



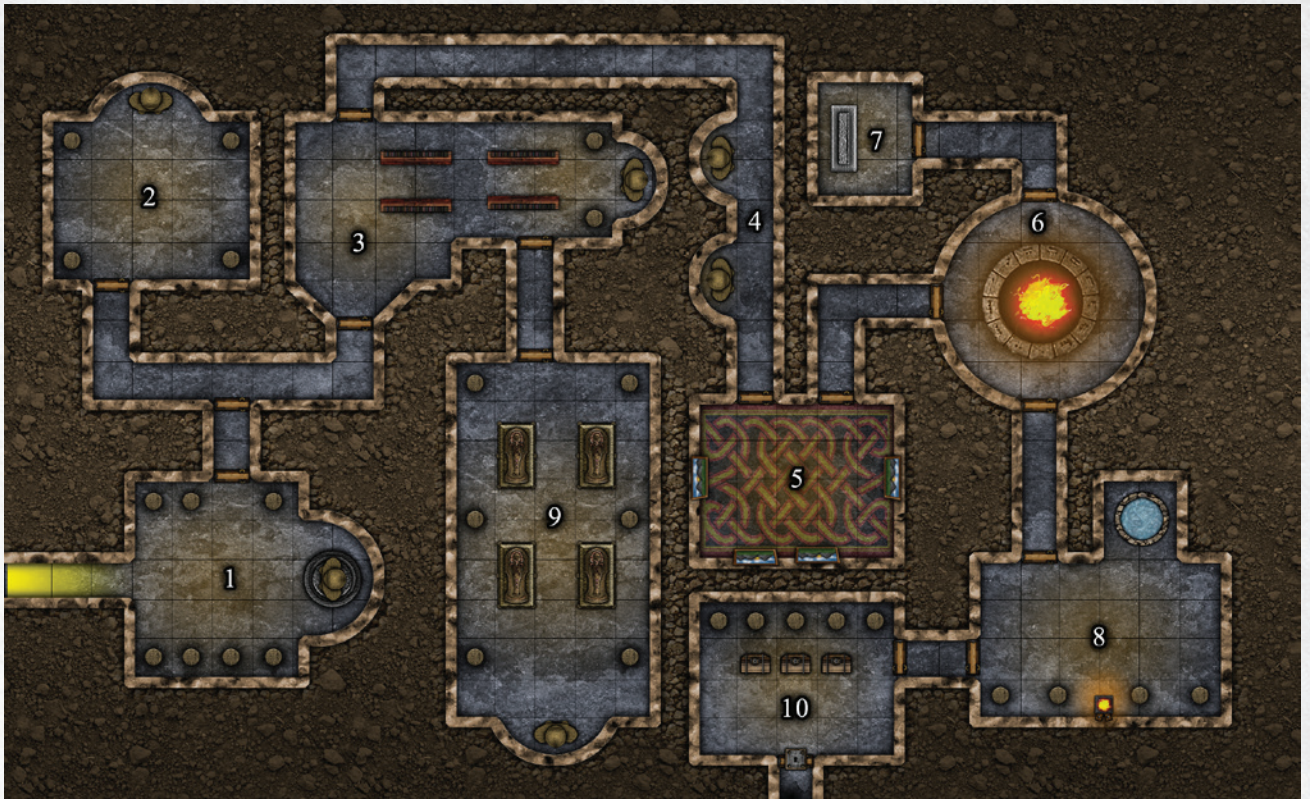
Mini-Dungeon Collection



THE SHARD OF ACCOUNTABILITY
BY JUSTIN ANDREW MASON



HMD-006



The Shard of Accountability

JUSTIN ANDREW MASON

During a celebration such as a birthday, PCs notice a mysterious package nearby: a giftbox ornately decorated with gold and silver gilded paper. A singular vellum note reads,

"In eternal gratitude, may your paths always be illuminated by the light of Truth."

The gift itself is otherworldly and contains an artifact: the Shard of Accountability. It has been secretly sent by a lawful or good deity as a test.

If the rainbow-hued crystal shard is removed from its container, a blinding light bursts forth from within and the adventurers fall unconscious as their minds enter a psychic dimension called The Halls of Contemplation. Within the Halls of Contemplation they assume their own likenesses, including whatever possessions they had on their person at the moment they entered.

Only the PCs are affected. Other creatures in the area will simply observe a bright flash with the adventurers falling unconscious for a few seconds before re-awakening. When the adventurers awaken, the crystal shard shimmers brightly before fading from existence.

