

7 of 12

Scene 1

Fortress of Solitude

Raven and the figure are talking to Luthor on a computer screen

Raven: (Growls) Luthor

Luthor: Ah, it seems you're familiar with my counterpart on your Earth, I hear he's quite a piece of work. Rest assured I am not like him.

Raven: What is it you all want?

Luthor: 'Erol' here has had difficulty communicating, corrupted magic has left him unable to speak for himself, that's why he needed to find a technologically advanced base and make contact with me.

Raven: Erol?

Luthor: No, not Erol, Eryl. But perhaps proper introductions are necessary. My name is Alexander Luthor, I am the leader of the Justice League on my Earth

Raven: You've kept me kidnapped for nearly a week, leaving me unable to help as an invasion tears the planet apart, you've violated the sanctuary of one of Earth's greatest champions, and you've unleashed a wave of magical energy onto the world

Luthor: It was unfortunately necessary; the wave of magic will enhance the powers of your staff so it's ready for what's to come

Raven: And yet most of Eryl's time has been spent keeping my staff out of my hands

Luthor: We weren't entirely sure of her power level, Eryl is sending data that can help us assess the power levels of the space and reality gems in your world. But we're running out of time, if we don't end this now, your entire universe could be at risk.



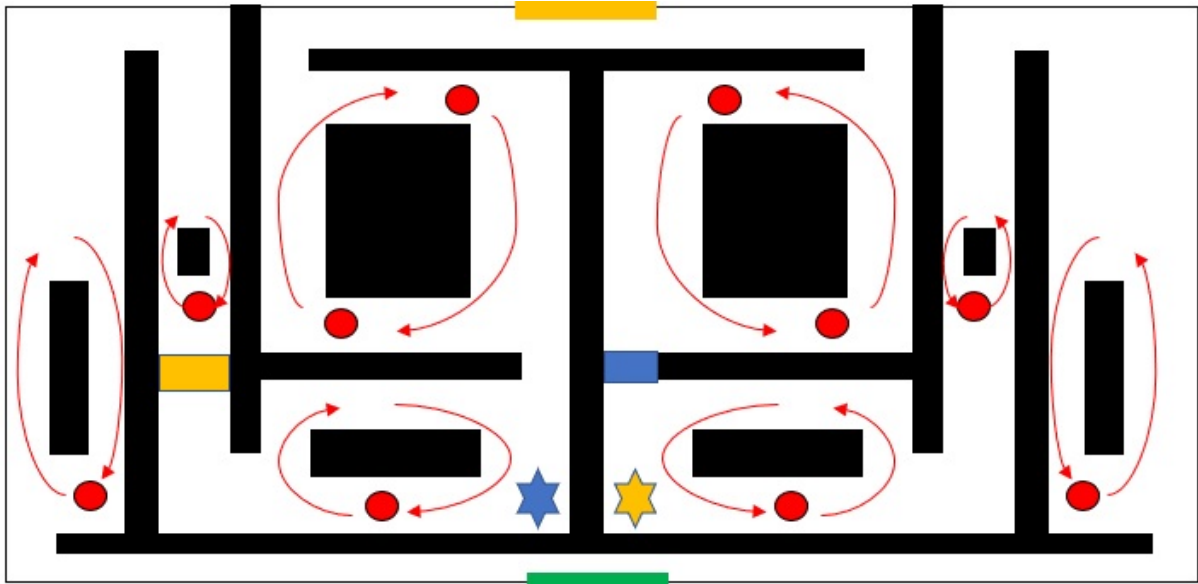
Scene 2

Approaching the Fortress

The Maze

Raven leads the warriors to a maze approaching the fortress

Raven: Warriors, one final test lies between you and the entrance to the fortress. The demons patrol these walls and will kill you if they spot you. Fortunately, my staff can give you a glance of the path ahead (she raises her staff and the gem glows red)



Raven: To complete this maze, you must split up. There is a door blocking your paths, which can only be opened with the pressure pads on the other side. Be careful and let the challenge begin (she transforms into a Raven and flies over the maze)

The warriors discuss their strategy and elect to have Valtho head to the left side on his own, whilst Pale and Etony head to the right side. Both head towards the corners in their respective directions, carefully watching the patrolling demon and giving each other signals to begin.

