Arcane Emporium, Vol. VIII

WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S EDITION OF Arcane Emporium, a monthly publication presented by Dungeon Master's Workshop. Arcane Emporium is a catalogue of homebrew rules, weapons, spells, monsters, and much more. Our mission is to provide the best content for Dungeons & Dragons, and roleplaying in general.

We have several articles for you this month, including a new player option for bards: the **College of Charm**! Additionally, we are proud to present two more articles for your enjoyment. The first is an alternative armour class system based on the rules devised by Brion "Bearclaw" Woods of the SCA. These rules allow for players to take a more active role in determining their armour class through breaking down the base AC bonuses into an easy-to-handle system that helps emphasize the differences between separate armour types. As well, by popular request, we have an article about including riddles in your games without infuriating your players. This second article includes a brief encounter that you can adapt to any campaign!

This volume of Arcane Emporium is sponsored by **Wyrmwood**. Wyrmwood offers many gaming accessories, ranging from dice vaults to card deck boxes, and now have game master screens available for pre-order. If you see anything you like, you can use the coupon code '**DMW**' to get free domestic shipping on your purchase.

Last month, we announced a contest for a Wyrmwood dice vault giveaway in celebration of the good folks over there becoming our first sponsor. We are pleased to announce that the winner of the contest was our valued reader **Marc**, from Illinois. Congratulations, Marc! We also asked a question of our readers: "Which spell do you feel is the most broken in 5th Edition?" The answer, not surprisingly, was *contagion*, so we're glad we fixed it in our last volume! You can check it out for free at http://dmsworkshop.com/2017/06/30/arcane-emporium-vol-7/.

Dungeon Master's Workshop is also accepting submissions for new content from the community. If you wish to become a contributor, either to this periodical or to the sundry rules-oriented posts to Dungeon Master's Workshop itself, reach out to us at dungeonmastersworkshop@gmail.com.

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Armour, Revised

Armour has always a staple of medieval fantasy. The knight in shining plate, the necromancer's cloak of shadows, and many other examples of armour both fantastic and not, lend to the unmistakable fantastic ambience.

Of course, that is not to say that the depictions of armour in fantasty are always (or ever) accurate. There is no pre-requisite to being a fantasy writer beyond a keen imagination and the motivation to develop a narrative, certainly not any prerequisite that involves studying period-accurate technology and nomenclature (see the 'Armour Terminology' sidebar, for instance). Most fantasy stories are rife with what medieval historians would identify as anachronisms and fallacies, and this is especially the case with armour. This, of course, carries over to Dungeons & Dragons, rooted as it is in the fantasy stories from which the players and developers alike would draw inspiration.

It is understandable that a game like Dungeons & Dragons would opt to handle armour in a simplified manner. This is especially the case with the more recent editions, which have gone to great lengths to streamline many elements of the game and eliminate minutiae. Unfortunately, the execution of this has merely served to propogate a number of myths about armour, as well as general ignorance on the subject, which can lead to disagreements over a core mechanic of the game.

Most frustrating of all the problems that 5E's armour system presents, however, is that it commits the biggest sin a tabletop RPG is capable of: overly restricting player freedom in favour of simplicity. One cannot simply add metal vambraces and greaves to their mail shirt to gain additional protection (in fact, your DM might tell you that doing so converts your armour to half-plate, which could be a problem if you don't have proficiency in medium armour). Additionally, armour fashioned by an accomplished expert is no better or worse than the armour that was effectively mass-produced by an overworked blacksmith with a half-competent apprentice.

This article includes rules to help address these issues and allow a more realistic depiction of armour in your game.

Light Armour

Made to be lighter and more flexible, light armour is favoured by those who rely on agility for defence and require additional protection only to reduce the damage suffered from physical blows.

Gambeson. Also known as quilted armour, this armour is composed of dozens upon dozens of layers of heavy cloth and batting. It comes with hardened leather vambraces and greaves as well as a steel helmet.

Lighter versions of gambesons, called arming jacks or padded jacks, are intended to be worn under other types of armour such as mail or plate and thereby provide an additional layer of padding against bludgeoning attacks, as well as protection from chafing.

