

GREEN DEVIL FACE

#2



Green Devil Face #2

James Edward Raggi IV, Editor, Mapper

Front Cover: Grotesque Head by M. Legrain (1878)

Back Cover: illustration from *De corporis humani fabrica libri septem*, by Andreas Vesalius (1543)

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The Green Devil Face is a classic fantasy RPG trap. It's obvious and out in the open, so no rolls need to be made to find it. It's obviously odd, so players will spend time thinking (and arguing!) about what to do about it. And when some poor sucker sticks his head inside, it's no one's fault but his own, his fate decided entirely by his own decision, without being able to blame bad luck or a crappy roll.

I've pasted a copy of the original Green Devil Face illustration to the front of my referee binder (which contains the inspirational and rules material I use when preparing adventures) to always remind myself that the best traps are left out in the open, daring the characters to come play with them.

Green Devil Face, the zine, is a community project. It is intended to provide RPG referees with game material that can be inserted as-is into their games. Detail is encouraged to give the reader the exact sense of how the author would play the trap out in-game, and of course the referee reading it is free to use that or substitute his own ideas as appropriate.

If you have a particularly original or clever trap, room, item, or tricky situation that you've used in one of your games and that you would like to share, submit it for publication in a future issue of Green Devil Face. We can't pay anything, but you keep the rights to your work, and you get to see your name in print. All contributors get a copy of the final finished product.

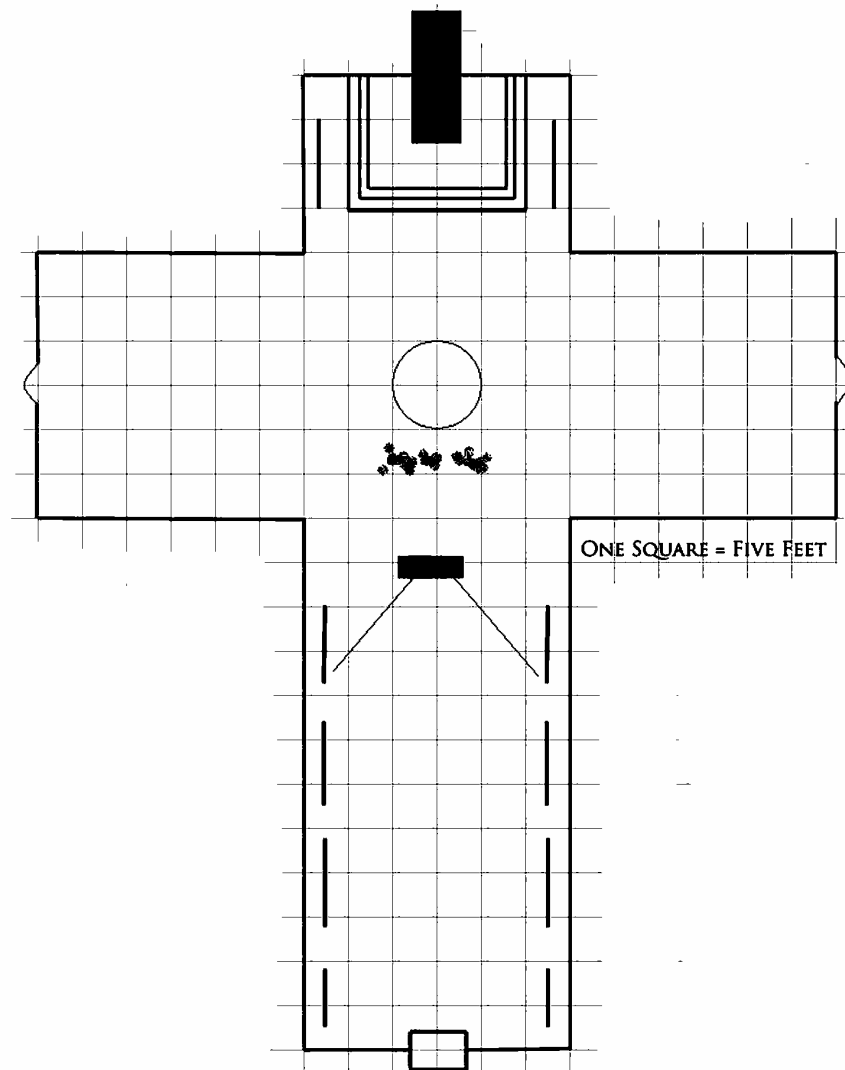
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THE EYES OF PARSIFUR AND DUNSANE

By Kent

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This room is large, the size and shape of a small church. The party enters through the south door, the foot of the cross. The floor is of sky blue obsidian which emits a pale even light no brighter than a candle. No other light whether magical or fuel based will function in this room. A number of paintings hang facing each other along the nave.

There are three powerful wizards in this room. Two are largely constrained, Parsifur and Dunsane, to their respective paintings. I do not make clear, leaving it to the referee, whether the third wizard, a miniature troll in 'disguise,' has trapped them there, is a servitor of one or both, is a motiveless malignity and opportunist, whether the two are really elsewhere, deep in the dungeon or traveling in the world of their paintings, leaving behind merely presences, or trapped awaiting rescue.

Observation is key in this room to understand what is going on. Intelligent players or characters should be encouraged to think carefully about proceedings, which are not necessarily logical but potentially dangerous and rewarding to the party. This is a kind of room where the referee has to wing it. He has to feel his way to influencing players who are role-playing cleverly with unclear hints and those who are blustering or bullying get shoved out with the garbage.

1. Towards the centre of this dimly lit room sits a doll-sized troll, one foot in height, wearing the mask of a gnome. His carrot nose pokes out through a nostril of the mask. When the party enter he stands up on his

four foot high wooden stool with great familiarity. Wielding two fifteen foot long poles or paintbrushes he begins to address simultaneously two blank canvases facing each other across the nave.

