

# Instructions

This is not only a book. This is also a building in the shape of a book... perhaps a library, the set of a television show, or a maze. Each numbered page depicts a room in the building. The doors and passages in each room lead to other rooms. For example, the room on page 1 has doors leading to rooms 11, 22, and 9. To go through the door labeled 22, simply turn to page 22. All the doors here are one-way--just because there's a door from 1 to 22 doesn't mean you can go back from 22 to 1!

Your challenge is to find your way from room 1 to room 24, travelling through every room exactly once.

Once you've found the correct path, you may even be able to find and solve the riddle of the library.

Now proceed to the Prologue... your guide awaits you.

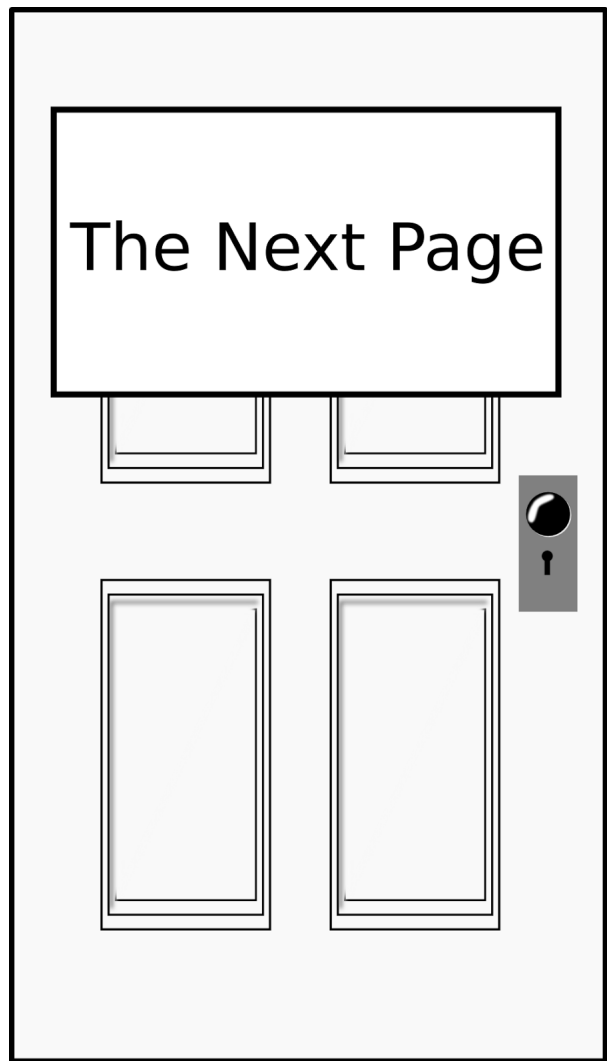
# Prologue

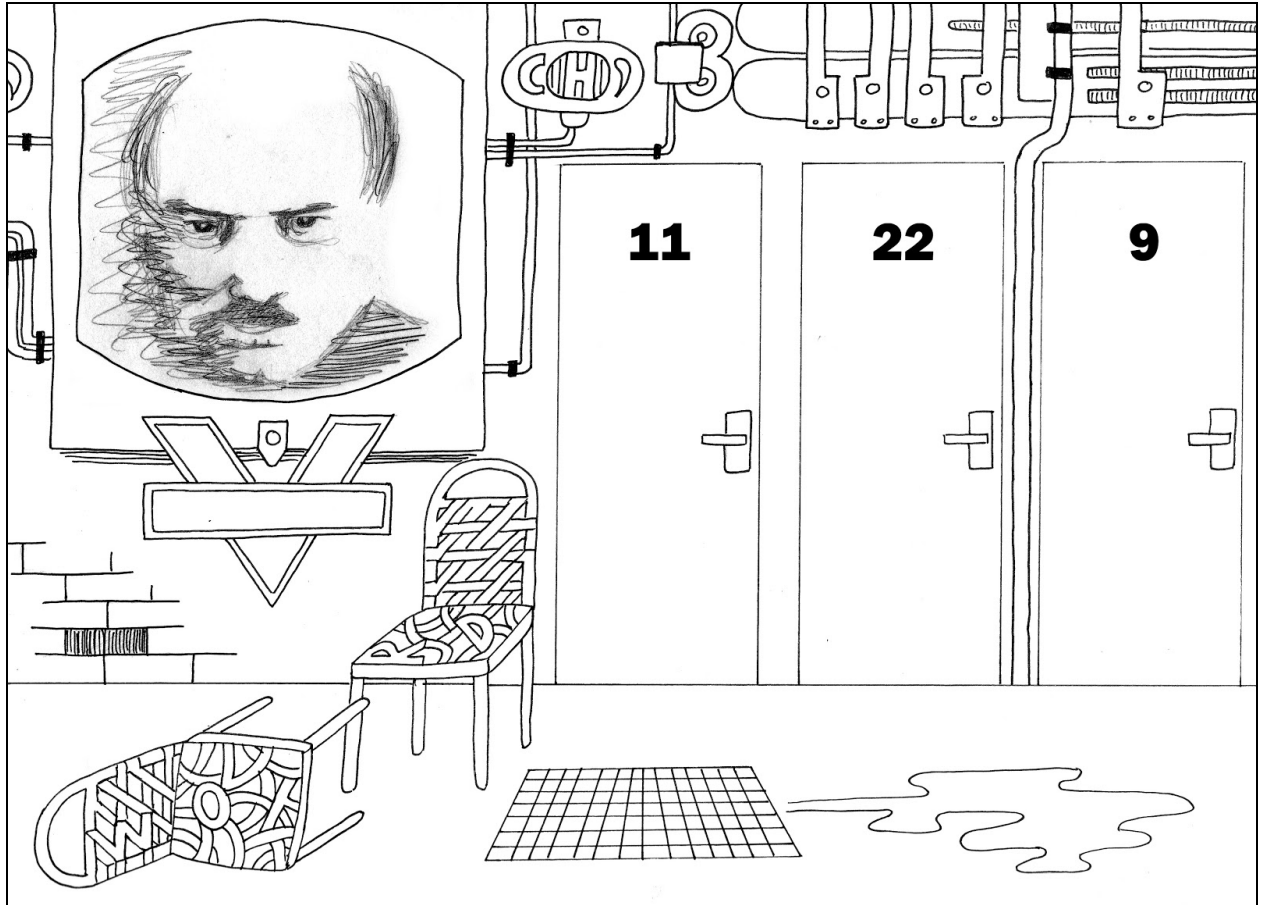
The film crew knocked on my door. Some kind of complicated hunt needing to tromp through the stacks, seeking mysteries or what-have-you, with me playing the role of the wise guide. It's part of the job, so I let them in.

Casting had found a fine group of adventurers. Most of them were still gawking at the scenery, their costumes, each other--I remembered how agog I was when I first came to the Library. Sometimes I wonder if I'd be happier if I were like them, in for a day of adventure and then back to the real world forever. But now I have my own secrets, and my stacks are my domain, unruly though they may be.

I gave them the spiel--you can call me Beth, don't wander off on your own, better hope you pick the right doors, try to keep your voices down.

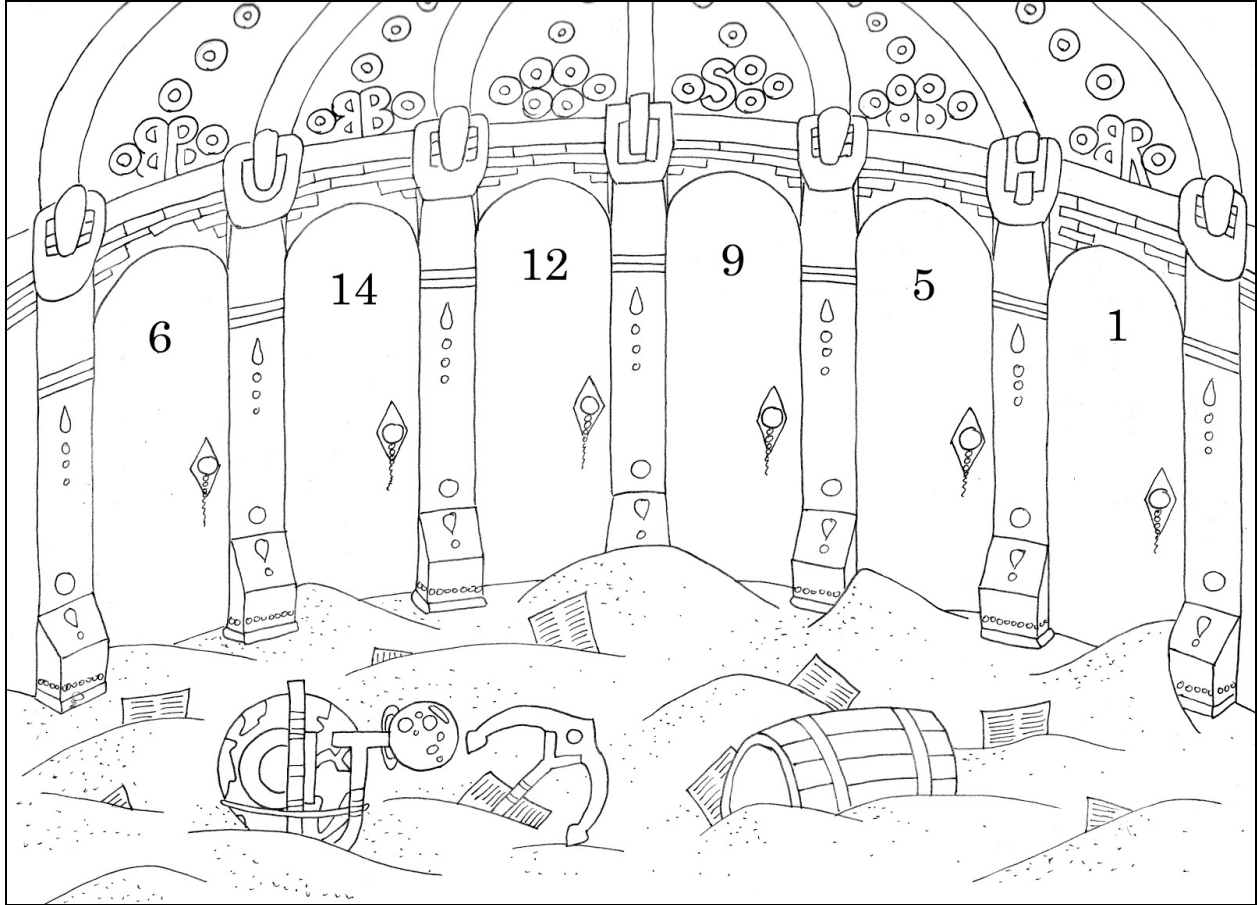
The cameras started rolling, and we moved on to...





