

# TOWER OF THE TOAD LORD

## Background:

In the days of the Nul Empire, Alvir Staemore (the Blade King) set upon a campaign to ensure that the full moon of Skalvirn would always shine upon his kingdom. This included invading the Fenlands of Orastrier. There on the remote moors, the Watchtower of Gulvest was erected and, after the death of Alvir, forgotten.

## Hook:

Now the tower lies half-sunk beneath the bog, fallen to ruin but not completely abandoned. As the party is making their way across the fens, a fierce storm moves in and, amidst the brilliant strobes of crashing lightning, a glimpse of the tower is caught, its dark, moss-claimed stone the only shelter from the hammering storm.

## 1) The tower roof.

The stone here is blackened with age; the cracked and crumbling surface has been laid siege to by moss and vegetation. The roof is now only eight feet above the bog, as the tower has sunk and lays at a slight angle. The decaying crenulations still provide ample handholds to climb out of the muck below.

The roof itself is clogged with moss and muck, and a stunted sapling has managed to take root. Rain pools along the lower edge of the roof, and if observed carefully, the rain drains through the roof/floor in one section, revealing a particularly weak section of the room that will collapse if more than 100lbs steps upon it (dropping anyone 15ft below into section 3).

In flashes of lightning or any light source brighter than torchlight, a metal glint will reveal the handle and hinges of a trap door protruding above the moss.

The trapdoor (like all the other doors in the tower) is blackened oak (nearly petrified with age) bound with iron. The handle and hinges are thick with muck and rust but still function, and opening the door will reveal a set of curved stairs heading down.

## 2) Map Room.

The walls here are damp and cracked. The stairs descend fifteen feet to the stone floor of the tower. The room bisects the tower and occupies a full half of this level. Stairs descend through the floor along the south wall. A single door (iron bound oak) leads from the room. Flashes of lightning and trickles of water seep into the room through the cracks. Nothing much remains of the room's furnishings; just a few broken and charred pieces of wood hint at the two tables and several chairs that were once here. A blackened area of the floor suggests that someone else may have sheltered here at one time. Enough of the furniture remains to get a small fire started.

## 3) Mess.

Two doors lead from this room (and possibly a large hole in the ceiling, depending on whether the weakened roof collapse was triggered). The door leading to the Map Room is intact; however, the one leading north has a large hole in the lower half. If examined carefully, the wood appears to have been gnawed on. The room's large table is in ruin and bears similar striations to the door.

## 4) Commander's Quarters.

All of the furniture that this room once held has been mounded into the southeast corner near the central column of the tower. Several small holes (about six inches around) can be seen in the room's outer walls as well as a couple in the stone floor. The corner of an iron strongbox can be seen jutting out from the refuse mound.

The mound is a nest for Giant Swamp Rats and, though cowardly, if the mound is disturbed they will swarm out and attack. The strongbox is intact and secured by a heavy internal lock. If removed from the mound and opened, the ancient payroll for the former garrison can still be found within rotting satchels.

## 6) Barracks.

## 5) Gallery.

This room once served as the main entrance for the tower, before it sunk into the mire of the bog. The tower's main door (in the west wall) is still intact, though the iron bindings are heavily corroded and the wood slats seep muck. Two other doors lay in the wall that bisects the tower north to south. Stairs lead up to the Map Room and down through the floor into the tower's Basement.

The air here is extremely dank and heavy. The walls are cracked and bulge inward, their surface is wet and lichen covered, and fungus grows from several of the larger cracks. The stairs leading down are slick and must be traversed carefully by anyone not wearing soft-soled footwear.

The floor is cracked and slopes toward the central column, where water and muck have pooled around its base.

The other half of this floor is in the same condition as the first and now lies in ruin. A large portion of the south wall has given way, the boggy earth spilling in through the opening. The bunks, tables, and chairs are nothing more than rotting mounds of detritus that now serve as fungus beds. These beds also now serve as a crèche for Mushroom Men, who will attack any intruders. If the crèches are searched, two metal strongboxes can be found buried in them; they hold what remains of the personal possessions of the soldiers once garrisoned here.

## 7) Basement.

This was once the storage and armory of the watchtower; now it lies in a flooded ruin. The floor of the southeast corner has collapsed into a deeper, water-filled chasm. The central column is cracking and decaying, the ceiling sagging, blocks threatening to collapse. Roots have broken through in several areas and lichen and slime cling to the stone, cut by rivulets of water trickling continuously down the walls.

No evidence remains of the old stores that were once held here, though if the muck-laden floor is search thoroughly, a battle axe can be found beneath the drek, oddly preserved given the environment.

Several Giant Toads lair here and will attack anyone who they believe threatens their spawning pool.

## 8) Spawning Pool.

This pool serves as a spawning pool for the Giant Toads. The ceiling is irregular and offers numerous pockets of air. The northeastern corner of the chamber leads to a shallower area with a roughly vaulted ceiling of mud and tree roots. The southeast corner of the pool holds a deeper chasm that is fed by a spring and is the home of a Giant Catfish that is extremely aggressive and will attack any exploring the area.

## 9) The Toad Lord.

The small cavern formed from the vaulted earth and tree roots serves as a home to the Toad Lord (an enormously obese Bullywug). The once proud toad-man was a warrior among his own clan, fighting to defend the spawning pools, even being the sole survivor on the assault against the human invaders. He won the day when he swallowed the glowing stone that one of the humans had been using to strike down his spawnbrothers. The next day, he had doubled in size and this was looked upon to be a blessing of the Deeplord for his bravery. But with that increased size and strength came an increased appetite that had to be met. And the more he ate, the more he grew. Soon he was eating as much of the clan's stores as the rest combined and began to need more. The spawnseers proclaimed him cursed, unnamed him, and drove him from the clan's spawnlands.

Now the bitter Toad Lord broods here, beneath the ruined tower of the men that caused his curse. He breeds the toads and feeds on what they bring him, his meager diet temporarily stunting his growth. But his hunger grows and gnaws at him; if only the Deeplord would bless him once more and grant him a bounty fitting of his hunger, then he could grown large and strong enough to win his place back among his clan.

\*Treat the Toad Lord as a giant sized Bullywug, with the hitdice and damage of an Ogre.\*

