



FLASH GORDON™

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF MONGO





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Scott's Dedication: To my parents for giving me the keys to the rocket ship, and to TaMara for her monumental patience during the forging of this intergalactic dream.

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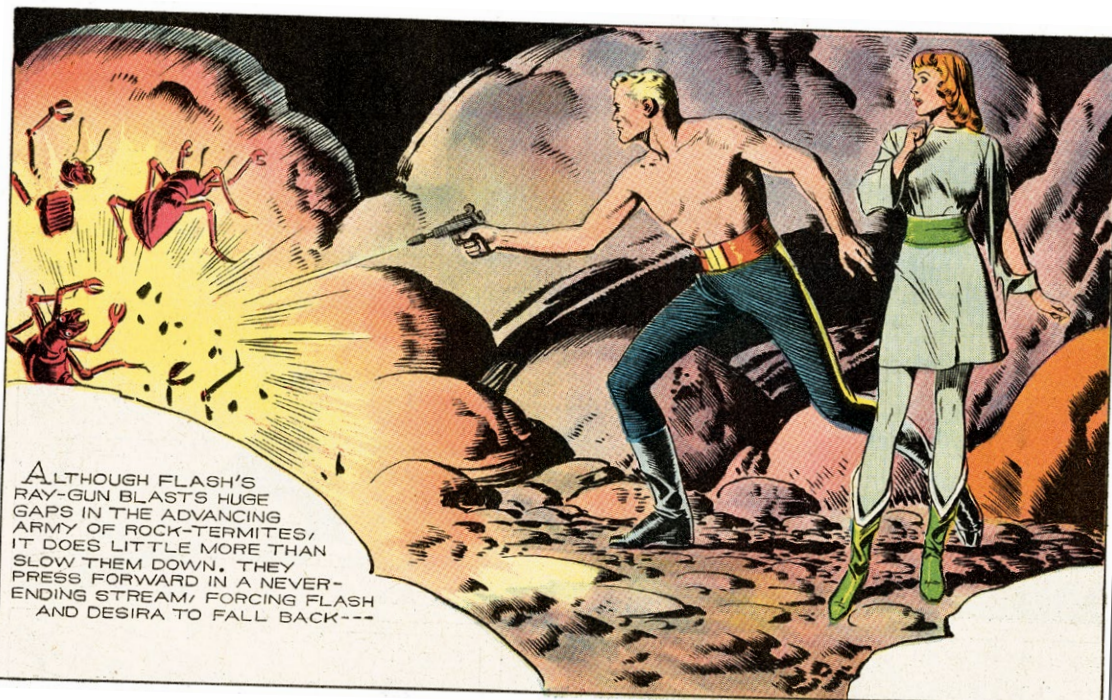


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ALTHOUGH FLASH'S RAY-GUN BLASTS HUGE GAPS IN THE ADVANCING ARMY OF ROCK-TERMITES, IT DOES LITTLE MORE THAN SLOW THEM DOWN. THEY PRESS FORWARD IN A NEVER-ENDING STREAM, FORCING FLASH AND DESIRA TO FALL BACK---



INTRODUCTION

Journey to the Center of Mongo is an epic serial for *The Savage World of Flash Gordon Roleplaying Game* presented in six thrilling chapters! Between the core rulebook and the *Kingdoms of Mongo* sourcebook, Game Masters have a number of Savage Tales and other scenarios at their fingertips to keep their players occupied upon (and above) the surface of Mongo for Mongomonths!

This particular adventure takes the heroes into an uncharted realm: the Subworld of Mongo, home of Wandu, the crystalline kingdom of the mysterious mole-men.

There they meet these strange subterranean dwellers, combat ravenous, rock-eating tunnel gators, and engage a band of Ming's soldiers in combat for control of a massive white sapphire mine hidden several Mongomiles underground!

While this campaign is designed to be run end-to-end, there are a few places where you can insert your own side-journeys within this strange, unexplored realm.

The campaign consists of six individual adventures, and in most cases each builds on connections and clues discovered in earlier adventures. Here is a brief summary:

I. JOURNEY'S DAWN

Utilizing a new deep-penetrating soni-scanner of his own devising, Dr. Hans Zarkov has intercepted mysterious radio transmissions emanating from deep underground. While the bulk of these broadcasts are garbled (likely due to electromagnetic interference), words pertaining to crystal mining have been overheard. With Prince Barin's new, larger, and faster-moving electric mole (christened "the Gnasher" by Dr. Zarkov),

the heroes must discover the source of these transmissions miles below the surface of Mongo and perhaps find a way for the Freemen to gain access to the referenced mines.

After boring straight into the planet for a few hours, the journey is suddenly interrupted by the attack of an ill-tempered gocko that is not at all pleased by the appearance of the Gnasher in its nursery tunnels.

2. A WORLD WITHIN A WORLD

With the gocko and its nestlings driven off or eliminated, the journey into Mongo continues. Eventually, the Gnasher tears its way through the roof of an enormous cavern and plummets several feet into a large, subterranean lake. When the crew exits the wrecked electric mole, they find themselves in a massive chamber illuminated by twinkling white sapphire crystal deposits.

To reach the shore, the heroes must cross the freezing water and in doing so, battle voracious cavernosaurs. Upon the shore, they are captured by a band of mole-men. These mole-men know little (or nothing) of the surface, believing the network of sapphire-illuminated caverns in which they dwell is the extent of the known world. They escort the heroes to the crystalline palace to meet with King Talpi, leader of the kingdom of Wandu.

3. CRYSTAL CASTLES

The heroes, received as welcome guests in the crystalline palace of King Talpi, are fed and allowed to rest. During the night, imperial soldiers infiltrate the citadel with the help of Talpi's lieutenant, Skalo, who is secretly allied with Ming and seeks to slay

the king and seize the throne. The heroes must defeat or drive off Ming's men.

4. DRAGONS IN THE DARK

After learning that Skalo was observed racing off towards the white sapphire mine during the attack on the palace, and after intercepting a cryptic radio message, the rebels pursue the traitor. The chase is complicated by a tragedy—several mole-man miners have been slain by invading tunnel gators. The ravenous creatures found their way into the mine from above via the bore hole created by their foe's stolen electric mole. The heroes must kill or drive off the tunnel gators to save the lives of the remaining miners.

5. THE BATTLE

With the tunnel gator menace resolved, King Talpi arrives to formally declare his allegiance with the Freeman, but

not before Skalo and a band of imperial soldiers step in to force the mole-men to hand over the mine to Ming the Merciless. Another fight breaks out, this time in the unstable sapphire mines, and the heroes must defeat the remaining imperials once and for all.

6. RETURN TO THE SURFACE

With the Gnasher destroyed and inaccessible, the rebels must find another way to return to the surface. Talpi helps them on their way and eventually they meet up with Professor Rena Kammus, a Mongolian explorer who has been wandering the winding cave systems of Mongo for months (though she is unwilling to admit she is actually lost). Kammus can help the heroes find their way out of the Subworld of Mongo through a series of lava tubes (the same path that Talpi once walked), however the journey is a treacherous one with beasts,

tremors, and natural forces opposing them at every turn. Eventually, the heroes exit through a dormant volcano into the Great Mongo Desert, several Mongomiles east of Arboria.





JOURNEY'S DAWN

Read the following to the players:

The transmission you received during the night was heavily-encoded and deliberately ambiguous, but the urgency was clear. You and your fellow rebels are to head deep into the jungles of Arboria to a secret Freeman base where you will be briefed by the noted Earth scientist, Dr. Hans Zarkov! While the thought of an impending mission fills you with excitement, you are even more thrilled at the prospect of coming face-to-face with one of Flash Gordon's greatest friends.

If the heroes are already in Arboria, they may make the trek on foot along the jungle floor or among the branches via the Great Tree Highway. Prince Barin insists that the group be escorted by a band of Royal Foresters (1 per hero). This offers an opportunity for side encounters with native wildlife including horned ape-men, harpy bats, or even a giant magnopod or two if on the ground. All others must make the journey via rocket ship (or another airborne alternative).

Once the rebels arrive in the well-concealed base (locatable only thanks to the precise coordinates they received via the earlier transmission), they are guided to a tent where a bearded man in a green tunic and wearing a bulky set of wired headphones appears to be listening to something intently and scratching notes onto a pad of paper. Eventually he notices the heroes, greets them with a smile, removes his headphones, and rises.

"Ah, I'm so happy you could join us on such short notice. I am Doctor Hans Zarkov."

He indicates a stack of electronic components upon the table that hums and glows with energy.

