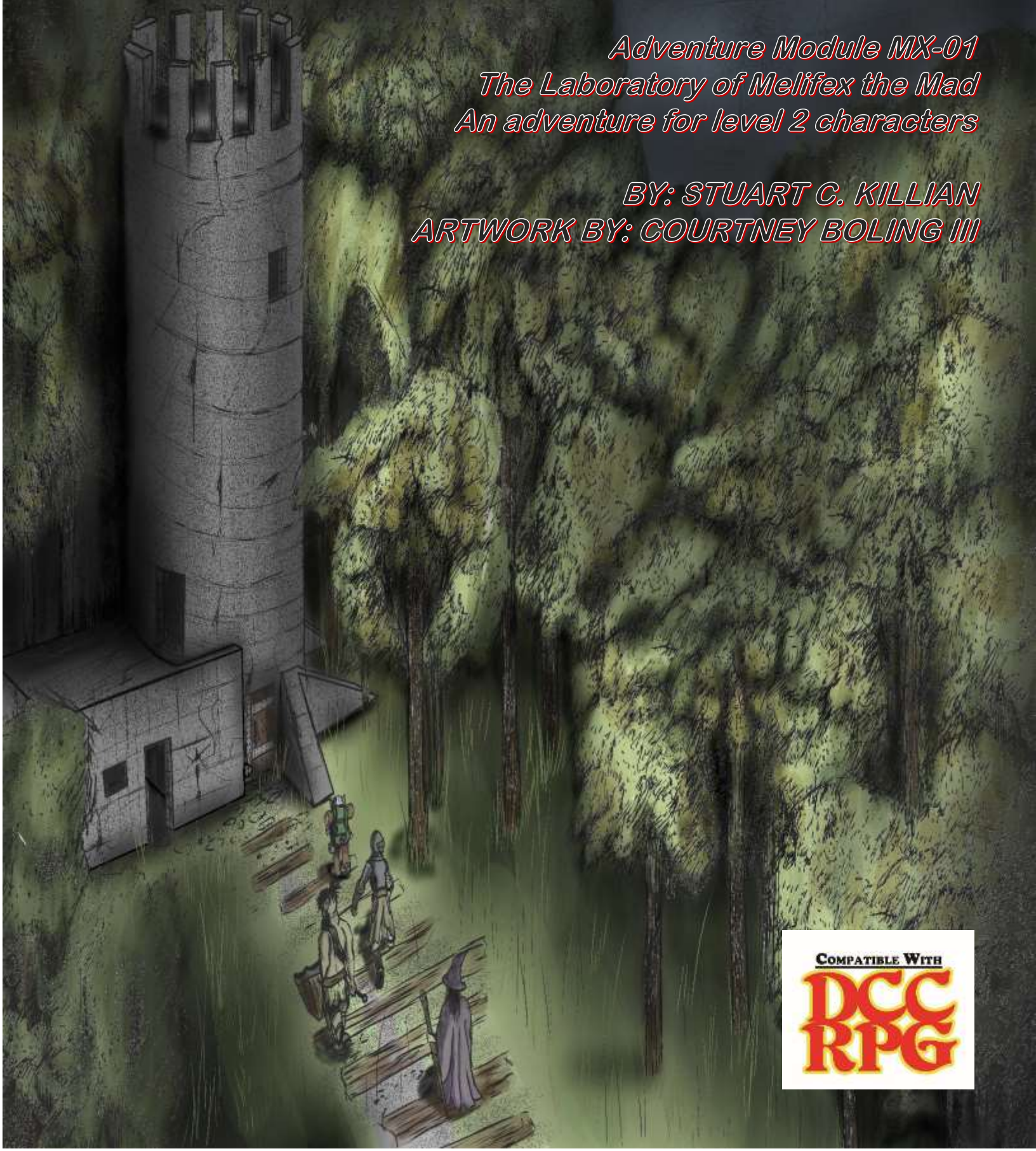


KILLIAN'S KRAWLS

*Adventure Module MX-01
The Laboratory of Melifex the Mad
An adventure for level 2 characters*

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COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

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An adventure for level 2 characters

This product is compatible with the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game.



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INTRODUCTION

The Laboratory of Melifex the Mad is an adventure for 6-7 characters of second level. Smaller and lower level parties can be accommodated by using the scaling suggestions in the Encounter Table.

