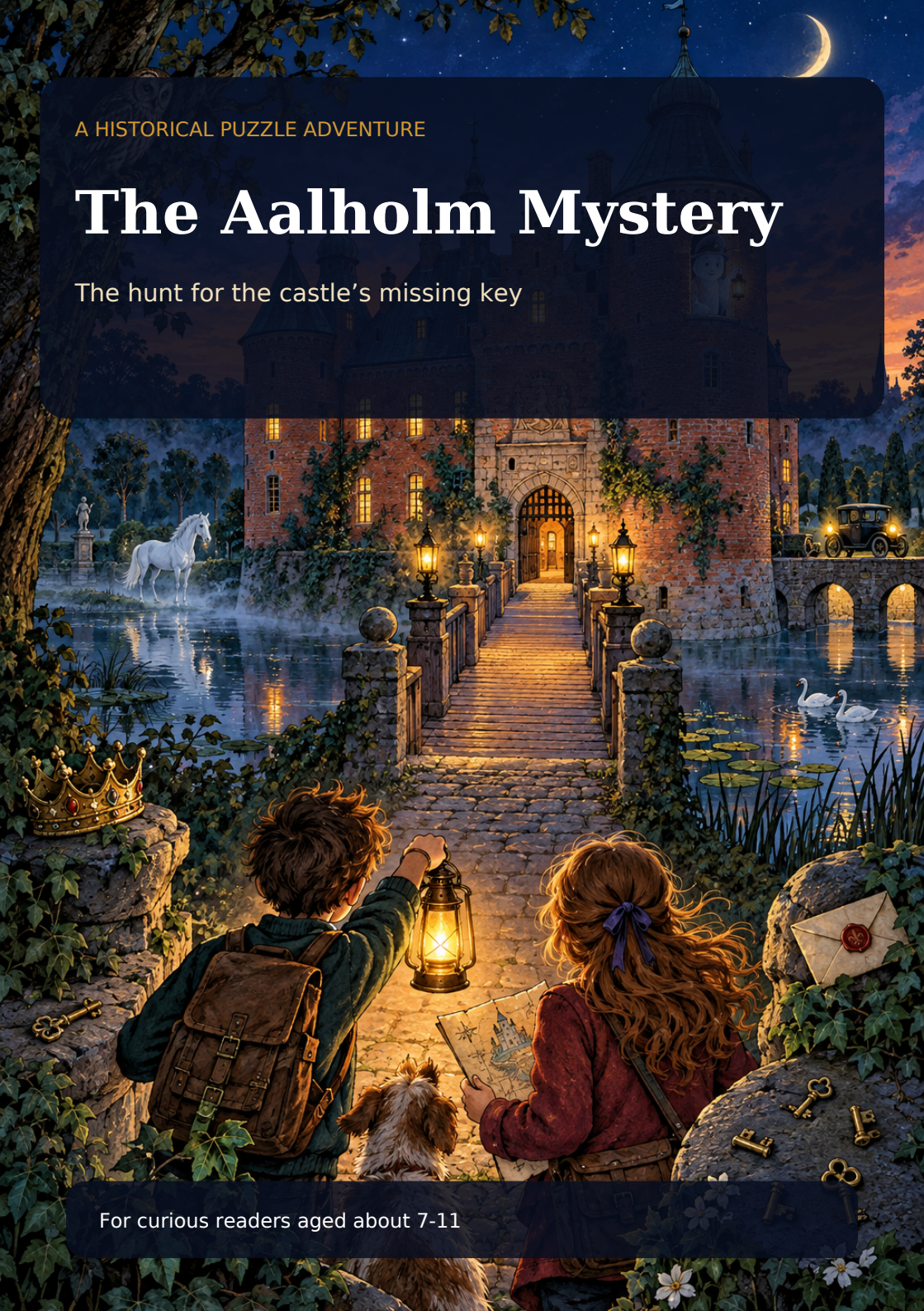


A HISTORICAL PUZZLE ADVENTURE

The Aalholm Mystery

The hunt for the castle's missing key



For curious readers aged about 7-11

The Aalholm Mystery

The hunt for the castle's missing key.

Ten story chapters, forty puzzles and a secret final message. For ages about 7-11; younger readers can share the reading with an adult.

Adapted from the revised Danish edition. Word puzzles, letter codes and the final message have been rebuilt for English. All the information needed for each puzzle is on its page.

Fact and imagination

Aalholm is a real Danish castle with a long history. Alfred, the shadow, the brass tokens and our encounters with the past are imaginary. The dialogue is not a record of what historical people said.

The numbers of windows, candles, patients and boxes, and the temperature changes, were invented for the puzzles. The cards, mazes and emblems are not historical plans or real coats of arms.

Legends are stories passed down by people. A written ghost story is not proof of a ghost. An unconfirmed tunnel is neither a proven tunnel nor necessarily a disproven one.

This whole adventure takes place in the book. Do not go under a real bridge, onto ice or into locked rooms. The cover is a fantasy illustration, not an exact picture of Aalholm.

Ten tokens, one key

The archive key has vanished. You and Alfred must collect ten brass tokens in ten periods of history. The last puzzle in each chapter reveals a word and tells you which letters to keep.

Some tokens give one letter, others more than one. Together they reveal where the single key is hidden. You are collecting clues to the key, not pieces of a broken key.

The shadow tries to erase names and memories. Each solved puzzle preserves a trace and opens the next part of the story.

You cannot change the past, but you can help people remember it.

Read, solve, continue

1. Read a story page, then turn the page and solve its puzzle. Continue with the next story page.
2. The puzzle tells you what to draw, count, write or circle. Use the alphabet key printed beside letter codes: A = 1, B = 2, and so on.
3. In each chapter's fourth puzzle, count the answer's letters from the left. For example, letter 2 of CAT is A. Copy only the requested letters into their labelled boxes on page 6.
4. Labels such as 3a and 3b mean the first and second boxes for chapter 3. On page 87, copy letters by their labels, not in chapter order.
5. Hints and explained answers begin on page 92. Try the hint before reading the answer. It is fine to ask for help.

PDF: print or use an app with drawing tools. EPUB: write on separate paper; the book does not save typed answers.

