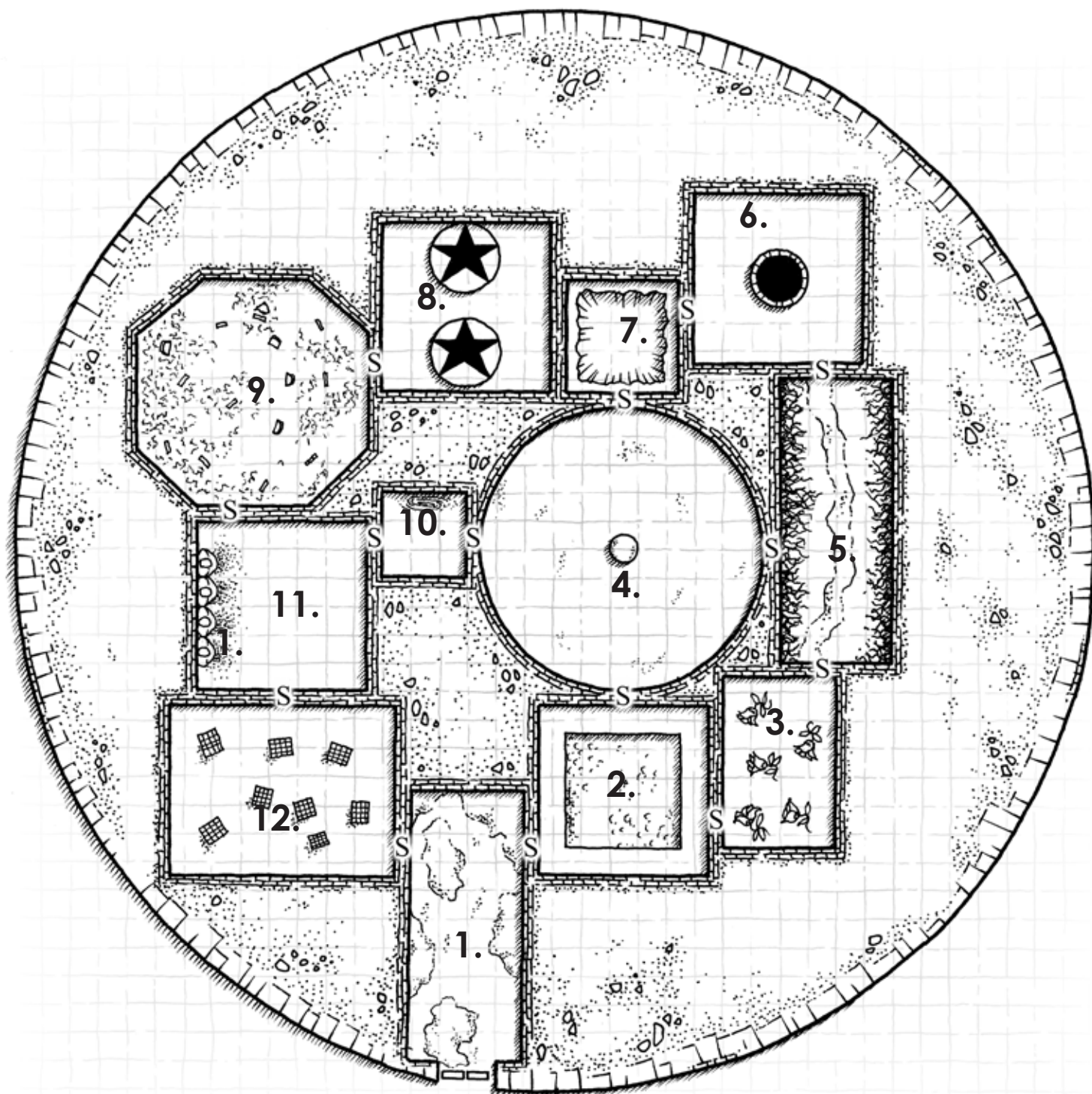
A **black treant** is a twisted, horrible abomination of a creature bent on destroying the natural world. They look like normal treants except for their black bark hides, and their extended limbs are gnarled and bent in unnatural ways. While intelligent they rarely speak and seem to take joy in crushing druids and elves especially.

