

Frontiers 1.0 • Fantasy

Built for Levels 1–53–4 Hours4-Player Party Size

Content used

- **The Fantasy Starter Set** — Folk, Callings, Skills, and gear
- **The d20 Ruleset** — a single flat die, with the Gradient rolled apart from it
- **Basic Combat** — the optional combat module

Leaning most on Setting Difficulty, Favor and Disfavor, Building a Fight and Adversaries. Nothing here changes a rule except the halved Average pool, explained in Part 1.

A town has dug something out of its own hills that nobody there can name. The only expert within a hundred miles lives in a tower in the fen and has not answered a letter in four months. Three people have already gone to fetch him. None have come back.

Getting in is easy. The tower is a squat cylinder of grey stone, about as thick through as a grain silo and not much taller, standing on its own in the fen with nothing around it. It is considerably larger on the inside than that allows. Its floors do not stay where they were put.

This is a **one-shot**, written to run in **3 to 4 hours**, and it is recommended to be played at **Levels 1, 3, or 5**, but can run at any level between 1–5. **It assumes a party of four adventurers.**

No characters yet?

The Pregen Chars are five Level 1 characters for this set, one for every Calling. Lay out all five and let the table take four.

Expected Readings

This assumes you have at least skimmed the Fantasy Starter Set. If you have not, or if something stops making sense mid-session, the Reference at the end of this adventure is the faster of the two places to look.

What You'll Find

Part	Covers
1 — Running This Adventure	Levels, scaling, difficulty, and what the reward is

Part	Covers
2 — The Road to the Door	The town, the river, the fen, and a door that will not open
3 — The Climb	How the tower works, and why it does not stay still
4 — The Floors	The entry floor and twelve rooms, rolled rather than ordered
5 — The Top of the Tower	The alcove, the expert, and what is actually wrong
6 — Home	The trade, the reward, and what each Level leaves behind

How Long It Takes

Part	Aim for
The town, the river, and the fen	65 minutes
The door	20 minutes
The Map Room	20 minutes
The climb	45 to 75 minutes
The top of the tower	45 minutes
Home	10 minutes

The climb is the part that moves. You play the Map Room and then three to five floors depending on Level, at about fifteen minutes each, so a Level 1 table climbs for around three quarters of an hour and a Level 5 table for well over an hour.

Read-aloud text

Anything in a **Read aloud** box is written to be spoken to the party. Everything else is yours. Paraphrase freely. This adventure assumes you set a scene in your own voice, so adapt any of it as you see fit.

1 — Running This Adventure

This is a lighthearted, upbeat, silly story. Keep the tone light and playful throughout.

Each scene is laid out in order and needs very little prep. At most you may want a battle grid for combat. Theatre of the Mind is fully supported.

Each scene concludes with a **Transition**, which tells you how to move into the next one. A great deal here is left to your discretion.

Levels, and Running Between Them

This adventure is **written and benchmarked at Level 1, Level 3, and Level 5**. Those are the three columns given throughout. Three things change meaningfully between them rather than just changing numbers: the fate of the three missing townsfolk, the alcove door at the top of the tower, and the perils on the climb.

Levels 2 and 4 are in the tables regardless, and you can use them two ways:

- Running a **Level 2 or Level 4 party**? Take an adjacent column and read across. Everything scales cleanly; nothing unique is lost except the tier-specific flourishes, and you can pick whichever of those you prefer.
- Running Level 1, 3, or 5 and finding a scene **too soft or too sharp**? Step one column either way, mid-session, without telling anyone. That is what the extra columns are for.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Adversary Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Adversary damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
Party output per Round	~25	~30	~36	~41	~47
Minor + pool	12	15	18	21	23
Average + pool (this adventure)	25	30	36	41	47
Floors climbed	3	3	4	4	5

Minor and Average adversaries

A **Minor** is a mook or minion — it dies inside a Round and exists to be part of a group. An **Average** adversary is an enemy that aims to be a significantly stronger threat to the party; a fight built around a single Average adversary plus a couple of Minors is the normal shape of an encounter here.

Why the Average pool is halved

The Fantasy set's own Building a Fight table puts an Average adversary at two Rounds of party output (50 / 72 / 94). This adventure runs those numbers at **half**, because the party fights repeatedly on the way up a tower with no meaningful rest, and a two-Round fight on every floor would roughly double how long the climb takes. At half, an Average adversary is roughly a one-Round problem and the climb keeps moving.

If a particular floor is meant to be the fight of the session, use the set's full Average pool instead (double the Average pool above). That is the dial, and it is the only place in this adventure where you should reach for it.

Adversary Tier should match party Level, but feel free to raise or lower the tier based on the difficulty of the adventure you want to run. Full numbers are in the Reference, and Building a Fight in the Starter Set covers the general case.

Difficulty Thresholds

These are the set's five rungs, taken from Setting Difficulty in the Starter Set, and you shouldn't announce any of them. Tell the party what might help, then let them decide whether to trust their Score or the die.

DT	Means
5	Trivial for anyone who knows the work. Rarely worth rolling
10	Ordinary. The way out of a room, and most of what gets rolled here
15	The clever route. Faster or cheaper than the obvious one
20	Ends a floor in one roll, or brute force where brute force is fair
25	Cannot be reached on a bare roll. Means you need something you brought

The rungs are five apart because the die is flat, so one step is always a quarter of it, and a character with the Skill is worth about one step. If they have it, treat the roll as one rung easier and move on. Favor and Disfavor covers the general case.

Pricing What They Come Up With

The party will invent things this adventure never planned for. That's the point, and the answer is almost always yes. What you're deciding isn't whether it works. It's what it costs.

Costs here are one of three things and never a fourth:

	What it means	Reach for it when
+ HP	Something in the room got them	Force, speed, or a bad landing
⚡ Energy	An ability did the work	A character's own power solved it
⊖ Fatigue	The tower took it out of them	Effort with no obvious injury, or a floor survived badly

Nothing in the tower gives + HP back. Landings return Energy and Fatigue, and there's no resting in here, so HP charged on the second floor is still gone on the ninth. It's the expensive one, and it's the one to reach for when a party does something that should genuinely hurt.

Charge + HP as one adversary hit at the party's Tier — the same $1d4+1$ through $1d12+5$ printed on every stat block in Part 4. A flat number goes stale: three points is a fifth of a Level 1 pool and a twentieth of a Level 5 one, where a hit at Tier stays worth about the same the whole way up.

When you have to price something on the spot and nothing here fits, the rule is that a good idea costs less than a rough one and neither of them costs nothing. And if a roll failed but the idea was sound, charge one of the three and let them through anyway. A floor nobody can leave is the worst thing that can happen in this adventure.

The Reward

There is no currency in the Frontiers Fantasy set, so pick whichever of these fits your table. **Offer at least one immediate reward** — a party that finishes a one-shot holding nothing but a promise feels cheated.

Immediate:

- **A chunk of change:** If your table uses coin, Tallowmere empties the strongbox. Simple, and it works.
- **Pick of the seam:** Two hollowstones each, uncut, straight from the mine. Nobody yet knows what they do.
- **Outfitted, on the town:** Full provisions, repairs, and one item apiece from the strongroom — priced by the set's Level ladder, so Level 2–3 at party Level 1 and Level 4–6 at Level 3 or 5. Handed over that night, not promised for later.

Longer: For campaign lead-ins or multi-shots.

- **A claim on the mine:** A standing share of whatever the hollowstone turns out to be worth. Excellent if this is the first session of something.
- **A public debt:** The council owes the party a favour, said out loud, in front of witnesses. Worth more than it sounds.

2 — The Road to the Door

Scene 1: The Job at Tallowmere

Aim for 30–40 minutes.

