

The Right Stuff

Airships can take men and gnomes into the sky, but what can reach further?

What adventures wait in the upper limits and beyond?

A kidnapped engineer leads the party on an adventure unlike any other...

A one-off adventure for 3rd to 5th level characters



by G Christopher Dyson



The Right Stuff

A 5E module for 3rd to 5th level characters

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The Right Stuff

"We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon"

— Konrad Adenauer



Introduction

When I first played Final Fantasy VII in 1997, I witnessed space travel as an element of a fantasy story experience. It was an awe inspiring moment delivered perfectly.

That gave me a desire to do the same. Almost ten years earlier, in 1989, I had played in the Spelljammer setting and on several other occasions I had been in games where a fantasy role playing game had incorporated space travel. My experience was always that it had been done wrong:

- There were too many rules.
- There were too many discussions on the accuracy of the rules (my friends were engineers, so this was a long conversation)
- There was too much story tied up in the mechanics of space travel.
- Not enough story connected to the wonder of space travel.
- The monsters and vessels screamed "cheap SF"
- It was just silly, no matter what was done, the genre just seemed silly!

But, in final Fantasy VII, it was not silly. There was the single most important thing: A sense of wonder. There was excitement and even though the characters were in space, we never lost sight of the genre of the game we'd been playing.

The lesson was right there, that you could incorporate space travel into a fantasy world without breaking it.

I find it odd, that gamers can be excited to play a gothic vampire story, yet look down at the idea of dwarves in space. I say they just haven't seen it done right.

This module aims to do space travel right.

Notes about reading this module

Unlike previous Rats in the Rain modules, this one places monster and NPC stats in the book where they are needed, rather than grouped at the back. This does produce some replication, but makes it easier to run. The stat blocks have a new format which highlights the most important numbers: AC, HP and attacks.

Likewise, maps appear where they are referenced, rather than at the end.

Experience Points and treasure are noted at the end of the NPC stat block and should probably be distributed immediately after the battle rather than at the end of the module.

Also note that each section of the module assumes the characters are at a particular level, so it may be easier to ignore XP and simply level up the characters at the start of each section. That said, XP would need to be awarded in the final chapters.

In writing this, I challenged myself to only use core monsters available under the OGL. I had wanted to use monsters not covered by that agreement, so if you have the appropriate manual you can substitute existing creatures to give the right feel.

I was tempted to get around this by creating my own creature: the Soul Crusher which is a tentacled creature that may be found in a Lovecraft story that uses those tentacles to suck up people's souls. Rather than build the new monster, I instead simply used Efreeti which are covered under the OGL. Not as exciting, but all legal.



Space

This is not a module about spaceships. It is a module about a space journey. The difference is significant. There is no intention for this to evolve into D&D Star Trek. While more space vessels appear later in the module, they should be felt as being in the background. The adventure should feel no different to a regular D&D adventure.

The dangers of space

In a naval adventure, ships are used to travel, but rarely to fight, and the dangers of the ocean are not closely studied. Similarly with airships, very little time is spent outside of a flying ship. This should be like that. When in space, the adventure happens within vessels so the open vacuum of space shouldn't come into play.

In an earlier edition of this game, there is a simple spell called endure elements which should protect PCs from all temperature/pressure/radiation dangers.

In 5e, environment damage is simplified and the risk lowered so this same pattern should be followed, even in space.

The main dangers of space should be limited to:

- Temperature. In 5e you can counter this with warm clothing.
- Lack of air. Rules are there for holding breath. Also assume vessels have air in them and all is manageable. There are no rules in 5e for stale air, so you don't need a big supply.
- Vacuum. There are rules for low pressure due to altitude, but no detail about space. I suggest to keep the game simple, play this as high altitude but with no breathable air. Assume PCs can hold their breath in a vacuum and that opening a door doesn't cause an explosive decompression. It doesn't match physics, but it does match storytelling.

My golden rule: If the environment is a danger, there should be a druid spell to defend against it.

If there is no spell, there is no danger.

When panic sets in

Most likely, the first mention of space travel will send ripples through the gaming table. Players will become excited, even "giddy" if you wish to use that word.

Before everyone goes nuts, read the players this:

This is not a module about space ships, it is a module about exploring a journey. Space vessels are just a means to get from A to B, much like a ship. There will be no photon torpedoes and all the monsters will be from the core rules.

Try not to focus too much on the physics you know, but rather on the story telling. Space is dangerous, but the rules are very forgiving on environmental damage, so should things go wrong, don't expect it to be disastrous.

J Michael Strazynski once said that Star-Furies travel at the speed of plot. It is the same thing here: plot trumps physics.

"Stars are much further away from where they are now for those who have no dreams and no intentions to reach them!"

— Mehmet Murat ildan

The Setting

The module is set in the lands near the city of Vollenchia in the Golden Kingdoms which is that setting already used for several Rats in the Rain modules.



It could be adapted to fit in any campaign setting, even your own.

Background

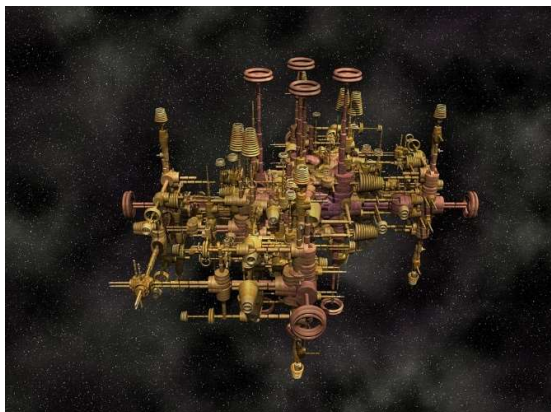
There are several airship companies operating near Vollenchia. One of them, run by Kenku, has been working on achieving higher altitudes. To achieve this, they have been using the best gnomish engineers. Recently, they successfully launched a vessel, but it was not able to come down and they need to launch a rescue mission.

To do this, they have begun by kidnapping the best airship engineers they can so that the ship can be completed quickly.

Each of the other airship companies has recently lost staff and one of them is ready to hire a band of adventurers.

Meanwhile, high above the atmosphere two civilizations have been at war for some time; Sahagin and Couatl, each with their own vessels and bases floating above the world. Their skirmishes have mostly involved the capture of bases and supplies. Both groups have dwindling numbers. Neither has set their vision in the ground below.

Farther out, an ancient clan of efreeti lie sleeping in ancient asteroids. They were banished there centuries ago. Now one of them is returning to the world below and if he succeeds, others will follow.



Outline

Chapter 1: The Right Stuff (level 3)

During chapter 1, the party investigates the disappearance of gnomish engineers from an airship company.

The trail leads them to another company where they learn this is a bigger problem.

Further investigation leads them to a kenku run facility where they rescue the engineers.

The last engineer is in a tower, which becomes a rocket when they rescue him, leading the party high up above the planet.

In chapter 2, the party is taken prisoner by a space faring race of sahagin and must fight their way to freedom.

During this chapter, more gnome and kenku prisoners are rescued.

In chapter 3, a rock in space turns out to be the prison of a sleeping efreeti who engages the party in some extra-vehicular combat.

In chapter 4, the party is aware of a large number of similar ships headed for Vollenchia, and so after a violent landing, they commandeer an airship to battle the invaders' scout ship in hopes of delaying the attack while the city's forces prepare.

Chapter 1: The Right Stuff

Before this section of the adventure begins, characters should be 3rd level with enough experience behind them that they may realistically be called on to investigate missing persons.

Part 1.1 The lost engineer

Read Aloud:

You have all taken long journeys: Some by sea and some by land. You know the endless trudging of one foot in front of another for mile after mile.

You have never been alone on the road. Other travelers walk the same miles and they are no longer than the ones you walk.

But some folks, travel in style, rising above their cares. All it costs is gold and you can move through the air, far faster and smoother than any road. Travelling by air is rare and expensive and above all, it is simply not for you and it never has been.

Vollencia's harbor sits on the eastern side of town: where the water is.

Just outside the western gate is another dock used very rarely by the airships that ride the sky from Vollencia to Andoora and beyond.

Today, you have been invited through its gates to meet with Lorilla Turin the daughter of Burgell Turin, who in turn owns Turin's Sky, one of the few airship companies that operates in this part of the world.

The compound is quite large and has room for two airships to be docked at a time and a third area where perhaps one is being constructed. There is a large mechanics' shed and a building for passengers to wait for ships. There is also a building with offices which is where Lorilla has asked to meet you.



Upon your arrival, you are directed to wait in a kind of board room with a large table that could comfortably seat twelve people. There are mugs of fresh water on the table. You do not have to wait long for the young gnomish woman in fine clothes to enter.