Valtho and Etony both spot their opportunities and sneak behind the demon, following their patrol until they get a clear path to the top of the maze, as the demons turn, Etony and Valtho make a break and hide behind the ice at the top of the maze

Pale waits patiently for the demon to return, when it can no longer see him, he uses the same manoeuvre to pass it by safely. With the door in front of Valtho shut, he elects to stay put and watch the demon he sees patrolling by the door.

Pale and Etony watch the pattern for the patrolling demon, Etony moves quickly behind the demon, knowing its patrol route is short, he manages to get to the edge of the maze, whilst out of the line of sight of the demon that patrols the button.

Etoney follows behind the demon as Pale makes his move, employing the same tactic and coming fortunately out of the demons' line of sight. He joins Etoney following the demon around the fountain.

They approach the button and Etoney moves to step on it, opening the door, Valtho watches, knowing this is just supposed to be confirmation. Pale continues to follow the demon to provide warning of his return

As the demon closes in, Etoney moves quickly, lapping the fountain until the demon has passed and presses the button again, Valtho monitors the timing closely, hoping it'll sync with passing his demon.

They repeat the tactic for a third time, and when the door opens, Valtho makes his move, passing the demon and heading through the open door. Etoney steps off the switch as the demon closes in, and joins Pale following the demon as they wait for the door to open

Valtho takes cover and watches the demon patrolling his button. He is sure to time the demons' movements as he will have no warning for the demon returning. Now sure of his pattern, Valtho follows behind the demon until he reaches the button.

Etoney and Pale see the door open, confirming that Valtho had made it through their door, Valtho is soon forced to move as the demon returns, he laps the fountain and is soon behind the demon again, he presses the button a second time.

Pale and Etoney keep count for how long the door remains open as Valtho is counting the seconds until the demon returns. He repeats his strategy a third time, this time Etoney sneaks through and takes a look at the guard patrol before returning to Pale

Valtho repeats his manoeuvre one final time, this time Etoney and Pale make it through, they see the demon about to turn around and quickly follow behind it until they reach the gap, they walk through it and reach the end of the maze

Valtho watches the demon patrol from the button, as soon as he sees a demon pass by, he makes his move and follows behind it. He soon makes it to the end of the maze, joining the others.

Etoney: Going into the challenge of the back of our sour result in the last challenge was tough but we all felt confident with the strategy and going through the maze I was not really doubting myself because that would lead to hesitation so I just kept calm and carried on.

Pale: When Valtho brought up the strategy I instantly knew there was a red flag with the fact that more than one warrior following the demon might end up making too much noise but it was the only available option we had given we lost Lerdan yesterday. The fact we all managed to get through that challenge

was the best-case scenario given I didn't want another one of us to fall given we have come so far on the quest together as losing another one of us at this stage would only make it harder for the rest of us to succeed.

Valtho: When we saw the map of the maze we had to get through I could tell we were all very nervous as a slight strategic miscalculation in a similar challenge had just cost us Lerdan. Since I felt Lerdan's loss was largely my fault I took it upon myself to ensure we all made it through this challenge safely, despite there only being three of us. Going down the left-hand side of the maze on my own was risky because if I didn't make it past the yellow door we would all fail! Thankfully, my strategy held up and the counting system worked. We are almost upon the fortress now!

The Key

The warriors see the massive doors to the fortress, engraved with a symbol that once inspired hope in these lands, now a cavern of despair and depravity. They approach an alter where the key can be placed.

The pieces of the key consist of a centre-piece, 3 segments and 2 half-segments, they place the centrepiece in the alter and try placing the segments in but find some longer than others that need to be placed in correctly.