Read aloud

At the edge of a mighty gorge sits the hamlet of Tallowmere. A mineral town, and a friendly one. Half the houses sit on the shallow end of the gorge, down in the swamplands that stretch to the west, the other half, including the market square, sit atop on the opposite side, both connected by a large wooden bridge hand-carved by the locals. The mine is up to the east, a maybe-5, maybe-10 minute walk from the town proper.

It's an early morning as you arrive, with the knowledge that you have an appointment with the Mayor, whose homestead is located in the Eastern, raised, half the town.

There is a notice on the bridge post. It has been there long enough to have been rained on.

- The town is **prosperous but lightly tense**.
- **Hollowstone**, the new magic rock from the mines, comes out of deep seams: fist-sized, faintly warm, and it rings hollow when tapped even after you have cut it open and found it solid. It occurs nowhere else, and the Mayor has some in her possession.
- **Sarn Odell**, a quartersman from the High City, from downriver, has been in town a handful of days and plans to leave soon. He offers a fair price for the stones rather than a generous one, which is why the town has not sold yet.

Development

Mayor Ivet Corran is practical, direct, and running out of time. She is not mysterious about any of it. She needs this to work.

- She sent **two people** to fetch the expert. A **third went after them** without being asked.
- None have returned. She is more embarrassed than frightened. The fen is not that dangerous.
- **Lore** or **Arcana** confirms an outsider can't identify a region-specific stone. This isn't a puzzle the party's own Mage can shortcut.
- Asked who else could help: nobody. She has already asked all of them.

The Three Who Went

Give these names weight now. They pay off at the top of the tower.

Denna Vail	The mayor's clerk	Sent first, alone. A letter should be delivered by hand. Nineteen days ago
Ospry Kell	A miner	Sent second, with rope and good sense. Twelve days ago
Little Tom Brice	A boy of fourteen	Nobody sent him. He went after Ospry six days ago, who is his uncle

She mentions the first two immediately. She mentions Tom last, and badly.

Tom lives

Whatever else the tower does to people, **Little Tom Brice comes out of it alive at every Level**, including Level 5. He is fourteen. Find him hungry, find him filthy, find him having befriended something he absolutely should not have. But find him.

What They've Heard

Roll or pick. All true, all garbled.

d6	
1	"Tower's no bigger than a privy. I've seen it. You'd not get a bed in there."
2	"He's not a wizard, he's a dragon. Little one. Sits on a cushion."
3	"The Grindles take him a crate every month, regular. Have done for years."
4	"Last three crates never got picked up. Still sat on the jetty, rotting."
5	"Door talks. That's what my uncle said and he wasn't drunk that time."
6	"Denna's fine. She's just rude. Probably got there and stayed for the library."

Transition: The mayor points them down to the low docks and tells them to ask for the Grindles.

Scene 2: The Grindles

Aim for 10–15 minutes. Short and warm.

Read aloud

The low dock is four planks and an opinion, sticking out into water the colour of weak tea. Tied off at the end of it is a flat-bottomed river boat, kept in far better shape than either of the two men standing on it.

They're arguing. It has the sound of an argument they've had many times before, and neither of them expects to win it today.

The older one sees you coming. He doesn't stop talking to do it, he just turns and aims the rest of it at you.

Hask Grindle — older, does the talking, has a theory about everything. **Mull Grindle** — younger, does the steering, has heard the theories.

- Warm, not stupid. Very good at their actual job, unserious about everything else.
- They have run the expert's **monthly supply crate** to the stone jetty for nineteen years. They leave it, they go. They have never met him.
- The last three crates were never collected, and Hask thinks something's been at them.
- They'll take the party for the asking. Not past the jetty, and not past dark.

Development

- Crate lids carry the expert's **mark**: a stamped gold wax seal pressed with a coil. The Grindles keep a stack of old lids for firewood and will hand one over without thinking about it.
- That seal matters in Scene 5. Don't point at it, and let a player take it because it's shiny.
- **Insight**: they're fond of a man they've never met, and worried in a way they'd deny.

Transition: The boat pushes off. The gorge opens out. The water goes brown, then green, then still.

Scene 3: The Stone Jetty

Aim for 25–30 minutes.

Read aloud

The river gives up being a river somewhere behind you. Ahead, the water spreads out flat and shallow and green, running between dead trees that stand up out of it in loose clumps. Mull poles the last stretch himself, slowly, watching the bottom. Then he stops, plants the pole, and doesn't take you any further.

"That's the jetty," he says. "That's as far as she goes."

Three crates sit on the old stone, swollen with damp. Two have been opened and picked over. The third is gone, and where it sat there's a shape pressed into the mud and a long drag-mark heading off into the reeds.

- The **stone jetty** is far older than the tower. Nobody knows who built it.
- **Investigation** or **Perception** on the crates: opened by something with hands. It wanted the food and left the glassware.
- **Nature**: the drag-marks are a fortnight old. Four sets. Heading west.

Development: The Reedmen

The lizardmen of the fen have been taking the crates. They aren't villains and they aren't starving. They found a reliable food source nobody was collecting and have been quietly delighted for two months.

They ambush at the jetty. They also stop immediately if given a reason to.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Number	3	3	4	4	4
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
+ HP each	12	15	18	21	23
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
Physical	13	13	14	14	15
Mental	13	13	14	14	15

Reed-spear. Reach. A Reedman that hasn't moved this Round attacks with Favor. Water-borne. Shallow water costs it no Movement. It costs the party plenty.

Want a real fight? Add a **Reed-Chief** at the Average pool. At Level 5 this runs past three Rounds, so only do it if the table wants a brawl before the tower.

Talking Instead

The Reedmen want the crates to keep coming. Anyone who explains that the crates stop unless the expert is fetched has their full attention.

Persuasion, Barter or Performance at DT 10, with Favor if the party is visibly not attacking.

On a success they hand back **the last crate, unopened**, plus a great deal of unsolicited advice about the door.

Transition: West through the reeds, on foot. The Grindles are already poling away.

Scene 4: The Long Walk

Aim for 5–10 minutes. A breath, not a scene.

- Two hours of wading. Chest-deep in three places.
- Nature at DT 10 finds the firm line and everyone crosses dry. No roll needed if someone says they're looking for one. Reward the intent.
- Otherwise Athletics or Endurance at DT 10. Failure costs **1 ☹ Fatigue**.
- Roll the Gradient if you want the walk to bite. A Minor Negative is a lost boot, a soaked ration, a bowstring that needs an hour it isn't going to get.

Read aloud

The reeds thin out, the ground firms up under your boots, and there it is.

You have walked the better part of two hours through a swamp to reach a pillar. That is what it looks like from out here: a squat grey cylinder standing in the reeds, wider than it is graceful, less like something built than something driven into the ground. There's a window near the top. Look a moment longer and you'll notice the window is painted on.

At the base, facing you, there's a door.

Transition: Somebody knocks. Somebody always knocks.

Scene 5: The Door

Aim for 20–25 minutes.

The set-piece of Part 2. The door is a person, it has held this job for forty years without a day off, and it has developed **procedure**.

Read aloud

"Good afternoon. Do you have an appointment?"

The voice is warm and brisk and rather pleased with itself. It's also coming from the door. The door hasn't moved. It has no face, no mouth, and no obvious way of making a sound, and it is clearly the thing that spoke.

It waits. It seems willing to wait a good while.

- Polite. Unbudgeable. Thrilled to have visitors, which does not make it any likelier to open.
- It can't be forced, picked, burned, or gone around. No other opening, the window is paint, and anything that gets over the top finds more tower.
- It genuinely believes it is being helpful.