Everyone drawn into the Halls of Contemplation is completely healed and cured of any ailments, including poisons, diseases, and curses.

ADVENTURE PREPARATIONS

The GM should ask the players the following questions, and the players should provide their answers back to the GM in secret.

1. What individual, living or otherwise, has your character looked up to the most as a hero?
2. Name three very important memories from your character's past.
3. What single memory is your character most ashamed of?

4. What is your character's most prized physical possession?
5. What good deed is your character most proud of?
6. At this moment what does your character most desire?

THE HALLS OF CONTEMPLATION

Experiences in the Halls of Contemplation all take place within the mind. The adventurers will suffer no damage to their physical body, and any consumables, ammunition, or charges used in this dungeon will not be expended from their "real" inventory. Any character knocked unconscious or killed within the Halls vanishes from the dungeon and awakens in the real world mere moments before their comrades also awaken.

1. SELF-REFLECTION

The adventurers awaken to find themselves standing at the end of a brightly lit corridor as it expels into a larger chamber. The light from the far end of the tunnel is more blinding than gazing into the sun, and if traversed, never ends.

The chamber boasts a 50-foot high domed ceiling masterfully painted with scenes of locales familiar to the entire party (perhaps from past adventures). A massive 25-foot stone statue depicting an individual stands resolute centered between two rows of columns. Each adventurer will see this statue as a magnificently carved representation of themselves. At the foot of the statue rests a basin filled with a viscous carmine fluid.

When the adventurers enter the center of the chamber, the face of the statue animates and speaks in a multi-tonal voice (sounding like all of the party members speaking simultaneously).

"Awakened within to seek the true gift, each true-self shall be revealed. Drink now from this well of shame, or continue and all will be revealed."

For a moment a strange sigil divided into five equal sections appears as if fashioned from light floating before the statue. Each adventurer feels a sharp sting on the top of their right hand (or other relevant appendage) and they notice the now vanished sigil is emblazoned upon their own flesh. The voice continues,

"Five challenges to prove your worth. Truth shall be revealed."

The statue then returns to its lifeless inanimate form. The basin contains a vile toxin that causes any creature drinking from it to suffer painful spasms for 2d4 rounds before "dying." There is no saving throw.

2. HEROES OF THE PAST

The far end of this chamber boasts an alcove that houses a 15-foot tall featureless humanoid statue. In front of the statute a circle has been carved into the stone floor. When an adventurer enters the circle, the statue takes on a likeness of their hero (from question #1) and their personal hero's voice emanates from the alcove,

"Speak my name and remember."

If the character says their hero's name and explains why they admire that hero, the statue smiles before becoming once again featureless. One of the segments of the sigil upon that character's hand now glows.

3. LIBRARY OF MEMORIES

This massive chamber has several book-laden shelves. A ten-foot tall golden statue depicting the sender of the shard stands nearby. Each adventurer has three chances to read from any of the books. Each passage is actually a randomly selected memory from all the adventurers who entered (from question #2). The source of the memory is not revealed, though if not the characters' own, then hints in the text may suggest who the memory is from.

The pages of any book appear blank to any adventurer after they have read three passages. Reading three passages causes one segment of the sigil upon the adventurer's hand to begin to glow.

4. HALL OF THE TWO SELVES

There are two statues in twin alcoves in this hallway. Each adventurer sees both in their own likeness. One depicts the smiling adventurer adorned in riches, jewels, and the finest clothing with its hand outstretched holding a loose golden key. The other depicts completely nude, frowning, and forlorn version.



The door at the end of the hall has a keyhole, but is unlocked. Beyond the door is a portal back to the doorway from which the characters entered the hall (creating an endless loop). If the party uses the golden key in the door's lock, the adventurer who turns it is wracked with pain for 1d4 rounds and immediately reduced to 1d4 hit points as the key disintegrates.

The portal creating the endless loop is deactivated when any adventurer either embraces or drapes an article of clothing around the forlorn statue.

5. GALLERY OF SHAME

This room appears to be an art gallery, in which hangs one masterfully crafted, detailed painting for each adventurer who is present. Each painting depicts its subject in meticulous detail, showing them in the midst of their most shameful memory (from question #3). The paintings are indestructible and can be clearly seen by all present. If a character exits the chamber without attempting to destroy their own painting, one segment of the sigil upon their hand begins to glow.

6. PIT OF SACRIFICE

The center of this large circular chamber is a 15-foot wide pit that descends 300 ft. to a river of flowing lava. The magma radiates a sweltering heat that fills the room. Upon the wall is carved a single sentence,

"That which is most precious is but a passing moment."

