

Level: For Heroic characters. Puzzle Solvers. Strong of will.

Setting: Anywhere in the kingdom that is moderately settled and a relatively dry and more arid, but not desert, area

Location Within 50miles of a size 2 city, perhaps near coastal, Valmorgan for example or a relatively dry and more arid, but not desert, area. GRID:

Synopsis. A ghostly sphinx approaches the party saying the sanctity of his lair has been disturbed and his soul awakened as this ghostly form. A group of foul creatures are despoiling his hidden temple and place of eternity.

He begs them to be destroyed before they break into the depths of his lair, overcome riddles that guard him and they truly disturb his body. He offers (up to) $\frac{3}{7}$ ths of his treasure as reward?

Party must overcome the motley band of interlopers, lead by an Oculus, solve three riddles, and resist the temptation to steal more than they are allowed.

Background Versimex is a long dead, but once very mighty Sphinx. Perished millennia ago, and all the upheaval and war and settlement has simply passed him by, in his very hidden and secret temple. Before the six winter war he was the most trusted cohort of Helios, the diety of sun and fire. Indeed as the deities placed their will upon the world it was Versimex, who took four of the fragile human race, new to the world, and empowered them with the heat and fury of Helios's might, and formed the first Solaris, mace wielders of great prowess and adepts of fire. He died before all the turmoil at the grand age of 860, and had a peaceful death. It is said the 'sun god' granted that a feather, a strand from his mane and one claw be taken to make powerful artefacts.

TERMS

Standard terms in the book. Plus:

GSS is a 'good skill success' with a skill roll, when 15% or less of the Base Chance is rolled, rather akin to an endurance strike in combat or double effect spell.

ESS is an 'extraordinary skill success' with a skill roll, when 5% or less of the Base Chance is rolled, rather akin to a grievous strike in combat or triple effect spell.

It stands to reason that rolling an ESR is greater effect than rolling a GSR.

1 Introduction

Another day of grand adventure and profit hasn't quite materialised. While following up on a lead to find a(nother) part of Brashnards sphere of ultimate power* (see many previous DQMAJ Adventures and Encounters) you find yourself on the edge of a dry arid plain, not too far from the coast-line, or so you think. You are not exactly lost, you just don't know where you are!! It is early morning, and your thinking of heading back to civilisation, if you can retrace your steps.

Suddenly the air all around starts to drop rapidly in temperature, the dust of the ground swirls and the landscape looks obscured and hazy (*in a 120ft area where the ghost is manifesting*). *Need WP+END % to avoid feeling disorientated and not quite oneself (at -15% to all activity for 1 pulse/10% fail).*

As the 'weirdness ends' and reality kicks back in you see before you an amazing site. A great golden lion hovers in the air above you, well a great golden lion with huge wings spread out (about equiv to a 7 hex (body) beast with wings extended 3 more hexes from this), oh yeah and a kindly wizened old human face, and, well, you can sort of see through its translucent 'material body'

It is a sphinx, quite dead, and very much a ghost. It does know it is dead, and thinks it is a ghost, and knows why it is in its current state. It has been dead for some 1100 years, dying at the grand age of 860. This was long before the Six- Winters war, before the time of demons in the land, and the terrible creations the troubles brought with them. It knows not what has happened to the world, and until just 3 days ago, had indeed been as dead as any other long dead creature.

"I am Versimex the golden, sphinx and former companion to Helios, goddess of the sun and fire, and founder of the Solaris. Well I was, now I mostly appear to be dead, well, maybe undead, a ghost wouldn't you say. Erm, what day is it? Or date in fact, the world feels very wrong. Amazing how things seem to have changed in the what, decades, since I died?"

Will be quite surprised to have been dead so long?

"Has it been so long, why am I not a settled and distant memory? Arдания in ruination, foul creatures upon the land, the gods at war, or rather, were.... Oh yes, my tomb has been violated by a fiend of a terrible nature, but surely if I had been dead so long I am way passed any time of being disturbed, this is quite disturbing, well you know what I mean".

"Hmm, maybe I was meant to be awakened, maybe I was meant to find you, maybe you are meant to enter and cleanse my tomb, maybe you are meant to have something buried with me, maybe Helios has deemed it this way??"

Anyway, it seems you are fated to enter my tomb, destroy what has disturbed me, and then follow the riddle path to where my body lays, there we will meet again and you shall have what is coming to you, reach my tomb before the accursed Lunord rises in the sky"...and he fades.....

