

Chirality



Written and designed by Jeremy Johnson for the
2024/2025 Lindenbaum Competition

00

It is just before dawn on the first day of your fourteenth year. Wind blows through the trees and you feel your ceremonial garments fluttering against your skin. You stand at the base of The Temple of Reflection. Your attendant, Aziza, wears the purple of a temple priest. The two of you wait for your brother Ares, who is late. Again.

“Everything depends on your actions today. By this evening, you will no longer be pupils. You two must—”

“I know, Aziza.” She only nags when she’s nervous.

Aziza hands you a piece of parchment and two bits of crayon, one red and one blue. “Store this someplace. You should chart your path. You may need to find your way back.”

You take them and tuck them into a pocket in your garments, but that’s not what’s interesting right now. A single obsidian stela stands tall at the base of the temple’s steps. It has always been blank, and indeed one face is, but on the other side, a single word is etched into the smoky glass: *sagas*. You trace your fingers over the letters. “Who did this?” you ask.

“Did what?”

The earth quivers. You lean against the stela until the shaking ceases. In the distance you can see another figure dressed in purple running toward the temple. It’s Ede, your brother’s attendant.

Before Ede even arrives, he’s shouting. “Your brother! Gone! Went to...temple...alone...in the night.” He stops in front of you, gasping for air.

Your fists clench, but then fear, confusion, sadness, and disappointment all join the anger. And then the ground shudders again. The stela cracks. You step back from it before it shatters and crashes down, becoming a vicious-looking heap of shards and slivers.

Aziza’s eyes go wide and she mumbles the same thing over and over, “The prophecy is broken.” Ede falls to the ground clutching his head.

You turn and look up to the top of the temple. Only you and your brother may set foot on or in it. You look back at the attendants, and you just want to get away from them. You run up the steps, taking them two at-a-time. When you arrive at the entrance platform, you find the seal broken. The massive doors—one limestone, one sandstone—stand open. The temple shudders again and someone lets out a groan from inside. You enter and find Ares lying on the floor at the base of another stela, this one made of clear crystal. He’s clutching his chest with his right hand. A pool of blood surrounds him. You hurry to his side and embrace your brother. The stone doors rumble and grind and slam shut.

You cradle his head in the dark. “Brother! Why?”

“I wanted to protect you. I saw some-” He lets out a wet cough. He shakes his head. “Here. This. Follow it.” He fumbles for something and then places a small disk into your hand.

“Wrong choice. In the end. Stabbed...in the...heart.” He struggles to say something else, but can’t get it out. Then Ares, your twin brother, exhales and goes limp.

You pull him into your lap and hold him. By the time you are ready to do anything else, your eyes have adjusted to the room. What little light there is in this room is strange. It’s made from hundreds of nearly imperceptible flashes happening in the air around you. Everything shakes again, and you know you must go. You place your brother’s head gently on the ground and then examine what he gave you. It’s a small compass. Its base is made of limestone with a dull grey metal for the needle.

It’s just light enough for you to read an inscription on the front of the stela that stands over your brother’s corpse:

In the first age there was nothing. Almost nothing. Small somethings would come into existence. Each came with a twin. The two would annihilate each other instantly. Finally, one thing arrived without a twin: *Arora*, the first deity. *Arora* refracted the void into two parts.

On the back side of the crystalline tablet is one word: *level*

You should have entered the temple with Ares; now you’ll have to go in alone. You examine the compass in the faintly flickering light. The only exit lies to the south. It’s ringed by a sparkling crystalline material, the same material the stela is made from. You pass through the open doorway into another chamber. A wall of crystal comes down behind you, blocking the path back.

Your eyes adjust to the relative brightness of this new room. Go to entry 01.

01

You are in a small chamber. The grey metal needle on your compass points north toward the crystalline slab sealing you off from the room with Ares. The limestone walls are carved with simple geometric patterns, and the room is lit by the gentle glow from a fountain bubbling in a recess in the east wall. It’s faintly blue, like your robes. A small trickle of water runs south into the hallway, and there is a passage to a small alcove in the west wall.

**Go west through the opening to entry 04.
Go south down a hallway to 02.**

02

This is a junction of hallways. There's a fountain recessed into the wall here too. A trickle of water bubbles out from it and feeds into a faintly glowing stream of water running from the north to the south down the hall. Another hallway branches off to the west.

Go north to 01.

Take the offshoot west to 07.

Go south to 08.

03

You cross the stone bridge in the darkness. On the platform there is another fountain bubbling and glowing faintly. At the edge of the platform, there is an obsidian archway that goes nowhere but over the edge of the platform. Back to the north, a sheer limestone wall disappears into the darkness in every direction.

