

Quest of the Mist Golem

Module QMG1 - Mist Hold An adventure for characters level 5-7

DM Synopsis:

Murq Thendival (better known as "Murq the devious") was at one time a wizard known and hated in Veluna City. Suspected of having dealings with Temple of Elemental Evil during its first heyday, the mage built his laboratory-tower in a forested area of the Lortmils, which he warded with killing fogs and mists. He was also known to have humanoids of varying types as troops who would deal with any interlopers who managed to make their way past the wizard's vaporous barriers.

Over time, Murq realized that his possible alliance with the temple was on shaky ground, since divinations revealed that the governments of Furyondy, Veluna and Verbobonc were preparing to move in force against it. Rather than fall with his erstwhile "allies" when his dealings were discovered, Murq set out to gain personal power in another way.

While the armies of Veluna City were occupied with the battle against the temple, Murq kidnapped nine of the city's children. They were used in foul experiments, which created evil simulacrum, two of which were substituted for their counterparts a few days after their disappearance. These simulacrum were experiments in new ways of creating golems from the bodies of living beings fused with the essences of lemures Murq had summoned from the lower planes. His goal was to create an army of intelligent and self-willed but loyal slaves.

The process that created the golems was partially successful in that they retained the mannerisms and portions of the personalities of their original hosts, however their lower planar nature was revealed very quickly. One simulacrum was involved in the foul and bizarre mass murder of its host's family while the other began compulsively torturing small animals. Capture of the simulacra, and subsequent divinations by priests of Rao, revealed their true natures and they were destroyed as abominations. The results of these divinations also pointed at who had created the simulacra.

The third simulacrum Murq kept as a part of his plan for when the forces of Veluna came looking for him, as they surely would once they realized his part in their creation. The rest of the children were either left as simulacra in his tower or were sacrificed to Astinopheles, an ice devil whose true name Murq had come across some years ago in a work detailing fiends who were said to have special knowledge of creating unusual magical creatures.

Murq had attempted to compel the devil (through threats of *spiritwracking*) to give him the knowledge of how to create a unique golem, which would be utterly loyal and yet intelligent. The wily devil, secretly amused by the presumption of the human mage, cut two deals. The first was the lives of four humans for the knowledge of creating doll golems. The second bargain was knowledge of the mist golem in return for Murq's soul three minutes after the Mage's natural death due to old age, accident or combat. Since the mage was planning to use the golem to help him in his researches into lichdom and since, if successful, a transformation into undeath would not be considered "natural" according to the letter of the contract, Murq agreed and the bargain was sealed. The devil, nursing plots of its own to twist the deal to its favour, returned to the Hells and Murq hastily began preparations to leave his fortress in order to establish a new stronghold in a more remote location, safe from prying eyes.

Overnight, the wizard gathered his servants and belongings, teleporting them to the Cold Marshes. Here he established a base, which eventually became the site of his new stronghold and his creation of the mist golem began in earnest.

A detachment of experienced Velunan guardsmen was eventually sent to Murq's forest tower, Mist Hold, where they discovered and destroyed the third simulacrum. Before its death the abomination told them that they were too late, its master was gone and had vowed vengeance upon them and their city's ruler. Unable to breach the wards Murq had left upon the tower's door, the guardsmen returned to Veluna City and the matter was marked closed. The tower was left alone and travelers avoided the forested area as cursed.

Fifteen years have passed. Recently, the aging High Priest of Veluna City and his Paladin-captain have both begun to suffer disturbing visions and dreams. In these Murq appears, much older and haggard looking, standing on a clump of weed-choked earth, enshrouded in the mists of a bog. He speaks to the High Priest and captain, threatening them and their city. He has even boasted of his creation-to-be, saying it is undetectable and invincible, being made of mist. It will soon be sent to assassinate the High Priest and his guards and then Murq will return to take the city for his own.

Even more troubling than the dreams are the signs from divinations to Rao. They indicate that when the stars reach a certain point in their orbits, one which only occurs every few hundred years and is due soon, there may arise from the north a vaporous killer with roots in the High Priest's past which will seek to destroy the city in the name of the infernal pits. Rao has indicated that the threat must be dealt with, but also that High Priest and his

captain must stay within the city since the safety of its inhabitants is their most important responsibility. Thus matters stand when a certain group of adventurers are called upon to take up the quest and end the threat of the Murq and his Mist Golem forever...

Module Conventions:

This is the first of a three module series inspired by an adventure seed in the first edition World of Greyhawk Boxed Set. It is therefore set out largely according to first edition rules and assumes use of several of the source books from that edition including the Monster Manuals 1 and 2, the Fiend Folio, the DMG and the PHB and UA tomes. Some second edition sources have been used, however the module assumes that largely first edition rules of play hold sway.

A few notes about XP: In several points in the module you will see suggestions for XP awards for PC's who play well. You may use these or not, as you see fit. However, if you do use them, it is advised not to inflate the XP awards beyond the ranges given since they are usually awarded to only one PC at a time and not split amongst the group. Not enlarging the XP bonuses should help keep any PC from getting too far ahead of his or her party members in levels, while still providing a reward for good play.

Secondly, XP is given in various forms for combat. Monster entries taken from second edition sources are listed with their full XP amounts. Monster entries taken from any of the first edition sources will have heading such as DMG, FF or MM2 in place of an amount. These entries tell you which book to consult to locate the XP amount for the creatures listed. You may also use the second edition XP amounts if you so desire.

Finally, several of the magical items in the module originate in the basic D&D game and drawn from the Book of Marvellous Magic. Since this tome does not list XP or gold piece amounts for the magical items, a value has been estimated based on the items' relative power. Feel free to tweak these as you see fit should the amounts seem too great or too little.

Getting Started:

Take some time to familiarize yourself with the NPCs and the storyline before trying to DM the module. You should also print out the player aids at the end of the module so that you have them at hand whenever the party encounters one of them.

The party should be made up of at least six characters ranging in level from 5'th to 7'th. They should be reasonably equipped, including a few minor magical items and some weapons of +1 value. Since much of the adventure takes place in

wilderness settings a Druid or Ranger PC will be most useful to the party.

To set up the adventure, it is assumed that the party has come to Veluna and has gained a joint audience with the High Priest and the Paladin-Captain. This can be due to rumours overheard, a request for general aid, the liege lord of the party's home town recommending them or any other reason the DM desires. The adventure begins in the Veluna City Hall With the party waiting for a herald to announce them to the High Priest.

Meeting the High Priest:

The stately granite walls of the grand council building of Veluna city rise around you. After arranging your audience with the High Priest, you have come at the appointed time and have been escorted to a private meeting chamber. Sitting around a large oaken table, you are asked to wait as a herald announces you to the city's ruler.

After several minutes, two people are ushered in. The first is a man of middle height with a warm face capped by a fringe of silver hair and deep circles under his eyes. He wears the robes of a Priest of Rao.

The second is a middle-aged woman, battle scarred and hardened, wearing a tabard with the livery of the city emblazoned on it. At her neck hangs a holy symbol of Heironeous and she wears a sheathed sword at her hip. Her face is stern, and she keeps her blonde hair (which is streaked with silver) tied back as if expecting to need to see in combat at any moment. She too looks tired, with a drawn, pale face and circles under her eyes.

The herald will announce the pair as "His Venerable Reverence Alton Stelz, High Priest of Veluna City" and "The Most Honourable Lady Galencia Burttil, Paladin-Captain and Commander of the Veluna City Guard". After introductions are made, the two ask the party to dispense with formality and simply call them Reverend Stelz and Lady Burttil. The High Priest will then ask if the party has ever heard of anyone named Murq Thendival in their adventures. Once he has his answer, he will speak as follows:

"The man I asked you about is also known as "Murq the Devious". He is the reason we have agreed to speak to you. That wizard was a thorn in our side, some ten years back. We knew he was in collusion with the Temple of Elemental Evil, before it fell, although we never were able to prove it with hard evidence.

However, during the assault upon the temple, when our forces were working with those of Furyondy and Verbobonc, we were left for two months with only a skeleton crew of guardsmen. During the first week of that period, nine children

went missing while berry picking outside the city walls. Because we were in a state of war and short handed, we could not devote the number of men we normally would have to finding them. Those we could spare looked for days in vane. We assumed a mishap involving wild animals at first. This indeed seemed to be the case when we finally found two of the children, hungry, filthy and exhausted. They told of a pack of wolves which had chased them into the fields and foothills to the west of the city. Their companions were killed and they survived by living on whatever they could find. We returned them to their families after making certain they were cleaned, fed and healed of their hurts. Another search party looked for the rest of the children, in the areas the rescued had told us of, but no sign of them was found."

(The High Priest stops for with a far away look of pain in his eyes. At his silence Lady Burtil takes up the narrative.)

"The city watch was called to the home of one of the two rescued children, eight days after they were found. They had been summoned by an hysterical neighbour who had run from the child's house screaming. Upon entering the building, they discovered that the entire family had been murdered in their beds, their throats cut as they slept.

In the parlour of the house was the eight year old boy. He was sitting cross legged, rocking, staring at nothing and giggling. Beside him on the floorboards was a bloody kitchen knife. In front of him, also bloodied, were six wooden soldiers, each arranged in exactly the same positions they found his family in.

When they tried to talk to the boy, he attacked one of the watchmen. Though not fatal, the wounds were serious. The uninjured guard mentioned in his report how this "innocent child" moved unnaturally fast and seemed to know exactly where the chinks were in his companion's armour."

"As if this were not enough, my men were called to a butcher shop in the business section, three hours after sundown that same day. The butcher had been working late and was depositing refuse in a cart behind his shop when he heard strange sounds coming from the sub-basement. He descended the short flight of stone steps to find the lock to the basement door had been picked and was lying open on the ground.

Peering within the doorway, he saw a ten year old girl had set up a circle of candles around a broken down work table. The tools on the table had been knocked into a heap to one side of it and draped across the table were the bodies of several mongrel dogs and stray cats, which the child had been

torturing. When he gasped in shock, the girl heard him. She picked up a bloodied bone saw and turned to face him. She was smiling angelically, but her eyes were mad. Not waiting to see what she would do, he ran and summoned the watch."

"The child was comatose, her body stiff to the touch, twitching and radiating heat, when they found her in the basement. She was taken to the Temple of Rao where the young boy was being examined by the clerics. She was recognized there as the other survivor of the group that had gone missing."

At this the High Priest clears his throat and speaks up again. "We prayed for guidance and Rao answered us. Our divinations told us that the real children were dead, that these impostors were abominations created for some foul purpose. Our lord instructed that we destroy them and that we should look to the south for the source of the crimes."

"In spite of the word of my god, I still had doubts. Not wanting to take the chance of slaying children who might only have been driven mad, I decided we should test their natures with holy water. When we sprinkled the liquid from the font upon them, they writhed in pain, screaming a single word. Smoke rose from the places that the droplets had touched their flesh. With that my doubts vanished and we destroyed the unholy things." He shakes his head and says softly, "So long ago. Those poor children. Rao forgive me."

(The High Priest stops for a moment and looks haggard. He then looks each of the PC's in the firmly in the eye.)

"The word they cried was "Thendival. The only Thendival capable of such evil was Murq, thus these abominations must have come from him. We knew he had a stronghold, somewhere to the south of the city." He pauses and looks at the Paladin-Captain, who now takes up the tale once more.

"I took a eighth of my best, the only paladins remaining in the city, and we rode out at dawn, making for the site of Murq's tower. It was a wretched pile of stone he called "Mist Hold", located at the edge of the Lortmil mountains, some days ride south of the city. We reached the edge of the woods surrounding the place at dusk, just as a fog was beginning to rise from the ground."

"That fog was either alive or it was guided by some malevolent will. It formed about us and three of my men began screaming. They died before we could reach them, choking and clutching their throats. Realizing the folly of attacking at night on Murq's home territory, I ordered my men to withdraw until sunrise the next day."

"At dawn the mists burned away. We entered the

woods again and followed a rutted cart track up to the tower. We were attacked three times as we went by trolls who displayed far more cunning than their kind usually have.”

“When we reached the tower itself, we found the grounds empty. Standing by the front gate was a sweet-faced redheaded girl of perhaps seven summers. As soon as she saw us, she stepped forward and said, “So you are the ones Daddy was expecting. You are too late. He left last night and you won’t see him again soon.”

“The child then looked directly at me and said in that high, sad voice, “They are all gone. Daddy and the green men and the dog-headed boys. Only I am left and I was told that I am for you.” With those words, she took a dagger from the sleeve of her tattered dress and ran towards me.”

