

The Gongfarmer's Almanac



The 2019 Gongfarmer's Almanac:

A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by
the DCC RPG Communities



DCC SURVIVE THE FUNNEL #1

VOLUME 1 OF FOURTEEN BOOKLETS

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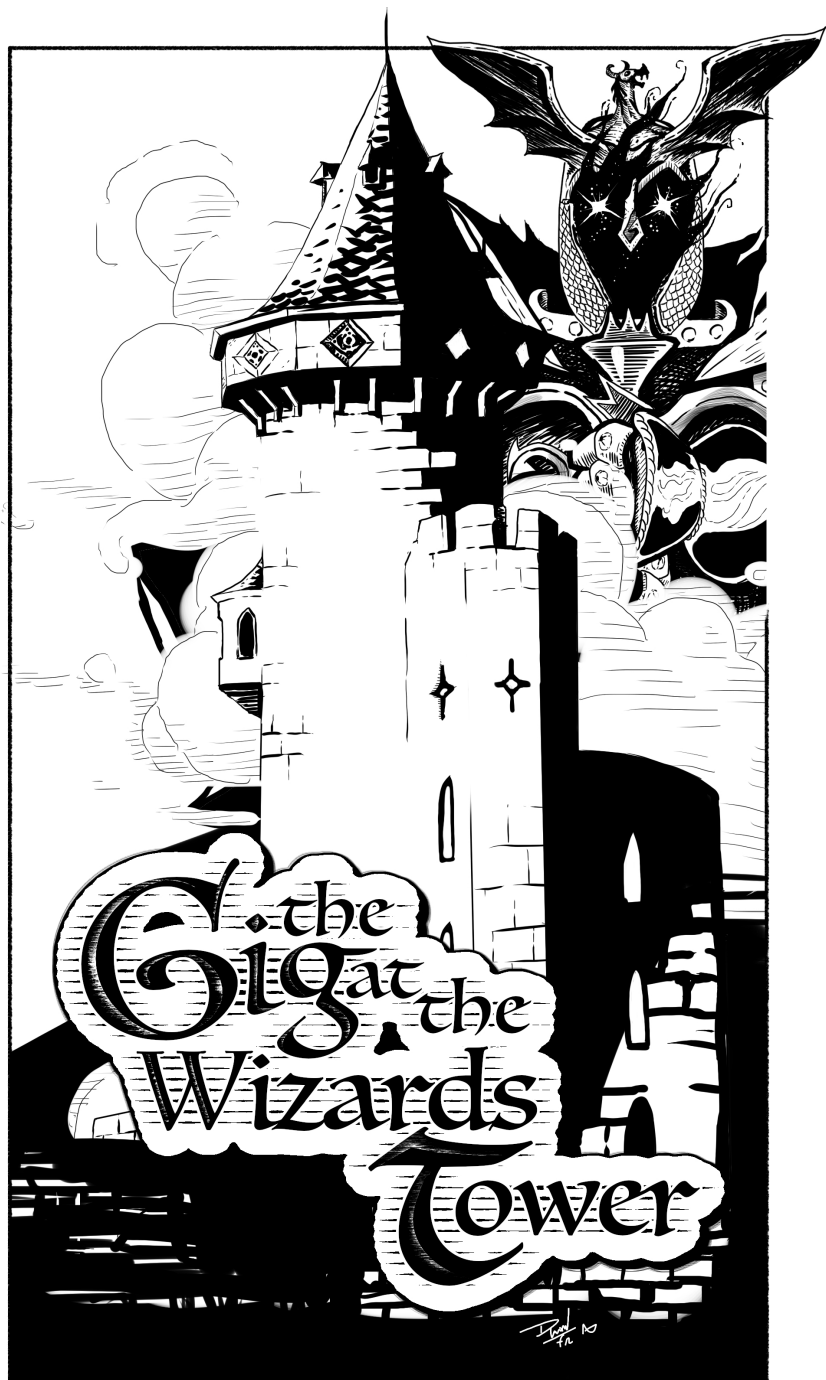
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The Gig at the Wizards Tower

0-Level Funnel

By Duamn Figueroa Rassol

Is little more than a grindy level-0 dungeon raid fit to introduce a new group of players to DCC by spending an evening of dungeon crawling goodness. Here you will find a four-level dungeon, more than two dozen monsters, a powerful set of magical artifacts and some adventure seeds to kickstart your new campaign.

The adventure begins as the characters arrive at the Tower of the Manticore—a wizarding school—answering an open call to all toshers, sewer hunters, and rat-catchers willing to exterminate the arcane horrors that crawl the catacombs beneath this magical abode.

Since this is a funnel adventure, have them participate in a larger group of applicants just in case the dungeon proves too deadly and you have to deploy a second batch of adventurers.

Applicants are led to a side room dominated by the massive statue of an arcane knight holding a detachable, adamantium claymore: **Æder-Kadai**, Wizard-Protector of the Tower. A large hole in the middle of the room leads to the catacombs, a golden scale hangs from a chain above.

The Gig

The adventurers are received by a pair of sorcerers, **Zser-Zerad** and **Biliac**, low level students charged with overseeing the extermination. Zser-Zerad will brief the PCs on the job: they must go down the catacombs, exterminate any monsters they encounter, remove their heads and bring them back to the massive scale that hangs over the dungeon entrance.

The mages at the Tower use an arcane unit of measure called “kilograms”, based on the weight of a mysterious platinum artifact stored deep beneath the earth. For every kilogram of head-mass PCs collect, they will receive 1 gold coin to share between the surviving characters at the end of the job.

For quick reference, all monsters’ head weights can be found

in parenthesis at the side of their entry names, but if you need to guesstimate some weight

(like if your players start stuffing the heads with sand to add weight, like mine did) 1 kilogram = roughly 2 pounds.

After the briefing, Zser-Zerad will unlatch the adamantine claymore from the statue —*the Sword of Æder-Kadai*— and call forward the first batch of adventurers to swear them in as the new Wizard-Protectors of the Manticore. She will recite the Oath of the Wizard-Protector while, due to enchantments on the sword, easily holding the sword over their heads. Make it long, ceremonious and boring.

ZSER-ZERAD:

Init +0; **Atk** dagger -1 melee (1d4-1) or magic missile (2d4, no to-hit roll nor save); **AC** 10; **HD** 3d4 (6); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** spells +4: lvl1 *charm person*, *find familiar*, *magic missile*, *spider climb*; lvl 2 *locate object*, *scorching ray*, *spider web*; **SV** Fort -2, Ref -1, Will +4; **AL** C.

BILIAC:

Init +0; **Atk** dagger -1 melee (1d4-1) or magic missile (2d4, no attack nor save); **AC** 10; **HD** 3d4 (6); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** spells +4: lvl1 *choking cloud*, *magic missile*, *sleep*, *ward portal*; lvl 2 *ESP*, *invisibility*, *scare*; **SV** Fort -2, Ref -1, Will +4; **AL** C.

The Oath of the Wizard-Protector

In the name of Æder-Kadai, lord protector of the Manticore

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

*We lend the task of twelve generations unto you, monster-slayers
of the Tower*

Consectetur adipiscing elit

*Of protecting our bastion of knowledge from the threats that
plague the mortal world*

Tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua

*With the power of the seven wizards we give you the powers of
magic and steel*

Rhoncus dolor purus non enim praesent

*And trust upon you the Sword of Æder-Kadai, abjured be thy
name, to vanquish what lies below*

Venenatis lectus magna urna rhoncus dolor.

Once the oath is finished, she will entrust them with the *Sword of Æder-Kadai* and send them on their way. Biliac will lead them to the golden scale and slowly lower it 40 feet deep into the hole, into room #D1 of the Dun Level.

During the gig the PCs can cut their losses at any time, cash out and beg the sorcerers to get them out of the catacombs. Zser-Zerad and Biliac remain there to keep the PCs from luring back any monster or curses from the dungeon and stop them from stealing any school property (like the sword itself). They won't hesitate in bombarding them with spells safely from above nor will they have qualms about killing any character mutated enough to be mistaken as a monster.

The Sword of ÆDER-KADAI

Æder-Kadai was an arcane-knight, a demon killer, and a founding member of the Tower of the Manticore. Their duty was to protect the magic school from the chaotic creatures magic is wont to attract. As the power of the Tower consolidated, the only threats to the school became the creatures that crawled about the old sewers: failed experiments, dangerous alchemical concoctions, and useless invocations that the mages discarded under the tower.

Since the knight's disappearance, this unpleasant task went down from the senior mages to novices to, eventually, hired goons. *The Sword of Æder-Kadai* is now trusted to the honorable toshers, sewer hunters, and rat-catchers charged with cleaning the dungeons below.

The sword itself is a massive adamantine claymore, enchanted to only be wielded properly by a wizard or a large creature, otherwise it can only be carried by at least three people. Its

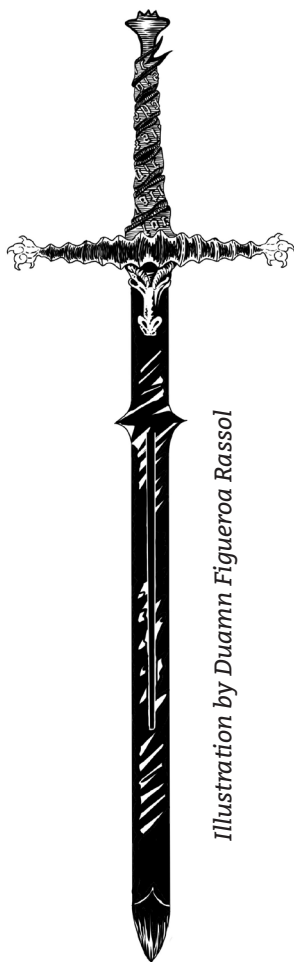


Illustration by Duamn Figueroa Rassol

hilt is embossed with the names of spells (see below).

**THE SWORD OF ÆDER-KADAI:
+1 TWO-HANDED SWORD, 1d10 dmg**

Intelligence 7, the sword holds the last remnants of Æder-Kadai's essence.

