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THE TEMPLE OF MYSTERIES™

IN MEDIA RES

AN ADVENTURE FOR
4th- to 5th-LEVEL CHARACTERS
by
MONTE COOK



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A dungeon adventure for 4th- to 5th-level characters

BY MONTE COOK

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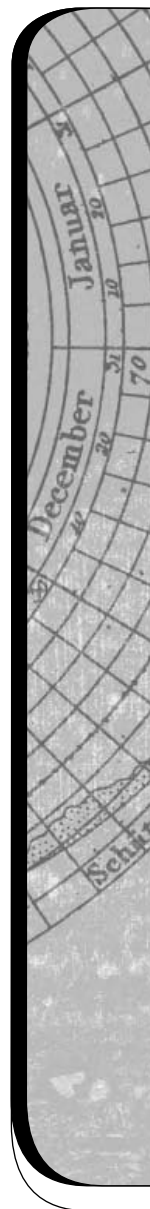
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Prelude to Adventure

The Temple of Mysteries: In Media Res is a tough, thinking-player's dungeon adventure with some strange twists. It's designed to be run in one sitting (probably four to six hours). Further, unlike most adventures, The Temple of Mysteries is designed to be most effective when not incorporated into an ongoing campaign.



The Temple of Mysteries takes place in a relatively small area filled with strange puzzles, traps, and (of course) a few monsters. While a lot goes on in this adventure, it shouldn't be too difficult for the DM to keep track of everything. However, this is definitely one of those adventures the DM should be thoroughly familiar with before running it. Actions in one area change things in others, so you really can't play this one on the fly.

While this adventure is, in many ways, a classic trap-and-puzzle dungeon crawl in the style of *Tomb of Horrors* or *Labyrinth of Madness* (albeit for much lower-level characters), it's really about something much more than that: identity, and the perception of such. In this adventure, characters must struggle to determine which of two possible identities is really theirs, with some discovering that, in fact, the answer is "neither." It's complicated and confusing but offers the potential not only for fun dungeon adventuring but for some off-beat roleplaying challenges as well.

COMPONENTS

Pregenerated player characters (PCs) are provided for use in this adventure starting on page 24. They were specifically designed for the scenario, in that they have at their disposal specific spells, items, and abilities that will help with the adventure without allowing them to overcome every challenge automatically. There also are plenty of things the characters can do that are designed to serve as red herrings—abilities and spells that will be of no use in this adventure. But of course, the players won't know that.

The scenario includes counters (courtesy of Fiery Dragon Productions) to print out and use as representations of the characters; see page 35. As well, you can print out full-scale maps (1 inch equals 5 feet) for most of the encounter areas in the dungeon; see pages 39 to 42. (Note that printing the Room 1 and 5 maps requires 11×17 paper.) If you use *Dundjinni* and have bought this product, visit <www.dundjinni.com> for a copy of this adventure in .dja format (see ad on page 36).

SCENARIO HISTORY

I ran this adventure twice—once in a practice run at GameFest Richmond in August of 2004, then in October of 2004 as part of the D&D 30th Anniversary celebration at The Source in St. Paul, Minnesota. I wrote the adventure with the 30th Anniversary of D&D in mind, attempting to create a classic dungeon crawl adventure like those of old, but with a serious twist (or, in fact, twists).

DM INFORMATION

If you're a player, read no further. Seriously.

Okay. This adventure is subtitled "In Media Res" because, unlike most adventures, it doesn't start at the beginning but the middle. The PCs have already explored half the dungeon and have just been exposed to a complicated magic trap that has altered their perceptions. But they don't know that. At least, not exactly.

The first twist to the adventure is that one player believes that he alone isn't actually playing his original character (the one that came down into the dungeon). He thinks he's playing an adventurer named Prester Young who's been trapped in the

About the Author

Monte Cook started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. In the employ of Iron Crown Enterprises, he worked on the Rolemaster and Champions games as an editor, developer, and designer. In 1994 Monte came to TSR as a game designer. As a senior game designer with Wizards of the Coast, he codesigned the 3rd edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, authored the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and designed the *Book of Vile Darkness*.

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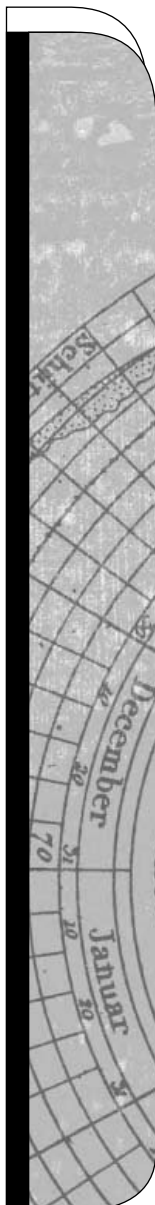
About the Cartographers

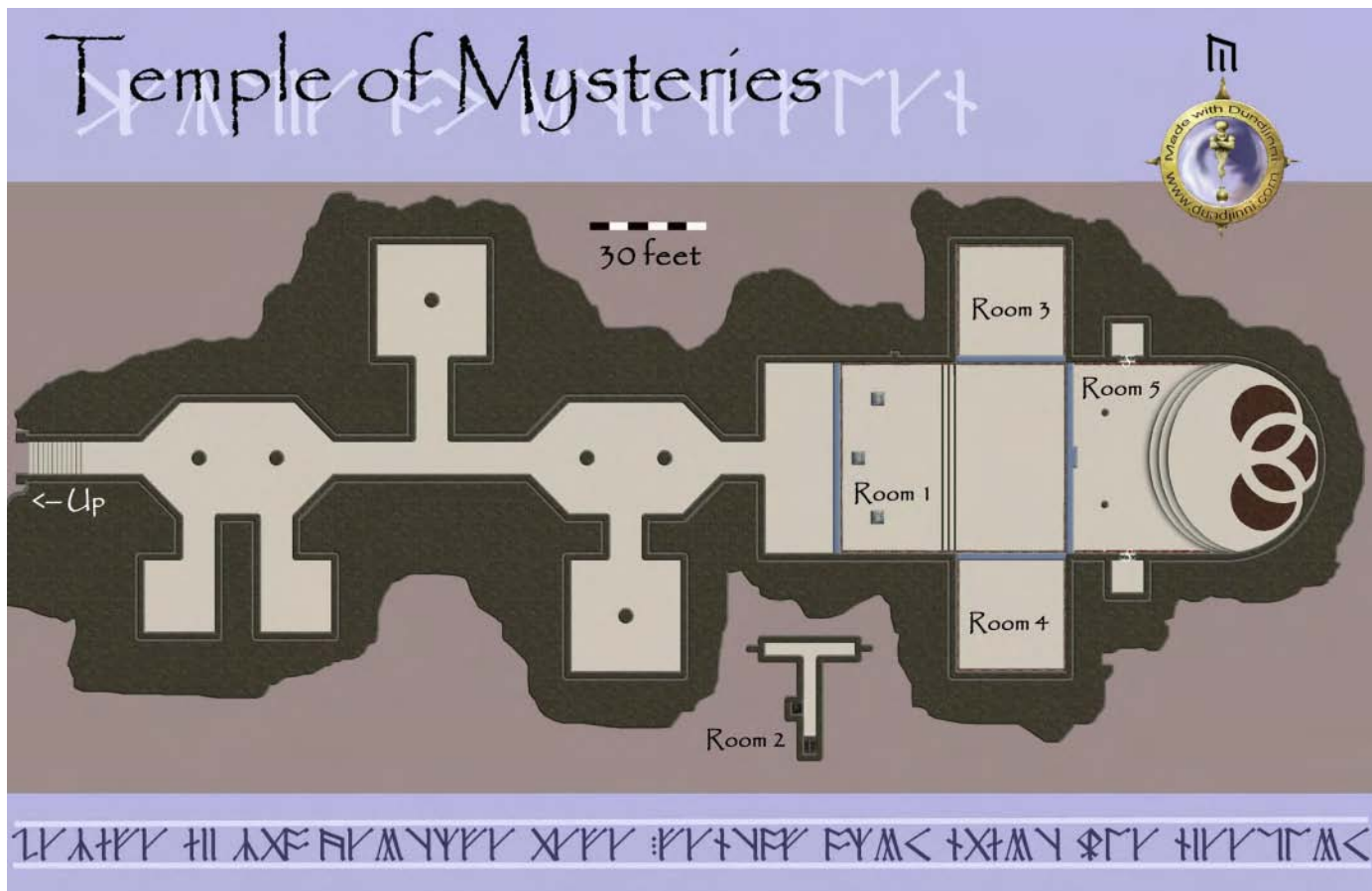
It takes two people to draw a map—at least, that's the way it works when you've got three preschoolers around the house. You can find more from the husband-and-wife team of **Todd and Mysie Sabin** on the Dundjinni website <www.dundjinni.com> under the screen names tmaas and Micah

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Current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at <www.montecook.com>. Look for Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*, available soon.





Temple of Mysteries for an untold amount of time and now secretly possesses the original character's body. He must keep this fact a secret, though, in order to escape the dungeon.

The second twist is that it's not just one player who believes this to be true about himself—they *all* believe their original characters have been secretly possessed by Prester Young. When you give players their "secret background info" sheets (on pages 30 to 32), you are, in fact, giving each of them the same information.

The third twist is that, even as the players believe all this, they're wrong. Their characters haven't been possessed, but simply enchanted so that all they want to do is leave the temple. But that's not as easy as it sounds.

The fourth twist is that two of the characters are, in fact, doppelgangers. They don't remember this because they, too, are "possessed."

What you're going to do is hand out the pregenerated characters (pages 24 to 29) and explain that tonight's adventure is a one-shot dungeon crawl. Then you'll give the players the scenario background and the secret lore that only their group knows, followed by a description of what their characters have already done. This information appears below and in the handout on page 23. You'll explain how they've already made their way through much of the

dungeon and had just come into a mysterious room when they were startled by a bright flash of energy.

Then—and not before then—hand out each character's secret background info sheet (pages 30 to 32), explaining that each character comes with specific information in his or her background relevant to the adventure to come. Do not let on in any way that the secret background info sheets all say the same thing.

From there, start playing through the scenario as written, just like any normal adventure. Don't expect the twists to start surfacing until nearly the end, but then get ready to watch the fireworks!

BACKGROUND (KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC)

Some 80 years ago, the Temple of Mysteries was a place of wonders. Three humans—T'Shem, Okala, and Jevira—founded the temple, dedicating it to the veneration of themselves as demigods. Today, those who remember the place or have heard the stories recognize that T'Shem, Okala, and Jevira were merely powerful spellcasters, but at the time, their wondrous might convinced at least a small following of their divinity. It didn't hurt that the three of them, known collectively as the Triune, rewarded their worshippers with great gifts and boons from time to time.

For the most part, however, the Triune were fickle “gods,” requiring their followers to undergo strange trials and solve mysterious puzzles. In retrospect, they seemed to be testing the faithful, but whatever quality or abilities they sought to find in them remains unknown.

In fact, besides their predilection for riddles and tests and their desire for veneration, the only concrete fact known about the Triune is that approximately 70 years ago, their Temple of Mysteries was destroyed in a terrible fire. Rumors circulated as to its cause, and many speculated that the Triune or their followers had enemies.

THE SECRET LORE (KNOWN TO THE PCs)

After delving through an ancient tome, the player characters have learned that a powerful magic item known as the *strand of tears* was kept below the Temple of Mysteries. This minor relic, created from the tears of a goddess, appears to be a delicate belt-sized silver strand set with blue and white teardrop-shaped jewels. It is said that the *strand of tears* enhances its wearer’s greatest attribute.

Despite the fact that other references to the *strand of tears* exist, no one else seems to know that it was last seen below the Temple of Mysteries. Although many adventurers are said to have explored the ruins, no one has spoken of the strand or, in fact, of having found a subterranean level.

THE TRUTH (KNOWN TO THE DM)

The Triune were three powerful spellcasters convinced that they had become demigods of secrets, mysteries, and challenges through their own inspiration and genius. Masters of puzzles and creative intuition (what in our world might be referred to as “thinking outside the box”), the Triune sought to display their genius by creating more and more devious—and dangerous—puzzles to test their followers. Even the route into their throne room to pay them homage was a series of complex riddles, challenges, and hidden secrets.

Regarding the end of their cult (which lasted only nine years), the truth of the matter is that the Temple of Mysteries was done in from within. A band of doppelgangers infiltrated the ranks of the Triune’s followers, seeking to sow dissent and confusion as they preyed upon the Triune’s servants. Ironically, the Triune and their followers were undone by masters of deception and trickery.

Eventually, a fire set in an attempt to drive out the doppelgangers got out of hand and destroyed the above-ground temple compound. The Triune themselves were trapped by the blaze in the subterranean level of the temple, where their throne room lay. Though the magical exit they had created was within their reach, the faith that the Triune had built up around themselves was in ruins, their power shattered by the fear the doppelgangers had spread. In their despair, they committed suicide, while above them, their followers scattered and fled.

