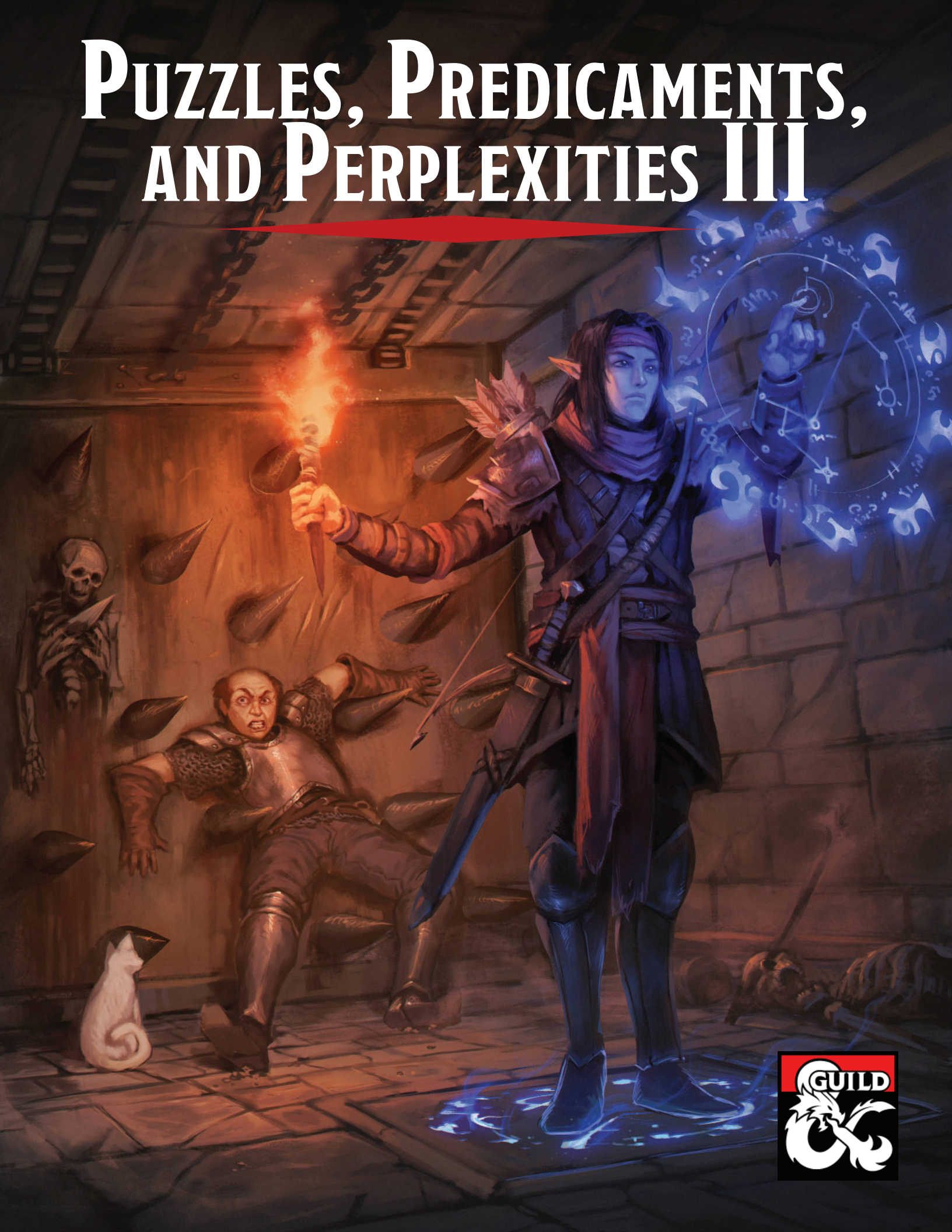
Puzzles, Predicaments, and Perplexities III



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Bill Putrino is a pop punk skateboarder living the good life in the world of nerdy pop culture. Bill is an avid Board Gamer, RPG player, and DM, not to mention an amazing artist as you can tell by his work on his site dnd2d.com.

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On The Cover

Boris desparately treis to hold back the deadly collapsing wall to give Jasp more time to focus on connecting the dots.
Cover art by Thomas Bourdon



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Introduction

Adventurers will find themselves tested in many ways during their careers seeking fame, fortune, justice, and truth. Some tests will challenge their strength, agility, spellcasting knowledge, and combat skills. Others will require diplomacy, conversation, observation skills, and social interaction. A rare challenge provides elements of both and requires deeper thinking and analysis. Such puzzles are meant to guard treasure and secrets and present a unique challenge to characters and players. They also imply a worthy reward lies on the other side.

Puzzles, Predicaments, and Perplexities: Volume Three presents twelve original puzzles for your fifth edition Dungeons & Dragons campaign. These encounters are designed to be inserted into your adventures at any point with minimal preparation. Each puzzle is presented with a description of how it works, its solution, and several hints that can be provided to players if they have trouble solving it. The hints are designed to direct the players toward the solution without giving it away. The full solution should not be revealed to players until all hints have been exhausted, and it is apparent the puzzle cannot be solved. We hope this will be a rare occurrence, as the answers should slowly become evident by revealing more about each puzzle with the provided clues.

The Perplexity Rating

This feature attempts to help DMs understand the relative difficulty of each puzzle. While each group of players is different, and it's not easy to predict which scenarios they will easily solve and which will completely stump them, this rating endeavors to provide high-level guidance on the difficulty of a particular puzzle. This is completely separate from the Challenge Rating and concerns the difficulty of solving the puzzles in terms of player skill and problem-solving ability.

The general guidelines used to determine Perplexity Rating are:

- **Easy.** A puzzle that can be solved through sheer persistence. Everything needed to solve an Easy puzzle is right in front of the characters, they just need to pay attention and follow the clues.
- **Medium.** A Medium puzzle requires more creativity or investigation. Players must look beyond obvious clues and search for hidden patterns that lead to the solution.
- **Hard.** The most difficult puzzles require careful analysis, consideration of multiple scenarios, and observation of how multiple moving parts interact with each other. Hard puzzles may also contain an element of math.

While specific players might prove the Perplexity Rating inaccurate for them (one party may blow through a Hard puzzle and become stuck on an Easy puzzle), it serves as a guide for relative difficulty of the puzzles in this supplement. The puzzles are ordered by this rating, starting with Easy and progressing to Hard.

Scaling The Puzzle Difficulty

The puzzles, as presented, are intended to be encountered by Tier 1 (levels 1-4) characters. However, they are designed in a way that allows them to be made suitable for characters of all levels. Some simple adjustments can be made to scale the difficulty up for higher level characters.

Adjusting the DC of ability checks is the most convenient method for changing the difficulty of a puzzle. It is recommended that you increase the DC of all ability checks in a given puzzle by 2 for each Tier over 1. For example, a puzzle requiring a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check would increase to DC 15 for Tier 2 (levels 5-10) characters, DC 17 for Tier 3 (levels 11-16) characters, and DC 19 for Tier 4 (levels 17+) characters. Ultimately, the players should succeed in solving the puzzle. It should be challenging, but not impossible. Adjusting the DC of the associated ability checks is one way to tune the difficulty of the challenge.

The puzzles can also be comprised of a trap component to punish characters for attempting incorrect solutions. These traps are meant to increase the sense of danger and urgency around finding the solution to the puzzle. The inclusion or exclusion of these traps also provides a technique for adjusting the difficulty of the puzzles. For lower level characters or newer players, the puzzle itself may provide enough challenge without the extra threat of a fireball landing on their heads if they press the wrong button. For higher level characters or experienced players, that threat can transform a tedious exercise in pattern identification into a potentially deadly encounter. Several of the puzzles have a sidebar entitled "Raising The Stakes" that includes optional additions to make the encounter more difficult or dangerous.

Opening Doors And More

By their very nature, these puzzles are designed as mandatory obstacles for the adventurers to overcome by finding the correct solution. For many of these puzzles, that obstacle is represented by a locked door that can only be opened by solving the puzzle. While the door may be the most common and logical choice as a barricade – forcing the party to engage with the puzzle – a variety of options can be substituted to suit your particular campaign or adventure. Some other options for successfully solving a puzzle include:

- Opening a locked chest.
- Uncovering a hidden message.
- Transporting the party to an alternate plane.
- Unlocking the shackles of a prisoner.
- Closing a magical portal.
- Revealing an invisible artifact.

There is also an opportunity to chain together several puzzles. This book includes two adventures that have been created entirely by doing just that!

The Adventures

In addition to the stand-alone puzzles, this book also includes two full-length adventures. These adventures build a story around the puzzles, giving a logical narrative for linking them together in a series of challenges. The adventures can be run completely as written, as self-contained modules, or they can be dissected and used for parts in your own campaign.

The Long-forgotten Adventures of Sir Canard sends the adventurers on a ghostly journey through time. The party relives the early and later years of a somewhat famous (if somewhat forgotten) explorer. As they assist him in a variety of tasks that shape his life and career, the heroes may be surprised by what they discover in the end.

Trials of the Bearwalker Clan finds the party seeking help from a tribe of goliath barbarians. The barbarians have exactly what the group is looking for, and they have a reasonable request. The adventurers must prove themselves worthy of the tribe's assistance by completing a series of ancient ritualistic trials that have been part of the Bearwalker Clan's tradition for generations.

Making The Puzzles Your Own

While the puzzles presented here are suitable for plugging into any adventure, Dungeon Masters are encouraged to customize the puzzles to better fit their game. There are numerous ways to customize each puzzle. This can include making the puzzles more personal to your group of adventurers; adjusting the puzzle descriptions to fit the setting of your dungeon; changing the symbols or languages involved to match your game world; or involving known NPCs in the solution. The puzzles provide a framework for logical and solvable problems that can be personalized to fit your adventure.



The Puzzles

The puzzles in this book are designed to be inserted into almost any adventure at logical points. This could entail adding additional challenges within officially published adventures or inserting new obstacles into your own custom adventure. Some are more challenging than others, and a puzzle that appears simple at first may surprise you by stumping your players. Every adventuring party is different and the way they approach challenges can vary drastically. Be open-minded when players surpriseyou while dealing with these trials.

Pictures Worth At Least Three Words

Perplexity Rating: Easy

This puzzle is a language-based challenge, involving matching images with words to reconstruct a lost language. Use it anywhere there is a suitable space for pictures on a wall, column, or other surface.

The Puzzle

When the characters approach this encounter, read or paraphrase the following and provide the accompanying images, available in appendix B:

> You come across a wall that holds crude images along with word plates written in Common. Some of the word plates are still hanging on the wall, some have been knocked down, and a few are completely missing.

The Solution

The party simply needs to match the correct plate with its corresponding image. The key is that the images build on one another; characters need to remember small words from earlier paintings to be able to piece together the final puzzle. Players first learn the word usage for angry ("hwagrator") and then learn the word for mouse ("rago") by comparing the words from the previous parts of the puzzle. There is a lot of guesswork involved, but players who are familiar with using foreign languages (or those with a natural aptitude for language) should be comfortable latching onto one or two familiar phrases and guessing everything else.

The simple words and phrases are translated as follows:

Lokwa - Happy

Virn Lokwator - Happy man

Mogra - Sad

Virn Mogrator - Sad man

Hwage (this word is missing) - Angry

Virn Hwagrator - Angry man

Inakto Avro - Bird in a tree (*Inakto* means "in a tree")

Avro - bird

Inakto Rago - Mouse in a tree

The more complex phrases are translated as follows:

Inmento Tukruk Hwagrator - "Angry dragon on a table." Players can recognize the word "angry" and guess that this is the answer. Inmento means "in or on a table."

Inbedo Rago Chago - "A small mouse in a boat. Players can recognize the word for mouse ("rago") and guess that this is the answer. Inbedo means "in or on a boat."

Yukto Manata Tesol Bancha - Bright sun next to a mountain. Literally, "Next to mountain, sun bright."

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- With a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check, the character understands that the party needs to place the correct plate on the wall.
- A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check will allow a character to figure out that Inakto means "In a tree."
- Players completely stuck can perceive with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check that they do not need to learn every word, and only need to focus on identifying one or two key words.
- Players can, with a DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Perception) check, be told part or all of the English (Common) translation of each picture, at the Dungeon Master's discretion.

Raising the Stakes

The Dungeon Master can adjust the difficulty by removing words from the pictures. For example, characters can guess "Inakto Rago" with only one of the previous images translated (Inakto Avro), leaving "Avro" untranslated. At a minimum, characters will need to learn "hwagrator" (angry) and "rago" (mouse) to solve the puzzle.

IMAGES WITH PLATES

The following images are hung ont he wall. One image's plate is unfortunately broken.



Lokwa



Virn Lokwator



Mogra

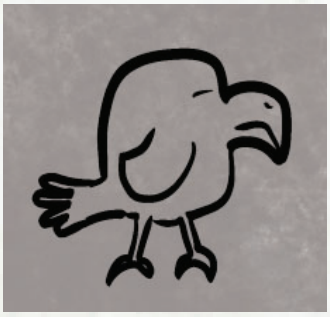


???

