THE TOWER

Contents

Introduction Scenario Design Competition

Setting

The Tower is a one off role-playing scenario nominally set in the tower of a powerful wizard, Kalin. The player characters are all various familiars, either assistants or experiments, who live in the wizard's laboratory. *The Tower* is a surreal mixture of

technology and magic. The game begins just after the familiars have witnessed the slaughter of Kalin, by a demon he had summoned. The frightened familiars must cooperate to flee the tower.

CHARACTERS

There are four familiars. The scenario requires each of these familiars to be a player character. The four characters are:

BATTLE IMP

The Battle Imp is a 50cm tall, animated suit of armour, holding a two-handed sword. Battle Imp was once a knight-errant sent to the wizard's tower by the King to rescue the Princess, whom it was feared that the wizard would sacrifice. The knight was defeated, his memory destroyed and imprisoned in the metallic body of the Battle Imp to serve as the wizard's bodyguard. With the death of the wizard, the knight's memories have returned.

BOOK

The Book is the wizard's ambulatory spell book. It is a magical tome spread open, with a pair of legs sprouting beneath. It is around one meter tall. The pages of the book flicker rapidly when it is in thought. Unfortunately Book has become damaged somehow with the death of the wizard and can no longer competently access the knowledge it contains.

JAW

The Jaw was the result of an earlier demon summoning experiment conducted by the wizard. It is a large mouth (filled with sharp teeth), some squat legs and an incredible digestive system. The wizard has been using the Jaw as a rubbish bin.

JACK-O-LANTERN

Jack-O-Lantern is a 50cm tall man made of straw. His head is a Halloween-pumpkin, within which burns a magical fire. The Jack-O-Lantern was the light by which the wizard read the book. There is some rivalry between Jack-O-Lantern and the book.

RULES

RESOLUTION

This scenario is designed for a very basic resolution system. The players may attempt any action they wish with their characters and may describe an intended outcome. The referee describes the actual outcome of these actions. Generally any action that uses a character's skills or attributes will be successful. Actions clearly beyond the capability of a character will fail. If the referee cannot decide they should ask the player to roll a dice. High numbers are good, low numbers are bad.

The referee should not be afraid to improvise or modify aspects of the scenario. When making modifications the referee should consider that the scenario is meant to be fun, anachronistic, and about the interactions between the player's characters. The

scenario is *not* a tactical wargame. It is advised that the referee takes a permissive rather than confrontational approach to the actions of the players.

CHARACTER RULES

Each of the characters has special 'rules' associated with them. The players should *not* be told what these rules are, but the referee should consider the rules when resolving the actions of the characters.

BATTLE IMP

Battle Imp is effectively immortal. Very little in the tower can cause it actual harm, although the referee should still describe the dents and scratches the Battle Imp picks up in play- for paranoia purposes.

The Battle Imp is a part of the tower itself. Even if it is somehow destroyed Battle Imp will be resurrected by the tower and will appear in the Armoury room (page 18), with all of its memories, of the session, intact. If the power has been cut to the tower (page 17) the Battle Imp cannot be resurrected. Also, once the tower loses power the Battle Imp will begin to shutdown. The referee should make their own judgement as to the length of time until permanent shutdown, and until that time periodically describe the gradual degradation of the Battle Imp's reflexes to the players. Ideally the Battle Imp should not completely shut down until nearly the end of the session.

BOOK

Book is able to telepathically communicate with another entity called Index. It is by consulting the Index that the Book can access the knowledge it contains within its pages.

The Index is damaged. Some responses that the Index can make are listed on page 20 and 21. Those on page 20 are 'true' responses, while on page 21 are error messages. The referee should photocopy, cut out and familiarise himself with these entries before the game. Generally the Index will respond with an error message unless the Book specifically asks for one of the 'true' responses, although the referee should feel free to improvise similar entries as they see fit- particularly if the players become hung up on a particular issue. The player controlling the Book is likely to become very aloof and distant from the practical considerations of the other players and spend most of his time puzzling over the operation of the Index. This is intended but the referee should be careful that the Book player does not monopolise his time.

The Book can become damaged principally by damage to its pages. The referee should take particular relish in describing the tearing and burning of pages, followed by error messages from the Index. This will worry the players.

JAW

Like the Battle Imp, Jaw is effectively immortal. Nothing much can damage it- except the wizard Kalin, the demon Quotal and the Battle Imp. The Jaw can eat almost anything in the game (except the walls of the tower, the bars of its cage, the head of Jack-O-Lantern and the Battle Imp), and can eat any volume of material. Obviously, eating something large will take time and may result in Jaw becoming bloated. (A play-test Jaw ate the sea on page 18).

Jack-⊕-Lantern

Jack-O-Lantern's head contains a magic flame (his brain) and his pumpkin head cannot be damaged except by the demon Quotal. Jack-O-Lantern's body, however, is made of straw, which can easily be damaged, torn or eaten. Damage to Jack-O-Lantern's body has no effect on his head or thinking processes. Jack-O-Lantern can be restuffed and repaired fairly easily. The straw is flammable, but it will not be set alight by his head in normal circumstances.

Jack-O-Lantern's head contains two personalities; the player controls one. The other personality is the magically preserved soul of the wizard, Kalin, played by the referee. Kalin will not reveal who he is and although he is capable of telepathically speaking to the primary personality he will refrain from doing so unless absolutely necessary- for fear of discovery by the demons. Kalin is telepathically aware of any conversation between Book and Index and anything that occurs in the tower- except the actions of Jaw. If Jack-O-Lantern is destroyed, Kalin will be too.

⊕ther Systems

The Tower is generic and can be adapted, by the referee, to any rules system. It is recommended that a rules-light fantasy system be used.

