

THE FLAMING PUZZLE FLOOR OF UBTAO

The trap in the House of the Crocodile that is hardest to picture from words alone, so here it is drawn out: the hallway as the players see it, a side view, a plan, and the rules as I wrote them for our table.



The hallway, from the terrace. Drawn by hand by the DM.

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

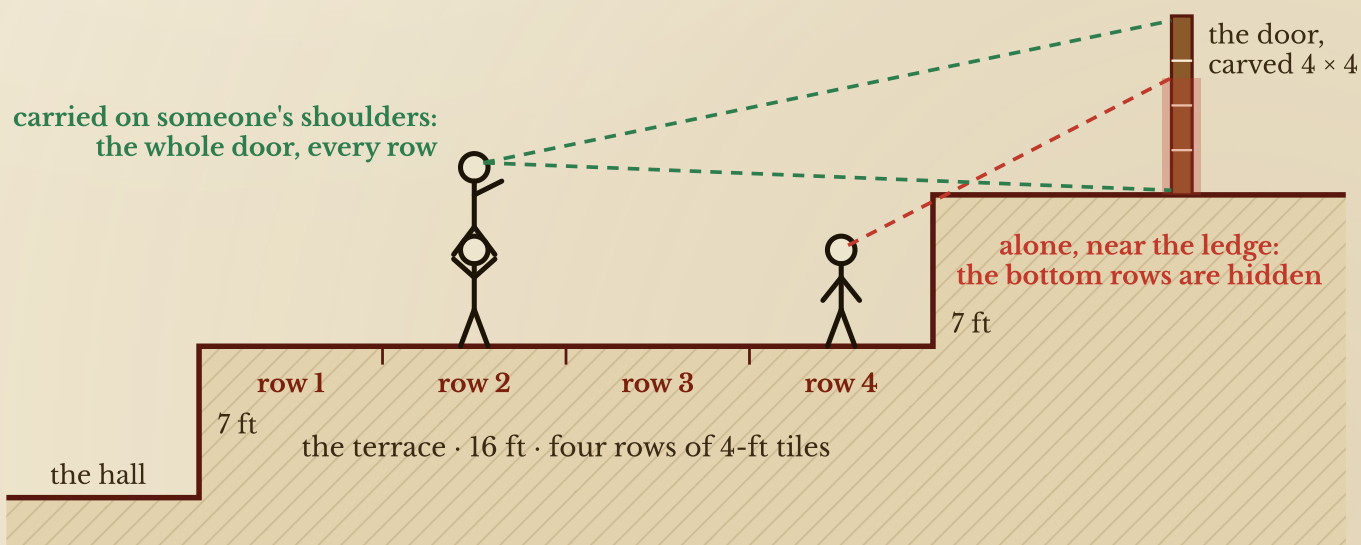
- 1 The terrace.** Sixteen tiles, four by four, sixteen feet across. Step on the wrong tile and flames blast out of the walls.
- 2 The far ledge.** Seven feet of stone carved with Ubtao's labyrinths. It is why the clue gets harder to read as you cross.
- 3 The door.** Carved with the same four-by-four pattern as the floor. One square glows faintly: the safe tile in the row you are about to step on.

THE IDEA

The door is a map of the floor. The bottom row of the door is the first row of tiles, and each correct step lights the next square up.

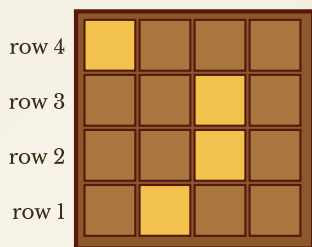
The catch is the far ledge. The closer you get, the more of the door it hides, so the players need someone higher up. That is the fable of the Man and the Crocodile again: carry your partner.

SIDE VIEW • NOT TO SCALE



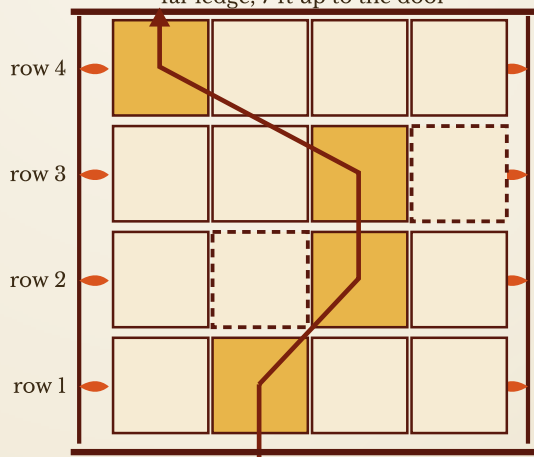
The nearer you get to the far ledge, the more of the door its edge hides. A rider on someone's shoulders sees over it.

THE DOOR, AS THE PLAYERS SEE IT



the door is a map of the floor

far ledge, 7 ft up to the door



near ledge, 7 ft up from the hall · start here

-  Safe: matches the glowing square on the door
-  Illusion: looks safe, but isn't
-  Anything else: the walls fire

One example path. Each row has one safe tile, and the door shows which.

RUNNING IT

When the team works together, Ubtao's carvings on the walls glow. When somebody fails again and again, or goes it alone, they dim and crack.

At our table, they worked out the carry rule quickly, and Fate carried Akira.

THE SETUP

Climb a 7-foot ledge to reach a terrace sixteen feet across, tiled in a four-by-four grid. At the far end is another 7-foot ledge, and on top of it a wooden door carved with the same four-by-four pattern.

READING THE DOOR

One square on the bottom row of the door glows faintly. It matches the safe tile in the first row of the floor. Spotting the glow is a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check. If nobody spots it, they guess.

Step on the right tile and the next square up the door lights, for the next row. The further across they get, the more of the door the far ledge hides. Only someone on another character's shoulders, or using magic such as *fly* or *spider climb*, sees the whole pattern clearly.

THE WRONG TILE

Magical flames blast out of the walls. Every creature on the terrace makes a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw, taking **22 (4d10) fire** damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

ILLUSORY TILES

Some tiles look exactly like safe ones but are illusions. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check before stepping on one reveals it. Step on one and roll a d4:

d4	What happens
1	Spectral crocodiles. Two appear and attack (use specter stats). They vanish after 1 minute, or when defeated.
2	Poison gas. Green mist fills the terrace for 1 minute. DC 14 Constitution save or take 14 (4d6) poison damage and be poisoned for 1 minute.
3	Blinding flash. DC 13 Constitution save or blinded for 1 round.
4	Sent back. Whoever stepped on it is teleported back to the start of the floor.

CARRY YOUR PARTNER

This is the shrine's answer to every trap in it. If one character carries another, like the Man and the Crocodile in the fable, the rider sees over the ledge and guides the carrier across, and the flames never fire.

Other ways round it. *Dispel magic* on the floor shuts down the flames and the illusions for 1 hour. *Detect magic* or truesight shows the illusory tiles.