

The Forgotten Tower

(an RPG encounter for 2-6 players)

by Tony Graham & Andy Underwood

An ancient tower stands forgotten on the rugged cliffs overlooking the sea. No one knows who built it, why it was built or when. Most folk in the area believe it to be haunted, some say cursed. It has always stood there, a silent sentinel above the restless sea. If approached at night, dusk or dawn, the base of the tower is obscured by a heavy mist rising off the sea.

This is a simple encounter for a small group of *Skilled* characters. Although it is set on the Northern shore of the Inner Sea, it can easily be dropped in any remote area. As an encounter, it is intended to be a small adventure for a GM to run in a single night. It can be used as an interlude to buy GMs time between larger events in their game or possibly as a place to drop a key piece of loot to a party.



The Set-Up

As the party travels through the forest, they encounter a small group of pigs (twelve to twenty) rooting through the undergrowth. Strangely, the pigs ignore the players for the most part. These are semi-domesticated pigs.

Mearle is a hermit pig-herder. In his youth (fifty years past), he was considered a bright and promising wizard specializing in the discipline of Animal Mastery. Unfortunately, his mind could not handle the strain of his youthful interests. Mearle is quite insane. He is psychotically paranoid, convinced his family elders are hunting him, either to imprison or kill him. He hides it well, given that he has little contact with people. His animals keep him calm. When Mearle is in control of himself, he is a *Skilled* ranger/druid-type. When Mearle is surprised or panicked, he is a *Trained* NPC woodsman.



The Forgotten Tower

- Should the players attack a pig, the entire herd of swine sets up a terrific racket of grunts and squeals. The noise will quickly attract Mearle, who will charge in with his plain-wooded staff, panicked and screaming incoherently. He is less a threatening figure than one to invoke pity and possibly comic-relief. While he is panicked over the welfare of his pigs, Mearle is incapable of using magic. Once struck, Mearle will fall to his knees begging forgiveness. If a pig is slain, Mearle will weep over the body for a few minutes, then completely ignore it as if the pig never existed. If the players offer to pay for the dead pig, Mearle will take the money without comment. Mearle will invite the players to share his camp.

- If the players calmly move through the pigs, Mearle will watch the players from a safe hiding point, worried “THEY” have come for him. After studying and watching the party, he will eventually introduce himself as a harmless pig-herder and invite them to dinner.

In either case, once introduced, Mearle will split his conversation between his pigs and the individual players. He responds to all pig noises as if he understands them. He will never directly meet the eyes of any of the players willingly. His conversation reveals he was more than a simple pig-herder at some point in his life; he is too well educated. He will invite the players to share his camp and feed them a meal of boiled potatoes, tubers, and mushrooms, all pleasantly seasoned with various herbs.

- *“I knew you were coming. My pigs and the birds tell me everything.”*
- *“Shut up, pig! I've had enough of your slander!”*
- *“Some pigs are quite intelligent, you know. Smarter than dogs. Smarter than some folk I've met.”*
- *“Greedy little swine. They're never really satisfied, you know. Always hungry. Always looking.”*
- *“Strange days hereabouts. Strange. Mist every night. Odd prints in the wood. Creatures, not animals you understand, creatures. Things full of hate.”*
- *“No, I don't think they are here hunting bacon. They have some other goal in mind. They have come for the treasure, I think.”*

With a little encouragement, Mearle will speak of the ancient treasure hidden in the forgotten tower. He will tell the players the tower is believed to be haunted or cursed. There are



countless tales of the tower, but no one goes there anymore. Mearle is willing to guide the players to the forgotten tower, but under no circumstances will he agree to go in.

At the Forgotten Tower

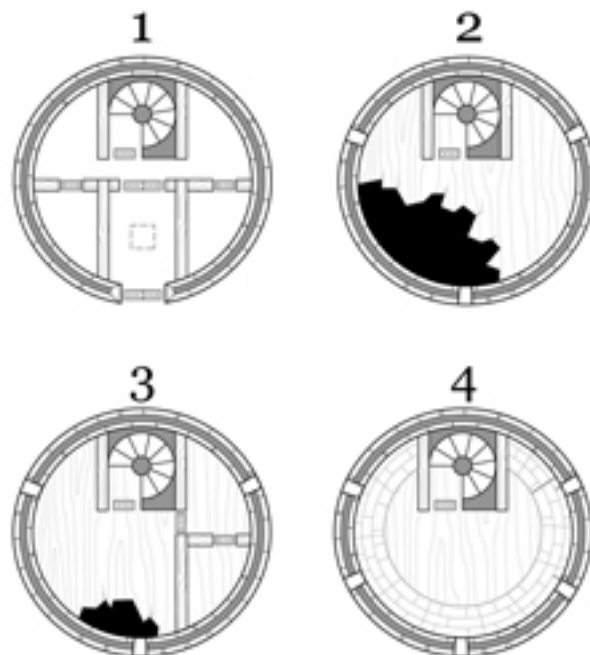
The Forgotten Tower stands on the top of a rocky hill, clear of the forest. A fallen tree lies on its side near the doorway. The tower is built of stone, four stories high with stout oaken doors that yawn open. There are narrow windows on each floor above the first, but the windows on the third level are closed, the wooden shutters sealed tight with something piled up behind them. All the windows are too narrow for even a small adult to squeeze through. The outside of the tower can be climbed by anyone with the appropriate skill. Climbing the tower and looking in through the windows on the second and fourth levels reveals a dim interior filled with old clutter – broken furniture, pieces of timber, torn tapestries, and a chest or two. A careful search around the base of the tower will reveal runes etched into a heavy corner-stone at each point of the compass: [Warding, the Elements, Constructs and Rune-weaving](#).

