

Riddle Me This

A system neutral guide to creating riddles, puzzles, tricks, and enigmas for you roleplaying game. Includes forty unique riddles customizable to your game. The appendix includes black and white version of visual puzzles for ease of printing.



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Deductive Riddle

Your classic logic puzzles like the wolf, sheep, and lettuce raft. The riddle presents certain premises and the deducer must use those logical starting points to come up with the correct answer. Alternatively, the riddle can rely on a novel situation which the quizzed must figure out.

1. Logic riddles almost always **start with a known logical conundrum or question** rather than beginning from a chosen solution. Work out a way to shoehorn the expected solution into the role playing situation you need it for, often times this will mean rewriting the fluff and flavor of the riddle without changing the substance. Turn light bulbs into magical candles, for instance.
2. Perform a careful reading of the description to **count the number of clues in the given description**. If this is less than three, try to modify the description to provide another subtle hint at the correct answer.
3. **Create clues exterior to the riddle** that can provide extra aid to skilled player characters. Good sources of this are the body language, inflection, emphasis of the riddle giver, representations of the riddle in the surroundings, or the characters calling attention to a specific part of the riddle.
4. **Give yourself an out** by writing a happenstance nearby to the players that hints at the solution. Something falls in a certain way or a creature in the distance bellows in a pattern. This is especially necessary if the riddle is a chokepoint in the adventure.
5. **Design the consequences** of an incorrect guess, allowing for creative attempts to circumvent the riddle entirely to work with some sort of cost. Take a “yes and” or “yes but” strategy to player creativity.

“Riddle of the Sands”

The following riddle is posed by a sphinx to pass through their desert valley to an oasis. “Your goat has fallen down a deep, cylindrical hole in the desert. It landed softly in the sand below and is now standing atop the pile, bleating. The only tools you have on you are a short leash, a five-foot walking staff, and your robe. The goat is carrying your water skins, rations, and empty backpack. How do you get your goat out of the hole?”

Three hints are contained in the riddle itself: the presence of sand in the hole, the goat climbing the sand, and the fact that the geometry of the hole is specified while other dimensions are not.

An observant character doing careful reading of the sphinx’s enunciation and emphasis will reveal that the listed items sound as if they were improvised.

An intelligent character would note to think what other objects, items, and resources are at hand which are not explicitly mentioned by the riddle. These might include shoes, sand, rocks, or the water in the waterskins.

In the distance, a goat herder brings his flock hopping happily along the top of a sand dune. One falls, but quickly shakes itself free of sand and hops on top of the small avalanche pile.

SOLUTION

The items are useless as the rope is too short, the staff too weak to be used as a beam, and the robe not sturdy enough to be turned into more rope. Instead, you must pile sand into the pit so the goat can climb out.

“The Masks We Wear”

A theatrically masked person speaks up, having somehow seated themselves amongst the group at a nearly empty tavern. As players reach for weapons, the figure assures them that they will come to no harm, but the masked figure does have information that might aid them in their search. However, the group must seem worthy and intelligent enough to put the information to good use, prove that they have the mental capacity to think things through logically and from many perspectives.

“Five automata stand before their master, looking to test her creations logical capabilities and quick thinking skills. She holds up a bag, clinking metal resounds from within, and states,

“Within this bag I have placed a number of masks, at least one of which is bronze, while the others are silver. I will hand each of you a random mask then drop the curtains between you. You must figure out what color mask you wear. This test is set up so that each of you has equal opportunity to be the fastest.”

Before she can even hand out masks, all five automata raise their hands to answer. What will their responses be and how do they know?”

For one versed in a knowledge of history, mathematics, or arcana, a skill check would tip them off to the idea of how the automata, knowing that the others are also perfect logicians, would act. If no other automata respond after the curtains are dropped, do the automata gain new information?

The logically inclined, on passing a skill check, would think to draw out the five possible mask distributions, from 1-5 bronze masks. Do any automata have an unfair advantage in guessing their own mask in any of these?

Solution

The solution to this puzzle is that all the automata would be given bronze masks. In any other situation, the mask distribution would be unfair to those with silver masks. For instance, if only one automata had a bronze mask, it would see four silver masks and know that it had the only bronze mask, while the silver masks would see three silvers and one bronze, unsure initially what they wore. For the case of two bronze masks, the two bronze mask wearers would see one bronze and three silver masks. When no automata had guessed initially, that means that the other bronze mask saw at least one other bronze mask, meaning that the two bronze masked automata would know what mask they wore. This is true for large numbers of bronze masks, merely increasing the number of iterations where no automata raise their hand before the bronze mask wearers know what they wear.

In this way, the only fair game would be one where all entrants wear a bronze mask, so that they all have the same chance of knowing what they wear at the same time. Thus the automata in the example would know they will wear bronze masks even before the game begins.

Logic Grid

Alternatively, many puzzles require deducing possibilities and cross-referencing hints. These types of puzzles are described as logic grids. To create a logic grid:

1. **Select your grid size.** Each increase of any of the three categories exponentially increases the size. A 3x3x3 grid will be a very easy riddle. A 3x5x4 will be a moderate riddle, and so on. The larger the puzzle, the more clues will be required to solve it.
2. **Create your categories.** These should be groupings that all fall into one type of thing: names, professions, places, monsters, colors, numbers, etc.
3. **Decide on the answers.** Create a copy grid that you mark with the correct answers of what corresponds to what.
4. **Write your clues.** Use a blank copy to work towards the final answer by creating clues. Clues that confirm one or more connections between categories are the most useful, followed by clues that disconfirm one or more connections between groups, and finally down to the weakest clues that are conditionals. Conditionals require other clues and answers to already be filled in to have a possibility of being useful, but they can also be red herrings if the first part of the phrase “if ___ then ___” is not true or if the second part happens regardless of the first part being true. Clues can involve word-plays or other types of puzzles, but for the puzzle creator should probably add another clue for every two riddle-clues.
5. **Mix up the clue order.** Test these clues with a new blank grid. Test it again in reverse order.
6. **Create another two clues** above what is required to solve the puzzle to give to player characters with high intelligence or who complete an intelligence check. Alternatively, hold on to these to release when the players get stuck or frustrated.
7. If this puzzle is required for the players to progress, a bottleneck in the adventure, add another clue or make an existing clue twice as useful. Puzzles with workarounds, even as simple as taking the time and wandering monster chances to smash through it, or that lead to extraneous things like treasure can be left as is.
8. For younger players or those inexperienced with puzzles, feel free to explain hints on how to solve these grid-puzzles. Mark known connections with an O and known non-connections with an X. When an O is placed, all other boxes in that row and column must be X's. If all the other boxes in a row or column are X's, then the last one must be an O.
9. For a group that doesn't like grid-puzzles or as a last resort, allow them to make intelligence or solving skill checks, with their check indicating how long it will take their characters to solve the puzzle. Then, abstain from introducing more grid-puzzles in the future and make your clues twice as easy in the future...

“Three Statues”

Standing in this room are three statues, three cloaks, and three stone weapons. Upon the door is a carved plaque listing a number of clues. To open the door to a vault or advance beyond, the players must correctly place the cloaks and weapons on the statues. Once all cloaks and weapons are placed, if they are in the incorrect places, the statues animate just long enough to attack for a moderate amount of damage.

	Arrow	Hammer	Dagger	Green	Purple	Orange
Jester						
Knight						
Smith						
Green						
Purple						
Orange						

The Jester would never wear anything with Yellow in it.

If the Smith wields the Hammer, then the Knight is Orange.

The Jester refused to work with Blades after a juggling accident.

The Arrow is held by one with Yellow.

The Knight thinks the Arrow is the most cowardly weapon to use.

The one in Green wields the Dagger.

Intelligence checks can reveal additional hints to the players based on the higher intellect of the player character.

Hint 1: The Jester is allergic to feathers.

Hint 2: The Knight can be Orange even if the Smith does not wield the Hammer.

SOLUTION

	Arrow	Hammer	Dagger	Green	Purple	Orange
Jester						
Knight						
Smith						
Green						
Purple						
Orange						

“Monstrous Neighbors”

A topographical map of a strip of land is built up of colored clay and miniature natural features. Three loose pieces of terrain sit on the side of the table, with one circular slot in each. Three miniature monsters are attached to small, circular bases: a fairy, a giant, and a goblin. The miniature creatures have poseable arms that can hold one object. They can be put in three poses -sleeping, fighting, or eating- and carry one of three items -wood, glass, or iron-. A ribbon-bound note holds a list of clues. If the miniatures are put in their correct terrain, in the right pose, and given their intended item, the topographical map will open up. Inside the wooden table there is a magical treasure map that leads to a valuable cache.

	Wood	Glass	Iron	Forest	Mountain	Hills	Fey	Goblin	Giant
Sleeping									
Fighting									
Eating									
Fey									
Goblin									
Giant									
Forest									
Mountain									
Hills									

Iron and glass are too hard to sleep on.

Giant's hate glass, it breaks easily and is very itchy.

The hills are between the mountains and the forest.

If the giants live in the forest, they make use of its wood.

If the fey live in the hills, they are always fighting for the highest vantage point.

The ones that live in the forest allow no iron, fearing the trees would become angry.

The giants cannot sleep in the forest, they're too noisy.

The giant's refuse to live next to the goblins.

Only a goblin would eat glass.

If iron is in the mountains, only a goblin could dig deep enough into the mountains to get iron. Fey dislike using glass.

Intelligence checks can reveal additional hints to the players based on the higher intellect of the player character.

Hint 1: Glass is not durable enough for fighting with.

Hint 2: The hills are the only source of iron.

SOLUTION

	Wood	Glass	Iron	Forest	Mountain	Hills	Fey	Goblin	Giant
Sleeping									
Fighting									
Eating									
Fey									
Goblin									
Giant									
Forest									
Mountain									
Hills									

Word Search Puzzle

1. **Select a word search style.** Are the players filling in the words or are they searching an existing group of words or letters for an answer?
2. **Choose the result.** Make sure that this result gives a clear indication of its use or next steps to be applied in the situation.
3. **Create the word search** by writing the full set of words around the desired answer. Use a thesaurus or google search synonyms if you are having trouble. Make sure the words used are ones the players would have heard before. If not, ensure that the word comes up casually in the game session preceding this puzzle.
4. **Design the hints.** A common puzzle with known like a word search or blank answers with underlined letter spaces count as a single hint, total. At least one clue should be written for each word the players are intended to find. Remaining hints to bring the clue total up to 3-5 hints should be used to spell out where to use the discovered word(s) or their relation to other pieces of information. These have the double effect of providing the players a way to self-check their problem solving as they go while also guiding their next steps.
5. **Think up two additional hints** that can jumpstart a stalled investigation. Alternatively, you can provide alternate means to reach the next stage of the adventure instead of either or both clues. Alternative paths should be easily discoverable even if they might be costly.
6. **Roll with any random words that appear** when you fill out the remaining puzzle with letters, incorporating them if possible or removing them if not.

Sample

“Roll Call”

The following is a handwritten scroll discovered on the desk of a clerk in a holy order who has been missing for a few days after skulking about at night and being reprimanded for going through people’s personal items. It appears to be an unfinished roll call sitting next to a closed inkwell, cleaned pen nib, and scribe ruler.

Roll of Mar 8 [Date is incorrect, but the month is]

Paladin_Esteban
Emily_Squire
Ambassador_Marcosh
Courier_Ilya
Jennifer_Gatekeeper
Duane_Abbott
Page_Karrinia
Douglas Armsmaster

If the desk is investigated further, the players will find a false bottom in the drawer containing a note about discovering a group of traitors within the order. The note finishes by saying that the clerk will send an encoded list of the suspects to the head organization in the morning with his normal roll tally, but is leaving this note in a hidden place should he fail. A small ‘XIII’ is written in cursive at the bottom.

