

# PUZZLES, RIDDLES & TRAPS ...oh my!

By Patrick E. Pullen

Art by Patrick E. Pullen, Leonardo Da Vinci & Daniel F. Walthall

## PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION

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# Riddles

1. Worms and birds pass, but you may not,  
until you open my rusty lock.  
Once I'm free, I swing to and fro,  
yet nowhere do I ever go.

**Answer: A Gate**

2. Black as Pitch, White as Snow  
born in flame, at first I glow  
Without wings, I still fly  
until I land and finally die

**Answer: Ash**

3. I like to follow you around  
while going up and coming down  
If you run, then so do I  
until the sun falls from the sky

**Answer: Shadow**

4. Peasants capture knights and kings  
stealing all the hearts of queens  
Rest now bishop, caught by rook  
ebony and Ivory, by battle took

**Answer: A Game of Chess**

5. First is needed to make quotes you see,  
and often comes out when it's time for tea.

Second has distinction which is easily found,

bearing the symbol that love has bound.

Three should be longest but that can depend,  
never standing alone or it may offend.

Fourth is oft needed when giving directions,

and sometimes used while making selections.

Fifth is the shortest yet still has much say,

especially when signaling that all is ok.

**Answer: Fingers**

6. I never was, am always to be.  
No one ever saw me, nor ever will.  
And yet I am the confidence of all,  
To live and breathe on this terrestrial ball. What am I?

**Answer: Tomorrow/Future**

7. The one who makes it, sells it.  
The one who buys it, never uses  
it. The one that uses it never  
knows that he's using it. What is  
it?

**Answer: Coffin**

8. I cover cities and destroy  
mountains,  
I make men blind, yet help them  
see.

**Answer: Sand**

9. Iron roof, glass walls  
Burns and burns  
And never falls.

**Answer: Lantern**

10. It holds most knowledge that  
has ever been said;  
But is not the brain, is not the  
head.  
To feathers and their masters, 'tis  
both bane and boon. . .  
One empty, and one full.

**Answer: Paper**

11. I have rivers without water,  
Forests without trees,  
Mountains without rocks  
Towns without houses.

**Answer: A Map**

12. Two bodies have I,  
though both joined in one.  
The more still I stand,  
the quicker I run.

**Answer: An hourglass**

13. Double my number, I'm less  
than a score,  
Half of my number is less than  
four.  
Add one to my double when  
bakers are near,  
Days of the week are still greater, I  
fear.

**Answer: Six**

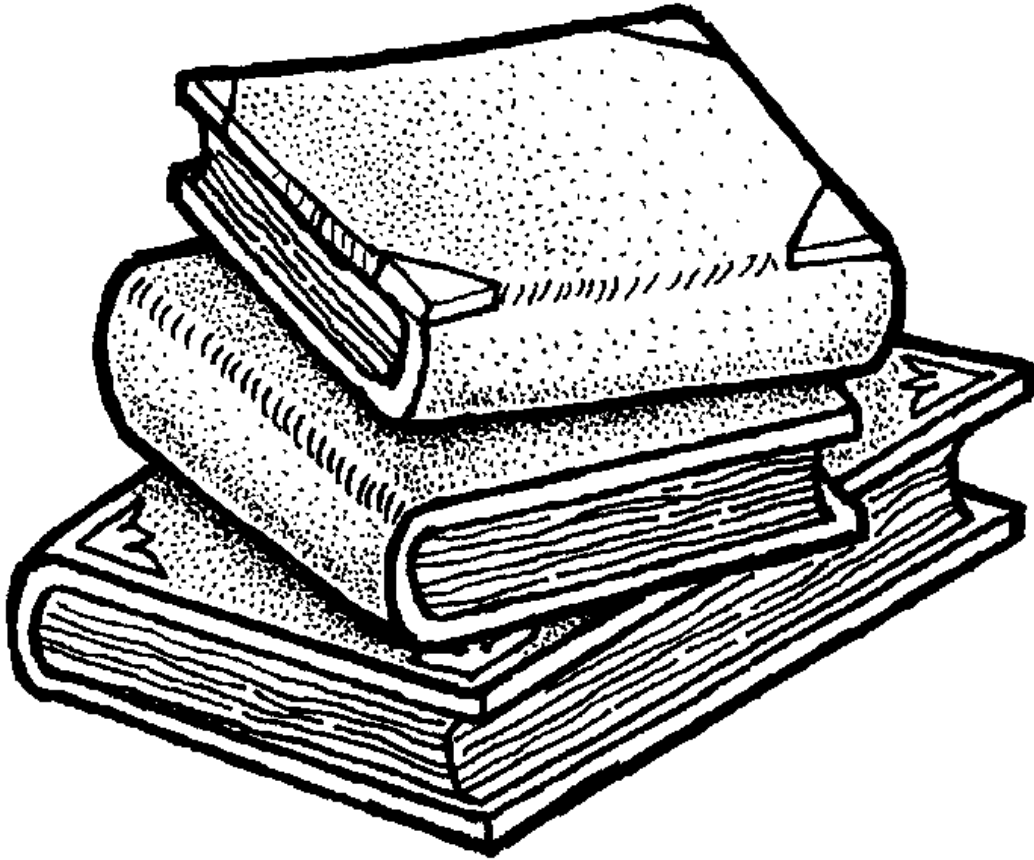
14. Two brothers we are, great  
burden we bear  
By which we are bitterly pressed.  
In truth we may say  
We are full all the day  
But empty we go to our rest.