Gwiddon: HD 8; hp 41; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 blight ray (range 100 ft., 2d10); Move 12; Save 8; Special: blight aura (anyone that starts their turn next to the gwiddon suffers 1d6 damage), druid spells (1/day *creeping doom*, *insect plague*, *wall of fire*, and *fire storm*), hit only by magic weapons, magic resistance 50%; CL/XP 13/2,300

The demon lord Lamotruu has long been served by an order of undead creatures known as **gwiddons**. In life they were druids, but secret processes known only to the faithful of Lamotruu (and thought lost long ago) twisted them into their current undead forms. Their skin is pulled tight across their bones and strands of tough black vines wrap around their arms, torso, and legs, creating a protective armor. They are evil and spiteful, seeking the death of all intruders into the Tower of Skulls.

Tower of Skulls Level I

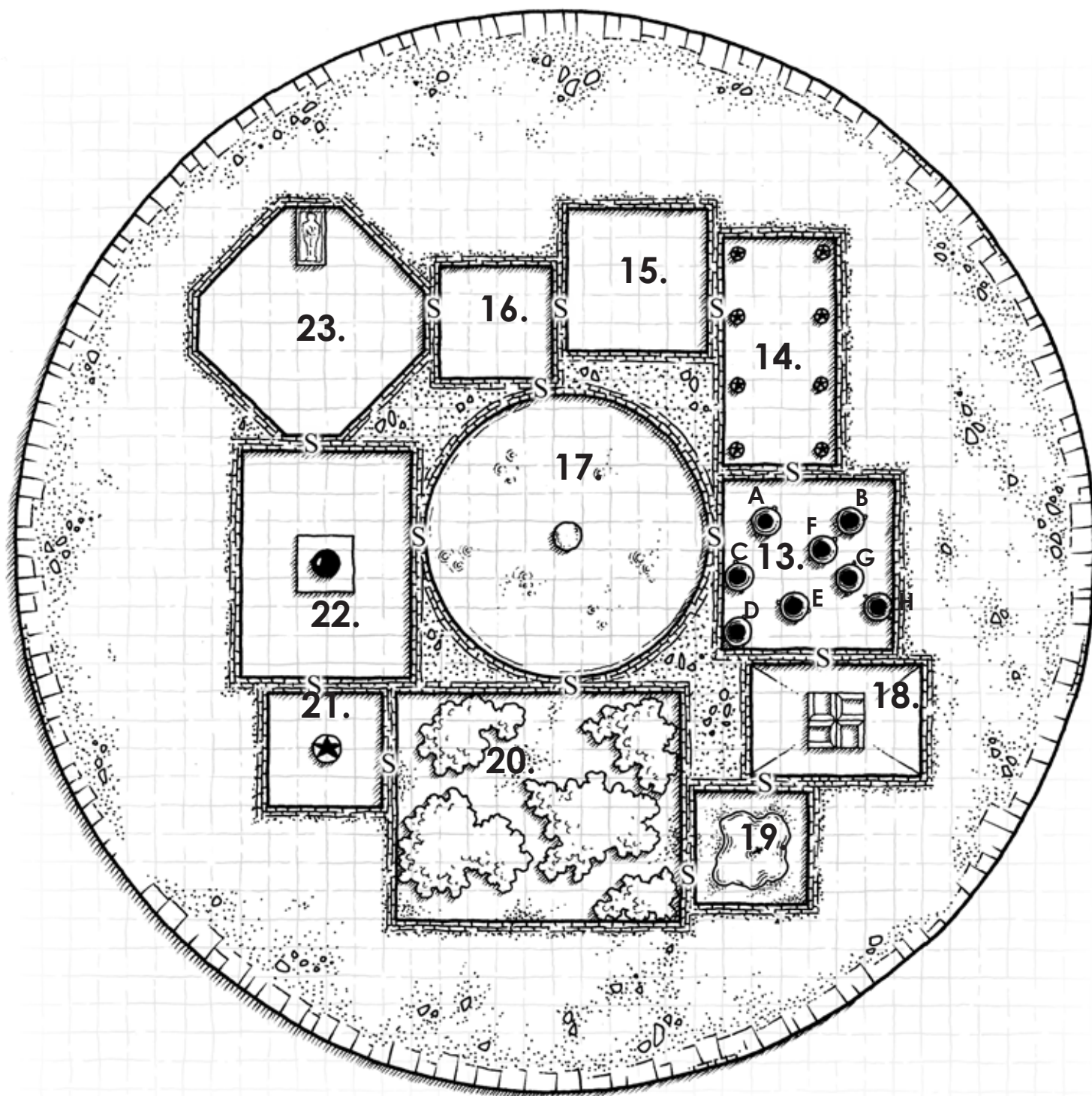
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Tower of Skulls

