

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

ESCAPE FROM THE PURPLE PLANET

#84C: A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY HARLEY STROH



ESCAPE FROM THE PURPLE PLANET

A 0-level Adventure

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INTRODUCTION

Heroes and blackguards of every stripe will find peril on the Purple Planet, but none more than 0-level PCs. Cast across the cosmos, surrounded by hordes of baying man-beasts, and marched into mass gladiatorial combat, the PCs' death waits with bated breath. Their sole hope for escape lies – not in pitched combat against endless hordes – but by braving the unknown and pressing into the darkness beneath the Purple Planet.

BACKGROUND

As the kith culture succumbed beneath the weight of total war, its people turned more and more to blood sports for entertainment. And of all the bloody arenas created for the purpose of distracting, none was grander than the arena-maze of Rh'ick-Uol. The famed maker and polymath created his arena-maze with a two-fold purpose: First, to host spectacularly bloody combats that could bring the warring Houses together. But secondly, to conceal hidden laboratories where the alchemist could work his experiments on unwilling victims, transmuting living flesh into unholy forms. The gladiatorial games provided a steady stream of bodies – living and dead – for Rh'ick-Uol's horrific work.

The present-day kith have almost no cultural memory of this age, and yet they carry on its superficial trappings – albeit with an overlay of superstitious fear. Once every decade the moons of the planet collude to occlude the weirdling sun, and hordes from every house gather at the arena-maze with their offerings of captured beasts, criminals and martyrs. The houses suspend their warring just long enough to celebrate the slaughter of thousands. Then the bodies are heaped upon great bonfires, roasted on long spits, and skinned for new banners.

For as long the sun remains in eclipse, the ritual slaughter continues. But as the sun wins free of its moons, so too do the kith return to their eternal warring.

This adventure presents only the upper ruins and the first level of the arena-maze. The deeper levels and the Maker's accursed creations of flesh and metal are left to the judge's discretion.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure opens with the PCs awakening, in chains, on the Purple Planet. Any armor or weapons have gone missing, though their gear remains (subject to the judge's approval). Their kith jailors present the PCs with the challenge of killing each other over the single, fragile key, but other solutions exist for those able to keep a cool head under pressure.

Once freed, the PCs are able to explore the small complex, which funnels them towards the arena, where great beasts, kith martyrs, and criminals battle for the pleasure of the amassed kith hordes.

The chaos of the grand melee presents a dire threat to the PCs, with little hope of reward. The PCs have the choice of pressing on in the tournament of gladiators or seeking another means of escape within the dungeon.

With determination (or luck), the PCs locate one of the several pits, chutes and lifts offering access to the arena-maze's forgotten lower level. However, the Maur – mother of monsters – lurks in the darkness below. She stalks the party, attempting to carry off PCs to feed her insatiable hunger.

If the PCs can defeat (or delay) the Maur, they have the chance to discover a wrecked Ythothian longship, and Tio-Lizix, the ship's mad navigator. Either with or without the navigator, the PCs can use the longship to escape the planet. Failing this, the PCs can attempt to claw their way free of the dungeon via an airway in the den of the foul Maur.

The adventure includes discoveries recorded in the Glossography of the Ythoth, but the folios are not required to run the adventure. (*Publisher's note: the Glossography entries are included in the Author's Edition of Peril on the Purple Planet.*)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The hooks for the adventure should be tailored to the PCs' origins, but are largely arbitrary. Prior to the adventure, the PCs lived staid, traditional lives. Their appearance on the Purple Planet is the catalyst for their careers: the PCs must become adventurers to survive. Those that fail to transcend their humble pasts, are left to become rotting corpses beneath the weirdling sun.

- If an all-kith party, the PCs are likely religious or military rebels, refusing to submit to the will of the Ascended Masters. Sentenced to execution, the PCs are marched to the arena-maze and placed in shackles in the dungeon below.
- Characters originating from a traditional Dungeon Crawl Classics campaign might be caught in the misfire of a wizard duel, cursed by a vengeful cultist, or passed through the gaze of a wandering demigod.
- Finally, if the PCs are hailing from our world (see Appendix I), then it is likely they are transported through some fluke accident: Someone put tin foil in the microwave; you hopped on the OSR ride at the wrong amusement park; someone brought an Ouija board or a tarot deck to the session and used it to summon the devil; or maybe the new player spilled Dr. Pepper on your old AD&D DMG.

The means of the PCs' transport is inconsequential and can be derived from any early 80's sci-fi cartoon. Regardless of how or why, a yawning portal to hell opens up, sucking up the PCs, and spitting them out onto the Purple Planet.

INTRODUCING NEW PCs

If a player should lose all his PCs to death, the judge is encouraged to reassign living PCs as players are willing. If players are unwilling to part with their precious 0-level PCs, then the judge should use the random arena encounters in area 1-4 to introduce kith and PC races to bolster the party's ranks. Desperate to escape the arena, or sucked down one of the numerous pit traps, these new PCs can appear nearly anywhere in the adventure.

Additionally, the Mad Navigator, found in area 2-5, would make for a fascinating addition to the party for the right player. Excellent role playing skills and a strong adherence to Wheaton's Law are essential to playing the Mad Navigator.

Encounter Table

Area	Type	Encounter
Start	P	Lock puzzle
1-1	P/C	Grate, arena encounters
1-2	T	Collapsing stone
1-3	P/C	Lever / valve puzzle, fleeing kith
1-4	C	Many (see text)
Level 2C		The Maur
2-2a	C	The Maur
2-3	T	Sand trap
2-4	P	Ythothian Longship
2-5	P/C	Tio-Lizix, the Mad Navigator

PLAYER START



The adventure begins with the PCs awakening in the gladiator pits below the arena-maze. The characters have been stripped of all their weapons and armor.

Judge's Note: The opening encounter is a puzzle with ample opportunity for player error; judges should be sure that the important details are communicated accurately.

