

# Cliffhangers Adventures

## The Trouble in Town

By Eric Haddock



### Episode One: Muffin Man

*The Trouble in Town* is a short adventure for four 10th-level characters. The adventure takes place near a walled town by a shallow river with a nonfunctioning, long abandoned aqueduct. Dungeon Masters can modify the adventure to accommodate higher-level characters by giving humanoid foes more class levels and increasing the HD and/or age category of other opponents.

### Adventure Background

The walled town of Auldlar is one of the few towns in the region with an aqueduct. Unfortunately, the aqueduct hasn't functioned for many years, but the network of caverns and tunnels that once channeled water are still there, as are the deep underground water tables that have since lowered too far to feed the aqueduct.

An evil necromancer has been using the caverns to move his undead about secretly and has been digging new tunnels around the area. The undead have begun spilling out of their tunnels and taking fresh, living people instead of dead ones from the graveyards.

### Adventure Synopsis

In this episode, the PCs discover a menace to Auldlar and go to an abandoned tower outside of town to investigate. There, they find a network that's not being used by water, but as a conduit for horrible things.

### Maps

This adventure uses four of the maps from the Map-a-Week feature. Only the first one is used in this particular episode:

- [The Kingdom](#)
- [Main Watch Tower](#)
- [Third Floor and Second Tower Sections](#)

### Character Hooks

- The PCs may have business in Auldlar and may encounter

The Dungeon Master can create his own town statistics or use the following ones:

**Auldlar (small town):** Conventional; AL NG; 800 gp limit; Assets 40,000 gp; Population 1,000; Mixed (human 79, halfling 9, elf 5, dwarf 3, gnome 2, half-elf 1, half-orc 1).

*Authority Figures:* Brianna Witherby, female human Com11 (town council leader); Telanas Ferran, male human Ari3 (mayor).

*Important Characters:* Warren Herlen, male dwarf Ftr7 (constable); Lillian Brogia, female halfling Com6 (merchant); Ferelen Brysteder, female human Clr5 (Pelor/healer); Frida and

the troubles at the same time the townspeople do.

- Word of the trouble in Auldlar may have spread to the PCs, who have come on their own accord to lend what assistance they can.
- While exploring an underground cavern, the PCs stumble upon a route that leads to the abandoned water channels beneath the tower outside of Auldlar.
- The PCs could be navigating the shallow river by the town and are stopped by townspeople desperate for help.
- The kind of trouble the Auldlar citizens have been describing may match the behavior of a recurring villain, so the PCs may want to investigate.

Lem, male and female humans Ftr4 (deputies); Felicity, female human Brd2 (Lorekeeper).

*Others:* Officers of the watch, Ftr2 (4); Town guards, Ftr1 (8), War4 (1), War2 (2), and War1 (45); Adp6 (1); Adp3 (2); Adp1 (5); Ari1 (5); Bbn4 (1); Bbn 2 (2); Bbn1 (4); Brd1 (2); Clr3 (2); Clr1 (4); Com6 (1); Com3 (4); Com1 (824), Drd4 (1); Drd2 (2); Drd1 (4); Exp8 (1); Exp4 (2); Exp2 (4); Exp1 (27); Mnk4 (1); Mnk2 (2); Mnk1 (4); Pal1 (1); Rgr3 (1); Rgr1 (2); Rog7 (1); Rog4 (2); Rog2 (4); Rog1 (8); Sor1 (1); Wiz4 (1); Wiz2 (2); Wiz1 (4).

## Introduction

The adventure takes place in the town of Auldlar. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs have already entered Auldlar.

The townspeople of Auldlar are especially tense after the fourth nocturnal attack. Last night, it was Walford the Girthsome, who is the baker known to eat his own profits. The story is that he went to the forest, near the old tower, looking for wild grains and never returned. They found his bloody hat on the hill east of town.

Walford was indeed killed near the old tower.