The doppelgangers still lair in the burned-out shell of the above-ground temple but steer well clear of the dungeon level. They prey upon travelers on the nearby road or on the occasional explorer who comes to the temple to seek treasure or lore.

The spirits of both T’Shem and Jevira remain in the dungeon. T’Shem’s soul has become even darker and more bitter than it was in life and now sustains him as a powerful wight. Jevira, however, seeks to leave the remnants of the Temple of Mysteries so she can move on to her proper afterlife; her ghost helps those who might open an exit for her. Though she has the power to assist only in minor ways, she still bears a bitter grudge against the doppelgangers and will not directly aid them.

The dungeon level of the Temple of Mysteries was its very heart. Here the Triune received offerings from their followers and tested the greatest among them, for only the cleverest and most ingenious could actually reach the throne room to speak with the “gods” directly. Those who accomplished this always received a great boon or treasure, but, truth be told, most who tried failed—some even died.

THE COURSE OF THE ADVENTURE

This is a small, almost claustrophobic adventure. The dungeon basically has only four rooms, and the players likely will spend at least the first two hours of the game just getting through all the puzzles of the first one.

The PCs quickly surmise that they are trapped in the room where the adventure begins (Room 1). Everyone likely focuses on getting out, which not only meshes nicely with the motivations presented in the secret background info sheets, but makes it less likely for the “presence” of Prester Young in the party (see page 7) to be revealed at the outset.

After solving a number of cryptic encounters in the first room, the PCs will find the secret door in the ceiling and be able to get into Room 2, which eventually gives them access to Room 3 or Room 4 by lowering one of the moving walls. After messing around

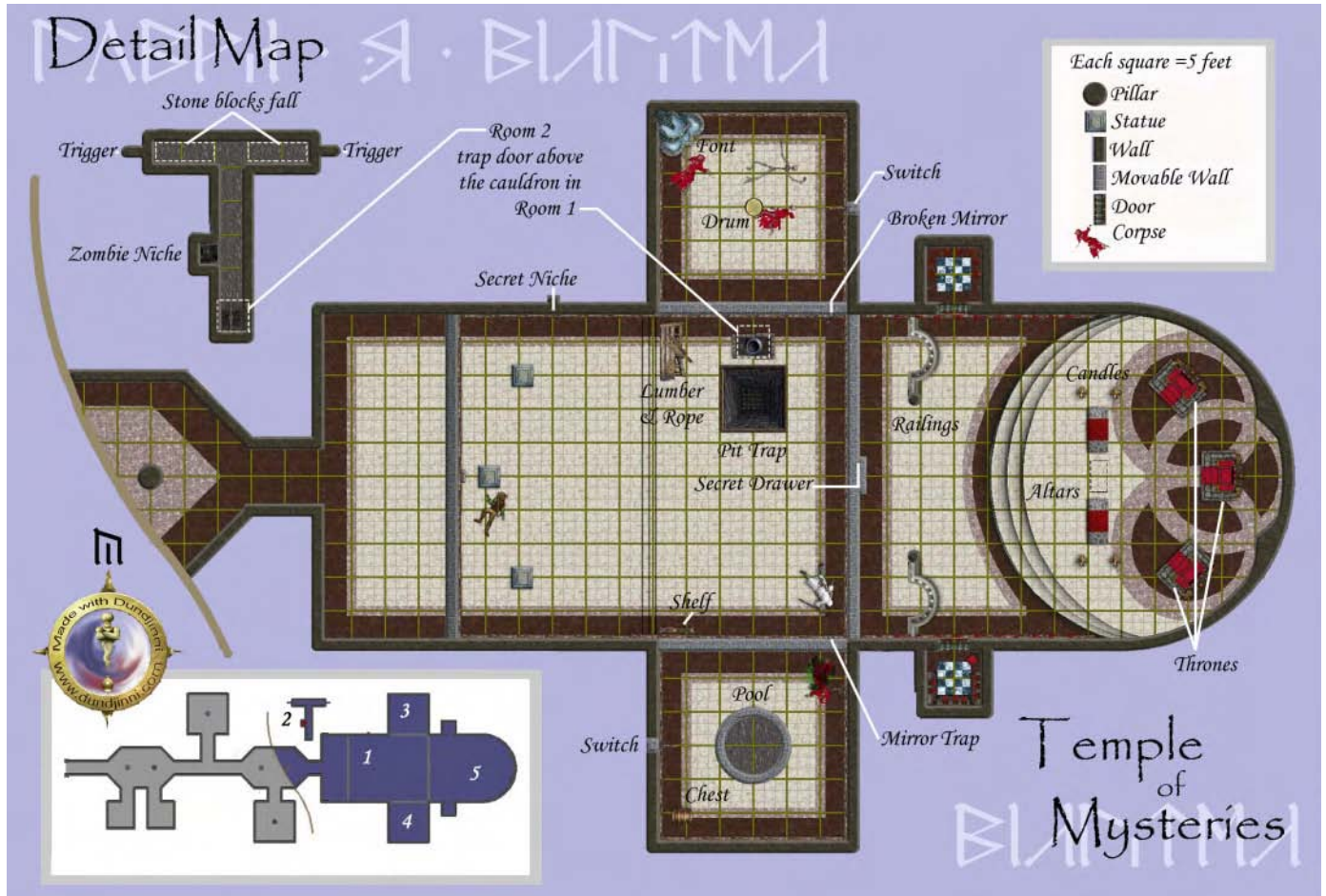
The Enchantment Effect

The mind-scrambling enchantment of the Temple of Mysteries is so strong that even creatures posing as other creatures, such as the doppelgangers involved in this scenario, lose all sense of their original mind and form. The doppelgangers who have taken the place of two party members forget that they are indeed doppelgangers, completely caught up in the belief that they are Prester Young. Further, they believe that Prester is inhabiting the body of the adventurer they appear to be, for that is the nature of the spell.

If this seems complicated, think of it this way. In order to create the effect of one mind replacing another, the magic of the enchantment relies on the outward appearance and impressions of the affected creature to some extent. Thus, the spell doesn’t recognize that the doppelgangers are anything other than the characters they appear to be. When the enchantment “overwrites” their personalities and identities, it leaves a blank slate (with access to the original characters’ thoughts and memories as the doppelgangers read them) that the Prester Young “identity” has to interpret on its own.)

A character entering the chamber in a magically altered form (such as from a polymorph spell) or even in a mundane (but complete) disguise would be treated the same. For example, a rogue disguised as a wizard would find herself believing that she was Prester Young possessing a wizard’s body (and would likely be extremely confused by her inability to actually cast spells)

Of course, there really is no actual “Prester Young”—this enchantment is simply part of the temple’s defenses, created by the Triune to encourage intruders to leave.



with whatever they find in the first room they choose, they eventually can get into the other. Only after they solve the puzzles in both Room 3 and Room 4 will they finally be able to enter Room 5.

While there are puzzles in Room 5 (and some combat as well), it's very likely that this is where the secret background info will come out, as it's here that the party encounters a magical apparition that informs them that doppelgangers are in their midst. This revelation is almost sure to get characters (and players) looking at each other very suspiciously, which, in turn, should get one of the players to reveal that he or she not only isn't a doppelganger, but is actually the spirit of an adventurer named Prester Young who was trapped in the dungeon. Such an admission prompts the others to say, "You're not Prester Young, I am," and "No, I am," and so on.

Ideally, the paladin will pull out his *candle of truth* at this point (see page 28), which will only make things more confusing, because everyone is telling the truth, even though they can't all be right. The PCs might use magic to get rid of some of the enchantment effects, revealing that some of them are not Prester Young. They might even expose the doppelgangers at this point.

Eventually, the player characters will figure out how to access the exit from Room 5 (and thus from the dungeon), but that also provides entry to the chamber holding the *strand of tears*. Those who still believe themselves to be Prester Young ought to just leave, but others who try to get at the artifact might wind up paying for their greed.

Meanwhile, the "Prester Young" enchantment ends as soon as a character exits the dungeon, meaning that each player character regains his or her old memories. Doppelgangers who suddenly remember who they are may use this opportunity to strike, even as everyone else is attempting to flee or to obtain the strand, making for an exciting climax to the adventure.

GETTING PREPARED

You'll want to be familiar with not only the background and adventure, but with the pregenerated player characters as well. Have a copy of each character sheet as well as each secret background info sheet ready to hand out. Reread the "Gray Ooze" and "Doppelganger" entries of the MM, and have a copy of that book as well as the *Player's Handbook* and DMG on hand.

THE PRESTER YOUNG EFFECT

All the player characters begin the scenario unknowingly under the effect of an enchantment that makes them believe they are, in fact, an adventurer named Prester Young. This enchantment is another facet of the dungeon, a defensive effect to make interlopers wish to leave; see “The Temple of Mysteries 80 Years Ago” on page 22.

Prester Young appears to be a “real character” currently possessing the bodies of each of the adventurers who have recently come into the Temple of Mysteries.

Each player believes that Prester has possessed only his character (which is to say, each player believes that he or she is the only one secretly playing the Prester character). In addition, the nature of the enchantment encourages each character to keep his secret quiet. As a result, the paladin will most likely continue to act (or at least attempt to act) like a paladin, the barbarian like a barbarian, and so on. For most of the first two-thirds of the adventure, the whole issue of Prester Young shouldn't even come up.

Treat the enchantment effect as a 6th-level spell. A character who casts *detect magic* on another character (or herself) will detect the spell and can make a Spellcraft check (DC 21) to recognize a moderate enchantment effect. The pregenerated PCs have no other means of learning about the enchantment or doing anything about it, but this will be a serious clue as to what's going on when the reality that all are hiding the same secret is finally revealed.

PRESTER'S “STOLEN” MEMORIES

“Prester” has some fragmentary memories of the person he inhabits (either the actual character affected by the Prester Young enchantment effect or, in the case of the two doppelgangers, the character they were impersonating). As Prester, a character knows his possessed adventurer's name, abilities and background, as well as the names of the friends he sees around him, their general abilities, and a brief overview of their background and history together.

Basically, a player character has any memories or knowledge that he or she needs to function in this scenario. Assume that the doppelgangers were able to gain that much information with their *detect thoughts* ability before they assumed their targets' forms (or perhaps they use that ability subconsciously and unknowingly even as the scenario progresses, gaining information from the other adventurers).

DISPELLING THE EFFECT

At some point, the PCs might gain the ability to cast *dispel magic*, either with the ring in Room 3 or the wand in Room 5. Dispel the Prester Young effect is difficult, though (dispel DC 22).

How affected characters react to the proposition of having *dispel magic* cast on them is up to the players, but there are basically two points of view: “I'm truly Prester Young, so there's nothing to fear,” or “I'm truly Prester Young, but I don't know what's going on with this other person, so I don't think I'm going to let him cast a spell on me.” Surely no character would cast *dispel magic* on himself to get rid

of the Prester Young effect, knowing that it would be a waste of a spell (or possibly fearing that doing so would end Prester's possession of this body, and with it, his chances for escape).

It's possible that after detecting the effect, a PC might try to dispel it, not realizing that it was the Prester Young effect. And at any rate, the effect will be dispelled as soon as an affected character leaves the dungeon, no matter what the character may want.

If the effect is dispelled, either intentionally or unintentionally, the character comes to his senses and realizes that he's been under the effect of a deluding enchantment. With the effect dispelled, characters again know who they really are—including the doppelgangers.

THE DOPPELGANGERS

The player-character doppelgangers in this adventure are part of a group descended from the doppelgangers that originally brought down the Temple of Mysteries

from the inside, murdering and eating most of the adherents of the faith. When the PCs came to search the temple ruins, the doppelgangers studied them, used *detect thoughts* extensively to assist them in further deception, then ambushed and killed Therren (a rogue) and Darian (a fighter).

With these two replaced, the doppelgangers knew they eventually could trick the rest of the group into a trap or ambush. As well, knowing the party's intent to explore, they saw a chance to figure out what was down in the subterranean level that the doppelgangers had always traditionally avoided.

For the majority of the adventure, the doppelgangers will (unknowingly) be using the abilities of the characters they've replaced—which is to say, abilities they don't actually possess. For example, the doppelganger who is impersonating Therren won't really know how to make sneak attacks. For the sake of the scenario, let this slide. Neither Darian nor Therren have such incredible abilities that the doppelgangers impersonating them will end up performing tasks they could simply never do.

Handling Multiple Presters

Ideally, the characters (and the players) will be very confused when and if they learn that there are multiple Prester Youngs. The enchantment encourages them to believe that the others must be somehow enchanted and deceived, and that they are the one true Prester Young.