...a room that seemed to show tyranny's true face.

"I feel pretty ungood about this place" said one of the actors. "Well, it *was* made by an enemy of the Party," I said. "Let's move on." So we left for...



...a sandy room.

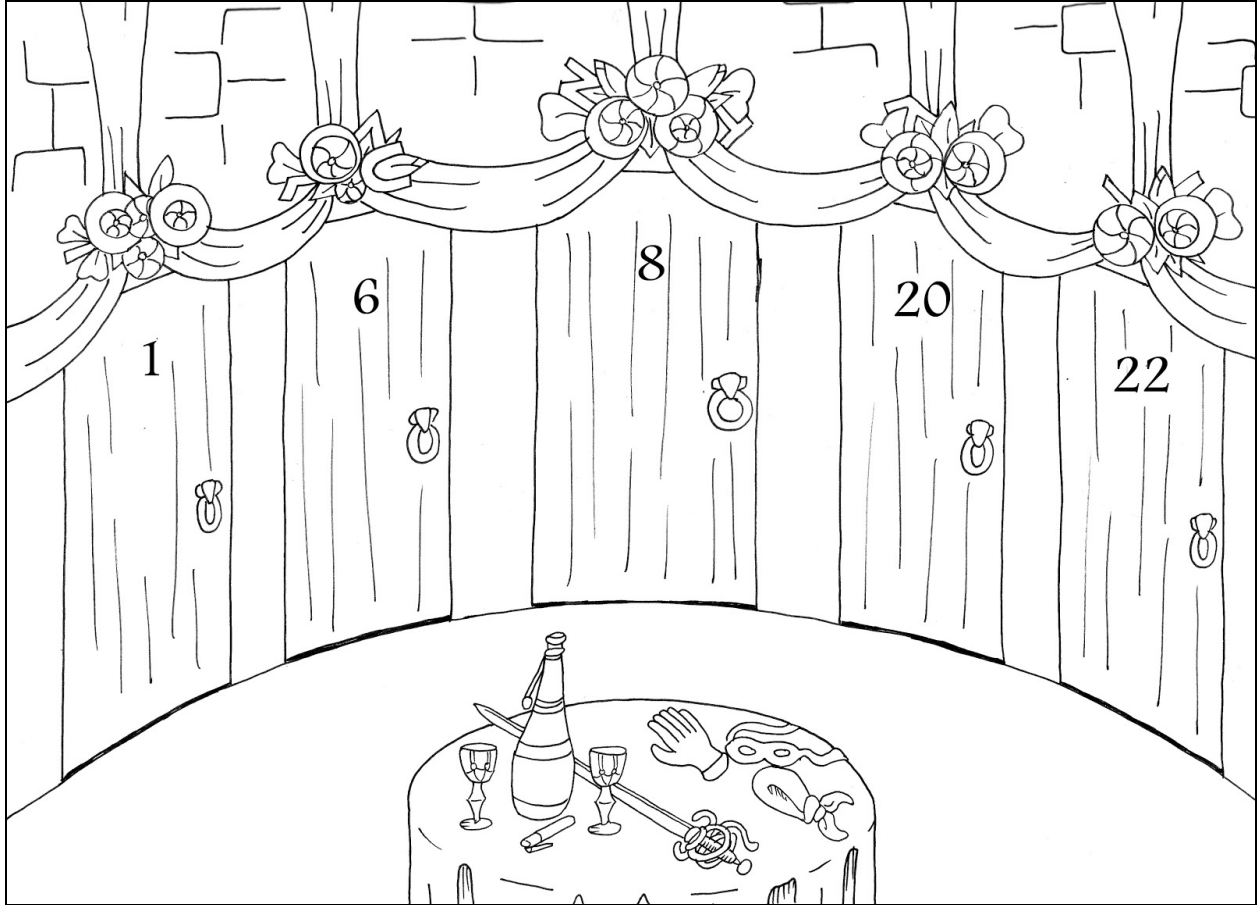
“Study the room well,” I said. “You will never see it again.”

“But how can that be?” asked one of the explorers.

“The pages that scatter this floor are infinite. If you were to sift through every dune pulling out page after page, there would still be just as many as when you started. And when you next came back to the room, the shifting sands would yield new pages yet again--and you would never, ever find the pages you’d seen before.”

Some of them seemed astonished at this revelation; others (the wiser ones, perhaps) seemed rather unsettled.

We dusted our feet off as we left for...



...a festively decorated room.

“I could swear I’ve seen this place before... but was it bigger? Or smaller?” asked one of the adventurers.

“The bigger one’s really boring,” I replied. “But this one has all the good parts--fencing, poison, true love, chases, escapes, miracles.....”

“Yeah, yeah,” said one who seemed to be playing the part of a jaded kid. “Let’s keep going.” So we left for...

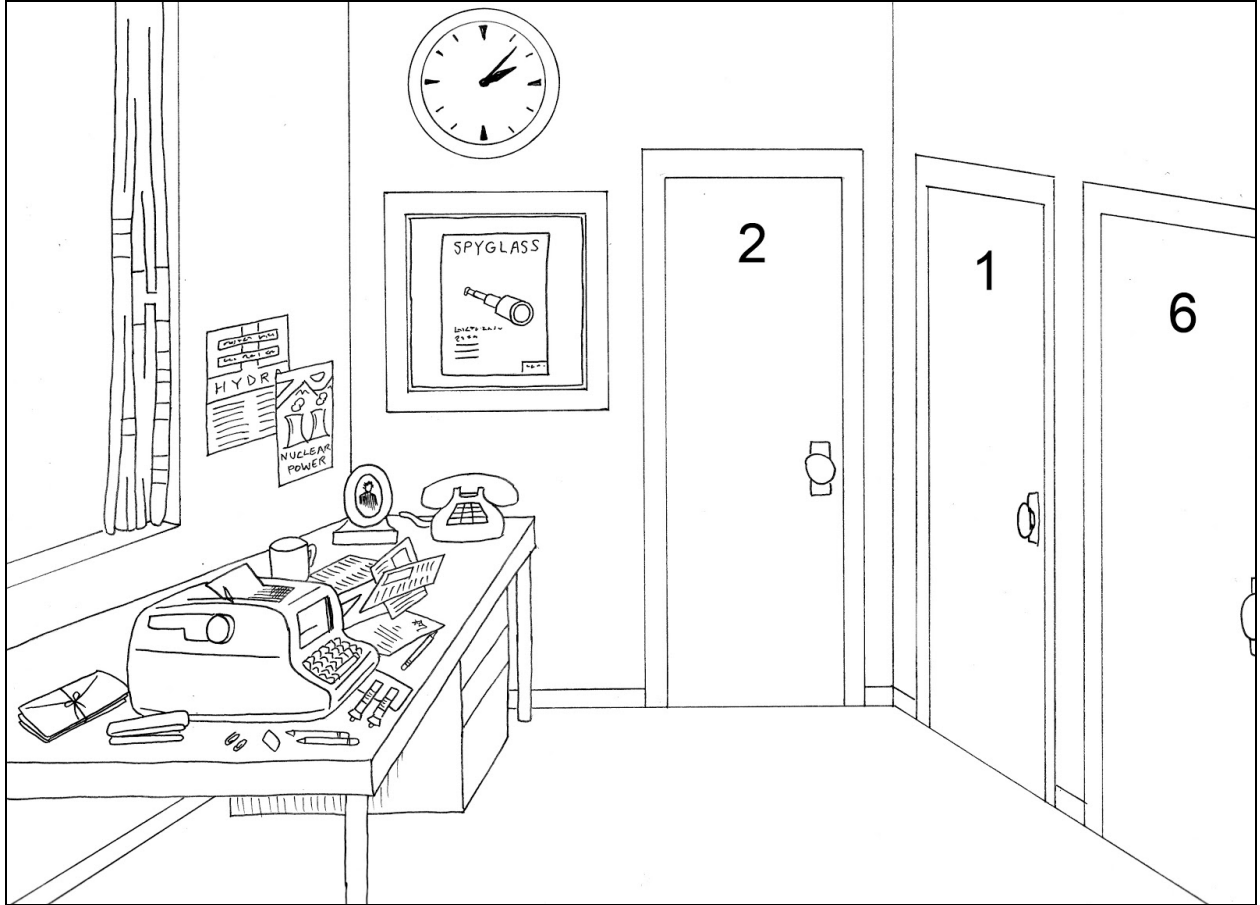


...a quiet room.

“Someone sure loves tulips!” “I’m not sure we can trust the man who brought them, though...”

“Are these doors just painted on? Ceci n’est pas une porte!”

