

Malcon's Tome of Treachery



By Malcon The Firebringer

Edited By Joseph Mohr

malcon's tome of TREACHERY

for use with OSRIC

by Malcon the firebringer

edited by Joseph A. Mohr

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Joseph A. Mohr

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FORWARD

Treachery. This is a subject very familiar to Malcon the Firebringer. He is the most infamous villain in the history of Zanzia. And he knows all about treachery. He is an ancient Lich after all. Malcon has written several tomes during his time of imprisonment inside of an active volcano. This one, however, is about a subject that he truly loves.

There are all kinds of treachery in a Dungeons and Dragons adventure. There are those pesky magical tricks that one finds in the dungeon. Tricks are there to confuse, confound and waste the time of the adventurers during their exploration. Illusions are there to harm the adventurers, warn them away from certain areas of the dungeon and to terrify those who can be terrified. Traps are there to wound, maim and kill adventurers who get too close to whatever the monsters do not want found. Riddles are present to confuse thin skulled adventurers and make them waste precious time. Puzzles are there to guard treasures, passages and other secret areas. All of these forms of treachery are important to creating adventures that will interest players far beyond just hacking and slashing everyone in their path.

While the Tome of Treachery is written with OSRIC in mind it could easily be adapted to any other edition or to many other fantasy role playing systems. Most of the items listed here will not have specific statistics that restrict it to any one game system.

Malcon graciously allowed me to write this forward to his tome (actually he threatened to polymorph me into something small and slimy if I didn't). I hope that you enjoy it.

Joe Mohr

TREACHERY

Ah treachery. What a beautiful thing. There is nothing quite so enjoyable as creating a total party kill out of a simple trick that could have been merely bypassed and forgotten. Enjoyable for me that is. Perhaps not for those meddling delvers that meet their doom. But who cares about them right? I mean....they are in the dungeon to steal my treasures after all. They are nothing but thieves and bandits one and all.

This tome is going to discuss five subjects:

1. Tricks
2. Traps
3. Puzzles
4. Riddles
5. Illusions

Not all of these elements will be in every adventure of course. But some may be present. Sometimes these elements can break up the monotony of murdering all of the guests in my home. At other times they may present more difficult obstacles to the adventurers than the most dangerous of beasts.

Additionally I will talk about a couple of other subjects which might be of interest to the Dungeon Master.

1. Obstacles
2. Nasty encounters

TRICKS in The dungeon

“The adventurers descend a small staircase into a large cavernous room. Stalactites hang from the high ceiling. A pool of shimmering water is in the center of the chamber. The chamber is about fifty feet wide by fifty feet deep. The ceiling is at least thirty feet above the floor. Surrounding the pool of water are strange colored mushroom which are almost man sized. They have various colors and are spotted. In the center of the pool of water is a small island with two treasure chests.

Ambros the thief hides in the shadows of the chamber. He makes his way slowly towards the island as the other adventurers wait near the stairs. Kalos the ranger knocks an arrow and covers the thief. Alkazar the magnificent prepares a spell in case it is needed. The two fighters Orok and Weelon prepare to charge in and rescue the thief if something goes wrong. And Jamo the dwarf prepares to heal the thief in the event of injury.

The thief is cautious. He checks his footing carefully as he slowly proceeds towards the center of the chamber. Suddenly one of the stalactites drops from above and narrowly misses him. This stalactite, however, is not made of rock. It is a living creature that just tried to kill him. He slashes it with his sword and the ranger shoots arrows into it. Now he is aware of the danger from above.

But things are about to get worse. The mushrooms just started wailing loudly and will not shut up. More stalactites keep dropping into the room from above. And a rumbling can be heard off in the distance. Something appears to have been drawn by the sound of the wailing.

The fighters rush in and douse the mushrooms in oil. They apply a torch and the sounds of the wailing go silent again. The stalactites have stopped dropping. Those that remain on the roof must be real ones now.

The thief continues his cautious journey to the pool of water. Small animal bones can be seen along the edges of the pool and in it. It is a shallow pool. But clearly this water is not for drinking.



He cautiously wades into the water and approaches the island. He feels a strange

tingling as he touches the water. The sword in his hand suddenly is drawn towards his belt buckle. However, he is able to pull it away and does so. But he still feels the pull of the two objects towards each other. He carefully climbs onto the small bar of sand that holds the two chests. As he touches the first one he finds himself glued to it. This chest is not real. It is a killer mimic and it is trying to kill him. The ranger fires arrows at it but the strange magnetism of the pool of water redirects the arrow in flight. The wizard casts a lightning bolt at it and wounds it deeply. And the thief slashes it with his short blade. Soon it lies dead on the sand.

And then he discovers....the other chest is just an illusion.....just as a shambling mound drawn by the wailing grabs the cleric from behind on the staircase.”

Sometimes the things one finds in the dungeon are not what they appear to be. Some creatures have means to disguise their real nature. Some creatures are able to camouflage themselves as innocent looking objects.

Page 216 of the DMG tells us about some possible tricks that one might find in the dungeon. Tricks are sometimes little magical things that may be annoying, harmful or even deadly. Sometimes they may be rewarding. Other times they may do serious harm. In this tome I am going to suggest to you some possible tricks that you can use in your campaigns.

The section in the DMG breaks things down into two elements. Features. And attributes. Features are those objects in a dungeon or adventure that draw the attention of the adventurers. Attributes are the effects that these objects have on the adventurers that get too close to them. Below I am going to

list some of each including some new ones not previously listed in the DMG.

SOME POSSIBLE FEATURES

Altar
Arch
Bed
Bell
Bellows
Bones
Brazier
Cage
Candle
Candlestick
Cauldron
Ceiling
Chandelier
Chimes
Container (chest, vase, barrel, crate, box, bag, sack, cask, keg, urn)
Dice
Dome
Door
Door, secret
Drum
Fire
Fireplace
Font
Forcefield
Fountain
Fresco, Mosaic or Painting
Furnishings
Gong
Holy Symbol/Unholy Symbol
Hourglass
Idol
Illusion
Lab Table
Lamp
Lectern
Loom
Machine
Magic Circle
Magic Mouth
Manacles

Mirror
Monster
Offering Bowl
Organ
Passage
Pedestal
Pentagram
Pews
Pillar or Column
Pipes
Pit
Pool
Prayer Rug
Quill
Refuse
Room
Rope
Sconce
Shrine
Skull
Stairway
Statue
Tapestry
Taxidermy
Throne
Tile on the floor which is different in color or pattern than the others
Tile on the ceiling which is different in color or pattern than the others
Torch
Torture Device
Tub
Vegetation
Vestments
Wall
Weapons or Shields Hung on a Wall
Well
Window
Wooden Fighting Dummy



SOME POSSIBLE ATTRIBUTES

There are many possible effects that could be encountered by adventurers who interact with these features. Some of them are beneficial. Others are not.

Ages
 Animates
 Anti Magic Shell
 Antipathy/Sympathy
 Appears/Disappears
 Asks questions/riddles
 Astral Spell
 Attacks
 Barkskin

Blesses
 Causes - Fear
 Blindness
 Disease
 Changes - Alignment
 Attribute
 Class
 Experience (up or down)
 Experience Level (up or down)
 Minds from body to body
 Sex
 Statistics or attributes
 changed upward or downward
 Clones
 Combination
 Collapsing
 Commands
 Confusion
 Creates Water
 Cures/Heals - Damage
 Disease
 Blindness
 Curse/Remove Curse
 Directs
 Discord
 Disintegrates
 Dispels magic
 Distorted - Width/Length
 Height/Depth
 Enlarges/Reduces
 Enrages
 Electrical shock - If metallic
 Magical
 Ethereal
 Faerie Fire
 False
 Feather Fall, Temporary Imbuement
 Feeblemind
 Fire Storm
 Flesh to Stone
 Fly
 Fruit
 Gaseous
 Gates
 Geas

