

# DRYAD'S TOWER

**HOME BREW**

From tiny acorns mighty problems grow

*FULLER*  
19

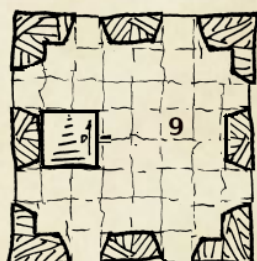
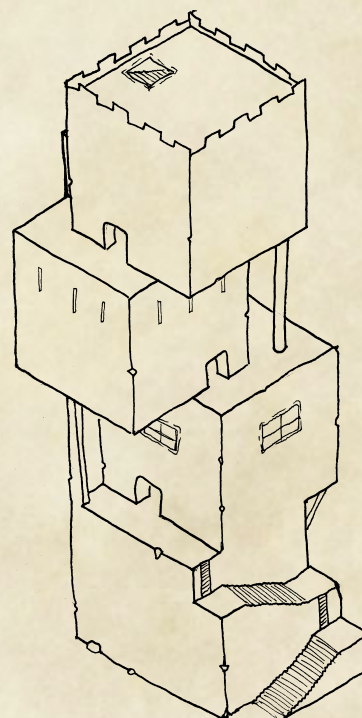
## CONTENTS

Location Maps	2
Adventure Hook	3
Cornerstone Tower	3
Adventure Conclusion	6
Appendix	7

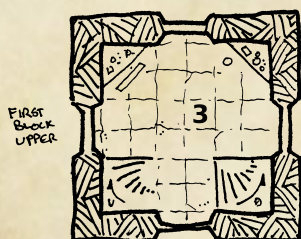
## MAP 1.2 CORNERSTONE TOWER

### MAP 1.1 CORNERSTONE TOWER LAYOUT

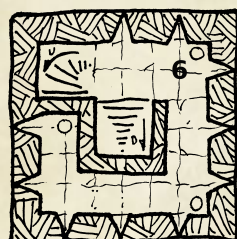
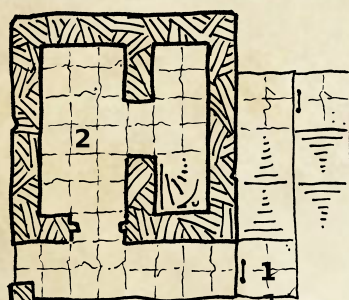
1 square = 5 feet



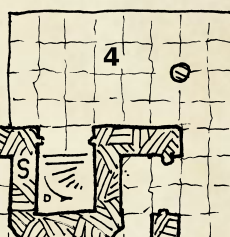
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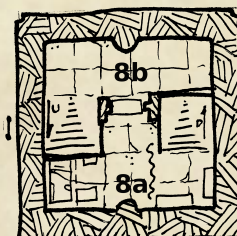
FIRST BLOCK LOWER



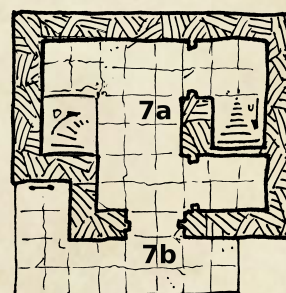
SECOND BLOCK UPPER



SECOND BLOCK LOWER



TOP BLOCK UPPER



TOP BLOCK LOWER



## ADVENTURE PRIMER

Dryads Tower is a 5th Edition adventure for **4-5 characters of 2nd level** and is **optimized for a party of four characters with an average party level (APL) of 2**. This adventure sees the party enter a plant-infested tower and are given the chance to complete a ritual to bond a dryad to a problematic awakened oak tree. Although this adventure takes place near the town of Red Hawk you are free to place it into any setting that includes an abandoned guard tower.

## BACKSTORY

Berrilis the dryad and her two lovers were violently and magically displaced from their forest and found themselves just outside the town of Red Hawk. Berrilis, disconnected from her tree, now had only a week to find a new oak to bond with or she would die.

