

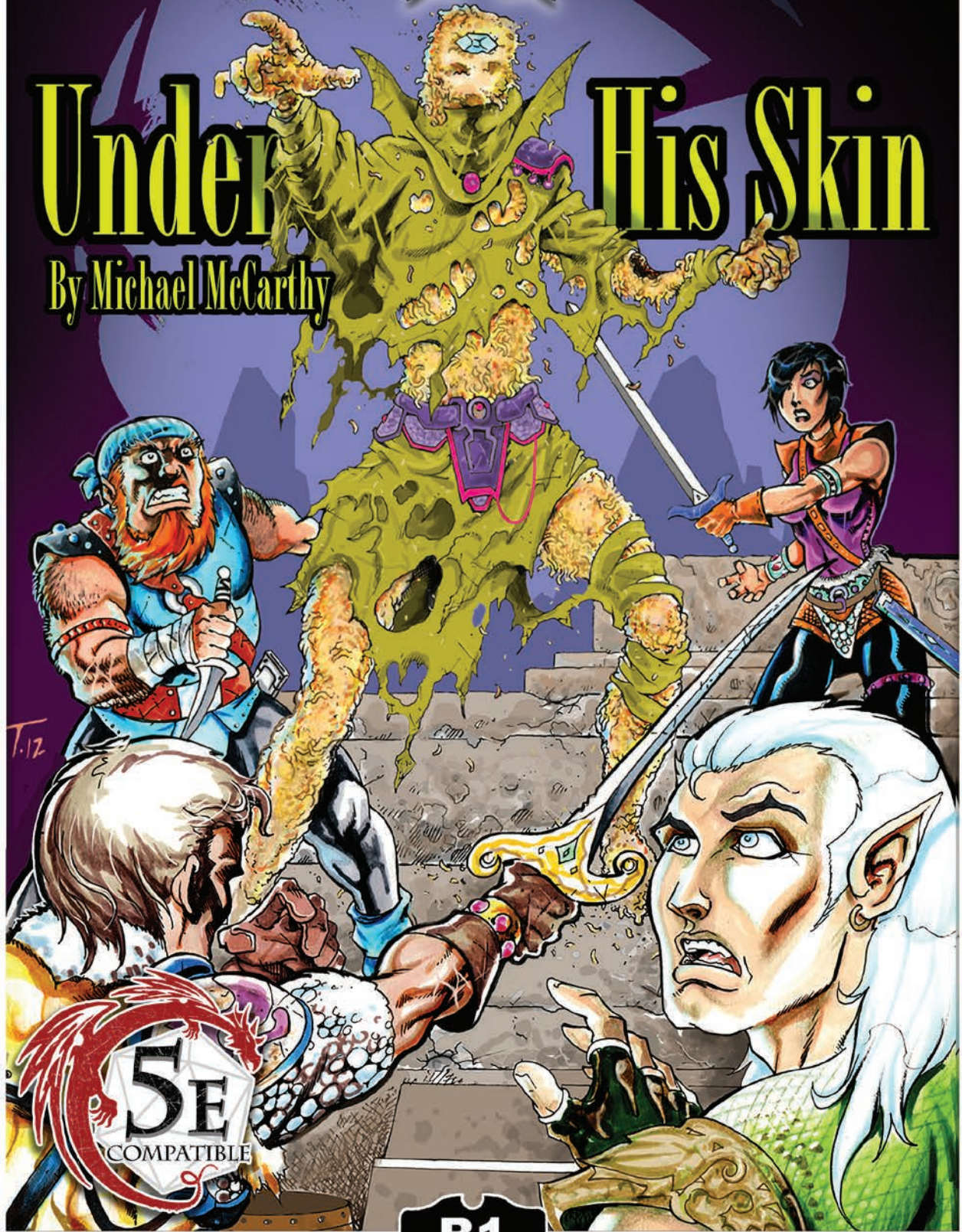
4 PCs



Level 2

Under His Skin

By Michael McCarthy



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UNDER HIS SKIN

A 5th Edition compatible adventure for four to six 1st to 2nd level PCs

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Adventure Background

Saben Behi has been called by his peers 'one of the most brilliant men of the last century', for the countless books he has written, and his study of the very nature of magic has touched lives across the world.

But despite the high praise and the efforts of his fellows, his name is all but unknown – and Saben would be happy if it stayed that way. Ever since he was young, Saben didn't like people or attention, and his latent talents and brilliant mind only drew more and more eyes to him. Even his seclusion in the prestigious Lunar Academy didn't earn him the peace he yearned for.

And so, for the last half-century, Saben has chosen to live in an isolated tower within a protective jungle, itself in the center of the unclaimed desert nestled between the two nations in which he lived. His only contact with the outside world was that of the occasional book he would publish, in exchange for costly materials he could not procure any other way.

In the last few years of his life, Saben's studies grew steadily darker; necromancy, eternal life, and the nature of what lay beyond. In his last letter to the academy, he claimed to be seeking the means to transform into a worm that walks; an evil creature neither quite living nor undead.

The particular worm that caught Saben's attention was the unfortunate Rodrei Ka – a druid startlingly opposite the wizard that captured him. Rodrei delighted in the closeness of living things, of maggots and writing creatures against his flesh. But, other than the power over these same creatures, he was a failure over everything else and utterly deprived.

Rodrei couldn't even transform himself into a worm that walks on his own; he had to sell his soul to an imp in servitude. Once the deal was made, he sacrificed himself to the dark powers, completing his obscene transformation into a sentient mass of worms and grubs.

