



Space Lairs

by Nicky Rea and Wes Nicholson

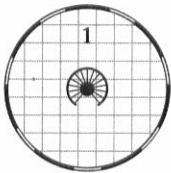


THE CROWN OF CORELLON

Elven Armada

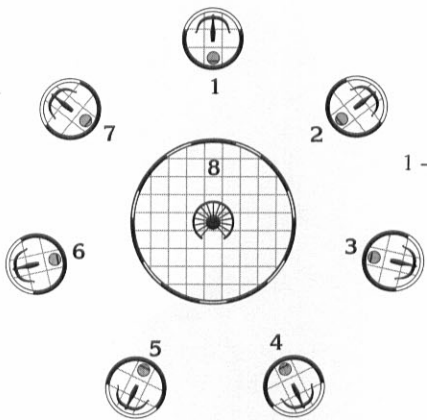
Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

Command Level



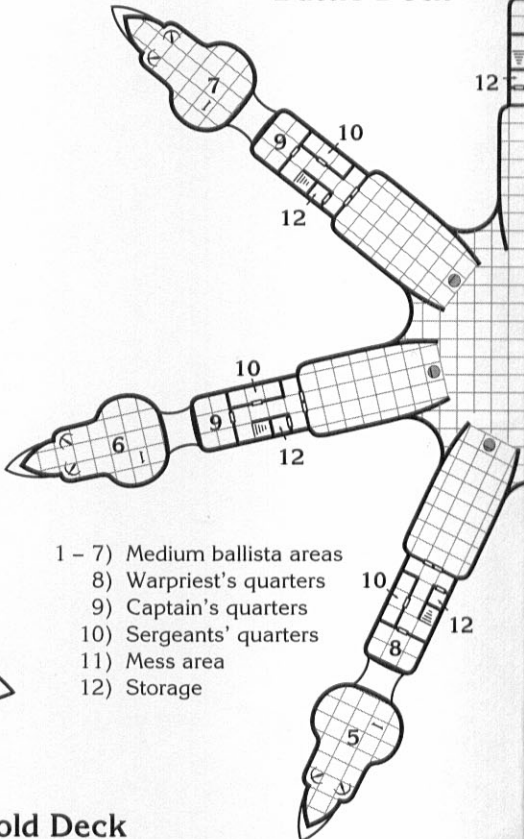
1) Wasp crew quarters

Turret Level



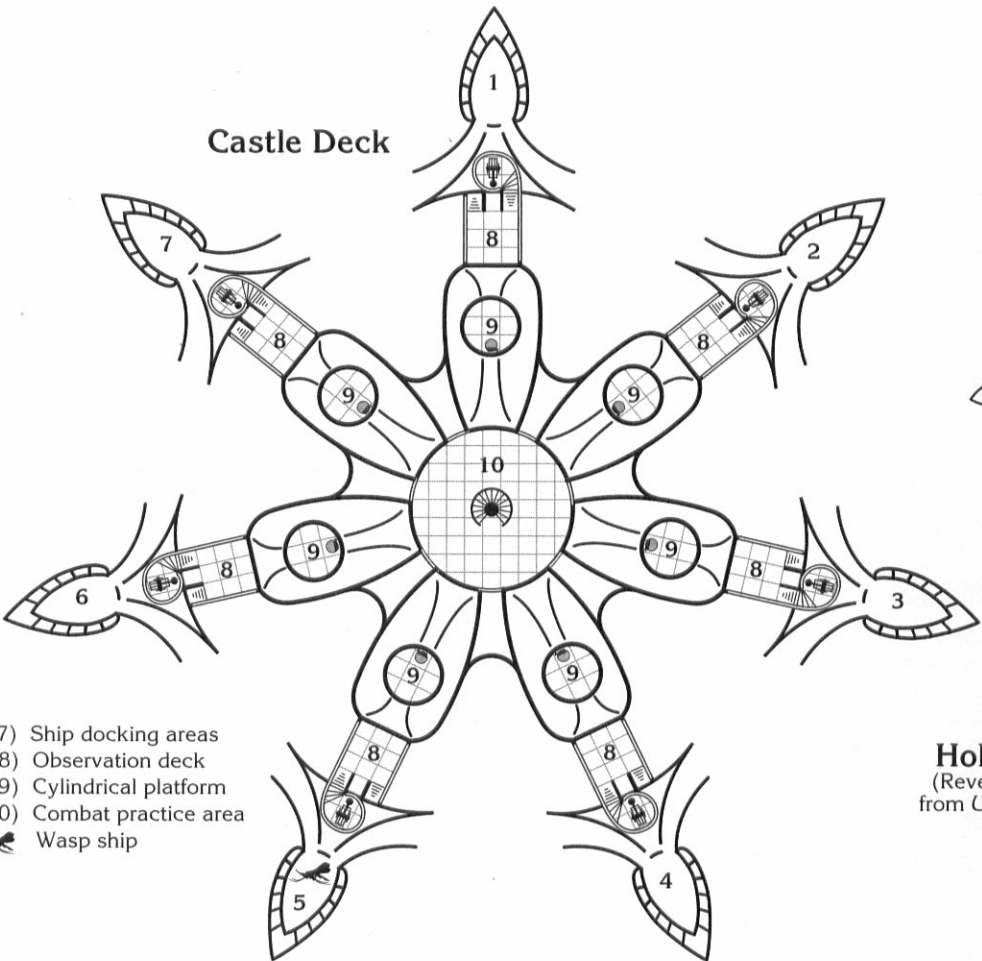
1 - 7) Ballista turrets
8) Almighty Lead quarters

Battle Deck



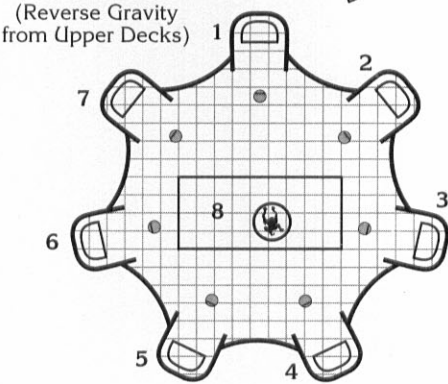
1 - 7) Medium ballista areas
8) Warpriest's quarters
9) Captain's quarters
10) Sergeants' quarters
11) Mess area
12) Storage

Castle Deck



1 - 7) Ship docking areas
8) Observation deck
9) Cylindrical platform
10) Combat practice area
Wasp ship

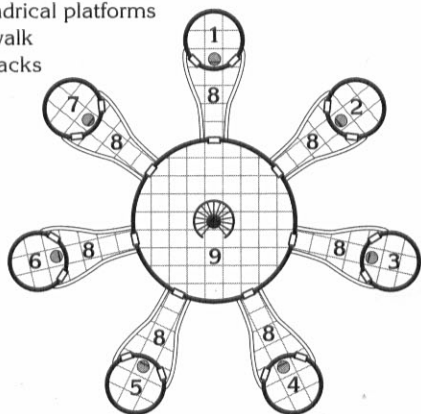
Hold Deck



1-7) Hol
8) Ma
Wrp

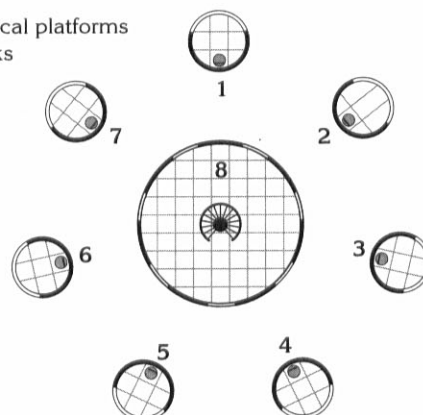
Catwalk Level

- 7) Cylindrical platforms
- 8) Catwalk
- 9) Barracks



Troop Level

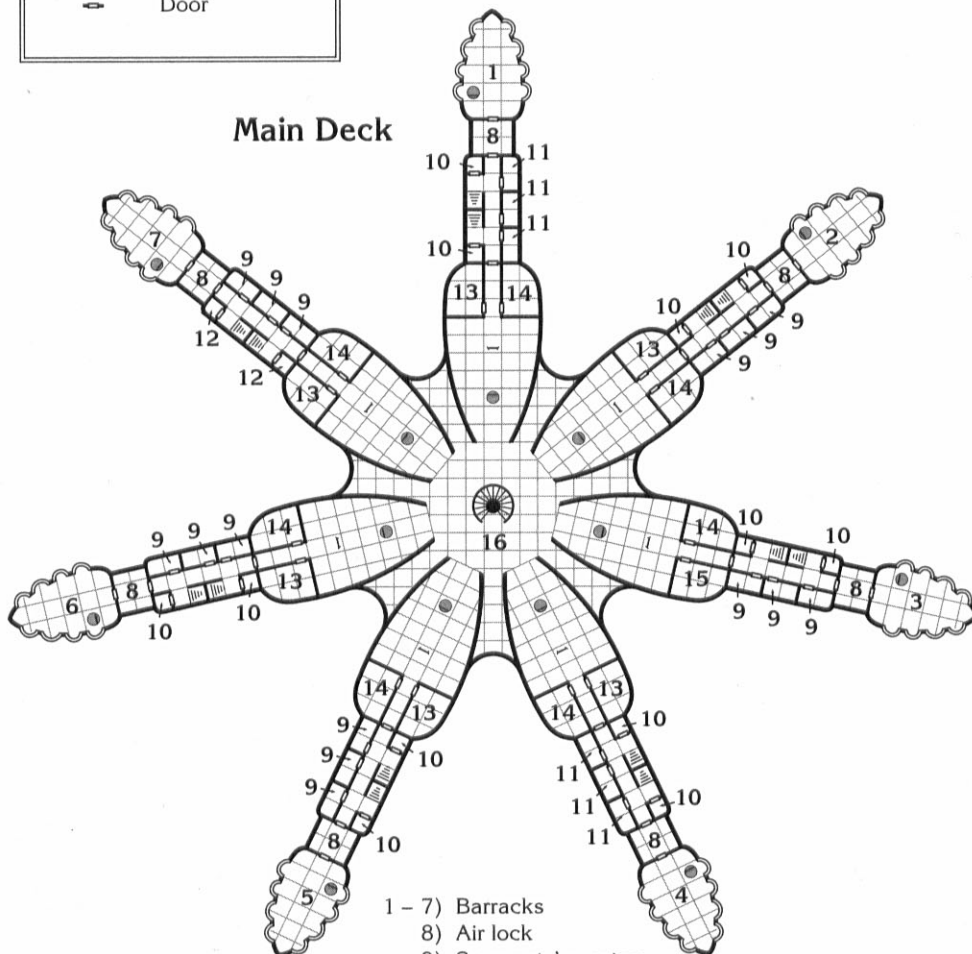
- 1 - 7) Cylindrical platforms
- 8) Barracks



Key

- Catapult
- Ballista
- Stairs
- Spiral staircase
- Ladder
- Door

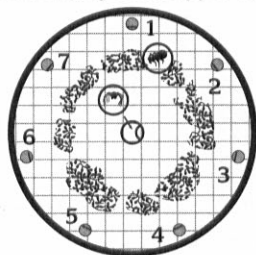
Main Deck



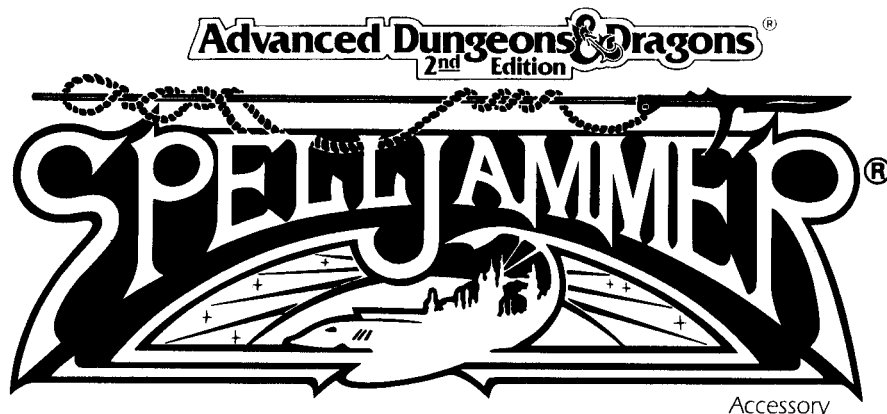
- 1 - 7) Barracks
- 8) Air lock
- 9) Sergeants' quarters
- 10) Storage
- 11) Dungeon cell
- 12) Head
- 13) Warpriest's quarters
- 14) Captain's quarters
- 15) Laundry
- 16) Gathering area

Arbor Deck

(Reverse Gravity from Upper Decks)



- 1 - 7) Ladders from hold deck
- Fountain
- Large spiders
- Phase spider



SPACE LAIRS

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HOW TO USE SPACE LAIRS

Space Lairs provides Dungeon Masters with a series of ready-made encounters to insert into any SPELLJAMMER® game campaign. The DM may use these adventures without much preparation during the middle of a game or to start one off.

WARNING! The information contained in *Space Lairs* is intended for use by DMs; players should check with their Dungeon Masters before reading this book in its entirety. (The authors are not to be held responsible for any harm inflicted on characters by vengeful DMs, angry that players had already read the “secret” encounter that was to be sprung on them.)

The adventures in this book are designed to cover a broad range of player character party levels, and they assume there will be approximately six characters in the group. The encounters are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. The final adventure is a special, longer scenario, to challenge parties of any level with a bit more time to spend.

Encounter Format

The main creature the party will face in each adventure is listed across the top of the first page of the scenario, after the adventure’s title. Following the monster type is a number in parentheses: the total number of the creatures that PCs might meet during the adventure. While the scenario might contain minor encounters with other monsters, the creature listed after the title is the group’s main adversary.

DMs can tell at a glance if this adventure is right for their campaigns by glancing at the top of the first column of text. Here is listed the total party levels needed to play, the terrain of the encounter, the total gold piece value of the nonmagical treasure to be found, and the experience points to be gained from defeating all the monsters in the adventure. Special conditions of the scenario are noted here as well.

The listing for **Total Party Levels** helps the DM determine the power of the group for whom the adventure was written. The “average” number under Total Party Levels points to the power of the creatures a party is facing. If the party average falls below or

above this listing by more than one, or if the party is larger or smaller than the total levels listed, the DM should make some alterations to the encounter.

For a weaker party, halving the creatures’ hit points or the amount of damage a trap inflicts is one solution. Another is to provide the PCs with some magical items containing one or two charges or a helpful potion near the beginning of the adventure. In cases where the members of the party have been hired to conduct an investigation, their patron might loan them a magical weapon or two. (These would need to be returned to their proper owner at the end of the adventure, of course.)

When the DM must make an adventure tougher, simply increasing the number of creatures encountered or raising their hit points can often bring the scenario up to the proper level. When any change is made, the DM should remember to modify the XP numbers.

The **Total gp Value** figure indicates the amount of nonmagical treasure that can be found in the adventure. It does not, however, include the value of any ships the party may encounter in the adventure. DMs with parties of an “entrepreneurial” nature should consult the *Concordance of Arcane Space* in the SPELLJAMMER boxed set for the values of ships and their fittings. Likewise, the total does not include the gp value of nontreasure items characters may encounter; it is assumed that, on finding stored or discarded weapons, armor, or supplies, they will take only what they need, not stockpile extra loot to sell later.

The **Total Monster XP** figure is computed from the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*™ listings. Three listings are given for each of the encounters; the DM should apply the figure appropriate to the encounter’s outcome.

The **Kill** listing applies when the party has killed all the creatures in the adventure: the title monsters plus any additional adversaries (not including NPCs). The **Defeat** entry is used when the party members succeed in routing the creatures or otherwise win the encounter without killing all the monsters. This listing, three-fourths the Kill figure, probably will be used

DMs can find detailed descriptions of most of the monsters featured in *Space Lairs* in MC7 and MC9, the SPELLJAMMER appendixes to the **MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM**.

HOW TO USE SPACE LAIRS

most often. The **Retreat** figure is offered if the party members attempted to vanquish the creatures in the encounter but were forced to flee. This entry, one-third the Defeat value, allows the DM to award the PCs for learning from the encounter, though they were unable to entirely overcome the creature(s).

Sometimes a **Bonus/Penalty** line follows. This percentage, applied to the Kill figure, rewards parties for outsmarting especially difficult tricks or traps or penalizes parties for things like killing nonhostile NPCs or similar creatures. It's important to note that in some cases it is preferable for the PCs *not* to kill a creature. In an encounter whose purpose is for the PCs to negotiate or help the creature, the group should be awarded the Bonus XP value, to best reflect the intended spirit of the encounter. (DMs should always feel free to add extra bonuses for role-playing, etc.)

Next comes a section called the **Set Up**, which offers suggestions for involving the PCs in the story. Every encounter has three Set Up features. The DM can use these bits of information or situations as premises to get the PCs into the adventure. They can also come in handy to get the party off a tangent and back on track.

The **Lair** section, following the Set Up, contains the meat of the adventure. First is outlined some background on the creature(s) and the premise of the encounter. Then the encounter area is described, with details of what is there and easily seen. (Some adventures include maps.) Many of the scenarios feature several separate encounters, which eventually lead to the climactic battle between the party and the creatures.

The Lair section also covers the monsters' combat tactics, as well as those of nonplayer characters contained within the scenario.

Terms Used in Space Lairs

Standard terms used throughout this book are defined in the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* Glossary. Every DM should become familiar with these terms. Whenever a new creature is introduced in an adventure, its stats

are listed as follows:

Ability scores/Int; AL; AC; MV; HD; hp; THAC0; #AT; Dmg; SA; SD; MR; SZ; ML; XP.

NPC statistics are similar, but may also include any special abilities the character possesses (such as thieving percentages), depending on how large a role the NPC has in the adventure. Also listed are weapons, magical items, and available spells.

SPELLJAMMER® Reference Materials

Space Lairs is designed to be played using the SPELLJAMMER® boxed set and the two AD&D® 2nd Edition *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™* appendixes for the SPELLJAMMER campaign setting (MC7 and MC9). The DM should be able to run the adventures in this book without referring to other reference materials, except central books such as the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide*. (Also helpful are MC1 and MC2, the core of the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*, or the new *Monstrous Manual*.)

While not essential, *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook* and *War Captain's Companion* feature some new rules, ships, nonweapon proficiencies, nonhuman character races, clarifications of magic use in space, and other valuable material. Consulting these SPELLJAMMER accessories can only enhance players' and DMs' understanding and enjoyment of this space fantasy setting.

Customizing Encounters

Though they are intended as quick add-ins for a game in progress or as intriguing lead-ins to start a campaign, the encounters in this book can be expanded, used only in part, strung together, or modified in any other way to best suit the DM's home campaign. If there is something in any encounter the DM doesn't like, from the party levels to the tactics and treasure, the DM should change it.

Bon voyage—the lairs await!

The encounters that follow can be modified in various ways to make them fit more smoothly into a DM's personal campaign. They can even be strung together to form a long series of adventures!

THE GOOD SHIP GUMP – COLOSSUS (1)

Terrain: Wildspace

Total Party Levels: 12 (Average 2nd)

Total gp Value: 660

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 1,750

Defeat: 1,313

Retreat: 438

Special: The XP of the colossus, 27,000, is not included in the Kill listing above, as Gump is not the party's adversary in this adventure.

Set Up

- The party has just left a planetoid where the PCs restocked and freshened their ship's air. Before they can go to spelljamming speed, one or more of the PCs notices a huge humanoid figure floating toward them. The figure is frantically gesturing for them to approach. (Note that the ship cannot go to spelljamming speed so long as the colossus is nearby.)

- A lame gnome named Axelander Perilant approaches the party members while they are relaxing in a tavern or inn and offers them several hundred gold pieces to accompany him back to help out "my friend, Gump." All they have to do is take their ship out to meet Gump, who is drifting in wildspace "... not too far away" and needs a group to rid him of the "hurty things" bothering him. Gump helped the gnome escape from pirates, and Axelander wants to repay the kindness, but is unable to get around well enough to do what Gump wants done. If asked, Axelander will tell the party Gump is a colossus.

- While carefully skirting an asteroid field, the party's ship is suddenly rocked by a direct hit. Toward the rear of the ship floats a huge giant, just emerged from around behind an asteroid! The great, imposing figure rubs his head, (which he just bumped on the hull of the party's vessel) and yells to the PCs, "Hey, you guys! Can you get these hurty things offa me?"

The Lair

Gump is a colossus with a problem. He has been drifting in space ever since he unwisely kicked off from the planetoid where he was living to catch his pet spaceworm, which ran away. (Note: Spaceworms, introduced in SJR1, *Lost Ships*, do not usually make good pets. The worm in question probably had no notion Gump considered it a friend, and only departed after deciding the colossus was too big to eat.) Once in space, Gump found that he had no control over his direction of travel and no ability to return to his home. Worse than that, he soon discovered that he got hungry awfully quickly.

Luckily for Gump (who isn't very bright), he hadn't been too careful about taking baths for awhile, and several plants had taken root in the dirt on his back. That meant at least he had something to eat. Thanks to the same plants refreshing his air supply, he also hasn't had any trouble breathing. But the question of atmosphere hasn't crossed Gump's mind: he has other problems.

For some reason that Gump can't figure out, as the plants have grown and spread, they have begun to hurt. At first he tried to be brave, but they hurt all the time, and he couldn't concentrate on anything else. This is a real problem, as Gump has difficulty concentrating anyway. He would like to be able to get somewhere where he can settle down again, but he can't plan how to do that as long as these "hurty things" keep pinching and itching and digging into him. He wants them removed.

Gump wants the party to climb onto his back to dig up, uproot, or otherwise get rid of all the nasty plants causing the trouble. It especially hurts right up between his shoulder blades where he can't reach to scratch, he says. He isn't in a very good mood, since he can't sleep well and is constantly itching and in pain.

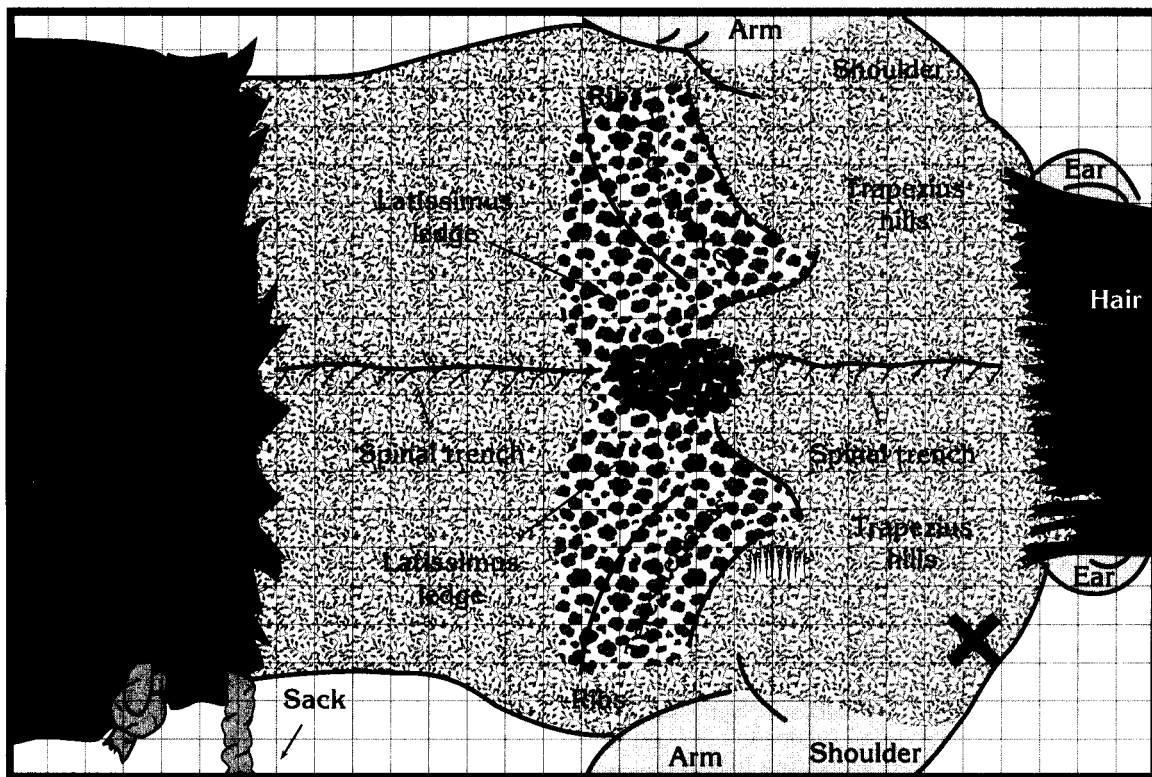
He hasn't figured out yet that if the plants are removed, so is his inexhaustible air supply. Hopefully, the party will figure that out for him. (Note: While colossi can go for more than a month in wildspace without running out of air, that may not be enough

"Hey, you guys! Can you get these hurty things offa me?"

—Gump, the Colossus.

Gump's Back

Scale: 1 square = 1.5 feet



Key



Moss, small plants



Large plants, small trees



Starting area



Krajens



Thornslingers

time for them to get anywhere to freshen it at their slow, drifting pace.) Unfortunately, if the PCs try to tell Gump they can't take the plants off, he will become very angry. It would be best if the party members at least pretended they were going to remove all the plants, climbed on his back, and tried to find out what was causing his pain. He won't take "no" for an answer.

Gump (colossus): Int Low; AL CG; AC 10; MV 48, Fl 24 (E); HD 35; hp 260; THAC0 5; #AT 1 every 2 rounds; Dmg 50-100 (or 5-10 hull points); SA Stunning clap, throw boulders; SZ G (60' tall); ML Unsteady (6); XP 27,000.

Colossi are dim-witted and move slowly on land, but in wildspace they are large enough to serve as their own ships. They cannot propel themselves except by leaping from a solid surface, however, which means they move very slowly, almost drifting along. Their planes of gravity make their stomachs or backs the walking surfaces for smaller creatures aboard them.

Gump has Intelligence 5. He is very good-hearted and means well, but he can't reason things out very

easily. He tends to forget small details—like the fact that he has a party of small creatures riding on his back, who might be hurt if he scratched an itch there.

If the characters agree to help Gump get rid of the "hurty things" on his back, he will lift them onto his shoulder. From there they can make their way down along his back in search of the greenery causing the problem. Gump is 60 feet tall and weighs 70 tons. Moving across his back is more like trekking through heavy undergrowth in hilly terrain than walking on a living being.

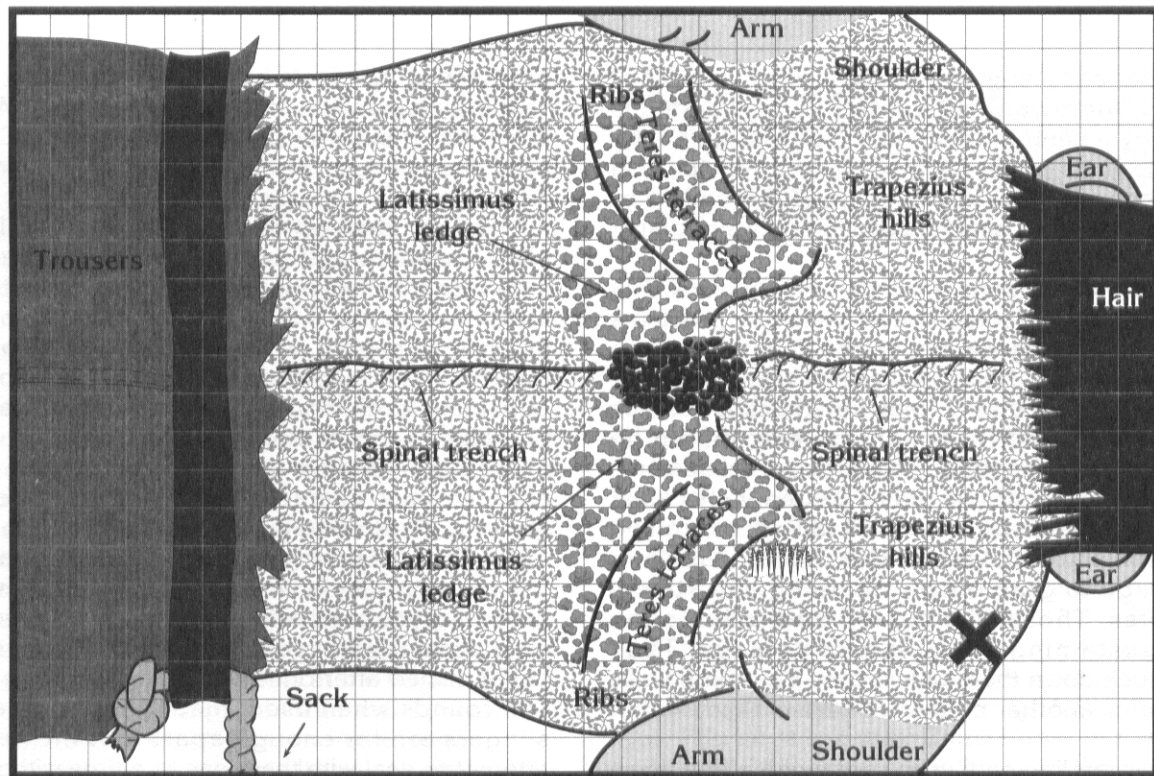
The Trapezius Hills

The map above shows the party's starting point on Gump's right shoulder; as such, the PCs' encounters all take place on the right side of the creature's back. DMs may just as easily set the journey on the left side, and have the colossus deposit characters on his left shoulder instead.

