

Rogue Mistress

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"...It came to pass that the Chaos Lord Gashoram began his plots against the multiverse. Lesser Champions were called to thwart his nefarious schemes, and to serve the will of the Balance...."

-The Chronicle of the Black Sword

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The Rogue Mistress

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Introductory Hints

THIS BOOK-LENGTH adventure was inspired in part by Michael Moorcock's *Eternal Champion* novels. If the gamemaster is unfamiliar with the adventures of Erekoš found in the books *The Eternal Champion*, *The Silver Warriors*, and *The Dragon in the Sword*, he or she should read those fine tales.

Several non-player-characters herein are integral to the plot. Unless the gamemaster is prepared to greatly restructure this adventure, these characters should lead charmed lives: do what's necessary to keep them alive until they have done their duty in the adventure.

Pollidemia, the mad sorceress, is a character vastly more powerful than the player-characters. She must remain fully in control of the situation throughout First Chapter and must return to play her part at the conclusion. Maria de Tres Pistolas is also intended to be present at the conclusion, as is the Tenatir. Justin Carrock, the Eternal Champion, must also live long enough to fulfill his role in the world of Uerth.

Player-Characters

Another area for gamemaster consideration is the strength and experience of the player-characters. If, after reading through *Rogue Mistress* he or she feels that certain encounters are too powerful or too weak for the player team, make necessary adjustments in the number of or the potency of the opposition—maintain game balance to provide an entertaining, challenging adventure.

The gamemaster might also design and add appropriate magic items to the adventure. Many opportunities exist for player-characters to discover caches of magical supplies that reinforce them or provide something vital for an upcoming encounter. Do not be afraid to change anything to suit your own campaign.

If player-characters fall by the wayside, the adventurers meet numerous potential player-characters throughout this book, many of whom will gladly sign up for the duration, and beyond.

Narrative Help

Some of the crew of the *Rogue Mistress* might be willing to accompany the characters on an adventure or two, providing information and additional swords, or perhaps taking the fall for an otherwise doomed player-character. Moorcock's stories are full of such companions; use these in the same way. The gamemaster of course has final say as to who will or will not join the party.

Since player-characters will be backed into many corners, the gamemaster should keep in mind ways that they might be rescued unobtrusively. In two chapters, the *Rogue Mistress* is available to swoop in and extricate the player-characters. Justin Carrock, as the Eternal Champion, is capable of pulling off a stupendously heroic feat now and then. And Carrock's mysterious companion, Andrew Grant, has a demon familiar whose full powers are unexplored—expand them as needed.

Finally, remember that some elements of this adventure are not resolved in the text. Does Maria make amends with her father, Justin Carrock? What is her reaction when she learns from him that she and Pollidemia are sisters? With which side of the warring factions on Uerth does Justin Carrock side? Does Maria survive the entire adventure? Does the *Rogue Mistress*? Is the ship available for future use by the player-characters? Answer such questions partly by the unfolding of this campaign and the planned future for the players and player-characters who share in it.

The Story

The *Rogue Mistress* is a sailing craft of mysterious origin, an unusual hybrid of age-old ship-building techniques and ultramodern technology. Powered by atomic engines, she is capable of flight; properly navigated, she is able to slip through dimensions, traveling between the different planes of the multiverse.

Discovered some two hundred years ago by the sorcerer Draa'k Ferenz, the ship had been abandoned on a distant, lifeless plane. On board remained the Tenatir, a strange alien being, difficult to communicate with but cooperative, and capable of navigating the ship between the planes of existence. With the Tenatir's assistance, Ferenz restored the vessel to running order and, captained by himself and navi-

gated by the Tenatir, the renamed *Rogue Mistress* sailed from the dead and dreary plane.

Ferenz captained the ship for over two hundred years, gathering crews from all over the multiverse and living the life of a free-booter and pirate. It was Ferenz who outfitted the ship with its present armament, four black powder cannons from Albyon, a huge laser weapon on the bow, and an aft acid cannon stolen from some distant technological plane.

A few years ago, while sailing as a privateer for the then queen of Albyon, Ferenz visited the far eastern isles of Grekia, one of the few places in the lawful world of Albyon where the conjurer's arts are practiced to any great degree. Here he met a young woman named Pollidemia, an apprentice sorceress who, at the age of 15, had ran away from an inattentive mother. Ferenz, fascinated by the woman, lived with her for many months, enjoying the warm climate of the isles and teaching Pollidemia much of what he knew of the sorcerous arts. It was Ferenz who taught Pollidemia her first major enchantments, and she adored her lover and mentor.

When, after a time, Ferenz announced that he must return to the island kingdom of Albyon and resign his commission from the Queen, Pollidemia promised to wait for him. He assured her he would return as soon as he had seen the Queen and returned to her the marque given him and his ship.

Ferenz never made it back to the isles of Grekia. After his audience with the Queen, he was laid over for repairs in the Espaniac port of Re' Hildago when he chanced to meet the lovely, dark-eyed Maria de Tres Pistolas, an infamous Espaniac outlaw. Completely forgetting Pollidemia, Ferenz and the fiery bandit embarked upon a long and notorious career of interplanar piracy. Flying the *Rogue Mistress* from one world to the next, they robbed merchant vessels, royal treasure ships, and other profitable victims.

Pollidemia, forsaken, plotted her revenge, casting a great summoning that brought to her the Chaos Lord, Gashoram, Master of Darkness. Gashoram promised aid to Pollidemia's vengeance, but in returned desired the Tenatir, the strange being who served the pirates as their navigator.

An attack led by Pollidemia's demon, Gath, finally surprised and took the *Rogue Mistress* off the coast of Gollia. Ferenz was overcome, and Dog, the blonde-haired captain of the warriors, dragged Maria below decks where he was to execute her. There, defying Gath's orders, Dog sought to enjoy her charms first, but Maria produced a hidden dagger and before Dog knew what happened he had been stabbed and had his left eye gouged out.

In the fight that followed, Gath killed Ferenz, but Maria was able to retake the ship. With general grief, the body of the dashing and valiant Ferenz was ejected while the *Rogue Mistress* cruised between the planes, disappearing forever into the ethereal mists.

Maria continued her piratical ways, commanding the loyal crew every bit as well as Ferenz had. They now spent most of their time in the world of Ildaron.

Pollidemia continued to scheme. Since Ildaron was suffering the deprivations of the *Rogue Mistress*, Queen Media of that land gratefully received Pollidemia's information that the troublesome pirates were hiding on one of Ildaron's free-floating lakes. The ship was boarded and although they were able to make off with the Tenatir, they were unable to capture Maria, who killed five of the attackers with her own hands.

Without the Tenatir to guide the ship, the *Rogue Mistress* is trapped in Ildaron, eventually to be tracked down and destroyed. Maria, suspecting the handiwork of Pollidemia, has vowed to rescue the Tenatir after which she will find and kill the wicked sorceress.

Queen Media has so far refused Pollidemia's demands to hand over the Tenatir, suspecting that the creature can extend her own power. Pollidemia has grown impatient, and presently seeks a band of mercenaries to raid Queen Media's castle for the Tenatir.

This is where the player-characters come in.

Synopsis of the Book

Pollidemia seeks a band of mercenaries to steal the Tenatir from Queen Media. To that end, her demon Astralgynx recruits the player-characters in a typical tavern scene. The gamemaster instead might devise an opening to the adventure tailored to fit his or her campaign. In whatever location or disguise, however, Astralgynx uses one of his many magic spheres to shift the player-characters through the dimensions to the plane of Pollidemia.

While on the way to the plane, the characters find themselves attacked by demons, a test mounted by Pollidemia to make sure the candidates are qualified. They find Pollidemia a madwoman who demands their obedience and who implants in their chests malignant, living demon hearts. These cold, chaotic organs may wreak unpredictable and undesirable changes upon their hosts. If not removed, these organs eventually kill the characters, but Pollidemia promises to remove them and return the adventurers to normal once they have fetched the Tenatir to her. Astralgynx whisks the characters off to Ildaron.

In the Second Chapter, the characters enter the stronghold of Queen Media, and locate and rescue the Tenatir. This requires disguise, cunning, and daring. Perhaps with help, they and the Tenatir successfully escape Media's land, but thereupon fall into the hands of Maria de Tres Pistolas herself, and her bloodthirsty crew.

During the Third Chapter Maria and the adventurers exchange information and begin to trust each other. She discounts Pollidemia's good intentions; the adventurers will

surely die. To save themselves from their dilemma they must find and learn how to use a weapon called the Planar Knife. A man living on the world of Albyon knows the legends and might be willing to help them. Maria could take them there in the *Rogue Mistress* but the ship needs a replacement part perhaps available in a wreck on a nearby plane.

In the Fourth Chapter the characters explore the huge, alien wreck, and encounter a race of vampiric energy-beings from the End of Time. Destroying them, rescuing the few helpless survivors of the original crew, and retrieving the replacement part proves difficult.

The Fifth Chapter takes the characters to the world of Albyon, a quasi-Europe similar to ours of the late 16th century. Here they search for a mysterious man named Justin Carrock who, as the fates would have it, is also on the trail of the Planar Knife, and who is the Eternal Champion of this world. The investigators catch up with Carrock at the very center of Chaos. Disasters follow, and the investigators are hurled across the multiverse to a plane known as The Whispering Sea.

The Sixth Chapter involves a journey across this chaotic plane, to find and destroy Straasha's Bane, an artifact that dominates this plane. They meet an odd character named Andrew Grant, a manifestation of the Eternal Companion, who acts as a guide and advisor to Justin Carrock and the rest of the group. Destruction of Straasha's Bane ends Chaos' domination of this plane and brings about the return of a grateful Straasha. Accomplishing that goal earns Carrock and the characters the enmity of Pyaray.

In the Seventh Chapter the adventurers seek to control the chaotic powers of the Planar Knife. They desire a small device Justin Carrock calls the controller module, found somewhere on Uerth, a highly technological society, almost without magic, and suffering through a nuclear winter, the aftermath of the Last War. Here a few thousand human survivors skirmish with hairy mutants now evolved to suit this newly frigid world. Carrock fulfills his destiny as the Eternal Champion, choosing to join one side or the other in a struggle that leaves only one species to inherit this world. The characters also have to make the choice.

In the Eighth Chapter the characters return to the nightmare plane of Styxx to face and destroy the demon statues whose living hearts dwell in their breasts. This accomplished, they can take their revenge on Pollidemia, and perhaps her Chaos Lord.

The Multiverse

The myriad worlds of the multiverse are the product of the opposing forces of Law and Chaos. Order and regularity characterize the force of Law, and sometimes sterility and boredom. Chaos represents creativity, diffusion, and vari-

egation—which, if left unchecked, leads to futile change and stagnation. Most worlds of the multiverse fall between these two extremes.

Worlds influenced heavily by Law tend toward organized, technological societies. Machines and science are used to great effect while magic and religion play little or no part in society. More chaotic worlds tend toward non-technological cultures where magic is prevalent, even commonplace. Gods and monsters roam freely in these worlds. The Young Kingdoms plane of Elric has been cited as an example of a world in near-perfect balance between these two forces.

Magic Across the Worlds

The ability to use magic varies widely as they travel among the different planes. Earlier Chaosium products attempted to chart these differences with an easy-to-use universal system. *Rogue Mistress* adopts a set of basic principles used to decide the actual changes to magic on different planes. The basic concepts of the effects of Law and Chaos have not been changed.

Planes of Increasing Chaos: the casting of summoning spells is generally easier on more chaotic planes, expressed by lowering the amount of POW used to cast the spell, as well as shortening the length of time required.

Demons summoned to a more chaotic plane prove more difficult to bind; perhaps the sorcerer can force the demon to perform only a single service. Previously-bound demons kept confined to their binding objects offer no problems, but demons manifested into physical form may attempt to break their binding and escape the sorcerer. The ability of a demon to break its binding depends on the amount of chaos in that plane.

Elementals are also easier to summon, but are unaffected by the increased power of Chaos and are no more difficult to bind here than in the Young Kingdoms. Previously-bound elementals can be manifested without fear of their escape. On more chaotic worlds there is a chance that the elemental will be dissolved by the rampant effects of Chaos.

The Elemental Lords can usually be called in the normal way, although they are most often banned from the more chaotic planes. Beast Lords respond normally, but only can be called to those worlds containing species similar to the particular Beast Lord. The most Chaotic planes have no real 'species.' The Lords of Chaos are usually more readily available in chaotic worlds. Conversely, the Lords of Law are more difficult to contact.

Planes of Increasing Law: Where the forces of Law are stronger than Chaos, magic is more difficult, usually expressed as increased casting time, increased expenditures of POW, and decreased summoning ability. Cultures of these worlds often frown upon any practice of magic.

Demons, if the sorcerer can manage to summon them, can be bound normally. Bound demons function normally and can be manifested without fear of them breaking their bind-

ing and escaping. Extremely lawful planes are dangerous, almost toxic, to demons. A demon manifested on such a plane dies a quick and painful death. Demons kept safe in their binding objects are usually immune to these effects.

If they can be summoned at all, the sorcerer can attempt to bind elementals in the normal manner. They function normally on the more lawful planes but, like demons, run into problems on worlds that are extremely lawful. In these cases the elementals are overcome by the inherent lawfulness of the particular plane and forcibly integrated into the local system, disappearing before the sorcerer's eyes.

The Elemental Lords are much more difficult to summon to these worlds and impossible to call on the most lawful planes. The Beast Lords are a little easier to contact, especially if their particular beast types are well-represented. The Lords of Law can be contacted directly on more lawful planes but do not manifest themselves in any form on the most lawful worlds. The Lords of Chaos, except under exceptional circumstances, never manifest on the lawful planes.

Technological Items

Carrying an aura of Law, such items can be transported across the planes for use in any environment, even the most chaotic. However, the forces of chaotic worlds warp them subtly and inexorably, until suddenly they fail, and no longer work.

To this end, one or more technical factors representing its comparative complexity could be assigned to each item. The chaotic plane is assigned a percentile number, indicating the relative strength of Chaos. Multiply the percentile number by the number of technical factors the item has and roll a D100. If the result is that number or less, the item has failed.

Most technological items will function well enough for the first 12-24 hours but after that, they must be checked, and again every 24 hours, to see if the warping effect of chaos has rendered them useless. Because of the subtle changes wrought by Chaos, these items are almost impossible to repair and usually must be replaced.

The following survey of technical factors (TFs) should be taken as cumulative: a revolver is less complex than a nuclear missile.

- ☐ The most basic technical factor is close or precision-machined parts. Close tolerances can not long survive in chaotic worlds. Any machine or item which features this factor (such as a gun barrel) qualifies for one technical factor.
- ☐ Chemical reactions are not uniform on more chaotic worlds, or even planes such as the Young Kingdoms. Gunpowder and other reactive compounds and chemicals that produce substantial or explosive energies receive two technical factors.
- ☐ Electrical components and insulation break down, creating shorts and open circuits, and fuses blow for no

reason. Add one technical factor to any device that makes use of basic electric principles.

Electronics are worse, as vacuum tubes and components quickly deteriorate. Add 2 TF.

Any piece of equipment containing computers or chip circuitry adds 3 TF.

EXAMPLE: a heavy laser cannon makes use of close-tolerance machining (+1), electrical wiring (+1), and electronic components (+2) totals 4 TF. (If equipped with a computer-controlled targeting system, the total would become 7 TF.)

The Young Kingdoms has a chaos rating of 10%. Consequently, the heavy laser cannon would have a 40% chance of breaking down every 24 hours it spends on that plane (70% with a computer-controlled targeting system). A simple rifle has only a 10% chance, but the gunpowder used to propel the bullets adds an additional 20% to the chance of failure. Chaos ratings, of course, can be higher, as much as 100% on the most chaotic planes.

Other Comments

Additional factors for different technologies can be decided upon by the gamemaster, keeping in mind only that the more complicated the item and the more it relies on scientific principles and consistency for its functions, the more likely it is to break down when brought to a chaotic world.

Larger objects, the *Rogue Mistress* for example, carry about them a much stronger aura of Law and therefore suffer correspondingly less from the deteriorating effects of Chaos. It may take many years before such effects began to take hold. The flying cities of the Vadagh were so huge that it is probable that they suffered not at all from these effects.

It is for these reasons that a demon can't be bound into a technological item. The combination of opposing forces quickly defeat each other, leaving a useless item and a frustrated demon.

Firearms in *Rogue Mistress*

Many worlds within the Million Spheres have developed firearms technologies ranging from simple ball-and-powder devices through fully automatic machine guns to hyper-scientific energy weapons, flame lances, and so forth. There are firearms small enough to be hidden in the palm of a hand and huge artillery pieces that can only be moved about with powered vehicles. All do critical hits.

Characters should get ample opportunities to improve such weapon skills. Although the rules state that a period of one week should pass before attempting to improve a skill, in the case of firearms it may be advisable and more realistic to occasionally allow more frequent checks. Successfully using a weapon in the midst of a major battle might be reason to allow that character a chance to improve the skill before he enters a second major battle two or three days down the road. Be flexible here.

In the *Stormbringer* world three basic principles distinguish firearms and crossbows from other missile weapons; *Shots per Round*, *Base Range*, and *Armor Piercing*.

Shots per Round: usually written *shots/round*, this number indicates how many times the weapon can be fired in one combat round, assuming that the weapon is loaded and readied for immediate fire. In the case of automatic weapons, this number could be as high as 20 or more or, for muzzle-loading single-shot weapons, as low as 1/6 (1 every 6 rounds).

Base Range: the range within which it can be accurately fired. At any range greater than this but less than twice the base range, the user's skill is one-half normal. At ranges up to three times the base, the user's skill is one-quarter normal, and so on.

At point-blank range, the skill of the user is double his normal. Point-blank range is the character's DEX expressed as feet, or less.

Armor-Piercing: usually abbreviated AP. This is the ability of firearms to pierce metal and other types of armor, including armor imbued with a demon. Each weapon is assigned a number reflecting its comparative hitting power. This number is the number of armor points that this weapon ignores when hitting an opponent. A weapon with a AP of 8 pays no attention to the first 8 points of armor the bullet or quarrel contacts. A character wearing full plate of 1D10+2 protection would roll as normal and then subtract 8 points from the roll result, giving him armor protection ranging somewhere between 0 and 4.

As a concept, *armor-piercing* refers only to armor worn by humans or other types. It does not extend to or include natural armors such as fat, fur, scales, and hide.

Firearms in Combat

In combat, a character can fire a loaded and ready weapon very quickly. Double the character's DEX to determine his strike rank. A weapon that is loaded but not readied (i.e., a holstered pistol) is fired on the character's normal DEX rank. A readied weapon that fires two shots per round fires on the character's doubled DEX rank and again on his normal DEX rank. If not readied, his second shot comes at the very end of the round.

Specifics concerning individual weapon reloading times, armor-piercing abilities, etc., are dealt with as the weapons are encountered

Learning to use Firearms

Most adventurers from the Young Kingdoms are unfamiliar with firearms. They may find it desirable to become skilled

in their use. For convenience, divide firearms into the categories of handguns, shoulder pieces (including crossbows), and artillery. The following rules assume the characters have someone to show them the basic principles of the weapon's use.

Handguns: if a character has an existing pistol skill, he is able to use any new type of pistol at a beginning skill equal to his existing skill minus 20% of it. An existing skill in any other type of firearm can be used, minus 30%. A character with an existing bow skill can begin with a handgun at half his present skill, but with a maximum ability of 30%. Failing other skill, all characters can use their attack bonuses as starting skill values.

Shoulder Pieces: this includes any type of rifle, musket, shotgun, or other long-barreled weapon aimed by bracing against the shoulder, including crossbows. A character with an existing weapon skill of this sort has a beginning skill value with a similar weapon equal to the existing skill minus 20%. A handgun or artillery skill can be used, but at minus 30%. If a character has a skill with a bow, he can use half that amount as a beginning skill, to a maximum of 35 percentiles. Again, the character's attack bonus can be used as a last resort.

Artillery: any weapon too large to be carried by a single person, usually mounted on a carriage, vehicle, or vessel, is classed as artillery. As a beginning skill a character can use either handgun or shoulder piece skills minus 30%, or one-quarter of his present bow skill, to a maximum of 30 percentiles. The character's attack bonus is the last resort.

Rules Changes to *Stormbringer* 4th Edition

4th Edition Rules Changes and Clarifications

[3.3.5] Critical Hits

Although critical hits still do double damage, they do not ignore the effects of armor. When a critical hit is rolled, merely double the damage, subtracting the protection of the armor as usual.

[5.6.2] Controlling Demons

When a sorcerer tries to persuade a summoned demon to perform a single task, the gamemaster rolls a D100 and the result must be equal to or less than the sorcerer's CHA x5.

Demon Armor

Demon armor no longer has a chance of breaking weapons that strike it. Neither does it redirect the damage of a natural weapon attack back upon the attacker.

The First Chapter

Dark Eyes, Cold Hearts

IN THIS, THE opening chapter, the characters find themselves whisked away to the chaos plane of Styxxx. This plane is ruled by Gashoram, the Chaos Lord of Darkness and inhabited by only the wicked sorceress, Pollidemia, her two demons, Astralgynx and Gath, and her occasional undead lovers. Pollidemia requests a 'favor' of the group and, to insure their compliance, places in their breasts the cold, malignant hearts of the Kynn K'tal, an ancient and forgotten race of demon beings that Gashoram intends to make his servants. The characters have few options in this scenario other than to listen and to do as they are told.

The Plane of Styxxx

This world is completely dominated by Chaos and is a seething, almost liquid mass of constant change and rampant creativity. The only solid piece of reality, the only thing not subject to constant change, is the small island inhabited by the mad sorceress, Pollidemia.

Sorcery

On the world of Styxxx the forces of magic are powerful and unpredictable. The summoning of elementals and demons is much easier than usual. Divide the time required and the POW necessary by 5 (rounding up all fractions of .5 or greater). Summoning ability remains unchanged. Summoned elementals may be bound normally but summoned demons are impossible to bind. In fact, with a roll of its POW x5 or less, the summoned demon is able to ignore the effects of the confining symbol of Chaos and the protective triangle of Law and may choose to attack any sorcerer so impertinent as to summon it. Bound demons who are manifested in physical form are automatically freed of the binding, and attack or escape. Elementals may be manifested and controlled but there is a 50% chance that the forces of chaos dissolve the elemental being. This check is made at the time

of manifestation and every five minutes after, as long as the elemental is out of its binding object.

Gashoram has banned the Elemental Lords from this plane; the Beast Lords are unrepresented and therefore impossible to call to this world. The Lords of Law are incapable of entering this plane.

The highly chaotic nature of this world allows for such things as the use of cast magic, an art that has been taught to Pollidemia by her lord and master, Gashoram. The characters will not be able to make use of this ability, but Pollidemia uses it to keep her visitors under control.

Technological Items

Technological items brought to Styxxx suffer from the deteriorating effects of Chaos and the plane of Styxxx has a Chaos rating of 70%. Fortunately, the characters spend little time here and this is not a factor in the First Chapter.

The Beginning

The adventurers find themselves in Vilmar, in the city of Old Hrolmar, once again low on funds. Rumors around the city say a local weapons manufacturer has need of several able bodyguards to escort a special shipment from somewhere in the west back to Old Hrolmar. The job sounds easy enough and the pay scale far better than anything else they've stumbled across. Dealing with an agent working for the anonymous arms dealer, they have been told to meet a contact tonight in the Blunted Blade Inn, located on North Street leading out of the city. They are to look for a small man named Astralgynx.

The tavern is crowded with people: sweaty cattle drivers in dusty yellow robes just in from the wilderness, local craftsmen in leather aprons, a selection of lower-priced whores. Two musicians, playing stringed instruments, provide a pretty young girl with a tune to dance to. Appreciative patrons toss small coins at her naked feet.

Asking the tavern owner for a man named Astralgx elicits a blank look from the swarthy, overweight barkeep. He shakes his head and claims to know nothing.

"I can't say to have ever heard the name," the man says. "But take an empty chair where you can find one. He'll probably show up sooner or later." The owner never turns away customers.

Let the adventurers spend a little time in the tavern, waiting impatiently, anxiously checking out every new customer who walks in. Perhaps the dancer performs for the characters, hoping for a tip. The tavern owner of course sells them as much wine or ale as they choose to drink.

About the time they've given up hope of meeting the mysterious Astralgx, the front door swings open and in shuffles a tiny man, no more than four feet tall, wrapped in a hooded brown robe. The hood hides most of the stranger's features but the adventurers see a long, hooked nose flanked by a pair of close-set, beady eyes. He quickly scans the tavern, looking for someone. His eyes settle on the group of adventurers and a smile crosses his thin lips. He shuffles over toward the characters, stopping in front of their table.

"You are," he begins, "the ones who would seek employment with my master?" He smiles again his unsettling smile, showing sharply pointed teeth.

Assuming the adventurers say yes and ask for more information, Astralgx goes on to explain that they are needed to perform a service very much desired by his master. Guarding a weapons shipment was merely a ruse intended to stifle talk and rumors. If this service is properly performed, Astralgx promises they will be paid most handsomely. He does not divulge what the job entails.

It is assumed the adventurers are intrigued enough — and hungry enough — to pursue the job offered them. Astralgx tells them his master will wish to interview them personally before they are given the details of their task.

Whether or not the adventurers wish to take the offer, Astralgx draws from beneath his coarse, brown robes a smoky yellow sphere of glass and throws it to the floor. Since the demon has a DEX of 23, no adventurer is likely to stop him.

The sphere shatters into a million pieces and the adventurers choke on the cloud of thick yellow smoke that rises up to engulf them. They hear screams and shouts from other parts of the tavern but see nothing, their vision obscured by the vapors released from the sphere. Even as they reach for weapons, the floor beneath their feet buckles and, with terrible groaning, tearing sounds, hurtles up through the roof of the building. Call for Balance rolls, all adventurers being thrown to the floor for 0/1D2 points damage. The screams and shouts of the tavern patrons fade away as the adventurers are swept up in a whirling torrent of wind and storm, cold and darkness. Astralgx is nowhere to be seen. Should they try to move about they find themselves enclosed by an invisible, yet impenetrable hemisphere, surrounding both them and the portion of tavern floor they ride.

Beyond the cloudy walls of the hemisphere, shapes begin to move. Limbs and heads press against the walls of the smoky globe, trying to pass through. Then a horde of demons pushes their way into the sphere, hungry for human flesh.

One demon appears for every character traveling in the sphere. The gamemaster can either roll randomly or choose which demon faces which character. As the battle rages, the characters feel themselves being carried vast distances. Beyond the protective hemisphere, dark mists sweep past, occasionally illuminated by distant, twinkling lights.

Demon One

It appears in the form of a large, hooded snake with two human-like arms and a man-like face.

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 11 DEX 15 CHA 2

Hit Points: 15 Armor: 5 points of thick skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw	65%	55%	1D6+1
Bite	45%	—	1D4 plus POT 8 venom.
Tail	50%	—	1D6 strangle*

*The tail stays wrapped around the victim's throat until removed with a successful STR vs. STR struggle.

Demon Two

This creature is ape-like but with a glistening, scaly reptilian skin.

STR 17 CON 16 SIZ 18 INT 9 POW 10 DEX 17 CHA 4

Hit Points: 22 Armor: 2 points of thick skin and fur.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Fist	60%	45%	1D8+1
Bite	75%	—	1D4+1

This demon attacks with both fists every round. If both fists successfully hit, the demon has grabbed hold of his opponent and attempts a bite.

Demon Three

It is a seething, hissing glob of greenish protoplasm.

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 14 INT 5 POW 7 DEX 6 CHA 1

Hit Points: 12 Armor: 1 point of springy flesh.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pseudopod	55%	—	1D6+1D4 digestive acids.

This demon attacks with 1D3 pseudopods every round. The liquid digestive juices ignore all armor. Additionally, if the creature is damaged with a cutting or stabbing weapon, it sprays digestive juice in the direction of its attacker. This juice has a 30% chance of hitting the attacker and causes 2D6 points of damage, ignoring armor.

Demon Four

This humanoid creature, devil-like and completely black, has a pair of horns sprouting from its head and a long whip-like tail with a barb on the end.

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 11 POW 12 DEX 19 CHA 9

Hit Points: 18 Armor: 4 points of rubbery skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw	65%	35%	1D4+1
Gore	80%	—	2D6
Tail	80%	—	1D6 plus POT 14 paralyzing venom
Bite	95%	—	1D6+1

Each round roll a 1D6. On an odd number the creature makes two attacks with its claws. On even numbers, it makes one attack with its barbed tail. If it hits with both claws, the demon takes hold of its opponent and attempts to gore him. If the tail hits, and penetrates the character's armor, the character must roll his CON vs. the venom's POT or become completely paralyzed in 1D3 rounds. Once its victim is paralyzed, the demon makes bite at-

tacks every round, ignoring armor and chewing away at the face and throat of the character.

Demon Five

This humanoid monster is only five feet tall but very stocky. It has a single horn on its head and one great central eye. Parts of its body are thick with wicked-looking, three-inch-long spines.

STR 20 CON 20 SIZ 12 INT 7 POW 6 DEX 14 CHA 4

Hit Points: 20 **Armor:** 2 points of thick skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw	70%	35%	1D8+1
Horn	65%	—	1D10
Hug	90%	—	3D6

This demon attacks each round with two claws. If both hit, the demon then either attempts to gore with its horn or hugs the character, piercing him with the dozens of needle like spines jutting from its body.

Demon Six

This demon is a small, rounded creature covered with bright orange porcupine quills. Its features are nearly indistinguishable with the exception of the wide curved mouth filled with long sharp teeth.

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 6 INT 4 POW 5 DEX 16 CHA 1

Hit Points: 9 **Armor:** 6 points of quills.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Leap	75%	—	Grapple
Bite	85%	—	2D6+2

This demon attacks by leaping for the throat of its victim. With a successful leap, the demon springs upon the character and holds on, readying to make a bite attack. Bite attempts occur on the round(s) following a successful leap. Before the bite is attempted, the character may attempt to dislodge the creature with a successful STR vs. STR roll. If the character succeeds, he pulls the demon away and throws it to the floor. If he fails, the demon is allowed to make the bite attack.

Demon Seven

Looking something like a large, flightless bird of prey, this demon has wicked claws and a deadly, hooked beak.

STR 22 CON 20 SIZ 22 INT 5 POW 9 DEX 15 CHA 5

Hit Points: 30 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw	55%	15%	2D6
Beak	75%	—	3D6

Each round the demon attacks with either one claw or its beak.

Demon Eight

This monster is vaguely humanoid in outline but bathed in flame.

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 10 POW 15 DEX 16 CHA 2

Hit Points: 18 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Flaming Blow	65%	20%	4D6 plus special

If this creature hits, it does 4D6 points of damage plus, regardless of whether or not any actual damage was inflicted, a victim wearing metal armor suffers 1D6 points of heat damage from the superheated metal. Wooden armor has a 25% chance of bursting into flame doing 1D6 points of damage every round until discarded or the flame is extinguished.

The Shattered Courtyard

Almost simultaneous with the death of the last demon, the characters' hemisphere suddenly crashes to a halt, hurling any character failing a Balance roll to the ground to suffer 1D2 points of damage. The yellow fog disappears and they find themselves in a wide, circular courtyard, the ground tiled with cracked and broken slabs of yellow stone. The court is open to the dark sky, no more than a broad patio encircled by eight (or the number of player-characters) great jackal-headed statues, 30 feet tall and of unfamiliar style. A slender tower, connected to the courtyard by a short causeway, stands in the distance.

Surrounding these two patches of land like a vast angry sea, the world of Styxx buckles and heaves, changing colors, sprouting unimaginable forms of vegetation that grow, mutate, and die in front of the eyes of the astonished adventurers. The dark sky boils with masses of rolling clouds, great flares of sickly green and yellow lights flickering and flashing behind them. Even the air they breathe is in constant turmoil. The temperature and humidity is in constant fluctuation, the air growing first uncomfortably warm and sticky, then a few minutes later dry and chill.

The broken and splintered remains of the tavern floor lay strewn about them while, incongruously, the table still stands on its legs, one drink as yet unspilled. Amongst the wreckage they spot the left arm and part of the upper torso of a Vilmirian cattleman, neatly sliced off by the strange force field that surrounded them. One of the dancer's tiny feet, chopped cleanly off at the calf, lies nearby.

At the far end of the courtyard, 75 feet away, the characters see four figures. A woman dressed in purple and blue sits upon a large white throne. On her right stands a tall thin man, wearing a black hooded robe while at her feet lounges a third, indistinguishable figure. The fourth member of the group, much smaller than the rest, bounds toward the characters with great leaps. As the figure draws closer, they see a man, four feet tall, dressed in a blue and white jester's outfit, bells jingling loudly as he runs. He has a long, hooked nose and beady eyes. It is Astralgys, their would-be employer. He skids to a halt, just a few feet from the characters.

"Welcome to the Shattered Courtyard, wayfarers!" he says gaily. "This is the home of my mistress," he bows low, the brightly tinkling bells on his pointed cap scraping the stones, "the great and powerful Pollidemia." He gestures toward the seated figure. "My mistress would interview you now. Come with me. Queen Pollidemia awaits." And the little man skips back toward the figures gathered at the throne, bells jingling madly.

There is little to do but to follow Astralgyn. As they draw closer to the throne they see the seated woman is partially masked and dressed in a filmy piece of silk and a cape. The throne is of ivory, carved from a single huge piece, its designs chased with gold. The woman awaits the characters patiently, one leg thrown casually over the arm of the great chair. Astralgyn, the jester, takes his position nearby, anxiously watching the group. The tall hooded figure on Pollidemia's right stands unmoving, its face completely obscured by the folds of its hood. Any character making a Scent roll notices the odors of turpentine and rotten eggs wafting from the mysterious figure.

The figure lounging on the dais at the foot of the throne is a corpse, male, dead at least several days. It is slightly bloated and the flesh has a sickening translucent quality to it. As the adventurers near the throne, Pollidemia lovingly strokes the head of the corpse. Surprisingly, the corpse opens its eyes and turns them to gaze in adoration at its mistress.

"Welcome," Pollidemia greets the visitors. "Astralgyn informs me you have come in response to my offer." She is languorous but at the same time, somehow deadly. "I am pleased," she smiles. "You seemed to have been capable of handling some of my pets, and therefore I believe you suited to the service I wish you to perform."

The adventurers may respond as they will. Pollidemia listens patiently. If they show hostility toward her, she will not hesitate to demonstrate the awesome power she wields. Astralgyn and the hooded demon, Gath, also stand ready to defend her. Remember, Pollidemia is a direct recipient of the powers of the Chaos Lord Gashoram. The gamemaster may allow her any power necessary to keep the characters in line.

She dismisses actions and arguments of the adventurers with a wave of her hand. "I need a service and fate has chosen you to perform it." She stands.

Raising her arms to the sky, she begins to chant in a familiar sounding, but unidentifiable language.

*"Quixoram dubois, Allentat sicrorum, Bealtant d'chansom,
Quortorat nominous..."*

Great bolts of power leap between the gigantic statues. Slowly their eyes open to reveal shining black orbs, living eyes which capture the characters with their gaze, freezing them where they stand. Movement is now impossible.

*"Kaloram detat, Kynn K'tal, Quixoram dubetait, Kynn
K'tal..."*

Any character who makes a successful Music Lore roll, half-remembers an ancient legend about a race of powerful demons known as the Kynn K'tal. They were said to have served the Chaos Lord, Gashoram, Master of Darkness.

Points of light form over the breast of each statue, whirling lights that swell in intensity, slowly forming the image of living hearts, blue-white and malignant, beating in mid-air. The glowing, pulsating organs begin moving toward the helpless characters. The grotesque living organs pass through their armor and flesh, entering their chests and



Queen Pollidemia

stirring within like great, cold toads. Characters slain in the demon battle also receive these hearts.

The characters are racked with pain as the alien, demon hearts enter their systems, stealing blood from their own hearts. Each suffers 1D2 points of damage and any character who fails a CON x1 roll falls to his knees in pain. A character who reaches 0 hit points does not die but instead faints. Slain characters implanted with demon hearts begin to revive slowly, groggily.

The characters feel a great coldness sweep through them, and a moment of stark terror when their own hearts stop beating and the demon hearts take over.

"Ha, ha, ha," shrieks Pollidemia. "How does it feel to have the heart of a supernatural being? Do you find it to your liking?"

Pollidemia sits back down, suddenly growing calm. "I, only, can remove those hearts without killing you. Return to me after you have accomplished your task and the demon hearts will be removed.

"Astralgyx will take care of you from here. He will escort you to the world of Ildaron. There an evil woman holds prisoner an innocent being, the Tenatir. I would have you bring this dear creature to me. Astralgyx will take you where you need to go and show you what you have to do. Be gone with you now, and do not fail in your mission. If you do not return to me, the hearts of the Kynn K'tal will eventually eat your souls."

The characters may protest but Astralgyx pulls forth one of the yellow smoky balls and throws it to the ground. The characters are again engulfed by the smoke and feel themselves being carried off. This time, Astralgyx rides with

them. As the plane fades from view, the characters see, rising up behind Pollidemia's tower, a gigantic black form, malevolent and winged.

Demon Heart Effects

The characters have had living demon hearts implanted in them. These are the hearts of the Kynn K'tal, a ancient race of powerful demons presently trapped inside the great statues on the plane of Styxx. These hearts, after having spent a period of time inside the chest of a living being will, when transplanted to the statues, bring the Kynn K'tal back to life. As the characters eventually learn, there is no way these hearts can be transplanted without causing the deaths of the hosts. These hearts remain within the characters for the rest of the adventure.

Whenever angered, the character is in danger of being partially possessed by his demon heart. This happens most often when the character receives a wound in the course of battle. When this happens, the demon heart starts to beat more powerfully and a cold thrill runs through the character's veins. Both his strength and power are increased and the character receives a temporary addition of extra hit points. After the battle is finished, the heart quiets down and the character returns to normal, but then suffers from some chaotic change brought on by the demon heart attack.

When the demon heart attack strikes a character, his POW is temporarily increased by 1D6+5 points. His strength is also increased, manifested by the character's sudden ability to inflict double damage with every successful hit. The character also receives an additional set of hit points equal in number to his normal hit points. These new hit points must

Demon Heart Attack After-Effects

1D20 Effect

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Skin grows over one eye causing partial blindness. Deduct 30% from every vision effected Perception skill. | 12 | Gain a powerfully bad smell. Lose 6 CHA. |
| 2 | Club foot and loss of 3 DEX points. | 13 | Sprout third eye in forehead. Lose 3 CHA points, gain 20% on vision effected Perception skills and add 2 points of POW. |
| 3 | Ugly face, must keep it covered when in public. CHA reduced to 2. | 14 | Character grows pig-like snout. Minus 6 to CHA. |
| 4 | Webbed hands. All hand-based Manipulation skills reduced by half. | 15 | Character grows boar-like tusks from lower jaw. Minus 5 to CHA and gain Bite weapon of 4D10% which causes 1D6 damage. |
| 5 | Skin starts to thicken and the character eventually grows scales. Minus 10 to CHA and add 2 points of natural armor. | 16 | Sprout small tentacle in an unlikely spot. Possible loss of 1 to 10 points of CHA. |
| 6 | At the end of the fight, the character turns murderously upon a companion, attempting to slay him. Anytime after the first round, this character might get control of himself by making a roll of POW x3 or less. | 17 | Character's skin turns a bright shade of green. Lose 3 CHA points. |
| 7 | Brain damage. Lose 1D4+1 points of INT. | 18 | The character is afflicted with a chronic disease involving itching, running sores. CHA minus 8, DEX minus 4. |
| 8 | Grow forked tongue. Reduce appropriate Language and Communication skills by one half and CHA by 5. | 19 | One arm fuses to side of body, making it useless. Many reductions will result including attack and/or parry skills, certain DEX functions, obvious skills such as Sleight of Hand and many others. The gamemaster will constantly have to make decisions regarding this character's reduced abilities. |
| 9 | Character gains a random Demon Power (gamemaster's choice). | 20 | Character begins to lose weight, reducing his SIZ to half normal. He takes on the aspect of a human skeleton, lowering CHA to half normal. |
| 10 | Arms become long, hairy, apelike. Gain 4 points of STR and lose 4 points of CHA. | | |
| 11 | Head swells to abnormal size. Minus 3 to CHA and add 4 points to INT. | | |

first be depleted before the character takes any additional damage to his real hit points.

The characters will not learn of this effect until the first time one of them is injured in battle. Although on subsequent occasions they may attempt to control this effect, on this initial experience, the characters will suffer the full effects of the heart attack. After this first experience, characters will be given an opportunity to resist the demon heart attack. When injured, they will feel the attack coming on and, by successfully matching their POW against the number of damage points they have so far received, they can resist the effects. The characters are not required to resist the attack. If they wish, they may allow the hearts to take them over, lending them strength and power.

Once the battle is over, the demon heart attack subsides and the character feels himself returning to normal. He is then beset by a chaotic change, brought about by the power of the demon heart. Roll 1D20 and consult the following list for the specific chaotic change. Gamemasters are encouraged to develop their own chaotic changes and, dispensing with the random roll, apply them to the characters as they see fit. This way, as the adventure unfolds, the chaotic changes can become progressively worse, leading toward the climax of the adventure. It should be noted that upon the successful conclusion of this adventure these effects may be reversed.

The effects can manifest themselves quickly or more slowly, as the gamemaster sees fit. The first time the characters are affected, it may be more slowly. Perhaps they wake the next morning to discover they have a tentacle arm or some other horror.

In time of need, a character may attempt to bring on a heart attack by making a roll of POW x5 or less. He will enjoy all the usual benefits and suffer the usual consequences of the event. Sorcerers may try to induce a heart attack in order to gain enough extra POW to summon and bind more powerful demons.

If a character loses a limb, the demon heart regenerates a new one in 1D6 days. This new appendage will not necessarily be human. The body of any character slain while bearing a demon heart is, in 1D6 rounds, automatically shifted back to the plane of Styxx where the unfulfilled heart returns to the statue of the Kynn K'tal and the corpse is then regenerated by Pollidemia to serve as one of her companions. If the characters somehow discover this fate awaits slain companions, a character can be saved by quickly chopping out the demon heart. The heart will shift out of the plane by itself, leaving the corpse where it is, allowing the slain character to enjoy a normal death.

Queen Pollidemia, servant of Gashoram

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 29 POW 32 DEX 15 CHA 16

Hit Points: 14 **Armor:** None, but possesses numerous magical wards.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Demon Dagger	105%	65%	1D4+2+8D6

Skills: Ambush 65%, Balance 75%, Plant Lore 85%, Poison Lore 78%.

Summoning Ability: 117%

Notes: Pollidemia has been taught any number of spells which she can use against unruly characters. The use of these are at the gamemaster's discretion but Pollidemia always wields enough power to keep player characters in line. At the end of this adventure, when Pollidemia no longer can draw upon the power of Gashoram, she is much more vulnerable.

Pollidemia chooses to disable rather than to kill her opponents, since she needs them to perform the task she has at hand. She is capable of paralyzing characters, creating an impenetrable force field about herself, or instantly teleporting to a safe location. Additionally, while in Gashoram's favor, she enjoys the security of wardpacts against almost any weapon.

Astralgyx, demon jester

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 7 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 23 CHA 5

Hit Points: 12 **Armor:** 2 points of demon skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
2 Claws	35%	10%	1D2
Bite	55%	—	1D3

Skills: Balance 98%, Climb 76%, Dodge 95%, Hide 75%, Juggle 95%, Jump 95%, Move Quietly 85%, Sleight of Hand 89%, Tumble 95%.

Abilities: Twice per day Astralgyx can near instantaneously teleport to any location he chooses. He will always flee rather than fight.

Possessions: Astralgyx seems to have an unlimited supply of the yellow globes which contain demons capable of carrying passengers across the planes.

Gath, guardian demon

Gath appears as a tall, almost skeletal figure. His face is almost human but his eyes are huge, crimson, and lidless. His two viciously clawed hands are normally kept hidden within his black robes, allowing Gath to sometimes pass for human. This demon reeks of rotten eggs and turpentine.

STR 17 CON 21 SIZ 20 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 17 CHA 3

Hit Points: 29 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw x2	79%	67%	1D6
Flame Breath	90%	—	3D8
Acid Blood	55%	—	2D10

Gath attacks with both claws every round. If both hit, the victim is held tightly. If he cannot worm free with a successful STR vs. STR struggle against the demon, he is held fast and subjected to the demon's flame breath attack.

Any weapon that cuts or pierces Gath's skin releases a spray of acid blood that, if it strikes the attacker, causes 2D10 points of damage, ignoring any armor as it drains through the gaps and chinks. The acid does not harm the armor but, at the gamemaster's option, may dissolve the straps and ties that keep the armor sections in place.

Skills: Ambush 95%, Hide 95%, Listen 85%, Move Quietly 95%, Scent 95%, Search 90%, See 85%, Track 95%.

The Living Corpse

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 1 POW 1 DEX 4 CHA 1

Hit Points: 13 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

weapon	attack	parry	damage
Fist	65%	25%	1D6

Pollidemia's undead servant is difficult to kill. Reducing it to 0 hit points does nothing. The living corpse must be dismembered to be defeated.

The Second Chapter

The Prisoner

ON THE ORDERS of Pollidemia, the party is transported to the plane of Ildaron, accompanied by her demon servant, Astralgx. Materializing on the free-floating island of Laukland, the adventurers are left to find a way of traveling to the nearby land of Syfera, there to find and free the prisoner known as the Tenatir. The prisoner is presently being held captive by the wicked Queen Media, head of a cruel, matriarchal society. Media originally kidnapped the Tenatir on the orders of Pollidemia but has since refused to turn over the captive. Media has been led astray by her sorceress and advisor, Salrenna, and her demon patron, G'theke. She now intends to keep the Tenatir for herself.

Astralgx, instead of taking the characters to the island of Syfera as he was supposed to, has instead brought them to the nearby island of Laukland. Astralgx was on Syfera once before and nearly lost his skin. He is convinced that the island is full of demonophobes. Despite his fear of Pollidemia, he has opted to bring the characters here, rather than risk the dangers of Syfera.

Some distance from their goal, the characters must use disguise and subterfuge in order to travel to Syfera, then enter the royal palace and accomplish the task at hand. Astralgx will provide them with maps, information, and some helpful items of magic.

The Plane of Ildaron

The world called Ildaron appears as a countless number of islands, most of them 50 to 100 miles across, suspended in space, slowly orbiting about a dully glowing central sphere. Thought to have once been a single planet, Ildaron has for ages existed in this state of fragmentation, each floating island developing its own society and culture. It is said that Ildaron was torn apart by the conflicting aims of Law and Chaos and indeed the islands are still bound to these forces by great hyperphysical chains. Giant tethers of gold stretch outward from the central sphere of Law, anchoring each of the islands to the golden globe. Black chains of utter darkness reach out from the surrounding void and, attached to the bottoms of the islands, strive to pull the lands into the outer blackness of Chaos. It is believed that the thoughts and beliefs of the people inhabiting each island directly influ-

ence the pull of the chains. Societies more lawful orbit closer to the golden sphere. The islands of chaotic peoples drift farther outward, circling at the fringes of this strange solar system.

Each of the islands possesses its own gravitational field, the result of an odd element found only in this plane. Each of the islands has a top and a bottom. The side turned toward the Sphere of Law is lush with life, covered with growth and usually inhabited by a human culture. The bottoms of the islands, facing toward the void, are nothing but barren lifeless rock, devoid of light and life. Most of the larger islands are surrounded by smaller satellite islands which orbit slowly about the larger bodies. Many of the major islands, Laukland and Syfera being typical, are grouped together in multiple systems wherein two or more major bodies orbit around a common center. Free-floating oceans and lakes also exist, tracing their own paths around the golden sphere, and teeming with strange aquatic life.

Daylight in the world of Ildaron is provided, not by the dim glow of the central sphere, but by the radiation of energy from highly charged particles residing in the great atmosphere surrounding and containing the Ildaron system. The radioactive discharge of these particles lasts for approximately twelve hours, giving the effect of normal daylight. For the next twelve hours, while the particles recharge, the neighboring islands endure a period of darkness. At night, the golden Sphere of Law, invisible during the day, hangs overhead like a great moon. Thousands of distant island clusters, experiencing their own periods of day and night, unsynchronized with Laukland-Syfera's cycle, twinkle in the azure sky like so many stars.

Most of the islands of Ildaron are habitable, possessing mild climates and good, arable land. Commerce between the islands is effected by self-propelled balloon boats that travel through the atmosphere of the plane. Culturally, most of Ildaron is much the same. Feudal societies are the norm and the weapons and methods of war are only a little different from those of the Young Kingdoms. The horse remains the standard of travel, although the ostrich and the large K'modo Lizard maintain a limited popularity. Politics, on the other hand, vary widely. Some islands, such as Laukland, have adopted democratic methods, allowing many individuals to take part. Others, like nearby Syfera, are dominated by strict and cruel tyrants, evil individuals with no respect for the rights and welfare of the people they rule.

The use of magic and sorcery in the numerous worlds of Ildaron oddly parallels the political systems that have developed. Democratic societies tend to shun the use of magic, stressing instead an ethic of individual effort. Although not usually illegal, the many strictures against enjoying the fruits of what one might gain through the use of magic tends to discourage the practice of the arcane arts. Of Syfera, however, it is rumored that the Queen makes full use of the darkest sorts of magicks. Her royal engineer, Salrenna, is known to be a sorceress of the blackest sort, although the two of them claim their human experiments are scientific research, not magic. Skeptics disagree and point to reports by Laukland astronomers that in the last fifteen years the island of Syfera has steadily moved down its chains, dropping farther away from the glowing sphere of Law and straying nearer to the black gulfs of the void. This period of rapid fall coincides with the reign of Queen Media.

Despite their many differences, there has not yet been a conflict between the armies of these two neighboring islands. This is due mostly to the ineffective ruler who now sits on the throne of Laukland, King Rexis III. Compassionate but senile, Rexis III does not perceive the threat posed to his island by the evil Queen Media. He does not believe that the unexplained disappearances of so many Laukland citizens in recent years have been, as people are wont to say, the result of secret slave raids conducted by order of Syfera's mad queen.

A concerned group of influential citizens, convinced of Media's guilt, have been secretly gathering evidence of her involvement in the disappearances. Although this kind of unofficial investigation is illegal on highly-regulated Laukland (as are so many things in this lawful society), members of this group have actually witnessed some of the kidnapers in action. When they think they have gathered enough evidence of the Queen's guilty deeds, they will present their charges to the King, hoping that he sees fit not to punish them for their illegal activities.

Languages

The language most often encountered in Ildaron is a Common tongue, familiar-sounding to Young Kingdoms ears. Any character with Read/Write or Speak Common skills of 65% or better can perform these skills automatically. Characters with lesser abilities will need skill rolls whenever trying to read, write, or discuss anything of importance.

Sorcery and Religion

Although magic is as easy to perform on Ildaron as it is in the Young Kingdoms, the actual practice of magic, and the types permitted by law, varies greatly from island to island. On Laukland, for instance, the practice of magic is legally permitted, but anything a sorcerer conjures into existence is strictly forbidden. Hence, demons and elementals are illegal, as well as anything else manifested in material form.

Heavy fines, sometimes banishment, are punishments for crimes of this type. Propitiation of elemental deities, particularly as practiced by the rural peasantry, is officially frowned upon but not specifically forbidden.

The White Temples of Pure Law represent the official religion of Laukland. These structures, usually marble basilica, are built where the golden chains of Law attach to the island. In these temples, those properly aligned with Law can be healed of severe injuries and usually returned to full health. However, the priests and priestesses who guard these holy places must be convinced that the would-be recipient is worthy.

On nearby Syfera, although sorcery of any kind is completely illegal and punishable by death, it is well known that the Queen's favorites are allowed to delve into whatever vile practices they choose. Other practitioners, especially those she fears covet her throne and power, are prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Many have been executed in public beheadings, others have been reserved for special treatment in Media's dungeons. As on Laukland, the peasantry still practices elemental worship but here it is more often done in secret. Media usually pays little attention to what the serfs do, but at times she has gone to great lengths to unearth and persecute the leaders of these primitive religious cults.

Temples to Chaos are found on Syfera, underground chambers bored deep into the bedrock, reaching those places where the black, cold chains are rooted in the island. These dark and frightening temples are capable of healing and restoring characters who are sworn to Chaos.

Weapons

War is war, and although some differences in weapons exist, their purpose remains the same. Like most worlds, Ildaron has developed a few articles of combat perhaps not familiar to adventurers from other worlds. The Long Sword, forged in the manner of Damascus steel, is the favored blade in most of Ildaron. This sword causes 1D10+1 points of damage and, because of its improved flexibility, breaks only half as often as a normal broadsword (any time a die roll indicates a broken weapon, there is a 50% chance the weapon does not break).

The Rapier is a short, light, piercing sword also taking advantage of the advanced metallurgy of Ildaron. It causes 1D6+1 points of damage and, like the long sword, breaks only half as often as swords forged in the Young Kingdoms. A newcomer to either of these weapons, if already skilled with some type of sword, has basic Attack and Parry skills equal to one half his best current sword skills. The secret of the steel used to make these swords is unknown in the Young Kingdoms and cannot be duplicated there.

The Crossbow, another weapon found in most of Ildaron, is treated like a firearm. It causes 2D6+2 points of damage and has a base range of 250 feet. Additionally, due to its ability to pierce armor, it ignores the first 5 points that it

encounters. The weapon must be cocked and loaded, hence fires only every other round (1/2). Damage bonus for STR and SIZ is not applicable to this weapon. These weapons could be imported back to the Young Kingdoms and possibly duplicated by a skilled master bowyer.

The Blackjack is a favored weapon of the slavers from Syfera. This weapon causes only 1D4 points of damage but, if used in conjunction with successful Hide, Move Quietly, or Ambush skills, is capable of knocking a victim unconscious. A victim taken unawares and successfully hit by the Blackjack must make a CON x2 roll or be rendered unconscious for 2D4 rounds.

Armor

Several different types of armor may be encountered in Ildaron. These include: Soft Leather (1D4-1), Ring Mail (1D8), Scale Mail (1D10), and Chain Mail (1D10+1). Any of these could be duplicated in the Young Kingdoms.

Astralgyx's Notes

The Palace — City's central structure, surrounded by outer battlement, eight corner guard towers with four guards each, two gate towers each with six guards, and six guards mounting patrol of battlements. Inner courtyard contains audience hall, grain bins, guards' quarters, exercise yard, stable and smithy. Royal compound located in center of courtyard.

Royal Compound — Four corner guardhouses with four guards each, two gate towers with six guards each, and with four guards mounted on regular patrol of battlements. Landscaped grounds include small lake in northeast corner, garden in west section. Gazebo located in this section, as well as an unused well. Guardhouse with twelve guards and Royal Quarters (two guards at entrance) located in center of compound. Grounds patrolled on irregular basis by approximately 6 guards.

Guards are all vicious fighters fiercely loyal to Media and all are low-born; would be considered criminals in this society. Cruel and ruthless, treat civilians like slaves, men like animals; have no rules of combat save to win. Worst is Yara, Media's Sergeant of the Guard, quartered in dungeon level of the royal quarters.

Media is paranoid and must have arranged for escape should palace be overrun. There is a tunnel extending from gazebo in royal compound to cellar of Black Lizard Tavern (two guards), but a route into the royal quarters has not been located.

Prisoners held in dungeons in lowest level of royal quarters. Here Media and Salenna conduct abominable experiments. It is said that east wing of dungeons has recently been vacated to make room for a single prisoner of some special importance to Media. Identity of prisoner unknown.

The experiments are conducted in west wing; their results are known to be the most hideous mutations. The more successful of these are kept alive in securely locked cells in this wing.

There is rumor of something else which occupies the laboratory, something horrible and more monstrous than mutations, something tied in with the disappearances of certain of Media's more powerful enemies.

Arrival in Ildaron

It is dusk on Laukland, the radiant sky now dimming. The party finds themselves standing near a great wood, next to a dirt road. A mile away, down the sloping road, the lights of a small village can be seen. Astralgyx, huddled in his dark robe, is uncharacteristically quiet.

"Here," he whispers harshly, thrusting out a filthy, rumpled sheet of paper. He casts a quick glance over his shoulder. "This is a map of the royal palace of Media. It's not complete but it's the best I could get. You are supposed to figure out a way to get into this woman's palace, find the Tenatir, and bring him back to me."

One side of the paper contains hastily sketched diagrams of the palace and its interior; on the other side are some scrawled notes.

Astralgyx wants the characters to believe that he made the spying mission to Syfera and drew the map himself. In truth, the treacherous little demon, after being sent there by Pollidemia, never even got near the royal palace. Lingered in the area, but too afraid to attempt entering the compound, Astralgyx finally had the immense good fortune to slay a messenger who happened to be bearing the very information he was seeking. Unfortunately, Astralgyx was soon after discovered — before devouring even half his recently-killed meal — and, recognized for the demon he was, was pursued across hill and dale for several hours before managing to double back and recover his magical supplies. Quick escape back to Pollidemia's plane was then easy, but Astralgyx still remembers his close brush with death and greatly fears the demonophobes he believes inhabit this plane.

"That's Syfera, up there," he says, pointing over the far horizon.

Looking up, the characters see a small patch of sky filled with innumerable tiny, twinkling lights. Any character making a See roll is able to make out, silhouetted against the dark sky, the mass of land comprising the island of Syfera. The twinkling lights are its cities and towns. "It's about 200 miles away," Astralgyx tells them. "It's too bad, but the particular alignment of the Million Spheres does not allow us to teleport any closer than this neighboring country. I had to do the very same thing last time I came." Astralgyx is lying through his pointed teeth, although the characters are probably not aware of it.

The adventurers may express consternation. Astralgyx explains to them the role of balloon boats in the world of Ildaron and how they regularly travel the great sky that stretches between all the islands. If asked how he got to Syfera, the lying demon at first hesitates, stumbles over his words, then finally says he "bought a ticket," and in that way got to the other island. He claims to have returned to Laukland via the same method, then transported himself

home from here. He claims there are regular passenger lines running back and forth between the two islands and one can travel at will, anywhere he wants to. He says there is a place to catch balloon boats down in the nearby village. Astralgx continues his lying, finding it gets easier as he goes along.

The demon apologizes for the inconvenience and hands them a heavy, spherical object wrapped in paper. "Look!" he says. "A gift from Pollidemia to help you with your task." He hands the sphere over to the characters.

Unwrapping the object, the characters find a solid black glass sphere, apparently hollow. There is a note attached which reads: "For your enemies!"

The characters will probably ask how it is used, but Astralgx does not know and cannot tell them.

"My mistress works in strange and mysterious ways," he giggles.

Although there is probably no way for the adventurers to learn about the sphere without using it, the globe contains an extremely powerful greater fire elemental. When the globe is broken, the elemental is released and, before it is free, it is bound by magic to perform one task for the user. The fire elemental is capable of burning and destroying as many as 12-15 enemies or can be used to set a building or ship ablaze.

"I'll wait here in the woods until you return with the captive," Astralgx says slyly. "But don't worry. I have ways of keeping an eye on you and anything you might try to pull will get back to Pollidemia." He smiles his nasty grin and, if the characters have nothing more to say to him, bounds off to disappear into the dark woods. Astralgx is sure the characters will fail and end up by being killed or at least incarcerated. With the characters out of the way, Astralgx feels sure his deception of Pollidemia will go undiscovered, although he will still have to suffer her anger over the failure to get the Tenatir.

Enroute to the Village

On their way to the village, the party gets a better look at the sky and sees the great golden Sphere of Law beaming down with a soft light. The lights of neighboring Syfera are easily seen as well as those of another nearby island, Quasit, on the opposite horizon. The next nearest island cluster, several thousand miles away, is in its daylight phase, and appears to the characters as a small, irregularly shaped moon.

The great chains of Law can also be seen, twisting in elegant, effulgent coils through the night sky, rising up from Laukland and the other nearby islands, fading into glowing threads whose light is eventually obscured by the golden moon-orb to which they all lead. There are many strands

connected to each of the islands, but as they rise, they intertwine and fuse, becoming at last a single massive strand perhaps a half mile in diameter. Each island is connected to the Golden Sphere by one of these single strands.

The tendrils of Chaos are less easily seen, requiring a See roll to spot them. They appear as an unnatural darkness in the night sky, snaking from beneath the two neighboring islands. Again, the many root-like strands affixed to the underside of these islands combine into a twisting single strand that disappears out into the void.

A Chance Encounter

Before they are halfway to the village, the characters hear shouts and the clashing of steel coming from beyond a low hill on their left. Following the sounds, the party finds a small clearing, and there a red-headed man standing with sword drawn against six adversaries dressed in mottled-green hooded cloaks. (Note: all the cloaked slavers are women, although this may not be immediately obvious to the adventurers.) Although the red-haired stranger seems to be holding his own, his enemies are fanning out, encircling him. It is obvious he will not be able to last for long.

To one side of the clearing stands a group of five men and women, again red haired, unmindful of the battle taking place in front of them. They stare blankly off into space, making no move to assist either the man or his six attackers. Some distance behind them, barely visible in the dark sky, hangs a balloon ship, its inflated gas bags dyed dark blue and camouflaged by the night. It requires a See roll to make the vessel out.

The besieged stranger is Valmir Horne, a Laukland by birth and a respected local citizen. Horne is part of the radical political faction that accuses Queen Media of Syfera of kidnapping and enslaving Lauklenders. He, along with a number of other vigilantes, has been conducting a secret investigation into the rash of disappearances plaguing his island. Tonight he tracked a suspected slaver back to this rendezvous, but accidentally stumbled into an ambush. The five red-headed Lauklenders standing to the side are captives of the slavers, drugged with a docility decoction and unaware of what is going on. Just beyond the nearby stand of trees, anchored on the very edge of Laukland Island, is the slavers' dirigible, mostly invisible against the evening sky.

Valmir Horne, Laukland vigilante

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 14 DEX 16 CHA 16

Hit Points: 17 Armor: Scale Mail (1D10)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	88%	72%	1D10+1
Dagger	78%	71%	1D4+2
Buckler	73%	69%	1D4

Skills: Ambush 35%, Climb 45%, Dodge 45%, First Aid 55%, Hide 55%, Move Quietly 50%, Navigate 50%, Orate 75%, Persuade 70%, Pilot Balloon Craft 84%, Search 40%, See 55%, Tumble 45%.

Languages: Ildaron Common 90%/99%.

Slavers

	Slaver 1	2	3	4	5	6
STR	14	16	10	12	14	12
CON	16	17	11	14	15	14
SIZ	14	16	10	13	14	13
INT	12	10	14	16	13	14
POW	11	11	10	15	13	15
DEX	15	12	16	16	14	16
HP	18	20	11	15	17	15
DB	+1D6/+1D4	+1D6/1D4	None	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4
Armor	None	None	None	None	None	None
Weapon		Attack	Parry	Damage		
Long Sword		65%	63%	1D10+1		
Dagger		55%	53%	1D4+2		
Blackjack		80%	—	1D4 plus knockout		

Skills: Ambush 45%, Dodge 40%, Hide 50%, Move Quietly 40%, Tumble 35%.

Hopefully the characters intervene. Using the slavers' balloon boat is the only method provided in this scenario of reaching the island of Syfera. If they fail to act on this encounter, the gamemaster will have to devise another opportunity for them. Valmir Horne is a source of valuable information. If he is cut down by the slavers, he is found to be still alive, although fading fast. He can provide them with the information necessary to continue the adventure.

If the characters intervene, the slavers immediately set upon them, leaving them no choice but to fight against the cloaked figures and at the side of Horne. If they merely watch, Horne will kill or gravely wound four of the slavers before being cut down himself. He dies slowly, lingering long enough to speak with the characters should they eventually investigate the incident.

Defeating the unarmored slavers should prove easy enough for the characters. Horne thanks them for their help and introduces himself by name.

"Slavers," he says, looking around at the fallen bodies of his hooded attackers. "From Syfera, I'd guess, judging from the look of that craft over there." He indicates the night-blue dirigible tied up just past the trees. He plays it cagey, fearing the adventurers are perhaps government officials in disguise. His night-time spying on suspected slavers is illegal and carries a stiff jail term. "I was just out for my evening constitutional and accidentally blundered onto this nest of villains. I thank you again for rescuing me."

It will be up to the adventurers to question Horne about the slavers. If they are the least bit honest about their motives and reasons for being here, Horne realizes they are potential allies in the struggle against Queen Media. He reveals to them what he, and others, suspect of the Queen, including her involvement with the Laukland disappearances and the rumors of her horrible human experiments. If asked how to go about obtaining passage to Syfera, Horne only chuckles.

"The Queen's got it fixed so no one goes on or off her island without her okay," he explains. "Only the merchants have licenses allowing them to travel back and forth freely and they're watched closely, their vessels always inspected.

The penalty for smuggling anyone on or off the island is death."

The obvious tack is to use the smuggler's vessel to fly to Syfera. If the adventurers don't recognize the opportunity, Horne will point it out. It may also be that the characters have not yet learned the slavers were all women. Horne can inform them of the harsh, female-dominated society of Syfera and can outline a plan of deception for them, making use of the slavers' robes as disguises. It is believed the slavers operate under the direct command of Media. As few people on Syfera deem it wise to interfere with the Queen's personal servants, the slaver garb should allow them to move about easily. He suggests the balloon boat be flown back directly to its hangar on the outskirts of the capital city of Amaht. In Amaht can be found Media's palace.

If the adventurers show Horne the map given them by Astralgynx, he cocks a suspicious eyebrow.

"How did you come to be in possession of this?" he asks.

Horne recognizes the handwriting on the map. It was made by a friend of his, a fellow vigilante who disappeared while on a secret mission to Syfera (slain by Astralgynx). He once again has reason to suspect the characters, this time of possible foul play regarding the disappearance of his compatriot. He will say nothing else of the matter, but will continue to keep a close eye on them, noting their actions carefully.

The dirigible is quite similar in appearance to a sea-going ship. Instead of sails there are two large, spherical balloons filled with a nonflammable gas. These balloons provide enough lift to float the ship, even when heavily loaded with cargo. Although most Syferan dirigibles are typical of the kind found in Ildaron, human-powered with great fan-like propellers, the slavers' craft is special. Salrenna has equipped it with a minor air elemental that generates enough air current to move the craft at the speed of a cantering horse. With their camouflaged balloons and silent propulsion systems, the slavers can approach Laukland during the hours of darkness and, tying up in out-of-the-way places, conduct their nefarious operations without fear of discovery.

Horne understands the workings of the dirigible and is a capable pilot, but it may be that he has been mortally wounded by the slavers. In this case, Horne lives only long enough to outline his plan to the adventurers and fill them in on what he knows of the wicked Queen. Characters unfamiliar with aircraft need a successful INT x1 roll to comprehend the workings of the dirigible. Characters with prior aircraft experience will have no trouble understanding the simple controls. Once the controls are understood, it is a simple matter to pilot the craft to its destination. Should none of the characters prove able to make the roll, and Horne is dead, one of the 'slain' slavers will, with a groan, regain consciousness. The adventurers find it easy to force her to pilot the craft back to Syfera.

The slavers' mottled green cloaks, tunics, and leggings are designed for better concealment on forested Laukland.

Their tall, charcoal-gray boots reach to just below the knee. The slavers travel light but each has a small pouch containing an assortment of Ildaron coinage valued at 10SS. Additionally, slavers three, five, and six, each carry one phial of the docility decoction. If present, Valmir Horne can identify the decoction and explain how it is used. Otherwise, the characters may have to experiment.

The Trip to Syfera

The voyage to Syfera takes 10-12 hours. Once away from Laukland, the party gets a better look at this rather typical Ildaron island. It appears as a great rough wedge of soil and bedrock, looking very much like a piece of land torn away from a normal planet and set adrift in the void. Small islets surround and orbit the larger mass, held in place by gravitational forces. The entire scene is reminiscent of the debris created by some cataclysmic rending.

The filaments of Law are seen to range in intensity from a dull glow to an almost blinding, golden brilliance, while the tendrils of Chaos range from smoky gray to a terrible, empty blackness which cannot be looked upon for any length of time without the viewer becoming uncomfortable.

While voyaging between the islands of Laukland and Syfera, the adventurers pass near a floating lake. This strange body, a huge undulating bubble of water populated with a wide variety of aquatic plants and animals, is a translucent blue-green in color. It has been floating about the Laukland-Syfera system for some time and is often used by the slavers to conceal their approach to the island.

Anyone falling off a ship into the open void is in terrible danger. Inertia carries the unfortunate about 10 meters from the ship, leaving him suspended and helpless. Within minutes, a golden tendril begins drifting toward him, extended from the Golden Sphere. At the same time an ebony chain snakes up from the void. These chains of Law and Chaos, when they reach the stranded individual, wrap around him and commence a spiritual tug of war. Individuals aligned with Law are drawn up and into the golden light, while those aligned with Chaos are dragged down into darkness. In either case, this person is, for all intents and purposes, dead. Those aligned with Balance suffer the worst, literally torn to pieces by the conflicting powers of Law and Chaos.

Traveling near existing chains is risky and should be avoided. The tremendous power contained within their semi-solid coils is so great that anything mortal coming into contact with them is instantly obliterated. This includes chains that may be wrapped around a free-floating character. Attempting to rescue a friend trapped by the tendrils proves impossible and absolutely fatal.

While it is hardly discernible, the island clusters of Ildaron are in constant motion. The equatorial band rotates in

The Docility Decoction

This potion is brewed from the leaves of a tree found only on the island of Syfera. If a small amount is orally ingested, it inhibits a victim's survival instincts and sends him or her into a zombie-like trance. A victim is able to answer simple questions and offers no resistance whatsoever, unquestionably following whatever simple commands are given him. The effects of the decoction wear off in 1D6+1 hours.

a clockwise motion around the planar core, seat of the Golden Sphere of Law, the islands always maintaining the same distance from one another. Water, however, tends to move at a faster rate than the land masses and water vapor even faster. Consequently, the land masses are periodically overtaken by drifting clouds of moisture and occasionally, with cataclysmic results, a floating lake or sea.

The Island of Syfera

Syfera is a strict matriarchal society where males cannot own property, are not allowed a say in the government, and enjoy few personal rights. This is not due so much to a consensus of public opinion but rather to the cruel and spiteful nature of the ruler, Queen Media, and her faithful followers.

The Queen's most loyal troops, the all-female Royal Syferan Guard, are an arrogant, contemptible lot, barely a cut above bullying ruffians. They accost citizens in the street for sport or, if they are in need of coin, to subject the unfortunate civilian to a spot tax: if they spot you, they tax you. The Guard functions as Media's 'peacekeeping' force and each member has been chosen for a harsh and unswerving loyalty to Media and Chaos. It was a contingent of this elite guard that assaulted the *Rogue Mistress* and abducted the Tenatir.

The Royal Syferan Guard wears polished brass armor over red hose and halter, leather boots plated with scrolled brass, and ornate brass helmets which expose only the eyes and mouth. Lastly, each guard wears a pair of supple leather gloves, the backs of which are decorated with brass fretwork. If a guardswoman makes a fist while wearing these gauntlets, the brass decoration forms a razor sharp claw that delivers 1D4+2 points of damage. A successful See roll allows an adventurer to make note of these peculiar gauntlets and realize their potential danger in combat.

If at any time the adventurers are discovered on Syfera, the Royal Guard attempts to capture them. The characters are dragged into the dungeons beneath the royal quarters and thrown into a cell in the west wing, joining here the mutants created by Media and Salrenna. If the adventurers do not engineer an escape from the holding area, they eventually are subjected to Salrenna's experiments and transformed into hideous mutants. It may be that the usually cowardly Astralgynx shows up and somehow helps them escape their

prison. Failing this, Maria and members of the crew of the *Rogue Mistress* might show up, looking to free their ship-mate, the Tenatir.

The adventurers will quickly perceive that Syfera, under Media's rule, is not a happy realm. This is evident in the smoldering resentment of the people, and vented in the hateful curses muttered after the Royal Guard has passed out of earshot. If Media and her royal sorceress were taken out of the picture, Syfera would almost certainly evolve into a democracy similar to Laukland's.

The Hangar at Amaht

In the capital city of Amaht, near the shores of Lake Raynar, there is a dirigible landing field used by the slavers. It is located some distance from the city, a precaution in case of mishap. Due to its distance from the city, whatever transpires here goes unnoticed for several hours.

At the edge of the landing field stands a large square structure which does double duty as a dirigible hangar and quarters for the six guardswomen stationed here. These guards also see that the dirigibles, after landing, are anchored safely on the field or taken into the hangar.

The guards know their job and generally perform their duties without speaking to the slaver crews; members of this group are beneath the consideration of members of the Royal Guard, so chances are the adventurers' ruse will go off without a hitch. However, the commander of the hangar guard, Ylys, is a suspicious, sharp-eyed woman who trusts no one. As the pseudo-slavers emerge from the dirigible, have Ylys make her See roll. If successful, she notices something odd about certain of the returning slavers. Male party members will tend to move in a manner not typical of females. This arouses Ylys' suspicions, and she confronts the group.

At this point, if a female party member acts as spokesperson and makes a successful Persuade roll, the party is able to leave the hangar area without a confrontation. If the roll fails, or if there are no female party members, Ylys shouts the alarm to her troops and a bloody fight ensues.

Ylys, officer of the day

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 13 CHA 16

Hit Points: 19 Armor: Ring Mail (1D8)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	68%	63%	1D10+1
Dagger	65%	60%	1D4+2
Gauntlets	60%	55%	1D4+2

Skills: Dodge 50%, Hide 45%, Move Quietly 50%, Search 45%, See 50%.

Typical Guardswoman

	Guard 1	2	3	4	5	6
STR	14	13	15	13	14	16
CON	13	16	14	13	14	14
SIZ	12	12	13	14	13	13
INT	13	14	13	12	11	14
POW	12	13	13	13	14	12

DEX	14	14	13	12	12	11
CHA	13	14	15	15	12	16
HP	13	16	15	15	15	15
DB	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4

Armor: Ring Mail (1D8)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	58%	53%	1D10+1
Spear	55%	50%	1D10+1
Buckler	45%	55%	1D4
Crossbow	68%	63%	2D6+2
Gauntlets	55%	53%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 40%, Dodge 45%, Hide 45%, Move Quietly 50%, Search 40%, See 45%.

Each of the Guardswomen has 1D100SS worth of Syferan coinage in their pouches, as well as a number of metal tokens bearing an overflowing tankard of ale on one side and a large black lizard on the other. These tokens are 'bonus chits', each good for one free tankard of ale at the Black Lizard Tavern. These tokens are government issue and are given only to the Syferan Guard. The tavern will be glad to accept them, but should any off-duty guardswoman be present and see civilians presenting them, she may raise an alarm. Slavers are not considered members of the Royal Guard and not allowed to carry or use these tokens.

The Black Lizard Tavern

This is a typical tavern with a large area for tables up front, a bar along the back wall, and a kitchen in the rear of the building. The tavern is crowded with both guardswomen and female slavers, some accompanied by male companions. From the look of things, the men seem to be treated like pets, and not even well-favored pets at that. Despite the crowd, there are still three empty tables left; one by the hearth, one near the bar, and one in the center of the room.