Her satyr lover Nod found an abandoned tower to take refuge in while he took care of her needs, while her human druid lover Bryer was forced to drastic ends to discover a solution to save the problem.

Bryer sought information and help in the nearby town of Red Hawk but did not find the answers he sought. In a last ditch effort, he begged a favor of a greater fey for help and it was granted. Bryer was provided with a ritual and a feather token - tree, but when he was performing the ritual things went astray.

Arguments between Berrilis, Bryer and Nod caused the token to activate early and it planted itself on the tower's middle courtyard. While the ritual did connect the oak tree with Berrilis it also absorbed Bryer into the tree, causing the ritual to be incomplete.

Bryers' mind in the tree caused it to awaken but sent him mad in the process. He knocked Nod off the side of the tower and is now bent on protecting his love from any and all people.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Players must find their way to the top of the tower to speak with the Berrilis, a dryad to find out what's going on. Then they need to complete a ritual to finish bonding her soul to an awakened tree whilst fending off waves of plant creatures.

## ADVENTURE HOOK

Paraphrase one of the following:

- A baby blood hawk has flown down and delivered a cry for help via the animal messenger spell to the most nature-friendly looking character. In an elven toned voice (Berrilis) the blood hawk repeats

"Help. The ritual failed. Bryers in the tree and gone mad. Take anything in the tower as compensation. I feel his madness, share his pain."

The players can get directions to the nearby tower from anyone in town.

- Yori, the local bird enthusiast and artist (CN gnome **commoner**), has requested your aid to check out the abandoned Cornerstone tower on the outskirts of town, as a family of blood hawks that nest there have been acting oddly and have been stealing bags of manure. He offers a small sum of money (10 gp each) and a personal character sketch for the party's time.

## CORNERSTONE TOWER

Cornerstone tower is situated a day's travel away from the town of Red Hawk. It was built by the Cornerstone family as a guard post when Red Hawk was a frontier town but fell into disuse when newer locations became the frontier.

What remains of the Cornerstone family used it as a base of operations but when they returned one day they found it overcome with animated vines. These vines killed three of them and the rest fled. The tower is now in control of Bryer the mad oak (human male CN **awakened tree**) who protects the tower from all who may approach.

### GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise:

**Blocks:** A block consists of two floors. Each block is 40 feet tall

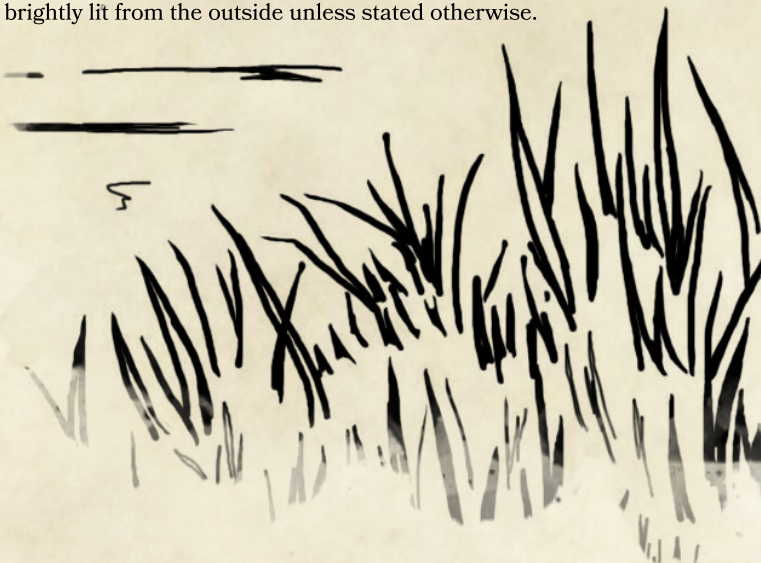
**Ceiling:** The ceilings are 15 feet high.

