

Shadow Prison Escape!

By Jeff McKelley

DM Notes: This prison dungeon is run as an escape room/ adventure hybrid. The players have a time limit to escape the prison or else be devoured by shadow creatures. DM is free to add wandering monsters as desired.

Player Hook: An abandoned prison lies on the outskirts of town. Rumor has it that the warden hoarded great wealth behind the Gray Door. Inside the prison, a portal filled with a gray swirling mist can be found. This portal leads to a Shadow Plane prison. Players who step into the portal are transported to area 1 of the prison. A voice says "Intruders! You have 3 hours (or other DM determined time limit) to leave, else be devoured." Set a timer and let the fun begin.

Area 1: Guard barracks. Eight bunk beds and 16 chests. Prison guard chain mail, short swords, helmets, and bucklers are available to the players.

Area 2: Broken pieces of tables and chairs are scattered about the room. Skeletal bodies of guards and prisoners lay about the room. As PCs move into the room, five bodies will release a shadow which will attack. Guard shadows will attack players who do not have a guard buckler or helmet while prisoner shadows will attack players with a guard buckler or helmet.

Area 3: Sally port leads to a corridor with five evenly spaced doors on each side of the hall. The hallway has three Shadow guard dogs. They will attack any character who does not have one of the guard bucklers or helmet showing. Cells hold a bed, table with a water basin and a chamber pot, a small wardrobe, and a wooden table and chair.

Area 4: The guards' common room containing tables, chairs, plates, mugs, gaming/gambling paraphernalia.

Area 5: Guard food pantry containing desiccated food and empty barrels.

Area 6: Deputy Office. On the desk is a stiletto stabbed into a piece of parchment. The stiletto has a twist and a half to its blade. The parchment reads "*Warden, The remaining amulets are safe. Remember the vaulted tale of the Magician who sought justice in the tower but only found Death. All you need is in hand. Deputy Gorm.*"

Area 7: Bed chamber. Shelves in this area hold books on prophecy and various accoutrements including a tea cup and tea, a silver bowl with a knife, a deck of tarot cards, a spirit board, and astrology star charts. The Magician, Tower, Justice, and Death tarot cards and the twisted stiletto are needed to open the vault, area 11.

Area 8: The Warden's Office. The shadow Warden is busy at the desk with paperwork. He is dismissive and will take no notice of the players; players may notice he is left-handed. The desk contains a book, a key, a monocle, a small silver comb, a container of moustache wax, and several mirrors. The book has the title "The Warden" on the cover and records prison data. The warden refers to himself in the third person as "the Warden" in the book. The last entry states that to escape, one must use the medium portal while wearing a Topaz Planar Amulet.

Area 9: The Warden's living chambers. Living area with bed, wardrobe, small night-table, and several mirrors. Under the bed is a stone chest covered with mirrors. The key from the desk in area 8 will open a panel on the chest with key code wheels (see picture below-cut out individual circles, randomly rotate them and give to players, keeping them in the same order). Arranging the wheels so that they spell the word WARDEN backwards (NEDRAW) will open the chest. Inside is the key to area 10 and 12 and a single Topaz Planar Amulet.

Area 10. Vault Antechamber. A hammer-wielding golem blocks the door to area 11, the vault. The golem will state that it will only move for its master. A person with a well-groomed moustache and monocle can command the golem, otherwise the golem will attack anyone attempting to get to the door behind it. The hammer can absorb 6 spell levels.

Area 11. Vault: A stone door with a keyhole and four rectangular depressions in the surface. To open the vault door, the Magician, Justice, Tower and Death tarot cards must be placed into the door depressions and the twisted stiletto used as a key. Inside the vault are several small bags of gold and a safe. The safe has a keyhole and can be unlocked using the key that is hidden in the handle of the stiletto. The safe contains Topaz Planar Amulets. At DM option, provide one fewer amulet than there are players.

Area 12: The Tower. Steps wind up to an open area at the top. Four portals are in the walls. A gray swirling mist can be seen in each of the portals. Each portal adorned with a specific pattern: one is bordered with a sword and shield design, a second is bordered in a crystal ball and book design, a third is bordered in a cloak and dagger design, and the fourth doorway is bordered by a lute and rapier design. The crystal ball portal leads to the prime material plane, while the others lead to certain death. Using a portal without an amulet also leads to certain death.