## Victims

The people (in order) missing from Auldlar are as follows:

- Penhallow, a 15-year-old boy taken from his room through an open window;
- Neville, an 8-year-old boy, taken while playing outside;
- Triona, a 12-year-old girl, taken during her chores on the family farm;
- Walford the Girthsome, (see above).

One person has disappeared every day for the past four days.

## The Old Tower (EL 9)

Locals refer to the tower as simply "the old tower." It was once used as a lookout for raiders that might emerge from the forest. It was built over the site of a large well that was used to start the aqueduct. Both the tower and the aqueduct have been long abandoned -- or so the townspeople believe.

When the PCs arrive at the old tower, the location where Walford was said to have been heading, read or paraphrase the following:

The five-story old tower shows the years of neglect that have befallen it. It has obviously been used for many purposes since it was originally built, for there are scars of where structures, posts, banners, rods, pipes, and the like have been built onto it then torn away. There is a flag of Auldlar's emblem on the top of the tower, but the flag is tattered and only limply waves at your approach.

As the PCs approach, a successful Spot check (DC 20) allows them to notice activity near the upper window. This is the yrthak, which just recently leaped out of the window, though the PCs may not figure this out right away.

**Yrthak:** hp 102; see *Monster Manual* page 189.

**Development:** What the townspeople do depends on what the PCs do next. If the PCs warn the townspeople to avoid the tower, the Auldlar citizens will assume that the tower is the source of all the evil that has been visiting them these past few nights, and they form a band of their most sturdy members and enter the tower on their own -- which could lead to their deaths. If the PCs tell the townspeople about the yrthak, then the folk assume their troubles are over -- the yrthak must have nested in the tower and swooped down and carried off the townspeople, including Walford.

## Cliffhanger

Next episode, the PCs discover what's inside the tower and, among other things, how it was that a huge creature such as a yrthak could live inside the upper level of the tower, let alone squeeze through the tiny window.

# Cliffhangers Adventures

## The Trouble in Town

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### Episode Two: The Old Tower

*The Trouble in Town* is a short adventure for four 10th-level characters. The adventure takes place near a walled town by a shallow river with a nonfunctioning, long abandoned aqueduct. Dungeon Masters can modify the adventure to accommodate higher-level characters by giving humanoid foes more class levels and increasing the HD and/or age category of other opponents.

### Adventure Background

The PCs came to town and discovered that people are missing. In this episode, the PCs investigate the old tower that housed the monster that attacked them in Episode One.

### Maps

This episode uses the Githyanki Citadel Main Watch Tower from the Map-a-Week feature as the map for the old tower.

- [Main Watch Tower](#)

### The Old Tower, Ground Floor

The door to the ground floor is wooden, sturdy, and not trapped or locked. It's kept this way intentionally so that if any townspeople are curious and decide to investigate the tower, they can have limited access to it and report that the tower is still empty.

The door opens to reveal a small chamber that's dominated by an old wooden staircase that leads up. There are no furnishings here. In fact, only the debris that has accumulated over the ages covers the floor.

Of note, however, is that the top of the stairs have been boarded over, preventing access to the upper floors.

If the PCs walk into the room, they can see twigs, dead leaves, and broken Auldlar ale bottles covering the floor. The door to the north is not locked either and nothing of note is in that room. To get to the first floor, the

PCs either have to break the wooden planks covering the top of the stairs or enter through the windows on the fourth floor and come down. A successful Craft (carpentry) (DC 15) or similar check reveals that the planks were laid around three months ago. Once the PCs have begun breaking the planks, read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as you begin work on the planks, you hear heavy padding around on the floor above you, as though a small group of people without shoes was walking quickly around the upper floor. They're also muttering something, but you can't quite make out the words.

A successful Listen check (DC 15) allows the PC to understand the language is Common, but only a few words are clear: "coming" and "warn." The voices are cracked and yet somehow gurgly, like an old man talking with a mouth half-full of water.

