

Trial of the Iron Bear

Once a center of worship, this room under the perch of Shakaask has been magically modified by the naga. With a skill roll (DC 30), Corbin (any wizardly character will do) will be able to sense the fractured reality; they're basically in a pocket universe. The PCs won't get the feeling that something is wrong with reality until they enter the second room, where it suggests that the dungeon is *much* larger than it originally appears. It would have taken expertly planned excavation and incredible resources carve a hole this deep into the mountainside. As the cave is inhabited by dwarves, they may not suspect anything. If they're curious, let'em roll with a 20 DC to get small details.

Entrance: Riddle of the Iron Bear

Upon first entering the doors of the dungeon, they're in a magically modified version of the room they were in before. The stink of rotting flesh fills the room, and they notice that there's a pile of something in the corner of the room. There's another statue of the "Iron Bear" that was seen against the wall in the previous room. This one is in the middle of the room, standing in a stable position with a great ax in his hands, poised to parry an attack. It looks like it's had some spells thrown at it, with carbon stains and corrosion on various parts.

If the PCs go to investigate the piles, they're piles of body parts and ground flesh (my games are rather graphic. You know, for the emotional effect). It's pretty much unidentifiable besides various human parts in a mound of doughy flesh. If the PCs attempt to dig around in it, head straight to the encounter.

Thankfully they didn't, they were pretty intent on checking out the room before playing with stuff. They did take a close look at these and I had fun giving them a pretty gross description.

Upon approaching the statue, its eyes start to glow with a smoky, purple energy. The mouth slowly opens, the metal squeaking loudly before its thunderous voice fills the air.

The energy that comes from the statue's eyes resembles an energy they see coming from the campaign's main villain, Ossen. I didn't remind them of that, and nobody brought it up. Cool, though useless, info.

*“Many forks litter the road of life
But none so dangerous as the trident
One is divine, with numbers to back it
The other has power over all
The last seeks to claim what has been earned
Through passion
Know your surroundings”*

When they take the time to investigate the rest of the room, they find three key holes in the wall behind the statue. The statue itself has keys etched into its skin, or so it seems. Some of the keys are only obtainable by climbing the statue, but they all have decorated heads that resemble various items. Keys can be wedged out by characters with some effort and a sharp tool. Each key sits very flush to the iron “skin” of the statue, it’d probably take a character around two minutes a key unless someone is rather skilled (DC 20 Dex).

They keys are as follows:

Sunflower on the top of the right foot [High Druid](#)
Star on the top of the left foot [Elf Queen](#)
Sword on the right hand [Emperor](#)
Banner without heraldry on the left hand [Crusader](#)
Dragon on the left arm [The Three](#)
Skull in the forehead [Lich King](#)
Flame on the back of the head [Archmage](#)
Mountain between the shoulders on the back [Dwarf King](#)
One without style behind the ear (DC 25 to find) [Prince of Shadows](#)
Fist under the chin (DC 22 to get out, tough spot) [Orc Lord](#)
Heart on the chest [Priestess](#)
Pitchfork on the right middle finger [Great Gold Wyrn](#)
Humanoid footprint on the left heel [Diabolist](#)

[Reach out on Twitter or FB if you want insight on how I came up with these!](#)

Each key represents an Icon, the riddle’s solution being the Three, Lich King and Archmage. The correct key combination is dragon, skull, flame. The trap will trigger when the entire combination is wrong, not the individual key is incorrect. That trap is the statue itself! Head to the encounter. A DC25 skill check can find a key hole in the floor near the flesh piles. The blank key opens a hidden compartment filled with some loot, courtesy of the Prince of Shadows.

I'm not really much of a riddle maker, but this one I did think up on my own. It's intended to be pretty difficult, with all the different symbols, to push them to the encounter. We hadn't had one in a while at this point in the game. The three Icons I chose are integral to my campaign, but you could obviously tailor this to a different set of player characters. My original plan working, we basically hand-waved the puzzle saying that they had enough time to figure it out once the main threat had been dealt with. If you want to be really mean, making the iron golem in the encounter just reset every time it's defeated until the puzzle is solved could make this room quite deadly.

The loot box was used to show that the Prince is pretty much everywhere and messes with everyone all the time. They got some runes, a bountiful jar (Book of Loot), as well as a hand written note from our beloved prince, signed as "P".

Encounter:

In the case that the PCs shuffled through the piles of goop, they find that the mounts are actually gibbering mouthers that spring to life once disturbed. However, cautious adventurers that let them be to try solving the puzzle aren't safe. Upon failure, the statue of the Iron Bear screeched to life as the iron cries out in protest to its movement. This sound disturbs the mouthers.

Disturbing the mouthers: 4x Umluppuks

Failing the riddle: 2x Umluppuks – add 30 hp
1x Iron Golem

If the iron golem is caught alone (because they killed the mouthers first), increase the number of attacks it has three in one turn and give him 50 extra hp.

We had the "failing the riddle" result. I found that the encounter itself was pretty scary and effective for my six players, especially since I used the Iron Golem's "nastier special."

The Pit of Riches

This room is dilapidated, and with only a slight, prismatic glow from a chasm in the center of it. It's a long way to jump across (DC 30), but one might be tempted to crawl down into it instead. The chasm has a fog suspended in it, about 20 feet down, that is condensed magical energy. The walls of either side have jewels and rare metals in them, waiting to be plucked out. Unfortunately for the adventurers, they start on the opposite side of what has something left to take. This side has been picked clean from less athletic adventurers. Those who fall down the pit trying to jump across or climb to their fortune end up getting separated from the party. Rolle from the High

Weirdness table in 13 True Ways for each player that falls through the fog. Then see **The Crematorium**.

Three of my players tried to jump before they even saw the answer to the puzzle, all failing miserably. Into the magical miasma you go! It was Tiberius (human paladin), Zan (half-orc druid), Mia (wood elf sorcerer), and Lisbeth (wood elf cleric).

For players looking for an easier way across, a DC25 feeling out the room check will reveal that there's a small symbol carved on a stone above the chasm. It's about the size of a large man's open hand, but the shadows that the magical glow cast make it easy to tell that it's a carving of a sun. A clever player will be able to figure out that casting a light spell in this room will create a rainbow force bridge across the chasm. Once on the other side, the players can have some loot without taking too much risk. It's mostly beautifully cut gem stones embedded in the rock, though there are also coins and rings with lumps of gold, platinum and mithril. Enough mithril can be mined to make one thing (sword, breastplate, helmet, etc.), making it far more valuable than the raw material. Either that, or there's enough mithril for 6 pieces of non-magical jewelry.

On the other side of the room, there are two doors. The left door is a mimic that attacks the opener for 3d10+3 damage before disappearing. Using the real door leads to the **Maze Entrance**.

Corbin figured out the light spell bit, the table was upset because it was after Lisbeth and the rest fell in the pit. Ben and Mike (Crysx and Corbin's player counterparts), stood there in shock for a moment. The mimic worked, as Corbin and Crysx decided to continue, assuming the rest of their group was dead. Because of this, Crysx was very upset and didn't try to get any of the riches. Corbin didn't want to risk falling down to get a vial of the magical miasma. We ended a session at this point, which made some amazing tension. You bet that I totally heckled them in our group chat about having "killed" characters. Heh. I started the next session with the PCs that fell in the pit, prompting them to give me a physical description of the High Weirdness they became subject to. That mutation remains with them until they use the bonus they got. A positively received detail for the start of a session, especially since they thought they were dead!