Doubt

The door starts with **Doubt** and has to be talked down to 0.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Starting Doubt	3	3	4	4	5

- A success lowers Doubt by **1**. A failure raises it by **1**.
- At **Doubt 6** the door begins Procedure. It stops answering for an hour and the party takes **1** $\ominus$ **Fatigue** standing in the water.

Carried from the Grindles • the wax seal

The wax seal from a crate lid lowers Doubt by **2** immediately, no roll. The door recognises the mark well before it recognises the people holding it. Nobody in Scene 2 is told this matters.

- **The unopened crate** from the Reedmen lowers it by a further **1**. The door recognises a delivery.

Approach	Skill	DT	Note
Claim an appointment	Deception	15	It keeps a ledger. It will check. It is slow
Explain the actual situation	Persuasion	10	The honest route, and the cheapest
Cite the expert's published work	Lore or Arcana	15	The door is a fan
Ask the door about itself	Insight	10	No Doubt reduction. Grants Favor on the next roll
Threaten it	Intimidation	—	Raises Doubt by 1 . It is a door

DT 25 covers anything trying to bypass the conversation outright, and a bare roll can't reach it at these Ranks. That's deliberate. The door doesn't open to a good roll. It opens to something the party brought with them.

Development

- At Doubt 0 it opens with enormous satisfaction and wishes them a productive visit.
- If the party is stuck, the door eventually admits the last three visitors also had trouble, that two of them are still inside, and that it does not consider this its fault.
- That's the first confirmation Denna and Ospry are alive. At Level 5 the door is markedly more careful about its phrasing.

Transition: It swings inward. Beyond it is a round room that does not fit inside the building you have been looking at, and a staircase that goes up a great deal further than it has any business going.

3 — The Climb

The tower contains a great deal more than the outside of it accounts for. Its floors are not in a fixed order, and the tower does not appear to think they ought to be.

This part is the bulk of the adventure. Take your time with it, and don't be afraid to cut a floor short if the table's energy dips.

The Map Room is always played first. After that, roll.

- Twelve floors in three blocks of four: **Lower, Middle, Upper**.
- Work through the blocks in order. Roll 1d4 inside the current block, cross the floor off, move up.
- **Rolled a floor already crossed off?** The tower hands it back with something moved. Two characters will remember the room differently. You don't need to explain why, and the party shouldn't get a straight answer if they ask.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Lower	2	2	2	2	2
Middle	1	1	2	2	2
Upper	0	0	0	0	1
Rolled floors	3	3	4	4	5

A Level 1 party never reaches the Upper Four, and that's intended. Those rooms are forty years of consequences. A Level 5 party gets one, last, before the alcove.

The tower runs funny at the bottom and quiet at the top. The Lower Four are charming, slightly broken and cheap to survive. The Upper Four have had four decades to think about it. That gradient is the shape of the climb and it is built into the blocks, so you never have to change how you're playing it — the rooms do that on their own.

Which means a Level 1 table gets the comedy version of this adventure, start to finish. Little Tom in the alcove is their relief rather than their turn, and for a first session that is the better ending of the two.

If the session is running long, skip floors and go to the top. A staircase arrives at the alcove, and the wyrmling has been listening the whole time and decided they're worth the interruption. This is the intended tool rather than a failure state. You will reach for it more often than not, and nothing in the climb needs finishing for the ending to land.

Landings

Every staircase has a landing partway up. A bench, a window showing a different season each time, and a refreshment charm still running after forty years.

Stopping at a landing costs ten minutes and restores **1 ⚡ Energy** and **1 ☹ Fatigue**. It's the party's choice. Some floors cost nothing, and a landing after one of those is wasted time.

Nothing here gives + HP back

Landings return Energy and Fatigue and nothing else, and there is no resting in a tower. HP charged on the second floor is still gone on the ninth, which is why Pricing treats it as the expensive currency.

	Landings available
Level 1-2	After every floor
Level 3-4	Every other floor
Level 5	None. The charms up here gave out years ago

This is the difficulty dial for the climb. At Level 1, ⚡ Capacity is 1 and maximum Energy is 3, so nearly everything costs on every use. Landings are what keep that party armed. At Level 5 the tower gives nothing back.

Reading a Floor

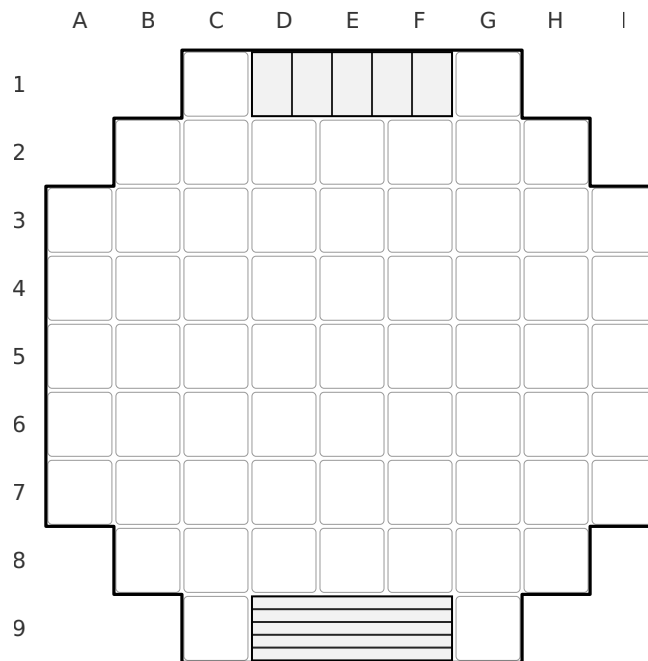
Each floor gets one page: what they see, **Development** for what's actually going on, numbers if there's a fight, and a **Transition**. You'll be flipping to these cold, mid-session, so they're built to be read at a glance.

Nobody at the table knows what's coming, and that includes you. The party can't plan a route through this tower because there isn't one, which is where most of the comedy lives — a room is a surprise to everybody standing in it.

Aim for around 15 minutes a floor. At 25 minutes, wrap it up. The tower losing interest in the party is always available as an exit.

The Floor Itself

Every floor in the tower is the same shape and the same size: nine □ Units across, with the stairs at the three middle tiles of each flat edge. One drawing serves all twelve.



□ One Unit · ┌ Wall · ▬ Stairs up · ▬ Stairs down

The standard floor. One drawing for all twelve floors. Nine Units across, stairs at the three middle tiles of each flat edge. This is one way the room could be laid out. Move the furniture, move the stairs, and put everyone wherever they came in from. Nothing here is load-bearing except the shape of the room.

The Common Thread

Forty years of unfinished projects, still running. Every room is an experiment that got started, worked well enough to leave alone, and never received a stop condition.

Nothing here is malicious. Everything here is still going.

4 — The Floors

The Map Room

The entry floor. Always played. No fight.

Read aloud

The room past the door is round, and a good deal wider than the outside of the building allowed for. One staircase leaves through the ceiling at the far end of it, and it climbs a great deal further than it has any business climbing.

In the middle of the room, hanging in the air with nothing holding it up, is a glowing orb the size of a cart wheel. Around it turns the tower itself in miniature, floor stacked on floor at angles no builder would allow, strung together with threads of light that come apart and rejoin as you watch. While you're looking, one of the floors swings out of the stack, turns a slow half-circle, and settles back somewhere it wasn't a moment ago.

Between the orb and the stairs stands a wall of slate as wide as the room, and every room in the tower is drawn on it. There are more of them than there is building to hold them.

Notes are pinned to every flat surface in the room. Hundreds of them, in small cramped handwriting that gets angrier the longer you read.

- The model is live. It shows the tower reorganising itself in real time.