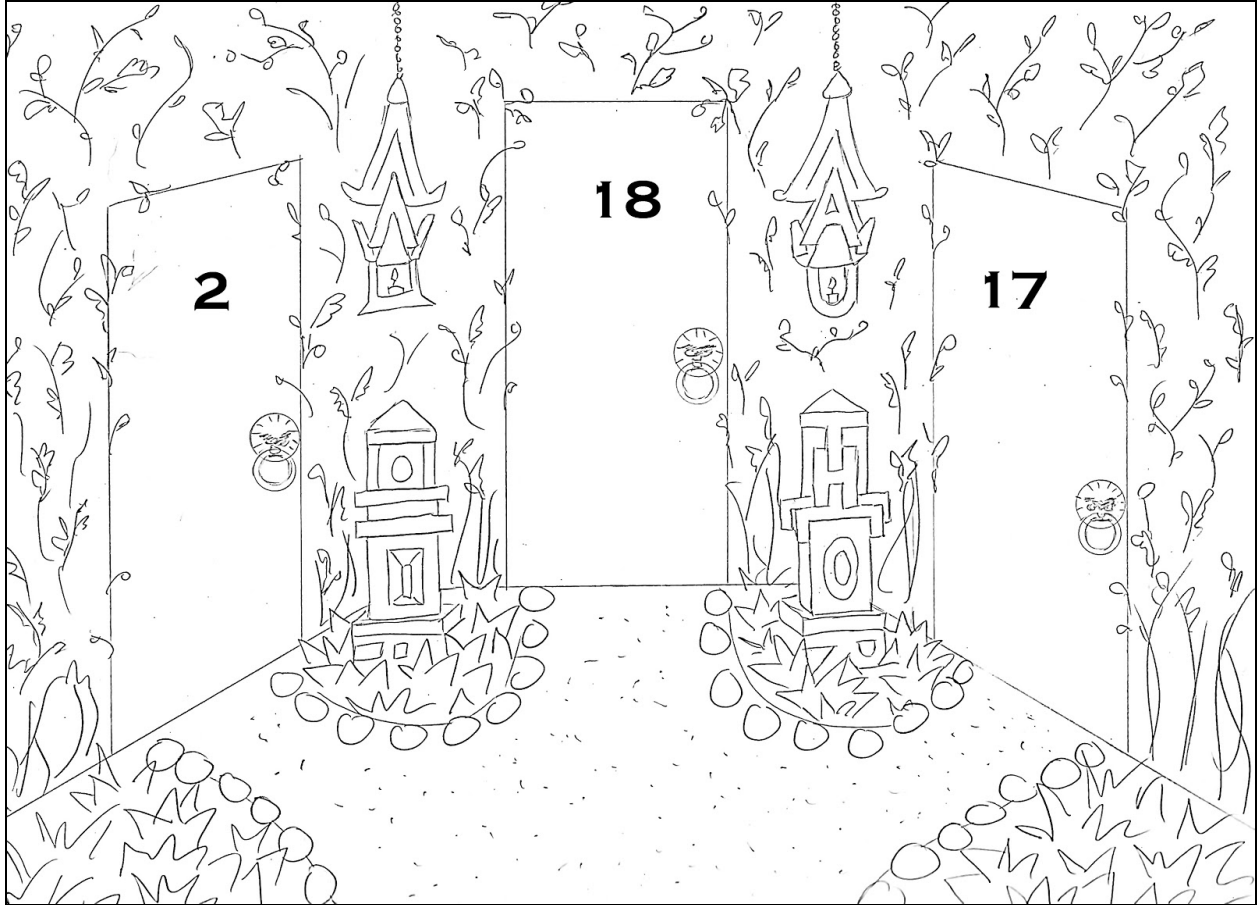
One of the actors started to say something, but was cut off midsentence as we departed abruptly to go to...



...a journalist's office.

"I'm glad I don't have an office job," said one of the actors. "What about a job in an exciting office like this?" asked another. "Chasing down coverups, unraveling conspiracies, or at least catching up on celebrity gossip!" "Nope," he said, "I've tried it, and it's just not for me. Your life is not your own when you're working in someone else's place."

Feeling a strange sense of déjà vu, we left for...

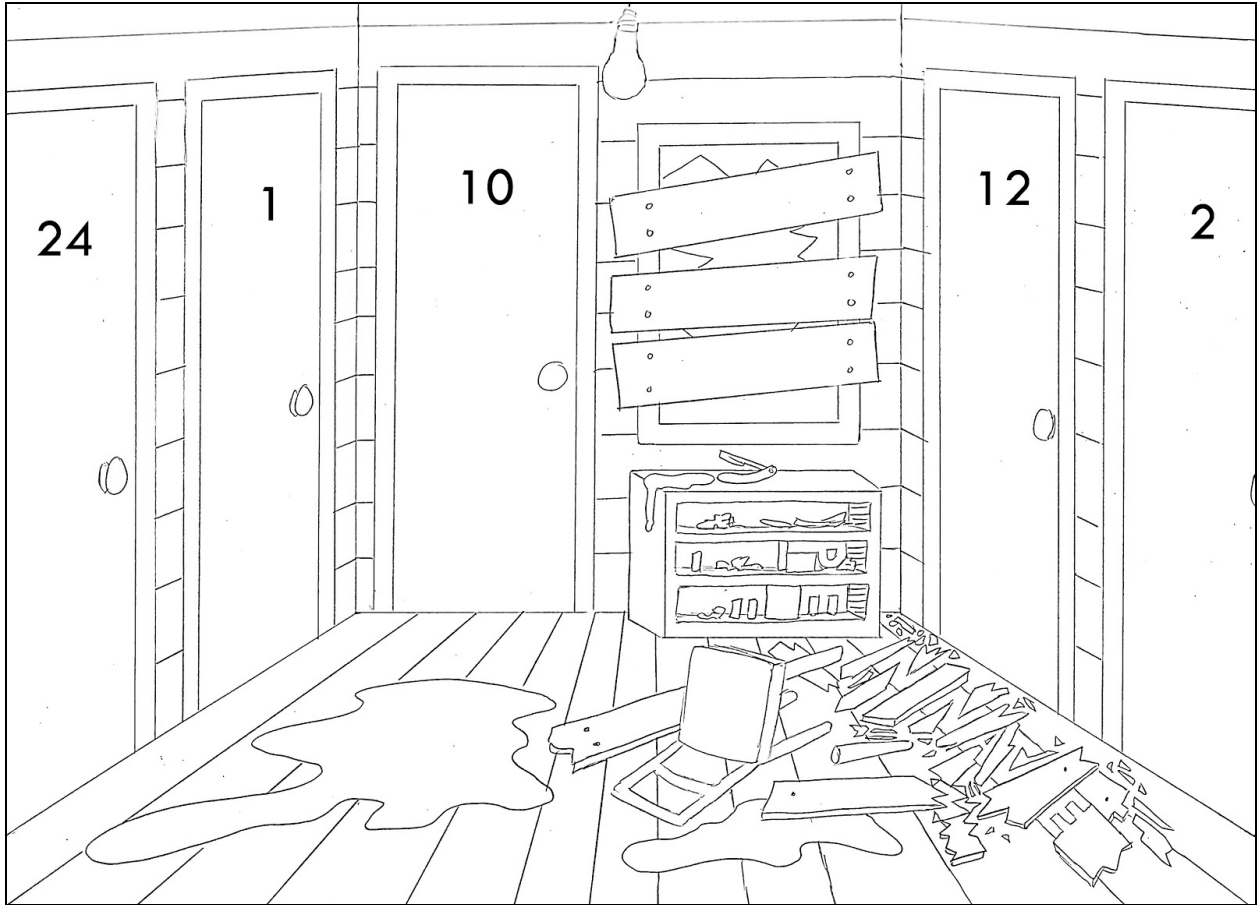


...a sort of hedge-maze.

Some of the visitors started running down the maze to explore it, and I had to hastily call them back. “You shouldn’t run off anywhere in the library,” I said, “but it’s especially important here. This is a labyrinth in which anyone will become lost. It is a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel corridors. Do not stray here.”

Chastised, they chose the next door and filed through it into...





...a crime scene.

“Oh dear,” said one of the explorers, going a bit pale at the sight of the blood-stained straight razor on the dresser.

“Sorry to bring you through here,” I apologized. “The creator of this room was, um... Not A Very Nice Guy.” A flock of sparrows fluttered noisily past the window.

With many nervous glances back over our shoulders, we moved quickly into...

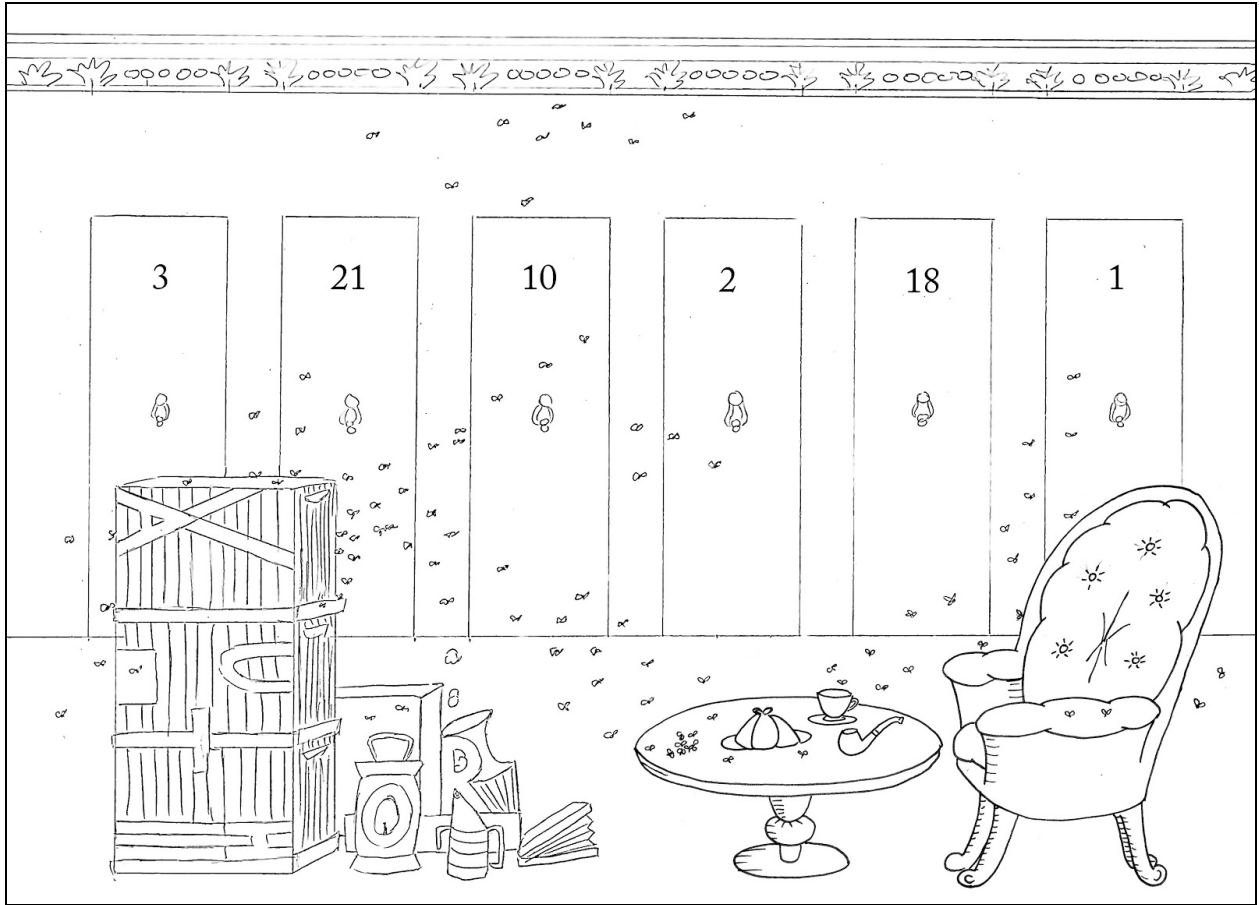


...a dizzying chthonic room of arcane, dread rituals.