"Good day," she offers, "I am sorry to have called you here so suddenly, but matters require skills that most of us here do not possess. I am a sales representative and not very good at locating missing people.

"Our chief engineer didn't report for work yesterday and nobody knows where he is. He hasn't been home; his family is worried. There is work that urgently needs doing on one of the ships.

"We want you to find him and bring him home. Personally I suspect Gradient Air are responsible as they are tendering for a job we'll be winning.

"But first, business. I understand a job like this would usually net you a hundred gold and I'm happy to pay that. I don't want you to waste your time haggling, so let us say one hundred and fifty to get you on your way."

Lorilla is eager to move on. If the party does not accept the job, she will be in a hurry to secure another group, so will not stop to haggle.

She can spare only a few minutes to discuss the mission and will give the party the following facts:

- The engineer was Dimble Folkor
- His wife, Caramip lives in town
- Gradient Air is run by Seebo Murnig, another gnome. The business operates from a field a few miles south of town. They have a poor location, which is not good for business.
- Dimble liked to stop for lunch at the Cold Palace, a dining establishment run by winter elves.
- Another engineer went missing a week ago. She was not as important. Name of Ellywick Engel.

Part 1.2 The trail

The investigation will no doubt begin in one of three ways:

- Visiting the Folkor home
- Investigating Ellywick
- Investigating Gradient Air

At the Folkor home, a very worried Caramip Folkor is praying with her family priest. Although distressed, both will help the party as best they can with the following:

- He was last seen in the evening two nights ago.
- Yesterday in the morning he was gone. She assumed he had gone to work, and wasn't worried until he didn't come home.
- He had no enemies or debts.
- He specialized in building liquid fuel engines
- A few months ago he was offered a job with Gradient Air. He turned it down.

At the Cold Palace they may learn:

- He was a regular and ate there most days
- He was quite likable and had no enemies.
- A few days ago he had some kind of altercation with a cloaked figure. Nobdoy recalls who that was. He hasn't been seen since.



With a little investigation, it is possible to track down the home of Ellywich Engel who lived with her parents Brocc and Marilla in the south part of town. They are both very worried, but can provide the following:

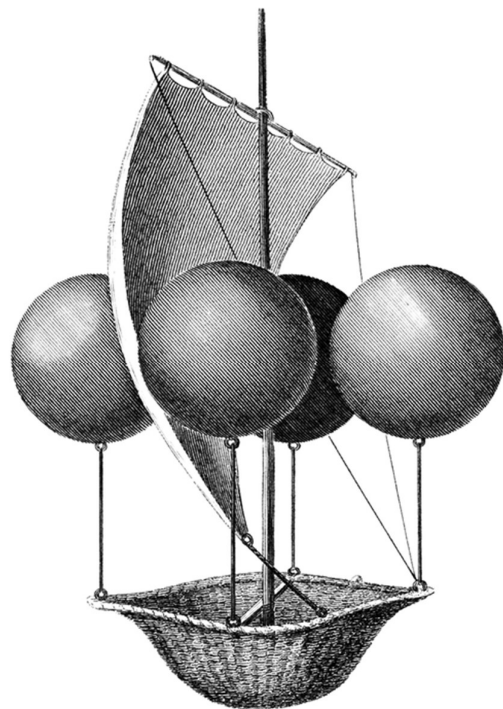
- They haven't seen her in a week.
- The Turin's have not helped and hardly cared that one of their engineers was gone.
- She owed money to a wizard who once mentored her. His name was Horsan Frostbeard.
- She was considering changing employers and taking a job with Gradient Air.
- She had been working with high pressure storage tanks but wanted to move on to something more interesting.

At the business of Horsan Frostbeard, the dwarven wizard, they might learn:

- She began her education as a wizard, but lost interest and moved on.
- She still owes him money, but he was not pushing her for payment and trusts she'll come good.
- A bit over a week ago, a cloaked visitor was asking about her. From the look he was a birdman; one of those kenku.
- She was quite fond of dwarven music...

If questions are asked about Gradient Air, characters can learn the following:

- Gradient Air is based five miles south of the city.
- They employ local drivers to operate a service taking passengers from the air field to their accommodation in the city.
- Seebo Murnig has been investing in research and development trying to build faster airships.
- He has been offering a lot to any qualified engineer.
- He is heavily in debt and needs a breakthrough to continue to be competitive.
- Rumor has it he has engaged in smuggling to help pay the bills.



Part 1.3 Gradient Air

Gradient Air operate from a compound about five miles south of the city. It is a similar size to the Turin's Sky compound. Two security guards with dogs patrol the perimeter while two more guards are stationed at the front gate. Two manned security towers overlook the compound. Security is present day and night.

If the party approaches the compound openly, the guards will not let them in unless they have official business – They need tickets for a flight or an appointment.

If they successfully bluff their way past the guards, they will be met by Myra Swift, a half elven sales representative. She is well dress and politely spoken.

She will try very hard to sell a flight, but tickets are very expensive and well beyond the party's budget. If characters ask about engineering staff she will say it's not her department but believes they are looking to employ.

She knows nothing about any of the missing people.

Should anyone mention that engineers are going missing, she will reply, "That's odd, I believe we've had trouble with one or two engineers as well."

But she won't elaborate beyond that. If characters offer to help with this problem, she will take their details and promise to pass the message on.

Regardless of how it goes, after leaving the premises, Alura Pott will approach the party.

Should the party attempt to sneak in, they will need to succeed in stealth checks against the guards and dogs. The exact number of rolls will depend on the way they go in, but should they succeed, they will find Alura Pott waiting for them

Alura is short (typical for a Halfling) wears a dark hooded cloak. The hood will be pushed back when she approaches the party. She carries weapons under the cloak, but none are in her hands.

Roleplaying Alura: Alura is sure of herself as an investigator, but is wary of combat. She knows she is taking her chances approaching the other team, but also knows the trail leads to the pridelands. She also knows that Turin's Sky have also lost engineers, so cooperation is in order.

Her exact introduction will depend on when she is met, but she will eventually get down to business.

Read Aloud:

"I know you are working for Turin's Sky, just as I work for Gradient Air. I know you've been asking questions around town. If you have learned as much as I have, you'll know we may as well work together.

"Gradient Air has two engineers missing, just like you do. Our employers' rivalry is not the problem, nor is it my concern." She smiles, "Shall we work together?"

If the players refuse, she will summon the guards and run for her life. The characters can tear the compound apart, but they won't find the missing engineers.

If they agree to work with Alura, she will ask what they know and add to it:

- Seebo Murnig hired her to track down a missing engineer names Aridon.
- Seebo suspected Turin's Sky was responsible, but that didn't seem likely, especially when Ellywich Engel went missing. (She knew about this before Turin did)
- Last night Kelros Raidoff also went missing.
- Alura was investigating Kelros when she learned other were asking similar questions, so followed to see what the connection was.
- Scraps of hair found at the site of Kelros' disappearance indicate he was taken by gnolls.
- A local businessman who employs gnolls suggested an encampment of gnolls living south of the city may be involved.
- She also knows of a theft that took place a few nights ago of a shipment of elven sunwood, which is often used in the manufacture of airships.
- She feels that asking some local travelling merchants if they have seen a wagon of wood may help
- In any case, if someone is building airships with slave labor and employing gnolls, they won't be too hard to find.

If characters mention the kenku, she will tap her fingers thoughtfully before concluding, "That could be it. Kenku are obsessed with flying, perennial thieves, willing to hire anyone and have a colony at Novarra, a town about forty miles to the south."

If they do not mention the kenku, she will have the group spend a day asking questions about town before she reaches that conclusion.

Guard *Medium humanoid*

AC: 16

HP: 11

Spear *+3 to hit, 1d6+1*

Armour Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Spear *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

XP: 25

Treasure: 5gp, chain shirt, shield, spear

Mastiff *Medium beast, unaligned*

AC: 12

HP: 5

Bite *+3 to hit, 1d6+1*

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The mastiff has Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

XP: 25

Treasure: Leather collar covered in dog slobber.

Alura Halfling

AC: 16

HP: 19

Rapier +6 to hit, 1d8+4 (plus sneak attack)

Spy

Armour Class 16

Hit Points 19

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws: Int+3, Dex +5

Skills Deception +3, Insight +2, Investigation +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7, thieves' tools +5

Senses: Passive Perception 14

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions:

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Rapier: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Shortbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

XP: 200

Treasure: 25gp, leather armour, rapier, shortbow, thief tools

Part 1.4 Road to Novarra

It's been a while without a fight. Are the players starting to get itchy? Would a random encounter on the way be a good break, or would it mess with the flow of the game?

That is something only you can decide. It may be wise to skip to the next part, but if they need to get some violence out of the way...