Communication: It has the urge to find the missing raiment of Æder-Kadai and to summon its master. It can detect the presence of the other pieces of the Raiment, and will tug and point towards the nearest one.

Bane: Creatures of chaos. The sword can detect chaotic creatures within 100' even if invisible or otherwise concealed.

Specialability: Grants the ability to cast the following spells with a CL of +5: *force manipulation*, *magic missile*, *shatter* and *dispel magic*. The names of the spells are embossed in the handle and can be easily read.

Special purpose: to summon Æder Kadai and protect the Tower of the Manticore.

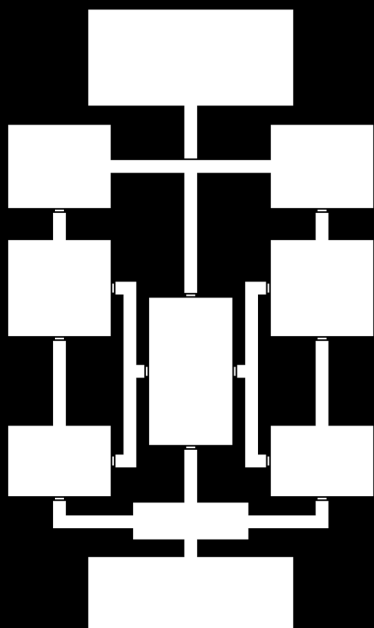
This weapon retains the essence of Æder-Kadai, granting its wielder the ability to cast some spells. Whomever grabs the sword by the handle can cast spells with a spellcheck of 1d10 + Int + 5. Up to 4 PCs can help the wielder by hoisting the sword, stepping up the dice chain for the caster up to 1d20. If the spell fails, any resulting corruption is rolled for every helper individually. If the roll indicates that the spell is lost, roll a minor corruption instead.

The Raiment of Æder-Kadai

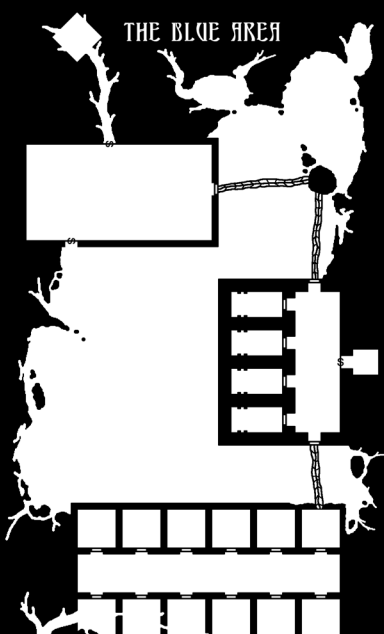
Consists of the Wizard-Protector's plate, gauntlets, and helm. These artifacts became scattered after the arcane knight's mysterious disappearance.

If a creature wears all the pieces of the raiment while wielding the Sword, they will immediately disintegrate to give way to the manifestation of the real **Æder-Kadai**, who will appear on the space formerly occupied by the wielder of the Sword. If the players decide to join them, give control of the NPC to the player whose character got disintegrated during the ensuing battles (see chapter 4 for their stats). Individual pieces of the raiment lose their magic if separated by a mile or more from the Sword, but regain their properties once reunited.

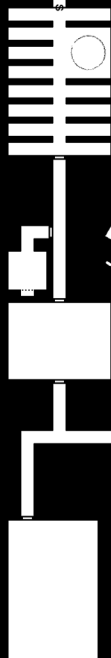
THE RED AREA



THE BLUE AREA

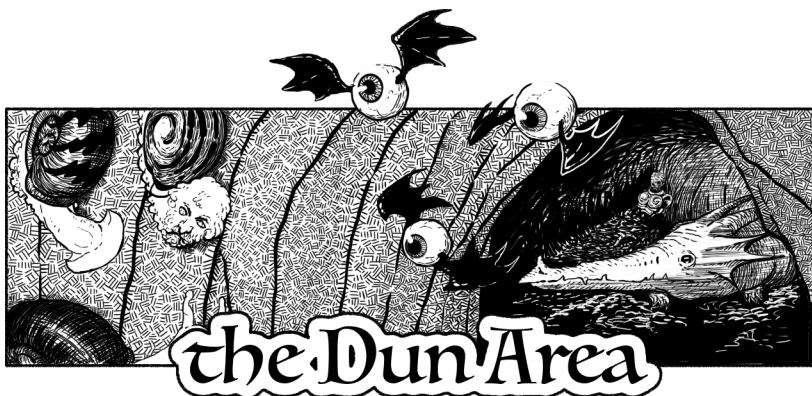


THE DON AREA



THE GREEN AREA





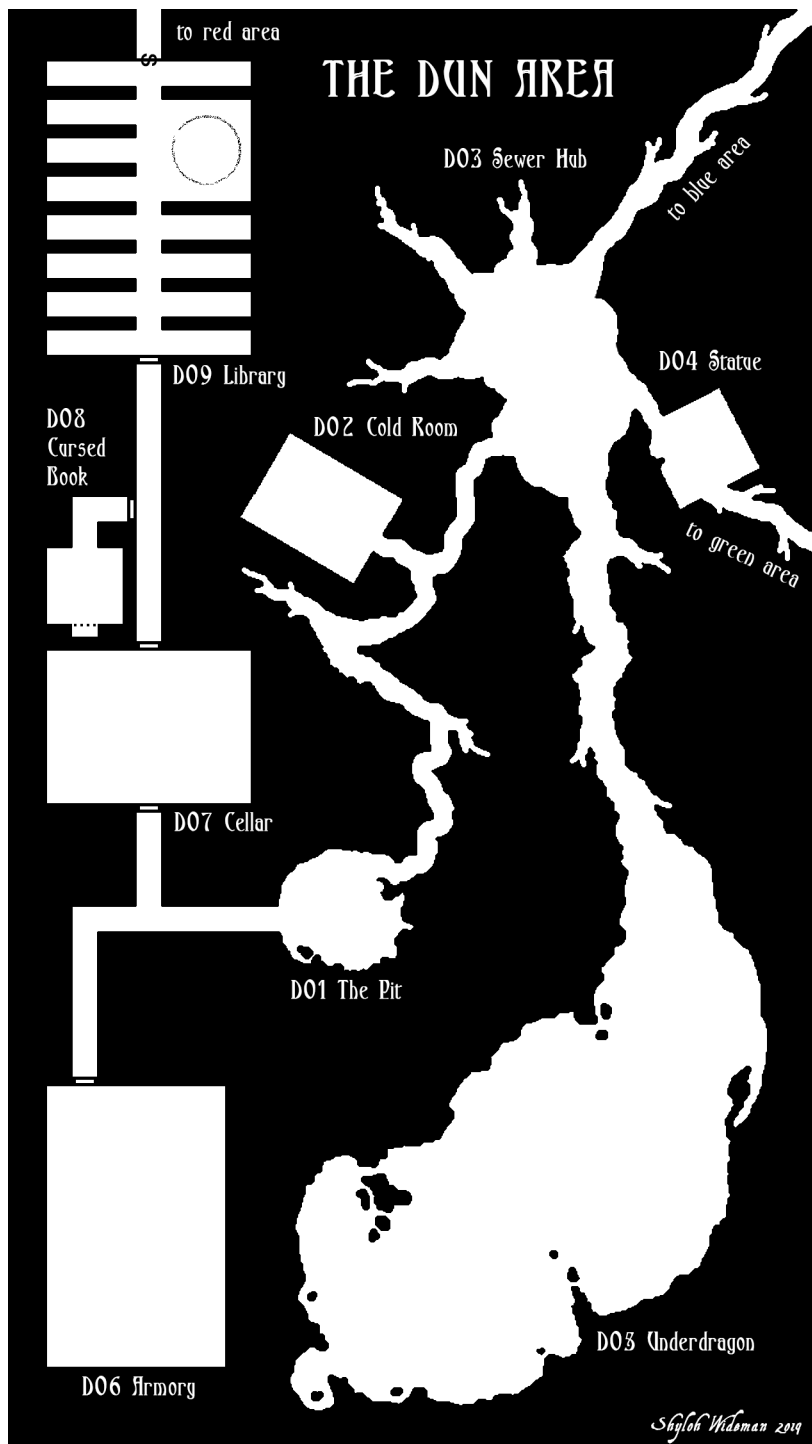
These are the sewers and catacombs of the Tower of the Manticore, a series of expanded natural tunnels surrounding a bottomless pit. The walls are composed of brown sedimentary rock occasionally covered-over with clay bricks and supported by wooden beams. A dank atmosphere permeates the area. Dripping stalagmites form at irregular intervals.

A dragon hatchling was discarded down here centuries ago. Now grown into the Underdragon, a misshapen subterranean monster, it reigns over the area, lording like a true wyrm under the bedrock.

Features: this area works as a hub level, connecting the other areas of the dungeon and the exit.

- * The caverns and corridors are completely dark.
- * All doors are swollen and stuck, it takes a Strength DC 5 roll to push one open, a failed roll triggers a roll on the wandering monsters table.
- * The grumbles of the Underdragon echo all over this area.

D01. This bottomless pit descends 40' to the catacombs under the Tower. The plate of the scale covers the pit and doubles as a shaft for characters to enter or leave the dungeon. **Zser-Zerad** and **Biliac** watch idly from above and manage the pulley. Roll on the wandering monsters table when the PCs enter any of the accessory tunnels.



D02. This was a cold-storage room that has sunken into the catacombs. The room is at a 45° angle. Rubble covers the floor. It remains colder than the rest of the area. Hooks holding gnawed pieces of meat dangle from the ceiling. 2d4 **mutamoles** hang from the chains, gnawing any remaining scraps.

D03. This is a sewer hub. 2' of murky water cover the pool. The sounds of conflict echo out of the chamber. A battle between 5 **squidletons** (check blue area) and 2 **crawling amoeba** (green area) ensues. If the PCs do nothing, the amoeba will vanquish the undead and absorb their bones. Each amoeba has 3d6 gold coins floating inside.

This sewer connects with the Blue (#B01) and Green (#G01) areas and the lair of the Underdragon (#D05).

