Tower of Therex

Tower of Therex is an adventure scenario for 3rd or 4th level 5e characters set in the ruins of the Lower Reaches below the City of Arches. It's intended to work with any 5e-based system including D&D 2014, D&D 2024, Level Up Advanced 5e, Tales of the Valiant, or others. It can be easily modified to support other fantasy RPGs as well.

This scenario is part of a series following the Key of Worlds campaign arc included in the City of Arches sourcebook beginning with *Scroll of Akrave*. *Tower of Therex* takes place after *Dungeon of the Hooded Inquisitor*, where the characters learned the locations of the two artifacts able to ignite the Blackfire Braziers – one of which resides at the Tower of Therex.

You can, instead, modify this scenario to run as a stand-alone adventure in any campaign or setting.

This Isn't a Typical Adventure

This scenario isn't written like a traditional adventure. Instead, it presents ingredients and a scaffold around which to build your own adventure for your group, campaign, and story. This scenario includes adventure hooks, histories, secrets and clues, notable NPCs, potential encounters, locations, and potential treasure.

Use these components to build and customize your adventure to best suit your campaign, the situation in the adventure, the interests of your players, and the pacing of the game.

Each section in this scenario suggests how to use these components during prep and play.

Summary

Having learned of the existence of the Blackfire Braziers and the two artifacts able to ignite them after completing the *Scroll of Akrave* and *Dungeon of the Hooded Inquisitor* scenarios, the characters seek the *Staff of Servlyn*, one of two artifacts able to light the Blackfire Braziers.

During this scenario, the characters travel to the Tower of Therex and face the tower's foes, including the spectral visage of the wizard Therex himself, before acquiring the *Staff of Servlyn*.

It's assumed the characters chose this scenario instead of the *Tomb of the War King*. If the characters already acquired the *Blade of Irixthius* in *Tomb of the War King*, they find early clues that rivals – Children of Ibraxus, Knights of the Nameless King, or someone else – already acquired the *Staff of Servlyn* after bargaining with Therex. Otherwise, the characters might arrive here before their rivals or at the same time as their rivals.

If the characters already completed *Lake of Monoliths* they already know the location of the Blackfire Braziers.

History

Centuries ago, the Knights of the Black Flame locked a powerful artifact known as the *Key of Worlds* in an extra-dimensional vault locked by three Blackfire Braziers. When ignited, these braziers open the doorway to the vault. Only two items can light these braziers – the *Sword of Irixthius* and the *Staff of Servlyn*. The Knights of the Black Flame hid both artifacts to protect the vault. The *Sword of Irixthius*, also known as the Blackfire Blade, was given to the warlord King Alithon Scalebright, known as the War King. This is covered in the scenario *Tomb of the War King.*

The Knights gave the staff, named after a beloved sage of the Knights of the Black Flame, to a mage of the tower of Kartan named Therex Belseveel who resided in his own tower in the lower reaches. Therex was unaware of the staff's potential to open the vault to the Key of Worlds.

Unfortunately, Therex became obsessed with forbidden magic and let it consume him, leaving him as a desecrated and haunted husk at the top of his ruined tower – the *Staff of Servlyn* clutched in his undead hand.

Secrets of the Tower of Therex

Deliver the following secrets and clues as the characters explore the tower of Therex. Characters might discover these clues from ruined statues in the tower's courtyard, carvings on the walls, whispering undead, or from old moldering books and parchments. It's not critical the characters discover every secret – think of secrets like treasure uncovered as the characters explore the tomb

- The Knights of the Black Flame gave the *Staff of Servlin* to an allied mage of Kartan named Therex Belseveel who operated out of a tower in the lower reaches.
- Therex became consumed with the study of forbidden magic taking on the name Therex Bloodrain.
- Therex held the staff close but never knew it could unlock the vault to the *Key of Worlds*.
- Other groups seek the staff including the Children of Ibraxus and the Knights of the Nameless King.

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- Therex studied forms of magic forbidden by the Tower of Kartan after the fall of the Nameless King including blood magic, void magic, demonology, and necromancy.
- Therex intended to become a lich, but his own talents and power never reached that level. Instead, he died a husk and haunted spirit bound to the tower.
- Many of Therex's creations and servants still wander through the tower and courtyard preventing raiders and treasure hunters from acquiring his possessions.
- Therex had a servant named Vincent Grace who served him until the day of his death. It was Vincent who plunged a dagger into Terex's heart on orders of the mages of Kartan.
- With a final necrotic touch, Therex killed Vincent, tearing his soul from his body. How Vincint's own spirit haunts the halls of Therex's tower.
- Having become even more twisted since his death, Therex would leap at the chance to support those who would open the archways to the darkest of worlds and destroy every living soul in the city.

Key NPCs

The following is a list of key NPCs for this adventure.

