

NECROPOLIS

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v1.1

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Introduction

It lies nestled deep in the wooded hills surrounding Craeger's Crossing, carved from the living rock of the outcroppings which dot the landscape. Evil may not enter. The living may not enter. None who have sought the remains of Sir Valyrian and the Mirror of the Zealot have ever returned. Now it is your chance to perish.

The Necropolis is a self-contained role-playing puzzle adventure for three players. Heavily influenced by *Dungeon & Dragons* and the *Tomb of Horrors*, this adventure is specifically designed to strip away all of the extra fluff and focus on puzzle solving and sweet, sweet, horror.

Preparation

This role-playing puzzle adventure requires access to a few twenty-sided dice. Rulebooks, however, are not required, though role-playing commonsense is advised. Players need not roll stats or create characters in advance, but it is recommended that everyone bring paper and writing instruments.

To get started, print out the adventure and the additional materials in the accompanying pdf. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the plot, threats, and puzzles. Many of the challenges are interlinked between chambers and require lateral thinking. Some text is designated as player information which can be read aloud or paraphrased at appropriate times.

Each chamber has been rendered on its own page in 1" to 5' scale, perfect for standard miniatures. It is recommended that these be cut out ahead of time and used to build the map incrementally as the players discover chambers. Tape is recommended for holding the chambers in place.

One chamber contains a potion puzzle. It is a great opportunity to run the puzzle "for real" by mixing six dubious looking (but harmless) beverages in suitable containers.

Adventure Background

What follows is the adventure hook, to be sent out to players in advance of the gaming session.

Blood fell like rain the night that Marghest Blaire came to Craenger's Crossing. The small village had welcomed them with open arms; the choice had been natural. Four travelers bedecked in the unmistakable vestments of the adventurer, well-to-do ones at that, with fancy heavy armor and fearsome arcane equipment. And as every villager knows, with great power come great purses of gold.

The shops and stalls had already been roused by the telling of their arrival, and every villager became a business man, ready to sell what they had to offer in the hopes of netting a tidy profit. The fifty or so villagers were bustling around their hovels like ants in a nest, caught up in their own fervor, when the first volley of fire struck the church and set the hamlet ablaze. Cinders flew up around the destriers hooves as Marghest Blaires party thundered through, cutting down and trampling anyone in their path.

It did not take long for the town to be reduced to a handful of ruined villagers, corralled within the inn, which remarkably still stands. All four of Marghest's party collect; Sigmund Itchler with his pale, sunken face and festering augmentations; Régar Orinson, the dwarf, staunch and solid in black plate; Blackrobe, aloof and bedecked in the rune-covered garment which was his namesake; and Marghest Blaire himself, clad in silver armor bearing the mark of

the blood-weeping eye. Itchler is already crawling over the remaining villagers like a maggot, sniffing and inspecting them. The smell of those he disapproves of hangs thick in the air.

He disapproves of many.

An elderly villager cries out to Marghest just as Itchler blubbers disapproval towards a lanky lad. “Why are you doing this?” the old man stammers. His face is a morass of wrinkles, blood stains, and tears. His opaque white eyes are heavy with pain and fear.

Marghest pays no mind to his anger, but calmly motions for Régar to drag him to his table. He proceeds to calmly unroll and smooth out a canvas map. Black ink strewn in elegant lines depicts the hills and vales of the surrounding countryside. A prominent feature in the center has been circled in red.

The old man sputters, “The Necropolis!”

Marghest’s mouth gives a sly half-grin. “The Necropolis of Sir Valyrian, the Zealous.”

Every villager in Craeger’s Crossing knows the story of the Necropolis. Sir Stedmund Valyrian, it is said, was not named The Zealous without good reason, having relentlessly vanquished evil in all forms during his long and glorious years of mortal life. The village pastor would preach of his steadfast courage and his legendary refusal to negotiate with the enemy, and that the Necropolis, if anything, stood as a reminder of his resolute demeanor and everlasting devotion to good.

It was known that Sir Valyrian was a stringently chaste individual, having forsaken material wealth outside of its immediate necessity to vanquishing the evils of this world. It was also known that he had been a man of great power, wielding powerful holy weapons and enchanted armor. Of even greater significance were the rumors of his greatest magical artifact, the Mirror of the Zealot, which was said to allow him to travel anywhere in the world at will, and possibly to places beyond the mortal plane. Word of the mirror had attracted more than one party of adventurers, but none who entered the Necropolis ever returned.

The old man became frantic, “The Necropolis is protected from your kind! Evil cannot enter. The living cannot enter. Such it has been and will always be!”

Marghest looks at him with eyes of cold steel, then raises one lobstered gauntlet at the scant few remaining villagers Itchler had left. His voice grates deep like an iron furnace.

“That shall not be a problem.”

Notes for the Dungeon Master

This dungeon takes “Thinking-Person Module” to the logical extreme. If your group does not like puzzles, do something else. If, on the other hand, you seek a unique puzzle adventure with a wide range of tricks, traps, and interconnected puzzles of all shapes and sizes, look no further. The Necropolis takes everything I love in puzzle dungeoneering and distills it into one self-contained experience.

Playtime for the Necropolis is around six hours. It is recommended to do it all in one go.

While the goal is that this adventure can be run without player stats, it still relies on a good grasp of the d20 system. This is especially the case for the Dungeon Master, who may have to adjust skill check DCs in response to clever players’ actions.

Most chambers include a set of text to be read out loud. Read the corresponding text to the players, but try not to give additional information unless their characters appropriately investigate. Death is built into this game, players dying is part of the experience.

The dungeon was designed with the commoners' power level in mind. If you try to use characters with magical abilities, fighting prowess, etc., it will have a huge impact on the dungeon and make much of it meaningless. Alter at your own risk.

The Beginning

What follows is the set of introductory text to be read to the players when they begin the game.

The Necropolis lies nestled deep in the wooded hills surrounding Craeger's Crossing, carved from the living rock of the outcroppings which dot the landscape. It is in one of the deepest natural crevices particularly pitted by the wind and weather that the entrance to the tomb of the Zealot can be found.

From the exterior it looks like any other slotted canyon, amply wide for one man. A few feet back the natural sandstone has been worked by skilled hands, shaping the rock into a smooth corridor which opens into a circular chamber.

The structure was clearly built in a style the Zealot would have approved of, or perhaps even personally specified. The surfaces are all smooth and bare of unnecessary decoration, and the door set into the back wall is similarly flat and undecorated. One can still make out the large block letters beneath the chunks of moss: VADE RETRO SATANA. It is easy to miss the additional script engraved in the door itself, for time has smoothed the surface to the point where the words are nearly gone. Marghest Blaire, however, is prepared, and finds the familiar passage in the black book he always carries at his side. The script reads: "The Necropolis of Sir Stedmund Valyrion the Zealous. May he rest in peace for all eternity." Below this is written, in slightly larger lettering as though to drive home a point, "Beware those who seek entrance. Evil cannot enter. The mortal cannot enter. The guardian does not sleep."