Read Aloud:

You have passed many other travelers on the road. Most of the way is along the main road south, but to get to Novarra requires the less travelled path that branches off to the west. There are far less travelers here and it is clearly not safe.

Though civilized townships exist for quite some distance to the south, this is beginning of the gnoll pridelands where borders are not necessarily respected.

One should travel with care.

Have the party make perception rolls. A DC 16 roll will allow someone to spot a pair of gnoll scouts in the woods by the side of the road.

If the characters attack, the gnolls will retreat to get help from four more that are deeper in the forest.

If the characters ignore them, the gnolls will gather their forces and attack.

Should the characters incapacitate the pair quietly, the other four may be avoided.

Gnoll *Medium humanoid*

AC: 15

HP: 22

Spear *+4 to hit, 1d6+2 damage*

Armour Class 15 (hide armour, shield)

Hit Points 22

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Gnoll

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

XP: 100

Treasure: 5gp, hide armour, spear, longbow

Part 1.5 Novarra Air Base

Novarra is a small town, a little bigger than a trading post. There is a small population of wood elves, “civilized” gnolls and kenku operating a number of businesses including a small brewery and inn.

There is nothing as inconspicuous as an air field in or around the town. There are people who know things though.

It will take a few questions, which Alura can take care of if the characters are not up to it.

What is learned is that a group of kenku are working on a project a few miles from town.

Tip:

Investigations quite often run on train tracks. This is because the investigation itself is no so much the mission, as it is a means of revealing information slowly. Too many details at once and players lose interest. Three steps of an investigation give three lots of information that can be digested piece by piece and gives space as well.

Don’t do it too long though, as the players will want more freedom and that is what they about to get.

The best way to give them freedom will be to put the map of the base down on the table, tell them they learned all this doing recon (or by asking the right people) and then let them decide how they are getting in.

Go and make yourself a sandwich as they discuss it. You’ll have all the time you need as suddenly they are not being pushed and all their creativity will come out at once. Disagreements are guaranteed.

Ideally, the characters will wish to investigate the base and determine if the kidnapped engineers are in there. (If not, they are missing the point of the module.)

- The compound is fenced and has guard towers (see map) The towers are twenty feet high and each has a kenku spy standing watch.
- Fences are eight feet high, wooden planks.

- There is a twenty to forty foot gap between fences and trees (these trees were cut down to build the place)
- A patrol of four gnolls scouts the outside of the compound.
- Six gnolls and two kenku guards are on duty within the compound.
- The guards seem to be more vigilant than the environment warrants.
- There is one airship (non-functional), a barracks, a tool shed, a small office building, a canteen and a large oddly shaped tower.
- 6 Engineers, including Ellywick Engel, are held in a shack with two kenku guards at the door.

Read Aloud:

Amongst the several buildings of the camp, there is one tower standing clear in the middle. It is tall: eighty or ninety feet high with only about a ten-foot diameter.

Unknown to the party, the kenku running the facility are heavily in debt and a large number of hobgoblins are on their way to collect. The guards of the compound are on edge, expecting such an attack.

This may make things difficult, but the hobgoblins may also prove a useful distraction.

If characters are sufficiently skilled at stealth, they should be able to sneak in, or take a few guards out before being seen. Allow the characters a lot of control of this (it will make up for the train track story that got them here.)

If they are careful and pick their timing, they should be able to get to the engineering hut where the gnomes are held prisoner. Alura will lead them out, but there is one gnome missing and he is in the tower.

If they scout about on the outside, or if they procrastinate, they should encounter a patrol of four hobgoblins. If these are captured and questioned, they will reveal that a larger attack is coming.

Waiting for nightfall is not really an option.

If gnoll guards are captured, they will reveal that an attack is expected. (Note the language limitations of gnolls.)

The goal is for the party to enter the camp (stealthily or by force) and get the engineers free. Then they should go to the tower to get the last gnome out.

Note that the tower has a ten foot diameter. There is an access ladder on the outside before a hatch, which is unlocked. This leads into a storage area that has a ladder going up to the main bridge.

They might decide to have most of the party stay outside on to guard. That is okay, you'll just have to get the NPCs to encourage them to get up.

"If you stay there, you'll be killed in the blast!" should get their attention especially if you mention they are next to a fuel tank.



A nearby explosion may also help.

Engineers

AC: 10

HP: 4

Spear +4 to hit, 1d6+2 damage

Armour Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10	10	10	10	10	10

Skills Various crafts

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions *Club. Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Gnoll *Medium humanoid*

AC: 15

HP: 22

Spear +4 to hit, 1d6+2 damage

Armour Class 15 (hide armour, shield)

Hit Points 22

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Gnoll

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

XP: 100

Treasure: 5gp, hide armour, spear, longbow

Hobgoblin *Medium humanoid*

AC: 18

HP: 11

Spear +3 to hit, 1d6+1

Armour Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10	10	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions **Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage, or 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

XP: 100

Treasure: 15gp, chain mail, shield, longsword, longbow.

Kenku Guard *Medium humanoid***AC:** 16**HP:** 11**Spear** +3 to hit, 1d6+1**Armour Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2**Senses** passive Perception 12**Languages** Common, Kenku, Gnoll**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)**Actions**

Spear *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

XP: 25**Treasure:** 5gp, chain shirt, shield, spear**Kenku Spy** *Medium humanoid***AC:** 12**HP:** 27**Rapier / Hand crossbow:** +4, 1d6+2**Armour Class** 12**Hit Points** 27 (6d8)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16**Languages** Common, Kenku, Gnoll**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn) The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

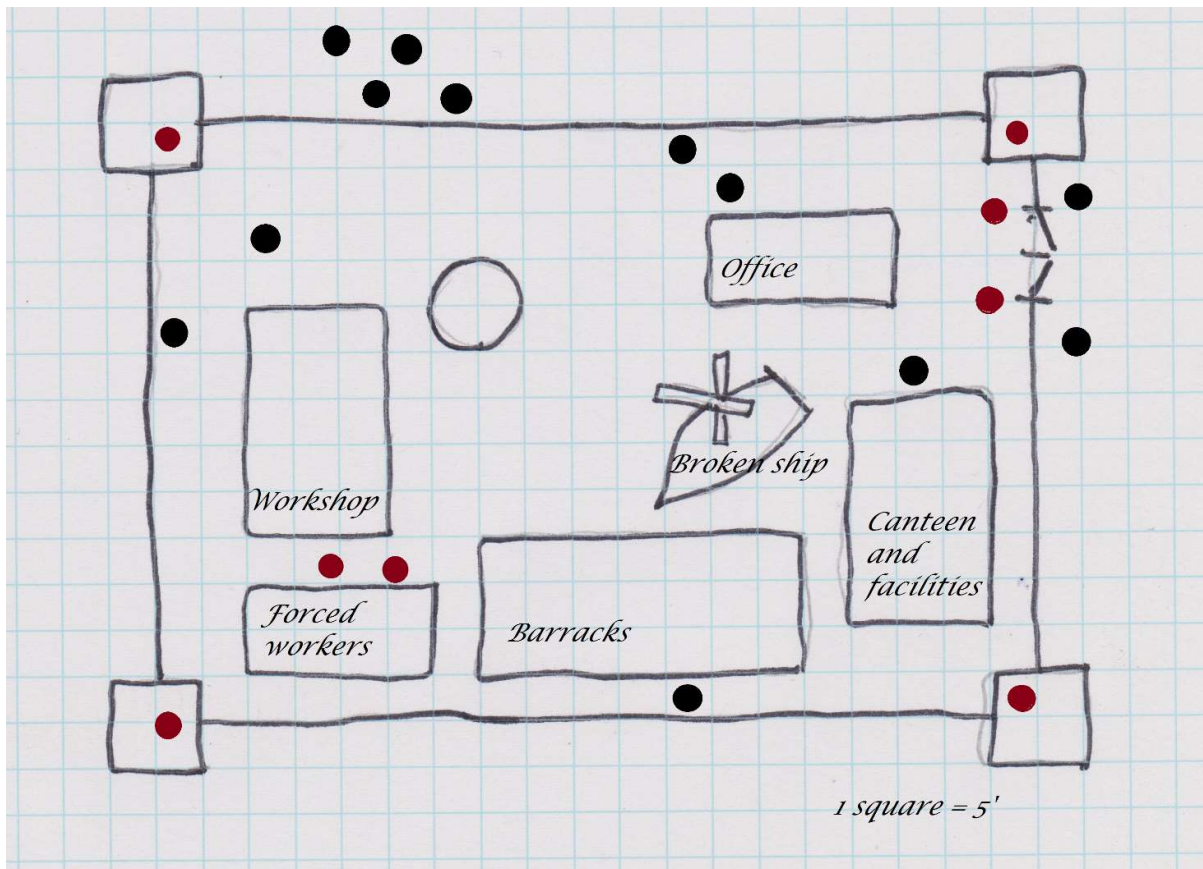
Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

XP: 200**Treasure:** 25gp, rapier, hand crossbow

Map: The Kenku compound



Darker spots represent gnolls. Most of these are constantly moving.