Asking about his daily schedule will reveal that he was last spotted going for an evening walk after dinner, leaving from his room with ink stained hands. The people listed on the scroll missed various parts of dinner for a smattering of different reasons, although none were gone at the same time nor do they normally associate if others are asked about them.

This is not the full roll, but the clerk takes the roll by wandering to check on each member, recording as he goes. Other roll calls can be found in bound books, with varying orders and numbers of people, dates corresponding to each month.

The lines of text seem oddly misaligned for someone with a ruler to set lines.

DM NOTE: Make sure to print these so that the alignment works out and the font is monospaced meaning the letters and spaces all have the same horizontal width. This font is courier, but other monospaced fonts work just as well.

SOLUTION

Roll of Mar 8 [Date is incorrect, but the month is]

Paladin_Esteban
Emily_Squire
Ambassador_Marcosh
Courier_Ilya
Jennifer_Gatekeeper
Duane_Abbott
Page_Karrinia
Douglas Armsmaster

“Spiraling Out of Control”

A floor, deep in the goblin caves near the shaman’s room, is covered in a carved spiral of random letters. While the text seems to move and crawl in peripheral vision, it holds still when observed. No magical power remains in these letters, but they did contain power. A butchered calf, drained of blood, sits in the corner.

Goblin Cave Carving

```

M B
G M C O N T R A C T W T I Z P A Y C J
Y U Z L C J T S Z C O N Q U E R C W C
R C M X W U
S J Z O I Q Q T X S M P F D C G Q
A P Z A U E N J F J T B X Z D T D
C F K B L M H S V E
R Z K W L E Y F T O I U W Y V
I I C U H W J J K N C M I G I
F V H C O P Z F K L A C W L
I V O F T A I F F Y N S L P
C N R F V A V B S U U M
E U G E U J A P O W E R R S S B
W C F L V A X B L O O D E J K S
W O H U O F Y I
K W T X O Z J H D U E R P S S R G D
Z A F M G M V R H S U M M O N R E E
V O Z M
Q M D G A D K H J R G J G H I J E T W O
F V O B O A F A R M Y B T Y N Y Y Z L N
    
```

Knowledge of arcana points to this style of spiral as being related to ritual magic that is being deliberately obscured with extraneous lettering.

Studying the stonework of the letter carving, some letters appear to have been dug before the others, based on the traces of dust found in their cavities. [DM to reveal a random few letters of some words]

SOLUTION

No particular word is required knowledge from this puzzle, save that the more words found, the clearer a picture the party can surmise of the goblins’ plans. Goblins will sacrifice cattle to summon a demon army to conquer the humans and empower the goblins. It is likely that the players would want to stop their cattle rustling and warmongering even without this background to figure out what they are doing. This is not a bottleneck, but may help the players prepare for demons in the upcoming battle, so it requires only a few clues. If it is repurposed as a required puzzle, it will need two more hints like a practice word searches the goblin shaman had drawn in the dirt elsewhere in the cave or a hint among the cattle ranchers that goblins cannot read words spelled backwards.

Goblin Cave Carving

```

M B
G M C O N T R A C T W T I Z P A Y C J
Y U Z L C J T S Z C O N Q U E R C W C
R C M X W U
S J Z O I Q Q T X S M P F D C G Q
A P Z A U E N J F J T B X Z D T D
C F K B L M H S V E
R Z K W L E Y F T O I U W Y V
I I C U H W J J K N C M I G I
F V H C O P Z F K L A C W L
I V O F T A I F F Y N S L P
C N R F V A V B S U U M
E U G E U J A P O W E R R S S B
W C F L V A X B L O O D E J K S
W O H U O F Y I
K W T X O Z J H D U E R P S S R G D
Z A F M G M V R H S U M M O N R E E
V O Z M
Q M D G A D K H J R G J G H I J E T W O
F V O B O A F A R M Y B T Y N Y Y Z L N
    
```

“Fine Candies and Pastries”

A cutting of a local newspaper is given to the players when they are looking for a secret clubhouse dealing in magical candies. The advertisement is as follows:

“Look around for those forgotten pieces of gold and gallop real slowly over to Big Johnny’s fine candies and pastries. Enjoy this word search kids!”

```

P D E T Q J T H I S T H O S E
E G N B D L O G R E V O P S J
P V N U I D F N E I E M P E K
P H K U O G X O W R I A K I I
E U C S N R O F Z T V R B D D
R B F R P E A F V S N S Q N S
M C Z T A E T E K A C H R A Y
I P H R Z E X T C P Q M K C N
N I I A E V S O O B O E F O N
T E T N F K O D O G A L A E H
R C B D O K C Z R D R L O N O
A E S O I A H U F O J O T J J
Q S L E O G K H S I W W F O S
U W S I A M K O J G N P G Y T
C Z I Q J H Z N R X F E I I W
    
```

```

PEPPERMINT
SUCKER
MARSHMELLOW
CANDES
PASTRIES
CAKE
COOKIES
    
```

Questioning the store employees about the extra words makes them nervous but apologetic for not having looked over the word search and regretful of any unfortunate words. If the passphrase is mentioned to the employees, they apologize that they cannot accept deliveries as they must be brought to the rear.

Staking out the candy store will reveal a decent amount of foot traffic goes through the alley, despite it not really being a shortcut between the adjoining roads.

SOLUTION

The true word list, revealing “gallop real slowly” as the phrase missing from the sentence. Many words not present in the official word list are intertwined with the correct words. As all three words of the phrase are missing, it should be a clue that the words are not missing by accident.

```

P D E T Q J T H I S T H O S E
E G N B D L O G R E V O P S J
P V N U I D F N E I E M P E K
P H K U O G X O W R I A K I I
E U C S N R O F Z T V R B D D
R B F R P E A F V S N S Q N S
M C Z T A E T E K A C H R A Y
I P H R Z E X T C P Q M K C N
N I I A E V S O O B O E F O N
T E T N F K O D O G A L A E H
R C B D O K C Z R D R L O N O
A E S O I A H U F O J O T J J
Q S L E O G K H S I W W F O S
U W S I A M K O J G N P G Y T
C Z I Q J H Z N R X F E I I W
    
```

```

LOOK
AROUND
FOR
THOSE
FORGOTTEN
PIECES
OF
GOLD
AND
OVER
TO
BIG
JOHNNYS
FINE
CANDES

PASTRIES
ENJOY
THIS
WORDSEARCH
KIDS
PEPPERMINT
SUCKER
MARSHMELLOW
CAKE
COOKIES
    
```

Going to the back alley of Big Johnny’s and giving this passphrase to the locked metal door will get the players access to the secret, black-market business.

“Dead Joke”

Having finally met the lich, or at least some sort of illusory avatar, the stretched skin on the face of the dead creature pulls back into a grin. He tosses a thin sheet of slate with ebony trim at the players. On the slate, there are short phrases followed by blank spaces, a few of the letters are encircled with paint. At the bottom is a longer sentence followed by another set of blanks, all of which are painted. After barely a moment, the lich starts, “Well, what is the answer? I will be very disappointed if you cannot figure it out. I had such high hopes for you lot.”

The black hawk CONFLA — — — —
 A point, a line, then nothing IINASTEGEDTR — — — — — — —
 Cycle of Lycanthropy RALNU — —
 Get up without a pulse MNEIATA — — — — —
 Gem of royalty YTSHAMTE — — — — — —

My bird handling act is quite popular, you could say I have a

A character with lyrical or literature background will groan when they realize that the answer is a lich pun.

An intelligent or lucky character who passes a skill check would receive a hint that the last word of the solution is the place where birds of prey are kept.

Solution

The black hawk CONFLA F A L C O N
 A point, a line, then nothing IINASTEGEDTR D I S I N T E G R A T E
 Cycle of Lycanthropy RALNU L U N A R
 Get up without a pulse MNEIATA A N I M A T E
 Gem of royalty YTSHAMTE A M E T H Y S T

My bird handling act is quite popular, you could say I have a
 F U L L A C T A E R I E

Upon giving the correct answer to the lich, he vanishes in a puff of smoke, with the following words echoing in the air, “and you’ll never find mine, so stop looking!”. The door unlocks and opens to the next chamber.

Riddles

1. **Select the correct answer or answers.** Alternatively, start with a clever pun, rhyme, or wordplay.
2. **Create the corresponding wordplay** or answer given the above.
 - a. **Describe the answer in an unusual way**, often in multiple, seemingly contradictory ways.
 - b. **Give multiple descriptions of the answer** but rely on an alternative definition for each one.
 - c. **Use the answer in a poem**, with the rhyming scheme or syllabic pattern being a natural fit for the answer to fill in the blank.
 - d. **Break the answer word or phrase down into its constituent parts** or into words that sound like its parts. Use those parts as the riddle instead. Treat this usage as a multi-stage riddle and create twice as many clues.
3. **Treat each separate description of the answer as a clue.** This can include a clear rhyme that gives a hint to the answer, each definition of the answer within the riddle, or an instance of a pun or wordplay of the answer. If this is less than 3-5 hints, add more to the riddle, unless it is a non-essential component to the story.
4. **Write an additional two lines continuing the riddle's style** to serve as additional clues for intelligent characters run by players unable to solve the riddle.
5. **Be open to reasonable solutions to the riddle**, especially if this is a bottleneck required to advance. Present alternative paths around the riddle if it absolutely cannot be changed to a different answer, even something as barbaric as smashing down a door or sly as discovering a secret passage around the blockage.

“Lock”

The following riddle is posed by a magic door animated to speak a single riddle in exchange for passage to the next chamber. When it hears a response, it repeats the word and asks if that is the intended answer. Upon confirmation, it will judge the answer. An incorrect answer will cause it to shout for thirty seconds. Although the guards of this dungeon are long deceased, the noise is likely to attract wandering monsters. Failing to answer within one minute will put the mouth to sleep. After five minutes, the mouth will animate again when a creature comes near.

A step inward of the sea.

Golden rings about a little she.

Above the barrel, hammering explosively.

Arm held out, prisoner cannot flee.

A clever character can make wisdom or intelligence checks to reveal additional lines, perhaps based on a half-remember saying that they encountered before.

Hint 1: A pair together could lift a boat for fee.

Hint 2: One said to win, assuredly.

SOLUTION

Lock

“Sister”

A burial cairn has a large boulder set into the entrance, with a phrase carved into it in an ancient language. While a character would recognize the language as an archaic form of common tongue, the boulder itself will not budge. It is held in place by magic and moves slightly when someone speaks, taking the word or phrase spoken loudest as the answer. The answer is magically carved into the boulder.

Should they give an incorrect answer, a skeletal guardian or rock elemental rises up to fight the intruders. Defeating the guardian clears the answer and allows a new guess. Successfully answering the riddle will move the boulder aside, allowing entrance into the sister’s resting place.

Three brothers could not beat me, though they fought with all their might.

Steel, and fire, and arrows did naught but increase their fright.

Imagine when a sibling struck with holy power,

A warrior, a mage, and ranger argued hour upon hour.

Each brother claimed the win, certain it was theirs,

Which among them turned back my beast, which deserves the airs?

Multiple hints are strewn throughout this riddle: specifically naming three brothers but listing it as a sibling that defeats the monster, noting three professions of the brothers that tie in with the useless attacks, and the way the riddle switches between referring to siblings in general and three brothers in particular. Additional lines can be given to a player character with a successful charisma, performance, or wisdom check as they get a feel for the rhyming scheme of the riddle.

Hint 1: How many siblings had fought that day?

Not all were given their due, some say.

Hint 2: Graceful and keen the victor was,

To have won as quick as she does.

SOLUTION

Their sister.

