



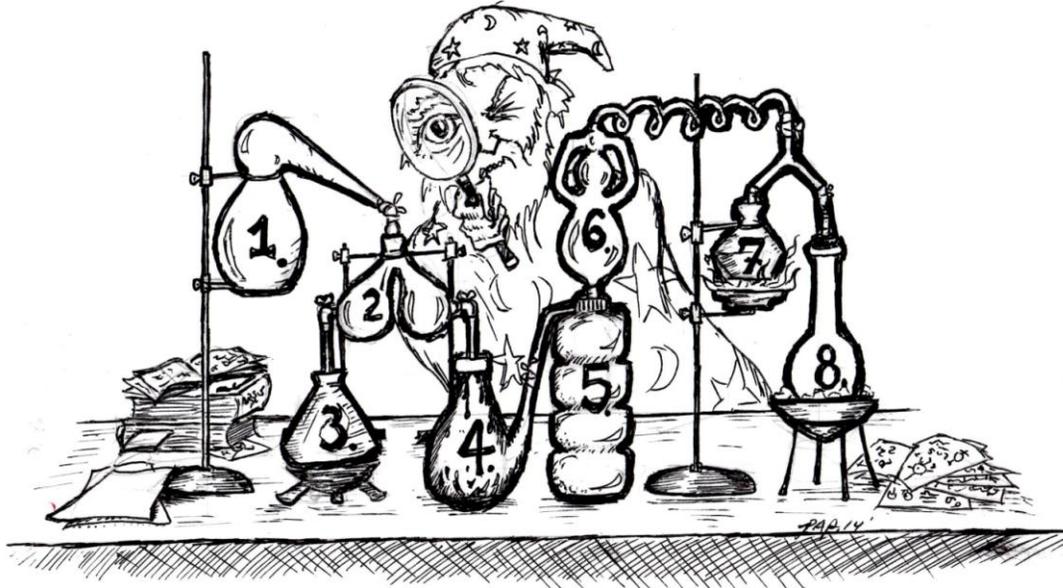
## THE CRUCIBLE



When the Adventurers decided to assist the sage Baerhoff with his "little alchemical difficulty," they didn't realize what they were agreeing to. With a spray of chemical fluorescence, the party finds they have been shrunk to nearly microscopic size, and inserted into the good Doctor's device in order to "work out any problems!" To regain their size, Baerhoff, now a looming giant, pronounces they'll have to figure out what's gone wrong with his experiments...from the inside!

### Environment

The adventure takes place entirely inside the tubes and devices connected on Baerhoff's desktop. The glass has been magically rendered impenetrable to keep out contaminants. The glass is slick with steam, and characters with poor agility have a 25% chance every time they transition between containers of falling to the lowest point of the two...possibly into a pool of chemicals, some with hazardous results.



### Random encounters.

Every time the party moves between areas, roll 2d6. Ignore repeated results:

- 2 : a blinding cloud of steam rolls through the doubling the chances of slipping
- 3 : a minor *fire elemental* appears, demanding the party heat an area (by spell or the controls in areas 3 or 7)
- 4-5 : a burst of vacuum sucks a random hand-held item into the next chamber
- 6-8 : nothing unusual occurs
- 9-10: the party encounters a thick plug of viscous wax blocking their progress and must chop or melt through it
- 11 : a *steam imp* bubbles up from the nearest pool of liquid and demands the party cool an apparatus (by spell or with the controls in area 2)
- 12 : a blast of air knocks characters to their knees! 25% chance of falling backwards into the previous chamber

### ENCOUNTER AREAS

- 1. Alembic – The party find themselves perched precariously on the glass lip of the upper chamber, above a pool of simple saline solution.
- 2. Double Retort – The air throughout this chamber is thick with steam. The glass walls here are etched with runes. Tracing the runes on the right-hand bulb causes frost and ice to bloom on all surfaces, condensing the liquid into a frigid pool (50% chance of immediate immersion, 1d4 damage/round from cold). Tracing the runes on the left-hand bulb opens the drip-valve to area 3.
- 3. Crucible – This walls of this canister are opaque porcelain, crusted with a strange orange mineral. Every round that any mass heavier than a gram touches the floor of the container, it heats 10 degrees. After just two rounds of this, the party will begin to take damage, starting with a single point, but increasing by one additional point of damage each round they stay in the container. On the fifth round, the orange mineral on the wall will melt, pooling on the floor as liquid gold! At their present size, this will appear as a vast amount of wealth...but upon exiting the apparatus, the party will find it amounts to little more than a single gold piece!
- 4. Ampulla – A stench of rot fills this container. Black slime coats the walls and 'floor'. In the center of this muck, a *salamander* has taken up residence. It attacks as a young black dragon, and will attempt to eat any organic material – such as the party.
- 5. Aludel – Each level of this structure is coated with a different element. From top to bottom: gold, silver, bronze, and mithril. Any residue collected from the top three levels will, like the gold in area 3, later be found to be shrunk to near worthlessness. However, rubbing any common weapon in the mithril residue of the bottom layer will imbue the weapon with a permanent magical bonus!
- 6. Reflex Condenser – Two *will-o-wisps* chase one another through the circling pipes of this contraption, spitting electrical sparks. A cautious party may avoid their notice entirely. If the wisps spot the party, they will attack for one round, then rush together. If the party does not keep them separate, they will touch and detonate, shattering the glass and spilling the party – still miniaturized – out onto Baerhoff's desk! Baerhoff himself will be unable to restore the party to full size until his apparatus is fixed, a week hence.
- 7. Cupellation Furnace – Here is the cause of the alchemical malfunction. A young *Efreet* has opened a gate to his home plane, and is skimming off the magical energy. The gate is surrounded by flames, controlled by incantations engraved inside the lid of the device. The gate is destroyed if the flames die – which will bring the Efreet to investigate.
- 8. Athanor – This device is filled with a thick, green ooze (1d4 acid damage/round)...unless the gate in area 7 is destroyed. At that time, the ooze will transmute into a potion which will heal the party and safely restore them to their proper size.