Soft leather. Favoured by barbarians and other frontier folk, this armour is often made from the cured hide of a prized kill. It comes with hardened leather vambraces and greaves as well as a steel helmet.

Hardened leather. This armour includes a cuirass of leather that has been stiffened by being boiled in oil. It comes with hardened leather vambraces and greaves as well as a

steel helmet.

Mail byrnie. This waist-length coat of mail has short sleeves and little by way of protection for the upper arms and legs. It comes with hardened leather vambraces and greaves as well as a steel helmet.

Armour Terminology

The armours referenced in this section differ in some ways from those described in chapter 5, "Equipment" of the *Player's Handbook*, or might seem to be missing parts of their name or categorization. This is because the *Player's Handbook* was written by game enthusiasts, rather than historians or historical re–enactors. For example, the term 'chainmail' is not historically accurate—it was created in 1822 by Sir Walter Scott in his book *The Fortunes of Nigel*. Similarly, 'platemail' is also a modern invention. In fact, 'chainmail' is a redundancy and 'platemail' is an oxymoron; mail and plate are two very different forms of armour, referring a mesh of metal rings or hardened steel panels, respectively. These terms, though they have been part of the *Dungeons & Dragons* legacy since the very first edition, have been corrected here.

Sample Good–Quality Armour Options

Armour	Cost	Armour Class (AC)	Strength	Stealth	Weight
Light Armour					
Gambeson	5 gp	11 + Dex modifier	—	—	8 lbs
Soft leather	5 gp	11 + Dex modifier	—	—	8 lbs
Laminated linen	10 gp	12 + Dex modifier	—	—	9 lbs
Hardened leather	10 gp	13 + Dex modifier	—	—	10 lbs
Mail byrnie	50 gp	14 + Dex modifier	—	—	12 lbs
Medium Armour					
Brigandine	30 gp	15 + Dex modifier (max 2)	—	—	16 lbs
Mail haubergeon	75 gp	15 + Dex modifier (max 2)	—	Disadvantage	20 lbs
Heavy Armour					
Mail hauberk	100 gp	16	Str 13	Disadvantage	35 lbs
Segmented plate	1,000 gp	17	Str 14	Disadvantage	40 lbs
Full plate	1,500 gp	18	Str 15	Disadvantage	45 lbs

Medium Armour

Though offering more protection than light armour, medium armour is also more restrictive of the wearer's movement. While wearing medium armour, your maximum bonus to your Armour Class from your Dexterity modifier is +2. In general, any armour weighing more than 15 lbs is at least of medium category.

Brigandine. Also called coat-of-plate, jack of plate, or paired plate, this armour is made of many layers of soft leather and cloth into which are sewn metal plates. It comes with hardened leather vambraces and greaves as well as a steel helmet.

Mail haubergeon. This mail coat comes down to the mid-thigh and includes full sleeves as well as a coif (hood). It comes with hardened leather vambraces and greaves as well as a steel helmet.

Heavy Armour

Heavy armour offers the best protection against conventional attacks, covering the whole body with materials designed to stop all manner of stabbing and slashing. Generally, armour must exceed 25 lbs to be considered heavy armour. Only tough warriors inured to rigorous physical combat can manage the weight and bulk of this armour category.

Heavy armour interferes with the wearer's ability to move quickly, stealthily, and freely. If the Sample Good-Quality Armour Options table shows a Strength requirement in the Strength column for an armour type, the armour reduces the wearer's speed by 10 feet unless the wearer has a Strength score equal to or higher than the requirement.

While wearing heavy armour, you do not add your Dexterity modifier to your Armour Class. However, it also compensates for a negative Dexterity modifier. Heavy armour confers an additional +1 to AC over non-heavy armours of similar kind.

Mail hauberk. This armour is a knee-length coat of mail with a coif (hood) and chausses covering the legs. It comes with hardened leather vambraces and a steel helmet.