Character Backgr⊕unds

Following are character backgrounds. These should be photocopied and given to each player. It is important that the players do not read each other's background until the end of the scenario. The backgrounds give some idea of the mental stability of the characters and the players should be encouraged to act and speak like the characters do in their backgrounds.
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⌐AW

i wiz jus mining me oh-nin bisniss. jus mucking bout eting stuff. thaz wat i like doing eting things. i wiz in the abyss. thaz where i livz. i'm justa wee demon tho. i just et things i donna kear wha it iz i just like eting sumthin. thare a big demon who tellz me wha 2 do. one day thiz demon, hiz name iz Quoltal he sed 2 me. "SUM FUKIN MAJISHIN IZ TRI-ING TA SUMMON ME. HEZ URTIN MY HED SO I IS SENDING U 2 HIM." "hang about" i sayz "i donna wan to c no majishin ether. ure bigga u go c him." then Quoltal he gos oll sighko, hiz iz roll back an he sed "U FUKIN LITTLE BUGIR U GO THRU THA PORTAL OR I ILL RIP YAW FUKIN JAW OFF, HAW HAW HAW, AN I ILL PULL OLL YAW BLUDY TEAF OUT AN .... "-fairnuf" i sed "juz chekin. sopose i ill go thru this portal thing then"

thare waz a big phlash of lite then i waz in thiz little rume. juz fukin grate i think 2 micellelf. woden flores an benchis, lotz of boks an stuf. i luke down an im standin ina chulk penta watzit thin. bludy hell i think thiz loks like a fukin riot don it. thiz guy ina black dress is in thiz rume. hez standing ina nuther penta thin of candils. thare a nife in hiz hand, blood oll ovur tha flore ana girlee, ware-ring a krown, tied ona grownd. tha girlee ona flore waznot ded, but she waz pail. tha poof ina black dress is proboblee tha wizzad i think. juz as i think this i iz sudenlee ina kage.

tha kages wa maid ofa funne sorta metal that i canny chew thru wid ma teaf. thare waza wee nite ina nutha kage. a wee mite nite he waz. wareing shyne metal armore wid a sord. thare waza a nutha wee fella maid of straw wid a flamin pumpkin fura hed in da rume. reele flamin it was, some sorta fire inside. i thought he mite set tha straw on fire but he didn; prete funne if he did tho. tha utha two didne say nuthin much 2 me. tha wizzad spen mosta hiz tyme in tha rume witha bok of hiz. tha bok prete odd too. it got legs an stuff an wondas arownd tha rume. i think i saw it sein sumthin to tha pumpkin hed but i donno. it dunna have a mouf eneway. i kinda furgot how long i staid in this kage. tha wizzad keep givin me stuf ta et so i waz prete hapee.

 then this mourning the majishin startd to reed from hiz bok, sum of tha majik wurds an stuf. hez drawn ona flure too. nutha won of those penta watzits. hair we go again im thinkin hope he doesn't get won of tha orribill big bugirs inna void. us demons in tha abyss are much betta. then wha shod hapen but auld Quotal jump outa tha pentagram. tha wizzad just aboot had a fit. donna think he waz redde, bent ova drawin ona grownd like tha. Quotal stuk hiz klawz inna wizzad. blud an stuf all ova tha flure again, but this tyme the wizzards blud. prete fukin funne i'm thinkn. when Quotal disapaired. then i hair Quotal spekin to me in me hed. "THA WIZZAD HAZ FLED HIZ BODEE. HEZ IN THA BODEE OF WON OF THA UTHA FAMILYARS. I CANNY STAY LONG IN THA WORLD. ONLEE LONG ENOUF 2 KILL WON MORE. FIND WITCH OF THA UTHA FAMILYAR'S IS THA WIZZAD. THEN SUMMIN <upload> ME WITH THA BOK. THEN I ILL KILL THA WIZZAD AN FREE U. THA WIZZAD WILL BE TRI-ING 2 FIND ANUTHA HUMAN BODEE- HE IS STRONGA IN THEM. FAIL AN I ILL TARE U TA BITZ." fuckin loudmouth demon king. supose i ill tri an do wha he wantz. it ill be betta if i kan get outa tha kage 1st.

CHARACTER SHEET:

Name	**Jaw.**
Attributes	**Tough, Agile and Psychotic.**
Skills	**Eating.**
Possessions	**whadt u think im a fuckin demon; i do tha possesions.**
	eneway i got no blude pockets
	…or arms.

B ⊕ ⊕ K

Once upon a time, there was a handsome young man. He lived in a village, nested at the head of a wooded valley, so long ago that the name of the village has been forgotten. The young man was apprenticed to be a blacksmith, like his father and his father before.

Unfortunately the young man wasn't any good at smithing. He tried as hard as he could, to please his father, but he lacked the art. He couldn't speak to the metal like his father, couldn't hear the iron spirit sing. He couldn't form a mould from the black-sand. Horseshoes cracked when he quenched them. Sickles shattered at first use and his wagon wheels were acentric.

So one day the young man decided to leave the village and travel to the city. He had heard much about the city from travellers, the city and its King. Even as he sat and sweated in his father's smithy, the King's armies marched across the continent, forging a kingdom that would rival that of the ancient Golden Empire.

In the dawn light the young man walked away from his village. As he glanced back, he could see smoke from the early morning fires meander over the trees into the blue sky. He almost turned from the path. Then, on the edge of hearing, he could just detect the staccato ring of his father, pounding at the anvil- beginning the day's work. Breathing deep, the young man faced away from the village and walked away.

Staggering.

Dark clouds swept across the night sky like giant bats. Rain drove down on the young man as he ran from tree to tree. Drenched his clothes offered no protection from the storm. Lightning arced through the night, briefly illuminating the path. By the time the thunder rolled overhead the young man had tripped on a fallen branch. Another blinding flash and the man is standing again.

Flash.

Running along side a swollen river. Flash. Bursting out of the forest. Flash. Standing still in a wind swept field. Flash. Dwarfed by a huge, dark monolithic shape. Flash. Crouching, shivering at a mammoth stone door. Flash. The door grinds open. Flash. Shapes, movement, clawed hands, reaching. Flash. An empty doorstep, set in the side of the Tower. Flash. An empty field, wheat blowing as the storm passes overhead. Flash. A final, distant laugh of thunder echoes.

That is the earliest story. Maybe it is the truth; maybe it is a lie. It was written so long ago that I can't remember. I am the Book. My purpose is to witness, to record, to never forget. But I'm running out of pages. Everyday I record less. New events overwrite old. The Index keeps telling me <file allocation error: Disk full>. But still Kalin expects me to work. "Don't worry I'll get you more memory", he said. I don't even know what he's talking about. The Index just says: <bad clusters: cascading format? y/n>.

But Kalin's gone. He tried to summon a demon king, and it killed him. The blood touched the ceiling.