And then, after only a few meager years of attempting to repay his endless debt, Rodrei found himself trapped in a cage in Saben's tower, where he would have been doomed to spend perhaps the rest of his eternal life under careful study. Except that his debtor felt there would be more entertainment in letting him free. It opened a tiny hole in the magical cage, just large enough for one worm at a time to squeeze forth, and like that, Rodrei was again free.

Rodrei quickly executed his former captor, and turned to searching it for any treasure that might be worth his freedom to the devil that owned him – though the devil isn't interested in such a deal at all. There were people coming looking for the wizard, and the druid's soul would make an excellent addition to their collection.

Adventure Hooks

The PCs could be promising students from the Lunar Academy, interested in helping – or asked by faculty – to look into Saben's apparent disappearance.

The PCs could be acquaintances or fans of Saben, who have followed his work in the past and are concerned about the circumstances mentioned in his last letter.

The PCs could be adventurers hired by the Lunar Academy to look into Saben's last letter.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs, having learned of the sudden lapse in Saben's communication and the worrying contents of his final letter, travel to Saben's tower only to find that even the jungle grounds surrounding his home have become dangerous and inhospitable.

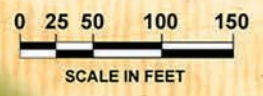
The PCs must navigate through the maze-like jungle Saben had cultivated around his tower, fighting off the jungle and the creatures within.

Once they arrive at the tower, the group finds the tower locked, and filled with vermin of all kind – and worst of all Rodrei Ka, a creature no longer mortal who slew Saben in his sleep and slowly ate his corpse.

Once the worm has been defeated, the group is able to lay Saben properly to rest, and escape the rotting tower.



WASTELANDS



JUNGLE MAP

Setting

The border between the countries of Bluerast and Laily is defined by a swath of desert wasteland not owned by either country - so undesirable that it has refused a proper name for centuries, and is known most often as "the desert". Once every generation or so, each country will try to claim the desolate place for themselves, only to let it lapse again as the arid sand isn't worth the energy to hold.

In the very center of this desert, an equal two-day's journey from both land held by Bluerast and by Laily, is where Saben makes his home; in a mansion-like tower in the middle of an impossible jungle.

Saben himself was born and raised within the fertile planes of Bluerast, though once he was old enough to set out on his own, he travelled to Laily's mountains for the Lunar Towers Academy before claiming the small plot of no-man's-land for himself.

Chapter 1 - Far From an Oasis

Read the following:

Two days of travelling through the desert, two nights where the temperature drops to near freezing the moment the sun sets. Only after such a harsh journey does Saben's tower jut out of the horizon.

Your guides bid you farewell a short distance away, erring to stay away from the home of the isolated wizard. For people who have to make this journey every several weeks, it's probably the wisest choice. Saben chose this place above all others so that people would keep their distance.

The transition from the arid desert to the humidity of Saben's jungle is instant, like stepping through a waterfall - though less comfortable. The trees of this apparent oasis loom ten and twenty feet tall, even the ferns tower as tall as a man. There wouldn't be any easy passage through the underbrush - only the single winding path he set out for his occasional visitors.

The adventure begins as the PCs arrive at the border of the jungle around Saben's home. The jungle is a dangerous place, maintained only by magic and Saben's maintenance. Saben deliberately keeps the jungle around his home dangerous, to keep visitors out. Rodrei's tampering with the tower's wards (see area C1) only worsens the problem by removing the protections available to the path. Most of the jungle creatures are oblivious to this, but they do occasionally wander into the normally protected space.

No Longer Safe

For every two hours the PCs remain within the jungle roll 1d4, on a roll of 1 the PCs of encounter a hunting colony of 1d4+1 stirges.

Combat

Stirge, CR 1/8; 25 xp each. See the official entry for full Stirge stats.



Off the Beaten Path

Even without the wards, the path is still the safest and only sure way to travel through the jungle. Attempting to press through the jungle towards the tower, just visible above the trees no matter where in the jungle you are, the PCs should make a Wisdom (Perception) check.



Skill Check

A **Wisdom (Perception) check** below DC 12 fails to notice the gentle shifting of the trees and plants in the forest as they guide the PCs back to where the group entered after several hours travel. For every two hours the PCs remain within the jungle roll 1d4, on a roll of 1-2 the PCs of encounter a hunting colony of 1d4+1 stirges.

Read the following:

You emerge from the forest no closer to the tower than when you entered, with a faint feeling of déjà-vu.

A **DC 14 or higher Wisdom (Perception) check** notices the shifting of trees and plants, but is unable to account for the change during travel. The group returns to their entry point as above, including the potential encounter with the jungle protectors. For each further time they attempt to enter the forest the PCs gain advantage on their first **Wisdom (Perception) check** to determine their way.

Read the following:

The ground seems to change beneath your feet, shifting the paths between trees to lead you back to where you began.

A **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** is enough to take the shifting trees into account, making it to the next path section closer to the tower.

Read the following:

Despite the shifting forest, you stay your course, emerging onto the path much closer to Saben's tower.

A. Jungle Entrance

Read the following:

A clear boundary separate Saben's jungle from the jungle around it, turning from sand to thick grass in the space of a single step. A dozen paces beyond that is the jungle proper, and the narrow dirt path leading into the darkness. Barely visible beneath the shadow of the canopy, a body lays face-down in the dirt.

The body is that of one of Saben's couriers, Jeleste. Barely sixteen, she is fit and lightly equipped, just food, water and a single letter in her bag. Despite it only having been a few days since her death, the jungle heat and Rodrei's insects have nearly reduced the corpse to mulch.

