

Old Rock Tower (adventure for characters level 5)

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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Introduction

Introduction

This adventure was written as a location in Shattered Peace, an adventure that takes characters from 1st to 8th level, coming soon from Unicorn Rampant publishing. In that context it exists as a description of the location where the chief antagonist of Shattered Peace, an Erines named Alu-mognis, was first brought into the mortal world by an evil and twisted human wizard named Talnabous. The location makes for an interesting and challenging adventure outside of that context, since the wizard is long dead and the Erines is busy elsewhere. To that end, I have polished it and am providing it for free for use as a stand-alone location for the public, for inclusion in an ongoing campaign or for use in tournament play, in thanks for the many free adventures I have been fortunate enough to have found and used over the years as a DM.

Preparation

To play this adventure you will need the Third Edition D&D core rulebooks, dice, a Dungeon Master (yourself) and some players.

The first step in preparing to run this adventure for a stalwart band of adventurers is to read over the entire adventure so that you are familiar with its contents. As with everything in Dungeons and Dragons, you, the Dungeon Master, should change any part of this adventure to fit your or your players' needs, styles or interests. If your players have access to this adventure you may consider changing the monsters they face in each encounter, which areas are trapped or anything you feel will be necessary to keep the excitement of facing unknown dangers for your players.

The adventure is designed for a party of four 5th level adventurers. If you have players of higher or lower level, or more or less characters, the challenge of this adventure can be adjusted. The easiest way to do this is by adding to or subtracting from the number of monsters or the hit dice of each monster. Table 3-1 on p.49 of the 3.5 DMG can be useful for determining appropriate encounter levels for your players. The appendices in the Monster Manual have guidelines for adding hit dice (HD) to monsters to adjust their challenge ratings. It may also be necessary to adjust the amount of treasure in the final horde (area 41) to provide the appropriate amount of treasure for a smaller or larger group of characters. The section on Treasure on p.51 of the DMG can provide guidelines for adjusting treasure.

Course of the Adventure

This adventure is of a scope that you should be able to play it in a session or two, and it should provide enough treasure and experience to take a party of four fifth level characters to the next level of experience. Whatever hook you use to get your players to explore the tower, once they enter they should be able to come and go as they please until they uncover all of the Old Rock Tower's secrets and unearth its hidden treasures (unless you use the optional "ghosts control the stairs" challenge below). The players should be able to take their time with the adventure since there are no random encounters. If they so chose they could rest after every encounter, though if that bogs down the pace the chimera can always investigate the sounds the adventurers are likely to make....

Character death

During tournament play, in the event one of the PCs suffers petrification by the cockatrice at the beginning of the adventure, it may be best to let that player pick another character to use, and let them arrive shortly, due to the fact that the players are unlikely to be able to reverse the petrification. An explanation can be offered as to why that character shows up separate from the others, such as they were

delayed in leaving town, or they were coming from a different place and had just arrived to meet their friends at the tower. Otherwise, character death should be handled as you see appropriate, though it should be noted that this adventure does not contain any particularly deadly encounters for a group of 5th level characters, so death will probably be the result of recklessness on that player's part.

Treasure

This adventure has a high ratio of treasure per encounter. There is 27,293 gp worth of treasure, not including the final vault's payload of 9,014 gp. For the encounters in the adventure the DMG recommends 22,800 gp. The adventure was written that way to compensate for low treasure in previous parts of the larger adventure of which this is a small part. Feel free to adjust treasure in final vault (area 41) to nothing if running a standard treasure game, or whatever amount is appropriate for the campaign you are running. Making it hard to transport the larger treasures, such as statues and tapestries, or eliminating the trade good style treasures, such as mystical components, can also help reduce the treasure in this adventure to an appropriate level.

Starting the Adventure / Character Hooks

As a stand-alone adventure there are many potential hooks to use to introduce it into your game, and entice your players into the tower. It makes a mysterious and exciting location for players to come across while traveling from one location to another, either through a dark forest or (by changing the description of the overland location slightly) through terrain of any type. Its obviously abandoned nature should incite curiosity in any daring adventurer. Characters who are interested in wealth may hear a rumor of an old abandoned wizard's tower with a hidden vault, much as the ill-fated thief in location 19 did. Perhaps an old mystical colleague of Talnabous wishes to discover the reason for a loss in communication with him or what fate may have befallen him. Characters of strong moral fiber might be asked by elven acquaintances to investigate the mysterious and sudden disappearance of the small tribe of elves who lived in the forest Talnabous built his reclusive wizard's tower in. The possibilities are wide open with this adventure because it's moral and character conflicts are static, having occurred long in the past. Your job as DM is to tailor these suggestions for your players' motivations, or come up with your own hooks since you, as Dungeon Master, know your players the best.

Background for the Dungeon Master

Several decades ago, a moderately powerful and extremely reclusive wizard named Talnabous build this four-story stone tower. For years it was his sanctuary where he could pursue his magical studies in solitude. Slowly his solitude and isolation drove him to greater and greater acts of depravity, including slaying many of the elves in the wood. His final mistake was to summon and enslave an Erynies. After long servitude and imprisonment at the wizard's hands she won free of his domination and enacted revenge upon him. Free to cause havoc in the world she left her former prison to slake her unquenchable thirst for turning mortals to evil and corrupting their souls. Years later, the ruins of the tower now serve as a home to a variety of dangerous creatures both of the wizard's creation and that have arrived from the wilderness. The secrets of the wizard's legacy remain to be discovered in the Old Rock Tower....

Chapter 1 : The Old Rock Tower

Special Features

Running up the height of the tower is a long, narrow (3' wide) spiral staircase starting at the ground level. Each floor is marked with a draconic rune indicating the floor's relative position. This staircase is enchanted in such a way that travelers on it can move to any floor from any floor.

