

CRAWLJAMMER

#4

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A NEW CRAWLJAMMER PC CLASS by Tim Callahan

Hi! This is the **fourth** issue of *Crawljammer*,
a bi-monthly zine dedicated to fantastical
space adventures using the **Dungeon Crawl
Classics Role-Playing Game** system.



IMPORTANT ART FACTS:

The cover illustration for this issue
was drawn by **Matt Hildebrand**,
featuring his fabulous take on the Riftrunner!

Interior art by **Christian Mojallalli**,
Nick Burchard, **Sarah Richardson**,
and **Fred Dailey**.

crawljammer

issue no. 4

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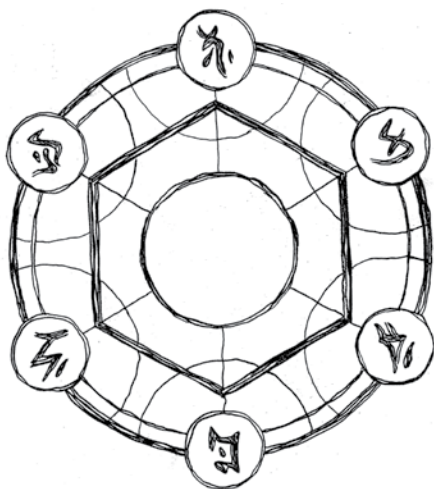
by Tim Callahan

For subscription information or submissions for future issues,
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A BRIEF NOTE ON Crawljammer Metaphysics



In the beginning was the Void.

Hyperlux, god of pure light, was born from that swirling absence, along with Atronox, god of pure darkness. These two brothers clashed for countless eons, before ceasing their hostilities and vowing to coexist peacefully. Each provided the other with a gift to mark this new era: first, Atronox gathered the darkness of deep space and molded it into the form of a beautiful star-speckled female he named Minyeria, whom Hyperlux took as a bride. Hyperlux, in return, gathered the light that would later stream from a million suns and crafted the blindingly lovely Saytaya, whom Atronox took as his betrothed.

Living in harmony in their cosmic palaces in multidimensional space, the first gods began to expand their families. Born from the coupling of Hyperlux and Minyeria

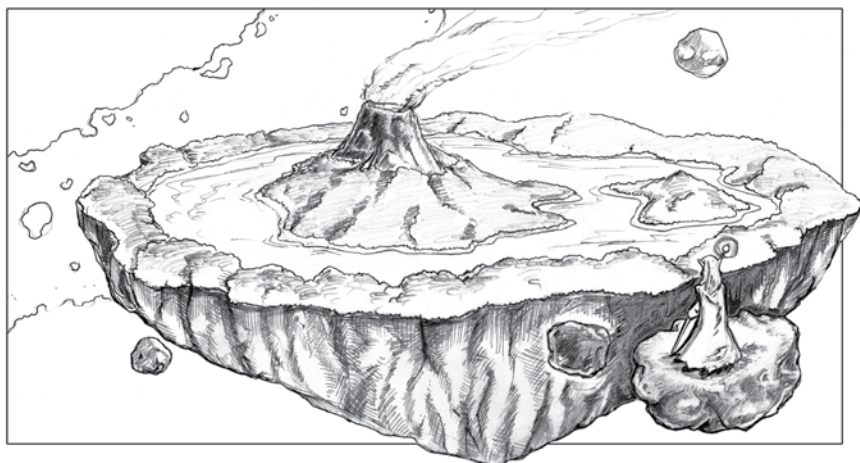
were Albuss, majestic god of the air, and Caerlusse, enchanting goddess of the seas. To Atronox and Saytaya were born Raveon, fickle god of stone and flower, and his twin brother Rozeon, austere god of fire.

From these six gods of old, the universe was born, with the six elements embedded into the substructure of reality – light, darkness, earth, air, fire, and water – and the cosmic magical energies of the phlogiston flux binding it all together.

It is from these elemental forces, and the elder space gods from beyond, that the power of wizards and elves and technomancers and bards and riftrunners derive. All other gods known to man and beast are but imperfect reflections of Hyperlux, Atronox, and their kin. And the old gods are not those with which to trifle.

Elysia: Land of the Space Elves

by SEAN ELLIS



Facing the Sun and orbiting directly opposite of Mars is a purple, bird-shaped nebula of only a few miles across. Beyond this portal lies a floating volcanic isle with deep coniferous forests, shallow warm seas, and uniquely varied flora and fauna. Elysia is a place of great beauty selfishly guarded by the elves whose magic brought it into being.

Long ago, a great elf chieftain demanded canoes to be dug out of trees and rowed to sea to find paradise or perish away from the foul Aereth. After the tribe found no palatable lands, the canoes rose from the water to ride the currents of the phlogiston flux. In the darkness of space, the elves were able to find the nebula-like portal to Elysia and wade ashore to a barren volcanic island. The elves raised voice in song and trees sprouted 60 meters in the sky. An arrow from the chieftain's bow caused birds and animals to appear, chasing it into the trees. Above,

the elves saw an immense magical barrier of perpetual twilight: the hawk-shaped portal visible from space. The elves settled here and built an armada of crawljammer ships to deny outside access to their respite, though adventurers sometimes break through.

Terrain

The high, snowy peak of active volcano Elysiamons stands 45,000 feet above the dense forests and coarse pink and black sand beaches. The kauri grows here, an immense tree that routinely grows 148 feet high and 16 feet wide with column-like trunks and horizontal, tiered branches. It is these trees that the Elves warp with their magic, creating palaces or dungeons according to their hearts' desire.

The island is surrounded by shallow, warm seas with azure water populated with miniature coral reefs and fish. The water

rarely reaches high enough to cover a human, and tends to be around three feet deep. The ocean stretches as far as the eye can see, though no matter how far one seems to travel by water, when they turn around they see that they are as close to the island as when they began. Whenever one swims towards Elysia, things progress normally.

Politics

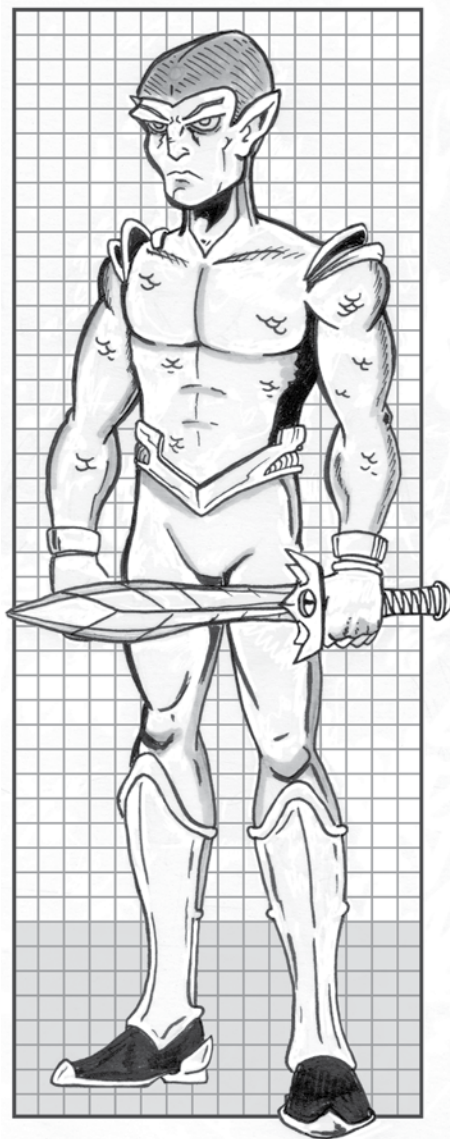
For the most part, elves are meditative and poetical. Thousands of years are spent admiring a flower or contemplating a river, and with such a distracted populace what politic is required?

However, some military organization is necessary to combat the threat of encroachment by uncivilized outsiders. Thousands of crawljamming elves patrol space, destroying anything that comes near the portal to Elysia. Elves have a dislike for martial life at home, and therefore there is no danger of military rule. After a few decades these elves return to their tranquil island and others take their place.

Population

In order for the elves to maintain their meditative lifestyle, a significant part of the Elysian population is made up of slaves. Captive Belligoblyns work as enthusiastic slave masters to direct the orcs that work the field, while goblin, hobgoblin, and lesser demons labor as house servants (for more on these creatures, see "Consider the Greenskins" in *Crawl!* #4). It is possible that one day the elves will have a major revolt on their hands.

Though meditative, all is not lost on elfin omphaloskepsis. An elf under the light of



Elysia's perpetual twilight will live forever, and during that time the elf engages in staggeringly complex feats. Great works of art, craft, and magic have come from an elf dedicating a few hundred years to a project,

all the while working as if in a dream. Never efficient enough for industry, perhaps, but Elfin works are the most majestic and masterful examples in any medium. Swords, bows, suits of armor, even elfin boots, cloaks, or candles are among the most sought after in the solar system. An Elysian elf is able to create a set of crawljamming sails at half the cost, but twice the time.

Elf reproduction is another subject worth note as they are not, strictly speaking, purely biological. Elves are magic made manifest in flesh and so are completely nonsexual with no gender or sexual characteristics. When humans label an elf male or female, that label speaks only to that person's perception, and elves will never use gendered pronouns when referring to another elf. Without sexual reproduction, elves rely on meditation to reproduce.

Sometimes when an elf meditates, a longing or idea is realized. This longing can cause an elf to write a sonnet or design a sword, but other times this feeling causes an elf to reproduce. From 0-3 times in an elf's life, the elf may conceive and deliver an infant (gestation time varies wildly, it simply depends on when the elf has finished the work of crafting the being inside). Often, this infant is born as an elf. However, swanmays, faeries, leprechauns, and even spells are results of an elf's "pregnancy."