Keep the letters you find

01 The castle in the water

Starts on page 7

1a

02 The treaty in the tower

Starts on page 15

2a

2b

03 The queens' castle

Starts on page 23

3a

04 Trouble at the gate

Starts on page 31

4a

4b

4c

05 The door behind the wallpaper

Starts on page 39

5a

06 The ice and the prison book

Starts on page 47

6a

07 The count's secret code

Starts on page 55

7a

08 The bear and the royal train

Starts on page 63

8a

09 Hoofbeats in the empty hall

Starts on page 71

9a

10 The final hammer blow

Starts on page 79

10a

10b

The castle in the water

Rain lashes Aalholm's walls. In this story, you have permission to visit the old archive. But a little night watchman blocks the door. His boots float above the floor.

"I'm Alfred. I look after the castle's memories," he says. "Someone has taken my key." Behind him a black patch slides across a sign. Its letters vanish.

Alfred unfolds a map. "Ten times, ten brass tokens. They hide the letters that will show us where the key is. We can visit memories, but we cannot change what really happened."

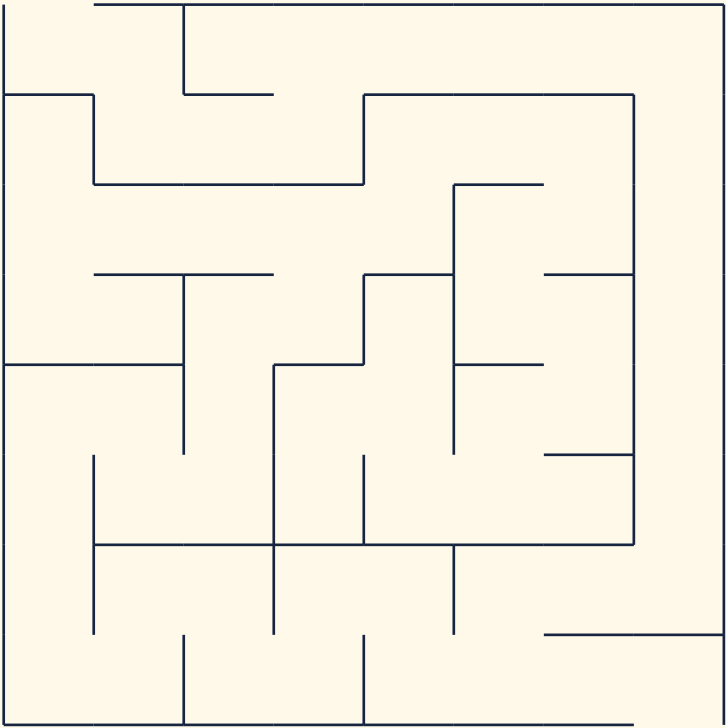
A map of imaginary passages appears. Three knocks sound at its far end. "First, the dungeon. Will you show the way?"

Next page: Puzzle 1 - The way to the dungeon.

The way to the dungeon

Draw a line from START to EXIT. Stay in the passages and do not cross a wall.

START



EXIT

Hints and answers: page 92. Try the puzzle first.

The iron chain

You leave the drawn passages. In a memory, the deposed King Christoffer II sits imprisoned. The links of an imaginary chain glow with sums. “Numbers first, letters afterwards,” says Alfred. “We can solve the code without changing the king’s fate.”

A drop falls through Alfred’s hat. He notices your surprised look. “Keep the paper dry. I’ll be all right.” You tuck the map beneath your coat.

Next page: Puzzle 2 - The king’s chain.

The king's chain

Work out each sum. Use the alphabet key to turn each answer into a letter. Read the letters from top to bottom.

ALPHABET KEY · Example: 3 = C

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

10 + 1 =

Letter:

16 - 7 =

Letter:

42 ÷ 3 =

Letter:

7 × 1 =

Letter:

YOUR ANSWER

1

2

3

4

Hints and answers: page 92. Try the puzzle first.

Wax on the letter

The chain releases a paper clue. You find a letter dated 1330. Alfred explains that a letter from that year is an important source for Aalholm's history. Your puzzle letter carries a grid and coordinates. Wax over a hidden sign will soften only when the word is read.

The shadow reaches for the letter. You bring the lantern closer and it retreats. Alfred waits. This time you will find the way between the squares yourself.

Next page: Puzzle 3 - The letter from 1330.

The letter from 1330

Read the coordinates in the order shown. The letter names the column; the number names the row. Write one letter for each coordinate.

	A	B	C	D
1	M	F	I	Y
2	I	E	S	I
3	E	H	F	L
4	A	S	D	W

READ IN THIS ORDER

B4 → A3 → A4 → D3

YOUR ANSWER

1	2	3	4

Hints and answers: page 92. Try the puzzle first.

The riddle in the wall

The word makes a seal glow. Behind it you glimpse a brass token. Three sentences on the surrounding stones describe one word. “Use all three clues,” says Alfred. “Then keep the letters the puzzle asks for.”

The stone feels warm under your hand. Something clicks behind it, like a lock being tried. “There’s something on the other side,” you whisper. Alfred nods towards the riddle.

Next page: Puzzle 4 - The speaking stones.

The speaking stones

Solve the riddle. Write one word with five letters.

I am a small building block made from clay.

Many of us can be stacked to make a wall.

I am baked hard, but I am not a stone.

YOUR ANSWER

--	--	--	--	--

1 2 3 4 5

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 1, in that order. Copy them into boxes 1a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 92. Try the puzzle first.

The treaty in the tower

The first brass token warms your hand. You copy its letters onto the key card. A line of light leads towards a tower, where a door opens.

Inside sit three scribes with a reed pen, a charcoal stick and a goose quill. They are preserving an important agreement between powerful men: a treaty.

The shadow sweeps over the table. Names vanish from documents. “Find the scribe who wrote the treaty,” says Alfred. “Otherwise we will save the wrong paper.”

Three clues lie beside the inkpot. You read them as a black finger creeps towards the parchment.

Next page: Puzzle 5 - Who wrote the treaty?.

Who wrote the treaty?

Read all three clues. Circle the scribe who wrote the treaty.

1. The treaty was written with the goose quill.
2. Esben used neither the reed pen nor the charcoal stick.
3. Mikkel used the reed pen. Each scribe had one different tool.

☐ MIKKEL

☐ ESBEN

☐ JENS

Hints and answers: page 93. Try the puzzle first.

A seal in three pieces

You point to the right scribe. He does not notice, but his document becomes clear in the light. The shadow strikes the wax. The seal breaks into pieces marked 1300, 60 and 6. “Add them,” says Alfred. “Give the agreement its year back.”

You lay the pieces on the table. A bell sounds outside, and the scribes lift their heads. You hold on to the memory you came to save.

