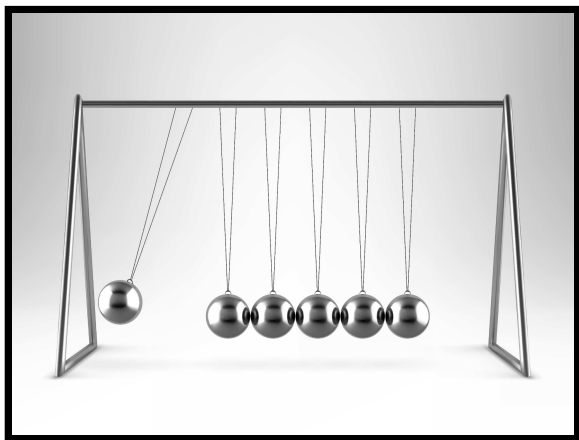


Uncle Elliot's Study



Designed by Michael Purcell

Prologue

Introduce the adventure by reading the following italicized text aloud.

“Hello, my name is George T. Longfellow of the law firm Short, Middleton, and Longfellow. You’re probably wondering why I’ve asked you to join me here today.

“As you know, your uncle Ulysses Elliot disappeared just over seven years ago. Since that time, no sign of him has been found other than a pile of his clothing which the maid found abandoned in his study. Last week, Mr. Elliot was officially declared dead. I have been nominated to act as the executor of his will.

“Mr. Elliot identified you as his heir. Your uncle left some specific instructions that we will need to follow in order to formalize this arrangement. If you will follow me to the study, we can get started.”

The clock strikes noon as Mr. Longfellow holds the study door open and waves you through. Rather than following you into the room, however, he quickly shuts the door and locks it from the outside!

“I’m very sorry about this.” he shouts, “but your uncle’s instructions were quite clear. If you can escape from the study within the hour, then the manor house is yours. Otherwise, I’m afraid you get nothing.”

Then, your captor slides a note in a sealed envelope under the door. As you bend to pick it up, you hear his footsteps as he retreats down the hallway. It looks like you’re going to have to find a way out of here on your own.

Give your player Handout 1, Uncle Elliot’s letter. Then, proceed to Act 1.

Act 1

Describe Uncle Elliot's study by reading the following italicized text aloud.

You entered the study through the door in the eastern wall. The western wall across from you is one huge picture window.

A stout desk is in front of the window. A person seated at the desk would face the room with the window behind them.

In the center of the room is a round, standing-height table with no chairs.

In the northwest is a set of shelves on which a variety of knickknacks are displayed.

In the northeast corner is a set of bookcases filled with a wide variety of books.

In the southeast corner a number of pictures are hung on the wall.

In the southwest corner there are several taxidermied animals on display.

Room Details: Future Study

Invite your player to explore the study. As they do, provide the following information about the significant features of the room as they are investigated more closely.

Door (E) The door is locked. You recall that your uncle lost the key many years ago but never got around to getting a replacement made. Two luxurious bath robes hang on hooks nearby.

Table (C) In the center of the table is a hemispherical dome approximately the size of your fist. It appears to be made of some kind of ceramic. There is also a plug board built into the surface of the table.

Plug Board (C) This is a 4×4 grid with holes of various shapes: squares, circles, triangles, and crosses. Four glass rods, one of each shape, fill four of the holes. Give your player **Handout 2**, the plug board, when they search the plug board.

Desk (W) There is a note in one of the desk drawers and a small safe in another. Give your player **Handout 3**, the poem, when they search the desk.

Safe (W) This small safe has no obvious handle or locking mechanism. It is locked.

Shelves (NW) A baseball, with burn marks on its top and bottom, has pride of place on these shelves. This may have been your uncle's most prized possession.

Bookcases (NE) There are many books here, but none of them seem noteworthy.

Pictures (SE) A framed, oversized movie poster dominates this part of the room. Give your player **Handout 4**, a small problem, when they search the pictures.

Animals (SW) Two specimens in this collection stand out. One, a grizzly bear. The other, a dog named "Quark" who was once your uncle's loyal canine companion.

Puzzle 1a: Open the Safe

Your player's main challenge in Act 1 is to figure out how to open the safe.

Recently, Uncle Elliot replaced the safe's original handle and locking mechanism. Now, the safe can only be opened via a retinal scanner concealed inside Quark.

To open the safe, the player must stare directly into Quark's eyes for a few seconds to allow their retina to be scanned.

The clue that should suggest this solution to your player is the movie poster in the southeast corner of the room which depicts a man staring directly into the eyes of a dog that looks remarkably like Quark.