(Plate is broken)



Inakto Avro



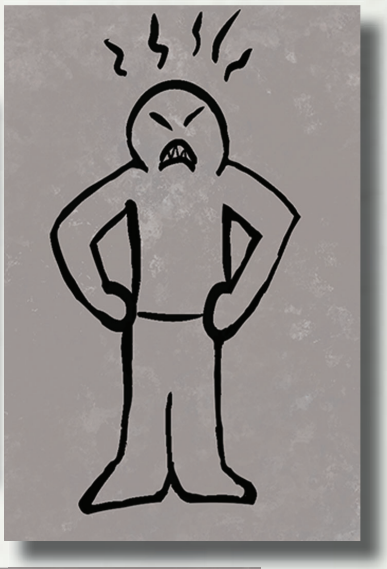
Avro

IMAGES WITH MISSING PLATES

The following images are hung ont he wall but their accompanying name plates have been scatterd on the floor.













Name Plates

You find these name plates scattered in no particular order on the floor.

Hwage

Inakto Rago

Inmento Tukruk Hwagrator

Virn Hwagrator

Inbedo Rago Chago

Yukto Manata Tesol Bancha

The Shattered Sword

Perplexity Rating: Easy

An old forge contains the tools and process for putting together the pieces of an ancient shattered sword. Only when the sword is once again made whole can the party solve this puzzle.

The Puzzle

The forge and the broken sword can be placed in any dungeon, castle, city, or fortress. When the party enters the forge, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you enter this room, you feel a surge of hot air on your skin. A large forge against the far wall is glowing with flames. An anvil sits before it, with a quenching bucket filled with liquid. A workbench is against a nearby wall. On it rests several smithing tools and an old-looking scroll.

While the forge itself is used to solve the puzzle, there are some crucial items that are required to use the forge properly. Specifically, the six shards of a broken sword. It is up to the Dungeon Master to decide where the shards are located. They may be scattered throughout the world, located across many sessions by the adventurers without really knowing what they were for. They could be hidden within the same dungeon as the forge itself. They could also simply be in the forge waiting for someone to come along to put them together. How, where, and when the party finds the shards of the sword is up to how the Dungeon Master decides to work this puzzle into their campaign or adventure.

The scroll contains the instructions for successfully putting the sword back together. Following these instructions properly is required to achieve the goal of this puzzle. Similar to the shards themselves, the scroll could be placed strategically elsewhere in the campaign or adventure by the Dungeon Master. Perhaps an experienced blacksmith who has been in hiding is in possession of it. Maybe it was also hidden somewhere else in the same dungeon as the forge.

Near the forge are additional tools and supplies needed to reforge the sword. The workbench contains a hammer, tongs, a sharpening stone, a polishing cloth, an hourglass, and gloves. On one side of the workbench is a pile of 20 iron bars. On the other side is a pile of coal. In front of the forge is a large anvil. Next to the anvil is a barrel filled with cooling oil.

The scroll contains the instructions as follows, and a handout to present to the players is available in appendix C:

The ancient sword in need of a fix
How will you reunite all the pieces six?
The steps to follow are here in this text
Continue to read to find what comes next

For the reunion to begin to transpire
The forge must be fed to increase the fire
Place into the flames the right amount of coal
Lumps numbered the same as the length of a pole

With the tools on the table grasp each piece one by one
Heat in the fire but not so much it's overdone
Use the timer to measure how long to aid with the fix
Heat exactly minutes counted two score minus six

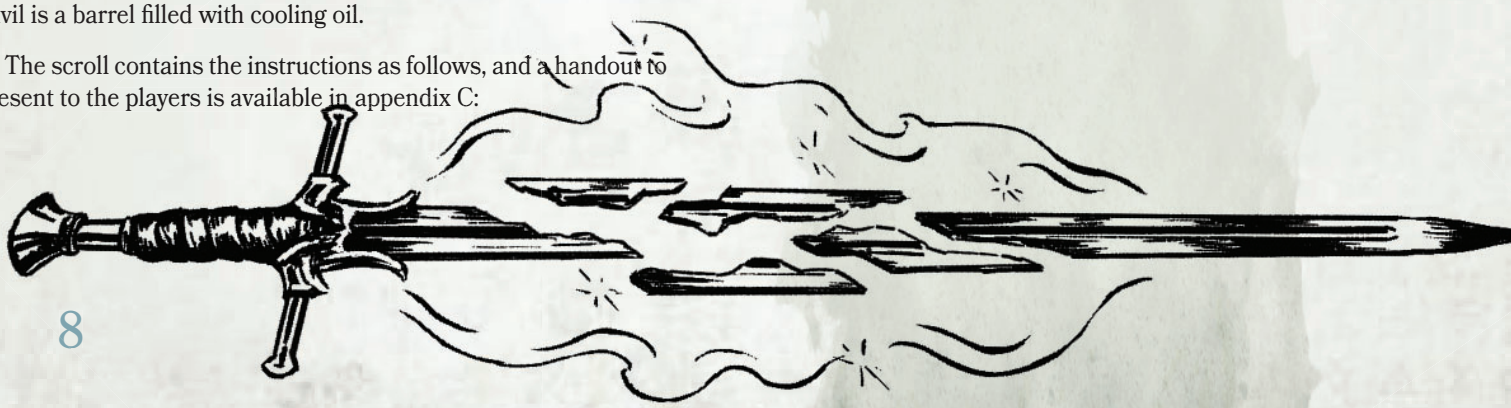
Once heated align the shards on the anvil to pound
The next steps are important for the sword to be bound
The point shall be pointed which way the sun rises
The hammers per shard will vary by sizes

The point and its two must be strong to impale
Five hammers per seam so the bond does not fail
The two pieces next get two pounds per scar
Extra metal is added as three iron bars

The sword nearly complete needs one more bar
The hilt joins with half the total poundings so far
The pieces all joined will need to be cooled
Four dips half a minute into the oily pool

The sword now one needs an edge sharp and fine
And polish to give it a bright sheen and shine
The fifth prime number strokes of the stone
This number on each edge gives the sword its hone

Sharp and united now needs to rub off the grime
You'll know on your own when it's ready to shine
If you deciphered each step and followed them true
A sword made for a hero is now waiting for you



The Solution

The players must successfully read, decipher, and follow the instructions as laid out on the scroll to forge the pieces of the magical sword back together. The steps below explain what each hint means and how it should be executed during the process:

Step 1: The second stanza talks about putting coal in the fire. "Lumps numbered the same as the length of a pole" refers to the 10-foot pole that is commonly included among the gear in an adventurers' pack. The party must place 10 lumps of coal into the forge's fire. Any more or less coal results in a failure.

Step 2: The third stanza describes the process for heating each of the shards. The tongs found on the workbench must be used to grasp each shard individually. Each piece then must be heated within the fire of the forge. The hourglass is used to track the time each piece is heated. The phrase "two score minus six" gives the number of minutes. A score is equal to 20, which means two score is equal to 40. Subtracting 6 from 40, the total is 34. Each of the six pieces must be heated in the forge for 34 minutes. Any more or less time spent heating the shards results in a failure.

Step 3: The fourth stanza explains how the shards should be aligned on the anvil. This is fairly straightforward, as they should be arranged so they fit together with the "point shall be pointed which way the sun rises." The sun rises in the east, so the tip of the sword should point towards the east. If the reforging proceeds without the sword tip pointing east it fails.

Step 4: The last line of the fourth stanza begins explaining the next step, as it mentions hammering the shards together. The blacksmith's hammer on the workbench is used for this step. Two pieces are connected to the shard that includes the tip of the sword. These create two connections or seams. "Five hammers per seam so the bond does not fail" provides the number of strikes to be done with the hammer to connect these pieces - five for each of the two seams, or ten total to connect these first three pieces.

Step 5: The next two lines provide the next stage of hammering, with the addition of extra metal. "The two pieces next get two pounds per scar, Extra metal is added as three iron bars." Three iron bars are added to the shards as the next pieces are hammered together. Two additional connections, seams, or "scars" as the poem puts it, with two pounds each, means four more strikes of the hammer to connect these shards. Too many or too few hammer strikes or iron bars and this step fails.

Step 6: The piece with the hilt is the final shard to be joined, and "needs one more bar, The hilt joins with half the total poundings so far." An additional iron bar is added, and the previous total hammer strikes must be totalled. With ten total strikes in step 4 and an additional four in step 5, that's a total of fourteen strikes. Half of that is seven. The hilt is joined with the addition of the iron bar and seven strikes of the hammer. Too many or too few hammer strikes or iron bars, and this step fails.

Step 7: The poem then speaks of cooling the reforged sword. This can be done by dipping it into the barrel filled with oil. "Four dips half a minute into the oily pool" gives the number of dips and duration. Half a minute is thirty seconds, so the sword should be dipped into the barrel and remain there for thirty seconds. This is repeated four times. If the sword is dipped for too long or too little time, or with too many or too few repetitions, this step fails.

Step 8: The sharpening stone is used to give the sword sharp edges. The poem explains how to do this with "the fifth prime number strokes of the stone, this number on each edge gives the sword its hone." Prime numbers are numbers greater than 1 that are not the product of two smaller numbers. Or, put another way, a number that cannot be divided evenly besides by 1 or itself. The sequence of the first five prime numbers are 2, 3, 5, 7, 11. Therefore, the fifth prime number is 11. The sharpening sword is stroked on each of the sword's two edges 11 times each. Greater or fewer strokes results in a failure of the process.

Step 9: The final step involves using the polishing cloth to give the sword a nice shine. This step doesn't give specific directions on how long to shine the sword, so it is reliant on the characters figuring this out on their own. This is done via a skill check. A successful DC 10 skill check in Intelligence (History), Wisdom (Perception or Survival), or Charisma (Performance) means the person doing the polishing can determine when the sword has been sufficiently shined. Proficiency with jewelers' tools, smiths' tools, or tinkers' tools allows the character to determine the appropriate shine without the need for a skill check.

Unsuccessfully following the instructions results in a failure to forge the sword shards back together. When a step is performed incorrectly, the shards glow an angry red color and split apart, blasting a hot burst of steam and causing 2d10 fire damage to those standing within 10 feet. The process must then be started over from the beginning. After a third failure, the damage increases to 6d10 and the shards are destroyed forever.

When the instructions have been followed successfully, the sword glows with a blinding flash of light and becomes whole again! See appendix A for the details regarding the *reforged sword of Zzuples* that has been created by this process.

Hints and Tips

If players get stuck interpreting any of the parts of the poem that explain the steps, the following skill checks are some suggestions for how they can figure out the meaning of the words:

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that the sun rises in the east and, therefore, the shards of the sword should point in that direction. This also allows the character to determine which direction is currently east.
- A successful DC 11 Intelligence or Wisdom check allows a character to recall that the word "score" refers to the number twenty.
- A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana, History, or Religion) check recalls what a prime number is. A successful DC 14 check of the same skill reveals the first five prime numbers.

Stone Tablets

Perplexity Rating: Easy

The party needs to place a pile of oddly shaped stone tablets correctly into a frame. Each stone must be placed in its correct position in order to fill out the frame. The Stone Tablets puzzle can be used anywhere you would like to put a pause in the game. Once the puzzle is completed successfully it can trigger a door, open a chest, summon an NPC, or fill the room with treasure. The end result can be fit into any scene in your game.

This puzzle has a print and cut element that can be used at your game table. Cutting the puzzle out is not required but recommended. See Stone Tablets in appendix D.

The Puzzle

When the party enters the room with the tablets, read or paraphrase the following:

> Before you lies a stack of stone tablets piled eight high. Next to the stones sits a square wooden frame. The depth of the frame looks deep enough to accommodate the thickness of one of the stacked stone tablets.

This is similar to a jigsaw puzzle where the party will need to arrange all eight stone tablets into the wooden frame to create a perfect square.

The Solution

This puzzle is complete when all 8 pieces are perfectly laid out within the frame to create a perfect square. There should be no gaps or overlapping of pieces. See the completed puzzle layout in appendix D.

A character casting the commune with nature spell can sense that 3 tablets want to be touching each other and will be able to place these tablets correctly in the puzzle.

Hints and Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- With a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check the character realizes this is an ancient magical puzzle where placing the stone tablets together in a perfect square yields a magical result.
- An Intelligence (Investigation) check result between DC 12 and 15 allows the character to see a dusting outline that matches the shape of one of the tablets in the frame. A 16+ Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the character to see the dusting outline of two tablets in the frame.
- On a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check the character can sense that one of the tablets wants to be touching the wood frame (place a correct edge piece in the puzzle).

Raising the Stakes

You can turn this puzzle into a dungeon crawl by having the party find the square frame, with one stone tablet in it, in the first room of a dungeon. Hide the rest of the puzzle pieces throughout the dungeon and have the characters search the rest of the dungeon to find all the pieces, then attempt to solve it.

Adding a damaging trap if too many pieces are placed incorrectly in the frame is a fun way to add some threat to the puzzle. If four or more pieces are laid incorrectly in the frame, the erupting earth spell is cast on the character's location.

If you are looking to add combat into this puzzle, **earth elementals** can spawn from the walls and attack the group if they place four or more pieces out incorrectly in the frame. Use 1 earth elemental for a Tier 1 group, 2 for a Tier 2 group, 5 for a Tier 3 group, and 8 earth elementals for a Tier 4 group.

The Zzuples Chest

Perplexity Rating: Easy

For this puzzle, the party is presented with a locked chest. The party has to figure out the missing number on a combination lock attached to a chest in order to open it.

The Puzzle

The Zzuples Chest puzzle can be used in any setting where you want the players to access a locked chest.