Read or paraphrase the following: *You awaken to darkness. A great, clanking weight hangs around your head, wrists, and ankles. Your nostrils flare with the stink of rusting metal and cool sweat. Muffled sounds of violence – cries of pain and the howls of a bestial audience – filter in from above.*

A door is pulled open and a flaming brand is cast into the center of your cell. The torch spits and sputters on the sandy floor, illuminating a thin black key suspended in the center of the chamber and dozens of weapons on the floor at your feet.

The roar of the crowd grows louder.

The cell is 20' across and 10' high, and built of massive stone blocks set on end. The floor is loose sand; characters digging into the sand discover dried and brittle bones of the cell's former residents (all kith), but nothing of value. The cell's sole exit is the (now open) door.

In the light of the single torch, the characters can begin to examine their surroundings:

- The characters are in fetters, manacles and iron helms. Each PC's manacles are, in turn, looped around a single, long master chain running along the wall of the cell. There is enough slack in the master chain manacles to allow a single PC to reach the center of the cell (about 7') but no further.
- A thin black key hangs from a thread of sinew in the center of the chamber. The key is carved from obsidian and appears very fragile. (For judges only: The key unlocks every lock in the chamber – the manacles, fetters, helms and the master chain – but every time a character uses the key he must roll under his Luck; on a failed test, opening the lock causes the key to snap.)
- The "weapons" are all constructed of rotting wood painted to resemble metal. There are swords of every sort, battle axes, maces, morningstars and the like. Regardless of the type, each inflicts a mere 1d4 damage, and automatically breaks on a fumble or critical hit. The flaming torch can also be used as a club, inflicting an additional 1d3 fire damage, but there is a non-cumulative 10% chance of extinguishing the torch with each successful strike.

Share Handout A with the players to further illuminate their dilemma.

The kith are hoping the PCs will kill each other trying to win the key. (And, in some playtests, these hopes were born out.) However, if the PCs keep their heads they are sure to come up with solutions that don't require the wholesale slaughter of their friends. Some of the more mundane solutions are listed below, but the players are sure to be far more creative:

- **Unlocking the master chain with the black key:** If but a single end of the chain is unlocked with the key, it can then be threaded out of the PCs' manacles, freeing all the PCs from the wall.
- **Unlocking each PC's manacles with the black key:** This can be done successfully if the PCs are extremely lucky. As noted above, each time the key is used, the PC must roll beneath his Luck. On a failed test, the key breaks.
- **Picking the locks:** The locks are readily picked (DC 12 pick lock check), but only by those with the training and tools. Zero-level PCs who are fortunate enough to have picks can attempt pick lock checks, but must beat the DC on a roll of 1d10 + Agility mod. The characters can try as many times as they like; however, on a roll of 5 or less the PC

tries to force the tumbler and ruins the picks.

- **Tearing the anchor free:** The PCs can tear the master chain's anchor off the wall with a DC 25 Strength check (then allowing PCs to thread their manacles free of the master chain). Up to 4 PCs (those in the same section of chain) can help. Ask one PC to make a Strength check; every aiding PC that succeeds on a DC 10 Strength check may add +2 to the total. Judges should note where other PCs are standing; characters on the chain – but not adjacent to the wall – are whipped into the cell wall for 1d3 damage.
- **All Haul Together:** PCs can attempt to strain a single link in the chain by all hauling on opposite ends of the chain (or some variant). Treat as **Tearing the anchor free**, as above, but with a DC of 27.

Once the PCs are free, their chains can also serve as weapons, either as garrotes (see DCC RPG core rulebook) or as metal whips (inflicting 1d4 damage per blow). The wooden door, if broken free of its worn leather straps (DC 20 Strength check) can serve as an improvised tower shield (+2 to AC, -4 to checks, 10% cumulative chance of destruction per battle).

LEVEL 1: ARENA-MAZE OF RH'ICK-UOL



he walls and ceiling of the maze are great blocks of rough-carved stone, quarried from the Ancestor Peaks. The floor is also stone, covered in several inches of sand. The stonework is imperfect; finger-width gaps between the stones bleed streams of sand from the ceiling and walls.

Characters digging in the sand will find bits of broken bones and wood. None are strong or large enough to serve as weapons, but this shouldn't prevent PCs from coming up with more creative uses.

There is no light, save for where noted. The air is cool and dry. The droning roar of the kith hordes begins muffled, then grows louder and more distinct as the PCs draw near the arena (area 1-4). In the arena, the sound is nearly deafening.

Area 1-1 – Cruorem Grate: *The passageway opens into a small chamber with three exits: stairs ahead, and narrow corridors to the left and right. The chamber's floor is set at a slight angle, funneling towards a grate set in the center of the room. The air is cooler here, and the hint of stagnant water hangs in the air.*

This chamber and its grate were once used to flush bloody gore from the arena above. Now they offer PCs a means of escape.

The grate is easily lifted and pulled aside, revealing a vertical shaft that drops 30' down through to a cistern (area 2-2). The walls of the shaft are rough-hewn, but not without peril (DC 10 climb check): PCs falling into the cistern take 3d4 damage as they strike the pool below (DC 10 Ref save for no damage).

Alternately, PCs can drag the master chain in from their original cell, and use the chain as a climbing rope.

For every round the PCs spend in the chamber, there is a chance that a wounded creature – at half hit points and mad with pain – staggers down from the arena (area 1-4). Roll on the following table each round:

3d5	Encounter
3	Coward
4	PC race
5	1d4 kith martyrs
6-7	1d3 kith (weakened)
8-10	Nothing enters this round
11-12	1d3 kith (weakened)
13	1d4 kith (condemned)
14	PC race
15	Strekleon

See creature stats in area 1-4.

