



# THE TOWER OF FIVE TESTS

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A strange light can be seen at the top of a magical tower belonging to a powerful – if modest – mage named known as **VULPES (VULPES) OF PENDLE**. Fearful that the beacon could mean that something is wrong with the wizard, local villagers have requested that the party find out what has happened and – if needed – provide what aid they can to Vulpes.

What neither the adventurers or villagers know is that Vulpes is beyond help, having died quietly in his sleep.

The beacon is not a call for help, as such, but rather it forms part of a system that will help those able to meet with Vulpes' ideals learn of his work and help to spread his ideals.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure can either begin with the adventurers on the road to Vulpes' Tower, or with them arriving in the town of Bunhill – a smallish settlement located in a quiet stretch of fields and woodland – and being asked to investigate a nearby tower by the mayor or chief councillor.

If the game is being run in a limited time-slot it's probably best to start with them already travelling. In this case read the below text out loud, or paraphrase it.

### WHAT IS THIS?

*THE TOWER OF FIVE TESTS* was written for a Quaker summer school in the UK. The organisers wanted an adventure that could be run in less than two hours, was easy to get into and - if possible - reflected Quaker values.

The fact that one of the core beliefs of the Quaker faith is staunch pacifism made this a strange little game to put together. In the end, we decided to design it around the core values of UK Quakers: truth, equality, sustainability, simplicity and peace.

We've decided to make this adventure freely available through the Winghorn Press website so that anybody can play it. Though be warned, there are a *lot* of Quaker in-jokes.

*When you arrived in the sleepy town of Bunhill this morning you expected it to be a forgettable stop on the road – somewhere to buy food and wash off the road dust rather than a source of adventure.*

*The only thing that set it apart from any other you've visited was the shine of a bright beacon somewhere in the nearby hills, which never seemed to flicker or fade as you travelled past it.*

*Idle conversation with a red-faced innkeeper soon revealed the source of the light, and with it an unexpected opportunity.*

*The beacon had apparently flared up around three days ago, and came from the direction of a magical tower owned by a Wizard named Vulpes of Pendle.*

*The mage had always been a friend and ally of the villagers so they weren't concerned for their own safety, but rather feared that it was a distress signal or some other call for aid.*

*While the tower was only a few hours' walk away, the path ran through a thick wood that was home to packs of wolves and even a few vicious owlbears. The town council had been discussing plans to send some stout farmers to check on Vulpes, but the innkeeper suggested that they'd probably be delighted to hire your party for a few bags of gold.*

*Negotiations were quick and profitable, and soon you found yourselves back on the road – though this time you were heading straight for the beacon and the tower.*

The town council provided what information they had on Vulpes and his tower to the party.

If they indicate that they would have asked for background on the mage, the councillors would know and be happy to share the following:

- Vulpes is a fairly old, male human. He has white hair, light skin and a wispy beard.
- He's a kind, generous fellow that provided the village with protection and aid when they needed it.
- Nobody in Bunhill is proficient enough with magic to be able to provide a realistic estimation of Vulpes' power, but from their descriptions he seems to be fairly skilled. A character able to make a DC13 Intelligence (Arcana) check will note that if the council's accounts can be believed, Vulpes is very powerful indeed.

- As far as they know, Vulpes lives in his tower alone.
- The tower itself is a tall structure of stone. A few villagers have been inside but they've only really seen the ground floor, which seems to be set up as some kind of lounge-cum-library.

## APPROACHING THE TOWER

The journey to the tower is relatively quiet and uneventful. Once or twice the group heard the growls of large animals in the bushes, but every time this happened the beacon seemed to flare a little brighter and the creatures moved off.

After a few hours, they emerge from the treeline to find themselves standing a few hundred feet from a tall stone tower. It lacks the shimmering glass and intricate stonework the party may have seen on other magical constructions, consisting of plain grey slabs of stone set with shuttered windows.

From looking at the windows it appears that the tower has six levels – five of the same size and a smaller area right at the top.

Directly above this is a gently glowing ball of energy that forms the beacon. It's roughly as wide as a man is tall and doesn't pulse or crackle with any sort of arcane force.

Adventurers that have acted generously and protected others – either in their backstories or thus far in the adventure – will feel a comforting, warming glow in their chests when they look directly at the beacon.

When a character approaches the plain wooden door it will click slightly as if unlocking itself, and will open easily. There will be no response to calls or knocking on the door.

