

THE MAD MAGE'S MARVELOUS MENAGERIE

A free puzzle resource brought to you by Above Average Creations



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Introduction

Puzzles are a mainstay of classic fantasy adventures, and when you can include one in your own adventure, your players face another challenge to enjoy and overcome. Unfortunately, not everyone has the ability to create their own puzzles and many commercial adventures simply don't include them.

On the pages that follow, you'll find a familiar type of puzzle that has been modified into a fantasy-style brainteaser for your player's gaming pleasure. You can drop this into your game or campaign with very little effort, or create your own unique puzzle using the included guidelines.

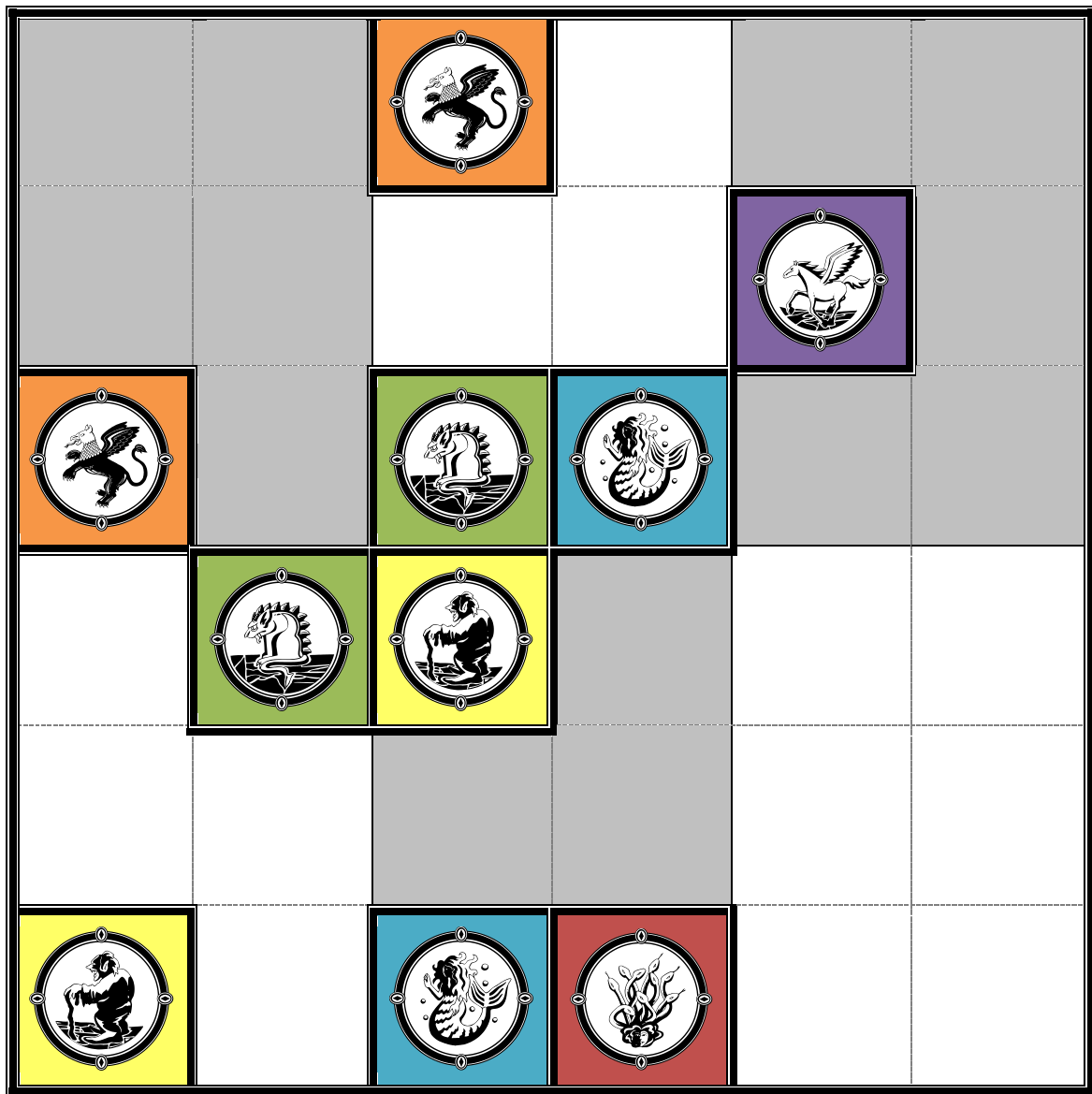
Instructions

1. Print out the "Player's Handout", and mount it onto foam core board for added stability.
2. Print out the "Game Master's Key" onto an adhesive-backed label sheet.
3. Cut-out the square pieces from the Game Master's Key and throw away the following extra pieces:
 - 1 Red Medusa
 - 2 Green Gargoyles
 - 2 Blue Mermaids
 - 2 Yellow Trolls
 - 2 Orange Griffons
 - 1 Purple Pegasus
4. At a time you deem appropriate, hand your players the puzzle board and describe it with something like...

Beneath layers of dust and grime, you discover a vaguely familiar child's game. The carved wooden board is unusually well constructed, but some of the game pieces are fixed in place, while others are missing altogether.

5. At points in your adventure, reward your players with a new puzzle piece and ask one of them to place it on the game board.
 - This works great as a non-monetary reward/treasure.
 - Hand out pieces regularly (i.e. all in one room) if you want the puzzle solved quickly, or spread the pieces out across numerous locations, if you want the suspense to build.
 - Incorrect placement of a piece can have any number of consequences, depending on how you want your game to play out, for example:
 - The board shocks the PC for 1d4 points of damage per the PC's level.
 - The PC becomes confused for 1d10 rounds or insane for 1d4 days.
 - The creature depicted on the piece appears and attacks the party for 1d8 turns.
 - The board does not accept the piece and cannot be tried again for 24 hours.