Maroon spots represent kenku. These remain stationary.

Part 1.6 One way out

By this section, Alura should have most of the kidnapped engineers on their way out. The party should be in the “tower” to rescue Dimble. When they discover Dimble, there will be an attack on the base.

Read Aloud:

Entering the uppermost room of the tower, you spot a gnome with some kind of instrument in his hand. He is staring out the window.

As you enter, he glances back at you then returns to his view.

“Did you lock the door behind you?” he says, “You should lock it.”

“Look at that.” He says, though makes no effort to give anyone else a view of the window.

When you do get a chance, you can see the area from high above. Patrols of gnolls are grabbing weapons and mobilising, but they are not pursuing the prisoners.

The gnome points further out where you see a dozen mounted hobgoblins charging them. To the west, another squad of the warriors advances on the gnolls.

Mercifully, the hobgoblins ignore the fleeing gnomes and focus instead on gnoll and kenku. There is a loud crashing sound from behind and then an explosion that you can’t see.

“I believe the kenku owe someone some money. It’s the only way they could pay for all this.”

As he speaks, a hatch in the roof opens, and the raven-like visage of a kenku appears through it.

“Kah!” it screams, “No time to waste! Got to go! Only one way to escape!”

The gnome nods. He attaches the instrument to a pipe and turns it.

“You might want to sit down.” He suggests. “Or hold something. Unless you want to go down and join the bloodbath. You did lock the door didn’t you? I really hope you did.”

You start to feel the tower shaking as the gnome buckles himself in.

The Kenku slams the hatch shut.

The shaking becomes a rumbling as a series of explosions ring out in the air.

In the next heartbeat you find an unspeakable force pushing you down.

The roar continues as its pitch increases and you feel the whole tower moves.

It moves upwards.

Very...

Very...

Fast.



And, we have lift-off.

If standing, the characters will need to make a DC 25 dexterity save to stay standing.
In either case, they will need to make a DC 18 constitution saving throw to stay conscious.

Characters should take 2d6 bludgeoning damage from equipment in the cabin bouncing around. This may be increased if anyone was carrying an unsheathed weapon.

A featherfall spell will prevent most of this.

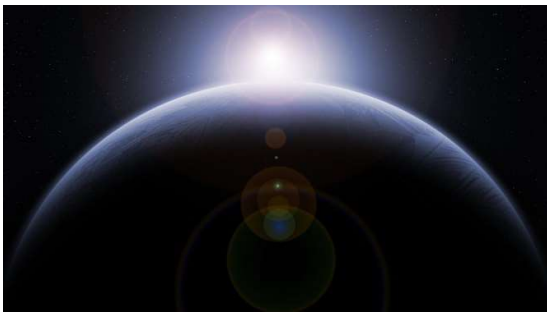
After that, there are several long minute where the forces of liftoff make it almost impossible to move.

"I think that would have been better with a count-down" the gnome says simply.

The light from the window fades to darkness as each of the characters struggles with consciousness.

Dimble will remain conscious throughout the launch and to anyone who asks he will explain:

- After building this thing, he wasn't leaving without flying it.
- The hobgoblin attack meant it would have been impossible to escape any other way.
- Plus, this rocket has a mission.



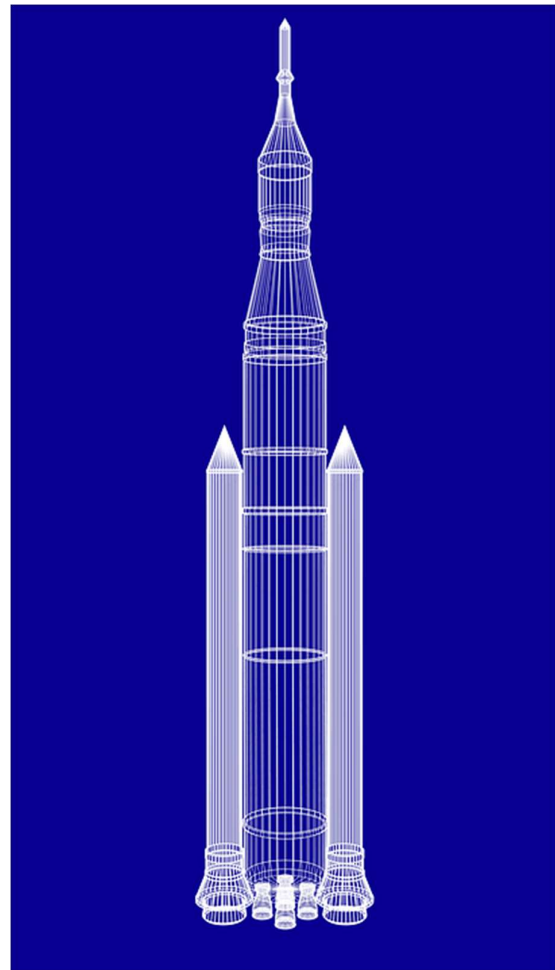
This is the end of the chapter. Any questions, can be answered in the next one when everyone has recovered.

Character Death.

From this point on, should a character die, it is going to be difficult, or impossible to bring in a replacement character.

Should a character die during chapter 2, the player could take over one of the gnomish engineers.

Should a character die during chapter 3, they should build a new character that will join the party at Turin's Sky in chapter 4.



Chapter 2: To Go Boldly

Before this section of the adventure begins, characters should be 4th level.

There was a lot of potential experience points in the last section, but the battles may have been avoided through stealth. That should be rewarded.

Tip:

Giving experience points out after an adventure does make sense and it does reward players, but it is far more important that have characters at the right level at the start of a module.

Part 2.1 We have a problem

The vessel they are in floats through space, slowly spinning and rolling. There is no gravity.

Read Aloud:

As you gather your senses, you feel the whole world has changed. Instead of lying on the floor, you now find yourself floating in the air. There is no up, nor down.

It is dark and cold. Out of the window, you see stars: brighter and more radiant than you have ever seen them before.

The stars seem to be spinning slowly.

There are no clouds.

Dimble, who is strapped into his seat says, "Welcome to the sky. Can you believe we are still alive?"

When the characters start asking questions, the first thing he will explain is that they are on an advanced prototype airship designed to fly straight up to the top of the sky and beyond.

He will encourage them to put their weapons away, both he and the kenku, Renkil are needed to pilot this.

Once they appear relatively non-violent, Dimble will let Renkil know he can come down.

Allow the players a few minutes of asking questions, during which Dimble and Renkil can reveal the following:

- All kenku want to fly, so Renkil started building air ships.
- The kenku funded this to rescue the crew of the last ship that was launched.
- The last ship was launched a few days ago. There was one gnome and one kenku on board.
- The missing kenku is Renkil's wife Akri
- The missing gnome is Orgrip Bilgrim. He did some consulting work for Gradient Air before being employed by the kenku.
- The last ship can't land, this one can (probably – its not tested)
- Just about everything onboard is untested.
- We're not going back without rescuing the other two.
- They should be around here somewhere.
- Most of the ship detached during the launch and they only have the small capsule now.
- The detached section contained a large chemical engine which essentially exploded.
- The exhaust probably hurt any hobgoblins nearby.
- It has small engines to move about.
- There is probably plenty of air.
- Don't open the door or window. That would probably be bad.
- There are some warm suits on board if needed.
- The ship is called Silver Wing 2 or "The Wing" for short.

Once curiosities have been settled, the search for the other capsule begins. This mostly involves looking through the window.

Part 2.2 Alone in the night

"Night, the mother of fear and mystery, was coming upon me. "

-HG Wells
-War of the Worlds, Book 2, Chapter 8

There is an overwhelming silence as Renkil begins searching the small amount of sky he can see.

As he does this, Dimble goes up through the hatch to do a safety check on the upper level.

The upper level is quite small. There is space enough up there for one person. There is no view and the walls are covered in machinery, dials and gauges. The room has one seat with a belt.

The bridge (where the character were during lift-off) is a small round room; ten foot in diameter. There is one window and the other walls have equipment against them. There are three chairs with belts and a bit of standing room.

Have the characters make some perception checks as the search for the other rocket begins, then have Dimble interrupt.

Read Aloud:

The gnome lowers himself back into the main room.

"We have a problem," he says coldly, "We've lost pressure on the re-entry stabilizer launch system. I can fix it, but I have to be outside the ship to do it."