## THE FIRST TEST - TRUTH

The ground floor of the tower is comprised of a single large room. It has a homely, comforting feel with bookshelves lining the walls and armchairs scattered around a fireplace. Towards the rear of the room a staircase begins to spiral upwards, disappearing into the ceiling.

A thin coat of dust on the floor indicates that it's been a while since anybody was in here, and a DC12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will allow a

## GENERAL FEATURES OF THE TOWER

- Unless otherwise specified, rooms in the tower have well-worn wooden floorboards and stone walls.
- The ceilings are around 10ft. from the floor.
- Each room is lit by magical lamps that emit a warm, yellow glow.
- The shutters are magically fixed in place and cannot be removed without the use of *knock* or a similar spell.
- -The exterior walls of the tower are smooth and extremely difficult to climb. There aren't any pieces of stonework where a rope can be tied off, and the walls are highly resistant to any attempts to hammer in spikes or crampons.

character to estimate it's been undisturbed for around three days.

A character examining the bookshelves will be able to determine that most of them seem to be about magic, with a smattering of history and philosophy. A DC12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will help them note that there seem to be a large number of books covering ethics as well.

The moment an adventurer attempts to head up the stairs they will find the way blocked by some kind of magical barrier. At the same time the door will slam shut behind them and the features of the room will fade, becoming an open white space that lacks any furniture or features of any kind other than the staircase.

A wall of fog floats roughly where the walls of the tower lay, and any character entering the fog will shortly emerge back into the white space from a different direction.

A shimmering figure of an old man with wispy hair and plain robes flickers into view in the middle of the room. It says:

*"If you are hearing this then I have probably passed away and have set out upon the next great journey.*

*"And if you have been drawn here by the beacon then hopefully you are also kind, strong-hearted and generous sorts – those who would learn of my ways and see how they can be used to aid others.*



*“This tower is a test – in fact it is a tower of five tests. At the very top is the storehouse of my knowledge and my power, and if you can reach it then it is yours to share with the world as you wish.*

*“If you fail... well, that’s unfortunate but you don’t have to worry all that much. Those who fail will simply have to leave the tower in peace, and can attempt the tests again if they wish. See you at the top!”*

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A few moments after the figure of Vulpes fades, a roar fills the air and a vast **WHITE DRAGON** emerges from the fog. It is an illusion, but spotting this is extremely difficult.

The creature will appear to shrug off any attacks and simply smiles at the adventurers. In a deep voice it explains that it is part of the first test – it will ask them a question and all they need to do is answer truthfully.

The question is: *“Am I not the most powerful and magnificent creature in all the world?”*

Any adventurer with any experience of dragons will know that White Dragons in particular are extremely vain creatures.

However, the correct answer – the one that will allow the party to proceed to the next level – simply requires them to be honest. For most adventurers this means they will answer ‘no’.

Once this has been done the creature will fade back into mist and the shimmering barrier blocking the staircase will fade.

## THE SECOND TEST – SUSTAINABILITY

The adventurers emerge in what appears to be a walled garden. The staircase ends at ground level, but seems to start again some 20ft. in the air above.

Directly below the floating staircase – which appears to be hovering in nothingness – is a shrivelled plant that character proficient in Nature will recognise as a beanstalk. If the adventurers approach it the plant will open a small mouth and tiny blinking eyes.

It will ask them for help – it wants to grow but in order to do so needs to be bathed in magical sap. Fortunately, a barrel of such sap is nearby, and if

they help it to grow it can provide a ladder that will allow them to climb to the next level.

The trick here is that if they simply dump the barrel of sap on the beanstalk it will grow too quickly and collapse under its own weight. If this happens, the garden fades out to white and then fades back in, reset to its starting conditions.

If the party wishes to progress they need to slowly and sustainably grow the beanstalk, possibly supporting it with bamboo struts and supports.

## THE THIRD TEST – EQUALITY

The next test takes place in a courtyard, with the spiral staircase seeming to head up into nothing and its entrance protected by another shimmering barrier. At the far end is a wall maybe 7ft. high.

In the middle of the courtyard is a group of five figures. They are all different heights, with an Elf and two Humans easily a couple of feet taller than a Dwarven figure, who in turn is taller than a Halfling. Each of them has indeterminate features, with their faces, clothing and even genders appearing to flow and change as the party watches them.