**Answer: Shoes**

15. What runs around a city  
but never moves?

**Answer: A Wall**

# Puzzles



## The Book Puzzle

This is the book puzzle. Print the picture below and give it as a handout to your players to examine. When it is discovered that a bookshelf has a trigger to open a secret door, have the player investigating know that the books in the handout are all fake. They are all connected to levers that go into the wall behind the shelf. It is impossible to tell which are trapped and which one opens the secret door. The answer is in the titles of the books. By reading the first part of each book's title, you realize it makes a sentence that says: "Pull me to open the way." The book titled 'Me and You' opens the door and the others should be trapped as you see fit.

PULL  
YOUR  
ON  
WEIGHT

HOW TO BE PART OF A TEAM

Bill Moore

ME  
&  
YOU

Making better Relationships

Sandra  
Birdsinger

○  
TO  
THE  
FOREST  
&  
BEYOND



CORE RULE  
PUBLISHING

OPEN  
FLAMES



THE  
DANGERS  
OF FIRE  
SPELLS  
BY  
MASTER  
KELIEN

THE  
WAY  
TO  
CONFUSION

BY  
ABBY  
NORMAL

## The Forge Puzzle

The forge puzzle should be in a room of a dungeon with a forge in it. The note suggests that someone with great forging abilities is needed to solve the puzzle and there is an impression beneath the note which would lead one to believe that a specific dagger must be forged and placed in the mold. However, the forging is of the signature not the weapon. Anyone who forges the signature with the pen on the bottom of the note opens the secret door, finds the treasure etc. Make the ink an "everfull ink vial" that never dries or goes empty. That should come in as a useful bonus treasure for your players.

## The Stone Hand

This puzzle contains a riddle to solve. The players come to a wall made of stone or metal and it has an open hand, palm upward, carved or forged into it. Have an inscription on the wall or have a magic mouth read the riddle. If the proper item is placed in the hand, it closes and melds into the wall. The wall then opens into a doorway allowing passage or unveiling a hidden treasure. If the wrong object is placed in the palm, you can have a trap go off instead of the door opening.

The Riddle:

Lost for centuries underground  
You'll rejoice once I am found  
Once I'm in the light of day  
I spread my light in every way  
Hard as stone, yet clear as ice  
I will not yield without a price  
Place an item in my hand  
And receive that which you demand

**Answer: A diamond**

## **The Blood Door**

Similar to the Stone Hand Puzzle above, the door can only be opened with the right thing placed into a container. In this case it is blood. Once the blood is poured into the receptacle, the door opens. It requires 1 HP worth of blood from exactly 2 PCs to work.