Newborn Elves grow rapidly in the early years before starting to stick at what a human would call ten earth years, thereafter the appearance of aging then slows to less than one tenth the appearance of humans. So, an elf and child born and raised together will look identical in terms of age until age

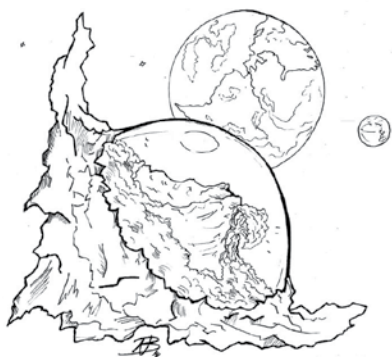
ten. By the time the Earth human is 15 the elf looks 10.5. When the human turns 20 the elf would appear 11 and so on, ending with the human dying at around age 60 Earth years, with an elf looking about 16 years old in attendance at the funeral. Mental and emotional capacity (though impossible to illustrate as easily as age) grows at more or less an identical rate to humans, depending on the elf's interest or effort. This is why so many elves are avoided by their elders until they are at least 50-100 Earth years old; they simply haven't any sense. Another part of "biology" worth note is an elf's sense of time. Elves tend to not see time as a deadline or mile marker as men do. To an elf, time appears as another sense, like smell or taste. Elves can commune with true universal time, feeling both the quake of the birth of the universe and the sense of what it is to be now amongst infinity. Using this time-sense allows an elf a +1 bonus to their efforts when fulfilling any navigational or piloting role on a crawljamming vessel.

Level zero elves will respond to aggression by disappearing into the trees. From this point on, they are unpredictable and may strike back with absolute vengeance or end up miles away with a new song in their heart. Level zero slaves have no interest in dealing with outsiders, and will walk away from offers of friendship or violence.

Giants also live on the mountains of Elysia in "kingdoms" corresponding to their type. Hill giants live at the base of the great mountain, while mountain giants and frost giants live in various additional locations as the mountain increases in altitude, with fire giants dwelling inside the volcano itself.

Climate and Perpetual Twilight

There is no day or night in Elysia, as the sun shines at all times. However, the purple portal of the elves changes sunlight into a dim and shimmering twilight. Elves living in the twilight of Elysia need neither food nor sleep and can live indefinitely. Communing with beauty is all Elves require for sustenance in Elysia. The same is not true for Elves living elsewhere, they must eat and sleep and die like mortals.



In addition to fulfilling the elven need for food, shelter, sleep, and sex, the dome of twilight around Elysia allows a constant environment with high moisture without rain and a stable temperature of around 80 Fahrenheit. This dome of perpetual twilight appears as a hazy barrier of blue light with changing colors as if an Aurora were occurring. It is this unique light that allows the Elven Lotus to grow here and perhaps nowhere else in the universe.

Any character or crawljammer vessel attempting to enter through the dome of twilight around Elysia is risking great peril, assuming the King of Elfland is paying

attention! No one may pass the barrier if the King of Elfland disallows. Of course, he may be distracted...

When a ship enters the twilight portal of the elves the skipper must roll under their luck on a d20. Failure means that the captain must roll a d6 on **Table 4-1** below:

After a failed captain's roll, each crew member rolls a luck check as well, and failure must be rolled with a d6 on the table above, with one substantial change: if the crew member rolls a 1 or 6, roll a d5 on **King of Elfland's Patron Taint** chart instead.

Finally, time passes strangely beyond this border. Whenever one leaves Elysia, they must roll a luck check to see how much time has passed in the "real world" while they were in fairy land. After discovering the amount of time that has passed, this time is immediately added to the character's age, oftentimes resulting in instant death. Have the captain roll a d20. If the roll is under the character's Luck, merely 1d30 days have passed. If it was missed by 5 or less the time elapsed is 1d30 weeks, if the roll was missed by 6-10 then 1d30 years have passed, and 15 or more means 1d30 decades. (Judge's option: Instead of killing your PCs, the aging of a few hundred years can have a more cosmetic effect... think Rip Van Winkle with his long beard and stooped back. Perhaps the PCs just look impossibly old and take a few hits to some stats...your call).

Animals

Birds of all description live on the island – from colorful and majestic to fat and flightless. Giant, thin giraffe-like creatures

TABLE 4.1: You Try to Enter through the Twilight Portal to Elysia, but...

- 1 Your intrusion is simply not allowed. It is as if a solid barrier bars your entrance.
- 2 You think you have entered Elysia, but you simply wandered for 1d4 days and find yourself more or less where you started, though your skin is now (roll d8) (1-2) red (3) orange (4) yellow (5) light green (6) dark green (7) blue (8) purple...for 2d30 days.
- 3 You simply lose track of your actions and drift away, mentally, for 1d8 days, taking no food or rest unless forced upon you
- 4 The energy of Elfland courses through you and changes your appearance (roll d8) (1) mossy antlers (2) rodent ears (3) animal legs (4) scales (5) snout (6) tail (7) thick fur (8) ineffectual insect wings...sprout from you and remain for a duration of the judge's choice.
- 5 You enter Elfland and remain forever.
- 6 You leave Elfland and may never attempt to return again.

also dwell here with deer, great flying squirrels, mountain lion, and many varieties of tree-dwelling mammals. The magic of the elves also brings less mundane creatures to the land: faeries, goblins, and the like are more common here than anywhere else in the solar system. Fey creatures such as fauns, dryads, deermen, elkmen, and minotaurs abound along with tree-men, tentacle hounds, and moondogs.

Opportunities for Adventurers

It is incredibly unlikely that adventurers will ever see the inside of Elysia. If they did, they would encounter all sorts of wild monsters, not to mention several races of giants that, if they were to cease internal struggle, would be raiding elven villages constantly. Add to this the constant threat of slave rebellion, and you have a constant need for men and women of action. Not that any adventurer would see the inside of Elysia.

Regardless, Elven antagonism with outsiders fuels the need for hearty mercenaries, and rumor is that the merchants of Aereth are desperate to force the Elves to open up to Aerethen trade by any means necessary. Elves themselves may require guards once a decade when they take to the spaceways to trade Elven Lotus extract for Dwarfing Mithral or Venusian Silk.

THE riftrunner



The solar system is vast, and the known universe seemingly infinite, but the elders of the cosmos have also identified at least 21 different parallel universes and nine planes of existence. Over the centuries, explorers and wizards and technomancers and deviants have attempted to tap into such multidimensional energies to power their own spells and experiments, often at a great cost. Because of such meddling, the phlogiston flux has become increasingly unstable in recent years, and a new breed of interdimensional traveller has emerged, taking advantage of the cracks in the very foundation of reality.

You are a riftrunner, a human from our dimension (or a parallel universe), who has communed with extradimensional powers and gained the ability to tap into the rifts in the cosmos. You have balanced the imprecision of your spellcasting with pugilistic discipline, as you search the

known universe for adventure, excitement, and more than your fair share of treasure. You have branded yourself as a seeker of mysteries, but you are as much of a mercenary as most of your comrades.

You are a riftrunner, and you shall split your opponents in half with your fists after unleashing elemental fury.

Hit points: A riftrunner gains 1d8 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: Riftrunners prefer the phlogiston fist attack in most situations, but they are trained in the use of the dagger, short sword, staff, and hand axe. They may also use crossbows and laser pistols. They lose their connection with the phlogiston rift if they wear any armor, so the use of even light armor would prevent them from casting spells or the use of the dimension run ability, and any melee or ranged attacks would incur a -2 penalty to hit.

Alignment: Riftrunners may be any alignment, but their spellcasting domains are usually determined by their ethical and metaphysical tendencies. Lawful riftrunners may select either the Light or Air domains, while neutral riftrunners may select either the Earth or Water domains. Chaotic riftrunners may choose from the domains of Fire or Darkness. Exceptions exist, but any PC who selects a domain which does not match his alignment would likely suffer corruption effects, as determined by the judge.

Attack modifier: Rifrunners are accustomed to defending themselves with their fists, and they gain a modifier of +1 to hit at first level with any attack.

Phlogiston fist attack: Rifrunners may make unarmed combat attacks (specifically, a magical punch that crackles with the energy of the phlogiston rift) as a standard attack, dealing damage equal to their combined Strength and Agility modifier plus an increasing damage die as identified on **Table 4.1**. A first level rifrunner with a strength of 10 and an agility of 14 would deal 1 damage plus 1d6 additional damage (+0 for the strength modifier, +1 for the agility modifier, and +1d6 at level 1.) A fourth level rifrunner with a strength of 13 and an agility of 16 would deal 3 damage plus an additional 1d8 damage with his phlogiston fist, etc.

In addition, any phlogiston fist attack that scores a to-hit roll that exceeds the target's armor class by 6 or more will paralyze the target for 1d3 rounds unless the target succeeds on a Fortitude save vs. the attack roll.

Dimension run: A rifrunner may have been born and raised in the known universe or jettisoned through the dimensions via an aberrant phlogiston rift, but all rifrunners have a limited ability to step in and out of reality via the use of their dimension run ability. For rifrunners of levels 1-5, this ability manifests as a type of short-range teleportation, allowing them to teleport up to 10' per level, once per day. Rifrunners may not teleport into solid objects, and any attempt to do so will bounce them back to their starting position.

At level 6 or higher, a rifrunner may still use the same type of short-range teleportation once per day, or he may cast the planar step

spell (as per the wizard spell of the same name) once per day at a spell check equal to the rifrunner's level plus his agility modifier.