“It should not have happened as it did: She was but one small child. Instead, events took on the tones of a nightmare. She slew two of my men who had dismounted to speak to her, slashing their throats with lightning speed. When I dismounted she tripped me by diving between my legs. When I rolled back up to my knees, her dagger point was suspended an inch from my left eye. She was laughing madly and would have slain me then and there had not one of my surviving officers pierced her clean through with his long sword.”

“She stiffened for a moment and gave a broken wail, twisting around with such force that she pulled the blade from his hand. Then she knocked his helm away and buried the dagger in his temple. Just as suddenly all the strength and speed left her. She flopped brokenly on the ground, huddled around the sword blade and looked up at me again. She hissed, “He will not forget the High Priest... He will not forget you... He’ll be back for you both... and for your shining city of Rao... one day... he’ll be back... and he will not forget.” An instant later, she died smiling at me.

My two remaining men and I tried to find a way into the tower, after collecting the bodies of our dead and taking pains to ensure the child-thing was truly no longer a threat. We never were able to gain entry. The wards left by that bastard wizard were too powerful for us to breach. We gave up and returned to the city, taking the body of the “child” for examination by the church. She was a simulacrum, just like the other two, the results of Murq’s handiwork.”

(Once again, the High Priest looks pained for a moment and then speaks.)

“All of this was ten years ago. Murq has not troubled us in all of that time and his tower has remained inviolate. We have warned travellers away from the grounds and kept a patrol over the forest’s borders.

We thought that the nightmare was over and that we could simply go on with our lives. We were wrong.”

“These last two months have seen both Lady Burtill and myself disturbed in our sleep. We both have foul dreams in which we see Murq, triumphantly laughing at us from atop a hillock of grass. He is in a bog or marsh somewhere and he is enshrouded in more of his foul mists.”

The Paladin-Captain takes over for the High Priest when he pauses for breath; “We have both heard his threats. He says he has almost completed his masterwork, a creature of mist which cannot be detected and cannot be killed. He says he will send it to slay us, that he will take the city and use it to create an empire of darkness to rival that which the Old One seeks to create from Dorakaa”

(The High Priest looks at the group and speaks softly, but firmly.)

“We need you to find out where Murq is. “

If the party agrees, continue the adventure. If they refuse, then they will be ushered out. They will hear of the death of the High Priest and the Paladin-Captain in three months time. The city and state of Veluna will be thrown into chaos for several more months. Eventually another group of heroes will overthrow the newly ascendant Murq who has successfully invaded the city, after transforming himself into a lich.

Assuming the PC’s are interested in the quest, read the following:

The High Priest holds out a scroll, embossed with the seal of the city. “Here is a writ of the church entitling you to act as our agents. Go to his tower and see if you can find any sign of where he went. Our prayers to Rao have told us that his tower contains the secret of how to find him. You may keep anything of value you find in your search, however we ask to see whatever you might find in case it holds a clue to his whereabouts.”

The high priest will send for a page and the party will be presented with ink and quill a few minutes later. They asked to sign or make their marks on the document as binding proof of their willingness to undertake the quest.

Setting Out:

Once the audience has been completed, the party should make any arrangements they need to and get underway. Time is fleeting and the High Priest urges them not to delay. The city will provide

for any reasonable needs the party has, such as mounts, rations or basic equipment.

The journey to the mountains will be uneventful and the party will have no problems finding the rutted track leading through the trees to the tower.

Murq's magics have not yet decayed from the grounds of his old stronghold, although they have weakened considerably. Should the party enter the woods at night, greenish mists just past the border



will surround them. These mists will affect them as if they had been victims of a *stinking cloud*. Anyone who fails a save vs. spell will pass out choking and not awaken until dawn. They will be at half hit points and any magical healing attempts will not avail them until they regain consciousness outside the mists.

Other than the mists, there is no danger in the region of the tower. The only thing odd about the wooded area is the deathly stillness. No birds sing and no small animals run through the underbrush at the party's approach. This is due to the effects of Murq's mist rising each night, since it slays all animal life larger than normal insects caught within it. If looked for during the day, the party will find several animal bodies in the weeds near the rutted track as they proceed up it. Rangers and Druids have an automatic 50% chance of noticing the bodies even if not specifically looking for them. The corpses are in various states of decay, with some left as nothing more than bones. The bodies show signs of having been gnawed by normal insects, but not by larger scavengers.

The path winds four miles into the wood, curving at its end in a spiral up the side of a hill. The trees

and brush make it difficult to see anything at first, however the party will start catching glimpses of the top of the tower in the last mile of travel as they ascend the hill.

Once the party reaches the top of the path show them Player Aid 1 from the back of the module and read or paraphrase the description below to them. Note that the gatehouses to the tower look north, towards Veluna City.

Ahead of you, the path rounds a final turn. Through the trees and bushes you see the faint outlines of a tower surrounded by a crumbling fieldstone wall. Both are covered with an overgrowth of vines. Weeds poke out of chinks in the surfaces of the structures.

You draw abreast of the gate in the wall. Two small gatehouses sag drunkenly to either side of the entry. The base of one of them has been partially reduced to rubble. The remains of the wooden gate lie scattered in rotted pieces around the entryway. Looking within, you see the wall has fallen away completely in several places. Bushes and weeds have run riot, overgrowing everything. The tower courtyard is filled with saplings and young trees which have taken up much of the once pristine lawn within the fence. What remains of the wall surrounds a modest tower, about forty five feet high. Attached to the west side of the tower is a small outbuilding with a single door set into it. Part of the tower facing the gate has collapsed near the foundation and a pile of debris clogs the hole in the tower's side.

The Tower Grounds:

(See Player Aid 1 for the grounds map)

Careful searching will reveal that there are no animal bodies within the bounds of the stone fence. Murq's mists do not reach within them and will not blow in, even during a high winds or a storm. The broken parts of the wall do not interfere with this effect in any way, so the party may pass the night in safety within the courtyard if they desire.

Most of the boxes in the pile behind the outbuilding contain little of value, holding the rotting remains of gnoll-sized leather armour. One small box near the middle of the pile has stood up to time rather well and when opened will reveal several items packed in straw which Murq missed in his haste to leave. These are three potions, one of which has curdled into a potion of poison. The other two are potions of invulnerability and fire breath. There is a pouch with two small gems in it: a 50 gp citrine and a 100 gp piece of black coral. There is also a suit of studded leather +1.

There are no wandering monsters on the tower grounds.

Getting In:

The door to the outbuilding is warded shut: A glowing green hourglass-shaped rune has been traced upon it and the handle will not turn. The door cannot be forced any physical means and spells cast at the door will rebound to effect the caster. (EG: A knock will open all the fastenings on the caster's equipment, causing it to fall off, combat spells such as *magic missile*, *fireball* or *lightning bolt* will bounce back and target or centre on the caster doing normal damage, etc.) All doors and windows within the tower are warded with the same glowing green rune, so even flying to the upper stories will not allow ingress. Anyone possessing Murq's master key (q.v.) will be able to open doors and windows at will with little effort.

For the present, the only means of entrance is through the rubble pile, which blocks the hole at the tower's base. It will require half an hour's steady work to clear a way in. Any character with stone-working related skills or non-weapon proficiencies will note that the hole was created by a natural lightning strike about six years ago, judging by the weathering of the rubble and the charred nature of some of the stones near the centre of the pile. Once the party has made their way within the breach, refer to Murq's Tower map below for details and encounters.

Murq's Tower: General Notes

Synopsis: The party's purpose within the tower is to find a way into the basement caves in order to locate Murq's master key, a small, hourglass-shaped piece of smoky quartz. This stone, though only moderately valuable as a gem, has been enspelled by Murq to open all of the wards on or in the tower (see Wards below). Once they have the key, their next job is to search the tower for any clues as to where the wizard went. Note that Murq's wards prevent any creatures which were not already within the tower to gain access, so there are no wandering monster encounter. Unwarded areas, such as the breached tower room and the basement caverns, are similarly safe once cleared, due to the protective effects of the mists, which rise each night.

Appearance: The tower is dusty but the contents are largely intact. Rooms are dishevelled from Murq's hasty departure fifteen years ago. Other than the dust, there are none of the other typical signs of neglect, such as cobwebs, cracked plaster or water stains. The rooms may smell a bit musty, but their contents will be in largely the same shape as they were fifteen years ago, due to the power of Murq's house wards.

Wards: Once the party has managed to find Murq's master key, any warded doors or windows

will open easily to them, as will any warded chests or cabinets. Anyone attempting to open a warded portal or object without holding the master key will see the same effects noted under Getting In. Warded chest lids or cabinet doors cannot be destroyed, although the chest or cabinet itself may be vulnerable. If this route is chosen, the force needed to break the container will certainly destroy any fragile contents.

The wards also have one other important effect: they prevent the use of normal fire (through use of an altered *affect normal fires* spell) anywhere above the basement caves level of the tower, until such time as Murq neutralizes them. The master key, since it only grants access to warded objects and does not dispel the warding magic, will not do so and only Murq's spoken command will work. This effect is one the wizard built into the wards to protect his library and research areas from accidental fires during times when he might have to lock up portions of the tower in order to travel. The fire dousing property also affects magical fire sources, causing them to do only one half damage when cast within the tower. They also prevent ignition of flammable substances by any fire source. Any PC with the spell craft nwp will discern the nature of the wards on a successful check, since the wards glow softly whenever they douse a normal fire or reduce the effectiveness of magical flames.



Mist Hold: Level 1

General Notes:

This level was one of the busiest in the tower, containing the kitchens, mess hall, reception and guest chambers and a major guard post. Most of the area is in disarray from the speed with

which Murq forced his troops to pack and leave via teleport spells after planting the child-simulacrum in Veluna City.

The PC's will likely get a feeling of "theme" from the pictures in the reception area. Murq had only recently decided on his choice of location for a newer, more isolated and much-enlarged stronghold in the Cold Marshes. Before he made this decision, much of his time was divided between locating a suitable place and trying to get the secrets he sought from the ice devil Astinopheles. As a result of his preoccupations, his packing plans were not as thorough as they could have been and he was forced to leave rather quickly when his evil

amusement with the children backfired and revealed who their creator was.

1. Guard Post

A stout oak door caps the north and south ends of this small 10x10 room. Both doors are banded with bronze and the hinges are in excellent condition. A rack on the west wall holds several weapons of inferior make. A large dusty brass disk with a mallet chained to it hangs on the east wall.

Both doors are warded. The disk is a gong, used to announce visitors. It has not deteriorated in the fifteen years since its last use and will come up quite shiny if rubbed clean. The weapons are two short swords, a hand axe, a bronze wood club and a broadsword +1. None of the normal weapons have been taken care of very well, even though no rust is present, and all are of inferior quality (10% chance per blow that the weapon breaks in melee).

2. Entry Chamber

This 30x20 room has doors in three walls, north south and east. A series of carved benches run along the west wall and portions of the north and south, forming a shallow U-shape. A desk, with an upended wooden chair behind it, sits in the centre of the U. A quill, a dried up ink well and single dusty volume lie open atop the desk.

The north and west doors are warded but the south one is not. This is where Murq had visitors and guests wait for him if they called while he was busy. The book was where he would have guests sign, supposedly as a memento of their visit. However, the real purpose was much more sinister, since he would use their written signatures as scrying links for his pool of misted sight (qv). Examining the book will not reveal any names of note, although the PC's will see that several early pages have rectangular strips torn from them. All of the signatures are dated ten or more years ago, although the ink on the pages has not faded noticeably in all of that time.

In the drawer of the desk, scattered amongst scraps of parchment, quill nibs, blotting paper and a spilled sander are 12 dusty electrum pieces, forgotten by the guards in their haste to pack and leave.

3. Cloak Room

The door opens to reveal a small, dusty chamber. The walls are lined with coat pegs and four armorer's dummies stand about the room, one of which has been knocked over. Two ripped cloaks hang on pegs, apparently undisturbed for over a decade. The cloaks bear a heraldic symbol of a crossed staff and lightning bolt over a cloud of fog on the back of them, their colours still bright.

Nothing of any real value is in the room, however, the cloaks' heraldic symbols are those of Murq's house guards, which he still uses today. Quick thinking PC's might choose to take the cloaks with an idea of using them to infiltrate Murq's guards when his location is finally known. Should they choose to do so, award the PC(s) who came up with the idea an XP amount of 50 each.

4. Entry Hall

This roughly L-shaped room contains several features of note. The east wall has two doors in it and the south has one. All of the doors bear the hourglass glyph you have encountered elsewhere in the tower. To the north is an alcove which contains a jumbled pile of items. Just above the southernmost door in the east wall is a spiral staircase which winds its way upwards into the tower.