“Welcome. Take your rest or inspect my work if you have an eye for art. I am tolerant of criticism! Do not speak for a moment however I am suddenly inspired. Later, we can trade anecdotes. Silence gentlemen I beseech you. I must concentrate.” Next to the hairs on each brush are receptacles, like egg cups. In each is a single eyeball. To the west a human eye, to the east the eye of an eagle. The miniature gnome-troll begins to paint a random member of the party on each canvas. It could be the same one twice. He will take two or three rounds to complete any character sketch. When he has, the referee must make a saving throw for that character against petrification, failure resulting in imprisonment in the painting and death when the paint dries. A simulacrum instantly replaces the character either under the distant influence of Parsifur (west) or Dunsane (east). The only way to handle this convincingly is for the same player to role-play the simulacrum. This is arranged discreetly with the referee. The simulacrum has an agenda at odds with the player’s character but he *must* role-play convincingly to the best of his ability as a spy pretending to be his original character. This is the kind of play, if honest and skillful, that must be highly rewarded with experience points. If the saving throw succeeds the player is told nothing.

2. Dispel Magic along with a clear understanding of what has happened will recover a character (versus 12th level enchantment) although the troll will react in alarm, threatening with a dab o’ the brush, any who might destroy his ‘genuine artwork’ with magic. The simulacrum of the character who is about to be recovered with a spell will object to any magic being cast onto the painting with plausible argument.

3. Example of an unclear clue: The miniature gnome-troll paints the same character twice simultaneously with one attempt finishing before the other.

The character makes his save. The troll stops painting, quickly appraises the character, spits out “bah!” and *begins a new character without finishing the second attempt*. The character fails to save. The troll stops painting, quickly appraises the character, *and drops the brush corresponding to the finished figure*. He snorts in merriment and glances at his next model.

An observant player might worry he is looking for some effect on the character, but a properly played simulacrum will shrug *and side subtly with the troll*. So why would he paint the same character simultaneously if one saving throw tells all? Because both Dunsane and Parsifur may want the same character as their agent.

4. There is a pool of sky blue liquid where the nave intercepts the transept which is level with the floor and hard to see. The liquid is poisonous to the touch. The troll uses the floor beside the pool for his palette. If attacked his invulnerable stool will extend to a height of twelve feet and he will dip his brushes in the pool and have two attacks per round, no damage, save versus poison or die. Any agent-simulacra will defend him verbally and physically as far as getting the party to cease their attack.

5. If all characters survive his attempt to imprison them (remember it’s possible they will suspect nothing all the while) he will become cranky and impatient with them urging them on their way but ultimately indifferent to their presence. A persistent and charismatic player might be permitted to examine his brushes. The human eyeball is fitted with a gold coloured lens, the eagle eyeball with a silver lens. It is up to the referee to handle negotiations if they wish to extract a lens to place it in one of the hollow faces in the east and west walls of the transept. They may also acquire the lenses if they been able to subdue the troll. He will drop his brushes and dive into the pool if in danger of death. This is unlikely as he is a 12th level magic-user with the strength of a troll. The gnome mask has a insidious charming effect even on powerful characters (-4 resistance to charm spell) but this is reserved for great danger. He has grown fond of his gnomish persona and is loathe to think of the mask as a tool.

6. The West wall of the transept is made from the same blue rock as the floor and is featureless except for a depression sculpted into the wall at head height which resembles nothing more than the inside of a human

mask. A very pale transparent liquid miraculously fills the head shaped depression. On inspection it is noticed that the left eye has a small black oval hole in the stone, rimmed with gold, presumably looking out onto nothingness beyond. Any character with the guts to fit the gold lens to his left eye and plunge his head into the depression deserves what he gets. Essentially, for the length of time the player can hold his breath, the referee should without warning hand the player the referee's map of that level of the dungeon. His mind is traveling throughout the level. He must memorize what he can and when he has to breathe again he can put questions to the referee such as, "I remember a long corridor with a cross-shaped room what did I see in that room?" Response, "A tiny figure waiting on a stool holding two long poles, many paintings on the walls, the room is quite and dimly lit-" Anything he can coherently remember deserves a proportionate description. A challenge for a good player is to somehow indicate he wants to go down, down, down getting valuable information about more dangerous levels. Of course a very powerful creature in your dungeon might be able to attack this wandering spirit. When the character pulls out his head the liquid comes with him. No more exploration for anyone.

7. The East wall of the transept is identical except this time the right eye hole is very large and round and rimmed with silver. This time the player with the silver lens in place and holding his breath in the depression finds himself inside the mind of (a) a random member of the party or (b) the most interesting member of the party. Hand the player holding his breath a card:

Hold your breath.

You are inside the mind of Cugel the Clever (say).

Indicate a choice before you breathe again:

Do you want to take over his mind? 10% chance

Do you want to explore his most private secrets? 35% chance

Do you want to explore something specific in his thoughts you are aware of? 70% chance

Do you want him to admire and trust you from now on? 50% chance

Do you want him to become sexually attracted to you? 20% chance

He must read and decide with breath held. If he laughs before indicating a choice. Sorry, opportunity lost. There forever remains a 10% chance that he can read Cugel's mind, once per day.

This device might be used to expose a simulacrum which would vanish with character still trapped. A simulacrum might use it (knowing exactly what it does) to spy further into the party for greater influence but would pretend he was assaulted in some way. The liquid will not flow out onto the floor when the depression is tested by a simulacrum but will for a real character, another half clue.

