



BRAM HENSHAW

Puzzlewright of Narrowways

QUICKSHOT NPC

BRAM HENSHAW, PUZZLEWRIGHT OF NARROWWAYS

EVERY LOCK IS A LESSON, EVERY HINT A DARE.

A wry, regionally-weathered artisan who designs puzzle-rooms to test cleverness rather than to hoard coin, Bram delights in twisting both rules and minds, forever chasing the perfect trial—and the perfect puzzle-solver.

WHO IS BRAM?

Bram Henshaw is the mastermind artisan behind Narrowways, a vertical warren of folding rooms and shifting puzzles that reward cleverness and punish assumption. His hands are stained from endless tinkering, his apron a memorial to failed and successful predictions alike, and his smile always runs two steps ahead of the truth. To outsiders, Bram is a genial craftsman, but behind every offer to help is a deliberate misdirection, every 'hint' is both a trap and lifeline. Whether testing, wagering, or offering sly mentorship, he is as much provocateur as patron, with a secret stake in the outcome of every game.

WHEN TO USE BRAM

- Bram hires the party to test a new room, promising a reward for solving his latest and most devious challenge. (*Patron, Puzzle-Tester*)
- He serves as the hub for wagers and rumours in the district; players seeking secrets or local odds will end up in a game of truth and misdirection with him. (*Informant/Wagerer*)
- Bram knows a compromising truth behind the Feast of Fools' latest chaos - and for the right 'answer,' he'll trade it. (*Secret Holder*)
- When the party grows overconfident, Bram is both rival and teacher: he'll shift the rules mid-challenge, testing ego as much as intellect. (*Complicated Ally/Antagonist*)
- A rival puzzlemaster or failed apprentice approaches the party with a vendetta. Bram's endorsement (or his sabotage) alters the outcome. (*Mutual Rival*)

AT A GLANCE

Bram is a lean, wiry man of middle years, his black hair cropped close and streaked with grey, fingers permanently stained with black oil. He wears a patchwork apron crowded with ticket stubs and annotated sheet music, and his eyes smile even when his mouth does not. At his belt hangs a uniquely notched bronze tuning fork, which he taps absent-mindedly as he studies you.

ATTRIBUTES

- **Race/Heritage:** Human | **Age:** Middle-aged | **Build:** Wiry, lean
- **Key Features:** Oil-stained fingers, patchwork apron covered in tickets, quick crooked smile
- **Signature Item:** Notched bronze tuning fork hung from a black cord at his belt



ROLEPLAY NOTES

- Bram's words are precise but laced with double meanings, delivered in a casual, wry tone with an occasional regional idiom ('Right, but have you thought it backwards, mate?'). (*Speech*).
- He habitually offers contradictory hints—one true, one false, never saying which, always delivered with an ambiguous smile. (*Behavior*).
- Driven by a love of cleverness over profit; gets visibly bored when presented with brute force solutions. (*Motivation*).
- If a puzzle's solution is discovered too quickly, Bram will subtly alter the conditions under the guise of 'maintaining the art.' (*Quirk*).
- Keeps a private prediction about each group stashed on a ticket in his apron. Sometimes he offers to read it after a session, sometimes burns it instead. (*Secret*).

STORY HOOKS

THE RIVAL'S GAUNTLET (*ACTION*)

Bram's former apprentice, Tesslyn Voard, issues a public challenge: beat her trial in half the time it took to solve Bram's, or forfeit your Narrowways winnings.

LOCKSMITH'S SECRET (*MYSTERY*)

A notorious noble hires the party to uncover how Bram's security systems keep getting bypassed, only to discover Bram is feeding 'solutions' to confuse both sides.

FOOL'S FEAST SABOTEUR (*INTRIGUE*)

Bram offers the party a cryptic clue tied to the source of chaos during the Feast of Fools, but asks for proof of wit - a puzzle or riddle - before he'll share.