Segmented plate. This armour consists of medium-sized, overlapping metal plates worn over a mail hauberk. The plates provide superior protection to the wearer's vitals. A harness of segmented plate comes with steel vambraces, pauldrons, greaves, sabatons to protect the feet, and a steel helmet.

Full plate. Consisting of shaped, interlocking metal plates worn over mail and covering the whole body, plate provides the greatest protection of any armour. Only expert armourers can produce a harness of full plate, and they come with a heavy cost that makes them unaffordable to all but knights or other military leaders. Full plate comes with an enclosed steel helm called a bassinet.

The weight of full plate indicated on the Sample Good–Quality Armour Options table is the average for armour appropriate for regular use in an adventuring career, often called field armour. Heavier harnesses of plate offer greater protection, but are impractical to use outside situations such as tournaments or a cavalry charge.

Calculating AC

The Sample Good–Quality Armour Options table presents a standard example of various armour types. These options are of Good quality and include protection for all four limbs as well as the wearer's head, as specified in the armour descriptions above. There are four general categories of armour quality: Poor, Good, Excellent, and Masterwork. To devise your own AC based on what armour you have come across in your adventures, you can consult the Calculating Armour Class table below for the base AC and bonuses conferred by the various armour pieces.

Base AC Calculation

Armour Type	Poor	— Armour Quality —		
		Good	Excll	Mwrk
Cloth				
Gambeson	6	8	10	12
Laminated Linen	7	9	11	13
Leather				
Soft Leather	6	8	10	12
Hardened Leather	8	10	12	14
Soft Metal (mail)				
Copper / Bronze	9	11	13	15
Hard Metal (mail)				
Iron / Steel	10	12	14	16
Mithril	11	13	15	17
Additional Coverage				
Helm	+1	+1	+1	+1
Two Limbs	+1	+1	+1	+1
Four Limbs	+2	+2	+2	+2
Heavy	+1	+1	+1	+1
Plate	+1	+1	+1	+1
Full Plate	+2	+2	+2	+2

For example, a Poor–quality coat of hide salvaged off the corpse of a hobgoblin outlaw would afford you an AC of 6 + your Dexterity modifier. Meanwhile, a Masterwork coat of hide—no doubt the pelt of a dire beast that has been fashioned by an expert leather smith—would raise your base AC to 12 + your Dexterity modifier. By adding leather vambraces and greaves, your AC would increase by an additional +2, or +3 if you also added a helmet. Thus a tribal warrior with a Dexterity of 14, wearing the pelt of a dire bear, a helm fashioned of its skull, and leather vambraces and greaves would have an AC of 19.

Likewise, a footsoldier with Dexterity 14 wearing a bronze breastplate over a Good-quality iron byrnie and bronze helm, vambraces, and greaves would have an AC of 16.

Pricing Armour

The Sample Good–Quality Armour table above shows the average cost of a generic type of armour. These prices can be adjusted based on your campaign. For example, a nation rich with iron mines would be able to produce iron and steel armour at a reduced cost because of the abundance of local materials. Likewise, a metal–starved nation would have a dearth of available resources to devote to metal armour, and such protection in any form would be very rare.

Unarmoured Combatants

Unlike the standard Armour Class system presented in the *Player's Handbook*, this variant sets an individual's base AC without armour as equal to their Dexterity modifier + their proficiency bonus.

Additionally, the quality of the armour has an impact on its cost. The exact costs are up to the discretion of the DM, but the Pricing Armour Adjustment table shows the general trend.

Pricing Armour Adjustment

Armour Type	Poor	— Armour Quality —		
		Good	Excll	Mwrk
Cloth	−10%	—	+20%	+50%
Leather	−20%	—	+25%	+75%
Soft Metal	−25%	—	+50%	+100%
Hard Metal	−25%	—	+100%	+250%

The History of Armour

Dungeons & Dragons presents a number of armour types together with very little context for their use and comparison. Though the game mechanics of Dungeons & Dragons are meant to allow for entertaining gameplay instead of historical simulation, it is worth bearing in mind that the armour that is most readily available is likely designed to combat the weapons of the day.