Next page: Puzzle 6 - The year in the seal.

The year in the seal

The seal has broken into three numbered pieces. Add the numbers. Write the year with no comma.

$$1300 + 60 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} + 6 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 93. Try the puzzle first.

The messenger at the door

The year is restored. A little paper horse leaps onto the map. It must carry a message through four years, but the year cards are mixed up. “It can only travel forwards in time,” says Alfred. “Start with the earliest.”

The paper horse stamps impatiently. As you lift a card, it lowers its head to watch. “It’s just as curious as you,” Alfred says.

Next page: Puzzle 7 - The messenger through time.

The messenger through time

Number the cards 1 to 4, with the earliest year first. Then write the years in that order.

1366

1359

1394

1362

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 93. Try the puzzle first.

Beneath the lid

The paper horse reaches a chest and nudges its lid. Golden letters lie inside. They are game pieces, not historical objects, but the shadow has turned them into a lock. “Find something a king wears on his head,” says Alfred. A token rattles inside.

The lid rises a little and falls shut. You move the letters away from the edge, so none will be trapped.

Next page: Puzzle 8 - The golden chest.

The golden chest

Rearrange all five letters. Use each once. Find something a king can wear on his head.



YOUR ANSWER

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1 2 3 4 5

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 2, 5, in that order. Copy them into boxes 2a, 2b on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 93. Try the puzzle first.

The queens' castle

The second token falls into your hand. A doorway of light reveals a young queen. She is fifteen when she marries Christoffer of Bavaria.

“A memory can show people from a time,” says Alfred. “It does not mean everything happened in this very room.” You nod. This is a story, not a photograph.

A raven hops onto a chest. It hides four little words among other letters, then flies away with a nameplate in its beak.

“First the chest, then the name,” says Alfred. A letter grid lies inside the lid. Find the words to open the next door.

Next page: Puzzle 9 - Words in the bridal chest.

Words in the bridal chest

Find BRIDE, RING, COURT and CASTLE. Circle each word. All read across from left to right. Write each word's row number.

1	Z	O	Q	B	R	I	D	E
2	W	M	G	Z	D	K	Z	S
3	X	Z	C	A	S	T	L	E
4	Z	J	B	Y	C	K	O	T
5	J	L	E	P	D	G	L	R
6	F	L	L	K	O	F	Q	C
7	T	A	R	I	N	G	X	F
8	Y	T	C	O	U	R	T	F

BRIDE · row: ____

RING · row: ____

COURT · row: ____

CASTLE · row: ____

Hints and answers: page 94. Try the puzzle first.

Letters on the road

The words are found. Four royal letters fly from the chest, each with a name and a year. “The royal court travelled,” Alfred explains. “A letter issued at Aalholm can tell us when a king was here.” Put the four cards in order before the wind takes them.

You catch the last letter with both hands. The wind pulls at it, then stills as you place it beside the others. Each year shines like a little doorway into the past.

Next page: Puzzle 10 - Kings on the road.

Kings on the road

Number the cards 1 to 4 by year, earliest first. Then write the kings' names in that order.

1516 · Christian II

1454 · Christian I

1526 · Frederik I

1503 · King Hans

YOUR ANSWER

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Hints and answers: page 94. Try the puzzle first.

The lost emblems

When the letters are in order, the wind stops. Four figures on a game card have lost their objects. “I drew these for the puzzle,” says Alfred. “They are not real family coats of arms.” A quill, key, crown and ring must each find their owner.

One figure holds out an empty hand. You read the descriptions while Alfred steadies the tray so that nothing falls to the floor.

Next page: Puzzle 11 - The four emblems.

The four emblems

Read each person’s description. Draw a line to the matching object. Use each object once.

The king wears something on his head. • • QUILL

The bride wears something on her finger. • • KEY

The gatekeeper opens the gate. • • CROWN

The scribe dips a tool into ink. • • RING

Hints and answers: page 94. Try the puzzle first.

The raven returns

The objects are back on the card. The raven drops the nameplate before you, but its letters are hidden in a grid. “Eight coordinates give eight letters,” says Alfred. “You may use a square again.” Read the name to restore the queen to the memory.

The raven flaps impatiently. “You’ll get your sign back,” you promise. It tilts its head and follows your pencil with one bright eye.

Next page: Puzzle 12 - The raven’s stolen name.

The raven's stolen name

Read the coordinates from left to right. Write all eight letters of the name. Use a square again whenever its coordinate repeats.

	A	B	C	D
1	E	L	H	A
2	M	E	L	H
3	O	Q	D	T
4	R	X	A	Z

READ IN THIS ORDER

C3 → A3 → A4 → A3 → D3 → C1 → B2 → C4

YOUR ANSWER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 1, in that order. Copy them into boxes 3a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 94. Try the puzzle first.

Trouble at the gate

The stolen name releases the third token. Shouts and church bells sound beyond the next door. It is 1533, a time of unrest around Aalholm.

Alfred stops you. “This is a sad story. The bailiff lost his life in the unrest. He was an official whose duties included collecting dues. We are looking after a person’s trace, not acting out the violence.”

A pouch lies on a table. In this adventure it holds a number code. Each number can become a letter. You raise the lantern before the shadow can erase the row.

Next page: [Puzzle 13 - The bailiff’s number code.](#)

The bailiff's number code

Use the alphabet key. Read left to right. The word names the official who owned the pouch.

ALPHABET KEY · Example: 3 = C

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

2 1 9 12 9 6 6

YOUR ANSWER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Hints and answers: page 95. Try the puzzle first.

Through the gate

The word appears on the pouch. The year changes to 1534. People from Nysted take Aalholm while the governor is away. You are only watching a memory. Alfred points at a drawn maze. “Our route is on paper. We will not walk among the fighting.”