Gravity -	Greater Lesser Nil Varying		Purifies (water placed in a container is purified/food is purified)
			Randomly Acts
Greed Producing			Releases - Coins
Heroism (as per the potion)			Counterfeit
Ice Storm			Gems/Jewelry
Illusion -	Creates Activates		Magic Item
Imprisonment			Map
Infravision			Repels - Insects
Intelligent			Monsters
Invisible			Repulsion
Invulnerability (as per the potion)			Resisting - General
Legend Lore			Specific
Levitates			Resurrects (if laid upon)
Magic Mouth -	Activates		Sanctuary
Magnetizes			Shape Change
Mass Suggestion			Shatters
Mind blank			Shield
Mirror Image			Shifting
Misdirection			Shoots
Moves/Rolls			Silences
Non-Detection			Sleep Inducing
One-way			Sliding
Paralyzes			Sloping
Pivots Two Possible Ways			Spinning
Points			Strength - Temporary
Poison			Permanent
Polymorphing			Suggestion
Predicts Weather			Summons - Animals
Protection from evil			Monsters
Provides Temporary Resistance -	Cold Fear		These may be hostile or they may be under control of the summoner
Heat/Fire			Suspends Animation
Electricity		Acid Poison	Symbiotic
Psionics -	Temporary Permanent Specific abilities such as esp,		Takes/Steals
levitation, etc			Talks - Intelligently/Normally
resistance	Psionic shielding or		Nonsense
			Poetry and Rhymes
			Singing
			Spell Casting
			Yells/Screams
			Teleports
			Time - Stops
			Shifts

Tongues, Person is temporarily imbued with this spell

Traps soul

Translates - Languages

Runes

Symbols

Water Breathing

Wish Fulfillment

Wish Fulfillment - Reversal

These are just some possible attributes or effects that could be encountered by interacting with some strange magical feature or object in a dungeon. There are, of course, many other possibilities.



SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF TRICKS

Altar

- Collapses revealing a secret door below
- Ages person of wrong alignment who touches it
- Repels violently anyone of wrong alignment
- Moves/Rolls revealing a trap door below
- Those of correct alignment are granted a wish
- Correct alignment are blessed
- Geas to do some evil act
- Sinks into the floor revealing hidden runes - riddle
- Teleports wrong alignment one mile in a random direction
- Teleports wrong alignment to the top of a deep pit
- Illusion - actually is a monster
- Flesh to stone for wrong alignment
- Placing a body of the right alignment on it resurrects that person
- Summons demon or devil if touched
- Wish fulfillment for proper alignment
- Suggestion
- Strange runes on the altar could be a riddle...or perhaps a warning...or even a curse

Arch

- Sex Change
- Attribute Change
- Alignment Change

- Teleports
- Disintegrates
- Portal to another plane
- If two people walk through at same time their minds are swapped
- Disappears and reappears
- Enlarges or reduces
- Ages
- Prismatic wall blocks passage through it
- Polymorphs
- An archway where small creatures enlarge and become terrifying monsters
 - mice
 - rats
 - roaches
 - ants
 - cat



Book Case in a Library

- It is really a killer mimic
- Books teleport back to their position on the shelves if someone takes them out of the room
- The books automatically organize themselves into alphabetical order
- Dust on the shelves disappears (or there is no dust on shelves when everything else in dungeon is coated in it)
- One of the tomes has letters cut out of it. Perhaps a code?
- One of the tomes is being used as a book code from some scroll the adventurers find.
- One of the tomes discusses the rites of ascension needed for some evil entity to become a demi-god. Perhaps this tome might be needed to prevent this from occurring.
- An evil cookbook with recipes calling for Couatl wings, Unicorn horns, etc....
- One book has a hole cut out of the pages to hide a phylactery for the Lich that maintains the library. It is a book of elvish poetry. No one but elves would read such books. The Lich believes it is well hidden.

- ceiling
Piercers, lurkers above, etc

Containers

- Touch causes greed
- Polymorphed creature protects contents
- Sinks into the floor
- Hides trap door below or inside



Dome

- Spins
- Shocks
- Is a polymorphed blob
- Moves/Slides to reveal trap door below it
- Those without metal weapons or armor can pass by it safely. Those with metal get shocked
 - Something just beyond the dome waits to ambush anyone no longer wearing armor or carrying weapons
- Covers a trap door

Door

- Resists
- Disintegrates if touched releasing a horrible monster
- Pivots two directions
 - Two different passages
- One Way Travel
- Collapses - bad creatures beyond it
- Slams shut after first person goes through separating the party
- Fake door - stone wall behind

Ceiling

- Trap door heading upwards is hidden
- Spins
- Illusion - archers are hiding behind it and will fire arrows or throw burning oil
- Anti-gravity room with a secret door near or in the

- Polymorphs first person touching
- Has a magical doorknocker with an animated face on it that speaks

reveal some important clue or reveal an item hidden in the fire.

- Fire cannot be put out
- Weapons blades put into the fire are temporarily improved by one

Door, secret

- One way
- Pivots two directions
- Hidden at the bottom of a pit
- Hidden on the ceiling
- Hidden on the floor
- Hidden in a treasure chest
- Hidden in a sarcophagus or crypt
- Hidden inside of an Iron Maiden
- Hidden inside of a barrel or crate

Force Field

- Protects a valuable item
- Lowers if some riddle is answered or some puzzle is solved
- Lowers if the correct knob is turned
- Lowers if a lever in another room is pulled

Fountain

Fire

- Talks
- Asks
- Animates into Fire Elemental
- Riddles
- Hides something in it
- Magical fire will not go out

- Riddles
- Statue in the water
- Water has random effects (or specific ones)

- mirror images
- strength
- weakness
- shield
- esp
- levitation
- tongues
- comprehend
- languages
- slow
- haste
- blink
- clairvoyance
- clairsience
- enfeeblement
- fear
- confusion
- polymorph
- geast
- flesh to stone

Fireplace

- Hides secret passage
- Riddles
- Puzzle
 - One example I have used is having a dying fire in a fireplace and a stack of wood and a stoker nearby. If the adventurers feed the fire and stoke it then it will brighten and roar. Then the fire will ask a riddle or

- vanishing
- blur
- bless
- curse
- healing
- curing disease or blindness
- resistances
- Poison water
- Water turns different colors with different effects
- Electricity is conducted through the water
- Secret trap door hidden under the water of the statue
- Has a statue in the center with valuable gem eyes
 - Water weird in the basin
 - Shock anyone in water
- Coins in the water
 - Water weird
 - Trigger tile in the basin of the fountain causes statue to spray poison gas
- Water elemental in the basin



Fresco, Mosaic, Painting

- The eyes in painting follow people moving in room
- Painting of a wizard reading from a scroll. Close inspection of scroll reveals that it is readable by one looking at the painting.
- Touch painting and you are teleported into the scene (perhaps combat even)
- Hides a secret panel
- Tilting the painting opens a secret door
- Close inspection of the mosaic reveals a small keyhole
 - Opens a secret passage in the mosaic
- Inspection of a painting reveals the face of the adventurer looking at it
- Clues to some riddle or puzzle in the painting
- Important legend lore type information useful to the party in the painting
 - Perhaps demonstrating a weakness of the primary villain

Hallway

- Distorted
 - Seems longer than it is
 - Seems shorter than it is
- Shifts
- The fantastic heat induction tunnel from White Plume Mountain

Hallway Filled With Mirrors

- Each mirror has a different effect
- Fun house mirrors
- Life trapping
- Opposition
- Normal mirror with a nasty monster hiding behind it in case players destroy them
- One way mirror with monster behind it seeing players but players not seeing it
- Or perhaps a room of mirrors like Conan: The Destroyer which gives the illusionist his power

Idol

- Trapped
- Collapses revealing secret passage
- Moves/Rolls/Slides revealing secret passage
- Talks
 - Riddles
 - Screams for help
 - Nonsense
- Secret passage hidden in it's mouth
- Magical effects if touched (from above list)
- Those of improper alignment who touch it are cursed
- Defiling it creates enmity with some devil, demon or god
- Touching it
 - Crumbles
 - Collapses
 - Causes it to scream
 - Causes it to spit Greek fire into the room or pour flaming oil from a brazier that

it is holding

- Make a suitable offering and get a wish

Illusion

- Casts spells
- Talks
- Riddles
- Wishes
- Rhymes
- Intelligent

Machine

- Levers have strange magical effects (some good and some bad perhaps using that list above)
- Moves or rolls
- Something rumbles down the hall in the dungeon but adventurers have no idea what happened
- Releases monsters in the room or in the dungeon
- Shocks
- Lowers force fields
- Anti-magic shell is raised or lowered



Magic Mouth

- Riddles
- Rhymes
- Nonsense
- Talks intelligently
- Screams for help
- Cries
- Sings
- Casts spells

Mirror

- Person seeing themselves in it
 - Mirror images
 - Becomes fatter or thinner like a fun house mirror except it is real
- View in mirror is a room of it's own which can be entered
- Something is in the mirror which is not in the room. It can be grabbed and taken out of the mirror
- Person looking into a mirror suddenly sees everyone else around them as being undead (illusion)
- Face in mirror is not the adventurers when they look into it. The face asks a riddle. Proper answer allows one to enter the mirror and take some object seen in it.