Level II

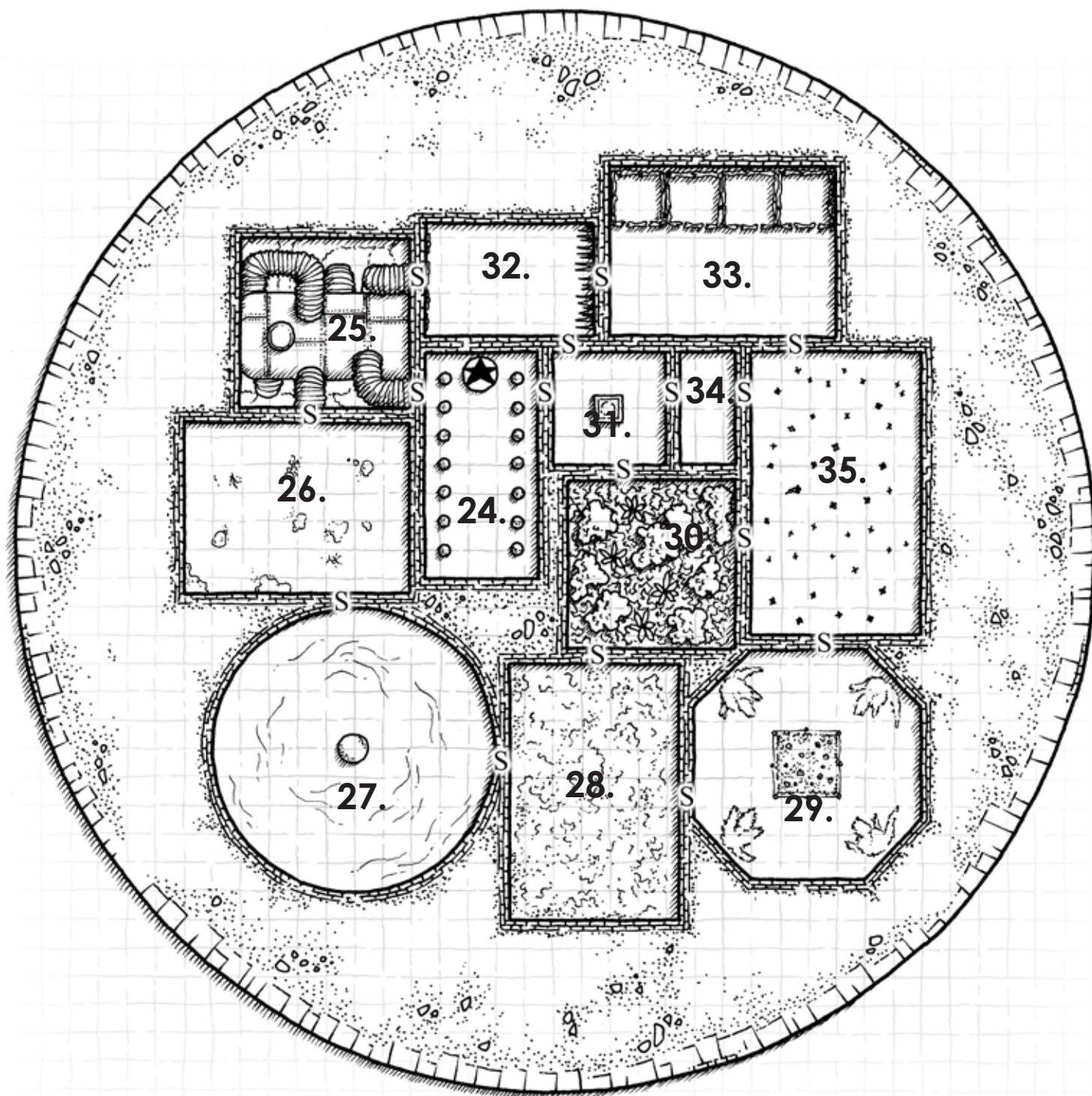
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Tower of Skulls

