



A WIZARD

A pulsing, writhing horror adventure for old school roleplaying games. Created by Ripley Caldwell

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WARNINGS & EXPLANATIONS:

System Agnostic: This module is OSR based and assumes the usage of Armor Class, Hit Points, Saves, and all that good stuff. When referring to the difficulty of checks or saves, I use generalized numbers that should be applicable to most OSR systems, along with an Easy, Medium, Hard, or Very Hard designation if you'd like to substitute your own numbers for other systems/higher level play. Statistics and damage are much the same, using Low, Medium, High, or Very High designations.

(A note: "To hit" bonuses for creatures are assumed to be the same as the creature's HD / 2, rounded up. HD are assumed to be d8 - you can roll for HP this way or assign a 4-5 for each die).

Danger: This module can be deadly. There are several traps or effects that could kill instantly if the characters aren't careful. If you'd like to reduce the difficulty of this module, allow players to make more saves against these deadly effects and deal one damage step lower than what's listed.

Dark and Gross: This module is gruesome. There is gore, body horror, and other disturbing content. Set boundaries with the players, and allow them to set boundaries with you.

Table of Contents:

<i>Canny</i>	1	<i>Floor Four</i>	22
<i>Shoppe</i>	1-2	18 - <i>Beacon</i>	22
<i>Blacksmith</i>	3	19 - <i>Disembodied</i> ...	22-23
<i>Bakery</i>	3	20 - <i>Doors</i>	24
<i>Barn</i>	3	21 - <i>Glare</i>	24
<i>The Tower on the Hill</i>	5	22 - <i>Trophies</i>	25
<i>Floor One</i>	8	23 - <i>Scuffle</i>	25-26
1 - <i>Foyer</i>	8	24 - <i>Exit</i>	26
2 - <i>Preparation</i>	8	25 - <i>WIZARD</i>	27-28
3 - <i>Isolation</i>	8-9	<i>Possible Endings</i>	31-32
4 - <i>Ascension</i>	9-10	<i>The Abyss</i>	33
<i>Floor Two</i>	11	6 - <i>Game</i>	34-35
5 - <i>Greeting</i>	11	7 - <i>Castaways</i>	36-37
6 - <i>Bath</i>	11-13	8 - <i>Peace</i>	37
7 - <i>Empty</i>	13	9 - <i>Finger</i>	38
8 - <i>Lights</i>	13	10 - <i>Locks</i>	39
9 - <i>Keys</i>	14	11 - <i>Orchard</i>	39-41
<i>Floor Three</i>	16	12 - <i>Entity</i>	42
10 - <i>Patterns</i>	16	13 - <i>Vessels</i>	42-44
11 - <i>Reward</i>	16	14 - <i>Library</i>	44-46
12 - <i>Guardians</i>	17	15 - <i>Moon</i>	46-47
13 - <i>Likeness</i>	18	16 - <i>Home</i>	47-48
14 - <i>Incubation</i>	18	17 - <i>Mannequins</i> ...	48-49
15 - <i>Quiet</i>	18	18 - <i>Feast</i>	51
<i>Floor Four</i>	20	19 - <i>Maze</i>	51-52
16 - <i>Somewhere</i>	20	20 - <i>Offer</i>	53-54
17 - <i>Up</i>	20	<i>Abyssal Encounters</i>	55-61

A Wizard, mad with power, has terrorized the charming hamlet of Canny before escaping to his Tower on the Hill. The heroes must find him and stop him, before his curses descend upon every hapless citizen!

RULES:

1. The Wizard is just that. He wears a pointed hat. Never refer to him as anything else, through description, NPC dialogue, etc. The characters find themselves unable to. He is the truth.

• Canny •

TOWN FEATURES:

- Flowers, everywhere, of every kind. They coat the green hills, pop up in flowerbeds, and pepper walking trails.
- Comforting smells. There's always something cooking in Canny, whether it be fresh steak, apple pie, or cheesy omelettes.
- A lack of guards. There's no organized government in Canny; the citizens support their own.
- Children playing in the streets.
- A *Shoppe*, a *Blacksmith*, and a *Bakery*.

The Shoppe: Run by a kindly old man named *Samuel Stock* (grey but well-kept hair, deep crow's feet, bowtie). He sells everything you might expect from a general store; rations, traveling supplies, produce from nearby farms, flowers, etc. Sam prices everything reasonably, but is open to bartering.

A wanted poster hangs behind the desk. It reads: WANTED, A Wizard - 40 gold reward. In the center, there's a picture drawn in charcoal of a stereotypical wizard, complete with pointed hat and mouth pulled back in a cackle. The eyes are completely scribbled out.

Sam is the one supplying the reward for the bounty (on behalf of the Ranchers). If the characters inquire about it, he directs them to the Ranchers residence. Sam's unable to articulate what the wizard is wanted for, but he shakes his fist in mild anger at him anyway.

He doesn't know why the eyes are crossed out, or who drew the poster.



The Blacksmith: The smith, *Mia Forge* (stocky, coal-dusted hands, orange hair) primarily sells metal artwork and trinkets. She can fabricate or repair weapons/armor if they're requested, but she only has the materials of a hamlet on hand.

If the wizard is mentioned, Mia freezes in place. She doesn't move again until the topic of conversation changes or if she's physically disturbed. She doesn't give a straight answer if interrogated about her behavior, because she doesn't understand it herself. **Mia is a fool.**

The Bakery: Pies, scones, bread, and other fresh baked goods. The bakery is run by a family of local farmers; *Heath Rancher* (rugged, charming, eternal stubble), *Albert Rancher* (kind, speaks slowly, spectacles), and their son, *Martin (child)*. The business is an extension of their farm, so on a good harvest, their stock is plentiful. The menu:

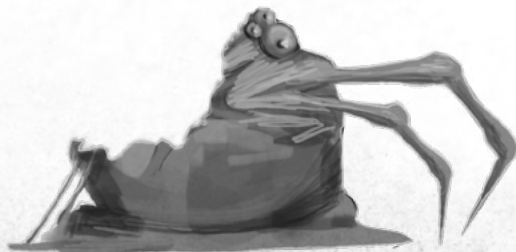
- Sweet pie (Apple, cherry, pumpkin, strawberry) - 8 silver
- Meat pie (Chicken, beef, pork) - 1 gold
- Pie slice - 1 silver
- Roll/croissant - 1 silver
- Scone (Vanilla, blueberry, almond) - 3 silver
- Bread loaf - 6 silver
- Cookies (5) - 2 silver

The meat pies aren't available. If the characters inquire about this (or about the bounty on the wizard) Heath leads them to the barn.

The Barn: Dimly lit. The door is painted with streaks of blood. In the center of the barn, there is a dead cow. It has been torn open along its stomach like a peeled orange. Its organs pattern the hay-covered floor.

Heath and Albert regard the scene as a nuisance. They won't clean it up, because they don't understand it. They placed the bounty on the wizard in the hopes someone would put a stop to him before anything like this happens again. **It's going to happen again.**

They two can direct the characters to the *Tower on the Hill* to the north.



The Tower on the Hill

From a Distance:

The wizard's tower lies on top of a grassy hill, surrounded by flowers. It's enormous, stretching high up into the sky. It has an odd shape, bending back and forth and dotted with bulbous growths as large as a house. As the characters get closer, they can see that the tower is composed of a sticky, fibrous material, pale blue and sweet-smelling.

TOWER FEATURES:

- **Automatic Doors:** As characters approach them, doors open with a wet sucking sound as they recede into the wall. A successful DEX check (12/Medium) avoids the detection of a door. Locked doors require a specific "key" bulb to be inserted into a circular crevice in the center of the door to be opened.
- **Natural Illumination:** Moist blue bulbs along the walls glow with dim light.
- **Vents:** Large openings are occasionally present, high up on the ceilings where light doesn't quite reach. The wizard can fit himself through these corridors and travel through his tower with ease. When the wizard travels through a vent, it's marked with off-white slime for a few minutes afterward.
- **Hunted:** If a character is ever alone in a room with the wizard, he picks them off. Describe something running at them very fast, being yanked up into the ceiling, dragged through a vent, etc. Then move on. **There is no need to worry about them anymore.**



FLOOR ONE:

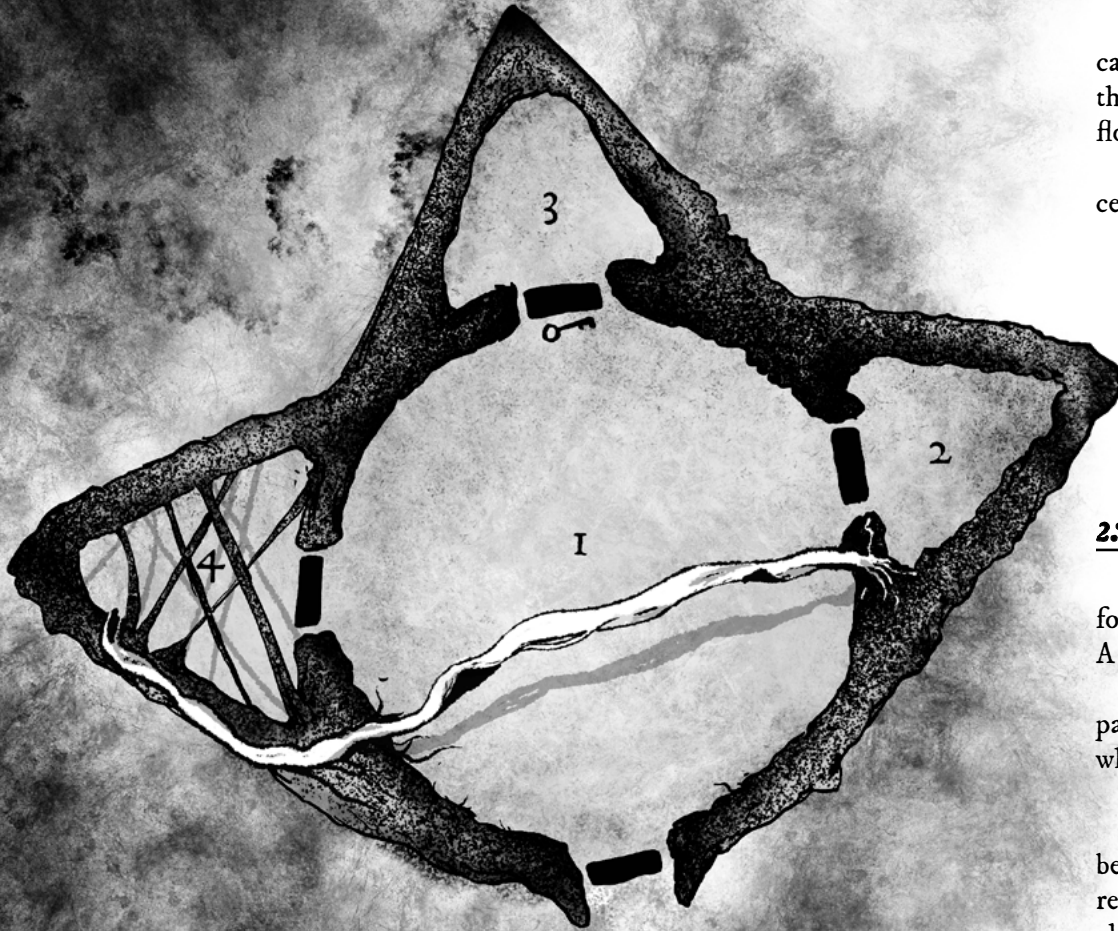
1: Foyer

First Glance: Spacious, dim, sweet scent (almost like cotton candy). The sticky floors make a smacking sound as characters walk across them. The fibrous quality of the tower's structure patterns the walls and floors with circles and spirals.

What's Hidden: Two vent openings on either side of the foyer's ceiling.

Exits:

- South: Entrance door.
- East: Door to 2.
- North: Door to 3. Locked (The key has been bestowed upon Sam in 9). Pained moaning can be heard from behind it if a character listens carefully.
- West: Door to 4.



2: Preparation

First Glance: Small, almost cramped. A number of thin stalks (one for each character) extend from the ground, lit by a bright bulb overhead. A pale blue robe hangs on each one. There is a note lying on the ground.