The letter is short, just a single page. It reads:

I have captured a worm that walks for study, an interesting creature. It seems to have a semblance of the intelligence of the man it once was, though it is now little more than a collection of insects. He has the capacity to perform rudimentary spells as well. This 'Rodrei' will require further study.

- Saben Behi

B. Winding Path

The path to Saben's tower is designed to gently deter intruders, and if that's impossible, to kill those irritating enough to press onward.

Skill Check

Each time the PCs come to a fork in the road, they may make a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** to identify the path more travelled - which is the one leading to Saben's tower. On a failure, the PCs are unable to discern which path might lead them forward and must make the decision blindly.

Should the PCs take the wrong route at any intersection, they will arrive at a dead end.



B1. Dead End

Read the following:

The twisting path begins to spiral in onto itself, opening into a small clearing. In its center is a monument of sorts, heavy with moss and brightly colored flowers.

The numerous dead ends of Saben's maze are all the same. A fifteen foot clearing, in the center of which stands a stone marker onto which is etched the phrase "You should not have come here" in Common.

Creatures: The stone marker is home to a pseudodragon. The stone's inhabitants will wait for the PCs to approach the stone and give them a moment to read it before attacking.

Combat

(4) Pseudodragon, CR 1; 200 xp; Adjusted Difficulty 400 XP; Medium. See the official entry for full Pseudodragon stats.

B2. Jungle Ambush

Saben has ensured this jungle has long been a breeding ground for exotic creatures, maintained by the bodies of a steady supply of unwelcome visitors or potential thieves. While normally restricted to the jungle itself, with the tower's wards lowered one of many colonies of stirges have begun to lay claim to the territory normally encompassed by the path.

While the PCs might encounter a number of stirges within the jungle, it has no effect on this encounter here - there are hundreds of the creatures within the jungle.

Read the following:

A droning sound erupts suddenly from the trees above your head, and moments later the sound is coming from the thick foliage to the sides of the path as well.

I have captured a worm that walks for study, an interesting creature. It seems to have a semblance of the intelligence of the man it once was, though it is now little more than a collection of insects. He has the capacity to perform rudimentary spells as well.

This 'Rodrei' will require further study.

- Saben Behi



IMPASSABLE FOREST

STONE SLAB (3 FEET HIGH)

TRAIL



IMPASSABLE FOREST

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

DEAD END





These gardens, and much of the jungle path, are maintained by a plant-creature known as a Leaf leshy, who specialize in such a task. However, their efficiency leaves the garden overflowing; resulting in much of their hard work becoming fertilizer for their next season.

While normally a dozen Leaf leshy maintain this garden, all but two have been drawn away by the idea of starting their own gardens elsewhere, once the wards fell.

Skill Check

A DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check spoken in either Sylvan or Druidic will convince them to follow the PCs to assist in simple tasks, though they will shy away from participating in actual combat.

Combat

(2) Leaf Leshy, CR 1; 100 xp; Adjusted XP 150;

Leaf Leshy

Small plant, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 9 (2d6+2)

Speed 25 ft., fly 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	7 (-1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Damage Immunities thunder, lightning

Languages Druidic, Sylvan

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The leaf leshy is an innate spellcaster whose spellcasting ability is wisdom (save DC 11). The leaf leshy can cast the following spells innately and without the usual spell components.

(1/day) *pass without trace, disguise self*

Glide. A leaf leshy cannot use its fly speed to hover in place. When flying, a leaf leshy must end its movement at least 5 feet lower in elevation than it started.

Seedpods. Leaf leshys sprout explosive acorns, pine cones, or other seedpods, and can hurl these as ranged attacks.

ACTIONS

Seedpod. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) thunder damage, and the target must succeed at a DC 11 Constitution saving throw becoming deafened on a failed save.

Creatures: The stirges will quickly assault the nearest PCs to the edge of the path, draining blood and then flying back off into the jungle to digest the meal. The stirges flee when 4 or more are killed.

Combat

(8) Stirge, CR 2; 200 xp; Adjusted Difficulty 500 XP; Medium. See the official entry for full Stirge stats.

Treasure

A quick search in the jungle reveals some unfortunate explorer near the wayside. His equipment is rotted, but he does wear a silver necklace worth 30gp. In his pocket is a *potion of healing*.

B3. Gardens

Read the following:

The path widens into a square clearing, with low wooden fences surrounding carefully tended gardens. Despite the general maintenance, none of the fruit appears to have been harvested, by man or animal alike, and tomatoes, pumpkins and other vegetables rot on the vine.



Tower Map

Levels 1 through 4

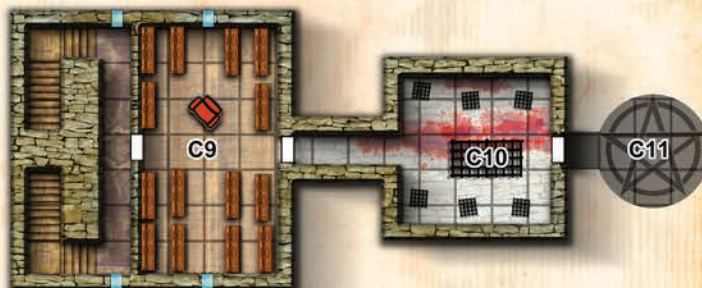


Tower, Oblique View

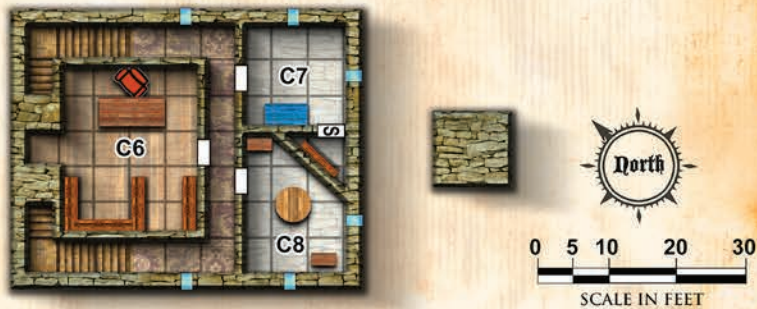
Floor 4



Floor 3



Floor 2



Floor 1



C. Saben's Tower

This clearing houses Saben's tower-like home. It is described in detail in Chapter Two.