We found ourselves navigating gingerly around crawling forms, hearing sourceless sounds echoing through the foul caverns.

The more curious explorers spent some time studying the cryptic hieroglyphs that circled the alien walls, but found them indecipherable. All for the better, really--there are some words that are themselves dangerous to read. "This geometry is all wrong," one of them said crossly.

Fortunately, we left with sanity mostly intact and headed for...

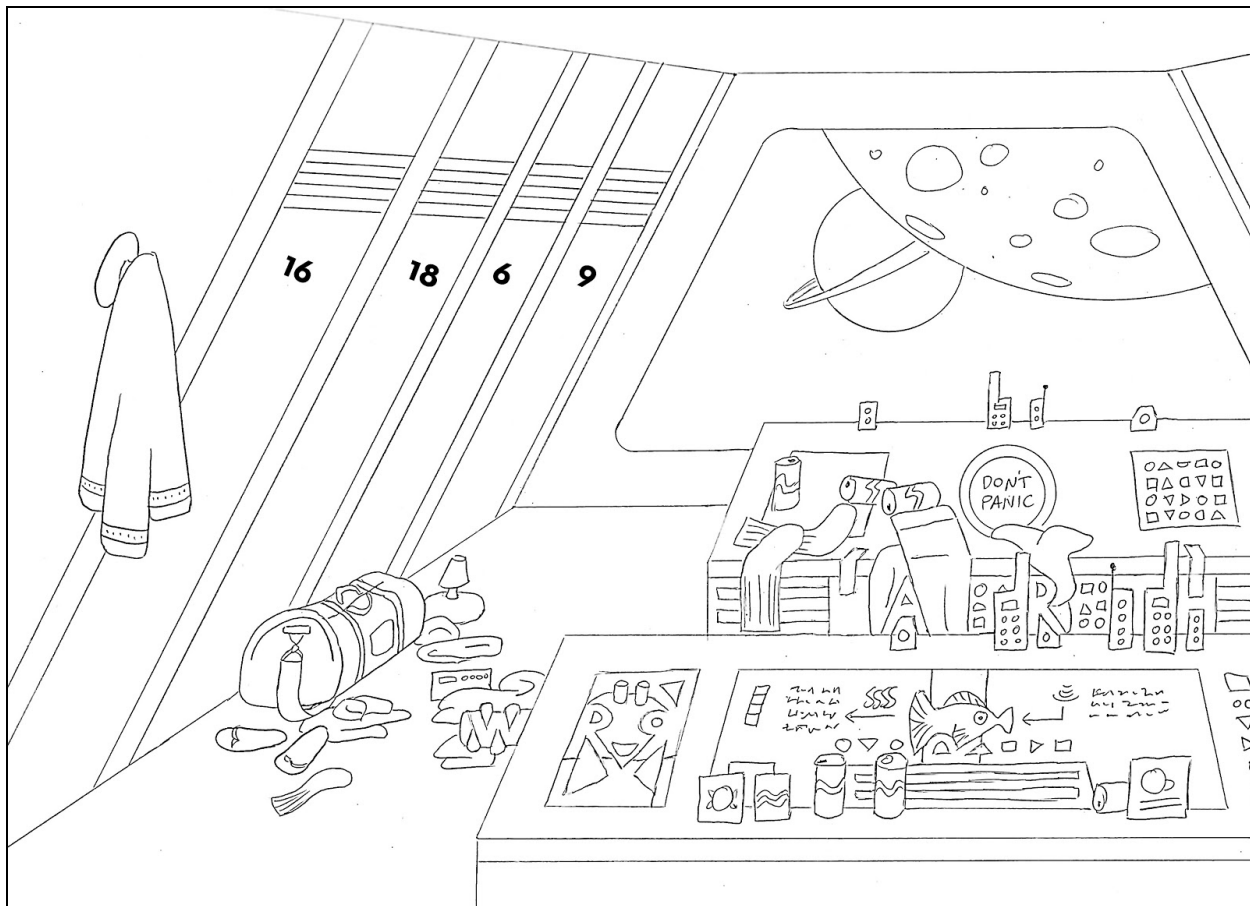


...a Victorian-looking room that was full of bees.

“Bees? Really?” asked an explorer. “Well, some people take up some rather eccentric hobbies when they retire,” I replied, “as you can probably deduce from this room.”

“I guess I could learn a lot about bees in this place,” grumbled one of the visitors, “but I miss the excitement. Let’s move on.”

Carefully sidestepping the beehives, we made our way to...



...a room on a spaceship.

Despite the mess and the confusing panels full of alien buttons and knobs, the large, friendly letters on the dashboard filled us with confidence. We spent some time perusing the info on the screens.

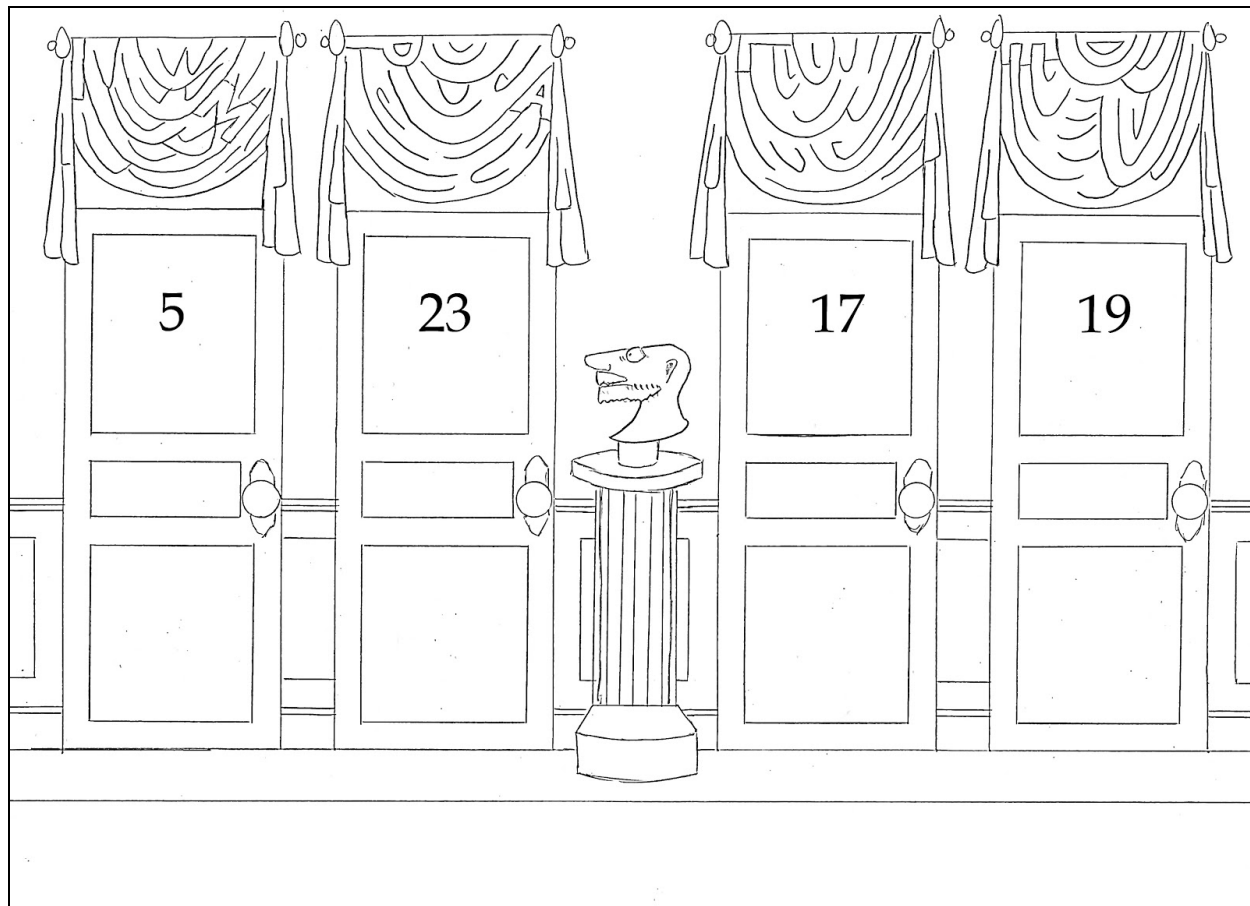
“Wow,” said one of the visitors, “Space sure is big! I can’t wait to see it all!”

Feeling better prepared to deal with anything the universe could throw our way, we left for...



...a quite regal room.

Normally one wouldn't want to linger here long, for fear of going mad, ranting in the streets about the king's tatters and so on. I tried not to let the memory of that Castaigne fellow show on my face as I ushered the visitors quickly to...