The Riddle:

Sacrifice by own consent

From two, must be spent

Fill from that which courses heart

Then on your journey you may start

## **The Broken Riddle Door**

This is more of an amusing role-playing situation, than an actual puzzle, but it offers some fun role-play, if your group is into such encounters. The PCs have come to a blocked passage and need to answer a riddle to proceed. A magic mouth spell activates as the PCs begin to search a wall for secret doors. The magic is old and in need of a replacement. The mouth just starts spitting out gibberish. After about a minute of this a gnome comes out of a small secret door and starts to kick at the wall, mumbling about how he doesn't get payed enough, the stupid spell never works right, if it were more than just him, he would start a union... etc. This makes for a nice tension breaker in a long dungeon crawl and adds a bit of comedy relief.

## **The Coded Language Puzzle**

This could be a letter or clue that someone has made and used a bunch of made up symbols that replace the real letters of the alphabet. You will need to make a legend for yourself to show what letter each symbol stands for then write out what you want while substituting the real letters for the symbols from the legend. To make this easier for your players, make sure the code has a few of the following words, which will make it easier to decipher: “and” “the” “A” “If” Once your players have a few of the symbols figured out, it will become easier and easier to solve.

## **The Infinite Hourglass Puzzle**

After the heroes enter this puzzle chamber, all exits are cut off, leaving no way out. In the center of the room is an hourglass attached to a lever and pulley mechanism. It flips over and a magical voice begins to count down from 20. If the PCs examine the hourglass, they find that it can easily be flipped. Flipping the hourglass resets the voice to start counting down from 20 again. The puzzle is solved and the doors open if the counting gets to zero. This is a nice little trick that will keep your players guessing and searching the room while one of them continually flips the hourglass prolonging their escape. If you want to be really cruel, throw in a monster or have the room start filling up with water.

## **The Sighting Stones**

This puzzle takes place in a graveyard with a few burial mounds. The heroes have been informed that all but one is full of deadly traps and monsters. One however, has a great treasure. As they enter the burial ground, inform them that they see 3 strange stone structures several yards out from the mounds and show them the following handout. By lining the sighting stones up, the players get a straight view through the holes to the correct burial mound. Once they figure this out show them the second handout.







## The Combination Puzzle

This puzzle is a play on words. The players need a certain combination to open a door, chest or something similar and they come to this riddle on the wall. By reading the words that can also be numbers, you'll get the combination which is: 8,2,4,2. A wrong combination releases a bolt of lightning.

THIS MAY BE A SHOCK BUT THE COMBINATION IS IN THE RIDDLE BELOW

I AM TOO MUCH

DON'T YOU KNOW

NOW I SUFFER

FOR THE CHANCE TO GO

# Traps

## **The Cursed Fountain**

The cursed fountain trap works best on a fountain but can be adapted to a statue or something similar. The fountain should have writing or a magic mouth which tells the players by drinking they will receive a gift from (place obscure evil deity name here.) If the players make the catch that it is evil or roll a good DC on their knowledge; religion check, they should know better than to drink from the fountain. If a player drinks, have them lose a point from a random stat. whether it is temporary or permanent is up to you as the DM to decide. You can also come up with some other curse if you feel it is more appropriate to your story. Suggestions; noticeable disfigurement, alignment change, polymorph into an animal, negatives or disadvantage to certain roll, etc.

## **The Downward Spiral**

This trap involves a long spiral stair case that is only connected to a large, inner stone wall/pillar and has a large open gap on the outer side which drops down a hundred feet. The players should encounter the stairs from the top and have to make their way down. Once the adventurers have made it around the curve of the first spiral, there should be a pressure plate or series of plates. When the pressure plates are activated, random stones slide outward pushing the characters off of the stairs into the open pit below. Roll a d4, d6 or d8 (depending on the number of PCs/NPCs you have going down the stairs) to decide which character is possibly struck by the sliding stones. Use marching order to decide what number is assigned to which player. If you roll a number without a player assigned to it, nobody is struck by the block. A dexterity; acrobatics save keeps the character from falling. (You can set the DC to whatever you feel is appropriate for your group's level.) A falling character takes the appropriate amount of falling damage. Feeling particularly evil? Just add some spikes or lava at the bottom.