Read or paraphrase the following:

> Laying on the floor in the center of the room is a decaying skeleton. It is barely clothed due to years of rot, decay, and insects eating away at it. The skeleton's right arm and hand is stretched out in an odd position. Upon further investigation, it looks like they have scratched some numbers into the stone floor. You can make out five numbers: 16, 06, 68, 88, and 98. Next to the numbers is a stone chest built into the floor. On top of the chest are six two-digit numbered rotary dials, all set to the number 00.

This is a straightforward number deciphering puzzle. The players are given five numbers (16, 06, 68, 88, 98) and need to figure out what the proper sequence, and the missing sixth number, is in order to enter the correct combination and open the chest.

The Solution

The players don't know that their characters are looking at the numbers upside down. Once they turn the numbers over, the series reads 86, 88, 89, 90, 91. If the characters notice that the numbers viewed in this way show a simple sequence, they can plainly see the missing number is 87. The complete combination is 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91. Once they set the rotary dials on the chest to those numbers in that order, the chest unlocks and opens.

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- A DC 11 Intelligence (History) check triggers a character's learnings of Common language and numbers. They realize that, as presented, these numbers are written in Common and are out of order.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check allows a character to notice that 88 is 88 even when it's upside down. This can help lead the characters to look at all the numbers upside down.
- A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to not only notice that the skeleton in the room looks like it was scratching the numbers in the stone, but that they are not lying in the position they were when they died. This can help lead the characters to see that the numbers are upside down from how the skeleton lies.

Raising the Stakes

There are several ways Dungeon Masters can modify this puzzle to make it harder for the players:

A non-damaging approach to making this a harder encounter is to give the players fewer numbers up front. Instead of giving them five numbers perhaps give them four, or even three for a real challenge. You can even change the order in which the numbers are written on the floor, also requiring the players to reorder them for the proper combination.

Combat may be added to this encounter by having the skeleton on the floor animate and attack the party if they guess the wrong combination.

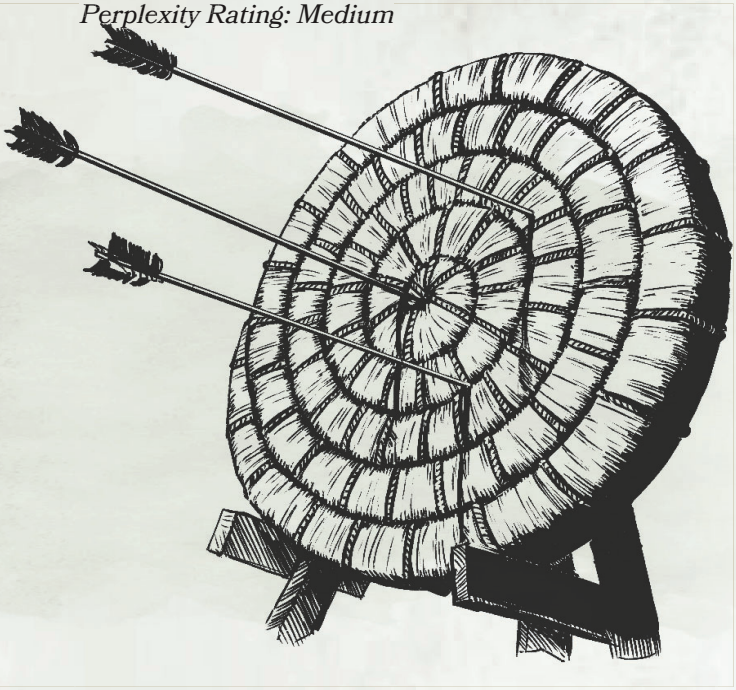
Adding an electrifying or poison trap when a rotary dial is turned is a way to add some danger to this encounter.

A hard failure condition can be added to this puzzle. If the party tries the wrong combination too many times (at the Dungeon Master's discretion), the chest transforms into a mimic and attacks the party. The party receives none of the treasure that was in the chest before it transformed.



Bullseye

Perplexity Rating: Medium



A collection of archery targets make up this puzzle. Players will have to examine a target that already has arrows in it, figure out the scoring system, and shoot arrows into the appropriate rings on the remaining targets.

The Puzzle

Arrows sticking out of a target are the main clue here, as well as some notes attached to each target. When the characters approach this puzzle, read or paraphrase the following:

> Before you, four archery targets are arranged next to each other. The first target has three arrows sticking out of it, each arrow embedded in a different ring of the target. The other three targets are empty. Across from the targets, a line is etched into the ground, seemingly to indicate the point from which archers should shoot. Lying beside the used target is a quiver filled with arrows and a longbow.

The targets have five rings on them, each ring worth a specific number of points when hit by an arrow. Each target expects a specific number of total points to be scored on it using three arrows. The party must determine how many points each target expects, how many points each ring is worth, and then successfully shoot arrows into each of the targets to reach that exact point total.

The points expected for each target is written on the back of each target. Any character who specifically examines the targets closely will notice this without a skill check. Any character who searches the room as a whole will notice this writing with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

The numbers on the targets, from left to right, are: 220, 190, 140, 260. The leftmost target is the one with the three arrows in it. The arrows are located within the outermost ring, the ring 3rd from the edge (which also happens to be 3rd from the center), and the bullseye.

The Solution

The party has to reverse engineer the values of each ring, using the target with the arrows stuck in it along with the point total written on the back of it. The total of those three arrows is 220 points. These points are summed from the three different point values represented by the three arrows. It should be a fairly easy assumption that each ring is worth different points and the outer circles are worth less than the inner circles (and bullseye), but if the party does not automatically reach this conclusion they can do so on a successful DC 11 Strength (Athletics) or Intelligence (History) check.

The process of finding the three numbers used to total 220 will take some trial and error, and eventually the party should realize the point numbers equal to 150 for the bullseye, 60 for the 3rd ring, and 10 for the outer ring. This leaves them to determine the point totals for the two rings that do not have arrows. It will take some more math to figure this out.

The difference in points between the bullseye and 3rd ring is 90 points. The difference between the 3rd ring and the outer ring is 50 points. This demonstrates that there is not a constant difference in the point values between each ring. Now the question to solve is how each ring changes in point value as they progress. Knowing that it's not an even distribution helps quite a bit. Taking the 90 points difference and 50 points difference and splitting each so they're roundly uneven gives a 50/40 and 30/20 split. Looking more closely at these numbers shows a difference of 10 points each time. So, from the bullseye, the number of points each ring is worth decreases starting at 50, and then 10 points fewer each time. See the table for the full breakdown.

Ring	Point Value	Difference From Previous Ring	AC
Bullseye	150	N/A	14
Fourth Ring	100	-50	13
Third Ring	60	-40	12
Second Ring	30	-30	11
Outer Ring	10	-20	10

Once the characters determine the point value of each ring, it's a matter of shooting arrows into the appropriate rings on each target to match its expected point total. Shooting each ring requires a successful ranged attack with a bow against the Armor Class as shown on the accompanying table.

The appropriate rings to be hit on each of the remaining three targets are as follows:

- **2nd target** - 190 points: fourth ring (100), third ring (60), second ring (30) or bullseye (150), second ring (30), outer ring (10).
- **3rd target** - 140 points: fourth ring (100), second ring (30), outer ring (10).
- **4th target** - 260 points: bullseye (150), fourth ring (100), outer ring (10).

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- On a successful DC 10 Intelligence check the character makes the direct connection between the numbers written on the back of the targets and the points scored by the arrows striking the target.
- A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that there is enough information available from the used target to determine the values of each ring.
- On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check the character recalls that targets such as these usually award 150 points for hitting the bullseye.

Connecting The Dots

Perplexity Rating: Medium

Floating magical runes require the characters to decipher what the symbols mean and how to interact with them to solve this puzzle.



The Puzzle

This puzzle can be placed at the end of a hallway or within a room with no obvious exits other than the way the party entered. When the group moves to within 10 feet of the puzzle, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you step forward, you feel a loose stone beneath your foot shift, and hear a low humming noise. Suddenly, directly in front of you, glowing symbols appear. A circular design with runes around the outer border floats in mid-air. The circle and runes pulse with pale blue light as the humming continues.

The floating magical symbols are interactive, and a character who touches them will experience a sensation like touching cold metal. There are two different components to this puzzle that the characters can interact with: touching the runes around the outer edge of the circle allows the rotation of the circle as a whole; depending on the rotated position of the circle, dots will appear within it that can be touched by a character.

Rotating the circle both changes the color of the entire display, and makes certain points within the circle appear or disappear. Solving this puzzle involves making the points within the circle appear and connecting them to one another by tracing a path between.

There are 10 runes on the outer edge of the circle. The rune in the top position (position one) is the current position, though the puzzle is not activated yet (and won't until they rotate away from this initial position). A character that uses their finger (or another object) to touch any of the outer runes can move the circle in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction, causing the outer circle and its associated runes to rotate. The dots and lines within the circle do not rotate and always remain in the same position.

The Solution

When a new position is made active by rotating the outer circle, the color of the puzzle changes and the dots within the circle appear or disappear. The characters must rotate the circle until the next set of dots appear and then use their finger (or another object) to connect the new dots to the pattern that's been drawn so far. The table below explains the color and dots for each available position.

From the initial position, no dots will show up within the circle until it is rotated to the 7th (red) position. At that point, two dots appear. A line must be drawn connecting the dots, at which point they will pulse in recognition of a correct move. After the first connection is made, the circle must be rotated again. No new dots will show up until the circle is moved into the 4th (brown) position, at which point one additional dot becomes visible. Once the brown dot is connected to the original two dots, the puzzle pulses to acknowledge the correct move. The circle must then be rotated to the 9th (yellow) position, which reveals three additional dots that must be connected. This process repeats until all 10 positions have been activated and their dots connected.

The correct sequence for rotating the circle into the active position in order to reveal and connect the dots is:

7th (red) - 4th (brown) - 9th (yellow) - 2nd (orange) - 1st (pale blue) - 6th (black) - 3rd (pink) - 5th (green) - 10th (purple) - 8th (midnight blue)

Once all the connections are made, the puzzle glows a bright white, the humming becomes louder, and it explodes in a burst of light. When the light fades, the reward is revealed.

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check understands that the puzzle can be interacted with manually, and that touching and moving it can manipulate its components.
- A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check reveals the runes on the outer edge of the circle to be representative of the numbers one through ten.
- A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check understands that the dots appearing within the circle are representative of some kind of map or pathway that needs to be connected somehow.

Circle Position	Puzzle Color	Dots Show up After	Sequence of Positions	Number of Dots Visible
1	Pale Blue	Orange	5	1
2	Orange	Yellow	4	2
3	Pink	Black	7	1
4	Brown	Red	2	1
5	Green	Pink	8	3
6	Black	Pale Blue	6	2
7	Red	Initial Position	1	2
8	Midnight Blue	Purple	10	1
9	Yellow	Brown	3	3
10	Purple	Green	9	2

Raising the Stakes

While it may take some time for the party to figure out the mechanics of how the puzzle works, once they understand, it's mostly a matter of trial and error. To increase the sense of urgency and danger while they are finding the solution, a wall of spikes appears from the wall opposite the puzzle and slowly begins to move towards them.

The wall begins 40 feet away from the group and moves 10 feet each round (the Dungeon Master may adjust the distance and speed at their discretion to make it more or less threatening). A combined Strength check of 50 allows the group to hold the wall in place and prevents it from moving for one round. That check must be repeated each round. A successful DC 14 check with thieves' tools - made with disadvantage due to the moving nature of the wall - disarms the trap and resets the wall back to its original position. Any character who is standing in a spot that the wall moves to must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be pierced by the spikes, taking 2d6 piercing damage. When the wall reaches the puzzle and there is no more room between the spiked wall and the far wall, the damage increases to 4d6 piercing damage and 4d6 bludgeoning damage as anybody standing in this location is crushed between the two walls. The trap resets after one hour.

Pillar Touching

Perplexity Rating: Medium

This room contains several doors to be opened, and the pillars within the room hide the method of opening each door. What lies behind the doors? Well, that remains to be seen...