The room itself is filled with several benches, chairs and small tables which look as if they have been knocked out of place by some kind of hurried action. A few landscape paintings, most of them scenes of bogs in various seasons and times of day hang on the walls. The paintings look as if they were once well cared for and their colours are still quite vivid. Nothing appears to be seriously broken or worn, although the dust is thick. The room simply conveys an air of haste and disorder.

This room was the focus of much of Murq's packing, serving as a mustering hall for small contingents of his troops just before he began teleporting them. The furniture is as stated with no real items of note.

Each of the paintings depicts a different bog located somewhere on Oerth. The paintings are very detailed and life-like. If a character has plant identification as a skill and if they make a successful check on the skill, they have a 25% chance of identifying the locations of the paintings.

The locations are as follows:

South wall:

1. A small scene of the Troll Moors during a fall day.
2. A broad canvas with many types of insects in a daytime scene of the Vast Swamp in high summer.

East Wall:

1. A medium sized canvas of the Cold Marshes on a moonlit night in mid-winter.
2. A larger canvas of a portion the Pelisso swamp where it fronts onto the Hepmonaland jungles at dawn.
3. A tiny scene of the Gnatmarsh in spring under cloudy skies.

4. A medium canvas depicting a heron with a small fish in its beak, standing at dusk in the midst of the Hool Marshes in southern Oerik.

West Wall:

1. A small oval portrait of a misty day in the Rushmoors.
2. A medium sized portrait of a tangled cedar grove near one of the edges of the Cold Marshes.
3. A rendering of hovering globes of light somewhere late at night in the Lone Heath.

The alcove to the north contains items which the troops were forced to discard before teleportation to keep weight limits down. Should the party choose to investigate it read the following:

This jumbled up pile of odds and ends looks to have been set here in quite a hurry and then simply left alone. The pile consists of some books, several bottles of darkish liquid, some obviously ornamental and non-functional armour and a few weapons which appear to be mock-ups of well crafted items.

If the party searches through the pile, they will locate a jewelled and apparently badly balanced +1 Dagger of Throwing. Once this item has been magically identified, the balance will reveal that it was made for use in a strangely shaped hand (namely that of a gnom) and that it can be used without penalty after some practise. Two of the replica swords have real gems on them, an amethyst worth 35 gp and a garnet worth 41 gp. The rest of the stuff is merely useless junk. The bottles contain a strong, dark home brewed whiskey and the books are old research volumes on swampy terrain culled from Murq's library. They are largely worthless, although one, a scholarly tome on the flora and fauna of the Vast Swamp is worth 100 GP to a sage.

5. Guest Room

This simple room contains a made bed, a dresser and an armoire. A foot high, arched window pierces the wall giving a view through its leaded glass of the overgrown rear of the tower grounds and the gap in the fieldstone wall which surrounds it.

The containers are all empty. The bed is dusty, but useable and the door to the room contains a single deadbolt. The window glass has a small warding rune in the bottom left corner. If a PC uses the master key here the window will tilt open allowing in fresh air.

6. Guest Room

See Room 5 above for the room description. A sliding secret door has been cunningly inset into the east wall (-1 on checks to find it.) A warding rune has been hidden under a medium sized painting of a storm-swept sky. Should the painting be moved, remove the penalty to secret door location checks. If the party opens the door, read the following:

Beyond the secret door is a small alcove with a varnished wooden ladder bolted onto the stone of the tower's outer wall. Two trap doors, one at the head and one at the foot of the ladder, bear softly glowing warding runes. Both are also secured with well greased deadbolts.

The lower trapdoor leads to area 5 of the basement caverns and the upper to the ladder section near area 4 on the second level.

7. Mess Hall

The central feature of this 30x30 room is a large table and 4 benches, which have been shoved up against the northern wall. The table has dusty plates and crockery on it, as well as a scattering of wooden spoons, forks and cups. Several of the plates bear old signs of food that has long ago mouldered away to some foul stains. The cups are all bone dry and filled only with dust. Aside from these items, the room contains nothing of note. Two doors give access to the chamber, one to the south and one to the west. Both are warded.

8. Kitchen

This roughly 30x30 room contains several work tables against the north and east walls. There are also dusty kitchen implements hanging from pegs above the tables as well as a small pot suspended from a boom-and-chain in a walk-in fireplace in the northeast corner. In the northwest corner you see several sealed casks standing next to some kind of sink and drain arrangement. Slightly south of the sink is a rack of pots and pans, which was knocked over a long time ago, judging by the amount of dust on the scattered kitchenware. In the centre of the pot rack, where hanging kitchen implements would likely normally cover it, is a small hourglass shaped warding rune.

The pot rack is part of the pivoting secret door, which connects to the entry at area 9. Note that if the party has been adventuring sometime and has not checked the wall breach lately, it may well have rebuilt itself.

The sealed casks will reveal fresh water if opened. The sink drains through clay tiles into a far corner of the watery area in the basement caves. The walk in fireplace is an exception to the fire wards for the

tower. Anything ignited within it will burn normally, however as soon as it is brought across the border of the hearth it will extinguish due to the wards. Magical fire sources also work normally, however if the border of their effects projects out of the fireplace, the wards will reduce their effectiveness as previously noted. Several dusty and half charred logs on the hearth should give a clue that fire works normally here for some reason.

9. Wall Breach

You step over the last of the rubble and enter the cool darkness of the oddly shaped tower room. It is quiet and dust is thick on the floor around you. A wall to the west bears a glowing, hourglass-shaped rune. To the east of the breach, a faint rectangular outline can be seen in the dust.

The rune has been placed on a secret door leading into the main part of the tower. PC's can detect the door normally but it will not open without Murq's master key.

The outline on the floor is a trapdoor, which has not been warded. Beneath it is a set of stone stairs leading down to the basement caverns.

If the party tries to open the trap door, the sound will disturb the two ochre jellies, which have nested on the ceiling above them. Anyone kneeling over or standing within 1 foot of the door is automatically hit and enveloped by the jellies. They will begin suffocating and will die within a number of rounds equal to 1/3 their constitution if not freed. They will also automatically receive damage from the jellies' secretions each round until freed. Anyone within 5 feet of the door must roll a save vs paralysis in order to jump clear or they will be enveloped as well. After dropping from the ceiling, the jellies will attack the rest of the group. Enveloped characters will take ½ damage from successful weapon attacks on the monsters.

2 Ochre Jellies: AC: 8; HD: 6; HP: 15,23; MV: 3"; #Att: 1; Dmg: 3-12; SA: Nil; SD: Lightning splits into two smaller, half strength jellies; S: M; AL: TN; Treasure: a jade amulet of protection +1 in the body of the second jelly; XP: DMG

10. Rubble Pile

Ten rounds after the party has descended the stairs under the trap door in room 9, the rubble pile will begin to reform the lightning blasted wall. This is the result of a *contingency* cast years ago by Murq that is only activated by the clearing of debris. When the *contingency* is triggered, any damaged areas in the tower or walls are affected by a variation of the *mending* spell that will gradually rebuild them.

The one disadvantage of the spell is that it is slow, taking two or three hours to repair a large breach. By the time the party returns to the hole, they should be treated to the sight of pieces of stone and mortar rebuilding themselves into a wall as they watch. *Dispel magic* will halt the effect for half an hour but otherwise have no effect on it. Should the PC's clear debris on any area on the grounds where there is damage (the gatehouse, the fieldstone walls) these too will undergo gradual reconstruction. The sole exception is the wooden gate, since it has rotted too much for the magic to affect it.



Mist Hold: Level Two

General Notes: This portion of the tower is mainly devoted to sleeping quarters for the small contingent of gnolls. Many of their items were left here in disarray because of their master's haste to teleport out without adequate time for them to prepare. This

caused some discontent, which resulted in mutinous infighting, costing Murq his blind guard captain who sought to quell the coup-in-the-making. Murq was also forced to slay two other gnolls as an object lesson to get his guards back under control.

Remember to apply the effects of the wards on fires and fire-based magic on this level.

1. Central Chamber

The first thing that hits you about this area is the smell of old death in the air. Once you have come fully into the room you can see the source: Two large dog-headed humanoid bodies, still clad in chain mail, have been crucified with large iron spikes driven into the stone on either side of the maple double doors on the western wall. The bodies have a leathery look to their skin and small spatters of flaking and brownish dried blood cover the floor at their feet. There is a pile of damaged and broken items near the crucified remains of the pools.

Each of the other walls in the room also has a set of double doors set into the centre of them.

These are the bodies of the two gnolls Murq was forced to kill to keep order amongst his troops. Murq had them crucified and then tortured them by taking all of their personal belongings from them and smashing them at their feet as they slowly suffocated to death. As a result of their treatment, their hatred has re-animated them as zombies. Up until now there was no target for their wrath

Note: The rooms on this level are conspicuously free of dust and disorder, due to the effects of a permanent *unseen servant* spell that is programmed to carry out basic housekeeping duties.

Remember to apply the effects on normal and magical fires due to the wards.

The Doll Golems: The golems found on levels 3 and 4 of the tower were a part of a new experiment Murq was trying, using knowledge gained from Astinopheles, upon the bodies of some of the kidnapped children. Seven of them were put through a special process that transformed their bodies to wood and they were then *reduced* to the size they are now. Unlike a true doll golem, they are partially free willed, able to speak and answer questions, and retain their original forms in miniature. However, they are magically *dominated* to be loyal to Murq. This spell is also functional in another manner, since the children could not deal with their new existences and were driven mad by the transformation. Because they are bound by Murq's spells they will perform their assigned tasks, but they are fighting the magic with all the strength of their madness.

Similar to the magic of the poisonous mists around the tower, the spells that keep the doll golems in their present servitude are also beginning to weaken. Thus, the golems will twitch, drop things or slur words occasionally. (If they are interacted with for any length of time, this should become apparent by the DM acting it out for the players.)

Any mention of Veluna City, the High Priest or the Paladin-Captain has a 20% chance (non-cumulative) of causing the golem's madness to overcome the fading spells that enslave them. Should this occur, they will attack the nearest PC mercilessly until slain. Even if they do not attack, the twitching and slurring will become very noticeable.

During any attack on a party member, whether due to orders or madness freeing them, the golems will scream out things such as "Run!", "I don't want to be bad but I can't help it!", "I don't want to hurt you Mister/Ma'am!" or "Help me!". Upon their deaths, each of them will be released from their torment and will fall to the ground lifeless. At this point the spells binding them will unravel and they will revert to their true forms as human children.

Murq left the golems in the tower as failed experiments, after he discovered that the transformation process rendered them mad and hard to control. He has programmed them to view him as a surrogate "father" and the fact that he has abandoned them has not penetrated their madness in all the years of his absence. Thus, they will always act as if Murq is really present within the tower, as if he is just in some other room. They will even lie to a certain extent, saying that they saw

Murq just a few minutes ago in this or that chamber, if asked. Too much probing along this line will cause them to become sullen and they will refuse any further questions at this point.

1. Waiting Room

As you step into the room, a magical force composed of softly glowing light begins to coalesce into being on the northern door. It forms into a large pair of lips, which speak commandingly; "Hail visitor. The mighty Murq bids you welcome. Servants will attend you momentarily. Please be seated until they arrive." The lips vanish and underneath them a softly glowing warding rune is revealed.

The waiting area is dust-free and has four chairs of polished wood set next to two small polished end tables. If the party waits, two doll golems, Kira (female, 12) and Villem (male 14) will arrive, introduce themselves as servants to "Murq the Magnificent" and escort them to Murq's dining hall. The golems both have the same ward negating powers as Murq's master key, being able to escort others through locked doors and can also open warded containers.

The golem's present orders are to escort any visitors to Murq's dining room where they will wait for the master to come and receive them. Any overt action going against their "programming", such as trying to break off from their presence to explore other rooms, will cause an immediate attack. See the introductory section on the golems for details about them in combat.

2 Doll Golems (Kira and Villem): AC 4; HD: 10 ; HP: 40 each; #Att: 1; Dmg 3d6; MV 15" AL: TN SA: bite every other round, save or begin laughing for 1d4 round 1, 2d4 round 2, 3d4 round 3 etc.; laughing only stops when *dispel magic* is used or victim dies ; SD: Immune to all magic except as follows: Fire does ½ dmg, *warp wood* acts as a *slow* spell, *mending* restores all hit points immediately ; S: S (2'); AL: CN; Treasure: Nil; XP: 7000 each

2. Murq's Dining Room

A massive table of polished dark wood dominates the centre of the east wall. Six chairs line it, one at each end and four along its length. Several cupboards, oddly empty, stand at either end of the table. One of the cupboard's swinging doors is empty of its glass, although shards and spikes of it still cling to the frame. Soft radiance, similar in brightness to dawn light, glows down from glassed-in recesses in the ceiling. The west wall is dominated by a large mural of an oddly built stone structure. The building is quite large and appears to be a temple or stronghold of

some kind.