Which floor travelers reach is determined randomly if the climber is unaware of the staircase's properties. Roll 1d6 to determine which floor the users end up on. A result of 1 indicates the ground floor (area 10), 2 the second floor (area 16), 3 the third floor (area 19), 4 the fourth floor (area 22), 5 the fifth floor (area 30) and 6 the sixth floor (area 36). The secret vault on the seventh floor is not reachable at random. Groups of people traveling on the staircase together will move as a group as long as they remain together, the destination floor determined by the character in the lead. Those who are not arcane spellcasters are unable to quickly navigate the stairs and must climb until they reach the desired floor. Arcane spellcasters able to read or decipher the runes marking the floors can attempt to travel the staircase by concentrating on the name (or rune) of the floor and making an intelligence + arcane spellcaster level check (DC 20). If the user actually knows draconic they receive a +2 circumstance bonus.

As with other magic items, a successful dispel magic spell will suppress the staircase's operation for 1d4 rounds. Under this circumstance, users can move between levels 1-4 with freedom, or between levels 5-7, but not from the above ground floors to the below ground floors, as they are not actually physically connected via the staircase.

OPTION: (EL 3 or 4): Include this option to add an extra challenge and an element of dread to the tower. The ghost that haunts the sitting room has taken control of the arcane properties of the staircase and prevents players from leaving until his body is buried. Once they have left the main floor, they will be unable to return to it. As they travel up and down the stairs the ghost of Aor will peer out of the walls at them with a mournful, pleading expression on his face. Otherwise the staircase operates as described above. The players will have to take body out via the balcony on the 4th floor and give burial, or will be allowed to return to the ground floor if they have his body and communicate to the ghost that burial is their intention.

Additional Preliminary Notes

There are no random encounters in the tower. Characters camping in the woods around the tower may encounter shadow mastiffs, displacer beasts, or other predators appropriate to the terrain. Doors are good wooden doors (DC 18 to break if locked) unless noted otherwise. All doors swing open from the hallways into the rooms, and from the rooms into the smaller rooms, with the exception of closets. The locks built into the doors that have them are DC 25 to pick.

Fire Trapped Doors: Several doors in the tower are warded with a permanent fire trap spell at 12th level, that will work once per day, dealing 1d4 + 12 points of fire damage, with a DC 19 reflex save for ½ damage. As with other magic items, a successful dispel magic spell will suppress their operation for 1d4 rounds.

This tower was built of modest proportions, so there will be times the players find themselves gathered in relatively small areas. It may be useful to remind the players of the “squeezing” rules (PHB, combat section), which mean that 4 Medium PCs can fit in a 5x5 square (like the landing), or that the chimera could climb up the staircase, with various penalties.

Key to Old Rock Tower Locations

Outside

0) The Old Rock Tower

DESCRIPTION: Standing in the depths of Grimwood forest, this tower rises out of the thick growth: a crumbling and foreboding site. The forest has reclaimed the cleared areas around the tower since its abandonment and now the brush and saplings grow right up against the base of the tower. The tower itself is 50' across its circular base. Its stone walls and roof rise up 20' of windowless 30' diameter stone shaft to a 40' diameter top floor. The top floor features two stone-walled balconies and a rotted wooden-shingled roof. A single door hangs open, partly off its hinges, on the south face of the tower. Small structures can be seen in the clearing just north of the tower.

The well-constructed stone walls of the tower are climbable, DC 20 to climb the walls to the stone roof of the first floor and then up the shaft of the tower. The only entrances above the first floor are the balconies on the fourth floor, which is only accessible by climbing 5' across the bottom of the fourth floor, a DC 25 climb check.

Those staying outside for a time will eventually see the Chimera on the fourth floor leaving by the south balcony to hunt and returning, usually near dawn and dusk. It may attack adventurers that attract its attention, but will retreat to its lair if strongly resisted. If it slays one of the adventurers or they flee it will take their dead back to its lair for later consumption.

1) well

DESCRIPTION: A stone well stands open here, slightly overgrown by a series of vines. The wooden hoist that the winch and rope were suspended from lies rotted on the ground at its foot. No bucket can be seen.

The well is climbable (DC 15) and descends 40 feet to 5' deep stagnant water. A careful search will reveal humanoid skeletal corpses, the remains of live elvven children the Wizard threw down his well out of spite, and a 4' rusty metal rod that is all that remains of the winch.

2) outhouse (EL5)

A tiny wooden shack leans here, 5' on a side. Its narrow door stands open a foot or two. A statue of a cat hissing, its tail up and bristling stands immediately in front of the door.

CREATURE: Two cockatrice nest in the ruins of the outhouse. Their small nest is built in the rafters of the decrepit 5'x5' building. They will leap down and attack anyone investigating the outhouse.

The nest in the rafters, if searched, will yield 3 cockatrice eggs. The statue of the cat (actually a live cat petrified by the cockatrice) is perfect in every detail and worth 25 gp, or will make a good mouser if restored to flesh.

3) pasture (EL 3)

The tumbled-down remains of a wooden post fence separate this area from the rest of the yard. A small gate stands open, allowing access to the tree-enclosed area.

CREATURE: A dire chicken wanders the area north of the outhouse and well, the result of one

of the wizard's earlier experiments. It will attack anything it sees, save the cockatrice.

A search (DC 25) of the area marked (a) on the map will reveal a single boot covered in dirt amongst the roots of a huge holly bush. This boot is one of a pair of boots of springing and striding.

4) concealed door

An old wooden door stands closed, overgrown with vines and hidden by bushes on the north side of the building. DC 18 search check to find. This door leads to area 10.

5) front entrance

A heavy door hangs open and loose on its rusty iron hinges on the south face of the tower's base.

This door leads to area 6.

1st floor:

6) Foyer (EL 3)

The front door to the tower opens into this high-ceilinged room. Light from outside illuminates the tile floor, which is mostly covered with dirt and leaves. Cobwebs fill all the corners of this room and thick webs obscure the ceiling. An archway opens to the north and a small wooden door stands closed on the east wall.