The Puzzle

There are eight identical columns in this room, arranged in a symmetrical pattern. When the party enters the room, read or paraphrase the following:

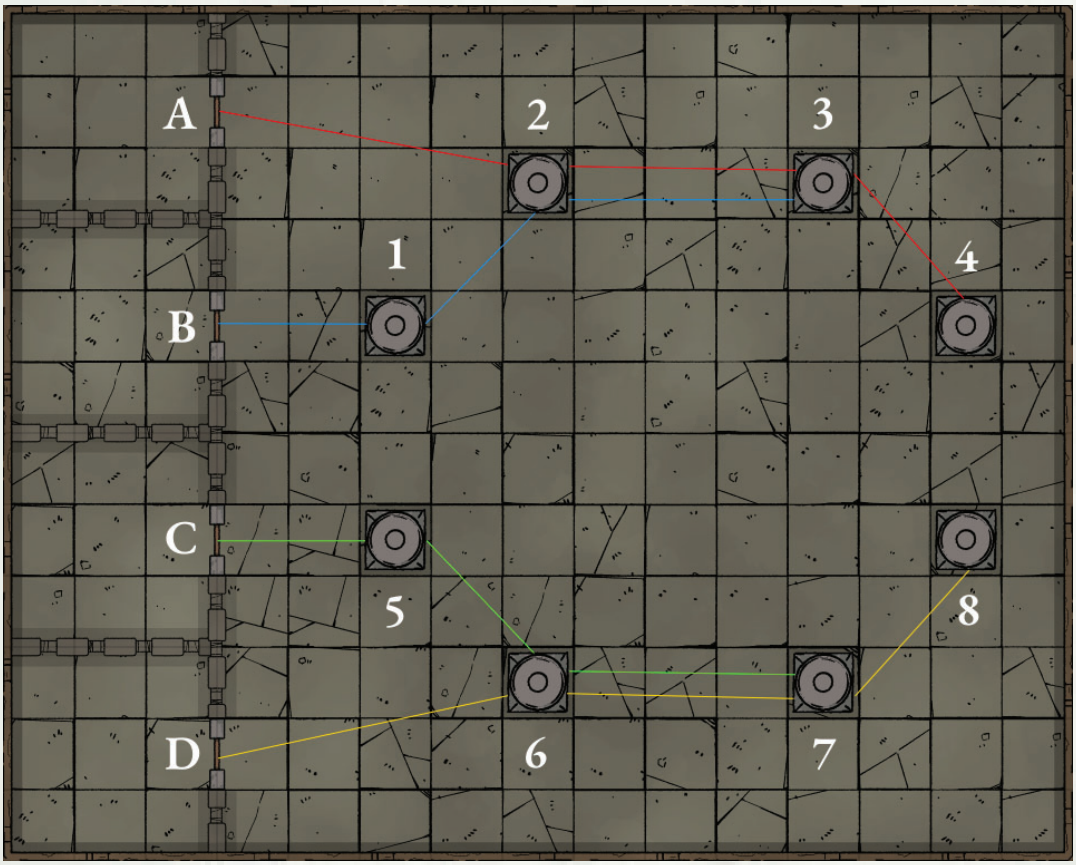
> Across from where you enter the room you see four identical doors on the opposite wall. Between you and those doors are eight stone pillars which reach from floor to ceiling. The pillars are arranged in a circular pattern that is not entirely closed. An aisle down the middle of the room separates the four on the left from the four on the right, each making a symmetrical semi-circle.

Each of the doors is magically sealed, with no detectable handle or lock. The trick to opening each of the doors is touching the correct pillars simultaneously. The group discovers this by examining the pillars and interacting with them. Once they realize that contact with the pillars is required, they must also find the right combination of pillars for each door, as well as recognize that the pillars must be touched simultaneously (meaning a different character will have to touch each one at the same time).

Touching a pillar results in the pillar warming up. Touching multiple correct pillars will increase the amount of heat expended by each pillar, although that sensation never becomes uncomfortable or causes damage. When one pillar is already being touched, touching subsequent pillars that are not part of a related pattern has no effect. When the correct pillars are all touched at the same time, they glow with a brief flash of light and the corresponding door slides open.

The Solution

Each door is opened by having characters simultaneously touch the three pillars that form a line between the door and the opposite wall. In other words, if a character moves in a straight line away from the door they want to open towards the opposite wall, then the first pillar they encounter is the first in the sequence, and moving further from the door will lead to the next two in the connection. See the table and illustration for the full list of combinations to open each door. See appendix I for a map of the room.
Cover art by Thomas Bourdon



Door	First Pillar	Second Pillar	Third Pillar
A	2	3	4
B	1	2	3
C	5	6	7
D	6	7	8

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check of the columns reveals that there are faded handprints visible on all of them, which hints at others before them touching the columns on purpose.
- A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check of the doors reveals that they are certainly magically locked and that it is likely something found in the room itself can be used to unlock them.
- A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check done while one or more of the pillars is being touched by somebody concludes that the sequence of the columns being touched is not as important as which ones are being touched simultaneously.

Raising the Stakes

What is behind each door is up to the Dungeon Master to decide. A few possibilities include:

- The group needs to open all four doors and collect items behind each.
- Only one door holds the item they seek or the path to progress further into the dungeon.
- Some doors can contain threats and obstacles, such as hostile creatures or traps.

There's also the option of adding traps to the room with the columns which could be triggered when several incorrect columns are touched at the same time, or if the characters let too much time pass before opening any of the doors.

Smoke Signals

Perplexity Rating: Medium

The use of smoke as a means of communication across long distances is a system that goes back many years. In this puzzle, the characters revisit that process and attempt to deliver an encoded message using smoke.

The Puzzle

This puzzle is presented inside a large room with a high ceiling. There is a fire pit filled with wood in the center. When the party enters this room, read or paraphrase the following:

> The ceiling of this large round room extends upwards approximately 50 feet. In the center of the room is a fire pit filled with wood and kindling. Stacked on either side of the fire pit are two piles of wood.

Directly above the fire pit is a hole in the ceiling. The wood next to the fire pit and the hole are the crucial components for solving this puzzle. Although it is high above them, there are markings visible around the hole in the ceiling. A character will notice these markings with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check while examining the room as a whole. A character that specifically looks at the hole spots these markings without a check.



These markings are important for understanding what kind of smoke signals must be created to solve the puzzle. See the diagram here and found in appendix E for a representation of the markings.

The Solution

The markings around the hole represent the color of the smoke and the size of the smoke puffs that must be sent through the hole – in order – to solve the puzzle. There are two sizes of smoke puff: short ones, represented by the circular symbol; and long ones, represented by the longer oval-shaped symbols.

There are three possible colors of smoke: white smoke, created by burning wood from the eastern pile; black smoke, created by burning wood from the western pile; and gray smoke, created by burning an equal amount of wood from both piles.

The party will need to come up with a mechanism to control the smoke and divide the different puffs as they rise from the fire and go through the hole in the ceiling. A variety of large, flat objects will do, provided the party is careful not to let the item catch on fire. Some possible objects that could be used for this purpose include a cloak, a shield, a bedroll, a tent, or a cape.

The correct sequence for the smoke signals to be sent through the hole is as follows: short white, long white, short white, short white, short white, long gray, long gray, short gray, short gray, long black, short black, short black, long black.

When the final correct puff of smoke passes through the hole, the fire blazes upwards, almost touching the ceiling, and then immediately extinguishes itself. The puzzle has been solved, and the prize, as determined by the Dungeon Master, reveals itself.

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- On a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check the character recognizes the setup with the fire pit, stacks of wood, and hole in the ceiling as a system used for communication with distant people.
- On a successful DC 11 Intelligence (History or Religion) check the character realizes that there are two symbols to be found within the pattern, one short and one long. There have been communications systems used in history that use combinations like this with sounds and lights (and smoke) to spell out words.
- On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Survival) check the character makes the connection between the colors of the symbols and the color of the smoke that can be created by the fire.

Starway

Perplexity Rating: Medium

Starway is a number puzzle in which the party needs to step on ten correct numbers, one on each stair, in order to ascend to the top of a 10 step stairway.

The Puzzle

When the party approaches this puzzling staircase, read or paraphrase the following:

> Before you is a staircase that leads towards your destination. The staircase is ten steps high and ten feet wide. Painted across each of the steps are ten stars laid out evenly in a row. Each star has one number in its center. They are laid out 0 through 9 from left to right. Each step has the identical painted stars on them.

The Solution

In order for a character to walk up the staircase successfully they need to step on one star per step in this order: 8 5 4 9 1 7 6 3 2 0.

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check by a character gives them a feeling that each star must be stepped on in the correct order to move up the staircase.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check allows a character to see an outline of a foot step on a correct number on one of the stairs.
- The character will find the letters ABC carved into the wall with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.
- If there is a bard in your group, succeeding on a DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check will have the lyrics "A-B-C. Easy as 1-2-3!" from the Jackson 5 pop into their head.

Raising the Stakes

- Add some danger for stepping on an incorrect numbered star by casting a *fire bolt* spell from the magical barrier at the character.
- Add an element of suspense and damage! Instead of taking damage from stepping on an incorrect star, have the character take damage by trying to walk through the magical barrier on any step that is still activated. The barrier casts *shocking grasp* on that character.
- Have the staircase reset if an incorrect star is stepped on. Once an incorrect star is stepped on, the stairs collapse into a slide, resulting in all characters sliding to the bottom.

Word Gisting

Perplexity Rating: Medium

Designed for adventurers with an aptitude for linguistics, this puzzle involves intuiting ("gisting") the possible meaning of a word when it isn't immediately apparent. See the handout in appendix F that accompanies this puzzle.

The Puzzle

The encounter begins with the characters finding a piece of parchment lying on a table alongside a quill and ink bottle. The parchment lists several questions along with possible choices. The adventurers will have to examine the words and figure out what common trait connects them.

The Solution

This puzzle involves reading often wildly misspelled words to guess their intended meaning and find their synonyms. Some words are easier than others. More literal-minded players may get stuck on sounding out certain words according to proper English ("Common") usage, while others may be more nimble and able to quickly guess the words' intended meaning based on the possible choices (hence the "gisting" part). Once a character understands that the words are misspellings, solving the rest of the puzzle becomes much easier.

Dore (door): Gate

Skrpt (script) Text

Jragen (dragon): Wyrm

Pewpool (pupil): Student

Xkews (excuse) Forgive

Svril (several); A Few

Payshins (patience): Tolerance

Tch (teach): Instruct

Anoff (enough): Satisfactory

Grbj (garbage): Rubbish

Amneypotnt (omnipotent): All-Powerful

Ansestrs (ancestors): Forefathers

Hints And Tips

Since much of the difficulty resides in discovering that the words are actually misspellings, not real words nor clues, a DM may want to provide small hints before revealing the true nature of this challenge:

- With a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation or History) check the character can understand that the question is somehow related to one of the four possible choices.
- With a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check the character can perceive that the words marked as "questions" are probably incorrectly written.
- With a successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check the character recognizes that the "question" is in fact an attempt to translate one of the four possible choices from an ancient language into Common.

Raising the Stakes

The Dungeon Master has several options to adjust the difficulty:

- Revealing the questions one by one will make the challenge harder, whereas showing several at one time might allow the party to guess the nature of the challenge sooner.
- Revealing the correct answer even when the character chooses incorrectly will significantly reduce the difficulty.
- Administering the test individually to each party member and rewarding the player who scores the best.
- Adding a timer (around ten seconds per question) to increase the difficulty, and introducing obstacles or penalties if the questions aren't answered in time.

Question	Dore	Skrpt	Jragen	Pewpool	Amneypotnt	Grbj
Choice A	Like	Stylus	Pole	Table	All-Powerful	Grabbing
Choice B	Thank	Text	Road	Leg	All-Knowing	Joking
Choice C	Gate	Angry	Stone	Boat	Wisest	Climb
Choice D	Tankard	Stool	Wyrm	Student	Strongest	Rubbish

Question	Svril	Payshins	Tch	Anoff	Xkews	Ansestrs
Choice A	Enough	Repay	Take	A Little	Sneaking	Necessity
Choice B	Evil	Order	Instruct	Satisfactory	Secret	Forefathers
Choice C	A Few	Bearing	Lament	Sometimes	Forgetful	Like
Choice D	Slender	Tolerance	Glorify	Crumble	Forgive	Allow



The Colored Triangle

Perplexity Rating: Hard

This particular puzzle requires good analytical skills and focus (and some math skills would come in handy as well). The colored triangle is a different kind of combination lock in that every possible combination must be discovered in order to solve the problem.

The Puzzle

This puzzle is designed to be the lock on a door the party needs to open. When they approach this door, read or paraphrase the following:

> A locked door stands before you, with eight solid metal bars secured into place between the door and its solid metal frame. In the center of the door is a triangular shaped carving. There are three grooves along the outline of the triangle. At each of its three points is a colored peg protruding from the groove. The top point's peg is blue, the one on the bottom right corner is red, and the final peg in the bottom left corner is yellow. It appears as if it is possible to move each of these pegs in two directions along these grooves

The party needs to carefully analyze and track the different combinations of peg movement in order to find all the possible variations. Each peg can only be moved one time along the groove, at which point it becomes immobilized until a new or repeated pattern is created. After each peg has been moved once, either a new combination is found and one of the metal bars unlocks, or a known combination is recreated which does not unlock any additional bars. In either scenario, the pegs return to their original positions for another attempt.

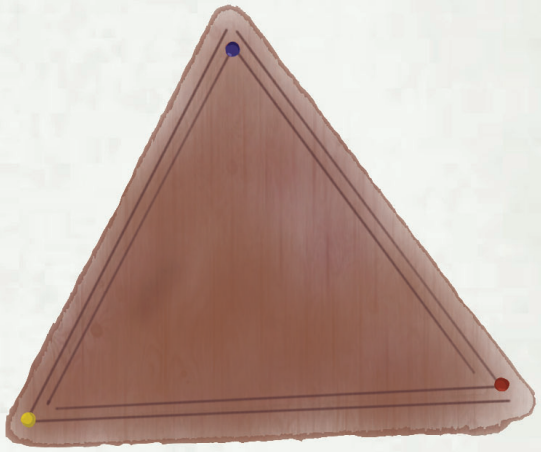
At the top of the triangle is the blue peg, which can be moved in two directions: down to left (putting it in the bottom left corner) or down to the right (putting it in the bottom right corner).

In the bottom right corner is the red peg, which can be moved in two directions: up (putting it at the top) or to the left (putting it in the bottom left corner).

In the bottom left corner is the yellow peg, which can be moved in two directions: up (putting it at the top) or to the right (putting it in the bottom right corner).

The Solution

To unlock this door, the group must move the pegs in different directions. There are eight possible movement combinations, each representing one of the eight bars keeping the door locked. When a new pattern is reached by moving the pegs, the bar slides open and the pegs reset to their original positions. In order to unlock the door entirely, each of the eight possible patterns must be created. The table below lists the eight possible combinations required to unlock all eight metal bars and open the door.