"This is my soni-scanner, a device capable of scanning for radio transmissions over extremely long range. Normally we use this machine to listen in on imperial broadcasts, but a few days ago, I turned the receiving dish to the ground beneath our feet and was shocked to hear voices coming from deep within the bowels of the planet! While the chittering was mostly unintelligible, I did, with the help of our linguistics specialist, Dr. Aman, catch several references to 'light stones.' We can only assume they were speaking of white sapphires."

Zarkov presents a map of sorts to the heroes showing a side view of the terrain with an "X" marking their camp.

"By my calculations, the mysterious voices are concentrated in this region here, some ten Mongomiles down. If they know of a significant source of white sapphires there, it could be invaluable to the rebellion!"



THE GNASHER

The Gnasher is a heavily-modified and slightly enlarged version of Prince Barin's typical electric mole design (see *Flash Gordon*). Unlike standard electric moles, the Gnasher is capable of reverse movement at half-speed thanks to the addition of a single, rear-mounted light gun pulverizer (mounted in the center of the propeller). The Gnasher also contains a white sapphire-based reactor capable of an almost unlimited journey underground, provided the system is fed raw materials on a regular basis.

Size: 10; **Acc/Top Speed:** 5/12 (2/6 in reverse); **Toughness:** 30 (10); **Crew:** 2+6

Notes: Heavy Armor, Tracked. Energy stores possess enough power for a 25 Mongomile, subterranean journey.

Weapons:

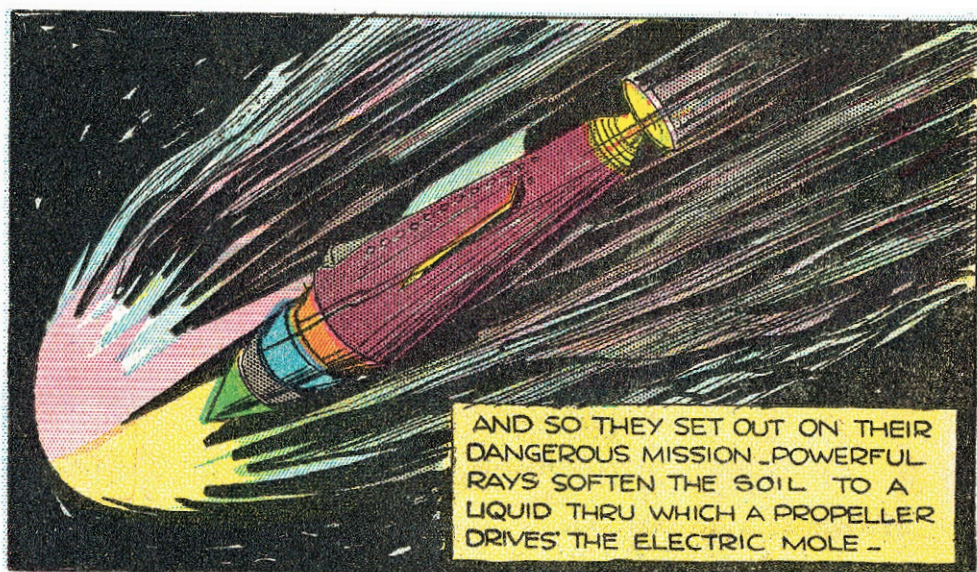
- 2 × Front-Mounted, Large Light Gun Pulverizers (Cone Template)
- 1 × Rear-Mounted, Large Light Gun Pulverizer (Cone Template)

"Prince Barin has provided us with one of his electric moles which I have modified to make the journey faster and safer for the occupants."

Zarkov leads the heroes to a large shape hidden beneath heavy, green tarpaulins. He pulls one away, revealing the nose of an electric mole already aimed slightly downward at the ground. The rebels are welcome to take time learning how to drive the machine, but the controls are simple enough to be operated by anyone with Driving or Piloting. The vehicle is capable of advancing forward or retreating at half-speed. If no one in the party possesses either of these skills, an experienced Royal Forester operator accompanies the heroes.

Zarkov has also created a Mongo-Tech device he calls a sapphire-sniffer. This mechanism must be affixed to the front of the electric mole. With it, the drilling machine can automatically hone in on large concentrations of power crystals. Attaching and wiring up the device requires a Repair roll and two hours (this time can be halved with a raise).

At the same time the party is attaching the sapphire-sniffer, a radioman informs Zarkov that imperial forces have attacked



AND SO THEY SET OUT ON THEIR DANGEROUS MISSION - POWERFUL RAYS SOFTEN THE SOIL TO A LIQUID THRU WHICH A PROPELLER DRIVES THE ELECTRIC MOLE -



one of Barin's secret facilities on the far side of the kingdom and made off with a modified electric mole, driving it into the ground and vanishing from sight. Zarkov checks the soni-scanner and detects imperial transmissions and the grinding of the stolen electric mole. The journey into the planet must begin as soon as the sapphire-sniffer installation is complete, however the Gnasher (the name Zarkov has given the modified electric mole) is twice as fast and far more reliable than the stolen one. Provided the journey is uneventful, the heroes should reach the source of the strange voices well before Ming's forces.

As night falls on Arboria, the heroes pile into the Gnasher, fire up its whirring engines and drill into the planet's crust while Freeman within the camp look on and cheer.

THE TUNNEL

After hours of boring through soft soil, loose rock, and then solid stone, the Gnasher breaks through a wall and slips into a natural tunnel. As this happens, a flashing light on the console indicates that the engines are in danger of overheating and the cave offers the heroes an opportunity to slow or even pause their journey to allow the machinery to cool.

A successful Knowledge (Mongotech) or Repair roll suggests the stream

of water running through the middle of the tunnel could be pulled through the cooling system via a hose to speed up the process. Should the heroes communicate with Dr. Zarkov via the Gnasher's signal-boostered radiophone, he agrees with a temporary pause to cool the engines and he can also walk anyone through the process of pulling water from the tunnel into the Gnasher.

Unfortunately, anyone stepping outside the Gnasher to perform maintenance is in harm's way as a gocko (protecting its nest) rushes out from a side passage and attacks! Deal action cards.

If the gocko manages to successfully Grapple a hero, it attempts to withdraw to carry the victim back to its nest as food for its young. Should the gocko suffer a wound before it manages to Grapple an opponent, it lets out a piercing shriek that summons its young to assist in the battle. The nestlings arrive the following round.

✂ **Gocko (1):** See *Flash Gordon*.

• **Gocko Young (1 per 2 Heroes):** See page 27.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Once the gocko threat has been overcome and the engines sufficiently cooled (pumping water through the engines takes an hour), the trip into Mongo can continue.



A WORLD WITHIN A WORLD

After a few more hours, the sapphire-sniffer goes haywire, yanking the Gnasher to and fro. Anyone with Weird Science or Knowledge (Science) may examine the device's interface. A success indicates it is not malfunctioning. Rather, it is simultaneously detecting two significant sources of power crystals (one east, one west). The lurching of the electric mole becomes more violent as time passes and anyone not strapped in (all the seats have belts) must make an Agility roll or suffer Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises.

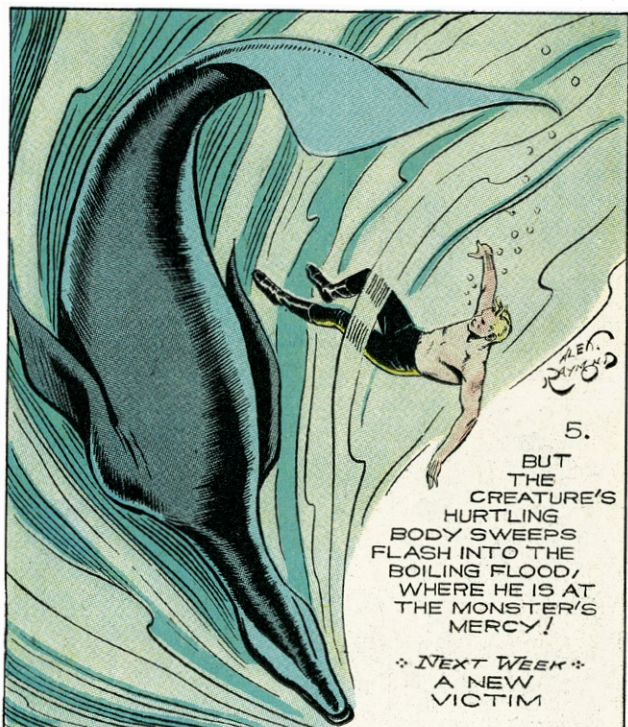
Deactivating the sapphire-sniffer is possible with the throw of a switch, but once it is off progress is in the hands of the operator. Before a decision can be made to select one of the sniffer's previous trajectories (printed on ticker tape), the

Gnasher goes wildly out of control as it strikes a vein of super-hard rock. The pilot has only moments to get the bucking vehicle under control with a Driving or Piloting roll. A failure indicates all occupants suffer Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises before the Gnasher pierces the ceiling of a colossal cavern and plummets into a subterranean lake! A successful roll spares the occupants the Bumps and Bruises, although the Gnasher still falls into the lake. A raise on the skill roll not only stabilizes the Gnasher, it also allows the operator to avoid the lake altogether and arrive safely on the beach (skip to **Lost & Found** on page 9).