Where to go?! Anyone who can make an MA x 5*, can see a barely visible ghostly-magical-fiery path to follow for about D+6 miles, over the fairly arid landscape, *not quite desert*. A GSR or better on this* impacts the pathway deep within the mind so it cannot be lost.

If the party refuse to aid they suffer the curse of the moon, cast upon them for a month. The minute the sun fades over the horizon they must save versus a rank 8 entity magic based curse (at a -20% MR penalty) or fall into a coma from which they cannot awake until the sun rises again.

2 Finding The Unfindable

Any spell or skill to find tomb normally would be at a -25% penalty (-40% at night) due its ancient and mystical nature. The fire path makes it easy to find but even this will fade as the moon rises...

Nestled in a series of small knolls and ridges, the fire path leads gently down into what look like a crater (*caused by a fiery meteor of Helios in millennia past*). It is sparsely grassed for the most part. The crater is about 80 feet at it deepest. At the deepest point in the 300ft radius crater is an entry down. A large stone slab seems to have been cast to one side. A few mules, a small cart and 4 humanoid figures mill about here. A couple of tents, and a small, near smokeless, campfire are present. Three of the humanoids are as tall as a dwarf but not as stocky, the other is akin to a sturdy man-size. They all wear hoods, leather armours and are armed with axes and bows, of one size and another. The cart seems to be used as target practise.

3 Unwelcome Guests

Hobgoblin and 3 goblin warriors, near the entry to the tomb. They are by now getting a little bored.

If captured / questioned they may talk if coerced by whatever means. They say a great floating eye tyrant has lead them here. Apparently great riches dwell within. A flying lion ghost dwells here, but it seems unable to harm us. A human, who gives you a right chill just by being near him, and a viscous elf, who calls himself Assay, have gone down with the great floating eye. Some kind a shaft and passages and some riddles to overcome.

Lots of climbing and mining gear, around 200sp and 7 gs can be found with 15 minutes search of the camp. D5+1 black hoarhound in a bag also, as well as a good amount of salted meats and rum.

4 Entry

30 Foot by 12 feet radius decent down. (Climb +10%). The rock surfaces are fairly smooth sandstones and a light dusty orange in colour. They are fairly warm to the touch, but not uncomfortably so.

Then a large ledge with an arch saying those who disturb the sleep of Versimex the golden will join the burning dead.

Beyond this 30feet square flat area is another shaft. Very smooth and drops down about 120 feet. Looks very tricky to climb (need either magic, like the villains used, or the climbing gear).

Hastily put something together makes climb the -15%.

Slowly construct, and put in pitons etc makes it +0% climb down chute.

The chute ends at the top of some elaborate steps. A burnt out torch is on a sconce nearby, less than a day cold.

The steps have an eerie feel to them and anyone decending the thirty three steps needs to roll under WPx5 or face a roll on the fright table (at -5%).

The elf ahead made it ok, as did the Oculus, but the shapechanger rolled a 37 in total on the fright table.

Beyond the steps can see light at the end of a 60ft tunnel. On A PCx3 can hear whispered conversation in (*language of night and shadow practised by celestials*). 3 separate important facts amongst the chatter, 1 PC x3 roll for each....

- Worries over the eyes true intent,
- Balance as to whether the risk is too high for the gain,
- Whether we too should just cut and run and leave the others too it...

5 Riddle Path 1

At the end of the 60ft tunnel see an pyramid shaped room, with elaborate stone flooring cut into a strangely cut room, circles with black and white shading. The dusty orange colour of the rocks of the decent tube has been replaced by a deeper grey-orange colour that seems less crumbly, and perhaps slightly warmer to the touch.

The elf celestial and the shapechanger may be in various sates of preparedness dependent on if they heard the parties approach....

They will not fight to the death and the other will surrender if he ally falls. Will explain all without coercion and indeed will perhaps ask an alliance against the Oculus.

Premise Stone plates / phases of the moon / a trick as Lunord is Helios rival. If follow path summons one 'burning dead' for each incorrect stone. If at any point you stand on a correct phase of the moon a burning dead appears in a random hex next to you. Obviously people rushing into help may summon more.

They are 7 phases of the moon, staring with the new, that is fully dark. See red line on map. Following the red line summons the dead, leaping on an incorrect stone or any order that doesn't touch the correct stones, flying, levitating, teleporting over etc are all the safe route, as they pay no homage to the phases of the moon or Lunord.