Monster

- Polymorphed into an object but will turn back to normal when touched
- Covered in mold or spores
- Kobold who can grant a wish if not slain (or so he claims)

Passage

- Shifts
- Slopes
- Teleports back so it seems like it is endless
- Teleports elsewhere

Pedestal

- Force field on top protects some valuable object

- Collapses
- Sinks into floor
- Rises to reveal runes or riddle on base
- Trapped
- Hidden Panel

Pillar/Column

- Collapses if touched causing roof to fall
- Polymorphed creatures (if column touched then all will turn to original form and attack)
- Hidden panel
- Strange mosaics or carvings in them with clues to some riddle or puzzle or revealing some legend
- Greed inducing if touched
- Steals from players

Pit

- Anyone who falls in is teleported to the top before hitting the bottom creating an endless loop (player is stuck and must be helped out)
- Anyone who falls in takes damage and then is teleported back to the top and falls again in perpetuity (must be rescued before death)
- Skeletal remains at the bottom with
 - valuables
 - clues
 - a map
- Distorted (seems deeper or shallower than it is)
- Secret door hidden in a wall down at the bottom that will not be found unless the pit is entered and searched

Pool

- Magical Effects (drinking or bathing in)
 - Temporary changes to stats
 - Invisibility
 - Invulnerability
 - Poison
 - Gel or ooze or pudding
 - Shield (as per spell)
 - Healing
 - Resistances (fire, electricity, cold, acid, poison)
 - Bless
 - Cures disease, blindness
 - Barkskin
 - Protection from evil/good
 - Psionics
 - Teleports
 - Insanity (temporary or permanent)
 - Intoxication
 - Delusion
 - Slow
 - Haste
 - Water Breathing
 - Polymorphing
 - Various potion effects
 - Causes disease
 - Water temporarily allows the drinker to see an aura representing the alignment of each individual that he looks upon
 - Sleep
 - Illusion of a treasure pile at the bottom of it
 - Muting or silence of

anyone who drinks of
it for a short time

- Filled with fish
- Random magical effects from the above list
- Bones at the bottom
- Some shiny object can be seen at bottom
- Hidden passage to underwater lair
- Filled with wine
- Green slime
- Clean drinking water
- Dry or empty
- Hot or boiling water
- Frozen solid



Room

- Deserted or seems to be
- Spins revealing a new exit
- Floor tilts when walked upon
- Slopes making people slide one direction or the other
- Floor drops one level when stepped upon revealing new entrances to the room and releasing monsters into the room
- Elevator room that has a lever somewhere in it which can make it lower or rise

Sconce in Wall

- If turned
 - Causes passage to shift
 - Causes staircase to slant downwards
 - Causes secret door to open
 - Causes the other sconces to spray gas into corridor or room
- Stepping on a tile in the passage causes all of the sconces in hallway to rotate downward and release oil into the passage which is soon set aflame

Stairs

- Collapse
 - Reveals a secret passage
- Distorted (seem longer or shorter)
- Teleport back to the top once a certain step is touched
- Sinks into the floor
- Hidden door beneath it where

guardians of the dungeon
wait in ambush with a
peephole watching the room
in which the adventurers
arrive



- Casts spells
- Screams for help
- Moves/Rolls revealing trap door below
- Turns
 - Hidden runes are revealed
 - Turning it towards a secret door reveals it or opens it
- Hidden panels
- Riddle on base
- Sinks into the floor
- Rises up to reveal hidden runes on base
- Hands extended
 - Pointing to something in the room or in the dungeon
 - Place something in the hand and statue does something beneficial
 - Arm can be pulled downward causing some effect
 - Opens secret door somewhere in dungeon or in this room
 - Opens a gate or lifts a portcullis somewhere
 - Causes statue to animate or a panel to open

Statue

- Steals from player
- Animates
- Asks riddles
- Gives clues
- Lies

- Any time that chair is moved to the table it teleports back to where it was
- The puzzle is how to get the chair back to the table in such a way that it does not teleport away. Then something valuable appears on the table.



Tapestries

- Disintegrates when touched
 - May reveal passage hidden by it
- If touched it falls on a player and acts as a rug of smothering
- If touched it turns out to be a polymorphed lurker above
- It is an illusion hiding a secret passage beyond it

Throne

- If anyone but the true king sits upon it
 - Disintegrate
 - Insanity
 - Delusion of royalty
 - Teleport to a prison cell
- Bestows statistics

Suit of Armor

- Animates and fights
- Has something valuable hidden inside
- Walks and talks
- Asks riddles
- Sings
- Rhymes

Table and Chairs

- One chair is not at the table but is somewhere else in room



- Random potion effects
- Temporary stat changes up or down
- Temporary psionics
- Greed inducing
- Sleep inducing
- Poison
- Thorns
 - poison
 - fire to protect the plant
- Covered in mold

Wall

- Collapses if touched
 - Releases some horrible monster or perhaps rust monsters
- Invisible
- Illusionary (hides passage)

Well

- Wishing
- Secret passage inside
- Valuable item hidden deep in the water of the well
- Wall around well is fragile and collapses causing anyone close a possible fall
- Water of well has random magical effects

Vegetation

- Magic berries with beneficial or strange effects
 - Enlargement
 - Diminution
 - Temporary insanity
 - Intoxication

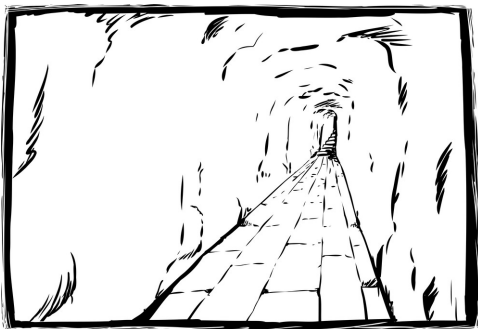
Some objects, of course, should be exactly what they seem to be. In fact....most should be. Otherwise it will be little surprise to your adventurers when this statue talks or animates or whatever happens. The idea is that occasionally something will not be what it appears to be. Or that the occasional item will have magical properties. That is what makes it a trick.

TRAPS in The DUNGEON

Ok. So there are a billion possible traps. And there is no chance that I could even scratch the surface of the topic in this tome. But in this tome I am going to list some favorites of mine which you might use in your own adventures. Of course, some of these may overlap with my discussion of tricks, as they may have a magical element to them.

#1 The illusion of a floor

The adventurers are traveling through a passage or a room which appears to have a solid floor. But there is no floor. Instead there is a pit of hungry wolves waiting. They can see the adventurers. But the adventurers may not be able to see them.



#2 Hallway Pits

This one is three illusions. The real pits are on the two sides of the hallway and are hidden by an illusion. There is an illusion of a pit in the center of the hallway which does not exist.

- Variation - instead of secondary pits on the sides there are spikes on the sides waiting to stick anyone walking beside the illusionary pit but one cannot see them because of an illusion of normal walls

#3 Collapsing Stairs

Two variations of this trap.

- One where the players slide into a nasty pit of spikes at the bottom
- Second where the players find themselves sliding into combat with creatures that they might otherwise choose to avoid

#4 Magic Staff That Holds up the Ceiling

Staff radiates powerful magic. It is also propped in such a way that it is keeping the ceiling from collapsing. It is only a magical aura. Not a real magical staff. Or perhaps it is a valuable staff. In either even the ceiling collapses if it is removed.