Mearle will not approach the doorway, claiming he fears the curse.

Level 1

The oaken doors are already ajar. They open outward. The doors are stuck and require a bit of pulling to get either of them to open further.

Inside, a simple hall greets the players. The floor is layered with dirt, leaves and old bits of clothing in varied states of decay. Light comes in through the door and a dim light shines down from the second level windows through a hole in the ceiling. On the far side of the hall are another set of double oak doors. EXCEPT FOR THE FRONT DOORS INTO THE TOWER, ALL DOORS WITHIN ARE BROKEN, TORN OFF A HINGE, OR HALF DESTROYED. THEY WILL SLOW DOWN



Tower
floor plans

MOVEMENT, BUT WILL NOT CLOSE PROPERLY NOR CAN THEY BE BARRED.

The clutter on the floor conceals a twelve-foot deep pit in the center of the room. The dried-out corpse of a man lies at the bottom of the pit. Should anyone climb down to the body, they will discover a man dressed in leather armor. The armor is torn and rent by multiple blows from a jagged edged blade. There are both dagger and sword sized cuts. The corpse wears a long bow of good quality (the string is broken), decent boots, an empty sheath for a long knife and a purse containing a few coins (GM discretion).

Beyond the inner doors is a staircase leading up. Amidst the clutter on the floor at the bottom of the staircase are a rusted short sword and hatchet/tomahawk with a cracked haft.

The other two rooms on this level are empty save for worthless clutter.

Level 2

After the players disappear up the stairs, Mearle will stealthily close the outer doors of the tower and, with a manic strength, roll the tree over to block the doors closed and leave the players to die, his deadly trap sprung.

As the players climb the creaking wooden stairs to the second level, they will begin to hear odd skittering noises, like rats inside the walls of the tower.

The second level is one large room. The bones of several animals (and humans) are scattered around the room. The clutter effectively makes the floor difficult terrain for movement. A quarter of the floor is torn away, opening down to the first level, twelve feet below. A hole in the ceiling leads up to the dark third level. No light comes down from the hole.

A few moments after the players enter the second level, the skittering noise increases. Anyone looking up will begin to see odd creatures floating down through the hole in the ceiling from the level above – a half dozen at first, with up to forty descending in total (GM discretion) on thin silk-like lines. A spidery appearance would be applicable.

Mantid Hatchlings

Mantid Hatchlings (nymphs) are the size of small dogs, with a thick exoskeleton. Black or dark brown in color, a hatchling looks like a large praying mantis in the light. It is capable of swift movement, typically having initiative in the first round as the result of a charge-like maneuver. They are minion-type creatures. A hit from a hatchling inflicts dagger damage. A single blow

from a player that inflicts damage will kill the hatchling. These creatures have no treasure.

Level 3

This floor is completely dark, the windows sealed closed. Whatever the number of your party, there is a matching number of bodies sitting or lying against the walls. Examination of the bodies will reveal jagged sword-like tears in their ruined armor. In all the victims, it is obvious that something(s) ate their way out of the bodies from within the torso.

The door into the last room on this level has been barricaded. No sound can be heard from within, no trace of light seen. Inside the windowless room lies the body of a sole adventurer who escaped the mantids. Instead, he sat locked inside, eating all his rations, chipping away (futilely) at the walls, until he died of dehydration or cut his own throat in despair (DM discretion).

Should the GM wish to reward the players, have the loot be amidst the corpses of former victims on this floor.

Anyone remaining on the stair will be attacked first by the adult mantids that dwell on Level 4. The mantids have been roused and are creeping down the staircase to level 3. Ideally, most of the party should be exploring level 3 (searching for loot) when the adult mantids attack. There are two or more adults in the tower (GM discretion).

Mantid

Large creatures, eight to ten feet tall, the adult mantids are giant-sized preying mantises. Black or dark green in color, the mantids are masters of the stealthy approach until they charge. They will always have initiative in the first round of combat. After the first round, resolve as normal. They attack with two blows from their spiked forelegs (as swords) each round. They may attack two different victims





with no penalty as long as both victims are in front of them. Their exoskeleton gives them an armor similar to chain mail. These are *Veteran* creatures with all the appropriate hit points, attack and defense bonuses.

Level 4

This level is empty save for bits and pieces of shed exoskeleton from the mantids. A wonderful view can be seen in all directions from the windows.