WAGERS OF WORTH (*POLITICAL*)

Players must outsmart Bram (and each other) in a public puzzle-wager that soon ensnares city officials and underworld figures in unexpected alliances.

BRAM HENSHAW

Medium humanoid (human), Chaotic Neutral

AC 14 (leather apron, quick reflexes)
HP 44 (8d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

Initiative +2

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0	+1	INT	17	+3	+5
DEX	15	+2	+4	WIS	16	+3	+6
CON	12	+1	+2	CHA	14	+2	+4

Skills Insight +7, Deception +6, Investigation +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Tinker's Tools (+9, expertise), Performance +4

Resistances psychic (puzzle-induced only)

Senses passive Perception 14, passive Insight 20

Languages Common, High Cant, musical notation

CR 3 (700 XP)

TRAITS

Adaptive Puzzlewright Bram has advantage on saving throws and skill checks to detect lies, deceptions, or unusual motives, and can reconfigure a puzzle or room in Narrowways as a bonus action once per encounter.

Expert Tinker Bram has expertise in tinker's tools and can disable, reset, or modify a mechanical device within reach as an action or bonus action. Any puzzle he oversees imposes disadvantage on brute force solutions.

Contradictory Guidance Whenever Bram offers a hint, players must succeed on a DC 17 Insight check to determine which element is misleading.