D04. Water drips from the stalactites, forming puddles. A **muck elemental** lurks here. The statue of a bald mage is the most prominent feature of the room. It holds a spellbook with a carved message in one hand, the other hand is open as if posed to hold something. An Intelligence DC 10 check deciphers the message on the cover: "My left hand carries the key to the Lord of Five (Obitu-Que)". If a character from #D08 was teleported by grabbing the key, the key appears in the open hand and stops glowing: now it can open the cell back at #D08.

D05. A large, domed cavern is dominated by a pile of trash and rubble, the skeleton of an adventurer lies amidst the junk, *the Plate of Aeder-Kadai* is plainly visible being worn on its chest. This is the lair of the **Underdragon**. There's a 75% chance the beast is asleep. Otherwise, it will confront anyone who enters its domain.

Diving into the pile unseen or trying to pry the magical plate off the skeleton takes an Agility DC 12 test, failing catches the attention of the dragon.

If combat erupts, the **Underdragon** can take an action to thrash around the cave and drop rubble over its enemies. All creatures roll a DC 7 Reflex save or take 1d4 points of damage.

If a PC digs into the hoard, roll 1d12 for a random item each time they do:

Roll 1d12	Result
1	Adventurer bones
2	Broken candles
3	3d4x3 copper pieces
4	50' of rope and a grappling hook
5	A battered shield with a faded blazon
6	A busted lamp
7	A dented helmet
8	A dull weapon (determine randomly)
9	3d4x2 silver pieces
10	3d4 gold pieces
11	Dragon scales
12	1d4 jewels worth 1d6 gold pieces each

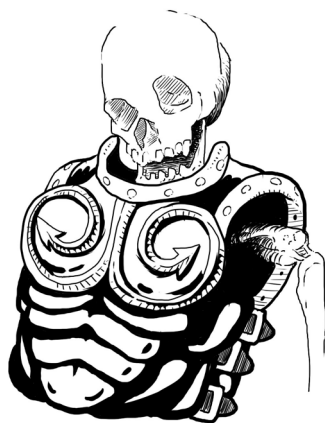


Illustration by
Duamn Figueroa Rassol

THE PLATE OF ÆDER-KADAI
Half Plate, AC 16
This half-plate grants its wearer the effects of a permanent enlarge spell with a spellcheck result of 20.

Wearing this artifact while wielding the Sword of Æder-Kadai grants the sword an additional +3 Intelligence.

D06. This door is boarded up with bricks. It takes a DC 10 Strength check to break down over 1d4 turns. Inside there are walls lined with weapon racks holding a dozen spears, and a dozen dummies wearing beaked bascinets and purple gambesons.

D07. This door is locked, it takes a DC 10 Agility check to pick. It opens into a sunken cellar, full of vintage wine casks. 2d2 drunken **battlesnails** flail around a broken barrel, their gelatinous bodies saturated with wine.

D08. The door to this room is locked with a potent spell. The lintel is crowned by a three-eyed dragon head, each socket fitted for a jewel: a ruby, an emerald and an opal. Placing such jewels within opens the door. The seal can be dispelled or opened with a reversed-casting of *Ward Portal*, but failing such magical attempts or forcing the door triggers a DC 15 Will save; failure gets the PC paralyzed for 3d6 turns and hurls creatures near the door 10' away in an explosion of raw force, dealing 1d2 damage.

A barred niche protects a cursed spellbook, a glowing key hangs besides the cell door. The spellbook bears the sigil of Obitu-Que with bloodstones inset in its eyes (worth 4 gold pieces each). If a non-wizard tries to take the key, the key and the creature get teleported to area #D04.

The spellbook holds: *Patron Bond (Obitu-Que)*, *Flaming hands*; *Monster summoning*; *Demon Summoning*. Removing a bloodstone sets the book aflame.

D09. This old library wing was buried by the ravages of time. 3d3 **mutamoles** are eating a perpetually failing invocation in the form of a wreathing mass of flesh in the middle of a broken summoning circle. The screams of its endless pain echo throughout the surrounding rooms. The creature can be dispelled.

Most books are ruined beyond recognition, but taking 2d6 turns looking for books gives one +1d to Intelligence checks concerning the school or its magical phenomena.

The red rectangle painted in the wall is actually a secret door to the Red Area. Two bronze sconces at its side can be pulled to open it. It closes immediately behind those that go through and it has no obvious means of opening from the other side.

DUN AREA WANDERING MONSTERS

Roll 1d6 for a wandering monster every 4 turns or if the PCs decide to camp inside the dungeon. On a result of 1 there is a wandering monster, roll 3d6 to determine what is it:

Roll 3d6	Result
3-4	Roll on the nearest area wandering monster table instead.
5-8	1 marauding battlesnail .
9-12	3d2 mutamoles .
13-15	3d3 eye batz .
16-18	1d4 giant ants .

BATTLESNAIL (2kg):

Battlesnails are the result of transmutation experiments on regular snails. Now they wander and reproduce aimlessly under the Tower. Some develop sentience and wisdom, but for the most part they're mindless vermin flailing around the dungeon.

Init -2; **Atk** axe or mace-face +4 melee (1d6)/acid spit 20' range (1d6)/antenna (1d3 plus paralyzation); **AC** 14; **HD** 2d8 (10); **MV** 20'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** paralyzation (Fort DC 12) or acid spit, slippery trail (Ref DC 12); **SV** Fort +4, Ref -2, Will -4/+4; **AL** N.

Roll 1d4: 1- wiseman face (acid spit); 2- snail face (antenna and paralyzation); 3- axe-face (axe attack); 4- flail-face (flail attack).

EYE BATZ (1/2kg):

Eye batz are one-foot diameter flying eyeballs with bat wings. They were summoned unintentionally from Hell and discarded in the dungeon. They roam in bands, shooting lasers all over the place.

Init +4; **Atk** eye-beam +2 range 60' (1d3); **AC** 10; **HD** 1d4-2 (1); **MV** fly 40'; **Act** 1d20; **SV** Fort +0, Ref +10, Will -2; **AL** C.

MUCK ELEMENTAL:

A corrupted water elemental, born off the magical energies that emanate from the tower.

Init +6; **Atk** slam +10 melee (2d6 or engulf); **AC** 16; **HD** 8d8 (32); **MV** 20', swim 40' or climb 10'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** engulf and drown, vulnerable to fire and heat, elemental traits; **SV** Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; **AL** N.

Engulfed target attacks at -4, make an opposed Str check (vs. Str 20) to get out. DC 16 Stamina check per round. When the first check fails, the target is drowning; lose 1d6 Stamina per round. Double damage from fire attacks.

GIANT ANT (5kg):

These giant ants live in a colony deeper below the pit (#D01), only coming to the dungeon while looking for food for their queen.

Init +0; **Atk** bite +2 melee (1d4+1); **AC** 12; **HD** 1d8+2 (6); **MV** 50' or climb 50'; **Act** 1d20; **SV** Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -3; **AL** L.

MUTAMOLE (2kg):

Mutamoles were regular moles corrupted and mutated by the magical energies that seeped underground from the Tower of the Manticore. They have become predatory, aggressive and hungry for human flesh (so, like regular moles).

Init +4; **Atk** bite +2 melee (1d4+1); **AC** 9; **HD** 1d4+2(3); **MV** 30' or climb 20'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** tremorsense 60'; **SV** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; **AL** N.

THE UNDERDRAGON (350kg):

The Underdragon is a giant, bloated mess of a dragon, too big to wander around the dungeon, its wings weak and atrophied to fly away. Its albino eyes betray a pathetic mix of pride and envy.

It hatched out of an egg treasured by one of the former masters of the tower, accidentally discarded after her death. Living in these catacombs for over a century warped the poor wyrmling into a misshapen mockery of a real dragon. But don't be

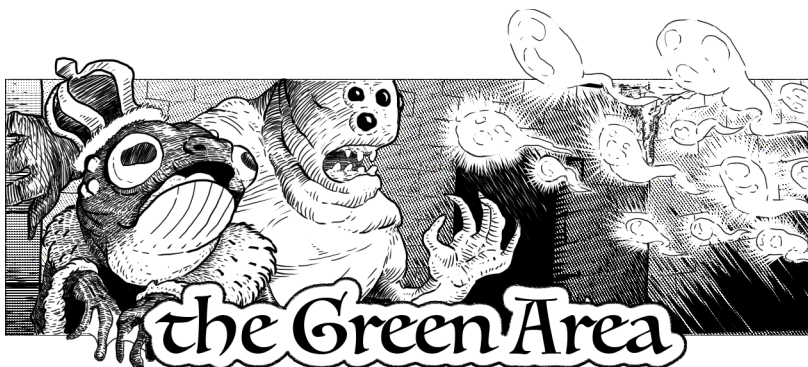
mistaken, the soul of a true wyrm swirls inside its broken body and through its wit and might it has become master of this domain of trash and muck.

Though mortally dangerous, the Underdragon is young, vain and completely unaccustomed to dealing with intelligent creatures. Adventurers may play on its pride to win its good side and gain a powerful ally under the Tower.

Init +12; **Atk** +14 2 claws (1d8), bite (1d12), tail slap (1d20 plus poison); **AC** 13; **HD** 12d12 (48); **MV** 40'; **Act** 1d20, spellcasting: 1d20+4; **SP** *Paralysis*, breath weapon (Fort DC: 22, half 8d6 acid or cold damage) 30' cone 2/day; poison Fort DC 16 1d6 Stamina damage, 1 point if successful; Hypnotic stare, gaze one target per round by using one action die, DC 22 Will save or stand stupefied; **SV** Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; **AL** N.



Illustration by Clayton Williams



This was the old Alchemy Laboratory. Fumes and regular explosions deteriorated the bedrock, destabilizing the underground structure. Eventually the laboratory was evacuated, leaving experiments in mid-progress and homunculi still running around.

Over the years, the alchemical concoctions and unfinished experiments ran amok in the area, mutating into plasmic oozes and forming roving clouds of miasma.