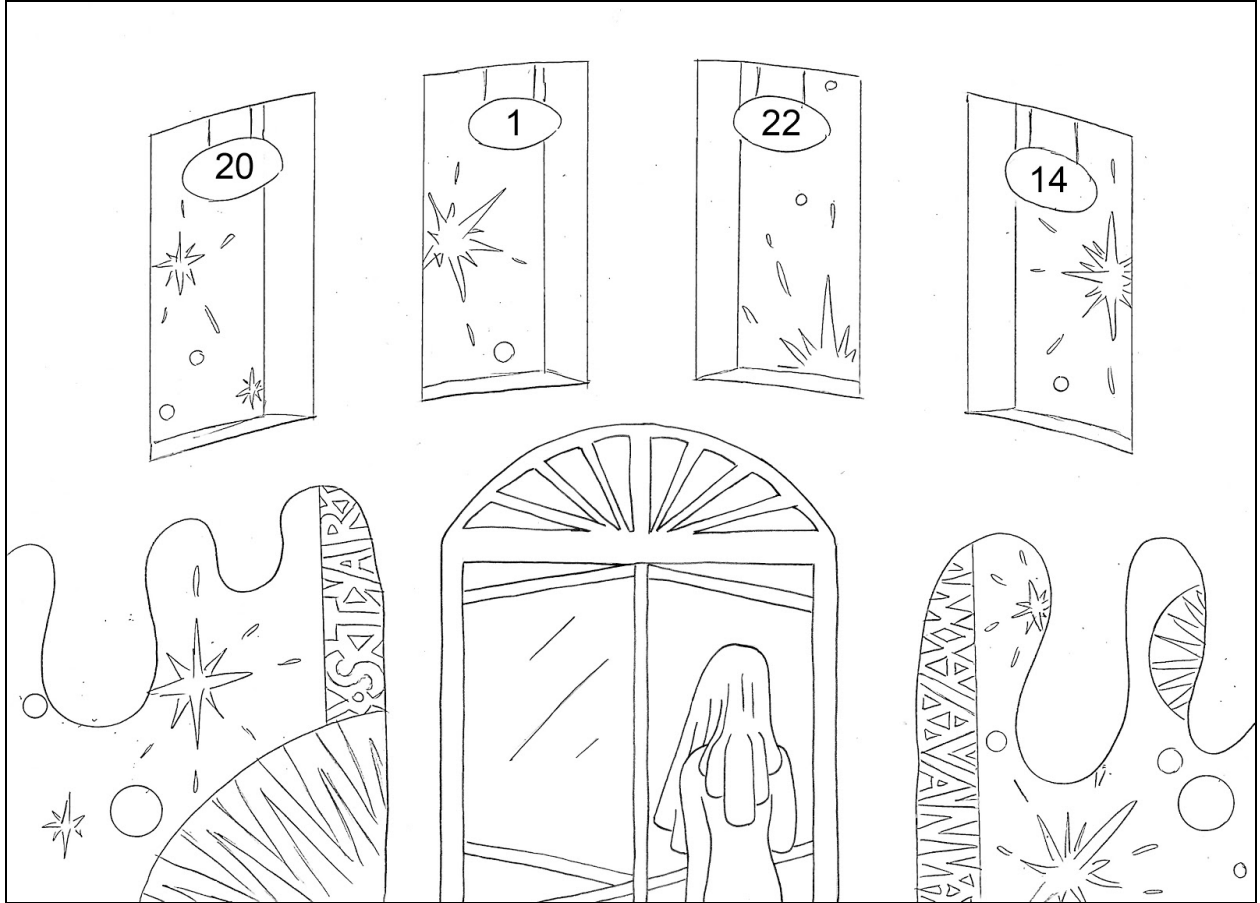


...a room of a stately English manor.

“This place is a convoluted mess” complained one of the adventurers. “Well, it has been rennovated quite a number of times,” I replied.

One of them peered through a side window at a pond. “They really ought to have that thing dragged for weeds,” he opined. Some of the others squabbled with him over this. Another actor began speaking over top of them, giving a longwinded description of a trip to Tibet. Leaning against the bust of Glassglue, I felt a flash of frustration. They surely knew that they’d get nowhere with all this indecisive back-and-forth! Why did we even bother coming here?

But I regained my composure. The others soon tired of the room, so we ushered ourselves out and into...

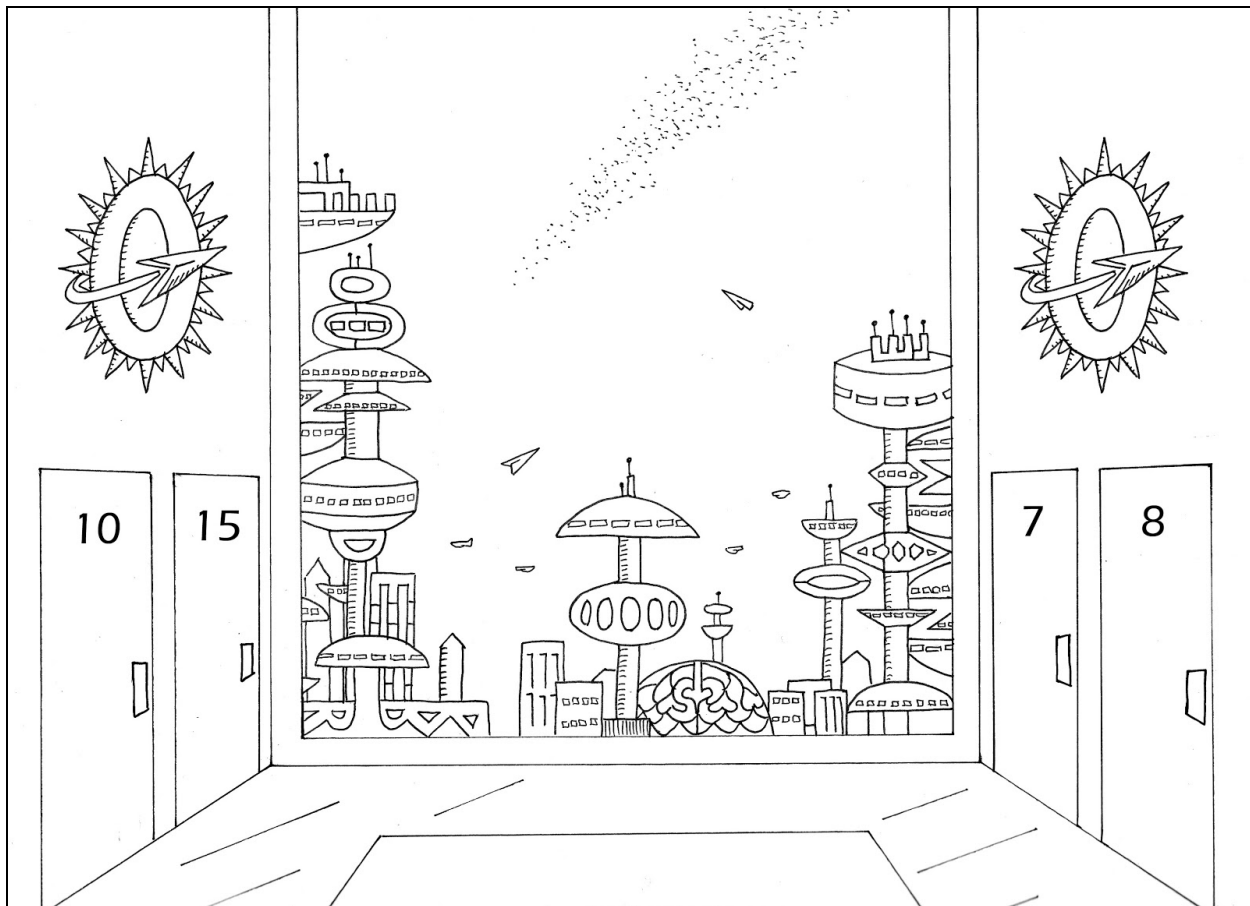


...a room of shifting images and sounds, seen as though through a shaky camera lens. I heard a woman's voice and caught a glimpse of a veiled figure stepping through a revolving door.

"Ahh, that's better. I could stay here forever. You guys go ahead without me, I'll catch up later," said an entranced explorer.

I gathered up the rest of them and we carried him out. Left to his own devices, I'm sure he'd stay here until the Year of the Extremely Speedy Website Hosting Service.

We proceeded to...



...a room that seemed to be filled with much promise.

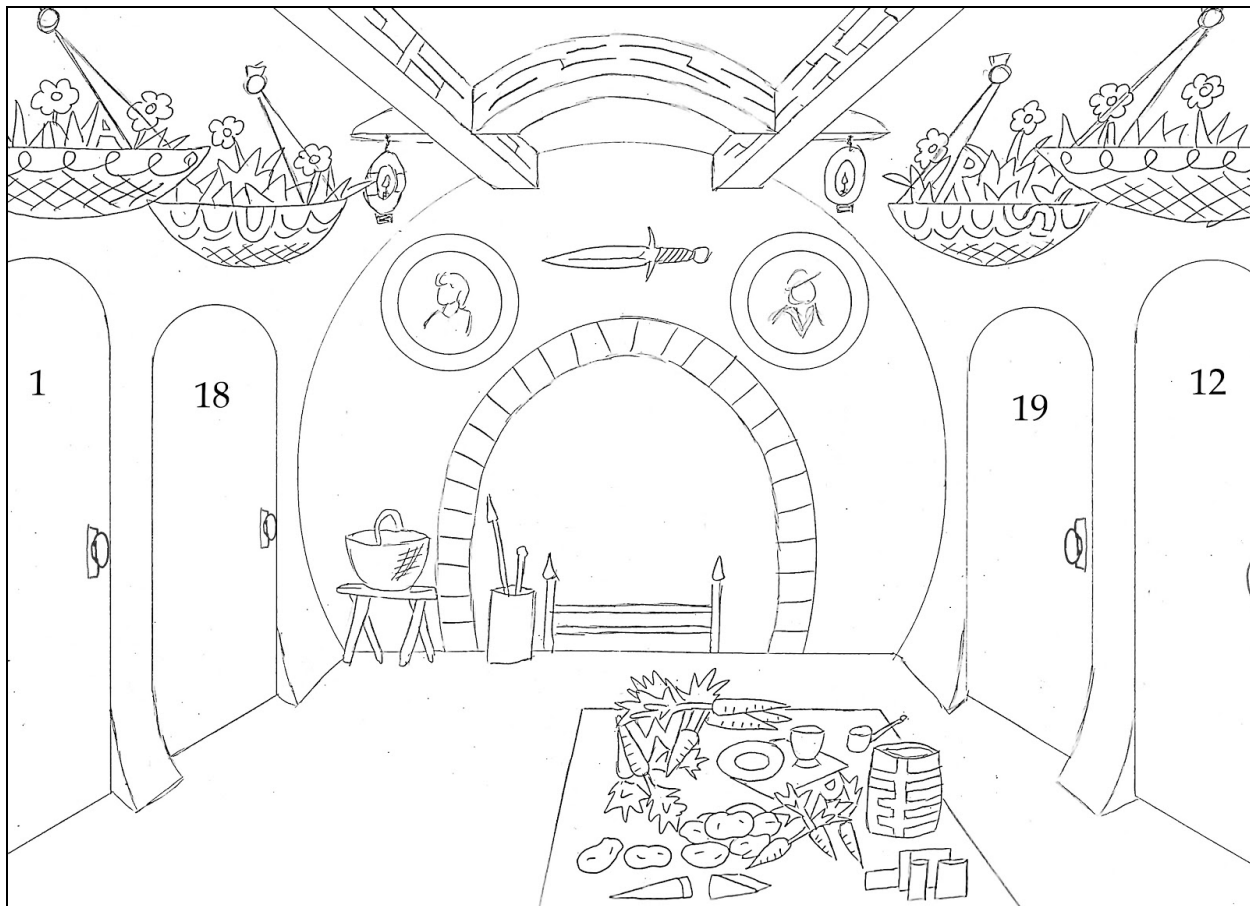
It seemed that quite a lot of planning went into this room. And as a result, its foundation was solid, but the view of the airy architecture kept the room from becoming stagnant.