Currently I am standing in Kalin's laboratory. The floor is slippery from Kalin's blood. Under his work-bench is a small demon Jaw, the Battle Imp, and Jack-O-Lantern. They are held in cages. The Index keeps saying <download core-memory: address: 000FD:A76B1.78>

CHARACTER SHEET:

Name	**Book.**
Attributes	**Learned and Confused.**
Skills	**Literacy and Memory.**
Possessions	**The Index.**

Jack‑⊕‑Lantern

Physically I am about 40cm. I have a sculpted pumpkin for a head, it contains my brains. My brains are a ball of flame suspended in the centre of the pumpkin. My body is made of straw. Sometimes it is an effort not to set myself alight. Of course I was not always like this, but I can remember only a little of my life before the wizard Kalin turned me into a familiar. Once, I think, I was an apprentice to a wizard- maybe Kalin, or maybe to Quotal (?whoever he is?).

Kalin just uses me to read by. It's not fair, he just thinks I'm a glorified lantern. He spends all his time looking at and talking to the book, that's the demented encyclopaedia with legs over there. Why doesn't he look at me, why doesn't he talk to me? I'm just as important as the book. If I wasn't here he couldn't even see the book, but does he think about that. Nooo. It's always "Please turn to this page... remember this...Oh you're such a good book".

Kalin only ever says "Follow" to me. "Follow": can you believe how arrogant he is. Then when he doesn't want me he just puts me in this cage. A cage, what am I, some kind of animal. Only the book's allowed out by itself. Stupid fucking book.

The book's gone senile, did you know? It keeps forgetting things. Once Kalin got mad with it, kicked it. Reckons he's going to get it more memory. I told him I could remember things for him, he doesn't need the book. I can remember stuff too.

"That's right," Kalin said. "You've got much more memory than the book. – but it's a secret."

A secret. Me. I'm the chosen one. Isn't that exciting? The book's going to be so jealous. I'd better not tell anyone though, especially not that walking garbage can. I don't trust it. It's a demon. Kalin summoned it, a bit after he captured the Battle Imp. He's going to summon another demon. A demon king. I hope it's not violent....

Holy Fuck, what is that?
.
.
.
Arragh, blood everywhere. Kalin!
.
.
.
Kalin's been killed by the demon king...arragh, Panic, Panic!

æ«ªš{{{{{ƒlŒ3q'7°j ◼

000FD:A76B1.77
<Jack-O-Lantern, autonomous drone. 80% AI. Power Unit: Internal: Type 1
209:16(2) 0.025m Inset date: 4567.344.07.692>

<data error: cascaded backup failure>

<tight band: memory dump>
<unexpected: data stream>: <error checking protocol ref 9478A5602D>: <emergency measures>

<DAZEMA>

where am I? what happened? who am I?

<systems: diagnostics: external referencing inactive>

external references? who said that? Am I meant to have external referencing? … I guess that means I have internal referencing too. I wonder what that is- maybe it is me. What's that? Room, cage, book. They're not internal … are they? How long have I been here? What's that mess over there? Who was speaking before? Who were they speaking to? Me? You? Then who am I? Who are you?… I can remember things. I can remember stars. What does that mean?

Whoa, Fuck. What is going on here?

CHARACTER SHEET:

Name	**Jack-O-Lantern.**
Attributes	**Agile, Flammable and Memory.**
Skills	**Illumination, Literacy.**
Possessions	**Brains (Hmm…aren't strawmen meant to be missing brains? I can see a tin-man, where's the lion and the girl and the dog?)**

Battle Imp

I am the King's Champion, sworn to protect the royal blood; protector of Princess Dazema. My name, Kithryn Thode, is renowned throughout the realm. I must save the Princess from the Wizard.

No-one knows where the Wizard comes from. One moonless night, about two weeks ago, his tower appeared on the outskirts of the royal capital. The King sent a herald up the marble steps to the portal at the foot of the windowless tower. As the herald approached, the heavy, ironbound, oak doors swung open. The herald cautiously stepped inside; the doors crashed shut like thunder. For days nothing was heard from the tower. No-one else could get the doors to open. The basalt surface of the tower was impervious to all attempts to scry inside. Then on the eleventh day the doors creaked open and the herald was ejected from the tower. Again the doors crashed shut behind him.

The herald was near death. As he lay, pale and panting, in the shadow of the dark tower he gasped out this last message to his lord. The Wizard was Kalin the Black. He required royal blood, as a sacrificial component in a spell. If the King did not volunteer the Princess within two days, for this "unique opportunity to serve mankind", Kalin would begin to destroy the City until the Princess was freely given. The herald shuddered and retched forth a bloody tangle of rotting organs. He had been dead for days.

The King placed a company of men-at-arms around the tower but did nothing else, he would not give up his daughter. The deadline came and passed and that night the city burned. It was as if the gods themselves had brought their wrath upon the City. Huge flaming rocks crashed from the sky onto the city. Deafening explosions rocked the air and the air stank with the smell of burning wood, burning houses and burning people.

When morning came all was quiet. A quarter of the citizens lay dead in the street but still the king would not give his daughter- the princess Dazema- to Kalin. Dazema, pleaded with her father to surrender- to prevent the death of more citizens. The King refused and locked her in the castle. All that day sappers worked at the base of the tower, attempting to collapse the tower. But no matter how far down they dug they could not find the end of the foundations.

That night the fires came again.

By now half the city had been killed and those who still lived were streaming out into the countryside and yet still the King would not give up his daughter. The Princess remained locked in the castle. That night however she conspired with her handmaidens and escaped the castle. Flanked by her handmaidens, under the cover of darkness, the Princess made her way to the Tower, which pointed at the sky at the edge of the City. As brave as the bravest knight, perhaps braver, she stood on the threshold of the Tower. The door opened wide and she gave herself to the Wizard.

The next morning there was rejoicing: the fire had not come from the sky. Then the rejoicing turned to despair when the absence of the Princess was discovered. The King summoned me to the throne room, and charged me to rescue Dazema.

I stood in front of the basalt monolith, as Dazema had during the night. Frightened cityfolk peered at me from beyond the ring of guards that surrounded the Tower. The door swung open and the entire city gasped at the scene that lay within. Dazema, pale, lay tied to a sacrificial altar, just inside door. A cowled, black robed figure stood over her, with a long pointed dagger. I leaped inside, drawing my sword.

The door crashed shut behind me.

The world spun into darkness.