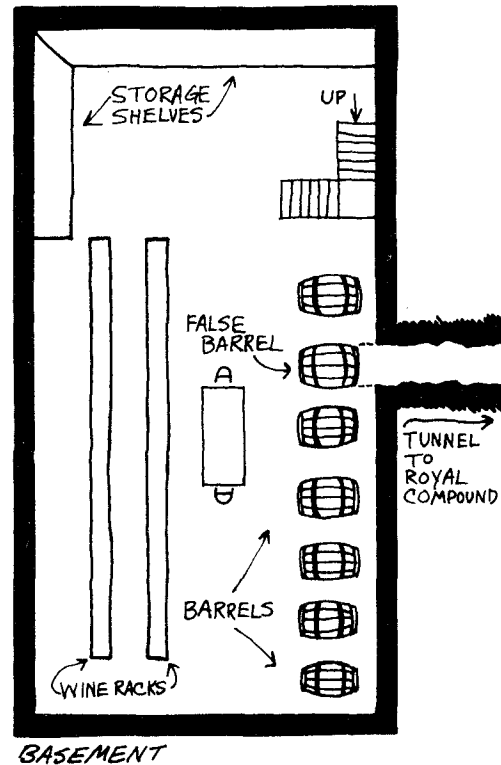
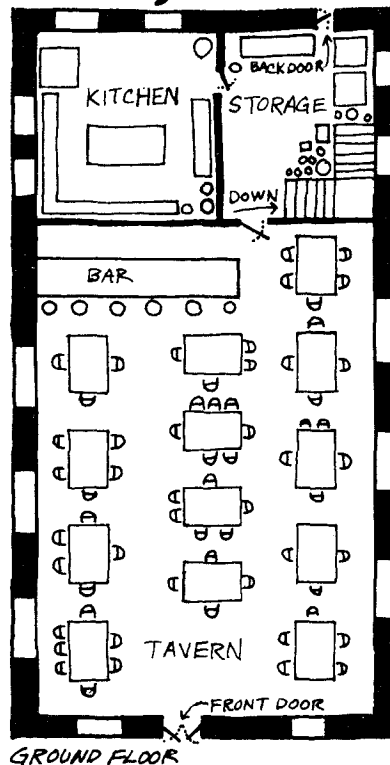
The Black Lizard caters to a mixed female clientele. The occasional male is seen only in the company of a Syferan woman. Unescorted males are roughly evicted.

On the night of the adventurers' visit an equal mix of guardswomen, slavers, and civilians are present. The atmosphere is relaxed and congenial and no one takes any notice of the characters; they appear as just another group of cloaked and hooded slavers looking for a little rest and relaxation. However, there is a 40% chance that the party will be invited over to a stranger's table and asked to sit down, share a tankard of ale, and swap stories. The game-master may handle this situation as he sees fit, bearing in mind that this should not be a major encounter, merely a minor event designed to increase the tension.

The Cellar

A flight of stout wooden stairs descends into a large earthen chamber. Here are many shelves packed with foodstuffs. A number of large barrels of ale line one wall, resting on their sides atop heavy wooden carriages. A double row of tall wine racks occupies the center of the room, reaching almost to the low ceiling. Two members of the Royal Syferan

The Black Lizard Tavern



Guard, absorbed in their game of cards, sit at a small table in the corner. A candle stuffed into an empty wine bottle provides the only light. They are assigned to stand guard over the entrance to the hidden tunnel leading to the royal compound.

The secret entrance to the tunnel can be found concealed behind the head of a false ale barrel. Only Media and the Royal Guard knows of this entrance. This tunnel is most often used to move slavers in and out of the compound without them being seen by the populace and raising suspicions. The slavers are always blindfolded and escorted by members of the Guard.

By arrangement with the owner, there are always two Guardswomen on duty in the cellar, keeping watch on the entrance. This is one of the duller duties in Amaht and security is commensurately lax.

Guards

	Guard 1	Guard 2
STR	16	12
CON	17	14
SIZ	16	13
INT	10	16
POW	11	15
DEX	12	13

HP	21	15
DB	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4
Armor:	Ring (1D8)	Ring (1D8)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	59%	55%	1D10+1
Dagger	50%	52%	1D4+2
Gauntlets	59%	55%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 45%, Dodge 40%, Hide 50%, Move Quietly 40%, Tumble 35%.

The guard changes every eight hours and the adventurers arrive early in the current shift. Having dealt with the guards, they will have several hours before their illegal entry is discovered. The staff of the Black Lizard will not notice anything amiss during this time. If the guards are discovered missing, staffers merely assume that they are out on patrol or off somewhere killing time.

The secret tunnel is entered by way of one of the ale barrels lining the wall. It requires a successful See roll to find the secret release mechanism disguised as a knot in one of the staves. When this knot is depressed, a click is heard and the entire front of the barrel swings out to reveal the entryway. Alternately, the barrel can be simply chopped apart.

The hidden tunnel behind the false barrel is rough-hewn, excavated through the rocky soil and braced at intervals with

thick hardwood beams. It extends straight ahead, into the darkness, and the need for some kind of light is obvious. At the far end of the tunnel is a vertical shaft, set with a rung ladder, leading up to the gazebo in the royal compound.

The Palace of Media

Rather than splendid, the royal palace of Media looks more like some grim fortress constructed during a time of terrible conflict. Roughly octagonal in shape, its thick walls are broken only by squat guard towers located at every angle along its perimeter. The numerous arrow slits piercing the tower walls and the many mechanisms of war arranged along the battlements make it clear that the tyrant of Syfera feels that her position is insecure.

Two ponderous main gates are set between the twin gate towers and kept slightly ajar, just open enough to allow visitors to slip through one at a time. It is impossible to enter without being seen by guards stationed on the towers.

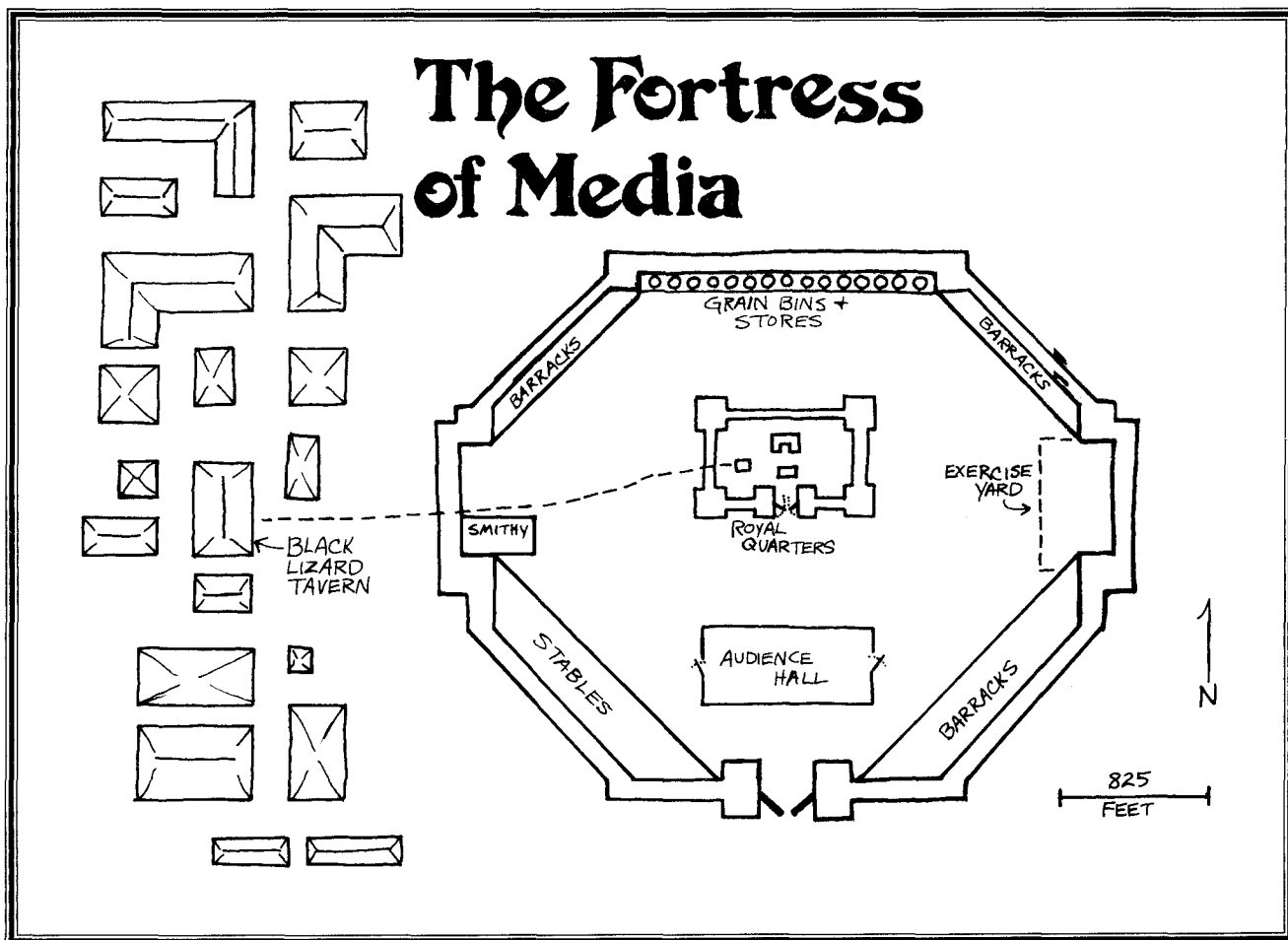
Around the inner walls are guard barracks, stables and a smithy, an exercise court, other fixtures of a feudal castle. In the center of the courtyard is an imposing structure that could only be Media's audience hall, unguarded and clearly not presently in use. Behind it rise the walls of the royal compound.

Guards

There are six guards in each of the gate towers and four guards in each of the eight corner towers. Six more guards walk the battlements in regular patrol. In addition, there are another 1D10+3 guardswomen present in the courtyard going about their everyday business, tending their horses or practicing swordswomanship in the exercise yard.

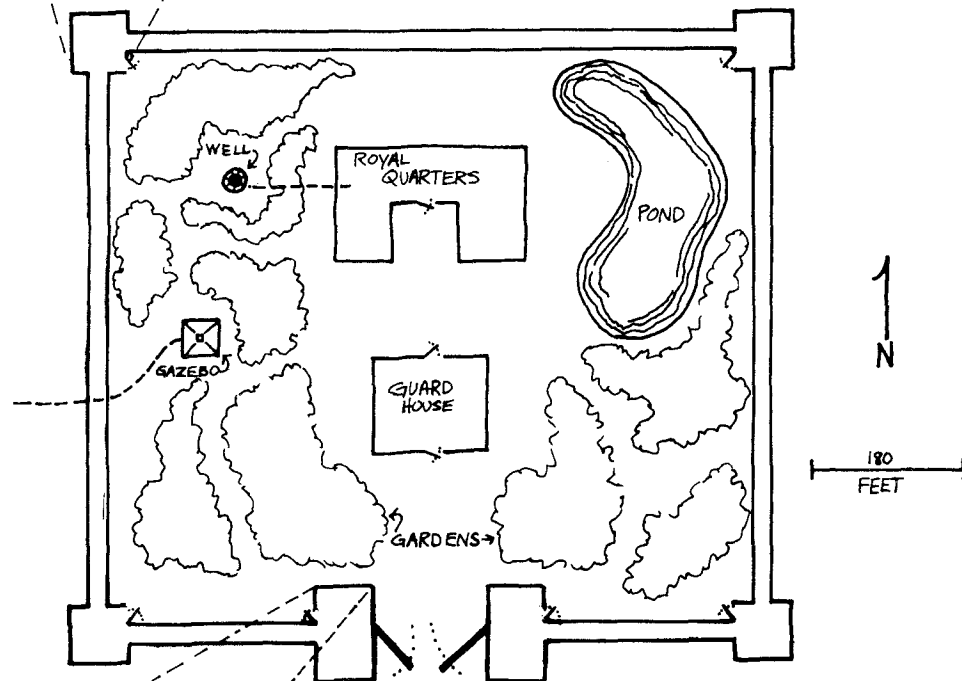
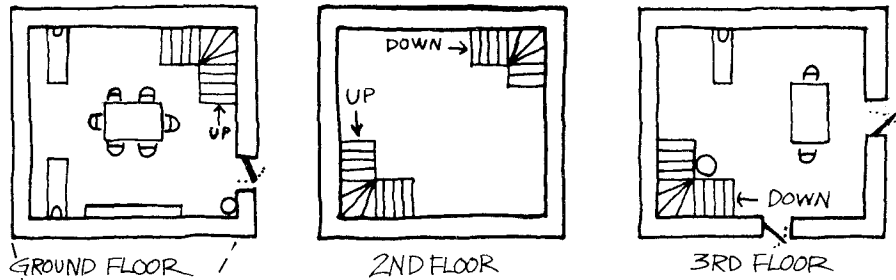
Tower and Patrol Guards

	Guard 1	2	3	4	5	6
STR	13	14	13	15	15	16
CON	12	14	13	12	13	16
SIZ	17	12	15	14	14	13
INT	13	13	13	14	13	12
POW	12	14	14	15	11	10
DEX	13	14	13	13	13	12
CHA	14	13	13	13	15	16
HP	17	14	16	14	15	17

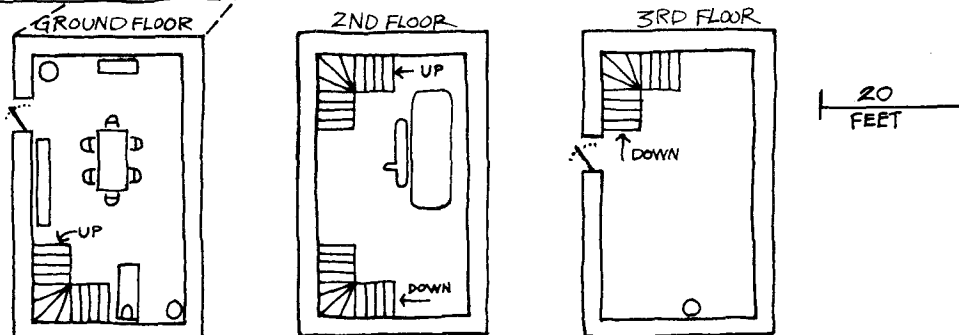


The Royal Compound

TYPICAL CORNER GUARD TOWER
(4 GUARDS)



TYPICAL GATE GUARD TOWER
(6 GUARDS)



DB +1D6/1D4 +1D6/1D4 +1D6/1D4 +1D6/1D4 +1D6/1D4 +1D6/1D4

Armor: Ring Mail (1D8)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	58%	53%	1D10+1
Spear	55%	50%	1D10+1
Buckler	45%	55%	1D4
Crossbow	68%	63%	2D6+2
Gauntlets	55%	53%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 40%, Dodge 45%, Hide 45%, Move Quietly 50%, Search 40%, See 45%.

The Audience Hall

Media has no plans to use the hall today and consequently this opulent, richly-decorated chamber is deserted and unguarded. A golden throne rests on a high platform on the north wall. It is carved in the form of an eight-fingered, taloned hand, representing Media's allegiance to Chaos. Nothing of interest will be found here.

The Royal Compound

A fort within a fort, the royal quarters are accessible only through a set of heavy gates opening into the lavishly landscaped park that surrounds the palace. This scrupulously maintained area contains wooded trails, fragrant blossoming trees, and a small pond. Occasional guardswomen can be found walking a meandering patrol along the shaded paths, or seen atop the compound walls. A number of guardswomen are lounging before the squat, rectangular guardhouse located just inside the gate. Beyond the guardhouse looms the taller structure of the royal quarters.

The Royal Quarters

This area is intended to be a private retreat for the ruler of Syfera. No one but Media's invited guests are allowed within these walls and never for the purpose of business. The guardhouse contains quarters for twelve guards, all of whom are usually present. Another six guardswomen roam the beautifully landscaped grounds, although these patrols have no set schedule or defined route. There is a 20% chance the adventurers encounter one of these guards while making their way towards the Queen's quarters.

The sight of slavers in the compound is a common one, but should combat occur, treat any guardswoman as a Typical Guard. Make the encounter roll once every three rounds. Only a single guardswoman will be encountered.

Typical Guard

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 13 CHA 14

Hit Points: 18 Armor: Ring Mail (1D8)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	58%	53%	1D10+1
Spear	55%	50%	1D10+1
Buckler	45%	55%	1D4
Crossbow	68%	63%	2D6+2
Gauntlets	55%	53%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 40%, Dodge 45%, Hide 45%, Move Quietly 50%, Search 40%, See 45%.

The Gazebo

This open-walled structure's only furnishings are an elegantly carved table and four ornate chairs. There appears to be nothing of interest about this structure, save for its usefulness as a quiet retreat, but a successful See roll reveals a concealed trap door in the floor which opens onto the tunnel leading to the cellar of the Black Lizard Tavern.

The Well

This old well looks as though it has gone unused for many years. There is no bucket to be found, nor any winch assembly. The walls of the well are still solid, though the mortar is beginning to crumble.

This is the secret exit for Media's escape route. A See roll at -15% draws attention to the very new and very sturdy iron rungs set into the wall of the stone shaft. They have been painted to camouflage their presence.

Within the Royal Quarters

The First Floor

Queen Media's quarters are richly furnished and display a taste for luxury and decadence. However, there is a certain grim oppressiveness about the place which makes itself immediately felt, the windows are heavily barred and latched.

The map the characters are using is not completely accurate and they must adjust to the situation. This provides the players with a few surprises as the party makes its way through the structure. Any secret passage in the palace which is drawn on the players' maps can be found automatically. Otherwise, a Search roll must be made once for each ten feet of wall space searched. Searching ten feet of wall space takes three rounds.

The Front Entrance

Two long reflecting pools flank a tiled walk which leads to the double bronze doors guarding the entrance to the Queen's quarters. Standing before these doors are two guardswomen attired in the standard uniform and wearing cloaks of deep royal red, trimmed with black.

These guards assume the 'slavers' have come to report to Media, and enquire of them if they had "a good hunt?" If attacked, the guards raise a hue and cry attracting the attention of their sisters in the East and West Guard Rooms. The alerted guards will promptly open fire on the intruders with their crossbows.

The Portico

This is a small, marble-tiled chamber with stout oak doors in the north, east, and west walls. Directly opposite the entrance is a flight of stairs descending into the gloom below. A guardswoman stands at each of the east and west doors.

The guardswomen deny even slavers the right to enter beyond this point. The only door through which visitors are allowed is the one leading to the common room. The portico is well soundproofed and anything which transpires here is likely to go unheard.

The two hallways connecting the portico and guard rooms are important only for the secret doors they contain.

East and West Guardrooms

Each of these large, stuffy rooms is furnished with a rough table, three chairs, and cots for six guards. There is a large fireplace against one wall, a flight of ascending stairs in the corner, and a number of arrow slits in the walls facing south into the entrance courtyard.

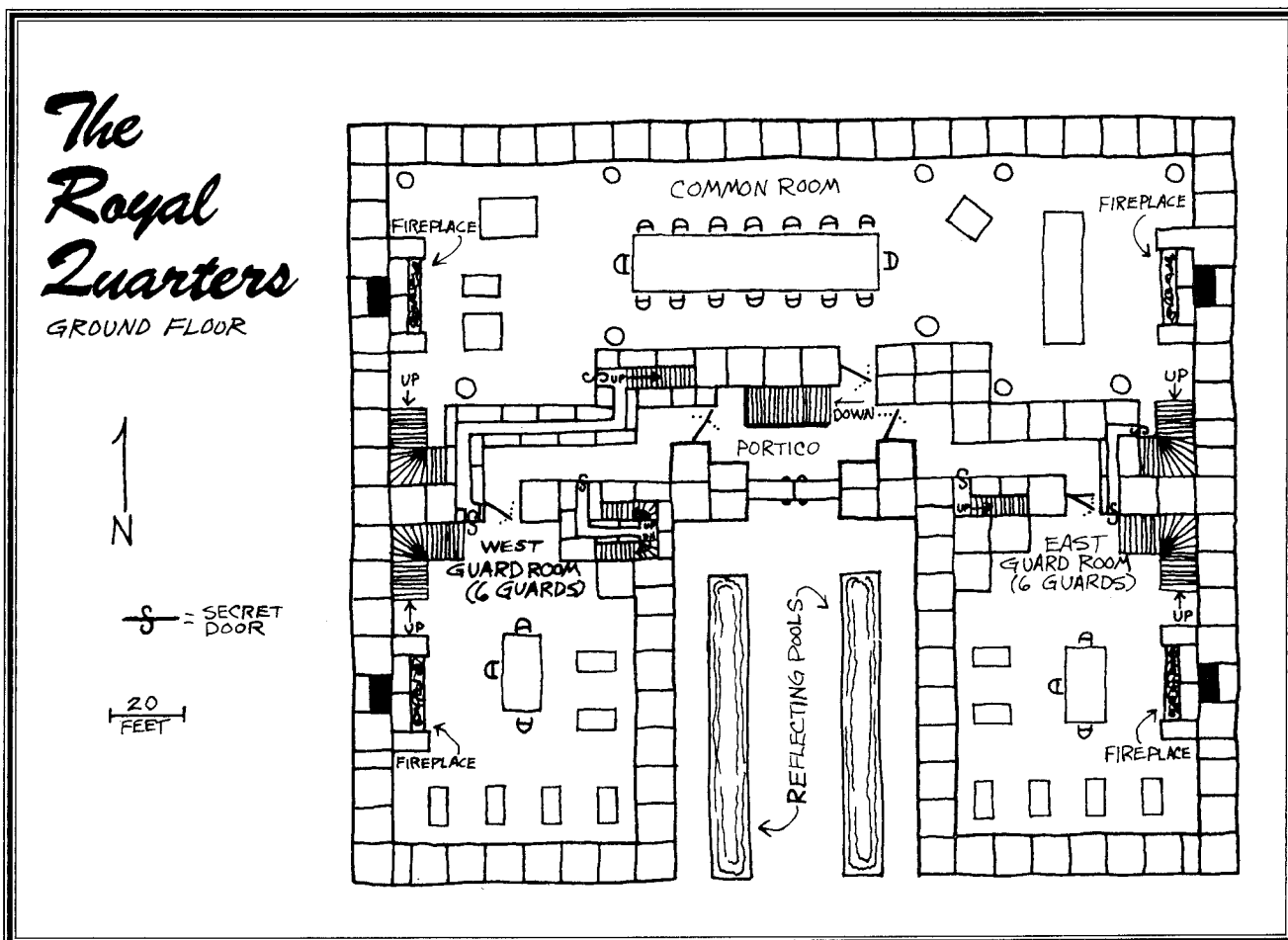
Six guardswomen are found in here and they don't appreciate the unlawful intrusion of outsiders, even if they are disguised as Media's slavers. The stairway in the east guard-

room ascends to Salrenna's sitting room, while the one in the west guardroom leads to Media's sitting room.

The Common Room

This luxuriously overdone chamber stretches the entire length of the palace. Two massive fireplaces are set into the east and west walls. In the mantel of these fireplaces is carved the symbol of a snake entwined around a sword (INT x5 or less reveals this as Media's royal crest). Three great crystal chandeliers hang from the ceiling, illuminating walls decorated with rich hangings and tapestries. There are numerous shelves filled with delicate sculptures of metal and glass and the floor is covered with thick, rich carpets of royal red. In the center of the room is a large oak table littered with charts, scrolls, and other documents. In niches at either end of the room a flight of stone stairs ascends to the upper level. This is where Media receives those guests who have proved to the tyrant their unquestioned loyalty.

The maps and charts on the table describe the Laukland-Syfera cluster and depict every known land mass. Marked beneath the names of several of the cities is the symbol of the serpent entwined around a sword. Again, a successful INT x5 roll allows the adventurers to recognize this symbol as Media's royal crest. The presence of the symbol on the



maps indicates the location of Media's spies in the lands of her enemies.

The Second Floor

The second floor resembles very much the first, with the exception that the windows are larger and unbarred. Media's taste for luxury and extravagance is unchanged.

Media's Study

This chamber seems to be merely another excuse to show off more decadent luxury. Plush divans are scattered about the room and what wall space is not covered with rich tapestries is taken up by rank upon rank of bookshelves. These shelves are packed with what look to be very ancient and well-read tomes.

Most of these volumes are concerned with sorcery and the nature of the multiverse. Some describe the gods of Law and Chaos. In one such volume there is reference to a strange and wondrous being called the Tenatir. The legend says that this being travels the endless reaches of the multiverse, part of the Two Who Are One, but ignorant of its own fate.

There are also books of a considerably more risque nature, the contents of which may make even the adventurers blush.

Media's Sitting Room

Beautiful works of art fill this room, giving it a cramped, claustrophobic feel. The atmosphere of the room is sweet-smelling yet somewhat stuffy. On a carved marble corner-table stands an assortment of crystal decanters and several goblets of silver and gold, studded with precious gems.

This is where Media entertains her more intimate guests. One of the decanters contains a fine wine laced with a powerful aphrodisiac. The aphrodisiac is detectable, but requires a Scent roll at -20%. A successful See roll at -10% spots a curious little mark etched faintly into the crystal of another decanter. This mark indicates the decanter contains a POT 15 poison that leaves the imbiber who fails his CON paralyzed for 1D10+3 rounds.

Media's Bedroom

A cool and luxurious chamber, the air here bears a scent of mint, the result of the incense that swirls from several elaborate brass burners. The bed stands in the center of the chamber, a thick, infinitely soft cushion covered in sheets of the finest silk.

The Dining Room

This room is suffused with warm light that comes from several spheres attached to the walls. Murals depicting scenes of the outdoors are painted directly on the stone. These, combined with a number of lush, potted plants creates the illusion that the diners are outside.

The bedroom and dining room hold little of real interest, save for the presence of the secret doors. Media is unaware

of the concealed entrance in the dining room but Salrenna knows of it, making frequent use of it to spy on Media and to secretly consult her collection of arcane tomes.

Salrenna's Bedroom

A comfortable-looking chamber, though austere. Weird and strange objects made of known and unknown materials are scattered about in a haphazard fashion. It does not seem that the occupant of this chamber spends a great deal of time here.

On the surface an innocuous chamber, but concealed about the room are a number of Salrenna's sorcerous weapons, each designed to appear as something mundane. A successful Search roll will be required to locate each one of them.

- ☐ A silver sphere with perforations dotting its surface. The sphere contains a mist demon. When the sphere is broken, anyone within 15 feet of it must make a successful CON roll against POT 12 or be overcome by its noxious vapors and rendered unconscious. Even with a successful roll all Attack, Parry, Agility, Manipulation, and Stealth rolls are reduced to half normal. There are three such spheres located in the room, and a separate Search roll is needed to locate each.
- ☐ An intricately carved silver wand into which is bound a demon. This demon can send a 2D6 bolt of lightning at whomever the wand is pointed, at the same time causing its user to take 1 point of damage. If the user is ever slain while holding the wand in his hand, the demon is free to return to its home plane.
- ☐ A silver pendant in the form of a lightning bolt. This holds a demon which bestows upon the wearer the effect of armor capable of absorbing 8 points of physical damage. If, however, the enemy inflicts in a single attack twice the damage that the demon can protect against (16 or greater) then the demon is slain and the necklace becomes a piece of mundane jewelry. This protection is in addition to any physical armor worn. There is no way for the adventurers to realize the properties of this necklace until it is worn into battle. Then the additional armor protection quickly becomes obvious.
- ☐ Salrenna's grimoire containing the spells necessary to create the objects listed above as well as the instructions for summoning a Storm Elemental and any of the demons of electrical nature encountered in this scenario. Also found are the spells for summoning two different forms of mist demon, one which produces a debilitating gas and another which releases a poisonous gas. A description of their ability to assume a spherical form is not included.

Note: These last two demons are part of the prison that holds the Tenatir. For security reasons Salrenna has not been overly generous describing them.

Salrenna's Sitting Room

This has the appearance of a parlor or reading room. Many books line the walls, their titles spelled out in threads of silver. All pertain to the arcane arts. The most impressive-looking tome is titled, simply, *Forbidden*. The wall hangings and furniture are all of cold blue fabric and the few decorations of glistening silver. On the mantel over the fireplace rests a six-inch glass sphere on a silver stand. The sphere is filled with some sort of strange, constantly moving mist.

- ☐ The book, *Forbidden*, is a ruse intended to tempt and punish the curious and unwary. Its covers are of pure silver and there are no pages, merely a hollow space which holds a lightning demon which has been bound into the tome. Anyone other than Salrenna opening this volume is treated to a 2D10 jolt of electricity. The demon then remains dormant for three rounds while recharging to full strength.
- ☐ The glass sphere contains a powerful air elemental, an Elemental of Storms. If the glass sphere is smashed, the elemental bursts forth into the sky, forming a thick, roiling black cloud 300 feet across, flecked with angry tongues of blood-red lightning. The Storm Elemental obeys whomever releases it and will perform one service before returning to its home plane.

The Storm Elemental can generate winds of hurricane velocity, extending cloudy tentacles that behave like ravaging tornadoes, inflicting tremendous destruction wherever they touch down. The red tongues of lightning cause 3D6 points of damage to anyone within a 30 foot radius of a strike. Armor provides no protection against this attack.

While it appears misty and insubstantial, the Storm Elemental is in fact a creature of substance and can be fought accordingly. Of course it should be noted here that the swords of the adventurers will act as lightning rods, increasing their chances of being hit by lightning by 10%.

The Storm Elemental is basically a creature of great destructive potential which can be used to lay waste to a selected area. The adventurer who makes a successful INT x5 roll realizes this fact and recognizes its potential for combating a large army.

The Storm Elemental

STR 17 CON 18 SIZ 35 INT 14 POW 14 DEX 13

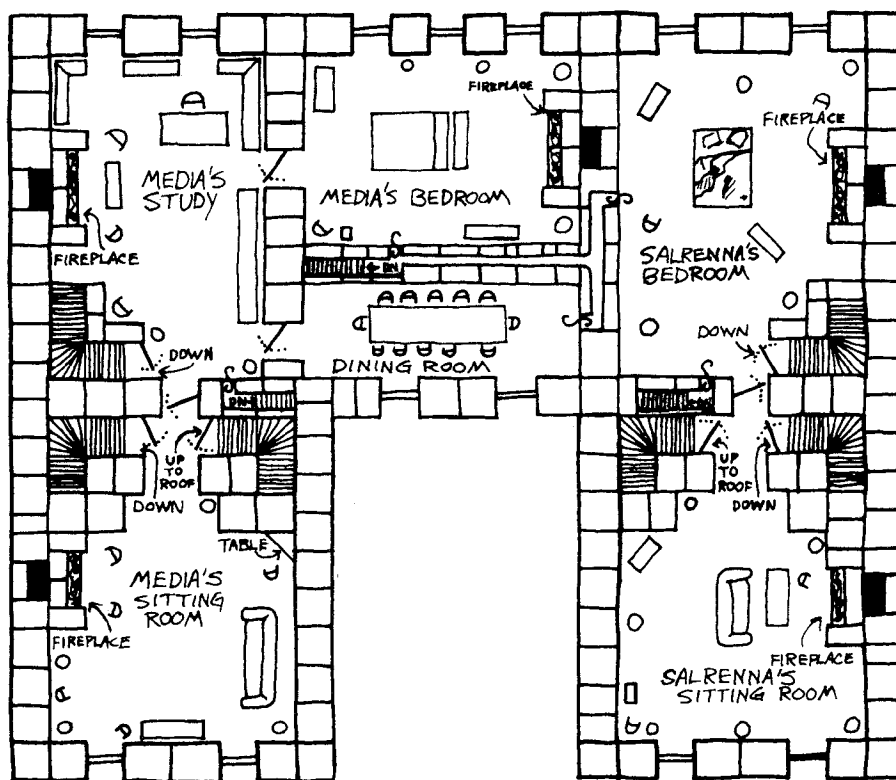
Hit Points: 41

Armor: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Lightning	45%	—	4D6
Tornado Tentacle	40%	35%	1D10 or special*

The Royal Quarters

SECOND FLOOR



*A critical attack means the target has been sucked into the maw of the tentacle and drawn up into the body of the elemental. Once inside the cloud's belly, the character must make a con x5 roll once each round or suffer 1 point of damage from asphyxiation.

Queen Media, depraved ruler of Syfera

A tall, raven-haired beauty, Media is completely evil, reveling in cruelty and the suffering of others. She enjoys her many luxuries and all the other perks of power, doing her best to destroy anyone who seeks to deprive her of these.

Media is currently planning a campaign of conquest against Laukland, eventually aiming to dominate the entire Laukland-Syfera cluster. She presently has spies in most of the major cities found in the cluster. On her command, they will become saboteurs, disrupting governments, economies, and industries.

Media, in defiance of Pollidemia's demands, is holding the Tenatir in her dungeon. On the advice of her sorceress, Salrenna, and the demon, G'theke, she is striving to find a way to use the unique creature to aid her in her goal of becoming the supreme dictator of the Laukland-Syfera system.

Media is never without her golden Chaos amulet. This magical device gives her the power to create the Echare, demon-driven zombies that mindlessly serve the bearer of the amulet (see "The Laboratory"). The amulet hangs around her neck on a delicate, but absolutely unbreakable gold chain. Although it appears to be of normal gold, the metal is a bit too lustrous and feels soapy to the touch. It is wrought in the form of a tortured face twisted in agony and despair, twin rubies serving as its eyes. When Media is invoking the amulet, these eyes glow with a brilliant rubescence, throwing off blinding flashes of light. The Echare obey only the one who wears this amulet.

If alerted to the presence of intruders in her quarters, Media uses her network of secret passages to reach the dungeon and laboratory. Should circumstances turn wholly against her, she takes her Echare as guards, releases the mutants from their holding cells, then flees the compound through routes previously described.

Once safely out of danger, Media will reassemble her forces and begin creating more Echare, making use of whomever she can lay her hands on. Media is an egomaniacal tyrant who will never admit defeat and who will never forget those who have dared to challenge her.

STR 15 CON 17 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 16 CHA 18

Hit Points: 19 Armor: Partial Ring Mail (1D6)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	68%	65%	1D10+1
Dagger	58%	55%	1D4+2
Crossbow	55%	52%	2D6+2
Gauntlets	66%	63%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 60%, Conceal 50%, Dodge 65%, Hide 60%, Jump 60%, Listen 55%, Move Quietly 55%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 60%, Search 55%, See 50%, Tumble 60%.

Languages: Ildaron Common 90/95%

Salrenna, wicked sorceress

Salrenna is a tall, strikingly beautiful woman whose long, straight hair is such pale blonde that it appears silvery-white. She is just as evil as Media, but hers is a cold, calculating evil nearly devoid of any human emotion save for a lust for power. The captives brought to her are nothing more than opportunities for experimentation and she is willing to sacrifice almost anything or anyone on the altar of arcane knowledge.

The comely sorceress has a fascination for storms and lightning, a rare occurring phenomenon on the plane of Ildaron. The bulk of her arcane abilities concern the calling and binding of demons whose nature is most similar to this object of her fascination.

For the moment Salrenna is content to leave things as they are, with Media in power and seeking to extend her influence. However, the sorceress plans to someday overthrow the Queen and seize for herself the throne of Syfera.

If captured by the adventurers, Salrenna will claim she has been made a prisoner, forced by Media to undertake the hideous mutation experiments. She will even go so far as to point out the technique for reversing the process, actually assisting the party to restore some of the mutants to human form. But she will always seek to double-cross the adventurers, waiting until circumstances allow her a reasonable chance of success.

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 17 CHA 17

Hit Points: 17 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Hair Pins	45%	—	1D2
Throwing Stars*	65%	—	1D2
Fingernails	40%	—	1

*These are treated as projectile weapons and have a range of 50 feet.

Skills: Conceal 50%, Dodge 55%, Evaluate Treasure 50%, Hide 55%, Listen 60%, Memorize 55%, Move Quietly 55%, Persuade 60%, See 55%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Set Trap 45%, Taste 50%.

Languages: Ildaron Common 95/99%.

Summoning Skill: 97%.

Summonings: Knows many elemental summonings and numerous demon callings. She prefers entities that reflect the power of storms including creatures that deal with wind, lightning, etc.

In the Dungeons

The dungeons beneath the palace are dark and dank, lit only occasionally by oil-burning lamps set in iron sconces on the walls. There are no windows on this basement floor.

The Hallway

This torch-lit hall runs east and west with a branch to the north some 70 feet long ending in a stout oak door equipped with an eye-level peephole. The hall is featureless save for the irregularly spaced iron sconces holding the lit torches. A successful Listen roll made at the north door detects the sound of several voices on the other side.

A guardswoman stands watch in the hall, concealed in a niche. From here she attempts to ambush unwary intruders,

simultaneously alerting her sisters in the guard room. A successful See roll reveals her presence to the adventurers. If Guard 1 can be dealt with quietly, her cohorts in the guard station will be unaware of the adventurers' presence.

The Guards

	Guard 1	2	3	4	5
STR	14	13	15	12	12
CON	15	12	12	12	13
SIZ	15	15	16	13	11
INT	12	13	12	12	14
POW	12	13	13	12	14
DEX	13	18	15	14	13
HP	18	15	16	13	13
DB	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	+1D6/1D4	None

Armor: Ring Mail (1D8)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	58%	53%	1D10+1
Spear	55%	50%	1D10+1
Buckler	45%	55%	1D4
Crossbow	68%	63%	2D6+2
Gauntlets	55%	53%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 40%, Dodge 45%, Hide 45%, Move Quietly 50%, Search 40%, See 45%.

Guard Station

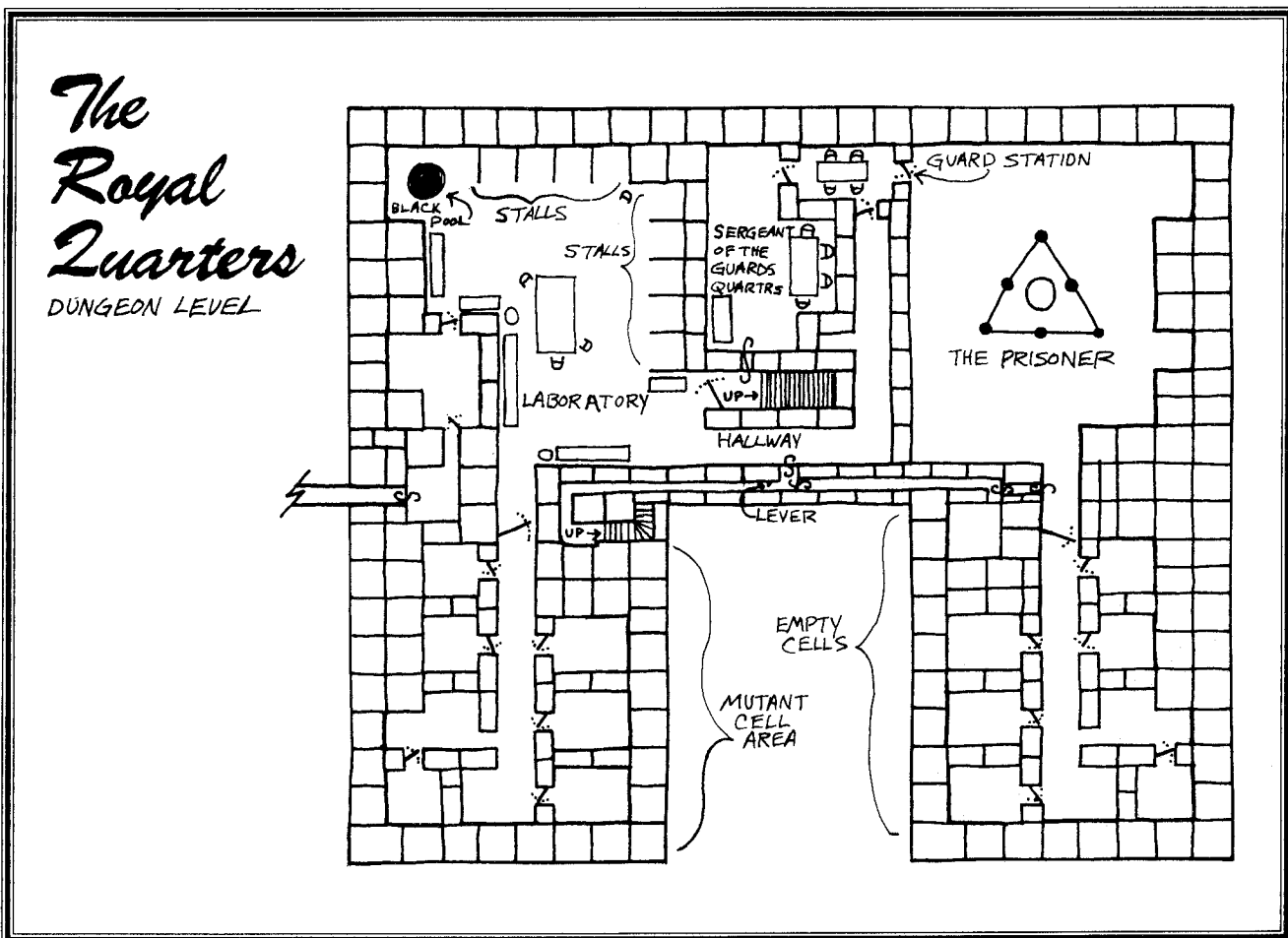
The peephole in the door is slightly open, and through it can be seen four guardswomen playing cards around a rough plank table. This room is bare save for a weapons rack and doors in the east and west walls.

If alerted to the presence of the adventurers, the guards jump to the attack; but if all is kept quiet, they can be taken by surprise. Note that any commotion draws the attention of Yara, Sergeant of the Guards, whose quarters are next door.

Sergeant of the Guard's Quarters

This is a large, cluttered chamber filled with ugly and brutal-looking weaponry, some still bearing traces of blood from past victims. There is a rough pallet in a niche in the east wall while the rest of the walls are decorated with tapestries depicting scenes of warfare. The room has the delicate aroma of an old bear's den. There is little of importance here, save for the secret door in the south wall that opens onto a stairwell leading up to the portico.

Yara is a hulking brute who lives for combat and enjoys inflicting pain. Her favorite weapon is her whip, a gift from Salrenna made at Media's request. This whip is an enchanted weapon, into which has been bound a demon which adds a



1D6 electric shock to the normal 1D4 damage of the whip itself.

Yara, sergeant of the guard

STR 16 CON 17 SIZ 17 INT 13 POW 15 DEX 14 CHA 14

Hit Points: 22 Armor: Plate (1D10+2)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Great Hammer	75%	74%	1D10+2
Hatchet	65%	54%	1D6+1
Dagger	85%	75%	1D4+2
Punch	80%	59%	1D3
Whip	75%	—	1D4 plus stun*

*While the whip's normal damage will probably not penetrate the adventurers' armor, the 1D6 electrical shock reaches anybody wearing metal. Anyone shocked by the whip must roll their CON x3 or less, or be stunned for one round, unable to move or react. Like the demon power, Zap, Yara can command the whip to shoot lightning at a chosen victim. The whip's skill is only 45%, the range 30 feet.

Skills: Ambush 55%, Conceal 50%, Dodge 35%, Hide 55%, Jump 40%, Listen 30%, Move Quietly 30%, Search 35%, Set Trap 50%, Tie Knot 45%, Tumble 45%.

Languages: Ildaron Common 20/80%.

Demons: The demon whip: CON 11 POW 10

A critical hit against Yara also slices her whip in half. The demon is immediately released in a blast of lightning, the attacker suffering 1D8 points of damage while Yara suffers 1D10 points and is stunned for 2 rounds. The demon immediately returns to its own plane.

The Tenatir's Prison

This chamber is devoid of furnishings save for three smoldering silver censers hanging from the ceiling and three silver braziers set on tall tripods. These objects are arranged in a double triangular pattern around a suspended, slowly revolving sphere, six or seven feet in diameter. Inside the glowing misty blue sphere a humanoid form can be vaguely seen, partially obscured by the swirling vapors. The censers glow with a sputtering, pale blue illumination which glows through the intricately carved fretwork decorating these objects. The air seems charged with an odd tension.

If she has not been encountered elsewhere, there is a 50% chance that Salrenna is present here, absorbed in her study of the Tenatir.

Anyone making a successful Listen roll hears a faint but distinct crackling sound coming from inside the censers. The arrangement of censers and braziers is Salrenna's first line of defense against anyone attempting to free the Tenatir. Should anyone step between a censer and a brazier, a tongue of crackling blue lightning leaps between them, inflicting 1D8 points of damage. The lightning ignores any armor that may be worn and the hapless victim will be hurled backwards, repelled by this protective barrier. Only Salrenna may pass unscathed, for the device is attuned to its creator.

The heavy braziers can be moved by anyone with a STR of 15 or more. As long as the character can find a way to move them without placing himself in the line of fire, the trap will not be triggered. However, these large objects are fairly unwieldy and unless the character makes a roll of DEX x5 the brazier topples over and releases the demon Salrenna has bound into it.

These demons are known as the Kerg and are from the same plane as the demon bound into Yara's whip. Kerg are larger, more powerful, and able to assume a tangible form. They resemble huge, translucent octopi which glow with an electric-blue illumination. Their tentacles seem to be made of bright blue light—nothing else—and they float in the air as though swimming in water. When released, they fill the air with the acrid smell of ozone.

The Kerg

Attributes	Average	One	Two	Three
CON 4D8	18	20	17	23
SIZ 3D8	13-14	14	16	15
INT 4D8	18	17	22	18
POW 4D8	18	18	24	16
DEX 3D8	13-14	14	16	13
HP/Charge (POW x3)	54	54	72	48

Armor: None, but can only be harmed by magical weapons. In addition, the Kerg can regenerate 3 hit points per melee round.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacle Zap	35%	—	2D6
Dazzle	Auto.	—	Special, POT 2D6

Each round a Kerg can make 1D8 tentacle zap attacks, firing a bolt of electricity at a given target up to a range of 30 feet. Electrical damage ignores any metal armor.

Alternatively, the Kerg may attempt to dazzle its opponents with a blast of bright light, capable of blinding a character for a short period of time. Characters can avoid looking at the dazzle by making a roll of POW x3 or less. If this roll is failed, the character is allowed to roll his CON vs the POT of the dazzle. Failure means the character is blinded for a number of rounds equal to the POT of the dazzle. Missile attacks are impossible and all hand to hand attacks and parries are made at one quarter normal.

The Kerg come from a plane which has evolved creatures of pure energy. When not bound to some object they usually assume the shape of glowing spheres and are often mistaken for ball lightning. When attacking, they take on octopoid form, the better to lash out at their enemies with their tentacles. They move about without any apparent means of propulsion, using fluctuating energy fields to shift them in whatever direction they wish to travel.

Because they are electrical in nature, the Kerg have an attribute called Charge, which is equal to their hit points. Charge represents the amount of energy a Kerg has available with which to inflict damage upon an enemy. When the 2D6 zap damage is rolled on a successful attack, that amount is deducted from the Kerg's Charge and hit points. If a Kerg's Charge is reduced to 0, it dies. If the Kerg's damage roll is more than its remaining Charge, the victim sustains damage equal to the Kerg's remaining Charge. Any successful hit scored on a Kerg by an adventurer wielding a metal weapon will subject that character to a 2D6 shock of electrical energy, subtracted from the Kerg's charge. Non-metallic, or wood-hafted weapons can be safely used, but only virtuous or demon weapons are capable of inflicting actual damage.

If the lightning bolt trap was sprung, anyone who witnessed the bolt of energy and can make an INT x5 roll realizes the silver braziers are grounded. If a Kerg can somehow be maneuvered into a position where it touches one of them, its

energy will be quickly dissipated, killing the demon. Any character touching one of these braziers at the same moment the Kerg discharges suffers damage equal to the full discharge.

The Kerg are immune to the effects of the gases contained within the spheres surround the Tenatir (see below).

The Sphere

The swirling sphere containing the Tenatir is in fact a combination of two minor demons, one inside the other. Both demons are formed into transparent spherical membranes. Each demon is capable of producing a different mist.

The interior demon, Ehdomo, produces a mist which is basically oxygen, except that it contains a concentration of a vapor which produces a disorientation in anyone who breathes it. In this way the Tenatir is kept alive but in such a state of confusion that it cannot effect an escape.

The exterior demon, Chakdahr, surrounds Ehdomo, leaving about a foot of space between the two membranes. This space is filled with a poisonous mist which, if released, rapidly spreads to fill the entire room. Puncturing the membrane destroys the demon and releases the mist. Anyone exposed to this poisonous vapor must make a successful CON roll against POT 15 or lose 1D10 hit points. With a successful roll, the loss is only 2 points. The mist will retain its potency for three rounds, after which it breaks down and is rendered harmless.

Similarly, when Ehdomo is punctured, the disorienting mist fills the room, and again a CON versus POT 15 roll will be called for. This time, however, a failed roll means the character is in a confused daze for 1D10 rounds. During this time an adventurer is unable to wield a weapon and wanders aimlessly about, bumping into walls and generally following the path of least resistance.

It should be noted that the demon membranes are extremely fragile, being barely more durable than a soap bubble. Even poking one with a finger is enough to pop the bubble.

When Ehdomo is destroyed, the Tenatir will fall to the stone floor of the dungeon to flop about unceremoniously, unharmed but helpless until the effects of the disorienting mist wear off.

The Tenatir

The Tenatir is a remarkably tall being, measuring in at well over seven feet. His skin is a strange, satiny-black color, covered with what appear to be

tattoos, although they shift and swirl in ever-changing patterns. The Tenatir wears a constantly bemused expression and the childlike gleam in his solid black eyes gives the impression of complete innocence.

Anyone contemplating the designs covering the Tenatir for any length of time becomes dizzy, lightheaded, and must make a CON x5 roll to keep from passing out. Anyone touching the Tenatir experiences a faint electric tingle but suffers no damage.

The Tenatir is a creature of insatiable curiosity and will stop to examine every new object, nook, or cranny he encounters. He must be physically pulled away from these each and every time, making his rescue all that much more difficult.

The Tenatir

STR 9 CON 28 SIZ 19 INT 32 POW 26 DEX 9 CHA 18

Hit Points: 35 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Balance 99%, Climb 88%, Dodge 80%, Listen 98%, Hide 92%, Make Map 106%, Memorize 117%, Move Quietly 99%, Music Lore 111%, Navigate 112%, Persuade 78%, Scent 101%, Search 34%, See 97%, Sing 98%, Taste 88%.

The Tenatir is an embryonic god, one half of the whole. The Chaos Lord, Gashoram, is the other half and the Tenatir's brother. While Gashoram has spent an eternity lusty after power and causing pain and strife, the Tenatir has roamed the multiverse, learning and experiencing, with no apparent thought for the future. The Tenatir is unable to communicate with the charac-



The Tenatir

ters, speaking an unfamiliar, soft, meeping language that can be understood only by those who have spent some time in the being's company. The Tenatir is gentle and child-like, devoid of anything resembling anger, hostility, or frustration. He is the interplanar navigator of the *Rogue Mistress*, capable of guiding the ship through the multiverse. Although the actual method used by the creature is not well understood, it is known that the Tenatir must first have a mental image of the plane he intends to travel to. The Tenatir learns of new planes by reading the minds of others. He accomplishes this by placing his hands on the character's head and scanning his memory for thoughts of the new world. This process takes less than a minute.

The Empty Cells

Every one of these cramped and foul-smelling cells shows signs of recent occupancy. Judging from the mess left behind, and the air of unutterable despair it is best the occupants are no longer around. These cells have been emptied in preparation for the Tenatir's incarceration. Those mutants who were not considered interesting enough, were put to death. The remainder were transferred to the cells in the western wing of the dungeon.

The Laboratory

This is a large, irregularly-shaped chamber. The western wall is taken up by shelves stocked with a wide assortment of arcane paraphernalia including beakers and phials of strange liquids and powders. In the center of the lab stands a large bench or table, a rectangular slab of glistening ebon stone, laced with veins of silver. It is supported by four silver legs that resemble the gnarled roots of an ancient tree. Directly above the table is a 10-foot-long translucent blue-green crystal with nine spikes of varying lengths, all radiating from the long central body of the crystal. The tip of the central spike, pointing down towards the table, glows with a pulsing, unpleasant green light. Near the table another small, crescent-shaped slab of stone displays an assortment of multicolored crystals, each glowing with its own mysterious inner light.

In a series of nine stalls arranged along the north and east walls stand what appear to be five women and four men, mummified and dressed in the various fashions of Ildaron nobility. Their eyes and mouths are sewn tightly shut with catgut, their hands clasped upon the hilts of strange black swords bearing disturbing looking runes.

In the small niche in the northwest corner there is a black pool in the floor surrounded by inlaid silver runes set in the stone. The most common of these runes depict the eight-arrow symbol of Chaos.

Most of the stored fluids and powders are quite dangerous. One example is the three phials of a thick, silvery liquid kept swathed in fabric and stored inside a small wooden box bearing symbols which are obviously not of Ildaron. These phials contain a highly volatile concoction which, when thrown, produces a tremendous detonation. The blast area has a 50 foot radius and causes 2D10+5 points of damage to anyone caught in it. Another shelf holds a small, locked trunk which can be opened with a successful Pick Lock. Inside are 12 phials of a thick, greenish fluid which a

successful See roll identifies as the slavers' docility decoction (if the characters are familiar with this potion).

The ebon slab and the crystal above it comprise an arcane construct designed by Salrenna. Magical, it is turned upon captured slaves in order to create hideous mutants. Any sorcerer examining this horrid device quickly sees that the process which created the mutants can be easily reversed, given time and the co-operation of the mutants to be treated.

Anyone examining the unsettlingly lifelike figures displayed in the stalls discovers that they are human beings stuffed and mounted like some macabre trophies. These are the Echare, created by Media using the amulet given to her by her demon mentor, G'theke. Media uses the amulet to sear away the flesh, bone, and soul of her victims, leaving nothing but a shell of skin into which is invested the fiery essence of a minor creature of Chaos called an Echare. This is Media's gallery of vanquished foes who also function as laboratory guardians, Media's last line of defense should the palace be overrun.

Any character who examines the runes on the mysterious swords and can make a Read/Write High Melnibonéan roll, discovers the secret of destroying the Echare. Only the swords carried by the demons are capable of absorbing the vile essence of these demons and only these swords can slay them.

Appearing at first as inanimate trophies, the Echare come to life 1D6 rounds after intruders first enter the lab, attacking with merciless fury and ruthless glee. The high-pitched keening noise they make is both jarring and unnerving.

The human skin containing the demons is easily cut, but that only releases the essence of the demon. Bursting forth in snakelike tendrils of fire, it strikes for 2D6 points of radiant heat damage. One tendril per cut will manifest itself and these cannot be harmed by any weapons save the swords borne by the Echare. The terms of the Echare's binding allow them to leave the plane after killing one victim. The sewn together bag of skin collapses to the floor along with the dark sword carried by the demon. These swords dissolve into a black, oily mist 1D6 rounds after the last Echare is destroyed.

The Echare

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 16 DEX 15

Hit Points: 17 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	61%	59%	1D10+1
Tendrils	45%	—	2D6

Skills: Ambush 50%, Dodge 50%, Jump 45%, Tumble 45%.

If not yet encountered, there is a 45% chance that Media and/or Salrenna are present in the lab (roll once for each). If Media is present, she will be gloating before her Echare trophies. If only Salrenna is present, she will be making some minute adjustments to the mutating device. If both women are present, they will be conducting one of their abominable experiments.

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If Media is here, the Echare defend her retreat into the store room wherein lies her secret escape route. Otherwise, they attack at their leisure, biding their time in order to take the party unawares. Make an Ambush roll for each Echare. If one fails, then the party is forewarned of the attack.

The black pool is a calling place where Media receives instructions from her demon master, G'theke. On closer inspection the material in the pool is found to have only a semi-liquid texture which hints at shuddersome depths and unnatural cold. This black pool is in fact the tip of a small tendril of a Chain of Chaos, extended into the laboratory when Media gave herself over to the desires of G'theke. In order to communicate with his servant, G'theke fashions himself a humanoid form from this viscous fluid.

G'theke appears here only to give Media instructions or to provide her with information she requires. The demon will not attack intruders and will not lift a finger to assist Media in time of need.

If the adventurers secretly enter the lab, at some point the great horned demon arises from the black pool to inform the intruders that they have been marked "as enemies of the greater demon, G'theke," and told that they will one day be made to pay for their interference.

Touching the symbols around the black pool produces a sharp but harmless tingling of the skin. Touching the pool itself causes the permanent loss of 1D3 points of POW; evil's way of leeching the soul.

There is a concealed push plate by the secret door in the store room and also near the secret door in the south wall of the dungeon. Either of these releases the locks on the cell doors as well as the lock on the door leading to the west wing. The door to the stairway leading to the first floor is simultaneously sealed off. With these devices, Media can release her mutants into the dungeon to deal with intruders who, unless they know of a secret door, will be hopelessly trapped.

The secret door in the store room off the lab opens onto a small chamber which contains food, clothing, and other essentials for an escaping tyrant. There is also 10,000LG in Ildaron currency. Another secret door opens onto a tunnel extending to the old well in the compound. Metal rungs set in the stone wall assist in the climb to the surface.

In the floor of the nearby gazebo there is a concealed trap door which affords access to the tunnel extending beneath the walls of the compound and into the cellar of the Black Lizard Tavern. From here a disguised Media will try to make good her escape. (See The Black Lizard Tavern for further details.)

The Mutants

These horrific spawn of Salrenna's inhuman tamperings are kept imprisoned in the west wing of the dungeon. Each is a monstrous commingling of human and animal parts, sometimes even including insect or reptile features.

Typical Mutant

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 10 DEX 14 CHA 2

Hit Points: 16 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw	58%	53%	3D6
Bite	55%	—	2D6

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 40%, Jump 50%, Move Quietly 50%.

While the mutants behave in a manner which seems insane, they still retain their human intelligence and reasoning ability. They are know what has been done to them and are possessed by raging hatred for those responsible for their wretched condition.

If the mutants can be convinced that the adventurers are not Syferans and that the process which created them can be reversed, they will ally themselves with the party.

Escape from Syfera

Once out of the Royal Compound, the adventurers will have to make their way back to the dirigible hangar, steal an aircraft, and use it to escape the island. Satisfied they will make their rendezvous with Astralgys, the characters might think they can relax a little. But it is then that they are set upon by the infamous pirate ship, the *Rogue Mistress*.

If the characters look as though they'll be caught before escaping Syfera, the ship shows up earlier, saving the adventurers along with the Tenatir.

For information about the *Rogue Mistress* see the next chapter.

The Third Chapter

The Rogue Mistress

THE *ROGUE MISTRESS* is a strange flying ship of mysterious origins. Presently captained by the infamous pirate, Maria de Tres Pistolas, the *Rogue Mistress* has for the last

several years been the scourge of Ildaron's shipping lanes. Skipping back and forth between the planes, Maria has managed to elude her captors both here and on the world of

Albyon, striking at first one, then the other. Six months ago, while the ship lay in what was thought a safe hiding spot, it was attacked by a contingent of Syferan guardswomen who kidnaped the Tenatir as well as damaging the ship's interplanar navigational equipment. Since that time, without the aid of their navigator, the ship has been trapped on this plane. Maria, as well as most of the crew, has a large price on her head. Without the Tenatir as a means of escape, the ship is confined to this plane and in increasing danger of being hunted down. Maria has spent a good deal of time learning the whereabouts of the Tenatir and it is only by luck that the characters have managed to free him (probably) before Maria launched her planned attack on the citadel.

This chapter is written assuming the characters were successful in finding and rescuing the Tenatir and have now escaped the island of Syfera. It is quite possible that, after springing the prisoner, the characters are in danger of being captured before they can get off the island. In this case, the *Rogue Mistress* will show up earlier, rescuing the Tenatir and the adventurers as well. It is possible that the characters bungle the job badly and are thrown into the dungeon. If all seems hopeless, the characters might be freed when Maria launches the surprise attack. The characters can then make some sort of arrangement to escape on the ship.

The Strange Ship

The ship itself, although at a distance appearing normal, is unknowably ancient and, upon closer view, is seen to be of alien construction and materials. Four swiveling, atomic-powered thrusters extend from the underside of the craft, providing it with lift and directional control. Its main armament consists of four black-powder cannons from the world of Albyon, mounted in pairs port and starboard, an acid cannon on the stern, and a heavy laser cannon mounted over the bow. Below decks, aside from the mysterious power plant, there is a device called the Entropy Configuration. This machine, if used properly, allows the ship to travel between the various planes of existence. The Tenatir is the only person who understands how to use this device. Without him the ship is unable to move between the planes.

The wood of the ship is dark, almost black, fire- and acid-resistant, nearly impervious to blows from swords, axes, or teeth. The railings and door frames are covered with intricate carvings depicting demons, dragons, and other beasts. The sails are made from a slippery, unknown material.

With the possible exception of the Tenatir, no one knows the origin of the ship. Legend has it that it has been sailing through the planes for untold ages. Most certainly the last captain, Draa'k Ferenz, commanded the craft for over two centuries before being killed by Gath, and some of the crew have been aboard for almost as long.

This encounter must be handled with care. It is the intent of the adventure that the characters join in with Maria. She

knows much about the sorceress, Pollidemia, and has her own reasons for seeking revenge on the woman. Maria learns of the characters' plight, the demon hearts beating coldly within their chests, and offers them aid. She knows bits of the legend of the Kynn K'tal and knows that the Planar Knife is possibly the only weapon in existence that can destroy these ancient beings.

Attack of the Rogue Mistress

Assuming the adventurers have successfully escaped the island, it will be about the time they are congratulating themselves on a job well done that they spot a strange craft bearing down on them from above. The ship has only sails, no balloons, and blue flames can be seen jetting out from four strange-looking metal nozzles protruding from the bottom of the ship's hull. The craft moves far faster than any balloon boat.

"The *Rogue Mistress*," says Horne (or any other native of this plane accompanying the party). The Tenatir, spotting the ship, breaks into a huge grin and begins squeaking happily, jumping with obvious joy.

If there are any Lauklanders or Syferans aboard the ship, they tell the party that they are about to be attacked by the notorious pirate ship, the *Rogue Mistress*. The ship, along with her captain, the deadly "Maria de Tres Pistolas," is the terror of Ildaron merchants. There is a large price on Maria's head but as yet no one has been able to collect. One of the difficulties in capturing the pirates has been that they often drop out of sight, sometimes for months at a time, only to reappear in some other part of the Ildaron system, voraciously attacking helpless trading vessels. If the characters don't know it yet, they are told that the hostage they have freed is a member of the *Rogue Mistress*' crew, captured several months ago during a raid staged by Queen Media. If, however, the adventurers are alone, they learn nothing of this. They can only stand and watch as the strange ship drops into position about 500 feet off their starboard bow. A dark-haired woman, dressed in red, walks to the port rail of the vessel and puts a horn to her lips.

"Ahoy! Heave to and prepare for boarding!"

The party will be given ten seconds to reply. If they don't answer, the characters see a hinged door on the side of the *Rogue Mistress* swing up, revealing the gaping end of large, black metal cylinder. The woman in red then drops her upraised arm. The characters hear a bang and see a large cloud of smoke erupt from the end of the cylinder.

The next instant a cannonball crashes into the forecabin of the characters' balloon boat, smashing it to splinters, tearing rigging, and perhaps injuring or even killing a non-player character.

"Heave to!" the woman calls again, and, ominously, a second hinged door swings open to reveal another of the black cylinders.

If the characters do not slow their craft, Maria continues to pummel their ship until it is ruined and adrift in the vast atmosphere, an inert object ready to attract the chains of Law and Chaos. The gunners are expert and slowly chisel away at the ship, always being careful to not injure their shipmate, the Tenatir.

One way or the other, the characters' ship is halted and the *Rogue Mistress* draws alongside, tossing out grappling hooks and drawing the two vessels together. A hard-bitten crew of pirates, many of odd appearance and dress, ready themselves to board the balloon boat. The dark-haired woman in red shouts orders to them. She carries no sword but is armed with three odd-looking devices kept in leather scabbards (nickel-plated revolvers). Standing next to the woman, obviously her first officer, is a seven-foot-tall creature with green skin, huge red eyes, and a frog-like mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth. Strapped to this thing's hip is another small hand weapon, in some ways similar to Maria's pistols, but different in design and style (a small ray gun). A huge fighting knife is kept tucked in the front of the creature's belt.

If the adventurers have made no hostile moves, a gang plank is dropped between the two ships and Maria, accompanied by the green creature and several members of her crew, swagger over. Should any character make threatening gestures with a weapon, the green creature unholsters his pistol and expertly sends a shaft of blue light into the offending character's hand, causing him to drop the weapon and suffer 1D3 points of damage. Maria is capable of similar feats with her revolvers.

If Valmir Horne is aboard, there may be trouble. The lawful Lauklander is a sworn enemy of the pirate, Maria, and may prove less cooperative than the player characters. It may be that he tries to pull a weapon on one of Maria's crew. In that case, Maria drops him with a single shot from one of her pistols, putting the bullet neatly into the center of Horne's forehead. Alternatively, they may simply engage in a verbal battle, Horne swearing that someday Maria will see justice and swing at the end of a rope, while Maria simply laughs in his face. Krathak, the green demon-thing, keeps a close eye on the Lauklander.

Although neither Maria nor her crew is adverse to robbing the characters, they are more interested in getting the Tenatir back. If the adventurers appear healthy, and powerful enough to put up a good fight, the pirates avoid engaging them in combat. In fact, if demanded of them, they might even be willing to pay a small ransom for their shipmate.

An Alliance

In the meantime, Mikkl Grathorn has scanned the party with his hand-held bio-reader and discovered the demon hearts residing in the characters' chests. Maria is informed of their situation and immediately recognizes the handiwork of the sorceress, Pollidemia. In the adventurers, Maria sees a way

of getting back at her hated adversary, as well as taking care of a more immediate problem.

The characters may not be willing to give up the Tenatir easily. Without him, they believe there is no chance that Pollidemia will remove the hearts. Maria informs them that no matter what they do, it is highly unlikely that Pollidemia has any intention of helping them. " 'Once the hearts of the Kynn K'tal have been placed in a mortal chest, there is no hope for them but that which is found within the Planar Knife' ," she quotes, as though from memory.

"Even Pollidemia hasn't the power to remove those hearts without destroying you, although she may lie and tell you that she does. Once the hearts of the Kynn K'tal have been called forth there is no way they can be destroyed except by the destruction of the Kynn K'tal themselves. In the meantime, their hearts live and grow within you. When the proper words are spoken, the Kynn K'tal will awake and once they have devoured their hearts, they will resume their feasting like they did in the days of old, stalking through the planes, bringing death, destruction, and terror to everything they touch."

The characters will certainly want more information about this powerful weapon called the Planar Knife and Maria reveals to them most of what she knows. The Planar Knife is supposed to reside in a space between the planes, a self-created place of Chaos that can be entered only by way of certain passages found piercing their way into different planes of existence. Maria knows of one rumored entrance, found somewhere on the world of Albyon.

The pirate captain proposes a deal to the characters. For reasons of her own, she explains, she would like to put an end to Pollidemia. She does not tell them of the woman's involvement in the death of her lover, Draa'k Ferenz, but instead feigns concern for the characters. She pretends that her reasons for wanting to confront Pollidemia have to do with the Kynn K'tal and the havoc and destruction they would wreak if unleashed upon the multiverse. Maria knows of a man who is supposed to know far more about the Planar Knife than she. However, this man lives on the world of Albyon, quite some distance from Ildaron, and she is unsure of whether the *Rogue Mistress* is capable of carrying them that far.

"The *Mistress* could easily take you there," she says, "if she were in shape for the voyage."

Maria tells the party that during the raid that saw the Tenatir taken captive, her navigational device was severely damaged. "It might be good for one more trip between the planes, but no more. And I doubt that even then it could get us all the way to Albyon."

Maria tells them she knows of a shipwreck on a nearby plane, a wreck she has every reason to believe carries a replacement navigational device. She is sure that the *Mistress* could get them that far, but once there they would be unable to leave until they found and installed the replacement part. The device is called the Entropy Configuration.

"If you would be willing to retrieve this thing for me, I could take you to Albyon and there set you upon the right path."

If the characters ask why she is willing to get so involved with their problems, Maria indicates that she has reasons she would like to see Pollidemia fail. "I'm no great believer in Law," she says, "but I don't think it would be in anyone's best interest to have creatures such as the Kynn K'tal freed and once more roaming the planes."

The Agreement

Maria promises the adventurers that if they retrieve the Entropy Configuration, she will then take them on to Albyon and there put them on the track of the man she claims knows the secrets of the Planar Knife. If the characters are hesitant to deal with the pirate, Astralgix appears on the scene, misreading the situation and, through his actions, helping the adventurers to decide to toss in with Maria.

"Aha!" says Astralgix, appearing in a cloud of smoke, perched on the rail of the ship. "I figured you were up to no good." The vile little demon accuses the party of betraying his mistress and going against her wishes. Before the characters can explain Astralgix says: "Wait till Pollidemia hears what you're up to; making deals with scurrilous pirates. Now you're in trouble for sure."

Krathak yanks his pistol out and fires a shot at the demon, but Astralgix disappears in a puff of smoke and the pencil-thin blue beam pierces nothing but air. Maria uses this incident to help convince the characters how hopeless their situation is. Only with her aid do they stand a chance of saving themselves.

Even if the characters have already decided to ship with Maria, Astralgix will still make his appearance. They should be aware that Astralgix and Pollidemia know of their plans.

Maria Outlines the Mission Ahead

Before journeying to the plane of Klaadii, the characters are called into Maria's cabin and the mission outlined to them. She makes no bones about the fact that she once before attempted to explore this wreck and that the four men she sent never returned. She makes sure the characters know full well what they are getting into.

She explains that the ship is an alien vessel, gigantic by any standards, and constructed in a very strange manner. The ship's strange power plants are still operating and give off some sort of invisible power that seems to affect the controls of the *Rogue Mistress*. Therefore, she will have to anchor the ship some distance from the wreck and send the adventurers in by longboat.

The plane of Klaadii, she explains, was once ruled by Chaos which, after exploiting and expending all the possi-

bilities which that world had to offer, left it a drained and lifeless place, devoid of energy, potential, and even time.

"It is a dead place," she warns them. "With not even the whisper of a breeze or the lap of a wave. If we fail to retrieve the Configuration," she warns them, "we may end up spending the remainder of our days trapped there."

The Crew

Maria de Tres Pistolas, pirate captain

Maria is 25 years old, dark haired, independent, and capable. Born and bred in the world of Albyon, she spent much of her youth in the streets of the Espaniac city, Re' Hildago, first earning her living as a pickpocket and burglar, and later as a notorious highwayman. At the age of 18 she met and fell in love with Draa'k Ferenz, free-booting pirate and long time captain of the *Rogue Mistress*. Together the two of them sailed across the planes, pirating and raiding, robbing the rich and sharing it with their crew and friends. Not long ago, during an abortive attempt by Pollidemia to kidnap the Tenatir, Ferenz was killed by Pollidemia's demon guardian, Gath. Maria soon after took charge of the ship and has since then served as captain.

STR 12 CON 16 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW 18 DEX 20 CHA 21

Hit Points: 16 Armor: None, but has invisible force field.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Revolver	97%	—	2D6+2
Dagger	88%	94%	1D4+2
Cannon	92%	—	10D6
Thrown Dagger	92%	—	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 67%, Balance 88%, Climb 98%, Conceal 92%, Cut Purse 94%, Dodge 92%, First Aid 76%, Hide 97%, Jump 93%, Listen 92%, Make Map 93%, Memorize 85%, Move Quietly 95%, Music Lore 95%, Navigate 96%, Orate 95%, Persuade 90%, Pick Lock 97%, Ride 55%, Scent 88%, Search 87%, See 91%, Set Trap 65%, Sleight Of Hand 88%, Swim 99%, Taste 66%, Tie Knot 92%, Tumble 88%.

Languages: Albyon Common 65%/95%, Ildaron Common 55%/92%.

Possessions: A high-tech shield given to her by Ferenz. When activated, it confers an almost impenetrable force field. She can not effectively fight from within it, but she can use it to effect a tactical retreat. This device has only a certain amount of energy charges and there are but a few left, perhaps 20 minutes worth. It protects Maria from physical attacks, electricity, liquids, heat, etc., up to a maximum of 30 points from any single attack.

Maria's three nickel-plated revolvers are fast and deadly weapons. Each holds six shots and fires twice per round with a base range of 60 feet. Maria can fire pistols with both hands, accurately, or fan one of them. Fanning allows her to expend all six cartridges in a single round. Her shooting skill when fanning is half normal but she can aim at as many as six different targets, as long as they are within a ten foot wide area. Reloading one of these guns requires two rounds and Maria keeps a large supply of ammunition in her cabin. In addition to the damage they do, the metal slugs are capable of piercing (ignoring) the first 10 points of armor they encounter.

Demons: Maria has a demon dagger capable of inflicting an extra 5D6 points of damage. If the weapon is thrown, it instantly teleports back to her hand after hitting the target.

CON 34 POW 14

Krathak, first mate

Krathak is a thoroughly alien-looking creature with green, scaly skin, huge red eyes, and a broad mouth shaped like a frog's and lined with sharp teeth. At first glance, characters from the Young Kingdoms may mistake him for a demon, but he is not. Krathak is simply a different from of natural life. He is fiercely loyal to Maria, as he was to Ferenz.

STR 25 CON 30 SIZ 19 INT 24 POW 22 DEX 20 CHA 14

Hit Points: 37 **Armor:** 6 points of resilient, rubbery scales.

Damage Bonus: +2D6/+2D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Ray Gun	97%	—	6D6
Fighting Knife	95%	102%	1D8+3
Cannon	80%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 80%, Balance 88%, Climb 85%, Conceal 55%, Cut Purse 45%, Dodge 88%, First Aid 70%, Hide 67%, Jump 67%, Listen 90%, Memorize 89%, Move Quietly 75%, Navigate 90%, Persuade 80%, Scent 100%, Search 80%, See 92%, Swim 100%, Tie Knot 88%, Track 66%, Tumble 65%.

Languages: Albyon Common 75/90%, Ildaron Common 88/95%.

Possessions: Krathak's ray gun fires a pencil-thin beam of blue energy. He can, if he wishes, adjust it so that less damage is caused and less energy used. This deadly weapon fires twice per round and ignores any and all armor save force fields. It has a base range of 60 feet but is incapable of shooting any farther. The beam ends sharply at 60 feet. The beam extends no farther than this. After twenty shots, the energy unit must be replaced. This can be popped in within the space of one round. Krathak has a large supply of spare energy units which are recharged directly off the ship's engines.

Hilda, viking warrior

Hilda is a large, good-looking woman with long blond hair kept in braids. She wears a horned helmet and prefers to fight with a spear. She is Maria's best friend and the two women spend a good deal of time talking together in Maria's cabin.

STR 21 CON 22 SIZ 17 INT 14 POW 15 DEX 15 CHA 15

Hit Points: 27 **Armor:** Chain Mail (1D10+1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Spear	95%	92%	1D10+1
Thrown Spear	88%	—	2D6
Cannon	95%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 90%, Balance 65%, Hide 65%, Listen 85%, Move Quietly 70%, Search 65%, See 95%, Set Trap 85%, Track 85%.

Languages: Albyon Common 65/85%, Ildaron Common 45/75%.

Grr'luk Houlk, giant of a man

A large hulking brute, Grr'luk has been a member of the crew since before Maria's time. He is fond of his captain and a fearless fighter. Grr'luk stands over 8 feet tall and weighs nearly 450 pounds. He has a bushy, full beard, and a remarkably hairy body.

