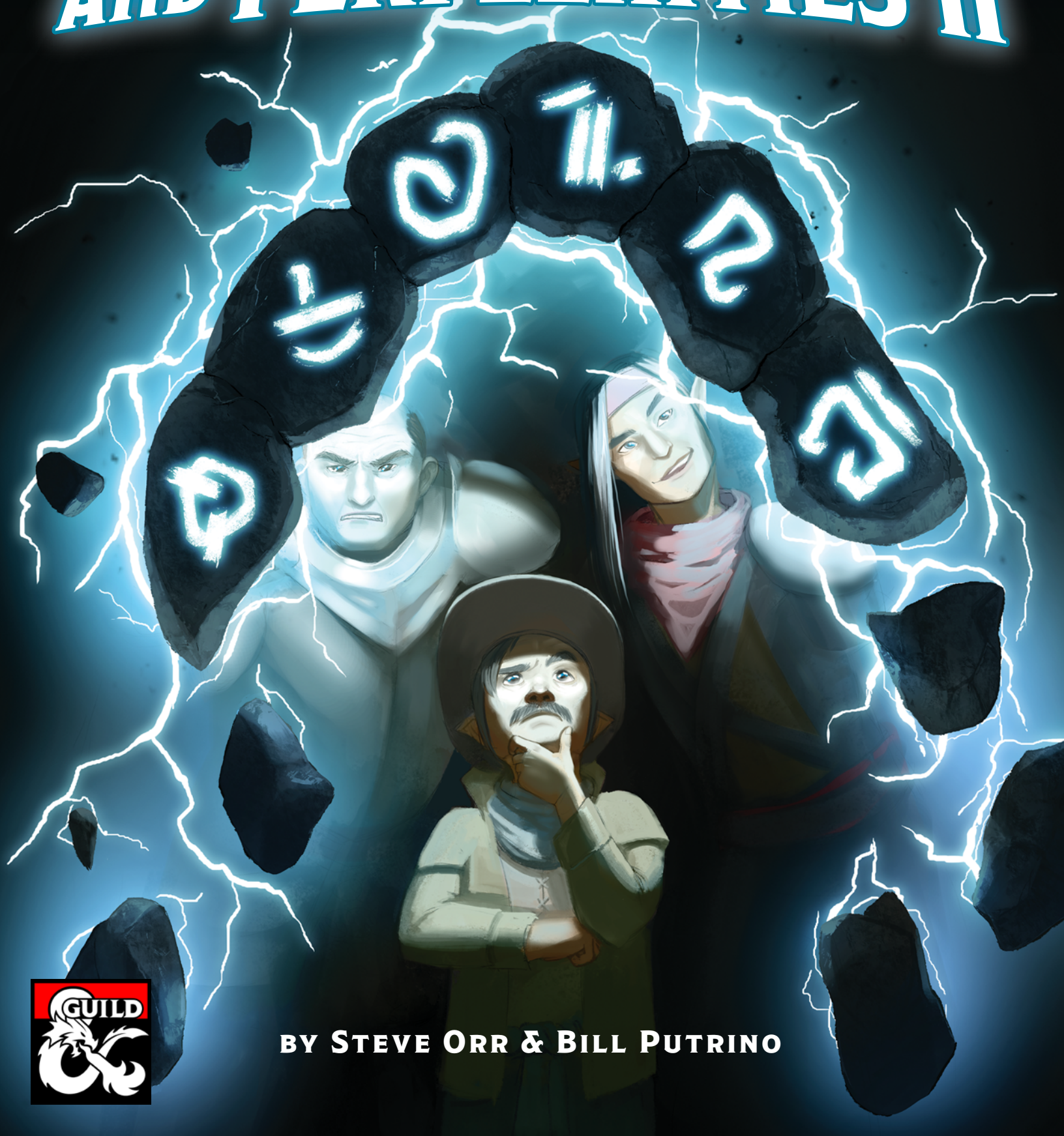


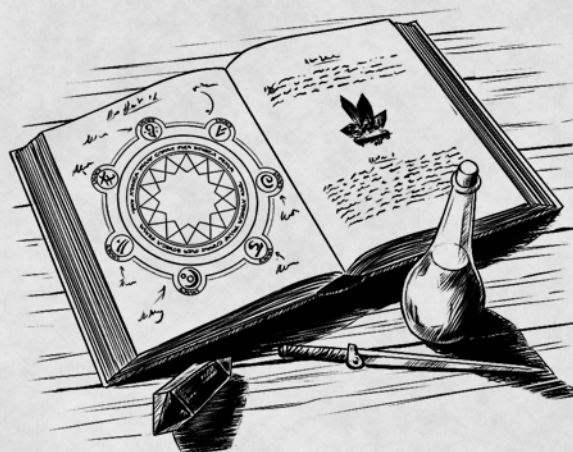
PUZZLES, PREDICAMENTS, AND PERPLEXITIES II



BY STEVE ORR & BILL PUTRINO

PUZZLES, PREDICAMENTS, AND PERPLEXITIES II

A COLLECTION OF CHALLENGES
FOR ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS
OF ALL LEVELS



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ON THE COVER

Gwen Bassett illustrates Boris, Korbin, and Jasp as they consider the strange runes inscribed onto a mystical lightning-infused portal.



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INTRODUCTION



adventurers will find themselves tested in many ways during their careers seeking fame, fortune, justice, and truth. Some of these tests will challenge their strength, agility, spellcasting knowledge, and combat skills.

Other encounters 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 suggest a worthy reward lies on the other side.

This product is the sequel to the *Dungeon Masters Guild* best-selling product *Puzzles, Predicaments, and Perplexities*. It includes new puzzles, additional guidance on selecting and running those puzzles, and two complete adventures making use of these encounters.

Puzzles, Predicaments, and Perplexities II presents fifteen 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 the 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 the 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 become evident by slowly revealing more about each puzzle with the provided clues.



THE PERPLEXITY RATING

This is a new feature added in *Puzzles, Predicaments, and Perplexities II* that 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 character skill and ability checks.

The general guidelines used to determine Perplexity Rating are:

- **Easy.** A puzzle that can be solved through sheer persistence. Everything that is 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 may certainly 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 of relative difficulty for 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 included 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 of a 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.

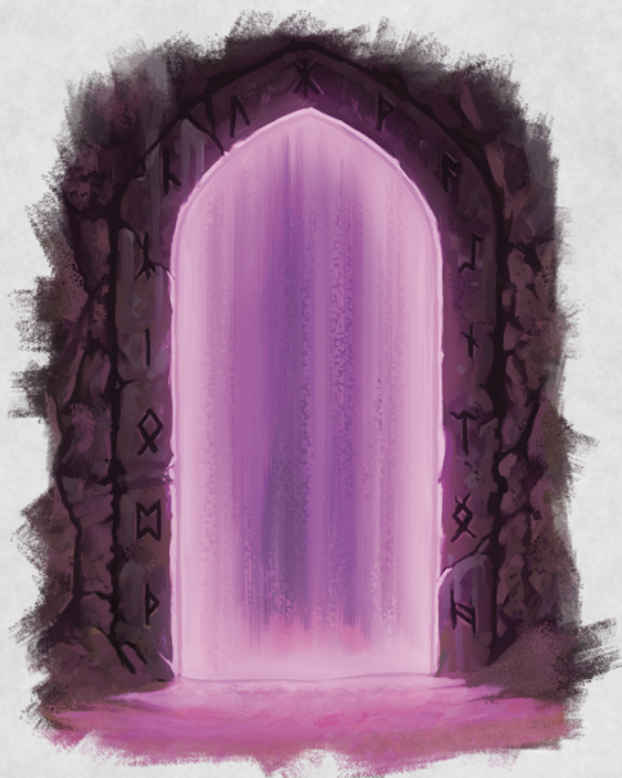


OPENING DOORS AND MORE

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 of the puzzles. This book also includes two adventures that have been created entirely by doing just that!



THE ADVENTURES

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

Where Heroes Lie begins with the party being asked to assist with a difficult situation: helping to make sure justice is served properly after a thief has been captured by the local authorities. The items recovered from the thief lead to a bigger mystery and point to a long-forgotten temple rumored to possess an artifact of great power. Entering the temple won't be easy, and once inside, a series of puzzles guard the treasure within.

The Lost Lantern of Leonara sends the adventurers into a mysterious dungeon to retrieve a lost relic sought out by a peculiar acquaintance. The dungeon itself is only accessible via a portal hidden deep within the haunted woods, and activating that portal is just the first of many challenges. Once inside the dungeon, deadly puzzles stand in between the group and their goal, and a surprise ending may provide them with a moral dilemma.

MAKING THE PUZZLES YOUR OWN

While the puzzles presented here are suitable for plugging into any adventure, DMs 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 as part of 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 surprise you while dealing with these trials.

PUNCH BOARD

Perplexity Rating: Easy

The party encounters a jagged stone wall made up of several rows of natural looking holes, each covered with a thick spider web. The item the party seeks lies within one of these holes, but how will they find the right one? And what else may lurk within these burrows?

CUSTOMIZING THE PUZZLE

The versatility of this puzzle lies largely in the fact that there could be almost anything hidden within the holes. This could be a magic item the party seeks, a key to unlock a nearby door, or a quest item of any kind. Assuming the prize matches the size of the hole, the identity of the item is only limited by the DM's imagination. As such, this puzzle can be placed at any key point during an adventure or campaign where an important item needs to be recovered.

THE PUZZLE

The five-by-ten grid of spider-web-covered holes contains a wide variety of surprises for the party. It is up to the party to punch through those webs and reach inside to find out what lies within. Some holes may contain critters who are not exactly happy that their home has been invaded by a foreign fist. Others may contain pleasant surprises. The majority of holes contain

clues that lead towards the hole containing the prize. Surviving the hazardous holes and following the clues leads the characters to their objective.

The hazards found in some of the holes aren't typically deadly, but more akin to nuisances that delay finding the solution. Some **spiders**, **giant spiders**, and **riddling rats** (see appendix B, "Creatures") have taken up residence within the punch board. Of course, the DM can make them more deadly to increase the tension and risk for the party (see the "Raising the Stakes" sidebar).

Appendix C contains a diagram of the punch board grid. The rows and columns are marked with numbers and letters for easy reference and tracking. The contents of each hole on the grid are listed in the Punch Board Results table.

PUNCH BOARD RESULTS

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------|----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| A | Spiders | 5 Right | 6 Right | 1 Down | Not Column | 4 Left | 4 Down | Nothing | 4 Down | Rats |
| B | All Right | Not Row | 1 Down | 1 Left | Rats | Nothing | Spiders | 1 Down | 1 Right | 2 Left |
| C | 1 Down | Rats | 3 Right | Nothing | Top Row | 2 Up | All Left | 3 Left | Spiders | 1 Up |
| D | 1 Right | 4 Right | Spider | 3 Up | 1 Down | 1 Side | ITEM | Rats | Nothing | 1 Up or Down |
| E | Nothing | 50 Gold | Top Row | Spiders | 2 Left | Rats | 2 Up | Ring | 4 Left | 3 Left |

PUNCH BOARD MONSTERS

| Challenge | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Level | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 |
| Easy | 1 will-o'-wisp | 2 hell hounds | 4 giant scorpions | 1 beholder |
| Medium | 2 fire snakes | 2 umber hulks | 2 chain devils | 2 death slaad |
| Hard | 3 imps | 3 flameskulls | 1 marilith | 2 erinyes |
| Deadly | 1 xorn | 2 mind flayers | 1 balor | 1 lich |



THE SOLUTION

By opening holes and deciphering the clues within, the party eventually locates their prize. Tracking which holes they've already opened and what they found in each is important. There may be a set or two of clues that lead them in a circle, pointing towards holes they've already opened. In that case, they must open new holes and look for a new path to follow. Since it could take a few holes before finding clues that get the party close to the goal, persistence is the key. By carefully following these clues, the party discovers the prize in the hole D7 on the grid.

HINTS AND TIPS

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

- A successful DC 11 Wisdom check by any of the characters allows them to recognize the value of tracking each hole they punch out and what was in it. This information could be helpful for breaking a circular pattern if some instructions lead them back to a hole they've already opened.
- A character that makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Nature) check realizes that the webs around the holes in each corner are more recently spun than others, indicating the item they seek is unlikely to be in one of those four holes.
- A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals a hole that appears to be occupied by living creatures. For every +2 over the DC on a successful roll, an additional hole is revealed (for example, a roll of 15 will reveal two holes, 17 will reveal three holes, etc.).

INCREASING THE CHALLENGE

While the default grid is five by ten, a DM could easily expand the grid to include more rows and columns. Adding more holes to check creates additional opportunities for the characters to stumble across traps or hostile creatures as they search for the hidden prize within the holes.

RAISING THE STAKES

There are two options for making this puzzle more dangerous. The first involves more deadly creatures living within some of the holes or their vicinity. See the Punch Board Monsters table for guidance on what kind of monsters lurk within the holes based on level tier. The second option adds a sense of urgency by unleashing a hazard after a certain number of holes have been opened without reaching the goal. For example, for every five holes opened, a poison arrow trap triggers and shoots towards the party. These two options can also be combined; after every five holes (or however many holes the DM sets as the trigger number) examined, a more dangerous creature appears and attacks.

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

Perplexity Rating: Easy

The rumors are true. Artist Edrap Nodternio does have a magical door that acts as a portal to wherever you need to go. But he doesn't allow just anybody to use it. Those who seek its power must prove themselves worthy by appreciating the effort—and details—that go into Edrap's work.

THE PUZZLE

When the party approaches this encounter, read or paraphrase the following:

You are standing outside the home of the infamous Edrap Nodternio. The structure is a humble single level shabby-looking shack held together by rotting wooden planks. Upon entering through the only door, you find yourselves in a dusty single room studio. Paints, brushes, and tarps litter the floor. Old canvases look to be thrown around. On the far wall you see a door. On either side of the door you see an identical painting of a horned man. In the middle of the studio you see the one who must be Edrap. The man is sitting on his stool, painting on a canvas that is sitting on easel. Edrap looks over at the party and says, "Another group looking to use my door. First you must find all the differences in my paintings." He points to the paintings by the door. "Turn the knob and the door will take you where you need to go."

This puzzle is best used when the characters need to go through a magical door. If they get the correct solution, when they open the door they get to where they need to go. If they fail to find the correct solution and open the door, the path leads to a random location as described in the Random Painting Door Location table.

RANDOM PAINTING DOOR LOCATION

| d6 | Note |
|----|--|
| 1 | The room described in the "Me and My Shadow" puzzle. |
| 2 | The middle of a large lake, the nearest land over 200 feet away. |
| 3 | Icwind Dale, outside the gates of Bryn Shander. |
| 4 | Walking through the front door of Edrap's studio, finding themselves right where they began. |
| 5 | The Yawning Portal tavern in Waterdeep. |
| 6 | The inside of a random vault filled with treasure. The sturdy door is locked from the outside. |

The puzzle will test the players' observation skills. The characters will be presented with what look like two identical drawings. Upon closer examination of the drawings, players may notice differences. The characters don't know how many differences there are. If they point out all ten correct differences, the door will open to where they need to go. If they point out less or what they believe to be more than ten, the door opens to a randomly determined room.



THE SOLUTION

There are ten differences for the party to find:

1. The length of the horns.
2. The size and shape of the teeth.
3. The presence or absence of a goatee.
4. The number of rivets on the breast plate
5. The shape of the clasp on breast plate.
6. The design of the engraving on the goblet.
7. The position of the pinky finger.
8. The presence or absence of the tattoo on the back of the hand.
9. The direction of the fork at the bottom of the frame.
10. The presence or absence of the earring.

HINTS AND TIPS

- If a character who notices the hand tattoo understands the infernal language, they recognize it as the symbol for the number ten. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check allows them to recognize this is an indication of the number of differences found in the paintings.

- A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check gives the characters hints on where to look. For example, after a successful roll the character has a feeling that something doesn't seem right with the goblet.
- A natural 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check allows the character to spot a difference. The DM may pick any difference from the list and point it out to the character.
- A successful DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion) check convinces the old artist in the room to tell the party how many differences to look for.

RAISING THE STAKES

The DM can make this puzzle more difficult by adjusting some of the mechanics. If the characters attempt a Charisma (Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion) check and fail, the old artist will lie to the group about how many differences there are.

The DM can also make the destination for an incorrect solution much more unforgiving. The characters finding themselves in the Shadowfell or the Abyss is a result that can have dire and long lasting consequences.

BOULDER DASH

Perplexity Rating: Easy

The party has survived all the challenges up to this point. A long, narrow hallway leads towards their final goal. If something seems too easy about it, there may be something more to this hallway. Sure enough, at one end of it sits a large boulder perched precariously atop a ledge above the hallway. At the other end of the hallway is a lone closed door. Can they avoid being crushed to death by the giant boulder?

THE PUZZLE

The hallway is 100 feet long and 10 feet wide. The doorway entering the hall is 20 feet from the wall where the boulder is sitting upon the ledge, and 80 feet away from the closed door exit at the other end of the hallway. The trick to this hallway is that the floor rests on a fulcrum at its center. When enough weight is placed beyond the fulcrum—usually by characters walking down the hallway—the floor begins to tilt. When the floor tilts far enough, the boulder begins to quickly roll down the newly formed ramp, barrelling towards the characters.

The floor begins to tilt when more than half the party crosses the midway point of the hallway—50 feet from the end with the boulder. At that point, the floor under them begins to sink. A character with a passive Perception score of 13 or higher notices this movement. The entire hallway is covered by slippery oil as described by the *grease* spell. The floor is difficult terrain, and any character moving across the area must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Meanwhile, as the party slips and slides on the slick and slanted hallway, the boulder rolls towards them. The slanted hallway has become a ramp for the large rock to roll down from its perch and down the hallway. At the end of each round, the boulder moves at a rate of 35 feet. It slams into the far wall at the end of the third round. A character that cannot outrun or otherwise avoid the boulder suffers 3d10 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. When the boulder comes to rest against the far wall, it blocks the door. It takes a successful DC 17 Strength check to move the boulder out of the way so the door can be opened.