You might also describe a power cord leading into Quark's body or a business card for the company that upgraded the safe (e.g. Face First Security) that can be found in a trash can next to the desk.

Act 2

After your player opens the safe, describe what they find within by reading the following italicized text aloud.

You hear a soft click behind you and turn to see the safe door slowly swing open.

Inside the safe is a single object, an office toy often known as a “Newton’s cradle”.

The device consists of a metal frame with six clear balls suspended between them. Each ball contains a light bulb, of which only the leftmost is currently on.

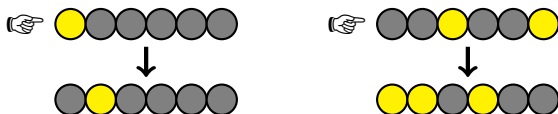
When you touch the device, you notice to your surprise that the balls do not swing freely. Rather, there seem to be some force that causes them to stick to one another.

Encourage your player to play with the device. See the following section for an explanation of what happens as they do.

Object Details: The Device

The pattern of lights that are on/off changes each time you touch the device's leftmost or rightmost ball.

If you touch the leftmost ball, all of the lights move one ball to the right. Then, if a light was “pushed” off the end, the two leftmost balls toggle on/off.

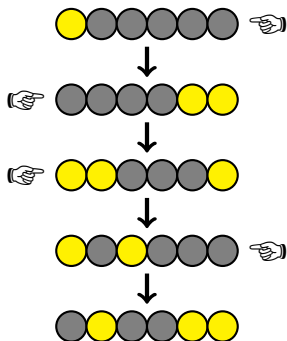


Similarly, if you touch the rightmost ball, all of the lights move one ball to the left. Then, if a light was “pushed” off the end, the two rightmost balls toggle on/off.



Puzzle 2a: Unlock the Device

Your player's main challenge in Act 2 is to figure out how to unlock the device by manipulating the device as follows:



The clues that should suggest this solution to your player are hidden in the letter that they received from Uncle Elliot.

The patterns of X's and O's indicate the starting and ending patterns of lights and the first letters of each sentence describe the moves required to unlock the device.

Act 3

Describe what happens after unlocking the device by reading the following italicized text aloud.

All six lights flash briefly and the force holding them together releases.

“Well done!” says a voice. You turn, and see your uncle standing next to the table in the middle of the room.

On closer inspection, you realize that it isn’t really your uncle, but rather some kind of hologram. Is this a recording?

If so, it must be quite old. Uncle Elliot is much younger here than you remember.

“If you’re seeing this message,” he says “you must have unlocked the device. Now, it’s time to use it and join me in the past.”

Then, Uncle Elliot pauses dramatically for a moment before saying “... and cut.”

The recording, however, keeps going.

Your uncle moves over to the desk, on which a brown paper bag has appeared.

He opens the bag and examines what looks like the receipt for an order from his favorite fast food restaurant.

Then, he glances around the room, repeating the same pattern a few times: first to the southwest, then the southeast, then the northeast, and finally the east.

“Great Scott!” he says, “I can use my order to make a new safe combo.”

As he bends over to examine the safe, he stops abruptly. “Am I still recording? I certainly don’t want this on tape.”

Then, he freezes and the holograms all slowly fade away.

Puzzle 3a: Use the Device

Your player's main challenge in Act 3 is to figure out how to activate the device.

To do so, they must place the device on the round table in the middle of the room then lift and release the leftmost or rightmost ball to set the device in motion.

The clues that should suggest this solution to your player are hidden in the poem that they found on the desk in Act I.

The line "Tick and Tock, just like a clock, it lets you see the past." refers to the sound the device makes as the balls swing and collide with one another.

The line "Turn it on, then you'll be gone! Let the table give you power." refers to the fact that the power source for the time travel device is incorporated into the round table in the middle of the room.

Act 4

Describe what happens after your player activates the device by reading the following italicized text aloud.

The dome in the table emits a blinding beam of light. When your vision clears, you see the study around you has changed.

Everything looks just like it did in the hologram. Could this really be the past?

Also, you find that you are no longer alone. Uncle Elliot is here! Wearing only an old bathrobe, he looks tired and confused.

“Can you help me?” he asks, “Something has gone wrong and I can’t remember where I am or how to get home.”

This just became a rescue mission.

First, however, you might want to find something to wear. For whatever reason, it seems clothing can’t travel through time.

Room Details: Past Study

Invite your player to explore the study. As they do, provide the following information about the significant features of the room as they are investigated more closely.

Door (E) The door is open and unlocked. One old bathrobe hangs on a hook nearby. A poster is on the back of the door which cannot be seen while the door is open.