8. The most northerly pair of paintings facing each other across the nave are life size portraits of men. To the west a figure with a dignity something less than that of a nobleman but more than a magistrate. A white haired man with a long face in profile. Parsifur. He wears a gold ring which under careful scrutiny does not appear to be merely painted. It can be removed with care if the party are leaving and have restored both lenses to the miniature gnome-troll he will not object. Opposite a begging monk or shepherd, balding and bearded in a grey tunic with a staff. An eagle also appears in this second painting. There is something wrong with the scale. Either the eagle is tiny or the man is a giant. *[Referee: The 'man' is a Devil of giant size. The player who habitually shows an interest in remembering details about original monsters you have created might be told he recognizes this as a type of devil and so perhaps is unlikely to be Dunsane. The eagle is Dunsane]* A real feather may be removed as above. Use your imagination as to the powers of ring and feather but they should tie in with a future adventure with Parsifur or Dunsane. Any attempt to damage one of these paintings will prompt the troll to remove his mask and attack the entire party with full fury. I would not fancy the party's chances.

9. The Devil, a shepherd of men, has been improperly imprisoned. Only the eagle on this painting may be safely scrutinized. The Devil can reach out as far as his elbows. He has hill giant strength and will hold anyone fast with one hand while he attempts to gouge out their eyes with the other. A bend bars roll is needed to struggle free. The arms are AC 4, Hit Points 40, 10% cumulative chance to gouge while held.

10. On the dais is a plinth of green marble long enough to lie on. The plinth continues into a recess in the north wall. A depression in the plinth, the size of a human head, is filled with blood, which cannot be drained. An inscription carved in the recess says simply,

Wouldst see more?
Then cast thy lustrous jelly.

Assuming both lenses are worn a head plunge results in, d20:

- (a) referee describes for the player something deep, hidden and awe-inspiring taking place in his campaign. Have it carefully written in a neat paragraph. 19, 20.
- (b) gain infravision, x-ray vision, and ability to metamorphose into an eagle. 17, 18.
- (c) gain ability to metamorphose into an eagle. 13 – 16.
- (d) gain x-ray vision. 8 – 12.
- (e) gain infravision. 3 – 7.
- (f) clothes fall at like a husk as body vanishes to appear naked in either Parsifur's or Dunsane's (immediately chased by the devil) painting. Character can move in a grotesque 2-dimensional parody of his former self. No sounds are transmitted between painting and room. Probably best to go seek out the wizard. 2.
- (g) both eyes impaled on spikes. 1.

The Simulacrum

In this final note I can't but tread on the referee's toes. Ideally the campaign environment would suggest an identity for Parsifur and Dunsane and from there a motivation for the simulacrum if the trap has sprung. I now present an example, with the reminder that the miniature gnome-troll *could* be interpreted as responsible for trapping the two wizards, though the motivation for a simulacrum would be darker in that case.

Parsifur and Dunsane are two wizards who worked together to devise a method of travel into the past to explore glorious ancient civilisations but specifically to learn from the Neurosolars, the preeminent magic-users of legend, a method for travel to worlds of their own imagining. This involves the careful preparation of a painting as a gateway to the imagined world. The quality of the painting colours the experience of travel in that world so the two wizards were soon hunting for an artist with preternatural talent. Hence the miniature gnome-troll, painter, servitor, familiar and guardian of the gateways when Parsifur and Dunsane are traveling.

In this case the motivation of a simulacrum is that of a henchman clearing the environment around this room of all wandering nuisances and identifying any powerful presences whose curiosity is drawing them to the room with unpredictable consequences. A party of adventurers poses a dilemma: more recruits or potential room thrashers?

So for example a character captured previously in some other painting in the room, now a simulacrum and in league with the troll, returns to the room. His behaviour and the fact he is already in a painting might present a clue.

The simulacrum will essentially seem to be more reckless in the dungeon and constantly worry about the integrity of the room. The referee may want to distinguish between a simulacrum under the distant influence of Parsifur or Dunsane.

DOPPELGANGER TRAP ROOM

by Akseli Envall
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The Northern Part (Dark)

40' x 40' room

Exits: one door in the middle of the eastern wall, going somewhere

A secret door in the southern wall, 10' from the west, going to the southern part

This room has a Continual Darkness spell cast on it, so it is totally dark. It is also completely empty save two doppelgangers. Their forms now resemble their latest two victims, probably that of two thieves. They won't exit the room; instead they wait patiently for any victims to step in. Then they attack, trying to grapple/wrestle those victims down. If successful, they will then knock the victim out with saps that they are carrying (a grappled-down victim must save against death ray to avoid losing consciousness, or use any other system to resolve this instead). Then they will exit to the southern part through the secret door, carrying their victim with them.

The Secret Southern Part (Illuminated)

20' x 20' room

Exits: one secret door in the middle of the northern wall, going to the northern part

This room has Continual Light cast in it (it won't leak to the northern room when the secret door is opened, nor will the darkness leak in here). It is a foul room, designed for torture and imprisonment of the victims of the doppelgangers. All manners of manacles and implements of causing pain lie around. The only time the doppelgangers come here is when they gain a new victim. They'll lock the unconscious victim in the manacles. One doppelganger will start torturing the victim. The other can then change its shape to that of the victim, as the light will enable them to see the victim's features. Then it will exit back again to the northern dark room, pretend to be the victim rejoining the party. It will use all manner of bluff and guile possible to make the party believe that it is the lost party member, and then it will try to lure the party to their deaths in the dungeons. The torture will ultimately kill the victim. If the victim was a NPC/henchman, this all will be easy, but if it was a PC, you can take the player to another room, explain the situation to him/her and make that player then play the part of the doppelganger pretending to be the PC (even if said PC is still alive).