Starting from the shoulder/neck area, the characters will be traveling slightly uphill onto the upper back above Gump's shoulder blades. This is the site of the trapezius muscles. The area is mostly covered

Gump's Back

Scale: 1 square = 1.5 feet



Key



Moss, small plants



Starting area



Krajens



Large plants, small trees



Thornslingers

THE GOOD SHIP GUMP - COLOSSUS (1)

with mosses and low-growing plants, since it is one of the areas Gump can reach to scratch. The area is bisected by a central trench that has sharp, knobby hillocks down its center (Gump's spine). Anyone with a proficiency in agriculture, cooking, herbalism or survival can identify several edible varieties of plants in the area.

There are no dangerous plants here, nor any that have deep enough roots to be causing any problems for Gump. The only danger to the PCs in the area comes from Gump. He did not realize that having the party tromping around on him would tickle quite so much. He holds off for as long as he can, but he finally just has to wiggle his shoulders for relief.

All the characters must make Dexterity checks at half their normal scores to avoid falling and rolling into the spinal trench. Those who succeed fall down but manage to grab onto something and steady themselves. Those who fail fall and roll into the trench, sustaining 1-6 points of damage. They remain stuck down there unless they can climb walls to get out or another character assists them with a rope.

Nobody standing on Gump can avoid falling down when he shrugs; the characters feel as though an earthquake tremor has passed right beneath their feet. Gump is very apologetic, but explains, "I just couldn't help it. You tickle." He promises to warn the characters the next time he feels like wiggling his shoulders. Alert PCs may notice that Gump carries a broken off tree to use as a club. It would be really unfortunate for the characters if Gump were to try to scratch with it.

The Teres Terraces

The teres major and teres minor muscles form terraces just below the trapezius and behind the arm. It is hard for Gump to reach this area, so there are many larger plants here. Besides the tall grasses and brambles, there are lots of bushes, reeds, small trees, and a few flowers. Along with these are a cluster of thornslingers. Since these plants sling their ammunition at any living things moving nearby, they fling thorns whenever Gump reaches toward them. They

are some of the plants he could do without.

Thornslingers (5): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 0; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0: See below; #AT 1 (Volley); Dmg 2-8; SD Adhesive dew; SZ M (4' radius); ML Average (9); XP 175 each.

Thornslingers—carnivorous plants with pale yellow blossoms—average about 8 feet in diameter and lie very close to the ground. The spidery, white plants attack by slinging 2-8 thorns up to a range of 30 feet in a spread pattern, which means being hit by one or more thorns is automatic. The thorns cause one point of damage each, and each plant has a virtually inexhaustible supply of thorns to hurl.

The central core of the plant is covered by a strong adhesive dew. Characters with less than Strength 13 are held immobile until freed or digested; those with Strength equal to or greater than 13 can break free in 1-4 rounds. Once a victim is caught, digestive juices cause 1-3 points of damage per round. Flame causes only normal damage to the plants. Open flame is extinguished after one round, and oil burns for only two rounds when used against them. The thornslingers are far enough apart that the party can attempt to deal with them one at a time without being subjected to a constant barrage of thorns from them all at once.

(The complete entry can be found in MC11, the FORGOTTEN REALMS® appendix to the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™.)

When the PCs successfully remove the thornslingers, Gump heaves a sigh of relief (the party teeters precariously) and tells them they are doing fine, but he still hurts a lot right in the middle where he can't reach. He will try to point out the area that is giving him problems, which may result in the characters having to wildly dodge under Gump's big hand as he sweeps it across his back. He should not be able to hit the PCs if they try any evasive actions, but the backdraft is enough to knock over anyone not already sitting or lying down.

Though they are not close enough to fall into the spinal trench, standing characters may find themselves sliding down Gump's rib cage toward his stomach. Gump snatches his hand away when he

"Oops. I forgot you was in the way."
—Gump, after trying to point out the "hurty things."

THE GOOD SHIP GUMP - COLOSSUS (1)

realizes he almost hit them, and clasps his arms across his chest to remind himself not to use them again. Anyone in the rib cage area must make a Dexterity check at -2 or be trapped under Gump's arm, sustaining 1-8 points of damage. Trapped characters can yell to be freed, or other PCs can run up next to Gump's ear and tell him to lift his arm. Gump will be very sorry if he hurt anyone.

The Latissimus Ledge

The real problem on Gump's back isn't a plant at all. As the characters travel up onto the ledge of the latissimus dorsi, the central area just below the trapezius and between the teres, they see a bed of what appears to be mossy ground cover interspersed with a colony of large barnacles. If examined closely, the skin around the barnacles looks red and sore. Characters who have been in space before may have a chance of identifying the barnaclelike growths. Have them make an Intelligence roll at -3 to correctly do so.

The growths are immature krajens, which have taken root on the colossus and are feeding on Gump while they grow large enough to leave their host and go hunting.

Immature krajens (25): Int Non; AL N; AC 9; MV 3; HD ½; hp 4; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Paralysis; SZ S (1' high); ML Unsteady (7); XP 35 each.

Krajen spores take root in any solid object, including living creatures. Once the spore is planted, its base widens and digs into the surface, while the outer surface hardens into a shell similar to a barnacle's. A central tentacle nests in an opening in the top of the shell and can whip out to attack enemies.

Most spacefarers destroy colonies of krajens wherever they are found, both because they are destructive while growing and to keep them from maturing into the gigantic adult krajens that attack ships. The krajens' tentacles are tipped with a poison that causes anyone hit to be paralyzed for 2-8 rounds. During that time, a krajen continues to strike at the paralyzed attacker with its tentacle or shuffles off to some other part of the surface it is growing on. A threat or attack to the colony aggravates all the

krajens, leading them all to attack those causing the disturbance.

If anyone successfully identifies the krajen colony, that character will know the information given above. Otherwise, the party will have to learn it the hard way. The characters should be able to plan their strategy so that they are only subject to one or two attacks while dealing with each krajen; if they don't make any attempt to state that they are approaching so as to minimize the risk to themselves, they could be in severe trouble almost immediately. If all the PCs end up paralyzed and in danger of dying, the DM might consider having Gump sneeze, which would propel them off his back and into a floating orbit around his body until they can shake off the paralysis and regroup.

Reward for a Job Well Done

When the PCs have removed the "hurty things," Gump is enormously pleased and considers the members of the party to be his best friends. Since Gump knows people should be nice to their friends, he gives the characters a present of their choice. One of them can take one item out of Gump's sack (which he wears tied to his waist). Since the party members are all friends, Gump figures they can all share the item.

Among the dross (old bones, a couple big rocks, a dragon scale, a decaying cow, and the figurehead off a small ship), there is one item they will want. Under the dragon scale is a box holding:

- 100 pp
- A gold ring (*ring of protection* +2)
- A metallic vial holding a *healing potion*
- A nonmagical gold armband worth 160 gp

The Gump then helps his new friends reboard their ship and bids them farewell. He says he has given up on his search for his lost pet (admitting that it was never that affectionate anyway), but figures that by now he must be getting close to the colossus home world, Arhoad. He's pretty excited to have a wonderful new tale to tell his kin when he finds them.

Many colossi talk about wanting to find their homeworld, Arhoad. Historians claim this planet is merely myth. Yet, the tales of faraway family are enough to spur the great creatures to attempt pilgrimages. The fact that they don't know how to get there usually doesn't bother them too much.

DEADLY RIDDLES – ASTROSPHINX (1)

Terrain: Wildspace (Rogue planet)
Total Party Levels: 18 (Average 3rd)
Total gp Value: 14,486
Total Monster XP:
 Kill: 6,000
 Defeat: 4,500
 Retreat: 1,500

Set Up

- The party's ship, in need of an air exchange, happens upon a rogue planet floating free within the sphere.

- The party members have heard a dwarf explorer speak of his recent voyage, in which, while in orbit around a rogue planet, he sighted a luminescent golden ore called glod (pronounced "glowed"). The PCs decide to visit the planet and collect some of the ore for research.

- A crazy dwarf merchant has hired the party to bring back a supply of glod, a luminescent golden ore. The PCs now approach a rogue planet, the only known source of glod in all the spheres. The merchant gave them the impression that the glod could make them all rich.

The Lair

Gazing down at the small planetoid, the party members can see that the north and south pole areas appear to be rich in glod. The north pole is brighter than the south, although both can be readily seen from space. Any group here only to get some fresh air should be intrigued enough by these glowing polar regions to stop and investigate.

If the ship attempts to land anywhere except the north polar region, crewmembers find evidence of tectonic activity on a huge scale. The further south they travel, the heavier the activity becomes. As they approach the surface anywhere other than the north polar area, a violent eruption throws molten rock 1d100+100 feet into the air over a wide region. They

must decide it is not safe to land anywhere except near the north pole. The geothermic activity makes it impossible for the characters to set the ship down anywhere south of the equator.

The glod on a mountain near the north pole is concentrated more heavily than anywhere else on the planet. The party members spy a clear, flat area about three miles south of this glod deposit, which can easily accommodate their ship. There is a 5 percent chance that they will find a ship already on the ground in the area when they arrive. (The astrophinx living here tries to destroy all evidence of other vessels as soon as possible, but it could be running behind in its cleanup efforts.) The astrophinx sees the PCs land and begins moving toward them immediately.

Once on the ground, it's a rough hike to the glod mountain. There are low foothills and plains featuring wide crevasses and scattered, large boulders. PCs should determine from these and other signs that daily seismic activity is wreaking havoc with this planet. The geothermal energy constantly being released keeps the rogue's temperature at a level able to support life, even far away from any sun. However, the party members do not encounter any living creatures on the ground. If they think about it, they haven't seen living creatures anywhere on the planet.

Before they reach the large glod deposit, they come upon several large caves. The first few have small deposits of glod on the walls. Party members note that each one-inch cube of the metal gives off light equivalent to a single candle. If they have come here on a mission to collect glod, they know the mineral is quiescent until agitated by either an electrical charge such as a lightning bolt (natural or magical) or by seismic activity of at least six on the Richter scale. The glod here is in a permanent state of agitation due to the planet's instability. If they did not have this information previously, the PCs can learn these facts through close study of the glod and surrounding area.

In the third cave that the PCs search on their way toward the glod mountain, they notice bones on the

Glod, a luminous golden ore, gives off light when agitated by an electrical charge or seismic activity. It might well be nicknamed "fool's glod," as many adventurers have risked their lives for the glimmering substance, which grows dull and brittle within 10 days after being mined.

DEADLY RIDDLES – ASTROSPHINX (1)

floor, as well as some shredded clothing. Weapons, armor, and other items also litter the ground. The astrosphinx uses these caves to store his food supply—dead spacefarers. (It chose this area for its lair knowing the bright glod deposits would attract victims.) Caves closest to the glod concentration hold the partially decomposed bodies of various spacefaring races. Many of the corpses show evidence of being struck by lightning. If the party members found a ship when they landed, they now see freshly killed bodies in one of the latter caves.

While the party members are busy exploring the area, the astrosphinx is stalking them. If they make straight for the biggest glod deposit, it will confront them at the base of the glod mountain. If they explore caves as they go, it will first attack any single party member it can find, and then stalk the rest. Should the party members remain together, the astrosphinx will challenge them when they move near a suitable cave to store their bodies for later consumption.

The Astrosphinx

The creature is quite mad, even by astrosphinx standards. The tall, horned beast with a dragonlike body and batlike wings has killed every living creature on this planet, and any who visit as well. It does not realize that its home is self-destructing, and wouldn't care if it did know. The astrosphinx lives only to kill, eat, and ask riddles.

When it confronts the party members, it will first challenge them to a game of riddles. If they refuse, it will attack immediately. If they decide to play, it will attack the moment they lose. The astrosphinx plays by its own rules, so the party *will* lose, no matter what. The rules, as the beast explains, are that it asks a riddle, then the party asks a riddle, and so on until someone gets one wrong. A PC may think to point out that, to be fair, the beast should allow them to ask one riddle even if they get the first one wrong, to force a draw. Upon hearing this suggestion, the astrosphinx will fly into a rage and attack.

Astrosphinx (1): Int High; AL CE; AC 4; MV 18 Fl 24; HD 9; hp 43; THAC0 12; #AT 5; Dmg 1-6/1-6 (horns) + 4-24 (bite) + 1-6/1-6 (claws); SA Cone of

sleep gas, chain lightning (dmg 9-54); MR 25%; SZ L (12'); ML Fanatic (18); XP 6,000.

The Contest

In the riddle match, the DM may choose to offer players an intellectual challenge (playing down the creature's insanity) by having the beast ask traditional sphinx-type questions, such as:

Fire within, yet I burn cold.

I never touch the things I hold.

What am I?

—A mirror.

or

I don't exist in place or time

Yet there's more of me than stars that shine.

What am I?

—Nothing.

Alternately, the astrosphinx can ask overtly threatening riddles, like:

Where am I going?

—I am going to kill you.

or

(Scratching the word "Ptheghath" in the ground)

How is my name pronounced?

—Death.

Finally, this astrosphinx may ask one of the mad, illogical riddles for which its species is known:

How is a mouse when it spins?

—The higher the fewer.

or

(Scratching "ughphoti" in the ground)

How is this word pronounced?

—Fish.

If the party members manage to answer a riddle correctly, the astrosphinx will explode as a 20d6 ring of chain lightning.

In attacking, the astrosphinx's tactics will depend on the number of opponents it faces. Against a single opponent, it prefers to attack physically with its horns (1-6 points per horn), its claws (1-6 points per claw), and its teeth (4-24 points). If it has not killed its opponent in two rounds, it will use its breath weapon: a cone of sleep gas 80 feet long. The cone stretches expands from a width of 4 feet at the monster's

Insanity—one of the predominant characteristics of the astrosphinx—might be used to defeat it. DMs may choose to allow a 1 percent chance of success to party members who answer the beast's demented riddle with an equally mad response.

DEADLY RIDDLES - ASTROSPHINX (1)

mouth to 20 feet at the end. All creatures within the cone's area must save vs. breath weapon or fall asleep for 1-6 turns.

When faced with multiple opponents, the astrosphinx prefers to use its breath weapon in the first round, then go to melee combat with any characters still standing. If fewer than half the targeted characters fall asleep from the gas, the astrosphinx will fire a chain lightning bolt from its eyes in the third round. (It can't use chain lightning in the second round, as the attack takes one round to prepare.) In the second round, the monster will launch himself at the closest standing party member. The target may notice the beast's eye color shifting from violet to gold, a warning that the monster is readying a lightning bolt. Whether this shift means anything to the party member depends on whether the character has seen one of these horrid creatures before.

The chain lightning acts as a 6th level wizard spell, doing 9d6 damage to the first target, then arcing to the next character within range (including the astrosphinx itself). The second target takes 8d6 damage. The lightning then arcs to a third target for 7d6 damage, and so on until either there are no more targets in range or nine targets have been hit. Saving throws for half damage apply to all creatures hit, as does magic resistance. Successful saves and magic resistance rolls do not prevent the lightning from finishing its destructive course.

In the round following its chain lightning attack, the astrosphinx is blind and red-eyed. It suffers a -4 penalty to hit the party members, but it flails about so furiously that only a brave or foolish adventurer would approach too close. After one round, the astrosphinx can see again and will attack at melee range. Its eyes will begin changing to gold as it prepares to use its lightning attack again.

From here on, the astrosphinx will use its breath weapon every five rounds (ie: in round 6, 11, 16, etc.) and chain lightning every three rounds (rounds 6, 9, 12, etc.). When it can not launch a special attack, it will use its five physical attacks against the closest opponent. All physical attacks will be directed against a single foe in any one round. In the round

following each chain lightning bolt, while the astrosphinx is blind, it will attack with extra fury but always at -4 to hit. If at any time the astrosphinx has rendered all the party members unconscious, it will quickly slay them and store their bodies for later consumption.

If things are going badly for it in the battle, the astrosphinx will fly away. Although it is fanatical, it is not suicidal.

The Loot

The astrosphinx has stored its treasure in a cave near the top of the glod mountain. Once the monster has been killed or driven off, the treasure is unguarded. Heaped upon the floor at the back of the cave is the following:

- 1,000 cp
- 600 sp
- 2,000 gp
- A silver ring with a blue jasper stone set in four silver claws (100 gp)
- A silver ring decorated with two small garnets, each held in a gold claw setting (700 gp)
- A finely crafted ring of woven platinum, made to resemble two serpents swallowing each other's tails (400 gp)
- A copper bracelet set with banded agates and turquoise (110 gp)
- A pair of lead crystal glasses in a velvet-lined box (160 gp)
- Electrum candelabra with room for seven candles on the lower tier and three candles on the upper tier (5,000 gp)
- Exquisite mahogany statue of a female elf, inset with a golden girdle, small diamonds for the eyes, and anklets of pure platinum (6,000 gp)

Adventurers counting on reaping extra financial rewards from their cargo of glod will be sorely disappointed. Should the party members continue on to collect specimens of the ore, they will discover later that the metal's luminescence fades in 1-10 days. The metal cannot be worked and becomes brittle and dull if refined. The ore has little or no commercial value.

"A mountain of glod! And it's all ours!"
—A greedy adventurer, in for a letdown.

THE DEATHSPIDER – SYLLIX (4)

Terrain: Phlogiston

Total Party Levels: 18 (Average 3rd)

Total gp Value: 2,605

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 700

Defeat: 525

Retreat: 175

Bonus: 50 percent, if the party members are not taken in by a syllix ruse.

Special: The neogi deathspider deckplan card from the SPELLJAMMER® boxed set will be useful as a map for this encounter. The PCs' ship must be less than 100 tons.

Set Up

- Just after passing through a portal into the phlogiston, the PCs' ship suddenly heels sideways as they run right into the gravity field of a neogi deathspider, hidden just above the opening until they passed through.
- From a friendly merchant who passes in the phlogiston, the party learns of a floating neogi deathspider hulk quite nearby. It is apparently abandoned. The merchant did not investigate, as his crewmembers are just sailors, not adventurers.
- The PCs' ship has been experiencing unexplained difficulties. In the phlogiston, they are forced to stop for emergency repairs. Just as they complete their work and are about to resume spelljamming speed, they see a huge spider-shaped vessel in their path. A neogi deathspider!

The Lair

The deathspider, the *Poison Lord*, is no longer functional. On board were Craz Lurd, the owner, 4 lesser neogi of his "family," 6 umber hulks, 33 human slaves, and 57 syllix. The neogi had recently captured these salamanderlike creatures to serve as food and slaves, or for use in lifejammer helms to power Craz Lurd's new mindspider. Some of the umber hulks were killed in the battle to capture the syllix, but Craz Lurd was certain the captives would settle down and submit once aboard. He was wrong.

The syllix staged a breakout when human slaves brought them food. They swarmed throughout the ship, grabbing whatever they could find to use as weapons, and attacking anyone they couldn't trust (i.e., all nonsyllix). Some of the humans joined them in attacking the neogi and their umber hulks, but all the humans were killed, either in combat against the neogi or by syllix who thought they were still under

neogi control.

One of the items the syllix grabbed to use as a weapon was a flask of oil. They intended to throw it on whoever was manning the helm and threaten to light it. They didn't know that it was a triple-sized *oil of fiery burning*. The resulting explosion ripped apart the helm, the helmsman, his umber hulk, most of the room, and several syllix.

Though they managed to defeat the umber hulks and neogi, most of the syllix were destroyed in the battle as well. Four remain, stranded with no helm. The syllix are willing to go against their normal warlike instincts and bargain for passage elsewhere, but the PCs must first convince them that they aren't slaves sent to recapture them.

Adrift

Unless the party encountered a merchant who told the members about the floating ship, the PCs may not realize that the craft is not able to function. Once their initial reaction is over, however, they should be able to see that it is just drifting in the Flow, slightly off kilter.

The *Poison Lord* is listing, and unless the party either approaches very carefully or has an enormous ship, the PCs' own vessel will shift to the side to match gravity planes with the deathspider. This could cause difficulties as unsecured items (or people) skitter and crash to the new "floor."

The deathspider's bloodred retractable shell is drawn back, and the PCs can get a good look at the citadel deck. The ballistae are not loaded, and several bodies lie in a tangled knot on deck. Another hangs from the torn, weblike rigging. From their vantage point, the party can guess that some of the bodies are human, two might be umber hulk, some look like salamanders or worms with legs, and one is a brightly colored, furry spider thing—a neogi. All look as though they were engaged in a terrific battle in which everyone died. Furthermore, the front (head portion) of the ship seems damaged. It appears as if a fiery explosion ripped through the area.

Citadel Deck

The DM may have to provide a reason for the party to explore the ship. If the party members are mainly of good alignment, they should consider the idea that the ship may still contain slaves locked away, who would die if not rescued. Those who are less altruistic might remember that neogi often carry lots of treasure to buy slaves. It is also a perfect opportunity to see an actual deathspider from the inside without being a slave.

Presumably, the party will enter the ship through the open shell onto the citadel deck. (If they do not

THE DEATHSPIDER – SYLLIX (4)

do so, just refer to the listing in this adventure for the section they are entering and make whatever changes are necessary to reflect their changed point of view.) Examination of the bodies here will confirm that all of them died in combat.

The dead neogi is Craz Lurd, the captain/owner of the vessel. The creature's hair is dyed with several bright colors, though the effect is somewhat subdued due to the dried blood covering the corpse. There are at least a dozen of the segmented salamanders here. If the PCs are familiar with space travel, let them make Intelligence rolls to recognize the syllix. Anyone who is successful knows they are intelligent and warlike. A second roll lets the PCs notice the tattoos on the left front and back shoulders of all the dead except the neogi. These are slave marks.

In area 3, a door has been bashed in. Amid a tangle of colored pillows that have come to rest against the far wall lies the body of a neogi. Its fur has fewer colors, though it wears a gold chain around its neck (worth 40 gp).

Areas 4 and 5 are empty except for tumbled pillows. If the PCs open the door to area 6, whoever does so must make a Dexterity check at -3 or be hit by a loose ballista bolt, which fell from its holding rack and came to rest against the door when the ship heeled. If struck, the character suffers 1-6 damage. Jettison shot and other ballista bolts litter the room. A few smaller weapons (swords, a mace, a light crossbow, and a wheel-lock pistol) are jumbled in among the rest.

Primary Deck

Part of area 16 (the flight deck and extra cargo hold), is visible through the open shell. Several bodies, mostly human, can be seen lying against or partially covered by large crates. Several crates have broken open. Spilling from them are rainbows of powders and liquids (dyes for coloring neogi hair and for tattooing). If the party members have the cargo space, they could take the undamaged dyes and sell them to the right buyer for up to 500 gp.

The cargo doors to the hold deck are open. Anyone looking down through them can easily spot the body of an umber hulk lying on its back below. An enormous broken crate partially covers it. Other wounds suggest that someone took advantage of the trapped creature's plight to finish it off.

Except for the blast damage, which punched through the wall from the bridge into the captain/owner's cabin and treasure room, areas 2, 4, and 5 are similar to areas 4 and 5 on the citadel deck. Areas 6 and 7 are a mess, with broken crockery and food everywhere. They were used for preparing food for the slaves. Dead humans can be found here as well.

Area 13 is much less savory, as this is where the neogi interrogated their prisoners (and, as the neogi are both a practical and repulsive race, where they prepared their food). The carnage in this room is enough to sicken the staunchest of old campaigners. Area 11 holds yet another dead neogi. This one is still clasped protectively by its dead umber hulk slave. Several more of the syllix died here as well. Area 10 is empty.

The ruined bridge, the captain/owner's cabin, and the treasure room (areas 1, 2, and 3) have become the quarters for the few remaining syllix.

Syllix (4): Int Avg; AL LE; AC 7; MV 12 (6 when upright); HD 3+1; hp 20, 16, 14, 12; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (weapon); SZ M (7' long/tall); ML Elite (13); XP 175 each.

The syllix have helped themselves to any weapons or potentially useful items they found in the captain's treasure room. These include a wheel-lock pistol (no good in the Flow except as a throwing weapon), a wand labeled "Zrech-ftar" (a *wand of magic missiles* with 12 charges), two of their own modified light crossbows with 14 quarrels, and a regular short sword. They also raided the sail locker and have managed to rig up "nets" over the doors into areas 1 and 2. Any PCs who go through these doors must state they are searching for traps to have any chance of noticing the tripwires that trigger these nets. Netted PCs can not free themselves unless they had a sharp weapon no larger than a dagger in hand when they were captured.

Because the explosion on the bridge ripped open the wall into area 3 and blew off the door into area 2, the bridge offers several possible attack and escape routes. The shattered helm (and dead neogi helmsman) provides at least some cover, though the air in this part of the ship still stinks of smoke and burned flesh. If necessary, the syllix could crawl out through the shattered "eyes" of the deathspider and onto the grappling ram. From there, they could creep up to the citadel deck and come back around behind anyone attempting to fight them.

The syllix think they are the last ones alive on board, but they haven't gone back below, in case the neogi have laid a trap to recapture them. They know they lack the numbers to defeat any neogi or umber hulks still alive. They will assume the worst of the PCs, believing them to be neogi slaves being forced to fight, and they will attack if they feel threatened.

If the syllix see the party's ship, they are much more willing to believe the PCs have nothing to do with the neogi. Of course, if it looks as though the PCs came in a very small ship, the syllix will try to lure the party into searching below to "... sssee iff the poor human ssslaves have all been ssslain by the

ssslimy neogi." Once the party goes below, the syllix close the cargo doors, board the party's ship, and try to make off with it.

Should the PCs' ship only have a few crewmembers left aboard, the syllix will attempt to scare them into obedience. If caught, they will claim they were only seeing if there were any jobs they could do in return for passage. If the party's ship has more than three or four crewmen aboard, the syllix will try to bargain with the PCs for passage. They will promise to perform shipboard duties for the party after they have had sufficient rest and food, and will behave themselves until they regain their strength. Then they will begin breeding to replace the members they lost to the neogi. The party members could end up having to deal with an Eruption of syllix on their ship!

Other objects of value to be found in the captain/owner's treasure room include:

- Six semiprecious stones (50 gp each)
- A soiled bolt of cloth of gold (worth 40 gp if cleaned)
- An ornate but useless gold ceremonial dagger set with three oval pieces of jet (200 gp)
- A padded wooden box holding a *healing potion* in a crystal vial (25 gp)

Hold Deck

Unlike the two upper decks, the hold is dark. Area 2 is filled with barrels of water and a few carefully packaged and separated bundles of the two substances that make smoke powder if combined. The stock had been intended for trade, but some of the water barrels split, soaking most of the cargo and rendering it useless. Enough can be saved for five uses (worth 1,500 gp).

Areas 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 are empty. The iron door leading into areas 3 and 4 (the slave and slavemaster quarters) is locked. The key can be found near area 11, where the slavemaster dropped it when he died. Inside the slave quarters are signs of vicious fighting. Cell doors are ajar, human and syllix bodies cover nearly all the possible space, and the smell is almost overwhelming. It looks as though both humans and syllix fought for their freedom but were blasted with magic. There is some evidence that the humans and syllix fought each other as well. The cells are little more than holes large enough for two slaves to lie side by side. Area 4 holds jumbled, bloodstained pillows.

Pools of dried blood dot the hall leading to area 11, the hall down which the slavemaster's umber hulk fled. It didn't realize its master had died, and was rushing to save the neogi. The syllix followed and slew the umber hulk, which already had massive wounds. The key to the slave quarters lies here.



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – PHLOG CRAWLER (1)

Terrain: Wildspace (Asteroid)

Total Party Levels: 18 (Average 3rd)

Total gp Value: 0

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 2,000

Defeat: 1,500

Retreat: 500

Bonus/Penalty: Extra 50 percent if the party members manage to kill the phlog-crawler in time to refresh their air. Loss of up to 50 percent if they fail to find and release Captain Bungel and Hyriss the priestess.

Special: The nature of this adventure demands that the PCs be in desperate need of air for their ship. The Set Up options below take into consideration the fact that the characters have not been able to refresh the air aboard their vessel for eight months.

Set Up

- An enemy ship has been pursuing the party members for months now, intending to keep up the pursuit until the PCs run out of air. The party members spy an asteroid up ahead that looks like a safe place to hide, the only celestial body they can reach before their fouled air turns deadly.

- A crewmember made an error in navigation that has stretched out this voyage, making the air aboard their ship dangerously fouled. A nearby asteroid offers the party members their only landing option, as this area of wildspace is otherwise deserted. While they aren't certain they can make out an air envelope around the asteroid, they can tell that the body gives off a metallic sheen.

- The party members are scouting for a base of operations, either for themselves or for someone who has hired them, when they find themselves in an uncharted area of wildspace. For months they have been searching for a celestial body to replenish their severely depleted air envelope. They are now approaching an unusual, gleaming asteroid that might prove useful as a base.

The Lair

As the party members land on the asteroid, it gives a hollow metallic ring. They notice that their ship has left indentations in the asteroid's shiny surface. Anyone with a mining, blacksmithing, or related proficiency can immediately identify the material as an alloy containing a good deal of gold! (Other players may make Intelligence checks to discover this information.)

The asteroid is revealed to be an artificial structure composed of tightly riveted metal plates made of the alloy. The surface is pocked with "craters"; an entrance hidden in each of the craters leads to the inside of the metal asteroid. The entire asteroid is 300 feet in diameter and airless. The exterior boasts no features other than the craters.

The PCs will want to get inside, either to escape their pursuers, to search for an air-rich environment inside, to explore a potential base, or to discover the source of such a wealth of rich metal.