For example, with the rise of the crossbow, hauberks—common in Europe from the 6th through 10th centuries—were no longer effective. Thus, people began to add pieces of hammered metal plates to their mail, the start of what historians call 'transitional armour'.

Weapons once again caught up to armour in the 14th century, when battles such as Crécy (1346) and Agincourt (1415) showed the ability of the English longbow to defeat regular plate. Once again, armour had to improve. By the end of the Hundred Years' War, medieval metallurgists devised tempered steel, and a well-armoured force such as the Burgundian cavalry became all but impervious to English arrows. Meanwhile, for those people who could not afford such complete protection but wanted something relatively arrow-proof to wear, armours such as brigandine (the basis for D&D's 'studded leather') were devised.

The armour that armoursmiths in your campaign will be proficient in crafting (and therefore that will be available for purchase) will largely depend on what weapons are common on the battlefield. Talk with your DM about what kind of protection is reasonable.

Credits

This article is based on the revised armour system initially devised by Brion "Bearclaw" Woods, who has held the title of Lord in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) and is a member of Order of Golden Alce, a reward for martial prowess within the SCA. Bearclaw's revisions are based on first-hand experience with mail, leather, gambeson, brigandine, Wisby, plate and chain, full plate, lorica, and many other historical armours. Minor adjustments to the system and writing of the article was done by Taylor Reisdorf of *Dungeon Master's Workshop*.

Riddle Me This: A Guide To Using Riddles In D&D

> *A thing there is whose voice is one;*
> *Whose feet are four and two and three.*
> *So mutable a thing is none*
> *That moves in earth or sky or sea.*
> *When on most feet this thing doth go,*
> *Its strength is weakest and its pace most slow.*
>
> — Athenaeus, *Riddle of the Sphinx*

Riddles have been a staple of fantasy ever since Homer wrote the Odyssey nearly three thousand years ago. The Greeks had a great love of riddles, and their greatest heroes often had to solve them in order to prove themselves as wise as they were strong and valorous.

Many DMs use riddles for this same reason. A great riddle can offer a welcome break from the repetition of constant combat and challenge your players to think critically—a skill that many players will allow to go unused if they are not sufficiently challenged.

However, there are many challenges that a DM faces when running a riddle encounter successfully, and more than a few DMs have failed trying to push such encounters onto their players. This article will examine why riddle encounters often fail, and how you can ensure that your riddle goes over well with your players.
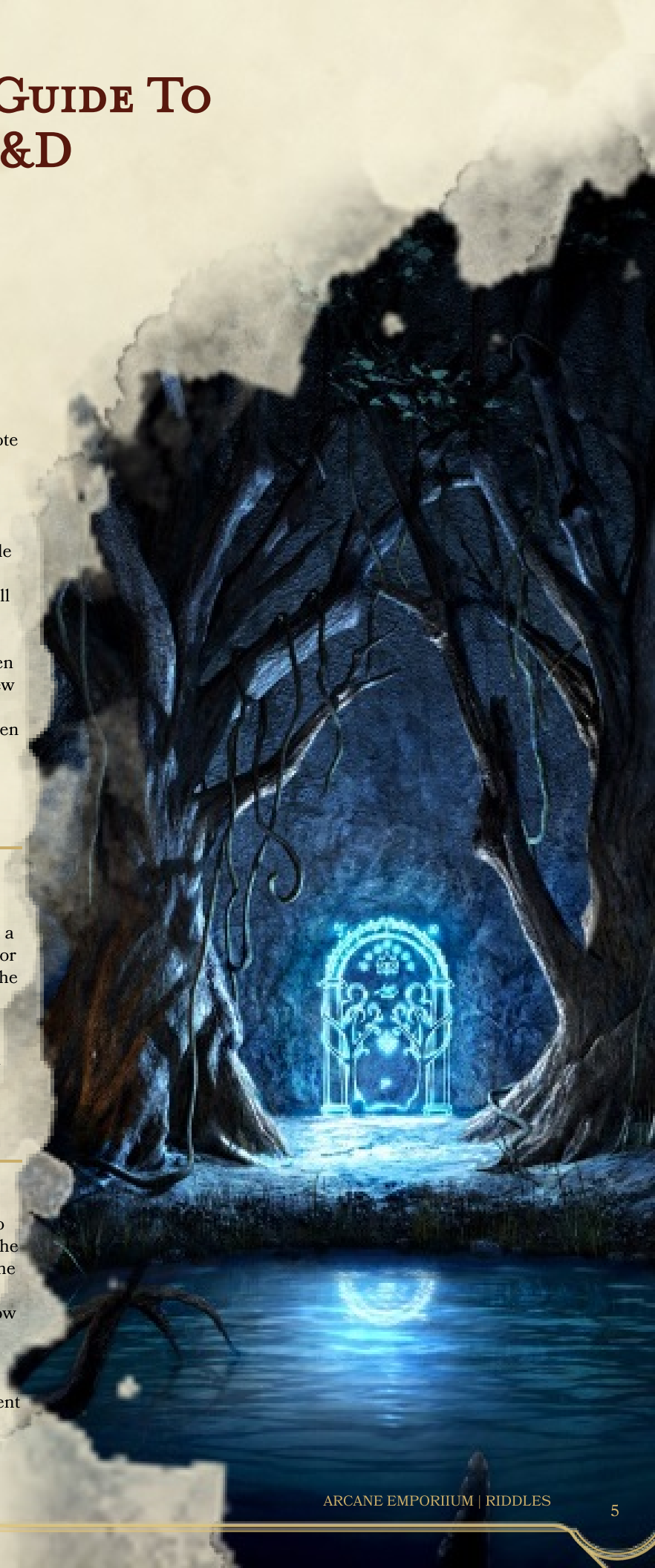
The Problem with Riddles