The creatures uttering the words are three red slaad who believe they are charged with protecting the upper levels of the tower. Golgon, the master of the tower (see upcoming episodes), has other plans for them, however, and has convinced them to stand guard over an empty floor until he is ready for them.

## First Floor (EL 10)

**Red Slaad (3):** hp 50, 55, 60; see *Monster Manual* page 166.

**Tactics:** The slaadi position themselves at each compass point (except south) in preparation for the attack. If they see a hole being slowly made in the floor, the one from the west attacks through the hole and uses its stunning croak ability to subdue as many as possible on the lower floor. The slaadi have but one purpose on the day the PCs visit: prevent anyone from going up the tower. To this end, they fight anyone or anything that enters their floor that they haven't been told to allow to pass. (On the day the PCs arrive, no one can pass.) If the slaadi subdue everyone on the ground floor, their orders are to send word to the master of the tower via the *mirror of sending* (see below) and to continue to watch for intruders.

The room contains a *mirror of sending* (see below) and a *teleportation* area on the floor. Anyone who steps on the area, which is the most southern square on the map of the floor, is teleported to the tower's second floor. The area is not marked, though it can be detected as per the *teleportation circle* spell description (Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34).

## Magic Mirror

There is a large silver mirror against the north wall. It is a magic item, and the tower's owner uses it to communicate to the slaadi. Golgon taught the slaadi the command words

**Mirror of Sending:** This 5-foot by 3-foot mirror allows a specific person to communicate with any being that says the words "in your service" in Infernal while near it. Once said, the mirror clouds over until the reflective surface becomes bone white, whereupon the user may communicate with the mirror's owner -- in this case, Golgon. The duration of the effect is 10 rounds. The mirror has only one owner (appointed at the time of

creation), so its use is limited.

*Caster Level:* 10th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *sending*; *Market Price:* 90,000 gp; *Weight:* 25 lbs.

Should the PCs try to scry Golgon using this mirror, they see a darkened area. (This is Golgon's chamber; he is currently moving about arranging some alchemical equipment.) Episode 4 will have more information on this area. If the PCs ascend to the first floor or otherwise kill the slaadi, read or paraphrase the following:

This floor closely matches the one below it, save that it has a stone ceiling instead of a wooden one and is devoid of debris that you would expect a human to leave behind. Instead, there are bones of small animals and children here, as well as a loose pile of clothes in the northwest area of the room.

There are also three torches in the room -- one on each compass point save the south.

The skeletons are of Auldlar children buried in the local cemetery, and the pile of clothes consists of the garments they were buried in. The slaadi have nothing to do with the bones of the children, only of the small animals. They have been commanded to leave small children alone by Golgon. A successful Search check (DC 15) shows that there are gnaw marks on the bones that are from mouths smaller than the red slaadi. The slaadi do not know where the bones or clothes came from.

If the slaadi are interrogated, they don't have a great deal to tell. They seek passage to a plane where it is said there is a rare ore. The ore is for their master, a gray slaad, who wishes to use it for his own purposes. To gain access to the plane, they have allied with a human wizard named Golgon, who promises to take them there once their term of service is over, which is for one year. The slaadi don't know, or care, what Golgon's activities are, but they do obey his orders readily enough.

The torches in the room are *everburning torches*.

## The Old Tower, Fourth Floor

If the PCs climb or fly to the fourth floor, read or paraphrase the following:

The window that the winged monster flew out of stands out in contrast to the others. It's framed with a thin metallic border.

A successful Search check of the metal (DC 10) shows fine rune-like inscriptions on the metal. Also, the metal is magical (see below for description).

Once inside the room, read or paraphrase the following:

You see nesting material for a large winged creature. The outside of the nest consists of small tree trunks that have been stripped of their twigs and leaves, which then form the majority of the bedding. The rest of the bedding is composed of strips of clothing.

Notable among the clothing is Walford's white apron, which can be found with a successful Search check (DC 10).

The trap door, which is conventional, unlocked, and underneath the nest, leads to the third floor crawlspace (see episode three).