Go back across the bridge to 05.

04

You duck into a small chamber. On the north wall there's a statue set into an alcove. It is a statue of a ewe. Her right foreleg is held up and her left ear is down. Below the statue, a single word is carved into the stone: *Arora*. The statue is made of crystal.

Leave this chamber and return east to 01.

05

The south face of this small limestone chamber is missing. A yawning void is beyond. Another fountain bubbles gently in the center of the room filling. Its trail of water flows in a channel south and over the ledge. There may have been a limestone bridge there, but only a few pieces hang from the edge of the room. The breaks look clean; it must have just collapsed from the shaking. Far to the south across a vast emptiness you can just make out a dimly-lit platform. With the bridge gone, there is no way to cross the chasm.

Go back north to 07.

06

At first the room looks huge, but it's a trick; the east wall is a massive, tinted mirror. The other three walls of the room are made of the same limestone as the rest of the temple seems to be. Recesses are carved in the walls, and each is a small fountain bubbling with a gentle blue glow.

The details of the room aren't quite the same in the mirror, and you aren't there either, or at least not fully. There is only a ghostly image of you there, but instead of wearing your blue ceremonial robes, the ghostly image is wearing red ones, like those your brother was wearing. You reach out to touch the mirror's surface, and there is something there, but it's not exactly solid. You push a little harder, and your hand passes through. You could probably go inside that mirror if you wanted.

Go west through the doorway to 08.

Go east through the mirror to 60.

07

This is another chamber with carved limestone walls. The patterns are complex in this room, but that's marred by a large crack in the west wall. It seems recent. There is a limestone stela in the center of this room. It's taller than you, but not by much. On the southwest face it says:

In the second age, many things came into existence under the auspices of *Arora*. The great river *Nedia* nurtured life, oversaw death, and circled ceaselessly.

On the other side, a single word is written: *flow*

Two passages lead from this room.

Go east down the hall to 02.

Go south to 05.

08

This “room” is just a strange widening of the hallway to accommodate a limestone stela. The channel leads to a pool of water that gathers at its base. A message is carved into the stela:

But, there could be no fourth age, because each world was incomplete. What this world needed could not be found here.

On the other side is a single word: *pool*.

To the south, there is a bridge that leads out into a vast black emptiness, the hall runs north, and there’s a limestone archway and a passage to the east.

Go through the hallway north to 02.

Go east through the archway to 06.

Go south across the narrow bridge to 09.

09

You cross the narrow bridge and arrive at a small platform balanced atop a limestone pillar. To the west there is another platform. It’s no more than ten stades away, but there is no way to get there. That platform rests on its own column rising up from the endless blackness below. On the other pillar, something glows blue and illuminates an empty archway at the platform’s edge. It doesn’t seem to have any purpose. Looking back to the north, there is a seemingly endless limestone wall. A few holes are carved into it. One is the room you just came from. There is no way that the temple you entered is large enough to contain this. You ponder this for a while, but you have no choice, you must go back the way you came.

Go back across the bridge to 08.

10

You are in a small stone chamber. The grey metal needle on your compass points north toward a crystalline slab sealing that exit. Drops of blood on the floor lead to the slab, and a single bloody handprint hangs in the middle of it. The sandstone walls are carved with a simple geometric pattern, and the room is lit by the flickering light of a brazier in a recess in the west wall. It is faintly red. There are two open passages leading out of the room.

Go east through the opening to entry 40.

Go south down a hallway to 20.

11

You step through the archway into the emptiness beyond. But your foot finds ground. You pass through it and discover that this side of the obsidian archway is now solid, and it is the other side of the archway that is empty. You stand on a huge granite platform in a new infinite blackness. You can just see the edges. You check your compass. To the south, at the edge of the platform there are two more archways. The one on the right seems blue, perhaps made of sapphire, and on the left, ruby. Standing in the center is a temple guardian wearing purple robes.

“I had expected that you and your brother would arrive together, but now that I’ve seen him without you, I’m not surprised to see the inverse of that.” He squints at the limestone and metal compass in your hand and at the now mostly dried blood covering the front of your robes. The temple shudders.

“What do I do?” you ask.

“You must reach the end...if that’s even still possible. I gave a gift to your brother, that gift, actually.” he nods toward the compass. “I have one to help you too.”

From behind his robes he reveals a huge sheet of silvery material. “This is a *rotator*. It will allow you to pass from one place to its twin.

“It is of little use at an intersection such as this. Its power cannot be used here.”

A rumbling sound echoes through the darkness and the floor heaves. Something along the northern edge of the platform cracks and the ruby archway shatters.