“Caltrops”

In a general's tomb the players will find on one of her lieutenant's coffins a plaque that reads, "Like a child's toy you dance. Like a child's toys askance. Man and beast find me a thorn, From a bag, I am born." An armored skeletal guardian, upon seeing the players read the plaque, moves to guard the coffin, asking the group to prove their tactical knowledge by answering the lieutenant's riddle. If they get the answer wrong, the skeleton will attack. If the group parley's or reduces the skeleton's hit points to half, the skeletal guardian will allow them a second guess.

A character skilled in tactics or military history can reveal these additional hints with skill checks.

Hint 1: If the point is up, take care.

Hint 2: The point is always up.

SOLUTION

Caltrops.

“Meat”

Imprisoned by a group of man-eating elves, the players are presented the following riddle by the shaman. If they get the answer right, they will be granted their freedom and if they fail, they will be cooked alive. Should they choose not to risk an answer, the elves will try to kill them before cooking.

Burn it, beat it, make sure its dead. Brown-brown, Red-brown, Red and red.

Musical skills, knowledge of folklore, or a similar skill can reveal the following additional lines of the riddle.

Hint 1: Maggots are bad? Maggots are bad.

Hint 2: Me. Me. Save a cut for me!

SOLUTION

Meat.

“Coal”

Orphan chimney sweeps clambering the rooftops around the players while they engage in clandestine operations will often be heard singing the following:
“Black ‘round the eyes, the better to sneak. Black in your lungs, no longer to speak. Black in air, fire will shriek.”

If the players give them a response or ask them about the rhyme, they will laugh in their faces.

A character with backgrounds with a hard urban upbringing or connections in the underworld can reveal up to two extra hints with a skill check.

Hint 1: Clink clank; Black, on metal squeak.

Hint 2: Black from the ground, under the peak.

SOLUTION

Coal. Giving this code phrase to the chimneysweeps will make them trust you and be quick to offer information of what they’ve seen and heard.

“Iris”

A talking snake is coiled around a palm tree at this lonely oasis in the desert. When the players, half-delirious, approach the pond, the snake lunges forward demanding the intruders play a game of wits to access. If the players agree, the snake offers the following riddle:

“I sit in the eyes of merchants and paupers alike. Beauty is seen by my opening. Surrounded I am by a swirl of color.”

For each answer to be presented, the players must present a limb for the snake to bite if they get it wrong. Should they get it right, they will get access to the fresh water.

Literature oriented characters or intelligent characters can reveal additional lines with a skill check calling upon their specialization and skills.

Hint 1: Is it all in your head or down on the ground?

Hint 2: I am largest in darkness or in sunny spring.

SOLUTION

Iris.

“Lion”

A mechanical type setting machine sits with an adjacent bin of type. With the pull of a lever, the machine can ink and stamp the set type. Above the machine, set in the wall, is a plaque reading, “His pride is all he cares for, yet he will ignore the finest jewels and baubles. No matter your sweet words, you could never place a crown upon his head.”

Branching out from the machine are copper wires running into the grout of the tile. If an incorrect word or phrase is entered in the machine, electricity shocks all the creatures in the room.

Characters with knowledge of nature or jewelry can reveal two additional hints with a skill check.

Hint 1: He must defend against men that would take everything from him.

Hint 2: His shout will make you shudder and his golden hair is admired.

SOLUTION

Lion.

“Bees”

Wandering through the forest at night, the players start to see will-o'-the-wisp in the darkness and hear whispering in their ears,

“Bramble bungalows, bearing bright;

Burrows bristling, blooms blessed;

Bumbling.

Brood. “

A character relying on a sense of lyrical word plays, bardic skill, or having a knowledge of nature can reveal two hints with skill checks.

Hint 1: Bared behinds brought by bother.

Hint 2: Baritone buzzing. Bleating bears.

SOLUTION

Bees. If the players answer correctly, the wisps will leave the players alone but if they answer wrong, they will begin to swarm and either attack or cause the characters to become hopelessly lost to drag them into dangerous marshy areas.

“Timed Target”

In the lair of a mad wizard, driven insane by pursuit of immortality, is a host of animated furniture. The door to this room held a carved sentence, half in cursive. Struck, Struck, Struck again, the needles in my eye. Hurry! Quickly! Tell me, exactly which am I?

The room holds just about every type of furniture that can be imagined, but the exit door on the other side has a large metal plate set in front of it with an ‘X’ marked on its surface.

The furniture in the room moves around to avoid being captured and they shriek when brought near the metal plate.

A craftsman or wise character can make skill checks to reveal additional hints.

Hint 1: Circles. ‘round and ‘round they go.

Hint 2: Impossible they say, for two needles here to meet!

SOLUTION

Clock or Target. Rounding up the appropriate furniture will take a little doing but bringing the object to the platform will disintegrate the object and open the door. It gives a blood-curdling scream upon being destroyed.

“Lost”

Meeting with a local monk in this remote town, the monk introduces themselves, offers tea, and then presents this riddle as a conversation starter.

Round and round, the trees they went,

No pointer could show the way.

Not after their guide was rent,

Could they hope to get away.

What are they?

Wise characters or those able to read the body language of the monk can reveal additional hints with skill checks.

Hint 1: If only they had brought, collected, wandering thought.

Hint 2: Time is the cost, the whole being crisscrossed. Look to the side of the trees mossed!

SOLUTION

Lost. If the players can give the right answer, the monk will be pleased and more amenable to helping the players.

“Mordenkainen”

When the players enter the final room of the dungeon to face down the wizard, the wizard reads a spell then asks the following riddle, “To make things interesting, if you can guess my riddle’s answer, I will recall my summoned pet

His call produces a hound. His home contains a whole plane in. His dismissal stops magic around. This wizard ...

One skilled in the arcane arts or magical history can make skill checks to gain additional hints.

Hint 1: The master to the master of the hand.

Hint 2: His name is studied by mages new and old.

SOLUTION

Mordenkainen. Upon answering correctly, the wizard will give a knowing smile, unsummon his minion, and then draw forth a magical artifact. He will say, “I am going to need this against a worthy foe, and if I should fall, it is yours to keep.” On an incorrect answer, the wizard will summon another minion and say, “Minions, clear away these unworthy foes.”

“Scimitar”

A trader in the desert, upon seeing strangers will call out to them with the following riddle.

Serpent of metal, reaver; that razored edge, curved star; A red crescent, cleaver; I draw forth my ...

A character with trading skills or diplomacy can make skill checks to gain some hints.

Hint 1: At arm’s length, it bites deepest.

Hint 2: Without, the janissary is not dressed.

SOLUTION

Scimitar. By answering correctly, the merchant will greet the players kindly and offer their wares at reduced price. An incorrect answer will cause the merchant to display his wares with a disappointed look, muttering about the lack of cultural appreciation these days.

Visual Puzzle

Spotting a pattern, filling in a blank, color mixing, and noticing differences between two things. These are going to be your standardized test/IQ test type pictures or your coloring book activities. The answers to these puzzles will have to be a contrived drawing solution that relates to some mechanism, magical sensor, or as a clue to match to other symbols.

1. **Choose the type of visual puzzle.**
2. **Select either the puzzle solution or rules first.** Fill in the other.
 - a. Starting with the solution, decide what constraints or rules would lead to that solution then write the puzzle to include those.
 - b. Starting with a puzzle, work through the logic presented, adding new constraints as needed, and then tie whatever solution results into your scenario.
 - c. Pattern puzzles can be created by drawing empty shapes, spaces, or a matrix then filling them in with whatever pattern comes to mind. Then, for the player version of the puzzle, remove a step or shape from the pattern. The answer is to fill in the missing piece with the correct entry.
 - d. Color mixing puzzles can be started by setting up the basic network of mixing. Create a number of nodes and connect them with arrows indicating direction and mixing. Starting from either end, either inputs or outputs, fill in the remaining nodes with what colors would result from or result in the known nodes.
3. **Create a basic explanation of the puzzle.** This serves as the introduction of the players to the puzzle and works as the first clue.
4. **Write hints based on the puzzle type.**
 - a. For pattern puzzles, the initial hints should be gauged by the number of instances of the pattern provided with extra hints adding more recursions. Alternatively, the puzzle can be judged for difficulty by the complexity of the pattern, with each additional step making the puzzle much harder.
 - b. Color mixing puzzles rely on an understanding of the color wheel, to have the characters mix the provided colors in the right quantity or order to produce the colors called for in the riddle, perhaps with a limited selection to choose from. The description of the mechanics of color mixing can count as one hint, as does the selection of colors available as inputs. Additional hints should identify useless colors or reference specific inputs as necessary.
5. **Designate at least two alternative solutions** that can still work if the puzzle is unsolvable by the players. Ignore this step if the puzzle is not necessary for the plot, adventure, or dungeon.
6. **Test your puzzle by mixing up the clues.** Try changing the facts of the puzzle slightly to see how that changes the result. Work through the problem starting with the solution to get to the hints and again from the hints to the solution.

“Trial of the Artist”

Five inputs basins that feed into a glass covered panel. The rivulets in the stone behind the glass coalesce at various points to mix their lines, before branching out to reach three stone mouths at the bottom. The mechanism will not start until all input basins are full. Bits of red powder collect in the corners of the room and below a small, stone cupboard that pops open to reveal six glass vials of dye. The dye dries almost instantly to a powder outside of the specially coated glass vials or input basins.

The following vials of color are present in the stone cupboard: Yellow (2) Blue (1) Red (2) Green (1)

An educated character that succeeds on a related profession or craft check can reveal these hints:

Green is an equal mixture of blue and yellow. Brown is an equal mix of Red, Blue, and Yellow.

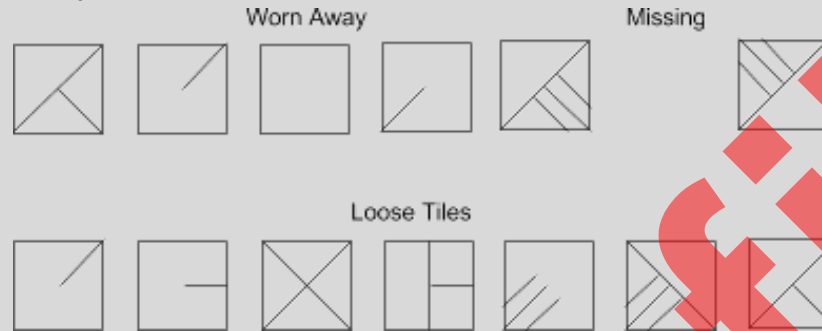
If one of the vials was emptied, it could be used to mix dye outside of the machine.



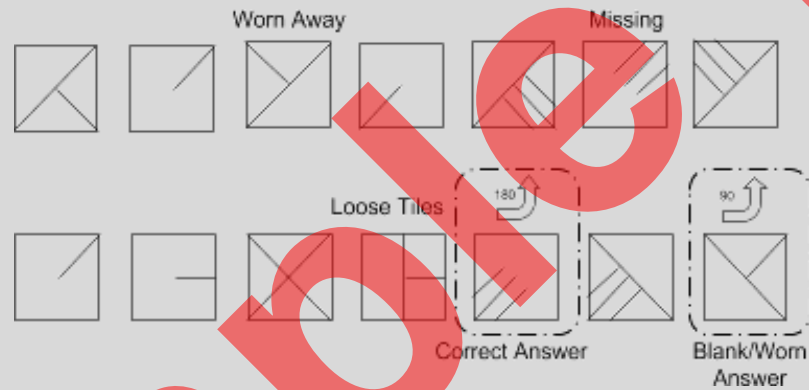
This puzzle requires all six vials. One red vial must be dumped to make space to mix an orange dye outside of the machine.