## Magic Window

The window is magic and has a basic function. It allows those that touch its gem to become ethereal for as long as they want to or to the limit of the duration, whichever comes first.

**Window Frame of Ethereal Jaunt:** This 6-foot by 4-foot steel window frame has runes twining their way up from the base of the frame to a large, fist-sized blue topaz in the center of the upper frame bar. When the topaz is touched, the being touching the topaz becomes ethereal as per the *ethereal jaunt* spell. The duration of the effect is 14 rounds, though beings can choose to lessen the duration voluntarily. The window frame has 42 charges left.

*Caster Level:* 14th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *ethereal jaunt*; *Market Price:* 98,000 gp; *Weight:* 50 lbs.

**Development:** Anyone who steps on the *teleportation* area is sent to the floor above. Details of this area are in the next episode of the Cliffhanger.

## Cliffhanger

When the PCs gain access to the second floor, the mystery deepens. Who is responsible for the deaths of the children, and why? The answer is surely on another floor in the tower. . . .

# Cliffhangers Adventures

## The Trouble in Town

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### Episode Three: Safe Room

*The Trouble in Town* is a short adventure for four 10th-level characters. The adventure takes place near a walled town by a shallow river with a nonfunctioning, long abandoned aqueduct. Dungeon Masters can modify the adventure to accommodate higher-level characters by giving humanoid foes more class levels and increasing the HD and/or age category of other opponents.

### Adventure Background

The PCs have already started investigating the disappearances of citizens of Auldlar, and their discoveries have taken them to the old tower. Inside, they've discovered a few nefarious beings and some interesting magic. In this episode, the PCs reach the safest room in the tower -- and its strangest.

### Maps

This episode uses the Githyanki Citadel Main Watch Tower from the Map-a-Week feature as the map for the old tower.

- [Main Watch Tower](#)

### The Old Tower, Second Floor

When you arrive in the room, your senses are immediately assaulted by foul odors, horrible screeching noises, and a most unwholesome light that is of a color you've never seen before and which bathes everything in a strange metallic hue that's quite unsettling. Dominating the southern area of the room is a small table, upon which is the body of a human child dressed in a manner keeping with Auldlar fashions. Attached to the body is an array of glass tubes flowing with liquids that glow with that strange color you've never seen. As you look, the child turns its head and looks at you. The screeching and howling is coming from something in the western portion of the room -- a small box with an iron-barred window. The box is shaking madly, but a short, bright silver chain, set a foot above the floor, holds it close to the wall. The ceiling here is stone.

The *teleportation* area is the easternmost square of the room on the map.



## Nevile

The little boy is named Nevile and is in the process of being converted into a creature under Golgon's control -- and is still alive. He is suffering from the effects of the screeching (see below) and needs to be taken to another area for questioning.

Once questioned, he can say that he was taken by flying creature whose description the PCs can recognize as the yrthak. Then, he says he was put to sleep by a demon, and he woke up with the tubes in him, then fell back asleep again before being woken by the PCs. He doesn't know anything more than this, nor has he seen any of the other victims (nor was he aware of them). If the PCs tell him the identity of the other missing children or of the baker, he feels very sad, for he knows Triona and is fond of her (and of course he knows Walford, as everyone in Auldlar does).

## Screeching

The sound of the screeching is constant, shrill, and maddening. Those who fail a Fortitude save (DC 15) suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls and skills, and they cannot hear well enough to converse with others for 10 rounds. If a victim remains within the area of effect (the room) until the effect wears off, the victim must succeed at another Fortitude save or suffer the effects listed above again. This is a sonic effect.

## Metallic Liquid

The tubing extending from the beakers into the boy is filled with a metallic-looking liquid. The glasswork on the table is normal glass. If they are broken (such as in an effort to quickly free the boy), the liquid splashes everything on the table and within 5 feet of the table.

