

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

SKY MASTERS OF THE PURPLE PLANET



#84.3: A LEVEL 6 ADVENTURE
ON THE PURPLE PLANET
BY JIM WAMPLER

DK6

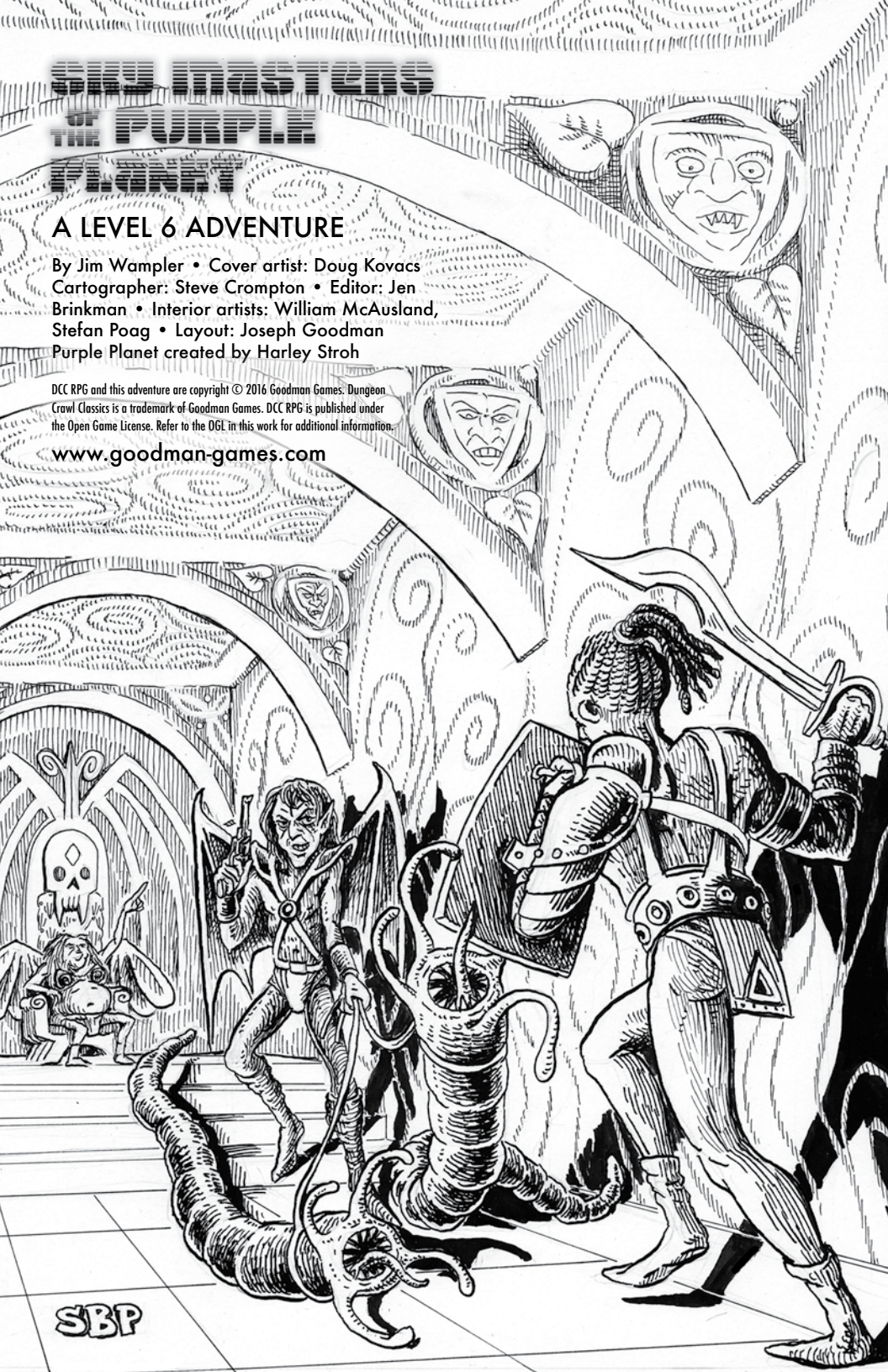
SIB MASTERS OF THE PURPLE PLANET

A LEVEL 6 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



his adventure is designed for 6th-level player characters and assumes that the PCs have adventured on the Purple Planet extensively. Experienced and well-equipped characters, or appropriate pre-generated characters, should be used.

BACKGROUND

Though long-settled on the Purple Planet, many mysteries of the searing sphere remain unsolved for the interplanetary freebooters who now call it home. Among these is one of the few stories told about camp fires that strike visible fear in the otherwise savage and stoic Kith — the Sky Masters of the Purple Planet. These enigmatic pirate-raiders are said to descend from their home on Choran, the larger of the Purple Planet's twin moons, and steal away whatever or whomever they like in savage midnight raids that leave few survivors.

Never seen clearly in their moonlit raids, the Kith tell seemingly tall tales of gigantic winged purple demons that take away their women folk, children, and meager food stocks, while slaying all of the remaining warriors. It is said that they are impervious to physical harm, and cannot be touched by mortal beings.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Sky Masters of the Purple Planet begins with a midnight raid upon the PCs' encampment. Accustomed to easier prey, as soon as the battle begins to go against the violent and volacious villains, they will flee back to their sky-boats and set a course for their lair on the northern rim of the Rima-Storm — a tempest-filled, equator-spanning chasm many miles across and deep. Taking advantage of a downed sky-boat, the PCs give chase, engage in aerial ship-to-ship combat, and eventually discover the Sky-Spire base of operations for the Sky Masters of the Purple Planet.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

By the time this adventure takes place, the PCs are assumed to be experienced immigrants to the Purple Planet. They should possess a working knowledge of the effects of the weirdling sun radiation, how to counter it with moon-milk, possession of a selection of native artifacts, and enough green shards to power them.



RAID UNDER A DOUBLE-MOON



egin this adventure by having the players set up their night watches in any fashion that they desire. Because of their silent airborne approach, the Sky Master raiders will start with surprise at midnight. Once combat has commenced, any sleeping PCs will be automatically awakened by the clashing sounds of battle.

All seemed normal as your band of interplanetary freebooters settled in for the evening. You posted the normal watches, expecting to face nothing more ferocious than the occasional wandering strekleon, who tend to grow bold when the double moons are full. But at midnight the hairs on the back of your neck go up. You look around and see nothing out in the wastelands. You strain your ears to listen, and hear naught but the gentle stir of a desert breeze. Then a shadow falls over you, blocking the double-moonlight, and you look up. To your horror, the sky above you is filled with winged demons bearing cutlasses and pistols. They seem to be spilling out of four large craft that hang silent in the penumbric air. Roll for initiative.

Though the Sky Masters have both the advantage of surprise and over-whelming

numbers, they are accustomed to preying on crudely-armed Kith who fear them as legendary demon-beings. They are otherwise cowardly and feckless when confronted with staunch resistance in the field, preferring to find easier prey. When four or more Sky Masters fall in battle, the larger group will retreat to their sky-boats suspended hundreds of feet in the air.

The PCs may well resort to extraordinary means to prevent this retreat. For purposes of this adventure, it is only important that two things happen: a least one sky-boat of pirates must escape, and at least one sky-boat must be hit in one of its lift tanks and crash otherwise intact to the ground.