"Dark Tomb"

Deep within the ancient mine, revealed by the recent landslide, is a sandstone door predating known history. Symbols are present on the doorway in a sequence, save for one worn away by time and another missing from its slot. Set within seven slots on the adjacent wall are a number of square stone tiles loosely fit into the wall bearing similar symbols.



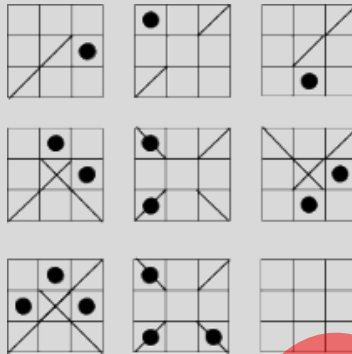
SOLUTION



“Recursive Analytics Society”

Those seeking entrance to this secret society will find mysterious notes, puzzles, or coincidences appear in their vicinity. Others might discover these puzzles put in place in dungeons, tombs, or other abandoned locations. Solving the riddle will attract the attention of the creator to take note of possible recruits.

For those not familiar with raven’s matrixes, the idea is that the shapes presented follow some sort of pattern that can be used to identify the missing block. Normally, a multiple choice solution would be given, but that is for a timed test.

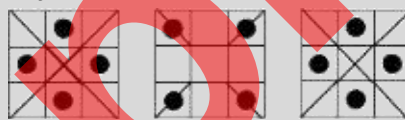


If the players become stuck or want to take advantage of an intelligent character, they can make knowledge checks to reveal additional hints.

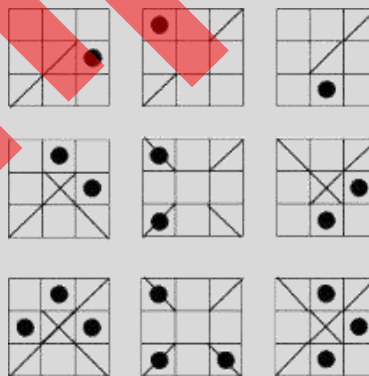
Rotate the squares in the first row for a hint to crack the puzzle.

The fourth column will be the same as the first.

The fourth row and beyond would look like this



SOLUTION



Moving one square right causes the line to move one diagonal square in the same direction it runs while the dot moves left two and up one. If that would move the line or the dot off the square, they wrap around to the opposite side or corner. Each square down copies the square above with an added 90-degree counterclockwise rotation. These rotated patterns also rotate the direction the dot and line will move. Knowing the correct pattern is not required, only the right result.

“Opening Scene”

The players have been given tickets to a pirate themed opera by their benefactor in the hopes of cracking a secret organization. The only information that the players or their benefactor have been able to get out of captured agents in the past are that this society uses theater groups’ opening scene props to encode secret messages to their high-society members in distant cities. The players also have a list of prop items. Your benefactor needs to know where to start investigating.



Sabotage Scimitar

Assassinate Ring

Diplomacy Fish

Trade deals

King Shingle

Bribe Barrel

Merchants Belt

Captains Lantern

Soldiers Feather

Infiltrate Shadow

Extort Diamond

Rob Tankard

Taxmen Gloves

Judge Rosary

Hire Eyepatch

A wise character or a lucky one could note that not all objects listed are in the opening scene, even if they are there in an unusual meaning of the word.

Every single piece of this scene seems meticulously designed, especially as a stagehand hurriedly brings out a barrel just as the scene is about to open. The actors hold their initial poses for an awkward length of time before beginning the scene.

A gentleman in the back got up and left as soon as the scene began. An astute eye might notice the piece of paper he dropped, which has the same list the players have with some of the items crossed off.

SOLUTION

Find what isn't in the scene to construct the clue: Sabotage diplomacy.

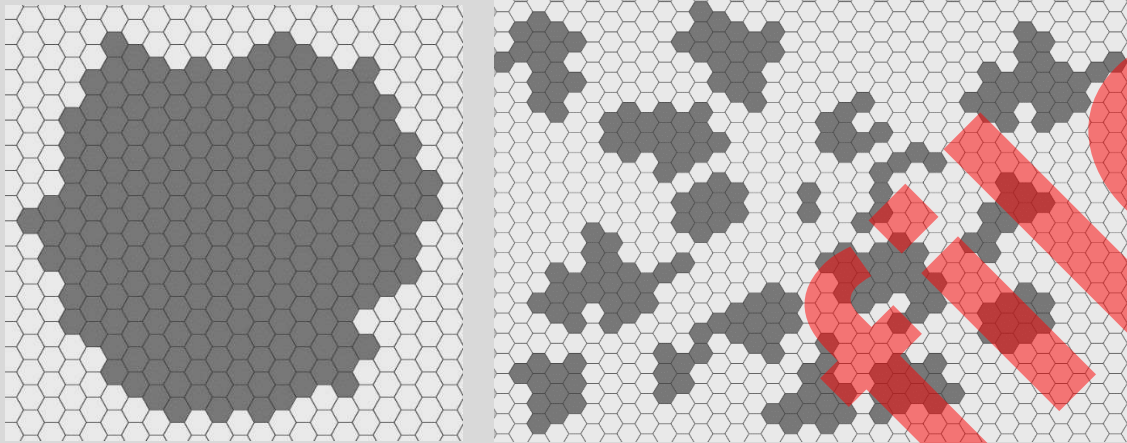
This is the plan of the secret organization, hinting that the players' next step is to stop the organization's efforts to sabotage important diplomatic work.

Geometry Puzzle

1. **Decide on the base shape** that the geometry will be based around such as squares, triangles, hexes, etc.
2. **Create a solution or puzzle design.**
 - a. To set the solution, draw the final shape that the constituent pieces will form including any hidden messages, shapes, or patterns that the pieces combine to create.
 - b. For a puzzle design, start by drawing out individual pieces, cut them out, then start fitting them together until you achieve a useful or interesting shape.
3. **Fill in the other.**
 - a. From a solution, work backwards by carving up the solution piece into individual pieces, ensuring that the random shapes are mostly or entirely unique from one another.
 - b. Starting with a puzzle design, combine the pieces you have created. If the geometry puzzle is intended to contain a pattern or phrase, write that across the combined pieces. If the puzzle is simply to combine the pieces correctly, then record the final outline of all pieces combined.
4. **Design your hints.** The base shape of the constituent pieces, the basic nature of a geometry puzzle, and the presence of many pieces can all count as hints. That makes this style of puzzle fairly easy to place in a game without worrying too much about hints. Additional hints can and should be created.
 - a. A very odd shape that can only fit in one or two locations within the intended shape.
 - b. Pieces that can only fit together in one or two ways.
 - c. Coloration or patterns on the pieces that can be matched together.
 - d. Different depths or craftsmanship of the pieces or receptacle to indicate lost, replaced, or recently used spaces.
5. **Carefully note factors that make it harder** and count as a negative hints.
 - a. A nebulous or lacking outline that provides no guidance as to the final shape the pieces should make.
 - b. Extraneous pieces that do not belong in the final collection.
 - c. Missing pieces that are hidden or destroyed, even if not essential to the solution.
6. **Create additional hints** for players that become stuck or frustrated. These can be of the same type as the previous hints made, but these should only be revealed upon a successful skill check related to geometry, design, knowledge, or intellect.
7. **Test that your puzzle** by reconstructing the puzzle from the pieces. Ensure that any patterns line up correctly and fit within any intended receptacle. Attempt to assemble the pieces incorrectly, rotated, and backwards. Alter any pieces that can fit in the puzzle incorrectly so that players do not get confused or pursue the wrong line of assembly.

“Shattered Floor”

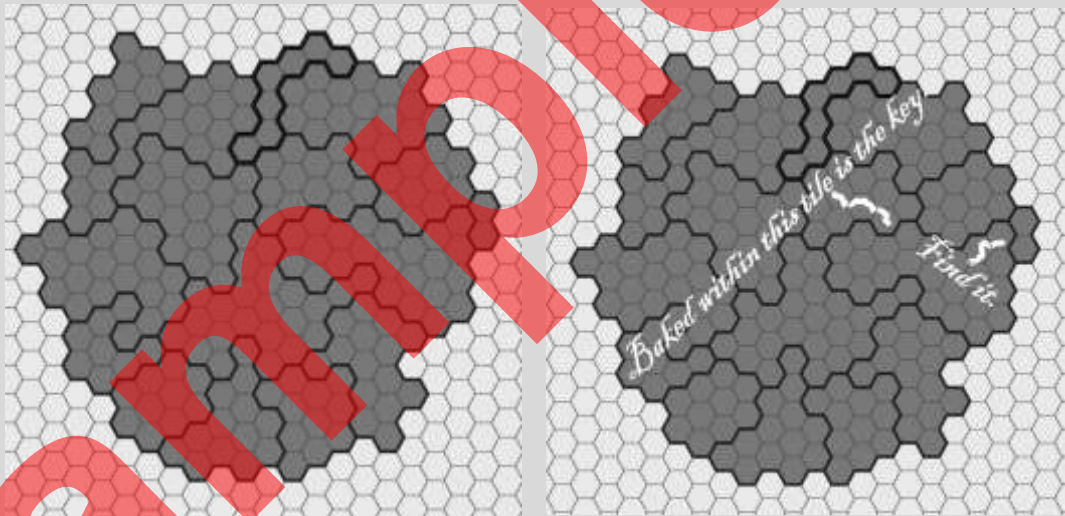
Scattered and broken mural stones sit in a pile in the floor near an area of missing tiles. A hole in the ceiling opens up to the stars and moon above. The hexagon tiles leave a large gap in the floor, revealing unworked stone beneath.



A character versed in stonework or craftsmanship can notice the different depths of cut that were used to level the tiles and identify a few tile locations.

An intelligence check will receive the hint to start from the edges, placing what tiles are the only possible ways to fill the edge spaces.

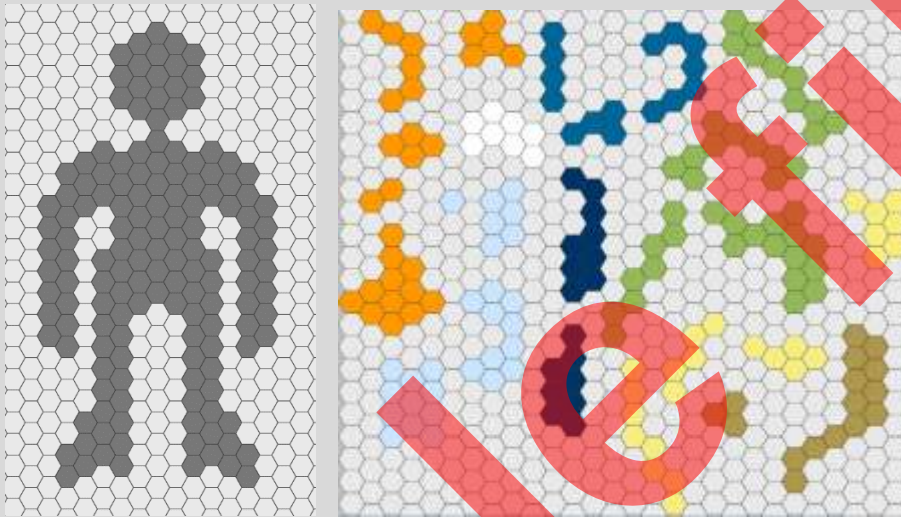
SOLUTION



When the moon strikes the completed puzzle, it reveals the image on the right. The small, 2x1 hex is the key to the door. The actual solution is to take the small 2x1 hex tile and use it as the handle on the circular vault door where it sticks like a powerful magnet. Bringing that tile near the door reveals a powerful attractive force between the door and that tile, pulling it towards the center of the door.