STR 30 CON 32 SIZ 24 INT 8 POW 12 DEX 11 CHA 9

Hit Points: 44 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +3D6/+3D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Spiked Club	88%	65%	1D8+1
Tower Shield	65%	92%	1D6+2
Cannon	78%	—	10D6

Skills: Balance 32%, Climb 34%, Dodge 33%, First Aid 40%, Hide 20%, Jump 50%, Listen 66%, Move Quietly 16%, Persuade 10%, Scent 98%, Search 73%, See 75%, Set Trap 65%, Swim 66%, Tie Knot 66%, Track 80%.

Languages: Albyon Common 0/75%, Ildaron Common 0/65%.

Mikkl Grathorn, technician

Grathorn is a native of a high-tech plane who was originally a kidnap victim, stolen from his home world by Ferenz to make repairs and perform maintenance on the *Rogue Mistress*. Although Grathorn at first resented his kidnapping, he eventually came to admire Ferenz. When the pirate finally offered to take him back to his home world, Grathorn declined, electing instead to stay on as a member of the crew of the *Rogue Mistress*. Mikkl is capable of repairing almost anything aboard ship, providing he can find something to serve as replacement parts.

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 9 INT 17 POW 13 DEX 10 CHA 11

Hit Points: 11 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	44%	24%	1D8+1
Target Shield	11%	23%	1D6

Skills: Balance 60%, Dodge 33%, Electrical Lore 95%, Hide 60%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Lore 85%, Move Quietly 45%, Orate 50%, Persuade 45%, Pick Lock 25%, Search 33%, See 55%.

Languages: Albyon Common 90/85%, Gollian 85/85%, Ildaron Common 89/80%.

Possessions: Grathorn uses a small hand-held device studded with meters and gauges. He calls it his bio-reader and uses it to scan people, buildings, objects, etc., often providing Maria with small bits of useful information. Only Grathorn understands how to use the device. Because of their basic lack of scientific knowledge, it would take a Young Kingdoms character over a year to learn even its simplest operations.

Okthang, invisible demon

When visible, Okthang looks like a bat-winged grapefruit with a single large, human-like eye. From its underside dangles a long, wiry arm ending in a three-fingered hand. While in flight, the Okthang's wingspread is about six feet. Incapable of speech, it is able to communicate by pressing the fingers of its single hand into Maria's palm and making simple signs which the pirate can understand. Okthang is not particularly bold, but is crafty and elusive. He usually performs tasks requiring surveillance and stealth.

STR 7 CON 13 SIZ 3 INT 7 POW 8 DEX 23 CHA 1

Hit Points: 7 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	25%	—	1D3
Claw	20%	—	1D2

Skills: Cut Purse 93%, Move Quietly 96%.

Abilities: The Okthang, at will can become invisible and its presence is then undetectable 90% of the time.

Teo & Deo, identical twins

These two men, 22 years old, joined the crew shortly before the death of Ferenz. They are both in love with Maria but won't admit it to anyone or each other. They are, however, capable of showing a fierce jealousy if one or more of the characters should grow overly friendly with their captain. Even worse, they often take opposing sides on different issues but leave the characters confused as to which of them took which side. They have identical statistics.

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 15 CHA 14

Hit Points: 15 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	88%	78%	1D8+1
Buckler	90%	95%	1D4
Thrown Dagger	85%	—	1D4+2
Self Bow	80%	—	1D8+1
Cannon	75%	—	10D6

Skills: Balance 90%, Climb 88%, Dodge 75%, Hide 80%, Jump 65%, Listen 75%, Move Quietly 60%, Search 75%, See 70%, Swim 65%, Tumble 85%.

Languages: Albyon Common 22/77%, Ildaron Common 17/67%

Demons: Each of the brothers has five demon arrows in his quiver. The arrows never miss their mark, unless effected by a stronger magic, and inflict 8D6 damage. Used once, the demon is unbound and free to return to its own plane: CON 7 POW 9.

Harri Beecham, deformed mutant

Harri was a prisoner of Queen Media and one of Salrenna's experiments. His face is wild and haggard looking, his body covered with bony plates that give him a form of natural armor. He has an extra pair of arms sprouting from below his ribs. With these extra arms he carries a second shield and a small dagger. Due to his skillful use of the two shields, Harri's Parry ability is higher than it would be normally. He is capable of making two attacks per round, the second attack coming later in the round, figured at half his normal DEX. Harri usually attacks first with the sword and second with his dagger. If Harri is fighting with only one shield, his Parry skill is reduced by 30 percentiles.

STR 20 CON 17 SIZ 18 INT 8 POW 10 DEX 9 CHA 5

Hit Points: 23 **Armor:** Mutated bony plates (2D10-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	75%	70%	1D8+1
Buckler (2)	33%	96% (66%)	1D4
Dagger	65%	55%	1D4+2
Cannon	85%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 95%, Balance 45%, Climb 65%, Dodge 35%, Hide 55%, Move Quietly 40%, Track 85%.

Languages: Albyon Common 10/44%, Ildaron Common 5/33%.

Jerkin Kilmer, cutthroat

Jerkin is the newest member of the crew and probably the least trustworthy. Although so far he has proved a willing hand and a capable fighter, Kilmer, given the opportunity and the right price, will sell out his captain and any of his companions.

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 16 CHA 9

Hit Points: 15 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	85%	65%	1D8+1
Dagger	85%	90%	1D4+2
Cannon	65%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 95%, Balance 90%, Climb 75%, Conceal 85%, Cut Purse 90%, Dodge 88%, Hide 85%, Jump 95%, Listen 88%, Move Quietly 90%, Navigate 55%, Persuade 15%, Pick Lock 75%, Search 75%, See 75%, Set Trap 80%, Sleight Of Hand 89%, Swim 98%, Tie Knot 55%.

Languages: Albyon Common 73/88%, Ildaron Common 44/64%.

Demons: Jerkin's scimitar contains a demon that allows the weapon to do an extra 3D6 points of damage. Additionally, it also has the Phantom power and upon command, causes itself and its wielder to become immaterial and ghost-like, able to pass through solid objects at will. Characters in such a state can not be harmed by any physical weapons although they are vulnerable to other sorts of attacks. Only another character in the phantom state can physically attack this person: CON 40 POW 8.

Syfrim Kalb, knivesman

Kalb is originally from a far-distant plane. He appears human but his skin is a bright red color and his hair a coppery gold. He has been a member of the crew for over two years. He rarely fights hand to hand but prefers to stand back taking advantage of his high dagger throwing skill and his two flying daggers, Iliah and Kr-syzt.

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 13 DEX 20 CHA 16

Hit Points: 17 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Dagger	65%	77%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	92%	—	1D4+2
Cannon	92%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 98%, Balance 99%, Climb 85%, Conceal 97%, Cut Purse 75%, Dodge 90%, Hide 98%, Juggle 90%, Jump 75%, Listen 60%, Move Quietly 96%, Music Lore 89%, Persuade 65%, Pick Lock 75%, Search 55%, See 70%, Sing 95%, Set Trap 85%, Sleight of Hand 95%, Swim 90%, Tie Knot 90%.

Languages: Albyon Common 45/65%, Ildaron Common 40/65%.

Demons: The two daggers each strike for an additional 3D6 points of damage plus have the ability to fly back to their master. It takes one round for the daggers to return to Syfrim's hand: CON 22 POW 10.

Generic Pirates

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 11 DEX 12 CHA 9

Hit Points: 13 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	65%	55%	1D8+1
Cannon	80%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 65%, Balance 65%, Climb 85%, Dodge 65%, Hide 80%, Jump 55%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 75%, Navigate 65%, Swim 90%, Tie Knot 95%.

The Rogue Mistress

She is a large, swift craft, sporting three square-rigged masts. The main deck, amidships, is broad and contains the main hatches leading to the ship's forward and aft holds. The fore and aft decks are smaller and higher, reached from the main deck by two short ladders, two forward, and one aft. There is a ship's wheel on both these upper decks but the usual steersman, Krathak, almost always uses the aft wheel while Maria stands at the front wheel operating the odd looking controls that command the many features of the ship. Small lights and indicators tell her the state of the craft's operating systems and two large throttle levers control the power to the nozzles under the hull. Maria is an expert pilot, as are Krathak and several other crew members. Young Kingdoms characters will find it nearly impossible to understand the controls unless they have been trained by a willing teacher. The vessel is nearly maintenance-free and what few repairs and adjustments it requires are performed by the technician, Mikkl Grathorn, assisted by other experienced members of the crew.

Going below decks, the crew's quarters are found in the bow, dozens of hammocks stretched one above the other in swaying tiers. Individual sea chests are kept here. The galley is situated immediately aft of the crew quarters and contains a small kitchen and rough wood dining table with benches. Farther back, in the direction of the stern, are two holds. The forward hold is used to store food, water, and other supplies the pirates need, including cannonballs and the black, explosive powder manufactured on the world of Albyon. The aft hold contains the engines and navigational devices used by the *Mistress*. In a small cramped corner of the hold is an odd-looking couch, upholstered with the smooth, slightly oily skin of some unknown animal (naugahyde). Suspended above the couch, mounted to the overhead, is a strange-looking device that Maria calls the Entropy Configuration. The base is made of an unrecognizable metal and attached to it is a large, translucent globe, filled with innumerable tiny, blinking lights. This is the Tenatir's room. The Tenatir lays upon this couch, his hands caressing the Configuration, using the power of his mind, amplified by the device, to smoothly and accurately maneuver the ship through the planes.

Obvious damage has been done to this instrument. Although still functioning, the tiny lights sometimes dim, occasionally threatening to wink out altogether. The Tenatir, although still elated to be reunited with his ship and crew, is visibly distressed when he discovers the condition of his beloved Entropy Configuration. He whimpers softly while

caressing its dented metal base and scratched and chipped crystal globe.

Maria's cabin is in the aft portion of the ship, a spacious area with a row of stained-glass casement windows looking off the stern. The cabin is sumptuously decorated with hangings of velvet and samite and the air scented with exotic fragrances. A large chest holds Maria's personal items and a second, smaller one her charts and maps. Hanging on the wall are a half-dozen black powder pistols of various design, once used by her on the world of Albion.

The ship's cabin boy, a small, hideously-ugly demon named Thraxis, is almost always present in Maria's cabin. He is nearly two feet high, of vaguely humanoid appearance, and acts as maid and servant for Maria, keeping the cabin clean, bringing her food, etc. Thraxis also acts as a body-guard and will defend his mistress valiantly. Although small, Thraxis can inflict a particularly ugly wounded with his rasp-like, pointed tongue. The terms of his binding do not allow Thraxis to leave the cabin but if for any reason Maria requires privacy, she uses a special command word that causes him to turn to smoke and enter a small, stoppered bottle.

Thraxis, Cabin Demon

STR 8 CON 13 SIZ 4 INT 6 POW 10 DEX 16 CHA 6

Hit Points: 8 **Armor:** 2 points of thick, rubbery skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Rasping Tongue	80%	—	2D4

Skills: Dodge 85%, Hide 98%, Jump 95%, Listen 98%, Move Quietly 88%, See, 95%, Taste 95%, Tumble 80%.

The Gifts

Also found in Maria's cabin are a pair of tall wooden cabinets with latched doors. One is marked with the eight-arrow symbol of Chaos, the other with the triangular sign of Law. For their aid in rescuing the Tenatir (assuming the characters did not give Maria too difficult a time) she will offer the party their choice of any two of the items found in the cabinets: a tradition aboard this ship. She unlocks the doors and opens them, allowing the adventurers to view the contents.

Maria knows very little about the objects, at least in detail. She knows which weapons have demons in them but does not know their powers or abilities. She knows the small, fruit-shaped devices are for healing but, similarly, doesn't know their limits. These cabinets have been on board the ship for ages and it has long been a custom to offer presents to guests who have earned the favor of the captain and crew. Periodically, new objects appear to replace those that have been taken. The cabinets are never opened save to offer presents to those who have earned them. Tradition says that doing so would negate the power of the cabinets and that no more objects would appear in them.

Cabinet of Chaos

The demons found in the following items are bound by the magic of the ship to serve whomever chooses them. Although the character must have enough available CHA to possess the demon, there is no POW struggle required to bind it.

Fleshblade, Demon Scimitar

This weapon adds 4D6 damage to the normal 1D8+1. In addition, upon penetrating armor and contacting flesh, *Fleshblade* enters into a POW struggle with its opponent. If successful, it has a 37% chance to transmute the victim's flesh into stone. The area affected is limited to a SIZ of 1D8, the rest of the victim remaining untouched. *Fleshblade* loses 1 point of CON for each point of SIZ transmuted: CON 20 POW 20

Quartermain, Demon Quarterstaff

Quartermain causes an extra 2D6 points of damage in addition to its normal 1D8. It also boasts the power of Explosive Decomposition with a POT rating of 10. Upon striking, *Quartermain* engages in a POW vs POW struggle. If successful, the victim takes a further 5 points of damage: CON 30 POW 12

Swordbane, Demon Plate Armor

Armor: 15 points.

Swordbane is blessed with a wardpact against swords. It appears as a battered suit of lacquered black plate armor of Ilmioran design: CON 40 POW 18

Stealth, Demon Leather Armor

Armor: 10 points.

This armor has the power, Phantom. The armor and its wearer, upon command, become incorporeal and immune to all physical attacks. The wearer is still vulnerable to non-physical weapons and cannot handle any solid objects which he did not have in his possession at the time he became immaterial. The phantom state remains for 12 rounds, after which *Stealth* must rest for 12 rounds before the power can be used again. *Stealth* also has the ability to heal its wearer. It can replace 2D6 hit points once per day: CON 12 POW 12

Cabinet of Law

The following devices are from planes with technologies similar to that of the Tragic Millennium.

Darkness Generator

This is a small, hand-held device shaped like a cobra's head, a trigger on its top. When activated, it generates a globe of darkness 30 feet in diameter, cancelling out all available light and reducing the attack and parry skills of everyone within the sphere by one half, and making the use of missile weapons impossible. Creatures who have perception abilities not relying on visible light will not be hindered by this device.

Gliding Membranes

This small pouch is strapped on one's back, like a pack, and is triggered by pulling a rip cord in the front. Huge, bat-like wings unfold, large enough to provide flight for a character of SIZ 12 or less. A second pull on the rip cord retracts and refolds the wings. They will function for up to two hours, after which time a small beep will be heard, signalling that power is getting low. Ten minutes later the wings automatically fold back up and the unit spends six hours recharging, during which time it is unusable.

Glass Healing Pear

This small, matte-black, pear-shaped object is pressed on a character's body and can heal up to 2D6 points an hour. After healing 50 points, its energy is expended and it shatters.

Glass Healing Apple

This is similar to the Healing Pear except it heals 3D6 points per hour and contains a total of only 35 points.

Blinding Pistol

This small silver pistol holds an irritant powder which is sprayed from the muzzle up to a distance of 15 feet. The victim must match his CON against the powder's POT of 15. If the victim is overcome, he is blinded for 2D6 hours and suffers a bad rash for the next 2D4 days. If successful, the victim suffers only the rash. The pistol holds 16 shots.

Floater

This is a small, silvery disk about six inches across. A telekinetic device, when attached to an object with its cord, it is capable of lifting anything up to and including SIZ 20.

The Ship's Armament

There may be time for the characters to get a quick tour of the ship's weaponry. This will be conducted by Krathak, the first mate. Heavy weaponry includes the four black-powder cannons mounted port and starboard, the swivel mounted acid gun on the stern, and the huge laser cannon fixed to the bow of the ship.

Black Powder Cannons

Krathak tells them the four cannon are from a world called Albyon, Maria's home plane. He says they are primitive, but functional. Firing a lead ball approximately three inches in diameter, they cause 10D6 points of damage and have an effective base range of 500 feet. Fired in an arc, the cannonballs can travel a maximum distance of 2 1/2 miles but accuracy is a problem. Anything less than 50 feet is considered point-blank range. Cannonballs have a tremendous impact and ignore the protection of any armor. Standard firing time is once every six rounds (1/6), although this can be improved with practice. Cannons are a crew weapon usually operated by two people. The overall cannon skill of the crew is the average of the two characters' skills. A single person can reload and fire these weapons but reloading time is exactly twice as long.

Loading the cannons is a complex and painstaking procedure. How fast this may be performed depends upon the skill level of the crew. The skill level also affects the chance of fumbling the reload and suffering the consequences. If, when the weapon is fired, a fumble is indicated, roll 1D6 and consult the Cannon Fumble Table below.

Cannon Reloading Times

Skill % Ability

- 01-50% Reloading takes 6 rounds and a fumble occurs whenever 90-00 is rolled.
- 51-70% Reloading time is reduced to 5 rounds and fumbles occur when 96-00 is rolled.
- 71-80% Reloading takes 4 rounds and fumbles occur on rolls of 99-00.
- 81%+ Reloading takes 3 rounds and fumbles occur only on a roll of 00.

Cannon Fumble Table

1 D6 Result

- 1-2 **Misfire:** The cannon does not fire. It must now be carefully cleared and reloaded, taking twice the normal amount of reloading time.
- 3 **Hangfire:** The cannon appears to have misfired but finally goes off 1D3 rounds later. One of the members of the crew was near the muzzle at the time (decide randomly). Unless the character can make a roll of POW x3 or less on a D100, he is hit by the shot, suffers 3D6 points of damage and loses a randomly chosen limb.
- 4 **Underload:** Too little powder was used and the cannon ball rolls harmlessly out the end of the barrel.
- 5 **Backfire:** The load has been packed too tight. Although the weapon fires normally, the burning powder flares back out the touch hole burning both crew members for 1D4 points of damage and blinding them for 1D10 rounds.
- 6 **Overload:** Too much powder was used. The weapon kicks back injuring both crew members and sending the shot astray. Each character takes 2D6 points of damage.

Acid Cannon

The aft gun is a technological device that fires green blobs of acid causing 6D6 points of damage each. It can be fired once every three rounds and has a base range of 100 feet. Krathak says that ammunition for the piece is in short supply. There is only enough left for five more shots.

Although effective against pursuing vessels, the blobs travel quite slowly and can be Dodged by any character who sees them coming and makes a successful roll. The gun is mounted in a manner that allows it to fire only in a narrow arc defending the stern and rear quarters of the ship.

Heavy Laser

The huge front gun is a gigantic laser cannon Krathak claims was installed by Ferenz himself. It has been out of order for quite some time, despite the efforts of Mikki Grathorn, has not worked since. When in working order, it has a base range of 800 feet, can be fired once every four rounds and does 12D6 points of damage.

The Fourth Chapter

Ghosts in the Machines

IN THIS CHAPTER the adventurers journey to an unusual plane devoid of life and energy. Their goal is to enter the wreck of an alien ship and retrieve from it a replacement Entropy Configuration to be installed aboard the *Rogue Mistress*. The ship is huge, over 250 feet long, part high

technology and part living creature. This vessel, created by a race of beings known only as the Engineers, was, like the *Mistress*, capable of sailing across the planes of existence. It was on one such voyage that the ship made a fateful encounter with a few members of a lost and dying race.

These beings, the Kia, are bipedal goat-like creatures who sustain their existence by feeding off the life energy of other creatures. During the attack of the Kia, many of the Engineer crew were killed, including the ship's navigator. The few survivors fled to a hold in the bow of the ship, a place where the murderous Kia curiously feared to tread. Uncontrolled, the ship crashed from plane to plane, finally smashing itself on a rocky reef in the empty world of Klaadii. The keel is broken, the ship useless. The Aleph, the creature used by the Engineers to construct the vessel, still lives, dying slowly and eerily moaning in pain, its spine irreparably broken by the impact. Meanwhile, the ever-hungry Kia, now trapped in this lifeless world, look for a way out.

The Plane of Klaadii

This dead dull world was once the domain of Chaos. After ages of rule, endless change, and infinite variety, the world is now left in a state of zero entropy, exhausted of possibilities and abandoned by both Chaos and Law. Its physical shape, whether a globe, saucer, or bowl shaped, is unknown. Very few have ever visited this place and no one has truly explored it. The world is covered by a shallow gray sea devoid of waves or tides, of almost equal depth everywhere on the plane. Only a few rocky, barren reefs protrude here and there above the surface. The air is still and stale, without scent or freshness. Sounds are rarely heard, for the plane of Klaadii is completely devoid of life.

The light is red, suffused, the product of a huge red band that arches across the sky from horizon to horizon, the path described by the dying sun in the last days of life on this plane. No matter where a person goes on Klaadii, this band maintains its same position, directly overhead in the sky, leading some to speculate that the world of Klaadii is shaped like the inside of a hollow donut with what is left of the sun circling through the center of the ring like a neon tube.

Sorcery

The sterile, empty world of Klaadii acts like a sponge, leeching magical and natural energies. The summoning of elementals, demons, or anything else proves impossible. No result of any kind is obtained. Although bound demons can manifest themselves in physical form, any bound elementals so manifested will survive only 1D4 rounds before dissipating, their energies sucked away by the thirsty plane. (It may be that enough elemental energy would revive this plane, giving it an opportunity to once again evolve life.) Any demon power that depends on the physical manifestation of energy (Dazzle Attack, Flame Spout, Zap, etc.) also proves useless.

Technological Devices

Most devices function normally on this plane although, as with sorcery, anything that manifests a form of energy proves useless, its power bled off immediately by the effect of this entropic world. Items such as Krathak's pistol prove non-functional, although the energy is expended, draining batteries or other charge devices as though the weapon had actually fired.

The Voyage to Klaadii

Once the characters' mission has been outlined, Maria wastes little time preparing for the voyage. Coming up on deck, she begins shouting orders to the crew. The Tenatir goes below decks and takes up his position beneath the Entropy Configuration. The *Mistress* hangs quietly in the void, unmoving.

There is a slight jerk, followed by a shudder, then the sails begin to billow out, as though filling with a strong wind. The ship moves forward, slowly at first, but quickly gathering speed. Maria barks another order and there begins a great whining, humming sound. Maria smiles gleefully, mans the forward wheel and starts putting the *Mistress* through her paces. She banks the ship over hard to port then levels her out, letting her cruise straight ahead. Her face glows with excitement.

"Soon the Tenatir will shift us out of this plane's alignment," she says, looking up at the still billowing sails. "We must be in motion in order for him to detect the subtle angles at which the planes intersect."

Even as the party watches, a black mist begins to form on the sails, masts, and riggings. "We're starting now," Maria says, a trace of excitement in her face as she watches the gathering black mists streaming from the sails, trailing off the ship to hang behind them in the sky.

Then the landscape and the ocean fade from view. The adventurers find themselves in a black void, the ship and the people aboard it seemingly the only things that exist in an empty, and infinite universe.

"The passage will only take a few minutes," says Maria, now leaning on the rail, looking over the side. "It never seems more than a few minutes, even though the passage of time amongst the planes sometimes varies." She explains further: "Travel between the planes somehow seems to take place outside of normal time. Sometimes I've left a plane and returned to it later to find the passage of time close to normal, other times I have returned to find the space of a week or a month unaccounted for; at least according to my own time sense. The Tenatir says it has to do with the particular alignment of the planes at the time of the voyage.

Sometimes they are very near to each other, and sometimes quite far apart. It naturally takes longer to travel to the more distant planes, although the passage of time aboard the *Mistress* is always the same, no voyage ever seeming to take longer than an hour. I've found no way of predicting the length of time that will pass during any given trip."

As the ship travels through the void, the characters see other worlds, other planes of existence drifting, ghost-like, into view. These glimpses last only a moment then fade away again to leave once more only empty darkness. Eventually a more solid image starts to form beneath the ship, a vast gray sea, waveless and still, illuminated by a dim red light. Overhead, a broad red band stretches across a sky from horizon to horizon, burning its way into existence. Maria pulls back a lever and the whining sound subsides. They have arrived on the plane of Klaadii.

As the ship settles into the plane, the seascape focuses and the characters experience a sharp chill, even though the air seems fairly warm.

"The strange coldness you feel is the plane trying to leech your body heat away from you," Maria explains. "Chaos left this world a vacuum, an entirely empty place without energy of its own. It greedily tries to soak up every bit of energy that enters this world. Although uncomfortable, I don't believe it's particularly dangerous – at least not for short periods of time."

A call is heard from high above. "Reefs Ahoy!" shouts a sailor from the crow's nest. "Wreck sighted off the starboard bow."

Making their way to the rail, the adventurers hear a strange, low moaning sound, drifting up to them from below. Looking down, they see a long line of rocky reefs protruding up through the motionless gray water, sharp and deadly. Following the line of the reef they spot the source of the sound — the fantastic wreck of the great alien ship.

It rests upright, over 250 feet long, listing slightly to port, its great keel broken and shattered upon the rocks. Maria drops altitude and turns the ship to starboard, cruising nearer the wreck. The characters see a thing all black and gray sinister bone, part ship and part creature from hell. The figurehead of the monstrous vessel is the skull of some huge animal, its forward curving horns shod with iron, forming a lethal battering ram. The great creature's spine serves as the ship's keel, now broken beyond all repair, and the fleshless ribs of the animal thrust upward to form a superstructure that strengthens and protects the hull. The after deck of the ship is crowded with strange spires, twisted towers that rise in some places as high as 50 feet above the deck. Lights twinkle in these towers and circular doors and windows can be seen.

Maria orders Krathak to bring the *Mistress* in, and the ship slows, dropping toward the surface of the water. Gently, Krathak lowers the *Rogue Mistress*, settling her in smoothly. Power to the engines is cut and it suddenly seems very quiet in this silent world. Then the wrecked alien ship moans

again, the low, crooning sound carrying easily across the still water.

"Some sort of distress signal, I guess," says Maria, if asked about the eerie sound. "It was the same last time I was here, eight months ago."

The Tenatir appears on deck, his face drawn in a look of profound sorrow. Pitifully, he meeps and jabbars at Maria who, in response, puts his head on her shoulder and pats him reassuringly.

"I was right," she tells the characters. "Our Entropy Configuration is gone, broken and unrepairable. If we don't find a new one aboard the wreck, I'm afraid we're stuck here."

The anchors are dropped and a longboat prepared with whatever supplies and equipment the characters plan to take with them. *The Rogue Mistress* is anchored about a mile from the wreck; Maria does not want to take her in any closer, fearing the navigational problems she experienced the last time they were here. Maria chooses two of the Average Pirates, Phillipe and Joseph, to serve as oarsmen and aides to the adventurers. Maria informs them that Mikkl Grathorn, the ship's chief technician, will also accompany them, to aid in locating and removing the Entropy Configuration. Grathorn is no fighter and Maria expects the adventurers to look out for his welfare.

At this time, the gamemaster may decide if any others of the *Rogue Mistress* crew will accompany the player-characters. Krathak or any of the other characters described may volunteer, lusting after a little action. Perhaps, if the characters take the initiative and invite crew members along, the gamemaster may call for Persuade rolls. If the gamemaster feels the party is already fit and strong enough to face the challenge ahead, he may decide that none of the crew will accompany them, regardless of the efforts of the characters.

Once everything is ready, the small craft is carefully lowered to the water. Maria shakes their hands and wishes them luck. The crew watches in silence as the oarsmen and adventurers climb down the rope ladder, seat themselves in the boat and cast off.

The ride across the silent, unmoving sea is eerie, the only sounds the soft splashing of the oars and the constant moaning sound that comes from the wrecked vessel. The vast, silver sea stretches forever in all directions, absolutely calm and unmoving. Even the ripples made by the passage of the boat quickly die away, their minute amounts of energy almost immediately absorbed by the barren plane.

Drawing near the wreck, its vast size overwhelms the tiny longboat, the skull figurehead hanging some 30 feet above the water. The hull of the strange craft is found to be a shiny, glossy black material, without seams, a substance totally unfamiliar to the player-characters.

Coasting alongside the wreck, a ladder is spotted, carved into the one of the great ribs that rises from the keel to arch over the deck high above. This ladder leads to the main deck.

TWO NEW RACES

The Kia

The Kia are a race of highly intelligent beings who maintain their existence by feeding, vampire-like, on the life-energy of other beings. They are normally immaterial and, when well-fed, appear as goat-like bipedal creatures, their phantom forms etched out in shimmering green lines of pure energy. Due to their lack of material bodies they are capable of passing through most physical barriers. Using this method, they can enter into the undecaying corpses of the dead Engineers and manipulate them to appear as though alive. They communicate telepathically, but only over short distances of less than a quarter mile.

Having centuries ago depleted their own world of available energy, the Kia took to enslaving other worlds, moving from plane to plane and sapping the energy of life forms they encountered. They eventually found their way to the End of Time, where all dimensions meet and where the energy of life and creation itself was available in abundance. The Kia settled here, in the Castle of Obsidian, until they themselves were all but destroyed by a far stronger race.

Without a home, the Kia fragmented, some melding with the stuff of Chaos while a handful fled in search of other worlds. It was one such band of roaming Kia that the *Ö Sidata* was unfortunate enough to encounter.

The Kia

Attributes

STR	2D8+2
CON	3D8
SIZ	2D8+2
INT	3D8
POW	3D8
DEX	2D8+4
CHA	2D8

Average Hit Points: 13-14

Armor: Immune to all kinetic weapon attacks. Electrical or radiation attacks add half their rolled damage to the POW of the Kia.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Vampire Touch	POW x3	—	1D6 POW drain

A Kia who makes a roll of POW x3 or less while at the same time touching its victim, drains from it 1D6 points of POW. The character will feel the Kia's touch and the POW drain. Demon armor will protect an individual from such an attack but the armor itself will be drained of POW until reduced to 0. The victim will not be aware that his armor has been drained until he discovers its uselessness. A victim has the opportunity to resist the Kia's attack by besting it in a POW vs POW struggle. This can be attempted each round the Kia attempts to attack. Success indicates that the struggle has been won and the victim is, for the moment, free. All POW lost to a Kia is regained at the rate of 1 point per game hour, until the victim reaches his original POW total, less 1 point which is permanently lost. The permanent loss occurs only once, the first time a victim suffers an attack by the Kia. Reducing a victim to 0 POW causes death.

Skills: Dodge DEX +40%, Move Quietly 100%, See 3d10+25%, Track 3d10+30%.

Abilities: The Kia are capable of feats resembling mind reading. By touching a character, the Kia can probe this person's mind, learning secrets, languages, etc. This mind probe is painless but any character who makes a roll of POW x1 or less will notice the presence of the alien mind. The Kia will use what it learns to manipulate and control the character.

The Kia are also able to control a victim's emotions. If the intended victim is unable to best the Kia in POW vs POW struggle, for the next five minutes he is subject to whatever emotion the Kia wishes him to experience. These include such things as: rage, depression, fear, insane lust, hunger, and hate. Every five minutes, the victim is allowed a chance to break the hold with a POW struggle. Whenever successful, the character is free of the Kia's influence until the control is again established. Two or more Kia can

combine their POW to gain control of a victim. The Kia have only to make eye contact in order to use this ability.

Kia are adversely affected by certain noises. Loud screams, or any high-pitched noise of short duration will paralyze a Kia for 1D4 rounds. The sustained moaning of the injured ship, the *Ö Sidata*, is capable of paralyzing them indefinitely unless they stay a safe distance away, near the stern of the ship. A successful Sing roll, the character voicing a sustained high pitch, inflicts 1D4 points of damage on every Kia within hearing distance.

The Engineers

Appearing more or less human, the average Engineer is of light frame, standing a little less than five and a half feet tall. Hair color ranges from blonde to deep russet-brown and their skin is colored an unusual bright pink. Their eyes seem to be nearly all pupil and are round and saucer-like. To Young Kingdoms humans they appear somewhat ugly. They lack ears and even aural openings. Like the Kia, they communicate telepathically.

Engineers are remote, aloof creatures with minds that would seem to us cold and scientific. They do not relish the real world, finding solace in mental gymnastics and through computer-simulated utopias.

Attributes

STR	2D6
CON	2D6+2
SIZ	2D6+1
INT	5D6
POW	4D6
DEX	3D6+2
CHA	3D6

Average Hit Points: 8

Skills: Biological Lore 50+5D10%, Chemical Lore 30+5D10%, Dodge 25+1D20%, Engineering Lore (see below) 60+4D10%, Mechanical Lore 40+5D10%, Memorize 60+2D20%, Move Quietly 35%, Persuade 40%, See 30+1D20%.

Abilities: Engineers are long-distance telepaths and can communicate with one another up to a distance of 20 miles. Different languages pose little problem as they are capable of reading and understanding emotional states and, from this, learn to translate any language. This takes a few minutes if performed from a short distance but only a few seconds if the Engineer can make physical contact with the person whose mind it wishes to explore.

Engineering Lore: This new skill is applicable only to Engineer characters. It describes the level of proficiency an individual holds in Engineering-based sciences. A rough guide to the types of sciences covered by this skill is given below.

- 01-60% The Engineer is skilled in all basic technical operations such as the repair and general maintenance of simple equipment. This does not include complex items such as computers or the Entropy Configuration.
- 61-70% The Engineer is capable of rudimentary bio-computer programming and the general maintenance of computer systems. This is the basic level of skill required for an Engineer to hold a post on the bridge of a ship.
- 71-80% The Engineer is capable of sophisticated programming and computer repair. He is able to pilot a ship according to the instructions given by the navigator. A junior officer will usually possess this level of skill.
- 81-90% A skilled pilot and officer. The workings of the computer and bio-technological systems are familiar to him. He is capable of making repairs, conducting maintenance, and adapting systems to new uses. This level of skill is usually required of a senior officer.
- 91-100% The Engineer is capable of using the Entropy Configuration and can conduct advanced communication with the mental faculties of the ship and its computer.



The Ö Sidàta

Aside from an identical ladder on the other side, this is the only easy access to the ship.

Inhabitants of the Ship

Aboard the *Ö Sidàta*, the characters will discover two new races of beings. One of them, the Engineers, were the designers and builders of this great ship, a technological race of humans. The other, the Kia, are an ancient breed, chaotic and destructive, no longer possessing any true culture. It was the Kia who, chancing to meet the *Ö Sidàta*, boarded it and slew most of the Engineers.

The Kia control the aft portions of the ship. They are very vulnerable to sound and cannot tolerate the moaning of the dying ship. The surviving Engineers, taking advantage of this, have made for themselves a stronghold in the forward hold. Well-equipped with supplies of food and fresh water, they have lived here for months and could probably survive for years except that one day, and probably soon, the injured ship will finally die. Once the moaning stops, the Kia will come to get them.

The Kia, although desperately hungry for life energy, are intelligent and know their only hope of survival lies in getting off this plane. To this end, they will attempt to fool the characters by donning the dead bodies of slain Engineers

and presenting themselves to the characters in this manner. They will not attempt to feed on the player-characters (although the sampling of POW from demon armor and weapons may occur), but instead try to befriend them in order to get invited aboard the *Rogue Mistress* and be taken off this world. The Kia's gravest fear is that the characters discover the surviving group of Engineers in the bow and from them learn the truth about the Kia. To prevent this, they may attempt to use their emotion control upon the characters, enraging them and making them slay the innocent Engineers before the characters discover the truth. A perfect result for the Kia would be to drain most or all of the POW from the characters' demon weapons and armor, convince them to slay the Engineers in the bow, and then be offered a ride back to the *Rogue Mistress* and be carried off this plane. Once on a live and healthy world, the Kia will slay four or five crewmen, glut themselves on the energy and then, abandoning the Engineer corpses, flee the ship and begin exploring their new world. For more information about the Kia and the Engineers, see the nearby boxed text.

Aboard the Wreck

There are five murderous Kia aboard the ship. Watching the adventurers' slow and cautious approach, they occupy and animate the corpses of some of the dead Engineers, then await the party's arrival on the main deck. The Kia walk forward, arms spread, hands held out as though in friendship. They will not attempt to harm the characters, but need to make physical contact in order to establish a telepathic link with the adventurers and learn their language.

The disguised Kia will be most helpful and gracious, welcoming the characters aboard, explaining at length their plight. They claim their vessel was driven out of control by a great Chaos storm encountered between the planes and that they eventually crashed in this terrible world. They have been just barely managing to stay alive but some of their less fortunate shipmates, driven hopelessly insane by the Chaos storm, are holed up in the bow of the ship. From here, the Kia/Engineers claim, these insane victims have been launching guerilla raids against them. They are outnumbered, the five complain, and don't know how much longer they can hold out. Discomforted by the ship's moaning, they will attempt as soon as possible to lure the adventurers back into the towers and onto the soundproofed bridge for further discussion. Any character making a INT x1 roll or less, notices the discomfort the aliens suffer whenever the ship makes its moaning call.

Any character who studies closely the Kia/Engineers, and makes a successful See roll, notices that the crew members' skin has a very dry, weathered look, reminiscent of corpses. But the Engineers are an alien race and as far as the characters know, this may be their normal appearance. The Kia have tried to preserve the bodies of the dead Engineers as best they can (not too difficult on this lifeless plane where not even bacteria exist) but ultimately, due to evaporation and general wear-and-tear, the corpses will start to fall apart.

The Kia recognize the adventurers as their only chance of escaping this plane. They need to get aboard the *Rogue Mistress*. They welcome the characters aboard and listen to their story. The Kia are more than happy to let the adventurers have the Entropy Configuration (although they don't have the slightest idea where or what it is) but beg the characters to take them off this world. However, the Kia fear that if the surviving Engineers are discovered, they will tell the adventurers what really happened. Consequently, they do their best to convince the characters that the Engineers hiding in the bow of the ship are hopelessly insane murderers that must be destroyed. They show them some of the corpses of victims they claim were slain by their insane shipmates (but actually slain by the Kia themselves). The Kia/Engineers, if ever asked to accompany the characters to the forward part of the ship, claim that they are too fearful of the maddened killers. No matter what, the Kia are physically unable to get within 100 feet of the skull. Any closer and they become paralyzed by the sound it gives off.

The Kia think that it might be possible that they could get a chance to drain the surviving Engineers if the adventurers drive them out of their hiding place. If they could do it without being seen by the adventurers, the Kia would certainly enjoy making quick feasts of the remaining Engineers before boarding the *Rogue Mistress*. If the opportunity presents itself, the Kia will use their emotion control on the characters and convince them that anything the true Engineers say is insane babbling. The Kia will not attempt to set the adventurers against each other, although the two pirates sent along as oarsmen, if left alone, might tempt the hungry vampires.

It may be that while the characters are off exploring the ship, the Kia are left alone. They take this opportunity to shed the Engineer corpses and assume their normal non-material forms. They again don corpses if the adventurers return but one of them mistakenly puts on the wrong corpse. If any of the characters makes an INT x5 roll he notices that one of the crewmen walking around looks an awful lot like one of the corpses he viewed earlier.

Also, while in the company of the Kia/Engineers, it will become apparent that the five are unfamiliar with the ship's systems and seem to know no more than the layout of the aft section, and a rough idea of the layout of the forward portion of the ship.

Five Kia

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
STR	12	11	13	10	11
CON	14	13	12	15	15
SIZ	11	11	13	10	13
INT	14	15	12	13	15
POW	14	12	11	14	13
DEX	15	14	12	14	14
HP	14	13	13	15	16

Armor: None but immune to all kinetic attacks. Electrical or radiation attacks add half their rolled damage to the POW of the Kia.

Weapon	Attack	Damage
Vampire Touch	POW x3	1D6 POW drain

Exploring the Ö Sidàta

The Ö Sidàta is 250 feet in length. Due to its unique semi-sentient construction, the ship requires a crew of only ten men, although it is equipped to carry as many as twenty sailors plus eight officers.

The bulkheads in the ship are all constructed from the same metal/wood/plastic material as the deck and the hull. Only demon weapons or energy devices, such as laser or flame lances, have any effect on it. Even then, the damage is minimal; little more than scratches and abrasions will be suffered. The entrances to the various compartments are via iris hatches that automatically open when a physical presence enters the identification field four feet in front of the hatch. All hatches can be centrally locked by using the ship's computer. Hatches can withstand up to 200 points of damage before collapsing.

At various times while exploring the wreck, the characters may don the thought helmets used by the Engineers for communications, ship command, and other functions. Whenever one of these helmets is worn, the character will hear a whispering, far away voice. Only with a successful Listen roll will the character be able to distinguish the words: "Kill me... please kill me..." This is the voice of the Aleph, the still-living creature who was used to create this ship. It's back is hopelessly broken and the beast has been slowly, painfully dying for the better part of a year. It would like nothing more than to be put out of it's misery. The only way the characters can learn the source of this voice and possibly communicate with the creature is by mentally linking with the computer. The computer and the creature's mind are one and the same.

Main Deck

The main deck stretches the length and breadth of the ship. It is made of the same unknown black material as the hull and although it appears slippery, the characters will find that it is, in fact, quite the reverse.

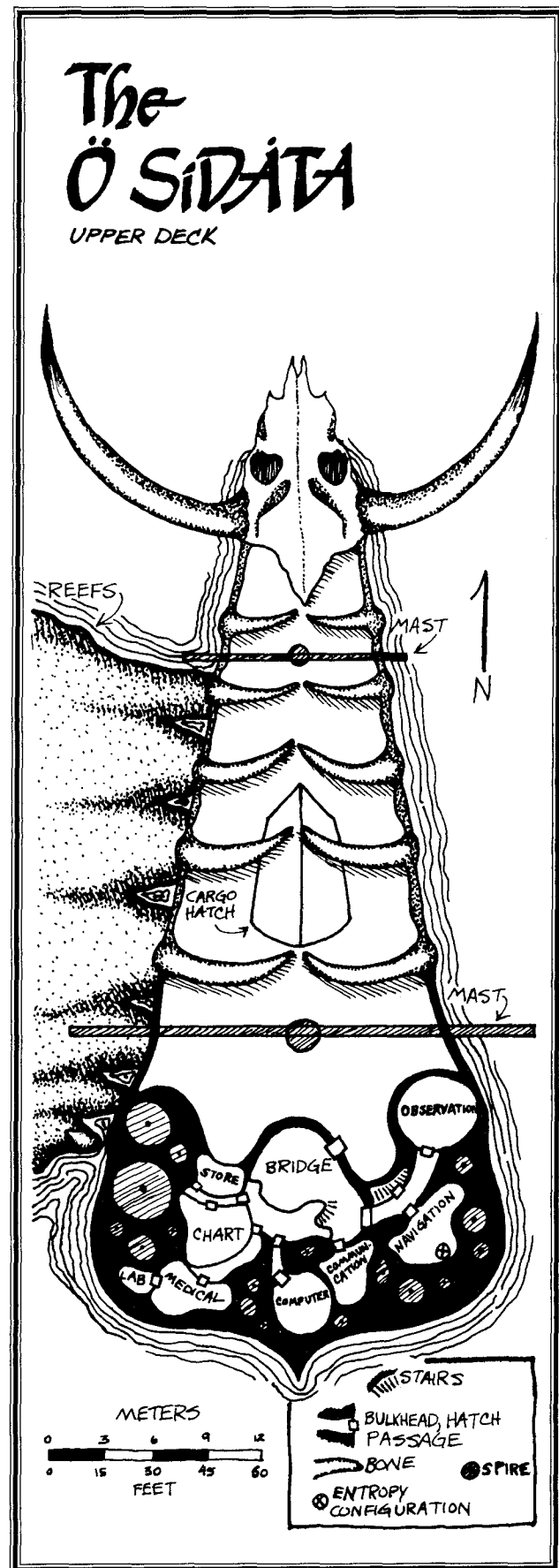
The Clustered Spires

The Bridge

Located in a spire at the stern of the ship, the bridge is entered through one of the self-opening iris hatches. Most of the ship's systems can be controlled from here, either by hand controls or through thought helmets worn by the characters. However, all manual controls have been locked out and the thought helmets are inoperative to anyone not knowing the command procedure. This procedure can only be learned by mentally linking with the ship's computer by way of the thought helmet found in the computer room.

Any character exploring the bridge, if possessed of sufficiently high mental skills, may be able to tune in on the living computer system, feeling its presence immediately as he steps through the hatchway. A character with a combined POW and INT totalling 32 or more will be allowed to make a POW x2 roll. If successful, this character(s), senses the presence of the semi-sentient computer mind. Concentrating on this presence, the character is led to the computer room and the thought helmet that links directly to the computer.

The bridge is split into two levels. The rear portion is raised to a height of 15 feet (accessed by steps as noted in the plan) and functions as the control center of the *Ö Sidata*. It contains a single acceleration couch, similar to the one found on the *Rogue Mistress*, surrounded by a semi-circular bank of controls, each touch sensitive and linked to the computer. A nearby thought helmet must be worn to operate



any of the systems. If the characters have not linked with the computer and learned the command procedures, they will hear only a nonsensical bleeping and buzzing when wearing the helmet. In the background of all this electronic noise a voice is heard but the words it speaks are unintelligible. Only with a successful Listen roll can a character hear the agonized voice of the living ship begging: "Kill me! Please kill me!"

The lower, forward portion of the bridge holds six more acceleration couches and additional instrumentation. The controls are presently shut down but when operative, a three-dimensional image is created that floods the entire bridge, displaying fields of data ranging from the ship's position in the multiverse to detailed information about the nature of whatever plane is currently occupied by the *Ö Sidàta*.

Any character familiar with technological items will probably find at least a few of the ship's controls familiar, understanding their functions better than the Kia/Engineers. Unfortunately, any controls of real importance have been 'locked out' and can only be accessed through the computer using the proper command procedure.

Communications Room

This semi-circular, domed room contains two acceleration couches and a pair of thought helmets. The helmets, if the command procedure is known, allow a telepathic enhancement that enables the user to establish communications with like centers on other planes. The user simply forms a mental construct of the place with which he wishes to communicate. When successful, the user finds himself apparently standing in the desired area, able to see, hear, and smell the environment. Physical touch, however, is not possible.

Unfortunately, like the rest of the ship's systems, the controls are locked out and can only be opened with knowledge of the proper command procedure. However, the apparatus is presently tuned to receive any incoming signals and the thought helmets can be used to receive any messages sent to the *Ö Sidàta*.

For the past several months, the Commanders of the Engineers' home plane have been trying to make contact with the vessel. The Commanders know that the crew of the *Ö Sidàta* has run into some kind of trouble. They have lost track of the ship's position in the multiverse, although from their read-outs they know it still exists. It is possible that while the adventurers are in this area, the Commanders will again attempt to make contact. The walls of the communication area pulse gently with a soft green light, a signal to the crew that contact is being attempted. The Commanders have been transmitting only irregularly, the messages being sent at random times. If any of the characters don the thought helmets, they will find themselves talking to a group of men known as the Engineer Commanders. Through the Commanders the characters learn something of the disaster that took place aboard the *Ö Sidàta*. Although they are unclear

as to the details, the Commanders do know that the ship was invaded by some sort of sentient life form that killed a number of crewmen. The Commanders know nothing else. The only aid they can offer the is to suggest they attempt to link with the computer and examine the ship's log. The Commanders are unaware of the possible effect of this action upon human brains and consequently don't warn the characters of any risks.

Non-Engineers using the communication device are at risk. Upon turning off the effect, the character must make a POW struggle against the machine's POW of 15 or be driven insane for a period of 1D4 hours. The insane character will only huddle in a corner, incapable of action or rational thought until the effects of the insanity have passed.

Computer Room

The computer room is at the base of the highest spire in the command cluster. In the center of this cool, gray-walled chamber is a single acceleration couch. A thought helmet, similar to others found on the ship, is used to link the user with the semi-artificial intelligence that is the computer of the *Ö Sidàta*. The physical structure of the computer fills the rest of the spire and, lying on the couch and looking up into its heights, the character can see the pulsing, shivering, semi-organic brain of the living ship, energy crackling between its neurons.

Every aspect of the ship is controlled by this computer, from the life-support systems to the logging of cargo. A free intelligence, however, is required to provide an input for the information, and to make the decisions necessary for the efficient running of the ship.

The computer also contains a complete log of the voyages of the *Ö Sidàta* including a record of the attack of the Kia. Anyone who links with the computer and explores the log feels the full pain of those who died at the Kia's hand, the draining of their energies, and learns how the corpses of the deceased have been used as vehicles for the Kia's bodiless forms. The recipient feels the desperation of those crew members who have been for months hiding in the bow of the ship, unable to leave their sanctuary except for brief forays. The recipient also feels the pain of the ship itself, the slowly-dying creature whose spine is shattered and broken. Only through this computer link will the character be able to communicate with the dying ship/creature and only by this link will they learn the command procedures for making use of any of the ship's systems. The ship explains its plight, asking the character to please destroy it by overloading the ship's power plant. The dying ship can detail the procedure. It wants to be put out of its misery.

Anyone can don a thought helmet and attempt to make the link, but any character with a combined INT and POW of less than 30 is doomed to failure and the consequent risk of insanity. Any others will have to make a roll of POW x5 or less to establish the initial link. Any character who tries to

link and fails must roll his POW x3 or less or be driven insane, paranoid and irrational, for 1D6 x10 minutes.

Any character who successfully links with the computer's memory finds themselves removed from the surrounds of the computer room and thrust into a constructed reality of past events, able to see, hear, and feel every sensation. Experiencing the full log of the computer's memories takes 10+1D6 minutes. When the ordeal is finished, the character is drained and exhausted. A character experiencing the ship's log must roll his POW x5 or less, or be driven insane for 1D6 x10 minutes. During this period the character will be violently paranoid but incapable of communicating or rationally acting upon what he has learned. Upon recovery the character will find that he has gained the skills of Read/Write and Speak Engineer Tongue at the levels of 70+1D20% and 80+1D20%. He will also have learned all the secret commands necessary to operate the ship's various systems.

Chart Room

This room is bare-walled and furnished with a pair of acceleration couches. However, when the correct instructions are mentally given, the computer projects a three-dimensional series of charts depicting the present configuration of the multiverse as well as maps and thermal surveys of the worlds the *Ö Sidàta* has explored. Part of the purpose of the *Ö Sidàta's* voyage was to map a sector of the Million Spheres—hence its extensive library of charts. Detailed maps of the Young Kingdoms, Tragic Millennium Earth, and other places possibly known to the characters are available.

Stores

The storage area contains a vast range of items from repair tools to medical equipment. All the items are of alien design and, without the help of either the Engineers or the computer, probably unusable by the characters. Gamemasters are invited to create any items they might think of interest or use to the characters and to locate them here.

Medical Center

The walls of the main area of the medical center are lined with man-sized-booths linked to the medical facilities of the computer. The Engineers are biotechnologists, experts in the techniques of gene-reproduction, cloning, nerve splicing, and neurosurgery. Any creature placed into one of these booths is scanned by the computer and any diseases or wounds automatically treated.

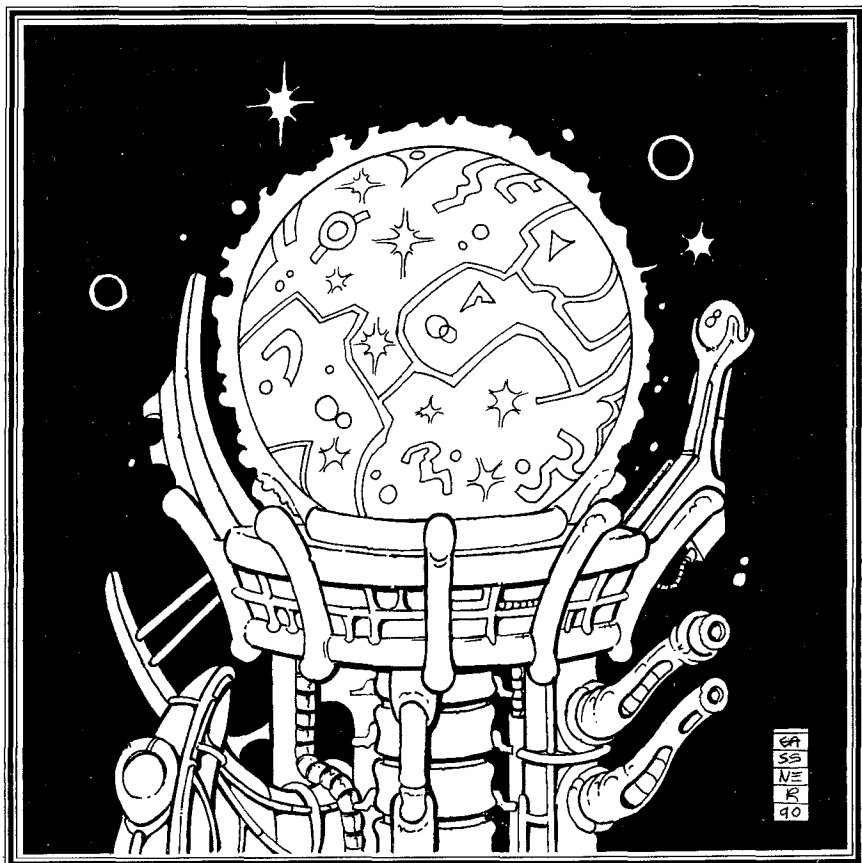
Wounds are healed at a rate of 1 hit point every 30 minutes. Some diseases can be cured, while the progress of others can be arrested. Severed limbs can be replaced from a stock of genetic material held in the ship's reserves. The genes are matched, a new limb cloned, and the appendage then spliced to the existing nerve endings. This process requires 2 hours. The medical systems, like everything else, have been locked out by the computer.

It is possible that one of these booths could be disconnected and installed aboard the *Rogue Mistress*. If Mikkl Grathorn has enough time, he can attempt it. Removing the booth takes Mikkl 12 hours and, after installing it aboard the *Rogue Mistress*, he will have to roll his INT x1 or less. Failure means the machine does not function. If the characters have the aid of one of the Engineers, they can pull the booth in less than 2 hours. The Engineer's Lore skill is then used to see if the machine survives the move.

The smaller area of the medical center contains a laboratory containing equipment for the study of alien flora and fauna.

Observation Area

This spire contains an anti-gravity device capable of lifting any object up to SIZ 30 to the top of the tower. A series of handrails spiraling up from the tower's floor allows an individual to control his movement. By gently grasping a



The Entropy Configuration

rail an individual can either slow, stop, or reverse his direction of travel.

Any section of wall that is faced by an individual turns transparent, allowing a person a full view of what is outside the ship. A cluster of sensors in the top of the spire allows the computer to project a holographic display, notated in the Engineer language and detailing atmospheric and geographical information about the current environment. This system is not locked out and is fully functional.

Navigation Room

This is the location of the Entropy Configuration. Mounted near an acceleration couch, the Configuration hangs in a suspension field similar to the one in the observation tower. It is nearly identical to the one the characters saw aboard the *Rogue Mistress*.

Mikkl Grathorn wants to begin dismantling it right away, a process that will take him at least 4 hours. Alternatively, the globe can be disconnected by any character with an INT of 15 or more in about 8 hours. If the characters have the services of one of the Engineers, the time will be reduced to half an hour.

Lower Deck

The lower deck is reached by the stairs between the bridge and the observation tower. The majority of the lower deck is given over to crew quarters and storage/cargo space. The rocks that impale the *Ö Sidàta* have punctured the lower port side of the ship and although some water has been taken on, the *Ö Sidàta*'s hull has 'healed' around the rocks, sealing out the ocean.

The Interior

The inside of the *Ö Sidàta* displays dazzling examples of bio-technology. The very walls of the lower decks seem to live, bristling with innumerable wires and conduits that lead to and from the ship's power center. Whilst the towers of the upper deck are constructed from the dark, chitinous material used to create the hull, the lower deck is a part of the living creature itself, kept in a semi-sentient state by the computer and the energy source within the power center.

Crew's Quarters

These quarters contain 20 wall-mounted cubicles that serve as the Engineers' homes throughout the duration of a voyage. Each cubicle is man-sized and rectangular in shape. Each has an opaque door that slides open upon physical touch and the name of the occupant/owner written above it in Engineer-tongue. Inside is found a vertical acceleration couch and a thought helmet similar to those found in other parts of the ship.

The cubicles serve two important functions. First, each is linked to the computer and can generate a mental construct of an environment relaxing to the user. Most of the cubicles are programmed to generate a specific environment mimicking the home of a particular Engineer, complete with reactive recordings of friends and loved ones. Other cubicles provide constructs of sporting events, brothels, cultural presentations, etc.

The cubicles also provide nourishment. The user enters a thought construct of a banquet and then is able to mentally enjoy a marvelous meal. In reality, the computer injects a chemical that supplies the Engineers' daily requirements of vitamins and vital nutrients. To a non-Engineer the imaginary banquet construct is sickening, the food syrupy-tasting and overly sweet. The nourishment provided by the computer will not harm the characters, although it may leave those who fail a CON x4 roll feeling slightly nauseated.

The cubicles are also interactive. Crew members can enter the constructs of other Engineers and socialize accordingly. Adventurers that make a roll of INT x1 or less notice that the quarters seem to have gone unused for some time.

Cargo Loading Bay

The aft portion of the ship is given over to the huge loading bay necessary for the removal and replacement of large components. Loading vehicles are stored in special bays in the starboard portion of this area. They are sculpted to the Engineers' proportions and operated by mental commands through thought helmets. These vehicles are not locked out by the computer and are functional.

The huge doors, if opened, admit water which will eventually sink the vessel in 2D6 hours. The doors can be opened only by a direct order given through the computer.

Escape Pods

This area contains 30 Engineer-sized escape pods. Each pod is large enough to hold one crew member. When activated, each carries an escaping passenger away from the ship and into the next nearest plane. Once launched, they emit a distress signal that can be monitored by the Engineer's home plane. The escaping Engineer is kept in a state of suspended animation throughout the escape process.

When the *Kia* attacked, the Captain of the *Ö Sidàta* prepared the pods for use but the besieged Engineers never had a chance to make use of them. The pods are still in readiness, although the triggering system is currently locked out by the computer. If the Engineers are saved by the adventurers they will, with the possible exception of Q11, escape by means of these pods to be picked up later by their own people.

Cargo Hold

The cavernous hold is a tangled web of ruptured bulkheads and splintered hull material. Water, in most places four feet deep, stands in the bottom of the hold, bits of debris floating

on its surface. Hanging from racks that line the walls are hundreds of matte-black crates, each electromagnetically sealed. A few have been dislodged from the walls and now float silently in the water.

The crates contain samples of pottery, jewelry, weaponry, art relics, technology, etc., collected from the various worlds visited by the *Ö Sidata*. There are also records (in Engineer language) of each item's use and its relative value. A large variety of objects can be found, from books on alchemy to items such as digital watches. There is also a large selection of weaponry from the Young Kingdoms, Tragic Millennium Earth, and other places. The crates can be forced open but it requires a great deal of effort. A minimum of 50 points of damage must be inflicted in order to split open a crate. The number of damage points inflicted is exactly equal to the percentage chance of the contents being damaged in the process. Gamemasters must decide what is found in most of the crates; however, one of them contains a high-technology replicant.

The Replicant

The replicant initially appears as a naked, sexless dummy; rather like a shop mannequin. The being, however, is intelligent and upon command can simulate the features of any human (male or female) that it has known or met. The mimicry extends to voice simulation, although skill and abilities remain those of the replicant. The chance of the replication being nearly perfect is equal to the replicant's Memorize skill less the POW of the person the replicant tries to imitate. If the replication is imperfect, it will be spotted by an observant individual with a roll of INT x1 or less on a D100.

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ varies INT 12 POW 1 DEX 11 CHA varies

Hit Points: 10 **Armor:** 2 points of resilient, plastic flesh.

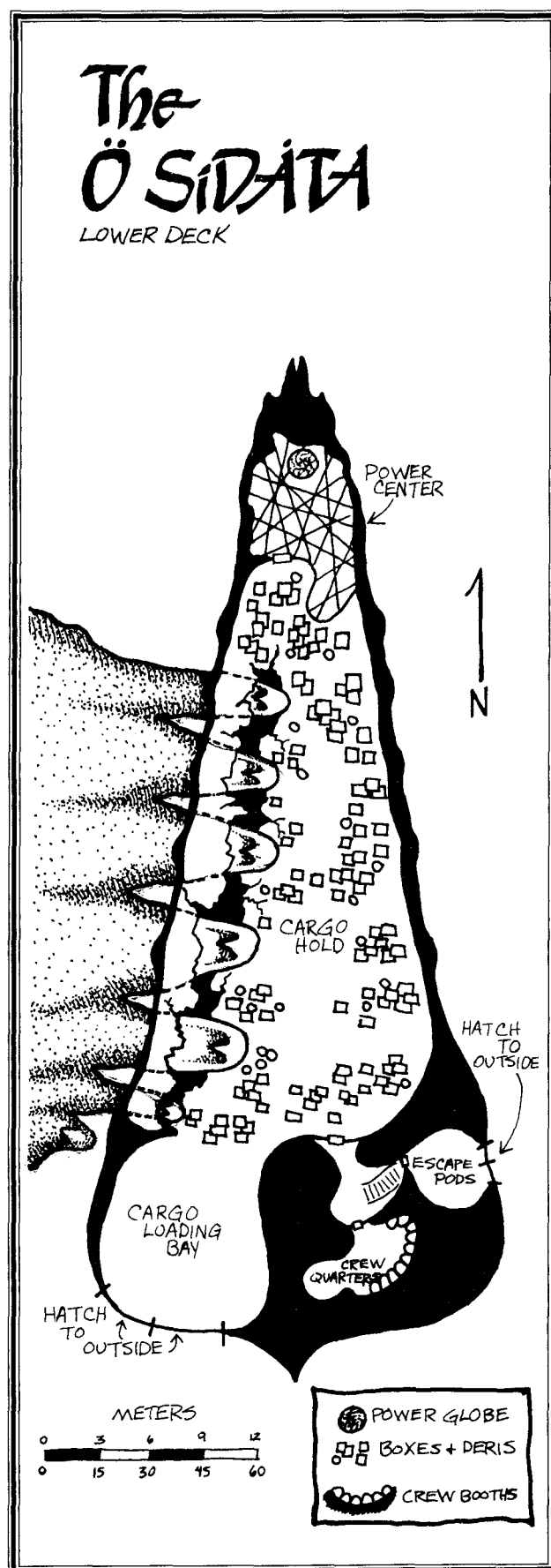
Skills: Balance 75%, Climb 20%, Dodge 25%, Listen 25%, Memorize 95%.

The replicant has a basic skill of 10% with any weapon and can improve skills in the usual manner. It is immune to attacks that rely upon a POW struggle, or attacks upon the emotions. The replicant 'imprints' on the first character it sees and follows this person's orders without question. It will do anything asked of it, short of sacrificing its own existence.

The Engineers hiding in the bow have managed to rig a number of traps in this area, trying to catch the Kia off-guard. These traps are noted below, and should be employed by the gamemaster with discretion.

- ☐ Hidden beneath the water are lines stretched taut between support struts. These wires are only discovered with a successful See roll. If a character stumbles into one of these, 2D3 crates will come toppling down at him. Each crate is SIZ 4 and falls from a height of 3D6 feet. Unless the character makes a successful Dodge roll, he takes damage according to the following table:

3-6 feet	1D4
7-10 feet	1D4+2
11-14 feet	1D6
15-18 feet	1D6+2



Any characters within three feet of the character who activated the trap must make a Dodge roll or be struck by one of the falling crates.

- Some of the crates contain explosives collected from other planes. These explosives have been primed to go off when a trip wire is triggered, inflicting 3D6 points of damage to all within 4 feet of the explosion. Again, the trip wire is hidden in the water, and only a See roll spots it. Disarming the explosive requires special knowledge. Any untrained character attempting to disarm a bomb activates it unless a successful POW x1 roll is made.
- The metal crates are conductors and some have been rigged with small batteries that inflict a substantial shock if the crate is touched. These crates have been placed by the Engineers in spots where it seems likely someone would grasp it for support while wading through the hold. Anyone wearing metal armor who touches one of these crates must roll his CON vs an electrical shock of POT 12. Failure means the character has suffered 1D6 hit points of damage. A success means the character suffers only 1D2 points. In either case the character is thrown backward 1D4 feet.

The Power Center

Behind the huge bulkhead at the forward end of the cargo hold is the Power Center, the sanctuary of the six surviving Engineers. They have rewired the hatch so that it can be opened only from the inside.

Within is a complicated network of conduits, piping, wires, and organic connections — the nervous system of the ship — all attached to the huge, swirling, multicolored globe that dominates the center of the room. The screaming of the ship is at its worst here, barely tolerable to the characters' ears.

The Engineers have constructed a small, safe encampment amongst the machinery of the power center but have suffered badly in the months they have been trapped here. They are dirty, tired, and wild-eyed. On constant vigil against the Kia, they are extremely paranoid and to the characters they may appear, as the Kia have said, hopelessly insane.

In truth, the Engineers have suffered much. For centuries these people have lived, not in the physical world, but in one made from their own fantasies, computer-aided constructs designed to provide them with every comfort. Here, trapped in a real world, they are disoriented and alone, barely able to cope with the nightmare that has befallen them. They may view the adventurers as enemies. They have already witnessed the Kia's ability to adopt the bodies of their prey and

although ill-equipped to fight, their survival instincts are strong.

The Engineers may attempt to learn the language of the adventurers, hoping to be able to contact them telepathically. If they can touch the adventurers, making the link takes only a few seconds. However, if they must probe the characters' minds without physical contact, the process takes as long as 1D20+2 rounds of time beginning after the adventurers have entered the power center. If any of the characters have learned to speak Engineer tongue (telepathically, of course) they may, with a successful Persuade roll, convince the Engineers that they come as friends.

The Engineers, once they realize the adventurers are entering the power center, will run to various hiding places carrying with them their crude weapons. They lurk in these places as the characters explore the center. If their Hide rolls fail them, they leap out and attack the characters. It is possible that several, or even all the Engineers could be killed before telepathic contact is established and the mistakes are realized.

Six Engineers

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
STR	8	9	8	7	11	9
CON	9	10	9	9	9	12
SIZ	7	8	9	9	9	8
INT	18	20	21	16	19	20
POW	14	12	11	14	12	11
DEX	15	15	12	14	14	15
HP	7	9	9	9	9	11
DB	-1D6/1D4	None	None	None	None	None

Armor: None

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Sharp Stake	25%	15%	1D4

Skills: Hide 75%, Move Quietly 25%.

Engineer #6 (named Q11) has the following skills: Biological Lore 75%, Chemical Lore 78%, Engineering Lore 92%, Hide 85%, Mechanical Lore 69%, Move Quietly 35%.

If any of the Engineers survive this encounter, Q11 will be one of them. Unlike his companions, Q11 has a bit of the wanderlust and, given any opportunity at all, will join up with the pirates. Mikkl Grathorn will find Q11 particularly charming, the only person he's met in a while with whom he can discuss scientific and technical matters.

Most of the ship's functions can be controlled from this power center. If suggested to them, the Engineers can override some of the computer's locked out systems. So far, the Engineers have lacked the acumen to attempt such a thing but the appearance of the adventurers might be just the thing to spur them into action.

The Camp

The camp is a collection of ramshackle tents constructed from materials salvaged from the hold. Scraps of food, pilfered from the ship's stores, litter the floor and a crude chemical toilet has been rigged in a secluded corner.

The Power Generator

This is a complex area of machinery that is way beyond the comprehension of even scientist or sorcerer characters. The power globe is a particle reactor.

If the globe itself is subjected to 300 points of damage, it begins to overload. The neural feedback to the living ship will cause it to suffer a massive shock, killing it and putting it out of its misery. The subsequent neural linkage causes the globe to cease its output of stored power; an explosion occurs within two hours, reducing the *Ö Sidàta* to its component atoms, leaving nothing but a slowly rising mushroom cloud.

Finishing Up

The possible endings for this adventure are numerous. The Kia may completely fool the adventurers and, once aboard the *Rogue Mistress* and off this plane, wreak havoc on Maria's crew before taking their leave.

The Kia may be defeated and the surviving Engineers rescued. If this is the case, the Engineers may suggest that one of the healing booths be removed and installed on the pirate ship. They can do this in about 2 hours, rolling their Engineer Lore at the completion of the project to see if it was a success. The booth is no longer capable of replacing lost limbs, but its other curative powers are undiminished.

The characters may or may not learn of the ship's desire to be destroyed. There are two ways of accomplishing this. The bay doors in the cargo hold might be opened, allowing

the sea to enter, eventually flooding the hold and pulling the ship off the reef and into the sea. The second, and most spectacular way, is by destroying the power globe and setting in motion a nuclear chain reaction. When the overload begins, sirens will sound and lights begin to flash. This is the 2 hour warning, announcing the imminent destruction of the ship. This event is irreversible. The resultant explosion obliterates the craft, possibly catching the fleeing *Rogue Mistress* in its wash. The energy released by this explosion spreads through the plane and reawakens it, the first step in returning this world to life.

In the worst case scenario, the adventurers fail to retrieve the Entropy Configuration and also set the nuclear chain reaction in motion. This problem might be solved if one of the surviving Engineers has been rescued by the party. This character will be able to repair the malfunctioning Configuration already aboard the pirate ship, allowing them to escape. Failing this, possibly one of the characters has explored the computer system and this individual will discover that he has picked up some Engineering Lore (50 +1D20%) and can now attempt to repair the device. Failing these possibilities, the *Rogue Mistress*, while attempting to get as far away as possible, is caught in the nuclear blast and hurled across the planes to come finally to rest in Albyon, their next scheduled stop. This last method should be considered a total failure on the part of the characters so be free to penalize them with severe radiation burns, hideous scarring, mutation, sickness, and death.

The Fifth Chapter

The Web of Chaos

ON THE WORLD of Albyon lives a man named Justin Carrock who, according to Maria, knows the location of the Planar Knife. Justin Carrock is a moody, troubled man, addicted to drugs and a manifestation of the Eternal Champion. Justin is the father of Maria, although the young woman, long estranged from him, will not tell the characters this. The last time Maria saw Carrock she was no more than eight or nine years old. Although she knows that Carrock is her father, she is unaware that Pollidemia is her older sister. It is not until the characters meet and speak with Victoria Constant, consort of Justin Carrock and mother of the two girls, that they learn the truth.

Justin Carrock, in his role of Eternal Champion, is presently seeking the Planar Knife himself, believing the object to be the source and cause of the Chaos pulses that have recently been rolling over the land of Albyon. The characters, beginning in the city of Londshire, track Carrock from

place to place, eventually catching up with this enigmatic character near the end of the scenario and at the very heart of Chaos.

Meanwhile, Pollidemia, informed by Astralgynx of the player characters' alliance with Maria, has dispatched a gang of bloodthirsty cutthroats to Albyon, led by her demon, Gath, to wait and watch for the appearance of the *Rogue Mistress*. Pollidemia knows of the Planar Knife and guesses, correctly, that they will sooner or later show up in the world of Albyon.

The Planar Knife

This double-bladed demon dagger was forged ages ago by the Lords of Chaos and was intended to be used against the Kynn K'tal, should Gashoram or any other Lord ever find a way to awaken them. Even the Chaos Lords fear these powerful beings and worry that one of their own kind might

bring these entities to life in a bid for domination. Merged into this knife was a madness so complete that the weapon proved uncontrollable, even by the forces of Chaos themselves, and the blade was eventually abandoned. Centuries later, the weapon was found by a Champion of Law who, using a small device from a technological plane, managed to harness the power of the blade. Later, when this device was lost, the dangerous blade was again left abandoned and has since that time gone untouched and unused.

When the Planar Knife resides in any one place for an extended period of time, it begins to create about itself an area of complete chaos. This has taken the form of a vast web that seems to exist outside normal space. The ends of these webs are anchored in various planes of existence where they form tunnel-like openings. These tunnels lead to the center of the web where resides the knife. Most of these chaotic 'feelers' have been sealed off by various guardians of Law.

The Plane of Albyon

The world known as Albyon is a more familiar type of plane; a quasi-Europe in many ways similar to that of 16th century Earth.

Albyon is the dominant country, an island nation which lends its name to the entire plane. Ruled by a hereditary monarch, King Victor Regis, Albyon keeps a close watch on its neighbor and would-be rival, the confederated nations known as the Charlon Empire.

This plane is more lawful than the Young Kingdoms and technology dominates the culture. The existence of magic is recognized but considered by many to be something dark and evil. The sorcerous arts are rarely practiced and then only in secret. The culture is in many ways similar to Elizabethan England. The people of Albyon speak 'Ingritch' and dress in clothing similar to historical Earth. Swords are little-used these days, more often serving a decorative function or as a badge of office. Black-powder firearms are the prevailing tools of war.

Languages

The language most often encountered in Albyon is a form of Common tongue similar to many other worlds in the multiverse. Any character with Read/Write or Speak Common skills of 80% or better can perform these skills automatically. Characters with lesser abilities are required to roll against their skills whenever trying to read, write, or discuss anything of importance.

Sorcery

Practicing sorcery is difficult. The summoning of elementals, demons, or others, takes five times as long as normal, requires five times the normal expenditure of POW, and is performed at only one fifth the sorcerer's normal summoning ability (round up any fractions). It is possible the Elemental Lords might be contacted, but only under the most exceptional of conditions. The Beast Lords are similarly difficult to call and it may be that this can only be achieved in the more primitive areas of the world. Lords of Chaos and Law are not able to enter these realms and cannot be summoned at all.

Although the practice of magic is not illegal, open displays or even talk of such things can lead to problems. Less than a century ago people were still burned at the stake for such practices. Any number of Albyon citizens still believe this the best way of dealing with the problem of sorcerers and witches. Magic-using characters must take care of what they say and do.

Weapons and Armor

There is at least one type of sword found in Albyon probably unfamiliar to the characters. This is the estoc (Panzerstecher), a heavy thrusting sword developed for use by the cavalry and used as a sort of auxiliary lance. It does 1D8 points of damage.

A new projectile weapon, the heavy, hand-thrown dart, is also found here. It does 1D4 points of damage and can be hurled accurately as far as 40 feet.

The firearms developed and used in the world of Albyon resemble the smooth-bored, muzzle-loading flintlock weapons common to our Earth of a few centuries ago. These guns use a kind of black powder made from the blending of two different plants common to Albyon, flashroot and firethorn. Because of the unstable nature of the powder, it degenerates quickly in worlds more chaotic than Albyon. In the Young Kingdoms, for instance, (using the formula described in the Introduction) the powder has a 20% chance per day of becoming inert and useless.

A partial list of black powder weapons found on this plane is given below.

Weapon	Shots/ Round	Damage	Range (feet)	AP
Pocket Pistol	1/6	1D6+2	15	3
Holster Pistol	1/6	2D4+2	40	5
Musket	1/6	2D6+2	80	8
Blunderbuss	1/6	4D6	30/60/100	0

Loading these weapons is a complex and painstaking procedure. How fast a character may perform this action is dependent upon his skill level. The character's skill level also affects the chance of fumbling when firing the weapon.

Black Powder Weapon Reloading Table

Skill Ability

01-50% Reloading takes 6 rounds and a fumble occurs whenever 90-00 is rolled.

51-70% Reloading time is reduced to 5 rounds and fumbles occur when 96-00 is rolled.

71-80% Reloading takes 4 rounds and fumbles occur on rolls of 99-00.

81%+ Reloading takes 3 rounds and fumbles occur only on a roll of 00.

Fumbles

If, when firing a weapon, a character rolls a fumble, roll 1D6 and consult the following chart.

Black Powder Weapon Fumble Chart

D6	Result
1-2	Misfire. The weapon does not fire. The weapon must be carefully cleared of the old charge before reloading. Double the time it normally takes to reload the weapon.
3	Hangfire. The weapon appears to have misfired but 1D10 strike ranks later, it unexpectedly goes off. The result of this depends on what the character has done with the weapon in the meantime.
4	Underload. The weapon fires but too little powder was used. The shot, underpowered, goes astray.
5	Backfire. Ball is packed too tight and igniting powder flashes back through touch hole. Weapon fires normally but user takes 1D3 points damage from powder burns and is blinded for 1D10 rounds.
6	Overload. Too much powder was used. The weapon kicks badly, sending the shot astray. The user takes 1 point of damage and, if he fails his Balance roll, is knocked to the ground.