When the revelation occurs, it probably will come about as one player decides to share the secret. This is most likely to happen in Room 5, when Jevira reveals that one or more of the PCs are doppelgangers. In their own defense, those players will likely say something to the effect of, “I'm not a doppelganger, but neither am I who you think I am. My name is actually Prester Young.” Alternatively, they might believe that Jevira refers to them, using “doppelganger” in some sort of general sense of the word rather than the name of a specific monster (the remains in Room 3 suggest otherwise, of course).

When one of the players does this, the others may look at you in surprise. “No, I'm Prester Young,” they'll say. They might even wonder if you screwed up and handed out multiple versions of the secret background info sheets by mistake. The key is to avoid giving out any information at all. Try to just look at them as blankly as you can, so as not to betray anything. Even after it comes out, don't allow the players to show each other their background info. Let them figure it out for themselves.

Explain it all away through the power of strong belief, as well as the power of the enchantment.

If either the Darian or Therren characters have the Prester Young effect dispelled at any point, they suddenly realize their true nature. Both know the identity of the other doppelganger in the group

(even if the other is still under the effect of the Prester Young enchantment) and are likely to immediately seize upon the first available opportunity to attack the rest of the group (preferably, just one or two members at a time).

When a character realizes that he's actually a doppelganger, secretly give him the doppelganger version of his character sheet (see page 33) and instruct him (again, in secret) as to his new motivations. Unless the player really objects, allow him to continue to play his role rather than turning him into an NPC.

Tips: Secret Background Info Sheets

When handing out a background sheet, fold it in half just before handing it to the player, looking at it for a moment before you do. As you go through the process, react to each sheet a bit differently, like you're remembering some new thing with each one. Give a couple of the players knowing glances when you hand them their sheet, like they're really getting something interesting. When you're done, give them some time to read, then say something like, "Okay, I imagine that at least one or two of you have some questions about your background, so now's the time to ask." If they do have questions, pull them away from the table and discuss them in private. In these conversations, act as though you need a reminder as to which background that particular player has.

GETTING STARTED

Tell the players that this is a one-shot adventure called *The Temple of Mysteries*, and that it's subtitled "In Media Res." Explain that it's called that because the action actually starts with the player characters already in the middle of the adventure. This way, they won't object that you've "railroaded" them into their current situation. Tell them to relax, and that it's just part of the setup.

Let the players choose from the pregenerated characters. Don't allow exchanges of equipment or spells (although you can tell them that they can rest later or go back to town to buy new gear—despite the fact that the former is unlikely and the latter impossible during this adventure).

Take special note of who selects the Therren and Darian characters. They don't realize it yet, but both of these characters are actually doppelgangers who have killed and replaced the real Therren and Darian. See "The Doppelgangers" section on page 7 for more information.

Explain to the players, in your own words, the history of the Temple of Mysteries (found in the "Background" section on page 4) as well as what they know about it that no one else seems to (found in "The Secret Lore" section, page 5). Inform them that they decided earlier to go to the Temple of Mysteries to explore and search for the *strand of tears*. Then paraphrase the following information for them:

You came to the Temple of Mysteries on a cold, dark day, finding a burned-out shell of a building along with a number of smaller outbuildings, all in ruins. Splitting up and spreading out, you combed the area carefully to find it picked clean by explorers, adventurers, and scavengers, just as some stories had said.

Unlike them, however, you knew to look for a secret way down, eventually finding a hidden trap door that provided access to a dusty old staircase beneath the temple. Lighting torches and descending into the darkness, you found a wide corridor that connected a few rooms. In places, faded frescos depicted travelers on the road and other simplistic scenes. You even managed to find a number of elaborately carved pillars set with a few small gems, easily pried loose and pocketed.

Then, at the end of the corridor, you came into a large room with mosaic images along the walls. Ahead of you, across the center of the chamber, three stone statues stood. You moved to investigate further, but before you could do so, the statue in the center erupted with a bright flash of light, and you heard a thunderous slamming of stone behind you.

Alternatively, you can print out and give each player the "Adventure Background" included on page 23 of this scenario. If you do, make it clear that this information is the same for everyone, unlike each character's background information.

Once the players understand the setup of the scenario and you've answered any questions they have (but before you give them any more information about the room they've just entered), hand out the secret background info sheets.

Once everyone has read their secret background info, tell them it's time to get started. Describe Room 1 to them (see page 9), now that the spots before their eyes from the flash of light have cleared, and let them look around to get their bearings.

USING THIS BOOK

Throughout *The Temple of Mysteries: In Media Res*, all references to spells, feats, and other rules are from the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM. For the sake of convenience, creature statistics that include damage reduction include the DR ratings for both v. 3.0 and v. 3.5 of the game.


More information about *The Temple of Mysteries* appears on Monte Cook's website. You can visit the book's product page online at the following address: <www.montecook.com/Temple>.

All maps in this adventure were created with *Dundjinni* software. For more information and *Dundjinni* files to enhance this scenario, visit <www.dundjinni.com>.

This adventure is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Gaming Content on the title page. For full details, please turn to the Appendix. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

Chambers of Mystery

Years ago, these rooms were created to test the faithful. Today, they guard the last treasure of the temple and, more importantly, the only way the player characters can escape from here alive.



The Temple of Mysteries is a dungeon adventure with only five rooms, but don't let that fool you into thinking your players are likely to breeze through it quickly. This is a complex place, particularly Room 1. Make sure you are familiar with all the contents and their uses before you start.

ROOM 1:

THE ELABORATE PUZZLE

Lay out for players the Room 1 battle mat map on page 39 of this book, while you refer to the detailed map on page 6. Room 1 is rectangular, 60 feet long and 50 feet wide. When the characters entered it, the room was 80 feet long, but a new wall has slammed down behind them, cutting them off from the western 20-foot section and the only obvious exit.

The wall has come down as shown in the western portion of the room. The “movable walls” to the north, south, and east are walls that are already down. They give no clue that they can be raised and lowered.

The eastern half of the room is about 3 feet higher than the western portion, with steps stretching across the width of the room in the middle. The ceiling is approximately 23 feet high in the western half and 20 feet high to the east. In the lower half, where the characters stand, there are three statues facing west. A skeleton lies on the floor, perhaps the remnants of a long-dead explorer.

In the eastern portion, to the north, a black cauldron sits over a fire pit next to a pile of lumber and rope. Also in the eastern half of the room, but along the southern wall, the PCs see a wooden bookshelf filled with small jars and pots. There is another long-dead corpse in front of a small mirror on the south wall, near the southeast corner of the room. A similar mirror hangs on the north wall directly across from the other, but a small piece of that mirror lies broken on the floor.

An elaborate mosaic mural covers all the walls. There are secret compartments and moving walls throughout this room.

THE MOSAIC MURAL

On the western wall (the one that has just slammed down, sealing the player characters in), the mosaic shows a wide, life-sized doorway in the middle of the room, with life-sized human figures walking out of it and passing to either side.

The figures are dressed simply but colorfully, and all carry something carefully in front of them—a basket of fruit, a platter of meat, a tray of polished stones, a nice wooden box, a sealed bag, or some other offering. Along the north and south walls, these life-sized suppliants appear to continue to move in a procession to the east. Mirrors cover the faces of the two figures that are farthest east, closest to their destination (see “The Mirrors,” page 12).

The mosaic covering the eastern wall depicts three regal figures seated on thrones—two men and a woman. The woman sits in the middle on a throne of glass. She has long golden hair and wears a beautiful diaphanous white gown and a golden circlet. The man to the south sits upon a wooden throne. He has a dark complexion and wears a purple coat of velvet over a white shirt and pants. The man to the north sits upon an iron throne, a staff laid across his knees. He wears a red shirt and black pants, and sports a brown beard that matches his long, curly hair.

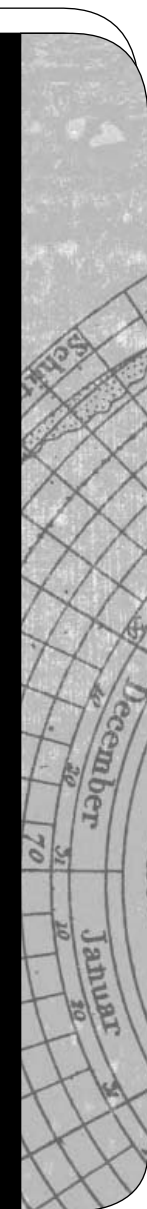
Discovering that the movable walls can indeed move requires a Search check (DC 30). There is a secret compartment in the eastern wall at the woman's feet (see “The Mirrors”) that requires a Search check (DC 40) to find. Likewise, a Search check (DC 40) finds the secret compartment on the north wall (see “The Three Statues,” below).

THE THREE STATUES

The three statues match the figures in the mosaic on the eastern wall, but they are not positioned the same. The southernmost statue is of the woman with long hair, dressed in robes and holding a thin sword. The middle statue depicts the man with curly hair and a beard, holding a staff upright. The northern statue shows the dark-complexioned man with a sword, a torch held above his head.

The statue of the woman is, in fact, a caryatid column, which animates and attacks if anyone touches it even lightly. It fights until it is destroyed or until it has slain everything in the room.

Caryatid Column: CR 4; Medium construct; HD 5d10+20; hp 50; Init -1; Speed 20 feet (cannot run); AC 14 (touch 9, flat-footed 14); Base Attack +3; Grapple +7; Attack/Full Attack +7 melee (1d8+6, longsword); SQ Shatter weapons,



construct, resistances, DR 5/magic (or 10/+1); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Skills and Feats: Hide +7; Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Shatter Weapons (Ex): Any weapon that strikes a caryatid column in combat must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 12) or shatter into pieces. Magic weapons receive a bonus on this save equal to their enhancement bonus.

Resistances (Ex): A caryatid column receives a +4 bonus on saving throws against any spells that can affect it (see below).

Magic Immunity (Ex): A caryatid column is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud*, *stone to flesh*, or *stone shape* spell instantly slays a caryatid column, although it can attempt a Fortitude saving throw to resist. A *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

(This version of the caryatid column is slightly modified from the version found in *Necromancer Games' Tome of Horrors*, and the monster name is used by permission. Any reference to monsters from that book must follow the guidelines contained in it.)

The statue with the staff is the device that triggered the trap that made all the party members believe themselves to be Prester Young. Now it has no function. The tip of the staff, however, sports a piece of amber worth 250 gp; a character can pry it out with a successful Strength check (DC 15). It is nonmagical.

The statue with the torch is also nonmagical. However, a careful Search (DC 20) shows a character that, while the torch is a fixed part of the statue itself, the carved stone flame unscrews, revealing a cloth wick that extends down into an oil reservoir in the statue's hand. If lit, the wick provides light equal to that of a torch.

If the copper cylinder found in the secret compartment in the east wall (see "The Mirrors," page 12) is placed over the torch, the ring on one end can be made to fit over the wick and hold the cylinder in place. Should someone then light the wick, the light shining through the holes in the cylinder plays out across the room. A careful examination of where the light and shadows fall (Search, DC 18) allows a character to note that a rectangle of light falls exactly on a box carried by a figure in the mural on the north wall.

With this aid, finding the secret compartment behind the mosaic image of the box is straightforward (Search, DC 15; DC 40 if the cylinder is not used). The compartment, however, is trapped. When opened, it sprays an acidic mist on all within 5 feet.

Acid Mist Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; 4d6 points of damage in a 5-foot radius; Reflex save (DC 16) halves; Search (DC 23); Disable Device (DC 28)

Within this compartment is a golden ewer worth 175 gp, with a large golden key worth 20 gp inside it. The ewer is for carrying water from the font in Room 3 to the pool in Room 4. The key opens the chest in Room 4.

If someone casts *detect magic*, the ewer radiates a faint aura of transmutation. The key is nonmagical.

THE SKELETON IN THE WEST

The long-dead corpse of a human male near the room's western wall wears rotten studded leather armor and a torn grey cloak. His rusted dagger and short sword remain in their decaying scabbards. In a large sack tied to his belt, he has 61 gp, a flask of alchemist's fire, and a small coin that glows continually as if a *light* spell had been cast upon it. He also has 50 feet of rope and a grappling hook, still in usable condition.

One or more of the characters might think this is Prester Young, though it isn't (there is, in fact, no Prester Young). This is an adventurer who died here, slain by the caryatid column (see "The Three Statues," above).

THE CAULDRON

A large black cauldron rests near the north wall, positioned on three short legs over a small fire pit. The 6-inch-deep pit is filled with partially burned kindling and ash; more kindling is stacked nearby. The cauldron itself is black iron, about 3 feet across and almost that high. The wall next to the cauldron and the ceiling above it both bear a very faint green stain. A Search check (DC 10) reveals flakes of green residue in the bottom of the cauldron. If the check result beats DC 15, the character searching not only sees the residue but finds a small bit of cloth affixed to the back of the cauldron with a gummy substance. The scrap reads, in Common, "Mix one part of each in equal measure."

The note refers to a special alchemical process needed to reveal the secret door that lies directly above the cauldron and leads to Room 2. When all of the ingredients on the bookcase (see "The Bookcase Full of Jars" on the next page) are mixed in relatively equal portions in the cauldron and a fire is set underneath it, the ingredients come to a boil in just three minutes. (If the characters also add water, they delay the boiling by a further three minutes but do not change the outcome.)

