Encounter 1: Horrors of the Tower

Encounter Level 1 (598 XP)

Setup
2 dolgrim warriors (D)
8 kruthik hatchlings (K)
Aric Blactree, captive (A)
Bren ir’Gadden, captive (B)

The poster map included with this book features a map of this encounter area.

If the characters have already formed a team (for example, if they’re all soldiers in a single unit, or all spies for the same nation), they can approach the tower as a group. If they’re coming independently, have them roll initiative and enter the area of the map from different directions in initiative order. The encounter with the horrors of the tower doesn’t start until at least one character enters the tower. At that point, roll initiative for the monsters as well.

The map shows starting positions for only four kruthik hatchlings—the ones that attack the first characters who enter the tower. On the second round of combat, the other four kruthiks burrow up from the ground to attack any characters that remain outside the tower, appearing in squares adjacent to those characters. The dolgrims wait for the characters to enter the tower before attacking.

8 Kruthik Hatchlings (K)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Senses Perception</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>Fortitude</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
<th>Will</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Weapon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+0; low-light vision, tremorsense 10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Claw (standard; at-will)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As the characters approach the tower, read:
The ruined tower juts up from the mountainside, silhouetted against the gray sky. A few leafless trees grow taller than the tower’s crumbling walls, and a mound of rubble is piled near the entrance. There’s no sign of the doors that once sealed the entrance, and you can see one other place where the walls have broken enough to allow passage into the tower.

Perception Check
DC 16 Looking at the rubble piled outside the tower, you see numerous small gaps, which might be tunnel entrances.

Tactics

The dolgrims try to remain as mobile as possible. They use the two passages between the inner and outer chambers, and the two openings between the outer chamber and the tower exterior, to circle around and keep the fight going on multiple fronts. They rely on the kruthiks to hold characters in place while the dolgrims attack.

The kruthiks avoid bunching up. No more than three attack a single foe, and they flank for combat advantage whenever possible (making them harder to catch in area attacks without also hitting their target).

Features of the Area

Illumination: The areas both outside and inside the roofless tower are illuminated by daylight.

Trees: Each tree’s trunk fills 1 square. A character can climb the tree with a DC 12 Athletics check. A character perched in the branches is considered to be climbing (thus granting combat advantage to all attackers), but the bare branches grant the character concealment against ranged attacks.

Kruthik Mound: This heap of rubble outside the tower is impassable except for the kruthiks’ tunnels. Small characters could move through the tunnels by squeezing, but they would be easy targets for the kruthik hatchlings.

Rubble: Rubble-filled squares in and around the tower are difficult terrain.
**APPENDIX**

**ENCRYPT 1: HORRORS OF THE TOWER**

**Manacles:** Bren ir’Gadden and Aric Blacktree are chained to the walls in the tower’s inner room. Characters can break the manacles with a DC 22 Strength check, or pick the lock with a DC 14 Thievery check. One of the dolgrims has a key to open the manacles in a pouch at its belt.

Aric is in a stupor from overexposure to the Prophecy mark and does not recover during the encounter. If the characters free Bren while they’re still fighting the dolgrims and kruthiks, he offers what help he can. His statistics appear in the next encounter. The dolgrims left him in his armor, but his shield and sword lie on the floor in the northeast corner of the room, so his first action is to retrieve and ready them. He is bloodied and has no healing surges available.

**Prophecy Mark:** Four squares at the south end of the inner room are bare earth, not covered with the flagstones that pave the rest of the tower interior. Swirling lines like veins in the earth can be seen in these squares, bulging upward and visibly pulsing with magical power. A character who enters one of these squares is momentarily overwhelmed with dizzying visions of past or future events.

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**Prophecy Mark**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Level 1 Obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trap: A 2-by-2 section of the floor dazes any creatures that enters it.</td>
<td>XP 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception ✦ DC 10: The character notices the power flowing through the lines of the Prophecy mark.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trigger The hazard attacks when a creature enters one of its squares.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack ✦ Charm Immediate Reaction Melee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target: The creature that triggered the trap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack: +4 vs. Will</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**THE CAPTIVES**

Assuming that he survives the encounter, Lord Major Bren ir’Gadden is grateful for his rescue. Once he pulls himself together, he regains his noble-born pride and demands to be returned to the care of Brelish forces. If the characters express their intention to do so, he’s grateful and cooperative. If they don’t, he cooperates only until he can get safely away from the tower.

Bren explains that the other prisoner is his aide, Aric Blacktree, who comes from a wealthy merchant family in Sharn. The dolgrims captured them, slaughtered their escort of soldiers, and brought them to the tower bound and blindfolded. While Bren languished in one corner of the room, the dolgrims kept Aric chained in the area of the Prophecy mark and seemed interested in its effects. In particular, they kept checking his skin, as if watching for the appearance of a dragonmark.

Aric remains more or less catatonic. He can stand independently, and he walks if a character takes his hand and pulls him along. Left alone, he stands still for a while, then sits, then curls into a ball on the ground.

By virtue of his presence, Aric presents the characters with another minor quest.

**Minor Quest (level 1, XP 100): Bring Aric to safety.**