PLAYER MOTIVATION

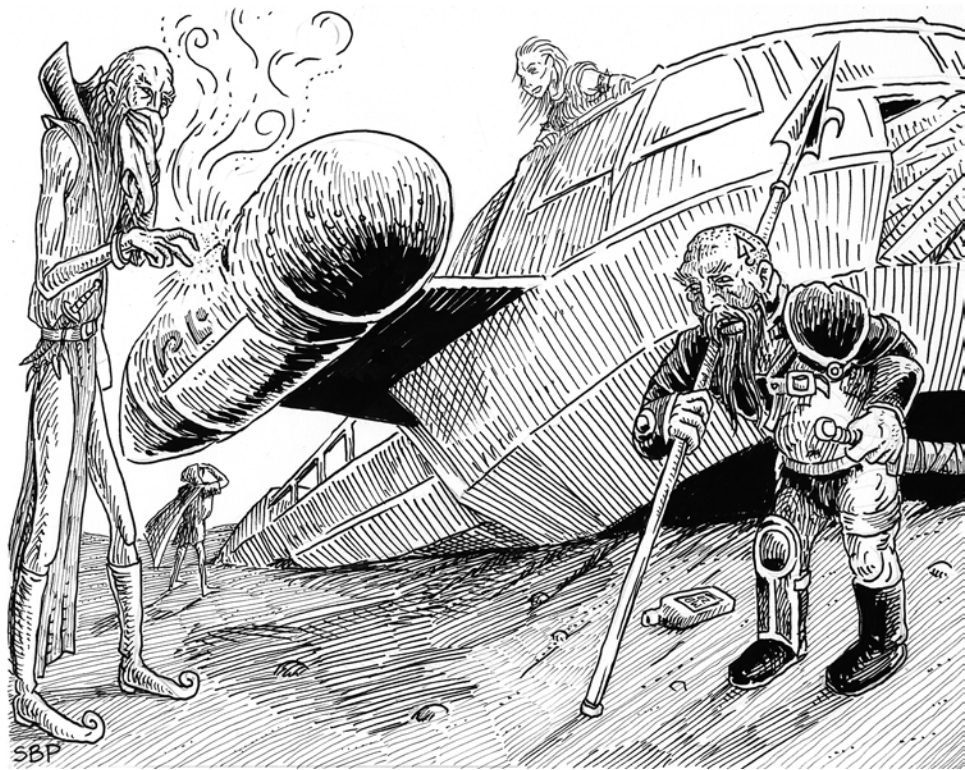
To ensure a chase to the main adventure, the judge should ensure that the PCs quickly notice that, in addition to stealing mundane food supplies and treasure, the Sky Masters have also stolen something extremely important to them – the wizard's spell book, or a prized and powerful magic item, for example.

Sky Masters (18): Init +4; Atk unassailium cutlass +4 melee (1d8+4), punch +4 melee (1d6+4), or cadmium pistol +4 ranged (1d6+4 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.

Cutlass (unassailium): Besides having a keen edge that never dulls (1d8+4 damage), the wielder of a cutlass manufactured of unassailium can attempt to use the cutlass to block any incoming energy-based attack of which they are aware (Reflex save versus ranged attack or spell check). As unassailium is a metallic 7th state of matter, the energy from any successfully-blocked attack is simply consumed by the cutlass and shunted off into a parallel dimension.

Cadmium Pistol: These wooden-stocked metal pistols fire explosive lead pellets containing cadmium dust. A cadmium round will explode upon contact with any solid object, and possibly cause additional radiation burn damage. These weapons make a distinctive sound when fired as the victim hears a double retort (the weapon discharge and the round striking home and exploding). Each pistol has a magazine that contains 10 rounds.





THE DOWNED SKY-BOAT

The crashed ship seems relatively intact, save for a strange green gas slowly leaking from one of two tanks projecting from underneath its keel. The strange air boat is 26 feet long, with most of its upper surface comprised of a wooden deck with rails encircling it. The forward third of the deck is raised and features a complex arcane device with twin spirelets tipped in large green gems, while the rear third of the craft has a series of complicated levers and rods protruding from the deck.

When this particular sky-boat took a hit to one of its two lift tanks and the ship began to lose buoyancy, its crew abandoned it and allowed it to sink to the ground. The hull of the sky-boat contains reserve pressurized lift gas that can be used to replenish the damaged lift tank, but this will be to no avail until the crack in the tank can be repaired. As the lift tanks themselves are not pressurized, any means of creating an air-tight seal in the cracked tank will fully restore flight capability. The exact means of achieving this repair is left completely to player ingenuity.

The fleeing Sky Masters' sky-boats will remain within distant sight for up to 5 minutes, as they sail due south over the horizon line. If the PCs can affect repairs within this time, they should be able to give chase. Figuring out the correct operation of either the ship's flight controls or the lightning turret will, of course, require some additional time. For each attempt by a PC to understand either of these items, use the following table, being sure to track the accumulated time that passes.

Table 1: Attempts to Understand Sky-Boat Mechanisms		
1d20 + Int modifier	Results	Time Taken
1	Flight Controls: Lever snaps off and PC suffers 1d6 electrical damage. Lever may be repaired with DC 12 Int check. Lightning Turret: Turret jams and a large piece falls off, shocking PC for 1d6 electrical damage. Broken part may be replaced and turret repaired with DC 12 Int check.	Instantaneous
2-12	Flight Controls: Incorrect lever pull causes a cross-circuit and shocks PC for 1d4 electrical damage. Lightning Turret: Attempt to fire turret with safeties still on causes a backfire that does 1d4 electrical damage to PC.	30 seconds
13-15	Flight Controls: Controls minimally understood. PC may pilot the sky-boat at half-speed. Lightning Turret: Turret minimally understood. PC has 50% chance of firing the weapon when desired.	5 minutes
16-18	Flight Controls: Primary control functions understood. PC may pilot the sky-boat at three-quarters-speed. Lightning Turret: Main turret functions understood. PC has 75% chance of firing the weapon when desired.	2 minutes
20+	Flight Controls: Controls fully mastered. PC may pilot the sky-boat like he was born to it. Pilot is capable of over-clocking the engines for double-speed movement. Lightning Turret: Turret fully mastered. PC may fire at will.	1 minute

SKY-BOAT EQUIPMENT

If searched, the PCs will discover an equipment storage locker built into the deck of the sky-boat. This locker contains a grappler gun, a complete set of signal banners, a spare matched set of lightning turret green shards, and 6 anti-grav harnesses that the Sky Masters sometime use as a form of airborne life preserver should they be critically injured in flight.

Grappler Gun: This large hand-held weapon fires a grappling hook attached to 500' of steel wire stored on a reel anchored to the boat deck. Upon a successful hit on another air ship, a button on the deck-mounted reel will cause the extended steel wire to reel in, drawing the two ships together for boarding action.

Anti-Grav Harness: These leather harnesses are strapped about the chest and arms. They feature two large dials on the front strap — one controls vertical height, while the other controls horizontal movement forwards and backwards. Steering in flight is achieved by the harnessed individual leaning in the desired flight direction. When activated, two hands are required to fly using the harness, and if the controls are released the harness automatically resets to a hover mode. Because of the simplicity of their design, it is suggested that the judge allow the PCs to actively role-play any experimentations with the anti-grav harnesses as they discover their workings.

