Session 48 - Ambush in the Broken Tower!

The party is in the auditorium, down on the lower level. Surrounding them are tiered benches, some human size and some much larger. There are glass statues scattered throughout, both of the insects and human sized figures. The humanoid statues are being preyed by the insects, it would be a gruesome tableau if they had any time to look around in detail.

With Soren's forewarning Esme is able to put her shield up just in time to take the brunt of the impact when the massive insectoid creature falls down onto her. It seems covered in a shiny fluid, and has no visible eyes. Just chunks of red crystals jutting out of its head. It is six feet long and about a foot around its body, with many legs along its length. Its foremost legs end in long, sharp scythes. It knocks her to the ground but she rolls with the impact and pops back up to her feet. Keeping her shield up in front she looks around and spots one more hanging above the door. She calls out to the others, warning them before they pass through the door. Soren steps through next, hearing her warning he can almost see in his mind's eye the creature dropping from above so he darts to the side the moment he clears the threshold. He gets out of the way cleanly, with enough time to strike back. He slashes with his bronze shortsword and the bronze sizzles as it hits the carapace, carving a rent into the side of its carapace and causing black ichor to spew out. The shortsword is smoking, the fluid remaining on it boiling off.

Rua comes in behind Soren, burning with righteous anger after seeing the remains of the glassy people around the insects preying on them. He bursts through the door, charging towards the beast inside facing Esme swinging the mattock with all his might. It pierces one of the rear segments of the beast, causing more of the black ichor to spill out. As he pulls it back a section of the carapace comes with peeling It doesn't seem to be much phased by this, but whips around and slashes at him with its long arm blades. He is able to raise his arm just in time to catch the blow, but feels the bladed limb but through his skin like butter, grinding down against the bone leaving a massive wound in his arm.

Kiva is still in the hallway watching this happen and sees her opportunity. While the creature is busy laying into Rua she lobs a vial of her stored naptha at it. The vial arcs through the air and lands squarely on its back, the thick fluid seeping into the cracks of its carapace as it ignites on contact with the air. The best lets out a piercing screech, reverberating around the auditorium seemingly endlessly. It turns its flaming body towards Kiva and charges towards her, looking for revenge. Esme jumps in front of the doorway to protect her, shield raised to catch the sharp blades. However, some of the naptha shakes free from the creature and falls on her, with some bits falling into her hair setting it alight.

The monster in front of Soren moves faster than he expected, lunging at him with two of its bladed arms extended. He dances away from one of them, but takes the other in a stab to his side. However, he has noticed the affect his bronze sword had and goes for a sweeping slash, aiming for the point where its legs join its body. The sword cuts through the joints like they are cloth, shearing multiple legs off sending it crashing to the ground. It flops around, struggling to get back back up with a good chunk of legs missing, the stumps smoking on its side.

The burning insect has just rushed past Rua, the combination of its burning flesh and the stinking ichor assaulting his nose. Once it clears past him he shakes off the stench and rushes to follow. It is distracted trying to force its way past Esme so he steps up beside it, firmly grasps the mattock with both hands and swings it, wincing with pain in his injured arm. The axe swings around, slamming into the side of the insect and pushing through, the point slamming into the door and nailing the creature to it. It writhes and shrieks in pain, but is clearly unable to get loose and is out of the fight. Kiva sees this and steps forward, angling her spear for the killing blow. She aims for a compromised section of its carapace and slams it home, twisting it to make sure its fully dead. The last insect is still trying to stand back up. Soren sees the others have dispatched their foe and takes a moment to grandstand. He raises his sword into the air, angling it so it catches the light from the hanging orbs above. "Begone foul creatures, go back to the shadows from whence you came!" After his declaration he brings his sword down in a two-handed chop, slicing it's head off. The head rolls down the shallow steps of the auditorium, the crystal in its face clinking as it rolls. Silence falls upon the auditorium, only the sound of the crackling of the pinned insect's burning flesh present.

To celebrate their victory Esme does a Haka dance above the smoldering corpse, crying out and thumpingg her chest. Soren looks around at the scattered glass figures and wonders how they all got turned to glass. Kiva and Esme start searching through the room, looking for interesting things. They find three sheets of bronze hooked together with rings so it can fold into itself with magical runes on them. Also the table in the center of the room on the stage is clearly magical. It is not so much of a table, but a giant basin filled with white sand. She finds it reflects what she is thinking and finds that she can shape the sand into the forms of her thoughts, but the moment her concentration lapses it falls formless. As they move about the room it becomes clear that this was a last stand, the human figures getting trapped in the room and facing down the swarm of invading insects. Their plight was desperate, clearly losing the battle as the mysterious glass spell froze them all in position. The door was ajar so it was likely the two living insects came in after the spell was cast.