Details: The note's texture is just slightly wrong; less like parchment and more like the sticky side of a roll of tape. It's written in whatever language the reader is comfortable with, and reads, simply, "PREPARE".

The robes are warm to the touch. They quickly (within 5 minutes) begin to fuse to any exposed flesh, giving it the same candied smell as the rest of the tower. Characters that notice these effects may attempt a STR check (12/Medium) to tear them off.

Exits:

- West: Entrance door (back to 1).

3: Isolation

First Glance: Dark. The floor is covered in something organic, red, human. The smell of rot and blood mixes with the pervasive sweetness of the tower. A hunched shape wearing a blue robe moans quietly in the room's center.

3 (Isolation) cont:

What's Hidden: Sifting through the waste on the floor reveals two other sets of bloody robes and an ancestral medallion that shows that once, Stephen was the son of a blacksmith named Mia Forge.

Details: The figure is a wizard's apprentice (pained, dripping face, melting). His name is *Stephen Forge*. Under his robes, his skin is melting off (very slowly). His eyes hang loosely from their sockets, his skin dripping in fatty globs and fusing to the floor. He was placed in isolation for disobedience. **He's getting what he deserves.**

If disturbed, he grasps at the characters.

Creatures:

Stephen Forge, Wizard's apprentice, AC: 8/Low, HD: 1/Low,

SAVES: +1/Low

Traits: Mostly Blind, Slow

Actions:

- *Grasp:* d6/Medium fire damage. Stephen is very hot to the touch.

Characters hit by the grasp must succeed on a DEX save (12/Medium) or he melts onto them. While fused, he can't target anyone else, but doesn't need to roll to hit to deal damage to the target.

Exits:

- South: Entrance door (back to 1).

4: Ascension

First Glance: Long and thin, high ceiling. Scattered footholds along the wall lead up to another door. Long strands of sticky blue material are threaded haphazardly across the length of the room.

What's Hidden: If a character focuses on the threads, they can see that they twitch and jerk ever so slightly. There's a vent opposite the door at the peak of the footholds.

Details: Characters that head up the footholds must make a DEX save (12/Medium) if they attempt to avoid the threads. On a failure, they brush a tendril. The tendril retracts from the wall, wraps around the character, and begins dragging them up and into the vent. They may attempt the same save to wrest themselves free, but they risk falling the height of the room (about 30 feet). They may also be cut free (the tendrils have 1/Low HD) or retrieved with a successful STR (12/Medium) check, although characters that fail this check are wrapped up by the tendril as well.

Characters that don't escape are pulled through the vents into 6 (Floor Two).

Exits:

- East: Entrance door.
- East: Foothold ladder up to 5 (Floor Two).



FLOOR TWO:

The Wizard Watches: As the characters ascend, begin to describe odd noises in the dark, occasional flashes of movement, slime on the vents. The wizard starts to take notice of them and monitor their actions.

5: Greeting

First Glance: The cotton candy scent is stronger here. Half of this room is blocked off by an enormous, stringy sphere (room 6). A figure wearing pale blue robes rushes towards the characters as they enter, babbling incoherently.

Details: The wizard's apprentice (watery eyes, blue-tinged skin, engorged veins) is eager to spread a **message** given to him by the wizard himself. It crawls inside him, wriggling up through his throat and bursting against his skin. This one's name is *Thinus*.

Creatures:

Thinus, Wizard's apprentice, AC: 10/Low, HD: 3/Medium, SAVES: +2/Medium

Traits: Frenzied

Actions:

- **Spread message:** d6/Medium acid damage. *Thinus* retches before unleashing a deluge of wet, blue, stinging tendrils from his mouth.
- **Burst:** When *Thinus* dies, every nearby character must succeed on a DEX save (10/Easy) or take d6/Medium acid damage as he pops open and unleashes all that was inside him.

Exits:

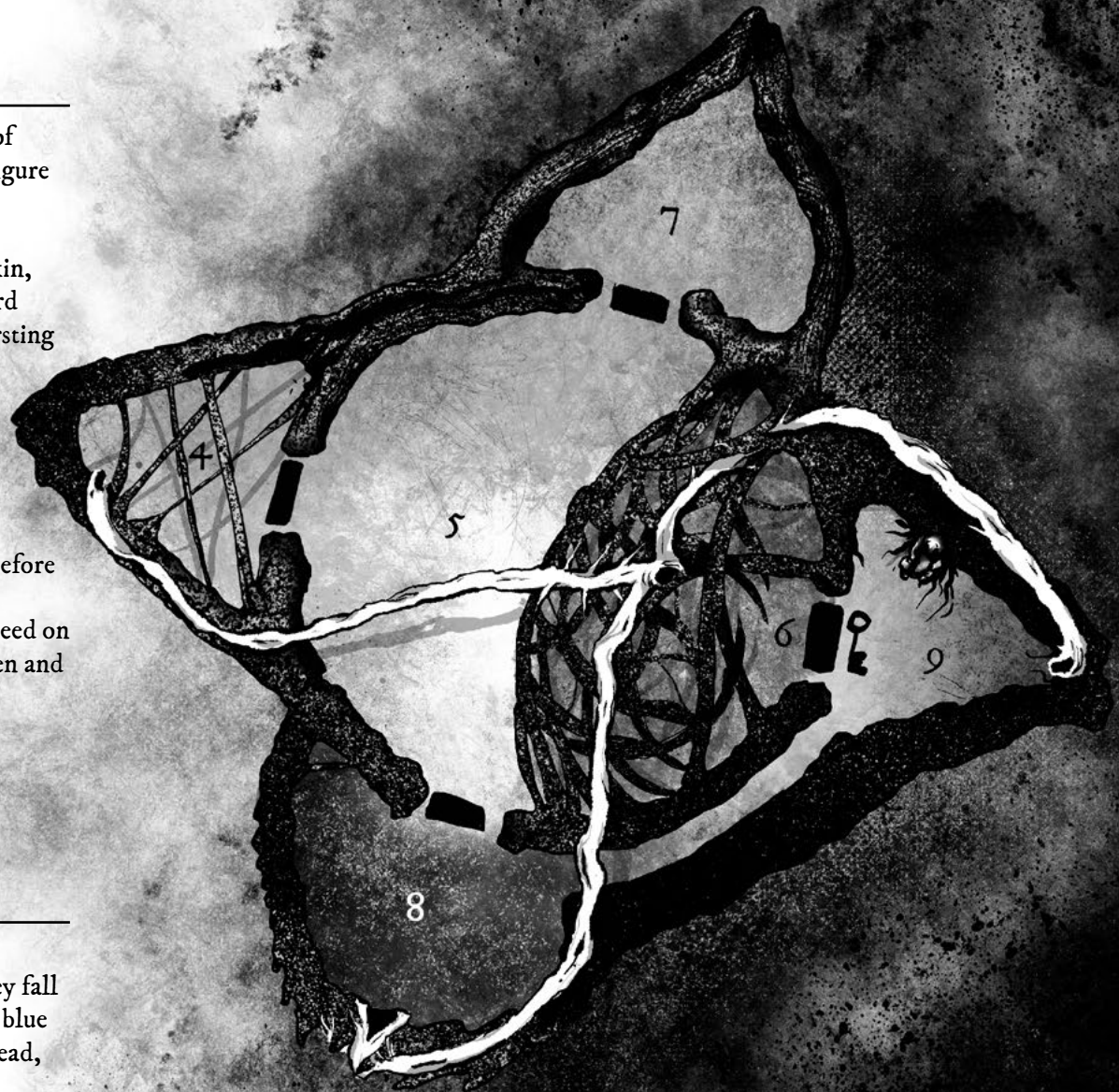
- Northwest: Entrance door (back to 4).
- Northeast: Door to 7.
- Southwest: Door to 8.

6: Bath

First Glance:

If a character is pulled into this room through the vents: They fall onto a loose net of stringy tendrils suspended over a mass of hot, pale blue liquid. A dark shape moves through it, its silhouette wormlike. Overhead, the vent covers itself with gooey fibers and becomes impassable.

If the characters open the door from the outside: Hot, stinging liquid pours forth from the open door. Each character must succeed on a DEX save (10/Easy) or take d4/Low acid damage as it splashes against them. Something twitches on the moist ground.



6 (Bath) cont:

Details: Characters suspended in the net take d_4 /Low acid damage from the corrosive tendrils every minute they spend hanging on. If they let go and fall into the liquid, they take $2d_6$ /High acid damage. Characters that die or fall unconscious from this quickly begin to melt into nutrient paste for the wizardling residing in the pool.

The wizardling is growing, unfinished. It is one of the wizard's children. It has limbs and tentacles and carapace legs and rows of gooey half-born eyes. **If the characters slaughter it, the wizard will do the same to them.**

Exits:

- Southeast: Entrance door (back to 9). Locked from both sides (Sam in 9 holds the key).

7: Empty

First Glance: An empty, unlit room.

Details: Characters that fail an 10 /Easy WIS check hear distant cackling/skittering in the silence, see motion outside the door that isn't there, etc (your choice).

Exits:

- Southwest: Entrance door (back to 5).

8: Lights

First Glance: Motes of flickering blue light float through the air. Heavy, labored breathing emanates from a darkened corridor. A vent is clearly visible overhead.

Details: Characters that breathe freely in this room must succeed on a CON save (12 /Medium) or become nauseated as they breathe in the blinking spores. Nauseous characters have difficulty with INT or WIS related checks, attacks, and anything else that requires an intense amount of focus.

Exits:

- Northeast: Entrance door (back to 5).
- East: Darkened corridor to 9.

9: Keys

First Glance: Dark, except for a dimly glowing shape leaned up against the wall. They gasp and sputter and hold onto their engorged stomach. Something is written on the wall directly above them. Another set of footholds leads further up into the wizard's tower.

What's Hidden: A vent overlooking the footholds.

Details: The shape is *Sam*, another wizard's apprentice (bulbous stomach, sweating intensely, tongue missing), left as an offering. She glows with pale blue light. The message written on the wall, legible in whatever language the reader is comfortable with, reads

"KEYS"

With an arrow pointed down at her. If the characters open her up, there are two bulb keys inside, corroding her internal organs into jelly. One corresponds to 6, the other to 2 (downstairs).

Exits:

- West: Entrance corridor (back to 8).
- Northwest: Door to 6. Locked (but not for long).
- Southeast: Foothold ladder up to 10.



FLOOR THREE:

10: Patterns

First Glance: Huge, conspicuously empty.

What's Hidden: Close inspection of the walls reveal that the sinewy fibers twist and undulate in disturbing patterns. Characters that get near them must succeed on a WIS save (12/Medium) or be mesmerized. Mesmerized characters can be snapped out of their stupor by shaking them or making loud noises, as if they were asleep.

Exits:

- Southeast: Foothold ladder back to 9.
- Northeast: Door to 11.
- Northwest: Door to 12.

11: Reward

First Glance: Thick tendrils cover the floor. There is a pale blue chest pushed up against the wall, glistening under dim light.

What's Hidden: A vent, looking directly down on the room from the ceiling.