Firearm Descriptions

The pocket pistol, as the name implies, is a very small weapon, capable of being concealed in the folds of a coat or cape. Some expensive (but not necessarily well-made) pocket pistols have two barrels with a mechanism for switching the flintlock between the touch holes of the barrels. Weapons of this latter type can be fired on two successive rounds but require double the reloading time.

The holster pistol has a longer barrel which greatly increases the weapon's range and power. It is typically carried in a leather holster on a horse's saddle.

The musket is a long-barreled weapon fired from the shoulder, similar to a rifle.

The blunderbuss is similar to a shotgun and fires pellets in a spreading pattern. They are not capable of piercing armor. Their damage also decreases as the range increases but, when firing at any range greater than 20 feet, the weapon is capable of hitting more than one target. Anyone standing within three feet of the target will suffer damage as indicated by the range. The character uses this weapon at his normal skill level at any range above point-blank and below 100 feet, damage decreasing past 30 feet and 60 feet. Any distance beyond 100 feet the character's skill is halved, beyond 200 feet, the skill is quartered, etc.

Armor

The only new armor the characters may encounter on Albyon is the steel cuirass, which provides 1D8-1 points of protection.

Sailing for Albyon

Once the new Entropy Configuration is installed on The Rogue Mistress (or the old one repaired), the ship will be made ready to set sail. Neither Maria nor the crew have any reason for wanting to linger long on Klaadii, and if the atomic chain reaction has been set in motion, haste will be of the essence.

Once again Maria gives the orders that set the ship in motion and, rising gently from the sea, the craft sails up into the air, quickly gathering speed. Before long the familiar black mist forms on the masts and rigging and, guided by the sure hands of the Tenatir, they begin slipping through the dimensions. As before, they find themselves in a dark void, sailing smoothly. Visions of other worlds, other times, form hazily before their eyes before quickly dissolving into mist.

Eventually a continent forms thousands of feet beneath the ship. A great coastline rises up along a mighty sea. The image becomes solid and, with a slight bump, the *Rogue Mistress* settles into the new plane. Warm sunshine pours down on the deck, burning away the chill of Klaadii.

"Albyon," says Maria, a trace of wistfulness in her voice.

To the north and west of the main continent the characters see a large island, at least a couple hundred miles in length. It is separated from the mainland by a long channel maybe 120 miles across.

Flying across the sky in the gathering dusk, Maria pilots the ship toward the great island called Albyon, eventually settling the *Mistress* in a quiet cove along a broad river. A switch somewhere is pulled and the engines shut down, the whining, humming noise decreasing in volume and pitch until it finally disappears. It is nightfall.

Later, in her cabin, Maria outlines to the adventurers what they'll need to do.

"Justin Carrock is the man's name," she says. "He owns a tavern in Londshire called The Dragon's Tears, located in the southwest quarter of the city on a street called the Scarlet Alley."

Justin Carrock, she explains, is an odd man, reclusive, subject to fits of depression, and not, she cautions them, to be completely trusted. "He's been known to let people down when they most need them."

There is a detectable bitterness in her voice and the characters get the impression that she perhaps once knew the man. If asked, Maria grudgingly admits she knew him once, "but only for a short time, and that was long ago." Regardless, Maria is convinced that the characters require his aid. Carrock, according to her, is the only person in Albyon who knows of the existence of the Planar Knife. It is supposed to be hidden some place where no one would ever find it, but she believes Carrock may know the weapon's location.

Maria's Map

Albyon

Albyon is the nation from which this plane of existence take its name. It is the central trading nation in this part of the world but despite its central economic position, the people of far more ancient Gollia consider it a barbaric and uncultured country.

Cities of the Albyon Nation

Londshire is the largest city on the island. Although barbaric by continental standards, Londshire is Albyon's premier city, and the cultural center of the maritime nation.

Camshire is Albyon's new capital. Following the death of his mother, Queen Lazabath, several years ago, the present ruler, Victor Regis, transferred the seat of power to this smaller city.

Whitedover is one of the many small towns found along Albyon's coast. It is perhaps the most popular seaport for ships from Gollia and the continent. Ships from the Splinter Nations and the Charlon Empire also occasionally dock here. A small fleet of Albyon trading vessels calls this port home.

Gollia

Gollia, now decadent and decaying, was once the cultural and spiritual leader of all the nations of Albyon. It is reputed that some of Gollia's leaders now traffic with the dark and nearly unknown nations of the Far West across the sea. Despite this reputation, Gollia is still respected for its fantastic art and great literature.

Sullair is a small seaport town that conducts most of its trade with Albyon. Caravans destined for Pahire leave here on a daily basis. Horses and wagons are readily available for purchase.

Nomand is another sea-trading town. The ships of Nomand range further afield than those of Sullair and it is not unusual to see them unloading goods from the lands of Eiron or slaves from the dark empires of the west.

Pahire, in times past, was said to be the nexus of the world, the terminus of all roads over land or sea. Pahire was known as the City of Morning, but is now more often referred to as the City of Dusk. Its inhabitants have turned toward more sullen and introspective pursuits. Gollia's Aged and Exalted Princess, who has not been seen in public for six years, lives in a palace in the center of Pahire.

The Coast of Silent Stones

In a time now forgotten, a forest of mysterious standing stones was erected along Gollia's coast. Stretching along the sea for nearly a hundred miles, and at times reaching as far as 20 miles inland, this land of dark pillars is abhorred and shunned by all. Lately, the area has become the favorite gathering place for a number of new and mysterious cults.

Other Nations and Places

The Charlon Empire is a group of smaller nations united under the banner of Prince Charlon, a lawful warlord turned emperor. The people of the Empire, though they mean well, have a tendency toward insufferable self-righteousness.

The Splinter Nations are a collection of city-states joined in a loose confederation for the purpose of resisting absorption into the Charlon Empire. In the process, the city-states have consolidated their influence over the surrounding countryside.

The Cellton Isles are inhabited by people banded into warring tribes. They are moving gradually toward an agricultural, feudal system of organization. Individuals from the Islands are valued by outsiders for their storytelling abilities.

Eiron bears some similarities to the Cellton Isles, but is more advanced and fully feudal. The people of Eiron, like those of the Islands, are agriculturally inclined.

Maria gets out a map of the world of Albyon and spreads it on the table. Pointing to the island of Albyon, Maria indicates the position of the *Rogue Mistress*, a broad river 30 miles north and east of the great city of Londshire.

"I don't dare anchor any closer to the city or the coast than where we are now," she explains. "There's a price on my head and its best if no one knows that I'm even on this plane." She apologizes for the distance the characters will have to travel to reach the city, but she explains that it cannot be helped.

The characters may ask questions about some of the places shown on the map and Maria will answer, using the descriptions printed with the gamemaster's map. Maria offers to let them take the map with them if they wish.

As before, the characters, with the gamemaster's blessing, may be accompanied by one or more members of the *Rogue Mistress* crew. Only those crewmen who easily pass for human will be able to make the trip. A creature such as the alien Krathak would more than likely be shot on sight.

Maria can provide a small amount of local currency and make suggestions about their attire that helps disguise their decidedly foreign appearance. The wearing of armor is not

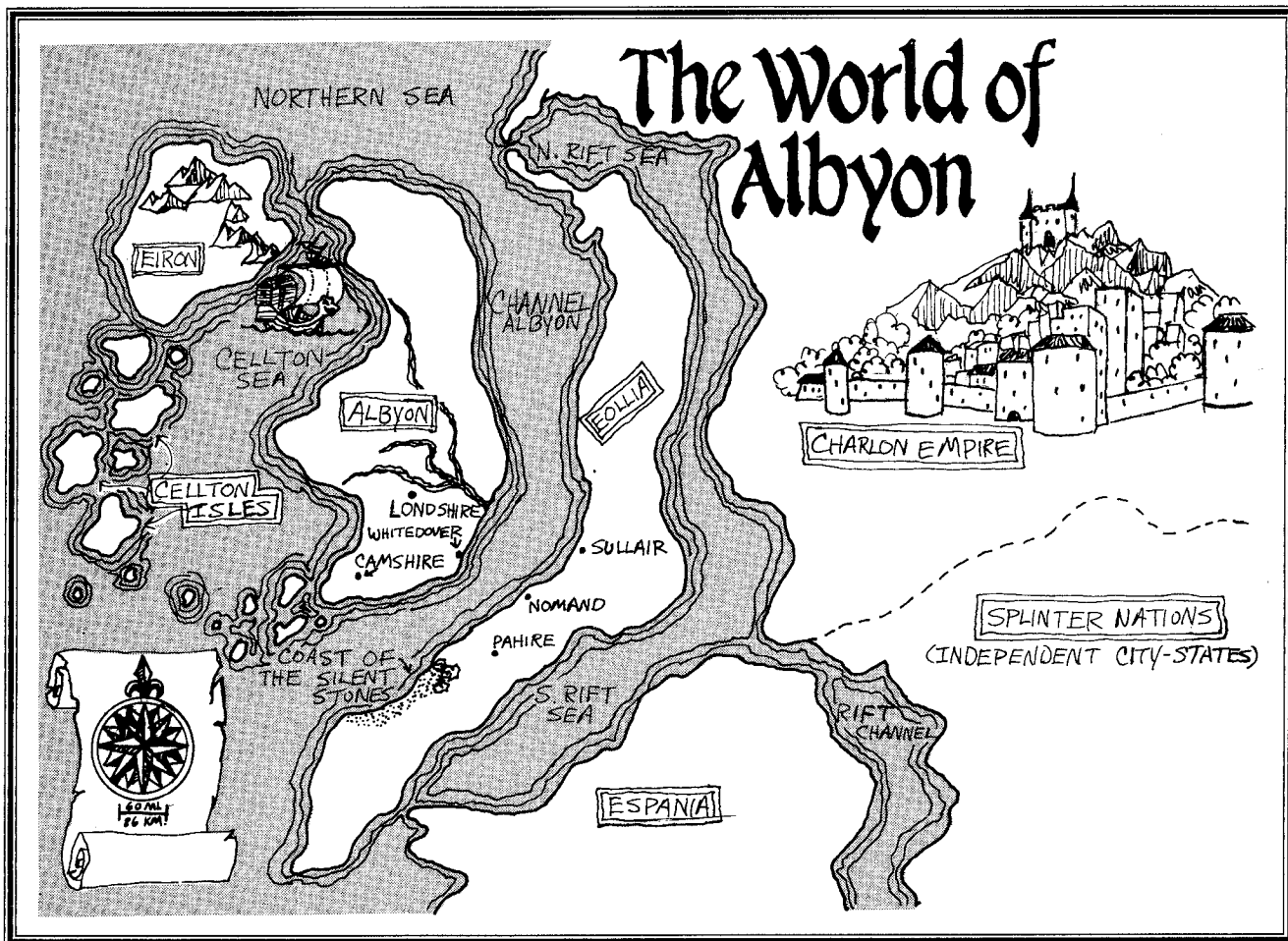
unheard of Albyon, although it is the exception rather than the norm. The styles worn by the adventurers are sure to draw attention.

Journey through Albyon

The next morning, the characters leave the ship, bolstered with supplies and headed for Londshire. With the river and the ship disappearing behind them, they march through a lush meadow filled with the waving purple blossoms of some sort of thistle plant.

After walking for almost three hours the characters come across a narrow rutted road running north and south. Looking south, in the direction of Londshir, the characters spy a man riding in their direction atop a broken-down plow horse. He is dressed in coarse, poorly-fitting, homespun clothing.

If the man is asked for directions the characters may at first have a hard time making themselves understood. Anyone with a Speak Common skill of 80% or better gets by. Others must repeat themselves and be required to make a successful skill roll. After breaching the first barriers to communication, both parties can make themselves under-



stood well enough. The characters learn that the city of Londshire lays about two hours away.

"Lon'shire wou' be the biggest city in these parts, sire," he says. "You bein' on foot, I don't suspect you could make it there in less than a couple hours, but that should get you there well before nightfall."

Drawing closer to the city, the land grows less wild and more populated. The adventurers find themselves in a countryside dotted with humble, sod-roofed cottages, small stony fields, and dark woods. Children are seen, dressed mostly in rags. A woman emerges from a nearby hut, tosses dirty water from a pan and, after giving the adventurers a suspicious second look, goes back inside. The peasantry seems a dull and tired lot.

Londshire

The characters reach the great city of Londshire just before dusk and enter through the north gate, paying the fee of a bronze farthing apiece to the bored-looking guards. Inside, the city is still active, late-staying farmers on their way out

the gates, the better dressed and obviously urban population still coming and going about their business. The attire of the city-folk is somewhat better than their rural counterparts. Men wear dark, tightly-cut suits of wool or cotton. Around their necks are wrapped high, stiff collars, decorated with knotted scarves dyed in florid colors and patterns. Metal helmets are rare, but pressed felt or silk hats with narrow upturned brims are common. Many men carry canes which must be ornament, as none appear to be lame. Few wear armor or openly display weapons. Those that do (about one in ten) usually sport long, rapier-like swords and slim daggers more ornamental than useful.

Women wear long skirts (the finer ones of silk or velvet), pleated or gathered, and tight blouses with padded shoulders and ruffled collars and cuffs. Player characters may note a marked gender segregation. Men are usually seen walking with men, and women with other women or children. None of the women appear armed and any female player character armed with weapons is an object of stares.

Although most people are on foot, the occasional man on horseback is seen as well as people riding in enclosed, horse-drawn carriages. The shop and street signs are written in an alphabet and style not totally unlike the Common of the Young Kingdoms, but with enough differences that

reading them is sometimes difficult. As before, any character with a Read/Write Common skill of 80% or better can automatically decipher the signs. Others must roll their skill.

As the characters pass through the city, they see regular patrols of armed men are walking up and down the streets in an orderly fashion; obviously the city guard, they carry light swords and daggers of functional design. Approximately one guard in four carries a device of unusual design, a tapered metal tube about three feet long and mounted to wooden shoulder pieces (muskets).

The adventurers, if dressed in the flamboyant attire typical of the Young Kingdoms, are the objects of suspicious glances from the guardsmen. The characters might realize that adopting some Albyon-styled clothing could be to their advantage. However, as long as the characters conduct themselves in a lawful and proper manner, they will not be challenged by the guard.

The characters' impression of Londshire is of a well-organized city, and a people reasonably secure and peaceful.

The Pulse of Chaos

Some time while making their way to the Scarlet Alley, the characters will have their first experience with the Pulse of Chaos, a phenomenon that has been plaguing Albyon for several months. It comes without warning, a rolling wave of distortion that passes through the reality of Albyon at its most basic level of composition. Everything in sight passes for a moment through a state of flux. Buildings fade into negative images of themselves, their timber skeletons glowing through with a pale, white fire. People throw themselves down on the street in terror as the distortion wrinkles through them, briefly altering their forms into monstrous shapes. The adventurers themselves are struck by the wave and the power of Chaos ripples through their bodies, making their demon hearts glow with an eerie witch fire. After a few seconds the disturbance ends and the people in the street regain their feet, dust themselves off, and go about their business almost as though nothing had happened. The anxiety in their faces, however, betrays the fear.

Nearby, a woman screams and the characters see her on her knees in the street, clutching her hands, wailing in shock and horror. Her young child did not recover from the Chaos wave and now squats in front of her, a multi-legged monstrosity resembling a huge spider with drooling human features. The now-mindless child suddenly jumps up and scampers off, moving at an almost frightening speed. From around a corner, attracted by the woman's screams, appear four of the city guard. One of them raises a metal tube weapon to his shoulder, pointing it at the fleeing aberration. There is a loud 'crack' and a cloud of smoke appears around the weapon. The scurrying child-horror gives a squeal of pain and immediately collapses in the street, rolling over on its back, multiple legs twitching spasmodically in the air. The stricken woman screams even louder, but the people in

the street pay little attention to her, most going about their business while a few of the more curious gather around the lifeless body of the unfortunate child. The wailing mother is eventually helped to her feet by another woman and half-carried into a nearby home.

The Scarlet Alley

Stopping and asking for directions, perhaps more than once, the characters finally find their way to the twisting, muddy street known as The Scarlet Alley. In this part of town the men and women seem more sociable and are frequently seen walking together, hand in hand or arms around each other. While most of the men resemble those encountered in the residential sections of Londshire, the women here are dressed more provocatively, their features accented with make-up.

In this place called The Scarlet Alley, no one pays much attention to the way the adventurers are dressed. Exotic clothing is more common here than other parts of the city. Men in the party will pass unmolested. Female characters, however, are likely to be accosted by different men and questioned about their "availability and price schedule."

Eventually, the characters spot a sign over a door that reads, "The Dragon's Tears," the tavern said to be owned by Justin Carrock.

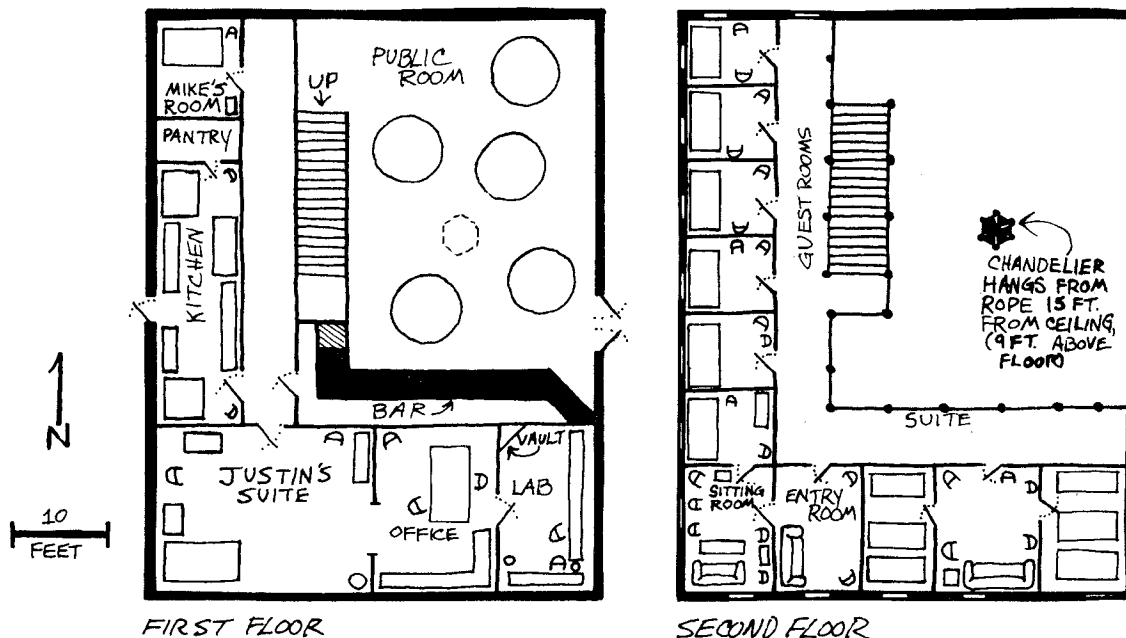
The Dragon's Tears

The building is two stories tall, made of dull red brick with windows set in casements of white sandstone. Stone carvings of dragons readied for flight decorate the corners of the building. Inside, the adventurers find a typical, unremarkable public room. Men drink quietly, talking to one another in lowered voices while others sit at tables intent on games of cards. In the back, four men throw small darts at a circular target hung on the wall. Next to them a stairway leads to the second floor balcony that overlooks the public room. The tavern floor is of bare wood and a large chandelier hangs suspended from the second floor ceiling.

The roughest-looking patrons are lined up at a tall bar that runs most of the length of one of the walls. The floor behind the bar is built higher than the rest of the tavern's and the mustachioed man working there has a commanding view of the entire room. He gives the characters an appraising glance as they come in, but makes no special effort to welcome them.

There are numerous women here, all dressed in gaudy, loose clothing, their faces painted in the fashion of the Alley. As the characters make their way through the tavern, one of these women turns to them and, making a quick appraisal,

The Dragon's Tears



takes an interest in the unusually-garbed strangers. She rises from the lap of the man she has been visiting with and approaches the party. Her would-be companion, dressed in a bowler and white, short-sleeved shirt, whines after her, calling: "Blanche?" His name is Jeremiah Obek.

Blanche Holden, Working Girl

Blanche's sudden interest in the characters is purely commercial and she immediately homes in on the most expensively-equipped male character. Blanche can Evaluate Treasure well enough to tell which characters are displaying wealth, no matter from which plane of existence the wealth comes

Although attractive, Blanche has a loud voice and coarse manners. If the character tries to brush her off, she proves persistent, impervious to any subtle attempt to turn her away. This leads to either a confrontation with Blanche's lately-rejected suitor (who, at the time of the adventurer's entrance, was haggling price with her), or a conflict between Blanche and a female member of the party whom the prostitute mistakenly believes to be a competitor.

One way or another a fist-fight soon breaks out, either between Blanche and a female player-character or between a male player character and Blanche's former client. It soon

degenerates into a free-for-all as the rest of the patrons leave their seats to either join with or against the player-characters. Through it all, no one draws a weapon; punching and wrestling are the only forms of fighting the nonplayer-characters engage in. If the characters draw weapons, the entire brawl quickly comes to a halt as the patrons, shocked by this sudden threat, quickly cool down and begin looking for their seats.

STR 8 CON 11 SIZ 9 INT 8 POW 13 DEX 11 CHA 15

Hit Points: 11 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Dagger	47%	41%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	20%	—	1D4+2

Skills: Conceal 75%, Cut Purse 60%, Evaluate Treasure 80%, Search 75%.

Jeremiah Obek

Jeremiah is a laborer and a man prone to selfish behavior. He usually wears a bowler, dark vest, and a white, short-sleeved shirt. Obek has a short fuse and judgement poor enough that he rarely knows when he's outclassed in a fight.

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 12 INT 7 POW 8 DEX 11 CHA 11

Hit Points: 16 Armor: None

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Cudgel	51%	44%	1D6

Fist 38% — 1D3
Kick 88% — 1D6

Skills: Cut Purse 59%, Dodge 45%, Tumble 34%.

If the fight starts to get out of hand, or about the time the characters draw weapons, a tall, beautiful middle-aged woman appears at the top of the stairs. Her hair is loose and coppery red, her eyes intense and gray. Her gaze is steady as she gestures with one hand toward the barkeep, calling him by the name of Michael. From behind the bar the man produces a blunderbuss and, pointing it in the general direction of the melee says in a loud voice: "I think we could all be a little more polite to strangers visiting our city."

The scuffling and fighting quickly comes to a standstill; the patrons eye the gun warily. They know when Michael means business. The woman on the balcony smiles, then speaks.

"Blanche," she says, speaking to the woman who started it all. "I've told you before, if you can't behave yourself, you're going to have to find somewhere else to work. You may now go home for the evening."

Blanche casts an acid look at the characters but says nothing and strides out into the street, her erstwhile companion following along behind, calling her name.

The tall woman looks at the characters, scrutinizing them. "Welcome to the land of Albyon and the Scarlet Alley of Londshire," she says. "I think I have been waiting for you." Gesturing again to the barkeep, she tells him: "Michael? Serve our guests whatever they would like. I will be ready to speak with them in a few moments." She turns to step back through the upstairs door, then turns back. "In fact," she adds, "I think it's time for a round on the house."

A loud hurrah goes up through the tavern. The tall woman turns and disappears back into the second floor room she came from.

A Drink on the House

Eames is a short, burly man with balding head, red cheeks, scarlet pate, and a prodigious belly. A droopy moustache covers most of his upper lip framing his large, square white teeth. A careful worker, Eames (like many bartenders) considers himself a craftsman of sorts.

Michael Eames, Faithful Employee

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 12 DEX 15 CHA 12

Hit Points: 11 **Armor:** Quilted Shirt (1D3-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Cudgel	90%	77%	1D6
Blunderbuss	50%	—	2D6/1D6/1D3
Fist	95%	—	1D3

Skills: Credit 25%, Evaluate Treasure 75%, First Aid 75%, Move Quietly 65%, Search 52%, Taste 50%.

Victoria's calm acceptance of the strangely-dressed characters is not lost on Mike. If the characters don't make their way to the bar to speak with him, he motions them over, inviting them to the bar.

"Call me Mike, please," he introduces himself. Unbidden, he goes on: "Now the lady, she likes to use me full name what me mother give me, but that always makes me feel too important — leastwise when other people are sayin' it. Now, when the lady uses me full name it don't sound so bad; it's like she's just showin' her respect for the job I do 'er."

Fastidiously, he wipes the surface of the bar, picking at some particularly sticky bit with a fingemil, but never losing the rhythm of his speech.

"You know, those couple years before the lady came here this used to be a right nasty place, what with dishonest games and fights breakin' out all the time, no one ever really trustin' any of the others. But it was like old Justin never saw what was goin' on around here, his mind was always somewhere's else. I swear, it's like he's always wrestlin' with some problem too big for the rest of us to even imagine. But like I said, after the lady showed up here a few months back and took up wi' the old man, things got more orderly around here right quick. Things have been runnin' smooth as silk, the way they was meant to be. I never saw the old man happier."

Mike then sighs, looking wistful.

"But now Justin's taken off again," he continues, "fallin' back to his old ways, I guess. It's a good thing the lady's here to take over for him. Sometimes you hardly realize that Justin's even gone."

"Don't get me wrong," he quickly adds. "I mean I miss Justin and all that. He's a good man, for all his broodin' and mopin' and such, but it's sure easier to come in and put in your night's work now." He squints one eye, and looks into the character's face. "Funny about her knowin' you folks were comin' along... but again, ain't that just like her?" At this point someone at the bar calls for a drink and Michael bustles off, leaving the characters to fend for themselves.

Information from the Public Room

Characters who mingle with the patrons find they can make themselves understood using Common or, in some cases, Low Melnibonéan. The patrons comment that this latter language sounds like some "mighty strange form of Gollian."

By speaking with the patrons, the characters learn that Justin Carrock is a tall man with sallow flesh, dark hair and eyes. His face is narrow, with a long aquiline nose. He rarely smiles and sometimes goes for days without saying anything to anyone. Asking what has become of Justin, the adventurers are told: "He's gone away again, guv. He does that sort of thing on a regular basis. But he always shows back up." And: "It's not our job to keep tabs on the gentleman." Everyone agrees that he's been gone for at least two weeks.

A Stranger Appears

At some point a man in a long cloak and metal helmet steps in off the street, goes directly to the bar, and orders a drink.

He is ugly and mean-looking, his left eye missing, covered with a filthy black patch. Dirty braids of blonde hair dangle from beneath the his helmet, bits of broken glass and twisted metal woven into them. Leather straps wrapped around the stranger's forearms are decorated in a like manner. Anyone making a Scent roll notices the faint smell of turpentine and rotting eggs lingering about the stranger.

The man speaks softly and the characters hear Eames ask him several times to repeat himself. Finally, growing exasperated, Eames finally asks: "Do you speak Ingritch, or what?" Eventually the man gets his drink and, downing it in a gulp, hastily leaves the tavern.

A character making a successful See roll, notices the man wears a full set of armor under his loose cloak. A roll of INT x3 or less on a D100 identifies the design on his breast plate as the symbol of Gashoram, the Chaos Lord of Darkness. It will also be noticed that the man is armed with a broadsword and dagger. This is the first broadsword the characters have come across in this world. The gamemaster should merely state that the Seeing character notices a broadsword and not draw a great deal of attention to it. If anyone keeps an eye on the man after he leaves, they see him join up with a small group of similarly-armed men waiting for him outside the building. Without discussion, they head up the street and out of sight.

If Eames is asked about the stranger, the barkeep tells the adventurers that the man has been coming into the tavern once or twice a day for the past week. The first time in here he asked for the whereabouts of Justin Carrock. He was told that Carrock had gone on an extended trip, no one knowing exactly when he would return.

The stranger is one of the band of fighters sent here by Pollidemia to try and interfere with the characters' plans. There are four of these men, led by Gath, Pollidemia's faithful demon. Having failed to make contact with Justin Carrock, they now intend to tail the characters in the hope that they will lead them to the location of the Planar Knife..

The characters may want to follow the stranger when he leaves but just then the tall woman appears on the balcony above. She signals to Eames and the barkeep informs the characters that the lady is now ready to speak with them.

Victoria's Secrets

This middle-aged woman is tall and slender, her skin pale and clear. She has thick red hair, usually worn piled on top of her head, and penetrating gray eyes. Her gaze is so steady and unwavering that it is said by some that "with a look, she can weigh a person's soul." In truth, Victoria possesses rudimentary prescience—glimpses of the future come unbidden to her, most often by way of dreams. Her understanding of these visions is rarely perfect, but she long ago learned to pay attention to them. She has had hints that the characters would be coming to the Dragon's Tears and that these strangers would somehow be involved with her fam-

ily; exactly how, she does not know. Knowing only that the adventurers' role in her life is unavoidable, she intends to help them in whatever way she can.

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 16 POW 14 DEX 15 CHA 20

Hit Points: 14 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Ice Dagger	55%	75%	1D4+2+1D6

Skills: Balance 45%, Credit 95%, Dodge 35%, Evaluate Treasure 75%, First Aid 75%, Move Quietly 45%, Music Lore 72%, Plant Lore 95%, Ride 60%, Scent 70%, See 65%, Sing 85%, Sleight of Hand 55%, Taste 75%, Tie Knot 70%, Tumble 25%.

Languages: Albyon Common 85%/95%, Gollian 85%/90%

Victoria invites the characters into her room and offers them seats on plush silken pillows nearly covering the floor. Victoria sits on a low chair set near the back wall of the room. Observant characters may See a particularly finely-made dagger and sheath hanging on the wall behind their hostess. An odd, heavily insulated glove, executed in a style to match the dagger hangs next to the weapon.

"Let me introduce myself," the woman says. "I am Victoria Constant. you have come here looking for a man named Justin Carrock, is that not right?"

The characters may answer as they wish, but it should be obvious to them that Victoria knows at least something about them.

"Justin has been gone a month now," she says. "I grow worried thinking about him, although I should have learned by now not to." She pauses. "He's gone in search of some solution to the problems lately plaguing Albyon. I'm sure that by now you have experienced the strange 'shock waves' that have been periodically sweeping the land."

She tells the characters that Justin left to find something, an object of some kind, one of great power. She does not know the exact nature of the object but she can tell them that it has something to do with the advance of Chaos in this world. Justin told her that if he did not find this thing and somehow insulate it from the world of Albyon, then eventually they would all be consumed by Chaos.

"I wish I could tell you more about this thing, but I'm not sure much is known by anyone, and though I am occasionally caught up in the eddies, I am outside the mainstream of events in this matter. It is a dangerous business, however, and I fear my family will suffer for it."

At this point Victoria pauses and takes a torn scrap of brown parchment from the top of the vanity she uses as a desk. She hands it over to the characters. The following text is written on the parchment in a clear, cursive script:

Forged in darkness,

Two who...

...and birth,

Father, son,

Brothers ...

Joined again,

*Two in one
But one again.*

If the characters jump in with questions, she answers as simply as possible, always maintaining that she would rather not confuse the issue with her own imperfect understanding of the situation.

"These words came to me in a dream," she says. "I know not what they mean and I think it better you see them as I wrote them and not ask me to try and explain them to you, for I understand these things but little."

She continues: "I have to admit that seeing you here after all these weeks of waiting eases my mind, but also makes me feel Justin's absence as I have not felt it before. I know he could stay in this place no longer. His patrons and friends think he will be back, but I do not think he will return. If only he could have waited for you." Tears cling to her lashes. "We were fated to be lost to one another." Victoria is silent for a long moment, then she stands. "Come now. I will show you to your rooms."

If the characters ask questions of her, Victoria answers as truthfully as she can, hedging only when the characters touch upon the subject of her family. If asked outright, she will admit that Maria and Pollidemia are her children and that Justin is the girls' father. She does not talk about Justin Carrock's drug problems or about the sour relationships between the two girls and between the girls and their father. She will tell them about Pollidemia running away while the three of them were in the east and admits to the fact that less than a year later she abandoned Maria to the care of a convent in Espania. From what she tells them, the characters can gather that over all these years Justin and she have spent little time together.

Victoria offers them beds for the night, or longer if the characters require extra rest. She says that when Justin left, he told her he was going to visit a man named Sypin, who dwells in the town of Whitedover. It is rumored that Sypin is a wizard and although this may or may not be true, everyone agrees that the man is wise and learned beyond his years.

"Sypin is said to have great knowledge about such things as this. Some say that he was born in a different world and came to Albyon to help us with our problems, but such things as these are beyond my speculation."

The characters are free to retire to their rooms, explore (carefully and quietly) some of the rest of The Dragon's Tears, or hit the streets in search of the mysterious stranger.

Other Rooms

Beyond the common room, the 'Tears' is decorated in a simple, pleasing style. Wallpaper of straightforward design, usually vertical stripes, covers most of the walls. While the large public room has a floor of bare wood, the stairs and hallways are all carpeted with plush, maroon rugs. Individ-

ual rooms are decorated with oriental-styled carpets of ornate and unusual design and furnished comfortably.

The Ground Floor

Justin's Office Suite: The bed and sitting area are neatly arranged and clean. The desk and files are stripped of paper work, all of it now in Victoria's possession and kept in her rooms on the second floor.

The alchemical lab contains a complete collection of well-used equipment. Unlike the bedroom, this area is very disorganized. Lining the window sills, the characters see open crocks heaped with raw materials of different sorts while retorts and other items of glassware clutter the main work table. A character with a Plant Lore skill of level three or better can tell that the equipment and materials are used to brew potions that alter an individual's health and well-being. A level five Plant Lore skill reveals that Carrock is working with formulae designed to increase a person's CON (but does not detect the deleterious side effects noted in Carrock's description).

Set into the floor in one corner of the room is a large brass triangle. If closely examined, it is found to be a locked door, the key hole hidden under a sliding plate and only discovered with a successful See roll. This is the door to a small vault Carrock has recently constructed. His plan is, after retrieving the Planar Knife, to lock it away in this specially constructed vault. Carrock believes the vault will safely contain the Knife's power and put an end to the terrible chaos pulses playing havoc with Londshire and the world of Albyon. The vault's lock is extremely intricate in design; subtract 25% from an individual's Pick Lock skill if they attempt to open it. If opened, it is found to be empty.

The Kitchen: This is used to prepare meals for people staying at the inn. Victoria and Michael share the cooking duties.

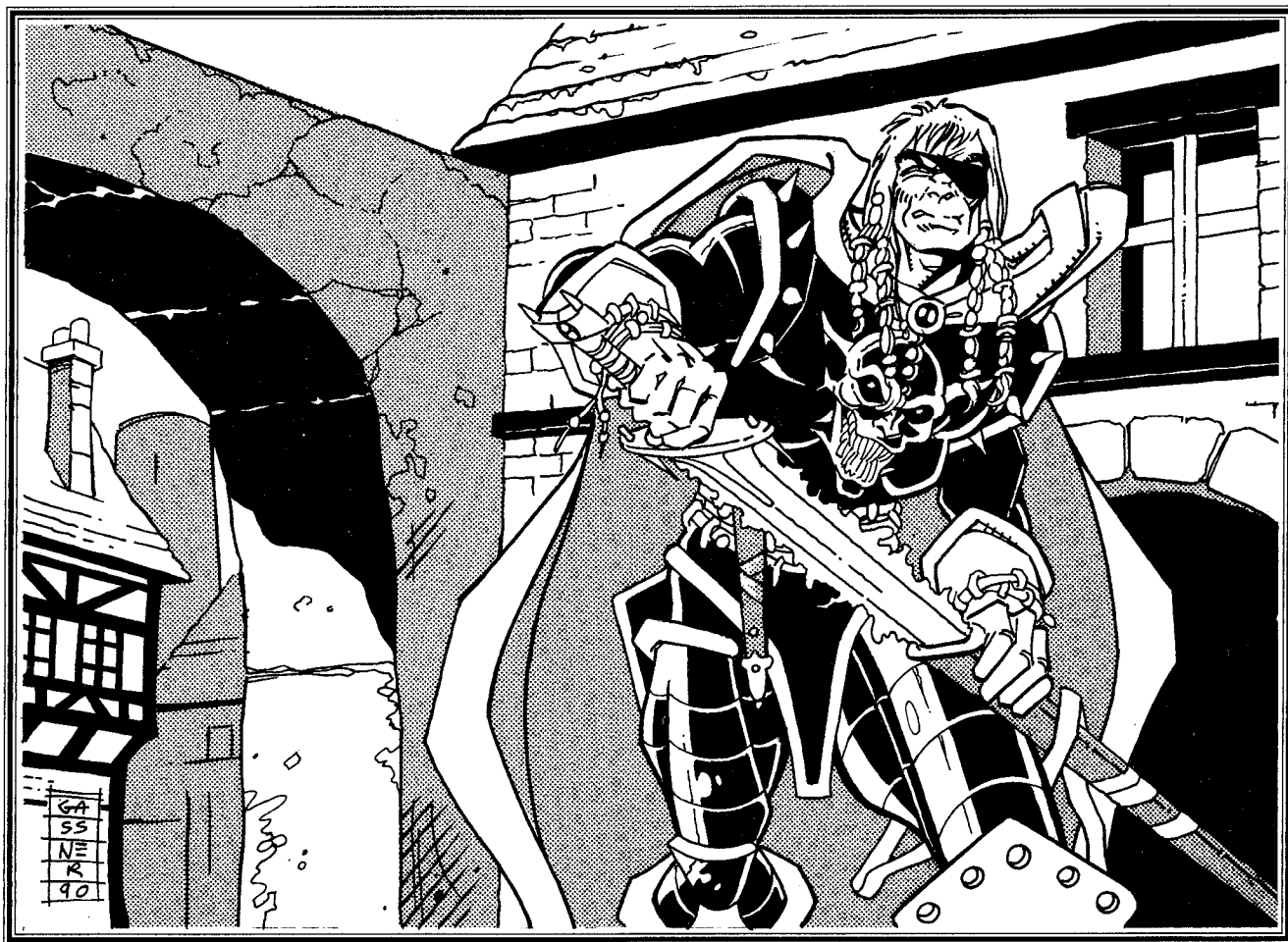
The Pantry: This room contains enough food to feed a dozen people for a week.

Michael's Room: This modest room contains a bed and a comfortable easy chair. The closet holds a half dozen shirts and vests of the type favored by Michael. There are no books in this room, although there is usually a recent copy of the local newspaper lying about. The man seems to have few interests outside his job.

Second Floor

The Guest Rooms: Each of these rooms has a bed, a nightstand, and a basin and pitcher. Pegs are provided on the backs of the doors for the hanging of cloaks or other clothing.

The Suites: There are two suites on the second floor. The one given to the characters contains two bedrooms and a sitting room furnished with comfortable chairs and cushions



The Warrior, Dog

as well as a writing desk. Victoria uses the other suite for her apartments.

In Search of the Stranger

If the adventurers take to the streets looking for the suspicious stranger seen earlier, they don't go far before they spot him lurking in a darkened doorway, quite obviously keeping the characters under surveillance. If approached, the man, named 'Dog,' steps out of the shadows and draws his sword. His stance is bold, especially considering he stands alone against a number of adventurers. A successful Scent roll detects the faint odor of turpentine and rotten eggs lingering about the man.

Dog's sword is a bound demon named *Thoron*. Upon command, *Thoron* produces a dazzling flash of blinding light which is directed forward, affecting anyone standing in a cone extending 10 yards out from the tip of the sword. Anyone in the area of effect must resist the flash by matching

their CON against the sword's POT of 14 or be blinded for 2D6 rounds. If Dog commands *Thoron* to flash, neither he nor the sword can do anything else in that round. Rather than fight, Dog prefers to escape the characters. He wants to carry out his mission as Gath has instructed.

Unblinded characters may attempt to melee Dog, but he again calls for a Dazzle attack, continuing this strategy until all characters are blinded or give up pursuit.

If anyone gets close enough to swing on Dog, they see he is wearing dark, metallic armor bearing the symbol of Gashoram. The grinning face of a demon is worked into the metal, its eyes are glowing points of light which seem to follow the movements of anyone pressing to attack. The demon armor, *Dixar*, affords Dog 25 points of protection.

After 1D6+5 combat rounds, the city guard arrives. The gamemaster should use their arrival to provide Dog an opportunity to escape. Possibly he Dazzles the constables and, blinded, they entangle themselves with the adventurers, allowing the man to make his getaway.

Afterward, witnesses support the characters' claim that the fight was started by the stranger but, regardless, the captain of the guard will warn the adventurers about proper behavior while in the city of Londshire.

Dog, Mercenary

Dog is of medium height, muscular and solid. He has blue eyes and a disconcerting, almost vacant stare. He rarely speaks, except when telling convincing lies. His long blonde hair is kept in braids into which have been woven twisted pieces of metal and bits of broken glass. More metal and glass are woven into gnarled leather straps wrapped around his arms, waist and legs. Dog Soldier smiles faintly when experiencing pain.

STR 17 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 9 POW 12 DEX 14 CHA 13

Hit Points: 17 **Armor:** Demon Plate (25 points)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	89%	60%	1D8+1
Dagger	45%	30%	1D4+2
Self Bow	72%	—	1D8+1
Target Shield	78%	65%	1D6

Skills: Ambush 75%, Climb 15%, Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 15%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 50%, Ride 80%, See 65%, Set Trap 80%, Swim 5%, Track 65%, Tumble 5%.

Languages: Common 16%/75%.

Thoron CON 25 POW 3

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Dixar CON 25 SIZ 12 POW 11

Armor: 25

This dark metallic armor has a grinning, demonic face worked into the breast-plate. The face's eyes are glowing points of light that follow the movements of any attackers. Anytime *Dixar* absorbs all the damage points inflicted by a blow in combat it vents a harsh, cruel laugh and the face on the armor grins madly. Damage points that get by the armor cause *Dixar* to shout with fury.

Lucas Vine, Captain of the Guard

The Captain is a tall, heavy man. An infectious grin continually splits his face revealing a seriously bad tooth in the bottom row. Vine looks upon his job as a important responsibility, but likes to carry out his duty with the most pleasant disposition possible. He is a formidable, if smiling, foe.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 9 DEX 16 CHA 13

Hit Points: 16 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Cudgel	75%	60%	1D6
Fist	73%	—	1D3
Holster Pistol	58%	—	2D4+2

Skills: Dodge 80%, Memorize 70%, Move Quietly 43%, Persuade 55%, Search 65%, Track 71%.

Typical City Guard

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 8 DEX 12 CHA 9

Hit Points: 12 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Musket	40%	15%	2D6+2
Fist	65%	—	1D3

Skills: Ambush 45%, Dodge 35%.

The Journey to Whitedover

The adventurers rise the following day to find that Victoria has already packed supplies for their journey and hired horses for their use.

"Whitedover is a two day ride from Londshire," she explains. "Sy-pin's tower can be found there."

She warns the player characters to be careful. The land of Albyon grows wilder as one rides through the interior, she explains. The cities and towns clustered on the shores are civilized enough, but the rest of the island is ravaged by wandering bands of lawless brigands. The chaotic nature of the interior seems to attract men of wild disposition.

The Token

Victoria offers the characters a special gift, a special weapon made for her by Justin and a token by which he will be able to recognize the party. She says she really has no use for the thing and that the adventurers might need its powers.

She opens a small wooden box and shows them the sheathed dagger and gauntlet contained within, the same dagger and odd gauntlet the characters may have seen hanging on the wall the night before. The dagger's blade is silvered metal and the ebony hilt is wrapped with a single, continuous strand of fine silver wire. She warns the characters that the dagger is bitterly cold and must always be held using the special insulated gauntlet that goes with it.

The Ambush

Whitedover is about 100 miles from Londshire. Leaving the city and entering the country to the south, the characters notice how quickly the level of civilization drops off. Only an hour's ride from the city, the countryside is nearly empty, only the occasional rude farm seen. Two hours out of Londshire all evidence of civilized habitation is gone. The only people the characters see is the occasional traveler (usually

The Ice Dagger

Bound into this weapon is an elemental from the highest, coldest reaches of the world. Bitterly cold, the dagger cannot be safely handled without the special, fur-insulated glove. Anyone who does suffers 1 hit point of damage per round. When the weapon is used in combat (either melee or ranged) it hits for 1D4+2+1D6 points of damage. If the dagger pierces the target's armor and does actual injury, the victim must then resist the dagger's POW or be afflicted with a shivering ague that prevents him from taking any action for the next 1D6 rounds. If the weapon was thrown, it is stuck in the target. In this case, if the target loses the POW struggle and is afflicted with a fit of shivering, he will not be allowed to attempt to remove the dagger until the fit is over, 1D6 rounds after it began. At this time, if the character can roll his DEX x3 or less, he will manage to pull the dagger out. If he fails to remove the dagger, he will again have to make a POW struggle to avoid falling into another fit of shivering (1D6 rounds). For every round the dagger remains stuck in a target, the target suffers an additional 1D3 points of damage. When 0 hit points is reached, the victim is dead, frozen solid like a block of ice.

CON 40 POW 3

Damage Bonus: +1D6

armed and armored) or ragged, rudely-clothed peasants. The peasants are always on foot and usually carry bundles of firewood on their backs.

About four hours into the journey the player-characters see, up ahead, a man working alone in an uncultivated field about 40 feet off the road on the right hand side. He is bent over a hoe, apparently toiling away.

The man is Paul Hobbes, a local highwayman. He and his gang have been hired by Gath to waylay the characters and delay their arrival in Whitedover, giving Gath and his men the chance to find Sypin and see what can be learned before the characters get there and interfere.

At Hobbes' feet, out of the characters' sight, lies a loaded musket. Across the road, hiding behind a light screen of trees, are six of his cohorts, armed with various melee weapons. This ambush is not very clever and any adventurer who seems alert should add 20% to his See skill. A character expressing any suspicion of Hobbes adds 30% to his See roll. If the roll is successful, the characters spot the highwayman's gang hiding in the stand of trees.

If the ambush is undetected, Hobbes waits for the player characters to get squarely between the two positions occupied by the ambushers, then drops his hoe, picks up the flintlock, and fires at a random character. As soon as Paul's comrades hear the crack of his weapon, they rise and charge through the trees, howling like banshees. Their first objective is to pull the player-characters from their horses, while Hobbes spends the next 3 rounds reloading his musket.

The ambushers are of medium to low combat ability, and think the player-characters are not especially dangerous. The brigands will be surprised by the combat strength of the adventurers and may be expressing anger or fear by the time the first couple rounds have passed. As soon as any one of the attackers is killed or severely wounded, the remaining brigands flee for the woods, leaving Hobbes to face the party alone. (The brigands may be ridden down, although the player-characters don't really have to worry about them coming back). If Hobbes is still alive, he exhorts the fleeing bandits to return and fight. If he has reloaded, he fires his rifle after them.

Hobbes has a pocket pistol hidden in the folds of his coat. If deserted and left to the mercies of the adventurers, he may use the weapon to try and effect an escape, or to hold off the threatening characters. Hobbes has concealed a horse in the thicket at the south edge of the field.

If any of the brigand's bodies are searched, the characters find that each man carries 2D10 bronze farthings. If Paul Hobbes is captured or killed, the adventurers will find 20+2D10 gold coins in a leather purse hanging from his belt.

Any captured brigands (including Hobbes) describe their employers willingly, stating that a tall thin man wearing a full length robe was the apparent leader of the group. This man spoke with an accent none of the ambushers could identify. "His Ingritch was clear enough, guv, just different y'know." The brigands go to great lengths describing the

odor of the man. "Like rotten eggs and turpentine it was, sir. Near strong enough to make ya gag."

The tall man was accompanied by four others, the brigands say, all of them mounted. If the characters ask them to describe the men, one of the descriptions matches the stranger (Dog) they encountered in Londshire.

The ambushers were not told why the player characters were to be attacked, they just know they were paid in hard cash, which was good enough for them. "Though we was told you'd be easier pickin' than this, guv. An' that's a fact."

Although the most of the ambushers are laggards and cowards, Hobbes exhibits a certain bravery and honesty about himself that will impress the characters. If offered the chance to join their quest, Hobbes willingly agrees.

Paul Hobbes, highwayman

Hobbes is of medium height and extremely thin. He is a very ambitious bandit, but so far his career has not proven particularly successful.

STR 9 CON 8 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 15 DEX 7 CHA 12

Hit Points: 8 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Musket	81%	35%	2D6+2
Pocket Pistol	50%	—	1D6+2
Dagger	50%	45%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 95%, Hide 65%, Persuade 75%, Ride 85%.

The Bandits

	#1	#2	#3	#4
STR	11	14	8	9
CON	12	8	7	8
SIZ	10	11	12	13
INT	12	8	10	9
POW	10	10	9	8
DEX	16	13	8	10
CHA	10	12	10	11
HP	10	8	7	8
DB	None	+1D6/1D4	None	None

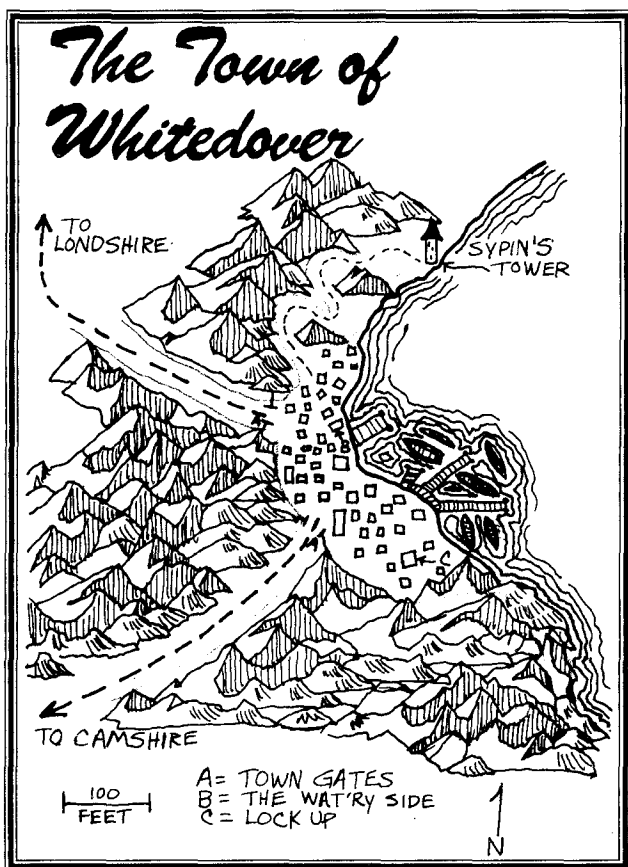
Armor: Steel Cuirass (1D8-1)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Battle Ax	65%	50%	1D8+2
Dagger	55%	40%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 40%, Hide 15%, Move Quietly 65%.

Arrival in Whitedover

This city, although architecturally similar to Londshire, is much smaller and has a maritime feel to it. The choppy green waves of a large body of water can be clearly seen on the far side of the town, the channel that separates Albyon from the Continent. The city is walled and at either entry gate the sentries challenge the adventurers and extract a small tax of 1 bronze farthing or the equivalent.



Most of Whitedover's buildings are built along the shores of the small harbor. Virtually all businesses stand on the harbor-front and most are associated with ship outfitting or maritime trade. The inhabitants dress in a more rural, utilitarian fashion than their counterparts in Londshire.

Asking for Sypin

If the characters approach people in the streets, asking for Sypin, their attention is directed to a long line of chalky cliffs rising to the north. "You'll be finding Sypin up there, sire. Though why you'd be asking after the man I don't rightly know. About as friendly as a harbor eel he is. Don't have no use for no one except old Abner, the man who does his cooking and cleaning. Quite frankly, most people are pretty glad he stays up there in that lonely tower of his." They are told a trail leads from the north side of town, up the cliffs. "That path's the only way you can be gettin' to Sypin's tower from here." If the characters ask about a good inn to stay at, they are told about "The Wat'ry Side," a popular tavern and inn located on the main wharf.

Asking about Sypin at The Wat'ry Side, the adventurers learn no more about the man than they did in town but they do learn that another group of strangers was in here asking about Sypin late last night. This group is described as including four armed men "dressed not unlike yourselves, sir", and a tall man in a long cloak with a hood that covered

his face. "And there was a stink about him, sirs, so much like turpentine and rotten eggs I thought I was going to lose my stomach."

Sypin's Tower

The tower is located on a brush-covered cliff overlooking town and channel. The structure is built right at the edge of the cliff, leaving no room even for a person to walk. The tower's only door faces away from the sea, inland toward the interior of Albyon. Slit-like windows look out over the channel, but there are no such windows on the landward side. From the cliffs, wooden ships can be seen sailing in and out of the harbor, far below.

First Floor

The path leads right to the landward entrance of the tower. A heavy wooden door seals the arched opening but is obviously unlocked and slightly ajar. Stepping in, the characters find a single room lit only by a solitary window set in the far wall. There are bales of yellowing and mildewed paper which appear to have been recently overturned and scattered across the floor. The room is filled with the smell of burned flesh and even a cursory examination of the room will find the corpse that lies behind some bales of paper. The body is that of an older male, dressed in typical peasant's garb. The body appears unmarked but the head is a blackened and burnt, most of the flesh melted from the face. Despite the overpowering stench, a successful Scent roll allows a character to detect a separate faint odor of rotten eggs and turpentine.

A steep wooden staircase leads to a circular opening in the ceiling above them, sealed off by a metal trap door. At the top of the stairs the adventurers find that the iron door is buckled and dented. It rests precariously on its hinges and if they try to push it open, it falls over with a loud crash. The door appears to have been battered off its hinges. The twisted remains of an iron bolt — wrenched off the door when it was smashed open — lies on the second floor, near the opening.

The Second Floor

Passing through the trap door, the characters find themselves standing in a circular shaft open to the sky some twenty feet above their heads. Lichen and moss clings to the floor and walls and stagnant water stands in the grooves between the mortared stones of the floor. Two doors lead from the shaft, one to the north and one to the south.

The door to the north has been forced open, the crude lock and latch handle shattered. The door to the south is latched but the key is in the lock, attached to a ring from which dangle two other keys. One of these keys fits the lock in the broken door, the other belongs to the smashed trap door the characters have already passed through. The south door opens into the kitchen and attached pantry. The north door opens into a darkened chamber. With light they see that this room is Sypin's study and attached bedroom.

Kitchen and Pantry: Here is broken pottery, a table and chair reduced to splinters, and spilled food. A window overlooks the channel, its shutters broken outward. Player-characters looking out one of the windows sees, far below, littering the narrow strip of sand along the shore, various items that were thrown from the tower windows.

Study: dominating this room is a large, circular table. Atop it, mounted firmly with several large bolts, stands a large brass hemisphere. Sprawled on the floor beneath the table, in a pool of coagulating blood, is Sypin's body. A quick examination shows the man was repeatedly stabbed in the back, apparently while trying to hide under the table. If his body is rolled over, the characters see Sypin's face, twisted into a craven mask of fear. It is also noticed that the third finger of Sypin's left hand has been rudely chopped off. It rests nearby; a successful Search roll spots callouses on the finger, indicating that Sypin once wore a ring. Under the body, sticky with blood, is a torn scrap of paper. Although badly stained, the faint lines of a map can still be seen and it is obvious that it is part of larger map.

If the party is accompanied by anyone native to the plane of Albyon, they identify the small area depicted on the map fragment as a portion of the Gollian coast, across the channel and approximately 100 miles north of the town of Sullair. This part of Gollia is usually avoided because of its reputation as a wild and untamed country. The region is said to be dominated by the ruins of an ancient and evil castle. If no one with the group can identify the map, the characters may learn the above by showing the fragment around town. Sailors at the Wat'ry Side will prove particularly knowledgeable and helpful.

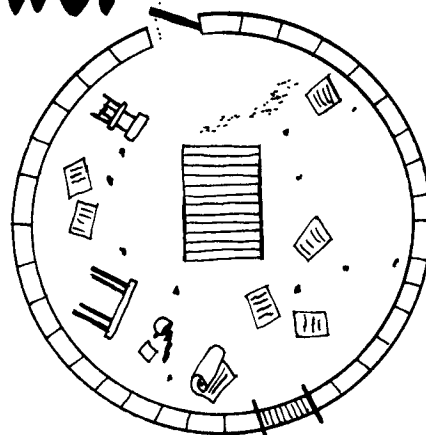
While examining the evidence of Sypin's murder, attentive player characters hear a soft, whirring sound — like the whine of an electric motor — coming from the area of the table. Anyone looking in that direction sees that the odd brass hemisphere has opened up slightly, like the lid of a large metal eye, revealing a faint light within. If the hemisphere is touched or approached, or even if someone's attention is called to the object, it suddenly snaps shut with another brief, high-pitched whine.

If directly addressed, the hemisphere, realizing it has been discovered, opens wide, revealing within it a perfect six inch crystal sphere. In the center of the crystal is a fiery shape, constantly weaving in and out of itself, changing form and size without pause. This point of fire occasionally coalesces into a recognizable outline, sometimes a miniature face, sometimes a tiny bat-winged horse. This shifting point of light is Sypin's demon of knowledge.

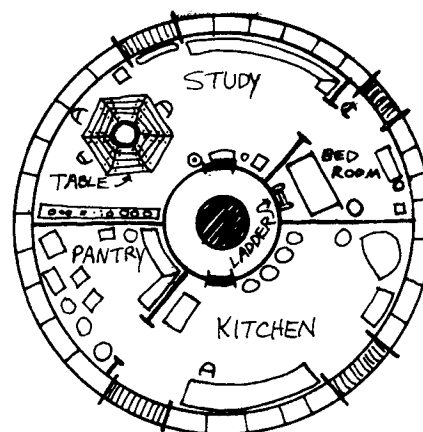
Bargaining with the Demon

This demon's specialty is knowledge of the planes of the multiverse. It knows a few intriguing tidbits about the Planar Knife and will exchange this information for gossip about the characters' home world and their visits to other worlds. The demon can tell them that the Planar Knife is supposed

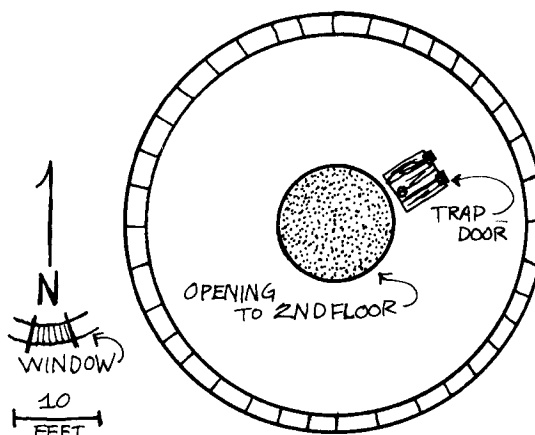
Sypin's Tower



GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



ROOF

to be a double-bladed dagger forged ages ago by the Lords of Chaos and that it is a very powerful and unpredictable weapon. It says the knife is supposed to be dangerous to its wielder, although the demon doesn't know how or why.

The adventurers probably want to know what happened to Sypin. The demon tells them that several hours ago he heard noises downstairs—the sounds of an argument, and then pursuit through the tower. Sypin came crashing into the laboratory, closely pursued by four men in armor. A fifth individual, tall, and cloaked in a robe, followed behind. Sypin, screaming in terror, tried to hide beneath the table but two of the men went after him and stabbed him to death on the spot. The four men, at the direction of the tall, mysterious man, next ransacked the tower, apparently in search of something. They did not seem to find what they wanted and shortly after left.

The murderers sought Sypin's diary, which they were sure must be hidden in the tower. The demon hints about the diary but will not tell where it is unless the adventurers agree to a deal. It will only reveal the location of the diary if the characters first free it from its imprisonment. They must smash the crystal sphere.

It takes 18 hit points from a single blow to shatter the crystal, whereupon the demon is released and coalesces into

physical existence before the characters' eyes. The crystal automatically shatters if struck by any Virtuous weapon or demon weapon. If a demon weapon is used however, the forces that unbind Sypin's demon also release the demon of the weapon.

If released, Sypin's demon shows them a secret panel in the study and how to open it. Inside is Sypin's diary. If the existence of the secret panel is not learned from the demon, it can be found with a successful Search roll.

Sypin's Diary

This journal can be easily read by anyone with a R/W Young Kingdoms Common skill of 80% or better. Those with less ability must make a skill roll to succeed. Reading this brief journal requires less than an hour.

Sypin's Bedroom

Here the characters may find, crushed on the floor, the remains of a small metal device. It was once apparently kept contained in a small, circular, gold case and was comprised of a collection of tiny gears and springs (a pocket watch). Several printed books are scattered around the room, each with pictures of unusual devices and strangely-garbed peo-

Excerpts from Sypin's Diary

(Twenty years ago)

It looks as though my exile on this foul world will be eternal. Corlus came again but the word he brought remains the same. The Council of Shame has retained my name on their list and should I return at this time to the world of Karlatan, I shall be executed on sight. Oh, how I yearn to return to my long lost home, to walk again across the tiled Arch of Reform, and by the lakes and streams of the Park of Jaded Dreams. But it appears it shall not be; the fools of the council can only see the crimes I committed; they are incapable of imagining the great and wondrous things I might have achieved. How can they possibly measure the lives of a few innocent people against what I set out to do.

I sent Corlus back. The spheres will soon be too far apart for journeys to be effected. It may be another thousand years before my world and this miserable Albyon again draw near enough that we can travel back and forth, and I doubt that even I can live that long. I wished Corlus well, there was a tear in his eye when we parted.

(Fifteen years ago)

Life continues dull here. I have found ways to summon my helpers to my aid, but the process is far more taxing and time-consuming than at home, so I attempt it but infrequently. The peasants hereabouts call me a wizard, a thing not good to be in this world. People who studied magic were sometimes arrested by the populace and then burned at the stake. I understand that this has not happened for some time but, regardless, I cultivate the reputation of a reclusive scholar, interested only in books and the nature of the world.

I have hired a man from the village. His name is Abner and he seems a good fellow. I enjoy his company.

(Twelve years ago)

I have gained some information about that mysterious artifact, the Planar Knife. It was apparently forged long ages ago by the Lords of Chaos and given to one of their champions. The original purpose of the knife was to be a safeguard against any attempts by a Chaos Lord to bring under his control an ancient race of demon monsters called the Kynn K'tal. The blade, if used properly, was supposed to be able to open a gate to another world where dwell a race of beings called the R'lann, sworn enemies of the Kynn K'tal. The weapon failed this champion and he was soon after killed. The Knife later came into the possession of one of more lawful inclination and this man, by melding to the dagger some strange, magical object, was able to bring the Planar Knife under his control. Apparently, in some later age the Planar Knife was separated from this lawful component and both were lost. The Planar Knife, freed of control, began constructing about itself a Web of Chaos, a world outside all worlds, and in the center of this self-created world now dwells the Planar Knife. From the weapon, tendrils stretch out in all directions, reaching through the planes into different worlds, searching for openings through which it can reach into these worlds and spill unto them the stuff of Chaos.

An odd rumor about the missing Lawful component says that the item still exists, dwelling on a far distant plane. It is said that the device rules the planet and is worshiped by the people as a god. The head of this cult is called "the priest in white".

Excerpts from Sypin's Diary (Continued)

I have also learned more about the mysterious Kynn K'tal. Ages ago they were somehow bound within great statues, their lives frozen. The legend holds that before they can live again their hearts must dwell for a time in the breasts of mortals. From these hosts the Kynn K'tal could somehow regain their life energies. It seems the hosts would be destroyed by this process.

(Four years ago)

All my research shows that the Planar Knife extends a tendril to Albyon. It has apparently been sealed off, like so many of the others on different planes have been, by agents of the Lords of Law. However, these seals can be broken by ones who know how. The poem below, I found in an ancient text chronicling some of the forgotten legends of this world. It speaks, I believe, of the Planar Knife.

Forged in darkness,

Two who are one,

Death and birth,

Father, son,

Brothers would be,

Joined again,

Two in one

But one again.

Apparently the poem refers to an ancient being, some avatar of that known as the Balance, who was long ago split in two, each half but a part of the whole. Whether it is the Planar Knife that it referred to or some other being, I cannot tell.

I believe that, by using the webways created by the Knife, I might possibly find my way back to Karlatan. Surely after all these years, my crimes will have been forgiven. I yearn so much for home.

I have hired a ship and bodyguards. Tomorrow we sail for Gollia, and the Ruin of Law.

(Three years, eleven months ago)

All my hopes are dashed. I found the opening easy enough all right, and the guardian of the seal presented little in the way of opposition — he seems greatly weakened by his age and proved easy enough to fool. I, and four of my bodyguards, after making the forbidden sign, entered the opening it created. After much trial we finally succeeded in reaching the center of the web. I saw the Knife, floating there, suspended from its thousand webs and was sorely tempted to take possession of it. Before I could move, however, we were set upon by the most awful of creatures. We tried to fend them off but my bodyguards were soon overwhelmed.

I was barely able to escape the webways alive but I found my way back to the ship and quickly returned to Whitedover. I'm afraid that it is beyond my ability and strength to pass through the webways. I must resign myself to live out my remaining years in Albyon.

(Eighteen months ago)

I have turned my attention to the strange, transforming waves that have lately been passing through the land. Their source is of yet unknown to me, although I press the issue to the forefront of my thoughts. These unpredictable pulses weigh heavily upon the peoples' minds; they are perhaps not entirely unpleasant in their effect, but they sometimes warp permanently those that they have touched. Many people have lost property, as well as loved ones, to these pulses — homes rendered useless and family members transformed beyond recognition.

(Ten months ago)

The pulses are slowly increasing in frequency and strength, the people of Albyon grow more tense, fate weighs heavy in the air, and the guilt I feel becomes greater. It seems beyond all doubt that the source of the chaos pulses is in Gollia, the opening of the tendril of the Planar Knife, its once powerful seal breached and violated by myself in my desire to return to my home. I see now that the agents of Law understood the truth, but in my delusion I dreamed that I, mere Sypin, could do what they would not dare.

The damage and pain that I have inflicted on these innocent people weighs heavily upon me and for many nights I have not slept, thinking of all the sorrow I have caused. What if they learned of what I have done, and discovered that I am responsible for all that has happened to them? Surely they would assail my home and carry me from the tower, burning me in the town square as was once their custom. And who could blame them? I understand now why these people would fear the witch, the wizard, and the warlock.

(One week ago)

Word has come to me that Justin Carrock now prepares to visit me. Carrock is a strange man; I first heard of him many years ago. He is of that rarest breed of man, the born champion. Although of ill health (I've been told he consumes powerful drugs to keep himself strong and alert), he is a man of deep thought, much like myself but, unlike me, somehow fated to play a great role in his world. I do not doubt that his visit concerns the curse that has lately befallen this world, and of my involvement with the Planar Knife he must surely learn. Whether he comes simply for information, or to slay me, I do not know. I accept my fate and my responsibility, and am determined to aid in stopping this accursed plague of Chaos any way I can.

(Three days ago — last entry)

Carrock has come and gone. As I guessed, he came because of the crisis we suffer due to my tampering with forces beyond my reckoning. He wanted only information and although he seemed to understand my role in the course of things, he showed no anger, nor any desire to seek revenge on me for my crimes. I told him all I knew of the history and powers of the Knife, and all of what transpired when I attempted to cross the webway. He was grateful for this knowledge. I have provided him with what little else I can, the name of the world on which resides the device he seeks, and a map of part of that world. I know not what his plan is but he seems determined to face the Planar Knife. I intend to continue my studies regarding the problem. Perhaps I can learn something else that will be of aid to him.

ple (volumes B, IJK, S, T, & UV from a 2147 edition of *Encyklopedia Amerikana*).

A ladder on one wall leads up to a iron-bound trap door that opens onto the roof of the tower. If the characters go up to the roof and look down upon the harbor, they notice a sloop leaving the docks, headed for the channel. If a See roll is made, the character sees a tall man dressed in a long robe, standing on the deck. A group of four armed men accompany him, one of them similar in appearance and build to the stranger seen in *The Dragon's Tears in Londshire (Dog)*.

Back in Town

In Whitedover the characters, if they need to, may ask questions about the map fragment they have found, learning that it depicts a portion of the coast of Gollia 100 miles north of Sullair. The area is supposedly cursed by the ruins of an ancient castle. Finding this out should be easy but the characters should realize that if Sypin's murder is discovered, they may well be the prime suspects. The city guard will come looking for them and attempt to arrest them and place them in the city gaol.

If the characters ask around about the mysterious strangers that keep crossing their path they are told: "Why yes sire, I have seen men as you describe. They took passage on a sloop bound for Gollia. They left port hardly more than an hour ago. Were they friends of yours? Did they owe you some money?" This witness also comments on their foul odor.

Crossing the Channel

At the docks the characters find a medium-sized ship preparing to leave for Gollia. It is named *The Skimmer* and sails under the hand of Captain Jacob Trews. Trews is a medium sized, gray-bearded man with an open, but business-like manner. *The Skimmer*, he says, is bound for the Gollian port of Sullair, and leaves within two hours. Passage across the channel is 20 bronze farthings (or equivalent) per character. (In lieu of payment, an experienced sailor can work his way across). Passage for horses is 35 bronze farthings. It is 120 miles across the channel and the voyage takes 12-14 hours with a favorable wind. If the characters ask, they are informed that they can hire horses in Sullair.

The ship boasts two cannon similar to those found on the *Rogue Mistress*, one each mounted port and starboard.

Jacob Trews, ship's master

Trews is an ex-marine who, having once served aboard a Gollian warship, wants no further part of the military, preferring instead life as a trader and merchant. He is well aware of the pirates that cruise this channel, in particular the notorious "Maria de Tres Pis-

tolas", and consequently, keeps the ship well armed. If asked for help with their quest, Trews declines to aid them, guaranteeing them no more than safe passage to Sullair, which is what the characters paid for.

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 11 DEX 16 CHA 12

Hit Points: 12 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Dagger	65%	65%	1D4+2
Cutlass	74%	71%	1D8+1
Cannon	45%	—	10D6

Skills: Climb 75%, Credit 70%, Make Map 82%, Navigate 80%, See 65%, Tie Knot 92%.

Another Pulse of Chaos

Some hours after *The Skimmer* has cleared the harbor, Albyon is swept by another chaos pulse. The sailors gasp in fear as the sky darkens. Brightly colored, writhing tendrils of a porous, elastic substance unexpectedly form in the sky and drop down upon the ship. They at first tangle in the masts and rigging but then lose their grip and fall, twisting, to the deck. Slippery and grasping, they are capable of entangling and tripping sailors or player-characters who try to move around. The chance of a tendril entangling any character is 40%. If entangled, a character must make a Balance roll or fall to the deck. After a few minutes, the tendrils fade, become semi-transparent, and break up into harmless brittle fibers which can be easily brushed away, provided that the sea serpent does not attack first.

The Beast from the Sea

This encounter occurs at the gamemaster's choice, either during or after the chaos pulse. Fighting the sea monster while simultaneously trying to avoid the grasping tentacles proves a real test.

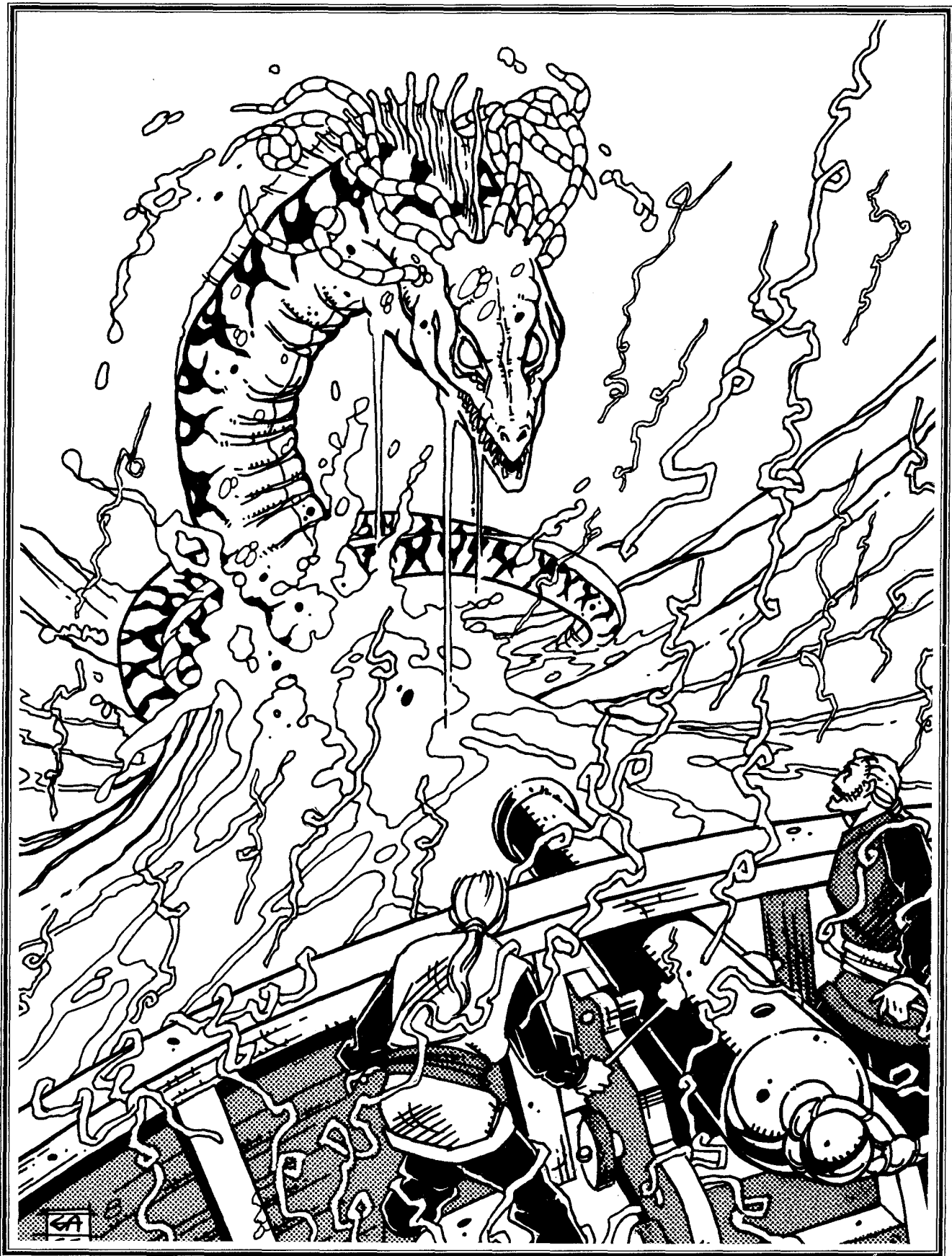
At some point, one of the characters Sees something moving through the water about a thousand yards ahead. The swift object, mostly submerged, heads straight for *The Skimmer*. If all the characters fail their See rolls, a crewman spots the thing.

"Ahoy," he calls. "Looks like a sea serpent off the port bow!"

Sailors scramble to their stations as Master Trews gives the order to heel to starboard. Men hustle across the deck to man the port side cannon. In the distance, the characters see a great beast rear its head from the water as it continues to plunge straight toward the ship.

The cannon loaded, they hold off firing until the monster is very near the ship, increasing their chances to successfully hit. When the beast is approximately 50 yards away, the cannon goes off. Whether or not the monster is hit (60% chance), it continues unabated toward the ship, smashing into the hull, then rearing up, water cascading down from its gigantic head onto the deck.