Pale works on the two half-pieces and tries fixing them together so it can be placed in as a single segment, his tactic is successful. He looks inside the centrepiece, seeing if he can work out whether a long or short segment belongs there

After some careful observation, he places the centrepiece in, it clicks into place and locks in, implying to everyone that it's in the correct position. It's not long before the other segments are in place.

The segments extend into a crank handle, the warriors all push and the doors begin to open, they rush in as the doors close behind them, Raven stands waiting for them

Raven: Congratulations, you have entered the fortress, but now things get ever more dangerous, now, he is waiting.

Valtho: I'm relieved to get into the fortress thanks to all the hard work that has gone into retrieving the keys. I can only hope now that we find Raven and finish this quest the way we said we would...

Pale: I am very ready for what lies ahead of us and the fact I was the one that did most of the construction of the key proves it. Every challenge we pass takes us closer to Raven and given the dangers we have faced already, we can't be far away from him now. If I am honest the Raven that is leading us I have a

bad feeling about but I am not sure what at the moment, I think I may find out soon enough.

Etoney: Getting this far I'm just really pumped to get started because I wasn't expecting us to only be 3 but it just motivates me to hopefully do well.

Scene 3

Fortress of Solitude

Raven (M): You have yet to answer my question, why am I here?

Luthor: Given the uncertainty of everything, we felt it best that you be brought as far away from her as possible. Eryl's been working on fixing the zeta tube so you can leave before she arrives

Raven (M): The Raven... the one that's been guiding warriors here to my rescue

Luthor: She is no friend of yours, and she is no Raven

Chamber of Ice

Raven (F): Warriors, even within the fortress, he has created obstacles. I cannot destroy them, but I can create a safe path across the stones. Look above you and find the answer to the riddle, from there you must cross alone.

The warriors find the chamber guarded by a pathway, and a beam across an abyss. To reach the beam they must in turn answer the riddle before them then they must cross the beam. Pale agrees to go first.

"I have a bed but never sleep, I have a mouth but never eat, I have banks but never spend, I'll always run until the end, what am I?"

He deduces the answer to the riddle, 'River.' He steps on the R, then jumps to the I, then the V, then the E, then the R. Etoney follows behind him, having also deduced the correct answer to the riddle. Pale steps onto the narrow beam, careful not to look at the abyss below him

With Etoney making progress along the path, Valtho attempts the riddle last, also correctly guessing the answer to the riddle. Pale is moving swiftly along the beam, but the swinging blades ensure his progress is less swift.

Pale remembers his failure at the Chasm and knows he cannot fail again. Etoney stands on the beam and already he seems unbalanced. Pale watches the swinging blade, preparing to make his move, he does so and manages to pass it, but 2 more lie between him and the end.

Etoney struggles to keep his balance but does proceed forward as Valtho steps onto the beam. Pale progresses quickly to the second swinging axe as Etoney reaches the first, he tries to pass it but is hit and falls into the abyss

Pale manages to pass the second act before he hears the screams of Etoney's demise. It unnerves him but he knows he must continue. Valtho is also unnerved by this loss. He carries on forward, approaching the first swinging axe

Valtho passes the first axe unscathed as Pale approaches the final axe, he watches it swing, ensuring he has an opening and eventually he passes through it. With the final axe passed, he makes it to the end of the beam and to safety.

Valtho reaches the second axe, with Pale encouraging him he passes it by, he shakes a little as he proceeds to the final axe, but he manages to maintain his balance. With Pale's help, he manages to pass the final axe and join him at the end.

Valtho: Losing Etoney now is a bitter pill to swallow as he has been a really important team player throughout the last couple of days. I was worried I would fall from the beam as well, but luckily, I made it and now Pale and I really have to work together to find Raven.