Area 1-2 – Collapse: *Massive slabs of stone have cleaved from the blocks that line the ceiling, filling the passageway with rubble and sand.*

The rubble blocks the passageway. In order for the PCs to pass, they must shift some of the large stones, creating a crawl space through the rubble. This is not without risk: moving the rubble risks triggering another collapse.

Shifting the stones requires a DC 18 Strength check, and up to three PCs can work together. However, with a successful Strength check the character must also roll beneath his Luck. (For every dwarf aiding the effort, improve the character's Luck score by +1.)

On a failed test, a section of the ceiling collapses, and every PC moving the stones must make a DC 10 Ref save or be caught in the collapse for 1d10 damage. This second collapse crushes the standing rubble, leaving a passageway over the mound.

Area 1-3 – Control Chamber: *The stairs rise to a small, rectangular chamber. The howl is nearly deafening here, and with each surge in volume a stream of sand falls from cracks in the ceiling. The walls of the chamber are host to a number of cranks and levers; the profusion of dust and cobwebs indicates that they haven't been used in decades or more.*

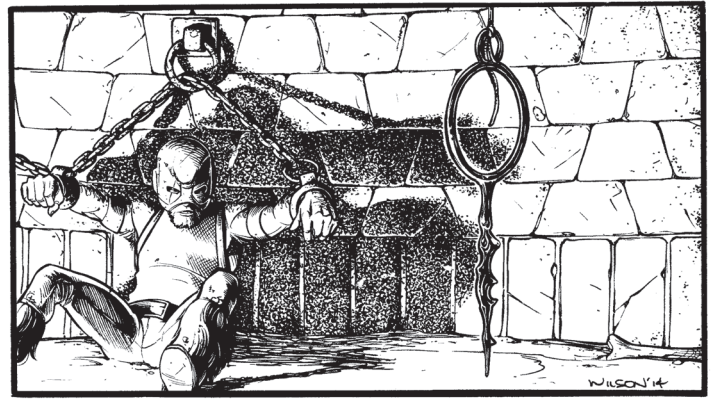
Show players Handout B, and refer to the key on page 10. This chamber was one of several control rooms responsible for activating lifts, triggering pits, opening cages and other "special" effects in the arena. Many of the original effects no longer function, but the chamber remains an effective tool for manipulating the arena.

The levers work alone and in conjunction. Excepted where noted, when performing an action, a second reverses the effect.

Action Effect

- A Raises a visor in the north wall, permitting PCs to look down on the arena.
- A+B Raises the portal between the chamber and the arena. Reverse does not function.
- C+D Opens all A pits in area 1-4. Second time: causes spiked walls to crush closed. Third time: resets pit.
- C+E Opens all B pits in area 1-4. Second time: lowers pit 20', permitting access to area 2-3. Third time: resets pit lift to original position.
- F Lowers the lift in the center of the chamber to area 2-1.

Other combinations have no effect. Turning the cranks has no defined effect.



If the portal to the arena is opened, the kith in the arena try to escape the tumult. The second round after the portal to the arena is opened, 1d3 kith charge the stairs. If they manage to exit the arena, 1d4 try, and then 1d5, and so on up the dice chain until a stampede of kith surges up the stairs.

In the rear of the chamber are a pair of small closets containing two small shields, two spears, 7 javelins and a barrel of 12 torches.

Area 1-4 – Arena: *The vast arena is walled by great standing stones. Thousands upon thousands of man-beasts watch from atop the stones, howling in anticipation of your doom. Overhead, the weirdling sun is in full eclipse, wreathed in a swirling corona that casts the world in a bloody light. Before you, hundreds of combatants clash on the sandy arena floor, their cries of pain and terror mingling with the howls of the man-beasts. The air is rich with the stench of blood and vomit, violence and fear.*

The arena floor is a chaotic maelstrom of violence. There is no hope for the gladiators, no laurel wreath or promise of freedom for the winners. Instead, the man-beasts amuse themselves by hurling javelins at random gladiators. Once every combatant has fallen, the kith will descend the stone walls and roast the flesh of the dead and dying on a great bonfire, howling for the return of their weirdling sun.

Throughout the battle, gladiators are constantly swept together and apart. Every round the PCs are on the arena floor, they are subjected to an attack. Each round, roll once on the table (next page) for each *player* to determine the attack on that *player's* PCs. For the purpose of the encounter, there is no end to the number of attackers the PCs can face. (Even though there is little chance for the PCs to engage a single target long enough to kill it, stats for the various combatants are listed below.)

Remaining in the arena is a death sentence – this is a battle the PCs cannot win. Faced with truly impossible odds, the only hope for the PCs is to escape. But this is no simple matter. The walls of the arena are composed of 30' tall standing stones (DC 13 climb check) and

even if the PCs manage to ascend the stones, they are then faced with battling their way through the howling horde of several hundred kith.

Nor is waiting out the battle an option. Once all the gladiators have fallen, the man-beasts descend into the arena to roast the flesh of the fallen on spits in a massive bonfire – once more leaving PCs to contend with hordes of ravaging kith.

The only means of escape are surviving a fall into one of the open pits, or retreating out of the arena to seek out another route.

3d5 Attack

- 3 Player's PCs avoid any attacks for the round
- 4 Coward
- 5 PC race
- 6 Spectators hurl javelins from atop standing stones
- 7 Spinning blades
- 8 Kith, martyr
- 9 Kith, condemned
- 10 Kith, weakened
- 11 Pit trap
- 12 Spectators hurl torches from atop standing stones
- 13 PC race
- 14 Strekleon
- 15 Player's PCs avoids any attacks for the round

Cowards: Giant kith that have balked or flinched in battle, the Cowards have had their eyes and ears sewn shut, so that – when cast into the arena to die – they would have nothing to fear. (The giants' blindness is already factored in their stat block.) The giant's enormous club can only be wielded by characters with 16 or better Strength.

Cowards: Init -1; Atk great club +0 melee (1d10+4); AC 12; HD 4d12+6; hp 30; MV 30'; Act 1d24; SP immune to visual or sonic attacks; SV Fort +3, Ref -4, Will +2; AL C.