The dimension run ability may be used defensively by a rifrunner who has taken no other move action yet during that round and has not used dimension run that day. If so, the rifrunner must make a reflex save vs. an otherwise successful attack to avoid all physical damage from the attack and teleport up to 10' per level away.

Rifrunner spellcasting domains: Rifrunners, unlike other spell casters, do not use traditional spell check rolls (other than with planar step at level 6 or higher) and do not begin with a small list of spells that increases in number as they gain levels. Instead, due to the unreliable nature of the phlogiston flux and the rifrunners' discipline in attempting to tame such wild forces, each rifrunner selects one spell domain at first level (based on alignment), and that spell domain list features 9 spells that stay constant throughout the rifrunner's career, though the rifrunner will not know what spell effect is beginning to manifest until he rolls a d10 spell selection check each time he casts a spell, and triggers the effect indicated on the spell selection table. At 5th level, the rifrunner may select a second spell domain (based on alignment), and alternate between the two lists as desired, prior to rolling the d10 spell selection check.

A roll of a 1 on the spell selection check leads to potentially disruptive phlogiston feedback, but a roll of 2-10 always results in a successful domain spell, as indicated on the appropriate spell domain table. Once the caster declares that he is casting a spell, and rolls on the spell selection table, he must

cast the spell rolled if a valid target exists.

Even though a 1d10 is rolled as the spell selection check, it takes the place of a full d20 action for the round. Usually, the spell takes effect immediately, and only lasts for the round in which it was cast, unless otherwise indicated on the appropriate spell selection table.

Initiative: A rifrunner's quick reflexes provide a bonus to initiative at each level.

Luck: A rifrunner may apply his luck modifier to his unarmed combat melee attacks or his armor class, chosen at 1st level. Luck points may be burned to increase a spell selection check roll by one for each point of luck spent. This may be used to

prevent phlogiston feedback effects.

Languages: Most rifrunners only know common, a language consistent throughout most parallel dimensions. If the rifrunner is not a human, but rather an alien or an extradimensional nonhuman creature, then other appropriate languages may be known, per the judge's discretion.

Action dice: A rifrunner receives a second action die at 5th level. Only an action die of d20 or higher allows the rifrunner to use the action to cast a domain spell. If a higher-level rifrunner is granted a 1d20 action and a 1d16 action, for example, the 1d20 action may be used for spellcasting while the 1d16 action can only be used for combat rolls.

TABLE 4-2: Rifrunner

Level	Attack	Crit Die/Table	Action Dice	Initiative	Phlogiston Fist Damage	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+1	1d7/III	1d20	+2	+1d6	+1	+1	+1
2	+2	1d8/III	1d20	+2	+1d6	+2	+1	+1
3	+2	1d12/III	1d20	+2	+1d8	+3	+1	+2
4	+3	1d16/III	1d20	+3	+1d8	+3	+2	+2
5	+4	1d20/IV	1d20+1d14	+3	+1d10	+4	+3	+2
6	+4	1d24/IV	1d20+1d16	+3	+1d10	+4	+3	+3
7	+5	1d12/V	1d20+1d20	+4	+1d12	+4	+4	+3
8	+6	1d16/V	1d20+1d20	+4	+1d14	+4	+4	+4
9	+6	1d20/V	1d20+1d20	+5	+1d16	+5	+4	+4
10	+7	1d24/V	1d20+1d20+1d14	+5	+1d20	+5	+5	+5

TABLE 4-3: Rifrunner Titles

Level	Title by Alignment	Chaotic	Neutral
	Lawful		
1	Initiate of the Golden Wind	Initiate of the Ebony Flame	Initiate of the Sea Panther
2	Brother of the Golden Wind	Brother of the Ebony Flame	Brother of the Sea Panther
3	Fist of the Golden Wind	Fist of the Ebony Flame	Fist of the Sea Panther
4	Disciple of the Golden Wind	Disciple of the Ebony Flame	Disciple of the Sea Panther
5	Master of the Golden Wind	Master of the Ebony Flame	Master of the Sea Panther

Rifrunner Spellcasting: The Six Domains

Rifrunner – Spell Selection Table – Arcana Domain: Light

d10 Roll Effect (Note: CL = Caster Level, and anything summoned by the rifrunner immediately disappears if any successful attack strikes AC 8, unless otherwise indicated)

- 1 PHLOGISTON FEEDBACK:** The caster must make a will save vs. DC 12 or take 1d4 damage and become blinded by a flash of cosmic light for a number of rounds equal to the damage taken.
- 2 HALO EFFECT:** Glowing orbs of light appear over the head of the caster and all of his allies. Until the end of the next round, all damage dealt to the caster or any ally within sight is reduced by CL.
- 3 SPECTRAL WANDERER:** A golden slender human wrapped in tattered bandages appears within 30' and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +1+CL to hit and deals 1d6+CL damage. The spectral wanderer disappears at the end of the round. If the attack was successful, the caster also becomes intangible and unable to be damaged by mundane weapons until the start of the next round.
- 4 SPINED SCALEMAIL:** Golden metal scales appear on the caster or one ally within 30' and tendrils of barbed metal emerge from the shoulders, providing +3+CL AC for the rest of the round, and dealing 1d6 damage to anyone who succeeds on a melee attack against the wearer of the spined scalemail. The scalemail disappears at the end of the round, though while it is in place on a rifrunner it does not negatively affect any of his abilities or spellcasting.
- 5 SACRAMENT:** The caster may choose one of the following two options: (a) capture the departing soul of an ally or enemy who died previously in this encounter and command that spirit to attack once at +2 to hit and deal 1d12+CL psychic damage, or (b) heal 1d3+CL damage to any ally within touch range.
- 6 SHIELDBEARER:** A bodyguard made of solid golden light appears in front of the caster and defends the caster against melee and ranged attacks until the beginning of the caster's next action, providing an effective AC of 18+CL against any number of attacks. The bodyguard disappears at the beginning of the caster's next round action.
- 7 BIRDMAN MENTOR:** A wizened birdman appears for the round and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +2+CL to hit and deals 1d8+CL damage. In addition, the caster may make take an extra non-spellcasting action immediately.
- 8 EYES OF PURITY:** The caster's eyes begin to glow with pure golden light and the caster or one ally in sight gains +2+CL to hit until the end of the round. If the caster opts to use this on himself, he gains an immediate extra action which he may use to attack.
- 9 DIVINE SCOUT:** A white-clad crossbowman appears for the round and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +2+CL to hit with his divine crossbow and deals 1d6+CL damage. In addition, the caster immediately detects any hidden, stealthy, or invisible characters in the area.
- 10 ANGELIC EAGLE:** A glowing, ghostly giant eagle appears for the round and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +4 to hit and deals 1d10+CL. Instead of attacking, the angelic eagle may pick up the caster or an ally and carry him up to 80 feet in any direction.

Rifrunner – Spell Selection Table – *Arcana Domain: Air*

d10 Roll Effect (Note: CL = Caster Level, and anything summoned by the rifrunner immediately disappears if any successful attack strikes AC 8, unless otherwise indicated)

- 1 PHLOGISTON FEEDBACK:** The caster must make a will save vs. DC 12 or take 1d4 damage from violent winds that knock the caster back 10' per damage taken. If the caster is knocked back into a wall or the equivalent, he takes an additional 1d6 damage.
- 2 WINGS OF THE INSECT KING:** Four shimmering insect wings sprout from the shoulder blades of the caster and until the end of the next round, he gains the ability to fly at 60' per round as a movement action.
- 3 SKYSHARK SUMMONS:** 1d4 cerulean blue skysharks appear out of thin air over the shoulders of the caster, attacking up to two targets within 30' at +CL to hit and dealing 1d3+CL bite damage. The skysharks disappear at the end of the round
- 4 ILLUSION SCULPTING:** A small multi-colored whirlwind surrounds the caster or a human-sized target of his choice, altering the appearance of the target to resemble anything of similar size that the caster desires. This effect lasts for one hour or until the caster attempts to cast another spell. The effect is equivalent to a disguise skill, and if a check is needed, the disguise check would be +8+CL.
- 5 WINDS OF WAR:** A gust of wind whirls through the air and into the orifices of an ally within sight, granting that ally an additional attack this round at +3+CL to hit.
- 6 GUST:** A forceful blast of wind shoots forth from the caster's mouth, blowing out any exposed flames within 50' directly in front of the caster and pushing back any targets within range 10' per CL unless they succeed on a reflex save vs. DC 15. Note that this gust affects anyone and anything within the 50' range, line-of-sight, whether friend or foe.
- 7 NOBLE DRAKE:** The caster's form phases out of reality for the round and his form is replaced by a medium-sized blue-green flying reptile who immediately attacks the nearest enemy target at +4+CL to hit and deals 1d8+CL bite damage. As the drake disappears at the end of the round, the caster reappears in his original position.
- 8 PROGNOSTICATE:** The spellcaster levitates 2' off the ground and his eyes turn pale white as he glimpses the future. He may ask the judge a number of yes or no questions this round equal to his caster level. The judge is obligated to answer, though if the caster asks for help from others formulating the questions, or if the judge determines that the caster has taken longer than one round to ask the questions, the judge should require a will save vs. DC 20 or the spell fizzles due to concentration loss.
- 9 BUBBLING HORDE:** A wave of 3d12 bubbles with menacing faces whip forth from the caster, blasting a target within 80' at +2+CL to hit and dealing 1d4+CL damage, and the target must make a reflex save vs. the attack roll or fall prone.
- 10 ARROW OF SLEEP:** The caster mimes the action of shooting a bow, and an invisible arrow shoots toward a single target within 100' at +1+CL to hit and dealing 1d6+CL damage. Any living creature hit by the arrow must succeed on a will save vs. the attack roll or fall asleep for 1d3 turns.

