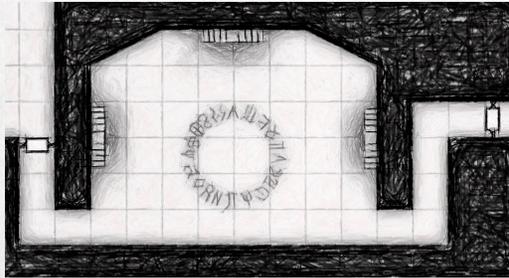


20. PASSAGE OF TIME

Secrets wait to be discovered by the crusaders if they have the fortitude to withstand the ravages of time.



FEATURES OF THE ROOM

- Irregular ticking emanates from countless brass clocks set into the walls of the chamber.
- Fine sand pours from an aperture in the ceiling, coating the floor in a large pile like the lower chamber of an hourglass. A great wind, emanating from nowhere, swirls the sand.
- Chunks of ruddy stone lie half-buried in the sand.
- Three colossal mask-like faces are set into the walls of the chamber, their open mouths filled with a swirling white fog.

EXPLORATION

Clocks

- The clocks are all set to the same time – the exact real time that the time limit for the adventure expires. Though the second hand ticks away, the hours and minutes do not move.
- Crusaders near the clocks hear amidst their ticking a cacophony of words, the words spoken thus far in the fortress as well as words they are yet to speak.
- In place of numerals, the clocks feature iconography of mortality – skulls, scythes, wands, withered trees.
- **Winding a clock forwards** causes the remaining time left in the adventure to decrease by 5 minutes.
- **Winding a clock backwards** adds 10 minutes to the time the crusaders have remaining. However, disturbing time in this way is dangerous:

The first time any clock is wound backwards, the offending crusader's family going back seven generations are wiped from history, leaving them in a paradoxical state of half-existence.

The crusader's current and maximum HP are halved and they momentarily waver out of existence at inopportune times.

The second time any clock is wound backwards, the crusader's entire line is extinguished from history. The crusader is instantly annihilated.

Subsequent backwards winding of any clock obliterates the offending crusader and all members of her race from history. All crusaders of that race are annihilated and that race is no longer available for respawning.

Pile of Sand

- The sand is so fine that it sinks through clothing and armor alike. Crusaders cough as it seeps into their lungs.
- ❖ **Clearing the sand from the floor** reveals a large triangular plate of volcanic glass jutting from the floor amid a circle of numeric runes that double as a *fractured teleportation circle* (page XX).
- Clever crusaders may note the resemblance between the stone in the circle and a sundial.
- ❖ **Shining the ruby lantern** (see "Roleplaying Challenge" on the next page) so that the time on the sundial echoes the time on the brass clocks casts a red shadow that points toward the only safe portal.

Chunks of Stone

- The pieces of stone are flat and jagged.
- Traces of weathered, unreadable runes mark the stones.
- Reassembling the stones like a puzzle causes the pieces to fuse into an unreadable tablet.
- ❖ **Using the wand of restoration** (see “Roleplaying Challenge” below) restores the tablet to perfect condition, revealing a new, random rumor (share its reliability or unreliability).

Colossal Faces of Time

- The masks depict a single individual at three different times in life – as a youth, as an adult, and near death. Ask the crusaders who is depicted.
- ❖ **Speaking to the stone faces** triggers their animation. The Roleplaying Challenge begins (see below).

ROLEPLAYING CHALLENGE

In turn, the fog of the three faces, representing Past, Present, and Future, clears. Each face provides a vision, makes a demand, and provides a reward if their demand is met.

FACE OF THE PAST

Vision: Death and a human play chess in a vast desolation. The human makes a move, smiles wildly, and whispers, “*Checkmate.*”

Demand: The mask speaks: “I hunger. What is the greatest sin of your past?”

Reward: The mouth vomits up a *wand of restoration*, a 1 use item that restores an inanimate object to perfect condition.

FACE OF THE PRESENT

Vision: Shows overlapping visions of alternate realities – some crusaders who died yet live, whereas others have died.

Demand: The mask speaks: “I hunger. What is your greatest secret?”

Reward: The mouth vomits up a ruby lantern.

FACE OF THE FUTURE

Vision: Shows the crusaders being diced to pieces by a massive construct of blades, armor, gold, and gems.

Demand: The mask speaks: “I hunger. What shall be your fate?” The only acceptable answers are ones that acquiesce to the Ur-Mage’s dire vision or ones that match the individual depicted by the faces.

Reward: The mouth provides a vision of a future room, granting an additional rumor.

If the crusaders fail the majority of the demands, the mouths rapidly accelerate time. The crusaders lose 30 minutes of their remaining time, and all crusaders must **Defy Danger with CON (7+)** or age to death in a matter of moments.

If the crusaders meet the majority of the demands, the faces speak in unison:

“Now one of you may choose a path. But beware, the whims of time are fickle.”

Randomly select one of the three as the safe path. The first crusader walking through the safe portal is transported back in time. Later in the adventure, that crusader may make one minor change to the fiction based on what they did on their trip back in time. Perhaps they stashed a useful item to find later, or perhaps they left a note of warning.

Crusaders who walk through one of the dangerous portals are transported to the end of time. Ask that crusader what is silhouetted by the final sunset before they are consumed by the Void.

OTHER DUNGEON MOVES

- Alter history.
- Rapidly age a piece of equipment.