Kith (Martyr / Condemned / Weakened): Kith that have been condemned to the gladiator pits or volunteered for the opportunity to give up their lives in fevered worship. There are three types of kith: martyrs (outfitted with a spear and ritual hide armor), condemned criminals (cast into the arena with only with their fists and claws), and the weakened (already wounded and unarmed).

Kith, Martyr: Init +0; Atk stone spear +2 melee (1d7+2) or +0 ranged (1d7+2); AC 13; HD 1d12+2; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; AL varies.

Kith, Condemned: Init +0; Atk fist, claw or bite +2 (1d3+2); AC 10; HD 1d12+2; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; AL varies .

Kith, Weakened: Init +0; Atk fist, claw or bite +2 (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d12+2; hp 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; AL varies.

PC race: A 0-level character that has mysteriously appeared on the planet, just like the PCs. Mad with fear, he or she blindly attacks the PC. If the PCs hold their attacks, and succeed on a DC 15 Personality check (or take other appropriate actions, as deemed by the judge), the player can elect to adopt the character as a PC (roll for new stats). The NPC is armed with a club.

PC race: Init -2; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL varies.

Pit trap: Not all of the pit traps are marked on the map or controlled by area 1-3. On this result, a previously unknown pit opens in the sand beneath the player's PCs. The character with the worst Luck must make a DC 10 Ref save or pitch into the yawning void, taking 2d6 damage before sliding down a chute to area 2-3. On a successful check, the PC grabs the lip of the pit, and can be hauled back into the arena with a DC 10 Strength check.

Spectators hurling javelins / torches: The kith thronging atop the arena's great walls take part in the ritual slaughter by hurling javelins and flaming torches at the gladiators. (Of course these can then be taken up by the PCs and used to their advantage.) Treat as d20 attack rolls:

Javelin: +2 ranged (1d6 damage)

Torch: +0 ranged (1d4 damage + 1d3 fire damage)

Spinning blades: A mechanical column covered with swords, spear-tips and spiked balls, erupts from the sand. The weapons are all affixed to the column by chains, and strike wildly as the column spins. The PC with the lowest Luck must make a DC 10 Ref save or be struck by 1d3 blades for 1d6 damage each. The tower spins for one round, slows to a stop the next, and then vanishes back into the arena floor on the third round. Characters can attempt to steal weapons from the column on the second round, and before its initiative count on the third round. With a DC 15 Strength check, the PC succeeds in tearing free a spiked or bladed weapon of his choice.

Strekleon: A massive strekleon charges through, attacking the PCs.

Strekleon: Init +3; Atk claw +3 melee (1d6) or bite +0 melee (1d10); AC 15; HD 3d12; hp 18; MV 60' or spring 45'; Act 1d20; SP quills (melee attackers need DC 10 Ref or take 1d3 damage; plate mail and silver suit grants immunity); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; AL varies.

LEVEL 2: RH'ICK-UOL'S HYPOGEUM

The arena's lower level was originally composed of holding cells and crude torture/surgery chambers used to transform resistant warriors into feral gladiators. Cut into the native sandstone, much of the level has collapsed and filled in with fine sand, a threat that remains in much of the surviving ruins.

The air is cool and wet, and the roar that permeates the upper level is reduced to a dulled drone. There is no light, except where noted.

The Maur: The PCs are not alone in the darkness. The Maur – nigh-immortal, mother to ten thousand monsters, one progenitor of the modern kith – lurks in the darkness. The Maur knows immediately when intruders enter her home, and immediately begins to stalk them as prey.

Roll 1d20 when the PCs enter the hypogeum and discretely begin a timer. This is the number of minutes – out of game – that the PCs have before the Maur reaches them.

Once the Maur finds the PCs she waits for an opportunity to attack a single PC. The Maur attacks not to kill, but with the intent of hauling away a meal. A caught PC can escape with a DC 20 Strength check, but failing this, the Maur bears the PC away into darkness. It is up to the remainder of the PCs whether or not to give pursuit.

If the Maur escapes with her prize, she kills the PC at her leisure. Once the kidnapped PC has been slain, roll 1d20 and begin the cycle anew.

If the Maur takes more than half her hit points in damage – or is otherwise seriously threatened – she retreats to her home pool (area 2-2a). There, in the strange healing waters of her demesne, the foul Maur regains 2 hp per round.

Finally, the Maur is terrified of Ythoth raiders, and refuses to enter Tio-Lizix's cell (area 2-6).

The Maur: Init +2; Atk claw +5 melee (1d8+3) or grab +4 (1d3 + drag); AC 16; HD 4d8+4; hp 31; MV 35'; Act 1d24; SP drag (DC 20 Strength check or Maur hauls away PC); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

Area 2-1 – Armory: Six armored forms stand utterly motionless in the dim chamber, weapons held at the ready.

The lift from area 1-3 can descend to this room; see area 1-3 for details. The “stationary figures” are racks of gladiator armor, complete with weapons. The chamber has survived, nearly unchanged, since the fall of the empire. While the armor and weapons are all crusted



with dust and cobwebs, they are no less serviceable for their age.

Both armor and weapons were forged with an emphasis on the dramatic. The six suits of armor feature half-breast plates, missing sleeves, spikes, blades and other choices designed to emphasize a gladiator's physique. Similarly, the weapons are oversized, with unnecessary flourishes and exotic blades.

(In game terms, the suits offer one less point of armor class protection than traditional suits of a given type, but also suffer one less point of check penalty. The weapons are all two-handed, and characters using two-handed weapons must use the d16 on initiative checks.)

The racks hold 2 suits of chainmail, 3 suits of scalemail, and 1 suit of hide armor.

There are 3 two-handed swords, 2 great glaives (treat as polearms), and one battleaxe.