Riftrunner – Spell Selection Table – Arcana Domain: Fire

d10 Roll Effect (Note: CL = Caster Level, and anything summoned by the riftrunner immediately disappears if any successful attack strikes AC 8, unless otherwise indicated)

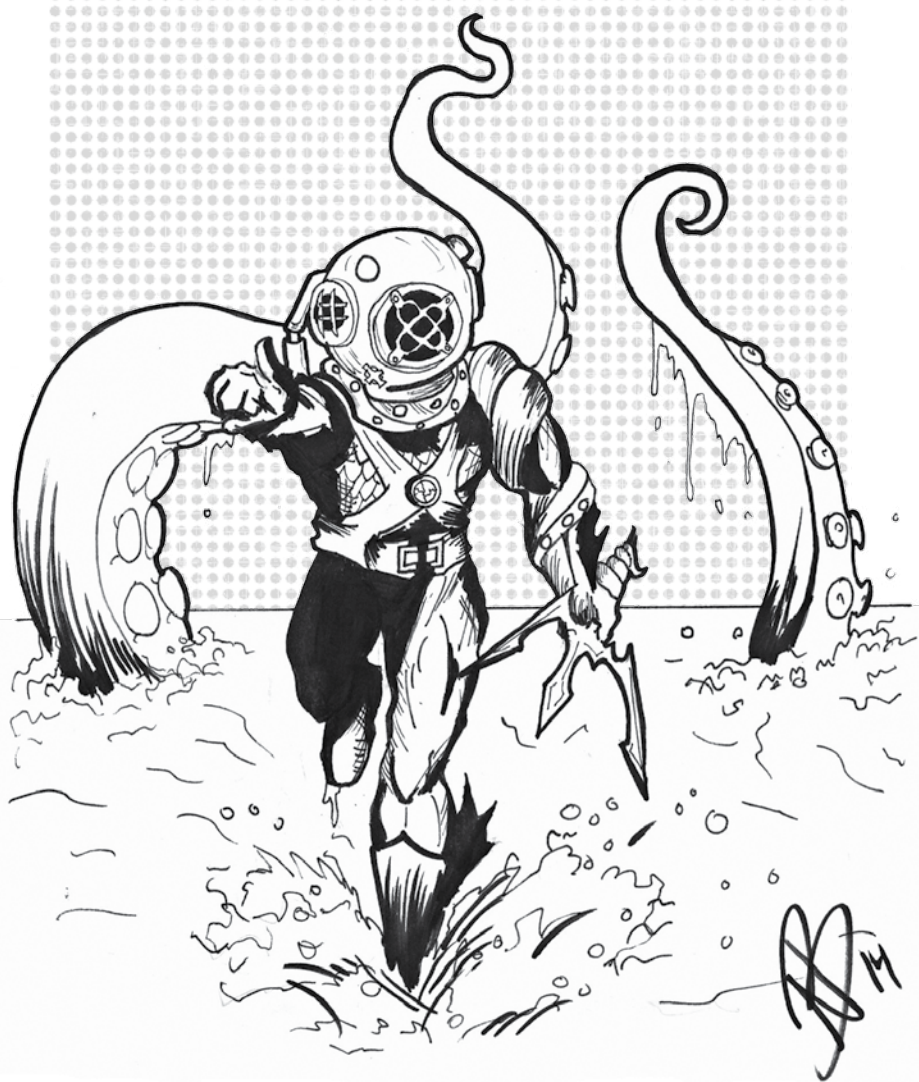
- 1 PHLOGISTON FEEDBACK:** The caster must make a will save vs. DC 12 or take 1d4 fire damage as a crown of flames surrounds his head. The fire continues to burn each round until the will save is successful, and no spells may be cast until the crown of flames is extinguished. (If the will save is unsuccessful, it may be extinguished by other means after the first round.)
- 2 FIRE SHROUD:** The caster or one ally within sight becomes engulfed in flame which deals no damage to the caster or ally, but provides an additional +2+CL AC until the start of the next round and deals 1d6 damage to any enemy within 5' and sets any flammable nearby items on fire.
- 3 ANGER AND HATE:** The caster becomes enraged with a spiritual fire which allows two additional actions this round and any successful melee attack by the enraged target this round inflicts additional fire damage equal to the caster's level.
- 4 WALL OF SPARKS:** Sparks pop and sizzle in front of the caster, providing an effective AC of 17+CL until the end of the next round. In addition, all enemies and allies facing the caster must succeed on a will save vs. DC 10+CL or become blinded until the end of the next round.
- 5 LAVA DEMONITE:** A small demonic creature with rippling lava skin appears within 30' and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +5+CL to hit and 1d5+CL. If the attack is successful, the target must make a successful reflex save vs. the attack roll or take an additional 1d4 fire damage. The lava demonite disappears at the end of the round.
- 6 BURNING EMBERS:** Blasts of rock and lava and ember shards emerge from the ground within 30' of the caster and up to two targets must succeed on reflex saves vs. DC 12+CL or take 1d6+CL fire damage.
- 7 DUST DEVIL:** A warm breeze soon turns into a hot blast of flying, swirling sand and the caster may choose one of the following two effects: (a) the dust devil lifts up an object weighing no more than 200 lbs within 50' of the caster and places it within 100' of its point of origin, or (b) the dust devil blasts up to 3 targets within 100' with hot sandy air, and each target must succeed on a fortitude save vs. DC 12+CL or become blinded for 1d4 rounds.
- 8 MUTATED MANIAC:** A mutated barbarian wielding a large sword in one hand and flailing one tentacled arm appears within 30' of the caster. The mutated barbarian attacks at +1+CL to hit and deals 1d12+CL damage. In addition, the mutated barbarian explodes after attacking and deals an additional 1d6 acid damage to enemies within 10' who fail a reflex save vs. DC 10+CL.
- 9 FIRE CHANNELING:** The caster or one ally gains the following ability until the end of the round: immediately shoot a condensed blast of intense flame out of your fingertips at a single target within 200'. The target must succeed on a reflex save vs. DC 15+CL or take 1d8 fire damage. The blast may not be used more than once during the round.
- 10 METAL MELT:** Any one mundane metal item within sight begins to melt immediately. If it is a weapon, it becomes useless. If it is armor worn by an enemy, the armor is destroyed and that enemy must succeed on a fortitude save vs. DC 12+CL or the wearer takes 1d6+CL burn damage. No metal item larger than human-size can be melted, though section of a larger metal item could be damaged by the spell. Nonmetallic items are unaffected by this spell.

Rifrunner – Spell Selection Table – Arcana Domain: Earth

d10 Roll Effect (Note: CL = Caster Level, and anything summoned by the rifrunner immediately disappears if any successful attack strikes AC 8, unless otherwise indicated)

- 1 PHLOGISTON FEEDBACK:** The caster must make a will save vs. DC 12 or take 1d4 damage from a minor earthquake that shakes the ground beneath the caster's feet and causes him to collapse to the ground. If the caster is near walls or beneath a ceiling of some sort, the caster and anyone within 5' take an additional 1d3 damage from falling debris.
- 2 STONE STRENGTH:** The caster's skin turns gray and his muscles bulge as he immediately gains an additional +3+CL strength modifier until the end of the round, and he may make a full move and attack this round even after casting this spell.
- 3 TENDRILS OF TERROR:** Roots tear up from the ground or floor and grasp up to two targets. Each must make a successful reflex save vs. DC 15+CL or become entangled and paralyzed by the tendrils for the rest of the round. The roots disappear at the beginning of the next round.
- 4 WANDERING DRUID:** A grizzled old man carrying a wooden staff appears for the round and seems to summon 1d8 terrifying creatures of various lizard and giant worm and spider varieties who rush into melee. They are illusions, but all enemy targets who can see the illusions must succeed on a will save vs. DC 10+CL or take 1d3+CL psychic damage.
- 5 NATURE'S CLAWS:** Two large green spectral hands emerge from the ground below up to two targets within 50' and attack with two sets of menacing claws under the caster's control at +2+CL to hit and dealing 1d8+CL damage to each. The claws disappear at the beginning of the next round.
- 6 TUSKED BISON:** A large shaggy bison with extended tusks appears for the round and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +4+CL to hit and 1d6+CL damage. If the attack is successful, the target is pushed back 10' and knocked prone.
- 7 GRANITE CENTAUR:** A heavily-armored stone centaur appears for the round and stands guard in front of the spellcaster until his first action next round. This provides the spellcaster with an effective AC of 18+CL during that time. In addition the first attempted melee attack against the spellcaster during that time provokes a single retaliatory strike by the Centaur, who attacks at +3+CL to hit and deals 1d8+CL damage.
- 8 LIGHTNING GRASSHOPPER:** A human-sized grasshopper appears for the round under the command of the spellcaster and shoots lightning out of its antennae at a single target within 50' at +CL to hit and deals 1d8+X electricity damage. Any target wearing metal armor gives the lightning grasshopper an additional +5 to hit and the metal-clad target takes an additional 1d6 electrical damage if successfully hit. The grasshopper disappears at the beginning of the next round.
- 9 PANTHER AURA:** The caster is surrounded by the spectral form of a giant green panther, providing an additional +1+CL dexterity modifier bonus and an additional +1+CL strength modifier bonus and allowing the caster to move at double speed and attack this round.
- 10 HERBAL HEALING:** A dog-sized ferret appears within 20' of the caster, holding a small pouch in its mouth. The pouch contains one dose of healing herbs which must be chewed within the round or they disappear. Chewing the herbs heals 1d3+CL hit points or restores 1 attribute point lost to spellburn or a curse effect (caster's choice).