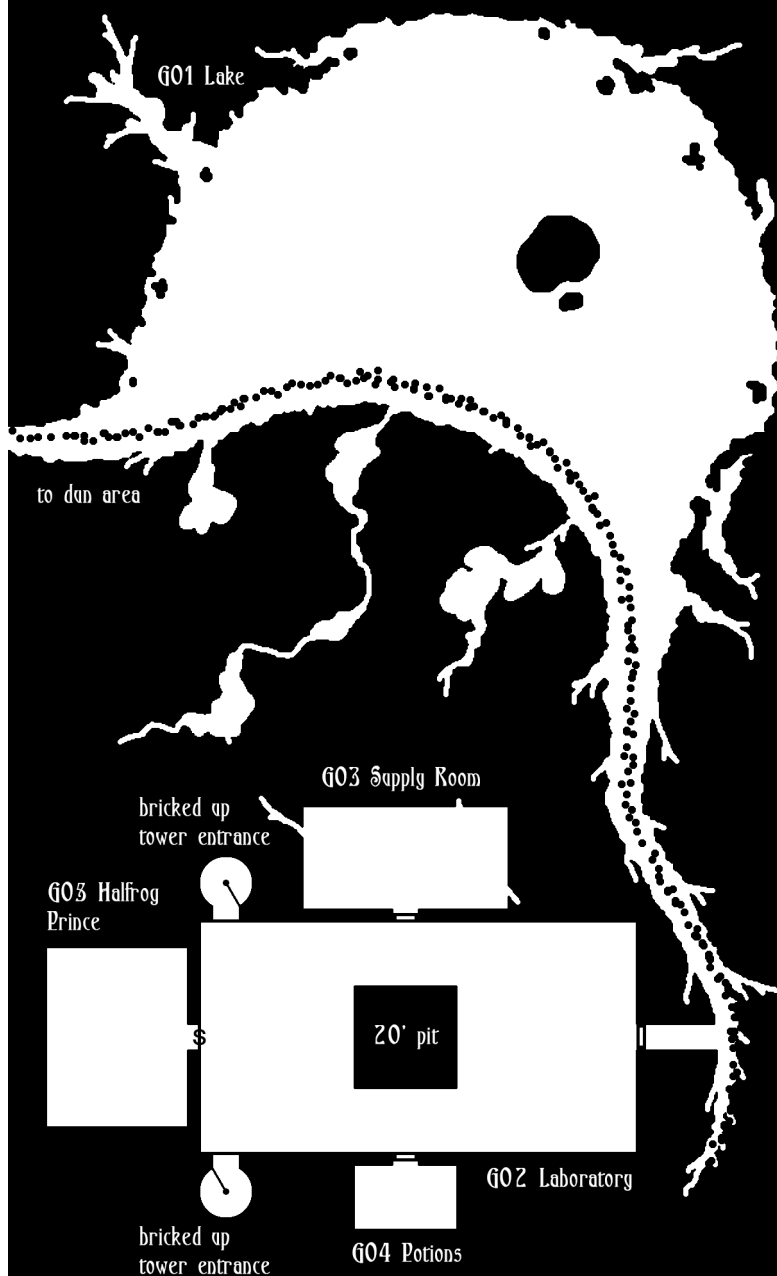
PCs are more prone to mutate than to die—remember that they who hunt monsters eventually turn into monsters as well—and their heads may find their final rest in the scale.

Features: This area is full of loot and danger. The alchemical lab was dedicated to the patron god Bobugbubilz and its ranine presence is palpable.

- * A sickly green phosphorescent glow illuminates the area with dim light, imposing a step down on sight-based rolls.
- * Green slime drips through the walls constantly, solidifying like sap.
- * Unless noted, all doors are stuck with a thick layer of slime; removing them takes 1d3 turns and either fire, pikes or both.
- * The whole area is preternaturally damp and warm.

G01. This cave is flooded with a viscous, iridescent liquid that emanates nauseous fumes. It is the receptory of the new laboratory above, pipes drain from the Tower.

THE GREEN AREA



A narrow ledge borders the lake, traversing it takes a turn and a successful Agility DC 8 test. Failure means the character falls into the liquid.

The smell is unbearable, dwelling in the room for over a turn triggers a DC 12 Fort save, failure means the PC takes a cumulative -2 to all rolls until they can rest. Falling into the lake or failing the save 3 times triggers a patron taint roll (use the Bobugbubilz table).

Drinking from the murky, iridescent water works like a successful *make potion* spell, roll 1d20+15 on the effect table to determine the effect.

A 5' by 5' stone altar with a solid gold frog on top rises in the middle of the lake. 1d12 **plasmic tadpoles** emerge from the holes in the frog's back every turn. The tadpoles float peacefully around the cave.

G02. 2d4 **lesser homunculi** hang around the room and will turn aggressive toward intruders. This great room is fit for a dozen wizards to work in: stone tables, basins, alambics, test tubes, distillators, any tools an alchemist would need.

Four vats plugged with tubes bolted to the wall showcase human clones in different states of development. The exits that connected with the tower were bricked over and sealed with magic slime.

A perfect cubic 20' by 20' pit is inset in the middle of the room. The right *Gauntlet of Æder-Kadai* and 3d6 gold pieces lie at the bottom. The pit is actually occupied by a **translucent gelatinous cube**. It will remain immobile to lure the PCs and attack if they try to retrieve the treasure below.

THE GAUNTLET OF ÆDER-KADAI

Each gauntlet adds +1d when casting spells with the *Sword of Æder-Kadai*.

A glove worn while near the *Sword of Æder-Kadai* grants the sword +2 additional Intelligence.



A bronze snake head hangs from the western wall. Pulling it down pours acid for 1d4 damage to whoever is activating the lever. Pulling sideways opens a secret door to #G05.

G03. This supply room is lined with shelves all packed with labeled jars holding chemicals and mineral substances. 4 **lesser homunculi** are occupied with stocking and keeping inventory, following their original programming. Every turn 1d3 **plasmic tadpoles** bring back raw materials for the homunculi to restock.

G04. This room holds a stash of magic potions. There are 1d3 samples of each potion, all clearly labeled. These magic potions are actually failed batches and produce a side effect in addition to their regular effect if drunk.

Potion	Side effect.
Love potion	A random body part becomes that of a pig.
Gaseous form	Its effects are permanent!
Healing	Starfish grow out of the injuries that the potion heals.
Shrinking	Drinker divides into 2d4 smaller versions of themselves
Water-breathing	Face becomes that of a fish.
Speed	Drinker vibrates out of the Material Plane for the duration of the spell.
Invisibility	Skin becomes transparent.
Fire resistance	Drinker catches on fire (to which they are immune) permanently.
Flying	Grow wings in their ankles they can't control. They want out.
Giant strength	Grows twice their size, breaking equipment and raising the drinker's Strength and Stamina to 16.
Longevity	Skin dessicates and becomes gray, body fat is consumed and hair becomes white.

G05. This would be a luxurious bedroom fit for a prince—if it weren't for the slime pouring down the walls. Four pieces of gold candelabra (worth 10 gp), a set of silverware (worth 2 gp), and a gold goblet (worth 10 gp) are scattered around the room.

This chamber houses the **Halfrog Prince** and his **greater homunculus** servant. He's desperate to get out of the crypts, but terrified of the monsters that dwell there. He will offer an emerald (worth 12 gp) to be escorted out of the dungeon. He also carries a crown (worth 60 gp) and an ornate rapier (worth 40 gp). The homunculus serves the prince, but it's programmed keep him in the laboratory, and will attack anyone that tries to rescue him.

The secret door can be easily opened from the inside.

GREEN WANDERING MONSTERS

Roll 1d6 for a wandering monster every 4 turns or if the PCs decide to camp inside the dungeon. On a result of 1, there is a wandering monster, roll 3d6 to determine what is it:

Roll 3d6	Result
3-4	Miasma. PCs roll a DC 10 Fort save. On a failed check, their humors unbalance, roll 1d4: 1) blood: take 1d4 damage; 2) yellow bile: the victim attacks their closest ally; 3) black bile: the victim is depressed and takes two steps down to all mental rolls for the next 6 turns; 4) phlegm: the victim is sick and two steps down all physical rolls until resting.
5-8	2d3 lesser homunculus looking for live prey to drop into the primaver pool (#G01).
9-12	2d6 plasmic tadpoles looking for matter. Roll 1d4: 1 calcium; 2 iron; 3 salt; 4 fat.
13-15	A crawling amoeba flows toward the PCs to process them.
16-17	A greater homunculus looking for parts to add to their failing body.
18	The Halfrog Prince and his greater homunculus walking around. He panics and runs away the moment he stumbles upon the PCs.

CRAWLING AMOEBA:

These amoeba were developed by the wizards to distill living creatures into their quintessential materials. Through this process, the amoeba separate the components into iron, carbon, salt, and sulphur, then stores them in their stomachs. Without the sorcerers' control, they roam about and absorb anything they come across.

Init -2; **Atk** pseudopod +4 melee (1d6 acid); **AC** 10; **HD** 2d12 (12); **MV** 10'; **Act** 2d20; **SP** paralyzation (Fort DC 12), half damage from slashing and piercing weapons; **SV** Fort +0, Ref -4, Will Automatic failure; **AL** N.

Once it paralyzes a victim, it takes an action to move over the victim and absorb it. It requires a successful opposed Strength check to pull a swallowed creature out of the amoeba.

GREATER HOMUNCULUS (7kg):

Greater homunculi are actually the combination of at least 4 **lesser homunculi** that stack and merge on top of each other. Even though powerful, their form is frail, and it will lose at least one body part per hour until it regresses back to just one **lesser homunculi**.

Init +1; **Atk** claw +3 melee (1d4) or bite +3 melee (1d6); **AC** 11; **HD** 2d8 (8); **MV** 30'; **Act** 3d20; **SP** darkvision 60', homunculi traits, disassemble; **SV** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -2; **AL** L/C.

Each homunculus forms differently, roll for 1d4 to see how many special traits it has, and then 1d4 per trait: 1) extra head (extra bite attack); 2) extra pair of legs (double speed); 3) extra arm (extra claw attack); 4) thicker skin (AC 16).

A greater homunculus that suffers damage equal to half their hit points disassembles, dividing into 2 **lesser homunculi**.

