

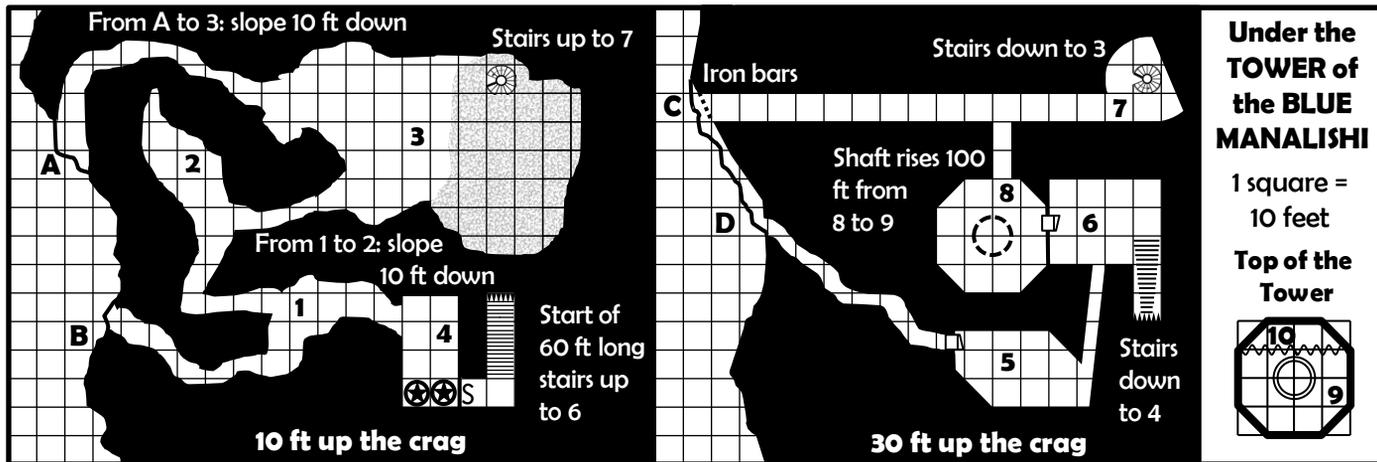
THE EGG OF THE GAZOLBA

A nonviolent (?) adventure, with apologies to [Clark Ashton Smith](#)

By Roger S. G. Sorolla 2011 One Page Dungeon Contest entry. CC license: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>
See <http://rolesrules.blogspot.com/search/label/nonviolence> for background, and G-rated ending.

King Euvoran IX rules thanks to a living Gazolba bird crown, which lays an egg when a son is born to him. The bird dies when he dies, the heir's egg hatching the new king's Gazolba. Now his Vizier tells you shocking news: the egg for the Sultan's only son has been replaced by a plaster sham! Divination traces the true egg to the windowless Tower of the Blue Manalishi, on a limestone crag in the royal hunting forest. Only you can retrieve it, for the Tower is dangerous, and who would believe foreigners if they squealed? The Vizier arranges a diversion for the keeper of the forest, one Syrax: high level, tracking ability near flawless in his own woods, prone to arrest trespassers. But the distraction is only for an hour. Syrax will surely follow your trail to the crag. The Vizier advises you: climb up into one of the four cave mouths, and leave no trace of which one ...

Thanks to Telecenter, richard for draft feedback



The rough crag offers good climbing. A narrow ledge runs between C and D. Entrances are natural caves except for C, a square tunnel blocked by iron bars (may try bending).

1. Human skulls, bones around entrance to 2. Fair warning...
2. Giant-troll 9 ft tall with mossy tree branch club. Asleep, but will awaken to loud noise on this level. Is really too tough for party to fight. Speaks Common and will bargain, craves treasure (already has 450 coins) and human flesh.
3. Huge cavern, piled old supplies at west end (oil, water barrels, untrustworthy rope, pickaxes, shovels). Two layers of slime mold (red over green) cover the east end and staircase. In southeast corner under mold layers, boxes with rolls of white silk worth 500 coins. *Red mold*: dies from water, spore cloud if touched or burned, all within 20' risk 1d6x10 minute coma. *Green mold*: infects by touch, grows rapidly when wet, dies from burning.
4. Room carved out of rock, plaster on walls scored in a square pattern. Granite statues of a royal couple ("KING ISIDOR" and "QUEEN ISABELLE" on bases; king wears Gazolba crown). Each holds in front a shield with a hand outline. Push the king's, he slides: secret door! The queen's rings a gong that will wake and attract the troll.
5. Clean kitchen, many cupboards. Smell of sausages frying, grubby cook cracks a huge white egg into a skillet; without looking up he says "How many for breakfast?" Cook, smell and fire are an illusion repeating once a minute. Looters can take 800 coins worth of kitchenware, and silver "S" and "P" shakers with cursed contents: the salt sleeps, and pepper paralyzes, anyone who tastes it.

6. Walls and floor faced in blue-veined marble. Guarding the brass-fitted ebony door is a living plate armor made of rippling, shining magic water, with an enchanted halberd. It speaks, demands your business, will deny and delay; but likes to brag of its invulnerability; may let slip it has a weakness, but not what. In truth, if a living plant touches the armor it will dissolve. So, it fears the troll in area 2 and its mossy club. Ice will also freeze and stop it.

7. The flat wall here has a mural of the Blue Manalishi, a skinny, sly-eyed old woman in a blue wrap and 3-pronged headdress. A scone nearby holds 10 incense sticks.

8. Tower's shaft rises to ceiling and through round gap. On floor is an 8 ft round brass platform, railing worked with clouds and dragonflies. Its control is a 4ft column in the center with a plunger at top. Pushing it down at ground level sets off a squawking, alerting the armor from room 6. Pulling it up makes the platform rise, 10 ft per 6 seconds.

9. Hanging between 9 & 10, a canvas painted with cartoons of young Euvoran IX... Warring overseas, taking a woman, sailing away without her ... Anxiously consulting the Manalishi when the Gazolba lays a *black, illegitimate* egg ... Hiding the egg in her Tower. Looking at the canvas too long gives headaches and minor damage. On the south side, a shrine to Truth, incense holder and blue flame. Light incense from area 7, and the Manalishi's voice tells how the Vizier learned of the black egg, gave a false story; outsiders wouldn't know what the black egg means. What to do with the truth? How to get back past Syrax? The Manalishi may give a free teleport if you think that too hard.

10. Cut the canvas, and enter. The politically priceless black egg is here, on a nest of gold straw worth 1000 coins.