If the golems have escorted the party here, Villem will take a post at the door to await Kiri's or the master's return. If the party attempts to leave the room, he will ask them to remain (and his slurring and twitching will become pronounced). Should the party ignore him, he will attack.

Kiri will tell the party she will go and fetch the master. She will then move to Murq's Library, announce the guests to empty air (any thief attempting to hear noise will hear her announce "A party of six for the master.", quite loudly) and stand waiting, head cocked to the left, for instructions. Since she will receive none, this is the state the party will encounter her in should they enter the library. She will not move even if she overhears a fight break out between Villem and the PCs.

The dining room is very clean, and neat. The party may freely inspect and take the contents of the cupboards. The upper, glassed-in portions contain only a few small plates and one or two clear glass tumblers. The drawers along the front of the cupboards contain silver flatware (total value 100 gp for the complete set of 50 pieces) and Murlynd's Spoon (See the UA for details).

The mural is a depiction of the top floor of the grounds of the Temple of Elemental Evil before it was sacked and wards were placed upon it. Viewers of the picture will get a sense of strength and dark power from the painting. Though the painting is not worth much to a collector, the High Priest will reward the party with 100 gp for it as proof of his suspicions of Murq's dealings with the temple in the past.

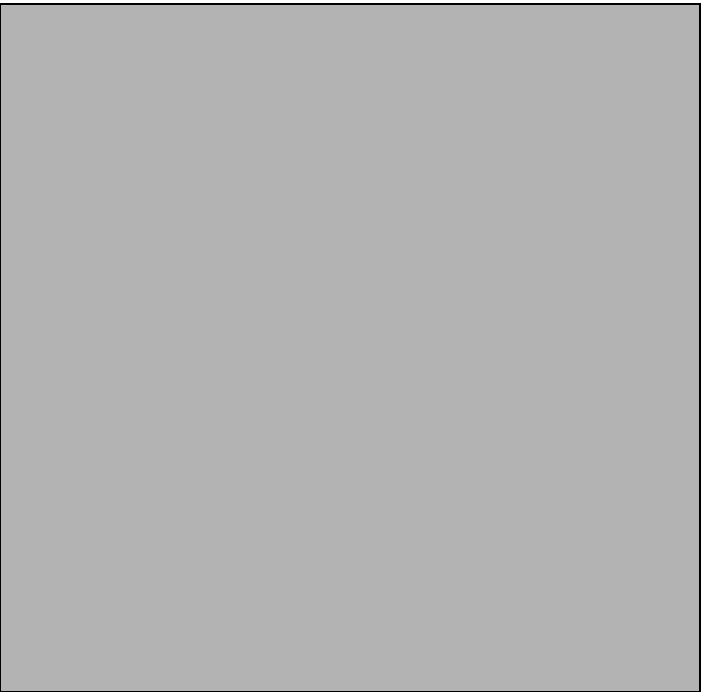
Be certain to check the meal schedule listed in the entry on area 5 for this level, since the PC's may arrive at a time when a meal has been served or is being cleared away. Any foods found on the dining table are fresh, and safe to eat.

3. Murq's Library

As you pass through the doorway and into the dimly lit chamber beyond it, the light suddenly vanishes!

This a piece of whimsy on Murq's part when he first enspelled the wards on the tower. All light sources within this room, including magical ones, are suppressed for the space of 2 rounds. Slowly, they will begin to return, gradually glowing brighter and brighter. Illumination from small glowing globes on the walls will add to the gradually brightening radiance until at the end of the third round after entering the room, the PC's will see the following:

The soft radiance gradually reveals a room is absolutely crammed with bookshelves. Three floor-



If Kiri is here, then the party will see her with her back to them, facing the arched doorway in her stance of awaiting orders. As soon as a party member steps into her view, she will jerk out of her reverie as her defence programming takes over. She will scream once, "You're not the master and you shouldn't be heeeerrrrreeee!" then attack. Note that of the party has somehow managed to lose Villem (or avoid combat with him in some way) and if he is still able to freely move, he will enter the room a round after the scream and attack at once, most likely from the rear.

Once the party is at liberty to look around, they can find several items of note. As would be expected, the library contains some useful items of magical nature, although none are terribly powerful. Note that magical items will radiate a dweomer if detected for.

Possible Search Locations:

a) Western Bookshelf: This shelf is devoted mostly to research topics. Titles of the volumes here include such erudite items as: "The Troll Moors – A Bloody History Revisited", "Speculation on the Origins of the Vast Swamp", "Will-o-the-Wisps - Fact or Marsh Gas?" and "A Treatise On Ye Alchemical Purposes of Sundry Plants of Ye Bogs and Fens".

The section of the shelf covered in jars contains Murq's old ink collection. He took most of the best items, so the majority of the pots are simply dried out and filled with congealed masses of pigment. 1d4 of them are still useable and may be utilized for scribing mage or clerical scrolls however, requiring only water to refresh them (Value: 500 GP/pot).

The major item of note here is a Quill of Transcription (XP Value: 300 GP Value: 1000) which

on command will transcribe everything spoken within 30 feet of it. The words transcribed by the quill appear in the language spoken and may require translation. It transcribes all normal words, but if any magical words are spoken, only the name of the spell or effect is transcribed, not the spell itself. It transcribes until commanded to stop and otherwise functions indefinitely, stopping only when it runs out of ink or parchment. When multiple voices are transcribed, the quill identifies each only by race and sex, numbering them in the order heard (human male #1, gargoyle #4, etc.); it writes all such non-transcribed remarks in the common tongue. The quill's detection abilities cannot be blocked by any means; it hears and transcribes even if encased. The quill is sitting upright within a glass jar filled with other non-magical quills of varying types.

b) Central Bookshelf:

Western Side: The lowest shelf of this side is devoted to storing paper, papyrus, parchment and vellum of various types. There are the following amounts of each: Papyrus: 160 sheets; Paper: 65 sheets; Vellum: 140 sheets, Parchment: 72 sheets. There are also 65 parchment envelopes of varying sizes. All of the writing material is suitable for scribing magical scrolls (see the DMG section on fabricating magical items for pricing and success rates).

The rest of the shelf is devoted to Murq's personal correspondence with sages, other wizards of like mind and agents of the Temple of Elemental Evil. Most of this is useless trivia, however, diligent searching will reveal a volume, which is obviously a diary. Most of the pages have been torn out of it, however a few partial entries on pages at the back of the book remain (**give the PC's Player Aid 3**):

"...pheles was not lying, I will have done it. Free willed golems may finally be within my grasp.

Goodmonth 6: Divinations in the pool indicate I must withdraw my support from the temple. They seek my knowledge merely to use my created creatures as front line troops. I will not throw my hard work away in a place that the signs indicate will be besieged so soon. It would be folly to allow my works to fall into either the hands of the hated Velunese or those of a rival who would seek to use them against me.

Goodmonth 9: I had the trolls capture a group of brats from the city. I will now put the knowledge that the fiend gave me to the test. If it is wrong or useless, I shall torment that fiend for attempting to toy with me! I go now to the lab to begin my grand experiment. Hextor smile upon my efforts.

Goodmonth 16: A week of uninterrupted toil has done it. Five of the nine city brats are now sentient golems under my control. The rest shall be my

offering to the fiend for its assistance, as it demanded. The golems maintain their childlike natures and some semblance of intelligence, but their wills are completely mine to control. Their small size makes them excellent spies and they will be able to assist me in lab work requiring fine control in tight places. This is a triumph of my art and a credit to my mastery!

Patchwall 13: Perhaps I rewarded the fiend too soon. The golems are showing signs that their conversion has unbalanced them. Yesterday I found one on the parapet of the upper level, laughing uncontrollably and surrounded with foul liquid and broken glass. It had smashed all of my partially brewed potions! I cannot express my rage! I think I heard Anastalia trying to comfort it as I was leaving the lab but I was too angry to look. I'd best watch her to ensure she is not really that frail of purpose. If she is, then there can be no place for her here. Only the strong and the ruthless can survive in this world. Hasn't she learned this simple fact yet?

Patchwall 15: I am exhausted, but I have managed to bring the golems back under my control. They fight the magic and will require occasional re-casting of the binding spells over the years to come. Much of their instability seems to come from homesickness and a weak-minded horror of their present circumstances. Anastalia has begged me to return them to their true forms (as if I would, even if it could be done now) as a method of healing their minds. I think she has come to pity the wretched things. She had best reign in her disgusting sentiment before it causes trouble for us both. There are only three kinds of people under The Lord of Strife: the rulers, the slaves and the dead. She may well leave the second category for the third if she continues to try my patience.

Still, her observation about the golems' condition may have some merit. Perhaps I can mend the golems by returning them to their previous lives for a time. Even if it does no good, I'll have the satisfaction of knowing their madness has bedevilled that sickeningly righteous priest and his pet paladin (may they both rot in lowest rifts of the Nine Hells.) Tomorrow, I will allow the two maddest to be found by their guardsmen and then we shall see how the experiment turns out.

Patchwall 20: I killed Anastalia this morning; Weakness such as hers is not to be tolerated! She actually tried to defend one of the defective creatures after I struck it repeatedly when it refused to carry out my orders, simply standing, shaking and whimpering, instead. Good riddance, since an enemy could easily have divined her vulnerability to sentiment and used it against us both. She had outlived her usefulness as an apprentice anyways and I shan't take another... I have no further desire

to share my power or my secrets and she is no longer a liability. She cannot tell anyone what she witnessed of my work or my summoning activities...

Patchwall 24: My handiwork has been discovered! I must pack and move my household to the new location I have settled upon, since those weak minded city folk will no doubt send someone to investigate. It would not do be besieged by the same army that has worked so much damage against the Elemental Temple. Bah! I shall not fear the likes of these. The temple was chaotic and masterless and the Velunese are simpering lick-spittles who serve a frail god of the transitory. They should have had the sense to remember that darkness came first. I shall leave the rest of the failed golems here for those snivelling servants of Rao to find, assuming they can pass my wards. Perhaps I will leave one of them as a door warden, just as a special surprise."

The rest of the leaves of this volume are blank.

Eastern side: This shelf was home to Murq's considerable magical library. He took all of his most powerful spells with him, leaving only those that he considered too weak or insignificant to bother with. Searching will turn up 2d4 scroll tubes which contain either a cantrip or a mage, illusionist, clerical or druidic spell of first to third level. (Note that clerical and druidic spells will primarily focus on plants and earth effects. Illusionist spells will largely be concerned with fog effects). These spells can be determined randomly or the DM can insert spells needed in the campaign. Placing some of the lower level spells by the known mages of Oerth as listed in the Greyhawk Adventures hardbound is also a possibility. No matter what spells are found here, the party will always locate a single mage scroll with *identify* (x3) and a clerical or druidic scroll with *detect magic* (x2) and *cure serious wounds* (x1) .

c) Eastern Shelf: This shelf is dedicated to maps of varying sorts. Most are of various locales on Oerth and any that have swamps depicted have had these areas circled in bright green ink. There are also several old maps that look to be catacombs, lairs and dungeons of various sorts.

d) The Writing Desk: This desk contains several very old ledgers in its drawers. They hold the accounts for the tower including rates of pay and supplies bought. On the desk is a jar of normal quills and an Everfull Inkwell (XP Value: 400 GP Value: 1200). This inkwell is used to fill quills for non-magical writing. When used properly, it cannot be emptied. The everfull inkwell is not suitable for making protection or spell scrolls but may be used in some magical

quills, such as the Quill of transcribing on the western shelving unit. There is also a normal sander and a blotter on the desktop.

e) The Reclining Couch: The couch itself is overstuffed and comfortable looking, but otherwise unremarkable. However, the low end table beside its head is covered in scattered papers that have accumulated a large amount of dust. This is because the permanent *unseen servant* in the kitchen is under orders to never touch, straighten or dust the table during its rounds, in case Murq had delicate research papers out or items with drying ink on them that might smudge.

When Murq left, he forgot to sort the papers and thus there is an interesting item here, in the form of a grimy and faded memo (**give the party Player Aid 4**) that the party can find if they check.