“Cobbled Cobbler”

Various colored tiles made of shaped hexagonal pieces are scattered around this abandoned tomb. When the players come upon a shattered sarcophagus deep in the tomb, a ghostly voice implores them to restore their burial lid so that they can pass on to the afterlife. Inside the sarcophagus is a flat stone lid with a hexagonal depression formed into a humanoid shape. The ghost explains that the players can salvage stone sacred tiles from elsewhere in the tomb to replace those that were destroyed. The pieces are not hard to find and are quickly gathered now that the players note them to be useful.



A character skilled in stonework, masonry, or art would notice, having discovered all the tiles, that the pieces are not all required.

Many of the pieces seem to only fit in a single space and would be a good place to start trying to arrange a new burial mask.

SOLUTION



This is the intended solution, but if the players can make a different solution work, including by carefully carving new tiles or modifying the existing tiles, that solution is perfectly acceptable to the ghost.

Philosophical Riddle

Philosophical riddles are similar to logic puzzles or riddles with the twist that their rules depend on the giver's morality or lead to it.

1. **Write the basic moral principle** or lesson that the riddle is intended to convey, reinforce, or test.
2. **Design a scenario around putting that principle to the test.**
 - a. Force the characters to act counter to their intuitions in order to follow the moral rule.
 - b. Set up a puzzle that utilizes the philosophy as its basic rule.
 - c. Generate a riddle where the answer is the statement of the moral rule.
3. **Create the hints to the puzzle.**
 - a. In a situation where the morality of the riddle creator is known, minimal hints are needed to tie the riddle to the creator's morality.
 - b. In a situation where the morality is not known, add at least one additional hint as to the moral principle underlying the puzzle.
 - c. Alternative ways to examine the problem can also serve as clues to the riddle, such as other NPC's that can be questioned, diary entries that can be read, a holy book discovered, or a past result that failed the riddle.
 - d. If the creator is present, their body language and tone during different parts of the explanation can give away clues. These can be noticed in retrospect by a skilled character.
 - e. Unlike other riddles, the penalty for failure is often directly related to the morality of the puzzle and can serve as a hint if the penalty is given.
4. **Write up at least two additional clues.** Philosophical puzzles can seem very obvious in hindsight but can be almost opaque to your players. Assume that it will be significantly harder than you imagine and prepare alternative routes around this riddle as well.
 - a. One clue Clues can take the form of revealing unorthodox but legal answers, moves, and actions.
 - b. Clues can also extend additional statements of the implications of the moral principle.
 - c. An extra hint could be a reminder to think in terms of the creator's intent rather than common sense.
 - d. A secondary route can be as mundane as smashing through a door, hiring a priest to pass a test, or fighting the riddle creator. It doesn't have to be an easy or cost-free secondary route though.
5. **Analyze your riddle for ways that they can be gamed,** passed on a technicality, and cheated. Resist the urge to patch these holes and instead change the wording on a hint or two to suggest that possibility. Leaving a shortcut or cheat like this is an excellent way for players to show off their skills.

“A Losing Bet”

Within the game room of a local gambling den, a group of robed figures following a god of the void beckon the players to join. As the players are hoping to join this society to infiltrate, they want to make a good impression. A normal game of chess is set up on the table and the lead figure invites the player to lose within three moves, going first playing white. Their opponent, black, will play to win.

An intelligent character might remember a foolish series of moves known as foolsmate that can cause a player to lose in the first few moves by opening up their king to the enemy queen or bishop.

A wise character or one skilled in obscure religions might remember that this group believes that nothing done in the world matters, that it is important to concede the illusion of reality.

SOLUTION

Either foolsmate, moving the pawn diagonal to the king forward so the enemy queen can checkmate after moving one of their own pawns forward, or conceding are the ways to lose within three moves.

“Just Have Fun”

Sitting in the middle of a kobold cavern is a hodge-podge machine covered in interlocking gears, whirling wheels, levers, buttons, bells, whistles, and signs. One button has graffiti above it, “DoNNT PUSH”, and another says, “DU PUSH”. Kobold gangsigns of individual nicknames and tickmarks cover a wall below a carving that says, “NAME” above one column and “FUN” above the other.

Careful observers and quiet players will hear kobolds whispering and giggling behind one of the stone walls where a closer inspection will reveal peepholes.

Close investigation of the stonework of the cavern will find the trapdoor to the kobold area, but if the players attempt to use it before getting kobold approval the kobolds will attack.

Mechanical study of the column of machinery will reveal that most objects are not attached to anything and those that are connect solely to noise makers and gear movers in the column itself.

SOLUTION

Only after the players have pushed and pulled levers, buttons, and gears for a little while will the kobolds come out of a trapdoor giggling about how many fun points the players earned. They will rush to carve what they guess are the players' names onto the wall with the number of tickmarks. They allow the players access through their trapdoor.

“Hypocritical Hippocratic”

In the room just before the hallway leading to this room, the players find a pedestal bearing a single scroll wrapped around an ivory rod. Upon this scroll is written, “First, do no harm. While the way may be difficult, life’s truest rewards come to those able to turn the other cheek to their foes, healing friend and enemy alike.” The wand can be easily identified as a source of magical healing with limited charges. Unbeknownst to the players, it has enough healing magic to heal ten times the amount of damage the holy creatures in the other room have taken.

The hallway leading to this chamber has a long mural of a paladin healing different foes through many scenes. This includes a number of the wounded or bestial entities attacking the paladin as the knight applies white light magic to the creature’s wounds. Scrawling across the bottom are the words, “The only way forward in this world, the surest end to fighting, is to be the change we seek. Blood begets more blood until the whole world drowns.”

A stone door at the other end of this room is made of stone with no handle depicts a mural of a woman with stigmata about to be speared by a demon and italicized text underneath. “We must bestow upon our enemies what they will not and do not reciprocate so that one day we can live in peace.”

Entering this space, four vertical sarcophagi spring open and human berserkers lurch forward. They ooze red blood from their wounds as they stumble forward to attack anyone in the room with weak claws, punches, and bites. The people can keep taking punishment, held together by a spiritual force even as decapitated or delimbed. They do not pursue out of the room.

A well trained cleric or undead-hunter can identify that these people are not human nor any kind of necrotic undead, but are instead animated with holy magic.

Observant or wise characters should notice that the mechanism of the room does not change with any amount of damage dealt to the creatures and to destroy the creatures, the group would have to obliterate every scrap of the creature. Combat may not be the intended solution.

SOLUTION

When all four of the creatures are returned to full hit points, they fall to their knees and make motions begging for forgiveness before they shamle back to their coffins. The humanoid creatures start with a small amount of hit point damage each. This amount plus the amount dealt to them by the players must be healed. Just as the coffins seal, the creature's wounds reappear, resetting them to having a small amount of damage. Alternatively, if the creatures are dealt a staggering amount of damage, the holy energy animated them fails. This fails to open the door but does clear the creatures away so that the players can break down the door or confound its magical mechanism in peace.

Game Puzzle

This sort of riddle or trick is based on a game of wits. In this game, the players are given a specific game state of a common game like chess, checkers, or the like. They must use logic and strategy to beat a spiritual or magical opponent. This can be anywhere from a whole game to asking for a single move to ensure victory.

1. **Choose the base game** that this puzzle will be based on. Decide what ruleset of that game to use.
2. **Select a scenario to solve or a solution.**
 - a. To build a scenario from a solution, work backwards from the solution's game-state a number of moves or turns until you reach a suitable starting point.
 - b. When starting with a predetermined game state, work out the solution.
 - c. Tie the solution to the surroundings or lore of the game.
3. **Test your game scenario** for the probability of alternate wins and accidental losses. Ensure that your puzzle is written well enough to know what moves you will take in response to the possible moves available in the game. Adjust as needed. The more steps or choices available, the harder the puzzle is to design and the more confusing it will be to the players.
4. **Write hints into the description of the game.**
 - a. Make sure you can describe the general rules well enough for them to count as a hint. Be open to explaining any details asked by your players.
 - b. Keeping a description of the "foe" controlling the game opponents can count as a clue if their personality or behavior can be predicted based on the information.
 - c. A clear description of the current state of the game also counts as a hint.
5. **Create two additional hints** for the game type riddle that can be used to help players overcome a mental stumbling block or compensate for your own mistakes in communication.
 - a. A clever character could recall unusual mechanics that might be of help to use during the game. Such mechanics might include things like castling in chess or card counting in poker.
 - b. An intelligence or wisdom check might reveal a particular step or strategy that could lead to the solution.
 - c. Alternatively, sneaky characters could always attempt to cheat in order to win. As long as they are not caught, you shouldn't penalize thinking outside the box, but that also does not mean it should be easy to cheat either.
6. **Play your game puzzle from the perspective of the opponent** and the players, testing how difficult you intend to play the opponent and how obvious you will make the winning strategy.

“Deal with the Devil”

A devil or evil godling of gambling sits before the players, offers them to join for a hand of cards. “You may not look at my hand, decide what to do to win”, the devil will say after exchanging greetings. The game is Devil Fishing (fantasy equivalent of Texas Hold’em) where each player is dealt two cards and must use those cards plus five visible cards in the middle to construct the strongest hand. Normally the game would involve betting at each stage as more cards are revealed but this game has been shortcut right to the end.

The devil allows you to view any visible card as well as the cards in your would-be hand before choosing to bet, with the buy in price being a significant amount of valuables or hit points. The devil has two face down cards in front of them, there are five face-up cards in the middle, two face down cards in front of the players, a pile of cards face up off to the side, and the remaining deck, face down.

Devil: two random cards + two hidden high value cards.

(A♠ 8♥ + [A♦A♥]) or (3♥ J♠ + [Q♥Q♣])

The Board: Four random cards + one matching high value card.

(K♠ 2♥ A♠ 10♠ Q♦) or (K♦ A♥ Q♦ 9♥ 7♠)

Player: Two random cards (Q♠ Q♣) or (9♠5♠)

Discard: 9 cards

(10♥ 3♥ 2♠ 7♣ 7♥ K♥ J♦ 9♥ K♦) or (A♠ A♦ 6 J♥ Q♠ 9♠ 8♥ 10♠ 3♦)

Deck: 34 cards using all other cards minus hidden ([A♦A♥]) or ([Q♥Q♣])

In this riddle there are clues in the fact that the opponent is a literal devil, or another creature known for duplicity, the mention of the rule of not looking at an opponent’s hand, and the open display of the cards laid out. Investigating the total number of cards will reveal that two are missing, to which the devil will give no answer save to ask if the player intends to make a move or make an accusation.

A skilled magic user that studies the binding circle the devil sits within can deduce that the devil is bound to be unable to lie within the circle and cannot break the circle with their own power.

Asked about cheating the devil will respond, “I do not know which cards are in your hand nor those remaining in the deck.”.

A highly perceptive character may notice that the back side of the Aces, Kings, and Queens seem to be marked.

Characters that fail the initial hand can try again, with escalating “buy-ins” that are lost to incorrect guesses. The random dealings will almost never result in the players winning as the highest available pair or three-of-a-kind will always be in the devil’s hand. Only the tiny chance of pulling a greater hand by random chance will result in the player’s’ victory this way.

SOLUTION

The way to win is to either bet enough times, losing until the random cards the character is dealt can overcome the cheating devil or by accusing the devil of cheating by citing the missing cards.