CREATURE: One Advanced Large Monstrous giant spider (CR 3) hangs in the darkness shrouding the ceiling of this room, old and well fed off the animals of the woods. The spider, who is hiding (+6 hide) will attempt to use surprise to attack anything entering the room with a Web attack.

Tangled up in the webs on the ceiling are the brittle skeletal remains of several animals and a few humanoids, along with 1070 sp, 10 gp and 300 cp.

7) Cloak room.

This narrow room has a shelf running the length of the east wall at 4' height, with some boxes and items on it. Several cloaks and coats hang from hooks running the length of the wall beneath the shelf. A pair of boots and a pair of slippers sit beneath the cloaks and hooks, along with a single boot.

The clothes and hats in the boxes are all old and rotted or moth eaten, with the exception of the single boot, which is half of a pair of *Boots of Striding and Springing*.

8) Grand Staircase

A stone staircase winds up into the ceiling from the middle of this room and down into the floor. The central shaft is carved with a rune above the first step. Sounds echo back from the stairs strangely, as though from a great distance. In addition to the archway in the south there are identical ornately carved, iron-bound doors on the east and west walls of this room.

The rune is draconic for "foot." This is the enchanted staircase described above in Chapter 1, Special Features.

9) Dining Room

A large table dominates this room, stretching 20'. Dust lies thick on the table, except for in three circles evenly spaced along its length, 2', 1', and 2' in diameter respectively. Opposite the door a large fireplace stands quiet and empty. Two simple marble statues of a comely man and woman stand at the north and south ends of this room.

There is a large iron-bound, carved door in the center of this room, opposite the fireplace, and another, smaller and simpler wooden door in the northern part of the curving east wall.

The statues are worth 300 gp each, and weigh 500 lbs apiece.

10) Kitchen (EL 5)

This filthy and debris-strewn room features a large stove in the northeast corner and counters and cupboards along the walls. An enormous iron pan sits on the stove. Cooking utensils lie on the ground along with a broken broom and shards of dishes.

There are small wooden doors on the east and west walls, and a larger wooden door in the north part of the west wall.

CREATURE: 1 ghastr and 2 ghouls inhabit this room in the rags of a chef's and butlers' outfits, and are currently eating fried egg with their bare hands. They will leap upon any fresh meat that enters the room. The zombies in area 11 will join the fight after 2 rounds.

Players attempting to open the northwest door will be unable to easily open it farther than 1', just wide enough to slip through, without forcing it open (DC 18 Strength check) or cutting the vines concealing it from the outside.

The frying pan is enchanted to flip whatever is cooked in it, and to not require cleaning or oil.

11) Servants quarters (EL 3)

This room has a single large bed in it, a broken wooden chair, a small table and a chest of drawers. A dented tin pitcher sits on the ground.

CREATURE: 4 Human Commoner Zombies shuffle around this room, dressed in woolen rags of servants' clothes. Two are slightly smaller than the others, as adolescents. They will all rush clumsily to attack anything living they encounter.

A note with the phrase "Praise the mighty Talnabous and his sorcerous power" written on it is concealed in the chest of drawers (search DC 15 to find). They also contain a rat's nest in the scraps of ruined servants' clothing.

12) Sitting Room (EL 5)

A once comfortable looking but now musty sofa and two chairs occupy the east wall and the southeast corner of this room, along with a small table with an oil lamp on it and a shelf of books. A fireplace in the northwestern corner of the room is filthy and covered with small debris and animal leavings. A large, carved, iron-bound door gives entrance to this room on the west wall, and smaller, plainer wooden doors give exit in the middle of the north and south walls.

CREATURE: This room is haunted by Aor, the ghost of one of the last elves slain by Talnabous. Once people enter the room, he will re-enact his death. He will slowly appear dressed in common elven clothes as he wore in life, not seeming to notice the party. He will sit and chat soundlessly with an unseen person while drinking wine. After a few minutes he will stagger to his feet, clutching his throat and belly, before collapsing on the ground and being dragged off by unseen hands. This ghost cannot rest until his body, which is in the tapestry on the 3rd floor, is given a proper burial. If attacked he will use his frightening moan ability and retreat. If slain he will rejuvenate in 2d4 days.

Cursory inspection of the sofa and chairs will reveal mouse infestations. The fireplace has a

narrow 2' square chimney that vents on the roof of this floor at the base of the tower's shaft and is occupied by a small colony of bats.

13) Privy

A wooden seat on a box with a tin bucket beneath it sits at the end of this room. A small table and a washbasin stand near the door on the east wall. A cracked enameled clay pitcher lies at the foot of the table. The small door of light-colored wood on the south wall is the only visible entrance to this room.

14) Guest Room

A comfortable-looking single bed and a small wooden chest and table are this room's only contents. A small light-colored door allows entrance to this room from the north and a smaller door stands closed on the south wall or the room near the corner.

The chest is latched and contains a comfortable looking scholar's outfit that has weathered the ages well.

15) Closet (EL 3)

CREATURE: 3 fiendish dire rats occupy this trash-filled closet. Anyone disturbing them will be attacked viciously. A small crack in the tower wall gives them access to the outside.

2nd floor:

16) staircase

The central shaft of the staircase bears a draconic rune above the landing for this floor. Two doors open off from this room to the north and west.

The Rune on this floor reads "loin".

17) Mundane Supplies

Several crates and piles of material lie around this semicircular room. The sturdy wooden door to the landing is the only obvious entrance to this room.

The materials include foodstuffs rotted to dust, moth eaten cloth, tarnished oil lamps, rotted blankets and towels, and several bottles of wine, 2 of which are still good (search DC 20 to find them).

18) Arcane Supplies (EL 2)

TRAP! The door to this room is trapped with a *fire trap* spell (search DC 29 to find), and will deal 1d4+12 points of fire damage to anyone within 5' of the door when it is opened, once per day. The trap will not go off if the opener speaks the phrase "Praise the mighty Talnabous and his sorcerous power" before opening it.