Don't point at this

Anyone who counts the model gets **fourteen** floors, and the model is correct. Let them count it and write the number down, but don't make a point of it. That number is the answer to the whole adventure, four hours before anybody needs it. See The Workroom.

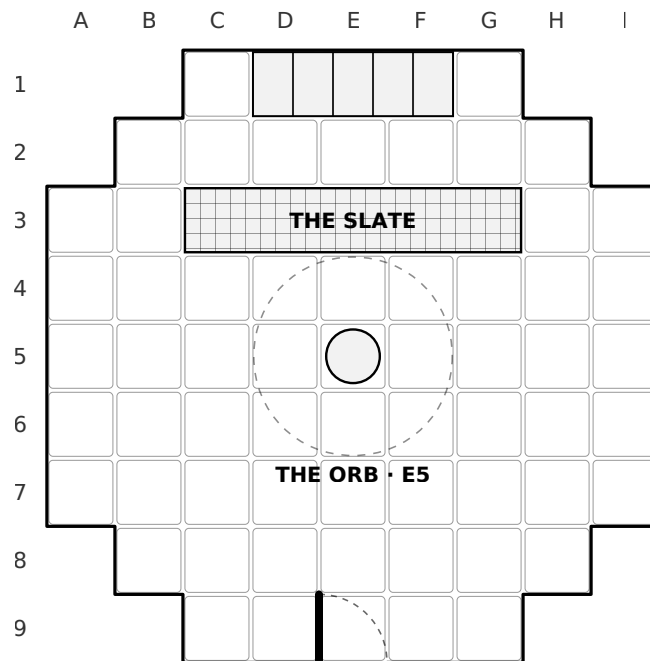
- The slate wall is the same count drawn out flat, and it is the same drawing the party will find at the top of the tower four hours later.
- Every note asks the same question in different words: why is it doing this?

The Layout

The entry floor is the standard floor, at the standard size. Three things stand on it.

The orb	Dead centre, at E5 . One □ Unit, and the model turns in the air around it well above head height
The slate	C3-G3 , two Units in front of the orb, facing it. Full height, so it blocks line of sight to the stairs. The room is nine Units wide and the slate is five, so there is a way past on either side
The stairs	D1-F1 , up only. There are no other stairs on this floor

The door the party came through is in the bottom wall, below **E9**.



□ One □ Unit · ┐ Wall · ┘ Door, swings in · ▒ Stairs up · ▒ The slate, full height, blocks line of sight · ⊙ The orb, and the model turning above it

The Map Room. The dashed ring is the model turning in the air, well above head height; it costs no Movement and blocks nothing. The slate is five Units wide on a nine-Unit row, so there is a way past on either side. This is one way the room could be laid out.

Development

- This is the expert's actual work, and he is no closer to an answer than when he started.
- Arcana or Investigation at DT 10 confirms the model is accurate and current. The tower genuinely rearranges itself.
- Touching a floor on the model sets the staircase to that floor. It doesn't let the party choose which. It just tells them which one they're getting.
- Set the tone here. This isn't a dungeon. It's a machine nobody has finished debugging.

Transition: One staircase brightens. That's the one.

The Lower Four

Charming, slightly broken, cheap to survive. These teach the party how floors work.

1. The Weather Room

Read aloud

Six glass cases stand along the walls, floor to ceiling, each one sealed and holding a different kind of weather.

It's raining in the first, into a pool deep enough to have grown a shoreline. The second holds a slow orange churn of lava, and the glass in front of it is warm. The third is packed with snow, the fourth with fog, the fifth with a wind you can hear through 6 inches of glass. The sixth has a thunderstorm in it about the size of a wardrobe, and it is at this moment throwing a very small and very serious bolt of lightning.

Something is living in most of them.

The stairs up are straight across the room, and nothing is standing between you and them.

- The party can walk straight out, and you should make that obvious. Nothing here wants a fight.
- Each case is a test of something. No labels, no results, no keeper.
- The occupants are specimens, not guards. They react to interference and nothing else.

GETTING UP

The stairs are open from the moment they arrive, so everything on this floor is optional. Some of what a party might try:

- Nature or Arcana at DT 10 works out which cases are safe to open.
- Sleight of Hand at DT 15 takes the key without opening anything.

If they try something else, price it against what it spends and say yes.

DEVELOPMENT

- A key sits in one of the cases, on the floor of it, plainly visible. It opens a locked cabinet on the top floor. Pick whichever case you like. The storm is the funniest.
- Opening a case releases both its occupant and its weather into the room.

SPECIMENS

One stat block. The case decides the damage type and the quirk.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
+ HP	12	15	18	21	23
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
Physical	13	13	14	14	15
Mental	13	13	14	14	15

Case	Occupant	Attack
Rain	A fish man, deeply territorial about his pond	Reach. Favor while the floor is wet
Lava	Something small and orange that leaves footprints	Burns for 1 more on the following Round
Snow	A white thing with too many legs	A hit costs the target 1 $\ominus$ Fatigue
Fog	Not clearly anything	Attacks $\square$ Mental instead of $\square$ Physical
Wind	A bird that has never landed	Can't be attacked in melee unless it attacked first
Storm	A small cloud with opinions	On a Major Positive Gradient, hits a second target

One specimen at a time. A party that opens all six has earned whatever happens next.

Transition: Out through the door nobody was blocking.

2. The Filing Error

Read aloud

The room is a library, and the library is moving.

Shelves cover the walls, and a few surfaces that aren't walls. The floor sits at a slight angle. While you're looking at it, a section of it clicks loose, turns a quarter circle, and reattaches across the room with its shelving still on it.

Books fill the air, hundreds of them, drifting shelf to shelf in slow steady traffic like they all know where they're going. A ladder rolls past at head height, leaning on nothing.

There's no door anywhere.

- A self-shelving library that reorganises the room along with the books.
- The floor moves. Standing still is a decision.
- One of the books is the door. Pull it and the wall opens.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Perception at DT 10 spots the one book that never joins the traffic.
- Lore at DT 15 narrows it faster. The fixed book is the only one shelved correctly.

DEVELOPMENT

- Crossing a moving section is Acrobatics at DT 10. Failure means riding it somewhere unhelpful and losing a Round.

- The library will also shelve a person. Once per Round it attacks one character against $\square$ **Mental Defense**, rolling $1d20 + \text{Tier} + 2$. A shelved character is out until pulled free with Athletics at DT 10.
- Being shelved is dark and dull and lasts an hour. It isn't dangerous.

Transition: The wall opens where the book was.

3. The Understudies

Read aloud

Six figures in spotless household livery straighten up the moment you walk in, all at the same time, with the held-in excitement of staff who have been waiting years for somebody to serve.

"Good evening," says the nearest one. It is mid-morning. "You'll be wanting to sit down."

The staircase you want is at the far end of the room. Between you and it is a table, and the table has been laid for four.

- A household staff with a house and no household. They have never had a guest.
- They want to feed the party, take their coats, draw baths, and announce them properly.
- Nobody goes upstairs unannounced. The announcement procedure has forty-one steps.

GETTING UP

Nobody gets upstairs until the announcement has happened, and the announcement has forty-one steps. Some of what a party might try:

- Command at DT 10 waives the procedure.
- Performance at DT 15 convinces them the party was announced already.
- Deception at DT 15 produces an invitation.
- Refuse and push past and they block the stairs. Politely. They do not move.

If they try something else, price it against what it spends and say yes.

DEVELOPMENT

The only free landing in the tower

Accepting refreshments restores **1 ⚡ Energy**. They are extremely good at their job, and a party that fights its way past them never finds out.

