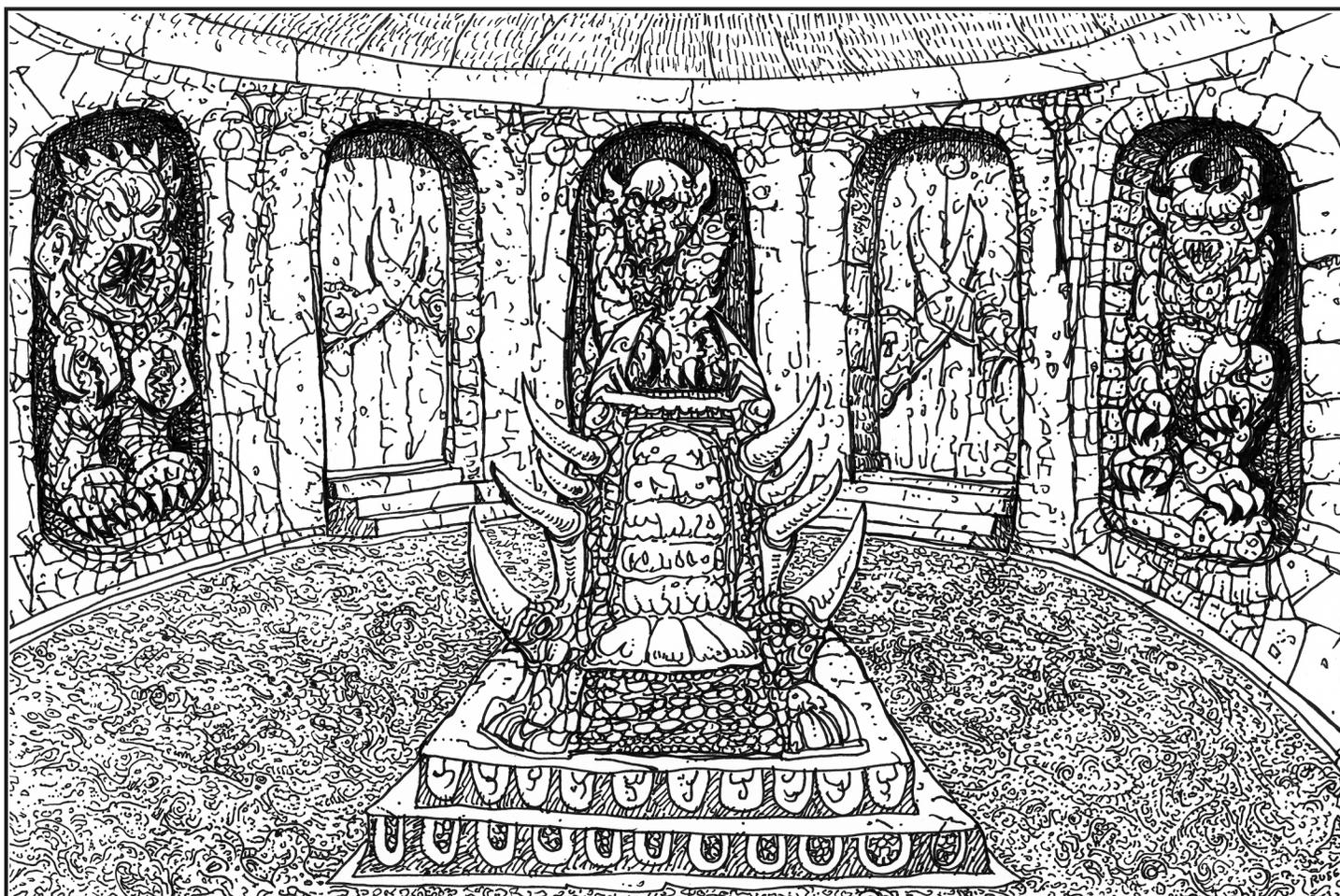


DUNGEON DELVE ADVENTURE #1

TOWER OF THE BLACK SORCERERS

by R. Nelson Bailey

A FIRST EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 5-7 CHARACTERS LEVELS 5-8



The black sorcerers have dwelled within their baleful tower for hundreds of years. Now something evil stirs in the town of Bal-Curz — strange happenings of malefic magics and persons disappearing in the night. The fearful townsfolk whisper that its source stems from the Black Tower. Possibly a few bold heroes could investigate the tower to uncover its secrets and put an end to this unseen terror?