#5 Shifting Hallway

Blocks the exits when hall moves or forces party to move in only one direction when they might otherwise choose not to

#6 Falling Block

It could kill or it could block party from retreating or force them to move one direction rather than another.

#7 Idol With Gems

Crumbles if climbed on or the mouth of it closes on anyone reaching into it, or the brazier it holds tips over and spills flaming oil everywhere if the gems are taken

#8 Open Pit of Acid in Hallway

Invisible wall on the far side of the pit to stop anyone jumping across and make them land in the acid

#9 Heat Induction Hall

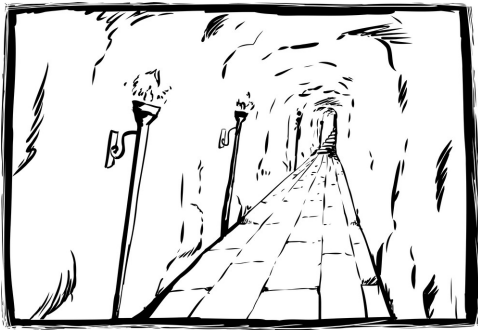
From White Plume Mountain module. The hallway gets hotter as the adventurers proceed in it making armor unwearable by the end of it. Some nasty beast beyond the hallway is waiting in ambush to fight someone no longer wearing armor.

#10 Elevating Hallway

Rises at one end to make adventurers slide to the other end and into some hazard

#11 Torches and Sconces

Hallway has lit torches in it. Step on wrong stone and they all turn dropping the torches onto the floor of the hallway and begin spitting oil onto these lit torches creating an inferno in the hallway



#12 Portcullis

Step on wrong stone and portcullis drops down blocking the hallway and splitting the party. The sound echoes through hallway and draws random encounter. This leaves party weaker to fight these wanderers.

#13 Caltrops

Released from the ceiling to prevent retreat or to channel adventurers in some direction that they do not want to go or to slow them from advancing while archers fire at them and spell casters cast spells

#14 Tilting Floor

If any weight is put on the floor it tilts in that

direction. There is a single axis in the middle which keeps floor from dropping into pit below. Anyone stepping on floor will cause floor to tilt their direction and drop them into pit below floor.

#15 Water Filled Tunnel

There is an air pocket in the middle. One could swim to this air pocket. But that air pocket is not air. It is poison gas, sleeping gas or corrosive gas. Perhaps something is visible in that air pocket that might draw the adventurers to want to visit the air pocket.

#16 Pit in Floor Hidden By Illusion

Something nasty waits in the pit. Perhaps a medusa. If player disbelieves the illusion then he sees the medusa and may turn to stone. This could work with a wall or door instead of a pit.

#17 Pit Trap

With crushing walls

#18 Chasm With a Rope to Swing Across It Hanging Overhead

Perhaps a kobold the adventurers are chasing uses this method of escape. But the rope is only strong enough for a kobold not a human or anyone wearing heavy armor. Or perhaps the kobold is waiting on the other side with a lever in his hand which will released the rope once the adventurer begins swinging across.

#19 Pit Trap

With a chute to the next level inside

#20 Hollow Stair in Staircase

One stair is brittle or hollow and breaks

when stepped upon. This traps the individual player on the staircase while monsters appear or perhaps there are blades inside of the hollow stair to maim the adventurer. Or perhaps it just drops the player completely through to take damage from the fall.

#21 Poison Door

The handle pulls off when the door is opened releasing gas into the hall. Or perhaps there is just contact poison on the handle or the door.

#22 Hollow Door

Door sticks or resists. If it is forced open it will break and release poison or corrosive gas from inside of the hollow space.

#23 Dry Rot Door

This door also sticks or resists or is locked from inside. Kicking or forcing it open causes it to crumble to pieces and releases level draining undead creatures waiting in the room.

#24 Rope Serpent

Rope is a polymorphed snake. Perhaps a constrictor.

#25 Sword Breaker

There is a visible peephole in the hallway or door. One can see movement in the peephole suggesting that someone is watching. Anything placed in the hole however will be destroyed as there is not anyone watching. It is just a moving blade or turbine that causes the peephole to appear to be occupied.

#26 Oily Bridge with a Stone Golem on it

Striking with metal weapons makes sparks.

This would be a bad idea

#27 Collapsing Floor

Floor drops one level. This reveals new entrances and exits that did not exist one level up. There are some nasty creatures hiding in these side rooms which will now see who has just arrived.

#28 Wrong Key Trap

Keys can be fun. Drop them everywhere. Some will do nothing. One will open something important. And some will cause serious harm to the person using them in the wrong locks. One might cause stone block to drop. Another might release some horrible monster into the room.

#29 Extension Bridge

Buttons seem to make the bridge extend or connect. But is this just an illusion? The bridge is over lava or acid.

#30 Illusionary Pit

It looks only five feet across but it is really ten feet across. Or it looks only ten feet deep but is really fifty feet deep.

#31 Chute Trap

Solid wall with spikes waiting at the end of it.

#32 Pit Trap

Begins filling with water or sand once something hits bottom.

#33 Two Pits in Row

Both can be seen. One could easily jump across each. But the patch in the middle of

them is coated with slick oil which cannot easily be seen in the light of the hall. Or perhaps the safe spot in the middle is just an illusion and it is really just one long pit.

#34 Chest Trap

Lock is trapped with an acid bladder to damage thieves tools

#35 Cage Trap

Slams down loudly and draws random encounters while adventurers try to free trapped members. Cage might just be solid rods that extend from ceiling or floor and connect to block escape.

#36 Chest With Two Traps

Once first trap is disarmed the second will arm. How often do your adventurers search for traps a second time? Or a third? Or a fourth?

#37 Pit Trap

Poisoned water in bottom. Causes paralysis leading to drowning in the pit.

#38 The Last Coin

Coin is stuck to the floor. If it is peeled off it a small hole is uncovered. Inside of this hole is something gaseous in form and very angry. An Efreeti or Djinini perhaps. This could be part of a treasure hoard.

#39 Reverse Gravity Pit

As adventurers are walking down hallway they notice that there is an open space overhead. If they step under it to look up they find themselves falling upward into a reverse gravity pit with spikes at the top. And how does one get down from there?

#40 Magnetic Wall

Metal walls with powerful electrical current running through them create strong magnetism that will pull players and hold them fast to the walls and do damage to both adventurer and their armor. Strong players might not be pulled but their armor will be pulled right off them and ruined.

And how does one get by this hallway with weapons and armor?

#41 Grinning Skull

Mouth opens and nozzle inside of it releases poison gas, sleep gas, other gas.

#42 Teleporting Throne

It is good to be the king. But it is not good for others to sit on his throne. Teleported to some nasty place, to a cell, or to the top of a pit trap. Or perhaps one ends up inside of an iron maiden.



#43 Door Trap

Trap door to a pit opens in hallway before the door whenever door is opened.

#44 Door Trap

Blade slices towards door whenever it is opened.

#45 Door Trap

Loose tile right in entry way releases guillotine blade which slices anyone walking in.

#46 Wooden Stairs

Extreme light wood like balsa or dry rotted wood. Collapse or shatter when stepped on with any weight. Drops adventurers into immediate combat in the chamber below.

#47 Fountain of Acid

Loose tiles around fountain causes the statue in the center to turn towards players and spray the acid towards them.

#48 Room Trap

There is a pedestal in the center of it. It has a valuable object on it. If object is removed the entire room drops except for the pedestal. Room drops like thirty feet and has passages leading to a new level.

#49 Flood

Step on the wrong stone in the hallway and adventurers head water rushing towards them. This channels them towards some area they do not want to visit.

#50 Idol

Idol looks like cover of PHB. Pull out it's gems and it spits oil out of the mouth of the statue. This oil passes over the flaming brazier it holds and sets the oil on fire. This creates a dragon breath effect in the room in front of the statue.

#51 Hallway with Terra Cotta Warriors or Statues with Weapons

Step on wrong stone and each statue turns in a different direction swinging it's weapon and hurting things in it's path.

#52 False Stairs

Step on these and stone block drops behind adventurers blocking them in forever.