Chapter 2 - A Wizard Bit it



Saben's Tower

Location: Built in a jungle within a desert between two countries, Saben has taken great pains to keep himself isolated.

History: Before Saben's arrival, this location was no different than any other series of dunes in the small desert between Bluerast and Laily, a desolate no-man's land not worth capturing by either country. Over the last several decades, Saben has converted this few square miles into a lush jungle controlled and protected strictly by magic.

Rodrei has recently disabled these very wards by tampering with the circle of runes surrounding the tower, causing many of the protections to begin to fail and throwing the formerly carefully structured system into chaos.

Location: Saben's Tower

Dangers: Creatures, Traps

Lighting: Sunlight

Walls: Magically-treated wooden walls (unless noted)

Doors: Unlocked good wooden doors (unless noted)

Mood/Theme: Overwhelming decay overtaking the tower.

C1. Tower Exterior

Read the following:

The trees of the jungle finally part, leading you to a large, round clearing. The path continues to wind, gently now, towards the tower that dominates the space, flanked on either side by a collection of potted shrubberies.

Around the whole space is a ring of stones, each featuring a single rune, free of even a hint of the vegetation growing so rampant on all sides of the clearing. Beside where you entered, two of these stones lay cracked into fragments, a third lying out of order beside.

While Saben's tower is well maintained, with clean plaster walls and a manicured lawn, it isn't inviting, either. The few windows are narrow, and there is only a single, small front door, which has begun to rot along the bottom but otherwise remains tightly shut.

There are a number of options available for PCs attempting to enter the tower. The front door is the most obvious – despite the trap* to keep intruders out – and once opened should remain so unless closed by the PCs. The few times Rodrei entered and left the tower, he disincorporated and simply swarmed beneath the door.

Alternately, the PCs could enter through one of the tower's many windows. Doing so requires a DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check for each character attempting to squeeze through the narrow windows. Small PCs have advantage on the check. If the PCs want to enter the tower from a second story window they must first succeed at a DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to climb to the window then attempt to squeeze through the window as described above.

The PCs also have the option of climbing the tower to the landing at C11. The plaster walls of the tower offer little purchase to bare hands, but offer excellent purchase to pitons and other climbing tools. A DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required for each floor scaled, but a PC with climbing equipment (Rope, Grapnel, Pitons) gains advantage on the check.



Howling Door Trap

DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the trap. A DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check disables the trap. A DC 12 dispel magic disables the trap. The trap is triggered whenever any creature opens the door and resets once the door closes. All creatures in a 10ft line from the door must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw taking 2d6 thunder damage on a failure. A creature takes half as much damage on a success.

C2. Entryway

Read the following:

In the center of this hexagonal chamber stands a soldier of stone, eight feet high and holding in both hands a sword half as tall as he is himself. Sitting at his feet are two heavy chests, banded in iron, and behind it a pair of foreboding doors.

The statue in this room is deliberately crafted to appear as if it were a stone golem, complete with an intimidating glare watching the door and chests. Fortunately for the PCs, Saben felt the cost of an actual golem was too high, and resorted to alternate measures.

Instead of a golem, Saben installed here a large threatening statue, and a permanent programmed illusion to make it appear to animate. When the PCs enter the room, the illusion will draw its sword, and stand menacingly as if it would prevent the PCs from passing. As an illusion however, it has no such power.



Skill Check

A DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check, along with physical interaction, is sufficient to tell the PCs that the creature on the pedestal is not the golem it appears to be. Upon a successful check the Illusion appears to become see-through and its voice becomes faint. Any physical interaction with the illusion reveals it to be an illusion.

Discerning the illusion or bypassing the illusory guardian grants the PCs 600 XP.



Treasure

Examining the chests at the statue's feet reveals them to be empty. Rodrei has already emptied them of the spell components which had been delivered for Saben, which he now keeps with him in C14.

C3. First Floor Atrium

Read the following:

This long atrium is carpeted down its length with a rich carpet, opening at the end to a number of windows to let in the natural light of the sun. On either side of the room, between the doors branching off in both directions, are a number of elaborate paintings of magical phenomena.

After a brief problem with his guests touching his collection too often, Saben installed weight-sensitive trap doors in this room. Their locations are fairly obvious once one knows what to look for; they are the only places in the room not carpeted. They are designed to only give way only after a moment, so characters walking along the walls are safe, but stopping for even a moment causes the floor to fall out beneath the target.

Each uncarpeted section is a separate pit.



Spiked Pit Trap

DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the trap. A **DC 14 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools disables the trap. The trap is triggered whenever any creature steps on the area above a pit. Any creature that triggers the spiked pit trap must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** falling 10 feet and taking 1d10 piercing damage on a failure. A creature that succeeds at the saving throw avoids falling in the pit.