**Floors:** The ground of all rooms are covered in wooden floorboards covering stone foundations. Areas 1-6 are overgrown with roots and sharp thorny vines. The overgrown areas are considered difficult terrain. A character can choose to ignore the effects of the difficult terrain for one round if they take 2 piercing damage as the sharp thorns dig into them. If the roots and vines are cleared they grow back within 5 minutes.

**Outer walls:** The outer walls are also covered in roots and vines. Climbing the outer walls is possible and requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) to climb a vertical edge. It requires a successful DC 20 for an overhang. On a failure the character takes 2 piercing damage from sharp thorns but still makes progress. Failing the DC by 5 or more causes the character to fall.

**Ladders:** One inch Iron staples that stick out of the wall provide handholds and footholds, no check is required to climb them.

**Illumination:** The inside of the tower is considered brightly lit from the outside unless stated otherwise.





# ARRIVING AT CORNERSTONE TOWER

A looming mound of greenery comes into view as the party travels uphill. As you approach, the green is more clearly identified as vines and leaves covering a misshapen tower that rises into the sky.

All seems quiet until an arrow thuds in the ground beside you, warning shots from the tower or missed shots?

**Encounter: Animated Archer.** Magical vines have animated a body in area 6 (use the **skeleton** stat block), it will fire arrows at the party. The animated body will stop shooting if it cannot see the characters and have **three-quarters cover**.

If characters investigate the north side of the tower they will see the remains of a dead **satyr** (this is Nod) that appears to have been torn apart by animals. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals his neck is broken and the position suggests fell to his death and that beaked animals tore apart the corpse.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) reveals it has been ripped to pieces by blood hawks.

Looking up at the north side of the tower reveals a crooked oak tree growing up and around the tower's odd block structure.

**Treasure.** Nod's body is a bronze key looped on a decaying belt, next to a coin pouch with 8 gp and two gems worth 10 gp each.

## 1. STAIRS AND LOWER COURTYARD

The lower stairs are lightly covered with vines and roots and lead up to the first ladder, but on climbing to the second set of stairs the ground has become overgrown with thistles and brambles.

The second ladder leads up to the lower courtyard and entrance to the tower. The odd shape of the tower means the overhanging floor is supported by a stone pillar.

It is possible to climb up the wall here to reach area 4 and avoid Bryer, the Mad Oak, who is blocking the stairway from area 3 to area 4.

## 2. GUARD OFFICE

The inside here is as overgrown as the outside but within the tangles of this room the remains of a collapsed wooden desk sitting forlornly in the northeast corner. Stairs in the southeast corner lead up.

**Treasure.** A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal two healing potions in the desk.

## 3. REPAIR ROOM

Windows sit proud and central on each wall but the northern window has been smashed through and blocked by a large root. The ceiling of this room is cracked and bowed with other large roots breaking through from above. The northern corner has two workbenches.

**Encounter Bugs!** If characters step into the north half of this room. A scattering of insects coalesce together from the dirt of vines of the northern wall. A **swarm of insects** have awoken and will attack.

**Treasure.** On a brief search the characters can find a complete set of smiths tools and on a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) finds a druidic ritual book under vines and rocks along the northern wall. It contains all the information about what happened and several rituals. The final page is needed to complete the ritual (handout 1).

**Blocked stairs.** To the west is another spiral staircase that leads up.

**Wooden stare.** At the top of the stairs, the exit to area 4 is blocked by a large tree trunk. If characters do any damage to the trunk or roots read or paraphrase the following:

The bark of the tree morphs into the humanlike face of an angry man and barks.

"You shall not harm her, I am her saviour. Begone or you'll meet the same fate as Nod. Tanaquill has made me her all, her love, her lifeblood, her saviour."

If characters try to talk to the tree further it responds in more mad ravings of protection, love and fey gods. A successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check will convince it to move out of the doorway.

If they damage it again, roots will whip out and attack the characters as in **Encounter: Bryer the Mad Oak** from area 4.

**Secret door.** A hidden door at the top of the stairs can be found on a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check which leads to area 5.