“This place is huge!” said one visitor, as we gathered around the window at one end of the room.

“It has to be,” I said. “It contains the collected knowledge of all humanity. And it’s getting bigger all the time.”

Next, we departed for...

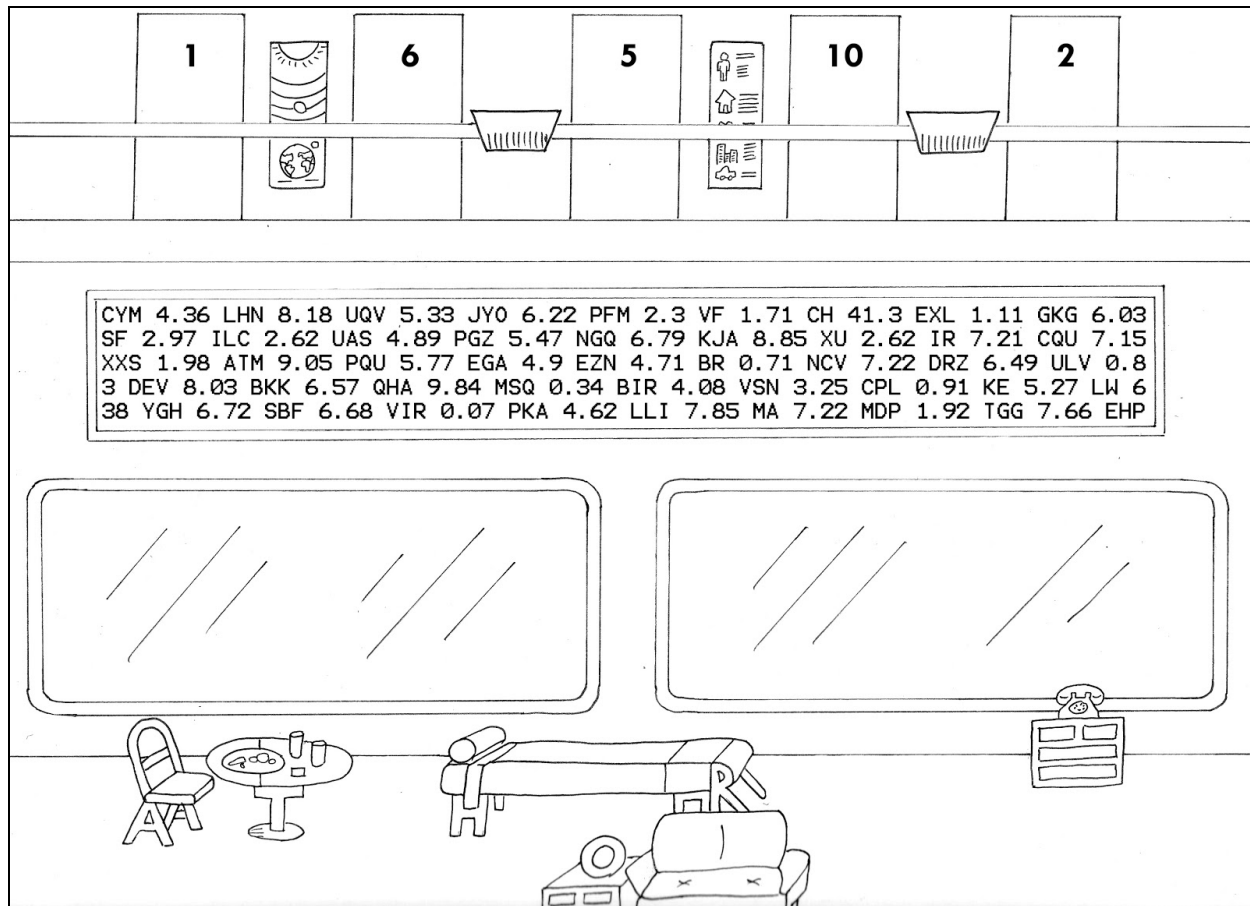




...a pleasant living-room.

“Ahhh. I’d be happy to live here until the end of my days, after a long adventure,” said one of the actors. We had to stoop a bit to get in the door, and the ceilings were rather short for big folk like us, so I had my doubts. Still, a cheerful enough place.

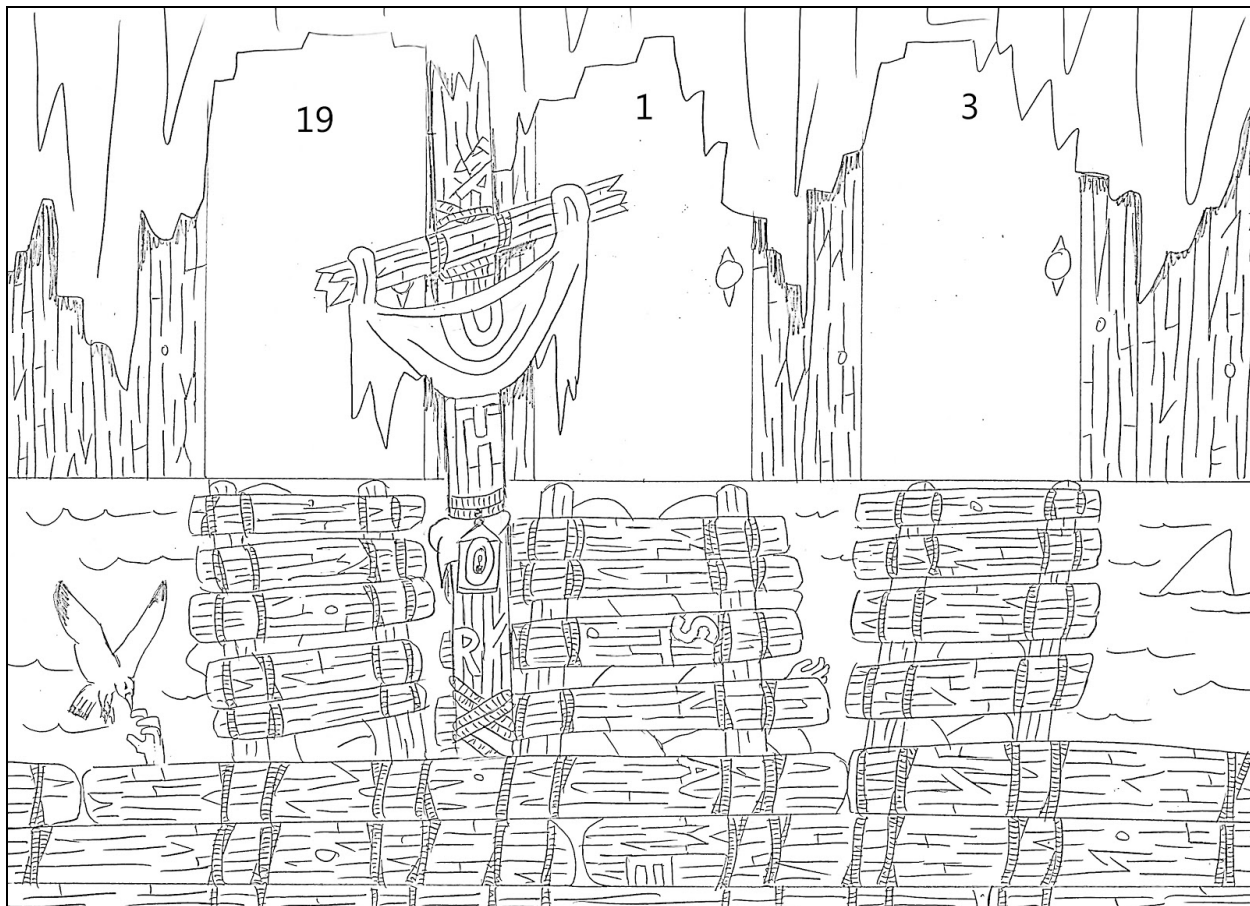
After a brief time savoring the atmosphere and a second breakfast, we left for...



...some sort of room with observation decks, some living accommodations, and a big board of stock numbers. The panels around the room were in an alien language, but I knew they showed basic info about the habits and life cycle of *homo sapiens*.

The explorers started playing with the controls, making the numbers go up, up and up! They jumped for joy at the projected profits and the flashing lights. But then the numbers started fluctuating wildly, barely responding to the controls any more. Frustration, confusion, and despair soon set in. So it goes.

I watched with some amusement at the play of emotion, then switched the board off and rounded the group up. We soon left for...