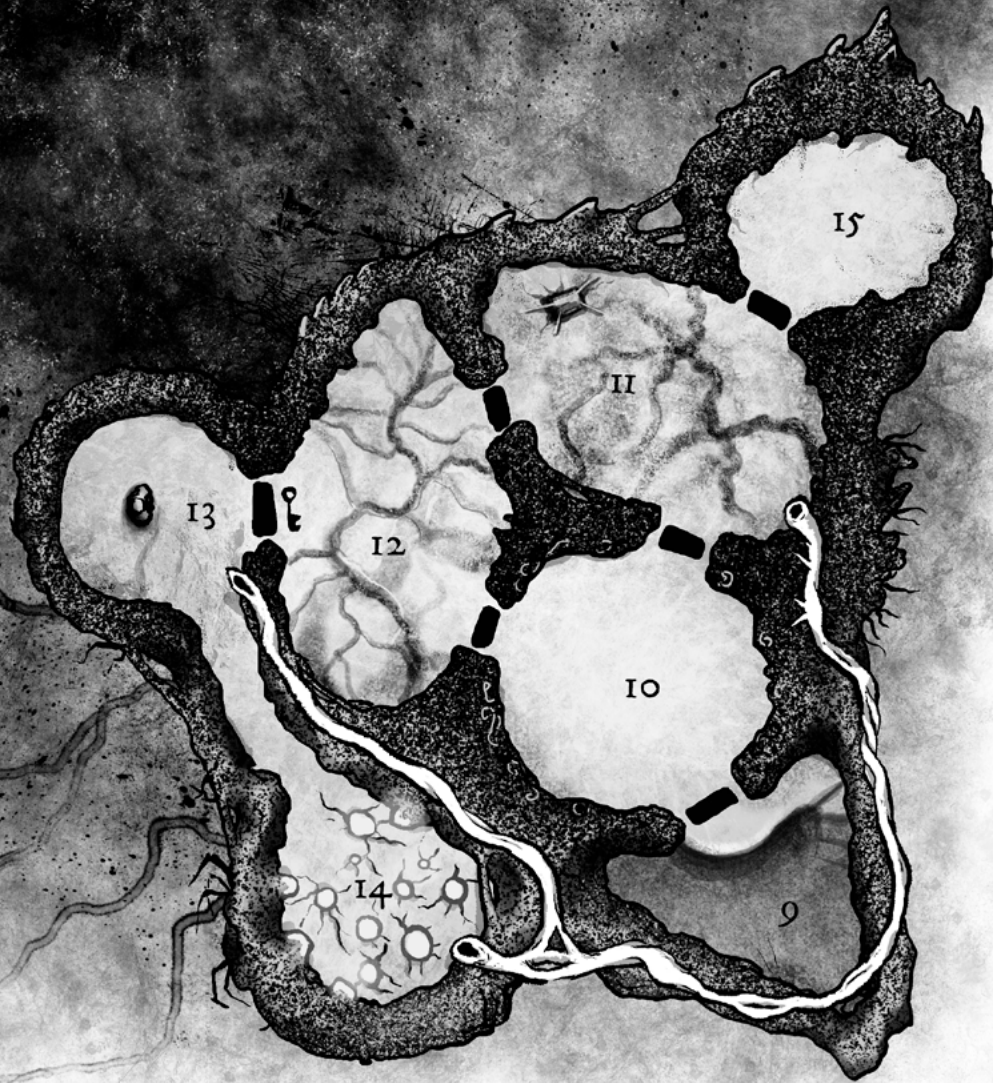
Details: If the characters put their ears up to the chest and listen for a few moments, they can hear soft noises coming from inside. The chest has grown out of the floor, wet, sticky strands still connecting it to the ground. It opens with a uncomfortably moist *pop*. The character that opened the chest must succeed on a DEX save (16/Hard) or a long, millipede-like creature flies out and attaches itself to their head.

The creature is a fledgeling wizardling. If a character succeeds on the save to avoid it, it continues trying to attach itself to their head until killed (which takes one successful attack of any kind). While attached, it cannot be removed without killing the character it has chosen; its tendrils burrow themselves into their brain. The host gains this trait:

Brainworm: When rolling INT, WIS, or CHA saves, you must roll twice and take the worse result. In addition, you see things that are disguised or invisible for how they truly are.

Exits:

- West: Door to 12.
- Southeast: Door to 10.
- Northeast: Door to 15.



No Turning Back: As soon as the characters start traversing the third floor, the exit door to the tower (Floor One) seals shut. They are somewhere else now.



12: Guardians

First Glance: The ground is uneven, covered in thick tendrils the size of tree roots. The western door is flanked by two robed figures that stand in place, shuddering.

What's Hidden: A vent, directly over the guarded door.

Details: The wizard's apprentices (shaking, bulging eyes, gritted teeth), *Joshua and Collin*, are guarding the door to 13. They won't attack until the characters approach the door, at which point they shed their robes and allow long, spider-like legs to burst through their skin. The tendrils also begin moving; characters that move on their turn must succeed on a DEX save (10/*Easy*) or become restrained as the tendrils wrap around them.

Creatures:

Joshua and Collin, Wizard's apprentices, AC: 14/*Medium* HD: 4/*Medium*, SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Too Fast, Climbs Walls

Actions:

- *Pierce*: d4/*Low* sharp damage.

- *Pop*: The upper body of the apprentice is ripped open as a mass of blood-soaked tendrils tears out of its fleshy prison. While in this new, perfected form, the apprentice gains a new trait (Attacks Twice) and a new attack:

- *Tendrils Whip*: d6/*Medium* acid damage, requires Pop to use.

Exits:

- Southeast: Door to 10.

- Northeast: Door to 11.

- West: Locked door to 13 (The key is among the trophies in 22).

13: Likeness

First Glance: A statue carved out of the same material as the tower stands in the center of this room, glowing dimly. It has the vague appearance of one of the characters (but missing their eyes). Wet noises echo down a nearby corridor.

Details: If the characters examine the statue, they can see the wet tendrils that form it bend and ripple. They must succeed on a WIS save (12/*Medium*) (16/*Hard* if it's the character that the statue represents) or become entranced and try to touch it. Breaking the target's line of sight with the statue ends this effect. If they touch it, small tendrils extend out from the statue and start to snake across the target's skin, slowly ensconcing them. It takes a STR check (14/*Medium*) to tear them away from the statue. Any parts of the target's body that were fully covered (fingers, arms, etc) liquefy into mushy blue goo underneath, dealing d10/*High* sharp damage as the "cast" is removed.

Exits:

- East: Entrance door (Back to 12).

- South: Corridor to 14.

14: Incubation

First Glance: Hot, humid. Veiny, luminescent bulbs scatter the floor. There is an uneven noise coming from a vent opposite the door.

What's Hidden: The wizard watches from within the vent. His breathing is profoundly inhuman; irregular, ragged, wrong. If a character looks through it, they see a shape slithering away through the vents, but nothing immediately identifiable. Tendrils, carapace, spindly arms.

Details: These are the wizard's eggs. **They will not be tampered with.** Still-incubating wizardlings, close to completion sleep within. If the characters crush them, set them ablaze, or anything similar, they wail and chitter as they die. **The wizard will make the characters pay for their stupidity.**

Exits:

- Northwest: Corridor to 13.

15: Quiet

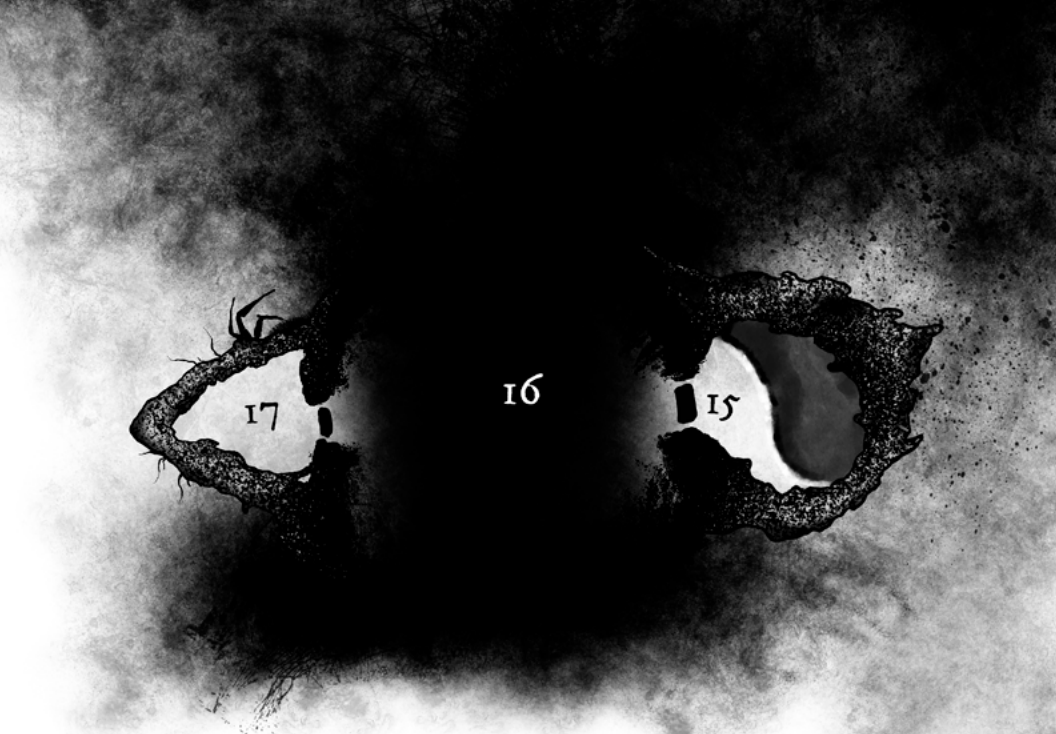
First Glance: Silent - noise seems muffled here. A series of footholds leads further up into the tower.

Details: Characters feel a mounting sense of dread as they ascend.

Exits:

- Southwest: Entrance door (back to 11).

- Set of stairs up to 16 (Floor Four).



FLOOR FOUR:

16: Somewhere

First Glance: Silent. There are no walls, no ceilings, and pitch darkness stretches off in all directions. Titanic shapes move through the void in the far distance, never visible beyond glimpses of slowly-moving limbs, bodies, possibly faces. A doorway lies about 100 feet across the gap, not supported by any other structure. Sickly blue light spills out from it.

Details: If the characters decide to investigate the inky expanse, go to pg. 33. This is an entrance to the Abyss.

Exits:

- East: Entrance door (back to 15).
- West: Hanging doorway to 17.

17: Up

First Glance: A series of footholds leads up into the fifth floor of the tower.

Exits:

- East: Entrance door (back to 16).
- Foothold ladder up to hatch that opens into 18 (Floor Five).

FLOOR FIVE:

Dark Hallways: On this floor, between each pair of connected rooms is a cold, pitch black hallway flooded with magical darkness. The wizard can see into these hallways, and watches the characters as they approach. As they get closer to the wizard's peak, describe sinister cackling, something sharp or wet brushing against their legs, flashes of sickly light in the darkness, etc as they traverse the dark halls.

18: Beacon

First Glance: A large geometric structure made up of pale blue tendrils looping in and out of each other floats in the center of the room, rotating slowly. A steady drone emits from it. There are holes dotting the ceiling, all filled with pitch darkness.

Details: The holes lead to the abyss (pg. 33). If a character stays to try and listen to it, the drone morphs over time to sound like a recognizable song from their childhood or local folklore. If the characters come back to this room later, they can see an enormous, pale finger extend itself through one of the holes and try to poke the structure, which reacts violently. Tendrils snap off of it and start whipping around the room, dealing d_4 /Medium acid damage to everyone who fails a DEX save (12/Medium). The finger jerks back into the void when it's hit.