Area 2-2 – Cistern: A narrow ledge runs the circumference of the chamber, overlooking the black pool several feet below. The walls arch to meet overhead where a dark vertical shaft pierces the ceiling.

(Note that dropping or falling into the cistern from above extinguishes all mundane light sources. See

area 1-1 for details on climbing, and the grate atop the shaft.)

The pool is 10' in depth, with a rounded floor. Once used to capture blood and gore washed down from above, the cistern is now half-filled with foul, stagnant water.

A menagerie of broken weapons and bits of armor have collected at the base of the pool. All are rusted or otherwise ruined, save one: a silvery raygun with 4 charges remaining. Characters searching the brackish water in search of treasure must succeed on a Luck check to find the raygun.

Characters exploring the base of the pool also discover an underwater cave leading to the Maur's den (area 2-2a). The underwater cave is a scant 3' across and slick with rotting material dragged in from the pool. Swimmers plumbing the dark, water-filled cave will not reach air until area 2-2a.

Area 2-2a – Den of the Maur: *The inky waters open to a muddy chamber, some three paces across and just as high. A maze of black rotting debris covers the floor. The cold, damp air is thick with the stink of rot. The stench worms its way down your throat and nostrils, and takes hold of your lungs.*

Note that chances are very good that PCs entering this chamber are utterly without light. If this is the case, the judge should alter the area description, removing all visual references. Far worse, if the PCs have not yet encountered the Maur, she is here, waiting for them in the darkness. She attacks at the first sign of a creature emerging from the water, and does her best to pin the PC in the pool – conveniently trapping other swimmers in the underwater cave. (For the Maur's stats, see above.)

Characters investigating the chamber find a mound of dying coals (which can be re-lit with determined effort), 1d5 greenstone shards, and hundreds of moldy rag dolls.

The muddy pool in the back of the chamber has healing properties: characters (or the Maur) soaking in the pool's mud heal 2 hp per round, and 1 point of stat damage per 10 minutes.

The den is fed fresh air through a narrow tunnel burrowed out by the Maur. The shaft is set 12' up the muddy wall; if PCs are able to discover and reach the tunnel, they can claw and crawl their way free the surface of the Purple Planet.

Area 2-3 – Sand Chamber: *The rough-hewn chamber is partially filled with sand. Short mounds are scattered around the chamber, the result of sand slowly bleeding from the ceiling. A number of 3' holes stand at the rear of the chamber, set where the ceiling meets the wall.*

Characters entering via the chute (from any of the B pits traps in area 1-4) arrive in the back of the chamber, slamming into the mounds of sand and kicking up a choking cloud of dust. A torrent of sand follows the PCs, threatening to bury them in the chamber. Characters must either exit the chamber in a single round, or make DC 10 Will saves to fight their way through the choking clouds. Those failing to win free begin to asphyxiate in the clouds of dust, per the drowning rules.

The approach from the hall is far less perilous. The only way to trigger a collapse is for PCs to disturb the walls or the chute. Doing so causes the entire room to collapse. Characters within the chamber must succeed on DC 15 Ref saves or be crushed.

Characters investigating the mounds find little more than sand and dust.

Area 2-4 – The Ship: *The chamber is dominated by a curious sight: a black-hulled vessel, lodged – at a steep angle – in the floor and the ceiling, caught in the sandy stone. The ship hull is ancient and rotted, with bowed and cracked planks revealing the ribs of the broken vessel.*

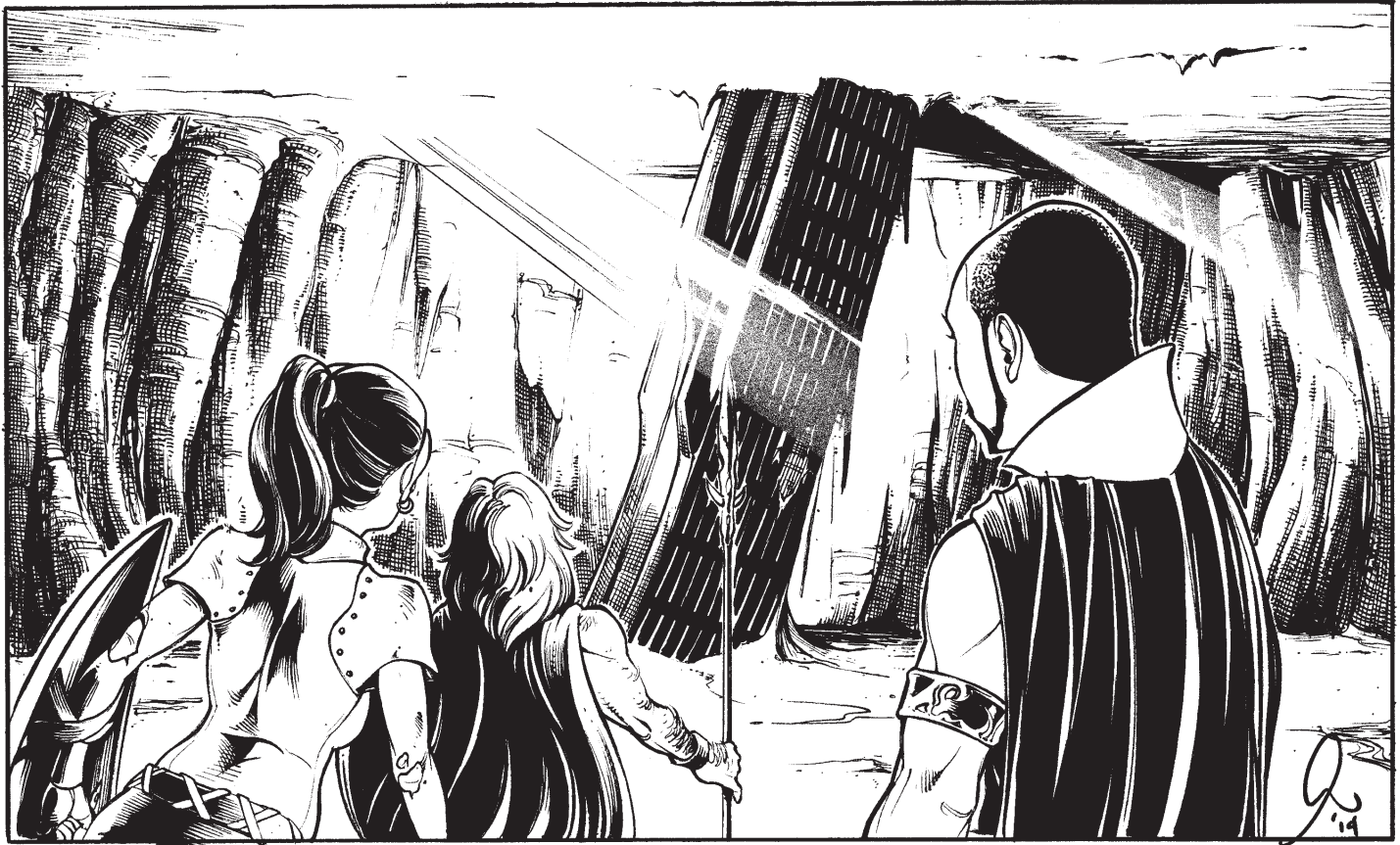
The wrecked vessel is a Ythothian longship that materialized beneath the planet's surface. The ship's navigator, Tio-Lizix (imprisoned in area 2-5), is the sole surviving member of the crew. The ship is ruined, but its *pedestal-of-worlds* is still functional. Torn free in the crash, the elaborately carved wooden pedestal now rests at the head of the wreckage.