C4. West Wing

The west wing of the tower was the place Saben had restricted for things he wanted to keep out of the main section of the tower – guests, and dangerous experiments.

Rodrei's tampering with the tower wards have opened the wing up to the least desirable guests at all, a nest of giant ants is beginning to take up residence just below the wing.

There are currently four giant ants in the nest, one of whom is above ground, reducing the contents of this floor to mulch. When the PCs first arrive, the giant ant is in the meeting room at C4b during the day and C4c at night. After two days, or the night after the PCs kill the first ant, an additional pair of giant ants will emerge, and effectively reduce the walls between all areas in C4 to difficult terrain.

Unlike the majority of the tower, the walls of this section of the tower are magically treated masonry.

C4a. Guest Bedroom

Read the following:

Though clean, this small bedroom is still grungy, and the potted plants in the corners of the room do little to brighten it up.

While Saben didn't enjoy the company of people in general, sometimes it was necessary for his work. So, he converted this small room into a bedroom, as quickly and shoddily as he could. The bed and dresser show such a lack of dedication and are of obvious sub-par quality.

The two potted plants however, look as if they have been carefully maintained despite the rest of the tower's neglect. Thanks to Saben's enchantments, they never need water, sunlight or care, and could be sold for 50gp. They each weigh 2 lbs. and are otherwise as delicate as a normal houseplant.

C4b. Meeting Room

Read the following:

What appears to have once been a large table and a collection of chairs litters the floor of the room in scraps, and the ground seems to be covered by a carpet of busy ants.

The base of the northern wall seems to be their point of entry, where a tunnel more than two feet across pierces the stone floor, leading underground.

Although there are thousands of ants in this room, they are harmless worker ants, drawn here by the pheromones of the much stronger giant ants beneath.

Creatures: during the day, 3 giant ants remains in this room, gnawing on the walls and remnants of furniture.



Combat

(3) Giant Ant, CR 2; 300 xp; Adjusted Difficulty 600 XP; Hard.





Giant Ant

Medium insect, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (0)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	10 (0)	3 (-4)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

C4c. Blasted Chamber

Read the following:

The unadorned stone walls of this room are scorched with the marks of hundreds of spells. Fire, acid and even claws seem to have left their marks in the rock, despite the shimmering protective runes along the perimeter.

This was where Saben performed his most unpredictable magic, and he had installed a number of wards to keep the rest of the tower safe from anything that might have happened within this room.

The stone walls in this room are immune to any effect that allows spell resistance, but are otherwise no stronger than the other walls of this section.

C5. East Wing

The east wing of Saben's mansion is the tower proper where he made his home, and was designed specifically to keep people out.

Since Saben's death however, Rodrei has triggered all the traps during his exploration of the tower, some accidentally himself, and some by the use of controlled or summoned creatures. Now, instead of being littered with traps, the wing is littered with the corpses of small animals and large insects.

C5a. Lower Landing

Read the following:

The floor of the room is littered with the half-eaten carcasses of dozens of small animals, alongside the shattered carapaces of particularly large insects.

While Rodrei has the capacity to magically summon creatures to follow him, his entropic desires have led him to entice large numbers of jungle creatures, particularly rats and insects of a similar size, to follow his lead in attempting to ascend the stairs, triggering every magical and mechanical trap in the process.

As they triggered one trap after another, their numbers dwindled down until only a few hundred remain, picking at the carrion now littering the base of the stairs.

Creatures: The collection of rats that remain in this room have been convinced by Rodrei that they should remain here and eat anything that looks appetizing. Though it wasn't intended as a defensive measure, the moment the PCs enter the room, the swarm of rats surge forward for some fresher food.



Combat

(2) **Swarm of Rats**, CR 1/2; 100 xp; Adjusted Difficulty 150 XP; Easy. See the official entry for full Swarm of Rats stats.



Treasure

Sifting through the debris at the base of the stairs will reveal a pair of +1 arrows that have survived intact from their use in the trap on the stairs.

C5b. Trap Mechanisms

The door to this room is locked with an average iron lock (AC 19, HP 10, DC 15 (thieves' tools). Inside are the mechanisms that control the mechanical traps on the stairs. Currently, all the traps are sprung, and all the ammunition exhausted.

C5c. Dank Storage

Read the following:

This dark, closet-like space smells of mold and mildew.

Saben rarely used this space beneath the stairs, and the supplies within – old parchment, robes and past-prime spell components – have been exposed to the elements too long. Any character searching this space is bound to be disappointed.

C6. Kitchen

Read the following:

The shelves and counters that line the walls of this kitchen have been emptied onto the floor, whatever methods used to keep the food fresh abandoned in the process. Now, insects crawl through the rotting mulch littering the floor.

Saben had kept a fairly large supply of food here, mostly preserved meats and fresh vegetables from the garden at B3. A permanent unseen servant prepared and delivered Saben's meals, and still remains in this room, inert.

Rodrei has gorged the worms that make up his body on this food, leaving a small part of himself here to enjoy the mulch it has become. The PCs entrance to this room is likely the first time Rodrei is aware of the PCs in the tower, absorbed in the lockbox as he is. He will do nothing with this information, but will not be caught by surprise upstairs should the PCs enter this room.

C7. Alchemical Lab

Read the following:

The wide table against the far wall is made from a single slab of stone, and balanced atop it are a collection of delicate philters and phials. It appears there were once other tables flanking it, too, but their contents are now reduced to a layer of fine, broken glass on the floor of the room.

While Saben was barely an average alchemist, he was still a savant when compared to Rodrei's abysmal skill. After failing to find anything immediately valuable here, Rodrei attempted to brew up his own concoction, attempting to make use of the wide variety of ingredients and tools here.