BACKGROUND

In the small city of Pinecliffe, a young wizard named Melifex began his magical studies. Convinced his magical work would help the world to become a better place, he sought after all types of magical power; from pacts with draconic and otherworldly denizens, to alchemy, enchantment and even the mysterious forces of necromancy. He delved into mysterious abandoned temples and tombs and dared to enlist the knowledge of elder dragons in order to perfect his power. Motivated by a desire to utilize magical forces to aid the common worker and end the despicable practices of slavery and military conscription, he relentlessly experimented on using magic to its full effect. However, magic being the fickle and often dangerous power it is, took a toll on Melifex's body and mind. When experiments failed and spells backfired, his body suffered corruption and he began to wander the streets of Pinecliffe aimlessly babbling to himself in rapid fashion about experiments and theories. Soon, the people who admired the inventive young wizard began to distance themselves, giving him the name "Melifex the Mad".

Realizing he was no longer accepted by the citizens of Pinecliffe, Melifex created a tower on the North cliff overlooking the city where he could conduct his experiments and pursue his new passion: finding a way to reverse spell corruption. His contact with the city ended with the exception of monthly supply deliveries from an outfitter in town who would venture up the cliff, pick up a list and collect and deliver supplies to the tower, where payment was waiting. Many rumors have circulated around the city as to what strange and dangerous things have occurred in the secluded tower for the past two years.

Two months ago, the outfitter was surprised to find no list or payment at the tower. Thinking Melifex had all he needed, he went back to Pinecliffe and awaited the next delivery date. However, this trip also ended with no list or payment. The city has become very concerned and rumors are being created as fast as they can be told. What happened to Melifex? Did he perish from his corruption, or was he annihilated by an unspeakable horror he may have summoned? Is the town safe? Who has the courage to find out?

ADVENTURE HOOK

There are many ways the party could be persuaded to venture to the tower. The GM could steer the party by utilizing a group of NPCs to hire the party, or they could be enticed with the rumors heard around the town (refer to THE CITY OF PINECLIFFE). Some examples are as follows:

- Melifex has a few close friends in town who are genuinely worried about him and are willing to pay to have the party conduct a "welfare check".
- Other wizards desperately want to study Melifex's work and research and will pay handsomely for someone to retrieve it.
- The town is worried about what Melifex may have done or what he may have unleashed in the tower. The town leaders want to put the fears of the population to rest.
- If the party has a cleric, they may be contacted by their deity or a high ranking member of their temple to rid the world of Melifex's "blasphemy".
- The party may simply want to treasure hunt. Obviously, a powerful wizard would have valuable and potent magic items in his laboratory.

GM'S NOTES

Descriptions in *italics* should be read to the party. Any additional information not covered in the description is left up to the GM. Occasionally, background information will be found in **highlighted gray boxes**. This information can be shared directly with the party or given out through role play. Additional GM notes for specific areas are in **boxed text**.

The GM should spend time reading and learning about the City of Pinecliffe before running the adventure. A great amount of role playing, information gathering, and buying and selling will take place there, so knowing the background of the city is important.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

AREA	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
W-1	Rockslide/Carnivorous Grove	T,C
1-A	Enchanted Door	T
L-2	Geoverme	C
L-3	Air Elemental	C
L-5	Enchanted Armor	C
L-7	Blattodes	C
2	Desk Drawer	T
3-A	Dragon	R, C

C= Combat, T= Trap, R= Role play

The encounters can be scaled to accommodate a smaller or lower level party. Make the following changes:

- Make the Air Elemental vulnerable to common weapons and remove the vortex attack.

- Reduce the dragon's spellcasting ability by removing the following spells:

- Patron Bond
- Sleep
- Mirror Image

- Demon Summoning
- Eternal Champion

- Remove the dragon's poison breath weapon

ADVENTURE START

Your new life of adventuring in your home town has become stagnant. Every cave, tomb, and bandit hideout has been searched and there's only so much adventure, gold, and glory your small village can offer. You decide to move on to the city, where adventurers may be able to sell their service, get new information on potential adventures, or even liberate some of the wealthier of their extra money.

The caravan masters who stop at your village speak of a small city tucked away in the low mountain range called Pinecliffe. The city, they say, is a crossroads where people of almost every race congregate to buy, sell, or simply pass through. You persuade one master, a veteran of many routes, to make you a map of the hill country where you live to find the main road leading to Pinecliffe. Surely, opportunities will be found there.

Packing up all the belongings you can fit on your back and selling everything else, you make your way along the cart paths and trails until you find a wide, stone-paved road. A red granite marker in the shape of a four-sided pyramid has arrows carved into the stone with the word "Pinecliffe" pointing to the East, and "Grayson's Trace" pointing to the West. Your spirits lift as you realize a new chapter in your adventuring life is about to begin.

Along the road are several clearings caravans have made to stop for the night. As it is getting dark and will be cold soon, you decide to set up camp for the night. Other people, equipped much like yourself have already set up their spots and a large community fire has been built.