The Oculus flew over this so was unaffected. The rest of the group are in here, somewhat unsure.

As soon as someone safely navigates the riddle and climbs the stairs the Oculus may hear and begin its assault.

6 The Evil Eye

Showdown with the Oculus. It will initially fight a withdrawal action back down the corridor, where he can keep all three eyes focused front and lay down 'fire' in a narrow confine, making it tricky for the party to melee him. If he is loosing a ranged combat, he will rapidly go back to riddle room 2 and try to ambush the first PC in and then concentrate on taking the rest down / incapacitate and flee away if possible. Like all 'monsters' of the time of the ruin of Arдания it is in his nature to hate all the civil races, and most other humanoids, so may well be angered enough to fight to the death. He has little trust for the elf and the shape-changer, and if this mission where successful he would urge the goblinoids to join him and slay the other two.

7 Riddle Path 2

Small pyramid shaped room, with no exit. On a stone slab in front of you is carved a pyramid like shape about 4 feet at its widest.. In a pile next to it are some stone chits, each nearly a foot long by six inches high, and an inch deep. *Made of very strong rock*

indeed, baked in the fires of “Helios’ great kiln”. Each has a hieroglyphic like symbol on it. Their value would be 150sp to the right dealer.

They are Hand, Bone, Animal, Moon, Sun, Mind, Blood.
Almost anyone can see they represent the 7 major deities of Arдания

Premise *Test on the pantheon. Pyramid of three sections. See map and handouts.*

Fit 1 picture in top, 2 side by side in next, 3, then 1 below in last.

Pictures in them, that any can recognise are associated with the gods as follows.

Sun--Mind, Hand, -- Bone, Blood, Animal+Moon

Helios, --Dauros, Agrela, --Krypta, Krolm, Fervus + Lunord.

Helios favour Dauros and Agrela, is impartial to all the others except, Lunord whom she distrusts intently.

Fail struck by a bolt of fire cast at 9th if utter mess and insult, or 6th or 3rd dependent on how bad. Cast out of top of room, at the pyramidal point, as by a MA 25 adept (+10% cc+40% base+3 per rank).

If placed correctly the bolt of fire instead burns away an area of wall to reveal an unlock stone door.

8 The Stairway Up

Very steep and draining, hot and dry, to walk up, but not fly. Anyone walking to the top must make an a roll versus BC of (ENDx2+WP) or loose all fatigue. *Protect versus fire adds +3% to the BC per rank, protect versus magical fire adds +6% per rank. Not cumulative*

9 Riddle Path 3 (place of power regard spell casting costs)

Enters a large pyramidal shaped room. The wall colour has returned to dusty orange. The middle third of the room has a squared area carved with letters. In front of this is a raised slab, carved with serpents. A large rock seems to have fallen from the roof and obscured some of the writing on this slab.

BC (Roll V PCx4, add in bonus for dwarf, and mechanic and ranger of 5/rank) roof looks very fragile. (if get a GSR or better roll it isn't really unsafe, it has been made to look that way).

Premise: Word search fake clues. DRAGOS is answer. Forked tongue etc. Step on wrong one are teleported into a pit below where night-gaunt is summoned in from main chamber 2 pulses later, max of 7. If the creature is defeated, teleported back into riddle room 2.

The slab has a number of lines off text, either side of that obscured and broken up by the fallen rock. In the form of some kind of riddle/poem.....

First is in Krolms, and also in self,
 Second is in forest, and also in elf.
next line wrecked...
next line wrecked...
next line wrecked...
next line wrecked...
next line wrecked...
en all is said and done
eaks with a forked tongue.

i.e the whole clue is a lie (indeed there is no writing on the plate covered by the fallen rock, and as 'serpents' have forked tongues so dragons is the answer...plus who in their right mind would have set of honest clues mentioning Krolm The Dirty!!

Floor of letters, 5 wide by 7 long (each is a 5x5 square)

S	D	M	A	F	L
F	E	R	L	O	T
B	A	S	T	E	M
E	G	G	H	U	E
W	I	D	O	S	M
R	E	N	E	G	E
D	I	S	P	E	L

See map for lettering on the squared floor. If crossed correctly a door appears, with a stairway beyond.