Rifrunner – Spell Selection Table – Arcana Domain: Water

d10 Roll Effect (Note: CL = Caster Level, and anything summoned by the rifrunner immediately disappears if any successful attack strikes AC 8, unless otherwise indicated)

- 1 PHLOGISTON FEEDBACK:** The caster must make a will save vs. DC 12 or take 1d4 damage from choking. If the caster is carrying any liquids (waterskin, potions, etc), these immediately begin to spill out on the ground unless the caster succeeds on a luck check for each.
- 2 SEABEARD MYSTIC:** A seaweed-bearded merman levitates in front of a target within 60', zapping the target with a spell that causes the target to immediately turn against and strike at a random ally within range unless the original target succeeds on a will save vs. DC 15+CL. The seabeard mystic disappears after taking that one action.
- 3 HYPER-AWARENESS:** The caster begins to sweat heavily and his eyes turn a bright blue as he becomes hyper-aware until the end of the next round. During the time, he may cast one additional spell or take one additional non-combat action.
- 4 SPELL MIMIC:** The caster's hands turn to translucent blue liquid, and until the end of the next round, if a spell is cast within 100' of the caster, he may immediately duplicate the spell at a CL spellcheck. This does not count as an action, and he may attack as normal during that time. (The blue liquid fist deals as much damage as a normal fist.)
- 5 FROGTOOTH MONSTROSITY:** An ally in sight or the spellcaster, determined randomly, transforms into a large blue frog-lizard with an enormous mouth filled with teeth. The frogtooth monstrosity then makes an immediate attack under the command of the spellcaster this round at +2+CL to hit and deals 1d10+CL damage. The frogtooth monstrosity turns back into the ally or spellcaster at the end of the round, or if anyone attempts to damage it, whichever comes first.
- 6 DISTRACTING MIRAGE:** Waters pool up from the ground and a medium-sized illusion of the caster's choice appears briefly within 100' and distracts up to 3 targets, causing a 1d4+CL penalty to their next action. The illusion disappears at the end of the round in which it was cast.
- 7 REFLECTIVE WAVE:** A tidal wave emerges out of thin air and deflects the next attack directed at the caster this round back toward the point of origin. The original attacker rerolls his attack after it is deflected, and if he rolls high enough, he hits himself and inflicts damage.
- 8 SEAHAWK LANCER:** A spectral, flying hawkman with webbed feet appears and attacks under the command of the spellcaster for this round at +2+CL to hit and deals 1d8+CL damage with his coral lance. The seahawk lancer can attack anyone within 50' of the caster, and then disappears at the end of the round.
- 9 WATERSPOUT:** The spellcaster or a target of his choice within sight is lifted 20'+10' per CL off the ground by a waterspout for this round. If the ascent causes a collision with a solid object or if the target fails a reflex save vs. DC 12+CL when landing, the target takes 1d6 damage and falls prone.
- 10 LEECHTAIL SPACEDRAGON:** A 15' long dark grayish-purple spacedragon from Neptune appears and attacks under the command of the spellcaster at +3+CL to hit and deals 1d12+CL damage with its fanged leech tail, which also reduces the target's stamina by CL for 1 turn. The spacedragon disappears at the end of the round in which it was cast.

Rifrunner – Spell Selection Table – Arcana Domain: Darkness

d10 Roll Effect (Note: CL = Caster Level, and anything summoned by the rifrunner immediately disappears if any successful attack strikes AC 8, unless otherwise indicated)

- 1 PHLOGISTON FEEDBACK:** The caster must make a will save vs. DC 12 or take 1d4 psychic damage as the departed souls of his friends and family return to haunt him immediately. If the original will check failed, the haunting continues, with the loss of 1d4 hit points per round, unless the caster deals at least one point of damage to himself with an edged weapon to interrupt the psychic feedback loop.
- 2 MENTAL SYPHON:** When cast, the caster selects either of the following options: (a) one target immediately forgets all spells known for 1d3 rounds unless the target succeeds on a will save vs. DC 12+CL, or (b) one target immediately becomes disoriented and wanders a full move action away unless he succeeds on a will save vs. a DC 12 +CL.
- 3 SHRIEKING VERMIN:** A dozen small screaming rats appear out of throbbing shadows within 10' of the caster, and all living creatures (except the caster) within 20' must succeed on a will save vs. DC 12+CL or take 1d6+CL psychic damage. The rats disappear at the end of the round.
- 4 PESTILENT ODOR:** A terrible rotten stench blasts a target within range, and if that target has HD less than the caster level, he or she must succeed on a fort save vs. DC 12+CL or fall unconscious for 1d4 rounds. If the target has a HD equal to or greater than the caster, he or she must succeed on a Fort save vs. DC 8+CL or take 1d4+CL damage.
- 5 CROWN OF VIPERS:** A cloud of shadow-formed snakes appear on the head of a target within 50', attacking the target four times at +0 to hit and dealing 1d4+CL damage for each successful strike. On each successful strike, the target must succeed on a fortitude save vs. DC 8+CL or take an additional 1d3 poison damage. The crown of vipers disappears at the end of the round.
- 6 SACRIFICIAL LAMB:** Caster chooses a target within 100', and unless the target makes a successful will save vs. DC 12+CL, the target immediately falls prone, paralyzed, for 1d4 rounds. During each round of paralysis, the target takes 1d4+CL damage. When cast, as an additional cost to cast this spell, the caster must designate one of his or her own allies (or he may designate himself), and that character must make a will save higher than the original target's will save roll or that character also falls prone, paralyzed, for an equal amount of time and takes the same amount of damage as the original target.
- 7 SOULLESS SNAKE:** A foul, rotting serpent appears within 30' of the caster and attacks under the caster's control at +2+CL to hit and deals 1d8+CL. In addition, any target struck by the soulless snake must succeed on a fort save vs. the attack roll or permanently lose 1d4 personality points. The soulless snake disappears at the end of the round.
- 8 LYCANTHROPE LINK:** The caster's hands glow a sickly orange color and a werewolf emerges from inside the caster's soul, crawling out into the world. The werewolf attacks under the control of the caster at +4+CL to hit, dealing 1d6+CL damage with its claws. If the attack is successful, when the werewolf turns toward the caster and horrifyingly crawls into the caster's mouth at the end of the round. The caster has grown additional hair on his hands and face and he loses 1d4 intelligence points until the next morning.



- 9 **DUTIFUL SERVANT:** Nothing happens immediately, but the next time the caster or an ally would take damage this round, a hunched, one-eyed servant appears right before the strike and takes the damage instead, dying in agony and disappearing at the end of the round. The servant only takes the damage from the first successful attack after this spell is cast, and if an opponent uses multiple attacks, everything after the first is unaffected.

- 10 **CARRION CRAVINGS:** A mass of worms and beetles crawl from the ground or floor and target any one item the caster chooses. That item immediately becomes carried away by the small creatures this round unless someone holding the item attempts to resist with a successful strength or agility check vs. DC 12+CL. The carrion dig below the ground or floor and hide the item up to 15' below ground, covered by foul earth and rotten debris. The item targeted by the carrion may be no larger than human-sized, though if the item is larger, then a specific part of it may be targeted for destruction.



SPACE PIRATES from BEYOND THE GRAVE

A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

One hundred and eighteen years ago, the council of Grey Wizards banished the Starshard family to Pluto for daring to commune with beings of great evil from a parallel dimension. Marooned on an alien world with few resources accessible to them, and lacking the magical implements of their homeworld, the Starshards scraped together a flimsy shelter and hunted for insects beneath the planet's chilly surface so they might feed their small children. The children survived, even if the parents did not, and as Pluto became a thriving hub of piracy and corruption, the four Starshard brothers — raised in the harshest conditions imaginable — used their innate talents and ruthlessness to become incredibly wealthy. And powerful.

Whatever dark pact their parents made with the evil forces in their youth have endowed the Starshard brothers with the ability to syphon life from those around them and grow in vitality as the strength of their enemies diminish. They are space vampires, and, on behalf of their dearly departed mother and father, they seek revenge on the planet Earth.

The PC's don't know any of this when the adventure begins. All they know is that they have found themselves at the auction house on the moon of Styx, orbiting Pluto, for one of any number of reasons:

- 1) The PCs have been informed of the list of items up for auction, and one of the items has a special connection and/or history for one of the PCs and he and the rest of the party want to buy the item and/or steal it.
- 2) The PCs have been hired by Rags Carbonon, auction house owner, to provide additional security during the time of the auction, since the items up for bid are worth hundreds of thousands of gold pieces, special guests will be arriving on Styx at any moment, and his regular guards are, let's say, under-prepared.

Or, my favorite (because I always use the Perilous League, whenever possible)...

- 3) The PCs, working for the Perilous League, have been commissioned by Lord Gosworth, wealthy League patron, to escort him to Styx and make sure that he is protected while he bids for, and wins (because Lord Gosworth gets what he wants) the Tear of Cadixtat, a legendary gem worth more than the PCs have ever seen.

Things go from bad to crazy to supernatural-evil-and-space-vampire-rituals over the course of this adventure, but it all starts at the Auction House on Styx, and the events unfold from there.