THE SOLUTION

Characters who realize the boulder is unleashed by causing the floor to tilt may understand that the trap can be avoided by keeping the floor level. This can be done by keeping as much weight in front of the midpoint fulcrum as has passed beyond it. Keeping half the party on either side of the floor, or by placing items equal to or greater than the party's weight on the entrance side

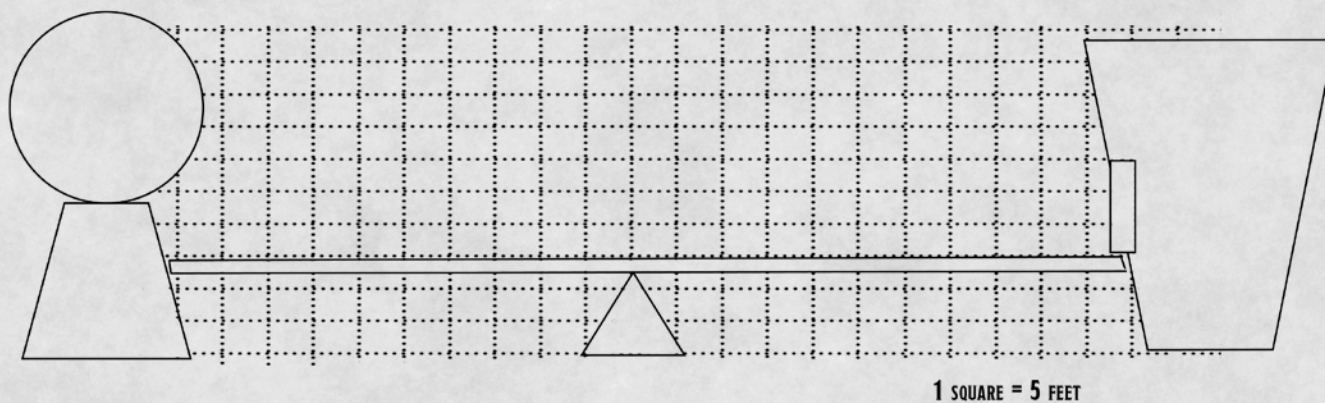
RAISING THE STAKES

There are multiple adjustments a DM can make to this puzzle in order to make it more challenging and dangerous. The boulder itself can be modified. For example, changing how quickly the boulder moves gives the characters less time to react and escape. Increasing its speed to 50 feet per round allows for only two rounds before it crashes into the door.

Having the door at the end of the hallway locked makes escape more difficult for a party trying to run from the boulder. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools picks the lock, though a DM can make that lock even harder to pick with a higher DC.

Lastly, the damage the boulder deals when it hits a character can be increased to make it more deadly. The base 3d10 bludgeoning damage can be scaled upward to match the level of the party or desired lethality.

DIAGRAM 1.1: TRAPPED HALLWAY



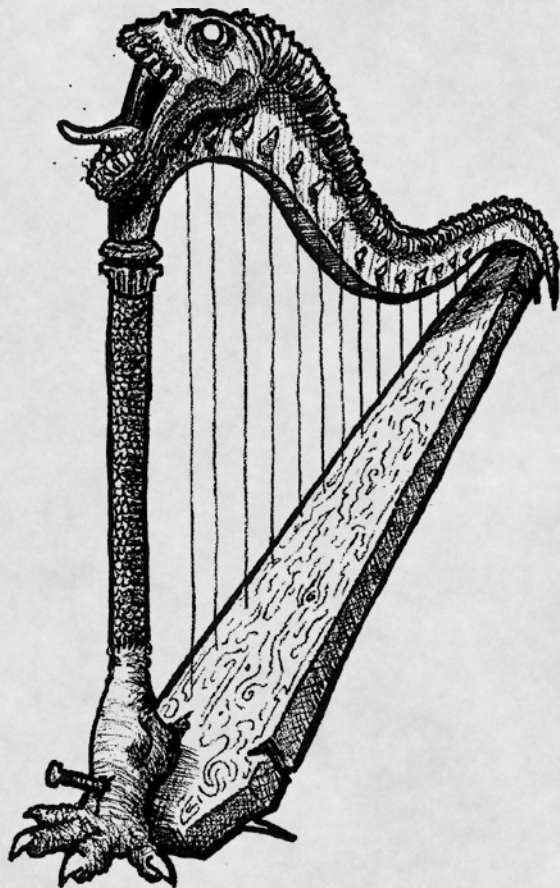
of the fulcrum will accomplish this. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check allows a character to recall seeing some heavy objects on their way to this hallway that could be used as counterweights to prevent the trap from triggering.

Of course, if the group triggers the trap, they still have a chance to escape unscathed. While the slick surface of the hallway makes for difficult terrain and a chance they fall prone, the characters can race towards the end of the hallway and make it through the door before the boulder crashes against it.

HINTS AND TIPS

For players struggling to solve this puzzle, the following clues can be provided to help guide them towards the solution:

- A character who examines the boulder with a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Nature) check notices that the ledge on which it rests bears grooves that match the nearby floor section, hinting that the floor could come up to meet the ramp and set the boulder in motion.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check allows a character to notice deep scrapes into the stone walls, indicating some kind of mechanical metal contraption as part of the construction of this hallway.
- A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History or Arcana) check reveals the knowledge that trapped hallways such as this one are often used to protect valuable treasure from grave robbers. That knowledge includes the mechanics of how the trap functions.



NAME THAT TUNE

Perplexity Rating: Easy (with a bard) / Hard (without a bard)

Among the usual danger and chaos the adventurers experience, coming across something artistic and peaceful is a rare occurrence. When the party enters this room, they notice a raised platform in the middle of the room with a wicked looking harp perched upon it. Next to the harp is a stone pedestal. Atop the pedestal rests a single sheet of music. Behind the platform is a large stone door with no apparent locks, hinges, or handles. Are any of the heroes musically inclined and ready to play the instrument?

THE PUZZLE

This particular puzzle room presents the challenge directly. The party must play the notes listed on the sheet of music using the harp. Playing a correct note causes the stone door to begin opening from the top, tilting forward towards the platform like a drawbridge. When all the correct notes have been played in the proper order, the drawbridge fully extends, and the party can cross into the next room.

Playing an incorrect note has consequences. For each wrong note played on the harp, a quarter of the floor drops away, causing any characters standing on it to plummet into a pit below. See map J1 in appendix J for the configuration of this room. The sections of floor drop away in order as labeled in map 1.1, starting with the quarter marked with number 1 and continuing through number 4.

Characters standing on a section of floor that drops must make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the pit. Characters standing within 5 feet of the center platform must make a DC 12 save. The DC of the saving throw increases by 1 for each additional 5 feet the character is standing from the center platform, to a maximum of 15. A successful saving throw means they were able to reach the middle platform before the floor beneath them vanished. On a failed save, they fall 40 feet into the pit below and take 4d6 bludgeoning damage.

THE SOLUTION

The difficulty solving this puzzle largely depends upon the makeup of the adventuring party. Their skills and proficiencies help determine how easily—or not—the group is able to read and play the music. There are three parts to this puzzle: reading the musical notes, identifying the strings on the harp, and playing the proper notes on those strings.

Examining the musical sheet reveals six notes written in traditional musical notation, with a familiar staff of lines and the notes sequentially listed from left to right. Appendix E includes a handout of the sheet music that can be given to players. A bard or any character proficient with any musical instrument is able to read the music from the sheet, and identify the notes without a skill check. If no character in the party has music proficiencies, they will have to rely on other skills to try and read the music. A successful DC 11 Charisma (Performance) or Intelligence (History) check allows a character to read a note. This check must be repeated for each of the six notes.

The DM should not tell the players if they succeeded or failed on an attempt to read a note. Instead, the DM should tell them a wrong note. For example, if the first note is a C, and the character rolls a 10 on their Charisma (Performance) check, that's a failure. Instead of immediate consequences and telling the player they failed, the DM should instead tell them that they read it as a D note. Only when they play the incorrect note on the harp (and see the floor fall away) do they realize they got the note wrong.

The correct notes, in order, are: A F B C B G

The next step is identifying the notes played by each string on the harp. The harp has seven strings. A character proficient with any string instrument is able to identify which strings on the harp represent which notes without a skill check. If there is no character in the party with proficiencies in string instruments, they will have to utilize other skills to try and understand the harp. A successful DC 11 Charisma (Performance) or Intelligence (History) check allows a character to identify the note represented by a string. This check must be repeated for each of the six notes. If the party realizes that there is a pattern to the relationship of the notes between each string, they make any subsequent skill checks with advantage. See the Harp Strings table displaying the notes represented by each string.

HARP STRINGS

| String Position | Note |
|-----------------|------|
| 1st | F |
| 2nd | G |
| 3rd | A |
| 4th | B |
| 5th | C |
| 6th | D |
| 7th | E |

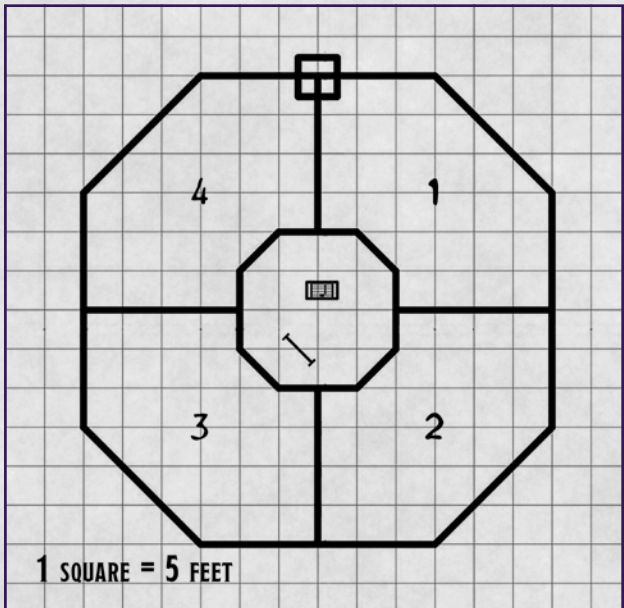
Note that the DM should not tell the players if they succeeded or failed on an attempt to identify a string. Instead, the DM should tell them a wrong note. For example, if the third string is the A string, and the character rolls a 9 on their History check, that's a failure. Instead of immediate consequences and telling the player they failed, the DM should instead tell them that they identified it as the B string. Only when they play the incorrect string on the harp (and see the floor fall away) will they realize they identified the string incorrectly.

The final step is combining the understanding of the musical notes on the sheet music and the knowledge of the harp strings. If they successfully completed those two parts, then this part is simply the execution of playing the notes on the harp. Playing the correct notes is incremental. In other words, playing an incorrect note does not mean they must start over from the beginning. For example, if they get the first two notes correct, then the third note wrong, the next attempt should be the correct third note, not starting over at the first note. The players are not penalized for resuming with a correct note where they left off.

The correct strings to be plucked, in order, to play the proper musical notes are: 3 1 4 5 4 2

As the floor around the platform breaks away with each incorrect note, the characters must crowd on the middle platform to remain safe. The drawbridge door

MAP 1.1: HARP ROOM



lowers 1 foot for each of the first five correct notes played, and then the final distance to complete opened position when the correct sixth and final note is played. It may be possible for characters to squeeze through the door before it is fully opened, but they may also have to traverse the gap between the platform and the opening if the floor in between has fallen away.

HINTS AND TIPS

For players struggling to solve this puzzle, the following clues can be provided to help guide them towards the solution:

- If the party has played at least one correct note before playing an incorrect note, any character with a passive Perception score of 11 or higher realizes that the door did not close at all and is still in the partially opened position, indicating they should continue where they left off, and not start over from the beginning.
- A character examining the harp that succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes they can partially mute the string while holding it. This allows for testing the sound of the notes without actually triggering the puzzle. Utilizing this technique, the party has advantage on checks to try and determine what note each string plays.
- Examining the musical notes closely and succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence check uncovers the relationship between the different notes. After learning this, subsequent checks to understand each note are made with advantage.

RAISING THE STAKES

If the DM wishes to make this puzzle more dangerous, the simplest way is to make mistakes more perilous, such as placing spikes at the bottom of the pit when sections of the floor fall away. The spiked pit deals an additional 4d6 piercing damage when an incorrect note is played, and a character who fails their saving throw plummets into the pit.

TIME WILL TELL

Perplexity Rating: Medium

The party is faced with a collection of doors, and they must choose the correct one to proceed. However, the correct door changes over time. The group must recognize the evidence pointing towards the proper door.

THE PUZZLE

The room for this puzzle is a circular room with twelve closed doors spread evenly along the continuing wall. The group will arrive in this room from above or below. This can be by way of a staircase, ladder, or pit trap. The party can leave the way they came, but in order to progress towards their goal, they will have to select the one correct door among the twelve available. When the party enters this room, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is circular with closed doors surrounding you on all sides. A quick glance around reveals there are twelve doors in total, all spaced equally apart. The doors appear to be identical, made of solid wood with a brass doorknob and no visible lock. In the center of the room is a small raised ring, the stonework of the floor carved in such a way that the edge of the ring rises about two inches from the ground. The sun shines into the room from a large square opening in the ceiling.

A passive Perception score of 12 or higher, or a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that above each of the doors carved into the stone is a number from 1 through 12. The default language of these numbers is common, though the DM can have these written in any language to adjust the difficulty of the puzzle by requiring a specific character or spell to decipher them.

The proper door is only available during the day and changes each hour. If the characters select the correct door, they are led down a winding tunnel that eventually leads them to the next area. If the characters select the wrong door, they travel down a winding tunnel for 1d4 hours before they come to a ladder. Climbing that ladder leads them through a door in the floor of the original puzzle room. They find themselves back where they started. This door can only be opened from below. If the characters insist on attempting to open this door and following that tunnel in the opposite direction, it also leads back to this room. In effect, the tunnel between the

RAISING THE STAKES

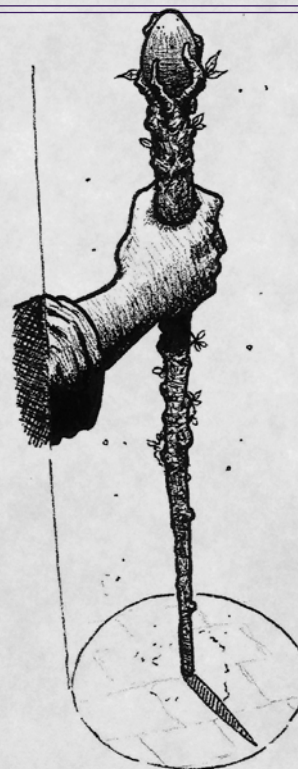
Night time can be used optionally to make this puzzle more dangerous to the characters. As mentioned, this puzzle cannot be solved during the night, since there is no shadow cast to reveal the proper door. However, while the party may not be able to find the correct door to exit this room, there's nothing stopping monsters from using the same doors to enter. Using this option, the DM rolls a 1d10 for each hour of darkness the characters spend in this room. On a result of 9 or 10, a creature attempts to come through the door corresponding to the current time of night. Consult the Creatures From The Darkness table for suggested enemies based on time and character tier.

door in the floor of this room and any of the eleven incorrect doors is one long, winding, circular path.

THE SOLUTION

The solution to this puzzle is revealed by combining three key clues found within the room: the numbers over the doors, the ring in the center of the room, and the sun coming through the ceiling. This room is essentially a clock or sundial. In order to find the proper door at any given time, the characters must place an item in the ring in the center of the room so that the sun coming through the ceiling casts a shadow of it. The shadow points to the correct door.

Unfortunately, at night—when the sun is not shining through the ceiling—none of the doors will lead to the exit. The group must wait for sunrise in order to solve this puzzle.



HINTS AND TIPS

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

- A character who succeeds on a DC 11 Intelligence (History or Nature) check realizes the numbers and positioning of the doors resemble a clock or sundial.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check focusing on the ring in the floor reveals several scratches and scuff marks in the stone, hinting that items may have been repeatedly placed in its center.
- A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check exposes the key placement of the hole in the ceiling and notices that the direction of the shadows belonging to the characters change position as they spend time in the room.

CREATURES FROM THE DARKNESS

| Time | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| 7pm–9pm | grick | troll | clay golem | beholder |
| 10pm–midnight | flameskull | guardian naga | vampire | pit fiend |
| 1am–3am | minotaur | hezrou | ultroloth | androsphinx |
| 4am–6am | hook horror | cloakier | iron golem | goristro |

THE SKELETON COURT

Perplexity Rating: Medium

Three skeletons sit upon thrones facing the center of the room. Gemstones rest in their empty eye sockets. Before them are three small wooden chests on raised pedestals. The corpse of an unfortunate adventurer lies crumpled on the ground in the center of the room. Several arrows protrude from the body. The skeletons silently watch as events unfold before them, waiting to judge the actions of those who dare enter the chamber. Those who present the expected tributes will be rewarded. Those who fail will be punished.

THE PUZZLE

Solving this puzzle requires placing the proper chest in front of each skeleton. The skeletons each have a different set of gems in their eye sockets. The skeleton to the left has red rubies in its eyes. The skeleton to the right has green emeralds in its eyes. The skeleton in the center has one red ruby and one green emerald in its eyes. Recognizing this is crucial to solving the puzzle, and something the party notices when they enter the room.

Characters examining the corpse discover a strange magnifying glass in its right hand. A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check reveals the item to be a *magnifying glass of x-ray vision* (appendix A). However, the magnifying glass has been damaged. The glass is cracked, and the item is extremely fragile. The character who identified the item also realizes that it only has one use left before the glass breaks, rendering the device useless.

A character who investigates the corpse further learns more about it with a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check. The adventurer appears to have been a treasure hunter, with several maps tucked into a pouch and intricate trinkets hanging from their belt. Although the items look to be somewhat elaborate, they are mostly worthless ornaments and have no significant market value. It seems the adventurer was examining the chests with the magnifying glass when they met their unfortunate fate.

An additional check of the cause of death and arrows sticking from the corpse can uncover more details. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the arrows to be commonly used by hostile creatures who reside nearby. The arrows are not part of a trap within the room. The fact that the treasure hunter succumbed to their wounds in this room was a coincidence.