They climb down through the short space beneath the crater doors to a hallway. Before them, extending outward to their right and left, is a ring of cabin doors. Each room is roughly 10 feet to a side, allowing for the curvature of the asteroid. Players exploring the hallway make a circuit of the inside of the asteroid's shell and count 10 cabin doors before arriving back at their starting point.

While two of the doors are locked, eight open easily into airless chambers. One of the cabins appears to have been a laboratory. Two others have been used as storage areas and still house some interesting items: boxes full of threaded rods, bolts, cogs, and other mechanical parts, and crates that used to contain food. The storage rooms hold many empty water barrels, and one houses three small drums containing oil for lubricating machinery.

Four of the rooms served as quarters to three crewmembers each; the bunks are about 4 feet long. None of the eight cabins contains any items of value now. All are deserted.

Next to the first locked door is one that opens into a cabin that affords a clear view of the starscape. It

Fresh air: Lasts 2-20 turns (individual) or 4 months (ship).

Fouled air: Lasts up to the 30th turn (individual) or the 5th through 8th month (ship).

(Causes -2 to ability checks and attack rolls.)

Deadly air: Begins on the 31st turn (individual) or the 9th month (ship).

(Roll saving throw vs. poison each turn.)

—**Concordance of Arcane Space**, page 11.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – PHLOG CRAWLER (1)

served as the navigation room when the asteroid was mobile. There is no apparent helm, but the party members see two large levers affixed to the floor. Tables hold star charts containing many scribbled notes and diagrams. None of the notes makes any sense to the party: they are written in Gnome. However, labels attached to the levers and the diagrams on the charts might be interpreted.

Party members who make their Intelligence checks at –4 (gnome drawing not being what one might call easy to decipher) glean that the levers were once used to steer the mechanical asteroid. Pulling starboard on one causes a climb, pushing port steers port. Pulling up on the other causes a dive, and pushing for a dive steers starboard. Any party members who can read Gnome can figure out these details automatically as well. Both of the levers are inoperative now.

In the Captain's Quarters

Behind the first locked door is the captain's quarters. To enter, party members have to first pick the clunky gnomish lock mechanism, then turn a wheel on the metal door, and twist a handle clockwise. Upon entering, the PCs find themselves in a small alcove facing a similar—though unlocked—door. Experienced spacefarers among the characters might realize they are in an air lock and take the precaution of closing the first door behind them before opening the next. A close inspection of the air lock reveals to them that the inner door and both crank mechanisms were hastily added onto the existing structure of the door.

In the captain's quarters are a bunk and a desk piled high with paperwork and small cubic models. A search of the desk area yields a log book, written in Gnome, detailing the operation of the machinery that drives the asteroid. Only those who can read Gnome can translate the log and discover that the locked room the PCs have yet to enter houses a vast array of machinery. The gnomish devices power the vessel and, more important for the PCs, create air. The log ends abruptly. The last entry was made more than a century ago.

Opposite the desk the party members spot an oblong wooden object lying on the floor, roughly man-sized and covered with bark. Beside it is a metal box (4' × 2') fitted with lots of incomprehensible gadgetry, including a clear sphere inside which a clockwork hamster runs. PCs can raise the lid on the box to discover a smaller version of the wooden object on the floor. To the left sit two 6-foot tanks with wheels attached to the nozzles.

Any veteran space traveler will recognize that the wooden figures are the results of *softwood* spells. (Others must roll their Intelligence or lower to determine this.) When the PCs crank the wheels on the air tanks resting nearby, fresh air rushes from the nozzles, flooding the cabin and dissolving the softwood. The figures released from the barky confines are the gnome captain (inside the metal box) and a human priestess. Even those who do not recognize the spell can assume the tanks hold air and turn the cranks to refresh their envelopes.

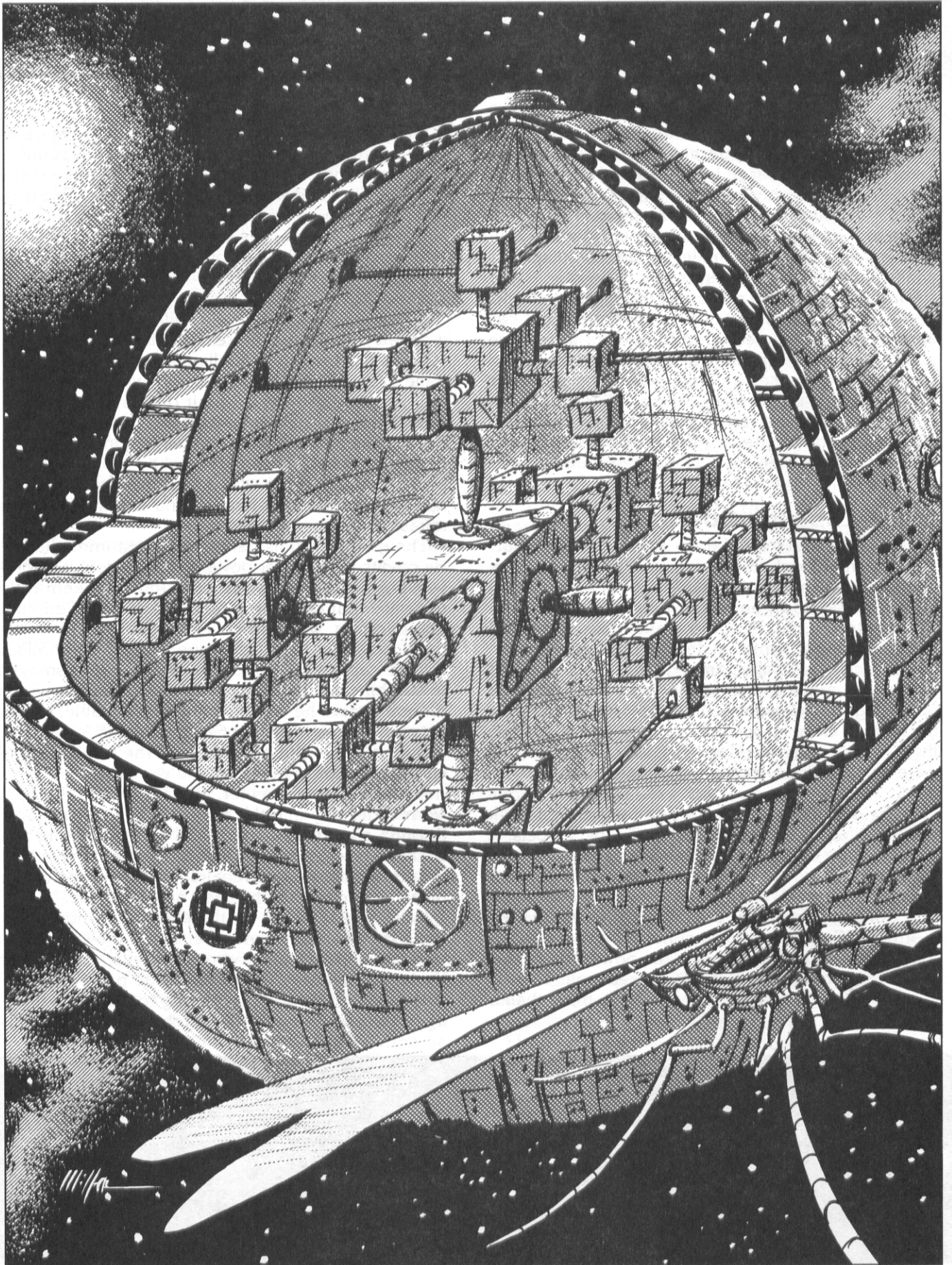
The gnome begins babbling almost immediately. He credits his hamster-powered "sleep box" with preserving him through his hibernation, seemingly unaware that only the priestess's spell saved him. The priestess, who introduces herself as Hyriss, gestures to the party not to argue with him. If the PCs ask the captain his name, they are quickly dismayed to see him take a deep, deep breath and open his mouth. Before he can utter the first syllable, Hyriss cuts in, "You can call him Captain Bungel."

Bungel, a bit put off, glares at the priestess and curtly demands of the PCs, "Did you kill it?"

"It" is a phlog-crawler. The PCs learn the best wormed its way into the asteroid's machinery room through a cracked seam in the surface plating and wreaked havoc among the gnomish crew. Bungel, on the surface for routine repairs, found and sealed the breach not long after the beast slipped inside.

It did not take long for the phlogiston monster to drain the Strength from most of the crewmembers working in the machinery room. Frantic, Bungel and Hyriss (a castaway the gnomes had picked up earlier) fended it off with sputtering torches and managed to seal it within the machinery room. (This

"It's a good thing I found this breach before it was too late!"
—Captain Bungel, moments after the phlog-crawler
slipped into his asteroid ship.



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – PHLOG CRAWLER (1)

chamber had been fitted with an air lock long ago, as the gnomes believed their mechanisms functioned at their levels of peak efficiency only within a vacuum.)

Not long after, the ship's drive seized up, and the air-making mechanisms stopped functioning. ("Never happened before, I just don't understand the mechanical failure. . . ." Bungel grumbles.) The two survivors were faced with eventual suffocation and—after going through all the asteroid's food and water—certain starvation. Finally, knowing that entering the machinery room to make repairs meant death as long as the phlog-crawler remained alive, they modified the door to the captain's cabin to make the room airtight and put themselves in suspended animation to await rescue.

Captain Bungel is anxious to get into his machinery room. Hyriss adds that they now are sufficient in number to confront and kill the beast. Once the phlog-crawler is dead, the air manufacturing devices will require only a bit of lubrication, the captain says, adding that he could make the necessary repairs to the drive as well.

The PCs don't have long to decide to help the two; they need to get those airmakers working again to refresh their ship. The only fresh air aboard the asteroid is in the captain's sealed quarters. (Already fouled if the party did not close the doors.)

Bungel (12th level, Head Tinker gnome captain): Str 11; Dex 18; Con 13; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 11; AL NG; AC 5; MV 6; HD Special; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2/1d6+1 (gnome pick); SD Counts as ½ human-sized creature for figuring air depletion; SZ S (3'); ML Champion (15); XP 2,000.

Hyriss (7th level human priestess): Str 13; Dex 12; Con 11; Int 16; Wis 16; Cha 13; AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); SD: *Cloak of protection +1*; SZ M (5'); ML Elite (13); XP 975.

Hyriss has no spells at her command, as she hasn't worshipped her deity in the hundred or so years she has been cocooned in softwood. She will have no time to pray for spells during this adventure. All her possessions were lost with her ship, except her cloak—useless against the phlog-crawler. She uses a piece of scrap pipe as a club in combat.

The Machinery Room

Of course, the party may have been so unfortunate as to enter the machinery room before encountering Bungel and Hyriss, or the captain's log book. In that case, they have no idea the horror that awaits them as they pick the lock of the hallway's second secured door and enter the air lock here.

They crank the wheel and turn the handle to gain access to the asteroid's core. The machinery room is a huge 275-foot-diameter hollow sphere. The whole place is immediately obvious as a gnomish construction. It is crisscrossed by catwalks going every direction, weaving their way in and out of all manner of mechanical devices of unknown purpose. Most of the machinery seems to be inoperative, and rust coats many of the gears and ratchets.

If the party is accompanied by the gnome, PCs receive detailed descriptions of the functions of each device. The central machine, an enormous cube 40 feet across and fitted with gobs of gears and cranks, is the power plant for the vessel. It contains a major helm, which has been "improved" to the gnomes' specifications but somehow manages to function nonetheless, albeit only with a qualified helmsman seated within.

Extending out from each face of the central cube is a long arm, with another block-shaped device attached. These six machines are connected to the central one by 30-foot-long crankshafts 6 feet high in the middle, tapering to 1-foot-diameter ends where they connect to eccentric gears. Each of these six machines is 20 feet across and serves to process air for the gnomish ship.

Each of those six machines is surrounded by five more blocklike constructions, which run the ship's weapons (when there are weapons on board). (A side note: Captain Bungel bartered his ship's weaponry away long ago in trade for spare parts.) All 30 of these machines are connected to their parent machine by a belt 4 feet across. The machines are spaced 10 feet from their parent constructions, and each one is 10 feet to a side.

These cubic contraptions are, in turn, orbited by five smaller machines in the same pattern. They are

"It's quite simple you see the hamster-powered rodotram-ultra drive turns the Schafferbinder cranks which drive the anterior interior exterior superior and posterior pistons in such a fashion so as to agitate the hibernatron capacitors . . ."
—Head Tinker Bungel, explaining the operation of his "sleep box."

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – PHLOG CRAWLER (1)

connected to their parent machine by two offset crankshafts 15 feet long. The machines in this layer are 8 feet across and produce electricity, steer for the vessel, and press metal parts.

The outermost ring of machines is connected to the inner wall of the ring of cabins by metal straps as well as the catwalks. Three of the outer machines are small forges for cast parts.

A few of the machines are working; the central device and its six satellite machines are not among them. Those that are functioning are in obvious need of attention—they grate and grind a lot, the belts wobble and need tension adjustments, and the eccentric gears need lubrication.

But the party members don't have much time to contemplate the gnomish mechanisms. Before they have finished absorbing the contents of the machinery room, they are attacked by a voracious phlog-crawler, waiting behind the air lock door. It sensed the presence of life aboard the asteroid once again, and instinct has driven as close as possible to its first prey in more than a hundred years.

Phlog-crawler (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6; HD 5; hp 23; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg Victim must save vs. breath weapon each round in contact with crawler or lose 1 point of Strength (dead at 0 Strength); SA Strength drain, speeds up air deterioration; SD Affected only by spells, magical weapons, and fire; SZ M (5'-7' long); ML Fearless (20); XP 2,000.

The phlog-crawler feeds on life energy. It attacks by coming in contact with its victim and draining the Strength from it. All targets are treated as AC 10, but Dexterity bonuses apply. No armor, *rings of protection*, or other protective items can affect the AC. The creature causes the air envelopes of those it touches to deteriorate in half the normal time. It will die if exposed to air longer than 24 hours. This phlog-crawler, because it has been trapped without food so long, is unlikely to flee even at the sight of fire and does not hesitate to attack a group.

After killing the phlog-crawler, the party members can assist the Captain Bungel in repairing the air manufacturing devices. If the lubricating oil from the storeroom is applied correctly, the machines will start

again and produce a rush of fresh air almost right away. Additional air is released from tanks built in between the cabins, and an envelope is quickly created around the asteroid. If this happens before the phlog-crawler can feed, it will leave before the atmosphere kills it. The air aboard the PCs' ship is immediately restored to freshness, assuming it has remained on the asteroid's surface.

The asteroid's drive can become functional again with some repair work from Bungel and a spellcaster (like a PC or Hyriss after she has prayed) in the major helm. Once the central machine is powered up, the others come on line by themselves. Remember, once the captain gets his gnomish helm working again, there is always a 20 percent chance it will malfunction suddenly, becoming inoperative for 2-8 turns. That's the magic of gnome ingenuity.

There is nothing of value aboard the asteroid, outside of the gold alloy with which it was constructed.

Hyriss may take pity on the captain and choose to accompany the party members back to their ship, but Bungel will refuse to leave his asteroid. The party members may choose to leave the preoccupied gnome some food and water.

If the party never encounters the captain and Hyriss, the members may consider the asteroid a good potential base. They should discover the pair in subsequent exploration. If they choose to simply renew their ship's air and leave, the asteroid will fall into disrepair quickly once they depart. If the pursuit Set Up was used, the characters should be on the lookout for ambushers that might have followed them into the asteroid.

DMs should frequently remind the players that their characters must make split-second decisions in this adventure, as they are working against a dead air deadline. Air envelopes around humans remain fresh for 2-20 turns (generous DMs can offer the maximum) and remain fouled up to the 30th turn. Beginning with the 31st turn, PCs must save vs. poison each turn or faint. A second failure results in death. (A gnome only uses half as much air as a human.) The characters' air envelopes are fouled when they arrive aboard the asteroid.

If party members can capture the phlog-crawler,
it can earn them a good price in the spacefarer's marketplace.
Some mages are eager to buy the creatures to use in concocting their
potions of longevity.

THE SCAM – SPACE MIMIC (1)

Terrain: Wildspace (Sparse planetoid)
Total Party Levels: 24 (Average 4th)
Total gp Value: 1,690
Total Monster XP:
 Kill: 5,000
 Defeat: 3,750
 Retreat: 1,250
 Bonus: Extra 25 percent if the DM chooses to use the first Set Up option.

Set Up

- Honest Albert's Used Ship Emporium has in stock mostly wrecks and near-wrecks. One ship, a dragonfly, is in better condition, and the exuberant Albert tells the party members they can "pay half in advance and take her for a spin." While the party readies for a test flight, Albert disappears with the money.

The "salesman" is an unscrupulous mage/thief, who happens to be in cahoots with a space mimic. The deal is this: Albert gets to keep all the nonmagical treasure he can wheedle out of his victims, while the mimic gets first choice of their magical items—and dinner.

- The PCs' ship has sustained significant damage in a battle and must put down on an out-of-the-way planetoid to make repairs. As they land, they notice a dragonfly ship nearby. Except for a slightly torn wing section, it looks to be in good condition. There is no sign of a crew, but the mimic is aboard, waiting for them.

- The PCs have been hired to salvage damaged but usable spelljamming vessels or parts from them. They are having no luck on this trip until they check a remote planetoid, where one of the more alert characters notices a small, almost intact vessel on the surface below.

The Lair

The slightly damaged ship is actually more dilapidated than it seems to the party. Abandoned here

after sustaining heavy damage in battle, the ship has been stripped of its helm and left to decay. It was found by a roaming space mimic that decided to make itself at home, luring prey by making the ship seem to be in better condition than it is through the use of an *improved phantasmal force* spell. (If the DM is using the Honest Albert scenario, Albert has towed in a few wrecks and set them near his "emporium" to serve as window dressing for his swindling operation.)

In reality, the ship has several holes, torn wings, missing fittings, broken "eye" windows, and a cracked catapult. The landing gear has also seen better days, but might hold up for one more landing—provided someone could get the ship off the ground at all. Since the helm is missing, the dragonfly isn't going anywhere.

To the party, the ship looks as though it is nearly new. Except for a slightly torn wing, a couple scratches, and one sagging door, it appears to be in great shape. It seems as though someone put a lot of time, energy, and love into the care of this vessel. Ropes are neatly coiled, the wooden sides and floors gleam, and the metal fittings are burnished to a soft sheen.

Situated in the center of the bridge, where it commands a sweeping view, is an ornate crystalline throne of polished black stone sprinkled with tiny specks of silvery inclusions, which give make the material resemble a starry night. No one would pay for such a magnificent-looking throne unless it were destined to be a major helm. It is even slightly contoured for greater comfort. The "helm" is actually a space mimic.

Space mimic (1): Int High; AL N; AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (B); HD 12; hp 80; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 (smash); SA Glue; SD Camouflage; SZ L (varies); ML Champion (15); XP 5,000.

It has the innate ability to cast the following spells: *audible glamor*, *phantasmal force*, *spook*, *ventriloquism*, *hypnotic pattern*, *improved phantasmal force*, and *invisibility*.

The space mimic would like one member of the party to sit in the "helm" to fly the ship. It hopes the

"Hello! Welcome to Honest Albert's Ship Emporium. If you see anything you like, just let me know, and we can take 'er for a spin—say, don't I know you?

Aren't you the heroes who took on those slavers a month or so back?

Well, let me shake your hands!"

—Honest Albert, on meeting the party.

THE SCAM – SPACE MIMIC (1)

other members of the party will leave the helmsman alone to man the helm while they go elsewhere to tend to the wings and otherwise prepare the ship for liftoff.

The mimic glues its victim in place, then attacks and consumes the character. After dining, the mimic drops the illusion on the ship, turns invisible, and attempts to escape the vessel. The party members have no body, no helm, and probably no idea what happened.

The mimic is very interested in magic. If the trapped helmsman is a mage, the mimic will search the poor unfortunate for anything magical it can acquire as it eats dinner. If the character seated is a cleric, the mimic will content itself with merely a good meal.

Should the party leave someone else with the helmsman, the mimic will give the other characters time to move away, then use part its *improved phantasmal force* spell to sound like a call to the character who stayed behind. Though understandable speech is not possible using this spell, something that sounds a little like a voice calling, “Hey!” or something similar could do the trick.

If the character being hailed doesn’t respond, the mimic will glue its victim in place and prepare to lash out at the other one as soon as its victim screams or calls for help. The mimic hopes it can quickly kill the extra character before attracting any additional attention.

Failing to achieve anything else, the mimic will try to glue its victim in place and fly out through one of the broken “eyes” of the ship. It will try to hide among the boulders or plant life nearby and eat the would-be helmsman there. Should this happen, the other PCs need to give chase and hope they arrive before the mimic finishes eating.

Other tactics for the mimic depend upon the party’s actions. If it manages to finish off one character but can’t escape past PCs rushing to the rescue, it might simply choose to retain its helm form and hope the party members look for their missing companion by searching the rest of the ship for signs of a struggle. Once they are gone, it will turn invisible and

make its escape.

The space mimic might also retain helm form, hoping to lure yet another character into sitting down. A party member might do this thinking that the missing PC has been somehow *teleported* elsewhere, and that repeating the missing PC’s actions might reunite the party with the lost helmsman.

Once seated, this PC too would be glued in place, and the mimic might bargain with the party to let it go in return for the safe release of the glued PC. PCs might bribe it to give up its meal by offering it books or other magical items. Of course, the mimic isn’t stupid; it will insist on being allowed to leave first, promising to release the trapped character once it is far enough away. Whether it keeps its word or not is up to the DM.

If the party just can’t figure out what happened and stays around long enough, the mimic might get hungry again. In that case, it would sneak back aboard the dragonfly (or on board the PCs’ ship), assume the form of a mundane item the PCs are likely to sit on, lie down in, or touch, and enjoy another meal at the party’s expense. (Note: Space mimics usually eat once every several months, but perhaps this one hasn’t eaten for a while and is a little hungrier than normal.)

The Stowaway

Should the mimic escape and wish to relocate to find easier pickings, it could easily travel along on the PCs’ ship by stretching itself along the vessel’s underside and gluing itself in place. In the course of the trip, it could move up the side of the ship by ungluing certain portions, sliding into its new position, and then refastening itself.

If it gets hungry on the trip, it can try any number of tricks to lure victims to it, including becoming a short set of stairs (covering the real ones), masquerading as a piece of cargo, becoming part of the mast—or even imitating the helm again! Judicious use of its *improved phantasmal force* and *invisibility* spells coupled with the creature’s ability to change shapes could cause the party members headaches for weeks.

“We will make a deal, yes? I keep this dinner until you let me go.

Then I let dinner go. Everybody happy, yes?”

—Xlprxssth, the space mimic, if caught in the act.



The mimic will fight to the best of its ability if caught in the act (either the first time or subsequently) and attacked. First it will cast *hypnotic pattern*, hoping to take a few of the PCs out of the fight for a few rounds. Then, it will try to use its pseudopod to smash at a character not affected by the spell, hoping to kill at least one of the party members before the others are freed from the spell's influence.

If it can do so, it will also try to glue characters to its surface in such a fashion that it traps their weapons. Assuming it gets the chance to do so, it will attempt to cast *spook* on one PC; if that one runs away, the mimic will cast *ventriloquism* the next round, making it sound as though someone is screaming "Help!" from the direction the spooked character fled.

Assuming its *invisibility* spell has not already been utilized, the mimic will make use of it in a last-ditch attempt to escape. If it has eaten one character already, it will choose to retreat rather than fight to the death. The mimic, denied its meal, will fight until at least half its hit points are gone, then will become subject to morale checks. When three quarters of its

hit points are gone, it will try to flee regardless of its morale roll, if given the chance and if it thinks the party still looks healthy enough to finish it off.

The Treasure

Should the party manage to kill the space mimic, they can locate its treasure concealed in a pocket under its belly. The treasure consists of:

- A small gold ring set with a topaz (140 gp)
- A platinum earring (60 gp)
- Two tiny sapphires (700 gp each) in a small silver and onyx box (75 gp)
- A dusty rose-colored prism-shaped stone (*ioun stone*)
- A spell book with *audible glamer*, *burning hands*, *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *knock*, *stinking cloud*, *web*, and *hold person*
- A small book titled *Space Wars, An Examination of the Unhuman Conflict* (15 gp)
- A torn, slightly stained scroll labeled *Teleport Without Error* (sic)

If the DM would like to do so, it is possible to place a map or some other written clue here as well, to lead

THE SCAM – SPACE MIMIC (1)

the PCs to investigate one of the other encounters in *Space Lairs*. In addition, the characters should get a chance to make Intelligence rolls to remember that some parts of space mimics are valuable—especially the internal ones. PCs making three Intelligence checks at a -5 penalty can remember which parts. Otherwise, the party will just have to consult an alchemist or a sage.

If the party members got into the encounter because their ship was damaged, they will still be grounded until they can make repairs. Have the PCs make either Intelligence or Wisdom rolls to realize they can use parts from the dragonfly on their ship (if they haven't already thought of it). With about five days' work, it should be possible to strip enough wood and fittings from the dragonfly to make at least token repairs of the PCs' ship.

A lot of the parts are right on the borderline of rotting away or breaking, however, and the PCs should be aware that they need to baby their ship back to a port where real repairs can be made. Until then, the party would be advised to avoid any encounters which could potentially damage their ship. Any catapult or ballista hit on a ship repaired using parts from the dragonfly should be calculated as a critical hit with appropriate damage.

The dragonfly itself is in such poor condition, it has no value, except as scrap material for the PCs' repairs.

Honest Albert

DMs using the Honest Albert scenario should keep in mind that Albert seems quite warm, good-hearted, and sincere. Con men are rarely slimy; they make their livings by fooling people into liking and trusting them. Albert will ask a reasonable price for the ship and will take any deposit that an honest salesman would find acceptable to let the characters test out the ship. If they have no money, he will hold onto magical items in lieu of a deposit, but he will refuse to let them aboard until they pay something. After all, he doesn't know them—they might run off with his ship!

If some of the party elects not to go aboard the dragonfly, Albert will invite them to look around at his other vessels, but will attempt to slip away as soon as possible. If he can't escape any other way, he will drink a sip of his *invisibility* potion after stepping behind one of the wrecks. His getaway ship is hidden nearby, beneath a painted tarp that has been camouflaged to blend in with the scenery.

Albert will also drink his potion if he thinks the party looks pretty tough, but he'll hang around to make sure they don't kill off his mimic. (He is unlikely to ever find such a good scam again.) If the party attacks the mimic and seems to be overwhelming it, Albert might attack by surprise to save his partner. Though he will try to avoid risking his life, Albert is willing to distract the party long enough to let the mimic make a break for it. Then the two of them would head for Albert's hidden ship and attempt to set up again elsewhere.

The PCs could have several encounters trying to chase down these two scam masters, or might run into them another time and in another place.

Honest Albert (human M3/T4): Str 12; Dex 18; Con 11; Int 16; Wis 10; Cha 15; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 19 (20 as mage); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 +1 (*dagger* +1) or by spell; SZ M; ML Steady (12); PP 45%; OL 40%; RT 25%; MS 55%; HS 40%; DN 15%; CW 88%; RL 12%; Backstab at +4 to hit, doing ×2 dmg; XP 270.

Albert normally uses his thief abilities, but can access spells he learned as a mage. He has the following spells memorized: *magic missile*, *wall of fog*, and *stinking cloud*. His spell book contains these three spells plus *detect magic*, *read magic*, *sleep*, and *knock*.

Equipment: Albert has a *potion of invisibility* with five sips left and a *dagger* +1. He wears no armor, depending on his agility to protect him. Aside from his spell book and ship, his only treasure is the PCs' deposit.

Long ago, mages created mimics to safeguard their treasures.
While this partnership is no longer common,
space mimics have clung to their fascination with the arcane,
and may be bribed with magical items into releasing their next meal.

THE IRON HIVE – CLOCKWORK HORRORS (32)

Terrain: Wildspace (Asteroid)
Total Party Levels: 24 (Average 4th)
Total gp Value: 6,014
Total Monster XP:

Kill: 3,650 (minimum)

Defeat: 2,738

Retreat: 913

Bonus/Penalty: Extra 50 percent if party saves humans and neogi. Slight penalty for unnecessarily slaying neogi that helped in the fight against the clockwork horrors.

Set Up

- The party members have been hired by a local merchants' guild to find a deathspider that has been marauding in the area. The PCs have tracked it to a remote asteroid.

- The party's ship is in need of repair, and the PCs spot an asteroid—the only potential berth nearby.

- Rumors abound of a remote asteroid rich with mineral and metallic wealth. The party members believe they have found the place.

The Lair

Approaching a remote asteroid, party members observe a crashed deathspider on the surface. A human figure beside the wreck is waving and jumping about, in obvious elation at the prospect of rescue. The PCs can also spot glints of bright metal in the immediate area.

As the players' ship draws near, they realize the man on the surface was reacting not in joy, but in fear. The area of the wreck is dominated by copper clockwork horrors attempting to drag away the struggling man in his metal armor.

Copper horrors (5): Int Low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD Immune to spells depending on biological functions, immune to electricity; MR 10%; SZ S (2' diameter); ML Fearless (20); XP 65 each.

Fons (3rd level human fighter): Int Avg; AL LN;

AC 3; MV 12; HD 3; hp 15; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ M (6'); ML Average (8); XP 65.