It is not uncommon for a player to express frustration with riddles. Most often, the root of the problem is that such encounters do not rely on any of the game mechanics in which their character is designed to excel. One cannot fight a riddle, nor beguile or confound it with clever skill checks, nor even ensorcell it into revealing its secrets. In other words, the riddle may be posed to the characters, but it is the players who must ultimately solve it. Not only does that place your players on the spot, it also negates their efforts to build characters capable of engaging with the obstacles that they face.

Building a Riddle Encounter

To build a successful riddle encounter requires that you address the various problems outlined above. Players must feel ready to take on the challenge, and they must be able to use their character's strengths to do so. To simply present the party with a door that cannot be opened save by speaking the password hinted at by ambiguous clues is to invite your players to feel stuck. You must expand the encounter to allow them additional avenues to success.

Additional clues should require that the players utilize various game mechanics to discover them. These could include conspicuous features of the surrounding environment that can be investigated for additional information, oblique

references in the riddle that can become the subject of an Intelligence-based check that yields additional insight, or other such options.

Sample Riddle Encounter: The Lost Tomb

The Lost Tomb is an ancient crypt hidden deep within ancient ruins from a lost civilization. Though the complex is vast, the encounter included here focuses on a single room where a sphinx guards the doors to the crypt proper.

Knowledge of the secrets of this place is fragmentary and couched in legend. Adventurers may know that it is the tomb of great sages, and that the tomb has a guardian, but the latter's nature and power should be unknown. As the adventurers navigate the ruins to enter this chamber, they should come upon monuments to wisdom and edification. Libraries of fragmented papyrus scrolls, frescoes depicting scenes of learning and revelation, and other celebrations of knowledge.

Some time before the arrival of the adventurers, a group of scholars made their way to the tomb seeking answers lost to the annals of history. They met the sphinx and felt confident enough to hear the riddle that would grant them access to the crypt if solved. Unfortunately, they could not decipher the clues, and failed the test. To protect the secrets of the tomb, the sphinx slew them. This was not the first time that the sphinx had to kill those who entered the tomb, but it was the first time that it had been forced to slay those whose intentions were pure, rather than motivated by greed. The slaughter of innocents has since weighed heavily on the entity, who has come to grow weary of its charge after so many years.

This encounter is designed for a party of four 11th-level characters.

General Features

The walls and floors of this chamber are sandstone blocks and flagstones.