They are gathered around a group of wooden boxes and seem to be discussing something. If the players approach they will cheerfully explain that they need to get over the wall, and have been given these boxes to climb on and make it easier. However, they aren’t sure about how best to distribute the boxes.

There are ten boxes, each roughly a foot high. At the moment they plan to evenly distribute the boxes between them, as that seems the fair way to do it.

Ideally, the players will note that in order for everyone to climb over the wall they can simply

### OUT OF THE BOX THINKING

While there are ‘intended’ ways for the adventurers to pass all the tests, you should still allow them to succeed if they have a good idea and manage to follow through on it.

After all, the magic governing the Tower is powerful but not all-knowing, so if the players find a way to circumvent the tests then let them do so

redistribute the boxes, giving more to the halfling and the dwarf and fewer to the elf and humans.

## THE FOURTH TEST - PEACE

The fourth test takes place in a white, open space similar to that found on the ground level, though this time four large pillars are evenly distributed around the centre of the chamber. This time, however, the staircase leading to the next level is on the far side of the white space – seemingly not protected by a magical field.

Once the party begins to head across the room, however, six roughly humanoid shapes – **FOG GUARDIANS** - emerge and take up defensive positions around the staircase. They wield glowing weapons and have bodies seemingly made of animated mist, and behave aggressively to anybody who approaches.

Have players roll for initiative and begin combat. However, at the beginning of each round each Fog Guardian that was slain in the previous round reappears from the mist and joins the battle.

Note that the Fog Guardians' *'Retributors'* rule means they will only attack adventurers who recently took aggressive actions, allowing the party to simply walk past them. When running the encounter, try to make it obvious that the creatures are focussing their efforts on adventurers who are behaving the most aggressively.

## THE FIFTH TEST – SIMPLICITY

This test takes place in what appears to be a normal room of the tower, with wooden floors and stone walls. There is a spiral staircase leading up, but once again it is blocked by a barrier.

In the room there is a rack with a number of magical-looking staffs set against it. As the adventurers approach the shimmering figure of Vulpes appears again. He stands by the staircase and congratulates the adventurers on getting this far.

If they wish to reach the final level, all they have to do is knock on the barrier with *'the staff of an archmage'*.

The staffs lying on the rack consist of:

1. One seemingly made from solid gold, set with rubies. It is cold to the touch and incredibly heavy.

## FOG GUARDIAN

*Medium Construct, lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 16 (3d6 +6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/4 (25 XP)

**Retributors.** The Fog Guardian can only attack creatures that have made a hostile action since the Fog Guardian's last turn.

### ACTIONS

**Fog blade.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

2. One made of polished black material – possible wood but it could be stone. It's topped with a bleached skull that appears to be humanoid save for the curling horns emerging from the top.
3. One made from white wood. It's incredibly beautiful and though it lacks gold or jewels it is intricately carved. An adventurer picking it up will note that it actually feels somewhat flimsy, as so much of the wood has been carved away.
4. A worn staff made from oak, set with runes and inlaid with occasional crystals that twinkle with inner power.
5. A staff seemingly made from a fallen branch. In fact, a thorough examination will reveal that it actually is a fallen branch, with little effort made to turn it into an actual tool.

The correct choice is staff number four – well-worn and plain but still practical and effective. All the other staffs will crumble to dust if they are knocked on the barrier field.

## MEETING VULPES

The final room at the very top of the tower seems to be a bedroom. Books line the walls and the glow of the beacon shines through the gaps around the shutters.



Lying in the bed in Vulpes' body. He is cold and stiff, and a character making a DC15 Wisdom (Medicine) check will be able to guess he died of natural causes – probably a heart attack.

As they explore, the glow of the beacon will get brighter and brighter until it actually begins to fill the room. The glow will coalesce into a roughly humanoid shape made of bright light.

In an oddly echoing voice the entity will praise the adventurers for demonstrating the virtues of Truth, Sustainability, Equality, Peace and Simplicity.

The promised reward comes in a few different forms. His staff is a powerful magical item in its own right, and his library holds

many tomes of great power and value.

However, the most important thing is that they now know they hold the ability within themselves to be good and righteous people. The greatest rewards and powers in this world will not come from without – it explains – but from within.

With that, the entity begins to dissipate for good, leaving the adventurers with the chance to explore the tower if they wish or to simply head back to Bunhill.

