

# RIYAL'S RESEARCH TRAPS

 **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

**JON BRAZER  
ENTERPRISES**

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## TRAPS

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# Riyal's Journal

## Trap Designers

In my experience as an adventurer, there are two different kinds of trap designers. The first is someone who just wants to slow down adventuring groups intruding on their domain, hurting them a bit and making them use some of their healing but not doing much else. This kind of trap designer tends to be an assistant to a group's leader while the leader relies on his people. This group I fear not their traps.

The second is someone that fills their domain with trap. This kind of trap designer will require a group looking for traps to travel through a labyrinth of trap triggers to cross an otherwise empty room. This trap designer is typically the group's leader or at least is a leader that genuinely understands the value of traps. In my experience, a group that will booby-trap their entire lair so extensively tend to either all too aware of their weaknesses (such as kobolds), are groups that do not trust anyone even their own members (such as dark cults), or are powerful spellcasters, possessing magical means to bypass all their traps. Naturally other types of groups may fall into this group, but I have yet to encounter them.

I am in possession of a healthy quantity of respect for this second group. First and foremost, I respect this group for their cleverness. A truly inspired trap designer will make only one path available to intruders but will make those traps easy to detect. This will give the intruders a high level of overconfidence and will not realize they are being lead into a truly deadly trap that will be hidden so will that most will not question an area where they cannot detect a trap. In this case the only correct way through this is to set off one of the traps or some kind of bypass mechanism. And yes, several overconfident halflings I have known over the past century have met their end due to this particular set up.

## Bypass Mechanism

While I never designed a trap myself, I feel that the bypass mechanism is the most important part of a trap. True it costs more to create the trap in the first place, but it means the trap can be in a frequently visited area without the trap being routinely set off. When a bypass is used properly, the majority of those visiting the area never need to know there is a trap there in the first place. The hidden lock style of bypass is ideal for this. This requires a key of some kind to arm the trap. Afterwards it will stay armed and ready to be sprung until the key is used to disarm the trap. While the trap is disarmed, an army can pass over the detonator every day for a hundred years with no ill effects. I have seen this kind of bypass used in traps that protect

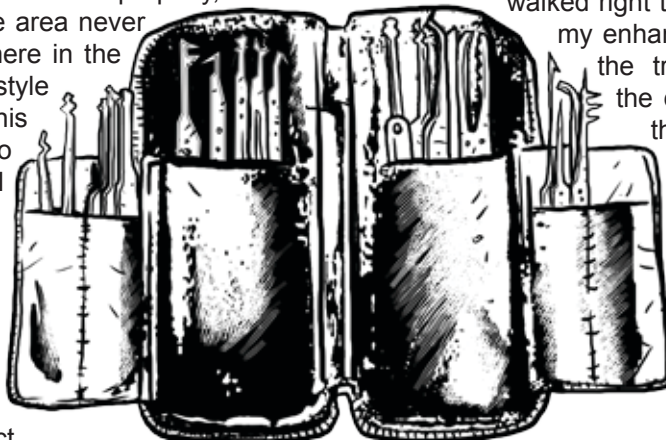
everything from most sensible royalty to overly cautious shop keepers.

Next we have the switch. This switch is obvious once you know a trap is present. However, the switch tends to be difficult to get to for an intruder. I call this one a drawbridge bypass. Reason being is that this kind of bypass works when the bypass is on the far side of the trap itself. This way the creator can simply cast *dimension door* or fly or however to move past the trap for their own transit. Once on the other side, the creator can hit the switch, allowing others to walk on through. This is similar to how humans build draw bridges over moats filled with deadly creatures. Once the traveler has the castle guard's permission, the draw bridge is lowered and the traveler may cross safely. Unlike a drawbridge, however, a switch bypass deactivates a trap for a span of five-to-ten seconds. I once knew a halfling bard that failed to cross the trapped area before the switch's time expired. It took me a week to get his blood stains out of my robes despite my magic.