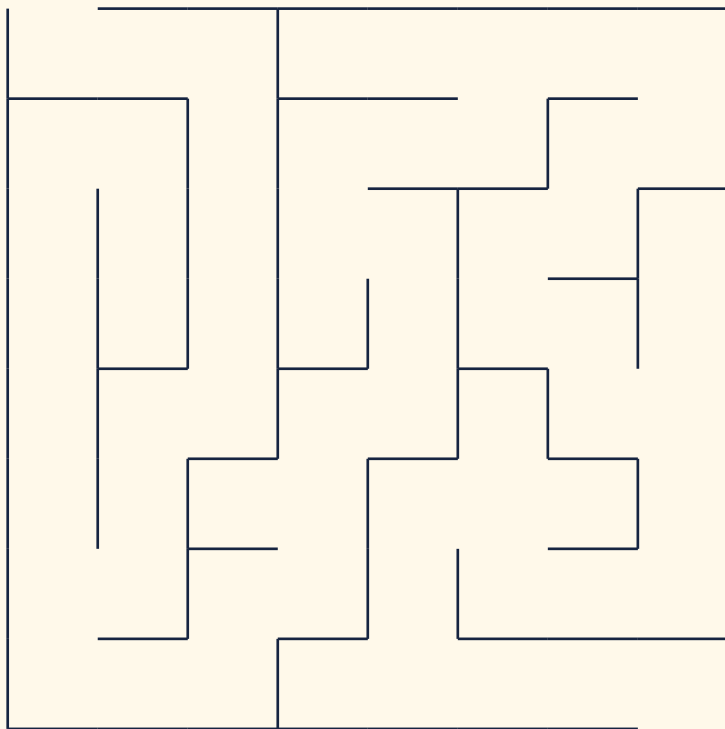
The noise fades behind you. Ahead there are only lines on a page. Your finger follows the first passage and stops before a wall.

Next page: Puzzle 14 - Through the castle gate.

Through the castle gate

Draw the route from START to EXIT. Turn along the passages without crossing any walls.

START



EXIT

Hints and answers: page 95. Try the puzzle first.

Three possible places

You emerge beside a writing desk. Three place cards ask where the governor was. Two clues each rule out a place. You hold the first card while Alfred steadies the second. One place must remain.

The shadow nudges a corner. You pin it with your finger. “You’re not moving the clues,” you tell it. Alfred lights both messages so you can read them again.

Next page: Puzzle 15 - Where was the governor?.

Where was the governor?

There are only three possible places. Use both clues and circle the only place left.

1. The governor was not in the town.
2. The governor was not in the courtyard.

- ☐ IN THE TOWN
- ☐ IN THE COURTYARD
- ☐ AWAY TRAVELLING

Hints and answers: page 95. Try the puzzle first.

Letters on the door

You identify the only possible place. A door appears with loose letters. Above them are the words “The Count’s”. Below them is a blank. “The missing word names the civil war,” says Alfred. Behind the door waits the fourth brass token.

The door creaks when you touch a letter. You can move the letters but cannot remove any. You gather them in the middle and try to hear the word in your head.

Next page: Puzzle 16 - A word for conflict.

A word for conflict

Use all four letters once. Complete the name of the Danish civil war: the Count's ____.



YOUR ANSWER

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1 2 3 4

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 2, 3, 4, in that order. Copy them into boxes 4a, 4b, 4c on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 95. Try the puzzle first.

The door behind the wallpaper

The fourth token closes the door on the unrest. In the next memory a builder lifts his hat. Scaffolding lines a wing of the castle.

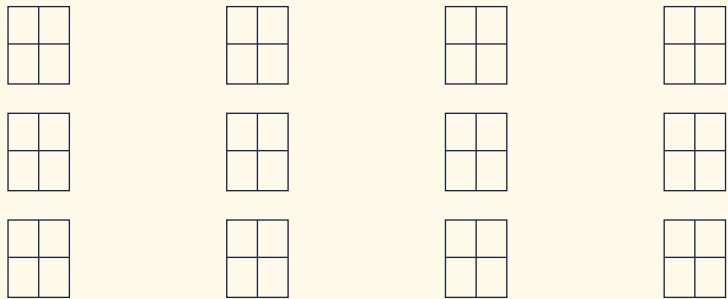
“Building work took place here in the 1580s,” says Alfred. “The real craftspeople left traces in the walls. I invented this little drawing so you can help our builder.”

The paper shows four groups of three windows. The builder has forgotten the total. Without it, the paper door will not open. You take out your pencil while Alfred holds the corner away from the shadow.

Next page: Puzzle 17 - The builder's drawing.

The builder's drawing

This imaginary plan has four groups of three windows. Count all the windows or calculate the total.



YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 96. Try the puzzle first.

The queen's candles

The window total opens the paper door. You enter a chamber where the queen's household is managed through accounts. Alfred puts down a small tray. "Our calculation is imaginary. But a household really had to keep track of its belongings." Two rooms have received candles. How many are left?

A little flame flickers above the account. You shelter it with your hand while following both changes to the number of candles.

Next page: [Puzzle 18 - Candles for the queen.](#)

Candles for the queen

There are 24 candles. Seven go to the hall and five to the chamber. How many are left?

$$24 - 7 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} - 5 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 96. Try the puzzle first.

The door in the red wallpaper

You finish the account. Red wallpaper peels back to reveal a hidden passage. “Before we enter, separate what is known from what is rumoured,” says Alfred. The staircase exists; the tunnel stories are unproven. Four statements need labels.

You can see the first step, but the rest is dark. “Not seeing something is not the same as proving anything,” says Alfred. You return to the fact note.

Next page: Puzzle 19 - What do we know about the passage?.

What do we know about the passage?

Use the fact note. Write D for documented or U for unconfirmed beside each statement. Unconfirmed means evidence is missing, not that it is proven false.

FACT NOTE: The hidden spiral staircase through the Red King's Bedroom towards the cellar is known. A tunnel to Nysted or the church is not documented.

☐

There is a hidden spiral staircase.

☐

There is a tunnel to Nysted.

☐

The hidden stairs lead towards the cellar.

☐

There is a tunnel to the church.

Hints and answers: page 96. Try the puzzle first.

Steps in the dark

Your labels separate the tunnel legends from the known passage. The door opens. Steps curl downwards. A brass token sits behind scrambled letters on the lowest step. “Find the word for a set of steps,” says Alfred. “Then the lock will know you found the right sort of route.”

You press the card against the door. The letters tremble, as though somebody is walking beyond it. “One step at a time,” you whisper.

Next page: Puzzle 20 - The winding way.

The winding way

Use all six letters once. Find the word for a set of steps leading up or down.

I S T R A S

YOUR ANSWER

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1 2 3 4 5 6

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 4, in that order. Copy them into boxes 5a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 96. Try the puzzle first.

The ice and the prison book

The fifth token rings against the others. A door closes behind you and a cold corridor appears. It is 1628. War has brought prisoners to Aalholm.

A book rests on a barrel. “Names matter, even when people are prisoners,” says Alfred. “The shadow wants to remove them.”