Ceiling. 25 feet unless otherwise noted.
Light. None.
Regional Effects. This is the lair of a sphinx, and is partly removed from time and space. The sphinx's magic pervades the lair, allowing it to control the flow of time and shunt creatures into other planes. The sphinx's magic can also serve to guide those who show proper respect for the knowledge contained throughout the tomb.

1. The Antechamber

> The room before you is dominated by the remains of a fountain, now little more than a crumbling hole leading to a well below. At the far side of the chamber a pair of large, relief-carved stone doors are flanked by two enormous statues. Though worn by the ravages of time, these twenty-foot-tall marvels continue their timeless vigil, watching your approach behind impassive miens.

Both of the colossi guarding the doors have one hand raised, as if in warning. The left-hand colossus carries a set of scales, and the right-hand colossus carries a heavy tome.

Ruined Fountain

This ancient structure is no longer serviceable, although the well still contains water. If characters lower a bucket or pail down the well shaft, they are able to retrieve cool water from the reservoir.

Approaching the Statues

When the party approaches the statues, read the following.

> As you approach the statues, the silence of the chamber is pierced by the harsh sound of grinding stone as the colossal statues turn their heads to stare down at you. As one, a pair of deep voices issue forth as though from a deep chasm.
>
> "Halt. You come before the tomb of the Venerable Four, the fonts of wisdom and the light of reason. A trial awaits you ahead. Many have entered, but none have returned. Turn back now, or advance to meet destiny. Decide."

If the adventurers say they will advance, the statues say "May you find what you seek in the chamber beyond". The statues then revert to their original positions, and you can proceed to the Proving Hall, below.

2. The Proving Hall

> The doors open suddenly to reveal a a cavernous chamber, the height of which may not have ever been known but for a great window set into its uppermost reaches. Bright, golden sunlight streams down from the ancient skylight to illuminate a pair of colossal golden doors at the far end of the room. From the doors descend a wide staircase down to the centre of the chamber, where it is guarded by a tall statue of a winged lion in repose.
>
> As you enter the chamber, you can feel the weight of time all about you. The walls are carved and painted with various breathtaking scenes, the pillars that support the tall roof are carefully sculpted into depictions of herculean figures of palpable majesty, and even the flagstones beneath your feet are engraved with ancient symbols whose meanings have long since passed into legend.

This chamber is the lair of the sphinx who guards the lost tomb. Its ceiling extends nearly a hundred feet above, where a skylight allows sunlight to stream in (providing bright light). As you allow players to explore the room, take a moment to emphasize the stillness and isolation here. Draw attention to the absence of wearing on the stonework, the dearth of dust, the stillness of the air. Let the players appreciate that this is a place that time has forgotten.

If the characters take a moment to examine the relief carvings in the walls, they can deduce that the scenes depict significant events in a more-or-less historical sequence. Use

your imagination with regard to the form of the reliefs, but bear in mind the answer to the riddle when describing the content.

The Sphinx

When the party enters the centre of the room, read the following.

> Your admirations of the chamber are quickly forgotten when, at your approach, the lion statue at the base of the stairway calmly stirs. From its perch atop a plinth, the winged lion fixes you with an inscrutable stare from a remarkably human face.
>
> "Long has it been since mortals dared to approach the tomb", it says in a low, faintly feminine voice. "Tell us: are you prepared to answer our riddle?"

The creature before the party is **Maatakare**, a **gynosphinx** who guards the lost tomb. It reveals to adventurers who approach the following information:

- Maatakare has guarded the lost tomb for centuries, protecting its secrets from those who do not have the wisdom to wield them responsibly.
- To test the wisdom of mortals who approach, it asks a riddle.
- To hear the riddle is itself a sacred rite. Those who submit to the test may not leave until they have answered. Those who fail are doomed to perish.
- The riddle was conceived to foil those who would seek the secrets of the lost tomb for their own gain.
- Once the riddle is heard, applicants have an hour to consider their answer.
- The lost tomb contains the remains and sacred knowledge of the four greatest minds of an ancient kingdom (see the Adapting the Encounter sidebar).