These are, of course, only some possible traps one might use. And obviously I did not personally invent every one of these. Clearly others before me (and probably after me as well) have almost certainly thought of some or all of these. But these are a bit different than the basic ones offered in the DMG.

puzzles

Puzzles can be a great change of pace or diversion in a dungeon crawl. Be careful not to make a puzzle that is too hard but must be solved in order to advance in the dungeon. If the players cannot figure it out.....your adventure might be over and your work on it might be wasted. Not every puzzle will be solved. Be mindful of that.

Puzzles do not have to be extraordinarily complicated. Simple puzzles can be entertaining too. Obviously a complicated one is great if the players actually figure it out. Otherwise it may seem like a red

herring that is just there to confuse the adventurers and they may just bypass it.

Puzzles can consist of normal things that exist in the dungeon that must be manipulated in some manner or in some particular order to get the desired effect. Sometimes the adventurers might not even realize that they are solving a puzzle as they are pondering it.

For example some adventurers come upon a statue. In the same room they find a secret door. But they can find no means of opening the door. The statue is of a wizard with his hand pointing forward towards the empty hallway in which the adventurers arrived. Close inspection of the statue reveals that it can be turned. It is on a rotation base. If the statue is turned towards the door.....it clicks. And the door can be opened. This is a minor puzzle. It is easy to solve. And the reward is minimal. The adventurers gain passage to a secret area that they could not visit before solving it. If they do not figure it out. Then they move on and miss a small area of the dungeon.

One thing to consider is the list of features that I made above in this text. There are lots of things that are regularly found in dungeons, castles and other medieval structures. The key is to know how to manipulate them in order to get the desired effect. The desired effect might be to open a door or passage. It might be to cause a hallway to shift or a room to spin in a certain direction to provide access to something. The desired effect may be to get a statue to animate or tell it's riddle. There are lots of things that could be the desired effect. And there are lots of potential features to choose from to make that effect occur.

There are many possible puzzles for dungeons. And this volume will only scratch

the surface. Some of the puzzle ideas that I submit here will not be complete ideas. They may need to be fleshed out a bit in order to make them part of your campaign.

PUZZLE IDEAS

Alchemy

- #1 Powders, liquids and other substances are present with a scale. Puzzle is to find the proper formulae to make something worthwhile.
- #2 Powders, metal, chemicals, a stone and clues are found. Can the characters turn lead into gold?

Anvil and Hammer and Guardian

Somewhere in the dungeon is a guardian that cannot be killed by means available to the adventurers. But there is an anvil and a hammer and the materials nearby to make a special spear that will kill that guardian. Will the adventurers put it to use? Will they realize what it is for?

Box Puzzle

I once placed a box in one of my dungeons which had no obvious way into it. It was made of a strong material that was strong and could not easily be cut into. It was stuck in the mud in a cave. Clearly it must have something valuable inside of it right? The adventurers spent a great deal of time working on this puzzle until one fighter type decided to pick it up and smash it down.....and then discovered that the box had an open bottom to it and nothing inside.....

Chess Boards

Chess boards are classic for D&D puzzles. A chess set could easily be part of a treasure hoard or found in a castle or dungeon. Medieval times were boring. Entertainment was taken where it could be found. Playing a game of chess would be a logical diversion. And according to Wikipedia chess in some form or fashion has existed since the sixth century.

- #1 The adventurers arrive in a room with a chess set made of valuable materials. The pieces are real jade and marble. The board is made of the finest obsidian. Alone it is valuable. The pieces are, of course, set up in a classic chess problem. I will not detail the problem as there are tons of free sources for such things on the net. The solution, of course, is for the players to make the move that achieves check mate. What happens after that? That is up to you. A passage could open. A magical award could be achieved.

If the players just loot the set and go then that is all the reward that they will get.

- #2 The room is set up as a chess board. The pieces animate and fight as the players get close enough to take them. Players can only move as a chess piece would. Fighters move as pawns or knights, clerics as bishops, etc. Something on the far side of the board like a passage beyond can be seen. Cannot get across without taking the king and the queen isn't going to allow that to happen without a fight. And she is a powerful wizard.



Damsel in a Bottle

In one of Joseph Mohr's published adventures a girl is kidnaped by Sahuagin. She is shrunk and placed in a bottle with a limited air supply. If the adventurers find her she will need to be removed from the bottle. But how? If the glass is broken she may be hurt but will also quickly drown. If not removed from the bottle she will run out of air anyway and die. The adventurers found a water breathing potion in the temple so they have the means to keep her from drowning

once they get her out of the bottle. And there is a diamond found near where she was kept which could cut the glass without killing her.

A variation on this could be a ship in a bottle that can be made into a real ship if it is removed safely from the bottle.

Desert

The desert is encroaching on what was once a lush green forest. A fountain nearby supplies water in an endless supply from some magical source. Some pipes are nearby. If the adventurers use the pipes and the fountain they could irrigate the land and beat back the desert. I used this one in a desert adventure.

Dungeon Entrance

If you use this then be prepared to have multiple ways into the dungeon in case the adventurers fail to solve this.

- #1 A riddle or puzzle like in Lord of the Rings. The riddle to get into the Mines of Moria comes to mind. But it does not have to be a riddle. It could be some minor puzzle.

Faces of Monsters Carved into a Door or Into Several Doors

There are no key holes.

- #1 The doors are steel or solid stone. They cannot be broken down. Each face animates and speaks a riddle when approached. Each wants something in order to open. Or perhaps just the answer will open the door.

Faces Carved Into A Wall

These are relief sculptures where the face sticks out from the wall.

- #1 They could animate and ask riddles, talk, rhyme, speak nonsense or give clues. If pleased then they might reward with valuable information or grant wishes. If angered they might cast spells or curses.
- #2 Perhaps something in the room must be manipulated in order to have these reliefs animate. Maybe some object must be returned to the room.

Fountain with No Water Flowing

Broken pipes somewhere nearby that can be found. If the pipes are reconnected in some manner the fountain begins working again and the water has magical effects which are mostly beneficial.

Fountain with a Statue of a Black Dragon in the Middle

Acid instead of water in the fountain.

- #1 Perhaps the fact that black dragons spit acid might be a clue not to drink or bathe or step into the "water"

Glass Blower

A fountain nearby has magical water in it. But this water loses its magic if taken from the fountain. But there are the materials nearby to make glass along with the tools to do so. Perhaps a container made of this glass could hold the water without it losing its magic.

Gong

- #1 Strike it with anything but the wooden hammer that is used to ring it and wandering monsters will come or be summoned by the gong. Strike it with the proper instrument and monsters will be summoned that will aid the party for a time.
- #2 Gong is tied with loose ropes or frayed ropes. If it is struck it will make a loud sound and then fall and roll around making more noise. This will bring a random encounter immediately.

Hour Glass

- #1 The adventurers are on a mission to save a princess or some other important captive but they are too late or the villain kills them right as they arrive. But there is a magical hourglass in the room that allows the adventurers to turn back time and re-fight the villain at a point just before the moment he slays the princess. Will the adventurers notice the hourglass? Will they know what to do with it? Will they realize the possibilities?

Keys Puzzle

The adventurers find pieces of a key and must put it together to open an important door, gate or portal.

Lighter Than Air

Low level characters that cannot fly yet but who need to for some reason might find the materials to make a balloon. Would they know what to do with them though?

Machinery

In one of Joseph Mohr's published adventures the delvers fly to a cloud in the sky that has a castle on it. The cloud has stopped moving for some reason and is above a city. The reason why the cloud stopped moving is unknown.

In the castle is a great machine with many cogs and spokes but does not seem to be running any more. There is a rock stuck in the gears. The puzzle is to find the cause of the gears being stuck. A thief could climb in and remove the obstruction and get the cloud moving again.

Mithril Keys

Ok I am going to be up front and say I did not invent this one but it is one of my favorite puzzles.

The adventurers find a lock to some magical place that cannot be entered by any other means. It cannot be picked. Something valuable is clearly inside. In a room down the hall there is a barrel of water (or some other container filled with water) and a box of keys. Thousands of keys. Perhaps more. So many it would take forever to find the correct one. Or perhaps the door has a serious penalty for using the wrong one. Like a shock or something. Anyway there might be clues here to indicate that one of these keys is the right one and that the proper key is made of mithril. All of the keys look exactly alike.