Similar to the switch we have a hidden switch. This bypass sees its most frequent use when a creature has no way to bypass its own trap but still want their lair defended. Kobolds tend to favor this method. The most hilarious switch I've ever seen from these ingenuous creatures involves a bowl of acid over a door. The switch looks like an ordinary, brown rock near a heavy metal door. Pushing the switch moves a rock underneath a stone bowl filled with stinging acid sitting over a door. If you open the door without pressing in the rock in first, the door opener gets the bowl of acid crashing down on his head followed by his acid-fueled screams. While this trap is quite simple, you have to admire its ingenuity.

The rarest of all bypasses is an arcane switch. With its usefulness in allowing traps to be more widely used by spellcasters, I do not understand its rarity. Regardless, arcane switches tend to be logical to the particular trap. One example that caught me by surprise when I was a young spellcaster, the trap dispelled the most powerful magic aura that it came across. The arcane bypass on it was for a living creature with no magical aura to stand in the trapped area for a short time. Once the trap was deactivated, we

walked right through. During our hasty retreat, my enhanced speed allowed me to reach the trapped area first. Focusing on the danger behind me, I ran straight through the area, causing me to lose my magical armor. I was quite fortunate to have survived that day.



**KOBOLD RAZORTOOTH TRAP** **CR 1**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 15

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** small or smaller creatures do not set off this trap

**Effect** tooth tipped spears (Atk +0 melee, 1d4 spear plus poison [black adder venom])

A favorite among kobolds, a razor-sharp, tooth tipped spear extends from a small hole in the wall when this trap is triggered. In order to set it off, the creature must be a medium or larger creature. Small creatures do not weigh enough to set off this trap. Since the trigger requires a creature of so much weight for the trap to go off, the spear's aim is not terribly great. Many creatures experience the rush of air as the spear extending out mere inches in front of them. Trap cost: 1,250 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 25.

**VAULT ALARM TRAP** **CR 1**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** touch; **Duration** 1 round; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** arcane switch (Knowledge (arcana) DC 15 to determine)

**Effect** spell effect (*ghost sound*)

Tripping this trap is harmless unto itself. However, it makes a loud buzzing sound that can be heard for a considerable distance away alerting guards that someone is breaking into the vault. This trap is commonly used in areas where people regularly move through all the time. This allows someone to accidentally trigger the trap without dying shortly thereafter. Uttering the verbal component to a *ghost sound* spell disables the trap for 1 minute. Trap cost: 250 gp.

**MAGIC MISSILE TRAP** **CR 2**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

**Effect** spell effect (*magic missile*, 1d4+1 damage)

A favorite among beginner trap-making spellcasters, the magic missile trap softens up those coming to attack. This simple trap can ward off weaker creatures like goblins looking for an easy meal or steal. Trap cost: 50 gp.

**POISON DART VOLLEY TRAP** **CR 2**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 15

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 23 to locate)

**Effect** poison darts (Atk +10 ranged, 1d3 plus poison [bloodroot]); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

Even though this trap is old and not all the parts of the trap are working as well as they use to, it is still quite deadly. Upon triggering the trap, a hailstorm of poison darts flies out

to strike all creatures within the area. The darts are filled with bloodroot poison and can be quite deadly if the injured do not make their save. The hidden switch is an image of the moon. Spinning the image upside down disables the trap for 4 rounds while the image turns itself back around. Trap cost: 2,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 20.

**ACID DUMP TRAP** **CR 3**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 25 to locate)

**Effect** acid drop (never miss, 2d6 acid plus 1d3 bludgeoning)

Another favorite of kobolds, the trigger for this trap is opening a door built for small size creatures. The door is always left open slightly so the kobolds can use ranged weapons from behind this trap. Even though most creatures will have cover, the point of firing ranged weapons is to distract the creatures from searching for traps. When a creature rushes through the doorway, a bowl crashes down on the opener, pouring out its acid. The trap can be disarmed by pressing a particular rock near the doorway. This rock moves a stone underneath the bowl, providing it enough support that it will stay in place for 2 rounds. If the door is not returned to its original position by this time, the trap is triggered. Trap cost: 3,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 20.