Investigation of the wreckage reveals a number of dead neogi, umber hulks, and humans. The ship's log identifies it as the *Venom*, on a mission of piracy. PCs can scavenge 5,000 gp worth of stolen loot from the ship.

The man, Fons, tells party members:

"I've been a slave aboard the Venom for months, forced to help the neogi with their looting and murder. Only four of them managed to survive the crash, and none of their umber hulks made it.

"When they saw these copper beasts and a silver one scurrying around near that big tunnel, they took the other three humans still alive and followed. I—I was playing dead. I think the neogi wanted to grab the creatures, thought they were some kind of treasure.

"They hadn't been gone very long when all these copper beasts attacked me. How come the things left the others alone but they sent more of them out after me?"

Any party members who roll their Intelligence or lower know that the horrors only wanted Fons's plate armor to use to build more horrors. Fons says the neogi allowed him to wear it for protection when he was sent to raid the ships that fell prey to the marauding deathspider. However, he (and any PCs with similarly heavy armor) is only too happy to remove it in order to become "horror invisible."

Fons urges the party to help him rescue his three comrades, and he points to the tunnel they went through.

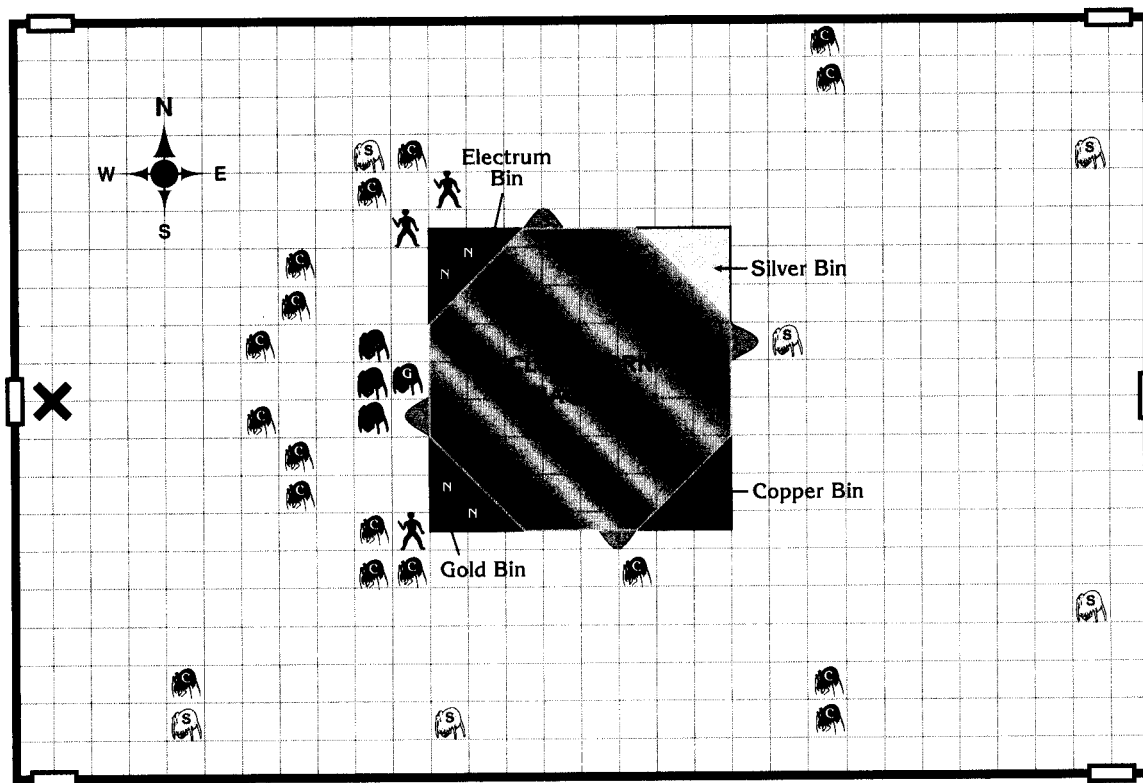
Through the Tunnel

The asteroid has been home to clockwork horrors for quite some time now; the creatures have honeycombed it with tunnels in their search for raw minerals to use to manufacture more horrors. The asteroid's surface is quite rugged; the tunnel mouths scattered across the land are completely symmetrical, though, making them appear very unnatural to the landscape. The tunnel openings are perfectly circular, and the tunnels themselves are utterly straight.

Clockwork horrors, consumed with propagating their species, tend to ignore intruders into their lairs as long as they do not interfere with the horrors' metalworking. Sometimes, though, the creatures launch aggressive campaigns against other peoples, intent to take over the new planet, slay the natives, repopulate the world with horrors, and begin mining. It's hard to predict which reception to expect from them.

Inside the Hive

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet



Key

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | Gold clockwork horror | | Door leading from tunnel |
| | Silver clockwork horror | | Party's starting point |
| | Electrum clockwork horror | | Clockwork horror ejection point |
| | Copper clockwork horror | | Neogi |
| | | | Human |

All the tunnels lead toward the asteroid's core. The PCs pass intersecting tunnels at regular intervals as they journey downward, but all these eventually wind their way to the center as well. Unless they've encountered clockwork horrors before, none of the party members has ever seen such precise earthworks.

The rock comprising the tunnel walls is mundane; there is absolutely no trace of any useful minerals at all anywhere on the asteroid.

As the party members explore the tunnels, they see occasional flashes of movement in the distance. If the PCs choose to investigate, they will find nothing, but as they move off again, another flash will attract their attention. This pattern continues as the PCs move deeper into the asteroid, where most of the activity is concentrated.

The Core

The tunnel ends at a wide doorway that opens into a room (150' x 100') mechanically hued out of the exact center of the asteroid. The first thing the PCs see in this room is a formation of six copper clock-

work horrors about 35 feet in front of them guarding a cluster of three electrum horrors and one gold horror. These coppers will advance to attack if the party steps into the room.

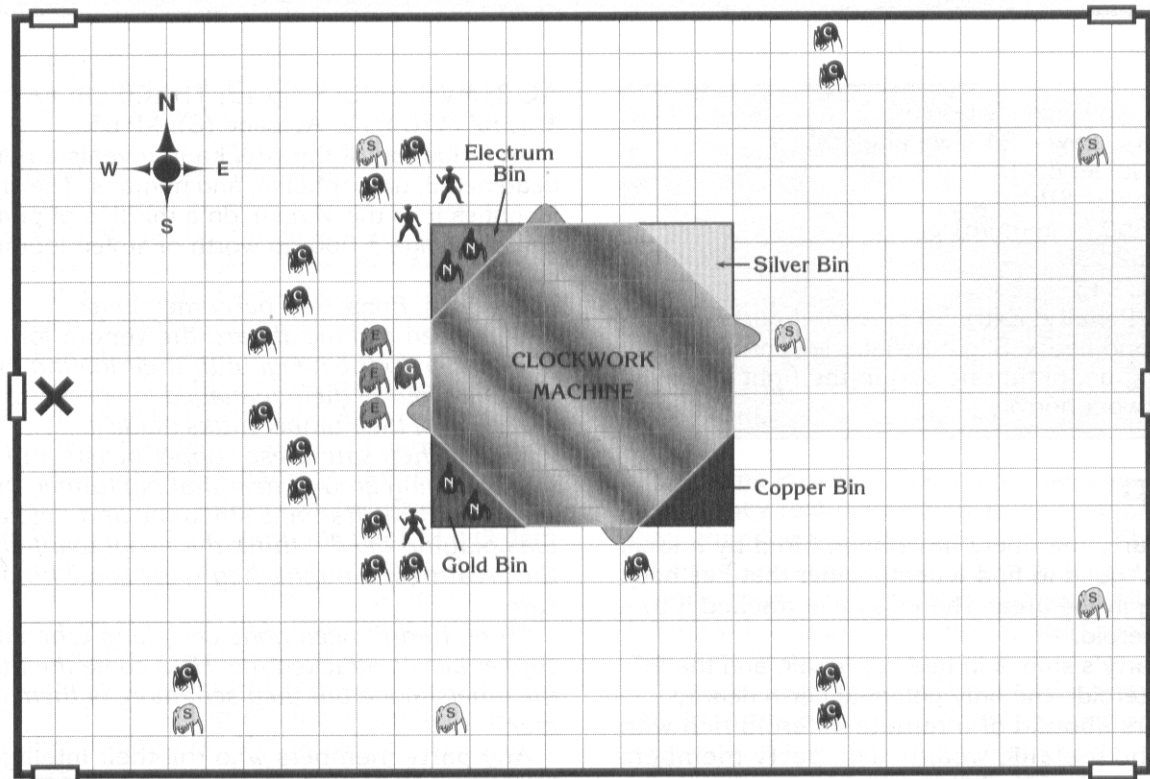
Easily visible behind the horrors is a structure towering to meet the chamber's high ceiling. This pillar is octagonal, about 15 feet to a side. Its smooth surface is marred in places by regular seams and latches.

If the party members hesitate before entering the room, they see one of these latches click open, and an appendage extends out of the column. The arm lowers toward a triangular bin nestled up against the southeast face of the octagon, and a suction device attaches to a mound of the scrap copper piled high in the bin. Holding the copper, the arm retracts back into the column.

The pillar begins to emit a metallic whirring. If the party members are able to remain undetected in the doorway a few rounds, they will see another door open at the base of the column, just to the west of the scrap copper bin. Out emerges a perfect new copper clockwork horror. One new horror is ejected every turn.

Inside the Hive

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet



Key



Gold clockwork horror



Silver clockwork horror



Electrum clockwork horror



Copper clockwork horror



Neogi



Human



Door leading from tunnel



Party's starting point



Clockwork horror ejection point

THE IRON HIVE – CLOCKWORK HORRORS (32)

Flanking the other angled faces of the clockwork horror machine are similar bins to store scrap silver, electrum, and gold. None contain any metal except the silver bin: it holds 4 sp. This meager store tells observers that the asteroid has been mined out of valuable metals. The horrors are getting ready to leave.

The other two bins are not completely empty, though. Two neogi cower in the gold bin on the southwest face of the octagonal pillar. They are forcing a lone human woman serving as a living shield against three attacking copper clockwork horrors. There are two additional neogi in the electrum bin on the northwest face of the structure. These are being defended from two copper horrors and one silver by two human slaves, a man and a woman.

The slaves are all very weak, as though they've been fending for their tyrannical masters for quite some time. They may find renewed energy for the attack if they see the characters rush in and engage the horrors. After the first copper horror emerges from the great machine, Fons will run in to assist the woman near the gold bin. Seeing a new chance for escape, the neogi finally scramble out of the bins and turn on the electrum horrors in melee combat. Other clockwork horrors occupy strategic locations throughout the room.

Copper horrors (17+1/turn): Int Low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD Immune to all spells depending on biological functions, immune to electricity; MR 10%; SZ S (2' diameter); ML Fearless (20); XP 65 each.

Silver horrors (6): Int Avg; AL LE; AC 2; MV 9; HD 3; hp 17; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (saw), 1-3 (spring caster); SA Spring caster (fires 1/round); SD Immune to all spells depending on biological functions, immune to electricity; MR 20%; SZ S (2' diameter); ML Fearless (20); XP 120 each.

Electrum horrors (3): Int Very; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 4; hp 21; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (razor saw), 2-8 (steam caster); SA Steam caster (fires 1/round); SD Immune to all spells depending on biological functions, immune to electricity; MR 30%; SZ S (2' diameter); ML Fearless (20); XP 175 each.

Gold horror (1): Int High; AL LE; AC -2; MV 9; HD 5; hp 28; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (razor saw), 3-18 (lightning rod); SA Lightning rod (fires 1/2 rounds, save vs. spells for ½ dmg); SD Immune to all spells depending on biological functions, immune to electricity; MR 50%; SZ S (2' diameter); ML Fearless (20); XP 975.

Neogi (4): Int High; AL LE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 5; hp 19; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Slowing poison; SD Slaves; SZ S (3'); ML Steady (12); XP 270 each.

Human slaves (3): Int Avg; AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ M (5'-6'); ML Unsteady (7); XP 40 each.

The Aftermath

If any of the neogi or human slaves survive the battle, they will request transport to somewhere safe. Rescuing the neogi will place these pirates in debt to the party; the PCs can use this advantage to force the neogi to free their slaves.

However, the neogi will be more than hesitant to release them, as they have already lost their ship, cargo, and umber hulks. To return from this mission with absolutely nothing would make them little better than slaves themselves. Should the neogi adopt this uncompromising attitude, the party members may justifiably attack them to free the humans. The PCs may have to fight the neogi if they refuse to return the treasure from the *Venom* or capture them if their mission had been to find the marauding deathspider.

There is no useful treasure anywhere on the asteroid, but the clockwork horrors could be melted down for their metal value. The total value of the metal in their bodies is 1,014 gp. If the party members do not destroy the clockwork horror machine, it will continue producing copper horrors until it runs out of raw material. With the horrors gone, the asteroid is a safe place for the PCs to work on their ship, if repair was the Set Up option used.

Hierarchy of Clockwork Horror Intelligence

| Copper | Silver | Electrum | Gold | Platinum* | Adamantite* |
|--------|---------|----------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| Low | Average | Very | High | Exceptional | Genius |
| 5-7 | 8-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |

*Unique creatures



UP, UP, AND AWAY – PUFFERS (46)

Terrain: Wildspace (Asteroid, wooded plains)

Total Party Levels: 30 (Average 5th)

Total gp Value: 1,455

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 10,880

Defeat: 8,160

Retreat: 2,720

Bonus: An extra 1,350 XP is available if the PCs kill the scro. DMs should determine whether killing them is appropriate to the circumstances of their adventures.

Special: The PCs' ship should be too large or unable (due to design) to land on the asteroid. It should hover nearby while PCs climb down a rope ladder or use other means to descend.

Set Up

- The PCs overhear a conversation about notorious pirate Blackleg Bart's "lost treasure." It is supposedly located nearby, on a large asteroid circling a small blue-green moon. The asteroid supposedly has fields under cultivation.

- The cartographers' guild has found signs of habitation on an asteroid circling a nearby blue-green moon. The PCs are asked to determine if the asteroid is inhabited, who is there, and whether they wish the asteroid to be included in the latest charts of the area as a stopover or supply point.

- The PCs' ship has fouled air. One crewmember knows a rumor about a group of asteroids circling a small blue-green moon close by. Large enough for a ship to make a complete air exchange, one asteroid boasts pure water and fruits that are said to have minor healing properties.

The Lair

The asteroid the PCs seek was until recently inhabited by a group of scro, marooned there when their damaged mantis ship crash landed, crushing the helm beyond repair. They worked to build a village

and scratch out an existence; their senior warpriest died in the crash. Built of mud, rock, reed, and wood, the few houses are functional and form a rough circle around an area with several fruit trees and a stream that broadens to form a pond suitable for drawing water and for bathing. Realizing that they needed the fruit trees to supplement their food supplies, the scro built around and among the trees rather than clearing the area. The trees hide at least part of the three houses in the village.

Located near the village in a natural clearing are fields, which the scro cultivate using seed gathered from wild crops. From space, both the fields and a few parts of the wrecked ship lying nearby are clearly visible.

Unfortunately for the scro, they have recently played host to a puffer, which floated to the asteroid in sphere form, landed, became active, and killed a scro working in a remote field. This unlucky scro became the host for the puffer's eggs, which just recently hatched. The babies quickly spread through the village, catching most of the scro off guard and asleep. While some have yet to feed and grow, others are ready to assume sphere form and launch into space. A few have been killed, but most are rampaging through the village, attacking. Out of 65 scro originally marooned on the asteroid, only five remain when the PCs arrive.

In the Field

Most of the asteroid is covered with trees and brambles. It will be extremely difficult for the party to land anywhere but in the cultivated fields. As they approach this area from above, the party members can see crops obviously ready for harvesting. Among the ripe crops, some remains and bones lie scattered. Apparently, a predator has feasted here. The PCs can determine that the bodies are goblinoid, strongly built and tall.

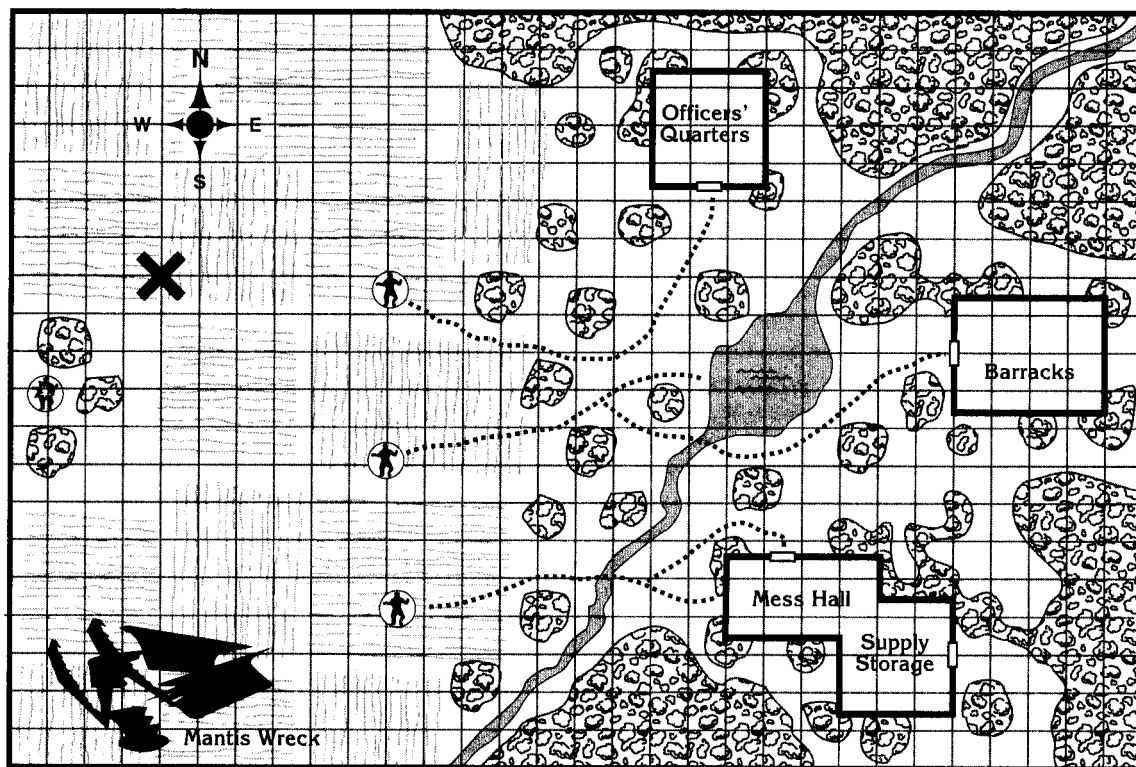
From an intact skull, they can tell that the bodies are orclike, with oversized canines sharpened and decorated with a gold zigzag pattern. The pattern is repeated on a patch decorating the shoulders of the victims' outerwear. Most wear remnants of torn black

Dormant puffers, at first glance, appear to be large balloons floating in wildspace.

Upon landing, a puffer in sphere form becomes active almost immediately and begins searching for a host for its eggs.

Scro Village

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet



Key

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------|--|---------------|--|---------------------|
| | Farm land | | Blood trail | | Scro corpse |
| | Trees | | Door | | Scro corpse (burst) |
| | Water | | Starting area | | |

studded leather armor. Bloody spears and long swords lie nearby. The most reasonable assumption is that they were guarding the fields when they were attacked.

One body is different, and it lies partially hidden in a patch of tall grass near some trees. This one is much further decayed, dead at least a couple weeks longer than the rest. The chest and abdomen are burst, apparently rent from inside, but other wounds indicate that the victim was overcome in battle by a fanged and clawed foe.

Any ranger or a party member with a tracking proficiency can note the slithering tracks and numerous blood trails leading from the bodies in the fields toward a lightly wooded area nearby. Many creatures with clawed feet and a low-hung underside moved that way within the last day, an examination shows. The tracks, which lead to the village, are reminiscent of those made by crocodiles.

The Scro Village

The five remaining scro have organized into a rough battle unit and are furiously trying to hold off

the puffers, which have decimated the rest of the village.

Scro (5): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1 (weapon, teeth) or 2 (glove); Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-3+1 (glove), 1-8 (long sword), 1-6 (hand axe), 1-4 (dagger); SA Smashing for 1-4+30 from type D poison (save vs. poison for 2-12); MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 270 each.

Three buildings comprise the village: a barracks, the mess hall and supply storage house; and the officers' residence. Doors and window coverings of woven reeds show signs of forced entry. Bodies litter the central area near the pond. Some are goblinoid, but many are small reptilian creatures that resemble both crocodiles and scorpions. Several of these monsters have had their stingerlike tails hacked off. PCs familiar with scro or puffers should have enough evidence now to tell the rest of the group what they are about to face.

If the PCs take time to look around, they will be attacked by a group of baby puffers hiding in the tall grass nearby. Four attack each member of the party. Puffers are highly intelligent, and will seek to attack

UP, UP, AND AWAY – PUFFERS (46)

from behind or as PCs kneel to examine evidence. Unless the characters are on guard, the puffers automatically surprise them. These puffers eat their kills in order to grow before heading off into wildspace.

Puffer babies (24): Int High; AL N; AC 10; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+save vs. poison or die; SA Poison stinger; SZ S (2' long); ML Fanatic (18); XP 35 each.

Up on the Roof

The five scro that are still alive have no effective ranged weapons, but they hope a retreat will keep the puffers away long enough for them to lose interest. Three of the scro are trying to hold the puffers at bay while the others scramble up the side of the barracks. If close enough to see this, the PCs are near enough to be attacked by puffers lying among the roots of the fruit trees. There are twelve babies and six that have already eaten a little and started to grow.

Puffer babies (12): Int High; AL N; AC 10; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+save vs. poison or die; SA Poison stinger; SZ S (2' long); ML Fanatic (18); XP 35 each.

Puffer adolescents (6): Int High; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg Stinger (1-6), save vs. poison or die; SA Poison stinger; SZ M (5-6' long); ML Fanatic (18); XP 270 each.

The scro on the ground are fighting already, and the rest throw daggers or axes from their vantage points on the roof. The fruit trees are not sturdy enough for PCs to climb. If the tide of battle is turning in the PCs' favor, the two scro on the barracks will jump down and join the fight.

If there are elves or half-elves in the party, the scro will watch to see if they seem to recognize the scro as enemies. If not, the scro will make no outward sign of hostility, but will wait to attack the elf characters sometime later, when the rest of the party is not around.

Eaten out of House and Home

Just as the party relaxes, a few larger puffers, hidden until this time behind the officers' quarters, metamorphose into spheres and float off toward the tilled

fields—and the PCs' ship! Crewmembers aboard the characters' vessel will be easy targets for the puffers, and the party members must run at top speed to get back in time to defend the ship and crew.

These puffers may have been forced to share their previous kills with siblings; in any event, some are still hungry and seek one last meal before launching into wildspace. Five or six float away, but four head for the ship. When the PCs arrive, two are still in sphere form (and easily slain), but the other two have landed and attacked. If the party manages to delay the creatures' arrival, the first two will have completed their change from sphere form and attacked as well.

Adult puffers (2-4): Int High; AL N; AC 4; MV 15; HD 9; hp 42; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg Bite (1-12), stinger (1-6+poison); SA Poison stinger; SZ M (12' long); ML Fanatic (18); XP 2,000 each.

Clean Up

Searching the village yields a total of 1,455 gp in various coins. The spartan buildings are furnished with items scavenged from the scro mantis ship or roughly made by hand from raw materials. If the DM has been looking for a chance to award a nonmagical navigational item to the party, this is a good opportunity to do so. Crude farm implements have been made from vines, stones, and wood, and can be taken along with anything else the party wants.

Many scro were killed as they slept in the barracks, and searching these bodies is quite a nasty job. The captain of the scro died in this fashion. His weapon is a *long sword +2/+4 vs. elves*, which served as his symbol of leadership. It still hangs above his bed. The scro will claim it, if possible. If denied the sword but given passage, they will try to steal back the weapon before they leave the PCs' ship.

The asteroid boasts fresh air, good farmland, wood and stone for building, and fresh water. There are no large predators to be found. While it seems the rumor of water and fruit with healing properties was unfounded (and who *really* knows about Blackleg Bart's lost treasure?), this could make a good base for the party.

“Elves, half-elves—what’s the difference?”

—Scro soldier, on racial diversity.

JOIN US – SURVIVOR (1)

Terrain: Wildspace (Remote planet)
Total Party Levels: 36 (Average 6th)

Total gp Value: 9,900

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 5,440

Defeat: 4,080

Retreat: 1,360

Note: These figures include XP for the mind-controlled *Starbright* crew.

Special: The party's ship must be large, capable of supporting at least 20 people besides the characters themselves.

Set Up

- The PCs have been hired by a very rich merchant to explore a somewhat remote planet on the fringes of the crystal sphere. The characters are to find out whether the planet is suitable to serve as either a supply station or as a base for their patron's guards, who would be stationed there as a deterrent to the pirates and other nasties that abound in this area of wildspace.

- The party's ship is plagued with dangerously fouled air and has a severely depleted crew due to a recent pirate (or radiant dragon, or neogi) attack. Realizing they need to replenish their air, the party members bring their vessel into the atmosphere of a remote planet. Below them, they can see the remains of a wrecked spelljamming ship and the smoke of campfires nearby.

- The *Starbright* is significantly overdue into a nearby port. A small merchant vessel passing a remote planet on the fringes of the system reports seeing what looked like a downed vessel on the planet's surface. The crewmembers didn't have the time to investigate or the capacity to take on passengers if they were to find anyone, but they suggest someone should take a look. The owner and captain of the *Starbright*, a half-elf named Ned Fairmorn, is known in ports all over the crystal sphere for his generous nature.

The Lair

While making for port two months ago, the crew of a merchant galleon called the *Starbright* found an odd man floating in the phlogiston. They pulled him aboard and with some care could coax him out of his coma for a few minutes at a time. He gave his name as Roderigo. Though his clothing looked strangely old-fashioned, the captain and crew were all seasoned enough spelljammers to realize that fashions vary greatly from sphere to sphere. It was only later, after the ship had entered a crystal sphere and his usually happy crew had become moody and secretive, that the captain began to suspect that he had unknowingly picked up a monster known as a survivor.

By then it was too late.

Those under the survivor's control staged a mutiny. The captain and the few crewmembers who remained free of the survivor's mind control attempted to hold the ship, but during the struggle the helmsman lost control of the vessel. It crashed on the planet, killing several crewmembers and sustaining too much damage to repair.

Since that time, the survivor has managed to enslave the captain and the rest of the crew. Though it has all 15 surviving crewmembers under its control, the survivor is desperate to get off this remote planet to a busy port where it can feed on the sensory input it desires.

It will be jubilant when the characters arrive and will have its enslaved sailors react eagerly to the thought of rescue. They will offer to work aboard the party's ship in exchange for passage back to the nearest port.

Information on the Starbright

If the PCs enter the encounter by joining the search for the *Starbright*, they can learn the following from another captain in port: The *Starbright* is a galleon owned and captained by Ned Fairmorn, a well-respected and popular half-elf who prides himself on his honesty and generosity. He is also known to run a neat and trim ship and pay each crewmember a

"Mutiny? By all I honor, you'll never take my ship!"
—Captain Ned Fairmorn, just before the *Starbright's* crash.



percentage of the journey's profits. The *Starbright* is famous for always making port on time, so the ship's failure to turn up is quite worrisome to authorities back at the harbor.

Should the DM choose to have the PCs become involved in the scenario in a different way, the above information can be revealed to them later to explain details about the ship and crew involved. In either case, if the characters investigate the planet, they will see evidence of a wrecked ship and campfires on the surface.

The Planet

The planet the PCs come upon features low, broken mountains and barren rock escarpments that lead down into desert. The world's harsh landscape is softened only by small bands of greenery and some blue waterways capped by small ice masses to the north and south. Twinkling prettily below, like tiny stars in the greenery, are lights—probably campfires.

When the ship gets close enough for the party members to make out more detail, the characters can see that the lights are indeed campfires, which

are situated near the remains of a wrecked galleon. The lettering on the downed ship's side proclaims her to be the missing *Starbright*. People are moving around below, and their waving and jumping makes it clear that they have noticed the PCs' vessel overhead.

The characters can choose to land their ship or leave it hovering while they descend. They will be met by a group of apparently excited sailors, who all cheer and ask to be rescued. If one of the PCs asks how the sailors seem, the DM should tell that character's player privately that the crewmembers' cheers seem a little perfunctory, and that their smiles look a little forced.

The encampment itself is strangely barren. A few hammocks are strung in trees, campfires are lit, and a meager meal is cooking. But for the most part, the camp is missing those small extras indicating that people have been living there for any length of time. There are no signs (reed nets, homemade fishing poles, bracken gathered for bedding, a latrine area, etc.) that those gathered here have any initiative beyond what is needed for moment-to-moment

JOIN US – SURVIVOR (1)

survival. These castaways have no possessions of value.

One wizened crewman, dressed in outlandish pantaloons and a sashed jerkin, mumbles himself awake and peers up at the characters from his hammock. This is Roderigo, the survivor, briefly awake to get a look at his newest victims.

Roderigo (survivor): Int Exc; AL NG; AC 10; MV 0; HD 10; hp 75; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Mind control; MR 30%; SZ M; ML Fearless (20); XP 3,000.