 - Correct placement of a puzzle piece causes the piece to meld with the game board. You can award some additional prize for the correct placement, if you desire. For example:
 - Each correctly-placed piece causes a carved compass on the reverse side of the board to "activate", showing the PCs the correct path to take next.
 - Completing a section of the board can cause something else to appear such as treasure, an important plot device of your making, or perhaps the creature depicted on the most recently placed game piece.
 - Award bonuses to combat or skill checks when facing related creatures.
 - Completing the game board can have any number of results that fit into your adventure.
 - The board is a key to a doorway or portal.
 - The PC's are magically transported to another location (i.e. the Mage's tower, the final boss room, a safe location, etc.).
 - Reveal a new plot arc to link the current adventure with the next one.
6. If you're feeling really adventurous, you can modify the game pieces to match the creatures in your adventure, thereby giving your PCs foreshadowing of what is to come.

THE MAD MAGE'S MARVELOUS MENAGERIE



In ages past, a mad wizard kept all sorts of strange beasts as pets and playthings. One problem the wizard had to overcome however, was how to keep the menagerie from growing (by mating) or shrinking (by fighting). His solution was to split them up into six pens and then release them for exercise one group at a time.

Some of the odd creatures got loose. You must put the beasts back into their cages. Fill all the empty squares by placing a creature in each square so that no row, column or section contains more than one of each creature of the same type.

Game Master's Answer Key:



The PCs need to fill the board so that every row, column, and group contains no more than one of each symbol, as shown above. The symbols are as follows:

- Red Medusa (5 missing)
- Green Gargoyle (4 missing)
- Blue Mermaid (4 missing)
- Yellow Troll (4 missing)
- Orange Griffon (4 missing)
- Purple Pegasus (5 missing)

10 pieces are already in place, 26 are missing.

If you hadn't noticed yet, this puzzle is based on classic Sudoku puzzles, replacing numbers with fantasy images. The difficulty rating would be considered "easy/average". The images used for this sample board came from freely available [clipart](#).

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