“Follow me. Quickly!” he says and then darts through the sapphire archway and vanishes.

Go through after him to 12.

12

You dive through the passage as the quake continues. You hear cracking and then something that sounds like glass shattering behind you. There is only a smooth wall of limestone where you entered. The shaking finally relents.

You stand up. It's a small room. The east and west walls are filled with intertwined carvings. This room is lit by a bubbling fountain set into the wall. The guardian is there clutching the mirror in a protective posture. A single passageway encircled by a crystalline arch leads southward from the room.

"Things are worse than I imagined." He takes a deep breath, stands the mirror up on the ground and supports it with his left hand, and starts again. "Most of the temple is split between twin states of existence. This tool," he motions toward the mirror, "allows one to twist from the reality on one side, to the other. Step through."

Step through the *rotator* to go to 21.

13

A complicated pattern decorates the walls. The blocks forming the walls of the chamber are mostly limestone, but there are a few made of sandstone. As the carved designs pass over the blocks of sandstone, they become more angular. A single limestone stela stands in the center of the room. On one side, it is written:

Nedia formed a bridge to her world allowing parts of the twin world to enter her own.

On the other side is a single word: *lamina*.

The archway to the north has shattered and collapsed; there is only a single path out of the room through a limestone arch.

Take the passage south to 23.

14

This chamber is a dead end. The walls are still mostly limestone, and the light is mostly blue. You rest your *rotator* against the wall and search for secrets. You can find none.

Go west through the sapphire archway to 23.

15

You step through into this room and are horrified to be ankle deep in a quivering mass of rats. There are no exits here. There was once an exit to the north, but that passage has collapsed in the quaking.

(No Exit)

16

The limestone walls of this room are covered in carvings with areas scooped out for small, gurgling fountains. There are exits to the east and west.

Take the passage east to 28.

Take the passage west to 27.

17

Dust still hangs in the air. The passage to the north has collapsed. The only way out of this section of the passage is to the east.

Follow the passage east to 29.

18

This passageway has collapsed. Limestone rubble has completely blocked the path to the west.

Go north to 28.

19

The chamber is completely engulfed in a cloud of gnats. You can't see much, and all you hear is an endless buzzing. You cover your mouth to prevent inhaling them. You see a sapphire stela in the center of the room. It says:

What began as an exchange between worlds that enabled them to flourish, now became a confusing and desperate struggle for control.

A single word is carved in the back: *ergo*.

There is a passage out of the room to the south through an archway made of obsidian.

Go north to 29.

Go south through an obsidian archway to 33.

20

This is a junction of hallways. There's a brazier recessed into the wall here that casts flickering shadows upon the walls. A hallway branches off to the east. There are a few drops of blood on the ground here. The blood indicates movement between the north and east exits.

Go north to 10.

Take the offshoot east to 70.

Go south to 80.

21

You step through and turn around. The guardian is standing and holding the mirror with his right hand. Shadows dance from the flickering brazier set in the sandstone wall.

"This *rotator* is yours. You may use it as you choose to pass through to the temple's twin reality. But there is one restriction." The guardian carries the mirror south through another crystalline archway.

Follow the guardian and go to 22.

22

"This *level* has no twin. Look!" The guardian holds up the mirror, a sheet of unpolished silver. It reflects nothing. "You are not to pass through in a place like this. Do you understand?"

The room has a single source of light in its center, a crimson flame dances atop a fountain of water. You nod. The foundations of the temple shiver and growl.

"Good. Then take this, and go through the *redivider*."

You look at him questioningly. The granite floor lurches and grumbles.

He points to the crystalline archway on the south wall. "Go!"

You now carry the *rotator*. You may use it at any time to reverse the digits of the number of the passage you are in. For example, using it in passage 15 would take you to 51. However, if flipping the digits would give you the same number the rotator cannot be used. For example, it could not be used in this room, 22.

You stumble through the arch before it shatters.

Leave south through the archway to 13.

23

This is another closed chamber of limestone. Small recesses in the walls bubble with a blue glow. The walls contain a few sandstone blocks with recesses containing red flames. Three archways lead from this chamber, one in each cardinal direction. All are limestone except the one to the east, it's made of sapphire.

Go north to 13.

Go south to 25.

Go east to 14.

Go west to 24.

24

This is a bend in a mostly limestone hallway, but the path to the south has collapsed. Dust still hangs in the air. If there was another pathway out, there isn't one now.

Go eastward to 23.

25

This limestone passage bends from the north to the east, but the eastern way has caved in. There is nowhere to go except north.

Go north to 23.

26

Huge chunks of limestone block this passage to the east. The only way out is south.

Go south to 28.