The Story

If the party members ask the whereabouts of Captain Fairmorn (or ask who is the captain, if they are here for other purposes), he will sullenly come forward and confirm his identity. He appears not at all similar to his reputation, but acts moody and answers any questions as curtly as possible. If asked, he (or any other sailor questioned) will listlessly say the following:

"We were attacked by pirates just this side of the crystal sphere shell. During the fight our helmsman was wounded and lost control of the ship. We crashed here. We sure are glad you showed up. Are you here to rescue us? We would love to get back to port right away."

Any of the castaways will relate the same story in almost exactly the same words. Each of them speaks in a monotone voice, and all the sailors seem awfully subdued considering that they are on the verge of being rescued.

If questioned about the pirates, they will look puzzled at first, then make vague replies about their appearance, their ship, or why the pirates didn't land to finish off the crew and steal their cargo. When the PCs press, each marooned crewmember asked will become more withdrawn and brusque. They are also strangely uninterested in moving their cargo (crates of artifacts worth 9,900 gp) onto the PCs' ship, as if they don't care whether their trade goods—which they depend on for their livelihood—are taken along or not.

Any plan that results in the party taking all the crewmembers with them back to civilization will be

accepted by the survivor, and the controlled *Starbright* crew will do whatever work is necessary to facilitate their rescue. If the PCs seem to have other plans in mind (such as exploring the planet or leaving the crewmen here while they return to port to find a bigger ship), the survivor will make his move to take over their minds and force them to do as he wishes. He will also take the offensive if they seem overly suspicious.

Once the party members have taken the stranded crew of the *Starbright* aboard their ship, the survivor will begin trying to control the minds of the crewmembers aboard the PCs' ship—and those of the characters as well.

If he fails to control all the PCs, whether still on the planet or aboard their ship, he will have his enslaved crew try to overpower them (probably while the party is getting some rest or split up doing their daily routines). Any crewmembers from the party's ship and any controlled PCs will be made to help the *Starlight's* crew capture their comrades. Sooner or later, it is likely that the party members will be captives aboard their own ship.

Regular crewmembers (12): Int Avg; AL N or any Good; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SZ M; ML As controlled by the survivor; XP 120 each.

Helmsmen (2): Int Avg; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 3; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SZ M; ML As controlled by the survivor; XP 175 each. Neither has spells, but one has a *wand of wonder*; the other has a *wand of fire* (each with 16 charges).

Captain Ned Fairmorn (half-elf F4/M4): Str 13; Dex 16; Con 15; Int 17; Wis 11; Cha 17; AL NG; AC 4; MV 12; hp 28; THAC0 F17/M19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1 (*scimitar +1*) or by spell; SZ M; ML As controlled by the survivor; XP 650.

Captain Fairmorn has memorized the following spells: *charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep*, *Melf's acid arrow*, and *mirror image*. He will use them if necessary. He wears *bracers of defense* (AC 6) and has a *scimitar +1*.

"That guy in the hammock doesn't look so good. What's wrong with him?"
—Later, the party members realize that the captain never did answer this question.

Prisoners!

If the *Starlight* crew succeeds in capturing the PCs, they will take over the ship. The mind-controlled crew knock the characters out, remove anything from them that could be magical or used as a weapon, tie and gag them, and stow the bound characters in the hold until they can become controlled by the survivor. Any crewmen on board not mind-controlled by this time will automatically be overpowered if all the PCs become controlled or are captured.

The characters should be able to work the gags out of their mouths and plan an escape. It should be difficult—but not impossible—for characters to scoot themselves into positions back to back and untie one another's bonds. Have the characters all make Dexterity checks at half their normal scores to untie someone else. It takes 1d6 hours of work to do so in the dark hold. Characters with the rope use proficiency can make proficiency checks to untie themselves or other characters in one-quarter the time.

Some of the more resistant crewmembers from the PCs' ship could be placed in the hold with them, if the DM wishes. These crewmembers can tell the party

that the ship is on its way to port, fully under the control of "that other captain and his crew." If the members of the party haven't figured out what they are fighting yet, or if they seem unaware that something or someone is manipulating Captain Fairmorn and his crew, one of the PCs' crewmembers might offhandedly mention: "It almost seemed like everyone was acting just like those slaves of the illithids I once saw—as though their minds were being controlled or something like that."

By now, the survivor is working to take over the minds of the rest of the party and their fellow crewmembers. The DM should make this clear by showing the takeover's effect on one of the NPCs in the hold. First the NPC complains of a headache. After a time, the NPC begins behaving a little strangely, asking the characters questions the NPC already knows the answers to, and acting restless. Soon after, the new mind-control victim becomes surly and morose. At this point, a few of the other controlled NPCs open the hold to release the new victim, disinterestedly urging the PCs to "join us." This should be enough to spur the PCs to action.



MAROONED – VAMPIRES (2)

Terrain: Wildspace (Deserted asteroid)

Total Party Levels: 42 (Average 7th)

Total gp Value: 9,800

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 10,210

Defeat: 7,658

Retreat: 2,553

Bonus: Extra 50 percent if the PCs deduce the true nature of “Brother Alaric” before he can get their ship.

Set Up

- While traveling along a seldom used route in wildspace, one of the PCs notices what look like signal fires on an asteroid nearby. Perhaps someone has been marooned and is in need of help.
- A coalition of merchants/traders hires the party to investigate an asteroid field they think may be the base for a group of pirates that has been preying on their ships.
- The PCs buy a very old treasure map (at a ridiculously low price), which shows the supposed location of Blackleg Bart's pirate stash. It is on a nearby asteroid.

The Lair

Sixty years ago, a young but undeniably talented and powerful mage named Morgion Frost gained a reputation as a vampire slayer. Convinced that he had eradicated the undead on his home world, Morgion sought other challenges—at the helm of a spelljamming vessel. His travels from sphere to sphere in search of undead to slay and magic to increase his power eventually attracted the attention of a vampire who swore to get Morgion before the mage got him. The vampire lured Morgion to his ship, trapped him, and made him into a lesser vampire. After 20 years of servitude, Morgion was freed when his master was slain.

No longer caring for anyone but himself, Morgion took control of his former master's ship, his charmed crew, and his possessions. His new freedom was

short-lived, however, as his ship was bested in battle and shot down with few survivors a few days later. They crashed on an empty asteroid, destroying the helm and most of the ship.

Some of the vampire's crew managed to escape Morgion's influence and fled with most of the supplies. The others eventually fell prey to Morgion or died and were animated by him. In the time that they have been marooned, the survivors of the crash have eked out a life for themselves, married, had children, and always done their utmost to fight off the vampire and his minions. The former crewmembers have never been numerous enough to fight the undead directly.

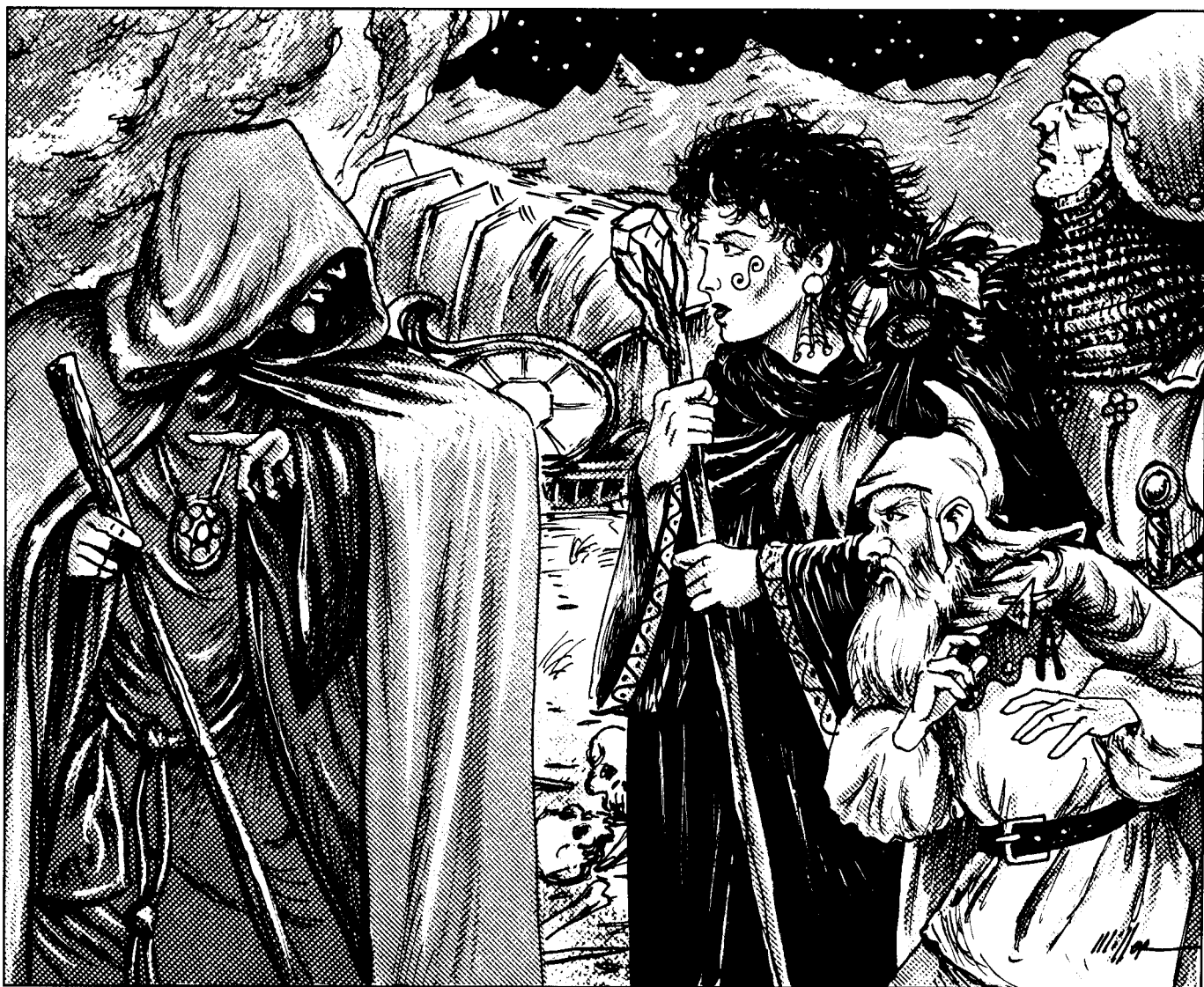
Morgion knows his situation is getting desperate. He is frantic to leave the asteroid before he is left with no further prey to satisfy his need. He has been patient, rationing himself as much as possible, but it has become obvious that time is against him. Now, Morgion has formed a plan to lure the next passing ship down to the asteroid, control or feed off the crew, and make his escape back into space—bringing along a crew of undead creatures and a few “snacks,” for good measure.

The Plan

Morgion has put his undead minions to work lately tearing his ship apart for wood to light signal fires. The vampire hopes these will be spotted by passing spacefarers, who will come to investigate. When they do, he plans to meet them and ask for their help. He will disguise himself as an earnest young priest and claim to have been fighting desperately to hold off the undead creatures around him long enough to be rescued. His minions have been primed to play their roles, and are set to make strategic attacks and withdrawals at Morgion's command.

His disguise affords Morgion three benefits: first, it allows him to wear a long, hooded robe to cover himself from the sun without arousing suspicion; second, if everyone believes he's a priest, they won't be expecting his mage spells, nor will they think it strange that he can “turn” the undead; and third, he can get close to members of the party under the

“The undead are concealed all around you. Can't you tell? Please, I want to leave this place.”
—Morgion Frost, vampire, in his guise as Brother Alaric.



guise of healing them and “persuade” them to help his cause or drain them of levels.

Signal Fires

No matter which Set Up was used to bring the party to the asteroid, when they arrive in the vicinity of the small asteroid field which plays host to the vampire’s lair, they notice the signal fires. The fires are clearly visible from space and spell out the word “HELP” in the common tongue. The survivors have placed their settlement as far as they could from the vampire’s ship, so their encampment is not visible to those in a position to view the signal fires. The party members can see the remains of a hammship—obviously the victim of a battle—resting upside-down near the fires.

When the members of the party land on the asteroid or climb down from their vessel, they will be attacked by the vampire’s undead minions, hiding near the ship.

Skeletons (19): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SD Immune to all *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, cold-

based attacks, and *fear*; ½ damage from nonblunt weapons; SZ M (6’); ML Usually fight to death; XP 65 each.

Zombies (15): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD Immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *death magic*, poisons, and cold-based spells; always fight until called off, turned, or destroyed; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

Morgion is willing to sacrifice his minions, knowing it is very likely that a priest will be with any group he might attract. Having cast *seeming*, *misdirection*, and *undetectable alignment* on himself, Morgion will race to “rescue” the party, pretending to turn the undead and urging the PCs to follow him to a safe place nearby where they can talk. He won’t object if they want to return to their ship and escape, as long as they invite him to go with them. If they agree to accompany him, he will take them to a shallow cave that he has prepared to look like the shelter of a cast-away.

He introduces himself as Brother Alaric, a servant of Melanus, Lord and Comforter of Celestial Travelers. Since there is no such deity, he assumes the

MAROONED – VAMPIRES (2)

party won't know what he should be dressed like and won't notice that his "holy symbol" is just an ornate pendant (worth 50 gp). He carries his spell book and his few remaining components in a backpack.

Morgion Frost (vampire, 11th level mage): Str 18/76 (+2 to hit, +4 dmg); Dex 14; Con 15; Int 18; Wis 13; Cha 12; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 62; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA *Energy drain*; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML Champion (16); XP 5,000.

Vampires can *charm person* by gaze (-2 to the victim's saving throw), assume *gaseous form* at will, *shape change* into bat form, summon lesser creatures for aid (typically rats, bats, or wolves), use *spider climb* to scale walls, and are unaffected by *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, poison, or paralysis. Spells based on cold or electricity do half damage. Garlic repels them, and they recoil from mirrors, holy water, and Lawful Good holy symbols (if they are presented strongly). Sunlight, a stake through the heart, and immersion in running water can destroy them. They may not enter a home without being invited by a resident of that dwelling.

As a 11th level mage, Morgion has memorized the following spells (those marked with an asterisk have already been cast): *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *wall of fog*, *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *misdirection**, *undetectable alignment**, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *spectral force*, *dimension door*, *improved invisibility*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *animate dead*, *seeming**, and *telekinesis*.

Equipment: *Beads of Force* (2), *Ring of Fire Resistance*.

The Cave

Morgion's cave holds a blanket, an armload of brambles and twigs (for making a fire), a small store of beans and grain, a crock of water, and an assortment of carved and drawn holy symbols. If the members of the party accompany him to the shelter, he will explain the following to them, in a long-suffering tone of voice:

"I was shipwrecked on this horrible place full of

undead. One by one, the other survivors were picked off, and now I'm the only one left. The fiend responsible for killing most of the others is a vampire lord who controls the other undead, but I'm not strong enough to defeat him. Would you please consider taking me with you when you leave?"

If the PCs say he is welcome to go with them or otherwise agree to take him along, the conditions have been met that allow him to enter their ship. If they express interest in slaying the vampire, he will offer to go with them, but explain that he isn't a very powerful priest. He has already made plans to deal with the party. His minion, Gorlo (once a low level warrior), the only lesser vampire he has created, has been instructed to attack the PCs when they settle down to eat, to sleep, or if they look like they are going to go exploring.

Morgion is planning to secretly charm one or more of the PCs. He will try to act in conjunction with Gorlo's attack to dispel the party's magical items. His scheme calls for Gorlo to attack the PCs, draining them to a level Morgion can defeat more easily. Once some of the PCs are charmed and others are sufficiently weakened, he will let them kill Gorlo if they can.

Gorlo (vampire): Int Exc; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA *Energy drain*, Strength 18/76 (+2 to hit, +4 dmg); SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML Champion (16); XP 3,000.

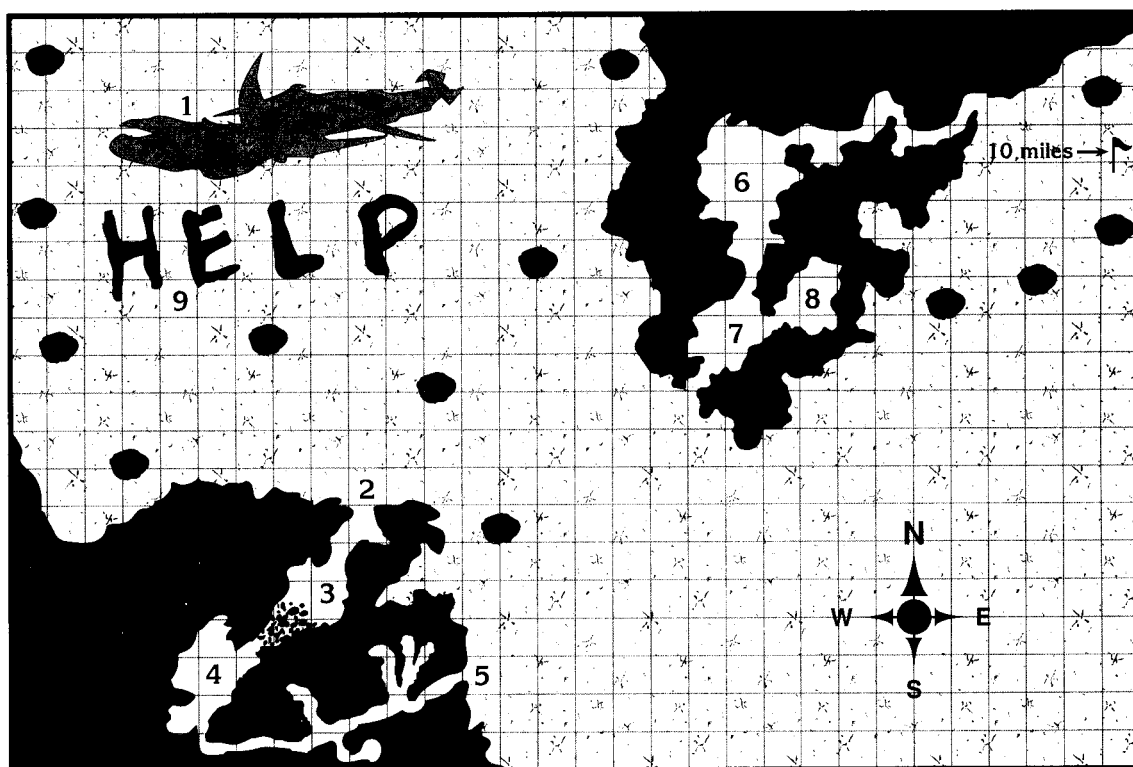
If the members of the party see through his disguise at any time, Morgion will control the PCs he has charmed, instructing them to hold, subdue or disarm the other PCs, and will try to drain all of them to levels he feels he can control. Once all of them are charmed, he will have them bring his two coffins and a large chest filled with gems, jewelry, and coins worth 9,750 gp aboard their ship. Then, he will call for any undead that are still animated to come aboard to act as his crew.

If there are other crewmembers aboard, he will be much more subtle; in this event, he will have the PCs sneak his coffins on board and stalk the rest of the

"That merchant says he's sold a dozen more o' them phony maps claimin' to lead to me treasure! If this keeps up, mateys, we won't have to go a-piratin' no more! Har, har!"
—Blackleg Bart, unconventional entrepreneur.

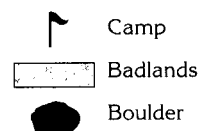
Vampire Lairs

Scale: 1 square = 25 feet



Key

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Wrecked hammership | 6) Gorlo's cave |
| 2) "Brother Alaric's" cave | 7) Skeleton cave |
| 3) Blocked passage | 8) Zombie cave |
| 4) Morgion's secret coffin | 9) "HELP" signal fires |
| 5) Secret entry | |



crewmembers to charm or drain them a few at a time, until he has control of the ship.

Morgion's first priority, once in command of the vessel, is to rid the ship's crew and the PCs of any magical weapons. Then, he will take any magical items he can use and have the rest sold or thrown away. Finally, he will go through spell books belonging to any mage aboard the ship, tearing out any pages with spells he feels could threaten him. He might even let useful servants—like the party—live for quite a while, as long as they remain under his control.

The members of the party may discover that Morgion is a vampire before he can get aboard their ship. If they successfully attack him, he will try to escape to the coffin he has concealed in a small hollow dug beneath his overturned ship. His other coffin is hidden behind what looks like an impassable rock fall at the rear of his cave. While there is plenty of room for someone in *gaseous form* to pass through the rubble, it would take the party at least four hours to dig out a passage large enough to allow them through.

The Survivors' Village

If the party members have their ship circle the asteroid before landing, they will be able to see the small hamlet that houses the survivors of Morgion's original crew. Any of these folk can tell the party the truth, if asked. All of them want to be rescued from the vampire and his minions. None of them knows that Morgion plans to masquerade as a priest, so it is possible to use most of the encounter as is, even if the party members talk to the villagers first.

Morgion, if asked about the villagers, will claim that he has no reason to trust them, as they all used to be under the vampire's control. He will also warn the party not to trust any plan the villagers propose, as they might be baiting a trap for the PCs.

The members of this sparse encampment will look incredulous if party members ask them the whereabouts of Blackleg Bart's treasure (see Set Up), but—since they do want to be rescued—will refrain from admonishing the PCs from believing in cheap novelty maps. They have nothing of value to trade for passage.

PIRATES OF THE SHATTERED FORGE – PIRATES OF GITH (13)

Terrain: Wildspace (Dwarven citadel)

Total Party Levels: 48 (Average 8th)

Total gp Value: 10,560

Total Monster XP:

Kill: 46,950

Defeat: 35,213

Retreat: 11,738

Special: If the DM plans a battle in space, the PCs will need a strong ship with good armaments. If the DM wishes the party's ship to land on the citadel's apron rather than simply tying off to a mooring post, they need a smaller ship, like a dragonfly.

Set Up

- Needing a costly overhaul on their ship before making any extended journeys, the PCs hear of an abandoned dwarven citadel nearby. Though dwarves usually strip their ships when they leave, there are often treasures to be found within. If so, the valuables might be enough to pay for the needed repairs.

- The PCs are hired by an impressive looking elf to explore an old dwarven citadel and bring back anything elven they might find. The elf is a scout for the elven Imperial Fleet and has been sent to locate a missing elven man-o-war that was carrying a very important item. PCs would be advised to turn over anything they find to the elf.

- The PCs (or one of them) have been victimized by the pirates of Gith once before. Though they escaped, they harbor a deep resentment for the scum who slew so many innocents and cost them so much to repair their ship. Now they've spotted the pirates up to their old tricks nearby, using a dwarven citadel as a base.

The Lair

The *Shattered Forge*, a dwarven citadel shaped like a mountain with a castle carved into the top of it, was once hailed as one of the most impressive and

approachable dwarven ships of its kind. Known then as the *Golden Forge*, the ship earned its current name when one of the magical forges providing motive power for the ship blew up.

Several dwarves were killed and many others injured in the accident, and the dwarves decided their pride in their ship had drawn bad luck to them. They abandoned the citadel prematurely, before they had quite finished mining it. Nonetheless, most parts of it are quite well carved out. The new name of the vessel has been chiseled in huge runic letters just below the castle on top as a warning to other dwarves to avoid it.

A group of pirates of Gith discovered it and realized what a treasure they now possessed. They don't utilize the whole ship, but the parts they do use serve as a secure base for them. The citadel has a wide landing apron for their captured elven flitters, and the dwarves built in a few interesting traps and alarm devices to discourage would-be attackers and thieves. The pirates utilize these to their best advantage, and have added some magical refinements of their own. The Gith have adopted the name of the ship for their group, and are known as the Pirates of the *Shattered Forge*.

They have been very successful since settling in the citadel. Several wrecked ships drift nearby, stripped of anything valuable or useful. The pirates also have acquired an elven man-o-war and two elven flitters, which they take into Astral space then emerge suddenly, in surprise attacks against other vessels.

The elven man-o-war they captured had some very important cargo on board, which the pirates are putting to good use: a magical ship locator, which works similarly to a planetary locator, but on a much smaller scale. The device is a prototype and was soon to be tested to aid the elven fleet in keeping track of enemy ships. The ship locator can measure objects traveling at either spelljamming or tactical speed and place their locations on a system chart. It then determines their direction and speed of travel, allowing anyone with navigation skills to plot a projected course for a ship and lie in wait to trap it as it passes.

"The ship locator tracks objects moving at spelljamming or tactical speed. Anyone with navigation skill can determine the placement, speed, and direction of any ships in the sphere not blocked by a large mass. Of course, there are a few problems with it . . ."

—From the journal of Tarrell Moonrider, elf mage/inventor.

PIRATES OF THE SHATTERED FORGE – PIRATES OF GITH (13)

The item has one flaw, which has yet to be worked out: besides ships, it also measures incoming meteors, large catapult stones, and jettisoned trash, registering these items on the chart as ships. Despite its problems, the elves are understandably anxious to retrieve it. Because the locator “malfunctions” in this manner, the captain has taken it to the pirate base to study. It sits on a crate next to the captain’s hammock in his room.

The Citadel

Use the map on page 39 to run the encounter. Only a small part of the dwarven citadel has been mapped here, since the pirates don’t use all of it. DMs can expand the encounter by creating more maps and planning the items to be found within the mountain and the castle.

Area 1: The Landing Strip

A docking apron has been carved around the main entrance to the citadel. When the citadel was under dwarf control, merchants and traders could land small vessels and moor large ones here to stock them or to deliver items in trade. Currently, the landing strip holds an elven flitter, parked near the side door.

Huge double doors, located to the west side and in the center of the strip, lead into the citadel. They are flanked by 9½-foot-tall, intricately carved statues of dwarves. Unless the proper phrase “Hail, king under the mountain,” is spoken, anyone attempting to open or go through the doors will be attacked by one of the statues—a stone golem.

Stone Golem (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 14; hp 60; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA Strength 22, *slow* 1/2 rounds against victims within 10'; SD Immune to all spells (except *rock to mud* and *flesh to stone*) and all weapons of less than +2 enchantment; SZ L (9½'); ML Fearless (19); XP 10,000.

The pirates discovered the password in the castle above. After battling the statue, the party members can try to enter. The central doors are barred from the inside. Unless the PCs brought a storm giant with them, they will be unable to smash through these dwarf-made doors. If unbarred, they swing open at a touch. The side doors are locked and protected with

an *alarm* spell, which the chief spelljammer can clearly hear from his room (area 4).

Area 2: Stores (30' × 60')

Once used as the sales room where the dwarves displayed, traded, and sold their wares, the chamber now serves as a catchall for ropes, belaying pins, sailcloth, crates, barrels and other useful—but uninteresting—ship fittings. Large double doors can be seen across the room from the entry doors. (Note that the door to the chief spelljammer’s room is hidden by an *illusionary wall*.)

Area 3: Practice Hall (80' × 60')

Formerly a storage area for supplies and goods, this huge chamber is now used for sparring practice. Boxes have been set up as a maze, ropes hang from the ceiling for swashbuckling maneuvers, and swords stand in racks along one wall. A normal door is set into the east wall. (Note the secret door, trapped with a *glyph of warding*, 11d4 electrical damage, which leads to the captain’s room.)

Area 4: Chief Spelljammer’s Room (30' × 30')

This room is furnished with a hammock and a duffel bag. If the PCs tripped the alarm at the citadel doors, Yogul, the chief spelljammer, will not be in his room; he will be checking the trap in area 5 and informing the mate and the captain of unexpected visitors.

If the party got through without setting off the alarm, he will be studying his spell book in his room. It is written in a githyanki code, and is so loaded with explosive runes, snake sigils, and secret pages, it almost isn’t worth the effort of reading through it. If the PCs manage to acquire it, they find the book contains all the spells Yogul has memorized, plus *alarm*, *illusionary wall*, and any of the DM’s favorites. The book can be protected with any trick or trap spells the DM wishes to place on it.

If given the chance, Yogul will *teleport* to the man-o-war and instruct the mage on duty (Phel, F7/M7) to bring the ship in to dock from its current hiding place among the wrecks nearby, so the rest of those aboard (five 8th level fighters and the mate, a 9th level cleric) can help fight off intruders in the pirates’ base. Yogul will *teleport* back to the landing strip,

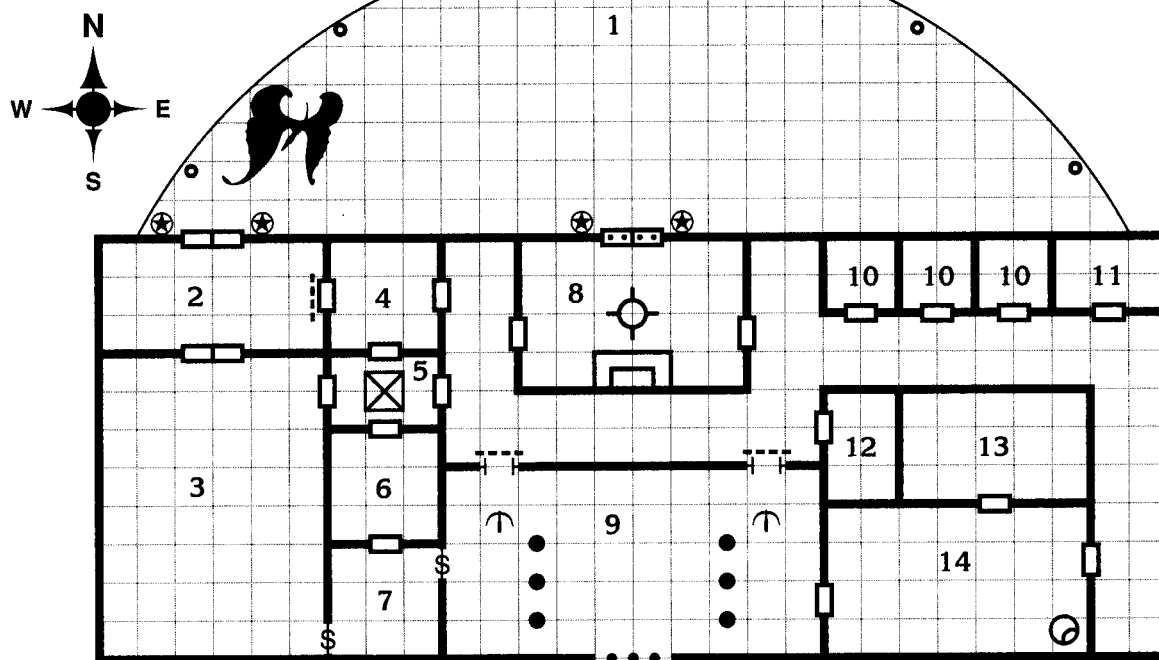
“Show no mercy, men! Dinner’s here!”
—Jvel, Gith pirate captain.