JUDGES NOTES

The moon of Styx is basically an enormous chunk of ice, floating in orbit around Pluto. It's cold and bleak. As far as the PCs know, there's only one outpost on Styx, and it's the auction house bopping around from planet to planet. It's where the incredibly rich go to bid on foolish items and legendary artifacts. It's the kind of place that every thief dreams of robbing, but no one has ever stolen from this auction house. Rumors indicate that Rags Carbonon really works for the Pirate Kings of Pluto, and they get a major cut of the profits of this little auction house on Styx, and no one would dare to mess with the Pirate Kings. Which is why it should be a surprise when pirates invade the auction house shortly after the adventure begins.

The adventure is set up with an opening conflict at the auction house, and some potential in-between sequences and encounters to get the PCs back toward the evil Sharshard invasion plan, and then a combination dungeon-slash-nightclub on the surface of Pluto in which the PCs would face down with the space vampires and the beginnings of an undead army. As always, judges are encouraged to adapt what is useful for their own campaigns, and while there is a through-line connecting all of the pieces of this adventure as the Starshard brothers advance their foul plan, the PCs may only intersect with parts of it, as they pursue their own interests in the galaxy.

Of course, if the PCs never end up stumbling upon the depths of Hellspace on Pluto and don't stop the Starshard brothers from summoning undead hordes and teleporting

their army to Earth, then the party might find that their next trip to the third planet from the sun is much, much, much more overrun with death and destruction and giant skeleton scorpion monsters than normal.

THE AUCTION HOUSE OF STYX

Ships dock on the ice moon of Styx about 1000 yards from the auction house. The cold on the surface could become lethal, but as long as characters are only exposed to the chilly Stygian air for less than an hour, they will not take any damage. For each hour of exposure after that, a character would have to make a Fortitude save vs. DC 20 or take 2d12 damage.

The surface of the ice moon is particularly treacherous, though. Normal walking should not cause too many problems, unless the character is not at all agile, but if any character enters combat on the icy surface, that character must make a Reflex save vs. DC 15 or fall prone after a movement action. Only by using a full round to move, and doing nothing else, would the character avoid the need to make the check. The check can also be avoided if the character wears spiked footwear.

The auction house itself is about 120' wide and 40' tall, though it is only a single-story building. The vast ceilings inside the auction house help to create a sense of magnificence and make the bidders feel relatively insignificant, as if the auction house were a cathedral devoted to wealth, which it is. The only windows in the building are the portholes in the front wall, two on either side of the grand entrance.



The Auction House of STYX



Upon approaching the building, a visitor would notice that tall, colorful but blocky male and female figures, evocative of classical art, dance along the front walls. These are holographic projections which run on a loop continually. Any viewer watching them for more than 20 minutes will see the same moves repeat.

The auction house also projects a strong force field, visible as flickering waves of light around all sides of the building. It is deactivated when guests arrive and immediately reactivated after they enter. The force field is more for show than utility. Damage in excess of 30 hit points will overwhelm the field and cause it to disappear for one hour, while the power cells inside the walls of the building recharge to resume the projection of the field. If the hologram projector in the front of the building is turned off as a precautionary measure to preserve power, the force field would not be overwhelmed until 50 damage was dealt to it.

The following area descriptions explain what the party might see when they first arrive in each room, though when the encounter begins, positions of NPCs will likely change at the judge's discretion.

AREA 1-1: The grand entrance and foyer. Ornatly decorated. Plaques upon the walls describe Rags Carbonon's civic achievements on Earth. An Imperial Medal of Merit from the Brotherhood of Jupiter hags beneath a painting of Rags and an orange lizardman bowing to each other. Two auction house guards – dressed in white leather uniforms

and carrying laser pistols in holsters – monitor this area and lower the force field as guests arrive. The guards will not speak unless spoken to, and are neither hostile nor welcoming to the PCs. **Auction House Guards (2):** Init +0; Atk laser pistol +1 missile fire (1d6), AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL L.

AREA 1-2: This area is locked, and the only electro-keys are with Rags and the guards (unless the PCs are hired by Rags, in which case they will each be given a key). This is a storage area, and all of the items listed in the auction will be stored here prior to the dramatic entrance of each item as the auction commences. (A guard brings one item out at a time, as Rags "entertains" the audience with Earth riddles and puns.) This room also features crates and chests that are mostly empty, unless the judge wants to place other campaign-related items inside. Approximately 1,245 gp of treasure can be found by sifting through the loose coins and gems in the various chests, though Rags would not look fondly upon anyone counting his money for him.

AREA 1-3: The auction room seats seventeen guests and features a tall stage that requires several high steps to ascend. Rags conducts the auction from atop the stage, as each item is brought in by a security guard and the guests bid from the seats. One guard stands on either side of the door from the foyer, inside this room. So that makes three guards total in this area once the auction commences: one carrying items in and out, two by the door. They have the same stats as the guards in **Area 1-1**.

AREA 1-4: This is ostensibly the guest sleeping area, though Rags Carbonon's girlfriend, blue lizardwoman from Jupiter named K'Leyna, rests in this room, lying across three beds pushed together, since she is 8' tall and obviously sickly. She hasn't adapted well to the Stygian climate and she hasn't eaten the proper lizardman diet of freshly killed prey in months. She will moan and express her discomfort but will not leave her bed during this adventure. The room contains some valuable clothes and jewelry, and an additional 2650 gp of Rags Carbonon's personal fortune, in various tins and crates and chests around the room. It smells of old leather and dried leaves.



ROBBERY AT THE AUCTION HOUSE OF STYX

Depending on the hook used to get the PCs to the auction house, a variety of scenarios might occur, but one thing that's definite is this: while the party is at the auction house, a group of space pirates from Pluto will attack and attempt to run off with some of the valuable items on display.

The space pirates are tattooed and painted to look like zombies and skeletons and other undead creatures, and the players will likely assume that the "space pirates from beyond the grave" in the title of this adventure refers to these robbers. And that's the point. Because it's all a diversion. The real threat has been in the auction house almost the whole time.

Here's what you need to play it out. First, a list of the guests who arrive for the auction, with brief descriptions – names and personalities in parenthesis. They do not have any additional entourage with them. Though these guests may not say their names aloud, the guards or Rags could identify them all by name, if asked:

1. Tall albino humanoid brute with a red vest and tie (this is Kedzar – he is gruff but kind)
2. Halfling man and wife, looking significantly lower class than all the other guests, smoking from a hookah (they are Bramble and Queenie – they are sleazy but harmless)
3. Thin well-dressed pale human wearing dark goggles (this is Syon Starshard – very polite and proper but completely

evil. He has secretly hired the space pirates to distract everyone so he can swipe the Legendary Lute of Hagen MacBrugan for his nefarious scheme)

4. Loud, portly human with a long moustache (this is Lord Gosworth – he is brash and direct, and he has money to spend, and he may have already hired the PCs to help him get what he wants, the Tear of Cadixtat)
5. Yellow skinned, red-haired woman wearing a red dress (this is Dyresh Solomon – she is completely silent, though she understands Common)
6. Red-skinned brawny lizardman carrying a thick tome (this is K'Igget – and he opens his book and talks to it throughout the auction)
7. Blue-skinned female elf wearing a black robe (this is Noramos Ravenwind – humble and friendly)

These guests are all significantly wealthy, and to determine what they are most interested in as the auction unfolds, roll a d7 to find out who is bidding on what item (use a d8 to determine the item). In playtesting it was most interesting if the players rolled the d7s and d8s and the story of the auction unfolded as characters outbid other characters as the judge described the auction. Note that Syon will NOT bid on the Lute of Hagen MacBrugan, because he plans to steal it anyway – he could afford it, but he doesn't want anyone to know he has it, and he hired the pirates to get it for him, but he realized he doesn't really trust them either, so even though the pirates have been hired, secretly, by Syon to retrieve the Lute, he will now use them as distraction so

he can take it for himself while everyone is panicking thanks to what he assumes will be an incompetent space pirate assault.

The list of items up for auction is indicated below, with the starting bid in parenthesis. The judge is encouraged to develop these other items in any way he or she sees fit. The items will come out on stage one at a time and will stay on the stage as Rags Carbonon acts as the auctioneer. Most of the items will likely sell at over 100,000 gp each.

1. A Twelve-Volume Memoir in Verse by Mad Brother Karg (starting bid: 12,000 gp)
2. The Flying Sword of Marketa the Warlock (starting bid: 16,000 gp)
3. The Discarded Wand of EmirikoI the Chaotic (starting bid: 35,000 gp)
4. The Legendary Lute of Hagen MacBrugan (starting bid: 27,000 gp)
5. The Onyx Hand of Harpylos the Impetuous (starting bid: 25,000 gp)
6. The Lost Scrolls of the Wanderer Aziz (starting bid: 52,000 gp)
7. The Impossible Helm of Sir Burtos of the Lost Isle (starting bid: 17,000 gp)
8. The Tear of Cadixtat the Chaos Titan (starting bid: 88,000 gp)

Each item is placed on a platform and surrounded by a glowing energy field which does 2d12 damage to anyone touching it, unless he deactivates the shield by making a DC 15 lockpicking or Intelligence check, or dealing 10 damage to the platform.

As the Tear of Cadixtat is being auctioned, just as Lord Gosworth is sure he's going

to win it for his collection, sounds of explosions can be heard from outside, and almost immediately, the eastern side of back wall of Area 1-3 explodes, dealing 2d6 damage to anyone standing within 10'. The space pirates have used a photon cannon to knock out the force field, and they have used explosive bombs to blow out the back wall, and they climb down a rope ladder dangling from their skyship above, ready to invade the auction house, steal the Legendary Lute of Hagen MacBrugan (and whatever other two or three valuable items are nearby), and escape. The space pirates will attack the auction house guards during the first round, allowing the PCs to escape through the front of the building if they wish to flee.