THE SOLUTION

Solving this puzzle requires the party to place the proper chest in front of the correct skeleton. Each of the three chests contain gems that correspond with the gems in the eyes of the skeletons:

- The chest on the left contains emeralds.
- The chest in the center contains rubies.
- The chest on the right contains emeralds and rubies.



The chests are magically sealed and cannot be opened. The damaged magnifying glass allows the party to look inside one, and only one, of the chests, and identify only one gem within the selected chest. The challenge comes in determining what each chest contains by only viewing one single gem inside one of the chests.

Of particular note, the chests are each placed on incorrect pedestals. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check focusing on the chests or pedestals reveals a mechanism that raises or lowers the level of the platforms. The mechanism or levels of the pedestals cannot be manipulated in any way aside from the chests being placed on them. There is a series of pegs that fit into the bottom of each chest, and those pegs are part of the machinery that determines the level of the platform. Upon discovering this, the characters learn that none of the platforms are in the correct position. Each one of them is in the incorrect location.

Knowing that none of the chests are in the proper position is a crucial piece of information, so the DM should encourage the party to discover this if they haven't realized it on their own. With this piece of knowledge, they can then make their selection and solve the puzzle.

The correct chest to examine is the one in front of the skeleton with the emerald and ruby eyes. Even though they can only examine one gem within the chest, knowing that each is in the wrong position means that whatever gem is revealed within this chest is the only gem in that chest.

Given this information, the group can determine the proper examination and placement of the chests. The party should use the one charge left in the magnifying glass to examine the center chest, the one in front of the skeleton with ruby and emerald eyes. This examination reveals a ruby, which means that it must contain only rubies. They can then move the original center chest into position in front of the skeleton with ruby eyes, the one on the left. That means the chest in the left position is now correct.

The chest that was previously placed in the left position now needs a new location. The available positions are the vacated center position and the occupied right position, in front of the skeleton with the emerald eyes. If it were to be placed in the center position, that means the chest on the right would not have been moved at all. Knowing that all the chests are in the incorrect position means that each chest must be moved. Therefore, the chest from the left position must be moved to the right position, and the chest in the right position is moved into the center position. The Skeleton Court table further illustrates the solution.

SKELETON COURT

| Skeleton Eyes | Position | Original Chest | Solution Chest |
|---------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rubies | Left | Emeralds | Rubies (from center) |
| Rubies and Emeralds | Center | Rubies | Rubies and Emeralds (from right) |
| Emeralds | Right | Rubies and Emeralds | Emeralds (from left) |

Once all three chests are placed in their proper positions, the puzzle has been solved. The pedestals descend into the floor with a grinding noise, the eyes of the skeletons illuminate, and the prize is revealed.

RAISING THE STAKES

This puzzle is perfect for adding traps around the room for the characters to potentially stumble upon. Trip wires, pressure plates, and traps placed on the chests all offer the chance to add danger and violence to this encounter.

CUSTOMIZING THIS PUZZLE

This puzzle can be customized in a way to reward any variety of prizes. It's not dependent upon a locked door or portal like some other puzzles, and the DM can get creative in how this is incorporated into their adventure. Some possible results from solving this puzzle include:

- A chest rises from the ground in the middle of the room and contains a prized item.
- The mouth of one or more skeletons drops open, revealing a piece of paper containing valuable information.
- A rope ladder uncoils from the ceiling, inviting the party to climb upwards to the next level.
- A secret compartment at the base of one of the thrones opens, revealing a rusty key.

HINTS AND TIPS

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

- A character that makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check recalls that the owners of such precious gems always want to be reunited with them after death. This helps guide the party towards matching the contents of the chests with their owners based on the eyes.
- A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check leads the party towards looking more closely at the pedestals and chests. This points them towards discovering the mechanism as described above.
- Groups not understanding the importance of the chests being in incorrect positions can realize this is crucial to the solution with a successful DC 12 Intelligence check.



ME AND MY SHADOW

Perplexity Rating: Medium

Traversing the dungeon hasn't been easy for the party, and it doesn't look like it's going to get any easier once they enter this room which contains dangerous shadows dancing across its walls. Not only do the shadows play tricks on their eyes, they are much more deadly than that.

THE PREDICAMENT

The party enters a 60-by-60-foot empty room. The room is dimly lit by two torches, one on each side of the room. Across the empty room, the party can see a strange looking door. On closer inspection, they realize the door is really just the shadow of a door. Looking back at the door they came in, they see that it also has become a shadow of a door. If a party member touches the shadow door, the torches extinguish and the room goes dark for ten seconds. The two torches then reignite and an eerie voice says, "I own your shadows. Next I'll own your souls." The characters then notice their shadows leaving their feet and forming a hideous shadow creature on the floor. The shadow creature attaches itself to a party member and attacks. The creature can move around the room by reattaching itself to a different party member.

If the party can destroy the **shadow creature** (appendix B), the doors cease to be shadows and are normal, functioning doors once again. This predicament will force the party to work together to defeat a shadow creature.

CUSTOMIZING THE PREDICAMENT

This encounter is contained to a single room, which means it can be placed almost anywhere within an adventure. It fits well within a dungeon but can be used in other strange places the party may be exploring, or as a defensive mechanism within strongholds or keeps. The number of doors within the room can also be adjusted easily, with each of them becoming a shadow until the creature has been defeated.

THE SOLUTION

To solve this predicament, the party must defeat the shadow creature. However, that is easier said than done, as it is immune to all damage when it is on the floor or ceiling of the room. The creature can only be damaged when it is on a wall, and it moves in such a way to avoid being on the wall whenever possible.

The party must use available light sources to force the shadow creature onto a wall. When the creature is attached to a specific character, that character's shadow

RAISING THE STAKES

To make this encounter more challenging, the DM can introduce more than one **shadow creature** to the fight. This will make the combat more chaotic, as the creatures attach themselves to multiple characters. Multiple light sources, positions of the characters with and without the creatures, and the locations of the shadows must be tracked carefully.



is where the creature manifests itself. The characters must use a light source to project the shadow creature onto a vertical wall, at which point it can be attacked. Once the creature has been defeated, all the doors in the room return to normal and become usable.

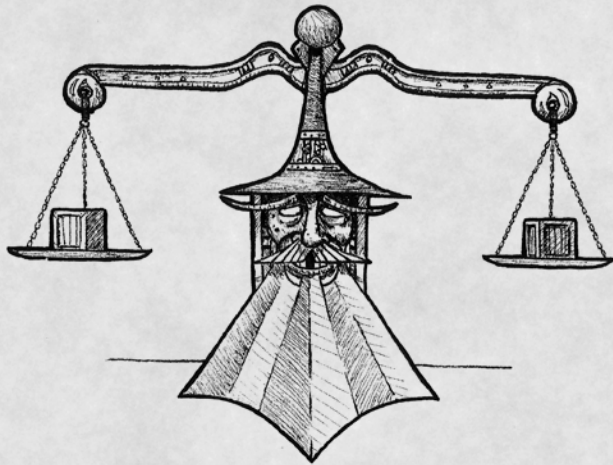
HINTS AND TIPS

- While using a light source, a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check allows a player to notice that they can move the shadow creature by moving the light source relative to the character to which the creature is attached.
- A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the room reveals that there are gashes, cracks, and scorch marks in random clumps on the walls, as if the wall was attacked.
- A character that makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes there are signs of magical damage spells in certain areas on the walls, as if the wall was attacked.
- When a character has the shadow creature attached to them, a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check allows them to realize standing close to a wall almost always causes the shadow to be cast onto that nearby wall, allowing the creature to be damaged. A success against a DC 15 reveals that standing in a corner is even better, as two nearby walls give an even better chance of light casting the shadow on one of the adjoining walls.

THE TALKING SCALE

Perplexity Rating: Medium

The group sees a giant scale approximately 30 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 15 feet tall sitting along a wall. This isn't any ordinary scale. A collection of identical crates are scattered about the room. Somehow, the characters must use this unusual scale to determine which crate contains the item they seek.



THE PUZZLE

This scale is alive. In the center are two huge eyes, a nose, mouth, and long grey beard that lies upon the floor in front of it. Scattered around the room are eight identical-looking crates, each about 3 feet square. The scale watches the party in silence until it is addressed or a party member touches a crate. When this happens, read or paraphrase the following:

The scale looks at you carefully, opens its mouth, and coughs loudly. In an old, raspy voice, it says, "The item you seek is in one of these crates. But which one? The heaviest, of course. Be warned: opening the incorrect crate destroys them all, including the one you seek." The scale coughs again before continuing. "You see these crates have been magically modified to look, smell, and weigh the same to ordinary beings. Only living scales such as myself can detect a weight difference." The scale makes a strange sound somewhere between a burp and a sneeze. "But my time has come, and I am weak. I have not the strength to weigh more than two times. But I am happy to spend my last night in this world helping you find the correct crate." It closes its eyes and takes a deep breath. "Once you have decided how it will be done, put the crates upon my platforms. Once they are set, tug on my beard, and I shall begin the weighing. Remember, I can only do this two times before I'm gone."

There are eight identical crates and one giant living scale in a room. The item the party is looking for is in one of the crates. By magical or conventional means, all the crates look, smell, and weigh the same to the players. If the incorrect crate is opened, then all the crates are destroyed and any items in those crates are also destroyed. The players must use the living scale to figure out which crate is the heaviest. The dilemma exists in that the living scale can only make two measurements before it dies.

THE SOLUTION

There are eight crates. They will be referred to by numbers 1 through 8. Seven of them are of equal weight. One is heavier. The trick to solving this puzzle is using the option of not weighing certain items as a third comparison. In other words, using a control group of items the players don't weigh can aid in their deductions. There are therefore actually three items or groups of items being compared—the left side, the right side, and those not placed on the scale. The following weight checks explain the steps for locating the heaviest crate:

FIRST WEIGHT CHECK

Place crates 1, 2, and 3 on one side of the scale and 4, 5, and 6 on the other. Crates 7 and 8 are not placed on the scale.

Case 1: If crates 1, 2, and 3 are heavier, then one of these must be the heaviest.

Case 2: If crates 4, 5, and 6 are heavier, then one of these must be the heaviest.

Case 3: If crates 1, 2, and 3 weigh the same as crates 4, 5, and 6, then crate 7 or 8 must be the heaviest.

SECOND WEIGHT CHECK

Place crate 1 on one side of the scale and crate 2 on the other. Crate 3 is not placed on the scale.

Case 1.1: If crate 1 is heavier, then crate 1 is the heaviest.

Case 1.2: If crate 2 is heavier, then crate 2 is the heaviest.

Case 1.3: If crate 1 and 2 weigh the same, then crate 3 is the heaviest.

SECOND WEIGHT CHECK

Place crate 4 on one side of the scale and crate 5 on the other. Crate 6 is not placed on the scale.

Case 2.1: If crate 4 is heavier, then crate 4 is the heaviest.

Case 2.2: If crate 5 is heavier, then crate 5 is the heaviest.

Case 2.3: If crate 4 and 5 weigh the same, then crate 6 is the heaviest.

SECOND WEIGHT CHECK

Place crate 7 on one side of the scale and crate 8 on the other.

Case 3.1: If crate 7 is heavier, then crate 7 is the heaviest.

Case 3.2: If crate 8 is heavier, then crate 8 is the heaviest.

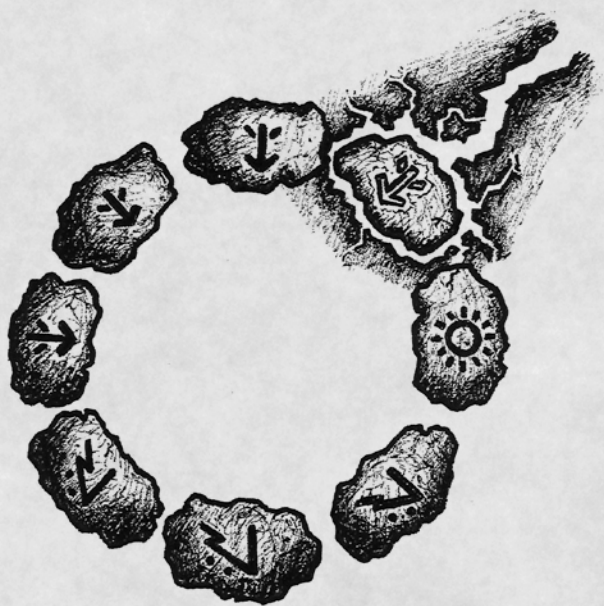
RAISING THE STAKES

The sense of urgency for this encounter can be enhanced by adding a time element. Not only can the living scale only weigh two more times before he dies, but he also only has 10 minutes to live. This forces the group to act fast. The DM can urge the characters to work quickly by roleplaying the scales progressively worsening state—increased coughing or blood coming from its orifices, the final words of a dying creature, and whatever else might be appropriate for something about to pass away.

HINTS AND TIPS

If the party struggles to figure out how to make the measurements, the scale can provide a hint or two:

- Have the scale use the word “odd,” to help direct the party toward using odd numbers (three items on each side) as their first measurement, for instance, “It’s odd that you are taking so long to figure this out...”
- If the party continues to struggle, the scale can say, “I’ve always enjoyed weighing things in odd numbers,” or “One is good but three is better. Two will never do.”
- With a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the scale will reveal that he has previously weighed the two crates in the corner and they are the same weight. That helps eliminate two crates from consideration, leaving only six to be dealt with. The solution now is much easier—two on each side and two off for the first measurement, and a one-against-one measurement of the pair deemed heaviest from the initial weighing.



RIDE THE LIGHTNING

Perplexity Rating: Medium

The players approach an unusual construction made from several pieces of sculpted stone. The stones are arranged in a circular formation, creating an opening in its center. Strange markings are carved into what appears to be a deactivated portal. A small charge of electricity flows into one of the stones, the current buzzing steadily. Does the party need to use a portal to reach some distant location? Figuring out how to activate this strange device is suddenly a crucial part of their quest.

THE PUZZLE

In order to activate this portal, the heroes have to use the incoming electricity to charge the entire structure. This involves two essential factors. First, the party must decide how they will conduct the electricity from one stone to another. Secondly, the electricity must be conducted in a specific order. This means the connections must follow a precise pattern, each stone in the portal having the electricity run into it.

There are eight stones making up the portal, all the same size and evenly placed. The portal is about 6 feet in diameter. When deactivated, the center of the portal does not contain any special properties—it’s simply open space through the ring of stones. Each stone is engraved with a rune. See appendix F for an illustration that can be presented to the players to better visualize the puzzle.

The cause of the electrical charge coming into the puzzle appears to be magical in nature. In fact, there does not appear to be an actual source at all. The small blue bolt of constant lightning appears to be hovering over one of the topmost stones and charging it. The other end of the bolt simply terminates in the air about a foot from the stone. No skill check or magic spell will reveal the source. Where the energy is coming from is not important to the solution of the puzzle. The electricity itself is the mechanism for solving it.

THE SOLUTION

For the characters to begin solving this puzzle, they first have to recognize that the way to activate the portal is to get the electrical current flowing through each stone by crossing through the center of the portal. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana, Investigation, or Nature) check reveals that all the runes on most of the stones appear to be dull and deactivated, while the rune on the stone that the electricity is flowing through is glowing brightly. This gives the characters the information needed to understand the electricity must touch all the stones.

Connecting the electricity from one stone to another presents the first challenge. The portal isn’t very big, so one option is for the characters themselves to conduct the electricity. Any creature medium size or larger can reach from one stone across to another stone, transferring the electricity through them. Of course, this isn’t the safest choice, and it does hurt a bit. For each round a character spends using their body to connect two stones they must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they take 1d6 lightning damage.

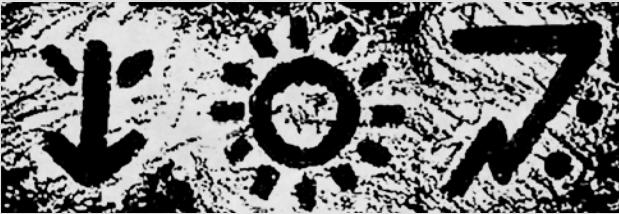
Using items to connect the stones and transfer the electricity is a better choice, provided the characters

possess or can obtain items suitable for the task. Luckily, this electrical current is very conductive, so just about any item will work. A few possibilities include:

- **A rope.** Depending on the length, it may even be able to make multiple connections.
- **Weapons.** Multiple weapons can be linked together to span the gap between stones.
- **Environmental items.** Depending on where the portal is located, items like tree branches, metal pipes, or chunks of stone can work.

Once they've figured out how to connect the stones, the next step is connecting them in the right order. The runes on the stones provide guidance for this. See the diagram in appendix F for the arrangement of the runes and the positions for each stone. There are three different runes:

DIAGRAM 1.2: RUNES



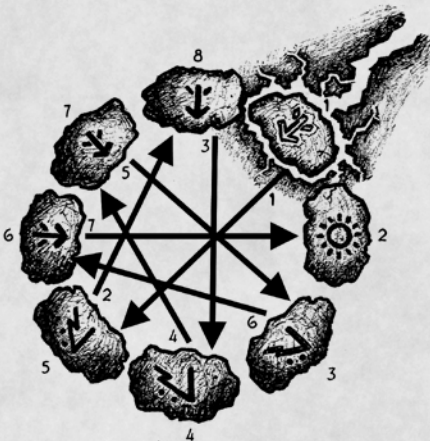
The first rune appears four times (stones 1, 6, 7, and 8) and has an arrow pointing straight across. On the first stone where the electricity enters the stone ring, the rune is glowing. The arrow pointing straight indicates the electricity should go straight across from the first stone to the stone directly opposite (stone 5). This indicates that the current going out from this stone should go straight across to the stone directly opposite. That means stone 6 connects into stone 2, stone 7 connects into stone 3, and stone 8 connects into stone 4.

The second rune only appears once (stone 2) and indicates the final stone that receives the electricity.

The third rune appears three times (stones 3, 4, and 5) and has two dots and a design that points to the left. Deciphering this rune is key to solving the puzzle. The left pointing design indicates the electricity should be connected to the stone to the left of it. The two dots represent two stones between this stone and its target. Each stone with this rune directs its incoming current to the stone three spots to its left.