Pale: The riddle was very easy to solve in all honesty but the balance beam section was the dangerous part as not only you had to balance on the beam but you also had to watch the axes on how they swung back and forth, trying to knock you off, I managed that challenge quite easily in the end so it was little problems as far as I was concerned. To be honest I knew Etoney wasn't going to make it given he concerned me several times with his agility but he certainly will be missed given he was a big contribution to the team's success up to that point. After we lost Etoney there was no way I was to be left by myself on the quest alone so I was really hoping that Valtho would pull through and join me to continue the quest and thankfully he did.

Back at the computer, Raven (M) continues his discussion

Raven (M): If you knew Eryl couldn't talk, why send him? (Eryl grunts)

Luthor: He's rather protective of the space gem and insists no-one else uses it. Your world is full of dimensional anomalies, possibly the result of some heavy experimentation* it made for easy travel and allows the gems to work outside the confines of their own reality.

Raven (M): Then why was Eryl unable to fight?

Luthor: The gems need exposure to their own reality, simply finding a breach would be enough to charge it but it was too big a risk with her nearby. With the space gem and your staff, she would have the ability to create full on rifts, over time, she can send an entire army through, or possibly something worse...

The Ice Wall

The warriors find Raven (F) blocked by an ice wall

Raven (F): This ice wall is formed from his dark magic. My staff alone cannot penetrate it, but perhaps there is another way (she points her staff at the wall and 3 spots glow red on the wall) impacts in these target zones might disturb the ice enough to destroy the wall (she raises her staff and from the ice in the ground a catapult forms, and several large missiles) be careful warriors, I'll see if I can find an alternate way around.

Thanks to Raven, there are 3 weak spots on the wall that the warriors need to hit to shatter the ice. After discussing it with Pale, Valtho decides to use the catapult. He loads the first missile, stretches back the catapult and releases but the first shot lands short of the wall

With the warriors unable to move the catapult any closer, Valtho knows that a stronger shot will be needed to hit these targets. He loads a second missile and pulls back as far as he can, he releases. The shot hits the wall, but just to the left of the highest weak spot.

With his aim in, Valtho repeats the tactic aiming a little further to the left, the shot hits the weak spot and the ice is visibly damaged. The next weak spot is further down and to the right, Valtho spends the next couple of shots getting his aim in

The missiles that have been fired disappear after making contact with the wall, and only a limited number exist, Valtho has 5 missiles left, with the first of those he manages to hit the second weak spot, the ice is cracking, one more weak-spot remains, further down and far to the right

Valtho uses the next shot to test his aim, the shot hits close, but not close enough to perform the required damage. His next shot misses as well, with only 2 missiles left, the pressure is on for Valtho to hit his mark. He aims his penultimate missile, and it successfully hits the weak spot. The ice shatters allowing the journey to continue.

Valtho: Once I saw the Ice Wall I knew it would be better for me to attempt the challenge with as many shots as possible. After a while, Pale agreed and then it was just me and the catapult. It took me awhile to judge the power of the thing, but I managed to break down the wall in the end. We are so close now!

Raven (M) and Eryl still talk with Luthor

Raven (M): I have listened to your tale, Luthor, but many a time has a man been tricked into carrying out others' ill deeds thinking they were doing good, tell me, why should I believe you?

Luthor: Because everything depends on what you do next, the zeta tube repairs are complete, you must leave now before... (The computer explodes, knocking Raven and Eryl to the ground)

Voice: That will not happen yet (The ice they stand on begins to melt and they are both trapped) the final challenge begins now

The Search

The fortress is much bigger than the warriors thought it would be, levels sprawling high above them with no available means to get to them, they see a statue and whilst neither can remember the age that spawned heroes such as him, they both smile thinking about it.

They see Raven searching the upper levels, so Pale and Valtho split up to cover the ground floor. Valtho passes a bottle, inside which is a city that looks so real, he'd almost believe it was, he finds a corridor and begins checking the rooms, finding mostly robot parts, which he backs away from slowly.