When the cauldron boils, there is a small explosion as the contents burst up in a green cloud, outlining the edges of a 5-foot-

Tip: Fear of the Cauldron

Expect the player characters to feel extremely wary of cooking in the cauldron. It may very well be the last of the strange things in the room they experiment with, even though, ironically, it holds the key to getting out. Be patient.

At the same time, use their fear to your advantage. Force the player undoing jar and pot seals to make the occasional Dexterity check to see if she spills any. Require (mostly bogus) Intelligence checks to get the measurements exactly right. Act as though anyone making one wrong move could cause everything to explode in the characters' faces. Identifying the pillory powder only makes their feeling of dread grow, and the final green explosion should vindicate their fears.

square secret door in the ceiling. Anyone within 10 feet of the cauldron at the time of the explosion suffers 1d4 points of fire damage and must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 16) to avoid being poisoned (1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage, 1d4 more one minute later).

The mist also reveals a keyhole, for the door in the ceiling is locked (Open Lock, DC 25; the key is long gone). When opened, the secret door above the cauldron leads to Room 2 but also activates a pit trap on the floor to the south if more than 200 lbs. is on the trap door at the time. If the player characters use the scaffolding from the lumber pile (see below) to reach the secret door in the ceiling, this trap likely sends the scaffolding and anyone standing on it crashing down into the pit. This pit measures 15 feet across and 30 feet deep, and spikes line the bottom.

Spiked Pit Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 30 feet deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (anyone on trap door, or on scaffold if set on trap door); pit spikes (attack +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d6 points of damage each); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22)

One can locate the pit trap with a Search check (DC 22), but no way of opening it becomes evident until the secret door in the ceiling opens. Because its complex mechanism is split between the floor and the secret door in the ceiling, a rogue that finds the trap door won't automatically know it's a trap (possibly suspecting it to be a way out of the dungeon instead), and thus might not think to disarm it.

Finding the secret door in the ceiling without using the cauldron is virtually impossible (Search, DC 50). If someone casts *detect magic*, the cauldron radiates a faint aura of divination. It has no value or special abilities if removed from this room.

THE LUMBER PILE

Just above the steps near the northern wall, the player characters find a pile of neatly stacked wood of various lengths, along with coils of rope cut into various lengths. Some of the pieces of wood are flat planks, but most are wooden poles. A successful Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 14) suggests that these are the makings of a scaffold that would measure about 15 feet high if built properly, with a flat platform at the top large enough for two people to stand upon.

Creating the scaffold takes about five person-hours (so five characters working together could do it in one hour). Its sturdiness depends on the result of another Knowledge (engineering) check:

d20	Result
5 or less	The scaffold is noticeably creaky and shaky-looking. As soon as anyone climbs past the 10-foot mark, it collapses. The climber must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 20) or suffer 1d6 points of falling damage. If anyone attempts to move the scaffold, it collapses.

6–10	The scaffold is creaky and shaky-looking on close inspection. No more than 200 lbs. can be placed on it without it collapsing, and anyone attempting to stand on the platform must succeed at a Balance check (DC 10) or fall off. Any checks (Search or Open Lock, for example) or attack rolls made while on the scaffold carry a –4 penalty. The scaffold can be moved, but if it is, it becomes as dangerous as if the original check result were 5 or less.
11–15	The scaffold is a bit creaky and shaky. No more than 400 lbs. can be placed on it without it collapsing, and anyone attempting to stand on the platform must make a Balance check (DC 5) or fall off. Any checks (Search or Open Lock, for example) or attack rolls made while on the scaffold carry a –2 penalty. The scaffold can be moved without problem.
16+	The scaffold is perfectly sturdy. It can support 600 lbs. without collapsing, and no Balance check is required to stand atop it. The scaffolding imposes no penalties to checks or attacks made while standing on it, and can be moved without problem.

The scaffolding is here to enable characters to reach the secret door above the cauldron. They should beware, however, of the pit trap next to the cauldron that might trigger when the door above it opens, likely sending the entire scaffold crashing down. (See “The Cauldron,” page 10.)

THE BOOKSHELF

FULL OF JARS

The simple, free-standing bookcase along the southern wall holds four shelves. Each shelf is full of various clay pots and glass jars, all sealed and stoppered. A handful of them have labels in Common that read, “basil,” “batwings,” “eye of newt,” “arsenic,” “jellied liver of cat,” and so on—all varied but fairly mundane ingredients. The label of one, however, reads “pillory powder.” A Craft (alchemy) check (DC 20) reveals this stuff to be a dangerous alchemical explosive. If that jar breaks, it detonates with a blast that spreads 30 feet, dealing 8d6 points of fire damage (Reflex save, DC 15, for half).

Handling Room 1

Room 1 is complicated, and there's a lot in it. As a result, the PCs are going to spend a lot of time there. Don't hesitate to repeat yourself when describing the room's contents—there are simply too many things here for the average player to absorb all at once. Be patient with the players. They're dealing with unfamiliar characters, a strange roleplaying situation (the Prester Young enchantment), and a complicated room all at once. They're likely going to need the area and its contents described over and over again.

Whether or not you use the large-scale maps provided with this adventure, remember that a visual representation of the room's contents will help the players remember those contents. Use verbal cues to remind the players of things. If a player is going to check out the cauldron and no one has said anything about the lumber and ropes, say, “Okay, your character walks past the pile of lumber and coils of rope and reaches the cauldron.” Resist, if you can, more blatant cues (“So, nobody's going to check out the wood and ropes?”). Let the players figure things out on their own, even if it takes a while.

If the ingredients in all these containers are mixed in equal measure in the cauldron to the north (see “The Cauldron”) and then brought to a boil, it creates a small explosion that reveals a secret door in the ceiling. Even after creating this mixture, enough pillory powder remains to make a useful grenade if someone wishes to utilize it (same area, damage, and save information as above).

Moving the bookcase without first removing all the containers risks some of them dropping and breaking (the movers must succeed at a Dexterity check, DC 15, to avoid this). If any containers fall, there is a 5 percent chance that the pillory powder is one of them.

The contents of the shelf are worth about 1,500 gp in total but would be difficult to transport safely. The pillory powder alone is worth 800 gp.

None of the jars or their contents are magic.

THE MIRRORS

There are two glass mirrors mounted on the walls of the room (one to the north and one to the south), both just a few feet from the eastern wall. Each mirror is an oval about 8 inches tall and 6 inches wide. Each occupies the space on the wall covering the head of one of the mosaic figures (see “The Mosaic Mural,” page 9), and so hang right at eye level.

If someone casts *detect magic*, both mirrors radiate a faint aura of enchantment. The mirror on the north wall is broken, though, with the missing piece on the floor below it. Though it radiates magic, the north mirror currently has no magical function.

The functioning southern mirror transfixes those gazing into it from a distance of less than 10 feet, paralyzing them unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 17). This paralysis is permanent unless magically negated, or until the affected character is physically moved to the opposite mirror in order to see his or her reflection in it as well. Thus, if someone falls victim to the southern mirror, it likely will be necessary to repair the other mirror, most easily with a *mending* spell. (Though *mending* will not restore an

item’s magical abilities, the magic of the broken north mirror is still intact—it simply needs to be made whole again in order to function properly).

Repairing the northern mirror with *mending* means the caster must immediately make a saving throw or become transfixed himself. Likewise, characters moving a paralyzed comrade to the second mirror will have to take steps to avoid gazing into it. If taken from this room, the mirrors lose all power forever.

Even while held paralyzed, however, a character transfixed by the mirrors receives a sort of psychic message left behind by Jevira. As the victim stares into the mirror, he sees a woman (whom he may recognize from her statue or the mosaic mural) come up behind him and make a sign of welcome. Then, silently, she moves to a secret compartment in the east wall, located in the mosaic mural where her own lower legs rest as she sits. The compartment slides out like a drawer when found.

A character who sees Jevira do this can find and open the compartment unassisted. Without this aid, finding the compartment requires a Search check (DC 40). If Therren or Darian (the doppelgangers) are transfixed, they do not gain the vision.

The secret drawer holds a number of labeled vials and a hollow copper cylinder with shapes cut out of it. The labels on the vials are written in an ancient tongue, indecipherable without magical aid or a Decipher Script check (DC 20, one check for each vial). The labels and the contents of each vial are as follows:

Liquid	Label	Function
Blue, bubbling	“For ear damage”	<i>Potion of remove blindness/deafness</i>
White	“For pure water”	<i>Oil of purify food and drink*</i>
Golden, sparkling	“For luck”	<i>Potion of divine favor</i>
Black	“For poison”	<i>Potion of neutralize poison</i>
Green, oily	“For climbing”	<i>Elixir of climbing*</i>

* *Pour into tainted water or onto tainted food in order to purify (as the spell).*

** *Like an elixir of swimming, but grants a +10 bonus on Climb checks for one hour.*

These potions might come in handy if the characters understand and trust the labels (for example, one might easily mistake the black potion for poison).

The copper cylinder measures 12 inches long and 6 inches in diameter. It is hollow and open on both ends, although one end features an inner ring connected by three thin supports. The cylinder itself has a number of strange small shapes cut out of it. If someone places it over the hidden lamp in the statue that holds the torch, it reveals the location of the secret compartment in the northern wall (see “The Three Statues,” page 9).

A Likely Trip Through Room 1

As all the many facets of Room 1 come together, events may unfold along the following lines. After trying and failing to raise the lowered wall that has them trapped here, the player characters come into the room, leery of the statue that just flashed with a magical light.

As they explore, they run afoul of the mirrors but learn of the secret compartment in the east wall. Within that compartment, they find the cylinder, which (after they search the statues and fight the caryatid column) allows them to locate the compartment with the ewer and key. However, it gets them no closer to getting out.

The party should search every inch of the walls, though that won’t help much, either. After examining the wood and ropes, they build the scaffold and use it to help search the ceiling, finding nothing. Reluctantly, they’ll bring the ingredients of the various pots and jars to a boil in the cauldron and reveal the secret door in the ceiling.

The party then moves the scaffold into place so someone can go up and open the door, but this activates the pit trap. The scaffolding, the people on it, and anyone nearby may go tumbling down into the pit. Finally, they climb up to the door using the scaffold, rope trick, or levitate and a normal rope, then move into Room 2.

THE SKELETON IN THE EAST

Crumpled below the mirror on the south wall lies the skeleton of an elf adventurer who stood transfixed by the magic of the mirror until he starved to death. The corpse wears a rusted and useless chain shirt and has a ruined longbow. *Detect magic* or a search of the figure's quiver (Search, DC 12) uncovers three +1 arrows that are still in good shape. In a pouch the skeleton has 45 gp and 198 sp.

MOVING WALLS, SECRET DOORS, SECRET COMPARTMENTS, AND PIT TRAP

Technically, the entire western wall, the entire eastern wall, and the eastern half of the north and south walls are all secret doors. Discovering that these walls can move requires a Search check (DC 30). As well, a Search check (DC 30) conducted on the western floor near the statues reveals the pressure plate that caused the western wall to come down, though it will not raise the wall again. (The player characters can assume—rightly—that one of them must have triggered this trap just as they entered.)

Attempting to “open” any of the movable walls is impossible except as detailed in the room descriptions that follow. Even magic such as a *knock* spell will not do it (although *knock* will open any of the other secret doors or compartments as normal if the caster knows where they are). The walls are all magically treated so that breaking through them (or through any of the compartment doors or other secret doors) is impossible without the use of powerful magic like a *disintegrate* spell.

The eastern wall holds a secret compartment (see “The Mirrors,” page 12) that requires a Search check (DC 40) to find. Likewise, a Search check (DC 40) locates the secret compartment on the north wall (see “The Three Statues,” page 9). Each of the referenced sections contains clues that can make finding each compartment easier. As well, remember that the compartment in the north wall has an acid spray trap.

Finding the secret door in the ceiling directly over the cauldron (see “The Cauldron,” page 10) requires a Search check (DC 50), but boiling the right ingredients in the cauldron makes discovering the door much easier. This ceiling door leads to Room 2, but it is locked (Open Lock, DC 25).

A secret pit trap in the floor beside the cauldron (see “The Cauldron”) activates when at least 200 lbs. of pressure weighs upon it while the secret door in the ceiling above the cauldron is open.

ROOM 2:

THE SECRET CRAWL SPACE

Once the player characters find and open the secret door above the cauldron, they see a 5-foot-square shaft going up. It rises for 10 feet, then turns horizontally to the north to become a crawl space 5 feet wide by 2-1/2 feet high.



Be forewarned—the secret crawl space is likely the most dangerous room in the adventure!