FIREFIGHT IN THE SKIES

As the air pirates' air ships begin to vanish over the southern horizon, you finally get your newly-acquired sky-boat airborne. Among the many dials found at the base of the flight control levers, you notice that the largest one features two overlapping miniature daggers that both resolutely point southward no matter which way you turn the craft. A small green gem in the center of the dial blinks insistently at you. The meaning of all of this is unclear, but it does coincide with the general direction in which you saw your attackers flee.

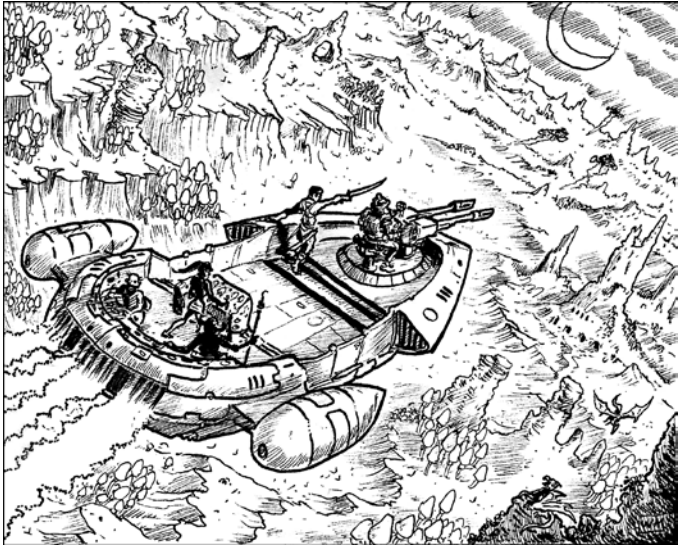
The PCs will doubtlessly be highly motivated to give chase, having been attacked and having a choice magic item or two stolen. The sky-boat navigation compass has two dagger-shaped indicator needles, which have been pre-set by the previous occupants. The larger dagger points due south, while the smaller points to a navigation beacon at the top of the Sky-Spire lair of the Sky Masters. So long as the PCs keep the ship on a due-south heading, both needles will point in the same direction. If the PCs turn the sky-boat to another heading for any appreciable amount of time, they will notice that the smaller needle begins to skew slightly towards the opposite compass direction from the heading.

CATCHING UP TO AND ENGAGING THE SKY-MASTERS

Since the fleeing Sky-Masters are not expecting pursuit, they are only flying at half-speed. Once the PCs' sky-boat approaches within visual range (1/2 mile), the PCs will notice that the Sky Masters on the fleeing boats do two things: they begin to space out their flight formation, and they begin flying brightly-colored banners from the rear of their craft. These are signaling banners meant to communicate and

identify ship/crew condition. The PCs will find that their ship has its own supply of these banners, which they may elect to use in response, though of course they will not know each banner’s meaning.

Table 2: Sky Master Signal Banners	
Banner Color	Meaning
Blue checkerboard on a yellow field	“Stop carrying out your intentions and watch for my signals.”
Black checkerboard on a red field	“You should stop your vessel instantly.”
Red field with white crossing bars	“Do you need assistance?”
White field with red crossing bars	“I am in need of assistance.”
Green field with white crossing bars	“No assistance needed.”
Purple field with zig-zag white bars	“I am taking in, discharging, or carrying dangerous goods.”
Blue and green diagonally split pattern	“Affirmative.”
Black and red diagonally split pattern	“Negative.”



SKY-SHIP COMBAT RULES



ky-Ship combat begins when any fire is exchanged between sky-ships within range. Use of a hex mat, erasable markers, and ship counters or tokens is desirable, but sky-ship combat can just as easily be adjudicated with hex paper and pencil.

In most respects, sky-ship combat is conducted exactly as other types of combat in the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG system. All combatants roll for initiative – with those characters acting as sky-ship pilots and turret gunners being especially important – and combat begins.

Movement: Sky-ship pilots may move their ships up to that ship's maximum number of speed points in hexes (each hex = 500 feet), and still allow the gunner time to fire his weapon. Optionally, a sky-pilot may gun the ship's engines and make a double-move, but such drastic acceleration does not allow the gunner time to usefully aim and discharge his weapon.

Weapons Fire: Turret gunners may act out of initiative order, either discharging their weapon at any point during the pilot's initiative (and sky-ship movement) or on their own initiative.

Other Combat Actions: Other characters on board a sky-ship act on their own initiative round. While most weapons and magic will be limited by the vast ranges of aerial ship-to-ship combat, in cases where sky-ships are in adjacent hexes (or the same hex during a boarding action or close fly-by), attacks against ship-board opponents may be possible. NOTE: Personal weapons and spell damage directed against another sky-ship do 1/10 their rolled damage in hull point damage (all numbers rounded down).

BOARDING ACTIONS

Anytime two sky-ships are present in the same hex, a boarding action is possible. For normal boarding actions to take place, one or both ships must succeed with a grappler gun attack, which will bind the two ships together and draw them into physical contact. When this happens, both ships' speed points are automatically reduced to 0, and both ships are effectively parked, hovering in that hex until disengaged.

Wizards, Sky Masters, and other beings with flight capabilities can of course attempt to board another sky-ship without the grappler gun attack prerequisite.

Hull Points: Hull points represent how much damage the sky-ship can take before it is no longer flight-worthy. The ship's frames and hulls are constructed of cavor-wood and unassailium rivets and plating, making them lightweight but extremely durable. Any normal weapon or spell damage done to a sky-ship is reduced by a factor of 10 (1/10 damage). Ship-to-ship weapons, such as the lightning turrets, do full damage.

Armor Class: Armor class represents how difficult a sky-ship is to damage. In order to inflict hull point damage to a sky-ship, an attack roll must be higher than the ship's armor class.

Speed: Speed points are a measurement of a sky-ship's maximum airspeed. Speed points have two values. In non-combat situations, 1 point of speed = 10 MPH of airspeed. When ship-to-ship combat begins, each speed point equals the number of hexes a sky-ship can move per round (each hex representing 500 feet of distance).

Maneuver: Maneuver points are how many 1-face turns a sky-ship can make in the course of one round's total movement. Only 1 maneuver point may be spent per hex.

Weapons: The sky-ships used by the Sky Masters employ two primary ship-to-ship weapons: lightning turrets and grappler guns.

Lightning Turret: Lightning Turrets channel the power of twin green shards fashioned by gemcutter weaponsmiths into precisely faceted duplicates able to harness fantastic levels of electrical energies via an arcane resonance effect. If either gem of a matched pair is damaged or exchanged for an unmatched green shard, the turret will not fire. A lightning turret blast delivers 1d20 points of hull point damage to another sky-ship, or 1d20x10 electrical damage when directly striking a living creature.

Though the theoretical range of a lightning turret is many miles, its effective range for hitting sky-ship targets is limited to 3,500 feet (7 hexes).