Pale passes through a hallway, in glass cages he can see creatures he never knew existed, he saw Raven's staff resting inside and takes a mental note of that for when Raven is found, a shadowy figure follows him from behind, before he knows it this figure strikes him, knocking him out.

Valtho continues searching, eventually finding Raven tied up and gagged in a room that seems surprisingly empty given the contents of the other rooms. He removes the ropes and removes the gags

Raven: I have been watching your progress. You have done well, Valtho, but come, we must recover my staff before...

As they head back into the chamber both look in shock, Raven has Pale unconscious in her grasp, and has her staff pointed at his head

Raven: So, it's true, things are not as they appear

Raven (3): It would seem so, wake up Pale (she blasts him with her staff enough to wake him up) tell Raven where his staff is

Pale tells Raven (M) where to find his staff, Raven (M) transforms and flies off

Raven (M): This disguise has served its purpose (she raises her staff and her clothes transform, she is now covered in white feathers, Raven returns with his staff)

Raven: You deceived the warriors, who are you?

Lyre: I went by another name once, but you can call me Lyre. I need that staff, Raven

Raven: You shall never possess it (Lyre turns her staff on Pale)

Lyre: I don't want to do this, I couldn't risk them all turning on me but these two are worthy.

Raven: What have you done?

Lyre: 5 was too many, I had to thin their ranks (we flash to see Lyre smashing the key to the fortress and hiding the pieces, creating demons from the snow

using her staff, creating the ice barrier in the cave and the challenges in the fortress) give me the staff Raven, no-one else has to die! (Raven steps forward, Lyre's staff glows and a stalactite grows from the ground and pierces Pale through the chest, he drops, dead) I didn't... (A blast barely misses her, Eryl has recovered, teleporting by Raven's side)

Raven: Take cover Valtho (as Raven and Eryl team up against Lyre, they begin to overpower her until a demon appears behind Eryl and claims him, Lyre quickly creates more with her staff to distract Raven as she heads towards Eryl's staff, she strikes the staff with her own, breaking the space gem free, she takes it and inserts it into her own staff, by which time Raven has dealt with the remaining demons)

Lyre: I have the power of 2 infinity gems, surrender! (Raven steps forward, Lyre backs away, touching a bottle on a pedestal, she turns her head and sees the contents of the bottle) I've heard of this place, Kandor, the last vestige of Krypton, with 50 million populating that city (she points her staff at the bottle) last chance

Raven: Monster!

Lyre: (Taken aback by those words, then angered, tears falling down her eyes) Give me the staff! (Raven sighs, then drops his staff, Lyre picks it up) The Grand Master will be pleased (she leaves and the portal closes before Raven can follow)

Raven: It seems I heeded Luthor's warnings too late, and now, Lyre has my staff and Eryl is dead, as indeed are most of the warriors. Valtho, I thank you for coming to my rescue, but it appears we have all been played. We must get back to Alaunus, before it's too late

Valtho: I am broken. The Raven that I trusted and who has led me on this entire quest has actually used me for her evil desires. It may have been better to never start the journey at all! Worst of all, she just killed Pale right before my eyes! It makes me so angry to think of the other nine warriors who sacrificed their lives for a quest that was all a trap. I wish I'd paid more attention to the wisdom tree and the riddle bridge... but I was too focused on succeeding to think clearly about the situation. Now the real Raven and I are trapped and without a weapon. We have to get back to the Island somehow... but how is the big question. Lyre... I won't ever forget this... I will find you and justice will be served!!!

Scene 4

Realm of the Dead

Etoney and Pale join their fellow warriors, staring at the journal.

The eyes of the serpent glow, the warriors open the journal and find an inscription

*Warriors. My name is Satyarani, and I need your help
Jewels from my homeland fell into the realm of the dead, you must
complete the trials and recover them. In return, their magic can return
some of you to the land of the living.*

Next time: Trials at the Realm of the Dead