He pauses, "I don't think we can go outside safely."

Then to explain, he adds, "It's the system that slows us down when we try to land. Without it, we are in trouble. Can any of you cast featherfall?"

"I guess I better fix this." He says before popping back up into the top area.

Meanwhile Renkil has made a startling discovery. "I think I found them!" he says excitedly.

True to his word, there is a small dot of light, much closer than the stars and moving towards "The Wing".

It should not take long to realise this is not the ship they were looking for. It is bigger for a start.

Read Aloud:

Like a giant stone fortress floating through the air, the other vessel approaches.

A nervous looking Renkil desperately tries to activate the ship's thrusters to move out of the way.

Dimble suggests they could be friendly. He wonders if they can help repair the ship or if they know where Orgrip and Akri are.

The ship makes no sound as it approaches.

Hatches on the stone sides of the ship open and two large metal arms reach out and grapple the small ship. The view through the window is obscured.

The ship shakes around you, but the weightlessness continues.

Then there is a loud crashing sound, perhaps the first sound you have heard in some time.

A moment later, gravity returns.

The ship has now been forcibly docked with the larger vessel. It now sits externally to it with some kind of ooze creating a seal.

There are a few moments to prepare before the bottom hatch opens and a sahagin yells at the passengers to come out. The shouting is in the sahagin tongue, so it is highly unlikely that they will be understood.

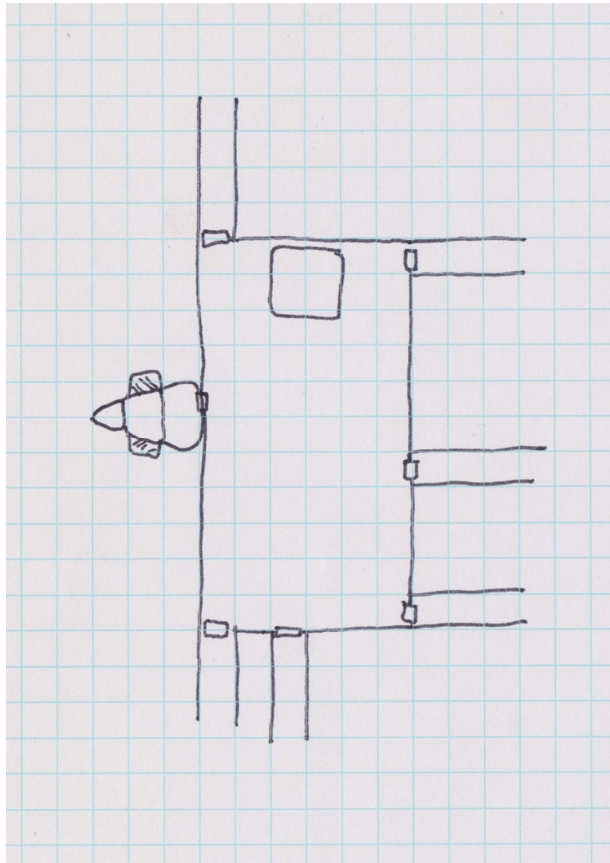
Should the characters charge out,, they will find eight sahagin ready to take them into custody.

If they do not immediately emerge, the sahagin will not wait for a response, but instead toss a vial of malice gas into the capsule.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature is blinded. They will wait a minute for the gas to clear, then charge in.

If the sahagin have difficulty capturing the party, they will release a black pudding. This is an act of last resort as it will dissolve the capsule and kill its occupants. The sahagin want prisoners.

Docking Area



The Sahagin will be surrounding the hatch, but if necessary can move back to unlock the stone box containing the pudding. All doors to this area are locked and will require a DC 18 pick locks roll. The idea is to keep the area sealed until it is contained.

Engineers

AC: 10

HP: 4

Spear +4 to hit, 1d6+2 damage

Armour Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10	10	10	10	10	10

Skills Various crafts

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions *Club. Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Sahuagin *Medium humanoid*

AC: 12

HP: 22

Bite/Claw +3, 1d4+1

Spear +3, 1d8+1

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Blood Frenzy The sahuagin has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The sahuagin can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. Interesting, but not going to be used in this module.

Actions

Multiattack. The sahuagin makes two melee attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws or spear.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

XP: 100XP

Treasure: 10gp, Spear

Black Pudding *Large Ooze, unaligned*

AC: 7
HP: 85

Pseudopod +5, 1d6+3 (bludge)+4d8 (acid)

Armour Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (-3)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amorphous. The pudding can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage. The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

Spider Climb. The pudding can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Pseudopod.

Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armour worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armour is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Split. When a pudding that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new puddings if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new pudding has hit points equal to half the original pudding's, rounded down. New puddings are one size smaller than the original pudding.

Part 2.3 The Hidden Fortress

The characters should eventually be taken prisoner, knocked unconscious and dragged off to the prison cells.

Obvious weapons, lockpicks, spell foci and material components will be removed and placed under lock and key. As will anything that is highlighted by a detect magic spell.

The party will be split between three cells (D, E and F). Do not forget the two NPCs travelling with the group. The cell block also holds the missing members of the previous expedition (In cell A) and a single couatl disguised as an injured elf (In cell B) There is one remaining cell in the block that is empty.

Cell facilities are minimal.

Escape is not impossible, even if players assume it is. Let them snoop about and ask questions. They will be looking for a weakness that they can exploit.

The doors have regular locks that can be picked if some kind of tool can be found. Any character with a knock spell will be laughing. The cells are designed to hold couatls, not a full party of player characters.

If the cell is searched thoroughly, one of them will have a loose panel on the roof. There is not much room up above, but a small character could squeeze through and open a similar panel in the guarded area, but no further access is available.

Tip: Players need to feel that they thought of something clever when they escape. If your delivery shows surprise and disappointment that tends to work.

If the characters do not escape, any of the five NPCs present can offer suggestions or encouragement. Two of them are second rate engineers, two of them are pretty good engineers, so they could do the escape if the characters give up.

Outside the cells stand two suits of animated armour. The only way past them is with violence. The lack of weapons and magic may be a problem. There are some chairs that could be used as improvised weapons.

If you are in the mood for a gag, describe the armour as being white with black trimming, but if you'd prefer to maintain the traditionalist point of view, just describe them as regular armour.

The engineers will avoid battle unless necessary. The couatl is attempting to stay in disguise and so may not use any of its abilities. Hemight bless the strongest members of the party and can use *create food and water* to create improvised weapons. (think about it!)

Once engaged in battle, the armours will trigger an alarm summoning more sahagin warriors, but this is a large ship and they will take time to arrive.



With five NPCs it is easy to create chaos as they argue about what way to go. Players will add to this chaos with their own ideas. Eventually the couatl (elf) will suggest stealing a life pod. He knows where they are. Both kenku will be keen to get their own ships back.

Tip:

Five NPCs can be hard to manage, so don't try. Just refer to them as "the engineers" or something generic like that. The players will not expect them to fight, so they can just follow along behind and it should be okay.

The "elf" will need a little more attention to stand out, but as soon as he starts talking about life pods, the players will pay attention.

Should the elf be questioned, he will reveal some or all of the following:

- His name is Zathrian
- He comes from Montpennier which is far to the north of Vollenchia
- He was captured by Sahagin and brought here.
- He doesn't know where "here" is, but does know his way across their ship.
- He knows there are "life vessels" on the far side of the ship.
- The sahagin are engaged in a war with a tribe of couatls and are about to launch an attack
- We need to escape before the attack.

Animated Armour

AC: 18
HP: 33
2 Slams: +4, 1d6+2

Armour Class 18 (Natural Armour)
Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The armour is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the armour must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the armour remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armour.

Actions

Multiattack. The armour makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

XP: 200XP

Treasure: None

Couatl *medium celestial, lawful good*

AC: 19

HP: 97

Bite +8 1d6+5 + poison

Armour Class 19 (Natural Armour)

Hit Points 97 (13d8+39)

Speed 30 ft. fly 90 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +7, Cha +6

Damage Resistances radiant

Damage Immunities psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The couatl's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

At will:

- *detect evil and good*,
- *Detect magic*,
- *Detect thoughts*

3/day each:

- *bless*,
- *create food and water*,
- *cure wounds*,
- *lesser restoration*,
- *protection from poison*,
- *sanctuary*,
- *shield*

1/day each:

- *dream*,
- *greater restoration*,
- *scrying*

Magic Weapons. The couatl's weapon attacks are magical.

Shielded Mind. The couatl is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense its emotions, read its thoughts, or detect its location.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 24 hours. Until this poison ends, the target is unconscious.

Another creature can use an action to shake the target awake.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the couatl can't constrict another target.