Marghest's party sets up at the entrance. Blackrobe moves to inspect the door while Régar pushes twelve haphazard villagers in, three of which have already begun the transformation process under Itchler. It takes a few hours for stakes to be set into the sandstone walls, the only setback occurs when the first explodes from having been placed too close to the enchanted rock of the Necropolis. Soon the villagers hang in iron shackles suspended from the stakes, three for each of the three chosen villagers.

At a wave from Marghest, Itchler pulls out his sacrificial blade and completes the ritual of the undying. The chosen had already been hog-tied back in the village where the first half of the ritual was conducted, followed by the painful arcane etching of the base symbols using a fine-tipped blade hot from the coals. None had survived the first half of the ritual. Indeed, that was the point. Itchler had teased their bodies to relinquish their hold on the mortal soul, only to prevent the escape of the same, leaving each a corpse, albeit a corpse with the soul trapped within.

He stokes a fire in the center of the chamber, ignoring the cries of the nine still living villagers. Calmly, and giggling all the while, the Maggot Man practices his work, finalizing the symbol of the undying on each of the chosen's skin.

Dark energies rise and swirl in the flickering of the fire, the cackling of the Maggot Man intermingling with the fear and screams of the observing villagers. He cuts with surprising precision, completing each mark with deft strokes before moving on to the next. As he completes the chosen he moves to those hanging on the walls; to their dismay. One at a time he cuts them too, engraving a separate sign, smaller than the first, incorporating a single symbol from the three circles. Each of the chosen have three living villagers.



The Mark of the Undying

Finally the Maggot Man's cackling gives way to a half-mad chanting. All of the hung villagers are wailing and flailing about at their chains, but slowly begin to subside as his power numbs and subdues them. Shadows dance on the walls in a maelstrom of writhing darkness, then there is a flash of light as the fireplace seems to erupt, and then... darkness.

The nine villagers hang on the wall, white eyes staring unseeing into empty space. Their bodies are limp, but still breathing. The three chosen lie on the ground, their fresh wounds already scarred over in arcane fashion. Their chests do not rise and fall, but unlike the villagers on the wall, their eyes open and focus on their surroundings. Slowly, cautiously, the Maggot Man crawls forward and unbinds them. Marghest Blaire looks on through eyes not unlike the glowing coals of the dying fire. He raises a lobstered gauntlet.

"Rise, my undying."

Marghest gives a half-smile, then forces them towards the door.

"You are sure the ritual is complete?" he asks Itchler. The maggot man nods, the folds in his skin bobbing up and down. "Good." He motions to the dwarf, who steps forward with a small satchel, and pulls out of it a knife for each of them. Régar guffaws, "Try not ter poke yer eyes out. Now git."

At Blackrobe's command the doors open unnaturally smoothly, gliding open without a sound. One would dread the sound of grating stone on stone, but the absolute absence of all noise is somehow altogether less pleasant. The back wall is now a gaping hole of darkness and despair.

Régar kicks one of the undying in the rear, sending it stumbling towards the opening. They slowly step in. Marghest places a lobstered gauntlet on Itchler's shoulder, clenches, and pulls him forward as he steps into the entrance as well.

Entrance

A circular cleft in a sandstone canyon with a narrow path leading out to the foothills of Craeger's Crossing. Set into the back wall is the gaping entrance to the Necropolis. The two large doors have been magically opened. Villagers are hung around the perimeter by shackles staked to the sandstone walls. Each is branded by a symbol similar to, but different from, that of the undying.

The party of Marghest Blaire remains in this chamber. Blackrobe, Régar, and Marghest await for the undying to either return with the Mirror of the Zealot or make it such that they themselves can gain entry. (The second will happen first).

Interior Features

The Necropolis was carved from the sandstone. The stone is magically bolstered to be impervious to assault. The floors, walls, and ceilings are all smooth. The entire map was made on a 5 by 5 foot grid. Chamber height varies, but in most places is 15 feet high.

The Undying

The Necropolis may not be entered by the evil, nor the living. To get around this, Itchler conducts the Ritual of the Undying on three of the villagers. He kills them and traps their souls, and ties to each of them the souls of three additional villagers.

The Undying have roughly the same hp as a commoner. All checks in the dungeon are given as straight d20 rolls. Any bonuses or penalties they would receive have already been accounted for. As undead they can be controlled by clerics, which Marghest uses as he sees fit. The Undying retain their intelligence, have no constitution score, can see in the dark out to 60 ft, and do not eat, breath, or sleep. These undying still feel pain. Their bodies are still whole, but no longer living.

Each undying has three extra lives and can respawn upon death.

Respawning

Any time that an undying perishes, their bodies rapidly decay into ash in a few seconds. Then, one of the remaining villagers connected to that undying gasps in pain as their brand lights up, sucking out their life energy. In a few moments their form is replaced by that of the undying. At this moment Blackrobe stalks over and opens the lock on the manacles before sending the undying back into the Necropolis.

Upon every death one of the circular symbols of the undying's brand lights up red, marking their loss. On their fourth death they are gone for good.

Loss of Items

Items in possession of an undying remain where they are on death and can be picked up by the other players.

A few items are critical in the completion of the dungeon. As such they are especially resilient to destruction. Others are not critical and can be destroyed if care is not taken, such as if dropped in the acid vat of the glutton or into the lava pool. Resilient items will not lose functionality and can always be retrieved, though the method of retrieval may require protection, such as when retrieving items dropped into the lava pool.

Item	Location	Resilient
Sin Statuettes	Varied	Yes
Parchment	Chamber 2	No
Greed Gold	Chamber 2	No
Queen Puzzle Pieces	Chamber 3	Yes
Hooked Polearm	Chamber 5	No
Titan Hammer	Chamber 5	Yes
Potions	Chamber 9	Yes
Pride Key	Chamber 10	Yes
Sloth Corpse	Chamber 11	No
Fake Mirrors	Chamber 13	No
Items of the Zealot	Chamber 14	No

Sin Statuettes

A set of eight statuettes are spread across the dungeon and must be collected in order to reach the end. They take the form of the seven deadly sins and Death. Each figure is made of cast bronze, is roughly two feet tall, and has a blocky square base. Each statuette has a number etched under its base in roman numerals. These numbers relate to a puzzle with the sin table in chamber 1. Present the appropriate statuette image every time one is obtained.