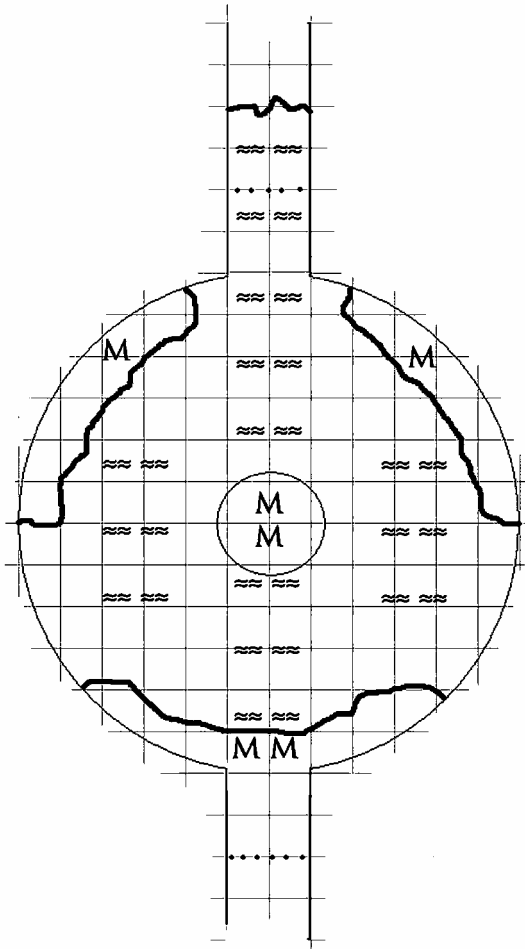
MUMMY TAR TRAP ROOM OF DEATH

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Round room, diameter of 60'

Exits: one 10' wide corridor going north from the middle

one 10' wide corridor going south from the middle



This trap is designed so that the most likely entry of the adventuring party is from the north, so that the trap will be most effective that way, but it also works if the adventurers are coming from the south. This room is extremely complicated so I've tried to describe it in parts.

Silence spell:

This room has a permanent silence spell cast in it. The spell also affects the last 15' of the southern corridor leading to it.

Tar-filled parts and walkways:

Most of the room is filled with a one-foot thick layer of tar. The tar layer also comes to the northern corridor, filling the last 20' of it. Any creature wading through the tar has its speed slowed down to only 10' per round. If the creature cannot see (for example due to a Continual Darkness spell, more of that later), the speed is only 3' per round. There are three walkways of solid stone going in the room above the tar, making faster travel possible. All of them line along the walls: they are 5' wide. If you visualize the round room as a clock, with north being "12", the walkways can be described fairly easily:

The first walkway goes from "9" to halfway between "11" and "12" (so that there is 5' of tar between where the walkway ends and where the northern corridor begins).

The second walkway is the mirror image of that, going from "3" to halfway between "12" and "1" (so that there is 5' of tar between where the walkway ends and where the northern corridor begins).

The third walkway is in the south, "7" to "5". Thus the southern corridor (which comes to "6" is not filled with tar, but connects to the walkway instead.

In addition to the three walkways, there is a dry, round "island" in the middle of the room (stone rising above the tar, completely similar to the walkways). The island has a diameter of 15'.

Portcullises and locking mechanisms:

There are two portcullises in the corridors leading to the room. Both are located 10' from the room. They are in the ceiling in a horizontal position, and anyone with wits enough to inspect the ceiling will be able to see them. Anyone casually passing through the corridors has a 5% chance of seeing them (elves have a 10% chance). The portcullises have ropes attached to them. The ropes go in the ceiling through metal loops. Each portcullis has 2 of these ropes attached to it. The ropes go to the room itself, the western ropes turning

curvingly west, the eastern ropes turning curvingly east. They come down to the floor after 10' in the room: if you compare this to the walkways, you will notice that these locations coincide with the walkways. So, a creature standing on the walkway has access to these ropes hanging from the ceiling. Pulling from these ropes sends the portcullis they're attached to coming crashing down. Anyone in the way must dodge it by making a saving throw against wands (or any other similar mechanism) or take 5d6 damage. If the saving throw succeeds, the victim can decide, to which side of the portcullis he/she is jumping. Thus, the portcullises are effective enough in crushing people, but they are really meant to lock people in the room. A descended portcullis might be lifted up using bare strength (of perhaps 3 PC's/monsters), but it will take at least 1 full turn (10 minutes).

Mummies:

There are 6 mummies in the room. One is waiting in the "first walkway" in the northwest, holding the western rope of the northern portcullis, ready to send the northern portcullis down. Another one is waiting in the "second walkway" in the northeast, holding the eastern rope of the northern portcullis, ready to send it down as well. Two are in the "island" in the middle of the room. Two are in the "third walkway" in the south, one in the east end, one in the west end. They are holding the ropes attached to the southern portcullis, ready to seal that way. It takes only one pull to send a portcullis down: each portcullis has thus an "extra mummy" to pull it, just as an emergency measure. All of the four mummies that are holding the ropes are not visible from the corridors. The two in the middle "island" are, but by the time that they are in lantern light range, it's too late to the PC's anyway. The four mummies holding the ropes are all facing the mummies on the island, waiting for their hand signals to pull the ropes. One of the mummies on the "island" is facing north, one is facing south. They are observing the corridors, waiting when intruders are beyond the portcullises. Then they give a hand signal to the mummies with ropes, and the portcullises come crashing down. What then happens is...