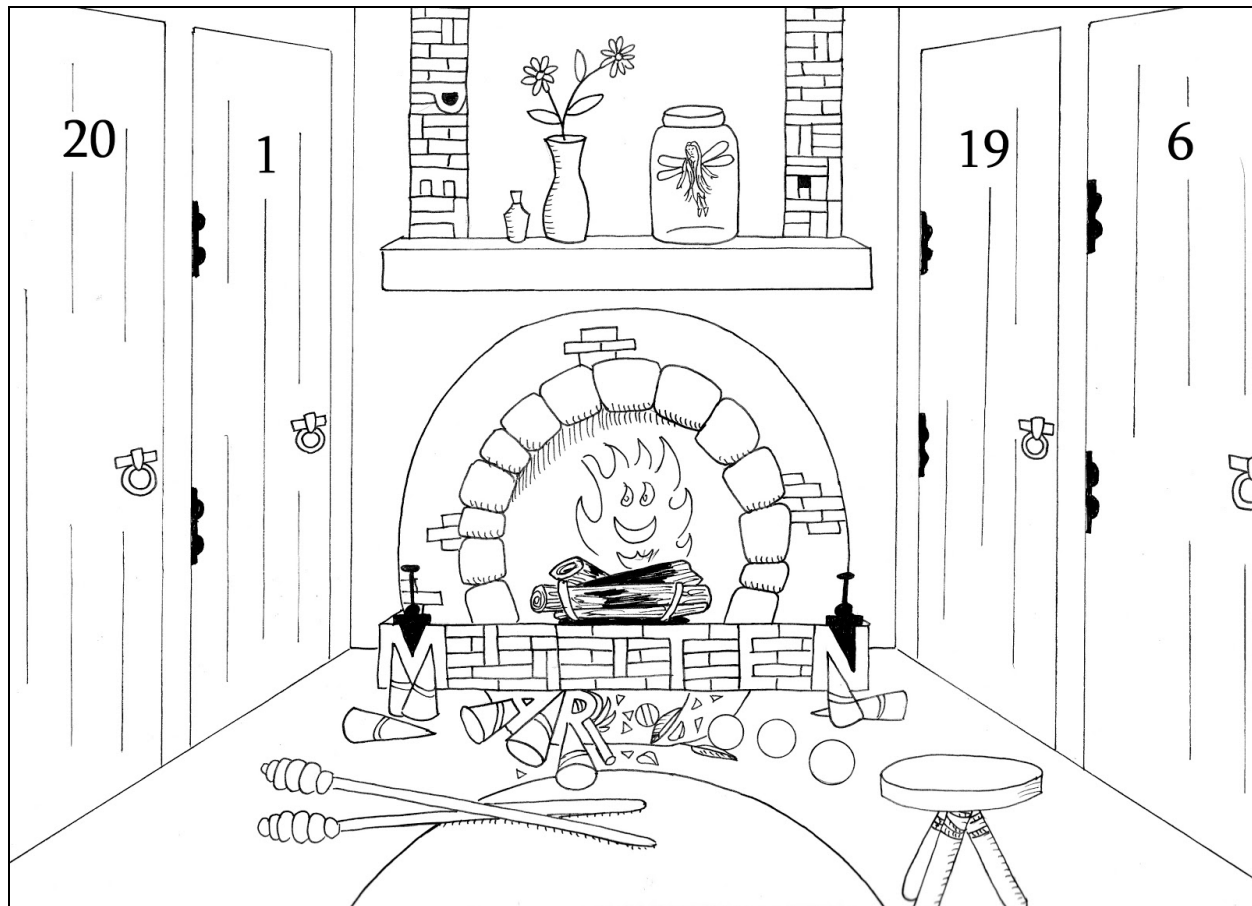


...a dark, gruesome room, smelling of blood and brine.

We stood on a rough footpath built from broken ships timbers, floating on dark, shark-infested water. I tried not to think about what the planks were floating on...

The actors looked around them with dawning horror. "Who would do such a thing?" "Someone who chose madness," I replied.

We hurried on, emerging into...



...a deceptively cozy room.

The chatty fire and a blue fairy in a jar cast a bright, homey light, but the juggling equipment on the floor was covered in dust, as though the owner had been away for a very long time. I thought briefly of regaling the visitors with tales of trolls, glass men, and other such fantastical creatures, but we needed to be moving on. There were dangerous people in this place, and I was not eager to meet them.

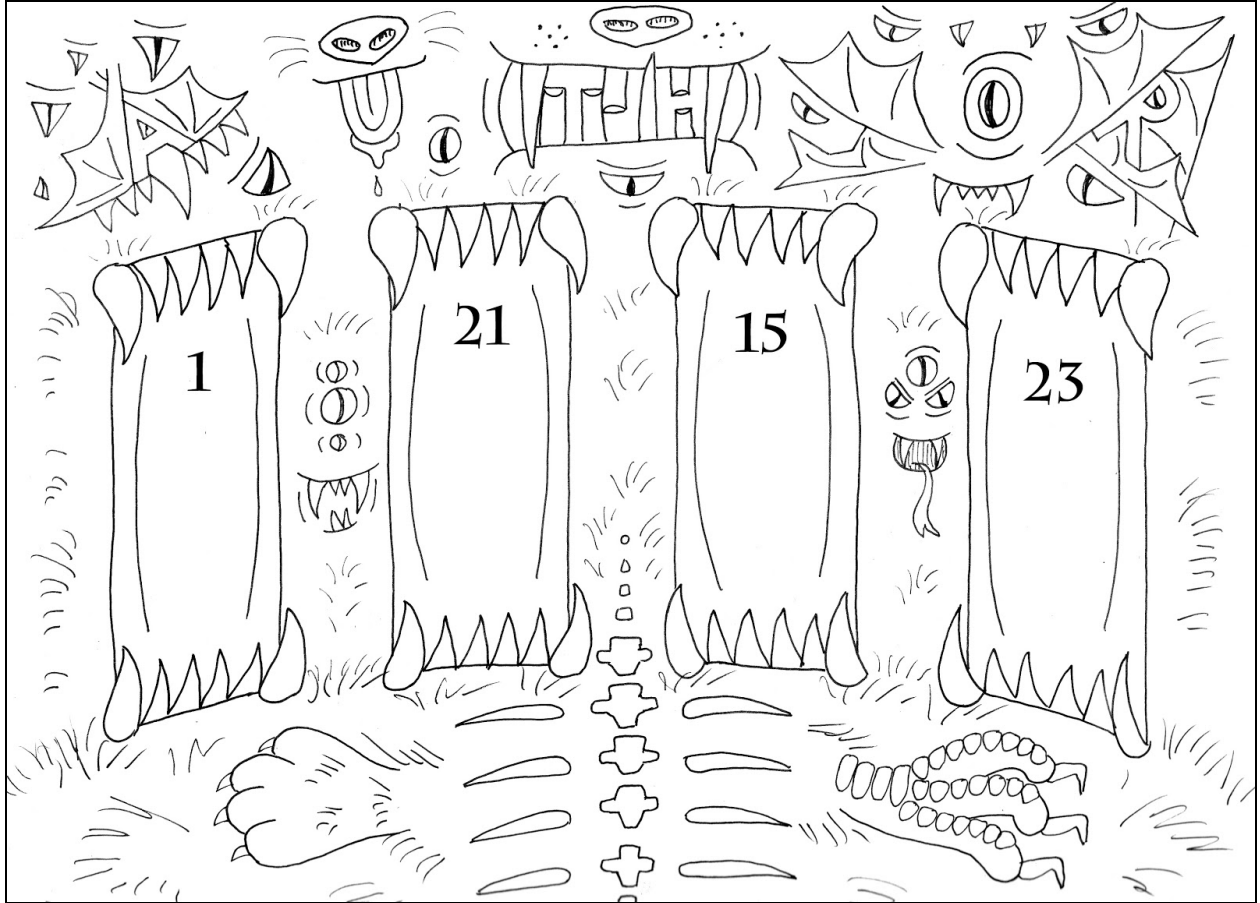
So we ventured onwards to...



...a well-lit room.

The picture window gave us a view of the Appalachian sunset. A waxwing flew near, narrowly missing a collision with the glass, and a red-striped Vanessa butterfly fluttered along the grass. However, the low hum of harmony and the measured rhythm of everyday life only led us to reflect on past sorrows.

We chose another door and departed for...



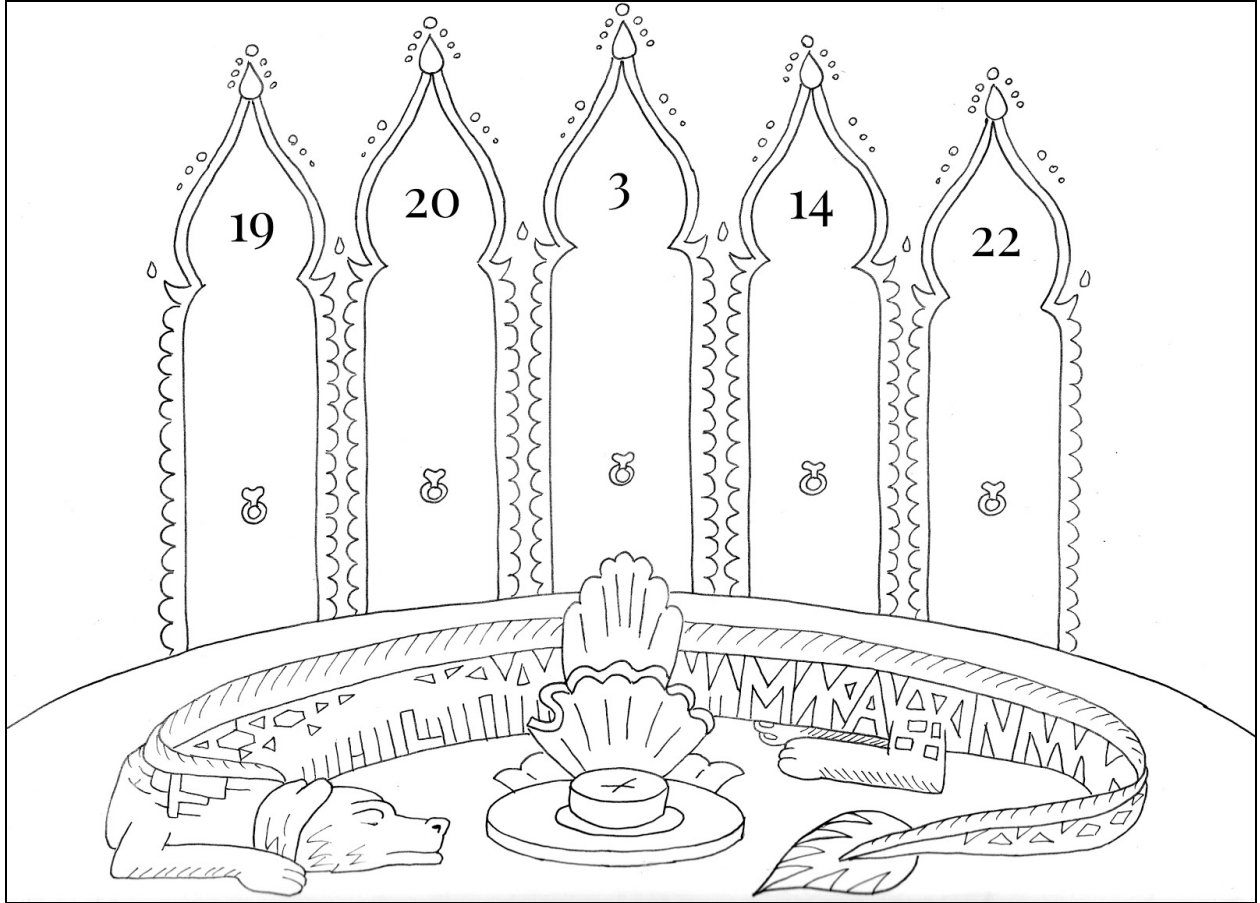
...a furry, snarling room.