- **Therex Bloodrain.** Elven mage, now a **wraith**, who haunts Therex's tower and guards the *Staff of Servlin* on the upper reaches of the tower.
- **Vincent Grace**. A halfling spirit now haunting the tower of Therex. Vincent tries to convince those he meets how he saved the world from Therex's wrath but in truth, he was jealous of the mage and sought Therex's power. He never had the chance.

Start

Use one of the following hooks to draw characters into this scenario:

- After learning the location of the *Staff of Servlin* from the confessions of Sir Gelfred Longshadow, Danvon of Duskwater, sage of Kartan, hires the characters to journey into the Lower Reaches to the Tower of Therex and recover the *Staff of Servelyn*.
- Plagued with visions of the opening of the central archway of the City of Arches to the abyssal domain of Choul, Garland Willowmane asks the characters to recover the *Staff of Servlyn* at the Tower of Therax before it falls into the wrong hands.
- After being attacked by cultists of the Children of Ibraxus, the characters learn that the cult intends to recover the *Staff of Servlyn* at the Tower of Therax. Roselyn Zeshe, the queen's spymaster, hires the characters to recover the staff before the Children of Ibraxus acquire it themselves.

Encounters in the Tomb

In his study of forbidden magics, Therex summoned several horrors and used them to guard his tower. These guardians remain, wandering the courtyard and tower.

Select from or roll randomly on the table below to add inhabitants to locations found throughout the tower.

1. **Skeleton** pikemen or servants.
2. A writhing mass that bursts into a hoard of **dretches**.
3. A nosy **imp** named Skeerit who constantly switches sides.
4. **Cultists** and **cult fanatics** of the Children of Ibraxus.
5. Lost and wounded **bandit** treasure hunters.
6. **Thugs** and **veterans** of the Knights of the Nameless King.
7. The ghost of Vincent Grace.
8. **Hell hounds** sniffing for humanoid flesh.
9. A necrotic rotted **shambling mound.**
10. **Flesh guardian** wielding a huge axe.

The State of the Staff

The characters may come to this location in one or two states. In the first state, the characters have yet to acquire the *Sword of Irixthius* and no one has yet acquired the *Staff of Servlyn*. During their explorations, the characters may run into **bandit** treasure hunters, **cultists** of the Nameless King, or **cultists** of the Children of Ibraxus who likewise seek the staff on behalf of their sinister masters. They might be living, dead, or undead depending on the circumstances.

If the characters already acquired the *Sword of Irixthius* during the *Tomb of the War King* scenario, then one of their rival groups – either the Knights of the Nameless King or the Children of Ibraxus – already acquired the staff. Make sure to telegraph this to the players so they don't feel like they wasted their time crawling through a haunted tower for nothing.

Should they choose to continue exploring the tower, they may find dead bodies of cultists who did not survive the expedition or other rival parties who likewise don't realize the staff is not here.

DCs, Damage, and Traps

The following list offers potential traps and hazards Therex uses to defend his tower. Roll on or choose traps based on the situation and pacing of the game.

DCs for detecting and disarming these traps or hazards are all 10. Traps inflict 10 (3d6) for single-target traps and 7 (2d6) for multi-target traps.

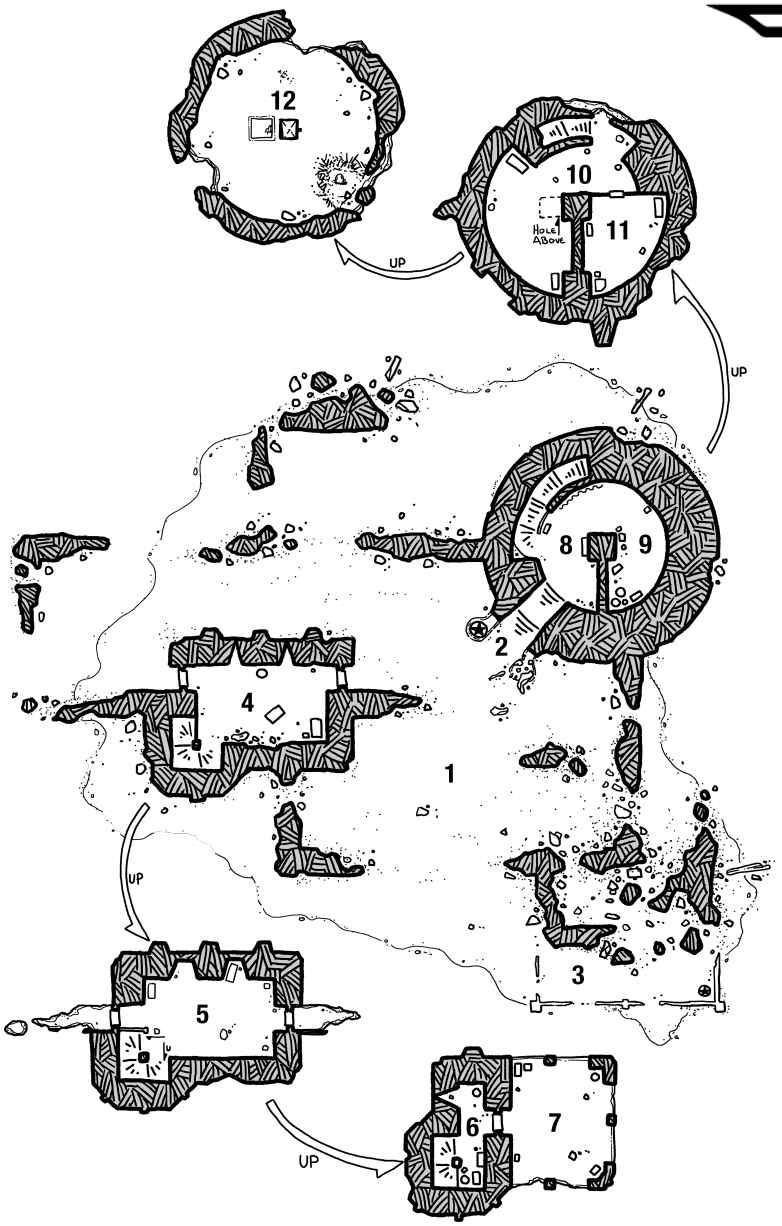
1. Soul-draining necrotic glyphs.
2. A pit of vile necrotic fluid.
3. A broken summoning circle arcing bolts of lightning.
4. A collapsing wall preceded by a strange roar.
5. Embedded gemstones firing magic bolts.
6. Grotesques or gargoyles vomiting acid.