This semicircular room contains many shelves and boxes. The shelves are covered with bags, jars and other containers. On a table near the door is a balance scale, metal scoops of different sizes and empty bowls and bags. The sturdy wooden door to the landing is the only obvious entrance to this room.

Examination reveals the boxes and jars contain various minerals, bits of animals and plants and small manufactured items such as glass rods. A large box on the ground holds 20 lbs of powdered silver. These are wizardly supplies such as components to arcane spells, scroll writing material, item enchanting material etc. There are 200gp worth of scroll writing material, 300 gp of magic enchanting material, and 300 gp worth of spell components. The material in its separate containers weighs a total of 400 lbs.

3rd floor:

19) staircase (EL 2)

The stone pillar that is the central shaft for the staircase has a draconic rune carved into it at a height of 4' above the landing. The smell of death is strong here. A human figure kneels slumped against the door, dressed in leather armor and wearing a backpack with a set of thieves' tools open on the ground in front of him. Other tools lie strewn about the landing.

The Rune on the landing is Draconic for "belly".

The door is locked (DC 25) and trapped with a poison needle, which has already been sprung. The key to this door is on the dead wizard's body on the 6th floor. The door to this room is also trapped with a *fire trap* spell (search DC 29 to find), and will deal 1d4+12 pits of fire damage to anyone within 5' of the door when it is opened, once per day. The trap will not go off if the opener speaks the phrase "Praise the mighty Talnabous and his sorcerous power" before opening it. This unfortunate burglar died from the poison needle trap in the lock to this door. His possessions include a suit of leather armor, a short sword and short bow, a backpack with a bedroll, some rotten rations, 50' of rope, and 20 gp and 40 sp in a small sack. He also has a larger sack with a silver candelabra (70gp), two silver serving dishes (20gp each) and 4 silver goblets (5gp each) in it, all tarnished with age. Tucked into his tunic (search DC 15 to find, unless he is stripped of his armor) is an old crumbling note.

The sloppily scrawled text of the note is this: "There be a wizard's tower hidden in a forest now called Grimwood by the Kiteles, reached from our city of Salbris by following the sun for 7 days, to and through the Verdant wood to the Rill river, then along it's south bank for a day to a switchback with woods ahead on each shore. There the now surely dead wizard's tower lies some miles to the south. It is said there is a vault with all of his magical treasure on the seventh floor of the tower."

20) Gallery

This circular room is a gallery of art objects. Paintings, tapestries and hangings adorn the outside wall and pedestals displaying urns, vases and statuettes are spaced along the inside wall. The floor and pedestals are covered with a thick layer of dust. The sturdy wooden door to the stairwell is the only entrance to this room.

Objects with obvious value include: an old masterpiece painting (1500 gp), a silver chalice set with agates (130 gp), an ebony statuette of a six armed, snake bodied woman (50 gp), a large well-done wool tapestry (200 gp), a silver statuette of Baccob (700 gp), and a silver ewer (100 gp), and a well-crafted wool tapestry depicting a starlit wooded grove with a dim object in the distance (enchanted, see text below).

The second tapestry is enchanted and can transport people to an extra-dimensional space, described below (area 21). The tapestry may be stepped through to be used, and anyone trying to discern what the object depicted in the distance in the tapestry's scene is will be transported through.

21) Tapestry Grove

Passing through the tapestry you find yourselves standing at the edge of a clearing in a dark, starlit wood. A faint shimmering is barely discernible immediately behind you. Thirty feet ahead in the center of the clearing a stone altar stands, carved with runes dedicating it to Baccob. It bears the brown stains of blood sacrifice and an ornate, long dagger lies upon it. The air smells of damp earth and a faint sickly sweet odor.

If any elves come within 20' the dagger will glow with a soft red light.

Anyone exploring the surrounding woods will find dozens of elf and a few human corpses piled high on each other, in various stages of decay, all dead from deep dagger wounds to the throat or heart. These are the many victims of Talnabous, sacrificed to Baccob and to darker powers. A search of the bodies (DC 15) will quickly turn up the body of the elf whose ghost haunts the sitting room on the first floor (area 12). The slow decay of the corpses is the result of a time dilation effect in this demi-plane: time passes only when living creatures are here. The stars never move here, nor is there sunlight. The plane is quite small however, and its boundaries wrap back upon themselves, such that anyone exploring the woods will find themselves back in the clearing quickly.

The dagger is an enchanted *+1 elfbane dagger* (total +3 enhancement bonus and +2d6 damage vs. elves). In addition it glows with a soft red light (illuminates 5') when elves are within 20'.

4th floor:

Note: This floor's roof is not stone like the rest of the tower, but a steepled wooden roof with wooden rafters. Sunlight (or starlight) filters in through holes in the ceiling where the wood has rotted through.

22) Staircase

The landing to this floor is marked with a draconic rune. The staircase does not continue up from here.

The Draconic rune on the staircase is "heart".

23) Guard Hallway (EL 5)

This short, wide hallway ends with a wooden door on the east wall, and a door on the south wall gives access to the stairwell.

TRAP: There is a 5'x5' trap door in the floor in the northeast corner of this room. DC 27 search check to spot it. Anyone stepping on it and failing a DC 20 reflex save will fall down a narrow, diagonal chute (DC 20 climb check to catch themselves in this chute) and then 20' to the roof of the first floor of the tower, taking 2d6 points of falling damage.

The door at the east end of the hallway is arcane locked.

CREATURE: Anyone attempting to open it without speaking the pass phrase "Praise the mighty Talnabous and his sorcerous power" will be attacked by the medium earth elemental that is hiding, flush with the wall, in the alcove immediately to the south (DC 20 to spot). The elemental will defend itself normally if attacked. If it gets the opportunity, it will push an opponent onto the pit trap.