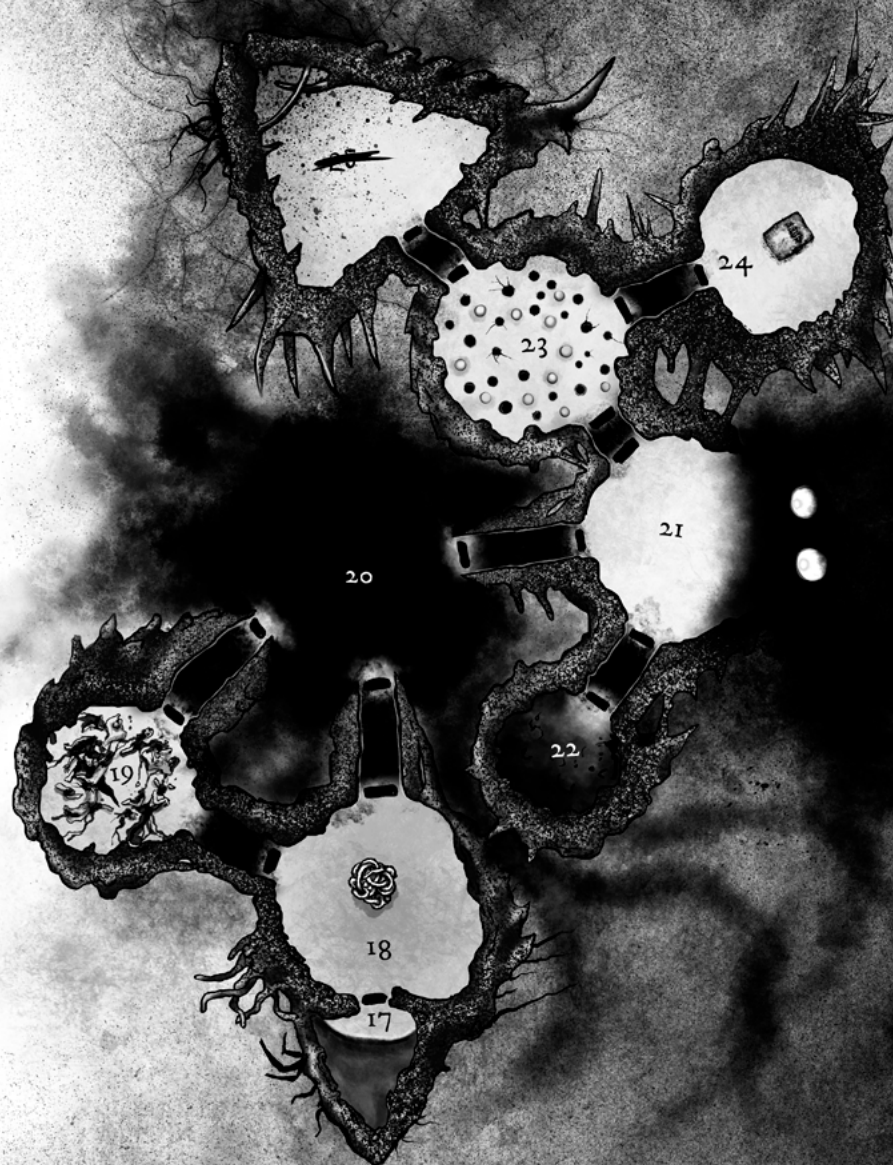
Exits:

- Southwest: Entrance door (back to 17).
- Northwest: Door to 19.
- Northeast: Door to 20.

19: Disembodied

First Glance: Smells awful. Severed body parts are scattered around the room along with torn cloth scraps. The cutoff point of each limb is covered in a viscous mixture of blood and bubbly slime.

What's Hidden: Underneath the largest cloth scrap, there's a sizable hole leading to the abyss (pg. 33). The head tries to lead characters towards it. If they step onto it, they must succeed on a DEX save (12/Medium) to grab onto the edge of the hole or fall in. If a character hits the head into the hole (a 16/Hard STR or DEX check), it closes and a distorted horn jingle plays. The limbs remaining in the room become thick and gummy and may be eaten to regain d_6 /Medium HP.



19 (*Disembodied*) cont:

Details: The various limbs make up a wizard's apprentice. The severed head, still covered by a blue hood, starts rolling toward the characters and babbling strange phrases as they enter. **Even in death, he can't shut up.** The rest of the apprentice starts to move as well. Each round, the head says one of the following phrases (roll d8, roll again if you land on a result you've already rolled):

- 1 - "The wizard shall return! He shall return through the cracked sphere, reborn moist and glistening!"
- 2 - "The two sentinels guard them! They guard the incomplete perfection!"
- 3 - "Beyond the black veil lies seas of wonder and terror! Through the door hanging in emptiness!"
- 4 - "He can see! He can see you coming as you stumble through the inky dark!"
- 5 - "Not the hole, no, not the hole, not the hole again!"
- 6 - "His mother will forget until he, in metal true, is shown to her!"
- 7 - "The statue has YOUR eyes, a beckoning call!"
- 8 - "We have suffered, we accursed six, and we have been saved!"

Creatures:

Claus, Wizard's apprentice, AC: 16/High, HD: 5/Medium, SAVES: +2/Medium

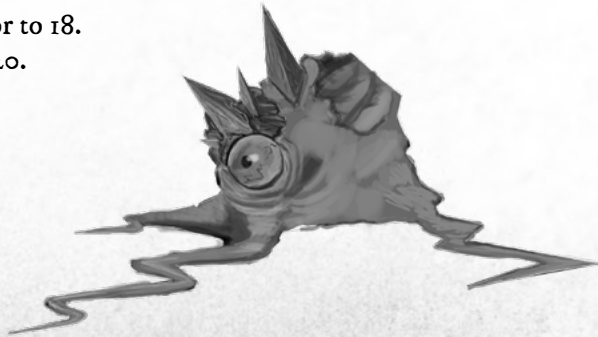
Traits: Swarm of Limbs (Reduce AC to 12/Medium once Claus reaches half of their HP)

Actions: (Choose three on Claus' turn. When Claus is reduced to half of their HP, choose two).

- *Scratch (Arm):* d4/Low sharp damage.
- *Kick (Leg):* d6/Medium bludgeoning damage.
- *Body Check:* d4/Low bludgeoning damage, the target must succeed on a STR save (12/Medium) or be knocked prone.

Exits:

- Southeast: Door to 18.
- East: Door to 20.



20: Doors

First Glance: Pitch black. All three doorways are suspended in the darkness by strange ropes that stretch off into nothingness.

What's Hidden: The "strange ropes" are legs of the wizard that have been extended into this room. If a character makes a successful WIS or INT check (12/Medium), they can tell something isn't right about them.

Details: The room is magically shrouded in darkness - effects that would normally allow characters to see in the dark don't work here. If a character tries to leave through any of the doorways, the wizard cackles and jerks it upward into their stomach. They must succeed on a DEX save (16/Hard) or take d6/Medium bludgeoning damage. Then, the wizard begins moving the doorways around the room in an attempt to separate the characters. If a character is caught in a doorway, they tumble through and end up in the hallway that connects to it. A character can make a DEX save (12/Medium) to avoid a flying doorway or a DEX check (12/Medium) to hop through one as it's moving.

Once a character is through the doorway to 19 or 18, it seals behind them and becomes a door that leads to 21. The door back into 20 becomes a door that instead leads to 19. If the wizard manages to isolate a character in this room, the doorways stop and they are dragged upward into the darkness. Every other character can hear their screams, and then nothing. The wizard isn't done, though. **Far from it.**

Exits (Subject to Change):

- Southwest: Doorway to 18.
- West: Doorway to 19.
- Southeast: Doorway to 21.

21: Glare

First Glance: Huge and empty. The back wall has been entirely cleaved away to reveal an endless black expanse. Two enormous, pale eyes stare upwards with intense fury from the void.

Details: The void leads to the abyss (page 33). If a character waits in this room for long enough, they can tell that the eyes are slowly inching closer to the tower, getting bigger and bigger.

Exits:

- Northwest: Door to 20 (19 if 20 has been sealed).
- Southwest: Door to 22.
- North: Door to 23.

22: *Trophies*

First Glance: Something unseen attacks the characters as they traverse the hallway to this room. In this complete darkness, the characters take penalties to all rolls that require sight, like attacks. As soon as all of them get inside the room, the attacks cease.

The floors and ceilings of the room within are mushy, with too much give. Globes of melty blue material drip from overhead and splash into murky puddles. Several objects, also covered in goo, are scattered around the floor.

Details: The wizard senses if any of his trophies are disturbed and remembers which characters take what. They include:

- A bulb key to 13.
- A severed human hand.
- A golden ring. The wearer hears distant, pained sobbing.
- A noble's longsword, broken in half.
- A strange ball of wiggling tendrils.
- A key with a blade at the end. Once per day, when turned while the blade is pressed into the palm, it opens a pale white door to the abyss.
- A small, wiggling grub. Bright blue. If attached to the eye, it latches on and allows the host to see past the wizard's magical darkness.

Creatures:

Something in the Dark, AC: 16/High, HD: 6/High, SAVES: +2/
Medium

Traits: Ambusher, Hidden, Blitz (Attacks Twice)

Actions:

- *Something Sharp:* d8/Medium sharp damage.
- *Something Wet:* The target must succeed on a CON save (12/
Medium) or be incapacitated as paralyzing fluid seeps across their exposed skin.

Exits:

- Northeast: Door to 21.

23: *Scuffle*

First Glance: An upright, segmented creature with spiderlike limbs and twisting tendrils for a head lurches forward as the characters enter. Sticky, globular bulbs are laid throughout the room, aside circular holes leading down into darkness.

What's Hidden: A second creature hides in wait inside one of the bulbs, ready to provide backup.

23 (*Scuffle*) cont:

Details: The creatures (adolescent *wizardlings*) defend the door to 25 with inhuman fervor. While the characters are engaged with them, roll on the abyssal encounter table (pg. 55). The result arrives through the holes. Whatever it is, it's hostile to the characters, but may also be hostile to the *wizardlings*.

Creatures:

Adolescent Wizardling, AC: 16/High, HD: 4/Medium, SAVES:
+4/High

Traits: Minor Magic Resistance, Clever, Acidic Body (deals d4/
Low acid damage to attackers when hit)

Actions:

- *Blade Arms:* d10/High sharp damage. The target must succeed on an INT save (16/Hard) or receive a Minor Curse. The curse disappears once the *wizardling* that inflicted it dies.

- *Minor Curse:* The target becomes slick and dizzy as they start to sweat thick, blue droplets. They take a penalty to DEX, INT, and WIS related rolls. In addition, if they make an attack roll with a weapon and miss, it slips out of their hands.

Exits:

- North: The last door. To 25.
- Southeast: Door to 24.

24: *Exit*

First Glance: A plain stone door is set into the floor. Scrawled onto it in whatever language the reader is comfortable with is a single word: "EXIT."

Details: If the door is opened, a blue tongue whips out and wraps around the closest character. They must succeed on a DEX save (16/Hard) or be dragged inside. The door shuts, and any other characters can hear grinding, splattering, and screaming from within. The fool takes 2d8/Very High sharp damage. If they survive, they're deposited back outside the door; if they don't, they're chewed up and eventually fed to the wizard.

Exits:

- Northwest: Door to 23.
- On the Floor: Door to **only good things**.

25 WIZARD

First Glance: The door opens into darkness. Something long and pale “beckons” the characters inward.

Details: The wizard is done toying with them. As soon as all the characters are through, the door seals behind them. The room is covered in magical darkness, but a blue bulb flickers to life in the center of the room. At the edges of the characters’ vision, something enormous skitters and writhes and floats over their heads. **He we ars a po inted h at .**

He never fully shows himself if possible; characters see his legs and tendrils whipping out of the dark. On each round, some part of him will be visible - a hanging leg, twitching tendril, a stretch of carapace-covered torso. **Th is is wher e the charac te rs can stri ke, if they’re dumb e nou gh to try.** If a character has the grub from pg. 25, they can see through the darkness and strike directly at the wizard. The wizard’s AC is 14/*Medium* for these attacks.

Creatures:

THE WIZARD, AC: 18/*Very High*, HD: 10/*Very High*, SAVES: +6/*Very High*

Traits: Cruel, Otherworldly **Normal**, Magic Resistance, **Many An Average Amount of Limbs**

Actions: (Roll initiative twice for the wizard. He acts once on both of his turns).

- **Lash Out:** d6/*Medium* sharp damage and d6/*Medium* acid damage as a limb whips out of the darkness.
- **Gift:** A glistening *wizardling* (pg. 26) falls from the darkness and immediately attacks.
- **Bite:** d8/*Medium* sharp damage as a bladed tube jabs into the target, turning the flesh around it into goo and sucking it up through the proboscis. The wizard heals HP equal to the damage dealt.
- **Curse:** The wizard releases a spray of pulsing blue spores - the target must succeed on an INT save (16/*Hard*) or be inflicted with a curse.

Curses (d6):

1 - **Jellylimbs.** The target’s joints become loose and wobbly. When they make an attack or move more than half their movement in a turn, they must succeed on a CON save (12/*Medium*) or a random limb cracks off with a wet pop. It can be squished back onto the joint as an action, allowing the target to use it again.

2 - **Meltskin.** The target’s flesh becomes hot, thick, and gooey, sloughing off in chunks onto the ground. They become unable to move more than 5 ft. per turn, and take d4/*Low* hot damage when they perform an action.

3 - **Dissolving Innards.** The target’s stomach begins to glow sickly blue. The first round after they become cursed, they take d4/*Low* acid damage, increasing by one step every round after (d6/*Medium*, d10/*High*, 2d6/*Very High*), caused by a corroding bulb growing in their gut. The only way to stop it is to cut the bulb out. The words **“CUT HERE”** appear over the infected area in whatever language the target is comfortable with.