Kiva sits down on one of the benchs and studies the bronze sheets. There is a lot she doesn't understand, but it is clearly a spell of some sort. Something to do with sound, or large noises. With some study she could probably figure out how to harness it. Esme goes to cut out the crystals from the beasts heads. Her dagger isn't able to make any progress, but borrowing Soren's bronze sword allows her to cut them out easily. As she holds it in her hand the feels a throbbing, but its hard to tell if its her heartbeat or the crystal itself. Soren approaches the basic of sand, finding it also reacts to his thoughts when one of the insect creatures if formed from the sand and skitters around as he was thinking if there were more around. Once he realizes what is happening he plays around with it, formingg an image of his still, then a barrel of whisky and several other benign objects until an unreadable look passes over his face. The sand smooths out, then forms two

faces. One is a man and the other is a woman, but their features are blurred and indistinct. Seeing this tears come to his eyes and he turns away from the table, leaving the auditorium and going back into the hallway outside.

Rua inspects some of the defender. They all seem human, wearing robes and their faces are locked in visages of horror at the approaching hoard. After a little more looking around they leave, and after a quick discussion decide to continue exploring. They take a right at the last intersection and come upon a hallway lined with statues. They are vaguely human shaped, each holding a crystal to their chest, seeming like it was inserted there. They look like the crystal charged with lightning from up stairs, but these ones don't glow or anything. Soren tried to pull one of the crystals out, but it is affixed in some manner and doesn't budge. He shrugs his shoulders and moves with the others to the end of the hall where a large, copper banded door is sounding. A rythmic pounding sounds from behind the door with a sliver of light coming from beneath it. Esme reaches forward and open it up.

The room beyond is a workshop or forge of some sort. Machines of unknown purpose or function lay about the room, and in the centre is a giant machine that is automatically pounding down like a giant blacksmith's hammer. The spectacular thing is the metal it is hitting is moving like a blacksmith manipulating a working piece, but there is nothing there to be moving it. Three more of the headless automatons sit inactive against the far wall and more laying on work tables. One has its chest swung open, the other has its leg disassembled. Esme calls out "Hello?" Her voice is almost lost in the noise of the workshop, but a deep, resounding voice replies "Did you reset the bulkheads in the western stairwell?" The voice echoes from inside their heads, like a translation of the source language but they have no problem understanding it. "Who said that!" Rua exclaims. There is no response for a moment, and the metal being worked under the hammer floats over and quenches itself "Inspect the celing collapse in the halls. Tell me how much shoring would be needed to prevent more damage. D79 was supposed to do that but hasn't returned." "Directions please. This servant is new" Esme replies.

A cloud of ash appears in front of the party after her response "I did not make you..." Its voice booms. "Hi, I'm Rua! I haven't ever talked to one of you before, this is so cool!" Esme replies more formally "We are here to provide service." "Hmmm, servants. I could use some servants. What are your mechanical skills?" Esme points to Kiva "She is the most skilled of our party, knowledgeable and talented with Runes." It floats over towards her, getting close enough that she can feel the head. "You...are alive!" it exclaims. Kiva replies nervously "Indeed I am,

"Things are not as they should be. This tower is in poor repair." "You are the caretaker of this tower then?" "I am Ferocitese. Caretaker is a good work. I take great care of this place. I would love to see it rise again." Esme speaks again "There are two of the intruders, recently slain by our hand, in the auditorium." She goes on to describe the insects. "Ah yes, the horrors. There are a still a handful of them that survived the vitrification. They cannot eat, cannot starve. They are a nuisance."

"It sounds like they are designed." Soren says. "They are." it replies. "Did you design them?" Soren asks. The cloud flashes red, rising in anger. Esme quickly chastises him, saying "Surely they would not make something so crude." It seems to be mollified at this. It then floats towards the

automaton at the far wall, saying "Have you seen of these before?" They reply that yes, they found one to the west with its chest rent open by the horrors. Kiva rescued the core, taking care not to damage the connectors. It seems interested at this "You have the core? You must give it to me." Esme replies that they would be happy to trade it for some raw etherium, say slightly larger than it? Ferocitese says that its Aetherium forge is not operational, they are unable to create more and keep a limited reserve for special uses. Soren mentions they have the designs for an Aetherium crucible, and knowledge of the required runes, as well as access to an ample supply of copper and lightning. Esme describes the Stone in Stonetop. "Humans live at Stormpoint now? Fascinating. I was going to kill you and take the core, but if you could provide me with more Aetherium then I could make use of you. I will show you what remains of my crucible and maybe you could bring what is needed to make more."