This monster from the deep resembles a 60 foot moray eel but with a mane of writhing, segmented tentacles sprouting in a ring around its neck. It begins by making bite attacks, snapping ponderously at sailors or player characters once



The Sea Serpent

per round. If severely wounded, however, it will pull back and begin making tentacle attacks. The monster will not necessarily fight to the death. The gamemaster may decide the monster, if wounded badly enough, would prefer to retreat to the depths.

The Sea Serpent

STR 49 CON 31 SIZ 47 INT 7 POW 13 DEX 7

Hit Points: 70 **Armor:** 8 points of leathery hide.

Weapon	Attack	Damage
Bite	30%	4D8+4+3D6
Mane Tentacles	20%	Special
Tail	35%	4D8+3D6

Skills: Ambush 60%, Dodge 55%, Swim 100%.

The sea serpent attempts to grasp the characters with its tentacles. Each time a tentacle hits, it slithers around the character and takes hold. If three or more tentacles are gripping a character, it snatches up the character and either drops him into the sea (01-50) or draws the character to its mouth and inflicts an automatically successful bite attack (51-00). This sea serpent has seven tentacles in its mane and can attack with all seven in any combat round.

The End of the Voyage

The Skimmer's destination is the port city of Sullair. If the characters have no need to equip themselves with fresh supplies or horses, they may attempt to Persuade Trews to detour his route and set them ashore further north, greatly shortening the distance they travel overland. If the characters have conducted themselves heroically, Trews agrees to this request. Otherwise, the ship docks in Sullair, right on schedule.

Gollia

Sullair

This small port city is not unlike its counterpart across the channel except the most common language spoken is Gollian, a tongue quite similar to Low Melnibonean. As before, characters with 80% or higher in the requisite skill have no trouble conversing or reading. Characters with lesser skills have to make successful rolls to communicate.

Here the adventurers can equip and supply themselves for the trek into the Gollian wilderness. They may think to ask around about the strangers who have been following them, but they learn nothing. Gath and his gang sailed straight to the north coast of Gollia and there await the adventurers in the vicinity of the Ruin of Law.

The Gollian Wilderness

If the characters persuaded Trews to drop them on the coast, it is only 30 miles to the location marked on the map. If travelling from Sullair, the Trek is 100 miles. In either case, the trip proves uneventful. As the party nears the vicinity of the Ruin, they notice the country growing wilder, the brood-

ing sky overhead a subtly different color, and the sounds of unfamiliar wildlife.

The Warning

Getting near the Ruin, the characters come upon a grisly sight. Hung by their heels from the limb of a tree are the corpses of a half dozen bandits, each one's head a blackened cinder. One of the dead bandits clutches a rolled sheet of rag paper in a stiffened hand. Written here in blood are the words: "By the Lords of Chaos, Keep Out! This is Your Only Warning!" Drawn below the text are eight arrows radiating from a single point.

Gath plans to wait for the characters to get the Planar Knife for him, ambushing them after they have retrieved it and are exiting the web, weak and tired. In order to avoid unforeseen problems, the demon is attempting to slay any local humans. He is sure that such warnings will not deter the adventurers.

The Ruin of Law

Eventually the adventurers arrive. Once a great castle whose towers reached to the skies, it is now an overgrown mound of tumbled stone blocks. As the adventurers gaze at what remains of the once great structure, a wizened, tiny, bent-over creature, dressed in a brown cloak, emerges from among the mossy ruins. It approaches the characters, never exposing its face.

The creature pats one of the foundation stones and whispers: "These are all that remain of a once tall and mighty castle which overlooked a world that was Chaos. But that world has now become Law and the castle has returned to Chaos. Thus I have seen the cycle complete."

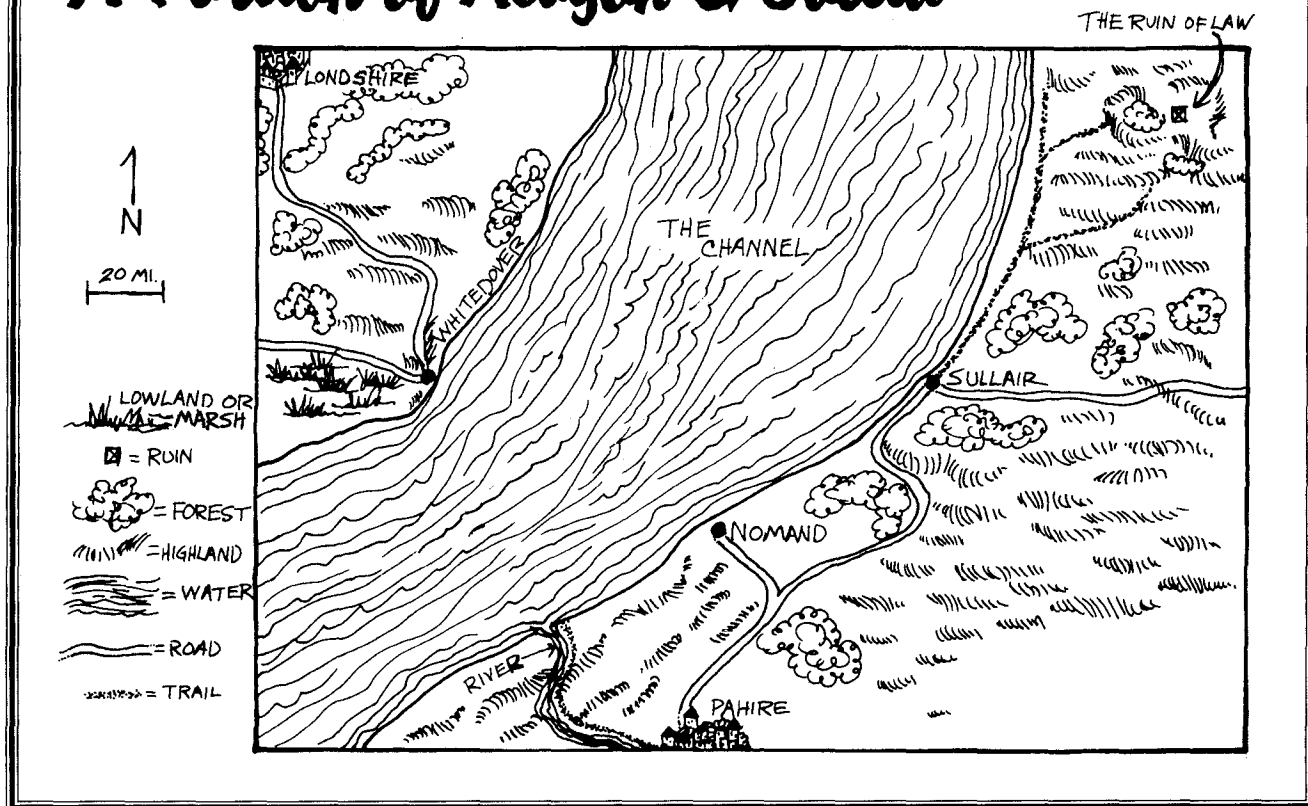
The creature turns its perpetually darkened face in the direction of the characters.

"I am sorry to see you here, for you will almost surely not return from that place you seek. But the Balance is wise and knows who serve it best. You are not the first to visit here today, and you will not be the last, else the Balance slips and the walls of the world collapse in Chaos.

The bent creature goes on to tell the characters that the Seal of Law stood strong for many years after the fall of the castle, and continued to thwart the efforts of Chaos to enter this world. Then, not long ago, a trespasser from the island of Albion broke and befouled the Seal. Soon after, Chaos began to seep into the world. The tiny guardian says he has not the strength to stop it.

"As the stones weather and disappear, so do I, and now nothing is left of me but this desiccated being before you. I am little more than a wisp, the pale core of my former being, wavering in the sunlight."

A Portion of Albion & Gollia



The bent creature leads the party around several of the grass-covered hummocks until they finally come to one with a low opening in the north side. Following the Guardian in, the party is led down a set of worn and broken stone steps which empty out into a broad, low room. Embedded in the back wall of this room is a large triangular stone, eight feet on a side, bearing a single upwards-pointing arrow carved in bas-relief; the Seal of Law. A crude depiction of an eight-legged spider has been scrawled over the Seal, defacing it.

"The trespasser marked the seal in such a manner," says the hunched-over figure. "The symbol was like a poison, and seeped through the Seal, causing rot and decay, weakening its power."

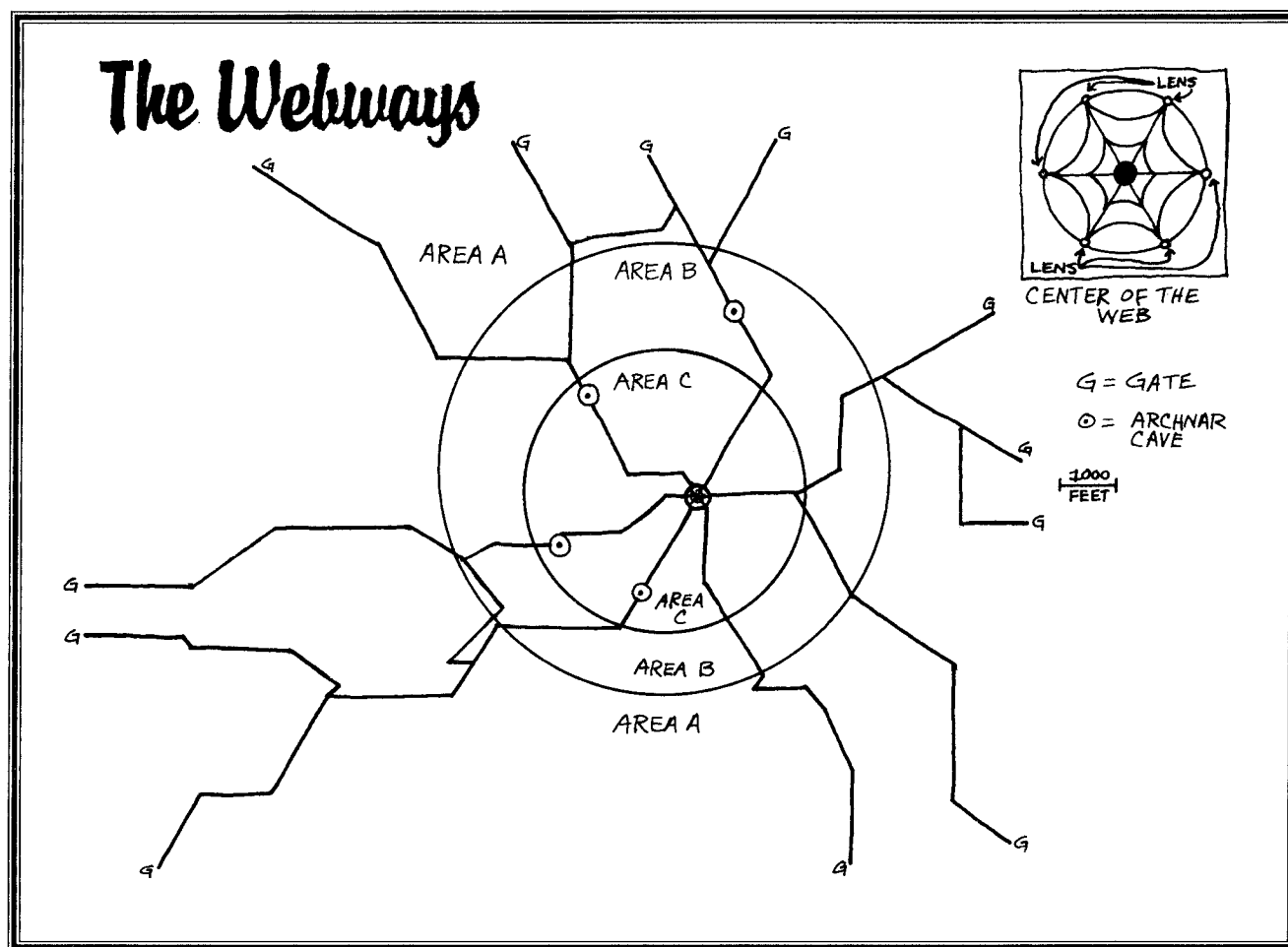
The characters can see that where the lines depicting the spider have been drawn, cracks have formed in the Seal. As they watch, the narrow fissures open and close slightly, with a regular rhythm, as though something was struggling to push its way out.

The bent creature reaches for the seal, and the jagged lines of the hellish symbol now begin to throb and burn with fiery brilliance. The light is painful to look upon, but observant characters notice this event is draining vitality from the bent creature. The cracks in the seal open widely and the creature

shouts: "Enter now! I cannot hold the doorway longer! Enter now and seek the Planar Knife — steal it from Chaos and return this place to Law! Go now, or abandon your quest forever!" As the characters step through the portal, they turn to see the bent creature suddenly collapse into a pile of bones, rags, and dust.

Passing through the gate, the characters, with a sudden jolt, are yanked from their feet. They feel themselves falling through an inky void, streaks of ruddy light flashing by them on all sides. Then, with a gentle bump, they land sprawled around the curving wall of a cylindrical passageway roughly 30 feet in diameter. Oddly enough, the members of the party are scattered all around the interior of this large tube, some directly overhead and seeming to defy the laws of gravity.

Up and down mean nothing here; a gravity exerts itself from somewhere outside the tube, pulling equally in all directions. Red light glows from the jagged, intersecting lines that course through the walls of the tunnel, providing enough light for the adventurers to see at least as far as the twists and turns of the strange tube allow. Once on their feet, the adventurers find they can walk completely around the cylinder, gravity exerting an equal effect no matter what their position.



The Web of Chaos

The tunnel the characters stand in is a strand of the Web of Chaos, created by the Planar Knife. Uncountable numbers of these webs exist in the Million Spheres, each one entering a different plane of the multiverse. The partial map of the web shows these webs and it is possible that characters may want to explore this web. Describing all the possible worlds they might discover is impossible. Unless the gamemaster feels ready to let the characters enter different universes, he is encouraged to keep the characters on track, reminding them of their demon hearts, etc. At the center of all these strands is the Planar Knife.

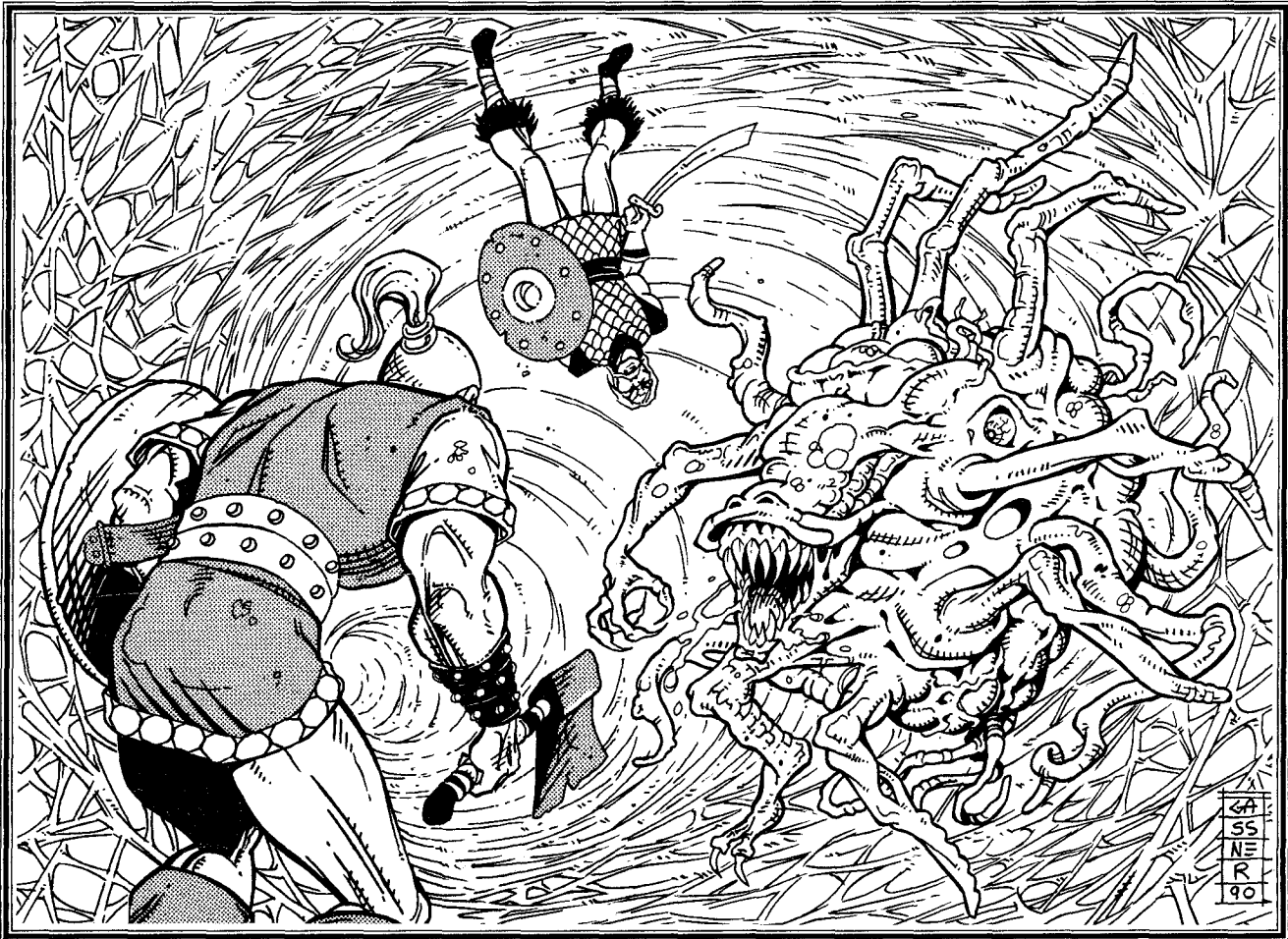
The Archnars

The web is inhabited by spider-like creatures known as archnars. From a distance one of these monsters looks like no more than a cloud of scampering sparks. As it draws closer, however, the thing is seen to actually be a quaking, flowing mass of ropy organs and gelatinous tissue. Visible through this outer layer, points of intense light blink and race through its body. The number of legs an archnar can have varies, but there are usually at least six and sometimes as many as 25 or 30.

Archnars can hide in the uneven lighting of the tunnel very effectively and their Ambush skill within the tunnels is never less than 75%. They are also capable of entering and exiting the tunnel tubes by passing through the jagged glowing lines that flow through the walls. To the characters these lines feel perfectly solid; they are, to humans, impassable. An archnar's passage through a glowing crack takes one round and during this time it can perform no other actions.

Typically these creatures drop into a party of adventurers from some unpredictable angle, taking their intended victims off guard. Generally an archnar seeks a host for a brood of its offspring and usually flees after successfully inflicting damage on one of the characters. When injured, an archnar breaks off the fight and attempts to retreat through one of the glowing cracks in the webway floor. A retreating archnar may sometimes try to drag a dead or injured victim along with it. Humans cannot pass through the glowing cracks but the archnars will try anyway, completely mangling the corpse in the process.

The bite of an archnar is very dangerous. If the armor of the victim is penetrated and damage inflicted, the victim must make a POW struggle against the venom's POT of 13, or be poisoned. A poisoned character immediately swells up



An Archnar Attacks!

25% of the time and, in less than a minute, violently explodes, coating those nearby with blood and bits of flesh. The rest of the time, the victim becomes the unwilling host of a small clutch of archnar eggs. In 2D10 minutes after being bitten, the victim's wound suddenly swells, then splits open: 1D6 baby archnars, each only a few inches across, spill out and run across the floor to disappear through the red, glowing cracks. The victim suffers another 1D6 points of damage, but may recover.

Archnar Statistics

Attributes	Average
STR	4D8+6 24
DEX	3D8 13-14
CON	5D8 22-23
SIZ	4D8 18
INT	2D8 9
POW	3D8 13-14

Average Hit Points: 28-29

Armor: 1D10 points of quivering, oleaginous hide.

Weapon	Attack	Damage
Bite	50%	2D6 plus venom

Skills: Ambush 74+1D20%, Dodge 40+1D20%, Hide 60+1D20%, Move Quietly 50+1D20%.

For each 2500 feet traveled through the outer branches of the webway (designated on the map as area A), there is a

30% chance of encountering a lone archnar. The branches of the inner webway (area B) have the same chance of archnar encounters, 30% every 2500 feet, but here the number of the beasts encountered is increased to 1D3. Multiple archnars attack from different angles, both behind and in front of the characters.

In the area in and around the location of the Planar Knife (area C) the percentage chance of encountering archnars increases to 60% for every 250 feet traveled. The number of archnars encountered is increased to 1D4+1.

Archnar Caves

When within 250 feet of any of these places, the characters feel a hot draft blowing in their faces. Nearing the source of the heat, they discover a spherical room about 75 feet across. The curving walls are a glowing, flowing mass of primal matter; burning sparks spit into the dry, hot air. Numerous flat, triangular slabs float about on the surface of the molten interior walls.

Unless the characters have some way of flying, they must Jump from slab to slab as indicated on the map. If a character fails a Jump, he falls into the molten stuff, suffering 1D6 points of damage per round until he can successfully Climb

back onto one of the slabs. Archrnars can pass over the molten areas without hindrance or injury.

Positioned on the largest central slab, 1D4 archrnars are present in each such and blocking the adventurers' path. Characters may try to sneak past the archrnars using their Hide skill, reduced to half normal because of the brightness and the fact that they are moving. If the characters are discovered, the archrnars circle the rim of their slab, observing the characters. Once satisfied the characters are not especially dangerous, they begin to slowly creep over the swirling molten material, heading directly for the adventurers. If there are more than two adventurers for every archnar, the monsters will sense they are outnumbered and retreat through the opening at the far end of the room. They return 1D6 rounds later with reinforcements, an additional 1D3 archrnars.

The Lenses

Immediately outside the central area occupied by the Knife, each passage tapers and narrows, ending in a strange-looking translucent *lens* about eight feet in diameter. A character touching a lens encounters only mild resistance and discovers that it can be passed through quite easily. Sticking an arm or leg through induces an odd wrenching sensation but no pain and, once withdrawn, nothing appears to be wrong.

The characters must pass through this lens to reach the Planar Knife. Traveling through a lens inverts a character, turning the entire body inside out but without causing death or injury. Clothing and armor worn by the character are now inside the body; likewise any gear or weapons which were not in hand at the moment of passing. Because of the reassembling that takes place, all lost hit points are restored.

The characters' nervous systems have also been altered and now appear as a glowing network of threads passing through the character's quivering, gelatinous organs and tissues. Perceptions can no longer be differentiated into hearing, feeling, smelling, touching, or seeing, but have been advanced into a new order: all perceptual skills have been subsumed into a single skill, Detect. Determine this skill by taking the average of a character's Listen, Scent, See, and Taste skills, adding to that percentiles equal to the character's POW. Detect is not tied to any one sense organ, and functions in all directions at once (i.e., the character so transformed no longer has a rear to be sneaked up on). To revert to normal, a character must pass through a lens in the opposite direction.

On the other side of the lens, attached at its center, is a single silken strand a few inches in diameter. Characters can balance on this strand easily and will find that they can, in fact, stick to it from any angle.

The strand stretches off into the darkness. Numerous other strands can be seen, all of them, like the one the characters are balanced on, radiating from some central point. As soon as the characters start to move on the strand they find they zip along at a smooth rate of speed, twice that

of their normal movement rates. Following the strand, the adventurers find themselves traveling toward the center of a great, multi-dimensional web.

The Great Web Spider

A gigantic spider lives in this web, repairing frayed strands and eating the odd archnar. Unlike the inverted characters, this spider is right-side out, and very large. Its central body is the size of an ox; each leg is over twenty feet long, bristling with curved, horny spikes. Its multiple eyes shine with a pale light.

There is a 50% chance of encountering this monster when sliding along the webstrands. This spider is nowhere near as bold as its cousins, the archrnars, and any creature that resists the spider's paralyzing webstrands and rushes toward it in an aggressive manner, has an 80% chance of frightening the monster off. The spider prefers to fight with its paralyzing strands, saving its poisonous bite attack for victims safely immobilized.

Web Spider

STR 37 CON 22 SIZ 20 INT 6 POW 6 DEX 18

Hit Points: 30 **Armor:** 6 points of horny chitin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Paralyzing			
Webstrand	55%	—	special*
Bite	50%	—	3D6 plus venom**

Skills: Ambush 70%, Hide 25%, Move Quietly 65%.

*The spider can hurl a webstrand coated with a paralyzing goo, POT 11. Upon impact, the target must resist the POT of the sticky substance with his CON. If the target fails to resist, he is unable to move or act for 1D6 rounds. Seeing his target paralyzed, the spider then moves in to attempt its bite attack.

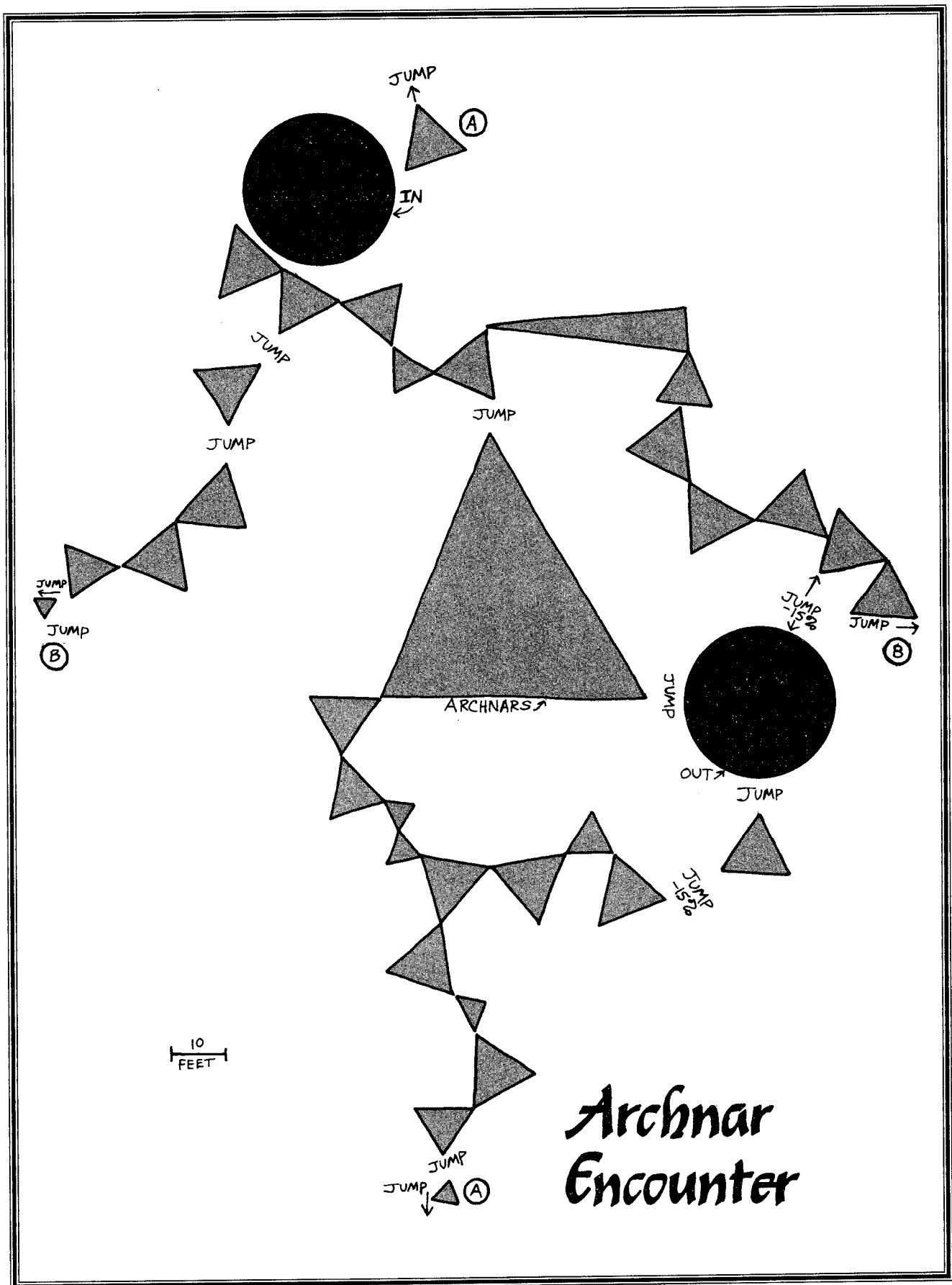
**The corrosive venom from the spider's bite is POT 8. If a resistance struggle, using CON, is unsuccessful, the victim begins losing 1D3 hit points per round as the poison begins dissolving bone and internal organs alike. Upon death, the victim is little more than a bag filled with fluids. A dose of level 5 antidote can halt the progress of the poison but not restore the lost hit points.

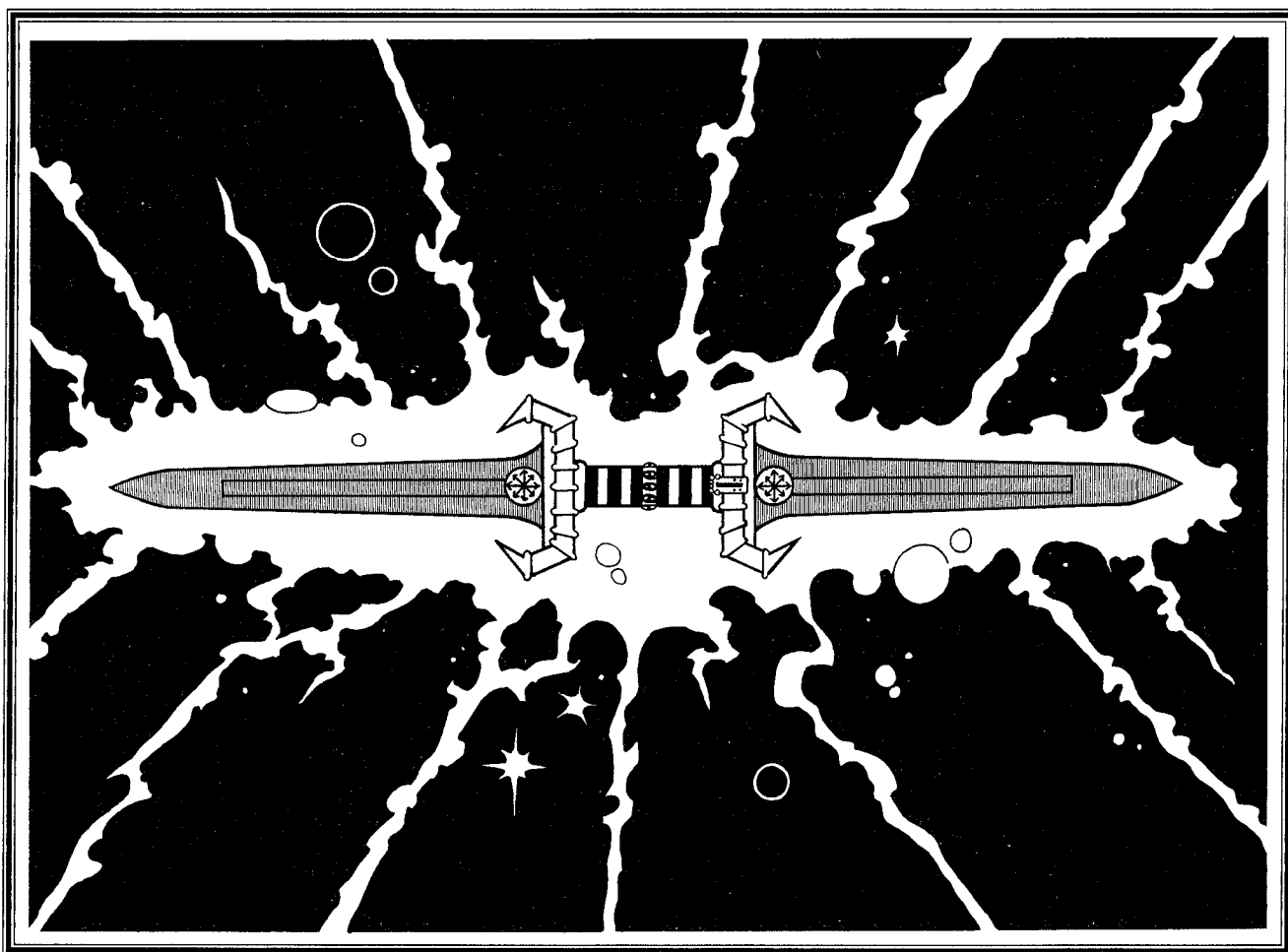
The Central Chamber

Near the center of the web, the strands converge upon a roughly spherical object nearly the size of a two story house. The strands enter this mysterious black sphere through irregular openings roughly 12 feet across.

In the dark central structure, all light disappears. Instead of walking on a giant, slightly pliant webstrand, they find themselves crawling through a narrow, slimy tunnel — with no apparent transition. The walls throb and contract rhythmically around them, the tunnel continually narrowing until the characters are forced to proceed in single file. This continues until, unexpectedly, the lead character's head pops out into an open, airier space. Although tough going, it is possible to struggle through this narrow aperture. The STR of this flexible opening is 14 and a character will have to resist it with either his STR or DEX in order to get through. In either case, a failed attempt means the character suffers 1 point of constriction damage.

After squeezing through the aperture, the characters find themselves inside the sphere.





The Planar Knife

Suspended in the center of the sphere is a glowing double-bladed knife, numerous, jagged shafts of light streaming from it in all directions. It is the Planar Knife and it glows with an eerie witch-fire. If any of the characters make a Detect roll they see, on the far side of the sphere, an inverted human bearing a sword. He is apparently unaware of the character's presence.

The Planar Knife

This weapon looks like a dagger with two blades, one protruding from each end of the hilt. Near the base of each blade is the eight-armed symbol of Chaos. The metal of the blades is dull and non-reflective, the hilt inlaid with a material resembling amber. The weapon has a light, quick feel to it but is not balanced for throwing.

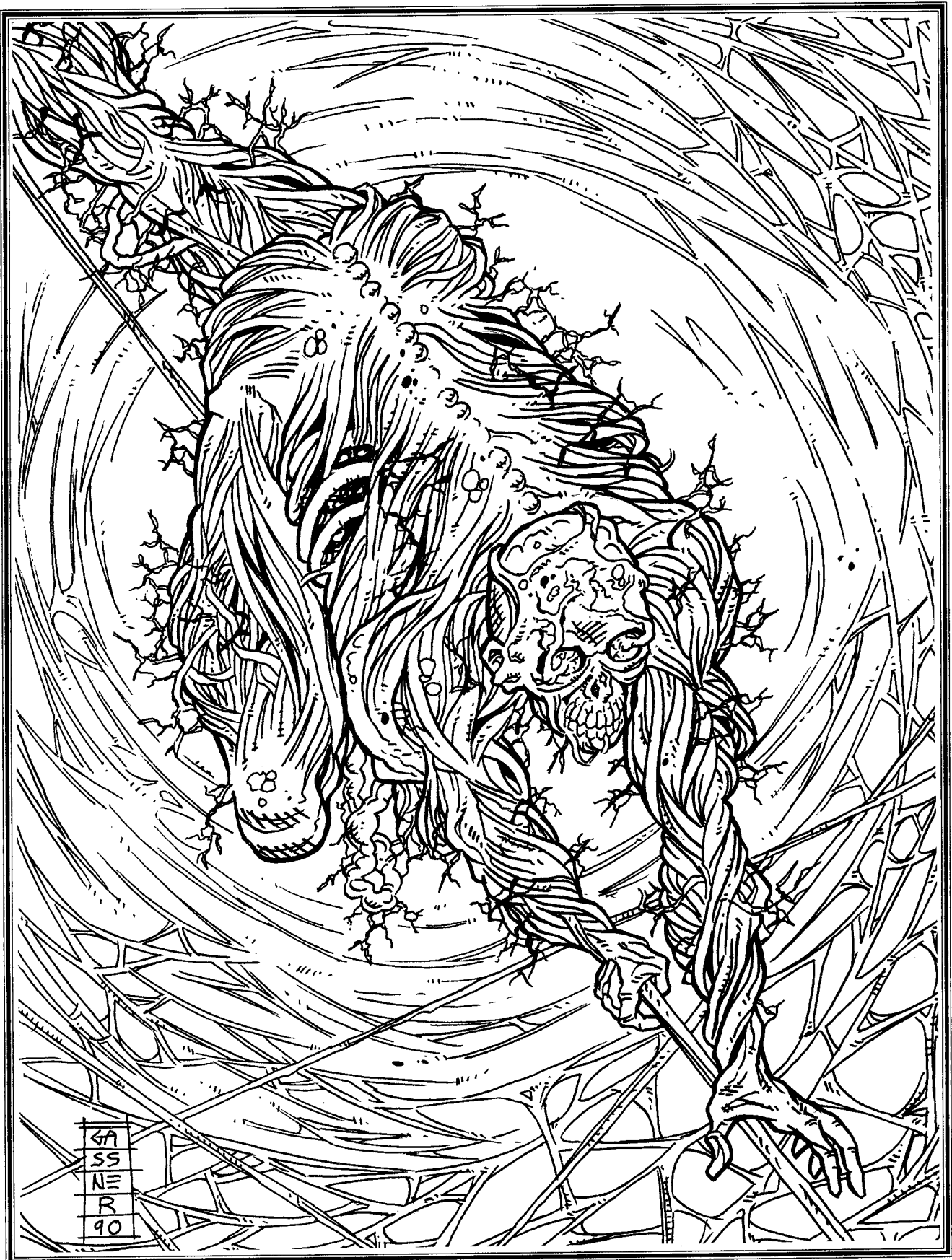
A small metal device is attached to one of the crosspieces. This device has a slot in it, about one inch long, a quarter of an inch wide, and a half inch deep. Arranged around the base of this device are six small, dull, unidentifiable gems of a very soft consistency (actually de-activated radiant components.)

Only characters who are possessed by a demon hearts find their eyes irresistibly drawn to the floating, glowing knife and must resist the knife's POW 30 or be possessed by

the idea of obtaining the exotic weapon for himself. Anyone so possessed will be irresistibly drawn to the blade and, kicking off from the wall, find themselves able to float across the sphere's interior. The possessed characters are all desperate to obtain the knife but those with a higher DEX have the advantage and lead the pack. No one else will be so drawn.

The inverted stranger, noticing the characters making their way across the sphere toward the Planar Knife, attempts to interpose himself between them and the blade and attacks the first character who comes near the knife, probably driving him back. The characters may Detect a human-like voice, urging them to stay away from the blade but, possessed, they ignore it. The inverted stranger cannot stop the second character and this adventurer sails right by the stranger while he continues to fend off the first player character.

When grabbing the knife, the character must make a roll of CON x5 or less on D100. Failure means the character has been blasted back by the power of the knife, suffers 2D6 points of damage, regardless of armor, and is hurled backwards across the sphere to slam up against the wall. This character will remain possessed, however, and if the knife is still untaken, will attempt it again. Any character who



An Inverted Adventurer

makes the roll suffers no damage and is allowed to take the knife. Meanwhile, the inverted stranger continues to try to fend the characters off.

As soon as the Planar Knife is pulled away from its position in the center of the web, the jagged streams of light break away, curling off in writhing coils. A great booming shock wave hurls all the characters back against the slimy, mucous-coated walls. Each suffers 1D2 points of damage.

The inversion caused by passing through the lens is immediately reversed and the characters feel themselves being turned right-side out, a process that, once again, repairs any injuries and returns them all to full hit point strength. The stranger is also turned right-side out and the characters find themselves in the company of a tall, thin man with dark hair and piercing eyes. It is Justin Carrock.

The character who took the Planar Knife undergoes an even more drastic change. He and the knife have become one, the blade has disappeared. Although the character still appears mostly human, his eyes glow with an unearthly light and when he opens his mouth, pale blue flames lick outward. His voice is changed and he speaks in deep, echoing tones, dissonant and cold. This character is possessed by the demon in the weapon.

"You should not have disturbed the blade," says Carrock, eyeing the demon-character warily. The possessed character leers back at them, smiles evilly, and spits flame. "It lacks the controller module that makes the weapon tractable."

Just then another shock wave ripples through the webways, buckling the floor and walls of the chamber.

"We must leave quickly," Carrock says. "The webway is collapsing and if we are caught in it, I don't know what will happen." Carrock begins sprinting for the exit, heading up the tunnel by which he and the characters entered from Albyon.

Justin Carrock

Carrock is a tall man with sallow flesh, short dark hair, and dark eyes. His narrow face is accented by a long, aquiline nose. He wears a long overcoat of herringbone tweed and a slouch brimmed felt hat.

Carrock is a manifestation of the Eternal Champion and is devoted to maintaining the lawful position of his world. He knows the controller module is on another plane and had hoped to reach that world via the webway. He knows nothing about the player-characters or their quest.

Once re-inverted to his normal form, the characters may recognize Justin Carrock from the description they got from Maria and at the Dragon's Tears. Carrock entered the webway just shortly before the characters and discovered the Knife, the source of the chaos pulses plaguing his world. However, he left it in place, planning to first retrieve the controller module and install it in the Planar Knife before messing with the dangerous demon weapon. Once it was

stabilized, Carrock intended to lock it away in the specially prepared vault in his office at the Dragon's Tears.

Carrock's health is poor; his normal CON is 6. To compensate, he uses a special drug of his own devising which fortifies his constitution beyond normal human limits (CON 30). The effects of the drug last for 2D6+1 hours, at the end of which time, his CON plummets, in 1D10 minutes, to its normal level of 6. Carrock must then roll a 6 or less on a D20 or fall unconscious for 1D10 x3 minutes. Upon awakening, Justin's INT has fallen to 8, where it remains for an hour or two before slowly rising back to its normal level. During this time, Justin is moody and intractable, withdrawing from the people around him. Unless they are well-known to him, he may forget the names of his companions and even why he accompanies them.

He always keeps 1D8 doses of his potion on his person (he has 6 doses with him now) but because of the cost of taking the drug, he rarely uses it unless compelled by circumstance.

Justin Carrock, Eternal Champion

STR 16 CON6/30 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 25 DEX 18 CHA 19

Hit Points: 6/30 ²² Armor: Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Rapier	118%	102%	1D6+1+
Dagger	128%	128%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	123%	—	1D4+2
Pocket Pistol	103%	—	1D6+2
Musket	107%	—	2D6+2

Skills: Ambush 98%, Balance 87%, Climb 83%, Craft Bladed Weapon 89%, Credit 122%, Dodge 73%, First Aid 88%, Jump 23%, Listen 82%, Make Map 78%, Memorize 100%, Move Quietly 92%, Music Lore 75%, Orate 114%, Pick Lock 91%, Plant Lore 113%, Poison Lore 65%, Ride 108%, Search 77%, See 97%, Sing 99%, Sleight of Hand 121%, Swim 23%, Track 92%, Tumble 78%.

Languages: Albyon Common 86/91%.

Summoning Ability: 88%.

Carrock specializes in exotic elemental bindings. He rarely summons demons; they are difficult to bring to this plane and their extremely chaotic nature repels him.

ELEMENTAL RAPIER *Viper*

This sword's basket hilt is of brass, carved to resemble the scales of a reptile. Upon uttering the word 'strike', the sword energizes, and is capable of delivering an electric shock whenever it hits. This shock inflicts an extra 2D4 hit points of damage, which ignores any metal armor. If the hit points inflicted by the sword are able to overcome the target's CON on the resistance table, the target is stunned — unable to move or act — for 1D4 rounds. Using the sword's electrical attack requires the wearing of a rubberized gauntlet like the one Justin always uses.

The Planar Demon

The player-character who obtained possession of the knife is now possessed by the demon of the weapon. Although still playable, this character is now subject to direction from the gamemaster and must play the demon in a proper manner. Later, if the controller module is found and installed, the demon is rebound and the player character restored to normal. The slot that accepts the controller module is now found in the throat of the possessed character.

The demon-possessed character has vastly different statistics and powers, outlined below. This creature is totally chaotic, to the extent of being unaware of the future and

lacking any ability to predict the results of its own actions. It is filled with a sense of hate and revenge, having been so long trapped in the blade, and although unpredictable, Knife (the only name the character now responds to) accompanies the player-characters, as long as they keep providing him with opportunities to kill and slay. It will help them on their quest to find the controller module, not able to realize that it is helping the characters obtain the one thing that will force it back into its prior existence. It perceives the threat to its freedom only when they attempt to install the module.

The possession by Knife has devoured and destroyed all demons bound to the character, his armor, weapons, etc. However, the demon instills its own chaotic powers in whatever weapons or armor it uses. All demon items handled by Knife are drained in the same manner.

Although an asset to the party, Knife is extremely dangerous. He does not spend time arguing and, if threatened or plotted against, seeks quick vengeance. The player-characters must handle this dangerous ally carefully.

Knife, vengeful demon

STR 22 CON 23 SIZ * INT 10

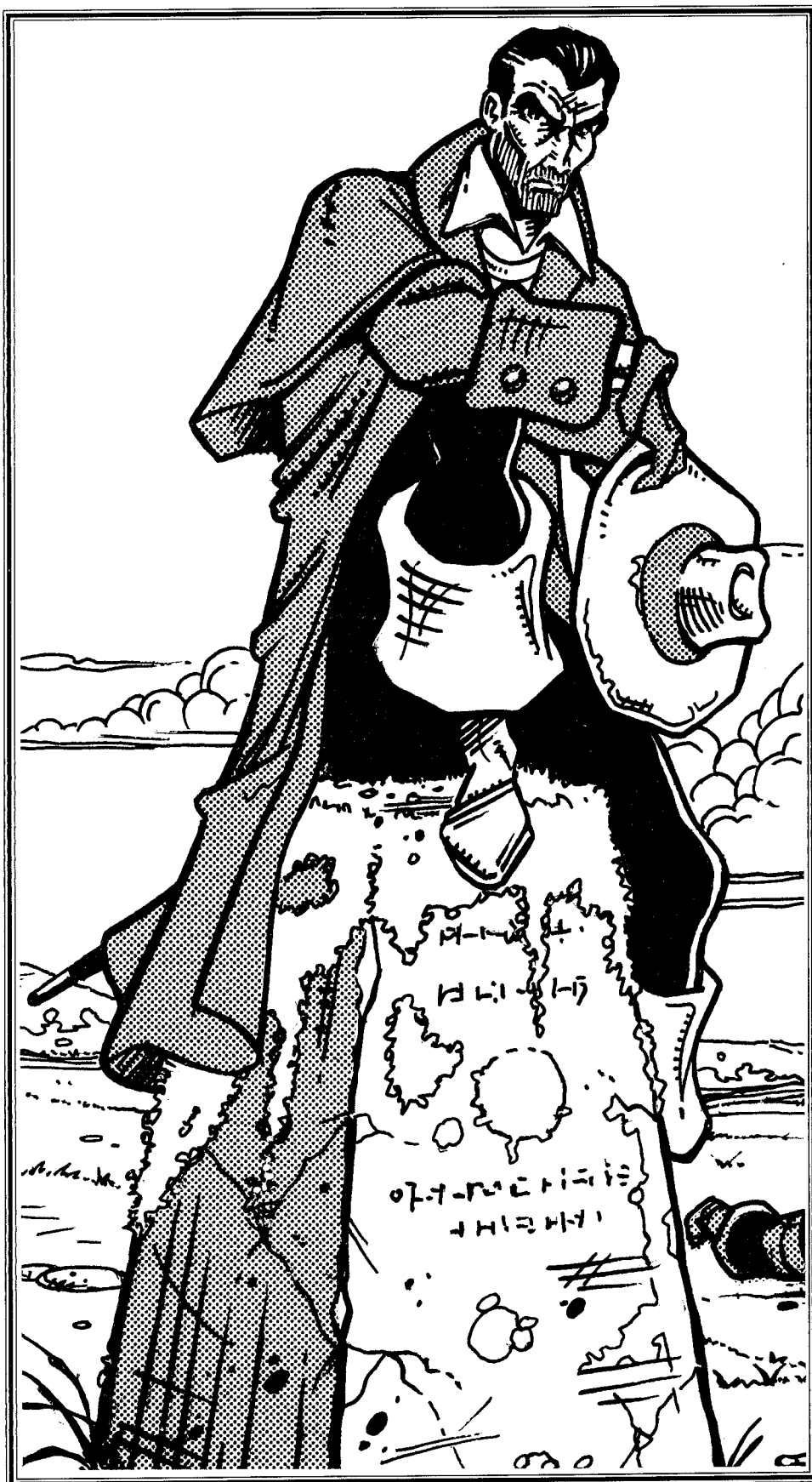
POW 30 DEX 15 CHA 6

*This is the character's siz

Hit Points: 23 plus siz adjustment. **Armor:** 20 points of metallic demon skin.

Damage Bonus: most likely +1D6+1D4.

Weapons: The character uses all weapons at his former ability. However, Knife always strikes twice in a round, once at normal dex, and again at the end of the round. All hand-held, bladed weapons wielded by Knife do an additional 2D6 points of damage plus have a special effect. If the victim is unable to resist the pow of Knife he suffers a gruesome end, watching in horror as his flesh and bones begin to unravel in ribbons, spilling out through the wound and piling up on the ground in a wet, pulsing mound.



The Elusive Justin Carrock

This causes an additional 1D10 points of damage every round beginning after the round the victim was initially hit.

Skills: Same as the original character.

Flight from the Webways

Carrock is adamant that they flee as quickly as possible. He is convinced that the webways will not last long. All the strands of the web have become tunnels, like the one first encountered. Justin immediately leaves the chamber by the path the characters just entered, not waiting to see if they follow him. If the characters hesitate, another rumbling shock wave should convince them of the imminent danger. Knife follows them.

The flight through the tunnel is a rough one. The tunnels twist and turn, bucking like a ship on a storm-tossed sea. The players may encounter some archnars but the monsters are in a panic, fleeing this way and that, appearing and disappearing through the walls, attempting to find some way to escape the imminent destruction of the web.

The Ambush

The characters near the now-open exit from the web when anyone making a Scent roll notices rotten eggs and turpentine. If no roll succeeds, they make the last turn before the tunnel's exit and run smack into Gath and his thugs.

If taken by surprise, the characters must suffer 1 round of attacks from the demon and the armed fighters without being able to retaliate. Otherwise, combat occurs as normal.

Gath, guardian demon

STR 17 CON 21 SIZ 20 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 17 CHA 3

Hit Points: 29 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw x2	79%	67%	1D6
Flame Breath	90%	—	3D8
Acid Blood	55%	—	2D10 POT

Gath usually fights with his claws, attacking once each round with both. If he hits a victim with both claws, besides the damage taken, the victim will be held tightly. If he can not make a STR roll vs. the STR of Gath, he is held fast and subjected to the demon's flame breath attack.

Any weapon that cuts or pierces the demon's skin releases a spray of acid blood that, if it strikes the attacker, causes 2D10 points of damage, ignoring any armor.

Dog, mercenary

STR 17 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 9 POW 12 DEX 14 CHA 13

Hit Points: 17 **Armor:** Demon Plate (25 points)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	89%	60%	1D8+1
Dagger	45%	30%	1D4+2
Self Bow	72%	—	1D8+1
Target Shield	78%	65%	1D6

Skills: Ambush 75%, Climb 15%, Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 15%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 50%, Ride 80%, See 65%, Set Trap 80%, Swim 5%, Track 65%, Tumble 5%.

Languages: Common 16%/75%.

DEMON SWORD *Thoron*

CON 25 POW 3

Damage Bonus: +3D6

DEMON ARMOR *Dixar*

CON 25 SIZ 12 POW 11

Armor: 25

Davis Olaer

Olaer is a middle-aged man on the small side. He is always serious and rarely smiles. Because of the strange appearance of his armor he usually wears a full length cloak with a hood. He uses his abilities (juggling and tumbling) to pose as a street entertainer and gather information. At these times he sheds his demon armor.

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 9 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 17 CHA 9

Hit Points: 15 **Armor:** Demon Armor (17 points)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	70%	67%	1D8+1
Dagger	65%	80%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	80%	—	1D4+2

Skills: Dodge 53%, Juggle 75%, Listen 38%, Move Quietly 60%, Tumble 47%.

DEMON ARMOR *Phantrey*

CON 17 POW 13

Armor: 17

This armor appears as a purplish layer of writhing rubbery worms. Each of the thousands of rubbery strands is about 18 inches in length, wriggling and crawling over every portion of Olaer's body except his face, hands and the soles of his feet. When not worn, Olaer keeps the armor in a foot long brass tube sealed with a threaded cap and bearing the sign of Chaos.

Urlik Palk

Palk is tall and cadaverously thin. He has a sadistic sense of humor and likes to taunt people entangled in his whip, commenting on the bravery, or lack thereof, they employ while facing death.

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 10 DEX 12 CHA 11

Hit Points: 11 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Demon Whip	78%	—	1D3+4D6*

Falchion 45% 35% 1D6+2

Skills: Ambush 60%, Dodge 57%, Hide 70%, Move Quietly 60%, Persuade 63%, Plant Lore 25%.

DEMON WHIP *Zar*

CON 12 POW 16

The lash of this demonic weapon wraps around the target upon striking (and inflicting damage). Once entangled, the target must resist the whip's pow or suffer an additional 1D6 damage on each subsequent round. Entangled victims may attempt to resist whip's pow once each round. Once successfully resisted the target is disentangled from lash.

Ransome Lyre

Lyre is the best looking, but least capable of the group. He is tall, muscular, with well-formed features. The others often call him Pretty Boy. He is an overachiever attempting to live up to the image of his colleagues, especially Dog. His efforts to please have made him a bungler.

STR 17 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 7 POW 11 DEX 10 CHA 15

Hit Points: 14 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Battle Ax	76%	40%	1D8+2
Self Bow	65%	—	1D8+1
Target Shield	28%	67%	1D6

Skills: Ambush 45%, Cut Purse 55%, Move Quietly 25%, Ride 65%.

Possessions: If Lyre is killed and searched, Sypin's ring will be found. It is gold and set with a large blue stone. Inside is an inscription that reads, "Herved, Class of '44"

Wrapping up

This is the final scene in this chapter and the gamemaster decides how and when it ends. No matter what the result of the ambush, before the characters can get safely out of the webway, the entire structure collapses and explodes, hurling everyone except manifested demons into another plane.

Then they awake on the beach of a strange island, not knowing where they are. The explosion can take place

immediately after the fight, or during it. If the villains are getting the best of the adventurers, the gamemaster will probably want to have the webways collapse before all the characters are killed. Otherwise, he may want to allow the characters the opportunity to punish the ambushers properly before triggering the explosion. Either way, the characters have no opportunity to get back to Albyon.

The Sixth Chapter

The Whispering Sea

SWEPT UP BY the maelstrom created by the destruction of the Chaos Web, the characters are cast across the multiverse to a place known as M'oor Talen, sometimes called The Whispering Sea. A world consisting almost entirely of restless, swirling ocean, M'oor Talen is a land slowly coming under the sway of Chaos. With the aid of a mysterious stranger, Andrew Grant, the characters will be led across the ocean on a quest to find and destroy an artifact known as *Straasha's Bane*. It is this object that holds M'oor Talen in the grip of Chaos. Destroying the *Bane* is the only real hope they have of getting out of this place.

About M'oor Talen

This plane is almost entirely one immense body of saltwater, broken by only a few scattered volcanic islands. There is no sky, but instead a great vault of stone that stretches from horizon to horizon, totally enclosing the plane. The only source of light is the pale radiance that glows from the wispy clouds drifting across the stony dome. The temperature varies; from humid and stifling during periods of calm weather, to bitterly cold during the worst of the freezing storms.

But it was not always this way. Centuries ago this world was called M'oor Talen by the people who lived here. Then the seas were lower and many great island chains, filled with beautiful cities, basked in the warm sunshine, bathed by the sea-freshened air. Great trading vessels plied the waters, carrying goods and passengers from one place to another. Then the people of M'oor Talen were lured away from their

Lawful beliefs and, led by the priest, P'urg-orp Lysh, turned to the worship of the Chaos Lord, Pyaray, the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets.

Slowly the influence of Pyaray stole across the world until finally, with the aid of the evil Lysh, the Chaos Lord was able to banish Straasha, the Elemental Lord, from this realm. With the balancing effect of Straasha removed, the oceans came under the sway of Pyaray. Before long the islands were awash with salt water, the great cities and their populations swept away by immense and unpredictable tides. Only the ancient Temple of the Oracle, built atop M'oor Talen's tallest mountain, was able to survive the devastation. No more do the great islands spread green beneath the warm sky, nor do the trading vessels ply the waves. The only ships now seen are Pyaray's Chaos fleet, monstrous barges manned by the corpses of all those who have died at sea.

A Chaotic artifact called Straasha's Bane, housed in Pyaray's great undersea temple, constantly spews forth what could only be described as pure liquid Chaos, polluting the sea and increasing the power of entropy in this world. If allowed to continue, it will eventually destroy the plane.

Above the waves, the environment of this world is harsh. A place where a few strange creatures struggle continuously to maintain their bleak existence. Beneath the sea, however, life is abundant, appearing in a vast variety of chaotic forms. The undersea world is a place of abrupt violence and random change, a world of sea monsters, some of them created by the unpredictable Currents of Chaos emanating from Straasha's Bane. In this primitive world invertebrates and fishes are represented in astounding variety and numbers. Of the higher forms of life, there are but a few reptiles and no birds or mammals at all.

Sorcery and Religion

Chaos is strong upon this plane and magical abilities are noticeably affected. The summoning of elementals and demons is somewhat easier than usual. Divide the time required and the POW necessary in half. Summoning ability remains unchanged. Summoned elementals may be bound normally but summoned demons are more difficult than usual. Double the demon's actual POW when conducting the POW struggle. Bound elementals may be manifested and used normally but any demon released from its binding object will be allowed to engage in a POW struggle (at double its normal POW) in an attempt to break free of the sorcerer's control. This occurs every time a demon is manifested.

The chaotic artifact, Straasha's Bane has banned the Elemental Lords from this plane and they can not be called. Beast Lords are represented by only a few species but those available may be called upon normally. The Lords of Law cannot enter here and, likewise, all Lords of Chaos, save Pyaray, are unavailable.

Lord Pyaray

Pyaray is one of the many Lords of Chaos. Upon the Plane of the Young Kingdoms he usually appears as an immense, blood-red octopus with several eyes, a huge maw, and a glowing blue gem set in his forehead. It is said in the Young Kingdoms that Pyaray sails the depths of the seas with his Chaos Ships, collecting all who die there to serve as undead crewmen for eternity.

While on this plane, all players accumulate elan as if a member of the cult of Pyaray. The players should not be informed of this, and the gamemaster must keep track of these points for each character. These points may not be used in the normal manner; the final elan total will come into play near the end of the adventure. In addition to the usual elan gains for the Church of Chaos and Pyaray, the gamemaster should keep track of the following bonuses and penalties.

- +1D10 For applying to Pyaray for Agent status.
- +1D10 For sacrificing pow at the temple ritual chamber.
- +1D8 For speaking to the Oracle.
- 1 For each black pearl taken from the giant oysters of the Whispering Sea.
- 1D4 For each one of the Children of Pyaray slain or injured.
- 1D8 For taking Straasha's Bane.
- 1D10 For destroying Straasha's Bane.
- 1D10 For desecration of the ritual chamber at the temple.

As Pyaray is the unchallenged master of this world, and frequently here in body or spirit, any question asked of a demon with Knowledge power is subject to Pyaray's scrutiny. Pyaray is aware of the question asked, possibly learning something of the adventurers' plans. Pyaray may arbitrarily prevent a demon from answering any given question.

Technological Items

Technological items brought to this plane are exposed to the warping powers of Chaos. Once each day, whenever an item is first used, a roll must be made to see if it has succumbed to the influences of Chaos. If the item has not been used for several days, upon using it a roll for each day must be made. There is a 5% chance per technological feature that the item has subtly altered itself in some way and is now unusable. For details on this effect, see the discussion of the multiverse in the front of this book.

In addition, any small technological device that comes in contact with one of Chaos Currents will automatically be transfigured and made useless.

Castaways

The characters awake slowly to find themselves stretched out upon a beach of gray sand next to a vast sea. The air is filled with the whispering of dozens, or hundreds of unseen voices. Overhead the characters see no sky, only a dark stone vault from which comes ominous grinding sounds. From time to time small showers of rocks rain down from above, rattling on the ground or splashing into the sea. Glowing, silvery gray clouds drift across this sky of rock, casting eerie, perpetual twilight upon the surface of the waters. Flashes of blue lightning periodically illuminate the sea, revealing small islands lying in the distance. Looking for the source of the whispering voices, the characters soon discover the noise is made by the action of the sea; no splashing, no booming crashes, only the constant, omnipresent whispering.

The characters also discover that not only have all their companions been carried to this same place, but any and all of their still-living human adversaries as well. Gath is not present, swept away to a different plane along with any other demons or elementals that were manifested at the time of the explosion. Dead characters, player or non-player, are not present, their corpses left behind.

The adventurers may at first be ready to do battle with any of the remaining band but they soon realize that this bunch has, for the moment, had all the stuffing knocked out of them. None of these men are so loyal to Pollidemia that they wish to keep up the fight. They are as lost and disoriented as the player characters and more than willing to call a truce, at least until they get out of this place.

Although without some exploration it is impossible to be sure, all evidence points to the fact that the adventurers occupy a small, volcanically-formed island, similar to others that can be seen a short distance away. The center of the adventurers' island rises steeply to a pair of twin peaks.

Far from shore, beneath the surface of the water, characters might observe mysterious points of light dotting the ocean floor like faint stars; it is impossible to determine their origin. Once again, the characters notice the sounds of the sea, the lapping waves, the wind on the water, the distant, surging surf, all combining to sound like the voices of a thousand whisperers. This soft noise is darkly threatening, although the actual words are too faint to hear. The players will not be free of this nerve-wracking phenomenon until they leave this world. Save for time they spend beneath the sea, the sound accompanies them everywhere. Use this effect to heighten tension throughout the adventure, calling a player's attention to it when things get quiet, or whispering strange or menacing things at players and then dismissing the effect.

Periodically, the chaotic tides of the Whispering Sea rise and cover the low lying plains of the island, usually leaving only the two peaks showing above the surface. This process is not ruled by natural laws but occurs randomly. Every hour there is a 20% chance of the tide rising approximately 20 feet, leaving only the twin peaks above the surface. The water will remain at this level for 1D8 hours and then recede, leaving behind various bits of debris. The peaks are steep, requiring a Climb roll to get halfway up and just above the high tide line. The peak on the left contains, wedged securely in a cleft between two great rocks, a small, crude hut. A character standing on the plains will have to make a See roll to spot the hut. This is the home of Andrew Grant, another person who has been cast into this world. The hovel is about 30 feet above the high tide mark and requires a character make a second Climb roll to reach it.

Down the beach to their left, about 300 yards away, mounds of rock line the shore, the whispering surf breaking against them. If a character makes a See roll while looking at these rocks he spots a group of large lizards crawling up and over them, their beady eyes fixed upon the characters. Otherwise, these monsters will make it over the rocks and, scuttling down the beach, get within 200 feet of the party before their approach is noticed.

These large lizards, similar to the marine iguana of Earth, are found all over this ocean world. Great numbers of them can be seen everywhere, voraciously scavenging the beaches in their perpetual search for food. As the characters soon discover, their omnivorous diets include humanoids. The lizards attack in groups, starting slowly with the approach of only a few (1D6). Their numbers increase as 1D6 more begin to move forward on the following round.

Carnivorous Marine Iguanas

These are very large lizards, similar to those found on Earth. Unlike earthly marine iguanas, they grow to a formidable size and possess an appetite for flesh as well as vegetation. They are found in large colonies on beaches and in coastal waters where they endlessly scavenge for food. Sometimes, a single lizard will find its way to deep waters, where it will may climb onto a convenient object on the surface (such as a ship) in search of food and rest.

Attributes	Average
STR 2D6+12	19
CON 3D6+6	16-17
SIZ 3D6+6	16-17
INT 1D3	2
POW 1D6	3-4
DEX 2D6+3	10

Average Hit Points: 16-17

Armor: 5 points of scaly skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	60%	—	1D8
Claw*	30%	—	1D10
Tail	40%	—	1D10+2
Butt	60%	—	1D6**

*May only be used against downed opponent

**A successful head butt knocks the target of its feet, unless a successful Balance roll is made. This attack can not be parried. A character knocked from his feet requires one round to get back up.

These iguanas are aggressive and predatory. They may attack in large numbers, especially if provoked or excited. They attack standing opponents with 1 Bite and 1 Butt each round. Opponents who are down can be attacked with 2 Claws and 1 bite in a single round. The tail may only be used against opponents directly behind the lizard.

The characters may well be overwhelmed by the lizards; if this happens, they soon benefit from an unlikely rescue.

A man dressed in odd-looking clothes charges down from the hut on the slope, his flailing staff driving the lizards before him and into the sea. He then walks forward to speak with the marooned adventurers. It is Andrew Grant.

If the characters best the herd of lizards, as is likely, Grant strolls down to see what the commotion is all about. Alternatively, the gamemaster could wait until the adventurers climb the slopes in search of the inhabitant of the hut, the only structure on the island.

The shack, constructed from materials deposited here by the tides, is securely located in a large cleft between the rocks, thirty feet above normal sea level on the south side of the western peak. It is a ramshackle affair, made of wood, rope, and torn canvas, little more than a lean-to. Inside there is a cooking pit, a container of fresh water, and Grant's few personal belongings. The shack provides only minimal shelter from wind and rain, and smells strongly of fish. Grant obtains food by fishing and collects fresh water from pools of water left in the rocks by passing storms. He has, over the period of time he's been here, learned a way to buffalo the lizards inhabiting this island. Unfortunately, this technique does not work against any other iguanas encountered in this world.

Andrew Grant

Like the adventurers, Grant is an unwilling visitor to the world of the Whispering Sea. He has lived alone on this island for almost a year. A sorcerer, Grant is a thoroughly unusual individual. His clothes and speech betray alien origins, although his knowledge of sorcery and legends suggests a familiarity with the Young Kingdoms. He is tall and thin, with long blond hair and pale eyes. He wears a long, dark cloak over his peculiar clothing which consists of a thin, short-sleeved shirt, tightly tailored pants made of a

tough, unidentifiable blue fabric, and the strangest shoes the adventurers have ever seen. A detail that the player-characters should find completely puzzling is his habit of inhaling smoke from small, white tubes of paper-wrapped leaves that burn slowly from one end. These are brought to him by his demon familiar, Kaaa, and come in oddly wrapped packs of 20 tubes each. He places great value on these tubes.

"Ahh! Glad you could finally make it," the strange man says cheerily. "I thought I'd end up spending the rest of my life here."

Grant seems to know Carrock, but Justin is baffled by the stranger, and shows caution.

"I see," says Grant. "This time you don't recognize me. But no matter, there's work to be done."

Although the characters should never be directly told, Grant is a manifestation of the Eternal Companion, friend and advisor to the Eternal Champion. Although he doesn't know everything about the adventure before them, he has some understanding of what is expected of them. For now, Grant knows only that he and Carrock have been swept here by fate to accomplish some task of importance. He has a small boat stored near his hut and knows that they must sail far to the north and there consult the Oracle of the Temple who dwells atop the highest mountain in M'oor Talen. Although he doesn't know how, Grant is sure that the adventurers' personal problems are somehow tied in with his and Carrock's. Later in the adventure, at the gamemaster's discretion, Grant can provide further information if and when necessary.

Andrew Grant, Eternal Companion

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 22 POW 18 DEX 12 CHA 11

Hit Points: 14 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Dagger	96%	96%	1D4+2
Quarterstaff	78%	99%	1D8

Skills: Ambush 55%, Balance 55%, Climb 65%, Dodge 95%, First Aid 55%, Hide 95%, Jump 85%, Listen 65%, Music Lore 105%, Navigate 85%, Orate 85%, Persuade 90%, Plant Lore 85%, Poison Lore 33%, Ride 75%, Search 85%, See 75%, Swim 65%, Track 55%, Tumble 85%.

Languages: Common 75%/80%, English 93%/95%, High Melnibonéan 65%/70%.

Summoning Ability: 65%.

Kaaa, Demon Familiar

STR 3 CON 11 SIZ 5 INT 23 POW 20 DEX 17 CHA 4

Hit Points: 7 **Armor:** 2 points of demon skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	85%	—	1 point plus POT 18 venom.

Skills: Ambush 99%, Climb 95%, Dodge 98%, Hide 95%, Listen 75%, Move Quietly 97%, Scent 95%, Swim 99%.

Abilities: In addition to its telepathic powers, Kaaa can read the mind of any sentient being within 50 feet, provided it can overcome the being's POW with its own.

Kaaa has the ability to shift itself through the dimensions, traveling between the planes. It can shift only itself along with any other objects totalling up to no more than siz 2. Kaaa does not lose con points for shifting dimensions.

Kaaa can heal up to 2D6 hit points a day, either its own or someone else's.

Kaaa may also have other useful powers that the gamemaster can decide upon later in the adventure. These unspecified powers might be used to get the adventurers out of a tight spot with the Chaos ship.

Attack of the Crab Monster

If the players stay on the island for a full day or more, they may encounter a greater danger than that of the lizards. The island lies within the territory of a giant crab and, in its constant search for food, it often visits here. Each day, there is a 25% chance that the crab comes up from the sea. If there is a high tide, there is a 60% chance that it will appear as soon as the tide falls, drawn by the organic debris left behind. The crab is primarily a scavenger but will not hesitate to include fresh meat in its diet. The crab cannot climb the peaks, but its claws can reach some twenty feet high.

Giant Crab

STR 35 CON 24 SIZ 50 INT 1 POW 3 DEX 7

Hit points: 62 **Armor:** 12 points of hard shell.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw x2	30%	20%	7D6

Another Voyage

Grant tells them that they are not the only humans in this world. There is also a band of pirates presently cruising the Whispering Sea. The pirates, along with their ship, were tossed into this plane after being sucked down a whirlpool while sailing the Dragon Sea in the Young Kingdoms. The pirates, he says, spend most of their time looking for a way off this plane. Grant says the pirates once told him of seeing a "haunted black ship" that they greatly feared and dared

Surface Encounter Table

D100 Encounter

01-25	No Encounter
26-30	Sea Serpent
31-35	Sharks
36-38	Giant Octopus/Squid(see below)
39-43	Marine Iguana
44-48	Seaquake*
49-53	Vortex*
54-63	Fog*
64-68	Waves*
69-78	Weird Current*
79-81	Pirates (see below)
82-85	Chaos Ship (see below)
86-00	Improvise a harmless but noteworthy incident. For instance, the characters pass through an enormous school of grotesque fish, or a large, dark, unidentifiable shape passes beneath the vessel. Maybe the characters come across the mysterious wreckage of a ship complete with dead crew, human or otherwise.

*See "Chaos in the Sea", a section several pages further on.

not go near. Unfortunately, Grant cannot provide any more information about this mysterious vessel. The pirates frequent the chain of islands which extend from here to the north, they visit his island at irregular and infrequent intervals, and they are not to be trusted.

Grant's boat is in good shape and large enough to carry all of the adventurers. It is fitted with four oarlocks and a small sail. Getting it down to the shore will take some effort but should not prove a problem.

Grant suggests they travel to the next nearest group of islands to the north, the direction in which the Oracle lies. These islands are ten miles away and, at average speeds, it will take the small boat about two hours to make the trip.

When traveling the surface of the Whispering Sea, the players are subject to chance encounters. In addition to any Weather rolls, a D8 is rolled each game hour, a 1 indicating a possible encounter. Roll 1D100 and consult the Surface Encounter Table.

Giant Octopus/Squid

This fearsome leviathan is found in oceans all over the multiverse and is greatly feared by sailors everywhere. Usually found only at the greatest depths, the huge predator sometimes makes its way to the surface in search of more plentiful food. Because of its vast size, there are few moving things that it will not try to eat; even a medium-sized vessel may be considered a potential meal.

Attributes	Average
STR 6D6+24	45-46
CON 6D6	21
SIZ 12D6	42
INT 1D6	3-4
POW 1D6	3-4
DEX 2D6	7

Average Hit Points: 63

Armor: 10 points of tough, rubbery skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacle	35%	—	3D6 or special
Bite	60%	—	2D8+3

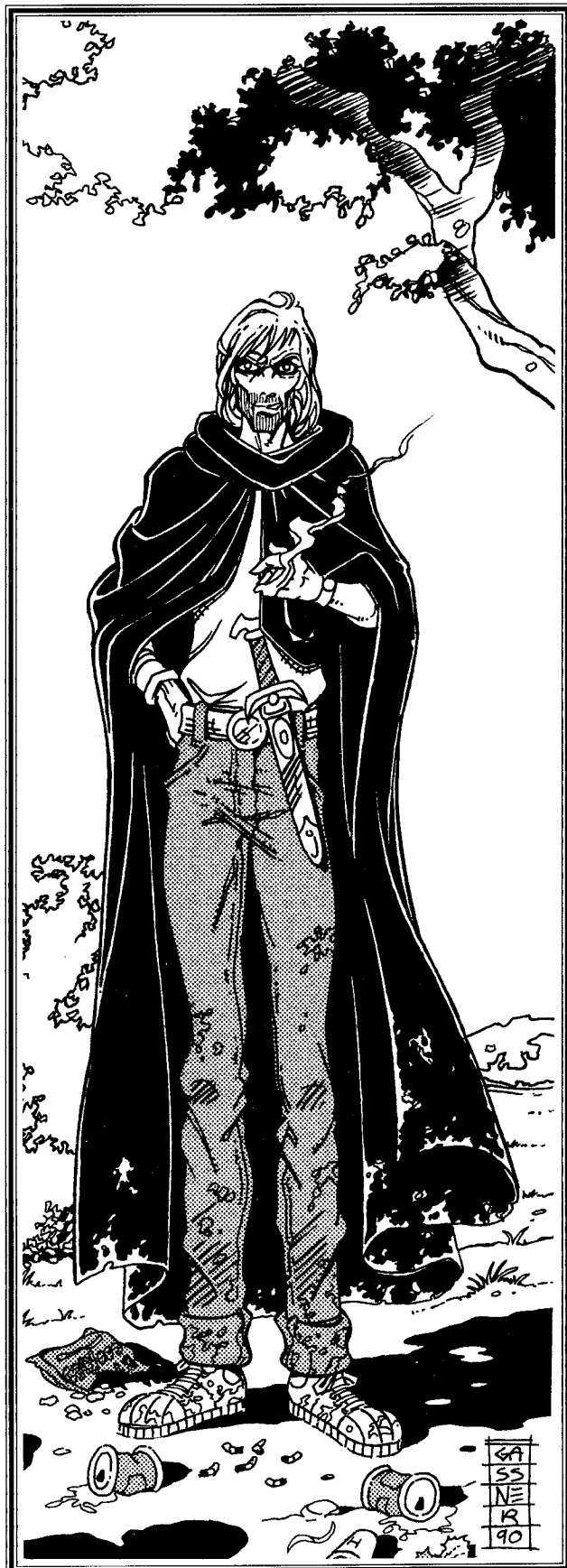
Skills: Ambush 65%, Move Quietly 70%, Swim 100%.

When disturbed, a giant cephalopod may squirt an enormous cloud of ink into the water. This affects a circular area 60 feet in diameter for 3D6 rounds, completely obscuring all senses. Combat rolls by affected creatures are made at 1/2 normal.