The metallic liquid acts as a most horrible contact poison. A successful Fortitude save (DC 24) avoids poisoning. Those that fail suffer 3d6 temporary Strength damage initially. Victims must succeed at another Fortitude save (DC 24) to avoid secondary 3d6 temporary Strength damage one minute later.

## Boxed Monster (EL 8)

The creature inside the box is actually two versions of the will-o'-wisp created by Golgon. Instead of being a glowing ball of vapor, they're spheres of darkness. They are under Golgon's command and are instructed to remain in the box unless anyone enters the room. If anyone does, they fly out of the window of the box and attack the nearest living target, and they keep concentrating their attacks on that target until it's dead.

**Dark Wisps (2):** CR 6; Small aberration (Air); HD 12d8; hp 60; Init +13; Spd fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 29 (touch 29, flat-footed 20); Atk +19 melee (2d8, shock); SQ darkvision 60 ft., natural invisibility, spell immunity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +13, Will +11; Str –, Dex 29, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +13, Diplomacy +3, Hide +13, Intimidate +3, Listen +18, Search +15, Spot +19; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative.

**Natural Invisibility (Ex):** A startled or frightened dark wisp can extinguish its darkness, effectively becoming invisible as the spell.

**Spell Immunity (Ex):** The only spells that can affect a dark wisp are *magic circle against chaos*, *magic circle against evil*, *magic missile*, *maze*, *protection from chaos*, and *protection from evil*.

### ***Silver Chain of Teleportation***

The chain attached to the box and the wall is magical. At first it may seem that the chain is created to be extra-strong to hold whatever is in the box. In actuality, the chain is the teleportation method Golgon uses to leave the tower and enter his chamber.

**Silver Chain of Teleportation:** The *silver chain of teleportation* allows a user to instantly teleport to a fixed location after speaking the command word. The location was designated at the time of creation by the creator. The command word for the silver chain is "spider" (in Infernal) and, when spoken while touching the chain, teleports the speaker to Golgon's chamber only. Because of the fixed location involved, the target location is a "very familiar" one.

*Caster Level:* 10th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *teleport*; *Market Price:* 90,000 gp; *Weight:* 8 lbs.

### **The Old Tower, Third Floor**

The third floor is little more than a stairway with an attached crawl space. The distance from floor to ceiling is only 5 feet. Stored here are various supplies needed to maintain an alchemical laboratory. If sold, all the material in the space could be sold for 300 gp.

### **Development**

The PCs now have a method for meeting Golgon, the individual responsible for the kidnappings and, perhaps, deaths of the townspeople.

### **Cliffhanger**

In the next episode, the PCs face off with Golgon in his secret chamber.

# Cliffhangers Adventures

## The Trouble in Town

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### Episode Four: Unbidden

*The Trouble in Town* is a short adventure for four 10th-level characters. The adventure takes place near a walled town by a shallow river with a nonfunctioning, long abandoned aqueduct. Dungeon Masters can modify the adventure to accommodate higher-level characters by giving humanoid foes more class levels and increasing the HD and/or age category of other opponents.

### Adventure Background

The PCs have already started investigating the disappearances of citizens of Auldlar, and their discoveries have taken them to the old tower. Inside, they've discovered a few nefarious beings, such as dark wisps, and some interesting magic. They've also found young Nevile. In this episode, the PCs face off with the evil that has been plaguing Auldlar.

### Maps

This episode uses the "Third Floor" section of the Githyanki Citadel Floor Sections map from the Map-a-Week feature.

- [Third Floor and Second Tower Sections](#)

### Golgon's Chamber (EL 10)

The chamber is located deep underneath the tower. It's about where the first dry chamber above the water line is indicated in the map of Auldlar and environs in the first episode. When the PCs enter the chamber, they find that it isn't lit.

Although Golgon uses the *silver chain of teleportation* magic item (see the previous episode) to *teleport* to his chamber, he *teleports* himself out. This means the PCs will have to use their own means to escape Golgon's chamber.