10 The Sphinxes Tomb

In the centre of this modest tomb is a large desiccated and dried body of the sphinx. It rests on a stone slab. In a circle around it are 7 moderately sized burning fires. The ghosly visage of a female appears, in a red and white and brown robe, long tied back hair, skin boots and a great 2 handed mace. *This is a Solaris of Helios, ancient warriors from the great days of Arдания. She will thank them from cleansing the tomb, and says that Versimax's soul has attained the inner fire of peace and has soared now in the sun lords care....She will also explain the treasure/rewards principal below.*

If the party are greedy she will be as a spectre, with rank 6 in giant mace, and rank 6 in all spells of the college of fire and MA of 21, and as though fully purified, like in the ritual of the same name.

If had to fight a night-gaunt its treasure is not chooseable as a reward.

If therefore had to fight more than 4 of the creatures you will not in fact gain $\frac{3}{7}$ th of its treasure.

Otherwise there are 7 piles of treasure, mostly obscured by 7 magical fires. The party can take 3 lots.

In each fire a minor harmless fire elemental will tell of the servant and items they wielded (but not specific stats on the items). *Anybody who is a merchant specialist on ancient artefacts or has lore, ancient stories with an ESR can remember info on any particular servants gear and exploits:*

11 Treasure Of The 7 Servants

- *“Pyros. wizened advisor and adept of fire. Staff and robe and ruby ring”*. Staff has 5 charges of rank 5 ball of fire, Robe adds +2 to AP if not worn over armour, ring adds +1 to MA and PC.
- *“Helena Blazeblow. Solaris squire. Heavy Mace and Mail and copper helm”*. Magic giant mace requires only 21 STR to wield it, albeit two handed, her mail is 33% lighter than normal, copper helm adds +10% to break stun.
- *“Sythus The archer. Elf, leather and longbow, in boots of dark crimson”*. Leather adds +5% to MR versus all elements except fire, longbow adds +1 ranks to skill and all arrows fired from it can be as flame if required (and in fact the equivalent of a rank 10 pyrogenesis spell), boots add +15% to stealth.
- *“Volcan Tar. Speaker of the Solaris. Brass ring, gilded mace, fire opal ring”*. Brass ring adds +3 to PC. Gilded mace adds +4% for quality and magically does +2 extra damage against undead and air/water adepts, and associated monsters/devils/demons etc.
- *“Canthus. Hound of fire and companion. Bronze tooth, ruby and iron collar”*. Bronze tooth if inserted into a beasts mouth magically attaches until death and gives the creature the ability to bit with a ‘magic’ attack. Iron collar adds +1AP magically to a creatures NA. Ruby adds +1 rank to a wearers unarmed (fist, bite, etc) attack.
- *“Soarbeam. Phoenix and messenger. Amulet of Blood, scarlet silk scarf”*. Amulet allows healing at a rate equivalent to having 21END and stops all bleeding (after the first D5-1 pulses of bleeding).
- *“Rimfire Sunbreeze. Solaris squire. Light mace and Mail and small bronze shield”*. Mace adds +2 ranks skill, weighs 50% of a normal mace, and requires the wielder to have 12 PS and 14 MD. Mail is 25% light. Her bronze shield adds +5% to def when wielded by someone with rank 0 or higher.

Also, all:

- Fire adept—gets ring +3% to all general fire spells
- Fire adept of Helios—gets ring +3% to all spells and rituals.
- Everyone also gets 25 golden coins (Helios engraved, weigh 1.5 times weight normal coin. Very pure and worth up to 3gs each to the right buyer). Can be used for making gilded arms and armour. It is not offensive to melt them down in a fiery furnace.

12 Epilogue

13 Stats

Oculus, Nexus Visions

WP (28), MA(21) and PC (24).

Str (12), Ag (10), and MD (12)

Moderate END (15) and FAT (22). Heavy scales give NA of 5.

TMR 3 flying, always hovers even if stunned.

Magic resistance is 28% plus 15% versus Thaum and Entity

1 Ray 'weakens', SC 67% (act as though have half strength, Allowed passive Magic Resistance v thaum magic, lasts 1 pulse per 10 points failed)

1 Ray 'paralyzes', SC 62% (2xWP, paralysis for 1 pulse per each 10 points failed).

1 Ray 'harms entity', SC 52% ((D-4)+3. Allowed passive Magic Resistance v entity magic).

3 Hex monster (8ft radius with 8, 6 feet tentacles).

Can use all three eye rays each round. Have 12 hex base range, max of 5 times this.