Solution	Top (Blue Direction)	Rigth (Red) Direction	Left (Yellow) Direction	Final Positions (T-R-L)
1	Down Rigth	Left	Right	None - Blue& Yellow - Red
2	Down Right	Left	Up	Yellow - Blue - Red
3	Down Right	Up	Right	Red - Blue & Yellow - None
4	Down Right	Up	Up	Red & Yellow - Blue - None
5	Down Left	Left	Right	None - Yellow - Blue & Red
6	Down Left	Left	Up	Yellow - None - Blue & Red
7	Down Left	Up	Right	Red - Yellow - Blue
8	Down Left	Up	Up	Red & Yellow - None - Blue

The trick here will be for the group to realize that the best approach is to systematically move and track each peg's possible movements to avoid repeating the same pattern or losing track of where they are. Note that the table follows a pattern of moving the blue peg in the same direction for the first four combinations, the red peg alternating every two combinations, and the yellow peg alternating each combination.

The Dungeon Master should pay careful attention to each combination the party creates and make note of which ones on the list have been completed and which have still not been discovered. For each new combination, one of the metal bars slides open. When they have created all eight combinations, the final bar slides open and the door is unlocked.

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- On a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check the character recognizes the triangular puzzle and bars as a sophisticated combination lock, implying combinations must be used to unlock it.
- A successful DC 12 Intelligence check reveals that the number of combinations can be calculated using math: the number of options each item has multiplied the number of items involved. So that's 2 X 2 X 2 = 8 possible combinations, which also just happens to be the exact number of metal bars locking the door closed.
- On a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check the character notices that the pegs will only slide in one direction each before they become locked in place, hinting that each peg must be moved once in order to trigger some unknown event.

Raising the Stakes

Since the Dungeon Master must track each combination that the players have completed, a penalty can be added each time they repeat a combination they've already created. A few options as consequences for repeating a previously completed pattern include:

- One of the previously unlocked bars slides back into place, re-locking it.
- A *fire bolt* trap strikes the last character who moved a peg, dealing 1d10 fire damage.
- The damage of the *fire bolt* increases by an additional 1d10 for each subsequent repeated pattern.

Language Of The Keepers

Perplexity Rating: Hard

Especially made for adventurers with an aptitude for linguistics, this puzzle involves deciphering an extinct language. Characters must read a short phrase written in Common which provides clues and context that will allow observant players to recognize a key word in an otherwise indecipherable language. See the handout in appendix H that accompanies this puzzle.

The Puzzle

This obstacle begins by having the characters observe a giant granitoid slab completely covered in writing.

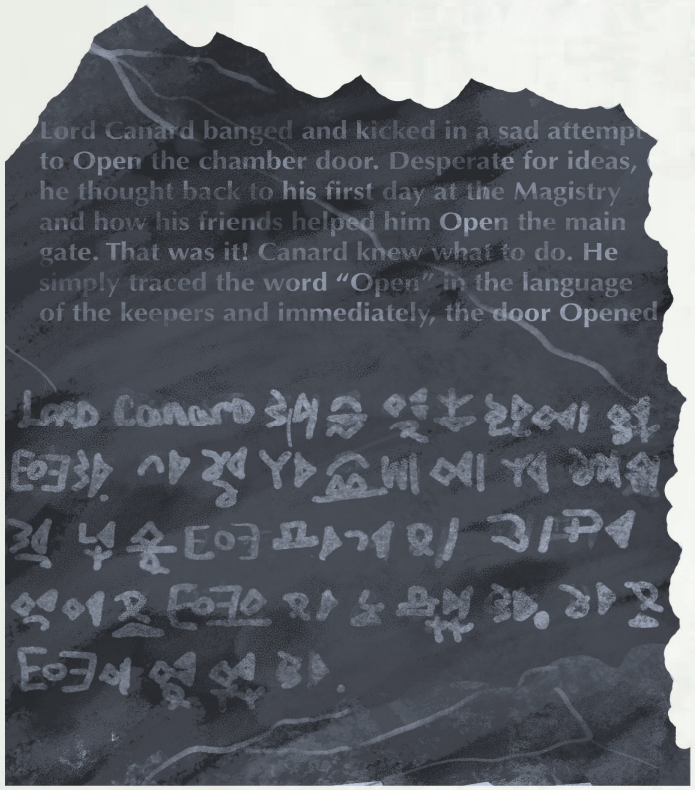
At the beginning of the encounter, read or paraphrase the following and provide the accompanying images.

> You find a piece of what was once a tall slab of gray granite covered in writing. While most of the stone slab is broken and missing, you are able to read part of what appears to be the saga of someone named Lord Canard, written in the Common language. Strange lettering that nobody in the party recognizes covers the rest of the remaining slab. Directly beside the remains of this mysterious slab sits an imposing – and obviously enchanted – door.



The phrase in Common reads:

"Lord Canard banged and kicked in a sad attempt to Open the chamber door. Desperate for ideas, he thought back to his first day at the Magistry and how his friends helped him Open the main gate. That was it! Canard knew what to do. He simply traced the word "Open" in the language of the keepers and immediately, the door Opened"



The Solution

Characters must recognize patterns in the unknown alphabet to identify the word "Open," which is the only word to appear four times, and in roughly the same places that the word "Open" appears in Common. Any player may then trace that symbol onto the circle of the door to unlock and open it. The door can not be opened by any other magical or physical means.

If a player incorrectly guesses the word, he or she suffers increasing amounts of damage for each failed attempt. After the third attempt, the door itself turns into a granitoid slab and becomes unopenable for ten years.

First incorrect attempt: 5 electric damage minus the player's Intelligence bonus.

Second incorrect attempt: 10 electric damage minus the player's Intelligence bonus.

Third incorrect attempt: 15 electric damage minus the player's Intelligence bonus.

Hints And Tips

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM to help guide them towards a solution:

- With a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check a character notices one word is capitalized in the Common version.
- With a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Perception) check a character intuits that one word in particular in the unknown alphabet seems slightly different in design than the others; it also resembles the door from the drawing (with two sides and a circle in the middle).
- Characters can, with a successful rudimentary Intelligence check (DC 9), recognize that the unknown alphabet is a translation of the Common.
- With a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Perception) check, a character notices that the circle of the door looks like an excellent place to trace a glyph.

The Adventures

While the puzzles presented can be placed into any campaign, this section presents two original adventures that provide story and context for them. Each adventure can be run as a stand-alone experience or be placed within a larger campaign. The puzzles are chained together by comprehensive stories that logically unfold, with the adventurers making their way through the puzzles and predicaments and proving themselves worthy of the final goal.

The Long-forgotten Adventures of Sir Canard gives the party a chance to relive exploits of a forgotten adventurer from an ancient kingdom. Overcome challenges to help a young Canard with his school lessons before assisting a grown Canard as he excavates temple ruins.

Trials of the Bearwalker Clan presents the party with a need to participate in the ritualistic trials of a barbarian clan. Earning the trust and admiration of the clan requires facing - and overcoming - the challenges presented.

The Long-Forgotten Adventures of Sir Canard

Sir Canard was apparently once an adventurer of some renown, although nobody alive today remembers any of his exploits. By some inexplicable twist of magic, space, or time, the party has now crossed paths with ghostly images of Canard during different periods of his life, from the time he started his studies at the Magistry to his most famous excavation of a lost temple.

Background

Next to nothing is known about the adventurer Sir Canard the Bold, but fragments of his exploits live on in legend and in the relics he uncovered. Explorers' guilds dedicated to uncovering and preserving ancient and rare artifacts across Faerun usually tell a story of the first of their order. While the details of these origin stories vary, there are enough similarities – such as describing a human male with a gigantic flowing mustache, a pet mallard duck (who is sometimes described as being able to speak), and a team of four or five assistants – to imply that the stories are based on someone real. Several of the most precious and ancient artifacts held in explorers' guild museums and reliquaries also feature variations of the name Canard (such as the Canardish Diamond and the Crown of Cannardt), although nobody knows why or when this came to be.

Adventure summary

This adventure consists of two main parts. The first phase involves assisting the ghostly image of a young child named Duck as he takes language lessons at a strange academy known as the Magistry. Unfortunately, young Duck is a miserable student who can't even step foot on school grounds his first day without assistance. Duck will need plenty of help passing his test. In part two, the party is transported to another ghostly scene where Duck – now an older adventurer known as Sir Canard – leads the excavation of an ancient temple. The characters inhabit the ghostly visages of Canard's excavation crew to solve a series of riddles and break into the final temple chamber.

Adventure Hooks

The metaphysical nature of this adventure is conducive to a simple step-by-step progression, whereby once the first encounter (placed at any location you desire) has started, the party proceeds through the challenges simply by phasing from one ghostly scene to the next. Since the general theme of the adventure follows an academic and archeological tract, several hooks might be useful in setting the stage for the first encounter.

A Tome Forgotten

The party comes into the possession of a weathered book written in an indecipherable language. How the party obtains the book is up to you: perhaps a party member searching for a last-minute gift at a shady gift shop was tricked into purchasing the book at discount; perhaps a party member who would normally never go near a book is inexplicably drawn to a tome tucked away in a corner of the local tavern. However the book is acquired, the party is transported to the first scene when a party member reads the inscription scrawled in Common on the first page: "To the lad who wouldn't stop guessing."

The Explorers' Guild

The local chapter of the Explorers' Guild, a group of part-time adventurers dedicated to uncovering and preserving various "relics" (usually just rocks or discarded junk passed off as ancient items), posts fliers across town advertising a reward of 100 gold to anyone who retrieves a stolen ring. Intrigued, the party shows up to the Guild headquarters and meets an old man named Reisalt Ducan. Old man Ducan is obviously senile, as he explains to the party that even though he posted the fliers, he knows exactly "when and where" the ring is. He leads them through a door in the back of the building, where the first encounter begins.

The Magisterial Academy

One of the party members receives a letter that was obviously meant for someone else.

It reads: "Dear Mr. or Mrs. Proctor, several days have passed and you still have not provided proof of your child's residency. As you know, all our students are required to be residents of Waterdeep to attend the Magisterial Academy. Please bring the required proof to our school office located just north of Berryhills Farm immediately or we must remove your child from school. Sincerely, Headmaster Anatra."

Concerned for the wellbeing of this student, the party decides to return the letter to the school personally to ensure it is delivered to the right family. However, when they show up to where the school office should be, they see nothing but a crumbling tower. The the first encounter begins when the party enters the tower.

Part One: The Bad Student

This adventure begins with the party encountering a stately door engraved onto the side of a stone wall. Next to the engraved door lies a pile of broken granite. This is the trigger for the **Stone Tablets** puzzle. The room in which this encounter takes place buzzes with mysterious, ghostly energy. You may include monsters to attack the party as it tries to solve the puzzle, forcing at least one party member to spend combat turns arranging the pieces.



Once the party assembles the pieces of broken granite, writing magically appears over the reconstructed slab. Simultaneously, faint and ghostly visages appear of small students laughing and skipping as they pass through the door, which has now sprung to life and shimmers with arcane energy. All but one of the ghost children easily enter the door, leaving a lone remaining spirit standing forlornly, wearing a small toga-like uniform and crying as it holds its books. Through surprisingly useful gestures and furious babbling in a strange, melodic tongue, the lone ghoststudent explains to the party that the clue to unlocking the door lies in the ancient texts on the stone. This begins the **Language of the Keepers** puzzle.

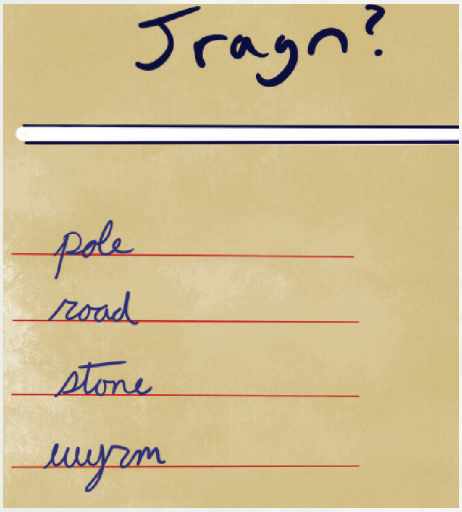


The next encounter begins when the party successfully opens the door, which vibrates and shakes before swinging open to reveal the ghostly courtyard and spiraling tower of an ancient school's grounds. The ghost student cackles gleefully as it rushes into the courtyard, beckoning for the party to follow.

The party enters the tower and observes an ancient and wizened teacher administering what looks like a language test to a group of students. Each student sits on a stool with a nametag written in Common. Some of the names are nonsensical: the party's new ghost friend surreptitiously slides into a seat with the name "Duck" scrawled in crude lettering. As the ghostly classroom goes about its business, oblivious to the party, they begin to see why Duck was the only one who couldn't pass through the gate: he is simply a terrible student! He sits picking his nose as the other students pay attention. When called upon, he flounders in broken and cringeworthy Common as the other students giggle and roll their ghostly eyes.

After some vocabulary drills, the teacher has had enough and decides to administer a pop quiz. "You to translate what means this wordings" the teacher says to the class in broken Common as he writes several phrases in an ancient language on the wall behind the stage. The students use their quills to scratch answers on small rolls of parchment. Duck looks hopeless. He struggles for a bit, then quietly calls the party over to his stool. "Mine answerings good?" he asks.