THE HALFROG PRINCE (4kg):

This unfortunate soul is the victim of the negligence of the wizarding school. A young prince cursed to be turned into a frog, his parents sought the help of the Tower of the Manticore to remove the enchantment, but after years of experimentation, no sorcerer was able to completely lift the curse, their trials only polymorphing the prince into a disgusting half breed between frog and man.

When the laboratory was evacuated, the Halfrog Prince was left behind, trapped in the catacombs far away from home. Years of isolation weren't gentle on his sanity, and now the Prince is an anxious mess, too weak and fearful to escape on his own.

Init +0; **Atk** scepter +4 melee (1d6); **AC** 11; **HD** 2d8 (8); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** nauseating aura 60'; **SV** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; **AL** L.

Everyone who looks at the Halfrog Prince must make a DC 14 Will save or have all action rolls at one step down due to nausea.

LESSER HOMUNCULUS (2kg):

Lesser homunculi are squat, goblinoid creatures made of a clay-like substance. Created to serve as assistants in the laboratory, they are bound to their original programming, and turn completely chaotic the moment the commands become obsolete, unless a wizard is able to assign them a new task. They are intelligent enough to carry out orders, use tools, open doors, pull levers, etc.

Init +0; **Atk** claw +0 melee (1d2) or bite +0 melee (1d4); **AC** 9; **HD** 1d4 (2); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** merge; **SV** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -2; **AL** L/C.

Four lesser homunculi positioned next to each other can take an action to merge, becoming a greater homunculus.

PLASMIC TADPOLE (1/4kg):

The plasmic tadpoles were invoked by the sorcerers to serve as collectors, absorbing specific materials from any object or creature. These white, phosphorescent creatures generate from the altar dedicated to Bobugbubilz in #G01.

Init +4; **Atk** absorption +4 melee (1d3 Stamina damage); **AC** 12; **HD** 1d4-2 (1); **MV** float 60'; **Act** 1d20; **SV** Fort +0, Ref +10, Will Immune; **AL** N.

With a successful attack, the creatures absorb specific materials off the victim, like water, fat, iron, etc. They can also target items, destroying them with a successful attack.

TRANSLUCENT GELATINOUS CUBE:

This ooze developed of the alchemical substances thrown down the pit. It is completely transparent and undetectable while remaining immobile.

Init (always last); **Atk** pseudopod +4 melee (1d4); **AC** 10; **HD** 4d8 (16); **MV** 5'; **Act** 1d24; **SP** half damage from slicing and piercing weapons, immune to acid; **SV** Fort +6, Ref -8, Will -6; **AL** N.

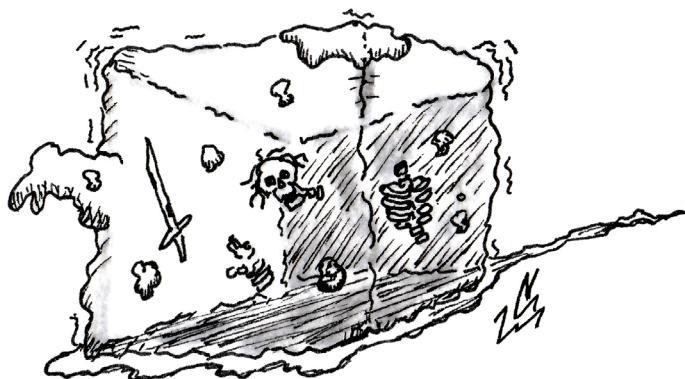


Illustration by Clayton Williams

Coming in and out of the Dungeon

Eventually the surviving PCs will try to rest out of the dungeon. If they want to leave and re-equip they must exit the Tower and that's it, you're out of the bounds of the adventure and I bid you farewell! Conversely, the characters may try to climb up and rest in the chamber by the pit. If so, **Biliac** and **Zser-Zerad** will offer them food, conjuring a magical feast attended by homunculus servants.

The prices of the feast are exorbitant, but it will fortify anyone who eats a full meal:

Meal	Cost
Entree (enough to survive)	2 sp
1st course (meal for the day)	3 sp
2nd course (+1 hp recovery)	5 sp
3rd course (+1d4 hp hp recovery)	1 gp
Dessert (+1 hp recovery)	1 gp
Wine (drink for the day)	1 gp

The homunculi carry a tally of what each character eats but never tell of the price until they finish eating. They will charge the PC on the spot or if the character doesn't have the money, write their name on the tab. Now the PC must work off their debt to the Tower of the Manticore or face the wrath of the wizards.

Biliac and **Zser-Zerad** can only invoke this feast once a day.

The PCs can also set up camp and sleep by the side of the pit. The sorcerers will retire and lock the characters in at nightfall, returning the next day.



This was the old Summoning Facility, sealed off from the rest of the Tower after too many botched invocations endangered the school. These days, summoning classes are given in mentorships, while the former wing is safely tucked underground.

Its brick walls are painted bright red, as if to warn of the impending doom lurking in this area from beyond space time.

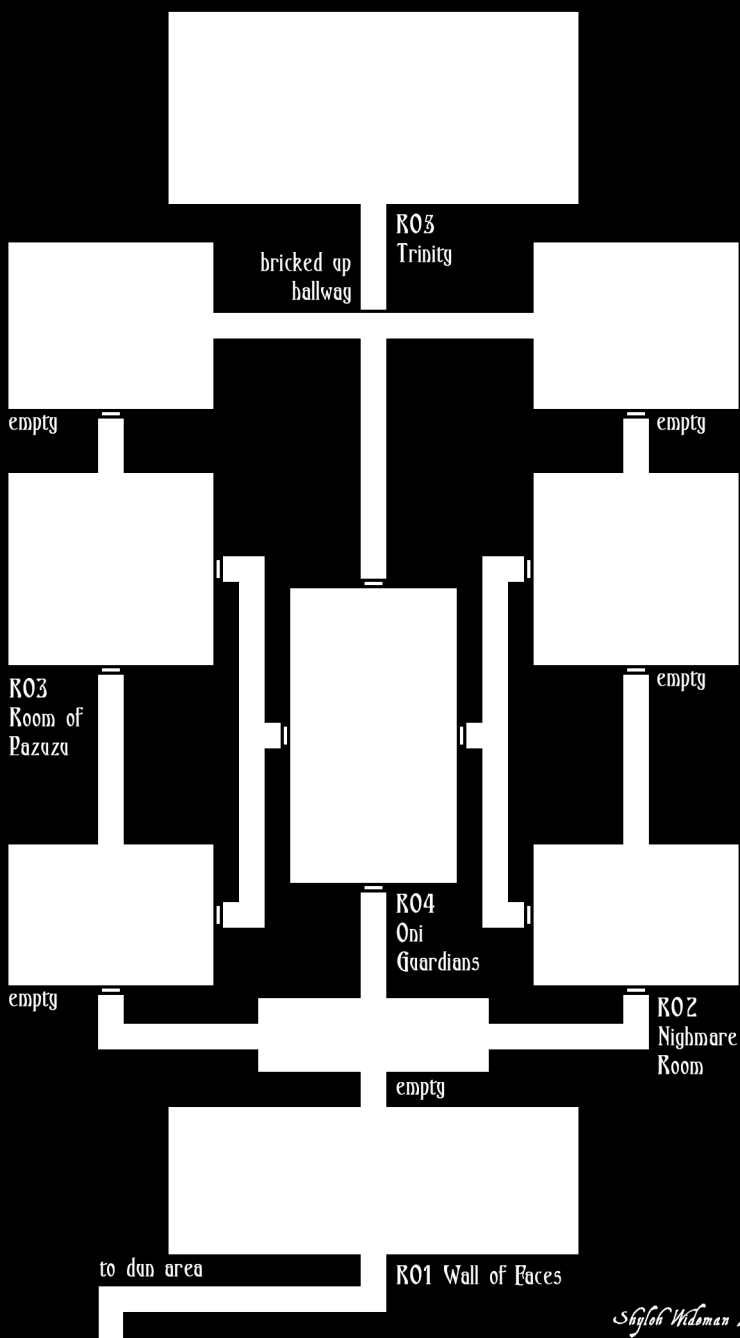
TRINITY, an avatar of Law invoked as a last ditch effort to keep any summoned demon at bay, dwells in this area. It eventually turned on the mages and was trapped within one of the rooms as retaliation.

Features: This area packs the mightiest (and heaviest) monsters in the dungeon, and should be treaded carefully.

- * The corridors are lit by torches set in bronze sconces at regular intervals. They never go out.
- * Its doors are made of iron and are all locked, they require a DC 12 Agility check to pick unless noted otherwise.
- * The presence of TRINITY keeps demons at bay. If the PCs banish it in any way, make sure to augment the frequency of wandering monsters.

R01. The stone of this room pulsates like living flesh. Devilish faces emerge from the walls; some stick their tongue out to reveal a key hidden inside: a horse key, a lion key, and a devil key. If the PCs want to extract any of the keys, roll for initiative; the wall rolls three times at +3, one roll for each key.

THE RED AREA



If a PC acts before the wall, they can try to extract the key with a successful DC 10 Reflex save (if they don't beat its initiative, the mouth closes and the key appears on another tongue). Failure means that character suffers 1 HP damage as the mouth snaps shut while they try to take it.

The block of rock leading back to the Dun Area can be pushed with a successful DC 15 Strength roll. Each attempt takes one turn.

R02. The door to this room is locked, a stylized horse adorns the keyhole. Trying to pick the lock triggers a black lotus spray trap; DC 14 Fort save or fall asleep for the next 1d24 hours.

Inside lies a luxurious chamber: a bed covered with a gold-inlaid canopy (worth 10 gp) and a night stand with a half-filled black lotus vial (DC 14 Fort save or sleep for 1d24 hours), a gold mirror (worth 20 gp), and a spellbook (containing all the spells the sleeping sorceress knows) resting on top.

On the bed lays a **sleeping sorceress** with an **imp** sitting on top, both observed by a **pale nightmare** from behind the canopy. The monsters turn towards the PCs as they enter. Killing the imp wakes the **sleeping sorceress**, who will chase and destroy every creature that broke her spell.

