

Dark Crystal: A Labyrinth Lord Supplement

Introduction

Dark Crystal is a wonderful high-fantasy film made before the days of CGI. It took carpenters, hair-dressers, welders, dancers, actors, artists, ceramic specialists, puppet masters, and many other people with diverse skill sets years to complete Froud and Henson's vision. Going to see this movie in 1982 with my dad was a memorable event.

The story offers original creatures, cultures, and worlds with little human-centered concepts for reference. As an eight-year-old, I had a hard time getting my mind around, what was to me then and still today, a complex story. The Dark Crystal has inspired novels, manga, comic-books, board games, fan websites, video games, and now a movie sequel. I've scanned the web looking for Dark Crystal-to-RPG conversions, but haven't found any. In this post I convert the setting, creatures, and playable races to Labyrinth Lord (LL), taking many liberties and making many inaccuracies along the way. I have used production notes, fan websites, and personal invention to create this document.

The Dark Crystal supplement can be ran as a normal LL game with several small modifications as listed below. Primarily, there are no humans. The languages include: multiple Gelfling Tongues, Podling, and Dwarven. The Skeksis and Mystics share the same language descendant of Urskek.

Setting

Planet Thra has three suns: The Greater Sun, the Rose Sun, and the Dying Sun. These suns align once every one hundred years in what is called the Great Conjunction. This is a time of extreme magical importance. Music and sunlight play important roles in magic. Labyrinth Lords should include a musical or sunlight element to all spells, either in the effect or casting. The Crystal of Truth, a large crystal hovering over a bed of lava, collects powerful magical energy from the three suns

and radiates it through Thra. This causes an abundance of biodiversity.

The cracking of the Dark Crystal split the Urskeks in to two different, but linked, races; the Skeksis and Mystics, or the UrRu. The Skeksis use the power of the Dark Crystal to control Thra, while the Mystics live quietly in seclusion. There were originally 18 Urskeks, so immediately after the cracking of the Crystal; there were 18 Skeksis and 18 Mystics.

Confusion and Skeksis civil war followed the cracking of the Crystal. Eventually, the mystics escaped the castle and found seclusion in the mountains to the East. The Skeksis, both enjoying the life-giving benefits of the Gelfling life-force and fearing an organized attack, began to hunt all Gelflings. Gelfling clans were slowly destroyed until only a few survived living either in hiding or staying in magically shielded environments.

Creatures



Garthim

No.Enc.: 1d8 (2d6)

Alignment: Neutral

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 2

Hit Dice: 2

Attacks: 2 (bite, club)

Damage: 2d4

Save: F1

Morale: 10

Hoard Class: None

XP: 40

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The Skeksis, over time, have used the power of the Dark Crystal to create and control Garthim. These powerful armored warriors have *infravision* and are the principal force behind the Gelfling genocide. Garthim resemble gigantic, cumbersome crabs with numerous legs and two “arms”; one a gigantic claw and another a limb with long grasping digits. Garthim continually emit a loud clicking noise, making it impossible for them to *surprise* a party. Garthim are single-minded in completing their assignment, noticing and responding to stimuli only in that consideration. They can, however, be *turned* by powerful magic.



Crystal-Bat

No. Enc.: 1d4
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 9' (3')
Fly: 120' (140')
Armor Class: 6
Hit Dice: 1
Attacks: 1 (bite)
Damage: 1d4
Save: F1
Morale: n/a
Hoard Class: See Below
XP: 20

Crystal-Bats are spidery bats that the Skeksis have infused with magical crystals to broadcast

visual data through the Dark Crystal. Crystal Bats follow Skeksis commands. Because they are linked to the Dark Crystal for both power and orientation, if there is any interruption in its contact, the Crystal-Bat is disoriented and will fall to its eventual death. Therefore, *silence* spells have no effect on the Crystal-Bat. The crystal in the bat can be removed from the its body and used to create a +1 dagger or *crystal of seeing*, in which the PC can see into the Great Chamber once per day for 1d4 turns.