4 - **Grubgut.** Skittering, slimy grublike creatures begin bubbling up the target’s throat and forcing themselves out of their mouth. The target can’t speak (meaning they’re unable to cast spells that require them to do so) and rolls a d6 at the beginning of their turn. On a 1-3, they spend the turn choking as another crawls its way out of their mouth, unable to take an action.

5 - **Stunbeam.** A mesmerizing blue light surrounds the target. The target is stunned until the end of their next turn, and they take a penalty to all saves.

6 - **Vilevision.** The target sees a vision of something intensely cruel and personal to them (their family being eaten by the wizard, being drowned under a sea of bluish mucus as the other characters watch, etc). They take d10/*High* mind damage and become unable to attack the wizard out of fear.





Possible • Endings

A: *(The characters defeat the Wizard but don't destroy the eggs in Room 14)* As soon as the final blow strikes the wizard, he bellows a rasping chuckle before a great rumbling noise fills the room, and the Tower on the Hill vanishes. The characters find themselves on top of a grassy hill where it once stood. Canny still calls the wizard what he is: a wizard, and don't even seem to recollect the fact that they sent the characters to deal with him. A simple, moist, and tacky note is left behind in one of the character's pockets, written in whatever language they're comfortable with:

"BE SEEING YOU"

There is a smile drawn on the other side.

The wizard will be reborn.



B: *(The characters perish in the Tower)* The wizard kindly heals them, spreading rejuvenating blue paste across their wounds, then gives them robes of their own. They are apprentices now, and will serve their role. The wizard moves on, another town to torture, another slew of adventurers to torment, and more people that may spread the truth of his nature. The wizard is just that.

C: *(The characters perish in the Abyss)* They float forever in the inky void, eventually eaten or recycled by a passing creature. The corpses end up somewhere else - another world. A kind end.

D: *(The characters defeat the Wizard AND they destroy the eggs in Room 14)* As soon as the final blow strikes the wizard, he chuckles unnaturally- and then begins to choke. His enormous body lashes around in the darkness as the tower begins to fall apart. The tendrils and goo that held together the entire structure turns hard and grey, crumbling into pieces. The exit door in 1 opens - if the characters can get there in time. As they leave, the tower falls to pieces, reassembles itself before their eyes, and then implodes with a loud POP.

Everyone in Canny is able to act normally again. Those who lost things or people to the wizard grieve, and then move on.

Except Mia. She closes her shop down. The wizard won with her, **because he will always win**, and she will never be the same.

E: *(The characters defeat the Wizard, destroy the eggs in Room 14, AND return the medallion in Room 3 to Mia)*

Mia gets closure for her lost son. Canny settles back into routine. Maybe, one day, the characters are able to move on as well.

But it'll never really be over.

You know that.

The wizard is just that. He wears a pointed hat.



The Abyss

The abyss is a cold, endless, inky void with no gravity or sense of direction. Occasionally, strange creatures and objects loom out of the darkness, pulling the characters towards them. Roll on the following table when characters first enter the abyss (or choose one). To escape, they must succeed on a 18/*Very Hard* WIS check, finding themselves back in the room where they entered the abyss. If they fail, roll from (or choose from) the table again, rerolling areas the characters have already investigated. The characters can, of course, choose to explore further rather than trying to escape.

1-5: Roll from the *Abyssal Encounters* table.

- 6: *Game*
- 7: *Castaways*
- 8: *Peace*
- 9: *Finger*
- 10: *Locks*
- 11: *Orchard*
- 12: *Entity*
- 13: *Vessels*
- 14: *Library*
- 15: *Moon*
- 16: *Home*
- 17: *Mannequins*
- 18: *Feast*
- 19: *Maze*
- 20: *Offer*

6: *Game*

First Glance: An object approaches from the endless dark, slowly spinning. It appears to be a black and white checkerboard floor, 100x100 tiles in size and each a 5x5 foot square. Something hovers above its center point, difficult to make out.

Details: Hovering a few feet above the tiled platform is a set of facial features, humanlike eyes and a wide, toothy smile floating in nothingness. If anyone touches the gigantic board, the face begins to speak loudly and brashly, introducing itself as “MASTER OF GAMES!” and challenging all visitors to play its game for a fantastic reward. If the challenge is accepted, it quickly becomes clear that it makes the rules up as it goes along in a chaotic, child-like fashion, and if anyone breaks these “rules” or attempts to quit playing, it will become violent. Character movement is physically restricted by some of these rules, i.e. if the Master says that people wearing red can only move diagonally across the board or men over forty years old have to jump over black, it will be impossible for applicable characters to defy this.

Creatures:

The “*Master of Games*”, AC: 18/*Very High* HD: 7/*High* SAVES: +4/*High*

Traits: Floating, No Body

Actions: (The Master of Games may choose one of the following actions AND Game Piece).

- *Time Out:* A flash of light bursts from the being’s eyes. The target must succeed on a CON save (16/*Hard*) or be frozen in place.
- *PENALTY! PENALTY!:* 2d6/*High* sharp damage. The Master of Games booms the name of this attack as it cleanly bites a piece off a frozen character. The character is permanently missing the piece, although it doesn’t bleed or otherwise interrupt biological processes.
- *Game Piece:* The Master of Games drops a “game piece” down on a square of the board. Game pieces are of a limitless variety, but typical examples would include (d8);

1: A figure like a suit of armor fashioned for a nonhumanoid. Moves in straight lines and spouts flames at adjacent players (16/*Hard* DEX save or take d6/*Medium* hot damage).

2: Buzzing cloud of beetles that convert a player into an animate skeleton. The master will invent a new rule for skeletons to follow.

3: A blue entity shaped like a small tree with silver cubes for “leaves.” Emits a scream that teleports characters around the board randomly.

6 (Game) cont:

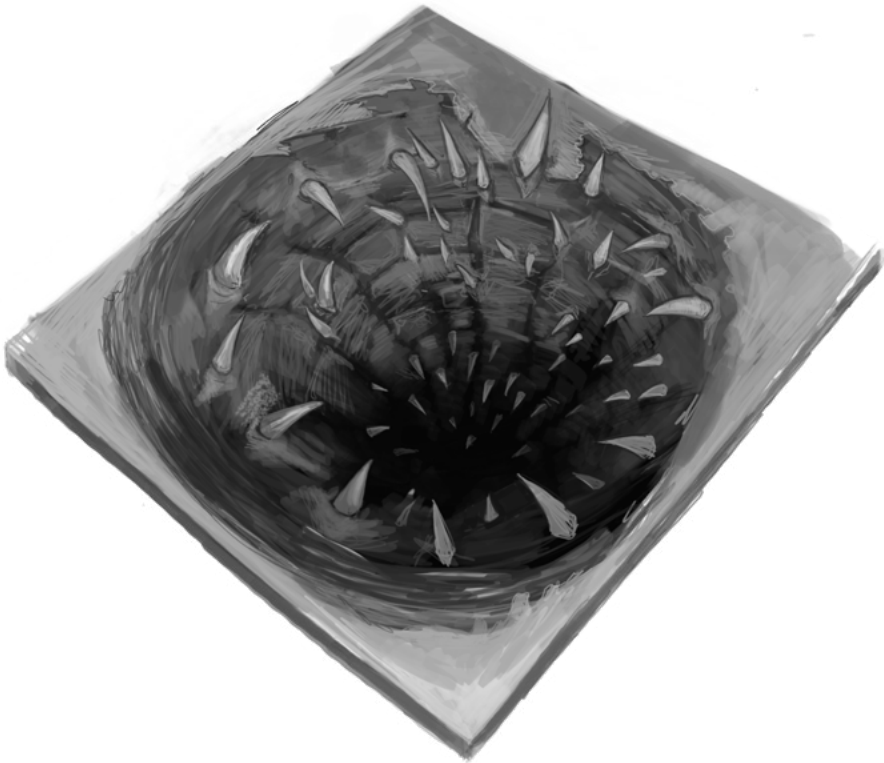
4: Giant, stone foot attached to a leg so long it stretches up with no visible end. Randomly leaps with crushing force (d10/High bludgeoning damage) to white squares only.

5: An extremely fast-moving creature like a faceless ball of fur with a whiplike tail, always giggling. The master invents a “bonus” for catching it.

6: Seemingly normal, friendly person who makes idle chit chat while joining the game, and offers friendly handshakes. Touching them is severely poisonous (16/Hard CON save or take 2d8/Very High poison damage).

7: An open maw. Doesn't move, but will devour anyone forced by the rules to pass over it.

8: Pale sphere of humanlike, fuzzy skin, squeaks as it bounces, randomly swaps position with other players and eventually explodes in a burst of acid (Characters in adjacent squares take d6/Medium acid damage).



7: Castaways

First Glance: As the characters drift through the darkness, they hear a strange, hollow groan. The emptiness before them appears to split open into a red, pulsing tunnel. A pitch black creature has actually opened its vast, toothless mouth. There is no escape as it swallows them whole, like a whale engulfing a few helpless krill.

Details: The characters awaken in a cavern of wet, veiny tissue, dimly luminescent. The air is sharp and acrid, smelling of bile, and their skin tingles slightly. White worms the size of tree trunks undulate along the mucus-lined walls. At the center of the cavern is a crude structure.

On close inspection, the structure is a hut fashioned from the bones and shells of abyssal creatures. Inside lives a *castaway* (heavily deteriorated, gaping holes, missing chunks, most of skull missing). They have only their lower jaw left, but they're still capable of wet, raspy speech (and speak almost continuously). They seem happy to have visitors and in no apparent pain, but they speak frantically of people, places and things unfamiliar, as though they may come from another world and time.

A route to escape the creature is concealed by a heap of putrid, half-digested carrion and trash, but during fleeting moments of clarity the castaway will deny there is any way to leave, insisting they would have obviously done so long ago. They strongly discourage attempts to explore, saying things digest faster the farther they are from the center (where they built their shelter) and that there are dangerous things lurking in the darker nooks of the stomach. The castaway will always quickly go back to their stranger ramblings.

Typical rant topics (d6):

1: “The Bomb” that apparently “ended everything,” rants about it being “even worse on the outside” and people “looking even worse” than themselves.

2: “Corruption” of an unspecified totalitarian government with horrific sounding laws, how the current surroundings are “the one place they can't find me anymore.”

3: How people in general have “forgotten so much,” don't “invent things anymore,” descriptions of personal inventions that don't make sense.

4: Angry tangents blaming various strangely named people or groups for almost anything, even the current situation (“they fed this thing for years, and guess who were the first ones down its throat?!”)

7 (*Castaways*) cont:

5: Sudden, unexpected snippets of information about the Wizard, though they will seemingly forget they ever brought them up and offer few deeper details.

6: A rare, focused tangent on the Wizard, about who/what he really is, his past, his intentions... but usually warped and confused. They correct themselves constantly and give inconsistent details.

8: *Peace*

First Glance: A warm, pleasant glow hovers in the blackness some distance away. Characters can float towards it at will, and feel more peaceful as they approach it.

Details: Anyone making contact with the light will find themselves precisely wherever they would be the happiest and most comfortable of all places in their memory. It's difficult for them to remember where they were before, or what they should be doing. Everything feels perfect, everything feels safe, and the characters want to finally relax. The longer they remain here, the more cozy it feels, the sleepier and more content they are. They aren't aware of it, but they're slowly being drained of energy and metabolized by an abyssal being that is difficult to describe in normal, physical terms. Any other beings they perceive in their comfortable surroundings - people or animals - are pseudopods of the entity acting on whatever their mind expects these figures to do.

The creature has a few **flaws** in its ability. For one, it doesn't necessarily understand the meaning of the words and actions that it imitates, and the characters may notice subtle errors, inconsistencies or repetitions. Further, with multiple characters trapped at once, the thing will attempt to build an illusion that will keep all of them comfortable together, and there may be conflicts of interest and taste that don't make sense together- the illusion attempts to reconcile them in convoluted ways. For instance, a character who loves peaceful study and a character who loves gory battle may find themselves together in an extravagant research institution in which, for whatever reason, fearsome battle-ready academics must be defeated in thrilling combat to acquire their study materials.