If an adventurer casts their most prized possession (from question #4) to be destroyed in the fire below, one segment of the sigil upon their hand begins to glow. Even if the character's most prized possession was not on their person before entering, they discover that it is among their possessions now.

7. TABLET OF FORTUNES

A large stone tablet stands erect in this small chamber; upon its face are scattered a myriad of carved lingual characters, symbols, and nodes. When an adventurer places their hand upon the tablet for the first time, the engravings begin to swarm and shift until they form a simple sentence clearly stating that character's deepest desire (from question #6).

When the desire is revealed upon the tablet for all to see, that adventurer is gifted with a moment of future insight. This insight grants them a permanent +1 miscellaneous bonus to one skill related to their desire (GM's choice). The tablet resets and re-scrambles after three minutes, and can work only once for each adventurer.

8. WELL OF WORTH

A deep recess in this chamber boasts a 2-foot deep well of crystal clear water. The passage leading further into the hall is barred by an impenetrable invisible barrier. If a character drinks from the fountain the waters within begin to softly glow, and within the pool each sees a visualization of that character's proudest moment. The illusion lasts only for a few moments, but afterwards a disembodied voice states,

"I find you worthy."

When an adventurer is found worthy, they may pass through the barrier into the final chamber.

9. CONQUER THYSELF

This room appears to be a crypt containing a number of ornate stone sarcophagi. The marble tombs clearly depict the likenesses of each of the adventurers who entered the dungeon, even if they are no longer present. A large statue of a robed skeleton wielding a wide-bladed scythe faces outward from the opposite wall. In the skeleton's outreached hand rests a black iron key. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a key hole at the base of the statue.

If the golden key from room #4 is used, the statue crumbles to dust revealing within a glowing holy avenger which functions for any lawful or good aligned wielder the same as it would a paladin.

If the black key is used then the statue crumbles and the entrance vanishes.

When the statue crumbles, the lids of all the sarcophagi explode open as dark figures rise from within to attack.

The dark figures are evil duplicates of the adventurers, each with the **shadow wight** template (see below). Shadow wights have the same weapons and armor as the player characters they are mimicking, though their damage type changes to necrotic (see template). In addition, these shadow wights cannot be turned.

When a shadow wight is destroyed, one segment of the sigil upon its living counterpart's hand begins to glow. When all are destroyed then entrance to the chamber is again revealed.

10. JOURNEY'S REWARD

This room contains three massive treasure chests; one copper, one silver, and one gold. A locked solid platinum door appears to be the only exit.

Each chest can be opened once by each adventurer. The copper chest can only be opened by adventurers with at least one glowing segment of sigil. A character must have at least three glowing segments to open the silver chest, and character must have all five segments glowing to open the gold chest. Each time a chest is opened, it contains a treasure that can be claimed only by the adventurer who opened it. While the treasures cannot leave the Halls of Contemplation, each has real effects in the physical world when claimed.

The gifts: The copper chest contains a healing potion that adds 4 permanent hit points to a character's hit point maximum. The silver chest contains a diamond pendant that provides a permanent +2 bonus to one Charisma skill of the player's choice. The golden chest contains a golden crown that grants permanent advantage on one Wisdom skill of the player's choice.

When a character places their hand upon the platinum door, the sigil emblazoned upon their hand transfers to the door, which begins to glow. The glow becomes brighter for each adventurer that repeats the process, and unlocks once all present adventurers touch it. Beyond is what looks like an unending corridor leading into darkness. When traversed for a few moments, however, the corridor leads to the adventurers regaining consciousness in the real world.

As a final potential reward: if the party has a total of 20 or more segments from the sigils on their hands glowing when they touch the door, each character who passes through it gains advantage on one skill check of their

player's choice whenever all members of the group who passed through the doorway are within 30 feet. The skill to which the reward applies must be chosen when the character passes through the doorway and cannot be changed later.

SHADOW WIGHT TEMPLATE

A beast, humanoid, giant, or monstrosity can become a shadow wight. When a creature becomes a shadow wight, it retains all its statistics except as noted below.

Alignment and Type. The shadow wight's alignment changes to chaotic evil and its type is undead.

Senses. The shadow wight gains darkvision with a radius of 60 feet.

Resistances. The shadow wight gains resistance to necrotic damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the shadow wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Necrotic Contingence. The shadow wight's physical and magical attacks all deal necrotic damage instead of their normal damage type, regardless of the nature of the attack. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this damage, a shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

A shadow wight's attacks are considered magical.