The Gnasher splashes down into the water, kicking up a massive cloud of steam and suffering 3d6 damage. Those wearing safety harnesses suffer half damage. The Gnasher immediately begins to take on water and sinks into the lake in 4d6 minutes, so evacuation must be done quickly.

The electric mole is equipped with an inflatable boat (with two wooden oars) large enough to hold all passengers. Outside, the entire cavern is dimly illuminated by a lattice of energized power crystals far above, casting artificial starlight (considered Dark) upon the surface of the water.

Once the entire party is safely in the raft, the Gnasher expels the last of its air with a loud roar and slips into the lake. Any lights on the mole vanish beneath the water, fading from sight as the machine slowly sinks into the inky depths. All is eerily quiet. In the darkness, the nearest shore appears to offer something resembling a beach and upon it a light moves



5.

BUT
THE
CREATURE'S
HURLING
BODY SWEEPS
FLASH INTO THE
BOILING FLOOD,
WHERE HE IS AT
THE MONSTER'S
MERCY!

❖ NEXT WEEK ❖
A NEW
VICTIM

7-26-42.

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from side to side. From this distance it is unclear who or what is responsible for it.

As the heroes draw nearer to the shore, a successful Notice roll detects movement in the water all around (otherwise the attackers have The Drop). Three hungry cavernosaurs suddenly rush the boat in an attempt to knock the rebels overboard. Early on in the battle, anyone watching the shore notices that the mysterious light has vanished. A few rounds later, additional lights (crystal lamps mounted at the front of helmets worn by mole-men) appear on shore and should the heroes call for help, these new arrivals voluntarily wade out into the water to offer their assistance. They fight the cavernosaurs from the water (and possibly lose one or two of their own to the creatures) before all can be safely delivered onto the shore.

- **Cavernosaurs (3):** See *Flash Gordon*.
- **Mole-Men (1 per hero):** See page 25.

LOST & FOUND

Upon the shore of the strange subterranean lake, the heroes (whether fleeing from the cavernosaurs in the water or safely exiting the Gnasher) are met by a band of mole-men. They all wear hardhats with glowing crystal lamps mounted at their fronts and wield stone clubs.

One mole-man, who stands slightly taller than the rest, wears a light-colored cape and radiates an air of superiority. She steps forward and introduces herself: "I am Skalo of the mole-men. Who are you and from whence do you come?"

Almost anything the heroes say about the sunlit world above is met with confusion as the mole-men know nothing of life beyond their shadowy kingdom of Wandu. While they do not threaten the heroes

(unless threatened), they are suspicious and even somewhat fearful. Consider the mole-men to be Neutral if the heroes attempt to use Persuasion. If questioned about pretty much anything, Skalo is tight-lipped.

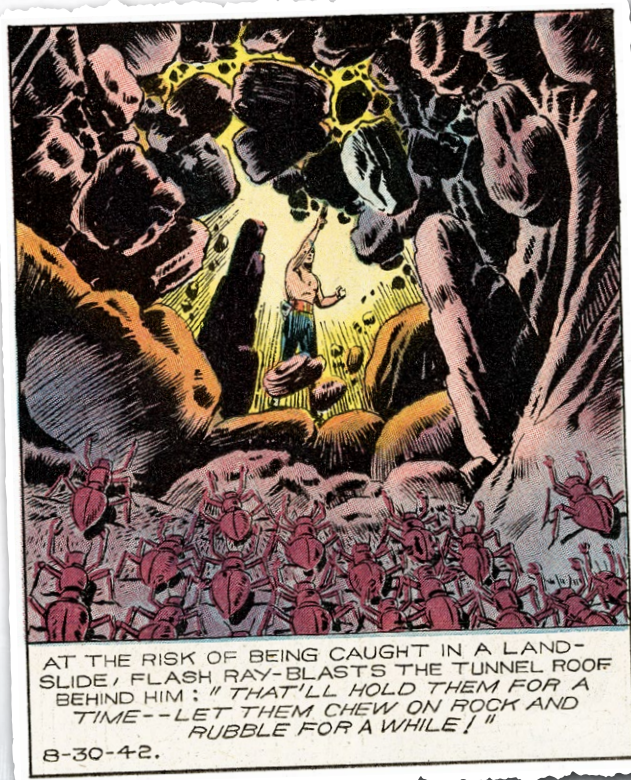
"You will accompany us to the palace to meet with our king. Follow."

With that, Skalo and her people lead the heroes away from the lake and into a large, dark tunnel to Wandu, the kingdom of the mole-men. The mole-men assist in the transportation of any gear the heroes managed to salvage from the Gnasher. Should the GM wish to extend the journey to the palace, an encounter with a swarm of rock termites may occur.

✧ **Skalo:** See page 26.

• **Mole-Men (2 per hero):** See page 25.

• **Rock Termite (Swarm):** See *Flash Gordon*. This swarm begins as a Medium Burst Template but can split into two Small Burst Templates.



AT THE RISK OF BEING CAUGHT IN A LAND-SLIDE, FLASH RAY-BLASTS THE TUNNEL ROOF BEHIND HIM: "THAT'LL HOLD THEM FOR A TIME--LET THEM CHEW ON ROCK AND RUBBLE FOR A WHILE!"
8-30-42.



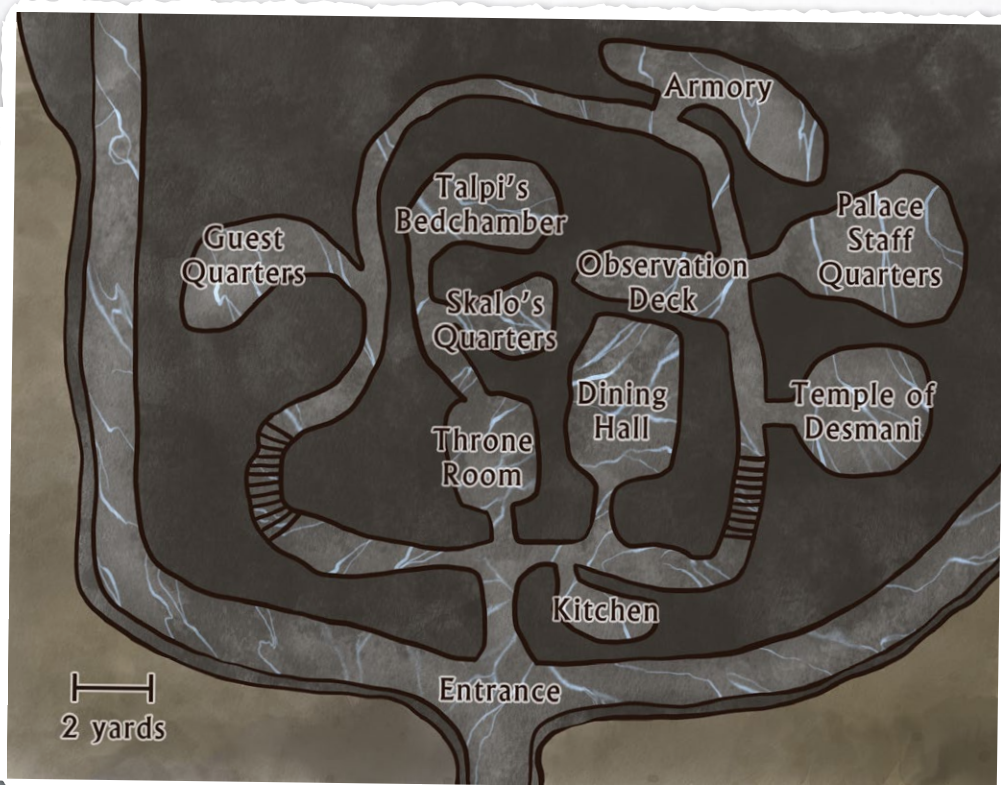
CRYSTAL CASTLES

The journey through the tunnel system takes less than an hour. Eventually the heroes, in the company of Skalo and the mole-men, exit into a massive chamber dwarfing the cavern from where they have just come. Additional concentrations of shimmering power crystals cling to the ceiling above, casting a glow of light, akin to starlight, over everything. At the center of this shimmering vista stands an impressive stone palace carved into the very rock itself and adorned with additional white sapphire design features including statues, columns, and glistening crenellations.