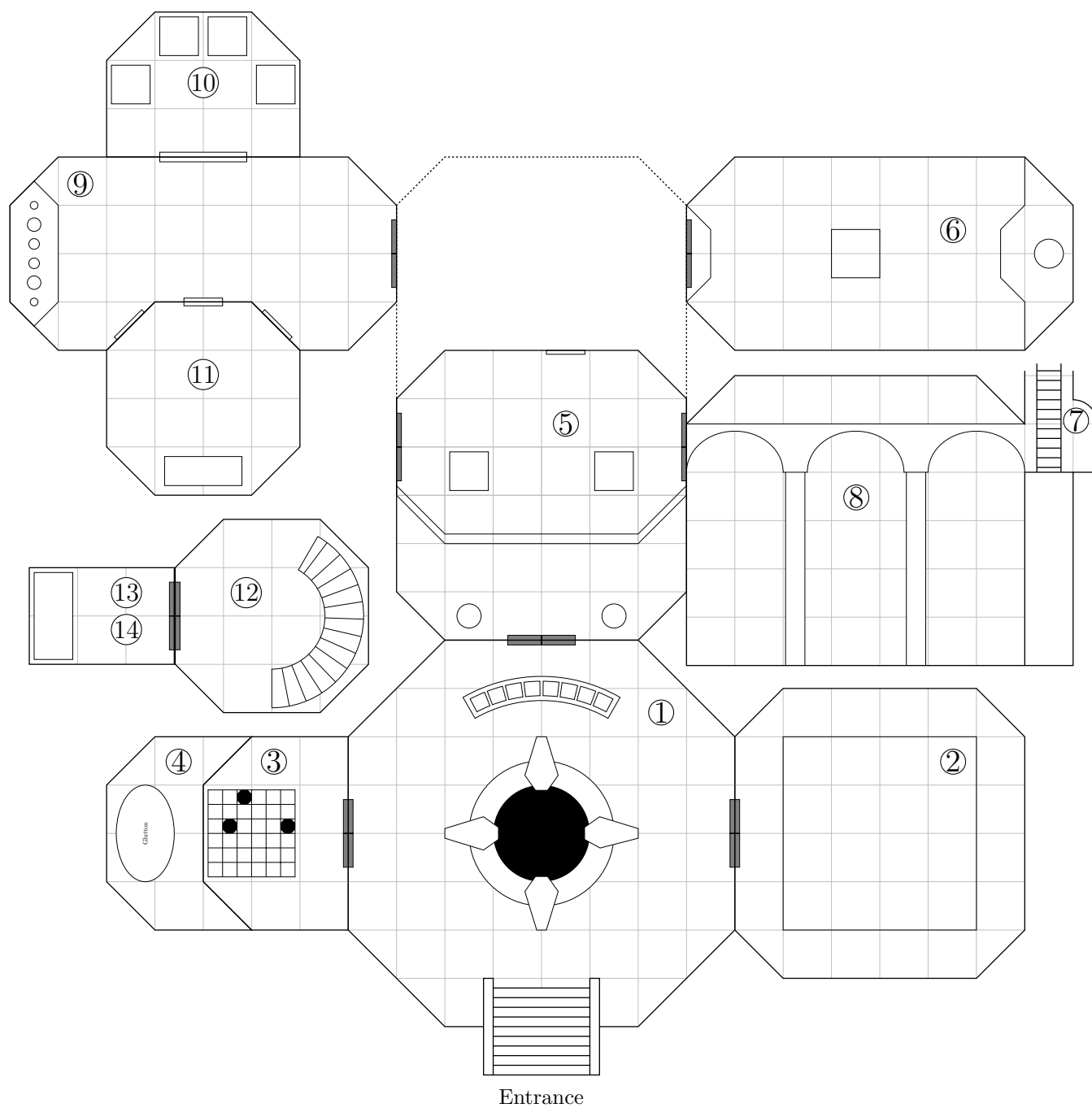
credit: Walter Schulze-Mittendorf, *Metropolis*

From left to right:

Gluttony	Sloth	Pride	Death	Lust	Envy	Wrath	Greed
1	9	15	21	25	27	33	35
I	IX	XV	XXI	XXV	XXVII	XXXIII	XXXV

Attempting to remove any sin statuette out of the dungeon is met by failure. The statuette simply stops at the entrance as though hitting a wall of force.

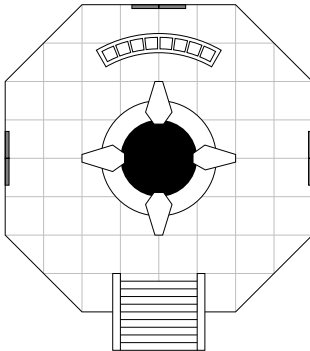
Dungeon Map



Keyed Locations

The following entries are keyed to the Necropolis map. Areas and items of note are also keyed to a series of illustrations that you, the Dungeon Master, should show to the players as they adventure. Text in boxes can be read aloud to the players as the section is first discovered or a particular component is examined.

1 - Central Chamber



A set of stairs jut deep into the mountain before opening into a circular chamber. The center of the room contains a well wreathed in flames. Its perimeter is edged in heavy white marble stones etched with runes. Four larger stones are set at even intervals to each other, also bearing distinct arcane markings. Every so often the unnatural green flames of the well lick out to taste the floor. Three sets of double doors are set in the walls, each relatively plain and smooth. An arched dais stands behind the well, and appears to be carved out of the same sandstone.

First Entry: Your footsteps echo softly as you descend down into the chilled depths. The air hangs still and presses close, begrudging your intrusion. You stir the dust of ages with your passing, but it settles quickly, as though these hallowed halls seek only to return to their eternal respite. You should not be here.

Marghest pays no heed, one hand placed firmly on Itchler's shoulder, guiding him down ever deeper. The fear in Itcher's eyes are met with callousness. The undying spread before the two like sheep, channeling down the steps and into the chamber beyond. Itchler and Marghest pause at the threshold.

"The Tomb of Sir Valyrian," Marghest bellows, "The last resting place of the Mirror of the Zealot." He pauses, lifting his faded black book. "Some work is to be done before the vault can be entered. Make it quick."

He gives Itchler a slight push, who falls forward and places a single foot onto the chamber floor. Nothing. Then, a maelstrom of green flame surges forth from the well, accompanied by a demonic howling which reverberates through the mind and soul, swarming over Itchler and bathing him in its seething fury. And then... silence. Itchler is gone.

Marghest chuckles, low and deep. "Watch your step."

He turns and marches back up the stairs.

Vaechter: The central well of flames houses a celestial fire elemental, a spirit whose true name is not mentioned, but calls itself Vaechter. It has the honor of guarding the Necropolis and consuming the souls of the evil mortals who dare enter. Vaechter is tied to the pit, but can reach any location in the main chamber. It possesses tremorsense, darkvision, detect evil, detect living, and detect celestial. Vaechter will attack anything evil, and anything living that is not celestial. Vaechter is not above speaking with the undying, but offers little advice. Its mind is warped from the long years of imprisonment, and its wide grin give way easily to fiery cackling.

Vaechter can be released by removing any of the stones which adorn the well. This takes some prying. Upon completion, Vaechter is free from the compulsions set upon it and destroys everything, undead and living alike, before returning to his home plane. Game Over.

Vaechter is open to trading lives for hints. Up to the DM's discretion.

Vaechter eats Itchler, who is living and was forced into the dungeon with the party. Marghest does not enter the dungeon far enough to be reached.



Sin Table:

This long arched dais of rough sandstone stands roughly waist high. Eight square indentations, each roughly six inches per side, are spaced evenly across its surface.



There are eight statuettes hidden in the dungeon. They must be placed in the appropriate location on the dais in order to unlock the seal on the tomb of Sir Valyrian. The correct answer is to place them in numerical order based on the numeral etched into their base. This is, from left to right: Gluttony, Sloth, Pride, Death, Lust, Envy, Wrath, and Greed.