- If it comes to a fight they defend the stairs and nothing else. They don't pursue, and they stop the moment the party stops.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Understudies	3	3	4	4	4
+ HP each	12	15	18	21	23

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
☐ Physical	13	13	14	14	15

Not trained for this. They attack with Disfavor. They are staff.

Transition: "Right this way. Mind the step. There is no step, but mind it."

4. Two Staircases

Read aloud

Two staircases, side by side, the same in every detail, both going up.

"Take the other one," says the left-hand staircase.

"Yes," says the right-hand staircase. "Take the other one."

- Both talk. Both insist the party use the other. Exactly one is lying.
- Forty years of rehearsal. They are very, very good at this.
- The wrong staircase leads to a landing, and the landing leads back here. Ten minutes lost. Both staircases pretend not to notice.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Insight at DT 15 catches it. The liar over-explains.
- Investigation at DT 10 on the treads. One set is worn.
- Asking either what the other would say gets a long, condescending speech about how often people try that, followed by an honest answer.

DEVELOPMENT

- A party that just picks one has even odds and loses ten minutes if wrong. Perfectly fine outcome. Let them.

Transition: Up, eventually.

The Middle Four

The tower stops being polite. Most of the fights live here.

5. The Greenhouse

Read aloud

Glass overhead, green light coming down through it, and far more room than the outside of this building should allow. Long planting beds run the length of the floor, every one of them overgrown enough that the path between them is more of a suggestion.

The air is warm and wet and smells of turned earth. Somewhere above you a pane ticks as it heats.

Two rows over, something heavy shifts its weight, settles, and goes still.

- A botany project that learned to move and was never told to stop growing.
- The first real fight of the climb.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Creepers	3	3	4	4	4
+ HP each	12	15	18	21	23
Rootstock +	25	30	36	41	47
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
☐ Physical	13	13	14	14	15

Rooted. The Rootstock can't move. It would rather the party came to it. Undergrowth. Movement through the beds costs double and gives Disfavor to ranged attacks through them.

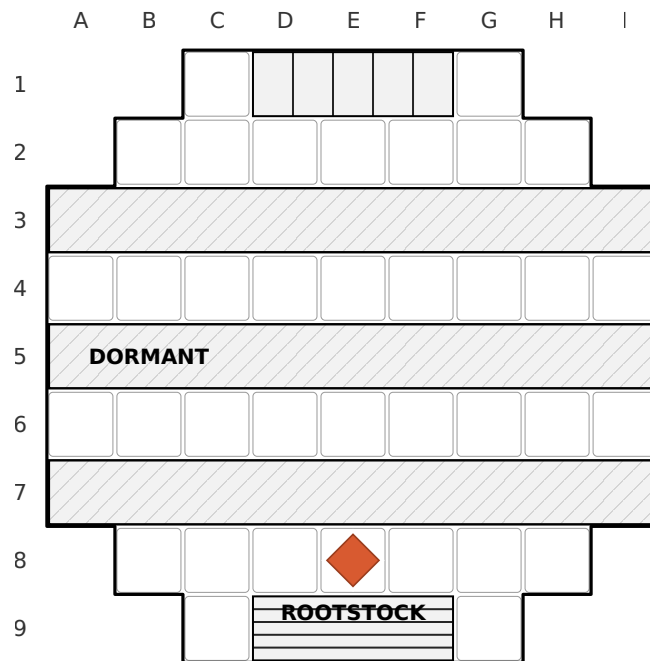
DEVELOPMENT

- **The layout.** Three beds, each one ☐ Unit deep, running the full width of the floor across the line between the two staircases. A clear Unit of path either side of each. Every route from the stairs the party came up to the stairs they want crosses all three.
- The **Rootstock** sits on the path nearest the far stairs, so reaching it means crossing everything and shooting it means shooting through the beds.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Nature at DT 10 identifies the dormant beds. Fighting from one removes the Movement penalty. The middle bed is the dormant one.
- Fire works extremely well. The greenhouse is made of glass, a long way up.
- Only the Rootstock has to die. The Creepers withdraw when it does.



□ One Unit · ┐ Wall · ▤ Stairs up · ▥ Stairs down · ▨ Planting bed, waist high: shoot over it · ◆ The Rootstock, rooted in place

The Greenhouse. Beds at rows 3, 5 and 7, each one Unit deep and running the full width, so every route between the staircases crosses all three. Moving through a bed costs double, and ranged attacks through one take Disfavor. The middle bed is dormant: fighting from it removes the Movement penalty.

Transition: Stairs on the far side, behind the beds.

6. The Glass Cage

Read aloud

Most of the floor is taken up by one enormous box of glass, big enough that all four of you could stand inside it without touching, thick enough that you can see the green in its edges. Every seam is sealed. Whatever this was built to hold, it was built to hold properly.

Set into the floor of the box, in a grid of 3 by 3, are nine metal pads.

The stairs up are on the far side of the glass. The only door into the box is the one behind you, and it's standing open.

- A teleport experiment, boxed so it couldn't escape. It never escaped.
- Nine pads. Stepping on one moves you to another. The mapping is fixed and unintuitive.
- The glass is extremely hard to break, and breaking it is a legitimate solution.

DEVELOPMENT

- **The box is 3 Units to a side and each pad is one Unit**, so a character always stands on exactly one pad and there is nowhere inside the box that is not a pad.

- Pad 5, the centre one, is the exit. Every other pad sends you to a different pad. Draw the grid, decide the mapping, keep it consistent.
- Three hints are scratched into the glass from the inside, by someone who worked it out the hard way:
 - Corners lie to each other.
 - The middle of an edge is honest once.
 - Never twice in a row.
- Nobody gets hurt in here.

What it costs

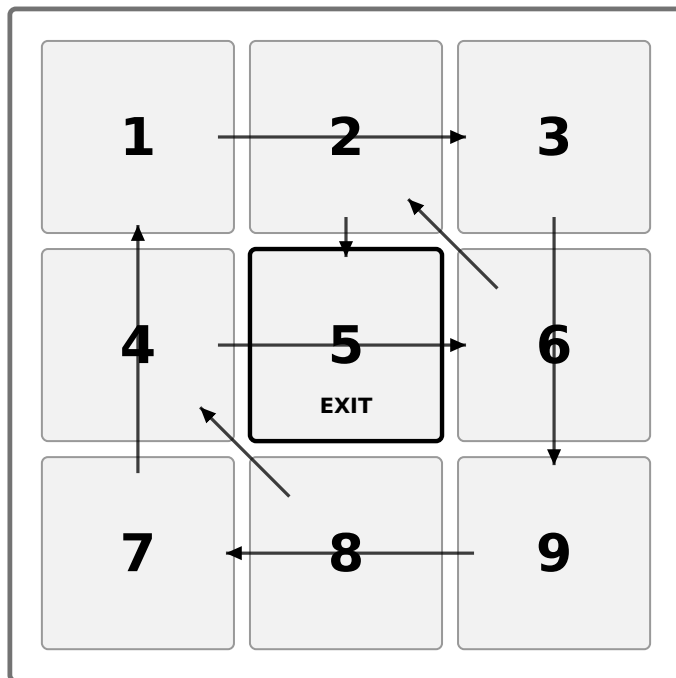
This floor charges in time rather than harm, and time in this tower is 4 Energy — every attempt to shortcut a pad is an ability, and there is no landing until they are out.

- Cap it at ten minutes of real play. Then someone lands on 5.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Arcana at DT 20 reads the pattern outright and skips the puzzle.
- Breaking the glass is Athletics at DT 20, or any ability that would obviously do it. This is a fair answer. Let it work.