DUNGEON DELVES by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style adventures with minimal plot for use with the 1st edition game. With little effort they can easily be adapted to most fantasy role-playing games including the advanced 2nd edition game, the original game, the BECMI (“Basic”) game, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

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First printing.



ISBN 978-1-5323-5428-1
ISBN 978-1-5323-5429-8 (E-book)



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INTRODUCTION

Tower of the Black Sorcerers is an adventure for 5 to 7 characters of levels 5 to 8 (about 40 levels total). In this module, the player characters (PCs) will explore a tower inhabited by a cabal of magic-users. Nominally set in the town of Bal-Curz, the Game Master (GM) can easily place this tower in an urban location in any fantasy role-playing game world they prefer. A good mix of character types — i.e. fighters, clerics, thieves, and magic-users — will prove most effective for thwarting the evil schemes of the sorcerers. The party should also contain one or more magic-user class player characters to deal with the many magical defenses in the tower.

BACKGROUND & NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

For as long as the citizens of Bal-Curz can remember, the ominous Black Tower has stood in the midst of their gleaming buildings like a rotten tooth. Situated amongst the shops and taverns of the merchant district, every arch-mage that has served the lords of Bal-Curz for the last four centuries has dwelled within its fuscous walls. The current arch-mage of the Tower, Basharn the Orotund, councils the lord of the city in all matters concerning eldritch dweomercraft and theurgies. The mages that reside in the tower are a secretive and aloof lot, rarely interacting with the ordinary folk.

Few citizens of Bal-Curz have ever been invited into the tower as guests; fewer still ever wish to set foot in it. Speculation of what goes on in the tower is rife amongst the peoples of the town, with each rumor more fantastical than the last. Current rumors tell of unspeakable experiments and magics practiced by the sorcerers. Many citizens speak of furtive scratching sounds heard in their cellars, and of seeing dark shadows creeping through the town's empty streets. Over the last few years, numerous townsfolk have disappeared from within the safety of their own homes, leaving no trace or sign of their fates. Others have been found dead in their homes or in the streets, slain by some mysterious creature and dying a quick and painful death by poison. All of these wild rumors suggest that some baleful working of the black wizards is afoot in Bal-Curz. To compound this problem, Ullvist, lord of Bal-Curz, has done little to assuage the concerns and fears of the townsfolk.

GETTING STARTED

This Dungeon Delve module contains little or no plot and has no predetermined adventure hook to get the players involved. This is by no means an oversight of design. Instead, it is an intentional feature that allows you — the Game Master — to make playing this module a unique experience, tailoring

it to fit your own campaign with little difficulty. The minimal plot allows you to use this module as a standalone expedition or as an adventure integrated into an existing campaign. As the GM, you should first read over the module in its entirety. Look for clues and hints in it to serve as seeds you can use to grow a plot. Think of the text of the adventure as the foundation and frame of a building that you side, shingle, and paint to fit your preferences and needs.

Listed below are a few plot suggestions to get you started:

1. The player characters hear rumors that the wizards in the tower possess an item they need, such as a magic item, book, or map. This item is required to complete another quest or adventure, or will help solve a problem of the PCs. Players will eventually approach the wizards to buy or trade for the item. However, they soon find that the price for it is too high to pay.
2. Fed up with the terror afflicting their town, a group of concerned citizens seeks to hire an adventuring party to investigate the tower. They have pooled together their meager moneys to offer a reward.
3. While visiting Bal-Curz, the party is attacked while they sleep in an inn by a number of huge spiders. A hidden trapdoor is soon discovered there, leading to a narrow tunnel that disappears beneath the streets of the town. The player characters soon learn of the strange murders and disappearances plaguing the town. The fearful locals hesitantly indicate that the spiders are minions of the sorcerers of the Black Tower.
4. In a highly unconventional proclamation, Ullvist, lord of Bal-Curz, announces that the most worthy citizen will marry his only daughter, Suvonna. To determine who will take his daughter's hand in marriage and eventually become the new Lord of Bal-Curz, the potential suitors will race on foot en masse from the town gates to the keep while pursued by a rancorous giant boar. However, this is simply a scheme hatched by the black wizards to gain legitimate control of the town. They have entered their champion, Engharn, in the race, who is sure to win against the other lackluster contestants. One astute citizen who suspects foul play approaches the party to enter one of their own in the race. Of course, the wizards will use their magics to ensure that their champion wins. Furthermore, they will seek vengeance on anyone that beats him.
5. A local cleric approaches the party for help. He tells the player characters that over the last year all of the temples in the town have closed — with the exception of his — because their priests have disappeared or have been murdered. This coincides with a new cult that has arrived in town who worships a heretofore unknown god named Morraith. The cleric has heard rumors that the wizards in the tower worship this foul god, and that they are behind this plot to rid the town of priests. Every night, unknown creatures creep in the darkness near the cleric's temple.