Esme asks about the teleportation room, it mentions that those doors used to virtually never close with how often they would be used. But it hasn't sensed them functioning in many years. Esme asks if it can guide them in its use. It says "No, it was not part of my purview. You must say the name of the destination though" "I have sworn many oaths, even though the subject of those oaths are long gone I must uphold them. Otherwise I will fall into chaos." Esme nods, then urges it to continue to show them the Aetherium crucible. It is massive, the lip hanging over their heads. An iron stepladder floats before them and settles on the rim. "Up." Kiva heads up to take a look inside, looking down into the basin. She gets the impression this being is very beyond mortal concerns and is driven by its work. It would presumably respect someone with a similar mindset. If she was to demonstrate her knowledge and how it would apply to its work it would be much more interested. Right now Ferocitese considers them to be curiosities.

Soren gets the impression that if this creature has really been down here since the tower fell how many thousands of years ago and it still hasn't managed to fix the damage, it may be less powerful than it is letting on, constrained in some way that it is unable to fulfill its purpose. He says "Forgive my fleshy, mortal ignorance, but how exactly is the crucible non-functional?" The cloud floats up and starts highlighting some portions and going into arcane technical details. Soren uses this as a distraction to slip away and start inspecting the rest of the workshop. Kiva is still on the gantry and can see the mechanism that is supposed to channel the lightning into it is clearly broken. There looks like some Makerglass crystal set in it that is cracked and dim. At some point it contained too much power to hold its form or was sabotaged. Kiva has been nodding along as Ferocitese goes on, and starts up a back-and-forth technical discussion about the workings of the crucible. It was damaged by an excess of power during a particularly bad storm. The runes were readily repairable, but something about the spires that transmit lightning strikes down to this room has been melted or broken. Now there is no power that flows into the crucible. "The gem is also non-functional. It is a conundrum. The things I need to repair it are things I need the crucible to build"

Esme mentions the crystal that shot lightning at them upstairs and asks the creature about it. "Yes, some of the tower's defences are still intact. Some have lost their power over the years, or like this device have lost their connections to the power they need. It is one of the many things I look forward to repairing. It will help significantly with the issues of losing servants to the horrors." Esme asks if there is a way to make more. If they had enough quartz or amethysts they could find a workaround, but Aetherium would be best. Esme offers for them to go out and fetch some quartz and amethysts, they have a need of Aetherium. The cloud of ash says that it takes 5 pounds of

quality copper ore to make one point of Aetherium. The refining process is...lossy

Soren fills in Garnuss on what is happening asks if he can detect anything about the cloud, sense a weakness or something. Garnuss floats forward and peeks around, then quickly ducks back behind the machine. "What the fuck!!" he exclaims, fear writ on his face. "Right? Its freaky, but what is it." Garnuss says "I think it is a Maker ghost...you need to get out of here right now, if that thing wants to kill you there is nothing I could do to stop it." Soren waves him off, saying he doesn't expect Garnuss to handle it, but if its a spirit then the usual spirit countermeasures should apply right? Garnuss shrugs and says "In theory sure, salt, silver etc. But that is the largest, most powerful ghost I have ever seen!" Soren nods, thanks him for his help and stows him in his pack again and goes to rejoin the others.

Esme has been making a deal with the Maker ghost, they will bring some raw copper ore and enough quartz or amethyst to repair the mechanism and he will make them 10 pounds Aetherium. Esme also haggles it into making a bronze weapon of their choice, and Rua chooses a bronze long sword. Jhiwa has been observing the whole encounter, frantically writing in a notebook trying to record everything that just happened. As they leave the room the whole group starts talking at once, exclaiming about how ridiculous it was, or in Kiva's case, how incredible it was. Soren shares the bit about Ferocitese being a Maker Ghost. Esme asks Jhiwa to keep what he has learned to himself, if word gets out there would a rash of people raiding the tower for the resources here. They would either anger it or it would empower them beyond all reason. "I would just as soon not attract people to this place. Ever since we started delving I got the feeling there are worse things than that ghost. I don't think it was him who turned all those people to glass"

Revision #1
Created 25 July 2026 02:09:32 by Garettv2_Bigger_Bolder_Badder
Updated 24 October 2026 04:40:30 by Garettv2_Bigger_Bolder_Badder