27

This tunnel has collapsed. Limestone blocks prevent you from going south. The only way out is to the east. Strangely, that pathway is covered by an archway made entirely of ruby.

Go east to 61.

28

This room is strangely almost entirely sandstone. Red flames flicker in the recesses in the walls. There are three paths leading from this chamber.

Go north to 26.

Go south to 18.

Go east to 16.

29

The ceiling has caved in on the western half of this room. If there was once a passage that way, it's been buried under tons of sandstone. There are two other ways out of this chamber.

Take the passage south to 19.

Pass through the sandstone archway east to 17.

30

You cross the stone bridge that hangs over the vast blackness stepping around the blood droplets. On the platform there is a brazier that burns with red fire and just beyond, there stands a strange archway carved from obsidian, but if you were to step through it, you'd just be stepping off the platform. Behind you, across the chasm, the bridge reaches out to a sheer sandstone wall that disappears into the darkness in every direction. A low rumble echoes in the darkness. The platform shakes and pitches. The bridge cracks loudly and then crumbles and falls away into the darkness. You listen for the stones' impact, but no sound ever comes. You sit on this platform for a long time. There is no way to go anywhere from here. There is nothing to do now but step through the empty archway and hope something happens.

Step south through the obsidian archway to 11.

31

A complicated pattern design of intertwining beasts decorate the walls. The blocks forming the walls of this chamber are mostly sandstone, but there are a few made of limestone. The carvings on the limestone blocks seem smoother, more serene. A single limestone stela stands in the center of the room. On one side, it is written:

Aiden formed a bridge to his world allowing passage from the twin realm into his own.

On the other side is a single word: *animal*.

The archway to the north has shattered and collapsed; there is only a single path out of the room through a sandstone arch.

Take the passage south to 32.

32

This is another closed chamber of sandstone. Small recesses in the walls flicker with red flames, but there are a couple of limestone blocks with recesses and those have bubbling blue fountains in them. Four paths once lead from this chamber, one in each cardinal direction, but the one to the south has collapsed. Two of the remaining three are sandstone, but to the east is a ruby archway.

Go north to 31.

Go east through the ruby archway to 42.

Go west to 41.

33

You step through the crystal archway and the temple pitches violently. You stumble out onto another platform with no walls surrounded by endless black. You carry your *rotator* in one hand and the compass in the other.

A guardian kneels in prayer. He's holding a staff vertically in his hands and pressing his forehead against it even as the world shakes.

"Guardian?" you ask. You hear crumbling and cracking in the distance. The temple is collapsing. The guardian does nothing. "Hello?" you say, louder.

He shakes his head and stands. After a moment, he turns toward you with a puzzled look on his face. "You. Your brother was here earlier. What happened? Where were you? Where is he now?"

You look down at your bloodstained vestments. "He's dead," you say. "Stabbed in the heart."

The guardian's eyes open wide for a moment and then narrow. The platform continues to shift and lurch. "You...are twins. You cannot live when he is dead." He jumps back in a defensive posture. "This is your fault!" He raises his staff and swings at you.

You duck his first blow. A second comes around and just grazes your cheek.

"You must die or we all die!" He attacks again, knocking your *rotator* from your hand. It lands on the ground behind you. "Don't you understand!?" His next blow comes for your knee. You manage to move it, but you can't quite get clear of the blow. You tumble backwards and fall into the *rotator*. "NOOOO!" he screams. There is a high pitched noise and then a deafening explosion. You are hurled out of the *rotator* and land on the platform on all fours. You hear the guardian wailing. He's no longer on the platform. His yell grows fainter and fainter until you hear nothing. You notice that the shaking has stopped too.

You turn to gather your *rotator*, but it has shattered. The ground is covered in tiny slivers, but there are four pieces large enough that you might be able to squeeze through them, if you dare try.

There were two archways here leading south, but the ruby one has collapsed.

Go through the sapphire archway to 34.

34

You stumble out of the archway onto another limestone platform seemingly adrift in darkness. Two sapphire archways stand at the western and southern edges of this platform. Beyond them is just darkness. The platform trembles. First, the arch to the south cracks and then shatters and falls away into the darkness below, and then the arch on the western edge does the same. Finally, the sapphire archway behind you fractures and then collapses.

With that, the movement finally stops. You are hopelessly stuck on an unstable platform in a dark expanse. There are only two options. The first is unthinkable: stepping off the platform and falling into darkness. To do that, would surely mean the end. The end of you for certain, and perhaps the end of your world. You won't consider that unless there is no other choice.

You have one other thing you can try. You place one of the four shards of the *rotator* on the ground and step through it.