Landstriders

No. Enc.: 2d4
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 160' (50')
Armor Class: 5
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: 1 (Stomp)
Damage: 2d4
Save: F1
Morale: 7
Hoard Class: None
XP: 40

Landstriders are tall leathery creatures with long limbs allowing for fast land speeds. They are skittish in behavior and wide-ranging habitat. If *charmed*, they can carry up to 2 Gelflings or 4 Podlings.

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Races



Dwarf

See *Dwarf* (p. 10).



Gelflings

See *Elf* (p.10) with the following modifications. Female has wings which allow *glide* (not true *flight*) while carrying up to one other Gelfling or two Podlings. Both genders have *Dreamfasting*, which is activated on skin-to-skin contact. This happens only once, when two Gelflings meet for the first time or at times of high emotion. *Dreamfasting* and the power of the Crystal of Truth are the primary reasons Gelfling culture has been largely peaceful. Gelfling tribes prior to the genocide were matriarchal and tribe-based. Some tribes united under queens.

Some have speculated that Gelflings are *Sprite* descendents.



Podlings

Podlings are small, generally friendly and whimsical humanoids. They have a racial reputation as gardeners and musicians. See *Halfling* (p.11) with the following aesthetic modifications: slightly smaller, wrinkled skin, no body hair other than head.



Urskeks

These advanced beings come from another world. They use the Crystal of Truth to capture the energy of the three suns for various magical exercises and longevity. Essentially demi-gods, the Urskeks are not a playable race.

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Mystics (UrRu)

Gentle wizards with four arms, long tails, and extended necks. These creatures tend to be extremely patient, calm, and wise.



Skeksis

Skeksis are imposing bird-like humanoids with powerful voices and a thirst for power. These warriors live in the Crystal Castle, which their slaves have built around the original Crystal Chamber designed by the Urskeks. They tend to be extremely intelligent and cunning.

Special Note

In order to create a Mystic or Skeksis character, the player must create *both* a Mystic and Skeksis that are polar opposites of a single Urskek. Because of this link, if one of them dies, the other does so as well. Mystics and Skeksis use the same character attributes as other races in LL, but they may be generated differently.

The PC has three options for establishing attributes. Once attributes are set, the player must complete the Mystic character as a Lawful Magic User (LL p.12) and the Skeksis character as a Chaotic Fighter (LL p.11) following LL rules.

Option 1

Each attribute is automatically set at either 15 or 3 (table 1.0). All normal penalties and bonuses apply. This method affirms that Urskeks have a combined 18 for each attribute.

	Mystic	Skeksis
Str	3	15
Dex	3	15
Con	15	3
Int	3	15
Wis	15	3
Cha	15	3

Table 1.0

Option 2

Modified dice rolls are used for each attribute. See table 1.1.

	Mystic	Skeksis
Str	1d6	4d6
Dex	1d6	4d6
Con	4d6	1d6
Int	1d6	4d6
Wis	4d6	1d6
Cha	1d6	1d6

Table 1.1

Option 3

No modified rolls. Create each character using established procedures (LL p.6) and noting prime requisites.

Campaign Setting Idea 1: Movie Prequel

The years immediately after the Crystal of Truth is cracked present an excellence time for a campaign setting. The Skeksis, through a brief civil war, determine an Emperor and governing

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system. The Mystics, in mourning and confusion, search for an effective hiding location. The disparate Gelfling tribes begin to experience ever-increasing and vicious Garthim raids. They struggle to adapt to a changing and more war-like world. The Dark Crystal not only eradicates most form of previous life within a certain range of the Castle, but also mutates some creatures, driving them deep into the caverns beneath the wastelands.

Campaign Setting Idea 2: Alternate Ending

Jen never heals the Crystal. The Skeksis and Mystics are forever split, but unable to procreate and continue their race. It is several hundred years after Jen's failure and Kira's death. The Skeksis, having locked the Mystics away in various castle cells are faced with eventual death. They discover a way to store their essence in the crystal, from which they continue to control Garthim and exert their influence over Thra. The destroying power of

the Dark Crystal has enlarged the wasteland and created a new group of mutant creatures. Small pockets of Gelflings have reformed into small tribes on the forest fringe and podlings live in ever-dwindling pockets of fertile soil. The valley of the mystics is now haunted by the ghosts of its former inhabitants.

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