Sky-Boat

Hull Points: 100

Armor Class: 14

Weapons: Lightning Turret (1)

Grapppler Gun (1)

Speed: 7

Maneuver: 3

Sky-Corvette

Hull Points: 250

Armor Class: 16

Weapons: Lightning Turrets (2)

Grapppler Guns (2)

Speed: 12

Maneuver: 2

Sky-Galleon

Hull Points: 750

Armor Class: 18

Weapons: Lightning Turrets (4)

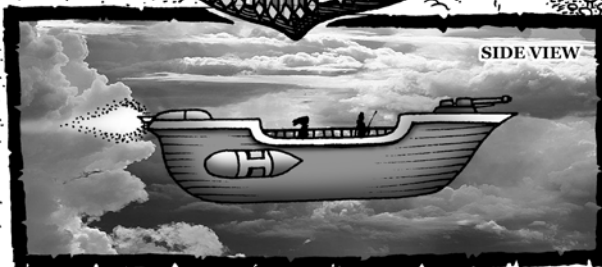
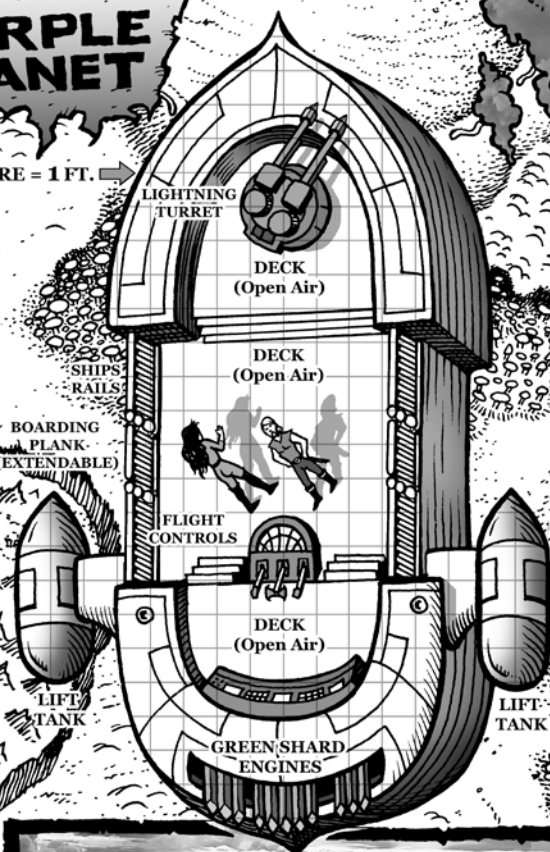
Grapppler Guns (4)

Speed: 20

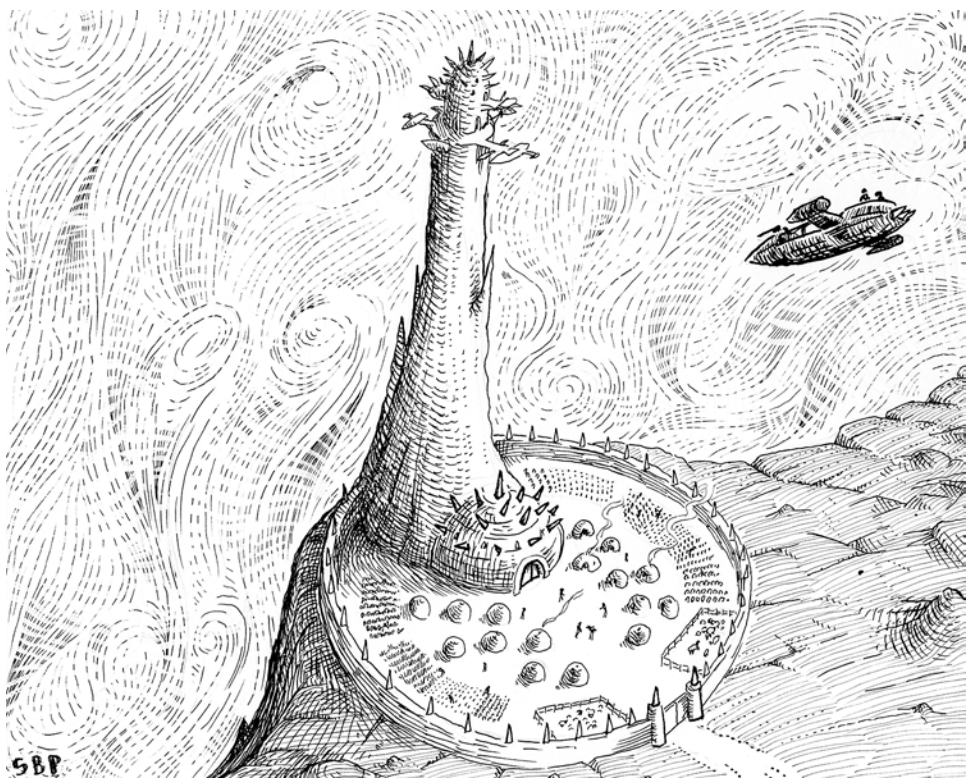
Maneuver: 1

SKYMASTERS of the PURPLE PLANET

1 SQUARE = 1 FT. →



55 Crompton¹⁶



SKY-SPIRE OF THE SKY MASTERS



Assuming that the PCs survive any air battles and continue to follow their sky-boat's navigation beacon, they will eventually travel southward until they reach the equatorial region of the Purple Planet, where they will discover the Sky-Spire of the Sky Masters.

Ahead you see a stone butte over 500' high poised on the northern ledge of a bottomless canyon so wide you cannot see across to the other side. The yawning chasm beyond the canyon ridge is filled with swirling, dense storm clouds. At the base of the rocky basalt spire are a collection of primitive mud-brick hovels surrounded by a 20'-tall stone palisade. High atop the rocky stone spire rests a two-tiered dome structure flanked on all sides by wide platforms with other air ships docked to them — some identical in size to the one you have commandeered, others much larger. The smaller, topmost dome is covered in long metal spikes that would seem to make any air-landing all but impossible.

NOTES ON RUNNING THE ADVENTURE FROM THIS POINT FORWARD

Invading the Sky-Spire of the Sky Masters is the equivalent of attempting to infiltrate an armed military air base. Because the Sky Masters conceive of themselves as demi-gods who are infinitely superior to all other sentient life on the Purple Planet, they tend towards languidity and lack of discipline. They are, however, well-armed and numerically superior to any party of PCs. Any attempt by the PCs to “storm the gates” or otherwise plow straight into their forces will eventually result in a Total Party Kill, and the judge is encouraged to impartially allow such events play out as they may. Another set of PCs can always come back and try again.

For the PCs to succeed in this adventure, they will be required to think “outside the box” and use all the strategy, spells, and luck at their disposal. As the ultimate reward at the end of this adventure — possession of an air base and the air ships to go with it — is exceedingly large, so too should be the challenge and the risks.

THE RIMA-STORM

This northern-most outpost of the Sky Masters is built atop a metamorphic rock spire, the weathered remnant of the central core of an ancient volcano. This rock spire exists on the northern ridge of the Rima-Storm — an equator-spanning feature of the Purple Planet that completely divides the northern and southern hemispheres. Millions of years ago, the Purple Planet had three moons, until the smallest of them broke apart and fell from orbit, gouging a chasm 100 miles wide that circles the equator of the planet.

This planetary-scale canyon is unknowably deep as it has since been filled by the Rima-Storm, a persistent and permanent weather system of turbulent storm clouds that prevent any crossing of the gargantuan chasm except by the largest and sturdiest of air ships. Even then, air travelers must contend with the airborne life forms native to the region, including an apex predator known as the aether-squid.

Should the PCs pilot their sky-boat into the Rima-Storm, they will quickly discover that their craft is far too under-powered to successfully navigate its howling and turbulent winds. Piloting a sky-boat in the Rima-Storm requires a DC 12 Agility check. For each number by which a piloting check is missed, the sky-boat is blown off course by one hex (500 feet), using a d6 to determine which direction.