The more mistakes and inconsistencies, and the more the dream is stretched thin by multiple victims, the easier it is for a character to figure out that something is wrong (an 18/*Very Hard*, 16/*Hard*, or 12/*Medium* WIS save depending on how strange the simulated reality has gotten), and may have to try and prove it to other characters in conflict with illusory NPCs.

9: *Finger*

First Glance: Adrift for what must be hours in nothingness, disoriented and lost, something comes into view from below; what appears to be a winding, pale grey walkway suspended in nothing. Finally, something to orient on! Maybe it leads somewhere!

Details: It's easy to plant feet on the pathway and keep them there. The surface is only slightly yielding, like damp wood. It continues for miles, with wrinkled knots every few yards. Soon similar paths can be seen in the distance, angled towards one another as though converging on some single, distant point.

A few miles into this journey, should they continue, the characters will see one of the other paths suddenly bend, then straighten again, a few times in succession. At this point, it should be easy to discern the fact that they're standing on a giant, twitching finger. Overhead, there are suddenly a number of huge, dim lights, like many scattered moons. All together, they turn and angle down to stare at the party.

If the party still continues, the entity may take several possible actions; it may decide to casually crush someone (d10/*High* bludgeoning damage), fling them off in a random direction, or try to shift what fingers they're walking on, toying with them idly. It could either ignore them if they attempt to flee or catch them again between its joints, and not delicately (16/*Hard* DEX save or take d10/*High* bludgeoning damage). The direct light of its eyes also causes an escalating sense of nausea and reduced cognitive function (16/*Hard* INT save), almost like intoxication; they will brazenly want to continue and think little of potential danger.



10: Locks

First Glance: The characters drift through the abyss, and for a while, nothing breaks the monotonous void... until something soft and unseen tickles their skin briefly. Then again, and again...

Details: It quickly becomes clear that the characters have floated into a field of hairlike strands, pitch black and invisible in the void. There's seemingly no end to them, and they grow thicker and thicker in the same direction. If anyone attempts to turn around or change course, they will find themselves tangled in the hair, which is seemingly pulling them in deliberately. A ragged breathing sound grows increasingly loud, and the source of the hair eventually comes into view. Obscured as it is by its own greasy black locks, it appears to be a pale blue, humanlike head adrift in the void, several times the size of a whale. Its lidless eyes twitch and its lips smack wetly, a purple tongue lolling in anticipation of food. It seeks to lick its prey from its own hair and has a mouth packed with blocky, grinding molars.

Due to its massive size it can't be engaged in direct combat, but the hair can be slashed or burned. There is, unfortunately, almost always more hair to replace it, and escape would require something like a continuous field of extreme heat or powerful, whirling blades to mow through the tangled locks. A different means of escape is to agitate both of the creature's eyes, each roughly the size of a house. They are coated in a thick, rubbery transparent membrane, but powerful enough projectiles and especially long-distance flame can penetrate the film and irritate the creature. Its tongue is also highly sensitive to bitter flavors, but few things would be strong enough to spoil its appetite. Otherwise, the characters have about an hour before they're consumed. During this time, there is also a chance that small, louse-like parasites may find entangled characters and begin draining their blood, steadily weakening them in symbiosis with the monster. Targets must succeed on a CON save (12/*Medium*) or have their STR, DEX, and CON scores reduced temporarily.

11: Orchard

First Glance: A tangled mass materializes from the darkness; a vast network of tough, red vines or branches. Many colorful, curiously shaped objects dangle from these vines, resembling otherworldly fruits. All of them smell sweet and delicious.

11 (Orchard) cont:

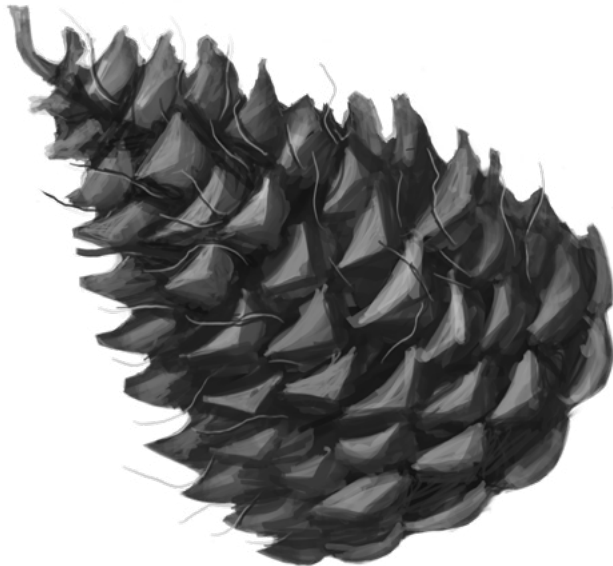
Details: Investigating the abyssal orchard reveals a crude wooden sign entangled in a few tendrils. Roughly scrawled on it are what seem to be hasty notes, listing rough descriptions of various fruits and the effects of eating them. The notes are as follows (only give the name and text in "quotes" to the players):

- *Green warty crescent* - "color change" (Eater's skin color changes to a random hue)
- *Blue fuzzy hourglass* - "antenna" (Eater develops a luminous orb on the end of a fleshy stalk somewhere on their body, and can now hear the thoughts of others)
- *Yellow greasy sphere* - "EWWW" (Eater begins to exude mucus over their entire body. Unpleasant, but they can seemingly control whether it is slippery or adhesive)
- *Purple jelly spiral* - "chuckles" (Eater's breath becomes a pinkish vapor. It doesn't affect them, but anyone else who breathes it will have intermittent, harmless but uncontrollable giggling fits)
- *Orange and red cube* - "magnetic" (Eater's skin becomes highly magnetized)
- *White hand shape* - "longer" (Eater's body stretches; they become extremely elongated and slender with up to a ten foot reach, though more easily damaged (greatly lowers AC))
- *Pink knot w/eyes?* - "soft" (Characters may recognize this as the shape of an embryo. Eating it will make the eater's body, bones and all, extremely malleable like an octopus)
- *Brown furry teardrop* - "bugs?!" (Eater gains the ability to generate and control a swarm of tiny, black fly-like creatures, though they have no notable abilities)
- *Eyeball* - "smile!" (Eater's teeth fall out, but healthy new ones sprout in their place)
- *Spiny clear crystal* - "flavors. Flavorsss." (Eater's entire skin becomes like the surface of a tongue, with sensitive taste buds)
- *Hairy teal pinecone* - "rusty" (All metal the eater comes into contact with will corrode almost immediately)
- *Blue cheesy block* - "BAD" (This simply tastes so foul, touching it to a single taste bud is enough to cause vomiting and nausea (lowered INT, WIS, and DEX) for hours. Also works on any abyssal predator)

11 (Orchard) cont:

- *Red fern frond* - “???” (No effect is obvious, and it tastes alright. Precisely one month later, a vine of the abyssal orchard will sprout from the character’s belly causing 2d8/*Very High* sharp damage)
- *Chalky white coil* - “calm” (Looks almost like a snail shell, any creature swallowing it becomes extremely docile and sluggish. Works especially well on the *Master of Games* (pg. 34).)
- *Clear funnel* - “undo” (Very difficult fruit to find (WIS check to find this fruit increased to 18/*Very Hard*) will nullify the effect of the last fruit consumed)
- *Cotton puff* - “???” (No obvious effect, but the eater can now command non-abyssal animals)
- *Lavender umbrella* - “???” (No obvious effect, but the next time it’s applicable, the eater sees through any form of illusion or mind control)

The notes end here, but there are dozens of fruit varieties not listed. Finding any specific fruit requires a 12/*Medium* WIS check.



12: *Entity*

First Glance: The characters drift a while through nothing, when a loud, sinister, hissing voice addresses them and asks if they are lost. Rows of several thousand greenish lights blink on in the darkness, lining the edges of what resemble dozens of tremendous, oily black centipedes that roll and twist over one another in a tangle that surrounds you on all sides. Much larger lights beyond them are possibly the entity’s enormous eyes.

Details: The entity presses its question, and it seems to be a mind reader, addressing everyone by name and knowing the full details of their current life and situation. It tells them this is an extremely dangerous place and there are many things that would delight in making a meal of them...”or worse. So, so much worse.” It speaks with a sinister relish, and a tone as if attempting to hide its amusement at their vulnerability. It keeps emphasizing how tiny and fragile they are, referring to them as “morsels” or “sweets,” and insists they allow it to help. It says it can “improve” them, make them stronger, send them wherever they need and assist them on their goal.

All of these offers are completely sincere; the creature absolutely does not lie and has no ulterior motive. It can enhance character attributes to some degree if they consent, transport them to any location they can specify and visualize correctly, and/or continue to give them telepathic advice or warnings of impending danger for the foreseeable future. None of this takes any more effort on its part than a human helping an ant along on its way.

13: *Vessels*

First Glance: The characters drift through the abyss a while, and see something strikingly inorganic: what appears to be an angular, artificial tower made entirely of glass squares. Its base is demolished, shards of glass, metal and concrete floating around it as though it was torn up from whatever city constructed it.

Details: If the characters enter the building, they’ll find objects of varying familiarity and strange construction. Rooms and floors are made up of perfect, sharp angles, furniture is smooth and of an unknown, lightweight material, odd mechanical boxes whirr and buzz and emit light, and humans, or what should be humans, tend to the various devices in curious ways, sometime transporting yellowed pieces of paper or other decrepit objects between one another. They don’t seem to be in distress, but each has a large, red, saclike organism clinging to the middle of their back.

13 (Vessels) cont:

Some will answer questions, but with peculiar dialect, and sometimes irrelevant to what was asked. They tend to repeat both actions and words, and if observed long enough, it seems that they live on a loop of the same behaviors every 24 hours. If asked about the Wizard, the Abyss, or their current situation they will tell you to “talk to HR.” If asked where “HR” is they’ll say “2250.”

There are forty floors to the structure, each with up to sixty rooms. If the characters deduce correctly that “HR” is on the 22nd floor and find it, the room is an empty, slimy chamber with a pulsing red mushroom-like growth in its center. This growth can be spoken to, and will respond politely in the character’s own language. It knows the following information:

- That this tower is the last piece left of a world “that destroyed itself,” and is otherwise irrelevant.
- [Something helpful regarding the Wizard]
- That the abyss is “a place between places and nowhere at all.”

When the characters are satisfied and ready to leave, the being will issue them a warning and an apology: that the “rest of it” is now aware of “viable new vessels” and it can do nothing to stop what is about to happen. All residents of the tower now turn hostile.

If the characters attempt to kill the “talking mushroom,” it will tell them they are welcome to try but that it thinks this might only make their escape harder. If asked why, it will say it doesn’t know, and cheerily admits that perhaps it only says so as a reflexive defense mechanism. If the characters do kill it, which is almost effortless, its final words will be “oh... that’s why.” Each floor of the tower is now stalked by the *Fruit Heads* in addition to the hosts.

Creatures:

Host Vessel, AC: 10/Low HD: 3/Medium SAVES: +4/High

Traits: Shared Consciousness (All individuals share all knowledge and sensory input, and are capable of remarkable feats of coordination, building bridges from their bodies, planning ambushes without speaking, etc), Insensate (They don’t feel pain and aren’t perturbed by physical damage)



13 (Vessels) cont:

Actions:

• *Worm Spores*: A red, fleshy hose now protrudes from the mouth of every infested human, and can belch a torrent of thin, red filaments that move like writhing worms. If any of these find their way into a character’s eyes, ears, nose or mouth they make their way to the brain, and the character will slowly lose their sense of self as they become part of the colonial being. The hoses can be snapped off with a successful 12/Medium STR check made by someone not “infected”.

Fruit Head, AC: 14/Medium HD: 4/Medium SAVES: +4/High (This vessel’s head is a massive, fast moving red clot with long, whiplike tentacles. The rest of the human body dangles upwards from it as though gravity is in reverse.)

Traits: Very Fast, Awakened Consciousness (Fruit Heads speak with the voice of the “HR” being, and still apologize for the “inconvenience” even as they attack)

Actions:

• *Injection Tendrils*: 2d6/High sharp damage. Long, whiplike tentacles of the Fruit Head can “squirt” worm spores from their sharpened tips. (This has the same effect as the Host Vessel’s worm spores.)

14: Library

First Glance: A strange object seems to rotate in the distance. As they approach, the characters can see that it consists of many concentric, nested rings that slowly turn in different directions.