Shattered Forge

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

- 1) Landing apron
- 2) Stores
- 3) Practice hall
- 4) Chief spelljammer's room
- 5) Pit trap hall
- 6) Mate's room
- 7) Captain's room

- 8) Entry hall
- 9) Great hall
- 10) Crew rooms
- 11) Crew room
- 12) Pantry
- 13) Kitchen
- 14) Banquet hall



Key

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|------------------|--|--------------|--|----------|
| | Door | | Archway | | Covered pit | | Fountain |
| | Double door | | Portcullis | | Statue | | Ballista |
| | Barred door | | Illusionary wall | | Mooring post | | Flitter |
| | Secret door | | Dais | | Brazier | | Column |

cast *invisibility* on himself, come back in behind the party members, and attack them by surprise at his best opportunity.

Yogul (chief spelljammer, 11th level Gith mage): Str 10; Dex 14; Con 16; Int 16; Wis 11; Cha 8; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 11; hp 36; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger) or by spell; SA/SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP* each 3/day; SZ M (7'); ML Champion (16); XP 5,000.

Spells memorized: *alarm*, *color spray*, *magic missile* × 2, *detect invisibility*, *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *vampiric touch* × 2, *ice storm*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *chaos*, *teleport* × 2.

Shig (mate, 9th level Gith cleric): Int Exc; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 9; hp 44; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+1 (mace) or by spell; SA/SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP* each 3/day, *mace* +1; SZ M (6'); ML Champion (16); XP 3,750.

Spells: *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds* × 2, *aid*, *firetrap*, *produce flame*, *resist fire*, *dispel magic* × 2, *prayer*, *cure serious wounds* × 2, *flame strike*.

Phel (mage on duty, Gith F7/M7): Int Exc; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 21; THAC0 14 (M 18); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger), 1-8 (long sword), or by spell; SA/SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP* each 3/day; SZ M (6'); ML Champion (16); XP 3,000.

Spells memorized: *magic missile* × 2, *color spray*, *jump*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *continual light*, *fly*, *fireball*, *Evard's black tentacles*.

Pirates of Gith (5, 8th level fighters): Int Exc; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 8; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger), 1-8 (long sword × 2), 1-8 (scimitar × 2); SA and SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP*, each 3/day; SZ M (6'-7'); ML Champion (16); XP 2,000 each.

Area 5: Pit Trap Hall (20' × 30')

The hall trap can be defeated by opening any door into it, closing it again, then reopening it within a few seconds. When a character performs these steps, the pit will not open when weight is placed on it. If the trap hasn't been disarmed in this way, the pit will open the moment more than 100 pounds crosses it. The pit is 40 feet deep and lined with spikes. Anyone falling in sustains normal falling damage and suffers

PIRATES OF THE SHATTERED FORGE – PIRATES OF GITH (13)

1-6 points of damage from each spike (roll 1d6 to see how many they hit).

Area 6: Mate's Room (30' × 30')

The mate, Shig, is in command on the man-o-war at present. His room is similar to Yogul's, but holds a navigation chart he is working on, as well as various pens, ink, and some parchment. He has 6 pp tucked away inside his pillow, and a jeweled dagger (worth 20 gp) rests on a carved stone table next to his hammock.

Area 7: Captain's Quarters (30' × 30')

Jvel, the captain, will be found here unless the alarm is given. He is trying to unravel the problems posed by the ship locator. If warned, he will scoop up the device, leave through whichever secret door affords him the best chance of escape, and try to rally his crew to defend the base. If he has time, he will *meld into stone* when he hears the party coming. He will wait four rounds, expecting that the crew will attack during that time, then step out to attack by surprise.

Jvel (Gith captain, F10/CI11): Str 17; Dex 16; Con 16; Int 15; Wis 18; Cha 15; AL LE; AC; HD Special; hp 84; THAC0 11 (CI14); #AT 3/2 (CI1 or spell); Dmg 1-8+4 (*long sword* +3) or by spell; SZ M (7'); ML Champion (16); XP 6,500.

Spells: *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds* × 3, *cause fear*, *protection from good*, *aid* × 2, *fire trap*, *heat metal*, *produce flame*, *resist fire*, *wyvern watch*, *cause blindness*, *dispel magic*, *feign death*, *meld into stone*, *prayer*, *cause serious wounds* × 2, *tongues*, *flame strike*, *slay living*, *heal*.

Equipment: *long sword* +3, *brooch of shielding* (48 charges), *ring of vampiric regeneration*.

Jvel will do everything in his power to escape, if things turn against him. He can always use his innate magical abilities to enter the Astral plane. If the PCs win but Jvel gets away, he will devote himself to learning more about them and exacting revenge at a later date. He could make quite an interesting recurring villain.

Area 8: Entry Hall (40' × 60')

Used by the dwarves as their official reception room, this area features an ever burning brazier and an empty dais.

Area 9: Great Hall (50' × 100')

This columned hall has become a main defensive area for the pirates. *Illusionary walls* cover the two northern doors. This spell also serves to conceal two ballistae stationed to point down the hall. The ballistae cause 3-18 points of damage to anyone hit. Each ballista has only one bolt. These are always manned by two 7th level fighters. The southern wall opens into the rest of the mountain but is barred by a heavy, locked portcullis. A door in the eastern wall and a

secret door to the west offer possible escape routes, if needed.

Pirates of Gith (2, 7th level fighters): Int Exc; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 25; THAC0 14; #AT 1; 1-8 (*long sword*), 1-8 (*scimitar*); SA/SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP* each 3/day; SZ M (6'-7'); ML Champion (16); XP 975 each.

Areas 10 and 11: Crew Rooms

Hammocks are strung in each of these rooms. Those who sleep here are elsewhere. Klav (M7) is scouting in the other elven flitter, and Girn (F8/M8) has just returned from his stint in the flitter parked outside.

Klav (7th level Gith mage): Int Exc; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (*dagger*) or by spell; SA/SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP* each 3/day; SZ M (6'); ML Champion (16); XP 3,000.

Spells memorized: *magic missile* × 2, *color spray*, *jump*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *continual light*, *fly*, *fireball*, *Evard's black tentacles*.

Girn (Gith F8/M8): Int Exc; AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; HD Special; hp 38; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1 (*long sword* +1) or by spell; SA/SD *Astral spell*, *plane shift*, and *ESP* each 3/day; SZ M (7'); ML Champion (16); XP 3750.

Spells memorized: *magic missile* × 2, *color spray*, *jump*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *continual light*, *fly*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *confusion*, *wall of fire*.

Area 12: Pantry (20' × 30')

Meat and wine are stored here. Some of the meat is fresh, though a lot of it has gone bad. Close inquiries as to the source of the meat are not recommended.

Area 13: Kitchen (30' × 50')

This area is unused.

Area 14: Banqueting Hall (40' × 70')

The pirates have transformed this room into a glorified chart room. Navigational charts cover the built-in stone banqueting table. A fountain stands dry and dusty in the corner.

Pirate Notes

The pirates are of exceptional Intelligence, and their battle tactics should reflect this. If they find themselves losing, they will escape to the Astral plane. It's extremely hard to kill the higher level pirates for this reason.

Pirates of Gith kill and eat captives, but these have a good store of meat, so the DM should give PCs a reasonable shot at escape. They have 10,560 gp of treasure in coins, gems, and jewelry (including items previously mentioned). If the party is tough, DMs may want to give the pirates more magic.

A LAIR OF FLAME – FIRELICH (1)

Terrain: Wildspace
Total Party Levels: 54 (Average 9th)
Total gp Value: 0
Total Monster XP:
 Kill: 10,000
 Defeat: 7,500
 Retreat: 2,500
Bonus: Extra 50 percent if party kills Manistock by destroying the diamond helm.

Set Up

- The firelich's prison moves randomly through wildspace. This adventure can challenge a party on a long journey.
- The party members have heard of a mysterious "rip" in wildspace and have traveled to its last known location to investigate.
- A powerful wizard has heard of Manistock's plight and hires the party to find him and bring back any of his possessions, especially the diamond spelljamming helm. The wizard may or may not be seeking the objects to prepare for his own lichdom.

The Lair

Manistock the sorcerer built an immense ship to use as a laboratory in space as he prepared to make the transfer to lichdom. He filled it with every spell component and magical device he could lay his hands on and powered it with a major helm made of solid diamond, which he purchased at great price.

Unfortunately for Manistock, an error occurred during his transference. The lich-preparation spells he had cast inexplicably turned him into an undead fireball, which exploded in the phlogiston. The resulting energy created a "rip" in the phlogiston, ejecting the unfortunate mage into wildspace, where he has remained ever since.

While spacefarers have from time to time heard reports of fireliches shrieking their agony as they race among the stars like wayward comets, Manistock's case is a bit different. This unspeakable fate did not befall him through his own mistake or ignorance, but was planned by an enemy. The merchant who sold Manistock his prized diamond helm was actually a powerful wizard, long a secret rival of Manistock's. He spoke a curse upon the wondrous helm, designed to pervert Manistock's attempt at lichdom and confine him (and the remains of his ship) within the wildspace "rip," a prison pocketed between dimensions.

The pocket prison is all but invisible from wildspace. Any ship entering the sector the prison is currently traversing has a 1 percent chance of noticing

it. The PCs can avoid the dimensional tear if it has not yet changed course toward them.

When Manistock's enchanted prison nears a ship, it inevitably changes course to intercept. Apparently the curse could not utterly contain the instinctive nature of the firelich, which draws Manistock to ram into ships and celestial bodies in futile attempts to extinguish his fiery self.

The party members look on in unspeaking horror as space rips apart before them. Manistock the firelich tears out, his long, flaming tail tracing his path of emergence. The lich's direction of exit is random but will never be directly toward the target.

Outside his prison, Manistock changes direction and screams toward the party's vessel. His only interest is in ending his miserable existence. He neither knows nor cares what damage he will do to the ship when he hits it. He cannot recall the countless times he has tried this plan of attack with other targets, and failed.

The rip will remain open until the party destroys it, or until it swallows up the firelich again. The prison retains a grip on the lich's tail and begins closing with Manistock, increasing its movement by three points per round.

Due to Manistock's unusual method of attack, the firelich's normal *fear* aura does not come into effect until the third round he is outside his prison. It takes that long for the crew aboard the targeted vessel to figure out what is happening to them.

Manistock

The firelich moves with a single purpose once he has determined the target's position. He will chase the vessel through space in his attempt to ram it. If he successfully hits the deck or hull, he inflicts 1-3 points of hull damage. Any PCs in the area suffer 10-30 points of damage from fire (no save, but *rings of fire resistance* work). The vessel must then save vs. magical fire. What happens next depends on the outcome of this saving throw.

If the save is made, Manistock will explode against the deck or hull as a 16 hit dice fireball—he was a very powerful sorcerer. The next round, his body will recreate itself from the fire, and he will immediately be swallowed up by his dimensional prison. The rip will then close and depart, leaving Manistock to search for another target.

Failing the save means Manistock has penetrated the outer hull; his passage leaves a ragged hole 8-18 (2d6+6) feet wide. As he passes through the ship, each deck he strikes must save vs. magical fire. If a deck succeeds, Manistock explodes inside the ship as a 16 hit dice fireball. After three decks fail saving throws, Manistock breaks through the ship back into

A LAIR OF FLAME – FIRELICH (1)

wildspace. While still in the ship's air envelope, the firelich looses a horrible shriek of frustration and flies off, his prison closing behind him. Each character hearing the shriek must make a saving throw vs. petrification or be frozen in terror for 1-4 rounds.

Any save that fails on a natural 1 results in a *wall of fire* surrounding the hole on the affected deck. The wall will last 31 rounds. Depending on the size of the area in which it appears, the wall will be 20 feet high with a radius of 85 feet. It does not have to be circular; it can expand to fill an entire deck on a small ship. The wall is only 1 foot thick. All creatures within 10 feet of the wall suffer 2-8 points of damage. Those within 20 feet suffer 1-4 damage. Anyone passing through the wall takes 2-12+31 points of damage. The affected hull or deck takes one point of hull damage per round. Saving throws do not apply.

There is a possibility that the *wall of fire* will cause a normal fire on the ship, too. This chance equals the difference between the ship's tonnage and 31. Thus, a 1-ton ship has a 30 percent chance of catching fire; a 20 ton or 42 ton ship each has an 11 percent chance of catching fire. (Negatives do not apply.) The wall consumes air at the rate of one creature month per round, for a total of 31 creature months of air. If a normal fire starts, refer to the rules on page 61 of the *Concordance of Arcane Space*.

In addition to the fire damage, a natural fire causes a critical hit. Consult the *Concordance of Arcane Space*, page 59, for the table. Reroll if 11 (Fire!) is the result.

Manistock (firelich): Int Genius; AL LE; AC 0; MV 36; HD 31; hp 85; THAC0 4; #AT 1; Dmg 16d6; SA Fear, MR 40%; SZ L (6' diameter+18' tail); ML Fearless (19); XP 10,000.

The Pocket Prison

The party members may seek to escape Manistock by sailing into the "rip." They can observe that Manistock seems almost as anxious to keep away from the rip as he is to ram the vessel. The firelich will not follow the party into his prison, preferring to keep as far away from it as he can to wait for them to come out.

The rip is wide enough to take any vessel smaller than the *Spelljammer* itself. Once inside the pocket dimension, the first thing the PCs see is a glittering throne: Manistock's cursed diamond helm. The mage paid 500,000 gp for it, but party members may find it difficult to locate a buyer for such a large object. If they try to leave the pocket dimension with the helm, the prison will move with them. The dimensional tear exists only because of the artifact, so the PCs can not remove the helm by normal means. Most magic won't work to extract the helm, either.

Bits of wreckage float within the pocket: the remnants of Manistock's ship. No mundane treasure remains in the prison—all was destroyed in the conflagration.

The DM may allow party members to find magical items inside the tear, but only very powerful objects could have survived the holocaust that created the lich's private hell. Any such items will be usable by wizards only; Manistock was a sorcerer and had no interest in clerical magic, armor, or weapons larger than a dagger. He was also unable to acquire any major artifacts before his attempted transference to lichdom.

Once the PCs have collected whatever objects they desire, they realize they can escape the prison only if they abandon the helm—or destroy it. The helm will be destroyed after suffering 200 hit points of damage from weapons of +2 or better or from spells of at least third level. A *transmute rock to mud* spell will inflict 50 points of damage.

The party members will not find it easy to simply abandon the helm. Manistock is waiting to attack their ship if it exits the rip. Meanwhile, the pocket dimension is moving faster and faster, trying to recapture its prisoner. If it succeeds in drawing the firelich back in while the party's ship is still inside, the rip will close. Manistock will continue to attack the ship within the pocket, exploding and reforming until either he is destroyed or he kills the PCs and obliterates their vessel.

Winning

The party can kill Manistock only through the destruction of the enchanted diamond helm that cursed him with the torturous unlife of a firelich. There are two ways this can be accomplished.

First, the PCs can cast a fireball or similar destructive magic into the rip from normal wildspace. One direct hit from *outside* the prison will unbalance the mysterious composition of the tear in wildspace, annihilating the diamond helm, the pocket dimension, whatever magical items it may contain, and Manistock himself. The party members are then free to continue their journey.

The party members can obtain the same results by destroying the helm from within the rip. This method is more time-consuming, but does allow the PCs to (possibly) collect other magical items. When the pocket dimension is destroyed, the PCs aboard their ship will be ejected into the phlogiston at a random location within a few days' journey of a crystal sphere, in much the same manner as Manistock was shunted into wildspace when the prison was created.

DWELLERS IN THE VORTEX – RADIANT GOLEM (1)

Terrain: Wildspace

Total Party Levels: 60 (Average 6th)

Total gp Value: 153,831

Total Monster XP: 0

Bonus: Up to 25,000 to parties whose members: do not try to kill the golem; do not double-cross the golem; or are not solely treasure hungry (the available treasure is more than most groups could carry, in any event).

Special: No Monster XP are awarded in this adventure, because the party's objective is not to kill, but to cooperate. DMs should allot Bonus XP accordingly. The PCs' ship must be equipped with only a minor helm for the terms of this adventure.

Set Up

- The PCs' ship has been caught in a huge space storm. When things settle down, the party members discover that their ship is badly damaged, stuck in the eye of the storm, within a vortex that has become a ship graveyard.

- The party members have heard rumors of a ship graveyard absolutely loaded with treasure, and they have sought it out.

- The Shou Lung emperor has hired the party to find two missing dragonships, which the PCs have traced to this part of wildspace.

The Lair

The vortex sucks ships to their dooms. It is not a sentient creature, merely a freak of nature. There is no way to combat the vortex itself. Only a powerful vessel can hope to escape the swirling cosmic winds that have trapped ships for centuries.

The storm was hard on the party's vessel; the ship suffered major hull damage. It is repairable, but the PCs have no materials and can't get out of the vortex to a suitable repair site. Fortunately for the party, there are lots of wrecks in the vortex. In fact, there are enough salvageable parts to get at least two ships spaceworthy.

Cargo and treasure await on most of the ships. Whether the PCs spend time collecting it is up to them, but they may want to stop treasure hunting and think more of escape when they find the only other creature in the vortex—the Radiant Golem.

The golem is quite friendly—it doesn't get many visitors—and will gladly help the party members repair a ship. Its one request: that the PCs take it along when they leave. How they get out of the vortex, and what they do about the golem (and its death aura!), are the main points of this adventure.

Almost every ship in the vortex has suffered hull damage of some kind, and there is a lot of wreckage, presumably the remains of smaller ships. Enough remnants of a wasp remain to identify it, and the PCs can deduce that the other loose wreckage came from ships of 10 tons or less.

If the party's ship is under 20 tons, it will be destroyed by the storm. In this case, the PCs will need a new ship. The available vessels are:

- An elven man-of-war
- A dwarven citadel
- A squid ship
- A cog
- A mind flayer nautiloid
- A galleon
- Two beholder tyrant ships
- Two dragonships
- Two gnomish sidewheelers
- Two hammerships
- Three tradesmen
- Three neogi deathspiders

The radiant golem is on board the mind flayer ship when the party arrives.

To escape from the vortex requires a ship with a major helm and a ship's rating of at least 8. The catch is this: the party has just a minor helm, and only the golem knows where to find a major helm amid the myriad wreckage. In fact, it has hidden the only functional one. The golem was growing understandably tired of helping crews free their ships from the vortex, only to be abandoned time and again. (Well, it will admit that often the crews it befriends die mysteriously before they can escape.)

It has been stuck here so long that it has come to understand what a vessel requires to escape the vortex's pull. It's quite willing to share this information with the party, providing the members are nice to it. More details on the radiant golem are included under the creature's description toward the end of this adventure. At first, the PCs may consider its offer quite a fair exchange.

First Deathspider—The Huntsman

The first of the three deathspiders contains no useful parts, but some hull plates are still intact and could be made to fit over holes in the party's ship or one of the other ships.

This ship is not fit to be repaired, and the PCs should not consider taking a deathspider anyway as it would invite attack from most other spacefaring peoples.

All the crew of 30 and their umber hulks are dead, and only skeletal remains will be found. A close check of the remains reveals that only half the neogi had physical damage (from the passage through the vortex). The others, and the umber hulks, have no

DWELLERS IN THE VORTEX – RADIANT GOLEM (1)

apparent cause of death. The ship was not carrying any cargo, but the crew's personal treasure consists of 2,978 gp worth of precious stones:

- Turquoise stones (2 at 9 gp each)
- A piece of blue quartz (10 gp)
- Star rose quartz (3 pieces at 50 gp each)
- Small peridots (8 at 100 gp each)
- Crysoberyls (2 at 500 gp each)
- An oriental amethyst (1,000 gp)

The ship was powered by a lifejammer, destroyed in the passage through the vortex.

Second Deathspider— The Black Widow

This ship is in better condition than the first, though its helm is missing. The hull is in fair shape, but the rams are wrecked beyond repair. Given the tendency of members of most races to attack neogi ships on sight, this would not be a good choice as an escape ship. The crewmembers are nowhere to be found on this vessel, as the survivors of the vortex passage went to the third deathspider to scavenge parts and decided to repair the that ship instead of their own. They ate those of the crew that did not survive the vortex. There is no treasure on this ship.

Third Deathspider—The Trapdoor

This is the best of the deathspiders. It is spaceworthy, lacking only motive power to get out of the vortex. There are remains of 46 neogi and 46 umber hulks on board, as well as some dwarf and human skeletons. About half the bodies still have a few strips of skin and clumps of hair on them. Some of the skeletons are not whole, evidence that the neogi had started eating the dead. The major helm here has been destroyed. The party members can scavenge hull plates from this ship if they wish.

There is a small fortune scattered about the ship: 15,225 gp in semiprecious stones and 20,478 gp worth of gems.

Although spaceworthy, this is not a good choice for escaping, as deathspiders are automatically fired upon by space travelers encountering them.

First Tradesman— The Phlogiston Trader

This ship is severely damaged, its fins smashed beyond repair, and the hull is badly holed. The helm is missing. It can be found on the nautiloid.

The ship's crew are all dead, still strapped into their seats. There are only four of them, no more than skeletons now. All of them appear human.

There is no cargo or treasure on this vessel. It was raided long ago.

Second Tradesman— The Merchant of Space

This ship is in much better hull condition than the first, but it has been completely gutted. All the useful items have been stripped out and taken to the nautiloid. There is only the bare shell left, making this a poor choice for an escape vessel. Even the bodies of the crew are missing.

Third Tradesman— The High Roller

The last of the tradesmen is in poor condition, but could be repaired with a lot of effort. It hasn't been stripped at all and its helm is undamaged. However, it is only a minor helm and won't help the party escape.

The ship carries 8 tons of cargo, mostly cloth and some metal ingots. The majority of the ingots are steel, with a few of copper and bronze.

- Cloth (3,800 gp)
- Steel ingots (37,000 gp)
- Bronze ingots (3,000 gp)
- Copper ingots (5,000 gp)

The crew of 10 are all dead, but they appear to have died recently. They all wear looks of pain on their faces.

First Hammership— The Shark of the Void

This vessel is in fine condition, having taken only minor damage from its passage through the vortex. Its port side "eye" has been sheared off, and the mast and tail have been snapped, but it is otherwise functional. It has only a minor helm as its motive force—

Lists of gems and their relative values can be found in Appendix 2 of the **DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide**. Where the precise treasure items aboard the derelicts in the vortex graveyard are not given, DMs may feel free to include items of their choice.



not enough to get such a large vessel out of the vortex. If the helm is replaced with a major helm, this would be an excellent vessel for escape.

There is no sign of any crew, but there is some cargo: rotted food so old it is almost dust. In the crew quarters are hoards of stones worth 23,050 gp.

- Pieces of obsidian (2 at 5 gp each)
- Various types of agates (11 at 10 gp each)
- A piece of hematite (20 gp)
- A piece of star rose quartz (43 gp)
- Moonstones and citrines (14 at 50 gp each)
- A sardonyx (67 gp)
- Aquamarines and pearls (21 at 100 gp each)
- Amethysts and garnets (16 at 500 gp each)
- Various opals (7 at 1,000 gp each)
- A jacinth (5,000 gp)

Second Hammer-ship— The Open Claw

This ship has not fared as well as the first hammer-ship. It has severe hull damage—far too much to be repaired—and has lost most of the bow and the fore-castle. The rest of the ship has been gutted, including

the helm and all cargo and treasure. It looks as though the crew of this ship gutted it to repair another vessel in an attempt to escape the vortex. Their fate remains unknown. (But *someone* had to start the graveyard rumor. . . .) There is nothing of value aboard this hulk.

First Sidewheeler— The Steam Wheel XII

In nature's perverse way, it figures that this is the only ship undamaged in its passage into the vortex. Yet, the crew are all dead. Sufficient remains can be found to ascertain that they did not die violently, but party members can not establish the cause of death. Like so many others in this graveyard, they died from exposure to the radiant golem before they could escape the vortex.

The ship is filled with all manner of mechanical marvels, all with no apparent purpose, except to take up space on board. The helm, concealed somewhere in the middle of the jumble of machinery, is only a minor helm. It doesn't work too well, as even the gnomes' "improvements" could not give it enough

DWELLERS IN THE VORTEX – RADIANT GOLEM (1)

power to drive such a heavy ship easily. There is no other useful cargo or treasure on board this vessel.

What is useful is the idea that the party can make a ship spaceworthy using bits and pieces from many others. Many of the parts missing from other ships have found their way onto this sidewheeler or its counterpart (though no major helms). This ship's example should give PCs a hint that scavenging parts to repair a ship is their best hope to escape this prison. Many parts for hull repairs, weapon repairs or replacements, and ammunition for weapons can be scavenged from this sidewheeler. The two wheels themselves would make excellent armor along the sides of any ship. (The golem can move the wheels by detaching them from the ship and pushing them gently toward the ship the party plans to use. The wheels will drift to their destination, where they can be affixed to their new home.)

The air envelope on this ship is exceptionally large and mostly fresh, although it does smell a bit musty.

Second Sidewheeler— The Iron Wheel XIV

Unlike its companion, this vessel is not spaceworthy. It could be made spaceworthy with a lot of effort, but there are better choices. It does have a wealth of barely attached parts all over it, especially weapons. This was obviously a gnomish juggernaut, equipped with 12 ballistae, 18 catapults, 7 jettisons, and a bombard, which does not appear to have ever been used. This is hardly surprising considering the explosive possibilities of mixing gnomes and bombards. (If it had been used, the ship probably wouldn't be here.)

There is no sign of the crew, but the helm is located in the midst of a steam turbine contraption in the exact center of the vessel. It is a major helm, or it was before the gnomes got it. Now it doesn't work.

Like the other sidewheeler, this ship has wheels that can be used as large hull patches or as additional armor on the sides of the party's ship. (The golem can move even these large objects with little effort, by pushing the wheels where he wants them to go, then drifting over to wait for them to arrive.)

Dragonships—The Imperial Court and The Imperial Trader

These two ships were obviously part of a larger fleet. Their banners are all identical and all the chests inside each ship bear the marking of the Shou Lung emperor. The ships are both well armed, with three bombards and four greek fire projectors apiece, as well as the standard ballistae. These weapons, severely damaged in the vortex passage, are of no worth.

The ships themselves have fared badly. The masts are smashed on both vessels, the shrine on the *Impe-*

rial Court is little more than a few boards, and the *Imperial Trader's* shrine has lost all but its lower floor. Even the side claws are damaged.

The ships are locked together, having been thrown at each other in their passage through the space storm. The ram of one ship has pierced the entire hull of the other, and the two have become hopelessly entangled. It would be virtually impossible to salvage either vessel, although both may be scavenged for hull plates, as many pieces hang limply from each ship.

Inside the ships are mounds of treasure collected for the emperor. A full exploration of both vessels will reveal two minor helms, plus:

- A teak chest full of cinnamon (2,000 gp)
- Bolts of raw silk (8 at 1,000 gp each)
- Silver, gold, and platinum (worth 24,800 gp)

The log books of the two vessels' recorders will reveal to anyone who can read them that the captains and crews were planning to turn private on this mission; they had no intention of returning to Kara-Tur with their spoils. If the PCs bring this information back to the emperor, he will give them a reward of 5,000 gp, paid in platinum.

The crews of both ships are long dead, and most have crumbled to dust. The only reason the treasure is still here is that no one else has bothered to investigate such obvious wrecks.

First Tyrant— The Mutant Eliminator

This hulk has been completely gutted, and all its crew slain violently. The orbi are not on the hulk, having been taken as spoils of war by the crew of the other tyrant. The hull is not badly damaged, but there is no way to use this tyrant to escape. No treasure or useful repair material lies aboard.

Second Tyrant—The Beholder

The second tyrant is severely damaged, neither spaceworthy nor salvageable. There are 30 dead beholders on board; some died violently, and others have suffocated. There are more orbi on this vessel than could have been used for spelljamming; as this ship was victorious in a battle with the other beholder ship, the victors took the orbi as spoils.

The air around this ship is deadly, the crew not having had the common sense to approach another wreck for fresh air. There is no useful material on this wreck, nor is there any treasure.

