

DISPLAY OF DAGGERS

Difficulty: medium

This is a basic cryptography puzzle, where characters decode an alphabet to interpret a message left in a smithy by the weaponsmith who was killed in a workshop accident.

After waiting in the queue for months, you're on your way to an appointment with the famous weaponsmith, Kleg Firedraw, noteworthy for his use of strange and rare materials in his metalworking.

Entering the darkened weaponsmith's workshop, you get an uneasy feeling. The place is in disarray, with daggers and swords strewn about, though Kleg's famous sword, *Soulkeeper*, remains on its mount, which stands on a desk in the corner of the room.

In his work as a smith, Kleg often worked with materials of a volatile nature. In fact, his latest endeavor exploded in his face. It would have killed him, but *Soulkeeper*, his sword, drew his soul into it as his body fell lifeless to the ground.

When the characters arrive, no one aside from Kleg's lifeless body is present. The characters might wish to contact the local authorities, but the authorities might be just as likely to arrest the characters. The characters' best bet at avoiding taking the fall—and at getting their new items—is to try to restore Kleg's soul to his body. However, it is stuck in his sword, *Soulkeeper*, and the way to release it is encoded among Kleg's notes.

PUZZLE FEATURES

The workshop is dark when the characters arrive, but through exploration, they find the various projects Kleg had been in the process of completing, as well as his desk, a birdcage with a cloth draped over it, and an iron altar that resembles an anvil.

Kleg's body is curled up on the floor in the center of the room. Unlit torches line the walls. Toward the back of the workshop is a doorway leading to the forge.

ALTAR

The iron altar is formed in the shape of an anvil, and when Kleg's special daggers spell out the answer to the dagger code, *Soulkeeper* magically releases the dwarf's soul back into his body, restoring him to life.

BIRDCAGE

A brass birdcage stands on pedestal beside the desk. Kleg's pet bird Echo is perched inside, but it's hidden beneath a heavy purple cloth that covers the cage.

Echo. Kleg's bird is a type of jay with pale yellow feathers and a black crest. If the cover is removed from its cage, Echo starts squawking the name, "Moradin" intermittently. Characters who succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check recognize Moradin as the name of the lawful good dwarven god, whose symbol is an anvil.

DAGGERS

Dozens of identical finely crafted daggers lay strewn about the shop in no discernable order. They lay all over the floor, a few scattered across the large iron altar.

DESK

The weaponsmith's desk is covered with paperwork and design sketches. Above the desk, a diagrammatic drawing with multiple steps depicts a naked humanoid figure with the sword, *Soulkeeper* floating before it. Curving lines run from the humanoid to the sword, representing the flow of soul energy.

Sketches in the Drawer. In the desk drawer, there is a black leather book of notes, with sketches of exotic swords. At the bottom of each sketch, carefully drawn daggers in different positions form intricate designs. When characters discover the notes, give the players Handout 11.

Soulkeeper. Kleg is no stranger to accidents in his workshop. In fact, *Soulkeeper* serves as a final safety measure should something catastrophic occur when he handles and shapes volatile substances. Should Kleg's life be in jeopardy, his sword stashes his soul away within it for safe keeping. *Soulkeeper* is Kleg's personal sword. Other than its ability to safeguard Kleg's soul, it is a normal two-handed sword. While Kleg won't give up his sword, he will reward those who restore his soul.

KLEG'S CORPSE

Kleg's lifeless body lies in a heap in the center of the room. He is bare at the chest and the skin of his face and shoulders is burned and sooty. A line of dried blood runs from one of his ears.

Because his soul is being held in his sword, he can't be restored to life unless his soul is released. If his body is healed, he remains unconscious until his soul is returned to it.

SWORDS

What appear to be four finely crafted weapons are fixed to the wall behind the weaponsmith's desk. Each one is labeled with a small brass plaque. From left to right, they are "Adamantine Scimitar," "Bonzewood Shortsword," "Mithral Greataxe," and "Truesteel Pike."

