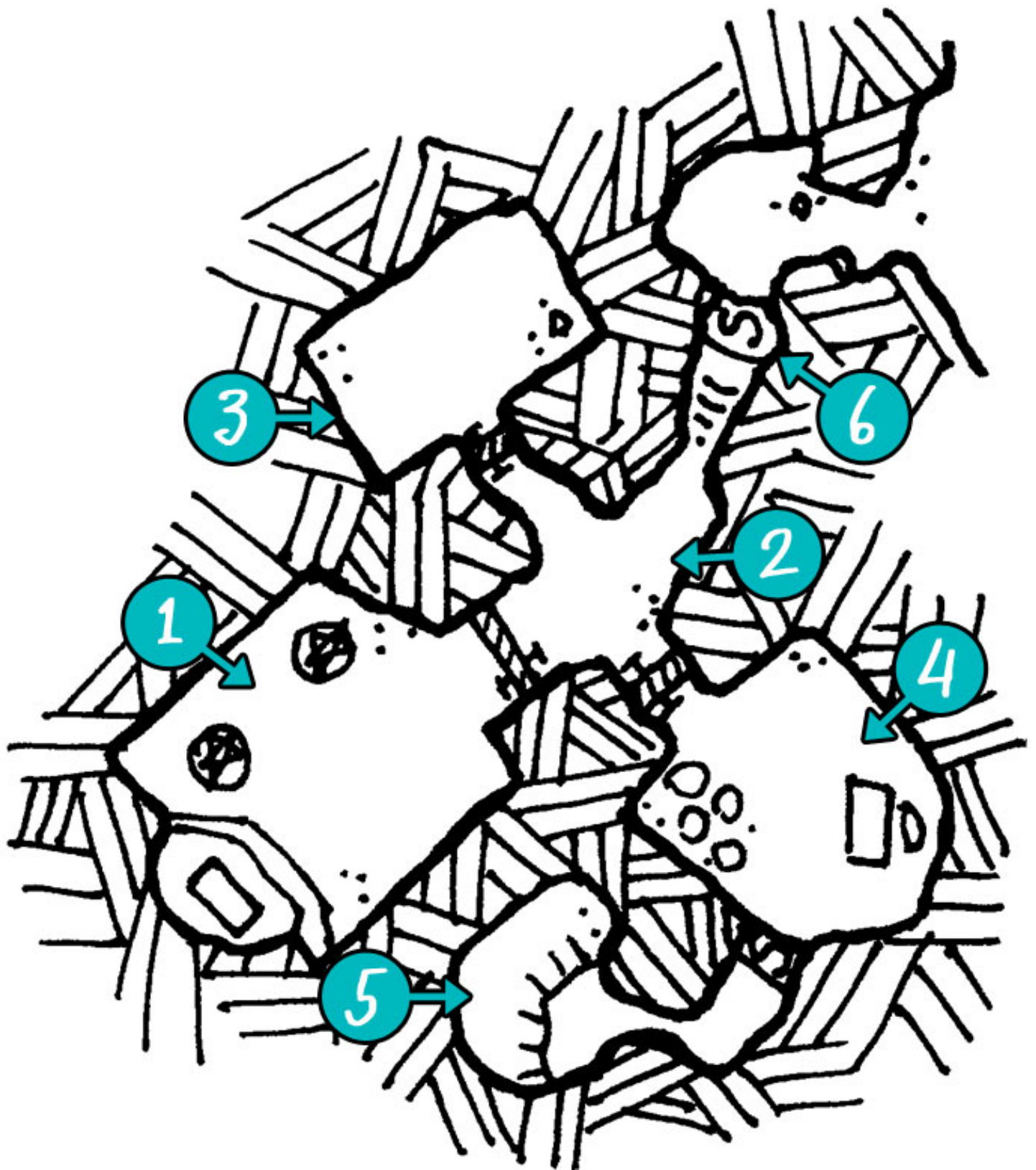


V'tor's Altar

An RPG scenario by Steve Keller

Based on a map by Matt Jackson

V'tor's Altar Map



1. The Altar Room

The party wake here. They are scattered around the room, lying in various uncomfortable positions and stripped of their gear.

On the left side of the room are two columns with fearsome looking angular runes carved into their surfaces. The columns are made of the same stone the room is built out of.

At the far side of the room is an altar made of carved stone, there are smudges of blood on its surface. A panel of polished gold rises up from the rear of the altar (think a mirror on a bureau). A fist of pure gold extends from the center of a raised star motif on the panel, parallel to the altar and pointing toward the door. Gripped in the center of the fist is a large key of wood and tin.