The Descending Darkness:

One of the mummies on the "island" will open a clay jar it is holding (this is the mummy facing north). It will take a fist-sized stone out of the clay jar. This stone has a Continual Darkness spell cast on it. The range of the spell is 30'. The mummy will place the stone in the middle of the island. Thus, the darkness will nicely fill up the whole room (it won't fill the corridors, though). Then the mummies will attack the intruders. It's dark and it's silent, the PCs cannot communicate, and what's worse, they are stuck in tar with a pitiful 3' movement rate because of the darkness. Also remember that no spells can be cast in the silence. The mummies see in the dark and they take no blindness penalties. Also, they can move with a 10' rate in the tar (and far quicker on the walkways). I suppose this will be the end of many a PC.

Setting the Tar on Fire:

Someone might get the idea of setting the tar on fire. It will burn for over 24 hours. It will cause 1d6 damage to anyone standing on it per round. Anyone standing on the walkways will suffer 1 point per round because of the heat. The smoke will cause a penalty of -1 to all hit and damage rolls and saving throws of living creatures in the first round, -2 in the second and -3 in the third. After that the penalty stays on -3. If the portcullises are down, the flames will certainly kill the mummies and most probably any PC's in the room as well. The smoke will spread through the portcullises to nearby rooms.

Final Commentary:

This is such a nasty room that there should probably be a route around it, so that "solving" the dungeon will not necessitate entering this room.

TEMPLE OF WATER

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Southern Portion (The Pool)

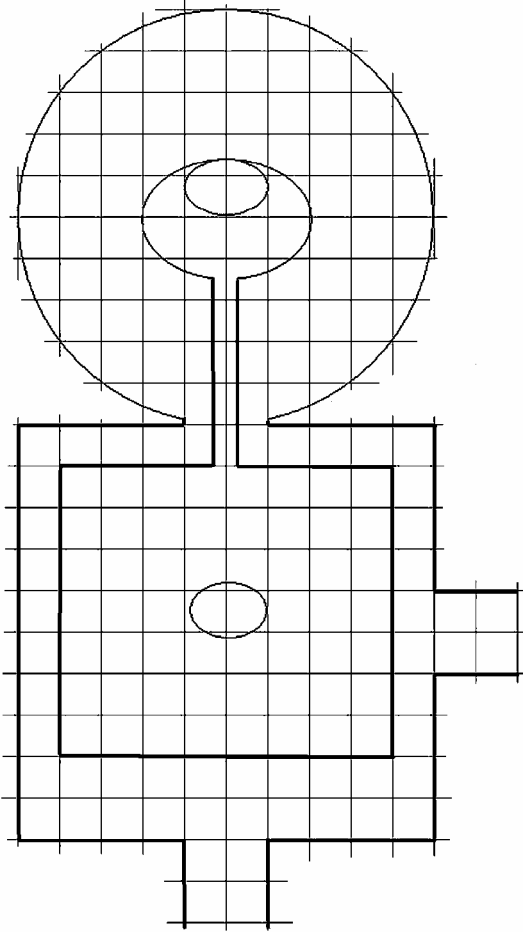
50' x 50' room

Exits (10' wide):

in the middle of the north wall going to the northern portion of the temple

in the middle of the east wall going somewhere

in the easternmost edge of the south wall going somewhere



Most of the room consists of a rectangular pool of water. The pool is almost square-shaped, being 40' (north and south edges) x 35' (west and east edges). The pool is situated so that there remain 5' wide walking spaces in the west, north and east sides of the pool, while the south side walkway remains 10' wide. A straight 3'-wide channel goes from the pool to the north, going through the middle of the northern exit, to the northern portion of the temple.

In each corner of the pool, there are wide stairs descending to the water. The bottom of the pool is 6' deep. The edge of the water is 1' below the room's floor level, so that makes the water 5' deep.

In the middle of the pool, there is a functioning fountain.

The pool is magical: the water is kept magically clean (even safe to drink), and anyone swimming in it will get Cure Disease cast on them. It works only once per day per person, and the spell is like one cast by a 6th-level cleric. The water won't work this way if it's removed from the pool.

Northern Portion (The Statue)

Round room, diameter 50'. Ceiling is also spherical.

Exits: one exit to the south, to the southern portion of the temple

The 3'-wide water channel from the pool goes straight north to this room. It leads to another pool in the middle of this chamber. This smaller pool is elliptic by shape, being 20' wide in the west-east axis and 15' wide in the north-south axis.

The north side of this pool is occupied by a large statue rising from the water. The statue is connected to the stonework in the northern side of the pool, and in fact occupies almost half of the pool itself. The statue is wide in the east-west axis, so viewed from above, it is roughly the same shape as the pool itself. The statue is facing south, and it resembles a giant monster, a sort of disfigured hybrid between a fish and a frog. It is squatting in the water, holding a ball of crystal in its hands. The statue has many functioning fountains in it: water arcs to the pool from odd orifices of the monster. There is nothing else worthy of note in the room.

The statue is easy to climb, if someone wants to. The detail in it provides ample foot- and handholds for the climber. The ball of crystal is attached firmly to its hands. However, it is indeed a standard issue magical Crystal Ball. While it is attached to the statue, a magic-user has unlimited usage with the ball. It can be removed and not broken if the thief is careful enough, use whatever system you feel appropriate to see if this is successful (remove traps check, dexterity check etc).

The statue is connected to Three Traps in this dungeon. Those traps must be reloadable ones. There are three places in the statue's surface that activate each of those traps by touch. All those three places are accessible by a human-sized creature sitting in the lap of the statue, facing the crystal ball. The ultimate purpose of the statue is that a magic-user can sit on its lap, spy on the dungeon with the crystal ball, and activate the three traps on any unwary explorers, just at the right time. The trap-activating "buttons" do not sink in, nor do they give any hint that something has happened, when pressed. The only way to decipher the mechanism is to scan the dungeon with the crystal ball, while touching diverse places of the statue. The three "buttons" are quite large areas and not hard to find. If the mystery is solved, the statue can then be used by the PC' to, for example, trap and kill monsters in the dungeon.