Things to Research

- altered trolls as house guards - are stupid and hard to control but their strength and hardiness is useful – are also less greedy than gnolls
- where should I settle next? Several locations to the north suggest themselves, however the larger mires to the far east might also suit my purposes
- find the location of the tome of Acererak - I must have the secret of lichdom
- locate the rest of the components for the mist golem - must also write the rest of the instructions for creation from the fiend
- must research more powerful compulsion spells - the fiend is not as frightened of me as it should be
- remember to take time to scribe teleport spells soon - will need them when location of new fortress is settled

4. Murq's Chamber

You part the beads in the archway and step through into a room fit for the ruler of a small country. Gold leaf adorns the walls and ceiling. Small glowing globes on the walls illuminate the room with a soft radiance, suitable for reading by. The walls are adorned with rich tapestries, most depicting nature scenes, all of which revolve around misty weather or boggy terrain. The floors are covered in some thick soft material that springs back when you step upon it. On the north wall, next to the archway, stands a sumptuous four posted and canopied bed, neatly made and immaculately clean. At the southern end of the room stands a small chest-of-drawers and a trunk. The lid of the trunk bears a warding rune.

The room is obviously Murq's personal sleeping chamber. Similar to the rest of this level it is cared for by the *unseen servant* and is immaculate.

The bed is a trap set for any servant or interloper unwise enough to try and sleep in it. Two rounds after lying down on it, roll a saving throw for the creature or PC in question. Repeat this save every round until they either get out of the bed or fail. On a failure, the creature is subject to a limited temporal stasis spell that will cause them to look as if they are simply asleep. However, creatures thus affected will be unable to regain movement or normal time sense until 2d6 turns have passed. Only Murq and Anastalia are immune to the effect and they are also the only ones who can remove the effect from a trapped being before the time limit naturally expires.

The chest of drawers is filled with various items of men's and women's clothing. Closer inspection will reveal that the female clothing would best fit a half-elf. Most of the men's clothing is gone, since Murq took it with him when he left. The rest belonged to his dead lover/apprentice. The only item of any value is a tiny smoky quartz set into the centre of a platinum amulet, similar to the Master key. Murq depowered it, so it is ineffective now, although the smoke effects in the heart of the stone are still visible. On the back of the amulet is an inscription reading: "To A.: Remember that to earn my respect you must be strong. Together we can rule the rest. M."

The chest can be opened as normal with the Master key, however it is also trapped and this will have to be found and disarmed. If the trap is set off, the room will flood with a corrosive gas doing 2d10 damage, save vs. breath weapon for half. On a failed save, check all items on the PC as well, since if they fail, they are affected as follows:

Normal Metal: destroyed

Magical Weapons/Armour: lose one "+". If the item was +1 originally, it becomes non-magical due to pitting and rust.

Leather: Damaged and will break 50% of the time. If it does not break immediately, check every turn adding 1% cumulative to the roll for the next 24 hours. If it does not succumb, it survives and functions normally.

Crystal or Glass: Unaffected

Paper, Wood or Parchment: Stained. If paper or parchment it fails its save, any writing it contains is illegible due to the staining. It is also too stained for use if it is blank.

All Other Items: Normal saves required.

Much of the chest's contents are gone, however Murq left several items from his apprentice, which he considered too insignificant to be bothered with.

The upper tray of the chest holds Anastalia's Strongbox (XP Value: 300; GP Value: Base 1500 at any Thieves Guild): This is a locked strongbox with a series of small trays containing 1000 GP.

Unfortunately, the money is actually fool's gold and the box maintains a permanent *dweomer* of this spell. Any coins of a non-gold metal will transform into fool's gold 1d6 hours after being placed within the box. They will revert to their true forms 1d4 hours after being removed. If magic is detected for, the box will radiate an obvious "alteration" *dweomer*. Anastalia completed this item as a project to prove her magical abilities to her master.

Below this are a few items that Murq had thought to use to equip a guard captain in the future as a troll master. He then decided to leave behind since he could easily get better if required. These include:

1. A Sword +1, Flametongue (dice for sword type or simply assign it as applicable) set into a clear quartz sheath. The sword requires no sharpening or cleaning since the crystalline structure of the sheath hones and cleans it each time it is drawn or scabbarded.

2. A medium Round Shield +1/+2 vs. Regenerating Creatures (XP Value: 350 ; GP Value: 1500) Normally +1, this shield provides extra protection from the attacks of regenerating creatures, such as trolls.

3. Scale Mail of Acid Immunity (XP Value: 2000; GP Value: 3500): This is +1 armour, which renders the user invulnerable to acid for a limited time. The armour can absorb up to 100 hp of acid damage per day and will then become normal magical armour until 24 hours has passed and it's magic has recharged. After the armour is inert, the wearer takes acid damage as normal but any saving throws made by them vs normal or magical acid are automatically successful. Note that spells which do combined damage involving acid and another attack form, such as *melf's acid arrow*, will have their non-acid attacks work normally.

4. Two vials of Oil of Acid Resistance.
5. Three potions of healing.
6. A pouch of three citrines of 36 GP value each.

5. Murq's Personal Kitchen

This room is quite obviously a well appointed kitchen. Cupboards with all manner of dried and preserved goods line the east and west walls. Along the south wall are a large open barrel, a preparation table and a sink. On the north wall is a woodstove with a large metal chest beside it. As you watch, a knife levitates from a rack near the table and begins chopping some kind of dried herb on a cutting board. Unwanted scraps from the herbs are seen floating towards a small door in the south wall which opens to accept them

The knife is being used by the permanent *unseen servant* that does the house keeping for this level. It is non-combatative and will immediately dispel if attacked, to reform and resume its duties 1d8 rounds later.

The servant will ignore the party and go about its routine of cooking and cleaning. Meals are set upon the table in area 2 and left for one hour, after which they are collected and thrown down the chute. The meal schedule goes as follows:

9:00 AM – Breakfast; 1:00 PM – Lunch; 6:30 PM – Supper; 10:00 PM - Late Evening Snack

The small door covers a chute down to the basement caverns, depositing waste materials and uneaten meals in the north western edge of the water in area 6. Any creature of dwarven size or smaller can climb into the chute, however, they will find it too slippery to maintain a grip and will slide the length of it to land in the water four levels below for 2d6 damage.

The barrel contains normal water and will replenish itself once every 12 hours. The large metal chest is an iron box with a permanent cone of cold on it's interior. It will freeze and keep good any perishables placed within it indefinitely. The sink connects up to the chute mentioned above and is largely responsible for the slippery conditions within it.

If the party somehow manages to remove either the barrel or the iron box from the kitchen, they will immediately become non-magical and lose all of their abilities permanently.

6. Storage Closet

Various kitchen and house keeping tools are neatly hung on pegs or stacked on shelves mounted on the walls here.

Swinging a shelving unit out of the way once the wards have been negated opens the warded secret door in the south.



Mist Hold: Level 4

General Notes:

Murq's lab has largely been stripped, since this is where most of the excess weight from his hurried teleporting came from. An attempt was made to pack and clear items in an orderly manner,

however one of the doll golems rebelled and was imprisoned, costing him more time. As a result, Murq was unable to remove everything that he would have wanted to and some valuable items remain.

The restriction on fire and fire-based magics does not apply here, since Murq did not ward the lab in the same way as the rest of the tower. He needed to be able to heat things freely using open flames for his alchemical and spell-crafting works, as well as during some of his summoning exercises.

Remember to check the lemur chest for spontaneous opening every round. There is a 1% chance this will occur, releasing all the monsters at once. This chance increases by 1% for every five rounds the party spends on this level of the tower, starting from the time the first PC sets foot on the floor.

1. Laboratory and Spell Casting Chamber

The lab is an immense room, forty feet on a side. The walls have been made intentionally thick to prevent fires or explosions from spreading easily. The ceiling is 20 feet high and conical. In the central 10 feet of the room there is the top of a spiral staircase heading down. Players should not be able to examine the lab quickly since there is such a profusion of stuff scattered about, most of which is disordered. The dust found on the lower levels is quite prevalent here as well.

The key for the lab divides it into quadrants, starting with the northeast and working its way around clockwise. When players choose to examine the area, have them do it a quadrant at a time for clarity. Note that each quadrant overlaps with it's neighbour and each shares the central staircase as one of its corners.

When the players first step into the room:

You have entered a large chamber, 50 feet on a side. The room is spacious and airy, with a conical roof ending in a peak twenty feet above you.

Stained glass windows set at each of the cardinal points allow dusty shafts of light in through sections of the cone. The room is a terrible mess, with objects scattered everywhere with no attempt to clean or organize them. Thick dust covers the whole in a gritty layer.

North East Quadrant: Alchemic Research Area

Read each section as the players encounter it. Do not rush and allow them time to look through each thing if they so desire.

The Worktable

In this section of the room you see an area which was once devoted to alchemical works of varying types. Glass tubing, alembics, oddly shaped tubes with rubber stoppers and various covered beakers and bottles of multicoloured liquids are scattered around a table just a little north east of the central staircase. Most of this apparatus has been rudely yanked apart and some of it is shattered from the haste in which it was separated. A single chair lies overturned and partially smashed behind the work table.

Aside from the listed contents, the party can find 4 potions that were incomplete at the time of Murq's hurried exit. The intervening time has since ripened them into their present form however each has odd side effects on the user (Although they will test and identify as normal potions of their type) :

Potion 1 - Greenish White and Odourless - Invisibility: This potion works as normally, however the user will glow a soft greenish-white colour for 24 hours after it has worn off. This will have the effect of reducing the user's effective charisma by 4 points. Viewers must save versus wands or flee in terror, thinking the user to be a ghost. This effect is permanent until the duration is gone and nothing short of a *wish* will remove it. The other unfortunate side effect is that it completely neutralizes any other invisibility effects from spell, device or potion while the glowing is in effect. The user is still invisible, but their form is outlined in the greenish glow, similar to *faerie fire* effects. Should the potion be imbibed in sips, the glowing condition will last for 1d4 turns per sip.

Potion 2 - Dead Black, Oily and Smelling of Watermelon - Diminution: This potion's effects are permanent until the imbiber receives a *dispel magic*, *limited wish*, *wish* or an *alter reality* spell. An *enlarge* spell or a *potion of growth* will not affect the shrunken imbiber.

Potion 3 - Pale Yellow, Smelling of Violets and Effervescent When Shaken - Clairaudience: When the user enters the clairaudient state, they will be subject to some hallucinatory effects as well. Thus, the user will receive clairaudient data as normal,

however they will also be subject to a vision in which a misty, humanoid figure slowly appears in front of them on a hazy background. It will not attack, but will threaten in a soft, hissing hypnotic voice: (EG: "I can see you, little snoop.", "The mists tell me everything you see and hear." and "You will be joining me soon. I'm waiting.") The delusion will even carry on an extended conversation if required. These are not visitations by Murq, they are simply harmless illusions generated by the contents of the potion. They will re-occur if the potion is taken in small sips for a period of five rounds per sip. Should the entire potion be quaffed at once, the delusory effects will last for 1d6+2 turns after the clairaudient effect has left. PC's affected during this time will seem to be talking to empty air, oblivious to what is going on around them. DM fiendishness is encouraged with this item. *Dispel magic* will not effect the delusory state since it is chemically, not magically, based.

Potion 4 - Deep Blue and Flower Scented - Cloud Giant Strength: The imbiber of this potion will indeed receive the strength bonus and extra abilities conferred by the potion, however, they will also become molecularly unstable for the potion's duration. Heavy exertion, such as combat or lifting extremely heavy items will cause the user to become gaseous in a sudden flash and thunderclap for 1d4 rounds, 50% of the time. This gaseous form will not take on normal mist-like proportions but instead will form a large, humanoid-shaped figure with blue-tinted skin and white or silver hair, similar to a hazy image of a cloud giant. The form abides by all rules of gaseous matter, other than the fact that it retains its outline. Thus it can be injured by high winds as normal. *Dispel magic* will cancel both the gaseous form and the strength effects.

Note: Imbibing two or more of these distillates at once will require a roll on the potion miscibility table (page 119 DMG) since they are much more unstable than those which have been properly completed.

There are also several unshattered bottles of various alchemic substances. These have had their labels torn off or faded by sunlight. Substances and their retail values include:

- yellowish, grainy powder (sulphur) (30 GP)
- green syrupy liquid (troll's blood) (125 GP)
- two vials of fine grey dust (grave dust) (40 GP each)
- a flaked, brownish-red substance (dried human blood) (worthless)
- fine, ivory-coloured shavings (flaked elephant ivory) (50 GP)
- a single, midnight-blue orb (pickled beholder eye) (125 GP)

- dark, yellow-brown liquid (iodine) (30 GP)

Other than the above, the rest of the items scattered about the table are of little to no value. Much of the glassware is chipped, cracked or broken and the rest of the equipment shows similar ill-use.