Details: On close inspection, the gigantic rings are artificial racks lined with thousands of pale tubes. They are simple scrolls, and the writing on them changes to match whatever language the reader is familiar with - or diagrams and artwork, if they can’t read at all. Any scrolls examined provide a mix of relatively normal information - descriptions of animal anatomy, principles of building construction, recipes etc. - and more alien, unsettling texts, some making horrendous assertions one might prefer not be true.

In the middlemost ring of scrolls is a squat, warty creature like a toad, whose forelimbs branch into dozens and dozens of smaller limbs, which seem to grow and shrink as the creature desires. It diligently writes upon several blank scrolls at once, while some of its limbs constantly rearrange and swap scrolls from the surrounding rings.

14 (Library) cont:

It glances at visitors with globular, half-lidded eyes but pays them little mind, unless they cause any kind of disturbance or attempt to remove a scroll from the library, at which point it will attempt to wrench the scroll back, and will resort to more force if necessary. Its appendages can continue extending and branching in as many directions as it needs.

Library Contents: Roll from this list randomly (d10). If the characters are looking for something in particular, they must succeed on a 16/*Hard* INT check to parse the librarian's arcane organizational system.

1: *Abyssal Data Scroll:* A scroll detailing one of the other rooms or hazards of the abyss.

2: *Planar Scroll:* A scroll detailing information on a plane of reality, may be anything from droning history and science to relevant secrets from the character's past experiences.

3: *Biological Scroll:* Discusses a living species with incomprehensible technicality, but the reader will nonetheless have a fantastically detailed understanding of that species' physiology.

4: *Personal Scroll:* Details the life of the character reading it, all the way up until their death, and possibly afterlife. (Not avoidable once read?)

5: *Paranoia Scroll:* Details another character, but fabricates frightening secrets as well as nefarious intentions against the reader.

6: *Science Scroll:* Explains the means by which to perform some technological feat, ranging from a simple electric light or steam engine to a weapon of mass destruction.

7: *Arcane Scroll:* Describes a seemingly alchemical process by which to perform an unnatural feat, for instance, a formula to transmute metals or bring inanimate matter to life.

8: *Maddening Scroll:* Explains something absurd and horrid about reality, whether true or not. (The souls of all dead are simply food for a higher being, all life is simulated fantasy, the reader is the only real person, etc.) The reader believes it wholeheartedly if they fail a 16/*Hard* INT check.

9: *Frivolous Scroll:* Describes a useless subject (the history of a particular hobby, the mating habits of a kind of snail) in such fascinating detail that it is almost impossible to willingly stop reading (16/*Hard* WIS save).

10: *Wizard Scroll:* Seemingly written about (or by?) the Wizard, may taunt the reader or attempt to deceive them.

14 (Library) cont:

Creatures:

Abyssal Librarian, AC: 8/*Low* HD: 6/*High* SAVES: +6/*Very High*

Traits: Limitless Reach, Unmatched Intelligence

Actions:

• *Information Siphon:* By touching a sapient being, the librarian can permanently remove knowledge from their mind, transferring it to a scroll it quickly shelves. Knowledge is recoverable if this scroll is re-read. In combat scenarios, this could be applied to remove the knowledge of how to wield a sword, how to walk, how to cast spells, etc.

15: Moon

First Glance: A dusty looking, pale grey surface looms out of the dark, appearing to be actual ground of some kind. It stretches into a horizon in every direction, and is broken only by large, dark craters every few hundred feet.

What's Hidden: An astute enough observer may see one or more distant craters close, then open again, or that the craters closest to the characters are slowly, subtly widening.

Details: The surface is the hide of a creature of indeterminate scale. Each crater is a feeding pore, and coiled within is a slimy, serpentine tongue lined with grasping hooks and suckers. Anyone dragged into a pore is consumed quickly. Clusters of roundish, yellow objects can also be seen between some of the holes, which seem to be moving slightly. These are fat, tardigrade-like parasites that feed on the creature through the suckered maws on their stumpy feet, and are completely harmless. A perceptive player may realize that these creatures are surviving wherever the tongues cannot reach, signifying safe zones. Rolling one of the creatures out of these zones will also temporarily distract the nearest tongue. In addition, the tongues eagerly devour any fruits from the orchard (pg. 39), which apply their effects appropriately.

However, the parasites have their own natural predator living in symbiosis with the creature; a long-legged ostrich-shaped arthropod that moves with extreme speed. It will not differentiate between the parasites and humans as potential prey, and is more likely to attack a human the more parasites have been fed to the tongues.

15 (Moon) cont:

Creatures:

Tentoungle, AC: 8/Low HD: 3/Medium SAVES: +2/Medium

Traits: Vice Grip

Actions:

- *Saliva Glue*: The tongue also drips with mucus that hardens on contact. Targets must succeed on a 12/Medium DEX save or the tongue attaches. Once the tongue is attached, the target must succeed on an 18/Very Hard STR check to escape, or shed whatever clothes/objects the tongue is touching.

Louse Hunter, AC: 16/High HD: 2/Low SAVES: +2/Medium

Traits: Speedy, Tough Exoskeleton

Actions:

- *Venomous Beak*: d6/Medium sharp damage. A bite from the towering predator causes paralysis on a failed 12/Medium CON save.

16: Home

First Glance: An object approaches from the distant darkness - or are the characters approaching it? It's difficult to tell. It appears to be a worn but ordinary wooden door, with a rounded top and a small, dirty window emitting a warm, inviting glow.

Details: Whether the characters knock, speak or barge in unannounced, they are greeted in the same jovial fashion. A family of five including a broad, bearded father, kindly old wife, two sons and a daughter occupy what appears to be a cozy, wooden cottage. A cat sleeps purring before a softly crackling fire and the family is just sitting down to a dinner of delicious-smelling meat stew. They cheer the arrival of visitors. They say they get wayward travelers all the time, and they simply must join them for their dinner; they have more than enough, and it's cold and dangerous "out there." If questioned, the family speaks only as though they live in some unspecified wilderness, that it's the dead of winter and that there are wild beasts roaming about. If the door is opened again, there appears to be a howling snowstorm outside.

The stew is harmless, delicious and filling, the family are all real humans and they are not aggressive, but should the characters stay too long, they will feel a strange sensation as though something is probing their minds and thoughts. Soon, a being will attempt to communicate with them in their minds, through ideas and sensations rather than words.

16 (Home) cont:

The entity is a nonviolent psychovore, feeding on positive emotions. It has no ulterior motive and will not attempt to force or trick characters into symbiosis with it, maintaining that when it reached out to the family, they agreed to partner with it. If the characters believe the creature, it will let them go whenever they wish, and the family will impart a valuable tip about the Wizard.

If the majority of characters doubt the entity, let alone attempt to meddle with the "house" or attempt to "save" the family, the creature will interpret them as sinister attackers. The symbiote family is incredibly powerful, and will use any force necessary to apprehend the characters and feed them into their "fireplace," the true heart of the creature. (Being tossed in deals 2d8/Very High hot damage). Even engaging in battle or sustaining damage, the family makes friendly dinner banter or other innocuous dialog, as if they truly don't know what their bodies are doing or what's happening around them. If one is killed, the others simply cease to acknowledge that they ever existed.

If the fireplace is correctly identified as the creature's core and destroyed, remaining family members will begin to sob at the loss of their loved ones and their "big friend," then attempt to kill remaining characters regardless.

Creatures:

Family Member, AC: 16/High HD: 2/Low SAVES: +4/High

Traits: Tough, Strong, Mindshield (Immune to mental attacks or enchantments)

Actions:

- *Bash*: d10/High bludgeoning damage.
- *Drag*: The target must succeed on a 16/Hard STR save or be grappled and dragged toward the fireplace.

17: Mannequins

First Glance: A glimpse of a human shape can be seen in the abyss... but it's as stiff as a corpse. On closer inspection, it's a cracked and twisted mannequin, and more begin to float by; a dense field of highly convincing human effigies made from some tough woody material.

Details: Investigating deeper will reveal a white, bony creature at the center of the "cloud" of dolls, resembling a collection of long, spindly spider-like legs with an equally long, segmented neck and a head like an equine skull. It is carving a hunk of driftwood-like matter into a humanoid shape with its many tiny, sharp pincers, but discards it on seeing real humans.

17 (*Mannequins*) cont:

It seems awestruck, and immediately begins to babble about its fascination with the human species. If anyone attempts to leave, it will calmly reach out with a long limb, grip them by a tiny pincer and pull them back into its presence effortlessly, its rambling never missing a beat. The longer the characters remain the more excitedly it gushes about their “exquisite forms” and “marvelous anatomy,” their “novel” appendages, their “intriguingly soft” flesh. It will pepper its rant with intrusive questions about what people eat, where they excrete, how often, how they breathe, how they reproduce, whether they can survive in various extreme conditions, etc. The questions will turn more and more towards the inner workings, what kinds of organs humans possess, where they are, what color they are, how the bones fit together, and of course whether the creature can see any of these in action. Its pincers are scalpel-like and it’s soon very eager to understand its visitors inside and out.

A player who has been to the library (pg. 44) and encountered its biology scrolls may make the connection that the creature might desire one on humans. It will eagerly desire the scroll if the subject is broached, but it will keep at least one character or valuable object with it as collateral. If this is accomplished, it will also point out a distant object (truthfully) as a gateway back out of the abyss.

Creatures:

Abyssal Peoplesmith, AC: 12/*Medium* HD: 6/*High* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Vice Grip, Doll Field

Actions:

- *Dissection Claws:* 2d6/*High* sharp damage. The creature’s pincers can easily snip through flesh and bone to pick out choice organs for examination.

- *Pulp Doll:* Escaping targets must succeed on a 12/*Medium* DEX save or be grappled by a doll. Fashioned from a dried pulpy substance, the mannequins can come to “life” jerkily and awkwardly. They are very clumsy and poorly coordinated but can attempt to apprehend fleeing victims. (Also highly flammable).



18: Feast

First Glance: As the characters drift through the abyss, they suddenly feel themselves moving “downward,” despite the void’s usual lack of any up or down. They are being pulled in by the gravitational field of a huge, wet, bright red island of solid meaty tissue.

Details: Landing on the island with a soft, moist plop, the characters will find a rat-sized, grublike creature feasting on the flesh at their feet. It rears up with a smiling, grandmotherly face and expresses ecstatic joy at having visitors. It implores them to enjoy its dinner with it, and every time they turn it down (if they do?) the smell of the meat becomes more enticing. Should anyone taste it at all they will be unable to stop eating. As they eat their limbs shrink, their skin bloats, their body distorts and they begin to lose memories. Eventually they will be reduced to another grub-thing, and no longer interested in anything other than the feast. The changes are rapid and cannot be reversed, but characters can be ripped away from their meal- the desire to eat lessens the further they get from the island.

19: Maze

First Glance: The characters float through the abyss for some time before coming upon a huge, tangled mass of fleshy tubes, like a ball of intestines. One tube gapes open, large enough to climb inside, and they feel strongly compelled to do so.

Details: The membranous maze is claustrophobic and frustrating, with spongy open chambers connected by thin, stretchy tubes the characters will have to worm and twist their way through, but at the center is a tiny mote of light. Any living being that contacts this mote will absorb it and acquire astonishing regenerative abilities, heightened senses and intelligence. The characters are increasingly aware of its presence and its effects the deeper they squirm into the convoluted mass, almost as though it is calling out and speaking to them in their minds.

Unfortunately, another being also lurks the maze; a pale, blind creature with saggy skin and bony limbs. Perhaps it was once human, but now it lives happily in the maze-organism, nourished by the strange point of energy at its core. It will attempt to prevent anyone from taking the light at all costs, and can fashion a number of traps from equipment it scavenged from past visitors; elaborate tripwire webs that entangle intruders in nets fashioned from old clothing, or spring-loaded snapping traps built from rusted old weapons. The creature also possesses a number of strange spell-like powers.

19 (Maze) cont:

Creatures:

Maze Dweller, AC: 16/High HD: 8/Very High SAVES: +6/Very High

Traits: Tireless, Regenerating, Clever

Actions:

- *Illusory Room:* The dweller creates a false chamber of the maze resembling whatever the creature dictates, such as its crude memory of a forest, a house or a meadow. The colors are always wrong.