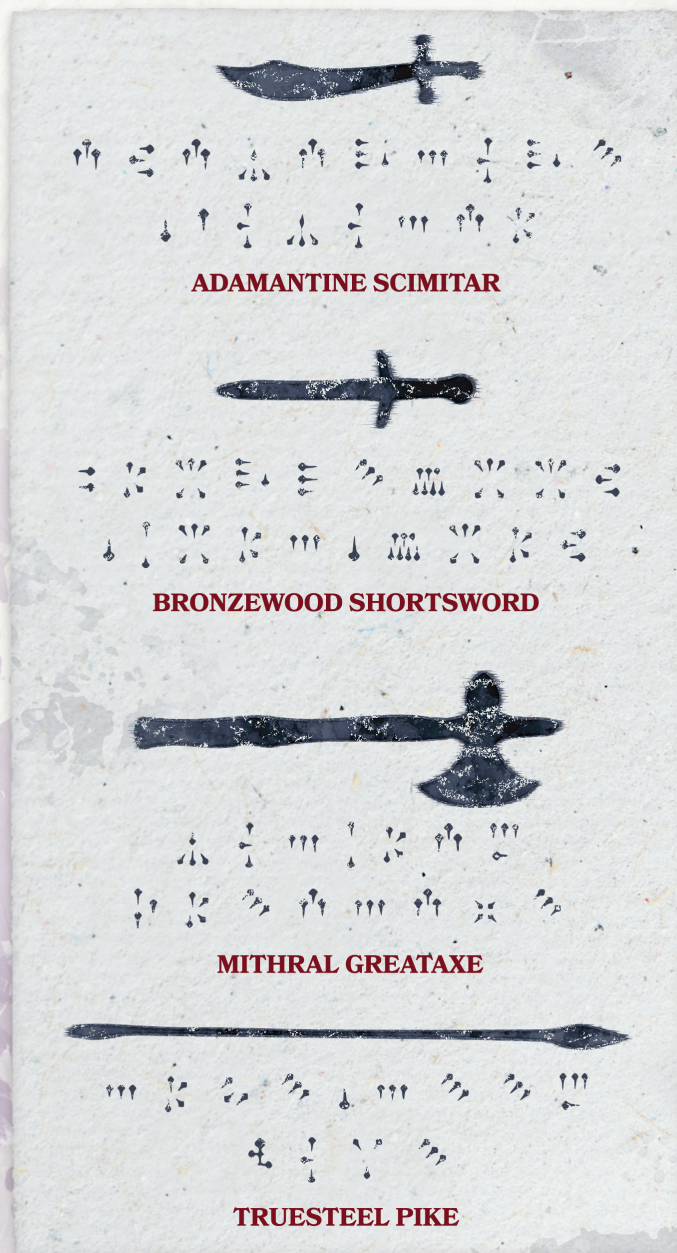
Upon further inspection, these weapons are revealed to be fake tin replicas.

THE SOLUTION

To solve this dagger code, characters must first decode the notes found in the desk drawer. Using the sketched images of the weapons and keeping in mind the rare materials that Kleg the weaponsmith is known to use, the characters must use trial and error to decode the dagger code.

Once the characters learn these letters, they should be able to recreate the word MORADIN on the altar with the daggers from all over the shop. The players can do this by writing out the dagger code on a piece of paper or by using some other prop to represent their characters interacting with the daggers.

The sketches in the notebook and the dagger translations are as follows:



Once the adventurers learn the code, they can spell out “Moradin”; the dagger code for this word is as follows. When this is done, *Soulkeeper* begins to vibrate. It swells with silvery light until at last, Kleg’s soul departs the sword and reenters his body, restoring the dwarf to 1 hit point.



HINT CHECKS

The following hints can be provided to assist with solving. If a character has proficiency with the hint’s associated skill, they receive the hint upon asking for it. If no character has proficiency with any of the hint check skills, they may roll a skill check for the hint.

Intelligence (Nature) DC 15. If at least half of the letters of a single material in the notes (e.g. “BRONZE” in “BRONZEWOOD”) are solved, but the characters are stuck on the rest, the character remembers learning about the material and is able to fill in the rest of the letters.

Wisdom (Perception) DC 10. The character notices the daggers in the shop look exactly like those in the notes.

CUSTOMIZING THE PUZZLE

Extend this puzzle and incorporate it more into your campaign by requiring characters to speak to other townsfolk to learn about Kleg’s background and discover he settled into this town as a weaponsmith after years of clerical service to his god, Moradin—which is how they can learn the password needed to solve the puzzle.

PUZZLE HANDOUT 1: DISPLAY OF DAGGERS