Space Pirates (8 appear in the first round, 10 more arrive at the end of round 2): Init +2; Atk cutlass +2 (1d8) or laser pistol +1 (1d8+1); AC 14; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C. *Treasure (each): 2d10 gp, 2d8 sp.*



Space Pirate Captain Hrusk Valbon (arrives at the end of round 2): Init +3, Atk laser whip +5 (1d8+2 or ensnare) or laser pistol +4 (1d8+1); AC 15; HD 4d8; hp 21; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +5; AL C. *Treasure: 25 gp, 2 yellow gems, 2 stim packs (increase action die by one – to d24 usually – for 1d4 rounds, but then lose 1d4 hp).*

Syon will let the pirates take the Lute of Hagen MacBrugan out of auction house if they seem to be getting away with it, but if things look bad for the space pirates, or if they look to clumsy, he will immediately intervene to grab the Lute for himself and flee to his ship, then back to Pluto. He would prefer no witnesses were kept alive, but he will be discreet if possible. He isn't however, afraid of a fight – he is a level 5 riftrunner who is also a space vampire – though he will not stick around and battle when the odds are against him.

Syon Starshard: Init +5; Atk laser pistol +5 (1d8+1) or phlogiston fist +5 melee (1d10+1) or riftrunner fire domain spell, AC 12; HD 5d8; hp 38; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP riftrunner with fire domain spells, may activate free vampiric aura action that attacks all living creatures within 10' who must make a Fort save vs. the attack roll or lose 1d4 hp and 1d4 Stamina, and Syon gains hp equal to those numbers combined; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C. *Treasure: black goggles have the power to detect invisible creatures, small metal rectangle, used to magically transfer up to 100,000 gp in currency between planets.*

Note: when vampiric aura reduces a victim's Stamina to less than 3, the victim falls unconscious. The victim dies if Stamina is reduced to 0.

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

The auction house scenario might conclude in a number of ways, like (a) the PCs running away, (b) the PCs staying to fight and defeating all the pirates and Syon Starshard, or (c) anything in between.

If you'd like to use the second part of this adventure, you can get the PCs to the surface of Pluto and to Club Starshard and Hellscape below via any one of these hooks (or whatever fits your campaign):

1) Cash. Rags Carbonon hires the PCs to retrieve a stolen item (if anything was taken from the auction house by the pirates or Syon), or to bring the culprits to justice. He points the PCs in the direction of Club Starshard on Pluto, and tells them that recent rumors indicate that the Starshard brothers are part of an evil cabal who meet beneath the nightclub.

2) Revenge. If Syon or any of the pirates killed or significantly harmed a party member, any investigation into what happened will be able to point them back toward Pluto and Club Starshard.

3) Duty. The Perilous League (or the Grey Wizards or whatever organization the PCs have alliances with) has uncovered evidence that the Starshard brothers are planning to harm Earth somehow. The PCs need to investigate and learn what the plan is – without realizing the plan is well underway – by heading to Club Starshard and finding the Starshard brothers.

CLUB STARSHARD

Club Starshard is one of the Starshard brothers main sources of legal revenue. It is one of the most popular drinking and dancing establishments on Pluto, built inside a temple to a long-forgotten god. The main entrance to the club is the only apparent way in – without breaking through a wall – but there are no guards. The club polices itself. If the customers drinking and dancing don't like you, they will push you back out the door. This might lead to some interesting disguise opportunities for the PCs, if they want to take a more subtle route to finding where the Starshard brothers are.

Level 1 of Club Starshard

Over a hundred patrons fill the open areas in the first level, dancing to music that seems to cause pain to anyone unaccustomed to it. Sturdy pillars help to hold the 30 ceilings in place, and a covered dome filled with blue/green liquid and glowing eels sits in the far center of the main room. A roped-off area is reserved for the musicians and valued





guests, and special drinks are occasionally brought up from downstairs to serve these VIPs. Two green lizardmen act as bartenders for those who desire the exotic beverages from the shelves below ground. Dozens of multi-colored candles light the first level, piled in clusters at the end of the large room.

The one side door in the main room leads to an unlit room with an obvious trap door leading down to level two. The trap door is protected by a shockwave field that deals 2d10 damage to anyone who attempts to lift the trap door. The shockwave field can be disabled by humming the encoded sound that matches the sound of "do de doodle do." The lizardmen who serve drinks can be heard to hum this sound when they are in this room, if the PCs are able to listen without being seen. The trap door can be disabled by a dispel magic spell or its equivalent, or by dealing 20 magical damage to the shockwave field, though that would cause a loud series of noises and any melee weapons dealing that damage would lead to contact, causing 2d10 damage to the melee PC via feedback.

Opening the trap door reveals a strangely spine-shaped steel ladder heading down.

Level 2 of Club Starshard

This area is well-lit by torches in wall sconces.

A lizardman guard stands behind the reinforced door to the main gambling room of Level 2, which is also the room that has shelves of specialty drinks. These are actually potions and poisons and various alcoholic beverages. The judge is encouraged to use Table 2-! in Thom Hall's "Hail Bob's" article from Crawljammer #2 to

generate a variety of strange concoctions for the top shelf of this establishment. In playtesting, PCs were eager to risk their own health trying to find out what some of the strangely colored elixirs actually did to their minds and bodies.

But first they have to get into the room (the door requires a DC 20 lockpicking check or a DC 20 Strength check), and past the lizardman guard who will look through the steel netting in the small opening in the reinforced door to see who is coming down the ladder. This gambling room is for special guests only. Note that there are three total lizardmen who may try to oppose the PCs, though not all three will be in the gambling room. Two bring drinks up and down the ladder and visit with VIP guests upstairs. One is always in the gambling room.

Green Lizardman Guards (1-3): Init +3; Atk claw/claw/tail +2 melee (1d6/1d6/1d6) or grab +4 melee (1d12 + immobilized); AC 15; HD 3d8; hp 19; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

The other 2d4 characters in the gambling room are an assortment of Plutonian "nobility" and drug-addled lowlifes with coin to burn. They are playing cards on the table, with 278 gp and 688 sp on the table. They flee or attempt to hide if the PCs enter the room with any kind of obviously hostile intent. Otherwise, they will continue playing cards and losing money to each other as the PCs stroll by.

The back door of the room is also reinforced (DC 20 to lockpick or break open with Strength check) and leads down a winding passageway with lumpy walls to an uneven stone staircase leading further down into...

HELLSCAPE

Hellscape is the area used by the Starshard brothers as their base of operations, where they have used their riches and amassed the magical power to create a portal which will tap into the core of Pluto and channel an invasion army to the surface of the Earth. They will finally get the vengeance their family has long craved.

Hellscape underground is a strange, nightmarish area, where strange vibrations warp reality and hideous things lurk behind corners. The longer the party takes to find **Area 1-9** and stop the Starshard brothers, the more undead that will be syphoned through the portal toward Earth. (Which could lead to a whole series of future adventures for the party as they clean up the undead mess on Earth, or it could explain why skeletons are so prominent in fantasy role-playing adventures.)



After the first turn of searching the tunnels and rooms of Hellscape, Syon Starshard and his brother Loke show up to see what the commotion is, waiting to strike until the party is engaged with another battle or until they can get a sneak attack in. They will retreat if the party does any damage to them and they are unable to immediately heal to full health using their vampiric aura. If Syon Starshard was killed or captured in a previous encounter, Loke will be alone as he stalks the party after their first turn of searching. Loke Starshard looks almost identical to his brother, though his hair is longer. He, too, wears black goggles, even though he lacks the fire domain spells of his brother. Syon's stats are provided again below for your convenience, along with the stats for Loke:

Loke Starshard: Init +5; Atk scimitar +6 (1d8+3), AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 39; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP, may activate free vampiric aura action that attacks all living creatures within 10' who must make a Fort save vs. the attack roll or lose 1d4 hp and 1d4 Stamina, and Loke gains hp equal to those numbers combined; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

Syon Starshard: Init +5; Atk laser pistol +5 (1d8+1) or phlogiston fist +5 melee (1d10+1) or rifrunner fire domain spell, AC 12; HD 5d8; hp 38; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP rifrunner with fire domain spells, may activate free vampiric aura action that attacks all living creatures within 10' who must make a Fort save vs. the attack roll or lose 1d4 hp and 1d4 Stamina, and Syon gains hp equal to those numbers combined; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

HELLSCAPE



AREA 1-1: Entryway

Double doors to the north, apparent passages to the left and right. One invisible guardian from each side room will pounce through the entryways on either side if any character heads down either open passage or touches the double doors. Both guardians are shaped like human-sized gargoyles, but can only be seen if an energy spell (or laser) hits them, or through normal invisibility detection capabilities (like the goggles the Starshard brothers wear).

AREA 1-2: Lair of Invisible Guardian - Left

Invisible Guardian: Init +4; Atk claws +4 (1d8+4); AC 18; HD 2d8; hp 11; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP all attacks against are at -4 unless the invisibility is inactive; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

AREA 1-3: Lair of Invisible Guardian - Right

Invisible Guardian: Init +4; Atk claws +4 (1d8+4); AC 18; HD 2d8; hp 11; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP all attacks against are at -4 unless the invisibility is inactive; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C. *Treasure:* This invisible guardian in Area 1-3 has stashed some items he has stolen from victims in the southwest corner of the room, but after prolonged contact with him, they are now invisible: vibro dagger +1 (1d6 +1 damage), fire-slinging crossbow (shoots small balls of fire that do 1d6 damage and may set things ablaze, though only 7 charges remain), potion of healing, potion of serpent skin (+2 AC for 1d8 rounds).