Fortunately, it seemed to be in a relatively calm mood when we entered. I led the group single-file and we gently walked along its spine, which seemed to soothe it further.

“What are we doing here?” cried one of the actors. “This place looks dangerous!”

“Give it a chance,” I said. “You could learn a lot about some pretty interesting creatures if you spent some time here.”

The explorers were hesitant to walk past the teeth and into the next door, but with a bit of coaxing, we proceeded to...

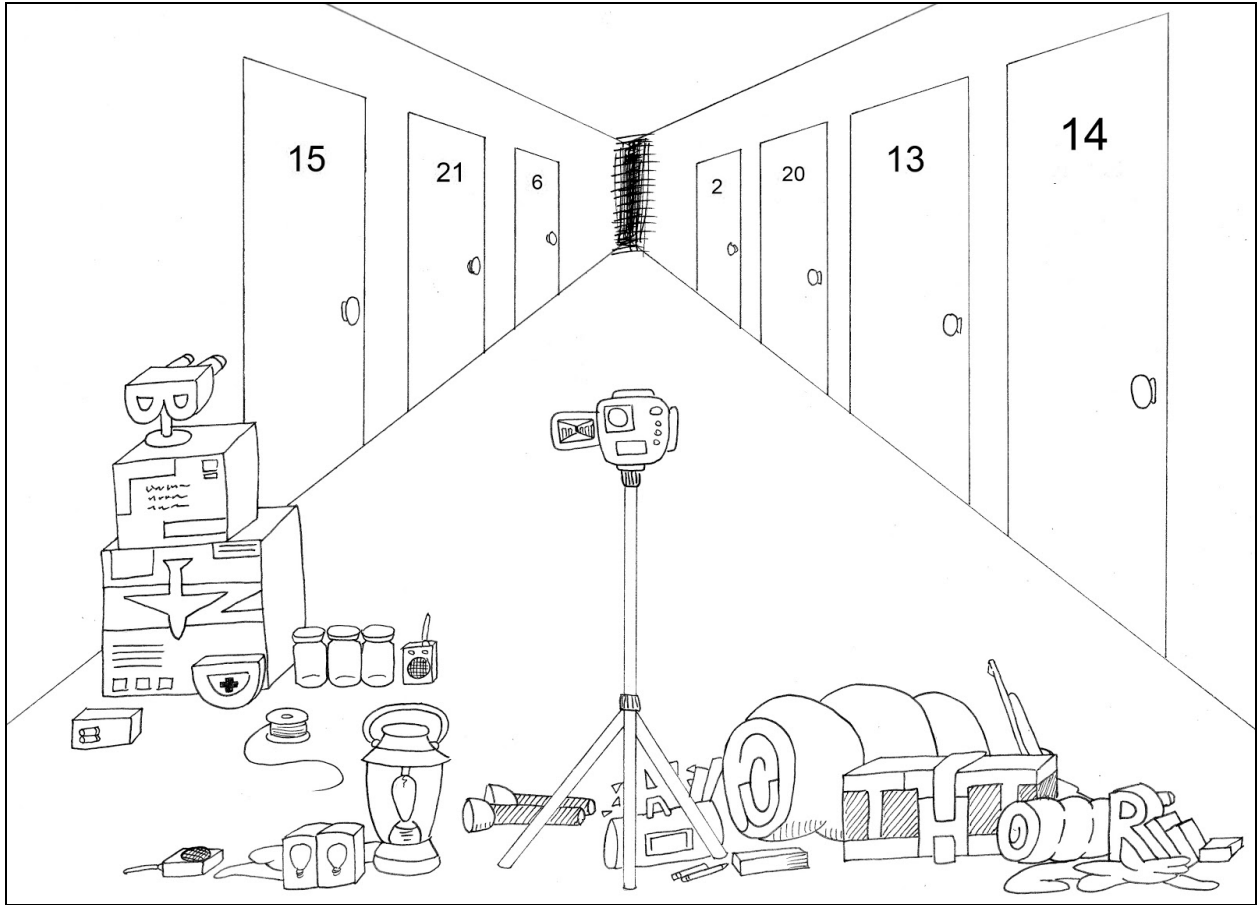


...a room in an ivory tower.

“Oo, can I pet that dragon?” asked one of the visitors. “Do what you wish,” I replied. “He won’t hurt you. You have Nothing to fear here.”

“This place is beautiful,” said one of the others. “Yes!” said another, “and I’ve heard it was all made from a single grain of sand--how remarkable!” “I feel so at home here, like I could stay here having adventures and forget my family and my responsibilities...”

“That has been tried, and it didn’t turn out quite like you might have imagined. But that is a story for another time,” I said, and with that we entered...



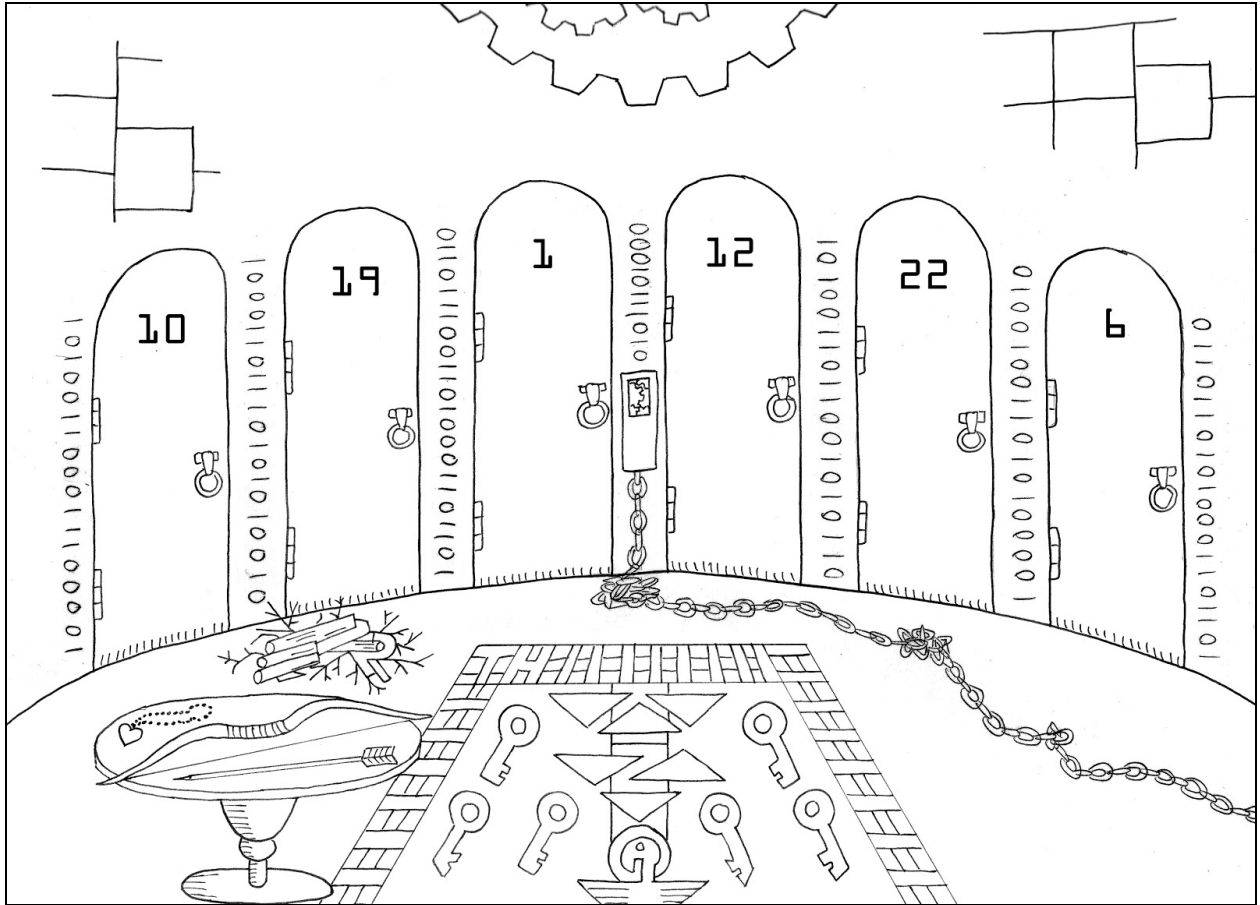
...a dim, shifting, measureless<sup>1</sup> place.

“What sort of person would build a [house](#) like this one?” exclaimed one of the visitors. “And what happened to whoever brought all this equipment here? I hope we don’t spend too long in this dreary and confusing place!” His voice echoed down the hallway.

“Fortunately or unfortunately, this is not for you,” I replied, “So there’s not much chance of that. Pick a door quickly and we’ll be on our way again.” And with that, we left for...

<sup>1</sup> “It is the quality of *measurelessness* that sets the unusual [house](#) apart from ordinary ones.” J. E. Ballast, *Compendium of Unusual Architecture*, p.24





...a digital castle that seemed to hum with tiny mechanisms.

Four figures including a dinosaur and a duck briefly wandered through and spoke to the adventurers. They seemed to focus especially on conversing with the younger women in the room, with a friendly but educational tone.

Some of the visitors examined the box with a chain. It was sending out encoded messages, and they found that they could send their own messages back, and get responses of their own! “But is someone really reading our messages,” asked one of them, “Or is it just some sort of computer sending back pre-determined responses?”

With that, we left for...

...the exit from the Library.

The group looked back at the rooms they'd journeyed through. Quite the adventure, indeed! I waved to them as they left, surely mulling over their time in the library and the things they'd seen along the way.