Additionally, any substantial amount of time spent in the Rima-Storm will inevitably draw an attack from one of the aether-squids who inhabit its endless roiling clouds.

Aether-Squid: Init +5; Atk 4 spiked tentacles +5 melee (1d20 plus constriction) or bite +5 melee (1d30, swallowing whole if damage total exceeds victim’s current hit points); AC 17; HD 20d10+10; hp 125; MV fly 150’; Act 4d20; SP holographic skin (invisible until attack); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.



SKY-SPIRE: GROUND LEVEL



he base of the Sky-Spire is perched on the northern ledge of the Rima-Storm chasm, and is surrounded on all other sides by a 20'-tall stone palisade. Whether approached by land or by air, it will quickly become apparent that neither the stone walls nor main gate are manned by guards. As the Sky Masters patrol the area by air, they are confident in their own security and maintain the palisades primarily as a means to keep out wild animals.

The space inside the palisades (approximately 300 square feet) is divided into areas of primitive mud huts, tilled land, and cattle pens. At the base of the spire is a larger, domed mud-brick structure of much finer fit and finish.

The inhabitants of the slave village are all dispossessed Kith slaves, and are predominately women and children, with very few adult males. Some of them are crippled by missing arms and legs. This population of Kith are the descendants of kidnapped Kith, and as such, have very little knowledge of the true Kith culture, customs, and society. Though they will defend themselves if attacked, to anyone accustomed to the highly aggressive and martial society of other Kith, the Kith slaves will seem to be a sad and broken people.

How events play out in the area will depend heavily upon whether or not the PCs were able to catch and defeat the fleeing Sky Masters before they reached their home base.

If the PCs defeated all of the fleeing Sky Masters, the Sky-Spire will not be forewarned nor on alert. Under these circumstances, PCs who approach the palisade walls or main entrance gate on foot will find both easily scalable with routine effort, meeting with no resistance. Landing their sky-boat at ground level within the Kith slave village will likewise cause no reaction or alarm, as any Sky Masters atop the spire will assume that the PCs are their own fellows returning with fresh slaves.

If fleeing Sky Masters were able to reach and land atop the Sky-Spire, the entire facility will shortly be on full alert for any intruders. If this happens, for each round the PCs spend out in the open within the Kith slave village, there is a 50% chance that they will be spotted and a squad of Sky Masters sent down to deal with the intruders.

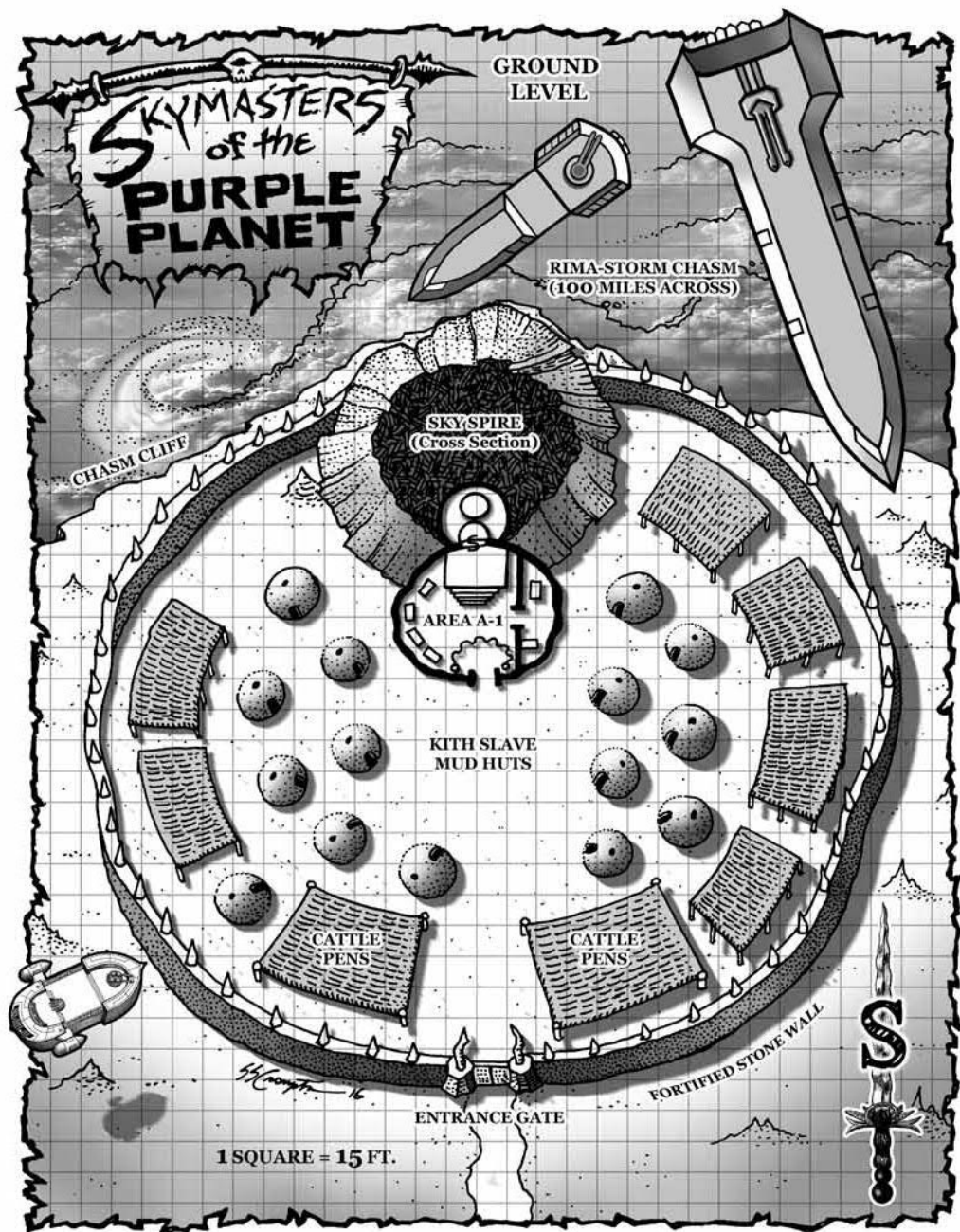
Sky Masters (12): Init +4; Atk unassailium cutlass +4 melee(1d8+4), punch +4 melee (1d6+4), or cadmium pistol +4 ranged (1d6+4 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.

Area A-1 — Temple of the Hierophant: *This large, domed mud-brick structure stands out in contrast to the mud-hovels of the Kith slaves because of its size, location, and the ornate frescos painted on its outer walls. It seems to be a place of worship, and is built at the base of the basalt spire so that its rear third appears to be inside the rock. A 10' wide-open entrance flanked by imposing stone statues of armed Sky Masters on its northern side seems to beckon all comers.*

The open-air entrance is dark inside, and anyone looking in can see nothing except dusty curtains suspended approximately 15' inside the doorway. The entrance is not trapped, the statues are mere statues, and the curtains are easily parted.

Once you part the curtains, you see a huge room dominated by a 10' tall golden statue of a seated winged female goddess in a contemplative pose — one hand upraised in blessing while the other holds a bizarre spiked holy staff. Sacrifices of arms and legs are impaled upon the staff spikes. Food stuffs are piled at the foot of the statue, with crates of more food and supplies stacked in the background. The statue glows as it is lit by the fires of hundreds of candles scattered about the room. A stooped and shriveled elder Kith dressed in dirty, ragged robes emerges from a doorway to the west and bids you welcome in his native tongue.