□ The glass box, sealed · □ A pad, one □ Unit · □ Pad 5, the way out · → Where that pad sends you

The Glass Cage. Corners send only to corners, so a party stepping on corners circles 7 → 1 → 3 → 9 forever. Pad 2 is the honest one, and the longest way in is 8 → 4 → 6 → 2 → 5. No pad ever sends you straight back where you came from. Change the mapping if you like, but keep it consistent.

Transition: Pad 5, or a hole in the wall.

7. The Kiln

Read aloud

The heat reaches you before you're through the doorway, and it carries the flat mineral smell of hot iron.

A forge-golem stands over an anvil with its back to you, working. It's enormous, and it isn't finished. One arm ends in a bundle of tongs instead of a hand, and there's no face on the front of its head.

Eleven more stand along the far wall, and each one is worse than the last. The nearest turns and looks at you with an expression it doesn't have.

The hammer comes down on the anvil again. None of this stops.

- A half-built forge-golem still running its final instruction, which was make one more.
- It has made eleven. All of them wrong. It has not stopped.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Failed Castings	3	3	4	4	4
+ HP each	12	15	18	21	23
The Kiln +	25	30	36	41	47
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
☐ Physical	13	13	14	14	15

Make one more. At the end of each Round the Kiln finishes another Casting and it joins the fight. Built badly. Failed Castings attack with Disfavor.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Craft or Arcana at DT 20 finds the instruction still running. Countermand it and the Kiln stops mid-swing. Every Casting sits down where it stands.
- Interfering with the forge works too. Quench it, break the mould, block the ore feed. Say yes to anything reasonable.

If they try something else, price it against what it spends and say yes.

DEVELOPMENT

- The Kiln isn't hostile. It's busy, and the party is standing where the anvil goes.
- At four Rounds the party is losing to arithmetic. Have the Kiln botch a casting onto the anvil and stop.

Transition: Past the anvil, which is the whole problem.

8. The Collector

Read aloud

After the rest of this building, the room is startlingly ordinary. A small tidy office, a rug worn thin in one spot, a ledger lying open on a stand.

Behind the stand is something that is mostly a coat.

"Finally," it says, and it sounds relieved. "Are you here about what he owes me?"

- A bound spirit that has spent forty years trying to collect from the wyrmling and has never once got past the door.
- The debt is real, itemised, and enormous. It will read the list aloud. It has been waiting a very long time to read the list aloud.
- It will settle with the party instead, on the reasonable grounds that they're here and he isn't.

GETTING UP

It wants one item, freely given, per person. Not weapons. It has standards. Some of what a party might try:

- Barter at DT 15 gets it down to one item for the whole party.
- Deception at DT 15 convinces it the debt is settled.
- Insight at DT 10 reveals it mostly wants somebody to agree that the situation is unfair.
- Agreeing the situation is unfair costs nothing and works.

If they try something else, price it against what it spends and say yes.

DEVELOPMENT

- Refuse and it fights, badly, at the Average pool. It knows it will lose. It has nothing else left to try.
- Whatever it takes goes in a drawer upstairs.

Transition: It stamps the ledger, thanks them sincerely, and holds the door.

The Upper Four

Forty years of consequences. A Level 5 party sees exactly one of these.

9. The Mirror Study

Read aloud

Every surface in the room is a mirror. Walls, ceiling, the floor under your boots, the backs of both doors.

The reflections are running about half a second late. Each of you watches yourself walk in slightly after you did it, wearing a look you're fairly sure you didn't make.

Then, one by one and still out of step, the reflections step out of the glass.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Copies	one per character				
+ HP each	25	30	36	41	47
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5

A copy uses its original's ☐ Physical and ☐ Mental Defense.

Badly made. Every copy has one thing wrong with it. Roll or choose: mirrored and left-handed; always acts last; no ⚡ Energy, native abilities only; can't speak; believes it's the original.

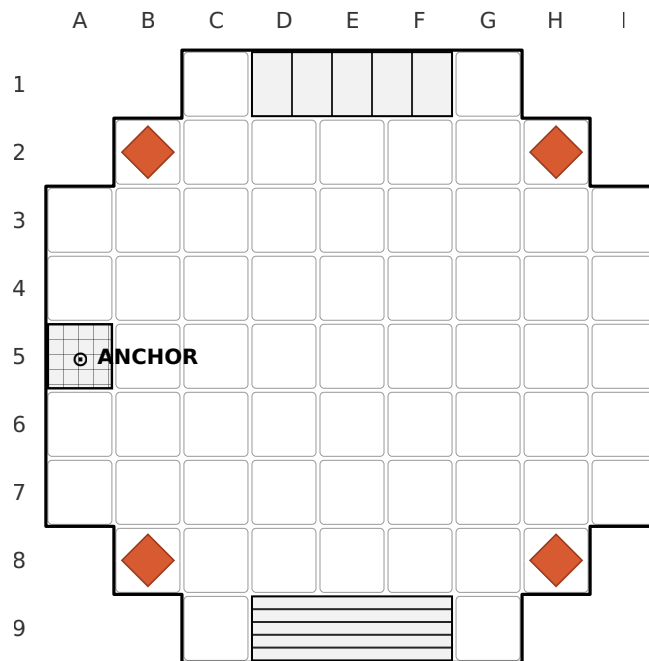
DEVELOPMENT

- **The layout.** Each copy starts against the wall, in front of the mirror it came out of, one copy opposite each character. Nothing stands in the middle of the room.
- **The anchor** is a full-length mirror under a dust sheet, flat against the wall at the widest part of the floor, halfway between the two staircases and off to one side. Reaching it means crossing the room sideways with a copy on you. It is the only sheeted mirror in the room and a player who looks at the walls can see that.
- A copy left alive when the party leaves stays in the tower. Write it down.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Breaking a mirror removes the copy standing in front of it. Players work this out fast. Let them.
- Arcana at DT 20 finds the anchor without looking. Breaking it ends everything at once.



□ One □ Unit · ↖ Every wall surface is mirrored · ▤ Stairs up · ▥ Stairs down · ♦ A copy — one per character, each against the wall opposite its original · ▧ The anchor: the one mirror under a dust sheet, at A5

The Mirror Study. Nothing stands in the middle of the room. Breaking a mirror removes the copy in front of it; breaking the anchor ends the fight at once. Reaching the anchor means crossing the room sideways with a copy on you.

Transition: Up, past a reflection that doesn't follow.

10. The Inverted Solar

Read aloud

You step through the doorway and you're standing on the ceiling.

The furniture is above you. A desk, two chairs, a rug, all of it sitting on what you'd normally call the floor, and all of it settled so well it has plainly been that way for decades. The dust has fallen upward onto it.

Something crosses the floor over your heads. Eight legs, in no hurry at all, and a face far too calm about the arrangement.

"Oh," it says, looking down at you with what seems to be real sympathy. "You're upside down. That must be awful."

Vess lives here. Antigravity, conversational, in absolutely no hurry.

- A gravity experiment with no off switch. Vess moved in decades ago and much prefers it this way.
- Vess isn't cruel. Vess is bored, and the party are the most interesting thing to happen in years.

- Vess would like them to stay. Not forever. Just a while longer.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Vess +	25	30	36	41	47
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
Physical	13	13	15	15	16
Mental	12	12	13	13	15

At home. Vess ignores the inversion entirely and attacks with Favor against anyone who hasn't solved it. Webbing. On a hit, the target's Movement is halved until they spend an Action.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Crossing unaided is Acrobatics or Athletics at DT 10. Failure means falling up for 1d6 + Tier.
- Persuasion or Insight at DT 15 gets Vess talking. Vess will carry the entire party across for the price of a conversation, and genuinely enjoys the trip.
- Arcana at DT 20 finds the inversion sigil. Reversing it drops the whole room, Vess included, for 2d6. Vess takes this personally.

