

The Golem Factory

Magic-users dabble in numerous branches of the arcane. Some seek the elemental manifestation of the forces of nature. Others look for ways to return the dead to the living. And some prefer to bind the life force and souls of hapless entities to their merciless will.

Binding rituals are an evil form of magic that traps a soul inside a body or object. The soul is used as a magical battery; a form of energy that slowly but surely is consumed. Subjects of this incantation are stripped from their power. They are nothing but a medium of energy. Some binding masters use elemental entities in this way and bind them to constructs. The worst of them bind people's souls to magical constructs. While less potent than their elemental counterparts, soul-powered constructs are more intelligent and efficient in their behavior and actions than elemental ones.

An evil mage who goes by the name of Lord Artghast has perfected the art of stripping a living person of their soul and embedding it into the inanimate body of a carefully prepared golem. Lord Artghast has built a factory of sorts under his manor for this purpose. So far, over a dozen poor townsfolk have gone missing. The wicked mage lures them into his lair with charms and deceptions. Then he traps them in the depths of his golem factory for future use in his sinister arcane activities. Local authorities have already connected the sudden disappearances to Lord Artghast, who is otherwise known as a purveyor of alchemical components.

The city representatives offer a hefty reward to whoever manages to arrest Lord Artghast. The damnable man must be brought to justice!

Area Descriptions

1. A trapdoor in Lord Artghast's manor leads to a staircase that descends 60 feet and leads to this landing. It is empty except for the pond of clear water in its center. Drinking the water causes a sudden collapse of the stomach, lungs, and heart. This poison is of Lord Artghast's invention.
2. Passing over the triggering plate causes an abrupt jet of clear orange fire to emerge from a hidden nozzle on the floor. The flames are hot enough to melt iron and vaporize flesh. The deadly trap can be deactivated by closing off both wheel valves in areas 5 and 6.
3. Passing over the triggering plate causes a mind-altering wave of magic to affect any creature within 5 feet. The effect numbs the mind and causes permanent mental damage. The mind-numbing trap can be deactivated by pulling the levers in both areas 7.
4. Passing over the triggering plate causes twelve spears to push through the wall. The spears impale anyone within 5 feet of the plate. The trap can be deactivated by pulling the levers in both areas 8.
5. The room contains two plain, stone enclosures. The clay golems within emerge to protect the dungeon against trespassers. These golems are powered by the souls of townsfolk captured by Lord Artghast.
6. The room is identical to area 5. The soul within one of the golems resists its unfortunate condition. The golem fights fiercely but the voice of the person within begs for forgiveness and desperately asks for help.
7. Both rooms contain a lever to deactivate the trap in area 3 and a wooden chest with tools and implements for the traps' maintenance.
8. Both rooms contain detailed documentation about Lord Artghast's degenerate binding rituals and a log of past experiments with necromancy magic in other cities. A copy of the mage's spellbook is stored here.
9. Each chamber contains a large enclosure that contains a prototype larger clay golem. A table by the corner contains embalming implements and other foci used for Lord Artghast's soul-binding ritual.
10. Lord Artghast stands by the central stone table. His incantation summons forth the huge clay golem in the enormous coffin. This is an experiment that contains the souls of ten poor people. The foul mage makes his last stand here but shall attempt to flee if defeat is inevitable. Unfortunately, there is no clear way to save the souls of his victims.