If the judge has access to Section V of the Glossography of the Ythoth, utilize the rules there. In the absence of Sec. V, use the simpler rules, following:

Any character placing his hands near the top of the pedestal (for example, searching the pedestal for traps) invokes a spinning, multi-colored orb – the Purple Planet. This orb is **not** the planet in miniature; instead – astrally – the PCs and their ship have grown quite large. The PCs are looking down on their planet from the astral plane. The PC can reorient the ship in relation to the planet, draw out to the solar system, their galaxy, or beyond.

Characters can attempt to steer the ship via Luck checks or spell checks. Thieves can also attempt cast from scroll checks. The DC of the check depends on the distance the navigator wishes to travel: DC 15 for a location within 1,000 miles, DC 25 to return the PCs to their home, or DC 5 to simply bring the PCs back to area 2-4.

Note that while PCs (and their players) cannot know the DCs of a warp jump, they will immediately experience the difficulty of fine navigation. The slightest misgesture and the globe expands to vast galaxies, planes and multi-verses – and all star clusters look alike from a distance.



A successful check brings the PCs to their chosen destination; however, in its ruined state, the longship can no longer levitate. The ruined ship and PCs drop from the sky. As the ship crashes into the ground, everyone on board must make DC 5 Ref saves or take 1d6 damage. Call for the PC serving as navigator to make a Luck check: if he rolls under his Luck, the pedestal survives the crash.

On a failed check the ship drops violently back into area 2-4 and every PC aboard must make a DC 5 Ref save or take 1d3 damage as they are hurtled through the wreckage. These small wrecks do not risk destroying the pedestal.

The ship's navigator, Tio-Lizix, has the skill to pilot the ship without fear of failure, and can land the vessel on any planet's surface, avoiding the crash. However, even Tio-Lizix cannot succeed in flying the ruined longship a second time.

Finally, characters searching through the ship's rubble discover 3 ancient cutlasses, a single harpoon (treat as spear), and 6 bucklers.

Area 2-5 – The Last Raider: *Hundreds of bones cover the floor of the gloomy cell. In the furthest reaches of the chamber you can make out a gaunt humanoid figure, chained to the wall. A hint of sugary rot drifts from within.*

The figure in chains is Tio-Lizix, the last surviving

raider from the wrecked Ythoth longship. Captured by henchmen of Rh'ick-Uol and then forgotten, the navigator has languished, imprisoned these several centuries, surviving off of the fleshy fruits of the corpse flower. Every few decades a kith finds its way into Tio's cell; the Ythoth summarily kills the kith, plants a seed from the corpse flower in the chest of the corpse, and feeds off of his victim's un-lived years. The grisly practice has kept the navigator alive, but has done little to maintain his sanity. (For details on the corpse flower and the Ythoth raiders, see Sections II and VI of the Glossography of the Ythoth.)

The Ythoth navigator is secured to the wall with manacles attached to 6' chains. Desperate for freedom, the Ythoth will offer any reward and try any deception to get free. However, after years of solitude and madness, Tio-Lizix has lost the ability to lie. More accurately, he cannot help but speak aloud every thought that comes to mind, not realizing that those around him can hear every word. Technically he *can* lie, but then he tells you about it, and how excited he is that he'd duped you.

To aid the judge in roleplaying Tio-Lizix, here are some specific thoughts that might surface during his interaction with the PCs:

- The young PCs are worth killing for their un-lived years.
- He knows how to pilot the wrecked longship (area

2-5) and believes (correctly) he can escape the planet.

- If the PCs release him, he'll need to wait until party members separate before trying to ambush them.
- His cache of weapons is within close reach, hidden in the bones at his feet. But can he kill them all? Probably not. Best to wait for later ...

... and so on, with all the Mad Navigator's murderous plans laid bare for all to hear.

Despite his madness, Tio-Lizix does still retain the ability to pilot the *pedestal-of-worlds* (found in area 2-4). With the mad navigator at the helm, the PCs can escape Purple Planet for a world of their choosing.

Treasure: Tio-Lizix has collected a fair number of weapons from his victims over the past several centuries - and will use them all in an effort to free himself. Hidden amid the mounds of bones at his feet are three large clubs, four daggers, ten bone shivs (treat as dag-

gers), and two greenstone shards.