Change Shape. The couatl magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating equal to or less than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the couatl's choice). In a new form, the couatl retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength, Dexterity, and other actions are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any statistics and capabilities (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks. If the new form has a bite attack, the couatl can use its bite in that form.

XP: 1,100XP

Treasure: None

Stats in elf form:

Couatl *medium celestial, lawful good*

AC: 12

HP: 58

Spear +4, 1d6+1

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Regardless of whose advice is being followed (and keeping in mind that only the couatl knows the way out) the party should encounter the following three points:

1. A guard station manned by four sahagin and 2 animated armours
2. A garbage disposal area with a black pudding
3. The docking area where six sahagin are preparing for battle. Escape craft are accessible here.

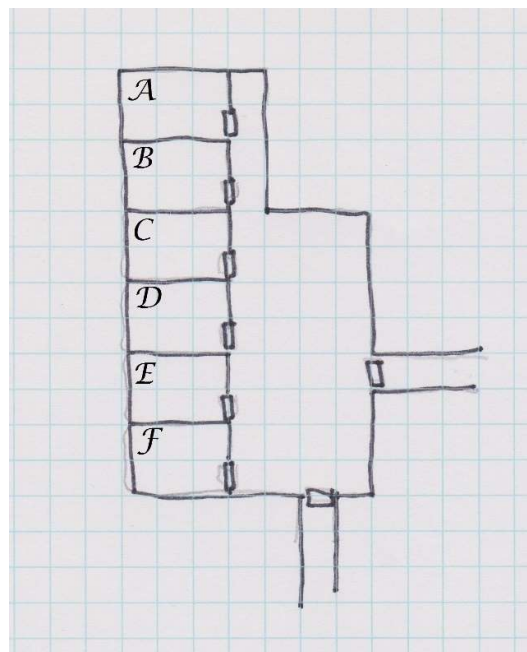
There will be no time for short rests during this set of encounters.

There is a long standing tradition in Role Playing games that whenever characters are captured, their weapons will be left conveniently nearby so that after the prison break that can quickly re-equip.

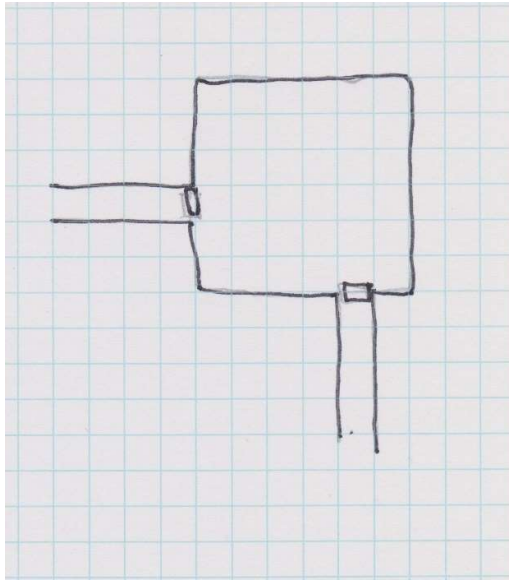
This is not realistic, but it saves not only a lot of trouble, but also a lot of whining.

For the sake of maintaining that tradition, the weapons will be locked up in a cupboard in the cell block.

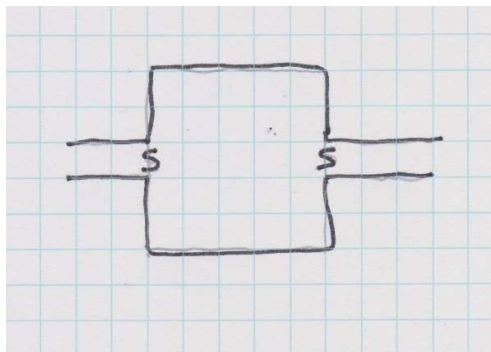
Prison Block



Guard Post

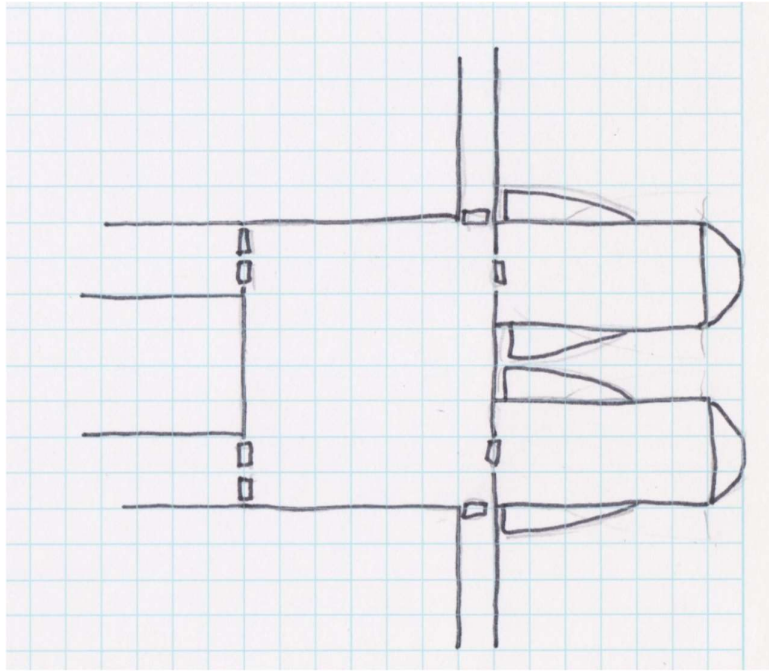


Garbage Disposal



The garbage disposal area is only accessible via secret doors. It will require a search to find the way out. DC 15 perception check. This will be followed by a DC 12 lock picking roll.

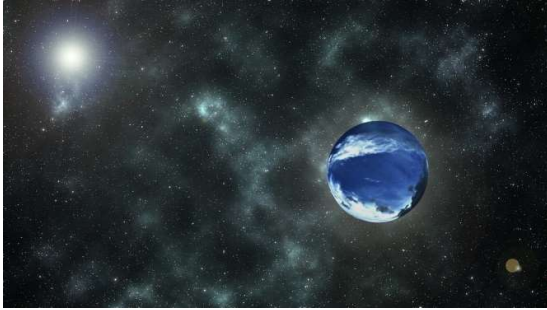
Docking Area



Part 2.4 The infinite ocean

Once the docking area is clear, the party will be able to access the escape pods.

Each pod is able to carry twelve medium sized humanoids. Zathrian will not be accompanying the others.



Read Aloud:

Before you, stand two large doors, each leading to an escape vessel.

“Sahagin escape vessels carry twelve, so there will be room enough for you all.” Zathrian says quickly, “I have to go warn my brethren of the attack. You don’t belong up here and you don’t want to be caught up in our war.”

The elf then changes and his form becomes that of a radiant winged snake. In your minds you hear his voice again, “I am sorry for the deception. My people are so few, we cannot take chances anymore. The sahagin will over-run us soon. I hope you make it home.”

Zathrian will board a separate pod so that he can return to his own people leaving the party with their four allies to board the other one.

If they stall, another four sahagin and four animated armours will charge in, most likely this will encourage the party to board quickly.

Unless one of the characters chooses to take the pilot’s seat, Dimble will grab the controls and hit the launch button.

There will be sudden acceleration followed by weightlessness as he steers the craft away from the sahagin ship.

“Anybody know how we land this thing?” he will ask, which will be followed by a flurry of activity from the other engineers.

As this goes on, the scene through the rear view port will show the sahagin vessel along with some others approaching a single, smaller colorful ship, which seems to be evading the attackers.

“We are imprisoned in the realm of life, like a sailor on his tiny boat, on an infinite ocean.”

- Anna Freud 1895 – 1982



Chapter 3: Where No One Can Hear

Before this section of the adventure begins, characters should be 5th level.

There was a lot of potential experience points in the last section, but the battles may have been avoided through stealth. That should be rewarded.

Part 3.1 Fear of the drift

The ship floats for several hours (enough for a long rest) The battle between sahagin and couatl becomes smaller in the distance until there is no longer any sign of it.

As Dimble tries to plan the ship's eventual landing, the other three engineers have been looking at the available systems.

Orgrip has come across some kind of suit made of a thick sealed material. It is attached to a water tank. He concludes that it was designed for sahagin to keep them watered while in space. He comes up with a plan to flush the water tank and pump air into it. He'll have to take the engines off line to turn them into an air compressor, but once that is done, the suit should allow someone to safely work outside the ship. They could work on landing struts and landing thrusters.