For his efforts, Rodrei managed to create a concoction that quickly engulfed the table he was brewing it on, and everything else is could reach beside. Fortunately, the door to the room is warded against acid, or the newly created life would have continued to grow and devour everything else within the tower when Rodrei quickly locked it in here.

Creature: The concoction Rodrei created is no more complex than a single cell – though many times the size, and certainly more corrosive. It will not attack the PCs immediately, but it resents being prodded at, and will eventually follow the PCs up the stairs should they attempt to leave it be.

Alchemical Amoeba

Small ooze, neutral

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 19 (3d6+9)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	6 (-2)	17 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances acid, fire

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this range), passive perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The ooze can move through any space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Acidic Body. Any creature striking an alchemical amoeba with an unarmed strike must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d6 + 1) acid damage from contact with the creature's surface. This damage occurs each round a creature maintains contact with an alchemic amoeba, such as while grappling.

Globules. An alchemical amoeba can form up to two globules of acidic cytoplasm on its surface, and launch them up to 30 ft., exploding with acidic cytoplasm upon striking any solid surface.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The alchemical aomeba makes two attacks with its pseudopod or two attacks with its globules.

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage.

Globules. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. **Hit:** 3 (1d6) acid damage. Any creature within 5 ft. of the spot where the globule lands must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) acid damage on a failure. The creature takes half as much damage on a success.

Skill Check

A **DC 20 Wisdom (perception) check** to search the room reveals a secret room containing exactly what Rodrei had been seeking, a valuable cache of potions. The door, while hidden, is unlocked.

Read the following:

A section of wall slides back, revealing a triangular storeroom behind. On the single shelf sit rows of flasks, both full and empty, and a pair of large carafes.

Treasure

Inside this secret area, Saben kept a number of supplies; four *potions of healing*; two large carafes, one containing 5 doses of alchemist's fire, one containing 3 doses of acid, as well as a siphoning system, and a total of fifteen empty flasks each large enough for a single dose. See official entry for potion stats.

C8. Crafting Workshop

The edges of the wide marble cylinder that dominate this room are covered with row after row of softly glowing runes, chiseled into the mirror-smooth surface of the stone. The walls of the room are covered with a variety of delicate tools hanging on hooks or set in cases, each similarly elaborately adorned.

Saben used this room to enchant any magic items he needed to make, and its contents have largely been ignored by Rodrei.

If the tools are taken to be sold they worth 200gp.

C9. Library

Read the following:

Though the shelves are irregular in size and shape, they fit together like a puzzle, leaving only narrow aisles between the stacks. In a space near the center of the room sits a single, comfortable looking – though heavily soiled – chair.

Saben's library is extensive in subject matter, and mostly his own work, comprising of hundreds of books. By spending ten minutes searching the room, characters gain advantage on Intelligence checks to gain knowledge from the books.

Treasure

Individually, none of these hundreds of books are particularly valuable. Each of the approximately 800 books could be sold for 5 sp, and weighs 0.5 lbs.

C10. Creature Storage

Read the following:

Small cages are bolted haphazardly to the floor of this room around the perimeter, with a single large cage occupying the center. Despite the bloodstained floor, the creatures inside seem to have starved to death, and are already beginning to heavily decompose.

While Saben was a brilliant wizard, he did still follow a number of unethical practices – particularly that of trapping magical creatures in cages, and cutting pieces of them off to study. To

prevent their escape, each cage was sealed shut by magic – though like many other wards in the tower, they were tied to the now defunct circle of runes outside, and are no longer active. Now, each cage is held shut only by a simple latch.

Unlike other rooms in the tower, this room has thick walls and no windows. It is lit by a permanent light spell affixed to a small orb hanging by a chain from the ceiling.

Rodrei's arrival to the tower was into one of these very cages, where he might have remained for years if not for his debt to be repaid. After several days of watching him suffer, the kyton which Rodrei had made a deal sent a servant to Saben's tower to free him – weakening the barrier just enough for the disincorporated druid to squeeze out, one maggot at a time.

Four of the five other cages contained creatures that have since starved to death outside of Saben's already irregular care, and have become more food for the insects that fill the tower under Rodrei's influence.

Creature: The fifth cage, however, holds a jittery ice mephit called Fizz, who doesn't need to eat, and is fully capable of causing Rodrei plenty of pain despite the worm that walks' lack of solidity. While initially unfriendly, Fizz does know what happened, and can inform the PCs of the details of Rodrei's escape and the days since if they promise to free him. Once freed, if the PCs offer him any sort of further payment for the task, he will join the upcoming fight against Rodrei. If the PCs free or ally with Fizz, grant them experience as if they defeated him in combat.

Combat

(1) Ice Mephit, CR 1/2; 100 xp; Easy. See the official entry for full Ice Mephit stats.



C11. Summoning Circle

Read the following:

Cutting out from the side of the building, this large circle of runes is open to the air. Only a narrow railing stands between you and the roof far below – while disembodied whispering voices urge you to jump.

The runes of this circle, carved in the iron of the floor, bind these places closer to the other planes than most of the world. As a result, it is particularly easy for things to leak through, whether they are the voices of the long-departed, or worse things that live in the dark.

Creature: One creature in particular floats just a few feet above the circle – the messenger of the devil that Rodrei owes his soul to, an imp. It is the creature that freed him from the cage, and it continues to watch over him, delighting in his madness. It waits patiently here for each attempt of Rodrei's to appease it, occasionally flying off to survey the area before returning.