Once all eight statuettes are placed, in the correct order, the green flames fly up and then drain downwards to allow passage to the Sepulcher. Vaechter is sent back to his home plane.

Upon 8th Statue Correctly Placed: The green flames of the central well surge in a dizzying maelstrom, careening higher and higher in a vortex of twisting fury. Vaechter is enveloped by the blaze, his grinning maw and deep-throated laughter swallowed in the torrent. The inferno reaches the ceiling, thickens, and then falls back, down into the well. The roaring ceases, and all is still.

It does not take long for Marghest to appear at the chamber entrance, Régar the dwarf at his side. They cross the threshold.

“Well done, my undying,” Marghest says as he surveys the room, his eyes settling at last on the empty well and the narrow staircase winding down to greater depths. “Well done indeed.”

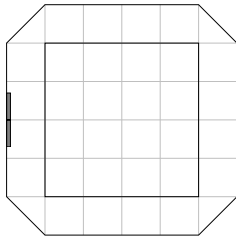
He peers over the edge into the darkness, then pulls out his sword. He speaks to it in hushed tones, and red, sickly light begins to emanate from it. He holds it aloft.

“After you.”

Downward Passage: Once the sin table has been completely populated and Vaechter is gone, the staircase to the tomb is revealed in the sides of the well and can be traversed. Entering the flames of the well before Vaechter is gone results in horrible death.

No Disposal: The green flames and tempestual energies prevent items from being tossed into the well before Vaechter is gone and the downward passage has been opened.

2 - Blocked



A large square section of the room's floor is sunk down roughly five feet. Large blocks of varying materials rest within, fitting together like puzzle-blocks. A square section of the space is unoccupied, leaving a ten-foot by ten foot hole. In the ceiling is a circular stone seal. Four clamps appear to hold it in place.

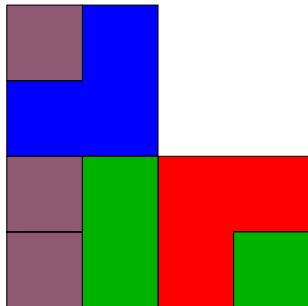
Blocks: This chamber has a block pushing puzzle. The chamber walls are made of the standard dungeon sandstone whereas the blocks are purple, green, red, and blue marble. The blocks have cherubs and angels carved into their surfaces, giving some ability to grip them.

Blocks can be moved as long as they stay in alignment with the grid. Some sort of magic prevents rotation and other “weird” movement. They cannot be lifted.

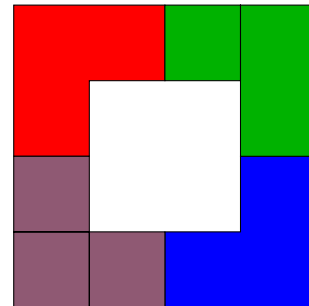
Every time a full corner is created in the correct location, one of the four clamps pulls back on the greed vent seal.



Original Configuration



Target Configuration



Greed Vent: The stone seal is a circle ten-feet in diameter centered in the ceiling. It opens when all four clamps are pulled back (when the blocks are in the correct arrangement). Hopefully a player or two are standing in the empty square underneath the seal at this point in time.

The last block slides into place. With a dull clank the final clamp releases and the seal splits into four hinged segments, releasing a metallic torrent. Gold, jewels, and precious trinkets spill out of the opening. Heaps of coins of all denominations intermixed with gemstones and sundries begin to fill the chamber. The heavy scent of metal causes a dull aftertaste in your mouth.

Any players in the square area in the center of the room (under the seal) die as they are pummeled in gold.

Searching the gold turns up two things: a roll of parchment forgotten in a golden vase and Fat Albert.

Parchment: A roll of parchment that can be found by searching the gold. It reads:

“The sacrifice of Yoren to the guardian Vaechter yielded naught but the following three numbers, after thoughtful contemplation assumed to be the next in the sequence: nine and thirty, five and forty, nine and forty. Of their significance I can still not fathom.”

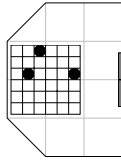
This is a reference to the statuette puzzle in chamber 6. The numbers 39, 45, and 49 are the next three numbers in the sequence.

Fat Albert: A search of the chamber finds a full-size pure-golden statue of a man buried beneath the gold. It is exquisitely crafted in perfect detail, as if his body was directly turned to gold. The statue is made of pure gold, and is thus rather heavy.

It takes 3 people to carry the golden statue.

Greed Statuette: Has the number 35 (XXXV) etched into its base. Note that the greed statuette is embedded within Fat Albert and must be extracted by dissolving the gold using the acid pot in room 4.

3 - Chamber of Envy



Directly opposite the door stands a table. Script is engraved in the wall beyond.

Queen Puzzle: The raised table is tiled in black and white, forming a 6×6 grid. A quick inspection finds that the central column which supports the table holds eight statuettes of elegant women. There is an additional inscription in the rear wall:

The Duke of Lain had to his name
Eight beautiful daughters chaste
Who would have known that soon was sown
The seedling of grave distaste

They'd start to fight if they caught sight
Of another's envious stare
So have heart, spread them apart
And put an end to this horrid affair



Problem



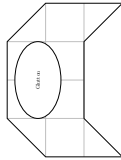
Solution

Placing the eight statues on the grid such that no two queens threaten one another causes a clunking sound to be heard. The pedestal has a small hidden compartment from which the statuette of envy can be collected. Note that queens can see along rows, columns, and diagonals.

Passage: Successfully completing the queen puzzle causes the table to crack open, revealing the statuette of envy within its supporting column. In addition, the rear wall slowly grinds downwards, revealing the chamber of the glutton.

Envy Statuette: The envy statuette has the number 27 (XXVII) etched into its base.

4 - Chamber of Gluttony



The rear alcove of this chamber is occupied by a hulking form. Rolls of fat drape over its massive bulk, and great globs of fatty skin hang from its face like bags of sand. It may at once have been human, but enlarged and somehow fattened to such an obscene degree to become this decrepit monstrosity before you. Short, pitiful hands stick out from beneath the rolls of fat, pulling a rubber feeding hose which drapes from a hole in the ceiling and with learned practice re-insert it past metal mandibles down its throat. It gulps down some sort of horrid protein slush, its beady eyes closing in satisfaction. The gelatinous hulk appears to be permanently set in place; its feet probably havent poked out from beneath the drapes of its own flesh in ages.

Glutton: The glutton is immune to the acid bath it sits in. It has a reach of only 5 feet, but is capable of seizing individuals and forcing them down its throat. Medium-sized creatures must be bitten in half to fit, killing them in one round and swallowing the other half in the following round. Attacking the glutton with daggers is pointless.

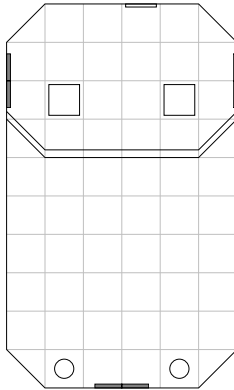
The glutton dies if it eats both of the poisons from chamber 10.