Each of the compass points has a circular chamber. Each area contains one of the kidnap victims (except for Nevile, who was found in the tower). Each victim is connected to a significantly more elaborate alchemical setup than the one found in the tower. A successful Heal check (DC 15) shows that each victim is dead and is

### Treasure

If the DM doesn't have his or her own ideas for what treasure to hand out in this short adventure, here is the list that they can find in an ornate chest in Golgon's chamber: chest with inset rubies and amber chips (600 gp), *assassin's dagger*, 2 ruby and gold tooth caps (to fit over Golgon's teeth; worth 800 gp each), fine black veil trimmed with black seed pearls (1,300 gp), 49 pp, 9 gp, 33 sp, and 87 cp. Since several of the magic items in this adventure are fairly limited in scope, it is up to you to determine whether the PCs can find a seller or use for those items. If you decide to allow them to sell the items for even a reduced price or if they find a use for them, you should take that into account when handing out the treasure listed above.

slowly being transformed into some kind of other creature, though what creature that would be cannot be determined. A successful Knowledge (arcana) check suggests that the humans might be undergoing a process to convert them into some sort of magical beast.

**Golgon (cornugon):** hp 82; see *Monster Manual* page 49.

**Tactics:** Golgon attacks the PCs on sight and kills them all for invading his chamber. Golgon does not allow himself to be defeated. If he's beaten in combat, he'll *teleport* himself away or, if he cannot *teleport*, he will summon other devils to assist him. (Devil types and standard chances of success are listed in the cornugon description in the *Monster Manual*.)

## Continuing the Adventure

Killing -- or driving off -- Golgon ends the trouble in Auldlar. However, questions remain. Golgon does not seem to have the skills necessary to conduct magical experiments. Although he can carry out many tasks (he has an above-average Intelligence ability score) there must be a mastermind behind the effort. If Golgon had wanted to do so, his power, used wisely, could have been enough to subjugate the entire town by himself. Why sneak away people for cruel experiments? And why Auldlar? These questions can be answered with future adventures....

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# Githyanki Citadel

## Main Watch Tower

Call-away  
View

7' x 8'

Entrance

5 feet



10 feet

Scale



Fourth  
Floor



Third  
Floor



Second  
Floor



First  
Floor

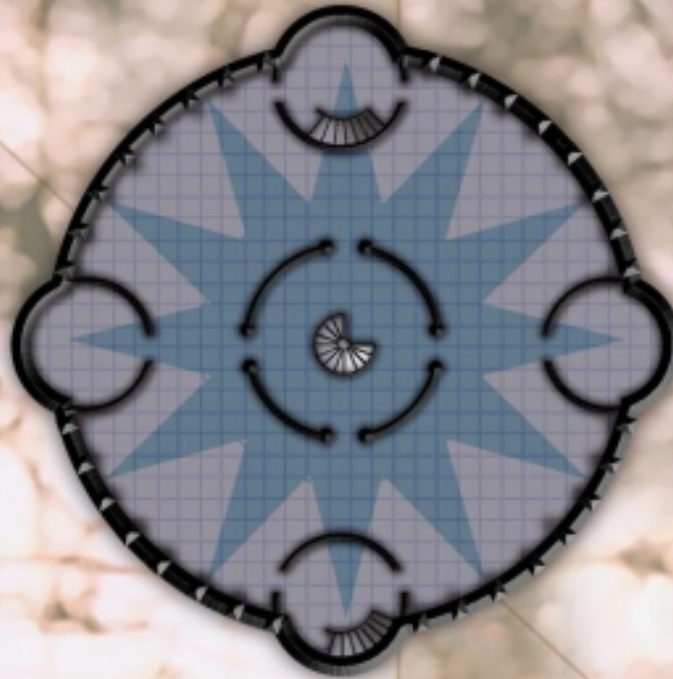


Ground  
Floor



# Gilhyanki Citadel Floor Sections

Third  
Floor



Central  
Tower  
Lower



Central  
Tower  
Upper



5 feet  
10 feet  
Scale

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