To access this citadel, the heroes must cross an elevated bridge linking the structure's upper levels to the neighboring mountains. As the party traverses this bridge, sentries, as well as a small

passing patrol, all salute Skalo by raising their weapons into the air and grunting.

Once across the bridge and inside the palace, the heroes find the construction crude, functional, and somewhat eerie: Black rock with pulsing veins of raw sapphire running throughout. Before passing through an ornate archway, the heroes are asked to turn over all their weapons. These are collected, placed on a rolling cart, and wheeled away for safe-keeping (see **The Armory**, page 13). Refusing to give up their arms decreases the attitude of Skalo and the mole-men by a step. Should this be reduced to Hostile, the mole-men attempt to seize the heroes and imprison them. Regardless, characters may attempt to use Thievery to hide smaller weapons (knives, pistols, etc.) on their person.



THE THRONE ROOM

Provided the heroes cooperate, they are led into a modest throne room where the aging king sits upon a glowing, crystal throne. The king nods his wrinkled head to the group in greeting and Skalo approaches to whisper her report. A moment later, Skalo steps aside and the king addresses the heroes with a raspy voice:

"Welcome strangers. I am King Talpi of the kingdom of Wandu. My advisor, Skalo, informs me of your trying ordeal. Rest here a while and be my guests."

King Talpi then succumbs to a coughing fit. Cloaked assistants rush up to help, but he pushes them away and recovers enough to address the heroes once more:

"We will dine later and you can regale us all with tales of your strange world."

Talpi is helped out of the room, exiting to the rear, while the heroes are led to their quarters before they have an opportunity to ask any questions of the ailing king.

GUEST QUARTERS [OR PRISON]

The guest quarters are sparse and consist of little more than short, raised platforms of dark stone with crudely woven blankets provided for warmth against the year-round, cool temperatures of Subworld. Human-sized characters and larger have a rough time of sleeping on these platforms while dwarves find themselves quite comfortable. Despite the king's comment about the heroes being "guests," armed guards stand on either side of the doorway leading into the hall.

If the rebels took the radiophone from the Gnasher (and the mole-men did not have reason to confiscate it), they are welcome to attempt to communicate with Zarkov. He informs them that transmissions and other sounds emitted from the stolen electric mole have ceased,

suggesting that either the imperials met with a tragic and sudden end or they successfully completed their journey and may already be in the vicinity of the heroes.

THE DINING HALL

Eventually the rebels are escorted to a dining hall where they are presented with a nauseating, full-course meal of subterranean fare ranging from varieties of sickeningly-sweet, marinated fungi to strange creatures resembling grubs and earthworms served raw in a stomach-churning dish the mole-men call "slush." Not consuming any of the offerings is considered an affront to the king, and unless the heroes brought their own rations with them to the palace, eating these foods is their only way of dealing with Hunger (see *Savage Worlds*). While undeniably vile, the offerings do provide adequate sustenance to those willing to ingest them. A yeasty, fermented brew is also offered ad nauseam and this at least helps to quash some of the more sickening flavors.

After the meal, King Talpi asks the heroes numerous questions about the world above. Only he seems to believe the tales told by the heroes, while the rest of his court (including Skalo) snicker dismissively. Talpi eventually reveals that he once walked upon the surface many decades ago, finding his way upwards and back through a series of extinct lava tubes. He speaks of wandering, dazed and dehydrated, through a strange, sunbaked desert, eventually meeting a friendly band of nomads who fed and clothed him and then helped him find his way back home. Before leaving their company, they gifted him a strange and powerful gun that he used only once against a dreaded gocko, dropping it with a single squeeze of the weapon's trigger.

Should the heroes share any details of the war for freedom waged above ground, Talpi shows compassion and expresses his outrage in regards to Ming. He states

that provided Wandu and its inhabitants can be kept hidden from the emperor's prying eyes, he and his mole-men can offer assistance and materials to help with the effort.

King Talpi informs the party that on the morrow he will help them recover

and/or repair their electric mole, as well discuss granting future Freeman access to Wandu's extensive "light stone" (aka white sapphire) mines. Talpi is carried off to his bedchamber and the heroes are once again led back to their quarters.

A FRIENDLY GAME OF LOD STRIKER

An additional event that may be played out comes in the form of an unusual table game known as Lode Striker. This combination strategy and dexterity game has players scuttling heavy, cut crystal pucks across a large, highly-polished obsidian table (the "quarry") to occupy areas of the board in an abstract simulation of mining. The game is played over five rounds (with each round representing a series of mining operations).

Despite the liberal use of talc on the playing field, the game pieces are quite large so it takes a bit of skill and oomph to slide them precisely. At the start of each round, the Slider (the player with the highest Athletics score) makes an Athletics roll while the others assist via cooperative Smarts rolls. Smarts rolls are made to simulate formulated strategies and suggested trajectories. The slider makes his Athletics roll and adds +1 for every success and raise his companions achieve on their Smarts rolls. Placement is easy to begin with, but quickly becomes more difficult as the board fills up. There is a Modifier for each round:

Round 1: +2

Round 2: 0

Round 3: -1

Round 4: -2

Round 5: -4

A success grants one card off a shuffled deck or two with a raise (no more). This represents revealing a random symbol under the piece's placement (whatever the miner has discovered in the mine).

A Spade represents a Shovel, which is a valuable tool in the mines of Subworld and is worth 3 points.

A Heart is a Friendship which is also valuable but not worth as much while mining, so it only grants 2 points.

A Diamond is a precious Gemstone, a nice find worth 1 point.

A Club represents a Broken Beam leading to a cave-in. The team loses 1 point.

Jokers are the Lodestones, veins of pure White Sapphire. Worth more in the beginning (when there would be more time to mine them) and less as the game goes on. The player gets 1 point the round they get the Joker and an additional point every round after for having it.

At the end of 5 rounds, the side with the most points wins.

AT DEAD OF NIGHT

In the middle of the “night” (night and day have little meaning in the perpetual darkness of Subworld), an alarm rings out. The crystal network running throughout the building flashes brightly as an emergency alert. If the heroes check, the guards stationed outside their door have disappeared, likely to answer the call of the alarm bell.

Once outside, the sound of raised voices and even screams can be heard somewhere within the palace. Should the heroes investigate, they hear the unmistakable sound of discharging ray guns! Unless they managed to hide weapons on their persons earlier, the heroes are currently unarmed.

THE ARMORY

The armory is located on this same floor and, at the moment, it is unguarded. Apart from all weapons and other gear taken from the heroes, this room also contains clubs, sapphire daggers and swords, and crude suits of armor forged from tunnel gator hide and gocko plating. Unfortunately, these suits of armor can only be worn by smaller humanoids (Size -1). A successful Notice roll spies a hidden stone door that opens into a web-encrusted vault containing a box of six limpid grenades along with a strange assortment of handmade weapons and an old (and non-functioning) ray gun rifle, adding credence to Talpi’s tale about having once visited the surface world. With their weapons reacquired, the heroes can move down the hall and look down into the dining hall from a second story observation deck.

OBSERVATION DECK

This furnished, second floor observation deck is open to the dining hall below. From here, the heroes observe a group of mole-men pinned down behind the overturned

LIMPID GRENADE

Limpid grenades are rare, perfect crystals that contain an intense charge of raw energy. Limpid grenades explode upon impact, releasing a flash of blinding, white light and a shower of fine, penetrating shards. The mole-men occasionally use limpid grenades in mining but they can also be a formidable offensive weapon.

Limpid grenades have a Range of 5/10/20. Anyone caught within the grenade’s area of effect (a Medium Burst Template) is automatically Shaken on a failed Vigor roll at -2 from the initial flash (this effect is ignored if the victim is wearing suitable eyewear) and suffers 2d6 damage.

Due to their volatility, limpid grenades are prone to accidental detonation and must be handled with great care. If a hero rolls a critical failure (snake eyes) on any Agility roll while carrying limpid grenades, the grenades explode and inflict damage as if they were thrown.

Lode Striker game table (directly below and slightly under the heroes) as three of Ming’s soldiers discharge their ray guns from the main doorway! The mole-men occasionally lob stone fragments and Lode Striker pucks, but they lack ranged weapons and are likely to fall victim to the imperials unless the heroes act. From here, the heroes spy the corpses of a half-dozen mole-men, the unfortunate victims of this imperial assault.

The heroes can open fire from this elevated vantage point (the soldiers are 30’ away), drop down 10’ from above into the room, or withdraw and take to the stairs in the hope of surprising the soldiers from the main corridor.

- **Imperial Soldiers (3):** See *Soldiers* in *Flash Gordon*.

THE TRAITOR?

Once the soldiers are defeated, King Talpi, assisted by two mole-men, arrives on scene to assess the situation. His second, Skalo, is nowhere to be found. A mole-man guard reports observing Skalo sneaking off toward the mines shortly after the imperial attack began.