If this is the first adventure for the party members as a group, the GM can use this time to have each character introduce themselves and learn about each other's characters. The night passes with no danger. It is another 8 hour walk to Pinecliffe. Horses are not available to be bought or rented.

After a long climb over winding hills and ridges, you reach the top of a ridge overlooking a wooded valley of cedar and pine. Before you sits the largest city you have seen. Tall stone walls surround an area of about a square mile. Within lies the city; an orderly arrangement of houses, and shops dominated by a sawmill on the North side and a keep on the West.

The town sits under the protection of a cliff to the North. As you scan the cliff, you notice what seems to be the top of a tower peeking out over the pines.

You are stopped at the gate by two armored guards who ask your name, where you are coming from, and if you have any trade goods to declare. A scribe sits at a table inside the gate, collecting fees and taxes. He informs you there is an entry tax of 15sp per person.

THE CITY OF PINECLIFFE

The walled city is located at the base of a large cliff on the South side of a low mountain range. The city spreads out into a temperate valley. The city is bisected by a large road running East-West which winds its way around the mountains. The South road continues down the valley to plains. The main industries of the city are mining and forestry as the cliff is surrounded by a pine forest. Dwarves and Humans are the principal occupants of the town with an occasional halfling trader visiting. Elves are never seen and may be treated with suspicion. The dwarves occupy a mine three miles to the East of the town and use the town to transport raw materials and forged goods to the plains dwellers.

The party can be expected to pay an entrance tax of 15sp per person. Additionally, the party will have to declare any expensive goods that are not personal items such as trade goods or any treasure greater than 25gp. The party will be required to pay a 5% tax on these items.

The city's population is approximately 3,500. It is governed by a mayor. The city guard protects the town and enforces the law. The guard is commanded by a sheriff who is assisted by investigators who can command small patrols of

city guard. The city is a democracy with an open market system. Silver is the main currency, but gold is not rare. Party members paying for small items with gold may be refused since the vendor would not have proper change.

The main temples in the city are the Temples of Justicia (L), and Amun Tor (N). The temples will provide healing to individuals who are of the same alignment or are vouched for by a worshipper. Magical healing of damage or disease requires a "donation" of 35-50gp, depending on the seriousness of the healing.

All equipment and adventure items can be found here at their normal price with the exception of thieves' tools (which are illegal to possess) and armor which is twice the normal price. Any person buying armor will be questioned by an investigator as to why they need it and will require a government permit (for a price of 10gp) to gain permission to purchase it. Horses and other mounts are not for sale or rent.

Spell components are not very difficult to find and the party should be able to find an alchemist who can brew simple potions of healing, cure disease, and neutralize poison for approximately 65gp each.

The party may be able to access the local underground market run by the Thieves' Guild (DC12 to make a connection), where they could procure the following items. There is only one of each item for sale throughout the city:

- One Long Sword +1	900gp
- Thieves' Tools	50 gp
- +1 Arrows (10 total)	50 gp each
- One vial of poison	25 gp
- +1 Daggers (2 total)	350 gp each

If the party decides to chat with the local population to gather information, the GM can decide to read the information in the BACKGROUND section. They may also hear rumors regarding the tower and Melifex. Use the following table to choose which rumors the party hears. The GM will roll to select the rumor and the party will make a Personality check against the DC of the rumor to determine if they were able to get the rumor to be told. The last column of the table

shows whether the rumor is true or false. If the GM rolls the same number of a rumor already told, stop rolling on the table and declare there are no more rumors to be heard.

RUMORS

d7	DC	RUMOR	
1	12	Melifex spent a large amount of money purchasing semi-precious and precious gems.	T
2	5	Melifex experimented with the dark art of necromancy and has turned himself into an undead creature.	F
3	14	Melifex acquired a very large and valuable gem that has incredible magical power, but it is unknown whether it is for good or evil.	T
4	11	The tower's doors are locked with intricate puzzles only the wisest can solve.	T
5	5	Melifex's tower was attacked by a dragon who killed Melifex for his magical treasures and now makes the tower its home.	F
6	9	Since Melifex stopped dealing with the city, a few bands of people have ventured along the path to his tower, but have never been seen again.	T
7	5	Melifex created magical locked doors that can open portals to other worlds.	F

The outfitter who delivered supplies to Melifex can be easily found if the party asks around. He will show the party the path he takes to get to the tower and will offer the party the key he used to gain access to the supply shed for the low price of 25gp.