When the adventurers are ready to proceed, read or paraphrase the following text:

> With a sudden groan, the ponderous doors to the chamber swing shut and the temple's guardian sits taller on its haunches, unfurling its great wings. A loud voice echoes forth, clear and compelling.
>
> *"My touch can temper youth in bloom*
> *and forewarn men against their doom.*
> *Great kings I guide to use their powers*
> *and sages teach me in their towers.*
> *I grant the blind man clearer sight*
> *and open minds to reason's light.*
> *What sophists seek and fools will claim;*
> *that greatest virtue is my name.*
> *Who am I?"*

The party can take some time to consider their response. The sphinx grants the characters an hour, but it would be impractical to actually give the players this long to possibly be stumped. If you have access to a timer (preferrably a sand timer), you may consider instead giving the players "three turns of the sand" or some other visual cue to help them stay on track. If the party is stuck, there are many insights they can gain into the riddle through clever skills checks, as well as clues around the chamber that they can examine to point them in the right direction. Consider having players roll initiative in order to allow each player an opportunity to contribute to the encounter.

The Riddle

With successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) checks about various parts of the riddle, a character will learn the following.

- There are many virtues that are said to be important for kings in the oldest religions: Strength, Courage, Fairness, Wisdom, and Faith. (A cleric of a deity such as Pelor has advantage on this check.)
- The blind seer is a common trope in many mythologies. They are invariably figures of surpassing wisdom whose clairvoyance helps them to overcome their physical infirmities. Some even give up their sight—or one of their eyes—for such a gift.

The Walls

A character who examines the walls with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check is able to glean the following information.

- The scenes depicted on the walls are events of enlightenment. Discoveries, revelations, and epiphanies.
- In every scene, the honourand is always touched by an ephemeral, feminine figure wearing an expression of serenity.
- This is a common trope in mythology whereby a personification of Wisdom visits mortals to grant them the insight they need to understand their discoveries.

The Solution

If the characters respond with "Wisdom", read the following.

> At your answer, the guardian seems to relax, as if a great burden were suddenly lifted from its spirit.
>
> "Many have come before us and failed the test. You cannot know our relief to hear the true answer spoken. For centuries we have kept this task, and now we are relieved of our charge —our burden. Would that you had come sooner, that others may have been spared their fate.
>
> The secrets of the crypt are yours. May you use them well."
>
> For a moment, a smile seems to pass the creature's eerily-human face before it slowly fades out of sight.

Failure

If the characters respond with anything but "Wisdom", read the following.

> Though the creature's expression remains unchanged, it seems suddenly weighed down by a heavy burden.
>
> "That is not correct", it says softly. Slowly, the creature unfurls its mighty wings and stands atop its plinth. All about you, a sudden, inexplicable wind begins to stir. "You are not fit to learn the secrets of the crypt", the creature continues, its voice echoing over the rising gale. Sand is now caught in the whirlwind, and through the bluster you are faintly aware of the tomb falling away, replaced by an endless, hazy horizon. Then, abruptly, the winds calm, and the sands fall to reveal a crumbling plaza lost amidst a wasteland of sun-blasted dunes.
>
> "Your ignorance has forced our hand", the creature says, now standing atop a crumbling stone pillar. As you watch, its form grows indistinct, and in a moment has vanished entirely.
>
> "Three ways there are to learn the answer", you hear its voice echo about the plaza. "You have failed in the noblest method: by reflection. You are too late to learn by the easiest: imitation. And so you must now learn by the bitterest: experience."

At this point, the gynosphinx attacks. It has used its *greater invisibility* spell to allow it to make its way unseen towards its first target and flown ten feet up so creatures who act first in combat are unaware of its present location. The sphinx prioritizes unarmoured combatants, hoping to neutralize them quickly with its advantage. If its position is revealed, the

sphinx will move away, not triggering opportunity attacks unless the attacker has a means to see invisibility. If the sphinx finds itself becoming surrounded, it will use its legendary action to teleport to a more favourable position.

If the sphinx loses concentration on its *greater invisibility* spell, it targets the strongest-looking opponent with *banishment*, using its 5th-level spell slot to banish two creatures if necessary.