Such monsters may attack with as many six tentacles each round. A successful tentacle attack may damage or grasp the character, pulling him in for a bite attack or beneath the waves for drowning damage in the next round. If damage equal to one quarter the creature's hit points is delivered to one tentacle, that tentacle is considered severed and useless.

The Pirate Ship

The *Silent Mist* is a typical Shazaarian junk from the Young Kingdoms. Her crew, under the command of a disturbing fellow named Kirian, had been until lately plundering the waters near the Dragon Sea. Several months ago, they were caught in a mysterious whirlpool and drawn down into this



Andrew Grant, Companion to Champions

world. Since then, Kirian and his crew have continually sailed the Whispering Sea, struggling to survive while searching for a way back to their home world. Although frightened and tired, they have not lost the hope that they may yet return to the Young Kingdoms.

The *Silent Mist*, partly because of her rough passage here and partly due to the lack of adequate timber, looks a little bit worse for wear, although still basically sound. Because the pirates have been forced to live aboard ship for many months, the craft is filthy. The deck is strewn with damaged objects of all kinds; frayed ropes, broken weapons, buckets with holes, etc. Below decks, the cabins stink of sweat and smoke from cooking fires.

The captain of the *Silent Mist*, Kirian, is a cheerful, easy-going cutthroat. He is a short, dark man with smoldering eyes, a large moustache, and a lunatic's smile. His speech abounds with an amazing variety of creative oaths and curses, ranging over topics from the intimate habits of current political figures in the Young Kingdoms to the number of breasts possessed by a particular goddess of Chaos. He maintains an unshakable good humor.

Kirian wants more than anything to return to the Young Kingdoms, so much so that this desire now has priority over greed and lust. He is loyal to his ship and crew within limits, limits which do not include self-sacrifice of any kind. It is possible that if Kirian thinks that Carrock and the adventurers have a better chance of getting out of this world, that he will leave his pirate band to join with the characters.

The crew is a motley group of mercenaries, sailors, and criminals from at least a dozen different nations. Currently, the crew consists of 13 men and 4 women, every one a hardened killer. Their mood is best described as sullen.

Since their entrance into this world, the pirates have been understandably suspicious of anything that seems supernatural. Neither Kirian nor the crew will voluntarily face any supernatural menace.

Kirian, buccaneer

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 9 INT 13 POW 10 DEX 15 CHA 12

Hit Points: 16 Armor: Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	76%	65%	1D8+1
Spear	51%	39%	1D6+1

Skills: Ambush 59%, Balance 51%, Climb 80%, Dodge 25%, Evaluate Treasure 69%, Jump 50%, Move Quietly 64%, Navigate 89%, See 81%, Shiphandling 69%, Swim 65%, Tie Knot 76%.

Languages: Common 35%/85%.

Typical Pirate

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 10 DEX 14 CHA 8

Hit points: 14 Armor: Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	45%	40%	1D8+1
Sea Ax	40%	30%	2D6+2
Self Bow	40%	---	1D8+1

Skills: Ambush 55%, Balance 60%, Climb 75%, See 60%, Swim 65%.

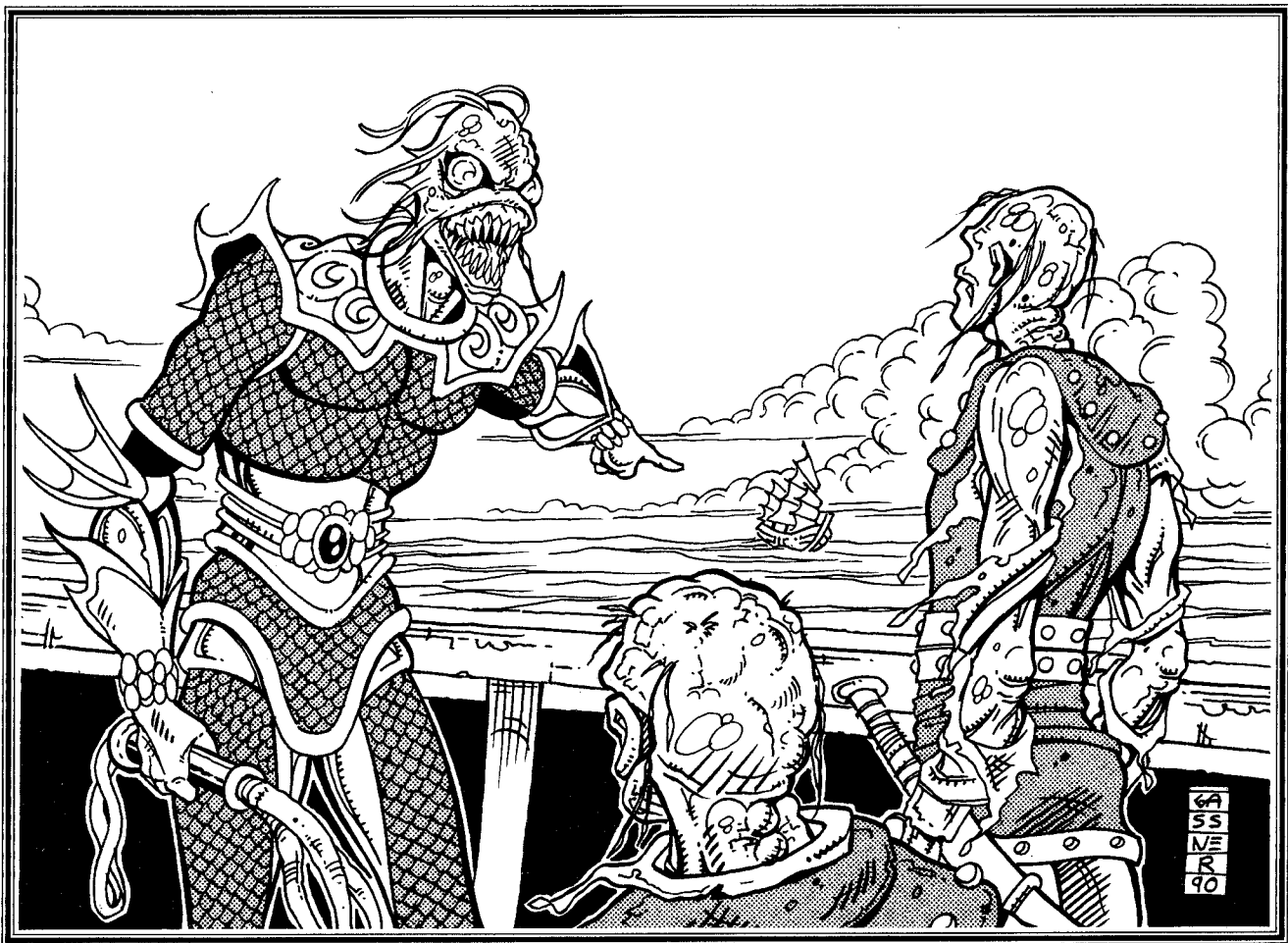
The player's encounter with the pirates occurs at sea. With a See roll, the junk is visible at a distance of about three miles and half that distance if the roll is failed. The junk approaches whether invited or not.

The pirates are cautious at first, attempting to determine whether represent a potential means of escape from this world, or easy targets. The pirates begin by assuming a friendly manner, inviting the characters on board, sharing their wretched hospitality, and trading stories of their adventures. Kirian leads this effort, attempting to put the characters off their guard by heaping flattery upon them. He attempts to obtain as much information as possible without arousing suspicion, while responding to the characters' questions with skillful evasion. If the players lead Kirian to believe that they, as well, are hopelessly trapped here, he begins planning a way to kill them and take their supplies. If they suggest that they might be able to help him escape, he bides his time.

If Kirian believes the characters to be easy prey, or if the characters instigate a confrontation, the pirates will not hesitate to attack. Any display of sorcery or demons, or the death or injury of more than half the crew, causes the pirates to retreat while Kirian re-evaluates his plans. If bargaining from strength, the characters can successfully demand from the pirates information and passage without fear of refusal. Still, the pirates are desperate characters, and even when threatened with sorcery and death, they will only take so much. If enraged or backed into a corner, the pirates attack with suicidal ferocity (except Kirian, who always thinks of his own safety first).

The player-characters and the pirates may reach an uneasy alliance, but the characters must be constantly on guard, whether sleeping in their bunks or conversing with Kirian on deck. If the pirates detect weakness, need, or indecision within the party, they exploit this to their own best advantage. If the pirates fear the characters, or believe that the characters can help them in some way, they are cooperative, if unpleasant, allies. However, they still attempt to improve their position by any manipulation, coercion, or extortion they can manage.

Once properly persuaded, the pirates can assist the adventurers in several ways. First, they can provide transportation. The junk, although less than luxurious, is something of an improvement over Grant's small boat. Secondly, the pirates have had close encounters with the Chaos Ship cruising this ocean. The ship is supposed to be searching this world for someone in particular (Justin Carrock), although the pirates don't know who. The pirates have so far managed to evade this vessel by simply pulling into the nearest island and hauling the ship up on shore, since the hellish crew will not follow onto land. If the pirates learn that the characters are the object of the Chaos Ship's search, Kirian may call for a re-negotiation.



Slypok and Dead Sailors

The Chaos Fleet

The Chaos Fleet is made up of huge vessels manned by crews of demons and the dead. On the plane of the Whispering Sea, the Chaos Fleet roams freely both above and below the waves.

"These were the ships said normally to sail the deeps of the oceans, taking on drowned sailors as crews, captained by creatures that had never been human. It was a fleet from the deepest, gloomiest parts of the vast, underwater domain which had, since the beginning of time, been disputed territory—disputed by water-elementals under their king, Straashia, and the Lords of Chaos, who claimed the sea-depths as their main territory on Earth by right. Legends said that at one time Chaos ruled the sea and Law the land. This, perhaps, explained the fear of the sea that many human beings had, and the pull the sea had for others."

—Stormbringer, Book Three.

A Chaos Ship

"...he stared at the huge craft...dwarfing everything else on the sea. They seemed covered with a kind of scintillating wetness which flashed all the colors of the spectrum so that their outlines were hard to see and the shadowy figures moving about on their gigantic decks could not easily be observed."

—Stormbringer, Book Three.

This ship of hell is commanded by a demon named Slypok. He and the dead crew of the *Entropy Rising* continually ply the waters of the Whispering Sea, searching for victims to be gleefully slaughtered and their souls enslaved to Chaos for eternity. This villain, at the bequest of Gashoram, now searches for Carrock and the band of adventurers. Until the characters are captured or slain, the *Entropy Rising* will hound them continuously. It will follow them across and beneath the Whispering Sea, turning up at inopportune moments throughout the adventure until the either the Chaos Ship is destroyed, or Slypok killed.

The *Entropy Rising* is typical of the ships of the Chaos Fleet. It is a monstrous vessel capable of sailing both above and below the waves. Its massive sails bear the eight-arrow emblem of Chaos, portrayed in amber, its shimmering aura causing the ship to appear distorted and unnatural. Like all the ships of the Chaos fleet, it is manned by dead sailors and warriors who, dying at sea, have been claimed by Pyaray for his fleet. It is over 600 feet long and boasts a crew of over 200. It has a top speed of 8 knots (faster than either Grant's boat or the pirates' ship) and can be damaged only by magic.

Slypok, Demon Captain

The demon, Slypok, is an aquatic monstrosity, a mockery of both man and fish, his face narrow and piranha-like, his eyes large and bulbous. He is utterly maniacal, a bloodthirsty hellspawn bent on the destruction of all humans and their kin. He loves torture, combat, and collecting souls to serve Pyaray. His dead crew follows his orders mindlessly, without hesitation. If Slypok is ever killed, the dead break off fighting and sail away, not to return.

STR 19 CON 28 SIZ 16 INT 14 POW 14 DEX 15 CHA 3

Hit Points: 32 **Armor:** Demon Armor (40 points)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacle Scourge	94%	58%	5D6

Skills: Ambush 98%, Balance 74%, Climb 78%, Navigate 90%, See 64%, Shiphandling 84%, Swim 100%, Tie Knot 84%.

Typical *Entropy Rising* Sailor

In the legends of the Young Kingdoms, it is said that any man who dies at sea is doomed to a hellish fate. He is enslaved by Pyaray to serve with the crew of the Chaos fleet. They are cursed with a agonizing state of living death, having become shambling mockeries of their former selves.

STR 13 CON 21 SIZ 11 INT 9 POW 10 DEX 6 CHA 0

Hit points: 32 **Armor:** Rotting Leather (1D4-1)

Attributes	Average
STR	3D6*
CON	6D6
SIZ	3D6*
INT	3D6*
POW	3D6*
DEX	1D6+2
CHA	0

STR 3D6* 10-11

CON 6D6 21

SIZ 3D6* 10-11

INT 3D6* 10-11

POW 3D6* 10-11

DEX 1D6+2 5-6

CHA 0 0

*or as in life

Average Hit Points: 21

Armor: Any (usually leather).

Weapons: As in life or see below.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	45+1D20%	35+1D20%	1D8+1
Sea Ax	45+1D20%	35+1D20%	2D6+2

Skills: As in life.

These beings are obedient servants of Chaos, whether voluntarily or not. Having already experienced death, they cannot be killed like mortals. They still take damage, but loss of hit points has no effect on the Dead. They must be disabled, dismembered or destroyed. They are affected by the maiming results of major wounds, but continue to fight until utterly destroyed (burnt, hacked to very small pieces, etc.). The Dead suffer no penalties for acting underwater. They fear nothing and fight without fear or mercy, death would be a release from their condition.

Whenever large numbers of these creatures are encountered, a player character has a 5% chance of confronting a past foe or comrade who was killed at sea.

Encountering the *Entropy Rising*

Needless to say, encountering this ship is very dangerous and characters should be given every opportunity to escape its clutches. Due to its immense size, the *Entropy Rising* is visible from miles away. The characters still must make a successful See roll in order to spot the unholy craft, but they should be given several chances. Allow the characters a head start of two rolls if they are on the *Silent Mist* and three if aboard Grant's boat before the servants of Chaos spot their craft and turn to pursue.

The Chaos Ship glides across the waters, its vast bulk sailing with eerie ease. This first sighting will be more ominous if it occurs during certain weather conditions: the monstrous, spectral craft could loom suddenly from the fog, appearing right next to the characters' vessel in all its hellish majesty, or it could be spotted far off on the horizon, relentlessly bearing down on the characters despite a dead calm.

If the characters or their allies sight the Chaos Ship before the *Entropy* spots them, they may attempt to hide from it using islands or weather to conceal their vessel. Once they are sighted, however, they must choose to fight or flee. Both options pose a certain amount of risk.

Fighting the *Entropy Rising* is near suicide whether the characters are upon the pirates' junk or the boat. The unnatural vessel is almost indestructible, and hand-to-hand combat with the crew is almost as futile. If allowed to come too close, the *Entropy Rising* will board. This entails 1D10 dead sailors leaping from the 100 foot tall decks of the Chaos Ship every round, attempting to land on the deck of the characters' vessel. The Dead each have a 35% chance of landing on the junk and a 15% chance of successfully landing on Grant's boat. Those that miss will resurface 3 rounds later and begin climbing aboard. The characters must disable a mere 200 of these fearless, unfeeling opponents along with their demon captain, to emerge victorious. The only real hope of defeating the ship lies in killing Slypok. Upon the death of the demon captain, the crew of Dead will shamle back on board the *Entropy Rising* and sail away. Slypok always stays aboard his ship, leaving the Dead to do the fighting, making it difficult for the characters to get to him.

If pursued by the *Entropy Rising*, the characters might be able to escape by making creative use of some of the random weather occurrences or encounters, or by making for an island. The latter option is virtually fool-proof as none of the crew of the *Entropy Rising* will ever leave the ship to come ashore. However, this only buys the characters some time. An escape of some sort still must be engineered, as the Chaos Ship will wait patiently just offshore. If the adventurers manage to reach the island of the Oracle, the *Entropy Rising* will veer away mysteriously, but only to prepare its next attack.

Should the characters lose this encounter, there are varying degrees of disastrous results. At the very worst they and their vessel will be sent to a watery grave, to be collected at Slypok's leisure and drafted into Pyaray's dead horde. If

Slypok has his way, however, the characters will be captured alive and brought aboard the hellish ship. Once there, they are tortured and interrogated before being taken to Pyaray's temple on the sea floor (see below). In the temple they are held prisoner, awaiting their final fate as sacrifices to Lord Pyaray himself. If not all of the characters are killed or captured, it is possible that they will be able to reach their captured comrades and free them. However, if all seems lost, it may be that Grant's demon cobra has a few tricks it can use to help them escape. The exact nature of this event has to be decided upon by the gamemaster.

Chaos in the Sea

Seaquakes

These are caused by violent upheavals of the ocean floor. Whether the characters are on land, in a vessel upon the sea, or underwater walking across the sea floor, the same dangers apply. All players must roll their Balance skill or fall to the ground or deck for 1D6 rounds. The quake might also cause other objects to fall. The gamemaster should note any objects above the character's heads, whether tall cliffs, a mast, or a crumbling pillar. Such objects have a 20% chance of falling as well, causing appropriate damage to anyone failing a roll against their Dodge skill.

Vortex Pools

Appearing suddenly upon the surface, these enormous whirlpools seem normal enough until investigated more closely. They are then found to be spinning in reverse, spewing water and debris out, rather than sucking things in. Beneath the surface, they behave like interplanar 'tornadoes', their funnel shapes reaching all the way into the Young Kingdoms plane. They appear at random locations, dangers known to have pulled down entire ships along with their helpless crews. The debris from these wrecks, along with an occasional survivor, is then spewed out upon the Whispering Sea.

Any time one of these pools is encountered there is a 50% chance that it has recently disgorged something pulled from the Young Kingdoms. This could be a survivor of some disaster, a corpse, a magic item, or simply wreckage and debris.

Ships that draw too close to the vortex risk the danger of being swept up in their currents and spun away, adding 1D8 miles to the character's current voyage. Without landmarks, a Navigate roll will be required if the characters wish to locate their new position. Failure to make the roll results in an additional 2D10 miles added to the voyage. Swimmers who draw too close will suffer the same fate. Swim rolls will be required to avoid drowning.

Waves

Occasionally the Whispering Sea generates huge waves attaining heights of 30 feet or more. A typical encounter with these unnatural waves lasts 1D20 minutes and is dangerous to those upon the surface of the sea or on island beaches. If encountered while in a vessel, the captain must make a roll of POW x5 or less or capsize. Any characters caught by these waves must roll their DEX x3 or less to avoid being swept overboard or out to sea. There is an additional 20% chance that items not tied down will be lost.

Strange Currents

These emanate directly from Straasha's Bane and may come from any direction. Some of these currents are visible to the human eye and, with a successful See roll, can be spotted ahead of time and possibly avoided. Choose one of the following entries. A character or ship caught in a current will be in contact with it for 1D6 rounds.

Boiling Current

This visible current is harmless to ships, but causes 1D6 points of damage to a swimmer every round he is caught in it. Armor provides no protection. This current leaves a trail of steam which is easily seen.

Freezing Current

Another visible current, this one looks like a winding path of ice moving over, or through, the sea. Anything caught in the path of one of these currents, whether a character or a vessel, is frozen into its solid wake, remaining this way until the ice melts in 3D6 hours. Frozen adventurers may be extricated and thawed out, recovering fully in 2D3 days.

For a mysterious effect, the gamemaster may wish to have players encounter the harmless evidence of a recent freezing current; an inexplicable barrier of ice which bars the party's progress until it melts.

Strange Color

This is merely a curling, twisting body of brightly colored water (red, black, glowing green, etc.). The effect is weird but harmless. Beneath the waves, vision is obscured until the current passes.

Living Water

Invisible, this is one of the more dangerous chaotic currents. It takes on a recognizable shape only when it attacks. The living current is a cohesive, sentient stream of water that prowls the seas under its own power. When attacking, it rises out of the water as a giant, featureless, serpentine form with multiple tentacles, made only of water. While alive and capable of action, it possesses no real intelligence and is as mindlessly destructive as a hurricane or tidal wave. It moves at a speed of 5 knots and is invisible when beneath the water.

STR 35 CON 35 SIZ 27 POW 3 DEX 16

Hit Points: 50 **Armor:** Harmed only by demon or otherwise enchanted weapons.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
1D8 Tentacles	30%	—	3D6

New Direction

This invisible current strikes the ship without warning, pushing it in the wrong direction for 1D8 miles which must now be added to the voyage. If pushed more than 4 miles, the characters must make a Navigation roll to get back on course, with the usual penalties for failure.

Chaos

A visible current, this is a stream of pure Chaos. It is a monstrous, swirling mass of darkness, rumbles like a freight train, and screams like the dead. This aberration transmutes all living things to Chaos. Anyone whose flesh is touched must roll POW x5 or less, or suffer a gruesome transformation (gamemaster's discretion or use Teleport Mishap or Demon Heart Effects tables).

Voyaging North

The characters now go ever further north, in the direction of the mysterious Oracle. They spend much of their time at sea, occasionally putting ashore at the uniformly bleak islands. Every hour roll 1D8, 1 indicating a possible encounter from the Surface Encounter Table.

Their first stop is a pair of islands roughly 17 miles to the northeast and visible from Grant's island. These islands, like most the characters will visit, hold nothing of interest.

The second voyage requires the players to brave 120 miles of open sea. No other land is visible, but Grant knows their goal lies in this direction. Land will not be visible until the last 20 miles, and then only if someone successfully Sees it. If everyone fails their See roll, they will be within 10 miles of the islands before spotting them. Characters need to make Navigation rolls to stay on course.

If the adventurers have not yet encountered either the pirates or the Chaos ship, the gamemaster should choose one of these encounters to automatically occur during the second voyage.

This group of islands proves all too similar to those previously visited, but still provide a good place to rest, repair vessels, or gather fresh water and food (probably lizard).

The third and final voyage entails traveling another 70 miles across open sea to reach their destination, the Temple of the Oracle.

During this final voyage, if the players have not encountered both the pirates and the Chaos ship, the remaining encounter should automatically occur.

Sailing Rules

The following rules are a simplified version intended for use in this adventure. The Chaosium publication, *White Wolf*, contains expanded rules that may be adapted to this scenario.

Navigation rolls are necessary when the destination is not in sight. Once per day the characters are required to make a Navigation roll. Failure means they have strayed from their course adding 2D10 miles to their voyage. When the additional distance has been covered they will again have to make a Navigation roll to make sure they have found their course. A failure indicates another 2D10 miles added to the journey at the end of which time Navigation must be rolled again. This continues until a successful roll is made.

Weather is the major factor in how long the voyages will take. The weather changes on this plane are sudden and unpredictable. Roll on the following Weather Chart using a D100 every 1D8 hours. Then roll 1D4 to find wind direction. The four numbers listed under the ship type indicate the four different speeds that particular ship is capable of obtaining when running before the wind, in a quarter wind, in a wind blowing broadside to the ship, and tacking into a head wind. The speeds are given in nautical miles.

Wind and Weather Table

D100	Weather	Boat	Junk
01-08	Calm	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0
09-20	Light Air	2 2 1 0	2 3 1 0
21-33	Breeze	3 2 2 1	2 4 2 1
34-47	Light Wind	4 3 3 1	3 5 3 1
48-65	Moderate Wind	5 4 3 1	4 5 3 1
66-78	Strong Wind	*	5 7 5 2
79-89	Fresh Gale	*	6 7 6 3
90-96	Whole Gale	*	*
97-00	Hurricane	*	*

*Ship or boat cannot be controlled under these conditions. Either make for a nearby shore or be blown off course. Blown off course means an additional 2D10 miles added to the journey and requires a successful Navigation roll to get back on course. Failure to make the Navigation roll means another 2D10 miles added to the voyage. This continues until a Navigation roll is successfully made.

Note: In calm weather the boat can be rowed and the junk towed by smaller boats. The boat travels at a maximum speed of 4, the junk 2.

The Island of the Oracle

There is almost nothing to distinguish this group of three islands from any of those previously encountered except that the central island's peak is the highest mountain they have yet seen. The top of this mountain is a flattened plateau. The high tide mark can easily be seen on the mountain, about 200 feet below the summit. Grant identifies it as their destination.

It requires two successful Climb rolls to reach the top of the mountain and characters notice, scattered about the slopes, broken pillars and paving stones, evidence of an



The Guardian and Oracle

ancient civilization. The island is conspicuously free of the lizards found in multitudes elsewhere.

The plateau is nearly flat, and less than a quarter mile across. In the center of it is a small, circular lake of stagnant water, some 200 feet across, its surface covered with a floating scum of black and green. Ruined pillars surround the lake, others stand partially submerged in the pool. In the very center of the lake there stands a circle of tall pillars, still nearly intact, and surrounding a large block of strangely carved green stone. The characters may or may not recognize this as an ancient temple devoted to Pyaray.

The lake is shallow, never more than four feet deep. Characters attempting to cross it must roll their Balance skill or slip on the uneven stone ruins hidden beneath the water and taking 1D4 points of damage from a fall or twisted ankle.

As the adventurers enter the inner circle of pillars, 20 of Pyaray's Dead rise from beneath the murky water. These mindless guardians are intent on murder and attack anyone standing in the lake. They cannot pursue characters who leave the lake.

The huge, square block of stone is found to be carved with stylized octopoid figures and appears to be an altar of some sort. Close examination and a successful Search roll reveals a seam, cleverly hidden within the carvings, along the block's upper edge. The top of the altar may be pried open by applying 30 points of STR. Inside is found a large, metal-bound book.

The book is an ancient grimoire containing the instructions for summoning the Oracle of the Temple, a demon of great knowledge. The summoning requires 20 minutes and when successful a faint light appears upon the water nearby. Slowly, it takes the form of a woman, naked, beautiful, but without eyes. As the form solidifies there is felt a powerful rumbling from below. The water starts to heave and within 2 rounds the secret Guardian of the Oracle breaks free, exploding upward, destroying the altar and pillars, and carrying the Oracle up upon its back. Anyone within 30 feet of the altar must roll DEX x3 or less on a D100 or take 3D6 points of damage from flying rubble. The demon guardian bursts into view, shaking the water from its body. It is an enormous skeletal figure with four arms and only a serpentine spine below the waist. Its entire body is covered with thick, green slime. In a terrible and loud voice it warns the adventurers to leave this place or die. If it is not immediately obeyed, it attacks. The Oracle rides safely upon its back, avoiding combat. Like the Dead, the guardian attacks relentlessly as long as the adventurers remain within the area of the lake.

Guardian of the Oracle

STR 29 CON 28 SIZ 31 INT 9 POW 12 DEX 7

Hit Points: 47 Armor: 20 points of demon skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claws x4	65%	32%	4D6
Bite	25%	—	1D10
Vomit Acid	45%	—	3D6 with a 30 foot range

This demon can attack with all four claws during any combat round plus use its Vomit Acid attack. If any one character is hit by two or more claws, regardless of whether they do damage or not, the character is grasped firmly and held. On the next round he can attempt escape by matching his STR against the STR of the demon. If the escape is failed, the character is lifted up and receives an automatic Bite or Vomit attack. This demon will not leave the lake.

THE ORACLE

This demon appears as a ghostly young woman with no eyes. She has long white hair and pale, almost dead-looking skin.

STR 12 CON 16 SIZ 9 INT 26 POW 23 DEX 14 CHA 28

Skills: Speak High Melnibonéan 100%

If the guardian is destroyed, the Oracle remains to assist the adventurers. Despite her apparent opposition to them during the battle, she holds no hostility towards them. She is ready to perform her duty as the Oracle, providing information and assistance to those seeking Pyaray's temple.

The characters should be allowed to question the Oracle but she may prove evasive. She knows a great deal about Pyaray and the Whispering Sea, but reveals only a little. Her answers are often mysterious and ambiguous, but there are certain hard facts that she is willing to provide. If asked, she will tell the characters that the artifact of Chaos that dominates this world is called Straasha's Bane. She confirms that it is located in a temple at the bottom of the sea. The temple is on the ledge of an underwater chasm that lies off the shore of this island.

If asked by the adventurers how they would get to this underwater place, the demon says she can provide a way. With the characters' consent, she gives them each a kiss. This kiss draws all the air from the characters' lungs, replacing it with a magical fluid that allows them to breath underwater. She warns the adventurers that this enchantment is good only one time and should a person emerge from the sea, it will be broken. If asked about the fluid, she will only tell them that it is called "Pyaray's Blood."

Beneath the Whispering Sea

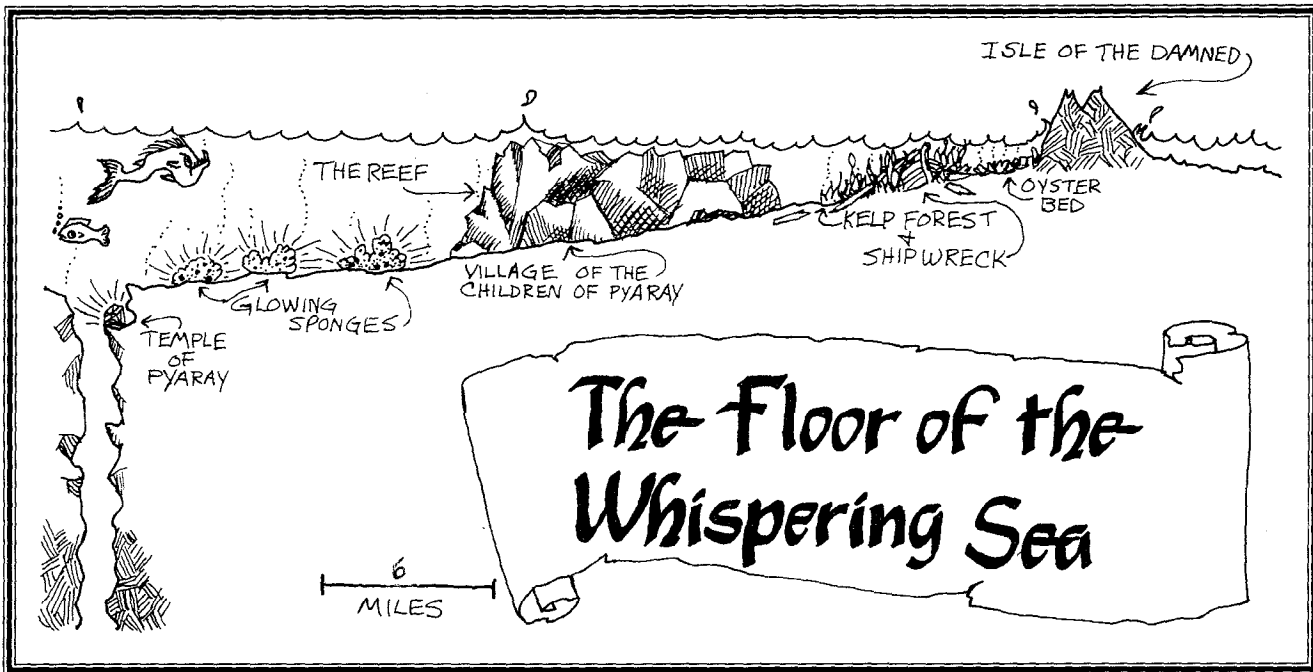
Movement

Under normal circumstances, swimming is the most efficient mode of travel and also allows freedom of movement in three different dimensions. Characters wearing metal armor, however, sink straight to the bottom and are restricted to walking across the sea floor. Barbarian armor floats, making diving below the surface of the water impossible. Only in leather armor, or no armor at all, is a character allowed to swim.

Walking characters move at 1/2 normal speed while swimmers move at normal rates.

Terrain

Characters who are swimming can ignore many of the effects of terrain, but considerations must be taken for characters who walk. Generally, most underwater terrain has



a counterpart surface terrain. Thick seaweed should be treated as forest, coral reefs are similar to hills, etc.

Combat

The characters and their weapons suffer severe handicaps. DEX is reduced to one half normal. The effectiveness of certain weapons, particularly bulky ones, or those relying on slashing or chopping attacks, is greatly reduced.

The following weapons are useless: cudgel, heavy mace, lormyrian axe, quarterstaff.

These weapons can be used, but attack and parry at one half the character's usual skill: battle ax, broadsword, greatsword, hatchet, light mace, scimitar, sea ax, natural weapons.

Unaffected weapons: short weapons or thrusting/stabbing weapons such as daggers, spears, etc.

Missile weapons: thrown weapons are useless underwater. Bowstrings stretch, making them equally useless. Black powder weapons, of course, will not work, nor will most energy weapons unless specifically designed and engineered to function underwater.

Skills

The use of some skills might be impossible (Juggle) but the gamemaster should determine each situation individually. Many skills will be affected by the presence of water including most Agility skills (Dodge, Jump), most Perception skills (Listen, See, Track), and those Knowledge skills requiring certain materials (Make map, First Aid, Craft). The gamemaster may assign a penalty to these skills ranging from -10% to -100%, depending on the situation.

Sorcery

Under these conditions most sorcery is impossible. The physical demands of most rituals, i.e. chanting, fires, inscribe circles and triangles, etc. cannot be met while underwater. However, those summonings which require only mental activity, such as calling an Elemental Lord or the informal summoning of a Lord of Chaos, may be performed as normal.

Adaptations

Upon entering the sea, the characters find themselves able to breathe the water and further experimentation will show they can also communicate to one another telepathically. The water seems as transparent as air and characters who examine their companions will notice that the pupils of their eyes have expanded tremendously. This effect increases as they descend until they reach the greatest depths. Here their

Coastal Slope Encounter Table

D100	Encounter
01-25	No encounter
26-35	Sharks
36-49	Marine Iguana
50-56	Reef lobsters (see below)
57-61	Giant Eels (see below)
62-67	Sea snakes*
68-73	Seaquake
74-81	Vortex
82-89	Strange current
90-00	Other

*As poisonous Snake, 7.2.15, Stormbringer rule book.

eyes will be entirely pupil, very much like the solid black eyes of dolphins.

Underwater Quest

From the north shore of the island, the characters must travel across the sea floor to the chasm wherein lies Pyaray's temple. The characters know only that the chasm lies north of the island somewhere beyond the great reef. They will have to search the sea floor in order to find it. The main obstacles are the hostile creatures and difficult terrain.

The journey divides into three stages. First, the characters must descend the underwater volcanic peak that forms the island. This phase consists of travelling through kelp beds and thick forests of seaweed.

Next, they travel into a deeper world consisting of underwater reefs and mysterious coral caves, the home of a native race of sentient beings — intelligent octopi.

Finally, the players must trek across the barren yet dangerous floor of the sea where only the strangest creatures and chaos spawned monsters dwell.

Encounter tables are provided for each section. Game-masters may use their own discretion as to how often to roll on the tables, but it is advised that this be done at least once every three hours of game time.

Traversing the Coastal Slope

The first phase of the journey descends from the island to the reef, passing through the dangerous coastal waters. This part of the sea floor is a jagged, uneven slope. The rocks are covered with fat slimy algae; kelp and seaweed beds are abundant. The thick plant life is mostly waist-high, roughly comparable to tall grass. The terrain is occasionally broken by huge volcanic outcroppings.

It is the coastal waters where the omnivorous marine lizards graze and hunt, where large sea turtles glide silently and fearlessly by the characters, and where sharks of all sizes prowl and hunt.

The Oyster Beds

Characters will sooner or later come across one of the many beds of enormous oysters. Some of these mollusks are four feet across. Any characters attempting to pry one open must match their combined STR against the oyster's STR of 5D6. There is a 40% chance that an oyster will contain 1D6 black pearls of 1D100 carats each. These are of great value and, with a minimum of time and effort, the characters could collect enough to go back to the Young Kingdoms very wealthy men. However, plundering the pearl bed brings a curse upon the adventurers. If any of these pearls are carried off this plane, the owners will become what sailors call a jinx. Whenever at sea, the pearls bring catastrophic bad luck to their owner and to all who sail with him. The chances of hostile encounters double, and the chances of bad weather triple (although specifics are up to individual gamemasters). Additionally, superstitious sailors have a 30% chance of

sensing this, refusing the character passage or blaming him or her when bad luck strikes. The only way to break the curse is to cast the pearls back into the sea.

The Kelp Forest

Gradually, the seaweed thickens until it becomes a forest of thick strands stretching from the sea floor nearly to the surface. The seaweed forest begins roughly two miles from shore and is nearly a mile in width. Travelers, whether walking or swimming, slow as though making their way through a heavy forest.

The kelp forest is home to many creatures. Schools of colorful fish glide among the thick leaves, scattering when the characters approach, resembling flocks of parrots in a jungle. Sharks are still plentiful here but the large marine lizards seldom stray this far out from shore.

Strange Movements: While in the kelp forest, perceptive players may get the feeling they are being watched. Call for rolls against the characters' See skills at the beginning, middle, and end of their journey through the seaweed. If successful, these characters see small shapes lurking in the weeds. Whenever approached, these shapes jet away and disappear. Known as the Children of Pyaray (see below), they are intelligent octopi who live within the reefs.

A Sunken Ship: Near the middle of the seaweed forest lies a sunken ship. The characters may glimpse it if any make a successful See roll while in the area. If they explore the ship with the hopes of finding treasure they will be disappointed. Only the rotting ribs and fragments of the hull remain and this is jealously guarded by four dead seamen in decomposing Pan Tangian finery (the Dead). These dead sailors are doomed to stay with their ship until the day of the final battle when Pyaray calls them to the Chaos Fleet. They are all insane monsters with a hatred for the living. They attack until destroyed.

When the players finally emerge from the kelp forest, they find themselves standing on the edge of a smooth, underwater plain. This plain gently descends for approximately four miles ending where the reef rises steeply toward the surface.

Reef Lobsters

These large scavengers, four to five feet in length, are found mainly near reefs and in shallow coastal waters. They are not particularly aggressive but may lash out at sudden movements within their reach.

Attributes		Average
STR	2D6	7
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D6	7
INT	1D6	3-4
POW	1D6	3-4
DEX	2D6	7

Average Hit Points: 8-9

Armor: 9 points of hard shell.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
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Claw	45%	35%	2D6+2
Bite	30%	—	1D3

The lobster attacks with two claws each round. A successful hit indicates that the lobster has grasped its target and held on, delivering automatic crushing damage each round afterwards. When the lobster has a firm hold with both claws, it begins to attack with biting mandibles, in addition to the automatic damage from the claws. This sort of bite attack ignores armor as the lobster will carefully search for any exposed soft parts. It will not release its victim until it suffers at least a major wound.

Giant Eels

These large snake-like fish are aggressive predators and viciously territorial as well. They usually attack when encountered, hungry or not. They are found in sheltered hiding places such as caves, crevices, and thick vegetation.

Attributes	Average
STR 3D6+6	16-17
CON 3D6+6	16-17
SIZ 5D6	17-18
INT 1D6	3-4
POW 1D6	3-4
DEX 3D6+6	16-17

Average Hit Points: 21-23

Armor: 3 points of slimy hide.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	60%	—	2D6+3

Skills: Ambush 70%, Hide 80%, Move Quietly 80%, Swim 100%.

Reef and Residents

Jagged mounds of rock, colorfully bizarre coral structures, and volcanic formations dominate the landscape. The reef is honeycombed with caves, cracks, and fissures that often present a choice either of going over, or through the difficult terrain. Movement across the reef is similar to travelling through mountainous territory on the surface, although swimmers can avoid the worst of it. If the characters wish to explore any of the deeper caves, a light source will be necessary.

The reef is inhabited by a variety of fish, crustaceans, and mollusks. For the next nine miles the terrain is fairly constant, alternating between irregular reef and rocky slope. Traveling across the reef is a dangerous proposition. It provides many opportunities for ambush by predators, and the coral itself can cause 1D6 points of damage to unarmored flesh scraped against it. Walking characters should be required to roll against their Climb skills every three hours, failure indicating they have slipped or fallen while traversing a treacherous stretch of coral and taken the 1D6 points of damage.

Reef Encounters

Use the Coastal Slope Table but if the result is 36-49 (Marine iguana) the characters instead encounter 1D8 Children of Pyaray. These shy, intelligent octopi cautiously examine the adventurers while maintaining their distance. If approached, they retreat cautiously but with signs of curiosity. Unless attacked, the Children of Pyaray offer no aggression or resistance. Because communication is so difficult, the party

will be judged by their actions. If approached properly, the octopi might even lead the adventurers to their village.

Children of Pyaray

The Children of Pyaray are a race of intelligent octopi indigenous to the Whispering Sea and possibly found in other aquatic environments throughout the multiverse. Unlike the more common expressions of Chaos' random creation, these are gentle, curious creatures with a loosely structured anarchist society. They show little interest in either technology or magic. Communication within the species is accomplished by movement and subtle color changes.

Attributes	Average
STR 2D8	9
CON 3D8	13-14
SIZ 2D8	9
INT 3D8	13-14
POW 3D8	13-14
DEX 4D8	18

Average Hit Points: 13-14

Armor: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacles x8	55%	—	1D8 plus Grapple
Bite	90%	—	1D6

Skills: Hide 75%, Move Quietly 80%, Search 45%, See 65%, Swim 100%.

Abilities: The Children of Pyaray make use of an ink typical of cephalopods. An ink cloud covers a circular area 4 yards in diameter and lasts for 5 melee rounds. Any creature caught within this blood-red cloud experiences difficulty seeing and makes all Attack and Parry rolls at one half normal. The ink cloud is often used by the creatures to effect an escape.

They also have a chameleon-like ability to alter their color. Using this ability adds 4D6 to their Hide skill.

The Children of Pyaray can attack with all eight tentacles in a single melee round. If more than two tentacles strike successfully, the octopus may grapple. Opponents successfully grappled are unable to use their hands for any activity other than freeing themselves from the tentacles. A STR vs. STR struggle may be attempted at the beginning of each melee round. If held, the victim is subject to a bite attack which is made in an unarmored location and automatically does damage.

The Village

Located in a sheltered cove of coral, this village of caves it is a community of several hundred Children of Pyaray. The caves of the inhabitants are spread around the interior of the cove in an irregular semi-circle.

Discovery of this village could occur in a number of ways. The characters might stumble onto it by accident. Swimmers, scouting high above the reef might spot it with a successful See roll. Following the Children of Pyaray, with or without their knowledge, could also lead the characters to this place.

The situation greeting the characters upon arrival at the village depends upon earlier possible encounters with the octopi. If this is the first close encounter between the adventurers and the Children of Pyaray, most of the tribe will cautiously observe from the safety of their caves. After some hesitation, a delegation of eight octopi crawls forth to greet and examine the visitors. If the characters have already been involved in a conflict with the octopi, their arrival will be met with stealth and ambush. If the characters have already made peaceful overtures, they will be greeted by the entire tribe, friendly and curious, who swarm over the characters,

touching them gently with hundreds of tentacles. Friendly relations with the octopi established, the characters will receive food and shelter.

Each of the dozens of caves in this area is occupied by a family unit of octopi. A typical cave is a single dark chamber containing a few simple tools (coral knives, seaweed ropes, etc.), several nets, and a woven basket or two full of living or dead fish and crustaceans. If the party's stay is a pleasant one, and the characters aid the octopi in some way, they will be repaid for their kindness. One or two octopi will accompany the party when they leave, acting as scouts and guides all the way to the temple.

Beyond the Nine Mile Reef

Eventually the far edge of reef is reached, sloping down to deposit the characters upon the sea floor proper. Before them lies a vast, barren expanse lightly inhabited. The sloping sea floor descends gradually and with it, the temperature of the water. Before long, the characters find the water bone-chilling and barely tolerable. The sea bottom here consists of thick silt that for the purposes of movement should be treated as a swamp. At irregular intervals grow vast beds of huge spherical sponges, some twelve feet in diameter, glowing with an eerie, green luminescence (the source of the strange undersea lights the characters may have seen upon their arrival on this plane).

Most of the time the characters' vision, augmented by Pyaray's Blood and aided by the light of the sponges, functions normally. Any violent activity, however, raises thick clouds of sediment, requiring a melee round of walking or swimming to escape to clearer water. Most aquatic predators are unaffected by this and find their way through the clouds effortlessly.

The sea floor landscape stretches away for ten miles before dropping suddenly into the mysterious depths of the great chasm. Unless somehow already destroyed, Slypok and the *Entropy Rising* will be cruising this area, looking for Carrock and the adventurers.

Soul Anemone

These ghastly creatures are found only in the darkest depths. They appear as ghostly-white waving masses of tentacles, deadly flowers attached firmly to rocks by their cylindrical bases. Careful examination of the creature's tentacles reveals spectral faces (both humanoid and octopoid) at each bulbous tip.

These creatures feed on the souls of sentient beings. They are naturally immortal and capable of waiting decades between meals. The soul anemone preys on the soul (POW) of any dying creature within its sphere of perception (30 feet). If the anemone's target is not already dying, it is willing to assist the process with its hypnotic ability, poisonous tentacles, and life-sapping aura. Any sentient creature killed by the creature is absorbed, becoming another ghostly face at the tip of a new tentacle.

Attributes		Average
STR	1D8	4-5
CON	3D8	13-14
SIZ	3D8	13-14
INT	3	3

POW 3D8 13-14

DEX 3D8 13-14

Average Hit Points: 15

Armor: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacles	30%	—	1D6 plus paralyzing poison

Abilities: This creature can regenerate 1D10 hit points of damage per round. It has the power to hypnotize, matching its POW against the POW of its intended victim. This ability has a range of 30 feet. A hypnotized victim has no will of its own and obeys the telepathic command of the anemone, walking toward it to fling itself into the creature's many-armed grasp. Once within the tentacles, the victim must roll his CON vs the poison's POW of 13 or take suffer an additional 3D6 points of damage and be paralyzed for 2D10 rounds. If the character is paralyzed, the anemone begins to suck away his soul at the rate of 1 point of POW per round. This loss is permanent (although the character can still increase his POW by normal means). If the poison fails to take effect, the hypnotic spell is broken and the victim may easily pull free. The anemone will immediately attempt to re-hypnotize its victim.

Sea Slug

These monstrous invertebrates resemble huge, bloated worms. They are usually a muddy brown color, their heads large, shapeless lumps with but one discernible feature: an enormous maw ringed with sharp, bony teeth.

Attributes		Average
STR	8D8	36
CON	3D8	13-14
SIZ	10D8	45
INT	1D2	1-2
POW	2D8	9
DEX	1D8	4-5

Average Hit Points: 46-47

Armor: 4 points of thick hide and slime.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	30%	—	6D6
Engulf	50%	—	special

This creature's Bite attack may not be parried, only Dodged. Engulf may be attempted against opponents whose SIZ is less than half the SIZ of the slug, and who have suffered a successful Bite in the previous round. To engulf a target, the slug convulsively swallows a huge volume of water, and consequently, anything else near its maw. Targets successfully engulfed take 2D6 points of damage each round (armor offers no protection) and suffer drowning damage as well. Due to their enormous mass, the giant slugs of the Whispering Sea cannot swim and are confined to crawling the bottom.

The Great Chasm

The Great Chasm is a vast fissure running for unknown miles across the floor of the Whispering Sea. The limit of its depths are lost in darkness and, in fact, lead across the planes to emerge in similar chasms at the bottom of the Young Kingdoms' Dragon Sea and possibly other places. Unless the characters have somehow wandered far off the mark, they should reach the chasm at about its center, almost directly above the Temple. Otherwise, the characters must search along the chasm's edge until they spy the eerie, tell-tale glow of the evil structure.

Once the chasm has been reached, the chaotic influence of Straasha's Bane is felt more strongly. In addition to regular encounters, there is an additional 20% chance of encountering a random Strange Current (see "The Chaotic Seas").

The temple sits on a ledge deep in the chasm, 700 feet below the level of sea floor. The descent may be accomplished by magic, Swimming, or Climbing. Should a

Sea Floor and Chasm Encounter Table

D100 Encounter

01-25	No encounter
26-31	Soul Anemone (see below)
32-39	Sea Slug (see below)
40-46	Sea Serpents
47-54	Giant Octopus/Squid
55-59	Shark Demon*
60-67	Seaquake
68-79	Strange Current
80-89	Chaos Ship
90-00	Other

*This is one of the Temple of Pyaray's guardians. It will attack the party by ambush, using hit and run tactics. If it loses more than half its hit points, it retreats. See "The Temple" for a full description of this monster.

weighed-down character fall while directly above the Temple, he lands upon the ledge, suffering 1D6 points of damage. If he falls at some other place, he plunges thousands of fathoms into the lightless depths of the chasm, eventually disappearing from sight. The character's fall will finally slow down, then stop, leaving him floating at a point halfway between two worlds. If the character unburdens himself of his armor he may swim either up or down. Up takes the character back towards the Temple and the Whispering Sea. Going down eventually leads to the Young Kingdoms and the Dragon Sea.

The Temple of Pyaray

The temple resembles an enormous, eight-faceted gem pulsing with a greenish-blue light. Its unbroken surface betrays no hint of an entrance.

The entire external surface of the temple contains a bound demon who serves two purposes. First, it protects the temple by preventing the entry of unwanted persons, behaving in most ways like a demon door. Secondly, it acts as a prison, consigning living beings to magical incarceration within the crystal's walls. Characters captured by the *Entropy Rising* or by the forces dwelling within the temple are mystically imprisoned in one of the facets of the temple's outer walls. These unfortunates await the eventual coming of the Chaos Lord, Pyaray. They are discovered by anyone who completely circumnavigates the entire structure. These unfortunates are imprisoned within the very wall, like insects trapped in amber. If the characters do not examine the entire external temple, roll 1D8. A result equal to or less than the

number of facets so far examined indicates the imprisoned characters have been found. All their possessions have been stripped from them. The prisoners are due to be sacrificed to the great guardian, the Son of Pyaray, in 1D8 days.

Demon Wall

CON 50 INT 9 POW 16

To escape from the cells or enter the temple, the characters must overcome the demon wall, either by magic or by the more direct and dangerous method of a POW struggle. Entry may be achieved through any of facets of the outer surface but the characters will always find themselves standing in Chamber 1, The Entry Hall.

The Inner Temple

The interior of the temple is a bizarre and chaotic place that does not conform to any natural law. The glow from this immense jewel provides the sort of low-level illumination the characters have become accustomed to in this world. Although effectively sealed, the temple is permeable to sea water, allowing water to flow in and the chaotic currents of Straasha's Bane to flow out; hence, the entire temple is filled with water. No map of the temple is provided because the sequence of rooms and encounters is subject to the whims of Chaos and is controlled by a random chart. Each of the eight rooms of the temple is shaped like an octagon; only their sizes vary. In each chamber is found a gateway. Passing through one of these magical portals will land the character in a different, randomly determined chamber of the temple. All gateways appear as glowing, amber octagons found upon the north and south walls of every room. Any character passing through an octagon on a north wall finds himself standing in a randomly determined room next to its south wall, and vice versa. Note that it is possible to end up in the same chamber that was just exited. Lysh, the demon priest, and the two shark demons navigate the temple at will, unaffected by the random layout of the temple.

1. Entry Hall

Gaining entrance to the temple, the adventurers find themselves in a large audience chamber. This chamber is a large octagon, approximately 85 feet across, made exclusively of the same greenish-blue gemstone that comprises the exterior of the temple. Upon the north and south walls are the glowing amber octagons, the magical portals. Ten feet in front of the north wall is a dais carved with sinister nautical and octopoid motifs. Upon this pedestal rests P'urg-orp Lysh, the demonic high priest of Pyaray's temple. Lysh was at one time a mortal but has long since traded his humanity for the power and immortality that comes to one of the servants of Chaos. He now resembles his lord, Pyaray, and possesses a tentacled, octopoid body that supports his bulbous, veined, humanoid head. His eyes are completely round and lidless, like those of a fish, while his mouth contains several rows of razor sharp teeth. Waiting at either

Random Temple Chamber Table

D8	Chamber
1	Entry Hall
2	Priest's Chamber
3	Ritual Chamber
4	Dead Sea Chamber
5	Servants' Chamber
6	Slaves' Chamber
7	Empty Chamber
8	Pyaray's Chamber

side of the monstrous priest are his chief servants, the Shark Demons.

P'urg-orp Lysh, Demon Priest

STR 14 CON 24 SIZ 11 INT 17 POW 18 DEX 18 CHA 3

Hit Points: 24 Armor: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacle x8	59%	49%	3D6
Bite	89%	—	1D8 plus paralyzation

Skills: Ambush 66%, Dodge 44%, Hide 90%, Move Quietly 90%, Persuade 30%, Plant Lore 50%, Poison Lore 20%, Search 76%, See 61%, Swim 100%.

Languages: Common 90%, Low Melnibonae 70%, High Melnibonae 90%.

Summoning Ability: 88%.

Lysh can strike with all eight tentacles in a single round. Any character successfully struck by three or more tentacles, regardless of whether injury was inflicted, is grasped by Lysh. If, at the beginning of the next round, the character can not break free with a successful STR vs STR roll, he will be drawn to the evil demon priest and suffer a Bite attack. If the Bite is successful, it ignores armor and inflicts 1D8 points of damage while injecting a dose of Lysh's paralyzing venom. A character suffering a successful Bite must make a CON roll vs the venom POT of 13 or be paralyzed. A paralyzed character may try to throw off the effects of the venom on following rounds by making a successful CON x1 roll.

Shark Demons

Shark demons are a type of demon fighter sometimes summoned by Pyaray and his servants. They are large, dark colored sharks with glowing green eyes.

Attributes	Average
STR 4D8	18
CON 4D8	18
SIZ 4D8	18
INT 1D8	4-5
POW 3D8	13-14
DEX 3D8	13-14

Average Hit Points: 24 **Armor:** 8 points of tough skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	55%	—	3D10
Tentacle Bite	40%	—	1D10 plus con drain

Skills: Ambush 30%, Dodge 50%, Listen 60%, Scent 30%, See 45%, Swim 100%.

These demons possess a tentacle in place of a tongue, at the end of which is a secondary mouth. Each round, the monster may choose to attack with a Bite, or use its Tentacle Bite. The Tentacle Bite is vampire-like in that it drains the victim of 1D6 con in addition to regular damage. These points are permanently lost.

The shark demon, if hard pressed, can use its attack to bite down on its own tentacle tongue, severing it and allowing it to become a free-swimming monster

capable of its own separate attacks. It takes two rounds for the demon to regenerate a new tongue.

Tongue-Tentacle Creature

Attributes	Average
STR 2D4	5
CON 2D8	9
SIZ 2D4	5
INT 2D4	5
POW 2D4	5
DEX 4D8	18

Average Hit Points: 5 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	40%	—	1D10 plus con drain

The priest greets the characters in a disturbingly friendly manner and seems open to negotiation. However, he is actually attempting to dissuade the adventurers from continuing their quest. He maintains a reasonable demeanor at first, pointing out the futility of opposing the Lords of Chaos, promising virtually anything to those who are willing to join with Pyaray, and reminding them of the threat posed by Slyphok and the *Entropy Rising*. He continues to attempt non-violent persuasion unless attacked or the characters attempt to pass through the amber gateway into the depths of the temple. When the inevitable confrontation breaks out, the priest calls upon 2D6 Dead who, after materializing from the walls, join with the shark demons attacking the adventurers. Meanwhile, Lysh makes his escape, passing through the glowing octagon, spitting curses and describing what he intends to do with the adventurers' souls when they finally become the property of Pyaray.

The characters must defeat or escape the shark demons and the Dead. If either demon is reduced to half its hit points, it retreats from the room and, rejoining with Lysh, assists the priest in his next assault. During the rest of their stay in the temple, the party must conduct a grim race to find Straasha's Bane while being hunted by the priest and his demons. The gamemaster may use these villains as he sees fit; as long as they live, they attempt to stop the adventurers. The priest uses the scrying mirror in his chamber (see below) to follow the characters and plot ambushes. Without his direction, the shark demons simply make direct assaults, battling the adventurers to the death.

If the party has an opportunity to search the dais where Lysh was sitting, a Search roll allows them to find a secret drawer on the north side. If any of the player-characters, or their associates, have been captured by the forces of Pyaray, their important personal objects will be found in this drawer along with a strange-looking sword, carved from some sort of horn or bone.

This is a narsword, the property of the prisoner mermaid, Ylalee. This sword causes 1D8 points of damage and can be swung through the water without encountering any undue resistance.



Purg-orp Lysh, The Demon Priest

2. Priest's Chamber

These are the private quarters of P'urg-orp Lysh, the demon priest. It is a smallish chamber, a mere 30 feet in diameter, with little furniture or decoration. Lying on the floor near the northwest wall is a large, pulsing mass of tentacled flesh, surrounded by a living curtain of seaweed hung from the ceiling. This sinister and alien object is simply the priest's bed. On the eastern wall hangs a large mirror, surmounted by a carved representation of Pyaray, his tentacles forming the frame. The mirror is twelve feet high and almost as wide; it cannot be removed without destroying it. Looking into the mirror reveals the observer's reflection through a film of greenish mist. Anyone who looks into the mirror and thinks of a location anywhere upon this plane will see that location in the mirror. The mirror shows only the present, and provides no sound. A character touching the mirror discovers that the surface of the glass is insubstantial. Reaching into the mirror, the character's groping hand finds a small niche containing a scroll. It is made of shark skin and inscribed with a water-proof ink, a grimoire explaining the procedures for summoning shark demons. Not surprisingly, the summoning procedure can only be performed underwater.

If the priest and his demons are still alive but not actively hunting the adventurers, they will be encountered here. The priest uses tactics identical to those described in the Entry Hall.

3. The Ritual Chamber

This chamber appears to be the central worship area. A hundred feet across, this room is mostly empty space. Upon each wall is an enormous bas-relief representation of Pyaray, depicted in all his gruesome glory. Ten feet from the north wall, placed directly before the glowing octagonal gateway, is a six-foot-long altar carved from blue gemstone. This is the inner temple, the unholy shrine to Pyaray.

Anyone touching the altar is temporarily drained of 3D6 points of POW (any being whose POW is reduced to 0 is killed). Lost POW can be regained normally except for 1 point which is permanently lost. However, this action increases the character's Elan with Pyaray by 1D10 points. Conversely, any desecration of this shrine reduces the Elan by 1D10.

4. Dead Sea Chamber

Entering this room is a shock. The chamber is vast, far larger than possible if judging from the outside dimensions of the temple. The ceiling and far walls are lost in the distance, obscured by the murky water and dim light (subtract 20% from all See rolls). Beneath the characters' feet is the sea floor, identical to that found outside the temple. Thousands of ship wrecks, from many different nations in many different worlds, clutter the bottom as far as the eye can see. This watery graveyard stretches across the chamber floor, a landscape of rotting hulls and wreckage.

The shipwrecks, since sinking here, have been left undisturbed. Characters may be able to locate some that contain useful or valuable cargo (gamemaster's discretion), however, collecting these things may prove difficult. Each ship still has most of its crew aboard, now transformed into Pyaray's Dead. Every vessel has 3D8-3 dead sailors, all with serious attitude problems.

5. Servants' Chamber

A rough-hewn, barren chamber 30 feet in diameter, this room serves as the quarters for the more mundane servants of the temple, 2D8 Children of Pyaray who always will be found here. Unwilling servants of the temple, they are passive and apathetic. They will not raise an alarm or hinder the players in any way. Slaying any of these temple servants brings twice the normal Elan loss.

6. Slaves' Chamber

This room is the smallest in the temple. Only 15 feet across, the slave chamber holds but a single occupant. Bound by a chain to a large metal ring in the floor is a mermaid. The other end of the chain terminates in a steel ring which cruelly pierces her delicate, silver-scaled tail. She is the priest's slave and plaything, and has been for many years.

Her name is Ylaleee and she is wary of strangers. She is startled by the adventurers' entrance, but she does not raise an alarm. Like many other inhabitants of the Whispering Sea, the mermaid's chief goal is escape. Ylaleee trusts no one. She listens to any bargains or speeches politely, but does not really believe anything unless the characters set her free. If the adventurers are hostile or uncooperative, she uses the hypnotic power of her singing to inspire any male characters to free her or fight in her behalf. If captured or coerced, Ylaleee leads the adventurers to the Dead Sea Chamber where she attempts to escape with them. To break the chain that holds her, 35 points of STR or damage must be applied.

Ylaleee, Mermaid

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 9 INT 14 POW 20 DEX 16 CHA 15

Hit Points: 12 Armor: 1 point of scales.

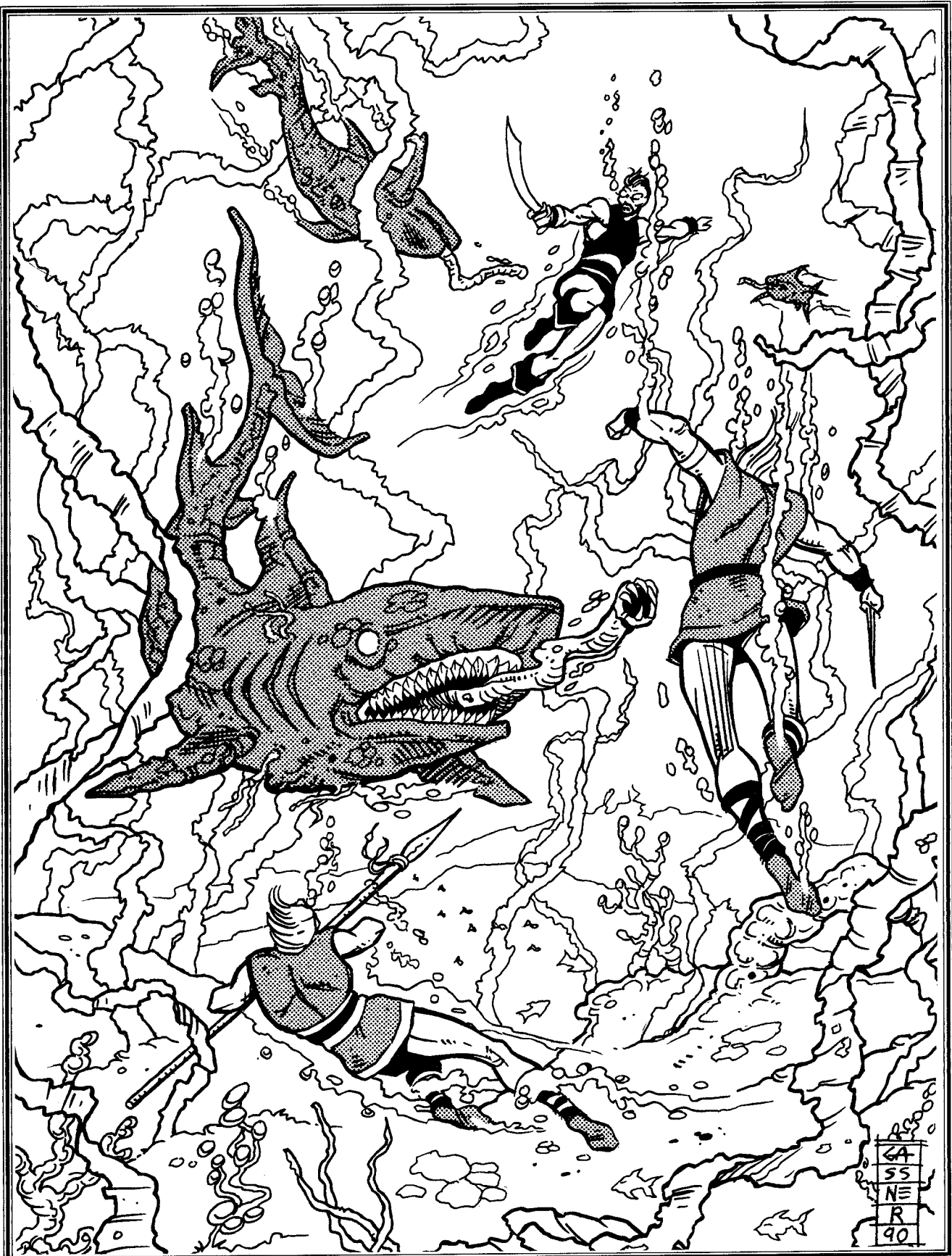
Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Narsword*	55%	50%	1D8

Skills: Scent 85%, Sing 95%, Swim 100%

Abilities: The females of this species can sing a song capable of entrancing human males. Any male character hearing this song must make a roll of INT x3 or less, or come under the hypnotic-like power of the mermaid.

If the mermaid's confidence is gained, she can be a valuable ally. She knows a little bit about Lysh, and she knows about the mirror in his room and its power of scrying. Also, Ylaleee knows a song that is capable of summoning Straasha. The only thing that stops her from using it is the presence on this world of the Bane. When she has her freedom, and has provided all the assistance she is able or willing to give, Ylaleee glides off into the depths of the Chasm in search of her own people and world.



The Shark Demons

7. Empty Chamber

This chamber may be any size or shape, and contains absolutely nothing. The gamemaster may use this room as he pleases. When it appears, it may be the same room every time, giving the adventurers the feeling they are traveling in circles; or always a different room, increasing confusion about the size and layout of the temple. This is a good site for an ambush by the remaining forces of Chaos.

8. Pyaray's Chamber

At first sight, this unusual chamber might be mistaken for one of the empty rooms. It is unexceptional in size, only 30 feet across, and appears to contain nothing of interest. There is, however, one unusual feature, found at the center of the room. Embedded in the blue gemstone floor is a circular slab of dull gray stone. This slab is roughly nine feet in diameter, with a large metal pull-ring fastened in the center.

Touching this ring causes a giant image of Pyaray, traced in glowing, bloody lines, to appear in the blue crystal floor, his eight tentacles surrounding the slab as though holding a globe. The image remains as long as anyone continues to touch the ring.

Touching the ring also alerts Lysh and the shark demons (if they still live) to the characters' whereabouts. The demonic priest and his servants head immediately for this room, making an unrestrained final assault attempting to prevent the destruction of *Straasha's Bane*. The trio will attempt to ambush the adventurers while they are occupied with moving the slab.

Moving the slab requires immense strength. The players must match the combined STR of their characters and their allies vs the slab's SIZ of 75. A successful struggle results in the movement of the enormous stone slab, revealing a dark aperture leading to the cavern chamber below.

Cavern Chamber

This large chamber is roughly circular, with a diameter of about 300 feet. Only the ceiling is made of the blue gemstone found in the rest of the temple above. The walls and floor are the rough, dark stone of the chasm. At the extreme northern end of the room a scintillating, prismatic glow is seen. In the center of the this radiance stands a large (six foot high) crystal chalice. They have found *Straasha's Bane*.

The characters may notice another feature of this room when they enter (See roll -20%). Behind them, to the south, where the wall and floor should meet, there is a large, dark crevice. The adventurers may not notice this, their attention being drawn to *Straasha's Bane* at the other end of the room. Lurking within this crevice is the final guardian of the temple, an immense monster known as the Son of Pyaray.

Son of Pyaray

STR 60 CON 36 SIZ 60 INT 10 POW 10 DEX 10

Hit Points: 84 ~~74~~ Armor: 12 points of tough, rubbery skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tentacle x8	45%	45%	4D6 or special
Bite	75%	—	2D10+3

Skills: Ambush 65%, Move Quietly 70%, Swim 100%.

Abilities: Like other giant cephalopods, this beast may squirt an enormous cloud of ink into the water. This affects a circular area 60 feet in diameter for 3D6 rounds, completely obscuring all senses. Combat rolls by affected creatures are made at half normal.

This monster may attack with as many as six of its tentacles each round. A successful Tentacle attack may either cause damage or grasp the character, pulling them in for a Bite attack that, if successful, ignores armor and automatically inflicts damage.

If damage equal to one quarter the creature's hit points is delivered to any single tentacle, that tentacle is considered severed and useless. The monster battles until slain or until *Straasha's Bane* is destroyed. If the artifact is destroyed the huge monster draws back into the crevice and disappears into the depths below.

Straasha's Bane

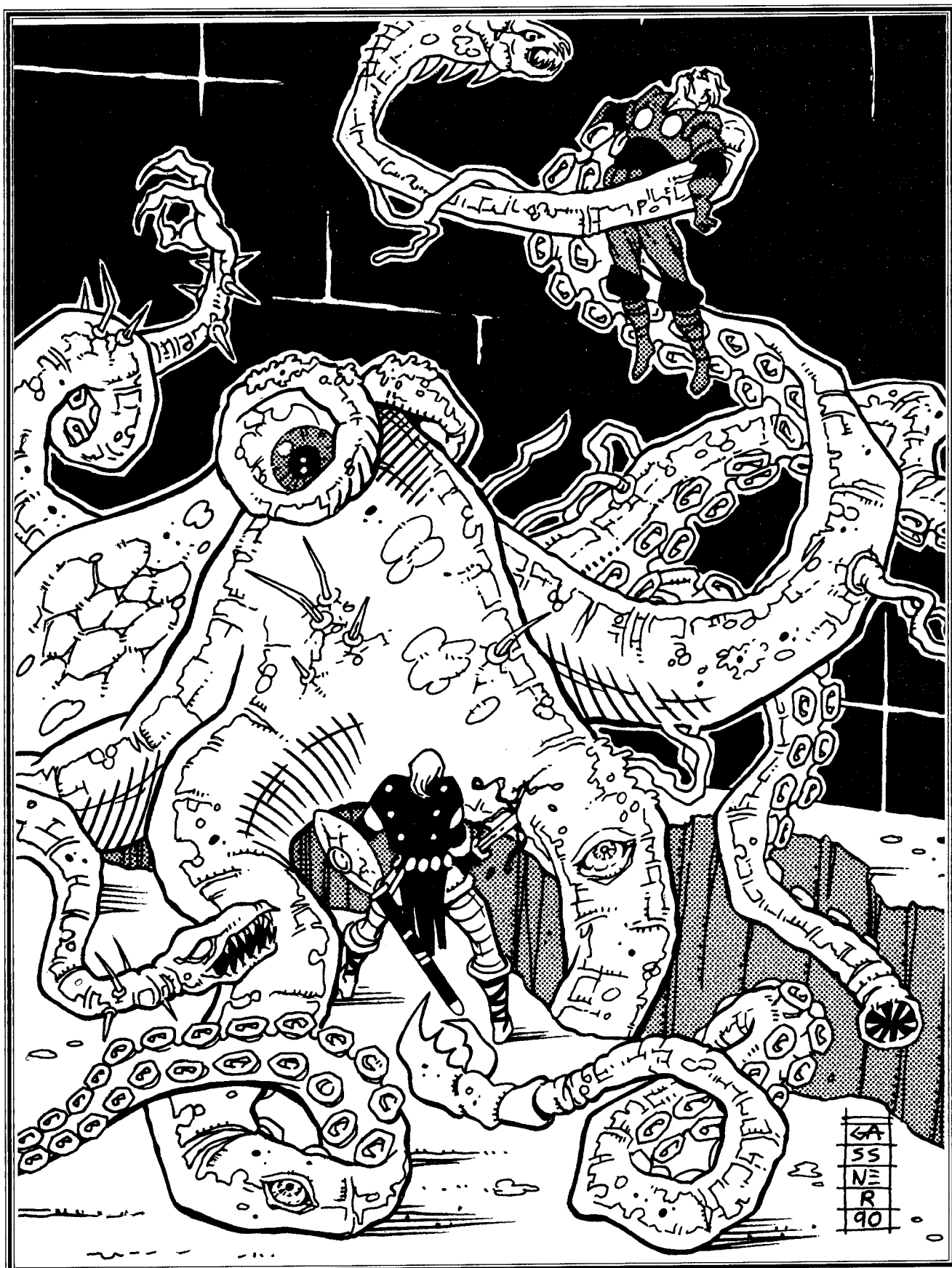
Straasha's Bane is an unthinkable ancient artifact, manufactured in the mists of pre-time by the Lords of Chaos. It appears as a six-foot-tall, glowing crystal chalice, a stream of multicolored, glowing liquid continually spilling over its rim. This is a fluid form of pure Chaos, the effects of which are infinitely varied and ultimately destructive. The chalice is so powerful that any character touching it must roll his POW x1 or less or be irrevocably destroyed.

Destroying *Straasha's Bane* is no small task and requires magic of some sort. Virtuous or demonic weapons are effective and, after inflicting a total of 100 damage points, will destroy the object. A powerful demon or virtue may be used to remove the Bane from this plane, but it would be at the cost of this being's existence.

If the characters succeed in destroying *Straasha's Bane*, the Son of Pyaray retreats into the crevice while the temple above begins to glow brightly with an eerie blue radiance that swirls like fire. With a sudden flash, the temple vanishes, utterly destroyed and the characters find themselves standing on the ledge in the chasm. At this time, the gamemaster should ask each player for a See roll. If anyone succeeds they see a fist-sized blue gem, sinking slowly into the chasm. If they wish to grab the gem they must roll their DEX x3 or less on a D100. If they fumble the roll, they miss the gem and fall over the edge of the chasm themselves. Characters may do what they wish with the gem, but unless they destroy it somehow (it withstands a total of 50 damage points before shattering) they will live to regret it. This gem forms a nexus by which Pyaray will manifest himself in this world, looking to exact his vengeance on the characters.

Escape

Unbidden, *Straasha*, free once again to enter this plane, rises up from the depths of the chasm. He appears as an enormous humanoid figure with turquoise beard and hair, pale green skin, and a voice that sounds like rushing waves. *Straasha* is grateful for the service performed by the band and has already made arrangements to repay them. Gathering them up in his great hands, he streaks to the surface, carrying them across the waves in the direction of the island. As they approach, the characters see a ship anchored in a cove. It is



The Son of Pyaray

the *Rogue Mistress*, brought here by Straasha. Members of the ship's crew stand upon the deck, waving to the characters as they draw closer, riding in Straasha's great hands. The Elemental Lord places the characters upon the deck of the ship and, if they need no further assistance, he thanks them again and departs. If the *Rogue Mistress* is still incapable of interplanar travel, Straasha provides them with a means of escaping the plane.)

The characters' arrival back aboard ship marks the first time that Justin has seen his daughter, Maria, in seventeen years. Maria strongly resents her father, and Justin, for his part, suffers considerable guilt over his shortcomings as a parent. The gamemaster will have to decide upon the pair's reactions to this first meeting.

It is also possible that Dog or some of the other chaos warriors might still be in the company of the party. Maria bitterly hates these men, the one-eyed Dog in particular, and she will have them immediately thrown in irons. At the first opportunity she hangs these offenders from a yardarm then unceremoniously dumps the bodies over the side of the ship. Persuade rolls from the characters might change Maria's mind, but it is not very likely.

Departure

If the *Rogue Mistress* is fully functional, Maria will be able to fly them off this plane. If not, Straasha can provide a means. Enveloping the entire ship and crew in a protective bubble, he carries the ship below the water down to the chasm. At the edge, he launches the *Rogue Mistress* in a certain direction, telling them the ship will emerge from the ocean on the plane of Uerth, their destination.

Either way, if the blue gem was not destroyed, Pyaray will manifest himself. If the gem is aboard ship, the Chaos Lord will simply appear there. If the gem was left on the ledge, Pyaray either pursues the ship into the cavern and catches it or reaches up out of the water when the ship passes overhead, grabbing hold and hauling himself aboard.

Pyaray Strikes

The Chaos Lord, angered by the destruction of his temple and of Straasha's Bane has come for compensation, revenge, or both. The gamemaster must handle this situation carefully, as Pyaray is possibly capable of wiping out the entire

party. Fortunately, Pyaray is not as rash as some other of the Lords of Chaos. He is more practical, perhaps even a little apathetic.

"Who has dared to violate my temple and defy the wrath of Pyaray?" the Chaos Lord asks.

Pyaray shares some statistics with the Son of Pyaray but his attack and parry skills are 100%. He can not be harmed by any weapon, save Stormbringer.