The Fireplace

Beyond the table is a fire grate set into the north wall, its base coated with a thick layer of grime and powdered ashes.

If the party sifts the ashes, they will find scraps of a badly burned note in Murq's spidery hand. Much of it is unreadable however the following remains:

**atchwall 30: hurried summoning last night was
succ l. eles has given rest secret of the
mist olem. I can finally it once I finish my
new hold. Hextor be praised!**

The Trunk:

Next to the fireplace you see a brass bound trunk, its bands long turned green with age. A lock is inset into the trunk's front and the whole does not look as if it has been disturbed in many years.

The trunk contains a surprise. Within it, inactive and disabled, is Katilla, another doll golem. She was the youngest of the children at 7 years old and was also the easiest for Murq to control. Her youth and pliability was what gave him his initial belief in success with the golems. Thus it was that when Murq dominated the rest of the golems to bring them back under his control, Katilla was the most powerfully affected.

When the party finds her she has followed Murq's orders to "turn herself off" and is lying in a folded position within the trunk where she has apparently been for some fifteen years. Her mind is still very much that of an innocent child's and she will not be able to easily articulate large words or complex concepts.

Katilla is the most innocent of all of the golems and thus there is actually hope that the party might be able to help her. She will speak if spoken to and will not display any of the stuttering, jerking or slurring problems that the others do. If removed from the tower and taken back to Veluna City, the church will take custody of her and will eventually (by the end of the adventure) find a cure through the intervention of Rao. In this case, she will be given into the custody of a now-grown sister and her husband who will take on the task of raising the child as if it were their own daughter. Should the party choose the option of returning her, award

them an XP bonus of 7000 divided between them for the heroic act of mercy.

Katilla will not attack under any circumstances since violence frightens her terribly. She will also react with great distress if the party is forced to fight around her and will become catatonic 75% of the time in such circumstances. Once in this state she cannot be roused for 1d6 turns. In the cases where she does not go catatonic she will seek to run away, screaming in obvious terror.

Should the party attack her, divide 7000 XP by the number of PC's and deduct this from their totals and tell them that they hear fiendish laughter in their minds after she dies. If attacked, directly, Katilla will fight back to the best of her ability.

Doll Golem (Katilla): AC 4; HD: 10 ; HP: 40 each; #Att: 1; Dmg 3d6; MV 15" AL: TN SA: bite every other round, save or begin laughing for 1d4 round 1, 2d4 round 2, 3d4 round 3 etc.; laughing only stops when *dispel magic* is used or victim dies ; SD: Immune to all magic except as follows: Fire does ½ dmg, *warp wood* acts as a *slow* spell, *mending* restores all hit points immediately ; S: S (2'); AL: CN; Treasure: Nil;

South East Quadrant: The Pool of Misty Sight

This portion of the room is dominated by a ten foot diameter pool inset two feet into the floor. The rim of the pool rises a foot above the floor and is made of mortared fieldstone with a layer of some black and slippery looking substance touching the liquid. As far as you can tell, the liquid appears to be water, very still and silvery coloured. The floor and the pool's rim are very dusty, however some force appears to have kept the dust from floating on or sinking into the liquid within the pool itself. The liquid contains no signs of floating speck and no mud or grit in it's bottom.

The only other item of note in this area is a dusty trunk sitting in the corner of the room to the southwest of the pool.

This pool was Murq's primary scrying device that he constructed through compelling the knowledge from various summoned creatures. The pool requires two operators – one to scry the pool and one to act as a lookout on the ramparts outside the lab. In operation, the scryer must sit and compose him/herself in front of the pool for at least 1 turn, clearing his or her mind. At the same time, the lookout must go out onto the rampart and stand at one of the four cardinal points of the compass, staring off into the horizon and clearing their mind for a turn as well.

Once the two have finished the required preparations, the pool will begin to generate silvery

mists from its surface. Within the mists the scryer may ask to view whatever they wish to see, so long as it lies within the quadrant of the compass direction the watcher on the ramparts is facing. There is no real effective limit to the pool's range on Oerth, however it cannot scry into wildspace or the inner, outer, astral or ethereal planes of existence. Thus, only scenes located on or under the land, within the sky up to three miles above the land or on or under the surface of the oceans can be viewed.

A time limitation also applies, since the pool can not look back any further than 10 years into the past or 10 into the future. Further, future scenes are extremely misty and prone to error, although their general meaning is usually clear enough. Fine detail, such as reading written words on a page or seeing small items in detail is possible only 50% of the time at up to five years ahead and 25% of the time up to 10 years ahead.

The scrying process is very taxing for both operators and can only be attempted a maximum of four times per day, one attempt per compass point. These attempts can last a maximum of 1 turn's duration before the mists will close over the viewed scene and obscure it. After the fourth attempt has been made, both operators must rest for at least 6 turns. Any further attempts will fail utterly and there is a 1% cumulative chance per attempt beyond the fourth that the operators will be rendered catatonic for 24 hours due to exhaustion and magical feedback from the device.

The other function of the pool is connected with devices that Murq created. Any surroundings around one of Murq's master keys may be viewed for 1 turn up to three times per day per key, in addition to the four basic scrying attempts. The limitation on this power of the pool is that the master key must be within a 100 mile radius of the pool in order for it to work as a scrying extension. See the appendix on new magic items for a full description of this function of the master key.

The Trunk:

This massive, long, low silver-fitted-and-bound iron trunk bears a warding rune which pulses irregularly. Small notes of greenish light can be seen to detach themselves from the sigil on the trunk's front and a soft humming, in time with the pulsing of the warding rune, can be heard.

This trunk is 6 feet long by three feet wide and three feet deep. The fittings and bands that wrap it are pure silver (400 gp value if removed from the container) and the sides, bottom and lid are made of sheets of cold-wrought iron. Murq enspelled the trunk to contain several lemures he *reduced* and placed in *temporal stasis*. The effects of the spells are set to a magical timer so that once the trunk

has been opened, any of the miniaturized contents that are touched will enlarge and come to wakefulness.

The sparks of light coming from the warding rune are an indication that the magic on the trunk (similar to much of the magic on the grounds since Murq's departure) is beginning to weaken and fade. Thus, the trunk can be opened by a thief without use of the master key, so long as they make an open locks roll in which is at least 10% in excess of what their normal needed score is.

Within the trunk are five lemures, all miniaturized and breathing slowly in time with the pulsing of the trunk. Any touch upon a lemure will begin the enlarging and awakening process on that creature. In addition, there is 25% chance (non cumulative) that the awakening of one lemure will also awaken and enlarge a second. Should this occur, check to see if the next lemure is also wakened and so on in a chain reaction. The awakening and enlarging takes a full round to accomplish and the lemure is immune to any damage, physical, magical or otherwise, done to it during that rounds.

Since the lemures are largely mindless and are always hungry, as soon as they come fully to consciousness they will attack the party seeking both food and escape. Pitched combat will add a 5% cumulative chance per round of awakening any of the other lemurs still within the trunk. Note that after three rounds of combat, they will also have figured out that the doors to the tower lead elsewhere and will try to flee through them if the battle is not going in their favour. These creatures will immediately drop themselves off the side of the tower and seek to head for the cover of the woods, should they have enough hit points to retain consciousness after the fall (4d6 damage). If they do not, then they will seek escape as soon as their regenerative abilities bring them above 0 hit points once more.

Lemure: AC: 7; HD: 3; HP: 16, 19, 21, 16, 15; #Att: 1; Dmg: 1-3; MV: 3 " SA: Nil; SD: Regenerate 1hp/round, only permanently destroyed by holy water, touch of a cleric's holy symbol, holy weapons; Resistances: ½ dmg from cold, fire, electricity, gas; AL: LE; S: M ;Treasure: Nil ; XP: DMG

South West Quadrant: Murq's Study Area

Two items of note are located in this section of the tower. The first, rather gruesome sight is that of a figure trapped within what appears to be an enormous bell jar of six inch thick glass standing free upon the floor. The figure is that of a child sized male, although it's facial features, contorted into a snarl of what appears to be rage or madness, are those of a boy of fifteen winters age. He stands upright, his body locked in a hunched and defiant

attitude, like someone gathering strength to lift a great weight. His arms are raised, with his fingers are frozen in place, clawing at the jar. The nails of his hands are chipped and broken and they appear to have scratched desperate claw marks on the glass. The glass of the jar, in spite of the cracks, remains whole and there is a small greenish-white rune pulsing softly on the glass between the figure's clawed hands.

The second area of note is a large table, just north of the table has a thick layer of dust and several objects lie in an almost undisturbed pattern on it's surface.

The boy is Karlos, the most stubborn, defiant and mad of the doll golems. A pugnacious boy, prone to arguments, Karlos was also the de facto protector of the group of children. The first of the doll golems created, he was driven mad both by his transformation and by his helplessness to protect the others from the same fate.

Karlos is the golem that Murq found shattering his potions on the outer ramparts of the top floor and this was not his only act of defiance. When Murq began clearing the top floor of the tower for transport, Karlos was the strongest of the golems and thus he was used the most for fetch-and-carry work. Once it became clear to Karlos that the remaining golems were not going to be going with Murq to the new stronghold, he lost his control and began destroying whatever he could get his hands on in the laboratory. Murq lost his temper and imprisoned him in the bell jar which he had enspelled to trap summoned creatures if they should suddenly get out of control. Karlos has been trapped in temporal stasis for the last fifteen years, however he has remained aware of the passage of time around him in the lab. This has driven any hope of reason from him and he will attack on sight if released. Note that Karlos, unlike the other golems, will not talk to those he attacks. He is fixated on destroying his tormentor and anyone who releases him will share that fate. Due to the single-minded nature of his madness and rage, Karlos is +1 both to hit and damage and his AC is improved by 1 as well.

Doll Golem (Karlos): AC 3; HD: 10 ; HP: 40 each; #Att: 1; Dmg 3d6 +1; MV 15" AL: TN SA: +1 to hit due to madness; bite every other round, save or begin laughing for 1d4 round 1, 2d4 round 2, 3d4 round 3 etc.; laughing only stops when *dispel magic* is used or victim dies ; SD: Immune to all magic except as follows: Fire does ½ dmg, *warp wood* acts as a slow spell, *mending* restores all hit points immediately ; S: S (2'); AL: CN; Treasure: Nil;

The Table

When the PC's first examine the table:

On closer examination, the dust appears to have settled over a cloth or sheet of some sort. The objects under it are irregular bumps forming a vaguely humanoid outline.

If the PC's remove the cloth:

An undisturbed female skeleton lies here. The table below the body is blacked as if from some kind of chemical reaction. There is a faint vinegary smell from the bones and the wooden slats of the table.

These are the acid-doused bones of Murq's lover and apprentice Anastalia. Three rounds after her body is uncovered, an apparition of her will slowly appear. Anastalia is still in a state of shock from her murder, even after all these years. She knows what was done to her, but not why and will implore the party for any knowledge they can give. Role play her as a lost soul - sad, grief stricken at Murq's betrayal and (if her requests are met) willing to help the party. She knows the following:

- Murq's new stronghold was to be established somewhere deep in the Cold Marshes of Blackmoor, north of the Vesve Forest and East of the city of Eru-Tovar.
- Murq was dealing with some lower-planar power, possibly from the Hells, Gehenna or the Abyss. The creature left a lingering aura of cold in the summoning chamber each time it was dismissed.
- Murq had 4 warding runes built into the stone walls around the tower which controlled the creation of the nightly fog. They can be detected by use of his master key, if it can be found. Note: Anastalia does not know the full nature of Murq's master key. She does know that it can be used to bypass wards in the tower and that it can trace Murq when it gets within a certain distance of him, as he instructed her in its use early in her apprenticeship.
- The warding runes can be destroyed by touching each with the key once and applying a drop of troll's blood. This will remove the mists, but all four must be obliterated for the removal to work.
- She can give detailed instructions on the use of the Pool of Misty Sight.
- She can give the details about her strongbox, if shown it or it is described to her.
- Anastalia will ask the party to bury her bones outside the borders of the forest. (If this is done, then there is a 50% chance that she will appear up to four time at later date to aid the party when they are in need. Her statistics are that of a neutrally aligned ghost (see the Monster Manual, page 43) with 6 points per hit dice.)
- So far as she knows, the potions in the alchemic section are genuine and effective.