Gluttony Statuette: The statuette is within the gut of the glutton. Observant players will notice the odd bulge in its gut (see image). The suggested tactic is to, after killing the glutton with both poison vials from room 12, to ingest acid resistance potion as a precaution and cut the statue from the glutton's stomach.

The gluttony statuette has the number 1 (I) engraved in its base.

5 - Chamber of Death



This chamber ends in raised flooring, whereupon stand two figures in gleaming full plate interlaced with white marble. The one on the left carries a hooked pole-arm, whereas the one on the right wields the largest war hammer you have ever seen. The chamber is empty between the door and the raised platform, but a quick survey spots numerals etched into the left and right walls and two curious symbols on either side of the door.

Copycat: Any player stepping onto one of the two symbols near the entry door causes the symbol to glow white. From this moment forwards, as long as one concentrates (no check necessary), the statue directly opposite activates. The statue moves opposite to the controller. Thus, movement north causes the statue to move south, whereas movement east causes the statue to move west. There are several rules:

- The statue faces the direction of movement in the same manner
- If the statue would move into a wall, it simply does not move
- If the statue moves into another statue, it pushes it in the direction it is moving
- The players can get the statues to set down or pick up their items



The goal is to get the statue with the titan hammer to strike on the symbol in the rear wall, shifting the section of the room back and allowing entry to more of the dungeon. The statue can only hammer if it is two spaces away from the hammer symbol, and horizontal from it (ie, there is only one target space).

At any point, a statue “wielder” can choose to stop concentrating on maintaining control. At that point, the statue walks back to the start block. It holds onto whatever it is wielding, if anything. It will not pick up its original item if it is not wielding it.

Titan Hammer: The hammer can be taken by having the statue set it down. It can be carried by three people but cannot be used effectively.

Statuette Puzzle: The left and right walls contain squares etched with roman numerals. The numbers 1 through 36 are all present, but are distributed in a random, arbitrary order. Investigation of any of these squares finds that they can be pulled from the ceiling after a little bit of prying. They are actually the bases of statuettes of death, each identical save for the numeral etched in their base. The one with the number 21 is correct, the rest are fake blocks of stone.

The puzzle works as follows: The dais in chamber 1 requires that the eight statuettes be placed in order. Each sin statuette has a number etched into its base. These number are: Gluttony: 1, Sloth: 9, Pride: 15, Death: 21, Lust: 25, Envy: 27, Wrath: 33, Greed: 35. These are the first eight non-prime, non-even positive integers. Death can be identified by finding the other seven statuettes first, noticing the pattern, and then selecting the correct one. If the

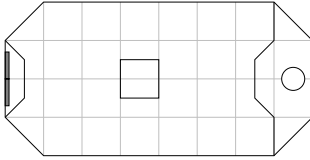
wrong death statuette is placed in the dais, or the last statuette is placed with them in an incorrect order, the green flames of chamber 2 flare up and Vaechter eats the placer.

Note that a hint to this puzzle can be found in chamber 2.

Note that the fake statuettes do not follow the statuette rules.

Death Statuette: The correct death statuette has the number 21 (XXI) etched into its base.

6 - Lava Heat



The walls glow red with heat. The floor ends a few feet past the door into a large roughly-hewn chamber with a pool of bubbling lava, half crusted over. The crust is thin, however, and thick bubbles gurggle and cause the surface to continuously roil and shift around. A metal platform hangs from the ceiling at the same height as the entry floor. The chains are attached to the ceiling some thirty feet up. On the far side of the lava pool is another small outcropping.

Lava: If a player falls into the lava they die. Resilient items like the Titan Hammer can be retrieved with the use of the fire resistance potion from chamber 10. The lava is waist deep.

Platform: The hanging platform can be used to cross the lava. There are three primary ways of crossing: jumping naively, using the hooked pole arm from the previous chamber, or wading through the lava while under the influence of a resist fire potion.

Jumping: To jump to the platform from the west side requires a DC 12 roll. Once a player lands on it the platform begins to swing. If the player tries to continue to run they must make a DC 12 roll to reflect the difficulty of the swinging platform. If they wait, the platform does settle down, but they no longer have a running start. Jumping the second distance is DC 16 when the platform is settled.

Pole arm: The pole arm can be used to pull the platform closer. If a player is on the platform then two players must use the pole arm together to pull the platform. Getting on the retracted platform does not require a check. When it is released, the platform swings. Jumping off on the far side requires a DC 6 roll.

Resist Fire: Use of the resist fire potion from the potion puzzle room allows the user to wade across unharmed. Note that any items held or worn are destroyed if they come in contact with the lava.

Easy Access: Upon reaching the other side, players can look up and see a metal loop in a depression in the ceiling above them. Using the hooked pole-arm to yank down in this lever causes two additional square platforms to lower from the ceiling, making crossing easy.

The Hatch: A circular hatch is set into the floor on the far side of the door. Words are inscribed around its perimeter:

Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast.

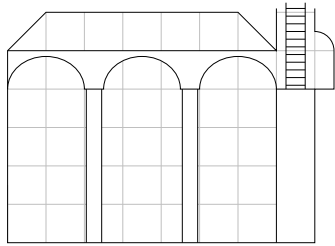
Several numbers are etched into the face of the plate:

111 = 0 637 = 1 280 = 3
768 = 3 123 = 0 599 = 2

The solution is to count the number of enclosed regions in each digit. For example, '0' has one closed region, '8' has two, and '1' has none. Thus $081 = 1 + 2 + 0 = 3$. The number of the beast is 666. Any player dramatically placing their hand on the hatch and stating " $666 = 3$ " causes it to unbolt from below, allowing one to lift it and push it to the side.

A deep, dark shaft is below.

7 - Dais of Lust



Shallow pockets have been carved into the sandstone walls, forming a sort of ladder. The shaft plummets down into darkness.

Attentive players can listen and hear the deep breathing of the beast in the chamber of wrath.

Note that the undying have darkvision.

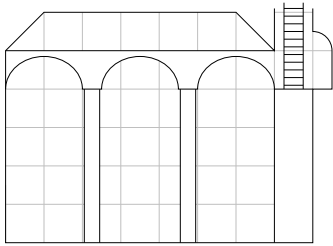
At the base of the shaft is an alcove. In it is a raised pedestal with a single stone statuette of a lustful woman. Opposite the alcove is the chamber of wrath.

Lodestone: Picking up the statuette causes its curse to activate. It acts as a lodestone, forcing the one carrying it to become encumbered. Setting the hefty statue down only causes it to vanish and reappear elsewhere on one's person. The curse is removed on death, in which case it reappears on its pedestal. It can technically be removed by the likes of remove curse, which could be tempted out of Marghest if done tactfully. An encumbered character cannot make the jump in the lava chamber.

The lodestone ability does not activate if flesh does not make contact with it. One can thus pick it up by wrapping it in one's shirt or similar.