Bargaining is possible. If the party can offer the Chaos Lord something that makes them more valuable alive than dead, he may let them go. He is not about to be betrayed, however, so any bargains will be rather one-sided. Likely bargains might involve statistics sacrifices, blood and souls to be devoted to the god, and service to Chaos. If any character offers to become an agent of Pyaray, the gamemaster should conduct the petition for agenthood as usual. If this is successful, the character must forever serve Pyaray, but at least the party will gain their lives and freedom.

Any player who respectfully throws himself on the mercy of the Chaos Lord, willingly accepting his judgement, has a small chance of being forgiven. At this point, the gamemaster must consult the character's total Elan for Pyaray and have the player make a roll. A result below this temporary Elan score means that Pyaray has chosen to let the character live. However, the gamemaster should make a note for future reference that that character is now in Pyaray's debt. Failure means instant death for this character and service in the Chaos Fleet.

Combat is the likely conclusion to this scene. There is little the characters can accomplish with normal weapons and even the Planar Knife will prove nearly useless against the Chaos Lord. Fortunately, the *Rogue Mistress* is already enroute to a different plane and the Chaos Lord, unable to travel through certain parts of the multiverse, will soon be pulled off the ship. Characters will have to battle with the monster for only eight rounds before the forces of interplanar travel yank him free of the ship to drift away from the stern and into the void. For every character who petitions for agenthood or throws himself at Pyaray's mercy subtract one from the total number of rounds that the party will have to battle the Chaos Lord.

Once free of the Chaos Lord's grasp, the *Rogue Mistress* slips out of the plane of the Whispering Sea and into the mists of the ether.

The Seventh Chapter

The Dark of the Sun

THE FATE OF the adventurers is now entwined with that of Justin Carrock. The Eternal Champion has been inexorably drawn to the plane of Uerth and is doomed to play a major role in the further development of this world's future.

The world of Uerth was a highly lawful place with technological developments similar to 20th century Earth's. More than a century ago the planet suffered a great nuclear war. Billions of people were wiped out by the bombing and by the great clouds of radiation that for years afterward circled the planet. Those few not killed outright or by exposure to radiation were eventually wiped out by exposure, starvation, and disease. A dark, eternal winter beset the world, temperatures dropped drastically, and plant life, deprived of sunlight, withered and died. The food chain collapsed.

The characters will meet and be offered a chance to aid the last living humans on the plane, the inhabitants of a domed city designed to survive a holocaust such as the Last War. These people are locked in a life and death struggle with creatures they call the Murdas, primitive, mutated humans who have rapidly devolved to survive the harsh conditions of this world.

The Murdas possess the controller module sought by the adventurers. In the course of trying to obtain it, Carrock and the characters meet the leader of the Murdas and are asked by him to help his people exterminate the humans, claiming, with some validity, that the city is waging a war of genocide against the mutant tribes. He offers them the module as a reward for their aid.

When Justin Carrock disappears, the characters are left to make their own decision as to who to help. They will not learn which side Carrock has chosen until after they have committed themselves. They may find themselves either fighting against the Eternal Champion or at his side. The *Rogue Mistress* will provide the characters with a rescue, should they require one, and leaving this plane in the possession of the controller module forms the climax of the adventure.

This scenario requires some decision-making by the gamemaster. It is not specified which side Carrock will take. Both the humans and Murdas seem to have arguments for and against helping them, neither side being plainly superior to the other. It is fated that only one or the other of these cultures survive to repopulate this world, and it will be whichever one that Carrock sides with. The characters are faced with making their own decision. Additionally, they are

offered an opportunity to go back on their word and simply bail out, abandoning both sides to their own fate. The conclusion of the adventure entails dramatic elements that the gamemaster must tailor to fit his own players' sense of adventure and excitement.

The Plane of Uerth

This world, ever since the Last War of more than a century ago, has been locked into a state of permanent winter. It is a dark, cold place, ravaged by freezing winds. Snow falls from clouds so dark and thick that at high noon there is no more light than one normally sees at the tail end of dusk, just about the time the servants would begin lighting the lamps. Only seven times in the recorded history of Ralcon 4 has the sun been seen to peep through a gap in the clouds.

In the part of the world where the adventure is set the midday temperature rarely rises above 0° F. Winds of from 30 to 40 mph constantly sweep the plains and mountain passes. At higher altitudes the winds increase in violence until speeds of 150 mph are sometimes reached. The land itself is barren and snow-covered, devoid of any natural life. Only the creatures of the sea have been able to adapt to the prevailing climatic conditions and the ocean is filled with fish and other forms of life. Certain sea mammals, curiously mutated, have for unknown reasons begun to explore the barren landscape. Seals and walruses are sometimes found miles inland, for reasons that can only be guessed at.

One hundred years after the Last War, the only humans known to still survive are the inhabitants of the domed city, Ralcon 4. Located on the eastern coast of a great continent, Ralcon 4 was a secret project of a past government intended to provide a place of refuge for a few lucky citizens. It was hoped, in the event of a deadly nuclear exchange that, with enough of these survival cities, civilization could be kept alive and eventually the planet would be repopulated. These cities were stored, unassembled, in vast underground facilities. Subterranean bunkers were built to house any refugees until the city could be constructed. Two years after the Last War, when no signal had been given to deactivate the unit, the great supercomputer of Ralcon 4 began automatic construction of the city. It was nearly four years before it was complete and the dome intact but when it was finished, the

people of the bunkers moved in immediately. Systems were activated, the city came to life, and the civilization of the planet was given a second chance. Although the city's records indicate that a number of Ralcon cities were manufactured and installed in different parts of the country, in the century since the war no evidence has been found to indicate that any of the other Ralcon projects have survived. Ralcon 4 stands alone in the world.

Forty years ago, the first evidence of mutant human survivors was discovered when a Ralcon fisherman returned to the city with the body of a large, hairy, ape-like animal. He claimed to have spotted the creature walking near the coast and, turning his boat toward shore, managed to shoot the animal. Autopsy showed the creature to be human, but somehow devolved, probably due to radiation exposure. Another specimen was obtained two years later but, although sightings continued with increasing frequency, no more specimens were taken for some time. It seems the creatures had learned to flee whenever a fishing craft approached too close to shore.

It was nearly thirty years ago that the Kraft-Weatherby expedition, dispatched to chart the northern range of the mountains, was attacked by a band of these creatures. That morning the expedition had had the good fortune to obtain two specimens of these creatures, an adult female and juvenile male, and were planning to return the next day to Ralcon 4 with their prizes. Survivors of the expedition claimed that they were set upon by thirty or forty of the beasts and the expedition was nearly wiped out. The survivors struggled back to the city two days later, bringing with them what few specimens they could carry. Several punitive expeditions were launched against the creatures — by now called the Murdas — but the creatures avoided confrontation with the Ralcon Guardsman. Later, a bounty was offered for Murda scalps. Fishermen began equipping themselves with rifles and made inland excursions in search of the valuable scalps. This went on for several years.

Then the Murda began to retaliate. Hunting parties started to disappear, their frozen, headless corpses later turning up far inland often within a few miles of Ralcon 4. Patrols of City Guardsman mounted on snow skis and sleds were dispatched to the mountains with orders to slay all Murdas on sight. Despite this, the number of Murda sightings increased and inland travel more than fifty miles north of the city became extremely dangerous. The mutants' movements and tactics were now showing signs of planning and strategy; a leader had emerged among these semi-animals.

Two years ago, while testing a new piece of military equipment near the northern spur of mountains, a large contingent of Ralcon Guardsman were set upon by an organized band of Murdas led by a huge, four-armed monster, and nearly wiped out. The one survivor reported that the mutants had come from a large valley that lay in the center of the mountain spur that runs the coast. He claimed the valley to be inhabited by thousands of the mutants.

While the Supreme Council of Ralcon 4 debated as to what should be done about this newly discovered mutant threat, another organized raid was launched against one of the city's two geothermal power plants. The mutants had never traveled so far south in the mountains and the humans were taken by surprise. The entire crew was slaughtered and the facility damaged beyond repair. With only one power plant left, emergency measures were taken. The power demands of the city were reduced by sealing off and shutting down a certain percentage of the city's interior cells and making a like reduction in the population. The city's power needs are now met by the single remaining geothermal plant located in the mountains west of the city. Although it is felt that this facility is relatively safe — it lies far south of any place the Murda have ever been seen — if it is lost, the city of Ralcon 4 will die. Guards are now posted at the remaining facility and plans are being laid to wage a war of extermination against the mutant threat.

The mutants indeed have found a leader, a human, a past citizen of Ralcon 4 named Kel Belanken. This man, forced to leave the city nearly twenty-five years ago, has since then managed to band together the small tribes of mutants into a single great nation that now inhabits the northern valley. Realizing that the humans are never going to allow his Murda to live in peace, Belanken has organized the mutants into an efficient fighting force. Belanken has sworn to not rest until the city of Ralcon 4 is destroyed.

Sorcery

This plane is heavily biased toward Law, making the summoning of demons or elementals extremely difficult. Attempting to summoning these creatures requires ten times the normal amount of POW and time, and the sorcerer's summoning ability is reduced to only one-tenth normal. Both the Lords of Law and Chaos are unable to enter this plane and cannot aid the characters. Elemental Rulers might be contacted, as well as Beast Lords who have representative species on this planet.

Bound creatures remain as they are, their powers and attributes unchanged. Bound demons or elementals may be manifested without fear of loss.

Weapons

The humans of Ralcon 4 make use of electrically-powered beam weapons. Some of these are listed below. In form and function they are similar to most firearms although modern in appearance and made almost entirely of plastic. They fire a bright white pulse of energy.

Weapon	Shots / Round	Damage	Base Range (Feet)
Pistol	2	2D6+1	50
Rifle	1	4D6+1	100
Light Cannon	1/2	6D6	300
Heavy Cannon	1/3	12D6	500

Shots per Round: Although the trigger of these weapons can be squeezed quickly, they require a certain amount of time in which to recharge. The pis-

tol is specially designed to fire more quickly but packs a commensurately smaller wallop.

The pistol holds enough electrical charge to fire 16 shots, and the rifle, enough to fire 12. In addition, lightweight power units that can be hung on a belt contain enough energy to provide an additional 100 shots for the pistol, or 50 for the rifle. These connect to the weapons by means of a small cable and can be used to either recharge the weapon, or be carried into battle powering the weapon directly. Cannons are almost always mounted on vehicles and draw directly from the vehicle's power source. The number of shots available depends on how much power the vehicle needs to operate.

Beam weapons lose concentration, hence power, at ranges longer than base. At anything up to twice base range, the damage is reduced to half of what is rolled. At anything up to three times base range, damage is one-quarter that rolled, and so on.

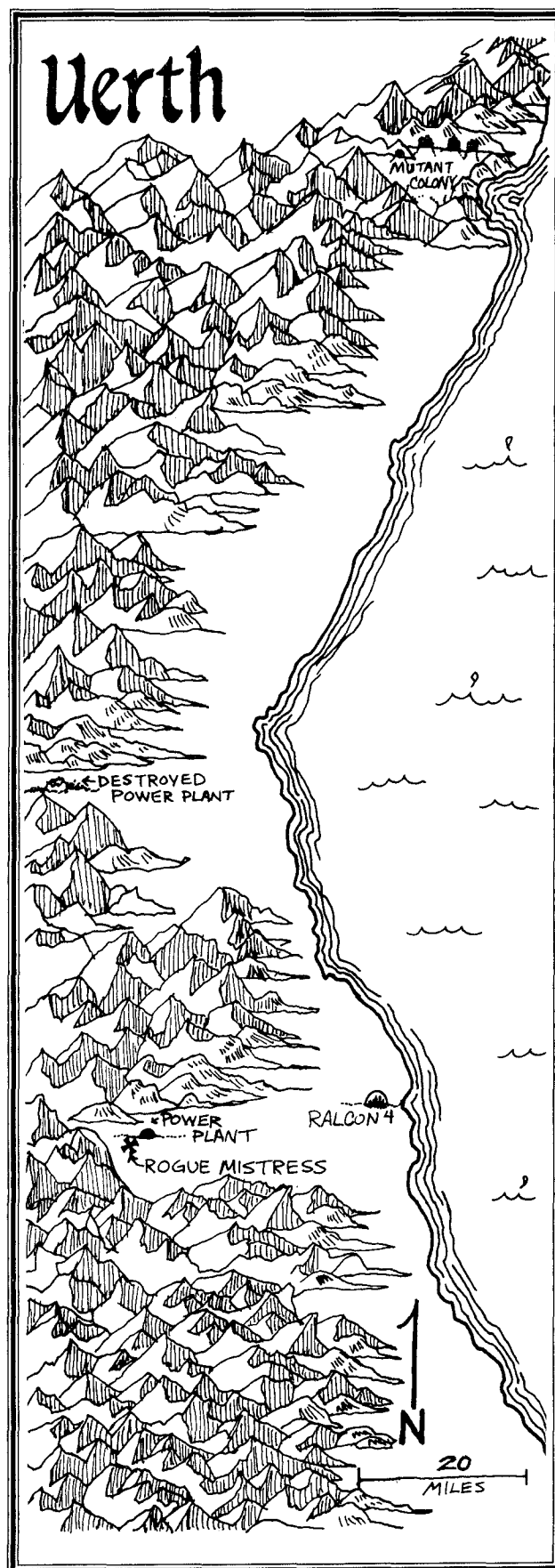
Young Kingdoms armor, whether regular or demon, is effective against beam weapons and blocks the normal amount of damage. However, the high frequency waves of the beam create additional effects. Metal armor is instantly heated by the wave and the wearer automatically takes burn damage equal to half the amount of damage rolled. This is in addition to any damage taken directly from the beam. Barbarian wood armor is merely damaged, decreasing its protection by 1 point every time it is hit. Additionally, there is a 25% chance per hit that it will be set ablaze and have to be quickly removed and discarded.

Beam weapons cannot normally be parried or dodged.

The rifles of the Ralcon Guard are usually fitted with bayonets, large heavy fighting knives. They do 1D6+1 points of damage.

Armor

Special protection from the cold and wind of Uerth is necessary and this is provided by the synthetic snow suits manufactured by Ralcon 4. They are made of a heavy, quilted material and consist of hooded coats, gloves, boots, and thick leggings. They are, however, light and flexible and offer complete protection from the cold. In addition, they provide their wearer with 4 points of armor against kinetic weapons and 6 points of armor against beam weapons. They are available in high-visibility yellow or camouflage white. The yellow makes it almost impossible to Hide while the camouflage version adds 25% to the wearer's Hide skill. Although the people of Ralcon 4 do not make use of other kinds of armor, player-characters may wish to combine the snow suit protection with their own armor. Characters of size 12 or smaller can procure snow suits large enough to fit over armor. This combination is effective but cumbersome and reduces their DEX to one half normal.



Vehicles

This highly technological world uses many machines and powered vehicles. The characters will encounter at least two or three vehicles during the course of this adventure and will be required to learn how to operate at least one of them. All are electrically powered and made of a light-weight plastic nearly impervious to beam weapons.

The Snow Ski is a small, one-man vehicle weighing less than 40 pounds. It is powered by a single continuous track, the speed controlled by a twist-grip throttle on the right handlebar. There is only this single control, clutching and braking being handled automatically by electronic and centrifugal sensors. The driver stands while operating the vehicle, steering the ski mostly by leaning his body to the side, using the handlebars very little. The snow ski is capable of speeds of nearly 50 miles per hour but can be tricky to handle. In addition to carrying its driver it has room for cargo and, in a pinch, can carry a second person (reduce Drive skill by half). It is possible to use one-handed weapons while operating a vehicle but this reduces the chances to hit by one half. Additionally, the character's Drive Vehicle skill will also be reduced by half. Like all vehicles the characters encounter, the snow ski is equipped with lights, absolutely essential on this dark and gloomy world.

A Young Kingdoms character, totally unfamiliar to the concept of driving self-propelled vehicles, will have a beginning Drive Snow Ski skill equal to the total of his INT, POW, and DEX. Tragic Millennium Earth characters, or others familiar with powered vehicles, should receive a substantial bonus to this beginning skill, from 10-40% at the gamemaster's discretion. If the character has an existing Drive or Pilot skill, the gamemaster may let him use this figure, deducting a certain amount to reflect the differences between this machine and the type the character is familiar with. Other vehicles met in the course of play will be dealt with as they appear.

The Arrival

The *Rogue Mistress* settles into the new plane with a bump, then pitches violently to port, scattering characters and crew across the deck. Any character making a Balance roll manages to grab hold of something and maintains his feet. Others suffer 1D2 points of damage as they bang and roll across the heaving deck. It is dark and cold, the air filled with snow driven nearly horizontal by the howling winter wind. The ship pitches forward then rolls sharply back to starboard. A pirate screams and falls from the crow's nest, streaking past the rail and disappearing into the darkness below, lost in the howling gale. Krathak struggles to the aft wheel, attempting to assist his captain control the bucking ship.

"I'm taking her down!" Maria hollers over the shrieking wind. "The winds are too strong. I can't control her!"

Flying blind, Maria dips the bow of the ship and descends, peering through the driving snow, searching for some sign of the ground below her. For a time, nothing can be seen but the thick, wind-driven snow but then, without warning, the ship suddenly drops below the gale, the air clears and there, just below them, is the surface of the planet, rapidly rising to meet the plunging *Rogue Mistress*. The ship's mysterious engines whine loudly as Maria feeds them full power, desperately trying to bring the ship out of its swift dive. It is of no use. The ground before them slopes upward, rising to a low hill and the *Rogue Mistress* hits the ground with a grinding crash, timbers cracking and engines screaming, sliding through the snow for nearly 300 feet before finally coming to rest against a snow drift. It is assumed that the characters are hanging on tight. They must make a STR x5 roll or be thrown across the ship for 1D6 points of damage. A resonant throbbing sound starts to emanate from the engine room, wracking the ship with vibrations that cease when Maria shuts the damaged engine down.

On the surface of this world, the winds are less violent, usually 30-40 mph and rarely gusting over 60. The air is still filled with huge snowflakes, but not nearly so thickly as at higher altitudes. In the midday gloom the characters can see, all around them, a dark range of low mountains, their peaks lost in the howling, high-altitude gale. Any character studying the mountains to the northeast and making a successful See roll, spots a point of light at the foot of one of the mountains.

Carrock's map, sketched for him by Sypin, indicates that they are but a few miles south and west of a small settlement (any character who made the See roll saw its lights). A larger city is supposed to lie on the other side of the mountains, some 30 miles away.

Maria, after consulting with the below-decks crew, announces that the *Rogue Mistress* has escaped serious damage but needs at least a week or two for repairs. The thick cushion of snow on the ground saved the ship from any major damage and although the main engines suffered some damage, the auxiliary power, used for heat and lights, is still functional.

The only thing left to do is to make the trek from the disabled craft to where the settlement is supposed to lie. Carrock and Grant will accompany the characters, and possibly Maria as well, if the gamemaster wishes. Other members of the crew may join the party in the usual fashion, while the remainder of the crew stays with the ship, helping with the necessary repair work.

The trek to the settlement will prove tough. The snow is nearly hip deep and difficult to wade through. It is bitter cold, made more so by the driving wind that swirls snow up, down, and in all directions. The march to the settlement, although only two miles away, takes 3 hours. Unequipped for the cold weather, any character failing a CON x3 roll

suffers 1D4 points of frostbite. Any character who fumbles this roll with a 96-00% loses 1D2 fingers or toes.

The Settlement

The approach to the settlement is uphill through rolling country. Drawing nearer, the characters see more clearly its lights and begin to make out its form. It appears to be a large hemisphere, some 40 to 50 feet in diameter. Portions of the hemisphere are transparent and inside the characters can see lights, but no movement. In several places atop the dome great plumes of steam rise into the frigid air. More plumes rise from outside the dome where stands rows and banks of huge metal tanks, covered with fins and connected to the building by a network of pipes. There are only two entrances to the dome, small doors found at ground level.

Only a character from Tragic Millennium Earth or other highly technological society has a chance of possibly recognizing this place as a geothermal power generating plant. Inside, water poured down a deep shaft is heated by the earth's interior, creating steam which drives turbine electrical generators. The steam is then condensed in the outside condensing stations and circulated back to the shaft to be heated again. This plant now provides all the electricity for the bubble-city of Ralcon 4, located across the mountains, on the coast.

The building has two doors, small affairs and apparently unguarded. They are made of light metal and painted gray. Above each door is mounted a small teardrop-shaped crystal globe inside of which burns a small, magical fire (a light bulb) which illuminates the immediate area around the door. Either of these doors open easily revealing the interior of the building. Warmth and light pour out upon the near-frozen characters.

Inside, the characters discover the building houses but a single vast interior of cement and metal. Only small portions of the building are walled off into rooms. Huge pipes, painted bright greens, purples, and reds, run this way and that, across walls and suspended from the high ceiling, singly and in groups of as many as five or six, snaking their way through the building in angular zigzag paths. Larger versions of the crystal teardrops seen outside hang from the high ceiling, providing the building with a bright and almost shadowless light. A high-pitched whining sound fills the air, emanating from the rows of huge, clamshell-shaped devices filling one corner of the facility (steam-turbine electrical generators). Large panels of metal are filled with glass-covered clock-like dials with numbered scales and quivering pointers. Flights of iron stairs climb to iron catwalks that surround and access the machinery at different heights.

There seems to be no one here. Even if the characters call out, they receive no response. However, any character making a See roll thinks he saw a shadowy movement somewhere near the center of the building. A character making a

Listen roll thinks he heard the sound of padding footsteps but is unable to tell from which direction they came.

The characters have arrived at the power plant just as it is being raided by a band of mutants. Most of the plant workers are dead, murdered by the marauding horde, and the mutants, their plans to sabotage the plant interrupted by the characters' unexpected arrival, are hiding in the basement. A single mutant, left to watch the ground floor, has signaled his companions of the adventurers' intrusion and now lurks behind some machinery waiting to Ambush the first character who walks by. His hiding place is near one of the stairs leading to the basement, the exact location depending upon which door the characters entered by.

The Mutant

This creature is a horrible misshapened travesty of something vaguely human. It has thick, bristly fur covering its body, three eyes, none correctly placed, and one arm decidedly longer than the other. It will fight to the death.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 10 POW 11 DEX 13 CHA 4

Hit Points: 16 Armor: 1 point of thick hide.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Stone Ax	84%	44%	1D4+1
Bite	55%	—	1D4

Skills: Ambush 75%, Dodge 65%, Hide 80%, Move Quietly 65%.

The Maintenance Area

This enclosed area contains tool chests, spare parts, work benches, and the like. Six mangled human corpses are found in this room, limbs twisted unnaturally and their skulls bashed in. The bodies have been brutally hacked and blood splatters the walls and floor. All six corpses are males and all wear similar brown uniforms with red arm bands. The broken remains of several strange-looking hand guns made of white plastic are found scattered around the room. (This is a unit of the Ralcon Guardsman, supposed to be protecting the facility). An iron stairway at the back of this room leads up to the second floor administration offices.

Administration Office

Several desks are found on this second floor chamber, along with files and lots of papers scattered everywhere. Three human corpses are here, two female and one male, in condition similar to those found downstairs and wear similar brown uniforms, lacking only the red arm band of the Ralcon Guard.

If any of the numerous papers are examined they are found to be written in a language similar to Young Kingdoms Common. It requires successful Read/Write rolls to decipher the papers. None offer any real information and appear to be nothing more than mundane records for the facility.

The Vehicle Shed

This space contains racks of cold-proof snow suits, nearly two dozen electrically-powered one-man snow skis parked against the wall, and a small armory of fully-charged energy pistols similar to the broken ones found in the maintenance

room. Young Kingdoms characters might not recognize them for what they are, but Justin Carrock will quickly discern their purpose and operation. He may take one or two with him, tucked in his belt. He can show others how to operate them.

Quarters

Upstairs, above the vehicle shed, is the living/sleeping area. There are twelve bunk beds here, along with lockers and a small kitchen. Two more corpses are found behind the counter that separates the living area from the kitchen.

Downstairs

An iron stairway, similar to the one found in the maintenance room, descends to an underground level. The light down here is not so bright but enough to see by. This level is filled with whirring machinery and panels covered with dials. In one end of the room is a deep inspection shaft with a rung ladder and smaller catwalks at the inspection sights. The shaft is nearly 200 feet deep.

The rest of the mutant party waits down here, ready to ambush unwary characters.

The Gang of Mutants

Although some of these mutants are fairly well-formed and appear more human than the thing upstairs, all are covered with a thick coat of hair. The majority of these mutants are grotesquely deformed in ways similar to the one encountered upstairs. Each of the mutants qualifies for a +1D6/+1D4 damage bonus.

Mutant	STR	CON	SIZ	POW	DEX	HP
#1	14	13	15	11	10	16
#2	13	15	14	10	9	17
#3	16	13	13	9	11	14
#4	11	13	15	11	11	15
#5	17	15	16	11	10	19
#6	13	15	14	12	12	17
#7	13	12	13	8	8	13
#8	14	11	11	10	10	11
#9	15	15	16	11	8	19
#10	16	13	15	9	12	16
#11	12	12	14	13	11	14
#12	11	14	15	10	13	17

Each mutant is armed with a stone-tipped spear and a stone axe.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Stone Axe	45%	20%	1D4+1
Spear	25%	10%	1D8+1
Thrown Spear	40%	—	2D6
Bite	20%	—	1D4

Aside from their stone weapons, the mutants carry little in the way of personal items. They attack savagely and fight to the death, convinced that if taken alive, the humans of the city will torture them before executing them. Shouting to their comrades as they fight, the mutants speak a language not unlike Young Kingdoms Common. The characters will understand the language but the frenzied shouts and curses of the battling mutants will tell the characters little other than to reveal that the mutant's language seems as sophisticated as most human tongues.

More than likely, the party will overcome the mutants, slaying them all. In this case, go to the following paragraph. However, if the characters are in danger of being bested by the mutant horde, they will have to be saved. Tannan

Hrokarlt and his band of men, as described in the encounter titled "The Rescue Party," arrive at the plant to give the characters a hand with the mutants.

The Survivor

After all the mutants are killed and the ruckus has died down, a human in brown uniform, the lone survivor of the raid on the power plant, creeps out of his hiding place in the inspection shaft. The youngish man's name is C'tharn Gray, Assistant Plant Manager. He thanks the characters for slaying the hideous creatures and for rescuing him.

"The Murdas struck without warning," he says, looking around at the hairy corpses now littering the floor. "Although we half-expected it, they've never been known to come this far south before."

C'tharn questions the characters about where they are from. Their colorful, individualistic garb is certainly foreign to him. He, like the others of his city, live with the hope that somewhere on the continent there are other bubble cities that have survived. Learning that the characters are not from some other survival city, he shows some disappointment, not really understanding what the characters say about other worlds and different planes.

C'tharn is slightly wounded but has little time to talk. He begins checking the dials on one of the many panels, making notes on a clipboard, adjusting knobs, and pressing buttons, flipping switches.

"At least they didn't have time to damage the plant," he says. He picks up a small object from a nearby table (a telephone) and, holding it to the side of his head, between his ear and mouth, begins shouting at himself. This seemingly irrational action might lead the characters to believe he is suffering from shock.

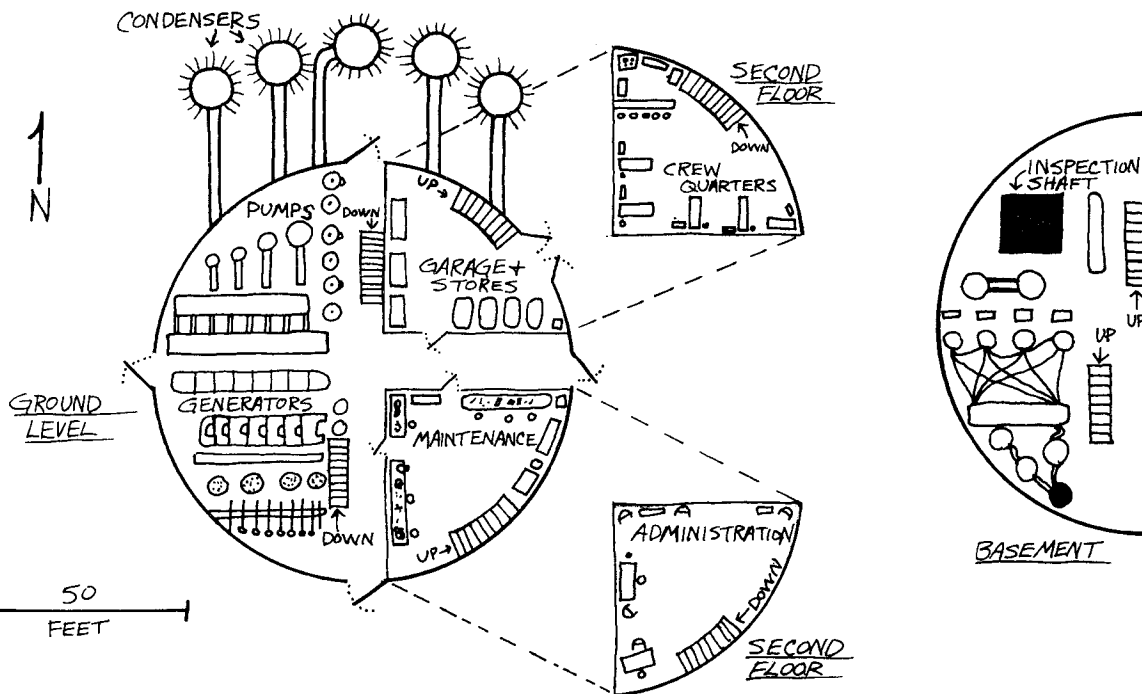
"Hello! Hello!" he yells, his face tense and anxious. "Damn!" he says, throwing the object back down on the table. "They've cut the lines. I can't get through to Ralcon 4."

The characters may or may not understand the actions of the man. If questioned, he explains that the Murdas — the name his people have given these hairy, misshapen mutants — have broken some of the equipment that he would otherwise use to contact officials at Ralcon 4 on the other side of the mountains. He explains that although the power plant has not suffered any serious damage, it requires more attention than he alone can provide to keep it running properly. If the power plant should fail, he explains, the city would be without energy. People would soon begin to die and eventually, it would spell the doom of the city and what is left of human life on this world.

"We must get word to the authorities right away. They must be told what has happened so a replacement crew can be dispatched."

C'tharn cannot leave the site, the plant will fail without his constant attendance upon its systems. The characters must find their way to the city and tell someone what has

The Power Plant



happened. He offers to provide them with warm clothing to protect them from the elements and vehicles on which to make the trip.

Characters may decide to do what they wish, but C'tharn has offered the only logical course of action. He has little time to discuss the matter as he is constantly chasing up and down the stairs, taking readings and making adjustments. It is obvious that in his condition C'tharn can not maintain this pace for more than a few hours.

Into the Mountains

Operation of the vehicles is not excessively difficult and C'tharn can show them in a matter of minutes. A single twist throttle on the right side handlebar controls the amount of power delivered to the rubber drive track underneath. Backing off on the throttle allows a centrifugal brake to gradually engage, slowing the vehicle to a smooth stop while simultaneously disengaging the motor. The city lies 30 miles

away, as the crow flies, but the twisting mountain pass they must follow makes the journey nearly 50 miles. C'tharn points the way to them.

"Just follow the route up between those two mountains," he says. "It will lead you right to the city on the coast. And dress yourself with coats and leggings. They'll protect you from the wind and cold."

The characters might ask about the energy pistols. C'tharn has neither the time nor inclination to discuss the matter and tells the characters to "take whatever you think you'll need, but just be quick about it!" He scurries back into the power plant to check and adjust his systems.

Mountains Encounter Table

D6	Encounter
1	2D6 Mutants on Foot
2	1D3 Wild Walruses
3	1D4 Mutants on Walruses
4	Avalanche
5	Crevasse
6	Killer Whale

Once dressed and readied, the back doors of the garage can be opened by a switch, closing automatically after the characters have pulled out of the building. If they have taken energy pistols with them, Carrock, familiar with black powder weapons, is able to show them how they are used.

Sled Drivers

Although the sleds are speedy, the passage through the mountains is often slow and difficult and the journey will take the characters at least three hours. During this period ask for Drive Snow Ski rolls once every hour on the half hour, improvising situations that require the characters to test their skill: steep inclines, steep declines, sudden unexpected crosswinds, patches of ice, rocks hidden beneath the snow, etc. Those who fail likely suffer no more than a spill in the snow with no damage to either man or machine. However, any crashed character failing a POW x5 roll suffers 1D3 points of damage from a sprained wrist, wrenched shoulder, etc. Cruel gamemasters might wish to damage the character's machine, forcing him to either walk or double up on the back of someone else's sled.

It is desirable that the characters receive opportunities to improve their drive skills and any character who completes this journey, regardless of whether he successfully made a skill roll, should receive a check to his score. Characters who have done exceptionally well, perhaps rolling a critical or making all three rolls during the journey without a failure, may be rewarded with two checks and two opportunities to improve his score.

Additionally, during the trip there is a 40% chance per hour of having a random encounter. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1D6 and consult the following list. Alternatively, the gamemaster can use the list to devise his own encounters, regardless of dice rolls. The prevailing terrain at the time of the encounter will be the decision of the gamemaster. Characters may stand and fight or, in some cases, use their superior speed to try and outrun the danger.

Mutants on Foot

Armed with axes and stone-tipped spears, they are a reconnaissance party exploring this part of the mountain range. The pass here is fairly wide, the walls more gently sloped than other parts of the defile. The mutants, upon seeing the characters, make a suicidal charge down the slope on the characters' left. The party may choose to stand and fight, or attempt to outrun their attackers.

If they try to flee, they may attempt it at their present cruising speed. They can easily outdistance the mutants but cruising speed leaves them within range of one spear toss against their backs before they escape. If the characters attempt to speed up, they risk the uneven terrain. Any character failing a Drive Vehicle roll hits an obstacle and start to wobble out of control. Allow a second Drive Vehicle roll: if successful, the character regains control of the bucking sled. If the roll is failed, the character and sled go down.

The mutants close in rapidly and while a character might be able to get back to his feet he will not have time to remount the sled and get away. He has to stand and fight.

Characters choosing to stand and fight get two rounds of missile fire before the mutants close and they have to draw melee weapons. A character can opt for a third round of missile fire but will be attacked during that round and left without a weapon to defend himself.

Characters might wish to use bows, but these will be packed on the back of the snow skis and hard to get readied. If the characters are carrying energy pistols, this might be the ideal opportunity to try them out. Carrock certainly will.

As with the snow skis, it is desirable that characters get chances to improve their energy weapon skills. The gamemaster can be generous with skill checks.

The Murda

Attributes		Average
STR	3D8	13-14
CON	3D8	13-14
SIZ	3D6+2	12-13
INT	2D6	7
POW	2D6+2	12-13
DEX	3D6	10-11
CHA	1D6+1	4-5

Average Hit Points: 13-14

Armor: Usually 1 point of thick fur.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Stone Ax	60%	50%	1D4+1
Stone Spear	50%	40%	1D8+1
Thrown Spear	70%	—	2D6
Bite	30%	—	1D4

Skills: Ambush 50+2D20%, Dodge 40+2D20%, Hide 50+2D20%, Move Quietly 50+2D20%.

Note: These statistics are for those mutants that are the most monstrous and hideously deformed. They are not representative of the mutant colony in general.

Wild Walruses

These huge flabby creatures have evolved useful legs and feet that allow them to move more easily over the snow and ice. They often rove far inland, for reasons unknown. If left undisturbed, they are not usually aggressive; they are, however, very territorial and if approached may well attack. They will probably not be encountered directly in the pass, but spotted a short distance away, up on a slope. If approached by the characters, the walruses will be provoked into charging and attacking them. The lumbering beasts are easily outrun by the snow skis but, if the characters approach close enough to make the walruses charge, they will have to make Drive rolls to get out of the way in time. Failure could have grave consequences.

Giant Walruses

Attributes		Average
STR	5D8	22-23
CON	5D8	22-23
SIZ	5D8	22-23
INT	1D4	2-3
POW	1D6	3-4

DEX 1D6+1 4-5

Average Hit Points: 33

Armor: 4 points of thick hide and blubber.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Tusks	45%	20%	3D6+1
Crush	80%	—	4D6

The crush attack is used only against a character who is down on the ground. A successful crush means the walrus has flopped his huge bulk onto the character. For the following 1D3 rounds, the walrus, unless killed or somehow driven off, will continue to flop and roll around on the unfortunate character while it fights against remaining adventurers. Each round of crushing causes and additional 2D6 points of damage.

Mutants Riding Walruses

These mutants, riding their trained walruses will, upon sighting the characters, charge and fight to the death. They can, of course, be outrun.

Avalanche

The avalanche area is preceded by a yellow sign posted along the trail. This triangular sign bears a stylized silhouette of a man standing next to a snow ski. If no player guesses the meaning of this sign, allow the character with the highest intelligence to make an INT x1 roll. If successful, this character, if not recognizing that the next stretch of path is potential avalanche territory, at least understands that the sign means they are to get off and walk their vehicles through this stretch. A half mile from here is another, similar sign, this time bearing the silhouette of a man atop a snow ski, indicating the end of the avalanche zone.

If the characters fail to understand the warning and continue to ride the buzzing snow sleds, there is an 80% chance of them triggering an avalanche. If an avalanche occurs, there is a 50% chance that it takes place behind them, leaving the characters unscathed. Otherwise, the rumbling, crushing wall of snow heads straight for them. If the characters speed up to outrun the snowfall and the gamemaster may call for Drive Vehicle rolls. As before, one failed roll indicates a loss of control, a second failure means a character has crashed his snow ski. A benevolent gamemaster may wish to allow a crashed character a third roll to allow him to get back on the vehicle and escape in the nick of time. Any character caught in the avalanche is buried alive and, for now, lost to the party. The medical facilities of Ralcon 4 are capable of reviving a person frozen in an avalanche, but the characters do not know this.

Crevasse

A hidden crevasse catches one of the characters off guard. All characters must make a D100 roll against their POW x1. If all the characters make the roll they narrowly avoid the crevasse, slipping and sliding on its edge, but never falling in. Otherwise, the character who misses his roll by the greatest amount, unknowingly pilots his snow ski over the edge and into the crevasse. The character falls 20 feet to the rocky bottom, destroying his vehicle and suffering 2D6 points of damage.

Killer Whale

These huge predators, like the walrus, have re-evolved rudimentary flipper/legs that allow them to paddle across the frozen ice and snow. They travel great distances from the water in pursuit of the peripatetic seals and walruses. These huge and vicious beasts consider humans fair game. If the characters encounter and fight one of these beasts, the gamemaster may wish to have them saved by "The Rescue Party."

Killer Whale

Attributes	Average
STR 12D8	54
CON 10D8	45
SIZ 12D8	54
INT 2D4+1	6
POW 2D6	7
DEX 2D4	5

Average Hit Points: 87

Armor: 6 points of blubber.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	65%	—	5D8 plus swallow
Crush	65%	—	8D6

On a successful bite, the whale automatically swallows any adversary up to SIZ 20. If the whale is killed and its stomach cut open within six rounds of the swallow, the victim will survive although his skin and hair will be bleached an unnatural white for the rest of his life.

The crush, like that of the walrus, is only attempted against characters who have been knocked down. The whale will continue to crush for 1D3 rounds, inflicting 4D6 points each round.

The Rescue Party

Unless encountered earlier, this group of humans, dispatched from Ralcon 4 to investigate events at the power station, is met in the mountain pass, a few miles from the city. This party numbers over forty men, mounted on snow skis and two-man snow sleds, most of them armed with energy pistols or shoulder weapons. They are led by young and handsome Tannan Hrolkarlt, Captain of the Guard and a member of Ralcon 4's Supreme Council.

The humans, upon seeing the party, halt their vehicles and ready weapons. Unless the characters foolishly attack this superior force, they are approached in a non-threatening manner, by Tannan along with his lieutenant and a half-dozen other men.

The party was dispatched from Ralcon 4 when it was discovered that the communication lines were down. They fear foul play on the part of the mutants and the contingent contains a number of plant technicians as well as armed men. Tannan is wary of the strangers but not hostile. He introduces himself and asks who they are.

The characters have nothing to hide and, if they tell the truth about the events that have taken place, they will be believed and treated fairly. Tannan detaches a dozen of his men and, under the command of Lieutenant Van Derweeden, orders them to escort the characters to Ralcon 4. He and the

rest of the force proceed with all haste to the site of the power station.

Tannan Hrolkarlt, guard captain

STR 17 CON 18 SIZ 16 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 15 CHA 15

Hit Points: 22 Armor: Snow Suit (4/6)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	95%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	96%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	85%	80%	1D6+1
Light Cannon	92%	—	6D6

Skills: Ambush 65%, Balance 75%, Climb 65%, Dodge 75%, Drive Snow Ski 97%, Drive Snow Sled 91%, Hide 80%, Listen 75%, Make Map 85%, Move Quietly 70%, Orate 60%, Persuade 65%, Search 55%, See 85%, Set Trap 25%, Track 80%.

Lieutenant Van Derweeden, second in command

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 12 DEX 13 CHA 12

Hit Points: 17 Armor: Snow Suit (4/6 points)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	85%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	87%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	77%	65%	1D6+1
Light Cannon	85%	—	6D6

Skills: Ambush 60%, Balance 56%, Climb 55%, Dodge 67%, Drive Snow Ski 88%, Drive Snow Sled 82%, Hide 50%, Listen 63%, Make Map 75%, Move Quietly 45%, Orate 50%, Persuade 55%, Search 58%, See 55%, Track 70%.

Ralcon Guardsman

It should be noted that Hrolkarlt and Derweeden represent two of the healthier, more fit citizens of Ralcon 4. Guardsmen are more typical of the general population. They are by no means unhealthy but, having lived nearly their entire lives within the bubble that covers Ralcon 4, they seem pale and somehow ill at ease outdoors. They are handsome enough specimens, but delicate, like hothouse hybrids.

Attributes	Average
STR 2D6+2	9
CON 2D6+2	9
SIZ 2D6+1	8
INT 3D6+2	12-13
POW 3D6+1	11-12
DEX 2D6+1	8
CHA 3D6+2	12-13

Average Hit Points: 8

Armor: Snow Suits (4/6 points)

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	40%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	50%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	35%	25%	1D6+1
Light Cannon*	30%	—	6D6

*There is only a 20% chance that any given guardsman will have been trained with this weapon.

Ralcon 4

Escorted down the mountainside, the party emerges from the pass and for the first time sees the coastline. Just four miles away, a vast stretch of frozen shore extends north and south, a cold, cruel, leaden-gray sea lapping at beaches of

ice and snow. Located right on the shore, almost straight ahead, is a vast bubble of transparent crystal, more than a half mile across, glowing with an internal, warm, golden light, the domed city of Ralcon 4.

Ralcon 4 is what was once called a survival city, an enclosed living environment sealed from the outside world by a vast hemispherical dome of tough plastic. Ralcon 4 was constructed by computerized machinery, activated after the holocaust by the colony of survivors then living in the emergency underground bunkers. More than one of these city systems, designed by the Ralcon Corporation prior to the great conflict, were installed and readied for activation. However, in the generations since, no once at Ralcon 4 has been able to locate any trace of human survival beyond their small enclave. As far as they have been able to learn, they are the sole human survivors of the Last War.

Led by their escort, the party proceeds toward the glowing dome. Drawing nearer they see that the light is produced by numerous glowing teardrops, like those seen at the power plant. The interior of the dome, visible through the transparent shield, is divided into countless cells, rooms, and chambers, separated by solid interior walls. A number of these interior cells, as viewed through the transparent exterior of the dome, are dark, pitch black, and apparently unoccupied. These darkened cells account for about 20% of the total area of the dome as seen by the characters.

The party, still under escort, enters the dome through one of the many doors found at ground level and, after some paperwork and processing, are shown to what they are told are "temporary quarters." Derweeden asks them to wait in these rooms until contact is made with the rescue party heading for the power plant. In the meantime, the characters will be brought food and fresh garments. Guards are posted at the doors and along the corridors. Although the characters are not formally being held as prisoners, they are under close watch and they are expected to cooperate until more about them can be learned.

The quarters are institutional, furnished with metal-framed cots and bunks, and equipped with bath facilities. (These include flush toilets, probably a novel experience for Young Kingdoms characters.) The quarters are, however, very clean and reasonably comfortable. The rest of the city they have seen is no different from their quarters: functional, non-decorative, sturdy, and utilitarian. All the people they have encountered have been dressed in similar garments, the only difference being that members of the Ralcon Guard wear red arm bands. This clothing consists of plain brown uniforms of shirt and trousers. Women sometimes wear skirts and blouses of identical material and similar cut.

Food is brought, a casserole of sorts, cut into square gelatinous slabs and served piping hot. Its main ingredient is quite obviously fish, it is nutritious but bland. The characters are also provided with fresh suits of new clothing, the familiar brown uniforms that everyone in the city wears. The characters may eat and change as they wish.

Less than three hours later the characters are called upon by Lieutenant Derweeden. He says that word has been received from Captain Hrolkarlt verifying that the characters were indeed responsible for saving the power plant, slaying the mutants, and rescuing the sole survivor of the raid. They are invited to appear before a special meeting of the Supreme Council where they are to be formally thanked and rewarded.

The Supreme Council

The Council Chambers are located at the apex of the dome, in the very center of the city. The characters are escorted down a seemingly endless number of corridors and broad thoroughfares sometimes riding, along with hundreds of others, upon broad rubber belts that move along the floor, swiftly carrying passenger through the city. Everywhere the characters see the same neutral brown, undecorated walls, and the same familiar brown uniforms.

If the characters have elected to remain in their regular clothing, they are the object of stares and curious interest. Word of the adventurer's exploits is already circulating Ralcon 4 and the populace is in awe of the unexpected strangers from another land. They may find themselves shaking hands or being the recipients of unexpected good wishes. Eventually, after a ride in a small enclosed chamber that carries them up through a vertical shaft (an elevator), the characters find themselves in the chamber of the Supreme Council.

This large, circular room is noticeably more luxurious than the rest of the city. The floor is carpeted by a plush rug of deep red while the ceiling is the transparent plastic of the dome. The swirling storms that continually ravage this world swirl about in a dizzying display of ferocious wind and madly dancing snow. Inside, however, all is quiet and pleasantly warm. An artificial fire flickers in the curved fireplace. Seated about a large round table in the center of the room are three older men and a young woman. They wear the common brown uniforms of the rest of the populace, but over their shoulders each carries a purple sash. A vacant chair has a purple sash laid over it. The four council members present (the fifth member, Tannan Hrolkarlt, is absent), rise from their seats and, smiling, step forward to warmly greet the characters.

Although weapon skills are included in their statistics, no one, with the exception of people on military duty, ever carries a weapon while within the city.

Father Merry Kelvert

Kelvert is in his late fifties, graying, and a bit portly. His twinkling blue eyes convey a fatherly warmth. He is the oldest member of the council and additionally holds the office of Head Chaplain of Ralcon 4. He is the leader of the city's official church. He warmly greets the characters, thanking them for their aid in foiling the mutants' plans.

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 9 CHA 15

Hit Points: 14 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	45%	—	2D6+1

Skills: Orate 87%, Persuade 89%.

Doctor Huerve Donatson

The doctor is a scientist, head of the city's engineering departments and responsible for maintenance and development of the city's many complex systems. He is also in charge of the vast amount of stored equipment kept below the city in underground bunkers which includes the armory. He is excitable and slightly eccentric.

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 21 POW 13 DEX 12 CHA 10

Hit Points: 10 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	32%	—	2D6+1

Skills: Orate 45%, Persuade 65%, Ralcon 4 Systems Lore 95%.

Nitral Spelvin

Spelvin is a nervous, suspicious man, small in stature. He smiles often but it usually seems only a surface gesture. He is hard to read. Nonetheless, his greetings and thank-yous for the adventurers are honest and warm enough.

STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 8 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 12 CHA 8

Hit Points: 10 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	55%	—	2D6+1

Skills: Orate 65%, Persuade 55%.

Ynilla Kelvert

Ynilla is the only woman currently holding a seat on the council. She is the daughter of Father Merry and is engaged to be married to Tannan Hrolkarlt, captain of the Ralcon Guard and fifth member of the Supreme Council. His purple sash, the council's badge of office, decorates the vacant chair. Ynilla is 22 years old, beautiful, and intelligent.

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 9 INT 15 POW 16 DEX 17 CHA 19

Hit Points: 15 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	85%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	95%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	75%	72%	1D6+1
Light Cannon	85%	—	6D6

Skills: Drive Snow Ski 90%, Drive Snow Sled 85%, Orate 75%, Persuade 80%.

Interviewing the Council

After all the thank-yous, introductions, and exchanges have been made, the characters are invited to sit down at the table. Father Merry is the first to speak.

"Your selfless actions demand that we give you some sort of reward, gentlemen. Certainly you have privilege to Ralcon 4 and are free to dwell here as long as you wish, availing yourself of the services as you see fit. But this seems but little in light of the great service you have rendered to the inhabitants of our city. Is there anything we can do to aid you? Anything we have that you desire?" The rest of the council nods in assent.

The characters will hopefully inquire about the controller module. After all, that is why they came to this world.

The object described, Father Merry raises an eyebrow than hurriedly leans over to Doctor Donatson. The two men whisper furtively for a moment. The Father Merry turns back to the characters.

"I'm sorry gentlemen," he apologizes. "It's just that I was taken aback for a moment by your request. Although we know of the object you desire, I'm afraid to say it is no longer in our possession. It fell into the hands of the Murdas some time ago, along with a piece of our equipment which was undergoing field tests."

Father Merry explains to the characters the situation in this world, their life in the survival city of Ralcon 4 and of the hideous mutants, a result of the holocaust, that now threaten their existence. The characters learn that the power plant they saved is the last hope of Ralcon 4. Another plant, located to the north, was not long ago destroyed by the mutants. The loss of energy production resulted in the closing down of certain selected portions of the city, the result being the dark spots the characters saw through the dome from the outside. These areas, after much discussion, were deemed expendable. They were sealed off and all heat and light turned off. If not for the characters' interference with the mutants, the other plant would most assuredly have been lost, and the rest of the city would be as dark and cold as the sealed areas.

Father Merry suggests that possibly the characters could serve themselves while at the same time helping the city in their struggle to survive. If the characters would help lead a raid against the mutant stronghold, the module could be recovered while at the same time the threat to Ralcon 4's survival would be eliminated.

The characters may find the idea interesting but Father Merry explains that no plans can be discussed until the Tannan Hrolkarlt returns. Tannan is the fifth member of the Council and captain of the guard. All plans of war must be approved by him.

The characters can ask whatever questions they wish and the Council will tell them as much as they know. The meeting finally concludes and Lieutenant Van Derweeden escorts the characters to their new quarters. These apartments are larger than the temporary quarters but, like the rest of the city, designed in an ultra-functional manner, institutional and plain. Derweeden tells them that Tannan is setting up new defenses at the power plant and does not intend to return to the city for another couple days. They will be notified of his arrival. In the meantime, as honored guests of the city, they are invited to do pretty much as they please. If any of the party were lost in the avalanche, the characters are now informed that the frozen bodies have been recovered and are undergoing revival treatment. It is believed that all will recover without serious injury. The characters are invited to visit their convalescing companions tomorrow, at the city's infirmary. Their escort wishes them a good night's rest.

Exploring Ralcon 4

Although there are no shops or stores, all things necessary being provided by the city, the characters might visit various holographic theatres or exercise in the gymnasiums or swim in one of the pools. Companions rescued from the avalanche can be visited. They are found to be in fine shape and recovering nicely. They will be released from the hospital in two days, healed of all their injuries.

There is also word from the crew left aboard the *Rogue Mistress*. They are in good condition and repairs are coming along fine. Technicians from the power plant are providing them with necessary tools and materials. Krathak (or whoever was left in charge) reports that the repairs should be completed within another eight days at which time, if he has not heard to the contrary, he will begin searching the mountain range for a pass large enough to negotiate the ship through and by this route fly to Ralcon 4.

The domed city is vast and characters will find that it contains everything needed and normally found in a city this size. There are factories, food processing plants, and clerical offices. Numerous cultural events are organized and sponsored by the city including dances, athletic competitions, and musical performances. The population figure is stated as 4,015, although the characters learn the city was designed to accommodate as many as 6,000.

If the characters attempt to explore any of the city's darkened areas, they find these chambers sealed against entry. Although the simple presence of lightweight locks are enough to keep the citizens of Ralcon 4 from attempting entry, they offer little in the way of an obstacle to typical adventurers. The latches are easily pried open.

Characters exploring these area find them dark and cold, and artificial light might be desirable. The adventurers may be shocked to find that when these chosen areas were sealed off, so were the inhabitants occupying them. Frozen corpses of men, women, and children are found in most of these chambers. They see dead office workers, maintenance people, and homemakers. The characters probably never realized that when the city's services were forcibly reduced, so was the population. This is no great secret within the city. All the citizens know of this, regretting the tragedy but secretly thankful they were chosen for survival. This past incident serves to fuel the air of furtive grimness that pervades the city. The fear of the mutant hordes occupies everybody's mind. If the characters ask Father Merry or any other Council member about the bodies sealed away in these rooms, they sadly shake their head and relate the story to the characters. It was a terrible thing to have happened but, without such drastic steps, the city's systems would have been over stressed, eventually failing and jeopardizing the entire population. There was no alternative.

The more they tour the city the more they realize how the threatening mutant hordes are at the forefront of nearly everyone's mind. Rumors persist about the mysterious



The Heinous Dr. Donatson.

leader thought to have banded the mutants together. Stories are told about Golaeth, the giant, blood thirsty, four-armed mutant said to lead the raiding hordes.

During their explorations of the city, the characters may wish to visit some of the members of the Supreme Council. These individuals will be more than happy to meet with the adventurers and give them 'special' tours of the city.

Father Merry Kelvert

The gracious Father Merry welcomes the opportunity to show off to his guests the many services available to the citizens of Ralcon 4. He shows them the location of gyms, theaters, and other places of interest, and describes for inquisitive characters as best he can the political and administrative systems of the city.

If asked, he can take them on a tour of the city's archives and library. The library is quite complete, he says, containing over 4000 volumes, carefully chosen by a panel of experts appointed by the same extinct government responsible for Ralcon 4. The archives contain the city's records, complete, detailed, and accurate.

Dr. Huerve Donatson

Donatson, habitually dressed in a city technician's white lab coat, is Chief Engineer in charge of all life support systems and food production. He can show the characters some of the complex machinery that keeps the city running and in repair, and the super-computer that controls all the various functions of the vast structure. Donatson explains that over the generations some knowledge of certain aspects of the computer's design and uses have been lost or forgotten but, fortunately, the designers provided plenty of backup systems and there are automatic programs capable of running periodic checks on the system. Most maintenance is performed by similar automatic systems. Maintenance workers do little repair work and are mostly concerned with the taking of readings and feeding this information into the computer. The computer takes its own readings, the human readings providing an additional check on the system. While examining the computer, any character making a See roll and an INT x1 roll, notices a small black empty socket in a panel on the computer. The character will be struck by the similarity between this socket and the one in the Planar Knife (which is probably now in his companion's throat). It

is the only socket on the board that has no component plugged into it.

Dr. Donatson will also be willing to show the characters the city's armory, an underground bunker filled with various weapons of war. The past government theorized that the survival cities might have to defend themselves against gangs of looters or possibly small military forces from unfriendly nations. There are hundreds of hand weapons stored here along with some larger field pieces and a few armored vehicles. Dr. Donatson tells the characters that the secrets of some of the most powerful weapons have been lost but that lately, with diligent effort, he has been able to recover some of these important secrets.

Lastly, he shows them the city's technical archives in which are stored long rows of technical manuals describing Ralcon's systems and maintenance procedures. There is also a wealth of other information stored on various forms of electronic media. This information is written in a peculiar form of bureaucratic/military jargon difficult to decipher.

Unless the characters have learned about it elsewhere and specifically ask to see it, Donatson, realizing the odd sensitivities of the characters, probably does not offer to take them on a tour of the experimental medical laboratory. Here are presently kept a half-dozen captured mutants, confined in small cells. They are used, Donatson can explain, for testing new drugs and surgical techniques as well as for "weapons systems research." From behind the bars, the mutants glare hatefully at Donatson and the characters. They are all capable of speech but generally refuse to talk in the presence of their captors, preferring instead to suffer in silence. Once they have served their usefulness, Donatson says, the mutants are humanely destroyed (if they somehow survive the weapons testing).

Nitral Spelvin

Spelvin's primary duties consist of maintaining and regulating the city's great fishing fleet, the major industry of the population. While the land is barren, cold, and nearly sterile, the seas teem with life. Fish and fish products are the chief raw material used by the city and its people. The harbor butts right against the eastern side of the dome and is partially protected by a huge roof of transparent plastic that extends out from the dome like a great awning. The electrically-powered fishing boats can cruise up to four days on a single charge.

Ynilla Kelvert

Ynilla, the daughter of Father Merry, is in charge of education, welfare, and reform. She can show the group the schools and health facilities claimed by the city as well as facilities for reeducating the wayward. Although she is in charge of the morals and the order of the city, there are no jails or police. The citizenry is well-behaved and only the occasional outspoken one who must be taken aside for special attention. The methods used for re-educating a per-

son are painless and involves the use of drugs in conjunction with hypno-therapy.

Ynilla is strikingly beautiful and very intelligent. She is engaged to Tannan Hrolkarlt and feels a true love for him. This in no way precludes the possibility that Ynilla will fall in love with one of the player characters. It is possible that she might even leave this plane, joining with the rest of the party on the *Rogue Mistress*.

Tannan Hrolkarlt

This handsome young man is the captain of the city guard and one of the most popular figures in Ralcon 4. Tannan is 26 years old and engaged to be married to Ynilla Kelvert. He is a smart and capable leader, both on the field and in the Council's chambers. He is deeply in love with Ynilla.

Upon his return from the power plant, one of the first things Tannan does is look up the player-characters. He once again congratulates them on the service they performed and willingly shares with them information about the strengths and weaknesses of the city and its guard.

If it turns out that Ynilla falls in love with one of the adventurers, Tannan, an honorable man, stands aside, although he thereafter bears a grudge toward that character that may erupt.

A Dire Secret

Despite their friendliness, some of the Council members are scheming behind the characters' backs. Father Merry and Dr. Donatson are the chief culprits, although Nitral Spelvin is also in on the plan.

A few months ago, after much research and testing, Dr. Donatson concluded that the small component the characters call the controller module contains the principal codes needed to activate the lost powers of the supercomputer. These include the activation of an automatic "preemptive counter strike" system designed to seek out and destroy an enemy no matter where he is, within 1000 miles of the system. Although there were once a number of these components, all identical to each other, over the years they were lost or fell victim to neglect and deterioration.

At the time of Donatson's discovery, the last module had been fitted in a snow tank then undergoing testing along the northern coast. Before Donatson could recall the vehicle, the test crew was assaulted and killed by a band of mutants led by the ferocious Golaeth, the four-armed monster. Although not sure where, Father Merry and Donatson both believe the mutants have hidden the tank somewhere in the canyons of the north mountain spur and that the module is more than likely still in the vehicle. They desperately want to recover this object and have decided to make use of the characters to fulfill this end.

Although they hold no ill will toward the adventurers, and are in fact sincerely thankful to them for saving the power plant, they must have the module. Father Merry and Donatson have laid a plan intended to thwart the adventurers and

obtain it for the city. They have let Spelvin in on some of the details but have not breathed a word of it to Ynilla or Tannan. Tannan, they feel, although bright and strong, is far too honorable to willingly take part in such a deception of their honored guests. Neither of the two couple will be told of the plan and any necessary dirty work will be performed by a Guard officer known by the two Council members to be trustworthy.

The plan calls only for the Module to be taken from the characters, and payment offered in return. However, if the characters resist, and Donatson expects they will, they are to be killed before being allowed to escape with the component.

A Plan of Attack

Shortly after Tannan's return to the city, the Council meets and decides to mount an attack against the mutant strongholds to the north. Tannan will command the operation and invites the characters to join in the attack. As the controller module is believed held by the mutants, the Council feels sure the characters will volunteer for the assault. Once everyone is agreed to the plan, there will be ten days' time in which the characters may prepare themselves.

Things To Do

There are a number of useful ways the characters can spend the next week and a half while waiting for the forces of the city to be assembled and prepared. By this time, since the trip through the mountains, the characters should have received a chance to improve their Drive Vehicle skills and possibly Beam Pistol skills. The next ten days can be spent further increasing these important abilities or even learning new ones.

The gamemaster may allow the players to simply state that they are spending time with the Guard, receiving instruction in the use of vehicles and/or weapons. At the end of this time, check the appropriate skills and allow attempts to improve. During this period of intensive training, characters may train in as many as three different skills.

Additionally, the gamemaster can stage a hunt, either on land or at sea from one of the fishing craft, the trophy being either walrus or one of the deadly killer whales. It may be that Tannan, learning of fresh killer-whale tracks found near the city, instigates this adventure. The makeup of the hunting party includes the characters and any number of Ralcon guardsmen the gamemaster wishes to include. The hunt possibly allows the characters opportunities to make use of Drive Vehicle and Weapon skills. The hunt will only take a day and, if the characters participate, allow them to make a second check to their skills, giving them two chances to improve.

Weapons and Vehicles

The entire attacking force will be mounted on vehicles. The characters will be informed that their group is expected to make up one of the more than a dozen attack 'pods' in which the force will be divided. They are encouraged to decide for themselves the makeup of their pod and choose the types of weapons and vehicles they feel they will need. The city's armory has plenty of supplies and the characters may request as many snow skis, snow sleds, rifles, pistols, or mounted cannon as they can use.

The characters can practice further with the pistols or snow skis, automatically receiving a check to their skill and the chance to improve. Alternatively, the adventurers can opt to train with the more powerful and accurate rifles or as two-man teams driving open air snow sleds outfitted with the high-powered light cannons.

The rifles are usually fitted with bayonets used for close fighting. Beginning bayonet attack and parry skills are equal to one half the character's best current sword skills. The bayonets are detachable and can be used as a fighting knife. Use the character's best current knife attack and parry skills minus 10%.

The six-wheeled snow sleds are fitted with light cannons and require two men, driver and gunner. This vehicle is much more stable than the snow skis and beginning Drive skills are equal to current snow ski skill plus 30%.

The light cannon is a high-powered version of the hand-carried rifle and has a special mount that facilitates aiming the weapon from a moving vehicle. Firing a light cannon from a moving vehicle calls for only a one quarter reduction of the character's skill rather than the one half usually assessed against a character in this situation.

The gamemaster is encouraged to make the training period as interesting as possible by adding a few vehicle crashes and other events to liven things up.

A Secret Message

Depending upon the sympathies of the player-characters, this incident may or may not take place. It has long been rumored that there are mutant spies living and working in Ralcon 4. In fact, there is at least one, a minor clerk in the civil records department named Hu Barnett. Barnett is an old friend of Kel Belanken, a human who long ago fled Ralcon 4 and eventually became the leader of the united mutant tribes and the secret behind their lately successful attacks and operations. Barnett is still in infrequent contact with his old friend and has been swayed by Belanken to support the mutant cause. Over the years Barnett has managed to supply Belanken with bits of information regarding city policies toward the mutants and news of military build-ups. It was because of Barnett that the mutants learned of the secret tank tests the city was conducting along the northern coast.

Barnett keeps close tabs on the adventurers, although they will in no way realize it. If he feels that the characters might be swayed towards helping the mutants, he makes efforts to contact them, leaving a note in their room, offering to meet them somewhere. This will depend entirely upon the reaction of the player characters to the culture and people of Ralcon 4. If they think the city is a nice place and the people wonderful, Barnett will probably stay quiet. If they start to question some of the policies and beliefs of the tight systems and standards that rule this captive society, he may think them possibly sympathetic to the mutant cause and make his existence known.

The gamemaster must improvise Barnett's actions and proposals. If the characters desperately want to join with the mutants, he may suggest they simply go out for a ride one day and not come back. If they head for the northern mountain spur, he can notify the mutants to meet them there. If they are more cautious, he suggests that they wait until the day of the raid. Arrangements will be made for the party to be met at the mountain spur and from there escorted to the mutant leader.

The characters are of course free to arrange the meeting and then turn Barnett over to the authorities. It is their choice. The authorities, although grateful to the characters for unmasking the spy, will be unable to learn anything important from the man.

Mounting the Attack

This section is written as though the characters are fully behind the military action of Ralcon 4. If they have made a deal with the mutant forces, the gamemaster may have to reconsider some of the situations. Certainly, if the characters and the mutants are in league together, there will not be the hostile encounter in front of the foothills.

On the morning of the attack, the characters and over 100 guardsmen assemble on the plain north of the city. Captain Hrolkarlt lays out the plan. The northern stronghold of the mutants will be approached up the narrow coast that runs between the mountains and the sea. The attacking force will be divided into groups of 6 to 10 men each, called attack pods. These groups are to spread out across the breadth of the coast, staying within visual contact with one another, and attempt to sweep the entire plain as they move north. Hrolkarlt fears that the mutants, if they have learned of the impending attack, might outflank him, then either attack his force from behind, or worse, attack the city in the guardsmen's absence.

The goal of the march is the short spur of mountains that runs from the central range eastward to the sea. Within the

spur is a great canyon, or valley, where the mutants are thought to dwell in caves. Over twenty major passes enter this valley from the south. Because of the narrowness of these passes, however, the going is slow and often requires a single file marching order. Consequently, in order to bring all their forces to bear against the valley at once, the decision has been made for the split forces to flood all the passes at once, hopefully arriving at the valley at approximately the same time. Once the passes have been entered, the element of surprise will be gone and the Guardsmen are instructed to make all haste toward the valley.

The March North

Unless the gamemaster has other plans, the adventurers' pod is placed near the middle of the advancing force, some miles from either the sea or the mountains. They can see on either side of them, each nearly a mile away, their two neighbor pods. Keeping pace with the skilled snow skiers may prove challenging and the gamemaster may improvise Drive rolls if he feels it is appropriate.

The traveling is generally smooth but the journey a long one. After three hours a prearranged halt is called and the characters may spend fifteen minutes eating, drinking, relieving themselves, or just stretching cramped muscles.

The last leg of the trip takes two hours. There will be no more halts and the order was given that upon nearing the foothills, all haste should be made to enter and make their way through the passes.

A Sudden Encounter

As the characters near the foothills the neighboring pods begin to speed up, the Guardsmen anxious to reach the mountains and begin the assault. The ground grows uneven, becoming a series of dips and crests preliminary to the foothills themselves. The party begins occasionally losing sight of the pods on their flanks. A likely looking gap in the mountains lies almost directly in front of them, the most convenient pass for the characters. They are within a quarter mile of it when, cresting a small ridge, they stumble upon a band of mutants scrambling toward the same pass, trying to outrace the raiding humans sweeping up the coast.

The band consists of ten mutants on foot and three more riding atop trained giant walruses. Each mutant is armed with a stone-tipped spear and a stone ax. The leader of the band, far ahead of them, stands at the entrance to the path, waving his men on. He has four arms and stands nearly ten feet tall. It is Golaeth, the infamous mutant monster.

But it is of no use. Mounted on the vehicles, the characters can easily outrun the mutants and even cut them off before they reach the pass if they wish. Golaeth sees this and, without waiting, lopes off into the mountains, disappearing from sight.

Conducting this battle depends a great deal upon the tactics employed by the characters. The mutants are intent on reaching the pass and will not turn to fight the characters

unless forced to. If the characters choose to outflank the mutants and, literally, head them off at the pass, the mutants will flee to their left, trying to reach another, smaller pass less than a quarter of a mile away.

The characters may attempt a cautious approach, pulling up behind the fleeing mutants and shooting them from behind. If any mutants are hit, the band will, if within spear range, turn and hurl their weapons at the characters before continuing their flight. Shooting the walruses enrages the beasts and, unless killed outright, they immediately turn and floppily charge the adventurers. Although the characters' vehicles can outrun the walruses, if they are within 100 feet of the beasts when they turn, the characters will be taken by surprise and have to make Drive rolls to turn around and get out of the way in time. A character who fails his snow ski roll has slipped and fallen and will barely be able to regain his feet before the monster is upon him. The driver of a snow sled who fails his roll will have spun out in a circle, giving the walrus a chance to attempt a tusk attack against the vehicle. If the attack is successful, the walrus overturns the sled, spilling its occupants out onto the ground. Characters failing a POW x5 roll suffer 1D6+1 points of damage. The sled, although dented, is still functional.

The safest approach is to play games of tag with the enraged walruses, allowing the beasts to pursue, but never catch their mounted attackers. The sleds are best for this job, more stable than the snow skis and armed with the light cannon. The cannon, in addition to the fact that it is fired by a gunner, has the special, fluid mount that absorbs much of the vehicle's motion. As long as the sleds stay in front of the walruses, they should have little problem. Characters who pull up close on the walruses' flanks and attempt shots from this position will find the walrus suddenly turning upon them. If the gamemaster deems it necessary, they may have to make Drive rolls to get out of the thing's way. The walruses, once enraged, will fight to the death, carrying their perhaps unwilling mutant riders along with them.

With enough sleds it is possible to keep the walruses occupied while any characters on snow skis race ahead to cut off the mutants traveling on foot. Regardless of what the walruses do, the running mutants continue to make for the pass, now about 500 feet away. Once their spears have been thrown, the mutants will not attack unless the characters draw within striking range of their stone axes. They will, however, attack snow skiers who attempt to block the pass, especially if the mutants outnumber these characters.

Eventually, the characters should be able to overcome this weak force and enter the pass, perhaps additionally intrigued by the opportunity to confront the monster, Golaeth.

A Trap!

The pass is narrow and winding, but not too difficult. They are about a half mile in when, behind them, there is a great rumbling and crashing. Turning about, they see an avalanche

tumbling down the slope, filling and blocking the pass behind them. Their way out is now impassable.

Before they can explore any of their few options, a man's voice calls out to them, addressing the characters by name. A short distance ahead, a figure steps out into view, a man dressed in a white Ralcon snow suit. He raises his hand in a friendly gesture. Behind him, out steps the huge mutant, Golaeth.

"Travelers, you are in the land of the Murdas. We welcome you in peace."

Any character looking around sees, high above them, lining the snowy slopes of the pass, dozens of hairy mutants, partially obscured by snow-covered rocks.

The man steps forward, cautiously. The characters see a face, a human face.

"Please, sheath your weapons," he asks. "Trust me when I say you have no need of them. We know why you have come and we wish to help you." The man coughs unhealthily, covering his mouth.

This is Kel Belanken, an outcast of Ralcon 4 who has, over the last twenty years, become the leader of the mutants. He knows who the characters are and why they are in this world, information gleaned from the dreaming shamans that are the spiritual guides of the mutant tribes. Belanken has in his possession the controller module as well as the tank that was captured along with it. He knows that the humans of Ralcon 4, if they gain possession of the module, intend to use it to exterminate the mutants. The gathered chiefs of the tribes, presided over by Belanken, had previously voted to destroy the dangerous component but, informed by their dreaming shamans of the impending arrival of the characters, were persuaded by Belanken to wait and see if something better could not be done with it. Belanken is willing to hand the module over to the characters if they will help the mutants against the humans. The captured tank is fitted with a super weapon which, when activated by the module, is capable of destroying the city of Ralcon 4, bringing to an end forever the threat posed to the mutants by the humans.

He asks the characters to put away their weapons and accompany him back to the valley of the mutants where they can further discuss the matter. If the characters put up too much of a fuss, Belanken is not afraid to threaten them.

"Look up," he says, pointing to the lines of mutants high up on the slopes on either side. "They are ready to trigger, at my signal, an avalanche that will bury the whole of you and end, for once and all, many of the questions that concern me. The module can then be destroyed without regret, ending the terrible threat that now looms over our heads. On the other hand, my people and I wish you no ill will and in fact would ask the service of yourselves in destroying the human colony. For this, we would gladly hand the module over to you."

Belanken tells them that the rest of the attacking force has been blunted, avalanches engineered by the mutants now

block every pass into the central valley. The characters can give up entertaining hopes of rescue.

Eventually the characters should realize that they have little choice and, seeing as how they are allowed to keep their weapons, have reason to believe in the sincerity of their captors. They will be asked to dismount from their vehicles. These will be dragged to the valley by the mutants on the slopes.

In the Valley of the Mutants

The central valley inhabited by the mutants is almost 10 miles in length and nearly a mile across at its widest points. For the most part it is sheltered from the violent winds and, warmed by the same geothermal forces tapped by Ralcon 4, the temperature is pleasantly mild, 20-25 F. The mutants inhabit the scores of caves riddling the valley and presently number, by Belanken's estimates, nearly 6000 souls.

"Greater than the population of Ralcon 4," he boasts. "And a good deal harder I might add." As if by contrast, he coughs again that same unhealthy cough.

The characters see many mutants moving about the valley, noting that the bulk of them seem far less hideous looking than those the characters have so far encountered. The mutants of the valley exhibit few deformities and, although their brows are more sloped than humans and they are all uniformly covered with a thick coat of hair, they carry themselves erect and with a certain sort of dignity. Although in some ways beast-like, they seem somehow possessed of a certain nobility of spirit. If anyone in the party comments on this, Belanken explains.

"The people of the valley you find, perhaps, less frightful to look upon than those you have met in battle?" queries Belanken. "The ones you have probably met so far are what we call 'our faithful ones.' Generally speaking, they are those who are too monstrous to find mates. They are encouraged to join the shock troops most often sent out against the humans. This way our more unfortunate ones find a sense of self-worth, and feel a part of the community. Unlike Ralcon 4, we find uses for the outcast members of our society." There is obvious bitterness in Belanken's tone.

Besides Belanken, the party is accompanied by several of the handsomer mutants as well as Golaeth, the four-armed giant and terror of the Ralcon Guardsman. Golaeth never speaks and is in fact, as Belanken can tell them, mute. Nonetheless, despite his reputation Golaeth seems intelligent and careful, almost gentle.

Belanken, human leader of the mutants

STR 7 CON 5 SIZ 9 INT 16 POW 14 DEX 8 CHA 13

Hit Points: 5 Armor: Snow Suit (4/6 points)

Damage Bonus: -1D6/-1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Stone Ax	25%	20%	1D4+1

Skills: Orate 65%, Persuade 85%.

Golaeth, monster mutant

STR 31 CON 23 SIZ 24 INT 8 POW 11 DEX 15 CHA 8

Hit Points: 35 Armor: 2 points of thick fur and hide.

Damage Bonus: +3D6/+3D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Huge Spear	75%	75%	2D6
Thrown Spear	65%	—	2D6+2
Big Stone Ax	92%	65%	1D10+2

Skills: Ambush 75%, Balance 85%, Dodge 55%, Jump 75%, Listen 85%, Scent 80%, See 80%, Track 85%.

Notes: Golaeth has four arms and is capable of two attacks per round, one each with his ax and spear.

The Offer

Eventually the group reaches the mouth of a large cave. Belanken leads them in and, stripping off his snow suit, seats himself next to a large fire in the center of the cave. He gestures to the characters to sit down with him.

"Come, let's talk."

Mutants move continually about the cave. Men, women, and children engage in chores or play. Most stare wonderingly at the unusual visitors but none molest them. Living arrangements in the cave are obviously communal. Belanken looks around approvingly.

"You find my children interesting?" he asks. He reaches out and scratches Golaeth behind the ears. The huge mutant tilts his head back and closes his eyes in ecstasy.