When I next opened my eyes I was standing in a cage on the floor. I am in a giant's room. The room seems to be some kind of laboratory. That huge bench over there has lots of glass vessels and things on it. There are two cages either side of me. One contains a man who appears to be made of straw. He has a grinning pumpkin, lit by a soft yellow light, for a head. The other cage contains some horrible looking creature that is almost completely jaw. A pile of half-eaten rubbish and waste surrounds it. Outside the cages in the middle of the room is a book. It's the strangest book I have ever seen. The book is the size of a man and open with its spine facing the floor. It is waddling around the room on a pair of legs that have sprouted from its cover. The book seems to be wandering around a pattern chalked on the floor. There is a great deal of blood on the floor around the chalk pattern.

My priority is to find and rescue the Princess Dazema. It is probably not a good idea to fool around with any of the wizard's magic stuff.

CHARACTER SHEET:

Name **Battle Imp.**
Attributes **Strong and Tough.**
Skills **Combat and Warrior stuff.**
Possessions **Gothic Plate and Sword.**

Lⲟⲥⲁⲧⲓⲟⲛⲋ

The tower has three levels. The lower level is a Ballroom occupied by a tribe of goblins. The middle level is Kalin's Workshop, where the familiars begin the game. The final level is a Hall of Rooms. The three levels are connected by a stairwell. The three levels do not make geometric sense; they could not fit in a real tower. Although it should be noted that those characters who have "memories" of the outside of the tower remember it as a simple, tall, black, windowless tower. None of the characters have useful memories of the internal layout of the tower. The diagram beneath shows how the levels are connected.

THE TOWER

Hall of Rooms

Workshop

Ballroom
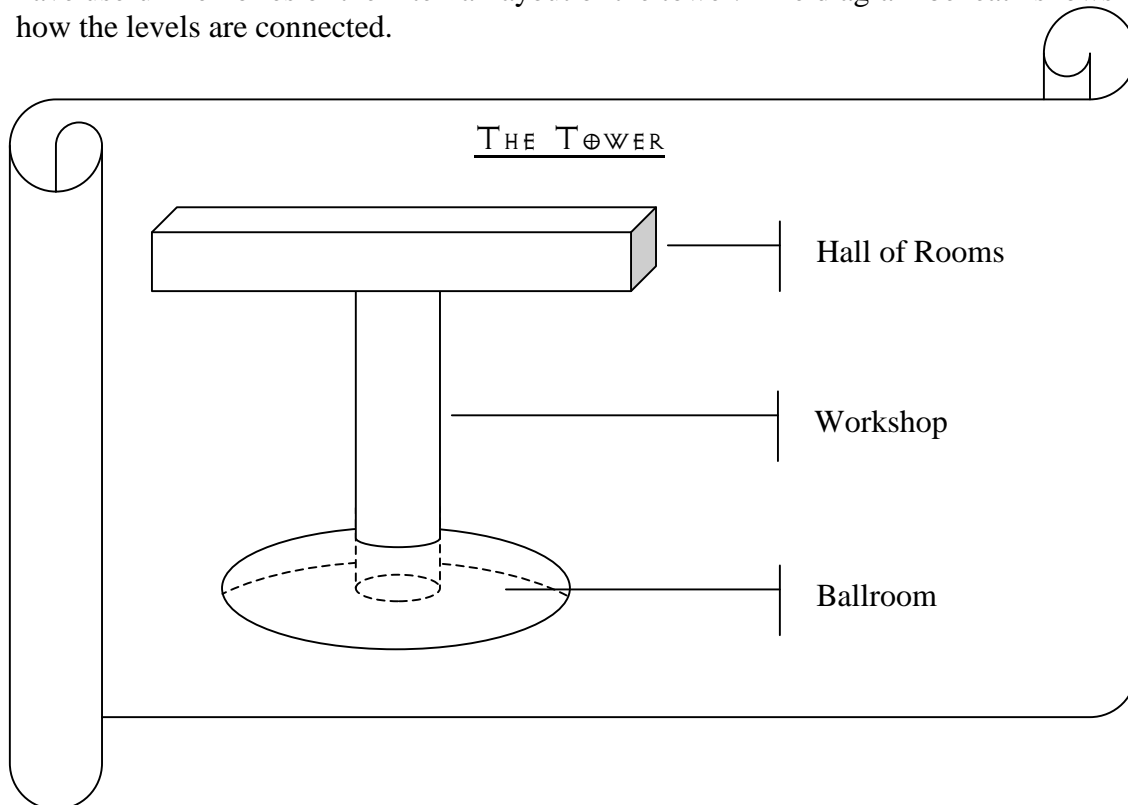
Kalin's Wⲟrkshⲟp
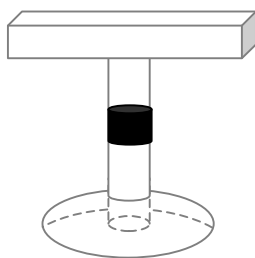
Kalin's workshop is a cramped, circular room around 10m in diameter. It is filled with a number of workbenches and bookshelves. The workbenches contain alchemist's glassware and samples of strange minerals, soils and unidentifiable organic material. Underneath one of the benches are three cages which contain: Battle Imp, Jaw and Jack-O-Lantern. Jaw's cage has bits of rubbish (paper, straw, broken beakers etc) surrounding it. There is chalk pentagram in the middle of the room. The pentagram contains Kalin- only his robe and a large amount of blood remain: some of his blood splattered the workbenches and a trap door set in the ceiling. The Book is nervously pacing near the pentagram.

If Kalin's robe is searched a piece of chalk and a set of three keys (to the cages) will be found. The cages are locked, have a top and bottom and are too strong for even

Jaw to eat his way out. When the other familiars are trying to get out of the cages it should be remembered that the Book has no arms.

Both the floor and the ceiling are wooden. Both have a trapdoor set in them. The trapdoor on the roof will require a cooperative plan on behalf of the familiars to be reached. Both trapdoors led to stairwells. The lower stairwell leads to the Ballroom, the upper to the Hall of Rooms.

The bookcase contains the following titles: Ambrose, *The Devil's Dictionary*. Biers WR, *The Archaeology of Greece*. de Bono E, *Lateral thinking*. Brain, *Staged Cascades*. Clarke H, *Thoughts on memory*. Descartes R, *Discourse on the Method*. Frobenius, *Linear Elimination*. Mann F, *Physics and Politics*. Newton I, *Philsophiae Naturalis Principa Mathematica*. Rayleigh III, *The Theory of Sound*. Rudd, *Process Control*. Sandler, *Thermodynamics*. Shakespeare W, *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*. Solomon, *Organic Chemistry*. Takakazu, *Storage media*. Thucidydes *History of the Pelopnnesian War*. Waugh E, *Decline and Fall*. Xenophon, *Anabasis*. Xenophon, *Hellenica*. de Witt, *Elements of Curves*.