Lust Statuette: The lust statuette has the number 25 (XXV) etched into its base.

8 - Chamber of Wrath



You stand at a balcony overlooking a large chamber. A steep staircase thrusts downwards to a floor covered in human skulls and old bones. Lying at the base is a Cerberus-like monstrosity, the form of a massive three-headed canine shaped from amalgamated human flesh. The great beast, appears, thankfully, to be asleep.

Cerberus: Cerberus is a monstrosity made of the amalgamated bodies of tortured sinners. If awakened, it quickly devours all it can reach.

Scaffolding: Scaffolding extends over the room, accessible from the columns forming the side of the upper hall. A character can climb to get up, and from there carefully inch over. If Cerberus is awakened while a player is on the scaffolding, it will leap up, striking the ceiling, thereby causing it to break all the lava from room 7 to flood in. This will kill Cerberus and any individual in the lower part of the chamber or on the scaffolding.

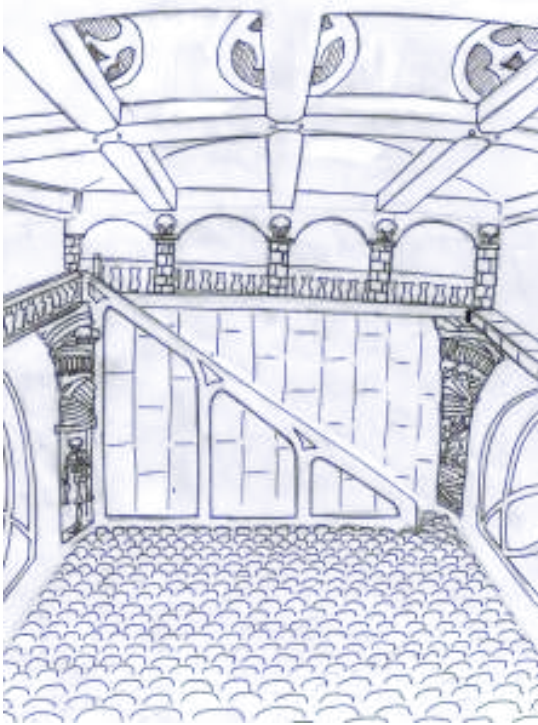
Skull Tiling: The floor of the chamber is covered in human skulls. Players walking on the surface to get around Cerberus must make a DC 13 roll to avoid waking him up. They must do this each way.

Those under the influence of the potion of reduce size do not need to make this check.

Ingestion: The living body of the Sloth can be soaked with potion of reduce size. If Sloth is then fed to Cerberus, the great best shrinks to 2 feet in size. Any character may attac it with their dagger. Roll contesting d20s, with the player getting a +2 advantage. The higher roll kills the other.



Image Credit: Cerberus by Todd Lockwood



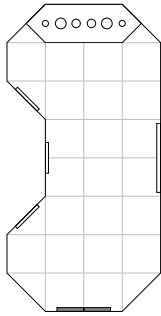
Downclimb: Players can choose to climb the walls of the room to avoid Cerberus. Climbing checks are made at DC 14. A failure causes the player to fall and awaken Cerberus.

Staircase: Cerberus can reach the area above the stairs, through it does take some difficulty. Players who immediately run (assuming they start above the stairs) following his awakening can get up the shaft before it is too late. Cerberus gets to anyone else too quickly. Cerberus does pause to eat slower or closer characters along the way, affording some time.

Wrath Statuette: The wrath statuette has the number 33 (XXXIII) etched into its base. The statuette is located in an alcove at the end of the chamber, a few feet above the ground. The alcove is protected from entry by lava.

Characters under the influence of reduce size can make the climb up with some difficulty. They cannot knock the statuette of wrath onto the floor without waking up Cerberus.

9 - Potion Puzzle



Directly opposite the door is a long counter on which are placed, evenly spaced, six glass vessels of varying size and shape. To the north is what looks like a fiery portal. Heavy etheric flames of blue and green froth between the two supporting pillars, forming a solitary wall through which you can neither see nor safely cross. Opposite the fiery door is a metal demon-face.

Northern Door: Those trying to get through the northern passage while the flames are there are instantly immolated. The flames spread, so even pushing only one's hand in will still cause complete immolation. The flames must be passed using the potion of fire protection.

Potion Riddle: Those who investigate the table find that words have been etched out before the line of potions. Note that one line is too worn to be read. There are three bottle sizes: small, medium, and large.



From left to right, the potions are:

- Small Bottle: Poison which kills instantly. Ingestion causes the flesh to melt off your bones mere moments after swallowing.
- Large Bottle: A special antidote which should be imbibed with the potion of fire resistance.
- Medium Bottle: Potion of acid protection. Ingestion causes pustules to break out over one's body which then erupt, covering one in protective mucus. The effect lasts for five minutes.
- Medium Bottle: Potion of reduce size. Ingestion causes rapid decrease in body size. A medium sized creature becomes roughly five inches tall. The effect lasts for around fifteen minutes.
- Large Bottle: Potion of fire protection. Ingestion causes rough calluses to form all over one's skin. The effect lasts for five minutes.
- Small Bottle: Straight holy water; poison for any undead.

The riddle does not completely specify the solution, which is intentional. The clues do not allow one to determine whether the innermost potions are swapped. This is acceptable, however, since one can simply sample these non-toxic potions to determine which is which.

The potion containers never empty, so there is no limit to their use.

Brave traveler who hasn't yet died

Stay on your toes if you value your hide

Six bottles before you in a row aligned

Which contain promise and which death malign?

Of safe drinks it is good to know there are two

One against Acid and one to change your Size too

Yet a third grants resilience to Fire's touch,

Without its Antidote though it does not help much

Alas the Antidote is not all too pure

It kills if taken separately to what it does cure

Two Poisons remain to make the sampler pout

Death may be quick or altogether drawn out

Know that the Antidote is left of the Acid

—————*This line is missing*—————

The large ones can kill you, though one may be the cure

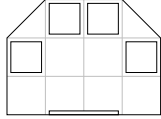
And Acid, it is known, is bigger than both Poisons pure

Make up your mind and try to choose well

An incorrect choice leads straight to hell

Demon Maw: A large demon maw is set into the stone oppose the green flames. Close inspection finds that the throat of the demon face is open, leading to a dark space behind the wall. It is large enough that a player with reduce size can fit through, granting admission to the chamber of sloth. It is also large enough for a statuette to be handed through.

10 - Chamber of Pride



Beyond the flames lies a chamber with four statues facing inwards. The statues all appear to be of a man of great self-confidence, dressed in the finest clothes, bearing an expression of utmost self-assurance. The statues, while not identical, appear to all be modeled after the same individual. Each statue bears a stone tablet in one hand, and holds in the other a metal key. Text is engraved in the back wall: *Only one of the best's statements are true.*

Pride Puzzle: Each of the four statues has a name inscribed in their base. The names are Augustus, Balbinus, Caligula, and Domitian. Each statue carries a stone tablet and holds a metal key. The stone tablet bears three statements. These statements are used to determine which statue holds the correct key.