"They are gentle, and affectionate," he says. "And far more intelligent than one would immediately guess."

The characters may talk with Belanken for as long as they wish. He will answer most of their questions honestly. It becomes obvious that Belanken is genuinely close to the mutant tribes and that it was he who molded them into an effective fighting force. He has united the disparate bands into a single nation that can now withstand the threat posed them by the humans of Ralcon 4.

If asked how he came to be here, Belanken tells them that, at the age of 14, he was forced to leave the city. He had been born with a minor defect, a mutation probably caused by the radiation that still lingers in this world. His parents managed to hide his abnormality for many years but eventually the secret could be kept no longer and Belanken was forced to flee before the deception could be found out.

"Imperfect specimens are forbidden in Ralcon 4," Belanken explains. "Children discovered defective are 're-integrated' by the city, their protein added to the processed, fish-based casserole its inhabitants live on."

This revelation may unsettle the characters, who have been eating this food for the last two weeks or so.

Belanken says that after wandering lost and hopeless for several days, he was near death when discovered by a small band of mutants who carried him to their cave and nursed him back to health. He owes his life to the benevolence and acceptance of the Murdas. Although his parents were not formally punished for their crime — "that is not the way of Ralcon 4" — Belanken is quick to note that they were

among those chosen to be 'deactivated' after the Murdas successfully destroyed the city's northern power plant.

If the characters ask Belanken about the defect he wordlessly removes his boot and sock and holds his foot out for all to see.

He has six toes.

"Perhaps you understand now why I have become who I am," he says, putting the boot back on. "The Murdas would accept, unquestioningly, the presence of the humans in this world. Unfortunately, the people of Ralcon 4 are not so generous. They view the Murda as a threat to be wiped out, exterminated like vermin. I would not see this happen."

Belanken goes on to explain why the Murdas are the proper inheritors of this world, a natural evolutionary product suited to the climate and conditions that now prevail. "The humans of Ralcon 4 are unfit for life on this planet." As though for emphasis he coughs again, covering his mouth with the back of his hand. The characters see specks of blood on the hand when he takes it away.

"See, even now I am dying. Even with my specially designed snow suit, I am unfit to live in this world. You understand now why the Murdas must not be destroyed. The people of Ralcon 4 have no hope. Someday the systems will fail, even now the city grows old and starts to crumble. Knowledge of how to maintain and repair it is being forgotten. All those people, without the false environment now provided them, will die. They have no hope. If the Murdas have been destroyed there will be no intelligent life left to inherit this planet."

"Before I die," he says. "I must make sure that the Murdas have a world safe for them to live and grow in. The humans of Ralcon 4 have to be destroyed."

The Offer

Belanken's offer is simple. If the humans will use the tank, equipped with the controller module, to help the Murdas destroy Ralcon 4, Belanken will allow them to keep the module to do with what they wish. If they refuse, he has no choice but to hold them hostage here in the valley until the "human question" is, in one way or another, resolved. For the safety of the Murdas, the module will be destroyed.

The characters will be allowed to think about it overnight. They are escorted to a number of smaller caves, warm and comfortable, but with guards placed at the entrances. They are told that they will be brought before Belanken in the morning and expected to then give him their answer. The caves are small and can be comfortably inhabited by no more than two or three people. Carrock and Grant share a cave. If Grant is gone, Carrock ends up in a cave by himself.

Carrock Disappears

The following morning the characters are awakened by a great stir outside their cave, the sound of many voices. They quickly learn that late last night Justin Carrock and Andrew Grant, after overcoming their guards, escaped and fled the

valley. The characters are brought before Belanken who, although visibly upset by this, states that his offer of the previous evening still stands.

"We were at first concerned that Carrock had perhaps stolen the module," he says. "But it and the vehicle are undisturbed. Our efforts can go ahead as planned. What is your decision?"

It is up to the characters to decide what to do. Agreeing to lead the attack offers them the best chance of getting their hands on the module. Belanken realizes, and so should the characters, that once they are inside the tank and underway, there will be little anyone can do to stop them from breaking their word and turning against the mutants. Belanken asks only that the characters give their word that they will do as they promise. He trusts them and is willing to take the chance.

The Snow Tank

Once the characters have agreed to lead the attack, Belanken shows them the captured snow tank, kept hidden in a cave a few hundred yards away. Five human heads, rudely severed and frozen solid are displayed on wooden stakes set in the floor of the cave in a circle about the vehicle. They are the heads of the Ralcon Guard tank crew attacked and killed by Golaeth and the mutants. Noting the characters' possible reaction to this, Belanken explains.

"I argued against it," he says, almost embarrassed. "But they have an innate fear of machinery and technology. They would only agree to not destroy the vehicle if they were allowed to contain its evil spirit with these unfortunate victim's heads." He clucks his tongue. "I suppose there was a time I would have been more shocked by this kind. But over the years I suppose I have become hardened to their occasional excesses."

The tank is totally enclosed and carries a crew of five with room for two more, if comfort is not a high priority. It is constructed of a tough white plastic and practically impervious to beam weapons. Inside the vehicle are seats for a driver, three gunners, and an observer/navigator in charge of systems. The three light energy cannons mounted outside are remotely operated from within the tank, the left gun covering the left side and rear of the tank and the right side gun doing similar duty on its side. The topside gun operates in a full circle and all fields of fire are within its range.

The tank is equipped with an additional weapon, a sonic generator that folds up out of the rear portion of the tank. This dish-shaped weapon is operated by the fifth seat observer and generates ultra-low frequency sound waves capable of vast destruction. The weapon, brought on line by the installation of the controller module, is capable of destroying the great dome enclosing Ralcon 4. The Drive Tank skill is identical to a character's Drive Sled skill and the cannons, although remotely operated, are fired at the character's normal Light Cannon skill.

Before this operation begins, if any of the characters received skill checks for the battle at the foothills, allow them a chance to improve their skills before this final battle.

Belanken's plan is as follows: The characters will take the tank down the coast. It is capable of speeds nearly approaching those of the snow sleds and can cover the distance to Ralcon 4 in less than eight hours. In the meantime, a force of mutants, having left on foot the day before, will assemble in the mountains west and north of the city. The characters will rendezvous with the mutant force two miles from the city and make the final advance together. The tank only needs to be within a half mile of its target to make an attack on the dome. Aim is not critical. Pointing the screen anywhere in the direction of the dome should prove effective. Once the generator is fired, it is estimated that the dome will break up within two minutes of being exposed to the low frequency sound waves. Once the dome is breached, the mutant forces will enter the city and destroy the population.

If the characters agree to the plan, the tank will be prepared. Just before they leave, Belanken will give them the controller module and show them the socket on the tank's dashboard where it should be installed.

Concluding this Adventure

The climax of this adventure depends heavily upon decisions made by the characters and by the gamemaster. The characters could either carry out the attack as promised to Belanken or, deciding the humans are the lesser of two evils, turn traitor, taking sides with the city of Ralcon 4. The gamemaster must come to a decision regarding the actions of Justin Carrock. Carrock is the Eternal Champion and fate has brought him to this world to help one side or the other against their enemy. Carrock's disappearance does not necessarily mean he has abandoned the mutant's cause. He and Grant may have simply retired to someplace in the mountains to think out what they should do. Depending on the gamemaster's decision, Carrock and Grant may, after ingesting some of Carrock's drug, make the long cold trek back to Ralcon 4 and warn the humans of the impending attack. On the other hand, Carrock may decide his sympathies lie with the primitive mutants. In this case he probably does not show up until the scheduled rendezvous just prior to the attack. The gamemaster should base Carrock's decision on what he feels offers the best dramatic possibilities. In either case, it is fated that Carrock will die in this battle, either against the mutant Golaeth while fighting for the humans or, if fighting for the Murdas, at the hand of Tannan Hrolkarlt. If the gamemaster feels incapable of making a decision, throw a die. An odd number means Carrock joins the mutants, an even one, the humans.

It may be that the characters suggest the power plant instead be attacked, arguing that if it is destroyed, the population of Ralcon 4 will be rendered helpless. Belanken, after some thought, will accept this alternative, modifying

the plan of attack to reflect the change in targets. This will not alter Carrock's intervention in the affair. He will show up wherever the battle takes place.

Rescued by the Rogue Mistress

The ship, most likely piloted by Maria or Krathak, will, in the best tradition of fantasy adventure, show up at the most opportune moment to rescue the characters from the battle. The arrival of the ship depends on the decision of the gamemaster but it should take into account the needs and wants of the characters. The ship definitely arrives before the characters are somehow trapped and slaughtered, saving at least some of them for the upcoming climax of the campaign. It is possible that the characters are disgusted by the aims and philosophies of both the humans and the mutants and want nothing more than to get the module and leave this world. In this case, the gamemaster may allow the ship to arrive on the scene somewhat earlier, in time to pull the characters out, and leaving the mutants and humans to solve their own problems. This decision will probably not change the actions of Carrock, who is fated to die fighting for one side or the other.

All of these are merely suggestions for the gamemaster. The final battle, involving hundreds of mutants and city guardsmen, will necessarily have to be improvised. Characters in the tank will have little to fear from even light energy cannons and they should have little trouble getting within range of the intended target. Using the sonic weapon requires no particular skill, it only being necessary to point it in the proper general direction and flip the switch. Characters accompanying the tank on snow sleds or skis may find the combat more dangerous, particularly if fighting against the humans who are armed with energy weapons. The battle should not be so much an episode testing the characters' ability to survive, but one that lets them play out their own decision regarding the fate of this world. They have in their hands the opportunity to help the mutants, the humans, or leave both of them to resolve their own fates.

Decision

The characters' success or failure in this battle depends on the decision of Justin Carrock their own. If the characters side with the mutants and Carrock turns out to do the same, he shows up just before the battle. After the characters crack the dome, he leads the assault on the city and is the first one through the breach.

If both the characters and Carrock side with the humans, the attack of the mutants, without the aid of the tank, will be a desperate and suicidal one. The humans will win easily but the characters may be left without the controller module, a serious disappointment.

If the characters side with the humans and Carrock with the mutants, the Eternal Champion operates the tank and cracks the city's dome. He immediately abandons the vehicle (somewhere within sight of the characters) to assail the

breach. The module is left in the tank and the characters can probably get to it and remove it.

If the characters take the side of the mutants while Carrock joins the humans, their attack will be thwarted. They will reach the city and activate the weapon but before the dome is destroyed, Carrock arrives on the scene in another, similar vehicle, but armed with a new and different weapon. Characters making a See roll will notice the approach of the other vehicle and see Carrock taking careful aim at the tank. The weapon is a heat device and 15 seconds of application to the characters' tank will cause the vehicle to explode. All other systems on the characters' tank, including motive power and auxiliary weapons, are automatically locked out while the sonic generator is operating and they will find themselves trapped and helpless as the temperature within the vehicle begins to climb. There will be nothing to do but abandon the tank as fast as possible.

Several convenient escape hatches exist and a successful roll of DEX x5 or less allows a character to scramble out and away from the tank before it explodes. These characters receive only 1D4 points of damage. Those failing the roll will be much closer to the tank when it goes up and will suffer 2D6 points of damage. Any character fumbling this roll with a 96-00% fails to clear the vehicle and is obliterated by the explosion. Hopefully, one of the characters will remember to snatch the controller module before abandoning the tank. Carrock will bother them no more, destroying the tank being enough to save Ralcon 4. However, the characters may have to do further battle with Ralcon Guards before the *Rogue Mistress* shows up to save them.

As for the final fate of Carrock, this is also up to the gamemaster. He does not necessarily have to be killed. Maria may pilot the ship into the battle and save him as well, or he may be mortally wounded, living only long enough only to speak a few last words to his daughter before dying. The gamemaster should strive to provide a climax that is dramatic and satisfying to both him and his players.

Back Aboard the *Rogue Mistress*

Once on the ship, the characters have a few moments to share information with the crew. They will be delighted to find out that, with a little bit of trading, the crew was able to not only repair the ship, but managed to get their hands on some components that have been jury-rigged to the Heavy Laser Cannon on the bow. The characters might be angered if they learn that one or more of their valuable magic items left aboard ship were traded for the components. Additionally, if the ship is still lacking a functional Entropy Configuration, this device will have been repaired by some of Uerth's technicians.

Less pleasant to be learned is the fact that yesterday the ship was attacked by a contingent of Ralcon Guardsman. The crew of the ship was victorious and one of the captured Guard officers revealed to them the plan by members of the Supreme Council to steal the module from the characters.

The characters might wish to make a couple sweeps over the battlefield in order to punish the humans for this traitorous action. The still-angry crew will certainly want to.

The Controller Module

This object is small, only about an inch wide, a quarter inch thick, and a half inch deep. It plugs smoothly into sockets found on the snow tank, in Ralcon 4's super computer, and in their possessed companion's throat. Although no one really knows how one of these devices was originally fitted to the knife, the device is obviously the product of a technologically advanced society. It is composed of layers of laminated ceramic substrate and translucent amber crystal. Embedded throughout the translucent layers are tiny dark shapes connected by flat, maze-like strands of dull metal. Each of the flat metal strands terminate at a series of gold bands arranged along one of the inch long edges.

One of these modules was for ages Knife's warden and it hates these things with a rage beyond human comprehension. Despite this, Knife's lack of ability to see into the future prevents him from realizing the module's potential to again enslave him. Not until a character actually attempts to install the object (or foolishly tells Knife that he intends to do so) will the demon react to its presence. A successful Ambush will allow a character to sneak up on an unawares Knife and plug the module in. If this attempt is failed, or for any other reason Knife discovers the character's intent, he attacks mercilessly. He has no compunction about killing the character, or anyone who might have been helping him. The only way to stop Knife, short of simply killing him, is to either get the module plugged in, or hand it over to the demon (just dropping it at his feet will cause Knife to stop fighting and pick up the module).

If Knife gets his hands on the module, he crushes it, ending forever the threat to his freedom. The character whose body is possessed is lost forever. Knife will probably hang around long enough to conclude this adventure but will then wander off to lead his own life.

Forcing the module into the slot while Knife resists, is difficult. A character trying to plug it in while Knife is actively fighting stands a chance of success equal to his DEX x1. A more likely method is for other characters to grab and hold the demon while the module is installed. Grabbing the fighting demon safely requires a character to make a roll of DEX x5 or less. Holding Knife down requires a successful struggle of the combined grappling characters' STR against the STR of Knife. Once the struggle is won, the module can be inserted.

Knife howls in rage and pain, his body stiffening as the module exerts its powerful influence over his being. Knife falls unconscious 1D4 rounds later and the skin and fat of the body immediately begins to liquefy. This putrescent fluid runs from the remains of the carcass, bearing with it the stabilizer module, and collects into a single mass that compresses, growing smaller and duller. In the blink of an eye

the mass transforms into the Planar Knife, the module installed in the socket on the hilt, tiny LEDs rhythmically pulsing.

The vacated body is now left without a protective layer of fat and skin but the blood vessels have been restricted and the nerve endings sheathed in some non-organic material. The character's consciousness, or soul, returns from wherever it was submerged by the power of the Knife and reanimates the fleshless form. The character's CON is permanently reduced by 1D4, SIZ reduced by 1, and CHA reduced to 3. The exposed organs and tissues have been bonded with layer of semi-permeable bio-mechanical polymer-like sheathing only several molecules thick. This sheathing was ejected by the module while sloughing the flesh off the unfortunate body. The sheath is permeable in one direction (from inside out) allowing for heat exchange, so the character will not be roasted alive inside his/her new skin. This new skin renders the character immune to contact poisons. The bio-polymer layer is not as sensitive to touch and pain as human skin, but it is more durable, acting as 1D3+1 armor. If breached, the sheath knits back together immediately, instantly restoring one hit point per successful strike.

The character's Manipulation Skill bonus is reduced by 15% due to a loss of tactile sense in his fingers and hands. The character no longer has eyelids or tear ducts. The sheathing protects the eyes from airborne dust, but there is no longer a system for removing particles from the surface of the cornea; the character must wash the eye surfaces periodically. The character also lacks hair or lips. The lack of lips to form the phonemes represented by the letters B, F, M, P and V (not to mention forward voiced vowel sounds) will modify the character's speech somewhat. On the plus side, if the character bore one of the hearts of the Kynn K'tal, it is now gone, literally burnt out of him by the power of the demon of the Knife. Upon arrival back on Pollidemia's plane, they will find that one of the statues has now crumbled to dust, destroyed when the heart was destroyed.

Leaving Uerth

Once everything is ready, Maria will want to head back to Pollidemia's plane. They have the knife and she is sure they are ready to face the woman.

Skimming along the surface of the ground, avoiding the high altitude winds, Maria shunts the *Rogue Mistress* out of this freezing plane and back to the chaotic world of Gashoram, Chaos Lord of Darkness.

The Eighth Chapter

The Two Who Are One

IN THIS, THE last chapter, the adventurers travel back to the Chaos plane of Pollidemia to regain their hearts and exact vengeance against the woman who has treated them so shabbily. They must first, however, meet and defeat several powerful entities.

The Plane of Pollidemia

Until the conclusion is successfully reached, all conditions on this plane are as described in the First Chapter.

The Arrival

The *Rogue Mistress* slides into the plane on the run, engines screaming. Throttles pulled all the way back, the ship screams across the flaring sky. The Tenatir has brought them in quite accurately and before long, the spire of Pollidemia's stronghold appears on the horizon. Maria drops the bow of the ship, diving down toward the small single patch of solid reality in this seething, distorted world. Far away, standing in the shattered courtyard the characters see a woman dressed in blue and purple — Pollidemia. She faces the towering statues of the Kynn K'tal, hands raised in the air, as though in supplication. The still-distant statues begin to shine with a strange translucency, shimmering in a golden, wavering light.

Any player character making a See roll notices, rising up from somewhere beyond the lonely isle, a great dark

shadow, winged and clawed. The huge form rises into the sky and with great flaps of its bat-like wings, begins flying toward the *Rogue Mistress*.

"Battle stations, everyone!" shouts Maria. "Look alive!" She pulls the bow of the ship back up, leveling the *Mistress* out. The hideous thing flaps closer. "Be ready to hit this thing with everything we've got."

The flying thing is the Chaos Lord, Gashoram, master of this plane and master of the sorceress, Pollidemia.

Gashoram, Chaos Lord

This is only one form of Gashoram on this plane, and certainly not the most powerful. As a Chaos Lord, Gashoram is invulnerable to most weapons, with the exception of the Planar Knife. However, as Lord of Darkness, he has, in this form, a particular vulnerability to any weapon that makes use of coherent (Lawful) light. This includes the laser cannon and any beam weapons the characters might have brought with them from Uerth. Gashoram's flight is incredibly swift, fast enough to run rings around the *Rogue Mistress*.

STR 55 CON 90 SIZ 45 INT 40 POW 45 DEX 16 CHA 5

Hit Points: 127

Armor: 15 points of unimaginably tough skin. Invulnerable to any weapons save the Planar Knife or beam/laser weapons.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw	75%	75%	4D6
Grab	65%	75%	2D6 plus automatic bite for 6D6
Wing Buffet	95%	—	Special

Gashoram will attack by flying in close to the ship and, hovering for a second or two, make one attack. Gashoram can only hover near the ship for one round, then must then drop away and fly ahead. He then circles around and swoops in for another attack. This cycle is repeated until either Gashoram is defeated or the *Rogue Mistress* is knocked out of the sky. Each cycle last three rounds; attack, fall away, circle and approach, then again, attack.

Rather than use his claws, Gashoram will prefer to make a grab attack, hoping to pluck up an unfortunate crewmen or player character. Once grabbed, the victim suffers 2D6 damage and is immediately snatched up to Gashoram's maw where a bite is applied for 6D6 more points of damage. If the grabbed crewmen was not killed by the first bite, Gashoram bites again while on the fly, eventually dropping the mangled corpse into the seething Chaos below. If the corpse contains one of the demon hearts of the Kynn K'tal, it is hurled into the courtyard. The heart soon erupts from the corpse and floats back to its Kynn K'tal owner.

In addition, every time Gashoram makes a pass at the ship, he attempts to buffet the *Mistress* with his wings. If successful, the ship suffers 6D6 points of structural damage. It can suffer up to 55 points of damage before its starts to go out of control.

Also, 1D3 randomly chosen characters, player or otherwise, stand the risk of being blown off the deck. The effected

characters must first make DEX x5 rolls to grab hold of something and then make STR x5 rolls to hang on. Failure of either roll means the character is blown or knocked over the far side of the ship, plunging to his or her death.

Characters using melee weapons can attack only once, during the round that Gashoram hovers next to the ship. Missile weapons can be used during the attack round plus the rounds that Gashoram spends flying away and then back toward the ship. During his approach, if characters hold their fire until the very tail end of the round, they will be allowed to take shots at 200 feet. During the round that Gashoram hovers, the range is close, possibly point-blank. The next round, Gashoram falls back away from the ship, preparatory to turning and winging away. This happens fairly slowly. Characters with strike ranks of 20 or better may fire at 30 foot range. Strike ranks of 15 to 19 fire when the Chaos Lord is 60 feet away. Strike ranks of 10 to 14 fire when Gashoram is 120 feet away. Characters firing missile weapons any later in this round must deal with a range of 240 feet. On the round that Gashoram is farthest from the ship, circling around and turning back, the best range that anyone can fire at is 900 feet.

Gashoram can never suffer a major wound but any hit that scores 25 points or more of actual damage, drives the Chaos Lord off. A skillfully manned heavy laser cannon, fired on Gashoram's approach round could conceivably keep the thing at bay until it is destroyed.

Climax of the Battle

If Gashoram takes damage in excess of his hit points, he disappears in a great flash and implosion, huge black clouds seething outward only to be immediately sucked back away into nothingness.

The island is below, Pollidemia gone from the shattered court; and the statues still glow with their eerie rippling light. The only clear landing place is in the shattered court. Although the ship has probably suffered damage Maria settles the ship down softly.

If the ship suffers more than 55 points of structural damage, it begins to go out of control. Maria and Krathak struggle valiantly, managing to keep the ship right side up, but the *Rogue Mistress* starts going down, spinning toward the island in dizzying circles. Gashoram wings his way upwards, disappearing into the darkness. As the characters hang grimly on, the Shattered Courtyard spirals upward to meet the ship. The *Rogue Mistress*, listing to starboard, noses in, piling into the ground, and finally rolling over to rest on one side.

All characters above decks are thrown violently from the ship, possibly suffering as much as 3D6 points of damage. Characters who make successful Jump and/or Tumble rolls take one less die of damage for each successful use of these skills. In addition, 1D3 of the pirates or other nonplayer characters will be killed outright, found smashed and mangled. Maria has suffered only 3 points of damage, is bleeding

from a small cut on her forehead. Characters who stayed below decks suffer 2D6 points of damage. The *Rogue Mistress* is, for all intents and purposes, destroyed.

The survival of any particular items the player characters might have had aboard ship is up to the gamemaster to decide. Metal weapons, such as swords, probably have a chance of being recovered. More fragile items will certainly be ruined. If he wishes, the gamemaster may allow a fire to start aboard the wreck that eventually burns the ship and everything left in it. A big explosion, once the characters are out of harm's way, might be a nice touch. Any surviving crew members, particularly the Tenatir, crawl out of the wreck before it is destroyed.

The Kynn K'tal

This event takes place immediately after the characters have landed the ship, or immediately following the crash, as soon as the characters struggle to their feet. Only the statues whose hearts are carried in the breasts of living adventurers will awaken. The others, those whose hearts who were borne in adventurers that died, lie crumbled in ruins.

The huge glowing jackal-headed statues, the Kynn K'tal, begin to move. Slowly, the great heads turn on their shoulders. The eyelids lift to reveal the blazing black orbs beneath. The almost living Kynn K'tal gaze balefully down on the characters, each one pinpointing the adventurer who bears his demonic heart.

The characters' demon hearts start to glow with a brilliant light, a painful throbbing beats in their chests. They feel the demon hearts trying to tear themselves free and each one suffers 1D3 points of damage. This continues every round until the Kynn K'tal are destroyed or the characters reach 0 hit points. When 0 hit points are reached, the heart rips free and explodes from the character's chest, sailing through the air across the courtyard and implanting itself in the breast of one of the Kynn K'tal. The character is, of course, dead and the now-living Kynn K'tal, laughing heartily, leaps upward from the Shattered Courtyard and disappears into the night, ready to wreak havoc on whatever plane it should happen upon.

It should be noted that if a demon-hearted character should still be possessed by Knife, he is semi-immune to the Kynn K'tal. One of the demon statues will try to rip out Knife's heart but the demon will resist. He will suffer great pain and bellow with rage, but suffer no real damage. Instead, he will be allowed to engage in a POW vs POW struggle with the Kynn K'tal. Every round check the POW struggle every round. If the Kynn K'tal wins the round, Knife suffers 1D3 points of damage as the heart starts to pull free. If Knife wins, the Kynn K'tal suffers 3D6 points of damage.

The Kynn K'tal (in semi-statue form)

STR 42 CON 40 SIZ 45 INT 28 POW 20 DEX 4

Hit Points: 73

Armor: 30 points of stony hide.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Fist	65%	45%	6D6

A Kynn K'tal can use its fist attack either to smash a character or to pick the character up and dash him to the ground. Damage in either case is identical. In addition, each Kynn K'tal will be actively working to draw forth its demon heart from whichever character is hosting it.

The Kynn K'tal are only partially alive and very slow moving. They cannot walk or in any way move from their position until they receive their hearts. Once the heart is in place, they come completely to life and immediately fly off.

If the characters should somehow manage to kill one of the Kynn K'tal, one of the characters who bears a demon heart will be free of the curse as the heart dies and disappears. This character will be chosen randomly from among those with demon hearts. The statue immediately begins to crumble and break apart, falling into rubble.

The R'laan

The best hope of defeating the Kynn K'tal lies in calling forth their eternal enemy, that race of beings known as the R'laan. To call the R'laan, the Planar Knife must be used to cut an opening between the planes into their world. To create the opening, a character must make a successful 'attack' with the weapon. If the characters were unable to retrieve or successfully install the controller module, the Planar Knife has not been reconstituted and their companion still possessed by the spirit of the knife. Knife can accomplish this feat using any bladed weapon, but first must be convinced to do so. A successful Persuade roll is required. The characters may attempt a Persuade every round until finally successful.

Once the way is opened, a sorcerer, on the following round, must make a successful summoning roll to call forth the R'laan. These beings are immense and come forth suddenly. If the character who made the opening between the planes has not gotten well back, he suffers 4D6 points of damage when the summoned creatures spill suddenly onto this world. This goes for any other characters who might be standing in the way. If these characters can make a successful Dodge roll, they lose only 1D6 points.

The R'laan appear as formless steaming heaps of pink goo, bubbling and hissing. They make straight for the Kynn K'tal and immediately begin to engulf them. The Kynn K'tal break off all combat with the characters to face this new threat. Even the characters with demon hearts are relieved of their suffering. The pink, formless things quickly overcome the Kynn K'tal, devouring them and then disappearing, folding in upon themselves until nothing is left.

Besides the Kynn K'tal, they also attack and destroy Knife, for he is a brother of the demons in the statues, one of their kind. Although Knife and the character whose body he occupied are now lost and gone, the Planar Knife is left behind. It has returned, transmogrified and controllable, the same but changed. Now decorating its hilt are designs reminiscent of the lost controller module. It can be handled without fear and, in the right hands, it is still a powerful



Rogue Mistress on the Assault!

weapon. If this adventure somehow ends without the summoning of the R'laan, and Knife wins the POW struggle with his Kynn K'tal attacker, Knife himself undergoes the change, growing and swelling to become one of the Kynn K'tal. As he vaults into the sky the transmogrified version of the Planar Knife falls to the stones of the courtyard.

Once the Kynn K'tal are destroyed or have escaped, the survivors of the encounter are left alone in the Shattered Courtyard. Pollidemia's tower waits before them.

Into the Tower

The gates are open and there is nothing to stop the characters from charging straight in. If the player characters hesitate, Maria takes the initiative, leading the way. She will probably be joined by any remaining members of the crew, but this is up to the gamemaster. The Tenatir will certainly accompany the group.

The interior of the tower is a simple affair consisting of a ground floor, two identical second and third floors, and a domed room at the top, Pollidemia's last refuge. The tower is remarkably barren and there is little to distract the characters upon entry. On the second floor, however, they run into a problem. Blocking their way to the next flight of stairs is Pollidemia's undead corpse lover, along with the living corpses of any demon-hearted characters who have died in the course of this adventure. The dead shambling things stumble forward. They all have the following identical statistics except for SIZ which will be that of the dead character. This could, of course, affect hit points.

Living Corpses

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 1 POW 1 DEX 4 CHA 1

Hit Points: 13 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Fist	65%	25%	1D6

As always, the dead are hard to kill; they must be completely dismembered. Using DEX and STR rolls to hold them down while chopping them up is most efficient method. It is possible that there will be enough crew along to take care of the Dead, leaving the characters to continue charging to the top of the tower.

There is nothing to be found anywhere in the tower until they reach the uppermost chamber of Pollidemia. If Gath, the demon, has not been killed at some point in the adventure, the characters meet up with him hurrying down the stairs, opposite the direction the characters are headed.

The adventurers might think the demon plans to attack them but he is simply trying to get away, out of the tower. If the characters stand aside, Gath hurries right past them, not even looking at them. If confronted, he will fight. He has no use for the adventurers and will not discuss anything with them. He only demands that they get out of his way then tries to push by them.

The Final Confrontation

When the characters reach the top of the stairs they find Pollidemia, standing with her back to wall, wild-eyed and gibbering mindlessly. She claws at her mouth with one hand, weeping and laughing, pointing at something on the far side of the domed chamber.

It is Gashoram, the Chaos Lord, a gigantic human, smiling, laughing, nearly filling the other half of this top floor tower room. He is fat and disgusting, his body covered with sweat, but not nearly so horrible appearing as he was a few moments ago, when dealing with Pollidemia.

Ignoring the Chaos Lord, Maria confronts her cowering sister. It only takes her a moment to realize that Pollidemia's mind is gone, hopelessly ruined by whatever the Chaos Lord did to her. Showing no emotion, Maria pulls out one of her revolvers and fires a bullet through her sister's forehead; whether out of revenge, or pity, who can tell? Blood splatters the wall and Pollidemia, lifeless, slides to the floor.

"Ho-ho!" laughs Gashoram, watching the gore run down the wall. "Blood is thicker than water."

He turns to the adventurers. "You have brought me something, have you not?" he smiles. "A knife? A very sharp knife?"

Gashoram is gigantic, perhaps 40 feet tall if he were to stand up. As it is, the ceiling of the tower is far too low for that to ever happen. He sits hunched over upon the floor, grinning down on the tiny characters. He holds something in one of his great fists, something that squirms.

"Aawwk!" A tiny head pops out of the giant fist. It is Astralgyx. "Ughhh!" he grunts, trying to free himself.

Gashoram scowls at the tiny wriggling figure then casually pops the little demon into his mouth. Astralgyx's scream is cut short as Gashoram's great teeth mash down on him. A gout of greenish demon ichor squirts out the corner of the Chaos Lord's mouth, dribbling down his chin. He wipes it away and licks his finger.

"Not bad, but a little coarse for my tastes." He giggles nastily, obviously amused by himself.

He stops smiling and looks back to his visitors. The smile leaves his face. "Where is the Knife? It would do you well to give me the Knife, now."

If none of the characters have anything to say, Maria steps forward, brushing back anyone who might be trying to give up the Planar Knife. "And what if we don't?" she challenges him. She takes a wide stance, arms folded across her chest.

Gashoram's face flares angry for a split-second but he then resumes his friendly smile.

"But why argue about it," he cajoles her, charmingly. "After all, you are still my dearest daughter, aren't you?"

A stifled scream escapes Maria's lips. The characters are shocked to see they are no longer facing Gashoram, but Justin Carrock, gigantic, swollen, but still, the man who was their past companion and Maria's father.

"You love your father, don't you, dear?" The Chaos Lord questions her, beguilingly.

Maria starts to stumble forward, heading for the gigantic Carrock across the room. Gashoram/Carrock leans forward, stretching his arms out toward her. "Come. Hug your father, dearest daughter." The Chaos Lord strains to reach her but does not make any attempt to move from where he sits. He seems rooted to the spot. It should be apparent that the Chaos Lord is somehow contained to that part of the tower.

Maria still sees Justin Carrock, her father, but the rest of the characters see a Justin Carrock whose mouth opens in an evil smile revealing long pointed teeth, then opens farther, then farther still, until the Chaos Lord is no more than a huge, deadly maw atop a heap of quaking flesh.

If no one moves to stop Maria she approaches the Carrock/Gashoram figure until close enough for the Chaos Lord to grab her. After a glance to make sure she does not carry the Planar Knife, Gashoram opens wide his mouth and Maria meets the same fate as Astralgynx. Carrock's face disappears and the charming, friendly Gashoram's returns. He smiles slyly at the characters. "Next?" he says, his face already changing, the features swimming about.

Gashoram chooses a random player character and, after searching his mind, alters his image to look like some person from the character's past. The gamemaster should draw from the player character's past history for ideas or, lacking a true background, improvise a character from the past. This could be a devoted parent, a sacrificing friend, a deserted lover, or any person whom the character feels he owes a great personal debt or has somehow seriously wronged. Gashoram loves to use a person's guilty conscience against them. The character, unless able to resist Gashoram's POW of 40 (01 on a D100 is always successful) behaves in the same way as Maria and meets the same fate. The other characters again watch the Chaos Lord transform to the great quaking mouth thing.

Characters cannot flee the room, the door behind them has disappeared (although characters outside the tower room are still able to enter). Gashoram will continue this same tactic, searching for the Planar Knife until the characters either hand over the weapon or attempt to attack him. If he should draw out the character who carries the knife, the blade either falls off this person as he stumbles forward to meet the ravenous Chaos Lord, or falls when Gashoram plucks them up to devour them. Seeing the blade lying on the floor very near him, Gashoram again demands that the characters "give" him the knife.

Gashoram is unable to take the knife himself. It must be given to him.

The characters may choose to attack him but they will soon find that no normal weapon can harm Gashoram in the least, nor can any magic nor any demons or elementals sent against him; only the Planar Knife can is capable of harming him. Gashoram always strikes last in a round but always hits, causing characters to take 3D6 points of damage. They are

also bowled over and drop whatever weapon they may have been carrying. The Planar Knife, wielded against the Chaos Lord, always hits and causes the Chaos Lord some damage but never enough to kill him; he simply regenerates and heals any wounds, almost as they occur. The character who attacks him with the Planar Knife will be attacked in retaliation and, when bowled over, will drop the Planar Knife. Although it falls within easy reach of the Chaos Lord, he does not pick it up. He instead repeats his request that the characters to give him the Knife.

It is hoped the characters will give the Knife to the Tenatir. He is the only being immune to the Chaos Lord's wiles and, with the Planar Knife, capable of defeating him. Like the Chaos Lord, the Tenatir can only take the Knife if it is given to him. Unlike Gashoram, the Tenatir will not ask for the blade. The being is incapable of acting or thinking along these lines until the Planar Knife is actually placed in his hands.

If the characters think of the Tenatir, perhaps mentioning it to each other, Gashoram overhears and perhaps betrays his concern. Terrified the Tenatir might take possession of the blade, he begins to bargain with the characters, offering them all sorts of things in return for the knife. These are all lies and the characters will hopefully not believe him. Once he has possession of the knife he will be free of his place in the corner. He will use the blade to slay the unresisting, wide-eyed Tenatir and then casually take his time torturing, killing, and eating any of the remaining characters. He may end up by allowing some to live, but they must swear fealty to Gashoram and agree to become his agents and subject to his desires. He may maim them before freeing them, just to make sure they remember whom they serve. Regardless of whether they live or die, it will be a miserable time for the characters. They will have to plead, beg, and generally humiliate themselves before the Chaos Lord if they are to have any hope of escaping this situation alive. Eventually the Chaos Lord tires of them and transports any characters who have become his agents back to whatever plane they come from.

If one of the characters gives the Planar Knife to the Tenatir, the adventure ends quite differently.

The Tenatir takes the weapon willingly, smiling. While Gashoram screams in rage and fear, the Tenatir stalks across the room toward the Chaos Lord, his features changing, his body growing, swelling until he is the size of Gashoram. The Planar Knife grows as well, becoming a gigantic version of itself. The transformed Tenatir places the double blade between himself and Gashoram, a point pressed against each of their breasts. Gashoram screams but the Tenatir smiles gently as he takes hold of his brother and pulls him against his breast. The Planar Knife buries itself in the hearts of the two beings and the characters are washed over by a great heat and light.

The Balance

Before them stands a smallish man, barely over five feet tall. He smiles easily, his eyes betraying great intelligence and wisdom. He introduces himself as Jocklyn Rye, a manifestation of the spirit of the Balance. He thanks the characters for bringing his two selves together, though it is never clear whether he refers to the Planar Knife and the controller module, or to Gashoram and his brother, the Tenatir. At any rate, he is happy with the characters and willing to reward them in nearly whatever manner they choose.

Jocklyn will first cure them of whatever chaotic mutations they have suffered as a result of carrying the demon hearts. The characters will be allowed to keep any mutation they deem desirable. Additionally, Jocklyn might be willing to provide them with special weapons or items of magic. He might even possibly bring back to life a character who was

killed during the course of this adventure. He will of course provide them with interplanar transportation back to whichever plane they choose. Most certainly he will offer the characters a chance to visit Tanelorn. The gamemaster will have to make the final decision about suitable rewards for the characters' success.

With the death of Gashoram, the Chaos Lord's grip on the plane is released and the world of Styxx settles into a solid, unchanging form, devoid of life but ready now to evolve into a world of a more lawful nature. Also any Kynn K'tal that might have escaped to other worlds are destroyed with the death of their master.

If Maria still lives, Jocklyn will, at her request, restore the *Rogue Mistress* to operating condition. If the gamemaster desires, Maria may invite the adventurers to join her crew for further adventures across the multiverse.

Play Aids

The following are items which will greatly ease the GM's play when used. They include: Comprehensive lists of all non-player characters and new weapons used in this book, as well as handouts which will enhance the players understanding of the game.

Queen Pollidemia, servant of Gashoram

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 29 POW 32 DEX 15 CHA 16

Hit Points: 14 **Armor:** None, but possesses numerous magical wards.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Demon Dagger	105%	65%	1D4+2+8D6

Skills: Ambush 65%, Balance 75%, Plant Lore 85%, Posion Lore 78%.

Summoning Ability: 117%

Astralgyx, demon jester

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 7 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 23 CHA 5

Hit Points: 12 **Armor:** 2 points of demon skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
2 Claws	35%	10%	1D2
Bite	55%	—	1D3

Skills: Balance 98%, Climb 76%, Dodge 95%, Hide 75%, Juggle 95%, Jump 95%, Move Quietly 85%, Sleight of Hand 89%, Tumble 95%.

Abilities: Twice per day Astralgyx can near instantaneously teleport to any location he chooses. He will always flee rather than fight.

Possessions: Astralgyx seems to have an unlimited supply of the yellow globes which contain demons capable of carrying passengers across the planes.

Gath, guardian demon

STR 17 CON 21 SIZ 20 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 17 CHA 3

Hit Points: 29 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Claw x2	79%	67%	1D6
Flame Breath	90%	—	3D8
Acid Blood	55%	—	2D10

Gath attacks with both claws every round. If both hit, the victim is held tightly. If he cannot worm free with a successful STR vs. STR struggle against the demon, he is held fast and subjected to the demon's flame breath attack.

Any weapon that cuts or pierces Gath's skin releases a spray of acid blood that, if it strikes the attacker, causes 2D10 points of damage, ignoring any armor as it drains through the gaps and chinks. The acid does not harm the armor but, at the gamemaster's option, may dissolve the straps and ties that keep the armor sections in place.

Skills: Ambush 95%, Hide 95%, Listen 85%, Move Quietly 95%, Scent 95%, Search 90%, See 85%, Track 95%.

Valmir Horne, Laukland vigilante

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 14 DEX 16 CHA 16

Hit Points: 17 **Armor:** Scale Mail (1D10)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Sword	88%	72%	1D10+1
Dagger	78%	71%	1D4+2
Buckler	73%	69%	1D4

Skills: Ambush 35%, Climb 45%, Dodge 45%, First Aid 55%, Hide 55%, Move Quietly 50%, Navigate 50%, Orate 75%, Persuade 70%, Pilot Balloon Craft 84%, Search 40%, See 55%, Tumble 45%.

Languages: Ildaron Common 90%/99%.

The Tenatir

STR 9 CON 28 SIZ 19 INT 32 POW 26 DEX 9 CHA 18

Hit Points: 35 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Balance 99%, Climb 88%, Dodge 80%, Listen 98%, Hide 92%, Make Map 106%, Memorize 117%, Move Quietly 99%, Music Lore 111%, Navigate 112%, Persuade 78%, Scent 101%, Search 34%, See 97%, Sing 98%, Taste 88%.

Maria de Tres Pistolas, pirate captain

STR 12 CON 16 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW 18 DEX 20 CHA 21

Hit Points: 16 **Armor:** None, but has invisible force field.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Revolver	97%	—	2D6+2
Dagger	88%	94%	1D4+2
Cannon	92%	—	10D6
Thrown Dagger	92%	—	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 67%, Balance 88%, Climb 98%, Conceal 92%, Cut Purse 94%, Dodge 92%, First Aid 76%, Hide 97%, Jump 93%, Listen 92%, Make Map 93%, Memorize 85%, Move Quietly 95%, Music Lore 95%, Navigate 96%, Orate 95%, Persuade 90%, Pick Lock 97%, Ride 55%, Scent 88%, Search 87%, See 91%, Set Trap 65%, Sleight Of Hand 88%, Swim 99%, Taste 66%, Tie Knot 92%, Tumble 88%.

Languages: Albyon Common 65%/95%, Ildaron Common 55%/92%.

Possessions: A high-tech shield given to her by Ferenz. When activated, it confers an almost impenetrable force field. She can not effectively fight from within it, but she can use it to effect a tactical retreat. This device has only a certain amount of energy charges and there are but a few left, perhaps 20 minutes worth. It protects Maria from physical attacks, electricity, liquids, heat, etc., up to a maximum of 30 points from any single attack.

Maria's three nickel-plated revolvers are fast and deadly weapons. Each holds six shots and fires twice per round with a base range of 60 feet. Maria can fire pistols with both hands, accurately, or fan one of them. Fanning allows her to expend all six cartridges in a single round. Her shooting skill when fanning is half normal but she can aim at as many as six different targets, as long as they are within a ten foot wide area. Reloading one of these guns requires two rounds and Maria keeps a large supply of ammunition in her cabin. In addition to the damage they do, the metal slugs are capable of piercing (ignoring) the first 10 points of armor they encounter.

Demons: Maria has a demon dagger capable of inflicting an extra 5D6 points of damage. If the weapon is thrown, it instantly teleports back to her hand after hitting the target: CON 34 POW 14

Krathak, first mate

STR 25 CON 30 SIZ 19 INT 24 POW 22 DEX 20 CHA 14

Hit Points: 37 **Armor:** 6 points of resilient, rubbery scales.

Damage Bonus: +2D6/+2D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Ray Gun	97%	—	6D6
Fighting Knife	95%	102%	1D8+3
Cannon	80%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 80%, Balance 88%, Climb 85%, Conceal 55%, Cut Purse 45%, Dodge 88%, First Aid 70%, Hide 67%, Jump 67%, Listen 90%, Memorize 89%, Move Quietly 75%, Navigate 90%, Persuade 80%, Scent 100%, Search 80%, See 92%, Swim 100%, Tie Knot 88%, Track 66%, Tumble 65%.

Languages: Albyon Common 75/90%, Ildaron Common 88/95%.

Possessions: Krathak's ray gun fires a pencil-thin beam of blue energy. He can, if he wishes, adjust it so that less damage is caused and less energy used. This deadly weapon fires twice per round and ignores any and all armor save force fields. It has a base range of 60 feet but is incapable of shooting any farther. The beam ends sharply at 60 feet. The beam extends no farther than this. After twenty shots, the energy unit must be replaced. This can be popped in within the space of one round. Krathak has a large supply of spare energy units which are recharged directly off the ship's engines.

Hilda, viking warrior

STR 21 CON 22 SIZ 17 INT 14 POW 15 DEX 15 CHA 15

Hit Points: 27 **Armor:** Chain Mail (1D10+1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Long Spear	95%	92%	1D10+1
Thrown Spear	88%	—	2D6
Cannon	95%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 90%, Balance 65%, Hide 65%, Listen 85%, Move Quietly 70%, Search 65%, See 95%, Set Trap 85%, Track 85%.

Languages: Albyon Common 65/85%, Ildaron Common 45/75%.

Grr'luk Houlk, giant of a man

STR 30 CON 32 SIZ 24 INT 8 POW 12 DEX 11 CHA 9

Hit Points: 44 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +3D6/+3D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Spiked Club	88%	65%	1D8+1
Tower Shield	65%	92%	1D6+2
Cannon	78%	—	10D6

Skills: Balance 32%, Climb 34%, Dodge 33%, First Aid 40%, Hide 20%, Jump 50%, Listen 66%, Move Quietly 16%, Persuade 10%, Scent 98%, Search 73%, See 75%, Set Trap 65%, Swim 66%, Tie Knot 66%, Track 80%.

Languages: Albyon Common 0/75%, Ildaron Common 0/65%.

Mikkl Grathorn, technician

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 9 INT 17 POW 13 DEX 10 CHA 11

Hit Points: 11 **Armor:** Leather (1d6-1)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	44%	24%	1D8+1
Target Shield	11%	23%	1D6

Skills: Balance 60%, Dodge 33%, Electrical Lore 95%, Hide 60%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Lore 85%, Move Quietly 45%, Orate 50%, Persuade 45%, Pick Lock 25%, Search 33%, See 55%.

Languages: Albyon Common 90/85%, Gollian 85/85%, Ildaron Common 89/80%.

Possessions: Grathorn uses a small hand-held device studded with meters and gauges. He calls it his bio-reader and uses it to scan people, buildings, objects, etc., often providing Maria with small bits of useful information. Only Grathorn understands how to use the device. Because of their basic lack of scientific knowledge, it would take a Young Kingdoms character over a year to learn even its simplest operations.

Okthang, invisible demon

STR 7 CON 13 SIZ 3 INT 7 POW 8 DEX 23 CHA 1

Hit Points: 7 **Armor:** None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	25%	—	1D3
Claw	20%	—	1D2

Skills: Cut Purse 93%, Move Quietly 96%.

Abilities: The Okthang, at will can become invisible and its presence is then undetectable 90% of the time.

Teo & Deo, identical twins

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 15 CHA 14

Hit Points: 15 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	88%	78%	1D8+1
Buckler	90%	95%	1D4
Thrown Dagger	85%	—	1D4+2
Self Bow	80%	—	1D8+1
Cannon	75%	—	10D6

Skills: Balance 90%, Climb 88%, Dodge 75%, Hide 80%, Jump 65%, Listen 75%, Move Quietly 60%, Search 75%, See 70%, Swim 65%, Tumble 85%.

Languages: Albyon Common 22/77%, Ildaron Common 17/67%

Demons: Each of the brothers has five demon arrows in his quiver. The arrows never miss their mark, unless effected by a stronger magic, and inflict 8D6

damage. Used once, the demon is unbound and free to return to its own plane: CON 7 POW 9.

Harri Beecham, deformed mutant

STR 20 CON 17 SIZ 18 INT 8 POW 10 DEX 9 CHA 5

Hit Points: 23 **Armor:** Mutated bony plates (2D10-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	75%	70%	1D8+1
Buckler (2)	33%	96% (86%)	1D4
Dagger	65%	55%	1D4+2
Cannon	85%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 95%, Balance 45%, Climb 65%, Dodge 35%, Hide 55%, Move Quietly 40%, Track 85%.

Languages: Albyon Common 10/44%, Ildaron Common 5/33%.

Jerkin Kilmer, cutthroat

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 16 CHA 9

Hit Points: 15 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	85%	65%	1D8+1
Dagger	85%	90%	1D4+2
Cannon	65%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 95%, Balance 90%, Climb 75%, Conceal 85%, Cut Purse 90%, Dodge 88%, Hide 85%, Jump 95%, Listen 88%, Move Quietly 90%, Navigate 55%, Persuade 15%, Pick Lock 75%, Search 75%, See 75%, Set Trap 80%, Sleight Of Hand 89%, Swim 98%, Tie Knot 55%.

Languages: Albyon Common 73/88%, Ildaron Common 44/64%.

Demons: Jerkin's scimitar contains a demon that allows the weapon to do an extra 3D6 points of damage. Additionally, it also has the Phantom power and upon command, causes itself and its wielder to become immaterial and ghost-like, able to pass through solid objects at will. Characters in such a state can not be harmed by any physical weapons although they are vulnerable to other sorts of attacks. Only another character in the phantom state can physically attack this person: CON 40 POW 8.

Syfrim Kalb, knivesman

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 13 DEX 20 CHA 16

Hit Points: 17 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Dagger	65%	77%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	92%	—	1D4+2
Cannon	92%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 98%, Balance 99%, Climb 85%, Conceal 97%, Cut Purse 75%, Dodge 90%, Hide 98%, Juggle 90%, Jump 75%, Listen 60%, Move Quietly 96%, Music Lore 89%, Persuade 65%, Pick Lock 75%, Search 55%, See 70%, Sing 95%, Set Trap 85%, Sleight of Hand 95%, Swim 90%, Tie Knot 90%.

Languages: Albyon Common 45/65%, Ildaron Common 40/65%.

Demons: The two daggers each strike for an additional 3D6 points of damage plus have the ability to fly back to their master. It takes one round for the daggers to return to Syfrim's hand: CON 22 POW 10.

Generic Pirates

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 11 DEX 12 CHA 9

Hit Points: 13 **Armor:** None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	65%	55%	1D8+1
Cannon	80%	—	10D6

Skills: Ambush 65%, Balance 65%, Climb 85%, Dodge 65%, Hide 80%, Jump 55%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 75%, Navigate 65%, Swim 90%, Tie Knot 95%.

The Replicant

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ varies INT 12 POW 1 DEX 11 CHA varies

Hit Points: 10 **Armor:** 2 points of resilient, plastic flesh.

Skills: Balance 75%, Climb 20%, Dodge 25%, Listen 25%, Memorize 95%.

The replicant has a basic skill of 10% with any weapon and can improve skills in the usual manner. It is immune to attacks that rely upon a POW struggle, or attacks upon the emotions. The replicant 'imprints' on the first character it sees and follows this person's orders without question. It will do anything asked of it, short of sacrificing its own existence.

Q11, curious alien

STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 8 INT 20 POW 11 DEX 15 CHA 12

Hit Points: 11 Armor: None

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Biological Lore 75%, Chemical Lore 78%, Engineering Lore 92%, Hide 85%, Mechanical Lore 69%, Move Quietly 35%.

Paul Hobbes, highwayman

STR 9 CON 8 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 15 DEX 7 CHA 12

Hit Points: 8 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Musket	81%	35%	2D6+2
Pocket Pistol	50%	—	1D6+2
Dagger	50%	45%	1D4+2

Skills: Ambush 95%, Hide 65%, Persuade 75%, Ride 85%.

Justin Carrock, Eternal Champion

STR 16 CON 6/30 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 25 DEX 18 CHA 19

Hit Points: 6/30 Armor: Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Rapier	118%	102%	1D6+1+
Dagger	128%	128%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	123%	—	1D4+2
Pocket Pistol	103%	—	1D6+2
Musket	107%	—	2D6+2

Skills: Ambush 98%, Balance 87%, Climb 83%, Craft Bladed Weapon 89%, Credit 122%, Dodge 73%, First Aid 88%, Jump 23%, Listen 82%, Make Map 78%, Memorize 100%, Move Quietly 92%, Music Lore 75%, Orate 114%, Pick Lock 91%, Plant Lore 113%, Poison Lore 65%, Ride 108%, Search 77%, See 97%, Sing 99%, Sleight of Hand 121%, Swim 23%, Track 92%, Tumble 78%.

Languages: Albyon Common 86/91%.

Summoning Ability: 88%.

Carrock specializes in exotic elemental bindings. He rarely summons demons; they are difficult to bring to this plane and their extremely chaotic nature repels him.

ELEMENTAL RAPIER *Viper*

This sword's basket hilt is of brass, carved to resemble the scales of a reptile. Upon uttering the word 'strike', the sword energizes, and is capable of delivering an electric shock whenever it hits. This shock inflicts an extra 2D4 hit points of damage, which ignores any metal armor. If the hit points inflicted by the sword are able to overcome the target's CON on the resistance table, the target is stunned — unable to move or act — for 1D4 rounds. Using the sword's electrical attack requires the wearing of a rubberized gauntlet like the one Justin always uses.

Knife, vengeful demon

STR 22 CON 23 SIZ * INT 10 POW 30 DEX 15 CHA 6

*This is the character's siz

Hit Points: 23 plus siz adjustment. Armor: 20 points of metallic demon skin.

Damage Bonus: most likely +1D6+1D4.

Weapons: The character uses all weapons at his former ability. However, Knife always strikes twice in a round, once at normal DEX, and again at the end of the round. All hand-held, bladed weapons wielded by Knife do an additional 2D6 points of damage plus have a special effect. If the victim is unable to resist the POW of Knife he suffers a gruesome end, watching in horror as his flesh and bones begin to unravel in ribbons, spilling out through the wound and piling up on the ground in a wet, pulsing mound. This causes an additional 1D10 points of damage every round beginning after the round the victim was initially hit.

Skills: Same as the original character.

Dog, mercenary

STR 17 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 9 POW 12 DEX 14 CHA 13

Hit Points: 17 Armor: Demon Plate (25 points)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	89%	60%	1D8+1
Dagger	45%	30%	1D4+2
Self Bow	72%	—	1D8+1
Target Shield	78%	65%	1D6

Skills: Ambush 75%, Climb 15%, Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 15%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 50%, Ride 80%, See 65%, Set Trap 80%, Swim 5%, Track 65%, Tumble 5%.

Languages: Common 16%/75%.

DEMON SWORD *Thoron*

CON 25 POW 3

Damage Bonus: +3D6

DEMON ARMOR *Dixar*

CON 25 SIZ 12 POW 11

Armor: 25

Davis Olaer

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 9 INT 13 POW 11 DEX 17 CHA 9

Hit Points: 15 Armor: Demon Armor (17 points)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Broadsword	70%	67%	1D8+1
Dagger	65%	80%	1D4+2
Thrown Dagger	80%	—	1D4+2

Skills: Dodge 53%, Juggle 75%, Listen 38%, Move Quietly 60%, Tumble 47%.

DEMON ARMOR *Phantrey*

CON 17 POW 13

Armor: 17

Urlik Palk

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 10 DEX 12 CHA 11

Hit Points: 11 Armor: Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Demon Whip	78%	—	1D3+4D6*

Falchion 45% 35% 1D6+2

Skills: Ambush 60%, Dodge 57%, Hide 70%, Move Quietly 60%, Persuade 63%, Plant Lore 25%.

DEMON WHIP *Zar*

CON 12 POW 16

The lash of this demonic weapon wraps around the target upon striking (and inflicting damage). Once entangled, the target must resist the whip's POW or suffer an additional 1D6 damage on each subsequent round. Entangled victims may attempt to resist whip's POW once each round. Once successfully resisted the target is disentangled from lash.

Ransome Lyre

STR 17 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 7 POW 11 DEX 10 CHA 15

Hit Points: 14 Armor: Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Battle Ax	76%	40%	1D8+2
Self Bow	65%	—	1D8+1
Target Shield	28%	67%	1D6

Skills: Ambush 45%, Cut Purse 55%, Move Quietly 25%, Ride 65%.

Andrew Grant, Eternal Companion

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 22 POW 18 DEX 12 CHA 11

Hit Points: 14 Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Dagger	96%	96%	1D4+2

Quarterstaff 78% 99% 1D8

Skills: Ambush 55%, Balance 55%, Climb 65%, Dodge 95%, First Aid 55%, Hide 95%, Jump 85%, Listen 65%, Music Lore 105%, Navigate 85%, Orate 85%, Persuade 90%, Plant Lore 85%, Poison Lore 33%, Ride 75%, Search 85%, See 75%, Swim 65%, Track 55%, Tumble 85%.

Languages: Common 75%/80%, English 93%/95%, High Melnibonéan 65%/70%.

Summoning Ability: 65%.

Kaaa, demon familiar

STR 3 CON 11 SIZ 5 INT 23 POW 20 DEX 17 CHA 4

Hit Points: 7 **Armor:** 2 points of demon skin.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Bite	85%	—	1 point plus POT 18 venom.

Skills: Ambush 99%, Climb 95%, Dodge 98%, Hide 95%, Listen 75%, Move Quietly 97%, Scent 95%, Swim 99%.

Abilities: In addition to its telepathic powers, Kaaa can read the mind of any sentient being within 50 feet, provided it can overcome the being's pow with its own.

Kaaa has the ability to shift itself through the dimensions, traveling between the planes. It can shift only itself along with any other objects totalling up to no more than siz 2. Kaaa does not lose con points for shifting dimensions.

Kaaa can heal up to 2D6 hit points a day, either its own or someone else's.

Kaaa may also have other useful powers that the gamemaster can decide upon later in the adventure. These unspecified powers might be used to get the adventurers out of a tight spot with the Chaos ship.

Kirian, buccaneer

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 9 INT 13 POW 10 DEX 15 CHA 12

Hit Points: 16 **Armor:** Leather (1D6-1)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Scimitar	76%	65%	1D8+1
Spear	51%	39%	1D6+1

Skills: Ambush 59%, Balance 51%, Climb 80%, Dodge 25%, Evaluate Treasure 69%, Jump 50%, Move Quietly 64%, Navigate 89%, See 81%, Shiphandling 69%, Swim 65%, Tie Knot 76%.

Languages: Common 35%/85%.

Tannan Hrolkarlt, guard captain

STR 17 CON 18 SIZ 16 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 15 CHA 15

Hit Points: 22 **Armor:** Snow Suit (4/6)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	95%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	96%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	85%	80%	1D6+1
Light Cannon	92%	—	6D6

Skills: Ambush 65%, Balance 75%, Climb 65%, Dodge 75%, Drive Snow Ski 97%, Drive Snow Sled 91%, Hide 80%, Listen 75%, Make Map 85%, Move Quietly 70%, Orate 60%, Persuade 65%, Search 55%, See 85%, Set Trap 25%, Track 80%.

Lieutenant Van Derweeden, second in command

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 12 DEX 13 CHA 12

Hit Points: 17 **Armor:** Snow Suit (4/6 points)

Damage Bonus: +1D6/+1D4

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	85%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	87%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	77%	65%	1D6+1
Light Cannon	85%	—	6D6

Skills: Ambush 60%, Balance 56%, Climb 55%, Dodge 67%, Drive Snow Ski 88%, Drive Snow Sled 82%, Hide 50%, Listen 63%, Make Map 75%, Move Quietly 45%, Orate 50%, Persuade 55%, Search 58%, See 55%, Track 70%.

Ynilla Kelvert

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 9 INT 15 POW 16 DEX 17 CHA 19

Hit Points: 15 **Armor:** Snow Suit (4/6)

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Pistol	85%	—	2D6+1
Rifle	95%	—	4D6+1
Bayonet	75%	72%	1D6+1
Light Cannon	85%	—	6D6

Skills: Drive Snow Ski 90%, Drive Snow Sled 85%, Orate 75%, Persuade 80%.

New Weapons

Armor **Value**

Soft Leather	1D4-1
Cuirass, Steel	1D8-1
Ring Mail	1D8
Scale Mail	1D10
Chain Mail	1D10+1
Maria's Force Field	30

Hand Weapons **STR** **DEX** **Damage**

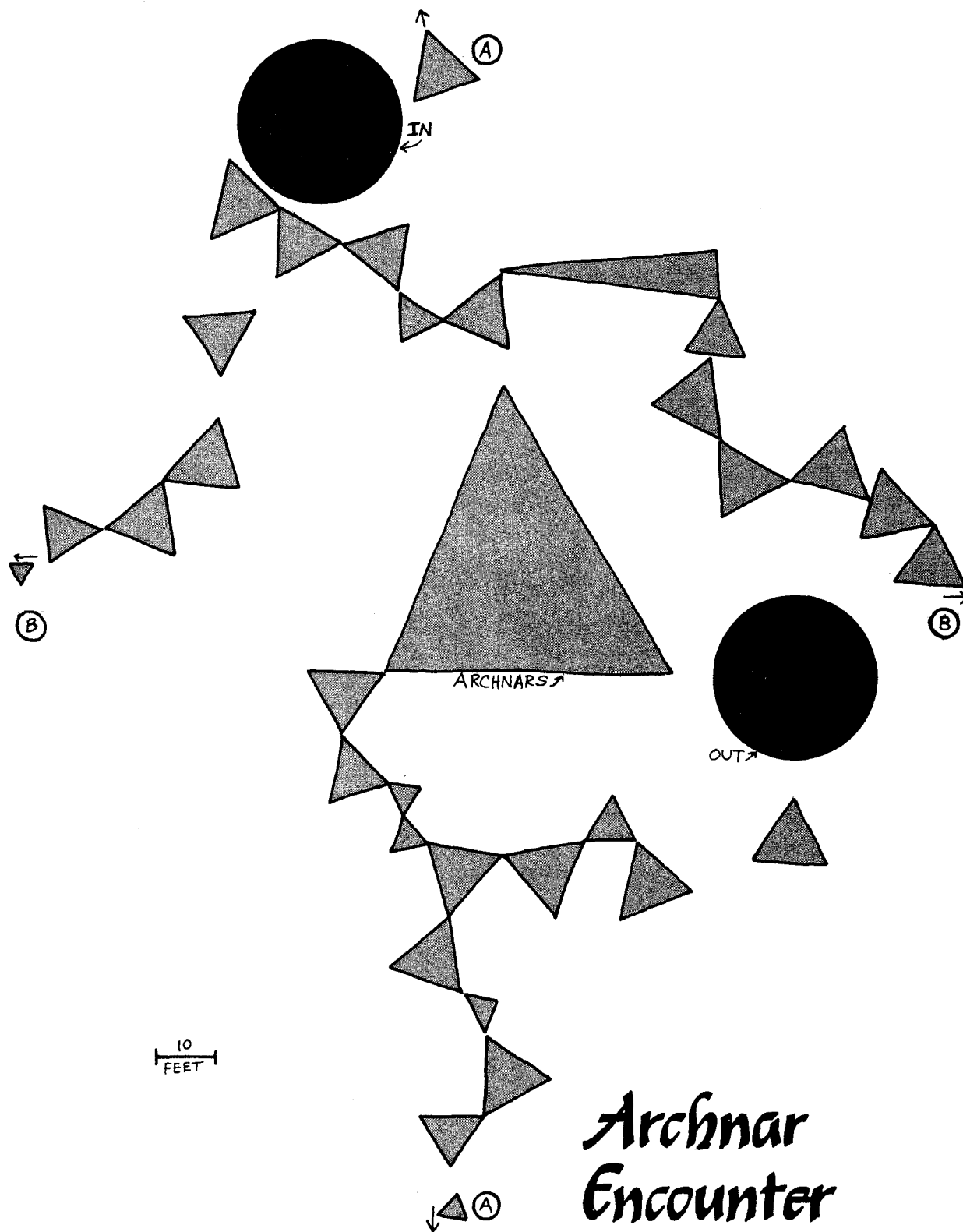
Ax, Stone	8	6	1D4+1
Bayonet, Mounted	7	7	1D6+1
Blackjack	—	6	1D4 plus knockout
Estoc	7	11	1D8
Gauntlets (Syferan)	—	—	1D4+2
Great Hammer	12	8	1D10+2
Knife, Fighting	9	10	1D8+3
Long Sword	8	10	1D10+1
Rapier	6	12	1D6+1
Spear, Stone	9	8	1D8+1
Whip	—	12	1D4 plus entangle

Missile Weapons **STR** **DEX** **Dam.** **Range (feet)**

Dart	—	8	1D4	40
Shuriken	—	11	1D2	50
Spear, Stone	9	10	2D6	50

Firearms **Shots/ Round** **Damage** **Range** **AP**

Acid Cannon	1/3	6D6	100	Ignores Armor
Beam Cannon, L.	1/2	6D6	300	Special
Beam Pistol	2	2D6+1	50	Special
Beam Rifle	1	4D6+1	100	Special
Blunderbuss	1/6	4D6/3D6/2D6	30/60/100	0
Cannon	1/6	10D6	500	Ignores Armor
Crossbow	1/2	2D6+2	250	5
Holster Pistol	1/6	2D4+2	40	5
Laser, Heavy	1/3	12D6	800	Special
Musket	1/6	2D6+2	80	8
Pocket Pistol	1/6	1D6+2	15	3
Ray Gun	3	6D6	60	Ignores Armor
Six Gun	2	2D6+2	60	10



Archnar Encounter



THE PALACE - CITY'S CENTRAL STRUCTURE, SURROUNDED BY OUT BATTLEMENT, 8 CORNER GUARD TOWERS - 4 GUARDS EACH, 2 GATE TOWERS EACH WITH 6 GUARDS, AND 6 GUARDS MOUNTING PATROL OF BATTLEMENTS. INNER COURTYARD CONTAINS AUDIENCE HALL, GRAIN BINS, GUARDS' QUARTERS, EXERCISE YARD, STABLE AND SATHAT. ROYAL COMPOUND LOCATED IN CENTER OF COURTYARD

ROYAL COMPOUND 4 CORNER GUARDHOUSES WITH 4 GUARDS EACH - 2 GATE TOWERS WITH 6 GUARDS EACH AND WITH 4 GUARDS MOUNTED ON REGULAR PATROL OF BATTLEMENTS. LANDSCAPED GROUNDS INCLUDE SMALL LAKE IN NORTHWEST CORNER, GARDEN IN WEST SECTION. GAZEBO LOCATED IN THIS SECTION, AS WELL AS UNUSED WELL. GUARDHOUSE WITH 12 GUARDS AND ROYAL QUARTERS (2 GUARDS AT ENTRANCE) LOCATED IN CENTER OF COMPOUND. GUARDS PATROLLED ON IRREGULAR BASIS BY APPROXIMATELY 6 GUARDS.

GUARDS ARE ALL VICIOUS EITHER FIERCELY LOYAL TO MEDIA AND ALL ARE LOW-SCUM - WOULD BE CONSIDERED CRIMINALS IN THIS SOCIETY. CRUEL AND RUTHLESS - TREAT CIVILIANS LIKE SLAVES - MEN LIKE ANIMALS. HAVE NO RULES OF COMBAT SAVE TO WIN. WORST IS YARA, MEDIA'S SERGEANT OF THE GUARD, QUARTERED IN DUNGEON LEVEL OF THE ROYAL QUARTERS.

MEDIA IS PARANOID AND MUST HAVE ARRANGED FOR ESCAPE SHOULD PALACE BE OVERRUN. THERE IS A TUNNEL EXTENDING FROM GAZEBO IN ROYAL COMPOUND TO CELLAR OF BLACK LIZARD TAVERN (2 GUARDS), BUT A ROUTE INTO THE ROYAL QUARTERS HAS NOT BEEN LOCATED.

PRISONERS HELD IN DUNGEONS, LOWEST LEVEL OF ROYAL QUARTERS. HERE MEDIA AND SALENNIA CONDUCT ABOMINABLE EXPERIMENTS. IT IS SAID THAT EAST WING OF DUNGEONS HAS RECENTLY BEEN VACATED TO MAKE ROOM FOR A SINGLE PRISONER OF SOME SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO MEDIA. IDENTITY OF PRISONER UNKNOWN.

THE EXPERIMENTS ARE CONDUCTED IN WEST WING - THEIR RESULTS ARE KNOWN TO BE THE MOST HIDEOUS MUTATIONS. THE MORE SUCCESSFUL OF THESE ARE KEPT ALIVE IN SECRETLY LOCKED CELLS IN THIS WING.

THERE IS RUMOR OF SOMETHING ELSE WHICH OCCUPIES THE LABORATORY, SOMETHING HORRIBLE AND MORE MONSTROUS THAN MUTATIONS, SOMETHING TIED IN WITH THE DISAPPEARANCES OF CERTAIN OF MEDIA'S MORE POWERFUL ENEMIES.

It looks as though my exile on this foul world will be eternal. Corlus came again but the word he brought remains the same. The Council of Mrose has retained my name on its list and should I return at this time to the world of Karlatan I shall be executed on sight. Oh how I yearn to return to my long lost home, to walk again across the tiled arch of Reform, and by the fakes and streams of the Park of Jaded Dreams. But it appears it shall not be; the fools of the council can only see the crimes I committed; they are incapable of imagining the great and wonderful things I might have achieved. How can they possibly measure the lives of a few innocent people against what I set out to do.

I sent Corlus back. The spheres will soon be too far apart for journeying to be expected. It may be another thousand years before my world and this miserable Albyon again draw near enough that we can travel back and forth, and I doubt that even I can live that long. I wished Corlus well there was a tear in his eye when we parted.

Life continues dull here. I have found ways to summon my helpers to my aid, but the process is far more taxing and time-consuming than at home so I attempt it but infrequently. The peasants hereabouts call me a wizard, a thing not good to be in this world. People who studied magic were sometimes arrested by the populace and then burned at the stake. I understand that this has not happened for sometime but, regardless, I cultivate the reputation of a reclusive scholar, interested only in books and the nature of the world. I have hired a man from the village. His name is Abner and he seems a good fellow. I enjoy his company.

I have gained some information about that mysterious object, the Planar Knife. It was apparently forged long ages ago by the gods of Chaos and given to one of their champions. The original purpose of the knife was to be a safeguard against any attempts by a Chaos lord to bring under his control an ancient race of demons called the Kygon K'tal. The blade, if used properly, was supposed to be able to open a gate to another world where dwell a race of beings called the R'lanm, sworn enemies of the Kygon K'tal. The weapon failed this champion and he was soon after killed. The Knife later came into the possession of one of more lawful inclination and this man, by meddling to the dagger some strange, magical object, was able to bring the Planar Knife under his control. Apparently, in some later age the Planar Knife was separated from this lawful component and left uncontrolled. The Planar Knife, freed of control began constructing a sort of itself, a Nest of Chaos, a world outside all worlds, even on the center of this self-created world now dwells the Planar Knife. From the weapon, tentacles stretch out in all directions, reaching through the planes into distant worlds searching for openings through which it can reach into these worlds and spill unto them the stuff of Chaos.

An odd rumor about the missing lawful component says that it still exists, dwelling on a far distant plane. It is said the device rules the plane and is worshipped by the people as a god. The head of this cult is called "the priest in white."

I have also learned more about the mysterious Kygon K'tal. Ages ago they were somehow bound within great statues, their lives frozen. Legend holds that before they can live again their hearts must dwell for a time in the breath of mortals from these hosts the Kygon could

somewhat regain their pfe energies. It seems the host would be destroyed by this process.

All my respect shows that the Planar Knife extends a tendril to Albyon. It has apparently been needed off, like so many of the others on different planes have been, by agents of the Lords of Pain. However, these seals can be broken by ones who know how. The poem below, I found in an ancient text chronicling some of the forgotten legends of this world. It speaks, I believe, of the Planar Knife. FORGED IN DARKNESS / TWO WHO ARE ONE / DEATH AND BIRTH / FATHER, SON / BROTHERS WOULD BE JOINED AGAIN / TWO IN ONE / BUT ONE AGAIN. Apparently the poem refers to an ancient being, some avatar of that known as the Balance, who was long ago split in two, each half but part of the whole. Whether it was the Planar Knife that it referred to or some other being, I cannot tell.

I believe that, by using the webways created by the knife I might possibly find my way back to Har-lator. Surely after all these years my enemies will be forgotten, I yearn so much for home. I have hired a ship and bodyguards to whom we sail for Solis and the Ruin of Now.

All my hopes are dashed. I found the opening easy enough all right, and the guardian presented little in the way of opposition — he seems greatly weakened by his age. I and my four bodyguards, after making the forbidden sign, entered the opening it created. After much trial we finally succeeded in reaching the center of the web. I saw the knife suspended from its thousand webs and was sorely tempted to possess it. Before I could move, however, we were set upon by the awful creatures. We tried to seal them off but my bodyguards were soon overwhelmed. I was badly able to escape the web as alone but I found my way back to the ship and returned to Whitewater. I regret it is beyond my ability and strength to pass through the webways. I must resign myself to dream my years in Albyon.

I have turned my attention to the strange, terrifying waves that have lately been passing through the land. Their source is as yet unknown to me, although I press the issue to the point of my strength. I have predicted in pulses with healing upon the people's minds;

they are perhaps not entirely unpleasant in their effect, but they sometimes warp permanently those that they have touched. Many people have lost property, as well as loved ones, to these pulses — bones rendered useless and family members transformed beyond recognition.

As the pulses are increasing in frequency and strength, the people of Albyon grow more fatalistic, heavy in the heart and the guilt I feel becomes greater. It seems beyond all doubt that the source of the chaos pulses is in Solis, the opening of the tendril of the Planar Knife, into one powerful seal brought and created by myself in my desire to return to my home. I see now that the agents of Har-lator took the truth, but in my delusion I dreamed that I, mere Spyn, could do what they would not dare. The damage and pain I have inflicted on these people weighs heavily upon me and for many months I have not slept thinking of the sorrow I have caused. What if they learned of what I have done and discovered that I am responsible for all that has happened to them? Surely they would assault my home and carry me from the tower burning me in the town square as who once their customs and who could blame them? I understand now why these people the witch, the wizard, and the warlock.

Word has come to me that Justin cannot now prepare to visit me. Carad is a strange man; I first heard of him many years ago. He is of the rarest breed of man, the bold champion Albyon. With all his health (he consumes strong drinks to keep himself strong and alert), he is as many deep thought much like myself but, unlike me, destined to play a great role in his world. I do not doubt that his spirit covers the curse that has fallen upon this world, and of my involvement with the Planar Knife, he must surely learn. Whether he comes simply for information or to slay me, I do not know. I accept my fate and responsibility, and am determined to aid in stopping the accursed plague of Chaos any way I can.

Carad has come and gone, as I guessed he came because of the crisis we suffer due to my long and night long day and my reasoning. He was only informing and although he seemed to understand my role in some of things, he showed no anger, nor any desire to seek revenge on me for my crime. I told him all of them of the history and powers of the knife, and all of what transpired when I attempted to cross the webways. He was grateful for this knowledge. I have provided him with what little else I can, the name of the world on which resides the device he seeks, and a map of part of this world. I know not what his plan is, but he seems determined to face the Planar Knife. I continue my studies regarding the problem. Perhaps I can learn something, else that will be of aid to him.

A STORMBRINGER ADVENTURE

R O G U E Mistress

An Epic
Campaign
Across the
Multiverse



Herber, Behrendt, Grate
Szymanski, Whitaker
Gassner, Triplett-Smith



KASSNER
2111

An Epic Campaign Across the Multiverse

R O G U E Mistress

The *multiverse* is a complex system of intertwined universes, each unique, with peculiar physical laws, varying influences of the gods of Law and Chaos, and differing in the degree to which the use of magic and technology are effective.

Heroes of sufficient cunning and ability traverse the physical barriers between these universes by means of special devices, spells, or magical portals. Risking their very existence, such heroes reap the reward of fabulous magical knowledge or exotic technological weaponry.

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Pollidemia, the demon sorceress



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