The Kith priest will tolerate the PCs' presence only so long as he believes that they are there to worship the Hierophant — which requires the sacrifice of either fresh foods or body parts. If the PCs wish to explore or otherwise question the priest, he will begin casting his *curse* spell on the strongest-appearing foe, and will continue to attack until killed or disabled.



Kith Priest of the Hierophant: Init +4; Atk poisoned dagger +2 melee (1d4+2 plus DC 14 Fort save or +3d6 poison damage); AC 11; HD 1d12+2; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP *curse* (-4 to all attacks for 1d20 turns); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6; AL C.

If the PCs search the temple, they will discover nothing of real value in the priest's quarters or the temple itself. There is a locked secret door to the spire-lift, used by the Sky Masters to enter and exit the temple from above, located directly behind the goddess statue. Finding the secret door requires a specific stated intention to do so, and a DC 14 Int check (remember that elves get a +4 bonus to this check).

Once revealed by moving aside a boulder that is balanced on hinges, the lift door is comprised of unassailium and can only be opened by a successful DC 14 Pick Lock check.

SKY-SPIRE: SKY-DECK (LEVEL 1)



Perched 500' in the air atop the basalt butte lies the northern-most outpost of the Sky Masters. It is comprised of two levels: the sky-deck level, which provides docking for their air ships and quarters for the Sky Masters themselves, and above that on Level 2 are the royal quarters of the Hierophant and her court.

As before, should the PCs decide to directly approach the sky-deck and dock, much will depend upon how the PCs dealt with the fleeing Sky Masters beforehand. If any of the fleeing Sky Masters were able to return to the Sky-Spire and dock, they will have put the entire facility on alert, and are in the Hierophant's quarters reporting directly to their goddess-queen. Approaching the sky-deck in an air ship under these circumstances would be sheer suicide, as the remaining air ships will be fully crewed and preparing to defend the Sky-Spire with their batteries of lightning turrets.

If the PCs defeated the fleeing Sky Masters prior to arrival at the Sky-Spire, then the approach of their sky-boat will cause no alarm, as it will be taken to be a returning crew of pirates back from a successful raid. Though efficient air sailors, the Sky Masters have a largely undisciplined work ethic that stems from their innate sense of superiority. The smaller sky-boats already docked will be unmanned as the PCs approach, and what few crewmen are present on the larger sky-corvettes and the immense sky-galleon will either be mostly below decks in their quarters or otherwise attending to their duties.

Once docked, the PCs face the odd chance that they will run into random crewmen or the token force of guards patrolling the sky-deck. Roll for a random encounter once for every 5 minutes the PCs spend out in the open on the sky-deck.

Table 3: Random Encounters on the Sky-Deck

Roll 1d20	Encounter
1	Sky Master flight crew on their way to their ship. Sky Masters (6): Init +4; Atk unassailium cutlass +4 melee (1d8+4), punch +4 melee (1d6+4), or cadmium pistol +4 ranged (1d6+4 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.
2-11	Sky Master deck guards on patrol. Sky Masters (2): Init +4; Atk unassailium cutlass +4 melee (1d8+4), punch +4 melee (1d6+4), or cadmium pistol +4 ranged (1d6+4 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.
12-13	Sky Master ship mechanic. Sky Master (1): Init +4; Atk unassailium cutlass +4 melee (1d8+4), punch +4 melee (1d6+4), or cadmium pistol +4 ranged (1d6+4 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.
14-20	No encounter.

Area B-1 — Central Core: *This circular area is 60' wide and has a 20' metal column in its center. There is a metal door on the northern face of the metal column, and 14 metal doors all along the outer wall, including one large double-door to the south.*

Approximately one-half of the doors on the outer wall lead back out onto the sky-deck. The remainder lead into the various rooms used by the Sky Masters for quarters, mess, and treasure storage. The door on the northern side of the metal column grants entrance to the spire-lift leading down to the secret door in the Temple of the Hierophant (Area A-1).

The secret door on the southern side of the metal column grants ingress to the spire-lift leading up to the Hierophant's quarters (Area C-1). It can be detected if a search for secret doors is made and with a DC 14 Int check (remembering that elves get a +4 bonus to this check).

Area B-2 — Sky-Boat Crew Quarters: *The walls of this room are lined with floating bunks stacked four deep, eight in all. In the center of the room you see four Sky Masters hunched intently over a table on which is spread a strange hand-drawn map demarked in an arcane 6-sided geometric pattern. They seem to be arguing as they push tiny model air ships about the map while rolling Kith finger bones that have been carved in strange shapes and are marked with magic sigils.*

SKY SPIRE OF THE SKY MASTERS

1 SQUARE = 15 FT.

LEVEL 1
(500ft. Above Ground Level)

SKY
DECK

AREA
B-8

AREA
B-6

AREA
B-4

AREA
B-2

AREA
B-9

AREA
B-7

AREA
B-5

AREA
B-3

AREA
B-1

SKY
DECK

SKY CORVETTE
DOCKS

SKY CORVETTE
DOCKS

SKY BOAT
DOCKS

SKY DECK

SKY BOAT
DOCKS

SKY BOAT
DOCKS

Champion WAMPLER '16



Because the Sky Masters in this room are intently focused on their combat simulation, the entering PCs gain a free surprise round of actions prior to combat initiative.

If the room is searched, 1d3 unassailium cutlasses and 1 loaded cadmium pistol are found, in addition to the equipment found on the crewmen.

Sky Masters (4): Init +4; Atk unassailium cutlass +4 melee (1d8+4), punch +4 melee (1d6+4), or cadmium pistol +4 ranged (1d6+4 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.

Area B-3 — Sky-Boat Crew Quarters: This room is similar to Area B-2, but is unoccupied.

Area B-4 — Enlisted Crew Mess: *Plain wooden tables and stools fill this room, with the far wall dominated by a series of metal cabinets. Empty plates, mugs, and cutlery rest on the tables, some with remaining food scraps on them. There is a large, partially-consumed side of meat in the center of one table, which smells wonderfully like smoked wild boar.*

The enlisted crew mess is currently unoccupied, but in 1d3 rounds a female Kith slave will enter the room to clean it up. She will be startled by the PCs and attempt

to flee. If allowed to leave, she will hide and raise no alarm. Any attempt to hold or harm her, however, will result in her screaming at the top of her mighty Kith lungs, attracting a guard patrol in another 1d6 rounds.

If the PCs examine the side of meat carefully, they will see that it is undoubtedly from an adult male Kith.

Area B-5 — Officer's Mess: *Metal tables and chairs fill the room, with a series of cold storage and heating units lining the far wall. A Kith slave girl is present, setting out a meal of finely prepared meat cuts and fresh vegetables. She sees you and backs away in fear.*

If the PCs can calm or sedate the Kith slave girl, their presence in the Officer's Mess may remain unknown. With any but the gentlest treatment, the Kith girl will scream in terror and summon the wandering Sky Master deck guards within 1d6 rounds.

Area B-6 — Armory: The armory door is locked and requires a DC 14 Pick Lock check to open.

After overcoming the locking mechanism to this room, you enter and see rows upon rows of weapons stocked in racks on the walls. Stored here you see the Sky Masters' cutlasses and some rapiers — all made of the same strange green-flecked metal you've seen before — plus a selection of the pistol devices used by the air pirates.