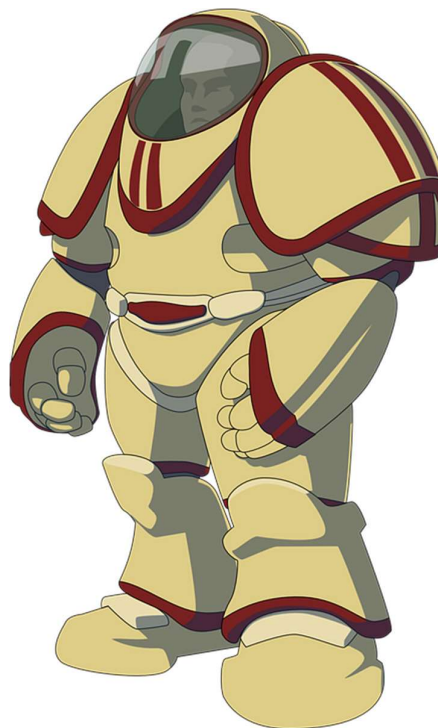
He discusses a lot of technical issues with the others that should go above everyone's heads.

Tip:

Note that at this point, the engineers and the characters still do not know what will happen if they open a door and are exposed to space. It is a safe bet the players don't want to test it, so keep it mysterious for just a little longer and the problem will go away.

Concluding that they are safe for now, Dimble (who has taken charge of the engineers) gives the word to deactivate the engines, convert them, pump the air and then bring the engines back on line.

There is a nervous moment as the gentle thrumming of the engine stops and is replaced by silence.



They spend more time connecting bits and pieces, dropping tools and yelling at each other.

This is totally irrelevant, but I always loved watching Scrapheap Challenge. That is what this is like. Improvisation, panic and bedlam.

Doing it in zero G is even more fun.

Eventually it becomes time to flush the water tank and the realization everyone has already had: the water must go somewhere!

For Orgrip, there is no time to decide, so he hits the pump and creates a flood. A huge ball of water floats and spins through the ship looking like an expensive exercise in special effects.

There is an attempt made to delicately move the water into the air lock, but this results in everyone and everything getting wet.

More time passes as the pump is switched over and fills the tank with air.

Finally, the tank and the suit are connected up and something becomes clear that should have been seen from the start: neither gnome nor kenku will be able to usefully wear the suit and conduct repairs. The fate of the ship depends on a human, elf, or similar sized character to wear the suit and do the repairs.

- Gnomes and halflings are too small
- Dragonborn are too big and have a tail
- Tieflings could wear the suit unless their tail is long or their horns are too big.
- A dwarf won't fit well. Could wear the suit, but will have disadvantage on rolls.
- Human, elf, half elf or half orc can wear the suit without penalty.

What needs doing: There is some structural work that needs to be done to construct landing struts. Some engineering work will be needed to redirect thrust. This work will require a dexterity roll or skill with tinker's tools. With a good roll, the task will take two hours. With a poor roll, it will take closer to four. The air tank will need to be refilled several times during this process.

Part 3.2 The thing from space

With the engines still off line, one of the more observant characters will spot a dark rock floating towards the craft.

Within the rock is a sleeping imprisoned efreet. As the rock, which is about fifty feet long passes the ship it will be noticeably man made (or carved) and Orgrip will suggest that it would make a good landing shield if they can capture it.



A challenge rating 11 monster: Surely that is ridiculous for 5th level characters? They will call shenanigans on you for sure!

What it is, is scary, but beatable. It has been stripped of some of its powers and will only be freshly woken when it encounters the characters, plus many of its abilities do not work in space.

- He will be on half (100) hit points
- Unable to cast plane shift, major image or summon elemental.
- Hurl flame, gaseous form and wall of fire do not work in space.
- Scimitar does not do fire damage in space.
- While sleeping, does not have scimitar

Orgrip will ask the character outside to capture the rock, which will probably require rope and grappling hooks.

How are they even communicating with the outside guy? Probably with hand signals through the window, I guess.

There are many anchoring points on the rock.

A DC 12 perception check will reveal some kind of hidden entrance. (characters inside the ship can made this roll with disadvantage)

There are two possibilities at this point, either the character will access the door or they won't.

It is possible to "dock" the ship with the rock. Dimble can coordinate this should the whole party wish to go inside.

During the recent space walks, characters will learn that the atmosphere does not suddenly evacuate the craft when a door opens and that unprotected characters do not instantly die. They do need to hold their breath (half the usual time) and they will get cold very quickly.

If they open the door it will wake the occupant, an efreeti who will come to investigate, though he will not stop to collect his scimitar, but will hurl flames (inside the ship, this works fine)

There is basically one large room within the rock. Forty feet long, twenty feet high and thirty feet wide with a large. It has air.

In the event they do not open the door, the efreet will collect his blade and come out when he is ready. He will immediately attack the character on the outside. He will then attempt to hurl flames at anyone coming out to face him, this attack will fail.

Efreeti

AC: 17

HP: 100

Scimitar 2 attacks +10, 2d6+6

Hurl flame +7 5d6

Armour Class 17 (Natural Armour)

Hit Points 200 (16d10+112)

Speed 40 ft, fly 60 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +7

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Ignan

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Elemental Demise. If the efreeti dies, its body disintegrates in a flash of fire and puff of smoke, leaving behind only equipment the efreeti was wearing or carrying.

Innate Spellcasting. The efreeti's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *Detect magic*

3/day: *enlarge/reduce, tongues*

1/day: *gaseous form, invisibility, wall of fire*

Actions

Multiattack. The efreeti makes two scimitar attacks or uses its Hurl Flame twice.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Hurl Flame. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) fire damage.

XP: 7,200XP

Treasure: Flame tongue Scimitar, Necklace of Fireballs

The Efreet will not speak. He is confused and angry. He will simply attack savagely.

Zero G combat

This is the only battle in this module to really be in a hostile environment

- Characters should have disadvantage on attacks due to the lack of gravity.
- They will need to hold their breath, which may limit spell casting.
- Spells can be cast from inside the ship while the door is open. Fire attacks will not work in space.
- The wearer of the space suit can cast spells.
- Unless they have heavy armour proficiency, the wearer of the space suit will have disadvantage on any attacks made with weapons due to the bulky suit.
- If they are hit, they will need to make an athletics or acrobatics roll to avoid being knocked away from the craft. The DC for this, is damage done. This does not apply to flying characters.
- Any attacks against a character in the space suit will damage the space suit, though the wearer will still have an air supply and be kept warm.

Note: The playtest group survived this, so it is possible.

Upon his death, the efreet will disappear in a burst of flame that is quickly extinguished by space.

His only surviving possessions will be his flame tongue scimitar (that will resize to suit its wielder once attuned) and a bead of fiery gems he wore as jewelry (necklace of fireballs)

Following the battle, should the characters investigate the inside of the rock, they will find some kind of freezing cold sleeping facility that the Efreet was in.

There are writings carved on the stone wall saying this tomb is that of a soldier in the Grand Rajah's army, sentenced to the far reaches of existence for involvement in the grand war of the planes. He should not be awoken as he is highly dangerous and will attempt to take over by force any kingdom he can.

A DC 15 history check will reveal the Grand Rajah was an ancient leader of genies and fire creatures who dominated many kingdoms over a thousand years ago.

Closer examination will reveal that waking him up activated a signal to other such sleeper vessels.

That is when other such asteroids will be seen moving through space and headed for the planet below.



In fact, they appear to be headed for Vollenchia.

Part 3.3 Going home

Following this battle, it will take time but the craft can be prepared for landing. There is however, now a race. The party can get to ground first, but the rocks headed for their home contain powerful beings.

Dimble suggests that they are basically going to crash when they land and will have no chance to stop any of the enemy.

What he offers to do, is crash near Turin's Sky so that they can commandeer an airship and stop these before they reach the ground.

Renkil also suggests that warning the city's rulers would be wise as well, so that they can prepare defenses.

Though not quite decided, there is very little choice now but to head back home.



Chapter 4: Independence Day

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."

--Ronald Reagan

Part 4.1 Landfall

Read Aloud:

Dimble gently taps at the controls, he pushes the main lever and you watch the the scene in the main window shows your home world. There are great lands, oceans, clouds, but before your eyes, it gets bigger...

And bigger...

There is a gentle screaming sound coming from the walls of the ship and it shakes as flames wash over the nose.

It shales more.

"Hang on!" Dimble shouts and suddenly all that is visible through the window is fire.

Everything gets hotter...

And hotter.

The screaming gets louder...

And louder.

Then the screaming is drowned out by a massive boom, followed by another.

Dimble pulls up on the stick and the flames disappear from the screen.

Ahead of you is the massive plains of the pridelands and plains and forests that surround Vollenchia.

"We made it!" Someone says, but Dimble is still focused and dripping in sweat as the ship comes closer to Vollenchia and the gnome tries to bring it in to land.