24) Sitting Room

This room contains some chairs, a low table and a shelf with some books on it. An archway on the east wall opens onto what appears to be a balcony or terrace. A doorway gapes on the south wall, its door splintered on the ground.

Search DC 20 to find the secret door on the west wall. The books are all worm-eaten and unreadable, and the furniture is musty and vermin infested.

25) Reading Room (EL 7)

The broken and charred remnants of furniture lie scattered around the room, piled up along with sticks and plant matter to form a raised nest. Coins, items and bones lie scattered around the room. Both the north and west doors have been broken down and the roof and archway leading to the southern balcony is mostly missing.

The debris in this area constitutes rough terrain and covers 1/2 of the floor.

CREATURE: A chimera with a red dragon head rests here and will leap to attack anything entering the room. If hard pressed it will retreat out one of the balconies and try to regain the upper hand by swooping in upon the party from above the roof. It will not easily abandon its horde of treasure. If the players made significant noise entering the area 24, the chimera will be waiting to ambush the first to come through the door.

The items scattered around the room include broken bookshelves and chairs, crumbling ancient scraps of paper and book covers, ruined scraps of clothing and armor, an elven longsword, a small steel shield, a short sword, 1100 gold coins, 1000 silver coins and a golden yellow topaz (800gp).

26) Balcony (EL 1)

This balcony's wooden ceiling is missing, torn away and singed. The low stone wall of the balcony is tumbled down with stones missing. The view of the treetops and foliage from here is quite beautiful.

TRAP: The balcony and ceiling are in poor repair due to the chimera's constant passage, and anyone approaching the edge risks causing the stonework to crumble beneath them (20% chance), plunging them 20' to the roof of the first floor (reflex DC 20 to avoid, damage 2d6).

27) Bedroom

This room is dominated by the crushed remains of a large four poster bed. Iron manacles with 5' chains are bolted to the three walls surrounding it. A small table and chair lie crushed in the southwest corner of the room. The east door is broken on the floor. The painted plaster covering the stone walls is cracked and falling in chunks to the ground.

A search check (DC 15) is required to locate the concealed door to the closet, which is painted to match the plaster on the walls of this room.

28) Closet

This room holds the moth eaten wardrobe of a wizard, with many once-comfortable robes.

Search (DC 20) to discover the secret door on the west wall, which is controlled by a hidden switch behind some rotted robes.

29) Hidden Room

This room is a vault and storehouse for the wizard. A low table holds some rolls of parchment and a few vials. A small chest stands open in the northeast corner. Strange doors give access to this room from the east and west.

The items on the table are a scroll with *dimension door*, a potion of *negative energy protection*, and a potion of *cure serious wounds* (3d8+7 hp). Examination reveals the chest to be empty except for a few (18) copper pieces.

5th floor:

30) Landing (EL 1)

This landing on the staircase is marked like the others, with a draconic rune. The stairs appear to continue up and down through the stone shaft from here. The door is partly blocked by earth, blocks of stone and what appears to be a fallen stone pillar.

The Draconic rune is for “throat” in this case.

The door here is locked with a sturdy lock built into the door. The key to this door is currently on the corpse of Talnabous on the 6th floor. The DC to pick the lock is 25.

The shaded area on the map immediately in front of the door is blocked by a fallen stone pillar and earthen and stone debris. Small creatures can squeeze through the narrow opening of the blocked door. It will take a DC 20 strength check to push the stone pillar out of the way enough for medium-size characters to pass through the door.

31) Torture Chamber

The west portion of this room is littered with fallen stonework. Earth is visible through gaps in the ceiling where stone has fallen to the ground.

This dark and foreboding room is appointed with devices for torture. Pillars are spaced around the room, supporting the stone ceiling. Sconces for torches stand empty along the walls along with a rack of rusted pliers, pokers, needles, and knives. A chair with leather restraints for legs and arms sits against the north wall. The alcove to the south holds a strange device: a hoist with a set of manacles hangs from an iron arm that sticks out from the pillar there. Against the south wall is a stone basin, 5' in diameter with sloped walls 2' tall.

Three of the four doors at the east end of the room have been broken through, and the fourth stands closed. The door in the west of the room is partly blocked by rubble.

Examination reveals that the hoist can be pivoted to dangle the manacles above the basin, which has an inscription carved onto the side in common and is filled with a thin layer of shards of glass. The carving reads “flow.” The basin is enchanted in such a way that if the word flow is spoken in a commanding voice a fountain of broken glass springs up from the center of the fountain to a height of 6' and falls back into the basin. The fountain stops automatically after one minute.

CREATURE: Any activity in this room is likely to attract the attention of the wights in areas 32-34.

32, 33, 34) Cells (EL 6)

A broken door reveals a windowless cell with four sets of manacles along the walls.

CREATURE: Three wights occupy these three cells, they were once elves who had been captured by Talnabous and died in their cells after he was slain. If anyone makes noise enough to alert the wights they will attempt to sneak up and slay the intruders (Move Silently +16, Hide +8).

35) Cell (EL 5)

A normal wooden door bars entrance to this cell. A small barred window shows the bare skeletal remains of a humanoid chained in one of the four sets of manacles there.

As you peer through the window at the skeleton, it's head swivels to face you, eyes glowing a dim red. It's jaw moves and a voice issues from it. "Hello? Who's there?! Help me, please!"

CREATURE: The skeleton is actually a bone creature the wizard created out of an elf that was attempting to investigate Talnabous' tower long ago, due to suspicion that he was the cause of many of his elven kins' disappearances. He was discovered, captured and slain in a torturous ritual that left him undead. The long years since have driven him mad. See Filodell's description in appendix 2 for more information. If anyone other than the wights peers into the cell Filodell will ask who is there and for help.

6th floor:

36) Entrance (EL 6)

The staircase is marked in this room with the draconic rune. Four alcoves are on the left and right walls, each holding a suit of dusty full plate armor with shields and swords held point down. A sturdy looking wooden door stands closed opposite the stairway. Thick dust coats the floor.