LEVEL TWO : KALIN'S WORKSHOP
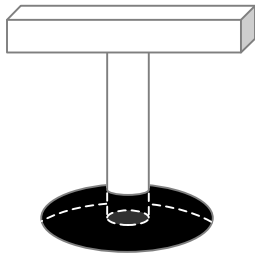
Workbenches

Trapdoors

Cages

Bookcase
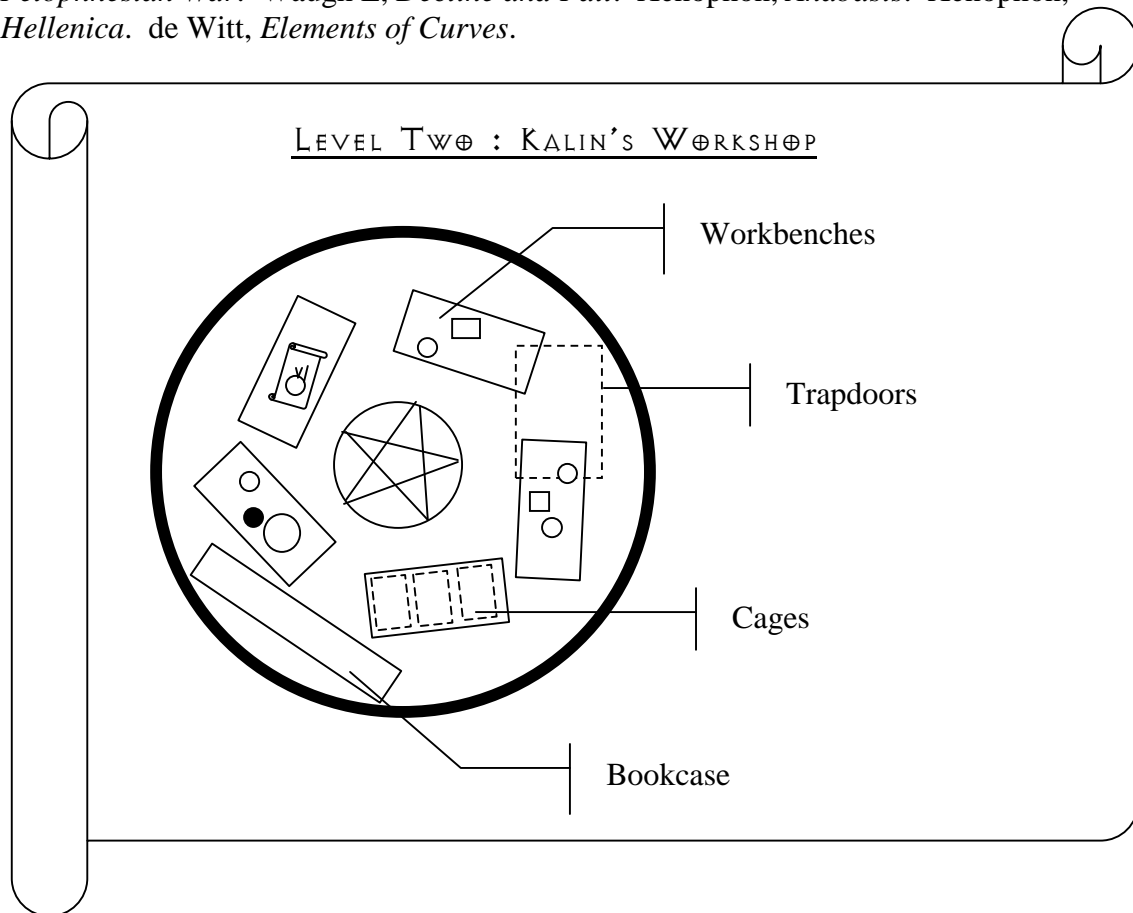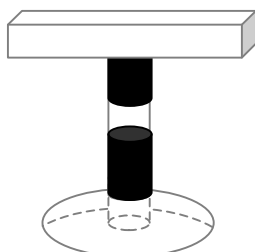
STAIRWELL

The stairwells connect Kalin's laboratory to the Ballroom and the Hall of Rooms. The stairway spirals around the wall of the tower several times. The stairs are made of stone and are around one meter wide. Each step is about twenty centimeters high; this is an uncomfortable height for the familiars.

Bᴀʟʟʀ⊕⊕ᴍ

The ballroom is a huge cavern hundreds of meters wide. The floor is polished and waxed as if ready for a ball. A large chandelier provides an unsatisfactory light. There are three large pillars in the cavern. The centre pillar is the landing to the stairwell, which leads to Kalin's workshop. The left pillar contains an orchestra pit. A tribe of goblins has taken up residence in the orchestra pit. The right pillar contains a secret panel behind which is the reactor control room. Unless the familiars are being especially stealthy, the goblins in the orchestra pit will dash out and attack the familiars as they descend from Kalin's workshop.

The goblins have large watery-luminescent eyes and big pointed ears. The goblins are wearing simple clothes and carrying a motley selection of knives, cleavers, hammers, trumpets and sticks. Their un-booted and clawed feet make scratching noises on the waxed ballroom floor as they scamper towards the familiars.

Nᴀᴍᴇ	**Goblins.**
Aᴛᴛʀɪʙᴜᴛᴇs	**Weak and Sneaky.**
Sᴋɪʟʟs	**Pack Tactics and Musicianship.**
P⊕ssᴇssɪ⊕ns	**Knives and Instruments.**

Nᴀᴍᴇ	**Conductor: Goblin Leader.**
Aᴛᴛʀɪʙᴜᴛᴇs	**Demagogue.**
Sᴋɪʟʟs	**Screeching and Keeping Time.**
P⊕ssᴇssɪ⊕ns	**Wand (baton) and Black Robes.**

There are 15 goblins. If their assault on the familiars goes wrong (as it is likely to) their leader (who unlike his followers is dressed in black robes- in imitation of Kalin- and carries a wand (conductor's baton)) will lead a retreat to the orchestra pit. Here the goblins will make their last stand, if the familiars purse them. If the familiars do not pursue the goblins, they will watch from the darkness. None of the familiars can understand the chattering goblin tongue.