Galleon—The San Marquez

This galleon has not weathered the space storm at all well. The mainmast has snapped off about 6 feet above the deck, leaving the mast and rigging floating in space alongside the galleon. The foremast is com-



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pletely gone, torn from its mounting along with all the ratlines and sails. It is nowhere to be found. The bowsprit has also disappeared. The only mast remaining is the mizzenmast, badly damaged. A split runs from near the base to the top, and most of the ratlines have snapped. The forecastle is only slightly damaged, except where the foremast was ripped out. However, the stern castle, which houses a minor helm, is damaged beyond repair.

Only the contents of the holds are of any value on this derelict vessel. The cargo deck is filled with shot for the catapult and ballistae. This ammunition is bulky, heavy, and not worth salvaging. The steerage deck cargo hold contains spoiled food, four 8-gallon kegs of excellent elven wine (2,000 gp), bolts of sailcloth (1,500 gp), some sacks of mineral samples, and various carpentry tools. There are some sturdy timbers in this hold, which could be used to shore up bulkheads and other damaged parts of another vessel. The sailcloth, light and strong, also can be used.

There is no sign of any crew nor evidence that anyone has been aboard since this vessel arrived.

Nautiloid—The Omen

One of the least damaged and most useful ships here, the nautiloid has no structural damage at all. The rudder is intact, as are the dorsal fins. The only real damage is to the flagstaff, which has broken off near the shell. The ship has been occupied at least twice by others trying to escape the vortex. There are obvious signs of two attempts to install a major helm in the ship, and two attempts at installing minor helms, taken from the tradesman vessels. The nautiloid's own pool helm was cracked in the vortex passage and is unserviceable.

The party members could take this ship as their own and use it as they wish once they effect their escape. No weapons are mounted on the ship, and much of its extra bulk has been stripped out. It seems that these modifications were made at some point before the ship was trapped, rather than by one of the groups that previously tried to use this vessel to leave the vortex. It has no useful cargo or treasure items aboard.

Dead illithids float in space around the ship, none carrying any valuables. All appear to have died in some pain, but there are no apparent wounds. The bodies were dumped by the previous two groups of hopeful escapees, before they succumbed to the golem's aura themselves.

The golem is in the captain's quarters on the cargo deck, looking for something interesting to do. It will immediately greet the party by telepathy. (Refer to the golem's description.)

A serious attempt to power this ship with a major helm should allow PCs to leave the vortex intact.

Cog—The Cockleshell

This is the smallest ship to have remained intact through the vortex passage; rather, the hull is still in one piece, more or less. The keel is cracked, and hull planks have sprung on both sides of the ship. It is clear that this vessel will never fly—or float—again.

The crewmembers, attached to the cog by lifelines, float at the limits of the lines, often in grotesque poses. Evidence shows they died violently, probably thrown around in the vortex passage.

The ship's helm has been smashed beyond repair, and there is nothing of value here.

Squid Ship—The Pirate's Doom

A strange craft, the squid ship has lost its enormous ram as well as both masts and the vanes on the stern. It is little more than a hull with a heavy catapult mounted on what's left of the forecastle. The "eyes" beneath the forecastle have been smashed. The captain's cabin is the only intact part of the ship, as it is made of reinforced teak and oak. Inside the cabin, a skull-and-crossbones flag hangs pinned to the rear bulkhead. A search of the room will reveal the ship's log, which explains that the skull-and-crossbones banner was a prize of combat, not a symbol of the ship's crew. This ship was a pirate hunter—a good one, if the log is to be believed.

Exploring the wreck yields no sign of most of the crew nor any treasure. The ship has a major helm, but it has been smashed by a teak beam. The skeleton of the human helmsman is still in the helm.

Citadel—(unnamed)

The dwarven citadel has been mined out and holds no crew, living or dead. A search reveals that the furnace was dismantled in an organized way a long time ago. It seems that the citadel was depleted and abandoned before it was sucked into the vortex.

While the citadel is relatively undamaged, it is not useful to the party, as it is too big to move with even a major helm. The air envelope around the citadel is very large and reasonably fresh.

Man-o-War—Queen of Spheres

The living ship has been here for a long time. Its wings have grown into huge spirals, with great whorls and twists throughout. Whatever damage it suffered coming through the space storm has been regrown and is not evident now. However, the ship is not spaceworthy in its present condition. It would require a great deal of effort to get the wings into a fit state for spaceflight, 30 hull points worth of work from someone skilled in forestry or woodworking. If the PCs have the expertise to do the repairs, this would make a fine ship for adventuring in space.

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Inside, this modified man-o-war has two medium catapults and two jettisons, plus quarters for up to 15 crew. The rest of the space is used to store ammunition and treasure, as well as food. A large cabin in the center of the ship is filled with dried-up forest plants. (This garden, when alive, stretched out the ship's atmosphere indefinitely during long voyages, as the plants recycled the used air.)

The major helm, located on the main deck just beneath the bridge, has been smashed. The PCs may find this fact odd, as there appears to be no other damage to objects and furnishings on this deck.

In the captain's cabin, located on the battle deck, the ship's log details the exploits of the adventuring company that owned the man-o-war. The Company of the Flaming Arrow was a capable group with many successes, according to the log. The last entry in the book is some 150 years old. There is no sign of the Flaming Arrows on board, nor any treasure.

The Radiant Golem

The golem doesn't know how long it's been since it drifted into the vortex—only that it wants out.

When the party members finally find and question it, the golem will tell them everything it knows about previous attempts to escape the swirling storms encircling the vortex. Only two ships have succeeded in escaping the vortex, it says; those that failed lacked sufficient power. (One of the parties that left the vortex, aboard a repaired tradesman, was ambushed by a neogi mindspider before the crew could warn anyone about the vortex.) From the descriptions, the PCs are able to gather that a vessel requires a major helm and a ship's rating of 8 to make it out of the vortex. The golem smiles and nods, adding that the party members won't find any usable major helms among the wrecks. "I smashed them," it blithely offers.

To make certain that victims of the vortex wouldn't leave without it any more, the creature destroyed all the major helms but one, which it took from the second deathspider and hid amid the wreckage of the wasp. The radiant golem will give the PCs this helm and its personal assistance in exchange for a ride out of the vortex. Its Strength 25 makes the golem capable of moving huge pieces of ships; removing damaged sections of hulls, planks, masts, and general debris; and putting the scavenged parts together to form a spaceworthy vessel. It doesn't care which ship the party takes.

(The golem seems quite proud of its little plan. Unfortunately, the creature isn't too smart. It has not realized that characters could be nice to it until they get the helm, then leave it in the lurch. DMs should caution party members against a double-cross,

though, as the golem exhibits no hostility toward them unless attacked.)

Although by now the PCs have probably seen the bodies of crewmembers who died inexplicably, they may not necessarily connect these deaths to the presence of the golem. PCs with average spacefaring experience or less will not have heard of the radiant golem or its death aura; trained or crack sailors among the party may attempt Intelligence rolls to see whether they are familiar with the golem.

Barring any knowledge of the danger the golem presents, the PCs should be eager to accept the big creature's help in exchange for passage. While they may be confounded that previous crews abandoned the golem, they only begin to suspect it's causing them harm once members have lost 1-6 hit points.

It is unlikely, but possible, that the party includes a mage of at least 14th level who has memorized the *create major helm* spell. If the PCs spurn the golem's offer in favor of this option, it will grow sulky and hang around them constantly, thereby inflicting more death aura damage upon them.

Radiant golem (1): Int Low; AL NG; AC 1; MV 6; HD 20; hp 90; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 6-60; SA Death aura causes victims to permanently lose 1-6 hp after 1 hr within 10' of golem (can save vs. death magic); SD Immune to weapons of less than +4 enchantment and most magical attacks (electricity-based attacks slow it, fire/heat-based attacks restore 1 hp/die of damage), regains 1-10 lost hp/round; SZ L (15'); ML Fearless (19-20); XP Special.

Escaping

To successfully escape the vortex, the party members need to pick their vessel: either their own, the *Black Widow*, *Trapdoor*, *Steam Wheel XII*, *High Roller*, *Shark of the Void*, *Iron Wheel XIV*, *Omen*, or *Queen of Spheres*. Then, they must make their ship of choice spaceworthy (if it isn't already) and fit it with a major helm.

As there are no usable ships in the graveyard with an automatic ship's rating of 8, the party's helmsman must be at least 16th level to power the group's ship out of the vortex. If such a spellcaster is not with the party, the DM may feel free to have the PCs find one clinging to life aboard the *High Roller* or to allow someone to find a scroll containing the *enhance rating* or *create major helm* spell.

Once it has helped the PCs escape, the golem may be so thrilled with its saviors that it wishes to stay on as a new member of the company. This can work, provided no one spends more than a few minutes a day within the golem's death aura. But the golem, as a sentient creature, must have company for at least some time each day to stay sane.

THE MORTISS SHIP – STELLAR UNDEAD (30)

Terrain: Wildspace
Total Party Levels: 66 (Average 11th)
Total gp Value: 0
Total Monster XP:
Kill: 18,645
Defeat: 13,984
Retreat: 4,661
Bonus/Penalty: Extra 50 percent to a party allowing no mortiss to infest its ship. Loss of 50 percent to a party that fails to meet the encounter.

Set Up

- On a pirate hunt, the party members chance across what seems to be a derelict. Crewmembers can see figures aboard the floating hulk.
- The PCs, crossing this part of wildspace on a long journey, are bored and in need of training exercises. Up ahead a crewmember spots a derelict ship. Perhaps the party members can use it to practice boarding and other maneuvers.
- Party members know that a strange and evil presence is in the region and are hunting for it.

The Lair

This vessel, seen from a distance, resembles a derelict hammership, adrift. As the party continues to approach, the PCs can see figures aboard, weakly flagging them down. Apparently, they are castaways, relieved to finally see an escape from the wreck.

As the ships close, the party members' attention will be drawn to the hull of the derelict, the burrow tubes of the dozens of mortiss clearly visible. The hull lines appear indistinct, and the rigging is revealed to be rotted through in many places. This hammership has been infected for a long, long time.

Mortiss convert light to magical energy, allowing the slugs to burrow through organic and mineral materials easily. This ship is entirely covered with burrow tubes, well over 100 in all, although there are only 93 mortiss currently alive on the derelict.

If the PCs believe the mortiss ship is their evil quarry, they may choose to take hostile action or flee. If not, they must decide whether to risk mortiss infection and attempt to rescue the castaways, who are still hailing them weakly. Until the party's ship is in boarding range, the PCs have no reason to doubt that those aboard the wreck are stranded sailors.

Once the PCs' ship draws near, the party members realize their mistake: the crew of the mortiss ship are all obviously undead. These crazed fiends, hungry for blood, immediately try to leap onto the party's vessel. Their sudden burst of activity collapses a portion of the

hammership's deck, weakened by the mortiss's tunneling. Undaunted, the 30 stellar undead focus on their only objective: to kill the party members and drink their blood. An added liability is the mortiss colony, which may spread to their ship if not destroyed.

Mortiss (93): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 1; HD 3; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Sting (save vs. poison or suffer 1-6 dmg + hallucinations); SD Withdraw into tubes, webs; SZ S-M (2"-6"); ML Fearless (20); XP 65 each.

The mortiss have stingers in their heads, loaded with poison. This toxin causes hallucinations as well as 1-6 points of extra damage if the victim fails a saving throw vs. poison. The mortiss will not offensively attack the party members; they will merely lash out at any attempting to destroy their burrows or prevent them from moving onto the party's ship. Any PC who ignores the mortiss and their structures will be ignored in turn. However, there is a 50 percent chance each round that at least one mortiss will detach itself from the overburrowed hammership and drift onto the party's vessel.

A *cure disease* spell kills a 10-foot-square area of mortiss—4 hit dice worth. PCs can destroy the infestations also with fire.

Stellar undead (30): Int Low; AL NE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 22; THAC0 16; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8 (claws)/3-12 (bite); SA Grappling; SD Immune to all mind-affecting spells; SZ S-M (3'-7'); ML Steady (12); XP 420 each.

The stellar undead attempt to grapple their opponents: they must hit with both claws and the bite attack in one round. A success means the bite does double damage, and the monster continues to cling to its victim, biting and drinking blood. A stellar undead inflicts an automatic 2 points of damage per round, plus double damage from the bite if it hits. A PC making a successful Strength check breaks the grapple. Stellar undead are turned as lichs.

Once the party members have disposed of the mortiss and undead, they should decide against boarding the mortiss ship, as more deck space could cave in under their weight. There is no treasure on the vessel, and the mortiss have ruined the helm.

The party members may choose to avoid the encounter, fireballing the mortiss ship as soon as they deduce its evil nature. This solution should only gain them half the total XP value of this adventure, as it didn't require much effort. Parties that engaged the stellar undead while incurring no mortiss infection should be granted the indicated Bonus XP.

DMs should advise the party to head straight for a large celestial mass with an atmosphere and spend at least a month there to ensure that any lingering mortiss have been killed off.

BASE OF WOES

Terrain: Wildspace (Elven armada)

Total Party Levels: Any

Total gp Value: Shown by deck

Total Monster XP: Shown by deck

Special: This adventure has no title monster, as several varieties await party members in the armada.

Set Up

- The elven Council of Admirals is plotting to recapture an armada lost to the scro in battle. Meanwhile, they are offering a reward for the return of various precious artifacts aboard the armada.

- One or more of the party members had relatives on the elven armada, *Crown of Corellon*, before the base fell to scro forces. These PCs wish to restore family honor by retrieving a priceless platinum torc from the armada and returning it the Imperial Fleet.

- A powerful faction wishing to make the elves look bad hires the party to retrieve a platinum torc from the *Crown of Corellon*. The elf government has been trying to keep its loss under wraps. The faction plans to sell it back to the elves for a ransom.

The Lair

The *Crown of Corellon* is a former elven stronghold in space. During the Unhuman Wars it fell to the scro, who continue to populate the base. Some portions of the armada have been occupied by wrybacks, existing in an uneasy truce with the scro.

The base, situated atop the back of the butterfly-shaped ship, was built to resemble an elven palace. Spires rise gracefully into the blackness of wildspace, making it difficult for the PCs to believe the armada is inhabited by the cruel scro. Walls, floors, and ceilings are made of natural wood, with some rock surfaces interspersed. Most surfaces are not covered, although moldy tapestries hang here and there. All the walls and ceilings are coated with a phosphorescent fungus that provides light equivalent to starlight.

The base's new inhabitants have not yet explored the entire structure. For example, the scro have yet to discover the central core of the arbor deck, partly because they don't often go onto the lower decks. This lapse is fortunate for the elves, because the core houses the sought-after elven artifact, an ultimate helm in the guise of a plain platinum torc. There is other treasure as well. If the party members come to the base seeking to retrieve artifacts for Imperial Navy's reward, they do not know in advance precisely which objects they are looking for. In any case, the party members are not aware that the torc is an ultimate helm, and they have no idea where to begin their search.

Besides the arbor deck, the base atop the elven armada houses a hold deck, battle deck, main deck, and castle deck. Various monsters within each deck have prepared surprises for any invader. Rising from the castle deck are seven spires that surround a central tower consisting of troop, catwalk, turret, and command levels. For the sake of convenience, these tower "arms" are referred to by the number assigned to the tip of each one. (See the map of the base on the interior cover.)

Currently the scro are using the base as a platform from which to launch pirate raids on passing ships. They have three wasp pirate ships, two of which are out looking for plunder. The third is docked on the fifth arm of the castle deck.

Approaching the Base

The party members should try to approach the base from "below." Both the turret level and the battle deck are well equipped with ballistae to drive off any unwelcome visitors. Only from the arbor deck to the hold deck is the base undefended. PCs can enter the base from any arm of the castle deck. If the scro, have seen them coming, the party members can expect a hot reception.

It is also possible to enter the base through any of the ballista ports on the castle deck or turret level, but only after disposing of the ballista's crew. This method will inevitably raise the alarm on the base.

The ballistae on the battle deck are manned, and at

The armada, the elves' largest ship, rests atop a vessel shaped like a butterfly. The scro have not invaded the ship's operations area in the "head" portion of the butterfly, preferring to use the armada as a stationary headquarters.

For more information on this class of ship, see **Lorebook of the Void**, page 44.

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least two can be brought to bear if the party's ship is above the gravity plane. Each ballista can fire once every three rounds, has a THAC0 of 14, and inflicts 1-3 hull points of damage or 3-18 hit points of personal damage. A 20 is a critical hit against a hull target. Each ballista has a crew of two, each with AC 4 and 18 hit points. Disabled or dead ballista crewmembers will be replaced. A hundred scro are available to man these weapons. Once the alarm is raised, crews will be brought to all the ballistae that can bear on the target. The ballistae on the turret level can also be manned if necessary, but these weapons cannot bear on targets below the catwalk level, and then only at long range. These weapons, useful if an attack comes from above the turret level, are intended mainly to protect the command level.

As the party approaches, a wasp is clearly visible docked on one of the arms of castle deck. This sight should tell the party where to dock and also that there may be somebody home.

The wasp is not attended and at first glance appears to be a derelict. This is a clever ploy the scro have used to disguise all their ships. Their tactics are to sit dead in space until the victim gets close enough to be attacked. Should the party members wish to investigate the wasp, they will find it fully functional and spaceworthy. However, it holds no treasure.

The Wasps

The two wasps out on missions are due back in a matter of hours. The returning ships' crewmembers will spot the party's ship and will be prepared to do battle for the base as soon as they dock. The ships may be sighted returning if a party member is near a portal at the right time. Refer to the map of the base to determine whether the PCs, in their current position, would be able to spot an incoming ship.

Each wasp has a crew of eight soldiers, plus a sergeant and a warpriest. The first wasp, due to return in eight hours, has been raiding and carries 5,400 gp in mixed treasure. The second wasp, which has been on a trading assignment, will return in 12 hours and has supplies for the base plus two chests of stones, with a total value of 100,000 gp. Virtually any type of stone or gem can be in these chests.

Scro soldiers (8/ship): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 17 (18 with crossbow); #AT 1 (weapon, teeth) or 2 (glove); Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-3+1 (glove), 1-6 (crossbow), 1-8+1 (battle-axe); SA Smashing for 1-4; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 270 each.

Scro sergeants (1/ship): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-6 (axe), 1-3+1 (glove); SA Smashing for 1-4; MR 10%; SZ L (7'); ML Elite (15); XP 420 each.

Scro warpriests (1/ship): Int High; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-4+2 (dagger); SA Smashing for 1-4+30 from type D poison (save vs. poison for 2-12), spells, *dagger* +2; SD *Ring of protection* +1; MR 10%; SZ M (6'); ML Elite (15); XP 975 each.

Spells: *armor*, *chill touch*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *cause light wounds* × 2, *cure light wounds*, *darkness* 15' radius, *stinking cloud*, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *bestow curse*.

Total Wasp gp Value:

Ship 1: 5,400

Ship 2: 100,000

Total Wasp Monster XP:

Kill: 7,110

Defeat: 3,555

Retreat: 1,778

Bonus: Extra 50 percent for each wasp captured, including the one docked on arm 5.

Scro Aboard the Base

There are 60 scro troops to man the ballistae in three shifts of 20, plus 40 more to assist if the base is being attacked and in general duties. There are 21 sergeants to supervise the battle deck ballistae in three shifts of seven. Members of one of the off-duty shifts supervise the general activities on the base. There are also 20 sergeants who act as aides for the warpriests and captains. There are 10 warpriests, 10 captains, and an Almighty Leader. The scro soldiers are quartered on the catwalk and troop levels and the main and battle decks. The Almighty Leader occupies the central portion of the turret level. The wasp crews—not included in the above totals—live in the command level when they are not on their ships. The off-duty wasp crew will not leave the command level, but will prepare to defend it against the party.

The scro are all immaculately dressed in gleaming studded leather armor, with wicked barbs on each stud. The soldiers are armed with studded gloves only (45 percent) or crossbows and battle-axes (55 percent). The sergeants use hand axes and gloves.

Each warpriest has a *dagger* +2 and wears a *ring of protection* +1. Warpriests cast spells as 5th level cleric/mages.

The captains each have a long sword and a star-wheel firearm. The starwheels are for show and won't be used. Captains wear *rings of protection* +2.

The Almighty Leader has a crossbow, a *battle-axe* +2, and a starwheel—which he will use if given the chance. He also has magical *armor* +3 and a *ring of fire resistance*.

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Exactly where, and how many, of the scro the PCs encounter depends on how the PCs approach the base and what they do once they're inside. If they cause someone to sound an alarm, all available scro will muster to surround and attack them. However, if they are lucky and use stealth, they can clean out the scro in small groups of three, five, or eight.

Group of three: One warpriest or captain, one aide, and one soldier.

Group of three (ballista crew): One sergeant and two soldiers.

Group of five: One sergeant with four soldiers.

Group of eight: One threesome plus a fivesome.

The Almighty Leader has at least one captain, one warpriest, their aides, and five soldiers with him when he is encountered, unless he arrives to do battle with the PCs while they are trapped in one of the cabins.

None of the scro carries any personal treasure. It is all kept in the Almighty Leader's quarters and distributed among the personnel when they go home (rarely) or go to a nearby trading post (about every six months).

Scro soldiers (100): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 17 (18 with crossbow); #AT 1 (weapon, teeth) or 2 (glove); Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-3+1 (glove), 1-6 (crossbow), 1-8+1 (battle-axe); SA Smashing for 1-4; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 270 each.

Scro sergeants (41): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-6 (hand axe), 1-3+1 (glove); SA Smashing for 1-4; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 420 each.

Scro warpriests (10): Int High; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-4+2 (dagger) or by spell; SA Smashing for 1-4+30 from type D poison (save vs. poison for 2-12), spells, *dagger* +2; SD *Ring of protection* +1; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 975 each.

Spells: *armor*, *chill touch*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *cause light wounds* × 2, *cure light wounds*, *darkness* 15' radius, *stinking cloud*, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *bestow curse*.

Scro captains (10): Int High; AL LE; AC 2; MV 9; HD 6; hp 33; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-

8+1/1-8+1; SA Smashing for 1-4; SD *Ring of protection* +2; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 975 each.

Scro Almighty Leader (1): Int High; AL LE; AC 1; MV 9; HD 8; hp 49; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-8+3 (battle-axe), 1-4 (starwheel); SA Smashing for 1-4+30 from type D poison (save vs. poison for 2-12); SD *Armor* +3, *battle-axe* +2, *ring of fire resistance*; MR 10%; SZ L (8'); ML Elite (15); XP 2,000.

Total gp Value (Scro on the Base): 0

Total Monster XP (Scro on the Base):

Kill: 65,720

Defeat: 49,290

Retreat: 16,265

Bonus: To be determined by the DM, based on circumstances of combat.

Castle Deck

This deck offers the party best likelihood for easy docking. Each of its seven arms has three distinct areas. The outermost area is a docking pad for ships. The raised catapult platform on each pad has fallen into disrepair, as the scro do not man them. Characters can reach the platforms from a curving stairway. A second stairway from each arm leads down to the main deck. The staircases are all wooden; those leading into the base are well worn, particularly in the middle of each step. The staircases up to the catapults are not as worn, but at least one step on each set of stairs has rotted. PCs suffer no damage from stepping through a rotten piece of wood, but the noise may alert guards in the area.

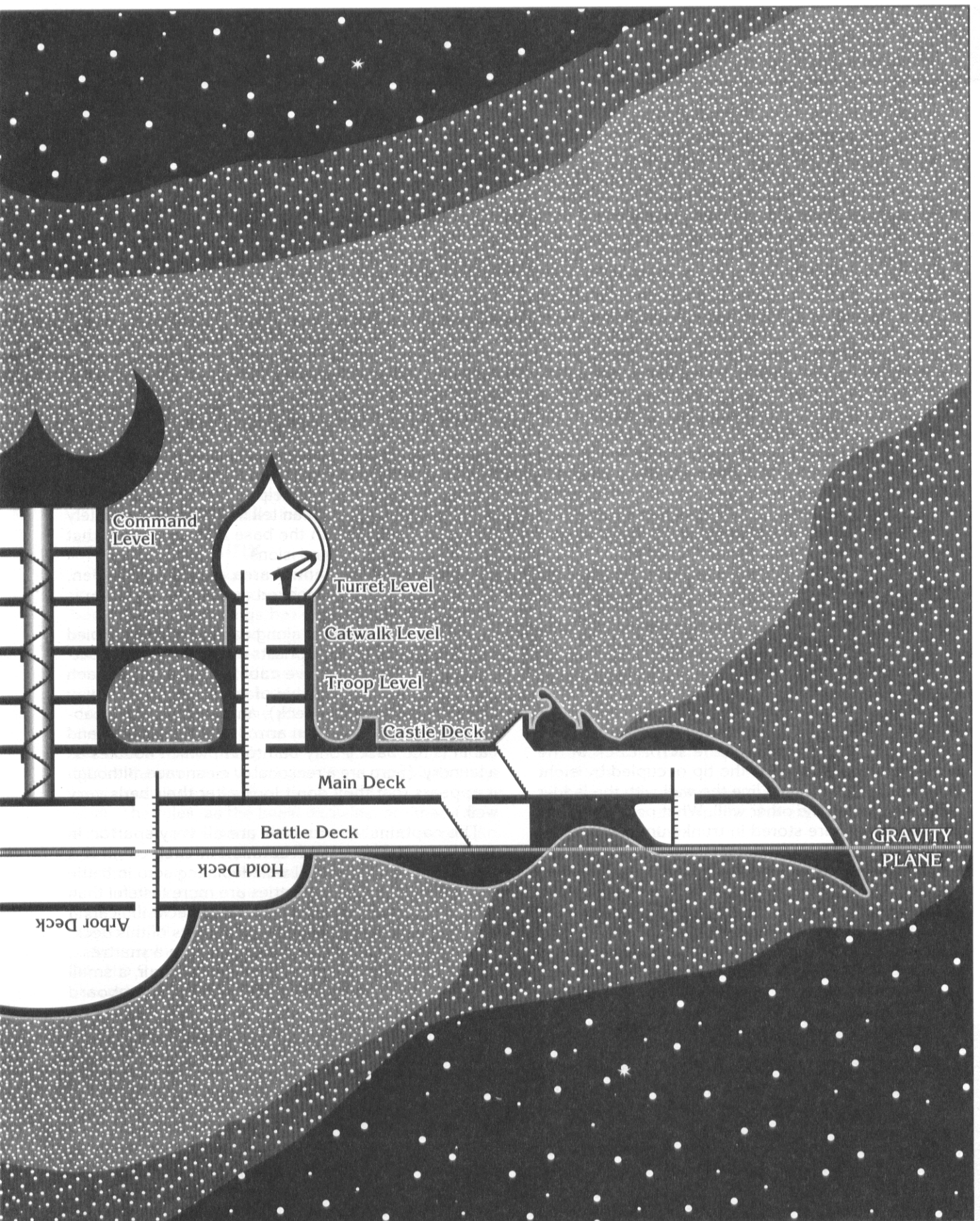
Party members will notice a flat area beyond the stairs on each arm. The elves liked to sit atop these platforms watching space go by when they weren't on duty. The small observation decks are wooden and were once very beautiful. However, the scro have hacked large chunks out of each one, and what's left of the platforms is quite splintery. The sight makes the PCs think the kindest thing they could do for this

Scro have a fanatical hatred of the race of elves,
exhibited in the vandalism they have inflicted upon the **Crown of Corellon**.
Some captains and warpriests aboard will taunt elf party members in the elves' own language.

Crown of Corellon

0 10 20 30 40 50 Feet

GRAVITY
PLANE



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trashed base would be destroy it. The effort involved in repairing the armada would be too great—and too heartbreaking—for the elves. This impression should be reinforced by the condition of the rest of the base.

The second portion of each arm is a cylinder (15-foot-diameter) running up to the turret level. The seven cylinders, in which personnel can climb all the way to the command level, actually start at the main deck. However, from outside they appear to be sitting atop the castle deck. Landings on each level were once decorated with intricate wooden reliefs, but now the scro have hacked them all to matchwood.

The round central space of the castle deck (45-foot-diameter) features a spiral staircase winding up from the main deck and continuing up through the tower levels of the base. The walls here also were once decorated with beautiful wooden carvings, now covered with scro graffiti. The scro have arranged broken wooden furniture into piles as obstacles for combat practice. There is a 60 percent chance that scro soldiers will be found here (if the PCs have not already dispatched them in previous fights).

Total Castle Deck gp Value: 0
Total Castle Deck Monster XP: (Variable)
Bonus: 5,000 XP if the party can sneak in without alerting any scro.

Main Deck

This deck houses most of the scro. Each of the seven arms has a room at the tip occupied by eight scro troops. Three bunks line the wall with the ladder hole, and five line the other wall. What personal items these scro have are stored in trunks under the beds. Most of the beds are little more than crude frames with straw mattresses thrown on top. The mattresses are generally dirty, and most need new straw. The troops keep their weapons in the air locks, the next rooms in toward the center.

The air locks are used only for weapons storage. None of the doors to the sleeping quarters is locked, but locked doors will block access to the central part of the deck as soon as the alarm sounds.

The next chamber, moving inward along each arm, contains three rooms (10' × 5') across a short hall from two 5-foot-square rooms. In arms 2, 3, 5, and 6, each of the 10 by five rooms houses two sergeants. (The square rooms stores the sergeants' personal gear.) Three sergeants each have their own 10 by five rooms in arm 7, which double as their personal storage space. Across the hall from these quarters are two five by five heads.

The 10 by five rooms in arms 1 and 4 have been

converted into prison cells to hold captives being ransomed. There is a 4 percent chance per party member that prisoners currently are being held on the base; one or more positive results means there are 1d6 males and 3d4 females, of mixed races, held in each of the two prison arms. Party members can earn a reward of 500 gp for each prisoner rescued. The five by five rooms in arms 1 and 4 hold prisoners' possessions, but these items are value only to the captives.