To find the proper key one must remember that mithril is much lighter than even water. It will float if dropped into the barrel. The other keys will not.

Murals

Murals are likely to be found everywhere in the medieval or fantasy world. Art was one of the few available forms of entertainment that people could enjoy. There are lots of possibilities to use such art in your puzzle making.

- #1 The clues to a puzzle might be found in a mural in your dungeon.
- #2 Murals and frescoes and the like found in an old and decaying dungeon would likely be faded and chipped. One would have to look very closely to notice a tiny key hole in one. Where might this key be found? And what will it do once it is turned?

Painting of a Medusa

- #1 Look at the painting and turn to stone. There is mirror in the room. If the mirror is positioned in front of the painting then the medusa in the painting turns to stone. Behind the picture is a hidden scroll of value. Or perhaps the scroll is hidden inside of the painting itself.

Prismatic Wall

It blocks an archway leading to a valuable treasure. Somewhere in the dungeon are scrolls with the proper spells needed to break the wall (or other magic items that can perform the necessary function). Will the adventures realize that they now have the means to break through the wall?

Psionic Solutions to Puzzles

Perhaps the use of psionic powers or abilities might be required to solve a puzzle.

Some possibilities might include:

- Levitation
- Telekinesis
- Cell adjustment
- Molecular agitation
- Molecular rearrangement
- Molecular manipulation
- Astral projection
- Teleport
- Probability travel
- Telepathic projection

Quill and Parchment

If the quill is placed next to (or over) the parchment it begins writing on it's own.

- #1 Perhaps it writes a riddle
- #2 Perhaps it writes a message
- #3 Perhaps it writes a story
- #4 Perhaps it writes a scroll which is usable

Riddles

There are many wonderful references on the internet with riddles that can be used in a Dungeons and Dragons game. Use them to your advantage. Riddles can be used in your game in a number of ways. Riddles should be used sparingly. They can give your adventures a change of pace and can get even the shyest members of your party involved. Some possible uses include:

- A riddle on the wall in a room which is crushing inwards (trap) or flooding with water or sand (trap). In either case the riddle might allow an escape from certain death. If only the adventurers know the answer.
- A riddle on the entrance door

- to the dungeon (Lord of the Rings/Mines of Moria)
- A riddle on the archway into a new part of the dungeon. Perhaps the answer might provide an important clue somewhere down the line
- A riddle's answer that opens a secret door
- A riddle that protects a secret treasure

Rocking Horse (wooden)

Something is broken on it like the rocker legs. If fixed (or some other trigger) it becomes a unicorn and serves as a mount for the party.

Sand

- #1 Adventurers find a room with loose sand on the floor. Enemies are approaching from all directions. Runes with a riddle are located on the wall of the room or on a statue nearby. The answer to the riddle is sand. If answered the sand on the floor will shimmer slightly. It turns out that the sand is dust of disappearance and there is enough for the party to hide with.

Secret Doors

Many puzzles in my dungeons involve opening secret doors and passages. Although the adventurers may find a secret door.....this does not mean that they automatically know how to open it. Tapping walls and finding hollow spaces means knowing that a secret door is probably present. But finding the trigger that opens the door is another thing entirely. Possible triggers:

- A keyhole hidden somewhere

else in the room that requires a specific key found in the dungeon.

- The keyhole might be found in a painting, a fresco, a mural, in the ear of a statue, in the eye of some idol.....etc....
- Tilting a painting a certain way
- Turning the ball on the top of a stairway bannister
- Rotating statue
- Turning a torch sconce
- Lifting a torch out of a sconce
- Putting a gem in the outstretched hand of a statue
- Putting a log in the fireplace
- Answering a riddle
- Clock on a wall needs to be turned to midnight
- A slightly raised stone in the floor must be stepped on
- A slightly raised stone in the wall must be pressed
- A close inspection of a relief carved into a wall shows that one part can be pressed inward
- Hidden lever in the room or in a secret compartment nearby
- Something must be done elsewhere in the dungeon to open it
 - Placing an item in the outstretched hand of a statue
 - Putting broken pieces of a statue back together
 - Pulling some lever
- Pushing movable spots on a relief in the room in the proper order or sequence

- Whistling a certain tune or singing a certain song
- Saying the proper phrase (aka Ali Baba and the 40 thieves)
- Knocking on a certain stone in the wall
- Inserting a certain object in the room into a niche in the wall as if it was a key
 - Candlestick
 - Sword
 - Torch
- Turning an object a certain direction opens/reverse closes
 - Statue
 - Sconce
 - Idol
- Dripping blood on an evil altar
- Making an offering to an idol in the room by placing something in it's dish (in it's outstretched hands)
- Two stones sticking out from the wall or floor must be pressed at the same time
- Hidden lever inside the lid of a chest in the room
- Hidden lever inside of a crypt or sarcophagus in the room
- Manipulating the fireplace tools opens a secret passage behind the fireplace
- Manipulating objects on the mantelpiece opens a secret passage behind the fireplace
- A scale in the room needs a certain weight laid upon it
- Removing object from a pressure plate which keeps the door closed
- A relief on the wall has an open mouth
 - Food
 - Ale
 - Wine
- Water
- Coin slot in wall
- A musical instrument is in the room
 - Piano key
 - Piano or organ pedal
 - Harp strings
 - Or a particular song or note
- A rotating pillar in the room must be turned
 - Perhaps it has a hole in it in which a spear could be inserted giving leverage to turn it
- Rotating book case or fireplace
- The Harry Potter secret door made from a painting with an animated lady in which you must give a password to in order to go through
- The staircase that lifts up (the Munsters) revealing a secret door in the middle of it
- Lifting up the head of a statue (Adam West version of Batman)
- Pulling the right book from the book case (or tilting it towards you)
- From the hobbit the secret door that can only be opened when the sun shines on a certain spot revealing the keyhole
- Secret door is hidden inside of a wardrobe (Narnia)
- And of course.....there are billions of other possibilities

Skeleton

Bones are scattered around the room or even around the dungeon as a whole

- #1 Place the bones together again and it rises and talks. Asks riddles. Gives clues or tells a story
- #2 Perhaps a single important bone or the skull is missing from the room. It can be found elsewhere in the dungeon. If returned the ghost of the skeleton rises and tells a story, asks a riddle or rewards the adventurers if they bury the remains.

Spell Solutions

Some puzzles might require certain spells to be used as part of the solution. Some spells come to mind which might be part of such a puzzle.

- Telekinesis
- Levitation
- Rope Trick
- Tenser's Floating Disc
- Web
- Lightning Bolt
 - To electrify something
- Frost
- Fire

Statue of a Black Pudding

- #1 If struck by lightning it will split revealing a secret door below.

Statue of a Cleric

- #1 Has an offering bowl nearby. If anyone places coins in it the statue shimmers and heals them.
- #2 Place coins in the offering bowl and statue blesses party.

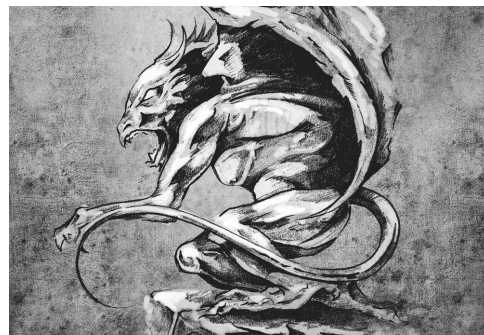
Statue of Dragon

- #1 Things on the statue can be manipulated. The head can be moved. The wings. The feet. The arms. The tail. Move the wrong piece then the statue spits acid, breathes fire, etc. Move the wings and perhaps it lays a golden egg from a secret compartment. Or something else of value.

Statue of Druid

Plant or animal in the room with it.

- #1 Water the plant or feed the animal and the statue heals, casts barkskin, summons animals to serve for a short time, etc. Do something bad to either of them and statue turns to bear form and attacks.



Statue of a Gargoyle

Many hands in different positions. One is upright if asking for something. If a gem is placed in the hand it will grasp the gem and something good will happen. If anything else is placed in the hand it will grasp that as well and use it as a weapon as the statue animates into a real gargoyle.