RUMORS

The party may wish to learn more about the sorcerers and their Black Tower before investigating the strange goings on in the town. By asking the right persons in town, the party can learn a few of the following rumors. Roll a d12 or select as you see fit from the following rumors:

1d12 Rumor

- 1 Basharn became the master of the tower six years ago after the previous master mysteriously disappeared. (True)
- 2 The wizards of the tower have joined forces with an assassins' guild that has recently set up shop in the town. These killers are responsible for the murders and disappearances of its citizens. (False)
- 3 Powerful creatures summoned from other planes of existence guard the tower. (True)
- 4 The original master of the tower lives on in undeath as a lich who resides deep beneath the tower. He is the true master of the tower; Basharn and the other wizards are simply servants who carry out his schemes. (False)
- 5 Over the last few months, Lord Ullvist has been acting quite strangely. He seldom leaves his keep, and is indifferent to the needs of his people. (True)
- 6 Recently, two young farm hands visiting town have disappeared leaving their ox and cart abandoned in the streets. (True)
- 7 A few years ago, strange lights and a horrid wailing were seen and heard coming from the tower. The wizards lost control of a powerful demon summoned from the pits of the Abyss. The demon slew all the wizards, and now rules in the tower. (False)
- 8 Some evenings, a sweet and mournful singing issues from the tower. This singing is from Basharn's ghostly lover that haunts the tower. (Partially true)
- 9 Basharn's champion, a warrior named Engharn, has sought the hand of Lord Ullvist's daughter and only heir, Suvonna, in marriage. (True)
- 10 The townsfolk who disappeared or were murdered were agents of the wizards who threatened to betray their secrets. They deserved the grizzly fate meted out to them. (False)
- 11 The sorcerers rarely leave their tower. Basharn, however, often speaks with Ullvist at his keep. He uses magic to get there since no one ever sees him entering or leaving. (True)
- 12 The wizards conduct ghastly experiments on those unfortunate souls that fall into their clutches. They seek to combine humans with the worst features of demons to serve as their minions. (Partially true)



ADVENTURE SECTIONS

The numbered areas on the module's maps are keyed to a specific encounter description that has one or more section headings detailing its contents and/or occupants. Each type of section heading is described below. Note that numbered areas will only contain those headings that are pertinent to the area.

Illumination: Notes the type of illumination in an area when first encountered by the PCs. Generally, the absence of this heading indicates that the area has no source of illumination.

Door(s): This section indicates whether or not any doors to the area are open, locked, and/or trapped when first encountered by the PCs. This might change with subsequent visits to the same area, so the GM should note any changes.

GMs Note: Alerts the GM of any special considerations of an area that might affect the PCs, occupants, or environment.

Description: This section provides a physical description of an area as it appears when first encountered by the PCs. The GM should not read this section to the players verbatim, but should instead paraphrase as they deem necessary. The area's description should be amended if its occupants or contents are destroyed, removed, or altered during the course of play.

Encounter: Any monsters or NPCs located in the area are noted in this section.

Tactics: This section provides general notes on the tactics used by any monsters or NPCs in combat upon encountering the PCs for the first time.



Alert: This section informs the GM of any special considerations that might arise after the PCs enter the area.

Development: This section notes any consequences that might arise from PCs entering a particular area that could later affect encounters in other areas.

Alarum!: This section notifies the GM to any actions or developments in the area when a general alarm has been raised.