If they try something else, price it against what it spends and say yes.

DEVELOPMENT

- Vess trapping the party is the fallback, not the plan. Reach for it if they attack first.

Transition: Across the ceiling, one way or another.

11. The Long Hall

Read aloud

A corridor, panelled in dark wood, evenly lit, with a plain door at the far end of it.

You walk. The panelling slides by on both sides. Somebody says something and somebody answers, and your boots sound the way boots sound.

After four minutes of walking, the door at the far end is as far away as it was when you started.

- A corridor-lengthening spell with no stop condition. Forty years of getting longer.
- Walking it is the encounter. Nothing in here has a body.

DEVELOPMENT

- The hall does not end.

What it costs

Every ten minutes of walking costs **1 ☹ Fatigue**, and there are no landings inside the hall. A party that argues about direction for half an hour pays for the argument.

- The hall works on the mind. Every ten minutes it attacks one character against ☐ **Mental Defense**, rolling **1d20 + Tier + 2**. A hit means that character becomes certain of something untrue: that they've walked this stretch before, that someone is missing, that the party turned around a while back and nobody noticed.
- A character hit twice will argue for turning around, and will mean it.
- Cap this at fifteen minutes. It stops being fun after that. If they haven't found the seam, the seam finds them.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Investigation at DT 10 on the panelling finds the seam where the pattern repeats. Going through it sideways is the way out.
- Arcana at DT 15 does the same, faster.

Transition: Sideways through the panelling, into a stairwell that was always there.

12. The Vault of Almost

No fight on this floor.

Read aloud

Racks and shelves and cradles fill the room end to end, and on every one of them sits something unfinished.

A blade with no edge. A bird with one wing. A door frame with nothing on either side of it. A clock with every part in place except the one that makes it go. There are hundreds of them, and every one has been dusted, and oiled, and left alone.

In the middle of the room, on a stand of its own, is something very nearly complete.

It has noticed you.

- Where he keeps the projects he couldn't finish and couldn't bring himself to destroy.
- **The Nearly** has been 98% done for eleven years, and has had a great deal of time to think about the other 2%.
- It cannot hurt anyone. It was never finished to the point of being able to.

GETTING UP

Some of what a party might try:

- Craft or Arcana at DT 15 identifies what's missing. It's something small and stupid: a screw, a name, a signature on a card.

- Finishing it takes a minute and ends the floor. The Nearly is embarrassingly grateful.
- The party can also break it, or walk away. Both work. Both are worse.

DEVELOPMENT

- It wants to be finished. It has concluded the party are either the people who'll do it, or more proof that nobody ever will.
- If finished, it follows them up, and does not stop mentioning it.

Transition: It shows them the stairs. It has been looking at them for eleven years.

5 — The Top of the Tower

The Alcove

Read aloud

The staircase ends at a small landing, barely wide enough for the four of you, with one door set into the wall.

It's a good door. Iron-bound, well hung, built by somebody who cared about doors. Every inch of it is covered in writing, line after line of tiny cramped script that wraps around the hinges and runs right up to the frame.

Somebody has been camped on this landing. You can tell at a glance.

The workroom is behind this door, and the door is **trapped**. He warded it decades ago, forgot the exact wording, and hasn't come out this way in some time.

This is what happened to Denna, Ospry and Tom. It should be the first thing the party sees.

	What they find
Level 1-2	The door is open, and has been for weeks. All three wandered in and are now part of whatever he's working on — holding things, reading things aloud, thoroughly enlisted. Denna has opinions about his filing. Nobody is hurt, and nobody is leaving until he's finished
Level 3-4	The door is locked. All three are camped on the landing, having failed to open it for somewhere between six and nineteen days. There's a fire going. They have formed factions. Denna has drafted a written proposal. Tom has been feeding something. They are overjoyed to see anyone at all
Level 5	The trap has fired. Denna and Ospry didn't survive it, in ways that are unmistakably absurd rather than grisly: a pair of boots standing neatly together, a hat at rest, a scorch mark shaped like a question. Tom is alive. He was too short to trigger it, has been up here six days, and is the one who has to tell them

Development

- At Level 3 and above the party opens the door themselves, with the survivors watching and offering advice.
- Whatever the Collector took is in a drawer inside. So is the cabinet the Weather Room key opens.
- He has known they were coming since the door announced them. He hasn't come out because he's busy, and being busy is the last problem in the adventure.

Transition: The door opens.

The Expert

Aurex Cassivar, Fifth of His Line is a gold wyrmling the length of your arm. He will give you the full name. He will give it more than once.

- Older than everyone in the party put together, and nowhere near old for what he is.
- Genuinely the foremost authority on this region. Genuinely insufferable about it.
- Not cruel, not a villain, not hiding anything. Just very busy, and very sure he's the only one who can fix this.

Play him as somebody in hour ninety of a problem. Rude by omission rather than intent. He interrupts, he answers questions nobody asked, and he has entirely forgotten that other people need to eat.

Read aloud

The room at the top of the tower is smaller than the ones below it. Whatever the building does with its middle, it does not do it up here. Every surface is covered in chalk, the ceiling included, some of it in places nobody your size could reach.

In the middle of it, standing on a desk with his tail wrapped twice round an inkwell, is a dragon about the length of your forearm. He's gold, under a heavy coat of chalk dust and what might be soup.

He doesn't look up.

"Don't touch anything," he says. "I've nearly got it."

What Actually Happened

GM only: The party works this out or they don't.

Four months ago Aurex cast something small. He wanted his library to sort itself across the tower, so that whatever he needed would be on whatever floor he was standing on. Useful. Tidy. A weekend's work.

The hinge of the session

He wrote the instruction against **thirteen floors**. The tower has fourteen.

He never counted the ground floor, because he never uses the ground floor, because the ground floor is where the door is and the door handles visitors.

The spell has been trying to fit fourteen floors into thirteen slots ever since. It cannot. It will not stop trying. Every few hours it reshuffles the tower and tries again.

That's the whole thing. It's an off-by-one error, and it has been four months.

That one error explains everything the party has seen: staircases arriving nowhere sensible, and rooms they've already been through coming back with the furniture moved.

Four months is also exactly how long it's been since he answered a letter.

He will never say any of this himself. He doesn't know it's wrong, so he has nothing to confess. It reaches the party through his paperwork or not at all.

The Workroom

Aim for 30 minutes.

He won't leave. He says so immediately, and he means it.

His reasoning is airtight and completely mad: the tower is broken, he broke it, nobody else can fix it, therefore he can't go anywhere until it's fixed. Every hour away is an hour it gets worse. He has been telling himself this for four months.

There are two ways out of this room and the party can use either.

Route A: Find the Error

The better ending, and the one the adventure is built for.

He does not explain himself. Asked what he's working on, he waves a claw at the room.

Read aloud

"It's all up. Read it yourself, I'm not doing it twice."

The air around him is full of boards, floating wherever he last shoved them, at whatever height he happened to be standing when he shoved. Some are diagrams. Most are columns of figures. Two are on their sides, and one of those has collected a line of dust along its edge.

The board nearest you is a floor plan of the tower, drawn out carefully, with every floor of the building on it.

- The boards move when nudged and can be reordered. He hates this and says so.
- Anything a player wants to read is readable. Don't gate the room behind a roll.