The proper order of the electricity from start to end is 1, 5, 8, 4, 7, 3, 6, 2. The correct solution looks like this:

DIAGRAM 1.3: ELECTRICITY PATTERN



HINTS AND TIPS

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM:

- A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check confirms that all the stones in the ring must have electricity passed through them in order to activate the portal.
- The party recognizes that it could use some items found in the surrounding area as conductors with a successful DC 12 Intelligence check.
- Characters who investigate the runes carefully can surmise the meaning of the runes with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check.

CUSTOMIZING THIS PUZZLE

Since this puzzle's objective is centered around activating a magical portal, it can be placed anywhere within your adventure or campaign. This also provides an opportunity for the setting to provide some of the items used to connect the stones. Some possible locations and usages for the portal:

- Located in a secret chamber beneath a local temple, the portal allows travel between the Material Plane and the Astral Plane.
- Hidden deep within a treacherous forest, the magical gate provides passage to the Feywild.
- Discovered inside a deadly dungeon, the portal provides access to the treasure vault of the lich who designed the dungeon.
- Tucked behind some crates in the basement of a popular tavern, the gateway allows fast travel from one end of the continent to another.

RAISING THE STAKES

The DM can make some easy adjustments to this puzzle for a more deadly encounter. The default damage for touching or conducting the lightning through a creature's body is 1d6 lightning damage. That can be scaled upwards to 1d8, 1d10, or even 1d20 to discourage the characters from coming into direct contact with the electricity.

A second option penalizes the group for connecting the stones in an incorrect order. In this case, when all the stones have charged but the sequence is not the correct solution, the portal opens to a dangerous plane, compelling a hostile creature through the gateway that immediately attacks the party. Some suggestions for this creature based on tier of the party include:

| Character Level | Creature |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Tier 1 | a displacer beast |
| Tier 2 | a hydra |
| Tier 3 | a beholder |
| Tier 4 | a death knight |

THE DRAGON TEMPLE

Perplexity Rating: Medium

A mysterious temple located deep in the jungle is said to have been built centuries ago by dragon-worshipping cultists. Intricately carved statues of dragons adorn the exterior of the temple and its surrounding area. Rumors suggest the temple contains hoards of treasure that were collected for the dragons. Many have tried to penetrate its defenses. None have succeeded... yet.

THE PUZZLE

For this puzzle, the party must unlock the door to the temple by interacting with several dragon statues in the area. These interactions require an item that acts like a key—a mysterious artifact known as the *staff of dragon's breath* (see appendix A). Without the *staff of dragon's breath*, the party has no chance of entering the temple. Its entrance is sealed by mechanical and magical means that even the most powerful spells are unable to unlock.

How the group comes into possession of the *staff of dragon's breath* is up to the DM. It could be an item that was discovered much earlier in the campaign, or it could be obtained at the very beginning of the adventure when they explore the temple. Suggestions for obtaining the staff include:

- Discovered as seemingly random loot in a dungeon the group previously explored.
- Presented to the party by an old hermit as a reward for helping him with a dangerous task.
- Recovered from a group of bandits who attempted to ambush and rob the group.

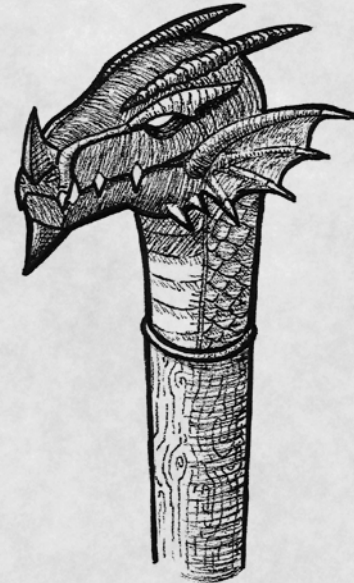
The dragon statues found around the temple are made of various materials. The majority of them are carved from stone, the gray rock weathered and crumbling. The statues relevant to the puzzle are made of colored stone and show no signs of decay. These statues are:

- **Ruby.** A dragon carved from the red gemstone stands with its mouth wide open, revealing sharp teeth.
- **Sapphire.** The statue carved from blue gemstone lies curled in a ball, its eyes open and alert for intruders.
- **Emerald.** The dragon carved from green gemstone rears up on its hind legs, wings spread.
- **Onyx.** The statue carved from black stone is posed as if it is walking, its head glancing over its shoulder.
- **Quartz.** The dragon carved from translucent white stone is sitting patiently, inviting a visitor to come closer.

THE SOLUTION

When the party approaches the temple for the first time, a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check allows them to notice that a few of the statues stand out from the rest due to the colorful materials they are carved from. Characters who examine the colored statues discover a round slot on the back of each of these statues with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check. These slots are the exact size and shape needed for the *staff of dragon's breath* to slide into.

Unlocking the temple involves using the *staff of dragon's breath* to magically activate each colored statue. This is done by inserting the staff into the slot



on each statue, and having the staff come into contact with the element that matches the breath type of that particular dragon. In other words, the group must be able to produce, magically or otherwise, the damage type that matches the breath weapon of each dragon.

The means of generating each type of substance is up to the party to solve. Magic items, spells, or physical items are all acceptable. The solution is as follows, matching each dragon with its breath weapon:

- Ruby/red dragon: Fire.
- Sapphire/blue dragon: Lightning.
- Emerald/green dragon: Poison.
- Onyx/black dragon: Acid.
- Quartz/white dragon: Cold.

When the correct interaction has taken place and the proper damage type has come into contact with the *staff of dragon's breath* while it is slotted into the dragon statue, the statue begins to glow. A beam of light, colored the same as the statue, appears between the statue and the locked door. Once all five beams of colored light are activated by the proper interaction with each statue, the door slides open. Each beam remains active for one hour after it has been initiated. When a beam deactivates, it may be reactivated again immediately by the same interaction between the statue, the staff, and breath weapon simulation.

HINTS AND TIPS

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

- If the players do not realize the slots in the statues are the perfect size for the staff to slide into, a successful DC 11 Intelligence check reveals this fact.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) or Intelligence (History) check reveals that there is a connection between solving this puzzle and the specific dragon type represented by each of the colored statues.
- A character attempting to learn more about how to interact with the statue with the staff realizes that the dragons' breath weapons are part of the solution with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

WATER WEIGHT

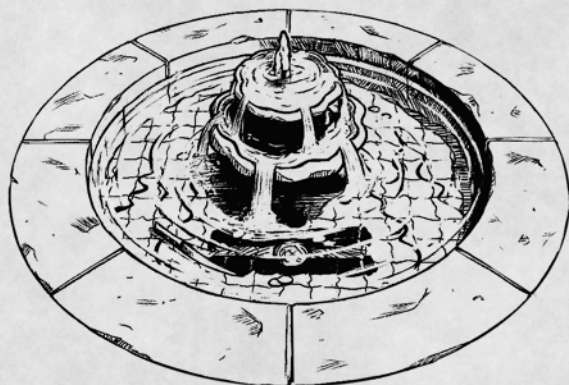
Perplexity Rating: Medium

A large stone fountain sits in the middle of the room. Behind it is a door barricaded by a heavy metal gate. In front of the gate is a small cistern. Next to the fountain rests two buckets, one larger than the other. It looks like someone has been moving water from the fountain to the cistern, but it is currently empty. How much must be poured into the cistern to open the gate?

THE PUZZLE

The characters must use the available buckets to fill the cistern with the proper amount of water in order to open the gate. However, neither full amount from either bucket is the correct amount. The proper amount of water is a measurement between the maximum capacity of the two buckets. This puzzle requires a bit of logical thinking, and perhaps some trial and error.

The water flows from the fountain endlessly, so there is never a shortage of water. The players may freely fill one or both buckets from the fountain. The cistern can be filled with water from the buckets. Only the proper amount within the cistern will open the gate. There is no indication or reaction by the puzzle when an improper amount of water is placed within the cistern. There is a small cork plug at the bottom of the cistern which can be removed to drain the water from it in order to reset the puzzle and try again.



THE SOLUTION

Delivering the proper amount of water into the cistern takes some logical thinking and calculations. Neither bucket delivers the proper amount by itself, but using the two buckets together can find the intermediate amount.

For reference purposes, consider the bigger bucket the Large bucket, the smaller bucket the Small bucket, and the proper amount a Medium quantity, between the capacity of the Small and Large buckets. If this is confusing to the players, the buckets can alternatively be referred to as the three gallon bucket and the five gallon bucket. Four gallons are required in the cistern to open the gate.

There are two possible solutions to this puzzle, both using the capacities of the two buckets in strategic ways.

SOLUTION 1

- Step 1:** Fill the 3 gallon bucket completely with water.
- Step 2:** Pour the 3 gallons of water from the small bucket into the 5 gallon bucket
- Step 3:** Fill the 3 gallon bucket completely with water again.
- Step 4:** Fill up the 5 gallon bucket with the 3 gallon bucket. The 5 gallon bucket already contained 3 gallons, so only 2 gallons will fit in it. This leaves exactly 1 gallon remaining in the 3 gallon bucket.
- Step 5:** Empty the 5 gallon bucket back into the fountain.
- Step 6:** Pour the remaining 1 gallon of water from the 3 gallon bucket into the 5 gallon bucket.
- Step 7:** Fill the 3 gallon bucket.
- Step 8:** Pour the water from the 3 gallon bucket into the 5 gallon bucket. This gives exactly 4 gallons within the 5 gallon bucket.
- Step 9:** Pour the 4 gallons from the 5 gallon bucket into the cistern to open the gate.

SOLUTION 2

- Step 1:** Fill up the 5 gallon bucket completely with water.
- Step 2:** Pour the water from the 5 gallon bucket into 3 gallon bucket, leaving 2 gallons in the 5 gallon bucket.
- Step 3:** Empty the 3 gallon bucket back into the fountain.
- Step 4:** Pour the 2 gallons in the 5 gallon bucket into the 3 gallon bucket.
- Step 5:** Fill up the 5 gallon bucket and pour it into the 3 gallon bucket until it's full. Since the 3 gallon bucket will only fit one more gallon, this leaves 4 gallons in the 5 gallon bucket.
- Step 6:** Pour the 4 gallons from the 5 gallon bucket into the cistern to open the gate.

HINTS AND TIPS

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

- Characters examining the buckets realize their relative sizes mean that there would be an intermediate size that logically fits between them with a successful DC 10 Intelligence check.
- A close examination of the buckets and a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check reveals markings or runes that show the measurements of each bucket to be the equivalent of 3 gallons and 5 gallons.
- A successful DC 12 Wisdom check allows the character to understand that the measurement of empty space in each bucket is just as important as the measurements of water.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Perplexity Rating: Medium

A powerful magic golden scepter was buried in the crypt of the adventurers who retrieved it many years ago. A new threat requires the retrieval of this item. But the adventurers did not leave it unguarded. The party will have to gather clues and piece them together in order to solve the riddle of the crypt and prove themselves worthy of the legendary artifact.

WHAT'S THE ITEM?

Although the default item is a golden scepter, the magic item hidden in the crypt can be anything. It can be something that ties into a larger campaign, a key component in an overarching storyline quest. The item can be used as part of a retrieval quest within a single adventure. The item is the reward at the end of the puzzle, and plays a part in the story behind the puzzle, but its actual details are up to the DM.

THE PUZZLE

The crypt holds the coffins containing the remains of famous adventurers. These adventurers were part of a legendary party whose deeds were captured in bard songs across the world. One particular song holds the key to unlocking the coffins and recovering the sought after item: a magical scepter made of gold. Unfortunately, the only sheet containing the lyrics to that song has been torn to pieces and scattered to the wind.

This particular puzzle is the final objective in *Where Heroes Lie*, a full-length adventure included in this book. For ideas on where to place the scattered lyrics or guidance on how to tie several of these puzzles together to form a coherent story, have a look at that adventure. Locating and gaining access to the crypt can also be a part of the adventure leading up to this puzzle. The puzzle assumes the party has entered the crypt.

When the characters enter the crypt, read or paraphrase the following:

As you descend the narrow stone staircase, the room opens up into a large, square chamber. The air is cold and damp, and several torches flickering from the walls cause the shadows to dance irregularly. Within the chamber are six ornate sarcophagi with images of their inhabitants carved into the stone.

Examining the carvings on the stone coffins reveals the following features of the figures portrayed:

- A large male with a beard, bare chest, and animal skin loincloth. He holds a large axe in his hands (Male Goliath Barbarian).
- A female with horns like a devil, dressed in loose robes and holding a book with an eyeball on its cover (Female Tiefling Wizard).
- A short male with a hooded cloak and bare feet. He holds a bow in one hand and a scimitar in the other (Male Halfling Ranger).
- A female in a hooded cloak, a sharp dagger in one hand and a small sack in the other (Female Human Rogue).



- A short male with pointed ears and bare feet. He holds a lyre in one hand and clenches a pipe between his teeth (Male Halfling Bard).
- A female with pointed ears and an antlered helm upon her head. A squirrel companion rests by her feet (Female Elf Druid).

The party may be inclined to start opening the coffins randomly attempting to find the item they seek. This would completely bypass the puzzle and is prevented by having the coffins magically sealed. The sarcophagi cannot be unlocked by magical or conventional means.

CUSTOMIZING THIS PUZZLE

This particular puzzle offers several opportunities for customization. Some of the aspects of this puzzle that can be modified by the DM include:

- Who was this adventuring party? Maybe they were more infamous than legendary. Perhaps the characters are from a previous campaign.
- The entombed characters can be changed as well, though that would likely require some changes to the lyrics of the song that contains the clues.
- Where does the party find the pieces of paper containing the lyrics? Are they found all in one location? Are they spread around the world to be found over the course of several adventures?
- Where is the tomb located? Is it lost deep within a dangerous forest or hidden behind secret passages beneath a temple within a large city?
- How did the party gain access to the crypt? Did they walk right in without any opposition? Did they fight through a dangerous dungeon to finally reach the room?
- What item is buried with the dead? What does it do? Who sent the characters to retrieve it?

THE SOLUTION

The first step towards solving this puzzle is collecting all the pieces of the lyric sheet. The lyric sheet is torn into pieces and must be put back in the correct order to form the complete song that unlocks the puzzle. There are six verses with four lines each, and each of the verses has been split in half. That leaves a total of twelve clues to find, each containing two lines of the song. See appendix G for a handout that can be shared with the players once they've collected all the pieces.

Locating and obtaining these twelve clues can be part of a larger campaign, or the characters can simply acquire them all at once. Ideas for each approach include:

INTERPRETING THE LYRICS

| Verse | Lyrics Clue | Coffin Carving | Character |
|-------|---|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | The tiefling wizard got caught in a blizzard | A female with horns like a devil, dressed in loose robes and holding a book with an eyeball on its cover. | Female Tiefling Wizard |
| 2 | The second to die was the rather large guy | A large male with a beard, bare chest, and animal skin loincloth. He holds a large axe in his hands. | Male Goliath Barbarian |
| 3 | The thief did not make it when she tried to take it | A female in a hooded cloak, a sharp dagger in one hand and a small sack in the other. | Female Human Rogue |
| 4 | The forest elf fought a lich by herself | A female with pointed ears and an antlered helm upon her head. A squirrel companion rests by her feet. | Female Elf Druid |
| 5 | The halfling bard took it twice as hard | A short male with a hooded cloak and bare feet. He holds a bow in one hand and a scimitar in the other. | Male Halfling Ranger |
| 6 | The last one alive was glad to survive | A short male with pointed ears and bare feet. He holds a lyre in one hand and clenches a pipe between his teeth. | Male Halfling Bard |

- Each piece of paper has been left in the possession of someone who knew the dead adventurers personally.
- The bard carrying the lyrics was killed in a dungeon, and the denizens tore apart the lyrics. The pieces of paper may be recovered as loot within the dungeon.
- The party purposefully scattered the lyrics, hiding each piece within a chest buried near key landmarks throughout the world.
- The songbook containing the lyrics was deemed cursed by a local wizard. The wizard tore the pages from the book and ripped the pages to shreds. The pieces are somewhere around his workshop.
- A recent fire burned down a nearby tavern. A distraught bard asks the party to venture into the wreckage to retrieve his belongings. Among those belongings are the lyrics, burned and separated, but still legible.

Once all of the pieces of the lyrics have been collected, the party can venture into the crypt. Where the crypt is located and how the party gains access is up to the DM. See the “Customizing This Puzzle” section for considerations when adjusting and running this encounter.

There are three important aspects to piecing the lyrics together correctly. First, each verse should be made whole by pairing together two lines of two. The key clue towards doing this successfully will be the rhymes within the lyrics. The final words of the second and fourth lines of each verse will rhyme. This part should be fairly straightforward as there are only six possible rhymes. Once the group realizes the rhymes within the pattern, pairing them together should be easy.

The next part is making sure that within each verse, the pairs of lines are in the proper order. This may be a bit trickier than the first step, but the story told by the lyrics should provide a logical order of how events play out, even within the same verse. There is also a pattern—the first part of each verse begins with either a recount of how many heroes are left or a transition to the next part of the adventure. Similarly, the second part of each verse is typically when one of the heroes dies.

The final piece of the puzzle involves putting the verses in the proper order. Clues include counting down how many heroes remain alive. The second, third, and sixth verses can be put into position using this type of clue. The fourth verse mentions “those that survived,” so it cannot be the first verse, since it implies more than one has died at this point. The fifth verse also implies several have died previously. This leaves the first one as the only verse that doesn’t mention how many remain alive or hint at previous deaths.