In this adventure the first page is locked by coordinates. Each coordinate tells you which square to find. You have done this before; now the sequence is different.

Alfred puts the lantern on the barrel. An iron door shuts behind you. The way forwards lies in the word inside the book.

Next page: Puzzle 21 - Squares in the prison book.

Squares in the prison book

Follow the coordinates in the order shown. Write one letter for each, then read the word from left to right.

	A	B	C	D
1	I	E	W	R
2	W	Z	Z	R
3	O	O	S	O
4	N	Y	R	P

READ IN THIS ORDER

D4 → D1 → A1 → C3 → A3 → A4 → B1 → D1

YOUR ANSWER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Hints and answers: page 97. Try the puzzle first.

A refusal on paper

The word opens the prison book. The memory moves to another case in 1634. A woman has been convicted of witchcraft. The governor refuses to carry out the punishment. Alfred lays out a short letter. “Read exactly what he refuses. That is different from what he does afterwards.”

There is no judgement of you here, just a question about a letter. Alfred stays beside you while you read the decision again.

Next page: Puzzle 22 - The letter to the governor.

The letter to the governor

Read the letter. Which action does the governor refuse? Circle A, B or C.

An order calls for the convicted woman to be executed. The governor refuses to carry out this punishment. He sends on his objection.

- ☐ A · Executing the woman.
- ☐ B · Sending his objection.
- ☐ C · Reading the letter.

Hints and answers: page 97. Try the puzzle first.

The moat freezes

You choose the correct action. The letter folds itself shut. A cold memory of the wars with Sweden in 1658 takes shape. Sixteen numbered ice squares appear on your card. “Only in this puzzle do even numbers mark safe squares,” says Alfred. “Never judge real ice like that.”

A crack crosses the picture but stops at the card’s edge. You stay on the floor with your pencil. It is the numbers you are investigating.

Next page: Puzzle 23 - Numbers on the ice.

Numbers on the ice

This is a fantasy puzzle, not a rule about real ice. Circle every even number: 2, 4, 6 and so on. How many squares did you circle?

1	6	7	2	14
2	4	3	16	12
3	9	11	13	8
4	15	1	5	10

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 97. Try the puzzle first.

The word in the walls

You have counted the even numbers. The card becomes a passage through a remembered gate. Letters hang on it, spelling the place the soldiers occupied. The shadow mixes them again, but the sixth token shines beyond them. Use each letter once.

A light comes on behind the drawn gate. You cannot see who holds it, but it waits. The letters on the table are all you need to go on.

Next page: Puzzle 24 - The walls around us.

The walls around us

Use all six letters once. Complete the sentence: The soldiers occupied the ____.

S E C A T L

YOUR ANSWER

--	--	--	--	--	--

1 2 3 4 5 6

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 4, in that order. Copy them into boxes 6a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 97. Try the puzzle first.

The count's secret code

The sixth token opens the library. Time has moved to the Raben family's centuries at Aalholm. A pen travels across a page.

"Otto Ludvig Raben kept a diary for 42 years," says Alfred. "That is why we know so much about his days. Other people left almost no words."

A reading card says you have already read 17 years in the game. The remaining volumes are locked behind the number of years still unread.

A black border spreads across the page. "Quickly," says Alfred. "We must reach the books before they go blank."

Next page: [Puzzle 25 - The unread diaries.](#)

The unread diaries

The diaries cover 42 years. In the game, you have read 17 of them. How many years remain?

$$42 - 17 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 98. Try the puzzle first.

The book behind the cabinet

The number opens the cabinet. You find an extra number code. “We invented this for our adventure,” says Alfred. “It is not a copy of the count’s real private code.” The numbers become a word for secret plotting.

A page turns by itself. The shadow tries to cover the numbers, but you pull the card into the light. Alfred weighs down its corner with a small stone.

Next page: Puzzle 26 - The extra code.

The extra code

This code was invented for the book. Use the alphabet key to find an eight-letter word meaning secret plotting.

ALPHABET KEY · Example: 3 = C

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

9 14 20 18 9 7 21 5

YOUR ANSWER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Hints and answers: page 98. Try the puzzle first.

The natural history room

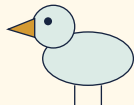
The code is read. Beyond the library, collections appear. Alfred tells you about Frederik Christian Raben's interest in nature. Nine birds stand in the puzzle drawing. "Their beaks are the clues. How many face right?" A great auk in the memory recalls how collections preserve traces of things that have disappeared.

You look at one bird at a time. The shadow hops between them. "You won't make me count a bird twice," you say.

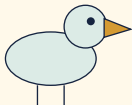
Next page: Puzzle 27 - Birds on the shelf.

Birds on the shelf

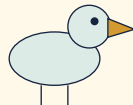
A bird's beak shows which way it faces. Circle the birds facing right. How many are there?



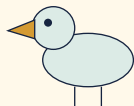
1



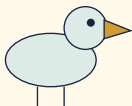
2



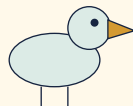
3



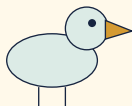
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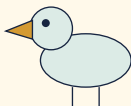
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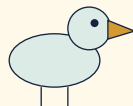
6



7



8



9

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 98. Try the puzzle first.

A five-letter name

You count the birds and the nearby cabinet opens a crack. The seventh token is inside. Five numbers cover its nameplate. “The same alphabet key,” says Alfred. “Now read the family name.” The edges of the paper darken.

The drawer almost closes, but Alfred puts his lantern in front of it. You hold the nameplate with both hands. When its name is read, you can let the drawer close in peace.

Next page: Puzzle 28 - The name on the cabinet.

The name on the cabinet

Read the five numbers with the alphabet key. They spell the family name on the cabinet.

ALPHABET KEY · Example: 3 = C

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

18 1 2 5 14

YOUR ANSWER

1	2	3	4	5

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 1, in that order. Copy them into boxes 7a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 98. Try the puzzle first.

The bear and the royal train

The seventh token carries you to 1864. A hall is full of beds. Aalholm was used as a military hospital, where wounded people could receive help.

“We’ll be quiet here,” says Alfred. A helper goes between the beds. In this imaginary scene there are twelve patients. Four are going home; two others are moving elsewhere.

The helper needs to know how many will remain. Alfred takes off his cap while you count.

Suddenly a train whistles outside the door. It does not belong to the ward. The next memory is already waiting.

Next page: Puzzle 29 - Beds in the hall.