There are grooves at the ends of each of the star's six points, about two inches long, an inch wide at the center, about half an inch deep.

2. Central Hall

In the center of this area is the body of an old man. Unlike the party, he is dressed. A quick search of his gear reveals a few simple items - a dagger, a healing potion, and a pouch of holding containing several gold coins and various jewelry in it (in fact, if any of the party members came into the scenario with a particularly expensive-looking article of jewelry it will be in here). He is wearing a

necklace with a small, flame bladed sword pendant on it, its curves greatly exaggerated. There is a purple gem in his hand about two inches long.

While the party are examining the old man, the door to room #3 opens and another party file into the hall. The other party are similarly stripped of gear, but otherwise have a comparable level and composition to the player party. Like the players, they have no idea how they got here.

3. Storage Room

This is where the second party wake up. It is a plain, rectangular room. There is a wooden chest here. It is empty except for a small jewelry box which is open and empty.

4. Office

At first, this room seems incongruous with the rest of the structure. There are four wooden barrels in one corner, filled with old, rancid ale.

A simple wooden desk is placed in the opposite corner. On the desk is a candle and a small flint lighting tool. There is also a quill, a small knife for sharpening the quill, and a dried out inkwell. There's a small pile of ledgers written in an unknown language, but their columnar layout gives the impression of inventory control.

There is a decorated shield on the wall to the left of the door. It can be used in combat, but it's not sturdy in construction, it is clearly meant as decoration. If the shield is moved, there is a small alcove behind it. Inside the alcove are six metal boxes just a few inches in size. The boxes are fastened to the inside of the alcove, and gears are visible coming out of the backs of the boxes and going into the wall of the alcove. The left-most box is opened. It is empty except for a black velvet lining. The other boxes can be smashed open with great difficulty, revealing small gems similar to the one found on the old man.

On the wall to the right is an old painting. It is fastened to the wall with heavy iron clamps. The painting shows what is obviously a wizard, with cliché pointed hat, robes, curly-toed shoes, whatever else spells obvious wizard. He is standing on a hill, looking at the viewer while clouds roil behind him. In his left hand is a flame blade sword with exaggerated curves similar to the pendant. There is a chest on the ground on the right hand side of the painting; it is drawn at a 3/4 turn so that its face is pointed toward the wizard but is still visible to the viewer.

Anyone examining the painting closely may realize that, although the wizard is looking at the viewer, he is pointing the sword at the chest.

A close examination of the chest reveals that

the keyhole on the chest is an actual hole.

The sword pendant fits into the hole perfectly, and turning it causes a series of clicks and clacks to sound out from behind the painting. After a second or two, the painting will swing out, revealing a passageway leading to room #5.

5. Gear Room

This is a small, dirt-floored cave. The party's gear is here, as is the gear belonging to the other party. Everything has a ransacked appearance, and everyone's money bags are empty. As noted earlier, any jewelry of obvious value will also be missing, having been found in the old man's bag of holding.

6. Vault Door

This is a massive stone door made of something much more solid and heavy than the material used to construct the rest of the chamber. In the center of the door, about eye height, is an ornate oval with a key hole. On the other side of the vault door is a magical portal that returns the party to wherever they came from.

Game Master's Notes

There are several ways this scenario can play out depending on how the party reacts to the other people trapped with them.

Puzzle Room

Placing one of the gems in one of the star point holes causes a monster to appear between the two columns. The monster should be leveled appropriate to the party, keeping in mind that the monster's abilities should be consistent with the old man's injuries.

Gems *will not* stay in place in the slots. If a gem falls out, the monster that was summoned vanishes. Someone will have to hold the gem in place until the monster is defeated.

Once the monster is defeated, the gem will lock into place and the next alcove box in sequence will open.

Each gem summons a stronger monster, or a multiple of the same monster (1st gem = 1 monster, 2 gem = 2 monsters, etc) depending on what works best for the party. Once all six gems have been locked into place, the hand opens and the vault door can be unlocked.

Survival Trap

If the party react badly to the other group, survival could be the object of the trap.

Placing a dead body on the altar, such as

the old man, causes the body to vanish and the next gem box to open. If the parties do not attack each other, a monster will appear between the columns every hour on the hour.

Psychological Puzzle

The other party aren't real. The entire puzzle is a test by some deity. The other party will try to sabotage the players, up to and including locking themselves inside the office or swallowing gems. The sabotage should start before the gear is found.