The players can use these three types of clues to discover the proper sequence of the words. Placing the pieces of the lyrics in the correct order forms the complete song:

These heroes and friends met untimely ends
As they looked for the scepter of gold
The tiefling wizard got caught in a blizzard
And died from the frost and the cold

The second to die was the rather large guy
But fell to a sword through the chest
The rest carried on and sang a sad song
In his memory though kept on their quest

Now four did remain through hardship and pain
They found what they long did seek
The thief did not make it when she tried to take it
The scent of her burnt flesh did reek

Those that survived did claim the prize
And shared it as they sought out more glory
The forest elf fought a lich by herself
And that was the end of her story

The friends carried on and tried to stay strong
At least they still had each other
The halfling bard took it twice as hard
When a vengeful gnome murdered his brother

The last one alive was glad to survive
Though thought about his lost friends often
When he passed away on one rainy day
The scepter was placed in his coffin

| Part Number | Lyrics |
|-------------|---|
| 4 | These heroes and friends met untimely ends As they looked for the scepter of gold |
| 8 | The tiefling wizard got caught in a blizzard And died from the frost and the cold |
| 2 | The second to die was the rather large guy But fell to a sword through the chest |
| 10 | The rest carried on and sang a sad song In his memory though kept on their quest |
| 6 | Now four did remain through hardship and pain They found what they long did seek |
| 9 | The thief did not make it when she tried to take it The scent of her burnt flesh did reek |
| 11 | Those that survived did claim the prize And shared it as they sought out more glory |
| 3 | The forest elf fought a lich by herself And that was the end of her story |
| 7 | The friends carried on and tried to stay strong At least they still had each other |
| 12 | The halfling bard took it twice as hard When a vengeful gnome murdered his brother |
| 5 | The last one alive was glad to survive Though thought about his lost friends often |
| 1 | When he passed away on one rainy day The scepter was clutched in his coffin |

The characters discover the six sarcophagi upon entering the crypt. The carvings on the coffins represent the adventurers within. The characteristics of each should provide enough information for the players to deduce which hero is in which coffin. The Interpreting The Lyrics table provides the connection between the clues within the lyrics and the characteristics on the coffins.

With the lyrics pieced together in the proper order and the coffins identified as matching the heroes in the song, the next step is for the party to use this information to unlock the coffins and claim their prize. This is done by touching the coffin and reciting or singing its matching verse, in order.

The correct order is:

1. Female Tiefling Wizard
2. Male Goliath Barbarian
3. Female Human Rogue
4. Female Elf Druid
5. Male Halfling Ranger
6. Male Halfling Bard

As this action is performed correctly on each coffin, the ghostly spirit of each adventurer manifests itself above the coffin, stares at the character touching their

coffin, nods in affirmation, and dissipates. This event indicates that the party performed a correct step. If the group performs this action in an incorrect order, the default reaction is that nothing happens. However, a DM can optionally make an incorrect action result in undead attacking the party. See the “Raising the Stakes” sidebar for more information.

The correct activation of a coffin and acknowledgment from its spirit does not unlock the first five coffins; their remains are kept safely sealed within their graves. Upon performing this action on the sixth and final coffin, the spirit of the halfling bard makes a pushing motion, which slides the lid of his sarcophagus aside. Looking inside the coffin, the party sees the halfling’s skeletal remains and the magic artifact they’ve been seeking.

HINTS AND TIPS

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

- If the party is having trouble determining the correct order of the verses while piecing together the lyrics, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Charisma (Performance) check allows them to realize the rhyme pattern, numerical tracking of how many heroes remain alive, or the story arrangement within the words. This check can be made multiple times to reveal each clue if they are struggling to piece things together.
- Characters examining the coffins can discover that the enchanted stone appears to respond to the touch with a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check. This should guide the party towards being in contact with the coffins while trying to unlock them.
- A successful DC 12 Charisma (Performance) or Wisdom (Perception) check reminds the character that lyrics are meant to be sung or recited aloud, revealing the verbal component of the ritual required to unlock the prize.

RAISING THE STAKES

Crypts are dark and dangerous places. While the six coffins containing the heroes are the main components of the puzzle, there can be several other coffins that contain less friendly creatures. To make this encounter more tense and dangerous, the DM may introduce undead attackers as the party attempts to solve the puzzle. This can be added in a few different ways, including unleashing skeletons from surrounding coffins any time the party sings a verse out of order, having zombies rise out of the ground each time they correctly unlock a coffin, or manifesting ghosts just before the party claims the final prize.

POTION MAKER

Perplexity Rating: Hard

Hopefully, the party paid attention in potions class back in school. If they didn't, they'll wish they did! Each of the characters has an opportunity to brew a vial of *PA20* (appendix A), an extremely powerful potion that gives its drinker three hours of luck if brewed properly. *PA20* can only be consumed by the person who brewed it, so each party member has to brew their own. The devices, processes, and directions for brewing this strange and powerful potion are not straightforward, and there is always a chance that an improper action could lead to disaster!



THE PUZZLE

In front of each character is a brewing workstation with everything they need to make their potion. This includes a scroll with the directions for brewing *PA20* written by its creator, Nayte Vonner. In his arrogance, Nayte would never just write the directions in a simple format. Characters must prove they are worthy of *PA20* by solving the riddles and clues found in the directions.

All party members will be placed in front of their own brewing workstation. The workstations contain various ingredients, devices, cauldrons, and a scroll containing a recipe to craft *PA20*, an extremely powerful potion that gives the character luck for 3 hours allowing them to re-roll any saving throw, ability check, or attack roll. The potency of the potion is determined by how well they pass a few ability checks, problem solving tasks, and riddles.

The scroll with the instructions for brewing the potion and the contents of each workstation can be found in appendix H and should be shared with the players.

The process to concoct *PA20* is described in the "Scroll of *PA20* Brewing" by Nayte Vonner:

Step 1: Three cauldrons are before you, each brewing a brew. You can only use one; which will you choose? Cast iron, pewter, and even steel. Which is the best? I'll make you a deal. Think long and hard because if you are right the potion you brew can help in a fight.

Workstation Usage: Each workstation contains three cauldrons filled with water. The cauldrons are each made of a different material: cast iron, pewter, and steel. Each character is expected to choose one and place it on their burner.

Step 2: What color flame are you going to use, the colors of the rainbow can help you choose. Red, yellow, green? Even blue, indigo and violet are in this view. One color is missing; it's the flame you need. Turn your knob so your potion can feed.

Workstation Usage: The cauldron sits on its burner. On the burner is a knob that says flame color. As the knob is turned, the flame changes color. What color should it be set to?

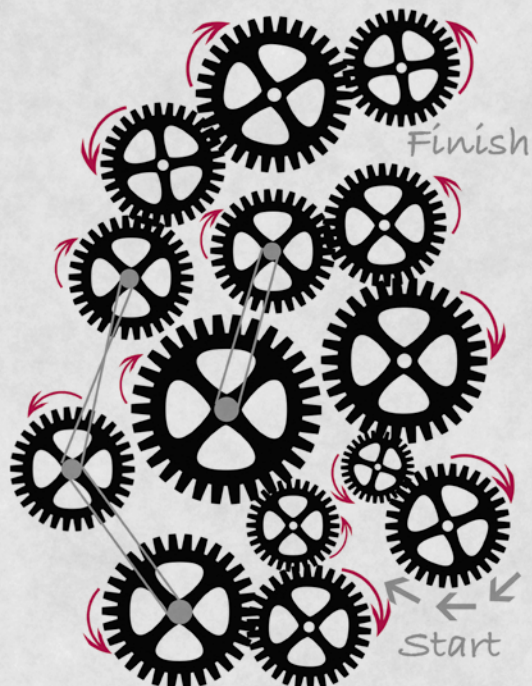
Step 3: Now is the time to add the grass. Just a few, don't you pass. Let your knowledge of nature guide you. How many blades will you do?

Workstation Usage: On the right side of the desk is a flower pot that has a small patch of grass in it. Characters must make a nature check to figure out how much to add (see "The Solution").

Step 4: Three vials lay before you labeled one, two, and three. Which do you trust to be swallowed by thee? One is dragon's blood, so strong and so fierce, perhaps this will allow the potion to pierce. The second is the blood of a vampire deceased. So cold yet pure, cursed you'll need a priest. Three is empty and waiting to be filled, would you submit your blood if it was willed? Now you must choose and pour it at will, and watch this potion begin to fill.

In a vial rack are three vials. One contains a dark red liquid labeled "dragon blood," one contains a slightly lighter red liquid labeled "vampire blood," and one is empty.

DIAGRAM 1.4: THE GEARS



Step 5: Now it is time to stir your brew, but how many times should you do? Stirring in the right direction is important, or you'll break this creation. Follow the gears here around, track them going round and round. From start to finish, you can see the direction that your stirring should be. Also count how many gears, cause that's how many time you should stir I hear.

Workstation Usage: On the back of the directions scroll, a drawing of gears is laid out. (See appendix H.)

Step 6: It has had enough, it's time to sit. Let it simmer for a bit. Using your knowledge of arcane and magic how many minutes? Too many will be tragic.

Workstation Usage: An hourglass sits waiting to be used.

Step 7: Once again three vials await, but these are empty out of the gate. Choose the right vial to pour in your brew. Choose incorrectly, it may turn to goo. Circle? Square? Or the triangle vial? You're about to complete this potion trial. Now pour into the vial that has two sides. If you've done well, you're in for a surprise.

Workstation Usage: On the left side of the table rests a circle vial, a square vial, and a triangle vial. Each is empty and has its own cork stopper. During this final step, the characters remove the cork and pour in their potion.

THE SOLUTION

Each party member will craft their own potion following Nayte Vonner's recipe. Using the table found in appendix H, the DM can track each party member's success and failures for each step. How well or poorly they do will decide their end results.

Correctly executing each step depends on a mixture of skill checks, puzzle solving, and riddles. The details below outline how each step in the process is expected to be approached and resolved:

Step 1: While deciding which cauldron to use, a successful DC 10 skill check reveals that the correct cauldron is cast iron. The skill used depends upon the approach the character takes in determining this. Characters roll an Intelligence (Arcana) check if they are familiar with magic and potion making. Intelligence (Investigation) is used if they look to examine the cauldrons to see which would work best. An Intelligence (Nature) check can evaluate the natural properties of each metal and use that to make the proper decision.

Step 2: For heating up the water, the characters will need to turn the knob until the flame is orange. This is revealed within the instructions, as it is the only color of the rainbow that is not mentioned. Any other color flame is incorrect.

Step 3: When determining how many blades of grass to add, a successful DC 11 skill check uncovers that seven blades of grass should be used in the recipe. The skill used depends upon the approach the character takes in determining this. Players can roll an Intelligence (Arcana) check if they are familiar with magic and potion making, or an Intelligence (Nature) check allowing them to know 7 is a lucky number in nature.

Step 4: Deciding what type of blood to use requires some logical thinking. Should the characters trust drinking the blood of a dragon or vampire? Consuming their own blood would be the safe choice. The correct answer is the characters using their own blood.

Step 5: For the step involving stirring, the diagram of the gears is used to determine how many stirs and which direction. They characters should stir fourteen times, the total number of gears in the puzzle. The direction should be counter clockwise, determined by following the interactive rotations of each gear. Player should examine the gear drawing in appendix H to determine these actions.

Step 6: Determining how long to let the concoction simmer requires a successful DC 12 skill check. The skill used depends upon the approach the character takes in determining this. An Intelligence (Arcana) check taps into their knowledge of magic and potions. A Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check allows characters to judge the heating time based on their experience with cooking and sanitizing using heat. A character that succeeds on this check understands that the brew needs to simmer for seven minutes.

Step 7: The final step involves choosing the correct vial to pour the potion into. This is described in the instructions by explaining the proper vial has two sides. The answer is the circle vial, its two sides being the inside and outside surfaces.

END RESULTS

The Potion Results table determines the final outcome of each recipe. Individual progress must be monitored by the DM, and the number of correct and incorrect steps must be tracked. The final result should only be revealed after all the steps are followed. The characters and players are not entirely sure whether or not they've made the correct choices until the end of the process.

POTION RESULTS

| Number of Incorrect Steps | Result |
|---------------------------|---|
| 0 | Brews a perfect vial of PA20. Will have luck for the full 3 hours. |
| 1 | Brews an imperfect vial of PA20. Will have luck for 10 minutes. |
| 2 | Brews a <i>potion of greater healing</i> . |
| 3 | Brews a <i>potion of poison</i> . |
| 4 | Brews an inert liquid. The vial is filled with brown colored water. |
| 5 | As the character is pouring the potion into the final vial, it comes to life in the form of a gelatinous cube and attacks the character. |
| 6 | As the character is pouring the potion into the final vial, the potion explodes and does 5d10 fire damage to all creatures in a 25-foot radius. |

TO TELL THE TRUTH

Perplexity Rating: Hard

There has been a murder in a small town. Residents of the town swear they saw Boris, a local food vendor, near the scene of the crime. The local wizarding police set out and arrested Boris. The only issue is somehow they've arrested three versions of him. Clearly two of them are murderous doppelgangers, and one of them is the innocent Boris. During the interrogation of the suspects, a rookie wizard's truth spell malfunctioned. Now each Boris stuck in a trance-like state and can only say one line, and only one of them is telling the truth. With the townspeople demanding justice, the wizarding police have no choice but to start the executions. Only fate can save the innocent Boris at this point. You are that fate.



THE PUZZLE

Three NPCs are about to be hanged for murder. One of them is innocent. The other two are guilty doppelgangers who took on the form of the innocent citizen. The NPCs have been put into a trance, accidentally induced when the authorities attempted to magically extract the truth from them. Each of the suspects can only say one line. Only one of them is telling the truth. The party needs to decipher the NPCs' clues and figure out which suspect shouldn't be hanged in order to save the innocent Boris.

THE SOLUTION

The NPCs awaiting execution are standing on the gallows with a noose around each of their necks. From left to right, the nooses are tracked as Noose 1, Noose 2, and Noose 3. The NPC in Noose 2 is the innocent character. We know this by listening and sorting out the one line each of them is allowed to say.

The NPC in Noose 1 says, "I'm innocent."

The NPC in Noose 2 says, "I'm guilty."

The NPC in Noose 3 says, "The person in Noose 1 is guilty."

Keeping in mind that only one NPC is telling the truth, there are three scenarios where the innocent NPC is standing in each spot. The lines spoken by each NPC can be used to determine which scenario has only one true statement, proving that the innocent man is standing in Noose 2.

SCENARIO 1: THE INNOCENT NPC IS IN NOOSE 1

We can see that there are two truths. This Scenario must be incorrect since two NPCs are telling the truth.

| Position | Status | Statement | Result |
|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Noose 1 | Innocent | "I'm innocent" | True |
| Noose 2 | Guilty | "I'm guilty" | True |
| Noose 3 | Guilty | "The person in Noose 1 is guilty" | False |

SCENARIO 2: THE INNOCENT NPC IS IN NOOSE 2

We can see that there is only one truth. This scenario must be the correct one since only one NPC is telling the truth.

| Position | Status | Statement | Result |
|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Noose 1 | Guilty | "I'm innocent" | False |
| Noose 2 | Innocent | "I'm guilty" | False |
| Noose 3 | Guilty | "The person in Noose 1 is guilty" | True |

SCENARIO 3: THE INNOCENT NPC IS IN NOOSE 3

We can see that there are two truths. This scenario must be incorrect since two NPCs are telling the truth.

| Position | Status | Statement | Result |
|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Noose 1 | Guilty | "I'm innocent" | False |
| Noose 2 | Guilty | "I'm guilty" | True |
| Noose 3 | Innocent | "The person in Noose 1 is guilty" | True |

HINTS AND TIPS

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

- With a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check, a character learns that the suspect in the 3rd noose is telling the truth.
- A successful DC 13 Intelligence check allows a character to think about this logically and suggest they should test the statements the suspects are saying with the innocent suspect standing in each noose.
- A character examining the suspects closely notices that the suspect in the middle noose looks a little bit more nervous than the other two with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

RAISING THE STAKES

To increase the intensity and danger around this encounter, the crowd becomes rowdy and exclaims that justice be served quickly. The executioner is not a patient man. If the party does not quickly decide who the innocent suspect is, the executioner will hang all three. This can be implemented mechanically by allowing no more than three total skill checks towards determining the truth. On the fourth skill check, the executioner throws the switch, and all three are hanged.

There's also an opportunity to introduce consequences if the group selects the wrong suspect. If the party chooses incorrectly, and one of the doppelgangers survives, it will grab the executioner's axe and attack the party once it has been freed from its noose.

NEED A HAND?

Perplexity Rating: Hard

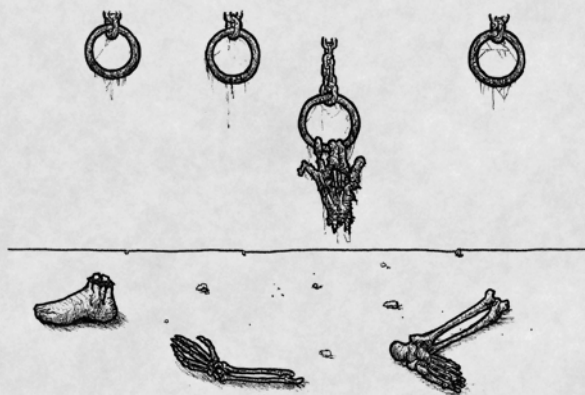
A set of chains hang from the ceiling. A deep, dark gap separates the party from a shut door set into the sheer wall on the opposite side. Hinges visible at the bottom of the door indicate that it swings down from the top, forming a drawbridge that spans the gap. Several objects litter the floor beneath the chains. Closer examination reveals these objects to be body parts of assorted shapes, sizes, and states of decomposition. A severed hand hangs from one of the chains, gripping it tightly; its weight causes the chain to drop a bit from its usual position.