Beds in the hall

In this imaginary scene there are 12 patients. Four go home. Two others move elsewhere. How many stay?

$12 - 4 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} - 2 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 99. Try the puzzle first.

The whistle behind the door

Your answer helps prepare the beds. You follow the whistle into a very different story: the tale of the so-called mad count, the bear and the special train. “Now we are inside a legend,” says Alfred. A bear growls gently behind you. The exit lies beyond the drawn passages.

Its dark shape moves across the paper. “Perhaps it’s looking for the way out too?” you ask. Alfred points to the winding route.

Next page: Puzzle 30 - The path past the bear.

Three visiting cards

You find the way through the maze. The bear's rumble becomes a locomotive's puff. The train stops beside cards bearing three royal visiting years. "These years belong to documented visits," says Alfred. "Put them in order. Not every old story about famous guests is equally certain."

The wheels tick more slowly. When you touch the first year card, the engine answers with a little puff.

Next page: Puzzle 31 - Three royal visits.

Three royal visits

Number the cards 1, 2 and 3, earliest year first. Then write the years in order.

1933

1906

1913

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 99. Try the puzzle first.

The gate with the letters

The visiting cards are in order. A model stands before you with walls, roofs and towers. Mixed-up letters on its gate spell the place the visitors came to see. Alfred holds the light as you move them. The eighth token waits behind the gate.

The windows are dark. Only a thin strip of light shows at the entrance. You gather every letter, while Alfred keeps the shadow from pushing one away.

Next page: Puzzle 32 - The place with the towers.

The place with the towers

Use all six letters once. Complete the sentence: The king visited the ____.

E S A C T L

YOUR ANSWER

--	--	--	--	--	--

1 2 3 4 5 6

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 6, in that order. Copy them into boxes 8a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 99. Try the puzzle first.

Hoofbeats in the empty hall

As you put down the eighth token, hoofbeats sound overhead. You look up. There is no horse, only a closed ceiling.

“We are visiting a legend,” says Alfred. “People told stories of a ghost horse at Aalholm. A story’s existence is not proof of a ghost.”

Five hoofprints appear in the dust. Some are dark; others are white with dark outlines. A sign asks how many white prints there are.

You bend down. Each print flashes as you count it. The empty hall seems to hold its breath.

Next page: [Puzzle 33 - Hoofprints in the dust.](#)

Hoofprints in the dust

Count only the white hoofprints. A white print has a dark outline and a white inside. Write the number.



1



2



3



4



5

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 100. Try the puzzle first.

Four different stories

Counting the white prints quietens the hoofbeats. A board appears with four statements. Two concern ghosts. Two concern cars and a train that really existed at Aalholm. “Read the fact note first,” says Alfred. “You don’t have to guess what I mean.”

The hall is quiet, but you still feel the sound in your body. Some traces belong to stories people told; others concern things that really were here.

Next page: Puzzle 34 - Legend or history?.

Legend or history?

Use the fact note. Write L for legend or H for documented history beside each statement.

FACT NOTE: The car museum and steam train really existed. The White Lady and ghost horse are legends: stories people told, not proven ghosts.

☐

The White Lady appears at the castle.

☐

Aalholm had a car museum.

☐

A ghost horse walks through the hall.

☐

A steam train ran through the park.

Hints and answers: page 100. Try the puzzle first.

Lights in the garage

You have separated legend from history. Headlights come on in a garage. Aalholm's car museum appears in the memory. In your imaginary garage game, three cars need parking. "All three clues are on the next page," says Alfred. "Start with the car whose place is certain."

Three rectangles of light fall across the floor. You point to the first space. Alfred waits by the door, leaving room for you to make the plan.

Next page: Puzzle 35 - Cars in the garage.

Cars in the garage

Read all three clues. Write FORD, BENTLEY and ROLLS-ROYCE in the spaces. Use each name once.

- 1. The Ford is furthest to the left.
- 2. The Bentley is immediately beside the Ford.
- 3. The Rolls-Royce is not in the middle space.

LEFT	MIDDLE	RIGHT

Hints and answers: page 100. Try the puzzle first.

The horseshoe in the glove box

The cars are in place. The Rolls-Royce's glove box opens. Inside is a small horseshoe with letters. Hoofbeats return from the legend. "Make the word for the animal that makes them," says Alfred. "Then collect the ninth token's letters."

The horseshoe lies still in your hand. A distant hoofbeat sounds when you move a letter. You listen briefly, then return to the word.

Next page: Puzzle 36 - What made the hoofbeats?.

What made the hoofbeats?

Use all five letters once. Complete the sentence: In the legend, the hoofbeats come from a ____.



YOUR ANSWER

--	--	--	--	--

1 2 3 4 5

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 1, in that order. Copy them into boxes 9a on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 100. Try the puzzle first.

The final hammer blow

Nine tokens lie on the map. The last door leads into a cool cellar smelling of stone and old wood. Bottles lie in rows.

“These are more recent memories,” says Alfred. “Soon things will be packed and change owners. If nobody keeps their history, it becomes hard to know where they belonged.”

A thermometer blocks the way. In the puzzle it starts at thirteen degrees. The shadow cools it by two; Alfred’s lantern warms it by one.

“Where does it finish?” he asks. You follow the column before the shadow hides it.

Next page: [Puzzle 37 - The cellar thermometer.](#)

The cellar thermometer

The thermometer shows 13 degrees. It falls by 2 degrees, then rises by 1. What does it show now?

$$13 - 2 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} + 1 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 101. Try the puzzle first.

Carts at the auction

The thermometer stops at your number. The cellar door opens to the sound of an auction hammer. Objects find new owners. In this imaginary scene, 24 boxes must be shared among six carts. “The same number on each,” says Alfred. “Then none are forgotten on the floor.”

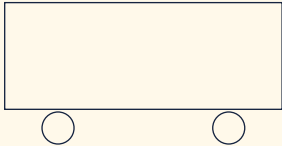
A cart rolls a little; you stop it with your foot. In the game you can move the drawn boxes without lifting anything heavy.

Next page: Puzzle 38 - Boxes on carts.

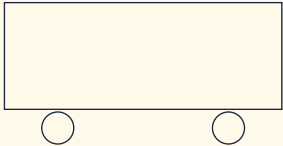
Boxes on carts

Share 24 boxes equally among six carts. Draw the same number of small boxes on each cart. How many boxes does each get?