From Duck's writing alone, the party has no clue what he is trying to say. Fortunately for them and Duck, the teacher is oblivious to their presence. The party decides to sneak a glance at the grading rubric, but it is only of limited help as each question has four possible choices. Maybe they can match up Duck's gibberish with the real answer? This begins the **Word Gisting** puzzle.



Part Two: Sir Canard At The Temple Door

With the party's help, Duck managed to pass the test! The little guy is practically sobbing with happiness. "Groma groma," he says as he and the ghostly classroom vanish.

The party members are now whisked away to another ghostly scene. This time they observe a tall man with a giant mustache watching a crew dig into an enormous sand dune. One of the crew members hits something with his shovel, revealing a stone door buried in the ground. "What do you think it means, Canard?" one of the crew members asks the man. "I think it means we found the temple" Canard responds, with just the hint of an accent. This begins the **Colored Triangle** puzzle, which must be completed to open the door.

After successfully solving the puzzle to open the door, the party follows Canard and his crew into the empty temple, which is buried under the sand dunes. A short while later, the party makes its way into a side chamber that resembles a classroom for very small children. The remains of small desks are scattered throughout, along with styluses, fragments of parchment, and some toys. This begins the puzzle **Pictures Worth at least Three Words**.

Once all the words and pictures have been matched, the wall opens to reveal a hidden chamber with a skeleton clad in once ornate finery and a locked stone chest. This begins the **Zzuples Chest** puzzle. You can choose to have the skeleton animate and attack the party once the chest is opened.

Conclusion

As his crew members crackle with greed at the treasures they find, Sir Canard turns to the party. "Thank you, my friends," he says. "I will always remember the help you have given to me, even if nobody else remembers me." Everything begins to shimmer and fade. Realizing they are leaving him, Canard hastily grabs something from the treasure pile and tries to give it to the party, but it is too late. The party members fade into the present and see the elderly man (alternatively the shady shopkeeper, Mr. Ducan from the Explorer's Guild, or Headmaster Anatra, depending on the hook). "I've waited for hundreds of years to give this to you, my friends," the man weakly says with tears in his eyes. "Ever since my first day of school as a child, you have been there to guide me. Please take this token of my love." The party realizes that the old man is Duck, who shakingly hands over the piece of treasure he tried to give them at the end of the ghostly scene in the temple. As they take the magic item, Duck sits down with a look of immeasurable relief and closes his eyes forever.



Trials Of The Bearwalker Clan

The Bearwalker Clan is a tribe of goliath barbarians who have lived in the region for centuries. Their relations with other clans change from generation to generation, often at the whims and aspirations of the current tribal leaders. One thing has remained constant however; the ritualistic and challenging trials they present to those seeking to earn their help and trust. This adventure puts the party through those challenges in an attempt to gain favor with the Bearwalker Clan.

Background

The trials remain a tightly guarded secret, but have a reputation for being unforgiving and challenging. While the legends may have been somewhat exaggerated over time, there is more than one story of those who entered the trials and did not survive. There are even more stories about those given the option of facing the trials in order to gain favor with the clan who declined the opportunity based on the reputation of the tests. The truth is that the trials are in fact challenging, but not as deadly and insurmountable as the tall tales claim. They will require sharp wits and discipline to succeed.



Adventure Summary

The adventure is fairly straightforward. Depending on the reason for the party looking to gain favor with the clan, they are given the opportunity to attempt the trials. The trials are a series of the puzzles and predicaments presented earlier in this book. If the adventurers succeed making their way through the trials, then the clan holds up their end of the bargain and grants the party the favor they seek.

Adventure Hooks

There are several ways to pull the characters into this particular adventure. You could come up with numerous options for items, information, or access to a location in the possession of the Bearwalker Clan. Some of these possible adventure hooks include:

A Dungeon In Bearwalker Territory

The party needs access to a dungeon that has its entrance located in the middle of sacred Bearwalker territory. These hallowed grounds are violently protected by the tribe, and anybody who sets foot on the grounds without permission will be attacked. In order to gain permission, the party must prove themselves worthy by passing the trials.

A Heavily Guarded Secret

The clan elder holds an important piece of information the party needs for their larger quest. The secret is so strongly guarded, the elder has not even shared it with any other members of the clan. He has a solemn duty to protect that secret and only share it when the right person comes seeking. That person must prove themselves worthy of the information by successfully completing the trials.

The Sacred Relic

The clan is in possession of a powerful artifact that has been with them for many generations. The adventurers have a need for the relic, and would like to borrow it in order to complete an important task. The Bearwalkers are reluctant to part with their prized relic, but might be willing to do so if the adventurers prove themselves worthy by completing the trials.

Preparing For The Trials

Once the party has been pointed in the direction of the Bearwalker Clan, they are sent to their main village. Upon arriving at the village, they are greeted by guards posted around the perimeter. When the party explains why they are there, the guards escort them to meet with the clan chief.

The clan chief is a tall goliath woman named Ivellia Bearwalker. She is wearing assorted animal furs, with long braided hair and blue tribal markings painted on her face. She is patient but serious. She calmly listens to the party's story and nods when they are finished. She agrees to help them, if they can prove themselves worthy by passing the ceremonial trials that have been a part of the clan's history for centuries. She explains that the clan believes the gods themselves watch over the trials and guide those worthy through them successfully, while those who are dishonest, unfit, or nefarious will be doomed to fail.

Ivellia explains that the trials consist of a series of challenges and gives the adventures an opportunity to rest in the village before embarking upon them. When they are ready, the clan provides a group of warriors dressed in ceremonial garb to escort the party to the site of the trials. When the group reaches the site, read or paraphrase the following:

> Your escort leads you up a short mountain path towards a small range of mountains in the near distance. As you continue forward, you notice a large stone structure built into the base of the mountains. The warriors form two rows on either side of the path, the road continuing between them as they begin to chant and bang their sticks on the ground in unison. One of the warriors approaches the door to the building and turns a large stone wheel. Once the wheel has been turned, she opens the door. Ivellia speaks up. "The trials of the Bearwalker Clan are about to begin. Enter the chamber and prepare to be judged by the gods." The open door awaits.

The Trials

The trials lead the adventurers through several connected rooms and sections within the mountain structure. The party advances through the mountain by solving the puzzles as they encounter them.

Once the group has entered, the door shuts behind them and locks. This first room presents the **Pillar Touching** puzzle. The characters must open the correct door to proceed to the next trial. In this scenario, the correct door is the bottommost one of the four doors before them. You may decide to place traps or creatures behind the incorrect doors for an added challenge.

After solving the first trial and exiting through the appropriate door, the party walks down a long and narrow hallway. At the end of this hallway, they are faced with the **Connecting the Dots** puzzle.

Upon solving the Connecting the Dots puzzle, a hidden passage in the wall of the hallway slides open, allowing the party to continue on. After walking down another hallway, the group encounters a large cavernous room. Inside this room are the equipment and archery targets as described in the **Bullseye** puzzle.

When the group has solved the Bullseye puzzle by shooting the correct arrows into each target, a rope ladder descends from the ceiling. The ladder is stable and sturdy enough to not require a skill check to climb. Upon reaching the top, the group find themselves in another large cavern, this one with a hole in the ceiling through which a cloudless sky is visible. This room contains the **Smoke Signals** puzzle.

After the correct smoke signals have been sent through the hole, a secret door is revealed. Behind this door is a short hallway and a stone staircase. At the top of the staircase is a large stone door. The party must solve the puzzle called **Starway** in order to navigate and ascend the staircase successfully.

Through the door is a large forge and the final puzzle The **Shattered Sword.** This is the final trial facing the party. Once they have finished this puzzle, successfully or unsuccessfully, a hidden door appears leading out of the mountain.

Through the door is a path that leads back down the mountain. The path leads to the entrance of the first building, where the trials began.

Conclusion

The ceremonial warrior escort and Ivellia Bearwalker are waiting for the party as they descend the path. She looks at the party expectedly waiting to see if they hold the reforged sword they would have created by successfully completing the final trial. If they do, she congratulates them on completing the trials, deems them worthy, and rewards them with the favor they seek. If they do not, she nods solemnly, consoles them that only the most deserving heroes are regarded as honorable enough to pass the trials. In this case, the party has to find another way to acquire that which they seek for their quest.

Appendix A: Magic Items

Empty Chest

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

A two foot by one foot wooden chest with a 6 rotary dial combination lock on its lid. The owner of the chest can set up five different lock combinations. Each combination acts as its own isolated container with no access to the other chest containers. Each container can hold up to 500 pounds, not exceeding a volume of 64 cubic feet. The chest never weighs more than 10 pounds regardless of its contents. It takes an action to retrieve an item from the chest.

If the chest is destroyed all contents in each container are also destroyed.

Once per day the owner can speak the command word to shrink the chest down to a size of two inches by one inch. While the chest is in this state, no items can be seen in, or removed from, the chest. The command word can be spoken again after the next sunrise.

Once per day the owner can speak the command word to enlarge the chest from its shrunken size to its normal size of two feet by one foot. The command word can be spoken again after sunrise.

Star Lock

Wondrous item, very rare

A five-pointed star measuring six inches across and cut from an ancient wizard's robes. On the inside of the star are the numbers 0 to 9 stitched into the fabric.

Lock Throw. As an Action you can throw the star at any door or chest. The star will stick and magically lock the door or chest.

Reclaim. As a Bonus Action, unlock and reclaim the star from its current locked door or chest, by tapping the current number combination.

Set Combo. During a short rest you can set a new number combination of your choosing into the Star Lock.

Jasp's Trickery Target

Wondrous item, very rare

An ordinary looking archery target made of parchment.

Lock Target. Studying the target during a short rest will magically guide any arrows you shoot at that target to the bullseye. If any other creature shoots at the target while Lock Target is active, they will never be able to shoot a bullseye. The effect of Lock Target dissipates 12 hours after activating. The target also mends itself of any tears, rips, or arrow holes during this time.

Reforged Sword Of Zzuples

Weapon (longsword), very rare (requires attunement)

As an attack action you can activate the Reforged Sword of Zzuples' Split Shard Attack.

Split Shard Attack. The blade splits into 6 separate pieces along it's reforged seams. The pieces fly through the air doing damage to the chosen targets up to 30 feet away then reform back into the sword. Choose up to 6 targets and make a single melee weapon attack roll. On a hit, a shard deals 1d4+1 piercing damage. The shards all strike simultaneously and you can direct them to hit one target or several.

At 10th level each shard deals 1d6+1 piercing damage, at 15th level each shard deals 1d8+1 piercing damage, and at 20th level each shard deals 1d12+1 piercing damage.

Split Shard Attack has up to 6 charges and regains 1d6 charges at dawn.

Zzuples' "I Win" Button

Wondrous item, very rare

A golden button adorned with an image of a dagger and feather. An inch in diameter, it can be sewn onto any blouse, shirt, or cloak.

By pressing the "I Win" button you will gain a clue that can help you solve the current puzzle or trap in your path. The clue can manifest itself as a thought in your head, a part of the puzzle or trap changing color to highlight a key part, or it may even bypass a part of the puzzle or trap. The clue that is given is up to the discretion of the GM. Zzuples' "I Win" button may only be used six times. Upon the sixth use the button is destroyed. After each button press, it takes 7 days for the button to reset and be usable again.



Appendix B: Pictures Worth At Least Three Words



Lokwa - Happy



Virn Lokwator -



Mogra - Sad



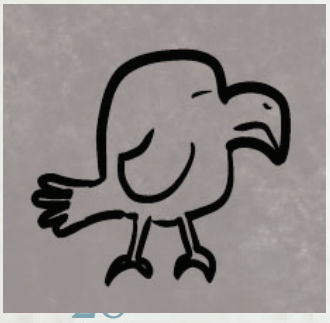
Virn Mogrator - Sad



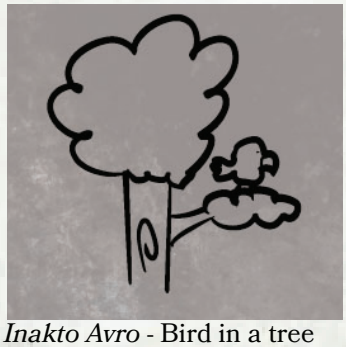
Hwage - Angry



Virn Hwagrator - Angry man



Avro - bird



Inakto Avro - Bird in a tree



Inakto Rago - Mouse in a tree



Yukto Manata Tesol Bancha - Bright sun next to a mountain.



Inbedo Rago Chago - "A small mouse in a boat.



Inmento Tukruk Hwagrator - "Angry dragon on a table."

IMAGES WITH PLATES

The following images are hung ont he wall. One image's plate is unfortunately broken.



Lokwa



Virn Lokwator



Mogra

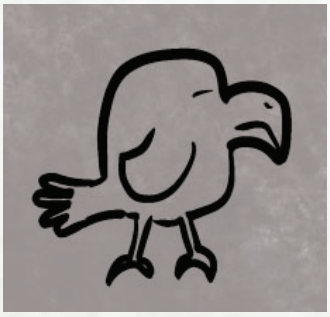


???