SKALO'S QUARTERS

Skalo's quarters (as well as King Talpi's bedchamber) are both only accessible via a single, secure passageway off the throne room.

Should the rebels visit Skalo's quarters, a successful Notice roll reveals a crystal radio (a crude version of a standard radiophone) attuned to an imperial frequency. If activated, repeated calls for a response from the defeated soldiers emanate quietly through the speaker grille. The heroes are certainly welcome to reply, however, if they choose to simply monitor the transmissions, they eventually hear a sudden, frantic broadcast:

"To all imperial soldiers within the sound of my voice, return to the mines at once! We are under attack! Repeat, we are under att—"

The transmission stops abruptly.

Whether the heroes heard the panicked transmission or as a means of following up on the news that Skalo was seen heading towards the mines, King Talpi shuffles forward, quickly adjusts the frequency of the crystal radio, and attempts to contact the mine, but his calls are met with static. Talpi informs the heroes that he has not dispatched any mole-men to the mine, so he is unsure what might be attacking the soldiers.

Should the heroes choose to investigate, proceed to the next chapter immediately, however they are all considered Fatigued (robots with access to power crystals are the exception to this) after being awakened in the middle of the night and combatting the soldiers in the dining hall. A few hours rest is recommended for the heroes to recharge unless they wish to deal with this Fatigue.

THE TEMPLE OF DESMANI

This is a large temple devoted to the mole-man goddess Desmani who is depicted here as a towering, 20 foot tall figure carved entirely from high-grade white sapphire crystal. This statue pulses with its own energized inner light. Desmani more resembles the actual animal from which the mole-men derive their name, even down to the elongated snout, small, circular eyes, and coat of fur all expertly carved into the rock by a skilled artisan.

At any one time, there are a handful of devoted worshippers here, along with a cloaked priest or priestess, all kneeling before the statue in silent prayer. If asked, the priest or priestess is always ready and willing to tell the tale of how Desmani crawled her way up from the pit of shadows to create the great kingdom of Wandu by infusing the very rocks with her life force, thus creating the power crystals that light and power Subworld.

Before the heroes depart the palace for the mine (either during the night, or the next morning), King Talpi must pay a visit to the temple to seek spiritual guidance from Desmani. Should the heroes wish to speak with him before their journey, they must wait patiently while he concludes his prayers. While Talpi does not accompany the heroes, he secretly follows along behind at a safe distance.

KITCHEN

The heroes are welcome to visit the kitchen to obtain food and drink either for the journey to the mine or the inevitable escape from Subworld. While the same nauseating options they "enjoyed" at dinner are available in some quantity, there are also portable options that the chefs regularly prepare for exploring parties, patrols, and miners. These crude rations consist of hardtack biscuits, and dried strips of nutrient-rich fungi. Fresh water is abundant in Subworld and a free-flowing well is accessible.



DRAGONS IN THE DARK

Along with an armed mole-man escort (one per hero) at the insistence of King Talpi, the trek to the sapphire mines takes the heroes away from the citadel and off in the opposite direction from the Gnasher's crash site. The group passes through large, crystal-illuminated caverns and along muddy gravel roads marked with deep ruts indicating the frequent passage of wagons and other vehicles.

As the group draws near the mines, the mole-men inform the heroes that at this point the sounds of mining operations should already be heard. Nothing but the occasional echoing drip of water comes from ahead. A successful Notice roll spots the severely mutilated body of a mole-man lying along one wall, partially hidden behind a low pile of rocks. The body has been partially devoured and exhibits teeth and claw marks, but examination of the corpse with a successful Knowledge (Medicine) roll confirms what their eyes show them, that death was the result of a savage animal attack.

A successful Tracking roll allows for the discovery of unique animal tracks in the mud leading off to the mines. Those rolling a successful Tracking or Knowledge (Science) determine the prints are from a large reptile. If asked (or if the heroes are unable to make the determination themselves), the mole-men identify the tracks as belonging to the dreaded tunnel gator, a rare but extremely dangerous reptilian predator.

HIDING WITH HORROR

Following the tracks for a few hundred yards eventually leads the group to the mouth of a man-made tunnel. The mole-men state that the tunnel leads to

temporary quarters as well as storage of surplus mining equipment. Torches to either side of the entrance are burned out and cold to the touch. More than one set of tunnel gator prints leads into the darkness, with the bulk coming from the mines ahead.

Should the heroes investigate the tunnel, they find a crudely barricaded side passage. If they investigate the barrier (attempt to dismantle it, etc.) muffled voices from beyond it call out for help. Removing the barricade (with the help of those on the other side) takes several minutes and can generate quite a lot of noise, possibly awakening the sleeping tunnel gators in a chamber ahead. With a successful cooperative Stealth roll, the heroes can clear the barricade without alerting the gators. A failure, however, awakens one tunnel gator while a critical failure awakens 1d4+2 gators. If alerted,



the tunnel gators immediately make their way up the main corridor to attack in two rounds. A successful Notice roll spies a white glow growing in intensity as the sapphire-saturated creatures approach. This glow is also accompanied by occasional flashes of bright light as the tunnel gators open and shut their mouths, exposing their irradiated maws.

If the barricade is removed the Freeman find ten miners, four of whom are suffering from terrible tunnel gator bites. If asked, and provided the gators haven't been alerted or arrived yet, one of the miners imparts the following information:

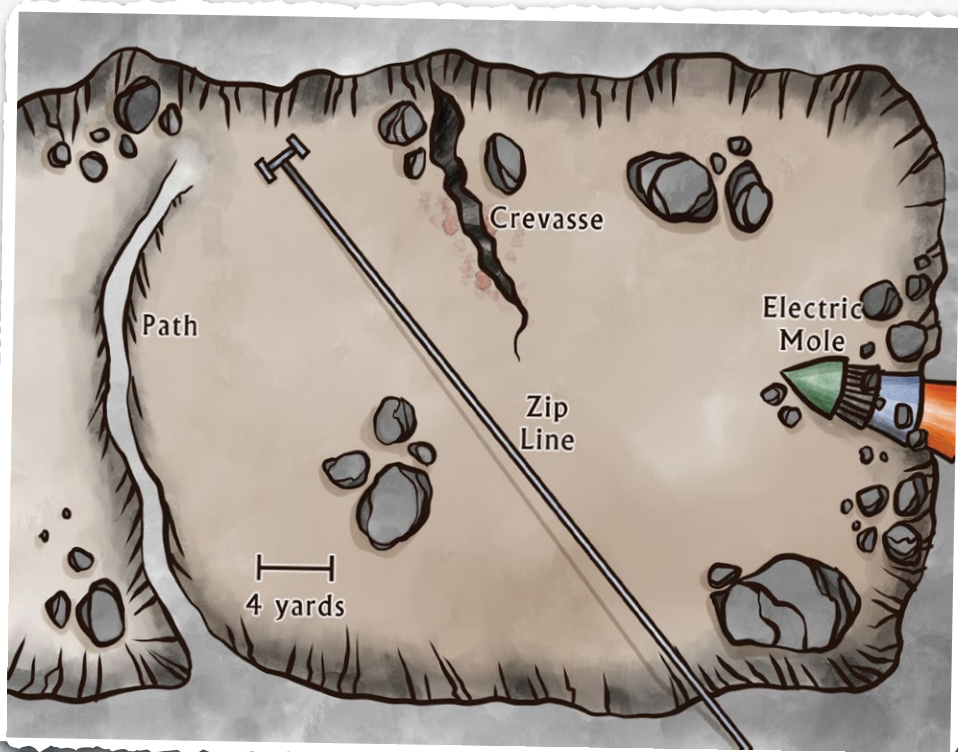
"Yesterday evening, we heard a terrible noise along the eastern wall of the main mine and the ground began to shake. We thought it was just a tremor, but suddenly the wall burst open and a giant, whirling cone of metal issued forth, knocking miners aside and bringing a portion of the wall and roof down upon it. After a few moments, strangers wearing golden armor exited the machine and threatened us with powerful weapons. Our foreman, Gromm, resisted and they shot him dead."

"We had no choice but to lay down our tools and surrender."

"The invaders interrogated us, but they were interrupted by tunnel gators spilling out of the new passage, clambering over the strange machine and attacking everyone in their path. We retreated and made our way here where we barricaded ourselves in this room. There were at least 25 miners on duty yesterday. Unless the others managed to hide in the mines, I fear we are the only survivors."