R03. The door to this room is locked, an stylized lion adorns the keyhole. Trying to pick the lock triggers a green acid trap, DC 14 Ref save or take 1d6 damage.

The room is dominated by a stone effigy of a demon with feather wings, a lion head holding a ruby (worth 16 gp) in its mouth, vulture feet, and a snake for a penis. There are 3d4 gold pieces in offerings at the feet of the statue.

As the PCs enter the room, the demon in the statue will try to possess them. One randomly-determined PC has to roll a Will save against the demon's possession attack of 1d20+5. If the PC fails, they will become possessed, their Strength, Stamina, and Personality will become at least 14 or their current score (whichever is higher), their alignment changes to Chaotic and their unarmed attacks become 1d8. Inform the player that their character is possessed, and have them roll the same opposed check every 6 turns. If the PC fails, they will permanently fall under the DM's control.

If the PC succeeds on resisting the initial possession successfully, the demon will try to possess the nearest character that enters the room.

R04. The door to this room is locked, a stylized devil adorns the keyhole.

Two **animated statues** resembling fearsome oni guard this room. The left *Gauntlet of Æder-Kadai* lies in the middle of the room, a bone shard still sticking out of its glove-hole. Four sets of curved broadswords adorn the walls around this room.

These statues are occupied by oni spirits that are bound to fight any non-wizard that tries to enter the area. The oni can be dispelled or appeased with a sacrifice: the head of a horse and the head of a lion.

Both statues animate the moment a non-wizard enters the room. Runes on the doors keep the statues from walking out.



THE GAUNTLET OF ÆDER-KADAI

Each gauntlet adds +1d when casting spells with the *Sword of Æder-Kadai*.

A glove worn while near the *Sword of Æder-Kadai* grants the sword +2 additional Intelligence.

The oni know about TRINITY in room #R05 and might warn the PCs about the impending apocalypse.

R05. This door has been bricked over. A set of button-tiles numbered 1 to 135 in random order are placed on the outside. The holy vestments of a cleric of Law lie in front of the door, next to a pair of boots and a prayer scroll; its wearer was disintegrated by the creature behind the wall. The prayer scroll holds a spell of *banish*, a seal against TRINITY written to block the planar creature by trapping it behind a disorganized configuration of multiples of three. It represents a sequence of 3-6-9, some religious scribbles and the number 135.

If the PCs push nine combinations of multiples of threes (3 to 27) or any combination of nine numbers that add up to 135 the wall opens to the inner chamber. The wall reconstructs behind their backs. Three *banish* prayer scrolls have been stuck with wax on the inside.

Sprawled nearby lie the corpses of three Lawful clerics, each carrying a holy symbol, chainmail, and three-pronged flails.

TRINITY, an avatar of Law is bound here. This creature was originally summoned to keep the demons at bay, but turned on the mages when it detected the presence of Chaos in their midst. The council called on the help of clerics of Law to keep its powers contained and promptly forgot about it. The three clerics sacrificed their lives to seal the planar creature inside, while the fourth was teleported and disintegrated.

TRINITY

It's a Lawful avatar of the mathematical concept of the number three. As a concept it cannot be destroyed, but can be banished through magical means to a more abstract plane of existence.

It is displeased by other numbers and rearranges compulsively any assortment of things in groups of threes. It talks in three worded sentences and expects to be spoken to in accordance.

Any creature that displeases it must make a DC 12 Will saving throw. If they succeed they're teleported outside TRINITY's presence, if they fail they're disintegrated.

This avatar cannot escape the room because the scrolls of banishment are waxed on the tiles numbered 9, 18 and 27. Since it cannot comprehend numbers that are not multiples of three and cannot touch the tiles marked by the scrolls, it can't activate the nine numbers combination to get out.

If TRINITY were to escape, it would first obliterate any non-lawful creature on sight, and then escape the Tower to reorganize the world to a perfect image of Law, bringing an era of absolute order and stagnation.

If a Lawful PC pledges loyalty to the avatar, it will rearrange their stats to the nearest multiple of three (so for example a score of 8 would turn to 9 and a score of 13 to 12) and charge them with freeing it and destroying any and all chaotic creatures they encounter.

RED AREA WANDERING MONSTERS

Roll 1d6 for a wandering monster every 4 turns or if the PCs decide to camp inside the dungeon. On a result of 1 there is a wandering monster, roll 3d6 to determine what it is:

Roll 3d6	Result
3-5	1d3 elemental eels . Roll 1d4 for each: 1 fire; 2 water; 3 air; 4 earth.
6-10	1d3 wandering hellskull .
11-15	1d4 winged swords .
16-18	1 bound demon .

If TRINITY is banished, roll for wandering monsters every 2 turns. If TRINITY is freed, roll as normal, but the avatar will appear to disintegrate any Chaotic creature that results.

ANIMATED STATUE (100kg):

These powerful bronze statues are possessed by the spirits of oni. They were bound to protect the antechamber leading to TRINITY. They cannot leave the room and have to serve any magician they encounter. Even though they're Chaotic they behave Lawfully to follow these conditions while inside the statue. If the statue is cracked, the oni is freed (see oni entry).

Init -2; **Atk** slams +3 melee (1d6+2) or kanabō club melee (1d10+2); **AC** 22; **HD** 4d8+4 (20); **MV** 15'; **Act** 2d20; **SP** immune to critical hits, unleashes an oni when killed; **SV** Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +4; **AL** C.

BOUND DEMON (25kg):

These demons were originally bound to serve as protectors of the Tower. They are humanoid in shape, have beastly feline heads, horns, are covered in an azure black coat of fur and have faces in the shoulders, knees and abdomen.

The magic that summoned them deteriorated and now perpetually invokes them with a random task, roll 1d4: 1) to hunt intruders; 2) to guard a place; 3) to retrieve an item; 4) to serve a wizard. The demon returns to Hell the moment it is destroyed or upon completion of the task.

Though Chaotic, their bond forces them to behave Lawfully under the specific terms of their task.

Init +0; **Atk** flaming poker +1 melee (1d8+2 fire damage); **AC** 13; **HD** 2d12 (12); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20/1d24; **SP** Infravision, *darkness* (+4 check), half damage from non-magical weapons and fire, action rolls are one step higher if pursuing its task; **SV** Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3; **AL** C.

ELEMENTAL EEL:

These wisps of magical energy come directly from the raw Elemental Planes and take a form best described as “eel-like” upon entry on the Material world. They burst into existence spontaneously, behave erratically and dissipate after one turn. They are attracted by similar energies and avoid their opposite elements as best as they can.

Init +2; **Atk** snap +4 melee (1d2); **AC** 14; **HD** 1d8 (4); **MV** float 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** suffers half damage from non-magical weapons, extra, elemental traits; **SV** Fort -2, Ref +4, Will -4; **AL** N.

Element	
Air	is insubstantial and cannot attack. If passing through another creature, the creature must roll a Fort saving throw DC 12 or take 1d6 Stamina damage.
Earth	can only be damaged by magic or blunt weapons, but suffers full damage.
Fire	after a successful attack the victim must roll a Ref saving throw DC 8 or catch fire, suffering 1d4 fire damage each turn until they succeed the saving throw or are put out.
Water	can slip through any crack and reform on the other side. It doesn't inflict damage but can force itself into a creature with a successful attack. The victim must succeed on a Fort saving throw to spit it out or be killed.

HELLSKULL (50 kg):

These fiery skulls come screeching right from the Abyss. They are the disembodied heads of demons, their flesh consumed by hellfire.

Init +0; **Atk** fire spit +2 15' cone (1d4 fire damage), bite +4 melee (1d4); **AC** 10; **HD** 3d8 (12); **MV** 40' float; **Act** 1d20; **SP** fire aura 1 damage to all who remain adjacent, self destruction Ref DC 10 or 3d6 fire damage (save for half); **SV** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; **AL** C.

IMP (3kg):

This squat imp is the approximate size of a human child, with a sickly golden-brown skin and eyes of madness. It likes to paralyze its victims, sit on top of them and feed off their negative feelings.

It travels around with the **white nightmare**, pinning down victims for the horse to induce nightmares and then feed on their bad dreams.

Init +1; **Atk** bite +3 melee (1d3) grip +3 (paralysis); **AC** 10; **HD** 3d8 (12); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** paralyzing grip DC 12 Will or paralysis for 2d6 turns, every failed save adds +5 to the DC for each subsequent saving throw; **SV** Fort -2, Ref +1, Will +4; **AL** C.

ONI (40kg):

Onis are ogrish sorcerers and powerful spirits. This pair of brothers, named Aoshio and Akashio, were bound by the wizards of the Tower long ago and if freed (either accidentally or on purpose) will seek vengeance against the humans that trapped them. Although evil and cruel, they can be appeased with tributes. Aoshio specially loves horses and Akashio loves lions.

Init +2; **Atk** slam +5 melee (1d6+6); **AC** 16; **HD** 4d8+4 (20); **MV** 20'; **Act** 1d20, 1d20 (spellcasting only); **SP** spellcasting +7; **SV** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; **AL** C.

Though they have spent their spells a long time ago, Aoshio can cast *control ice* once a day and Akashio *control fire* once a day.

PALE NIGHTMARE (20kg):

The white nightmare looks like a ghostly white horse with bulging, milky eyes. It induces nightmares in everyone it meets eye to eye.

Init +2; **Atk** hoof +2 melee (1d4+2); **AC** 12; **HD** 3d8 (12); **MV** 60'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** Induce nightmares DC 12 Will or become afraid for 2d6 turns, can teleport to unseen areas like closed doors or curtains; **SV** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; **AL** C.

SLEEPING SORCERESS (5kg):

This sorceress tried to invoke the imp and the white nightmare to enact vengeance upon an old rival, only to fall victim to their tricks. She has lost her sanity after years of nightmarish torment, and will blast everything on sight if she ever wakes up.

Init +2; **Atk** claw eyes +2 melee (1d2); **AC** 12; **HD** 3d4 (6); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** Spellcasting +6; **SV** Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; **AL** C.

Lvl 1 spells: *chill touch*, *find familiar*, *magic missile*, *sleep*. Lvl 2 spells: *levitate*, *scare*.