(Plate is broken)



Inakto Avro



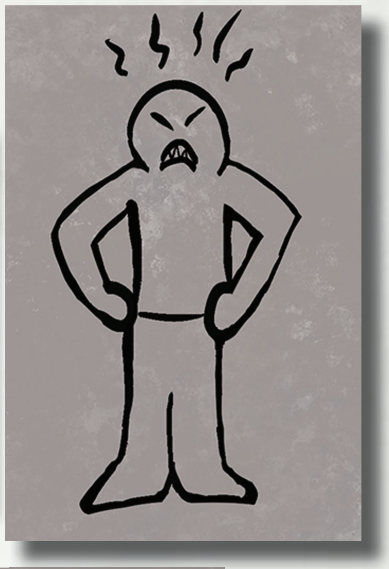
Avro

IMAGES WITH MISSING PLATES

The following images are hung ont he wall but their accompanying name plates have been scatterd on the floor.













Name Plates

You find these name plates scattered in no particular order on the floor.

Inakto Rago

Hwage

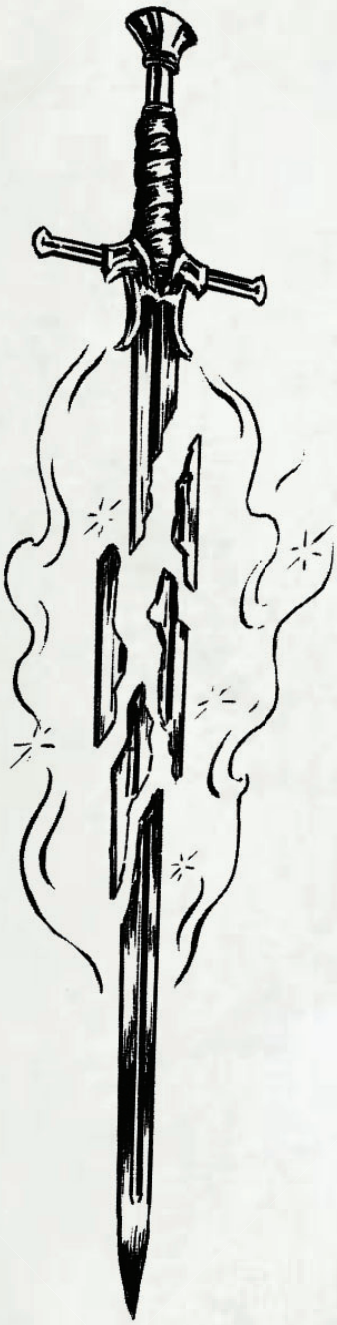
Inmento Tukruk Hwagrator

Virn Hwagrator

Inbedo Rago Chago

Yukto Manata Tesol Bancha

Appendix C: The Shattered Sword



The ancient sword in need of a fix
How will you reunite all the pieces six?
The steps to follow are here in this text
Continue to read to find what comes next

For the reunion to begin to transpire
The forge must be fed to increase the fire
Place into the flames the right amount of coal
Lumps numbered the same as the length of a pole

With the tools on the table grasp each piece one by one
Heat in the fire but not so much it's overdone
Use the timer to measure how long to aid with the fix
Heat exactly minutes counted two score minus six

Once heated align the shards on the anvil to pound
The next steps are important for the sword to be bound
The point shall be pointed which way the sun rises
The hammers per shard will vary by sizes

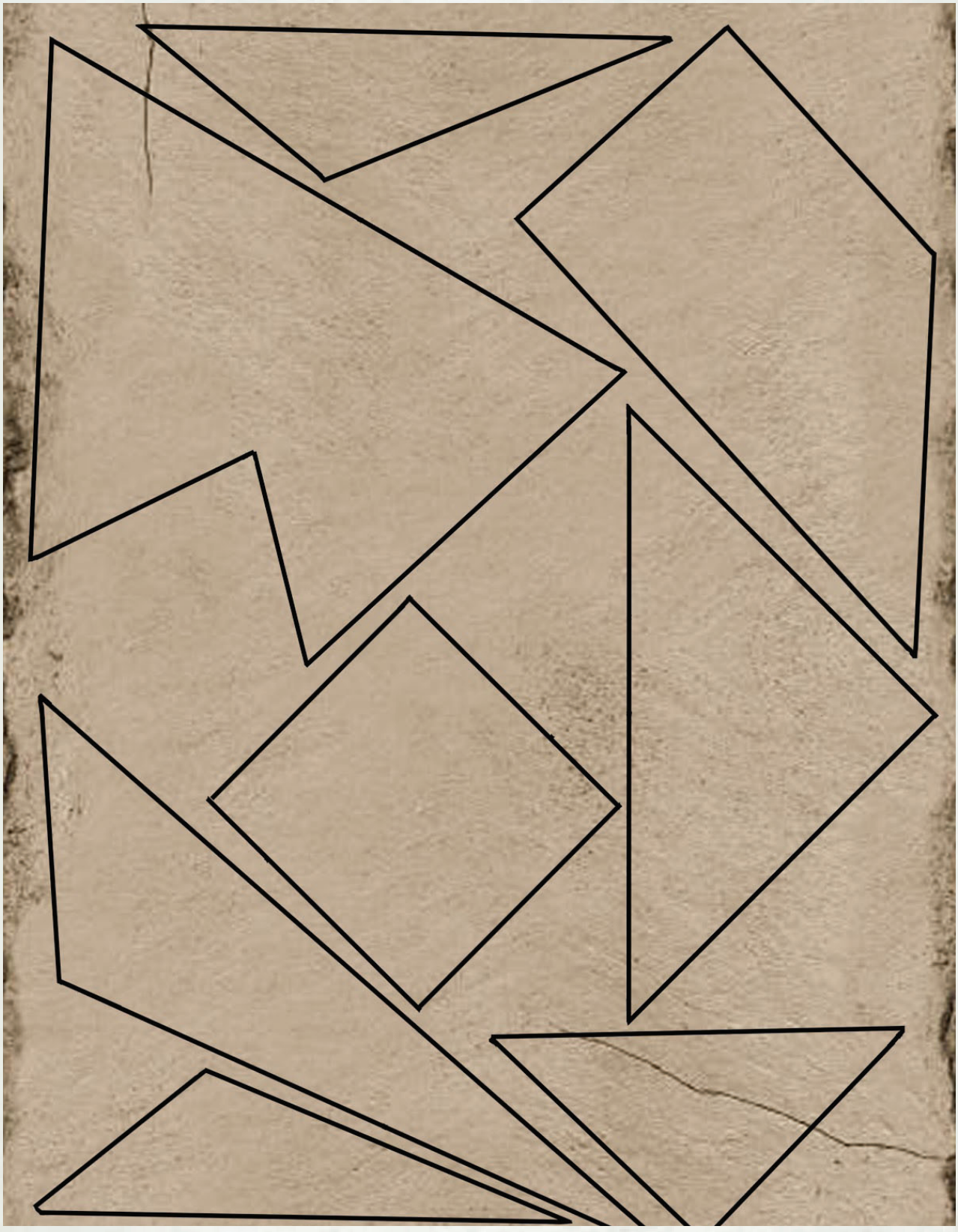
The point and its two must be strong to impale
Five hammers per seam so the bond does not fail
The two pieces next get two pounds per scar
Extra metal is added as three iron bars

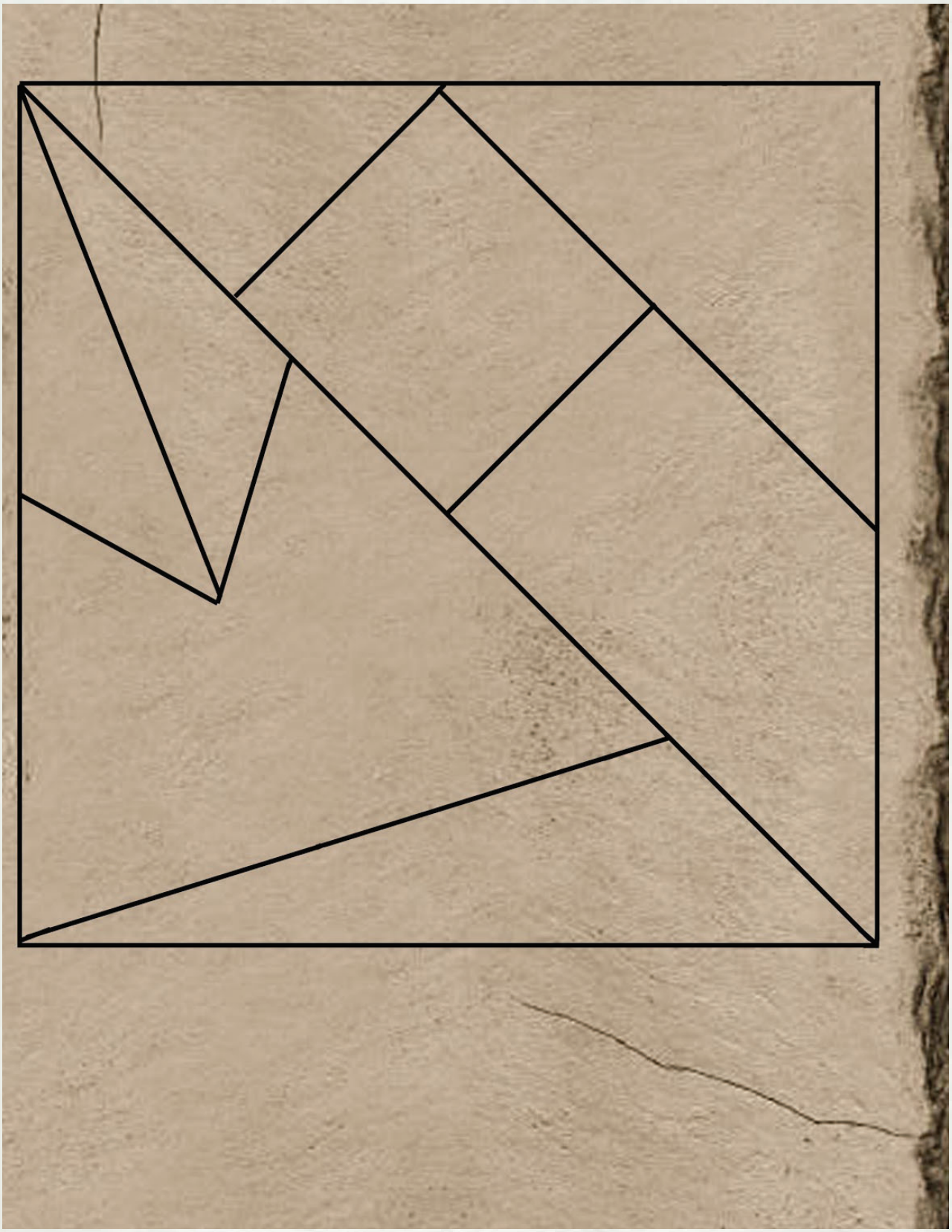
The sword nearly complete needs one more bar
The hilt joins with half the total poundings so far
The pieces all joined will need to be cooled
Four dips half a minute into the oily pool

The sword now one needs an edge sharp and fine
And polish to give it a bright sheen and shine
The fifth prime number strokes of the stone
This number on each edge gives the sword its hone

Sharp and united now needs to rub off the grime
You'll know on your own when it's ready to shine
If you deciphered each step and followed them true
A sword made for a hero is now waiting for you