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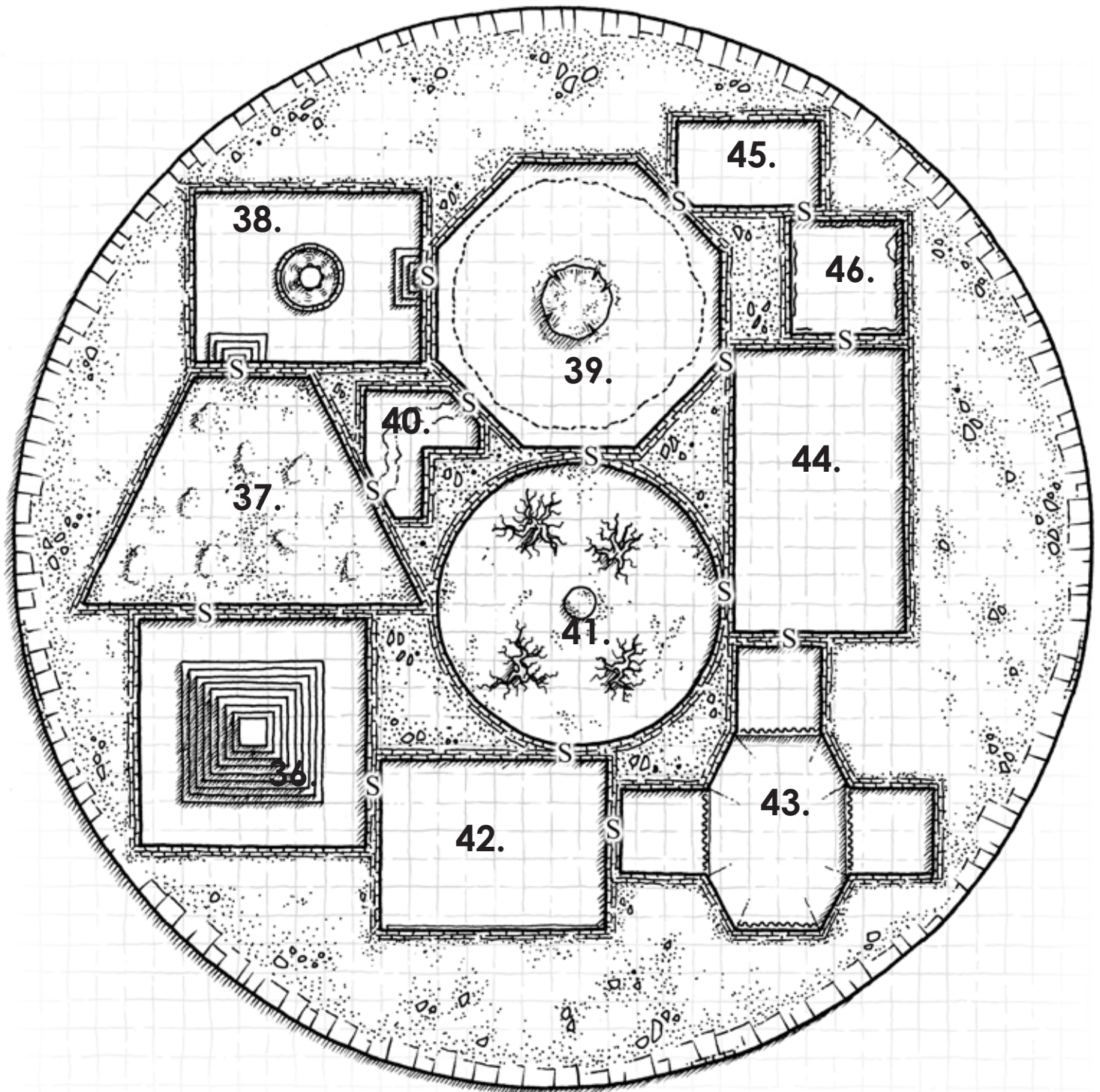
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Tower of Skulls