WINGED SWORDS:

Winged swords are avatars of Law summoned from the celestial planes to battle the overflowing demons that started invading the facility.

They first use detect alignment to sort any Chaotic creature and promptly start to attack, sparing any Neutral or Lawful creature unless they attack first.

Init +0; **Atk** sword +2 (1d8); **AC** 10; **HD** 3d8 (12); **MV** 20' fly; **Act** 1d20; **SP** none; **SV** Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; **AL** L.

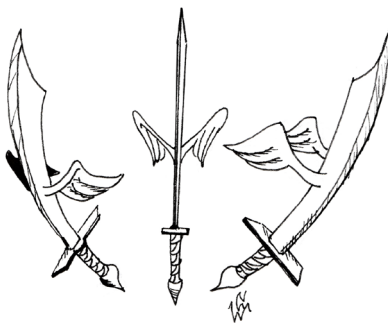


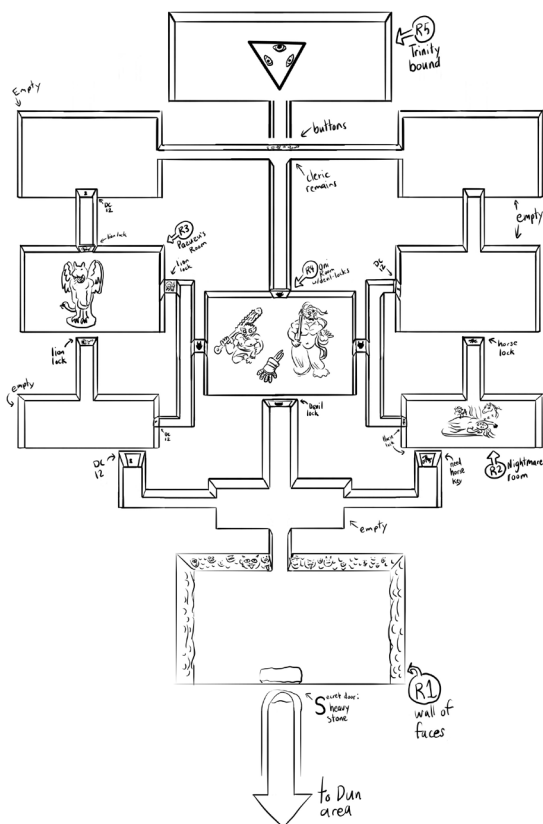
Illustration by
Clayton Williams

Playing the Sword

As the *Sword of Æder-Kadai* gains Intelligence, it will improve its communication skills, being able to respond, draw marks, maps and even write.

Check the current Intelligence on the sword, it will act accordingly:

Int	Result
7-8	Just tugs and pointing toward the nearest piece of the raiment.
9-11	Responds to questions by nodding or tapping.
12-14	Can draw arrows, marks and symbols.
15-16	Can draw crude maps and write words.
17+	Æder-Kadai appears!



Its goal is to find the remaining items of the raiment and summon its master Æder-Kadai. It can sabotage attacks if thwarted from this purpose, causing lower steps on the dice chain and even redirecting attacks if mistreated.

Map the sword drew. Illustrated by Claytonian JP



This was the Necromancy Faculty. Its former headmaster was a member of the Conclave of Seven and one who was secretly replaced by his superintelligent octopus familiar upon death. When the rest of the Conclave discovered the ruse a magical battle erupted, shaking the Tower to its core and culminating with the necromancy wing being teleported underground.

Having survived the battle, the octopean necromancer took on the name of The Lurking Lord and rose as master of this area. Over the years it was able to recover the squid eggs from its former master's study, hatched them as its children and trained them to scavenge for bones, with the ultimate goal of raising an undead army and enacting vengeance upon the Tower of the Manticore.

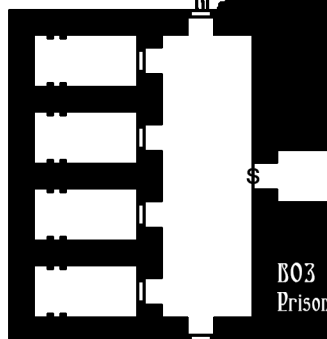
Features: this area was broken thrice when teleported. The rooms are connected by rickety rope bridges. The cracks drop 20' to a large chamber connecting directly to the Tower's graveyard (#B02).

The necromancy wing is maintained by the servants of the Lurking Lord and patrolled regularly.

- * Crossing the bridges triggers a Luck ability check. Failing the roll means the rotten wood gives in and the character falls into the pit (#B02).
- * The area is pitch-black. Bringing any flame here turns it blue.
- * Unless noted, the doors are open, surprisingly oiled and well maintained.
- * Dead characters will be collected and dropped into the pit (#B02) to be processed.

THE BLUE AREA

B04 Study



B03
Prison

B02
The Pit



B01 Necromancy Wing

to dun area

Sylvia Wilman 2019

B01. These meager quarters were occupied by the students. A dozen quarters fit to house a novice lie at the sides, now covered in debris. 3d4 copper coins with matching minting lie scattered around the rooms.

A 10' tall statue looms over the western wall. It looks as if melted from the stone itself and represents a hooded figure holding a hammer. Inside the shadowy hood shimmers a galaxy of stars: there are fifty tiny diamonds (worth 20 gold pieces each) inset to appear as a starry night sky. The silver-plated warhammer is dismountable, fully functional, and doubles as a holy symbol for neutral clerics.

If a PC pries the diamonds out, they receive the curse of undeath. At the moment of the character's death, it will immediately rise again, taking 3d2 points of ability damage to distribute between Strength, Stamina and Agility. The character will also lose a body part, roll 1d6: 1) the head; 2) the left arm; 3) the right arm; 4) the left leg; 5) the right leg; 6) one of their eyes. If a result is rerolled, the body was thoroughly hacked to pieces and finally destroyed. The character is now harmed by magical healing and can be turned as an undead with the same hit dice.

The **novice ghost** haunts this place. Knowing that the Lurking Lord grows ever more powerful, it offers an opal (worth 12 gp) if the PCs can steal the *Helm of Æder-Kadai* off it. Having no use for the helm itself, it will gladly let them keep it as well.

B02. This chamber is a natural cavern, it connects directly under the Tower's graveyard, the floor littered with the skeletons that drop from the ceiling. 2d3 **squidletons** are picking bones for the Lurking Lord.

A swarm of flesh-eating scarabs was released to pick the skeletons clean. Walking through the bones requires a DC 10 Ref saving throw or suffer 1d6 points of damage per round. If a PC falls from the rickety bridges, it will alert the scarabs who will swarm in the next 3 rounds.

B03. The dungeon of the facility is where the subjects are held. It is fitted with four cells held by iron doors and two pairs of manacles attached to the wall. Each door has a sliding peephole. It takes an DC 15 Agility check to pick. The keys are carried by a triskeleton (roll 25% for next ones they meet). **Boslovik**, an unfortunate student lost in the catacombs, is currently held in one of the cells. The Lurking Lord is experimenting on him with the goal of extracting a skeleton, a ghost, and a wraith out of the same body.

An ornate octopus is carved against the eastern wall, 8 tubes curl inside the rock, each ending in a chain pulley. This is a hidden door designed for a squid to activate by pulling the chains in sequence. Figuring out the sequence takes an DC 10 Intelligence check to hear the gears tuning inside the wall while someone rolls an DC 10 Agility check to twist their arms and pull the chains inside the tubes. Since the tubes are made for creatures with boneless limbs, the Agility test is rolled at minus one step. Due to the nature of the sequence, two people are required to activate the pulleys (or just one squid).

Inside the secret door there's a sarcophagus occupied by a **mummified baboon assassin**. This creature is invoked by the Seven and One and the Lurking Lord whenever they need to murder a rival. There's a 25% chance the creature is not present at the moment.

B04. This open room leads to a grim laboratory set with embalming, surgery, and other necromantic tools. Roll 1d4 to see who's occupying it.

Roll 1d4	Result
1	The Lurking Lord is alone, implanting a skeleton with a baby squid.
2	The Lurking Lord is building skeleton sets with the help of 2d3 squidletons .
3	The Lurking Lord is issuing orders to a patrol of 2d4 squidletons and 1d2 triskeletons .
4	The room is currently empty.

The *Helm of Æder-Kadai* rests over an old stone bust on the far wall.



THE HELM OF ÆDER-KADAI

Grants its wearer the ability to cast detect magic and read magic at will with a +5 spellcheck.

Wearing the helm near the *Sword of Æder-Kadai* grants it a further +3 Intelligence.

Two octopus-doors (like the one described in #B03) are set on the northern and southern wall.

The northern door leads to a cold and damp room dominated by a sealed sensory deprivation tank filled with squid eggs. If the **Lurking Lord** isn't working in the laboratory, it is resting inside: the body hangs like a suit on the wall while the octopus sleeps. Opening the lid takes a DC 10 Strength check. A locked chest holding 85 gold pieces, an alabaster worth 9 gp, a hematite worth 10 gp, a malachite worth 10 gp, and a rock quartz worth 9 gp rests at the feet. It takes a DC 15 Agility check to pick.

The southern door leads to the pit (#B02). It springs closed as soon as someone passes through, merging seamlessly with the bedrock. Once closed, it's impossible to open from the outside.

Blue Area Wandering Monsters

Roll 1d6 for a wandering monster every 4 turns or if the PCs decide to camp inside the dungeon. On a result of 1 or 2, there is a wandering monster, roll 3d6 to determine what it is:

Roll 3d6	Result
3-5	3d4 spare parts flopping about.
6-7	1d4 vampiric leeches looking for a quick meal.
8-13	2d4 squidletons performing various chores.
14-15	2d4 squidletons + 1d2 triskeletons guarding the perimeter.
16-18	The mummified baboon assassin stalking the corridors.

BOSLOVIK (5kg, you sick bastards!):

Boslovik is an enchanter apprentice. Too curious for his own good, he snuck down the crypts to retrieve any lost knowledge buried on the necromancy faculty. Being no adventurer himself, he was quickly captured by the forces of the Lurking Lord and used as a subject.