Appendix D: Stone Tablets



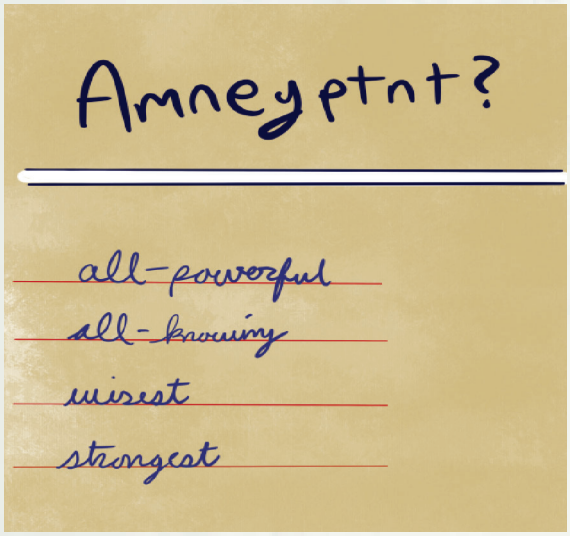


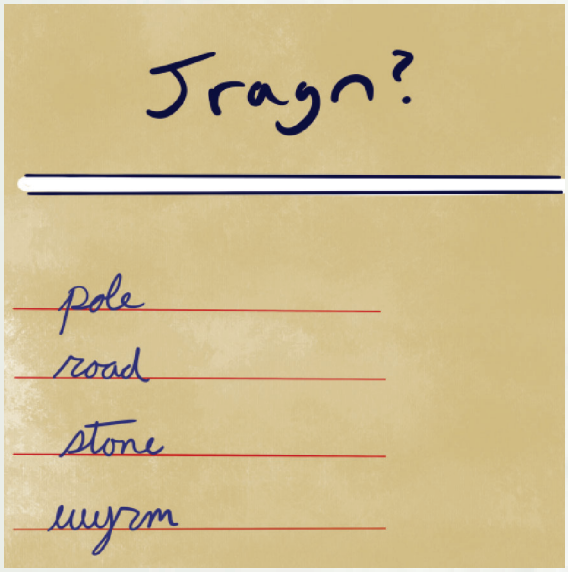
Appendix E: Smoke Signals

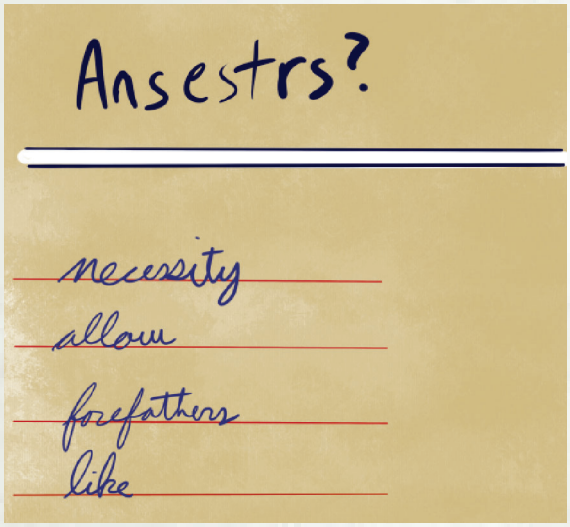


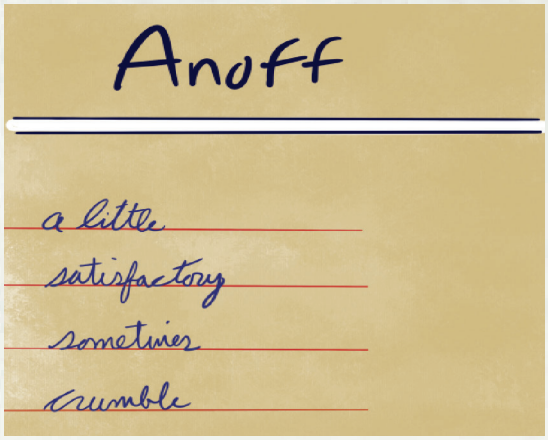


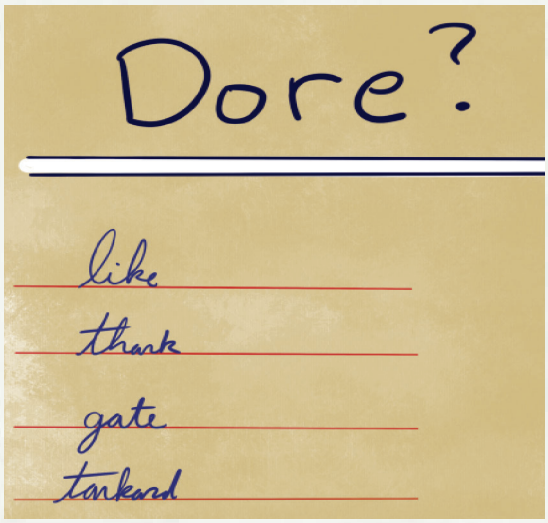
Appendix F: Word Gisting

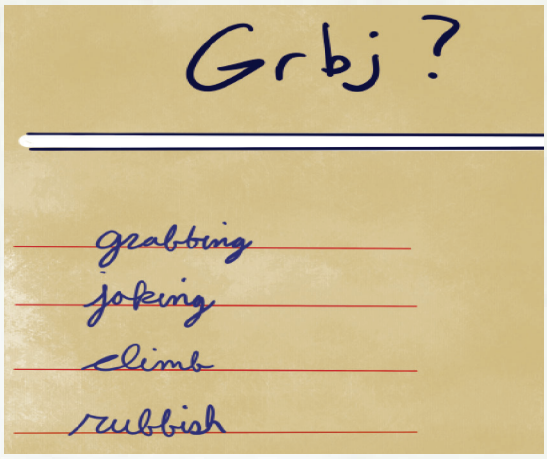


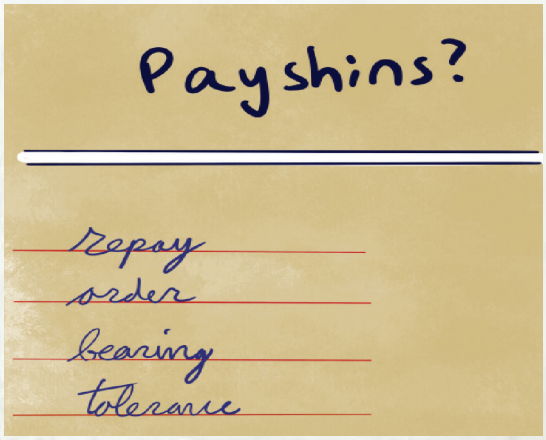












Word Gisting

Svril?

enough
evil
a few
slender

Pewpool?

table
leg
boat
student

Skrpt?

stylus
test
angry
stool

Xkews?

sneaking
secret
forgetful
forgive

Tch?

instruct
take
lament
glorify

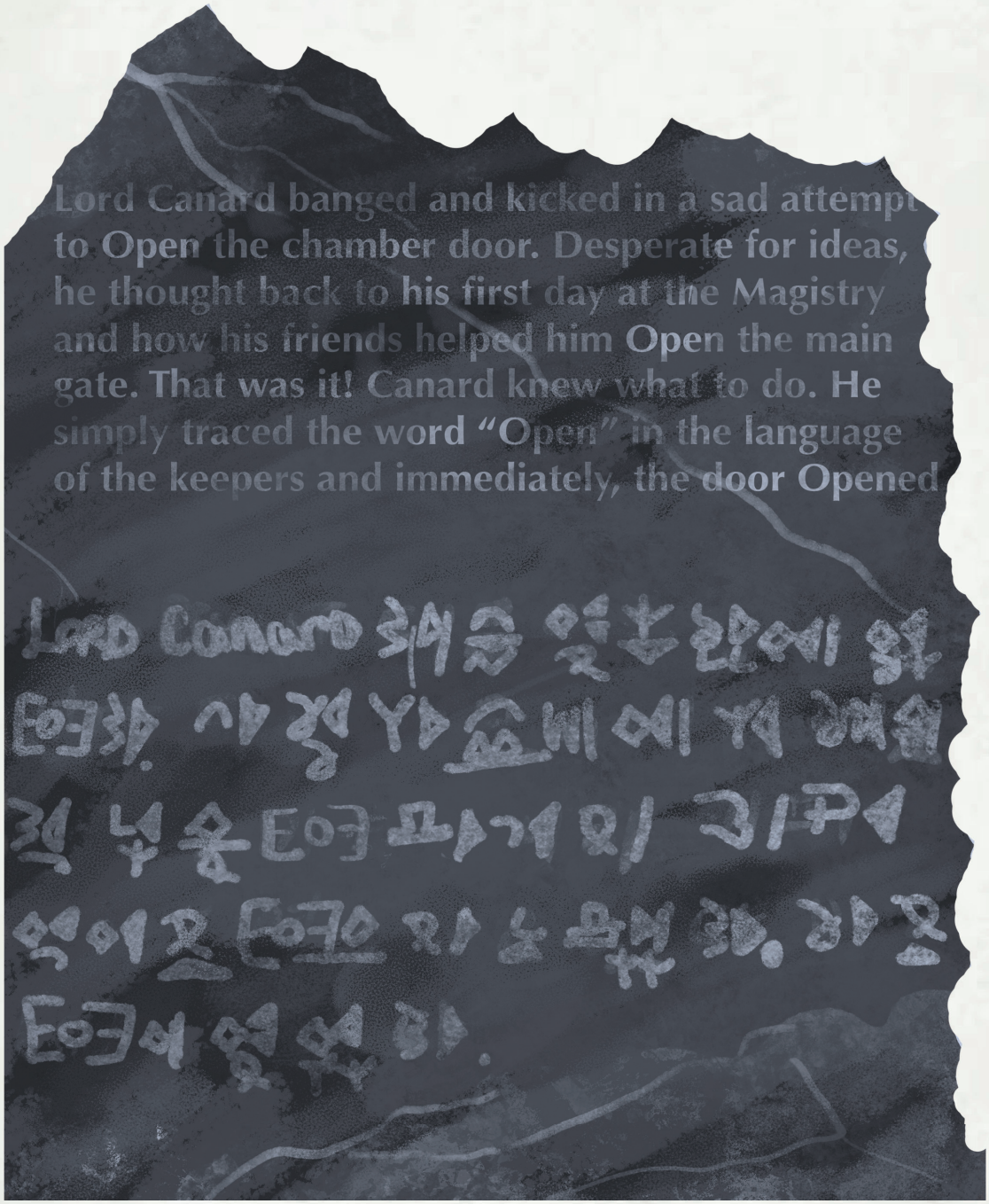
Appendix G: The Colored Triangle



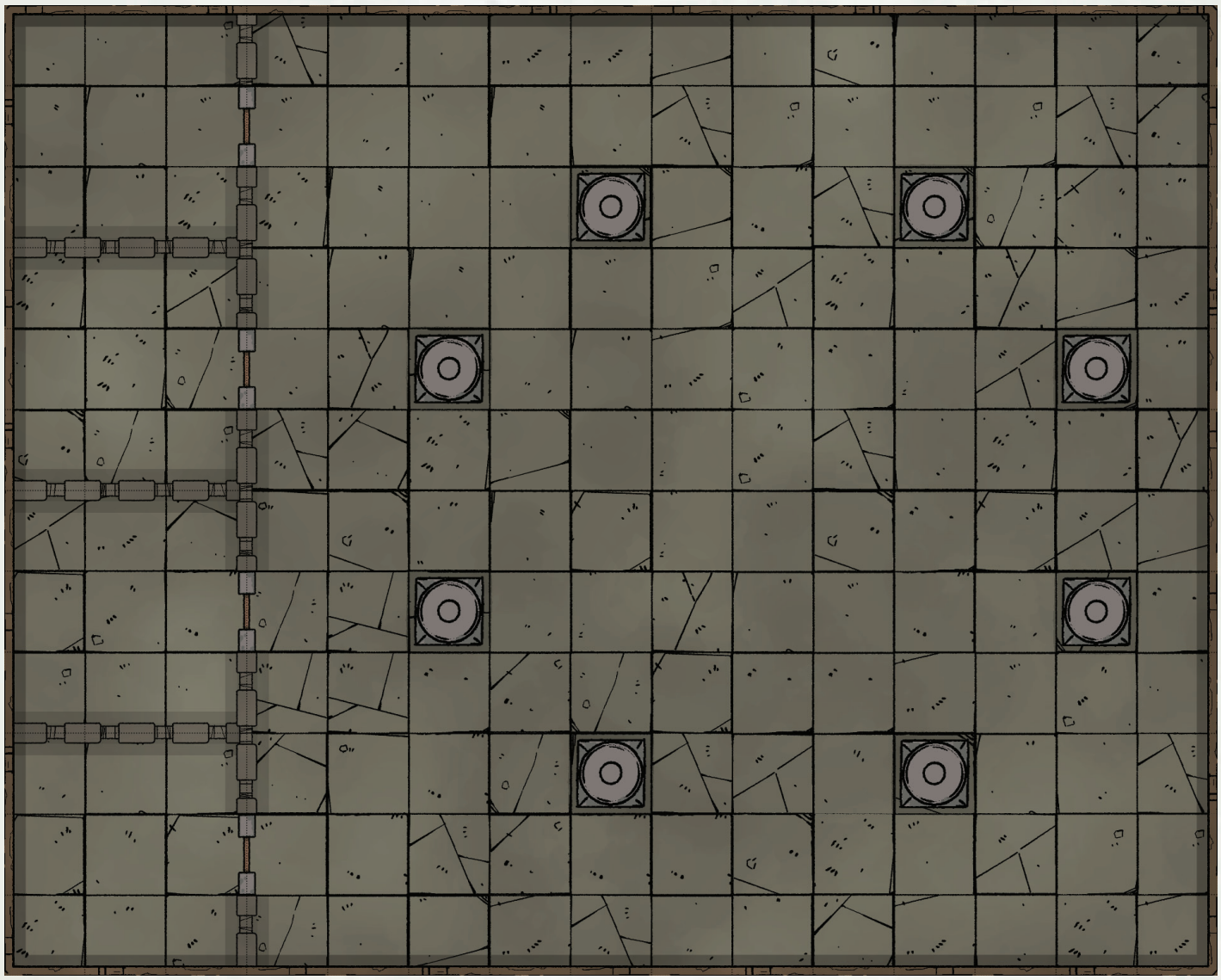
Appendix H: Language Of The Keepers

The phrase in Common reads:

"Lord Canard banged and kicked in a sad attempt to Open the chamber door. Desperate for ideas, he thought back to his first day at the Magistry and how his friends helped him Open the main gate. That was it! Canard knew what to do. He simply traced the word "Open" in the language of the keepers and immediately, the door Opened"



Appendix I: Maps: Pillar Touching



Appendix I: Maps: Shattered Sword



Appendix I: Maps: Bullseye



A Challenge Of Wits And Reason

Adventurers need much more than just brute force, magical powers, and nimble moves in order to survive the dangers that await them. A sharp mind is just as important as a sharp sword. When faced with a challenging puzzle, finding the solution can be the difference between victory and defeat.

Puzzles, Predicaments, and Perplexities III contains a collection of logic puzzles, brain teasers, and encoded sequences intended to test the problem solving and deductive reasoning of characters and players. These puzzles are designed to be placed easily into any adventure with no additional work, yet also provide guidance on how Dungeon Masters can customize the details to best fit their own campaigns.

This volume also includes two adventures that connect the puzzles together with compelling stories, as well as several original magic items and maps.

A Dungeons & Dragons supplement for adventures of all levels and types to be used by Dungeon Masters.