## 4. UPPER COURTYARD

The flagstones of this courtyard are cracked and broken. A large oak tree grows here and its roots sprawl all over the courtyard, even through the walls and floors. Some roots grow through torn bags of manure and a pair of sandals and a pouch lie on the floor. The tree branches extend upwards towards the roof.

**Encounter: Bryer the Mad Oak.** The dryad Berrillis is linked to Bryer the Mad Oak (awakened tree) and it keeps her alive; although it is a poor substitute of her original. If the tree is damaged in any way, it retaliates.

It is stuck in this courtyard and cannot move past the stone support. It can however still move a little and use its roots and branches to attack. It would prefer to use anything it kills as fertiliser but will attempt to shove a character off the side if it has lost half its hit points.

**Treasure.** The pouch contains 30 sp, 5 gp and 2 gems (10 gp each).

## 5. ARMOURY RACKS

The weaponless racks of an armoury still mount the walls in this chamber. The stairwell in the middle of the room leads up. The few remaining weapons held here are rusted and useless.

**Secret door.** A hidden door at the back of the armoury can be found on a successful DC 13 Intelligence (investigation) check which leads to the top of the steps in area 3.



## 6. ARCHER'S BATTLEMENT

Light shines in through narrow arrow slits in the walls and the smell of decaying mulch is stronger in this room than any other. Stairwells lead up and down.

**Encounter: Animated Soldiers** Three bodies have been reanimated as sentries using plant vines and will attack any character on this level (use the **skeleton** stat block).

## 7A. BARRACKS

This is the first room where floorboards have not been covered in roots and vines. Wooden tables, chairs and collapsed bunk beds are placed throughout. Stairwells led up and down.

## 7B. BALCONY

This open air balcony is strewn with crimson feathers and nesting materials.

**Encounter: Blood Hawk Nests.** The nests on the balcony currently contain four roosting **blood hawks**. They consider the balcony their territory.

They will become aggressive and defend their balcony if characters step onto it. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check is required to calm the animals for 1 minute and allows characters to pass by.

An iron staple ladder leads up to the roof of the next floor. Then another that leads to the roof.

## 8A. BEDROOM

This room is dark and no light shines in. At the top of the stairs are shelving units that contain old military ruined books and trinkets; a frayed curtain initially blocks the view to the other half of the room which contains an old bed with a musty blanket and bedside desk.

A bronze padlock keeps the door to the north locked. It takes a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with proficiency in thief's tools to pick the lock or can be unlocked with the bronze key found on the satyr's body. It takes a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break the lock open.

**Treasure.** One of the trinkets is a marble hawk statue and is worth 10 gp.

## 8B. STAIRWELL

A pile of furniture and a chest sits in the northeast corner. A stairwell leads up to a trapdoor. The trapdoor is stuck due to age and can then be opened with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Treasure.** The chest contains 30 cp, 40 sp 8 gp and 4 gems worth 10 gp each.

## 9. ROOFTOP

This crenulated rooftop is the first area that looks like a garden and not the untamed wilds. Rose bushes grow around the walls and flower beds occupy the four corners, grass covers the rest of the rooftop. One lone branch reaches up to the roof resting like a hand on the northern wall crenulation. Close to the northern edge is an emaciated maiden with pointed ears and pale green skin and hair. She sits collapsed on a

woven throne of leaves and roots. Vines enwrap her arms and legs, and thorns pierce her skin.

She raises her head with a mix of hope and sadness and whispers "help"

**Damsel in Distress.** This is Berrillis (CN **dryad**). If a character speaks to the maiden, she gives them her name and, in a weakened voice beseeches to

"Find Bryer's book... complete... the ritual... it fell through... below him"

Then she reaches out towards the north wall.

She then slumps back and falls unconscious. Healing her will have no effect and pulling out the vines which are feeding her nutrients is detrimental. Berrillis suffers 3 hp of piercing damage and she will scream each time this happens.