- *Mind Shuffle:* The creature can briefly swap bodies with one of the characters, enough to perform one action. The character swapped into its body will have to think fast (A 16/Hard INT check) to realize what has happened in time to take advantage of the same opportunity.

- *Void Funnel:* A black portal, invisible in darkness, leads to wherever the creature sees fit elsewhere in the maze.

- *Void Vision:* The creature can “enchant” a character in an adjacent room (or closer) with a membrane of darkness. They must succeed on a 16/Hard INT save or cease to sense anything around them except faint motes of energy where conscious beings are present.

- *Void Soul:* On a failed 16/Hard WIS save, the creature can enchant a character to feel comfortable only in the abyss, not desiring to ever leave again. The only way to reverse this effect is by claiming the the light at the center of the maze or by touching someone else who’s claimed the light (including the dweller).



20: Offer

First Glance: The characters are approached by a floating creature with a translucent, gelatinous green body, luminous round eyes and long, boneless limbs with sucker-tipped fingers. It assures them in their own language that it means no harm, and comes to them with “an amazing offer!”

Details: The creature will offer a series of weird, alien items with valuable properties. If anyone accepts an item, a part of their body - an eye, hand, tongue, nose, etc. - will abruptly vanish as if it were never there. The characters are unaware of what body part will be exchanged, and the merchant will not tell them. The item is, somehow, fashioned from this missing piece, but will regenerate if the item is given back and exchanged for another. Unfortunately, if the same person does this more than three or four times, the creature will pretend it has “urgent business that just came up” and disappear, leaving the customer stuck with their most recent choice. The merchant also leaves once each character has chosen an item.

WARES:

- *Left eye:* A veiny sphere that allows one to roughly predict the immediate future once per day.
- *Left arm:* A crystalline fan that allows limitless flight. Even movement through the abyss becomes much faster - a wielder can find their way back to the tower within minutes.
- *Left leg:* Bony blade that can cut any material, even metal or stone effortlessly. Can be dangerous to wield.
- *Right eye:* A grey, cracked fist-sized stone. If thrown even gently, it lands with three tons of force.
- *Right arm:* A starfish-like organic object that can spin through the air, remotely controlled, allowing remote vision.
- *Right leg:* A twenty foot metallic cable. As long as one end is held, it can be controlled like a dextrous tentacle.
- *Tongue:* Clear, rubbery gloves. When worn, any inorganic material they touch can be reshaped like soft clay.
- *Ears and ability to hear:* A durable metallic pole that can shrink to an inch in length or extend up to a hundred feet as the holder desires.
- *Nose and sense of smell:* A “portable hole,” a thin black 3 foot by 3 foot sheet that becomes a hole up to seven feet through any substance.
- *Lower jaw:* A bottle that can produce as much water as the holder desires, to a seemingly infinite amount.

20 (Offer) cont:

- *All teeth:* A metal dial embedded in a square of wood. Controls the ambient temperature for a square mile, from freezing cold to boiling heat.
- *Both arms:* A hood of unknown animal skin that, when worn, allows limitless mind-reading.
- *Both legs:* An eagle-sized, indestructible, flying construct of bladed metal, will do everything possible to protect owner from harm. Can make one attack per round on the owner’s turn, dealing *d10/High* sharp damage.
- *All limbs:* A strange, insectlike organic mask that allows essentially limitless teleportation (including out of the Tower on the Hill) once per hour.
- *Entire head:* A large crablike animal the owner can control as a second body. They somehow functionally see, hear, speak, think, and eat through it.
- *Nerves (lose ability to feel physical sensation):* a glassy bulb with a handle like a lantern. Emits bright light that heals physical wounds.
- *Skeleton (become soft and floppy):* A portable wooden trap door that always opens into the same ordinary brick basement.
- *Brain (fatal):* A small doll of the Wizard with an oversized, smiling head attached by a wobbling spring. Has no other attributes.



Abyssal ... Encounters

Random Encounters: You may choose one from the following list or roll (d20). 14-20 are nonviolent/nonthreatening - at least not directly. Use whenever it feels appropriate, or in conjunction with other hazards.

1: A massive creature resembling a blubbery round humanoid with a funnel-like mouth. It attempts to swallow characters by sucking inward.

Sucker, AC: 12/*Medium* HD: 6/*High* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Floating, Huge

Actions:

- *Gulp:* Can target anyone in front of the funnel. All targets must succeed on a 14/*Medium* DEX save or be sucked inside. Once inside, targets may attempt a 16/*Hard* STR check to crawl back out. They may also make attacks.

- *Digest:* All creatures inside the sucker take 2d6/*High* acid damage.

2: A creature like a huge house centipede made of human bones. Those who hear its laughter can't stop laughing painfully themselves.

Cacklepede, AC: 12/*Medium* HD: 4/*Medium* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Skeletal, Jovial

Actions:

- *Laugh:* All targets that can hear the centipede must succeed on a 16/*Hard* WIS save or start laughing themselves. At the beginning of their turn, they take d4/*Low* bludgeoning damage and may attempt the save again.

3: A creature like a broad, paper-thin flattened frog, transparent and almost invisible. Its surface is very sticky and rapidly digests anything stuck to it.

Paste Frog, AC: 8/*Low* HD: 2/*Low* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Stealthy

Actions:

- *Stick:* d10/*High* acid damage. The paste frog attaches to a target. They must succeed on a 16/*Hard* STR check to remove it.

4: An eel like beast with shimmering lights down its sides.

It continues into the distant darkness with no tail end in sight, but the head end has a frighteningly gaunt, almost humanoid face with huge, lidless eyes that emit blinding beams of light.

Gazer Eel, AC: 12/*Medium* HD: 4/*Medium* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Disorienting Lights

Actions:

- *Glare:* The target must succeed on a 12/*Medium* CON save or be blinded for d2 rounds.

- *Bite:* d6/*Medium* sharp damage.

5: An organism like a slimy, floating bird embryo with a short, squashed neck, head and mouth. It stretches open into a wide sticky "net."

Thief Bird, AC: 8/*Low* HD: 2/*Low* SAVES: +0/*Low*

Traits: Sticky, Fast

Actions:

- *Snare:* The target must succeed on a 14/*Medium* DEX save or be caught in the thief bird's net. At the beginning of their turn, they may attempt an 18/*Very Hard* STR check to free themselves. Once the bird has a prisoner, it quickly flies away with the intention to deliver it to a larger predator.

6: Creature like a giant, hairless anteater with transparent skin and visible bones. Its long tongue can penetrate skin and rapidly drain fluids.

Glassling, AC: 8/*Low* HD: 3/*Medium* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Fragile

Actions:

- *Puncture:* d8/*Medium* sharp damage. Temporarily reduces CON and STR.



7: A gelatinous amoebic life form. Floating inside are three different creatures acting as its “organs.” One uses its long limbs to hold prey, one injects a paralyzing venom with its long stingers and one uses gnashing jaws to strip flesh.

Gelatinous Host, AC: 16/*High* HD: 6/*High* SAVES: +4/*High*

Traits: Jelly, Organs (Each separate “organ” can be ripped out with a successful 18/*Very Hard* STR check (deals d4/*Low* acid damage to the ripper.) The host loses access to the organ’s associated ability.

Actions: (Choose two)

- *Engulf:* d6/*Medium* acid damage.
- *Grab:* The target must succeed on a 14/*Medium* STR save or be held in place.
- *Injection:* d4/*Low* sharp damage. The target must succeed on a 12/*Medium* CON save (16/*Hard* if the target is being held in place) or become paralyzed.
- *Gnash:* d6/*Medium* sharp damage. (Deals d10/*High* damage against targets that are held or paralyzed).

8: A swirling, colorful fog actually composed of parasitic microorganisms. It causes rapid decomposition but keeps victims alive, essentially creating undead to feed on continuously.

Puppeteer Fog, AC: 18/*Very High* HD: 4/*Medium* SAVES: +4/*High*

Traits: Fog (Unable to be harmed by weapon attacks), Deceptive
Actions:

- *Devour:* The fog surrounds a target. They age rapidly, taking 2d6/*Very High* damage. Characters that “die” from this ability become undead that the fog can control on its turn. While controlling an undead, the fog isn’t able to use *Devour*.

9: A tiny, comical googly-eyed creature, like a cartoon frog or a sock puppet. It can actually squirt a toxin that causes the victim to soften, becoming as boneless and floppy as a jellyfish. The creature attempts to suck this up, expanding like a balloon in the process.

Sploogus, AC: 12/*Medium* HD: 4/*Medium* SAVES: +2/*Medium*

Traits: Deceptive

Actions:

- *Softening Spray:* The target becomes soft and floppy. They can still move, but any physical actions they take will be ineffective. This effect lasts for about 10 minutes, after which they’ll “reinflate.”
- *Slurp:* The sploogus slurps up a softened target. Inside, it starts separating the meal into smaller pieces for digestion. Each turn the target is within the sploogus’ belly, they take d8/*Medium* sharp damage.



10: A fish shaped creature whose details are unseen beneath its dense coat of long, thin red needles. When fired into prey, the hollow spines pump the victim's blood from their body, spewing it out into the surrounding abyss.

Scarlet Fish, AC: 12/Medium HD: 3/Medium SAVES: +0/Low

Traits: Long-Range

Actions:

- *Spine Shot:* d10/High sharp damage. Temporarily reduces CON. The blood may attract other abyssal predators.

11: A swollen balloon-like head trails a humanoid body so long and thin that it's difficult to see at first, wispy limbs dangling a hundred feet long. The slightest touch delivers a paralyzing electric shock (d10/High electric damage and paralyzation on a failed 14/Medium CON save).

The creature is extremely slow moving and absolutely enormous- another creature could be pursuing the characters around its twisting body.

12: Membranous, veiny, flapping thing like an umbrella, or a mass of batlike wings with no body. Emits a painful, piercing scream.

Wailing Flapper, AC: 12/Medium HD: 3/Medium SAVES: +2/Medium

Traits: Chaotic

Actions:

- *Scream:* All targets that can hear the flapper must succeed on a 16/ Hard CON save or take d6/Medium sound damage.

13: A flat, hairy, toadlike quasihumanoid no bigger than a rat. It can't be felt as it latches on to a passing character and begins to drain one of their physical stats. Each time they rest, they lose 1 additional point until they realize what's going on and find the creature. If it's squashed, its rancid blood deals d4/Low acid damage to whoever destroyed it.



14: A burbling school of baby-faced "tadpoles," - unfortunately, they may be pursued by a more formidable predator (such as 1, 4, or 7).

15: A school of flapping white ray-like creatures, their entire underside like an eerie, grimacing face. Merely curious, they like to follow and observe the characters. The characters should be wary if they suddenly flee - the rays can sense extreme violence before it occurs.

16: A thin rope of tissue hundreds of miles long. Every few yards another giant, white, humanlike head hangs from it upside-down, trailing its long hair behind it and whistling through pursed lips. Some heads whisper (largely irrelevant) secrets.

17: A gigantic, membranous form billowing and twisting in a convoluted bundle. Characters may get alarmingly tangled in it, but it is harmless. It's difficult to notice that it is a humanlike figure stretched into a vast sheet unless its otherwise normal head, hands or feet come into view. The head looks panicked. It does not communicate.

18: A gelatinous shape flying through the abyss, seemingly controlled by the small, red, mantis like creature inside. It is nonviolent, but careful examination may betray that its gelatinous vessel is another distorted human body, swollen and gutted and mostly de-boned, with its limbs severed. If the characters point it out, the mantis creature becomes mildly offended and leaves. Otherwise, the mantis is a traveler and can offer minor information about various abyssal rooms.



19: A rotating sphere of squealing baby-like faces, long lizardlike tongues flicking out of their mouths at random. Their cacophonous sound can possibly mask other unrelated dangers, but otherwise not dangerous.

20: A huge, snakelike creature with a dopey, almost camel-like face. It moves by with blinding speed and is gone before characters can react... but at the end of its tail trails a normal human torso, arms and head, which screams for help as it passes by. The creature feeds on chaos and uses the torso to lead the characters to a dangerous abyssal room.



A WIZARD
THE TOWER
ON THE HILL



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