ZOMBIE AMBUSH

The crawl space runs for 20 feet before coming to a T-intersection. On the way, however, a character crawling down the tunnel must make a Spot check (DC 18) or be surprised by the zombie hidden in a small niche to the west. The zombie attacks mindlessly but takes no penalties due to the cramped quarters. The character, on the other hand, loses all Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) and suffers a –2 penalty on all checks and attack rolls made in the crawl space. As

well, characters in the crawl space can use only weapons that they can wield in one hand. (Small PCs take none of these penalties, but none of the pregenerated characters are Small.) Even with these penalties, the zombie should be little threat to any of the PCs. In truth, this creature is here only to put the party on edge.

Zombie, human commoner: CR —; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 18; Init —1; Speed 30 feet; AC 11 (touch 9, flat-footed 11); Base Attack +1; Grapple +2; Attack/Full Attack +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SQ Undead, single actions only, DR 5/slashing (or —), darkvision 60 feet; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref —1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills and Feats: Toughness

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

DEAD ENDS

At the T-intersection, a character can crawl either left or right (east or west) for another 10 feet. Both of these side tunnels come to a dead end, with a 6-inch-diameter hole in the center of each wall.

Each hole opens up into a shaft just over 2 feet long—about the length of a human arm. At the far end of each shaft are five smaller openings spaced about where a human's thumb and fingers would reach if someone stretched a right arm down the length of the shaft (or a left arm turned upside down).

If any character in either the western or the eastern section of the crawl space puts all five digits in all five openings at the end of the shaft at the same time, three things happen at once.



1. BLADES

Buzz saw-like blades slice down in the shaft, most likely upon the wrist of the one who reached inside. Unless the character succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 22), she suffers 6d6 points of damage and her hand is cut off. Success results in half damage and no lost limb.

Buzz Saw Trap: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; never miss; 6d6 points of damage plus loss of hand; Reflex save (DC 22) halves damage and negates limb loss; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 25).

A character who has lost a hand to this trap takes 2 points of temporary Constitution damage and 1 point of permanent Dexterity drain. That character cannot use two-handed weapons or otherwise undertake any task that logically would require two hands to complete. She suffers a –4 penalty on Climb and Swim checks and a –2 penalty on Open Lock, Disable Device, Use Rope, and Craft checks.

2. BLOCK OF STONE

A stone block 10 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 2-1/2 feet high falls down in the section of the T-intersection opposite of the character who triggered the buzz saw trap. The block seals off this section of the crawl space and crushes any character in the area.

Falling Block Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset (see below); never miss; 15d6 points of damage; Reflex save (DC 25) halves; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 25)

3. MOVABLE WALLS

The third effect of activating the devices in the dead ends is that one of the movable walls in Room 1 lowers into the floor, revealing Room 3 or Room 4. If the trigger to the west is used, the wall between Rooms 1 and 3 lowers. The trigger in the eastern part of the T-intersection lowers the wall between Rooms 1 and 4.

Since the falling block of stone seals off the opposite side of the intersection, once the characters gain access to one room, it would seem that access to the other is denied for good. This is not true, though—see Rooms 3 and 4 to learn how to reset the falling blocks.

NEXT STEPS

Extremely ingenious (or morbid) characters might think to remove an arm from one of the two skeletons in Room 1 (see “The Skeleton in the West” and “The Skeleton in the East”), then try to fill the five openings with its long-dead fingers instead of their own. The condition of the corpses and the narrow confines of the shaft make this extremely difficult, though, requiring a successful Dexterity check (DC 25) to pull it off.

In 1 round, characters can pull out their fallen comrades not killed by the falling block, but the block finishes its descent automatically afterward. The block does not budge even if a gap remains where it has crushed a body.

ROOM 3: THE DRUM AND THE FONT

Lay out for players the Room 3 battle mat map on page 40, while you refer to the detailed map on page 6. When the wall slides down between Rooms 1 and 3, the player characters see a square chamber 30 feet on each side. As in Room 1, the stone walls are covered in a mosaic of life-sized human figures. These figures all face forward, their hands over their ears as if hearing something terrible.

In the middle of the room sits a large kettle drum. In the north-west corner stands a strange font that looks like a dragon's head with a wide-open mouth. The mouth spouts a stream of water straight down into a similar dragon's head, upside down so that its open mouth forms a sort of basin with a drain. Three skeletons lie on the floor.

THE SKELETONS

Two of the skeletons are humans wearing tattered red robes. One of these wears a golden, jeweled necklace worth 500 gp and carries a rotten leather pouch containing 173 gp. The other robed skeleton is missing a hand. In the folds of its tattered garments (Search, DC 15), it bears a small slip of parchment that reads (in Common):

Beware—there are even more doppelgangers in the ranks than you think. Trust only Monro.

The corpse's missing hand was severed in battle and flew into the font (see "The Font," below). From the position of the corpse, this figure clearly died struggling.

The third skeleton is not that of a human, but something with a large, elongated head and gangly arms. Even now, the bones are flexible rather than brittle. This is the skeleton of a doppelganger. Near it is a masterwork longsword covered in long-dried blood.

Players may attempt to use the arms of any of the skeletons to bypass the buzz saw trap (see "Dead Ends" in Room 2). Because of the pliable nature of the doppelganger's bones, using its arm is easier (Dexterity check, DC 23; DC 25 for the human skeletons).

THE DRUM

If beaten with anything other than the golden drumstick in the chest in Room 4 (see next page), all within 80 feet (including the character beating the drum) must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or become permanently deafened. If instead someone beats the drum with the special golden drumstick, pieces of the mosaic on the walls break off to reveal another pattern beneath; the figures change into happy people enjoying music. No one is deafened, and the wall between Room 1 and Room 5 lowers.

The drum cannot be removed from this room without destroying its magical abilities. It radiates a faint aura of necromantic magic.



THE FONT

The water in the dragon-headed font is cold and crystal clear. It radiates a very faint aura of transmutation to the caster of *detect magic*. A strange fist-sized glob of unknown material sits at the bottom of the font near the drain; it requires a Search check (DC 15) to find it. Any touch dislodges the glob, but a character must make an attack roll (AC 15) to snatch it before it goes down the drain.

The glob is, in fact, a hand balled into a fist. One finger wears a gold ring. The inside of this special magic item bears runes that someone succeeding at a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 18) can decipher to mean "dispel magic by touch." In effect, the ring can do a targeted dispel (as described in the *dispel magic* spell description, caster level 5th) against one specific effect on one target the wearer touches. It functions three times only; its value is 2,250 gp less 750 gp for each time it is used.

Given their experiences in Room 2, player characters might conclude that this figure lost its hand in the buzz saw trap, so don't be surprised if they spend some time tossing their own severed limbs into the font to see what happens. The hand in the font cannot be used to attempt to bypass the buzz saw trap, however, as it is too badly decomposed.

If someone carries the water from the font in the golden ewer (see "The Three Statues" in Room 1) or in any container first cleansed with magically pure water (such as water affected by a *purify food and drink* spell, but not water from this font) and pours it into the pool in Room 4, the wall between Room 1 and Room 5 lowers (see "The Pool" on the next page).

THE SECRET SWITCH

In the middle of the east wall is a secret switch (Search, DC 20) that appears to be just a small stone in the midst of the mosaic. If pressed, the dropped stone block in the eastern part of the T-intersection in Room 2 rises, giving access to the trigger that opens the way into Room 4. (The player characters will know there's a trap hidden in the trigger this time, but bypassing it is difficult.)

ROOM 4: THE POOL AND THE CHEST

Lay out for players the Room 4 battle mat map on page 41, while you refer to the detailed map on page 6. When the wall slides down between Rooms 1 and 4, the player characters see a square chamber 30 feet to a side. Unlike in Rooms 1 and 3, the stone walls here are bare—there is no mosaic.

In the middle of the room stands a dry pool some 8 feet in diameter and about 1 foot deep. A stone chest sits in the southwest corner of the chamber. A skeleton in tattered red robes lies near the east wall.

THE SKELETON

Unlike those in Rooms 1 and 3, this corpse is mostly dissolved—it is more a human-shaped stain than a skeleton. Clumps of red fabric cling to the remains here and there, and a rusted, half-dissolved dagger lies between it and the wall. On the eastern wall, the figure appears to have scrawled the following with the dagger before he died:

Monro is a doppelganger. He

THE CHEST

The chest is ornately carved with geometric designs and bears a large lock (Open Lock, DC 25). It is also trapped so that, when someone tries to open it, a blast of electricity catches all targets within 10 feet. The golden key in Room 1 (see “The Three Statues”) opens the lock and deactivates the trap.

Electricity Blast Trap: CR 3; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (5d6 points of electricity damage, 10-foot radius, Reflex save [DC 15] halves); Search (DC 23); Disable Device (DC 28)

Inside the chest is a golden drumstick. If a character uses it to beat the drum in Room 3, the wall between Rooms 1 and 5 lowers (see Room 3, “The Drum”). The drumstick possesses a faint aura of evocation magic.

THE POOL

A sticky grey residue coating the bottom of the dry pool is, in fact, a very old gray ooze almost dead from dehydration and starvation. Its touch is not currently caustic, and it cannot move. However, if any water (including water from the font in Room 3) is poured into the pool, the gray ooze instantly rejuvenates and attacks.

Ooze, Gray: CR 4; Medium ooze; HD 3d10+10; hp 45; Init -5; Speed 10 feet; AC 5 (touch 5, flat-footed 5); Base Attack +2; Grapple +3;

Getting Into Room 5

To lower the wall to Room 5, characters need to:

- Use the drumstick from Room 4 on the drum in Room 3; or
- Pour the water from Room 3 into the pool in Room 4.

They do not need to succeed at both of these methods to access Room 5 (unless you are a very mean DM).

Attack/Full Attack +3 melee (1d6+1 and 1d6 acid, slam); SA Improved grab, acid, corrosion, constrict 1d6+1 and 1d6 acid; SQ Blindsight, cold and fire immunity, ooze, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 12, Dex 1, Con 11, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Acid (Ex): A gray ooze secretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal, but not stone. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 16). A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 16). The save DCs are Constitution based. The ooze’s acidic touch deals 16 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

Constrict (Ex): A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent’s clothing and armor take a -4 penalty on Reflex saves against the acid.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict (see above).

Transparent (Ex): A gray ooze is hard to identify, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a Spot check (DC 15) to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a gray ooze and walk into it are hit automatically with a melee attack for slam and acid damage.

If someone carries the water from the font in Room 3 in the golden ewer (see Room 1, “The Three Statues”) or in any container first cleansed with magically pure water (such as water affected by a *purify food and drink* spell, but not water from that font) and pours it into the pool, the wall between Room 1 and Room 5 lowers.

The pool itself has no aura of magic.

THE SECRET SWITCH

In the middle of the west wall is a secret switch (Search, DC 20) that appears to just be a small stone. If pressed, the dropped stone block in the western part of the T-intersection in Room 2 rises, giving access to the trigger that opens the way into Room 3. (The player characters will know there’s a trap hidden in the trigger this time, but bypassing it is difficult.)

ROOM 5: THE THRONES OF THE TRIUNE

Lay out for players the Room 5 battle mat map on page 42, while you refer to the detailed map on page 6. When the wall between Rooms 1 and 5 finally lowers, the player characters see a large room, 50 feet wide and just over 60 feet deep. The ceiling is some 30 feet high. The eastern half of the room is 3 feet higher than the western half, with curved steps rising between them. The eastern wall is curved as well.

Just past the point where the movable wall once closed this room off, a wooden railing 3 feet high runs across the width of the chamber, with a 20-foot opening in the center to walk through.

At the top of the curved steps, four elaborate black iron candlesticks, each 4 feet high, hold tall white candles. Two stone altars sit close to the candlesticks, across the chamber from three thrones with their backs parallel to the curving eastern wall. From north to south, one throne is made of iron, one of glass, and one of wood. A dead body lies sprawled in the wooden throne, a dagger thrust into its chest.

THE MOSAIC MURAL

The mosaic mural continues into this room, appearing much as it did in Room 1, with two exceptions. First, only the north and south walls bear the mosaic. Second, the life-sized human figures bearing gifts and offerings all wear red robes, gloves, and shoes.

THE RAILING AND THE SECRET DOORS

The railing is purely ornamental, although a Search check (DC 20) reveals that one post in each railing will twist. Twisting a post opens a nearby secret door, either on the north wall or the south wall. The railing is nonmagical.

Finding the secret doors without using the railing requires a Search check (DC 28), but even if successful, a character must twist the railing to open them. Each secret door is locked (Open Lock, DC 24) and trapped with a *glyph of warding* that resets once per day.

Glyph of Warding (Blast): CR 4; spell; spell trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 6th-level cleric, 3d8 electricity, Reflex save [DC 15] halves); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28)

Behind each secret door is a small 10-foot by 10-foot room. In the northern secret room, eight red robes hang on pegs on the walls. In the southern secret room, eight pairs of red gloves and eight pairs of red shoes sit on shelves. The robes, gloves, and shoes radiate a faint aura of abjuration magic.