If the tunnel gators were alerted earlier, they should arrive by now to attack the heroes and the rescued mole-men who wield little more than shovels and pickaxes (Str+d6). The side tunnel also contains two crates of limpid grenades (12 in total), as well as a dozen torches, oil lamps, lengths of rope, and a variety of other mining tools (reasonable requests by players for primitive mining apparatus should be honored). Otherwise, the group can attempt to use Stealth to withdraw from the cave or use limpid grenades to bring the tunnel entrance down, temporarily trapping the gators inside.

• **Tunnel Gators (6):** See page 27.



RESCUE SQUAD

Once out of the tunnel, and provided one of the heroes is carrying the radiophone, the heroes suddenly receive a transmission alert. Alternatively, one of the mole-men escorts could be carrying a crystal radio (perhaps the one found in Skalo's bedchamber) that reacts in response to an intercepted signal. Should they listen, they hear a whispered voice pleading for help:

"Hello? Can anyone hear us? This is Kinslo. We are trapped in a crevasse in the center mine. There are at least three tunnel gators attempting to claw their way in. The edge of the crevasse is starting to crumble and we don't know how much longer we have. Please send help!"

The transmission ends with a burst of static.

The rescued mole-man who told his tale in the tunnel steps up to express his familiarity with the mines ahead and plead with the heroes to help rescue the trapped miners—especially since Kinslo is his brother!

Should the heroes agree to help, the walk to the mine itself is a relatively short one. Successful Notice rolls reveal the occasional roar of a tunnel gator from up ahead, but no other sounds accompany this frightening noise.

The mine itself is an expansive pit several hundred feet across. A path wide enough to accommodate two side-by-side pushcarts leads down to the pit floor. From here, occasional flashes of white light can be seen, accompanied by the roars and grunts of tunnel gators as they prowl around a dark rent in the earth. Several bodies lie around the edge of the quarry, including at least one Mongonian soldier wearing imperial armor. This grotesque display of carnage is enough to warrant a Fear check.

On the far right side of the pit, partially buried under a rock fall, is the gravel-polished golden nose of the stolen electric mole. There is no sign of life anywhere in the mine, apart from the hungry tunnel gators prowling about the dark crevasse.

The distance to the crevasse (and the tunnel gators) is equal to the Long Range rating of the best weapon carried by the heroes. To get closer, they have three options: abseil down the sheer cliff walls, make their way down the pathway, or zip-line down a cable running from a nearby stand all the way to the ground close to the crevasse. The first two options risk exposing the heroes, giving the tunnel gators a chance to spot the heroes with a successful Notice roll, while the zip-line (though riskier) offers the possibility of surprise.

Rappelling down the 30 foot cliff requires a successful, unmodified Athletics roll (as there are ropes, pitons, and other items available to make the journey relatively easy). No rolls are required to walk down the pathway unless the party opts to utilize Stealth. As for the zip-line, buckets with pulleys can be placed on the line as a handhold to ride down to the opposite side of the pit. Two Strength rolls are required on the journey down (it takes two rounds to make the trip). Should the first roll fail, the hero falls 20 feet, but only 10 feet if they fail the second roll. At the bottom of the zip-line, each hero should make an Agility roll to safely land on their feet, otherwise they are knocked prone. The tunnel gators must make Notice rolls for the sudden arrivals or be surprised.

Once the tunnel gators are defeated, the five survivors who have been hiding in the crevasse are free to climb out and join the party. Apart from a few scratches and scrapes (and a bit of dehydration), the rescued mole-men are in better shape than some of those rescued from the cave earlier.

- **Tunnel Gators (1 per hero):** See page 27.



THE BATTLE

Moments after rescuing the trapped miners, a strange horn sounds from the opposite side of the quarry and all the mole-men snap to attention (even those with injuries). A band of four mole-men carrying King Talpi upon his litter slowly descends the ramp. They approach the heroes, Talpi is helped down from his carrier, and then he is guided to the heroes and the rescued mole-men. He leans heavily on his crystal staff and addresses the group:

"I thank you for rescuing my miners and dispatching those horrific beasts. In recognition of your bravery, I am prepared to offer you and the Freeman above access to this grand light stone mine that has served us for as far back as we can remember. From this point forward —"

Talpi's speech is suddenly interrupted by the sound of ray gun fire from the darkened electric mole. The beam strikes far above, unleashing a rain of debris over the party. A familiar voice emanates from the darkness:

"Not so fast, my king!"

Skalo appears from the shadows and approaches, flanked by two imperial soldiers and a third of a higher rank than the others. Anyone with Knowledge (Battle) or previous experience with imperials recognizes this figure as having a rank of Captain. The soldiers all walk with their weapons trained on the party, though they are clearly outnumbered.

Talpi acknowledges Skalo and berates her for allying herself with the enemy from above. Captain Corbel orders everyone to drop their weapons. Skalo explains that she has been communicating with Ming's forces for some time now in

the hope that they might find their way down to Wandu and help her depose the king. The previous night's attack on the palace was supposed to have been a silent assassination. Alas, Skalo's own guards proved too vigilant for their own good and the infiltration was detected. At that point, Skalo raced from the palace to seek sanctuary with Corbel and his men. Getting past the tunnel gators wasn't easy, but she eventually made it to the electric mole.

The leader of the imperial squad, Captain Corbel, steps up and orders King Talpi to surrender peacefully and abdicate his throne so that Skalo may be installed as the new leader of Wandu. While he states that it would be quite easy to kill the entire party where it stands, it would be better for all if Talpi would step down willingly to ensure the citizens of Wandu accept Skalo's rule and servitude to Ming the Merciless.

Have everyone make a Notice roll (Hearing). Successes reveal cracking and groaning from above, where the ray gun warning shot struck the ceiling. Deal Action Cards as a section of the ceiling separates and falls upon the party below (spread over an area equal to a Large Burst Template) for 3d6 damage to every target under the template.

Leaping into the crevasse is an easy option for cover (and is what Talpi and his aides do), however those who do so are trapped and require assistance to dig themselves out, effectively removing themselves from the combat. Those able to get clear of the rock fall may engage the imperials.

The battle for control of Wandu has begun!

During this fight, each miss that comes up a 1 on the Shooting die indicates the

beam or projectile struck the ceiling and unleashed another rock fall. These are smaller than the first, covering an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and causing 2d6 damage to targets. They are also not significant enough to entrap anyone caught beneath them.

✧ **Captain Corbel:** See page 25.

✧ **Skalo:** See page 26.

• **Imperial Soldiers (2):** See *Soldiers in Flash Gordon*.

RETREAT

Unless all three imperials and Skalo are killed outright, one surviving opponent withdraws from the fight and races to the electric mole in an attempt to escape. Alternatively, an additional soldier might have been waiting in the mole, out of harm's way, the entire time.

Once this individual is safely inside, gaining access from outside is difficult but not impossible (Toughness: 20 (5)). After three rounds, the mole's drive system activates. At the end of five rounds, the mole crawls forward and pierces the quarry floor. This vibration triggers a series of massive cave-ins! The heroes must escape the quarry as quickly as possible along the pathway (only option at this point) or find themselves buried under falling rock and crystal!

Those who initially leapt into the crevasse survive this dramatic rock fall, however it takes a full day of digging by a band of well-equipped mole-men to rescue them. The trapped can communicate via radiophone.

Ever-resilient, King Talpi survives the rock fall whether in the crevasse or helped out of the quarry. He has sustained a

few minor cuts and scrapes and first aid provided by any of the heroes is well-received, increasing Talpi's appreciation and respect for them.

Dr. Zarkov contacts the heroes via radiophone (though reception near the abundant mines is marred by interference) and explains that he detected significant seismic activity suggesting that the electric mole may well have exploded after it withdrew from the quarry. If desired (to allow for later encounters with the electric mole and whoever survived the battle), this could simply be explained away as an echo of the cave-in. In such a scenario, the electric mole actually managed to escape, driving out of range of Zarkov's soni-scanner and into a recurring role for future dastardly plots by Ming to secure Wandu for himself.

• **Hazard – Cave-In:** See *Catastrophes in Flash Gordon*.





With the imperial invaders now out of the picture (whether destroyed, imprisoned by the mole-men, or escaped via the stolen electric mole), a trusting relationship forged between Wandu and the Freeman opening access to an almost limitless supply of white sapphire crystals, and King Talpi's throne safe from the clutches of the traitorous Skalo, it is time for the heroes to focus their energy on returning to the surface.

As promised, Talpi offers aid to the heroes in an attempt to recover the Gnasher from the lake, however, unless the heroes come up with an astoundingly clever way of raising the sunken ship from the water, it quickly becomes clear that there is no way to salvage the machine. If the heroes are insistent on coming up with a solution, a cavernosaur attack or two should help change their tune.