The room contains 12 each of the unassailium cutlasses and rapiers, and 12 unloaded cadmium pistols (for which there is no ammunition present in the room).

Area B-7 — Minor Treasure Vault: The vault door is locked and requires a DC 14 Pick Lock check to open.

Once you get the door open, you see a room stacked with small chests.

The chests in this room contain lesser treasure and booty belonging to the rank and file Sky Masters. Though the amounts are left to the judge's discretion, among the assorted gold, silver, and gems will be found one chest containing 12 green shards.

Area B-8 — Officer's Quarters: *This smoke-filled room contains four floating bunks, and there is a Sky Master captain sitting at a table in the middle of the room puffing clouds of vapor drawn from a small metallic baton in his left hand. The captain is old, grey, grizzled, and wears an eye-patch with a long scar peeking out from underneath. There is a small, black winged feline with tentacles resting at his feet. Seeing you, he reacts with a speed that defies his years, hitting a button on the vapor baton. A jet of opaque grey smoke billows forth from the baton, filling the room in an instant, and you hear the sounds of a weapon being drawn and a high-pitched, kitten-like hiss. A voice like gravel crunching underfoot rings out and says, "Fight me if you wish, but I am old for a reason."*

Battle-hardened and accustomed to fighting with only one eye, the vapor fog-blinded Sky Captain does not suffer a -4 to attacks, as will any PCs entering the room. He will step deftly towards one of the far walls and begin angling to strike his opponents from behind, never attacking the same foe twice. His familiar, the dimension cat, will likewise use her short-range teleportation abilities to perform

hit-and-run attacks until defeated.

Sky Master Captain: Init +6; Atk poisoned unassailium rapier +6 (1d8+6 plus DC 14 Fort save or paralysis for 1d10 rounds), punch +6 melee (1d6+6), or cadmium pistol +5 ranged (1d6+6 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 16; HD 10d8+1; hp 40; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP commands dimension cat familiar; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

Dimension Cat: Init +6; Atk 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+2) and bite +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 20; HD 1d20; hp 12; Mov 35'; Act 3d20; SP short range teleportation 10'; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +4; AL C.

Area B-9 — Ammunitions Depot: The armory door is locked and requires a DC 12 Pick Lock check to open.

This small room is packed with wooden crates, and a shelf on the far wall seems filled with small leather cases.

The room contains over 20 crates of pre-loaded cadmium pistol magazines, as well as a small supply of 10 leather cases containing matched pairs of green gems for use as replacements in the lightning turret deck guns.

SKY-SPIRE: HIEROPHANT'S QUARTERS (LEVEL 2)



This smaller, secondary domed structure rests on a pedestal above the sky-deck level. The entire structure, including the small attached landing deck, are ringed with long metal spikes up to 50' in length, intended to prevent any approach by air ship. Each metal spike is mounted on a mechanical gimbal and has been enchanted in such a way so as to automatically orient towards approaching air craft or other airborne intruders.

Area C-1 — Main Hallway: *You exit the lift into a curved hallway with a set of double-doors across from you and two curtained doorways to the west and the east.*

If the Sky-Spire has been put on alert, a squad of this level's attendant Sky Guards will be waiting outside the lift doors for any intruders to appear.

If the spire has not been put on alert, these guards will be encountered in Area C-5 (Sky Guard Quarters).

Sky Guards (6): Init +5; Atk unassailium rapier +5 melee (1d8+5), punch +5 melee (1d6+5), or cadmium pistol +5 ranged (1d6+5 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 16; HD 10d8+1; hp 40 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.



Area C-2 — Throne Room: This decadently appointed throne room is overfull with rich tapestries, plush gold-leafed furniture, gem-encrusted decorations, and a golden throne resting upon a raised dais. But in sharp contrast to the statue of Her Holiness the Hierophant in the temple, on this throne sits a bloated and wizened crone. Her nearly skeletal limbs seem insufficient to support her distended and bloated belly. Her wings have obviously been amputated and replaced by bejeweled artificial constructs. She is flanked by a bent, wizened Grand Vizier dressed in fine robes and the Captain of the Guard, who has two orm larvae leashed in front of him. The Hierophant scowls at you and points in your direction, screaming “Blasphemers!” as the Vizier begins making arcane gestures and the Captain of the Guard orders the other guards present to charge you.

The Captain of the Sky Guard knows that his job is to shield the Hierophant as she flees the room, and to create as much of a distraction as possible so that the Grand Vizier can start casting spells. He will release his two trained attack orm larvae and he and his men will fearlessly charge the PCs, having been promised high status in the afterlife by their queen.

The Grand Vizier will first attempt to use his summoning spells to conjure additional forces and to create even more melee chaos to cover the Hierophant’s escape. He will start by using *animal summoning* to summon a nearby aether-squid. The arriving aether-squid will be too large to enter the room, but will instead shatter the viewing balcony glass doors and begin attacking the PCs with its tentacles, attempting to drag them outside into its giant maw.

If the Grand Vizier is then able to cast his *demon summoning* spell, he will do so and bring forth the Kasim-Tik, a small, poisonous demon that is completely under the Vizier’s dominance.

The Grand Vizier will save the use of his *magic missile* spell as an emergency means of self-defense, or to tip the scales in his favor should the battle begin to go against the goddess-queen’s forces.

As soon as battle commences, the Hierophant will attempt to use her stealth skills to sneak out of the room and escape to her personal air ship. On her initiative round, simply announce to the players that she is no longer sitting on the throne, and has seemingly vanished. Allow any PC who stops to scan the room for her an Int check against her hide/move silently roll results, with a success meaning that they have spotted her skulking out of the room in the confusion.

If the Hierophant successfully escapes the throne room, it will take her 5 rounds to make her way to her personal air ship and to launch it.

Sky Guard Captain: Init +6; Atk unassailium rapier +6 (1d8+6), punch +6 melee (1d6+6), or cadmium pistol +6 ranged (1d6+6 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 16; HD 10d8+1; hp 40; MV 30’ or fly 60’; Act 1d20; SP commands two orm larvae; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

Orm Larvae (2): Init +2; Atk 4 maw +5 melee (1d8+5); AC 12; HD 7d6+1; hp 25; MV 30’; Act d20+5; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

Sky Guards (6): Init +5; Atk unassailium rapier +5 melee (1d8+5), punch +5 melee (1d6+5), or cadmium pistol +5 ranged (1d6+5 explosive damage plus DC 12 Fort save vs. radiation or +1d8); AC 16; HD 10d8+1; hp 40 each; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

Grand Vizier: Init +7; Atk unassailium rapier +5 melee (1d8+5), punch +5 melee (1d6+5), or spell; AC 18; HD 10d10+1; hp 65; MV 30' or fly 60' flying; Act 1d20; SP spells: *animal summoning* (aether-squid), *magic missile* (flaming daggers), *demon summoning* (Kasim-Tik); SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

Kasim-Tik (type VI demon): Init +6; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6 plus poison) or claw +6 melee (1d4 plus poison); AC 18; HD 6d6+2; MV 30' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP demon traits, venomous (each successful strike, victim must make DC 12 Fort save or suffer +1d6 poison damage per round); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

The Hierophant: Init +10; Atk poisoned dagger +4 melee (1d8+4 plus DC 14 Fort save or paralysis for 1d10 rounds); AC 14; HD 8d8+1; hp 32; MV 30' or fly 60' (via anti-grav harness); Act 1d20; SP +10 to stealth checks; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +8; AL C.