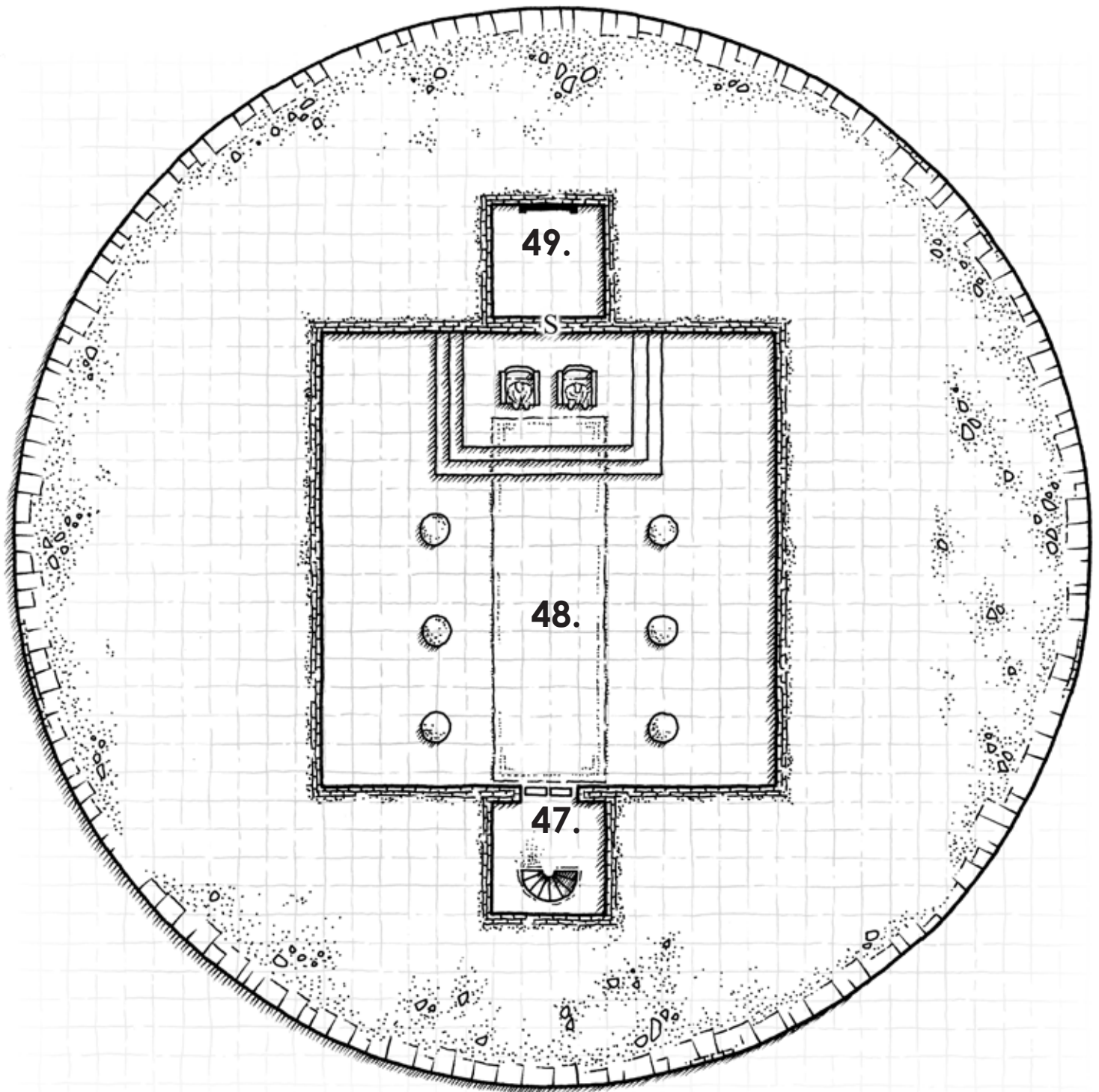
Level IV

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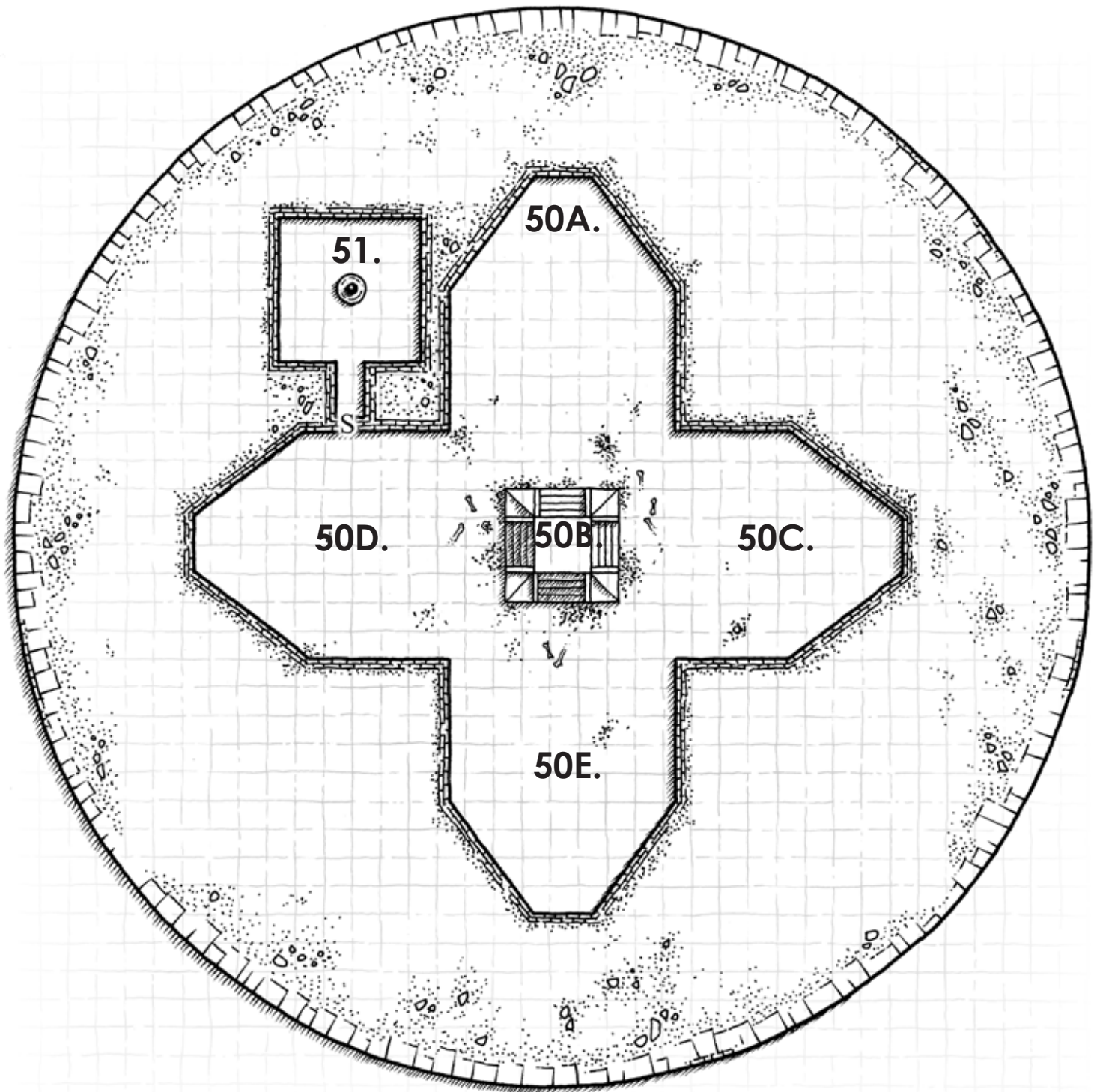
Tower of Skulls Level V

1 square = 5 ft.



Tower of Skulls Level VI

1 square = 5 ft.



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