Southeast Quadrant: The Summoning Circle

In the corner of the room, you see the faint outline of a circle on a slightly raised stone dais. The walls to either side of the dais are inscribed with fine silvery runes and sigils which have tarnished black in places.

On closer examination:

A faint smell of ozone, cedar and burnt tar clings to the area, becoming stronger and more pungent in the still air as you approach.

The circle is actually a pentagram within a double circle. The border of the circle is inlaid with the same silver runes as the walls, but they appear stained and far more tarnished than those on the walls. Lying on the edge of the dais is a smoothed wand of rowan wood, tipped with a single clear quartz crystal. Melted candle stubs are located at the tip of each of the points of the pentagram and five broken ivory-coloured shafts lie within each of the arms of the design. In the centre are the skulls of two small humanoid creatures, along with several scattered bones.

The summoning circle is useless now, since Murq damaged it beyond repair during his last summoning before he left. Even so, the entire area will radiate both a faint aura of old evil and the remnants of both abjuration and conjuration\summoning dweomers if they are detected for.

The ivory shafts are carved from walrus tusks and have a value of 200 GP/broken pair. The wand is magical: it is a wand of magic detection with 21 charges remaining. The wand does not require an activation word and the quartz on its tip will glow with a steady clear blue light when it is activated. (See DMG for XP/GP values)

If the bones and skulls are examined, they will turn out to be those of human children. Under one of the skulls is an old magical ring which Murq dropped here by accident. It is a ring with a permanent *non-detection* spell cast on it by an 10th level illusionist. (XP Value: 600 GP Value: 1200 (2000 to thief, assassin or illusionist)

The smell will be found to be coming from some kind of unguent smeared on a number of the wall and floor runes and it is the agent, which caused them to tarnish.

If the party chooses to take the bones of the children and bury them (or returns them to Veluna for this purpose) give them 200 X.P. each.

2. Ladder

This ladder is hidden behind a secret door warded by the Master Key. It is similar in nature to the other

ladder areas on the floors below, except that it is not trapped, since it serves as an escape route in case of fire, alchemic explosion or magic gone awry.



Mist Hold: The Basement Caves

1. Stairs Up

You have descended into an earthen room, roughly rectangular in shape. A tunnel heads off into darkness at an angle to the southwest, narrowing at its far end. From the darkness beyond it you hear high pitched squeaks and scuttling sounds. A moist, foul smelling draft blows softly from somewhere on the eastern wall of the room.

The squeaking sounds come from a large colony of ordinary rats who have settled in Murq's old root cellar in the southwest. The draft comes from a point at the base of the secret door that the rats have dug underneath to get to the water supply in the underground pond. As a result, the party can easily locate the secret door hidden in the wall (+1 to all checks).

2. Murq's Root Cellar

The rough, earthen walls of this room smell faintly of dampness and mildew. Southwest of the entrance there are several barrels, two of which show signs of leakage. Due west of the entrance stand a table and another barrel. You make out the signs of movement all around the room – there is a large colony of rats which has settled here! You can see a few adults tending nests which squirm with their young. Most of the rats seem congregated around the table.

These were once Murq's garrison supplies. Since his soldiers were humanoids and not very picky about what they ate, he bought the cheapest provisions possible. The only costly item is the table

which is designed to hold troll meat in a semi-stasis under a permanent slow spell. The table will radiate a faint alteration dweomer if magic is detected for. A command word from Murq would speed up the field to allow more regeneration when extra meat was needed quickly. Now, however, the table's magic is fading and the command word no longer works.

There are 41 ordinary rats in total here, including babies. (Rats: AC: 9; HD: 1-1; HP:1 each; #Att: 1; Dmg: 1-2; MV: 12"; SA: 5% chance of disease on successful bite; AL: TN; S: S; (8-12 inches long); XP: 8 each). They will scuttle away from the party if approached and will only fight in self defence if cornered and attacked.

The two leaking barrels once contained a cheap wine which has long since turned to vinegar. The rest of the barrels contain (1d6): 1-2 cheap sour wine, 3-4 foul tasting bitter black ale or 5-6 weak watered rum.

If the party examines the table closely they will see the following:

There is a large, ragged side of greenish meat lying on the greasy and blood-stained boards of the table. Oddly, the blood still looks reasonably fresh, perhaps only a few days to a week old. The carcass looks as if it came from a humanoid of some kind. Though you can clearly see the bones, you also see what looks like the fresh remains of organs. Although everything has been chewed by the rats, you note also that quite a bit of flesh still clings to the underside of the bones.

Observant PC's who examine the meat closely may make an intelligence check to realize what is happening, A Ranger has a 10% of correctly identifying the race of the carcass in it's present condition. If the Ranger has seen a troll before, increase the chance to 80%. Should the carcass be removed from the table, it will begin regenerating at normal speed for a troll. Replacing the meat onto the table will slow the regeneration once more.

If the carcass is not replaced on the board, the troll will fully regenerate in 10+2d10 rounds and devour all of the rats in the room. It will then start hunting the party through the basement caves and will even go up into the tower to follow them. If the spider's lair at area 4 is cleared and the trap door above the ladder is un-warded, the troll will use it to set an ambush on one of the upper tower levels, assuming the party also unseals any of the secret doors on levels 1-4 that conceal the ladder.

Troll: AC: 4 ; HD: 6+6 ; HP:36 #ATT: 3; Dmg: 5-8/5-8/5-12 ; MV: 12 " ; SA: may attack multiple enemies; severed limbs attack ; SD: Regenerates 3hp/rnd, fire

or acid required to kill; S: L (9') ; AL:CE ;Treasure : Nil; XP: DMG

Any PC eating the meat will become ill 5 rounds later. They will start vomiting, taking 3 points of damage internally as their bodies struggle to digest the troll tissue and they will be weak for 1d20 rounds thereafter. While ill, their CON will drop by two points. This will return slowly to normal at the rate of 1 point every two hours. Ill PC's are at a -2 to hit, damage and on all saves, due to the weakness. After two hours this will rise to -1 and then to normal in two more as the last of the weakness fades.

There is nothing else of interest in the room.

3. Tunnel Fork

The earthen tunnel splits at this point. A short way down the branch to the east you can see the passage opens into a larger chamber. South of you the passage continues for some distance. An echoing dripping sound can be heard in that direction, while a cool, moist, foul smelling breeze blows around you towards the northwest.

4. Giant Trap Door Spider Lair

This largish earthen room smells dry and a bit stale. You dimly see ahead of you some scattered, oblong objects, most of which seem to have been collected and roughly piled at the foot of a ladder inset into the east wall. One item of note catches your eye: You can barely make out the edge of a scrap of yellowed vellum peeping out of a brightly coloured ceramic tube at the edge of the pile.

The oblong objects are the cleanly picked arm and leg bones (including those of a hapless gnoll servant of Murq's from 15 years ago) from the trap door spiders' previous victims. Should the party choose to investigate the pile and the ladder without checking the rest of the room, the mated pair of spiders, hiding in the shadows on the ceiling of the alcove to the north cross and attempt to attack from above, dropping down to drag away one of the PC's. Victims struck by a dragging attack must make a STR check at -2 to free themselves, in addition to taking bite and poison damage. Note that extremely bright light sources (*continual light*, a *helm of brilliance*, et al.) will clearly reveal the spiders. Lesser light sources such as torches, lanterns or *light* spells will make the creature 75% invisible. Rangers and Barbarians have a normal chance to detect the creatures through tracking, if they choose to look for footprints.

2 Giant Trap Door Spiders: AC: 4 ; HD: 4+4 ; HP: 20,28; #Att: 1 (or 2; see special attacks) ; Dmg: 2d4 ; MV: " SA: poison for 1d6 damage, save for half; shoots web strands – normal to hit roll, no damage

but *entangles* victim for 1-4 rounds; AL: TN S: M (5' long); Treasure: (scattered in bone pile at base of ladder) Ceramic tube with message scroll, 523 cp, an eye agate (10 gp), a jasper (50 gp), an opal (100 gp) and a flawed oriental amethyst (450 gp, nonetheless); XP: 975 each

When the spiders attack read the following:

There is a monstrous chittering sound and two huge spiders with brown-gold bodies and red markings on their legs leap to attack!

Once the ceramic tube has been examined, the faded, spidery writing on the scrap of torn and blood stained vellum will read (Give the players Player Aid 2 from the back of the module):

...since you are the only one of the gnolls who can read, I am giving you the task of getting the spare master key from the chest in the basement. I'll need it at our new home for the wards I intend to install and I will be extremely annoyed if I have to fashion another duplicate, so make certain you don't forget it. If you are late or dally hunting rats in the cellar again, I won't wait for you when I start the teleporting. You and any other lazy troops will just have to walk all the way to... (this is followed by two words partially obliterated by a large, dried blood stain which read: "ist ano")...

Note that the tube itself is valuable as well: it is glazed clay formed around a leather core with a cork cap. The tube will protect its contents well against fire, lightning, acid and cold attacks, adding +3 to saves vs them. The tube can be sold to a mage or cleric for 50 gp.

5. Ladder Up

A varnished hardwood ladder has been inset into a shallow alcove in the wall here. The varnish shows signs of age and cracking. There is a sizable pile of bones scattered at its foot, in which a few small objects gleam dully. The top of the ladder ends in a trap door, marked with an green hourglass-shaped rune which pulses softly with a subdued glow.

The trap door is warded. The gleaming objects are the dusty copper and gems (see the spiders treasure, above.)

6. Underground Pond

The passage widens out here and you smell water. The air is very moist and ahead of you is a large, open cavern, perhaps fifteen feet from the ceiling down, filled with still, brackish water. It is dark, however you think you can just make out the outline of long, low a mound with a bulge on its eastern edge, about twelve feet from the point

where the passage opens into the cavern. All around you at intervals are faint sounds of dripping as water condenses and falls from the ceiling, leaving faint rings on the surface of the water where it lands. Aside from the sounds of the dripping condensation, the cavern is utterly still.

The water in the north section of the cavern, between its entrance and the small island, is no more than two feet deep. Beyond the island and ten feet to the east and the west of the entrance it begins to drop off quickly until it reaches a depth of 40 feet near the southern walls.

Should the PC's investigate the hump, they will have to step about 3 feet south from the entrance into the water to see clearly. If they do so, read the following:

You step out a few feet into the water and note that it is not very cold and that it has a sandy bottom. The low mound you saw earlier resolves into a sandbar, about 20 feet long and eight to ten feet wide. The bulge to the east is what looks like a chest, keg or some kind of large wooden container. The wood is shiny from the dampness and you can see faint streaks of pale white fungus even from here.

If the party continues onwards to investigate the sand bar, begin a 7 round counter. At the end of this time, the first wave of four giant water beetles will have arrived, after noticing the party, and will swim to the attack. Should the party post guards while examining, they will detect the beetle one round before they close for combat. When the beetles are detected, whether a round early or not, read the following:

You look up to see four large, dark coloured, barrel-like shapes moving soundlessly and very quickly through the water towards you. The shapes resolve themselves into beetles with a bubble of air trapped under their carapaces. They continue to move soundlessly towards you, flexing their mandibles hungrily.

4 (of 8) Giant Water Beetles: AC: 3; HD: 4; HP: 19, 21, 10, 17, (9, 19, 23, 29); #Att: 1; Dmg: 3d6; MV: Land 3", Water 9" AL: TN Size: M (6' Long) Treasure: Nil XP: DMG

Two Rounds after the first wave attacks, the last 4 will come to investigate the noise as well.

Once the party has time to investigate the sand bar, read the following:

The wooden hump turns out to be a four foot long, two foot high chest of oiled oak wood. It is bound with rusted steel bands and a heavy, rusty iron padlock with a dial on its face hangs from a loop at

the front of the chest. The wood of the container is streaked with pale, slightly luminous fungus and patches of condensation, but otherwise appears to have stood up to its damp environment quite well. Several softly glowing runes are written across the top of the box.

The runes are written in the old Oeridian script, common in the Flanaess a few hundred years ago. Anyone with this language proficiency can read them easily, otherwise allow each PC a base 30% chance to puzzle out each line. Thief characters will add their Read Languages score to this percentage, if applicable. Translation attempts will take a minimum of two rounds of uninterrupted study. A *comprehend languages* spell will also translate the runes automatically with no time penalty.

The runes read:

The first is the first of his first name.

The second is the first of the direction the gate faces.

The third is the last of his last name.

The fourth is the first of those whom he hates.