Should the heroes come up with a devastatingly clever way of capturing the stolen electric mole or somehow recovering the Gnasher from the bottom of the lake, just go with it! In both cases, the vehicles are severely damaged (the Gnasher from being submerged and the stolen electric mole from wear and tear) and regardless of the number of successful Repair rolls, they eventually fail. Reward the efforts of the heroes with a few hours of travel (and perhaps an encounter with an enraged gocko or two), but eventually, the mole breaks down, forcing the heroes to exit and continue on foot with the help of Talpi's map. Things should then continue on from **Finding Rena**.

Talpi then makes one more offer.

From within the folds of Talpi's kingly garments, he produces a scroll case which he hands to you. Within is a fragment of parchment upon which has been scrawled a crude map. "For years I have kept this object secret from my subjects. You hold in your hands the only known record of my trip back to Wandu from the surface world. A crude map in my own hand, scrawled while I made that treacherous journey, oh so long ago. May my scribbles help to guide you all safely home. And may we all meet again soon."

While Talpi is too frail to accompany the heroes, he once again insists on sending along a group of armed mole-men escorts.

The heroes are welcome to stock up on food and supplies from the palace, if necessary, otherwise the trek up to the surface may begin at once.

FINDING RENA

King Talpi's map, while old and crudely rendered, is actually surprisingly accurate, leading the heroes and their mole-men aides through a confusing labyrinth of twisting lava tubes. Occasionally, a simple rune matching one on Talpi's map is spotted scrawled onto a wall in chalk. Less than an hour into the trip, the veins of energized power crystals that perpetually illuminate the kingdom of Wandu fade from sight and artificial lighting is required to continue.

The journey is a challenging one, but the undeniable sensation of upward movement is encouraging. It becomes clear after several hours of travel that the group may well be looking at a few days on foot before they see sunlight.

At the end of the first day, the group must rest or fall victim to Fatigue. While they rest, they are set upon by a group of giant rats.

During the fight (either if the heroes are doing poorly or close to the conclusion of the battle), someone else joins the battle, firing their light pistol from the safety of a nearby passage. Eventually, a humanoid figure steps out wearing a fur coat and sporting a gas mask with an extended breathing filter and round, dark lenses. Once the combat has ended this new arrival is acknowledged by the mole-men, who suddenly prostrate themselves before it! Those who visited the temple of Desmani in the palace note the similarity between this figure and the animalistic statue of the goddess of the mole-men.

One of the mole-men speaks:

"Oh, glorious Desmani! Great maker of Wandu! Goddess of Subworld! She who lit the spark of life! We honor you and we offer ourselves to you in supplication."

The figure pauses, glances at the heroes, then looks back at the mole-men for a moment before holstering its light gun and reaching up to remove its gas mask. A mass of brown hair streaked with gray drops down the figure's back and a mature and attractive Mongolian woman is revealed.

"Oh, do please get up. I'm not your goddess. Hello there. My name is Rena. Rena Kammus of the National Museum. How do you do?"

Rena steps forward and extends an open hand to the party. Once welcomed, she tells them she was part of an archaeological expedition that fell victim to an ambush by a pack of ravenous tunnel gators.



WITH RODENT CUNNING, THE GIANT RAT, SUSPICIOUS OF A TRICK, NIPS AT FLASH'S FEET TO SEE IF HE'S REALLY UNCONSCIOUS.

While the rest of her party was killed, she managed to escape and has been exploring the caves ever since. She never lets on that she is actually quite lost and has no idea how to return to the surface, forever changing the subject whenever escape is brought up



THE TROOPS POUR OVER THE STILL-SMOKING GROUND, INTO THE TUNNEL---

or implying she is simply continuing her research.

If anyone asks about her gas mask, she states that some, not all, of the tunnels down here have been found to contain toxic fumes. She assures the heroes there is nothing to worry about as long as they don't spend too much time in those tainted areas.

If Rena sustained any injuries during the battle, first aid is welcomed and the individual responsible for it (with a successful Healing roll) also easily determines that Rena is malnourished and showing signs of exhaustion. If confronted, she eventually (and rather emotionally) spills the proverbial beans about her being lost and begs for help from the heroes, offering her own skills in exchange for release from this world of perpetual night.

The next "morning," the mole men inform the group they only brought enough rations for a day or two of travel

and must return home. They part with well wishes and trudge back toward Wandu.

- **Giant Rats (2 per hero):** See *Rat, Giant* in *Flash Gordon*.

THE SKELETAL RELIC

Talpi's map leads the heroes onward and upward, with the occasional symbol inscribed upon a wall as additional encouragement. Eventually the cave widens into a larger cavern littered with rocks and boulders. A successful Notice roll indicates they spy the ancient, mineral-encrusted skeletal remains of a dead gocko lying among the debris. Closer examination reveals two things: the creature was dispatched with a single ray gun shot to the head (the gocko Talpi spoke of in his tale) and the expansive ribcage is now occupied by a hideous troglowrm that springs out between the ribs to surprise and attack the closest target.



Should the fight be an easy one, a second troglowurm can join the fray.

After the troglowurm(s) have been defeated or driven off, the journey continues. While additional random encounters with tunnel gators, ill-tempered death dwarfs (use the dwarf profile in *Flash Gordon*), or rock termites are all certainly possible, the most significant event is a sudden Mongoquake that causes a cave-in, blocking the path ahead. The map indicates a parallel tunnel that can be used as a detour if the heroes backtrack slightly, though this alternate route appears to lead to a different exit out of subworld.

- **Troglowurms (2):** See page 27.
- **Hazard – Mongoquake:** See Hazards in *Flash Gordon*.

WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF FUNGI

An hour later, they arrive at the entry of a cave mouth from which emanates a strange, sickly-sweet smell. The sound of dripping water and the way the light reflects off the rocks ahead suggests abundant moisture.

While Rena claims she has encountered the strange odor before, she has made a point of avoiding it and is not certain of its origins. Those making a successful Knowledge (Science) roll (particularly those with a background in Botany or Mycology) determine the scent is likely linked to a fungus or mold. Abundant airborne spores could pose a danger.

The heroes must traverse the cave system and avoid the

flingus growths to safely reach the other side. Two additional threats lie within these tunnels: a corridor swirling with poisonous, volcanic gasses (equivalent to Venomous Poison from *Savage Worlds*), and a nest of tunnel gators. Should the flingus growths at the end of the tunnel leading to the poison gas be disturbed or destroyed, the gas surges forward, filling the entire map in five rounds.

The tunnel gators react only if the heroes move within 3" of them.

- **Tunnel Gators (2):** See page 27.
- **Hazard – Flingus:** See page 28.
- **Hazard – Poisonous Fumes:** See Hazards in *Flash Gordon*.

EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST EMERGE

Once through the caves, the journey continues without issue. Eventually, the heroes notice a warm, sulphurous



smelling wind blowing from side tunnels, rushing forward toward the exit marked on Talpi's map. A successful Knowledge (Science) roll determines that the winds are being pulled up the dormant volcano, drawn from deep, magma chambers. The map (and additional marks on the walls) indicate that the way out lies down a long lava tube and it is through this tunnel that the rushing wind is strongest.

As the heroes advance through the lava tube, request a few Athletics rolls to see if they are able to proceed without being knocked to the ground from the rush of hot air. While there is no immediate danger for those who fall, Small characters (dwarfs, for example) may find themselves pushed along the ground for a few yards until they make a successful Strength roll to grab and hold onto a feature (crack in the wall, large rock, etc.).

Eventually, the tunnel opens up to a large shaft rising hundreds of feet into the air. At the very top, sunlight is visible through a round hole. The roaring hot air, pushed out and up from the side tunnel and from below, has enough force behind it to lift dust, rocks, and even an encumbered body. Anyone brave enough to step out into the shaft is yanked upwards, rocketing towards the sunlight and the surface of Mongo. Once ejected from the cinder cone, the flailing hero must make an Agility roll to safely land on the soft, sandy hillside after falling 20 feet (2d6 damage).

EPILOGUE

After everyone has exited the volcano, the journey to the center of Mongo is at an end. A radio message transmitted on a secure frequency alerts a Freeman patrol and the heroes are rescued. Back

in Freeman hands, they may speak with Dr. Zarkov or other leaders and inform them of their discoveries in Subworld. Hopefully a good relationship has been established with the mole-men and future mining operations are possible to help support the war effort.

Professor Kammus agrees to join the Freeman cause, returning to Mingo City with some fanfare and an exciting story to be shared (though one devoid of any mention of rebels, mole-men, or expansive, subterranean mines). She returns to the National Museum and works for the rebellion from within.

If any of Ming's soldiers escaped in the stolen electric mole, a future battle for control of Subworld may well lie in everyone's future.



SUDDENLY THERE'S A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT BEHIND THEM--AND A GIANT BLAST OF AIR HURLS THEM FORWARD LIKE PEBBLES FROM A SLINGSHOT.