To help Berrillis the characters need to complete the ritual that Bryer the druid failed to complete. They first need to acquire his ritual book which fell into the repair room (area 3) through the cracks in the courtyard when the tree was formed.





## THE RITUAL

To finish the ritual the players must interpret and complete tasks described in the ritual book (handout 1).

**Initial Task.** Make a stronger connection between Berrillis and the tree.

To do this a character must take some of the dryad's blood and draw a druidic symbol (triskelion) found in the ritual book on the awakened tree. This requires one action to draw and a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of hand). Once drawn this will trigger waves of attacks on the roof.

The sound of a large wooden creaking roar echoes out from Bryer the Mad Oak

"No! She is mine to protect!"

Then all the plant life on the roof begins to wriggle and jitter, the bushes form into solid clusters and ten irritated leafy shrubs move forwards to attack anyone on the roof. Berrillis wakes briefly and whimpers.

"The ritual will weaken his influence"

**Secondary tasks.** Call upon fey magics to finish the binding.

While on the rooftop the characters must complete the ritual with three consecutive and successful actions.

- Create a living bond between the dryad and her tree by holding the hand like a branch and the dryad.
- Perform a tuneful chant with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check.
- Know and call upon the name of a greater fey its powers with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check. Characters gain advantage on this role if they heard Bryer say his fey patron's name was Tanaquill in the **wooden stare** interaction.

If all three checks are completed successfully read or paraphrase;

Berrillis gains a healthier green colour and stands up, breaking away any vines that are still attached to her. She looks around, smiles; then heads towards the northern wall before jumping off the side.

Any one watching will see her dive and meld into the tree below. Any creatures from waves will now have disadvantage on attacks and saves as Berrillis fights for control of the tree.

## WAVES

A new wave will begin when all creatures in the previous wave has been defeated.

If all waves have been defeated and the ritual has not been completed, characters can take their time and complete the ritual without needing to roll.

**First wave: A Shrubbery!** Ten **awakened shrubs** will grow from the surrounding bushes on the crenulations and will rush in and attack with little regard to tactics.

**Second Wave: Thorny Satyrs.** Two **satyrs** (made from plants, they are immune to the charmed condition) grow from the western flower beds. One Satyr will stay in the corner and stand on the crenulations to fire arrow-like projectiles with a priority on those adjacent to Berrillis. While the other attacks in melee.

**Third wave: Verdant Avatar.** Bryer's Avatar is a bark covered **druid** (made from a plant, it is immune to the charmed condition) that will arrive on the east wall with **barkskin** spell active (AC 16) berating the party. He will only use the **thunderwave** spell as long as it avoids Berrillis.

## ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

On the chance the players destroy the oak tree, Berrillis will beg for a quick death as there is no way to save her before she descends into madness and wastes away.

If the characters save Berrillis; she is grateful to be alive and will promise the party aid in the future. The tree reaches into a knot on its bough and plucks a single acorn, which it hands to Berrillis. She in turn gives the acorn to the characters, the acorn acts as a pearl of power.

For the moment she needs time to sort out this itchy feeling she has with the connection to the artificial and still awakened oak tree. As an immediate next goal she wishes to leave this tower and getting the tree down safely will be an interesting problem to solve.

On returning to town Yori will award what he offered as reward and proceed to work out a way with the town to help Berrillis and her tree get down from the tower, so the blood hawks can get their roost back.

## CREDITS

**Story and Mechanics:** Procrastination Hydra

**Cover Illustrator:** Patrick E. Pullen

**Illustrations:** Patrick E. Pullen

**Cartography:** Dyson Logos





## APPENDIX

### HANDOUT 1

*Her lifeblood intended upon barken side,  
The spirit linked, once triskelion inscribed.*

*Strengthened by conduit of friendly  
flesh.*

*Complete the rest to finish the mesh.*

*Draw my attention with cheerful tune.*

*Then call my name to grant thy boon.*





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