Give your player **Handout 5**, sneaky snakes, when they search the door.

Table (C) In the center of the table is a hemispherical indentation about the size of your fist. The device is on the tabletop next to the plug board.

Plug Board (C) This is a 4×4 grid with holes of various shapes: squares, circles, triangles, and crosses. The glass rods you saw in the future are nowhere to be found. Give your player **Handout 6**, unplugged, when they search the plug board.

Desk (W) There is a paper bag filled with fast food wrappers on the desktop with a paper receipt for the order stapled to it.

Give your player **Handout 7**, the receipt, when they search the desk.

Safe (W) This small locked safe has four dials numbered 0-9 that can be used to enter the combination to unlock it.

Shelves (NW) Uncle Elliot's baseball is on the top shelf. It has no burn marks.

Bookcases (NE) A French book titled "La Mouche" (i.e. The Fly) is noteworthy for not having been shelved properly.

Pictures (SE) A movie poster is taped to the wall, slightly askew, in this corner.

Give your player **Handout 8**, fear of spiders, when they search the pictures.

Animals (SW) A taxidermied grizzly bear, *Ursus arctos horribilis*, stands alone. Quark has not yet joined the collection.

Puzzle 4a: Use the Device 2

Your player's main challenge in Act 4 is to reactivate the device.

To do so, they must properly configure the table by finding the glass rods, inserting them properly into the plug board, and finding a replacement for the ceramic sphere that is missing from the table.

The glass rods are locked away in the safe. Your player must unlock the safe to retrieve them. See Puzzle 4b for details.

Then, they must insert the glass rods into the plug board in the “fast forward” arrangement. See Puzzle 4c for details.

Finally, they must use Uncle Elliot's baseball to replace the ceramic sphere. See Puzzle 4d for details.

Once your player has completed all three tasks, they are ready to use the device. Proceed to Act 5.

Puzzle 4b: Open the Safe 2

Your player must unlock the safe in order to retrieve the glass rods stored within.

To do so, they need to figure out the correct safe combination, i.e. (1, 8, 3, 2).

The clue that should suggest this solution is the sequence of directions Uncle Elliot used while setting the combination in the recording, i.e. (SW, SE, NE, E).

These locations correspond to the various animal-themed decorations in the study, i.e. (Bear, Spiders, Flies, Snakes).

Each decoration corresponds to a type of food or drink in Uncle Elliot's fast food order, i.e. (Beer, Sliders, Fries, Shakes)

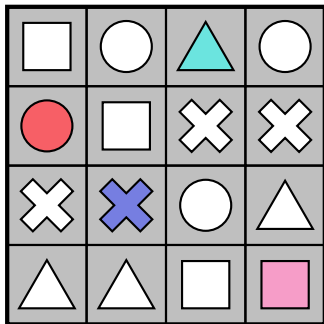
Finally, each type of food or drink corresponds to the number of that item that Uncle Elliot ordered, i.e. (1, 8, 3, 2).

Puzzle 4c: The Plug Board

Your player must figure out how to insert the glass rods into the plug board in the *fast forward* arrangement.

Each rod can only be placed in a hole that matches its shape. Furthermore, the rods must be placed such that only one rod is in each row and each column.

There are two such arrangements, *rewind* and *fast forward*. In the future, the rods were in the *rewind* arrangement. The *fast forward* arrangement is depicted below.



Puzzle 4d: The Sphere

Your player must find a replacement for the ceramic dome that is missing from the past version of the table.

For years, Uncle Elliot struggled to get his time machine to work properly. One day, his baseball rolled into the beam as he was performing an experiment. It worked!

It turns out that having something round and solid block the beam was the critical ingredient that his design was missing.

In the future, Uncle Elliot uses a bespoke ceramic dome. His baseball, however, will still do the job in a pinch.

The clues that should suggest this solution to your player are the burn marks on the baseball, the dome in the future version of the table, and the indentation in the past version of the table.

Puzzle 4e: The Key

This is an optional puzzle that your player can solve to secure their inheritance.

To do so, they must figure out a way to get a door key to the future version of the study. This will allow them to escape from the study before their time expires.

One possible approach is to get the key from Uncle Elliot in the past. Then, hide the key somewhere it is unlikely to be found in the intervening years. When your player arrives in the future, they can recover the key and make their escape.

That said, this is an opportunity for your player to be creative and there are many ways to approach the problem. If your player suggests a solution, try to help them find a way to make it work. There are no wrong answers to this puzzle!

Act 5

Test

Version 0.1