

EIGHT RINGS

Difficulty: Medium

Perfect for dungeons and temples, Eight Rings can be used as a barrier to the next section of your story arc, a trap that must be solved to exit a room, or a challenge to gain hidden information or another reward. The goal of the puzzle is to determine the correct placement of eight rings of different materials onto four pillars. Once the correct rings are in place, the characters are rewarded. In this example, the room is sealed until the puzzle is solved.

Before you is an octagonal chamber, at the center of which stands a simple altar. Four slender, six-inch pillars rise vertically from its surface, flanking an open chest. A tapestry hangs on the wall behind the altar. A closed stone door is set into the wall across the room.

When the characters all enter the room, the stone door through which they passed slams shut, sealing the characters within.

PUZZLE FEATURES

Both the door through which the characters entered the room and the one across the room are made from thick stone and sealed shut. The only way to open them is to place the correct rings on the pillars. The characters see a chest, an altar with small pillars jutting up from it, and a tapestry.

CHEST

A wooden chest, carved and inlaid in gold filigree, sits open on the altar in the center of the room. Eight rings are arrayed within. Two are made of gold, two of silver, two of copper, and two of stone. All are just wide enough to fit over a pillar. They are the keys to unlocking the doors.

ALTAR WITH PILLARS

Four pillars (one each of gold, silver, copper, and stone) protrude from the altar and stand 6 inches tall. The pillars all have two grooves, each the width of one ring. The rings are meant to slide onto the pillars to rest in the grooves.

Each pillar is designed to hold two ring types in order to unseal the room. The order in which the rings are placed doesn't matter, but if an incorrect ring is placed on a pillar, the creature that placed the ring takes 1d4 lightning damage.



TAPESTRY

The tapestry is decorated with images of rings around the border. In the center, the following verse is embroidered:

*“The pillar of silver desires a gold;
While the pillar of gold hates copper it’s told.
Not silver but stone surrounds a copper home;
And a gold ring never belongs on a stone.
One ring of copper needs a silver ring mate;
Yet another copper ring does not share that fate.
A gold ring and stone ring belong as a pair;
But gold and silver rings a pillar don’t share.
Identical rings together do not go;
And the same combination no two pillars know.”*

Distribute the puzzle handout when the characters first examine the tapestry.

SOLUTION

Eight Rings is a logic puzzle, and if players make a chart or take careful notes, following the rules on the tapestry should lead to the following arrangement:

- Gold pillar: silver and stone rings
- Silver pillar: copper and gold rings
- Copper pillar: gold and stone rings
- Stone pillar: copper and silver rings

HINT CHECKS

Any character has the option of making these ability checks to receive a hint:

Intelligence (Arcana) DC 15. The rings have a magical tie to the room and are drawn to specific pillars. The character gets the feeling that danger comes with taking the rings out of this chamber.

Intelligence (Investigation) DC 15. The character realizes that a silver ring cannot go on the silver pillar.

Intelligence (Investigation) DC 25. The character determines that after all clues are read, there is only one pillar where a silver ring can have a copper mate.

Wisdom (Perception) DC 15. The character notices a piece of parchment at the base of the altar. There is a faint image of a graph or chart on it, but the image is hard to make out.

CUSTOMIZING THE PUZZLE

Here are some ideas if you want to change the difficulty of the puzzle.

LOWERING THE DIFFICULTY

Making props for this puzzle not only brings realism to the table but allows the players to have a tactile experience, which makes finding the solution much easier. If you don't have access to physical props, encourage players to make a chart or cut out pieces of paper to represent the rings.


RAISING THE DIFFICULTY

If a character puts the incorrect combination of rings on a pillar, you might increase the damage of incorrectly placed rings to accommodate the level of the characters.

DM TIPS

- Reward knowledgeable players with low-Intelligence characters with the opportunity to help solve in other ways. Nature or Arcana checks of DC 15 or higher should allow a player to know enough about the metals or magic attached to them to help with the puzzle without conflicting with their character stats. If those checks fail, drop a monster into the room that is carrying a potion with a temporary Intelligence-increase effect.
- Have a party full of treasure seekers? Discourage characters from taking rings out of the room by dropping a monster at their CR level into the room each time they try to do so.

PUZZLE HANDOUT 1: EIGHT RINGS



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