AREA 1-4: Trapped Foyer

These double-doors are locked (DC 15 to pick or smash open with Strength check). The area inside is trapped by a combination

of necromancy and super-science. Ten seconds after the first living thing enters the room, the walls burst forth in illusory flame (dealing 1d6 damage to anyone touching them unless they actively disbelieve) while gas jets in the wall pump out poison gas that looks like smoke (but doesn't smell like smoke) and the gas will fill the southern rooms as well. For each round any character is exposed to the gas, roll on the Corruption Tables on pp. 116-119 of the *DCC Core Rulebook*, starting at Minor Corruption and shifting up one table per round of exposure. Any character exposed to gas for more than three consecutive rounds, rolls on table 5-5 (page 119) and falls unconscious for 1d6 turns.

Note: the doors to the north are also locked (DC 15 to pick or smash), and the only way to stop the gas is to open the doors to the north or to find and manually disable the gas vents on either side which are obvious if the illusory flame is dispelled or disbelieved.

AREA 1-5: Robot Chamber - Left

If they have not yet already done so, Loke and Syon (if he's present) will engage with the PCs as soon as the robot gunner on the left side of this room has started firing at them, but the brothers will retreat to the nearest secret door (by typing in a code on the second robot) if they take damage they cannot heal in one round. The second "robot," further into the room, toward the west wall, is a metal statue with a hatch on the front chest (not duplicated on the robot gunner, but otherwise identical) that has a series of buttons that will open the secret door to **Area 1-9** if the proper code is entered (Luck check to get the code correct

in 1d6 rounds or less). Shorting out the circuits of this dummy robot and the dummy robot in **Area 1-7** will also open both doors, as long as both robots are shorted out. The door to **Area 1-6** is unlocked.

Robot Gunner (will not attack until PCs are in the center of the room or step within 5' of the robot gunner): Init +6; Atk machine gun arms +2 missile fire (1d12), AC 19; HD 4d8; hp 28; MV 30'; Act 2d24; SP double damage at melee range; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

AREA 1-6: Feeding Room - Left

This enormous room contains metal crates and metal cabinets featuring a variety of treasures the Starshard brothers have accumulated over the years. It also contains another seeming robot guardian, only this one has his hands directly outward, frozen as if in a defensive pose. A close examination reveals this is not a robot, but a kind of iron maiden device, with a human inside who is barely conscious. The brothers feed this human through feeding tubes running up through the device and into its back, and they feast on the human's energy periodically. The human is named Shorrek, and he's an apothecary who has been banished to Pluto by the Grey Wizards, but he is a mere victim here. He is too drained to talk much, though he can briefly describe his abduction by green lizardmen from Club Starshard and being hooked up to this torture device by Syon Starshard. Releasing Shorrek will set off an alarm which will cause one randomly determined Starshard brothers to immediately leave **Area 1-9** to come investigate via the secret passage.
Treasure: 370 gp, 12 green gems worth 40 gp

each, 6 blue gems worth 120 gp each, bulky paintings and sculpture worth a combined 1200 gp, one laser pistol with scope (+2 to hit, 1d6+2 damage), one data card embedded with the following technomancer spells (knock, invisibility, spider web), and one vial of poison (save vs. DC 15 Fort or take 1d12 damage).

AREA 1-7: Robot Chamber - Right

Identical to **Area 1-5**, though Loke and Syon are not waiting in this Area, and are either in **Area 1-5**, or they have retreated to **Area 1-9**, or they are captured or dead. But, yes, this room is identical in terms of robots and passageways to **Area 1-5**.

AREA 1-8: Feeding Room - Right

Same as **Area 1-6**, except the human victim is Zamarea, a red Martian female who was kidnapped by space pirates on a voyage to Jupiter and sold to the Starshard brothers. She is also drained, physically. *Treasure: 120 gp, 360 sp, scrolls containing the following wizard spells: detect magic, enlarge, monster summoning, fireball, 2 healing potions, one magic two-handed Lawful sword known as Baneslayer (+1 to hit and damage, evil creatures take one additional damage each round and wounds do not heal until cured by divine magic. Baneslayer's purpose, communicated telepathically, is to punish evildoers). Baneslayer is kept inside a locked case, inside a locked cabinet, protected by an electrified trap (1d8 damage if undetected, DC 20 to detect, DC 22 to disable).*

AREA 1-9: Portal between Pluto and Earth

If the Starshard brothers – via any means – have procured the *Legendary Lute of*

Hagen MacBrugan, then it's most likely that Mektar Starshard – pale skin, green eyes, long fangs, spikey white hair – is playing it as part of the ritual being performed in this room. If he is playing the Lute, the judge should double the number of non-Starshard undead creatures in the room, to signify the enhanced power of the ritual with the weird vibrations from the Lute contributing to its power. If the Lute is destroyed (which would take 50 damage) or the playing stops for more than one round, a shockwave of anti-vibration anti-undead magic emanates from the Lute as backlash and deals 2d8 damage to any remaining undead in the area, non including the Starshard brothers (as they are energy syphoning space vampires, and not traditional undead beings).

Here's what the PC's see when they enter this room from any door: A swirling portal on the floor seems to act as a foul doorway for undead creatures to climb up out of the depths. Skeletons claw their way to the surface and flying demon skeletons rise up from below. Another portal sits along the wall of the room, and the undead monstrosities pile their way through that window to another world after they rise up from the depths. The world through that portal seems familiar. It looks like...Earth.

The Starshard brothers (all four, unless some are already dead or captured) stand back by the high-tech coffins in the southern part of the room, and the brothers are all chanting magical incantations to speed the ritual or playing the Lute of Hagen MacBrugan if they have it. Both portals can only be closed by

killing, paralyzing, or otherwise disabling the speaking sounds and incantations of all four Starshard brothers. If any Starshard brother falls to 8 hit points or less, he will immediately head to his techno-coffin and attempt to regain health. The coffins heal the Starshard brothers at 2d12 hit points per round, unless they are rendered powerless by either freeing the two victims in **Areas 1-6** and **1-8** or by disconnecting the wires that lead into the coffins (DC 15 Strength check, or 15 damage needed). The covers to the techno-coffins are effectively invulnerable, absorbing the first 20 damage dealt to them each round, unless the coffins are disconnected from the wall.

During this encounter, the skeletal monstrosities will continue to rise up out of the depths of Pluto through the portal and rush toward the portal to Earth until the Starshard brothers are attacked. When that happens, the creatures indicated below will climb up through the portal, but will engage the PCs instead of heading to Earth, while the rest of their undead brothers continue their invasion. But first, some stats for the other two Starshard brothers! (Jaaf Starshard is the short, squat brother, with healthier skin and a reddish glow.)

Jaaf Starshard: Init +5; Atk punch +3 melee (1d6+3); AC 15; HD 5d8; hp 31; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP may activate free vampiric aura action that attacks all living creatures within 10' who must make a Fort save vs. the attack roll or lose 1d4 hp and 1d4 Stamina, and Jaaf gains hp equal to those numbers combined; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.



Mektar Starshard (playing *Legendary Lute* if possible, while avoiding melee): Init +5; Atk claws +6 melee (1d6+3) or bite +5 (1d5 plus increase the saving throw roll needed for the victim to avoid Mektar's vampiric aura effect by +5 for the rest of the encounter), AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 30; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP may activate free vampiric aura action that attacks all living creatures within 10' who must make a Fort save vs. the attack roll or lose 1d4 hp and 1d4 Stamina, and Mektar gains hp equal to those numbers combined; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

The following creatures emerge from the portal and immediately attack the PCs if the Starshard brothers are attacked by the PCs. Remember to double the number of creatures below if the *Legendary Lute* is still being played by a Starshard brother:

Two-Headed Zombie Hounds (2): Init +6; Atk bite/bite +6 melee (1d12/1d12), AC 16; HD 4d8; hp 21; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP successful bit leads to a rotting disease on target where magical healing only heals ½ normal, and normal healing doesn't work at all until disease is cured; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will -1; AL C.

Winged Demon Skeletons (3, plus 1 more every two rounds): Init +3; Atk claw +3 melee (1d8), AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 10; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

Skeleton Soldiers (8, plus 2 more every two rounds): Init +0; Atk flaming swords or flaming flails (1d8), AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

If the battle continues into round 5, the winged demon skeletons and the skeleton soldiers currently in the room begin to crawl atop one another and reconfigure their structures to form a giant skeleton scorpion. The scorpion fights the strongest-looking PC while additional skeletons emerge from the portal as normal, unless the portal is closed.

Giant Skeleton Scorpion: Init +6; Atk claw/claw/sting +6 melee (1d10/1d10/1d12), AC 14; HD 7; hp 65; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP successful sting paralyzes target for 1d8 rounds unless Fort save is made; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

If the PCs run through any of the portals before they close, they will find themselves on an unfamiliar planet (since their living physiognomy has altered the magicks that would have sent them to Earth), with whatever undead monstrosities that they haven't killed chasing them onto this new landscape.

CONCLUSION

The PCs have either saved Earth from a horde of undead or they've died trying (or they've fled in terror).

If they haven't accidentally teleported themselves to a strange alien planet (maybe it's the *Purple Planet!*), then they find themselves in the lair of the Starshard brothers with the knowledge that there's still part of an undead army loose on the planet Earth. They may or may not care about dealing with that situation. Maybe they just want to count their money and go on to the next adventure.

What they don't yet know is that there is a fifth Starshard brother...who will someday avenge the death of his brothers. *Dun dun dunnn!!!* (You can write that one yourselves.)



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