The solution is Caligula.

Tablet Inscriptions:

Augustus:

1. Domitian is not the best
2. I am not the best
3. The best is the best

Caligula:

1. I am not the best
2. Domitian is the best
3. I am the best

Balbinus:

1. Caligula is not the best
2. Augustus's second statement is true
3. Not all I say is the truth

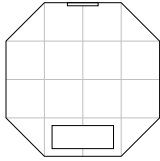
Domitian:

1. Augustus only lies
2. Caligula tells the truth at least twice
3. I am the best

Key Hole: The central tile of the chamber has a small keyhole. The correct key must be rotated in the keyhole three times in order to allow the tile to be lifted, revealing the statuette of pride below. Insertion of the incorrect key causes a lighting blast to discharge in the room, killing the key bearer.

Pride Statuette: The pride statuette has the number 15 (XV) etched into its base.

11 - Chamber of Sloth

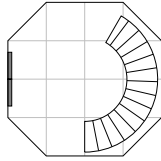


The throat of the metal maw opens into a dank and musty chamber. It seems that it has not been visited in ages; the scent of decay permeates the air. Dust has long settled on the flagstones and over the corpse in the center of the room. At the rear of the chamber is what appears to be a statuette.

Sloth Corpse: Upon close inspection one finds that the sloth is still alive and close to death, but nonetheless still living. Sloth could potentially be used as a sacrifice to Vaechter for information, or to the Wrath beast to reduce it in size.

Sloth Statuette: The sloth statuette has the number 9 (IX) etched into its base.

12 - Sepulcher



The staircase winds into the depths. The steps are high and short, making progress difficult and treacherous. You are soon covered from head to toe in slick black soot. At long last the stairs open in a small octoganal chamber. One wall contains a massive gate, standing nearly fifteen feet tall and ten feet wide. In the deep gloom its form is imposing and utterly frightening, a myriad of devilish shapes forever captured in unrelenting bronze.

The remaining walls contain eight white crystalline quartz slabs, each roughly four feet high and one across. Their milky interiors appear to slowly roil.

Upon reaching the base of the stairs the air thickens and the green flames of the well appear once again in the shaft above. Leaving, it appears, requires the use of the Mirror of the Zealot.

The Bronze Gate: The Bronze Gate lacks doorknobs or handles and appears devoid of any helpful description. Each door begins to glow with an inner light if a creature of good places a hand on its surface. This glowing increases when two hands are placed on the door. It opens when both doors each have two hands belonging to good people pressed on them.

Marghest Blaire and Régar likely attempt to open the door but find that they cannot.

Soul Gems: The milky quartz slabs are large gems containing the tortured souls corresponding to the eight statuettes. That is, for each of the seven deadly sins plus Death there is a quartz slab containing a soul which suffers for its misdeeds. Staring into the milky depths of the soul gems finds the wispy forms of said souls, but these are unresponsive, unaware of their surroundings, and in constant torment.

The soul gems are immune to physical attack and any attempts to pry them from the walls.

As is described in chamber 13, the soul gems can receive new hosts and release their current ones to the afterlife. If a character is sucked into a gem its form can be recognized as the swirling soul within, as it looked when last whole and alive.



credit: *The Gates of Hell* by Rodin, photo by The Golden Sieve

13 - Fake Tomb



Revealed is a ten foot by fifteen foot cavity with flat stone walls and a flat mithril ceiling. A single granite sarcophagus stands at the rear, plainly embossed with the name, VALYRIAN. Spread around the room are various distinct objects.

- Marghest commands Régar to choose the true Mirror of the Zealot.
- Régar will chooses the full-length mirror. At Marghest's command he uses it and suffers the consequences.
- Marghest will thereafter angrily force the players away and will use the obsidian dagger, cutting a portal and suffering the consequences.
- The resurrection effect of the undying has ceased to function since the sin table was completed. Any deaths here are final.



Antimagic Chamber: The room is lined in lead and exists within an *antimagic field*. Only the spells and spell-like abilities outlined for this chamber continue to function within, with the exception of the durability of the limestone walls.

Fake Artifacts: Eight fake artifacts are contained within this chamber, seven immediately visible which correspond to the seven deadly sins, and the Bronze Maw hidden within the sarcophagus which corresponds to Death. Their use (or misuse) results in the wielder's soul being trapped in the corresponding soul gem in chamber 12.

Stone Bowl, Gluttony: This stone filigreed bowl is wide and shallow, with steep edges. Its exterior surface is covered in scroll work, but its interior is sanded to a crisp smoothness. It appears to be made of a heavy gray stone and is filled near to the brim with a silvery liquid.

A person staring into the bowl's reflection who audibly expresses the desire to travel to a particular location will cause that location to be pictured in the liquid's perfectly smooth surface. The water then coalesces upwards, forming a silvery tree. This tree blossoms, then grows fruit. Finally, the silver peels back over ripe apricots. Ingesting any of this causes the partaker's soul to be sucked into to glutton's soul gem in chamber 12.

Velvet Carpet, Sloth: This velvet rug is exquisitely made, with rich red colors depicting vast landscapes. If unrolled and spread out it is found to be 5 ft. by 5 ft, large enough for one person to sit comfortably or up to four to squeeze side by side.

A person sitting on the carpet can cause it to levitate a few inches off the floor by concentrating. Audibly expressing the desire to travel to a particular location will cause red light to shine from its top surface, projecting shadows of

the intended destination onto the chamber walls. Maintaining concentration will cause the carpet to shine brighter, and then the red light begins to dissolve those it bears, burning away their exterior and aging the activator to the shriveled corpse of the Sloth. Any others on the rug simply perish. The activator then dissolves as well, and their soul replaces the previous soul in the sloth's soul gem in chamber 12 and they will suffer until another unfortunate soul makes the same mistake and replaces them.

Silver Full Length Mirror, Pride: A five by eight foot flat object covered in a white cloth leans against one wall. Pulling off the cloth reveals a full length mirror with an elegantly wrought silver frame. A cursory glance at the mirror's surface shows exactly the reflection one would expect.

Longer observations into the mirror find that the mirror's image has slight alterations. The faults in the bodies of others are slightly exaggerated, their clothes more dull, the bearing less impressive. At the same time, the mirror improves the image of the observer. Waiting only increases the effect.

A person staring into the mirror and audibly expressing the desire to travel to a particular location will cause that location to be pictured in the reflection. The observer suddenly begins to transform, its features matching the aforementioned positive exaggerations. Simultaneously their skin becomes pale and white as they turn into a marble statue and at last become pride statues similar to those in chamber 10. The statue then dissolves, and the activator's soul replaces the previous soul in pride's soul gem in chamber 12.

Ebony Hand Mirror, Lust: A small, ornate hand mirror, as used by the upper crust of society, is wrapped in delicate white silk. Lifting it and staring at one's reflection finds one's own reflection replaced with that of a beautiful stranger. The observer is completely entranced by this attractive other and submits to the magical trap unless they pass a DC 16 save. On success the observer is able to tear away. On failure, the observer becomes so gripped with lust and love that they lose control over themselves, frantically pressing their face against the mirror and tearing away at their own clothing. In a few moments they have torn themselves to shreds and lie dead. Their form vanishes and their soul replaces the previous soul in the gem of lust in chamber 12.