Aftermath

Once they tear a hole in the roof and climb down or break down the outer door, the players can spend the time hunting down Mearle should they wish to, but it should not be easy. Mearle remembers most of his woodcraft and can recall an occasional nature-based spell when pressed. In the end, Mearle is no more or less than a madman.

Conversion Guidelines

We strongly encourage you to use whatever rules system you and your group are the most comfortable with. *Runes of Gallidon* isn't about rules, it is about collaborative story-telling adventures. Don't let rules - ours, yours, theirs - get in the way.

The key to translating *Gallidon* RPG modules to some popular systems is Skill Mastery. All non-player characters, player characters and creatures are rated by Mastery Skill Levels: *Trained, Skilled, Veteran, Expert, Master, Grand Master*.

In a level based system

Trained averages 1st Level.

Skilled averages 4th Level.

Veteran averages 8th Level.

Expert averages 12th Level.

Master averages 16th Level.

Grand Master averages 20th Level.

In a percentage based system

Trained averages a 35% chance of success at a difficult task.



Skilled averages a 50% chance of success at a difficult task.

Veteran averages a 65% chance of success at a difficult task.

Expert averages a 80% chance of success at a difficult task.

Master averages a 95% chance of success at a difficult task.

Grand Master averages a 110% chance of success at a difficult task.



Illustration [Forgotten Tower](#) by Andy Underwood.

Illustration [Praying Mantis](#) by Andy Underwood.

[Forgotten Tower Map](#) by Andy Underwood.

This Work set in Runes of Gallidon – runesofgallidon.com.

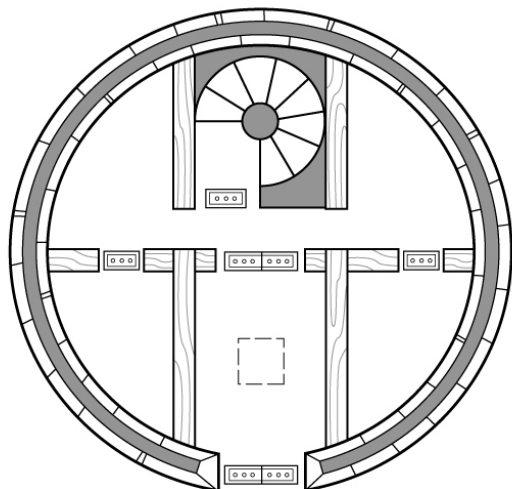
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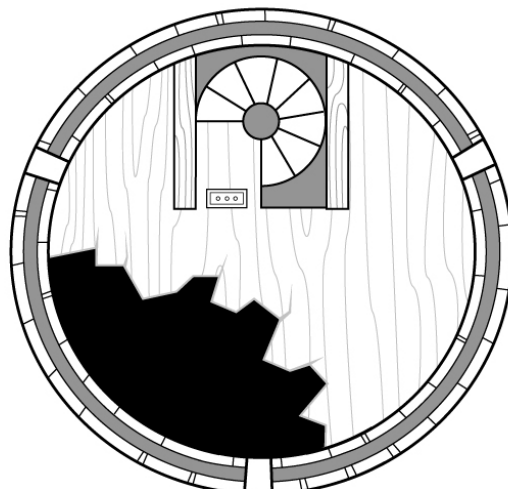


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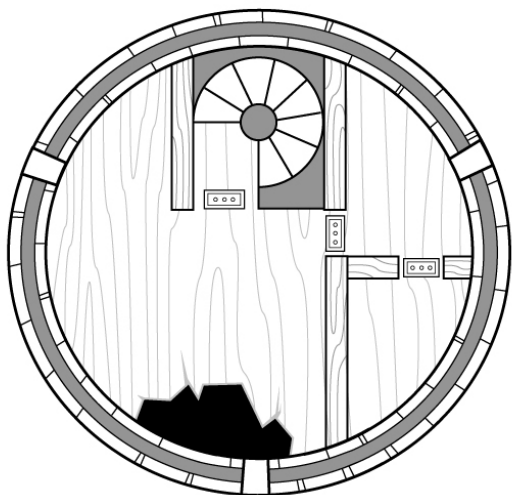
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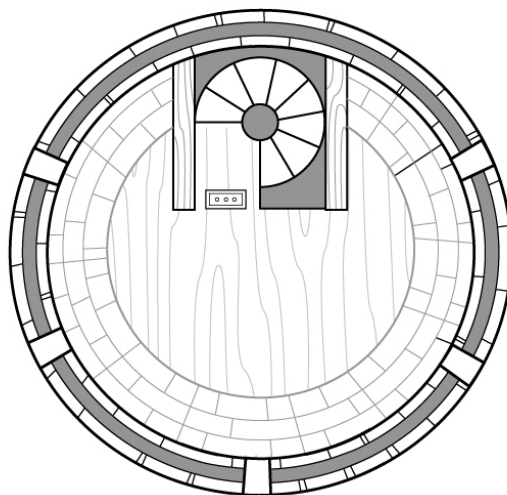
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3



4



Tower floor plans