The rune on the staircase is Draconic for "head".

The door is *arcane locked*.

CREATURE: Anyone trying to open the door without Talnabous being present will be attacked by the four suits of armor, which are 4 Dread Guards (see below). The animated suits of armor will also attack anyone who attacks or attempts to damage them. The weapons are normal longwords, but the shields and armor are masterwork (though if the players defeat them they may be badly damaged).

37) Arcane Laboratory

Tables and shelves fill this room. The tables and shelves hold beakers, vials, and other strange glassware, scales, charcoal braziers, books and pieces of paper. Against the south wall an open book, ink fount and a quill sit upon a large, sturdy-looking desk. A stool is lying on its side at the foot of the desk. A door stands partially open on the west wall and there is a sturdy wooden door on the east wall.

A DC 20 search check will reveal the secret door to area 39 in the northeast of this room, opened by a small stone button hidden behind some books on the shelf.

A DC 15 search check will reveal a scroll with *magic circle vs evil*, *stone to flesh* and *greater magic weapon* (12th level) amongst the items on the tables. The books on the shelves around the room cover topics of arcane knowledge, alchemy, demonology and the realms beyond the world (the planes) and as a set will give a +2 circumstance bonus on knowledge arcana, religion and planes checks. The alchemical and exotic materials on the tables and shelves are all aged beyond usefulness. One of the books on the shelves is a tome explaining the creation and use of the staircase in arcane terms (DC 17 Int + arcane caster level check to understand).

The thick, dusty and bloodied book on the desk holds Talnabous' journal and working notes, most of which detail his researches and are incomprehensible to those without sorcerous training. There are notes in it (DC 10 search) that detail his summoning of various spirits and forces from beyond the

world's borders. There are also writings (DC 15 search) that describe with some excitement a lower spirit from Archeron that he has bound and wishes to use to serve his “more earthly needs”, after some careful study. A later entry indicates that he has uncovered her name and type: an erynes and that he has discovered a arcane method of consorting with her safely, by means of potions from “those cursed city holy-men” that will protect him from her essence-draining. The second to last entry talks about a “blood offering” that did not go very smoothly due to suspicion on the “foul elf’s” part. It also mentions that the writer is suspicious that the erynes is planning something, and that he needs to remember to check her enscrollment.

The drawers of the desk hold old, dry parchment, dried up vials of ink, a golden loop with a 1500 gp ruby lens, an analyze *dweomer*, *detect magic* and *identify* scroll. Another drawer holds 2 books: Talnabous' spellbooks, which have spells up to 6th level and are both warded with an *explosive runes* spell that will deal 6d6 points of force damage, no save, to anyone reading the books, and the same damage with a DC 20 reflex save for half damage to anyone within 10'. Triggering a rune will destroy the spellbook. Detecting or disabling the runes is a DC 28 search or disable device check.

38) Summoning Room (EL 5)

This room is dominated by a magic circle carved into the floor, 7' in diameter. A small altar covered in black cloth stands in the northeast corner. The dessicated remains of a human lie in the center of the room, its hands and feet nailed to the floor with iron spikes and its tattered robes open to reveal a body cut open and emptied of its organs, which lie, now leathery bits of matter, around it. A chill runs up your spine as you gaze upon the altar. The only visible entrance to this room is the open door on the east wall.

TRAP: There is a glyph of warding inscribed above the door in the interior of this room. The glyph is set to summon a bearded devil if any humanoid enters the room. The bearded devil will appear next to the first humanoid entering the room and attack, probably with surprise. The DC to detect or disable the glyph is 28.

This is the final resting place of the wizard Talbonous, sacrificed by the devil he tried to subjugate. A search of his body reveals a copper key, which opens the mechanically locked doors in the tower.

The altar is enchanted with an unhallow spell, with a bane effect for any who do not worship evil powers (DC 14 Will save or -1 to attack rolls and -1 to fear saves for 5 minutes).

39) Secret Vault

One of the stones that makes the wall of this chamber is a thin door and swings out to reveal a small vault.

This secret door (DC 20 search check to find) is arcane locked, and opens to a small cubbyhole containing a box and a metal vial. The box is trapped with a *Sepia snake sigil*. Inside the box is a the erine's true name, Alu-Mognis, on a piece of parchment. The vial is a Potion of *Negative Energy Protection*.

7th floor:

40) Landing

The staircase on this level descends onto a small landing marked with draconic runes. The staircase does not continue down from here. A sturdy wooden door stands closed on the north wall of this small landing.

The runes on this landing are Draconic for “teeth” and “tail”.

The door to this room is *arcane locked* and enchanted with a *fire trap* which will deal 1d4 + 12 points of fire damage (DC 19 reflex save for ½ damage) to anyone other than Talnabous who opens the door.

41) Vault (EL5)

This vault contains seven chests and a small box on a table.

This vault is haunted by the unquiet spirit of Tanabous, who persists in undeath as a wraith. He will attack any entering the room, first any elves he sees, but afterwards focusing on whoever threatens him the most effectively. He will fight until destroyed.

The chests contain 150 pp, 1000 gp and 50000 sp (in 5 chests). A small gold-inlaid box (100 gp value) on the table holds 7 gems (50 gp onyx, 6 gp moss agate, 10 gp blue quartz, 30 gp carnelian, 10 gp lapis lazuli, 8 gp pearl, 1300 gp ruby).

Appendix 1: Monsters and NPCs

Dire Chicken: CR 3; Large Magical Beast; HD 4d10+12; hp 34; Init +2; Spd 60ft; AC 13 (touch 10, flat-foot 11); Atk +6 peck (2d4+2) / rake +1 (2d6+4); AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Jump +13, Listen +11, Spot +11, Wilderness Lore +9.

Possessions: None.