“Inscrutable Bureaucracy”

The young child the players have been looking for sits on an overturned bookcase under a canopy of salvaged tarp. He glances atop his spectacles and attempts to grumble, “Fine you’ve caught me. I’ll cut you a deal” his voice cracks and he blushes slightly, returning to a normal speaking voice, “Fine, just let me have some fun with this and I’ll tell you what I heard.” He begins to sort through a deck of cards, dealing some out. He says, “Play a game I’ve been working on in my head when I have time to kill. I set out cards here in a pattern,” he points to a line of cards, “and these cards were the ones that didn’t fit the pattern,” pointing to cards turned sideways in the procession. “I’ll deal each of you three cards from the deck, well I can do three hands at least if you don’t mind sharing, and you’ll take turns either playing a card or drawing a card. If you guess wrong, and your card doesn’t fit the hidden rule, you take it back and draw two more cards. First one of you to empty your hand of cards wins and I’ll tell you what I know plus some. If you don’t want to play, I’ll give you what you ask for and be on my way.”

“Oh, Aces count as the highest and lowest card. Also, keep in mind that jacks are 11, queens are 12, kings are 13, and that makes an ace both a 1 and a 14. If the deck runs low, I’ll shuffle up the cards in the stack except for the top one.” He rattles off just as the players look at their hands of cards.

9♦ 8♣ 10♠ A♣ 7♠-9♣ K♥ J♦ 3♦ Q♦ Q♥ 3♥ 2♦ 4♠

Sample player hands: 8♦ J♠ 6♠ 4♥ J♠ 6♥ K♦ 10♦ 7♠ 2♥ 9♥ 5♦

Next 10 cards of the deck: 6♣ 10♥ 5♠ 8♥ Q♣ 3♣ 5♣ 7♠ K♣ 4♦

A wise character or one trained in gambling could know, with a skill check, to try and learn a hidden rule by testing where it doesn’t work rather than checking what does.

The perceptive characters could notice, with a skill check, to watch what happens when a diamond card is played.

Solution

The hidden rule of this game is that cards must be played in ascending or descending order, switching when a diamond suit card is played. It started out in descending order. As Aces count as both the highest and lowest card, they allow the game to proceed without getting stuck at a king or 2. Lucky players or ones with a close-enough idea of what the rules are could still finish this game with good plays.

This may work best as a physical riddle if the DM deals out cards from a real deck. In which case, the center pile’s initial setup should be the DM playing the first 10-15 cards, in order, noting whether or not they follow the hidden rule. Then the DM deals four cards per player hand, and play begins from the player to their left.

“Tactics and Towers”

There is a mural of a partially completed chess game on the floor and an 8x8 grid of square stone buttons on the wall next to a stone trapdoor. Surrounding this is a stone relief of an elaborate stone fortress, with a crowned figure standing in the balcony. Below the grid is a plaque stating, “The Black King needs to be put in check in one move.” This mansion the players are investigating was built by a game nut who loved obscure strategies, so much that they often chose unorthodox tactics which have left them bankrupt and desperate. The usage of the common game of chess, the physical depiction of the pieces, and the note that the answer is only a single winning move each count as clues.

Wise characters or those versed in strategic games might remember little known chess moves such as en-passant or castling.

Intelligent characters or those that gamble will note that the player must do something about their own king being in check at the same time as putting the enemy king in checkmate.

Observation skills focused on the stonework will notice that more than just the grid of squares have gaps to allow movement, it seems that the stone reliefs can be pressed as well.



SOLUTION

Either Rook moves to F1 or 0-0, White castles to checkmate.

The answer must be pressed into an 8x8 grid on the wall, pressing the F1 space. The trick is that if the players choose to press the castle, they will be rewarded with either a secret passage shortcut or a minor treasure is revealed from behind the stonework.

“A Treasured Relative”

An intercepted letter in the mail at a frontier town from a jailed rebel reads:

“To my favorite niece,

I know you are anxious to see me, but the years between 4 and 5 should really be Treasured. As you enjoy numbered riddles, and given I have so much time for my slow mind to think them up while away on business, I have created a number puzzle for you. I learned the style from a foreigner I met here. Each column, row, and 3x3 block must contain the numbers 1-9 only once each. Forgive my poor drawing skills as I tried drawing your family’s barn.



3		1		6	7	9		8
6		7	2		3	4		
8	4			1	9	7		
						7		
			8	2			4	
9	2	6		3				
2						6		
	1		9	7				
			2	5			8	9

Signed, Your loving uncle Barnabus”

Investigating the given address for the letter will find that the target family has no daughter but they do have a barn opposite their house across a square field on their property.

Investigators are searching for a hidden stash of dangerous cursed magical artifacts to prevent them from being disbursed by the rebels for devastating attacks.

An observant character will wonder why Treasured and “between 4 and 5” seem to have more ink and weight applied to their writing than the surrounding words.

The field of the target address was turned over by a plow at the beginning of the season and the dirt has not been disturbed since, but the farmer has many digging tools ready and cleaned. If the farmer is questioned, they might remember an area on the middle right side of the field didn’t grow very well, assuming the players do not seem to be agents of the government.

The current farmer of the field only recently moved to this land in the last month or so.

SOLUTION



3	5	1	4	6	7	9	2	8
6	9	7	2	8	3	4	1	5
8	4	2	5	1	9	7	3	6
1	8	5	6	9	4	3	7	2
4	7	3	8	5	2	6	9	4
9	2	6	7	3	1	8	5	4
2	3	9	1	4	8	5	6	7
5	1	8	9	7	6	2	4	3
7	6	4	3	2	5	1	8	9

This is the correct solution of the Sudoku puzzle, showing the location of the only place that a 4 borders a 5. Digging between these two number will reveal a hidden cache of magical items. Upon closer investigation, these myriad of tools, objects, weapons, and armors are all horribly cursed. If the farmer family sees the party digging or discovering the cache, they will attack.

Trivia Riddle

These riddles are based around referential knowledge, word plays, and trivia. They test player and character knowledge within a category as well as on word synonyms and antonyms.

1. **Decide on the category of trivia as well as the style** of the trivia riddle. These can include crossword puzzles, word jumbles, scrambles, scrabbles, and many others.
2. **Generate the word grouping** to provide the background to the puzzle or write the solution intended to be hidden by the riddle.
 - a. To generate a word grouping, brainstorm a large number of words to fit the category chosen earlier. Then trim to fit the desired size of riddle.
 - b. To create a solution, start with the coded phrase or password then create a cloud of words within a category surrounding that solution.
3. **Design the riddle itself.**
 - a. Using the word cloud, align words that share letters in horizontal and vertical lines to create a crossword. The more intersections, the easier the crossword will be. Write a question or clue for each word, noting which vertical or horizontal word that word corresponds with.
 - b. For a word scramble, take the solution and mix up the letters within each word.
 - c. Within a word jumble riddle, the solution's words constituent letters are mixed into the word cloud brainstormed earlier. Select words in the generated category that share words with the solution, then highlight those letters. Hide the words, retain the highlighted space of the letter, then write a clue for each hidden word.
 - d. For a word scrabble, take words from the word category and all the solution's words, then cross the words where letters intersect. Remove the letters used for the solution's words and retain them for the player's to attempt to recreate the words. Write a clue for each word scrambled.
4. Many hints are inherent in the nature of this riddle, including hints for each word, having scrambled words in front of them, and knowing the number of letters in the final words. **Write additional hints for the most difficult words for use when the players become stuck.**
 - a. An alternative description of the longest words can provide a hint to intelligent or lucky characters.
 - b. Another clue for wise characters can involve revealing a letter of the final word, such as noting the first letter of a solution word to help speed along uncovering the riddle.
5. **Test any scrambled words for accuracy** to ensure that no letters were left out or added, while also trying to unscramble the words differently than the solution to ensure that alternative words do not seem correct. Analyze word jumbles and crosswords to ensure that there are no other words that can fit into the crossword. Modify the word clues as needed.

“Arcane Curio”

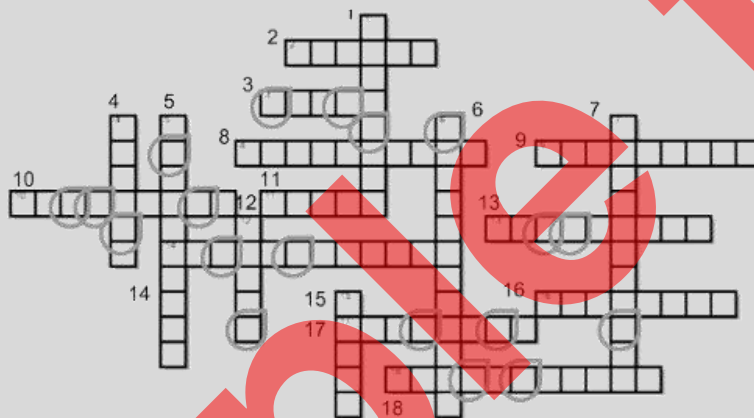
Within the tower of this hedge-wizard is a grand marble entrance that is locked with no apparent handle. Upon the door is a phrase inquiring the players to speak the wizard’s name to enter. Adjacent to the door is an overlapping set of blank stone squares, a number of which are made of red stone. Below these stones is a plaque listing numbers followed by short phrases.

Investigating this hedge wizard in nearby towns will reveal him to be a self-described wordsmith and studier of arcane texts. The hedge-wizard likes to make magical puns. All anyone knows of their name is “Lyo”.

Staking out the wizard’s tower or attempting to intercept its mail would reveal that letters from other wizards are addressed to the wizard Mr. Ephgyhm.

Additional hints for intelligent characters: #14 Across: Cast at the darkness.

#6 Down: Readied to stop another from doing what you are preparing.



ACROSS

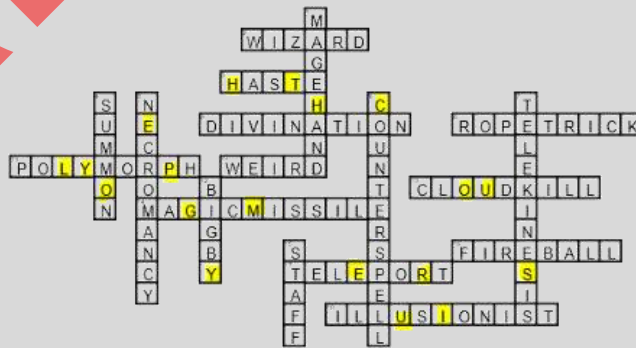
- 2 No conjurer of cheap tricks.
- 3 Makes waste.
- 8 See what your enemies are up to.
- 9 Climb on up to my secret retreat.
- 10 Bleating beasts roaring.
- 11 Odd. My enemies keep perishing.
- 13 Fog rolls in and my enemies die.
- 14 Unerring blasts.
- 15 A ball of red to lick my enemies.
- 17 Envision it and then you are there.

- 18 Magician who can't hurt you if your eyes are closed.

DOWN

- 1 Reach out and touch someone.
- 4 A monster appears at my command.
- 5 Death is no retirement plan from my army.
- 6 No, you shall not be casting that.
- 7 Shovels dig holes. Minds move mountains.
- 12 Master of the hand.
- 15 Summoned with one and it is used to serve my meals.

SOLUTION



The correct answer to the door riddle is Lyo Ephgyhm The Curious.

“The Revealed Word”

A holy book is found by the players when investigating the death of a local priest. They found the book in a parchment with a note reading “To my firnde, ___” (the blank space is either icMhela, a jumbled version of Michael, or a jumbled version of one of the player’s names.) Michael is the scribe or investigator that is working with the players on this case. Many of the letters and spaces in the book are highlighted with a red ink. A scribe, a henchman, or Michael takes the time to copy these highlighted letters and spaces, in order, but they still seem to make no sense.

Aefr the gnmcio ncloeit. Iupciontrrble Gehit will tmidnoae the numpigco veot to iehrnc rthie lsnohdig. Hchurc cfeofrs nriviyaabl esurff nerinusg ootdwddnren chrdlien rceviee nitohng. Laickblam sbind the inoquisitr's ndhas.