THE PYLIS PRISON

by J. Brian "Trollsmyth" Murphy
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The pylis prison is a magical holding cell created by an ancient race with strong interest in moving between Planes. In my campaign, it's the ancient elven empire though pretty much any long-fallen culture would do.

The prison itself looks like a ring of gold at least 5' in radius set into the floor. The gold appears to ripple under lamp or torchlight, but closer inspection reveals that it is actually covered with runes etched into its surface. Those with the proper background will recognize these runes as magical and might possibly work out their connection with Planer magic if they've had enough exposure to that sort of thing.

Spaced equidistant along the ring are three circles, one of jade, one of orichalcum, and a third of adamantium. All three have keyholes set in them. There should be, or should have been at one time, at least one key for each hole made of the matching material.

The entire structure will respond as magical under a detect magic spell or similar test. Any attempt to damage any part of the structure, using the wrong key, or to pick any of the locks will zap the vandal with 6d6 points of electrical or magical damage, save vs. magic to reduce the damage in half. In addition, there's a 5% chance (roll of 1 on a d20) such tampering will activate one of the prisons only long enough to release what is held and to drop anyone standing inside the ring into the holding space.

There are actually two cells in each pylis prison, both extradimensional pockets where time is suspended. Anything held in one of these cells never ages, never needs to eat, and cannot be harmed or helped. They remain in perfect suspended animation until released, with no knowledge of the time that passes.

To activate a prison, the keys are turned, one at a time. Turning them in clockwise order opens one prison, and turning them in a counterclockwise order opens the other. When a prison is opened, the floor enclosed by the ring glows with a brilliant light and anything standing in the ring, or straddling the ring, falls down into the light, to be held in the prison. At the same time, anything in the prison is spat out. The gate remains open for only three seconds. Anything that hasn't fallen fully within the prison in that time is sliced perfectly at the line of the floor.

Turning all three keys simultaneously opens a gateway that remains open for six seconds. It usually goes somewhere the crafter of the prison felt was a safe place to escape to. However, these gates are almost always one-way.

THE GEM IN THE SKULL

By James Edward Raggi IV

Somewhere in the dungeon a skull sits on a pedestal, an altar, an alcove, a table, or maybe it's just lying on the ground. The important thing is it is on a stone surface, and the skull's mouth is wide open. Inside the mouth of the skull, also lying on the stone, is a big bright shining gem.

The only constant circumstance is that the skull is firmly fused at its base to the ground, and the gem is just partially stuck and could be dislodged with a bit of effort.

Beyond that, there are many possibilities. The cruelest thing to do is to decide that there is nothing unusual about the situation, and it's just a gem in a skull stuck to the ground. All they have to do is take it. This option works best if it is in a dungeon full of traps or other situation where the players will assume, "TRAP!" The menace here will be wasted time, and wandering monsters rolls should be made judiciously according to time spent and arguments had.

The next most malicious use of the situation is if the gem has a malicious, but passive, negative effect on whoever possesses it. Perhaps wandering monsters checks are made more often, or with a better chance of an encounter, for the character/party. Perhaps it causes a negative reaction modifier. As long as the effect does not play into a roll that a player would make for his own character, the referee should be able to wreak subtle havoc with the party.

More obvious is to make the skull or the gem trapped. With even a simple trap present, cruelty can be inflicted by making the gem of low value, and thus not worth the trouble.

Suggestions for traps that might protect the skull and/or gem:

Moving the skull disturbs a powerful powdered drug inside the main cavity, and everyone in the area (30' radius, say) must make a save versus poison or be *mentally slowed* for 3d4 turns, resulting in a greater chance to be surprised and a penalty on initiative rolls.

Moving the gem puts a series of gears into motion which collapses the ceiling onto the would-be thief. Or, perhaps the exits cave in, trapping the thief for all time with the treasure he thought was so important.

Or perhaps the gem is glass, but the skull is actually made from some material which, if examined very carefully, is revealed to be the valuable item of the pair.

THE HALLWAY THAT DOES NOT EXIST

By James Edward Raggi IV

This is simply a straight corridor in any dungeon or other location that can accommodate a hallway that extends for 200' or so.

At the 30' mark, the color of everything in the corridor gradually begins to fade. At the 50' mark, all color is gone and everything in the corridor is simply black, white, and grey.

Note that these effects only apply to things in the corridor. If, for example, someone turns back at the 50' mark, their color would return.

At the 75' mark, objects in the corridor (including people and their gear) become increasingly blurry and indistinct. Light sources still illuminate to their full radius, but the light seems fainter somehow.

At the 100' mark, things in the corridor are sinking a little bit into the floor. Just a hair's width at first, then more and more. Characters' gear and bodies overlap. At the 130' mark, if a character, say, claps his hands, his hands would pass halfway through each other before stopping. This effect gets worse further down the passage.

At the 150' mark, anything in the passage is barely there, and is visible as just a faint outline. Yet the passage seems to continue on and on...

At the 160' mark, anything in the passage ceases to exist.

This trap becomes more deadly if the corridor is not straight, as the characters behind the lead will not witness his fate.

THE LEVER

by James Edward Raggi IV

The room is a long, vaulted hall with twin rows of columns running down the sides. On one end of the room is the entrance (or more than one), and on the other end is a raised platform with stairs leading to the top. Along the side wall near the platform is a passageway blocked by a portcullis, and a big nasty monster behind the portcullis with its tentacles reaching out to grab anyone nearby. The tentacles don't reach to the platform. The room behind the portcullis has a side passage/room so the thing can retreat if people start lobbing flaming oil at it.