Make the landing as dramatic as you like and feel free to destroy some buildings in the Turin Sky compound. So long as a single airship survives, everything is good. Have them make dexterity saves and throw in some damage from heat and random things bouncing around.

When the smoke clears, have the group exit the craft before it explodes.

Read Aloud:

Taking charge quickly, Dimble looks to Orgrip.

"I'm going to warn the government, you take the Grand Tiger and see if you can intercept those things. It has a grapple launcher designed for mid air docking, but its never been tested."

And at that the lights in Orgrip's eyes switch on with dangerous excitement and he looks at you all, "well what are you waiting for?"

Part 4.2 The Grand Tiger

The Grand Tiger is a dirigible based airship; essentially a great air balloon with a propeller driven carriage underneath. It has fine passenger seats and room enough for twelve.

There are four ropes with grappling hooks, and one device that looks like a harpoon launcher.



It takes only a few minutes to get it ready to launch.

Orgrip becomes quite manic as he takes command of the ship and is excited by every aspect of it. He desperately wants to pilot and fire the grapple, so characters wishing to help with one or both will need to succeed in a DC 15 persuasion or intimidation check.

The ship gains altitude quite quickly. Have the characters make perception checks to spot the first craft to be approaching the city. Note that these vessels are using a more controlled entry and so will give time for the more reckless characters to arrive.

The first vessel takes up a stationary position high above the city to watch as the rest of the vessels approach.

Orgrip will be very enthusiastic about charging it and getting the grapple cannon into play.

Getting the vehicle into place will require a roll at piloting airship (dexterity)

Firing the grapple weapon will require proficiency with martial weapons. Orgrip has the first skill, not the second, yet he will ask a character to take the helm while he fires.

Once the grapple hits the vessel, it will be possible to throw the other grapples and pull the ship closer pirate style.

This will take a series of skill rolls. First each character throwing a grapple must hit AC 12 with an attack roll to get the grapple to catch.

Everyone wants to be a sky pirate! This is the scene that brings things back, because no matter how excited anyone was about being in space, playing airship pirates will trump that and make a better climax to the module.

Once the vessels are locked together, a ramp will open up on the enemy ship and two azers will prepare to repel the boarders while two more are piloting the ship.

Then characters must succeed on a group strength roll to pull the vessels closer, before doing either an athletics or acrobatics roll to board the ship.

Failure in these rolls should not result in death. At worst it should leave them prone.

Characters using ranged attacks or spells may do these without boarding the other vessel, but even they must admit that this is boring.

Award inspiration to anyone who dramatically succeeds at swinging across.



Azer *Medium elemental, lawful neutral*

AC: 17

HP: 39

Warhammer: +5, 1d8+3+1d6

Armour Class 17 (Natural Armour, shield)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft,

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +4

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Ignan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Heated Body. A creature that touches the azer or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Heated Weapons. When the azer hits with a metal melee weapon, it deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage (included in the attack).

Illumination. The azer sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

Actions

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

XP: 450XP

Treasure: 50gp in gems each

After two rounds, the other two will switch the craft to hover mode and join them.

When the azers are defeated, Orgrip will come on board, play with the controls and then:

Read Aloud:

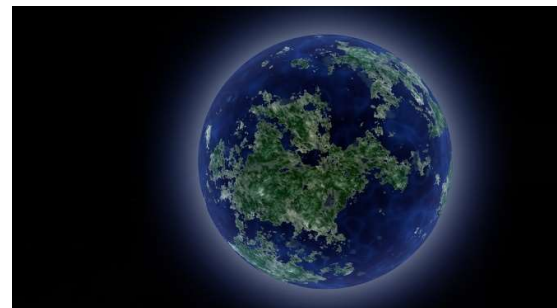
Orgrip look up with fear in his eyes.

“Run!” he shouts, “back to our ship!” The way he leaps from his seat shows just how urgent this is. Clearly there is no time to explain as he leaps desperately and waves the party to join him.

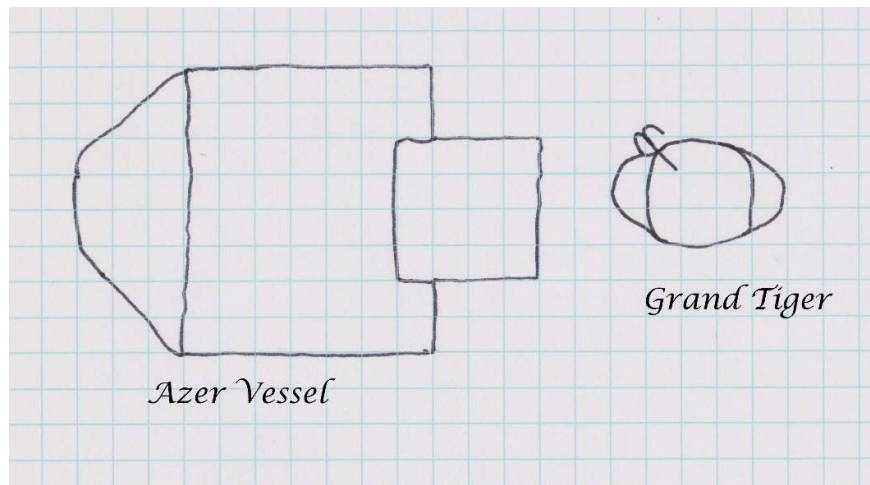
He hardly even waits to start cutting grapples and hitting the burner to gain altitude.

Then, there is one more loud boom as the azer ship cracks and bursts open with flames.

“That is not what I was trying to do.” The gnome says as rocks and fiery debris fall over the city.



The Grand Tiger and the Azer vessel



The distance between ships may vary depending on the use of grapples and the tactical decisions of the party. Should the party decide to stay at range, the azers may use some kind of fire thrower to attack the Grand Tiger directly.

Wrapping up

By the time the azer vessel is defeated, the Vollenchia military will be ready to repel further attackers, but without a signal from the azer ship, the rest of the fleet will search for somewhere safer to land, perhaps in the heart of a great southern land on the far side of the world.

This could lead to a follow-up adventure when the characters are higher level.



The rest of the characters' actions will go largely unnoticed.

The Sahagin and Couatls will continue their war, but without involving the ground bound races.

The Kenku rocket program will have been stopped (The hobgoblins will have seen to that)

Turin's Sky will need to make major repairs to the base before resuming business.

A small number of gnomes and kenku will owe the characters a great debt.

And, of course, nobody will believe a word of the story.

Rewards

Characters should have begun Chapter 4 at 5th level and received experience points for all encounters from that point on.

All treasure gained is listed with the encounter. There is not a lot in the way of treasure, but the real reward is the adventure itself.

New Rules

Airship Captain

You may not have actually been in command of an airship, but you know the skies, how to navigate them and how to lead men. You understand weather patterns, winds and rain

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Sky vehicle, one language of your choice

Equipment: A uniform, a navigation device, a map and belt pouch containing 15gp

Feature: **Hitch a lift.**

You know a thing or two about air travel and in a pinch you can organise to get on board an airship.

Suggested Characteristics

Airship captains are already living a life of adventure. You need to ask yourself, why would you give that up? Did the company you worked for go out of business. Were routes disrupted by dragons? Were you in a crash? What prompted you to walk away from the air and take up the life of a regular adventurer?

Airship Engineer

You are an expert with tools and you understand the mechanics of flight

Skill Proficiencies: Sleight of Hand, Investigation

Tool Proficiencies: Two sets of artisan's tools

Equipment: A uniform, one set of artisan's tools, a small backpack and a belt pouch containing 15gp

Feature: **Stories to tell.**

The idea of air travel is so fascinating that your stories instantly grab people's attention. This allows you to get attention and make friends quickly in any new town.

Suggested Characteristics

Airship engineers are well trained, but not necessarily prepared for a life of adventuring. What has happened to take you out of the sky? Did you come across a secret that needed pursuing? Did you overhear something that led you on another path? Are you looking for secrets that would improve your craft? Does your knowledge of traps and locks make you so valuable that you have been lured away from your job?

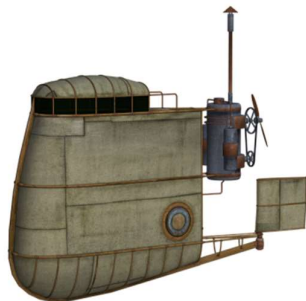
Both backgrounds from the soon to be released: Times of Peril.

Coming Soon from Rats in the Rain:



Times of Peril

A handbook of character options for Renaissance, Steam Punk and Victorian Age adventuring where airships and train lines dominate transport; where the favour of the gods has been replaced by technology; where barbarians are luddites; where rogues use guns and rangers gain advantage while tracking trains...



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