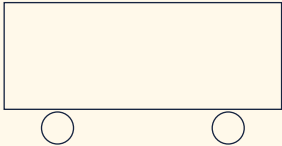
Cart 1



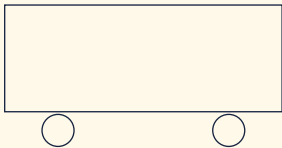
Cart 2



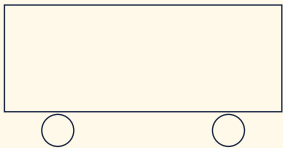
Cart 3



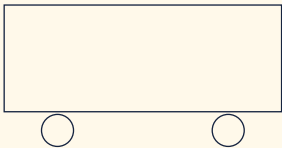
Cart 4



Cart 5



Cart 6



YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 101. Try the puzzle first.

Years out of order

The boxes are shared. Beneath the last one lie four cards: an auction, three sisters, cars leaving the site and a new period of restoration. The shadow has mixed their years. “Earliest first,” says Alfred. “You know the rule now.”

The cards no longer slip away. The shadow is smaller and its edges flicker. You keep looking at the dates instead of guessing.

Next page: Puzzle 39 - The final dates.

The final dates

Number the cards 1 to 4, earliest year first. Then write the years in order.

2012 · The cars are sold

1996 · The great auction

2019 · A new restoration period

2008 · Three sisters carry on

YOUR ANSWER

Hints and answers: page 101. Try the puzzle first.

The final token

The years are ordered. The shadow tries to gather them up but loses its grip. “I grow when nobody asks,” it whispers. Alfred raises your nearly full key card. One token remains behind letters describing the loop that holds keys. The key itself is still missing.

You put the card beside the letters. Only the last labelled boxes remain empty. Alfred holds his breath, although he does not need to. This time you smile at him.

Next page: Puzzle 40 - The final lock.

The final lock

Use all seven letters once. Find the loop that holds keys together. Write the answer as one word.



YOUR ANSWER

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Count letters from the left. Take letter(s) 2, 7, in that order. Copy them into boxes 10a, 10b on your key card on page 6.

Hints and answers: page 101. Try the puzzle first.

Where is the key?

Each empty box has a label, such as 3a. Find the box with that same label on your key card on page 6 and copy its letter. Read each row from left to right, then move to the next row. The rows form three words.

--	--	--	--	--

4b

2b

3a

4a

2a

--	--	--

6a

9a

8a

--	--	--	--	--	--

1a

7a

5a

4c

10b

10a

Try reading the message before you turn the page.

The lock turns

UNDER THE BRIDGE. You read the message aloud. A little paper bridge rises from Alfred's map. "Only here in the book," he says, lifting the model. Beneath it lies the missing key.

You turn the key in the archive lock. Names return to the signs. Ink fills the letters again. For a moment the room is full of footsteps, scratching pens, trains and engines.

The shadow shrinks. "Is it gone forever?" you ask. Alfred shakes his head. "People forget again when nobody looks after the traces. But tonight you helped."

He puts the ten brass tokens into a little box. "History is not just kings and important dates. It also belongs to people who wrote, built, worked and waited. Now you know how to begin finding them."

Outside, the rain has stopped. You go home with your key card. A small light flashes once in a castle window.

Keeper of the Key

This certifies that

has solved 40 puzzles and helped save Aalholm's memories.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

The history behind the game

This book draws on selected themes from Aalholm Castle's history collection: royal imprisonment, treaties, travelling kings, the Count's Feud, building work, a dowager queen's household, prisoners of war, the Raben family, collections, legends, a museum and auctions.

Historical themes and game details are different things. None of these puzzles is presented as an original medieval code. An imagined meeting does not prove that a particular person stood in a particular room.

The bear and the special train are treated as a traditional story. The known hidden staircase is distinguished from the unconfirmed tunnel legend. The book's ghosts belong to fantasy.

The source is Aalholm's existing history section. This edition adapts the story and puzzles; it is not a new archive investigation.

A small glossary

Castle: A building that could be defended against attack.

Bailiff: An official whose practical duties could include collecting dues.

Governor: Here, an official who ruled an area on behalf of the monarch.

Treaty: A formal agreement. Seal: An impression, often in wax, showing who a document comes from.

Legend: A story handed down over time. Unconfirmed: Not supported by firm evidence.

Military hospital: A place where wounded or sick people receive care during a war.

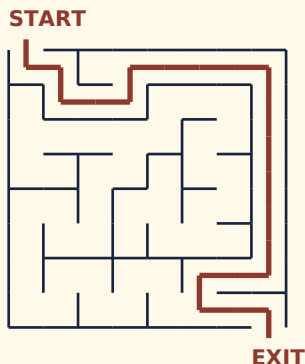
Intrigue: A secret scheme between people.

Coordinate: The address of a square. B2 means column B, row 2.

Try a hint first

1. The way to the dungeon

Hint: A dead end means you must return to the last turning.



Answer: The red line shows the route between the two openings.

2. The king's chain

Hint: Start with the first sum, then find its answer in the alphabet key.

Answer: KING. The numbers give K, I, N and G in order.

3. The letter from 1330

Hint: Find the first column, then move down to the numbered row.

Answer: SEAL. The four squares spell SEAL.

4. The speaking stones

Hint: The word begins with B.

Answer: BRICK. A brick is a building block made from clay and baked hard. 1a = B.

Try a hint first

5. Who wrote the treaty?

Hint: Cross out the two tools Esben did not use.

Answer: Esben had neither the reed pen nor the charcoal. He must have used the goose quill.

6. The year in the seal

Hint: Add the first two pieces, then add 6.

Answer: $1300 + 60 = 1360$; $1360 + 6 = 1366$.

7. The messenger through time

Hint: All the years begin with 13. Compare the last two digits.

Answer: The card numbers from top to bottom are 3, 1, 4, 2.

8. The golden chest

Hint: The word begins with C.

Answer: CROWN. C R O W N spells CROWN. $2a = R$, $2b = N$.

Try a hint first

9. Words in the bridal chest

Hint: Find the first letter of a word, then read to the right.

Answer: BRIDE: row 1, column 4; RING: row 7, column 3; COURT: row 8, column 3; CASTLE: row 3, column 3.

10. Kings on the road

Hint: Christian I has the earliest year.

Answer: The years are 1454, 1503, 1516, 1526. The card numbers are 3, 1, 4, 2.

11. The four emblems

Hint: Find the object that opens a lock.