Combat

(1) Imp, CR 1; 200 xp; Easy. See the official entry for full Imp stats.



C12. Upper Landing

Read the following:

The landing at the top of the stairs is littered with the skins of thousands of molting insects.

While observant PCs might notice a lack of additional stairs leading upwards from here, there is nothing of particular interest here on the landing. Instead, this space provides a likely staging area for PCs before their final battle with Rodrei.

C13. Saben's Bedroom

Read the following:

This room must be Saben's bedroom, but even at a glance you can tell something is wrong. The covers have been tossed off the lonely bed in the center of the room, and the half-naked wizard lays motionless above his sheets. To the side, a thin curtain is drawn across a long archway leading into another room.

The late Saben Behi lies here, just as he was sleeping when Rodrei snuck in and slit his throat. Saben didn't even struggle, simply bleeding out his life in a matter of moments into his self-cleaning sheets – not even leaving obvious evidence of his own death.

Rodrei has since filled the wizard's body with thousands of maggots, allowing them to devour him from the inside out. When characters attempt to examine the body, read to them the following:

At the slightest touch, Saben's skin sloughs off his body, releasing thousands of flies into the air. The air vibrates from their wings only for a moment before they disperse, out the windows and into the jungle around the tower.

If the PCs have not yet entered the study to fight Rodrei, also read the following:

As the insects disperse, the curtain begins to shuffle, and around its edges, along the floor, walls and ceiling come crawling hundreds of insects, worms, and maggots.



Treasure

Beneath Saben's bed is a sizable chest containing several changes of clothing, already in disarray from Rodrei's earlier search. However, even despite the lack of individually valuable pieces the clothing is sewn with gold and small gems, making each of the nine outfits worth 30gp.

C14. Study

Read the following:

Crawling insects cover every inch of space in this room, almost blotting out the light from the window. The biting and gnawing swarm has destroyed much of the room's former contents, though a desk and several shelves seem to have suffered years of decay instead of total destruction. Piles of what might have been books and scrolls are now little more than fragments of parchment amid piles of worms.

In the center of all this is a hunched figure, wearing a close-cut robe and running its gloved hands over a long box. He stops and turns to you after a moment, revealing his face to be made of thousands of squirming maggots and worms. A single jewel emerges from the writing mass like an eye, spins once, and then vanishes back into the figure's head.

This worm-faced figure is Rodrei Ka, one of the weakest worms that walks ever to have risen. His own fear of death and moderate incompetence at the spread of rot and decay led him to make a deal with an Imp – immortal life as a worm that walks in exchange for his spreading of evil and eventually his soul descending to hell.

Being short-sighted as he is, Rodrei regrets having made such a deal, and has grown slowly more and more panicked in attempting to find a way out – particularly in some form of alternative payment. He has torn Saben's tower apart looking for anything that might be worth as much to his debtors.

But, Saben was about as interested in material goods as he was in people in general, and spent all the wealth he had earned on further experiments, and this tower itself. Rodrei has scavenged several bags of valuable components from elsewhere in the tower, and has found an unopened gift in a sealed case on one of Saben's shelves – which he has been attempting to open for nearly a week now with no success.

Rodrei Ka

Medium humanoid (worm that walks), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (16 with barkskin)

Hit Points 36 (4d8+16)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +5, Insight +5

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; passive perception 15

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, sleep effects, stunned

Languages Common, Druidic, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. Rodrei Ka regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn. If Rodrei Ka takes acid or fire damage, this ability no longer functions at the start of his next turn.

Discorporeate. Rodrei Ka can use his wildshape ability to take on the form of a swarm of insects (see official entry for statistics). While in this form his regeneration ability no longer functions.

Wild shape. As a druid Rodrei Ka can take on the forms of animals he has seen. He has two uses of wildshape ability and must take a short or long rest to regain expended uses. He can stay in animal form for two hours per expended use of wildshape. Unique to his new form all animals he becomes function as normal but appear to be made up of thousands of insects.

Wildshape forms. hawk, swarm of insects, crocodile. (see official entry for statistics).

Spellcasting. Rodrei Ka is a 4th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Rodrei Ka has the following spells and slots available:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *barkskin*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit (+6 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh* or if wielded with two hands.

Combat

Rodrei Ka, CR 5; 1,800 xp; Deadly.

During Combat Rodrei is a worried fighter, and as soon as combat is joined will cast *barkskin* and *shillelagh*. He will focus his attacks on any targets that are holding objects that look valuable, hoping to kill at least one target in case the group flees. Rodrei will fight until reduced to less than 5hp, at which point he will wild shape into a hawk (one still made of insects) and flee out the tower window. He will not pursue characters that flee down the stairs.

While the insects drawn to Rodrei are themselves harmless, they can be targeted by area effects to rob Rodrei of his regeneration ability. Any area effects centered on Rodrei that does at least one point of damage causes the insects around him to flee. So long as Rodrei is in an area without insects, he does not gain the benefits of his regeneration ability. The insects return after one round.

Too difficult? Consider removing his regeneration ability if you think he is a bit too hard for your players.

Too easy? Consider adding 1d4 giant ants (see above) under Rodrei Kas's control.