His greatest treasure - which has kept him alive all these years - is a withered ebon plant, growing from a desiccated corpse forced against the wall. Three fleshy fruits hang from the bony branches. Consuming the sweet, crimson fruit extends a character's life by one decade. (See Section VI of the Glossography for additional details regarding the wicked Corpse Flower.)

Tio-Lizix as a PC: If a player is up to the roleplaying challenge (and has the judge's blessing), the PCs can elect to adopt the Mad Navigator into their band. Re-roll all Tio-Lizix's stats, save hit points, treating Tio as a 1st level wizard. Tio learns spells and advances in levels as a wizard. Alternately - if the judge is daring enough to take on the multi-verse as his sandbox - the Navigator can advance as a Ythoth per the Glossography.

Tio-Lizix, the Mad Navigator: Init +2; Atk dagger +3 melee (1d4+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

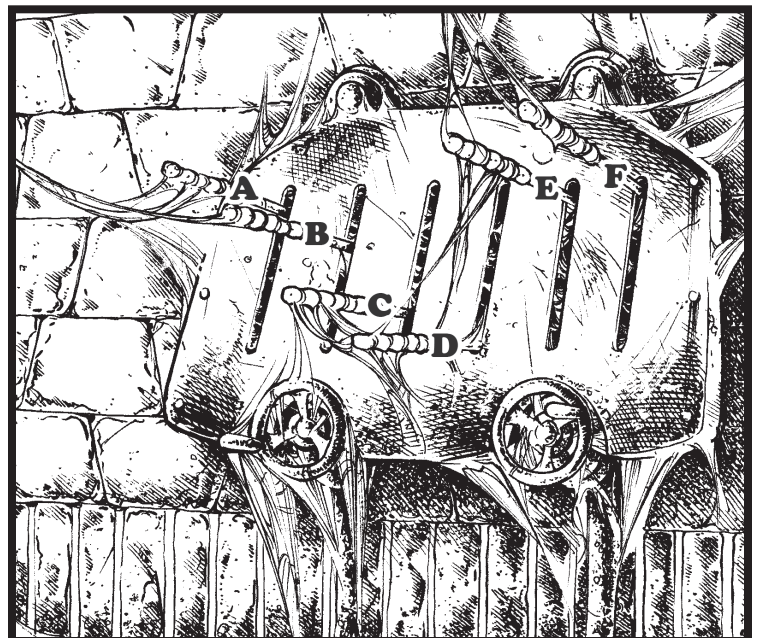
APPENDIX I: INTERPLANETARY HEROES

A core trope championed by Burrough's *Barsoom* series and Howard's *Almuric* is that of the modern hero transported to a world of adventure. And what band of 7th-grade gamers hasn't likewise sat up all night, translating themselves into gaming stats? ("*Thirteen pull-ups and the 97th reading percentile! That has got to be a 15 Strength and an 18 Intelligence, right?*")

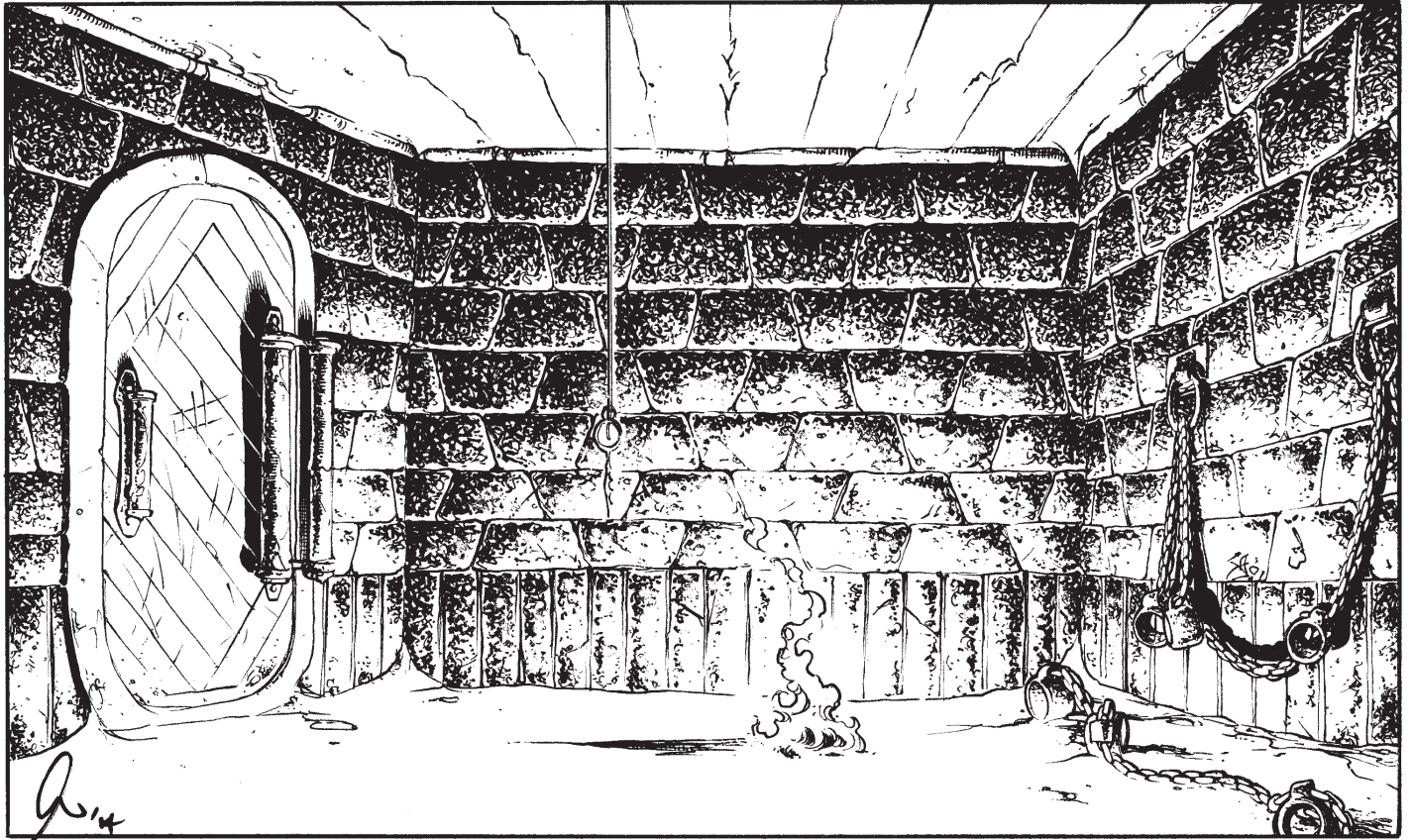
While the longing to escape our world has evolved into the will to transform it, no tribute to the genre would be complete without a tool for sending you and your friends to a distant planet, albeit without deferring to the Presidential Fitness Program to determine Strength and Agility scores.