Obsidian Dagger, Envy: A black obsidian dagger sits in a cold forged steel stand. Its handle is wrapped in supple leather, but its blade is crude and wickedly sharp. Lifting the dagger causes its wielder to become overwhelmed by a sense of envy for the nearest creature within sensing range. The wielder must pass a DC 16 save or fully submit and hurl themselves at the object of their envy.

The attacker and defender must each roll a d20, the attacker gaining a +2 bonus. If the attacker has a greater result he succeeds in killing the target, and a new save is required or they become envious again of the next-closest creature. If the defender has a greater result they manage to subdue their attacker and cause them to drop the dagger.

A wielder of the dagger who makes their save can use the dagger to feel for nicks in the fabric of the space-time-continuum. With a slice of the dagger they can tear open a hole to nothingness, and are instantly sucked in and lost, the tear falling in upon itself behind them, leaving the dagger to fall on the floor.

Iron Hammer, Wrath: A stout iron warhammer, medium size, rests on its head. Its handle is wrapped in leather chords. The metal surface is polished to a fine sheen. Observant players will notice it bears the same markings as that of the Titan Hammer.

Wielding the hammer does not immediately produce any ill effects. It can be used to knock down the supporting columns of this chamber. See below.

Using the hammer against another causes the wielder to become enraged. Treat the effect similarly to the obsidian dagger, with the same chain reaction and the end result being the wielder replacing the soul of wrath in chamber 12.

Gold Coin, Greed: A large golden coin, one side engraved with the markings of a long forgotten king, the other side smooth but covered in dust. Its edges are set with three shining orange gems.

If the coin is held and one polishes its smooth side the coin takes on a mirror-like finish. Holding it and staring into its reflection shows one the form of a Ginni, trapped behind the coin's surface. It cannot communicate with the outside world but appears to listen to the words of the one holding the coin.

The gold coin grants a wish, but it perverts it so that no matter the wish, the desire of the holder is twisted, reversed, or otherwise fouled such that anyone hoping to benefit from it is harmed. The actual effect is up to the DM. Once the wish is made the gems pulse a searing, hellish red, and the bearer must make a DC 16 save or turn to gold and then vanish, their soul replacing the soul of greed in chamber 12.

Granite Sarcophagus: The huge outer shell of this stone container is scribed with the name VALYRIAN. The sarcophagus opens with some effort and contains the rotten remnants of an inner wooden coffin-like shell, a few bones, rusted armor (precious stones pried out), torn bits of clothing and windings, dust, and a carved stone cylinder (containing the Bronze Maw). Among the remnants is a shattered skull.

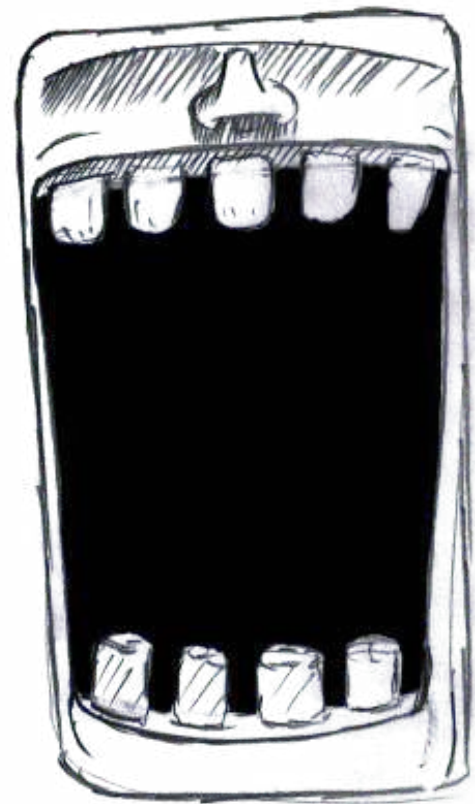
Bronze Maw, Death: A carved stone cylinder, about three feet long and four inches in diameter, is covered in skeletal carvings and an assortment of faces and runes. The end cap can be unscrewed, revealing a rolled up piece of cloth. The cloth is thick, heavy, and dark as night. If unrolled it is about seven feet long and three feet wide, with beveled edges. The material becomes rigid when set flat on a surface, horizontal or otherwise. A sucking noise can be heard as its surface becomes a door to the void, and from the depths of the void comes a great stone face, which protrudes from the Mirror of the Void to form a vile grinning doorway. A draft fills the immediate area as the air becomes sucked through.

The bronze maw acts as a sphere of annihilation. Anything that enters is completely and forever destroyed. The mirror can be rolled back up by pulling up its sides. This causes the great face to pull back, and the surface quickly turns back into heavy cloth.

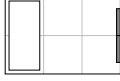
A person standing before the open maw and audibly expressing the desire to travel to a particular location causes the maw to close and then reopen, that location now visible within. Passing through the portal causes the passer's flesh to dissolve away, leaving a skeleton to fall to the ground. This then dissolves and the person's soul replaces the previous soul in the death soul gem in chamber 12.

Supporting Columns: Four supporting columns can be seen in the accompanying chamber image. These can be struck down with the use of the Iron Hammer. Note that the hammer can be thrown from outside the room to down the last column, avoiding the ensuing trap.

The mithril ceiling collapses as the last column is toppled. It is actually a large mithril block containing an entirely separate chamber, the true tomb. Anything in the fake tomb is crushed. The true tomb can now be accessed from room 12.



14 - True Tomb



The solid mithral vault of the Zealot has replaced the lesser tomb. The chamber appears to have been carved from a solid block of mithral. Cut out of the floor is a flat bier, on which is a thick layer of bone shards and dust mixed within a hollow suit of armor. The steel gauntlets still clasp the hilt of a long sword, its sheath molded away, but the blade appearing sharp and fresh. A shield leans against the bier.

Zealots Protection: Only good creatures can enter the true tomb. Neutral or evil creatures which attempt entry are inflicted with divine energy and perish.

Overwhelming Zealousness: Wielding the sword, shield, or armor causes the bearer to adopt some of the Zealot's power and demeanor. They gain an overbearing sense of zealousness and adversity towards evil. Their alignment instantly becomes lawful good and they henceforth have a great distrust in everyone else and seek to vanquish evil anywhere and everywhere, by whatever means necessary.

Shield of the Zealot: The shield is perfectly round and can be quickly polished to an extreme sheen. The metal is lustrous and pure, and reflects light very well. The shield has uses beyond mere protection. If turned over and filled with water, it forms a perfectly smooth mirrored surface which can be used as a portal to any location on the material plane. Any creature in possession of the shield can concentrate on a location. The shield's surface reflects the desired place and can be stepped through as a portal to said location.

Decanter of Endless Water: A silver vessel stands behind the bier. It is only a few inches tall and is filled with water. If water is poured out it miraculously continues to refill.