**STONE CALL TRAP** **CR 3**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 27; **Disable Device** DC 27

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (*alarm*); **Duration** 3 rounds; **Reset** none; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 25 to locate)

**Effect** spell effect (*stone call*, 2d6 bludgeoning damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 40-ft.-radius cylinder)

This trap is relatively common among hill giant tribes. A tribe's druid creates this trap to protect a shrine against thieves or their own kind greed enough to steal their unholy relic present. When something touches the gold statuette without first triggering the hidden switch at the base of the shrine finds rocks fall from the sky as their "god's displeasure has been made known to the thief. *Stone call* can be found in Section 5 of the Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide. Trap cost: 300 gp.

**DISPELLING DOORWAY TRAP** **CR 4**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (*detect magic*); **Reset** none; **Bypass** arcane switch (Knowledge (arcana) DC 25 to determine)

**Effect** spell effect (*dispel magic*, CL 5th, targeted dispel)

When a creature with a magical aura (such as one carrying magic items or has an ongoing spell effect) passes through this doorway, this trap activates. It casts *dispel magic* as a 5th

level caster, attempting to dispel the spell or effect with the highest caster level. The arcane switch is actually a simple wave of a hand through the doorway by a creature with no magical aura. If this is done, any number of creatures with a magical aura may pass through the doorway for the next 3 rounds. Trap cost: 750 gp.

#### COLD FIRE TRAP

CR 5

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair

**Effect** cold fire (alchemical, 6d6 cold damage, DC 20 Reflex half); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius area)

First created by an ifrit that was hunting creatures native to the plane of fire, a cold fire trap uses an alchemical device that burns a wintery blue when released into the air. Creatures caught within sustain cold damage for a single round. Trap cost: 6,500 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 20.

#### ACID SHOWER TRAP

CR 6

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair

**Effect** acid shower (save DC 29 Reflex negates, 2d10 acid damage, touched creature takes damage for 3 rounds)

Acid pours down from a hole in the ceiling and begins to burn the creature if it did not make the save. It is believed that the creator of this trap got the kobold's acid dump trap and decided to make a more sophisticated version. This trap is most common in labyrinths or in 10 ft. wide hallways where all those normally there know to avoid the trigger. Trap cost: 7,500 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 25.

#### TRAP OF GREED

CR 6

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch (gold coin); **Reset** manual

**Effect** spell effect (summon monster v, summons 1 babau demon, 9 rounds)

A single gold coin rests undisturbed and unhidden on the floor near a wall as if it were dropped and not noticed. Underneath the coin, however, is a small summoning circle that instantly summons a babau demon should it be disturbed. This trap is usually left several rooms in advance of a dungeon's true treasure trove to eliminate greedy thieves that will steal anything they can find. Once the trap is sprung, the demon will typically go after the creature that stole the coin then any others nearby.

The summoning circle under the coin is magical while the coin is merely a common trigger. If any other object (such as a creature's foot) covers the summoning circle, the trap is considered reset. The coin is non-magical and does not radiate magic. Trap cost: 2,250 gp.

#### LIGHTNING STORM TRAP

CR 8

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 15

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** sound; **Duration** 2 rounds; **Reset** repair; **Bypass** hidden lock (Perception DC 25 to locate, Disable Device DC 30 disarm)

**Effect** alchemical device (5d6 electricity, save DC 25 Reflex half, creatures in metal armor take a -4 to this save); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft.-radius cone)

Used to protected treasure rooms, this trap sprays electricity from a suit of armor in the corner. Since it is triggered by noises as quiet as two coins clanging together, thieves fill up their bags with coins will set it off. However the trigger is disabled when the fingers of the suit of armor's right fist are pointed out. Because the suit of armor is metal, failing the Disable Device check by 5 or more sets off the trap. Trap cost: 8,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 25.

#### SPINNING BLADES PIT TRAP

CR 8

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair

**Effect** 40-ft.-deep pit (4d6 falling damage); spinning blades (Atk +15 melee, 6d6 damage); onset delay (1 round), DC 25 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-square area)

Set to fall one round after the first creature steps on it, the spinning blades pit trap is particularly deadly. First, the delay gives the trap time for multiple targets to be in range of the floor falling out from underneath the creatures. The fall causes some damage, but the real danger in this trap are the spinning blades. Each round the creature is in the trap, the blades get to make an attack roll. A successful Disable Device check (DC 25) on the center spinner will stop the attacks. Breaking the spinner (Break DC 28, Hardness 8, hp 30) will also stop the attacks. Trap cost: 8,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 25.