It has a rank 0 weak bite in close combat as last resort (40%, for D damage).

For other purpose the tentacles have a STR of 8 each only, 3 can combine to give an effective PS of 12.

Shapechanger (snake). *Lucien Coldwell*

ranger (wastes/3)/ spy (/5).

Uses a +3% quality Estoc/5, buckler/4. Potion heals 7 fatigue, alchemical. Ring of +2% elemental spell resistance. Ring of silver and opal worth 220sp. 7gs, 13sp.

Elf, *Alian Smote-ream*. (shadow-celestial adept),
 Quarterstaff, , has 2 invested star-fires in, rank 3 (78%). 15% light leather armour,
 cloak of +10% stealth. Potion heals 7 fatigue, alchemical. 11gs, 4 sp,

Dragon Quest										PRIMARY CHARACTERISTICS					FATE:					
										PS	MD	AG	MA	WP	EN					
										12	16	15	18	20	15	15				
CHARACTER NAME: ALIAN SMOTE-REAM										PC	TMR	PB	DEF	FT						
RACE: Elf										9	6	15	15	22						
SEX: M																				
ASPECT:																				
STATUS:																				
BIRTH:																				
HAND:																				
RANK	WEAPON	WGT	BASE %	IV	SC	DM	CL	RG	USE	ARMOR	STH	WGT	PRO	AG-						
3	Quarterstaff	3.00	55	###	27	83	+2	C	P	M	Leather	0	13	4	-1					
										###										
										###										
										###										
COLLEGE: CELESTIAL (SHADOW) MAGIC										MAGIC RESISTANCE: 11					Initiative Base 24					
										STUNNED ON 5										
SKILLS		ABILITY		EFFECT		RK		%		POSSESSIONS		WEIGHT								
Climbing				If surface has hand/foot holds add +4%/rnk		0		48												
Horsemanship						0		13												
Stealth						1		70		Quarterstaff		3.00								
Merchant						4				COPPER FARTHINGS(x0.25)										
Speak Language						8				SILVER PENNIES(x1)										
Read/Write Language						8				GOLD SHILLINGS(x12)										
Read/Write Language						7				TRUESILVER GUINEAS(x252)										
Read/Write Language						7														
Speak Language						8														
Merchant		Req:		Must read and write in 3 languages above rank 6 to be able to assay items																
Discount on common items		20%		May specialize in 1 categories																
Discount on uncommon items		8%																		
Discount on rare items		4% Add		8		to all dealings with Precious Metals														
Raise price of uncommon item by		6% Add		8		to all dealings with None														
Raise price of rare items by		2% Add		8		to all dealings with None														
Assay a common item		57%		and takes		7		minutes to complete												
Assay a uncommon item		45%		If a miss roll is even, then the told price																
Assay a rare item		33%		will be to high , if the roll is odd, the price																
Total transactions may not exceed		1050 sp per month, all other transactions must be done so normally																		
Code	Name	Effect	Rk	Range	Duration	ExpX	Base%	Main %	Resist											
CS	CS, , G	feet and mins	0	25	10	100	40	45	P											
CS	CS, , Sp	feet and mins	0	25	10	200	40	45	P											
GR	rit purification	dur =5+r x time spent	4	---	---	200	---	---	N											
GR	rit investment		4	---	---	300	20	32	N											
GR	rit warding		0	---	---	400	20	20	N											
T-1	Speak to Shadow Cre	feet and (C)	4	50	(C)	50		---	N											
T-2	Night Vision		4	---	---	100		---	N											
T-3	Detect Aura	- 1% per 5 foot away	5			75	9	34	N											
G-1	Blending	self and hours	4	---	5	50	60	77	N											
G-2	Light	feet and minutes	0	15	15	75	50	55	N											
G-3	Darkness	feet and minutes	4	75	75	75	50	67	N											
G-4	Shadowform	feet and minutes	0	15	30	150	10	15	N											
G-5	Wall Of Starlight	feet and minutes	0	15	10	150	15	20	N											
G-6	Wall Of Darkness	feet and minutes	0	15	10	100	20	25	N											
G-7	Witch-Sight	feet and minutes	0	15	30	150	15	20	N											
G-9	Walk Unseen	feet and hours	4	5	5	100	50	67	N											
Q-1	Reading The Stars	1 hour	4	---	---	150	20	36	N											
Q-2	Sum /Bind Shadow Cr	(C)	0	---	---	200	20	20	N											
S-1	Healing	Self and Immediate	2	---	---	200	40	51	N											
S-3	Star-Fire	Feet and Immediate	3	75	---	200	35	49	A&P											
S-5	Shadow Wings	feet and minutes	4	50	150	250	25	42	N											

Hobgoblin, *Mallis*.

military scientist/3, longbow/4. 6 silver arrows, 5 arrows of -20% range but +1D, 11 normal arrows, longbow of yew at +6% quality. Chain-mail. *Wastes herbs?* 22sp, 2 gs.