There are many hints in this book that something is afoot, including the highlighted letters and the note to a jumbled name on the attached note. These are intended to get players thinking about the words being jumbled, especially as spaces are highlighted as well, denoting the word sizes of the jumbled words.

An outside investigation into the activities of this priest could find that they had taken a keen interest in cardinal electoral political texts, accounting practices texts, and past doctrine books on the organizational rules of their church. The priest has also been seen skulking about, and investigating this lead will find that they had been sneaking around the towns of major churches nearby. Those churches host the richly decorated and lavish lifestyles of the cardinals taking part in the upcoming church election.

Charitable activities of the late priest include regular visits to orphanages in the surrounding areas, where he would often play word games with the children while serving them food. Asking the children will reveal that they really liked his word jumbles and he would give out candies to the children that could solve them.

SOLUTION

Unscrambling each of the words will result in the following:

“Fear the coming election. Incorruptible Eight will dominate the upcoming vote to enrich their holdings. Church coffers invariably suffer ensuring downtrodden children receive nothing. Blackmail binds the inquisitor’s hands.”

Cipher Puzzle

Ciphers are riddles that use a special encoding method to hide a message within another body of text, a picture, or list. Common examples of this type of riddle include typical spy movie encryption all the way back to the old technique of Caesar using two concentric disks with each letter of the alphabet rotated against one another as a tool to encode a message.

1. **Decide on the solution text and style of encoding.**
2. **Use that technique to work backwards** from the solution.
 - a. If ciphering a text, replace each letter of the solution with its cypher or symbol.
 - b. If embedding the solution in a larger body of text, space out the solution words or letters on a grid according to the pattern, such as every fourth word.
 - c. Apply any other encryption effects like reversing the letter order, capitalizing, or adding grammatical mistakes.
 - d. Fill in the other words around the solution letters or words. Decide how odd or incoherent the plaintext message should sound. It is easier to write an incoherent message but this also makes it obvious that it is encoded.
3. **Set up the hints noting encryption and the method of encryption.**
 - a. The message receiver would need some way to know what code to use, and some hint would be included on how to break it. Sometimes, the sender and receiver use the same code without change, in which case they will likely leave behind clues like counting out words, pencil marks on paper, reminder notes to themselves, or tools to assist in decoding or encoding messages.
 - b. Set up clues that direct the party to their next steps, such as a who the message sender or receiver are, a place to confirm their theory, or an interested party to report to.
 - c. Create hints that convey similar information about the message sender, receiver, and interested parties that can be discovered outside of the message decoding. This can include people noting suspicious activity, details surrounding the players' acquisition of the message, the rumor mill, or just plain old detective work. You can ignore this type of hint if the message is not central to the plot or already has multiple avenues to the solution.
 - d. Design fallback hints that can be given to skilled player characters' players. These can be as direct as hinting at one step of the decoding process or as obscure as giving additional lines of the message written elsewhere to test the players' working theories.
4. **Spell-check your solution.** Test your encrypted message by decoding it using the process you set up. Spell-check each step of the way. Try mixing up your decoding steps to see how that changes the result. Compare your ease of solving the cypher with how hard you intend the puzzle to be, considering that the decoding method was known to you. Be ready to admit any mistakes.

“Misplaced Taxes”

Finding this note on the body of a henchman, as a political poster nailed to a wall, or in a dead-drop location, the players will find this hand-written message. The date listed at the top is a nonsensical day of the fourth month, as there are only 30 days in April. For fantasy month names, ensure that the date listed is the fourth month with one more day than the number of days in that month.

April 31st

Nowadays people go hide when they lose gold. Ruinous cowards go between their ramparts' of aspen wood, furrowing brow ridges, fearing the dark mark. Would they shouted, with fervor from the flagstone square, "We resist!"

-Antonio Rodrigo and the woodsman.

Careful investigation will find small imprints on the paper, as if someone was tapping an un-inked pen nib onto the page once under each word.

Antonio Rodrigo is not a name recognized by anyone in the area, but a tavern keeper or similar figure adjacent to shady dealings, if questioned, will ask if they mean Antonio Woodsman instead. Antonio Woodsman, a tax assessor, stayed for a few days in the inn, then left around the time of a tax heist. He was in the tavern at the time of the heist, so allowed to leave by investigators after giving his carefully stated testimony, taking his time to choose his words carefully.

A recent tax collector was robbed and the suspects in the robbery were caught but had no gold on them so it could not be proven. They are being held in custody for a few more days. Tight-lipped, they will not reveal the location of the gold even if they can be gotten to admit to the crime.

Lumberjacks claim to hear digging and cursing coming from the aspen ridges at night.

SOLUTION

By copying down every fourth word of the message, the players read, "Hide gold between aspen ridges mark with flagstones Antonio Woodsman".

Antonio is having trouble finding the gold because he intended the message to say "mark with square" and doesn't realize he outsmarted himself. He spends nights digging up square looking areas or rocks in the aspen ridge, not realizing that a bunch of flagstones actually mark the treasure. His associates are expecting him to spend some of the gold through a proxy to make it seem like someone else has the gold far away so they can go free.

“Code of Conduct”

Attending a noble’s wedding gala, the players stumble upon a rolled up scroll placed under their dinner plate, where they had chosen a seat against the seating order (or perhaps as a last minute accommodation). They have been told to not make a scene at the wedding or perhaps hired to ensure the event goes well.

“And Pza’mhu reversed the Dislocation of the Seven (14:37)”

Below that text written in common, are a series of words written in elvish calligraphy. The letters are reverse italicized. Translated, it is:

Aptl ilmvył ylabyu huk zolhy jvha. Msvvy aopyk jsvzla zlhyjo. Allao wvpzvu npcl av nvsk.

The first hint about the method of decoding is written as reversed, although this does not specifically state to reverse the words not the letters. The second hint is in the Dislocation of the Seven, meant to show that the words have been Caesarian shifted by 7. A third hint is the reverse italicization, indicating the direction the words are to be read.

Closer investigation of the paper will reveal that it has indentations as if it was under another paper that was written on. The letters are impossible to make out without long study with finer tools, but the sentence written appears to be the same length as the encoded message although the spacing between words is mirrored.

An alternative method of investigation would notice that the elven hand is very well practiced, so the players could investigate elves or those able to write in elvish. Depending on how difficult or obtuse this path is to be, the DM could have there be many elves in attendance, throw in an over-the-top obvious elven villain, or a butler who is later discovered to do the writing for diplomatic missives to the elves. Either way, the writer’s name or nickname should be Gold to correspond to the riddle. Showing the letter to elves will reveal the words to be gibberish, including the nonsensical Dislocation of the Seven and 14:37, as these reference no known holy books. Holy books generally list a book name before giving a verse number.

SOLUTION

Shifting each letter by 19 (reversing the shift of 7) reveals the following words: *Time before return and shear coat. Floor third closet search. Teeth poison give to gold.*

Reversing the word order reveals the plot to poison the sheers intended to cut open the traditional wedding ribbon and prick the bride and groom’s palms to mix their blood. The intended target time can be revealed by shifting the “verse” numbers down by 7 hours and 7 minutes.

Gold to give poison teeth. Search closet third floor. Coat shear and return before time.
(7:30)

Numbers Riddle

Numbers riddles rely on coding and decoding a riddle based on mathematical concepts and operators. They are most often seen in combination with combination locks, door codes, addresses, coordinates, or the like.

1. **Choose either your puzzle type or write your intended solution.**
2. **Decide on the other portion.**
 - a. Starting with a solution, choose a number riddle type that can give you your format and range of numbers. Combination locks need numbers in sets of three, addresses need between 3 and 6 numbers and coordinates need a pair of number. Other numbers such as door codes can be fairly variable in the format and number, making them easily adaptable to any number riddle type.
 - b. If the number riddle type is already selected, create a scenario around the types of numbers that the chosen type can give. For example, a Sudoku puzzle can give answers using combinations of numbers 1-9, with some difficulty in formatting the puzzle for longer strings of numbers.
3. **Design the puzzle mechanics.**
 - a. For a Sudoku, Kakuro, or similar gridded number puzzle, start filling in from one side around the solution or randomly. Then, as the grid begins to fill up, start solving for allowable moves with the remaining numbers. Eventually, you may find a point where there are no more legal numbers that can be entered. Undo the most recent additions or modify already placed numbers until you can proceed again. Repeat this process until the whole grid is filled.
 - b. For syllabic puzzles, choose syllables or combinations of letters that produce the numbers you desire or choose a suitable phrase with the correct number of syllables then mold the solution to the syllables.
 - c. Assign any mathematical operators as needed by inserting them into the puzzle where relevant. For Ken Ken puzzles, this also requires sectioning off the number grid to reach particular sums.
4. **Write additional hints to accompany the puzzle.**
 - a. Note a number or two that can be given to a lucky, intelligent, or skilled character. This can even be something as simple as allowing a thief to feel for the slight click on a combination lock to get a clue for one number in the series.
 - b. Remind your players of forgotten or unusual rules related to the number puzzle.
5. **Try your own number puzzle from the starting state** to ensure that you didn't change something accidentally to produce the wrong solution or make it impossible to deduce given the clues.

“Idle Philanderer”

Scratched on the back of one of these two padlocks holding a backstage door, at the Idle Philanderer Theater, shut is the phrase, “Sound it out, yah Lazy Flirt.” and on the other, “If you can’t count to 45, get some friends with fingers and toes.” Each padlock is a three number spin-lock, going from 0 to 103.

In a nearby trash bin, someone has crumpled up a playbill where the name of the theater has different slashes placed between its letters. The same sheet seems to have been under something else that was written on. The heavy handwriting left imprints that can be made out “a = 0 e = 4 i = 8” but beyond that is illegible.

Not every theater troupe member is in on the secret, but a good number are. They will regularly put in the combination each night. Although they block line of sight to the lock, some members can be heard sounding out, almost like they are counting aloud: duh duh pause duh duh duh duh.

SOLUTION

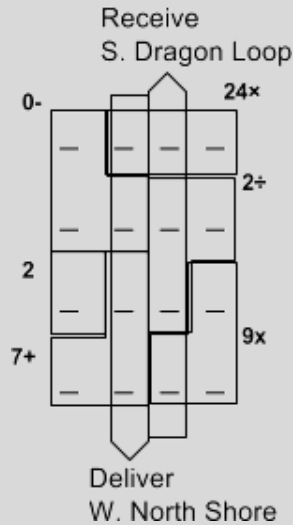
I - dle Phil - an - der - er

[08- 03-11-04 15-07-08-11] [-00-13 -03-04-17 -04-17]

Top Padlock 8 + 18 + 41 Bottom Padlock 13 + 24 + 21

“Speedy Delivery”

A thug defeated by the group in an alleyway has a peculiar note on their person. The top holds a street name in the warehouse district and the bottom the long street of the coastal properties of the city. The four by four grid has empty boxes grouping some of the blank spaces together with a small number.



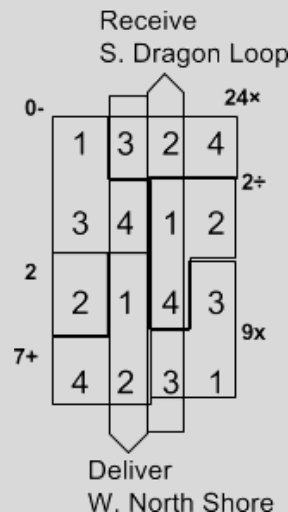
This type of puzzle is built on a math problem of grouping numbers together so the digits 1-4 are represented once on each row and column, using the grouped boxes to deduce the solution. The operand listed next to the number indicates what mathematical operation must be performed with the grouped numbers, in any order, to result in that number.