Only characters wearing the red robes, red gloves, and red shoes found here can touch either altar without activating its detrimental magical effects (see “The Altars,” below). The clothing otherwise has no special value.

THE CANDLES

Four tall white candles sit atop 4-foot black iron candlesticks near the altars, making each candle’s flame approximately 6 feet off the ground. They are unlit when the player characters enter, though much wax has dripped down and congealed onto the black iron stands. Lighting the candles reveals that the wax melts and runs very quickly, and the flames sputter.

Succeeding at a Search check (DC 10) shows a character that hanging down from the top of each iron candlestick is a 4-foot flat iron bar. This bar is covered with wax like the candlestick and attaches to it near the base of the candle. Each bar has a groove running down the middle of it and hangs from a hinged ring, so that one can position it at any angle around the candlestick.

Experimentation or inspiration reveals that the bar is long enough to reach one of the nearby altars (two candlesticks to each altar). If its bar is positioned correctly, a lit candle will ooze runny wax down the groove to the altar. When wax from each candle touches the closest altar in this way, a third altar rises up between the other two (see “The Altars,” below).

Removing a candle from its stand and allowing it to drip wax directly on an altar (or catching the hot wax in a receptacle of some kind and carrying it quickly to be poured onto an altar) will not raise the hidden third altar. The candles must burn on their stands with their wax flowing along the grooved bars.

Once the central third altar has risen, the congealed wax on the northern and southern altars absorbs magically into the stone, leaving no clue as to the altars’ function.

THE ALTARS

There are three altars in Room 5, although one remains hidden until activated by the wax from the candles. The southern altar is gilt. Carved into the surface of its otherwise smooth top is an open mouth filled with teeth. The mouth measures about 6 inches wide. The northern altar is plain stone carved with the image of a mouth with pursed lips.

THE TOOTHY-MOUTHED ALTAR

The toothy-mouthed altar is magic, radiating a faint aura of conjuration. Touching the altar without wearing the red robes, shoes, and gloves found in the secret rooms results in an orc suddenly appearing in front of each throne and attacking the party immediately. These orcs are not actually real but summoned from magical energy. They are fearless and do nothing but attack; otherwise, treat them as normal orcs.

Summon Orcs Trap: CR 4; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (summons three orcs); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28)

Orcs: CR —; Medium humanoids (orc); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +0; Speed 20 feet; AC 14 (touch 10, flat-footed 14); Base Attack +1; Grapple +4; Attack/Full Attack +4 melee (1d12+4, greataxe) or +1 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 feet, light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 7, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness

Possessions: Greataxe, javelins (5), scale mail

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Three new orcs continue to appear and attack each round until the effect is turned off. The only way to do this is to place material in the mouth of the altar; each 100 gp worth of material reduces the number of orcs appearing by one each round. For example, feeding it a gem worth 100 gp reduces the number of orcs per round to two; giving it 250 gp in coins and gear makes only one orc appear each round; and providing a magic item worth 300 gp or more turns off the effect.

If anything passes into the mouth on the altar, its teeth bite down, crushing it. It gobbles up and destroys even metal and stone items. A creature placing any part of its body in the mouth sustains 6d6 points of damage unless it makes a successful Reflex save (DC 17) to pull it back out in time. Anyone looking down into the mouth sees a hollow cavity within the altar, filled with dust and the remains of ground-up items.

Hidden within a secret compartment (Search, DC 20) in the back of the altar is a *wand of dispel magic* (caster level 7th) with one charge remaining. Arcane runes covering its length reveal its function and command word on a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 17). This wand is special, however, in that its dispelling affects even supernatural abilities (a doppelganger's change shape ability, for instance). Thus, if a character uses it to dispel the Prester Young effect on Darian or Therren, it may also reveal their true appearance (assume the doppelgangers' "caster level" to be their Hit Dice total).

THE PURSED-LIPS ALTAR

The altar carved with the image of pursed lips is nonmagical, although it generates a quasi-magical effect (abjuration) under the proper circumstances. The pursed lips slowly and constantly spew a powerful acidic contact poison that flows out and over the entire altar. A Search check (DC 22) can detect the poison (1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage, and 1d6 more one minute later; Fortitude save, DC 17, negates).

The poison also inflicts 1d3 points of acid damage to any creature touching the altar (even with normal gloves or armored gauntlets). Wearing the red robes, shoes, and gloves found in the secret rooms magically protects a character from the poison. Characters can plug the lips and wash off the altar with water, but the acid eats through any material used as a plug within 1d6+1 rounds.

Contact Poison Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); automatic reset; poison (1d6/1d6 Constitution + 1d3 acid damage; Fortitude save (DC 17) negates Constitution damage only); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 23)

Hidden within a secret compartment (Search, DC 20) in the back of the altar is a monoclelike eyepiece wrapped in a square of cloth. Scribbled on the cloth, in Common, is the following message: "Use this to look at one whom you distrust. It will reveal his true appearance. It can be used only thrice." The monocle is a special magic item (caster level 10th) that allows the wearer to examine one creature as a standard action and see his or her true appearance. The monocle sees through illusions, disguises, *polymorph* effects, and even *shapechange*. It certainly will reveal a doppelganger if used upon one. It has three charges.

THE HIDDEN THIRD ALTAR

The hidden third altar rises up magically from the floor when wax from the four candles runs down the candlesticks' iron bars onto the other two altars (see "The Candles," above). This plain, nonmagical altar is not trapped. It has a very well-hidden knob on the back (Search, DC 26; Search, DC 18 with Jevira's advice—see "The Glass Throne" on the next page). This knob creates the exit (see "The Exit," page 20).

THE IRON THRONE

If anyone attempts to use *detect magic* on the iron (northern) throne, it radiates an aura of strong divination. The iron throne has ten 100 gp gems set into an intricate, delicate pattern carved in its surface. A Strength check (DC 15) allows a character to pry out a gem. If all the gems are removed, the act summons the spirit of Okala, who (unlike his two comrades) was able to move on from this place into the afterlife. However, a powerful spell that he placed on his throne long ago to summon him if a thief ever stole his gems still functions. So powerful is the magic of the spell that it draws Okala back from the afterlife as a wraith.

Okala is surprised to find himself back in his old demesne—so surprised, in fact, that for 1 round he does nothing (not even speak) except look around and get his bearings. If attacked during that time, he attacks all living creatures in the room and does not stop until either he or they are destroyed. If he is not attacked during that first round, he looks at the person who holds the tenth gem removed from the throne and pronounces a curse upon him or her: "In the name of all the Mysteries, I curse you, thief, to watch as your mind betrays itself!"

The victim of the curse must make a Will save (DC 20) or suffer 1 point of permanent Intelligence drain. Every hour after that, the character must make another save or suffer 1d4 points of temporary Intelligence damage. Characters who succeed at the saving throw heal 1d4 points of Intelligence damage from that previously lost



(though this cannot repair the Intelligence drain). If no one attacks Okala, his spirit leaves. If he is attacked at that point, he fights back as stated above.

If Okala is not attacked and someone in the party succeeds at a Diplomacy check (DC 16) in an attempt to speak with him, he answers one question truthfully (though perhaps somewhat mysteriously) before departing. This includes questions like the following:

Q: Who is the real Prester Young?

A: There is no such person.

Q: How do we get out of here?

A: Ask Jevira.

Q: Where is the *strand of tears*?

A: In a vault where you must choose quickly and wisely.

Okala: Wraith; CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 46; Init +7; Speed 30 feet, fly 60 feet (good); AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 12); Attack/Full Attack +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); SA Constitution drain, create spawn; SQ Undead, incorporeal, +2 turn resistance, unnatural aura, daylight powerlessness; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Constitution Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or take 1d6

points of permanent Constitution drain. The save DC is Charisma based. On each such successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate, but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn remain under the command of the wraith that created them and stay enslaved until its death. They possess none of the abilities they had in life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Daylight Powerlessness (Ex): Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

THE GLASS THRONE

If anyone touches the beautiful, delicate glass throne flanked by the other two thrones in Room 5, an image of Jevira appears within it, positioned as if she were seated on the throne (though she is clearly *inside* it). As soon as she appears, she looks at those within 40 feet of her. She takes one of the following four actions depending on what she perceives:

1. If either Darian or Therren (or both) are within 40 feet of her throne, Jevira says, "I will not speak to you with doppelgangers in my presence." She then disappears. (Characters making a Spot check, DC 24, notice that she subtly

motions toward the altars when she speaks. This gesture refers to the items hidden inside the altars that could help the characters.)

Her statement might create confusion and dissension in the party. The characters may eye each other suspiciously, and in their questioning of each other (and maybe themselves), the Prester Young secret most likely comes out (see “The Prester Young Effect,” page 7).

2. Assuming there are characters within the room but none within 40 feet of Jevira’s throne, she announces, “I will not speak to you while some skulk in the shadows out of my perception.”
3. In the event that there are characters within 40 feet of her but Darian and Therren are either dead or not in the room *and* the third altar is not visible, Jevira tells the adventuring party, “To provide an exit from this place, burn the candles one last time in our honor, and let their essence flow to the altars.”
4. If there are characters within 40 feet but Darian and Therren are either dead or not in the room, *and* the third altar is visible, Jevira says the following: “To provide an exit from this place, find the hidden stud on the third altar. But be prepared to make an all-important choice, and quickly.”

Each time someone touches her throne, Jevira reappears and goes through the same process as above. However, noticing the subtle motions toward the altars in result #1 is only DC 18 on any attempts after the first. It is Jevira’s ghost that speaks, but she is limited to these mechanical responses, saying things the same way every time. Any ability to sense undead will reveal her to be such, but she is not evil, nor is her throne magical.

If the player characters create an exit, her ghost uses it as well. She disappears forever, and touching the throne thereafter produces no effect.

Tips: I’m Suddenly a Doppelganger?

As stated earlier in the adventure, if Darian or Therren discovers that he is actually a doppelganger, take the player aside and provide his new motivation (kill the others) and his new stats (see page 33).

Some players might feel a bit cheated by this turn of events, thinking that they never had a chance to prevent this outcome. Assure them that since this is just a one-shot adventure, it’s okay for one player to fight another, and that the surprise for the other players will be worth it. Tell them that the experience of suddenly playing a monster will be a fun change of pace.

When you give the players the doppelganger versions of their character sheets, the characters must retain any wounds (lost hit points) they have suffered that have not yet healed.

THE WOODEN THRONE

T’Shem still sits upon his nonmagical wooden throne, his decaying corpse held together and animated by sheer resentment and bitterness over his final fate. T’Shem is a powerful wight, but when the player characters come into the room, he appears to be nothing but a normal corpse. His *+2 dagger*, the one he used to take his own life, juts from his shriveled chest. As soon as any living creature comes within 5 feet, he attacks, hopefully with surprise (allow the characters to make Spot checks, DC 20).

If it is obvious, however, that the person approaching intends to remove the dagger, T’Shem allows that to happen before attacking, hoping that the characters assume the dagger will prove useful against him. In fact, the dagger holds a small portion of the negative energy that sustains T’Shem, and a blow from it grants him temporary hit points (to no more than double his maximum hit points) rather than dealing damage. The dagger has this special quality only with regard to T’Shem (and he cannot use it to “heal” himself with self-inflicted wounds—someone else must attack him with it).

T’Shem: Wight; CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 48; Init +1; Speed 30 feet; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 14); Base Attack +2; Grapple +5; Attack/Full Attack +5 melee (1d4+3 and energy drain, slam); SA Energy drain, create spawn; SQ Undead, +4 turn resistance; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn remain under the command of the wight that created them and stay enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight’s slam attack gain one negative level. One can remove a negative level with a Fortitude save (DC 14). The save DC is Charisma based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

THE EXIT

When someone presses the secret knob on the third altar (see “The Altars,” page 17), all three altars and thrones disappear. In their place, a 10-foot-square opening appears on the floor in front of where the third altar was. Down that opening, a set of stairs descends 60 feet to a 10-foot-square chamber. In the middle of this chamber, a pedestal holds the *strand of tears*.

At the same time, 10 feet east of this opening in the floor, a staircase appears and rises 60 feet to the surface. These stairs are the way out of the temple.

Ask the players to give you a round’s worth of actions for each character. Don’t tell them this, but **they only have 3 rounds before**



these openings and staircases disappear, never to function again. Characters who run (as opposed to taking a single or double move) on either set of stairs must make a Balance check (DC 15). Failure means the character trips and falls. His or her round ends immediately, and the character begins the next round prone on the stairs.

Essentially, the characters must decide whether to leave or to go down and claim the strand. (Remember that those who believe themselves to be Prester Young should want only to leave. That is, in fact, the whole point of the enforced delusion—to safeguard the *strand of tears* and convince thieves to leave rather than take the treasure.) Don't allow players to take time to coordinate actions or formulate a plan—they don't have that luxury in this kind of situation.