Two stairways are located in this area on each arm: one going up and going down. The stairways in arms 1 and 4 have had iron gates welded over them. These gates are locked once an alarm is raised on the base. The stairway coming down from the castle deck is the party's most likely route into the base. The first thing they find using this route is either the sergeants' quarters or the prisoners.

The prisoners can not help in combat, as they are all too weak. But, they can tell the PCs approximately how many scro are on the base and warn them that two wasps are out on missions.

The doors to the central area are normally open, but will be closed and locked as soon as an alarm is raised.

The innermost cabins along each arm are occupied by the captains and warpriests not housed on the battle deck. Warpriests have cabins on the left of each arm (from the perspective of someone facing away from the center of the deck), and captains have cabins on the right, except in arm 3. Here, the right hand cabin is the base's only bathroom, which doubles as a laundry. (Scro are a reasonably clean race, although it appears that they don't look after their beds very well.)

The captains' rooms here are all very spartan in appearance. The only decoration in each cabin is a tapestry on the outer hull wall depicting scro in battle against elves. These tapestries are more tasteful than their gory counterparts on the battle deck, indicating the more refined tastes of the occupants of this deck. Each cabin has a well-made bunk with a mattress, pillow, and quilt, a writing desk with a chair, a small trunk for storing personal items, and a cupboard where the captain keeps his armor and weapons. In each of the trunks is clothing and (in some) a diary telling of the captain's exploits, his hopes, and his fears. Each trunk also contains pictures from home and a *potion of healing*, as well as a pewter dinner set. Each dinner set consists of a plate, knife, fork, and mug, and is worth 15 gp.

PCs have only a 15 percent chance of finding a captain asleep in his quarters. They are more likely to encounter these officers in the alcoves between the arms, hacking at elf-shaped dummies, or on the bat-

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tle deck, working at combat drills with their fellows.

Each warpriest's cabin has a bed with a rough quilt and a pillow. A desk and chair occupy the center of each room, and a chest rests in one corner. The chest contains personal items and a spell book with the following spells: *armor*, *burning hands*, *chill touch*, *enlarge*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *darkness 15' radius*, *detect good*, *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *rope trick*, *stinking cloud*, *web*, *chill fire*, and *lightning bolt*. Priestly raiments and spell components occupy the wardrobe along the back wall.

If the warpriest is in, he is either asleep (30 percent chance) or studying at his desk (70 percent chance). If awake he will call for help, then attack. It is 40 percent likely that the captain across the way will hear the call for help. Nearby captains and sergeants will hear the call and rush to the warpriest's aid, arriving in one round. At least one of the scro will raise a general alarm before joining his fellows, and will arrive two rounds after the first group. The rest of the scro on the base, except those manning the ballistae and the wasp crew, will arrive six rounds after the alarm sounds. If the PCs are still in the room at this time, they will quickly become trapped there or in the hallway.

Should the party members become trapped in a cabin anywhere on this deck, the only nonmagical way out is to defeat all the scro, except those noted to be at specific posts. *Dimension door* or similar spells may get the party out, depending on which cabin the group is in.

Any alarm will summon the Almighty Leader. Upon arriving, he will push his way toward the front of the battle and use his starwheel as soon as he can get a clear shot. After firing, he will take out his axe in order to engage the strongest-looking invader. The captains will attempt to get to the front and attack the invaders with their swords. The warpriests will use all their offensive spells before joining single combat.

The sergeants will try to engage the invaders also, assuming there is enough room. If not, they will direct the efforts of the troops with missile weapons, making a concerted effort to ensure that each spellcaster is hit at least once per round. (They determine that armorless invaders, especially those wearing holy symbols, are spellcasters. Elves and half-elves in the party are also primary targets for missile attacks.) If they fail immediately to identify all the invading spellcasters, they will spot them as soon as the PCs cast their first spells.

The troops with missile weapons will hang back and use them. They will follow the sergeants' orders or, lacking direction, will shoot at any invader who has cast a spell. It is possible that one or more spell-

casters may not be targeted, though, as all the troops may fire their weapons at only one or two invading spellcasters.

If the warpriest is asleep in his room when the party members enter, they may kill or capture him without a fight. If the PCs are quiet, the sergeants down the corridor may not be warned of their presence.

The areas around the ladders, outside the cabins, have no specific purpose. Murals of elves in forests, surrounded by huge, ancient trees, once covered the walls here. Now, the scro have despoiled these murals to the point where they are barely recognizable, and then only upon close inspection.

The central space of the main deck is used as a gathering area for groups about to go on watch. It boasts no decorations of any kind. The scro assigned the central area this purpose because it was convenient to all parts of the base, and because they couldn't think of anything else to do with it.

When walking down the hallways to their quarters, soldiers are required to move at double speed, so as to minimize the disturbance to the officers.

Total Main Deck gp Value: 90
Total Main Deck Monster XP: (Variable)
Bonus: 500 XP per prisoner rescued

Battle Deck

The scro's main activity on this deck is standing watch on the ballistae, which can only be reached by ladder from the main deck. The quarters of the scro leaders are located within each arm of the battle deck.

The party members can reach the battle deck proper by ladders from the main deck or the hold deck. The battle deck can also be reached from any arm using staircases descending from the main deck.

If the PCs were detected arriving at the base, or if they have seen combat already, the scro will all have left this level to join the search for the intruders. Only if the characters arrive quietly down the stairway from the main deck will they find anyone at home.

Each arm on this deck contains two cabins: closest to the center and across from the staircases are the sergeants' rooms, followed by large quarters for a warpriest or captain. At the tip of each arm lie the ballista areas.

Arms 1, 4, and 5 each contain the room of a warpriest. Each cabin has a bed with a rough quilt and a pillow. A wardrobe standing against the back wall contains priestly raiments and spell components. A desk and chair occupy the center of each room. A chest sitting in one corner holds personal items and a



spell book. The book contains the following spells: *armor*, *burning hands*, *chill touch*, *enlarge*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *darkness 15' radius*, *detect good*, *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *rope trick*, *stinking cloud*, *web*, *chill fire*, and *lightning bolt*.

If the warpriest is in the room when the PCs enter, there is a 50 percent chance he is asleep and a 50 percent chance that he is studying at his desk. If awake he will immediately call for help, then attack. His cry will attract the two sergeants in the next room, one of whom will rush to the warpriest's aid in one round. The other sergeant will sound the alarm, arriving to do battle two rounds later.

Just as on the main deck, if the alarm is raised while the PCs are in a cabin, the scro will attempt to trap them there and force them to surrender. Their tactics will be the same as on the main deck. Only those scro on watch elsewhere will not join in the attack against the party.

Arms 2, 3, 6, and 7 each contain a captain's room. These quarters look as spartan as those on the main deck. The only concession is a tapestry on the back wall of each cabin depicting scro in battle against elves. (The exact actions of the scro in the tapestries is not a subject for civilized creatures to contemplate.) Each cabin has a bunk, a writing desk with a chair, a small trunk for storing personal items, and a cupboard where the captain keeps his practice weapons. Each trunk holds sketches of the captain's family and a *potion of healing*. On the desks in arms 3 and 7 are recently used eating utensils made of poor quality silver. The other two captains have left their eating kits in their trunks. The kits are worth 20 gp each.

PCs have only a 20 percent chance of finding a captain asleep in one of these cabins. The party is more likely to encounter them in the areas between the ladders and the double doors on each arm, practicing their weapons skills or holding a conference with their fellows. There is a 10 percent chance of finding a captain and possibly a sergeant in the center of the battle deck. If discovered in his cabin, a captain will raise an alarm, with a result similar to that of the warpriest's alarm, described earlier.

The 15-foot by 5-foot cabins in each arm are sergeants' quarters. Each cabin contains two bunks with rough blankets and straw mattresses. The walls are covered with crude pictures of scro massacring elves in many imaginative ways. There is little else in the cabins. The sergeants' trunks and other personal items are stowed in the 5-foot-square cupboards behind each staircase. In each trunk are a sergeant's personal items and a few loose coins. The total value of the coins in all 14 trunks on this deck is 42 gp. There is nothing else of value here.

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Regular troops are not allowed in the open spaces between the ladders and the double doors on each arm. These areas each include a dining table with four chairs, but also are used for weapons practice among the sergeants and captains. The tables are made of solid wood and bear many knife marks. Dice rest on the tables in arms 2 and 5, where scro were gambling. The walls here are covered with scro graffiti describing what they did to the last group of elves they caught.

A thin brass strip across the deck just behind each ladder serves as a limit marker to the regular troops. A scro caught on the wrong side of the line better have had a good excuse, or he'd be breathing space very soon.

The center of the battle deck is a general mess area for the troops. Several long tables provide bench-style seating for up to 40 scro at a time. In each of the alcoves between the arms, elf-shaped targets have been erected; the troops stand in the exact center of the deck and take practice shots at the targets. There are always at least six scro in this area, practicing their shots, trading war stories, and/or eating.

They will be alerted immediately to any party members coming down the ladders onto the battle deck. They will summon help, then attack. Such an encounter will result in a situation similar to one that would take place in a warpriest's room; the main difference is that the scro have more space here to surround the party, and more of them can get into close combat with the PCs. If they corner the party here, the scro will attempt to capture them alive for ransom. (If the ransom is paid, the scro will release the prisoners, minus their equipment and treasure, but with their ship and their lives.)

At the tip of each arm are two medium ballistae. Except when the base is under attack, the scro man only one of the two. To determine which ballista on each arm is manned, the DM should roll a d6. On a 1, 2, or 3, the right ballista is manned; a 4, 5, or 6 means the left one is manned. (Left and right refer to the perspective of a creature walking outward from the ladder toward the ballistae.) The arm tips also store bolts for the weapons and the personal weapons of the crew on duty. There is a 70 percent likelihood a sergeant will be present in any ballista area. The sergeants alternate patrolling these crews and the ones on the turret deck.

Each ballista has a two-man crew and can fire once every three rounds. The weapons have a THAC0 of 14 and inflict 1-3 points of hull damage or 3-18 hit points of personal damage. A roll of 20 is a critical hit against hulls. Characters can gain access to the ballista platforms only by ladder from the main deck.

Total Battle Deck gp Value: 122

Total Battle Deck Monster XP: (Variable)

Bonus: Extra XP should be rewarded to a party that kills all its opponents while the characters are trapped within a cabin.

Hold Deck

As the party continues downward, the characters arrive in the base's storage center. The hold deck is stacked with all kinds of materials, some left over from the days when the elves ruled this base, and some the spoils of the scro pirate raids. A strange, unstable structure of timber rests just below the center of the deck. It was built by the wrybacks inhabiting this part of the base. The scro tolerate the beasts, as long as they don't steal any of the plunder.

PCs can access this deck via one of seven evenly spaced ladders circling the area. The ladders come from the battle deck, crossing the gravity plane. Thus, anyone climbing them onto this deck is going from the floor of the battle deck through to the floor of this one. PCs must roll their Constitution or lower or will feel slightly nauseated when crossing the plane.

An open construction of timber and matted organic material from the arbor deck occupies the center of the hold deck. The PCs can walk easily around it or through it; they feel as though they are in a maze and, looking up, can glimpse the deck's walls through cracks between the maze's beams. The maze is 10 feet tall, almost 50 feet wide at its widest point, and 20 feet deep. Investigation does not reveal the maze's purpose, only its many entrances and paths.

Thirty-three wrybacks live here in seven small packs—one group in each of the holds located on the arms of this deck. (The creatures share the central structure.) The wrybacks are hiding atop the maze in spots where the ceiling is not visible to someone within. They leap onto the backs of those passing underneath, three or four onto each party member.

Wrybacks (33): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 15; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-3; SA +1 to surprise; SD Always 50% undetectable, resist falls and blunt weapons, infravision at 30', victims have -3 on surprise, *feign death*; SZ S (3'); ML Average (10); XP 175 each.

The wrybacks will not attack if the characters do not enter the maze, unless they see a good chance of wiping the group out quickly. For instance, if the PCs come up through the floor all at once (one per ladder) rather than in single file, the wrybacks may jump onto them as they emerge. Unless the characters previously all made successful attempts to move silently, the wrybacks will hear them coming and split up, five or six attacking each party member.

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The PCs may choose to avoid the maze and turn their attention to the seven holds ringing this deck.

The first hold contains an assortment of armor:

- Plate mail sets (3 dwarf-sized, 9 human-sized)
- 2 suits of chain mail, elf-sized (not elven chain)
- Suits of leather (1 halfling-sized +2, 1 elf-sized)

The second hold contains weapons:

- 8 battle-axes
- 5 long swords
- A chest with 25 plain daggers
- 9 long bows

The third hold contains chests of coins:

- 2 each holding 3,000 sp
- 1 holding 2,000 cp
- 1 with 1,500 ep
- 1 with 1,000 gp
- 1 containing 300 pp

The fourth hold is empty; the wasp out on the trading mission has taken the magical items usually stored here.

The fifth hold contains a small chest. Party members can see scratch marks on the floor, suggesting that other chests used to be stored here. (Likewise, they are on the trading wasp as well.) The chest contains stones worth 27,400 gp. PCs have a 10 percent chance of finding a specific type of stone in the chest, modified to 5 percent for gems, 2 percent for jewels, and 15 percent for semiprecious or fancy stones.

The sixth hold contains the poor quality food scro eat. It is mostly dry, although there are some tins holding rotting vegetables and a barrel of salt meat that smell suspicious. Any character trying the meat must save vs. poison or become physically ill. The vegetables show signs of something having clawed at them.

The seventh hold contains barrels of water and ale. The ale is of poor quality but the water is pure, if a little stale. There is not much left of either liquid. It should be obvious that the base needs resupplying, based on the condition of the food and drink. This observation should alert the party members to the possibility that more scro could arrive with supplies at any time.

Total Hold Deck gp Value: 30,970

Total Hold Deck Monster XP:

Kill: 5,775

Defeat: 4,331

Retreat: 1,444

Bonus: Extra 40 percent if party avoids the wry-back attack.

Arbor Deck

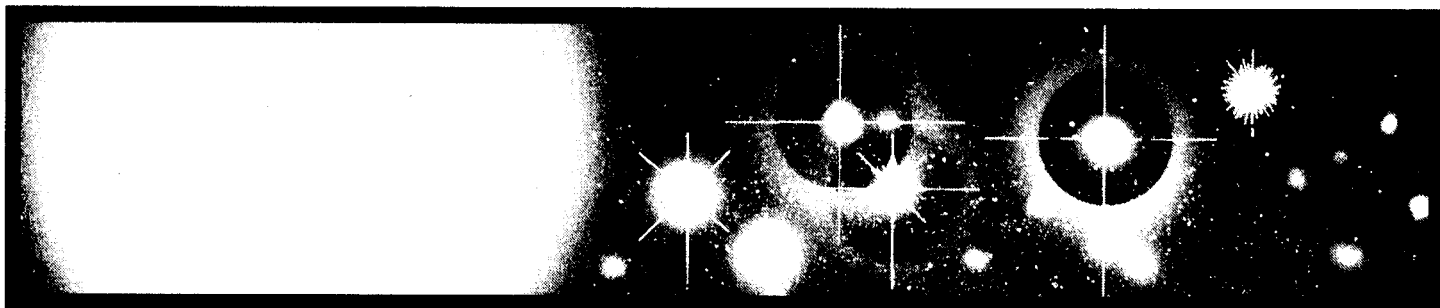
PCs can access this, the lowest deck on the base, via ladders from the hold deck. It is important to remember that these two decks are below the gravity plane, so the party members will be climbing **up** to the arbor deck and will come through the floor, not the roof.

Once the party members enter the area, they notice most of the trees that once graced the deck have been wantonly cut down, presumably by the invading scro. Some of the trees have been left standing to help refresh the air on board the base. Stars are visible through the glass dome high above.

The trees that remain are interlaced with spider webs, and webs coat the rotting stumps as well. Among the webs are 14 large spiders, which the PCs may encounter singly, in small groups, or all at once, at the DM's discretion. PCs with Strength 19 or better who become tangled in the webs can extricate themselves immediately. For each point their Strengths are less than 19, others require one round to disentangle themselves. Spiders attack trapped PCs at +4 to hit.

Large spiders (14): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6 (web 15); HD 1+1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Type A poison (save vs. poison at +2, dmg 15/0); SZ S (2' diameter); ML Unsteady (7); XP 175 each.

Once through the spider webs, the party members can see clearly to the center of the arbor deck. Here stands what used to be quite a beautiful fountain. Now it has been smashed to bits, with only its base left relatively intact. If the party members approach the fountain, they can easily see that on top of the pedestal base sits a phase spider, its long, furry legs



BASE OF WOES

draping down the sides. The creature will attack as soon as it sees the party.

Phase spider (1): Int Low; AL N; AC 7; MV 6 (web 15); HD 5+5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Type F poison (save vs. poison at -2, dmg death/0), -3 to initiative; SD Can phase in, attack, phase out in 1 round); SZ L (14' diameter); ML Champion (15); XP 1,500.

Once the remnants of the phase spider and its web have been cleared away, the PCs who investigate the base see evidence of attempts to smash the pedestal. Obviously it is made of a pretty tough material. When it was whole, the base was about 8 feet across and climbed in tiers to a height of 6 feet. A dry pool surrounds the pedestal. Scenes of elves frolicking among trees are carved into the pieces of the fountain, and a fresco of elves performing a strange dance under the moon can be seen traced around the bottom of the pedestal.

The fresco depicts two moons: one full and the other new. They are situated opposite each other on the pedestal base. A careful search reveals that, if the two aspects of the moon are pressed simultaneously, a quiet click sounds, and a door opens in the pedestal. Behind the door is a small compartment containing four rings, three wands, a torc, and a cloak. If *detect magic* is cast on these objects, all except two rings is found to be magical. The nonmagical rings, worth 12,000 gp, are set with valuable stones, mainly emeralds and jade.

The magical items are a *ring of shooting stars*, a *ring of protection* +3, a *wand of paralyzation*, a *wand of magic missiles*, a *wand of frost*, a *cloak of the bat*, and the torc—the ultimate helm. The PCs will not be able to learn the nature of the torc through an *identify* spell.

If the party members are determined to understand the magical nature of the torc before handing it over to the elves (or to whoever hired them to find it), a sage can identify it for them. However, an elven sage will not tell them exactly what the torc is and will attempt to keep it, by buying it or stealing it, if necessary.

Total Arbor Deck gp Value: 12,000

Total Arbor Deck Monster XP:

Kill: 3,950

Defeat: 2,963

Retreat: 978

Bonus: For discovering the treasure, a party should receive a 25 percent bonus.

Troop Level

If, upon arriving, the party members climbed up to the tower levels of the armada rather than down, they arrive here from the castle deck. This utilitarian part of the base closely resembles its condition when elves controlled the *Crown of Corellon*.

The seven cylinders leading up to the turret level together form the outermost section of this level. The landings at this level are bare of all elven decoration, and the scro have diligently painted heated anti-elf slogans on the walls. The scro have left the wooden walls intact, as vandalizing these external supports would severely weaken the walls' structure, as well as that of the whole base.

The core of this level, dominated by the spiral staircase, quarters 30 troops. Each of the straw mattresses ringing the wall has a small trunk at its head for personal items. The PCs will find nothing of value in them, just a few clothes and the odd letter from home.

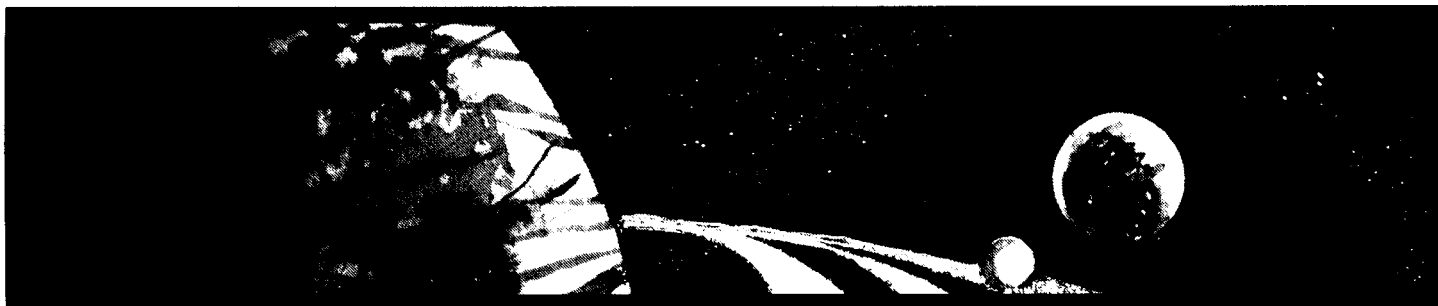
The walls here have been covered with the scro equivalent of centerfold pictures; it is unlikely that any of the party members will be able to understand the appeal of scro cover girls.

Total Troop Level gp Value: 0

Total Troop Level Monster XP: (Variable)

Catwalk Level

The scro use the catwalk level primarily as a way to get from the outer cylinder landings to the core of the base without going all the way down to the main



BASE OF WOES

deck. It consists of two distinct areas per arm, plus a central core.

The outermost portion of each arm is a landing within the cylinder. Each of these platforms can hold six troops with room to swing weapons. If the party members began moving upward from the castle deck, the scro will take a stand against them here. They will be silently waiting for the invaders to descend from the upper levels down the ladder within the cylinder.

Further in on each arm is a narrow catwalk stretching from the cylinder to the core. These catwalks are open to space and have only handrails at the sides. Crossing them, the PCs feel as though they are suspended on a high bridge over a deep chasm. Each cylinder has two doors onto the catwalk.

The core of the level is a 45-foot-diameter room, dominated by the spiral staircase. Two mattresses jut out from the exterior wall between each of the catwalk doors. These mattresses are used by the last of the scro troops on the base. Their personal trunks sit against the wall, between the two mattresses and below more of the scro centerfolds.

Total Catwalk Level gp Value: 0
Total Catwalk Level Monster XP: (Variable)

Turret Level

Two separate areas comprise this level: turrets and the tower core.

The turrets, which top the base's seven arms, each contain a medium ballista and a supply of bolts. Only three of the seven turrets will be manned, unless the base is under attack. When the party members arrive, scro are manning the turrets atop arms 2, 5, and 7. There is a 70 percent chance of finding a sergeant inspecting any of the ballistae at any time.

Each ballista has a two-man crew and can fire once every three rounds. The weapons have a THAC0 of 14 and inflict 1-3 points of hull damage or 3-18 hit points of personal damage. A roll of 20 is a critical hit against hulls.

The central area of the turret level is a 45-foot-diameter room where the Almighty Leader sleeps and holds war meetings with the captains and warpriests. The leader's bed sits against the wall, away from the spiral staircase. The scro leader has surrounded it with thick blankets for privacy. Across the room from the bed is a large table and 12 chairs, plus a small throne for the leader. Star charts hang on the walls above a long planning table where the leader often plots new raids with his officers.

Under the leader's bed is a large iron chest, holding

the personal treasure of every scro on the base. It contains:

- 2,200 cp
- 1,470 sp
- 300 ep
- 1,370 gp
- A coral garden sculpture (500 gp)
- A lapis-lazuli carving (400 gp)
- An exquisite ivory snuff box (1,300 gp)
- A *scroll of protection from lycanthropes*
- A *potion of fire giant control*
- A *wand of flame extinguishing* with 41 charges
- A bulging pouch of gems (94,000 gp)

The Almighty Leader is not here. If the party members have not already vanquished him in combat, he is patrolling elsewhere. If the PCs manage to land on this level, their paths should be clear of scro down to the castle deck. Their luck would not be as good if they should decide to climb up to the final level.

Total Turret Level gp Value: 97,889
Total Turret Level Monster XP: (Variable)

Command Level

The top level of the base is the domain of the wasp crews when they aren't in space. When the party arrives on the base, one crew is on the command level, resting and preparing to go out in about 10 hours. The crew will not leave this level for any reason—defending the base is not their job. They will, however, prepare to defend this level against invaders.

Each of the eight troops has a crossbow, which will be loaded if the crewmembers have heard evidence of a major battle. If they're expecting company, these scro can get their bolts off before players can roll for initiative. Once they have fired, the scro soldiers drop the crossbows and charge with their battle-axes. The sergeant charges with his hand axe. The warpriest uses spells until he runs out, then uses his dagger. None of the scro here at this level has any personal treasure.

This level is set up with 10 bunks and room for 10 more. The wasp crews "hot bunk," as they are never all in at the same time.

The level's one room, a 45-foot-diameter circle, sits at the top of the spiral staircase. Windows look out over each of the seven arms of the base, but the view is somewhat obscured by the minarets on the tops of the turrets. Nevertheless, it is possible to see approaching ships, as well as the stars, from this level.



The walls are covered with star charts and more scro centerfolds.

Scro soldiers (8/ship): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3; hp 18; THACO 17 (18 with crossbow); #AT 1 (weapon, teeth) or 2 (glove); Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-3+1 (glove), 1-6 (crossbow), 1-8+1 (battle-axe); SA Smashing for 1-4; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 270 each.

Scro sergeants (1/ship): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 4; hp 25; THACO 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-6 (hand axe), 1-3+1 (glove); SA Smashing for 1-4; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 420 each.

Scro warpriests (1/ship): Int High; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 30; THACO 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-3 (bite), 1-4+2 (dagger) or by spell; SA Smashing for 1-4+30 from type D poison (save vs. poison for 2-12), spells, dagger +2; SD Ring of protection +1; MR 10%; SZ M-L (5'-8'); ML Elite (15); XP 975 each.

Spells: armor, chill touch, shocking grasp, sleep, cause light wounds × 2, cure light wounds, darkness 15' radius, stinking cloud, flame blade, heat metal, hold person, lightning bolt, bestow curse.

Total Command Level gp Value: 0

Total Command Level Monster XP:

Kill: 3555

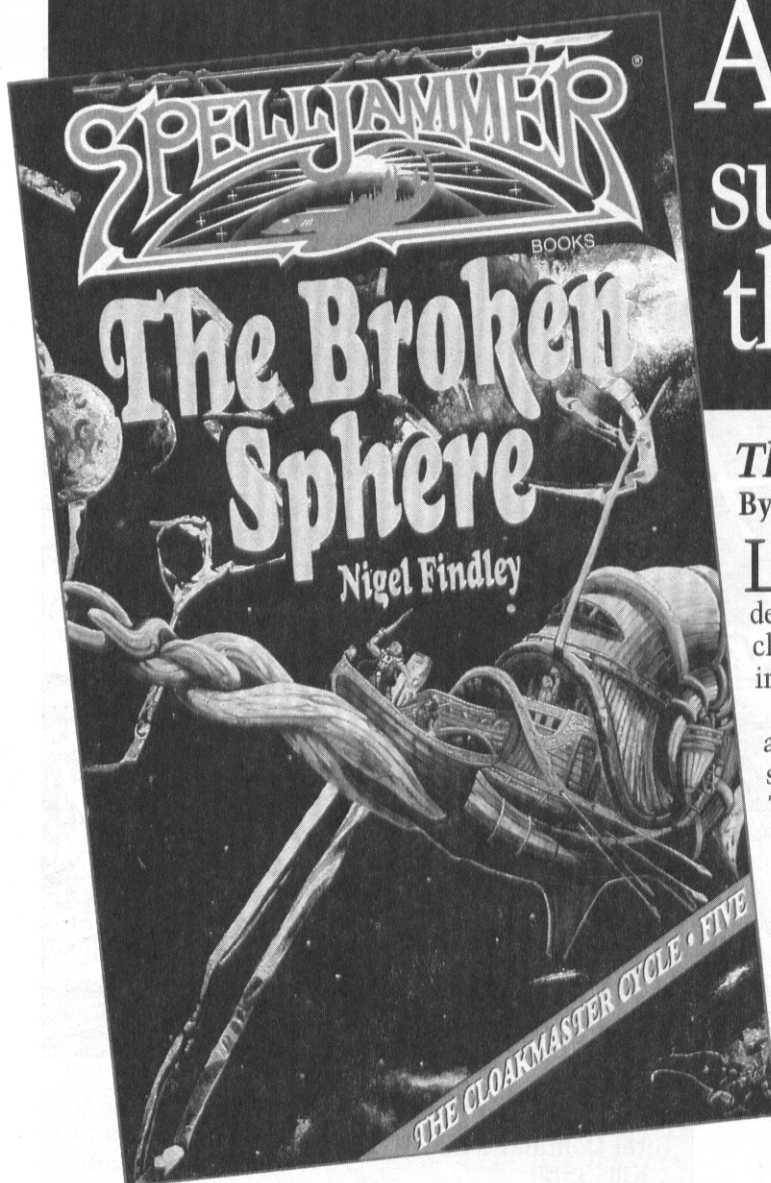
Defeat: 2666

Retreat: 889

Wrapping It All Up

While the value of ships and ship fittings has not been calculated into the gp totals listed in this adventure, DMs may want to consider letting the party members sell or keep the wasps, should they capture any of the three pirate vessels. Extra XP should be awarded for ships kept or sold.

By and large, the party may feel free to retain any items found in the base that were brought in through the scro's plunderings. Items aboard during the time the elves controlled the base—such as the artifacts concealed on the arbor deck—must be turned over to those who hired the party members in exchange for the agreed-upon reward or fee. In this case, the party members may hand over the torc, an ultimate helm, without ever knowing what they had in their grasp.



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