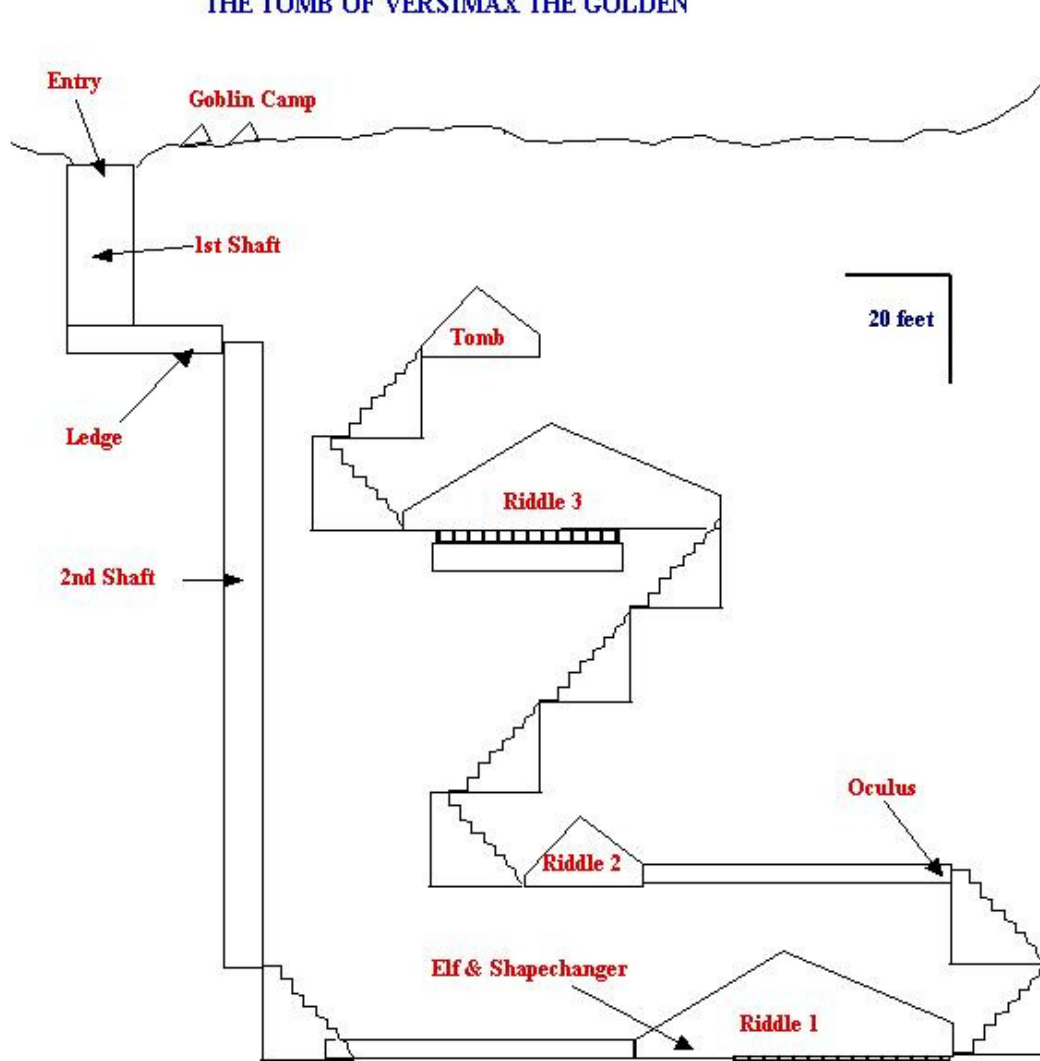
Goblin warriors (3). *Render, Loose-tongue, Feralclaw*

Stealth/2, shortsword/4, small shield/3. Leather armour, small shields of +1 rank. Sling and 13 bullets each. Have D+5sp each and 1 gs.