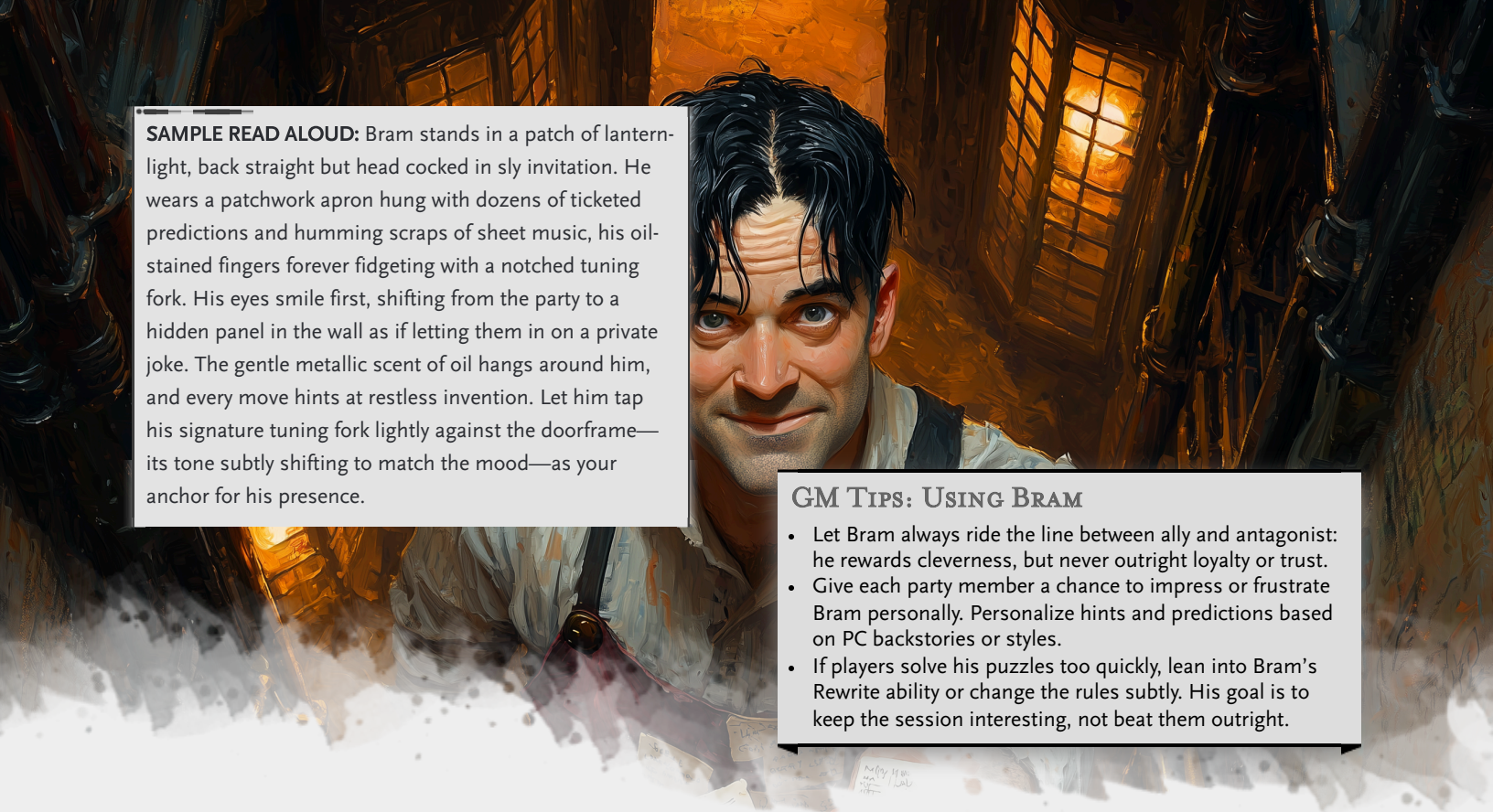
ACTIONS

Rewrite (1/encounter) Bram may instantly alter one written clue, inscription, or sign in his immediate location, changing its meaning or logic; DC 16 Investigation to spot inconsistencies. He cannot use this to directly harm, but players acting on the old text may face misleading consequences.

Mnemonic Tune Bram hums or plays a brief mnemonic sequence (Performance +4 vs DC 13 Wisdom); if successful, a chosen creature has advantage or disadvantage (Bram's choice) on the next insight or intelligence-based check relating to a current puzzle or room.

REACTIONS

Red Herrings When challenged or caught in a lie, Bram can point out an irrelevant clue or misdirect player attention, imposing disadvantage on one Investigation or Perception check made by a challenger.



SAMPLE READ ALOUD: Bram stands in a patch of lantern-light, back straight but head cocked in sly invitation. He wears a patchwork apron hung with dozens of ticketed predictions and humming scraps of sheet music, his oil-stained fingers forever fidgeting with a notched tuning fork. His eyes smile first, shifting from the party to a hidden panel in the wall as if letting them in on a private joke. The gentle metallic scent of oil hangs around him, and every move hints at restless invention. Let him tap his signature tuning fork lightly against the doorframe—its tone subtly shifting to match the mood—as your anchor for his presence.

GM TIPS: USING BRAM

- Let Bram always ride the line between ally and antagonist: he rewards cleverness, but never outright loyalty or trust.
- Give each party member a chance to impress or frustrate Bram personally. Personalize hints and predictions based on PC backstories or styles.
- If players solve his puzzles too quickly, lean into Bram's Rewrite ability or change the rules subtly. His goal is to keep the session interesting, not beat them outright.

D8 INTERACTION TABLE: WHAT DOES BRAM SAY OR DO?

d8 Interaction

- 1 Offers two conflicting hints and invites you to choose 'the more interesting one.'
- 2 Misremembers your name and gives you a clever anagram instead.
- 3 Quietly burns a ticket from his apron, then shrugs, 'Your odds just changed.'
- 4 Asks you to hum a melody before continuing the conversation.
- 5 Moves a clue mid-puzzle, pretending it was always - or never - there.
- 6 Quotes a failed adventurer, pauses, then claims they solved the room... eventually.
- 7 Teases you with, 'Do you want a hint, or a dare?'
- 8 Adjusts his tuning fork, listens, then says, 'The room likes you today. Be careful.'

QUOTES & ECHOES FROM BRAM

Use these as ambient mutterings, sudden insights, or unsettling truths.