Old Spider: CR 3; Large Vermin; HD 8d8+8; hp 47; Init +3; Spd 30, climb 20; AC 14; Base Atk/Grapple: +6/+12; Atk +7 bite 1d8+3 and poison, cast web +9 (ranged touch); SQ cast web, poison; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +6, Jump +2, Spot +7

Special Qualities: Poison DC 14 fort save or 1d6 str damage. Web Escape DC 15, Break DC 19, hp 13.

Aor's Ghost: male elf rogue 3; CR 5; Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal); HD 3d12; hp 25; Init +3; Spd fly 30ft(perfect); AC # (touch #, flat-foot #); BaseAtk/Grp: +2; Atk +5 incorporeal touch; SQ manifestation, frightful moan, +4 turn resistance; AL CG; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 17, Con -, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: +17 hide, +14 listen, +14 search, +14 spot. Dodge, mobility.

Special Qualities: manifestation, frightful moan (30' radius, DC 13 will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds), +4 turn resistance, rejuvenation (reappears in 2d4 days if destroyed).

Possessions: none.

Notes: Aor is the ghost that haunts the sitting room (area 12). He is unable to rest until his body is properly buried. Generally non-aggressive, Aor will use his frightful moan if attacked, and flee is hard pressed. If you are using the optional challenge "Ghost Controls Staircase", Aor rejuvenates immediately if destroyed.

Dread Guard: CR 2; Medium-Size Construct; HD 5d10; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 20ft (can't run); AC 17 (touch 10, flat-foot 17); BaseAtk/Grp: ; Atk +6 longsword 1d8+3/19-20; SQ cold resistance 10, construct traits, fire resistance 10; AL neutral; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con -, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 2.

Special Qualities: Construct Traits: see MM2 p307.

Possessions: masterwork small steel shield, longsword.

Filodel: Elf Male Rogue 4; CR 5; Size Med undead; HD 4d12; hp 35; Init +10; Spd 30ft; AC 18 (touch 16, flat-foot 12); Atk +9 claw 1d4+1 / +9 claw 1d4+1 or +5 short sword 1d6+1; SQ darkvision, cold immunity, half damage from P / S, undead qualities, elf qualities, sneak attack +2d6, evasion, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 22, Con --, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, move silently +10, tumble +10, open lock +12, listen +7, spot +7, search +9, disable device +11, Use Magic Device +6, improved initiative, weapon focus short sword.

Special Qualities: darkvision 60, cold immunity, half damage from P / S, undead qualities, elf qualities, sneak attack +2d6, evasion, uncanny dodge, weapon finesse claws.

Possessions: none.

Filodel is a bone creature (*Book of Vile Darkness*) the wizard created out of an elf that was attempting to investigate Talnabous's tower long ago. The elves of the area had begun to suspect that Talnabous was the cause of many of their elven kins' disappearances. Filodel was discovered, captured and slain in a torturous ritual that left him undead. The long years since have driven him mad.

Filodel will beg for release when encountered in his cell and may be persuaded to give the party some information about the Wizard and his tower, but he is prone to fits of gibbering madness. He may ask to accompany the party if they take pity on him, saying he wishes to discover the fate of his kins-elves so long ago. If given the opportunity he will equip himself with gear befitting a rogue.

If he is asked about what happened to him or the wizard's study (floor 6) he will be overcome with the memory of his death, cringing, trembling and saying things like "Oh, Corellian, that's my heart!

He's got my heart!" "So cold... cold, so cold....", and "He's in my head! Help, he's in my head!" Filodell will be be inconsolable but the fits will pass after a minute or so.

If he accompanies the party to the third or sixth floor he will become quiet and nervous. If he is brought to or sees the summoning room (floor 6, room 3) or into the tapestry (floor 3, area 2) he will fly into a murderous fit and attack the nearest creature.

Filodell also knows the location of the second boot of springing and striding, which he wore when he was caught. After he was captured, it fell off his foot in area 3 outside the tower. If he sees the single boot that is in the cloak room on the first floor, he will be reminded of where he lost it so long ago. If taken to the site where he was captured he will either become catatonic and unresponsive, or attack the nearest creature, overcome with the memory of his experience there.

Appendix 2: Magic Items

Tapestry of a Private World: This tapestry is enchanted to allow access to a pocket dimension. Characters may use this by simply stepping into it. Anyone gazing into it for a period of time may also be pulled through to the pocket dimension.

Strong Conjururation; CL 13th, Craft Wonderous Item, *mage's magnificent mansion*; Price 91,000gp; weight 50 lbs.

