AT-TABLE REFERENCE

The Clockwork Crossing

45-60 minutes / 3-4 level 1 characters / D&D 5e (2024)

READ ALOUD

The drawbridge creaks above the canal. Across the water, a baker rests two baskets of bread on a cart. On this bank, a brass figure in a work apron blocks the bridge. Its eye clicks towards a red signal. “Red. Bridge stays up.”

1. Arrive at the bridge

Start at A and read the opening. Ask who goes over to Tess or Brassbutton. Tess gives the party one clear job. Get the bridge down.

2. Find the red cover

Tell them the keeper reads the signal. At B, close inspection shows a loose red maintenance cover over green glass. The clue turns up even if their first check fails.

Tess Calder

Wants the morning bread across the canal. Knows the keeper works from the signal. “The baker has been waiting since sunrise. Can you find out what’s holding us up?”

Checks and saves

Inspect from a distance with DC 10 Perception or Investigation. Bracing the winch alone uses DC 10 Athletics. If the handle slips, DC 10 Dexterity save or 1d4 bludgeoning.

3. Free the crossing

Lift and clip the cover at B, or use the hand winch at C to pull it clear. After seeing green, Brassbutton lowers the bridge. If springs pop loose, the stop button at D disperses them.

4. Pay it off

Lower the bridge, bring across the bread and ask each player what their character does as it arrives. Tess gives the group 8 gp.

Brassbutton

Wants to keep the crossing safe. Knows green means lower the bridge. “You can look in the signal box. Let me know when it shows green.”

Optional springs

Use a failed solo winch check to release one spring for 3 players or two for 4. AC 11, 4 HP, Initiative +1, Speed 20 ft. Attack +3, reach 5 ft., 1d4 bludgeoning. Press D as an action or wait until round 3 to stop them.

INITIATIVE ORDER

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

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