Fragments of the *rotator* are consumed when used, otherwise they work exactly the same as it did before: you may use it at any time to reverse the digits of the number of the passage you are in. If this is the first time you are reading this message, you have three (3) fragments left.

If you use all of your fragments and can progress no further, you may step off the platform and go to section 66.

You emerge on a sandstone platform. The fragment of *rotator* shatters.

You find yourself at 43.

35

This sandstone platform is engulfed in flames! You can't stay here. You dart toward one of the sapphire archways that stand along its edges.

Leap through the archway west to 39.

Run through the archway south to 45.

Dive through the archway north to 37.

36

There is a bubbling fountain in the center of this sandstone platform. A ruby archway leads south and a sapphire one north.

Step through the sapphire archway to 38.

Go south through the ruby archway to 64.

37

This platform is made of limestone and has only two significant features. At the southern edge there stands a ruby archway, and along the eastern edge of this platform are the fractured remains of a sapphire archway.

Take the ruby archway south to 53.

38

A single ruby archway leads from this limestone platform.

Step through the archway to the south to go to 63.

39

This limestone platform once had two sapphire archways. The one to the north has collapsed, and only the one to the west remains.

Go west through the remaining archway to 49.

40

You duck into a small chamber. On the north wall there's a statue set into an alcove. It is a statue of a ewe. Her left foreleg is held up and her right ear is down. Below the statue, a single word is carved into the stone: *Arora*. The statue is made of crystal.

Leave this chamber and return west to 10.

41

This chamber is a dead end. The walls are mostly sandstone and contain recesses with red flames. There is little to do here.

Go east back through the ruby archway to 32.

42

This section of the hallway turns the corner. Once again, it's mostly built with sandstone, but with accents of limestone.

**Follow the hallway south to 51.
Follow the hallway west to 32.**

43

This is a sandstone platform resting on a column in the mysterious void of the temple. Massive shards of ruby rest in a heap along its northern edge. Two other ruby archways stand at the southern and eastern edges of this platform, according to your compass. You can't see anything beyond the platform you're on.

Step through the ruby archway to the south to 93.

Step through the ruby archway to the east to 73.

44

You are on another platform, this time made of granite. A small table and a bench rest at its center. A guardian sits on the bench facing away from you. Her long white hair covers the shoulders of her robes. You look back at the archway you came through. It isn't obsidian. In fact, you don't know what it is. Colors seem to shift and swirl within it.

"Hello, dear," she says. "Come hold this."

"Hello?" You ask, cautious after your exchange with that last guardian.

"This," she says, holding up a small kettle. "I need you to do me a favor."

You take the kettle from her and join her on the bench.

"Tea. Best in all of Costrom. Best in all of Mortsoc too, truth be told." She takes a scoop from a small wooden box and dumps it into the kettle. "Be a dear," she says and motions over in the direction of two archways, one sapphire and one ruby.

You take the kettle with you and stand before the doorways wondering which to go through.

Go through the ruby archway to 65.

Go through the sapphire archway to 56.

45

A huge sapphire stela stands on this sandstone platform. One face reads:

Nedia fought back. Drowning attackers and lashing out with all the natural forces at her disposal.

On the back is a single word: *steels*.

The only way off of this platform, assuming that you don't want to jump, is through a sapphire archway on the northern edge.

Step through the archway to 35.

46

There are two paths off of this limestone platform. One is a ruby archway leading north, and another is a sapphire archway leading east.

Take the sapphire archway east to 48.

Take the ruby archway north to 63.

47

Sapphire archways stand along the northern and western edges of this limestone platform. An obsidian archway stands on the southern edge.

Take the archway north to 49.

Take the archway west to 48.

Take the obsidian archway south to 44.

48

You stand on a sandstone surface. A sapphire archway stands on the western edge of the platform, and a ruby archway stands on the eastern edge.

Enter the sapphire archway to the west to go to 47.

Enter the ruby archway to the east to go to 64.

49

This limestone platform has only one archway, a ruby one, to the south.

Take the archway to the south to 74.

50

Light from a brazier flickers on the three walls of this chamber. The wall to the south is entirely missing. In that direction there is only a narrow sandstone bridge over an impossibly deep chasm. The bridge is attached to a dimly-lit platform far to the south. Drops of blood scatter the bridge, the floor, and lead north.

Go back north to 70.

Cross the bridge to the south and go to 30.

51

This is a sandstone room, but set into the floor is a limestone block. Inset into its surface is a large ruby, and on that ruby are etched two words: *stark cuts*.

You notice that when you stand in the center of the room, the needle on your compass twitches.

Leave and head north to 42.

52

This sandstone passage bends from the north to the west, but the northern way has caved in. There is nowhere to go except west.

Go west to 62.