Answer: The descriptions match crown, ring, key and quill, from top to bottom.

12. The raven's stolen name

Hint: A repeated coordinate gives the same letter again.

Answer: DOROTHEA. The coordinates spell DOROTHEA. 3a = D.

Try a hint first

13. The bailiff's number code

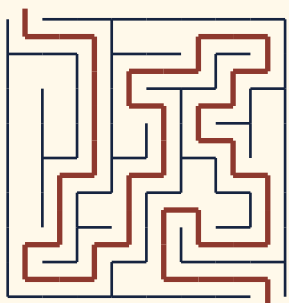
Hint: Find the first number in the key.

Answer: BAILIFF. The seven numbers spell BAILIFF.

14. Through the castle gate

Hint: Try another turning when a passage ends.

START



EXIT

Answer: The red line shows the route between the two openings.

15. Where was the governor?

Hint: Cross out each place ruled out by a clue.

Answer: The town and courtyard are ruled out. Only away travelling remains.

16. A word for conflict

Hint: The word begins with F.

Answer: FEUD. F E U D spells FEUD, a word for a bitter conflict. 4a = E, 4b = U, 4c = D.

Try a hint first

17. The builder's drawing

Hint: Count one group at a time.

Answer: $3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 12$, or $4 \times 3 = 12$.

18. Candles for the queen

Hint: Subtract twice.

Answer: $24 - 7 = 17$; $17 - 5 = 12$.

19. What do we know about the passage?

Hint: Does the statement concern the known stairs or a tunnel?

Answer: The staircase is known. Neither tunnel claim is documented.

20. The winding way

Hint: The word starts and ends with S.

Answer: STAIRS. S T A I R S spells STAIRS. $5a = I$.

Try a hint first

21. Squares in the prison book

Hint: The column letter comes before the row number.

Answer: PRISONER. The squares spell PRISONER.

22. The letter to the governor

Hint: Look for what he refuses, not what he does.

Answer: He refuses to execute the woman. He does send his objection.

23. Numbers on the ice

Hint: An even number can be divided into two equal whole numbers.

Answer: There are eight: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16.

24. The walls around us

Hint: The word begins with C.

Answer: CASTLE. C A S T L E spells CASTLE. 6a = T.

Try a hint first

25. The unread diaries

Hint: Subtract 10 first, then 7.

Answer: $42 - 17 = 25$. Check: $25 + 17 = 42$.

26. The extra code

Hint: The same number always means the same letter.

Answer: INTRIGUE. The numbers spell INTRIGUE.

27. Birds on the shelf

Hint: Look at the pointed beak.

Answer: Birds 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 face right: six birds.

28. The name on the cabinet

Hint: The first letter is R.

Answer: RABEN. 18, 1, 2, 5, 14 spell RABEN. $7a = R$.

Try a hint first

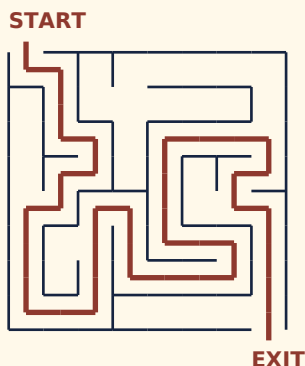
29. Beds in the hall

Hint: The two who move are not among the four who go home.

Answer: $12 - 4 = 8$; $8 - 2 = 6$.

30. The path past the bear

Hint: Try working backwards from EXIT.



Answer: The red line shows the route between the two openings.

31. Three royal visits

Hint: 1906 comes before 1913.

Answer: The cards receive 3, 1, 2 from top to bottom.

32. The place with the towers

Hint: It has walls and towers.

Answer: CASTLE. C A S T L E spells CASTLE. 8a = E.

Try a hint first

33. Hoofprints in the dust

Hint: Look at one numbered print at a time.

Answer: Prints 2, 3 and 5 are white: three prints.

34. Legend or history?

Hint: Classify the event, not whether somebody wrote about it.

Answer: The ghosts are legends. The museum and train are documented.

35. Cars in the garage

Hint: Place the Ford first.

Answer: Ford takes space 1. Bentley must take space 2. Rolls-Royce takes space 3.

36. What made the hoofbeats?

Hint: The word begins with H.

Answer: HORSE. H O R S E spells HORSE. 9a = H.

Try a hint first

37. The cellar thermometer

Hint: A fall means subtract; a rise means add.

Answer: $13 - 2 = 11$; $11 + 1 = 12$ degrees.

38. Boxes on carts

Hint: Give each cart one box, then repeat.

Answer: $24 \div 6 = 4$. Six groups of four make 24.

39. The final dates

Hint: A year beginning with 19 comes before these years beginning with 20.

Answer: The cards receive 3, 1, 4, 2 from top to bottom.

40. The final lock

Hint: It starts with KEY.

Answer: KEYRING. K E Y R I N G spells KEYRING. 10a = E, 10b = G.

The key card explained

1. BRICK: $1a = B$
2. CROWN: $2a = R$, $2b = N$
3. DOROTHEA: $3a = D$
4. FEUD: $4a = E$, $4b = U$, $4c = D$
5. STAIRS: $5a = I$
6. CASTLE: $6a = T$
7. RABEN: $7a = R$
8. CASTLE: $8a = E$
9. HORSE: $9a = H$
10. KEYRING: $10a = E$, $10b = G$

UNDER THE BRIDGE. The hiding place is beneath the paper bridge in the story, not a real treasure hunt at the castle.

Invite the child to explain how they found an answer. If reading or writing is difficult, answers may be spoken aloud. This does not change the solution.

Find the real stories

Aalholm Castle's history: <https://aalholmslot.dk/slot/historie/>

Topics include the letter from 1330, the Aalholm treaty, royal letters, the Count's Feud, the dowager queen's accounts, prisoners, the count's diary, natural history collections, ghost stories, the car museum and auctions.

This is a selected children's adventure, not a summary of every article. Check the evidence before presenting an uncertain story as established history.

English adaptation, October 2026. The PDF and EPUB contain the same stories, puzzles and answers.

Questions for another day

Which memory would you like to learn more about? Write or draw here.

Will you open the archive?

A key has vanished. A shadow is erasing names. Ten brass tokens are hidden in Aalholm's memories.

Follow Alfred through ten chapters. Read clues, break codes, find routes and collect the letters of a final secret message.

40 puzzles · 10 chapters · Hints and explained answers

An original historical puzzle adventure for readers aged about seven and up.