Neither Battle Imp nor Jaw can be particularly damaged by the goblins, although they may be pushed over by weight of numbers. Both Book and Jack-O-Lantern can be damaged.

LEVEL ⊕NE : BALLR⊕⊕M

Stairwell
(to Kalin's Workshop)

Orchestra Pit

Secret Door
 (to reactor control)
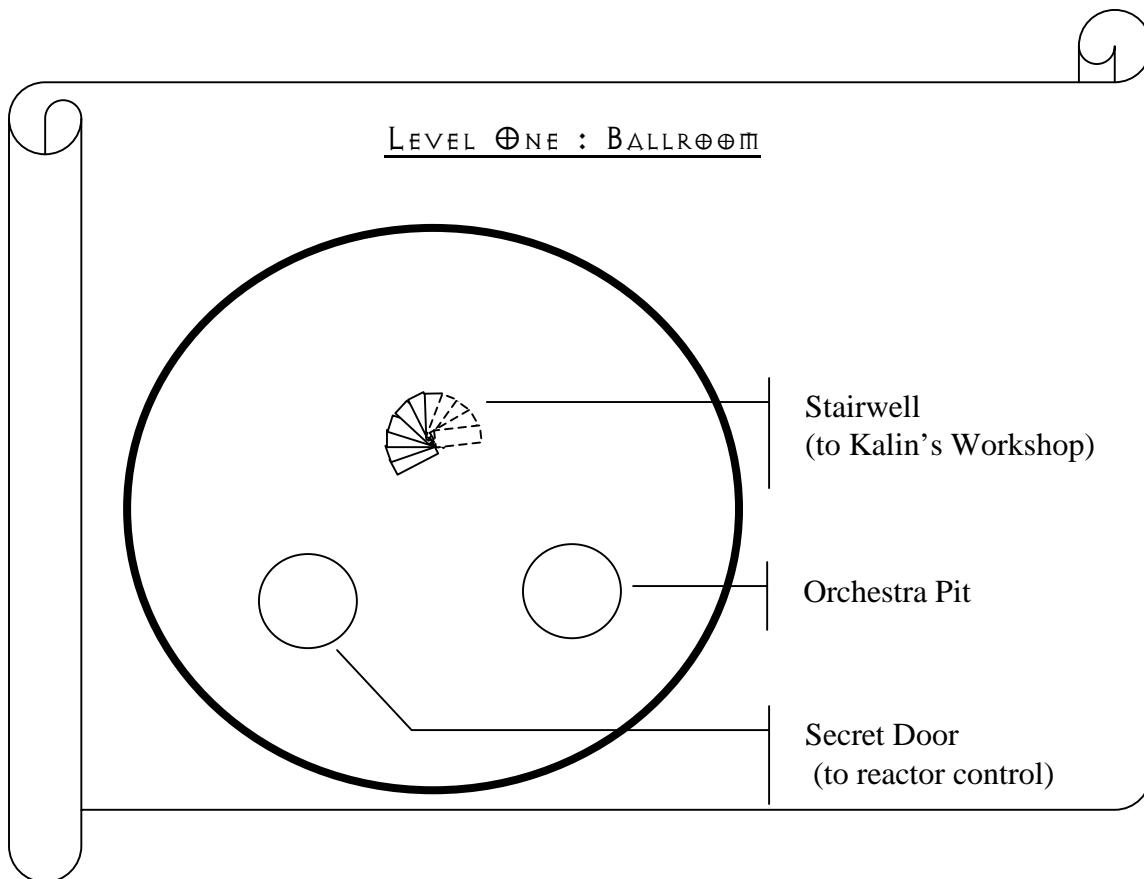
⊕RCHESTRA PIT

The orchestra pit is where the goblins have been living. There are a number of broken instruments (violins, cellos, drums etc) and torn pieces of music in the pit. There is raised podium for the conductor to stand upon. This is where the goblins will make their last stand (if required). The conductor's podium contains a lectern with a heavily bound book. All the pages are blank, except for the first, which reads:

<fatal read/write error: download new memory core>

REACT⊕R C⊕NTR⊕L R⊕⊕M

The door to the reactor control room is hidden in the third pillar in the ballroom. It is reasonably easy for the familiars to spot it, if they look for it. The reactor control room is circular and contains a large bottomless pit, which almost fills the room and emits a cold blue glow. Occasionally jagged arcs of lightning leap from the pit, especially when metal objects approach the pit (Battle Imp).

On the far side of the pit (from the door) is a large circuit breaker lever. The lever is currently up. If the lever is pulled down, the blue glow ceases and the Tower begins to shut down. The referee should use their own judgment as to the operational time remaining, depending on the length of the session and the progress of the players. The referee should describe the gradual failure of systems in the Tower, for example: the Chandelier in the Ballroom begins to flicker, the Battle Imp becomes arthritic and the Index issues error messages.

Hall of Rooms
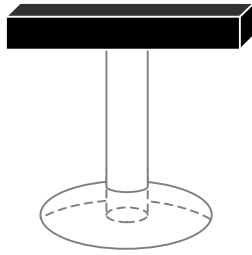
At the top of the Tower the stairwell opens out into an infinitely long hallway. Every few meters along the hallway is a large door: a big, heavy, oak door. Each door has a number (like: 380E2:230D5.29) printed upon it. None of the doors are locked and all are shut, except one a few down from the stairwell.

Level Three : Hall of Rooms

Stairwell
(to Kalin's Workshop)