THE PUZZLE

There are four chains of differing length attached to the ceiling. A severed hand, with most of its flesh still clinging to the bones, hangs from one of the chains, pulling it down noticeably. There are three detached body parts scattered along the ground:

- A skeletal arm, including the hand and the arm bone up to the elbow.
- A severed foot, skin gray and slimy, a bone jutting out from where it was once attached to an ankle.
- A skeletal leg, including the foot and leg bone up to the knee.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the chains control the drawbridge. Manipulating the chains in the proper way lowers the drawbridge and allows the party to cross the chasm. The severed hand clinging to the chain should be an indicator that the party should use

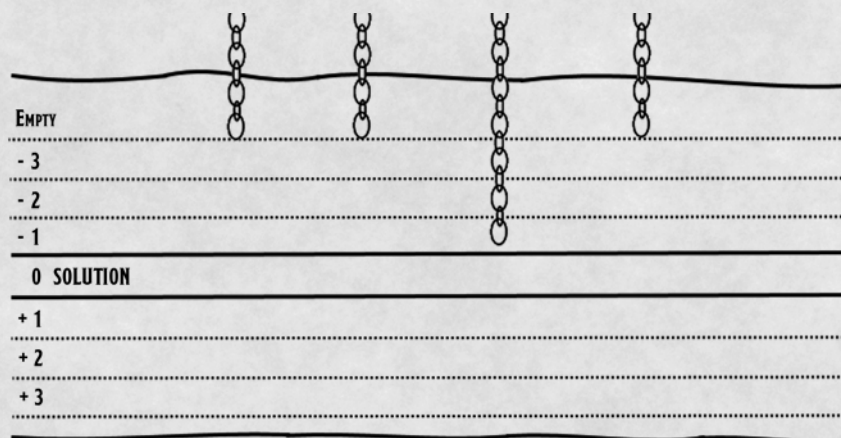


the other body parts on the remaining chains. If this does not occur to the group naturally by observing the scene, a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) check allows them to draw that conclusion.

THE SOLUTION

Solving this puzzle requires all four of the chains to be set at the same position by hanging the various body parts from them. When all four of the chains are evenly pulled, the mechanism activates and lowers the drawbridge across the chasm.

DIAGRAM 1.5: CHAIN POSITIONS AND ARRANGEMENT



Positioning the chains properly relies on understanding the relationship between the chains and the body parts. Each chain has a specific amount of resistance. Each body part weighs a unique amount. That means there is one and only one combination of body parts on chains that makes all the chains level. The characters solve this mostly through trial and error, though close observation of how the chains react to each body part gives them clues.

There are four chains, which will be referred to as A through D from left to right. Each chain has eight possible positions. The first position is the topmost position, which each chain assumes when there are no body parts hanging from it. The final position is the bottom position near the ground, which a chain could enter when the heaviest body part is hung on the chain with the least resistance.

When the party first approaches the encounter, chains A, B, and D will be in the highest possible position. Chain C is the one with the severed hand attached and is hanging down three notches, in the fourth position. Refer to appendix I to better visualize the chains and positioning.

There are eight positions available for each chain. The first position is the “empty” position when nothing is attached to the chain. The remaining seven positions indicate how far above or below the target position each chain is situated. To visualize this and track the positioning of each chain, conceptualize the positions as a number line with three positions on the negative side, three on the positive side, and zero in the middle. See diagram 1.5 for reference.

The solution requires all four chains to be arranged in the zero (neutral or middle) position. A chain reaches this position when the body part matching its resistance is placed onto it. If the body part’s weight is lower than the chain’s resistance, then the chain is positioned higher than the neutral position or in the negative portion of the number line, by an amount of slots equal to the difference between the two. If the body part’s weight is greater than the chain’s resistance, then the chain will be positioned lower than the neutral position, or in the positive portion of the number line, by an amount of slots equal to the difference between the two.

The following table demonstrates the solution and matching body part weights and resistances:

| Chain Order | Proper Body Part | Weight/Resistance |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| A | Severed hand | 4 |
| B | Severed foot | 6 |
| C | Skeletal arm | 5 |
| D | Skeletal leg | 3 |

The following tables indicate the chain positioning for each possible combination:

| Chain Order | Attached Body Part | Body Part Weight | Chain Resistance | Chain Position |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| A | Severed hand | 4 | 4 | 0 (Solution) |
| B | Severed hand | 4 | 6 | -2 |
| C | Severed hand | 4 | 5 | -1 |
| D | Severed hand | 4 | 3 | +1 |

| Chain Order | Attached Body Part | Body Part Weight | Chain Resistance | Chain Position |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| A | Severed foot | 6 | 4 | +2 |
| B | Severed foot | 6 | 6 | 0 (Solution) |
| C | Severed foot | 6 | 5 | +1 |
| D | Severed foot | 6 | 3 | +3 |

| Chain Order | Attached Body Part | Body Part Weight | Chain Resistance | Chain Position |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| A | Skeletal arm | 5 | 4 | +1 |
| B | Skeletal arm | 5 | 6 | -1 |
| C | Skeletal arm | 5 | 5 | 0 (Solution) |
| D | Skeletal arm | 5 | 3 | +2 |

| Chain Order | Attached Body Part | Body Part Weight | Chain Resistance | Chain Position |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| A | Skeletal leg | 3 | 4 | -1 |
| B | Skeletal leg | 3 | 6 | -3 |
| C | Skeletal leg | 3 | 5 | -2 |
| D | Skeletal leg | 3 | 3 | 0 (Solution) |

HINTS AND TIPS

For players having trouble solving this puzzle, the following clues can be provided by the DM:

- Characters examining and picking up the body parts recognize that they each have a different weight to them with a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine or Perception) check.
- If the party is having trouble realizing that the chains all must be level to lower the drawbridge, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals this mechanism.
- After attaching several body parts to different chains and watching the movements, a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check divulges the requirement of hanging a specific body part on its matching chain.

INCREASING THE CHALLENGE

For a more difficult challenge, the DM can add more body parts to the scene. There are still only four chains, but including additional body parts increases the number of possible combinations, making the solution harder to find. These body parts can be of the same weights or different weights from the body parts required for the solution. Adding more body parts of the same weight means the group is more likely to find a match on the appropriate chain, though they are also more likely to find a mismatched body part on the other chains. Adding body parts of different weights means different results to process.

For a DM who really wants to take this to another level, more chains can be added, and more positions can be added to each chain. A puzzle containing six chains, with twelve positions each, and twenty body parts to sort through will challenge even the most intelligent and seasoned players.



THE ADVENTURES

While the puzzles presented can be placed into any campaign, this section presents two original adventures that provide story and context for those encounters. Each adventure can be run as a standalone experience or be placed within a larger campaign. The encounters 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.

Where Heroes Lie begins as the party assists with the resolution of a crime where the guilty party is not easily identifiable. From there, the motives of the crime unlock the secrets to a seemingly impenetrable tomb that holds a powerful magic item.

The Lost Lantern of Leonora calls on the heroes to assist with an ancient threat that has resurfaced after many years. A local leader has discovered an artifact from the past that can thwart that threat, but the potent item has been hidden away to keep it out of reach of those who would misuse it.

WHERE HEROES LIE

Sometimes the heroes do achieve their goals, but nothing lasts forever. Mortality is a sad truth of life, but some legends do persist through time. Songs, stories, poems,

and folk tales all serve the purpose of keeping the history alive and remembering the brave deeds of those who came before.

In this adventure, a foiled theft carried out by unusual suspects leads to a treasure hunt that delves into the history of heroes from the past. A crypt filled with puzzles and traps reveal verses to a poem that recounts their deeds. That poem holds the key to unlocking the tombs and claiming a prize meant to be passed on to the next group of worthy heroes.

BACKGROUND

An adventuring party known as the Last Chance Companions became well-known in some regions for their brave escapades and bold exploits. One of their most famous adventures was delving deep into a dangerous dungeon to recover the *Golden Scepter of the Ancients*, a powerful artifact lost for centuries. This was quite possibly their crowning achievement and their most prized possession.

As sometimes happens with heroes, not all of them survived the search for the scepter. Some lost their lives during the quest. While those that did find it celebrated the extraordinary accomplishment, they continued to tempt fate. The idea of a quiet life of peace was boring to them. As their adventures continued, their skills began





to fade. One by one, the Last Chance Companions saw their lives slip away.

The Last Chance Companions had planned for this eventuality. They made arrangements to all be buried in the same crypt, along with the scepter. The crypt would be protected by a variety of locks, traps, and puzzles. Only the most worthy adventurers would be able to locate the crypt, find the key, solve the puzzles, assemble the clues, and claim the scepter as their own.

An attempted robbery in a nearby town sets this adventure in motion. By the end, the party will find the crypt of the heroes and recover the *Golden Scepter of the Ancients*.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The local authorities respond to a theft in town. The town hall is broken into, and the *staff of dragon's breath* is stolen. While the guards quickly recover the stolen staff and some other interesting items, they are confused when three versions of the prime suspect are apprehended.

After the mystery of the three thieves is solved and the innocent man's life spared, the group takes a closer look at the items recovered during the robbery. The pieces of paper appear to be parts of a song or poem—potential clues towards why the thieves were after the staff.

The staff and clues lead the adventurers to the dragon temple, a mysterious structure that is rumored to hold great treasure, but none have penetrated and lived to talk about it. With the aid of the *staff of dragon's breath*

and some creative thinking, the party gains access to the temple.

The temple houses the crypt of the Last Chance Companions and, with them, the *Golden Scepter of the Ancients*. However, several puzzles stand between the party and unlocking the crypt. Solving the puzzles reward additional pieces of the poem, and piecing together the poem holds the key to unlocking the crypt and claiming the scepter.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This particular adventure is one where timing is everything, so the hooks to bring the party into it are going to be based upon them being in the right place at the right time.

JUST PASSING THROUGH

This connection is perfect for inserting this adventure as the party travels from one place to another in the larger scheme of things. They stopped here to rest and resupply. Then, chaos erupts and they find themselves in the middle of things.

HERE FOR... SOME REASON

Alternatively, the party could have a good reason for being here. That reason is largely up to the DM, but could be a quest contact, a relative to visit, a faction contact, or a shop that sells a rare item the party seeks. They could have come to this town for any variety of reasons, and now that they are here, things get interesting.

AN UNUSUAL CRIME

When citizens report a break-in at the city hall, the town guards respond quickly. Witnesses saw a local food vendor, Boris Bacla'va, fleeing the scene. The authorities recover the staff and two cryptic notes stashed in a nearby alley. The guards also capture Boris and bring him to the local prison. However, what seems like an open and shut case soon becomes much more complicated as three separate guard patrols bring in three versions of Boris.

Among the guards is a student studying wizardry who attempts to magically extract the truth from the three suspects. However, the spell misfires and places the suspects in a trance, leaving them unable to speak more than a single line each. The spell attempting to extract the truth has affected them differently, and the guards can not understand how to identify the real Boris.

The captain of the guards is reluctant to attempt another magical solution after the first one backfired. They are not inclined to trust locals who may have a bias—good or bad—towards Boris. When the guards begin to search for visitors they consider trustworthy to help unravel the mess, they identify the party as a potential solution.

This encounter unfolds as described in the “To Tell the Truth” puzzle. Please reference that puzzle for the details on how this scene develops.

When the party successfully identifies Boris and sets him free, focus switches to the items found during the robbery. The *staff of dragon's breath* was taken from the city hall, but two notes were also found with it. See part numbers 1 and 2 in appendix G for the words written on each note.



The captain of the guard helps the party make the connection. The *staff of dragon's breath* has long been rumored to be the key to entering the dragon temple located to the southwest of town. The staff has been a prized possession of the town for as long as anybody can remember, so it wasn't freely available for treasure hunters to use to try to enter the temple. However, the notes may be another part of the overall puzzle. Fearing that additional thieves may come for the staff, the captain agrees to let the party borrow it and explore its connection to the temple.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, making the connection between the *staff of dragon's breath*, the two notes, and the dragon temple can be something that plays out over the course of several social interactions. These interactions can happen within the town itself over a short time, or occur during an extended length of time as the party travels around the world.

Similarly, while the adventure as written has all the pieces of the poem placed within the temple itself, those too can be spread throughout the realms in order to extend and expand the reach of this adventure. By dispersing the clues across distance and time, the underlying story becomes a bit more mysterious, and the final payout feels more rewarding to the players.

The group is given a map leading to the temple. If the DM chooses, random encounters may be used during their journey to the location. Reaching the temple segues into the Dragon Temple puzzle. Once the adventurers solve that puzzle, they gain access to enter the temple.

THE CRYPT

As the group enters the temple, read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk through the doorway to the temple, a set of stairs leads down into the darkness. After descending, you face a long hallway that is lit by torches spread evenly on all walls. On each side of the hallway is three doorways, evenly spaced apart. At the end of the hallway, 75 feet ahead, is a large metal gate.

At the end of the hallway is the actual crypt containing the coffins where the heroes lie. The six rooms adjoined to this corridor each contain a puzzle that award pieces of the poem as well as unlock the gate guarding the final crypt. The party may attempt the puzzles in any order, but they must solve all six in order to gain access to the crypt.

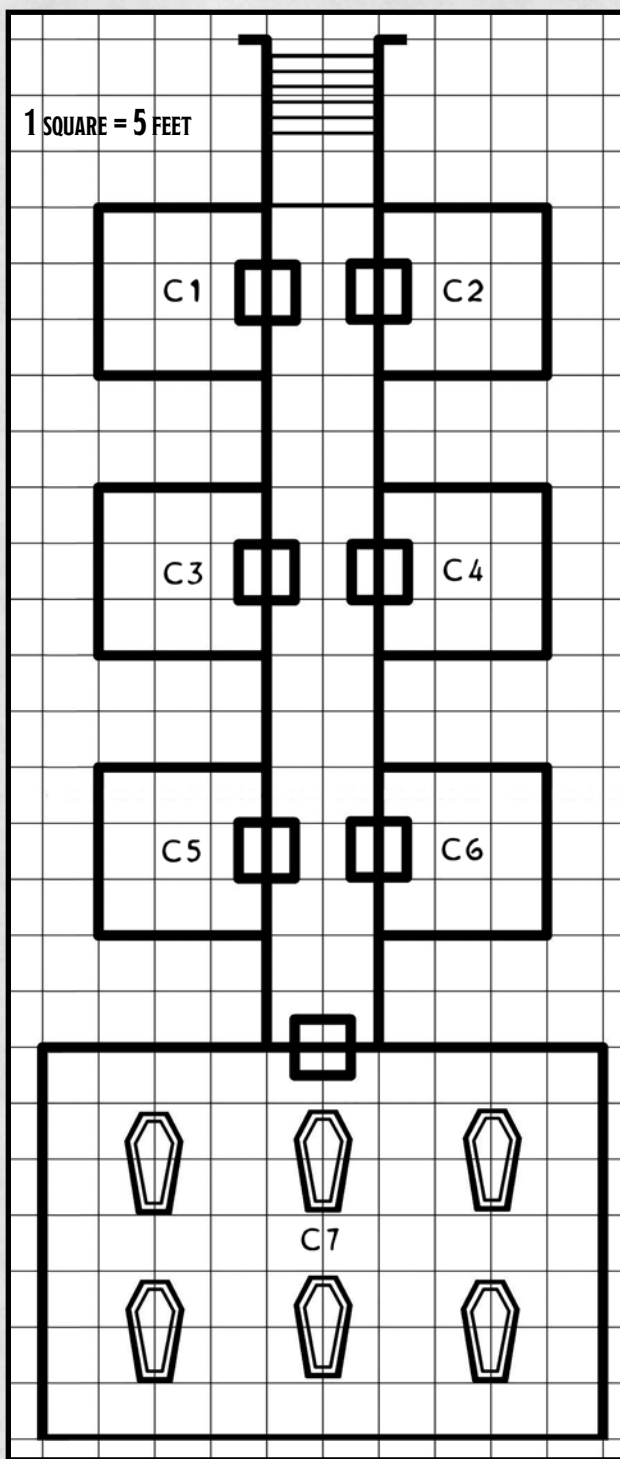
Each of the rooms labeled in map 2.1 is associated with a specific puzzle. The labels reference these puzzles, and the text for each will describe modifications to the encounters and the rewards once they solve each. See appendix J for the player version of this map.

C1. NEED A HAND

This puzzle is modified in that there is no drawbridge present. The chains hang from the ceiling, and the body parts are scattered about.

Solving this puzzle results in two additional chains dropping from the ceiling. The chains each have a hook

MAP 2.1: THE HEROES CRYPT



on the end. On the hooks are pieces of the poem, items 3 and 4 in appendix G.

C2. THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

With this puzzle, there is no artist present in the crypt. Instead, a note is nailed on the wall between the two paintings. The note reads, "When all the differences you see, worthy of the prize you shall be." The party must identify all ten differences between the two paintings by touching them on the canvas.

When this puzzle is solved, a stone in the floor in front of each painting pops open. Lifting the stones reveal small compartments beneath the floor. In the compartments are pieces of the poem, items 5 and 6 in appendix G.

C3. PUNCH BOARD

There are no changes to this puzzle. It can be run as explained in the original description. The reward found in the appropriate hole is a piece of the poem, item 7 in appendix G.

C4. THE SKELETON COURT

This puzzle can be run as written. When the group solves this puzzle, all three skeletons open their mouths, and pieces of paper emerge from each. These are items 8, 9, and 10 in appendix G.

C5. POTION MAKER

Solving this puzzle leaves the group with a final potion. The character who drinks the potion has their vision modified with a strange purple filter. The filter allows them to see a previously invisible chest stashed in the corner of the room. Inside is a piece of the poem, item 11 in appendix G.

C6. WATER WEIGHT

For this puzzle, the setup is the same. However, when the gate opens, instead of it being a doorway that allows the party to advance, it reveals an alcove built into the wall. Within the alcove is a piece of the poem, item 12 in appendix G.

C7. TALES FROM THE CRYPT

The party must have solved all the previous puzzles before the gate into the crypt slides open. The door to the crypt is sealed with powerful magic and cannot be opened by magical or mechanical means.

Piecing together the poem and solving the final puzzle will reward the group with the item they seek, the *Golden Scepter of the Ancients*.

CONCLUSION

Having claimed the scepter, the party has proven themselves worthy to carry on the legacy of the Last Chance Companions. If they return the *staff of dragon's breath* to the town they borrowed it from, they are welcomed as heroes for having conquered the mystery of the dragon temple. Should they decide not to return the *staff of dragon's breath*, it is likely that they will soon find themselves with a bounty on their heads for its theft.

Possession of the scepter might come with its own set of problems, as the original owner or new potential owners may come seeking it now that it is out in the world.