Robert E. Howard offers an Appendix N precedent. In his short story, *People of the Dark*, the psyche of a modern day character is transported to the distant past, but arrives in a different body, with its own memories and traits. The character's mind remains, but in a virile body with the skills of a tested warrior. The same premise can be used to justify transporting our own gaming groups to the Purple Planet.

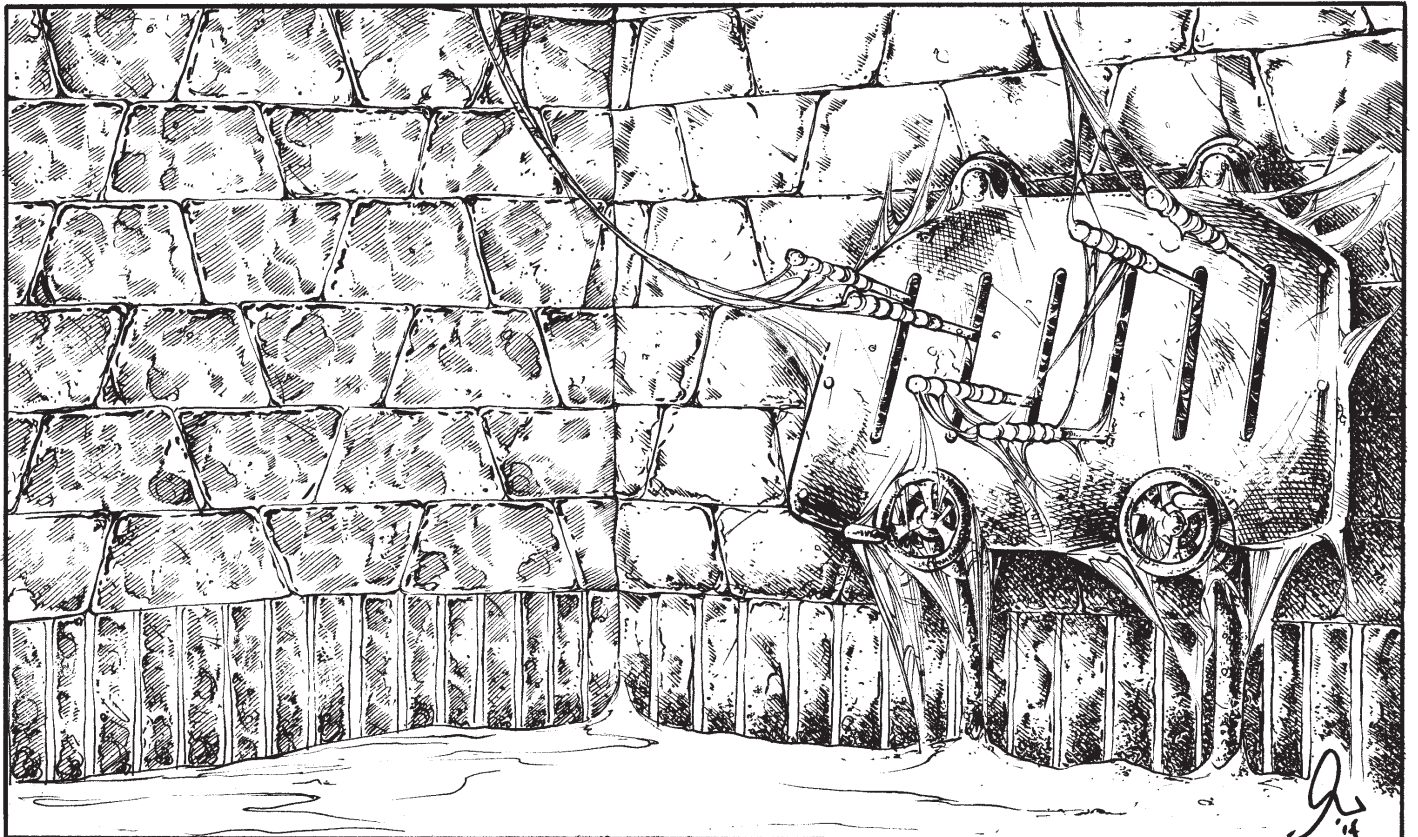
While players are permitted to role play with all their modern knowledge, the bodies they arrive in, and the state of their psyches after being transported through the cosmos, should be rolled per the core rules. Finally, in place of a 0-level character's trade goods, each PC/player is allowed to grab one item from their current location.



Key to Handout B: The levers in Handout B are labeled A-F from left to right, as noted above. See area 1-3 for additional details.



HANDOUT A



HANDOUT B



ARENA MAZE

LIFT 2-1

1-3

1-4

PLAYER START

CHUTES

CRAWLWAY TO SURFACE

HYPOGEUM

UNDER WATER

AK 1987