On the platform is a lever. There might be other set dressing around the room, maybe an altar on the platform or stuff hanging from the ceiling, but this trap involves the lever.

If you pull the lever, the portcullis slowly raises (so the monster's tentacles don't get caught!) and the monster is loose to eat the characters. The monster should be sufficiently powerful enough to decimate any exploring party, if not destroy them completely. The point is this is a *bad thing* to fight.

The room left that way could be a very effective trap. Sure, only a fool would pull that lever since there is only one thing it could possibly do, but there is always one fool in every adventuring party that just *has* to know.

You can make the decision less foolish. Perhaps there is another exit behind the platform, also gated. (For more fun, make it unlocked and easy to move, if someone but attempts to do so before worrying about the lever.) Perhaps there are two alcoves in the wall, also blocked by bars, with treasure behind them.

But the lever still just lets the monster out.

Further cruelty can be inflicted by making an entrance behind the creature visible. Or a treasure! Suddenly opening the gate doesn't seem so foolish a thing to do, but it's still a bad, bad idea.

THE LUMBERJACK IS NOT OK

by James Edward Raggi IV

This is a 20' x 20' x 30' room that is completely filled with water (20' deep from "sea level" where the passages come to the room, with a 10' ceiling)), with the only other exit from the room being directly opposite the entrance. In the water are a couple dozen logs.

The water is teeming with piranha. Whether there is a plausible explanation for them or whether they are "just there" is up to you. Taking a swim is a bad idea, and anyone in the water takes d6 damage per round. They are sleepy and not prepared for feeding so there are no ill effects for the first two rounds after someone or something enters the water.

Jumping from log to log is one possibility for getting across the room. To successfully jump onto a log without falling into the water, a character must roll as if making an attack on an unarmored human; dexterity modifiers apply and armor subtracts from the roll. It will take d6+3 logs to get across. Once they begin hopping logs, characters must jump to a new log each round, or attempt to log-roll in place. The logs are not all normal. Every time a character jumps to a new log, roll on the following table:

1 – 6	Normal Log
7	The log is an illusion. The character falls straight into the water.
8	The log is sticky! The character must save versus paralyzation or stick to the log as it overturns, submerging them until they can make a save (once per round)
9	The log is a mimic and it isn't at all happy to be jumped on.
10	The log is very oily! The character must roll to hit AC d6-1 to not fall in the water.

There are also a set of steel rungs along the ceiling from one passage to the other. Any unencumbered character with at least an average strength can make it across, but all the rungs toward the middle of the room are blistering-hot. A character will take d4 damage, and must save versus dragon breath or fall into the water. If he is still hanging on, he may decide to continue on, taking only another d4 damage on his way (no further save necessary) but being unable to hold anything in his hands after reaching the other side until this burn damage is healed.

You wouldn't be so cruel a referee as to have nothing worth finding in the area beyond this room, would you?

THE INCREDIBLE PEDESTAL

An Overly Elaborate Treasure Trap by Jeff Rients
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A hallway leads north to a locked steel door, beyond which is an octagonal chamber, 30 feet wide at its widest. Six shallow steps lead down into the chamber, which has both a lower floor (by about 3 three feet) and a higher ceiling (30' vaulted) than most of the rooms on the level.

At the center of the room, on a ten foot wide raised stone dais (some 4" above the floor level) is a pedestal, a stone cylinder some 12 inches in diameter, 36 inches tall and decorated with intricately carved goblin faces. On top of the pedestal, under a glass dome, sits a glittering ruby the size and shape of an elf maiden's breast. Undoubtedly the stone is worth at least 10,000 pieces of gold to the right buyer, perhaps more if the other half of the presumed pair can be found! Eight wires stretch taut from near the top of the pedestal, up and away to disappear into tiny (1/2" diameter) holes in the walls some 11 feet above the floor level. In the flickering light of a single candle or torch there's a chance (1 in 6 perhaps) that the copper wire running from the pedestal to straight above the entryway will not be detected until a party member brushes against it.

The wires are the most obvious hazard here. The four wires running north, south, east and west from the pedestal are made of copper. The copper wires course with electricity and any contact with a wire sends 3d6 points of electrical damage coursing through the body of the hapless adventurer. Cutting the wire leaves the end going into the wall "live", but the segment running into the pedestal becomes safe.

The wires running northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest are made of silver. Tugging on them or cutting them automatically activates a trap on the pedestal, whereby four faces carved thereon spew Ochre Jelly to the northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest. Each volley of jelly can immediately attack a foe up to 5 feet away. The jelly reservoir (down a pipe in the pedestal below the floor) holds enough jelly for but a single volley of four jellies, but just enough ochre residue remains in the reservoir that it can regrow its supply in 2d6 weeks. The space between the bottom of the steel door and the dungeon floor is just big enough that an Ochre Jelly can ooze under it.

If the pedestal is examined, the faces with the open mouths can be readily located and plugged with a torch stump, a section of pole, etc. However, if the pedestal is approached while one or more wires is still active the referee should determine the chance of incidental contact based upon factors such as armor worn, overall equipment load, DEX score and precautions noted. The best case scenario would still call for at least a 1 in 6 chance of tripping a wire right.