Open Door

Doors
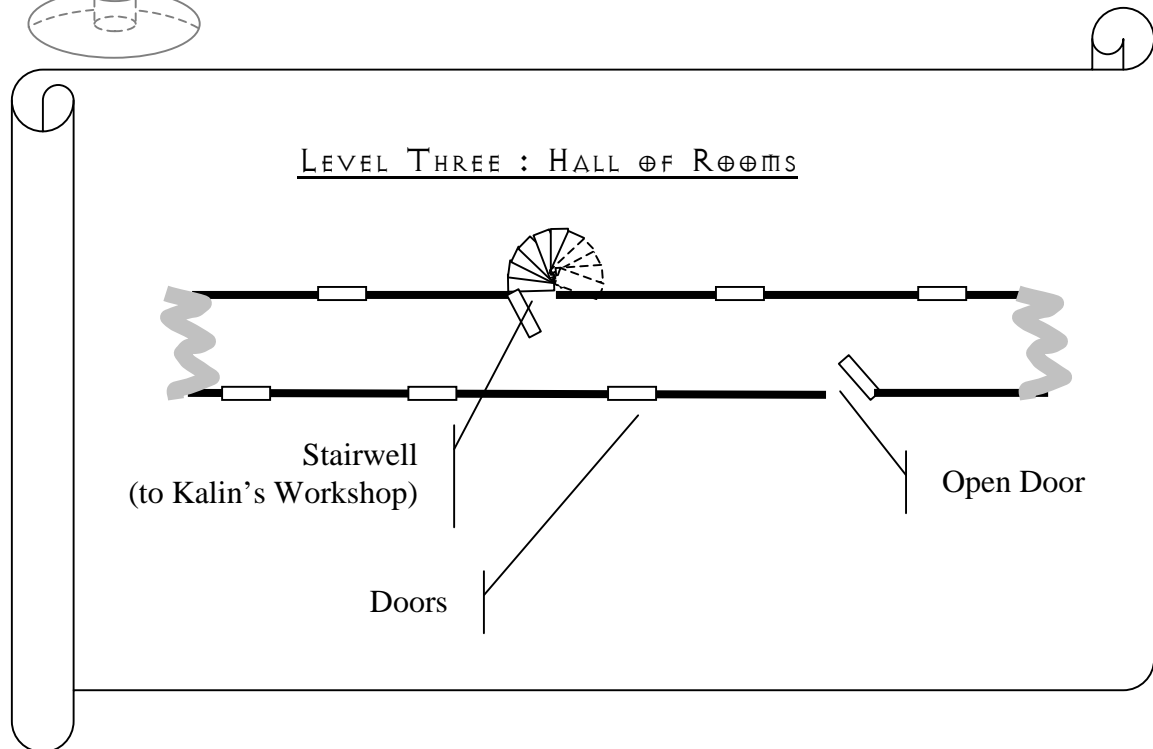
The Open Door

The open door has the address: 380E2:230D5.29 printed upon it. The room contains a foul swamp, crawling with leeches. The swamp is about 50 meters in diameter. Rising out of the centre of the swamp is a stone pedestal. On the pedestal is a stone tablet. It reads.

< **protocols: 1. Reboot.**
2. Download or Upload file-system. >

Other Rooms

There are an infinite number of rooms, in the hallway. A few doors might be locked, but most will be unlocked and shut. If the familiars go exploring some example rooms are given below. The referee may need to improvise more.

3A31A:137E2.13

This room is an armoury. It contains all sorts of weapons- from clubs and flint axes, to swords and knifes to machine guns and grenades to plasma assault rifles and ceramic pistols. There is a spherical metal-drone hovering above the ground which

fires very small needle like projectiles, in the room. It is hostile to all the familiars except Battle Imp, which it ignores unless attacked. There is also a rack of deactivated Battle Imps. This is where the Battle Imp is resurrected, if it is killed.

NAME	**Spherical Weapon Drone.**
ATTRIBUTES	**Hostile and Armoured.**
SKILLS	**Targeting.**
POSSESSIONS	**Many Needle Missiles.**

34521:98324.01

This room contains mirrored walls. It is difficult to get out of the room once inside it. Otherwise it is empty.

5443E:54732.AE

This room has walls that are drenched in blood. The blood is also pooled on the floor. There is nothing special about the room.

11111:3423A.11

This room has a red and white-stripped deck chair sitting on a beach. There is a sandcastle by the deck-chair and footprints leading into the surf. There is no sign of anyone else. There are sharks out in the sea, if anyone goes swimming.

NAME	**Sharks.**
ATTRIBUTES	**Psychotic and Hungry.**
SKILLS	**Tearing thing to bits, Intimidation and Swimming.**
POSSESSIONS	**Teeth.**

40434:B50A3.A1

This room appears to a bedroom in some kind of Gothic manor. There is a bed in the room. On the floor, by the bed is a burning cigarette. The edges of the bed sheets are just catching alight.

21341:4566D.F7

This room contains a large-distillation column (climbable via a ladder) (perhaps 15m high 2m diameter). Flying around near the top of the column are three, winged imps-who try to secretly drop things on the party.

NAME	**Mystery Imps.**
ATTRIBUTES	**Mischievous.**
SKILLS	**Jokes and Flying.**
POSSESSIONS	**Practical Joke paraphernalia.**

94331:64039.FF

This room contains three marble statues: a discus thrower, a javelin thrower and a sprinter.

Dazema's Chamber

Another door, closed, has the address: 000FD:A76B1.78. This door can only be found if the familiars specifically look for its address (unless perhaps it is the end of the session and they still have not searched for it). This room contains the body of the Princess Dazema. She is in a white, cold sarcophagus with a transparent, frost-covered lid. It is a cryogenic life support system. There is no way to open the sarcophagus and it is immune to both the Jaw and to Battle Imp. There is a microphone on a table beside the sarcophagus.

If the word "Reboot" is said by anyone in the room, a hidden speaker in the room will say: "Password?". The correct password is: "Control, Alt, Delete." Then the hidden speaker will say: "Download or Upload?". The password for "Download" is "Xcopy", the password for "Upload" is "Virus". Anyone can say the correct passwords and the system will act on the first one spoken. If the "Download" system is activated: Jack-O-Lantern will fall to the ground. The sarcophagus will open and Kalin will step out. The scenario ends. If the "Upload" system is activated: the sarcophagus will open and Quotal (a huge winged demon) steps out. He will ask the Jaw where Kalin is. Quotal will destroy the familiar indicated by Jaw. The scenario then ends.