WILDERNESS

Area W-1 ROCKSLIDE/CARNIVOROUS GROVE

The path described to you is right where you were told it would be. It is unmarked and narrow, barely enough room to fit a cart. The path climbs steeply up the ridge, winding through a thick forest of evergreen trees that blocks out the sunlight enough to make the whole area look like dusk. The scent of pine lingers and makes the air seem much fresher than back at town. You easily navigate around a few rotted fallen trees and realize this path has not been travelled by cart in a long time. You crest an incline along a cliff and see a large rockslide blocking the path. The massive pile of rubble spreads out from the top of the ridge above you to the cliff approximately 40' down what used to be the path. A small pebble skips its way down the pile and off the cliff. You don't hear it hit the ground.

GM NOTE #1 The party can attempt a number of actions in this area. If the party attempts a unique action, it will be up to the GM to assign difficulties and abilities to navigate this obstacle.

If the party attempts to clear the path, they would have to move rocks of different sizes, from pebbles to boulders the size of a dwarf. Additionally, they risk creating another rockslide. Each member of the party moving rock must make a DC14 Luck check per hour of clearing or create another rockslide. Any characters moving rock will be swept over the cliff and buried under tons of rock, meeting their final doom (no save). The path would be blocked once again, and any remaining characters would need to start over. It would take 4 workers approximately 8 hours to clear a path through the pile of boulders.

If the party decides to walk across the rockslide they risk slipping and falling as well as triggering a slide. Characters can only move 10' per round and must make a DC10 Agility check each round or slip. A slipping party member will tumble down the pile and over the cliff, never to be seen again (no save). Every party member must make a DC12 Luck check for every 20' moved or cause a rockslide. All party



members standing on the rocks will meet the same fate described above.

The party can retrace their steps to find an alternate path. It is easy to find a way around and no check is required. If the party takes this action read the following:

The animal trail you found weaves its way up the ridge and through a thickly wooded area. As you pick your way through the branches and underbrush, you notice what looks like a pile of clothing in the center of a grove of willow-like trees.

If the party decides not to investigate, they make their way down the ridge and back on the path without incident. Go to "The Laboratory" section. Otherwise, read the following:

As you step into the grove, you uncover a grisly sight. Animal carcasses and the dried-out corpses of five people, probably adventurers, lay strewn about the ground. Each body appears leathery and dry, with hollow eye sockets, as if every drop of moisture was pulled from them.

Elven characters and those with a background having a knowledge of trees will immediately notice the trees around them are not common willows. The trees are ash white in color with a slick, waxy-type bark. The branches are more like vines, with veins of black running through them and around the trunk. Tiny, perfectly circular leaves line the branches and have a fuzzy coating on them, like hundreds of little needles.

The trees, in fact, are carnivorous, and will immediately attack if a character gets near or tries to inspect the tree. The branches will lash out and attempt to wrap around their target, injecting it with the hundreds of needles in the leaves and begin draining the victim of blood, causing 1d6 damage per round. As the victim is held, the tree will inject a venom that liquifies the internal organs. The character must make a DC13 Fortitude save or take an additional 2 points of damage for 5 rounds.

The branches can be severed on a successful hit doing 8 damage. The damage is counted towards the total hit points of the tree. The trees can only make

one attack, but have three branches available. So, when a branch is severed, a new branch will attempt to attack the nearest creature. A branch can be removed by a DC10 Strength check but will cause 1d6 damage due to the needles tearing the skin off the victim.

Carnivorous Trees (3) Init +5; Atk Branch +3 ranged 10' (1d6+special per round), AC 16; HD 5d8; hp 26; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP 3 branches; SV Fort +6 Ref -10 Will -5

Branch AC13, HP 8, SV Fort +3 Ref +2 Will -5

Among the items are clothing, Two pairs of high quality leather boots, A suit of human or elf sized studded leather, three daggers (one is +1), a longbow, 7 arrows (3 are +1), a flask of oil, and a small amount of coins: 22cp, 77sp, and 36gp. When cut, the tree bleeds a blackish-purple sap that can be used to poison one single weapon. On a successful hit, the poison will cause 2 points of damage for 5 rounds. The poison will wear off in 24 hours.

THE LABORATORY

After a long upward climb, the path finally levels off to a plateau. As you rest your burning legs and sore feet, you notice the city below you. A few large birds of prey circle around the cliff. The air is cool and brisk and you start to feel a chill after your sweaty climb. Centered in the plateau is a tower made of dark gray cut granite placed so tightly together it resembles a single carved piece. The walls are impossible for anyone to climb. The tower appears to be nearly 35' high and peeks slightly over the grove of pines surrounding it. A single, round window on the East side, two feet in diameter, is situated 12' from the ground. An outbuilding made of wood and stone is connected to the South side of the tower. The door to the outbuilding has been smashed open with only a few pieces of splintered wood still attached to the iron hinges.

A solid iron door 8' high bars access to the tower. As you see the door, you notice a slight pink sheen surrounding the door.