#### DROWNING CHAMBER TRAP

CR 9

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 28

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 25 to locate)

**Effect** liquid (water); never miss; onset delay (1 round) multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room)

When the trap is triggered, the doors to the drowning chamber instantly close and seal. A round later, the room begins filling with water. Five rounds later, the room is completely filled with water. The room stays filled with water for four minutes at which point the water drains out and the doors open. The hidden switch bypass shuts off the water, opens the draining holes and the doors leading out. Trap cost: 9,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 25.

**HEIGHTENED FIRE SNAKE TRAP****CR 9****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32**EFFECTS****Trigger** sight (*true seeing*); **Reset** none**Effect** spell effect (heightened *fire snake*, 13d6 fire damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (*fire snake* can be up to 65-ft. long)

This unusual trap attacks a surprising number of creatures. The fire snake begins at the place the trap's trigger. From there it attacks the fire snake makes a 65 foot long line that can bend as needed to attack the most number of creatures possible. If the trap cannot strike all the creatures within a 65 foot radius by making a straight line, it will make as few bends as possible while still targeting as many creatures as possible. Fire snake can be found in Section 5 of the Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide. Trap cost: 4,550 gp.

**ROLLING BOULDER TRAP****CR 10****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** repair**Effect** rolling boulder (12d6 damage, DC 25 Reflex negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. x 40-ft. area)

This trap is typically placed in a 10 foot wide passageway of an ancient tomb and is set to crush those that set it off or seal the intruders inside. The boulder rolls for 40 feet, crushing everyone in the hallway that fail the Reflex save and slams into the wall with the only doorway out sealing inside all those still alive. This prevents any surviving grave robbers from leaving and any future grave robbers from entering. Moving the boulder enough to allow a medium sized creature to slip through the doorway requires 3 successful DC 35 Strength checks. Trap cost: 7,500 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 25.

**FROST BOMB TRAP****CR 11****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 25**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic**Effect** alchemical device (11d6 cold damage, DC 29 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.-radius burst)

An old alchemist named Franswick "Chills" Totenheimer was an exceptional trapmaker. Long ago, he was commissioned by many royal families, religious sects and others that wanted him to protect what they considered valuable. He preferred to use alchemical devices in his traps and One of his more common traps was the frost bomb trap. This trap, buried well below the stone flooring that concealed the trap, possesses enough charges for over 200 uses. Totenheimer now long since dead, his traps still protect countless undiscovered treasures from a time long gone by. Trap cost: 11,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 35.

**FREEZING EARSPLITTER TRAP****CR 12****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30**EFFECTS****Trigger** proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic**Effect** spell effect (*shout*, 5d6 sonic damage plus deafened for 2d6 rounds, DC 16 Fort save for half damage and negate deafened); spell effect (*cone of cold*, 9d6 cold damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 60-ft.-cone)

Tired of adventurers stealing from his cave, the great blue dragon Tashana created a trap that utilized two different kinds of energy, neither of which matched its breath weapon. This worked wonders on turning back adventurers since most of them were ready to encounter electricity and wind up in pain and deafened. A number of other blue, red and black dragons have since copied this trap for their own cave. Trap cost: 36,500 gp.

**POISON ARROW STORM TRAP****CR 12****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 25**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 25 to locate)**Effect** Atk +19 ranged (10d6 plus poison [shadow essence])

This is a common trap found in ancient temples to deities long forgotten. This trap is exceptionally deadly as a number of poisoned arrows rain down upon the creature unfortunately enough to have set it off. Since most martial characters set off trap, this trap hurts them in their most important ability: their strength. With their strength weakened, the intruders will be much less of a thread to whatever waits beyond. One of the skulls to decorate the wall has a small button inside an eye socket (Perception check DC 25 to locate). Pressing the button means the trap will not go off at any point in the next 1 minute. Trap cost: 23,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 35.