The thug, if conscious or captured, has not yet solved the puzzle, but will give up information with sufficient pressure. The thug will not that this is the method they receive delivery orders through, and they must solve these puzzles before their competitors in order to figure out the receiving location and get there first.

Using the thug, the party could identify one of the delivery competitors and exhort or bribe the information out of them. This delivery person could have completed part or all of the riddle, but is currently doing a different job before they will head over to take this one.

The 9x can only be achieved with two 3's and one 1. As the two 3's cannot share a row or column, the 1 must be in the bottom right corner.

SOLUTION



“Planar Security Agents”

Passing through a portal, possibly attempting a magical shortcut or as part of an interdimensional dungeon, the players come to a floating checkpoint in the astral plane. Staffing this point are a number of order aligned constructs and planar beings. While sitting through the wait line, the players hear the guards ask each traveler, various planar creatures of all types, for their name and code. Around the floating checkpoint are magically anchored signs stating various security slogans including: “If you see chaos, report it in triplicate.” “Patterns, grammar, and numbers remain justiciars’ greatest weapons against chaos.” “Do not accept group members and report unattended acquaintances.” “Be prepared with your personal name-code”.

Travelers ahead of the party give the codes “2-6”, “2”, “3-3-8-1-4”, and “6” when prompted by the emotionless justiciars, “Announce your name-code, traveler!”. Each is allowed to pass. Should the players have some way to determine names of these creatures or risk security sanction by moving out of line to pester them, their names are as follows: Didi Goromandelina, Kipler, Shawneela Ixkamu Gelililifofofonu of Karimaxxo, and Extemporaneously.

The short line only has a few persons in front of the players in line. The one directly in front of the players, a near incorporeal robed demon, introduces themselves as Beliforuken the Idolatrous. Their traveling companion, a skinless monkey, is introduced by Beliforuken as Regular Old Michael. When they pass through security, Beliforuken gives the code “5-1-4” for himself and “3-1-2” for Regular.

Behind the players is a trio of humanoids. They introduce themselves as Georgia, Kelly, and Christopher Smith. Should the players fail their first pass through, they are held in waiting to let the Smith’s go first before they are allowed another try. Respectively, they answer “2-1”, “2-1”, and “3-1” before being allowed through.

SOLUTION

The players must give their full names and then a count of the number of syllables in each of their names, including their legal epithets. Failure to do so will result in fines, delays by being sent to the back of the line, rough security personnel attention, or even expulsion back the way they came. The worst results will only occur after the party has failed at least three or four times, although unorthodox actions like stepping out of line or shouting will count as one strike against the group. Expulsion will force the rest of the party to come with per the group member warning sign and cause the portal to shift that it traverses a much more dangerous portion of the astral plane.

Mechanics Puzzle

This type of puzzle is based around real-world situations, or as close as a made-up game can come to them. The general principles behind mechanics puzzles come from the fundamental nature of the world, with a solution that must be engineered in the moment. These puzzles can be based on combat, elemental weaknesses, alchemical reactions, or any other repeatable, natural function of the game world. In some ways, every fight with a creature with resistances, weaknesses, or immunities serves as a limited riddle with clues based on mythology, behavior, and character knowledge.

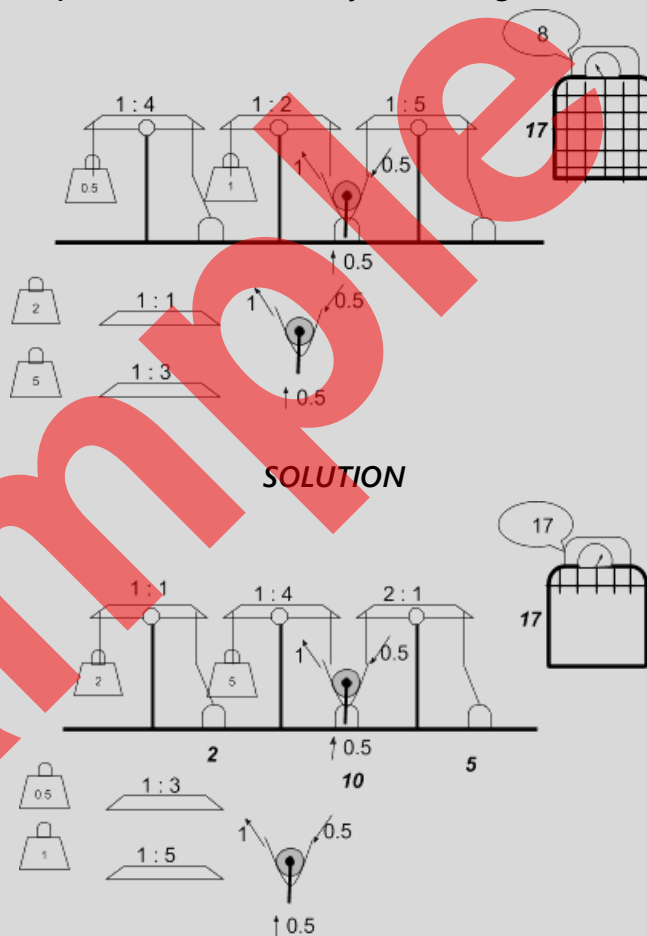
1. **Select the mechanic that the puzzle will be based on.**
2. **Create a desired end state.** This can involve objects being in certain places, affecting creatures in certain ways, or changing some specific aspect of the surroundings.
 - a. A physics puzzle might require heavy blocks in the right configuration.
 - b. Movement puzzles have a designated finish line or spot to end at.
 - c. Magical puzzles can be sorted with the correct combination of applied magic to create a certain effect.
 - d. Alchemy requires creating the right conditions, ratios, and mixtures.
 - e. Mechanical contraptions need a solid understanding to set the controls, gears, belts, levers, and pulleys.
3. **Design the puzzle's workings.**
 - a. Taking the mechanics chosen, work backwards from the solution to create a starting point.
 - b. Looking forward from the starting point, think up confounding rules that ensure only the intended solution is the possible one.
4. **Create clues for the puzzle.**
 - a. The description of the principles behind the puzzle can vary between obvious, for things like combat, to the esoteric, such as magic spell interactions. An overt retread of the applicable game-world mechanics being used in the puzzle can count for one or two clues.
 - b. The description of the starting situation can count as another.
 - c. Additional clues can be added at the points recorded previously. Each point of decision or choice can be given a description that makes the incorrect path logically incorrect or less beneficial.
5. **Design two additional hints** to aid players not having trouble or stuck.
 - a. A player character skilled in the application of the mechanics used in the puzzle should be able to give a hint as to one correct choice.
 - b. Side-paths around the puzzle each can count as a clue.
6. **Test your puzzle**, given the clues and alternative paths you have designed. Try to reach an incorrect solution. If it is possible to come up with a false solution, then either prepare to accept that solution as an answer that might be given, reword a clue, or add another hint.
7. Unlike other riddles, these types of puzzles almost always require a visual aid. Even a simple sketch is a requirement unless you double the number of clues.

“Fickle Gate”

Standing in this room, before a heavy iron gate is a group of three levers, pulleys, and scales. The arms on the pivots are varying lengths, the weights are all different sizes, and there are three chains in the floor connected to the mechanism of the machine. A dial above the door moves and shifts as force is increased or reduced on the chains, with a thin range of green paint coloring the space just around “17” although the dial is currently pointing to “8”. Two additional arms lie on the ground along with a spare pulley and two weights.

The arms can be flipped around to provide their leverage to increase or decrease the force pulling up on the other end. The pulley splits its upward pulling force between what it is anchored to and what it is pulling down on. It has a short chain with no hooks. Each lever arm has a fixed chain on either end along with a hook to connect it to one object on either end.

Attempting to pull up a chain by hand will cause the dial to fluctuate wildly except for the most careful and steady puller. The dial must stand still for 30 seconds before the door will open. It will close swiftly if the weight becomes incorrect again.



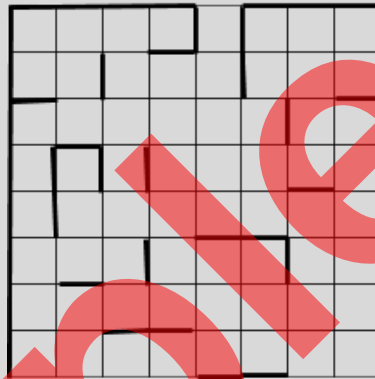
The intended solution uses the above to apply a sum of 17 pounds of upward pull to the chains. There are likely other solutions that are acceptable. Using outside equipment or raw strength should require careful skill checks.

"Skeletal Sliders"

An oil-slicked furnace room radiates heat in front of the players. A sign notes that the fire suppression system controls are on the other side. An aproned skeleton stands still next to a pile of charred bones staring at a set of slightly glowing tongs. Upon picking up the tongs, a creature knows that they can give simple commands to the skeleton, including walking in a direction or pulling a switch. Moving the skeleton through the burning chamber causes it no harm from the fire, but it will continue to slide in a direction until it hits a wall. Each hit causes fractures to form and after the tenth hit, it will crumble to the ground and its bones fall through grates in the floor. A new skeleton will form from the bone pile, ready to serve. The whole maze can be seen from a small raised staircase near the entrance to the room.

Living creatures trying to move through the furnace will take moderate damage for each square they transverse, sliding until they hit a wall, and then taking light damage from the scorching hot wall.

Goal



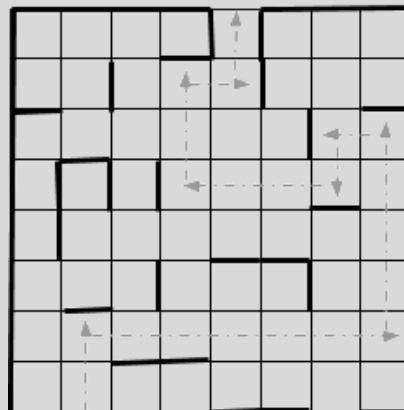
Starting Side

An intelligent creature could notice that the finishing location cannot be slid directly into and will require stopping at the wall jutting out from it.

Keen observation skills might find little used areas unrelated to the correct solution, giving clues to incorrect paths.

SOLUTION

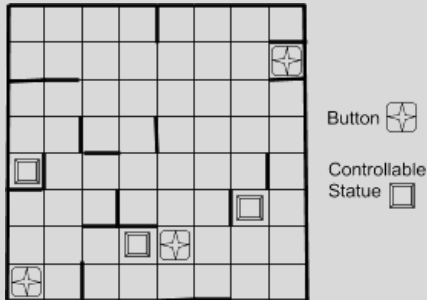
Goal



Starting Side

“Idle Idols”

In a large, square chamber, three monkey statues stand atop their square plinths. Dropping down five feet to enter this smooth, stone tiled area, the players will see a number of five foot walls and three areas of decorated tiles. If the statues are pushed or pulled in a cardinal direction, the statues become frictionless and glide across the stone floor until they hit a wall. Creatures standing between a moving statue and the wall will likely receive some bludgeoning damage if they are pinned against a wall. When not moving in a cardinal direction, the statues are fixed to the floor. Only one statue may move at a time. A ghostly voice whispers, “Three monkeys were lost and needed a guide to return to their homes”. Three, dull, glass spheres sit above the door to the next chamber.



Some of these positions seems impossible to reach for the sliding statues unless the stone figures work together.

An intelligent player character might be able to reason out a move or two from the solution.

SOLUTION



The solution is presented above, but likely other methods exist. As each button is occupied by a statue, one glass orb lights up above the door. When all three are in place, the orbs light up and the door opens. The creator of the puzzle may reward the players for efficient moves. If this is the case, have the ghostly voice say instead, “Three monkeys were lost and needed a guide to return to their homes. When the guide got them all home with so little walking, they presented a reward.”