Statue of a Ghoul

- #1 Touch the ghoul and get paralyzed. Hidden compartment in the statue. How to get to it? Statue arm moves occasionally and might touch people close to it.

Statues of Goblins

Each one looks different. Different poses, colors, etc. Each one speaks when approached.

- #1 Each gives a clue or part of a riddle. Or each one wants something brought to it and gives some vague clue or riddle as to what it is that they require. Once all are satisfied a passage opens or a reward is given.

Statue of a knight

- #1 It is made of solid obsidian. If the wrong things are done it will polymorph into a black pudding or animate and fight. If the right things are done it will reward in some manner. To gain the reward perhaps the adventurers might return it's weapon, lower it's face shield on the helm or raise it's shield to defend itself from attack.

Statue of a Shambling Mound

A lightning bolt striking it would cause it to grow.

- #1 If it grows big enough perhaps it breaks through the roof.

- #2 Or perhaps it animates and speaks.

Statue of Wizard

Statues or wizards are commonly found in towers owned by them. Wizards are vain. They like to see themselves in such heroic poses.

- #1 Statue of wizard casting a spell. A large mirror is nearby. If the mirror is moved in front of the statue then the effects of the spell take place in the room. These spell effects might be:

- Passwall revealing a secret area
- Teleport the characters somewhere else in the dungeon without error
- Magic mouth which tells a riddle
- Legend lore which tells the adventurers something important
- Wish or limited wish
- Astral spell

Or place an object in his other hand that completes the spell. Perhaps runes on the base of the statue might suggest the spell being cast. The spell components might be what he needs to cast the spell.

- #2 Place statue of wizard in front of a mirror and the face in the mirror begins talking intelligently, gives advice, tells legend, asks a riddle or otherwise aids the adventurers in

their quest.

- #3 Wizard is pointing somewhere. Statue has a rotating base. If turned the secret door in the wall is unlocked. Or alternatively it is popped open or is highlighted so that the adventurers actually find it.

Sundial

A sundial that controls the opening and closing of the entrance to a dungeon. If one were to put a light source in front of it at such an angle to have the shadow fall on a certain time...the passage would open. Or the adventurers could wait for the proper time. But waiting might not be convenient.

Warhorse Puzzle

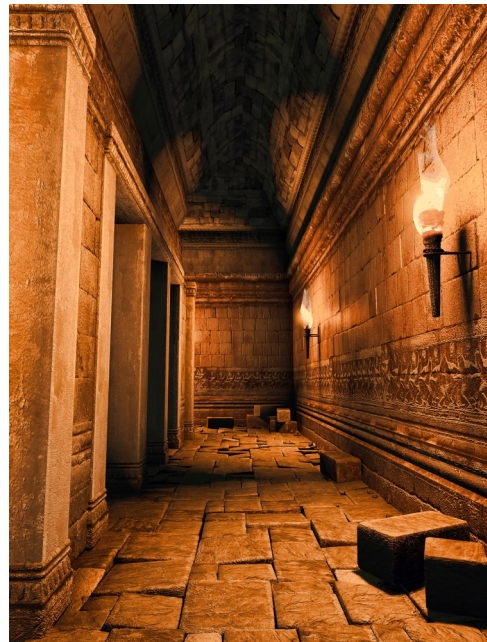
The adventurers need to get over a castle wall. They have rope. And there is a horse nearby. There is a high beam sticking out from the castle parapet (perhaps holding a banner or flag). If the rope is thrown over the beam the horse could pull them up.

ILLUSIONS

Illusions can be used in many ways in the dungeon. They can be used to confuse, harm or terrify the adventurers. And they can be used in other ways.

- #1 An illusion of a boulder trap causes the adventurers to run into an area of the dungeon that they were not prepared for.
- #2 An illusion of a long dead wizard informs the players, gives clues, tells legends, casts spells at them or even talks intelligently.

- #3 The illusionary floor trap I discussed earlier



- #4 The illusionary bridge trap I discussed earlier

- #5 Illusions used with monsters can be

effective. Even if the spells of the illusionary magic user have no real effect or the damage from the illusionary monster might have no permanent effect they might cause the adventurer to believe that it did. And if the fall unconscious the real monsters can do damage.

For example put an illusion of a powerful wizard or lich with some real undead creatures and watch the fun. The adventurers will focus all their damage on the illusion and not on the real creatures.

- #6 Illusionary traps that make the adventurers think that they have been harmed.
- #7 Demon Princes and Arch Devils might appear to have many body guards nearby. Are they real? Or just illusions?
- #8 Perhaps the boss of the dungeon has many illusionary guards to make himself look more powerful than the adventurers.
- #9 Illusionary walls can hide passages or hide treasures in plain sight.
- #10 An illusionary Beholder with lots of illusionary eye powers.
- #11 A real beholder with illusionary gas spores around him to make adventurers think twice about attacking

NASTY **encounters**

Sometimes your adventurers know a little too much about this game for their own good. They know every monster in the manual. They know every magic item in the DMG. And they know all of the rules by heart. So it is time to mess with their minds. Mix things up a little bit. Give them some encounters that they do not expect....and may not survive....

- #1 Kobolds One - I mentioned this one previously in this text. Some kobolds wait in a large room with a hidden pit between them and the arriving party. A couple of them hold torches. One kobold out of sight stands by a lever that releases the trap door. If the fighters charge in then the trap door lever is pulled and the slayers fall into a pit of oil. The torches held by the two kobolds are dropped into the pit just as other kobolds arrive behind the remaining party members from secret doors in the hallway.
- #2 Kobolds Two - I love kobolds. They are so weak. Players are not afraid of them at all. After first level most of them last for one swing of the sword. So players tend to do cocky things when they encounter such weaklings. And this is their doom.

Kobolds may be weak. But they are clever. And they prepare for their defense.

Adventurers arrive in a room and face a kobold king and his entourage. A kobold out of sight stands by a

- lever. The lever releases some monsters that are much more powerful than the kobolds are from their cages hidden in secret rooms behind where the adventurers arrive. Yes the kobolds might regret doing that if they survive the battle and the adventurers do not. But they are not gonna go down without doing some damage.
- #3 The Illusionary Floor - This one was also detailed earlier but bears mention again. This one is a combination of an illusion and a monster and a trap all in one. The floor of a passage or chamber is but an illusion. Those who recognize it will not step forward and will find themselves separated from those who do not.
- The floor is really just a big pit. In this pit are lots of nasties that cannot get out of it on their own and are hungry for flesh. Wolves, hell hounds, undead and other type creatures are good possibilities.
- #4 Remember the troll from the picture in the DMG? An adventurer walking in the dungeon finds one end of a piece of string. He follows it until he finds a troll that is holding the rest of the roll. Setting up adventurers is part of the fun. Sometimes they do things which are predictable and stupid. Which brings me to my next point.
- #5 I once put a dagger (poisoned) on an altar for my adventurers to find. There were runes in some strange language which they deciphered that said.... "use the dagger and place a drop of blood on the altar and receive your reward" or some such nonsense. Naturally a player did. And died from the poison.
- #6 Another of my favorite pictures from the DMG sets up another nasty encounter. It is easy to set this one up. The adventurers find a room with bones scattered about. Someone steps in the wrong place and a steel portcullis falls on both exits sealing the room as water begins filling it. When the adventurers are most engaged in trying to find a solution.....the bones rise up as skeletons and attack.
- #7 One of my favorite tactics is to set up traps that do not really harm the adventurers but which force them into choices that they would not ordinarily make. Channeling traps such as stone blocks, collapsing ceilings, iron portcullis and the like can fall behind adventurers and force them to go one direction. And that direction takes them to the nastiest encounters in the dungeon. As the villain it is in my best interest do weaken the party before they face me. It is my duty!
- One variation of this is a trap which releases tons of water quickly. This may sweep the adventurers one direction, block their retreat and damage them at the same time. And then they find themselves immediately in combat with something they did not want to meet.
 - An illusionary boulder rolling down the hallway that causes some of the adventurers to

dive into another room or passage which has nasty creatures waiting in ambush. Separates the party at just the right time to cause chaos

#8 Ambushes are another favorite encounter of mine. My minions are not always so intelligent. Most of them are undead you know. And their minds are well.....not there. But usually I have something more intelligent leading them. And I have them set up an ambush at a point in the dungeon where they pretty much have to go in order to get to me. A secret door beneath the stair case is often missed when the adventurers descend to the next level. This is even more true when you put something else more interesting in the room with it. A magical fountain or statue perhaps. Anything that draws their attention from searching immediately for secret doors and gets them looking elsewhere. From peepholes my lieutenant can see what is happening in the room and begin the fun.