ALLIES AND ENEMIES

⚡ CAPTAIN CORBEL

Corbel is a fiercely loyal and accomplished soldier in Ming's army, though he occasionally appropriates orders from higher ups to make himself look even more qualified in the eyes of his subordinates. While he never acts against the orders of his superiors, he may alter the suggested tactics from time to time.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

Hindrances: Obligations (Major—to Ming)

Edges: Lunge

Gear: Plate Corselet (+3), Rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), Ray Gun Pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2)

⚡ KING TALPI

Leader of the mole-men, King Talpi is an ancient (by mole-man standards) being with wrinkly, grey skin. Talpi was badly injured in a cave-in some years ago and while he can walk if necessary, he is often carried about on a four-person litter if he ever needs to travel long distances. He is very diplomatic and still wishes only the best for his people, but he knows his days are numbered and believes his advisor, Skalo will be a worthy successor. At all times, Talpi has at least four mole-man guards at his beck and call.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Academia) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Survival d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 2; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 3

Hindrances: Blind (in full sun), Elderly, Lame

Edges: Command, Crystal Sensitivity, Followers, Natural Leader, Noble

Gear: Sapphire-Topped Staff (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Low Light Vision:** King Talpi ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Light Sensitive:** Bright light (whether full, natural sun or artificially generated electric light) poses significant problems for King Talpi and his fellow mole-men, effectively rendering them Blind. By wearing specialized filtering goggles, this total blindness is reduced to the Bad Eyes (Major) Hindrance.
- **Size -1:** King Talpi walks with a stoop and stands a little less than 4' tall.
- **Tunneler:** Mole men dig through soft earth and loose rocks at a Pace of 4". The sound of their digging is obvious, and they cannot surprise foes like the Burrow ability.

MOLE-MAN

The mole-men of Mongo are a squat race of humanoids that resemble their Earthly namesakes in several ways: they have large, shovel-like hands tipped with thick claws they use to dig through earth and rock, little or no necks to speak of, and beady, light-sensitive eyes that are all but useless in full sun. They are relatively shy and even passive creatures, but will band together to defend their terrain if threatened. The mole-men worship Desmani, the Crystal Goddess.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Blind (in full sun)

Edges: Crystal Sensitivity

Gear: Stone Club (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Low Light Vision:** Mole-men ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Light Sensitive:** Bright light (whether full, natural sun or artificially generated electric light) poses significant problems for mole-men, effectively rendering them Blind. By wearing specialized filtering goggles, this total blindness is reduced to the Bad Eyes (Major) Hindrance.
- **Size -1:** Most mole-men stand about 4' tall.
- **Tunneler:** Mole men dig through soft earth and loose rocks at a Pace of 4". The sound of their digging is obvious, and they cannot surprise foes like the Burrow ability.

➤ PROFESSOR RENA KAMMUS

Kammus is a middle-aged explorer and archaeologist employed by the National Museum who originally found her way into Mongo through Kira, the Kingdom of Caves. Some months back, her traveling companions were ambushed and killed by tunnel gators. Since then she has been wandering, lost and alone, surviving on edible fungi, bread trees, and the rare blindfish caught by hand from underground streams. Kammus is malnourished and weary when the heroes encounter her, but she is more than happy to help in any way she can with the promise of a safe return to the surface.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Healing d8+2, Knowledge (Academia) d8, Notice d6, Survival d8, Tracking d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious

Edges: Attractive, Brave, Healer

Gear: Climbing gear, gas mask, goggles, light pistol (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 2d10), torch

➤ SKALO

Skalo is King Talpi's right-hand woman and long-time confidant. Alas, her patience has worn thin over the decades and she has grown tired of bowing and scraping to the aged king. She wants to be ruler of Wandu now and with the promise of aid from imperial forces above, Skalo believes that the day for her rise to power has finally arrived.

One notable feature that sets Skalo apart from other mole-men is her size: she stands almost four-and-a-half feet tall, practically towering over her fellows.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Blind (in full sun)

Edges: Crystal Sensitivity

Gear: Sapphire short sword (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Low Light Vision:** Skalo ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Light Sensitive:** Bright light (whether full, natural sun or artificially generated electric light) poses significant problems for Skalo and her fellow mole-men, effectively rendering them Blind. By wearing specialized filtering goggles, this total blindness is reduced to the Bad Eyes (Major) Hindrance.
- **Tunneler:** Mole men dig through soft earth and loose rocks at a Pace of 4". The sound of their digging is obvious, and they cannot surprise foes like the Burrow ability.



THE MONSTERS OF SUBWORLD

GOCKO [YOUNG]

Fully-grown, gockos (see *Flash Gordon*) are enormous, six-legged underground dragons with saw-toothed beaks and crushing claws. Well before they reach maturity, young gockos, while still a threat, are not quite as terrifying to behold as their multi-colored, adult versions. Young gockos have milky white, translucent exoskeletons and where adults are capable of emitting a terrifying roar, young gockos do little more than screech like large Earth parrots.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Young gockos have thick, undeveloped exoskeletons.
- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Size +3:** Young gockos weigh around 1500 pounds.

TROGLOWURM

Troglowurms are grotesque, bloated, blood-red worms that resemble human-sized earthworms. Unlike the common earthworm, troglowurms are extremely aggressive and strike quickly with an expansive mouth of sharp teeth that latch onto its victim like a trap. As a defense mechanism, troglowurms emit a viscous, foul-smelling slime through their pores, making it difficult for predators to grapple and offering the troglowurm a means of quick, slippery escape.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Troglowurms have thick, fatty bodies.
- **Bite:** Str+d6. With a raise, a troglowurm automatically Entangles its victim, latching on with its tooth-lined maw and wrapping itself tightly around the target. Until the victim breaks free, they suffer Str+d6 damage each round as the troglowurm burrows into the victim's flesh.
- **Slippery:** As an action, a troglowurm can expel a coating of foul-smelling, luminescent slime granting a +2 to opposed Athletics rolls to resist Grappling attempts and also adding +2 to its Pace as a natural lubricant. The revolting odor accompanying this slime requires all victims to make Spirit rolls unless they are wearing gas masks. A failure means the character is Shaken and must make a Vigor roll or suffer severe nausea causing a level of Fatigue for the remainder of the encounter.

TUNNEL GATOR

Tunnel gators are large, squat lizards that can chew through solid rock with their gaping maws of razor sharp, metalized teeth. While they are flesh eaters, their regular consumption of white sapphires ingested while tunneling through the cave materials of their dwellings gives them an iridescent glow detectable in total darkness. This glow is most intense internally, and an open tunnel gator mouth can emit enough light to illuminate its surroundings and even temporarily blind potential prey with the sudden flash.

Despite their being subterranean creatures, tunnel gators suffer normal

penalties in dark or dim lighting. It is believed they are simply mutated versions of land-dwelling gators that found their way underground several generations ago.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d6, Tracking d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Inner Light:** As an action (often before they attempt to bite their prey or as a means of distraction to allow them to escape danger), a tunnel gator can pop open the back of their throat revealing their sapphire-illuminated interior,

temporarily blinding a single target. The target of this attack must make an Agility roll at -2 to avert their gaze. On a failure the victim is Shaken and Vulnerable until the end of their next turn.

- **Permanent Luminescence:** Due to the ingestion of white sapphires, tunnel gators emit a constant glow detectable with the naked eye in Dark conditions.
- **Size +2:** These creatures can grow up to 12' in length.
- **Tunneler:** Mole men dig through soft earth and loose rocks at a Pace of 4". The sound of their digging is obvious, and they cannot surprise foes like the Burrow ability.

NEW HAZARD

FLINGUS

Flingus is a type of large, brightly-colored clavarioid fungi found in damp caves and caverns across Mongo. The central yellow stalk of a flingus growth is thick, sturdy, and topped with a bulbous cap from which issues forth stiff, red fruit bodies. These branches grow up and away from the central stalk until they strike surfaces, often rock walls and ceilings at which point they begin to curl and flex under pressure.

Vibration and heat cause these tendrils to snap and lash about, scattering toxic spores through the air. Anyone stepping within 2" (four yards) of a flingus must roll 1d6 every round they are within range. On a 1, the flingus reacts by scattering spores out over a Medium Burst Template. Those caught within this cloud may make an Agility roll to safely leap out of range, otherwise they are showered with spores and must make an immediate Vigor roll. Failure causes death in 2d6 minutes from suffocation unless a Healing

roll at -2 is made. Success causes a wound and Exhaustion. A raise on this roll indicates a natural immunity to the spores and flingus never poses a threat to this character. Those wearing gas masks or other protective gear are immune to the effects and need not roll. The cloud of spores safely disperses after one round.