53

This sandstone platform was seemingly once a crossroads, but only two archways still stand. There is also a massive ruby stela here. On one side is written:

Aiden bristled. He would protect and lead his pack. He led armies to attack the other realm.

On the other side, there is a single word: *serif*

A ruby gate stands to the north and a sapphire one to the south. The archways to the east and west have been destroyed.

Step through the northern, ruby archway to 73.

Step through the southern, sapphire archway to 45.

54

Stinging ice pummels you here and you slip on the layer of pellets that have accumulated on the limestone here. You move slowly and carefully even though your garments are soaked and freezing cold, and the sleet bites your exposed flesh. There are two ruby archways here.

Take the archway north to 53.

Take the archway west to 63.

55

You emerge onto a platform. The guardian is already there, waiting.

“Now, you must pass through this door...”

“Guardian, something is bothering me. The creation story. It didn’t end; it just stopped.”

“That’s right! It never did end, that’s why you and your brother came here. You are meant to end the strife of the third age. The others believe that the asymmetry of your brother’s death has doomed us all, but they are wrong. Asymmetry is why we are here at all. The quaking is because the third age never ended. You’ve lived a sheltered life, but the war has continued unabated. If you can complete the passage, you will bring an end to that war.”

“And if I can’t?”

“Oh don’t worry about that. Just remember what you’ve learned and you’ll do fine.” She touches your arm, and you feel a warmth flow through you. “You can rotate once. Your task is to go through that blue door, pick the right room, and flip. Understand? Just like you did with the *rotator*. Just make sure you’re standing in the right place when you do it.”

You nod.

Go through the blue doorway to 59.

56

On this platform you find two more archways and a fountain. You fill the kettle with water before moving on.

Go through the sapphire archway to 68.

Go through the ruby archway to 86.

57

The room is empty save for a single obsidian door. I guess that’s *reward* enough!

Go through the doorway to 88.

58

As soon as you rotate into this room and your feet touch the ground, a *trap* is sprung. A mesh of razor sharp wires sweeps through the room. Your body tumbles to the floor in cubes.

The End.

59

You feel cautiously optimistic as you enter the room. Once inside you find a limestone stela. On it is a single word: *mood*. There are two doors: one to the east and another to the west.

**Go through the eastern doorway to 67.
Go through the western doorway to 78.**

60

The west wall of this room is a massive mirror, and the other three walls are carved from sandstone. At first you thought the mirror was tinted, but now you can see that on this side the recesses are filled with gently flickering red flames, while those on the other side glow blue.

**Go east through the doorway to 80.
Go back west through the mirror to 06.**

61

The limestone walls of this room are covered in carvings with holes scooped out for small fountains. The wall to the west has been crushed, so that passage is inaccessible. The only exit is to the east according to the compass. But can that be right?

Go east to 82.

62

This mostly sandstone passageway makes a sharp turn. Unlike many of the others, it's undamaged. You notice that the path east is ringed in sapphire.

**Follow the passage east through the sapphire archway to 25.
Go south to 82.**

63

There is a burning brazier in the center of this limestone platform. Ruby archways lead in all directions except west.

**Step through the archway to the east to 54.
Step through the archway north to 83.
Step through the archway south to 64.**

64

There is only a single way off of this platform. A ruby archway to the north.

Go through the archway to 36.

65

On this platform there is a brazier with a raging fire inside. You place the kettle over it. At first the tea smokes, and then it bursts into flame.

“Not how I usually do it,” she says from behind you. “I’m glad we did this practice run with you before the main event. I can stand to lose a little tea, but if you make any more mistakes... Well, just don’t make any more mistakes. Follow me.”

She steps through an obsidian archway.

Follow her to 55.

66

You step out into the darkness. You fall and fall and fall until you almost feel like you’re floating. You don’t hit the ground, but you don’t fall endlessly either. The world is now only you, and you begin to melt away into an ever more abstract version of yourself. Finally, you are gone.

The End.

67

In this room, there is a sapphire stela. On it is carved a single word: *devil*. There is an exit to the west.

Go through the doorway to 59.

68

Another platform and another fountain. You catch more water in the kettle, but it overflows, spilling most of the tea leaves into the water basin.

“That’s a little weak for my tastes,” she says from behind you. “I’m glad we did this practice run with you before the main event. I can stand to lose a little tea, but if you make any more mistakes... Well, just don’t make any more mistakes. Follow me.”

She steps through an obsidian archway.

Follow her to 55.

69

In this room is a single sapphire stela. On it is written a single word: *repel*.

The End.