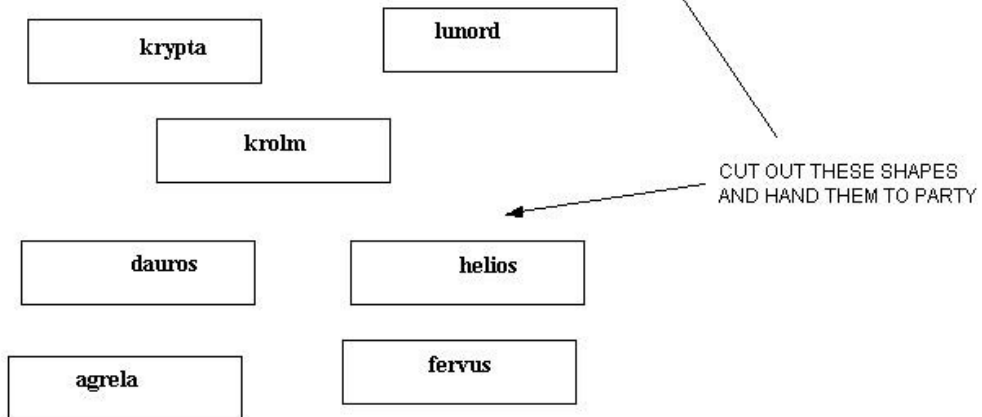
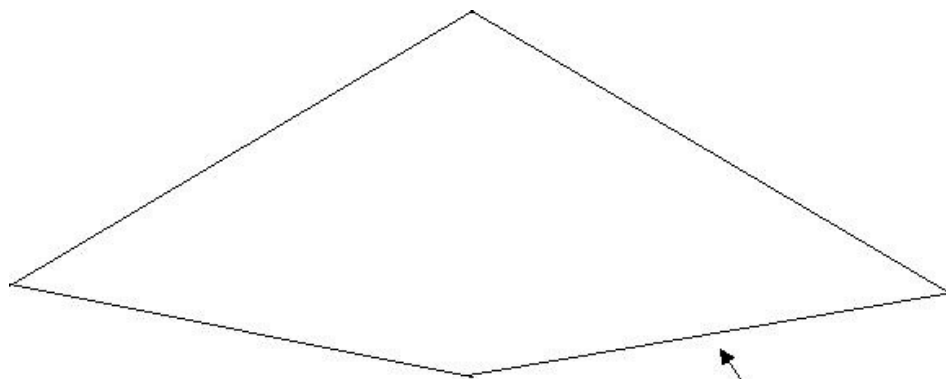
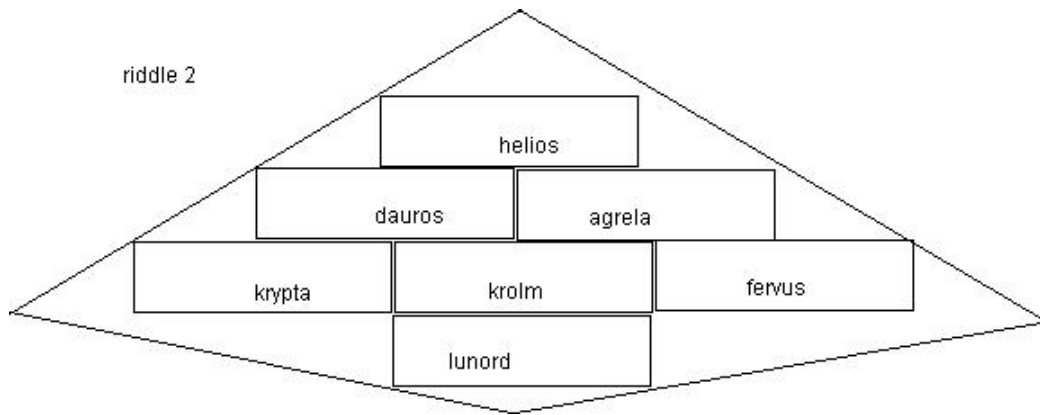
The Burning dead (rank 5 skeletons with fire weapons, +12% to hit, and +2 damage, they add +12% to their fire magic resistance and have extra 2AP versus fire)