Grabbing the *strand of tears* from the pedestal is a standard action. Doing so, however, forces a character to make a Will save (DC 16). Failure means that the character is held for 6 rounds as if affected by a *hold person* spell (though the doppelgangers, regardless of their awareness of their identity, prove immune to this effect).

Hold Person Trap: CR 3; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*hold person*, 6th-level wizard, Will save [DC 16] negates); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27)

In theory, a character who does not wear heavy armor and who has a speed of 30, if positioned at the top of the staircase down when it appears, could double move down on the first round, grab the strand and move the second round, then run on the third and last round all the way up and out. A character with a move greater than 30 (such as a barbarian) might have even slightly better options. Most likely, though, anyone who doesn't choose to leave immediately won't make it out in 3 rounds. Characters still in the room or on the stairs out when the third round ends remain trapped in Room 5 forever. Characters in the chamber with the strand or on the stairs down are trapped there forever.

Remember that as soon as a character leaves the dungeon, the Prester Young effect ends for him or her. That means a fight with the doppelgangers may ensue even as people try to escape. It also means that greedy adventurers, no longer believing they are Prester Young, might turn around and go back to retrieve some of the treasure they left behind in their single-minded desire to leave. Such adventurers, however, have no chance of getting out with the *strand of tears*, even if they run both ways and make all their saves and checks (assuming you are using the pregenerated characters).



Wrapping Things Up

Surviving characters should be very proud, as should the players running them. This is a tough adventure to get through.

When everything is over, it's likely that some characters will be dead (perhaps killed by other player characters, if not the monsters or traps) and some will be trapped in the dungeon forever.

If the PCs don't obtain the *strand of tears*, or even if no one survives, don't let the players feel that they failed. Tell them how hard the scenario was, and that having fun was the real goal.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If all (or mostly all) of the player characters do make it out alive, congratulate them. Should they make it out with the *strand of tears*, tell them that doing so was extraordinarily difficult, and that they should be proud. When worn like a belt, the strand adds a +4 enhancement bonus to the wearer's highest ability score (or the ability of the wearer's choice, if two or more have the same high score). The item is caster level 10th and has a value of 20,000 gp.

THE TEMPLE OF MYSTERIES 80 YEARS AGO

In case it comes up, when the Triune used the "dungeon" level of the Temple of Mysteries 80 or so years ago, here is how all this strangeness worked:

The majority of followers and adherents stayed in the above-ground temple and paid homage to the Triune. The extremely talented and devout, however, were allowed to come into the presence of their gods if they dared. These worshipers brought offerings down into the lower level and then were forced to figure out how to find the Triune (who waited in Room 5, watching the progress magically). The Prester Young effect was not activated for these suppliants but was reserved for dealing with unwanted intruders. In fact, sometimes the Triune sent adherents mental clues and riddles to help them along.

Those able to survive and reach Room 5 were allowed to present their offerings into the toothy-mouthed altar. The

Triune rewarded the most faithful of all by allowing them to summon the third altar and take the passage down to obtain some great reward (like the *strand of tears*). The creation of the passage out at the same time was, again, to ensure that intruders under the Prester Young enchantment would flee rather than steal.

The Triune themselves came and went using spells, and typically never bothered with the complex process of opening the movable walls or the exit activated from the third altar.

USING THIS ADVENTURE IN AN ONGOING CAMPAIGN

It's easy enough to insert this adventure into an existing campaign, but there's every reason to expect it to not have quite the same impact. One of the best things about the setup of this adventure is that the players, having been given a character brand new to them, will play as if they truly are Prester Young—looking at the adventure through eyes that they discover only at the end are not their own.

Further, you can't (or you shouldn't) just kill a couple of characters "off stage" to replace them with doppelgangers—although if two characters were *captured* by doppelgangers, that's not only fair but might lead to a possible follow-up adventure to rescue them.

Lastly, it's a dangerous adventure that will probably end up killing or trapping a few characters at least. But if you don't mind that, by all means, let your player characters loose in the *Temple of Mysteries*. Allow them to arrive at the ruins to search and investigate for themselves. Eventually, they'll find the way down (Search, DC 22) and make their way into Room 1, where they'll trap themselves.


Each character should be allowed a Will save (DC 20) against the Prester Young enchantment invoked by the middle statue (the pregenerated characters are assumed to have all failed). You'll have to figure out a way to take those affected aside and give them their secret background info sheets without arousing the other players' suspicions.

After that, play can proceed normally.



Background and Characters

This player handout package consists of the adventure background known to the party, as well as character sheets detailing the abilities, equipment, and spells with which each player character will take on the Temple of Mysteries. In addition, each player receives his own secret background info sheet. This sheet may contain specific information that only your character knows, so be sure not to let the other players see it.



Hand out copies of this selection of adventure background to all players at the start of the game session, in addition to going over it verbally as described in the Introduction. Players may want to refer back to this sheet throughout the course of the scenario.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Some 80 years ago, the Temple of Mysteries was a place of wonders. Three humans—T'Shem, Okala, and Jevira—founded the temple, dedicating it to the veneration of themselves as demigods. Today, those who remember the place or have heard the stories recognize that T'Shem, Okala, and Jevira were merely powerful spellcasters, but at the time, their wondrous might convinced at least a small following of their divinity. It didn't hurt that the three of them, known collectively as the Triune, rewarded their worshipers with great gifts and boons from time to time.

For the most part, however, the Triune were fickle “gods,” requiring their followers to undergo strange trials and solve mysterious puzzles. In retrospect, they seemed to be testing the faithful, but whatever quality or abilities they sought to find remains unknown.

In fact, besides their predilection for riddles and tests and their desire for veneration, the only concrete fact known about the Triune is that approximately 70 years ago, the Temple of Mysteries was destroyed in a terrible fire. Rumors circulated as to its cause, and many speculated that the Triune or their followers had enemies.

All of you are part of an adventuring company that has worked together for some time. You know each other fairly well and have developed something of a bond, along with the common goals of making a name for yourselves and striking it rich.

While delving through an ancient tome on an unrelated adventure, you learned that a powerful magic item known as

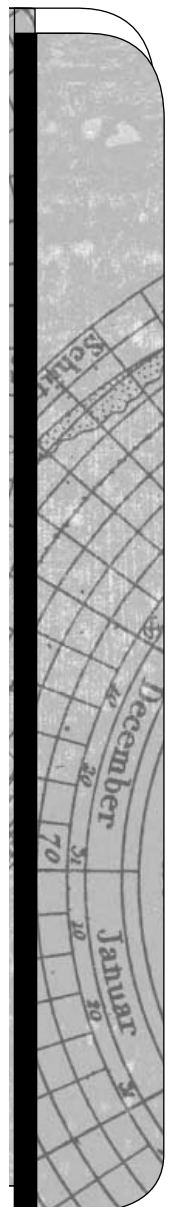
the *strand of tears* was kept below the Temple of Mysteries. This minor relic, created from the tears of a goddess, appears to be a delicate belt-sized silver strand set with blue and white teardrop-shaped jewels. It is said that the *strand of tears* enhances its wearer's greatest attribute.

Despite the fact that other references to the *strand of tears* exists, no one else seems to know that it was last seen below the Temple of Mysteries. Although many adventurers are said to have explored the ruins, no one has spoken of the strand or, in fact, of having found a subterranean level. You decided to go to the temple and explore, in the hopes of finding the fabled *strand of tears*.

You came to the Temple of Mysteries on a cold, dark day, finding a burned-out shell of a building along with a number of smaller outbuildings, all in ruins. Splitting up and spreading out, you combed the area carefully to find it picked clean by explorers, adventurers, and scavengers, just as some stories had said.

Unlike them, however, you knew to look for a secret way down, eventually finding a hidden trap door that provided access to a dusty old staircase beneath the temple. Lighting torches and descending into the darkness, you found a wide corridor that connected a few rooms. In places, faded frescos depicted travelers on the road and other simplistic scenes. You even managed to find a number of elaborately carved pillars set with a few small gems, easily pried loose and pocketed.

Then, at the end of the corridor, you came into a large room with mosaic images along the walls. Ahead of you, across the center of the chamber, three stone statues stood. You moved to investigate, but before you could do so, the statue in the center erupted with a bright flash of light, and you heard a thunderous slamming of stone behind you.



Therren of Graydawn

HALF-ELF ROGUE 4 (CHAOTIC GOOD)

Strength 13 (+1)
Dexterity 16 (+3)
Constitution 12 (+1)
Intelligence 14 (+2)
Wisdom 8 (-1)
Charisma 10 (+0)

AC: 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 13)

hp: 22

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 feet

SAVES

Fortitude +3

Reflex +7

Will +0

ATTACKS

Base Attack +3

Grapple +4

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Masterwork short sword	+5	1d6+1	19-20/x2
Masterwork longbow	+7	1d8	x3

Armor: Masterwork studded leather

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sneak Attack: Deal +2d6 damage against flanked or flat-footed opponent.

Trapfinding: You can use the Search skill to find traps with a DC greater than 20.

Trap Sense: +1 bonus on Reflex saves and to AC against traps.

Uncanny Dodge: Retain Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or struck by invisible opponents.

FEATS

Improved Initiative: +4 bonus on initiative checks.

Point Blank Shot: +1 bonus on ranged attack rolls and damage against targets within 30 feet.

SKILLS

Bluff +7

Climb +8

Decipher Script +9

Disable Device +9

Hide +10

Knowledge (local) +4

Listen +7

Move Silently +10

Open Lock +10

Search +9

Tumble +10

POSSESSIONS

Masterwork short sword

Dagger

Masterwork longbow

Arrows (40)

Masterwork studded leather armor

Jar of sovereign glue (1 ounce of unbreakable adhesive, takes 1 round to set)

Bag of holding (up to 250 lbs. or 30 cubic feet)

Potion of cure light wounds (cure 1d8+3 points of damage)

Potion of invisibility (imbiber becomes invisible for four minutes)

Potion of darkvision (imbiber gains 60-foot darkvision for four hours)

Thieves' tools

50 feet of silk rope

Iron spikes (4)

Wooden mallet

Hooded lantern and oil

40 gp

100 gp gem

Aieron Swiftriver

ELF WIZARD 4 (CHAOTIC GOOD)

Strength 8 (-1)
Dexterity 14 (+2)
Constitution 13 (+1)
Intelligence 16 (+3)
Wisdom 13 (+1)
Charisma 10 (+0)

AC: 13 (touch 12, flat-footed 11)

hp: 17

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet

SAVES

Fortitude +2

Reflex +4

Will +5

ATTACKS

Base Attack +2

Grapple +1

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Dagger	+1	1d4-1	19-20/X2
Longbow	+4	1d8-1	X3

Armor: +1 bracers of armor

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immune to magic *sleep* effects.

+2 on saves against enchantment spells and effects.

FEATS

Spell Penetration: +2 on caster level checks to overcome spell resistance.

Combat Casting: +4 on Concentration checks to cast on the defensive, or while grappling or pinned.

Scribe Scroll: You can produce scrolls.

SKILLS

Concentration +8

Craft (alchemy) +7

Decipher Script +10

Knowledge (arcana) +10

Spellcraft +6

Spot +6

POSSESSIONS

Dagger

+1 bracers of armor

Longbow

Arrows (40)

Cloak of elvenkind (+5 bonus on Hide checks)

Wand of *burning hands* (10 charges) (3d4 points of fire damage in a 15-foot cone)

Wand of *shield* (43 charges) (invisible disc of force blocks *magic missiles*, grants +4 to AC, including against incorporeal creatures, for three minutes)

Backpack

Vial of ink

Parchment pages (5)

Food (1 day)

Water (2 days)

200 gp ring

42 gp

Scrolls:

- *See invisibility* (reveals invisible creatures or objects for 30 minutes)
- *Silence* (creates silence in a 20-foot radius for four minutes)
- *Grease* (makes 10-foot square or one object slippery for 4 rounds [Reflex DC 11 or fall])
- *Mage armor* (grants subject a +4 armor bonus for three hours)
- *Magic weapon* (weapon gains +1 bonus for four minutes)
- *Fireball* (deals 5d6 points of fire damage in a 20-foot radius [Reflex DC 14])

SPELLS

Cast 4/4/3 0-, 1st-, and 2nd-level spells per day, save DC 13 + spell level

0-Level Prepared

Detect Magic: Senses magic within 60 feet

Mage Hand: Moves one nonmagical object of up to 5 lbs.