The Index

Valid Messages

The following messages are the valid responses of the Index:

<search: Battle Imp>: 000FE:387A4.3E
<drone: classifications>
<Battle Imp, autonomous combat drone. 50% AI. Power Unit: External (Range 20,000m). Inset date: 4567.345.12.005>

<search: Book>: 000FD:A76B1.79
<drone: classifications>
<Book: autonomous drone: 70% AI: Power Unit: Internal: Type 1 209:16(2) 0.025m Inset date: 4567.344.07.700>

<search: Dazema>: 000FD:A76B1.78
<Data Accumulator Zoned as Emergency Memory Area>
<dormant: Reboot and Download>

<search: Download>: 00001:00003.02
<systems: protocols>
<The first is not in marriage
  - but in divorce and extortion
  The final four are only a copy.>

<search: Index>: 00001:00001.00
<systems>
<Index: V3.4 general records interface>

<search: Internal Power Unit: 209:16(2)>: 000FD.A76AF.43
<insert: ref: design.spec: 78D>
<polonium oxide. thermal-electric generator. Type 1: reserved use: critical backup units: Type 2: discontinued: sub-critical containment leakage: Type 3: general use: drone>

<search: Jack-O-Lantern>: 000FD:A76B1.77
<drone: classifications>
<Jack-O-Lantern, autonomous drone. 80% AI. Power Unit: Internal: Type 1 209:16(2) 0.025m Inset date: 4567.344.07.692>

<search: Jaw>: 000FE:387A4.3F
<drone: classifications>
<Jaw, semi-autonomous demon. 15% AI. Power Unit: Internal: Type 3 209:16(2) 0.0125m   Inset date: 4567.345.12.006>

<search: Kalin>: 00001:00001.01
<ontology>
<I think that I am thinking therefore I probably am>

<search: Quotal>: 000FD:A76A2.53
<general:>
<file: time.ref: 4567.345.11.878>
<Gotcha. Bet you didn't expect that.>

<search: Reboot>: 00001:00003.01
<systems: protocols>
<First control
  then sacrifice from the altar
  finally, nothing: erasure.>

<search: Spell>: 000F3:45B17.44
<protocols: Reboot. Upload. Download.>

<search: Time>:00001:00002.01
<systems>
<data error: base line terminated: V.time 0000.000.01.386>

<search: Tower>: 000FE:387A4.3B
<LIF: virtual environment>
<Tower: Cascaded memory backup centre.>

<search: Upload>: 00001:0003.03
<systems: protocols>
  <My whole is an illness.>

ERROR MESSAGES

These are some example error messages of the Index.

<60ns parity error:>
<abort due to unknown error:>
<argument not optional or invalid property assignment>
<array is fixed or temporarily locked>
<automation error>
<automation object doesn't have a default value>
<bad cluster: data irretrievable>
<bad file mode>
<bad record length>
<bad record number>
<can't call friend procedure on an object that is not an instance of the defining class>
<can't load or unload this object>
<can't perform requested operation>
<can't use character device names in specified file names>
<checksum: error>
<class is not set>
<code must close topmost modal form first>
<code resource lock error>
<code resource not found>
<connection to type library or object library for remote process has been lost>
<could not access system registry>
<data unrecoverable due to error: data non-existent or unrecoverable>
<data value named not found>
<device unavailable>
<division by zero>
<error at address: 00:14789:437:5 >
<error loading from file>
<error: I am a fish: error: I am a fish: error: I am a fish: error: I am a fish: error>
<expression too complex>
<fatal application error: 59712:F3129847>
<file allocation error:>
<file name or class name not found during Automation operation>
<form already displayed; can't show modally>
<function, or property not defined>
<have a nice day: this error message should not occur>
<illegal parameter; can't write arrays>
<incompatible format: reformat? y/n>
<input past end of file>
<internal error>
<invalid data source:>
<invalid format in resource file>
<invalid object use>
<invalid ordinal>
<invalid pattern string>
<invalid procedure call>
<invalid property value>
<invalid property-array index>

<irrecoverable error: I'll try to muddle through but things go downhill from here>

<named argument not found>

<need property-array index>

<no object>

<no point>

<object doesn't support current locale setting>

<object doesn't support named arguments>

<object doesn't support this action>

<object doesn't support this property or method>

<object not a collection>

<object required>

<out of memory>

<out of memory>

<out of stack space>

<overflow>

<permission denied>

<permission to use object denied>

<property Get can't be executed at run time>

<property not found>

<property or method not found>

<property Set can't be executed at run time>

<read write: error>

<replacements too long>

<restricted access: >

<search text not found

<specified format doesn't match format of data>

<sub-processor down: unable to reroute>

<system DLL could not be loaded>

<the specified file is out of date. This program requires a later version>

<the specified object can't be used as an owner form for Show>

<this component doesn't support events>

<this error should not occur: something is wrong with the universe>

<this key is already associated with an element of this collection>

<type mismatch>

<unable to activate object>

<unable to unload within this context>

<unknown: failure:>

<very, very bad>

LAYERS OF MEANING

W.T.F. IS HAPPENING?

Like a physical tower there are several layers to what is happening in the scenario *The Tower*. At its simplest level the characters are- as described earlier- the familiars of a wizard, Kalin, who has been slain by the demon, Quotal. The characters need to

cooperate to escape the confines of the tower. This is the "ground floor" of *The Tower*.

At the next level: the wizard Kalin has survived the attack by the demon, by transplanting his soul into the Jack-O-Lantern. The body of Jack-O-Lantern is only a temporary measure as many of Kalin's powers and much of his memory are lost in this form. Jack-O-Lantern/Kalin does not want to escape the tower. Instead he wishes to transplant his soul into a human body, that of the Princess Dazema. Jaw also does not wish to escape the tower. Jaw is an agent of the demon Quotal. His task is discover where Kalin is, and then resummon Quotal to complete the assault.

Meanwhile, the memories of Battle Imp, prior to his abduction by the wizard Kalin have started to return. Battle Imp was once the bodyguard of the Princess Dazema. Although many years have passed since Kalin's capture of the Princess and the Battle Imp, it is only an instant in the fractured memory of the Battle Imp. The Battle Imp's incomplete mission was to rescue Princess Dazema from clutches of Kalin. The Battle Imp's anachronistic goal is to complete this mission.

The Book who is in constant communication with the unreliable and cryptic Index is the closest to the third level of the scenario. Nothing exists beyond the tower at this level. There are no windows in the tower, no exits. All that came before is illusion. Kalin and Quotal are not wizard and demon, but two vast artificial intelligences; or a single intelligence; or a broken computer. The familiars (even the tower itself) are robotic or virtual drones used as proxies by Kalin and Quotal. Whether the conflict between the drones is representative of a serious conflict between Kalin and Quotal or merely a game is not addressed by this level of the scenario.

Finally at the very top of the tower there are a group of five people. Some are overweight, others are too thin and many of them have bad eyesight. There are too many pony tails, too many sparse goatees and not enough women. This group of five people are entertaining themselves by pretending to be things that they are not. Ultimately what these five people enjoy, the decisions that they make and what they want drives the scenario.