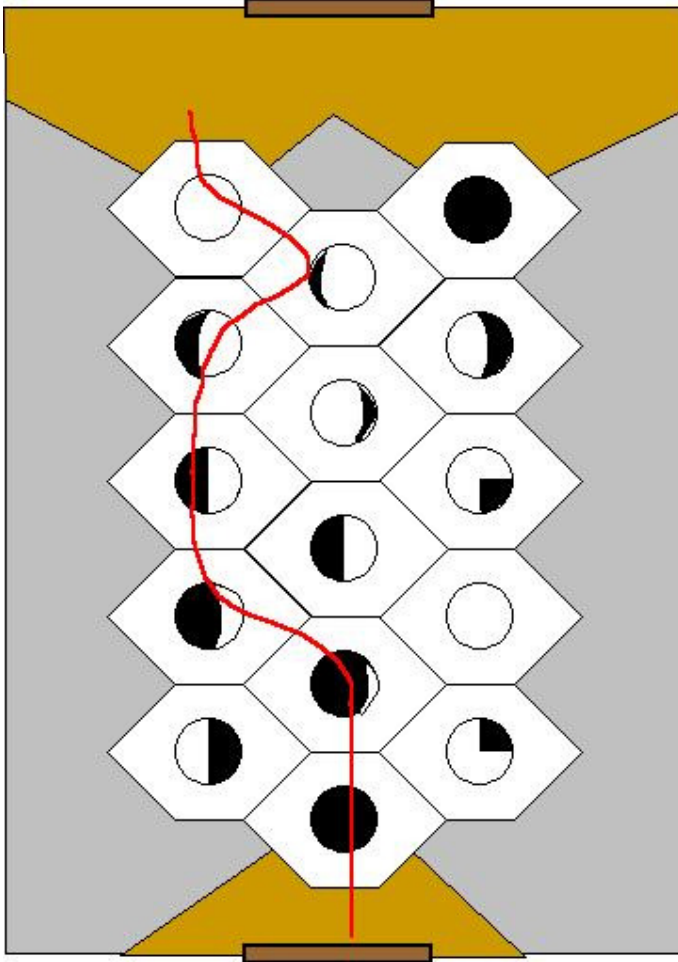
Moderate Night-gaunt guardians.

THE TOMB OF VERSIMAX THE GOLDEN




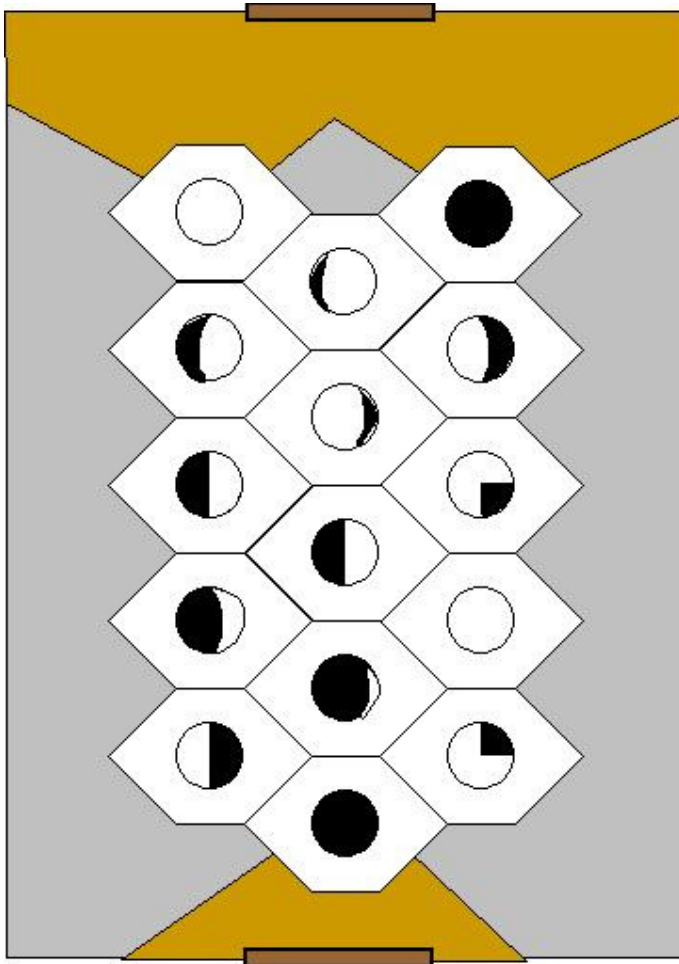
Riddle 2. Bricks and Plate





GMs map of riddle number 1

 The Route of the Burning Dead



players map of riddle number 1