## **Jacob's Ladder**

A Jacob's ladder is a rope ladder with wooden rungs tied into the ropes. This trap refers to one that is laid horizontal over an expanse with something dangerous below. You can have the ladder as long as you see fit. You may place whatever wickedness you wish below the ladder; a spiked pit, pool of hungry piranha, lava, slimes, acid etc. The ladder has only one rope connecting it to a solid foundation on each end of the expanse. This makes the ladder very unstable and extremely hard to maneuver. The climb DC should be at least 15 for a short ladder and more around DC 20 or higher for one longer than 10 or 15 feet. If the player fails by less than 5, you can say he is unable to advance but doesn't fall. Anything more than 5 they fall. If you are feeling generous, you may allow a save to grab the ladder instead of falling. A simple solution is to use the ladder as if they were monkey bars. Drop the climb DC by a few points if a player comes up with this idea.

## **Split the Party Trap**

Rule number 1: NEVER split the party... unless the DM decides to throw this fun little trap at them. A pressure plate or True Seeing trigger sets off a mechanism that happens to be holding up a huge stone above the other side of a doorway or opening. Once a player carelessly crosses the threshold into the area beyond, they step on the plate or enter the magic's area of effect which triggers the stone to fall. This effectively blocks the doorway from both sides. Anyone inside is cut off from anyone who has yet to enter the doorway. If someone is directly under the block have them make an athletics or acrobatics save. If they make it, let them choose which side they jump to safety. If they fail make sure to roll up the appropriate damage and you can have them pushed randomly to one side or the other or have them pinned beneath the stone.

### **Gelatinous Cube Pit Trap**

This is a particularly nasty trap. It can work in one of two ways. It involves a normal pit trap 20 to 50 feet deep should do. At the bottom of the pit is a trapped gelatinous cube. When the careless adventurer falls into the pit he lands in the cube. The good side of this is that the cube breaks the fall. The bad side; the character is automatically engulfed. The second way the trap can work, is to have the character fall into the pit, take the appropriate damage and then have a second trap door above the pit open and drop the cube in on top of the victim. Have the player roll an acrobatics save to avoid falling into the pit.

### **Acid Lock Trap**

This trap is usually placed in a door or chest lock. When a thief fails his roll to pick the lock by 5 or more, he punctures a bladder containing a very small amount of potent acid. Instead of doing harm to the thief, it melts the pick and the locking mechanism together which makes picking the lock impossible from that point on. Call on the fighter to bash it down.

### **Exploding Brazier Trap**

This trap is placed in a large dark room. It is a simple brazier that can be lit as a source of light for characters that don't have dark vision. The brazier is full of an extremely explosive chemical or liquid which ignites if lit. The result is a fireball-like effect. Allow for a Dexterity; Acrobatics save for half damage.

## **Vorpal Blade Trap**

This is a VERY nasty trap. It is similar to a normal blade trap, where a blade swings out from a wall, but with one major difference. The blade is actually a magic Vorpal sword. When activated, make an attack roll for the blade as if the attack was being made by a fighter of an appropriate level to your party. If a natural 20 is rolled, the victim loses his head. Typically, players without heads can't do much on their turn other than place large amounts of blood on the walls and floor. As a bonus, you can allow the players to retrieve the sword as a treasure after it decapitates their buddy.

## **Stay on the Path; Maze**

The players enter a maze to discover letters in dwarven or elven at each junction or crossing. You can use the languages and alphabets for other races which can be found in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition DMG. The adventurers must decipher the runes to follow the correct path out of the maze safely. If they follow the wrong set of runes, they will become lost or set off a nasty trap. For this to work, place an inscription on a wall or in a scroll somewhere in the dungeon prior to the maze. It could simply be a word or a name written in elven or dwarven. When they find it they will have no idea what it means. Once they see the individual elven or dwarven script in the maze, they should figure out that they can safely pass the right way by spelling out the word or name they found earlier.

## **Break the Circle Trap**

This trap requires a demon to be trapped inside of a circle of protection made in salt. A door that opens into the room has a broom head attached to the bottom, which can't be seen from outside. When the door is opened, the broom bristles sweep some of the salt aside, which frees the captive demon from the circle of protection. It immediately attacks.

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Patrick E. Pullen

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