These are the combination for the padlock dial to the chest, which is numbered from 1 to 26. The items hinted at are letters, which correspond to numbers on the dial. The letters are as follows:

M(urq) = M = 13 Right

N(orth) = N = 14 Left

T(Thendiva)L = L = 12 Right

V(eluna) = V = 22 Left

Opening the chest with the above combination will disarm the poison dart trap which is set to shoot out of the chest when it opens. (See below for effects of trap.) All other methods short of smashing the chest (eg: a *knock* spell, a thief's open locks ability) will not. The trap mechanism is within the chest itself, so a thief is at a -40% to detect it, unless they peer in with the lid open only a third of the way. Magical means will discover that there is a trap, but not what it is, unless the person using them also opens the lid partially.

Anyone within a 5-foot radius of the chest has a chance to be struck by a dart, if the trap is set off by opening the lid fully. The darts strike with a THAC0 of 10 for 1d4 damage and are coated with a numbing poison which will do 1d4 damage and both slow the victim and paralyze their vocal chords for 2d6 turns. If a successful save vs poison is made, the damage is halved and the slow is negated, however the vocal paralysis is still effective for the indicated time. The effects may be removed by a *neutralize poison*, a *potion of*

sweetwater or a *heal* spell. *Slow poison* will not affect this venom due to the speed of its onset.

Within the chest are several items. In the top tray are three pieces of cheap jewellery, with *Nystal's magic aura* on them. They are two necklaces and a ring worth 8 gp each. Below the tray is a burlap sack with various spell components in it. This can be sold for 150 GP to any mage, illusionist, alchemist or a store or guild catering to such. Beside this is a small, laced leather pouch that is warm to the touch. Within the pouch is one of Murq's master keys. See the entry in Appendix 1: New Magical Items at the end of the module for details on this item.

Ending the Adventure

The trip back to Veluna City should be uneventful. The High Priest and the Paladin-Captain will grant an immediate audience during the day, should the party arrive then. If at night, the gate guards will take word of the PC's return to their superiors immediately (they have been instructed to watch for the party) and the audience will be arranged for the next morning. The PC's will be escorted from the gates to the audience, during the day, or to The Bull and Mallard, an inn close to the city council chambers, if it is after dark.

The more complete a report given to the High Priest of Veluna, the faster he will be able to divine Murq's exact present location on Oerth. If the party has been particularly observant and meticulous in reporting the details, you may wish to give a moderate XP bonus (50-200 each, depending on quality of play) for a job well done. When the High Priest has their reports, go to the beginning of Part 2: Into the Vesve.

As a final point, the empty premises of Murq's forest tower, Mist Hold, could become a DM's nightmare if handled improperly. Allowing mid-level players permanent access to a mage's warded stronghold as a base can take much of the danger (and fun) out of later, high-level play. The simplest way to handle the problem is to have Veluna confiscate the tower as a watch post for its guards.

Another point is that the tower will lose many of its special qualities after Murq's death, and this should be used to trim the tower down to something more manageable if you opt for the players keeping it.

Reasonable powers for Mist Hold to keep include the self-repairing and preservation abilities and very limited use of the scrying device on the walkway of the upper level. Features such as the killing mists, the effects on fire and fire magics and any magical traps and the door/window/container wards will vanish altogether. This will make the tower basement vulnerable to invasion by large burrowing creatures and the grounds will have

various types of animal and monster life move back into them.

Note also that the stronghold is of special interest to the ice devil Astinopheles, who would love to possess an inhabitant with the intention of taking over the tower as a prime material safe-hold. This will tend to give the place a slight aura of evil when the devil is scrying on the tower, and the aura will be noticeable even without magical detections (PC's will feel a chill on the spine, milk curdles, fires go out or other minor annoyances). These effects stop in the presence of a *non-detection* or similar spells, or if the party is creative and finds a way to sheath or impregnate the tower walls with lead. Note that such efforts will alert the devil and likely have it attempt to be summoned to Oerth in order to investigate.

Appendix I: New Magical Items

1. Murq's Master Key

Description: A three inch long, one inch in diameter crystal of smoky quartz, carved into an hourglass shape. Greenish mist is trapped within the heart of the crystal and constantly runs from one end of it to the other, similar to the movement of sand in an hourglass. The crystal pulses faintly and gives off a soft radiance and warmth.

Function: The key can be used to pass by the wards set by Murq the Devious. He always has one such device on his person and a spare hidden away in case of emergency. The key is linked to Murq's magic and will become immediately powerless (as will the wards it negates) upon the death of its creator, although the mist will remain flowing in the heart of the crystal even after the pulsing stops. Because of the link, this key can also be used to "home in" on it's owner when within 100 miles of him, since it will increase the speed of its pulses as it nears him. Knowing that enemies would value this function, Murq has added one other useful property to his master keys: when within a 100 mile radius of him they act as a crystal ball with clairaudience, allowing him to see and hear in his Pool of Misted Sight whatever is going on around the key and its owner for ten minutes, up to 3 times a day. When Murq is actively scrying through the key, the mist in the crystal stops flowing and turns a soft grey. Should the owner detect the fact that they are being scried upon, the change in the crystal will not be immediately apparent unless the victim has it out in full view when they look to see what is amiss. (Note that *identify* or *legend lore* spells will not reveal the scrying function.) A dispel magic will deactivate the key for 1d4 hours, but otherwise not affect it. The key has no other magical or mundane functions.

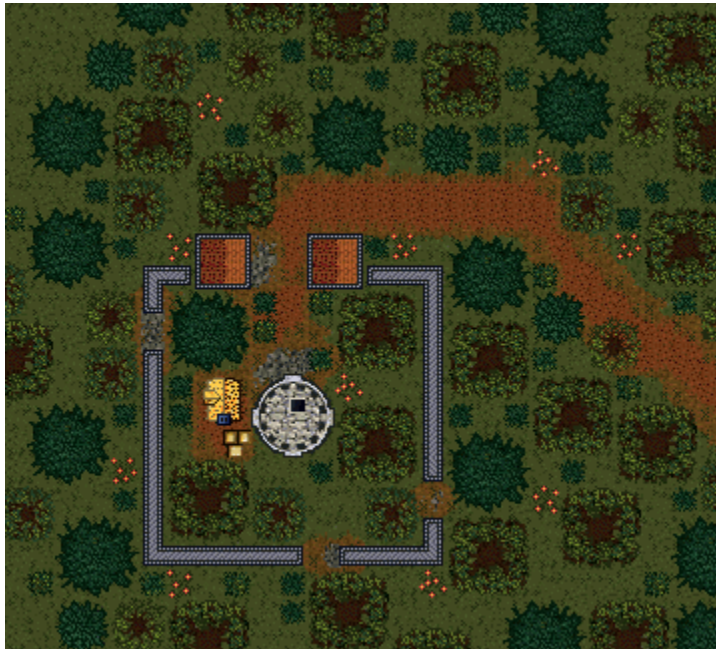
Value: If actively radiating a dweomer, the key can be sold for ten times its gem value, otherwise it is worth 200 gp.

2. Anastalia's Strongbox

(XP Value: 300; GP Value: Base 1500 at any Thieves Guild)

Description: This is a locked strongbox with a series of small trays containing 1000 GP. Unfortunately, the money is actually *fool's gold* and the box maintains a permanent dweomer of this spell. Any coins of a non-gold metal will transform into fool's gold 1d6 hours after being placed within the box. They will revert to their true forms 1d4 hours after being removed. If magic is detected for, the box will radiate an obvious "alteration" dweomer. The box was a project she completed while under the tutelage of her lover Murq.

Player Aid 1: The Approach to Mist Hold



Player Aid 2: Note smeared with old, dried blood.

...since you are the only one of the gnolls who can read, I am giving you the task of getting the spare master key from the chest in the basement. I'll be needing it at our new home for the wards I intend to install and I will be extremely annoyed if I have to fashion another duplicate, so make certain you don't forget it. If you are late or dally hunting rats in the cellar again, I won't wait for you when I start the teleporting. You and any other lazy troops will just have to walk all

the way
to...ist...ano...

Player Aid 3: Remains of a Diary

-pheles was not lying, I will have done it. Free willed golems may finally be within my grasp.

Goodmonth 6:

Divinations in the pool indicate I must withdraw my support from the temple. They seek my knowledge merely to use my created creatures as front line troops. I will not throw my hard work away in a place that the signs indicate will be besieged so soon. It would be folly to allow my works to fall into either the hands of the hated Velunese or those of a rival who would seek to use them against me.

Goodmonth 9: I had the trolls capture a group of brats from the city. I will now put the knowledge that the fiend gave me to the test. If it is wrong or useless, I shall torment that fiend for attempting to toy with me! I go now to the lab to begin my grand experiment. Hextor smile upon my efforts.

Goodmonth 16: A week of uninterrupted toil has done it. Five of the nine city brats are now sentient golems under my control. The rest shall be my offering to the fiend for its assistance, as it demanded. The golems maintain

their childlike natures and some semblance of intelligence, but their wills are completely mine to control. Their small size makes them excellent spies and they will be able to assist me in lab work requiring fine control in tight places. This is a triumph of my art and a credit to my mastery!

Patchwall 13:

Perhaps I rewarded the fiend too soon. The golems are showing signs that their conversion has unbalanced them. Yesterday I found one on the parapet of the upper level, laughing uncontrollably and surrounded with

foul liquid and broken glass. It had smashed all of my partially brewed potions! I cannot express my rage! I think I heard Anastalia trying to comfort it as I was leaving the lab but I was too angry to look. I'd best watch her to ensure she is not really that frail of purpose. If she is, then there can be no place for her here. Only the strong and the ruthless can survive in this world. Hasn't she learned this simple fact yet?

Patchwall 15: I am exhausted, but I have managed to bring the golems fully back under my control. They fight the magic and will

require occasional re-casting of the binding spells over the years to come. Much of their instability seems to come from homesickness and a weak-minded horror of their present circumstances. Anastalia has begged me to return them to their true forms (as if I would, even if it could be done now) as a method of healing their minds. I think she has come to pity the wretched things. She had best reign in her disgusting sentiment before it causes trouble for us both. There are only three kinds of people under The Lord of Strife: the rulers, the slaves

and the dead. She may well leave the second category for the third if she continues to try my patience.

Still, her observation about the golems' condition may have some merit. Perhaps I can mend the golems by returning them to their previous lives for a time. Even if it does no good, I'll have the satisfaction of knowing their madness has bedevilled that sickeningly righteous priest and his pet paladin (may they both rot in lowest layers of the abyss.) Tomorrow, I will allow the two maddest to be found by their guardsmen

and then we shall see how the experiment turns out.

Patchwall 20: I killed Anastalia this morning; Weakness such as hers is not to be tolerated! She actually tried to defend one of the defective creatures after I struck it repeatedly when it refused to carry out my orders, simply standing, shaking and whimpering, instead. Good riddance, since an enemy could easily have noted her vulnerability to sentiment and used it against us both. She outlived her usefulness as an apprentice anyways and I shan't take another ... I have

no further desire to share my power or my secrets and she is no longer a liability. She cannot tell anyone what she witnessed of my work or my summoning activities now.

Patchwall 24: My handiwork has been discovered! I must pack and move my household to the new location I have settled upon, since those weak minded city folk will no doubt send someone to investigate. It would not do be besieged by the same army that has worked so much damage against the Elemental Temple. Bah! I shall not fear the likes of these. The temple was chaotic and masterless and the

Velunese are
simpering lick-
spittles who serve
a frail god of the
transitory. They
should have had the
sense to remember
that darkness came
first.

I shall leave
the rest of the
failed golems here
for those
snivelling servants
of Rao to find,
assuming they can
pass my wards.
Perhaps I will
leave one of them
as a door warden,
just as a special
surprise.

Player Aid 4: To Do List

- altered trolls as house guards - are stupid and hard to control but their strength and hardiness is useful
- also are less greedy than gnolls
- where should I settle next?
Several locations to the north suggest themselves, however the larger mires to the far east might also suit my purposes
- find the location of the tome of Acerak - I must have the secret of lichdom
- locate the components for the mist golem - must also write the rest of the instructions

for its creation from the fiend

- must research more powerful compulsion spells - the fiend is not as frightened of me as it should be

-remember to take time to scribe teleport spells soon - will need them when location of new fortress is settled

**Player Aid 5: Remains of a Charred Diary
Entry**

atchwall 30:
hurried summoning
last night was succ
l. eles has
given rest
secret of the mist
olem. I can finally
it once I finish my
new hold.
Hextor be praised!