Treasure

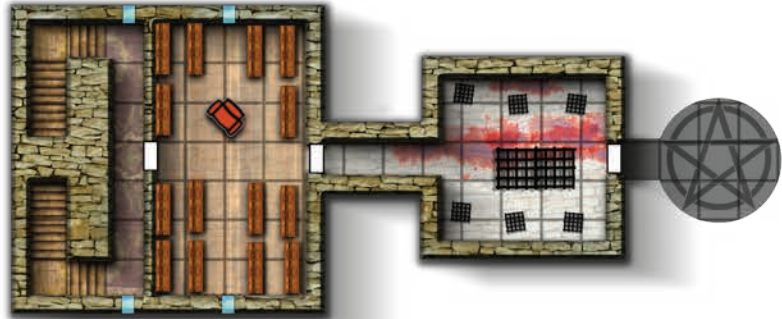
The lockbox Rodrei struggles with isn't as powerful or as complex as he was worried about, it is simply a lead box warded to remain closed while within 10 ft. of any evil creature. Once the box has been opened, the enchantment fades leaving only the lead box itself and its contents, a *dagger of venom* (see official statistics for more information).

In addition to the lockbox are two sacks of rare spell components from C2; 500gp of onyx, 50gp in gold dust, 250gp in small rubies and a +1 *long sword*. The bags had previously contained a number of other more disposable ingredients as well, but they have long since been ruined by the insects.

Chapter 3 - Laying Saben to Rest

No doubt the PCs, after travelling all this way will be interested in informing the Lunar Academy or Saben's family of his demise. As these are in separate countries, the PCs will soon have to make the decision to brave the jungle, and desert once more.





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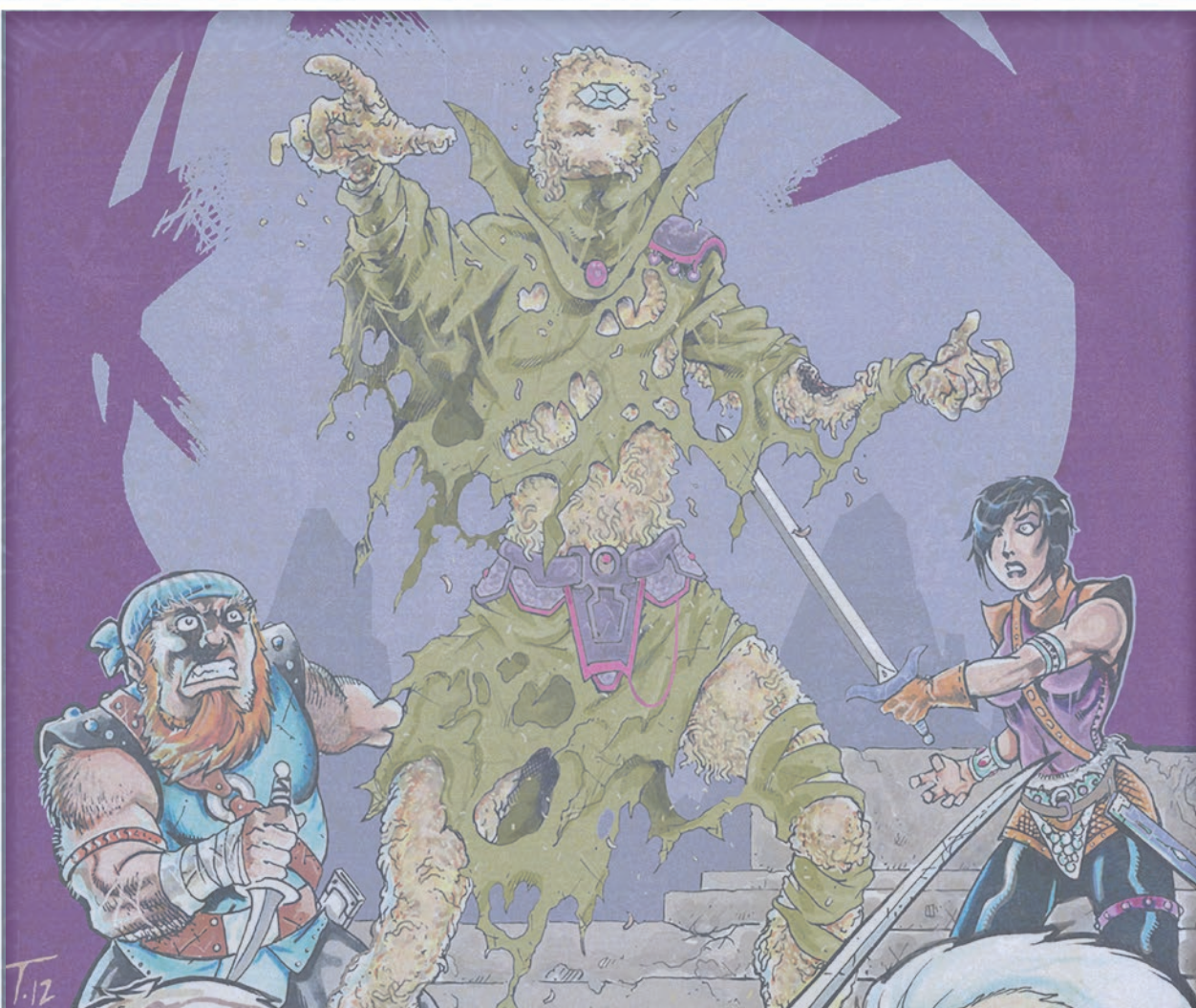
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A 5th Edition compatible adventure for four to six 1st to 2nd level PCs

Saben Behi is lauded amongst his peers for his study of the very nature of magic has touched lives across the world. But he remains secluded, and has suddenly fallen silent after suggesting he was studying the art of necromancy to extend one's life forever.

The PCs arrive at the wizard's tower to find it in disarray, rapidly dissolving into a rotten mess. What has Saben brought upon himself - or worse, what might he have become?

Also included in "Under His Skin":

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