70

This is another chamber with carved sandstone walls. The patterns are intricate. There is a sandstone stela in the center of this room. It's taller than you, but not by much. On the southeast face it says:

In the third age, many things came into existence under the auspices of *Arora*. The wolf deity, *Aiden*, hunted, fed, and guarded those in this world.

On the other side there are two things to note. The word *wolf* is carved into it, and there is a single bloody handprint on its surface.

Two passages lead from this room. A trail of blood connects them.

Go west down the hallway to 20.

Go south to 50.

71

Dust still hangs in the air. Sandstone rubble blocks the path to the west. The only way out of this section of the passage is to the north.

Go north to 72.

72

This passage has collapsed. Sandstone blocks prevent you from going west. The only way out is to the south.

Go south to 71.

73

This sandstone platform has two archways, both made of ruby. One stands on the western edge and one on the southern.

Step through the archway south to 53.

Step through the archway west to 43.

74

There are three arches on this sandstone platform. A ruby one leads north, and a sapphire one leads east, and an obsidian one leads south.

Take the ruby archway north to 94.

Take the sapphire archway east to 48.

Take the obsidian archway south to 44.

75

This room contains a sandstone stela, but it has broken off of its pedestal and lies face down on the floor. There is no way to shift it to see the word on the other side. Strangely, a drawer rests on the floor beside it.

**Go through the doorway north to 85.
Go through the doorway south to 96.**

76

That's it! You find yourself standing in a sandstone room unharmed. There is an obsidian doorway set into the southern wall.

Go through the doorway to 77.

77

The guardian is here, drinking tea.

"Back already, dear? Great! Time for the next challenge. You have one more rotation in you, so use it wisely. Go through that door over there." She motions toward a red door.

The temple shakes. "Oh, that reminds me! If you find the right path, best to just make the switch. We're running short on time here."

Go through the door to 85.

78

In this room, there's a sandstone block set into the floor. Inset into its surface is a large sapphire, with a single word etched on it: *tip*. There is also a door leading out of the room.

Go through the doorway to 59.

79

As promised, you are in a limestone room. There is a doorway ringed in sapphire leading to the south. You stand in the room and ponder what she meant. In the mirror, you notice something strange. There are drops of blood on the floor in the other room, but not in this one.

You look at the strange ghostly image of yourself in the mirror. You raise your hand and put it over your heart, and the other version of you does the same, but different. And then you remember the image of your brother with his right hand clutching the left side of his chest. Could that be right?

**Go through the mirror to 97.
Go through the doorway to 89.**

80

This “room” is just a strange widening of the hallway to accommodate a sandstone stela.

But, there could be no fourth age, because each world was incomplete. What this world needed could not be found here.

On the other side is a single word: *loop*. You feel like you’ve been here before.

To the south, there is a bridge that leads out into a vast black emptiness, the hall runs north, and there’s a sandstone archway and a passage to the west.

**Go through the hallway north to 20.
Go west through the archway to 60.
Go south across the narrow bridge to 90.**

81

This passageway has collapsed. Limestone rubble has completely blocked the path to the north.

Go west to 92.

82

Red flames flicker in the recesses in the sandstone walls. There were once three paths leading from this chamber, but the path to the south has collapsed in the quakes.

**Go north to 62.
Take the passage east to 61.**

83

There was once a ruby archway to the west, but it has been destroyed. The only way off of this sandstone platform is the sapphire archway to the south.

Step through the archway to 36.

84

There is a single ruby archway along the western edge of this sandstone platform.

Go through the archway to 74.

85

This sandstone room contains a ruby stela with a single word etched into it: *part*. You could flip here, or you could go through the doorway to the south if you don't think that would be a good idea.

Go through the doorway to 75.

86

On this platform there is a brazier with a raging fire inside. You place the kettle over it and wait. Just before it starts boiling, you remove the kettle and turn to go back to the guardian. She's standing behind you holding two cups.

You pour the tea into each cup and place the kettle on the ground. It's warm, fragrant, and absolutely delicious. You catch yourself smiling for the first time during this whole ordeal. "What did I tell you?" she says. The two of you sip your tea in silence.

Eventually the tea is gone, and she says, "Very well, let's get on with it. You're doing well so far. Let's make sure that continues.

She steps through an obsidian archway.

Follow her to 55.

87

You are safe inside a sandstone room with an obsidian doorway along the south wall.

Let a step toward the doorway take you to 66.

88

You step out onto the platform once again. The guardian is there waiting for you.

“The mirror is more than just a metaphor, you know? You truly are the mirror of your brother, Ares. Think about that.”

What is she getting at?

“The same thing is going to happen to you, Sera.”

“I’m going to die?” you ask.