The dais is trapped as well. If more than one person (or a single over-encumbered adventurer) steps onto the dais an audible 'click' echoes through the chamber as the dais drops a fraction of an inch into the floor. The referee should count to three. Anyone still in the room on three is subject to 4d6 laser damage as a magical light effect is triggered underneath the gem. The light splits into deadly beams issuing from the gem itself. A saving throw versus wands is allowed, at -2 if still standing on the dais, to avoid laser fire. Anyone rolling a natural 1 for their save is blinded for 2d6 turns. The light source is magical and can be dispelled (20th level caster). One turn after activating the dais resets itself and the light can be fired after every reset. If the gem is no longer on top of the emitting aperture the effect is a simple shaft of bright but harmless light that illumines the ceiling for a second or two. If the glass dome has been removed but the gem is still in place the light will be more focused and the laser will do 6d6 damage instead of 4d6. Note that the laser fire trap has a 1 in 6 chance of cutting one of the wires if any of them remain in place.

Finally, the glass dome is trapped. The dome encloses not just the gem, but an invisible poisonous gas as well. Any non-elf on the dais when the glass is lifted or shattered must save versus poison or die. Elves are immune to this particular poisonous gas.

Any character able to lay hands on the ruby has certainly earned their reward.

YET ANOTHER STUPID GIANT CHESSBOARD

By Jeff Rients

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Giant chessboards have long been a staple dungeon gimmick. This one is smaller than many, only about 25' long and wide, with each square about 3 feet across. The room containing the chessboard should be at least 30' x 30' to allow for movement through the room without disturbing the board. In fact feel free to place it in a room with a lot of traffic. Any monster on the level smarter than a shrieker will use the room but avoid the chessboard.

The chess pieces are of stone, the 'white' pieces actually of grey stone and the black pieces a darker grey. The pieces have been carved to realistically depict kings, queens, bishops, etc. at a little less than life size, perhaps as big as elves. The pawns are depicted as peasants holding simple spears and the rooks are round stone towers. All of the pieces are arrayed as at the start of the game, but with three pieces missing from the board. The white queen's bishop and the white king's knight are both missing. The pawn in front of the black king's rook is absent.

Except as noted below, messing with the board is a deadly business. Stepping onto the 'white' half of the board activates the white pieces. Stepping onto the 'black' half of the board activates the black pieces. The non-rook pieces fight as stone golems and will attempt to destroy anyone on their half of the board. The rooks slide at interlopers as stone juggernauts! If either king is destroyed all the pieces of both colors stop moving. Otherwise the pieces will do their utmost to destroy the trespassers or chase them off the level. Once that goal is accomplished, they will resume their places on the board. So long as both kings survive, destroyed pieces will be magically reconstituted within 24 hours of the party exiting the level.

There are three ways to interact with the board that can prove beneficial to the party. All involve the right kind of person stepping from off the board onto a specific square.

If a cleric steps onto the square of the missing white bishop, the queen blows the cleric a kiss. For the next twenty four hours all saves by that character will be at +2.

If a fighter steps onto the square of the missing white knight, the adjacent bishop will make a sign of blessing and the character will be fully healed of all wounds, diseases and afflictions. If undamaged, the fighter instead will be at +1 to-hit and damage for the next 24 hours.

If a hireling or henchman steps onto the square of the missing black pawn, a tiny door will open in the adjacent rook and a tiny stone soldier will come out and hand the character a tiny stone sack. The tiny soldier will return to the rook and the door will shut. The sack then grows and changes into a real large sack containing 7 weeks of iron rations and two wineskins full of wine.

Each of these boons can be invoked no more often than once per week.

To gain these benefits the party must not have already triggered a golem attack that day, nor will they gain a boon if any member of the party disturbs any piece on the same side as the benefit they seek. (I.e. shooting the white king with an arrow will negate the two goodies available on the white side of the board.)

There is no obvious way to get the black pieces and white pieces to fight each other.

HUNGRY LITTLE MAMMON

by Wayne S. Rossi

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A 30' by 30' room is entered by a door in its northeast corner, on the east wall. An exit sits to the south, in the center of that wall. The room is mostly bare, with the exception of a small (about 3' tall), fat, greedy-eyed idol with a wide, toothy grin in the center of the north wall. The idol sits on top of a small, squat pedestal recessed into the wall. The statue itself is ugly but gilded, and seems to rest loosely enough that it could be pulled down with some effort. Under the gilding the idol is actually quite hollow, and made of brass.

Any character coming within 10 feet of the idol must immediately make a saving throw (versus spells if applicable). The layout of the room is such that careful explorers, keeping their distance from the idol, could avoid triggering its effect. Anyone failing this roll is ensorcelled by the idol, and immediately walks toward it reverentially. He or she will begin to feed coins into the idol's mouth at a rate of 10 per minute (i.e., 100 per turn). Each coin is eaten noisily by the idol. The character under its spell is quite happy about what they are doing, and will resist any attempt to stop it so long as they are within 10 feet of the idol's current position. A character who runs out of coins may opt instead to put jewelry, gems or other objects (generally not magic items) instead; anything that will fit within the mouth, about 1 inch high by six inches wide, will be consumed. Once the character has no more valuables on their person, they are free to go, and will continue to have a good feeling about what they have done – so long as they are within a ten foot radius.

Characters ensnared can be physically removed from a ten foot radius, which will stop their sacrifice of wealth. The idol is hollow, and significant fire or damage from a hammer or even a hard fall on the floor will also stop its effects. (But a character must have passed their saving throw to attempt this.) At the referee's option, feeding it a cursed item or a false coin (fool's gold, wooden nickel, etc) may also break the spell on a character. Similar creativity should be encouraged.

All wealth fed to the idol, plus an additional 1d6x1000 gold pieces, can be found in a Bag of Holding secured within the pedestal that holds the idol. The pedestal is hollow, but there is no "natural" opening; there are about two inches of stone that must be broken through in order to retrieve the bag inside. Any wealth beyond the first 10,000 coins (counting the original allotment) or weight equivalent fed to the idol is simply destroyed.