THE LOST LANTERN OF LEONARA

A powerful artifact was hidden away decades ago to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. Now, a new threat is rising, and that artifact may hold the only hope for defeating it. It will take more than bravery and strength to recover the artifact, as several puzzles have been placed to guard its resting place. Only a group of adventurers with wits as sharp as their swords have a chance to recover the item and save the region from certain doom.

The Lost Lantern of Leonara is an adventure designed for a party of four to six 4th-level characters. It can be scaled up for higher level characters by following the guidelines in the "Scaling the Puzzle Difficulty" section found in the Introduction.

BACKGROUND

Lady Gelabri is the Mayor of the town of Goodmeadow located in the kingdom of Amn. Strange occurrences in the region have caught her attention. Sudden eclipses of the sun have cast shadows over fields of crops for hours. Entire sections of ancient forests have shriveled up and died. Nocturnal creatures have been seen roaming the countryside in broad daylight. Gigantic burning pyres have suddenly been snuffed out with no apparent reason.

Lady Gelabri has contracted local explorers and scholars to investigate. She has personally examined many books looking for clues as to the cause for these abnormalities. After weeks of exploration, study, and experiments, the investigators have all agreed upon a single conclusion: the Dimness has returned.

The Dimness last appeared two centuries ago and hadn't been seen since--until now. According to history books, its source was traced to demonic activity in the Underdark. Adventurers far and wide came to the region to assist with stopping the spread of Dimness, but nothing worked. Adventurers that didn't perish in their attempts to stop it were touched by the curse and haunted by terrible nightmares for the rest of their lives.

When a wizard of little renown came to investigate, most thought she would fail and perish as so many before her. What they didn't realize was Leonara Remsen was uniquely suited to deal with this threat. Leonara came from a long line of spelunkers and miners, generations of which explored caves and mines searching for secrets and treasure. She spent years honing these skills before she began the study of wizardry. This gave her a unique perspective regarding light and shadows, and she continued to study the unique aspects of both during her study of magic.

Leonara developed a special lantern that had an extraordinary effect on shadows. The magical device not only cast its light on the shadows and made them vanish, it made them disappear permanently. Leonara was able to demonstrate this effect on some of the Dimness that had recently appeared. It was effective in removing it entirely.

The leaders of the region assembled a group of warriors to escort Leonara to the deepest depths of where the shadow originated. The party fought several nasty beings that had taken refuge within the shadow's gloom, but the lantern did its job, destroying the



Dimness as it touched it. Slowly but surely, the Dimness was completely eradicated, and the region was safe once again.

Leonara was granted an honorary title, and a statue was erected in Keczulla in her honor. However, with the power of her lantern now well known, she worried that forces of evil would try to obtain it for foul purposes. Although the shadows of the Dimness were bad, the existence of shadows within the world still played an important part in maintaining the environment and balance within nature. She decided to hide the lantern away in a vault protected by many puzzles.

Now the Dimness has returned, and Leonara's Lantern appears to be the only hope for pushing it back before its shadows—and the creatures that lurk within them—overwhelm the region. Lady Gelabri has summoned a band of brave and clever adventurers in hopes they can conquer the puzzles in the vault and recover the *Lost Lantern of Leonara*.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The Lost Lantern of Leonara begins with the party meeting with an important local figure who is desperate for help against a growing threat. She had local scholars do some research and believes she has discovered the

existence of an ancient artifact that can be used to defeat the threat.

Unfortunately, the artifact (a magical lantern imbued with extraordinary powers) is hidden in a chamber guarded by a variety of challenging and deadly puzzles. She seeks out brave and clever adventurers who have a chance of defeating the puzzles and recovering the lantern.

The first clue leads to a dormant portal hidden deep in a nearby forest. Activating that portal leads the party to the vault where the lantern is kept and leads them through a series of puzzles, each one more dangerous than the last.

When they reach the final room, the group encounters a vault guardian unlike anything they've encountered before. As time slips away, the heroes will have to act quickly and decisively or risk losing the lantern forever.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several ways to pull the characters into this particular adventure. Lady Gelabri is desperate for help, and she doesn't trust any of the people around her to be clever and strong enough to defeat the challenges of the vault.

TRAVELING THROUGH AMN

Giving the party a reason to travel through the region will allow them to experience some of these unusual circumstances firsthand. The group crosses paths with several locals, who confirm their suspicions about strange activity. The locals suggest they visit Lady Gelabri in Goodmeadow to learn more.

FACTION CONNECTION

A senior member of a faction that one of the party members belongs to sends a letter requesting aid. In the letter, the faction contact mentions that they have some agents investigating the events, and they fear this could be tied to a dangerous threat from the past. The party is to report to Goodmeadow and meet with a faction agent there for further instructions.

HISTORY WITH THE LADY

The background of one of the characters could provide a connection to Lady Gelabri herself. This could exist in the form of family relationships, familiarity with the region, a debt owed from the past, or one of many possible links between one of the characters and Lady Gelabri that could cause her to reach out to the party in this time of need.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE MAYOR

Regardless of which story hook is used, the tale begins with a meeting between Lady Gelabri and the adventuring party. She explains the sudden onset of the mysterious shadowy events, and how she and her advisors have connected these incidents to something called the Dimness, described in history books from centuries ago.

When it last occurred, the Dimness was repelled by a hero named Leonara Ramsen and the effects of a magic lantern she had created. Lady Gelabri can share as much of the background story with the party as they are interested in hearing. She wants to be fully transparent with them, and has nothing to hide.



Lady Gelabri explains that after it was used to ward off the Dimness, the lantern was hidden away in a secret vault, guarded by several puzzles and traps. Their research has pointed toward an ancient portal that lies dormant in the nearby forest. Its presence is well known, but nobody has discovered what it is for or how to activate it. She suggests that the party begin there.

THE VAULT

Finding the portal is not difficult, though Lady Gelabri will provide an escort to the location if one is requested. Upon reaching the portal, the party finds an electrical current charging a portion of the structure. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check concludes that this current has only recently appeared, perhaps an effect of the ongoing return of the Dimness.

For this encounter, please refer to the puzzle entitled “Ride the Lightning.” Once the puzzle has been solved and the portal has been activated, the characters may step through it and enter the vault.

The other side of the portal leads to a round room with doors on all sides. The portal itself opens a few feet above the ground in this room, and those passing through it drop harmlessly onto the floor. For this first room of the vault, please see the encounter “Time Will Tell.” Choosing the proper door at the correct time of day will lead the party deeper into the vault.

The next section in the vault is the room as described in the puzzle “Name That Tune.” The adventurers have to solve the musical puzzle—and avoid the pitfalls if they make mistakes—in order to advance deeper into the vault.

The rooms between “Name That Tune” and the next puzzle are connected by a long and twisting hallway.

For DMs interested in adding a bit more combat to this adventure, this tunnel is the perfect spot for an ambush.

Upon reaching the end of the tunnel and walking through an open door, the group finds themselves locked in the room described by the “Me and My Shadow” encounter. The party must defeat the shadow creature before the doors unlock and they can advance.

The next challenge that awaits them is the “Boulder Dash” encounter. They have to remain nimble and clever to avoid the boulder and grease traps that make up this perplexity.

Having survived all those impediments, the group finally reaches the final encounter. In this room, the lantern is hidden in one of many crates. “The Talking Scale” encounter awaits them here and will determine the final outcome of their journey. If the party solves the final puzzle and claims the lantern, they may return to Lady Gelabri with their prize.

CONCLUSION

Lady Gelabri is overjoyed and appreciative that the lantern has been retrieved. She rewards the party with 2,000 gold and a ring of telekinesis. She is anxious to see the lantern put to immediate use to drive back the Dimness.

The adventure continues if the party is interested in helping thwart the Dimness. Lady Gelabri trusts them to wield the lantern themselves, and directs them towards the locations where the Dimness has become most troublesome. Additional dangers and creatures surely await the heroes as they battle the strange darkness.



APPENDIX A: MAGIC ITEMS

THE LOST LANTERN OF LEONARA

Wondrous Item, legendary (requires attunement)

The lantern has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *light* (1 charge), *dancing lights* (1 charge), *branding smite* (2 charges), *guiding bolt* (1 charge), *dawn* (5 charges), *wall of light* (5 charges), *sunbeam* (6 charges), or *sunburst* (8 charges). Undead targets have disadvantage on saving throws against these spells.

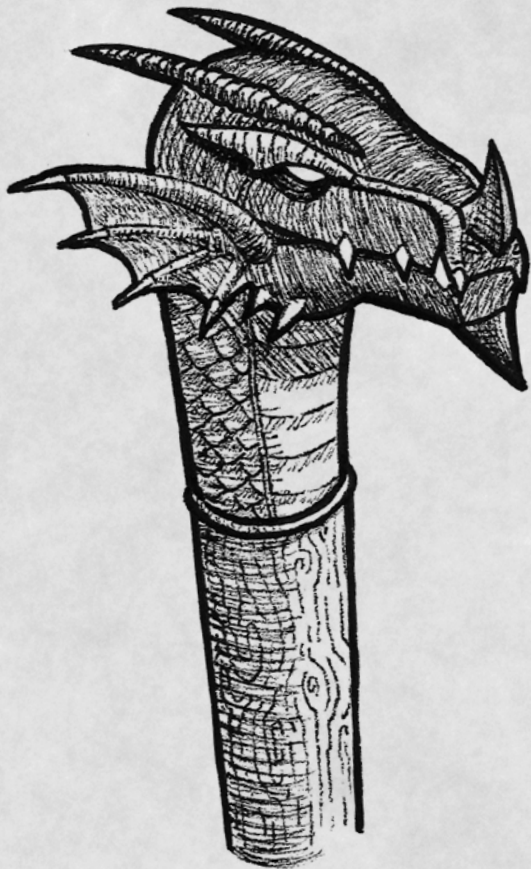
The staff regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the lantern blackens, turns to dust, and is destroyed.

MAGNIFYING GLASS OF X-RAY VISION

Wondrous item, very rare

While holding this magnifying glass, you can use an action to speak its command word. When you do so, you can see into and through solid matter for 1 minute. This vision has a radius of 30 feet. To you, solid Objects within that radius appear transparent and don't prevent light from passing through them. The vision is blocked by more than 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, 3 feet of wood or dirt, or any thin sheet of lead.

You must complete a long rest before using this item again.



THE GOLDEN SCEPTER OF THE ANCIENTS

Rod, legendary (requires attunement)

The scepter has a rounded head, and it functions as a magic mace that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. It also has the following additional properties:

Rubbing the rounded head turns it into a crystal ball that allows the user to cast *commune* allowing them to ask 3 questions and seeing the answers as visions in the crystal ball. The crystal ball needs 1d6 days to recharge before it can be used again.

PA20 POTION

Potion, very rare

The Maker: PA20 can only be consumed by the person who brewed it. It is physically impossible to drink this potion if you didn't brew it. The liquid will refuse to leave its container as if it's being stopped by an invisible barrier.

The Effect: Upon drinking this potion, you will be imbued with luck for up to 3 hours or 1 minute depending on how well the potion was brewed. Whenever you make an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you may roll an additional d20. You use this effect after the original roll, but before the outcome is revealed. You choose which of the results is used for the attack roll, ability check, or saving throw.

STAFF OF DRAGON'S BREATH

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. It also has the following additional property:

Burning Fire Breath. As an action, you smash the butt of the staff into the ground releasing a thin sheet of flames from the mouth of the dragon's head that is on top of the staff. Each creature in a 15-foot cone must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The fire ignites any flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried. This ability can be used up to 3 times per long rest.

At Higher Levels. When using this ability, add 1d6 fire damage per attuned character at levels 4, 8, 12, 16, and 20.

APPENDIX B: CREATURES

SHADOW CREATURE

Medium undead, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 58 (10d10 + 3)

Speed 0 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 16 (+3) | 5 (-3) | 16 (+3) | 1 (-5) | 6 (-2) | 1 (-5) |

Damage Immunities all damage unless vertical on a wall

Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Attach. Before the first round of combat begins, the shadow creature attaches itself to any character it chooses.

ACTIONS

Slap and Scratch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage, and the target takes 2 (1d4) necrotic damage at the start of their next turn.

Collapse. As a bonus action, the shadow may collapse into the floor, unattaching itself from its current target. It then attaches itself to a new target and positions itself in any direction.



RIDDLING RATS

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 20 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 4 (-3) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 2 (-4) | 10 (+0) | 4 (-3) |

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

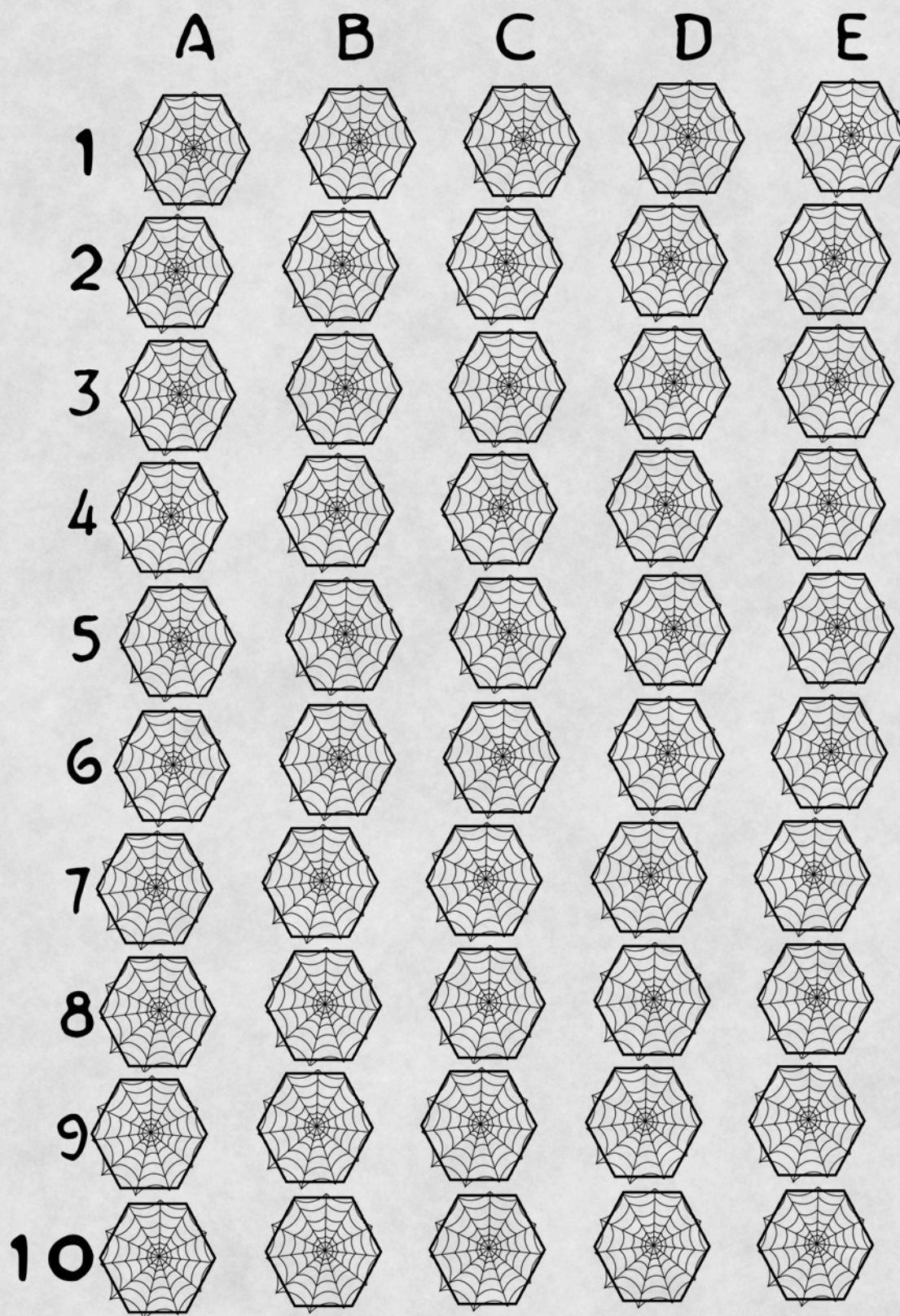
Sickly Saliva. If the rat pierces the skin on a bite attack, its saliva seeps into the blood stream of its target that causes confusion on a failed DC 8 Constitution saving throw.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.



APPENDIX C: PUNCH BOARD



APPENDIX D: THE DETAILS

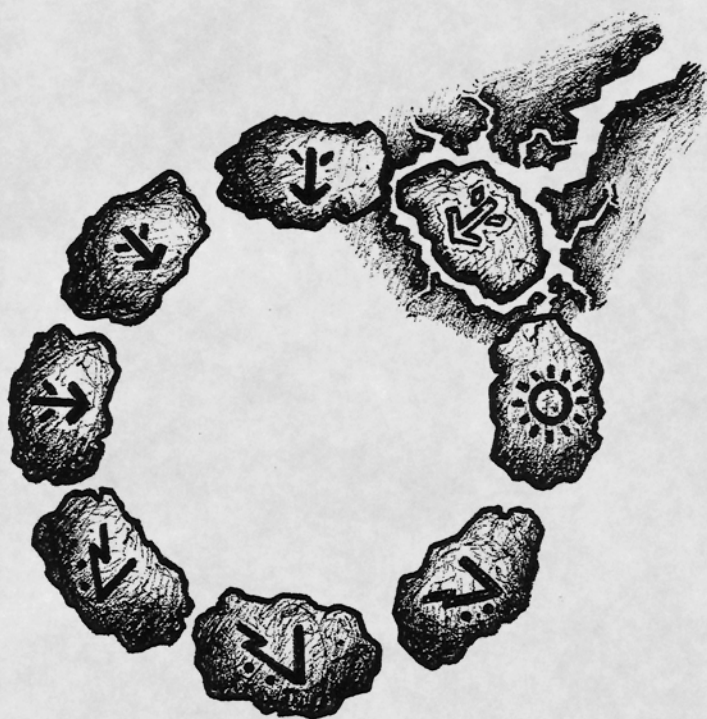




APPENDIX E: MUSICAL NOTES



APPENDIX F: THE LIGHTNING PORTAL



APPENDIX G: THE SONG OF HEROES

| Part Number | Lyrics |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | When he passed away on one rainy day The scepter was clutched in his coffin |
| 2 | The second to die was the rather large guy But fell to a sword through the chest |
| 3 | The forest elf fought a lich by herself And that was the end of her story |
| 4 | These heroes and friends met untimely ends As they looked for the scepter of gold |
| 5 | The last one alive was glad to survive Though thought about his lost friends often |
| 6 | Now four did remain through hardship and pain They found what they long did seek |
| 7 | The friends carried on and tried to stay strong At least they still had each other |
| 8 | The tiefling wizard got caught in a blizzard And died from the frost and the cold |
| 9 | The thief did not make it when she tried to take it The scent of her burnt flesh did reek |
| 10 | The rest carried on and sang a sad song In his memory though kept on their quest |
| 11 | Those that survived did claim the prize And shared it as they sought out more glory |
| 12 | The halfling bard took it twice as hard When a vengeful gnome murdered his brother |



APPENDIX H: POTION MAKING

WORKSTATION CONTENTS

- A scroll with instructions written on the front.
- The back of the scroll contains a diagram of connected gears.
- Three cauldrons filled with water, each cauldron seemingly made from a different material.
- A wooden spoon.
- A gas burner with a knob to control the flame.
- A small flower pot with a small patch of grass growing in it.
- A rack with three vials: One contains a dark red liquid labeled “dragon blood,” the second contains a light red liquid labeled “vampire blood,” and the third vial is empty.
- An hourglass with markings indicating number of minutes.
- A set of three empty glass vials: One with a triangular base, one with a square base, and one with a round base.