Sometimes I set up other ambushes in the dungeon. A favorite of mine is to place a narrow bridge over a chasm or lava or something. Archers behind barricades hide beyond the bridge on the other side and will begin firing once the adventurers approach the bridge. They have cover so it is not easy for the adventurers to kill them with missile weapons or spells. If they want to win they will have to charge across and things could get messy. Perhaps someone on the far side has a lever that causes the bridge to collapse? What fun!

#9 Sometimes I like to mix in some other creatures into a pack that have special abilities but look just like the others.

- Ghosts in a pack of ghouls
- Shadow demon in a pack of shadows
- Ghost in a pack of spectres or wraiths
- A real beholder in a group of gas spores

#10 This one is not really an encounter but just a nasty trick. As a Lich my only real vulnerability is my Phylactery. Some of my brethren wear it or carry it with them but that is a serious mistake. If someone is powerful enough to kill your physical form it is a mistake to have your phylactery where they can find it easily. Obviously you want it protected. And it is quite tempting to have it where the most dangerous creature in your dungeon (me) can protect it. But that is a bad mistake. Even I have been struck down on occasion. My survivability has been ensured by making the phylactery hard to find or identify.

- I had an acquaintance that kept his hidden inside of an old book in his library. There was a space cut out of the pages and the book was some boring tome on elvish poetry so no one missed the parts that were cut out anyway. Elves have far too much time on their hands. No one ever found it. Because no one was ever interested in Elvish poetry.

- My personal favorite though it to have too many phylacteries to choose from. Why have just one around? Yes I can only bind my soul to one of them. But the adventurers have no idea which one. And these things are too valuable for the adventurers to go around crushing them all. The first time I was struck down the idiots thought that they had destroyed me. And then they sold my phylactery in the market as loot. The next time it happened they did not bother trying to figure out which one was the right one. They found so many of the things that greed took over. They clearly were not going to destroy all of them and lose the money.
- #11 A rolling boulder trap that is easily avoided if the adventurers split the party with some jumping into one room to avoid and others jumping into another. Of course...both rooms have nasty creatures in them.
- #12 A long hallway filled with nasty level draining undead. At the end of the hall is a lever. But how can one get there without being noticed? Hiding in shadows would have little chance of success. Invisibility might work. Or it might not.
- #13 A talking monster that is normally hostile but wants to make a deal
 - Wants an enemy slain
 - Offers a reward
 - Offers explanations that suggest that his interests and the party's interests are aligned
- But all of these things are a lie. He just wants to weaken the party and then attack
- #14 Lesser Undead with a master that can prevent them from being turned
 - Alternatively placing an evil shrine nearby that the undead are bound to and will not flee even if presented with a holy symbol
- #15 Mimic pretending to be a treasure chest acts as bait for a lurker above in the same room
- #16 Stirges flying around in a cave with piercers hanging down
- #17 Piercers in a cave with shriekers
- #18 Bugbears with war drums for summoning allies

obstacles in the dungeon

Obstacles are non combat encounters in the dungeon that present a problem for the explorer. It might be a blocked passage or a high wall to climb. These I like to sprinkle around my low level dungeons before the adventurers are able to just use magic to bypass them. In some cases they may have to use magic to get by them even at higher levels. This gives the characters a chance to use their natural class abilities to solve some problem on behalf of the group.

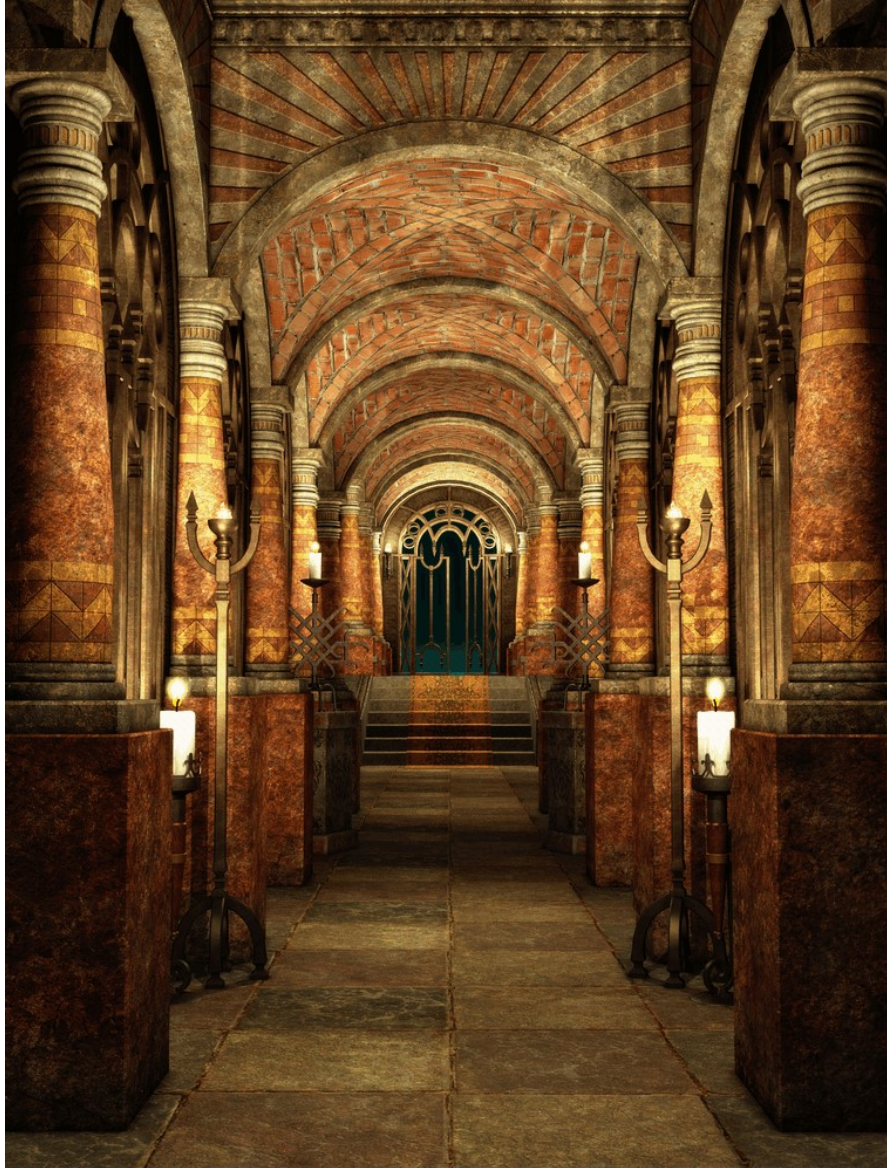
- #1 Rusty portcullis that won't budge

- #2 Rubble, collapsed wall or ceiling, blocking a passage
- #3 High wall, cliff, something that needs to be climbed
- #4 Prismatic wall or force field blocking a passage or an archway
- #5 A passage that dead ends in a deep pit. But somewhere in that pit another hallway begins. Adventurers must climb down (or up as the case might be) in order to continue exploring.
- #6 A wall of whirling blades (blade barrier)
- #7 A hallway filled with poison mist
- #8 A raging stream, river, etc
- #9 A body of water filled with piranha
- #10 Obvious traps that must be crossed or bypassed
 - Open pits with poisoned spikes
 - Pools of acid
 - Lava
 - Crossbow traps set up in a crossfire hallway
- #11 Rope bridge
- #12 Rope ladder
- #13 Rickety wooden bridge over a raging flood
- #14 Tight ledge
- #15 A falling block

#16 Yellow Mold

TReAchERY IS A GooD ThIng!

For an evil lich like me anyway. I hope that you have found some useful ideas in this tome for use in your next total party kill...er....adventure I mean. Tricks, traps, puzzles and illusions are the Dungeon Master's friends. Use them well and your adventurers will be entertained as well as destroyed.



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