Init +0; **Atk** unarmed -1 melee (1); **AC** 10; **HD** 2d4 (4); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** spells +4; **SV** Fort -2, Ref -1, Will +2; **AL** N.

Boslovik is completely drained and has lost all of his spells, but can cast any scrolls given to him, or add his spellcasting bonus to the *Sword of Æder-Kadai*.

THE LURKING LORD (4kg):

Was the former headmaster of the Necromancy Faculty and member of the Conclave of Seven and One. When he died, his familiar (a strange octopus belonging to a species of superintelligent cephalopods that inhabit the deep sea) took over his body and resumed activities as normal. All went well until the ruse was discovered by the rest of the Conclave.

The octopus believes itself to be the legitimate apprentice of the headmaster and heir to his position in the Conclave, but the appeal was rejected by the other members of the Seven and One, and the trial escalated to violence.

Exiled from the Tower, the Lurking Lord now schemes to build an army of the dead and reclaim its place in the School.

Init +0; **Atk** silver dagger +2 melee (1d4); **AC** 12; **HD** 5d4 (15); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20 1d14; **SP** spells as level 5 wizard (spell check +7), double-bodied, undead traits; **SV** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; **AL** L.

Spells lvl1: *chill touch, comprehend languages, magic shield, sleep*.
Lvl 2: *mirror image, invisible companion, ray of enfeeblement*; Lvl 3: *animate dead*.

Due to its double-bodied nature, damage affects its outer body first. Inhabiting a brain dead corpse, it is immune to mind-affecting effects as long as it remains inside the corpse.

Destroying the body frees the octopus. It has the same stats except its movement changes to 10', swim 30', it cannot use weapons and its saving throws change to Fort +0 Ref -2 and Will +6.

MUMMIFIED BABOON ASSASSIN (7kg):

This creature was conjured as the personal hitman for the Coven of Seven and One. The mummified corpse of a wild baboon infused with the risen shadow of an assassin, it is bound to serve and unable to harm any member of the Conclave (since it uses the body of a former member, the Lurking Lord can summon and is immune to the assassin as well).

Init +4; **Atk** bite +4 melee (1d4+3) or claw +6 (1d6+3); **AC** 13; **HD** 3d8 (12); **MV** 20' or climb 30'; **Act** 1d24; **SP** undead traits, immune to non-silvered weapons, vulnerable to fire, automatically knows the location of its target, can teleport between shadows; **SV** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; **AL** L.

NOVICE GHOST:

This unfortunate soul was a novice wizard that fought against the Conclave of Seven and One to defend the Necromancy Faculty. They died when the wing was teleported and rose as a ghost when the Lurking Lord started building its army. Seeing how the necromancer used the bones of their former schoolmates changed their heart, and now they cannot rest until they thwart the plans of the Lurking Lord.

Init +2; **Atk** draining touch +6 (1d4 Str damage); **AC** 10; **HD** 2d12 (8); **MV** fly 40'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** undead traits, immune to non magical weapons, 1d4 special abilities; **SV** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; **AL** N.

The novice ghost is bound to their quarters and cannot exit the room.

SPARE PARTS (4kg, head only):

Are limbs and heads reanimated by the necromantic magic that emanates from this area.

Init +0; **Atk** slam/bite +2 melee (1d2); **AC** 8; **HD** 1d2-1 (1); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** undead traits; **SV** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will Immune; **AL** C.

SQUIDLETON (3kg):

The squidletons are animated skeletons controlled by the superintelligent squids that serve the Lurking Lord. As such they can act intelligently and organize in complex formations. Without their skeletal armor, the squids are defenseless.

Init +0; **Atk** claw +0 melee (1d3) or club (1d4); **AC** 10; **HD** 1d6 (3); **MV** 30'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** undead traits, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons; **SV** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; **AL** L.

TRISKELETON (3x1d2kg):

Triskeletons are the armed forces of the Lurking Lord. They are an upgraded version of the squidleton built by at least two skeletons: three arms, two legs and one or two heads.

Init +0; **Atk** scimitars +2 melee (1d6); **AC** 9; **HD** 1d6 (6); **MV** 30'; **Act** 3d20; **SP** undead traits, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons; **SV** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; **AL** L.

VAMPIRIC LEECH (1/4kg):

These leeches were mutated by the necromantic magic that emanates from this area. They grow up to two feet and develop stunted, bat-like wings. They use their wings and larger muscles to leap violently aiming for the throat.

Init +2; **Atk** proboscis +6*/+2 melee (1d4 Sta damage, attachment); **AC** 9; **HD** 1d2-1 (1); **MV** 10' leap 20'; **Act** 1d20; **SP** leap, attachment; **SV** Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2; **AL** N.

The vampiric leeches leap on their first attack, adding a bonus to their regular attack. If they hit they attach to their victim and drain 1d4 Stamina damage each round. As an action they can be forcefully removed, but this deals 2 points of damage to the victim. It takes an Agility DC 12 test to pry the leech without harming the victim.

Who's Æder-Kadai?

Wizard-Protector of the Tower of the Manticore, the identity of this arcane knight is shrouded in mystery. Member of the original Conclave of Seven and One, they were instrumental in taming the Manticore, claiming the Tower and founding the wizarding school.

During their life they were charged with protecting the Tower against rival sorcerers, the chaotic creatures commonly attracted by its magical energies, and the power-hungry wizards that rebelled against it.

Fulfilling their duties spelled their doom. When conflict rose among the Seven and One, three sorcerers turned against the Conclave and in a magical battle that shook the Tower, disintegrated Æder-Kadai. The treacherous sorcerers disposed of the remains in the crypts below and took over the School. But Æder-Kadai had several magical countermeasures that averted death, and their spirit was castaway in the Astral Plane instead of passing away. Now it only needs a physical body to resurrect.

The Wizard Protector presents itself as a powerful *enlarged* human, talking in a metallic voice that's not completely male nor female. They are encased in scale armor and plate except for their face: a dark void swirls instead, with two starry eyes that emanate arcane energy floating in place.



Illustration by
Duamn Figueroa Rassol

ÆDER-KADAI:

Init +2; **Atk** The Sword +6 (1d10+6); **AC** 20; **HD** 5d4 (26); **MV** 30';
Act 1d20 1d14; **SP** spellcasting +7: *force manipulation, magic missile, shatter and dispel magic*; **SV** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; **AL** L.

Rumors abound on Æder-Kadai's true identity. If your players ever ask you, you may roll on the following table to find out what their character knows:

Roll 1d8	Result
1	Æder-Kadai is a dual-souled creature of Law, summoned by the Seven and One and bound to protect the Tower of the Manticore.
2	They were chosen by the gods of magic and born androgynous, gaining powerful abilities by mixing black and white magic.
3	A circle of seven powerful wizards performed a dark ritual in which they sacrificed their bodies to join their souls into one. They possessed a suit of armor and the Wizard Protector was born.
4	Æder-Kadai was a powerful mage that embraced their dual aspects to duplicate their arcane power and abjure harmful spells and curses.
5	It's a myth. It never existed and like most wizard mumbo jumbo, it was made up to scare nosy magelings.
6	They are actually a dragon that got trapped by the Seven and One in their humanoid form after polymorphing to sneak into and study within the Tower.
7	It is actually a title, carried by the powerful wizards that have taken the mantle of Wizard Protector. There was no one worthy enough to take the name during recent centuries, but someone might rise to the occasion.
8	Originally they were a wandering knight who, during a duel, became possessed by the enemy sorceress, turning them into a perfect balance of magic and steel.

Playing Æder-Kadai

As the lawful Wizard-Protector of the Tower of the Manticore their goal is to return to the School, defeat the chaotic sorcerers that settled in it, and reclaim their place in the Conclave of Seven and One, bringing order back to the Tower.

They behave with authority and righteousness, but truly appreciate that the PCs have taken over their duties. They will try to recruit the characters to guide them out of the dungeon and recover the Tower. If they're successful, they may name the characters "Protectors of the Manticore" and resurrect the ancient knightly order under the service of the School.

Since the apparition of Æder-Kadai means the disintegration of a character, you should let the player control the Wizard-Protector while returning to the Tower, at least to compensate for their loss with a short power trip.

If the PCs decide to toil in the dungeon, Æder-Kadai will grow restless and ditch the party to fulfill their goal.

Wrapping up the adventure

There are several victory conditions in the Gig at the Wizards Tower. Surviving characters are pretty much free to wrap up the adventure whenever they like and claim their well earned gold. By the time the players decide to cash out you should have a bunch of dead PCs, some mutated survivors, and at least a handful of lvl 1 characters to kick off your campaign.

If you're looking for a more epic conclusion, confronting any of the "bosses" of each area should be enough to end a lvl-0 funnel module on a high note. Collecting all the pieces of the raiment to summon Æder-Kadai and/or defeating all the bosses definitely makes for a full-on adventure!

Return to the Tower of the Manticore

A successful run in the crypts would most definitely catch the attention of the Conclave of Seven and One, specially if the party was able to restore Æder-Kadai. The wizards could name the surviving characters "Protectors of the Manticore" and start giving them assignments, to retrieve lost artifacts below and clearing out the crypts once and for all.

These are some ideas about the kind of quests the Conclave could assign to the Protectors:

- ✱ Retrieve the gear down in the armory to resurrect the Protectors with a proper uniform.
- ✱ Trap the Underdragon's soul in a magical orb and transfer it to another dragon's body, bound to serve the Tower of the Manticore, of course.
- ✱ Rescue the Halfrog Prince and return him for treatment back at the new laboratory.
- ✱ Banish TRINITY before the planar entity brings apocalypse into the world.
- ✱ Defeat the Lurking Lord and its growing army of skeletons, burying the necromancy faculty at last.

If you find yourself returning to the crypts, one quick way you can repopulate the dungeon is to roll on the wandering monsters list to see what new creatures are currently occupying an empty room.

To give a deeper sense of a living dungeon you might mix and match monsters lists in different areas.

Have the forces of the Lurking Lord advanced to the Dun area?

Have the PCs broken the seals in the Red area, allowing its demonic influence to slowly take hold?

You'll have to brave the catacombs to find out!

JUDGE'S NOTES

[illegible]

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community

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