These lines and phrases can help you shape tone on the fly, unsettle players, or build empathy for Bram Henshaw depending on how they're delivered.

{{descriptive

- 'Every answer is a door; but not all doors open.'
- 'Half of what I tell you is true. The fun is guessing which half.'
- 'Welcome - did you bring your second thoughts?'
- 'You're looking for the key. I'm watching for the locked ask.'
- 'Assume nothing, especially the walls.'
- 'The quickest way out is usually a trap.'
- 'Don't mind the music. Sometimes it's warning me, not you.'
- 'Even my failures are better teachers than my puzzles.'
- 'Are you testing my room, or am I testing you?'
- 'Prediction: one of you is about to impress me. Or possibly die trying.'
- 'Not everyone gets a second attempt. Use yours wisely.'
- 'The house listens, and it prefers honesty over cleverness. Usually.'

Note on the death of Bram Henshaw: If Bram dies, a final impossible room appears in Narrowways, a test left behind for those clever enough to mourn him.

OPTIONAL LOCATION: THE FOLDING NARROWWAYS

Narrowways is a stacked labyrinthine house on a cramped city block, cobbled together with vertical ambition: no two visits use the same set of rooms. Players might discover it via a rumour, invitation, wager, or by stumbling across a door that, impossibly, opens onto a new floor each time.

LOCATION OVERVIEW

Narrowways is best run as a shifting, customizable venue where each room is itself a puzzle. Key elements include mechanical chambers with pressure plates, sliding tracks, musical locks, and origami-folded staircases that can invert with a lever.

Bram Hemshaw, the Puzzleright of Narrowways, can (and will) alter the layout between sessions. As such, the building itself feels semi-sentient, like an architectural extension of his mind. Lighting changes with the mood of the challenge.

There are always two visible exits, but neither leads back the way you came. GM's should prep a couple of quick puzzles and be ready for Bram to rewrite their rules if the players get complacent.

READ ALOUD: Narrowways is a narrow, vertical mansion stitched from crooked timber and shadowed glass, packed with folding panels and secret doors. Dim brass lanterns cast honeycomb light on warped corridors, and the air tastes like parchment, oil, and polished copper. Every echo hints at rooms you haven't entered, and even the stairs seem uncertain of their own direction. The feeling of being watched — by the house, by Bram, or by rooms themselves — never quite fades.

EFFECTS IN THE THE FOLDING NARROWWAYS

Type Effect

Environmental Rooms can fold, invert, or shift at Bram's command, reconfiguring physical challenges and exits unpredictably.

Magical/Sensory Auditory illusions murmur riddles, clues, or false trails if players hum or play music within.

Social/Psychological Failed attempts or moments of overconfidence trigger subtle, discordant soundscapes that induce paranoia or self-doubt (DC 14 Wisdom save or minor disadvantage on next attempt).

Hidden Mechanical Some pressure plates reward creative failure over success, sometimes opening passages only when a player gives up or asks for help in a clever way.

Artifact Puzzle Sheet music clues are hidden behind glass panels; matching the melody out loud can reveal or reseal a vital passage.

WHY USE THIS LOCATION?

- **Shifting Geometry:** No two visits are ever the same. Even recurring players can't reliably predict the next route through.
- **Living Architecture:** Rooms respond to music or occupant moods. A creative approach can physically alter the challenge.
- **Puzzleright's Arena:** Players and rivals are invited to wager not just coin but pride and secrets in Bram's public trials.
- **Echoes of Genius:** Failed solutions and triumphs linger as faint sounds, offering inspiration or warning (if you listen close enough).

MUSICAL ATMOSPHERE

A constant undersong of melodic ticking, half-heard chimes, and spatial dissonance fills Narrowways. Each step might trigger a faint motif: clashing if you're on the wrong path, harmonious when you're close to a solution. Every successfully solved room ends with a soft, resonant chime. For ambient music, consider something like mechanical with dark whimsy.