Some of these traps reset after they're triggered while others can only be triggered once. Characters might discover the remains of victims from previously sprung traps.

Locations

The Tower of Therax is hidden away in an underground cavern outside of the Lower Reaches. Its traps and inhabitants keep would-be treasure hunters away. The chamber ceiling above the tower is 100 feet high.

The tower itself is made of rough stone, falling apart from long age. Chambers in the tower have twelve-foot ceilings and are unlit.



1. The outer courtyard with shattered walls and swampy gritty earth.
2. The open staircase into the tower with a nearby crumbling statue of Therex.
3. A ruined bastion overlooking the surrounding cavern.
4. The lower floor of a mostly-intact bastion with a long-ruined dining table and rusted weapons and armor.
5. Former sleeping quarters of the bastion with old heralds on the walls. The eastern doorway leads to a collapsed walkway.
6. An upper guard post with arrow slits.
7. The bastion's upper balcony overlooking the courtyard with leering grotesques.
8. A large tattered portrait of Therex decorates the wall of this chamber. The northern staircase leads to area 10.
9. A laboratory containing old, rotted, and unstable alchemical supplies.
10. Therex's receiving hall with crumbling statues, shattered wine cabinets and a hole leading to area 12.
11. Therex's private study with a rotted chair, desk, and moldering books.
12. The tower's open-air chamber with broken arcane pilons still arcing unstable lightning.

Therex and the Staff of Servlyn

The *Staff of Servlyn* lies in the skeletal hand of Therex's corporeal body atop the tower in area 12. Now a **wraith** himself, Therex is unable to use the staff.

Should they acquire it, the *Staff of Servlyn* is a *Staff of Fire* whose spells and abilities unlock when the attuned character reaches certain levels.

- 1st level: *burning hands*
- 5th level: *fireball*
- 7th level: resistance to fire
- 11th level: *wall of fire*

All flames created by the *Staff of Servlyn* appear black instead of red and the staff can ignite the Blackfire Braziers described in the scenario's introduction.

Treasures

Several areas in the Tower of Therex might contain Therex's treasures. Add treasure as you see fit to this dungeon, using the treasure below for inspiration.

Split monetary treasure into separate locations if desired.

Monetary Treasure

- 265 sp, 64 gp, 8 × 10 gp bloodstones, a pair of charred silver bracelets worth 25 gp each.

Consumable Magic Items

You can also include the following consumable magic items somewhere in the tower.

- *Potion of Acid Resistance*
- *Dust of Disappearance*
- *2 × Potion of Greater Healing*

Permanent Magic Items

If desired, place one of the following permanent magic items somewhere in the dungeon in addition to the *Staff of Servlyn.*

- *Figurine of Wondrous Power* (Silver Raven)
- *Headband of Intellect*
- *+1 obsidian battle axe* or *great axe* called "Warsplitter". Once per day a creature attuned to Warsplitter can use an action to cast the spell *shatter* (DC 14). This ability resets at the next dawn.

Further Adventures

Once the characters acquire the *Staff of Servlyn* or the *Blade of Irixthius*, they have several potential options for their next journey.

- If they have not yet uncovered the locations of the Blackfire Braziers, they can travel to the Lake of Monoloths to discover their location etched on the base of the monoliths in the *Lake of Monoliths* scenario.
- If they already know the location of the Blackfire Braziers, the characters should reach 5th level and can choose which one of the three braziers to investigate including the Brazier of the Nameless King, the Brazier of the Betrothed, or the Brazier of Grayon. These scenarios are still to come but you can use material from the City of Arches to create these scenario paths.