Area C-3 — Hierophant's Quarters: *You enter what must be the lascivious sleeping quarters of Her Holiness the Hierophant. Four slave-maiden Kith, dressed in jeweled harnesses and rich silks, look up in shock and surprise and attempt to flee the room.*

If cornered or held against their will, the Kith females will begin to wail loudly, attracting a squad of the Sky Guard who will show up in 1d3 rounds. Otherwise, they flee to the spire lift and attempt to escape back to the Kith slave village.

Area C-4 — Grand Vizier's Quarters: *This room has vast tapestries hung on every wall shutting out all exterior light, and is dimly lit by a slow-burning brazier located next to an intricately-carved desk. Bizarre objects such as shrunk heads and unidentifiable body parts hang on golden threads suspended from the ceiling. A shelf on the far wall contains dozens of ampules and stoppered flasks, all of them labeled in a tongue that resembles that of the Kith, but yet is clearly not their language. Simple wooden furniture and a bed covered in expensive silks fill out the rest of the room.*

While it would take days to thoroughly search the Grand Vizier's quarters and discover all of its secrets, use the table below to generate results for PCs spending 5-10 minutes or less searching. Roll once per PC, and re-roll duplicates. If not previously encountered, there is a cumulative 5% chance each round the PCs spend in the room of them unknowingly tripping an arcane alarm and alerting the Grand Vizier to their intrusion.

Table 4: Searching the Grand Vizier's Quarters

Roll 1d20	Arcane object found
1	(found in a snuff box on shelf) Amber Ampules (6): If broken, a small puff of amber-colored gas envelopes the user and causes him to instantaneously vanish, having shrunk to sub-atomic size.
2-3	(found in secret compartment in the floor) Amulet of Invulnerability (Cursed): Once donned, the user becomes immaterial, wraith-like, and barely visible. The cursed wearer is unable to touch anything or to be heard. A cleric casting a reversed curse spell with a 20+ spell check result can free the wearer from the amulet.
4-5	(found in desk drawer) Small Iron Flask: Contains weapon poison. When applied, target struck must make a DC 14 Fort save or suffer paralysis for 1d10 rounds.
6-7	(found on top shelf) Sealed Glass Jar: Contains a living 3"-tall human from the PCs' home world. May be freed and used as a replacement PC.
8-9	(found in a locked metal chest stuffed in the corner) Green Gem Cache: Contains 2 green gems that may be used to spellburn or power artifacts (see DCC #84: Peril on the Purple Planet). DC 18 Pick Lock check required to open.
10-11	(found under bed) Anti-Grav Harness: See description in "The Downed Sky-Boat" section.
12-13	(found in back corner) Sealed Cold Box: Contains 2 preserved orm eggs. If the eggs are simply removed from the box, they will begin to spoil in 24 hours and the odor will attract death orm attacks in the wastelands. If placed in the burning brazier, tiny 6"-long orm larvae will hatch and imprint upon the first being they see. Within 30 days they will have grown into 6'-long attack orm larvae, loyal to their master.

Table 4: Searching the Grand Vizier's Quarters	
Roll 1d20	Arcane object found
14-15	(found under a draped cloth) Head in a Jar: Contains the preserved head of an Ascended Master of House Drage (see DCC #84.2: Synthetic Swords-men of the Purple Planet). The head is unconscious, but if freed and treated with fairly, the head may aid the party with his psionic powers, scuttling about on tiny spider legs that extend from his neck-stump. The head desires only to be taken back to the Biosphere Plant at the northern pole.
16-17	(discovered behind a secret panel in the wall) Cerulean Ampules (4): If broken, a small puff of cobalt-colored gas envelopes the user and heals all damage and stat loss (including Luck).
18-19	(found hidden beneath mattress) Belt of Knowing Things: This ornate jeweled belt contains the trapped spirit of a defeated minor demon. The demon knows things, but lies 50% of the time. The demon will never reveal his true name, but will constantly demand the respect due an arch-demon prince.
20+	(locked in a secret compartment of desk) The Grand Vizier's Spellbook: Contains the following spells: <i>magic missile</i> (flaming daggers), <i>animal summoning</i> (aether-squid), and <i>demon summoning</i> (Kasim-Tik).

Area C-5 – Sky Guard Quarters: *You see what is clearly a barracks area for the guards who live on this level of the Sky-Spire, containing bunks and furnishings superior to those located on the lower level.*

If the squad of 6 Sky Guards were not previously encountered in the hallway outside the lift, they will be found here.

Area C-6 – Major Treasure Vault: *You part the curtains leading to this room and see that it is stuffed wall-to-wall with treasure – enough to ransom an entire kingdom on the world of your birth. Piles of gems, gold statues, and luxurious gold furnishings fill the room.*

The exact contents of the treasure room are left to the designs of the individual judge. It should be noted that in the harsh environs of the Purple Planet, most of the treasure would mean little to the vast majority of its primitive inhabitants. There is, however, a campaign-breaking amount of treasure present should the PCs ever figure out how to return with it all to the world of their origin.

Area C-7 — The Hierophant's Personal Sky-Deck: If the Hierophant is able to escape to her personal air ship, she will use it to leave and seek the succor and shelter of her home civilization on the southern side of the Rima-Storm. Her personal flyer has been modified with extra lift-tanks and a corvette engine so that it can safely navigate the Rima-Storm — making it quite a coup should the craft fall into the PCs' hands.

If hard-pressed and unable to attain possession of her personal air ship, the Hierophant will panic and attempt to escape by air using the anti-grav harness built into her jeweled artificial wings.

The Hierophant's Sky-Boat

Hull Points: 200

Speed: 16

Armor Class: 18

Maneuver: 3

Weapon: Lightning Turret (1)

THE AFTERMATH



If the PCs manage to prevail over the Hierophant and her court, the remaining Sky Masters will quickly route. Cowardly by nature, any crews still present will disembark in their air ships and flee southward into the Rima-Storm. Those aboard the sky-galleon and smaller sky-corvettes will, for the most part, survive the journey. Only extremely foolish PCs would fail to expect them to return to the Sky-Spire at a future date, and in far greater numbers, in order to retake their air base.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

By this time the PCs have been given plenty of clues that the Sky-Spire represents a token outpost of the Sky Masters, and that an entire nation of these volacious villains is likely located on the southern side of the Rima-Storm (southern hemisphere of the Purple Planet). While the smaller sky-boats are unlikely to make the Rima-Storm crossing intact, if the PCs manage to capture them, they now have access to the much larger sky-galleon and perhaps even the Hierophant's personal air ship. Either of these craft can make the crossing successfully. Using the information in this adventure as a basis, an entire campaign arc could be created around exploring the vast unknown southern hemisphere.

Likewise, the PCs have the option of freeing the Kith slaves located in the village at the base of the Sky-Spire. Though largely bereft of the typical Kith warrior culture and ethos, they can readily be trained as warriors and even sky sailors. Kith slaves freed by the PCs will regard them as Ascended Masters, and serve loyally until death.

When a legendary race of demonic beings pours out of the double-mooned sky and raids the party's camp, events are set into motion that will lead them far southward to the equatorial region of the Purple Planet. Between the party and their destination lie air-ships and aerial combat, pirates and plunder, and the silver-spined Sky-Spire of the Sky Masters of the Purple Planet!



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