WHAT THE BOARDS SAY

Board	Contents
The floor plan	The whole tower, drawn accurately, every floor on it. Count them and there are fourteen — the same count as the Map Room's model
The working	Column after column of the sorting instruction. Every column is written against thirteen
The log	Four months of attempts, each ending the same way, each annotated with a ruder word than the last
The timeline	The reshuffles started the day he cast it. He has drawn no line between those two facts

CATCHING IT

- A player who counts the floor plan and reads the working has it, with no roll needed. If they say the numbers out loud, they've solved the adventure.
- Investigation at DT 10 finds it for a player who's looking but not counting.
- Insight at DT 15 on Aurex gets there sideways. He is confident about every number on those boards, and he shouldn't be.
- Anyone who counted the model in the Map Room already has half of it. Reward that hard.
- A Level 5 party needs one more thing. The working also has to be checked against the tower they actually climbed, so somebody has to say out loud what floors they came through.

Once a player names it, let them be the one to say it out loud. There's no roll on the last step.

He doesn't believe them. Then he checks. Then there is a very long pause.

Read aloud

He looks at the plan. Then at the working. Then back at the plan.

"That's the door's floor," he says, slowly. "The door's floor doesn't count. The door handles the door's floor."

The pause goes on for a while.

"Oh."

- Correcting the instruction takes him about forty seconds, and he is very quiet while he does it.
- The tower settles. Something enormous stops moving for the first time in four months.
- He is mortified, and covers it by talking a great deal about something else.

Route B: Just Get Him Out

The party never solves it and talks him out anyway. Fully supported. He can debug it later.

He has to be moved off the position that leaving makes him a coward.

Angle	Skill	DT
The town needs him and it'll take an afternoon	Persuasion	15
He's been eating nothing but stored fish for four months	Insight	10
The answer might not be in this room	Persuasion or Lore	10
A fresh pair of eyes has never once been tried	Barter or Command	15

Two successes and he goes, complaining for the entire journey.

- If the party mentions **Little Tom**, he drops it immediately. A child came out here for him. He has no answer to that and doesn't try to find one.
- That shortcut is deliberate. Give it to any party that thinks of it.

At Level 5

He has to be told that Denna and Ospry are dead, and that his door killed them.

Play it straight for one beat. He stops talking. He says he wrote that ward in a hurry and meant to fix it. Then he asks their names, and writes them on the wall with everything else, and that's where they stay.

Then let him recover. This is still an upbeat adventure and he is still ridiculous. But don't rush the beat, and don't let anyone joke through it.

The Hollowstone

Whenever the party remembers to ask.

He looks at one for about four seconds.

Read aloud

"Oh, those. They're not hollow, they're full. Sound goes in and doesn't come out. Whatever was making a noise near that seam a long time ago is still in there, waiting for somebody to hit it properly."

He hands it back.

"You came all this way for that? I'd have written it on a card."

- The stones hold sound. Struck properly, one gives back whatever it swallowed.
- This is the joke the adventure has been walking toward. The thing the town couldn't solve took him four seconds, and nobody could reach him to ask.
- He will happily write it on a card. He is annoyed it was ever a question.

Getting Down

Nobody re-climbs the tower.

Aurex has a **return sigil** on the desk that drops anything standing on it beside the orb in the Map Room. He has had it the entire time. He hasn't used it in four months, because using it meant leaving the room.

- It takes the whole party plus any survivors from the alcove.
- The orb is still turning when they arrive. If the party fixed the instruction, the model has stopped moving. It still shows fourteen floors, because it always did.
- Let somebody notice that.

Collect the payoffs on the way out:

- Whatever the **Collector** took is in the drawer beside the desk.

Carried from the Weather Room • the key

The **Weather Room key** opens the cabinet in the corner. Put something in there worth the detour: an item at Level 2-3 for a Level 1 party, Level 4-6 above that.

- The Nearly, if finished, comes along, and does not stop talking about it.

6 — Home

Summarise the return. The fen is a paragraph, not a scene.

Read aloud

The walk back out through the reeds takes the same two hours it took coming in, and feels shorter, partly because you know the way now and partly because there's a dragon riding on somebody's shoulder complaining about the humidity.

The Grindles are waiting at the stone jetty where you left them. Hask says he had a feeling. Mull says nothing at all, and unties the boat.

Aurex has never met the Grindles, and is deeply put out to learn that someone has been leaving him crates for nineteen years without ever being thanked for it.

Back in Tallowmere:

- **Sarn Odell** gets his identification and buys the seam.
- The mayor pays what she promised. Hand over the immediate reward that night, in the room, in front of people.
- **Little Tom Brice** goes home filthy, insufferable, and completely unbearable about the whole thing, and will tell this story wrong for the rest of his life.

Aftermath by Level

Level 1-2	Denna, Ospry and Tom all walk out. Denna files a fourteen-page report nobody asked for. Ospry never discusses it again
Level 3-4	The same three walk out, having spent up to nineteen days on a landing together, and two of them are no longer speaking
Level 5	Tom comes home alone. The town holds a service. Aurex attends, which nobody expected, and says something short and correct

Hooks

- The tower is fixed, and Aurex now has time on his hands, which is worse.
 - The hollowstone holds sound. Sooner or later somebody works out what the loudest one is holding.
 - He got the count wrong once. Nothing about him suggests it can't happen again.
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Reference

Adversaries at a Glance

Every adversary here uses the Starter Set's Tier ladder.

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Tier	1	2	3	4	5
Damage	1d4+1	1d6+2	1d8+3	1d10+4	1d12+5
Minor + pool	12	15	18	21	23
Average + pool	25	30	36	41	47
Party output per Round	~25	~30	~36	~41	~47

Average pools run at half the Starter Set's published figures. See Why the Average pool is halved for why, and when to reach for the full number instead.

The Floors at a Glance

You roll into these rather than choosing them, so this is the table to have open. Work the blocks in order and cross a floor off once it's been played.

	Floor	What it is
Lower 1	The Weather Room	Six cases, six weathers, one key
Lower 2	The Filing Error	A library that shelves people
Lower 3	The Understudies	Staff who will not be hurried
Lower 4	Two Staircases	One lies. Both are insufferable
Middle 1	The Greenhouse	The first real fight
Middle 2	The Glass Cage	Nine pads, one exit, no harm
Middle 3	The Kiln	Busy, not hostile, and you're on the anvil
Middle 4	The Collector	Wants one item each, freely given
Upper 1	The Mirror Study	One copy per character, one anchor
Upper 2	The Inverted Solar	A ceiling, a long drop up, and Vess
Upper 3	The Long Hall	It does not end, and it works on the mind
Upper 4	The Vault of Almost	Ninety-eight per cent finished, eleven years

Where the Fights Are

Floor	Shape
The Weather Room	Optional. One specimen at a time, only if a case is opened
The Filing Error	No adversaries. ☐ Mental attacks from the room itself
The Understudies	Only if pushed. They defend the stairs and nothing else
Two Staircases	None
The Greenhouse	Minors plus an Average adversary. The first real fight
The Glass Cage	None. Costs time
The Kiln	Minors plus an Average adversary, with reinforcements each Round
The Collector	Only if refused
The Mirror Study	One Average adversary per party member
The Inverted Solar	One Average adversary, avoidable entirely by talking
The Long Hall	No adversaries. ☐ Mental attacks and ☹ Fatigue
The Vault of Almost	None

Cast

Mayor Ivet Corran	Tallowmere's mayor. Practical, out of time, embarrassed
Sarn Odell	A quartersman from the High City. Buys the seam or doesn't
Hask & Mull Grindle	River men. Nineteen years of deliveries, never met the man
Denna Vail	The mayor's clerk. Sent first. Has opinions
Ospry Kell	A miner. Sent second. Tom's uncle
Little Tom Brice	Fourteen. Not sent. Survives at every Level
The Door	Forty years of procedure and no days off
The Collector	Owed a great deal, by someone who won't come down
Vess	Lives on a ceiling. Would like to talk
Aurex Cassivar, Fifth of His Line	A gold wyrmling the length of your arm. Nearly has it

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