Mending: Repairs one broken object

Read Magic: Reads magical writing

1st Level Prepared

Mage Armor: +4 AC bonus to creature touched

Magic Missile (2): Two missiles deal 1d4+1 damage

Sleep: Put 4 HD of creatures to sleep

2nd Level Prepared

Invisibility: Turn one creature or object invisible

Rope Trick: Rope rises up to 30 feet, creates extradimensional space for up to eight people

Scorching Ray: Ranged touch attack inflicts 4d6 points of fire damage

Spellbook: 0-Level— all; 1st—*burning hands*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*, *sleep*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*; 2nd—*daze monster*, *invisibility*, *rope trick*, *scorching ray*

Darian Longblade

HUMAN FIGHTER 4 (LAWFUL GOOD)

Strength 16 (+3)
Dexterity 12 (+1)
Constitution 14 (+2)
Intelligence 13 (+1)
Wisdom 10 (+0)
Charisma 8 (-1)

AC: 18 (touch 11, flat-footed 17)

hp: 36

Initiative: +5

Speed: 20 feet

SAVES

Fortitude +6

Reflex +2

Will +1

ATTACKS

Base Attack +4

Grapple +7

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
+1 greatsword	+9	2d6+7	19-20/x2
Longbow	+5	1d8	x3

Armor: +1 chainmail

FEATS

Weapon Focus (greatsword): +1 on attack rolls with greatsword.

Weapon Specialization (greatsword): +2 on damage rolls with greatsword.

Combat Expertise: Take penalty on attack rolls up to base attack bonus, add to AC.

Power Attack: Take penalty on attack rolls up to base attack bonus, add to damage.

Cleave: If you drop a foe, make an extra attack.

Improved Initiative: +4 bonus on initiative checks.

SKILLS

Climb +10

Intimidate +6

Jump +8

Knowledge (engineering) +4

Swim +6

POSSESSIONS

+1 greatsword

+1 chainmail

+1 amulet of natural armor

Longbow

Arrows (20)

Potion of cure moderate wounds (cure 2d8+4 points of damage)

Potion of spider climb (imbiber can walk on walls and ceilings for 30 minutes)

Torches (3)

Tindertwigs (4)

Backpack

Empty sacks (2)

200 gp gem

150 gp ring

14 gp

Food (1 day)

Water (2 days)

Grimbold the Ram

HUMAN BARBARIAN 4 (CHAOTIC NEUTRAL)

Strength 16 (+3)
Dexterity 12 (+1)
Constitution 14 (+2)
Intelligence 10 (+0)
Wisdom 12 (+1)
Charisma 10 (+0)

AC: 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 15)

hp: 42

Initiative: +1

Speed: 40 feet

SAVES

Fortitude +6

Reflex +2

Will +2

ATTACKS

Base Attack +4

Grapple +7

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
+1 <i>silvered greataxe</i>	+8	1d12+5	×3
+1 <i>javelin</i>	+6	1d6+4	×2
Javelin	+5	1d6+3	×2

Armor: +1 *chain shirt*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Trap Sense: +1 bonus on Reflex saves and to AC against traps.

Uncanny Dodge: Retain Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or struck by invisible opponents.

Illiterate: You cannot read.

Rage 2/day: +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC, lasts 7 rounds; fatigued after rage.

FEATS

Quick Draw: You can ready a weapon as a free action.

Power Attack: Take penalty on attack rolls up to base attack bonus, add to damage.

Improved Bull Rush: You don't provoke attacks of opportunity, gain +4 on Strength checks for bull rush.

SKILLS

Climb +10

Jump +10

Listen +8

Survival +8

POSSESSIONS

+1 *silvered greataxe*

+1 *javelin*

Javelins (2)

+1 *chain shirt*

Potion of barkskin (+2 to natural armor bonus)

Potions of cure light wounds (2) (cure 1d8+3 points of damage)

100 gp gem

Backpack

Torches (2)

Food (1 day)

Water (2 days)

Jarten Lightbearer

HUMAN PALADIN 4 (LAWFUL GOOD)

Strength	14 (+2)
Dexterity	8 (-1)
Constitution	12 (+1)
Intelligence	10 (+0)
Wisdom	13 (+1)
Charisma	16 (+3)

AC: 20 (touch 9, flat-footed 20)

hp: 32

Initiative: +3

Speed: 20 feet

SAVES

Fortitude +8

Reflex +3

Will +5

ATTACKS

Base Attack +4

Grapple +6

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Masterwork silvered longsword	+8	1d8+2	19-20/x2
Throwing axe	+3	1d6+2	x2

Armor: +1 full plate, heavy shield

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Detect Evil: Usable at will.

Smite Evil: 1/day, +3 on attack rolls and +4 damage (plus regular bonuses) on one attack against evil foe.

Lay on Hands: Heal a total of 12 points of damage per day.

Aura of Courage: Immune to fear, allies within 10 feet gain +4 morale bonus on saves against fear.

Turning: Turn undead as 1st-level cleric, six times per day.

FEATS

Power Attack: Take penalty on attack rolls up to base attack bonus, add to damage.

Weapon Focus (longsword): +1 on attack rolls with longsword.

Channel Divine Vengeance*: Spend a turning attempt, gain a ranged touch attack with a 100-foot range that inflicts 1d6+6 points of positive energy damage (lawful good creatures take half damage).

**Feat from the Book of Hallowed Might II*

SKILLS

Diplomacy +10

Knowledge (religion) +7

Sense Motive +8

POSSESSIONS

Masterwork silvered longsword

Throwing axes (3)

+1 full plate armor

Heavy shield

Candle of truth: Those in its light must make a Will save (DC 13) or tell the truth. The candle has a total of one hour of use left.

Potion of cure moderate wounds (cure 2d8+4 points of damage)

Potion of cure light wounds (cure 1d8+3 points of damage)

Potion of levitate (imbiber can float up and down for four minutes)

Backpack

300 gp amulet

100 gp gem

25 gp

Food (1 day)

Water (2 days)

SPELLS

Cast one 1st-level spell per day, save DC 14

1st Level

Bless Weapon: Weapon treated as magic and good against evil creatures' damage resistance, automatically confirms critical hits against evil creatures

Thar the Hammer

HALF-ORC CLERIC 3/BARBARIAN 1 (CHAOTIC GOOD)

Strength 18 (+4)
Dexterity 12 (+1)
Constitution 14 (+2)
Intelligence 9 (-1)
Wisdom 13 (+1)
Charisma 8 (-1)

AC: 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 15)
hp: 35
Initiative: +1
Speed: 40 feet

SAVES

Fortitude +7
 Reflex +2
 Will +4

ATTACKS

Base Attack +3
 Grapple +7

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Masterwork greatsword	+8	2d6+6	19-20/x2
Throwing hammer	+4	1d6+4	x2

Armor: +1 chain shirt

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Darkvision 60 feet
Luck Domain Ability: Once per day, reroll one die.
Strength Domain Ability: +3 bonus to Strength, 1/day for 1 round.
Turning: Turn undead 2/day.
Rage 2/day: +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC, lasts 7 rounds; fatigued after rage.

FEATS

Power Attack: Take penalty on attack rolls up to base attack bonus, add to damage.
Improved Sunder: +4 bonus on attack rolls to sunder, no attack of opportunity.

SKILLS

Heal +5
 Listen +5
 Spot +2

POSSESSIONS

Masterwork greatsword
 Throwing hammers (3)
 +1 chain shirt
 Pearl of power, 1st level (recast a 1st-level spell)
 Wand of cure light wounds (30 charges) (cure 1d8+3 points of damage)
 Necklace of fireballs (one 5d6 fireball, two 3d6 fireballs [DC 14])
 Potions of cure moderate wounds (2) (cure 2d8+4 points of damage)
 Potion of lesser restoration (dispels magical ability penalty or repairs 1d4 ability damage, but not ability drain)
 Flask of alchemist's fire (throw as a splash weapon to deal 1d6 points of fire damage, 1 point of splash damage, 1d6 points of fire damage to primary target in following round [Reflex DC 15 to extinguish]).
 Torches (2)
 Wooden holy symbol
 Backpack
 34 gp
 100 gp gem
 Food (1 day)
 Water (2 days)

SPELLS

Cast 4/4/2 0-, 1st-, and 2nd-level spells per day, save DC 11 + spell level

0-Level
Detect Magic (2): Senses magic within 60 feet
Mending: Repairs one broken object
Read Magic: Reads magical writing

1st Level
Bless: You and allies gain +1 on attack rolls and saves against fear
Comprehend Languages: Understand spoken and written languages
Divine Favor: +1 luck bonus on your attack and damage rolls
Summon Monster I: Summons one creature to fight for you

2nd Level
Hold Person: One humanoid creature becomes paralyzed
Remove Paralysis: Frees one creature from any temporary paralysis

Therren's Background

DO NOT ALLOW THE OTHER PLAYERS TO SEE THIS.

You are not who you seem to be. No one else knows this. You are actually a male human adventurer named Prester Young whose soul has been trapped within the Temple of Mysteries for some unknown amount of time. You have no idea how long it has been since your soul was trapped here, but you entered and took control of this new body just moments ago, as a bright light flashed.

The body you inhabit now is that of some other adventurer, somewhat unfamiliar to you, though you know the basics of that person's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Your own skills seem to have atrophied over time, and you no longer remember what they were. Perhaps that will soon change.

You have dim insight into the memories of the person whose body you inhabit, and you certainly bear that individual no ill will. The other adventurers here are almost certainly after the fabled treasures of this place, but mostly you would like to just get out. Perhaps you can find some magic that will rightfully restore your soul to your proper body and allow you to relinquish control over this one. If not, though, possession of this body might be your only chance to escape this place.

For the time being, it is probably best not to tell the other adventurers your secret. There's no telling how they might react to the news that you are not actually the person they think you are. Later on, you might be obliged to tell them, if the situation warrants it. You'll just have to make that judgment call on your own.

Aieron's Background

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Darian's Background

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Grimbold's Background

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Jarten's Background

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For the time being, it is probably best not to tell the other adventurers your secret. There's no telling how they might react to the news that you are not actually the person they think you are. Later on, you might be obliged to tell them, if the situation warrants it. You'll just have to make that judgment call on your own.

Thar's Background

DO NOT ALLOW THE OTHER PLAYERS TO SEE THIS.

You are not who you seem to be. No one else knows this. You are actually a male human adventurer named Prester Young whose soul has been trapped within the Temple of Mysteries for some unknown amount of time. You have no idea how long it has been since your soul was trapped here, but you entered and took control of this new body just moments ago, as a bright light flashed.

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For the time being, it is probably best not to tell the other adventurers your secret. There's no telling how they might react to the news that you are not actually the person they think you are. Later on, you might be obliged to tell them, if the situation warrants it. You'll just have to make that judgment call on your own.

“Darian Longblade”

DOPPELGANGER (NEUTRAL)

Strength 12 (+1) **Intelligence** 13 (+1)
Dexterity 13 (+1) **Wisdom** 14 (+2)
Constitution 12 (+1) **Charisma** 13 (+1)

AC: 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 19) **hp:** 36
Initiative: +1 **Speed:** 20 feet
Saves: Fortitude +4 Reflex +5 Will +6

ATTACKS

Base Attack +4 Grapple +5

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Slam	+5	1d6+1	N/A

Armor: +4 natural, +1 chainmail

When in your natural form, you strike with your powerful fists. In the guise of Darian (or another armed person), you attack with whatever weapon is appropriate. In such cases, you use your detect thoughts ability to employ the same tactics and strategies as the person you are impersonating.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Detect Thoughts (Su): Continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18th; Will save, DC 13, negates). You can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma based.

Change Shape (Su): You can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, you lose your natural attacks. You stay in a humanoid form until you choose to assume a new one.

Immune to sleep and charm effects

Darkvision 60 feet

FEATS

Dodge, Great Fortitude

SKILLS

Bluff +10*, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9* (+11 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

POSSESSIONS

You retain all of Darian’s possessions.

** When using your change shape ability, you get an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If you can read an opponent’s mind, you get a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.*

“Therren of Graydawn”

DOPPELGANGER (NEUTRAL)

Strength 12 (+1) **Intelligence** 13 (+1)
Dexterity 13 (+1) **Wisdom** 14 (+2)
Constitution 12 (+1) **Charisma** 13 (+1)

AC: 18 (touch 11, flat-footed 17) **hp:** 22
Initiative: +1 **Speed:** 30 feet
Saves: Fortitude +4 Reflex +5 Will +6

ATTACKS

Base Attack +4 Grapple +5

Weapon	Attack Bonus	Damage	Critical
Slam	+5	1d6+1	N/A

Armor: +4 natural, masterwork studded leather

When in your natural form, you strike with your powerful fists. In the guise of Therren (or some other armed person), you attack with whatever weapon is appropriate. In such cases, you use your detect thoughts ability to employ the same tactics and strategies as the person you are impersonating.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Detect Thoughts (Su): Continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18th; Will save, DC 13, negates). You can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma based.

Change Shape (Su): You can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, you lose your natural attacks. You stay in a humanoid form until you choose to assume a new one.

Immune to sleep and charm effects

Darkvision 60 feet

FEATS

Dodge, Great Fortitude

SKILLS

Bluff +10*, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9* (+11 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

POSSESSIONS

You retain all of Therren’s possessions.

** When using your change shape ability, you get an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If you can read an opponent’s mind, you get a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.*

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