“Well, maybe. But that’s not what I mean. Let me spoil the rest of this trial for you. You’re going to walk through that door over there.” She motions to a crystalline doorway. “You’ll find a limestone room with a giant mirror, not unlike one you’ve seen before. In each of those rooms, there is a doorway. Each of those doorways leads to another room. These rooms are mirrors of one another. In one there is a ruby etched with the word *bats*. In the other, there’s a sapphire etched with the word *bats*. Do you know what I mean?”

You furrow your brow. “What kind of a test is that?”

“It’s a test of chirality. Don’t make the same mistake your brother did. Now go.”

Go through the doorway to 79.

89

The guardian is holding a knife, and she lunges at you as you enter. The blade sinks deep into your chest. She strikes at your right side. The blade sinks deep into your heart.

You look at the ground and you do indeed see the word *bats* etched in sapphire. You fall to your knees and then look up at the guardian. She frowns at you. “I’m sorry, dear. I didn’t want it to turn out like this. Here, let me at least take you to your brother.” She escorts you through a doorway, and you find that you are near the beginning of the temple. She holds your hand as you walk following your brother’s trail of blood. Finally, you arrive at the entrance. You lie down beside your brother. The temple begins to shake again.

The End.

90

You cross the narrow bridge to a small platform balanced atop a sandstone pillar. To the east there is another platform. It's no more than ten stades away, but you have no way to get to it. That platform rests on its own stone column rising up from the endless blackness below. On the other pillar, a red light flickers and illuminates an empty archway at the platform's edge. Looking back to the north, there is a seemingly endless sandstone wall. A few holes are carved into it. One is the room you just came from. There is no way that the temple you entered is large enough to contain this. You ponder this for a while, but you have no choice, you must go back the way you came.

Go back north across the bridge to 80.

91

You enter a huge, spherical chamber. In the center of the room is a massive stela made entirely of ruby. In the front is written:

Each world entered a battle with the other. It was only a matter of time before the gods became involved.

As you move around to examine the other side, you notice an enormous creature resting against the back of the stela. It is sleeping, so you move quietly, and keep your distance. Just beside its head you can read the word: *stang*.

There is a passage out of the room to the south through an archway made of obsidian.

Go north to 92.

Go south through an obsidian archway to 33.

92

The ceiling has caved in on the eastern half of this room. If there was once a passage that way, it's been buried under tons of sandstone. There are two other ways out of this chamber.

Follow the hallway south to 91.

Go west to 81.

93

This limestone platform once had two ruby archways on it, but now only the one to the north remains. The one to the west lies in a heap.

Go through the archway to 43.

94

This limestone platform has only one archway, a ruby one, to the south.

Take the archway to the south to 74.

95

You flip into a room with no exits. A sandstone stela stands at the center of the room. It shows a single word: *doom*. The structure begins to shake violently. The stela breaks off and falls face-first onto the ground. Eventually the entire structure collapses, and you are crushed. The third age continues.

The End.

96

You enter a sandstone room, but before you can do anything a diseased madman attacks you. His nose has rotted off. He sinks his few teeth into your flesh and tears. Despite his deterioration, he's strong, and you're losing a lot of blood. Your strength and will fade until you lose consciousness.

The End.

97

You are now in a sandstone room. There is a doorway ringed in ruby leading to the south. There are drops of blood on the floor lead to—or perhaps the lead from—a ruby doorway.

You look at the strange ghostly image of yourself in the mirror once again. You raise your hand and put it over your heart, and the other version of you does the same, but different. Yes, that's the key.

Go through the mirror to 79.

Go through the doorway to 98.

98

The guardian is holding a knife, and she lunges at you as you enter. The blade sinks deep into your chest. She strikes at your left side, but the blade misses your heart. It beats on the right side of your chest.

You look at the ground and you do indeed see the word *bats* etched into a ruby. You look back up at the guardian and she smiles at you. “Sorry, dear. It had to be done. Here, hold some pressure on that.” She places a wad of gauze into your hand and helps you hold it against the wound in your chest. “Come with me now, let’s get you to the end.”

Allow her to escort you through the final doorway to 99.

99

As you pass through the doorway, the pain in your chest fades, and so does the world around you. You are beginning to understand. The guardian steps back from you as you begin to glow.

The temple can no longer contain or control you. You move through a doorway defying the geometry of this place to find your brother’s body. With a thought, you throw open the outer stone doors. In the fading light of the evening you place your hands on Ares and fill him with life. You are the *reviver*.

He opens his eyes. “Sera? You did it?”

You smile down at your brother. “We did it.” Ares stands and takes your hand. “We shall bring a fourth age.”

Together the twins have been *deified*. Let the war end and a new age of peace begin!

A New Beginning.