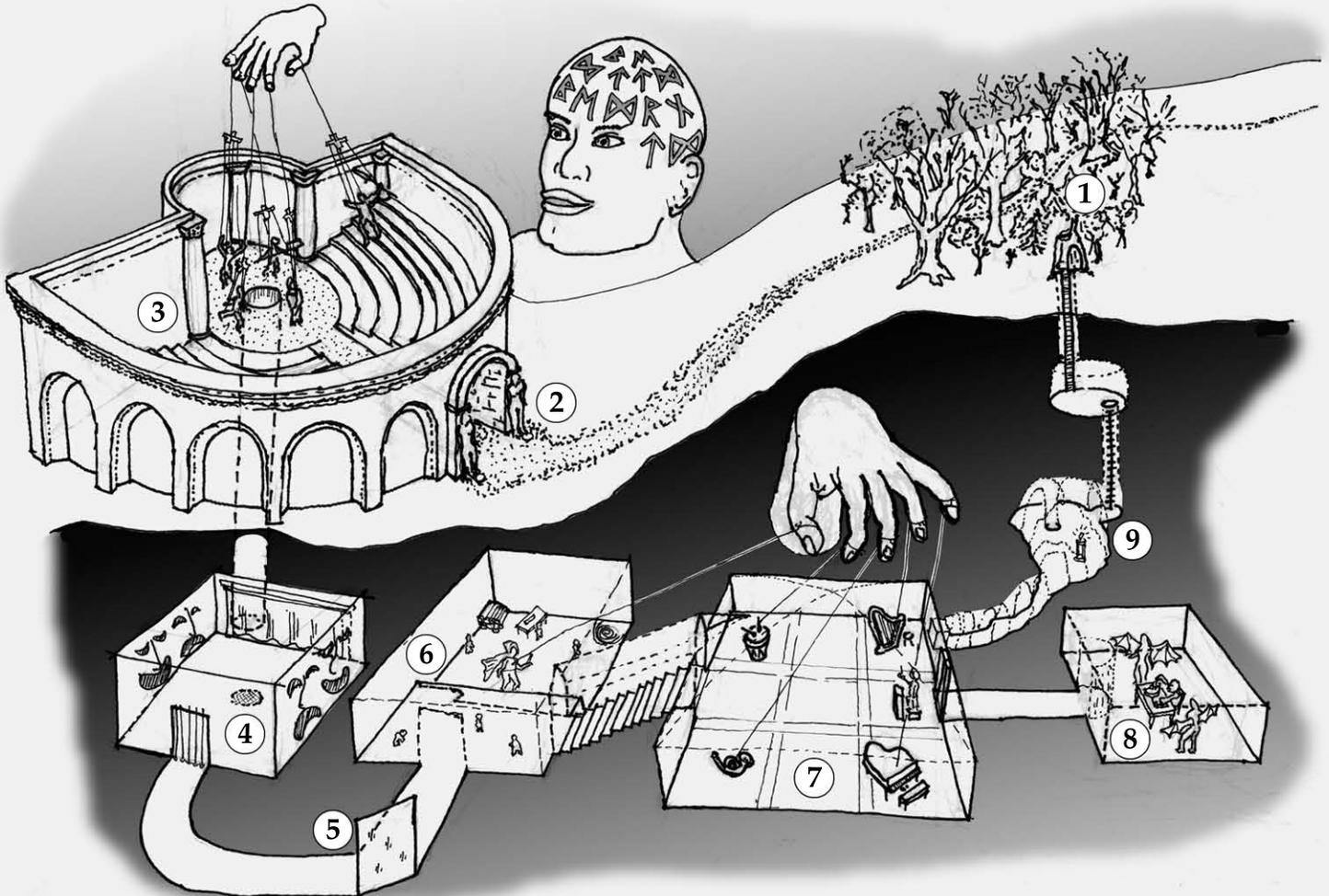


The Sinister Puppeteer

(Left Handed)

1. Brittle Woods - A path through a modest forest suffering from a brutal harvest of wood. The wind sounds as haunting voices echoing laughter and tears through the trees. A stump conceals a door, too well hidden to be found by any but those with knowledge of it.

2. Cursing Caryatids - Twin stone statues flank the entrance, as beautiful as they are hard. The arch stands upon plinths above their heads, twin bowls at their feet. The plinths read "GIVE PLAYERS DUE" and "FOR PASSAGE THROUGH". Any who places a coin within a bowl may pass in peace. If anyone passes them without paying they will both turn and utter a curse upon the trespasser in unison. They spring forth to attack any who attempts to enter the theater by any other route or causes harm to them or the structure.



3. The Puppeteer's Right Hand - Five larger than life marionettes dance here. Each is made of solid wood and hardened leather, held up by mystic strings that disappear to another plane mere inches from the joints. They perform and attempt to entertain any who enter the theater. "Pinky" - A nervous boy, small to the others at six feet tall, dressed in pauper's cloths with a mouth full of surprisingly sharp teeth. "Ring" - A beautiful princess, vain and flirtatious. She wears a dagger at her waist and her hair is set with many sharp pins. "Long" - The long-suffering father of Ring, he walks with help of a mighty staff, and only wishes to find his daughter a good match. "Pointer" - Wily wizard who plays the part of a dimwitted merchant. He greatly desires Ring, but she will never consent to have him. "Thumb" - The flying knight, he speaks nobly, but thinks only of himself, and remains perpetually unaware that Ring pines for him. Once, the marionettes warn anyone who attempts to enter the stage. On a second attempt, or if harm is directed at them, they will attack. They are virtually impossible to defeat without severing the strings that support them, but cannot pursue down the hole.

4. Comedy and Tragedy - A stage curtain, a locked portcullis. Beyond the portcullis music can be heard appropriate to the situation. The faces speak "All Words, All Sport, All Life Upon the Stage". In response to questions comedy laughs, tragedy cries. Each time the curtain in front of the painted stone wall is moved, it releases a spirit of the theater which attacks. The portcullis opens on the word "Play".

5. Perfect Mirror - Fragile, but practically invisible. Able even to reflect magical attacks. The music begins to swell.

6. Workshop - Many gnomes scurry about making new marionettes. They attempt to trick, trap and hinder any who enter this room. Darting from shadow to shadow is the Left Thumb appearing as a Jester. Clever, skilled and deadly, this assassin will take any measure to defeat trespassers but prefers to allow them to pass and strike from behind.

7. Orchestra - A mannequin conductor leads a phantom set of instruments in a stately wood paneled room. The music pounds in assaulting waves and harmonies to drive back interlopers. Each instrument continues to make noise for as long as it can, becoming more hideous and painful with every tear, dent, break or desecration. The large doors will open only at a wave of the conductor's baton. The door to the lost cave is cleverly hidden in the wood panels.

8. The Trapped Puppeteer - Here, beyond a shield of force, the puppeteer acts in thrall to an incubus and succubus (wearing comedy and tragedy masks of gold). He desires freedom, but is compelled to act to fight any interlopers. The shield of force only drops when touched with bare skin. The puppeteer strikes out with threads of string that give him control of whatsoever they touch. The demons attempt to subdue invaders to be their new marionettes.

9. Crystal Pedestal - A dull glow shows the way to the sad, trapped, soul of the puppeteer seeking release.