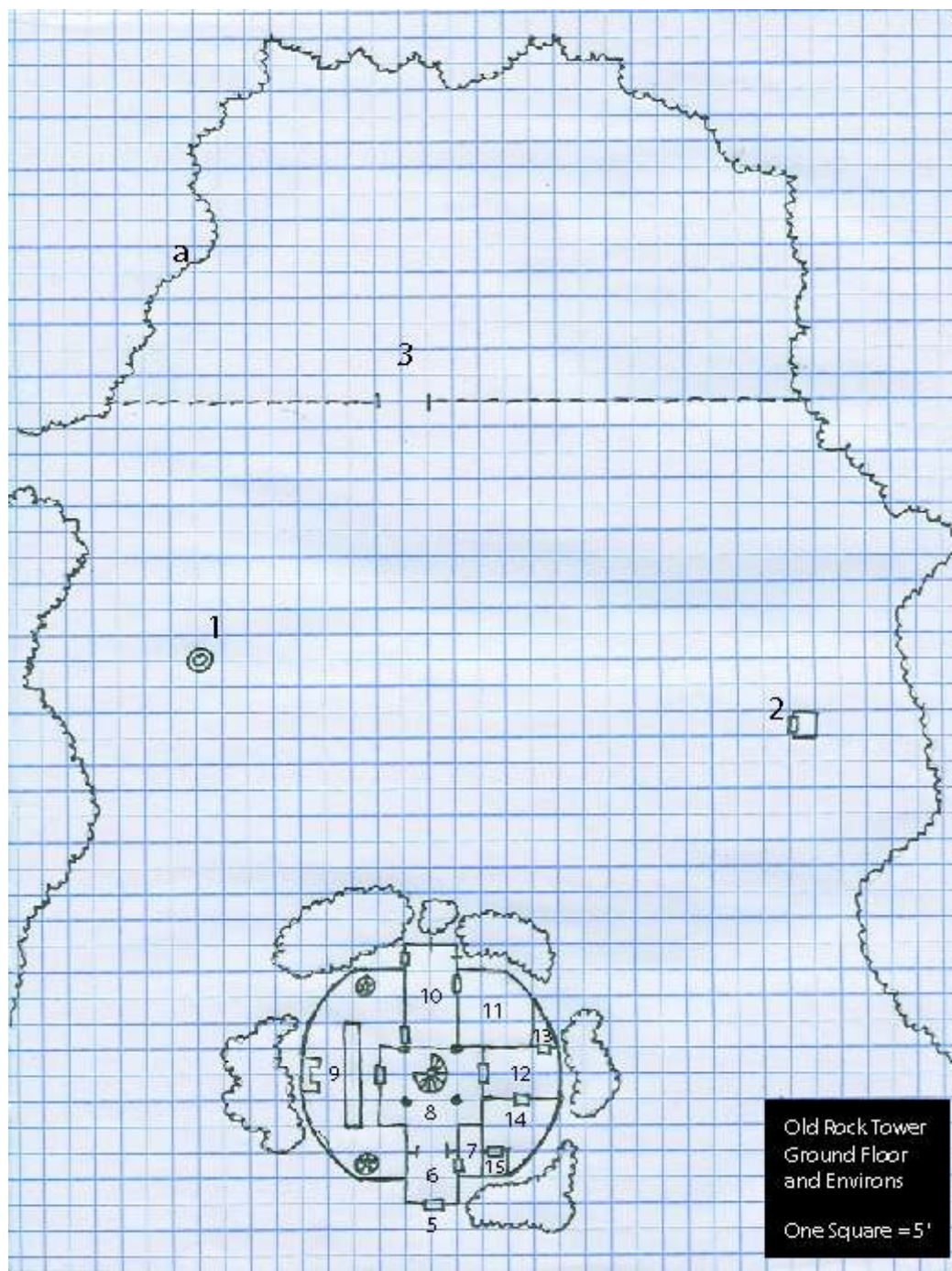
Appendix 3: Player Handouts

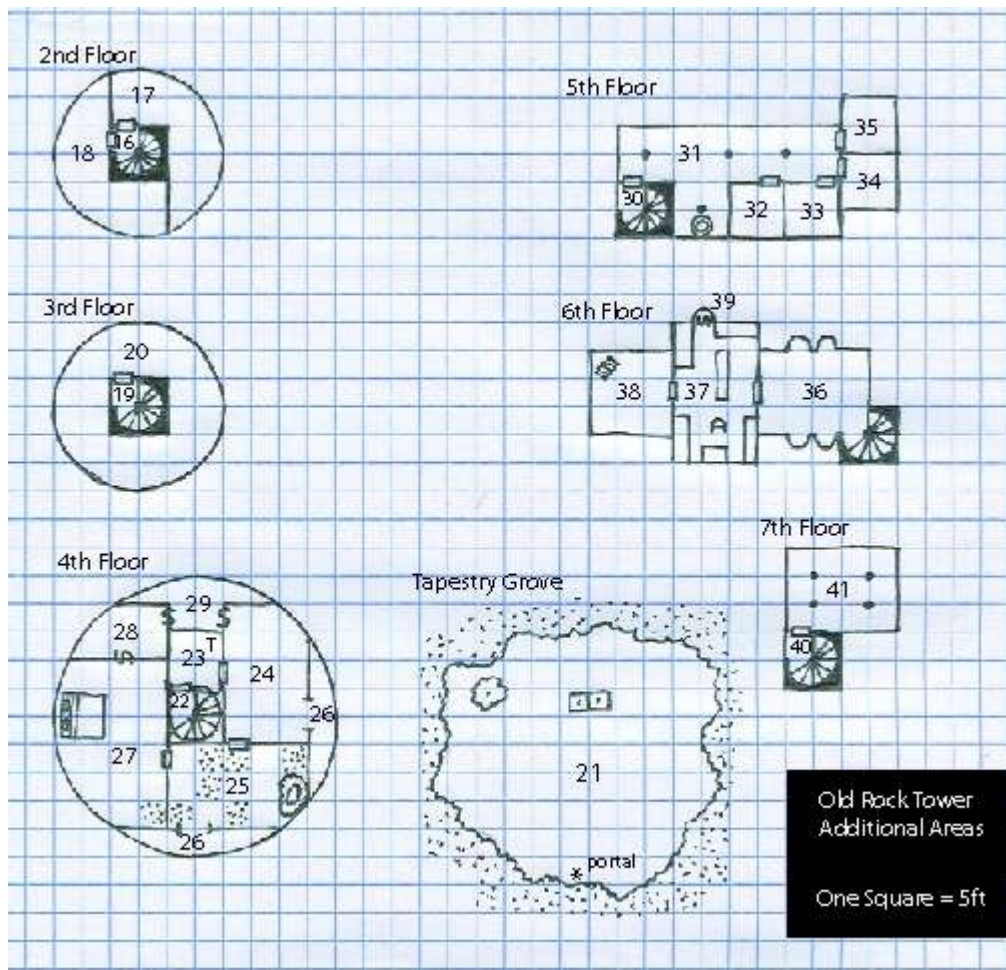
These are papers that are to be handed to the players at the appropriate time.

The note from the dresser in area 9 reads:

praisethemightyTaldabasandhissorcercapower

Appendix 4: Maps





Additional Information

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