**TREASURE ROOM TRAP****CR 14****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 30**EFFECTS****Trigger** sound (*clairaudience*); **Reset** none**Effect** poison gas (burnt othur fumes); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-by-10-ft. room)

Typically placed in a false treasure room, this trap is a favorite to repel grave robbers. During the two rounds following the trap being triggered, a series of loud pops and hisses are designed to scare the intruders into grabbing as much treasure as they can in a single round and then bolting for the door. This type of encouragement dissuades the grave robbers from searching for the secret door to the real treasure chamber. Failing a Disable Device check by 5 or more makes enough sound to trigger the trap. Trap cost: 9,100 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 30.

**GRIM REAPER TRAP****CR 15****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 35; **Disable Device** DC 25**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic**Effect** Atk +1 flaming keen scythe +20/+20 (2d4+1/19-20/x4 plus 1d6 fire plus poison [wyvern poison])

When this trap is triggered, a blade from a scythe sheathed in flames comes out from a slit in the wall and slashes twice then resets back into the wall. The blade receives a fresh coating of poison each time, insuring that it stays just as deadly as the last time. Trap cost: 22,500 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 35.

**EXPLODING COLUMN TRAP****CR 16****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** none; **Bypass** hidden switch (Perception DC 30 to locate)**Effect** exploding column (8d6 bludgeoning damage and 8d6 fire damage, DC 30 Reflex save for half damage); collapsing ceiling blocks (4d6 bludgeoning damage, DC 30 Reflex save avoids); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.-radius burst)

Typically set to go off near a doorway to forbidden areas in sacred temples or treasures rooms, a column explodes sending gouts of flame and chunks of rock go flying in a 15 foot burst. The explosion weakens the ceiling enough that large chunks on rock begin falling. After the trap is sprung, the whole 15 foot area is considered difficult terrain and there is a 50% chance the doorway is blocked with large stones. If the doorway is blocked, it requires 30 minutes of moving stones to allow a medium size creature to squeeze through (Knowledge (engineering) DC 20 cuts the time in half). There is a hidden switch in the corner of the room. A symbol of a fire is among a number of wall carvings. Pressing the hidden switch allows any creature to pass through the area unharmed for 3 rounds. There is a similar switch on the other side of the doorway. Trap cost: 16,000 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 35.

**DOUBLE FIREBALL TRAP****CR 17****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32**EFFECTS****Trigger** proximity (alarm); **Reset** none**Effect** spell effect (*fireball*, 10d6 fire damage, DC 14 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius burst); spell effect (*delayed blast fireball*, 1 round delay, 13d6 fire damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius burst)

Long since considered the bad job of traps, the double fireball trap releases two beads at once. Few, however, notice the second bead, assuming the trap has sprung and

there is no need to worry. One round later, a second fireball that is even more deadly than the first explodes. Trap cost: 6,050 gp.

**GIANT SWINGING AXE TRAP****CR 17****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic**Effect** Atk +20 melee (4d6+46/x3); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft. x 5-ft. area)

This trap is typically placed in a 10 ft. wide corridor of ancient castles, allowing someone to bypass the trap without setting it off. When it swings down from the ceiling the axe strikes every target in its 15 foot long path. An axe this size would be wielded by a huge creature and the weights attached to it make it hurt as much as if a huge creature was wielding it. Trap cost: 12,750 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 40.

**COLLAPSING WALL OF SKULLS TRAP****CR 19****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** manual**Effect** collapsing wall (20d6 bludgeoning damage); DC 25 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 5 ft. x 30 ft.-square area)

Both sides of this thirty foot long hallway is composed entirely of humanoid skulls, however, one wall is a trap. The skulls on one wall are designed to fall on all those in the hallway, crushing them beneath the falling skulls. The trigger is the the five foot space in front of the locked door at the end of the hallway. Any creature that stands on that spot for more than a round will trigger an avalanche of skulls. If a creature stands on the trigger and leaves before the end of its next turn, the trap's timer resets. Trap cost: 4,750 gp. Construction DC: Craft (traps) 35.