Treasure: Any treasure found within the area is detailed in this section.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear throughout this module:

AC = Armor Class; **MV** = Move; **HD** = Hit Dice; **hp** = hit points; **#AT** = Number of Attacks; **Dmg** = Damage; **SA** = special attack; **SD** = special defense; **MR** = magic resistance; **Int** = monster's intelligence rating; **AL** = alignment; **L** = large size; **M** = medium size; **S** = small size; **xp** = experience point value; **THACO** = the number to hit AC 0; **C** = chaotic; **L** = lawful; **E** = evil; **G** = good; **N** = neutral; **F** = Fighter; **MU** = Magic-User; **C** = Cleric; **T** = Thief; **S** = Strength, **I** = Intelligence, **W** = Wisdom, **D** = Dexterity, **C** = Constitution, **Ch** = Charisma; **d** = type of die; **rd/rds** = round/rounds; **cp** = copperpiece; **sp** = silverpiece; **gp** = gold piece; **ep** = electrum piece; **pp** = platinum piece.

KEY TO THE BLACK TOWER

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF THE BLACK TOWER

Courtyard: A 12' high stone wall topped with iron spikes surrounds the tower's courtyard. A single 10' wide wrought iron gate allows access to this area. A few forlorn stunted trees and patchy brown grass fill the courtyard.

Tower: The Black Tower stands 70' high with 5' high crenellations rising from its flat roof. The circular tower is 80' wide with 5' thick outer walls constructed of large, unmortared stones. A single door pierces this fell edifice at the ground level, while four slim, shuttered, and barred embrasures look out across the town from the upper level. An enchantment laid on the stones of the tower imbues it with a magic resistance of 50% against spells cast at its walls.

The interior of the tower and the dungeon level below are lined with smoothed, mortared, yellowish-brown stones. The mortar contains gorgon and basilisk blood to ward against access by ethereal beings, plus powered lead to prevent attempts at scrying within the tower from outside its walls. Ceilings are 10' high unless noted otherwise.

Roof: The tower roof is accessed via a trapdoor located in the ceiling of AREA 4.

Dungeon: Unknown to most townsfolk, a dungeon level, cut from bedrock, lays 50' below the tower. Access to the dungeon level is via a teleporter in AREA 5. Ceilings are 10' high in passages and 15' in rooms unless noted otherwise. Wall-mounted oil lamps illuminate the most frequently used passages in the dungeon. The teleportation platform in AREA 5 ventilates this level by continuously drawing in fresh air.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

No random encounters occur within the Black Tower. However, the GM should take care to note the locations of free-willed, intelligent creatures that move around during the course of the adventure. Once it has been determined that intruders are in the complex, these creatures will take proactive steps to thwart the party, as noted in the "Alarum!" sections of the keyed encounters.

GROUND FLOOR (USE UPPER LEVELS MAP)

1. THE GREAT HALL

Illumination: Four light stones placed along the walls light this area. Each of these magical lights can adjust its luminosity from a torch to a candle if commanded to do so. Currently, they each provide dim lighting equal to a single candle.

Description: The tower's heavy wooden outer door opens into a 70' wide circular room furnished with a throne mounted on a dais. The vaulted ceiling rises nearly 50' to a centrally located 10' circular opening. A half dozen leering gargoyle statues mounted in niches ring the chamber's walls. Colorful floor mosaics depict cavorting elementals and demons. Those entering the tower feel a slight swirling disturbance in the air equal to a light breeze.

Throne: Basharn receives guests to the tower in gauche haughtiness while seated on the ivory throne that rests on a dais that emerges from the north wall. The throne is carved from mammoth tusks and decorated with lapis lazuli and carnelian inlays (7,500 gp value; 4,000 gp for the gems alone).

False Doors: Other than the main entrance, the outer walls of the tower hold four false doors. Those attempting to open one of these doors are immediately teleported to an empty cell in AREA 15, while their gear is sent to AREA 26. Victims gain a saving throw vs. Spells to avoid this effect.

Ceiling Hole: The opening in the ceiling allows access to the tower's upper floor. The wizards of the tower use magical means to access the tower's upper level, such as *levitate* or *fly*, or they command the elemental to lift them up or down.

Encounter: A powerful air elemental guards the Great Hall. This being hovers in the shadows near the ceiling when the