The Plaza. The sphinx has shifted the adventurers to a nameless demiplane dominated by a vast desert. The plaza is approximately 30 feet wide and 60 feet long and flanked by tall, broken columns. Six 30-foot statues are arranged in pairs facing each other along the length of the plaza, standing 20 feet apart from the other as well as from the next pair.

The sphinx does not have access to its lair actions here, which characters familiar with a sphinx's abilities may find a

perplexing strategic choice. Whether by this hint or simply through an attempt to find a tactical advantage in the plaza, a character that takes the Search action to do a Wisdom (Perception) check on the area notices several things:

- There are sun-bleached bones and tarnished, fragmented weapons scattered all about the plaza.
- A number of heavily-weathered statues watch over the plaza. Many have begun to crumble with age, yet those that are complete all seem to keep a similar pose, holding a heavy tome in one hand and holding their other hand in a peculiar position. A DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies this finger positioning as a symbolic sign of enlightenment.
- The plaza seems to have once included a splendid mosaic, now somewhat faded and worn. A DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check reveals the same information one could glean from examining the walls in the Proving Hall.

A Second Chance. Characters who solve the riddle during the fight, whether by examining the features of the plaza or by sudden epiphany, may speak the answer during the fight. If they do, the sphinx abandons its attacks and congratulates them. On its turn, it uses a bonus action to return them to the lost tomb and congratulates them. Feel free to re-use some of the read-aloud text from the Solution section.

Defeating the Sphinx. If the sphinx is reduced to 0 hit points, the characters are automatically returned to the lost tomb, where the mortally wounded sphinx confides in them its resentment of its charge and relief that by its failure to defeat them, it is finally freed. For centuries it was compelled to slaughter any who failed the test—even innocents who sought only that which was the answer to its riddle. It then slumps down onto its side and vanishes, leaving only the sapphire that previously hung around its neck.

The sapphire is an exceptionally large and clear specimen that, when viewed in sunlight, contains a faint, flickering symbol that anyone fluent in Celestial recognizes as meaning 'wisdom'.

Bard College Option: College of Charm

The following is a Bard College option available to players in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

College of Charm

Bards of the College of Charm excell through magic-enhanced chicanery. Exceptionally gifted in the school of enchantment, these bards use their gifts to sway even the most stubborn minds, and can channel more of their forceful personality into mind-affecting spells.

Bards of the College of Charm know better than anyone else the power they wield over another's mind, and so are hesitant to form meaningful relationships with other bards of this college. Loose fraternities of these bards may span nations—or even continents—never amounting to more than a professional acquaintance.

Silver Tongue
Starting at 3rd level, when you make a Charisma check, you can expend one use of Bardic Inspiration. Roll a Bardic Inspiration die and add the number rolled to your result. You can choose to do so before or after you roll the die for the ability check, but before the DM tells you whether you succeed or fail.

Master Prevaricator
Beginning at 3rd level, your are able to magically undermine the mental defences of your foes. When a creature rolls a saving throw against a mind-affecting spell you cast, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration. Roll a Bardic Inspiration die and subtract the number rolled from the result of the saving throw. You can choose to do so before or after the dice is rolled for the save, but before the DM declares if the save is successful or not.

Forceful Coercion
Beginning at 6th level, once per turn you can add your Charisma modifier to the damage roll of any spell you cast that deals psychic damage.

Additionally, when you learn new spells as you gain levels in this class, you may learn *phantasmal killer* or *weird*, provided that you meet the level requirements to learn bard spells of their level. These spells count as bard spells for you.

Alter Memories
At 14th level, you gain the ability to make a creature unaware of your magical influence on it. When you cast an enchantment spell to charm one or more creatures, you can alter one creature's understanding so that it remains unaware of being charmed.

Additionally, once before the spell expires, you can use your action to try to make the chosen creature forget some of the time it spent charmed. The creature must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw against your bard spell save DC or lose a number of hours of its memories equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). You can make the creature forget less time, and the amount of time can't exceed the duration of your enchantment spell.