SCROLL INSTRUCTIONS

Three cauldrons are before you, each brewing a brew.
You can only use one, which will you choose.
Cast Iron, or Pewter, and even Steel.
Which is the best? I'll make you a deal.
Think long and hard because if you are right
the potion you brew can help in a fight.

What color flame are you going to use,
the colors of the rainbow can help you choose.
Red, yellow, green, there's even blue,
indigo and violet are in this view.
One color is missing; it's the flame you need.
Turn the knob so your potion can feed.

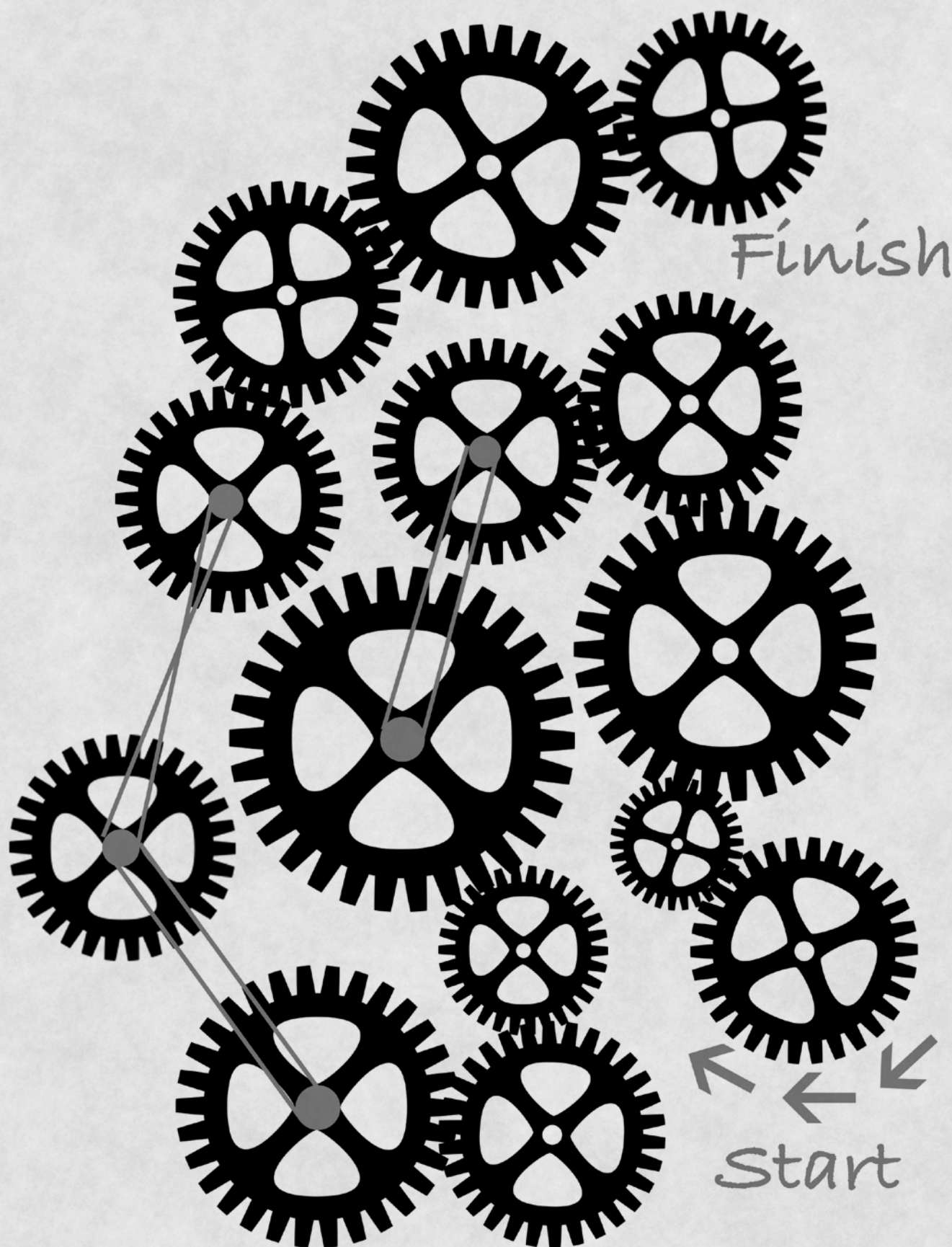
Now is the time to add the grass.
Just a few, don't you pass.
Let your knowledge of nature guide you,
how many blades will you do?

Three vials lay before you labeled one, two, and three.
Which do you trust to be swallowed by thee?
One is dragon's blood, so strong and so fierce,
perhaps this will allow the potion to pierce.
The second is blood of a vampire deceased,
so cold yet pure, cursed you'll need a priest.
Three is empty and waiting to be filled,
would you submit your blood if it was willed?
Now you must choose and pour it at will,
and watch this potion begin to fill.

Now it is time to stir your brew,
but how many times should you do?
Stirring in the right direction is important,
or you'll break this creation.
Follow the gears here abound,
track them going round and round.
From start to finish you can see
the direction that your stirring should be.
Also count how many gears
cause that's how many time you should stir I hear.

It has had enough, it's time to sit.
Let it simmer for a bit.
Using your knowledge of arcane and magic
how many minutes? Too many will be tragic.

Once again three vials await,
but these are empty out of the gate.
Choose the right vial to pour in your brew.
Choose incorrectly, it may turn to goo.
Circle? Square? Or the triangle vial?
You're about to complete this potion trial.
Now pour into the vial that has two sides.
If you've done well, you're in for a surprise.



HOW TO USE THE PROGRESS TRACKER

Place each character's name into a column. As the characters progress through the recipe, mark a check for a correct solution or an X for an incorrect solution. Then add the number of X's per each character and write the total in the Character Fails box. The Character Fail number is result that is applied to that character's concoction.

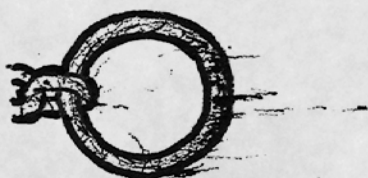
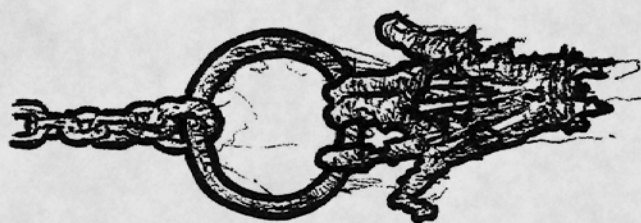
POTION RESULTS

| Number of Incorrect Steps | Result |
|------------------------------|---|
| 0 | Brews a perfect vial of PA20. Will have luck for the full 3 hours. |
| 1 | Brews an imperfect vial of PA20. Will have luck for 10 minutes. |
| 2 | Brews a <i>potion of greater healing</i> . |
| 3 | Brews a <i>potion of poison</i> . |
| 4 | Brews an inert liquid. The vial is filled with brown colored water. |
| 5 | As the character is pouring the potion into the final vial, it comes to life in the form of a gelatinous cube and attacks the character. |
| 6 | As the character is pouring the potion into the final vial, the potion explodes and does 5d10 fire damage to all creatures in a 25-foot radius. |

PROGRESS TRACKER

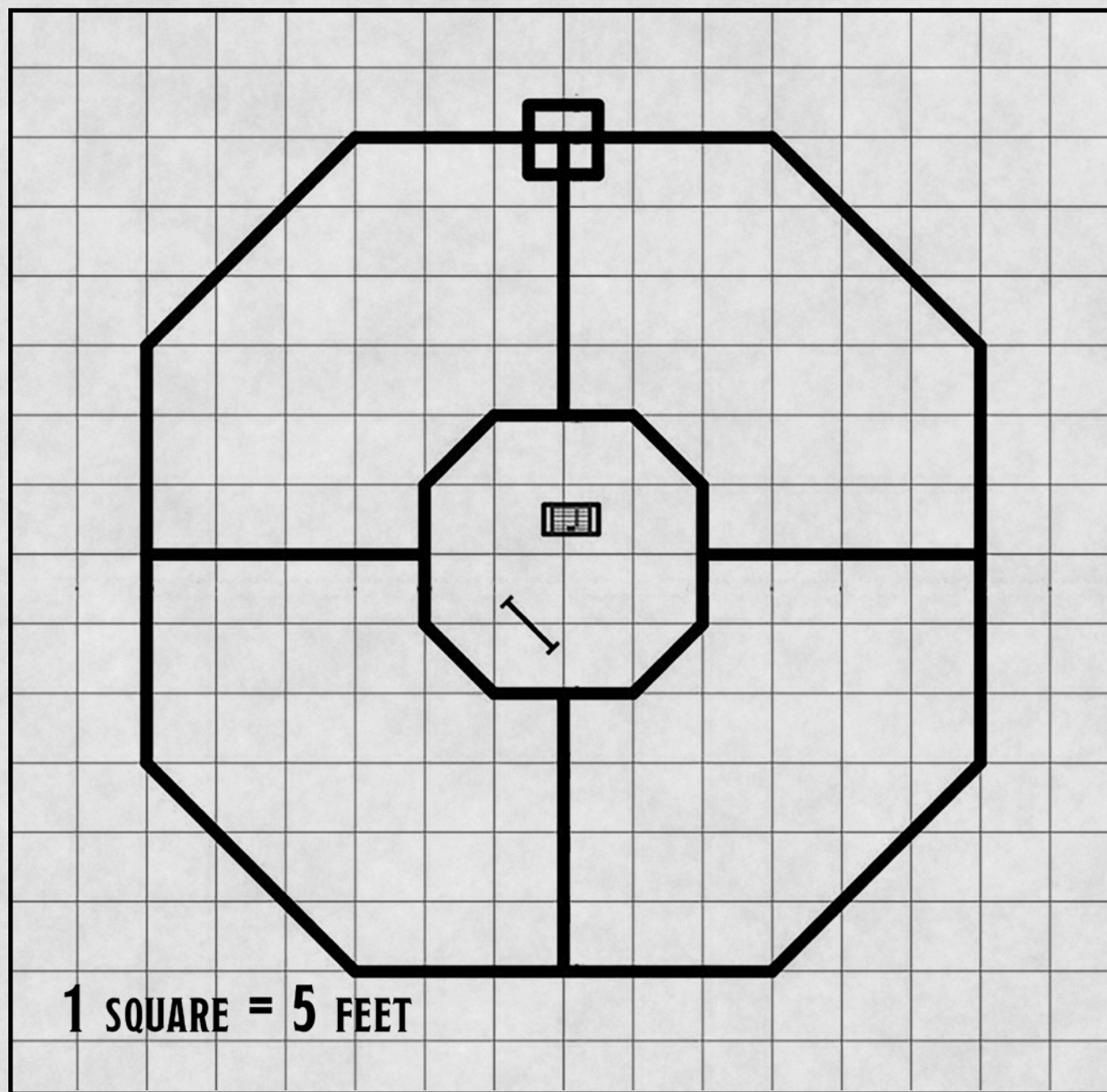
| | | Characters | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | Correct Solution | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | Cast Iron | | | | | | |
| 2 | Orange | | | | | | |
| 3 | DC11 Skill Check | | | | | | |
| 4 | Their Own Blood | | | | | | |
| 5 | 14 Counter Clockwise Rotations | | | | | | |
| 6 | DC12 Skill Check | | | | | | |
| 7 | Circle Vial | | | | | | |
| Character Fails: | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX I: NEED A HAND CHAINS

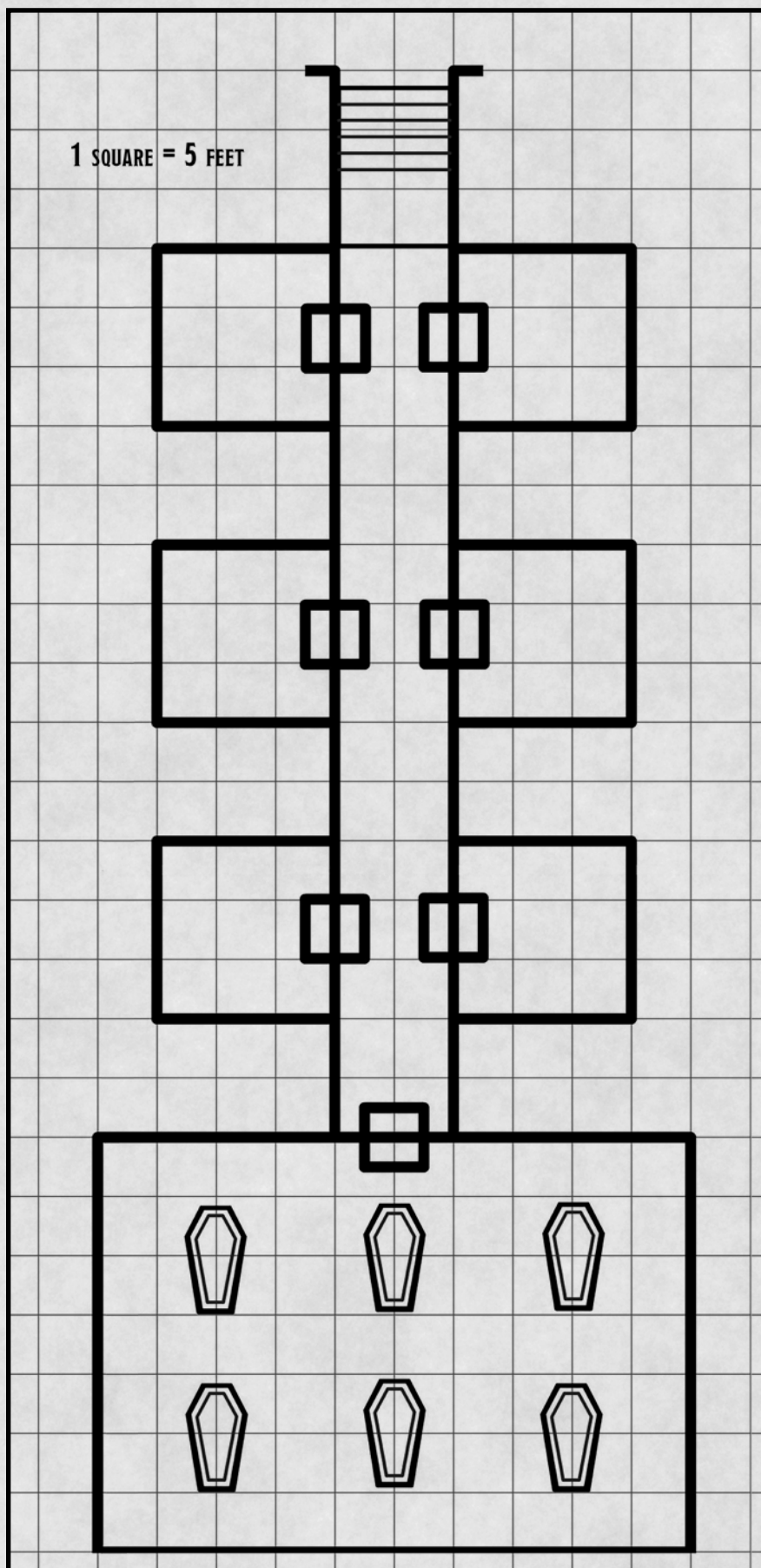


APPENDIX J: MAPS

J1. THE HARP ROOM



J2. THE HEROES CRYPT





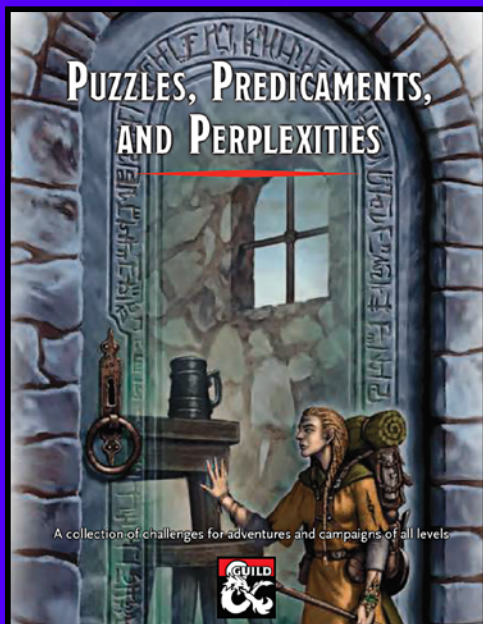
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LEFT *DEADLY*

*A clever adventurer will find
the puzzle within the puzzle,
and therein lies the true prize.*

— Rezinar Remsen

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